

## Chapter 15 " Magic of the Obelisks"

by Peter Tombkins

### E PLURIBUS UNUM

**"Out of many, one", is a dictum on the Seal of the United States.**



The most sacred symbol of Lucifer Sun Worship. The largest upright phallus of the SUN in the world is the George Washington monument in Washington D.C., the capital city of the United States of American. Its dimension at its base is 55.5 ft wide by 55.5 ft. long, with a height 555 ft high. Guess what the sum total is, when you add up those three

**Dimensions?**

Masonic lodges were introduced into the American colonies at the time they were being proscribed by Clement XII in 1738. By the beginning of the Revolutionary period, there were lodges in each of the thirteen colonies, including seven Provincial Grand Lodges.

***Whether or not the idea for a union of the colonies originated among colonial Freemasons, it was certainly achieved through their leadership.*** Boston Masons organized the Tea Party at the Green Dragon Tavern, described by Daniel Webster as "the Headquarters of the Revolution" and by the British as "a nest of sedition." Paul Revere was a Master Mason, as was every general officer in the Revolutionary army, starting with Jospeh Warren, Grand Master of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, the first to die at Bunker Hill. Two thousand more Masons were among officers of all grades, including Catholics and a score of the Jewish faith, such as Colonel Isaac Frank, aide-de-camp to George Washington,

and Major Benjamin Nones, on General Lafayette's staff.

Of the **fifty-six signers** of the Declaration of Independence, **some fifty were Masons**, as was its prime author, Thomas Jefferson. The same was true **of the Constitutional Convention.**

In colonial times Freemasonry had been the only institution in which leaders of the different colonies could meet on common ground, Protestant, Catholic, or Jew. Local government differed too widely, from the town meeting system of Puritan New England to the vestry system of the Southern colonies. In the Lodges men of the most diverse religious and political views, rich and poor, could come together in a spirit of mutual harmony and confidence. Founded on the broad **universal principles** of the brotherhood of man, the immortality of the soul, and the existence in the universe of a Supreme Architect, the lodge became a sanctuary in which any man, from general to private, could meet on an equal plane, something the princes of the world found hard to tolerate.

As Americans began to rebel against the injustice of George III's government, the lodges became divided into "modern" and "ancient," the former patronized by royal governors and British civil military officers, mostly sympathetic to the Crown; the "ancient," composed primarily of merchants, mechanics, and laborers, was intensely demo-cratic, in favor of independence. With the progress of the war, independent American lodges superseded those of English, Irish, and Scottish jurisdiction.

In Virginia, when the members of Alexandria Lodge No. 22 declared themselves independent of any foreign jurisdiction, they named George Washington as First Master of the Lodge. Washington, at the age of twenty, had been entered on November 4, 1752, as an apprentice Mason in the lodge at Market House in Fredericksburg and nine months later, in his twenty-first year, was raised to the degree of Master. In the midst of hostilities, in 1780, when the idea was suggested at the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania of creating a Grand Master of all the Grand Lodges formed or to be formed in the United States, George Washington was unanimously elected to fill the post. But the commander in chief, too busy with the war, was obliged to decline.



At last, when peace came, it was the Grand Master of New York's Grand Lodge, Robert Livingston, who administered to Washington his oath of office as first president of the United States. *When the cornerstone of the nation's new Capitol was laid on September 18, 1793, the ceremony was performed in concert with the Grand Lodge of Maryland and with several lodges under the jurisdiction of Washington's Lodge 22, with the new president clothing himself for the occasion in a Masonic apron and other insignia of the brotherhood.*

At George Washington's burial on his estate at Mount Vernon, 20 miles south of the District of Columbia, six of the pallbearers and three of the officiating clergymen were brother Masons from Alexandria Lodge 22. And "the mystic funeral rites of masonry" were performed by the new Grand Master of the Lodge, as, one by one, Washington's Masonic brethren cast upon his bier the ritual sprig of acacia, Osirian symbol of the resurrection of the spirit. On the coffin with two crossed swords was placed the Masonic apron specially made for Washington by the Marquise de Lafayette. So it is not surprising that the idea to raise to Washington's memory the greatest Masonic monument in the world, an obelisk of marble to tower majestically 600 feet above the waters of the Potomac, visible from his home in Mount Vernon, should have been conceived in the minds of America's Freemasons.

Within hours of Washington's death, his fellow Mason, Representative John

Marshall of Virginia, later the country's first chief justice, rose in the House and moved that a monument be raised to the man "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."(Died: December 14, 1799) **Promptly in both Houses a bill was passed to raise \$200,000. But no money was appropriated; and for a quarter of a century no step was taken to implement the resolution.** *Instead, the infant nation, founded on the tenets of the great liberating movement of northern Europe, which aspired to religious liberty and the right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, found itself swept by tides of religious intolerance almost as deadly as those of the sixteenth century, and the waves of controversy ebbed and flowed around the building of the monument.*

The trouble all started in England in 1797, when a reactionary French **Jesuit named Augustin Barruel** fled to London from the September massacres of the French Revolution and brought out a five-volume opus, *Memoirs pour servir a l'histoire du Jacobinism*, in which he placed the blame for the bloodbath of the Terror squarely on Freemasons, singling out Saint-Germain, Cagliostro, and Weishaupt as the major Masonic villains. *Tracing the slogan of "Liberty and Equality" back to the early Templars*, Barruel declared that the secret of Masonry *did* consist in those two words, but that "in the higher degrees the twofold principle of liberty and equality is unequivocally explained not only by *war against kings and thrones*, but by *war against Christ and his altars*.

