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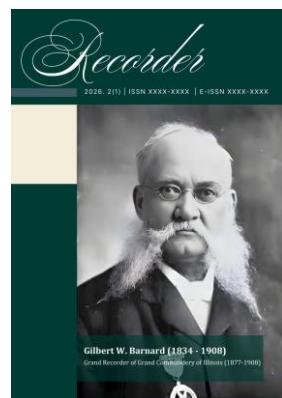
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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

The year 2026 marks a milestone in American history as the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of its Declaration of Independence. On July 4, 1776, thirteen British colonies formally declared their separation from the British crown, establishing the foundations of a new nation. This anniversary invites reflection on the individuals, institutions, and spiritual traditions that shaped early American society, including the role of Freemasonry and the Knights Templar. In the January issue of *Recorder*, we honor this historical moment with the publication of "Sir Peter Lauck (1753–1839): Soldier of the Revolution and Knight Templar", an article dedicated to a member of the revolutionary generation and an early participant in Templar Freemasonry in the United States.

This issue also completes a major editorial transformation of the journal. We have removed all reprint materials and redesigned the structure of *Recorder*, establishing it as a fully independent academic publication focused on the history of Freemasonry in the United States. The journal now addresses researchers, archivists, historians, and specialists in fraternal organizations, offering a platform for rigorous historical analysis. The main section, *Original Research*, is presented in chronological order, allowing readers to trace the evolution of Templar Freemasonry from the early to late nineteenth century. The issue includes biographical studies, institutional analyses, and source-based research, providing insight into the lives of individual Knights Templar and the functioning of regional Masonic structures.

The former *Uniform (Exhibitions)* section has been replaced by *Museum News*, which now features curated reports and analytical overviews of the activities of The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar. This includes articles such as *The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar Today* and detailed reviews of temporary and permanent exhibitions over specific periods, highlighting historical uniforms, regalia, and archival materials.

Additionally, we have introduced a new section, *Our Publications*, which systematically presents research conducted by staff members of Cherkas Global University on Masonic history. This section aims to consolidate contemporary scholarship, provide readers with direct access to original research, and foster engagement within the academic community. By highlighting ongoing research and scholarly contributions, *Recorder* seeks to strengthen the dialogue on the social, cultural, and institutional significance of Freemasonry in the development of American society.

We believe that the changes implemented in this issue position *Recorder* as a central resource for historians of American Freemasonry, while honoring the legacy of the country's formative generations and their enduring traditions. As we celebrate this historic anniversary, we remain committed to illuminating the past, supporting rigorous research, and contributing to the ongoing understanding of Freemasonry's role in American history.

We wish you a pleasant reading.

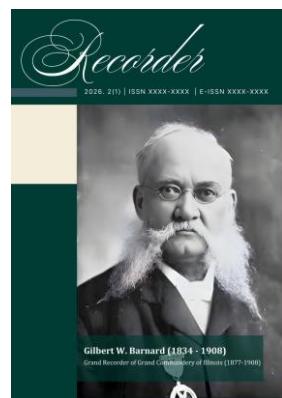
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Original Research

Sir Peter Lauck (1753–1839): Soldier of the Revolution and Knight Templar

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the biography of Sir Peter Lauck (1753–1839) as a Soldier of the American Revolution and a Knight Templar. The source base of the study includes documents from the commercial genealogical database Ancestry.com, as well as a number of published documentary collections.

In the conclusion, the author argues that the life course of Peter Lauck represents a vivid example of service to society, the state, and fraternal ideals in the late eighteenth and the first third of the nineteenth centuries. His biography reflects the characteristic features of the generation of American revolutionaries who, after the War of Independence, not only participated in the formation of political institutions but were also actively engaged in the economic, social, and spiritual development of their towns and states. As an entrepreneur and one of the founders of the Farmers Bank of Virginia, Peter Lauck contributed to strengthening the financial foundations of the region. His involvement in law enforcement and his service with the rank of captain underscore his role in maintaining order and civic stability during the early period of United States history.

Of particular importance is his long-standing and active participation in the Masonic movement. His leadership of lodges during the transition from the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania to that of the Grand Lodge of Virginia testifies to the high level of trust and authority he enjoyed among his contemporaries. The final stage of his life was closely connected with the Order of Knights Templar, in which he held responsible officer positions at both the local and state levels. The continuation of the Masonic tradition within his family further emphasizes the continuity of values and service.

The death of Peter Lauck in 1839 marked the end of the life of a man who can rightfully be characterized as a Soldier of the Revolution, a public figure, and a Knight Templar—one of the notable personalities of his time.

Keywords: Peter Lauck (1753–1839), Soldier of the Revolution, Battle of Quebec, December 31, 1775, Freemason, Knight Templar.

Introduction

In the history of the United States, one can find a considerable number of examples in which individuals who contributed to the formation of American statehood were also Freemasons. There is nothing surprising in this phenomenon, since Masonic lodges in the British provinces of North America began to be established as early as the first half of the eighteenth century. For example, Saint John's Lodge in Boston was chartered in 1733¹. However, cases in which a Soldier of the Revolution later became a Knight Templar are relatively rare. This can be explained by the fact that the formation of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar in the United States began only in the early nineteenth century and was associated with the further development of the York Rite. It should be recalled that the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United

¹ Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Massachusetts. Boston: Press of Rockwell and Churchill, 1877. P. 391.

States was established only in 1816 and at that time numbered no more than about 300 members¹. Several encampments existed in the country that did not join the General Grand Encampment in 1816; among them was the Winchester Grand Encampment (Winchester, Virginia), founded in 1813. Within this body, we identified Sir Knight Peter Lauck—Soldier of the Revolution and Knight Templar. It is this outstanding individual who forms the focus of the present study.

Materials

The source base of this study consists of documents from the commercial genealogical database Ancestry.com, as well as published compilations such as Marriage and Death Notices from the National Intelligencer (Washington, D.C.) 1800–1850² and the Virginia Pension Roll of 1835³. Of particular importance for reconstructing the Masonic biography of Peter Lauck are the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge. We used Proceedings from the following jurisdictions: Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Massachusetts. In addition, the study incorporates materials from the Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar Masons of Virginia for 1823. The research also draws upon a number of biographical works devoted to individuals of the period of the American War of Independence.

Results

Peter Lauck was born on December 31, 1753, in Somerset, Pennsylvania.

He began his military service at the age of twenty by taking part in Dunmore's War, a short conflict that lasted from May to October 1774.

In 1775, the American War of Independence began. On June 15, 1775, General George Washington was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, which was being formed in Boston. At the same time, the Continental Congress authorized an invasion of Quebec, one of the British provinces (present-day Canada), with the aim of separating it from Great Britain.

The newly forming army was in urgent need of volunteers, and the Continental Congress called for the creation of ten rifle companies from the middle colonies. At the end of June, the colony of Virginia agreed to raise two companies, one of which began forming on July 4 in the town of Winchester, Frederick County, under the command of Capt. Daniel Morgan⁴.

By July 14, 1775, the rifle company, consisting of 96 men, had been fully organized⁵. The company received the unofficial name "Morgan's Riflemen." One of its volunteers was the unmarried twenty-one-year-old Peter Lauck (Fig. 1) (he would not turn twenty-two until December 1775), who enlisted in the company with the rank of private⁶. It is also important to note that the company was intended for service on the "Continental Line"⁷, meaning that its personnel could be deployed anywhere on the continent at any time. On the same day, Morgan's company set out in full strength toward the town of Cambridge near Boston, arriving there on August 6, 1775. During the twenty-one-day march, the company covered approximately 600 miles.

¹ Taran, K. V. (2025). The materials of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar serve as a statistical source for the number of Knights Templars in 1856. *Recorder*. 1(1): 22.

² Martin, G.A., Metcalf, F.J. (1976). Marriage and Death Notices from the National Intelligencer (Washington, D.C.) 1800-1850. Volume II 1835-1850. Washington, D.C.: National Genealogical Society. P. 1107.

³ Virginia Pension Roll of 1835. [Richmond, Va.]: [Auditor of Public Accounts?], [1835].

⁴ Graham, J. (1859). The life of General Daniel Morgan: of the Virginia line of the Army of the United States, with portions of his correspondence. University of California Libraries. New York: Derby & Jackson.

⁵ Cartmell, T.K. (1909). Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants. A History of Frederick County, Virginia (illustrated) from its formation in 1738 to 1908. Winchester, Va.: Printed by the Eddy Press Corp. P. 102.

⁶ Virginia Pension Roll of 1835. [Richmond, Va.]: [Auditor of Public Accounts?], [1835]. P. 776.

⁷ Virginia Pension Roll of 1835. [Richmond, Va.]: [Auditor of Public Accounts?], [1835]. P. 776.



Fig. 1. Soldier of the Revolution Peter Lauck. 1780s

As part of the invasion force, units of the Continental Army were sent to the Province of Quebec.

The invasion of Quebec was carried out by two expeditions of the Continental Army: the first under the command of Brigadier General Richard Montgomery, and the second under the command of General Benedict Arnold. Peter Lauck served in the second expedition led by General Arnold.

At the beginning of the campaign, the expeditions operated separately. The first expedition departed from its base at Fort Ticonderoga, which had been captured from the British on May 10, 1775. On September 17, 1775, the expedition reached and laid siege to the British Fort Saint-Jean. The siege lasted forty-five days and ended on November 3, 1775, with the capitulation of the British garrison.

The fall of Fort Saint-Jean opened the way for the first Continental Army expedition to Montreal, which surrendered without resistance on November 13, 1775.

Meanwhile, the second expedition under General Benedict Arnold set out from Fort Western on September 25 with approximately 1,050 men. "Morgan's Riflemen," together with two other companies, formed the advance battalion commanded by Capt. Daniel Morgan and marched at the head of the column. The route of the expedition ran through roadless and rugged terrain in what is now the state of Maine. As a result of travel by boats along turbulent rivers, the troops lost a significant portion of their gunpowder and provisions. About one third of the personnel fell behind and ultimately decided to turn back. Consequently, by early November, when General Arnold's expedition reached the Saint Lawrence River, only about 600 soldiers remained, exhausted by a 350-mile march. On November 13–14, 1775, the expedition crossed the river and attempted to besiege Quebec. After failing, it withdrew to Point-aux-Trembles, and in early December 1775 the two expeditions united under the overall command of General Benedict Arnold.

On December 31, 1775, his birthday, Private Peter Lauck took part in the Battle of Quebec as a member of the Continental Army during a severe snowstorm. According to the plan, the two expeditions were to assault the city from different directions, meet in the lower town, and then jointly overcome the wall defending the upper town. However, at the very beginning of the battle, General Montgomery was killed by cannon fire (Fig. 2), and his expedition turned back and did not participate further in the assault. At the same time, General Benedict Arnold was wounded early in the attack, and command was assumed by Daniel Morgan, who continued the assault, breached the first barrier, and entered the lower town. Peter Lauck took part in this assault together with the expedition. During the fighting, Private Peter Lauck was wounded by cannon fire, which severely damaged his hearing.

The initially favorable prospects of the assault on Quebec for the Americans largely depended on the element of surprise. However, on the eve of the attack, the British received reinforcements and mobilized militia. As a result, by the start of the battle the British had about 1,800 soldiers and officers, while the Americans had only around 1,200. Under such conditions, the assault already appeared hopeless; in practice, only about half of the available American forces entered the lower town, giving the British a threefold numerical advantage. In the lower town, British forces surrounded the attacking detachment and compelled it to surrender. A total of 372 men were taken prisoner, including Captain Daniel Morgan and Private Peter Lauck; about 50 men were killed and approximately the same number were wounded.

This battle became the first major defeat suffered by the Americans in the war.



Fig. 2. The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec, December 31, 1775. Oil Painting. By John Trumbull. 1786.

He remained in captivity until the spring of 1776, and later that year he returned to Winchester¹. For the young soldier, who had nearly lost his hearing, the War of Independence was over, and his civilian life began.

On October 27, 1779, he married Miss Amelia Emily Heiskell. Their family had eleven children: Ann Maria (born November 9, 1760), Jacob (born February 22, 1783), John Heiskell (born August 15, 1785), Rebecca (born April 20, 1787), a son born dead (August 22, 1789), Samuel Heiskell (born December 10, 1790), Isaac Straltt (born August 6, 1793), Morgan Monley (born July 7, 1796), Joseph Hundley (born March 8, 1799), Amelia Susan (born March 30, 1802), and William Cunningham (born March 24, 1805).

In 1781, Peter Lauck was engaged in law enforcement service; he was sworn in as County Constable and held the rank of captain. In 1783, he built the "Red Lion Inn" in the town and became actively involved in business affairs. In 1812, he was among the founding members of the Farmers Bank of Virginia.

Alongside his business activities, he took an active part in social life. Throughout his life, he was an active member of the Lutheran Church in Winchester and participated in Masonic fraternal organizations. It should be noted that at the end of the eighteenth century the town of Winchester was under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. Lodge No. 12 operated in the town, and Peter Lauck served as its Master in 1805² and again in 1806³.

In 1807, the lodge was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Virginia and its number was changed. In that year it was known as Hiram Lodge No. 21, and its first Worshipful Master was Peter Lauck, as recorded in the Grand Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Virginia⁴. The reporting practices of the period listed only senior officers, without publishing information about ordinary members. Given that Peter Lauck held the highest office in the lodge from 1805 to 1807, it is likely that he joined the Masonic movement in the late eighteenth century.

In 1813, the Winchester Grand Encampment of Knights Templar was established in the town⁵. The final stage of Peter Lauck's life was closely connected with this Masonic order. Although the exact date of his

¹ Martin, G.A., Metcalf, F.J. (1976). Marriage and Death Notices from the National Intelligencer (Washington, D.C.) 1800-1850. Volume II 1835-1850. Washington, D.C.: National Genealogical Society. P. 1107.

² Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, 1805. P. 146.

³ Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, 1806. P. 187.

⁴ Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Winchester, 1807. P. 369.

⁵ Hoover, J. (1902). An Historic Commandery, The American Tyler. Volume XVI. No. 22. P. 519.

affiliation with the Winchester Grand Encampment is unknown, in 1821 he was an active member and was elected to the officer position of Standard Bearer. Moreover, his son, Samuel Heiskell Lauck, held the officer position of Grand Registrar (analogous to Recorder) in this commandery¹. Two years later, the Grand Encampment (Commandery) of Knights Templar of Virginia was established, and Peter Lauck assumed the office of Grand Treasurer². He was re-elected annually to this position until 1831³, after which he most likely remained a member of the Winchester Encampment.

