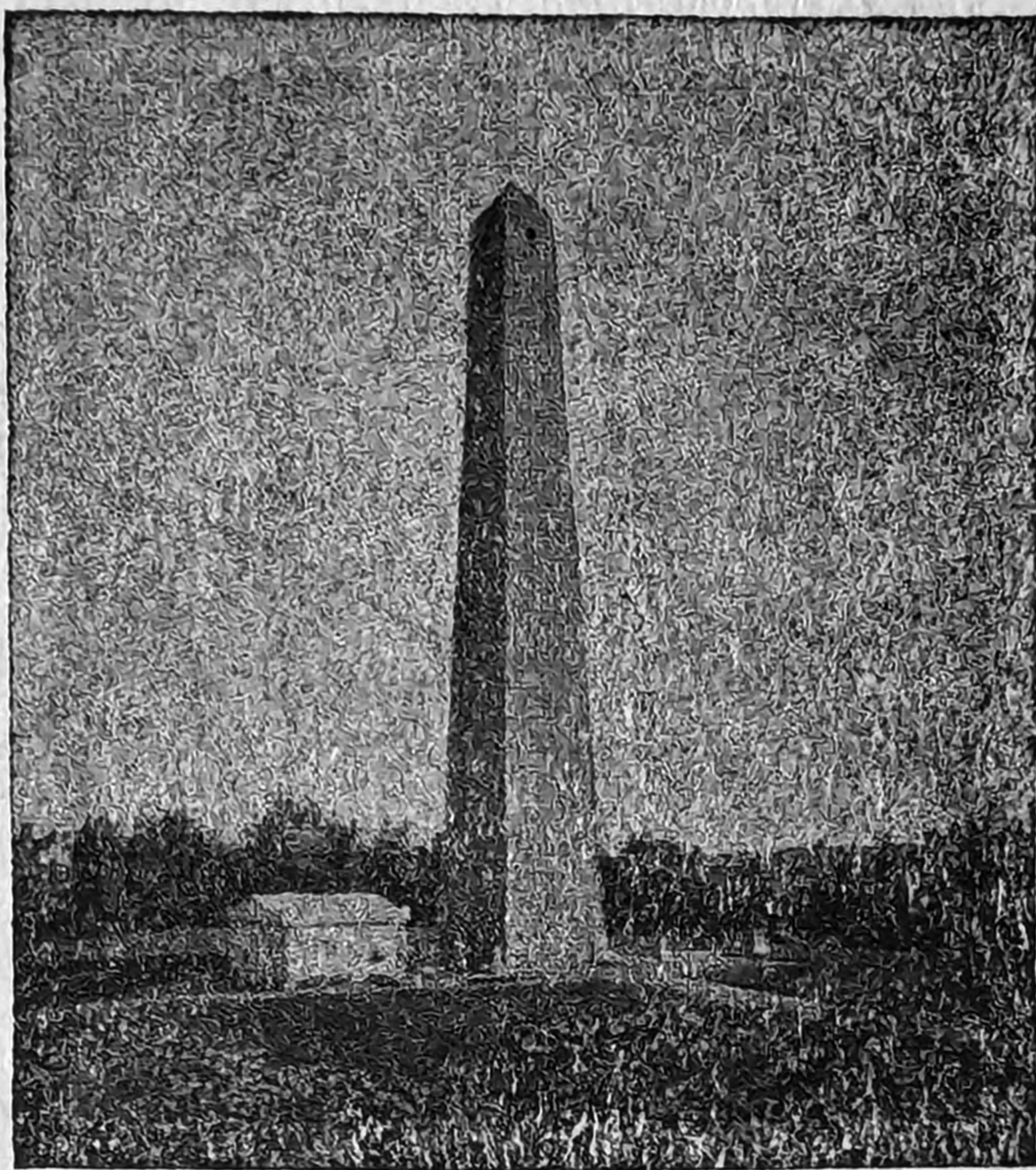


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**Bunker Hill Monument,
Laying of Corner Stone,
June 17, 1825.**

[Asson]

Massachusetts Historical Society

From C.C.C.

June 17, 1917.

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6/20/1917

Prayer at the Laying
of the Corner-Stone of
Bunker Hill Monument.

June 17, 1825.