To Barruel, the Jacobins had instituted the Terror as members of a vast plot to overthrow society and religion, the worst villains being Weishaupt's Illuminati, cuckooed into Freemasonry. In his early volumes, Barruel claimed that a formal and systematic conspiracy against all religion had been formed and zealously prosecuted by the encyclopedists Voltaire, d' Alembert, and Diderot, assisted by Frederick II of Prussia. In his third volume Barruel attached the "wickedest anti-Christian conspirators: devoted to atheism, universal anarchy and the destruction of property, boring from within to undermine every government, wishing for the nations of the earth to be directed from their nocturnal clubs." Imagine, wrote Barruel, "thousands of lodge rooms converted into nests of human vipers, men possessing warped intellects with one uncontrollable impulse surging through their arteries-destruction! destruction! destruction! and you will be getting down to the true cause of the holocaust which drenched the French nation in human blood."

Barruel charged that not only the lower orders of Masonry were duped by Weishaupt, but also those of Weishaupt's own Illuminati, for whom he had provided another top-secret level of direction known as the Aeopagus, a withdrawn circle of directors of the whole order, who alone knew its secret aims. To Barruel, such revolutionary leaders as La Rochefoucauld, Lafayette, and the duc d'Orleans. had become Illuminati agents and dupes of the more extreme radicals such as Danton, provocateurs who sparked the Illuminati-directed rebellion. Barruel further charged

that the entire French Masonic establishment had been converted to Weishaupt's revolutionary ideas, its lodges turned into secret committees which planned bloodshed. "Masonic units, dotted by the thousands all over the map of Europe, were thus transformed into places of anarchy, **devoted to creating mob violence.**" In his fourth and fifth volumes, Barruel went into the minutiae of how the holocaust had been carefully plotted in a secret meeting between Saint-Germain and Cagliostro, who had organized "six hundred thousand masons into a conspiracy with the duc d'Orleans as the chief villain, ambitious to possess the throne of France." Barruel attributed to Saint-Germain, Cagliostro, and Weishaupt the deliberate steering of the Revolution into the Terror. "The power to govern France was vested in the *Oomite de Salut Public* composed of three hundred men, all leaders in the Illuminated Order." And, according to Barruel, these same Illuminati had spread to America and infiltrated American Masonry.

Jefferson, after reading one volume of Barruel's *memoirs*, called it "the ravings of a Bedlamite." Historian Vernon Stauffer, more politely dismisses the connection between Illuminati and the French Revolution as "suffering from the fatal defect of lack of historical proof." And John Morris Roberts, in his recent *The Mythology of Secret Societies*, sums up the conclusions of more rational historians: "It is difficult to grasp, let alone understand, the success-and enduring success-of this farrago of nonsense." Not only, says Roberts, does Barruel "mistranscribe and misreport," he is "careless about ideological and doctrinal distinctions. He wrote nonsense about Swedenborg and the Martinists, and he cribs, uncritically, stories which weaken his case in the eyes of anyone who has some acquaintance with the world of which he is writing." And yet, Roberts concludes, almost audibly sighing: "Few objective scholars have dictated the shape of their subject for so long as this unbalanced and indiscriminate priest." Hardly was Barruel's book off the presses in England when a Scottish Freemason, John Robinson, professor of natural philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, with the excuse that he was anxious to dissipate English Masonry from having been involved in the French Revolution, brought out a sequel echoing Barruel's "data" in *Proofs of Conspiracy Against All the Religions and Governments of Europe, Carried on in the Secret Meetings of Free Masons, Illuminati and Reading Societies*. The book was a quick best seller; with the result that as further editions were brought out in Edinburgh, Dublin, and New York, a wave of anti-Masonic and anti-Illuminist feeling spread across America, carefully enflamed by Barruel's brother Jesuits. Even Washington was accused of having been an Illuminatus, and was obliged publicly to play down his Masonic connections.

When, in 1799, a German minister, G. W. Snyder, sent Washington a copy of Robinson's book with the warning that the Illuminati were preparing to "overthrow all government and religion," asking the ex-president to prevent the plan from "corrupting the Bretheren of the English Lodges over which you preside," Washington replied that he had heard "much of the nefarious and dangerous plan and doctrines of the

Illuminati, but never saw the book until you were pleased to send it to me." Subtly, Washington added that he wished to "correct an error you have run into, of my presiding over the English Lodges in this country. The fact is, I preside over none, nor have I been in one, more than once or twice, within the last thirty years-I believe notwithstanding, that none of the Lodges in this country are contaminated with the principles ascribed to the society of the Illuminati." All of which was palpably true, though perhaps somewhat sophistical, as the lodges to which Washington belonged after 1776 were not English, but American.

In another letter, written a month later, Washington further corrected Snyder's misunderstanding. "It was not my intention to doubt that the doctrines of the Illuminati, and principles of Jacobinism, had not spread in the United States. On the contrary, no one is more fully satisfied of this fact than I am. The idea that I meant to convey was that I did not believe that the Lodges of Freemasons in *this* country had, as societies, endeavoured to propagate the diabolical tenets of the first, or pernicious principles of the latter, (if they are susceptible of separation). That *individuals of them* may have done it, or that the founder, or instrument employed to found the Democratic societies in the United States, may have had these objects-and actually, in my view, had a separation of the people from their government, is too evident to be questioned." *And although the next four presidents of the United States were all Masons, an organized surge of anti-Masonic feeling swept the country, threatening the institutions of Masonry and testing the fidelity of its members. To be seen wearing a Masonic emblem meant risking social ostracism.*

In these circumstances, the prospect of erecting a Masonic monument to Washington grew dimmer. On January 15, 1824, Representative James Buchanan (later president) proposed that something be done about the 1799 resolution. His proposal was tabled. And even when John Quincy Adams, the first non-Masonic president, reminded the members of Congress of the resolution in December 1825, no action whatsoever was taken.

