



## VIRGINIA SUPPLEMENT

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Knightly Greetings!

This month I am continuing my brief history of Temple Church, in the City of London, England.



### 1185–1307

The Knights Templar order was very powerful in England, with the Master of the Temple sitting in Parliament as "*Primus Baro*" (the first Baron in precedence of the realm). The compound was regularly used as a residence by Kings and by Legates of the Pope. The Temple also served as an early safety-deposit bank, sometimes in defiance of the Crown's attempts to seize the funds of nobles who had entrusted their wealth there.

In January 1215 William Marshall (who is buried in the nave next to his sons, and is represented by one of the nine stone effigies) served as a negotiator during a meeting in the Temple between King John and the barons, who demanded that the king should uphold the rights enshrined in the Coronation Charter of his predecessor and elder brother King Richard I. Marshall swore on behalf of the king that the grievances of the barons would be addressed in the summer, which led to the signing by the king of Magna Carta in June.



Marshall later became regent during the reign of John's infant son, King Henry III (1216–1272). Henry later expressed a desire to be buried in the church and, to accommodate this, in the early 13th century the chancel of the original church was pulled down and a new larger chancel was built, the basic form of which survives today. It was consecrated on Ascension Day 1240 and comprises a central aisle and two side aisles, north and south, of identical width. The height of the vault is 36 feet 3 inches (11.05 m). Although one of Henry's infant sons was buried in the chancel, Henry himself later altered his will to reflect his new wish to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

### Crown seizure

After the destruction and abolition of the Knights Templar in 1307, King Edward II took control of the church as a Crown possession. It was later given to the Knights Hospitaller, who leased the Temple to two colleges of lawyers. One college moved into the part of the Temple previously used by the Knights, and the other into the part previously used by its clergy, and both shared the use of the church. The colleges evolved into the Inner Temple and the Middle Temple, two of the four London Inns of Court that exist to this very day. (The Inns of Court are the offices of the very top attorneys in the United Kingdom.)

With All Knightly Courtesy,

Peter R. Spring, KCT  
Grand Commander