

Response to Anecdote 1 - What is the correct name of our lodge and how did it change over the past?

By RW Granville C. Canard, Jr. PM and DDGM 1A, 2000

RW Claude Harris has provided us with a very well founded and well-researched discussion about the history of the name of our Lodge. His facts and findings are well supported and should not be disputed. Based on the information that RW Claude has presented, it now leaves a question in some minds as to what is the proper usage of the name today in the year 2000, i.e., should the hyphen be used in the name or should it be excluded as it was in the 1800's.

I submit the following for your consideration:

Over time, the usage of the English language has changed. This includes the written word as well as the spoken word. It changes primarily based on the common practices of the majority of the people who use the language. Our style of writing today is different than it was back in Biblical days when the Holy Book was developed and recorded. Our style of writing today is different than it was in the late 18th and early 19th century when our lodge name was first created.

As supported in the paper written by RW Claude, the hyphen was added to the lodge name between 1900 and 1913. You can develop your own theory as to why, but mine is that during this period, the scholars of the day wanted to clearly identify the lodge name as being composed of two separate words, one representing a location, Alexandria, Virginia and the other representing the proper name of a man, being that of George Washington, and the two words forming a compound word or phrase, it was proper to use the hyphen as "a mark (-) used between the parts of a compound word or the syllables of a divided word" which is the definition of a hyphen. Used without the hyphen, the name could be interpreted as representing a person by the name of Alexandria Washington.

As for the question of how should our name be written today, it really doesn't matter as to why it happened but the facts today are that in February, 1920, the Grand Master issued an official

document to the Lodge and the authentication on the document states:

“Upon application of Alexandria-Washington Lodge, No. 22, A.F.&A.M, approved by Right Worshipful Frank W. Latham, District Deputy Grand Master, for District No. 1, and for reasons set forth in the said application, a dispensation is hereby granted, the said Lodge, originally chartered as Alexandria Lodge, and whose name was changed to Alexandria-Washington Lodge on the 11th day of December A.D. 1805 A.L. 5805, permitting it to use this reproduction of it’s original charter in place of the original, and to remove the said original charter from it’s Lodge room and place it in some secure place for safe keeping.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, A.F. & A.M., to be hereto affixed, the 11th Day of February A.D. 1920 A.L 5920.”

The reproduction of the original charter is signed by: Joe Cutchins, Grand Master and Charles A. Nesbitt, Grand Secretary.

In the current official records of the Grand Lodge, the Lodge name is recorded as Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22. There are also a number of other Lodges on the rolls of the Grand Lodge of Virginia with hyphenated names.

The facts being what they are, it is clear that the only proper way to write the name of the Lodge today is in the form of: Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22.