

A Place in the Lodge: Dr. Rob Morris, Freemasonry and the Order of the Eastern Star

Nancy Stearns Theiss



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If you have an interest in Freemasonry, you may have heard of Rob Morris or have seen his name on various documents, books, poems, and songs from the mid- 1800s but don't know much about him. A Place in the Lodge sets forth new facts about his early life and relationships and presents a slice of his life via previously unpublished family letters, sent while he was on the road.

It was a time of yellow fever, Civil War, and manual farmwork, and the detail in the letters and the old photographs here make the era almost tangible. Visit this not-so-distant past and see how Morris helped Masonry evolve from its origins to take part in the United States' women's movement and become one of the world's largest fraternal organizations. As he worked to standardize Freemasonry and establish the Order of the Eastern Star, his efforts were not without controversy.

About the Author

Nancy Stearns Theiss, PhD., is the executive director of the Oldham County Historical Society. She has published several books and writes a weekly history column for the Louisville Courier-Journal and compiles oral histories in the Living Treasures Program for the Oldham Era newspaper.

She and her husband live on the family farm close to La Grange, Kentucky, where Dr. Rob Morris's name is still a household word. Nancy often visited the Rob Morris historic home as a child, which piqued her curiosity about Morris's accomplishments in Freemasonry and the Order of the Eastern Star.

The Oldham County Historical Society operates a history center that includes The Peyton Samuel Family Museum, J. Chilton Barnett Archives and Library, and Rob Morris Educational Center. The educational center is in the former Presbyterian Church where Morris attended, lectured, and recited his poetry.

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