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Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908) in the Museum Collection of Cherkas Global University

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Abstract

This work is focused on the representation of Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908) in the museum collection of Cherkas Global University. The materials for this study included the items of material culture (a sword and badges) of the Masonic Order of the Knights Templar which are in Cherkas Global University's collection. Methodologically, use was made of the biographical method, to create a general biographical sketch of the life of F.S. Rogers, and of the historical reconstruction method, to produce a detailed portraiture of the outfit of an officer of Monroe Commandery No. 12 as of 1900.

The study's findings revealed that one of the items of material culture left behind by F.S. Rogers (1847–1908) is the sword (individual No. 007/KT005) currently housed in the museum collection of Cherkas Global University. This sword was manufactured circa the 1880s in his city of residence – Rochester, New York. The study established that the sword's owner was a member of Monroe Commandery No. 12, Knights Templar, stationed at Rochester, New York, and was a Knight at the time of the sword's manufacture. In 1899, F.S. Rogers was elected to the post of Eminent Commander of Monroe Commandery No. 12. He was appointed to the post of Past Eminent Commander in 1900.

Keywords: Frederick Stiles Rogers (1847–1908), biography, Monroe Commandery No. 12, sources of private origin, museum, Cherkas Global University.

1. Introduction

Historians can often get hold of various items of material culture – from materials of private origin (e.g., letters and personal effects) to interior items. All such items of material culture require attribution and conducting a search to produce the most complete picture of the emergence of the source. In other words, additional details and supporting information may be needed for something that is seemingly nondescript to qualify as an object with a rich historical past. This paper considers a ceremonial Masonic sword from the Order of the Knights Templar that used to belong to Frederick S. Rogers, an item of material culture that is currently in the museum collection of Global Cherkas University (individual No. 007/KT005).

2. Materials and methods

In September 2024, the museum collection of Global Cherkas University was enriched by a sword that used to belong to a man named Frederick S. Rogers (individual No. 007/KT005) (Figure 1).

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Fig. 1. F.S. Rogers's sword in the museum collection of Global Cherkas University (individual No. 007/KT005)

The sword has a length of 36 inches. Its blade is 28 inches long. It weighs 2.21 pounds. It belonged to a person of medium height. It is metal throughout, and its handle is made of ivory. The sword's color indicates that its owner was a Knight, inasmuch as the Officers had gilt swords. The initials on the handle match the full name on the scabbard and on the blade, which is testimony to the sword's completeness as a unit (Figure 2).



Fig. 2. Inscriptions on the sword's handle, blade, and scabbard

The piece has all the makings of a ceremonial sword. It is monogrammed, complete with traditional ornamentation and symbology – that of the Masonic Order of the Knights Templar (Figure 3).

