

Origin of The Rosicrucian Society
(Paper presented and read at the First Annual Convocation of
Delaware College, S. R. I. C. F., June 26, 1956 by R. W.
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The secret society of the Rosicrucians was one of the great mysteries of medieval days.

On August 17, 1586, Johann Valentin Andrea was born at Harrenberg, a small town in what was afterwards the Kingdom of Wurttemberg. After a studious youth, during which he became possessed of a more than moderate share of learning, he departed in 1610 on a pilgrimage through Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and France. He had little money, but an indomitable desire for the acquisition of knowledge. Returning home in 1614, he embraced the clerical profession. In 1634 he was a Protestant prelate of the Duchy of Brunswick. He died June 27, 1654 at the age of 68 years.

Andrea was a man of high moral character and a very copious writer. A philanthropist from his earliest life, he sought to carry his plans of benevolence into active operation. Actuated by the spirit of philanthropy he viewed with deep regret the corruptions of the times and sought to devise some plan by which the conditions of his fellow-men might be ameliorated. With this idea in mind he invoked the assistance of fiction and wrote in 1615, "Fama Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis" or the "Report of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood." It was published anonymously and for but one purpose -- that of discovering by the character of its reception who were the true lovers of wisdom and philanthropy and of inducing them to come forward and take part in an active organization.

Andrea relates a romantic story of a fictitious character Christian Rosencreutz, who (though of good birth) was placed in a cloister when five years old. At the age of sixteen, when one of the monks proposed a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher, Rosencreutz, as a special favor, was permitted to accompany him. At Cyprus the monk was taken ill and died and Rosencreutz proceeded to Damascus with the intention of going on to Jerusalem. Here the Arabian wise men appeared as if they had been expecting him and called him by name. He heard of the wonders performed by the sages of Damascus and his curiosity being excited, he spent three years in the acquisition of their most hidden mysteries. He then set sail from the Gulf of Arabia for Egypt where he studied the nature of plants and animals. In obedience to the instructions of his Arabian masters he went to Fez in Africa. In this city it was the custom of the Arab and African sages to meet annually for the purpose of communicating to each other the results of their experiences and inquiries. Here he passed two years in study. From here he went to Spain and back to Germany. (Note that this is the route by which Greek philosophy arrived in Europe.) He resolved to establish a society to bring about a reformation in morals and science. He selected three of his favorite companions from his old convent and under a solemn vow of secrecy communicated to them the knowledge which he had acquired during his travels. He imposed upon them the duty of committing these secrets to writing -- secrets of "all that which man can

desire, wish or hope for" -- and of forming a magical vocabulary for the benefit of future students.

In addition to this task they undertook to prescribe gratuitously for all the sick who should ask their assistance. The number of patients became so great that it interfered with their other duties. Rosencreutz, who had been erecting a building which he called the Sancti Spiritus, Temple of the Holy Ghost, decided to increase the number of the brotherhood by four new members.

The Temple completed, the eight brethren instructed in the mysteries of the Order, they separated according to agreement, two only staying with Father Christian. The other six were to travel for a year in foreign countries, then return and communicate the results of their experiences. The two who had stayed at home were then to be relieved by two of the travelers, so that the founder would never be alone, and the six again dividing and traveling for a year. Before starting they agreed on six rules:

1. To profess no other thing, then to cure the sick and that gratis.
2. To wear no distinctive dress, but the common one of the country where they might happen to be.
3. That every year on the day C they should meet at the house Sancti Spiritus or write the reason of absence.
4. Every brother was to look about for a worthy person, who after his death might succeed him.
5. The word C. R. should be their Seal, Mark and Character.
6. The fraternity should remain secret 100 years.

