

WILLIAM O. WARE LODGE OF RESEARCH

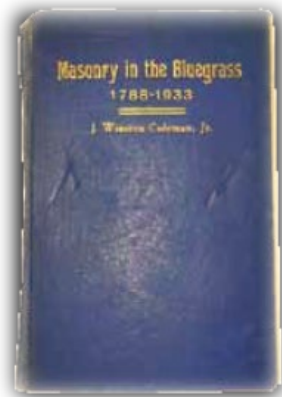
Book Review – March 2020

Masonry in the Bluegrass

John W. Bizzack,

Past Master, Lexington Lodge No. 1, William O. Ware Research Fellow

In 1933 *Masonry in the Bluegrass* became the third book published about the history of Freemasonry in Kentucky. The first was Rob Morris's *History of Freemasonry* in 1859. Although mostly about the history of one lodge, the second book was J.W. Norwood's, *A Concise History of Lexington Lodge No. 1, 1788-1913*. A fourth book, published nearly fifty years after Coleman's work, was Charles Snow Guthrie's, *The History of the Grand Lodge and the Men who Made It*, released in 1981.



While Morris's compilation required more than 500 pages and chronicled his research about the origins of Freemasonry and appendant bodies, the work was largely a summary of the first 59 years of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky Proceedings accompanied by Morris's editorializing. Regardless, Morris captured and centralized invaluable information for historians about how Freemasonry unfolded in Kentucky in its first half-century.

Norwood's book was written the year Lexington Lodge No. 1 celebrated its 125th anniversary. Enough was written in the book to consider it a history of Freemasonry in Kentucky, however, its focus was clearly on Lexington Lodge No.1, and its early leaders and Masters.

Guthrie's work was a significant contribution. His personable style of writing provided a comprehensive look at the 47 years since Coleman's, 1933 *Masonry in the Bluegrass*, and reflected the approach used in writing histories about Freemasonry in other jurisdictions in America at the time.

All three books constructively contribute to historiography of Freemasonry in Kentucky. Supplementing those formal works, we find *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky: 1800-1814*, published in 1884 (and possibly again in 1909) by the Masonic Home Journal, H.B. Grant's, *Doings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky: 1800-1900*, published in 1900, and *History of Freemasonry in Kentucky from 1900-1935*, compiled by the Masonic Home Journal in 1935. Aside from personal comments made by Grant in his compilation, these publications are mostly a reprinting of Proceedings from Annual Communications of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, including in some cases, extended biographies of Past Grand Masters and more detailed information about the Masonic Homes of Kentucky.

Coleman's 1933 book is often considered by historians more engaging than the other works listed in this review because he was a prolific local historian with several writings already to his credit and he knew how to tell a story without bogging it down with broad details that could be found elsewhere. Coleman, a member of Lexington Lodge No. 1, never promoted himself as a Masonic scholar and approached Freemasonry and its history in Kentucky until 1933 as a subject of interest to all, not just members of the fraternity.

Coleman documents bits and pieces of some important, often neglected, facts in the long history of Kentucky Masonry that help historians today see other aspects of what was going on inside the fraternity at the time in relationship to societal evolution. His observations and commentary reflect a typical representation of men of the times who were Masons and wrote about the fraternity, but he was able to keep his perspective and subtly connect changes in society and their effect on the ongoing development of Freemasonry.

Masonry in the Bluegrass offers a series of backstories and sidebars about events and happenings not found in previous or later works. For example, in early 1898, at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, a petition to the Kentucky Grand Lodge was received from a body of Masons stationed at Camp Bradley in Woodland Park in Lexington who were members of the 1st Kentucky Infantry U.S. Volunteers. At a joint meeting of Lexington Lodge No. 1, Devotion Lodge No. 160, and the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, the petition was presented. On the collective opinion that a new lodge was "both desirable and necessary," the Kentucky Army Lodge No. 1 U.D. was authorized by the Grand Lodge. There were 18 members. When the war was over, the lodge was mustered out of military service in Louisville where the last two meetings of this lodge were held in 1899, and thus passed out of existence. That was the last time two lodges in Kentucky were designated the same number.

