

GEORGE WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON'S
MASONIC
CORRESPONDENCE

George Washington

**Washington's Masonic
Correspondence**

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Washington G.

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Содержание

FOREWORD	7
The Masonic Correspondence of Washington	9
I	15
II	21
III	24
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	25

George Washington Washington's Masonic Correspondence / As Found among the Washington Papers in the Library of Congress



J. Henry Williams

Grand Master
1914-1915.

*J. Henry Williams,
R. W. Grand Master* *Office of the
R. W. Grand Master*
F. & A. Masons in Pennsylvania,
Masonic Temple Philadelphia.

The position of eminence, the great respect and the profound reverence in which the name of Washington is enshrined in the hearts of the American people, and particularly so, with the members of this Fraternity, and of all true lovers of liberty and freedom wheresoever dispersed, is the reason, if any be needed, why everything relating to this great man and worthy brother should be preserved for the future generations, to be used by them as a guide, in the cultivation of those cardinal virtues of Honor and Integrity, that should ever characterize the conduct of a good man and a good Mason.

The collection and reproduction of the letters of Brother Washington, together with the text of this book, have been prepared under my supervision, and its publication is heartily approved.

J. Henry Williams

Grand Master.

February 22, A.D. 1915—A.L. 5915.



FOREWORD



WASHINGTON'S Masonic correspondence as found among the Washington papers in the Manuscript department of the Library of Congress, affords an insight of the great esteem in which Washington held the Masonic Fraternity, of which since his early days he had been an honored member.

This is further shown by his great courtesy to the Brethren, in his replies to their addresses, no matter whether they were from a Grand or Subordinate Lodge. In this collection, were also found some of the original drafts of Washington's replies, together with copies of the various masonic addresses and letters to him, and in the case of Dominie Snyder, press copies of his answers.

In the present work an attempt has been made to group this matter together in chronological order, also to show some of the surroundings and conditions under which this correspondence was made, and of the Brethren who were prominent in the presentation of these Eleven Addresses, which came to him from Seven of the Thirteen Colonies.

A complete set of photostatic fac-similes of these documents in the Library of Congress, has been secured for the Museum of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. Efforts were also made to obtain photographic copies of such of the Washington Masonic letters as were still in existence, which were successful except in two instances as noted in the text.

It will be noted that on April 30, 1789, Washington, while Master of his Lodge, was inaugurated President of the United States; this is the only instance where one of the fourteen Presidents, who were Members of our Fraternity was a Master of a Lodge during their term as President.

The esteem in which Washington held the Masonic Fraternity, is shown by the fact, that in almost every case he had both the address and his reply, copied upon opposite pages of one of his folio letter-books, now in the Library of Congress. These copies are respectively in the handwriting of Washington's private secretaries, viz:—Major William Jackson: Tobias Lear: Bartholomew Dandridge and G. W. Craik.

In addition to the above copies we have Washington's original drafts of his letters to Watson and Cassoul, to the Grand Lodges of Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Maryland, to Paul Revere, and as before stated press copies of his answers to Mr. Snyder.

A perusal of these original documents, as here presented, affords an excellent illustration of the *entente cordiale*, which existed between Washington and his Masonic Brethren.

Upon the other hand, how the Masonic Fraternity, during Washington's lifetime, venerated their august Brother, is shown by the addresses of this correspondence as retained by Washington.

Also by the various Masonic Memorial services held, after Washington's death, the chief of which was in Philadelphia, under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. The Masonic services held in every State of the Union, the many Eulogies and Sermons delivered and printed are matters of history.

How this veneration of the great Washington continued during the past years, is shown by the fact that there are no less than 53 Masonic Lodges in the United States, named after the illustrious Brother. This is independent of the numerous Royal Arch Chapters, Commanderies, and other Masonic bodies, that bear the name "Washington."

Washington Lodges are found in thirty-eight of the forty-eight States of the American Union.

The other ten States, which thus far have no "Washington Lodge" within their Jurisdiction, are Mississippi and Texas, together with the newer western States lately admitted into the American Union, viz:—Nevada, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona.

In addition to the fifty-three Washington Lodges, there is also one each in Canada, the Island of Cuba and the District of Columbia.

In the Masonic Fraternity throughout the world, the name of Washington is ever kept in remembrance, as one of the brightest luminaries in the Masonic constellation, one of the most prominent examples, being his full length oil portrait in Masonic clothing in the Hall of the Grand Lodge of England at London.

Acknowledgments are due to the Hon. Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress, for placing these documents at the disposal of the writer, and giving permission to have photostat copies made of same; also to J. Henry Williams, Esq., R. W. Grand Master of Masons in Pennsylvania and Masonic Jurisdiction thereunto belonging, for suggestions and encouragement in the preparation of this work.

