

SALUTE

Wor. Master Bro. Wardens and Brethren,

~~in reference~~
I have divided my Paper "George Washington, the Man and the Freemason" into 6 main Sections, first, I deal briefly with the advent of 'Organised Freemasonry' in the 13 Colonies of North America at the commencement of the 18th. century, then refer to the birth, childhood and early manhood of Washington, proceed to an account of his Initiation, after which, I make reference to some of his masonic activities, the attacks on his membership of the Craft, his retirement from public life, and, finally, on his death, burial and some of the effects of his membership on Freemasonry in the U.S.A.. I regret that it has proved impossible to maintain a strict chronological sequence and ask you to bear with me where it has proved necessary to move forward and backward in time in the interest of the narrative.

I take this opportunity of acknowledging those sources of information from which I have borrowed freely, viz., Hayden's "Washington and his Masonic Compeers", "The Facts about Geo. Washington as a Freemason" by Tatsch, and, The Christian Science Monitor of Thurs. Oct. 16, 1952. I also tender apologies Wor. Master and Brethren if the Paper appears somewhat lengthy, but the subject is one that cannot be adequately dealt with in a more expeditious manner.

I stress the word 'Organised' because although American historians and biographers prior to the 3rd. decade of the 18th. Century are silent concerning the Fraternity, it is almost certain that, as in other countries, Masonic Lodges were being held without the sanction of a written Warrant, but, by the inherent right of Freemasons as sanctioned by immemorial usage. These Lodges kept little if any record of their proceedings, and, such scanty records as existed at the time were, as likely as not, destroyed in the firing and sacking of the several towns and civic buildings during the War of Independence.

If however we study records in the possession of our ^{OWN} Gd. Lodge we find that a Deputation or Patent was granted by the then Duke of Norfolk, Gd. Master of the Grand Lodge of England and dated June 5th. 1730, to one Daniel Coxe constituting him Prov. Gd. Master of the Provinces of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. From these records we learn that the said Daniel Coxe was present at the Meeting of Gd. Lodge in London on the 29th. of the following ~~XXXX~~ January where his health was proposed as Prov. Gd. Master of North America. Little is known of his masonic history beyond the fact that his name appears

VERY early

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very early in the annals of American Masonry, ^{FOR} ~~HE~~ he does not seem to have exerted himself to any extent as a Prov.Gd.Master, Of his personal history we knew that he was the son of Dr.D.Coxe, ^{physician to} ~~and agent~~ Queen Catherine and Queen Anne, that as the representative/ of his father he administered extensive tracts of land in New Jersey and on the Gulf of Mexico, was a member of the House of Assembly and, for a time Deputy Govener of Western New Jersey, he was also very active in the attempt to establish an English Colonial Union in North America as a protection against the inroads of the French, he died at Burlington, New Jersey on April 24th. I739 in his 65th. year.

Toward the end of April I733, Lord Montacute, Gd. Master of the Grand Lodge of England appointed Henry Price Prov.Gd. Master "of New England and the domimions and Territories there-unto belonging", this appointment it is stated differed from that of Coxe in-as-much as the tenure of office was not limited to a specified number of years neither was it revokable except at the pleasure of the Authorities in London, whereas Coxe was appointed for two years only after which, I quote!, "the Brethren resident in all or any of the said Provinces were empowered to elect a Prov.Gd. Master every other year on St. John's Day."

Henry Price was born in London about I697, sailed for America in I723 and settled in Boston Mass. as a merchant tailor. He appears to have been 'made a Maseñ' in one of the 4 'Time Immemorial' Lodges. He returned to England in I729 and joined Lodge No.75 which met at the Rainbow Coffee House, London. In I733 he returned to Boston, Mass. where he convened his first Prov.Gd. Lodge ^{APPOINTING} ~~and appointed~~ Andrew Belcher his Deputy, Thomas Kennelly and John Quann Prov.Gd. Wardens. Andrew Belcher the Deputy was the son of Johnathan Belcher then Governor of Mass^{etts.}, himself a Freemason who for many years was regarded as one of the two earliest, if not the earliest known Freemason in America, he having been 'made whilst resident ^{SOMEWHERE} in Europe in I704.

