

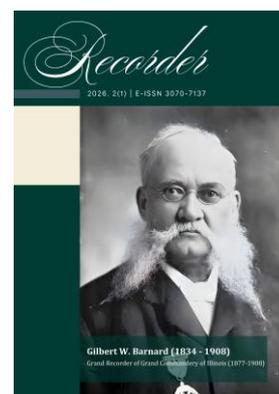
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### *Museum News*

## **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