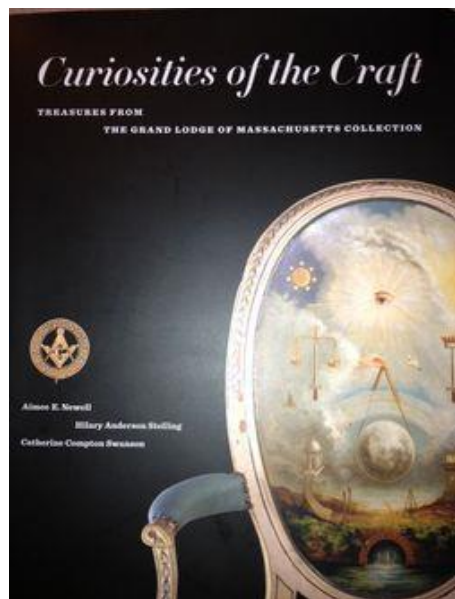


**Curiosities of the Craft: Treasures from the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts Collection**, by Aimee E. Newell, Hilary Anderson Stelling, and Catherine Compton Swanson. Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library; Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts, 2013. 287 p. ill. ISBN 9781889541006 (cl.), \$44.95.



This handsome catalog from the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts and the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library is a scholarly peek through the arcane doors of America's famous fraternal order, Freemasonry. While it does not reveal all, it does present an intriguing and diverse sample of its relics through excellent color photos and scholarly scheme. The three authors, (ironically, all female) document the diverse 156 artifacts representing a tiny portion of the items held in both institutions. Aimee E. Newell, Director of the Collections of the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, wrote many of the footnotes as well as the introduction that gives some history of the organization and its holdings. Her coauthors are her museum/library colleagues. They skillfully show the historical connection of the objects in relation to the context of what was going on in the world of its members.

The book is arranged in five topical sections: Traditions and Roots, Ritual and Ceremony, Gifts and Charity, Brotherhood and Community, and Memory and Commemoration. Seventeenth through nineteenth-century crafts and documents dominate the assortment featured. Some examples include furniture, parchment letters, *Scherenschnitte*, scrapbooks, and jewelry (mostly member pins). In addition, there are several well-preserved examples of engraving and lithographs on paper including works by William Hogarth and Thomas Palsler. Also featured is a nineteenth-century oil painting of Paul Revere by Jane Stuart, after her father Gilbert Stuart, which was commissioned to replace the original lost in a fire. Other objects examined include souvenirs of the fascinating and famous associated with American historical Freemasons such as James A. Garfield, William McKinley, and Paul Revere, who created a silver urn that came to house a lock of George Washington's hair. The catalog even includes an anti-Masonic object, "Illustrations of Masonry," exemplifying the political views of the time.

Carefully presented reference notes with a few introductory paragraphs significantly detail each object. A very helpful index follows at the end and contains especially useful subjects, such as "symbolism." For more expansive historical narratives, researchers might prefer either *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840* by Steven C. Bullock (The University of North Carolina Press, 1996) or Lynn Dumenil's *Freemasonry and American Culture 1880-1930* (Princeton University Press, 1984). However, both have scant black and white illustrations. *Curiosities* will be a welcome visually stimulating addition to the scholar and the inquisitive alike.

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