

Celebrate The Past... Build The Future  
By C. Michael Watson

More than a third of all U.S. Presidents have been Masons. A large number of signers of the Constitution were Masons. Patriots who shaped the very being of our United States of America were Masons. Throughout the wars of our history, famous Generals and military leaders were Masons. Countless numbers of Masons have gained fame and notoriety for their achievements and accomplishments in the field of arts, business, science and industry.

This is part of our rich and glorious legacy we have inherited as Masons. Should we cast this aside and only concentrate on what lurks in the future? Never! We should never lose sight of our glorious past, but we can ill afford to live in the past, of those golden days of yesteryear. As is said in today's business environment, "Don't tell me about the storms you've weathered. Did you bring in the ship?" In other words, "What have you done for me lately?"

Masonry in Ohio extends back to the days before we became a state in 1803. The times were simpler, but yet more difficult in contrast to the conveniences we enjoy today. It took a dedicated effort on the part of committed Masons to establish a Masonic presence. That presence, in large part, we enjoy today. Masons literally traveled along little more than Indian trails by the light of the moon to attend lodge. By their service to the community and to their members, the impact made by these Masons, was extensive.

It is interesting to reminisce and with pride recollect our rich fraternal past. But, I have a concern. My concern is that too many symbolic lodges and too many Ohio Masons have for too long not merely reflected upon our past, but have been living in the past. These brethren have been resting upon the laurels of the accomplishments made by our Masonic forefathers. When this occurs, lethargy and apathy set in. We stop doing the things that once earned us the admiration and respect of the public. We assume the public will always know who Masons are, what they do, and the good they perform. This simply is not so. As an organization, we have at least missed out on one generation and are about to lose another.

Our Masonic forefathers had to adapt, overcome, and innovate in establishing a rich legacy, which we have inherited. As Masons of today, what are we doing with our inheritance?

In order for us to continue this heritage, we must not only accept change, but welcome change and embrace it, without sacrificing our principles of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Someone once said, "Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past are certain to miss the future." From the Book of Proverbs we read, "He who is without vision is lost."

My brethren, we must awaken from our lethargy and set our vision for the future, while always keeping our glorious past in sight. Begin immediately. Benefit immediately. Believe in yourself! Help others. We can't change yesterday, but we can build today for tomorrow.

For our continued success, join with me as we “Celebrate Our Past... Build our Future!”