At the ^{MEETING} meeting of his first Prov.Gd. Lodge Brother Price was petitioned by I8 local Brethren to constitute them 'a regular Lodge', they had been meeting for some considerable time without a Warrant or Dispensation but, "under immemorial custom", and, the opportunity of assembling according to the procedure laid down by the Gd. Lodge in London and of working under the jurisdiction of a Prov.Gd. Master and Representative Brethren was sufficiently enticing to cause them to make this request, their petition was granted, and, on the same evening met as the "First Lodge, Besten", the name by which this Lodge was

known until

known until 1783 when it was changed to that existing today, "The St. John's Lodge". This is of ^{FURTHER} masonic interest because we learn that even then the Lodge was not issued with a Warrant, the fact of it being Constituted and its Officers installed by the Prev. Gd. Master in person being considered sufficient legal authority for its existence. Bro. Price was succeeded as Prev. Gd. Master in 1737 by Robert Tomlinson and then in 1744 by Thomas Oxnard. Bro. Price was ~~again~~ commissioned Prev. Gd. Master on two subsequent occasions in 1754 and again in 1768 which is, I suppose, some justification for our American Brethren regarding him as the father of Freemasonry in the U.S.A..

It is just prior to the commencement of the 1st. Prev. Gd. Mastership of Bro. Price that our study of Geo. Washington must begin, for, in the Washington family Bible (which is still preserved) is an entry, supposedly by his Mother, which reads in part as follows:- "George Washington, son to Augustine and Mary his Wife, was born ye IIth. day of February, 1731/32, about 10 in the morning and was baptized the 3rd. of April following, etc. etc.". The birth-date mentioned accords with the old style calendar then in use, and corresponds to the 22nd. of Feb., 1732 of our current reckoning. This seemingly is considered a matter of ~~some~~ ^{some} importance to ~~many~~, especially when the masonic history of the then infant Washington is the topic of discussion, as we shall see.

The ancestors of Geo. Washington emigrated to America from the north of England during the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. His great-grand father, John, whom it is said, inherited the blood of English nobility, both by paternal and maternal descent, went to America in 1657 settling in Westmoreland County, Virginia. From John, first in line of descent was Lawrence; second Augustine and third George, who was the 3rd. child of Augustine and the first (by a second marriage) to Mary, daughter of Col. Ball of Virginia. Augustine moved to Fredericksburg while Geo. was still a child and died there when his son was II years of age. Little is known of him or of his family life, but it is on record that "he had instilled in his son, a kind, noble and generous disposition. The episode of the cherry-tree and the hatchet, a story so often told and so characteristic of the man in after-life, shews that even as a boy one of the noblest masonic virtues, the love of truth, had been well inculcated in this youthful mind. To his Mother is accorded, and rightly so, the credit of so directing the mental and religious character of her son as to give an exalted tone to his every action in after-life. Left, at her husband's death, with

the responsibility of educating five children and of maintaining the family estate of some 5000 acres, she so acquitted herself as to have the proud satisfaction of seeing them all enter adult life with good prospects, and, of her first-born becoming the most beloved and exalted of American citizens. Truly we can ascribe to Geo. Washington the title of "the Widows' Son." As might be expected, the schools of the Colonies, even for wealthy parents, did not afford great opportunity of education, and Washington's scholastic achievements were contained within the three R's, although he did, ^{AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL} ~~at a latter date~~, study geography, history and surveying, in the last of which subjects he gained such proficiency as to be appointed Government Surveyor to Culpeper ^(Culpeper) County at the age of 18. Early in his boy-hood days he showed a marked military flair and is stated to have exerted a commanding influence over his youthful associates in their amusements and escapades, a trait which was to fit him for the perils and adventures that were ahead of him, and which were to need strength of body, perseverance and confidence in his own ability to ensure success. After his father's death the boy lived for a time with his half-brother Lawrence, an intimate friend of the influential family of Fairfax, and, through them, obtained an appointment as a midshipman in the British Navy, his mother however forbade this step and, because of her wish, he surrendered the Commission and returned to his studies of mathematics and surveying. Because of this obedience to her will she gave him ^{THE FAMOUS} a penknife (still to be seen) admonishing him to "Always obey your superiors", an injunction which, when, because of political strife his military fortunes were at their lowest ebb, and, the plight of the Republican Army desperate he had decided to resign his command as C. in C., a reminder by his life-long friend General Knex of his mother's words, caused him to tear up his letter of resignation and to continue, in spite of ^{THE} ever increasing bitterness the task assigned him.

