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Washington Chapter No. 29 - Bicentennial

There are not too many organizations in contemporary Masonry that can boast 200 years of continued existence! On May 22, 2010, the Companions of Washington Chapter No. 29 located near Homer, NY set out to celebrate their bicentennial anniversary and rejoice in their incredible accomplishment!



High Priest and Officers re-obligated in an impressive ceremony

But first - a little background...The Grand Chapter of New York State first began in Albany, New York in 1798 with Governor Dewitt Clinton being elected as its first Grand High Priest. *Note: Governor Clinton was the builder of the Erie Canal, which was the largest construction project ever attempted in the United States.*

Also attending the first Grand Convocation was the famous Thomas Smith Webb, who is largely credited as the founder of the American York Rite of Masonry. He was our first Grand Treasurer and was instrumental in the formation of the General Grand Chapter of the Northern States of America, being its first General Grand King. Also present was Ezra Ames, the celebrated portrait artist who succeeded Webb as Grand Treasurer in 1799.

Fast forwarding just twelve short years later places the much-loved Ezra Ames as Grand High Priest, with Dewitt Clinton as Grand Master of New York; this was just two years before the Village of Buffalo, and Washington DC were burnt to the ground during the War of 1812 against the British, and just seventeen years before the start of anti-Masonic era.

The proceedings of 1810 confirm that 14 Chapters were present at the Annual Convocation namely: *(those written in bold are still in existence!)* **Ancient No.1**, Montgomery No.4, **Temple No.5**, Hudson No.6, Horeb No.7, **Jerusalem No.8**, De La Fayette No.9, **Federal No. 10**, Lebanon No.13, St. Andrew's No.14, Rising Sun No.16, Fredonian No.19, New Concord No.21, and **Warren No.22** (now 23). We suspect that several of the extinct Chapters may have merged into others, but this will require additional research.



R..E.. Harley DeShane is presented the original warrant of Washington Chapter No. 29

An excerpt of these proceedings reveals the following quote:

“The Committee to whom was referred applications for Warrants reported, after due consideration of the subject, that in their opinion, Warrants ought to be granted to the following Chapters(2 other Chapters listed) andto Companions George Rice, Asahel Miner, and Reuben Washburn, to hold a Chapter at Homer, County of Cortland, by the name of WASHINGTON CHAPTER, No. 29.”

It is interesting to note that Washington's original Warrant is still in use today and is in perfect condition! The hand writing is clear and of excellent penmanship. Fortunately, the Warrant is protected in an attractive glass frame.



Full Chapter room observes the Re-Dedication Ceremony

The day of celebration started out with the Grand Chapter Officers conducting a brief but formal Ceremony of Consolidation which merged Owahgena Chapter No. 303 and Washington Chapter No. 29 to be hereafter known as Washington Chapter No. 29.



The Grand Master of the Veils re-consecrate the Chapter Veils

Next, the Grand Chapter Officers together with the Officers of Washington Chapter No. 29 participated in a Ceremony of Rededication of their Tabernacle. The impressive public ceremony rededicates the Chapter Officers to their respective duties and re-consecrates the furnishings of the Tabernacle as well.

The Grand High Priest had the privilege of presenting a congratulatory certificate issued by the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons International, which was personally signed by the Most Excellent Emory J. Ferguson, General Grand High Priest, M..E.. Edmund D. Harrison, Right Excellent General Grand King, M..E.. Louis E. Bartrand, Right Excellent General Grand Scribe, and M..E..Larry E. Gray, Right Excellent General Grand Secretary.



R..E.. Harley DeShane, proxy High Priest of Washington Chapter No. 29, receives a congratulatory certificate from The General Grand Chapter Royal Arch



Officers of Washington Chapter with Grand Line Officers

At the conclusion of the impressive ceremonies, the group reconvened to the Social Hall where a delicious ham dinner with all the trimmings, topped off with a beautiful birthday cake for dessert was enjoyed by all!



R..E..Harley DeShane and Grand High Priest cut the celebration cake.