

George Washington

A Man For The Times

By George D. Seghers

Very few of us do enough during our short life spans to leave a lasting impression or have an effect on our present time or future times. This was definitely not the case for George Washington. Although he lived only 67 years, his accomplishments were truly incredible and have not been matched in human history.

He was without a doubt the prime reason we have the United States of America. His efforts, sacrifices and the risks he took, both private and public, were truly a matter of life and death. If the revolution had failed, he would not have returned to Mount Vernon. He would have been hanged or shot. His property would have been confiscated and his family turned out into the streets. These are facts that are too easily forgotten and are not passed on to successive generations of Americans.



This striking painting by artist Boyan Mishev captures the essence of Washington as patriotic symbol for the nation.

his fairness, especially at this decisive time when the election of a new President for our nation is taking place.

Washington strongly believed that the future and fate of the United States was the responsibility of the people. He expressed this belief in a letter to Edmund Pendleton dated January 22, 1795, "...republicanism is not the phantom of a deluded imagination: on the contrary, that under no other form of government, will laws be better supported, liberty and property better secured, or happiness be more effectually dispensed to mankind." On December 22 of that same year he wrote to Gouverneur Morris expressing his concern and conviction about the character and

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Greetings From The President



Michael D. Brumback

Is there a correlation between the building of grand Masonic edifices in the first quarter of the last century, and the membership growth spurt we experienced in the '40s and '50s? Why did the building of architecturally significant Masonic structures seemingly end during our most prosperous period?

Like most complex questions, the answers are not black and white. However, it is probably fair to say that our affluence was one of the factors that contributed to this outcome. We rested on our laurels.

Today our economy is being tested, but it is of interest to note that the George Washington Masonic Memorial was dedicated during the Great Depression. Why were the Masonic leaders that built American Freemasonry bolder than we dare be today? I believe that Freemasonry is again embarking on a period of growth and vitality. The new generation displays some of the same characteristics that were imbued in our forefathers. The next generation of Masons will want to learn about the history of our Fraternity, and the George Washington Masonic Memorial has embarked on a project to be the national repository of the history of American Freemasonry.

We have already opened our new exhibit on Freemasonry. We

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are working with Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22 to improve their display of the George Washington artifacts so that the exhibit is up to world-class standards. We have initiated a project to digitize the Proceedings of all American Grand Lodges so that their history can be preserved and made available to future Masonic researchers. Our exhibits sponsored by Appendant Masonic Bodies will be redesigned to better represent the family of Freemasonry, and we appreciate the support all of these organizations are providing to complete this project.

I hope you noticed that I have not itemized a long list of maintenance projects to bring the building back to its former glory. Unlike many Masonic buildings built in the early 1900s, the George Washington Masonic Memorial is still beautiful and well maintained. As a building, it still presents a very positive image of the Fraternity to the public. At the Memorial, we are not in a maintenance phase. **We are in a growth phase.**

The Board of Directors is not just preserving the past; it is responding to the future needs of the Fraternity. It is a response with an optimistic view. Now more than ever, this country needs the principles of Freemasonry. With possible national economic challenges ahead of us, what better time

to demonstrate our optimism for the future of Freemasonry and democracy.

What can you as a Freemason do to help? Become a member or patron of the George Washington Masonic Memorial. You will find an application in this issue of *The Messenger*.

More importantly, you can use your influence to motivate your Grand Lodge to meet the challenge of annually contributing \$1 for every Mason in your Jurisdiction. Several of our Grand Lodges have met this challenge and we congratulate them for their leadership. It is imperative that ALL Grand Lodges meet this challenge prior to our 100th Anniversary in 2010.

Now before someone says that the current economic conditions make this the wrong time to consider increasing their contribution to the Memorial, let's consider what \$1 per member means. A member would only have to give up buying one soft drink a year to cover the cost. Or, if they would drink one less Starbucks latte this year, it would cover contributions for the next four years.

It is not the wrong time – it is the right time to tell the world about Freemasonry and to honor our Brother, George Washington.

