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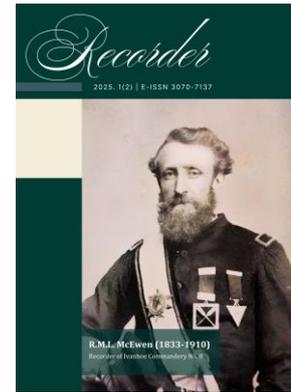
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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

you are holding the second issue of our journal Recorder. In this edition, we continue to publish materials devoted to the history of Freemasonry (York Rite).

Here you will find research about one of the Recorders of the Knights Templar — Sir R.M.L. McEwen from St. Louis, Missouri, as well as original articles, reports, and materials about The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar (Houston) and its exhibitions of historical uniforms.

This issue presents materials from five exhibitions held between February 28 and April 9, 2025. Special attention is given to the black and white uniforms of the Knights Templar from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, representing several commanderies: Trinity Commandery No. 1, St. Elmo Commandery No. 9, De Witt Clinton Commandery, and Pilgrim Commandery No. 19. In addition, this section includes a group of knights in Regulation Fatigue Coats from the Grand Commandery of Illinois.

In the section “Leafing Through Antique Books”, we continue to introduce our readers to excerpts from Thomas S. Webb’s *The Freemason’s Monitor or Illustrations of Masonry* (1816 edition). In this issue, we present the 6th Chapter – “Charges and Regulations for the Conduct and Behaviour of Masons”, and the 7th Chapter – “Prerequisites for a Candidate”.

This section also features a short work by the 6th Grand Master of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, the prominent American statesman Benjamin B. French — *A Letter and Short Poem on the Death of Abraham Lincoln* (1870 edition).



We have also added a new section to the second issue — “New Publications.” It features the book published in 2025, “History of Bethany Commandery No. 28, Knights Templar (Mendota, Illinois).”

The editorial board of Recorder invites all interested authors to contribute. Reviews, letters, and research materials may be sent to the official email address of the editorial office.

We hope that this issue will also attract the interest of our readers and continue to inspire those who study and appreciate the history of Freemasonry.

Editor in Chief

Dr. Alexander C. Cherkas

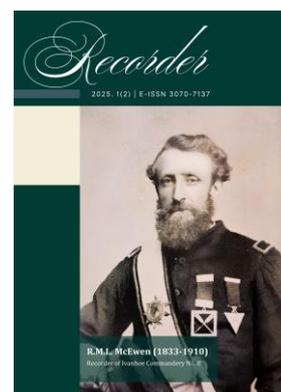
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*In Memoriam***R.M.L. McEwen (1833–1910): Recorder of Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8**

Violetta S. Molchanova

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. Ralph Maxwell L. McEwen (1833–1910) was a long-time resident of St. Louis, Missouri, where he lived from 1870 until his death. Born in Adams County, Pennsylvania, he built his professional life as a clerk in the local post office. In 1878 he married Mary McEwen, and together they raised three sons. McEwen was actively involved in Masonic life, holding membership in Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8 and Occidental Lodge No. 163, A.F.&A.M. His dedicated service culminated in his role as Recorder in 1895. McEwen's life reflects civic engagement, family devotion, and active participation in the Masonic fraternity.

Keywords: Ralph Maxwell L. McEwen, St. Louis, Freemasonry, Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8, Occidental Lodge No. 163, Recorder, Knights Templar, 19th century.

Ralph Maxwell L. McEwen was born on December 5, 1833, in Adams County, Pennsylvania. Since 1870, he had been a resident of St. Louis, Missouri.

He was married on January 9, 1878, in St. Louis, Missouri, to Mary McEwen, and they had three sons. He worked as a clerk in the post office.

He was a member of Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8 and of Occidental Lodge No. 163, A.F.&A.M. (St. Louis, Missouri). In 1895, he held the officer position of Recorder (Fig. 1).

Ralph Maxwell L. McEwen passed away on May 10, 1910.



Fig. 1. R.M.L. McEwen – Recorder of Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8. 1895.

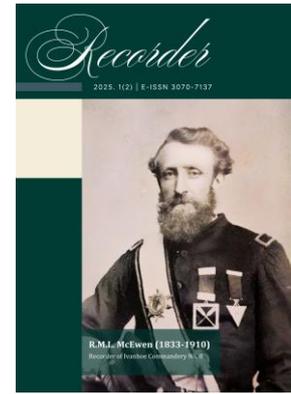
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Articles

Sir George Stodart Blackie (1834–1881) in the Museum Collection of Cherkas Global University: Commemorating the 190th Anniversary of His Birth

Alexander C. Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This work is a tribute to the 190th anniversary of the birth of Sir George Stodart Blackie (1834–1881). It provides a biographical account of his life, with a special focus on his service with Masonic organizations in the United States.

The source base comprised the following two groups of materials: 1) annual reports of the Masonic order of Knights Templar (specifically, the annual reports of the Grand Commanderies of New York and Louisiana); 2) photographs from the museum collection of Cherkas Global University (specifically, the photograph of G.S. Blackie represented by Exhibit No. 006).

The study's findings revealed that Sir George S. Blackie was an outstanding man. An Edinburgh University graduate, he moved in 1856 to the United States (Nashville, Tennessee), where he got involved with a local university and a number of local Masonic organizations. During the American Civil War, he served as a surgeon in the Confederate States Army. Afterwards, he resumed his academic and social work. At the height of his career with Masonic organizations in 1871–1872, he held the office of Grand Commander of Knights Templar of Tennessee. A participant in the 18th Triennial Conclave of the Knights Templar of the United States, held at Baltimore, Maryland, in September 1871, he later criticized the Order's leadership for the ostentatious pomp and display with which that event was organized.

Keywords: Sir George Stodart Blackie (1834–1881), Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Tennessee, biography, University of Nashville.

April 10, 2024, marked the 190th anniversary of the birth of Sir George Stodart Blackie (1834–1881), who was an esteemed Mason and Past Grand Commander of Tennessee. Although his life was brief, he left a significant mark on the history of Edinburgh University (which he attended), the American Civil War, the University of Nashville, and the Masonic movement of his era. The present work offers a biographical account of the life of this esteemed man, with a special focus on his Masonic activity.

The source base comprised the following two groups of materials: 1) annual reports of the Masonic order of Knights Templar (specifically,

the annual reports of the Grand Commanderies of New York and Louisiana); 2) photographs from the museum collection of Cherkas Global University (specifically, the photograph of G.S. Blackie represented by Exhibit No. 006 (Fig. 1)).

In the photograph, G.S. Blackie is dressed in the uniform of the Masonic order of Knights Templar wearing the insignia of Grand Commander. The picture was taken in Nashville, Tennessee, at the studio of C.C. Giers. Its reverse side is inscribed with the negative number (No. 24967) and the last name of its owner – Blackie. It is trimmed at the top, with only a portion of G.S. Blackie's written name visible.



Fig. 1. Photograph of G.S. Blackie (front and reverse) (Exhibit No. 006)

Use was made of the biographical method and content analysis to search for relevant information and construct a coherent picture of G.S. Blackie's life based on discrete biographical accounts. The work has a special focus on the man's Masonic activity.

The historiography quite abounds with biographical accounts of G.S. Blackie's life. Of particular note are the article by J. Sibbald, 'Obituary Notice of Professor George Stoddart Blackie, M.D.', the work by E.W. Goodell, 'History of Columbian Commandery No. 1, Knights Templar, State of New York: From 1810 to 1910 Inclusive', and the work by J.D. Richardson, 'Tennessee Templars: A Register of Names, with Biographical Sketches, of the Knights Templar of Tennessee, and Brief Histories of the Grand and Subordinate Commanderies'. G.S. Blackie's Masonic activity specifically is covered in the last of those three publications only, and that account contains a couple of factual inaccuracies. For instance, it says there that G.S. Blackie joined the Masonic order of Knights Templar in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1857, whereas in actual fact at that time he was already living and working in the United States.

Thus, the subject under examination continues to be one of interest to the academic/pedagogical community and is worthy of further research.

G.S. Blackie was born on April 10, 1834, in Aberdeen, Scotland. He studied medicine at Edinburgh University, where he received the degree of M.D. in 1855. During his time at university, G.S. Blackie evinced a keen interest in botany, and even received a gold medal for the best herbarium. In 1851, he became a member of Botanical Society of Edinburgh.

In 1856, G.S. Blackie moved to the United States. He took up residence in Nashville, Tennessee. That same year, 1856, he was appointed Professor of Botany at the University of Nashville, and in 1857, Professor of Chemistry and Natural History there. In April 1857, G.S. Blackie joined the Masonic order of Knights Templar.

As early as 1858, G.S. Blackie was appointed Assistant Editor with *The Nashville Journal of Medicine and Surgery*.

On June 28, 1858, G.S. Blackie married Martha Eliza Cheatham. On June 15, 1859, they had a daughter, Elizabeth Blackie, and on September 19, 1860, they had a son, Berrien Lindsley Blackie. That same year, 1860, he became a member of Nashville Commandery No. 1, KT (Nashville, Tennessee).

Nashville is where he was when the American Civil War broke out, and as early as October 18, 1861, he was appointed Surgeon in the Provisional Army of the Confederate States (Fig. 2).

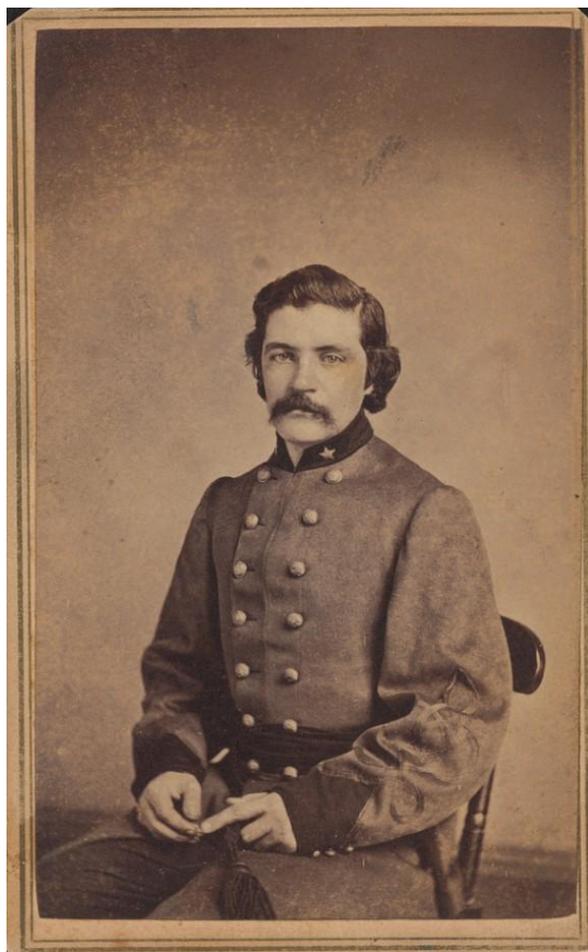


Fig. 2. Surgeon George Stodart Blackie of Confederate States Medical Staff in uniform. Circa 1862.

After the end of the Civil War in 1865, G.S. Blackie was Librarian and Professor of Natural Science at Montgomery Bell Academy.

On November 24, 1867, the Blackies had a daughter named Marion Greeve, and on December 22, 1869, they had their fourth (and last) child – a son named George Frederick. On July 8, 1870, G.S. Blackie returned to the post of Professor of Natural History in the Medical Department of the University of Nashville.