Julius F. Sachse.

Philadelphia, February 22, A.D. 1915—A.L. 5915



The Masonic Correspondence of Washington

MUCH has been written pro and con about Washington and his connection with the Masonic Fraternity. Thus far no complete set of his Masonic writings have been compiled or published. Such portions as have been printed were fragmentary, and issued for what may be called local purposes.

How careful Washington was of his Masonic correspondence is shown by the fact that he had copies made, in his private letter books, of most all letters sent him by the various Masonic Grand and Subordinate bodies, and his answers thereto, usually upon opposite pages. He thus had both the addresses and his reply at hand for easy reference. This fact shows the esteem in which Washington held his Brethren of the Masonic Fraternity, as well as his own opinion of Freemasonry.

These letter-books are now in the Library of Congress, and photostat copies of such as relate to Freemasonry have been made for the Library of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

As to the authenticity of the Washington Letter Books, and how they came into the possession of the United States Government is explained by the following statement by Mr. Galliard Hunt, chief Manuscript division, Library of Congress:¹

"They are a part of the Washington papers in
"the Government's possession, purchased from the
"Washington family, one lot in 1834 and the re-
"mainder in 1849, and deposited in the Department
"of State until 1903, when, by the President's order,
"they were sent to this Library. They range in date
"from 1754 to 1799. Some of them are partly
"or wholly in Washington's hand-writing, and others
"in the writing of his secretaries and their clerks.
"There are no volumes of press copies, but there are
"some press copies among the papers."

Washington in writing his answer to the various greetings, in most cases would first make a rough copy of his reply, then digest, alter, correct or change such parts or sentences as he thought proper. Then after deliberate consideration, a fair copy would be made either by Washington or one of his Secretaries and signed by him, and sent to the Masonic bodies for which they were intended.

Fortunately some of the original drafts of these Masonic letters have come down to us; thus far five autographic copies have been found among the Washington papers in the Library of Congress at Washington.

1. Draft of letter written at Newburg, New York, August 19, 1782, to Watson and Cassoul of Nantes, France, thanking them for the Masonic Apron, embroidered by the nuns at Nantes, and which is now in possession of Alexandria-Washington Lodge, No. 22, at Alexandria, Virginia.

2. To the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

3. To the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

4. To the Grand Lodge of South Carolina.

5. To the Grand Lodge of Maryland; this draft is a two-page letter written upon a letter sheet and shows many changes and corrections; it is dated 1798.

In addition to the above original drafts there were found several addresses and the accompanying answers, which thus far have never been published, in fact no mention of them has ever appeared in print, viz:—

1. An address from the Grand Lodge of Georgia, together with Washington's reply.

¹ Letter to Julius F. Sachse from Manuscript Division, December 19, 1914—in Library of Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

2. A letter to Paul Revere, Grand Master of Massachusetts and his Grand Officers.

3. An address from the Brethren of Prince George's Lodge, No. 16, Georgetown, South Carolina, presented to President Washington during his visit to South Carolina, April 30, 1791, also his reply to same.

4. An address from the Brethren of St. John's Lodge, No. 2, of Newbern, North Carolina, and the reply to same.

Photostat copies of the above have also been obtained which make the most complete collection of the Masonic Correspondence of Washington which has thus far been compiled.

A careful study of this correspondence so carefully cherished by Washington puts an entirely new phase upon Washington's connection with the Masonic Fraternity, and his esteem of Freemasonry.

These papers absolutely thrust aside all of the statements, arguments and libels, brought forth by our misguided enemies at the time of the Anti-Masonic craze during the last century, and in a small way kept alive even down to the present day by some people who are blinded by their ignorance or malice.

Referring to some of their published statements that Washington never belonged to the Masonic Fraternity, and that there were no authentic Masonic letters nor copies thereof among his records so frequently made during the political Anti-Masonic craze, which swept over New England and the Middle States about eighty-five years ago, the following quotations from the Masonic literature of the period will prove interesting examples.

One of the chief statements made by these people, and brought before all their conventions and heralded in the public prints was: "That though General Washington caused to be carefully copied in books kept for that purpose, all his letters on every subject, no trace whatever of any of the five letters under consideration,² nor any letters to any other Lodge or Masonic body whatever, are to be found among the records of his correspondence."³

The chief authority upon whom the leaders of the Anti-Masonic movement at that time depended in their defamation of Washington, was Jared Sparks of Boston, who at the time was engaged writing a life of Washington, and then had access to all the Washington letter-books and papers, and from his connection with the Washington correspondence, was supposed to be the best qualified to pass upon their authenticity.

