



**THE GRAND COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
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Revival of Knight Templarism in Washington, DC after the anti-Masonic movement circa 1835.

Early Knights Templarism in the United States was far different than we know it today.

Absent the advancement of technology, especially with near-instant communication we enjoy across the globe today, and the rapid transportation we now have, everything seems a bit slow compared to today.

As many Freemasons are aware, there was an anti-Masonic movement that started around 1835. Washington Encampment No.1 (Individual Commanderies used to be called Encampments back then), which was originally chartered in 1825, had shut down in 1837.

A Dispensation for Washington Encampment the then Deputy General K. Stapleton on April 22, Baltimore.

At that time, the Masonic “old Medical College” on N.W.

The Eminent Commander Encampment was Benjamin was also the Architect of became the Grand Master Encampment, et cetera.

To quote from the *Anniversary Washington Knights Templars* by J.

Recorder of Washington Commandery No.1, “The first event of national importance in which the Commandery took part was the laying of the cornerstone of the monument to Washington, on the 4th of July 1848. **Photo above is of Benjamin French**



reorganization of No. 1 was granted by Grand Master Joseph 1847, in the city of

Hall in use was the Tenth and E Streets

of Washington Brown French, who the Capitol, he later of the Grand

Centennial Commandery No.1
Claude Keiper,

The invitation to participate in the ceremonies of the occasion came from the M.W. Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, and the arrangements were referred to a committee.

An invitation was extended by the Commandery to every Encampment of Knights Templars in the United States, in regular standing, to attend in full regalia, and unite with us in doing honor to the memory of Washington. A special invitation was also sent to the officers of the General Grand Encampment of the United States to join in the approaching celebration.” Christina Philips

Some Background

Post-Revolutionary Resurgence of Anti-Masonry:

Once the American and French Revolutions were in the rear-view mirror, anti-Masonry began to creep out into the open. Strong voices, including future president John Quincy Adams, John Robinson, and Reverend Jedidiah Morse, voiced their opposition to the Freemasons. In 1798, Robinson published a scathing 240-page diatribe titled “Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe,” which implicated Freemasons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies¹. Morse also preached sermons against the Freemasons and Illuminati, claiming they had incited the French Revolution.

Interestingly, George Washington clarified the separation between Freemasonry, the Illuminati, and the still-active Jacobites. He acknowledged that while the doctrines of the Illuminati and principles of Jacobinism had indeed spread in the United States, he did not believe that the Lodges of Free Masons in the country had actively propagated these diabolical tenets or pernicious principles¹.

Despite this, a growing segment of the population remained wary of the Freemasons. The mystique of the Craft’s secret nature gave way to suspicions and rumors of brewing conspiracies. Accusations of elitism due to its gentry-based membership and objections by organized religion further fueled anti-Masonic sentiments. Within the Catholic Church, anti-Masonry intensified, with edicts imposing the death penalty for disobedience and condemnations based on secrecy, religious ecumenism, and perceived opposition to the Church and State¹.

Impact of the Anti-Masonic Party: The Anti-Masonic party, America’s first third party, played a significant role in shaping public opinion. Although the party remained small, it fueled rising anti-Masonic sentiment and led to the closing of many Freemason societies. Some churches even threatened to expel parishioners unless they quit the Freemasons².

Overall, the post-Revolutionary era witnessed both renewed interest in Freemasonry and heightened opposition. While some embraced its traditions, others saw it as a secretive and potentially dangerous force. The tension between secrecy, tradition, and suspicion continues to be a fascinating aspect of Freemasonry’s history. - Google search

DC Sir Knights made an effort to keep Templary on track after the Civil War. Potomac Commandery comprised in the main of Confederate soldiers and Columbia Commandery comprised typically of Union soldiers would meet as one group of Masonic Knights Templar for regular conclaves and dinners together. The Editor