

THE HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM OF
THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR SWORD
from the 11th to 20th Centuries

by Norman Williams Crabbe

The sword was the prime weapon of the Medieval Knights Templar and today is the symbolic weapon of the Christian Order of Masonic Knights Templar. To the medieval knight it was his personal offensive and defensive weapon. To the Masonic Knight of today it symbolizes his historic link to the past. And; while wielding his sword he is also displaying symbolically the story of the Christian Mysteries.

The first Holy Crusade was mounted in the latter part of the 11th Century with the fall of Jerusalem to the Crusaders in 1099 AD. Nineteen years later the Order of the Temple was formed. They were commonly known as the Knights Templar. In 1066 AD William the Conqueror of Normandy, France invaded and conquered England. The basic uniform and weapons used by the Knights Templar were of the same design as used by the Normans.

The True Knights Templar Sword had a two edged blade, two inches wide and about forty inches long with straight Quillions, one Fuller running about two thirds the length of the blade, a wooden Hilt and a Pommel either in the shape of a bevelled wheel or brazil nut. The sword was held in a leather scabbard and was slung from a leather waist belt or a leather shoulder baldric.

The first modern versions of the Masonic Knights Templar Sword have been found in France and England dating circa 1735 AD. These rare examples have a much thinner blade, about one and one eighth inches wide, and the markings may have a Passion Cross somewhere on the Hilt or the Pommel may be in the shape of a human skull and the Quillions, crossed bones. In the seventeen hundreds Masonic Knights Templar used aprons as part of their lodge clothing. They had Knights Templar markings on them and therefore it was not necessary to have ornate swords to carry the Knights Templar symbolism.

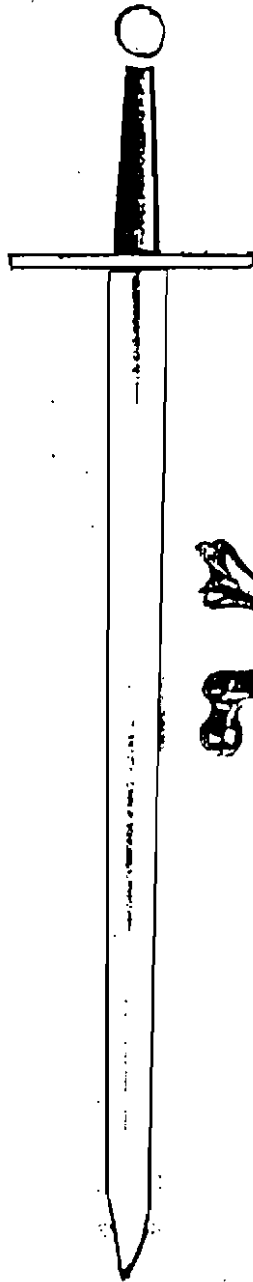
A sword is made up of the Blade, Hilt, Body, Tip, Fuller, Quillions and Pommel. The Blade is the working end of the sword. The Hilt is made up on the Hand Grip, Quillions and Pommel. The Body of the sword is the blade but not the tip. A fuller is the groove or depression in the center of the body of the blade. The Quillions are the crossbars that protect the hand. The Pommel is the end cap and holds the Hilt to the Body and is also a counter balance to the blade.

The following description is of three nineteenth century Knights Templar Swords. They are excellent examples of the Masonic Knights Templar Sword. Each Knights Templar Sword tells a symbolic story of the Christian Mysteries and also interlaces the more ancient Esoteric Masonic and Ancient Wisdom Religious Symbolism.

