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FREEMASONRY BUILDS: DEDICATION OF A MASONIC BUILDING

A Draft Speech Prepared According to the Instructions of
The Honorable Robert Dole

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D. S. Whitney
Editorial Specialist
History and Government Division
May 1, 1962

Wm. B. Dole
Waller Lodge
FREEMASONRY BUILDS: DEDICATION OF ~~A MASONIC BUILDING~~

~~Waller Lodge~~ Wm. B. Dole - Sat May 5

In accordance with the time-honored custom of the Masonic fraternity, we, who represent the ancient and honorable Craft, have assembled with you here today, for the purpose of dedicating a Masonic Hall. In peace we laid the cornerstone and without fear the structure has been erected. We can speak of these accomplishments because the laws of our country and the principles of Freemasonry are in unison in favoring equal justice to all men.

Today will be remembered in the annals of our Lodge and our community because it marks the conclusion of the labors of earnest and zealous men, men who have known no such word as "fail", who have given of their means willingly and cheerfully. Today marks a new era in Masonry. It is established in a new home. It has shown itself a united fraternity and a power that has within itself much inherent strength.

Those who gaze upon this Temple we dedicate today are privileged to admit that there is something more in our Order than a mass of unmeaning rites and ceremonies. There is something sublime in an institution which puts all men on a common level, that knows no rich or poor, cultivated or rough, but takes every man by the hand, if indeed he be a man, and seeks to do its duty by all.

We say this with sentiment and gratitude in the fulfillment of a goal. But unless Masonry is something serious, we have

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no right to give it so much attention. If Masonry is merely to furnish a place where we are to meet in the Lodge, and to go out of the Lodge forgetting what we thought and said therein, we ought not to stay there long. If we mean to accept the doctrine of Masonry, and live by it, we can then do much for ourselves and much for the world. Then we have the right to solemnly dedicate this structure.

The Masonic Lodge represents, in symbolic form, the ancient crafts whose vocation it was to build. There is little doubt that the Masonic Order is the descendant of the trade guilds of ancient times. The building undertaken by these guilds was of various sorts and kinds. It might have been the building of delicate and beautiful works in gold and silver and precious stones. It might have been the building of books in magnificent bindings and illuminated pages whose workmanship has never been surpassed. It might have been the building of stately temples, whose soaring towers and tapering arches directed the mind of man to the worship of Almighty God.

One thing we know of the workmanship of these old trade guilds, their work was always done in a masterly manner and the worker was not ashamed to put his name and mark on what he had done. The Hallmark, which is still found on the silver we use at our tables, is a relic of the time when a Master gold or silver smith brought his work to the gold and silver smiths' hall to be examined by the trade to determine whether

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it measured up to the standards of excellence of a Master gold and silver smith. If it was according to that standard, the mark was placed upon it. It was the mark of excellence.

The same was true in all the guilds of the time. Inferiority in workmanship was not tolerated by the guilds out of which Masonry sprung. A man could not gain admission to the Guild until he had shown himself a Master of the Craft. The long apprenticeships of those days made for perfection in workmanship. Seven years were not looked upon as too much for a man to spend in mastering the trade. Today an apprenticeship in trade is almost unheard of.

When it came to the buildings constructed by our ancient craft Masons, every stone and every beam represented character and skill. In the highest type of architecture no part of the building was without purpose in the completed whole. There were parts of the structure that were ultimately decorated and beautiful, but these parts were essential to the strength and endurance of the structure. The whole was held together by the strength that every part supplied.

Freemasonry no longer has anything to do with the professional building of material structures, except when a Lodge may have a temple built for its use, or a Grand Lodge may officially lay the cornerstone of some great public building. To use the Masonic words describing this change, "our ancient

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brethren were operative Masons, but we work in speculative only."

The modern Order of Masons which we represent here today has taken the standards of our ancient Craft and made them symbolic of human life and character. Our Speculative and Symbolic Orders have taken the Temples built in glory and beauty by our Ancient Brethren and have said to them: "These temples that you have made are glorious and beautiful, but the real temples of God are human hearts. 'Ye are the temple of the living God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.'"

It is in the building of that Temple that modern Masonry labors.

