

Alaska Supplement

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR AND FREEMASONRY

The earliest documented link between Freemasonry and the Crusades is the 1737 oration of the Chevalier Ramsay. This claimed that European Freemasonry came about from an interaction between crusader masons and the Knights Hospitaller. This is repeated in the earliest known "Moderns" ritual, the Berne manuscript, written in French between 1740 and 1744.



In 1751 Baron Karl Gotthelf von Hund und Altengrotkau began the Order of Strict Observance, which ritual he claimed to have received from the reconstituted Templar Order in 1743 in Paris. He also claimed to have met two of the "unknown superiors" who directed all of masonry, one of whom was Prince Charles Edward Stuart. The order went into decline when he failed to produce any evidence to support his claims, and was wound up shortly after his death.

In 1779 the High Knights Templar of Ireland Lodge, Kilwinning, obtained



FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to encourage all Sir Knights to submit articles, letters, pictures, or comments for inclusion into this supplement. Articles need to be submitted to me by the 1st of the month for the next issue. (Dec. 25th for the Jan. issue.)

a charter from Lodge Mother Kilwinning in Scotland. This lodge now began to grant dispensations to other lodges to confer the Knights Templar Degree. Some time around 1790 the Early Grand Encampment of Ireland was formed, which began to warrant Templar Lodges, and evolved into the Supreme Grand Encampment in 1836. The Early Grand Encampment chartered several Scottish "encampments" one of which, having been chartered in 1805 as the "Edinburgh Encampment No. 31", then became the "Grand Assembly of Knights Templar in Edinburgh". who then sought a charter from the Duke of Kent, Grand Master of the Order in England. It seems that the Templar degree had filtered into the lodges of the Antients from Ireland about 1780, and was recorded at York about the same time. In the five degree system developed by the York Masons, the Knights Templar degree sat between the Master Mason and the Sublime Degree of Royal Arch.



Templar masonry in England entered a new era in 1791, with the formation of its first Grand Conclave, with Thomas Dunckerley as Grand Master. At that time, there were eight known Templar encampments in England, the most senior being the Encampment of Redemption at York, and the Baldwyn encampment at Bristol, at whose request Dunckerley began his mission. Under his leadership, the number of encampments steadily grew until his death in 1795. Stasis then followed, until in 1805 their Royal Patron, Duke of Kent, became Grand Master himself, re-energising the society and launching it into an era of growth and development. Dunckerley laid the foundation for this not only by promoting the order, but by standardising the ritual and insisting on proper record keeping.

