

LITTLEBERRY CALHOUN ALLEN
GRAND MASTER - 1906

by
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Shreveport, LA

M:W: Littleberry Calhoun Allen was born at Applewood in Caroline County, Virginia, on March 10, 1862. He was the son of Rev. L.W. and Ann Martin Allen. His father, a Baptist minister, was chaplain of Magruder's regiment in the war between the States.

In 1875, at the age of thirteen, young Allen left the place of his birth and moved to Alabama, where two married sisters and a brother made their home. In 1876, he enrolled in Howard College, a Baptist institution at Marion where, in 1879, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree.

At that time, there was a great projection for railroad building in the southern United States, and Allen soon identified himself with that branch of activity. His pursuit of railway construction subsequently took him to Central America where he remained for several years. He returned to the States in 1886 and after spending some time in Mississippi, came to Louisiana where he continued to engage in railway work. He was connected with the Crescent & Queen Railroad, principally in the northeast part of the State.

Bro. Allen was married on June 6, 1894 to Miss Fannie Otey Robinson of Gallion, Alabama. Two children were born to them: a son, L.C., Jr., and a daughter, Olivia.

In 1895, Bro. Allen gave up the railroad business and relocated to the Shreveport area where relatives were engaged in the operation of a huge sawmill enterprise at Allentown, near Alden Bridge, in Bossier Parish. He soon saw great opportunity in the manufacture of finished millwork goods. The partnership of Allen & Curry was formed, which later became known as the Allen Manufacturing Company, of which he was president. His fine business acumen came to the forefront and helped to make this venture a success. The company became well known throughout the South as a leading manufacturer of sash, blinds, doors, and general millwork. Upon Bro. Allen's death, the company was acquired by the Wheless family and remains to this day under the ownership and management of B.J. Wheless, Jr. and John Wheless, but still bears the name of Allen Millwork Co. Bro. Allen was also prominently identified as Treasurer-Manager of Caddo Lumber Co., Ltd., located in Shreveport.

L.C. Allen took a most active leadership role in the civic and political affairs of turn-of-the-century Shreveport. He was elected to the City Council in 1899 for the first of five consecutive terms, and only did his death separate him from that office. It was said at the time that there had never been a member who had held a seat on Shreveport's City Council who was a more energetic worker for the City's interest. He was a strong advocate of progress, and a foremost Council Member. He was a leader in all that tended to elevate the social, moral, and business affairs of the City. He was a true friend and a

fair foe who never hesitated to take a stand on the side he thought right and fight the battle through to victory or defeat. Shortly before his death, Allen was mentioned as a candidate for mayor and was regarded as having a good chance of being elected. Ironically, his political legacy survived the grave as his grandson, L. Calhoun Allen, also a brother Mason, was elected Mayor of Shreveport some sixty years later and served two terms.

Bro. Allen was prominent in the church, social, fraternal, business, Knights of Pythias, Hoo-Hoos, and Order of Railway conductors. He was a charter member and president of the Louisiana State Fair Association, and was a director of the Shreveport Mutual Building and Loan Association, Shreveport Athletic Association, and the Progressive League. He was a member of the First Baptist Church, a Bible class teacher, and chairman of the Building Association of the church. Upon his death, Bro. Allen's church dedicated a beautiful memorial window to his memory.

Perhaps, because of his strong Baptist upbringing and beliefs or possibly his long observation of alcohol's negative effects upon the daily production efforts of men laboring in the railroad and lumbering industries, Allen became an ardent and earnest worker in the campaign for Prohibition and was appointed treasurer of its local organization. Some expressed thoughts that the strain placed upon him by his efforts in that cause may have been a contributing factor in his death because he suffered a nervous collapse after the campaign's completion.

Bro. Allen served the Masonic fraternity with honor and distinction. His labors for the Craft were characterized by fervency and zeal in his every act. It was said that he truly loved Masonry and lived by its tenets in his daily walk before God and man. He was initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason on November 19, 1889; passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, December 5; and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on the 17th of the same month, all in Western Star Lodge No. 24, Monroe, LA.

