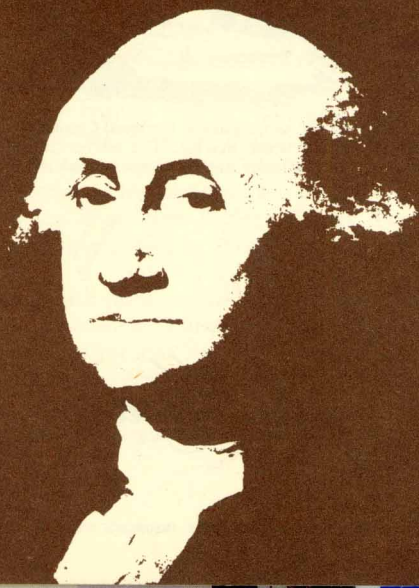
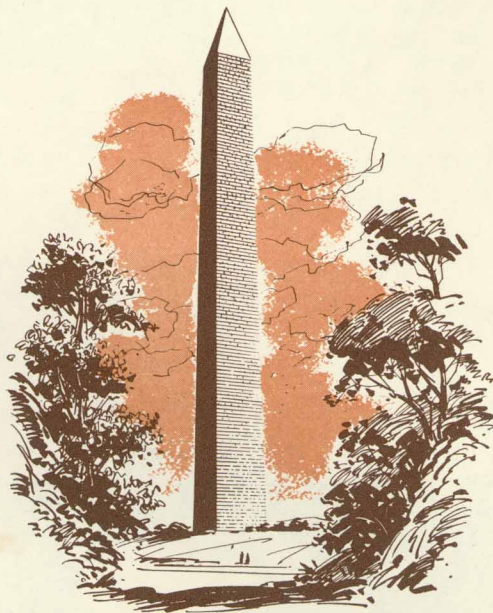


George Washington

First President
of the
United States





The Washington Monument at the National Capital is a tapering shaft or obelisk of white marble. The corner stone was laid July 4, 1848, but the monument was not completed until 1884.

John Hancock

GEORGE WASHINGTON



Mount Vernon

THE first President of the United States, George Washington stands as the founder of our nation. Strong, self-sacrificing, and determined, he was Commander-in-Chief of the American Army during the Revolutionary War and led the fight for freedom. Today, more than two hundred years after his birth, we still enjoy the fruits of his greatness.

Washington was born in Virginia on February 22, 1732, the son of Augustine and Mary Ball Washington. In 1932, as a part of a world-wide celebration of his two hundredth birthday, a reproduction of his birthplace was erected on the original site between Pope's and Bridge's Creeks — the actual house, which became known as "Wakefield," having burned in 1780.

When he was three years old, his family moved from Wakefield to the estate known as "Little Hunting Creek Tract," later to be called "Mount Vernon." Here they remained only about four years, when a fire destroyed the house and they went to live at "Ferry Farm" beside the Rappahannock River across from Fredericksburg, Virginia, where his father died in 1743.

YOUTH AND EARLY TRAINING

George Washington never had any formal schooling, and through life was far too modest about his degree of education. He probably spent some time at one or more small schools in the neighborhood, and may have been instructed a little by local clergymen. Yet somehow, from his parents and especially from his older half-brother Lawrence, he received rather better than the usual education of a gentleman of the time and place. Many of his copy books, with page after page of writing in a boyish hand, still exist. There are also in existence forty diaries kept by George Washington throughout his life, plus many account books and thousands of his letters. From them we are able to come very close to his personality, and to study him with a more intimate understanding. We find him abundantly human, and not the cold, heroic figure of greatness as pictured in the early legends.

During these years of his boyhood and youth, Washington lived at intervals not only at Wakefield with his father, but also at his mother's home on the Rappahannock, and frequently with his half-brother Lawrence, who was now established at the Little Hunting Creek estate in the house he had named Mount Vernon. A proper career for George was a frequently discussed topic. There was talk of his going to sea, but when that was overruled by his mother, he decided to become a surveyor.

