

# WILLIAM O. WARE LODGE OF RESEARCH

## BOOK REVIEW

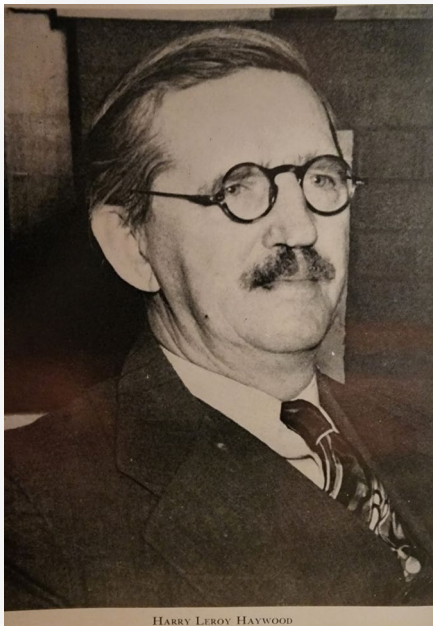
### WELL-SPRINGS OF AMERICAN FREEMASONRY

H. L. Haywood

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**H**enry LeRoy (H. L.) Haywood (1886-1956) was one of the most prolific writers about Freemasonry in the first half of the Twentieth Century. A native of Cincinnati, Ohio, Haywood became a Methodist minister while still a teenager. His ministry took him to Iowa, where he received the Degrees of Freemasonry in Webster City's Acacia Lodge No. 176 in 1915. His subsequent affiliations included the Quatuor Coronati Correspondence Circle, the Society of Blue Friars (Friar No. 20) and a Fellow of The Philalethes Society (Fellow No. 25). He served for a time as editor of The Builder magazine.



Brother Haywood was considered an expert in both Masonic and Mediaeval history. His most well-known works include *The Newly Made Mason*, *The Great Teaching of Masonry and Symbolical Masonry*. The subject of this review, *Well-Springs of American Freemasonry* ("Well-Springs"), was first published in 1953.

*Well-Springs* could be described as the family album of American Freemasonry. It is a snapshot of Haywood's impression of the grand lodges that existed in the forty-eight U. S. states (remember, the book was published prior to statehood for Alaska and Hawaii) plus the District of Columbia in the early 1950s.

*Well-Springs* begins with a Forward by Carl H. Claudy, M. W. Brother Claudy (PGM, District of Columbia) correctly points out that *Well-Springs* is not a traditional history. It is, in Claudy's words, a romance that links the development of Freemasonry to the development of the nation and to the development of the several states. Haywood's portrait, as Claudy observes, reveals the various idiosyncrasies that each grand jurisdiction brought to Freemasonry.

Haywood arranged the entries in *Well-Springs* in chronological order, beginning with Massachusetts, the oldest Grand Lodge (established in 1777). He points out that Boston was a great seaport, and

was a hub of the political, cultural and economic life of the American colonies. Freemasonry existed in Massachusetts in several different forms, with Lodges chartered by the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland existing simultaneously. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was organized in 1777, following the death of M. W. Brother Joseph Warren at Bunker Hill. Warren had been appointed a provincial Grand Master by the Grand Lodge of Scotland. After his death, his friends organized the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts as a tribute to his heroism at Bunker Hill.

The third American grand lodge was the Grand Lodge of Virginia, organized in 1778. The Grand Lodge of Virginia, of course, later chartered the first Masonic Lodge in Kentucky, Lexington Lodge No. 25, which became Lexington Lodge No. 1 upon the founding of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky in 1800. Haywood dutifully notes that George Washington, later to become the first president of the United States, was made a member in Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4. He goes on to note that James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States, was also a member of that Lodge, making Virginia's Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 the only American Lodge that can boast of two U. S. presidents.

Haywood warms to the task in his description of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, the fourteenth grand lodge established in the United States. He notes that it was the first grand lodge organized west of the Appalachian Mountains, and that it is older than several grand lodges currently existing on the eastern seaboard. He further notes the role that Kentucky played in the establishment of grand lodges in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Mississippi, and Alabama.

In writing about Kentucky Grand Master Rob Morris, Haywood casts something of a jaundiced eye towards the "poet laureate." Haywood writes:

"Of Morris as a poet one hesitates to speak, because his 'Meet Upon the Level' is known and loved among Masons here and abroad; but if one were a professional literary critic, and speaking under oath, he would have to admit that Morris was not a poet, but a versifier, or what, a century ago, would have been called a poetaster. In the large Masonic libraries his huge tome of verses is seldom asked for."