Thomas, sixth Lord Fairfax, born in England in 1690 emigrated to Virginia in 1743, inheriting from his Mother 5,500,000 acres of land extending from Chesapeake Bay to the Shenandoah Valley, he was ~~one of~~ ^a the founders of the City of Alexandria, Va. and latter retiring to his estate in Frederick County, whither we learn, the boy Washington went, early in March 1748 with Geo. William Fairfax cousin to the baron, "to survey and sub-divide the lands of his lordship", he was then only 16 years of age but there was to spring up a friendship between the noble lord and the youthful surveyor that was to last unbroken until the death

of Fairfax in 1781. First to discover the elements of greatness in the young pioneer ^{FAIRFAX} ~~he~~ lest no opportunity of recommending him for high positions of trust and responsibility, and to this man more than to any other must be given the credit of fostering and developing the genius of the youth who was to be appointed Adjutant-General of the Virginian Militia with the rank of Major at the age of 19, and who, even at this early age, had so impressed his contemporaries that they have described him as being, "grave silent and thoughtful, diligent and methodical in business, dignified in appearance, strictly honourable in all his actions, and, a stranger to dissipation and riot".

Such then was the early history and character of George Washington when, in a candle-lighted room in a three-storied building in Fredericksburg, Va., he offered himself a candidate for the mysteries and privileges of Freemasonry on the 4th. of Nov., A.L. 5752.

The Old Lodge of Fredericksburg (now Fredericksburg Ldg. No. 4) had been founded some two months earlier, namely on Sept. 1st. 1752, and consisted of some 10 or 12 Brethren under their Master Daniel Campbell and his Wardens John Neilsen and Dr. Robert Walkersen. It appears to have worked without a Warrant, but, there is reason to believe, that it met under dispensation granted in Boston, Mass. by Thomas Oxnard the 3rd. Prev. Gd. Master appointed by Lord Montacute, Gd. Master of the "Moderns" in London. Old records and etchings show that the Lodge Room was furnished and erected in a manner characteristic of the period, straight-backed wooden chairs are seen at the several Officers' stations, table-type desks for the Treasurer and Secretary stand ^{RESPECTIVELY} just west of East on the North and South sides of the room. In the East stands an oriental chair elevated above the floor and beneath a canopy for the Master above whose head hangs the "Sacred Symbol". Long wooden benches being provided in the South, North and West for the Brethren, the floor is of checkered design and the ceiling star-bedecked. In the center of the room surrounded by the "three lesser lights" stands an altar bearing the V.S.L.. The early records of this old Lodge are unfortunately decidedly meager, perhaps if our late Brother Campbell could have foreseen that he was to initiate one, who at a latter date, was to serve as Commander-in-Chief of a revolutionary army, play a major part in shaping a nation and become its first President he would have seen to it that the records of his Lodge

amply covered

amply covered this auspicious occasion, they do however record that one Charles Lewis, the brother-in-law of Washington's sister Betty, paid his entrance fee of £1--Is.--6d. on Nov. 3rd. 1752 and was [1 QUOTE] 'affiliated with the Lodge' the following day, that Geo. Washington paid £2--3s.--0d. his fee for initiation at the same time and was 'brought to light' as an entered apprentice on Nov. 4th.. 'George Washington pass'd Fellow Craft' is part of the record for March, 3rd. 1753 and 'The Transactions of the Evening' for August 4th. of that year record 'George Washington rais'd Master Mason. How often Washington was present at latter meetings of his mother Lodge is not known, as the records do not always give the names of brethren attending, he is however **RECORDED** as being present on Sept. 1st. 1753 and again on Jan. 4th. 1755. He continued a member of the Lodge throughout the remainder of his life but never occupied its Chair.

If, because of the amended calendar Washington's birth year was 1732 he was not fully 21 at the time of his initiation, but was actually 20 years 8 months and 13 days old a fact that has caused a deal of comment and the use of much printer's ink, ^{BECAUSE OF} a suggestion that a masonic principle was violated, ^{OF COURSE HAS TO} THIS be judged in the light of contemporary standards, for, at this period of time, the Gd. Ldg. of Scotland permitted initiation at age 18, the Gd. Ldgs. of England and of Ireland stipulating age 25. In the Fredericksburg Lodge no regulation is to be found until 1769 when it definitely decided that 21 was to be the required age for admission. Perhaps at the time of his initiation the Lodge was conforming to the Scottish requirement, perhaps his mature mind and bearing gave the impression that he was of "mature age", again, perhaps they were not particularly interested in the fact that the new reckoning adopted by the British Parliament in 1751 which changed the beginning of the year from March 25th. to Jan. 1st. was to have something to do with the seeming irregularity, for, this change, would have altered his birth-date as recorded in the family Bible from Feb. 11th 1731 to Feb. 22nd. 1732, who can tell?, surely in the absence of a specific regulation, the practice prevailing at Fredericksburg, even though it was in conflict with those observed elsewhere, must be regarded as authoritative. Suffice it to say that at his death in Dec. 1799 Washington's age was given as 68, making 1731 as the accepted year of his birth.

