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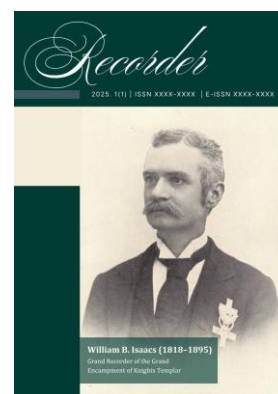
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Editor's Note

Dear reader,
 our journal is published in electronic and printed format.

A reader may wonder why our journal is called Recorder.

The answer is simple: within the Knights Templar Commanderies, the officer known as the Recorder — or the Secretary in Masonic lodges — has traditionally been responsible for maintaining all documentation: from records of membership to official correspondence.

In many cases, Recorders also authored historical or scholarly works about their Commanderies. Thus, the Recorder was not only an administrative officer but also a kind of chronicler and historian, preserving the institutional memory of the Order.

In this same spirit, our Recorder serves as a modern chronicler, dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Freemasonry and the Knights Templar.

Recorder is our attempt to look at the history of Freemasonry (York Rite) through the eyes of a wider audience. This is a historical journal that bridges academic research with accessible storytelling — bringing to light ideas, symbols, and people that have shaped the Masonic world across centuries.

Many of the materials featured in this issue were originally published in specialized academic journals and, for understandable reasons, have remained outside the reach of general readers. We have reworked these studies, preserving their scholarly foundation while removing the excessive scientific apparatus and references. At the same

time, each article includes a reference to its original publication, allowing interested readers to consult the full version when needed.

The research featured in this first issue was prepared by scholars of Cherkas Global University, ensuring that no conflict of interest exists between authors and publisher.

The studies draw upon the resources of The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, established on August 1, 2024, in Houston, as well as the university's fundamental library, which holds a remarkable collection of rare books on the history of Freemasonry.

The title Recorder was chosen with purpose. In the Order of Knights Templar, the Recorder is the keeper of knowledge — the one who preserves memory and chronicles events. Our journal seeks to fulfill a similar role: to safeguard historical understanding while presenting it in a form that inspires curiosity and engagement.

The first issue includes the following sections: Anniversaries, In Memoriam, Articles, Uniform (Exhibitions) and Leafing Through Antique Books. In the future, the structure of the journal may expand, reflecting the growing interests of our readers.

Recorder is published four times a year—March, June, September, and December. We invite researchers, collectors, and all those fascinated by the history of Freemasonry to collaborate with us. We hope this journal will find its readers — thoughtful, inquisitive, and passionate about history.

Editor in Chief

Dr. Alexander C. Cherkas

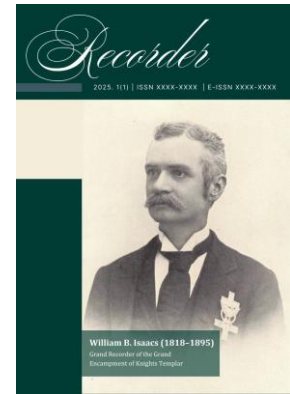
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Anniversaries

Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of Washington Commandery No. 1 (Washington, D.C.)

Natalia A. Shevchenko

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This text presents a concise historical overview of Washington Commandery No. 1, founded on January 14, 1825, in the nation's capital and destined to become one of the most distinguished Knights Templar bodies in the United States. By 1855, it was the largest Commandery in the country, with 104 swords. Notable figures included Benjamin B. French, the 6th Grand Master of the Grand Encampment, and Recorder William J. Rhees. In 1895, under Eminent Commander Edward Mahl, the Commandery participated in the Boston Triennial Conclave parade. Today, Washington Commandery No. 1 remains active, preserving nearly two centuries of Masonic and Templar tradition.

Keywords: Washington Commandery No. 1, Washington, D.C., Knights Templar, history, Anniversary, 1825–2025.

On January 14, 1825, Washington Commandery No. 1 was established in the nation's capital, becoming one of the earliest and later one of the most prominent Knights Templar Commanderies in the United States.

By 1855, the Commandery counted 104 swords, making it the largest Templar body in the country at that time.

Among its distinguished members was Benjamin B. French (1800–1870), the 6th Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in the USA.

During the mid-1850s, the Recorder was William J. Rhees.

In 1895, the Eminent Commander was Edward Mahl. That same year, Washington Commandery No. 1 took part in the grand parade at the Triennial Conclave in Boston (1895) (Fig. 1).

A photograph of the organization's badge from that period is also presented.

Today, Washington Commandery No. 1 continues to exist, preserving two centuries of Masonic and Templar heritage in the heart of Washington, D.C.





Fig. 1. Washington Commandery No. 1
took part in the grand parade at the Triennial Conclave in Boston. 1895

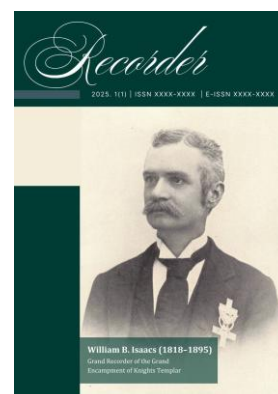
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*In Memoriam*

William B. Isaacs (1818–1895) Grand Recorder of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar

Violetta S. Molchanova

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This article examines the life and service of William B. Isaacs, the ninth Grand Recorder of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in the United States. Born in Connecticut in 1818 and later residing in Richmond, he became a prominent member of Richmond Commandery No. 2. Elected Grand Recorder in 1886, Isaacs was repeatedly re-elected, reflecting the unique continuity traditionally associated with the offices of Grand Recorder and Grand Treasurer. He served until his death in 1895, after which his son, William B. Isaacs Jr., temporarily assumed the role. The study highlights their contribution to the administrative stability of the American Templar Order.

Keywords: William B. Isaacs (1818–1895), Richmond Commandery No. 2 (Richmond, Va.), Knights Templar, Biography, Grand Recorder of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar.

William B. Isaacs was born on April 10, 1818, in Norwalk, Connecticut, and moved to Richmond in 1845.

He was a member of Richmond Commandery No. 2 (Richmond, Va.).

In 1886, he was elected Grand Recorder of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar (Fig. 1) at the XXIII Triennial Conclave, and was re-elected to this position at the Conclaves of 1889 and 1892.

After the establishment of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in 1816, William B. Isaacs became the 9th Grand Recorder of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar. Before him, the office was held by John James Loring (1816–1826), Oliver M. Lowndes (1826–1829), James Herring (1829–1835), Charles Gilman (1835–1850), Benjamin B. French (1850–1859),

Samuel G. Risk (1859–1862), John D. Galdwell (1862–1871), and Theodore S. Parvin (1871–1876).

It is also important to clarify that, among all officer positions in the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, repeated re-election of the same individual was considered normal only for two offices — Grand Treasurer and Grand Recorder. For other officer positions, such repeated service was not standard practice but rather an exception.

However, returning to William B. Isaacs — he held this office until his death on June 9, 1895.

Interestingly, just a few days later, on June 12, 1895, his son William B. Isaacs Jr. was appointed Acting Grand Recorder of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, a position he held until the next Triennial Conclave, which took place on August 26–31, 1895.



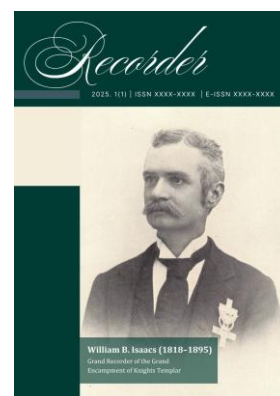
Fig. 1. Sir Knight William B. Isaacs.

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Articles

Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908) in the Museum Collection of Cherkas Global University

Alexander C. Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This work is focused on the representation of Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908) in the museum collection of Cherkas Global University. The materials for this study included the items of material culture (a sword and badges) of the Masonic Order of the Knights Templar which are in Cherkas Global University's collection. Methodologically, use was made of the biographical method, to create a general biographical sketch of the life of F.S. Rogers, and of the historical reconstruction method, to produce a detailed portraiture of the outfit of an officer of Monroe Commandery No. 12 as of 1900. The study's findings revealed that one of the items of material culture left behind by F.S. Rogers (1847–1908) is the sword (individual No. 007/KT005) currently housed in the museum collection of Cherkas Global University. This sword was manufactured circa the 1880s in his city of residence – Rochester, New York. The study established that the sword's owner was a member of Monroe Commandery No. 12, Knights Templar, stationed at Rochester, New York, and was a Knight at the time of the sword's manufacture. In 1899, F.S. Rogers was elected to the post of Eminent Commander of Monroe Commandery No. 12. He was appointed to the post of Past Eminent Commander in 1900.

Keywords: Frederick Stiles Rogers (1847–1908), biography, Monroe Commandery No. 12, sources of private origin, museum, Cherkas Global University.

Historians can often get hold of various items of material culture – from materials of private origin (e.g., letters and personal effects) to interior items. All such items of material culture require attribution and conducting a search to produce the most complete picture of the emergence of the source. In other words, additional details and supporting information may be needed for something that is seemingly nondescript to qualify as an object with a rich historical past. This paper considers a ceremonial Masonic sword from the

Order of the Knights Templar that used to belong to Frederick S. Rogers, an item of material culture that is currently in the museum collection of Cherkas Global University (individual No. 007/KT005).

In September 2024, the museum collection of Cherkas Global University was enriched by a sword that used to belong to a man named Frederick S. Rogers (individual No. 007/KT005) (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. F. S. Rogers's sword in the museum collection of Cherkas Global University (individual No. 007/KT005)

The sword has a length of 36 inches. Its blade is 28 inches long. It weighs 2.21 pounds. It belonged to a person of medium height. It is metal throughout, and its handle is made of ivory. The sword's color indicates that its owner was a

Knight, inasmuch as the Officers had gilt swords. The initials on the handle match the full name on the scabbard and on the blade, which is testimony to the sword's completeness as a unit (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Inscriptions on the sword's handle, blade, and scabbard

The piece has all the makings of a ceremonial sword. It is monogrammed, complete with traditional ornamentation and symbology – that

of the Masonic Order of the Knights Templar (Fig. 3).

