

DEDICATING THE WASHINGTON MASONIC MEMORIAL

Freemasonry is the only Fraternal Order for which the United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission has set aside a whole week for participation in the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of the First President.

The week of May 7th to 14th inclusive will go down in Masonic history as the most impressive of all periods of Masonic celebration. The peak of the National Observance will be reached on May 12th, when the great George Washington National Memorial in Alexandria will be dedicated to Masonic use by the Grand Lodge of Virginia.

Every Freemason in the country is concerned, as every Grand Jurisdiction has contributed to the erection of this, the mightiest memorial ever erected by any man, by any order, people or nation. Begun twenty years ago with the simple idea of providing a fireproof repository for the priceless relics of Washington, the Freemason, in the possession of Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22, before long the plans changed, and the project was for a monument to George Washington the Mason, as well as for a fireproof structure to keep safe forever those objects which Mason and profane like hold in veneration. As time passed on and interest grew, the plans were again enlarged, so that the huge building which now towers four hundred feet above the surrounding country might be not only a Memorial to the man and the Mason, but a monument to Freemasonry.

To this great undertaking the Grand Lodges of the United States pledged the Craft. As their representatives in the Memorial Association brought home reports of the progress of the work and the enlargement of the plans, the Craft enthusiastically backed up these pledges.

The great structure is now much more than either monument or 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 Grand Jurisdictions can labor unitedly to a common end. East, and West, North and South, have engaged in friendly rivalry to see which would soonest complete its per capita contributions.

Written into the constitution of the association is the proviso that no contract for any work may be made until money to pay for it is actually in the treasury - hence this imposing pile of imperishable granite, its decorations, its lighting, its heating, the thirty-six acres of land on which it stands and its landscaping, are all paid for. Not a dollar of mortgage or indebtedness of any kind stands against this shrine of the ancient Craft.

The exterior of the building is completed; 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. But, much remains to be done inside and

furnishings have yet to be bought and placed. It is not a complete and perfect whole which will be dedicated and consecrated to Masonic use on May 12th; the task is not yet finished. But the end is in sight. The last dollar of the four million required will be speedily raised, following the demonstration to the two hundred thousand Masons expected at the dedicatory exercises, of the magnificence of the structure and the sacredness of the trust to finish it immediately and completely, The influence of this monument cannot be estimated.

Unlike many memorials, this will serve many practical purposes as well as those altruistic and patriotic. Lodges will meet in it. Ceremonial of all proper Masonic character will be held in it - have been held in it. Masonic bodies will travel long distances to perform some ritualistic observance within its portals. 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 shrine, a meeting place, a monument and a Memorial.

It belongs to American Freemasonry; to every Craftsman of every lodge. On page 11 is a table showing (as of December, 1931), the contributions of the forty-nine Jurisdictions, and the relative standing of the several States. These figures are taken from the Masonic Reviews of J. Edward Allen, noted Masonic statistician, and Fraternal Correspondent of North Carolina.

Plans for the dedication program contemplate a parade which will begin at 9:30 o'clock on the morning of May 12th, the ceremony of dedication to follow immediately after the parade has been dismissed. The dedication program will include an invocation by Bishop W. Bertrand Stevens, of Los Angeles, a short address by the President of the Memorial Association, Past Grand Master Louis A. Watres, (Penn.) a special ceremony prepared for the occasion by the Grand Lodge of Virginia, an address by Past Grand Master Melvin M. Johnson, of Massachusetts, the principal speaker, and a benediction by Reverend Brother William J. Morton of Alexandria, Chaplain of the association. Two Masonic Glee Clubs will sing.

The President of the United States will arrive at one o'clock for the dedication exercises. He will be saluted with twenty-one guns from an Army Battery, and as the first gun is fired, the salute will be taken up by five Naval Vessels which will at that time be in the harbor off Alexandria.

The Secretary of the Navy has ordered the Frigate Constitution, "Old Ironsides," to Alexandria for all of "Masonic Week."

An unusually complete outfit of loud speakers is being installed, so that, no matter how great the assemblage before the platform on which the dedication exercises take place, all may hear in comfort. The ceremonies will be broadcast over both the great national hook-ups. The parade will be both large and colorful. Many large delegations from Grand Lodges from all over the country will participate, and uniformed bodies of the Templars, Shrine and Grotto will take part. Many Masonic bands and the Army, Navy and Marine Bands will be in line, and forty-nine Grand Masters will first lead, then review the procession.

The dedicatory exercises will be conducted by the Grand Lodge of Virginia, but all the Grand Masters will participate. The special ceremony arranged for this occasion includes individual

responses from the Grand Masters of the thirteen original States of the Union, and the District of Columbia, and group responses from other Grand Masters.

The gavel used at the laying of the corner stone of the United States Capitol will be in the hands of the Most worshipful Grand Master of Virginia. The Bible from Fredricksburg Lodge, on which Washington was obligated as an Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Masons, will be present on this historic occasion, as will the Bible from St. John's Lodge, of New York City, on which Washington took the oath of office when he became the first President of the united States. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts will bring to the dedication its famous urn, in which is a lock of Washington's hair.