As I have already remarked Washington held active membership of his Mother Lodge until his death without becoming its Master, and, when in May 1777

in May 1777 steps were taken to form a Gd. Lodge in Virginia with Geo. Washington "as the proper person to fill the office of Grand Master" he declined on the ground "that he had never been Master or Warden of a chartered Lodge and did not think it legally proper to accept; also, that the demands of his military profession would take all his time". He did however consent at a latter date to serve as the first Master of a Lodge at Alexandria which, after owing allegiance for a time to the Gd.Ldg. of Pennsylvania, decided to apply to the Gd.Ldg. of Virginia for a new Charter having obtained Washington's consent to act as its first Master. The Gd.Ldg. of Virginia granted this request in 1788 constituting "Brether Geo. Washington Esq., late General and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the United States of America etc. etc. to be the first Master.

This was the Alexandria Lodge No.22 which, after the death of Washington, successfully petitioned its Gd.Lodge for permission to alter the designation of the Lodge to the Alexandria-Washington Lodge, No.22, the title by which it is known today.

If we now turn for a moment from the record of his masonic life to the annals of his public history we find that, at this time, he was ^{ALSO} directing the tide of events that were to affect the wel-fare of the infant Republic, and, when the Constitution of 1787 was submitted to the people he is stated to have been extremely anxious for its fate believing as he said "if it not adopted now the next will be written in blood", when however this corner-stone of the Federal Union had been accepted and he had been chosen to preside over the rising temple of a republican government, he again exchanged the quite domesticity of his home at Mount Vernon, to become the Chief Magistrate of the Union.

Looking back over the vista of 170 odd years and, having in mind the honoured place he holds in every true American mind, we could be forgiven if we were to consider Washington as the mere or less ~~unanimous~~ unanimous choice of the people for the office of President, this would be far from the fact as we find in a report of a committee set up to record the history of one of the old Lodges in the City of Philadelphia, I quote!, "In the winter of 1788-89, discord and dissension were so rife as to cause serious disturbances among the Brethren, arising from the political questions of the day when the Government was first organised upon its present basis and Brother Geo. Washington was elected the first President of the United States. It appears

the members were

the members were pretty equally divided on the question of his election and scenes anything but harmonious took place at the meetings held that winter. Contention and strife obtained such a foothold in the Lodge that, at the first Quarterly Communication of 1789, the Lodge surrendered its Warrant. Brother Washington having been elected President however these Brethren who had advocated his election united in a petition for the return of the Warrant which request was granted ~~at the second Communication held in June of that year, and, we read:-~~, that Union and Harmony now prevailed and the Lodge prospered in its labours". How strange it is that an institution so divine in its teachings cannot ^{IN SPITE OF THEM} conceal the passions of its members.

If we now return to the masonic side of our study and the Ldg. at Alexandria in particular we find that, upon the designation of Washington as first Master, he became an active member of that body. He served his term as Master, was re-elected for a second period on Dec. 20th. 1788 and for the third and fourth time occupied the principal office during the years 1798 and 1799. Thus, when he was inaugurated the first President of the Republic, he was also Master of his Lodge, a distinction not enjoyed by any of the other masonic Presidents of the U.S.A.. The ceremony of inauguration took place in New York, then the national Capital, on April 30th. 1789, Brother Robert R. Livingston, Chancellor of the State of New York and Grand Master of its Grand Lodge administering the oath of office on the V.S.L. of St. John's Ldg. No. 1, New York City. The volume was opened at Genesis 49, verses 13 to 33 which contains Jacob's blessing of Joseph as "the Prince of his Brethren". This Bible printed in London in 1767 by Mark Baskett, Printer to the King, has, recorded on one of its fly-leaves, in beautiful form, the story of Washington's oath to support the Constitution of the United States. It is of interest to note that it was also used at the inauguration of Pres. and Brother Warren Harding in March 1921. The V.S.L. upon which Washington was obligated is one of the prized relics of the Fredericksburg Ldg. No. 4, it was printed in Cambridge, Eng. in 1668 and is a much travelled volume.

