

Parliamentary Procedure

New Covenant Presbyterian Church
Leadership College, Module 2

- East: Mesopotamia, India possibly
- West:
 - Ancient Athens (16th c BC forward)
Initial form of democracy
 - Roman Republic (6th c BC forward)
Roman Senate

**Deliberations in
a Democratic Assembly**

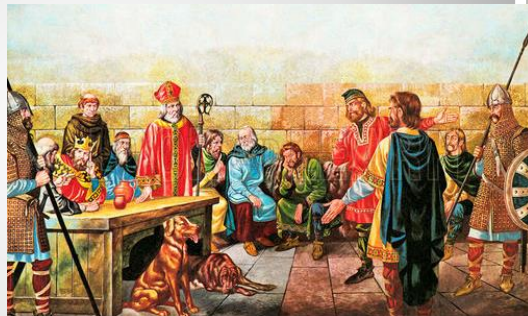
- 5th c. AD – Anglo-Saxon tribes moving into Britain

Witenagemot – Advisory council of 'wise men'



Development of Decorum in Debate and Discussion

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- 1066 AD – Great Councils of the Normans



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- 14th c - King Edward I – The 'Model Parliament'

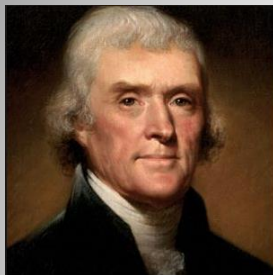


Development of Decorum in Debate and Discussion

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- 1066 – Great Councils of the
- 1155 AD – King Arthur & the
- 14th c - King Edward I – The 'Model Parliament'
- 14th c –
“parler” – Old French
for any type discussion
- 15th c – “Parliament”



Development of Decorum in Debate and Discussion



“crude, multiform and embarrassing ... ”
But “advancing
toward uniformity and
accuracy ...”

T. Jefferson

Development of Decorum in Debate and Discussion

- 1583 - The Manner of Government and Policy of the Realm of England

Sir Thomas Smyth



Development of Decorum in Debate and Discussion

- One subject at a time.
- Alternation between opposite points of view in assignment of the floor
- Requirement that the chair always call for the negative vote
- Decorum and avoidance of personalities in debate
- Confinement of debate to the merits of the pending question
- Division of a question

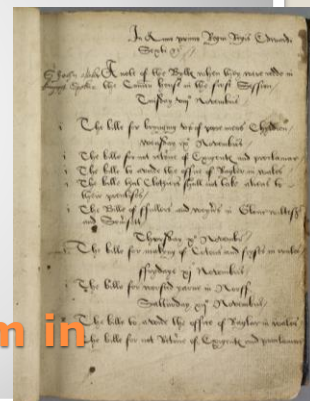
Primary Areas of Definition

- 1607 – Virginia establishes parliamentary procedures



Continued Development

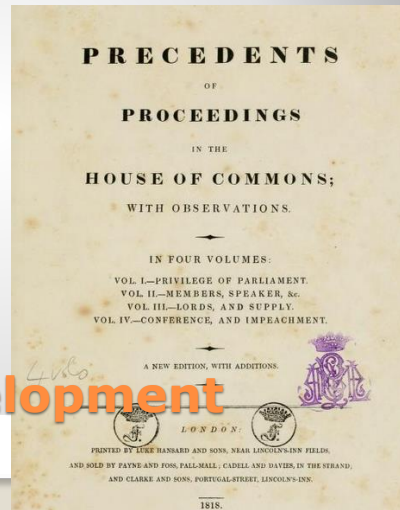
- 1623 – Journal of the House of Commons



Development of Decorum in Debate and Discussion

- 1781 – Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons

John Hatsell



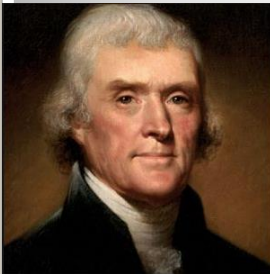
Continued Development

- 1781 – Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons

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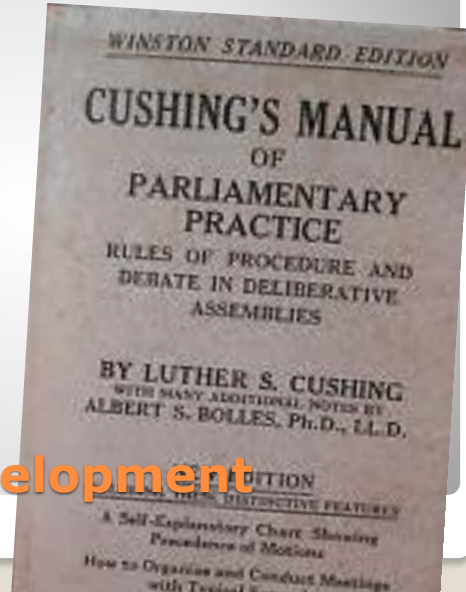
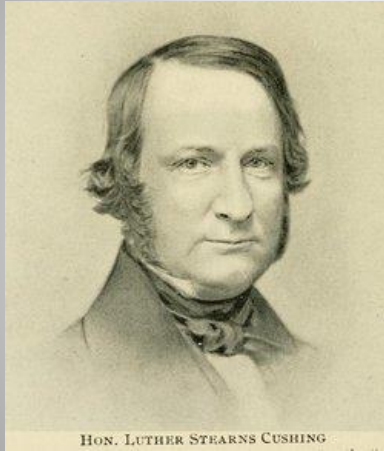
- 1801 - Manual of Parliamentary Practice