From that time, he actively combined academic work with activity in Masonic organizations. In 1869, he was appointed Chairman of Committee on Foreign Correspondence. A glimpse of his service can be found in the 1869 report *Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of KT and Appendant Orders, of the State of Louisiana*: “The report on Foreign Correspondence was submitted by Sir George S. Blackie, and gives a courteous and impartial synopsis of the proceedings of twenty Grand Commanderies, our own for 1868 included. He advocates a uniformity in drill, is opposed to ministers of the Gospel receiving the Orders gratis, and favors the England ritual, but, in regard to the Red Cross, remarks: “We much fear that the removal of the ublice to its proper place –

that is, in our opinion, out of the Commandery – would injure the attendance on the Commandery, as for reasons which the Knights know, the Red Cross ceremonies have attraction peculiarly their own; but yet we would sacrifice pleasure to truth in history.”

In 1870, G.S. Blackie became Knight Commander of Grand Priory of Scotland, and as early as 1871–1872 he was Grand Commander of Knights Templar of Tennessee. In fact, Photo No. 006 from the photo collection of Cherkas Global University is dated to 1871–1872. In the 1872 report *Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of KT and Appendant Orders, of the State of Louisiana*, G.S. Blackie is present in the list of all Grand Commanders KT as Grand Commander of Tennessee. On a side note, the Grand Commandery of Tennessee was established on October 12, 1859, with headquarters in Nashville. While in charge of the Knights Templar in Tennessee, Grand Commander George S. Blackie had a new commandery established on May 23, 1871 – DePayens Commandery No. 11.

At the 10th Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Tennessee, held at Lebanon, Tennessee, on May 14, 1872, Grand Commander Sir George S. Blackie expressed strong resentment

of the ostentatious pomp and display with which the 18th Triennial Conclave of the Knights Templar of the United States was organized. On a side note, the 18th Triennial, which convened at Baltimore, Maryland, on September 19, 1871, was attended by representatives of 28 Grand Commanderies KT and those of subordinate Commanderies from all over the United States. In accordance with the event's program, 76 Commanderies, 4,300 Sir Knights, and 700 musicians participated in the escort to the Grand Encampment, with the pageant being brilliant in the extreme. G.S. Blackie must have found the celebrations overly lavish, all the more so given that the country was still recovering from the Civil War. Here is what is said regarding this in the 1873 report *Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of KT and Appendant Orders, of the State of Louisiana*:

"Sir George S. Blackie, Grand Commander, in his address, thus alludes to the displays made at the triennial meetings of the Grand Encampment:

Although I fear the tendency of such magnificent displays is to lead to an extravagance which is the forerunner of effeminacy and decay, and am in favor of a more modest style of welcome, yet I do not presume to judge of the actions of others. I trust, however, that the good sense of the Order will prevent an attempt to eclipse the magnificence of the Baltimore reception, and that the triennial gatherings will gradually decline until they are remarkable rather for talent in the dispatch of business than for glitter and display. I think the tendency of the Order in America since October is rather to curb the spirit of display, and to devote itself to deeds of more exalted usefulness. The lessons of charity taught them by the sufferings of their Fraters in Chicago have not been without their influence on the whole character of the Order.

Many public banquets were given, but my bad health prevented my attending any, save that tendered by Mary Commandery, of Philadelphia, to the Grand Body. It was a scene which can hardly be forgotten.

Our frater thus beautifully closes a very admirable and elaborate address:

Some say that the age of Chivalry is passed, that the spirit of Romance is dead. But they are wrong. The age of Chivalry is never past, so long as there is a wrong unredressed on earth, and a man or woman left to say, "I will redress that wrong, or perish in the attempt". The age of

Chivalry is never past, so long as we have faith enough in God and Christ to say "God will help me to redress that wrong, or if not me, those that come after me." The spirit of Romance will never die, as long as there is a man left to say that the world might and can be better, fairer, wiser, happier in all things than it is now, that God's will will be done on earth. "Thy will be done on earth" is the utterance of the prayer we have by his instruction pronounced around the altar. He who bade us ask that boon for ourselves and generations yet unborn was "very GOD of very GOD." Do you think that He would have bidden us ask a blessing which He knew would never come?

A resolution was adopted that General Order No. 8 be published for information, and a strict conformity thereto enjoined.

Grand Commander Blackie furnishes the report on Foreign Correspondence, in his usual excellent style, and cordially notices our proceedings for 1871. He thinks that because we have a Grand Master resident in the State, the number of the Knights should be increased. We hope that it may be soon, but do not want the increase to come upon us too quickly."

The above record indicates that G.S. Blackie was already experiencing health problems at that time, having to be absent from a few of the less significant events. Despite those problems, he continued to serve the Order as Chairman of Committee on Foreign Correspondence. The 1874 report *Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of KT and Appendant Orders, of the State of Louisiana* mentions G.S. Blackie as follows: "The report on Foreign Correspondence is again by Sir George S. Blackie. Our proceedings of 1872 are kindly noticed. Relative to our report, he quotes: "He says he sees a speck of trouble in the present position of the Red Cross in Canada; so do we, and we will always see trouble until we cut loose from that mongrel degree altogether." We think that opinion is growing."

On June 24, 1874, he attended a conclave held by Columbian Commandery No. 1 as a distinguished guest and Past Grand Commander.

In the late 1870s is when one of the last photographs of G.S. Blackie (Fig. 3) was produced. It later appeared in J.D. Richardson's 'Tennessee Templars: A Register of Names, with Biographical Sketches, of the Knights Templar of Tennessee, and Brief Histories of the Grand and Subordinate Commanderies'.

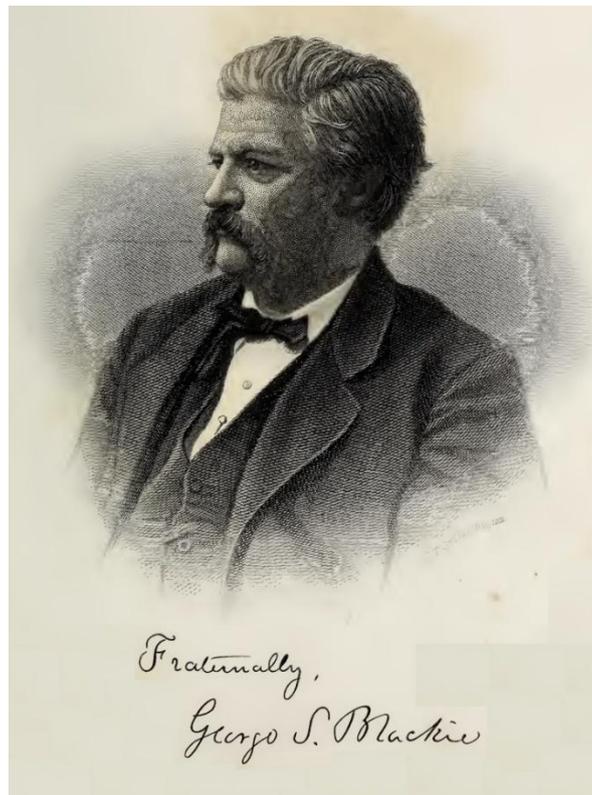


Fig. 3. G.S. Blackie. Late 1870s

Over the course of his service with Masonic organizations, G.S. Blackie occupied a variety of positions, including Assistant Grand Recorder of all Grand Bodies, Master of Lodge, High Priest of Chapter, and President of Masonic Board of Relief, Nashville, and was an honorary member of Grand Lodges of England, Scotland, Ireland, Portugal, Brazil, Canada, Three Globes (Prussia), Friendship (Prussia), New Brunswick, Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, and Washington Territory, Lodge No. 360 (Glasgow, Scotland), Grand Chapters of Georgia, Illinois, Canada, and Maryland, and St. Louis Commandery, Missouri.

Despite his good education and talent for both academic and administrative work, he was not granted a long life. His illness progressed and on June 19, 1881, G.S. Blackie passed away at the age of 47.

Sir George S. Blackie (1834–1881) was an outstanding man. An Edinburgh University graduate, he moved in 1856 to the United States (Nashville, Tennessee), where he got involved with a local university and a number of local Masonic organizations. During the American Civil

War, he served as a surgeon in the Confederate States Army. Afterwards, he resumed his academic and social work. At the height of his career with Masonic organizations in 1871–1872, he held the office of Grand Commander of Knights Templar of Tennessee.

A participant in the 18th Triennial Conclave of the Knights Templar of the United States, held at Baltimore, Maryland, in September 1871, he later criticized the Order's leadership for the ostentatious pomp and display with which that event was organized. He had a worldview that emphasized the need to make the world a better place, which he expressed in the following words: "Some say that the age of Chivalry is passed, that the spirit of Romance is dead. But they are wrong. The age of Chivalry is never past, so long as there is a wrong unredressed on earth, and a man or woman left to say, "I will redress that wrong, or perish in the attempt.""

A Mason and scholar, G.S. Blackie passed away on June 19, 1881, at the age of 47 after a long progressing illness. He had so much to accomplish in his life only to leave so soon.

Resurse: *Cherkas, A. (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.*

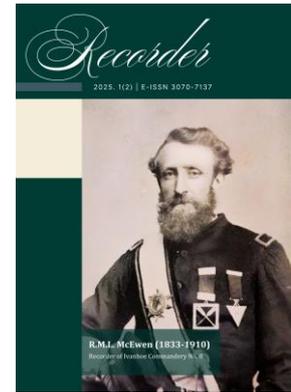
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Sir Albert E. Worthington (1849–1915) in the Museum Collection of Cherkas Global University: Commemorating the 175th Anniversary of His Birth

Alexander C. Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract

This work commemorates the 175th anniversary of the birth of Albert Edwin Worthington (1849–1915), a member of the Masonic order of Knights Templar. It offers a biographical account of his life and examines a sword that used to belong to him.

The source base comprised the following three groups: 1) items of material culture from the museum collection of Masonic swords at Cherkas Global University; 2) personal documents from commercial US databases; 3) regional periodical press materials (specifically, those from the newspaper *Transcript-Telegram* for 1915).

The study's findings revealed that Albert E. Worthington (1849–1915) was a fairly well-rounded person. During his youth, he received a good education and was professionally engaged in choral singing as a tenor – eventually, he remained attached to the choir at his local Baptist church throughout his life. Around 1885, he joined Masonry (a local Masonic lodge and Springfield Commandery No. 6, KT). It is this period that his sword which is part of the sword collection at Cherkas Global University (Exhibit No. 036/KT032) appears to date to. As regards his personal life, A. E. Worthington married twice and had three children. To date, no photographs of A. E. Worthington have been found, leaving the search for a likeness of him ongoing.

Keywords: Albert Edwin Worthington (1849–1915), tenor singer in a church choir, musical education, biography, Springfield Commandery No. 6, Knights Templar, museum collection, private university.

October 18, 1849, saw the birth of Albert Edwin Worthington, a member of the Masonic order of Knights Templar, in the city of Springfield, Massachusetts. Consequently, October 18, 2024, marked the 175th anniversary of his birth. The Masonic sword collection at Cherkas Global University contains a sword that used to belong to him (Exhibit No. 036/KT032), and that is what adds relevance to the research reported in this paper.

