

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

A Small Treasure of Buckingham Lodge

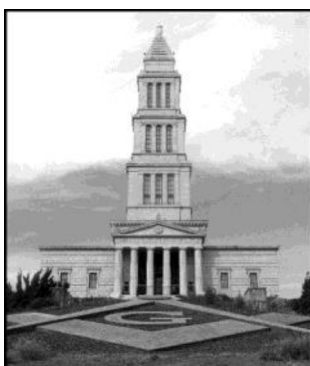
When the Indian Hill Historical Society was founded 44 years ago, it sought both to preserve local history by saving the Little Red Schoolhouse and to create a community organization that collected and disseminated information of historic interest affecting Indian Hill. In 1990 the group moved its office to Buckingham Lodge and created a repository for its collection. It also renovated the lodge and later furnished it with period style antiques representative of an early 20th century farmhouse. Some artifacts were donated by residents to enhance the décor.

One unique donation was the 4 ½" by 4 ½" copy of a picture of George Washington. It was rare because it depicted the nation's first President in Masonic regalia when he was at an advanced age, and the original was painted from life. The portrait was done in 1794 by William Joseph Williams of Philadelphia, and it was oil on canvas. It illuminates several lesser known facts of George Washington's life.

The "Father of Our Country" joined the Masonic Lodge in Fredericksburg, Virginia at the age of 20 in 1752. Freemasons (aka Masons) are members of a secret fraternal organization. They meet in lodges and adhere to certain concepts. They believe in God, brotherly love for each other and all mankind, charity towards others, mutual aid for other Masons, and they seek to lead ethical lives and do good works. Masonic symbols include tools of ancient stonemasons which are reminders of moral lessons. In the portrait, Washington's apron and sash are adorned with a pin or pendant displaying two Masonic symbols. The level represents equality and reminds Masons to treat others as brothers and to live life on the level. The square reminds them of rectitude or rightness of behavior.



In 1783 after resigning his commission from the Continental Army at the end of the Revolutionary War, George Washington was invited to the Alexandria, Virginia Lodge No. 22, and he became an honorary member there in 1784. Then five years later, Washington became Master of the Alexandria Lodge No. 22, a position he held for almost two years. He was the only President of the United States to be Master of a Lodge while in the executive office. During his tenure as Master, the Lodge engaged in its most historical moment – laying the cornerstone for the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.



Alexandria Lodge No. 22

George Washington's plantation home, Mt. Vernon, was about 10 miles from the Alexandria Lodge No. 22. During his ownership of the property and house, Washington worked constantly to improve the mansion house and the surrounding 8000 acres of agricultural land. He was scientific in his approach and tried raising 60 different crops. When he finished his tenure as President of the nation, he invited several nephews to Mt. Vernon to assist him. One who moved there was Lawrence Lewis. He served as Washington's personal secretary and aided his uncle with all aspects of his daily life. When George Washington died on December 14, 1799, Lewis was the primary executor of his will. He also inherited the Masonic apron and sash worn in the Williams portrait. In 1812, Lewis donated those items to the Alexandria - Washington Lodge No. 22, where they are still preserved. This was the same Masonic Lodge where Washington was Master. It changed its name in 1804 to honor the memory of its most famous brother. Besides the Lewis donation, it contains many other priceless relics relating to President Washington.

The picture of Washington at Buckingham Lodge was a gift from Helen Black. It was part of the estate of her parents, Mr. & Mrs. William Chatfield. This heirloom is even more pertinent because George Washington was nicknamed "the American Cincinnatus", because, like the Roman general, he valued public service more than personal profit, and became a private citizen after his retirement from political office. Washington returned to Mt. Vernon, where he farmed and led a peaceful life rather than seeking political gain. It is fitting that this small treasure, this portrait of George Washington can be viewed at historic Buckingham Lodge.