

THE 'KIDD COLLECTION'

© 2016 Neil Wynes Morse

Background

In 2009 the Masonic scholar and author WBro Karen Ann Kidd of Oregon purchased a collection of manuscript [handwritten] ritual materials from an internet auction site. At that time it was supposed by the vendor to have connections to African-American Freemasonry, as it was sourced from an African-American bishop's estate. Her purchase at that time was predicated on the beliefs that the material should be kept from the hands of the profane and would be an interesting future research project.

WBro Kidd has been unable to commit the necessary time and resources to advance this project. In August 2015, while I was in the USA undertaking Masonic research, the collection was brought to my attention. Having been allowed to borrow the volumes, I perused them on the flight home; I realised that they had nothing to do with Prince Hall Freemasonry, but had their own significance. Subsequently I acquired the material in order to undertake the required research. [You've got to have a hobby!]

The Volumes of the Collection

Volumes II to VI are small commercial blank notebooks measuring 6 inches by 3¾ inches and are ⅜ inch thick, containing about 196 pages. The other volumes are larger in size, except for Volume I which is 6 inches by 3¾ inches, but of only 24 pages.

The titles and/or details of the eleven volumes in the collection are:

- I. No title; a notebook listing signs and responses; principal signs; tokens; sacred words; passwords; ages and knocks for 4th to 14th degrees [with the 15th and 16th degrees in another hand].
- II. Masonic Text Book No. 3: "Ritual of the Masonic Degrees or Orders of Knighthood; viz; Knights of the Red Cross; Knights Templar; and Knights of Malta of the Holy Order of St John of Jerusalem. From various Authentic Sources with Notes explanatory +c. Penn-Yan 1849. Also Some accounts of the Honorary Degrees of Knighthood, conferred (as are the preceding) in Encampments of Knights Templar and the Appendant Orders. viz: Knights of the"
- III. "The Honorary Degrees of Free-Masonry; viz: Honorary Degrees of Knighthood; Honorary Chapter Degrees; and Honorary Master-Mason's Degrees; consisting of Knights of the Christian Mark; Knights of the Holy Sepulchre; Thrice Illustrious Order of the Cross; and the Mediterranean Pass; High Priesthood; Royal Master; Select Master; Super-Excellent Master; Perfect Past Master; Heroine of Jericho and Ark and Dove; Secret Monitor; Knights of Constantinople; Knights of Three Kings; Master Mason's Daughter; and the True Kinsman. Compiled and collected from various authentic sources. 1849."
- IV. Masonic Text Book No. 5 The Eleven Ineffable or Sublime Degrees of Masonry, conferred in the Lodge of Perfection; copied from the work called "Light on Masonry", by Elder David Bernard published in Utica in 1829 together with an Introduction to each Degree; From Webb's Free-Masons Monitor_ Part II 1816 and also Notes to the Opening, Reception, Lectures +c. Penn-Yann N.Y. April 1849.
- V. Masonic Text Book No. 5 In Two Parts: The Masonic Degrees conferred in Grand Councils of Princes of Jerusalem; viz: I Knight of the East or Sword; and II Prince of Jerusalem. Also, the Masonic Degrees conferred in Sovereign Chapter of Rose Cross [Croix] viz: I Knight of the East and West; and II Knight of the Eagle or Sovereign Prince of Rose Croix De Heroden [Herodim].
- VI. Masonic Text Book No. 7 In Two Parts: The Masonic Degrees conferred under the authority of & in Sovereign Grand Consistories of Princes of the Royal Secret, viz: Grand Pontiff; Grand Master &c; Prince of Libanus; Chief of the Tabernacle; Prince of the Tabernacle; Knight of Brazen Serpent; Prince of Mercy; Commander of the Temple; Knight of the Eagle and Sun; Patriarch of the Crusades; Noachite or Chevalier Prussien; Knight of Kadosh; Grand Inspector Inquisitor Commander; Prince of the Royal Secret. Also Masonic Degree (33d + last _ Official) conferred in

the Supreme Council; called Sovereign Grand Inspector General. According to a book entitled "Light on Masonry" by Elder David Bernard published in Utica – 1829. Also the French Masonic Degree of "Patriarch Noachite or Chevalier Prussien".

