

Was George Washington a Mason?

Many Americans are confused over George Washington's alleged affiliation with the Masons. To remove that confusion, we are reprinting the text from pages 30 and 31 of The New England Anti-Masonic Almanac for the year 1831:

WASHINGTON A SECEDER.

That the Father of his country in the latter part of his life became aroused to the dangers of SECRET SOCIETIES, is universally acknowledged. He saw Masonry in France and Germany throw aside the veil that concealed its haggard features and boldly avow the detestable principles of Atheism, and the Illuminati. He saw the infamous Duke of Orleans at the head of the masonic combination in France, carrying on the bloody work of the Revolution, whose excesses were but the natural fruit of this poisonous tree. With these terrible scenes before his eyes, well might he warn his beloved countrymen in his Farewell Address, against such great Combinations.

The masons in this country have boasted much of Washington. They have represented him as a great mason, a zealous advocate of the order, a *Grand Master* of the Institution. This attempt at imposition has been successful that "Washington had gone that way before them." But masonry is a system of deception. Falsehood is the breath of its nostrils. The time is approaching, yea, it now is, when the artifices and wiles of the Harlot to catch in her toils the young and inexperienced, shall be made manifest to all the earth.

Of Washington's opinion of masonry the following letters written near the close of his life, speak an emphatic language. They were written to the Rev. Mr. Snyder of Fredericktown who sent him a Copy of *Robison's Proofs of a Conspiracy*.

LETTER 1. Mt. Vernon, September 25th, 1798.

Sir,--Many apologies are due to you for my not acknowledging the receipt of your obliging favor of the 22d ult. and for not thanking you at an earlier period, for the book you had the goodness to send me. I have heard much of the nefarious and dangerous plan and doctrines of the Illuminati, but never saw the book, until you were pleased to send it to me. The same causes, which have prevented my acknowledging the receipt of your letter, have prevented my reading the book hitherto, viz: the multiplicity of matters, which pressed upon me before, and the debilitated state in which I was left after a severe fever had been removed, and which allows me to add a little more here than thanks for your wishes and favorable sentiments, except to correct an error, you have run into, of my *presiding* over the English lodges in this country.--The *fact* is, I *preside* over *none*, nor have I been in one, more than *once* or *twice* within the last THIRTY YEARS. I *believe* notwithstanding none of the lodges in this country are contaminated with the principles ascribed to the society of the Illuminati. With respect, &c. G. WASHINGTON.

[Thus it appears, that Washington had not been in a Lodge but once or twice for the last THIRTY YEARS, but had by a withdrawal, virtually seceded from the society. What corruptions might not have crept into the institution during that long period?--How, in that time, had masonry changed its features in France. The "belief" of Washington therefore is purely complimentary, as in the former paragraph he confesses his ignorance of the present state of the Institution.]

LETTER 2. Mt. Vernon, October 10th, 1798

Sir,--It is more than a fortnight since I acknowledged the receipt of your first letter, on the subject of the Illuminati, and thanked you for Robison's account of that society. I went to the post office as usual, addressed to the *Rev'd Mr. Snyder, at Frederick Town Maryland*. If it has not been received before this some mishap must have attended it, of which I pray you to advise me, as it could not have been received, at the date of your last, not being mentioned. I am, &c. G. WASHINGTON.

LETTER 3. Mt. Vernon, October 24th, 1798.

Rev'd Sir.--I have your favour of the 17th inst. before me, and my only motive to trouble you with the

receipt of this letter, is, to explain and correct a mistake, which I perceive the hurry in which I am obliged often to write letters, has led me into. It was not my intention to doubt that the doctrines of the Illuminati and the principles of Jacobinism had not spread in the United States; on the contrary, no one is *more fully satisfied of the fact* than I am. The idea I meant to convey was, that I did not *believe* that the lodges of free masons in this country had, as *societies*, endeavoured to propagate the diabolical tenets of the first, or the pernicious principles of the latter, (if they are susceptible of separation.) That individuals of them may have done it, and that the FOUNDER or INSTRUMENT employed to found the Democratic Societies in the United States *may have these objects*, and actually had a separation of the people from their government in view, IS TOO EVIDENT TO BE QUESTIONED. My occupations are such that but little leisure is allowed me to read newspapers of any kind; the reading of letters and preparing of answers absorbs much of my time. With respect, &c. G. WASHINGTON.

With these feelings respecting secret societies, aware that individual masons were active in spreading the doctrines of the Illuminati, and that *Masonry* and *Illuminism* were united as one in Europe, and that the connexion in this country was in rapid progress, Washington in his Farewell Address lifted up his warning voice, and spoke the following language.

"All *obstructions* to the execution of the laws, all COMBINATIONS and ASSOCIATIONS, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to *direct, control, counteract*, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force, to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small, but enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of ill concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organs of consistent and wholesome plans, digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests.

"However COMBINATIONS or ASSOCIATIONS of the above description, may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the *course of time* and things to become POTENT ENGINES, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp from themselves the reins of government."

If such language as this, together with the fact that he had hardly been in a Lodge for THIRTY YEARS does not constitute a Seceder, we know not what does.