**Prayer at the Laying of the
Corner-Stone of Bunker Hill Monument,
June 17, 1825.**

O Thou who rulest in the armies of heaven, and doest whatsoever seemeth good to Thee among the children of men below, we desire at this time to remember Thy loving kindness to our pious ancestors, in rescuing them from a land of intolerance and persecution. We thank Thee that Thou didst conduct them in safety through the mighty deep to this then howling wilderness; that Thou didst protect and defend them when few and helpless. We thank Thee that by Thy blessing on their endeavors and labors the wilderness was soon made to blossom as the rose. We thank Thee that Thou didst animate them with an invincible attachment to religion and liberty, that they adopted such wise institutions. We thank Thee that they so early

established our University, from which have flowed such streams as have made glad the city of our God; that Thou hast raised up of our own sons, wise, learned and brave, to guide in the great and important affairs of church and state. May Thy blessing rest on that seminary, and continue it for a name and praise as long as the sun and moon shall endure.

We thank Thee that by the wisdom and fortitude of our fathers every attempt to infringe on our rights and privileges was defeated. and we were never in bondage to any. We thank Thee that when our country was invaded by the armies of the mother country, Thou didst raise up wise counsellors and unshaken patriots who, at the risk of life and fortune, not only defended our country, but raised it to the rank of a nation among the nations of the earth. We thank Thee that Thou hast blessed us with a Constitution and a Government which, if duly administered, secures to all -- high and low, rich and poor, their invaluable rights and privileges. We ask Thy blessing on our President and Congress, on our

judges, and on all our civil officers. Make them, we beseech Thee, ministers for good to Thy people. Bless the ministers of the Gospel and make them happy instruments in Thy hands of destroying Satan's kingdom, and of building up the Redeemer's.

We thank Thee that in Thy good providence we are assembled to lay the foundation of a monument. not for the purpose of idolatry but for a standing monument to rising and future generations, that they may be excited to search the history of our country, and learn to know the greatness of Thy loving kindness to our nation. May the services of this day be performed under the most profound awe of Thy glorious majesty, and be an acceptable sacrifice. We thank Thee for the unparalleled progress in arts and sciences; in agriculture and manufactures; in navigation and commerce, whereby our land has become the glory of all lands. We thank Thee that the light which came from the East and enlightened the world, is now reflected back, and that the nations of Europe are now learning lessons of wisdom from our infant nation.

We pray that these rays may be spread with greater power, until the rod of oppression shall be broken through the whole world, and all mankind become, free and wise and happy. We humbly ask and offer all in the name of Jesus Christ, our great and glorious Mediator, through whom be glory unto God the Father, now and for ever. Amen.

Rev. Joseph Thaxter who offered the prayer was a native of Hingham, and graduate of Cambridge in 1768. While preparing for the ministry he was a revolutionary volunteer, and fought in the battles of Concord bridge and Bunker Hill. He served afterward as army chaplain surgeon under Washington at Cambridge and at White Plains. He was minister at Edgartown in Martha's Vineyard from 1780 to 1827, forty-seven years, In 1825, when eighty years old, he was chosen to make the consecrating prayer when the corner-stone of Bunker Hill monument was laid, on the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. Daniel Webster

the eloquent orator of the occasion, and Lafayette, the nation's honored guest, who assisted in laying the corner-stone with an immense audience of people, probably the largest ever gathered at that time in this country, reverently listened to the prayer.

Its exact words were preserved by his daughter, Mrs. Ann Athearn, who went with her family in 1855 to aid in making Kansas free, serving also in the Christian Commission in the Civil War and dying in California in 1890. Her daughter, Miss Annie Thaxter Athearn, who was an earnest religious and temperance worker in California, lost her home in the earthquake disaster in San Francisco, but gained her heavenly home in 1912 having like her mother and grandfather, attained the age of eighty-three years. Soon after her mother's death she compiled "Gems from my mother's selections" and had it privately printed, including with them this impressive and patriotic prayer of her grandfather, a transcript of which now, a century and a half after the battle, may inspire us with a fresh and grateful appreciation of the meaning of "Bunker Hill"!

It should be added that the man who, by virtue of his office as Grand Master of the Massachusetts Lodge of Free Masons in 1825, laid the corner-stone of the monument was Mr. John Abbot. a Harvard graduate of 1798, a lawyer and state senator residing in Westford, and a direct descendant in the sixth generation of George Abbot, of the old "garrison house" in Andover. This, in connection with the fact that many Andover men fought at Bunker Hill, and that Jonathan French, the young pastor of the South Church, who had been in earlier years a soldier and acting surgeon at Castle William., hurried off to Cambridge on the Sabbath morning following the battle. with instruments and medicines for the relief of the wounded, gives a special local interest to this notice of the corner-stone exercises of 1825, which a recent citizen of the town has kindly offered to print for preservation in our town.

C. C. C.

Andover. December, 1916.