Peter Lauck died on October 2, 1839, in Winchester, Virginia. Thus ended the life of one of the outstanding figures of his time—Peter Lauck, Soldier of the Revolution and Knight Templar.

Conclusion

The life course of Peter Lauck represents a vivid example of service to society, the state, and fraternal ideals in the late eighteenth and the first third of the nineteenth centuries. His biography reflects the characteristic features of the generation of American revolutionaries who, after the War of Independence, not only participated in the formation of political institutions but were also actively engaged in the economic, social, and spiritual development of their towns and states. As an entrepreneur and one of the founders of the Farmers Bank of Virginia, Peter Lauck contributed to strengthening the financial foundations of the region. His involvement in law enforcement and his service with the rank of captain underscore his contribution to maintaining order and civic stability in the early period of United States history.

Of particular significance is his long-standing and active participation in the Masonic movement. His leadership of lodges during the transition from the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania to that of the Grand Lodge of Virginia attests to the high level of trust and authority he enjoyed among his contemporaries. The final stage of his life was closely associated with the Order of Knights Templar, in which he held responsible officer positions at both the local and state levels. The continuation of the Masonic tradition within his family further emphasizes the continuity of values and service.

The death of Peter Lauck in 1839 brought to a close the life of a man who can justly be characterized as a Soldier of the Revolution, a public figure, and a Knight Templar—one of the notable figures of his time.

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¹ Hoover, J. (1902). *An Historic Commandery, The American Tyler*. Volume XVI. No. 22. P. 519.

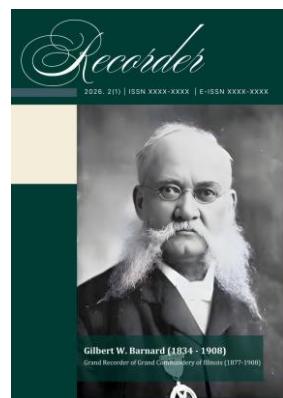
² Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar Masons of Virginia. Winchester, 1823. P. 8.

³ Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar Masons of Virginia. Winchester, 1830. P. 43.



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Sir Knight Samuel May Williams (1795–1858): Missionary Activity of the First Texas Knight Templar

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Abstract

This article examines the missionary activity of Sir Knight Samuel May Williams (1795–1858), the first Knight Templar of Texas. Having been received into the Masonic Order of Knights Templar on December 1, 1835, Samuel M. Williams devoted the remainder of his life to service within the Order.

In the conclusion, the author argues that the activity of Samuel M. Williams represents a rare example of the combination of political, civic, and Masonic missions that exerted a long-term influence on the development of Texas. His assistance to the Republic of Texas, although it followed the Battle of San Jacinto, played a crucial role in stabilizing the young state and preventing a possible renewal of Mexican military intervention. In subsequent years, Williams became one of the central figures in shaping the institutional structure of Freemasonry in Texas: from the establishment of the first regular lodge and participation in the formation of the Grand Lodge to the organization of Royal Arch chapters and the higher chivalric degrees of the York Rite. Of particular significance was his contribution to the establishment of the Grand Encampment, later the Grand Commandery of Texas, which laid the foundation for the rapid growth of Templarism in the region. The history of the development of Masonic organizations in Texas clearly demonstrates that the mission of Samuel M. Williams was not only successfully accomplished, but also determined their trajectory of development for decades to come.

Keywords: Samuel May Williams (1795–1858), San Felipe de Austin Commandery No. 1, Galveston, Texas, Freemason, missionary activity.

Introduction

Samuel May Williams (1795–1858) was one of the most prominent figures in the history of the state of Texas. He was an American businessman and politician, as well as a close associate of Stephen F. Austin. His biography has been studied in considerable detail. He was born on October 4, 1795, in Providence, Providence County, Rhode Island. At the age of twenty-seven, in 1822, he arrived in Texas, where he initially engaged in clerical work, including service as a secretary of the local Mexican government. From 1834 onward, he turned to commercial activities, and in 1835, when the Texas Revolution became inevitable, he openly supported its cause.

Materials

The study is based on the following collections of documentary sources: Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, 1816 to 1856¹; Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Texas, from Its Organization in the City of Houston, Dec. A.D. 1837, A.L. 5837 to the Close of the Grand Annual Communication²; Twenty-Third Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of

¹ Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States 1816 to 1856. New Orleans, La.: Bulletin Book and Job Office. 1859.

² Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Texas, from its Organization in the City of Houston, Dec. A.D. 1837, A.L. 5837 to the Close of the Grand Annual Communication Held at Palestine, January 19, A.D. 1857, A.L. 5857. In Two Volumes. Vol. I. Galveston: Richardson & Co., News Office. 1860.

the State of Illinois¹; Transactions of the R.E. Grand Commandery of Knights Templar and Appendant Orders of the State of Texas²; Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. Forty-Sixth Triennial Conclave³; Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. Fifty-First Triennial Conclave⁴; and other materials.

Results

It is important to note that until 1821 Texas was a province of Spain. After Mexico gained independence, the former Spanish province became part of the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas. In 1833, General Antonio López de Santa Anna was elected president of Mexico. He abolished the Constitution of 1824 and began to rule as a dictator. Several unpopular measures introduced by the Mexican president over the following two years created conditions in which Texas—where Spanish-speaking citizens constituted less than 25 percent of the population—stood on the brink of a war for independence.

Because Texas had first been part of the Spanish Crown and later, for a short period, part of Mexico, Masonic organizations of the York Rite were absent from the territory. Another reason for this absence was the relatively small population (approximately 40,000 inhabitants in 1836).

Returning to Samuel M. Williams, after Antonio López de Santa Anna came to power, an internal political crisis unfolded in Coahuila y Tejas, dividing the province into two political camps: supporters of the Mexican president and federalists. In 1835, Samuel M. Williams was elected as a delegate to the legislature of Coahuila y Tejas. In May, following the first legislative session, the federalists were subjected to repression by supporters of the Mexican president. Many federalists were arrested and imprisoned, among them Samuel M. Williams. He did not remain in prison for long, however, as he managed a successful escape, first reaching Texas and then traveling through the eastern states of the United States to raise capital for his bank⁵. While in New York, he received information about the imminent possibility of war in Texas and redirected his efforts toward the cause of Texas independence.

From this point onward begins the missionary activity of Samuel May Williams (Fig. 1).

¹ Twenty-third annual conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Hazlitt and Reed, printers, 1879.

² Transactions of the R.E. Grand Commandery of Knights Templar and Appendant Orders of the State of Texas. Houston: W.H. Coyle, Printer and Lithographer, 1883.

³ Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. Forty-Sixth Triennial Conclave. New York, 1955.

⁴ Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. Fifty-First Triennial Conclave. Denver, 1970.

⁵ Henson, Margaret S. (1976). *Samuel May Williams: Early Texas Entrepreneur*. College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press. P. 79.



Fig. 1. Samuel May Williams (1795–1858)

Sir Williams received favorable recommendations in the highest Masonic circles from individuals who were well acquainted with his personal qualities. In the autumn of 1835, he entered the Masonic movement and, within only eleven days (from November 21 to December 1, 1835), passed through all the degrees of the York Rite—from Entered Apprentice to Knight Templar.

Jewel P. Lightfoot, in his work *History of the Relations Between the Grand Chapter of Texas and the General Grand Chapter of the United States of America*, notes: “By whom recommended; by what right of jurisdiction; by what custom; the Masonic Bodies in New York acted, the record is silent”¹.

Thus, on November 21, in Independent Royal Arch Lodge No. 2, he was initiated into Freemasonry and immediately received the first three degrees of Freemasonry². On November 25, he received all the degrees of the Royal Arch in Jerusalem Chapter No. 8, Royal Arch Masons, and on December 1, in Morton Encampment No. 4 (Fig. 2), he was knighted as a Knight Templar.

¹ Lightfoot, Jewel P. (1943). *History of Relations Between the Grand Chapter of Texas and the General Grand Chapter of the United States of America*. Fort Worth. P. 10.

² Duncan, William J. (1904). *History of Independent Royal Arch Lodge No. 2, F. & A.M., of the State of New York*. New York: Grand Lodge of New York, F. & A.M. P. 280.



Fig. 2. Badge of Morton Encampment (Commandery) No. 4, KT (MHAKT CGU. Collection 3rd. Catalog no. 017)

Thus, on December 1, 1835, Samuel May Williams was knighted as a Knight Templar. It is important to note that between 1816 and 1848 the number of Knights Templar in the United States increased from approximately 500 to 1,200 members¹. Consequently, it can be stated with a high degree of probability that in 1835 Samuel May Williams belonged to the first thousand Knights Templar in the United States.

However, Samuel M. Williams not only passed through all the degrees of the York Rite, but was also vested with exceptionally broad authority. As early as December 8, 1835, the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, meeting in Washington, D.C., granted Williams a charter for a chapter of Royal Arch Masons to be known as San Felipe de Austin Chapter No. 1—the first Royal Arch chapter in Texas—and installed him as its first presiding officer².

Less well known is the fact that only two days later, on December 10, 1835, Sir Knight Samuel M. Williams received authorization to open the forming San Felipe de Austin Encampment of Sir Knights Templar, No. 1, and was appointed to the office of Eminent Commander³. This document is reproduced in full below.

"On Thursday, December 10th, A.D., 1835,

The General Grand Encampment convened pursuant to adjournment, and was called to order.

PRESENT.

The M. E. Sir Jonathan Nye, G. G. Master.

And officers and members as before.

The minutes of the meeting held last evening were read and approved.

The committee appointed to nominate officers, reported that they had not been able to agree on a list of officers, and asked to be discharged. The committee was accordingly discharged.

The committee on the application for a Warrant to constitute an Encampment of Knights Templar in Texas, reported as follows:

¹ Twenty-third annual conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Hazlitt and Reed, printers, 1879. P. xxxvi.

² Lightfoot, Jewel P. (1943). History of Relations Between the Grand Chapter of Texas and the General Grand Chapter of the United States of America. Fort Worth. P. 10-11.

³ Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States 1816 to 1856. New Orlean, La.: Bulletin Book and Job Office. 1859. P. 40.

The committee to whom was referred the application of Sir Knights Samuel M. Williams, James H. C. Miller and other Sir Knights of Texas, in the Republic of Mexico, for a Warrant for an Encampment of Knights Templar, to be located at San Felipe de Austin, in the State of Coahuila and Texas, respectfully report: That after mature examination and deliberation, it is the opinion that the application is constitutional and proper, and ought to be granted, although the application is not made by a number sufficient to the opening of an Encampment; it being completely within the power of this General Grand Encampment to authorize the opening of such an Encampment in Texas so soon as a competent number of Sir Knights shall be assembled as is required. Therefore, your committee recommend that a Warrant by the name of San Felipe de Austin Encampment of Sir Knights Templar, No. 1, of Texas, issue to Sir Knight Williams, as Grand Commander, Sir Knight Miller, as Generalissimo, and Sir Knight — as Capt. General; and would further recommend, that the Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of New York be, and he is hereby authorized to install into the office of Grand Commander, Sir Knight Williams.

All which is respectfully submitted.

By order of the committee,

[Signed]

PETER GRINNELL, Chairman¹.

Thus, by December 10, 1835, Samuel M. Williams had obtained the authority to establish an extensive network of Masonic organizations in Texas, and, most importantly, Masonic bodies encompassing all degrees—from the lowest to the highest.

From this moment, his missionary activity truly began. He launched an active campaign to raise funds to support the Republic of Texas. He secured a loan to purchase the schooner Invincible in order to support the naval forces of Texas, and in May 1836 he returned to Texas with ammunition and provisions, as well as 700 volunteers².

On the one hand, this assistance was somewhat delayed, since the decisive battle at San Jacinto had taken place on April 21, 1836, ending in a Texian victory. Almost immediately after the battle, soldiers residing in Texas, believing that hostilities had ended, left the army and returned home, reducing the strength of the Texian army to approximately 400 men (on April 21 its strength had been about 1,200). On the other hand, this assistance sharply increased the size of the Texian army in May and, in effect, protected the young Republic of Texas from a renewed Mexican invasion. In the following months, the Texian army continued to grow due to the arrival of volunteers, and by September it numbered about 2,500 men, of whom 1,800 had arrived in Texas after the Battle of San Jacinto³.

This period was followed by intensive administrative and public activity. Harmony Lodge No. 6 began with 20 members, with its first initiation held in 1839. Harmony Lodge No. 6 is the oldest chartered Masonic organization in Texas, and Samuel M. Williams is regarded as its founding father⁴. In 1839, Williams became a representative of Harmony Lodge No. 6 in Galveston⁵. In 1840, while serving as Junior Warden of Harmony Lodge No. 6, he was nominated for the office of Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Texas and was elected to that position by a majority vote⁶. From 1841 onward, he held the title of Past Grand Master⁷.

Thereafter, he turned to the establishment of Royal Arch chapters and the organization of similar chapters in other parts of Texas. On December 30, 1850, this work was completed with the establishment of the Grand Chapter of Texas, Royal Arch Masons, and Williams was elected its first presiding officer⁸.

¹ Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States 1816 to 1856. New Orleans, La.: Bulletin Book and Job Office. 1859. P. 40.

² Nichols, Ruth G. (1952). "Samuel May Williams". *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. 56 (2): 200.

³ Lack, Paul D. (1992). *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History 1835–1836*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press. P. 134.

⁴ Turner, Bronwyn (2015). Harmony Masonic Lodge No. 6 celebrates 175 years. *The Daily News*. 2015. Jan. 11.

⁵ Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Texas, from its Organization in the City of Houston, Dec. A.D. 1837, A.L. 5837 to the Close of the Grand Annual Communication Held at Palestine, January 19, A.D. 1857, A.L. 5857. In Two Volumes. Vol. I. Galveston: Richardson & Co., News Office. 1860. P. 48-49.

⁶ Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Texas, from its Organization in the City of Houston, Dec. A.D. 1837, A.L. 5837 to the Close of the Grand Annual Communication Held at Palestine, January 19, A.D. 1857, A.L. 5857. In Two Volumes. Vol. I. Galveston: Richardson & Co., News Office. 1860. P. 49.

