

This afternoon I will be presenting a condensed version of a paper I wrote several years ago. The subject of this paper is my theory that the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717 was politically motivated to suppress the Jacobite movement and attempt to legitimize the Hanoverian monarchy of England, which was preceded by numerous religious and political power struggles over a 200-year period.

I shall explain the historical events of conflict between the monarchy and both Catholic and Protestant faiths, the resulting legislations introduced within England that preceded the formation of Grand Lodge and what role Freemasonry played within the Monarchical power struggle and finally explain events which lead to the Papal Bull of Pope Clement XII which forbids Catholics from becoming Freemasons.

Prior to 1500, Western Europe was emerging from the Middle Ages. The failure of the Roman Catholic Church to help with the plague as well as well as the politically motivated Western Schism that resulted in 3 popes at one time weakened its influence on the population. Western Europe was a boiling pot that perceived the Church as a corrupted institution. Martin Luther was a German monk that became convinced that the church had lost sight of what he saw as several of the central truths of Christianity. The tipping point for Luther was the selling of indulgences, or paying money for decreased temporal punishment in Purgatory. Luther's disputation, known as the 95 Theses, was nailed on the church door in 1517 sparking the Protestant reformation.

While Luther was the Father of the Protestant Reformation, King Henry VIII of England was the catalyst for the English Reformation that saw the break of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope. The history of King Henry and the House of Tudor is well known and I won't spend too much time dissecting it here except to present 2 pieces of legislation that Henry invoked. First, the Act of Supremacy declaring that the King was "the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England" and secondly, the Treasons Act that made it high treason, punishable by death to refuse to acknowledge the King as such. Parliament passed numerous acts to ensure the breach with Rome such as preventing the Church from making any regulations without the King's consent, requiring clergy to elect bishops nominated by the sovereign, and the Pope was denied any financial support.

With the legislated Church of England established and subsequent changes through the monarchies of Henry's children, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I, the church alternated between Catholic Unity with Rome and Protestant exclusion of Rome accompanied by charges of treason and executions for those that didn't comply with the reigning King or Queen.

The Anglican church was not established by Henry, but rather by Elizabeth as a means to neutralize Catholic and Protestant conflict and she made it mandatory for all people to attend church on Sunday, however a majority of the population began to view religion as becoming corrupted and subservient to politics. A movement termed "Puritanism" began calling for a restructuring and purifying of church practices through biblical supremacy and the doctrine of priesthood.

As Elizabeth had no children, the crown was passed to King James I, daughter of Mary Stuart Queen Of Scots and great grandson of Henry VII. Thus ends the reign of the House of Tudor succeeded by the House of Stuart. Before becoming King of England, James I wrote a doctrine entitled The Divine Right Of Kings asserting that a monarch derives his right to rule from the will of God, and not from any temporal authority, including the will of his subjects, the aristocracy, or any other estate of the realm. Puritanism had numerous anti-royalist sentiments and as they held numerous powerful positions within the Church of England and Parliament, any religious political decisions were met with rounds of schisms and dissenting sects. James I's believe in his doctrine along with his distrust of Parliament was passed onto his son Charles I.

Charles I ascended the throne in 1625 following the death of his father. He married Henrietta Maria of France, a devout catholic. Parliament was opposed to the marriage because it feared that Charles would lift restrictions on Roman Catholics and undermine the establishment of Protestantism as well as assure a lineage of future Catholic Monarchs. Charles believed he had no need to compromise nor explain his policies and that he was only answerable to God. Many of his actions violated English law. Charles I would dissolve Parliament repeatedly invoking his Royal Prerogative. However, Parliament was the medium through which the monarchy collected taxes and if they refused to collect taxes, the monarchy had no means to compel them. Following many costly wars, Charles had no choice but to recall Parliament and make numerous

concessions, even empowering Parliament that it could not be dissolved without its own consent. When Charles I received a rumor that Parliament wanted to impeach his catholic wife, he entered the House of Commons with 400 soldiers to arrest 5 MPs for treason. Parliament retaliated by passing a piece of legislation without royal ascent called the Militia Ordinance to deny the King military forces to be used against them. This unprecedented move asserted Parliamentary sovereignty and assured English Civil war. Charles I was captured during the early phase of the Civil war that lasted 9 years and while captured he encouraged the second phase. Charles was tried and beheaded for High Treason in 1649 while his family, including his son Charles II, were exiled to Scotland. In the third phase of the war Oliver Cromwell led attacks on Ireland and Scotland attempting the purge of Catholics. To this day Cromwell remains a despised figure in Ireland.

After the death of Charles I, a republic was declared, known as the Commonwealth Of England and Cromwell became Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland until his death.