On November 19, 1895, he demitted from Western Star Lodge and on January 18, 1896, affiliated with Caddo Lodge No. 179, in Shreveport. In December of the same year he was elected Senior Warden, and during 1898 he served as Worshipful Master. His activity did not cease with his retirement from the most honorable station to which the Lodge could elevate him, and he continued to serve in whatever office he could be useful, and during the very year in which he occupied the exalted position of Grand Master, he also served in the humble position of Senior Deacon of his Lodge.

He received the Capitular degrees in Monroe Chapter No. 18, where he became a Mark Master, December 29, 1892; Past Master, January 5, 1893; and Most Excellent Master and Royal Arch Mason on January 10. At the end of 1895 he demitted and affiliated with Shreveport Chapter No. 10. At the end of 1896 he was elected King, serving four years in that station, then became High Priest in 1901. He was anointed to the Order of High Priesthood in February of that same year.

Louisiana Council No. 2 conferred upon him the degrees of Royal and Select Master, February 15, 1900.

He became a charter member of Monroe Commandery, where he received the Chivalric Orders on December 1, 1894. He demitted upon his removal to Shreveport, and affiliated with Ascension Commandery No. 6 in the beginning of 1896. During the election at the end of 1896, he was elected Recorder, and served in that capacity during 1897-98-99. The following two years he filled the station of Eminent Commander.

At the beginning of 1903, he took the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, 4th to 32nd, becoming a Master of the Royal Secret on January 31, in the Grand Consistory of Louisiana. It is interesting to note that although a Scottish Rite Valley wasn't established at Shreveport until after Bro. Allen's death, one of its bodies was later named the "L.C. Allen Lodge of Perfection" in his honor.

On February 22, 1895, Jerusalem Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S., at New Orleans created Bro. Allen a Noble of the Mystic Shrine.

In the Grand Lodge, Bro. Allen was elected Grand Junior Warden on February 12, 1902, and reelected in 1903. In February, 1904, he was chosen Grand Senior Warden, and in the same month of the year 1905, Grand Master Delahoussaye appointed him as Deputy Grand Master. He was elected Grand Master on February 7, 1906.

Although a complete record of G.M. Allen's stewardship as leader of Louisiana Freemasonry is contained in the 1907 Grand Lodge Proceedings, several signal events occurred during that year: the dedication of the magnificent Alexandria Masonic Temple; the laying of the cornerstone for the New Orleans Scottish Rite Cathedral; and the San Francisco earthquake and fire. To the latter, a terrible disaster, The Grand Lodge responded with \$5000, a princely sum at the time, to help relieve distress.

Bro. Allen believed strongly that a Grand Master serving more than one year, as was sometimes the custom in those days, wasn't in the best interest of the Craft. He was a highly popular Grand Master and many brethren desired his re-election. In answer to those supporters, at the annual communication of the Grand Lodge in 1907 he stated in his address, after giving his reasons for the statement: "I, therefore, return this gavel, emblem of authority, with a heart full of love for my brethren, and with the understanding that it be given to some other brother to wield for the incoming year". His wishes, so clearly expressed, were respected.

In the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, he became Grand Master of the Third Veil in 1903; Second Veil, 1904; First Veil, 1905; Grand Royal Arch Captain, 1906; Grand Principal Sojourner, 1907; and Grand Captain of the Host, 1908.

The Grand Commandery, Knights Templar, selected him in February, 1900, to the position of Grand Standard Bearer; Grand Junior Warden, 1902; Grand Senior Warden, 1903-4-5; Grand Captain General 1907; and Deputy Grand Commander, 1908.

It may be seen from the above that he had nearly reached the summit of the Chivalric Order in our state, and was well on his way to the position of Grand High Priest of Capitular Masonry.