Board of Directors Mandate Long-Range Strategic Plan

At the Semi-Annual Board of Directors Meeting held August 8-9, 2008 at the Memorial, the Board took a strong and united stand in favor of the creation of a long-range strategic plan for the Association. The Board emphasized that effective planning, fund raising and awareness programs could not be developed without a decisive plan. As a result, a task force was established and they will present the long-range plan at the next Board meeting in February in Anaheim. The Board is already committed to several renovations, many of them currently underway at the Memorial. Grand Masonic Hall will be enclosed and air conditioned to allow use of the space throughout the year. Elevators will also be installed. The Tower elevators will be upgraded to provide access to new exhibits in the Tower rooms. The top floor will be renovated by adding windows,



Board of Directors gather in Grand Masonic Hall in front of a bronze bust of Washington and beautiful mural. The newly refurbished east niche is part of several renovation projects in preparation for the Memorial Association's 100th Anniversary in 2010.

installing flat screen monitors and informative displays. These projects are scheduled for completion before the 100th Anniversary of the Memorial Association in 2010.

Message From Alexandria



George D. Seghers

Our vision and our mission here at the George Washington Masonic Memorial is to enlighten and inspire our fellow citizens, and indeed the world, about the virtues, character, and vision of George Washington. To accomplish this task, we require adequate tools, resources, direction and support. We are blessed to have a Board of Directors doing just that. They are providing and allocating the necessary resources to repair, conserve and improve the physical Memorial, to create and install interesting, informative and educational exhibits and to develop and implement valuable services for our Members.

Activities over the next 17 months will create changes, improvements and repairs to much of the Memorial. We have also commissioned a new portrait of George Washington to be unveiled at our 100th Anniversary in 2010. A new book, a comprehensive and accurate history of the Memorial Association, will also be introduced at the same time.

We have also embarked on a mission to preserve the history of American Freemasonry through our new exhibit and the digitization of Masonic Proceedings, including those of the George Washington Masonic Memorial Association. The link to these searchable data files can be found on the Memorial website at www.gwmemorial.org. These ambitious and necessary projects are under the direction of

our Director of Collections, Mark A. Tabbert. The history of American Freemasonry is disappearing before our very eyes. Masonic buildings are being sold, historical Masonic artifacts are being sold or disposed of, and Masonic records are being lost. Freemasons were active, intrinsic and essential participants in the formation of our country. We cannot allow our history to disappear. If we lose our history, we lose a part of ourselves.

Nearly a century ago, America's Freemasons were inspired by the example and character of George Washington to create the George Washington Masonic Memorial. Now it is our turn. It is up to us to not only maintain and publicize the Memorial, but to improve the quality, breadth and distribution of information about George Washington, the Memorial and the American Freemasons who built it, so that it will forever remain an inspiration and guiding light for all generations.

This is an exciting and wonderful time to be a Mason and more especially to be able to participate and contribute to the mission and vision of this magnificent Memorial dedicated to a remarkable man, Brother George Washington.

George D. Seghers is the Executive Director of the George Washington Masonic Memorial.

2008 Holiday Ornament - *Collector's Edition*



St. John's Day Observance

The George Washington Masonic Memorial is pleased to present this year's holiday ornament: St. John's Day Observance. It depicts General Washington and his officers attending Christ Church in Philadelphia for a St. John's Day Observance on December 28, 1778. Under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, the Observance raised money to help alleviate suffering of the citizens during the British occupation. The British evacuated Philadelphia in June of 1778. In December, Washington visited Philadelphia where Congress was in session. While there, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania celebrated the festival of St. John the Evangelist. Washington was present on the occasion, and was honored with the chief place in the procession.

To order, please contact the Memorial Gift Shop at 703-549-9234 or visit the Memorial's website at www.gwmemorial.org.