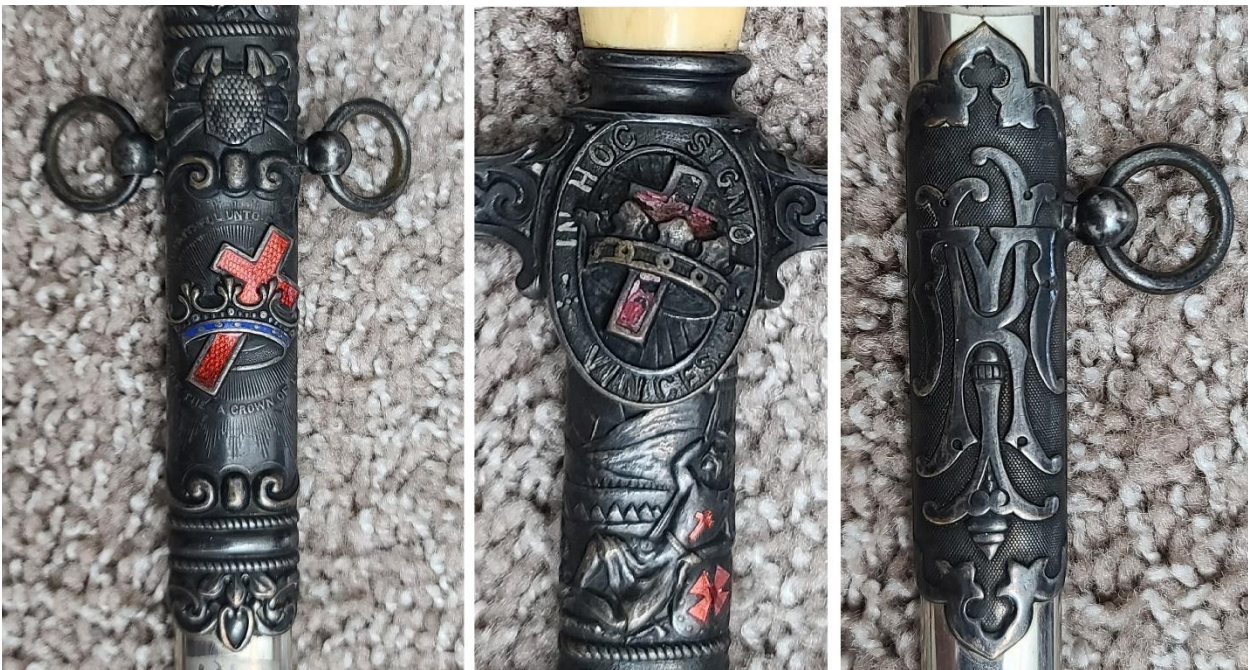


Fig. 3. Knights Templar ornamentation, symbology, and monogramming on the sword

These particularities combine to offer testimony to the fact that the sword belonged to a Knight Templar. What is more, the reverse of its

ivory handle bears a fairly rare emblem of the Commandery (Fig. 4), whereas most swords of this kind would have just a cross on the reverse.



Fig. 4. Emblem of Monroe Commandery No. 12

The emblem linked the sword to Monroe Commandery No. 12, with 'KT' standing for 'Knights Templar'. Inscribed on the band at the bottom of the emblem is information as to where

the Commandery was stationed – Rochester, New York. What is more, the name of that city also appears on the mark of the sword's manufacturer (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Mark of the sword's manufacturer – Loder MFG Co., Rochester, N.Y.

In other words, it was established where the Commandery was stationed and the sword's owner resided – the city of Rochester in the state of New York.

The historiography on this subject consists of specialized works on the history of Masonic weapons. Of particular note is 'The American Fraternal Sword' by Hamilton and colleagues, which covers a large number of swords used by various American Masonic orders, giving the reader an initial acquaintance with ceremonial weaponry. Of interest also is J. D. Hamilton's 'Swords of the Masonic Orders', which provides data regarding the number of members in the Order of the Knights Templar as of 1897. Another

work worthy of mention is M. L. Cummings's 'The Vintage Ceremonial Sword, Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree'.

Mention should also be made of the publication 'Fraternal Swords from the Collections of Jim Kaplan and Joe Marino: An Appreciation', which appeared in *Man at Arms* magazine.

Most valuable to this study was M. C. MacDonald's 'Fraternal Regalia I: Knights Templar', which is devoted to the actual Order of the Knights Templar and has, among other things, a large section on ceremonial swords.

A further search, conducted in the Library of Congress, yielded several books mentioning F. S. Rogers. The books contained the full name of the

sword's owner – Fred. S. Rogers, born in 1847, with the 'Fred.' being short for Frederick. The book on the city of Rochester's most famous residents contained the second name of the sword's owner as well – Stiles. Thus, the search

helped establish the full name of the sword's owner – Frederick Stiles Rogers. A search of the books helped retrieve three photographs (Fig. 6–8) and a biography of him.



Fig. 6. Photo of F. S. Rogers (Masonic Fair..., 1902: 17)



Fig. 7. Photo of F. S. Rogers (Notable men..., 1902: 321)



Fig. 8. Photo of F. S. Rogers (Peck, 1908: 761)

The biography of F. S. Rogers from W. F. Peck's 'History of Rochester and Monroe County, New York' is provided below, unabridged:

"FREDERICK S. ROGERS.

Frederick S. Rogers, secretary and treasurer of The John Siddons Company, conducting a roofing and sheet metal business of large proportions in Rochester, was born May 21, 1847, in the city which is yet his place of residence. He is of English lineage, his father, Henry T. Rogers, having been born in London. Emigrating to the United States in his youth, he came direct to Rochester and in his manhood attained considerable distinction as a prominent contractor and builder and as a man active and influential in the affairs of the city. He served as alderman of the third ward for many years and his official labor was of a character that promoted general progress and development, the city benefiting by his co-operation and his practical methods. He died in 1878, while his wife, who bore the maiden name of Eliza Stiles, and was also a native of England, passed away when her son Frederick was but four years of age.

As a student in a private school Frederick S. Rogers acquired his early education, which he continued in Myron G. Peck's school. When his textbooks were put aside he entered the employ of the Evening Express of Rochester, taking charge of the mailing department, where he continued for six years. He next became connected with Pollock & Weaver, hardware merchants, as bookkeeper, and after some years entered the employ of John Siddons as confidential clerk and bookkeeper in 1878. His business worth and capacity being proven, he was admitted to the firm and has since been active in the management of a business which has had a continuous existence in Rochester since 1852. It was established in that year by John Siddons and is the representative

house in roofing and sheet metal work, including all kinds of cornice work, ventilating systems and the manufacture of metallic burial caskets, together with the manufacture of boiler breeching and smoke stacks. In 1878 Mr. Siddons was joined by Charles and John O. Vogel. In 1889 the business was incorporated under the name of The John Siddons Company, with Mr. Siddons as president and treasurer; Charles Vogel, vice president; Frederick S. Rogers, secretary; and John O. Vogel, superintendent. The founder of the business, John Siddons, died in August, 1890, after a most active, successful and honorable career. At this time the following officers were chosen: Charles Vogel, president; John O. Vogel, vice president and superintendent; and Frederick S. Rogers, secretary and treasurer. At the death of John O. Vogel, in December, 1894, Mr. Rogers was elected vice president, secretary and treasurer. The last change in officers was made in 1903, when Charles Vogel was elected president; Frederick S. Rogers, secretary and treasurer; and Theodore J. Vogel, vice president and superintendent. The trustees are Charles Vogel, Frederick S. Rogers, Theodore J. Vogel and Louis C. Vogel, who own all the stock — fifty thousand dollars paid in full. The enterprise was at first located on Main street and removed to the present location in 1890, occupying a large building, which the company owns, at Nos. 61, 63 and 65 North Water street. Both steam and water power is used and employment is furnished to fifty men.

In 1872 Mr. Rogers was married to Miss Emma L. Bennett, a daughter of Stephen D. N. Bennett, for many years owner of the Bennett foundry. Unto Mr. and Mrs. Rogers were born three children, but one is now deceased and Mrs. Rogers died in 1899. The living son, Louis Charles, is now with his father in business. He was born

June 16, 1875, and was educated in the public schools and is regarded as an enterprising young business man. He belongs to Valley lodge, No. 109, F. & A. M., and of all branches of Masonry. The daughter, Mrs. Edmund M. Ailing, is also a resident of Rochester.

Mr. Rogers has attained high rank in Masonry, being a member of Valley lodge, No. 109, F. & A. M.; Hamilton chapter, No. 62, R. A. M., in which he has served as high priest and treasurer; Doric council, No. 19, R. & S. M.; Monroe commandery, No. 12, K. T., in which he has served as eminent commander; Rochester consistory, S. P. R. S.; Damascus Temple, A. A. O. N. M. S.; and Lalla Rookh Grotto Veiled Prophets. He has also served as treasurer of the Masonic

Club and belongs to the Order of Exempt Firemen. In politics he is a republican, giving support to the party on state and national questions, but often casts an independent ballot. He resides at No. 200 Adams street, where he is pleasantly situated in life. He has made a splendid record in Masonic circles, as a citizen and as a business man. Quiet and unassuming in manner, he nevertheless has a host of staunch friends who recognize and appreciate his genuine worth and admire him for what he has accomplished in the business world".

As evidenced by the above text, Frederick S. Rogers, born on May 12, 1847, held in the last quarter of the 19th century an executive position with a firm engaged in a profitable business – roofing (Fig. 9).

