



## Attention Grabber

Wanted: Individuals to join the Knights Templars immediately.

These individuals should be mighty warriors and devoutly religious with impeccable morals.

Job duties include protecting pilgrims as they travel to and from the holy city of Jerusalem.

Individuals should also be willing to take an oath of poverty upon joining.

Send resumes to Jerusalem Palace addressed to Jacques de Molay.

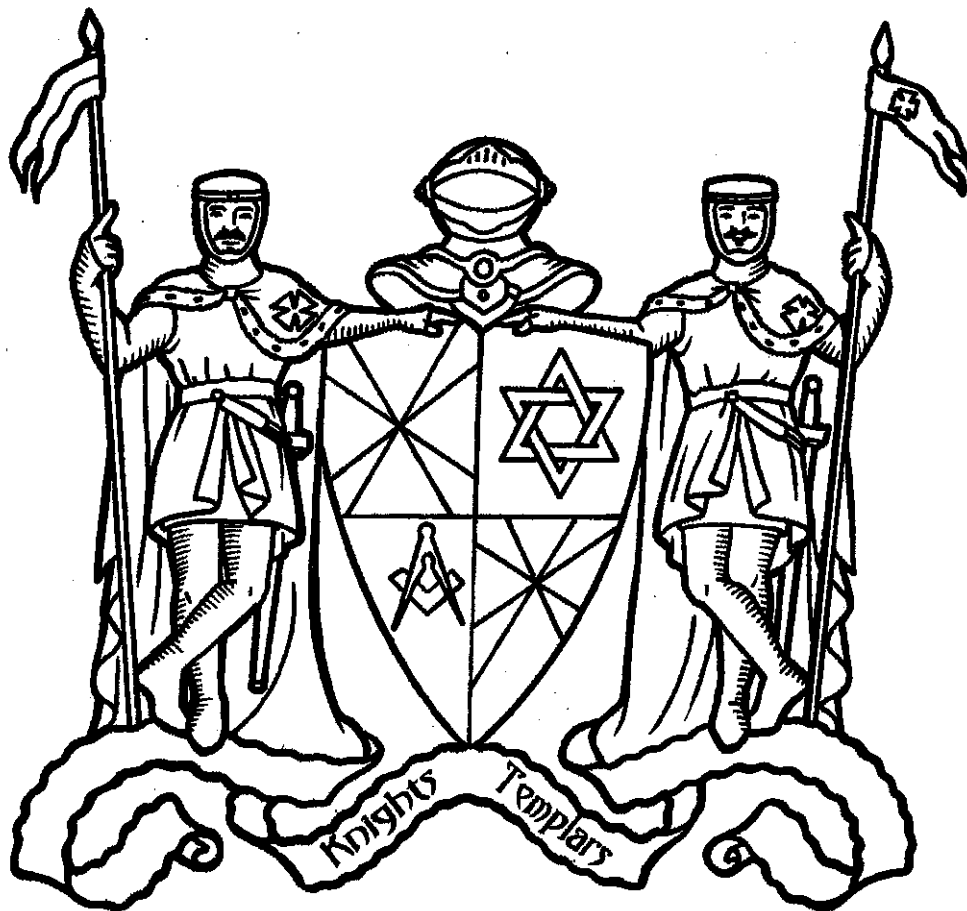
# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## Background Information

During the Middle Ages, knights from Europe invaded the area of the Middle East called the Holy Land. These knights were Christians and these invasions were called the Crusades. The purpose of the Crusades was to take back the Holy Land or Palestine (called Israel today) for the Christians. Muslim rulers had control of the land at that time.

In 1099, the Christians defeated Jerusalem. By 1119, a group of knights had banded together to protect the people who traveled from Europe to the Holy Land. It is believed that there were 20,000 of them at one time. The knights' duty was to protect Jerusalem and the pilgrims who traveled there. Pilgrims faced the threat of thieves and pirates along the way. By day the knights were warriors and by night they were religious monks who prayed.



# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## Background Information *(cont.)*

The king of Jerusalem blessed them and let them stay in his palace. This king's palace was on the site where a famous king named Solomon had once built a temple a long time ago. Because they stayed on the site of the temple, the knights were called the Poor Knights of the Temple or Knights Templars. They took vows of poverty, but their poverty did not last for very long. The Knights Templars soon became very rich. In fact, they were the richest group of people in the medieval world. Their religious conduct, along with their warrior abilities, attracted the attention of many rulers throughout Europe. These rulers competed for the Templars' attention by giving them many gifts. The rulers did not make the Templars pay tax, either. The Templars' wealth began to accumulate.

Soon the Templars became the first bankers in Europe. Rulers sent money to them and the Templars issued the ruler a letter of credit which could be redeemed anywhere. In no time at all the Templars had as much power as any king or queen. By the end of the 1200s, the only person more powerful than the Templars was the Pope. It was also about this time that Jerusalem was taken back by the Muslims and all the Templars were expelled. Luckily, their money headquarters was in Paris, so financially they still seemed safe.

But resentment had been building against the Templars for quite a while. Other groups were jealous that they held so much money and power. They had secret initiation rights and others did not like the secrecy. The Templars acted as though they did not have to answer to anyone. This arrogant attitude made many people angry and they refused to help them when the Templars were in trouble. Soon accusations began flying against the Templars. Some accused the Templars of being Satan worshippers, the worst accusation possible at the time.

The main leader accusing the Templars was the powerful King of France, Philip the Fair. He tried to convince the pope to perform an investigation, but the Pope refused to listen. So Philip the Fair began his own investigation and arrested all the Templars in France. The Pope protested by saying that he alone had power over the Templars, but Philip ignored him. Under torture, many of the knights admitted to spitting on the crucifix and to other anti-Christian behavior. Some claimed that they worshipped idols in the forms of cats or other animals.

# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## Background Information *(cont.)*

The pope did not believe the confessions of these knights. He believed that the king of France pressured them into lying. However, in 1308, 72 of these knights confessed right in front of the pope. The pope was forced to launch an official investigation throughout Europe. In some places these knights were tortured, and in other places they were simply questioned. When the knights were tortured, there were more confessions. It took years for him to complete the investigation.

After a while, the Templars who had confessed in France began retracting their confessions. They claimed their confessions were all lies. Any knight who retracted his confession was immediately placed under the authority of the state. In France, this authority was Philip the Fair. King Philip did not have any mercy on those who retracted. He had them immediately burned at the stake. The leader of the Templars, Jacques de Molay, decided he could not live with his "false" confession either. It took him four years, but he finally retracted his confession, too. He was burned at the stake in front of Notre Dame in Paris. Legend says that out of the fire, his voice was heard telling the Pope and King Philip to meet him in heaven to determine justice. Many believed he was calling down a curse on them. Both the Pope and the King were dead within a year.

The Pope had already officially disbanded the Knights Templars everywhere except for Spain and Portugal. These groups were allowed to continue but had to change their names. Everywhere else their money, possessions, and land were seized and used by rulers. Some say a greedy king who could control a weak pope wrongly accused the Templars. Others say that the Templars were conspiring to turn many people away from Christianity and the Church.

# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## Background Information *(cont.)*

Many theories surround the Knights Templars. Was all their wealth taken or was some of it secretly hidden? Did any of the Knights Templars continue the society illegally under a different name? One legend claims that on the day of the mass arrests in France, the Templars' wealth was taken out of the country on a boat. This wealth was loaded onto a wagon and taken to the port city of La Rochelle. It was then loaded onto a Templar ship and taken to a secret location where the remaining Templars used it to set up an underground organization. One theory says that they went to Scotland with the wealth and eventually emerged as the Freemasons. Some think the remaining Templars went to Scotland and helped the Scots under Robert Bruce defeat the English under King Edward I in 1314. They say it was their warrior presence that won a decisive battle for Bruce. Freemasonry did emerge in Scotland in the 1700s, so could both of these theories tie together? There is not enough evidence to prove or disprove any of these theories.