The source base comprised the following three groups: 1) items of material culture from the

museum collection of Masonic swords at Cherkas Global University; 2) personal documents from commercial US databases; 3) regional periodical press materials (specifically, those from the newspaper *Transcript-Telegram* for 1915).

A valuable piece of material culture employed in this work was Exhibit No. 036/KT032 from the museum collection of Masonic swords at Cherkas Global University (Washington, DC, USA). This item is a rare Masonic sword (Fig. 1), with a guard decorated with crosses and an ebony hilt.



Fig. 1. Front and back views of the Knights Templar Masonic sword which belonged to Albert E. Worthington (Exhibit No. 036/KT032)

One side of the sword's blade features the name of its owner – Albert E. Worthington, and

the other, the name of the commandery he served – Springfield Commandery No. 6, KT (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Inscriptions on the sides of the sword's blade (Exhibit No. 036/KT032)

The sword's ebony hilt (Fig. 3) and silver-colored scabbard attest that it used to belong to a member of the Masonic order of Knights Templar.



Fig. 3. Hilt and guard of the sword (Exhibit No. 036/KT032)

Thus, based on the inscriptions on the sword, it used to belong to a Knight Templar named Albert E. Worthington, who was a member of Springfield Commandery No. 6, Feeding Hills, Massachusetts.

A search for similar swords led to an indistinguishably similar sword of a Knight

Templar which, likewise, belonged to Springfield Commandery No. 6 (Fig. 4). This attests that the sword was not an exclusive (presentation) weapon belonging to the owner, but was one of those routinely issued to Springfield Commandery No. 6 officers.



Fig. 4. Similar sword belonging to a Knight Templar from Springfield Commandery No. 6

Use was also made of the commercial database Ancestry.com to establish the man's full name and birth and death years and gain insight into various details of his life.

Specifically, it was established that Albert Edwin Worthington was born on October 18, 1849, in Springfield, Hampden County, Massachusetts, to a 42-year-old father, Henry Worthington, and a 35-year-old mother, Henrietta Renton. He died on May 20, 1915, in Agawam, Hampden County, Massachusetts, at the age of 65, and was buried in the same city.

The historiography dealing with biographical accounts of the lives of various figures in the Masonic movement spans nearly 200 years. One of the first such works is C. Staats's 'Tribute to the Memory of De Witt Clinton, Late Governor of the State of New-York'. De Witt Clinton (1769–1828) was the first Grand Master of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar for the United States of America. He occupied this post from 1816 until his death in 1828. A noteworthy work that came out a little later is W. W. Campbell's 'The Life and Writings of De Witt Clinton'.

Fourteen years later, and that was during the Civil War in the United States, a work entitled 'Leaflets of Masonic Biography: Or Sketches of Eminent Freemasons' was published under the editorship of the Mason C. Moore. This collection of biographies comprises 13 biographical works, which include biographical accounts of the lives of famous Masons such as Joseph Warren, Christopher Wren, Thomas Smith Webb, Rev. James Anderson, and Benjamin Franklin. The authors, besides C. Moore himself, include W. P. Strickland, Sidney Hayden, and Henry C. Deming.

The increase in the number of members of the masonic order of Knights Templar appears to have been accompanied by a sharp increase in the number of biographical works on them. Of particular note is J. D. Richardson's 'Tennessee Templars: A Register of Names, with Biographical Sketches, of the Knights Templar of Tennessee, and Brief Histories of the Grand and Subordinate Commanderies', published in 1883. The work contains biographies of the state's 13 famous Masons, including Henry M. Aiken, George S. Blackie, and George C. Connor. On a side note, it presents a history of the Grand Commandery of Tennessee.

Another work worthy of mention is G. A. Lawrence's 'Sir Knight Lee Stewart Smith, Most Eminent Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America, 1916–1919', published in 1920. Among the 1960s works, of particular note is 'Eugene F. Falconnet, Soldier, Engineer, Inventor', written by H. L. Swint and D. E. Mohler about Sir Eugene F. Falconnet, a participant in the Civil War, engineer, and inventor, who, among other things, was a member of Nashville Commandery No. 1 (Nashville, Tennessee).

The topic remains one of relevance today. It is worth mentioning here two of our own works related to it – the one on Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908), who was a member of Monroe Commandery No. 12 (Rochester, New York), and the one on Sir Albert A. Marden (1824–1919), who was Recorder of De Molay Commandery No. 26 (New Ulm, Minnesota).

The afore-mentioned Masonic sword belonged to Springfield Commandery No. 6, part of the Grand Commandery of Massachusetts. Springfield Commandery No. 6 was one of the many different organizations in the city of Springfield, part of Hampden County, at the beginning of the 20th century. There are no dedicated publications on the history of Springfield Commandery No. 6, but there is a mention of it in the 1902 book "Our County and Its People": A History of Hampden County, Massachusetts'. Here is what it says about the organization: "Springfield Commandery Knights Templar is the only commandery in the county. Its present membership is more than six hundred and it has numbered among its members many of the leading citizens of the county. The movement for its organization was set on foot in the fall of 1825, there being a number of Knights in Springfield and vicinity who had received their knighthood in New York or Boston. On February 22, 1826, the movement took shape, and a meeting was held in the old Masonic hall which stood at the corner of Main and State streets in Springfield, the site of the present Masonic temple. At this meeting it was decided to petition the Grand Encampment for a charter. A petition already prepared was thereupon signed by Koswell Lee, Henry Dwight, Alpheus Nettleton, John B. Kirkham, Abiram Morgan, Major Goodsell, Arnold Jenckes, Amasa Holcomb and Hezekiah Cady.

Village Encampment of Greenwich, having jurisdiction over the territory in which the new encampment desired to be created, was requested to sanction the granting of a charter and its sanction was given. In June following the charter was granted, but for some reason, unknown to the present generation of Knights Templar, the charter was not signed until June 19, 1830, four years later. However, the delay in signing the charter did not operate to the disadvantage of the new organization, which has always ranked as of June 19, 1826. Its relative position in order of precedence was retained when the change was made from encampments to commanderies of Knights Templar. Henry Dwight was the first Eminent Commander of the commandery or encampment. The commandery flourished until 1831, when in common with Masonic bodies it felt the anti-Masonic sentiment so strongly that it apparently abandoned work. From January 5, 1831, until July 4, 1851, the records are blank. In 1851, Sirs James W. Crooks, John B. Kirkham, Ocran Dickinson, Daniel Reynolds, Amos Call and James H. Call succeeded in reviving interest in the work, and from that date in July when the first meeting for twenty years appears to have been held, the interest in the knightly degrees has never flagged. But it was in 1861, when the late Judge W. S. Shurtleff was elected Eminent Commander, that the commandery took up the work with enthusiasm, his incumbency of the high office marking an epoch in the history of the commandery. This brief note gives us an idea of how Springfield Commandery No. 6 of Knights Templar developed. Albert E. Worthington, who was in his early 50s at the time, was one of the organization's 600 members as at 1900.

In terms of biographical information on Albert E. Worthington, the following was written about him in the newspaper *Transcript-Telegram* on May 21, 1915, the day following his death: "Mr. Worthington was born in Springfield, being the youngest son of Henry and Henrietta (Renton) Worthington. His parents came to Agawam when he was two years old and bought a farm of his

uncle, Amos Worthington. A few years later he bought the farm about opposite. It had previously been an old tavern stand owned and carried on by another uncle, Ambrose Worthington. Here Albert Worthington grew to young manhood. He was educated in the public schools of the town and the Connecticut Literary Institution in Suffield, Ct. He developed considerable musical ability, and was under the instruction and training of Prof. Zuchtman in Springfield for some time. He had an unusually fine voice. He united with the Baptist church in May, 1864, and occupied the position of tenor singer in the choir of that church for many years. He followed the occupation of a farmer, being foreman on the large farm of L. L. Whitman for some years. May 30, 1878, he was united in marriage to Miss Mary A. K. Whitman, daughter of the late L. L. Whitman of Agawam. Mrs. Worthington died May 24, 1883, leaving a little daughter. Mr. Worthington was again married March 17, 1887, to Miss Evelyn E. Bitgood, who survives him. He leaves, besides his widow, two daughters, Mrs. Charles Relyea of Hartford, Ct., and Mrs. Guy Perry of Agawam, also one brother, Henry R. Worthington of Yarmouth, and one sister, Mrs. J. N. Cook of Agawam". As we can see, the obituary says nothing about A.E. Worthington's service in Springfield Commandery No. 6, and the reasons behind that are not known.

The study's findings revealed that Albert E. Worthington (1849–1915) was a fairly well-rounded person. During his youth, he received a good education and was professionally engaged in choral singing as a tenor – eventually, he remained attached to the choir at his local Baptist church throughout his life. Around 1885, he joined Masonry (a local Masonic lodge and Springfield Commandery No. 6, KT). It is this period that his sword which is part of the sword collection at Cherkas Global University (Exhibit No. 036/KT032) appears to date to. As regards his personal life, A. E. Worthington married twice and had three children. To date, no photographs of A. E. Worthington have been found, leaving the search for a likeness of him ongoing.

Resurse: Cherkas, A. (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.

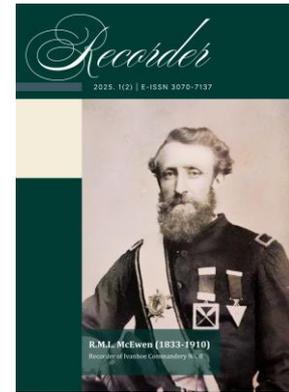
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Journal homepage:



“Little Commandery” – Children from the Masonic Widows and Orphans’ Home of Kentucky

Konstantine V. Taran

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. While examining the Photographical Souvenir of the Twenty-Sixth Triennial Conclave in Boston (1895), researchers identified a unique photograph depicting members of Louisville Commandery No. 1 accompanied by twenty-six boys dressed in Knights Templar uniforms. These boys represented the “Little Commandery” of the Masonic Widows and Orphans’ Home of Kentucky, an institution founded in 1867 by the Grand Lodge of Kentucky to support families affected by the Civil War. The image shows the boys carrying the American flag, the Home’s flag, and likely their own banner, each wearing the official Conclave badge. The “Little Commandery” symbolized the Home’s educational, moral, and fraternal influence on its young residents.

Keywords: Little Commandery, Louisville Commandery No. 1, Masonic Widows and Orphans’ Home of Kentucky, Knights Templar, 1895 Triennial Conclave, Boston 1895, Masonic history.

While browsing the “Photographical Souvenir” of the Twenty-Sixth Triennial Conclave held in Boston in 1895, we discovered a remarkable photograph: members of Louisville Commandery No. 1 together with 26 boys dressed in Knights Templar uniforms.

The caption read:

“Little Commandery, from the Masonic Widows and Orphans’ Home of Kentucky. Louisville Commandery No. 1, Louisville, Ky.” (Fig. 1).

In the photo, the boys of the “Little Commandery” carry:

- the American flag,
- the flag of the Masonic Home of Kentucky,

- and most likely their own Commandery banner.

Each boy wears the badge of the Twenty-Sixth Triennial Conclave, Boston 1895, confirming that the photo was taken during this event.

What was the “Little Commandery”?

It originated in the Masonic Widows and Orphans’ Home of Kentucky, founded by the Grand Lodge of Kentucky in 1867 after the Civil War, when the region was home to many widows and orphans of Masons.

