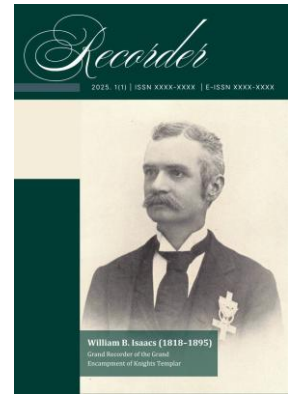


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Knights Templar of Texas, 1901

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

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

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

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

The oldest Commanderies were:

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

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

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

In 1901, the three largest Commanderies by membership were:

1. Colorado Commandery No. 4 – 203 members,

2. Worth Commandery No. 16 – 154 members,

3. Ruthven Commandery No. 2 – 115 members.

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

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



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