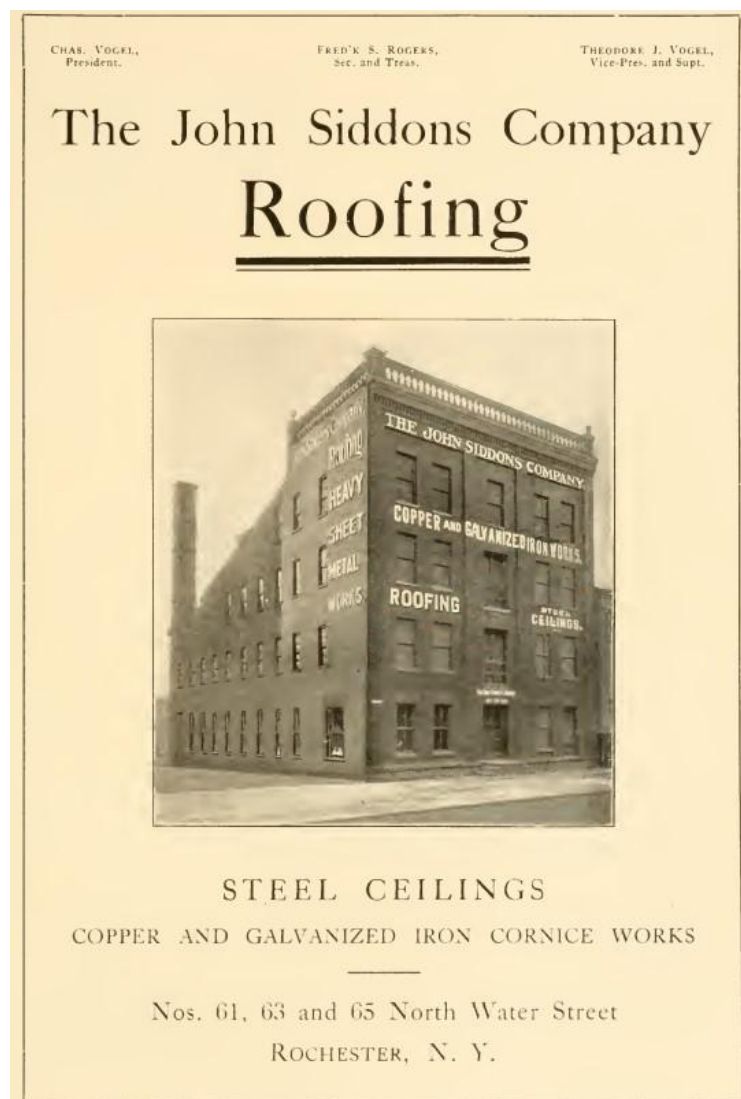


Fig. 9. Advertisement poster for The John Siddons Company, which F. S. Rogers worked for

Monroe Commandery No. 12, Knights Templar, stationed at Rochester, New York, was one of the oldest commanderies in that state. It was formed back on June 14, 1826. The anti-Masonic sentiment at the time led to the

temporary closure of Monroe Commandery in 1839. It resumed operation on January 28, 1848. The museum collection of Cherkas Global University houses a ribbon from Monroe Commandery No. 12 (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Ribbon from Monroe Commandery No. 12 in the Collection of Masonic Knights' Badges at Cherkas Global University. Exhibit No. 006

As far as Sir Frederick S. Rogers's service in Monroe Commandery No. 12, the above biographical sketch just mentions his stint there as Eminent Commander. Additional research helped establish that F. S. Rogers was appointed to the post of Eminent Commander at Monroe Commandery No. 12 in 1899 and that he took on the position of Past Commander there in 1900. Incidentally, based on data from J. D. Hamilton, by 1897 the Knights Templar numbered around 115,000 "swords", as they used to be referred to at the time.

Members of the Order of the Knights Templar often included not only adult males but their wives and children as well. For instance, Miss Alice H. Rogers, the wife of Sir Frederick S.

Rogers, is known to have served on one of Monroe Commandery's Committees in 1902, and his son, Louis C. Rogers, was one of its three Guards Officers (Fig. 11).

We are jumping ahead for a moment here, but it is worth noting that F. S. Rogers passed away in his 61st year on November 26, 1908. He was buried in Rochester, Monroe County, New York. This was reported in a piece published in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* newspaper on November 28, 1908. In 1909, the same newspaper carried a piece entitled 'Degrees Conferred at Masonic Reunion', in which F. S. Rogers, a 32nd-degree Mason, did appear on the list of deceased Masons.



Fig. 11. Knights Templar Guard Officer Jewel in the Collection of Masonic Knights' Badges at Cherkas Global University. Exhibit No. 005

In 1902, the *Masonic Fair Souvenir* booklet carried a photograph of the Officers of Monroe Commandery No. 12 in 1901 (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12. Officers of Monroe Commandery No. 12, Knights Templar, in 1901

No members of the Rogers family (neither the father nor the son) appear in it, inasmuch as the Commandery elected its officers on an annual basis. Nevertheless, Figure 12 can give one an idea of what kind of uniform was worn in Monroe Commandery No. 12 at the time. The use of the

historical reconstruction method helped provide the necessary source material for producing a portrait of Sir Frederick S. Rogers, with one eventually painted by artist Lyudmila N. Bogutskaya (born 1979) between September and October 2024 (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13. 2024 oil painting of Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908)
by Lyudmila N. Bogutskaya (born 1979)

The materials collected by Cherkas Global University were used to set up a stand for Sir Frederick S. Rogers in the museum (Fig. 14). The

stand can also be viewed online on the organization's Facebook page.



Fig. 14. Stand for Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908) in the museum at Cherkas Global University

One of the items of material culture left behind by F. S. Rogers (1847–1908) is the sword (individual No. 007/KT005) currently housed in the museum collection of Cherkas Global University. This sword was manufactured circa the 1880s in his city of residence – Rochester, New York. The study established that the sword's

owner was a member of Monroe Commandery No. 12, Knights Templar, stationed at Rochester, New York, and was a Knight at the time of the sword's manufacture. In 1899, F. S. Rogers was elected to the post of Eminent Commander of Monroe Commandery No. 12. He was appointed to the post of Past Eminent Commander in 1900.

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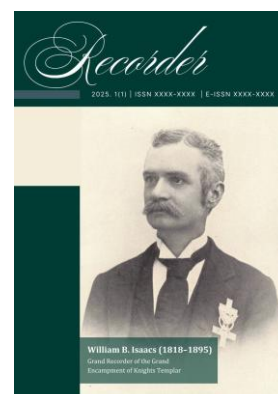
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A Few Fresh Strokes to the Biographical Portrait of Sir Albert A. Marden (1824–1919): Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of His Birth

Alexander Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This work was produced to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Albert A. Marden (1824–1919), an esteemed Mason.

Use was made of the following three groups of documents: 1) documents from the archive of Cherkas Global University (specifically, *Register of De Molay Commandery No. 26*); 2) personal documents from commercial databases; 3) periodical press materials. The study relied on a set of methods – most importantly, the biographical method and content analysis. The combined use of these methods helped extract meaningful insights from the vast amount of information and introduce several new biographical details respecting A. A. Marden.

The study's findings revealed the following two noteworthy facts:

1) A. A. Marden was a fairly unique figure among the Masons of the state of Minnesota. At the beginning of the 20th century, his number on the registry of the Grand Commandery of Minnesota was 645, and he is highly likely to have been one of the movement's oldest members not only in the state of Minnesota, but in all of the United States.

2) A. A. Marden joined Masonry at a mature age, at 40 years old, in 1864. From then on and all the way through to his death in 1919, he remained an active member of the Masonic movement. At different times he held several important posts in the Grand Lodge of Minnesota. He served continuously as Recorder of De Molay Commandery No. 26 from 1901 to 1919.

Keywords: Albert A. Marden (1824–1919), biography, Mason, Knight Templar, recorder, De Molay Commandery No. 26, New Ulm, Minnesota.

December 29, 2024, will mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Albert A. Marden (1824–1919). A brief biography of this esteemed Mason was presented in the form of an obituary

on December 10, 1919, right after his death, in the newspaper *New Ulm Review*. The obituary also contained the only available photo of him (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Albert A. Marden (1824–1919)

The present work commemorates the 200th anniversary of the birth of Albert A. Marden and seeks to add a few fresh strokes to his biographical portrait.

The materials for this study included documents from the archive of Cherkas Global University (Washington DC, USA) – more specifically, *Register of De Molay Commandery No. 26* (Fig. 2). This register was begun in 1901, at the time of the launch of De Molay Commandery No. 26, and was maintained up until 1955. Overall, the register spans the years 1901 to 1955

and lists 501 members of the Commandery. It contains the following personal data fields: Grand Commandery Registry Number, Commandery Registry Number, Names (Surname and Christian Name in Full), Age, Occupation, Born in State of, Lodge of which a Member, Royal Arch Charter of which a Member, Received Order of Red Cross, Received Order of Knight Templar, Joined (Affiliated by Dimit), Commandery Joined from (Last a Member of), Commandery Knighted in, Restored, Withdrawn (Demitted), Stricken from Roll, Suspended, Expelled, and Died.

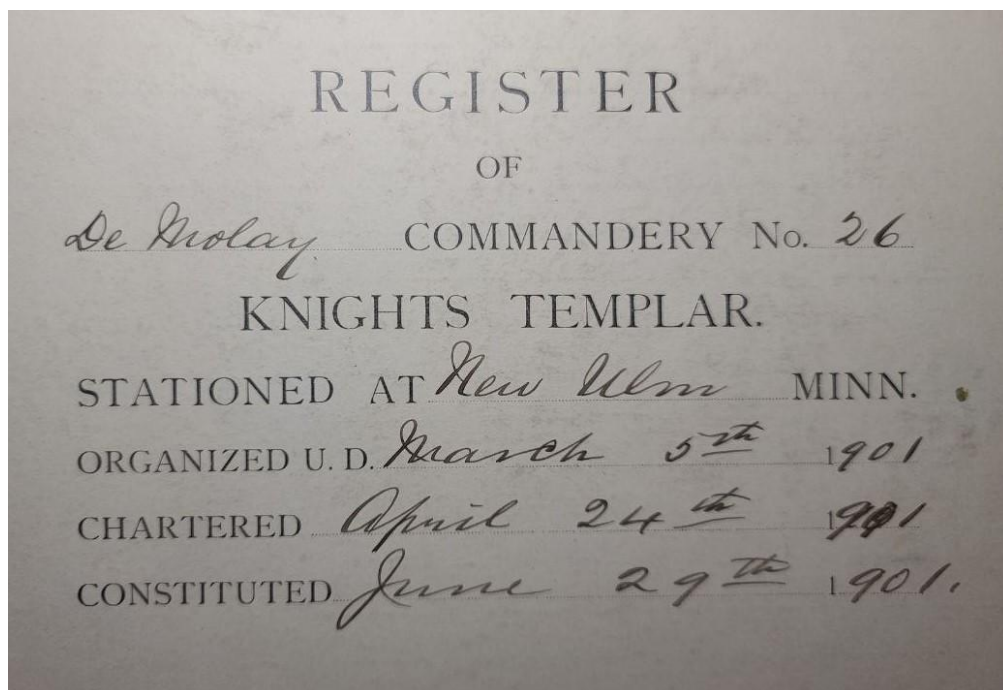


Fig. 2. Cover page of *Register of De Molay Commandery No. 26*

In addition, use was made of biographical information from the commercial database Ancestry.com and from the newspaper *New Ulm Review*, which carried an obituary of A. A. Marden on December 10, 1919.

