

2008

June



June 14th – Flag Day
Fly your flag

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The Front Cover Picture
Our Bald Eagles

Since 2001 we have been thrilled by the sight of bald eagles on and about Goodyear Lake. There are three nesting pairs of bald eagles in Otsego County, and we are fortunate that one pair nests near our area. Scott Van Arsdale of the Department of Environmental Conservation has generously provided information about and photographs of our ravishing raptors. I have a house on Goodyear lake and have seen he eagles. We are about 15 miles South of Cooperstown. Dave Pickup



The Impact of Freemasonry upon America

Our Founding Fathers entrenched in this country the quality of Freemasonry, the patriotism of our Craft and the dedication of all Brethren to our nation's ideals of freedom and excellence. Freemasonry is America. The two are inseparable. Our Brethren have cemented the union of the Craft and the country through more than two and one half centuries of labor and achievement. Today no Mason works alone. He shares in and benefits from a dual heritage of Americanism and Freemasonry rooted in the earliest years of our country.

The seed bed of Masonic idealism established by those early Masonic founders of America and many hundreds of unnamed colonial Freemasons bore a rich harvest during the American Revolution. Paul Revere and John Hancock fought for liberty in word and deed. Freemasons proudly stood among the Minutemen when they fired the first shots at the Battles of Lexington and Concord. There is a monument at Bunker Hill that marks where Joseph Warren, the Grand Master of Massachusetts, sacrificed his life for freedom.

On July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia, they declared American Independence and many of the firmest voices supporting this world shaking event were Masonic. Franklin, Hancock, Paine, Hewes, Hooper, Stockton, Walton, Whipple, Ellery, all put their names, their lives and their families' lives on the line when they signed the Declaration of Independence. All were Masons.

The list of Masonic patriots continues. John Paul Jones was captain of the Bon Homme Richard. Robert Morris, who received his Masonic apron from George Washington, managed the new nation's unsteady finances. Robert Livingston, the Grand Master of the State of New York, became the first American Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Benjamin Franklin, as American Ambassador to France, virtually assured our victory by winning France as our staunch ally. Samuel Nicholas, of Lodge No. 13 in Philadelphia, was appointed Captain and first commandant of what was to

become the United States Marine Corps. From other countries came the Marquis de Lafayette, who served as a Major General, and Baron Von Stueben, who was Inspector General and Drill Master. All were Masons.

Since Washington, 14 verified Freemasons have served as President:

James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, known as "Old Hickory," James Polk, James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, James Garfield, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, the "Rough Rider," William Howard Taft, Warren

Harding, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, who was also Past Grand Master of Missouri, Lyndon B. Johnson and Gerald R. Ford.

Led by an illustrious succession of Masonic Presidents, America has been equally supported in the ranks of the military.

Tragically, the War Between the States interrupted America's first century of nationhood. Brethren of the North and South felt compelled to defend their ideals of geographical sections, and many were prominent Masons. Generals Albert Pike, Beauregard, McClellan, Lew Wallace, who authored "Ben Hur" and Admiral Farragut are a few names that come to mind from both sides. The roster of Union and Confederate Freemasons is long and illustrious, but even in the midst of war, they sustained the ideals of peace and brotherhood. For instance, often Brethren would call a Masonic Truce and halt hostilities to exchange wounded or minister to the fallen.

General John J. "Blackjack" Pershing was commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I. Highly decorated Eddie Rickenbacker distinguished himself in the skies in the same war. Both were Masons. Likewise, our nation's high command during World War II was largely made up of Masons. Brother and General George C. Marshall headed the U.S. Army from 1939 to 1945, and after the war was Truman's Secretary of State. He founded the famous Marshall Plan to aid European

recovery as a buttress to world peace. Douglas MacArthur made history in the Philippines and elsewhere in the Southwest Pacific. Omar Bradley was a key figure in the invasion of Normandy and, later, permanent chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1949 to 1955. Jonathan M. Wainwright was the hero of Bataan and Corregidor and later, a prisoner of war in Manchuria. General James H. Doolittle, world famous aviator, personally carried America's "Crusade for Freedom" into the skies above Tokyo. Charles A. Lindbergh distinguished himself in the skies, first, in 1927 by making the first solo Transatlantic flight and then in World War II by flying combat missions as a civilian over the Pacific. Lyman Lemnitzer was Commander of the NATO forces. He and his wife organized the Masonic Children's Home in Pusan, Korea. Curtis E. LeMay was instrumental in organizing the Strategic Air Command. The most decorated hero of World War II was Audie Murphy, a Mason. At all levels, from chief of staff to private, our