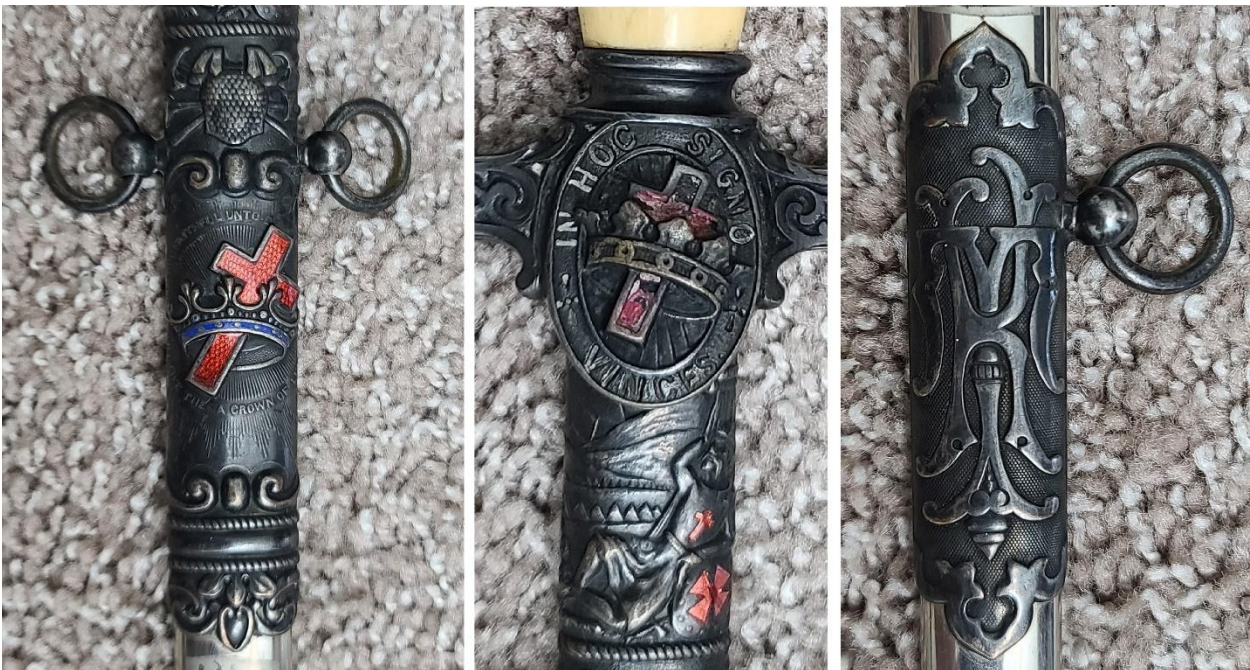


Fig. 3. Knights Templar ornamentation, symbology, and monogramming on the sword

These particularities combine to offer testimony to the fact that the sword belonged to a Knight Templar. What is more, the reverse of its ivory handle bears a fairly rare emblem of the Commandery ([Figure 4](#)), whereas most swords of this kind would have just a cross on the reverse.



Fig. 4. Emblem of Monroe Commandery No. 12

The emblem linked the sword to Monroe Commandery No. 12, with ‘KT’ standing for ‘Knights Templar’. Inscribed on the band at the bottom of the emblem is information as to where the Commandery was stationed – Rochester, New York. What is more, the name of that city also appears on the mark of the sword’s manufacturer ([Figure 5](#)).



Fig. 5. Mark of the sword’s manufacturer – Loder MFG Co., Rochester, N.Y.

In other words, it was established where the Commandery was stationed and the sword’s owner resided – the city of Rochester in the state of New York.

This work, written in a narrative genre, relied on the biographical method, which was employed for the purpose of creating a general biographical sketch of the life of F.S. Rogers. Use was also made of the historical reconstruction method to produce a detailed portrait of the outfit of an officer of Monroe Commandery No. 12 as of 1900.

3. Literature review

The historiography on this subject consists of specialized works on the history of Masonic weapons. Of particular note is ‘The American Fraternal Sword’ by Hamilton and colleagues ([Hamilton et al., 2008](#)),

which covers a large number of swords used by various American Masonic orders, giving the reader an initial acquaintance with ceremonial weaponry. Of interest also is J.D. Hamilton's 'Swords of the Masonic Orders' (Hamilton, 1979), which provides data regarding the number of members in the Order of the Knights Templar as of 1897. Another work worthy of mention is M. L. Cummings's 'The Vintage Ceremonial Sword, Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree' (Cummings, 2005).

Mention should also be made of the publication 'Fraternal Swords from the Collections of Jim Kaplan and Joe Marino: An Appreciation', which appeared in *Man at Arms* magazine (Fraternal Swords..., 2005).

Most valuable to this study was M. C. MacDonald's 'Fraternal Regalia I: Knights Templar' (MacDonald, 2008), which is devoted to the actual Order of the Knights Templar and has, among other things, a large section on ceremonial swords.