The historiography on the subject is relatively thin. A. A. Marden is mentioned only in the book 'History of Brown County, Minnesota: Its People, Industries and Institutions'. However, it is fair to note that biographical works on members of the Masonic order of Knights Templar came out quite often between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the works produced in the late 19th century, of particular note are J. D. Richardson's 'Tennessee Templars: A Register of Names, with Biographical Sketches, of the Knights Templar of Tennessee, and Brief Histories of the Grand and Subordinate Commanderies' and E. T. Carson's 'A Historical Sketch of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States. Also, a Historical Sketch of the Formation of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States in 1816'. Among the works that came out in the period between the early and middle 1900s, worthy of special mention are G. A. Lawrence's 'Sir Knight Lee Stewart Smith, Most Eminent Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America, 1916-1919' and 'Eugene F. Falconnet, Soldier, Engineer, Inventor' by H. L. Swint and D. E. Mohler. Historical research on the topic has been conducted in the 21st century too.

The biography of A. A. Marden published in the newspaper *New Ulm Review* over 100 years ago, in 1919, is provided below, unabridged:

"Dr. Albert A. Marden, pioneer dentist and this city's oldest inhabitant, is no more. Death ensued at a local hospital Friday night, where Dr. Marden had received treatment for about a week, and was caused by neuralgia of the heart. He had been ailing for about one month, and owing to his advanced age, no hope was held out for his recovery, although all that medical skill and devoted attention could do, was done to alleviate the aged patient's suffering.

Dr. Marden was born in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, December 29, 1824. At the age of only five years he was bereft of a father's protection and his mother was left to care for six children. He attended school in the good old days, when the boys had to build the fires and the girls swept the school room. There were no stoves in the school house, where he secured his youthful education – only a huge brick fireplace, large enough to burn logs three feet long. Goose quills were used for pens and writing ink was made by boiling maple bark with copperas.

At the age of 12 deceased was apprenticed to a baker, working at this trade for three years, when the firm by whom he was employed, went out of business, whereupon he turned his energies to the

shoemaker's trade. In March, 1843, in company with an older brother, who was a millwright, he went to Orono, Maine, but did not take to this kind of work readily, and for seven summers he was engaged in driving and rafting logs. During the winters he cooked for logging camps. Becoming afflicted with rheumatism, the young man was forced to give up this activity, whereupon he opened a drug store and studied dentistry.

Deceased left Orono, Maine, August 27, 1866, and arrived at St. Joseph, Mo., September 1. It was his intention to go to Pike's Peak and hunt for gold, but becoming discouraged, wended his way to St. Paul on the old steamer "War Eagle," landing in the Saintly City, October 1. From St. Paul he traveled east, west, north and south for two years, working at his chosen profession, as all the dentists were doing at that time.

April 10, 1868, he came to New Ulm, and this city became his permanent home until the end of his earthly career. For a great number of years he was the only dentist in this city and vicinity and enjoyed a large and lucrative practice. He was not given to worry very much and never attempted to accumulate wealth. He retained his mental faculties in a remarkable degree until the end and up to the time of his last illness he was well preserved physically as most men are when they arrive at three score years and ten. His philosophy of life was: 'If I can live to make one pale face brighter; to give a second lustre to a tear-dimmed eye; to impart one throb of comfort to an aching heart, or cheer some wayworn soul in passing by; if I can lend a strong hand to the fallen, or defend the right against a single envious strain, my life, though bare of much that seems so dear and fair to us on earth will not, have been in vain.

Dr. Marden entered the Masonic fraternity in 1864, when he became a member of Mechanics' Lodge No. 66, Orono, Maine. He was made a Royal Arch Mason at St. Peter, August 27, 1873, was Knighted at Mankato, April 18, 1874, was made a Scottish Rite Mason, 32nd degree, at Sleepy Eye, October 7, 1893, and entered the Mystic Shrine at Zuhrah Temple, Minneapolis, October 10, 1902. In January of the same year he was elected a member of the Masonic Veteran Association at St. Paul. January 14, 1885 he was elected Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, and in 1893 he was appointed representative of the Grand Lodge in the state of Nevada, a position he occupied up to the time of his demise.

Deceased was the first Master of Charity Lodge No. 98, A.F. & A.M., of this city and served in that capacity for 21 years. He was a charter member of New Ulm Charter No. 57, Royal Arch Masons, as well as of De Molay Commandery No. 26, and was recorder of the latter organization from the date of its inception until his death.

He needs no slab of marble, with its white and
ghastly head,
To tell travelers in the Valley the virtues of the
dead.
Let the lily be his tombstone, and the dew-drops
pure and bright
The epitaph that angels write in the stillness of the
night.”.

As we can see, while relatively brief, the above account of the life of A. A. Marden is fairly detailed. It, however, says little to nothing about his family. The present paper attempted to fill this gap in the literature.

To this end, use was made of the commercial database Ancestry.com. According to that source, in 1846 Albert A. Marden married Abbie Marden in the city of Bangor, Maine. In 1860, he resided in the town of Orono, Maine. At that time, the couple was raising three sons: Winfield – 12, Fred – 9, and Charles – 2 years old. One of the possible reasons A. A. Marden’s family members were not listed in the aforementioned biography is that as the head of that family he survived not only his wife but all his sons too. There is also a photo of the monument to A. A. Marden, which is Masonic in style (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Monument to Albert A. Marden

The Masonic symbol on the monument indicates that the deceased was a 32nd-degree Mason.

In addition, use was made of several biographical works dealing with New Ulm, Minnesota. These include ‘History of Brown County, Minnesota: Its People, Industries and Institutions’. The book contains some information on De Molay Commandery No. 26. It lists Albert Marden among the charter members of De Molay Commandery No. 26, organized in 1901, and states that he was its Recorder as at 1916. As a

reminder, as per the aforementioned biography of him, Albert Marden served continuously as Recorder from 1901 to 1919. A recorder is an officer whose job is to record proceedings, receive correspondence and petitions, and assist with agenda for the commandery he serves. Thus, it was established based on that information that *Register of De Molay Commandery No. 26* was maintained by Albert Marden personally.

Another valuable document employed in this study is *Register of De Molay Commandery No. 26*, which is part of the archive of Cherkas Global

University. According to this unique document, Albert Marden's number in De Molay Commandery No. 26 was 4, and in 1901 he was a fairly unique member of the Masonic order of Knights Templar, with his number on the registry of the Grand Commandery of Minnesota being 645. To put this into perspective, the next smallest number on the registry was 2713 (Fig. 4). According to that document, in 1901 Albert

Marden, born in New Hampshire, was 50 years old. He was a member of Charity Lodge No. 98. He received the Order of the Red Cross and the Order of Knight Templar on April 4, 1874. Prior to the establishment of De Molay Commandery No. 26, he was a member of Mankato Commandery No. 4. Albert Marden passed away on December 5, 1919.

94234—Pioneer Press Co., St. Paul, Minn.

Grand Command'y Registry No.	Com. Reg. No.	NAMES		Age	OCCUPATION	Born in State of
		Surname	Christian Name in Full			
+ 3246	1	Bobleter	Joseph	47	Banker	Austria
2716	2	Olsen	Ole M	39	Druggist	Norway
2713	3	Strickler	O	28	Physician	Can
645	4	Marden	Albert	50	Dentist	N.H.
2715	5	Crone	Theodore	27	Merchant	Minn.
+ 2949	6	Soot	Hayden R	33	Elevator	Nor
2950	7	Rothenburg	H R		Physician	N.Y.

Fig. 4. Personal data on members of De Molay Commandery No. 26

Of interest is the fact that in 1901 A. A. Marden wrote down his own age in *Register of De Molay Commandery No. 26* incorrectly – he was 77 at the time, not 50. He may have done so deliberately – possibly because he did not wish to be thought of as being too far removed from other members of De Molay Commandery No. 26, most of whom were much younger. Figure 4 gives us an idea of what A. A. Marden's handwriting was. It is also to be noted that sitting first on the list is Joseph Bobleter, an honored veteran of the Civil War and brigadier-general of the Minnesota National Guard. He was the very first Eminent Commander of De Molay Commandery No. 26.

Furthermore, according to the 1879 records of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota, Albert Marden was one of the two Secretaries at its 26th Annual Communication. Also, in 1879 Albert Marden was in charge of 7th District, which comprised the following lodges: Antiquity No. 91, Keystone No. 94, Charity No. 98, Sunset No. 109, Granite No. 117, Delta No. 119, and Walnut No. 136.

In the 1906 records of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota,

Albert Marden is listed under 'Past Junior Grand Wardens'. As a reminder, as per the aforementioned biography of him, in 1885 he held the post of Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota.

The study's findings revealed the following two noteworthy facts:

1) A. A. Marden was a fairly unique figure among the Masons of the state of Minnesota. At the beginning of the 20th century, his number on the registry of the Grand Commandery of Minnesota was 645, and he is highly likely to have been one of the movement's oldest members not only in the state of Minnesota, but in all of the United States.

