



**Reverend Henry Warren Rugg**  
**21st Most Eminent Grand Master, 1907-1910**

(18th in a series on our Grand Masters)

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by George L. Marshall, Jr., PGC

Henry Warren Rugg was born in Framingham, Massachusetts, on September 3, 1833, the eldest son of Warren (1807-1842) and Hannah (Smith) Rugg (1810-1881). His brothers were George Frederick Rugg (1834-1906) and Franklin A. Rugg (1841-??). Henry received his early education in the public schools of his native town and at Mount Hollis Seminary at Holliston, Massachusetts. He became a school teacher at nineteen, and while in Worcester, began the study of theology.

In 1854 he was ordained a Universalist minister and was called to the pastorate of a parish in South Dennis, Massachusetts, where he spent several years. In 1856 he took charge of Sea View Seminary in Hyannis, Massachusetts, and the next year became pastor of a church in East Cambridge. In 1860 he moved to Bath, Maine, but ill health caused him to resign in 1864 and seek a milder climate.

He became chief clerk in the Finance Bureau at the Post Office Department in Washington. He continued in that position until August of 1866, when he resigned to accept the pastorate of the Second Universalist Church of the Mediator in Providence, Rhode Island, where he remained for nearly thirty years. He was financial secretary of the General Convention, 1895-1899. In 1877 he was elected a trustee of Tufts College and in 1899 was elected secretary of the Corporation of Tufts College. The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by this college in 1878.

He was a prolific writer. Among his published books are: History of Freemasonry in Rhode Island (1895), The Lives of the residents (1886), Christ and His Church (1891), The Contributions of New England to America (1867), and Our Word and Work for Missions (1894). For nearly a quarter of a century he was editor of a monthly magazine, The Freemason's Repository.

Sir Knight Rugg married Miss Abby Nelson Howard (1836-1916) on December 25, 1853, at Milford, Massachusetts. They had one daughter, Mrs. Gertrude Rugg Field (1859-1923), and a granddaughter, Abby Field (1890-1951).

Sir Knight Rugg was made a Mason in Fraternal Lodge at Barnstable, Massachusetts, on September 12, 1854. When a new lodge was organized in West Dennis, Massachusetts, in 1855, he was elected the first worshipful master. He also served as master of Solar Lodge of Bath, Maine, in 1862. Soon after he moved to Providence, Rhode Island, he affiliated with St. John's Lodge 1. In 1868 he was appointed grand chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Rhode Island, which office he held, except for one year, until 1909, a period of forty years. In 1909 he was elected deputy grand master of the Grand Lodge and in May of 1910, was elected and installed grand master.

He was exalted in Orient Chapter Hyannis, Massachusetts, in 1857. He was appointed chaplain of Providence Royal Arch Chapter in 1869 and grand chaplain of the Grand Chapter of Rhode Island that same year. In 1886 he was elected grand high priest of the Grand Chapter of Massachusetts. He was greeted in Providence Council of Royal & Select Masters in 1869.

In 1863 he received the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Maine Consistory. In 1900 he received the 33° and became an honorary member of the Supreme Council of the Northern Jurisdiction.

He received the orders of Knighthood in Maine Encampment, North Gardner, Maine, in 1863. In 1869 he affiliated with St. John's Commandery in Providence, and was elected prelate. On December 4, 1871, he was elected eminent commander of St. John's Commandery and in October of 1873, deputy grand commander of the Grand Commandery of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. He was elected grand commander in 1875 and again in 1876. In 1908 he was appointed representative of the Sovereign Great Priory of Canada to the Grand Encampment of the United States, which position he held until his death.

Sir Knight Rugg delivered many addresses and orations of a Masonic and general character throughout New England. His wide knowledge of Masonic and religious literature and history, as well as his fine delivery, created a constant demand for his services as a public speaker. He was richly endowed to do constructive work in education, in the Church, and in Masonry. He added to his character and culture a graciousness of manner which was the outward mark of a sympathetic heart.

In 1892 at the Triennial Conclave in Denver, he was elected grand junior warden and in 1907 was elected grand master. During his term of office, he became ill as a result of a bad cold in December of 1909. While at times his health showed improvement, the decline was gradual. He had hoped that he might be spared to live to preside over the Triennial Conclave of 1910. Early in June he asked the deputy grand master, Sir Knight Melish, to come to his home for consultation about the affairs of the Grand Encampment and the coming Conclave. He prepared his report and arranged all his affairs on June 11th. On July 21, 1910, he passed away peacefully. He was the first grand master to pass away during his term of office since Sir Knight DeWitt Clinton. His last thoughts were with the great Christian order of Knighthood, and he concluded his report:

"Much that I have done has been done in weakness of body, but all with the singleness of purpose and with never-failing love for our magnanimous order, but not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

The funeral was held on July 25, 1910, with services in the Church of the Mediator, of which he had been pastor for so long. The Grand Encampment was represented by Deputy Grand Master William B. Melish, and the Grand Lodge of Rhode Island by Deputy Grand Master James B. Gay. There were delegations from all the Masonic bodies with which Dr. Rugg had been associated during his lifetime. The solemn

ceremonials of the Grand Lodge and Grand Encampment were carried out.  
He was interred in Swan Point cemetery in Providence.  
Of him it may be said: "A true and courteous Knight has fallen in life's battle with his armor on."

Right Eminent Sir Knight Marshall, KYGCH(3), KCT, 33°, is a past grand commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Alabama. He is a member of the Editorial Review Board of the Knight Templar magazine and has published several articles in that magazine as well as in the Royal Arch Mason magazine. He can be reached at geomarsh@yahoo.com.

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