

Book Review www.bonisteelml.org By Bro. Robert Blackburn, P.M.



Michael
G. Maness,
Character
Counts: Freemasonry
is a National Treasure and a
Source of our Founding Fathers'
Constitutional Intent (Arthur House 2010,
\$23.50 USD).

Winter
2012

CHARACTER COUNTS:

Freemasonry is a National Treasure and a Source of our Founding Fathers' Constitutional Intent

It didn't take long after Freemasonry began to spread from the British Isles for it to draw unfair and unwarranted attention. Cosmopolitan in outlook, democratic in operation, and non-dogmatic in matters of personal religion, it was often perceived as a threat by the period's secular and religious leaders alike. To be fair, there was some justification for this. Freemasonry did promote notions of liberty, fraternalism, and religious tolerance that ran contrary to authoritarian regimes and establishment churches. Masonic lodges and individual Freemasons were also known to have played roles in the American Revolution, the failed 1798 Irish Rebellion, and the French Revolution. But a devil worshipping cabal bent on world domination? Such ridiculous, though readily accepted libels, have grown into a cottage industry. Thankfully, various Grand Lodges and individual Masons are speaking out and setting the record straight.

Character Counts is Freemason Michael G. Maness' line in the sand.

It was originally published in 2006 but has now come up in a revised second edition. Maness notes:

Today, two entire literature venues come against Freemasonry: (1) the anti-Masonic critics for over 200 years and (2) the David Barton-like Christian establishment revisionisms. The first concoct one Frankenstein after another, and the second rides the same train of obscuring Freemasonry in the Founding Fathers of the USA. The greatest mystery is why the character

of a legion of legendary men did not count to the critics. We document how small or false the evidence is that the critics use to support their allegations and how little they utilized in their constructions from the vast secular, religious and Masonry archives. Then we show how Masonry contributed to the founding of the USA like no single church or institution precisely upon character counting among the Founding Fathers.

Maness shows up to this fight 'loaded for bear.' It is clear he takes the critics' barbs personally - both as a Freemason and as a Southern Baptist, a Christian sect which actively promotes such misrepresentations. But characterizing the result of his effort is difficult. Part rebuttal, part personal musings on Masonry, its philosophy, historical characters, and accomplishments, *Character Counts* is, frankly, an overwhelming book. Maness covers a lot material, perhaps too much, which means the reader isn't always sufficiently

briefed to follow his arguments and insights. His prose style and the book's format can also be cumbersome. Nevertheless, Maness has done yeoman's work documenting and defusing some of Masonry's most vocal critics.

Michael G. Maness, *Character Counts: Freemasonry is a National Treasure and a Source of our Founding Fathers' Constitutional Intent* (Arthur House 2010, \$23.50 USD).