2) A. A. Marden joined Masonry at a mature age, at 40 years old, in 1864. From then on and all the way through to his death in 1919, he remained an active member of the Masonic movement. At different times he held several important posts in the Grand Lodge of Minnesota. He served continuously as Recorder of De Molay Commandery No. 26 from 1901 to 1919.

Resurse: Cherkas, A. (2024). A Few Fresh Strokes to the Biographical Portrait of Sir Albert A. Marden (1824–1919): Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of His Birth. *History and Historians in the Context of the Time*. 33(1): 3–9.

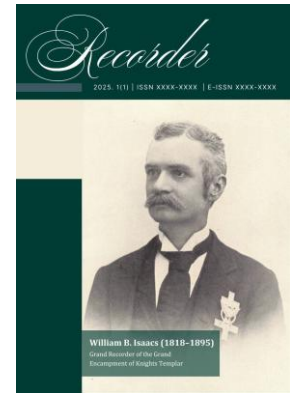
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The materials of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar serve as a statistical source for the number of Knights Templars in 1856

Konstantine V. Taran

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This article analyzes the earliest statistical records of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, first published at the 13th Conclave in 1856. Until that time, no official data on membership had been made available, although the organization at its founding in 1816 likely included no more than 300 members. The 1856 report introduced two tables detailing the size of both Grand Encampments and Subordinate Encampments, though several jurisdictions lacked complete numerical information. Using average membership indicators derived from documented Encampments, the study reconstructs missing data and provides corrected estimates. The total number of Knights Templar in 1856 is assessed at approximately 4,826 members. The article highlights inconsistencies in the original statistical summaries and offers a refined understanding of the organizational structure and demographic scale of the American Knights Templar in the mid-nineteenth century.

Keywords: Knights Templar, General Grand Encampment, membership statistics, 19th century Freemasonry, Commanderies, historical demographics, United States.

As is known, the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar was established in 1816. At that time, the organization consisted of seven Encampments and one Council, and the total number of their members, according to researchers, was no more than 300 people. For a long time, no statistical information was published about the size of the organization. The situation changed only in 1856 at the 13th conclave of the General Grand Encampment. This conclave was known for the fact that the Grand Encampment act Encampments, which were part of the organization, were renamed in Grand Commanderies and Commanderies. At the same conclave, the statistical information on the size of the General Grand Encampment was given for the first time.

This statistical data was consolidated into two tables: Table of Grand Encampments Under the Jurisdiction of the General Grand Encampment of the United States and Table of Subordinate Encampments Under the Jurisdiction of the General Grand Encampment of the United States. The total number of Templars was estimated at 4,710, of which 2,744 in the Grand Encampments;

1,366 in the Subordinate Encampments and 600 unaccounted for.

The first table listed eleven Grand Encampments, specifically: Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, Vermont, Connecticut, New York, Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Texas. It provided details on the number of Encampments and knights in each. The highest number of Encampments was in New York, with 20. This was followed by Ohio and Pennsylvania, with 13 and 12 Encampments, respectively. The most populous Encampments were in Ohio, averaging 50 knights per Encampment. In contrast, the least populous Encampments were in Kentucky, averaging only 20 knights per Encampment.

According to this table, there were 95 Encampments in 11 Grand Encampments, and the number of knights, according to incomplete information, was 2,744 people. It is important to note that the table provided the number of Encampments for Maine (3) and Massachusetts and Rhode Island (9) but did not include the number of knights in these states. To estimate the approximate number of knights in these

Encampments, we used statistical data from the remaining 83 Encampments, which accounted for 2,744 knights. This has allowed us to find the average value per Encampment – 33 people. Based on this average, the estimated number of knights in Maine was approximately 99, while Massachusetts and Rhode Island likely had about 297 knights. As a result, the most accurate estimate for the total number of Knights Templar in the 11 Grand Encampments was approximately 3,140 knights.

Now let us examine the second table (*Table of Subordinate Encampments*). This table lists individual Encampments that, as of 1856, had not yet been organized into Grand Encampments. The list includes 42 Subordinate Encampments, but the number of knights is not specified for 8 of them. In the remaining 34 Subordinate Encampments, the number of knights ranged from 9 (Palestine No. 2) to 104 (Washington No. 1), with a total of 1,366 knights. The average number of knights per Encampment was 40. Using this average, we can estimate the number of knights in the 8 Subordinate Encampments (with unknown membership) at approximately 320.

Thus, the total number of knights across all 42 Subordinate Encampments was approximately 1,686.

In total, 716 individuals (99 from Maine, 297 from Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and 320 from the 8 Subordinate Encampments) were unaccounted for in the first and second tables. However, at the end of the second table, the General Grand Recorder estimated that 600 individuals were unaccounted for across both tables. Since no explanation or calculation method for this figure of 600 was provided, we deemed it possible to use statistical indicators to clarify this estimate.

Thus, the total number of Knights Templar in 1856, as recorded in official documents, was likely underestimated rather than overestimated. In our view, the following data were the most likely: the eleven Grand Encampments included 3,140 knights, while the 42 Subordinate Encampments comprised 1,686 knights, bringing the total membership of the organization to 4,826 knights.

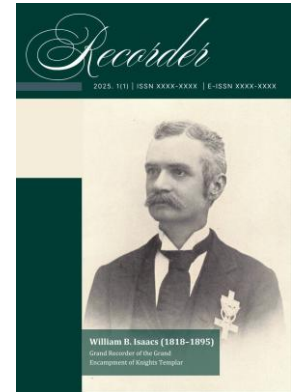
The author extends gratitude to the management of *The George Washington Masonic National Memorial* for kindly providing access to their resources.

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Periodical Publications on the History of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar

Anvar M. Mamadaliev

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This article explores the development of the printed heritage of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar in the United States. Beginning shortly after the establishment of the General Grand Encampment in 1816, official publications became central to documenting the Order's activities. Early reports were brief, but by 1835 the first volume of the Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment initiated a continuous documentary tradition. State-level Grand Encampments also issued annual proceedings, enriching the organizational record. By the late nineteenth century, souvenir photo albums of Triennial Conclaves emerged, providing unique visual insights. Together, these materials form a valuable historical resource on American Templar culture.

Keywords: Knights Templar, Masonic history, printed heritage, Triennial Conclaves, proceedings, American Freemasonry.

The history of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar in the United States is closely intertwined with its printed legacy. The first official publications appeared soon after 1816, when several independent Templar bodies united to form the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA.

These reports became the cornerstone of the Order's documentary tradition. The General Grand Encampment met every three years at gatherings known as Triennial Conclaves, during which officers were elected and current affairs discussed.

The proceedings of these meetings were recorded, and in the early years consisted of only a few pages. However, following the Sixth Triennial Conclave in 1835, the first volume titled "Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the USA" was published — marking the beginning of continuous documentation.

The General Grand Encampment included Grand Encampments (after 1856 — Grand Commanderies) of individual states. These met annually, producing their own reports, issued as "Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the State of..."

The earliest publication in our library is the "Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the State of Ohio", printed in 1844 (Third Annual Session).

In addition to these official records, by the late 19th century souvenir photo albums of the Triennial Conclaves began to appear. Today, these beautifully produced volumes are not only rare bibliographic treasures but also invaluable visual sources reflecting the life and culture of the Knights Templar in America.

This post is illustrated with photographs from our library collection.



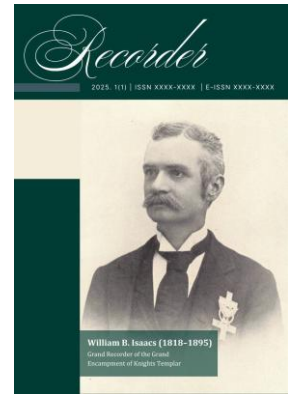


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Knights Templar of Texas, 1901

Anvar M. Mamadaliev

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This article examines the development and structure of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar in Texas at the beginning of the 20th century. Using statistical data from 1901, it highlights the organization's steady expansion, which included 32 Commanderies with a combined membership of 2,270. The study outlines the historical origins of the oldest Commanderies—San Felipe de Austin No. 1, Ruthven No. 2, and Palestine No. 3—and identifies the largest Commanderies by membership. Special attention is given to John Carson Kidd, Grand Recorder of Texas in 1901, whose leadership reflects the strong Masonic traditions shaping Templar life in the state.

Keywords: knights Templar, Texas Freemasonry, Commanderies, membership growth, John Carson Kidd, early 20th century.

At the dawn of the 20th century, the Masonic Order of Knights Templar in Texas was a well-established and rapidly growing organization.

In 1901, the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Texas consisted of 32 Commanderies with a total of 2,270 swords — an average of 71 members per Commandery.

The oldest Commanderies were:

San Felipe de Austin Commandery No. 1, founded in 1835 in Galveston,

Ruthven Commandery No. 2, founded in 1848 in Houston,

Palestine Commandery No. 3, founded in 1855 in Palestine, Texas.

In 1901, the three largest Commanderies by membership were:

1. Colorado Commandery No. 4 — 203 members,

2. Worth Commandery No. 16 — 154 members,

3. Ruthven Commandery No. 2 — 115 members.

During that year, the Grand Recorder of Texas was John Carson Kidd (1845–1945) (Fig. 1) — a distinguished Mason, and Past Commander and Treasurer of Ruthven Commandery No. 2.

These figures vividly illustrate the strength and expansion of the Knights Templar in Texas at the beginning of the 20th century — a period when the ideals of the Order were firmly rooted in Masonic life across the state.



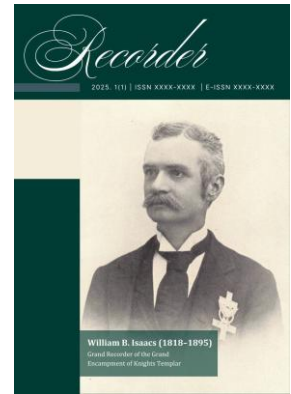
Fig. 1. Sir Knight John Carson Kidd (1845–1945)

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Uniform (Exhibitions)

Museum of Cherkas Global University Today

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This section highlights several exhibitions organized by The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, founded on August 1, 2024. From its inception, the museum began forming four core collections: swords; uniforms such as coats, aprons, belts, and sashes; badges, ribbons, and jewels; and photographic materials, including portraits, group photos, and promotional items produced by Templar commanderies across the United States. These exhibitions showcase rare artifacts and visual sources that reflect the traditions, symbolism, and evolution of the American Knights Templar. As of August 2025, the museum's holdings had grown to approximately 600 cataloged items.