Another of the charges made by the Anti-Masonic bigots whose chief object was to controvert facts was:

"That although Washington was *extremely scrupulous* in preserving his correspondence with all public or private bodies, there is not a line of his *relating to Freemasonry*, to be found among all his papers, except the correspondence with Mr. Snyder!⁴ It is also a fact, that Washington was equally scrupulous in dating his letters, and it is believed that not one can be found, which is without a date."⁵

It appears that the chairman of a committee of citizens of Boston called upon the officers of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts to submit their two Washington letters to Jared Sparks for his inspection. This the Grand Officers refused to do.

² The letters referred to by the Anti-Masons were the one to King David's Lodge at Newport, two to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and one to Charleston, S. C., and to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. The above five Masonic Letters were all that were known to the Anti-Masons at that time.

³ "Vindication | of | General Washington | from the stigma | of adherence to | Secret Societies | by | Joseph Ritner | Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, | communicated | by | request of the House of Representatives, to that body, | on the 8th of March, 1837." This address during the Anti-Masonic period was regarded as an important state paper.

⁴ Letter press copies of the Snyder letters were retained by Washington. Photostat copies of same are in the Archives of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

⁵ "Proceedings of the Third State Anti-masonic Convention, of Massachusetts, Worcester, 1832," p. 27.

In return Sparks sent the following letter to the Chairman:

"Boston, February 18, 1833.

"Sir,—I received this morning your letter of the 15th instant, in which you inquire:

"Whether I have yet seen or had in my possession any original letter or letters, in the hand writing of General Washington, addressed to any body of men denominating themselves Freemasons.

"In reply, I can only state that I have seen no letters from General Washington of the kind described in yours, nor received any communication on the subject, either verbal or written.⁶

"I am, Sir,

"Very respectfully,

"Your ob't servant,

"Jared Sparks."

How Sparks could have overlooked the numerous entries in the letter books whose numbers and folios are here quoted, also the drafts of replies in Washington's hand-writing and signed by him (copies of which are here given in this work), can only be accounted for by the fact that he must have been carried away by the political excitement of the day.

Washington's connection with the Masonic Fraternity has been exhaustively traced by Brother James M. Lamberton, Past Master of Perseverance Lodge, No. 21, in his address "Washington as a Freemason," from the day of his entrance into Fredericksburg Lodge, No. 4, of Virginia, September 1, 1752, until the day of his death, December 14, 1799, before the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, at its celebration of the Sesqui-Centennial Anniversary of the Initiation of Brother George Washington into the Fraternity of Freemasons,⁷ held in the Masonic Temple, in the city of Philadelphia on Wednesday, November 5, 1902.

It must also be remembered that Washington made a public profession of his membership in Philadelphia, Monday, December 28, 1778, when he walked in procession with his brethren of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, from the College at Fourth and Arch Streets to Christ Church on Second Street above Market Street, Philadelphia, where, after a prayer by Rev. William White, a sermon was preached for the "[Benefit of the POOR] by appointment of and before | The General Communication | of | Free and Accepted | MASONS | of the | State of PENNSYLVANIA, | on Monday, December 28, 1788, | Celebrated, agreeable to their Constitution, | as the Anniversary of | ST. JOHN the Evangelist, | by William Smith, D.D., | Provost of the College and Academy of Philadelphia." |

This Sermon was printed and dedicated to Brother Washington and a copy sent to him, which was bound with other pamphlets in a volume lettered "Masonic Sermons," and is so mentioned in the inventory of his estate and now in the Boston Athenæum.⁸ At this service over four hundred pounds were collected for the relief of the poor.

Rev. Brother William Smith, D.D., preached a number of Masonic Sermons in Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland; three of which delivered at the request of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania were printed, viz.:

⁶ Vindication of Washington before quoted, p. 13.

⁷ The Ancient Minute Book and Ledger of Fredericksburg Lodge, No. 4, in Virginia, of which we have a photostat, is still in possession of the Lodge, showing that "George Washington was entered November 4, 1752, and on November 6, paid for his entrance £2. 3. 0, March 3, 1753, George Washington was passed to Fellow-Craft; August 4, 1753, George Washington was raised Master Mason."

⁸ Catalogue of Washington Collection in Boston Athenæum, Boston, 1897, p. 185.

Sermon 1.—On Brotherly Love, &c. Preached on the Anniversary of St. John the Baptist, June 24, 1755,

Sermon 2.—Preached on Monday, December 28, 1778, celebrated as the Anniversary of St. John the Evangelist. With an Appendix on the Character of Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus,

Sermon 3.—Preached before the Grand Lodge of Communication, on St. John the Baptist's day, June 24, 1795.

