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Freemasonry in Context: History, Ritual, Controversy

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Freemasonry has had a long, enduring, and yet at times largely invisible influence on American culture and society. The decreased visibility of Freemasonry has to do, directly, with there being very few scholarly resources on the subject.

In the history of the United States, reaction to Freemasonry led to America's first "third party," the Anti-Masonic Party. Much of America's social safety net, from the Civil War to the Second World War, was provided by the orphanages, retirement homes, and insurance programs of Freemasonry. Freemasonry has also influenced the development of other fellowships: Knights of Pythias, Elks, Moose, Woodmen of the World, and Knights of Columbus, to name a few. At its peak, in 1960, Freemasonry claimed 4.2 million members: one out of every twenty males in the United States.

In *Freemasonry in Context: History, Ritual, Controversy* editors Arturo de Hoyos and S. Brent Morris feature work by renowned Masonic scholars. Essays explore the rich and often controversial events that comprise the cultural and social history of Freemasonry. Other essays discuss the function and development of ritual rites and practices. The scholarship in this volume represents ten years of scholarly investigations by the Scottish Rite Research Society. *Freemasonry in Context* is the most authoritative compendium of Masonic scholarship available. Contained within this volume is the most erudite scholarly reflection on an enormous body of research conducted by academic historians and Masonic authors.

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