Keywords: Knights Templar, museum collections, uniforms, swords, badges, photographs, exhibition.

This section presents a selection of exhibitions held by The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar. The museum was established on August 1, 2024, and at that time, four main collections began to take shape:

The Sword Collection;

The Uniform Collection (coats, aprons, belts, and sashes);

The Badge Collection (badges, badge pins, ribbons, and jewels);

The Photo Collection (portrait and group photographs of members of the Knights Templar, as well as promotional materials produced by Knights Templar commanderies in the United States, including souvenir postcards).

The motto of the museum is — *Ad perpetuam rei memoriam* ("In eternal memory of the event"). The museum has its own logo (Fig. 1).

As of August 2025, the museum's holdings comprised approximately 600 items.



Ad perpetuam rei memoriam

Fig. 1. The Museum's Logo

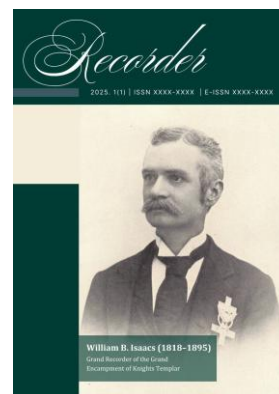
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Everyday kepis of the Commanderies from the Grand Commandery of New York, KT – Exposition No. 006 (Nov. 18, 2024)

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This section presents a set of early 20th-century everyday kepis worn by members of several Commanderies of the Grand Commandery of New York, Knights Templar. Displayed in Exhibition No. 006, the collection includes five original caps from Genesee Commandery No. 10, Salem Town Commandery No. 16, King Edward Commandery No. 24, Hudson River Commandery No. 35, and Delaware Commandery No. 44. These kepis represent an important element of the organizational and visual culture of the Knights Templar in New York State. Today, such headdresses are considered historical rarities, offering valuable insight into the material heritage of American Templar Masonry.

Keywords: Knights Templar, New York Commanderies, kepis, early 20th century, Masonic regalia, historical artifacts, Grand Commandery of New York.

Everyday kepis of the Commanderies from the Grand Commandery of New York of Knights Templar in the early 20th century.

At exposition No. 006, there are presented five hats (everyday caps) from the following Knights Templar commanderies of New York State.

The kepis belonged to the knights of the following commanderies:

Genesee Commandery No. 10,
 Salem Town Commandery No. 16,
 King Edward Commandery No. 24,
 Hudson River Commandery No. 35,
 and Delaware Commandery No. 44.

Today these headdresses are a historical rarity.



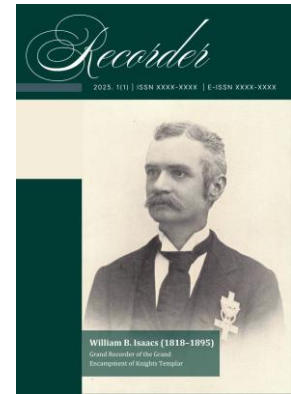


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Knights Templar in Regulation Fatigue Coats – Exposition No. 009 (Jan. 25, 2025)

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. Exposition No. 009, presented on January 25, 2025, showcases ceremonial uniforms of the American Knights Templar from the early 20th century. The display features regulation fatigue coats, a style officially approved by the Order during that period. The exhibition includes two fully dressed Sir Knights—one from Genesee Valley Commandery No. 15 (Flint, Michigan) and another from Gogebic Commandery No. 46 (Gogebic, Michigan). Between them is presented the historic flag of the Knights Templar, adopted in the late 19th century. Together, these artifacts illustrate the evolution, symbolism, and visual identity of Templar ceremonial attire in the United States.

Keywords: Knights Templar, ceremonial uniform, Michigan commanderies, early 20th century, museum exhibition, Masonic history, Grand Commandery of Michigan.

On January 25, 2025, Exposition No. 009 was presented at the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar.

Ceremonial Uniform of Knights Templar (early 20th century). Knights Templar in regulation fatigue coats, this uniform was approved in the Masonic order in the early 20th century.

From left to right:

Sir Knight of Genesee Valley Commandery No. 15 (Flint, Michigan);

The flag of the Order of Knights Templar approved in the late 19th century;

Sir Knight of Gogebic Commandery No. 46 (Gogebic, Michigan).



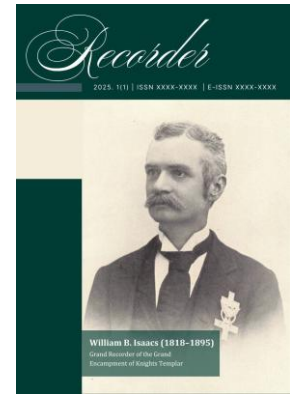


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Uniform of DeMolay Commandery No. 4 – Exposition No. 011 (Feb. 2, 2025)

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. Exposition No. 011, presented on February 2, 2025, highlights the rich heritage of DeMolay Commandery No. 4, founded in Lynchburg, Virginia, on November 30, 1826. As the Commandery approaches its 200th anniversary in 2026, the exhibit focuses on its distinctive uniform traditions that emerged during the late 19th century, a period of active development in American Masonry. The showcased uniform includes a knight's apron and a dress coat marked "4 VA," identifying the wearer as a member of Commandery No. 4 of Virginia. The exposition emphasizes the continuity, symbolism, and historical significance of Templar regalia within one of the oldest commanderies in the United States.

Keywords: DeMolay Commandery No. 4, Knights Templar, Masonic history, Templar uniform, Virginia Masonry, 19th-century regalia, museum exhibition, Grand Commandery of Virginia.

On February 2, 2025, Exposition No. 011 was presented at the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar.

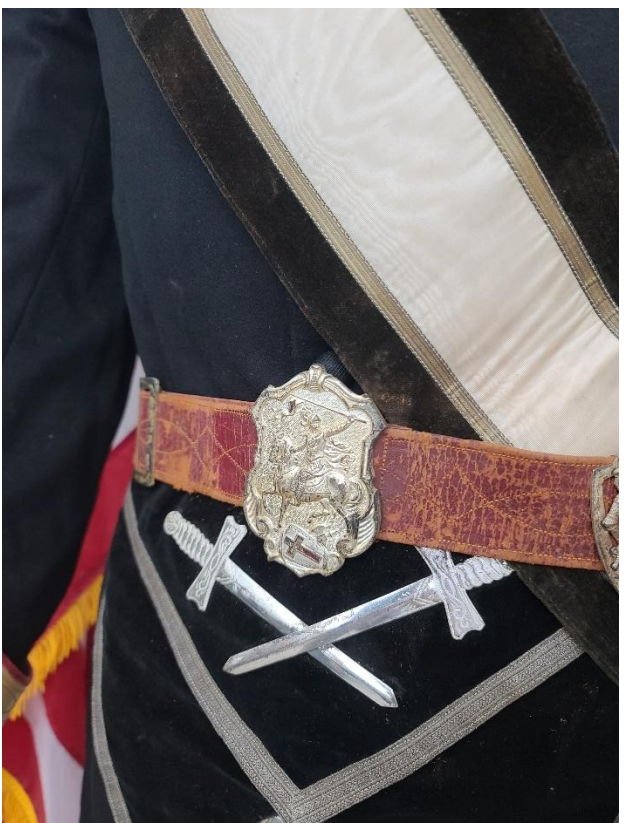
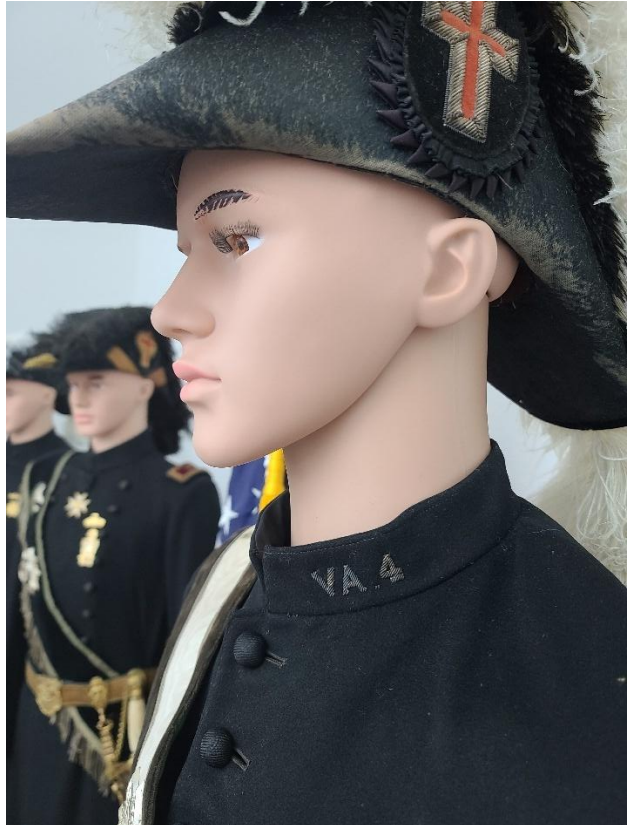
On November 30, 1826, DeMolay Commandery No. 4 was founded in Lynchburg, Virginia, and next (2026) year it will celebrate its 200th anniversary.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, as the Masonic movement developed, DeMolay

Commandery No. 4 established its own uniform distinctions by statute.

The exposition features the uniform of a knight from DeMolay Commandery No. 4 with a knight's apron. The dress coat bears the inscription "4 VA", which stands for "Commandery No. 4 Virginia."