In the country the anti-Masonic movement had increased as there came into being the first third party in American politics, the Anti-Masonic party, which grew rapidly as a result of the hysteria generated by the disappearance in 1826 of a brick mason named William Morgan, little known other than for his penchant for the bottle, and for a dubious past as a Mason. 'n May 1825 Morgan had been mistakenly exalted to the degree of Royal Arch Mason in Batavia, New York, on the basis of his oath that he had received the earlier necessary degrees in Canada, where the Masonic ritual was somewhat different. But Morgan's drinking habits and his financial looseness aroused suspicion, and when it was established that he had not been initiated into the lower degrees, he was dropped from the order. In revenge, Morgan decided to publish a book containing the ritual secrets of Freemasonry, for which he obtained a contract from a printer of the *Batavia Republican Advocate*, also a former Mason who had

failed to advance in his lodge in Albany, and ever since had cherished a grudge against the brotherhood.

As Morgan set to work on his book, keeping the local barrooms advised of his progress, feeling began to run high among Masons that a stop should be put to what they considered Morgan's treachery. News of the intended publication finally roused Masons in New York State to take action, though most counseled that if the book were greeted with silence it might become stillborn.

John Whitney, an ardent New York Mason, incensed by Morgan's behavior, went to Governor De Witt Clinton, Grand Master of New York Masons, but was advised to purchase Morgan's manuscript, for which \$1,000 would be made available, and warned to do nothing that might conflict with the law.

On September 11, 1826, Morgan was arrested on a warrant sworn out by a tavern keeper in Canandaigua, New York, and charged with theft. Acquitted, he was re-arrested for a debt of \$2.68 and jailed for his inability to pay. On September 12, Morgan was released on payment of the sum by a third party, who, with several companions, drove Morgan away in a coach. Morgan was later traced to Fort Niagara, where he had been confined in an unused military depot. There after he disappeared completely. As a *cause celebre* for anti-Masonic propaganda, the disappearance was a true bonanza. A great cry was raised, and his abductors were accused of being Masonic murderers, fulfilling their secret oath to dispose of traitors in the most gruesome way. According to formal allegations of the Anti-Masonic party, the ritual manner of inflicting death on traitors among Masons was "cutting the throat and tearing out the tongue, tearing out the heart, severing, quartering and disemboweling the body, and burning the ashes tearing the breast open, and throwing the heart on a dunghill to rot-smiting the skull off, and exposing the brains to the sun pulling down the house of the offender, and hanging him on one of the timbers-striking the head off, and placing it on a lofty spire-tearing out the eyes, chopping off the hands, quartering the body, and throwing it among the rubbish of the Temple." To calm a population outraged by this further "farrago of nonsense," Governor Clinton issued three successive proclamations urging all good citizens to cooperate with the authorities in helping to find Morgan and punish his abductors. A \$2,000 reward was offered for information leading to his recovery and for bringing to justice his assailants. A free pardon was offered to anyone involved who would uncover the offenders.

The discovery that certain Masons had arranged for the change of horses and drivers for the 125-mile drive from Canandaigua to Fort Niagara, brought jail sentences to those involved. And every possible effort was made to prove as murderers these Masons; only lack of a body made it impossible. When a man's corpse was washed ashore on the beach of Oak Orchard Harbor, New York, about 40 miles below Fort Niagara, Morgan's widow, though she admitted the clothes were not

those of her husband, expressed belief that the body might be his. But whereas Morgan had been bald, with a smooth face and the peculiarity of long white hairs in his ears and nostrils, this body had a heavy beard and a full head of hair.

To remedy the discrepancy, a leading member of the Anti-Masonic party, Thurlow Weed, editor of a Rochester paper, present at the inquest, was accused of having had the corpse shaved and hairs plucked from his forehead to thrust into its ears and nostrils. Result: a verdict that the body was Morgan's. Publicity about the verdict, as it brought on another wave of anti-Masonic outrage in the country, also brought to Oak Orchard Harbor the widow of a man, Timothy Munroe, who had fallen from a boat and drowned. So minutely did the widow describe the clothing worn by her husband and so accurately did the details tally with marks she said were identifiable on his body, that another inquest was ordered and the verdict reversed. The corpse was declared to be that of Munroe.

Of Morgan, nothing more was heard, and though stories continued to be circulated that a group of Masons had drawn lots to dump him in the river with a weight around his neck, Masons stuck to the story that Morgan had been taken across the river to Canada, where Canadian Masons near Hamilton, Ontario had given him \$500 to make himself scarce-after which he had disappeared without a trace.

Not that the disappearance of Morgan did anything to halt publication of what was purported to be his book, put together by Miller, his contractual publisher, from manuscripts in the possession of his widow. To arouse sympathy and to publicize the book, Miller even appears to have set fire to his printshop, for which he was then indicted. The book, quickly pirated, sold by the hundreds of thousands of copies, adding fuel to the anti-Masonic blaze.

That one such disappearance could bring down the wrath of a whole country on the Brotherhood of Masons, whereas the Church could historically be held responsible for several million agonized deaths under torture and execution, seemed to Masons unaccountably unequitable, especially as no other "ritual murder" could be attributed to American Masons, who pointed out that by their own code of ethics, they, above all, were bound to obey the law of the land, "with respect for God, country and their fellow men."

Clearly, the Morgan incident had only been a spark, like Marie Antoinette's affair of the diamond necklace, which lighted a well-prepared pyre designed to destroy the fraternity. Social, racial, religious, and political forces had been working beneath the surface to capitalize on the frenzy of the anti-Masonic movement.

Conventions of anti-Masons convened throughout the country, to sweep anti-Masonic candidates into office. Again the principal ammunition at these conventions

were the works of Barruel and Robinson, freely excerpted and produced as the sacrosanct evidence of history. Illuminism, said Ethan Smith, chairman of the Committee on the Connection between French Illuminism and the higher degrees of Freemasonry, at the 1832 anti-Masonic Republican convention in Massachusetts, was designed to bind the world with invisible hands, and had been infiltrated into America well before 1786. "Both Robinson and Barruel," said Smith, "testify to the fact. Barruel mentions a lodge of this order in Portsmouth, Virginia, and two lodges as having descended from it. Illuminism exists in this country; and the impious mockery of the sacramental supper, described by Robinson is acted here." Smith then quoted from Christoph Girtanner's book on the French revolution: "active members of the propagandists in 1791 numbered fifty thousand, with funds of thirty millions of livres. They are extended over the face of the world, having for their object the promotion of revolutions, and the doctrines of Atheism. And it is a maxim in their code that it is better to defer their attempts fifty years, than to fail of success through too much precipitation."