The first Masonic Knights Templar sword is an English Knights Templar Sword circa 1850 AD. Starting at the foot of the scabbard we find a two headed face. This face is the Roman God, Janus, and faces forward and backward looking to the new year and back at the old year. This Roman God is whom the Month of January is

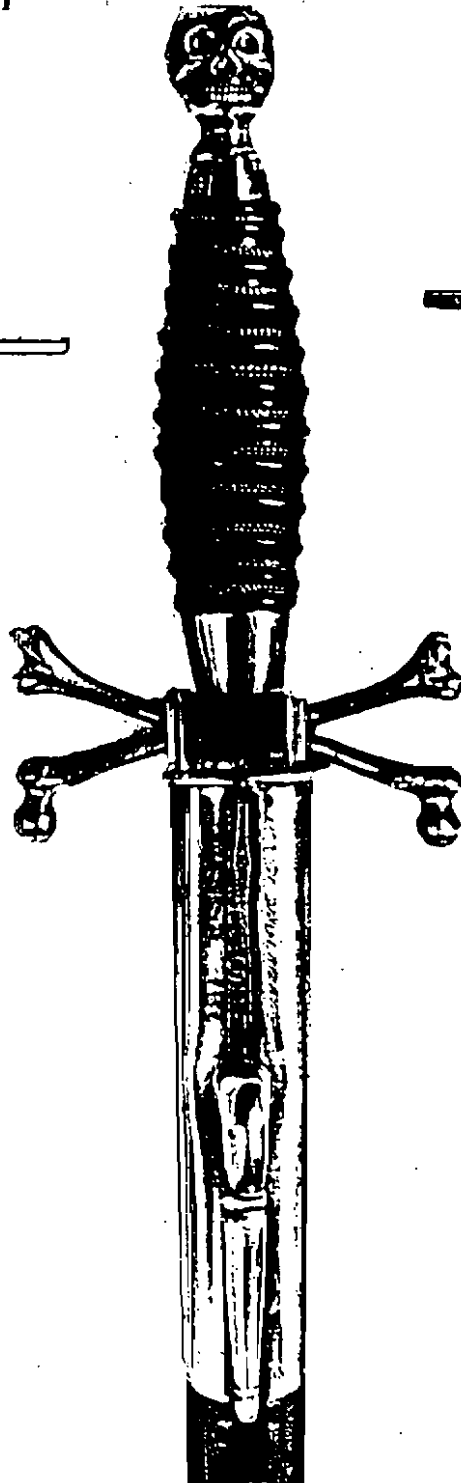
POMMELS

Wheel



Straight Quillions
1000-1400 AD +
Norman Style

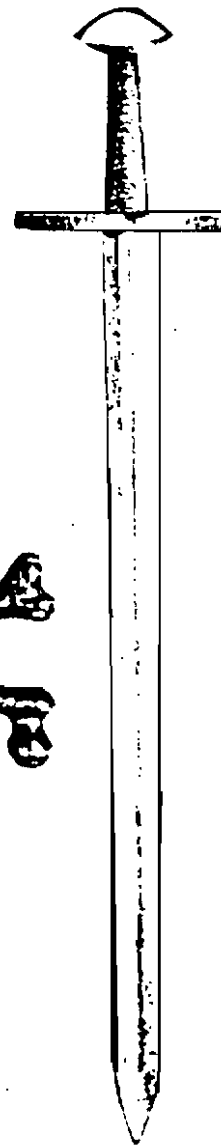
Skull



Crossed Bones
Quillions
A. Deuchar

Master of Scottish
Templars 1810-1835

Brazil Nut



Straight Quillions
1000-1400 AD +
Norman Style

named. The two heads also symbolize the universal principle that: Where you have a left you have a right, where you have a right you have a wrong, and where you have good, so too you have evil.

Next, we have an etching of a symbolic vine indicating Christ's words, "I am the vine", and esoterically means that Christ is the harvester of Human Souls. Above the vine in the middle of the scabbard we find the Seal of Solomon. The shape is the Star of David, King Solomon's father, but the way the star is formed shows that really this symbol is of two equilateral triangles interlaced. This symbol stands for the Divine Triune; Father, Holy Spirit and Son; which also represents the "Indivisible Unity" of the spiritual generative powers, the Male Principle, the Female Principle and the Product of their union; the equilateral triangle pointing up: And; The Human triune; Mind, Soul and Spirit of man; the equilateral triangle pointing down and also symbolizes the unity of Human Maleness and Femaleness and Product joined; "Man will cleave to a woman and become one."