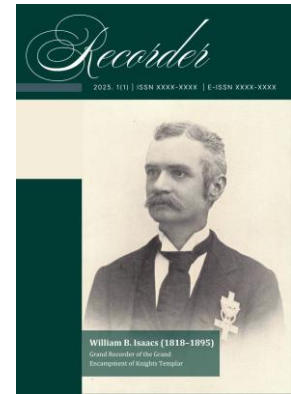




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Uniform of St. Omer Commandery No. 12 – Exposition No. 014 (Feb. 22, 2025)

Airin Cherkas

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Abstract. Exposition No. 014, presented on February 22, 2025, highlights the heritage of St. Omer Commandery No. 12, founded on May 6, 1874, in Waterville, Maine. As the Masonic movement expanded in the late 19th century, the Commandery introduced distinct uniform regulations that reflected its identity and traditions. The exhibit showcases a ceremonial uniform of a knight of St. Omer Commandery No. 12, complete with a knight's apron. The dress coat features the inscription "St. Omer 12," denoting the Commandery's official designation. This exposition demonstrates the evolution of Templar attire and preserves the visual legacy of Maine's Masonic history.

Keywords: St. Omer Commandery No. 12, Knights Templar, Masonic uniforms, Maine Masonic history, 19th century, ceremonial attire, museum exposition, Grand Commandery of Maine.

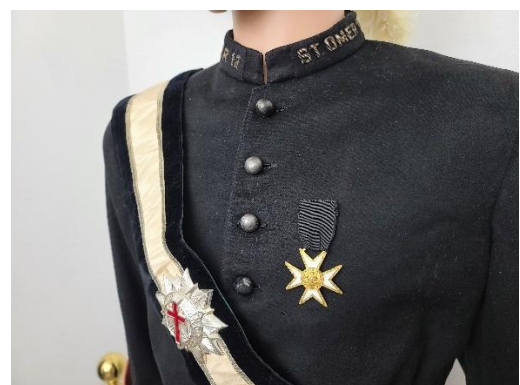
On February 22, 2025, Exposition No. 014 was presented at the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar.

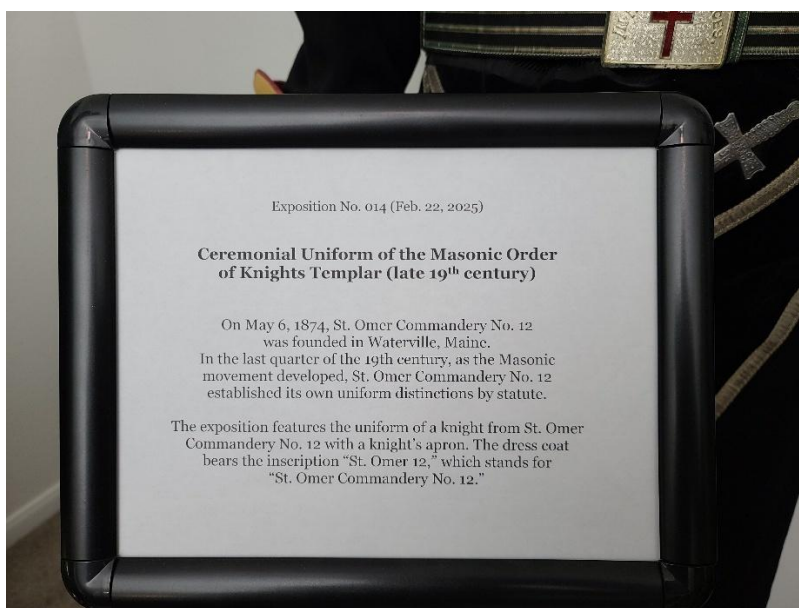
On May 6, 1874, St. Omer Commandery No. 12 was founded in Waterville, Maine.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, as the Masonic movement developed, St. Omer

Commandery No. 12 established its own uniform distinctions by statute.

The exposition features the uniform of a knight from St. Omer Commandery No. 12 with a knight's apron. The dress coat bears the inscription "St. Omer 12," which stands for "St. Omer Commandery No. 12."





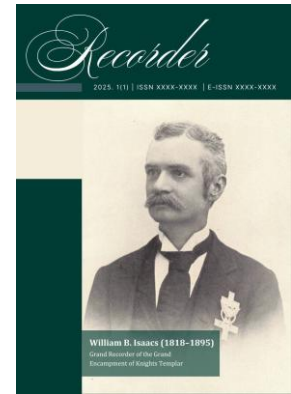
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A group of Knights Templar – Exposition No. 016 (Feb. 26, 2025)

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Abstract. Exposition No. 016 presents a historical photograph depicting Knights Templar from several commanderies assembled in full ceremonial formation. The knights are dressed in characteristic white uniforms, with the upper row composed of knights and the lower row of officers. The American flag is displayed on the left, and the commandery flag on the right, emphasizing both national and organizational identity. Such group photographs were widely circulated throughout the Masonic Order of Knights Templar in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, serving as important visual records of organizational structure, ceremonial practices, and fraternal culture during this period.

Keywords: Knights Templar, ceremonial uniforms, commanderies, Masonic history, group photograph, 19th–20th century.

On February 26, 2025, Exposition No. 016 was presented at the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar.

A group of Knights Templar from various commanderies, dressed in white uniforms, standing in ceremonial formation. The upper row

consists of knights, while the lower row consists of officers. The American flag is positioned on the left, while the commandery flag is on the right.

Photographs of such formations were widely circulated within the Masonic Order of Knights Templar in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.







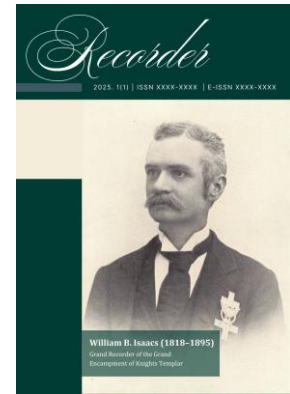
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Leafing Through Antique Books

Thomas Smith Webb ‘The Freemasons Monitor of Illustration of Masonry’. Chapters I–V

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Abstract. This section presents a rare bibliographic artifact connected to Thomas Smith Webb (1771–1819), one of the most influential figures in American Freemasonry and the Knights Templar. Webb served as the first Deputy Grand Master of the General Grand Encampment from 1816 until his death in 1819. His most significant contribution was *The Freemason’s Monitor, or Illustrations of Masonry* (1797), a work that profoundly shaped the ritual and structure of the York Rite in the United States. During Webb’s lifetime, the book underwent five revisions, with the 1816 edition now considered a valuable rarity. This section presents selected excerpts from chapters I–V of this historic volume.

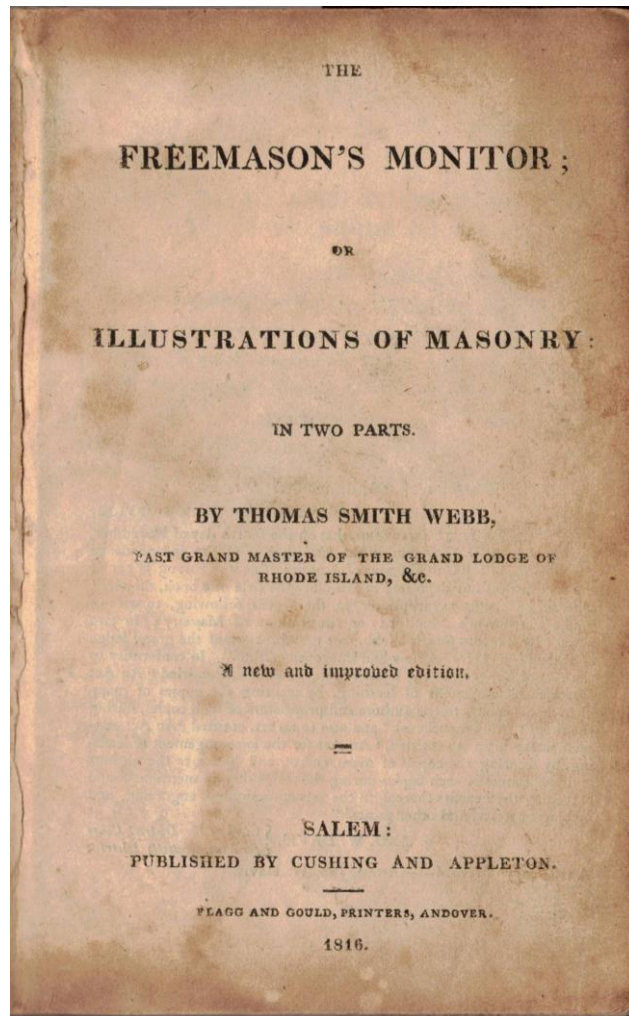
Keywords: Thomas Smith Webb (1771–1819), Freemasonry, Knights Templar, York Rite, Masonic literature, 1816 edition, ‘The Freemasons Monitor of Illustration of Masonry’.



Thomas Smith Webb (1771–1819) — a prominent Freemason and Knight Templar. In 1816, he became the first Deputy Grand Master of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in the USA, a position he held until his death in 1819.

In 1797, Thomas Smith Webb published the principal work of his life — “*The Freemason’s Monitor, or Illustrations of Masonry*”. This book had a profound influence on the development of Masonic ritual in America, particularly within the York Rite.

During the author’s lifetime, the book was revised and expanded five times. The penultimate edition, published in 1816, is now considered a bibliographic rarity. We present to the reader selected excerpts from this remarkable volume (chapters I–V).



THE FREEMASON'S MONITOR

PART FIRST

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Origin of Masonry, and its general advantages.

From the commencement of the world, we may trace the foundation of Masonry¹. Ever since symmetry began, and harmony displayed her charms, our order has had a being. During many ages, and in many different countries, it has flourished. In the dark periods of antiquity, when literature was in a low state, and the rude manners of our forefathers withheld from them that knowledge we now so amply share, masonry diffused its influence. This science unveiled, arts arose, civilization took place, and the progress of knowledge and philosophy gradually dispelled the gloom of ignorance and barbarism. Government being settled, authority was given to laws, and the assemblies of the fraternity acquired the patronage of the great and the good, while the tenets of the profession were attended with unbounded utility.