This urn, the handiwork of M.W. Paul Revere, is the most precious possession of the Grand Lodge of the Bay State, and is handed from Grand Master to Grand Master at the St. John's Day Communication. The center of "Masonic Week," the very climax to the nation-wide celebration of the Bicentennial, this dedication of the Memorial carries in its train many other Masonic observances of noteworthy importance. These are, in brief:

May 7 Saturday, (7:30 P.M.) - Special Communication, Harmony Lodge, No. 17, F.A.A.M. Lodge Room No. 1, Masonic Temple, 13th and New York, Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. Entered Apprentice Degree.

May 8 Sunday, (9:30 A.M.) - Religious services, Kallipolis Grotto, M.O.V.P.E.R., Sylvan Theatre, Monument Grounds, Washington.

May 9 Monday, (10 A.M.) - Annual meeting of the Masonic Service Association of the united States, Raleigh Hotel, Washington.

May 9 Monday, (3 P.M.) - Special Communication of the Grand Lodge of Texas, in the Memorial at Alexandria, Va.

May 9 Monday, (6 P.M.) - Annual Conference of the Grand Secretaries of the United States, Raleigh Hotel, Washington.

May 9 Monday, (7 P.M.) - Annual conclave of the Grand Commandry of Knights Templar of the District of Columbia, Masonic Temple, Washington.

May 10 Tuesday, (9:30) A.M.) - Annual Conference of Grand Masters of the United States, Willard Hotel, Washington, Dinner in the Evening.

May 10 Tuesday, (8 P.M.) - Thirty-Second Degree, A.A.S.R. Scottish Rite Cathedral, 433 Third Street, N.W. Washington.

May 11 Wednesday, (9 A.M.) - Annual Convention of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association, in Memorial at Alexandria.

May 11 Wednesday, (1 P.M.) - Special Communication of King Solomon's Lodge, No. 31, F.A.A.M., Masonic Temple, Washington, Master Mason Degree.

May 11 Wednesday, (7:30 P.M.) - Special Communication of the Grand Lodge of Missouri, in the Memorial at Alexandria.

May 11 Wednesday, (7 P.M.) - Semi-Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, Masonic Temple, Washington.

May 12 Thursday, (9:30 A.M.) - Dedication of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial at Alexandria. Parade - Dedication immediately following parade.

May 12 Thursday, (7:30 P.M.) Stated Communication of Alexandria- Washington Lodge, No.22, in the Memorial at Alexandria.

May 12 Thursday, (8 P.<.) - Stated Communication of Temple-Noyes Lodge, No.32, F.A.A.M., Masonic Temple, Washington, Fellowcraft Degree.

May 12 Thursday, (9 P.M.) - Reception and Ball, Willard Hotel, under Auspices of Circle Club, Washington.

May 13 Friday, - Annual Conclave of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Virginia, in the Memorial at Alexandria.

May 13 Friday, (10 A.M.) - Meeting of the Masonic Librarians and Students of the United States, in the Memorial at Alexandria.

May 13 Friday, (8 P.M.) - Grand Chapter O.E.S., District of Columbia, Pageant, "Washington's Vision of a Triumphant Nation," Auditorium, Washington.

May 13 Friday, (7:30 P.M.) - Banquet, National League of Masonic Clubs, Willard Hotel, Washington.

May 11-14 - Annual Meeting of the National League of Masonic Clubs, in Washington. Saturday morning session in Memorial at Alexandria.

May 14 Saturday, (all day) - Special Convocation of Mt. Vernon Chapter, No.3, R.A.M., of Washington, in Memorial at Alexandria, Royal Arch Degree.

While Commanderies, Royal Arch Chapters, Eastern Star Chapters, Masonic Clubs, Librarians and Students, etc., all have a part in this week of Masonic celebration, the dedication of the Memorial is strictly and exclusively an Ancient Craft observance, except for the participation in the parade by allied Masonic Bodies. Planning for this celebration last year, the Memorial Association decided that while certain assistance from allied Masonic bodies would be gladly welcomed, the ceremonies should be wholly in the hands of the Freemasons of the United States

who have erected the building, just as the dedication should be wholly in the hands of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, in which Jurisdiction the mighty Memorial is erected.

Alexandria is but six miles by road or rail from the Nation's Capital. Alexandria is a small city, and will be taxed to its capacity during this week. The majority of delegates and visitors will live in Washington during that week; some will use their railroad cars as sleeping quarters.

Transportation between the two cities is by bus, automobile, railroad and boat. The United States Government has just completed and opened to traffic the magnificent Memorial Highway, passing through Alexandria. The Washington end of this boulevard begins at the Memorial Bridge, due West of the Lincoln Memorial.

Because of the enormous number of visitors expected, automobiles and buses will be barred from Alexandria after 9 o'clock in the morning of May 12th. Twenty-five to fifty thousand automobiles, all trying to reach Alexandria at the same time, would jam even the new Memorial Boulevard, and there is no place in Alexandria to park so many cars, even if they could all arrive safely at the same time. Visitors to Alexandria on May 12th should plan to go from Washington by railroad; steam trains will leave all day long at five minute intervals. The railroad authorities promise ample accommodations, no matter how large the crowd.

The dedication of the greatest Memorial ever erected to mortal man will write important Masonic history. All Masons who can make the trip will be present; for those who cannot participate in the flesh, the radio offers an opportunity to hear, and, thus, to be present in spirit while the ancient Craft, with solemn ceremony and joyful hearts, consecrates its wondrous Memorial to Washington the Mason, and to Freemasonry.