Masonry is pure and free, otherwise it becomes a huge tragedy. It is not pertinent to the purposes of this occasion that we discuss the exact date when, or the particular circumstances under which, Freemasonry originated. A tradition is just as sacred as an established fact and we may be well content to adopt the truth that the present distinctive name of Masonry, or by whatever name it may have been known in past centuries, represents the oldest such association of ideals that history records. It is not my purpose to give a detailed account of the progress of Masonry during the years from which authentic records have come down to us. Much has been written upon the subject. It would be impossible to bring it all within the scope of this address.

The legendary history of Freemasonry locates its origin at or immediately anterior to the building of King Solomon's

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temple at Jerusalem. However, numerous learned and industrious Brethren have endeavored to demonstrate the fact of its existence for thousands of years prior to that event.

We ask ourselves from where came this vast order of the Square and the Level, and the Plumb, and the Cross, and the Star, and the Sun? From Syria, or Chaldea, or Egypt, or from the Hebrew land of the kings and prophets whose temples outshone the sun, or from the Grecian academies? We find operative masonry existing as an applied science in the midst of the pre-historic civilization of the Orient. We see its handiwork standing today challenging the admiration and wonder of the world, and which was old when Abraham trod the unpeopled wilds of Palestine.

Thousands of workmen from Tyre, skilled in hewing and cutting, went with Solomon's men into the mountains of Lebanon for cedar, and into the quarries for stone. The work moved smoothly and harmoniously on.

As a practical Institution, our Order may be said to have culminated in England and on the continent of Europe during the erection of the grand old cathedrals. It remained at its zenith for centuries. Of the lights glimmering here and there, in the dark ages, architecture was among the brightest. Even in the present glare of art and science, there are few structures that do not pale before the light still beaming from the Church of St. Ouen, the Cathedral of Fribourg, and the Ducal palace of the City of the Sea.

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At the beginning of the eighteen century, however, Freemasonry had ceased to be a healthful and vigorous society whose occupation consisted in building such edifices as we have described. The ages were no longer dark. Learning, emerging from the gloom in which it had been hidden, was gradually illuminating Europe. The printing press was revolutionizing the world. America had been discovered. Enterprise was on foot everywhere, and marching with a giant's strength. Labor, rattling impatiently the chains with which guilds and corporations bound it, was struggling into freedom. Research was busying itself about the mysteries of art and was unveiling them. Other men became competent as architects and builders and the masons, ceasing to be a necessity as craftsmen, found themselves, left, at last, in exclusive possession of their ceremonies only. Year after year, the Society became feebler. William, the Third, had been its last royal patron; Sir Christopher Wren its last Grand Master in England. Finally, somewhere about the year 1717 A.D., four Lodges were all that remained of the once powerful organization that had built Westminster and Ely and Canterbury. This was the lowest ebb in the fortunes of Freemasonry.

The tide then turned. The practical feature of the Order was abandoned altogether. It became speculative in its character. We find the Grand Lodge of London permanently established. Freemasonry once more attracted to its Lodges the

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rank and influence. But the Grand Lodge of London was not without its trouble. The Masons of York, rich in their rights and privileges, with a charter dating back 900 years, disputed the authority of the new creation. It was only in the beginning of the nineteenth century that harmony was obtained, and the authority of the Grand Lodge of England recognized by all parties.

But Masonry at all times, whether operative or speculative, has been democratic in its own organization and government. It has chosen its leaders, officers, and lawgivers from the floor of the Lodge by the votes of the Brethren. ~~As it is now,~~
~~so it has ever been, that while an obscure mechanic might~~
~~preside in the seat of authority, the Lord Mayor of London, the~~
~~Prince of Wales, or the President of the Republic might serve~~
~~as Junior Steward, or be seated among the Brethren. It was,~~
~~our gifted Brother, Robert Burns, a speculative Mason, who~~
~~taught the whole English speaking world that --~~

"Tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear Hoddin-grey and a' that,
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is King o' men for a' that."

To our British brethren also belongs the honor of constituting the first Grand Lodge to which local or subordinate lodges could look for strength and guidance.

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Freemasonry, it is recorded, was introduced into the United States in 1730. The mother Grand Lodge of England constituted the first American Grand Lodge, namely the Grand Lodge of the Provinces of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It is a significant fact that the mother granted absolute independence to the American daughter. It seems that the thought never occurred to the Brethren of the Grand Lodge of England that the mother Grand Lodge had any right to demand tribute in the way of dues or taxes of any kind. From that day down to the present moment there has been no bond connecting Masonry in America with Masonry in Great Britain, excepting only ties of brotherly love and affection.