In these early days, when distance was a barrier and travel, at the best, a hazard, Washington is known to have visited many

Ledges, he was present at a Dt. John's Day celebration in Philadelphia in Dec. 1778, American Union Lodge in June and Dec. 1779 and again in June 1782, Solomon's Lodge, No. 1 New York in Dec 1782, Alexandria Lodge in June 1784 and many others, in fact so seriously did Washington take his Masonry and so widely known did he become by his exemplification of its ideals, that, a movement was launched in 1780 to elect him General Grand Master of a proposed General Grand Lodge of the United States. The plan was widely supported both in the army lodges and in those of the several States but it was never carried into being, although a belief that he had been so appointed was wide-spread and not confined to the American continent only, for, there is evidence that he was so regarded in England, Scotland and in France. In America a masonic medal struck in 1797 bears among other devices the letters "G.W., G.G.M.," (Geo. Washington, General Grand Master). Again, in the Minutes of The Royal Lodge of Faith and Friendship, No. 270, Berkeley, Gloucestershire, dated Sept. 2nd. 1805, ^{WE FIND THAT} R. Wor. Bro. Henry Jenner, Prov. Gd. Master of the Masonic Province of Bristol proposed, and Bro. The Rev. W. Davis seconded and it was ordered:—"That a portrait of our late worthy Bro. George Washington, President of the United States and Grand Master of the Freemasons of that country, be purchased and hung up in the Lodge Room.

Among the many accounts of Washington's masonic activities there are several that purport to show that he received masonic light other than in the Lodge at Fredericksburg:— Lessing in his "Field Book of the American Revolution" gives an account of the Cmr.,—in-Chief initiation in 1776 in a room in the Morris Hotel, Morristown, New Jersey where it is stated he also received most of the degrees of the Order, but, the incontrovertible proof of his initiation at Fredericksburg repudiates this account. Another claim alleges that Washington was 'made a mason' during the winter of 1756 in a British military Lodge holding a Warrant from the Gd. Ldg. of Ireland, this Lodge, the Lodge of Social and Military Virtues, No. 227, I.C., was attached to the 46th. Regiment of Foot. It surrendered its 'Travelling Warrant' in 1847 and is now The Lodge of Antiquity, No. 1 on the register of the Gd. Ldg. of Quebec. It is not improbable that Washington did meet up with this Lodge at about this time, but, as it did not arrive in America until early in 1757 we can be reasonably certain that this claim is also

without foundation. However the story persists because the Lodge has or had a Bible on which there was a plate reading:- "On this sacred volume Washington ^{RECEIVED} a degree of masonry. It was twice taken by the enemy and both times returned to the Regiment with all the honours of War". It is to be noted here that the plate records "he received a degree of Masonry", was it the Mark ?, or did he take a test oath as a visiting Brother ?, or again might it be that the authority under which he 'had been made' was deemed to be irregular and that it was required he should be 'remade' before admitting him to the Lodge ?, who can tell ?, suffice it to say that these stories and others purporting similiar claims have little if any foundation in fact and must therefore be treated with reserve, likewise the numerous accounts of his membership at degrees other than those of the Craft are doubtful and open to question, it has been stated for instance that Washington became a Royal Arch Mason in a British military Lodge in the year 1755 and that the Bible on which he was obligated came into the possession of a Lodge in Manchester, Vermont and was placed on exhibition in 1834 and again in 1852. While such accounts must be accepted with caution it must be remembered that Lodges at this time are known to have worked the R.A., K.T. and Kt. of Malta degrees under the authority of their Craft Warrants. The doubt in this case arises from the fact that the first known record of the R.A. Degree being conferred in the 13 Colonies is to be found in the Minutes of the Lodge at Fredericksburg for Dec. 1753 the year of Washington's 'Raising' and one would think that he would have sought 'Exaltation' in his Mother Lodge if at all. Further conjecture associates Washington with the Mark Degree on account of the Apron presented him by Gen. Lafayette a distinguished French Officer in the Revolutionary Army and which bears on the flap a circle with the familiar letters of the Mark Degree and, within the circle a 'Beehive', which, it is suggested may have been a 'Mark'. Again, in the "Freemason's Monthly Magazine published in Boston Mass. and dated Feb. 1st. 1852 commenting on a Mark Master Mason's Jewel alleged to have been worn by Washington states:- "This Jewel, being the only one in the possession of the Brethren appropriate to a Mark Lodge, was loaned to Gen. Washington as presiding Officer and was worn by him at the regular meetings of the Lodge." The Lodge in question was one of the revolutionary army Lodges which so far as is known did not confer or work the Mark Degree, and so, for the lack of conclusive evidence one must accept

one must accept this story also with reservation.