Around "The Star of Solomon" we find a continuous etched circle. This circle represents a serpent eating its own tail; the ancient symbol of immortality, as well as the esoteric symbol of Divine Thought; evolving into Matter and revolving back into Spirit in a never ending cycle.

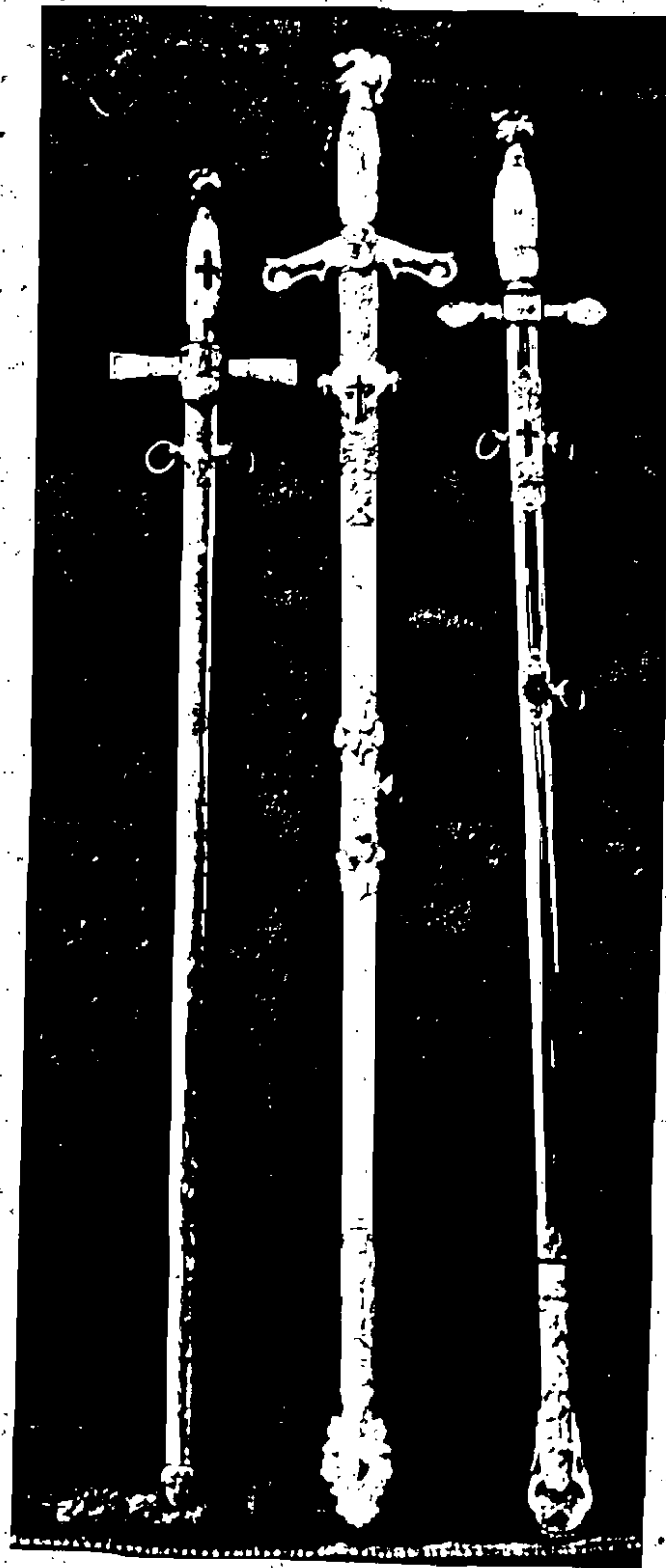
between the two hookup rings are three etchings. The Passion Cross; the cross that Christ died upon, an anchor; the foundation of our faith as well as a very ancient symbol of the Blessed Savior, and a king's crown; a symbol of immortality and symbol of God's Kingdom. The Passion Cross is also considered a male generative symbol while the crown is considered a female generative symbol. The crown also symbolizes the true location of the "Crown of Heaven." One's own "Self": the Christ Consciousness. And, when joined together by Faith, "The Anchor" holds the Crown and Cross together bringing immortality for the awakened Soul.

