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# Cornerstone rededication at G.W. Masonic Memorial

This month, freemasons from around the world will unite to re-dedicate the cornerstone of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. The memorial is a National Historic Landmark that stands as American Freemasonry's tribute to George Washington and the values of freedom. Each year, thousands of museum guests visit the memorial to learn about Washington and Freemasonry and to become inspired by the great heritage left to us by the Father of our Country and our nation's foremost Freemason.

"The centennial of that spectacular event is nearly upon us, and it is our great pleasure to extend to you a cordial invitation to a special re-dedication of our cornerstone on February 20, 2023," Ken Nagel, past grand master of California and the first vice president of the memorial Association, said. "This will be an opportunity for supporters of the memorial from around the world to join in a Celebration both of the memorial's past as well as its future in the century to come."

The original Nov. 1, 1923, celebration of the cornerstone was a national Masonic event.

That day began with a parade containing seven divisions that included 22 marching bands and more than 10,000 freemasons. Several military units and bands, including 500 sailors from the light cruiser USS Richmond, that were anchored in the Potomac River led the parade.

More than two hours after the parade started, the Grand Lodge of Virginia and more than 15,000 freemasons and spectators were in place on the hill. President Calvin Coolidge, Chief Justice William Howard Taft, Virginia Gov. E. Lee Trinkle, most U.S. grand masters and other civic and Masonic dignitaries attended. Alongside the American Masonic leaders, including Puerto Rico, were representatives from Ontario, Panama, Philippines, Quebec and Venezuela.

The ceremony began as Acting Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Virginia Charles Callahan stepped to the microphone. After opening remarks, he used the same small silver trowel used by Washington on Sept. 18, 1793, during the Masonic cornerstone ceremony of the U.S. Capitol, to dap wet cement on top of the stone. He handed the trowel to Coolidge,

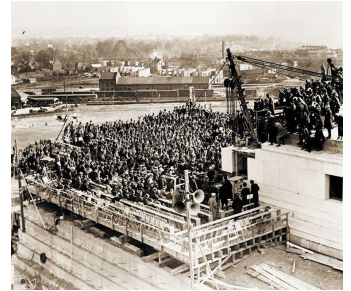
who with Taft and every U.S. grand master present, or his representative, followed suit.

As each grand master stepped forward he also placed books, coins and other representative items into a strong box, after which the cornerstone was lowered over the box into place. The cornerstone was duly tested by plumb, level and square and formally declared "to be true and trusty, and duly laid."

The stone was then ceremonially "blessed" with the traditional corn, wine and oil. Lastly, the working tools were presented to architect Harvey Wiley Corbett, "with the superintendence and direction of the work, having full confidence in your skill and capacity to conduct the same." Prayers, hymns and short addresses punctuated the work.

The Right Rev. James E. Freemason, bishop of the Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Washington, D.C. concluded his speech that day with this charge:

"There is a common level in our Fraternity, a great democracy that binds us all together. As the years come and go, may that bond keep us so closely knitted together that



PHOTO/THE GEORGE WASHINGTON MASONIC NATIONAL MEMORIAL

The 1923 Masonic Memorial cornerstone ceremony.

we shall contribute our part, dear Brethren, not only to perpetuate the memory of Washington but to perpetuate that for which he gave all he had of genius and of wealth, to perpetuate the fair Republic of which we, as citizens, are so justly proud."

The years have indeed "come and gone" and for freemasons, now is the time to renew their fraternal bonds, celebrate the memorial's timeless legacy, and honor the sacred memory of Washington. You can join freemasons from around the country in February 2023 and become part of the memorial's second century of making history.

*Out of the Attic is provided by The Office of Historic Alexandria.*