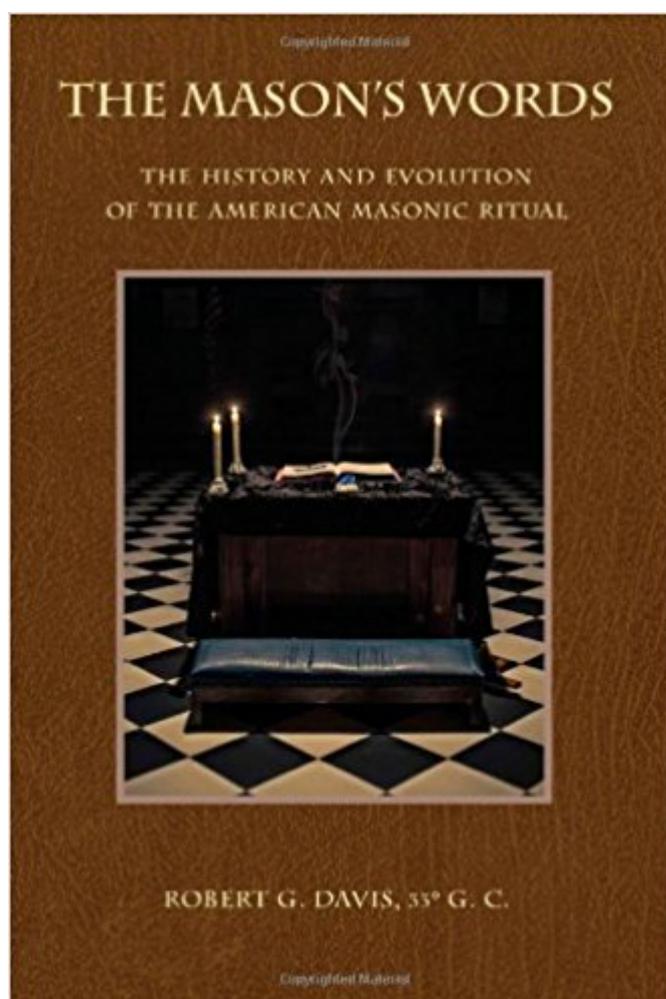


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The Mason's Words: The History And Evolution Of The American Masonic Ritual



Synopsis

Freemasonry is entirely built around traditions. From time immemorial, those who have belonged to the world's oldest and largest fraternal order have metaphorically passed between the pillars of Solomon's Temple to nurture within themselves a harmonious bond between tradition and modernity. This is the story of the Masonic ritual, the language and ceremonial forms that have evolved into the present structure of American Freemasonry, defined its lodge space, and offered its members the same stabilizing influence of instruction that has prevailed on every continent for nearly 400 years. The reader will discover that the language of the world's oldest fraternal society has also made its own interesting journey, and been tested by the most powerful and the most humbling of men. The result is, that, in Masonic lodges across America, and, indeed, the world, men from every walk of life, of all ages, every social category and every spiritual and philosophical conviction are able to find a basis for reflection on who they are, why they are here, and what has meaning to them. By its common language delivered in a common culture of fraternal relationship, Freemasonry is enabled to exemplify a universal brotherhood of man. This is the story of the Mason's words; the history and evolution of the American Masonic ritual. It is an interesting bit of history that is perhaps all the more fascinating because it is so rarely known.

Book Information

Paperback: 356 pages

Publisher: Robert G. Davis (July 25, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 061585382X

ISBN-13: 978-0615853826

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (31 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #517,401 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #229 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Freemasonry](#) #75614 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences](#)

Customer Reviews

In introducing his book, Brother Davis states, "Freemasonry is the pursuit of that which is noble in man." When and how did this noble pursuit start and develop over the years? As opposed to the "romantic school" of thought, Brother Davis follows the "authentic school" in seeking to

find the genesis and evolution of Masonic ritual, especially American Masonic ritual. He accomplishes his task by carefully studying Masonic Landmarks, historical documents and manuscripts, and a variety of exposes released over the years, especially in the 18th Century. The following are just some of the items he discusses in the book. Ever wonder where the penalties in the ritual may have originated? Well, they likely did not originate within the Craft itself. As they were used and adopted by the operative lodges during the sixteenth century, they were likely created as an adaptation of the punishments given of traitors for at least two hundred years prior to that time. The first degree penalty may have been adapted from a Navy penalty in existence as early as 1375. Early on in speculative Masonry, only the first and second degrees were given, often at the same time. The Master Mason degree did not take shape until the early 1700s. Although it's not possible to say with certainty, the Hiram legend may have descended from an old Noah Mystery Play popular in the late Medieval period. The formation of the first Grand Lodge in 1717 and the later break that occurred in Masonry between the "Antients" and the "Moderns" makes for fascinating and important reading. Things become very clear as he moves to a study of Masonry in America. We read about such Masonic legends as Thomas Smith Webb and his disciples, a group of roving ritualists (i.e.

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