The quillions are straight which helps form the sword's shape; that of a Passion Cross. They also are elongated triangles symbolizing the Three unified parts of Deity.

On the Hilt is an unusual Cross. This cross has equal-distant top and bottom legs and equal-distant, but shorter, left and right legs. This cross belongs to the Masonic Rosicrucian College, Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis; a select group of scholars that study Masonic History and Esoteric Philosophy. Historically; only seventy two in one jurisdiction can belong. Seventy two when added together; seven plus two equals nine [(72) or $7+2=9$] and is the minimum number of members required to open a Knights Templar Commandery.

The pommel is in the shape of a Helmeted Knight. One unusual note though, this Knight's Helmet has overlapping plates to resemble a pine cone. Symbolically the pine cone represents the Pineal Gland, the Sixth "Chakra", the Chakra of Wisdom and the Kabbalistic Sephiroth "Cochma", located in the human skull, the location of the Third Eye of Man; the mystical center of insight and clairvoyance.

The body of this sword has typical Knights Templar markings: a passion cross with rays, two splayed crosses (The original knights templar cross), and two crossed standards with the splayed cross. This sword blade has a full length fuller and; as with ALL knights templar swords, has a two edged blade. The two edged blade



First Sword
English

Second Sword
American

Third Sword
American

represents the dualistic principle of the positiveness and negativeness of life. It stands for the balance arrived at through Hermetic study wherein the Adept searches out harmony by cutting forwards and backwards with his blade and thereby negating the swings of the pendulum of life. He thus becomes a Rock of Faith holding the material universe in check.

The second example is a very ornate American Knights Templar Sword circa 1890 AD. This sword is styled for the Texas and Iowa Regulations.

Starting at the foot of the scabbard we first see that there are two pair of double headed women, unclothed from the waist up. These are the twins, Gemini, of the Zodiac, again one head facing foreword the other backward, as if looking at both sides of a question. This continuing theme is the notion of universal duality and is considered a Karmic Principle or in western terms; For every action there is an equal reaction. Since this universal duality is indivisible, in other words, you can never have the left without the right, the right without the wrong, the good without the evil, matter without void, then this universal duality becomes a devisable of the One Universal Principle which is that the One and the Many are the One.

In the center of the foot we find a Sunburst, representing God, his right hand is extended out of the sunburst holding the passion cross (Christ) with light rays and flames shooting forth. Above the flames is the lighthouse at Alexandria, Egypt; the ancient entry port to the Holy Lands and esoterically symbolizes Christs words: "I am the Light of the World" and esoterically means "I am the pathway to Wisdom" and also means "I am the SON/SUN."