Over time, the Home formed its own “Little Commandery”, which was proudly presented at the Conclave in Boston in 1895 (Fig. 2-4).



Fig. 1. "Little Commandery" with members of Louisville Commandery No. 1

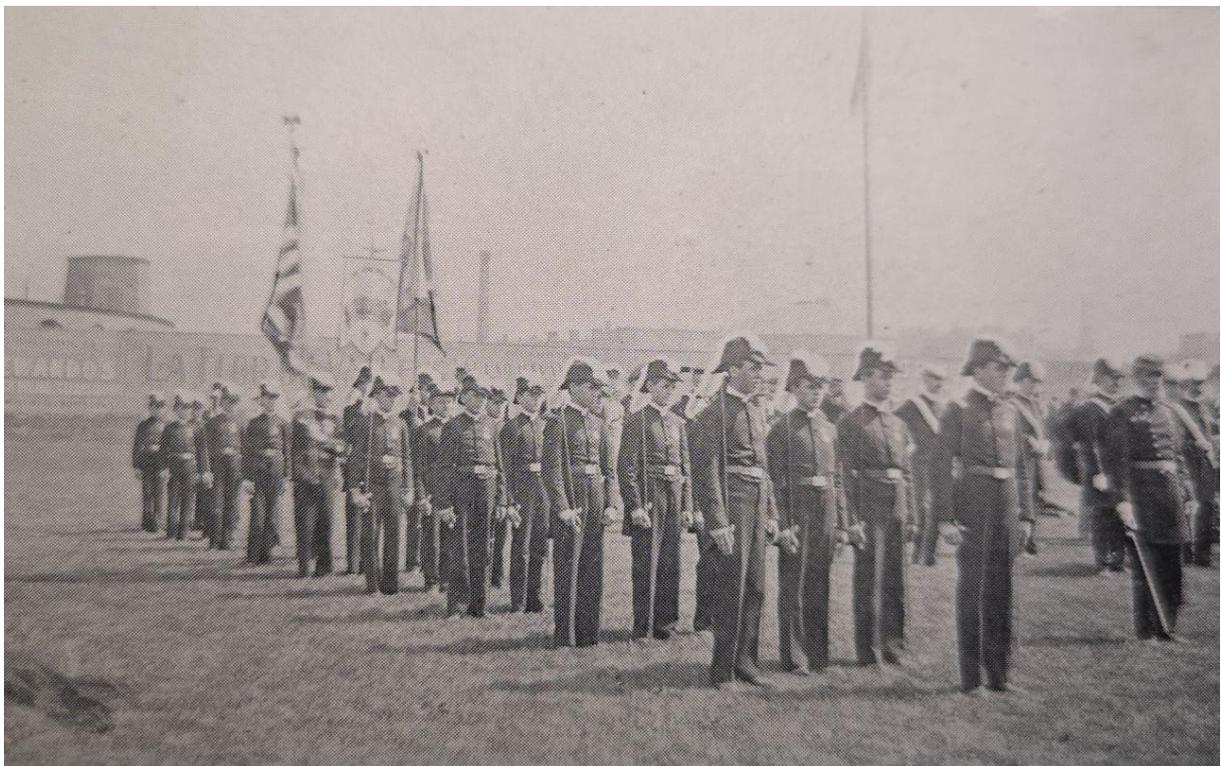


Fig. 2. "Little Commandery". Twenty-Sixth Triennial Conclave. 1895

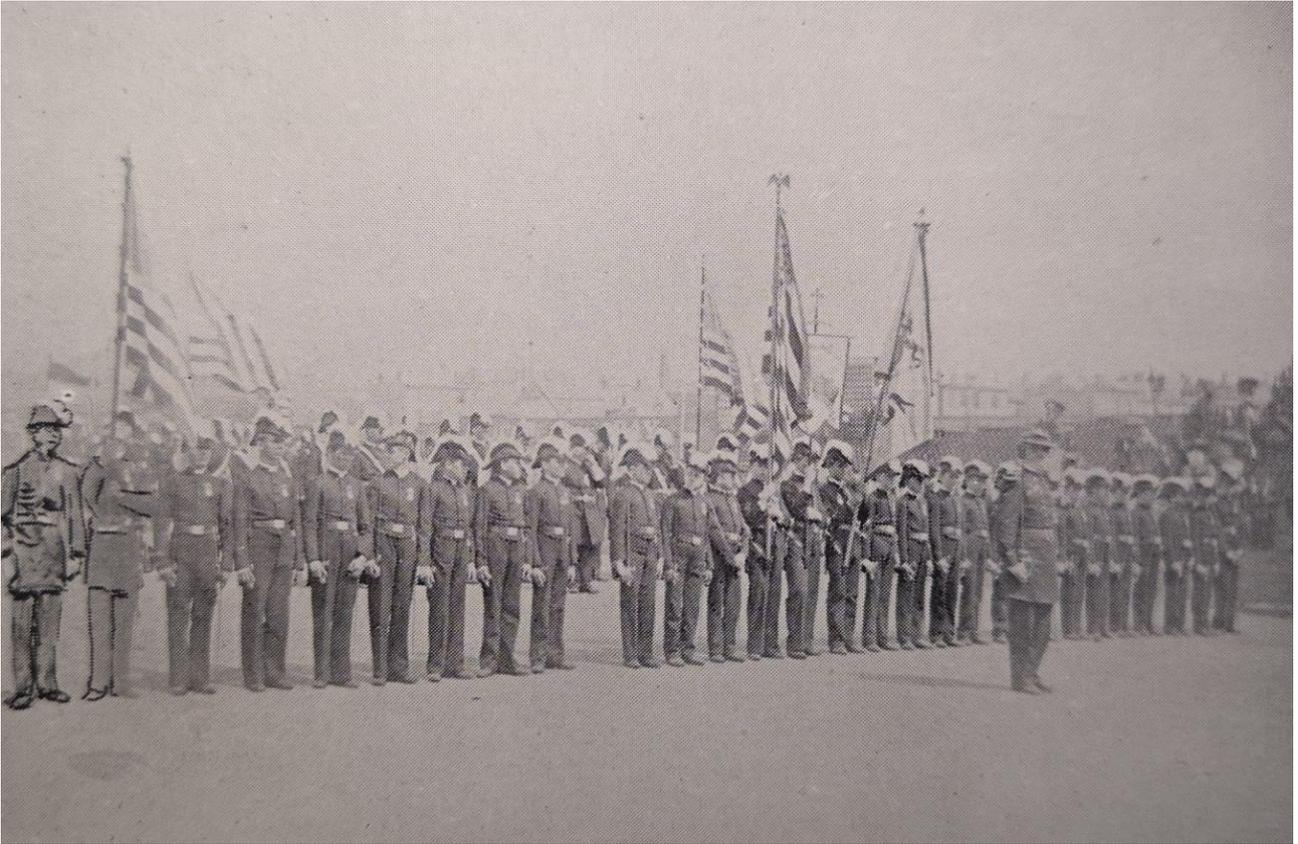


Fig. 3. "Little Commandery". Twenty-Sixth Triennial Conclave. 1895



Fig. 4. "Little Commandery". Twenty-Sixth Triennial Conclave. 1895

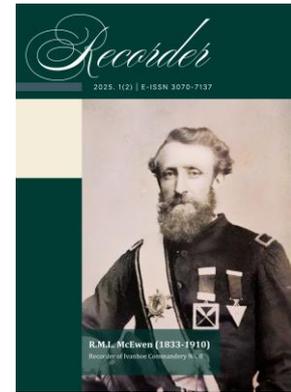
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Lesser-Known Traditions of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar

Anvar M. Mamadaliev

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. Over the past two centuries, the Masonic Knights Templar have developed a wide range of customs, including the now-forgotten tradition of appointing unmarried women as Commandery sponsors. A notable example appears in the souvenir album of the 28th Triennial Conclave held in Louisville in 1901, which features a group portrait of twenty-nine sponsors representing every Commandery in Kentucky. Archival evidence shows that these women, aged 18–32, served as symbolic supporters of their Commanderies and were replaced upon marriage. Rooted in medieval precedents—such as the example of Catherine of Siena—the tradition highlights the historical moral and ceremonial role women played in supporting Templar ideals.

Keywords: Commandery sponsors, Kentucky 1901, 28th Triennial Conclave, Knights Templar, Freemasonry, women in Masonic culture, historical traditions.

Over the past two centuries, the Masonic Order of Knights Templar has developed numerous customs and traditions. Some have faded into history, while others remain alive to this day.

One of the more unusual and now-forgotten traditions was the appointment of unmarried women as sponsors of Commanderies.

After the 28th Triennial Conclave, held in 1901 in Louisville, Kentucky, a souvenir photo album was published. It included a remarkable group photograph of unmarried women sponsors from all Commanderies of Kentucky, along with members of the Drill Committee and the Grand Commandery of Kentucky.

According to the album, there were 29 sponsors across the Grand Commandery of Kentucky in 1901 (Fig. 2), each representing one Commandery and serving as an official sponsor of the 28th Triennial Conclave.

The complete list is as follows:

Miss Minnie Gertrude Vogt (Fig. 1), Louisville, for the Drill Committee.

Miss Elizabeth Julia Jefferson, Louisville for the Grand Commandery.

Miss Annie Leathers, for Louisville, No. 1.

Miss Sue Metcalfe, for Webb, No. 2, Lexington.

Miss Laura Browning, for Versailles, No. 3.

Miss Katherine Lindsey, for Frankfort, No. 4.

Miss Grace Waters, of Louisville, for Montgomery, No. 5, Mt. Sterling.

Miss Susie Bell Cox, for Moore, No. 6, Hopkinsville, represented by Miss Ethel Gray, of Louisville.

Miss Elizabeth Sarah Fisk, for Covington, No. 7.

Miss Florence Sinclair, for Bradford, No. 9, Georgetown.

Miss Beulah Louise Pugh, of Vanceburg, for Maysville, No. 10.

Miss Carrie Rieke, for Paducah, No. 11.

Miss Susie Mills Bartholomew, for De Molay, No. 12, of Louisville.

Miss Blanche Dorland, of Louisville, for Newport, No. 13.

Miss Sue Soaper, for Henderson, No. 14.

Miss Mary Jewell Watkins, for Owensboro, No. 15.

Miss Mary Robinson, for Cynthiana, No. 16.

Miss Bessie Gray Dunlap, for Ryan, No. 17, of Danville.

Miss Julia Higgins, for Richmond, No. 19.

Miss Allye Collins, for John C. Breckinridge, No. 20, of Flemingsburg.

Miss Lizzie Berry, for Alida, No. 21, of Sturgis.

Miss Clara Jenkins, for Bowling Green, No. 23.
Miss Grace Kirk, for Marion, No. 24, of Lebanon.
Miss Lucy Grubbs Orndorff, for Russellville, No. 29.
Miss Lizette Blanton Dickson, for Coeur de Lion, No. 26, of Paris.
Miss Martha Arnold, for Madisonville, No. 27.
Miss Jerrie A. Weaver, for Ashland, No. 28.
Miss Susan E. Atkinson, for St. Bernard, No. 29, of Earlington.
Archival research reveals that all the women sponsors were between 18 and 32 years old and

lived in the same towns as the Commanderies they represented. If a sponsor married, she was replaced by another candidate.

