



Education Monthly

April 2013

We recently witnessed the Inauguration of President Obama. A recent article from the Masonic Service Association Short Talk Bulletin (a publication I highly recommend) deals with the Inauguration of George Washington, a Mason and of course the first American President. I have shortened the article to publish it this month.

There are to be 3 Masonic Education Conferences this year, Ottawa & Thunder Bay in May and London in the Fall. Details of these appear below. I hope many of you will attend these. They are for Masons by Masons and will be well worth attending

John Forster

This article¹ by V.W.Piers Vaughan, the Master of St. John's Lodge No.1 of the Grand Lodge of New York, relates a fascinating account of the Bible used for the inauguration ceremony of the first President of the United States, Bro. George Washington. The commonly held history of this is that on the day of the inauguration officials had forgotten to bring a Bible. Someone ran off to get one & on his return the Bible was opened at random but the corner of the page was turned down to preserve it for posterity.

But why would they forget the Bible at such an important event where everything else was being laid out in detail? There is a story in St. John's Lodge that one of the members located a pamphlet which revealed that far from the romantic notion that Washington had sailed across the Hudson river & straight to Federal Hall he had actually crossed the Hudson weeks before & his officers and key civilians had planned every last detail of the inauguration.

Washington was a religious man whose household contained a Bible, which was read every day. We know he traveled throughout his campaigns with the Good Book beside him. With all this time to plan there is no doubt that he would have sought in advance the Bible to be used in the ceremony.

New York was at that time a melting pot of nationalities and religions. Residents and the many spectators were inheritors of diverse Christian beliefs for which many had been persecuted in their homelands. How could they use a Bible without the church from which it came proclaiming that its form of Christianity had been adopted as the "official" religion of the United States?

¹ Morgan, Piers.A., Washington's Inaugural Bible: A New Theory. Masonic Service Association bulletin Vol. 91, No.2. February 2013. www.masana.com

Freemasonry was highly regarded at the time. By using the Masonic Bible a noble order was being represented. More importantly, it could be claimed that this Bible had never seen service in any church and was therefore free of any denominational issues.

It is also extremely unlikely that the Bible was opened randomly. The passage was probably very carefully selected as the passage used (Genesis, Ch. 49) is near the very front of the Bible and most persons would open a book at random in the middle.

In Genesis 49 Jacob call us his 12 sons to bless them. That makes 1 plus 12 or 13 people. At that time there were 13 colonies and New York was the Empire State, New York City then being the capital of the new country. Jacob blesses his sons and Washington blesses the colonies.

Masonic Education Conferences 2013

There are to be 3 conferences held this year in Ottawa, Thunder Bay and London respectively.

OTTAWA Saturday May 25th: a full day conference at the Ottawa Masonic Centre. There will be a keynote speaker and presentations by brethren with time for questions and discussion. Call for abstracts! 100 words or less. Three papers will be chosen for the conference! Four sessions --refreshments & lunch – invited speakers & a seminar -- open questions & answers -- only \$15.00 - limited seating available (150) so book early!

THUNDER BAY. Saturday June 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. A morning conference in conjunction with the Grand Master's visit to Thunder Bay. Venue is The Canoe Shed at Old Fort William. There will be two invited speakers. Further details will follow.

LONDON. Saturday Sept 7th. London Masonic Hall. A full day conference. Please submit abstracts. Speakers will be chosen from them along with a number of invited orators. Will include lunch. Cost TBA. Information & applications to W.Bro. Rick Cadotte 9 Braesyde Ave. London ON N5W 1V2, e-mail: rickcadotte@hotmail.com

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTARY EDITION OF EDUCATION MONTHLY WILL BE ISSUED WITH FURTHER DETAILS OF THESE EVENTS.

As usual I'd ask that you pass this edition on to as many masons as you can.

All of these monthly newsletters and much else are available on the Grand Lodge web site. From my correspondence I find that many people are unable to access this. And others as yet have not tried. The information that is available on the web site is growing steadily and will continue to do so.

Instructions for accessing the web site members' section are below. Please use your web site often. It is becoming a very important mode of communication.

Web Site Member Area Access: <http://www.grandlodge.on.ca/> >> Login

Username: your 6 digit Grand Lodge Certificate number [from your actual Certificate, Lodge Secretary, or Email webmaster@grandlodge.on.ca]

Password: Initial password = your 6 digit Grand Lodge Certificate number. [change on first access and provide your Email address, to be used if you ever require a password reset]