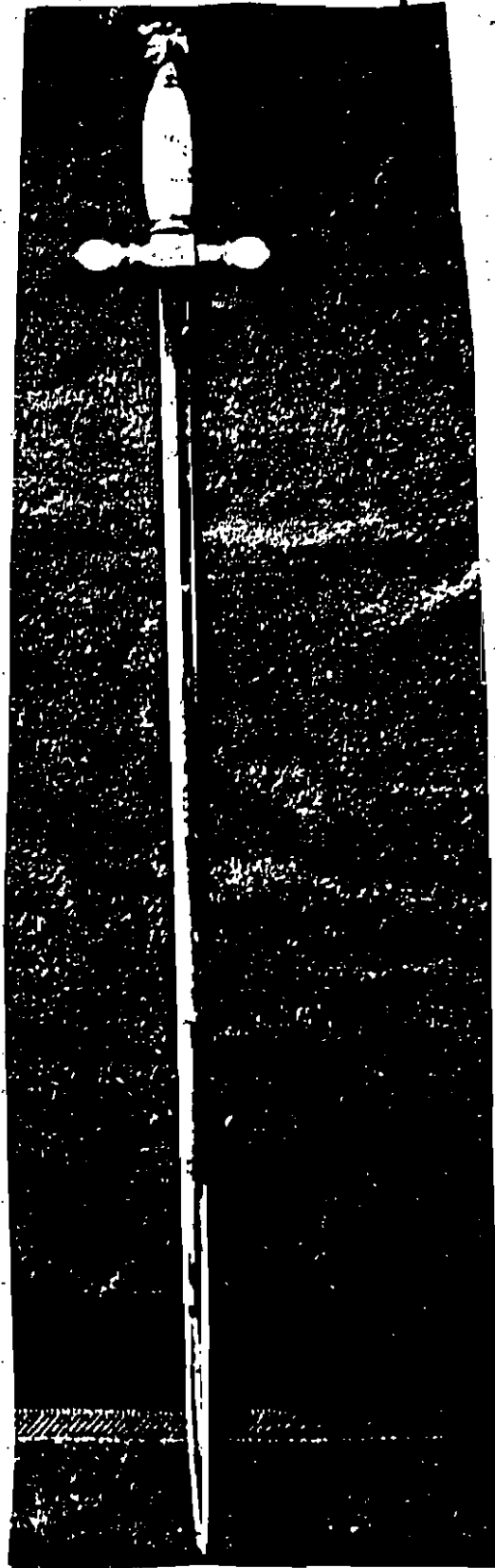
Grapevines and Grape leaves decorate the metal work along side of the lighthouse. This again is a Signature of Christ; "I am the Vine." The grapes represent the wine "Holy Blood" served at the last supper. And, to the ancients, grape vines symbolized "The Harvest."

Midway up the scabbard is the bottom hookup ring mount. The symbolic grape leaves appear as well as the Crown and Cross. The crown symbolizing immortality and the cross symbolizing the path by which immortality may be reached. The top hookup rings mount has a splayed cross as well as a blood red Passion Cross. Again we see a Knights Armor styled in the form of pine cone seeds.

The quillions are straight but very stylized. In fact they are shaped like a grapevine with a grape leaf draped over the top of the vine on each side. In the center is the crown and cross. The cross going through the circle formed by the crown. With a bit of imagination we can see in the crown and cross the symbol of the female principle as well as the symbol for the planet Venus.

The grip has the original owners initials on the front and on the back is an equilateral triangle with a Passion Cross going through it. On the triangle are twelve marks. The Passion Cross represents Christ, the triangle The Divine Triune, and the twelve marks are the twelve apostles and also represent the twelve signs of the Zodiac and the twelve months of our year.

A dragon sits atop the Knights Head Pommel; a symbol of destruction for all who oppose this knightly sword and, like the snake, mystically symbolize the wisdom



United States circa 1910

of the ancients.

On the double edged blade are many ornate etchings. Most are just decorations but a few are symbolically relevant. The first and most important on this blade is the skull and crossed bones. These are the ancient symbols of a Christian Death. Above and below this symbol are the latin words, "Memento Mori." Translated they mean; "Ego, Falsehood, Death."

We also find the Masonic square and compasses with a pentangle star in place of the letter "G." The Masonic square symbolizes virtue by squaring our human actions thereby maintaining the harmonic balance of good and evil. The Masonic Compasses symbolize morality by circumscribing the human passions thereby keeping good and evil within the circle of our outward bodily manifestations. The pentangle star is used in many mystic rites and is the mystic symbol for man. Each point symbolizing a human appendage, as well as each point representing one of the five human senses. The pentangle also represents the five occult elements and elemental essences; earth, water, air, fire, and aether.

The last sword is an American Knights Templar Sword circa 1910 AD. Many markings on it are the same as the others but there are a few that should be pointed out as being particularly relevant.

