

During the closing months of 1863, he prepared the ritual, and, on the evening of February 15th, 1864, at a meeting held in the room of Robert Allen Champion, in the house, No. 369 F. Street, near the corner of Ninth, in the City of Washington, after obligating those present to secrecy, he read the ritual which he had prepared, to Robert Allen Champion, Edward S. Kimball, David L. Burnett and W. H. Burnett, and it was decided to organise the Order of Knights of Pythias. With this understanding, an adjournment was taken to Friday evening, February 19th, 1864, at which time, the Arion Club, of which they were members, was to have a meeting for rehearsal. On that night, the meeting took place, in the lower rooms in Temperance Hall on E Street, between 9th and 10th, in the City of Washington, and the following were present, viz:

Justus H. Rathbone, Clerk Surgeon-General's Office; Joel R. Woodruff, Clerk in the Quartermaster-General's Office; Joseph T. K. Plant, Commissioner of Deeds, representing several States; David L. and William Burnett, Clerks in War Department; Robert A. Champion, Edward S. Kimball and George R. Covert, Clerks in Surgeon-General's Office; John S. Roberts, Clerk in Medical Purveyor's Office; Aristides Roderique, Hospital Steward in Surgeon-General's Office; ——— Driver, Clerk in the War Department; Matthew R. Vanderveer, Clerk in Surgeon-General's Office; A. D. Vanuerveer, Clerk in Surgeon-General's Office. These gentlemen were obligated, on the small Bible given to Brother Rathbone by his mother and afterwards, in 1886, presented to, and accepted by the Supreme Lodge. The ritual was then read, and Washington Lodge No. 1, Knights of Pythias, duly organised.

It is proper at this point to say, that, of those present, Brother A. D. Vanderveer has ever since been in continuous membership in the Order. To this may be added the important fact, that Brother Vanderveer has been trusted with the counting of the money in the United States Treasury, upon the change of every administration, from that time to the present.

Thus was the Order started upon its mission, but, owing to the dissensions in the Lodge, Rathbone withdrew, on February 25th, 1864; he rejoined the Order April 30th, 1866, by affiliation with Franklin Lodge No. 2, Washington Lodge, having gone out of existence, Franklin Lodge, in effect, because its successor; and to-day is the brother of the Order.

Again, in June, 1869, he withdrew from the Order, remaining without its pale until 1874, when he deposited his Card in Maverick Lodge in East Boston, where he remained about two years, when he withdrew and affiliated with the Lodge, No. 11 of Washington. He withdrew from No. 11, and joined Mt. Vernon Lodge, also of Washington. Afterwards having become a resident of the State of Maryland, he withdrew from Mt. Vernon Lodge and deposited his Card with Sicilian Lodge No. 97 at Bowie, Maryland, to which Lodge he belonged at the time of his death.

Prior to 1876, there had been a persistent belief made by Joseph T. K. Plant, one of the

original members of Washington No. 1, to be one of the founders of the Order. At a meeting of the Supreme Lodge, in 1876, the jubilee and centennial year of the Republic, Rathbone was readmitted to full membership in that body, the fact, as to who was the Founder of the Order, fully investigated, and upon the adoption of the report presented by Past Supreme Chancellor, Samuel Read, the question was forever settled, and Rathbone "recognised as sole Founder of the Order of Knights of Pythias." This report was based upon the document I hold in my hand, which bears the original signatures of the four members who were with the Founder on the night when he read the first Ritual, and reads as follows:

District of Columbia,
Washington County, To-wit:

The undersigned, who were present at the first reading of the First, Second and Third degrees of the Order of Knights of Pythias, which took place in the house No. 369 F. Street, near the corner of Ninth Street, in the City of Washington, D. C., on Monday evening, the 15th of February, 1864, do make this their voluntary statement, to-wit: That Justus Henry Rathbone, of the City of Washington and District of Columbia, is the sole and only originator and Founder of the Order of Knights of Pythias; that the work was complete when read to us as above: that at the Committee meetings, of which we were members, nothing was done except to re-read the work as originally prepared by said J. H. Rathbone, and endorse it. No changes were made. Mr. Joel R. Woodruff suggested an addition to the Third, or Knight Degree, which was accepted. The impression which prevails, that Joseph T. K. Plant is the Founder, or assistant Founder of the Order, is false in every particular; the only connection he had therewith was voluntarily offering the use of his parlor for the Committee to hold their meetings therein. We further certify that the Ritual was prepared complete before J. T. K. Plant or Joel R. Woodruff had any connection with the Order, or were even spoken to in reference to joining Washington Lodge No. 1, K. P.

D. L. BURNETT,
W. H. BURNETT,
E. S. KIMBALL, M. D.,
ROBERT A. CHAMPION.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 6th day of March, A. D., 1869.

T. DRURY,
Justice of the Peace.

The authenticity of the officer's certificate is attested by R. J. Meigs, Clerk of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia.

At the meeting of the Supreme Lodge, held at Cleveland, Ohio, August, 1877, Rathbone was made the "Supreme Lecturer" of the Order.

The testimony of those living is to the effect that at the time of the founding of the Order, and the establishment of Washington Lodge, it was not intended that the membership of the Order should be composed of other than Depart-