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## Rare Publications from the American Masonic Order of Knights Templar (first half of the 19th century)

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### Abstract

The focus of this study is centered around rare publications from the American Masonic order of Knights Templar produced in the first half of the 19th century. The library at Cherkas Global University currently holds three such publications: *Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1835*, *Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1844*, and *Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars of the State of Ohio, 1845*.

Methodologically, the study leaned on key historical principles such as historicism and systematicity. Extensive use was made of the source studies method to conduct internal and external criticism of the historical sources.

The key findings from this study are:

- 1) The P.A. Cherkasov Fundamental Electronic Library currently holds three rare publications from the Masonic order of Knights Templar, which are brochures produced in the first half of the 19th century. These were published in 1833, 1844, and 1845, respectively.
- 2) All three of the brochures report meeting proceedings, with two of them dealing with the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States and the third one with the Grand Encampment of an individual US state (Ohio).
- 3) The publications are not very large (18 to 32 pages) and all consist of a section covering the actual proceedings and one devoted to the Constitution of the General Grand Encampment, with internal document forms also present.
- 4) These publications are believed to be of significant interest to Freemasonry researchers around the world and in the US, in particular, and could be a valuable source for genealogical research.

**Keywords:** P.A. Cherkasov Fundamental Electronic Library, Cherkas Global University, rare publications, *Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars*, USA, 1st half of the 19th century.

### 1. Introduction

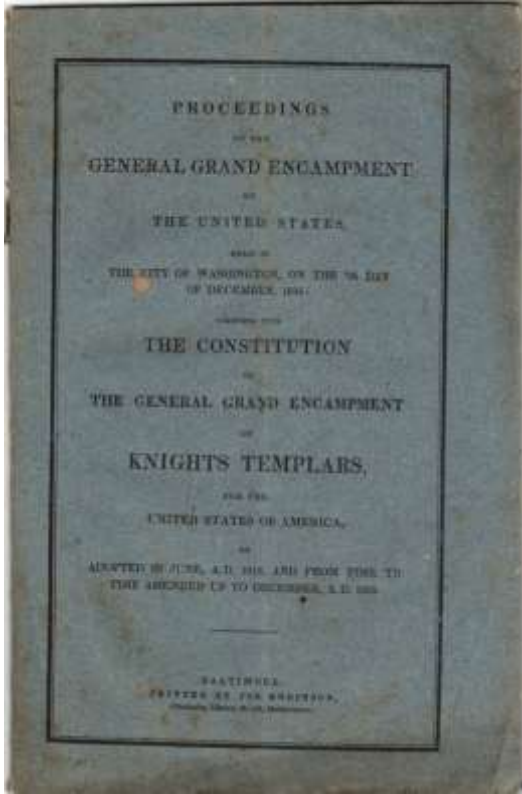
The scattered Masonic Knights Templar organizations created in the United States in the late 18th century united into one in 1816, when the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America was formed from seven Templar Encampments and one Council ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1859: 3](#)). At that time, the organization had barely 300 members. However, a little over 100 years later, in 1927, it now had more than 450,000 members ([Proceedings of the Grand Encampment..., 1928: 172](#)). The present work is focused on print publications from the Masonic order of Knights Templar produced in the first half of the 19th century, i.e. the period of the making of that organization.

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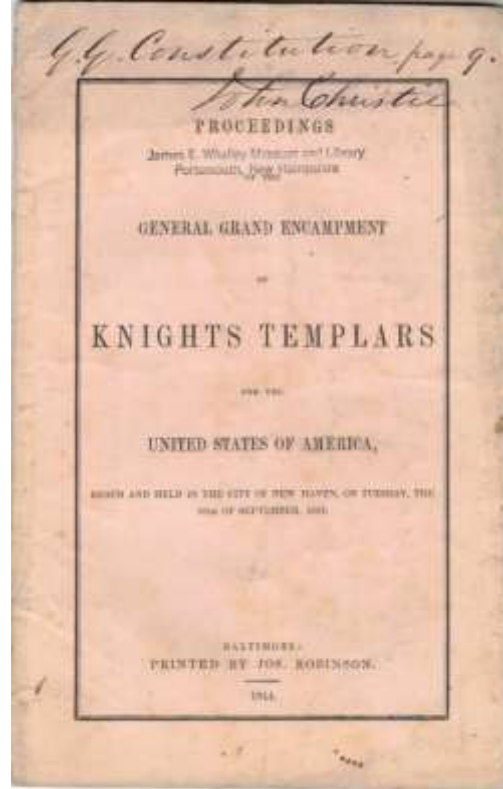
E-mail addresses: [a.cherkasov@cherkasgu.net](mailto:a.cherkasov@cherkasgu.net) (A. Cherkas)

