



Masons of California

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The cornerstone ceremony

For nearly 300 years, Masons have joined with communities throughout America to lay cornerstones and celebrate the construction of new public buildings that are dedicated to the principles Masons value. For Masons, these dedication ceremonies not only promote our freedoms, but they also remind us that all enduring things – buildings and people alike – must be built on a firm foundation.

Because sound beginnings help ensure solid results, Masons take pride in the dignified and impressive cornerstone ceremony. The ceremony itself has evolved since the first recorded ceremony in 1738, yet the symbolism remains much the same. At the heart of this event is the Masons' commitment to freedom, as symbolized by the cornerstones laid at the Federal District (now the District of Columbia), houses of worship, institutes of learning and public education, and countless other public buildings.

The signatures of numerous Masons can be found on *symbolic* cornerstones that mark our freedom as a nation. These include the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution. In addition, Masons laid numerous *physical* cornerstones of historical significance, including the California State Capitol, the White House, and the Statue of Liberty. In one of the more famous ceremonies, President and Mason George Washington laid the cornerstone for the U.S. Capitol in 1793 – which was later said to be the cornerstone of democracy for the world.

Although very few cornerstones are actually laid today, the ceremony is still as meaningful to Masons as it was more than three centuries ago. It represents the fraternity's commitment to public institutions, particularly in our state.

EDUCATION

CHARITY

FAMILY

TOLERANCE

COMMUNITY

ETHICS

BROTHERHOOD