This tradition had deep historical roots, dating back to the medieval era. A prominent example is Catherine of Siena (1347–1380), a fervent supporter of the Crusades who engaged in advocacy, recruitment, and fundraising for the cause.

Thus, the photographs from Kentucky in 1901 are not merely rare historical documents but also a reminder of the symbolic and moral support that women offered to the Knights Templar and their ideals.



Fig. 1. Minnie Gertrude Vogt – sponsor of the Drill Committee



Fig. 2. Sponsors of the Grand Commandery of Kentucky in 1901.

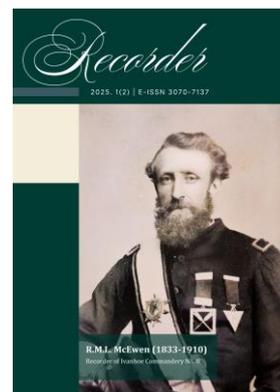
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Journal homepage:



The Oldest Mason of New York State

Anvar M. Mamadaliev

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. Thomas Heald Brown (1791–1893) was a long-lived figure of American Freemasonry whose Masonic career spanned more than seven decades. Born in Massachusetts, he became a Master Mason in June 1821 and later settled in Gloversville, New York. Remarkably, he was knighted a Templar on February 14, 1893, by Holy Cross Commandery No. 51, only weeks before his death at the age of 102. Contemporary newspapers noted Brown as the oldest Mason in New York State, commemorating his exceptional longevity and dedication to the Craft.

Keywords: Thomas Heald Brown (1791–1893), Freemasonry, Holy Cross Commandery No. 51, Gloversville, oldest Mason, 19th century, Knights Templar.

Thomas Heald Brown was born on January 22, 1791, in Massachusetts.

Made a Master Mason — June 1821.

Later moved to Gloversville, New York.

Knighted a Templar — February 14, 1893, by Holy Cross Commandery No. 51, New York.

Thomas Heald Brown passed away on April 4, 1893, at the age of 102.

After his death, newspapers reported that he was the oldest Mason in New York State.



Fig. 1. Sir Knight Thomas H. Brown. 1893.

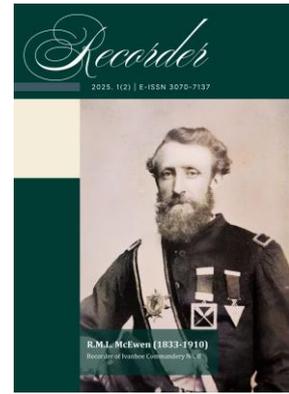
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Journal homepage:



Uniform (Exhibitions)

Museum of Cherkas Global University Today

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. This section highlights selected exhibitions of The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar (also known as the Museum of Cherkas Global University). Founded on August 1, 2024, the museum initially developed four core collections: the Sword Collection; the Uniform Collection; the Badge Collection; and the Photo Collection, which includes portraits, group photographs, and promotional materials from U.S. Knights Templar commanderies. On November 1, 2025, a fifth collection—Personal Belongings and Souvenirs—was established. By October 2025, the museum’s holdings numbered approximately 700 items, reflecting its rapid growth and expanding historical significance.

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 October 2025, the museum’s holdings comprised approximately 700 items.



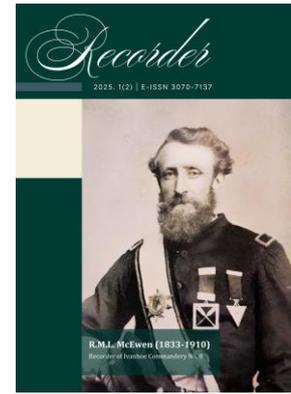
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Black uniform of a knight from Trinity Commandery No. 1, KT – Exposition No. 017 (Feb. 28, 2025)

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

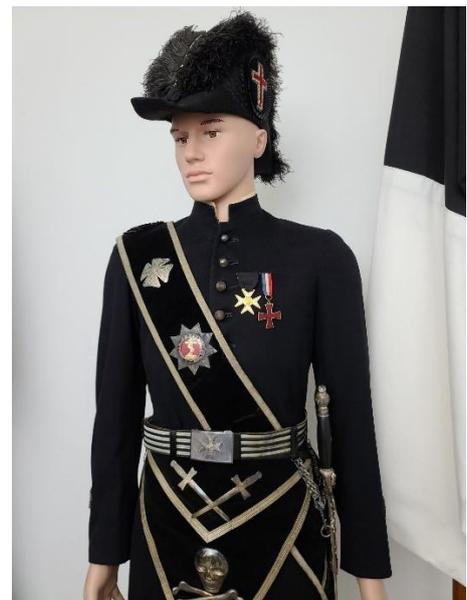
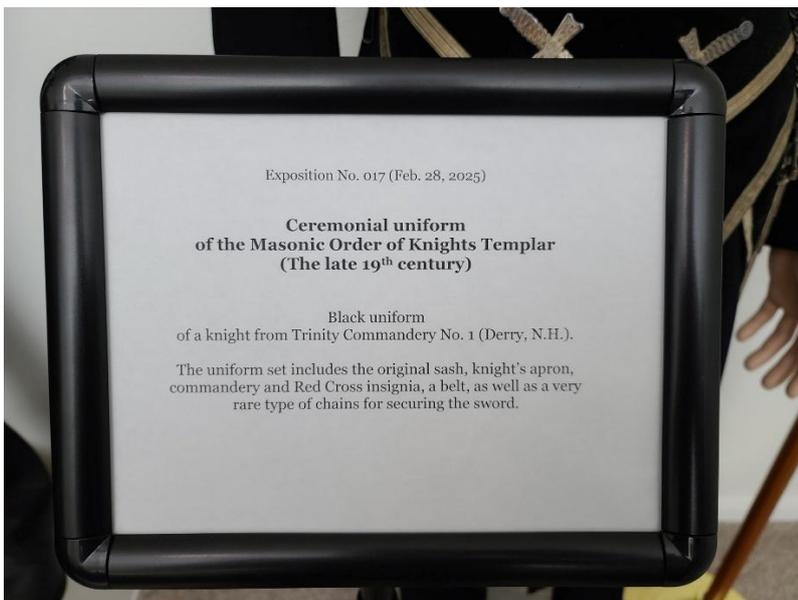
Abstract. Exposition No. 017, held on February 28, 2025, at The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, showcased the black uniform of a knight from Trinity Commandery No. 1 in Derry, New Hampshire. The exhibit featured a complete and well-preserved uniform set, including the original sash, knight's apron, Commandery and Red Cross insignia, a belt, and an exceptionally rare type of chains used to secure the sword. This collection provides valuable insight into the material culture and ceremonial attire of the Knights Templar in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Keywords: Trinity Commandery No. 1, Black uniform, Knights Templar, ceremonial regalia, museum exhibition, Derry, New Hampshire, sword chains.

On February 28, 2025, The Museum of The History of the American Knights Templar held Exposition No. 017, which was dedicated to the Black uniform of a knight from Trinity Commandery No. 1, K.T.

Black uniform of a knight from Trinity Commandery No. 1 (Derry, N.H.).

The uniform set includes the original sash, knight's apron, commandery and Red Cross insignia, a belt, as well as a very rare type of chains for securing the sword.





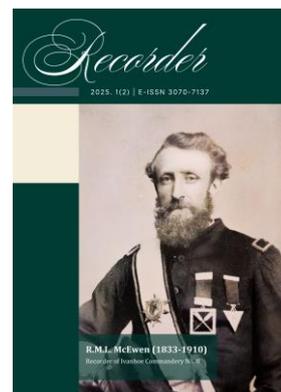
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Journal homepage:



White uniform of a knight from St. Elmo Commandery No. 9, KT – Exposition No. 018 (March 14, 2025)

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. Exposition No. 018, held on March 14, 2025, at The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, presented the white uniform of a knight from St. Elmo Commandery No. 9 in Meriden, Connecticut. The exhibit featured a complete and authentic uniform set, including the original sash, knight's apron, Commandery insignia, and a belt with its original buckle. A particularly notable highlight was the very rare original sword preserved with the ensemble. This exposition offers valuable insight into the ceremonial regalia and historical craftsmanship of St. Elmo Commandery No. 9.

Keywords: St. Elmo Commandery No. 9, White uniform, Knights Templar, ceremonial regalia, Meriden Connecticut, museum exhibition, original sword.

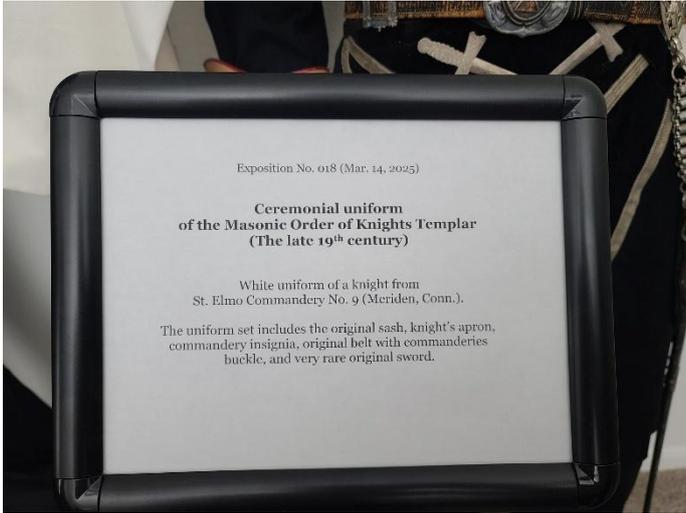
On March 14, 2025, The Museum of The History of the American Knights Templar held Exposition No. 018, which was dedicated to the White uniform of a knight from St. Elmo Commandery No. 9, K.T.

White uniform of a knight from St. Elmo Commandery No. 9 (Meriden, Conn.).

The uniform set includes the original sash, knight's apron, commandery insignia, original belt with commentaries buckle, and very rare original sword.







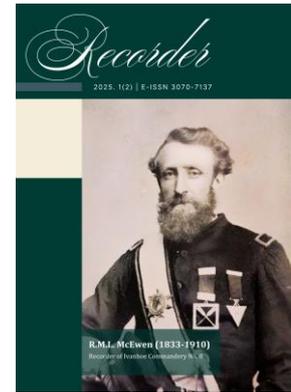
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Journal homepage:



White uniform of an Officer Recorder from De Witt Clinton Commandery, KT – Exposition No. 019 (March 20, 2025)

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. Exposition No. 019, held on March 20, 2025, at The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, showcased the white ceremonial uniform of an Officer Recorder from De Witt Clinton Commandery. Dating to the early twentieth century, the uniform represents a well-preserved example of Knights Templar regalia. The set includes the original sash, knight's apron, Commandery and officer insignia, a standard belt with buckle, and a rare original sword. This exhibition highlights the distinctive attributes of Recorder-level attire and contributes to the broader understanding of Templar ceremonial traditions.

