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George Washington VII

First in Peace ✨



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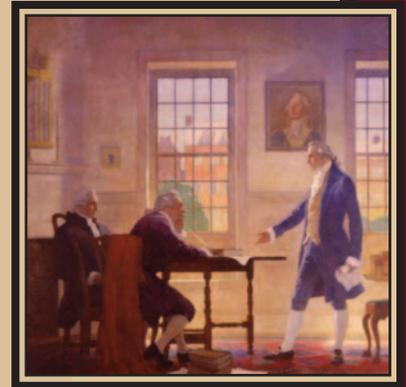
George Washington, a Biography, Volume Seven brings us to the dramatic conclusion of George Washington’s magnificent life. Reluctantly taking up the burdens of a second presidential term, Washington deferred a return to his beloved Mount Vernon in order to complete the crucial tasks of stabilizing the young republic. Originally, he had planned to retire. After nearly four years as president, dealing with the infighting in his own cabinet and with partisan critics, Washington showed little enthusiasm for continuing. However, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison urged him not to retire, saying his absence would only allow the dangerous political rift in his cabinet and in the House of Representatives to grow. Hamilton maintained that Washington’s absence would be “deplored as the greatest evil” to the country.

*W*hen the election of 1792 neared, Washington did not publicly announce his presidential candidacy but silently consented to run. The Electoral College unanimously elected him president on February 13, 1793, with Adams remaining as vice president. Washington, with nominal fanfare, arrived alone at his Philadelphia inauguration in his carriage. He was sworn into office by Associate Justice William Cushing on March 4, 1793 in the Senate Chamber of Congress Hall in Philadelphia, where he afterward gave a brief address.

*O*n April 22, 1793, during the French Revolution, Washington issued his famous Neutrality Proclamation and resolved to pursue “a conduct friendly and impartial toward the belligerent Powers” and warned Americans not to get involved in the international conflict. Although Washington recognized France’s revolutionary government, he would eventually request that French ambassador Genet be recalled over the Citizen Genet Affair. Genet was a diplomatic troublemaker who was

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The cover image depicts George Washington and is a composite including a photo of a wax model of Washington on display at the Mt. Vernon Estate as well as a portion of the Gilbert Stuart 1795 portrait of George Washington. Above is The Hamilton Mural (Alexander Hamilton addressing George Washington and Robert Morris) by N.C. Wyeth.



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openly hostile toward Washington's neutrality policy. He had secretly procured four American ships as privateers to strike at Spanish forces (British allies) in Florida while organizing militias to strike at other British possessions. But his schemes were discovered and his efforts failed to draw America into the foreign campaigns during Washington's presidency. On July 31, 1793, in a surprise move, Thomas Jefferson submitted his resignation from Washington's cabinet.

*I*n the following year Washington signed the Naval Act of 1794 and commissioned the first six federal frigates to combat Barbary pirates. In western Pennsylvania in 1794 threats against federal tax collectors escalated into defiance against federal authority, and gave rise to the Whiskey Rebellion. Washington issued a final proclamation on September 25, threatening the use of military force. The federal army was not up to the task, so Washington invoked the Militia Act of 1792 to summon state militias. Washington initially took command personally, but after reaching Pittsburgh handed over command to Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee to lead them into the rebellious districts. They took 150 prisoners, and the remaining rebels dispersed without further fighting. Two of the prisoners were condemned to death, but Washington exercised his Constitutional authority for the first time and pardoned them.

*I*n January 1795, Hamilton, who needed more income for his family, resigned as Secretary of the Treasury. Washington chose Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to replace him, though Washington and Hamilton remained friends. However, Washington's relationship with his Secretary of War, Henry Knox, deteriorated. Knox resigned on the rumor he profited from construction contracts on U.S. Frigates.

*B*efore leaving office, Hamilton had formulated the Jay Treaty to normalize trade relations with Great Britain while removing them from western forts, and also to resolve financial debts remaining from the Revolution. Chief Justice John Jay acted as Washington's negotiator and signed the treaty on November 19, 1794. The Jeffersonians, however, supported France. Washington deliberated, then supported the treaty because it avoided war with Britain. He mobilized public opinion and secured ratification in

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the Senate, but faced frequent public criticism. Washington believed that in time Britain would become a better trading partner than any other nation.

*T*he British agreed to abandon their forts around the Great Lakes, and the United States modified the boundary with Canada. The government liquidated numerous pre-Revolutionary debts, and the British opened the British West Indies to American trade. Crucially, the treaty secured peace with Britain and a decade of prosperous trade. Jefferson claimed that it would anger France and “invited rather than avoided” war. Relations with France did, indeed, decline afterwards, (as, in time, relations also soured with Britain).

*I*n the final months of his presidency, Washington was assailed by his political foes and a partisan press who accused him of being ambitious and greedy. The President argued that he had taken no salary during the war and had risked his life in battle. He regarded the press as a disuniting, diabolical force of falsehoods. These sentiments were expressed in his Farewell Address. At the end of his second term Washington retired, dismayed by personal attacks, and believing his death while still president would encourage his successors to remain in office for life. The tradition of a two-term limit was thus created and respected by all subsequent presidents until 1941.

*I*n May 1792, in anticipation of his retirement, Washington had instructed James Madison to prepare a “valedictory address”, an initial draft of which was entitled the “Farewell Address”. In May 1796, Washington sent the manuscript to his Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, who did an extensive rewrite. Washington provided concluding edits. The final version was published by the American Daily Advertiser on September 19, 1796.

