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DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know, that the year 2019 marks the 250th anniversary of the first recorded conferral of the “Knight Templar degree” in the United States? According to their minutes, it happened on August 28, 1769 when members of St. Andrews Royal Arch Lodge of Boston, Massachusetts voted to approve the Petition of Brother William Davis “coming before the Lodge begging to have and receive the Parts belonging to a Royal Arch Mason, which being read was received and he unanimously voted in, and was accordingly made by receiving the four steps, that on an Excell’t, Sup. Excell’t, Roy’ Arch and Kt. Templar.”

At this time, there was no supervising Templar authority such as a Grand Commandery or Grand Encampment. Rather, the work was conferred under Blue Lodge Warrants by affiliated Royal Arch Chapters. It is also interesting to note that the precise origin of the work has never been ascertained. In the case of St. Andrews Royal Arch Lodge, however, it seems likely that the Order or Degree derived from Ireland, and that Military Lodge No. 322 attached to the 29th Regiment and holding a Warrant from the Grand Lodge of Ireland was responsible for bringing the Order to America. It was not until some 25 years later when, on November 12, 1794, the Templar degree was formally ceded to a “Council of Knights of the Red Cross” which had formed for that purpose.

The next vignette in this series will explore the origins of Templary in Virginia and the formation of the first Templar Encampment, so be sure to check back from time to time for more historical nuggets!