

**The Very First Presentation of the  
George Washington Lodge of Research  
By Most Worshipful Donald Maynard Robey  
August 4, 2012**

**Why George Washington?**

Some years ago, after an Installation of Officers at a Lodge in Northern Virginia, a friend and Brother of the craft asked me a question, the answer to which was (in my opinion) so basic, that I was amazed it was asked at all. "Why is George Washington's picture hanging in the Lodge? Why do I see it hanging in every Lodge room or Masonic Temple here in Virginia?" I gave the answer that George Washington was not only a great American and father of our country, but he personified all that we Freemasons hold dear. My friend proceeded to ask why we chose George Washington, when we could choose from centuries of Masonic heroes? I was perplexed and that is what led me to write this short talk.

Most of us have heard the mythical stories of George Washington. As a boy, he chopped down his father's cherry tree with his new hatchet, and when his father asked him who did it, he bravely said, "I cannot tell a lie, father, I did it." (Or words to that effect.) This was a story that first appeared in the early 1800s to teach young children to tell the truth. Or perhaps you have heard the story of George Washington throwing a silver dollar across the Rappahannock River. If this really happened, we could all be impressed. The story probably has a basis in fact. Like most boys and young men, he threw stones across the water to see how many times they could skim or skip across the surface. He may have quite well skipped a stone or even a silver dollar across a narrow portion of the Rappahannock River.

However, these are not the reasons that his memory is revered. George Washington earned our respect; it was not bestowed on him. He held ultimate power in this new country several times, and did not seize it for himself and his posterity.

In July 1752, George Washington inherited the Mount Vernon estate, and on November 4th of that year he was initiated an Entered Apprentice in Fredericksburg Lodge, he was Passed a Fellowcraft on March 3rd and Raised a Master Mason on August 4th of 1753, 259 years ago today. Masonic principles and ideals affected him for the rest of his life in a most positive manner. Did you ever realize that it is exactly nine months, to the day,

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from the day that he was Initiated to the day he was Raised a Master Mason? I was born on August 4<sup>th</sup>, so you know his being Raised on that day has always meant much to me.

We are told that he would rise early in the morning, retire to his study for an hour, and study the Holy Bible before proceeding with the day's business. Likewise, in the evening, he would excuse himself from his company, and study the Holy Bible for an hour before retiring for the night.

He and his good friend George Mason selected the location for the construction of the Pohick Episcopal Church, it being midway between their homes. He served as a vestryman at this church, as well. He had married a widow, Martha Park Custis, and adopted her children as his own.

When the Governor of Virginia disbanded the House of Burgesses, which met at Williamsburg, the members assembled at the Episcopal Church in Richmond. At one meeting, George Washington offered to raise a unit of soldiers at his own expense and lead them to defend the colonies.

When the Revolution began in New England, where most of the fighting was occurring (such as Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill), the Continental Congress appointed George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. John Adams, who was not a Freemason, is credited with recommending the appointment of this Virginian, in order to unite the colonies. The Continental Congress, whose President was John Hancock (a Freemason), and many others, including Benjamin Franklin (a Past Grand Master of Pennsylvania), thought this a good idea, and appointed him. George Washington agreed to serve, but did not want a salary, only reimbursement for expenses, while commanding the Army.

Since the fighting was occurring in New England, George Washington proceeded to New England, where he met with the New England Generals who resented a Virginian being given command, when they were doing the fighting. George Washington arrived, met on the level with those Generals, and they readily accepted his appointment.

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Throughout the War, George Washington was not known as a victorious Commander, but he did turn the tide at several battles by his presence. The British Army outnumbered our Army throughout the Revolution. It is reported that as the Americans began to retreat under heavy attack, George Washington rode out in front of them, encouraged them to stand and fight, and on many occasions turned potential defeats into victory. He had several bullet holes through his coat, cloak and hat, and even had horses shot from under him, but never sustained a bullet wound. He was truly a man of destiny.

The first Government of the United States was a loose Confederation of States, under the Articles of Confederation. Eventually, this weak central Government was considered not to be working, and a Constitutional Convention was to be held. George Washington was asked to preside over the Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Washington was the presiding officer, or President of the Constitutional Convention. The delegates were sworn to secrecy as to the internal proceedings of the Convention, and a new Governmental document, the Constitution, was created. A strong central Government was established by the Constitution, leaving all powers not delineated therein to the States.

George Washington, once again seeing his work done, returned to Mount Vernon to resume his life as a farmer and businessman.

The new Congress found the Electoral College to have elected George Washington to be the first President of the United States, and sent a committee to ask him to go to New York, the capital at the time, to serve. Once again, he answered his nation's call to duty. He was sworn in at Federal Hall in New York City, on the Holy Bible of Saint John's Masonic Lodge Number 1, by the Chancellor of New York State, Robert Livingston, who was also serving as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York at the time. George Washington took the oath of office as delineated in the Constitution. Afterwards, the President, his party, and the Congress, many of whom were Freemasons, attended a celebration service at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, New York City, where they heard a stirring sermon by the newly appointed Chaplain of the House of Representatives.