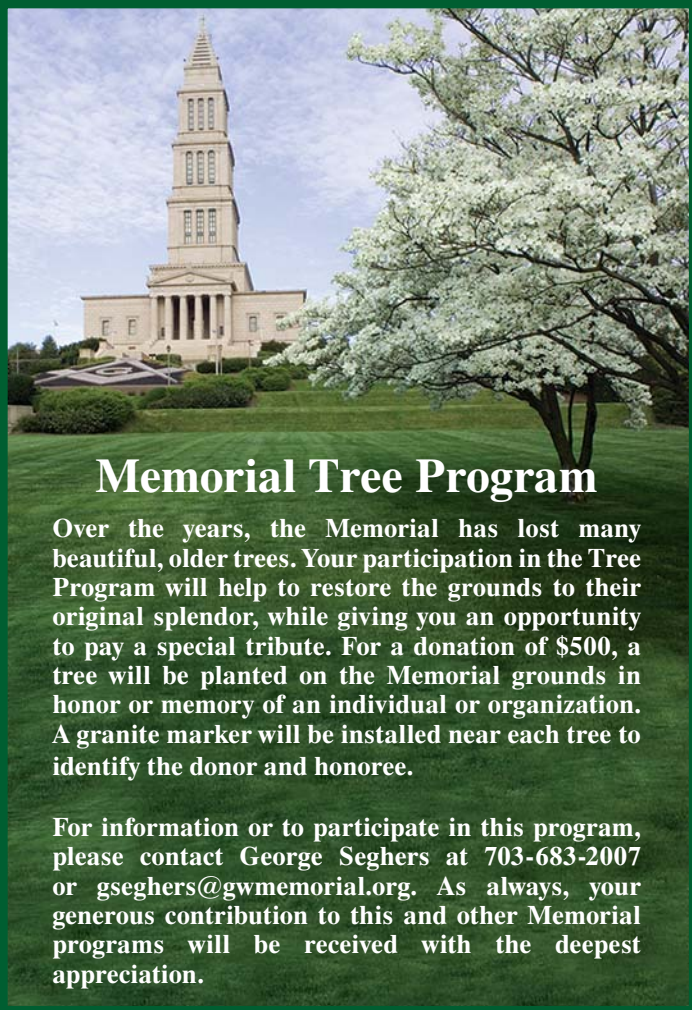
Crafted with pride in America. Historical booklet included.

George Washington, *continued from page 1*

actions of elected and appointed government officials, "...In a government as free as ours where people are at liberty, and will express their sentiments, oftentimes imprudently, and for want of information sometimes unjustly, allowances must be made for occasional effervescences; but after the declaration which I have here made of my political creed, you can run no hazard in asserting, that the Executive branch of this government never has, nor will suffer, while I preside, any improper conduct of its officers to escape with impunity; or will give its sanctions to any disorderly proceedings of its citizens."

These remarkable words are as relevant today as when they were written more than 200 years ago. They reflect the courage, conviction and moral standards that George Washington believed in and lived by. They are the model that we as citizens should emulate. We should strive to live, think and make decisions concerning our country with the same high ideals and clear vision as did our First Commander in Chief, our First President and our Foremost Freemason, Brother George Washington.

George D. Seghers is the Executive Director of the George Washington Masonic Memorial.



Memorial Tree Program

Over the years, the Memorial has lost many beautiful, older trees. Your participation in the Tree Program will help to restore the grounds to their original splendor, while giving you an opportunity to pay a special tribute. For a donation of \$500, a tree will be planted on the Memorial grounds in honor or memory of an individual or organization. A granite marker will be installed near each tree to identify the donor and honoree.

For information or to participate in this program, please contact George Seghers at 703-683-2007 or gseghers@gwmemorial.org. As always, your generous contribution to this and other Memorial programs will be received with the deepest appreciation.

What If George Had Said, "Yes!"

By Richard H. Curtis

There has been some speculation about the extent of George Washington's involvement within the Masonic Fraternity. Did he attend such-and-such Lodge? Did he actually preside over a meeting at a Lodge? Was he really asked to serve as Grand Master of Virginia?

As a general and later as president, Washington was preoccupied with matters of independence and guiding that independence onto a proper course. His devotion to duty left little time for heavy involvement in the Masonic Fraternity.