First; on the blade of this sword as well as on the other American sword is an unusual marking for a knights templar sword. The emblem of the 28th Scottish Rite Degree is shown; the "Knight of the Sun" or called the "Prince Adept". A faced, radiant sun. This Scottish Rite degree is the degree wherein you are to be considered a Mystic Adept and hold the secret knowledge of the ancient mysteries.

The foot of the scabbard has the familiar grape leaves and a passion cross but also we find our first spear. Spears in medieval knighthood were used on a knights coat of arms as a symbol of a Christian Mission. Remember that Christs' side was pierced with a spear and, by adding the cut of the spear with the three nails of the cross, one in each hand and one in Jesus feet, brings the count to four and represents the four Cardinal Virtues, the number of yearly seasons, the number of years to make a leap year, the four primary colors, etc. And, when adding the mystical number three to four the sum is the mystical number seven. Or, by multiplying we get three times four equals twelve.

We also see the equilateral triangle at the foot. This time however there are light rays being admitted from around it and within the triangle we find the Hebrew Symbols of the Sephiroth, (n/n). Starting with the letter for Kether (Yod), of Binah (Heh), together forming (Yah); the feminine gender; and then add the third letter, Hokhmah (Vau), then add the last (Heh), which represents the lower seven Sephiroth being the masculine gender, to the three others we get the Tetragrammation of Gods Hebrew name (Y-H-V-H) pronounced Yod-he-va-he (Yod-Heh-Vau-Heh). Translated means, HE is, HE was, HE will be.

Finishing out the foot, at the lower hookup and at the tope hookup rings we find three interlaced circles. These also refer to the three unified parts of the Divine Triune.



English circa 1050

Here for the first time we see the splayed cross located at the lower hookup ring being now the cross of the Knights of Christ. Christopher Columbus sailed under this cross when on his voyage of discovery to the new world. The Knights of Christ were in fact the Knights Templar after their name change by the Spanish King after the repression of the Knights Templar Order in France and England from 1307 to 1314 AD.

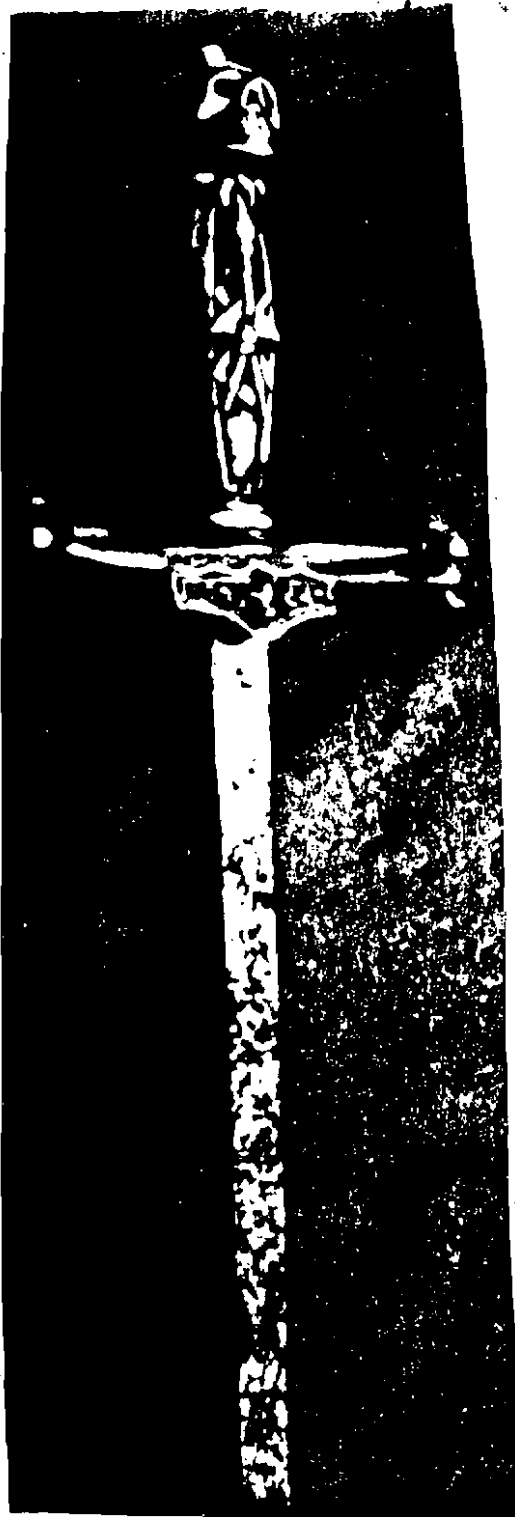
Again at the pommel we find the knights head with the familiar pine cone motif. The quillions of this sword have the words: "In Hoc Signo Vinces", written in a circle around a passion cross super-imposed on a splayed cross. When translated from Latin and completing the sentence with the words "Memento Mori" found around the skull and crossed bones on the body of the blade we get the FULL MEANING.