It is with sadness that we begin the final chapter of so bright a life. Although he had been in ill health for some two months, Bro. Allen's condition was never regarded as dangerous until a few days before his death. Four weeks beforehand, he had gone to Mineral Wells for therapy, but instead of improving, his health continued to fail. He returned home on Wednesday March 4, at 3:00 A.M. Although it was not generally known, even to his closest friends, that his condition was critical at that time, he continued to sink rapidly and it was soon learned by the attending physicians that there was little hope for his recovery. Surrounded by his family and friends, our beloved Past Grand Master, only three days prior to his forty-sixth birthday, and only some thirteen months after having presided over the Grand Lodge, gradually sank to rest at 2:30 P.M. on Saturday, March 7, 1908.

The direct cause of death was "Bright's Disease", a kidney disorder, but, as aforementioned, the collapse following the Prohibition campaign was thought by some to be a contributing factor.

On Monday March 9, the Grand Lodge of Louisiana, under the direction of G.M. John C. Drew, assembled in emergent communication at Shreveport, La. For the purpose of conducting Masonic graveside rites for the deceased. P.G.M. Allen's remains lie buried in the Knight Templar section of Greenwood Cemetery on Stoner Avenue near the graves of P.G.M.'s Chessemann and Rowland.

Alas, my brother!

A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT

Dedicated to the memory of L.C. Allen, President of the State Fair of Louisiana

March 19, 1908

At an adjourned meeting of the board of directors of the State Fair of Louisiana held at 11 o'clock today, the committee named at the session held March 12 to draft a memorial commemorative of Hon. L.C. Allen reported as follows:

To the Officers and Directors of the State Fair of Louisiana:

Gentlemen,

It is with grief inexpressible that we submit this memorial, dedicated to the memory of our esteemed friend and co-corker, L.C. Allen, who departed this life at 2:30 P.M. on Saturday March 7, at his home in the city.

His illness, acute Bright's disease, was brief, and many of his friends did not know or realize how serious was his affliction until he had been called to his Heavenly reward.

He was born in Caroline County, Virginia, March 10, 1862, and had resided in Shreveport since 1895.

It seems but yesterday that our friend was in our midst, in the pride and beauty of his manhood, but he is no more. How keenly his loss is felt; it is not possible to convey in words.

He possessed an individuality and the moral courage which enabled him to follow without hesitation, when he was assured, after mature deliberation, that he was right, the lead of his own commanding sense of duty, unswerved by the apprehension of personal loss or detriment to his popularity.

Indeed, the charm of his personality will ever linger with the tenderest affection in the hearts of those who knowing him best admired him most, and therefore, were endeared to him from the inspiration of his manly worth.

After all, what is there which is greater than character, the ever-refreshing memory of the life which may be eulogized, not simply for the reason that it is ended, but because it was worthily spent.

In life our friend was no laggard, nor did he linger in the vineyard. He gave his untiring attention and his earnest action to every duty and trust and responsibility assigned to him.

He was never found wanting in the fulfillment of his obligations to the best of his ability. In his death, Shreveport is deprived of the usefulness of one of its most devoted sons; one of its most valuable public servants who held closely the esteem and the confidence of the people, and this association has sustained a loss which is personal to each of its members, and is bereaved of one who was wise in counsel, steadfast in action, and whose

efforts were being earnestly directed to the success of the Fair. He was a man who moved forward and pushed onward to useful and ennobling ends.

In these expressions of personal regard, in this testimonial of his earthly achievements, we, his friends and associates, are simply voicing our appreciation of one who was in every sense a man useful to this community, who was loyal in his friendship, who was a devoted husband and father, a gentleman always, who was true to himself, his country, and his God.

Resolved, That this memorial, officially authenticated, be transmitted to the wife of our deceased friend as a token of our soulful sympathy in her great bereavement, that a copy thereof be inscribed on a page of the record of this association which is to be consecrated to his memory, and copies to be furnished to the Shreveport press for publication.

V. GROSJEAN
ANDREW QUERBES
E.R. BERNSTEIN

This memorial was adopted unanimously.