4. Results

A further search, conducted in the Library of Congress, yielded several books mentioning F.S. Rogers (Masonic Fair..., 1902; Rochester..., 1906; Notable men..., 1902; Peck, 1908; Hakes, Aldrich, 1896). The books contained the full name of the sword's owner – Fred. S. Rogers, born in 1847, with the 'Fred.' being short for Frederick (Peck, 1908: 761). The book on the city of Rochester's most famous residents contained the second name of the sword's owner as well – Stiles (Notable men..., 1902: 321). Thus, the search helped establish the full name of the sword's owner – Frederick Stiles Rogers. A search of the books helped retrieve three photographs (Figures 6–8) and a biography of him.



Fig. 6. Photo of F.S. Rogers (Masonic Fair..., 1902: 17)

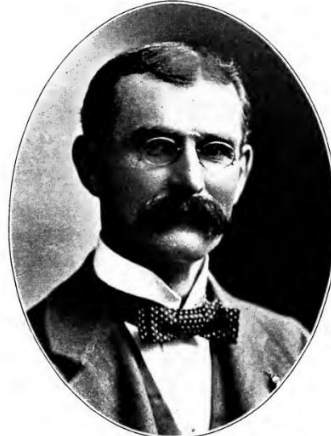


Fig. 7. Photo of F.S. Rogers (Notable men..., 1902: 321)



Fig. 8. Photo of F.S. Rogers (Peck, 1908: 761)

The biography of F.S. Rogers from W.F. Peck's 'History of Rochester and Monroe County, New York' is provided below, unabridged:

"FREDERICK S. ROGERS.

Frederick S. Rogers, secretary and treasurer of The John Siddons Company, conducting a roofing and sheet metal business of large proportions in Rochester, was born May 21, 1847, in the city which is yet his place of residence. He is of English lineage, his father, Henry T. Rogers, having been born in London. Emigrating to the United States in his youth, he came direct to Rochester and in his manhood attained considerable distinction as a prominent contractor and builder and as a man active and influential in the affairs of the city. He served as alderman of the third ward for many years and his official labor was of a character that promoted general progress and development, the city benefiting by his co-operation and his practical methods. He died in 1878, while his wife, who bore the maiden name of Eliza Stiles, and was also a native of England, passed away when her son Frederick was but four years of age.

As a student in a private school Frederick S. Rogers acquired his early education, which he continued in Myron G. Peck's school. When his textbooks were put aside he entered the employ of the Evening Express of Rochester, taking charge of the mailing department, where he continued for six years. He next became connected with Pollock & Weaver, hardware merchants, as bookkeeper, and after some years entered the employ of John Siddons as confidential clerk and bookkeeper in 1878. His business worth and capacity being proven, he was admitted to the firm and has since been active in the management of a business which has had a continuous existence in Rochester since 1852. It was established in that year by John Siddons and is the representative house in roofing and sheet metal work, including all kinds of cornice work, ventilating systems and the manufacture of metallic burial caskets, together with the manufacture of boiler breeching and smoke stacks. In 1878 Mr. Siddons was joined by Charles and John O. Vogel. In 1889 the business was incorporated under the name of The John Siddons Company, with Mr. Siddons as president and treasurer; Charles Vogel, vice president; Frederick S. Rogers, secretary; and John O. Vogel, superintendent. The founder of the business, John Siddons, died in August, 1890, after a most active, successful and

honorable career. At this time the following officers were chosen: Charles Vogel, president; John O. Vogel, vice president and superintendent; and Frederick S. Rogers, secretary and treasurer. At the death of John O. Vogel, in December, 1894, Mr. Rogers was elected vice president, secretary and treasurer. The last change in officers was made in 1903, when Charles Vogel was elected president; Frederick S. Rogers, secretary and treasurer; and Theodore J. Vogel, vice president and superintendent. The trustees are Charles Vogel, Frederick S. Rogers, Theodore J. Vogel and Louis C. Vogel, who own all the stock — fifty thousand dollars paid in full. The enterprise was at first located on Main street and removed to the present location in 1890, occupying a large building, which the company owns, at Nos. 61, 63 and 63 North Water street. Both steam and water power is used and employment is furnished to fifty men.