Thomas Jefferson



Continued Development

- 1845 – Manual of Parliamentary Practice



Continued Development



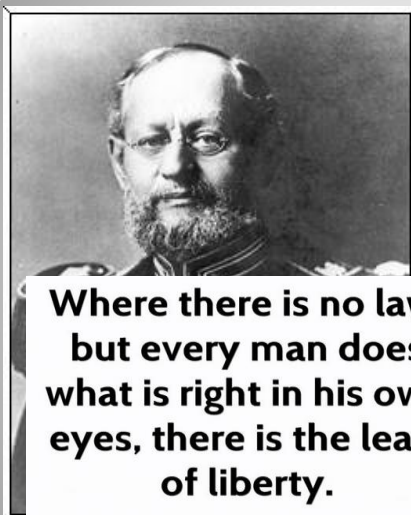
- Brigadier General, U.S. Army
- Chief of Engineers
- Buried at Arlington National Cemetery

Henry Martyn Robert (1837-1923)

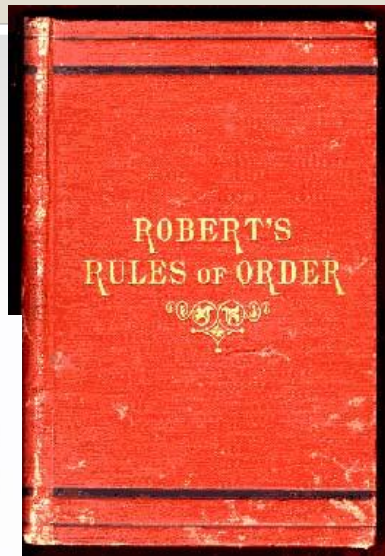


"My embarrassment was supreme. I plunged in, trusting to Providence that the assembly would behave itself. But with the plunge went the determination that I would never attend another meeting until I knew something of ... parliamentary law."

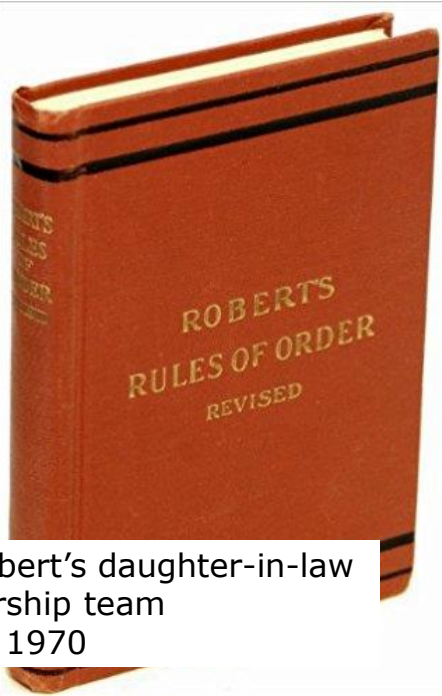
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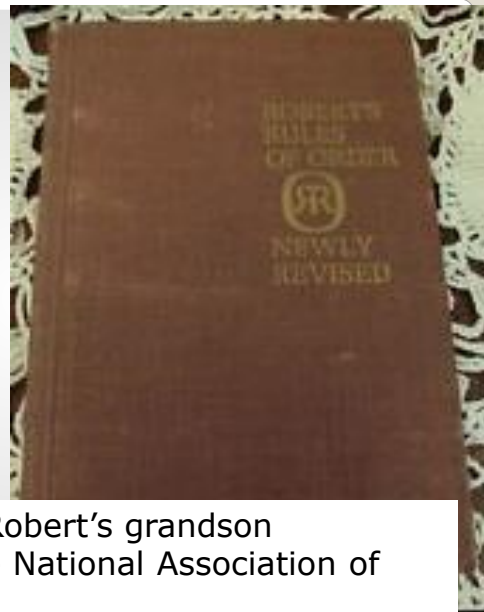
**Where there is no law,
but every man does
what is right in his own
eyes, there is the least
of liberty.**



