

SOME GEOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF FREEMASONRY
IN ILLINOIS, 1970

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by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation is to determine, describe, and analyze the spatial distribution of Freemasons in Illinois for the year 1970. Using the county as an areal unit and data for 1970, choroplethic maps were drawn of the distribution of Masons and of Masonic lodges. In analyzing the distribution of Masons, the primary objective was to attempt to discover those spatial variables which significantly covary with the presence of Masons and explain a major proportion of the variation in their distribution. Eighteen hypotheses were formulated, one for each variable, in the process of exploring the strength and kind of possible covariation between the variables and Masons.

Masons, while found in every county of Illinois, exhibit an uneven distributional pattern throughout the state. In terms of absolute numbers of members, urban (i.e., the most populous) counties, with few exceptions, are the principal areas of Masonry. If the proportion of adult males who are Masons is used as a criterion, rural counties, with few exceptions, are the dominant areas of Masonry.

The number of Freemasons, as a percentage of the adult male population for 1970, and eighteen selected socioeconomic variables have been analyzed, using simple correlation as well as multiple correlation and regression analysis. Simple correlation analysis led to the acceptance of ten hypotheses and rejection of eight. Multiple correlation and regression analysis revealed that the following five

variables developed statistically significant relationships with Masons and explained 59 percent of the total variation in their distribution: 1) percent families with an annual income \$12,000 to \$25,000; 2) percent minority population; 3) median education of males, age 25 or over; 4) percent males, age 45-59; and 5) percentage of people who are native born of foreign or mixed parentage.

The value of this study is to introduce a new topic of research (i.e., fraternal groups) to geography and to bring a new approach, as well as new knowledge, to Masonic investigation.