Smith also quoted from a printed sermon of a Reverend Dr. Morse, who assured the public of an official communication from the Illuminated lodge Wisdom, of Portsmouth, Virginia, to the Illuminated lodge Union. "The letter," said Smith, "was intercepted. In it were the names of their officers, and the number of their adepts; being then 100, mostly French. In this letter, it appeared that there were thousands of such Lodges of Illuminism in the world; and many in the western world." Smith came to the point of all the fuss: he produced the same charge which had been leveled against Pico, Ficino, Dee, and Cagliostro: Illuminism had been most secretly planted by the side of Speculative Masonry to indulge in *gross infidelity and licentiousness*. Here, at last, was the note needed to enflame a "Christian" opposition.

The churches joined in the general attack, barring Masons from their pulpits as "irreligious." **Ministers preached the "satanic nature of the Masonic lodge"** and called it incompatible with the Christian faith. Baptists were told to dissolve their ties with Masonry or risk having "the Hand of Christian Fellowship" withdrawn from them. Other denominations announced they would support no Mason for any office in either town, country, or state. Masons were stricken from jury rolls; hostile crowds formed to prevent Masonic meetings; and individuals were so persecuted that in many cases they were driven to emigrate. *In the early 1830s, of 227 lodges in New York State, only 41 remained. New York's membership dwindled from 20,000 at the time of the Morgan incident to a mere 3,000. All the lodges in Vermont surrendered their charters, and it was the same in all the other states of the Union.* As one historian sums up the carnage: The Temple of Masonry was shattered, the brotherhood scattered.

Many politicians campaigned on an anti-Masonic platform and rose to eminence, such as **Millard Fillmore**, who worked his way up to the White House, and **William H. Seward**, governor of New York and a United States senator, who narrowly failed to

occupy the White House, but was to become Lincoln's secretary of state. There was a slight respite when Andrew Jackson, Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee, was elected president for a second term; and then gradually the halls of Masonry once more began to throng with candidates who, after the lesson of Morgan, were more warily chosen from among those whose "pure lives and characters would make them an ornament to the order." *As the lodges multiplied, Grand Master James Willard was able to announce that thanks to the constancy of members, Freemasonry was once more held in respect and honor in the country, as was the memory of its founder, George Washington.*

In Washington, D.C., what was described as "a number of patriotic citizens" assembled to revive the plan for erecting a national monument, asking for voluntary contributions from all the people, rich and poor, in the amount of \$1 each. That this group, which called itself the Washington National Monument Society, was fundamentally Masonic is evidenced by its first president, Washington's brother Mason, Chief Justice John Marshall.

Ads were placed by the society to elicit designs from American artists for a monument "harmoniously to blend durability, simplicity and grandeur" at an estimated cost of \$1 million. As to form, there was no limitation, but, as might be expected, a committee selected the design of Freemason Robert Mills for a 600 foot obelisk surrounded at its base by an olympian rotunda.

By 1847 the society had collected and gained from judicious investments a total of \$87,000, and seemed on its way to success. A liberalizing trend in the country echoed a similar trend in Europe, especially with the election to the papacy in 1846 of Giovanni Maria Mastaijerretti. As Pius IX, the new pope auspiciously inaugurated his reign with a political amnesty and several badly needed reforms in the judicial and financial systems of the Papal States, proverbially the worst run in Europe, cutting down ecclesiastical graft. Censorship was mitigated and, in March 1848, wonder of wonders, the pontiff promulgated a constitution with a parliament consisting of two chambers, to which many Masons were elected.

In this happy atmosphere the United States Congress passed a resolution authorizing the Washington National Monument Society to erect the obelisk designed by Robert Mills, granting them, as a suitable site to build on, a 30 acre lot overlooking the Potomac south of the White House. There beautiful marble from the Symington Beaver Dam quarries in Baltimore County could easily be brought by water or by rail. The estimated cost of construction was \$55,200 for the obelisk and \$1,122,000 for the entire job, which Congress agreed to provide.

Mills was authorized to contract for the required material and to have a rail line laid right up to the base of the monument. And so thoroughly had the atmosphere changed

that the laying of the cornerstone a 24,500 pound block of Maryland marble donated by Freemason Thomas Symington could be performed with a suitable Masonic ceremony scheduled for July 4, 1848.

Stands were built around the site to make a vast sloping amphitheater of seats. Near the Fourteenth Street Bridge (then called Long Bridge), a triumphal arch was decorated with the same live eagle, now forty years old, which had hailed the arrival of Freemason Lafayette when he had visited the capital twenty years earlier. A parade of carriages led by President James Knox Polk was followed by the Masonic fraternity, headed by their Grand Marshal, J. B. Thomas; and the ceremonies were opened with a prayer led by the Grand Chaplain of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Maryland. It was a lovely day. Recent rain had laid the dust and turned the sod a fresh green. Bells tolled solemnly as close to twenty thousand people crowded around for the ceremony, fares having been reduced by rail and stagecoach lines into the city. Among the spectators were past and future presidents Martin van Buren and Millard Fillmore, as well as Mrs. Alexander Hamilton, Mrs. John Quincy Adams, and a delegation of Indians with whom George Washington had originally signed treaties of peace. Benjamin B. French, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia, deposited articles in a cavity beneath the stone, using the same gavel and wearing the same Masonic apron and sash worn by George Washington when he laid the cornerstone of the Capitol in 1793.

