

NEVADA SUPPLEMENT

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GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Sir Knights,

The following article was contributed by SK Mike Fuhlendorf, GSW.

It is popular within a certain age demographic to seize upon some hero from American history, pour over that person's every act and statement until they find something that does not go along with their world view, and then clamor for that person's heroic status and place of honor to be canceled. According to a brief article in the December 25th issue of "The Week", a San Francisco school district has decided to rename Abraham Lincoln High School because "...he did not show that black lives mattered to him and failed to help Native Americans."

I've no doubt that George Washington is in their sights, too, especially because he was a slave owner. Some years ago, I presented a talk on George Washington and slavery for Masonic Education. Unfortunately, over the years I've lost track of my sources, but I still have the facts I used. The talk considered three letters written by Washington and an excerpt of his Will which show how his beliefs changed over the years.

The first was written eight years after becoming active in his Lodge. It is dated July 2, 1766. In it he details his desire to sell a slave who had run from him. Washington describes the slave's qualities and what he thinks he is worth. He considers the sale merely the natural results of the slave having tried to escape. In the second, titled "Reflection on Slavery," he states, "The unfortunate condition of the persons, whose labour I in part employed, has been the only unavoidable subject of regret." He goes on to say that their circumstances should be improved "...to lay a foundation to prepare the rising generation for a destiny different from that in which they were born." The third is a letter to his nephew Lawrence Lewis dated August 4, 1797. He states, "I wish from my soul that the Legislature of this State could see the policy of a gradual Abolition of Slavery."

Finally, in his will he calls for the emancipation of all his slaves after his death and the death of his wife. He states that those slaves who are too old to work any longer are to be provided for. Further, his "Mulatto man William" is to be freed immediately in gratitude for his service during the war. William is to be provided with an annual annuity as well as clothes and food. I'm not interested in debating situational ethics. What is important is that we can see how Washington's beliefs about slavery evolved over the years. The Cancel Culture cannot ignorantly condemn a man's life without considering it in its entirety. Hopefully, none of us are the same man we were thirty years ago. Washington certainly was not.

Thank you, SK Mike for this article. It should give us all some pause to be circumspect and to contemplate all our actions.

Thank you for your service to Templary.

In the name of our Blessed Emmanuel, may Peace be with You.

Courteously,
SK Kevin McCans, KTCH
Grand Commander