⁷ Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Texas, from its Organization in the City of Houston, Dec. A.D. 1837, A.L. 5837 to the Close of the Grand Annual Communication Held at Palestine, January 19, A.D. 1857, A.L. 5857. In Two Volumes. Vol. I. Galveston: Richardson & Co., News Office. 1860. P. 86.

⁸ Lightfoot, Jewel P. (1943). *History of Relations Between the Grand Chapter of Texas and the General Grand Chapter of the United States of America*. Fort Worth. P. 34.

The most difficult task proved to be the accumulation of a sufficient number of Knights Templar of the higher York Rite degrees within Texas. After the opening of San Felipe de Austin Encampment No. 1 in 1835, thirteen years passed before a second encampment was established in Texas—Ruthven Encampment No. 2 (Houston, Texas), opened on February 2, 1848¹. Five years later, on May 16, 1853, the third encampment—Palestine Encampment No. 3 (Palestine, Texas)—was opened², providing the legal basis for the creation of the Grand Encampment of Texas.

In 1854, the Grand Encampment of Texas was established, and Samuel M. Williams became its first Grand Commander³, assuming the title of Past Grand Commander in 1855. In that same year, Colorado Encampment No. 4, Dallas Encampment No. 6, and San Antonio Encampment No. 7 were opened. In 1856, all Knights Templar encampments in the United States, both local and state-level, were reorganized into commanderies.

Samuel M. Williams died on September 13, 1858, in Galveston, Galveston County, Texas.

The next Knights Templar encampment was established only after the death of Samuel M. Williams. Looking ahead, it should be noted that a century later, in 1955, the Grand Commandery of Texas already comprised 89 commanderies with a total membership exceeding 22,000 Knights, and its numbers continued to grow. In that year, the Grand Commandery of Texas ranked third in size in the United States, surpassed only by the states of Pennsylvania and Ohio⁴.

By 1970, the number of Knights Templar in Texas exceeded 30,000 members organized in 91 commanderies, placing Texas first in the United States⁵. Yet the beginning of this story dates back to December 1, 1835, when in New York, at Morton Encampment No. 4, Sir Samuel M. Williams was knighted as a Knight Templar. His mission was the creation of a network of Masonic organizations throughout Texas, and this mission was successfully fulfilled.

Conclusion

The activity of Samuel M. Williams represents a rare example of the combination of political, civic, and Masonic missions that exerted a long-term influence on the development of Texas. His assistance to the Republic of Texas, although it followed the Battle of San Jacinto, played a crucial role in stabilizing the young state and preventing a possible renewal of Mexican military intervention. In the years that followed, Williams became one of the central figures in shaping the institutional structure of Freemasonry in Texas: from the establishment of the first regular lodge and participation in the creation of the Grand Lodge to the organization of Royal Arch chapters and the higher chivalric degrees of the York Rite. Of particular significance was his contribution to the establishment of the Grand Encampment, later the Grand Commandery of Texas, which laid the foundation for the rapid growth of Templarism in the region. The history of the development of Masonic organizations in Texas clearly demonstrates that the mission of Samuel M. Williams was not only successfully accomplished, but also determined their trajectory of development for decades to come.

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² Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States 1816 to 1856. New Orleans, La.: Bulletin Book and Job Office. 1859. P. 180.

³ Transactions of the R.E. Grand Commandery of Knights Templar and Appendant Orders of the State of Texas. Houston: W.H. Coyle, Printer and Lithographer, 1883. P. 44.

⁴ Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. Forty-Sixth Triennial Conclave. New York, 1955. P. 148-149.

⁵ Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America. Fifty-First Triennial Conclave. Denver, 1970. P. 64.

Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States 1816 to 1856. New Orlean, La.: Bulletin Book and Job Office. 1859.

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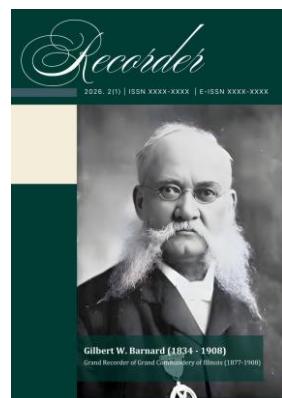
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Personnel of Winchester Grand Encampment No. 1, Knights Templar (Winchester, Virginia) in 1821: A Historical and Genealogical Study

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Abstract

This study examines the personal composition of one of the early Knights Templar organizations in the United States—Winchester Grand Encampment—as of 1821, when its membership consisted of 31 individuals. The source base of the research includes materials from the commercial genealogical database Ancestry.com as well as published documentary collections.

In the conclusion, the author notes that the analysis of the membership of Winchester Grand Encampment in 1821 allows for several important observations regarding the social, age-related, and geographical characteristics of its members. First and foremost, a significant proportion of the members were veterans of the American Revolutionary War. At least eight members of the Encampment had military experience from the Revolutionary War; most of them served as privates, while two held the non-commissioned officer rank of sergeant. This indicates that Winchester Grand Encampment relied heavily on the authority and life experience of men who had participated in key events of early American history. Additional evidence of the military character of this milieu is provided by the service of Presley Marmaduke, who held the rank of captain during the War of 1812.

The age composition of the Encampment demonstrates a combination of generations. Alongside elderly members, such as William Kelley, who was 70 years old in 1821, the organization also included relatively young men, including Samuel H. Lauck and Norman Nash, both aged 31. The average age of 51 years indicates the predominance of mature and socially established men, a characteristic feature of leadership-oriented and fraternal organizations of the period.

The geographical distribution of the members shows that the influence of the Encampment extended beyond a single city and even beyond one state, encompassing Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Mississippi. Finally, the identified family continuity—illustrated by the Lauck family—highlights the role of Winchester Grand Encampment not only as a social institution but also as an intergenerational structure that reinforced traditions and values within individual families.

Keywords: Winchester Grand Encampment, membership composition, 1821, Knights Templar.

Introduction

On March 2, 1900, during the dismantling of an old brick building in Richmond known as the Market House, located on the city square, workers discovered an old lead box. Since the premises in which the box was found had long been occupied by Freemasons, the box was transferred to them. Upon opening the box, Masonic regalia and documents were discovered¹. After the documents were examined and their authenticity confirmed, the materials were published in 1902 in the journal *The American Tyler*.

Materials

Among the discovered documents, the most significant was a copy titled “A List of the Officers and Members of Winchester Grand Encampment of Sir Knights Templars, No. 1”. This document is reproduced in full below: “A list of the Officers and Members of Winchester Grand Encampment of Sir Knights Templars, No. 1, Held in the Fields of Winchester, State of Virginia.

¹ Hoover, J. (1902). An Historic Commandery. *The American Tyler*. Volume XVI. No. 22. P. 518.

Founded Anno Domini 1813, Anno Lucis 5813, and in the Era of Sir Knight Templars 831.

Officers

Most Excellent Sir Knight Daniel Walker Thomas, Esq., Grand Generalissimo.

Reverend Sir Knight George Reed, Excellent Grand Captain General.

Excellent Sir Knight Lemuel Bent, Esq., Grand Captain of the Host.

Excellent Sir Knight Peter Lauck, Grand Standard Bearer.

Excellent Sir Knight Conrad Kremer, Grand Marshal.

Excellent Sir Knight Samuel H. Lauck, Grand Registrar.

Excellent Sir Knight James Hill, Grand Treasurer.

Excellent Sir Knight James Foster, Grand Sword Bearer.

Members.

Sir Robert Maloney, Sir Henry Severs, Sir William P. Helm, Sir Dolphin Drew, Esq., Sir William Herrin, Sir Jacob R. Thomas, Sir Presley Marmaduke, Sir William Kelley, Sir John A. Haupe, Sir Warner Throckmorton, Esq., Reverend Sir Norman Nash, Sir Abraham Lang, Sir Joseph P. Thomas, Sir William W. Blanchard, Sir Isaac Hershell, Sir Edward Jackson, Sir John Wilson, Sir Cyrus B. Baldwin, Sir John Denton, Sir Philip Klipstine, Sir John R. Heyden, Sir John Kern and Sir James Keller.

Deposited, (together with a Triangle, Cross and Star-Jewels of our Order on the thirtieth day of the Seventh Month called July), Anno Domini 1821; Done by Order of our Said Encampment at Wimchester.

D.W. Thomas, M. E. G. G. L.

Attest:

George Reed, E. G. C. G.

Samuel H. Lauck, E. G. R.

Lemuel Bent, E. G. C. H.

The object of this deposite is to shew to some future Age, that the science of Free Masonry is in a flourishing state, not being Trammelled with Governmental fetters as in Ages past — It is also designed to shew that the Religion of Jesus Christ is flourishing and fast gaining ground on Heathenism which has for so many Centuries Inveloped the world in gross darkness and Idolotry. It is hoped when these lines shall again be Exhibited to the Human Eye; it will be high Meridian of Gospel day, when the Glorious Sun of Righteousness shines forth its resplendent beams to Earth's remotest bounds, and all the Inhabitants bow to the mild Centre of the all Glorious Emmanuel — That the Great God of the Universe may hasten the time is the prayer of

Daniel Walker Thomas, Esq.

Most Excellent Grand Generalissimo of the Grand Encampment of Virginia, held in the Fields of Winchester.

“On the thirtieth day of the seventh month (called July), Anno Domini 1821, Anno Lucis 5821, and in the Era of Sir Knights Templars 839. Amen”¹.

In this document, a total of 31 members of the Winchester Grand Encampment are listed. This roster represents one of the earliest surviving lists of Knights Templar not only for the state of Virginia but also for the United States as a whole. In order to establish genealogical information about these individuals, the present study draws upon materials from the commercial genealogical database Ancestry.com, as well as documentary compilations such as Genealogical, Burial, and Service Data for Revolutionary War Patriots Buried in Virginia² and Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment³.

Results

Thus, from the document presented in the Materials section, we learn that the Winchester Grand Encampment was founded in 1813⁴. The organization also possessed its own official seal (Fig. 1), which was reproduced in the original publication.

¹ Hoover, J. (1902). An Historic Commandery. The American Tyler. Volume XVI. No. 22. P. 519.

² Luman, Myron R. (2021). Genealogical, Burial, and Service Data for Revolutionary War Patriots Buried in Virginia. Second Edition. Heritage Books, Inc.

³ Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States 1816 to 1856. New Orleans, La.: Bulletin Book and Job Office. 1859.

⁴ Hoover, J. (1902). An Historic Commandery. The American Tyler. Volume XVI. No. 22. P. 519.



Fig. 1. Seal of Winchester Encampment No. 1¹.

Surprisingly, in 1816, during the establishment of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, representatives of the Winchester Grand Encampment were not present at this assembly and did not become among its founders². This circumstance may indicate that not all Knights Templar organizations in the United States were represented at the founding assembly.

In 1821, the Winchester Grand Encampment consisted of 31 members, including 8 officers. Among the members of the organization were four Esquires and two Reverends. The Esquires included Daniel Walker Thomas, who held the highest office of Grand Generalissimo, Lemuel Bent, who served as Grand Captain of the Host, as well as two members—Warner Throckmorton and Dolphin Drew³.

It should be noted that in the United States the title Esquire denoted a person holding a license to practice law, that is, an individual occupying a high social position. For example, in the first officer corps of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States in 1816, among the twelve officers, eleven were Esquires and one was a Reverend, the latter holding the office of Prelate⁴.

Using the commercial genealogical database Ancestry.com, we identified brief biographies of the earliest Knights Templar of the state of Virginia. These biographies are presented and numbered in the same order as in the membership list of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

No. 1. Esq. Thomas, Daniel Walker (1760–1834)



¹ Hoover, J. (1902). An Historic Commandery. The American Tyler. Volume XVI. No. 22. P. 520.

² Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States 1816 to 1856. New Orleans, La.: Bulletin Book and Job Office. 1859. P. 3.

³ Hoover, J. (1902). An Historic Commandery. The American Tyler. Volume XVI. No. 22. P. 519.

⁴ Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States 1816 to 1856. New Orleans, La.: Bulletin Book and Job Office. 1859. P. 4.

Daniel Walker Thomas was born on November 12, 1760, in Coventry Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. He was married to Sarah Potts Ellis.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment. In the same year, he was elected to the highest office within the Encampment—Grand Generalissimo.

He died on September 6, 1834, in Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia.

No. 2. Rev. Reed, George A. (1766–1849)

George A. Reed was born on February 13, 1766, in Ireland. He was married to Martha Chambers Tilden.

From 1796 onward, he resided in Winchester, where he served as a minister of the Methodist Church¹. In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on April 1, 1849, in Winchester, Virginia.

No. 3. Esq. Bent, Lemuel (1766–1849)

Lemuel Bent was born on February 17, 1766, in Canton. He was married to Betsey Lewis.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment and was elected to the officer position of Grand Captain of the Host.

He died on April 5, 1849, in Winchester, Virginia.

No. 4. Capt. Lauck, Peter (1753–1839)



Peter Lauck was born on December 31, 1753, in Pennsylvania. He was married to Amelia Lauck.

He was a veteran of the American Revolutionary War and served with the rank of Private².

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment and was elected to the officer position of Standard Bearer. In 1823, at the establishment of the Grand Encampment (Commandery) of Knights Templar of Virginia, he was elected to the office of Grand Treasurer.

He died on October 2, 1839, in Winchester, Virginia.

¹ Morton, F. (1925). The Story of Winchester in Virginia the Oldest Town in the Shenandoah Valley. Strasburg, Va.: Shenandoah Publishing House. P. 214.

² Luman, Myron R. (2021). Genealogical, Burial, and Service Data for Revolutionary War Patriots Buried in Virginia. Second Edition. Heritage Books, Inc. P. 240.

No. 5. Kremer, Conrad (1755–1837)

Conrad Kremer was born on January 5, 1755, in Germany. He was married to Catherine Helphenstine.

He registered for military service in 1776 and was a veteran of the American Revolutionary War. In 1822, he served as Superintendent of Police in Winchester.

He was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment and, in 1821, was elected to the officer position of Grand Marshal. In 1823, he was among the founders of the Grand Encampment (Commandery) of Knights Templar of Virginia and was elected Grand Senior Warden.

He died on May 29, 1837, in Winchester, Virginia.