Charles II returned to England in 1660 to assume the throne to mark the period known as The Restoration. Charles II imposed harsh anti-Puritan laws and tried and executed all involved in his father's regicide. Charles II married a barren Catherine of Braganza, which left the heir-presumptive to be Charles II's unpopular Roman Catholic brother James. To appease public fears that the family was too catholic, Charles II arranged that James' daughter Mary would marry the protestant William of Orange. Charles II died in 1685 after converting to Catholicism on his deathbed.

James II became the last Catholic monarch to reign over England, Scotland, and Ireland. James II allowed Catholics to hold high positions within the army and court. In 1688 he reintroduced the Declaration of Indulgences and ordered Anglican priests to read it in church. Public alarm increased when James II's wife Mary gave birth to James Francis Alexander Stuart, which would ensure another Catholic dynasty. A group of protestant nobles sent a formal invitation to William of Orange to invade England. This was referred to as The Glorious Revolution of 1688. When William arrived, many of James' protestant officers defected and joined William, as did James' own daughter Princess Anne. James lost his nerve and fled to France and dropped the Great Seal into the

Thames, effectively abdicating the throne. To fill this vacancy, James' daughter Mary was declared Queen; she was to rule jointly with her husband William, who would be King. Parliament passed the English Bill Of Rights which stipulated that no catholic would henceforth be permitted to ascend to the English throne, nor could any English monarch marry a Catholic as "it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant kingdom to be governed by a papist prince". The Bill also stipulated the succesion of the throne would pass to Mary's sister Anne. The 1701 Act of Settlement dictated that should William, Mary, and Anne have no heirs the crown would pass to the House of Hanover, descendents of James I. 52 more senior claimants were excluded due to their Catholicism. To ensure that Scotland would not choose a different successor than the English crown, England crippled their economy through restricted trade until they complied with the 1707 Act of Union where the 2 countries merged to become Great Britain. Upon Anne's death in 1714, James Francis Alexander Stuart was approached to assume the throne if he would renounce his Catholicism. He refused and George Hanover became King George I.

The Glorious Revolution sparked outrage from a number of different groups because they believed parliamentary interference with monarchical succession was illegitimate. The Jacobite movement, named from the latin Jacobus referring to James II, was aimed at returning the deposed James II and the House of Stuart to the throne. Jacobitism still exists today with the foremost body being the Royal Stuart Society.

James II attempted to attack England with an Irish and French army but was ultimately defeated at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 and never returned to England. During the battle James fled leaving the Irish army to continue fighting for another 15 months, which earned him the nickname Seamus, an chaca (James the beshitten). James' son James Francis Edward Stuart became known as the Old Pretender or James III to the Jacobites as well as King Louis XIV of France. To Jacobites remaining in England he was referred to as the King Over the Water and often when a toast to the King of England was appropriate they would pass their beverage over a glass of water. George I was very uncharismatic and spoke very poor English. During George's reign it has been mentioned that 5 out of 6 English were Jacobite. The Jacobite movement had sweeping consequences across Europe forever changing the face of Scotland. One thing to consider

is that the date of the first uprising was 1715. The uprising was a failure which resulted in more Jacobites escaping to France. Jacobitism declined in 1745 after a slaughter of a battle called "The 45" led by the Old Pretenders son Charles Edward Stuart, also called the Young Pretender or Bonnie Prince Charlie. Bonnie Prince Charlie was exiled to France and the last Stuart to actively lay claim to the throne was his younger brother Henry who became a Cardinal. Curiously, Princess Diana Spencer was a descendent of James II although through his illegitimate child Henrietta.

It was said that when James II escaped to France he brought Freemasonry with him. But how many Stuarts were actually involved in Freemasonry? James I was initiated in 1601 at the Lodge of Scoon and Perth in Scotland. Freemasonry was brought from Scotland to England with James. There is neither proof nor record that Charles I was a Mason although numerous members of his Scottish court were that later formed a faction known as the Engagers. There also is no proof Charles II was a Mason except for a passage within William Preston's 1772 book Illustrations that states Charles II had been received into the Order of masonry during his exile in the Civil war, although this may have been an error taken from a previous source. Likewise there is no mention of James II or his son The Old Pretender belonging to any Lodge but what James II taking masonry into France meant would have referred to his numerous acquaintances.

There is however an obvious connection between what has been termed Stuart, Jacobite or Scottish Masonry and the formation of the Grand Lodge of England that was formed in 1717. Proponents of Stuart Masonry would lead us to believe that the already established Scottish masonry, not the present day Scottish Rite, was loyal to the defense of the Stuart dynasty, which is even reflected within the 1684 minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh. After the 1715 uprising the English Whig party branded Tories and Freemasons Jacobites. The Hanoverian government saw this as a threat and a strategy to curtail Jacobite involvement with Freemasonry was to create an alternate authority, the Grand Lodge of England.