Original copies of the above are in the Library of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

Rev. Brother Smith reprinted the above in a Volume of Sermons with the following note:⁹

"N. B. The above three Sermons were preached at the request of the Grand Lodge of Communication, for Pennsylvania, and contains in substance all that the Author thinks it necessary to bequeath to the Brotherhood, by way of Sermons, preached at different times and in sundry of the neighboring States, during 48 Years past."

By referring to the following letters and Documents it is shown that Washington's interest in Freemasonry and the Fraternity continued until the time of his death.

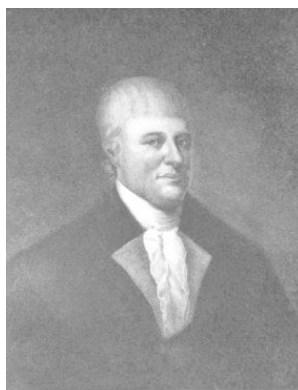
These documents cover the period from 1782 to 1798.

As these copies in our possession are photostat fac-similes of the original documents in the Library of Congress, there can never be any question of correctness or of their authenticity.

The finding and collating of this material will settle for all time to come the question of Washington's connection with the Ancient Fraternity, and his opinion and esteem of Freemasonry.

The earliest record we have of any Masonic Body proposing a masonic address to General Washington, was the resolution offered in King David's Lodge, No. 1, at Newport, Rhode Island, during Washington's visit to Newport in March, 1781, while the French Army under Rochambeau was quartered there. Washington arrived in Newport on the sixth of March and remained there until the thirteenth, when he left for Providence by way of Bristol.

It was in anticipation of this visit that the Brethren of King David's Lodge, of which Brother Moses Michael Hays¹⁰ was Worshipful Master, that a masonic greeting to General Washington was proposed. The following entry from the old Minute Book of the Lodge will explain why the project failed to materialize.



Moses M. Hays

W. M. KING DAVID'S LODGE, No. 1, NEWPORT, R. I., 1780-1781.
GRAND MASTER OF MASONS IN MASSACHUSETTS, 1788-1793.

⁹ Cf. "Works of William Smith, D.D.," Philadelphia, 1803, Vol. II, pp. 27-88, also "Life and Correspondence of Rev. William Smith, D.D.," Philadelphia, 1880, Vol. II, p. 9. *Et seq.*

¹⁰ For an exhaustive sketch of Brother Moses Michael Hays, see *The American Freemason*, Vol. V, p. 576.

Extract from the Records of King David's Lodge

"Regular Lodge night, held at the house of Mr. James Tew, Wednesday evening, the 7th February, 1781. 5781.

"A motion being made that as our worthy brother, his Excellency General Washington, was daily expected amongst us, a committee should be appointed to prepare an address in behalf of the Lodge, to present him. Voted, That the Right Worshipful Master (Moses Michael Hays) together with brothers Seixas, Peleg Clark, John Handy, and Robert Elliot, be a committee for that purpose, and that they present the same to this Lodge at their next meeting for their approbation."

"At a Lodge held by request of the Right Worshipful Master, Feb. 14th, 1781. 5781,

"The committee appointed to draught an address to our worthy brother, His Excellency General Washington, report, that on inquiry they find General Washington not to be a Grand Master of North America; as was supposed, nor even Master of any particular Lodge. They are, therefore, of opinion that this Lodge would not choose to address him as a private brother at the same time, think it would not be agreeable to our worthy brother to be addressed as such.

"Voted, That the report of the committee be received, and that the address be entirely laid aside for the present."¹¹

Now as to the cause for this uncertainty how to address Brother Washington, it will be recalled that just at that time, the proposition sent out by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania nominating General Washington as Grand Master of all the Colonies, was then before the various grand bodies, but did not find favor in New England, in fact the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was the chief objector, and finally defeated the scheme to elect Washington the Grand Master General.¹²

The means of intercourse between the different Masonic Bodies at that early day were so limited and uncertain that it offers a clear explanation for the uncertainty under which the brethren of King David's Lodge, No. 1, at Newport labored at that time.

During the Anti-Masonic craze in the last century, the above minute was extensively used by the political leaders of the Anti-Masonic party to strengthen their claim that Washington had never presided over any Masonic Lodge.

Following is a complete list of the Washington Masonic Correspondence, thus far found among the Washington papers in the Library of Congress.

Draft of Letter to Watson and Cassoul, Nantes, France, August 10, 1782.

Letter to Alexandria Lodge, No. 39, Virginia, December 28, 1783.

Address from King David's Lodge, No. 1, Rhode Island, August 17, 1790, and Washington's Reply.

Address from St. John's Lodge, No. 2, Newbern, North Carolina, April 20, 1791, and his reply.