Having applied the square, level, and plumb to see that the stone was "well laid, true and trusty," the Grand Master placed on the stone the ancient Masonic elements of consecration: corn for plenty, wine for joy, oil for health. He then turned to his brother Mason, Robert Mills, and presented him with the square, level, and plumb, the working tools he was to use in the erection of this monument, saying: "You, as a Freemason, know to what they morally allude: the plumb admonishes us to walk upright in our several stations before God and man, the square to square our actions with the square of virtue, remembering that we are traveling upon the level of time to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns."

The Honorable Robert C. Winthrop, Speaker of the House, then delivered an address which reflected the encouraging political mood of the times, alluding to the rash of liberating revolutions of 1848 as the "mighty movements which have recently taken place on the continent of Europe, where events which would have given character to an age have been crowded within the changes of a moon." In these changes, said Winthrop, "we see the influence of our own institutions...we behold in them the results of our own example. We recognize them as the spontaneous germination and growth of seeds which have been wafted over the ocean, for half a century past, from our own original Liberty tree."

That the occasion was intentionally and intensely Masonic was unmistakable from

Winthrop's words: "Everywhere the people are heard calling their rulers to account and holding them to a just responsibility. Everywhere the cry is raised for the elective franchise, the trial by jury, the freedom of the press, written constitutions, representative systems, republican forms." And in an unusual tribute to Pius IX, Winthrop continued: "In some cases, most fortunately, the rulers themselves have not escaped some reasonable symptoms of the pervading fervor for freedom, and have nobly anticipated the demands of their subjects. To the sovereign pontiff of the Roman States in particular belongs the honor of having led the way in the great movement of the day, and no American will withhold from him a cordial tribute of respect and admiration for whatever he has done or designed for the regeneration of Italy. Glorious indeed on the page of history will be the name of Pius IX if the rise of another Rome shall be traced to his wise and liberal policy."

But this was not to be. In November of that same year Pius fled from the republic of Rome to the Kingdom of Naples, and there, completely reversing his liberal policy, threw himself into the arms of the Jesuits, calling on France and Austria to help him back into power. Reinstated in Rome with foreign bayonets in April 1850, Pius inaugurated as violent an antiliberal reaction as had occurred after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 and one which was to swing the political pendulum to the farthest opposite extreme. Absolute autocracy was restored in the Papal States, and anyone could be thrown into Castel Sant' Angelo without a trial.

**By 1851 Pius showed the absolutist direction he was taking by proclaiming Roman Catholicism as the sole religion of the Spanish people, to the exclusion of all other creeds, a principle which was then applied to Latin America with the hope of doing likewise in North America.** By 1854 Pius, well on his way to announcing his stunning dogma of the infallibility of popes-an idea strongly disputed by a great many Catholic bishops-defied the whole trend of liberal thought by branding as false the basic beliefs of democracy and liberalism. Reinforcing his predecessors' bans against Masonry, **Pius attacked public education, free libraries, and the right of men and women to choose their own religion, claiming for the Catholic Church control of all culture, all science, and all systems of education, declaring: "The pontiff neither can nor ought to be reconciled with progress, liberalism and modern civilization."**

Arguing that the Son of God had established **one religion and imposed on all men the obligation of embracing it, Pius branded all Protestants and Jews as heretics**, doomed to damnation, there being no salvation outside the Roman Church. Catholics were forbidden to read certain books or to discuss their religion without approval of a priest, who, in turn, could be reprimanded and punished for proposing mercy for heretics. Catholics were to be held to the dogma that hellfire was real, and that the unfortunate non-Catholic damned would never lose consciousness of their torment throughout all eternity.

**Unashamed, the pontiff declared himself to be Father of Princes and Kings, Ruler of the World, Viceroy of the Lord Jesus Christ, claiming for himself absolute political power and declaring it to be the duty of all states to carry out orders from Rome, that only the Roman Church could decide whether a law was "good" or "bad" and that obedience to a law displeasing to the pontiff was not binding on the citizens of any state.**

Summed up, these clearly expressed political principles of the Roman Catholic Church, to which was applied the epithet *ultramontanism*, appeared formidable to American Masons. According to Pius IX's famous *Syllabus Errorum*, the ultimate source of law and government in the United States lay not in the people but in the "will of God as interpreted and expressed by the Pope." The primary and ultimate functions of the government of the United States were to carry out the principles of the Roman Church as promulgated by the pope. Freedom of speech and the press were to be permitted only to the extent they did not interfere with the principles and activities of the Roman Church. Public funds were to be used to support the Catholic Church and its schools. Most alarming, Catholics who were citizens of the United States owed a primary political allegiance to the Roman Catholic pontiff who could lawfully use force to overthrow their government. Catholics were not to approve a policy of separation of Church and State, and states had no right to legislate in matters such as marriages, only to be recognized by the Church, which forbade contraception and abortion even if required to save a mother. A leading Jesuit writer in the United States classed with prostitutes those American wives who used contraception, and called them "daughters of joy," maintaining that birth control resulted in sin which was no more than mutual masturbation.

