

**CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE LAYING OF THE  
CORNERSTONE OF THE  
NATIONAL  
CAPITOL, SEPTEMBER 18, 1793**

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Centennial Anniversary of the Laying of the Cornerstone of the National Capitol, September 18, 1793 by The Capitol Centennial Committee

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**THE CAPITOL CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE**

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CAPITOL, SEPTEMBER 18, 1793**



*"Stet Capitolium*

*Fulgens:*

*Late nomen in ultimas Extendat uras."*

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## Centennial Anniversary

OF THE



## LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE

OF THE

... NATIONAL CAPITOL ...

SEPTEMBER 18, 1793.

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ISSUED BY THE CAPITOL CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE.  
WASHINGTON, D. C., 1893.

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"Let's to the Capitol."—*Shakespeare*, "Coriolanus," Act IV, Scene 6.

"See yond' coign o' the Capitol, yond' corner-stone?"—*Same*, Act V, Scene 4.

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"In fancy now, beneath the twilight gloom,  
Come, let me lead thee o'er this 'second Rome,'  
Where Tribunes rule, where dusky Davi bow,  
And what was Goose Creek once is Tiber now;  
This embryo Capital, where fancy sees  
Squares in morasses, obelisks in trees;  
Which second-sighted seers even now adorn  
With shrines unbuilt and heroes yet unborn."

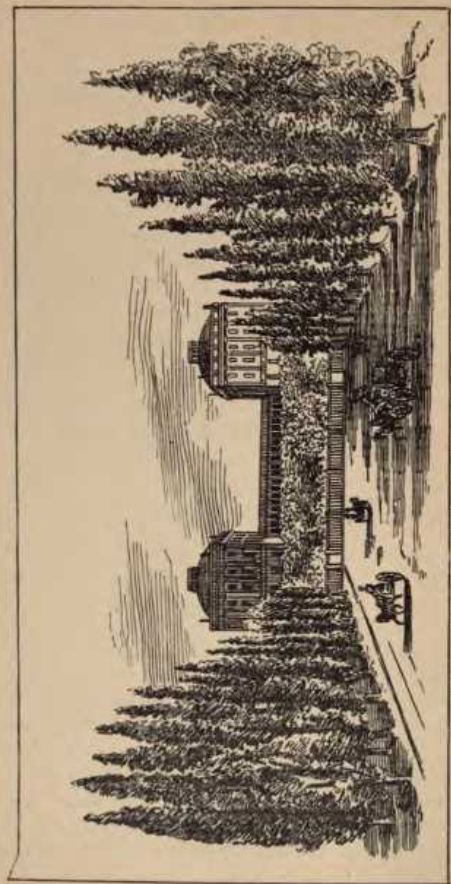
—*Thomas Moore*, 1804.

## The Capitol

is situated on the western edge of Capitol Hill, eighty-eight feet above the level of the Potomac, in latitude  $38^{\circ} 53' 20'' .4$  North, and longitude  $77^{\circ} 00' 35'' .7$  West from Greenwich. The original (central) building is of sandstone from Aquia Creek, Va., and the extensions of white marble from Lee, Mass. The entire length of the building is 751 feet 4 inches, and the greatest width 350 feet, the area covered being 153,112 square feet. The height of the dome above the base line of the East front is 287 feet 5 inches. The rotunda is 95 feet 6 inches in diameter and its height from the floor to the top of the canopy is 183 feet 3 inches. The Capitol occupies the center of a park of fifty-eight acres.

The North wing of the original building was finished in 1800, the South wing in 1811, and the central portion in 1825. The interiors of both wings and the incomplete structure between them were destroyed by fire by the British troops on the 24th of August, 1814, but the damage was immediately repaired. The corner-stone of the new extensions was laid by the then President of the United States, Millard Fillmore, on the 4th of July, 1851, with imposing ceremonies, including an oration by Daniel Webster, Secretary of State. On the 24th of December, 1851, the interior of the Western portion of the building, containing the Library of Congress, was destroyed by an accidental fire. The extensions were completed in 1861 and the dome in 1863, and on the 2d of December of that year the statue of Freedom was placed upon the dome. The terraces were completed in 1891. The total cost of the building, including the terraces, has been \$14,455,000.

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THE CAPITOL IN 1814, FROM PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE.



The city is divided into the Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest quarters by imaginary lines drawn North and South and East and West through the center of the Capitol, and from this center the streets and buildings are lettered and numbered.

