

Sunday, July 23, 2000
Bangkok

Dear Brethren,

Here are some questions posed about the first anecdote in an email to me. Let me address these points for the benefit of all our members.

Question 1: Can you please tell me if there is any indication that George Washington corresponded concerning Lodge No. 39, in any way other than those minimal ones mentioned in <http://bessel.org/gwfmym.htm>? Most importantly, is there any evidence that Washington allowed his name to be used in the request for the Virginia Charter, or to be used as WM, or any indication that Washington paid dues or in any other way showed an interest in what by then was Alexandria Lodge #39, other than attending one banquet? I am under the impression that there isn't any evidence that Washington even knew his name was being used in connection with the Virginia Charter of Alexandria Lodge in 1788.

Response: Washington's correspondence and attendance with the lodge will be addressed in several upcoming anecdotes completely devoted to the subject. Let me briefly state here that General Washington did correspond and attend Lodge No. 39 more than what our brother is referring to in these letters. As for the VA charter, there was a specific committee appointed by the lodge to visit and "await on" General Washington concerning his name being used in the charter and thus becoming its first Worshipful Master.

Question 2: One minor point: I am pretty sure that the District of Columbia was not formed in 1791, but in 1800. In fact, D.C. is celebrating its bicentennial in 2000. In 1791 the legislation was adopted that led to the creation of the District, but as with many laws the actual creation of the entity did not take place until the date specified, 1800.

Response: The US Congress passed bills creating the district in 1790-1791 and our lodge helped set the first boundary stone in 1791 to mark out the new territory of DC. From 1791 until 1800 the land began development and the construction of the White House (1792) and the Capitol (1793) were thus begun. One should state that the "official" year (1800) was when Congress physically moved into the new territory it had created earlier.

"Bills passed by the US Congress in 1790-1791 created the District on a tract of land ceded by Maryland and Virginia. The area contained the communities of Alexandria and Washington. The cornerstone of the US Capitol was laid in 1793, and in 1800 Congress moved here from its temporary headquarters in Philadelphia. In 1847, Alexandria and the remainder of the District on the western bank of the Potomac were returned to the state of Virginia by an act of Congress. Georgetown held the status of a separate town within the District from 1878 to 1895, when it was merged with Washington. Population (1980) 638,432; (1990) 606,900." "District of Columbia," Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2000. 1993-1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Question 3: By the way, as I'm sure you realize, it is very significant that from 1811 through 1846 AW Lodge was chartered by Virginia but located in another territorial jurisdiction. There is no doubt that during this period the "doctrine of exclusive territorial jurisdiction" was supposed to already exist, so this showed that DC and Virginia accepted the fact that this "doctrine" did not have to be followed. Thus, the GL of Virginia and the GL of DC operated in the same territory at the same time, and both were recognized by other GLs. Couldn't this still occur today? Shouldn't it?

Response: The situation that AW22 found itself was difficult as it was not of her own making. In those days Freemasons had not the large volume of rules and laws to reference, nor did they need them. I believe in this case the two grand lodges "closed their eyes" to this irregularity for the betterment of Freemasonry and the country in general since it dealt directly with General

Washington. I wish this type of philosophy were more often used in our present day. If the district would have remained intact, I am sure the abnormality would have been addressed at some period in our history.