¹¹ "Newport, ss. Newport, August 18th, A.D. 1832. I certify that the extracts taken from the records of King David's Lodge, Newport, contained in the above and three foregoing pages, have been by me compared with the minutes contained in two books purporting and appearing to be the original records of said Lodge, and found to be true and accurate copies of the same." Quid attestor, "Geo. C. Mason." *Jus. Peace and Pub. Not'y.* "Cf. "Anti-masonic Republican Convention of Massachusetts held at Worcester, September 5-6, 1832," p. 23.

¹² For a full account of this episode, see "Freemasonry in Pennsylvania," Barratt and Sachse, Philadelphia, 1908, Vol. 1, Chapter XII; "Washington as General Grand Master," p. 393 *et seq.*

Address from Prince George's Lodge (Moderns) Georgetown, South Carolina, April 30, 1791, and his reply.

Draft of reply to Grand Lodge of South Carolina, May 5, 1791.

Address from Grand Lodge of Georgia, May 14, 1791, and his reply.

Address from Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, March, 1792, and his reply.

Address of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, December 27, 1792, and his reply.

Address from Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, December 27, 1796, and his reply.

Address from Alexandria Lodge, No. 22, Virginia, April 4, 1797, and his reply.

Letter to Paul Revere and Grand Officers, April 24, 1797.

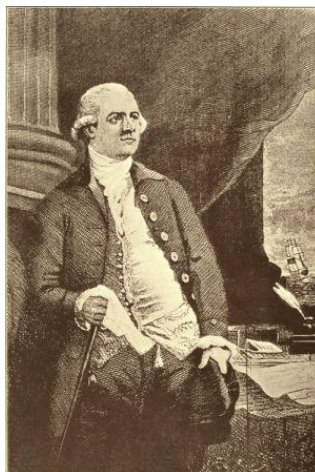
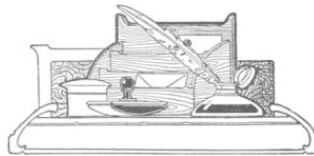
Draft of Letter to Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in reply to an address, April 1797.

Draft of a reply to an address from the Grand Lodge of Maryland, November 8, 1798.

Letter from G. W. Snyder to Washington, August 22, 1798.

Washington's Reply to Snyder, September 25, 1798.

Washington's Reply to Snyder's letter of October 17, 1798.



ELKANAH WATSON,

B. PLYMOUTH, MASS., JANUARY 22, 1758, D. AT PORT KENT, N. Y., DECEMBER 5, 1842, WHO, TOGETHER WITH HIS PARTNER CASSOUL, PRESENTED TO WASHINGTON A MASONIC APRON MADE BY THE NUNS AT NANTES, FRANCE.

NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF ALEXANDRIA-WASHINGTON LODGE, No. 22, VIRGINIA.



I

Correspondence with Watson & Cassoul, Nantes, France, August, 1782

THE earliest letter of General George Washington of Masonic Import known is the one written while in camp at Newburgh in New York, dated State of New York, August 10, 1782, to the firm of Watson and Cassoul in Nantes, France, in which his friend, Brother Elkanah Watson was the chief partner, thanking the firm for the Masonic Apron and ornaments sent him from Nantes, France.

This apron is now in the possession of the Alexandria-Washington Lodge, No. 22, at Alexandria, Virginia.

Elkanah Watson in his Memoirs states:¹³

"Wishing to pay some mark of respect to our beloved Washington, I employed, in conjunction with my friend M. Cossoul, nuns in one of the convents at Nantes to prepare some elegant Masonic ornaments, and gave them a plan for combining the American and French Flags on the apron designed for this use. They were executed in a superior and expensive style. We transmitted them to America, accompanied by an appropriate address."

By the above extract is shown beyond all doubt the error in the statement so repeatedly made, that the apron at Alexandria is the one made by the Marquise de Lafayette, and presented to Washington by General Lafayette, during his visit to Mount Vernon in 1784, and the one in the Museum of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, that of Watson and Cassoul.¹⁴

Following letter was sent to Washington, together with the Masonic Apron and "Ornaments," by Messrs. Watson and Cassoul, from France under date "east of Nantes," 23d 1st Month, 5782.¹⁵

"To his Excellency, General Washington, America.

"Most Illustrious and Respected Brother:

"In the moment when all Europe admire and feel the effects of your glorious efforts in support of American liberty, we hasten to offer for your acceptance a small pledge of our homage. Zealous lovers of liberty and its institutions, we have experienced the most refined joy in seeing our chief and brother stand forth in its defence, and in defence of a newborn nation of Republicans.

"Your glorious career will not be confined to the protection of American liberty, but its ultimate effect will extend to the whole human family, since Providence has evidently selected you as an instrument in his hands, to fulfill his eternal decrees.