There is a story that claims that their treasure was buried in Nova Scotia, Canada, on Oak Island. This treasure area is called the Money Pit. No one knows exactly what is buried in the Money Pit because complete excavations have not yet taken place. Some think that the Templars had famous relics from Jerusalem like the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy Grail. They claim that the Templars took these relics when they secretly excavated Solomon's temple while living in Jerusalem. The Money Pit is marked with a stone cross, a sign typical of the Templars. Whatever happened to the Templars and all their wealth will continue to remain a mystery.

# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## More Treasure Information

### *Is the Treasure at Oak Island in Nova Scotia?*

A 16 year old boy named Daniel McGinnis first discovered the Money Pit in 1795. He had been fishing for the day. He docked his boat at Oak Island and walked across the land. Suddenly he saw a scarred oak tree with a hole near it. He believed it was a place of buried treasure, possibly by pirates, and that a make-shift crane caused the scarring on the tree. He returned with two friends. As they dug, they discovered they would need better tools. They left and returned almost nine years later to find the site as they had left it. This time they had financial backing and the needed tools to excavate the site. Everyone working there had a claim in the treasure, if it was found.

After digging through layers of oak logs, boards, charcoal, putty, and coconut fiber, they suddenly hit a stone at 90 feet deep. This stone had a puzzling inscription on it that has not yet been deciphered.

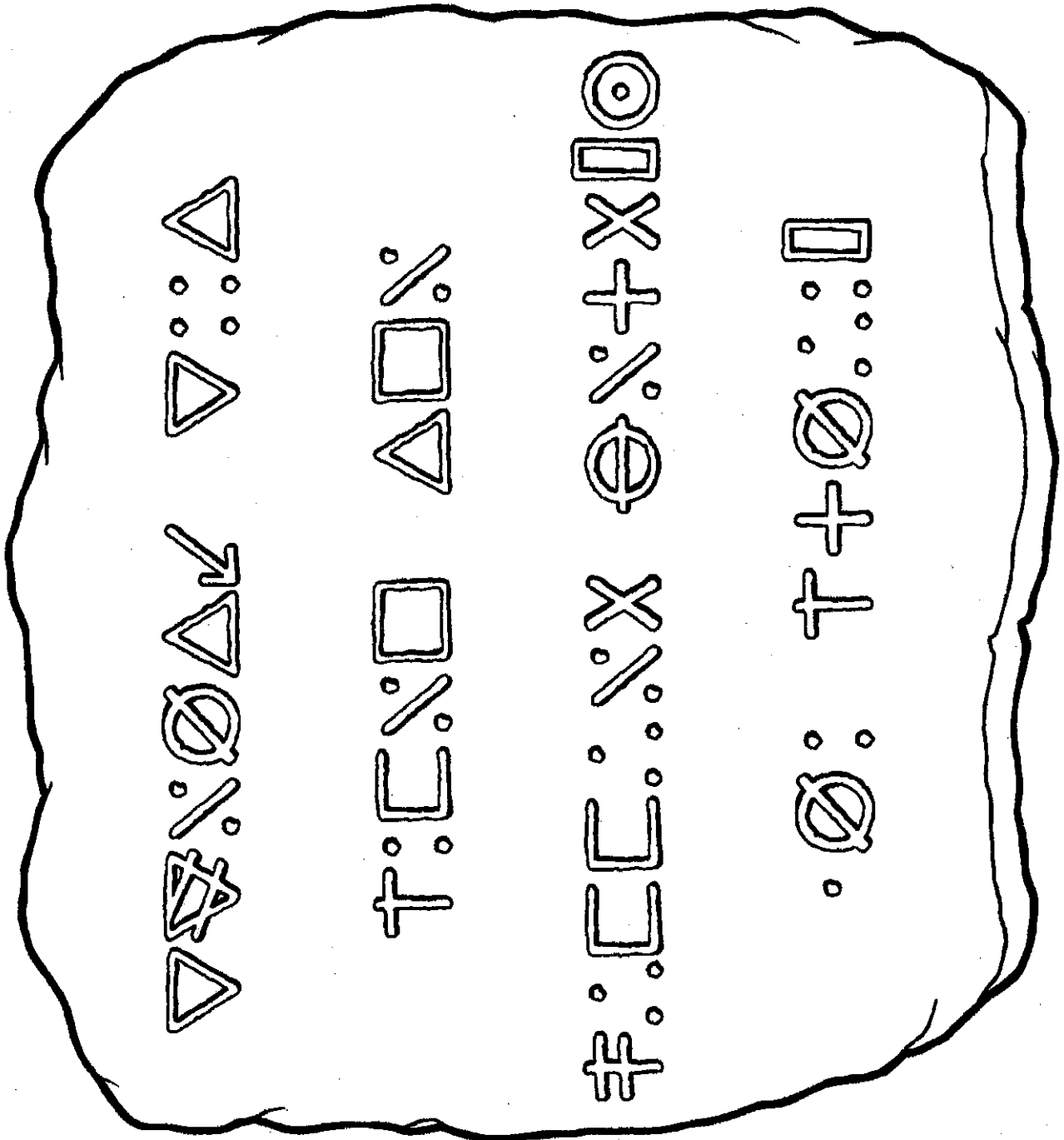
When they dug down deep enough and struck what they thought to be a treasure chest, the shaft flooded with water. It appeared that the hole was booby-trapped. They could not reach the treasure. For years different groups tried to reach the treasure and several men died in the process.