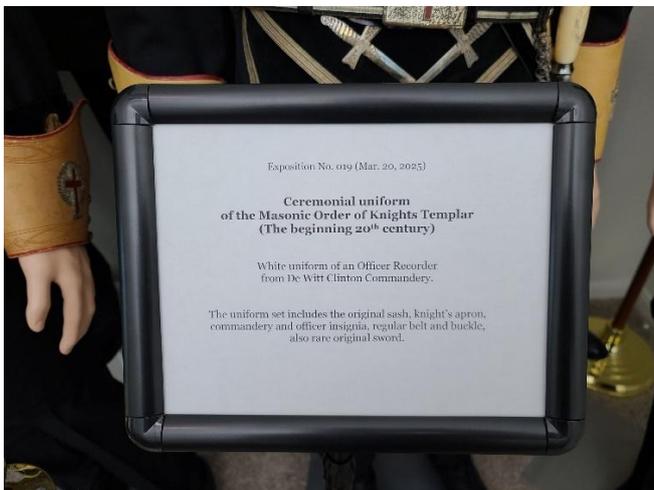
Keywords: De Witt Clinton Commandery, Officer Recorder, White uniform, Knights Templar regalia, early 20th century, museum exhibition, ceremonial sword.

On March 20, 2025, The Museum of The History of the American Knights Templar held Exposition No. 019, which was dedicated to the White uniform of an Officer Recorder from De Witt Clinton Commandery, K.T.

Ceremonial uniform of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar (The beginning 20th century).

White uniform of an Officer Recorder from De Witt Clinton Commandery.

The uniform set includes the original sash, knight's apron, commandery and officer insignia, regular belt and buckle, also rare original sword.







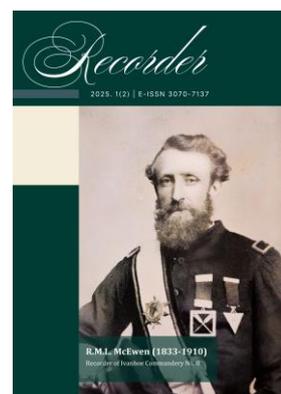
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A group of knights in Regulation Fatigue Coat from the Grand Commandery of Illinois KT – Exposition No. 020 (March 24, 2025)

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. Exposition No. 020, held on March 24, 2025, at The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, featured a unique display of early twentieth-century ceremonial attire: a group of knights wearing the Regulation Fatigue Coat of the Grand Commandery of Illinois. The presentation included three representative figures—a knight from St. John Commandery No. 26 (Peru), a knight from Chevalier Bayard Commandery No. 52 (Chicago), and the Eminent Commander from Montjoie Commandery No. 53 (Chicago). This exhibition offered valuable insight into the standardized dress and hierarchical distinctions within Illinois Commanderies.

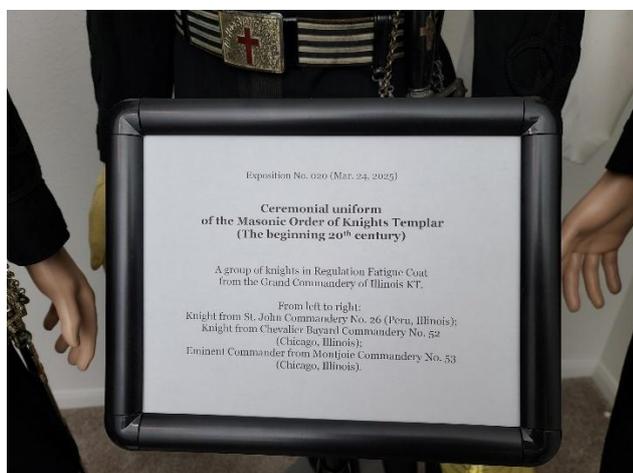
Keywords: Grand Commandery of Illinois, Regulation Fatigue Coat, St. John Commandery No. 26, Chevalier Bayard Commandery No. 52, Montjoie Commandery No. 53, Knights Templar uniform, early 20th century.

On March 24, 2025, The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar held Exposition No. 020, which presented a group of knights in Regulation Fatigue Coats from the Grand Commandery of Illinois, Knights Templar.

Ceremonial uniform of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar (The beginning 20th century).

A group of knights in Regulation Fatigue Coat from the Grand Commandery of Illinois KT.

From left to right:
Knight from St. John Commandery No. 26 (Peru, Illinois);
Knight from Chevalier Bayard Commandery No. 52 (Chicago, Illinois);
Eminent Commander from Montjoie Commandery No. 53 (Chicago, Illinois).









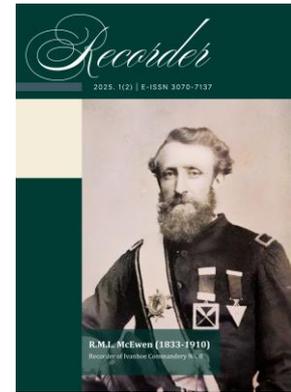
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The White uniform for Eminent Commander from Pilgrim Commandery No. 19, KT – Exposition No. 021 (Apr. 9, 2025)

Airin Cherkas

Cherkas Global University

Abstract. Exposition No. 021, held on April 9, 2025, at The Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar, showcased the early twentieth-century white ceremonial uniform of the Eminent Commander of Pilgrim Commandery No. 19 in Farmington, Maine. The display featured a complete officer's ensemble, including a dress coat marked "Pilgrim" on the collar, an apron and sash, a regulation belt, and a regulation sword unique to the commandery. This exposition highlights the distinctive stylistic and hierarchical elements of high-ranking Templar regalia in the New England tradition.

Keywords: Pilgrim Commandery No. 19, Eminent Commander, white uniform, Knights Templar regalia, early 20th century, ceremonial dress, Farmington, Maine.

On April 9, 2025, The Museum of The History of the American Knights Templar held Exposition No. 021, which was dedicated to the White uniform of the White uniform for Eminent Commander from Pilgrim Commandery No. 19, K.T.

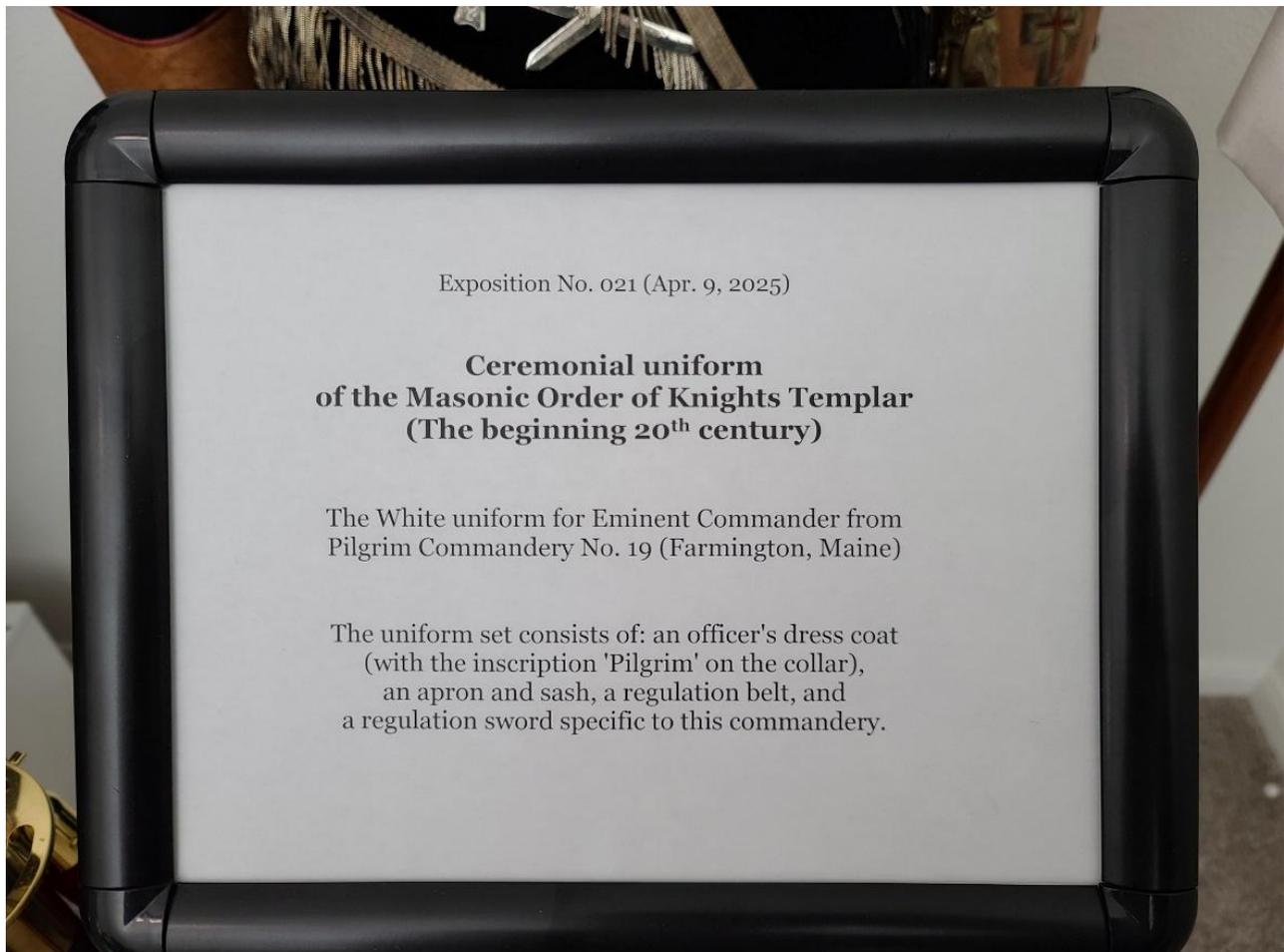
Ceremonial uniform of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar (The beginning 20th century).

The White uniform for Eminent Commander from Pilgrim Commandery No. 19 (Farmington, Maine).

The uniform set consists of: an officer's dress coat (with the inscription 'Pilgrim' on the collar), an apron and sash, a regulation belt, and a regulation sword specific to this commandery.







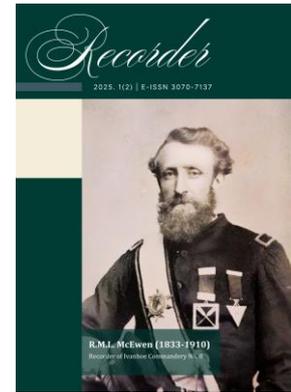




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Leafing Through Antique Books

Thomas Smith Webb ‘The Freemasons Monitor of Illustration of Masonry’. Chapters VI–VII

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Abstract. Thomas Smith Webb (1771–1819) was one of the most influential figures in early American Freemasonry and the Knights Templar. Serving as the first Deputy Grand Master of the General Grand Encampment from 1816 until his death, he played a decisive role in shaping the York Rite. His seminal work, *The Freemason’s Monitor; or, Illustrations of Masonry* (1797), underwent five revised editions during his lifetime and became foundational for the development of Masonic ritual in the United States. The rare 1816 edition represents the culmination of his editorial efforts. In this section, we continue presenting Webb’s remarkable book by offering Chapters VI and VII.