If I now turn to another side of our study I would like to comment on the attacks on Washington's Masonry, for, there is little if anything, that astenishes masonic students more than the incessant attacks which, from time to time, and especially in the 19th. century, have been made against the fact that he was a member of the Craft, in a number of these attacks the claim that he was ever a Master is most emphatically denied, others, while admitting his initiation, passing and raising in the Lodge at Fredericksburg assert 'that he had only a nominal connection with the Order', 'that he was indifferent to and other than a loyal member of the Fraternity', 'that he was unsympathic with the Institution and desired to have nothing to do with it'. The unprecedented storm of hostility against Freemasonry which raged throughout the North and Western States during the period 1826--1840 over the noterious 'Morgan Affair' could be expected to have warped the minds of many, but, it is difficult to understand why when Joseph Ritner, Governor of Pennsylvania at the time, requested the legislature of that State to take action against the Fraternity for the alleged mis-deeds laid at its door, he officially declared that Washington was not a Freemason, a statement that was responsible for the printing and circulation at State expense in 1837 of a pamphlet entitled "The Vindication of Geo. Washington from the Stigma of Adherence to Secret Societies", of which pamphlet other editions were published in both Philadelphia and Massachusetts during the following five years. These attacks are all the more astenishing when one reads of the welcome accorded him on his many visits to the Ledges of the Revolutionary Army and elsewhere, proof, surely, that his masonic affiliation was well known and that he was not an indifferent Freemason, again the wish of his Virginian Brethren that he should become their Grand Master which he had to decline because up to then he had not occupied the Chair of a Lodge or served as Warden, the further desire of his Brethren in 1780 that he accept the General Grand Mastership of the projected General Grand Lodge of America all testify to a warm and lively association with the Craft and the absurdity of such attacks. Washington's correspondence also discloses his membership and devotion to the Craft, for, in 15 letters written by him we see ample evidence of his interest and regard for the Fraternity, for instance in a letter of thanks

of thanks to Watson and Cassoul in France for the gift of an Apron we read in part:- " If my endeavours to avert the evil with which this country was threatened----should be crowned with the success that is wished----the praise is due to The Grand Architect of the Universe#--- he terminated this letter as follows:- "For your affectionate vows permit me to be grateful and offer mine for all true Brethren in all parts of the world, and, to assure you of the sincerity with which I am, Yours, etc. etc.. When replying to a letter of invitation sent him in 1783 by the Brethren of Alexandria Lodge (then No. 39) that he should join them on all possible masonic occasions, he writes.- "I shall always feel pleasure when it may be in my power to render service to Lodge No. 39, and in every act of brotherly kindness to Members of it; being with great truth, Your affectionate Brother and Obedient Servant, etc. etc.. When Washington visited New England on Aug. 17th. 1790, a special meeting of King David's Lodge No. 1, Newport, Rhode Island, was called to prepare an address of welcome the closing paragraph of which is significant; it reads " Permit us then, illustrious Brother, cordially to salute you with three times three, and, to add our fervent supplications that the Sovereign Architect of the Universe may always encompass you with His Holy protection", in his reply to the address we find the following, "Being persuaded that a just application of the principles on which the Masonic Fraternity is founded, must always be promotive of private virtue and public prosperity, I shall always be happy to advance the interests of the Society, and to be considered by them as a deserving Brother".

Brethren I feel it to be unnecessary to weary you with others of his many expressions of regard for the Brother-hood as I am sure that I have quoted sufficiently from his correspondence to convince you that these unwarranted attacks on his membership of the Craft are malicious and ill-conceived, that they will continue from time to time, is, almost without doubt, but, they cannot and will not alter the fact that Washington was a Freemason by Initiation, by Precept and by Practice.

On September 18th. 1793 upon the invitation of the Grand Lodge of Maryland, Washington officiated in a masonic capacity at the laying of the corner-stone of the Capitol at Washington. We learn that the stone was placed

that the stone was placed in the south-east corner of the building. Details of the ceremony are given at length in a Georgetown paper of the time from which I quote :-

"The Grand Sword-Bearer led the van, followed by the Grand Master pro tem. on the left, the President of the United States in the centre and the Wor. Master of Lodge No. 22, Virginia on the right---they took their stand to the east of a large stone and stood, for a short time, in solemn order---. The Grand Marshall delivered the Commissioners a large silver plate, with an inscription thereon, which the Commissioners ordered to be read, and was as follows:--"This south-east corner-stone of the Capitol of the United States of America, in the City of Washington, was laid on the 18th. day of Sept. 1793, in the 13th. year of American Independence, in the first year of the second term of the presidency of George Washington, whose virtues in the civil administration of his country have been as conspicuous and beneficial as his military valor and prudence have been useful in establishing her liberties, and in the year of Masonry 5793, by the President of the United States, in concert with the Grand Lodge of Maryland, the several Lodges under its jurisdiction and Lodge No. 22 from Alexandria, Virginia, etc. etc..