After many investigations and failed attempts at excavating, people are still divided on what they believe about the Oak Island treasure. Some believe the shafts and booby trap elements of the hole are not man made. They say these holes are just natural sink holes that could be found on any island. But no one can refute the evidence of the encrypted stone. Was this stone merely a hoax or was it a real clue explaining where the treasure was buried?

# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## The Stone



# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## Time Line of Events

1795

Daniel McGinnis finds the Money Pit and digs with friends, John Smith and Anthony Vaughan, to a depth of 30 feet. It was too hard, so they gave up and went to find more help.

1803

The Onslow Company together with Daniel and his friends begins excavating the site. When they reach a depth of 90 feet they find an inscribed stone. The shaft becomes flooded as water quickly seeps into it.

1804

In hopes of reaching the pit without flooding, the Onslow Company digs next to the pit to a depth of 110 feet. Water floods that hole when they attempt to tunnel across into the Money Pit.

1849

Another company, the Truro Company, begins digging. They drilled through two casks filled with loose metal thought to be coins. Parts of a gold chain found there vanished.

1850

A waterway and fake beach are found at a cove, which is discovered to flood the pit.

1861

Several cross tunnels have weakened the pit, causing the bottom to fall out. Because of this, items that were suspected to lie at 100 feet fall farther down into the earth.



# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## Time Line of Events *(cont.)*

- 1893 The cave-in pit is investigated when Fred Blair and The Oak Island Treasure Company begin their investigations.
- 1899 A second flood tunnel on the south shore of the island was discovered.
- 1936 A second inscribed stone was found.
- 1959 Four more lives were lost from carbon monoxide poisoning in the pit.
- 1965 A 70-ton digging crane is used to apply modern open pit mining methods.
- 1970 Triton begins digging on the island and commissioned a complete geological survey of the area. Their discoveries are never made public, but they continue digging today.
- 1971 Video footage shows what is believed to be two chests and a severed hand.

