

Freemasonry's Monument

The movement to erect a Masonic Memorial to George Washington had its origin in a strong desire on the part of the Masonic Fraternity of the United States to safeguard the Washington relics in the possession of Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22, of Alexandria, Virginia. Washington was the first master of this lodge, (then Alexandria Lodge No. 39) serving in that office while he was President of the United States.

At the time of the formation of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association, these relics were inadequately protected from fire, and visitors to the old lodge room gave general expression to their belief that some means should be adopted to provide a safe repository for the collection, the many items of which are priceless because of their association with Washington's life and Masonic career.

While Alexandria Masons were fully aware of the need for protection of the relics, and had given careful attention to the matter for a number of years, the first nation-wide action with respect to it occurred on February 22, 1910, when a number of grand masters and representatives of grand masters met in Alexandria, on the invitation of the grand master of Virginia, and took preliminary steps to organize a national association for the purpose of erecting a memorial to Washington, the Mason. The relics were to be housed in that memorial. The meeting in 1910 endorsed the proposal and in 1911 and 1912 plans for raising funds were developed and a Constitution and by-laws were adopted.

The first thought, of a simple repository for the Washington relics, very soon developed into a great memorial to Washington and, as the years passed and greater interest throughout the country was manifested, it became apparent that the Washington Memorial offered an opportunity for the erection of a monument to Freemasonry itself and to the influence which it had exerted in the foundation and preservation of our free government.

The great structure is now much more than either a monument or a memorial. It is the living embodiment of the faith and patriotism and practice of Freemasonry; it is a demonstration both to the world at large and the world of the Craft that fifty (forty-nine continental grand lodges + Philippine Islands) grand jurisdictions can labor unitedly to a common end. East and West, North and South, have engaged in a friendly rivalry to see which would soonest complete its per capita contribution.

The exterior of the building is completed, as is also the beautiful auditorium. The beacon light on top shines every night; the permanent roadway from King Street is finished; heating, ventilating, electrical wiring, lobbies and adjacent stairways and the auditorium are finished. The great Memorial Hall, which the visitor sees on entering, lacks only the heroic statue of Washington and the mural decorations. The entrance lobbies are also finished, and the next step in construction is the completion of the Blue Lodge Room and the Replica Room, in the latter of which will be placed the Washington relics.

Plans and specifications for these two rooms were completed by the architects during the past years, bids for the work were obtained and this work is now under way. The exact amount of progress made depends wholly on the ability of the contractors to obtain the necessary materials for construction under the priority regulations of the United States Government. Funds for the work are in the hands of the treasurer.

By standing resolution of the Association, provision is made that no contract for any work may be let until the money to pay for it is actually in the treasury — hence the thirty-six acre park in which is erected this imposing pile of imperishable granite, its decorations, its lighting, its heating, the landscaping, so far as now completed, are all paid for. Not a dollar of mortgage or indebtedness of any kind stands against this shrine of the Ancient Craft.

The influence of this monument cannot be estimated. Unlike many memorials, this will serve many practical purposes as well as those altruistic and patriotic. More than one hundred lodges all over the country have met in it. Ceremonials of all proper Masonic character have been held in it. Masonic bodies travel long distances to perform some ritualistic observance within its portals. Brethren from many sections have been raised there and have counted it an added honor in Masonry. The nucleus of a magnificent Masonic library is already in hand. Masonic leaders with vision of the future see the Memorial as a great center of Masonic learning; they envision it as a central source of Masonic light and knowledge, as well as a shrine, a meeting place, a monument and a Memorial.

The annual meetings of the Memorial Association are held in the Temple and grand masters and their representatives, from 46 of our 49 grand jurisdictions, have assembled there on occasion for this purpose. They invariably depart from its halls with enthusiastic determination to do their part toward the completion of the project.

The first President of the Association was M.W. Brother Thomas J. Shryock, grand master of Maryland for thirty-three years. He was succeeded by Past Grand Master Louis A. Watres, of Pennsylvania, to whose wise guidance and constant efforts much of the progress made is due. On the death of Brother Watres in 1937, M.W. Brother Elmer R. Arn, past grand master of Ohio, was elected President and he has proved himself a worthy successor of the distinguished brothers who preceded him.

It is a matter of regret that conditions, the Depression, the confusions incident to the war in Europe, and many other causes, have prevented the gifts of enough funds to permit the great building to be completed. It is now almost ten years since the Dedication in May 1931. The Fraternity has yet to show to the world what is unquestionably the fact, that it can reflect the glory that is Masonry's and the ability of its membership to complete that which it begins.

