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The first law of history is not to dare to tell a lie: the second, not to fear to tell the truth; besides let the Historian be beyond all suspicion of favoring or hating anyone whomsoever.—Leo XIII.

Which if I have done well and as becometh the history, is what I have desired; but if not so perfectly, then it must be pardoned me.—Machabees XV, 39.

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scheme for establishing a new government on the Ohio, in the manner talked of, should ever be effected, these must be among the most valuable lands in it, not only on account of the goodness of the soil, and the other advantages above enumerated, but from their contiguity to the seat of government, which more than probable will be fixed at the mouth of the Great Kanawha.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Bulletin, Nov. 10, '01.

Washington The Free Mason.

The Review of St. Louis quotes THE RESEARCHES as bringing out the curious fact that the Nuns of Nantes made a Masonic apron which was presented Washington in 1782 and adds: "Surely the good Sisters of Nantes did not know what they made when they stitched that Masonic apron for General Washington."

"By the way, will Mr. Griffin kindly inform *The Review* whether there is positive and reliable evidence that Washington was a free Mason?"

"If you have anything bearing on Washington's connection with Free Masonry I'd like to have it. I do not believe that Washington was really a Mason in good standing and at heart. I am writing something to that effect and if you have anything handy on the subject for or against, let me have it and I shall be your debtor forever.

"A SUBSCRIBER."..

I have often been asked that question and have answered it: Yes, Washington was a Free Mason. There is just as "reliable and positive evidence" to show that he was as there is to prove he was President. I have not, of course, made investigations of original and manuscript Masonic sources but I am well satisfied from many sources of information in my seekings in American History that Washington was a member of the Masonic Order.

The latest contribution to the subject is a four columned article by Rev. Edward G. Mason in the *Public Ledger* of Philadelphia February 22, 1901. By this it appears that Washington was a member of the Fredricksburg, Va., Lodge. Minister Mason relates:

“On the lodge minutes under date of November 6, 1752 (1752) appears the entry: ‘Received of Mr. George Washington for his entrance £2,3.’ The minutes of a lodge meeting held November 4th show that he was initiated on that night. Then follow these further entries:

“March 3d, 1753 Geo. Washington passed Fellow Craft. August 4th, 1753 George Washington raised Master Mason.”

MASONIC HONORS TO WASHINGTON.

Washington visited Philadelphia in December, 1778, while Congress was in session. Masonic services were held in Christ Church on St. John’s Day, Monday, December 28, the Rev. William Smith, D. D., preaching the sermon. On that occasion about 300 brethren, including the members of the Grand Lodge, all newly clothed, formed in procession, “His Excellency, our illustrious Brother, George Washington, Esq., supported by the Grand Master and his deputy,” marching in the parade. An offering for charitable purposes was taken, amounting it is said, to more than £400. By order of the Grand Lodge, Dr. Smith’s sermon was published in pamphlet form, and the proceeds of its sale devoted to helping the poor. It was prefaced by the following dedication:

“To His Excellency, George Washington, Esq., General and Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States of North America, the friend of his country and mankind, ambitious of no higher title, if higher were possible, the following sermon, honored with his presence when delivered, is dedicated, in testimony of the sincerest affection and brotherly esteem of his merit. By order of the Brethren.

“JOHN COATS,

Grand Secretary, Pro. Tem.”

From this time on Masonic honors were showered thick and fast on Washington. It soon became the custom to devote the first toast at Masonic banquets to the theme, “General Washington,” to show him special honors whenever he visited a lodge, and a military lodge, for which a warrant was granted October 6, 1779, from the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, took his name.

When Washington returned to Mount Vernon at the close of the war, the lodge in Alexandria, Va., addressed him a letter of greeting, and some months later he became its guest at the festival of St. John the Baptist, on which occasion he was made an honorary member of

Alexandria Lodge, No. 39. In November, 1788, the lodge, which had been working under a charter from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, applied to the Grand Lodge of Virginia for a new warrant, requesting further that "Brother George Washington, Esq., should be named in the charter as Master of the Lodge." The request was granted, the lodge number being changed to 22. Washington, it may be added, had been elected Master the May previous. In 1804 the lodge applied for a change of name, and the memory of its distinguished Master has been perpetuated in the title, Alexandria-Washington Lodge, No. 22.

One of the most interesting incidents in Washington's Masonic life took place September 18, 1793, when, clad in the apron and other insignia of the Order, and holding in his hand an ivory gavel, he took a prominent part in the ceremonies attending the laying of the corner-stone of the National Capitol. On this occasion the lodges represented were No. 9, of Georgetown, and No. 22, of Alexandria. Washington marched in the procession between the Grand Master on his left, and the Worshipful Master of Alexandria Lodge, No. 22, on his right.