No. 6. Lauck, Samuel H. (1790–1828)

Samuel H. Lauck was born on December 10, 1790, in Winchester, Virginia. He was the son of Peter Lauck and was married to Mildred Lindsey.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment and was elected to the office of Grand Registrar (equivalent to Recorder). In 1823, at the establishment of the Grand Encampment (Commandery) of Knights Templar of Virginia, he was elected Grand Standard Bearer.

He died on March 5, 1828, in Frederick County, Virginia.

No. 7. Hill, James (1757–1830)

James Hill was born in 1757 in Chesterfield, Chesterfield County, Virginia. He was married to Anne Hill.

He was a soldier of the Continental Army and served in the Virginia Line with the rank of Private. In 1818, he resided in Sussex, Virginia.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment and was elected Grand Treasurer.

He died in 1830.

No. 8. Foster, James (1759–1841)

James Foster was born in 1759.

He served in the American Revolutionary War in the Virginia militia with the rank of Private and was associated with Winchester and Frederick County.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment and was elected Grand Sword Bearer. In 1831, he resided in Frederick County, Virginia.

He died in 1841.

No. 9. Maloney, Robert

Robert Maloney resided in London Grove, Chester County, Pennsylvania.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

No. 10. Seavers, Henry (1768–1857)

Henry Seavers was born on July 25, 1768, in Virginia. He was married to Elizabeth H. Seavers.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment and was also affiliated with Mount Carmel Encampment. In 1823, he was among the founders of the Grand Encampment (Commandery) of Knights Templar of Virginia and was elected Grand Captain General.

He died on January 1, 1857, in Winchester, Virginia.

No. 11. Helm, William P.

In 1821, William P. Helm was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

In 1845, he resided in Noxubee County, Mississippi, and in 1850 he was living in Yazoo County, Mississippi.

No. 12. Esq. Drew, Dolphin (1776–1856)

Dolphin Drew was born in 1776.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on September 4, 1856, in Kabletown, Jefferson County, Virginia.

No. 13. Herrin, William (1762–1847)

William Herrin was born in 1762 and was married to Elizabeth Herrin.

He was a veteran of the American Revolutionary War and served as a Sergeant in the Virginia militia.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on December 26, 1847, in Intermont, Hampshire County, Virginia.

No. 14. Thomas, Jacob R.

In 1820, Jacob R. Thomas resided in Waterford, Loudoun County, Virginia.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment. In 1823, he represented Warren Encampment¹. In 1824, he resided in Harpers Ferry, Jefferson County².

No. 15. Capt. Marmaduke, Presley (d. 1823)

Presley Marmaduke was born in Shepherdstown, Jefferson County, Virginia. He was married to Sarah Klise in 1810.

During the War of 1812, he commanded a local militia company in April 1814³.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on July 28, 1823, in Shepherdstown, Jefferson County, Virginia.

No. 16. Kelley, William (1751–1822)

William Kelley was born in 1751 in Lancaster, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He was a veteran of the American Revolutionary War and served with the rank of Private.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on June 8, 1822, in Lancaster, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

No. 17. Haupe, John A.

In 1821, John A. Haupe was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He was not recorded as residing in Winchester or Frederick County.

No. 18. Esq. Throckmorton, Warner (1783–1826)

Warner Throckmorton was born in 1783 in Winchester, Virginia. He was married to Catherine Inskeep.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment. In 1823, he was among the founders of the Grand Encampment (Commandery) of Knights Templar of Virginia and was elected to the second-highest office of that body—Deputy Grand Master.

He died on March 13, 1826, in Romney, Hampshire County, Virginia.

¹ Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar Masons of Virginia. Winchester, 1823. P. 7.

² Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar Masons of Virginia. Winchester, 1824. P. 15.

³ Bushong, M.K. (1941). A history of a Jefferson County West Virginia. Charles Town, West Virginia: Jefferson Publishing Company. P. 71.

No. 19. Rev. Nash, Norman (1790–1870)

Norman Nash was born on November 17, 1790, in Ellington, Tolland County, Connecticut.

In 1820, he resided in Frankfort, Hampshire County, Virginia. In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on November 11, 1870, in Port Huron, St. Clair County, Michigan.

No. 20. Lang, Abraham (1770–1844)

Abraham Lang was born on December 24, 1770.

In 1820, he resided in Bethel, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on December 29, 1844, in Jonestown, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania.

No. 21. Thomas, Joseph P.

In 1821, Joseph P. Thomas was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

No further biographical data could be reliably identified.

No. 22. Blanchard, William W. (1785–1872)

William W. Blanchard was born on May 17, 1785, in England.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment. In 1823, he represented Mount Carmel Encampment¹.

He died on January 18, 1872, in Shelbyville, Shelby County, Missouri.

No. 23. Hershell, Isaac

Isaac Hershell was not recorded as residing in Winchester or Frederick County.

In October 1778, Isaac Hershell served in the 14th Virginia Regiment with the rank of Sergeant. In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

No. 24. Jackson, Edward

In 1821, Edward Jackson was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

No additional reliable biographical information has been identified.

No. 25. Wilson, John

John Wilson was not recorded as residing in Winchester or Frederick County.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

No. 26. Baldwin, Cyrus B. (1782–1855)

Cyrus B. Baldwin was born on September 25, 1782, in Newtown, Fairfield County, Connecticut.

In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on August 15, 1855, in Rockbridge, Virginia.

¹ Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar Masons of Virginia. Winchester, 1823. P. 7.

No. 27. Denton, John

John Denton was not recorded as residing in Winchester or Frederick County. In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

No. 28. Dr. Klipstine, Philip

In 1810, Philip Klipstine was recorded in Winchester in the age category of 45 years and over. In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

No. 29. Heyden, John R.

In December 1778, John R. Heyden served in the 3rd Virginia Regiment with the rank of Private. He resided in Bolivar, Jefferson County, Virginia. In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

In 1823, he represented Warren Encampment¹. In 1824, he resided in Harpers Ferry².

No. 30. Kern, John (1788–1839)

John Kern was born on December 22, 1788, in Frederick County, Virginia. In 1820, he resided in New Market, Shenandoah County, Virginia. In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on August 24, 1839, in Wayne, Ohio.

No. 31. Keller (Keeling), James (1769–1846)

James Keller (also recorded as Keeling) was born on March 18, 1769. He was married to Christiana Hickman.

He resided in Frederick County, Virginia. In 1821, he was a member of the Winchester Grand Encampment.

He died on November 16, 1846, in Fountain County, Indiana.

Unfortunately, no reliable biographical data could be identified for four members of the Winchester Grand Encampment due to the prevalence of their names in contemporary records. These individuals are Joseph P. Thomas, Edward Jackson, John Wilson, and John Denton. For several other members, the available biographical information remains incomplete.

All identified biographical data have been systematized and summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Membership of the Winchester Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in 1821

No.	Name	Revolutionary War Service, Rank	Year of Birth	Age in 1821	Place of Residence
1	Thomas, Daniel Walker	-	1760	61	Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia
2	Reed, George A.	-	1766	55	Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia
3	Bent, Lemuel	-	1766	55	Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia
4	Lauck, Peter	Private	1753	68	Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia

¹ Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar Masons of Virginia. Winchester, 1823. P. 7.

² Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar Masons of Virginia. Winchester, 1824. P. 15.

5	Kremer, Conrad	Private	1755	66	Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia
6	Lauck, Samuel H.	-	1790	31	Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia
7	Hill, James	Private	1757	64	Sussex, Virginia
8	Foster, James	Private	1759	62	Frederick County, Virginia
9	Maloney, Robert	unknown	unknown	unknown	London Grove, Chester County, Pennsylvania
10	Seavers, Henry	-	1768	53	Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia
11	Helm, William P.	unknown	unknown	unknown	Noxubee, Mississippi
12	Drew, Dolphin	-	1776	45	Kabletown, Jefferson, Virginia
13	Herrin, William	Serg.	1762	59	Intermont, Hampshire County, Virginia
14	Thomas, Jacob R.	unknown	unknown	unknown	Harpers Ferry, Jefferson County, Virginia
15	Marmaduke, Presley	unknown	unknown	unknown	Sherpherdstown, Jefferson County, Virginia
16	Kelley, William	Private	1751	70	Lancaster, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania
17	John A. Haupe	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
18	Throckmorton, Warner	-	1783	38	Romney, Hampshire County, Virginia
19	Nash, Norman	-	1790	31	Frankfort, Hampshire, Virginia
20	Lang, Abraham	-	1770	51	Bethel, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania
21	Thomas, Joseph P.	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
22	Blanchard, William W.	-	1785	36	Mount Carmel, Virginia
23	Hershell, Isaac	Serg.	unknown	unknown	unknown
24	Jackson, Edward	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
25	Wilson, John	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
26	Baldwin, Cyrus B.	-	1782	39	Rockbridge, Virginia
27	Denton, John	unknown	unknown	unknown	unknown
28	Philip Klipstine	unknown	unknown	unknown	Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia
29	Heyden, John R.	Private	unknown	unknown	Harpers Ferry, Virginia
30	Kern, John	-	1788	33	New Market, Shenandoah, Virginia
31	Keller	-	1769	52	Frederick County, Virginia

According to the data presented in Table 1, at least eight members of the Winchester Grand Encampment were veterans of the American Revolutionary War. Of these, six served as privates and two held the rank of sergeant. For ten members of the Encampment, no reliable information regarding military service could be identified, while the remaining members were not veterans of the Revolutionary War. In addition, at least one member of the Encampment—Presley Marmaduke—served with the rank of captain during the War of 1812.

The oldest member of the Winchester Grand Encampment was William Kelley, who was 70 years old in 1821. The youngest members of the organization were Samuel H. Lauck and Rev. Norman Nash, both aged 31. Birth dates are known for nineteen individuals, which makes it possible to calculate the average age of this group. Thus, in 1821, the average age of the Knights Templar within the Winchester Grand Encampment was 51 years.

Information on the places of residence of the members of the Winchester Grand Encampment is also of particular interest. For six members, no residence data could be identified. Ten members resided in Frederick County, Virginia, which included the town of Winchester; eleven lived in other parts of the state of Virginia; and four resided outside the state—three in Pennsylvania and one in Mississippi. Consequently, in 1821 the geographical reach of the Winchester Grand Encampment extended beyond a single state, encompassing three states in total.

The example of the Winchester Grand Encampment also demonstrates patterns of family continuity. For instance, members of the Lauck family—Peter Lauck and Samuel H. Lauck—were father and son, illustrating the intergenerational transmission of membership within the organization.

Conclusion

The analysis of the membership of the Winchester Grand Encampment in 1821 allows for several important conclusions regarding the social, age-related, and geographical profile of the members of this organization. Most notably, a significant proportion of the Encampment consisted of veterans of the American Revolutionary War. At least eight members had military experience during the Revolutionary War; the majority of them served as privates, while two held the non-commissioned officer rank of sergeant. This suggests that the Winchester Grand Encampment relied heavily on the authority and life experience of individuals who had participated in the formative events of early American history. Additional evidence of the military character of this milieu is provided by the service of Presley Marmaduke, who held the rank of captain during the War of 1812.

The age composition of the Encampment reflects a clear intergenerational structure. Alongside elderly members such as William Kelley, who had reached the age of seventy by 1821, the organization also included comparatively young men, including Samuel H. Lauck and Norman Nash, both aged thirty-one. The average age of fifty-one years indicates the predominance of mature, socially established men, a characteristic feature of leadership-oriented and fraternal organizations of the period.

The geographical distribution of the members further demonstrates that the influence of the Winchester Grand Encampment extended beyond a single city and even beyond the boundaries of one state, encompassing Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Mississippi. Finally, the identified pattern of family continuity—illustrated by the Lauck family—underscores the role of the Winchester Grand Encampment not only as a social institution but also as an intergenerational structure that reinforced traditions and values within individual families.

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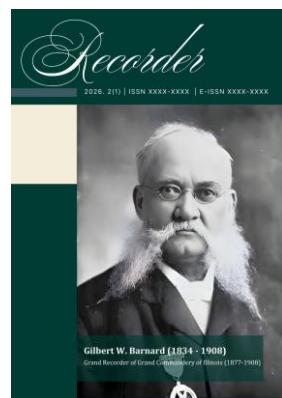
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In Memory of Sir Knight Gilbert W. Barnard (1834–1908), Grand Recorder of the Grand Commandery of Illinois (based on periodical press materials of 1908)

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Abstract

This article is dedicated to the memory of Sir Knight Gilbert W. Barnard (1834–1908), who served as Grand Recorder of the Grand Commandery of Illinois from 1877 to 1908. The source base of the study consists of collections of documents related to the activities of the Grand Commandery of Illinois, as well as periodical press materials devoted to the death of Gilbert Wordsworth Barnard. In the conclusion, the author argues that the research conducted makes it possible not only to reconstruct the main stages of the biography of Sir Knight Gilbert Wordsworth Barnard (1834–1908), but also to determine his real significance in the history of the Grand Commandery of Illinois and American Templar Freemasonry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An analysis of the sources shows that Barnard was not merely a long-serving administrator in the position of Grand Recorder, but a key figure who ensured institutional stability, continuity of traditions, and the effective functioning of the higher Masonic structures of the State of Illinois. The scale of his activity is confirmed both by numerous official references in the proceedings of annual conclaves and by the considerable attention paid to his death in the periodical and specialized Masonic press. Of particular importance are obituaries and memorial texts, which make it possible to identify the perception of Barnard by his contemporaries as a moral authority, an expert in matters of Masonic law, and a guardian of ritual and organizational tradition. The number of degrees he held, the offices he occupied, and his extensive committee work testify to his exceptional involvement in the life of the Order. Thus, the death of Gilbert W. Barnard in 1908 became not only a personal loss for his closest associates, but also a significant event for the entire Masonic community of Illinois. The material presented demonstrates that the study of figures of this magnitude allows for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of functioning of Masonic institutions and the role of individual personalities in their sustainable development.

Keywords: Sir Knight Gilbert W. Barnard (1834–1908), Grand Recorder, Grand Commandery of Illinois, Knights Templar, June 19, 1908, memorial publications.

