

Alexander McCormick

(1773 – 16 Feb 1821)

McCormick. Last evening (Feb. 16), Mr. Alexander McCormick, merchant of this city. His friends are requested to attend his funeral at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning the 18th inst. from his late residence on Capitol Hill.



Kenton N. Harper, History of the Grand Lodge and of Freemasonry in the District of Columbia, 1911

Grand Master, 1812-15

This Brother was the immigrant son of a Church of England minister in Ulster, who came to Georgetown in the latter part of the eighteenth century and eventually moved to Capitol Hill, where he spent the balance of his life. From 1807 till his death he filled the position of Rector of Christ Episcopal Church in that section, passing away February 18, 1821, and being interred with distinguished Masonic honors in Congressional Cemetery.

Bro. McCormick, while a clergyman, also was a citizen of prominence, identified with all the progressive movements of his day, and served for some years as alderman and a member of the City Council.

As a member of the Masonic Fraternity, however, his history is best known. He was initiated in Federal Lodge, No. 15 (now No. 1), February 1, 1796, passed February 13, 1796, and raised March 7, 1796. At once he began to make his mark in Fraternity circles, and as early as 1798 represented his lodge in the Grand Lodge of Maryland; was Master of his lodge in 1806, 1808-9, 1812-14, and 1816; Secretary in 1810. He was a delegate from Federal in the convention to form a Grand Lodge in the District and served as Chairman of that gathering. After serving as S.G. Warden in 1811, he became the second Grand Master and filled that office with conspicuous ability through the formative years of the infant Grand Lodge.

There is at this time in the possession of Federal Lodge, a code of by-laws drawn up by Bro. McCormick in 1798, when he became Master, having for its object "a restoration of dignity and discipline; or return to true Masonic character and conduct; a lessening of conviviality, and the provision of a sure revenue to enable the lodge to live, work and pay its way."

Bro. McCormick was undoubtedly a member of the so-called Royal Arch Encampment appendant to Federal Lodge, No. 15, in 1795-99, for in the re-organization of the Grand Chapter of Maryland and the District of Columbia in 1807 we find him elected as Grand Treasurer of that body. During the latter years of his life he took great interest in the advancement of Capitular Masonry.

One of the most interesting relics in the possession of the Grand Lodge is a fragment of spermaceti candle presented to it by the widow of a son of Bro. McCormick's in 1867, and represented as being the remains of the candle carried by him at the funeral of General Washington, and with which he was said to have entered the tomb. Corroborative evidence leaves no room for doubt as to the genuineness of the souvenir which is carefully preserved.