

A Trip into the Past

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There is probably no Masonic historic site in the United States that has had more words written about it than the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, just outside Washington, D.C. in picturesque old Alexandria, Virginia. Each year thousands of persons from Masonic and allied organizations, as well as persons who have no Masonic affiliation, visit this beautiful shrine to see and enjoy Masonic relics from the American past.

This article is not intended to be a history of the creation of that very impressive Monument, nor even a condensation of the same. It is merely the writer's impressions of the Shrine as seen by a visiting Mason, an attempt to highlight certain very interesting parts of it. (A complete history titled *Freemasonry's Great Monument* written by Brother Frederic F. Schondau, published by The Masonic Service Association, 700 Tenth Street, N.W., Washington 1, D.C., January 20, 1952.)

The most notable sight recommended by the guide for viewing is the Replica Room. Here the original setting of the Alexandria Lodge No. 22 (known as Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22 since 1805), over which General George Washington presided as its first Worshipful Master in 1788-89, is reproduced in its original, authentic form.

The original furniture used in Wor-

shipful Brother Washington's Lodge is arranged just as it was when that notable early American presided over the Lodge, including the stations of the principal officers, the Altar, with the same Holy Bible on which Washington as Master initiated candidates. The Altar Lights are the originals from the early Lodge, used at the laying of the cornerstone of the United States Capitol on September 18, 1793, and at General Washington's Masonic funeral on December 18, 1799.

In the East is the United States Flag used by the Lodge. It was the flag with thirteen stars on a field of blue carried by General Washington's bodyguard during the American Revolution.

The Master's chair, a large Chipendale used by Washington in his library was presented by him to the Lodge while he presided as Master in 1788. The chair was in constant use for 118 years, but at present is used only on special occasions, and at the annual installation of officers in Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22. On each side in the North and South of the Replica Room the original desks of the Secretary and Treasurer are in place, as well as the same straight-backed hardwood chairs and benches that accommodated the Brethren 171 years ago.

In the South on the wall hangs the silver trowel with ivory handle which

President Washington used to lay the Cornerstone of the National Capitol on September 13, 1793. The ceremonies were conducted under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Maryland, with Washington acting as Grand Master pro tem on that occasion. This trowel has been used subsequently by Masonic Presidents, as well as by the Masters of Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22 for cornerstone laying at important functions.

Perhaps the most impressive relic in the Lodge is the hand-painted picture of General Washington in uniform with his Masonic regalia, which hangs in the East directly above the General's chair where he sat as Worshipful Master. This is a very life-like portrait of the gentleman painted in 1794 by William J. Williams of Philadelphia, while Washington was President and living in that city (before the United States Capitol was moved to its present location). This is the only picture in existence which shows the General in extreme old age, wearing both the uniform and Masonic attire. It is devoid of the usual touch-up, for the artist was instructed to "paint him as he is." This is the artist did, for he brought out a blemish on the face and a mole under the ear which other artists have chosen to ignore or modify.

The contract price for the picture was \$50.00. At the stated meeting in which the motion was presented to pay for the picture, the Lodge could not agree on the price so that the motion was tabled for further discussion at the subsequent stated meeting. In the interim, individual donations and collections netted the sum of \$300.00 which was paid the artist, and the picture was hung in the Lodge in late 1794. This same picture was recent-

ly assessed in value at \$150,000.00.

As one stands to the West of the Altar and looks toward the East where the celebrated portrait hangs, he meets the gaze of the steady, clear eyes of this grand old Mason, which with the hint of a smile, seem to say, "Welcome, Brother."

One of the interesting additions to the exact replica of George Washington's Lodge is the mantle clock on a shelf in the north that has originally in General Washington's bedchamber. The clock is stopped, just as it has remained for 160 years, since the cord attached to the weight which operated the clock was severed by Doctor Elisha C. Dick, Master of the Lodge, and one of the attending physicians, at the exact moment of Washington's death at 10:20 PM, Saturday, December 14, 1799. The clock was presented by Mrs. Martha Washington in reverent appreciation to the Lodge on the day the General was buried at Mount Vernon, Virginia.

In the hall leading to the Replica Room is a large piece of Parian marble taken from the quarries of King Solomon, which was presented to the Memorial Association in 1927 by Congressman Allen Treadway, from Massachusetts. Congressman Treadway had visited the Holy Land in the early 1920's, and it was about this time that the quarries had been rediscovered. There he conceived the idea of having the stone sent to Alexandria for the Memorial. The stone is very soft, with deterioration showing in places. As one inspects this stone, it is more easily comprehensible how the ancient temples were demolished by pagan conquerors. It has been stated that Masonic meetings have been held in the old quarry since its rediscovery.

Many other relics are available for viewing in the Memorial such as the George Washington Memorial Hall at the front entrance, several priceless paintings, the Amphitheater, and the Shrine Room. Certainly the most interesting place for the Master Mason, however, is the Replica Room described above. Every Mason who has the opportunity to visit in the Washington, D.C. area should make every effort to visit this very beautiful Temple. △

Our country, our civilization, our race, is based on the belief that for all its weaknesses, there is still in man that divine spark that will make him reach upward for something higher and better than anything he has ever known.

Clarence Darrow

Beautiful young people are accidents of nature; beautiful old people create themselves.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

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Rizal the Mason

By MWB MACARIO M. OFILADA
Grand Master

Here is a voice you will recognize although it comes from very long ago and very far away. The words stand out for their vigor, and the idea they convey is very familiar to you, for he was a mason, same as each of you, Bro. Jose Rizal. I quote:

"...dear brethren: The modern mason works, and should keep on working. That masons of the free world engage in business and do charitable works, well and good! But they should not rest while the earth feeds a tyrant, while the night gathers in its echoes the plaints of the oppressed, while there are slaves, while there are oppressors! And this work is perhaps the greatest that Masonry has ever imposed and the only one worthy of its universal name."

My brethren, I have been quoting from the speech of our illustrious brother, Jose Rizal, delivered in Spanish at a meeting of "Solidaridad" Lodge

No. 3 in Madrid 76 years ago. That was 13 years before he was murdered by the Spaniards through the machinations of Spanish priests. That year was 1883. I want you to remember this because it has a most important bearing on the forgery which his murderers cooked up in their effort to destroy his character after they had destroyed his body.

The year was 1883, in Spain, that he pronounced those words—4 years before he finished the *Noli* in Berlin on February 22, 1887. That outburst at that time and in that place was not an isolated act of our Brother Rizal, but one expression of an ideal to which he dedicated and gave his life.

That decision to dedicate his life to the righting of wrong, the correction of injustice and the freedom of his people from oppression, began in his tender years, when his young mind was shocked by the priests' inhumanity to mankind, crystallized by the in-