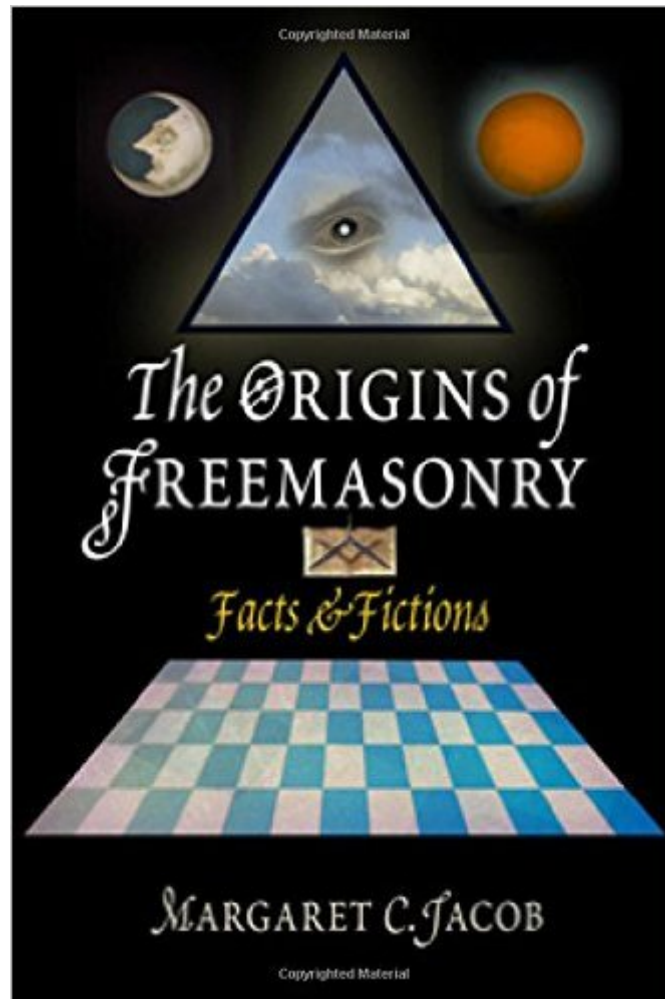


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# The Origins Of Freemasonry: Facts And Fictions



## Synopsis

Can the ancestry of freemasonry really be traced back to the Knights Templar? Is the image of the eye in a triangle on the back of the dollar bill one of its cryptic signs? Is there a conspiracy that stretches through centuries and generations to align this shadow organization and its secret rituals to world governments and religions? Myths persist and abound about the freemasons, Margaret C. Jacob notes. But what are their origins? How has an early modern organization of bricklayers and stonemasons aroused so much public interest? In *The Origins of Freemasonry*, Jacob throws back the veil from a secret society that turns out not to have been very secret at all. What factors contributed to the extraordinarily rapid spread of freemasonry over the course of the eighteenth century, and why were so many of the era's most influential figures drawn to it? Using material from the archives of leading masonic libraries in Europe, Jacob examines masonic almanacs and pocket diaries to get closer to what living as a freemason might have meant on a daily basis. She explores the persistent connections between masons and nascent democratic movements, as each lodge set up a polity where an individual's standing was meant to be based on merit, rather than on birth or wealth, and she demonstrates, beyond any doubt, how active a role women played in the masonic movement.

## Book Information

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: University of Pennsylvania Press; 1st Pbk. Ed edition (January 24, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0812219880

ISBN-13: 978-0812219883

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.4 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,213,520 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #541 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Freemasonry](#) #154743 in [Books > History](#) #180749 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences](#)

## Customer Reviews

Distinguished professor of history Margaret C. Jacob presents *The Origins Of Freemasonry: Facts & Fictions*, an intriguing and scholarly scrutiny of Freemasonry, from its roots in the gathering of impoverished English and Scottish guilds in the 1650s to its evolution into an organization

intertwined with fledgling democratic movements. Freemasonry membership gradually came to imply a keen interest in government, with lodges functioning as schools in oratory, social discipline, and other facets of community life; furthermore, women played a noticeably more active role in Freemasonry life than is popularly believed. *The Origins Of Freemasonry* strives to recreate as accurate a picture of the daily life of Freemasons as possible even as it seeks to debunk misperceptions and explore noble ideas connected to the movement, such as the concept (unfortunately not always honored in full spirit) that an individual's standing should be based on merit rather than birth or wealth. A fascinating and eye-opening examination of a lasting organization's impact on history.

Excellent work of an historian notwithstanding the fact that she is probably not initiated in the mysteries of Freemasonry; She points out positively the radical philosophical, social and political elements of the origins who are still alive and kicking to day, and so bitterly neglected by her colleague Jonathan Israel. in his "RADICAL ENLIGHTENMENT" notion she branded and that he borrowed from her.HSch..

Excellent book, well written by a non-Mason. The best part, for me, is Jacob's treatment of women in Masonry. At a time when equality between women and men is getting ever more important and significant, it is very helpful to know that there were, and are, women actively involved in Masonry. If for no other reason, the book is a good read for perspective.

Professor Jacobs delivers again with this volume. Despite its relatively short length, the value of the information far exceeds expectations. Great basic information.

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