Continuing to write about Morris, it is clear that Haywood is just getting warmed up. Of Morris's most well-known creation, the Order of the Eastern Star, he says:

"Every Mason knows (ladies of the Star are not Masons) that a local chapter of O. E. S. can become a nuisance of the first class in a small town when it starts in to 'fix up' the lodge room to suit itself, and to try to run the lodge and to take a hand in the lodge's pitifully small town politics."

In an effort, perhaps, not to go too far out on a limb, Haywood concludes his comments about the Order of the Eastern Star by saying that:

"But over the country as a whole, on a grand average, the O. E. S. has been a great blessing."

One may reasonably conclude that Haywood's summation does not match his indictment.

Haywood wraps up his remarks about Kentucky with a couple of paragraphs extolling the generosity of Kentucky Masons in establishing the Widows' and Orphans' Home in Louisville.

The twentieth grand lodge established in the U. S. was the Grand Lodge of Indiana in 1818. As noted previously, all of the lodges that met to form the Grand Lodge of Indiana were originally chartered by the Grand Lodge of Kentucky.

Of Masonry in Indiana, Haywood notes that it is remarkable for its extreme orthodoxy and wonders, in the years since its inception, why it had never produced a "first-class Masonic author." Hoosier Freemason Chris Hodapp has suggested that this remark so rankled Indiana's PGM Dwight L. Smith, that he took it as a personal challenge. If Freemasonry has Haywood to thank for Smith prodigious writing, than so much the better.

In his remarks about the Grand Lodge of Indiana, Haywood pauses to take one more shot at Rob Morris (who was an occasional speaker in Indiana lodges), calling him a, "composer of a great deal of very indifferent Masonic 'poetry.'"

The Grand Lodge of Iowa, Haywood's adopted home state, was the thirtieth grand lodge established, having been founded in 1844. As may be expected, Haywood is generally laudatory in describing Freemasonry in Iowa. He especially relished writing about the establishment of Iowa's Masonic Library, which he described as the first building in the world to be used exclusively for such a purpose.

In Haywood's estimation, the Iowa Masonic Library is due to the vision and efforts of Theodore S. Parvin, who served as Grand Master, and then, for many years, as Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Iowa. Haywood says, "The whole history of the world's Masonic literature would have been immeasurably different from 1870 on had it not been for him and his library."

The Grand Lodge of Montana was the forty-first U. S. grand lodge established, and the first to be founded following the Civil War. Haywood describes Montana Freemasons as "possessing an abiding enthusiasm, a willingness to make sacrifices, and a genuine and manly love for each other." Haywood, in this instance, heaps uncharacteristic praise on Montana Freemasonry.

The forty-ninth, and final grand lodge that Haywood describes is the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma, established in 1892. Haywood draws attention to the number of Native Americans who became Freemasons in Oklahoma. He writes of Oklahoma Freemasonry:

"In this writer's check list of the forty-nine Grand Jurisdictions of the United States he has given Oklahoma a unique mark. In his judgment, and (as there should be no need to say) taking circumstances and conditions into consideration, it has been from the beginning all that Freemasonry can ask of any Grand Lodge and its jurisdiction."

Clearly, Haywood was impressed with the quality of Freemasonry that he found in Oklahoma.

It should be noted that *Well-Springs* includes what Haywood describes as a “Genealogy of Masonry in the United States,” a map that depicts the founding of each grand lodge, and the lodges that participated in such founding, along with the jurisdictions where those lodges were originally chartered.

The value of *Well-Springs of American Freemasonry* is less in its depictions of the histories of the forty-nine continental grand lodges (although such histories are not without merit), but, rather, that it is a social and cultural portrait of American Freemasonry as it existed in the mid-twentieth century. H. L. Haywood’s perspectives, while not necessarily unfailingly accurate, provide an important glimpse into how organized Freemasonry viewed itself during a time when membership was at its highest flood. Haywood spends little, if any, time discussing membership numbers. He seems to have taken it for granted that Freemasonry would continually appeal to men. His pen, here, is turned to the characteristics that made up the widely differing nature of American Freemasonry. Like a painting from a previous century, there is much in Haywood’s prose to observe and from which to learn.

Copies of *Well-Springs of American Freemasonry* may still be obtained through on-line booksellers.