"It is to you, therefore, the glorious orb of America, we presume to offer Masonic ornaments, as an emblem of your virtues. May the Grand Architect of the Universe be the Guardian of your precious days, for the glory of the Western Hemisphere and the entire universe. Such are the vows of those who have the favor to be by all the known numbers."

"Your affectionate brothers,

"Watson & Cassoul."

¹³ "Men and Times of the Revolution, or Memoirs of Elkanah Watson," New York, 1856, pp. 135, 136.

¹⁴ Cf. "Proceedings Grand Lodge of New York," 1867, p. 28.

¹⁵ "Memoirs of Elkanah Watson," p. 135.

"East of Nantes, 23^d 1st Month, 5782."

Owing to the uncertain intercourse between the two countries, it was almost seven months before Brother Washington received the Masonic apron, ornaments and letter from France. He at that time was in camp with the army at Newburg on the Hudson.¹⁶

In reply Washington sent the following autograph letter to the donors in Nantes, viz.:

"State of New York

"Aug^t 10th 1782

"Gentⁿ.

"The Masonick Ornam^{ts}
"which accompanied your Bro-
"therly Address of the 23^d of
"Jan^y last, tho' elegant in
"themselves, were rendered
"more valuable by the flattering
"sentiments, and affectionate
"manner, in which they were
"presented.—

"If my endeavours to
"avert the evil, with which this
"Country was threatned by a
"deliberate plan of Tyranny,
"should be crowned with the suc-
"cess that is wished—The praise
"is due to the *Grand Architect*
"of the Universe; who did not see
"fit to suffer his superstructures
"and justice, to be subjected to the
"Ambition of the Princes of this
"World, or to the rod of oppression,
"in the hands of any power upon
"Earth.—

"For your affectionate
"Vows, permit me to be grateful;
"—and offer mine for true Brothers
"in all parts of the world; and
"to assure you of the sincerity
"with which I am

¹⁶ Cf. "Itinerary of General Washington from June 15, 1775, to December 23, 1783," by William S. Baker, Philadelphia, 1892, p. 271.

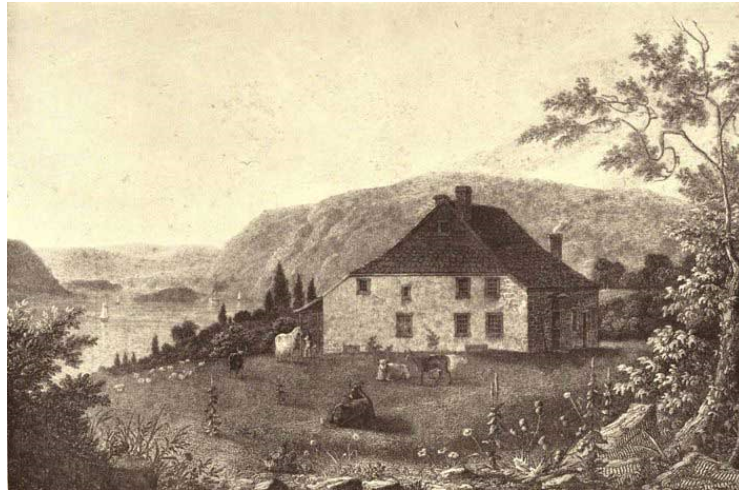
Y^{rs}

G. Washington

"Mess^{rs}

"Watson & Cosson¹⁷

"East of Nantes"



WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS
NEWBURGH-ON-THE-HUDSON WHERE THE WATSON AND CASSOUL LETTER
WAS WRITTEN, AUGUST, 1782.

This autograph letter from Washington to Messrs. Watson and Cassoul is now in the possession of the Grand Lodge of New York, who purchased it from a member of the Watson family in the year 1866 or 1867 at a cost of approximately \$1,000, and is now framed and secured between two sheets of glass in the collection of the Committee of Antiquities of the Grand Lodge F. & A. M. of New York.¹⁸

It is written upon two pages of an ordinary letter sheet, and was a copy of one written by Washington, with which he was not entirely satisfied, as shown by the changes made in the text before it was sent to France. The first copy Washington retained, and is now in the Library of Congress, and is here given for comparison, viz:

¹⁷ It will be noted that on both the draft and letter, Washington spells the name Cassoul—"Cosson."

¹⁸ Catalogue of Antiquities and Curios, Grand Lodge F. & A. M., New York, Class J, No. 1, New York, 1905.

State of New York.
Aug^t 10th 1782.

Gent^l.

