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MASONIC EDUCATION

Square and Compass on the National Mall:
Masonic Washington, DC

Bro. Mason DuPree • October 27, 2026

Clemson Lodge No. 254 • Ancient Free Masons of South Carolina

THE WHITE HOUSE CORNERSTONE

1792

The President's House

October 13, 1792

Laid by Georgetown Lodge No. 9

THE CEREMONY

Georgetown Masons marched from the Fountain Inn to the site and laid the stone.

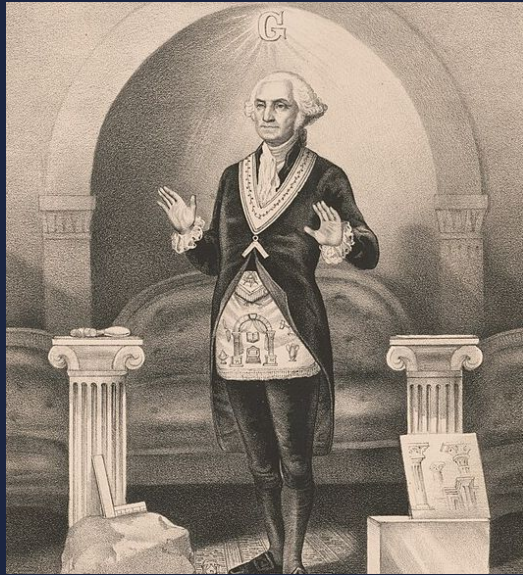
WHO LED IT

Bro. Peter Casanave, Master of Lodge No. 9 (today Potomac Lodge No. 5, DC).

THE STONE TODAY

A brass plate was laid beneath it. Where the stone sits today is unknown.

THE U.S. CAPITOL CORNERSTONE • 1793



September 18, 1793

Washington lays the stone with Masonic ceremonies

- Alexandria Lodge No. 22 joined Maryland Lodges No. 9 and No. 15
- Bro. Joseph Clark of the Grand Lodge of Maryland acted as Grand Master pro tem
- Bro. Washington set it in the southeast corner
- Where the stone sits today is unknown

THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT CORNERSTONE

July 4, 1848: The Grand Lodge of DC Lays the Stone



Grand Master Benjamin B. French wore Washington's own Masonic apron and sash and used the gavel Washington had used at the Capitol in 1793. He tried the stone with the square, level, and plumb, then poured corn, wine, and oil.

MEMORIAL STONES INSIDE THE MONUMENT

Gifts from states, cities, societies, nations, and Masons

193

Memorial stones

Set in the walls today

20+

Masonic stones

*Grand Lodges and
lodges*

50

Flights of stairs

*897 steps past the
stones*

1st

Alabama's idea

*A state stone began
the gifts*

THE SMITHSONIAN CASTLE CORNERSTONE

1847

The Smithsonian Castle

Smithsonian Institution Building

Laid by Grand Master B. B. French

THE CEREMONY

Bro. Benjamin B. French, Grand Master of DC, laid the cornerstone.

THE BUILDING

Designed by James Renwick Jr.; begun in 1847 and finished in 1855.

THE SAME HANDS

A year later, French laid the Washington Monument stone.

THE CASTLE ON THE MALL



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

1847–1855

Cornerstone laid in
1847 by Grand
Master B. B. French.

Designed by James
Renwick Jr.; finished
in 1855.

THE HOUSE OF THE TEMPLE



SCOTTISH RITE, S.J. HEADQUARTERS

1733 16th Street NW

Designed by John Russell Pope after the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus; finished in 1915.

33 columns, each 33 feet tall, ring the upper walls.

Albert Pike's remains were moved from Oak Hill Cemetery to a crypt here on Dec. 29, 1944, his birthday.

GEORGE WASHINGTON MASONIC NATIONAL MEMORIAL

Alexandria, Virginia: A Memorial Built by Masons

1910

The Association Forms

Delegates of 26 Grand Lodges met at Alexandria-Washington Lodge on February 22, 1910.

1923

Cornerstone Laid

November 1, 1923: President Coolidge and Chief Justice Taft took part in the Masonic ceremony.

1932

Dedicated

May 12, 1932, in Washington's bicentennial year, with President Hoover taking part.

MYTH VS. FACT

Is a Masonic Symbol Hidden in DC's Street Plan?

THE MYTH

The avenues hide a square and compasses, a pentagram, or an owl, drawn in by Masons on purpose.

THE FACT

L'Enfant drew the plan; Andrew Ellicott finished it.
No record shows any planner as an active Mason.



VERDICT: MYTH

The plan follows the land and its views. Stars appear in any radial grid.

LESSONS FOR US

Every stone was tried by the square, level, and plumb. So are we.

*“What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us;
what we have done for others and the world
remains and is immortal.”*

Albert Pike, as carved in the House of the Temple

Thank you, Brothers.

SOURCES (1 OF 3)

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Castle photo: Noclip, Wikimedia Commons (public domain)

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