Now barely sixteen, George spent much time in the saddle on the trail of fox, bear, and deer. He studied the woods, knew all the Indian trails, and developed a strong body and great courage. The habit of vigorous exercise, formed in his youth when he rode the most difficult horses and tramped through the woods with his gun and surveyor's chain, followed him through life. Large-framed, erect, and powerful, with strong, noble features, Washington was always a striking figure.

He won the friendship and confidence of Lord Fairfax, a large landowner in Virginia, who gave him his first employ-

ment as assistant surveyor in a party he was sending to survey his western lands. Washington was gone about five weeks and kept a diary of each day's experience.

Upon the recommendation of Lord Fairfax, who was tremendously pleased with his work, Washington was appointed official surveyor of Culpeper County at an age when most boys are still in school. He was paid by fees from the landowners, and his diary speaks with satisfaction of his "Doubloon . . . every day" when the weather was good enough, and occasionally "six Pistoles" when he worked fast. A doubloon was worth as much as \$50 today, but he had to pay two assistants out of it; a pistole was a quarter of a doubloon. His surveyor's tripod and compass may be seen today at Mount Vernon.

After three years of surveying, he was appointed Adjutant of one of the military districts in Virginia, and entered upon the study of warfare with the same zeal he showed in every task he undertook.

In 1751, when Lawrence Washington developed tuberculosis, George accompanied him to Barbados. But Lawrence did not improve and died the following year at Mount Vernon. George, now twenty, was left to carry out the terms of his brother's will, and manage his estate. Lawrence's little daughter died within a short time, and George inherited Mount Vernon, his home thenceforward for over forty years.

EARLY MILITARY RESPONSIBILITIES

In 1753 Washington served his apprenticeship in military service. Rivalry between the French and English in the westward settlement of the country had reached a crisis. They both claimed the Ohio valley, and the French were building forts there. It was for the purpose of warning the French to cease encroaching on this territory that Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia sent young Major Washington to the frontier in charge of a small party.

After an adventurous journey through the wilderness, they arrived at the French fort and delivered the Governor's message, but the French commander gave no promise that they would leave the Ohio valley. Washington was wise enough to make maps of the fort and its surroundings before starting the journey homeward. His report was printed and widely circulated.

The following April, Washington, now a lieutenant-colonel, was sent to the frontier with a company of men. At an open space known as Great Meadows, near what is now Confluence, Pennsylvania, he encountered a French scouting party which he captured. The French were now strongly entrenched at Fort Duquesne, and Washington found himself in a precarious position. With the approach of the French in great force, he took refuge in a rude stockade near Great Meadows, which he called Fort Necessity. Fighting valiantly for ten hours against far greater numbers, he surrendered the fort itself but not his men who started their march homeward on the fourth of July. His report was again printed, with a letter to his brother in which he said, "I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound."

The next year two British regiments commanded by General Braddock came to aid the Colonists. Impressed by the reports and courage of young Washington, General Braddock asked him to join his staff. Again they marched against Fort Duquesne. Washington warned Braddock of the danger of French and Indian ambush, and suggested that he advance rapidly with strong advance and scouting parties, and in open order with light baggage. Instead, the army traveled slowly about three miles a day without adequate scouts, building a good road as it went and carrying all its baggage. The sudden surprise attack panicked the Regulars, who were saved from utter massacre only by Washington's coolness and the bravery of his Virginia company. He plunged into the thick of the battle, shouting words of courage to his men. Two horses were shot from under him and four bullets pierced his coat. Over

seven hundred of the English, including General Braddock, were killed.

For the next three years, Col. Washington commanded the Virginia forces, and with about three hundred men protected three hundred miles of frontier from French and Indian raids that averaged about one every two weeks. In the winter of 1756, he journeyed to Boston on horseback to interview Governor Shirley, the acting Commander-in-Chief in the Colonies, and secured an order making American officers equal in authority to British Regulars of the same rank.

In the fall of 1758, Washington's troops joined in another attack on Fort Duquesne. The French fled, leaving the fort in ruins, and the Ohio country was secured to the British.