Introduction

On June 19, 1908, the Grand Commandery of Illinois suffered a great loss: on that day, Grand Recorder Sir Knight Gilbert Wordsworth Barnard, who had held this position since 1877, passed away¹. Gilbert W. Barnard was born on June 1, 1834, in Palmyra, Wayne County, New York. He received the third Masonic degree in Garden City Lodge No. 141 in 1864, followed by the Royal Arch in Corinthian Chapter No. 69 in 1866 and the degrees of Royal and Select Masters in Siloam Council No. 53 in 1871².

On May 13, 1870, he was knighted in St. Bernard Commandery No. 35³. As early as 1871, he was elected to the officer position of Prelate⁴, and he remained in the same office in 1872⁵. In 1873, he was elected to the

¹ Fifty-Second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1908. P. 134.

² Fifty-Second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1908. P. 59.

³ Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Conclave, of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois. Chicago: Horton and Leonard, steam book and job printers, 1870. P. 125.

⁴ Fifteenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois. Chicago: Horton and Leonard, printers, 1871. P. 142.

third of the highest officer positions, Captain General¹. At the same time, he was elected to his first officer position in the Grand Commandery of Illinois, that of Grand Standard Bearer². In 1874, he was elected to the second-highest officer position, Generalissimo³, and in 1875 he became Eminent Commander of St. Bernard Commandery No. 35⁴. From 1876, he held the title of Past Commander. Subsequently, he served on various committees, including the Committee on Finance and Accounts⁵. In 1877, he was elected to the office of Grand Recorder (Fig. 1)⁶. From that time until his death, he remained in this position⁷. He died on June 19, 1908, in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

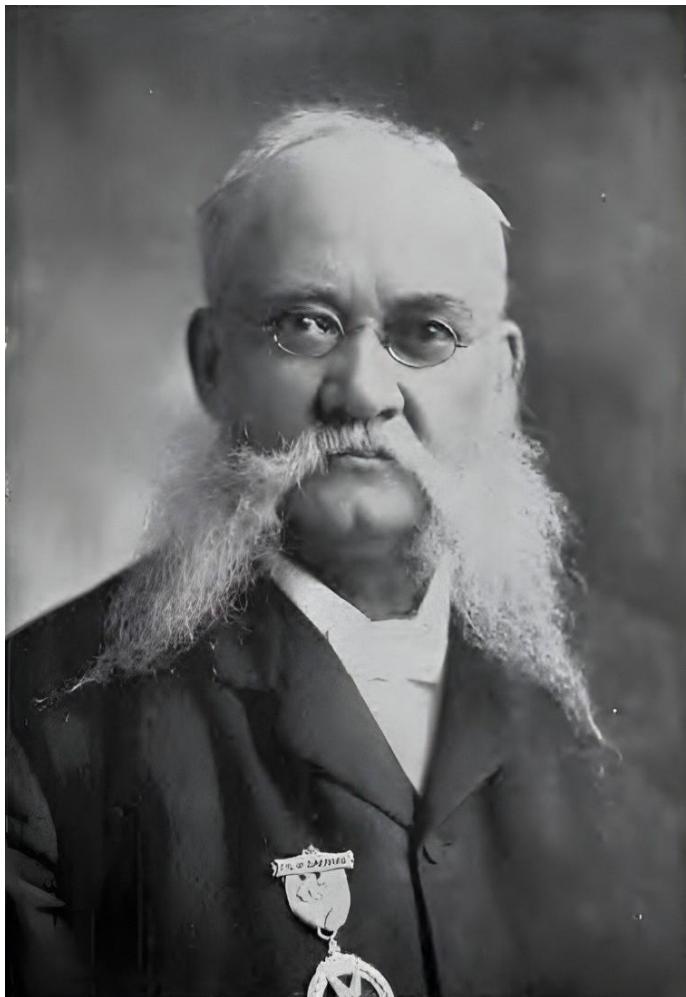


Fig. 1. Sir Knight Gilbert W. Barnard (1834–1908). Late 19th century.

Materials

The source base of the study consists of collections of documents related to the activities of the Grand Commandery of Illinois and materials from the periodical press devoted to the death of Gilbert Wordsworth Barnard.

⁵ Sixteenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois. Chicago: Knight and Leonard, printers, 1872. P. 114.

¹ Seventeenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois. Chicago: Knight and Leonard, printers, 1873. P. 135.

² Seventeenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois. Chicago: Knight and Leonard, printers, 1873. P. 35.

³ Eighteenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois. Chicago: Knight and Leonard, printers, 1874. P. 27.

⁴ Nineteenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois. Chicago: Knight and Leonard, printers, 1875. P. 47.

⁵ Twentieth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois. Chicago: Knight and Leonard, printers, 1876. P. 8.

⁶ Twenty-first Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois. Chicago: Hazlitt and Reed, printers, 1877. P. 40.

⁷ Fifty-Second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1908. P. 134.

Among the first group of sources, particular mention should be made of the numerous *Proceedings of the Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois*. The study makes use of the *Proceedings* for the years 1870–1877 and 1908.

The second group of sources includes numerous newspaper publications: *Waukegan Daily Sun*, *Fremont Tribune*, *The Evening Journal*, *The Times-Democrat*, *Omaha Daily Bee*, *Chattanooga News*, *Bonners Ferry Herald*, and *Troy Weekly News*, published between June 19 and June 27, 1908.

Results

One of the first newspapers to report this sad news was the New York paper *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, which published the notice “Gilbert W. Barnard” on June 19, 1908. The notice is quoted in full below:

“Chicago, June 19—Gilbert Wadsworth Barnard, well known to the Masonic fraternity of Chicago and the United States, died at his residence here early to-day, after a lingering illness of several months. ‘Gil’ W. Barnard, as he was known, held more active Masonic offices and had more degrees than any other member of his order, so far as is known. His degrees numbered more than three hundred, a large proportion being conferred by collateral orders.

During the last few years of his life Mr. Barnard devoted himself to directing the work of the Masonic bodies of Illinois. He was the active working force in ten big state bodies, writing reports and directing all the details of the work. Mr. Barnard was an oracle on matters of precedent and interpretation of Masonic laws. All disputes that could not be settled elsewhere came to him for final judgment.

His connection with Masonry began in 1864. Mr. Barnard was born in Palmyra, N. Y., in 1834¹.

The same publication appeared on the same day in the *Chattanooga News*².

On June 20, the notice “Gilbert W. Barnard Dead” was disseminated in the mass media and published in *The Evening Journal* and *The Times-Democrat*³. Three days later, this notice was reprinted in the *Fremont Tribune* on June 23, 1908⁴. In addition, on June 20 the *Omaha Daily Bee* published a brief notice entitled “Gilbert W. Barnard.”⁵

On June 22, the *Waukegan Daily Sun* reported on the funeral in an article entitled “Gilbert Barnard Buried.”⁶

A more detailed obituary appeared only on June 26, 1908, in the *Troy Weekly News* under the title “Mason of Many Degrees Dies.” This publication is quoted in full below:

“Gilbert Wadsworth Barnard, well known to the Masonic fraternity of Chicago and the United States, died at his residence in Chicago recently. Heart disease was the cause of his death.

‘Gil’ W. Barnard, as he was known to his friends, held more active Masonic offices and had more degrees than any other member of his order, so far as is known. His degrees numbered more than 300, a large proportion being conferred by collateral orders.

During the last few years of his life Mr. Barnard devoted himself to directing the work of the Masonic bodies of Illinois. He was the active working force in 10 big state bodies, writing reports and directing the details of the work”⁷.

On June 27, 1908, this publication was reprinted in the *Bonners Ferry Herald*⁸.

However, the greatest attention to the death of the distinguished Mason was paid in the Masonic press, particularly in the materials of the Annual Conclave of 1908. In these materials, the name of the deceased is mentioned 80 times.

His name was first mentioned in connection with the issuance of Order No. 3, which reported that, due to the illness of Gilbert W. Barnard, Sir Knight Chester S. Gurney was appointed to the position of Grand Recorder effective June 3, 1908⁹. Subsequently, the death of Gilbert W. Barnard was officially announced.

In the section *Memorials*, materials describing the circumstances of the funeral were published:

“June 19, 1908, our dearly beloved Grand Recorder, Gilbert Wordsworth Barnard, was called from labor to refreshment; from his many years of toil in our Order, to his well-earned rest.

On Friday morning, June 19, 1908, our dear old friend, brother and counselor, after a long and most exceptional life of usefulness, passed away. Em. Sir Knight Barnard ‘wrapped the drapery of his couch around him and lay down to pleasant dreams.’

‘We shall meet, but we shall miss him.’

¹ Gilbert W. Barnard. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. June 19, 1908.

² Gilbert Wordsworth Barnard. *Chattanooga News*. June 19, 1908.

³ Gilbert W. Barnard Dead. *The Times-Democrat*. June 20, 1908.

⁴ Gilbert W. Barnard Dead. *Fremont Tribune*. June 23, 1908.

⁵ Gilbert W. Barnard. *Omaha Daily Bee*. June 20, 1908.

⁶ Gilbert Barnard Buried. *Waukegan Daily Sun*. June 22, 1908.

⁷ Mason of Many Degrees Dies. *Troy Weekly News*. June 26, 1908.

⁸ Mason of Many Degrees Dies. *Bonners Ferry Herald*. June 27, 1908.

⁹ Fifty-Second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1908. P. 15.

The subordinate Commanderies were notified by wire of Sir Knight Barnard's death, and the attendance at the funeral was very large. The following Commanderies attended: Apollo, Joliet, Chicago, St. Bernard, Montjoie, Siloam, Evanston, Englewood, Columbia, St. Elmo, and Mizpah, making a total present of nearly one thousand Sir Knights. The escort was in charge of our most efficient Grand Generalissimo, and every detail was most carefully carried out.

Following the battalion of Templars, a very large representation from Oriental Consistory, officers of the Grand Chapter, Grand Lodge, and innumerable friends came in carriages¹.

This was followed by an extensive obituary:

"ILLINOIS. Sir Knight Gilbert Wordsworth Barnard. Past Commander of St. Bernard Commandery No. 35, and Grand Recorder of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. 'The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.' The poet's words suggest the meditative and the retrospective, and to us who knew not only well, but intimately and affectionately, the attractive personality, the warm cordiality, and enduring friendliness of the noble dead, the parting of the way is drear. Had not the gracious Barnard received the honors of Knighthood, the character and bearing of the true Templar would have been personified in the nobility and fearlessness that were inborn in that strongest and gentlest of men. Many of his contemporary fraters, and their number is legion, will always recall with tender recollections the urbanity and quaint humor of dear old 'Gil,' as he so liked to be called, and it may truly be said that no Nestor of any age was more revered, none whose opinion on questions relating to any detail of the Craft was more respected, and whose advice was more faithfully followed. How many who are now listening will easily call to mind the unalterable patience and the kindliness of spirit that governed his every word and action. 'None knew him but to love him, none named him but to praise,' is interwoven in the wreath of recollection of that true and lovable Knight whose memory we honor and whose love we mourn. If ever the saying, 'Men, not Masonry alone, adorns the Order,' had special significance, it is when the character of the departed one is remembered; for the life of any institution, ancient or modern, is dependent on the strength and noble traits of the individuals who compose it, and in truth our deeply lamented frater was in our Order a strong tower; a Father in Israel has fallen, and we do well to grieve. His office was a haven of rest and refuge for those who sought help or advice, and his genial good nature was like a benediction to all who came into his presence. To us as Christian Knights, the life of 'Gil' stands as a pillar of light, for he practiced knightly virtues in every act of each day of his life..."².

In addition, a personal memorial page (Fig. 2) and a photograph (Fig. 1) were published.

This was followed by numerous mentions of his name in the lists of the officer corps of the Grand Commandery of Illinois³. He was also listed among the deceased knights of St. Bernard Commandery No. 35, of which he had been a member since 1870, for nearly forty years⁴. In addition, his name appeared in correspondence with other Grand Commanderies of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States⁵.

¹ Fifty-Second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1908. P. 32.

² Fifty-Second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1908. P. 58-60.

³ Fifty-Second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1908. P. 134.

⁴ Fifty-Second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1908. P. 153.

⁵ Fifty-Second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1908. P. 85-88.

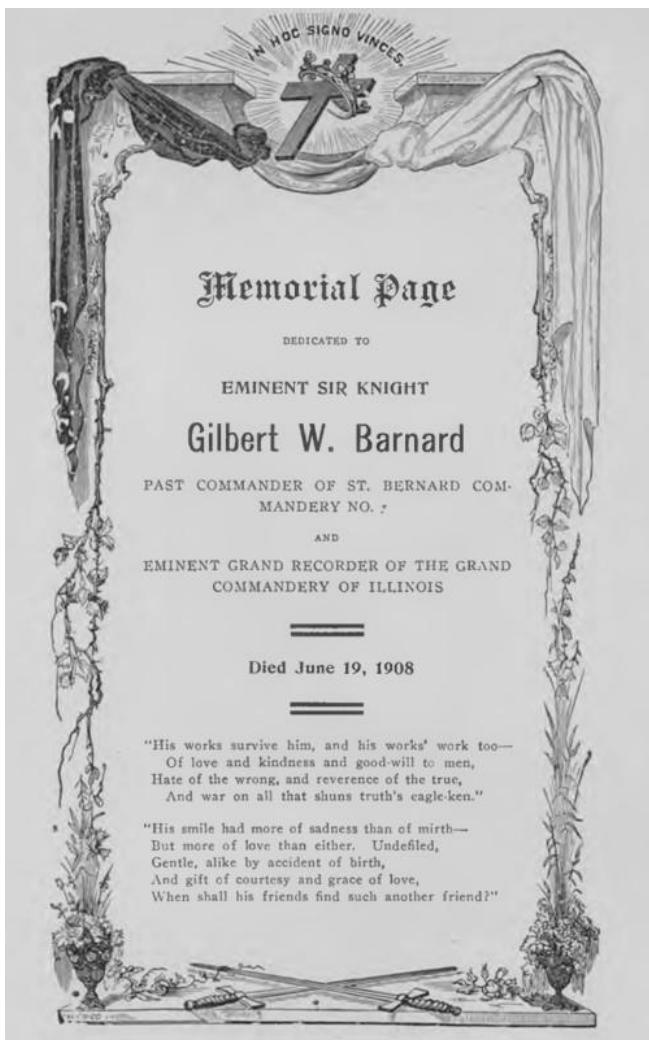


Fig. 2. Memorial page dedicated to Gilbert W. Barnard¹.