The Masonick Orna-
ments which accompanied your
Brotherly address of the 23^d
of the first Month, tho' elegant
in themselves, were rendered
more valuable by the glowing
sentiments, and affectionate
manner, in which they were
offered. —

If my endeavours to
avert the evil, with which
this Country was threatened by
a deliberate plan of Tyranny,
should be crowned with the
success that is wished — the
praise is due to the Grand
architect

Architect of the Universe;
did not happen his superstru-
ctures of Justice, to be sub-sec-
undaries of the power of this world —
to the Lord of oppression, in
hands of any power upon
Earth.
For your affectionate
Wish, permit me to be gratify'd
and offer mine for you in
in all parts of the World; —
to assure you of the sincerity
with which I am.

Y^rs

G. Washington

To
Mess^{rs}. Watson &
Cassoul - Quaker
to N. York
10 Aug^t 1782
N^o 121... P. H. 323.

Fac-simile of the Original Draft of Washington's Letter to Watson and Cassoul, New York,
August 10, 1782.

"State of New York,

"Aug^t 10th 1782

"Gent^l.,

"The Masonick Orna-
"ments which accompanied your
"Brotherly Address of the 23d.
"of the first month, tho' elegant
"in themselves, were rendered
"more valuable by the flattering
"sentiments, and affectionate
"manner, in which they were
"offered.—

"If my endeavours to
"avert the evil, with which
"this Country was threatned, by
"a deliberate plan of Tyranny,
"should be crowned with the
"success that is wished—the
"praise is due to the *Grand*
"*Architect* of the Universe; who
see fit to
"who did not ^ suffer his superstruc
"tures & justice, to be subjected
ambition of the Princes of this world—or
"to the ^ rod of oppression, in the
"hands of any power upon Earth.

"For your affectionate
"vows, permit me to be grateful;
"and offer mine for true Brothers
"in all parts of the world; and
"to assure you of the sincerity
"with which I am,
Y^{rs}.



Endorsed
to
"Mess^{rs}. Watson &
"Cosson—Nantes
"10th Aug^t 1782."

A photographic fac-simile of the letter now in New York, and a photostat of the original copy retained by Washington are in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

The firm of Watson and Cassoul of Nantes, France, acted as confidential agents of the American Government during the Revolutionary period, as is shown by their correspondence with

Benjamin Franklin in the Franklin Mss. collection of the American Philosophical Society.¹⁹ Elkanah Watson was also a bearer of despatches to Dr. Franklin.



¹⁹ Cf. "Calendar of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin in the Library of the American Philosophical Society," edited by I. Minis Hays, Volume V, p. 312.

II

Correspondence with Alexandria Lodge, No. 39, Virginia, December, 1783

THE next Masonic Letter of Brother Washington of which we have any knowledge is the one written in answer to a letter sent him, upon his return to civil life by the Brethren of Lodge No. 39, on the register of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, which met at Alexandria, Virginia.

December 23, 1783, General Washington presented himself to "The United States in Congress Assembled," at Annapolis, Maryland, and resigned his Commission that he had received on June 17, 1775, as Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States.

Upon Christmas Eve he returned to Mount Vernon, whereupon the Brethren at Alexandria, who, it must be remembered, were working under a Pennsylvania Warrant, at once sent the following Address signed by the Officers of Lodge No. 39, to Brother Washington at Mount Vernon,²⁰ viz.:

"Sir: Whilst all denominations of people bless the happy occasion of your excellency's return to enjoy private and domestic felicity, permit us, sir, the members of Lodge No. 39, lately established in Alexandria, to assure your excellency, that we, as a mystical body, rejoice in having a brother so near us, whose preeminent benevolence has secured the happiness of millions; and that we shall esteem ourselves highly honored at all times your excellency shall be pleased to join us in the needful business."

"We have the honor to be, in the name and behalf of No. 39, your excellency's
"Devoted friends and brothers,
"Robert Adam, M.
"E. C. Dick, S. W.
"J. Allison, J. W.
"Wm. Ramsay, *Treas.*"
"His Excellency General Washington."

Two days later Brother Washington sent following reply,²¹ viz.:

"Mount Vernon 28th Dec^r. 1783

"Gentlemen:

"With pleasing sensibility
"I received your favor of the 26th, and
"beg leave to offer you my sincere thanks
"for the favorable sentiments with
"which it abounds.—

"I shall always feel pleasure

²⁰ Cf. "Old Masonic Lodges of Pennsylvania—Moderns and Ancients," Julius F. Sachse, Philadelphia, 1913, Vol. II, p. 157. Also *Vide* "Washington the Man and the Mason," by Charles H. Callahan, published under the auspices of the "Memorial Temple Committee of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association," Washington, D. C., 1913.

²¹ Original among Washington relics in Alexandria-Washington Lodge, No. 22, Alexandria, Virginia. Fac-simile in Washington collection of Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

"when it may be in my power to ren-
"der service to Lodge N° 39, and in
"every act of brotherly kindness to the
"Members of it; being with great truth.