When the Virginia House of Burgesses gave Washington a vote of thanks, he rose to respond, but became so confused that he could not say a word. "Sit down, Mr. Washington," the speaker is quoted as saying, "your modesty is equal to your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess."

Washington now resigned his commission and went to Mount Vernon to live as a peaceful Virginia planter for the next sixteen years.

A VIRGINIA PLANTER

In January, 1759, Washington married Martha (Dandridge) Custis, a widow and mother of two children, Jacky and Patsy, as he always affectionately called them. They were probably married at the "White House," home of the bride about thirty miles from Williamsburg, and while Washington attended the House of Burgesses, they lived in Williamsburg under another roof of hers, the "Six Chimney House."

In May they went to live at Mount Vernon, Washington's beautiful estate on the Potomac. His deep affection for Mount Vernon, and his delight in its development and upkeep, are constantly evident throughout his diaries and letters. In course

of time he so increased his estate that he became one of the largest landowners in the country, and his greatest pride was to be thought the first farmer in America.

Washington farmed on a very large scale. He constantly supervised every detail and knew what crops had been planted or gathered during the week, what increase or loss of stock had occurred, and how every slave's or laborer's time had been spent.

His lands formed a little world in themselves. Save for the goods ordered from London every six months, he produced everything needed by his households. Washington exacted economy in every detail, and allowed no unreasonable expense.

He equipped his farms with all the improved machinery and tools available. He took great delight in the planting of trees about Mount Vernon, in the grafting of his fruit trees, and in the arrangement and development of his gardens.

Washington worked his lands with slaves, and his farm records show kindly treatment of them at the expense of his profits. They soon became too many for even Mount Vernon's acres, but he neither sold any nor hired them out to other planters, being, as he wrote, "principled" against these practices. In 1786 he wrote several letters expressing a wish that the State legislature might favor an eventual gradual abolition of slavery, and in his will he stated: "Upon the decease of my wife it is my will and desire that all the slaves which I hold in my own right shall receive their freedom."

Riding to hounds was a favorite pastime at Mount Vernon. "Went a hunting" is a frequent entry in Washington's diary. He was an excellent rider and extremely fond of his horses and dogs.

Washington was methodical and punctual in his daily routine life. It was his habit to rise with the sun and work at his desk for several hours before breakfast, then ride about his lands until dinner time, which was a mid-afternoon meal.

Mount Vernon was rarely without guests; they came from all over the country and stayed for days, sometimes weeks, at

a time. Thus the years passed contentedly and happily, Washington taking part in the political affairs of the Colony, tending his vast estates, and entertaining his friends, while a great destiny awaited him.

COMING OF WAR

Washington was a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses for fifteen years, from 1758 until 1773. This was the period when the Colonists were sorely tried by British legislation. At first Washington did not take an extreme stand, but as he became more and more convinced that this oppression must be resisted by the Colonists, his position was unwavering. When the tax on tea was levied, he forbade the using of tea on any of his estates. When fighting and bloodshed were feared after the Boston Port Bill, he proclaimed to the Virginia Assembly, "I will raise one thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march, myself at their head, for the relief of Boston."

The First Continental Congress was called to open in Philadelphia, September 5, 1774. Washington was one of Virginia's delegates, and although he said but little, he was considered one of the strongest men present.

The Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, May 10, 1775. Washington answered the call to attend with these words: "It is my full intention to devote my life and my fortune to this cause."

Before the Congress met, Paul Revere had "spread the alarm" and the war had begun at Lexington and Concord. John Adams, delegate from Massachusetts, wrote to his wife Abigail of the favorable impression Washington made when he appeared in Congress wearing the uniform of his Fairfax County militia company — the buff and blue which he wore throughout the Revolution.

When George Washington was appointed Commander-in-

Chief of the American Army by the Second Continental Congress, he said, "I beg it may be remembered by every Gentleman in the room, that I this day declare with the utmost sincerity that I do not think myself equal to the Command I am honored with." With such modesty, but with grim resolution and stalwart courage, he undertook the task of leading the Americans in their fight for independence.

