THE MASONIC DEGREES OF MARK & ROYAL ARK MARINER.

MARK.

The consensus of opinion among those who have researched deeply into the origins and development of Mark Masonry is that it had its birthplace in Scotland. In 1865 a report, prepared by a special committee, was presented to the Grand Chapter of Scotland which stated:-

> "In this country, from time immemorial and long before the institution of the Grand Lodge of Scothand (1736), what is now known as the Mark Masters' Degree was wrought by the operative Lodges of St. John's Masonry". = (5)

Br. George Draffen, Past Substitute Grand Master of Scotland, in his comments on a Paper "The Age of the Mark Ritual' by Br. Norman Rogers (A.Q.C. Vol.73, p.47) observed that From a purely esoteric point of view it is not impossible that the Mark Degree is, in itself, a perfectly valid <u>initiatory</u> lite and did the first three Degrees of Craft Freezasonry as the know them not exist the Mark Degree might well have taken their place.

The oldest known records of Mark Yasanry are contained in the minutes of the Royal Arch Chapter of Frieriship (now)No.257 which meets in Portsmouth (Hampshine) and was constituted in 1769.^{=1 &2} The opening minutes. Acted 1st September 1769, were written in Masonic cipher and rid as fullows:- =4

> "At a Royal Arch Chapter held at the George Tavern, Portsmouth, om filet September Seventeen hundred and sixty-ning - Present

> > "humas Dunckerley, Esq., William Colk, - Z Samuel Palmer - H Thomas Sumville - J Hent, Lian, Philip Joyes and Thomas Webb.

The Pro(v) C M., Thomas Dunckerley, bro"t the Warrant of the Chapter and having lately received the "Mark" be make the bre'n "Mark Masons" and "Mark Masters". And each chuse their "Mark". He also told us of the manner of writing which we may give to others so they be F.C. for "Mark Masons" (this should have read "for Mark Men") and Master M. for "Mark Masters"".

It has when said =4 that the importance of this short passage cannot be exagerated. In it Dunckerley refers to the Mark Begree as having been established for some time. Br. Bernard Jones, commenting on the abovementioned Paper Said:-

=(1) - Taken from Grantham's "History of Grand Mark Lodge" p.62. =(2) - G.L. Year Book (1976/'77)

=(3) - The Chapter is now attached to the Pheonix Lodge No.257.

=(4) - Pick & Knight "Pocket History of Freemasonry" (1953, p.262

= (5) - A.R.C., Vol. 44, p. 284, "The hearth Regree" by Br. E. hearton.

1. mark masonry - ? bright in France? 2. Doubtful - out of character - too presie. 3. "Hat Nose breix did - quilt feasible H. . began in ither England or testland 5. To be left at that until fusther evidence Anturlo (a starl) Marono worked the Do under their braft Massanto - Doight G. & (6. KT. M. Some moderns lodges also worked these "side" degrees due to "immitation" The folgelling (m 1813) - laid down of fun and the solution of 1813) - laid down of fun + KT. E Mondally meaning how browne () EA., F.C. & H.H.) & us more including the in preme C. of the It. R.A. - " bet this criticle is not intended to prevent any file or Chapter from holding a mieting in any of the D's. of the Eders of Chickelog