

AW22 Lodge Anecdotes

By

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Internet Edition

July 20, AL 6000 AD 2000

What is the correct name of our lodge and how did it change over the past?

Our lodge was first warranted on February 3, 1783 by the *Provincial Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, according to the Old Institutions, held at Philadelphia, in the Province of Pennsylvania, by virtue of a Provincial Grand Warrant from the Grand Lodge of London, in Great Britain* (Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania---Ancients). There was no name given to our lodge by this provincial Masonic body other than *Lodge No. 39*. In referencing the original warrant and other letters of correspondence (even those of Washington), our lodge was strictly referred to as: *Lodge No. 39* or *Lodge No. 39, Ancient York Masons*. This corresponds with the other lodges under the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania at the time, as none had names attached to them following a custom of the Ancient Grand Lodge of London. As a consequence, there was no *Alexandria Lodge No. 39* in our history.

It was not until this issuance of the Virginia charter on April 28, 1788 that our lodge was first officially named *Alexandria Lodge*. In that charter issued and signed by the then Governor of the Commonwealth and Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Virginia Edmund Randolph, it states: "We...do hereby constitute and appoint our illustrious and well-beloved brother, George Washington, Esq., late General and Commander-in-chief of the forces of the United States of America, and our worthy brethren Robert McCrea, William Hunter, Jr., and John Allison, Esqs...to be a just, true, and regular Lodge of Freemasons, by the name, title, and designation of the Alexandria Lodge, No. 22." This name, *Alexandria Lodge, No. 22* remained unaltered until several years after the death of General Washington, when there was a movement in our lodge for permission "to alter the designation of this Lodge from that of the *Alexandria Lodge, No. 22*, to that of the *Alexandria Washington Lodge, No. 22*". Therefore, in a resolution issued by the Grand Lodge of Virginia on December 9, 1805, the following was adopted:

"Whereas, at the last Grand Annual Communication a request was made by the Alexandria Lodge, No. 22, for permission to change the name of the said Lodge to that of the Alexandria Washington Lodge, No. 22, which request was acceded to, and a new charter ordered to be issued; and whereas, this order did not meet the wishes of the brethren of the said Lodge, who having had our illustrious brother General George Washington for their first Master, whose name is inscribed as such in their original charter, they then were and still are desirous of preserving their said charter, as an honorable testimony of his regard for them, and only wish to be permitted by the Grand Lodge to assume the name of the Alexandria Washington Lodge, No.22, without changing their charter; therefore,

"Resolved, That the said Lodge be permitted to assume the said name, and that it be henceforth denominated the **Alexandria Washington Lodge, No. 22**, and that an authenticated copy of this resolution be attached to their said charter."

After this change, our lodge's name has remained unaltered up to the present day. Please note there is no hyphenation between the words Alexandria and Washington.

In 1791, the District of Columbia was formed and both Maryland and Virginia ceded territory to establish the nation's capital. During this period until 1846, our lodge was not located in Virginia but rather in the District of Columbia. In 1810, Federal Lodge, No. 15 of Maryland,

together with several other lodges within this new territory invited our lodge to form a Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. To this our lodge declined, citing several reasons one of which was the need to remain under the Virginia charter in which General Washington was inscribed as the first Master. Consequently, the lodge never changed its name, but when the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia was formed in 1811, our lodge found itself not only in a different territory, but also under a different Masonic grand jurisdiction. This irregularity would remain for thirty-five years up to 1846 when congress passed a bill that allowed Virginia to reclaim the land originally ceded in 1791.

Throughout the nineteenth century our members did not refer to our lodge by the new name they had selected. In reverence to General Washington, members referred to the lodge as *Washington Lodge* and after the establishment of Andrew Jackson Lodge in 1854, this tradition was reinforced and the nicknames *Washington Lodge* and *Jackson Lodge* became synonymous with Freemasonry in Alexandria. It was not until recent times that members began to refer to our lodge as Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22.

One cannot overlook the most recent nickname of the lodge: *AW22*. And who else can be credited with this modernism more than RW Jack Canard? One should never forget the time when as Worshipful Master, Brother Jack hurried to select the Virginia Masonic license plates labeled "AW22" for his red Jeep. Those plates with their abbreviations, and now the famous AW22 Internet site are our most recent adaptations of the historic and ever changing name of our lodge.

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POSTSCRIPT: Who decided to place that hyphen in our lodge's name? From what I can deduce, it happened as a result of the many published materials sent out for the construction of the memorial at the turn of the century. I believe it was one of these "bright" publishers that started this modern innovation. Also, one can note that the Brockett book, edition of 1900, does not carry the hyphen, but thirteen years later the Callahan book does. More about these two books later in our series of anecdotes.