"FIRST IN WAR"

We can hardly appreciate the tremendous task which Washington faced. At once he must organize an army out of about 16,000 men who knew little of fighting and less of military discipline. Congress could not provide for the necessary food, clothing, and ammunition. His men were frequently half-starved, ill-clothed, and had little powder to fight with. At times one-fourth of the men were on the sick list. The term of enlistment was for only six months, and many soldiers went home when Washington needed them most. Three times, portions of the army mutinied, and only Washington's influence kept the disorder from spreading.

But through the long, weary years of the war, years full of suffering and seeming defeats, Washington never lost courage. Without him the Revolution might have failed almost at the start. His leadership was the inspiration and the power which brought America to her independence.

Not only did Washington have an undisciplined and disorganized army to deal with, but an uninformed, inert, and slow-moving Congress. In the hours snatched from the problems and fighting of the battlefield, often when he should have been sleeping, he sat at his headquarters writing letters to Congress which told in no uncertain terms how to organize and supply the army, and how to raise money and men.

In less than a year, General Washington drove the British from Boston and took up his stand in New York, where the

British overwhelmingly outnumbered him. But Washington was equal to every emergency; even his retreats were masterpieces. When the British thought they had him completely in their grasp on Long Island, they awoke to find that Washington, through high tide and heavy mist, had taken his 10,000 men, their baggage and arms, across East River to New York.

Even his defeats were incentives to fresh efforts, and his successes were usually the result of bold, swift strokes — all of which confirms his military genius.

In 1776, when the enemy was celebrating Christmas at Trenton, Washington crossed the Delaware in the midst of floating cakes of ice. Marching through blinding snow, he captured the city and took one thousand prisoners. Cornwallis, the British General, hurried upon the scene, expecting to turn the tables. "At last we have run down the old fox and will bag him in the morning," he said to his staff. But while the British slept, Washington slipped away, leaving burning campfires to deceive the enemy, and won a victory at Princeton.

The winter of 1777-78 the enemy spent gaily at Philadelphia, while Washington and his men suffered from cold and hunger at Valley Forge. He wrote to a Virginia friend and delegate to Congress that so many soldiers lacked shoes that "their marches might be traced by the Blood from their feet." But even in these dark days Washington did not lose heart.

There at Valley Forge, Baron von Steuben, a Prussian officer who joined the American forces as a volunteer, proved of great service to General Washington in drilling and organizing the troops.

In May, 1778, the joyful news came that the French were coming to the aid of the Colonists. This alliance brought money, supplies, and auxiliaries into the army and marked a step forward in the Revolution. Washington also proved that his wisdom was great enough to deal with foreign allies as well as to lead his own troops.

He was incapable of fear, and on the battlefield was repeatedly in danger from the enemy's fire. On such an occasion one

of his aides said to him, "Sir, you are too much exposed, had you not better step back a little?" "If *you* are afraid," replied the General, "you have the liberty to step back." He himself stood firm.

In 1781 Lord Cornwallis was driven north to Yorktown, Virginia. Washington rushed south four hundred miles to block him. The Comte de Rochambeau brought his French infantry from Newport, Rhode Island; French Royal Marines were sent up from the West Indies; and the French fleet, commanded by Admiral de Grasse, was stationed in Chesapeake Bay. Cornwallis was trapped. He surrendered his entire army on October 19, 1781. Two years later, peace was signed, and the war ended. Thus George Washington led the American Army in the long, hard struggle for independence.

"FIRST IN PEACE"

Everything in the country was now at loose ends. The states were jealous of one another, and the unpaid and poorly fed army chafed at the delays of Congress. There was even danger of open revolt. A supreme test was put to Washington: the most powerful man in the land, he could, as was twice suggested privately to him, have established a monarchy with himself at its head. But not once was he tempted by this dream of power. His whole heart and mind were set upon establishing the free republic which had been the inspiration of the Revolution, and he threw all his personal influence into the creation of a central government.

On Christmas Eve, 1783, General Washington arrived at his beloved home Mount Vernon, having resigned his commission. But even in retirement he exercised a powerful influence over national affairs. Washington the soldier was becoming Washington the statesman.