When one hundred and six years old, Christian Rosencreutz died. The place of his burial was unknown to anyone but the two Adepts who were with him at the time of his death and they carried the secret with them to the grave. The society, however, continued to exist unknown to the world, always consisting of eight members only. It was a tradition among them that at the end of 120 years the burial place would be revealed and the existence of the brotherhood could be made known to the world. After 120 years it so happened that the brethren were making some alterations in their building and decided to remove to another and more fitting location the memorial tablet on which were inscribed the names of their associates. This brass plate was affixed to the wall and upon removal a portion of the plaster of the wall became detached and exposed a concealed door. Upon this door there appeared in large letters: Post CXX Annos Patebo -- After one hundred and twenty years I will be opened. The door opened to a vault of seven sides, each side five feet wide and eight feet high. Although the sun never shined in this vault, it was lighted by an artificial sun in the center of the arched roof, while in the middle of the floor, instead of a tomb, stood a round altar with a small brass plate on which was this inscription: A. C. R. C. Hoc, universi compendium, vivus miki sepulchrum feci -- while living, I made this epitome of the universe my sepulcher. About the inner edge was: Jesus miki omnia -- Jesus is all things to me. In the center were four figures, each enclosed in a circle, with these words inscribed about them:

- 1 - Nequaquam vacuum - In vain is vacuum.
- 2 - Legis Jugum - The yoke of the Law.
- 3 - Libertas Evangelii - The liberty of the Gospel.
- 4 - Dei gloria intacta - The immaculate Glory of God.

Pushing aside the altar, they came upon a large brass plate. Upon removing it, they beheld the corpse of Rosencreutz as freshly preserved as on the day it had been deposited and under his arm a volume of vellum with letters of gold containing among other things the names of the eight brethren who had founded the Order. On each of the seven sides of the room was a door opening into a closet. In these were discovered many rare articles such as the secret books of the Order, the vocabulary of Paracelsus, (who incidentally wasn't born when Christian Rosencreutz died) the life of the founder, curious mirrors of diverse virtues, burning lamps, little bells, manuscripts on various sciences, etc. They closed and sealed the vault and "departed the one from the other and left the natural heirs in possession of our jewels. And so we do expect the answer and judgement of the learned or unlearned. We know after a time that there will be a general reformation, both of divine and human things ---- so in the meantime some few, which shall give their names, may joyn together to increase the number and respect of our Fraternity ---- and not walk so blindly in the knowledge of the wonderful works of God."

In brief this is the story of Christian Rosencreutz and his Rosicrucian Order as told in the *Fama Fraternitatis*. Lives of Magi, from the earliest down to the latest tend to acquire a set, preordained, ritual quality. There is an initiation; the Journey to the East to acquire knowledge (here C. R. C. follows in the footsteps of Pythagoras, Appollonius and many other); a Magical Contest, here representing dimly by the events at Fez; a Trial or persecution (the events after his return to Europe); a strange and unaccountable death, which is seldom if ever described; and a resurrection (here shown symbolically by what happened 120 years after his death). It is obvious that Andrea composed this romance not to record the existence of any actual society, but only that it might serve as a suggestion to the learned and philanthropic to engage in the establishment of some such benevolent association. He hoped that a few noble minds would see through the veil of fiction and communicate with him personally. His design was misunderstood and everywhere his fable was accepted as fact. Diligent search was made by the credulous for the discovery of the Temple of the Holy Ghost. Letters appeared addressed to the unknown brotherhood seeking admission. The irresponsive silence awoke suspicions in many persons who violently attacked the brotherhood. Others defended it in books and pamphlets. Each successive writer claimed to be better informed than his predecessors. The learned men of Germany did not give a favorable ear to Andrea's suggestions. However, the mystical notions in this fabulous story were seized by the charlatans, who added to them the dream of the alchemists and the reveries of the astrologers. Post - Andrian Rosicrucianism became a very different thing from that which had been devised by its original

author. They neglected the moral reformation which Andrea had sought, and stressed the seeking of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of immortality.

Some historians have endeavored to show that modern Freemasonry was derived from Rosicrucianism. This is wholly untenable, however there is no doubt that at a later period it played an important role in the so called Higher Degrees which were invented about the middle of the 18th Century.

We can safely state that Rosicrucianism exerted much influence on modern Freemasonry and that it was resuscitated with Masonic form about 1767.

