Robert Moris was born in Boston, Mass., August 31, 1818 and was a direct descendant of Robert Morris, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He was well educated, being trained in law, but taught school for seven years. He then went South and became President of Mt. Sylvan Academy at Oxford, Miss.

Here he was married in 1841 and the union was blessed with seven children. In 1851, he moved to La Grange, Ky., and here he lived until his death on July 31, 1888, 70 years of age.

He was made a Mason in Oxford Lodge No. 33, Oxford, Miss., March 1846, later joining Fortitude Lodge No. 47 at La Grange, Ky. He was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky in 1858-1859.

After receiving the Masonic Degrees he became so imbued with the beauties of its symbolic teachings and possibilities for the welfare of mankind that he practically devoted the remainder of his life to its study and endeavoring to instill it into the lives of others. He journeyed all over this country, visiting thousands of Lodges in this effort. In 1868, the Masons raised $10,000 and sent him to the Holy Land in Masonic Research work and his visit confirmed many Masonic traditions as to Masonry, and enabled him to contribute many valuable writings and evidences as to its age. His book, Free-Masonry in the Holy Land is wonderful reading for Masonic students. In 1878, he made a second trip. On his first trip he organized Royal Solomon's Lodge No. 1, in Jerusalem and was made the first Master and the Lodge is still an honor to the Craft. He received more degrees and honors in Masonry than any man of his time and was considered the greatest Masonic poet and prose writer that ever lived. For years he edited and published Masonic periodicals and in all these, to quote the words of Lyttleton in his eulogy of Cowper, there is, "Not one immoral, one corrupt thought, One line which dying he would wish to blot."

His poems are like selections from many a bed or rarest flowers whose fragrance of expression and perfection of form make a beauty never fading and excite an admiration never dull or weary. Indeed, wherever a symbol stands forth upon the tessellated pavement, wherever an emblem finds a place on the Trestle Board, wherever a working tool comes to the Master's hand, we can, in the lines of Robert Morris, read new meanings, look on purposes before unknown and comprehend a broader, higher, and deeper significance in the wondrous scheme of Masonic instruction. During all his Masonic life he was a seeker after further light and all branches of Masonry felt the touch of his Master hand.

He became famous as a great lecturer and writer and his contribution to and in connection with the Masonic, the religious, the sectarian and the scientific press, which extended over a half of a century and his unparalleled industry as a lecturer upon many themes, all unite in surrounding his name with a halo of public respect. Throughout the world the name of the Poet Laureate of Masonry is known and loved next to the Order itself his chief fame came to him through his poems and he was selected as Poet Laureate of Masonry by the expressed wish of 500,000 Masons throughout the world. The coronation took place in New York City, Dec. 12, 1884, before an assembly of thousands of Masons, distinguished public men and beautiful women, it was the most striking event ever witnessed in the world of Masonic life. An old man, trembling with the aspen touch of years, his brow furrowed by the indenting fingers of time his hair scant and whitened from the bleaching of many front sard nothing of youth left to him but his heart, which beat as fast as in the virile days of his youth, stood up and had placed his head the insignia of well won fame, the laurel wreath of Masonic endorsement that made him Poet Laureate of the Universal Craft of Masonry.
He took the wreath, as he so sadly declared, as evidence that his work was done, his designs upon the Trestle Board of life complete, his daily pilgrimage to the Middle Chamber ended for he was too old to enter the promised land of further effort.

His poems are many of them of rarest delicacy and beauty. He composed most of them on horseback, on foot, in coach an car, in wayside inns and on the seas and it seemed that everywhere the genius of song inspired him. Very few Masonic writers have written poetry. The Order has among its votaries, Walter Scott. Chas. Mackey, Wm. Cowper, Robert Burns, Thos. Moore and many others of poetic fame, men whose effusions will survive while sweet sentiments, wedded to melodious diction have a value, but the united efforts of all these poets applied to Masonic themes, scarcely fill a dozen pages.

Morris once said that he hoped that someday a great poet would rise who would be to Masonry what Scott was to chivalry, Moore to patriotism and Burns to rustic love. Most of his early plates of poems were lost in the great Chicago fire in 1871, but in 1875, he made a collection of some 400 of them for publication and in 1884 he published his last book. It would seem that no man could perform the amount of labor accomplished by Robert Morris, unless he preserved all his faculties intact and attained a ripe old age. Yet that work was done unassisted by Morris, and the spring of inspiration which promoted it lay in the one source ambition.