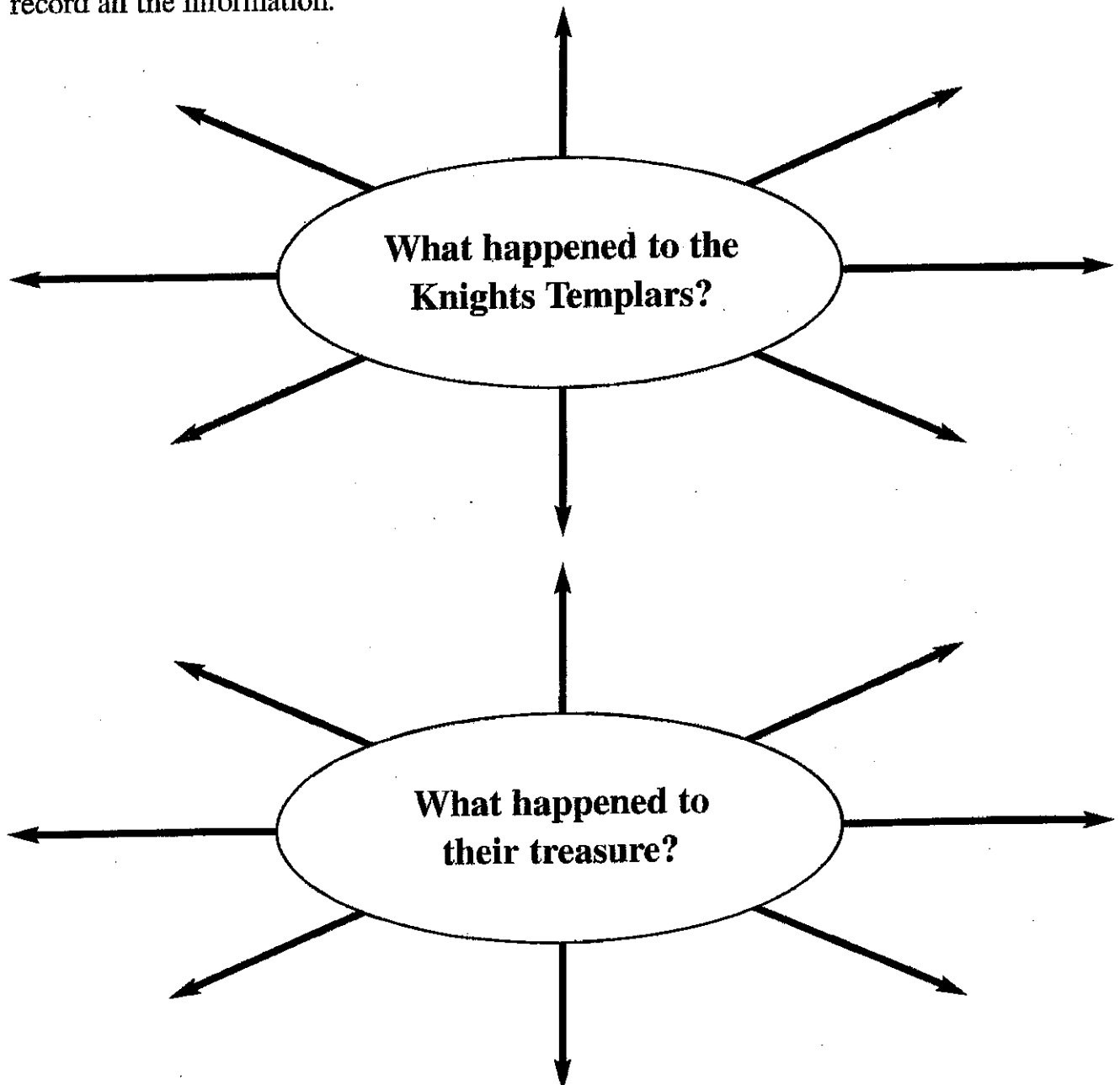
# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## Graphic Organizer

### *Mapping Solutions*

**Directions:** Use this page to create a flow chart about the Knights Templars and their treasure. Your flow chart can go in many different directions. This page will help you keep track of that information in an organized way. Add as many arrows as you need to record all the information.



# The Knights Templars and Their Treasure



## T-Chart

**Directions:** Were the Knights Templars guilty of what Philip the Fair accused them? Why would he accuse them? If they were not guilty, then why did they confess? Think about their guilt or innocence. Then write the reasons for guilt on one side of the T-chart and the reasons for innocence on the other side of the T-chart.

The Templars Are Guilty

The Templars Are Innocent