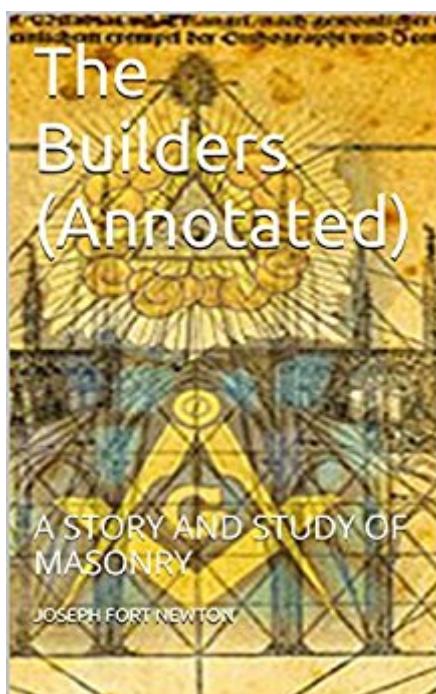


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The Builders (Annotated): A STORY AND STUDY OF MASONRY (Masonic History Book 1)



Synopsis

This is a general survey of Masonic origins, history and philosophy. It was at one time given to every new Mason in Iowa, probably a better choice than *Morals and Dogma*, which is almost three times as long and much more difficult reading. This is a scholarly but approachable treatment of Masonry and will be enlightening both to practicing Freemasons and a general audience. Newton is a rationalist and deflates claims of an ancient origin for Masonry *per se*; rather he illuminates the historical precedents of the group. He starts with ancient Egypt, not because he believes that the Egyptians had functioning Masonic lodges, but because that is where monumental architecture began. He covers the ancient mystery religions, and the true origin of Masonry in organizations of medieval stone-masons. After a period of decline, a London meeting held in 1717 at the Goose and Gridiron Alehouse united the remaining four Lodges of England, and started modern Freemasonry. The two-tier organization proliferated into three, and then multiple degrees, during the 18th and 19th centuries, eventually resulting in modern Freemasonry. Masonry, which had started as an underground association of building trade workers, evolved into a fraternal group which included both members of the English royal family and American revolutionaries. Despite his rational stance, Newton is rhapsodic about the progressive influence of the Masonic movement and philosophy, both for individuals seeking 'the lost word', and for society as a whole. Newton claims that the world has benefited greatly because of the Masonic ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. The Builders tells the Masonic side of this story.

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Customer Reviews

I finished reading this book between my E.A. and F.C. confirmations and want to read it again (as a M.M.), but it is on loan to one of my brothers. This is a book every mason ought to read. It is full of references to good literature and gives a very articulated and informative view of many aspects of masonry. While not as hard to read as Moral and Dogma, it does take a minute to absorb, but it is none the less very well written. I say all this pertaining to the 1916 or so 1st edition (from the 2nd printing) that I inherited from my Grandfather, which is hardbound approx. 292 pages. But let us hope that in the later editions the antiquity of masonry which is so eloquently expressed in the original has been preserved.

This is a great book for a new (or old) Master Mason to read. Joeseph Fort Newton designed this book for new Master Masons under the Grand Lodge of Iowa - but it is in no way specific to Iowa.

I was given a copy of this book when I first became a Freemason back in the early 1980's, I have read it and re-read it over the years. I always get something new out of it each time I read it. I often quote from it as Newton was a skilled writer on the subject of Masonry. I would recommend it to anyone be they an Entered Apprentice, Master Mason or someone thinking of becoming a Mason. The only secrets in Masonry are the business conducted in Lodge concerning the funds taking in and how the money is to be spent, other than that there are no secrets between Masons.

A detailed and comprehensive look at Freemasonry. I would recommend this book.

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