It is a matter of faith to all who have seen the Memorial that Masonry having set its hand to the plow will not fail to accomplish its purpose. The final fruition of Masonic hopes in the erection of this monument to Masonry, this Memorial to the only man in all our history who

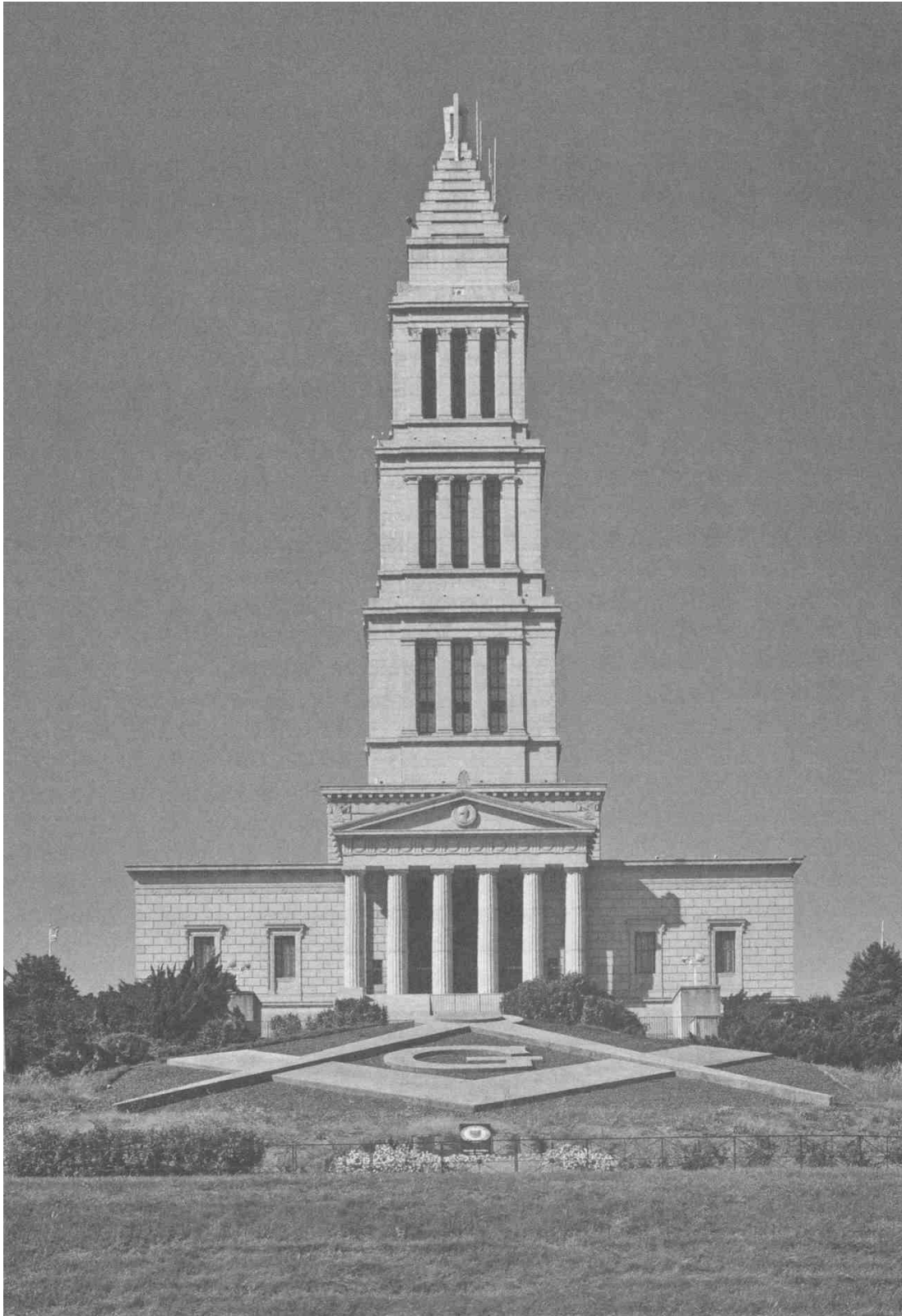
was at the one time master of his Masonic lodge and President of the United States, must follow united efforts just as surely as the night follows the day and the evening the morning.

Dr. Joseph Fort Newton truly caught the vision of the Memorial when he wrote, after witnessing the laying of the cornerstone in 1913, the following prophecy:

When, at last, the work of the Builders is done, and the Memorial stands stately in the sunlight, white and magnificent at night, it will be at once a perpetual Shrine and a prophetic Symbol; a Shrine where men who despair of the present may rekindle their Masonic faith and patriotic hope; a Symbol of the unity and power of Freemasonry, in whose fellowship our first President lived and wrought — led by its light, taught by its truth, hallowed by its spirit — the Republic itself at once its monument and his Memorial.

