



John Temple Rice was born in Danville, Virginia, on December 9, 1888. The family moved to Greensboro, N.C., in 1892 and in 1901, to Spencer, N.C. He received his elementary education in the public schools of Greensboro and Spencer. In March, 1904, the family moved to El Paso, Texas.

Due to the death of his father in 1901, he assumed the responsibility of supporting and educating his sisters and caring for his mother. For many years he operated one of the leading drug stores in El Paso. In 1927 he was able to retire from business and devoted himself to Masonic and civic interests. He was an active member of Saint Clement Episcopal Church in El Paso, serving as vestryman and senior warden beginning in 1937. He never married.

On June 22, 1917, he enlisted in the 36th division of the Texas National Guard and was assigned to the Medical Department. As a member of Field Hospital No. 141, 111th Sanitary Train, 36th Division, he served in France with the American Expeditionary Forces from July 18, 1918, to June 3, 1919. He took part in the Meuse-Argonne offensive in which the 36th Division distinguished itself.

Sir Knight Rice was made a Master Mason in El Paso Lodge No. 130 on April 14, 1911, and served as Worshipful Master in 1915 and 1916. He was elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Texas in 1937.

He was exalted in El Paso Chapter No. 157 on October 17, 1911, and served as High Priest in 1917 and 1918. He was elected Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Texas in 1942.

He was greeted in El Paso Council No. 98 on March 30, 1912, and served as Thrice Illustrious Master in 1919 and 1920.

He received the 320 in the Scottish Rite in the Consistory at El Paso on April 23, 1915. He became active in all the Scottish Rite bodies and on October 16, 1923, received the grade of Knight Commander of the Court of Honor. He was coronetted an honorary 330 Inspector General on January 30, 1928. He was also a member of the Mystic Shrine and of the Red Cross of Constantine.

He received the Orders of Knighthood in El Paso Commandery No. 18 on November 29, 1911, and served as Eminent Commander in 1921. He was elected Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Texas in 1931.

At the Conclave of the Grand Encampment in 1934 he was elected Grand Junior Warden, and on October 31, 1946, he became Grand Master.

Sir Knight Rice was most active during his term as Grand Master, traveling extensively to visit the different grand Jurisdictions. His pleasing personality and affable manner made him welcome at every occasion. At each Grand Commandery, his interest in their work and his kindly words of approval and encouragement endeared him to all the Sir Knights. The following tribute at the time he became Grand Master is most appropriate. He brings to the exalted office of Grand Master a clear mind and rich experience of executive responsibilities. His meticulous care in all matters of detail and his sound judgment of values, his adherence to established customs and traditions and his lofty conception of the mission and dignity of Templary undoubtedly qualify him for the great responsibilities of the office of Grand Master.

Reference: From Dr. Francis J. Scully's...History of the Grand Encampment, Chapter XXIII, Biographies Of The Grand Masters, as published in the Knight Templar Magazine, July 1995 Edition, page 16

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