

NEW ADDITIONS (JULY, 2016)

Baigent, Michael and Leigh, Richard The Temple and the Lodge (2012)

In this book Baigent and Leigh that claim to trace a link between the suppressed Knights Templar and modern day Freemasonry. They claim that following the suppression of the Knights Templar by the King of France some of them initially sought refuge in Scotland.

The book then explains how the Templars helped the Scots in the fight for independence from the English, and how the Templar Order survived through Jacobite Freemasonry to Strict Observance and the Grand Orient of France.

It also claims that many of the people behind the American Revolution were Freemasons, as were some of the less successful British commanders such as Howe and Cornwallis, even claiming they intentionally lost some of the battles to prevent the destruction of America's economic base.

Baigent and Leigh also point out that the ideas of European thinkers such as Locke, Hume, Adam Smith, and the French philosophers are incorporated in the Constitution. They also suggest that most of these thinkers were Freemasons or men who moved in Masonic circles

I would classify this book as "Speculative Masonic History" rather than a pure Masonic text, but still a very interesting read for those interested in Masonic History.

Claudy, Carl; Introduction to Freemasonry, 1931

Every type of literature has within its unique genre those volumes which are considered to be classics. In North American Freemasonry one of those classics is Carl Claudy's "Introduction to Freemasonry". First printed in 1931 it has since that time gone through more than 30 printings. Contained between the boards of this book are answers to the elementary inquiries of the newly made brother. Broken down into the three degrees, Claudy's work should be required reading for all new members or as one reviewer stated " Every Freemason should read these books within a week of being raised a Master Mason and before speaking in lodge or offering any opinion on any aspect of the Craft."

This book (sometimes broken up into the three degrees as separate publications) covers all the basics of the three degrees without getting overly complicated and as such makes for an easy read.

Highly recommended

Jones, Bernard E; Freemasons' Guide and Compendium

First published in 1950, the 'Freemasons' Guide and Compendium' is filled with detailed information on a wide variety of subjects related to Freemasonry. Written by an experienced member of the craft Jones brings to this book evidence of a great deal of research having been undertaken to provide the rich fabric of information. Whether a newly made Master Mason or someone who has been around for a while, this book will

provide a wealth of information and as such is an excellent resource book. As is the case with other books written in the mid twentieth century his opinions of a historical nature are somewhat dated in light of current historical research. That caveat aside, this is an excellent addition to your bookshelf.

Recommended

Newton, Joseph Fort; The Builders, 1921

Another Masonic classic is Joseph Fort Newton's "The Builders" first published back in 1921. Newton was thorough in his examination of the craft although his treatment of the historical aspects of Freemasonry are now dated. Unlike other works of its type it is not a recitation of facts and dates, this book builds upon the narrative to expound a deep insight underlying the philosophies behind the craft. Still a very worthwhile read for the neophyte Mason.

Recommended

Wilmshurst, William Leslie, The Masonic Initiation (2007 Revised Edition) - Exploratory

In the opening paragraph of chapter I Wilmshurst wrote "No more needed and useful work is to be done in the Masonic order today than the education of its members in the true purpose of rites of initiation, that they may the better appreciate the reason, the importance, and the seriousness of the work the order was designed to achieve" Thus begins the sequel to Wilmshurst's other enduring classic, The Meaning of Masonry.

Within this new edition by Plumbstone (which has been fully revised and re-set in modern type) we find the author's most advanced expression as he explores the profound depths of Masonic ritual as a contemplative art, and offers his vision of the future of the Craft. Wilmshurst's insights into the initiatic experience enables the reader to develop a greater understanding of the first degree ritual. Prominent Masonic author Robert G. Davis writes in his Foreword that this edition provides "a new look at a timeless classic which has induced many generations of Masons to feel that, when they are in the sacred space of lodge, they are in the presence of a mystery that goes to the root of their own being."

For those interested in the deeper meaning of the craft and its ritual this is one the 'must read' books out there and one that you will find yourself going back to re-read time and time again.

Highly recommended.