"Your affect^e Brother
"and Obed^t Servant



"Rob^t Adam Esq^r Master,
"& the Wardens & Treas^r
"of Lodge N° 39."

No copy of either address nor reply of this correspondence has thus far been found among the Washington papers in the Library of Congress, by the present writer.

Brother Robert Adam, the Master of Alexandria Lodge, No. 39, was a Son of the Rev. John Adam, D.D., and Janet Campbell, of Kelbride, Scotland, was born May 4, 1731; he emigrated to America in 1753, and, after a short residence at Annapolis, Md., established himself at a pleasant country residence in Fairfax County, Virginia, about four miles from Alexandria. He was a gentleman of refined taste, cultivation and wealth, and interested himself in everything that could promote the prosperity of his adopted home.

Thos Vernon 28th Dec^r 1783

Fortknex

*With pleasure & sensibility
I received your favor of the 26th, and
beg leave to offer you my sincere thank
for the favorable sentiments with
which it abounds. —*

*I shall always feel pleasure
when it may be in my power to ren-
der service to Lodge N° 39, and in
every act of brotherly kindness to the
Members of it; being with great truth*

Your affect^e Brother

and Obed^t Servant

G. Washington

*Rob^t Adam Esq^r Master,
& the Wardens & Treas^r
of Lodge N° 39*

Washington's Reply to Alexandria Lodge, No. 39. Original in Alexandria-Washington Lodge, No. 22, Alexandria, Virginia.

It appears that during his residence at Annapolis, he was made a Mason in a clandestine or irregular Lodge, and in the year 1783 applied for a dispensation from the Grand Master of Pennsylvania, to apply to Lodge No. 2, for initiation and membership.

Brother Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick, Senior Warden of Lodge No. 39, was a native of Pennsylvania, born near Marcus Hook, in Delaware County, about 1753, and died at Alexandria, Va., September 22,

1825. He was a son of Archibald Dick, a member of Lodge No. 2 at Philadelphia, and joined the same Lodge, September 15, 1779.²² Brother Elisha C. Dick was a graduate of the old Pequea Academy, and of the College of Pennsylvania. He began the study of medicine under Drs. William Shippen and Benjamin Rush. After graduating he settled in Alexandria, Va., and at once became active in Masonic circles in that city, and was instrumental in having the petition presented to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania for a warrant, which was granted under the name and number "Alexandria Lodge No. 39."

Upon the records of the Lodge, Brother Dick appears as both predecessor and successor of Brother Washington as Master. Brother Dick was the first consulting physician in Washington's last illness, and also conducted the Masonic services at Washington's funeral on December 18, 1799. A biography of Dr. Dick is in the Library of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

Brother John Allison, the Junior Warden of Lodge No. 39, had served as Major in the 1st Virginia State Regiment, and later as Lieutenant Colonel.

Brother William Ramsay, Treasurer of Lodge No. 39, was an old personal friend of Washington.

For a history of Alexandria Lodge, No. 39, warranted by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, February 3, 1783, which was constituted on the second floor of a large three-story frame building, known as the "Lamb Tavern," on the twenty-fifth of February, 1783, the Masonic student is referred to "Old Masonic Lodges of Pennsylvania," Philadelphia, 1913, Chapter XLVI, pp. 153-168.

This tavern was situated on the west side of Union Street, between Prince and Duke Streets, Alexandria, the site of which is now known as No. 55 South Union Street.²³



²² Elisha C. Dick's petition was presented in Lodge No. 2, September 14, 1779, approved and entered by virtue of a dispensation from the Grand Master, September 15; passed and raised, September 23. "Freemasonry in Pennsylvania," Vol. I, pp. 352, 353.

²³ Cf. "The Lodge of Washington," by F. L. Brocket, Alexandria, Va., 1876.

III

Correspondence with Alexandria Lodge, No. 39, Virginia, June, 1784

THE next Washington letter of Masonic import in chronological order is his reply to an invitation to join the brethren of Alexandria Lodge, No. 39, in the celebration of St. John the Baptist's Day, June 24, 1784, to which Washington sent the following reply, accepting the fraternal invitation.

"Mount Vernon, June 19, 1784.²⁴

"Dear Sir: With pleasure, I received the invitation of the master and members of Lodge No. 39, to dine with them on the approaching anniversary of St. John the Baptist. If nothing unforeseen at present interferes, I will have the honor of doing it. For the polite and flattering terms in which you have expressed their wishes, you will please accept my thanks."

"With esteem and respect,

"I am, dear sir,

"Your most Ob't serv't



"Wm. Herbert, Esquire."

²⁴ "Washington and his Masonic Compeers," by Sidney Hayden, New York, 1866, p. 104.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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