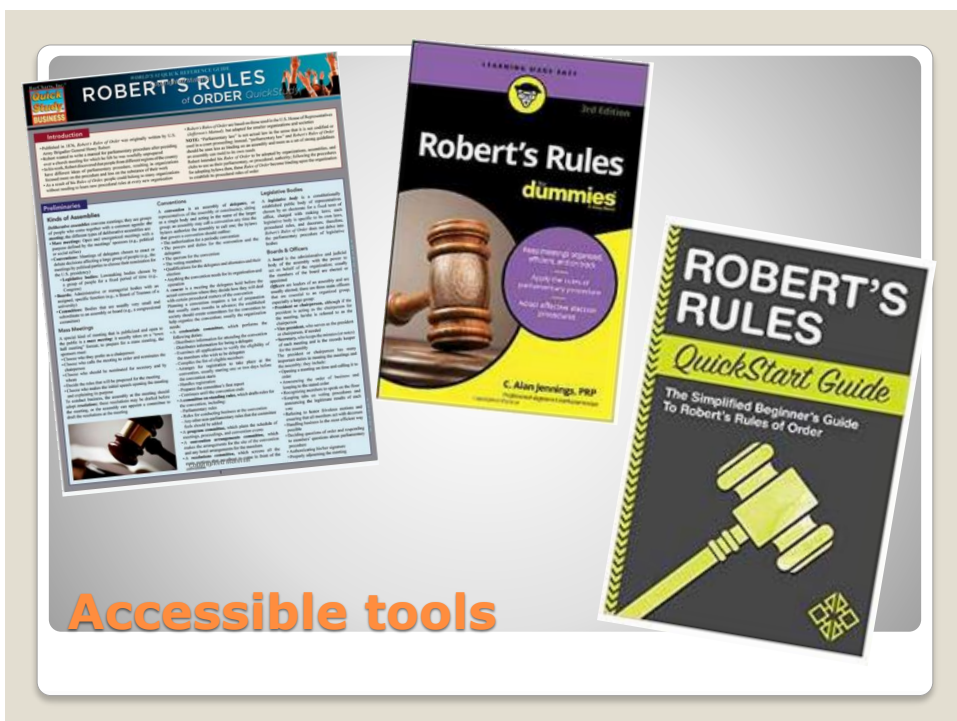
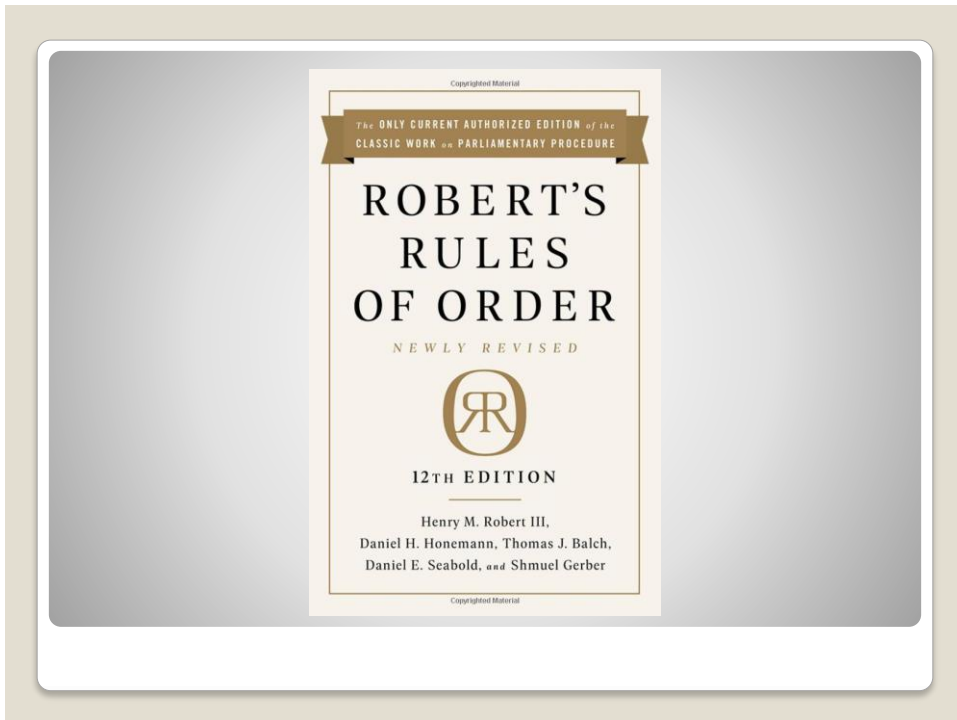
Robert's Rules of Order, 1874)



Sarah Corbin Robert, Robert's daughter-in-law
Trustee & head of authorship team
Most extensive revision, 1970



Henry M. Robert III, Robert's grandson
Parliamentarian of the National Association of
Parliamentarians



- Guard against the tyranny of the majority or the minority.
- Avoidance of “subject creep” and of abandonment of decisions needing to be made.
- Understand the fallacy of the vote of abstinence.

Aspects to know and appreciate

- Understand how parliamentary procedure works
- Know your own view – “What are you *really* after?”
- Know your opponent’s view – “What is he *really* after?”
- Be prepared to abide by the decision of the body

Tools for effective debate

- It can be used by the few (including the moderator) to manipulate and control the larger body prejudicially.
- It can be used positively to keep the body moderate, compassionate, and balanced.
- Bottom line: the heart is the only thing that controls the mouth (rf. Mt. 15:18)
- Precision should increase with the size of the room.

The limits of parliamentary procedure

