

William Moseley Brown - The Man and His Masonry

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Virginia Research Lodge No. 1777

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William Moseley Brown was born in Lynchburg, Virginia on February 27, 1894. He received his education in public and private schools in Danville and graduated from Danville High School in 1911. He entered Washington and Lee University that fall and received his A. B. Degree in 1914 and his M. A. Degree in 1915. He served as an instructor in German and Biology for two years before entering Centre College of Kentucky for a short time before entering military service during World War I. He returned home to Danville during December 1918 as an assistant principal and later as principal of the Danville High School. He was married to Gloria Graham and they had two sons; David Graham Brown who has joined our ranks, and William Graham Brown. In 1920 he returned to Washington and Lee University as an Associate Professor of Education and Psychology, organizing this department and became a full Professor in 1923. During this time he attended Teachers College, New York City, from which he received an M. A. Degree in 1922. The next year he received an M. A. and Ph. D. Degrees from Columbia University Graduate School. In 1929 he resigned from Washington and Lee and ran unsuccessfully for Governor. Some time after that he founded and organized Atlantic University in Virginia Beach but this endeavor only lasted three years and the closing was attributed to the depression. He then left education and pursued a business career and became Personnel Director of the Vick Company in 1937.

He achieved the rank of Lt. Colonel after being recalled to active duty in the Army in 1942. He received decorations from the United States, France, Luxembourg, and Belgium. He served for ten years as Professor of Social Sciences at Elon College and held

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membership in many scholastic and professional societies both here and abroad. Of major interest to ourselves, his Masonic record is one that is seldom accomplished, especially in this day and time. He petitioned Mountain City Lodge No. 67, A.F. & A.M., Lexington, Virginia, on October 3, 1921, and received his Entered Apprentice Degree on November 21st. He was examined on December 5th and passed to the Fellow Craft Degree on December 19th. He was examined on the Fellow Craft Degree and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on January 2, 1922. He was elected Junior Warden of this Lodge December 17, 1923, Senior Warden in December 14, 1924, and Worshipful Master on December 21, 1925. He served as District Deputy Grand Master of the 20th Masonic District for two terms, 1926 and 1927. That was followed by an appointment to the Jurisprudence Committee of the Grand Lodge of Virginia on which Committee he served until he was elected Grand Junior Deacon in 1929, becoming Grand Master by regular succession in 1934.

He traveled approximately 57,000 miles during his year as Grand Master, traveling throughout the United States and Europe as well attending the Grand Lodge of England on September 7th. It was during this year that he was elected an honorary member of Mountain City Lodge No. 67. He wrote some fifteen books on Masonry and allied subjects including: *Freemasonry in Virginia*; *Templary in the Old Dominion*; *The Making of a Mason*; *George Washington, Freemason (Bicentennial volume of the Grand Lodge of Virginia)*; and others. He served for a time as Editor of The Masonic Herald.

Brother Brown was the second Worshipful Master of Virginia Research Lodge No. 1777 and a member of Lodge of Antiquity No. 2, London (one of four Lodges forming the Grand Lodge of England in 1717). He held honorary membership in eight Virginia Lodges, two Lodge in other states and two out of the country, in addition to his involvement in various Research Lodges. He received medals and awards from the Grand Lodges of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, North Carolina, Nova Scotia, and Germany.

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Thus far I have not attempted to keep his Masonic titles in order nor will I attempt to throughout the rest of this paper. It has long been my understanding that once we have become a member of the Craft and become a Brother that we cannot receive a higher Degree as we travel in Masonry; however, there are many titles to which some become entitled. Companion Brown was an active member of Rockbridge Royal Arch Chapter No. 44, Lexington, serving as High Priest and later as Grand High Priest of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Virginia during the years 1936 and 1937. He was an honorary member of two other Virginia Chapters as well as a member of three other Grand Royal Arch Chapters. He was a member of the Grand Council of Anointed High Priests, Virginia, and the Grand Council of Thrice Illustrious Masters, Virginia, as well as an honorary member of the Grand Council of Anointed High Priests, District of Columbia, Texas, and North Dakota. He was an Honorary Grand High Priest of Ireland.

His memberships in Councils included Royal and Select Master, Solomon of the Silver Trowel Council No. 24, Monroe, North Carolina, and an honorary member of Field Council No. 12 in Red Bank, New Jersey. He held the Super Excellent Master's Degree in Tennessee and Missouri. Sir Knight Brown was an active member of Moomaw Commandery No. 27, Knights Templar, Lexington, as well as an honorary member of three other Virginia Commanderies. He served as Commander of Moomaw Commandery and as Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1935 and 1936.

Brother Brown joined the Scottish Rite in Richmond in 1922, receiving the Investiture of Knight Commander of the Court of Honor in 1935 and then the 33^o in 1939 from the Southern Supreme Council. Additionally, he was made a *Membre d'Honneur* of the Supreme Council of Belgium as well as an Honorary Member of the Scottish Rite Council of Virginia.

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He was a past President of the Allied Masonic Degrees of the U. S. A.; a member of the Knights of the York Cross of Honor, serving as Grand Master General in 1939; Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests, serving as the second Grand Preceptor in 1934; Grand College of Rites of the U. S. A., serving as Grand Chancellor in 1936; National Sojourners; National League of Masonic Clubs; and the Philalethes Society. He was a member of the Society of Blue Friars and Nine Muses Council.

He was a Charter Member and First Great Prior, C.B.C.S. (Knightsly Bienfaisant De La Cite Sainte), he received the degrees in Switzerland and was given a charter for the United States in 1934. He was the first Puissant Sovereign of St. Polycarp Conclave No. 69, Red Cross of Constantine, June 2, 1934; Knight Grand Cross, May 21, 1949; and was Grand Sovereign, Red Cross of Constantine in 1949. He was also a member of The Royal Order of Scotland; Abaca Grotto, MOWER; ACCA Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S.; Knight Masons of Ireland; Sigma Nu Sigma (Masonic College Fraternity); as well as the Virginia College and the High Council, S.R.I.C.F. (Rosicrucian Society). On May 7, 1934 the Supreme Magus authorized Right Worthy Fraters Tatsch, Voorhis and Shute to conduct the consecration of Virginia College with Dr. William Moseley Brown as Chief Adept.

Brother William Moseley Brown passed to the Grand Lodge on High January 8, 1966, and is buried next to his parents in Louisville, Georgia.

Bibliography

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