The modern day order does not claim any direct connection with the ancient one. In its modern Robes of Glory it is traceable to 1865 when the plan was first projected by Robert Wentworth Little in London. In building upon the ancient order, the Modern Societas Rosicruciana did not depart from precedence. The Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (England) mothered several other similar Societies in different nations: Scotland, America, Ireland and Greece. Today there are only three High Councils in the world: England, Scotland and the United States, the others having become dormant.

The Society in the United States owes its origin to the High Council of Scotia (Scotland) who established the following Colleges:

Pennsylvania - December 27, 1879
New York - April 18, 1880
Massachusetts - May 4, 1880
Maryland - May 10, 1880

In September 1880 representatives of the four Colleges founded the High Council for the United States (Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis).

At the present {June 26, 1956}, the following Colleges are active:

College	Chief Adept
Massachusetts	Rutherford E. Smith
New Jersey	Raymond B. Holtz
North Carolina	Wallace E. Caldwell
Virginia	William Mosely Brown
Colorado	Harry W. Bundy
Long Island	Ward K. St. Clair
Ontario	J. Austin Evans
Pennsylvania	William E. Yeager
Delaware	J. Wallace Woodford

The objects of the Society are as follows:

1 - To consider, examine and record all such matters as may come within the purview of the philosophy of Freemasonry, and those sciences embraced in it, as also those sciences which are akin thereto, with the purpose of

obtaining verified truth in place of traditional error of reconciling any apparent discrepancies between History, Myths, Philosophy, and Sciences, as embraced in the study of Freemasonry.

2 - To facilitate the study of the system of Philosophy founded upon the Kabalah and the doctrine of Hermes Trismegistus, and to investigate the meaning and symbolism of all that now remains of the wisdom, art, and literature of the ancient world.

3 - To create a base for the collection and deposit of archaeological and historical subjects pertaining to Freemasonry and Secret Societies, and other interesting matter.

4 - To draw within a common bond men of scientific inclination, and authors who have been engaged in these investigations, and, as well, those interested in them, with the view of strengthening their exertions by association, and of placing in juxtaposition the results of their labors for comparison, that Freemasonry may be rendered free from the apparently gross contradictions within itself, its sciences and historical myths.

5 - To promote generally true Science and the principles of philosophy proper, to the end that the members and those within their influence may be enlightened by the results of these investigations, either by published papers on subjects read and discussed within the Society, or by lectures, delivered under its sanction or auspices.

6 - To review the good of the life labors of that class of scientists and scholars whose aim and study was what the name of the Society implies.

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As of February 1994, the number of Colleges of the Society had grown to 31. They were:

College	Chief Adept (2/14/94)
Alabama	George L. Marshall, Jr.
Arkansas	Homer F. Chamness, Jr.
California	David B. Slayton
Colorado	Howard W. Montague
Connecticut	Merle P. Tapley
Delaware	James H. Hutchins
Florida	Howard P. Bennett
Georgia	Richard S. Sager
Illinois	Gary D. Hermann
Indiana	James R. Phillippe
Kentucky	Morrison L. Cooke
Long Island	Robert C. Singer
Louisiana	Earl R. Little
Maine	Peter C. Schmidt
Maryland	S. Flory Diehl

Massachusetts
Michigan
Mississippi
New Jersey
New York
North Carolina
North Star
Oklahoma
Ontario
Pennsylvania
South Carolina
Supreme Magus
Tennessee
Texas
Virginia
Wisconsin

Donald W. Vose
Richard M. Strauss
Evan L. Fleming
Robert W. Bates
George Peter
Donald B. Street
David S. Bouschor
Joe R. Manning
C. C. Brodeur
John L. McCain
Willard F. Bond, Jr.
Joseph S. Lewis
Luther A. Hill, Sr.
Reese L. Harrison, Jr.
Herbert A. Fisher
George Hughey

Donald D. Thomas, IX^o, Chief Adept,
November 15, 1995