Freemasonry in America became popular at once. George Washington was the Master of a Lodge. A great number of the officers of the Army of the Revolution were members. Many cornerstones were laid by those early Brothers, including the Capitol of the United States. The statement that the laying of the cornerstone of the United States Capitol was the greatest public Masonic occasion in American history is, in the belief of many historians, amply born out by an examination of the facts. The essential reasons for this claim center around the following assertions:

1. The intrinsic historical significance of the event itself is outstanding from the point of view of even the secular historian as well as from that of all subsequent events in our national history.

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2. As in ancient times "all roads led to Rome," so since the establishment of the American Republic all roads, both figuratively and almost literally, have led to the District of Columbia as the area making the location of the Nation's Capital.

3. The cornerstone of the Capitol building was laid Masonically by members of the Masonic fraternity, including its most distinguished Brother, George Washington.

4. The ceremony was performed by a Masonic sovereign body -- the Grand Lodge of Maryland -- and upon the direct invitation of the public authorities responsible for the erection of the building.

5. The cornerstone -- or more properly, the plate -- was laid by George Washington in his dual capacity as America's first citizen (then President of the United States); also as Acting Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Maryland.

6. As far as the record shows it was the only time in his entire life that George Washington laid a cornerstone.

7. It was also the only time that Washington occupied the office and was invested even temporarily with all the prerogatives of Grand Master. We must note that Washington possessed all the qualifications necessary in Masonic law for holding the office of Grand Master. He was on that date a Past Master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22 -- a permanent member of the Grand Lodge of Virginia.

The historic event of the laying of the cornerstone of the United States Capitol took place on September 18, 1793, six

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months after Washington had been inaugurated at Philadelphia for his second term as President. The young Republic over which he presided was then only slightly more than four years old.

Application of Masonic principles in George Washington's private and official life during great moments of history, became a habit with him, as indicated by numerous instances cited in his personal diary, in his letters, and in early records.

When Washington was inaugurated President of the United States at the first inauguration on April 30, 1789, in New York City, the Bible used in the ceremony came from St. John's Lodge, No. 1 of that city. The oath of office was administered by Robert R. Livingston of New York, Grand Master of Masons at that time. During the inaugural the Bible was opened at the 49th chapter of Genesis, where Washington laid his hands upon verses 13 to 33, among which is the record of Jacob's blessing of Joseph as "the Prince of his brethren."

Years later that same Bible was again to serve for the obligation taken by other Presidents -- Warren G. Harding and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Time does not permit me to mention in detail many of our Masonic brethren who brought to the altar of their country the qualities of Freemasonry. But we should be reminded of such men as:

Paul Revere who was made an E. A. September 5, 1760 and advanced to Grand Master in Massachusetts Freemasonry. As a

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skilled craftsmen by profession, his ride to warn the Colonists, which was fraught with danger, was described in poetry made famous by Longfellow. He was also engaged in the French and Indian War as Lieutenant of Artillery and in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Benjamin Franklin's versatility affected the country's economic, diplomatic, journalistic, and patriotic endeavors. Franklin was raised in St. John's Lodge, Philadelphia, June 24, 1731, became Worshipful Master, Grand Master, Provincial Grand Master. In 1777 he was made a member of what is sometimes referred to as the "Lodge of Nine Muses" in Paris. He assisted in raising Voltaire, and the French brethren elected and re-elected Franklin as Worshipful Master.

John Hancock, William Pitt, Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, Roger Sherman, John Marshall, Alexander Hamilton, Nathan Hale, Reverend John Peter Muehlenberg, Baron F.A.W. Von Steuben, Henry (Light Horse Harry) Lee, John Paul Jones, Nathaniel Greene, Lafayette -- all were Masons of good standing. Their names in American history have become household terminology.

The literature of Masonry and patriotism go hand in hand throughout our history -- without end. It is a proud boast of the Craft that this has been, from the beginning, a government conceived by Masons, fostered, furthered, fought, bled and died for, by Masons.

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Not in one speech -- such as this -- can even a outline be given of all that Masonry has done or is doing for this country of ours. But perhaps we can review enough today to instill the desire to further study the stirring deeds of Masonry and patriotism. It is a great hobby to read for one's self of the incidents out of which the Republic was born and the inspiring record of the struggles by which she has been preserved.

