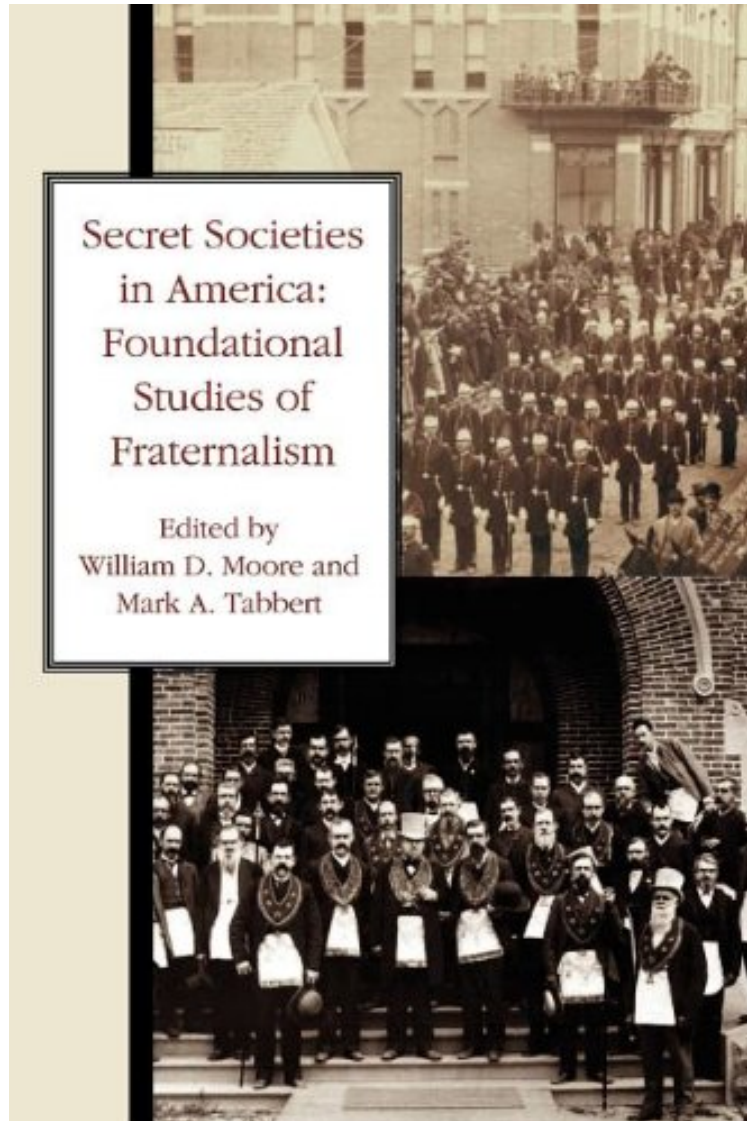


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Secret Societies in America: Foundational Studies of Fraternalism

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great compilation By ackp Early arguments for and against fraternalism to later formations of various groups. Especially liked index of various groups--while some are merely mentioned in passing, it does give one names that one may not be familiar with, even those who have studied fraternal

groups for a long time. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Must-Have Volume By Blind Willie McTell Anyone fascinated by fraternal organizations or "secret societies" knows that something happened 100 to 150 years ago. That something was the birth of an amazing profusion of new organizations, each fine-tuned to meet some need of its members: health, life, or burial insurance, a place to drink, a place to be with others like them, or moral uplift. And each of these brave new societies patterned itself after Freemasonry with passwords, handshakes, hierarchical memberships, and distinctive regalia. From this high watermark of fraternalism over a century ago we have with us today the Shriners, the Grotto, the Elks, the Moose, the Eagles, the Knights of Columbus, and more. The modern structure of the Family of Freemasonry evolved during this period: Blue Lodge, Eastern Star, Scottish Rite, York Rite, and Shrine. Bro. Mark Tabbert and Prof. William Moore are two leading students of this period and movement. They have gathered together nineteen original articles that describe the fraternal movement first hand, from the perspective of someone who lived in the period. These essays provide a fundamental understanding of how "secret societies" were viewed at the time. It's virtually impossible to find membership figures for many of these groups, but W. S. Harwood gives contemporary estimates in his 1897 article in the *North American Review*. And while fraternal benefit societies were the foundation of our modern insurance industry, they didn't always live up to their goals, as Walter H. Page points out in his 1911 article from *The World's Work*. On top of the reprints of original works, Prof. Moore has a wonderful (if too short) overview of the period and the movement. If you like fraternalism, if you want to understand the immediate roots of 21st-century Freemasonry, if you like exploring obscure byways of American history, then this is a must-have volume for your library. Buy it now! Book review by Ill. S. Brent Morris, 33, G.C., Baltimore, MD, and Washington, DC *The Scottish Rite Journal* May /June 2012, p. 284 of 5 people found the following review helpful. CONTENTS By Mark A. Tabbert Contents *Journalistic Studies* 1 - Harwood, W.S. "Secret Societies in America." 1897 2 - Hill, Walter, B. "The Great American Safety-valve." 1892 3 - Foster, J.M. "Secret Societies and the State" 1898 4 - Harger, Charles Moreau, "The Lodge," 1896 5 - Weir, Hugh C. "Romance of the Secret Society." 1911 6 - Merz, Charles. "Halt! Who comes There?." 1923 7 - Merz, Charles. "Sweet Land of Secrecy." 1927 8 - Lehman, Milton. "It takes three to make a lodge." 1948 *Historical Studies* 9 - Schlesinger, Sr., Arthur M. "Biography of a Nation of Joiners." 1944 10 - Davis, David Brion. "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature." 1960 *Sociological Studies* 11 - Simmel, Greg. "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies." 1906 12 - Gist, Noel P. "Culture Patterning in Secret Society Ceremonials." 1936 13 - Gist, Noel P., "Structure and Process in Secret Societies." 1938 *Insurance Studies* 14 - Meyer, B.H. "Fraternal Beneficiary Societies in America." 1901 15 - Stevens, Albert Clark. "Fraternal insurance." 1900 16 - Landis, Abb. "Life Insurance by Fraternal Orders." 1904 17 - Nichols, Walter S., "Fraternal Insurance: Its Character, Virtues and Defects" 1904 18 - Page, Walter H., "Insurance that Does Not Insure." 1911 19 - Knight, Charles K., "Fraternal Life Insurance." 1927

Fraternal organizations, often called "secret societies" because of their proprietary ritual initiations, have thrived in America since the 1730s. Only recently, however, have they become the subject of rigorous academic scrutiny. Bringing together foundational studies of American fraternalism by respected journalists, historians, and sociologists, this volume seeks to contribute to a greater understanding of this aspect of American life. Two respected authorities in the field have carefully selected and edited writings which shed light on how contemporaries understood fraternalism during its golden age of the 1800s, document how 20th century scholars understood these groups, and hopefully facilitate further research into this quintessentially characteristic American phenomenon.