

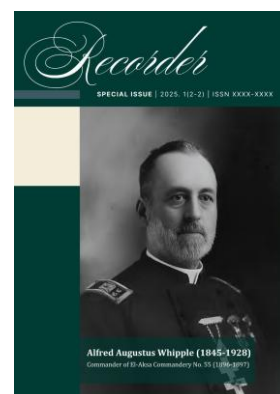
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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

only a few days have passed since the release of our previous issue, and we are pleased to present the second special issue of Recorder. In this special issue 2-2 for 2025, we publish a new original study devoted to the history of the second Commandery of the Masonic Order of Knights Templar in the city of Quincy, Illinois — El-Aksa Commandery No. 55. Founded in 1882, this Commandery existed alongside Beauseant Commandery No. 11 until 1911, when both Commanderies were merged under the new name Quincy Commandery No. 77.

Despite its relatively short history — only twenty-nine years — El-Aksa Commandery No. 55 left a significant mark on the history of the Masonic movement not only in Quincy but across the state. The Commandery demonstrated that even young organizations can serve as a model for older Commanderies and have a noticeable influence on shaping the traditions and structure of local Masonry.

The study is based on the annual Proceedings of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois for the period 1882–1911. Over these nearly three decades, a total of 170 individuals were affiliated with the Commandery. Among its members were figures of regional and statewide prominence, including Civil War veteran Brigadier General Elisha Bently Hamilton (1838–1902) and Alfred A. Whipple (1845–1928),

who subsequently attained the office of Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Illinois.

Particular attention is drawn to the exceptional continuity in the office of Treasurer. Throughout the entire history of El-Aksa Commandery No. 55, this position was held by a single individual from 1882 until 1909. Under his long tenure, the Commandery accumulated considerable funds, which were kept in a bank at interest, providing a stable annual income that materially contributed to the organization's regular operations.

By contrast, other offices were characterized by frequent rotation. This practice appears to have been a deliberate strategy by the leadership, allowing a greater number of Sir Knights to serve in officer positions and gain administrative experience. However, frequent changes, particularly in the office of Recorder, created certain challenges for maintaining accurate membership records. Beginning in 1899, measures were undertaken to reduce turnover in this office, which helped to systematize recordkeeping and improve administration.

We hope that the history of these two Commanderies from a single city will be of interest to our readers, offering insight into the Masonic movement in Quincy at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and helping to provide a comprehensive view of urban Masonic life during this period.

Editor in Chief

Dr. Alexander C. Cherkas