Freemasonry came to our State of Kansas in the middle of the nineteenth century. Wyandotte Lodge, Under Dispensation from Missouri, was organized on August 4, 1854. With John M. Chivington, a missionary as Master, the Lodge is said to have been made up mostly of Indians and the first Lodge in Kansas. Later the Grand Lodge of Missouri chartered Smithfield Lodge No. 140 in October of 1854 and Leavenworth Lodge No. 150 in December of that year, and Lawrence Lodge in September of 1855.

A convention met in November, 1855, for the purpose of forming a Grand Lodge, but the meeting was adjourned to December 27 to await the arrival of the representatives of Wyandotte Lodge, who failed to appear. The Grand Lodge was opened but, there being some doubt as to the legality of the organization in which only two chartered lodges had participated, another meeting was held March 17, 1856. It was on that date the Grand Lodge of Kansas was officially formed.

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In those days things in Kansas were paradoxical. It has been said that in those days of early settlement Kansas was almost literally not a geographical territory but a frame of mind. But there were big things done in it and for it. People came from every direction and it grew and prospered. For this we are truly grateful.

Our Masonic forefathers -- in Kansas and elsewhere -- wanted an America to stand tall in the world; not by virtue of its military might nor its material achievements, but because of its belief in human liberty and the rights and dignity of man. They wanted an America whose light would shine throughout the world and would illuminate the pathway of millions who seek to rise out of the valley of tyranny and reach the peak of man's loftiest aspirations.

And so we find ourselves today happily involved in another step forward in behalf of Freemasonry and the free world: the dedication of this Temple. Freemasonry is a permanent institution. Its existence dates far back into the annals of the past. Although empires and kingdoms have been overthrown, and revolutions have taken place in Governments and in society, since it first had a being, yet Masonry still lives. It stands forth to all the world as a tried institution.

Man longs to be free. The aspiration is universal and the higher the grade of enlightenment the firmer seated is the desire

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for personal liberty. We have completed this building and we are now ready to go forward in our continued goals for carrying the Light of Freemasonry into the dark corners of our existence.

Out of what was once a wilderness, God has assisted us in completing a building. We can do no less than to alert ourselves to its duties and awake to its rights. God has given us an altar and has given man a resting place! May the knowledge of this occasion not be forgotten!



MASONIC "IF"

By MAURICE H. THATCHER, 33^o
Former Congressman from Kentucky
(As published in The Masonic World)

RECEIVED
DEC 16 1963
BOB DOLE

If you can steel yourself against the devil
That dwells in you and bids you to despair;
If you can ground your life upon the level,
And build it up with use of plumb and square;
If o'er your failures you can draw the curtain,
And think of lifting, more--of leaning, less;
If you can hold the law as fixed and certain,
That only virtue has the power to bless:

See-
Masonic Speech
File- (Dedication)

If you can learn the things your Craft would teach you,
And make them work thru all the burdened year;
If you may pause where pity's cry shall reach you,
And pay it heed; and dry the widow's tear,
And clasp the orphan's hand, and help your brother--
When he is down and needs your strength and aid;
If you can sense the fact, o'er any other
That man, to serve his fellow-man, was made:

If charity may temper all your action,
And zeal and justice claim you as their own;
If you can rise above the taint of faction,
And labor for the common weal, alone;
If you shall love your country and its banner,
And if you're ever ready to defend--
At any cost, and in whatever manner--
Your country and its banner, to the end:

If to the lodge and fireside you are loyal,
And if from duty's path you dare not swerve;
If honor is, to you, the hall-mark royal,
And if, always, you labor to deserve;
If you shall cherish vow and obligation,
And note the symbols with discerning sight,
And into conduct give them sure translation;
And if you walk within the altar's light:

If you can stand aloof from hate and rancor,
And free your tongue from futile speech or cant;
If truth shall be your compass, sail, and anchor,
And if your righteous will be adamant;
If terms shall fail to vex you, or bewilder,
And "brotherhood" and "fatherhood" be clear;
If faith be yours to trust the Master Builder,
In His own way, the Temple to uprear:--

If you can live, and act, and have your being,
In manner thus, nor languish by the way;
And if your vision comes to be all-seeing,
With wisdom, waxing stronger day by day;
If, thruout all, your courage lifts unbroken,
And if you deal sincerely with all men, --
You'll be a worth-while Mason, sir, and token
Of God's elect-- a first-class Citizen!