**All of which, not unnaturally, was unpalatable to American democrats, especially when the Catholic clergy insisted that the laws of Rome superseded the laws of the republic, and that Catholics were duty-bound to force all people into the pattern laid down by the Church.** What made the system intolerable to its opponents was the fact that Catholics in America had no say whatsoever in the choice of their own priests, bishops, or cardinals, all of whom were appointed from Rome to perpetuate the system of management and control, bishops being deliberately selected for their subservience to the Vatican. The country began to be flooded with Catholic immigrants-as many as 300,000 a year, mostly poor, illiterate, and superstitious-Irishmen fleeing the potato famine, or Germans escaping crop failures and political persecution, all under the control of foreign priests. American Protestants found themselves faced with an army officered by disciplined bishops under a single omnipotent commander in chief whose chiefs of staff were the Jesuit generals. Whereas at the time of the founding of the republic there had been perhaps 1 percent of Catholics in the colonies, now there were as many as 10 percent who could effectively influence elections in which Yankees could even find themselves reduced to minorities. As the established Protestants saw their longtime position of privilege being

eroded, religious intolerance flared up to a degree almost comparable with the horrors of the Counter-Reformation. Protestant ministers rose in their pulpits to denounce Catholics as un-American because they were obliged to take orders from an autocratic, antidemocratic foreign power. These ministers, believing in human sinfulness and predestined damnation, became, in the words of historian Carleton Beals, "a band of neck-swollen, hate mongering tub thumpers." In the streets scores of Protestant ant papist magazines began to appear, and masses of anti-Catholic literature were put out by Protestant Bible societies. As sex was the easiest and most obvious peg on which to hang an inflamed propaganda, religious presses gave free reign to stories of secret orgies in nunneries, the rape of young girls by priests, the killing of bastard babies, with headlines such as "Six Thousand Babies' Heads Found in a Nunnery Fishpond." Most popular were the "confessions" of escaped nuns who described being forced into carnal intercourse with priests. *Awful Disclosures* by Maria Monk, the joint effort of "a disordered whore and unprincipled religious demagogue," sold 300,000 copies before the Civil War.

When a Catholic priest in Carbean, New York, outraged at the distribution of Protestant Bibles to his parishioners, angrily burned several copies publicly, the whole country reacted. Nor did it help when Bishop Hughes of New York defended the act, saying: "To destroy a spurious corrupt copy of the Bible was justified and praiseworthy." Described by pro-Catholic Carleton Beals as "pretty much a Torquemada deprived of rack and screw and hot irons," Bishop Hughes gave an outrageous sermon in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, boasting that the pagan and Protestant nations were crumbling before the force of Rome. "The true Church," thundered the bishop, "would convert all Pagan nations, even England, with her proud Parliament. ... Everybody should know that we have for our mission to convert the world-including all inhabitants of the United States-the people of the cities, and the people of the country, the officers of the Navy and the Marines, commanders of the Army, the legislatures, the Senate, the Cabinet, the President and all."

To counter the bishop, his opponents made use of a firebrand named Alessandro Gavazzi, a former priest and teacher turned revolutionist who had fled from Italy to the United States under the auspices of The American and Christian Foreign "Church Union, a scandal-making organization formed to fight the "Corrupting Catholic Church." Gavazzi wanted nothing but to annihilate the papacy. and swore to devote his life to "stripping the Roman harlot of her barb." Although a renegade, he wore a long monk's robe embroidered with a blazing cross. Six feet tall, with an "almost savage physical energy," he caused riots wherever he went.

Protestants turned against Catholics as they had against Baptists, Methodists, Shakers, and Quakers, using the same methods of "torture, whippings, brandings, arson and murder, looting and raping in the **name of the democracy** they claimed to support." Everywhere "native" American parties began to mushroom, waving the Stars

and Stripes, and raising up mobs to burn Catholic convents, churches, houses; to assault nuns and murder Irish and other European immigrants. As the nation became torn with bitter sectionalism and seething social unrest, there was repeated rioting, in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Providence, Hartford, New Orleans, Saint Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville, and San Francisco.

According to Herbert Asbury in his *The Gangs of New York*, at least thirty thousand men in the city were active members of gangs, and not only men but women fought in the streets. "One notorious female," says Carleton Beals in *Brass-Knuckle Crusade*, his description of early fascism in America, "carried a tomahawk, knife, and gun and wore boots cleated with broken glass. Another sheathed her nails in steel and filed her teeth to needle point' *Hell Cat Maggie*, they called her." Tammany Hall's "Sons of Saint Tamina," started, as Beals says, "by hatchetman Aaron Burr who first made secret gangsterism into a political system," found themselves pitted against Protestant bully clubs who sought to control the polling booths with sticks, knives, and guns.

That the times were rough is evidenced by miscreants in New Jersey being branded on the cheek and given public floggings. A girl convicted of petty theft was sentenced to 210 lashes on her bare back. Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormons, taken by a mob from an Illinois jail, was murdered, as was his brother. Abolitionists were dragged through the streets at the end of ropes and frequently killed. *Southern states imposed the death penalty for preaching to "blacks" or teaching them to read and write. And, although Washington, in his will, had emancipated his slaves and left a trust fund for their education and for the schooling of their children, the Bible Society refused to send Bibles to slaves.*

As the whole country, aroused by the fervor of prejudice, prepared to square off for the bloodiest civil war in history, there came into being a secret society known as the Supreme Order of the Star-Spangled Banner. To avoid the Constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, its members pledged to vote only for non-Catholics selected by their secret upper tier caucuses, swearing never to betray the society's secrets, under pain of expulsion and implied penalty of death, and to deny affiliation by replying to the curious with the simple phrase: "I know nothing." Multiplying like rabbits, they soon numbered five million members, with new ones enrolled at the rate of five thousand a week. By 1855 they were a power in the land, controlling Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California, all but one of the New England states, and nearly every state in the South. Millard Fillmore became president standing on the Know-Nothing platform, and U. S. Grant rose to fame in the same way. But the proudest "claim" of the Know-Nothings was that George Washington had been the first of their party, citing his apocryphal words at Valley Forge: "Tonight let none but native-born Americans stand guard."