Masonry in the Bluegrass has long been out of print, but sections have been used for the past 87 years in telling the story of how Freemasonry not only came to Kentucky but how it unfolded in its first 145 years. Originals can be found in used and antique bookstores across the nation, and the work can be found in many of the special collections departments of university libraries along with the libraries of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, William O. Ware Lodge of Research Library, and the Lyle Van Outer Masonic Library at Lexington Lodge No. 1. *Masonry in the Bluegrass* is also available in "print on demand" versions from various online book sellers.

ABOUT J. WINSTON COLEMAN

J. Winston Coleman, Jr. (1898-1983), was a native of Lexington, Ky. He received degrees in mechanical engineering from the University of Kentucky (Lexington, Ky.) and was president of the general contracting firm of Coleman & Davis, Inc. In the 1930s his interest turned toward Kentucky history. His first book, *MASONRY IN THE BLUEGRASS*, was published in 1933. In 1936 Coleman retired to Winburn, his Lexington farm, in order to devote time to historic research and writing. He wrote more than a dozen books and pamphlets, including *Stagecoach Days in The Bluegrass* (1935), *Slavery Times in Kentucky* (1940), *A Bibliography Of Kentucky History* (1940), *Lexington During The Civil War* (1968), and *Historic Kentucky* (1967).



His books, articles, and materials on the lives of Kentuckians, was one of the largest in private hands in Kentucky. His Kentucky library features more than 3,500 books and pamphlets, many of which are rare and valuable items.

TABLE OF CONTENTS OF MASONRY IN THE BLUEGRASS

PART I.

CHAPTER	PAGE
Preface	ix
1. ANTIQUITY OF MASONRY	13
2. EARLY MASONRY IN AMERICA	18
3. SETTLEMENT OF LEXINGTON	22
4. ESTABLISHMENT OF MASONRY IN LEXINGTON..	29
5. EARLY RETURNS OF LEXINGTON LODGE 25.	32
6. SOME EARLY MASONS OF LEXINGTON	37
7. GRAND LODGE OF KENTUCKY FORMED.....	44
8. MASONIC FUNERAL OF GEORGE WASHINGTON....	49
9. LEXINGTON 1803-1810	55
10. WAR OF 1812	63
11. FUNERAL OF JOSEPH HAMILTON DAVIESS.....	67
12. MASONS ESTABLISH FAYETTE HOSPITAL	71
13. CELEBRATIONS AND MILITARY COMPANIES.....	76
14. LEXINGTON'S THIRD MASONIC LODGE— WEBB FUNERAL	81
15. FIRST COUNTRY LODGE IN FAYETTE COUNTY....	87
16. BROTHER HENRY CLAY	91
17. THE GRAND MASONIC HALL	95
18. LAFAYETTE'S VISIT TO LEXINGTON	105
19. ANTI-MASONIC MOVEMENT	111
20. ANTE-BELLUM MASONRY	117
21. THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD	138
22. RECONSTRUCTION DAYS	150
23. MASONRY IN LEXINGTON 1890-1900	165
24. THE PRESENT GENERATION	174

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
COL. RICHARD C. ANDERSON	<i>Frontispiece</i>
MASONIC DIPLOMA OF 1799	<i>facing</i> 32
SOME PIONEER MASONS OF LEXINGTON.....	" 33
FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE	" 56
LEXINGTON'S FIRST CITY DIRECTORY	" 57
ODD FELLOWS HALL	" 78
FLAG PRESENTATION	" 79
LOTTERY ADVERTISEMENT	" 96
GRAND MASONIC HALL	" 97
CHARTER OF LEXINGTON LODGE NO. 25	" 106
INVITATION TO LAFAYETTE BALL	" 107
MASONIC HALL, WALNUT AND SHORT ST.....	" 128
PROMINENT MASONS OF THE ANTE-BELLUM PERIOD	" 129
LEXINGTON TEMPLES	" 184
INTERIOR OF CLUB ROOMS	" 185
CHARTER OF LEXINGTON LODGE NO. 1.....	" 200
GROUP OF LEXINGTON MASONS	" 201
CHARTER OF DEVOTION LODGE NO. 160	" 216
OLD METHODIST CHURCH—CHURCH ST.	" 217
FAYETTE COUNTY LODGE HALLS	" 224
CORNERSTONE OF GRAND MASONIC HALL	" 225