

The Northern Masonic Jurisdiction—

Ratified May 21, 1815; Unified May 15, 1867

Dalcho's copy of the *Constitutions of 1786* permitted "one Council of this Degree, in each Nation or Kingdom in Europe—[and] two in the United States of America, as remote from each other as possible."⁶⁴ As a result, the Supreme Council at Charleston created several Supreme Councils around the world, including a second Supreme Council in the United States, which was established between 1813 and 1815, and later reorganized in 1867.

On May 1, 1813, while in New York City, Emanuel De La Motta, 33°, Treasurer General of the Supreme Council at Charleston, initiated J. J. J. Gourgas and Sampson Simson into the Thirty-third Degree.⁶⁵ Then, on August 5, De La Motta, acting as Grand Commander in a "special sitting," initiated four others and "The Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree for the Northern Masonic District and Jurisdiction" was organized, with New York Governor (and later Vice President) Daniel D. Tompkins as Grand Commander. On May 21, 1814, this Supreme Council reopened and proceeded to "nominate, elect, appoint, install and proclaim, in due, legal and ample form" the elected officers "as forming the *second* Grand and Supreme Council..." Finally, the charter of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction (written January 7, 1815 in Gourgas's hand) added, "We think the *Ratification* ought to be dated 21st day May 5815."⁶⁶

The reason for the creation of the Supreme Council, 33°, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction (NMJ), was to combat a bogus "Supreme Council" previously created by Joseph Cerneau, a French Mason living in New York City. Prior to immigrating to

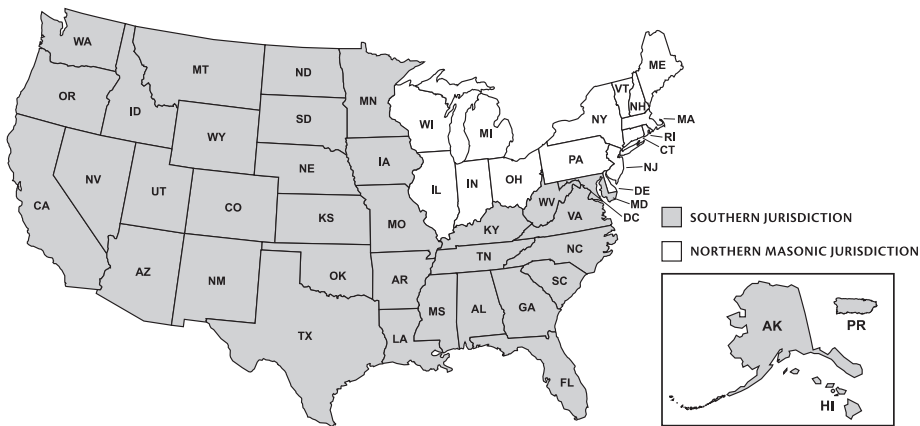
64. Alterations to Dalcho's copy of the *Constitutions of 1786* reveal that it was copied from an earlier draft. It is possible that the original version (which no longer exists) allowed only one Supreme Council per nation or kingdom, as is stated in the *Circular throughout two hemispheres*: "In the new Constitution this high Power was conferred on a Supreme Council of nine Brethren in each Nation..."

65. J. J. J. Gourgas, and others of his Council, may have irregularly received the 33° as early as 1809, and their initiation into the 33° by Emanuel De La Motta may have been an attempt to "heal" them. In a letter dated January 26, 1830, Gourgas admitted to Holbrook that he had received "The history of the 33d[.] Secret Consit^{ns} &c." from France and Kingston, Jamaica. The *Secret Constitutions* were a confidential document delivered *only* to people who had received the 33°. Each recipient of this document signed an oath swearing to keep it secret from anyone who had not received the 33°. This may explain why, years earlier, in a January 17, 1814 letter written by Gourgas, he asked De La Motta, "We should be glad to know what your ideas are *at present* respecting our Recognition in the 33d by your Supreme Council at Charleston, as it would be a very desirable thing to bring it about as soon as possible on account of the peculiar Situation at this Grand East of New York." The letter was signed by Sampson Simson, John G. Tardy, Richard Riker, and J. J. J. Gourgas, *none of them signing as a 33°*, but only as Knights Kadosh, Princes of the Royal Secret, and Deputy Inspectors General, *all titles of the Order of the Royal Secret*.

66. For the documents cited see Charles S. Lobingier, *The Supreme Council, 33°, Mother Council of the World, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A.* (Louisville, Ky: The Standard Printing Co., 1931), pp. 60–68. The actual charter, with Gourgas's ratification note, is in the Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, S.J.

the United States, Cerneau had received a patent for the Order of the Royal Secret, which authorized him to confer the highest degree (25°, Prince of the Royal Secret) on one Mason a year, although it limited his authority to the northern part of Cuba. However, after moving to the United States, he created several Masonic organizations, including a “Supreme Council” in 1813, which was bold enough to imitate the name and seal of the Supreme Council at Charleston. The group was discovered by De La Motta, who was in New York at the time. De La Motta met with Cerneau and asked for proof of his Masonic credentials, but was rebuffed. Cerneau’s members included many prominent regular Masons, who were deceived and continued to believe in their cause. Following an investigation, Cerneau’s activities were denounced as irregular and unlawful, and he was expelled from Freemasonry by the Supreme Council at Charleston.⁶⁷ Cerneau’s group denied Charleston’s authority over the Scottish Rite Degrees, and even had the temerity to deny the existence of the Supreme Council at Charleston. In a long and interesting history the regular Scottish Rite Masons in New York continued to battle against Cerneauism, with occasional defections on both sides, until the two bodies reconciled on May 15, 1867, in what is now known as the “Union of 1867.” This resulted in the formation of the current Supreme Council, 33°, NMJ.⁶⁸

In 1827 a territorial agreement was reached between the Supreme Council at Charleston and the Supreme Council, 33°, NMJ, and, at the quarterly meeting of



The division between the Northern Masonic and Southern Jurisdictions. The Northern Masonic Jurisdiction comprises fifteen states in the Northeastern United States, the remaining thirty-five belong to the Mother Supreme Council.

67. As “Sovereigns of Masonry,” the Supreme Council believed it had the authority to expel Cerneau from “every or any lawful degree or Masonic Society.” Whatever powers it then possessed, it could not have lawfully expelled him from his Blue Lodge.

68. Arturo de Hoyos, “The Union of 1867,” *Heredom* 7 (1995), pp. 7-45.

the latter in June the agreement was unanimously accepted and confirmed. Four months later, on October 31, 1827, the Supreme Council, 33°, NMJ issued a “Balustre” (official communication), naming the states over which it would preside. Later, by consent of the Supreme Council at Charleston, Delaware was added to the list. The territory of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction was fixed as comprising the fifteen States north of the Mason-Dixon Line and east of the Mississippi river.⁶⁹ The Southern Jurisdiction occupies the remaining thirty-five States, the District of Columbia, and the American territories and dependencies. As the premiere Supreme Council, it is sometimes referred to as the “Mother Council of the World.” This is the Body to which we belong.⁷⁰

69. The selected geographical boundaries may also have reflected ideological differences between the Northern and Southern States, which became progressively more defined until the Civil War.

70. For a recent history, see William J. Fox, *Lodge of the Double-headed Eagle* (Fayetteville, Ark.: University of Arkansas Press, 1997)