Masonry is a science confined to no particular country, but diffused over the whole terrestrial globe. Wherever arts flourish, there it flourishes too. Add to this, that by secret and inviolable signs, carefully preserved among the fraternity throughout the world, masonry becomes an universal language. Hence many advantages are gained: the distant Chinese, the wild Arab, and the American savage, will embrace a brother

¹ Masonry and Geometry are sometimes used as synonymus terms.

Briton, Franc, or German; and will know, that beside the common ties of humanity, there is still a stronger obligation to induce him to kind and friendly offices. The spirit of the fulminating priest will be tamed; and a moral brother, though of a different persuasion, engage his esteem. Thus, through the influence of masonry, which is reconcileable to the best policy, all those disputes, which embitter life, and sour the tempers of men, are avoided: while the common good, the general design of the craft, is zealously pursued.

From this view of the system, its utility must be sufficiently obvious. The universal principles of the art unite men of the most opposite tenets, of the most distant countries, and of the most contradictory opinions, in one indissoluble bond of affection, so that in every nation a mason finds a friend, and in every climate a home.

CHAPTER II

The Government of the Fraternity explained.

The mode of government observed by the fraternity will best explain the importance, and give the truest idea of the nature and design, of the masonic system.

There are several classes of masons, under different appellations. The privileges of these classes are distinct, and particular means are adopted to preserve those privileges to the just and meritorious of each class.

Honour and probity are recommendations to the first class; in which the practice of virtue is enforced, and the duties of morality inculcated, while the mind is prepared for regular and social converse, in the principles of knowledge and philosophy.

Diligence, assiduity and application, are qualifications for the second class; in which an accurate elucidation of science, both in theory and practice, is given. Here human reason is cultivated by a due exertion of the rational and intellectual powers and faculties; nice and difficult theories are explained; new discoveries produced, and those already known beautifully embellished.

The third class is composed of those whom truth and fidelity have distinguished; who, when assaulted by threats and violence, after solicitation and persuasion have failed, have evinced their firmness and integrity in preserving inviolate the mysteries of the order.

The fourth class consists of those who have perseveringly studied the scientific branches of the art, and exhibited proofs of their skill and acquirements, and who have consequently obtained the honour of this degree, as a reward of merit.

The fifth class consists of those who, having acquired a proficiency of knowledge to become teachers, have been elected to preside over regularly constituted bodies of masons.

The sixth class consists of those who, having discharged the duties of the chair with honour and reputation, are acknowledged and recorded as excellent masters.

The seventh class consists of a select few whom years and experience have improved, and whom merit and abilities have entitled to preferment. With this class the ancient landmarks of the order are preserved; and from them we learn and practise the necessary and instructive lessons, which at once dignify the art, and qualify its professors to illustrate its excellence and utility.

This is the established mode of the masonic government, when the rules of the system are observed. By this judicious arrangement, true friendship is cultivated among different ranks and degrees of men, hospitality promoted, industry rewarded, and ingenuity encouraged.

CHAPTER III

The Importance of the Secrets of Masonry demonstrated.

If the secrets of masonry are replete with such advantages to mankind, it may be asked, Why are they not divulged for the general good of society? To which it may be answered; Were the privileges of masonry to be indiscriminately bestowed, the design of the institution would be subverted; and, being familiar, like many other important matters, would soon lose their value, and sink into disregard.

It is a weakness in human nature, that men are generally more charmed with novelty, than the real worth or intrinsic value of things. Novelty influences all our actions and determinations. What is new, or difficult in the acquisition, however trifling or insignificant, readily captivates the imagination, and ensures a temporary admiration; while what is familiar, or easily obtained, however noble and eminent for its utility, is sure to be disregarded by the giddy and unthinking.

Did the particular secrets or peculiar forms prevalent among masons constitute the essence of the art, it might be alleged that our amusements were trifling, and our ceremonies superficial. But this is not the case. Having their use, they are preserved; and from the recollection of the lessons they inculcate, the well informed mason derives instruction. Drawing them to a near inspection, he views them through a proper medium; adverts to the circumstances which gave them rise; dwells upon the tenets they convey; and, finding them replete with useful information, adopts them as keys to the privileges of his art, and prizes them as sacred. Thus convinced of their propriety, he estimates the value from their utility.

Many persons are deluded by their vague supposition that our mysteries are merely nominal; that the practices established among us are frivolous; and that our ceremonies might be adopted, or waived, at pleasure. On this false foundation, we have found them hurrying through all the degrees, without advertent to the propriety of one step they pursue, or possessing a single qualification requisite for advancement. Passing through the usual formalities, they have accepted offices, and assumed the government of lodges, equally unacquainted with the rules of the institution they pretended to support, or the nature of the trust reposed in them. The consequence is obvious; wherever such practices have been allowed, anarchy and confusion have ensued, and the substance has been lost in the shadow. Were the brethren, who preside over lodges, properly instructed previous to their appointment, and regularly apprised of the importance of their respective offices, a general reformation would speedily take place. This would evince the propriety of our mode of government, and lead men to acknowledge, that our honours were deservedly conferred.

Such conduct alone can support our character. Unless prudent actions shall distinguish our title to the honours of masonry, and regular deportment display the influence and utility of our rules, the world in general will not easily be led to reconcile our proceedings with the tenets of our profession.

CHAP. IV

General Remarks.

Masonry is an art equally useful and extensive. In every art there is a mystery, which requires a gradual progression of knowledge to arrive at any degree of perfection in it. Without much instruction, and more exercise, no man can be skilful in any art; in like manner, without an assiduous application to the various subjects treated of in the different lectures of masonry, no person can be sufficiently acquainted with its true value.

It must not, however, be inferred from this remark, that persons, who labour under the disadvantages of a confined education, or whose sphere of life requires a more intense application to business or study, are to be discouraged in their endeavours to gain a knowledge of masonry.

To qualify an individual to enjoy the benefits of the society at large, or to partake of its privileges, it is not absolutely necessary that he should be acquainted with all the intricate parts of the science. These are only intended for the diligent and assiduous mason, who may have leisure and opportunity to indulge such pursuits.

Though some are more able than others, some more eminent, some more useful, yet all, in their different spheres, may prove advantageous to the community. As the nature of every man's profession will not admit of that leisure which is necessary to qualify him to become an expert mason, it is highly proper that the official duties of a lodge should be executed by persons whose education and situation in life enable them to become adepts; as it must be allowed, that all, who accept offices and exercise authority, should be properly qualified to discharge the task assigned them, with honour to themselves, and credit to their sundry stations.

CHAPTER V

The ceremony of opening and closing a lodge.

In all regular assemblies of men, who are convened for wise and useful purposes, the commencement and conclusion of business are accompanied with some form. In every country of the world the practice prevails, and is deemed essential. From the most remote periods of antiquity it may be traced, and the refined improvements of modern times have not totally abolished it.

Ceremonies, when simply considered, it is true, are little more than visionary delusions; but their effects are sometimes important. When they impress awe and reverence on the mind, and engage the attention by external attraction, to solemn rites, they are interesting objects. These purposes are effected by judicious ceremonies, when regularly conducted and properly arranged. On this ground they have received the sanction of the wisest men in all ages, and consequently could not escape the notice of masons. To begin well

is the most likely means to end well; and it is judiciously remarked, that when order and method are neglected at the beginning, they will be seldom found to take place at the end.

The ceremony of opening and closing a lodge with solemnity and decorum, is therefore universally admitted among masons; and though the mode in some lodges may vary, and in every degree must vary, still an uniformity in the general practice prevails in every lodge; and the variation (if any) is solely occasioned by want of method, which a little application might easily remove.

To conduct this ceremony with propriety ought to be the peculiar study of every mason; especially of those who have the honour to rule in our assemblies. To persons who are thus dignified, every eye is naturally directed for propriety of conduct and behaviour; and from them, other brethren, who are less informed, will naturally expect to derive an example worthy of imitation.

From a share in this ceremony no mason can be exempted. It is a general concern, in which all must assist. This is the first request of the master, and the prelude to all business. No sooner has it been signified, than every officer repairs to his station, and the brethren rank according to their degrees. The intent of the meeting becomes the sole object of attention, and the mind is insensibly drawn from those indiscriminate subjects of conversation, which are apt to intrude on our less serious moments.

This effect accomplished, our care is directed to the external avenues of the lodge, and the proper officers, whose province it is to discharge that duty, execute their trust with fidelity, and by certain mystic forms, of no recent date, intimate that we may safely proceed. To detect impostors among ourselves, an adherence to order in the character of masons ensues, and the lodge is either opened or closed in solemn form.

At opening the lodge, two purposes are wisely affected: the master is reminded of the dignity of his character, and the brethren, of the homage and veneration due from them in their sundry stations. These are not the only advantages resulting from a due observance of this ceremony; a reverential awe for the Deity is inculcated, and the eye fixed on that object from whose radiant beams light only can be derived. Here we are taught to adore the God of heaven, and to supplicate his protection on our well meant endeavours. The master assumes his government in due form, and under him his wardens; who accept their trust, after the customary salutations. The brethren then, with one accord, unite in duty and respect, and the ceremony concludes.

At closing the lodge, a similar form takes place. Here the less important duties of masonry are not passed over unobserved. The necessary degree of subordination in the government of a lodge is peculiarly marked, while the proper tribute of gratitude is offered up to the beneficent Author of life, and his blessing invoked and extended to the whole fraternity. Each brother faithfully locks up the treasure he has acquired, in his own secret repository; and, pleased with his reward, retires to enjoy and disseminate among the private circle of his brethren, the fruits of his labour and industry in the lodge.

These are faint outlines of a ceremony, which universally prevails among masons in every country, and distinguishes all their meetings. It is arranged as a general section in every degree, and takes the lead in all out illustration.

Charge used at opening a lodge.

Behold! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment:

As the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded a blessing, even life for evermore.

A prayer used at closing the lodge.

May the blessing of Heaven rest upon us, and all regular masons!

May brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us!

Amen.

Resurse: *Webb T.S.* (1816). *The Freemasons Monitor of Illustration of Masonry*. In two parts. Salem: Published by Cushing and Appleton. P. 13-24.