The Gavel used by Washington when laying this corner-stone has been used on more than 50 other occasions according to Harper's history of the Gd. Ldg. of Columbia. The Apron worn by the President during the ceremony was then presented to him by the two French members of the Craft, Watson and Cassoul, it has seldom been worn since the death of the General, some 5 occasions only being on record. Both this and the Gavel are to be seen in the Library of the Gd. Ldg. of Philadelphia. Incidentally there is a line of thought in the States that Washington was officiating as General Gd. Master of Masons when laying this Stone, but, it is only conjecture and without foundation, for he held no official rank in Masonry at that time other than that of a Past-Master.

Washington retired from public service on March, 4th. 1797 somewhat disillusioned by the party strife that was at that time very rife and which terribly embittered the closing scenes of his administration, his ardent desire to flee from it all and to find peace is seen in a letter written by him two days before his retirement to his masonic brother General Knox in which he complains pathetically of the magnificity of

the magnignity of certain of the members of the House of Represent-
-atives and of their efforts to undermine and change the political
system of the time. He was not forsaken however by his Masonic
Brethren, for, he had only just resumed his domestic life when loving
and congratulatory addresses from the seferal Grand Lodges were ~~XXXX~~
received by him at Mount Vernon and, his own Lodge No. 22 arranged to
celebrate his return home by inviting him to dine with them in Lodge,
this he did a few days latter when the following address was
delivered:-

"Most Respected Brether, --The Antient York Masons of Lodge No.
22, offer you their warmest congratulations on your retirement from
your useful labours. Under the Supreme Architect of the Universe, you
have been the Master Workman in erecting the Temple of Liberty in
the West on the basis of equal rights. In your wise administration
of the Government of the United States for the space of eight years,
you have kept within the compass of our happy constitution, and acted
upon the square with foreign nations, thereby preserving your country
in peace and promoting the prosperity and happiness of your fellow-
citizens. And, now that you have returned from the labours of public
life to the refreshment of domestic tranquillity, they ardently pray
that you may long enjoy all the happiness which the Terrestrial Lodge
can afford, and, finally, be received to a Celestial Lodge where love,
peace and harmony, for ever reign, and cherubin and seraphim shall
hail you Brether". Washington replied thus:--"Brothers of the
Antient York Masons, No. 22.--While my heart acknowledges with
brotherly love your affectionate congratulations on my retirement
from the arduous toils of past years, my gratitude is no less excited
by your kind wishes for my future happiness. If it has pleased the
Supreme Architect of the Universe to make me the humble instrument
to promote the welfare and happiness of my fellow-men, my exertions
have been abundantly recompensed by the kind partiality with which
they have been received. And the assurances you give me of your belief
that I have acted upon the square in my public capacity, will be among
my principal enjoyments in this Terrestrial Lodge."

He was, however, not to enjoy the pleasures of home-life for long,
the danger of war with France became so imminent that he was called
upon to raise a provisional army and to perfect the military organ-
-isation

organisation of the country, he reluctantly accepted this command in 1798 but was not called into the Field as France assumed a more pacific attitude towards the U.S.A. and he was able to return to his home early in 1799 in time to celebrate what was to prove his last birth-day, for, he was confined to his bed with a common cold on Dec. 12 of that year which he treated lightly at first, refusing, because of the inclement weather, medical attention until it was too late, indeed he had almost passed away by the time that his well-tried friend and physician reached his bed-side on the morning of the 14th.

The three physicians in attendance at his passing were all Masons, two of them, Doctors Dick and Craik being members of his own Lodge (Dr. Dick its reigning Master) ; while the third, Dr. Gustavus Brown, was the 5th. Grand Master of Maryland. Washington breathed his last at 10.20pm., December 14th, 1799, in his sixty-eighth Year.

The arrangements for the funeral were left to the Master, Junior Warden and two members of Ldg. No. 22. Of the four clergymen officiating three were members of ~~XXXXXXXX~~ that Lodge. The Junior Warden, Col. Deneale, was in command of the Alexandria Militia, Capt. Piercy the Senior Warden being in command of his own Company of the military contingent. Lodge No. 22, Alexandria was represented by its Master (Dr. Dick) who was supported by all but one of his Officers, while some 60 other Brethren formed the masonic procession. The pall-bearers were all Senior Officers of the Revolutionary Army and all but one were members of the Lodge. A contemporary engraving of the Committal Service shows the coffin--on which rests his Apron and Swords--on a pier at the mouth of the vault, on the left are the relatives and intimate friends of the deceased, in the fore-ground the officiating clergy and on the right, formed in a semi-circle, the members of the Craft while the Militia are to be seen along the hill behind the vault. We read that, at the conclusion of the committal service, Bro. the Rev. Dr. Davis gave a short address, after which, there was a pause before the Master of the Lodge performed the ~~XXXXXX~~ funeral rites of Masonry, the Apron and Swords were removed from the coffin and the Brethren, one by one cast upon it an evergreen sprig as their last mystic gift, the masonic burial honours having been given by each Brother in due form the mystic chain was re-united in a circle around the tomb, the soldiery fired their solemn burial salute and Mt. Vernon was left in the possession of its noblest sleeper.

sleeper.

