
Henry Bates Stoddard

19th Grand Master of the Grand Encampment

(Tenth in a series on our Grand Masters)

by

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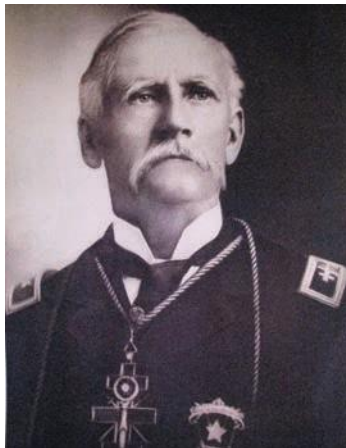
Most Eminent Sir Knight Stoddard was born on June 22, 1840, in Essex County, New York, to John and Margaret Bates Stoddard. He moved to Texas in 1860 and, at the outbreak of the Civil War, entered the Confederate Army as a Private. Serving throughout the war, he was assigned to the staff of Major General Camille Polignac and was discharged in May of 1865 at Jackson, Mississippi, with the rank of Captain.

Returning to Texas, he initially settled in the town of Millican where he began work in the cotton brokerage business. While in that town, he survived the terrible yellow fever epidemic of 1867 and served actively on the relief board. An estimated seventy-five per cent of the population died from the effects of the epidemic. A short time later he moved to Bryan, Texas, where he was to spend the rest of his life. In 1869 he married Louisa Ross English (1826-1904) of Bryan, and after her death, he married her sister, Hortense English (1859-1944) in 1909. By his first wife he had one child, a daughter, Charlotte (1877-1961), who never married.

knight templar

During his time in Bryan, Sir Knight Stoddard served as a Colonel of the Second Texas Volunteer Guard from 1880-1885 and as Brigadier General of the Texas Volunteer Guard from 1885-1893. In this latter capacity he presided over ceremonies dedicating the new state capitol building in Austin in 1888. Besides the cotton industry, his status as a cattleman led to his election as President of the Texas Live Stock Association in 1887 and as President of the Interstate Convention of Cattlemen in 1890 in Fort Worth, where eleven states were represented. He often declined election to public office but did serve one term as Alderman of Bryan, having been elected while he was absent from the state. As Alderman, he was largely instrumental in establishing the public school system of

Bryan, which at the time was considered one of the best in the state. He was also involved in several other business ventures, among the most notable of which were the Texas Dressed Beef and Packing Company, a proposed meat-packing business which it was hoped would rival Chicago in meat processing; Aransas Harbor City and



Improvement Company, a real estate venture at Aransas Pass, Texas; and the Texas Mineral Company, a proposed brickmaking project in Grimes County. In later life, he served on a committee designed to head the local effort to locate a proposed girls' industrial school at A&M College (now Texas A&M University). Stoddard was once considered for the Presidency of A&M College of Texas in 1902, and many petitions from various citizens of Texas to the Board of Directors of Texas A&M were received requesting the consideration of H. B. Stoddard to fill the vacant position of President of the College. (Stoddard did not, ultimately, become President.)

His Masonic career began in Bryan where he was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Brazos Union Lodge No. 129 in April of 1869. He served Brazos Union Lodge as Master in 1875 and again in 1876. He was exalted a Royal Arch Mason on July 26, 1869, in William T. Austin Chapter No. 87 in Bryan. He served as High Priest of Sterling Chapter No. 50 at Calvert in 1870 and his home Chapter, William T. Austin No. 87, at Bryan in 1885, 1886, 1887, 1896, and 1897. Sir Knight Stoddard was created a Knight Templar in Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8, Knights Templar of Texas at Bryan on December 25, 1869. He served this Commandery as Commander in 1875, 1876, 1882, and 1883. Sir Knight Stoddard was elected Prelate of Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8 in 1895 and served continuously until his passing in 1925.

In Grand Commandery, Sir Knight Stoddard was appointed as Grand Warder in 1874. He was elected Grand Junior Warden in 1875 and served in the several stations until 1880 when he was installed as Grand Commander, Knights

Templar of Texas.

In that same year, 1880, Sir Knight Stoddard was appointed Sword Bearer for the Grand Encampment, Knights Templar, United States of America. For the next twenty-one years, Sir Knight Stoddard served in the several stations until his election at the Triennial in 1901 in Louisville, Kentucky, where he was installed as Grand Master, Knights Templar of the United States of America and presided at the 29th Triennial in 1904 held at San Francisco, California.

At this Triennial, the negotiations toward closer relations with Templar bodies in other lands, which had been carried on for so long a time and which had shown signs of maturing at Louisville in 1901, for the first time achieved success. Upon invitation of Grand Master Stoddard, the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Euston, the Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master of the Great Priory of the Religious and Military Orders of the Temple, and of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta in England and Wales and the Dependencies thereof, came with a staff of six distinguished Knights to visit the Grand Encampment of the United States. He was royally received and, upon motion of Past Grand Master Reuben Lloyd, was elected the first honorary member of the Grand Encampment. Grand Master Stoddard was made a Knight Commander of the United Orders of England and Wales by the Earl, special representative of King Edward VII. The two great Templar organizations of England and America were thus bound together with ties of the closest friendship, the Templar order thus assuming an international role. The remainder of this Conclave was characterized by the absence of any agitation or need for legislation on the hitherto much debated

questions of uniform, non-affiliation, permanent place of assembly for the Grand Encampment, etc. One Grand Commandery, Idaho, was organized and created during the Conclave week. Sir Knight Stoddard received the thirty-third degree of the Scottish Rite in Galveston in 1920.

After serving as Grand Master, Sir Knight Stoddard continued to be active in his local Masonic bodies and the Grand Encampment up until his death. Sir Knight Stoddard's final duty to the Craft was installing the Grand Commandery officers on May 7, 1925, in Beaumont. He died on May 29, 1925, in Bryan. Funeral Services for Most Eminent Past Grand Master Stoddard were held at St. Andrews Episcopal Church,

Sunday evening, May 31, 1925, in Bryan, followed by the full Templar Burial Service by the Grand Commandery of Texas. He was interred in the Bryan City Cemetery beside his first wife.

General Henry Bates Stoddard Council No. 87, Knight Masons of the United States of America, in College Station, Texas, was named in his honor.

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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Photo of a pediment in a chapel in the cathedral at Troyes, France taken by the editor.