Conclusion

The research conducted makes it possible to reconstruct not only the main stages of the biography of Sir Knight Gilbert Wordsworth Barnard (1834–1908), but also to determine his real significance in the history of the Grand Commandery of Illinois and American Templar Freemasonry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An analysis of the sources demonstrates that Barnard was not merely an administrator who held the office of Grand Recorder for an extended period, but a key figure who ensured institutional stability, continuity of traditions, and the effective functioning of the higher Masonic structures of the State of Illinois. The scale of his activity is confirmed both by numerous official references in the materials of annual conclaves and by the attention devoted to his death in the periodical and specialized Masonic press.

Of particular importance are obituaries and memorial texts, which make it possible to identify how Barnard was perceived by his contemporaries—as a moral authority, an expert in matters of Masonic law, and a guardian of ritual and organizational tradition. The number of degrees he held, the offices he occupied, and his extensive committee work testify to his exceptional involvement in the life of the Order. Thus, the death of Gilbert W. Barnard in 1908 became not only a personal loss for his closest associates, but also a significant event for the entire Masonic community of Illinois. The material presented demonstrates that the study of figures of this magnitude allows for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying the functioning of Masonic institutions and the role of individual personalities in their sustainable development.

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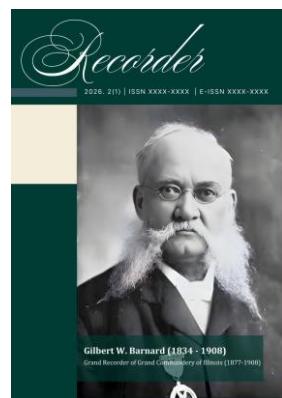
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National Hotel Disease (1857): The Story of One Victim — What Really Happened?

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Abstract

This article presents the author's interpretation of the events of 1857 associated with the National Hotel Disease. The author attempts to examine this incident through the life history of one of its victims. The study is based on two groups of historical sources: official reports and periodical press materials from 1857.

In the conclusion, the author notes that the present study makes it possible to consider the 1857 incident at the National Hotel in Washington not merely as an epidemic or a sanitary disaster, but as an event with potential political consequences. The biography of Alfred C. Barry serves as an indicator of the long-term impact of the poisoning on the lives of individual representatives of the political and intellectual elite of the mid-nineteenth-century United States. An analysis of official reports and periodical press materials reveals a number of anomalies, including the absence of quarantine measures, the coincidence of the peak of the disease with the inauguration of James Buchanan, and the severe and chronic consequences of the illness for a significant number of those affected. These facts make it difficult to explain the incident solely by sanitary causes. The hypothesis advanced in this article regarding a possible political motivation behind the poisoning does not claim to offer a definitive conclusion; however, it allows the event to be reconsidered within the broader context of the escalating crisis of American statehood on the eve of the Civil War. Further research on this incident may contribute to a deeper understanding of the hidden mechanisms of political struggle in the United States during the 1850s.

Keywords: Alfred Constantine Barry (1815–1888), National Hotel Disease, 1857, the story of one victim, hypothesis.

Introduction

In 2025, my article devoted to the biography of Sir Alfred Constantine Barry (1815–1888)—one of the victims of the poisoning at the National Hotel in 1857—was published in the *European Journal of Contemporary Education*¹. The present article constitutes a continuation of this research. Its purpose is to identify and analyze the cause-and-effect relationships of this event within the broader historical context that developed in the United States in 1857.

Materials

The source base of the study consists of two groups of historical sources: official reports and periodical press materials from 1857.

The first group includes official reports, primarily the report of the Committee of the Board of Health entitled *The Washington Epidemic: Report of the Committee of the Board of Health*, published in *The New York Times* on March 25, 1857².

The second group comprises materials from the American periodical press of 1857. One of the earliest publications was an article in the *New York Daily Times* dated March 23, 1857, entitled “The Washington

¹ Cherkas, Alexander C. (2025). Sir Alfred Constantine Barry (1815–1888): Minister, Educator, Mason // *European Journal of Contemporary Education*. 14(4): 617–624.

² “The Washington Epidemic – Report of the Committee of the Board of Health”. *The New York Times*. March 25, 1857.

Epidemic¹. In the same year, the epidemic was also addressed by the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, which published the article "The National Hotel Disease — Letter to Dr. D. H. Storer"².

Results

Our story begins on July 15, 1815, when Alfred Constantine Barry (1815–1888) was born in Walton, Delaware County, New York³. Shortly afterward, his family moved to Victor, New York, where Alfred received an excellent education from private instructors. Among his preceptors was Rev. Jacob Chase of Geneva.

At the age of 21, Barry was ordained a Universalist minister (1836) and served as pastor in several towns across New York State for the next ten years — Gaines (Orleans County), Homer (Cortland County), and Fort Plain.

In 1846, he moved to Racine, in the future state of Wisconsin. He would live in Wisconsin for the next 18 years and ultimately spend the remainder of his life there until his death in 1888.

Temperance and Public Education

When Wisconsin became a state in 1848, a temperance movement quickly emerged. That same year, the Sons of Temperance established a Grand Division in Milwaukee. Founded on the East Coast, the organization promoted a strictly alcohol-free lifestyle. Rev. Alfred C. Barry joined the movement and soon became a highly active member.

In Racine, he founded and edited the temperance magazine *The Old Oaken Bucket* (1849–1852) (Fig. 1). The publication became the official organ of the Wisconsin Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance⁴.

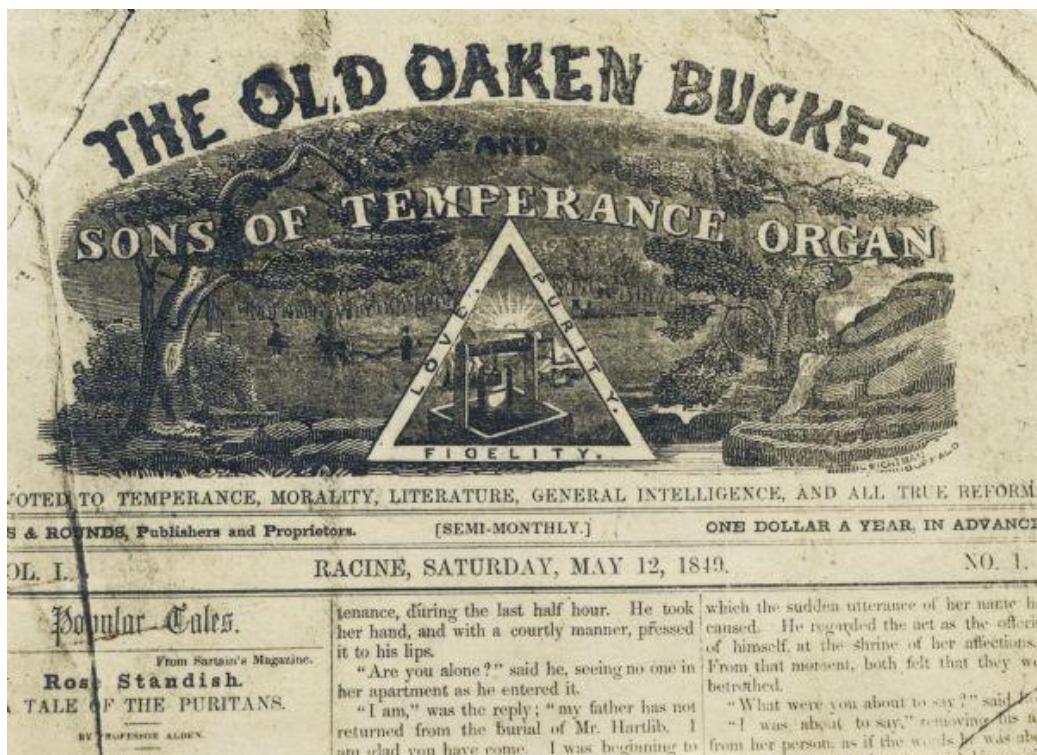


Fig. 1. Cover of Magazine 'The Old Oaken Bucket'

Simultaneously, Barry became deeply involved in public education. From 1849 to 1853, he served as the first superintendent of public schools in Racine. Pedagogically, he followed the ideas of Horace Mann, supported the creation of district teachers' institutes, and advocated for the consolidation of school districts.

In 1855, Barry became the 4th Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Wisconsin, serving until 1857. Politically, he was an active member of the Democratic Party⁵.

¹ "The Washington Epidemic", New York Daily Times, March 23, 1857.

² "The National Hotel Disease — Letter to Dr. D. H. Storer". *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*. 1857. 56(19): 371–376.

³ Butterfield, C.W. (1880). *The History of Columbia County, Wisconsin*. Chicago, IL: Western Historical Company. P. 989.

⁴ Schaefer, J. (1925). Prohibition in Early Wisconsin. *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*. 8(3): 284.

On November 4, 1856, the Democratic candidate James Buchanan won the U.S. presidential election¹. The inauguration was scheduled for March 4, 1857, and Superintendent Barry was invited to Washington together with his wife.

Arrival in Washington and the National Hotel Poisoning

In late February 1857, Alfred C. Barry and his wife arrived in Washington, D.C., and checked into the National Hotel (Fig. 2), where many inauguration guests were staying.



Fig. 2. National Hotel, Washington, D.C.

There, both he and his wife, along with scores of other guests, suffered a severe poisoning, now known in American history as the National Hotel disease — considered by some historians to be one of the largest poisoning episodes in the 19th century. If intentional, it would have been the most significant political crime of that century.

Even President James Buchanan himself fell ill, though he eventually recovered.

The disease was characterized by symptoms recorded by physicians at the time:

“The National Hotel epidemic manifested itself as a persistent diarrhea, often accompanied by intense colic. Those affected experienced sudden prostration along with nausea.”

Many victims never recovered and suffered chronic illness for the rest of their lives. Some notable fatalities included:

Rep. John Montgomery (Pennsylvania) — died one month later at age 51

Rep. John Quitman (Mississippi) — died 16 months later at age 60

Rep. David Robinson (Pennsylvania) — died 27 months later at age 43

For Alfred C. Barry, March 4, 1857, became the dividing line of his life: before and after the poisoning.

Once an energetic pastor, politician, educator, editor, and public figure, he now became — in modern terms — a person with severe long-term health impairments. The nature of his illness made further political service impossible. He did not seek re-election and withdrew almost entirely from public life.

The Civil War Years

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Barry volunteered for the Union Army.

From June 15, 1861, to June 8, 1862, he served as Chaplain of the 4th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment².

Returning to Wisconsin, he worked on the local recruiting board, helping enlist volunteers.

In 1863, he was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly from Kenosha County, serving in the 17th Wisconsin Legislature.

After the legislative session, on April 4, 1864, he returned to active military duty as Chaplain of the 19th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment, serving until February 9, 1865.

⁵ Butterfield, C.W. (1880). *The History of Columbia County, Wisconsin*. Chicago, IL: Western Historical Company. P. 989.

¹ Cherkas, Alexander C. (2025). Sir Alfred Constantine Barry (1815–1888): Minister, Educator, Mason // *European Journal of Contemporary Education*. 14(4): 621.

² Roster of Wisconsin Volunteers, War of the Rebellion, 1861– 1865. Volume I. Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, 1886. P. 156-157.

On February 9, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln appointed him Chaplain of the United States Hospitals¹.

He was honorably discharged on August 15, 1865².

Later Life and Ministry

After leaving military service, Barry dedicated the rest of his life to missionary and pastoral work. In spring 1864, he moved his family from Racine to Fond du Lac, where they lived for four years. In 1868, the family relocated to Elkhorn (Walworth County), where Barry founded a new church³. In April 1878, they moved to Lodi, where Alfred C. Barry lived until his death on March 5, 1888 (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Alfred C. Barry. 1870-1880s

What Was the National Hotel Disease?

To return to the question: what happened on March 4, 1857?

Historical records show that the outbreak at the National Hotel began in early January 1857⁴.

Cases briefly declined in late January, but a new and far more severe outbreak occurred in mid-February – just as political elites arrived for Buchanan's inauguration⁵.

An estimated 400 guests of the hotel were poisoned.

Several strange facts stand out:

Despite the outbreak, the hotel was never quarantined.

It remained fully booked – primarily by the top leadership of the Democratic Party.

The symptoms were persistently debilitating and long-lasting.

At first glance, the incident could be dismissed as dysentery or contaminated water. But this explanation becomes less convincing when viewed against the political climate.

A Hypothesis: Was It Political?

¹ Cherkas, Alexander C. (2025). Sir Alfred Constantine Barry (1815–1888): Minister, Educator, Mason // *European Journal of Contemporary Education*. 14(4): 622.

² Butterfield, C.W. (1880). The History of Columbia County, Wisconsin. Chicago, IL: Western Historical Company. P. 989.

³ Cherkas, Alexander C. (2025). Sir Alfred Constantine Barry (1815–1888): Minister, Educator, Mason // *European Journal of Contemporary Education*. 14(4): 622.

⁴ "The Washington Epidemic", New York Daily Times, March 23, 1857. P. 2.

⁵ "The Washington Epidemic", New York Daily Times, March 23, 1857. P. 2.

The presidency of James Buchanan (1857–1861) coincided with the final polarization of the United States into North and South, culminating in the Civil War.

Given the rising tensions, political forces on both sides had much at stake.

Even before taking office, Buchanan's political stance was widely known.

Thus, a controversial hypothesis arises:

Was someone attempting to disable the Democratic Party leadership by turning its active members into chronically ill men — effectively removing them from political life?

Supporting patterns:

January 1857 — first outbreak: a rehearsal

February–March 1857 — major outbreak timed with the arrival of Democratic leadership

Many victims died within a few years; most survivors withdrew from public life

The Democratic Party entered the weakest period in its history: between 1861 and 1885, only one of six U.S. presidents was a Democrat

This perspective casts the National Hotel disease not merely as a public-health incident — but potentially as a political act with long-term consequences.