In 1872 Mr. Rogers was married to Miss Emma L. Bennett, a daughter of Stephen D.N. Bennett, for many years owner of the Bennett foundry. Unto Mr. and Mrs. Rogers were born three children, but one is now deceased and Mrs. Rogers died in 1899. The living son, Louis Charles, is now with his father in business. He was born June 16, 1875, and was educated in the public schools and is regarded as an enterprising young business man. He belongs to Valley lodge, No. 109, F. & A. M., and of all branches of Masonry. The daughter, Mrs. Edmund M. Ailing, is also a resident of Rochester.

Mr. Rogers has attained high rank in Masonry, being a member of Valley lodge, No. 109, F. & A. M.; Hamilton chapter, No. 62, R. A. M., in which he has served as high priest and treasurer; Doric council, No. 19, R. & S. M.; Monroe commandery, No. 12, K. T., in which he has served as eminent commander; Rochester consistory, S. P. R. S.; Damascus Temple, A. A. O. N. M. S.; and Lalla Rookh Grotto Veiled Prophets. He has also served as treasurer of the Masonic Club and belongs to the Order of Exempt Firemen (Peck, 1908: 760). In politics he is a republican, giving support to the party on state and national questions, but often casts an independent ballot. He resides at No. 200 Adams street, where he is pleasantly situated in life. He has made a splendid record in Masonic circles, as a citizen and as a business man. Quiet and unassuming in manner, he nevertheless has a host of staunch friends who recognize and appreciate his genuine worth and admire him for what he has accomplished in the business world (Peck, 1908: 763)."

As evidenced by the above text, Frederick S. Rogers, born on May 12, 1847, held in the last quarter of the 19th century an executive position with a firm engaged in a profitable business — roofing (Figure 9).

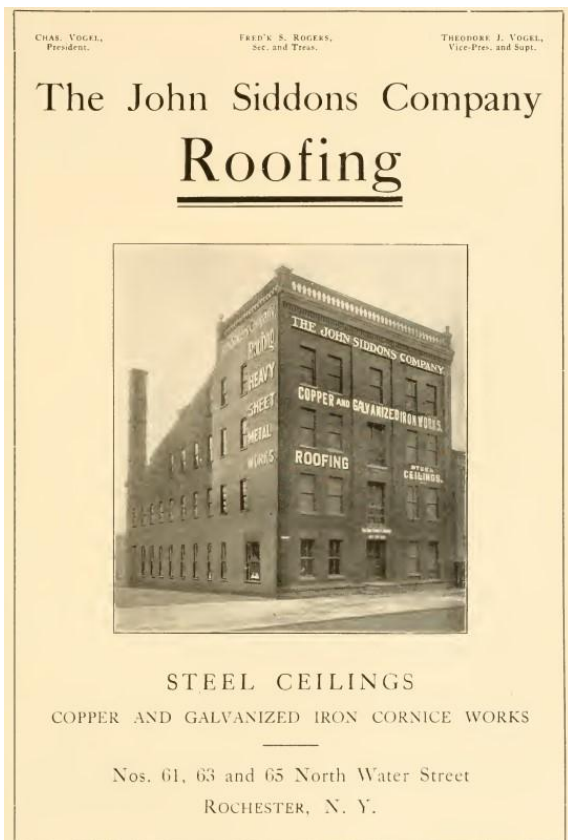


Fig. 9. Advertisement poster for The John Siddons Company, which F.S. Rogers worked for (Rochester..., 1906: 159)

Monroe Commandery No. 12, Knights Templar, stationed at Rochester, New York, was one of the oldest commanderies in that state. It was formed back on June 14, 1826 (Masonic Fair..., 1902: 16). The anti-Masonic sentiment at the time led to the temporary closure of Monroe Commandery in 1839. It resumed

operation on January 28, 1848 ([Masonic Fair..., 1902: 16](#)). The museum collection of Global Cherkas University houses a ribbon from Monroe Commandery No. 12 ([Figure 10](#)).