Finally, in 1787, the great Constitutional Convention met at Philadelphia. This convention, with Washington presiding,

debated for nearly four months. Aided by the commanding will and vision of Washington, that incomparable instrument of government, the Constitution of the United States, was given to America.

There was no uncertainty as to who was to be the head of the nation. "We cannot, sir, do without you," said Governor Johnson of Maryland to Washington, who was unanimously elected first President of the United States.

Strong as was his desire for private life, his sense of duty to his country was greater. An entry in his diary, dated April 16, 1789, says: "About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life and to domestic felicity; and with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York . . . with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations." Thus he accepted the Presidency with the same modesty and forbearance with which he had previously taken up his military responsibility.

His journey to New York was a triumphant ride. Old and young thronged the highways to honor him, and in every town and village there were demonstrations of the love and veneration that the whole nation felt for him.

Washington took the oath of office in New York on April 30, 1789, on the balcony of the United States Building, where his statue now stands in front of the old United States Sub-Treasury Building on Wall Street. His task to establish a new government of free Americans was as great, if not greater, than that which he had accomplished in the war for independence.

"I walk, as it were, on untrodden ground," he said. There was no precedent. Everything, from the smallest detail to questions of gravest importance, had to be determined. Congress had to be organized, a Cabinet selected, courts established, and an enormous war debt paid.

In the creation of this new government, Washington had

very strong and able helpers in the members of his Cabinet. But all his patience and calming influence were required to smooth over the jealousies of Jefferson and Hamilton.

For two terms — eight years — Washington served as President, and then firmly declined re-election, thus establishing the precedent that no President should serve longer than two terms. He had carried the country safely through its formative period and “left the United States an effective and vigorous government.”

In September, 1796, Washington published his “Farewell Address.” It had been in preparation for several years, and no more appropriate legacy could Washington have bestowed upon the people whom he had welded together into a nation. “Be united and be American” is the inspiration of the “Address,” which is today one of the famous papers in our history.

Then, his duty to his country done, his great work finished, Washington became once more a farmer and country gentleman at Mount Vernon, where he still kept up an active interest in the affairs of the nation. Less than three years were left to him at the home he loved so well, for on December 14, 1799, after one day of illness, he died with the words “ ’Tis well” on his lips.

“FIRST IN THE HEARTS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN”

Washington was a man set so far above other men that it is difficult to realize his human side. To many he seems cold and unfeeling, but his whole life is a contradiction of this. No personal sacrifice was too great for him to endure for his country's sake. His devotion to his family, his hospitality to his friends, rich and poor alike, his warm-hearted affection and love for all his soldiers, show that he abounded in human sympathy.

One of the noblest pictures of Washington is his farewell to

his officers after the war was over. They assembled at Fraunces' Tavern in New York. Washington's words were simple: “With a heart full of love and gratitude I now take leave of you, I most devoutly wishing that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable.” As each officer approached, Washington grasped his hand and embraced him. His eyes were full of tears and he could not trust himself to speak. In silence he bade them farewell, but it was the silence of love and affection and gratitude.

Small wonder it is that Washington was loved and trusted by his fellow men almost to the extent of worship. In him they saw the general, who had brought them victory and independence; the statesman, who had given them a well-ordered government.

This love for Washington, the man, this respect for his great accomplishment in the founding of our nation, lives today in the heart of every American, and will endure forever.

In all parts of the world where the name of America is known, the story of Washington and his greatness is told. In our Capital City bearing his name, there stands a beautiful and inspiring monument, which symbolizes the reverence, esteem, and affection of all the world for our first President, who declared that the first duty of Americans is to be American. “Do justice to all and never forget that we are Americans.”

George Washington

First President of the United States

"This booklet is dedicated to the Bicentennial Celebration; to a reaffirmation of the ideals which brought forth a new nation two centuries ago. As the nation begins its third century, may we strive even harder to secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity."

John Hancock

Mutual
Life Insurance
Company