Unwittingly they were to do their assumed hero a gross disservice. By this time the

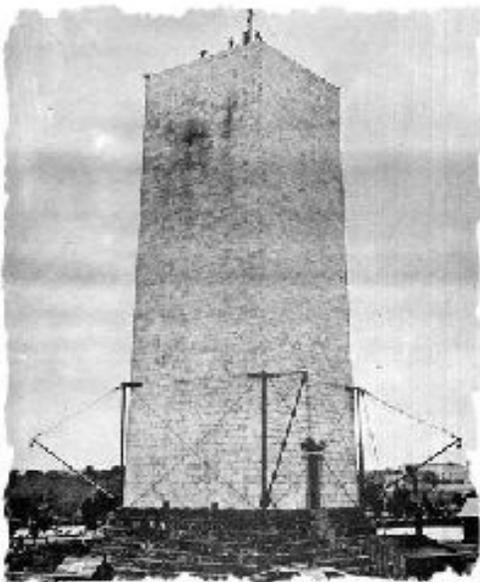
Washington Monument had reached a height of 170 feet at a cost of \$230,000. But the Washington National Monument Society, complaining that the turmoil of the times had dried up subscriptions, appealed for money to the various states. Alabama replied that it could give no money, but offered to contribute a stone of the requisite dimension-4 feet by 2 feet, by 1112 feet. Other states followed suit, including municipalities and associations, as did foreign governments such as Switzerland, Turkey, Greece, China, Japan, and the Vatican-from which Pius IX sent a block of marble, ironically taken from the Pagan Temple of Concord in Rome.

But even these contributions were nowhere near sufficient to do the job, and the society's board of managers appealed to Congress to take whatever action it deemed proper. A select committee recommended a subscription of \$200,000, the exact sum originally voted in 1799, but never provided. It too was to be canceled, by the occurrence of an extraordinary event.

On March 6, 1855, between 1 :00 and 2:00 A.M., a group of men rushed out of the darkness round the foot of the monument and seized the night watchman, whom they locked up in his shack, so as to break into a shed where **the pope's stone was boxed**. With skids, bars, and blocks they rolled the stone out to a scow in the nearby canal basin, then ferried it out into the Potomac almost to Long Bridge, and dumped it.

The men, nine members of the Know-Nothing party, had drawn lots for the job, announcing that the marble block represented "a designing, crafty, subtle scheme of the far-reaching power that was grasping after the whole world to sway its iron scepter with bloodstained hands over the millions of its inhabitants." The same night a group of about 750 members of the Know-Nothings, many of whom had surreptitiously joined the Washington National Monument Society, called a meeting and voted their own officers into control of the society, defenestrating the others. On the morrow Know-Nothings announced they were in possession of the Washington Monument. Congress's reaction was speedy. They tabled the recommended appropriation, effectively killing it.

The disappearance of the pope's stone angered **"a large body of citizens"** and also discouraged further contributions; so all construction ceased. Two weeks later Robert Mills died, and with him went what appeared to have been the last ray of hope for continuing the monument. During the next three years, as the battle continued between the old members of the monument society and the new Know-Nothings, only 13 courses, or 26 feet of masonry were laid, consisting mostly of rubble rejected by the master mason. By 1858, unable to raise any money in 1855 they only



managed to collect \$51.66-the Know-Nothings finally surrendered all their records to the original society with the entire treasury of \$285. As a national party the Know-Nothings were through.

In February 1859, to prevent any recurrence of such events, Congress incorporated the Washington Monument Society with President James Buchanan presiding *ex officio*. But the Civil War was looming, and in all of 1860 the society was only able to collect \$88.52, 48 cents of which came from Washington's native Virginia, and 15 cents from Mississippi. With the outbreak of war, the monument stood 176 feet high, less than a third of its prospected height. In the words of Mark Twain, it "looked like a hollow oversized chimney." All construction was halted during the war while the grounds on which it stood were used to graze cattle for the Union commissary.

Following the war these swamp like grounds came to be known as Murderer's Row the hangout of escapees, deserters, and other flotsam of the war"; and it wasn't until ten years later, with the approach of the first centennial of independence, that Congress once more went into action. But there was now a real question as to whether to try to continue the building or simply tear it down and write off the quarter of a million dollars already spent. The problem lay in the foundations-81 feet square and 25 feet deep, solid masonry-which was now considered too weak a base onto which to raise the projected 600-foot obelisk. It was feared the structure would sink into the swampy terrain or be blown over by the wind. In the House, there were complaints about asking the people of the United States for money to "finish this unsightly and unstable shaft upon this unsafe foundation...this ill shapen badly put together structure of mixed blocks." It was said that "storms, the uncertain foundation. the swaying to and fro of such a column will sooner or later bring it to earth."

The ignorance of some of the politicians was exemplified by Representative Samuel S. Cox of New York, who pompously declared: "If you raise this obelisk which comes from Egypt, a barbarian country that never had art, I don't believe it will succeed in impressing the American people in a proper way with the virtues and greatness of George Washington." Representative Jasper D. Ward of Illinois argued that the monument had been stopped because "when the unsightly column reared itself so high that they could see it they (the people) did not feel like contributing more to it." John B. Storm of New York, on the other hand, declared that though he might have preferred it had the monument never been started, he was "unwilling that the hundredth anniversary of our existence as a nation should dawn upon us with that monument standing there as a testimony that republics are ungrateful." R. C. McCormick of Arizona agreed that "no greater disgrace, certainly no greater calamity, could possibly befall than that the shaft after once being completed should fall to the ground," but argued that the chief reason for adopting the simple obelisk was its permanency and imperishability. Norton P. Chipman of the District of Columbia backed him up, suggesting there was something special in such a simple, majestic obelisk,

"eminently proper as commemorative of the character of Washington, aside from the fact that the early fathers preferred it. ... "

In the end, Congress appointed an engineer to study the problem and give an estimate for completing the job of raising a simple obelisk, abandoning the expensive pantheon at the base designed by Mills in favor of a massive terrace with a balustrade for statuary, which would cost only \$65,000. When the first engineer gave an unfavorable report, the matter was allowed to slide; and only when the actual centennial was at hand did Congress decide to hire another engineer, who after much probing beneath the monument finally agreed it would actually be possible to raise a 600-foot obelisk, provided Congress was willing to spend the extra money needed to put a whole new foundation beneath the present one. But by now Congress had delayed so long, the centennial was upon them and no real progress had been made. Not until the first day after the centennial, July 5, 1876, was Senator John Sherman of Ohio able to introduce a resolution asking for \$2 million to complete the monument. On August 2, the House dutifully passed the bill to retake possession from the society of the 30 acres and its truncated shaft and appropriate the necessary money to complete the monument.