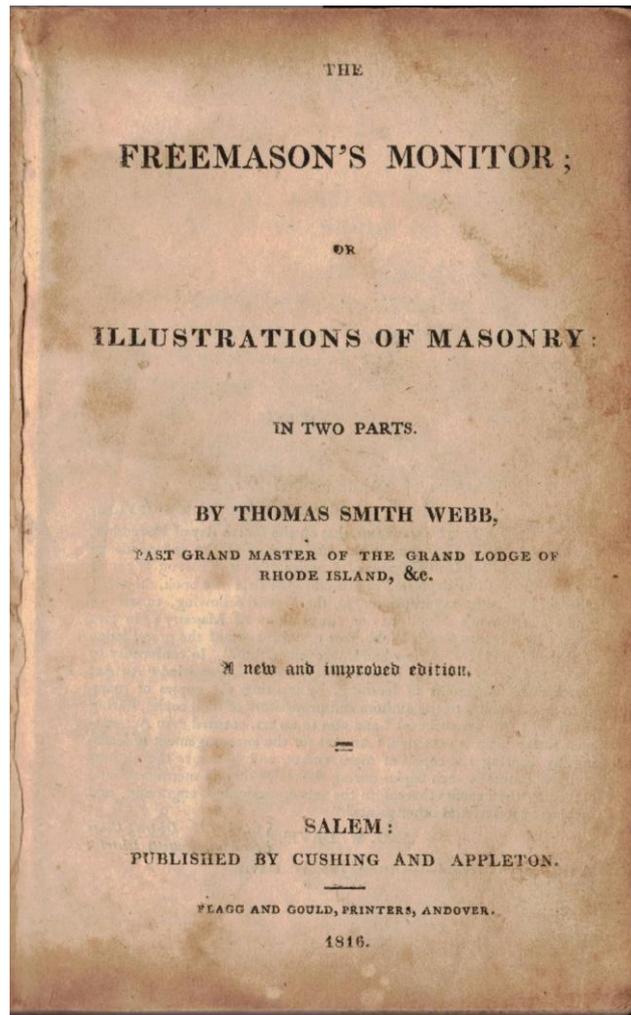
Keywords: Thomas Smith Webb (1771–1819), Freemason’s Monitor, York Rite, Knights Templar, Masonic ritual, early American Freemasonry, 1816 edition.



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

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

During the author’s lifetime, the book was revised and expanded five times. The penultimate edition, published in 1816, is now considered a bibliographic rarity. We continue to acquaint the reader with this remarkable book and present to your attention Chapters VI and VII.



THE FREEMASON'S MONITOR

PART FIRST

BOOK I

...

CHAPTER VI¹.

Charges and regulations for the conduct and behaviour of Masons.

A rehearsal of the ancient charges properly succeeds the opening, and precedes the closing, of a lodge. This was the constant practice of our ancient brethren, and ought never to be neglected in our regular assemblies. A recapitulation of our duty cannot be disagreeable to those, who are acquainted with it; and to those, who know it not, should any such be, it must be highly proper to recommend it.

¹ To be continued. See the beginning in Recorder. 2025. 1(1): 36–40.

ANCIENT CHARGES.

On the management of the craft in working.

Masons employ themselves diligently in their sundry vocations, live creditably, and conform with cheerfulness to the government of the country in which they reside.

[The most expert craftsman is chosen or appointed master of the work, and is duly honoured by those over whom he presides.

The master, knowing himself qualified, undertakes the government of the lodge, and truly dispenses his rewards, giving to every brother the approbation which he merits.

A craftsman, who is appointed warden of the work under the master, is true to master and fellows, carefully oversees the work, and his brethren obey him.]

The master, wardens, and brethren, receive their rewards justly, are faithful, and carefully finish the work they begin, whether it be in the first or second degree; but never put that work to the first, which has been accustomed to the second degree, nor that to the second or first, which has been accustomed to the third.

Neither envy nor censure is discovered among true masons. No brother is supplanted, or put out of his work, if he be capable to finish it; as no man, who is not perfectly skilled in the original design, can, with equal advantage to the master, finish the work begun by another.

All employed in masonry meekly receive their rewards, and use no disobliging name. Brother or fellow are the terms or appellations they bestow on each other. They behave courteously within and without the lodge, and never desert the master till the work is finished.

Laws for the government of the lodge.

You are to salute one another in a courteous manner, agreeably to the forms established among masons¹; you are freely to give such mutual instructions as shall be thought necessary or expedient, not being overseen or overheard, without encroaching upon each other, or derogating from that respect, which is due to any gentleman, were he not a mason; for though, as masons, we rank as brethren on a level, yet masonry deprives no man of the honour due to his rank or character, but rather adds to his honour, especially if he has deserved well of the fraternity, who always render honour to whom it is due, and avoid ill manners.

No private committees are to be allowed, or separate conversations encouraged; the master or wardens are not to be interrupted, or any brother speaking to the master; but due decorum is to be observed, and a proper respect paid to the master and presiding officers.

These laws are to be strictly enforced, that harmony may be preserved, and the business of the lodge be carried on with order and regularity.

Amen. So mote it be.

Charge on the behaviour of masons out of the lodge.

When the lodge is closed, you may enjoy yourselves with innocent mirth; but you are carefully to avoid excess. You are not to compel any brother to act contrary to his inclination, or give offence by word or deed, but enjoy a free and easy conversation. You are to use no immoral or obscene discourse, but at all times support with propriety the dignity of your character.

You are to be cautious in your words and carriage, that the most penetrating stranger may not discover, or find out, what is not proper to be intimated; and, if necessary, you are to wave a discourse, and manage it prudently, for the honour of the fraternity.

At home, and in your several neighbourhoods, you are to behave as wise and moral men. You are never to communicate to your families, friends or acquaintance, the private transactions of our different assemblies; but upon every occasion to consult your own honour, and the reputation of the fraternity at large.

You are to study the preservation of health, by avoiding irregularity and intemperance, that your families may not be neglected and injured, or yourselves disabled from attending to your necessary employments in life.

If a stranger apply in the character of a mason, you are cautiously to examine him in such a method as prudence may direct, and agreeably to the forms established among masons; that you may not be imposed upon by an ignorant, false pretender, whom you are to reject with contempt, and beware of giving him any secret hints of knowledge. But if you discover him to be a true and genuine brother, you are to respect him; if he be in want, you are to relieve him, or direct him how he may be relieved; you are to employ him, or

¹ In a lodge, masons meet as members of one family; all prejudices, therefore, on account of religion, country, or private opinion, are removed. In a lodge, masons meet as members of one family; all prejudices, therefore, on account of religion, country, or private opinion, are removed.

recommend him to employment: however, you are never charged to do beyond your ability, only to prefer a poor brother, who is a good man and true, before any other person in the same circumstances.

Finally: These rules you are always to observe and enforce; and also the duties which have been communicated in the lectures; cultivating brotherly love, the foundation and capstone, the cement and glory, of this ancient fraternity; avoiding, upon every occasion, wrangling and quarrelling, slandering and backbiting; not permitting others to slander honest brethren, but defending their characters, and doing them good offices, as far as may be consistent with your honour and safety, but no farther. Hence all may see the benign influence of masonry, as all true masons have done from the beginning of the world, and will do to the end of time.

Amen. So mote it be.

CHAPTER VII.

Prerequisites for a candidate.

By a late regulation, adopted by most of the grand lodges in America, no candidate for the mysteries of masonry can be initiated without having been proposed at a previous meeting of the lodge; in order that no one may be introduced without due inquiry relative to his character and qualifications.

All applications for initiation should be made by petition in writing, signed by the applicant, giving an account of his age, quality, occupation, and place of residence, and that he is desirous of being admitted a member of the fraternity; which petition should be kept on file by the secretary.

Form of a petition to be presented by a candidate for initiation.

“To the worshipful Master, Wardens, and Brethren of ——— Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons.

“The petition of the subscriber respectfully sheweth, that, having long entertained a favourable opinion of your ancient institution, he is desirous of being admitted a member thereof, if found worthy.

“His place of residence is ——— his age ——— years; his occupation ———.

(Signed)

A. B.”

After this petition is read, the candidate must be proposed in form, by a member of the lodge, and the proposition seconded by another member: a committee is then appointed to make inquiry relative to his character and qualifications.

Declaration to be assented to by a candidate, in an adjoining apartment, previous to initiation.

“Do you seriously declare, upon your honour, before these gentlemen,* that, unbiassed by friends, and uninfluenced by mercenary motives, you freely and voluntarily offer yourself a candidate for the mysteries of masonry?” I do.

“Do you seriously declare, upon your honour, before these gentlemen, that you are prompted to solicit the privileges of masonry by a favourable opinion conceived of the institution, a desire of knowledge, and a sincere wish of being serviceable to your fellow creatures?” I do.

“Do you seriously declare, upon your honour, before these gentlemen¹, that you will cheerfully conform to all the ancient established usages and customs of the fraternity?” I do.

After the above declarations are made, and reported to the master, he makes it known to the lodge, in manner following, viz:

“Brethren,

At the request of Mr. A. B. he has been proposed and accepted in regular form; I therefore recommend him as a proper candidate for the mysteries of masonry, and worthy to partake of the privileges of the fraternity; and, in consequence of a declaration of his intentions, voluntarily made, I believe he will cheerfully conform to the rules of the order.”

If there are then no objections made, the candidate is introduced in due form.

Resurse: Webb T.S. (1816). *The Freemasons Monitor of Illustration of Masonry*. In two parts. Salem: Published by Cushing and Appleton. P. 25-31.

¹ The stewards of the lodge are usually present.

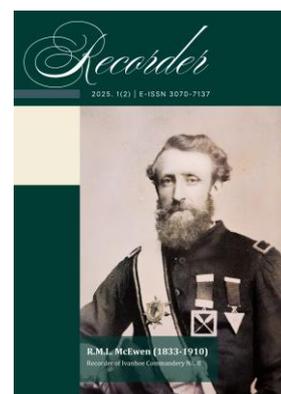
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Benjamin Brown French ‘A Letter and Short Poem, on the Death of Abraham Lincoln’

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Abstract. Benjamin Brown French (1800–1870) was a distinguished American public official and a leading figure in nineteenth-century Freemasonry. A politician, telegraph pioneer, Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, and Public Commissioner of Buildings in Washington, D.C., he also served as Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA from 1859 to 1865. French personally knew President Abraham Lincoln and valued their friendship deeply. In the year of his death, a small brochure was published containing his letter and poem reflecting on Lincoln’s assassination. This publication—now a historical rarity—is presented here for the reader’s consideration.

Keywords: Benjamin Brown French (1800–1870), Abraham Lincoln, Knights Templar, Grand Encampment, Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA, 19th-century Freemasonry, historical brochure, letter and poem.

Benjamin Brown French (1800–1870) was a politician, telegraph pioneer, Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, Public Commissioner of Buildings in Washington, D.C., and a very prominent Mason. At the height of his career, he served as Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the USA from 1859 to 1865 (Fig. 1). He personally knew President Abraham Lincoln and was proud of their friendship.

In 1870, the year of Benjamin Brown French’s death, a small brochure (Fig. 2) was published containing a letter and a poem by French related to the death of Abraham Lincoln. It is this brochure that we would like to present to the reader.



Fig. 1. Benjamin Brown French. 1865.