Fig. 10. Ribbon from Monroe Commandery No. 12 in the Collection of Masonic Knights' Badges at Cherkas Global University. Exhibit No. 006

As far as Sir Frederick S. Rogers's service in Monroe Commandery No. 12, the above biographical sketch just mentions his stint there as Eminent Commander. Additional research helped establish that F.S. Rogers was appointed to the post of Eminent Commander at Monroe Commandery No. 12 in 1899 and that he took on the position of Past Commander there in 1900 ([Masonic Fair..., 1902: 18](#)). Incidentally, based on data from J. D. Hamilton, by 1897 the Knights Templar numbered around 115,000 "swords", as they used to be referred to at the time ([Hamilton, 1979: 25](#)).

Members of the Order of the Knights Templar often included not only adult males but their wives and children as well. For instance, Miss Alice H. Rogers, the wife of Sir Frederick S. Rogers, is known to have served on one of Monroe Commandery's Committees in 1902 ([Masonic Fair..., 1902: 61](#)), and his son, Louis C. Rogers, was one of its three Guards Officers ([Figure 11](#)) ([Masonic Fair..., 1902: 61](#)).

We are jumping ahead for a moment here, but it is worth noting that F.S. Rogers passed away in his 61st year on November 26, 1908. He was buried in Rochester, Monroe County, New York. This was reported in a piece published in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* newspaper on November 28, 1908 ([Death of Frederick S. Rogers, 1908: 17](#)). In 1909, the same newspaper carried a piece entitled 'Degrees Conferred at Masonic Reunion', in which F.S. Rogers, a 32nd-degree Mason, did appear on the list of deceased Masons ([Degrees Conferred..., 1909: 13](#)).



Fig. 11. Knights Templar Guard Officer Jewel in the Collection of Masonic Knights' Badges at Cherkas Global University. Exhibit No. 005

In 1902, the *Masonic Fair Souvenir* booklet carried a photograph of the Officers of Monroe Commandery No. 12 in 1901 (Figure 12).



Fig. 12. Officers of Monroe Commandery No. 12, Knights Templar, in 1901

No members of the Rogers family (neither the father nor the son) appear in it, inasmuch as the Commandery elected its officers on an annual basis. Nevertheless, Figure 12 can give one an idea of what kind of uniform was worn in Monroe Commandery No. 12 at the time. The use of the historical reconstruction method helped provide the necessary source material for producing a portrait of Sir Frederick

S. Rogers, with one eventually painted by artist Lyudmila N. Bogutskaya (born 1979) between September and October 2024 (Figure 13).



Fig. 13. 2024 oil painting of Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908) by Lyudmila N. Bogutskaya (born 1979)

The materials collected by Cherkas Global University were used to set up a stand for Sir Frederick S. Rogers in the museum (Figure 14). The stand can also be viewed online on the organization’s Facebook page.



Fig. 14. Stand for Sir Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908) in the museum at Cherkas Global University

5. Conclusion

One of the items of material culture left behind by F.S. Rogers (1847–1908) is the sword (individual No. 007/KT005) currently housed in the museum collection of Cherkas Global University. This sword was manufactured circa the 1880s in his city of residence – Rochester, New York. The study established that the sword's owner was a member of Monroe Commandery No. 12, Knights Templar, stationed at Rochester, New York, and was a Knight at the time of the sword's manufacture. In 1899, F.S. Rogers was elected to the post of Eminent Commander of Monroe Commandery No. 12. He was appointed to the post of Past Eminent Commander in 1900.

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