Some consideration was given to alternative designs, especially one suggested by the American sculptor William Wetmore Story, who wanted to build what he called "an ornamental Lombardy tower," which would have required demolishing 41 feet of the shaft already built, so as to insert several windows. But the advice of George Perkins Marsh, United States minister to Italy, prevailed, and the form of an authentic Egyptian obelisk was retained. However, as nobody knew exactly what constituted an authentic Egyptian obelisk, or in what proportion the pyramidion should stand to the shaft or at what angle, the State Department sent out a circular eliciting information. From Rome, Minister Marsh, an accomplished scholar who had previously been United States consul in Cairo and said he had made sketches of all the known standing obelisks in Egypt, came up with a reply. An obelisk, he warned, was not an arbitrary structure which anyone was free to erect with such form and proportions as might suit his taste and convenience, but that its objects, form and proportions were fixed by the usage of thousands of years, so as to satisfy the cultivated eye. Marsh laid down the law that the pyramidion should be one-tenth of the height of the shaft, with its base two-thirds to three-fourths the size of the monument's base. He was categorical in insisting that it would be as great an aesthetic crime to depart from these proportions as it would be to make "a window in the face of the pyramidion or shaft, both of which atrocities were committed in the Bunker Hill monument." If one had to have a window, said Marsh, it should be the exact size of one stone and be supplied with a shutter of the same color so as to be invisible when closed. "And throw out," he concluded, "all the gingerbread of the Mills design and keep only the obelisk." His advice was taken, and a joint commission of Congress was formed to oversee the completion of the monument as Marsh had suggested, \$94,474 being voted to stabilize the foundation. Lieutenant

Colonel Thomas Lincoln Casey, a forty-two-year-old army engineer, was hired to raise the monument to 555 feet, ten times the size of the base; architect Gustav Friebus was assigned to design the pyramidion with which to top the shaft. It was estimated that \$677,000 more would be needed to complete the monument.

On January 28, 1879, five boom derricks were erected on the top of the existing shaft with block and tackle and an 8-foot safety net to catch any workmen—none of whom fell or were injured. As a first step, so that building could start in July 1880, the top three courses laid by the KnowNothings were removed. An iron framework 20 feet high went up first, around which the new courses of blocks could be laid, with marble on the outside, and a granite backing. By the end of 1880, as Goringe's obelisk was steaming toward New York, 22 feet of masonry had been laid, each course containing 32 blocks of marble and 24 blocks of granite, raising the monument to a height of 250 feet. During 1882, as the shaft thinned, the number of blocks hoisted each trip was doubled and another 90 feet were added. In 1883 another 70 feet brought it up to 410. After the 450-foot level no more granite was to be used, only marble, so that during 1884 the shaft could be brought to 500 feet, ready for the 55-foot pyramidion whose 300 tons were to be lifted into place as one piece.



To finish off the obelisk at its apex, an aluminum capstone weighing 100 ounces—the largest single piece of aluminum cast to that time—was to be placed atop the pyramidion on Saturday, December 6, 1884. Placing the capstone required another appropriate Masonic ceremony, and a special scaffold was constructed on which the principal officials might stand. When the day came, a 60 mile-an-hour wind came with it, and thousands held their breath as they gazed up from the Mall at master mason P.N. McLaoughlin, the project superintendent, who successfully placed the capstone. The American flag unfurled, and the crowd raised a cheer. Cannons brought from Fort Meyer, Virginia, boomed out a hundred-gun salute, and all was ready for the dedication on Washington's Birthday, February 21, 1885.



On dedication day, which dawned cold but clear, the obelisk stood majestic and serene, the tallest monument of masonry then in the world. A sharp wind blowing down the Potomac put a snap into the flags, and the marine band played patriotic tunes as troops and citizens gathered on the snow-encrusted turf around the base. A short address was delivered by Senator Sherman of Ohio. And Myron M. Parker, Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the District of Columbia, began the Masonic ceremonies, reminding the audience that "the

immortal Washington, himself a Freemason, had devoted his hand, his heart, his sacred honor, to the cause of freedom of conscience, of speech and of action, and that from his successful leadership the nation had arisen." As props for the Masonic ceremony there was the same gavel which George Washington had used to lay the cornerstone of the Capitol, the same Bible on which he had taken the oath as president, the same apron made by Madame Lafayette, plus a golden urn containing a lock of Washington's hair passed down by every Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. In conclusion the Grand Chaplain of Masons brought out the same ritual corn, wine, and oil. Then the official procession, headed by President Chester Alan Arthur, marched down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol to hear an address written by former Speaker of the House Robert C. Winthrop, the same sponsor who had given the oration at the laying of the cornerstone thirty-seven years earlier. Regretting that the monument could not have been hewn from a single stone, like an Egyptian obelisk, Winthrop said he nevertheless took pleasure in the idea that the united stones standing firm and square could serve as a symbol for the national motto, "*E pluribus unum.*" John C. Palmer, speaking for the fraternity, declared that Masons were no longer builders of cathedrals and castles, "poems in marble and granite," but of human society whose stones were living men, "their minds enlightened with divine truth, their hearts radiant with discovering the joy of pure love, their souls cherishing-like the ancient Egyptian worshippers of Osiris, the hope of immortality."

Within a year ten thousand citizens had climbed to the top of the obelisk to look out across the tranquil Potomac at the gentle slopes of Mount Vernon, where Washington lay buried, but few among them realized-any more than did the admirers of the Chartres Cathedral or the great pillars of Karnak, except perhaps through a sense of awe-the phenomenal significance of the majestic work of masonry upon which they were supported.