## 2. Materials and methods

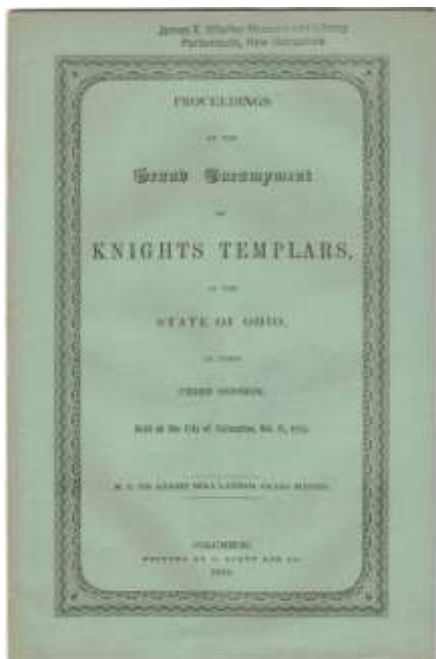
The primary materials for this study were three rare publications (brochures) from the P.A. Cherkasov Fundamental Electronic Library at Cherkas Global University produced by the American Masonic order of Knights Templar in the first half of the 19th century: *Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1835* ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1835](#)) (Figure 1), *Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1844* ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1844](#)) (Figure 2), and *Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars of the State of Ohio, 1845* ([Proceedings of the Grand Encampment..., 1845](#)) (Figure 3).



**Fig. 1.** Cover of *Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1835* ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1835](#))



**Fig. 2.** Cover of *Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1844* ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1844](#))



**Fig. 3.** Cover of *Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars of the State of Ohio, 1845* ([Proceedings of the Grand Encampment..., 1845](#))

Methodologically, the study leaned on key historical principles such as historicism and systematicity. Extensive use was made of the source studies method to conduct internal and external criticism of the historical sources.

### 3. Discussion

Due to the dearth of historiography on the subject and given the fact that we are looking here at books which are in the holdings of the P.A. Cherkasov Fundamental Electronic Library at Cherkas Global University, of interest here might be the works in which the objects of study are items from the university's museum, archive, and library.

Among the latest works, of particular note are those by A. Cherkas covering biographies of prominent members of the Masonic order of Knights Templar. Specifically, relevant items from the museum of Cherkas Global University were used to put together biographical accounts of the lives of the following Freemasons: Frederick S. Rogers (1847–1908) ([Cherkas, 2024](#)), Albert A. Marden (1824–1919) ([Cherkas, 2024a](#)), George S. Blackie (1834–1881) ([Cherkas, 2024b](#)), and Albert E. Worthington (1849–1915) ([Cherkas, 2024c](#)).

In 2025, an attempt was made to explore the history of an individual commandery within the Masonic order of Knights Templar – Bethany Commandery No. 28 ([Cherkas, 2025](#)). At the same time, certain collections in the Museum of the History of the American Knights Templar at Cherkas Global University were the object of study in the work by A. Cherkasova ([Cherkasova, 2025](#)).

### 4. Results

All three of said brochures in the library of Cherkas Global University report meeting proceedings, with two of them dealing with the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States and the third one with the Grand Encampment of an individual US state (Ohio). The publications are not very large (18 to 32 pages). The second and third brochures are each stamped 'James E. Whalley Museum and Library. Portsmouth, New Hampshire'. The James E. Whalley Museum and Library continues to function to this day and currently has a holding of nearly 4,000 books on Freemasonry.

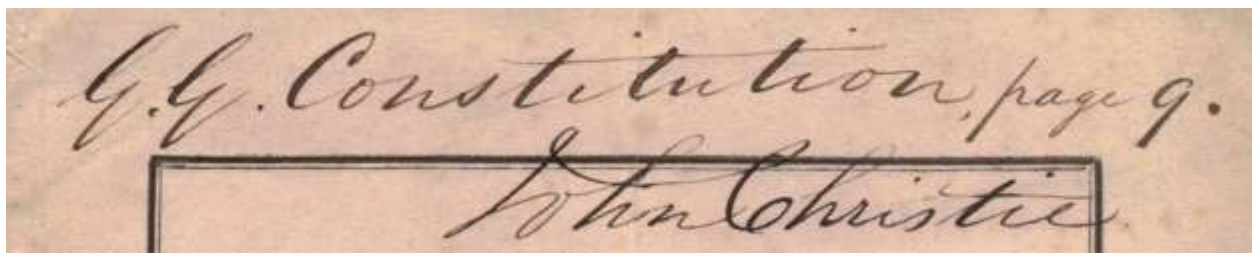
Each of the three publications is discussed in detail below.

*Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1835*

*Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1835* is definitely one of the more valuable publications produced by the Masonic order of Knights Templar ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1835](#)). As a side note, the General Grand Encampment normally held its Conclaves once every 3 years. The first Conclave took place in 1816, followed by those held in 1819, 1826, 1829, 1832, and 1835. Thus, the year 1835 is when the governing body for the Masonic order of Knights Templar held its sixth meeting. After each meeting a report would be put together outlining any issues. The first meeting produced a report of just two pages. Eventually, the proceedings of the meetings held from 1816 to 1856 were covered in a collection of documents published in 1859 ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1859: 3-4](#)). The second meeting was covered in four pages ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1859: 4-8](#)), the third in eight ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1859: 8-16](#)), the fourth in eight too ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1859: 17-24](#)), and, lastly, the fifth in nine ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1859: 25-33](#)) – i.e., roughly just 30 pages in all to cover the proceedings of the first five meetings of the governing body for the Knights Templar, held between 1816 and 1832. In 1835, following the conclusion of the sixth meeting, the Baltimore-based publisher Jos. Robinson released one of the first, if not the first, printed works from the Masonic order of Knights Templar – *Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1835*. The brochure has a total of 31 pages and consists of two parts, the first section covering the actual proceedings (16 pages) and the second devoted to the Constitution of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templars (15 pages). As a side note, the actual Constitution was launched in 1816, but additions and amendments were made to it at virtually every meeting.

*Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1844*

This publication, which covers the proceedings of the ninth meeting of the governing body for the Masonic order of Knights Templar, was printed in Baltimore too. The brochure has 32 pages, with the actual proceedings covered in seven pages ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1844: 3-9](#)) and followed by the section devoted to the Constitution ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1844: 9-17](#)). This is followed by documents on particular issues and an internal form template – the form for a return of a subordinate Encampment to the G.G. Encampment ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1844: 30-32](#)). This copy is stamped 'James E. Whalley Museum and Library. Portsmouth, New Hampshire', with the following handwritten text appearing at the top of its cover: 'G.G. Constitution, page 9. John Christie' ([Figure 4](#)). According to *Fifteenth Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois, 1871*, John Christie, of New Hampshire, was a Knight Templar who officially corresponded with the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the State of Illinois ([Fifteenth Annual Conclave, 1871: 9](#)).



**Fig. 4.** Handwritten text on the cover of *Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of the United States, 1844* ([Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1844](#))

*Proceedings of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars of the State of Ohio, 1845*

This brochure is one of the earliest proceedings-covering publications from the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars of an individual US state. The meeting covered by it was held in the city of Columbus, Ohio, on October 21, 1845. This was the third session of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars of the State of Ohio. The brochure has 18 pages, with the proceedings section occupying eight pages ([Proceedings of the Grand Encampment..., 1845: 3-11](#)) and followed by the section devoted to the Constitution of the General Grand Encampment ([Proceedings of the Grand Encampment..., 1845: 12-18](#)).

The proceedings section contains an appendix which offers a variety of data on the local Encampments forming part of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars of the State of Ohio, including financial, enrollment, and personal information. Of particular interest are the enrollment figures for the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars of the State of Ohio. Specifically, as at 1845 the five Encampments in the state of Ohio had the following enrollments: Mount Vernon Encampment No. 1 – 16 members, Lancaster Encampment No. 2 – 27, Cincinnati Encampment No. 3 – 19, Massillon Encampment No. 4 – 18, and Clinton Encampment No. 5 – 22. That is, a combined enrollment of 102 members ([Proceedings of the Grand Encampment..., 1845: 9](#)) ([Figure 5](#)).

Names of Encampments.	No.	No. of Admissions.	No. of Withdrawals.	No. Red Cross Knights created.	No. of Knights Templars created.	No. Died.	No. Suspended.	No. Expelled.	No. Members.
MOUNT VERNON, ..	1.	0	0	7	7	0	0	0	16
LANCASTER, ....	2.	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	27
CINCINNATI, ....	3.	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	19
MASSILLON, ....	4.	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	18
CLINTON, .....	5.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	22
				11	12				102
Contributing members, .....									102

**Fig. 5.** Enrollment figures for the Grand Encampment of Knights Templars of the State of Ohio as at 1845

## 5. Conclusion

The key findings from this study are:

1) The P.A. Cherkasov Fundamental Electronic Library holds three rare publications from the Masonic order of Knights Templar, which are brochures produced in the first half of the 19th century. These were published in 1833, 1844, and 1845, respectively.

2) The first two publications deal with the governing body for the Masonic order of Knights Templar, i.e. the General Grand Encampment of the United States, and the third one with the Grand Encampment of an individual US state (Ohio).

3) The publications are not very large (18 to 32 pages) and all consist of a section covering the actual proceedings and one devoted to the Constitution of the General Grand Encampment, with internal document forms also present.



4) These publications are believed to be of significant interest to Freemasonry researchers around the world and in the US, in particular, and could be a valuable source for genealogical research.

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[Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment..., 1844](#) – Proceedings of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templars for the United States of America, begun and held in the city of New Haven, on Tuesday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, 1844. Baltimore: Printed by Jos. Robinson, 1844.

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