- VII. Degrees of Perfection KVR MS 1861. [viz] IV: Secret Master; V: Perfect Master; VI: Intimate Secretary; VII: Provost and Judge.
- VIII. Sovereign Grand Inspector General; 33° (Thirty Third) A.: + A.: Rite; (Rite Ecossais), as used by the New York Supreme Council, June 5, 1862 . . . Received from Ill.: Edmund B. Hayes 33° M.:P.:S.:G.:C.:.
- IX. Tableaux of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General 33°, A.: + A.: Rite in the United States of America from 1801 to 1875 inclusive including The Supreme Council of America [afterwards the Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction of U.: S.: A.:] and the Several Supreme Councils of the No.: J.: of U.S.A. both at Boston + New York and The Supreme Council for the Northern Jurisdiction U□ S□ A□ formed at Boston, May 17, 1875. Compiled by John L. Lewis P.: Sov.: Gr.: Comm.: September 1875.
- X. Sov.: Gra.: Ins.: Genl.: 33d
- XI. Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite; sometimes called "Rite Ecossais" or Scottish Rite, and known as Sublime or Ineffable Masonry; being thirty degrees from the 4th to the 33rd inclusive; the three Craft degrees be excluded from the numeration. 1860.

The numbering of the volumes in the Collection is purely arbitrary; based on the order in which they were packaged, probably based on size.

The compiler

Following the clue provided in the title of Vol. IX, I sought a comparison of the handwriting in the MSS with records held in the Supreme Council of the Northern Jurisdiction. Through the kind offices of Jeffery Croteau, it has been confirmed that the writer of all but the first of the documents in the Collection was Bro. John Livy Lewis Jr of Penn-Yan, New York [1813–1889].

The Grand Lodge of New York masonic record states:

John L. Lewis was born in Yates County in 1813, studied law, and was admitted to the bar in 1835; was district attorney from 1837 until 1848, when he was elected Judge of his county. After holding that office for four years he engaged in the ordinary practice of his profession, acquiring a good practice and winning hosts of friends.

He was a man of bright social proclivities, an attached friend, a clear-headed adviser, a brilliant orator and a most painstaking executive. His intellect was not that of a genius and his success in life came from his industry, aided by his commendable natural traits and his many good qualities of heart and hand. He was an earnest student, indefatigable in research, a close reasoner and an honest and earnest advocate of whatever cause he believed to be right. As a Mason his reasoning on disputed points of history or jurisprudence was clear and convincing and he did much to codify and bring into proper shape the constitution which is known as that of 1860 and which is practically that under which the Grand Lodge is now governed. He was also the first real student of the history of Freemasonry in New York, the first Historian of the Grand Lodge in fact, if not in name.

It was, however, as Grand Master during the four eventful years of 1856-7-8-9 and on until June, 1860, that his services to the order stand out most prominently, and his memory is likely to be longest enshrined in the annals of Masonry in the State. Its crowning glory was that during its continuance the last vestige of division and schism disappeared from the story of Freemasonry in New York, disappeared, it is to be hoped, never again to return.

There is more, but it is easily found, and not necessary to be published here.

Lewis was raised in Milo Lodge No. 108 at Penn-Yan, NY on 15 May 1846. He was exalted in Penn-Yan Chapter No. 100 on 23 February 1847 and knighted in Monroe Encampment No. 12 at Rochester NY on 17 May 1861. Subsequently he was Grand Master of Masons in New York from 1856 to 1860, Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of New York from 1852 to 1854, Grand Generalissimo of the Grand

Commandery of New York from 1851 to 1853 and General Grand High Priest of the General Grand Chapter of the United States from 1865 to 1868.

Further detail on individual volumes

Volume II compares the rituals in common exposures, Avery Allyn's *Ritual of Free-Masonry* of 1831, and David Bernard's *Light on Masonry* of 1829, with 'a MS copy of the Charges, ceremonies +c in the handwriting of Sylvester Spencer of New York city, then Grand Recorder of the Grand Encampment of the State of New York made some years ago, the precise time unknown & is semi-official & was received in 1848 from the Grand Master of that body. This is called the "Spencer MS" and is placed in the third column & marked "S".'

The compiler states that 'taken together they constitute a very full + complete Ritual of the Masonic Degrees of Christian Knighthood.'

There follows a total of 91 two-page spreads divided into three columns headed A, B and S, in which Allyn is used as the basic text and differences in the other two works are noted.

Unfortunately the first 48 pages, a complete section of the notebook, of Volume III have been lost. So there are no introductory remarks and the text of the rituals of the Knights of the Christian Mark, Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and the first nine pages of The Illustrious Order of the Cross. Despite this loss, the sources can be divined from references in the remaining texts. As with the other volume, Barnard's *Light on Masonry* and Allyn's *Ritual of Free-Masonry* have been used. Other material referenced include Cross's *Masonic Chart* of 1826, Cole's *Ahiman Rezon or Free-Mason's Library* of 1826, Ward's *Anti-Masonic Review* and various issues from the 1840s of Moore's *Freemason's Monthly Magazine*. The final two degrees of this Volume are in printed form and are headed 'Masonic Sister's Degrees'. Lewis notes that it 'came into my hands in June 1861 with papers of WHD and copied [July 1861] verbatim.'