Prior to 1717 there were 2 degrees of speculative masonry that could both be taken within the same ceremony. Upon formation of the GLE a regulation was passed which prevented a Fellow of the Craft from becoming Master until he worked the Master's Part in the second degree that could only be conferred by the Grand Lodge alone. Not all

Freemasons accepted this rule and by 1723 the regulation failed and the degrees were split into three. Meanwhile the Grand Lodge of Ireland and Scotland formed in 1725 and 1736 respectively to maintain their rituals and customs separate from England.

Alterations in the English ritual were significant enough that in 1751 a group of Irish Masons led by Laurence Dermott accused the Grand Lodge of England of making too many innovations within the body of Freemasonry. Dermott formed his rival Grand Lodge of England (The Antients) and the 1717 Grand Lodge became referred to as the Moderns, or to some as the Jacobite and Hanoverian lodges respectively. The rift between the 2 Grand Lodges continued until 1813 when the United Grand Lodge of England was formed through the cooperation of 3 brothers; the Prince of Wales (Grand master of the Moderns), the Duke of Kent (Grand Master of the Antients), and the Duke of Sussex (the new Grand Master of the UGLE). The ritual was altered once again close to its present day form. Most evidence of the Jacobite influence has been lost, or actually never existed.

France however was a haven for Jacobites following James II escape. Charles Radcliffe, the earl of Derwentwater was a Jacobite exile that was taken prisoner during the 1715 rebellion and sentenced to death. He escaped to France and became the secretary to the Old Pretender and formed the first lodge in Paris, becoming the Grand Master in France. Another notable individual was Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay. Ramsay first connected with the Stuarts serving as Bonnie Prince Charlie's tutor when he was 3 years old. He was an influential figure during the formative years of French Freemasonry and some Masonic historians believe him to be the originator of the Scottish so-called 'higher' degrees including the Knights Templar, Royal Arch, and the Scottish Rite. Above all, he is famous for his 'Oration' or discourse of 1737 that is alleged to have been the source of the theory of the Templar origins of Freemasonry. It is further alleged that the Oration was the immediate cause of the condemnation of Freemasonry by the Roman Catholic Church. On March 20, 1737 Ramsay wrote to cardinal de Fleury, Chief Minister to Louis XV to ask for the support and protection of the Society of Freemasons. The Cardinals endorsement would add massive credibility to Ramsay's Oration, the Craft, and guarantee approval by the censors. Twice the Cardinal refused to respond to Ramsay

however he did remark in the margin of Ramsay's request "The King does not wish it". In fact de Fleury did the opposite and condemned Freemasonry.

Cardinal de Fleury also urged Pope Clement XII to act, which he did on April 17, 1738 with the Papal Bull in which Freemasonry is condemned and Catholics prohibited from practicing it on pain of excommunication. The Pope condemned the Craft for two principle reasons. The first because Freemasonry keeps secrets from the Church and the other "for other just and reasonable motives known to US". The second reason was political as Robert Walpole, first British Prime Minister, was using Freemasonry for a political and intelligence tool against the Old Pretender for the British throne. It's not difficult to speculate that the reasons were not specified because to do so would have undermined the position of the Old Pretender whose cause the Catholic Church was trying to promote. The Old Pretender eventually turned his back on Freemasonry due to the poor support he received from the Scots during the 1715 uprising. In 1747, during "The 45", Bonnie Prince Charlie declared himself the Sovereign Grand Master of the Order. The Pope refused to acknowledge him as the King of England on the death of his father.

Since the Papal Bull was presented it has been reiterated by several later Popes. The 1917 Code of Canon Law explicitly declared that joining Freemasonry entailed automatic excommunication and also forbids books friendly to Freemasonry. After Vatican II, the Church appeared to some to be easing its stance towards Masonry. In 1974 Cardinal Seper signed a document that stated, in part, that "The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith...has ruled that Canon 2335 no longer automatically bars a Catholic from membership of Masonic groups...And so, a Catholic who joins the Freemasons is excommunicated only if the policies and actions of the Freemasons in his area are known to be hostile to the Church". This advice led some Catholics to believe that the prohibition was no longer in force, and that the Church no longer had many of its traditional objections to Freemasonry. In 1983, the Church issued a new Code of Canon Law. Unlike its predecessor, Canon 1374 does not explicitly name Masonic orders among the secret societies it condemns. It states in part: *A person who joins an association which plots against the Church is to be punished with a just penalty; one who promotes or takes office in such an association is to be punished with an interdict.* This omission caused

some Catholics and Freemasons to believe that the ban on Catholics becoming Freemasons may have been lifted, especially after the perceived liberalization of Vatican II, and caused confusion in then Church hierarchy. However, in a 1981 letter authored by the then cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI), the matter was clarified, and the prohibition against Catholics joining Masonic orders remains.

The Masonic Position remains as it has since time immemorial that Masonic bodies do not ban a Catholic from joining if he wishes to do so. There has never been a Masonic prohibition against Catholics joining the fraternity, and many Freemasons are Catholics.

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