The circumstances of Washington's death are too well known to required repetition here. When the end came, Saturday, December 14, 1799, at the age of 68, there were at least two Masons by his bedside—one of them his family physician, Dr. Craik, and the other the Master of Alexandria Lodge, Dr. Elisha C. Dick. The funeral arrangements were in charge of a committee from the Alexandria Lodge. An emergent meeting of the lodge was called on Monday, December 16, forty-one brethren being present, and two visitors, one from Fredericksburg and the other from Philadelphia. Another Lodge in Alexandria, known as Brooke Lodge, No. 47, met at the same hour. Afterwards a joint committee of the two lodges was appointed, and the program as arranged by the first committee was adopted. Potomac Lodge, No. 9, at Georgetown, and Federal Lodge, No. 15, (now Federal Lodge, No. 1), of Washington, were invited to participate, as also the military companies of Alexandria. The funeral was held Wednesday, December 18. Of the four clergymen present three were members of the Alexandria Lodge, one of the latter, the Rev. Mr. Davis, pastor of the Alexandria Episcopal Church, officiating. The pall-bearers were six members of the same lodge, and the Master of the lodge performed the Masonic funeral rites. At the close, according to Mason-

ic custom, each brother in turn cast a sprig of evergreen upon the coffin. On the two succeeding Sundays the Alexandria Masons formed in procession, clothed in mourning habit, and marched to the Presbyterian Church, where sermons on Washington's death were preached. Many other services were held in memory of the illustrious dead at Mount Vernon, Alexandria and Washington, and later in other more distant sections of the country. Of these some were exclusive Masonic and in many others Masons had a prominent place. In the ceremonies which took place in Philadelphia, December 26, by designation of Congress, the Masons participated by official invitation, the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge being convened earlier in the day and addressed by the Grand Master, January 1, 1800, a French Lodge in Philadelphia, known as L'Amenite, No. 71, held a Lodge of Sorrow, which was attended by the Grand Officers and many local Freemasons. Addresses were delivered in both French and English.

News traveled slowly in those days. It was not until December 20, that word of Washington's death reached New York. The Grand Lodge was convened three days later, and the Masons of the city took part in a public demonstration on the 31st, on which occasion the Bible on which Washington had taken his oath as President was borne before the Grand Master. The first tidings arrived in Boston the 23d, and special Masonic services were held under the auspices of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge on the 11th of February following. Other memorial exercises were held by Grand and local lodges throughout the Union, and everywhere the Craftsmen were prominent in all demonstrations of the kind.

Washington's devotion to the Order was recognized by non-Masons, as well as Masons, and there seemed a general desire to honor the fraternity wherever his memory was honored. Much of his Masonic correspondence had been published before his death, and had, no doubt been widely circulated. In one of these letters, written in reply to an address from King David's Lodge, Newport, R. I., he had said: "Being persuaded that a just application of the principles on which the Masonic fraternity is founded must be productive 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." The prominence accorded the Masonic bodies in all public memorial exercises was probably due to a wide acquaintance with the fact that Washington had often expressed his opinion of the Order in similarly high terms of appreciation.

Just a century from the day on which that great life went out into the unknown, more than 3000 members of the craft gathered about the tomb in Mount Vernon, where rest all that is mortal of the patriot, soldier and statesman. The chief address of the day was delivered from the piazza of the mansion in which he had died by William McKinley, his successor in the Presidential office and a Mason.

Concerning the Masonic apron made by the Nuns of Nantes Minister Mason, relates:

"When Lafayette visited this country in 1784, he brought as a present to his former chief and bosom friend a Masonic apron, made of white satin, with numerous Masonic ornaments worked in colored silk, the whole being the handiwork of Madame Lafayette. This with other Masonic emblems was presented in a handsomely finished rose-wood box, also embellished with Masonic symbols. The apron remained at Mount Vernon quite a time after its owner's death, but was finally presented to the Washington Benevolent Society, by whom, in turn, it was given to the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge. The box became the property of the Alexandria Lodge. Another historic apron was presented to Washington, August 10, 1782, by Watson & Cassoul, a Franco-American mercantile firm, doing business in France. The apron and a Masonic sash was made, at the firm's order, by some nuns in Nantes, and is of satin, wrought with gold and silver tissue, and having the flags of the United States and France mingled with various Masonic symbols. These aprons, Hayden says, are often confused. The latter is now in the possession of Alexandria-Washington Lodge, and is kept in the box in which the Lafayette apron was originally placed. When Lafayette visited Alexandria-Washington Lodge in 1824, he wore the Watson & Cassoul apron, but from some allusion made by him in his remarks on that occasion, it is evident he supposed he was wearing the one made by his wife. After so many years the mistake was entirely natural. The Lafayette apron is worked in silk, and has on the frontlet the Mark Master's circle and secret letters, with a beehive as a mark in the centre. For the account of these aprons the writer is almost wholly indebted to Hayden's book."