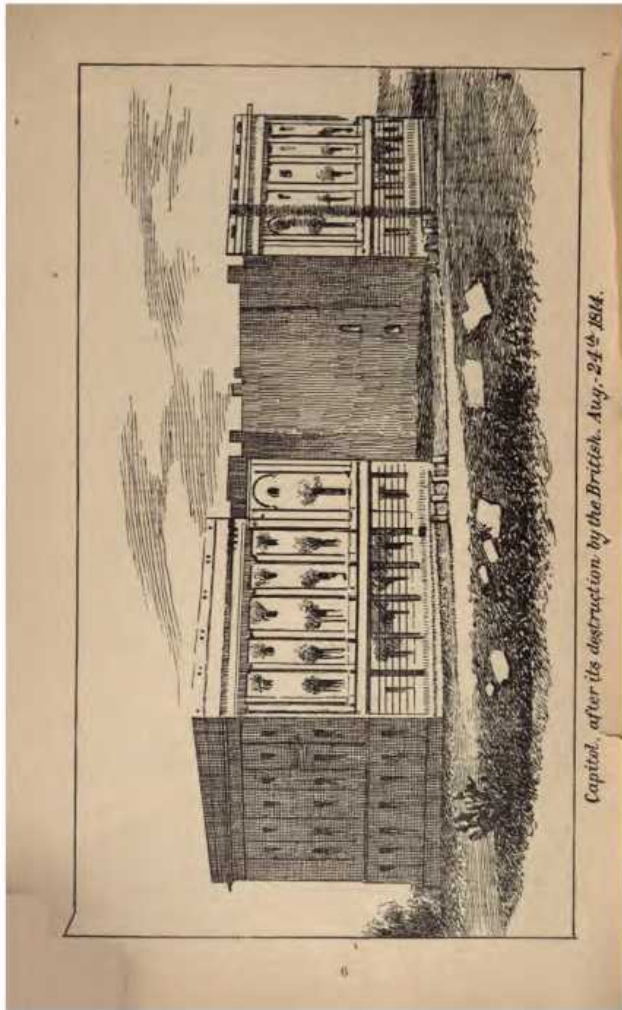
It is worthy of note that Mr. Edward Clark, architect of the Capitol, has held that office for more than a quarter of a century, having been appointed in 1865. His immediate predecessor, Mr. Thomas U. Walter, was appointed in 1851.

In the course of an address at a recent public meeting, an official of high position and character remarked, in substance, that during his nearly thirty years of official life in Washington, he had met here visitors from every civilized land, and that all of them, perhaps without exception, in speaking of the Capitol, had pronounced it the noblest and most beautiful public building of modern times.

#### THE LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE.

The following account of the ceremonies of laying the corner-stone of the Capitol is copied from the book entitled "The Lodge of Washington; a history of the Alexandria-Washington Lodge, No. 22, A. F. and A. M., of Alexandria, Va.," compiled from the original records of the Lodge, by Past Master F. L. Brockett, and published in 1876. The included quotation credited to "the newspapers of that day" is substantially the report published in the *Columbian Mirror* and *Alexandria Gazette* of September 25, 1793. After giving an account of the erection of the southeast corner-stone of the District of Columbia, on the 15th of April 1791, the history above named says:

"The next important event of this kind was the laying of the corner-stone of the United States Capitol, at the city of Washington, on the eighteenth day of September, 1793. The Masonic ceremonies were conducted by His Excellency, General Washington, President of the United States, a Past Master of this Lodge, which was present and holding the



Capitol, after its destruction by the British. Aug. 24<sup>th</sup> 1814.

post of honor. Dr. Dick, elected Worshipful Master in 1789, still in office, invited Washington to act as Master on this occasion, in accordance with his own wishes and those of the public. The stone was deposited in the southeast corner of the building, instead of the northeast, as is now the custom. The inscription on the plate stated that Alexandria Lodge, No. 22, of Virginia, was present and participated in the ceremonies. The apron and sash worn by Washington on this occasion were the handiwork of Mrs. General La Fayette, and are now the property of this Lodge."

The following account of the ceremonies was published in the newspapers of that day:

"On Wednesday, one of the grandest Masonic processions took place, for the purpose of laying the corner-stone of the Capitol of the United States, which, perhaps, was ever exhibited on the like important occasion. About ten o'clock Lodge No. 9 was visited by that congregation so graceful to the craft, Lodge No. 22, of Virginia, with all their officers and regalia; and directly afterward appeared on the southern bank of the Grand River Potomack, one of the finest companies of volunteer artillery that has been lately seen, parading to receive the President of the United States, who shortly came in sight with his suite, to whom the artillery paid their military honors; and His Excellency and suite crossed the Potomack, and was received in Maryland by the officers and brethren of No. 22, Virginia, and No. 9, Maryland, whom the President headed, preceded by a band of music; the rear brought up by the Alexandria Volunteer Artillery, with grand solemnity of march, proceeded to the President's Square, in the city of Washington, where they were met and saluted by No. 15, of the city of Washington, in all their elegant badges and clothing, headed by Bro. Joseph Clarke, R. W. Grand Master, *p. t.*, and conducted to a large lodge, prepared for the purpose of their reception. After a short space of time, by the vigilance of Bro. Clotworthy Stephenson, Grand Marshal, *p. t.*, the brotherhood and other bodies were disposed in a second order of procession, which took place amid a brilliant crowd of spectators of both sexes, according to the following arrangement, viz.,

"The Surveying Department of the city of Washington,

"Mayor and Corporation of Georgetown.

"Virginia Artillery.