The 'Tableau' in Volume VII relates to Cerneauism, a matter which has dogged the Rite in the US since 1807. In this document Lewis commenced to list the names and details of every S.:G.:I.:G.: created in the "A.: & A.: Rite in the United States of America from 1801 to 1875 inclusive". It is an incomplete table entitled "Tableau of members of the New York or Supreme Council established by Joseph Cerneau August 28th 1807 (Note. In this Table are contained the names of those who composed the Grand Consistory between 1807 and 1812)". It contains two names only, Cerneau and Clinton, and is also incomplete in the details given. However, Lewis prefaced his Tableau with an introductory retrospect of the Order[s] as he saw it. It is this nine page 'history' which is of interest. Lewis was both well placed and well informed to write such a report. Although the rights and wrongs of the matter remain contentious, this is one of a few personal, rather than official, documents extant.

Volume X is of significant interest as it contains the text of a letter to M.: Ill.: Bro Edward A. Raymond, at the time [1861] the "Sov.: Grand Commander of the Supreme Gr.: Council of M.: Ill.: S.: G.: I.: G.: 33d and last degree "Ancient and Accepted Rite" for the Northern Mas.: Jurisdiction of the United States of N.: America" from M.: Ill.: Bros.: John J J Gourgas and Giles F Yates. This letter relates to the rise, fall, and anticipated resurrection of Cerneauism.

One of the more interesting items is Volume XI; a 'side-by-side' comparison of seven different exposures in which the compiler reproduces Richardson's *Monitor of Free Masonry* of 1860 with notes describing the differences with Scottish Rite ritual material produced by Allyn, Bernard, Webb, Carlile, George Crafts, and Mary Hanlon's *Revelations in Masonry* of 1827.

Lewis occasionally compares the written word with his personal experience, using such phrases 'as I was taught'; 'I was instructed in this way' and 'the manner in which I received this Degree was . . . '.

He also was blunt in his assessment of some of the ritual material; in one case noting the inclusion of an incident involving William Wallace fighting the English was 'pretty much twaddle and humbug – there is about as much connection between the things as light & darkness'.

Conclusion

Given the contribution of Lewis to the progress of the NMJ, [see Baynard's *History*, Vol 1, pp359-360] it is of interest to note Lewis's personal interest in ritual development. He writes in the foreword to Volume XI:

Authenticity is not claimed or pretended in any portion in either of the text or subjoined notes. A number of professed rituals or pretended exposures of these degrees having come to my hands I have arrived myself with an effort to compare and collate them as a matter of curiosity.

Oh, that some of the present ‘rulers of the Craft’ had such ‘curiosity’, and interest in masonic research! And did something about it.

The volumes of the ‘Kidd Collection’ contain significant indicators of Masonic development in the USA. The Cerneau references are particularly important to the documented history of the Scottish Rite.

FINIS

Acknowledgments

My grateful thanks are due to Jeffrey Croteau, Manager of Library and Archives, Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library, NMJ, for his assistance, expertise and many kindnesses, especially in identifying Lewis’s handwriting. Larissa Watkins of the Library of the House of the Temple in Washington DC has been, as ever, most helpful.

Obviously I owe a great debt of gratitude to WBro Karen Ann Kidd, without whom . . .

