

The Royal Order of Scotland The Provincial Grand Lodge, U.S.A.

A Common Beginning with Uncommon Parents

By Sir James E. Winzenreid, 33^o, 11th R.W. Provincial Grand Master



Many of you are familiar with the Royal Order of Scotland and the story of the Battle of Bannockburn on Summer St. John's Day 1314 led by Robert the Bruce, King of Scots. What is not so well known is the story of the founding of the Provincial Grand Lodge Royal Order

of Scotland, United States of America. The Provincial Grand Lodge was founded in 1878, and two distinguished Masons made it possible. They were Albert Pike and Josiah Drummond, leaders of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite for the Southern and Northern Jurisdictions respectively and the Provincial Grand Lodge. This is the story about how these uncommon parents collaborated in a common beginning of the Provincial Grand Lodge.

There is evidence of an early Provincial Grand Lodge at Norfolk, Virginia, but no records are available. Subsequently in 1876, Pike entered into correspondence with John Whyte-Melville. At the time, Whyte-Melville was Deputy Grand Master of the Royal Order of Scotland and Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite Supreme Council for Scotland. The Deputy Grand Master heads the Royal Order as the Grand Mastership is reserved for the King of the Scots. In his letter, Pike expressed the view that the Royal Order of Scotland might be introduced into the United States, and as a result:

The letters exchanged between Pike and Whyte-Melville were read to Grand Lodge [of the Royal Order] at the annual meeting on 4th July 1876. On the motion of the Deputy Grand Master &

Governor it was unanimously agreed: that it was desirable the Royal Order of Scotland should be established in the United States of America. That with a view to the Order being officially promoted and at the same time managed so as to preserve its tone and character there, as it has been done here, it could not be placed in safer hands than those of Brother, the Honourable Albert Pike. (Lindsay citing Draffen, p. 36)

Subsequently, it was necessary for Pike to become a member of the Royal Order of Scotland. To accomplish this, Bro. George Stodart Blackie, a doctor of medicine from Edinburgh University living in Nashville and a member of the Royal Order of Scotland was empowered to advance and promote Albert Pike to membership of the Order.... This he did and reported the matter to Grand Lodge in December 1876 along with a petition from Albert Pike to be appointed Provincial Grand Master. A Charter was issued on the 4th October 1877 setting up the Provincial Grand Lodge of the United States and, by a Commission of the same date, Albert Pike was appointed the first Provincial Grand Master. The first meeting of the new Provincial Grand Lodge was held on 4th May 1878 when the Provincial Grand Master advanced and promoted some ten brethren, and filled the various offices. (Lindsay citing Draffen, p. 36)

Over the years, it has been difficult to understand why the Grand Lodge granted a charter for the whole of the United States. The question was raised with Josiah Drummond some twenty years after the fact and his views were requested about the matter. Drummond stated, *In his view only by having one Provincial Grand Lodge for the United States could the Order remain in any way selective.*

In 1878 a limit of membership of 150 had been set and, in a reversal of the position in Scotland, membership of the Scottish Rite had been made an essential qualification for membership. (Lindsay citing Draffen, p. 37)

Pike was very clear in explaining what he believed to be the role of the Provincial Grand Lodge. He defined its objectives as follows:

The Provincial Grand Lodge has been established with a limited membership, to make impossible the cheapening of our degrees, and that the admission to it might be, as it is in England and Scotland, a high honour. We do not propose to create Chapters, for we neither desire to levy taxes, nor to govern subordinates, nor to add to the legislation or jurisprudence of Masonry.

We have desired to create an association of worthy Masons and gentlemen, of all of the States and Territories, to assemble annually, not for dry discussions or for display, but for social intercourse and festive enjoyment, to the end that each may become richer at every meeting, by the acquisition of new friendships, and the strengthened ties of old ones; wiser, by learning to set a higher estimate on human nature; truer and nobler by self-correction, and the communion of wise and proud men.

We will always have it at heart to maintain and increase the honour and dignity of Free Masonry, as the Advocate and Defender of civil and religious liberty; to elevate and ennoble it, and make it worthy of the respect of men of intellect and scholarship; and to prevent the removal of the ancient Land-marks. (Report and Historical Survey, p. 39)

Since that time, the Provincial Grand Lodge has had eleven Provincial Grand Masters. The first was Albert Pike who at the time was serving as Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite for the Southern Jurisdiction. The second was Josiah Drummond, the seventh Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite for the Northern Jurisdiction. The relationship between the Scottish Rite and the Provincial Grand Lodge has continued for over 137 years.

In closing, it seems appropriate to quote Pike as he described what an invitation to become a member of the Provincial Grand Lodge meant:

In the United States the degrees of the Order are highly prized. Only one meeting each year is ordinarily held. A close contact has been maintained with the Supreme Councils of the A.A.S.R. during the entire existence of the Order in the United States, in accordance with a resolution adopted at the first meeting held in 1878 reading as follows:

That the Provincial Grand Lodge shall meet in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in September 1878; and thereafter alternately at the same time and place of the meeting of the Southern and Northern Supreme Councils. (Report and Historical Survey, p. 40)

Now you understand why the Scottish Rite and the Provincial Grand Lodge have a common beginning with uncommon parents and why it is important in the United States of America.

REFERENCES

R. S. Lindsay (2013) *The Royal Order of Scotland* citing G. Draffen *The Royal Order of Scotland: The Second Hundred Years*, 5th ed. (Glasgow: Wm. Anderson & Sons, 1977).

Royal Order of Scotland, *Report and Historical Survey* (Edinburgh: Published by the Grand Secretary, 1960).