In December 1779, American Union Lodge proposed that George Washington lead Freemasonry in the struggling nation by serving as General Grand Master for all the states. During that time frame, there was plenty of dissension between Federalists and anti-Federalists. Should the colonies unite or should each remain independent? That was still a major concern in 1787 during the ratification process.

Henry Coil summed it up nicely when he said, "The proposal for a General Grand Master aroused essentially the same jealousies which made it so difficult to frame and adopt the Constitution of the United States."

The matter of a General Grand Lodge did not die. In 1819 the question was raised once again. This time much of the emphasis was placed on the need for standardizing the Masonic ritual among the various Grand Lodges.

By 1822, representatives from many Grand Lodges met in Washington, D.C. The question of a General Grand Lodge was again discussed and rejected. There were concerns that such a body would infringe upon the jurisdictions of existing Grand Lodges.

There were many other attempts to come together. The famous Baltimore conventions in the 1840s considered the issue, but the Grand Lodges could not agree. Further efforts in the 1850s proved fruitless.

Perhaps World War I did more to awaken the need for unity than did any other event. Masons were concerned about servicemen during the war. Government officials had turned down requests from various Grand Lodge leaders to travel to Europe to provide aid and comfort to Masons in uniform, because the federal government did not want to work with 50 or more independent Masonic groups.

Although Grand Lodges had learned to live with jurisdictional sovereignty, several Masonic leaders saw the need for a central agency to coordinate efforts to assist Masonic brethren serving their country. The war

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New Planned Giving Program Lets You Do It *Your Way!*

Sign up now and become a Friend of the Memorial

Now you can choose your own donation plan through the new *Friends of the Memorial Program*. As a supporter of the Memorial, you will make it possible for us to not only maintain and improve the Memorial, but to ensure that the great deeds, character and vision of George Washington will not be forgotten and will be passed down to all generations.

You want to be comfortable and gratified about supporting the Memorial, but you don't want to be flooded with mail asking for money. We don't want that either. As a *Friend of the Memorial*, participation is easy and convenient. You contribute based on the plan that's best for you. For example, you may consider the following *sample* donation plans:

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Quarterly - \$30 every three months

Twice per year - \$60 every 6 months

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When it's time to donate, you'll receive a friendly reminder. Or, for easy payments, simply use your credit card, saving you time, paper and postage! At the end of the year, you'll receive an annual statement detailing your donations for tax-deduction purposes.

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- Receive an annual statement for tax purposes

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What If George Had Said, “Yes!”, *continued from page 4*

had ended, however, before representatives of 22 Grand Lodges were finally brought together to discuss the matter. At a meeting in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in November 1918, there was some interest in forming a national Masonic agency — one that could be of service in peacetime as well as war. A proposal was prepared, and the representatives returned to their various Grand Lodges to seek approval. The following November, 34 Grand Lodges were represented at the first annual meeting of the Masonic Service Association (MSA).

To ease the minds of those who still feared that the Grand Lodges might become subordinate to the newly formed agency, a provision was written into the document so that “This constitution shall never be amended in such manner as to provide or permit the development of the Association into a National Grand Lodge.”

The MSA continues to offer educational material to its constituent Grand Lodges and serves as a central agency to coordinate relief funds. Through its Masonic Information Center, it offers a central location for the media to obtain information about the Fraternity.

The George Washington Masonic Memorial has also had a unifying influence without having Grand Lodges abdicate their sovereignty. The Memorial Association, established in 1910, soon received financial support from the Grand Lodges and individual Masons. The driving force was the desire to honor Brother Washington, who exemplified Masonic ideals as he set the nation on a proper course.

Perched on a hill in Alexandria, Virginia, the Memorial offers a united effort to reflect the pride of all Masons in this nation. Today the Memorial is working with Grand Lodges to have their Proceedings digitized. The net result will allow the Memorial to serve as a central source for retrieving data from the various Proceedings. This is a major task that would not be accomplished by independent Grand Lodges without encouragement from a centralized agency.