"In Hoc Signo Vinces: Memento Mori."

(In Hoke Sig'no Win'case: May'mantoe More'i.)

"In This Sign Overcomes: Ego, Falsehood, Death."

Footnotes: Because of the volume of information available a source reading list is provided in lieu thereof.



Excavated in Illinois in the mid-1980's. Now in a private collection in southern Maryland. Italian - 1910+

Reading List:

The Meaning of Masonry-----Wilmshurst
 The Temple and the Lodge-----Baigent/Leigh
 The Holy Bible-----King James Ver.
 The Jewish Kabbalah-----Historical
 The Other Bible-Ancient Esoteric Texts-----Barnstone
 The Greek/English Interlinear New Testament-Tyndale
 The Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament---King James Ver.
 The Nag Hammadi Library-----Robinson.
 The Upanishads-----Hindu Bible
 The Holy Koran-----Muslim Bible
 The Historical Landmarks of Freemasonry-----Dr. G. Oliver, D.D.
 Morals and Dogma-----Albert Pike, 33rd
 Ex Oriente Lux-----Henry
 Mind and Magic-----King
 The Occult World-----Sinnott
 Duncans Ritual of Freemasonry-----McKay
 The Mysticism of Masonry-----Clymer
 Born in Blood: The Secrets of Masonry-----Robinson
 Holy Blood/Holy Grail-----Baigent/Leigh/Lincoln
 Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance---Pirsig
 Jonathan Livingston Seagull-----Bach
 The Grand Lodge Ritual Book-----Maryland, DC, Scotland
 The Secret Teachings of All Ages: Masonic,
 Hermetic, Qabbalistic & Rosicrucian-----Manly P. Hall
 The Supreme Identity-----A. Watts
 The Way of Zen-----A. Watts
 Atlantis-----Donelly
 Revelations-----Edgar Cayce
 The Secret Doctrine 1 & 2 -----Blavatsky
 More Than Wanderers: Spiritual Disciplines
 for Christian Ministry-----J.C. Fenhagen
 I.N.R.I. De Mysteriis Rosae Rubeae et
 Aureae Crucis-----Frater Achad
 The Kybalion; Hermetic Philosophy-----3 Initiates
 The Rosicrucian Philosophy; the R.C. Creed---G.W. Plummer
 The Cloud Upon the Sanctuary-----K.V. Eckartshausen
 Constantly Creating Circumstances-----G.W. Plummer
 Codex Rosae Crucis, D.D.M.A.-----M.P. Hall
 History of Initiation-----G. Oliver D.D.
 Philosophy of Fire-----Clymer
 The Science of Death-----G.W. Plummer
 Tour Notations of the Theosophical S.-----Theosophical S.
 Quarterly publications-----Theosophical S.
 Roots of Ritualism in Church & Masonry-----Blavatsky
 The Story of Philosophy-----Will Durant
 Karma: T. Universal Law of Harmony-----Hanson & Stewart
 Esoteric Buddhism-----Sinnott
 History of Western Philosophy-----Bertrand Russel
 Masonry in the New Age-----Lynn F. Perkins