(16).

In this attempt to portray Geo. Washington as a Brother Freemason I have resisted the temptation to include the many and perhaps highly improbable stories concerning Freemasonry and the Revolutionary period, that there was a tendency in the U.S.A. to glorify and attribute unusual and undue influence to Freemasonry, that supposedly, then as now, proscribed politics and partisanship from the activities of its Lodges, is without doubt. The many legends and fables connected with the events of the period and which are stated to have had a Freemasonic origin, have, in my opinion, done more in past years to antagonise certain sections of the American public than ever the notorious Morgan Affair did, and, it is perhaps, not inappropriate if I here & now dispose of three of these stories. It is often stated by ill-informed masonic speakers that all of the top ranking Officers of the Revolutionary Army were Freemasons, this is pure conjecture and cannot be substantiated in fact, neither can I find, in the more authoritative publications dealing with the causes of the Revolution anything to support the fanciful story that the so called "Mohawk Indians" of the Boston Tea Party incident were the disguised members of the St. John's Lodge, Boston. Again it is often said that 52 and sometimes as many as 55 signatures on the Declaration of Independence are those of Freemasons, in fact only 18 can be proved to have been members of the Craft. These and the many other stories of a like character make it very necessary to be chary of accepting all one reads concerning Freemasonry and the events of the time, and, it is for this reason that I have preferred to keep to recorded fact and leave the dramatics to others.

On Nov. 4th., 1952 the Bi-centenary of the conferring of the Entered Apprentice Degree on the young Washington was celebrated throughout the States and elsewhere, Brethren of all Degrees uniting to recall the momentous but unpretentious event of 210 years ago, an event that was to be the commencement of an experience that was to give inspiration, sound judgment and countless benefits to the Man and Brother who became acclaimed as "the father of his country--- first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen", for as Joseph Dillaway Sawyer, author of a biography of Washington wrote in part:- "When George Washington entered the Masonic Order

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BY LOOSES WHO HONOUR THE 1ST PRESIDENT OF THE USA BY BEARING HIS NAME (18).
83

Order

he followed a light which has guided man-kind for uncounted centuries; for the esoteric beginning of the Order is so ancient that its true origin is hidden in the mists of antiquity, and, it is certain that, with the earnestness and thoroughness that distinguished his action in every walk of life, Washington entered into the full spirit of the Order, carrying its mystical light with him into all his enterprises".

THAT THIS IS SO REGARDED BY OTHERS IS PROVED BY THE FACT THAT THERE ARE, ~~SOME~~ ~~OF~~ ~~THE~~ ~~BRETHREN~~ ~~BEFORE~~ ~~CONCLUDING~~ I would like to read two sets of

Brethren before concluding I would like to read two sets of verses which I consider to be a fitting tribute to this great man and Brother Freemason; they were published, the first during his lifetime, and the second, after his death, namely, in 1779 and 1800 respectively,

"See Washington, he leads the Train, -- 'Tis he commands the grateful strain; -- See, every crafted son obeys, And, to the godlike Brother homage pays. ---- Let fame resound him thro' the Land, -- and echo 'Tis our Master Grand!, ---- 'Tis he our ancient craft shall sway, -- whilst we with three times three, obey."

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At God's imperial high decree, Our Master sleeps in dust; His Brethren bend the prostrate knee; -- Thy Will, O God! is just.

That Will, Grand Master, Most Sublime!, Lent him to guide our way; When darkness wrapp'd Columbia's alicae, and veil'd the light of day.

That Will, beyond the stern of war, our Master's steps conveyed; Our Brother left his prophied war, and sought Mount Vernon's shade.

In War, in Peace, in War again, Columbia's voice he heard; A Master, Brother, cried Amen; And bow'd to Adam's word.

His God-like course of glory run, --- Heaven's Royal Arch sublime, Mid morn's bright star and Light's full sun, Enthroned his soul divine;

Immortal Master, Brother, hail!, Adieu, farewell, adieu; The Cassia Sprig on Glory's vale, --- Is bath'd in Virtue's dew.

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Finally Brethren in thanking you for the opportunity you have afforded me this evening I trust that I have been able to give you an insight into the character of this great man and Brother Mason, ^{and} that, this Paper has proved both interesting and instructive, and, as pleasing to you, as the preparation of it has been to me.

Thank you most sincerely.