Picture the situation in America today if the states had not agreed to unite with a common goal. Unity has made even the smallest states stronger. One can only wonder what Masonry would be like today if George Washington had accepted the position of General Grand Master. Would he have done for Masonry what he did for the country? Would the Fraternity have traveled a different course? We will never know, but speculation is always an intriguing game.

Richard H. Curtis guided The Northern Light magazine for the Scottish Rite Northern Masonic Jurisdiction from its inception in 1970 until his retirement in 2006. He currently assists the Supreme Council's Sovereign Grand Commander with special projects.

Memorial Digitization Project Becomes Reality

By Mark A. Tabbert

The Grand Lodge of Washington is the inaugural Masonic body to digitize its complete Proceedings through the Memorial's ContentDM database system. Every page, image, chart and report from every year from 1858 to 2007 will be on a secure website. The agreement between Washington and the Memorial was signed in August and in September the complete set of 61 bound volumes containing some 52,000 pages was shipped to a processing center in Utah. By late October, Washington will receive a hard drive and a secure website.

Following close behind Washington, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts will start digitizing its Proceedings. But as the oldest Masonic body in North America, it will not digitize every year at once. Rather, it has decided to digitize from 1733-1855. These years are contained in five collected volumes published in 1895 and will provide invaluable insight into the early development and spread of Freemasonry throughout the Western Hemisphere. Massachusetts will digitize the remaining 140 bound volumes in due time. It is currently organizing the means to underwrite further batches through its local Lodges and charity funds.

Looking ahead to 2009, the Memorial expects the Grand Lodge of Nebraska and the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma to join the project.

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Freemasonry Exhibit Update

In August, additional displays were added to the new exhibit on American Freemasonry that recently opened to the public. These displays tell the story of Freemasonry in the American Revolution, Civil War and the Gilded Age, as well as Freemasonry today. A third phase is being planned and will include computer inter-actives that will provide entertaining, in-depth information on Freemasonry.



Local Lodges Sponsor Portrait Program



Local Lodges across the nation are answering the call to put George Washington back in the classroom as part of the Mount Vernon-initiated program in 2007 to distribute portraits of George Washington to every school in America. The George Washington Masonic Memorial has joined with Mount Vernon to support this worthy endeavor and is pleased at the interest the program is generating. Several Lodges have already sponsored a portrait and the Memorial continues to receive inquiries from those interested in participating in the program. America's Freemasons are in a unique position to help make sure that George Washington will once again greet students in school, inspiring them to lead lives of *virtue, character* and *vision*. Visit the Memorial's website for more information and to access a participation form at www.gwmemorial.org.

Kids and Families Dig Memorial

Without a doubt, visitors think the Memorial is a pretty cool place, but for the past few summers, many of them have also had a great time getting their hands dirty in Memorial soil unearthing historical relics as part of the Alexandria Archaeology Museum's Summer Camp and Family Dig Days. Participants work directly with local archaeologists and learn first-hand the steps to excavating a site. They also use science, history and geography skills to discover more about the town's history and how archaeological methods uncover the past. The Memorial is pleased to be part of this enriching public program. *(Photo courtesy of the Alexandria Archaeology Museum)*



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Term expires February 22, 2009

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**Member of Executive Committee*

Memorial Digitization Project, continued from page 7

Several other Grand Lodges, as well as other governing Masonic bodies, are currently studying the ContentDM database and discussing a variety of funding programs. For example, one Grand Lodge is considering asking local Lodges to sponsor individual years. Another may ask Lodges that have a Grand Master as a member to sponsor the year its brother presided in the Grand East. Still others may seek sponsorship from individuals or offer matching funds to encourage broader participation.

The Memorial will offer a demonstration of the full application of ContentDM at the Conference of Grand Masters in February. We are pleased at the level of interest and participation in this significant new service that will make the official record of the Craft known to all who seek it.

Mark A. Tabbert is the Director of Collections of the George Washington Masonic Memorial.

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The Messenger

The George Washington Masonic Memorial
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