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While President, he laid the Cornerstone of the Capital Building in the new Federal City, with Masonic Ceremony, acting as Grand Master of Maryland. He also served as Charter Master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22 under the Grand Lodge of Virginia, and now Alexandria-Washington Lodge #22, my mother Lodge.

After a term as President, George Washington was prepared to resume life at Mount Vernon, once again but it was not to be. His countrymen asked him to serve for a second term. Reluctantly, he agreed and after that term, he finally retired to Mount Vernon, insisting that no man should serve more than two terms as President of the United States. In effect, this became a tradition, until in the 1940s, when the two-term limit was made an Amendment to the Constitution,

While serving as President, when asked if he should be called, Your Excellency, or Your Highness, he responded, "Mister President." This struck down the old terminology, which related to royalty and the aristocracy in the Old World.

Why George Washington?

He was a Man who served his country when it called upon him to serve.

He was a husband and father, who provided for his family.

He was a good and religious man, always studying the Holy Bible, the Great Light in Masonry.

He lived by a code of Morals, to which all Freemasons can relate.

He was, indeed, First in War, First in Peace, and First in the Hearts of his Countrymen.

He was a Man, an American and a Freemason.

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In 1932, the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth of Washington, at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial, Carl H. Claudy, the renowned Masonic Author, was asked to make some remarks concerning George Washington and his involvement in Freemasonry. This is what he had to say:

“Washington was so obviously a man's man, a soldier, a statesman, a farmer, a thinker of great thoughts of his government and of his people. Its no wonder that the fraternal side of life made to Washington a powerful appeal, no wonder that the ancient craft of Freemasonry should have become so interwoven with his life.

Yet, particularly is it natural, that a man who so loved his home, and whose religious feelings were so strong should turn to his lodge for that particular variety of spiritual strength, which to many men comes from no other place.

The effect upon character produced by a mans religion and church affiliation can only be measured by the yardstick of a man's reputation, few great men have set down in black and white those things of the spirit which, intimate and personal, are the very man himself.

The same may be said of a man's freemasonry. What it is in his heart can only be judged by the externals. Judging by this standard, Washington frequently expressed his love and veneration for his Masonry and his lodge. Many of his closest friends and associates, his generals and military aides in the revolution were members of our ancient craft, and his whole life of consecration and service to his fellow man carried out the ideals which radiate from our Masonic altar.

We members of this ancient craft understand why Freemasonry made so great an appeal to this great leader. But anyone who will read even a little of the history of Freemasonry will understand why this body of truth, this organization of such great teaching and high endeavor, this society of such strict moral ideals, was at once a magnet and a comfort to a man such as the man whom we honor here this evening, Worshipful Brother George Washington.”

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I know our Brother Washington would be proud of the fact that the George Washington Lodge of Research has been chartered here this day and I pray that it receives the greatest of support from the members of the Craft here in Virginia. I know that I am looking forward with great anticipation to the meetings of this Research lodge and the inspiring lectures that we shall hear at each of its meetings.

I appreciate being asked to deliver some remarks today about the great man George Washington that we in Virginia hold so dear.

Thank you.

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**The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge**

OF ANCIENT, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

ALAN W. ADKINS, P.G.M.  
Grand Secretary  
4115 NINE MILE ROAD  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23223-4926

TO: The Officers of the Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of Virginia  
The Past Grand Masters  
The District Deputy Grand Masters  
The Masters and Wardens of all Lodges holden under this Grand Lodge

**GREETINGS:**

In accordance with the provisions of Section 1.05 of the Methodical Digest, a special communication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons in the Commonwealth of Virginia, will convene. The communication will take place on Saturday, August 4, 2012, at 1:00 o'clock P.M., at Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, located at 803 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg, Virginia. Grand Lodge Officers are to assemble at 12:00 Noon for practice.

This special communication is called for the purpose of instituting under dispensation George Washington Lodge of Research, with Masonic ceremony.

Dress for elected Grand Lodge Officers will be Grand Lodge uniform. The appointed Grand Lodge Officers are to wear dark business suits.

All District Deputy Grand Masters as well as Masters and Wardens of subordinate Lodges holden under this Grand Lodge are requested to wear the apron and jewel of their respective offices.

Elected and appointed Grand Lodge Officers will notify the Grand Lodge office if they cannot be present.

Given under my hand as Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, this 18th day of June, 2012, and to which I have caused to be affixed the Seal of the Grand Lodge of Virginia by the Grand Secretary.



*William T. Ellison, Jr.*

William T. Ellison, Jr.  
Grand Master

Attest:

*Alan W. Adkins*

Alan W. Adkins  
Grand Secretary