The original plans for raising funds contemplated the contribution of \$1.00 for each Mason in the United States. Some ten years ago it was seen that the amount that would be provided from this source would be insufficient and on the suggestion of the grand master of New York, who agreed to raise \$200,000 in addition to the \$1.00 per capita, the quota sought to be achieved was raised to \$1.70 per capita. The following tabulation shows the standing of the several grand jurisdictions as to \$1.00 and the \$1.70 quotas: the contribution made under both the percentage of quota on basis of

Rank	Jurisdiction	'32 Masonic Population	Amount Contributed	Percentage of Quota on basis of		Other Jurisdictions & Masonic Bodies	Amount Contributed
				\$1.00 per capita	\$1.70 per capita		
1.	New Hampshire	15,106	\$ 54,107.03	358.2	210.7	Alaska	\$ 100.00
2.	Delaware	6,123	14,592.54	238.3	140.2	Puerto Rico	100.00
3.	Dist. of Col.	22,777	46,245.99	203.0	119.4	Canal Zone	200.00
4.	New Jersey	97,080	190,533.00	196.3	115.5	General Grand Chapter, R.A.M	10,500.00
5.	Virginia	47,581	90,531.65	190.3	111.9	General Grand Council, R.S.M	7,000.00
6.	Pennsylvania	212,768	396,490.75	186.3	109.6	Grand Encampment, K.T	20,000.00
7.	New Mexico	7,122	12,976.10	182.2	107.2	Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, N.M.J.	110,000.00
8.	Arizona	6,618	11,842.17	178.9	105.3	Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite, S.J.	35,100.00
9.	New York	345,986	614,217.85	177.5	104.4	Imperial Council. A.A.O.N.M.S	168,000.00
10.	Indiana	129,380	229,543.97	177.4	104.4	Supreme Council, M.O.V.P.E.R	14,100.00
11.	Massachusetts	124,755	216,733.50	173.7	102.2	Supreme Forest, Tall Cedars of Lebanon	1,000.00
12.	Rhode Island	18,913	32,568.30	172.2	101.3	Provincial Grand Lodge, R.O. of Scotland	100.00
13.	N. Dakota	15,332	26,356.00	171.9	101.1	Grand Imperial Council, R.C. of Constantine	100.00
14.	Connecticut	45,795	77,123.47	168.4	99.1	Job's Daughters, Supreme Guardian Council	260.50
15.	Florida	27,522	44,479.25	161.6	95.1	General Grand Chapter, O.E.S	4,000.00
16.	Iowa	85,395	137,756.96	161.3	94.9	National League of Masonic Clubs	100.00
17.	N. Carolina	40,244	64,055.60	139.2	93.6		
18.	Oregon	30,623	47,309.14	154.5	90.9		
19.	S. Carolina	28,092	42,848.52	152.5	89.7		
20.	Missouri	111,172	162,367.01	146.1	85.9		
21.	Utah	5,196	7,583.50	145.9	85.8		
22.	Vermont	19,706	28,336.87	143.8	84.6		
23.	Idaho	10,396	14,537.01	139.8	82.3		
24.	Nevada	3,105	4,255.97	137.1	80.6		
25.	Wyoming	8,447	10,756.00	127.3	74.9		
26.	Kentucky	58,467	72,679.60	124.3	73.1		
27.	California	142,422	171,467.30	120.4	70.8		
28.	Mississippi	33,804	40,549.97	119.9	70.6		
29.	Montana	20,695	24,661.30	119.2	70.1		
30.	W. Virginia	34,145	40,514.71	118.7	69.8		
31.	Michigan	150,107	177,971.30	118.6	69.7		
32.	Maryland	34,215	39,613.03	115.8	68.1		
33.	Maine	43,250	49,017.00	113.3	66.7		
34.	Georgia	62,284	69,601.69	111.7	65.7		
35.	Louisiana	31,174	34,004.73	109.1	64.1		
36.	Colorado	33,962	36,481.85	107.4	63.2		
37.	Tennessee	47,962	38,995.21	81.3	47.8		
38.	Ohio	208,559	167,918.25	80.5	47.4		
39.	Texas	134,552	107,000.00	79.5	46.8		
40.	Washington	48,994	37,519.00	76.6	45.0		
41.	Nebraska	42,027	25,466.00	60.5	35.6		
42.	Oklahoma	66,506	37,143.46	55.8	32.9		
43.	Illinois	289,359	161,396.95	55.8	32.8		
44.	Alabama	44,654	20,274.50	45.4	26.7		
45.	Arkansas	37,509	14,305.00	38.1	22.4		
46.	Minnesota	61,378	22,978.25	37.4	22.0		
47.	Wisconsin	62,588	21,847.75	34.9	20.5		
48.	S. Dakota	19,843	6,438.67	32.4	19.1		
49.	Philippine Islands	6,452	1,484.37	23.0	13.5		
50.	Kansas	78,848	1,911.00	2.4	1.4		



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