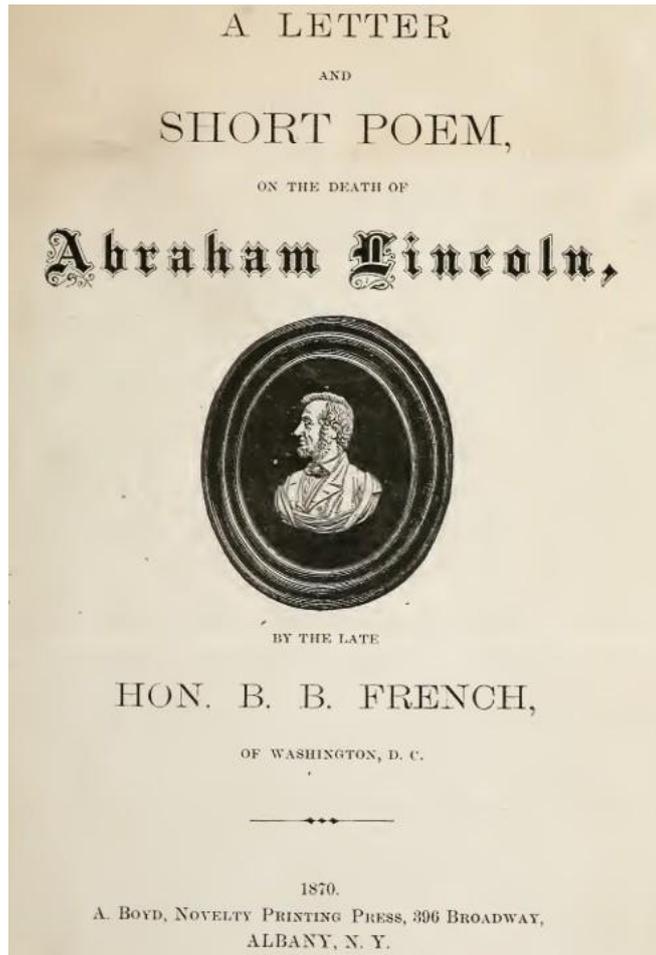


Fig. 2. Brochure cover.

Washington, October 27th, 1869.

Andrew Boyd, Esq.,
Albany, N. Y.,

My Dear Sir: —

Your elegantly printed copy of the poem from the London Punch of May 6, 1865, reached me to-day. The poem I had, but your elegant and feeling preface I had not, and most sincerely do I thank you for it. I believe there are but few men who cherish the memory of Abraham Lincoln as I do, but, judging from the remarks in your preface to that poem, I am led to believe that you are one of that few.

On Sunday, April 30th, 1865, sitting in an arbor in my garden, with my journal before me, I wrote on a blank leaf in it, with a pencil, the following:

“A jewel from our crown—
A pearl from out the Nation’s diadem—
A life torn out by traitorous, murderous hands—
Crushed—trampled down!

A people’s hearts all riven
With grief—with horror—that their Chief is dead;
A Nation plunged into the abyss of woe!
A Martyr gone to Heaven.

Great God! why was it done?
Thou knowest why—Thou did'st the deed permit:
And while we weep, we bow to Thy decree;
And kneel before Thy throne—

Humbly we kneel, and pray—
Who hold'st the power in our great Martyr's stead,
May wield it to Thy glory and our good
For many a happy day.

May ages still pass on,
And in one Union bind the land we love,
May blessings mark the years with happiness,
And joy the Union crown.”

I do not copy this as worthy of any particular note, but only to show you how my mind ran on the memory of that good man.

On the 19th of February last, I delivered a lecture before the faculty and students of Pennsylvania College, at Gettysburg, by invitation. That lecture was opened by the following language:

“I do not, I cannot, forget how I came here on the 19th of November, 1863, and lent my feeble aid to the consecration of the noble cemetery, which now holds the thrice honored dead, who, on those memorable days of July, died that their country might live. How I stood at the side of our great and good President, and heard the silvery voice of Everett, as he bound all his hearers, as it were, in the silken cords of his surpassing eloquence; and how I listened, as many of you did, to that brief, terse, touching address of the President, in which he so truly said: “We cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.”

“When I call to mind these events—when I remember how that President fell a martyr in the very arms of that victory which gave this nation ‘a new birth of freedom’ and an assurance ‘that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth,’—my memory cannot but go back, and cause my mind to wonder how a severely stricken people lived through that awful tragedy, that bathed the Executive Mansion in blood, and caused a wail of woe throughout the republic.”

You see, that in divulging to me the fact that you loved Abraham Lincoln in life and honor his memory, you have waked up a person who may bore you more than you bargained for!

You will, however, find me always ready to respond whenever you desire anything from me that I can furnish, relative to that great and good man.

Truly and Fraternaly Yours,

B. B. FRENCH

Resurse: French B.B. (1870). A Letter and Short Poem, on the Deeath of Abraham Lincoln. Albany, N.Y.: A. Boyd, Novelty Printing Press.

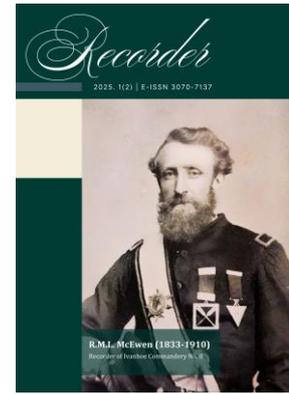
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New Publication

**Review of the Book Alexander C. Cherkas,
History of Bethany Commandery No. 28, Knights Templar (Mendota, Illinois).
Houston, 2025**

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Abstract. A new monograph by Dr. Alexander C. Cherkas, *History of Bethany Commandery No. 28, Knights Templar (Mendota, Illinois)*, presents a comprehensive examination of the commandery's 127-year history, from its founding in 1868 in the post-Civil War era to its closure in 1995 due to declining membership. During its existence, more than 400 men belonged to Bethany Commandery No. 28, with over 100 maintaining long-term membership. The richly illustrated volume features numerous archival photographs and detailed biographical sketches of the commandery's members. The book offers valuable insights into local Masonic life and is intended for a broad readership.

Keywords: Bethany Commandery No. 28, Knights Templar, Mendota Illinois, Alexander C. Cherkas, Masonic history, biographical sketches, post-Civil War era.

In the book by Alexander C. Cherkas, the history of Bethany Commandery No. 28, a Knights Templar unit in the state of Illinois that existed for 127 years, is examined. The study is well structured, grounded in the available archival materials, and aimed at reconstructing the dynamics of membership, the social composition, and the institutional development of a Masonic commandery operating in a sparsely populated region of the American Midwest.

Sources and Their State of Preservation

The author correctly identifies the principal challenge of the research—an incomplete set of sources. The core materials are the annual reports of the Grand Commandery of Illinois preserved at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. The absence of reports for several years—particularly from the later decades—along with the lack of private papers and visual materials, complicates the reconstruction of the final period of the commandery's activity. Nonetheless, the study demonstrates a careful and competent use of the available sources; the gaps are clearly identified, contextualized, and appropriately interpreted.

Membership Analysis and Social Composition

One of the most valuable aspects of the text is the demographic and statistical analysis. The author presents the total membership numbers, counts of members who died in service, and identifies distinct periods of growth and stagnation. The interpretation of the three notable waves of membership increase (1885–1886, 1927–1929, 1948–1951) is particularly convincing, as each surge is tied to broader socio-economic or political developments: institutional consolidation, the economic boom before the Great Depression, and the post-World War II resurgence.

Attention to the professions of members—intellectuals, farmers, veterans of the Civil War and World War I—provides insight into the social structure of a small Midwestern town at the turn of the twentieth century.

Genealogical Value of the Study

The text holds significant genealogical potential. The appended list of members, coupled with evidence of multigenerational involvement of numerous families (Smith, Tower, McIntyre, Harris, Davis, Hoffman, Cook, Gilmore, Hess, Knauer), illustrates the continuity typical of

Masonic organizations and reveals the long-standing social networks within the Mendota community. The inclusion of information on relatives and, in some cases, visual materials adds further value for historical demography and genealogical research.

Historical Development and Closure

The study effectively outlines the long-term trajectory of Bethany Commandery No. 28—its formation, periods of growth, prolonged stagnation beginning in the 1960s, and eventual closure in 1995 due to insufficient membership. This trajectory demonstrates the broader patterns experienced by many small Masonic bodies in the United States, whose mid-century vitality gradually declined in the context of shifting social priorities and demographic changes.

Scholarly Significance

The text is of considerable importance for several reasons:

Regional History: It fills a gap in the study of local Masonic institutions in Illinois.

Social History: It sheds light on the interaction between fraternal organizations and small-town communities.

Genealogy: It provides a rich, systematic source for reconstructing family histories.

Source Studies: It exemplifies rigorous work with an uneven and fragmentary source base.

Conclusion

Overall, the text is a well-researched, methodologically sound, and valuable scholarly contribution. Despite the limitations of the surviving sources, the author succeeds in reconstructing a comprehensive picture of Bethany Commandery No. 28—its membership, internal dynamics, and place within the local community. This study offers an important addition to the historiography of American Freemasonry and to the social history of small towns in the United States.

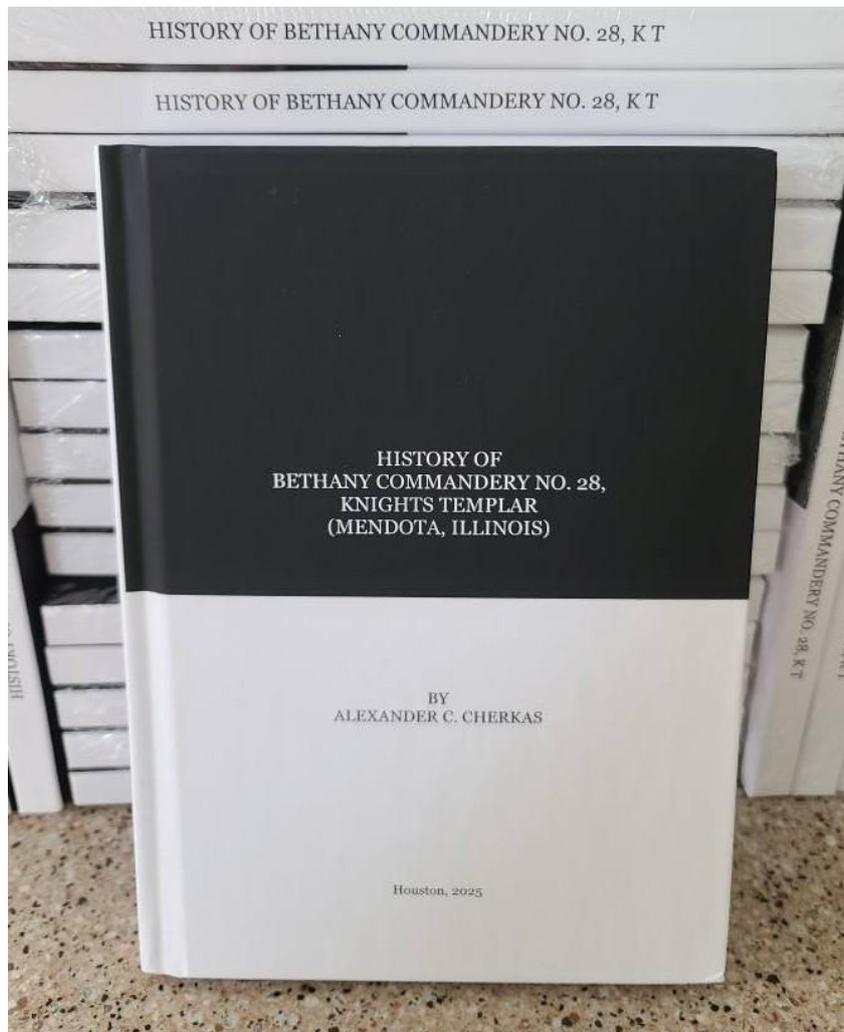


Fig. 1. Book cover.