Conclusion

The present study has made it possible to examine the 1857 incident at the National Hotel in Washington not merely as an epidemic or a sanitary disaster, but as an event with potential political consequences. The biography of Alfred C. Barry serves as an indicator of the long-term impact of the poisoning on the lives of individual representatives of the political and intellectual elite of the mid-nineteenth-century United States. An analysis of official reports and periodical press materials reveals a number of anomalies, including the absence of quarantine measures, the coincidence of the peak of the disease with the inauguration of James Buchanan, and the severe and chronic consequences of the illness for a significant number of those affected. These facts make it difficult to explain the incident solely by sanitary causes. The hypothesis advanced in this article regarding a possible political motivation behind the poisoning does not claim to offer a definitive conclusion; however, it allows the event to be reconsidered within the broader context of the escalating crisis of American statehood on the eve of the Civil War. Further research on this incident may contribute to a deeper understanding of the hidden mechanisms of political struggle in the United States during the 1850s.

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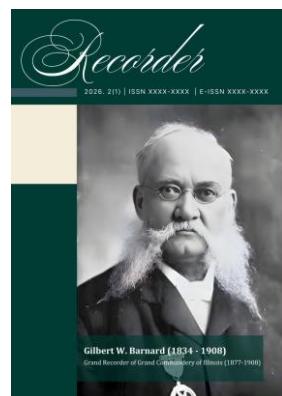
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“Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois” as a Historical Source (based on the holdings of the George Washington National Masonic Memorial Library)

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Abstract

This study, based on materials from the library of the George Washington National Masonic Memorial, examines the annual publications of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois as a historical source. These annual reports have been published continuously since 1857 and remain in publication to the present day.

In conclusion, the author notes that the materials of the Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois constitute a valuable historical source not only for the history of the Grand Commandery of Illinois itself, but also for the subordinate commanderies under its jurisdiction. The Conclave materials preserved in the library of the George Washington National Masonic Memorial reveal numerous aspects of the life and activities of the Knights Templar within the state and may serve as an important source for genealogical research, especially for the period from 1857 to 1973. Many sections introduced more than 150 years ago continue to be used in the preparation of annual reports today.

Keywords: Grand Commandery of Illinois; Masonic Order of Knights Templar; Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois; historical source; source studies.

Introduction

The Masonic Order of Knights Templar was established in the United States in 1816. Its full official name was General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States. The subordinate bodies were known as Encampments, while at the state level they were designated as Grand Encampments. In 1856, a reorganization of the Order took place: the supreme governing body became known as the Grand Encampment of the USA, the state-level bodies as Grand Commanderies, and the local bodies as Commanderies.

The Grand Commandery of Illinois of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar was established in 1857. At that time, it consisted of only three commanderies—Apollo Commandery No. 1, Belvidere Commandery No. 2, and Peoria Commandery No. 3. The total number of Knights Templar at that time was fewer than 200 members; specifically, in 1857 these three commanderies together counted 183 swords¹. Sixty years later, by 1927, the Grand Commandery of Illinois comprised more than 80 commanderies with a total membership exceeding 36,000 swords². At the same time, commanderies such as Chicago Commandery No. 19, Englewood Commandery No. 59, and Humboldt Park Commandery No. 79 had memberships ranging from 1,912 to 2,155 swords³ and, in terms of their size, were comparable to full military regiments. Such a rapid growth in the membership of the organization predetermined our interest in this topic and led us to examine

¹ Proceedings of the Convention and Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Jameson & Morse, Book and Job Printers, 1867. P. 23-25.

² Seventy-first Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1927. P. 253.

³ Seventy-first Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1927. P. 252-253.

the materials of the annual conclaves of the Grand Commandery of Illinois as a historical source. For this purpose, we drew upon the materials of the annual conclaves preserved in the library of the George Washington National Masonic Memorial (Washington, D.C., USA).

Any source-study research presupposes the application of both external criticism (external features of the source, such as whether the text is manuscript or printed, the type of ink used, etc.) and internal criticism (internal features of the source, including the determination of the date of compilation, the content of the text, and related issues).

External Criticism of the Source

From the moment of its establishment in 1857, the Grand Commandery of Illinois began to prepare annual materials for its Annual Conclave. The first such annual report comprised only 25 pages¹. In addition to current information about the activities of the Grand Commandery, it also included the Constitution of the organization².

Ten years later, in 1867, the materials of the first eleven annual Annual Conclaves were published together in a single volume (Fig. 1). This volume consisted of 346 pages, while the materials of the most recent conclave alone already amounted to 70 page³.



Fig. 1. The first collected volume of the annual conclaves of the Grand Commandery of Illinois. Chicago, 1867.

¹ Proceedings of the Convention and Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Jameson & Morse, Book and Job Printers, 1867. P. 3-25.

² Proceedings of the Convention and Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Jameson & Morse, Book and Job Printers, 1867. P. 13-18.

³ Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois, at their Tenth annual conclave. Chicago: Jameson & Morse, Book and Job Printers, 1867. P. 278-346.

From this point onward, the annual reports began to be published on a regular yearly basis. The only exception was the year 1867, when two volumes were issued simultaneously for 1866 and 1867, since the volume containing the materials for 1866 had not been published in time during that year.

State of Preservation of the Materials at the George Washington National Masonic Memorial

The library of the George Washington National Masonic Memorial (Washington, D.C., USA) holds a substantial collection of the annual reports of the Grand Commandery of Illinois. The reports from the second half of the nineteenth century, specifically from 1857 to 1899, are preserved in full.

The first half of the twentieth century (1900–1949) is represented with several gaps: the library lacks the conclave reports for the years 1934, 1940–1941, and 1943. The second half of the twentieth century (1950–1999) is the least completely represented; the annual reports for 1974–1979, 1988–1989, and 1992–1999 are missing.

Materials from the conclaves of the twenty-first century are entirely absent from the collection, although the Grand Commandery of Illinois continues to publish them. For example, the existence of annual conclave reports for 201¹, 2020² and 2023³ is known.

For clearer visualization of this information, data on the state of preservation of the materials have been summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. State of preservation of the annual conclave materials at the George Washington National Masonic Memorial.

Periods	Years	Missing Conclave Materials
Second half of the nineteenth century	1857-1899	Materials Fully Preserved
First half of the twentieth century	1900-1949	1934, 1940, 1941, 1943
Second half of the twentieth century	1950-1999	1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1988, 1989, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1197, 1998, 1999
Early twenty-first century	2000-2025	Materials are completely absent

Thus, the holdings of the George Washington National Masonic Memorial most fully represent the materials for the period from 1857 to 1973. For this span, only four volumes are missing, which makes it possible to trace the history of the Grand Commandery of Illinois, or of one of its subordinate commanderies, almost in its entirety.

Internal Criticism of the Source

Compilers

The work of collecting information from the commanderies and compiling the annual reports was entrusted to a special officer of the Grand Commandery of Illinois whose office was known as the Grand Recorder. It should be noted in advance that the position of Grand Recorder was one of the least subject to rotation, as it involved a substantial and continuous workload.

During the period from 1857 to 1899, only five individuals served as Grand Recorder. The first, William H. Turner, held the office for three years (1857–1859). He was followed by George W. Deering, who served for the shortest term—only one year (1860). The third Grand Recorder, Henry C. Ranney, served for four years (1861–1864). The fourth, James H. Miles, held the position for twelve years until his death (1865–1876). Finally, the fifth, Gil. W. Barnard, assumed office in 1877 and continued his service through 1899⁴. Thus, the fourth and fifth Grand Recorders occupied their posts for more than ten and more than twenty years respectively.

Composition of the Materials

The materials of the annual conclaves of the Grand Commandery of Illinois may be divided into two main parts. The first part pertains to the internal affairs of the Grand Commandery of Illinois itself, while the

¹ 163rd Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 2019. P. 1-182.

² 164th Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 2020. P. 1-143.

³ 167th Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 2023. P. 1-190.

⁴ Forty-third Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Ill.: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1899. P. 123.

second part relates to its interactions with the Grand Encampment of the USA and with the Grand Commanderies of other states.

The foundational documents—specifically the Constitution of the Grand Commandery of Illinois—were first presented and approved in the materials of the inaugural conclave of 1857¹. As amendments and revisions were introduced, the Constitution was republished. Updated versions appeared, for example, in the materials of the 1862 conclave and in subsequent years². At the same time, the Constitution of the Grand Commandery of Illinois was also published³.

Genealogy

The materials of the annual conclaves of the Grand Commandery of Illinois constitute a valuable source for genealogical research, as they contain extensive personal information about the Knights Templar. Complete membership lists of the Grand Commandery of Illinois and its subordinate commanderies were published beginning in 1857⁴. The reports recorded information on all individuals knighted during the year, as well as changes in status, such as Dismitted, Suspended, Reinstated, or Deceased.

In addition, the reports provided information on the officers of both the Grand Commandery and the subordinate commanderies, who were elected annually, with their respective offices specified. As a result, the study of the complete corpus of annual reports makes it possible to reconstruct the service record of a Knight Templar who served within the jurisdiction of the Grand Commandery of Illinois.

Complete membership rolls were published every three years during the triennial conclaves of Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States.

In 1861, one of the senior officers of the Grand Commandery of Illinois, Deputy Grand Commander Nelson D. Elwood, passed away. From that time onward, a tradition was introduced in the conclave materials of dedicating special pages *In Memoriam* (Fig. 2). Beginning in 1862, obituaries of high-ranking members of the Grand Commandery also began to be published⁵.

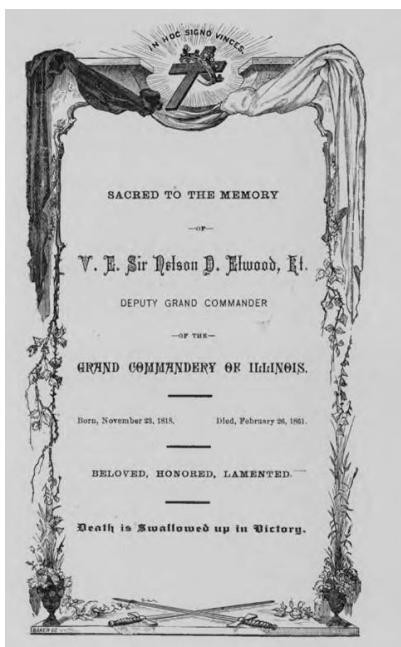


Fig. 2. *In Memoriam* page dedicated to the memory of Nelson D. Elwood⁶.

¹ Proceedings of the Convention and Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Jameson & Morse, Book and Job Printers, 1867. P. 13-18.

² Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois, at their Sixth Annual Conclave. Chicago: F. Fulton & Co., Printers, 1862. P. 67-70.

³ Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois, at their Sixth Annual Conclave. Chicago: F. Fulton & Co., Printers, 1862. P. 63-66.

⁴ Proceedings of the Convention and Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Jameson & Morse, Book and Job Printers, 1867. P. 23-25.

⁵ Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois, at their Sixth Annual Conclave. Chicago: F. Fulton & Co., Printers, 1862. P. 59-61.

⁶ Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois, at their Fifth Annual Conclave. Chicago: F. Fulton & Co., Printers, 1861. P. 23.

Beginning in 1860, the conclave materials started to include standardized forms of various documents, such as the Form of Petition, Form of Demit, Form of Certificate of Election, Form of Certificate for Proxy, and Form of a Petition for a Dispensation¹. This was done in order to systematize the documentation and bring it into a uniform standard. From that point forward, all documentation within the jurisdiction of the Grand Commandery of Illinois was required to be prepared in accordance with the established forms.

By 1861, the number of commanderies within the Grand Commandery of Illinois had reached eleven. As a result, the Grand Recorder began to consolidate information on changes in membership within the commanderies into tabular form (Fig. 3).

REGISTER OF WORK, COMPILED FROM THE FOREGOING RETURNS.										
NAME OF COM- MANDERY.	NO.	PLACE OF MEET- ING.	RETURNS TO	NO. OF ACTIVE MEMBERS.	CREATED.	ADMITTED.	DIMITTED.	SUSPENDED.	DECEASED.	HONORARY MEMBERS.
Apollo	1	Chicago	Sept. 30, 1861.	114	7	1	1	3		
Belvidere	2	Alton	" " "	27	1					
Peoria	3	Peoria	" " "	45	2	5				10
Joliet	4	Joliet	" " "	45	2	5	3		1	
Blaney	5	Morris	" " "	35	7		2	1		
Elwood	6	Springfield	" " "	28	8		3	2		
Freeport	7	Freeport	" " "	20						
Galesburg	8	Galesburg	" " "	26	4					
Beaumanoir	9	Decatur	" " "	18	1	1				
Ottawa	10	Ottawa	" " "	14	9					7
Beauseant	11	Quincy	Oct. 22, "	14	12					3
Waukegan	12	Waukegan	" " "	13	11					1
				399	67	2	9	1	6	10
										11

Sir Knights returned in these Commanderies, in addition to the No. of members who are also members of other Commanderies.

Fig. 3. Table of membership changes within the jurisdiction of the Grand Commandery of Illinois².

Tables of this type, with minor modifications, continued to be published for more than one hundred years. For example, a table recording membership changes can still be found in the materials of the 1973 conclave³. However, during the 1980s the Grand Commandery of Illinois discontinued this practice.

In 1864, the first table listing all officers of the Grand Commandery of Illinois by year was published (Fig. 4). This tradition has been maintained to the present day, for more than 150 years⁴.

¹ Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Jameson & Morse, Book and Job Printers, 1867. P. 205-208.

² Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois, at their Fifth Annual Conclave. Chicago: F. Fulton & Co., Printers, 1861. P. 33.

³ 117th Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1973. P. 73.

⁴ 167th Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 2023. P. 183-186.

OFFICERS OF THE GRAND COMMANDERY OF ILLINOIS SINCE ITS FORMATION.						
	GRAND COMMANDER.	DEPUTY GRAND COMMANDER	GRAND GENERALISSIMO.	GRAND CAPTAIN GENERAL.	GRAND TREASURER.	GRAND RECORDER.
1857	J. V. Z. Blaney	C. B. Stebbins	B. F. Barry	H. A. Johnson	R. H. Foss	W. H. Turner
1858	J. V. Z. Blaney	J. Hunt	B. F. Barry	H. A. Johnson	R. H. Foss	W. H. Turner
1859	Josiah Hunt	H. A. Johnson	N. D. Elwood	F. K. Hulburd	R. H. Foss	W. H. Turner
1860	H. A. Johnson	N. D. Elwood*	F. K. Hulburd	W. H. Turner	R. H. Foss	G. W. Deering
1861	H. A. Johnson	F. K. Hulburd*	W. H. Turner	D. C. Martin	R. H. Foss	H. C. Ranney
1862	G. W. Deering	W. H. Turner	J. H. Hibbard	N. F. Prentice	R. H. Foss	H. C. Ranney
1863	W. H. Turner	J. H. Hibbard	N. F. Prentice	P. A. Armstrong	R. H. Foss	H. C. Ranney
1864	N. F. Prentice	P. A. Armstrong	V. L. Hurlbut	G. C. Lanphere	R. H. Foss	H. C. Ranney

*Dead.

