

THE
BEGINNING OF PROGRESS

The Laying of the First Stone

OF THE

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad

America's First Railroad

AT

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

July 4, 1828

RE-ENACTED

IN THE

Travel and Transport Building

AT

A Century Of Progress

CHICAGO, 1933

FOREWORD

A SCENE called "The Beginning of Progress" is one of the principal features of the Baltimore and Ohio exhibit in the Travel and Transport Building at A Century Of Progress, Chicago. It re-enacts, in part, the original ceremonies attending the Laying of the First Stone of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Full-size, animated figures represent some of the persons who took part in the original ceremony.

The "First Stone" marked the beginning of construction of the railroad at Baltimore, Md. It was laid with formal ceremonies on July 4, 1828, under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of the Masonic Order of Maryland, assisted by the illustrious Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last surviving Signer of the Declaration of Independence.

THE LAYING OF THE FIRST STONE

So important has the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad always considered the ceremony that signalized the beginning of its construction from Baltimore to the Ohio River, that the original Stone has been carefully preserved for the 105 years since that day, July 4, 1828. The First Stone itself has been brought from its original site in Baltimore to the Travel and Transport Building at A Century Of Progress, Chicago, where it may be seen under plate glass during the exposition.

On the top of the Stone is still legible the following inscription:

"This stone, presented by the Stone-Cutters of Baltimore, in commemoration of the commencement of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, was here placed on the Fourth of July, 1828, by the Grand Lodge of MARYLAND, assisted by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last surviving Signer of the Declaration of American Independence, and under the direction of the President and Directors of the Railroad Company."

On each side of the Stone is the inscription:

"First Stone of the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road."

Just as the words were spoken in 1828 by the Grand Master of the Masonic Order of the State of Maryland, the figure representing him with the insignia of his office, now says:

"I pronounce this Stone well formed, true and trusty. Sealed within it have been put

the Company's Charter, newspapers of the day and a scroll telling the story of the Road's beginning."

Charles Carroll of Carrollton

A few bars of "Hail to the Chief" are played, because in 1828 this tune was played by the band as Charles Carroll of Carrollton rose from his place of honor in the pavilion and with firm step advanced to the Stone. He was then in his ninety-second year and the last surviving Signer of the Declaration of Independence. His utterance when he assisted in these ceremonies was most prophetic. He seemed to realize in that day, before the coming of the locomotive, even before the wheels of a horse car had turned on a rail, that his action presaged astounding possibilities.

This was his prophecy:

"I consider this among the most important acts of my life, second only to my signing the Declaration of Independence, if even it be second to that."

The voice of Charles Carroll of Carrollton used in this scene is that of George M. Shriver, senior vice-president of the Baltimore and Ohio. And the voice reproducing the words of the Grand Master of the Masonic Order of Maryland in 1828 is that of Charles W. Gallo-way, vice-president in charge of operation and maintenance and grandson of William Gallo-way, the driver of the first railroad horse car in 1829.

The original implements used in connection with the laying of the First Stone are also in

the Baltimore and Ohio's exhibit, in a wall case in the Office Headquarters near the scene.

The Ceremony a Gala Occasion

The original ceremony, partly re-enacted here, was, according to chroniclers, a gala one, attracting vast throngs of people from outside the city. It was the Fourth of July, 1828. The streets were crowded with merry-makers. On the day before, all roads leading to Baltimore had been jammed with vehicles bearing visitors to the celebration. The parade preceding the ceremony was witnessed by many thousands of people who lined the streets. It seemed that Baltimore and its people sensed the importance of what some of its foremost citizens had undertaken, to construct two or more sets of rail from the head of Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River. It was an unheard of, gigantic undertaking. Hence, the enthusiasm of the people, the parade of the various trades, the air of dignity and importance that the entire populace appeared to wear for the occasion.

Members of Congress, including the Speaker of the House, State Legislators, officers of the American Revolution and the War of 1812, Governors of States and others, came to witness the placing of the First Stone. They were guests of the President and Directors of the Railroad Company, as were the Mayor and City Council of the City of Baltimore and other celebrities. A pavilion for the convenience of officials and guests had been erected close by the site chosen for the Stone.

The Declaration of Independence was read and a band played the "Carrollton March," composed especially for the event.

Significant Papers Sealed Within

Most interesting is the cylinder placed within the Stone at the time, containing the Company's Charter, newspapers of the day and a scroll with the following inscription:

"This Stone is deposited in commemoration of the commencement of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, a work of DEEP AND VITAL INTEREST to the American people. The accomplishment will confer the most important benefits upon this nation, by facilitating its commerce, diffusing and extending its social intercourse, and perpetuating the happy union of the confederated States. The first meeting of the citizens of Baltimore to confer upon the adoption of proper measures for undertaking this magnificent work, was on the 2nd day of February, 1827. An Act of Incorporation by the State of Maryland was granted February 28th, 1827, and was confirmed by the State of Virginia March 8th, 1827. Stock was purchased to provide funds for its execution, April 1st, 1827. The first board of directors was elected April 23rd, 1827. The company was organized April 24th, 1827. An examination of the country was commenced under the direction of Lieut-Col. Stephen H. Long, and Capt. William G. McNiel, U. S. civil engineer, assisted by Lieuts. Barney, Trimble and Dillehunt, of the U. S. artillery,

and Mr. Harrison, July 2nd, 1827. The actual surveys to determine the route were begun by the same officers, with the additional assistance of Lieuts. Cook, Gwynn, Hazzard, Fessenden and Thompson, and Mr. Guion, Nov. 20th, 1827. The charter of the company was confirmed by the State of Pennsylvania, February 22nd, 1828. The State of Maryland became a stockholder in the company by subscribing for half a million of its stock, March 6th, 1828. And the construction of the road was commenced July 4th, 1828, under the management of the following named Board of Directors: Philip Evan Thomas, president; Charles Carroll of Carrollton, William Patterson, Robert Oliver, Alexander Brown, Isaac McKim, William Lorman, George Hoffman, John B. Morris, Talbot Jones, William Stewart, Solomon Etting, Patrick Macauley; George Brown, treasurer."

The man who cut the Stone and its inscription was Nicholas Hitzelberger, of Baltimore, a veteran of the War of 1812 and the carver of the Washington Monument in Baltimore, the first to be erected in honor of President George Washington.

In 1898, interest in the First Stone, which for a time apparently had been forgotten, was revived. A visit to the supposed location revealed no sign of the Stone. Nobody remembered having seen it for forty years.

Then an old record, giving its exact location in distance and direction from Mt. Clare, was discovered. A new survey was made, and after

hours of strenuous digging, the Stone, intact, was discovered.

It was unearthed, photographed and surrounded by a fence and protective wire covering. Here it remained until it was brought to A Century Of Progress, Chicago.