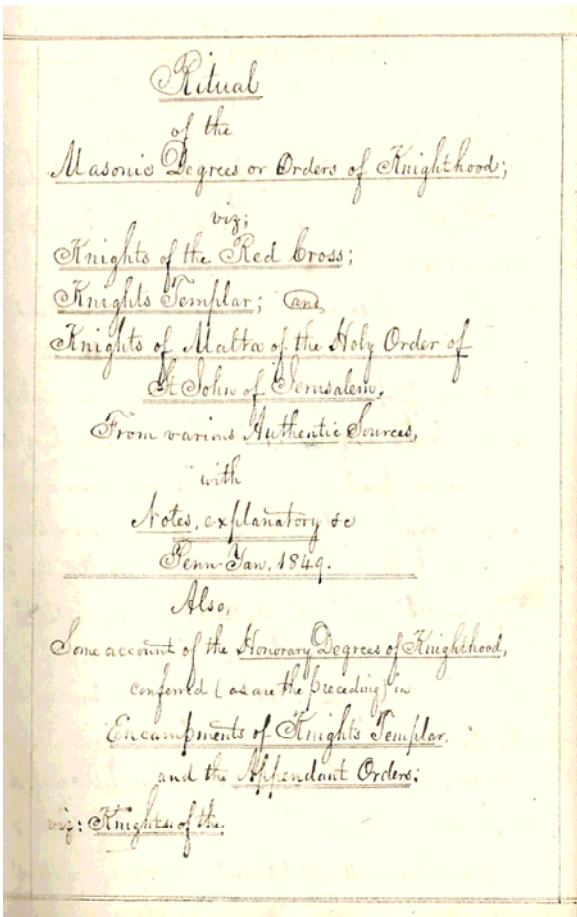


WBro Karen Kidd and her Collection
I-photo © 2015 Ronald Kirk, used with thanks

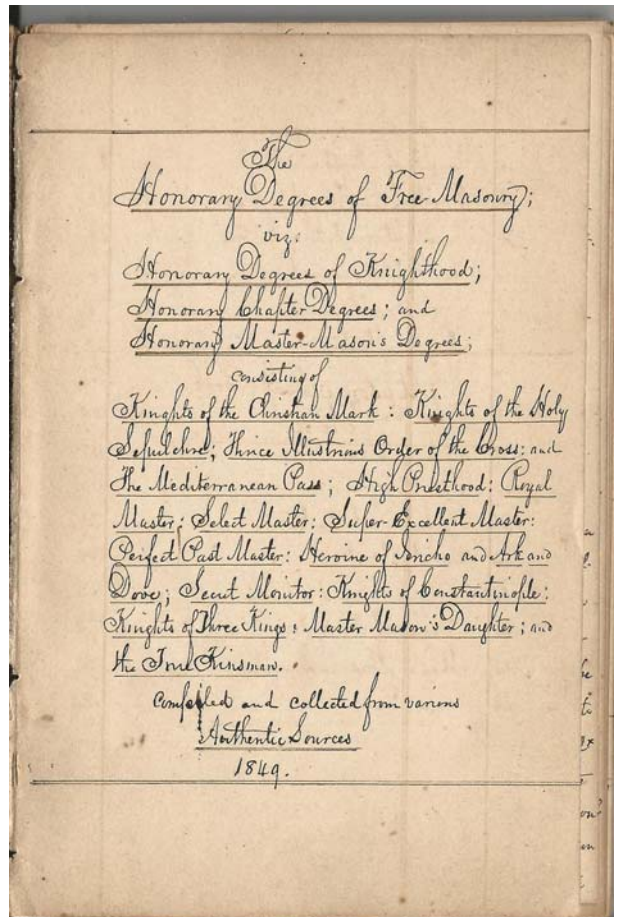


John L. Lewis 33°

John Livy Lewis Jr,
[from <http://gwm.lunaimaging.com/>]



Title page of Vol. II



Title page of Vol. III

| A | B | S. |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1 <u>Knights of Red Cross</u> According to <u>Collins' Ritual</u></p> <p>2 <u>P.C. Opening</u> From all the Grand of the temple the line on 3 formed, the Master of Cavalry, then says: 4 "Sir Knight Master when a Council of 5 (Red Cross Knights is about to be opened 6 what is thy first duty?" 7 Master "To see the sentinels are at their 8 respective posts & the necessary Council cham- 9 ber duly guarded". 10 <u>M.C.</u> "Attend to that part of your duty 11 inform the Captain of the Guards that 12 we are about to open a Council of Red 13 Cross Knights for the despatch of business." 14 The Warden goes to attend the guard 15 (Sylor) returns and says: 16 "W." The sentinels are at their respective 17 posts the council chamber is duly guarded 18 <u>M.C.</u> "Sir Knight Warden are all present Knights of the Red Cross?"</p> | <p>1 <u>Knights of</u> According to 2 his a S.S. of 3 At the S. of the to: the 4 M. of b. to Sir Kt 5 R. C. is abt. to be 6 # 1 M. of C Sir Kt 7 M. of J. J. all pt 8 W. To see the b.b. 9 M.C. Pleas at 9 10 Sent. are at 11 11 sent them to both 12 (S. of Kt's Capt 13 You will introduce 14 W. (Same) 15 M.C. are all present 16</p> | <p>1 <u>Red Cross</u> Bomani's Light 2 <u>Opening</u> line is first 3 W. When a C. of R. of 4 M. of J. J. is abt. to be 5 M. of J. J. all pt 6 are Kt's of R. C. 7 duly g'd 8 M. of J. J. of yr. all, see 11 9 part & inform ac (re: same) 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18</p> |
| S. | <p>1 <u>Knights of Red Cross</u> According to Spencer's "Job" 2 <u>Opening</u> 3 "Red Cross Knights" 4 M. of J. J. Sir Knight Master of Cavalry when you will form 5 the line preparatory to opening a Council of 6 Red Cross Knights (and returns to his apartment). 7 (The Sir Knight being previously armed falls into rank 8 (Re: same as first paragraph in Collin except the words 9 "becomes you" instead of "is the" in the 5th line). 10 (Same as Collin - omitting "are" in line 6. 11 M.C. "Performs that duty" 12 13 14 15 16 17 M.C. "Sir Knight Master of Infantry are all 18 present Sir of the Red Cross."</p> | |

The comparative three-column layout A, B & S in volume II. [the pencil additions are not original]