Fig. 4. List of selected senior officers of the Grand Commandery of Illinois¹.

Beginning in 1871, a tradition was also introduced of placing a portrait of the incumbent Grand Commander in the conclave materials². This tradition has been preserved in Illinois to the present day.

Inspections

An important component of the annual materials consisted of reports on inspections of the commanderies. The inspectors were officers of the Grand Commandery, and the jurisdiction was divided into districts, with inspectors assigned to the commanderies within each district. Beginning in 1873, inspectors' reports started to be published in the materials of the annual conclaves³.

These reports were compiled in a free narrative form, and inspectors shared any information they considered significant. As a result, these reports became one of the most important sources for studying the social life of the inspected commanderies.

Unfortunately, by 1891 the inspectors' reports ceased to be published, most likely in order to conserve space within the volume, as the conclave materials for that year already exceeded 250 pages. As a result, this innovation reduced the amount of information available on the internal life of the commanderies. In 1922, a new (scoring-based) evaluation system was introduced in their place⁴.

Charity

In the United States, the Knights Templar Educational Foundation was established in 1922 by the Knights Templar to support financially disadvantaged students pursuing higher education. Knights Templar of the State of Illinois also contributed funds to support this initiative⁵. In addition, Knights Templar made donations to other charitable organizations, such as the Knights Templar Eye Foundation⁶.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that the materials of the Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois constitute a valuable historical source for the study of not only the Grand Commandery of Illinois itself, but also its subordinate commanderies. The extensive holdings of the George Washington National Masonic Memorial Library reveal numerous aspects of the life and activities of the Knights Templar within the state and may serve as a significant source for genealogical research, particularly for the period from 1857 to 1973. Many sections and practices introduced more than 150 years ago continue to be applied in the preparation of annual reports to this day.

¹ Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois, at their Tenth annual conclave. Chicago: Jameson & Morse, Book and Job Printers, 1867. P. 163.

² Fifteenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Horton and Leonard, printers, 1871. P. II.

³ Seventeenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Knight and Leonard, printers, 1873. P. 15-28.

⁴ Sixty-sixth Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1922. P. 121.

⁵ Ninety-second Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1948. P. 86-87.

⁶ 113th Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1969. P. 96.

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117th Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1973.

163rd Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 2019.

164th Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 2020.

167th Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 2023.

Fifteenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Horton and Leonard, printers, 1871.

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Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois, at their Fifth Annual Conclave. Chicago: F. Fulton & Co., Printers, 1861.

Seventeenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the state of Illinois. Chicago: Knight and Leonard, printers, 1873.

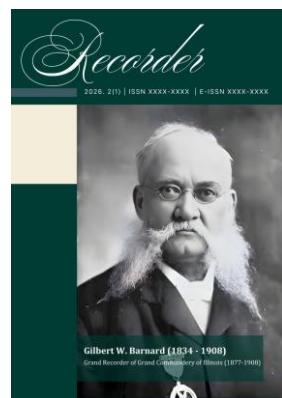
Seventy-first Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1927.

Sixty-sixth Annual Conclave the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Illinois. Bloomington, Illinois: Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, 1922.



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Museum News

The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar Today

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Abstract

This section presents selected exhibitions of the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, also known as the Museum of Cherkas Global University. Established on August 1, 2024, the museum began developing four core collections: the Sword Collection, the Uniform Collection, the Badge Collection, and the Photo Collection, each reflecting different aspects of the material and visual culture of the Knights Templar in the United States. On November 1, 2025, a fifth collection—the Collection of Personal Belongings and Souvenirs—was initiated, significantly expanding the museum's thematic scope. By December 2025, the museum's holdings had grown to approximately 800 items. Special attention is given to the completion of the western exhibition space in December 2025, the centerpiece of which is an oil portrait of Sir Knight Joseph William Edwards (1832–1925) of Bethany Commandery No. 28, painted in 2025 by artist Lyudmila Nikolaevna Bogutskaya. Edwards served as Eminent Commander during two separate periods in the 1870s. The inclusion of this portrait highlights the museum's role in preserving personal memory, institutional history, and the artistic representation of prominent figures within American Templar Freemasonry.

Keywords: the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, Cherkas Global University, collections, uniforms, badges, photographs, Knights Templar history.

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

The Sword Collection (Collection No. 1);

The Uniform Collection (coats, aprons, belts, and sashes) (Collection No. 2);

The Badge Collection (badges, badge pins, ribbons, and jewels) (Collection No. 3);

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) (Collection No. 4).

On November 1, 2025, the museum began forming a new collection — Collection of Personal Belongings and Souvenirs (Collection No. 5).

As of December 2025, the museum's holdings comprised approximately 800 items.

In December 2025, work on the design of the western side of the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar was completed (Fig. 1). Its central feature is now a portrait of Sir Knight Joseph William Edwards (1832–1925) (Fig. 2) from Bethany Commandery No. 28, who served as Eminent Commander in 1872–1873 and again in 1875–1877. The portrait was painted in oil in 2025 by the artist Lyudmila N. Bogutskaya (born 1979). It should be recalled that Bethany Commandery No. 28 was established in 1868 and was organizationally affiliated with the Grand Commandery of Illinois of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar.



Fig. 1. The western side of the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar.

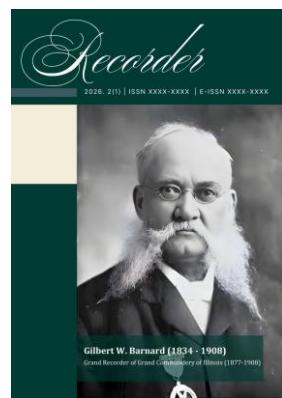


Fig. 2. Sir Knight Joseph William Edwards (1832–1925). Oil Painting. By Art. Lyudmila N. Bogutskaya (1979 year of birth). 2025



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Review of Exhibitions at the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar (Expositions No. 22–25 Presented between April 19 and July 15, 2025)

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Abstract

This article reviews four exhibitions held at the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar between April 19 and July 15, 2025. The exhibitions—Expositions No. 022 through No. 025—were devoted to the uniforms and material culture of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Each exhibition highlighted original and rare artifacts, including ceremonial uniforms, aprons, sashes, insignia, belts, and swords associated with specific commanderies and individual officers. Particular attention is given to the white uniform of an Eminent Commander from Bethany Commandery No. 28, which belonged to Civil War veteran Casper Ruedy, as well as to the black uniforms representing various commanderies across different states. The final exhibition focused on the eastern side of the museum, emphasizing the symbolic and ideological foundations of the Order through the display of an American Bible published in 1812 and the regalia of an Eminent Commander. Together, these exhibitions demonstrate the museum's role in preserving, interpreting, and presenting the historical legacy of the American Knights Templar through authentic material evidence and curated visual narratives.

Keywords: Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, Exhibitions, Review.

Between April 19 and July 15, 2025, four exhibitions were presented at the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar: April 19 — Exposition No. 022, April 29 — Exposition No. 023, May 3 — Exposition No. 024, and July 15 — Exposition No. 025. As in previous exhibitions, these displays were devoted to the uniforms of Knights Templar from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

Exposition No. 022 (April 19, 2025) was dedicated to the black uniform of an officer Recorder from De Witt Clinton Commandery. The uniform set includes the original sash, knight's apron, black sleeves, commandery and officer insignia, a standard belt and buckle, as well as a rare original sword.

Exposition No. 023 (April 29, 2025) focused on a very rare white uniform of an Eminent Commander from Bethany Commandery No. 28 (Mendota, Illinois). This uniform belonged to Casper Ruedy, a Civil War veteran who served in the Union Army and held the office of Eminent Commander in 1879. The set includes a dress coat, belt, trousers, hat, and a presentation sword.

Exposition No. 024 (May 3, 2025) presented black uniforms of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The exhibition featured the uniform of a Recorder from De Witt Clinton Commandery; that of a Past Eminent Commander from New Haven Commandery No. 2 (New Haven, Connecticut; apron not original); and the uniform of a Knight from Claremont Commandery No. 9 (Camden, Maine).

Exposition No. 025 (July 15, 2025) was devoted to the eastern side of the museum dedicated to the Masonic Order of Knights Templar (late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries). The central focus of this section is an American Bible published in Philadelphia in 1812, serving as a symbolic reminder of the Christian foundation of the Knights Templar. To the left of the Bible stands a knight dressed in the full regalia of the Eminent Commander of Jamestown Commandery No. 61 (State of New York), alongside the American flag, representing the unity of Masonic tradition and national heritage.

Exposition No. 022 (Apr. 19, 2025)
Black Uniform of an Officer Recorder from De Witt Clinton Commandery



Exposition No. 023 (Apr. 29, 2025)
Very rare uniform of an Eminent Commander
from Bethany Commandery No. 28 (Mendota, Illinois)

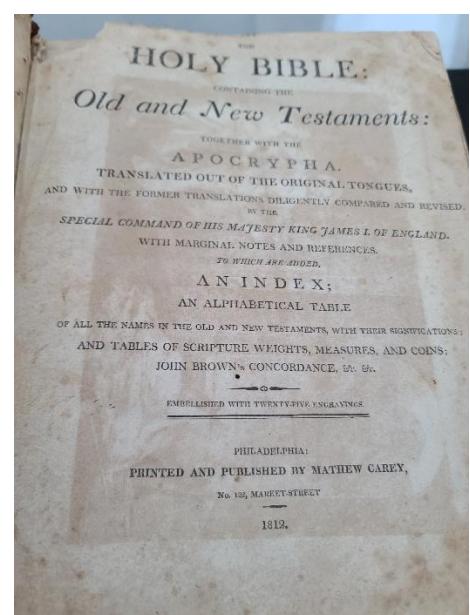




Exposition No. 024 (May 3, 2025)
Black Uniform of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar
(late 19th century – early 20th century)



Exposition No. 025 (July 15, 2025)
East Side of the Museum Dedicated to the Masonic Order of Knights Templar
(late 19th century – early 20th century)

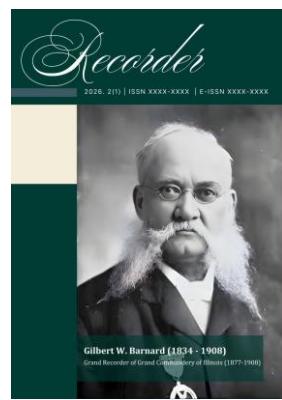






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Our Publications

A List of Publications Devoted to the History of Freemasonry

In 2024–2025, the staff of Cherkas Global University prepared and published the following works on the history of Freemasonry:

2024

Cherkas, Alexander (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.

Cherkas, Alexander (2024). Sir Albert E. Worthington (1849–1915) in the Museum Collection of Cherkas Global University: Commemorating the 175th Anniversary of His Birth. *European Journal of Contemporary Education*. 13(4): 742-746.

Cherkas, Alexander (2024). Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908) in the Museum Collection of Cherkas Global University. *Bylye Gody*. 19(4): 1674-1682.

Cherkas, Alexander (2024). Sir George Stodart Blackie (1834–1881) in the Museum Collection of Cherkas Global University: Commemorating the 190th Anniversary of His Birth. *European Researcher. Series A*. 15(2): 32-37.

2025

Cherkas, Alexander (2025). A History of Bethany Commandery No. 28, K.T. (1868–1918). *Bylye Gody*. 2025. 20(1): 264-288.

Cherkas, Alexander (2025). History of Beauseant Commandery No. 11, KT (Quincy, Illinois). *Recorder*. 1(2-1): 98-168.

Cherkas, Alexander (2025). History of Bethany Commandery No. 28, Knights Templar (Mendota, Illinois). Houston: Cherkas Global University Press. 181 p.

Cherkas, Alexander (2025). History of El-Aksa Commandery No. 55, KT (Quincy, Illinois). *Recorder*. 1(2-2): 172-212.

Cherkas, Alexander (2025). History of Quincy Commandery No. 77, KT (Quincy, Illinois). *Recorder*. 1(2-3): 216-312.

Cherkas, Alexander (2025). Rare Publications from the American Masonic Order of Knights Templar (first half of the 19th century). *Bylye Gody*. 20(2): 775-779.

Cherkas, Alexander (2025). Ribbons in the American Masonic Order of Knights Templar (second half of the 19th century): Their Emergence and Evolution. *Bylye Gody*. 20(3): 1465-1476.

Cherkas, Alexander (2025). Sir Alfred Constantine Barry (1815–1888): Minister, Educator, Mason. *European Journal of Contemporary Education*. 14(4): 617-624.

Cherkas, Alexander (2025). Sir Benjamin F. Howard (1835–1908): Soldier, Police Officer, Mason. *Bylye Gody*. 20(4): 1811-1822.

Cherkasova, Anastasiya A. (2025). The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar at Cherkas Global University: Its Collections Dating to between the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. *Bylye Gody*. 2025. 20(1): 188-195.

Mamadaliev, Anvar M. (2025). Lesser-Known Traditions of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar. *Recorder*. 1(2): 65-67.

Mamadaliev, Anvar M. (2025). Russian Freemasonry from Peter I to Nicholas II: a Historical Sketch. Bylye Gody. 20(2): 532-539.

Mamadaliev, Anvar M. (2025). The Masonic Organizations in the Russian Empire (XVIII century): Structure and Personalities. Bylye Gody. 20(3): 1095-1104.

Taran, Konstantine V. (2025). “Little Commandery” – Children from the Masonic Widows and Orphans’ Home of Kentucky. Recorder. 1(2): 62-64.

Taran, Konstantine V. (2025). The materials of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar serve as a statistical source for the number of Knights Templars in 1856. Recorder. 1(1): 22-23.