fraternal Brothers in every branch of the Armed Forces proved their Masonic courage under fire. Second only to the military in the ranks of Masonic honor stand the titans of American industry, those giants of commerce and manufacturing who have used free enterprise to build this nation. Perhaps the most famous of all epic builders is Henry Ford. His creation of the Model "T" automobile revolutionized America, put our nation on wheels, and introduced mass assembly techniques to industry. Following his lead were Walter P. Chrysler and Ransom E. Olds, two other automotive giants and Masons. So was John North Willys of "Jeep" fame: The railroad industry saw Leland Stanford, who was Governor of California, then went on to be one of the "Big Four" who built the Central Pacific Railroad. Also, was George M. Pullman, the inventor and founder of the Pullman Palace Car Co. He founded the industrial town of Pullman, near Chicago, where he built his company shops.

American industry is more than invention and manufacture. It is also distribution, communication, and production. Brother James C. Penney began his first "Golden Rule" store in 1902, but in a few short years he innovated a system of mass distribution that made

economical goods available to the average American. David Sarnoff, as president of the Radio Corporation of America, became the "Father of Television." We can also include Colonel Sanders of KFC fame and Dave Thomas of Wendy's in this list of Masonic industrialists. Samuel Gompers, early founder of the American Federation of Labor, true to his Masonic background, focused on the industrial worker.

Not to be outdone, Freemasons in the fields of science, medicine and exploration have made significant contributions from colonial times to the present. Thomas Cadwaladar of Philadelphia, a friend of Ben Franklin, is noted for his prevention of smallpox epidemics by using inoculation. Dr. John Gorrie developed innovative treatments for Florida's malaria victims in the 1830's and 40's. The Mayo brothers who founded the Mayo Foundation for Medical Research and Education began their first clinic in their Masonic lodge building in Rochester, Minnesota.

In the field of exploration, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were both Freemasons. Polar explorer Admiral Richard E. Byrd dropped Masonic flags on both poles, Let us not forget that legendary frontiersman Davy Crockett.

Sea and space set no limits to the aspirations of modern America's Freemasons. Cyril J. Tuckerfield, Jr., Lomaye Hurley and Timothy D

Miller were the three key men in 1965 Sealabs I and II. Challenging space were astronauts Gordon Cooper, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, Don Easley, James Irwin, Walter Schirra, Virgil "Gus" Grissom, John Glenn, James Kevin, Edgar Mitchell, Thomas Stafford and Paul Weitz. Kenneth Klienkecht was NASA's manager for the Command and Service Modules of the Apollo Spacecraft Program. All Masons.

The finale for this brief review of famous American Masons must go to the Brethren in the field of entertainment. What heart does not beat faster on hearing John Philip Sousa's spirited marches "Semper Fidelis" and "Stars and Stripes Forever?" What foot can

resist tapping to George M. Cohan's "Over There" and "You're a Grand Old Flag?" Is there any song as noble as Irving Berlin's "God Bless America?" You can hear Masonry's inspiration in all these melodies.

Masons have also been foremost in other -fields of arts and entertainment. "Buffalo Bill" Cody was a Mason. As were the Ringling Brothers, all seven of them, Emmett Kelly, the clown and Karl Wallenda, the circus acrobat. Florenz Ziegfield was a member of the Craft. So were his top performers Eddie Cantor and Will Rogers. Cecil B. de Mille, Carl Laemmle, the Warner Brothers Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, John Wayne, Red Skeleton, Oliver Hardy, W.C. Fields, Clark Gable, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., Richard Arlen, Richard Dix, George Bancroft, Wallace Berry, Victor McLaglen, Monte Blue, Harold Lloyd, Burl Ives, Lauritz Melchior, Norm Crosby, Ernest Borgnine, and Foster Brooks are just a few entertainers of the past and present who have proudly worn the Masonic apron. Remember the next time you Pledge Allegiance to the Flag that it was written by the Rev. Francis J. Bellamy, a Freemason. And when you hear the "Lord's Prayer" sung please bear in mind that the music was written by Albert Hay Malotte, who was a composer and devoted Mason.

America today is the strongest, freest, most prosperous nation in the world. This reality was once a vision. Brave and good men, so many of them Freemasons, chose to live by their dreams. Today as Americans and Brethren, we inherit the fruits of their labors, a quality of life Yet only we can make it so. We are the footing, the foundation of tomorrow. As we build, so will the future generations benefit.

XAVIER A. "SAM" PITASSI He is 324th district inspector for the Grand Lodge of California. "Built Strong to Last Forever" was published in the December 2001 issue of the California Encompasser, the official publication of the Grand York Rite Bodies of California.