*W*ashington stressed that national identity was paramount, while a united America would safeguard freedom and prosperity. He warned the nation of three eminent dangers: regionalism, partisanship,

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and foreign entanglements, and said the “name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations.” Washington called for men to move beyond partisanship for the common good, stressing that the United States must concentrate on its own interests. He warned against foreign alliances and their influence in domestic affairs and against bitter partisanship and the dangers of political parties. He counseled friendship and commerce with all nations, but advised against involvement in European wars. He stressed the importance of religion, asserting that “religion and morality are indispensable supports” in a republic. Washington’s address favored Hamilton’s Federalist ideology and economic policies.



Painting of Mount Vernon by Edward Savage.

*W*ashington retired to Mount Vernon in March 1797 and devoted his efforts to his plantations and other business interests, including his new distillery. But his operations were only minimally profitable, and his lands in the west (Piedmont) yielded little income, with the squatters there refusing to pay rent. He attempted to sell parcels but without success.

*W*ashington grew restless in retirement, prompted by tensions with France. He wrote to Secretary of War James McHenry, (who had replaced outgoing Henry Knox) and offered to organize President Adams’ army. In a continuation of the French Revolutionary Wars, French privateers began seizing American ships in 1798. Naturally, relations deteriorated with France and led to the “Quasi-War”. Without consulting Washington, Adams nominated him for a lieutenant general commission on July 4, 1798 and the position of commander-in-chief of the armies. Washington chose to accept, replacing

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James Wilkinson, and he served as the commanding general from July 13, 1798 until his death seventeen months later. He participated in planning for a provisional army, but he avoided involvement in details. Washington delegated the active leadership of the army to Hamilton, a major general. No army invaded the United States during this period, and Washington did not assume field command.

*O*n December 12, 1799, Washington inspected his farms on horseback in snow and sleet. He returned home late for dinner but refused to change out of his wet clothes, not wanting to keep his guests waiting. He had a sore throat the following day but again went out in freezing, snowy weather. On Saturday, he awoke to an inflamed throat and difficulty breathing. Washington's death came more swiftly than expected. According to Tobias Lear, he died peacefully between ten and eleven p.m. on December 14, 1799, with Martha seated at the foot of his bed. His last words were "Tis well."

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This view of Mt. Vernon is by William Bartlett.



VOLUME SEVEN

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First in Peace

Total running time: **22 hours, 13 minutes, 49 seconds**

The duration and start times of chapters may vary slightly depending on how the material is streamed.

DURATION:	START TIME:	TABLE OF CONTENTS:
00:42:23	00:00:00	INTRODUCTION
01:30:54	00:42:23	CHAPTER 1 - Reflection, Resignation, Resolution
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00:47:47	03:14:60	CHAPTER 3 - "Sundry Matters . . . Of Much Magnitude"
00:43:45	04:02:46	CHAPTER 4 - Genet Goes – Plague Comes
00:37:48	04:46:31	CHAPTER 5 - "It Seemed My Duty"
00:47:32	05:24:19	CHAPTER 6 - "Peace, Peace To The Last Day"
01:06:53	06:11:51	CHAPTER 7 - Insurrection – The Fruit Of Faction
00:45:51	07:18:44	CHAPTER 8 - The Price Of Peace Comes High
00:43:12	08:04:34	CHAPTER 9 - A Treaty Hangs In The Balance
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00:37:03	09:50:45	CHAPTER 11 - "A Kind of Fatality" Seems To Pursue

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DURATION: **START TIME:** _____

01:07:09	10:27:48	CHAPTER 12 - "Without Any Comments Of Mine"
01:34:58	11:34:57	CHAPTER 13 - The Most Momentous Debate
00:54:59	13:09:55	CHAPTER 14 - "The Ever Favorite Object Of My Heart"
00:55:07	14:04:54	CHAPTER 15 - The Exit Is Not All Glory
00:48:25	15:00:01	CHAPTER 16 - Washington Enters "A More Tranquil Theatre"
00:47:06	15:48:27	CHAPTER 17 - "Never ... A Dull Or Lonesome Hour"
01:20:47	16:35:33	CHAPTER 18 - The "Calm Observer" Accepts A Commission
01:28:22	17:56:20	CHAPTER 19 - "Everything Sacred And Dear Is Threatened"
01:03:49	19:24:42	CHAPTER 20 - "I Have Put My Hand And Seal"
00:48:55	20:28:31	CHAPTER 21 - "I Will Hope For The Best"
00:39:21	21:17:26	CHAPTER 22 - "Let Me Go Off Quietly"
00:17:02	21:56:47	AFTERWARD

Total running time:
22 hours, 13 minutes, 49 seconds

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VOLUME SEVEN PORTRAITS

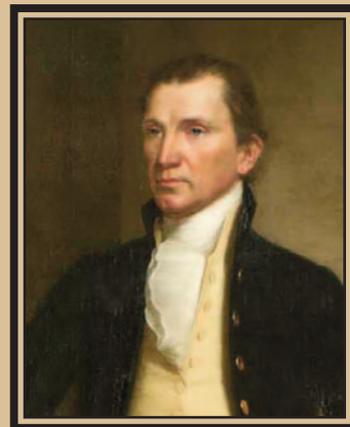


Genet – Saved by the Man He Most Despised *By the time Edmond Charles Genet arrived at Philadelphia in 1793 as Minister Plenipotentiary from the French Republic he was knowledgeable and experienced far beyond his thirty years. Born in the shadow of the King’s palace at Versailles, the precocious boy was tutored under the expert eye of a learned father. His four sisters were in the royal household, the eldest as First Lady in waiting to Marie Antoinette. A facile linguist at 14, he worked in the office of his father, Secretary Interpreter at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the father’s death in 1781, he succeeded to that post and, a few weeks later, had the delightful duty of bearing to Vergennes news of the victory at Yorktown. He became Chargé d’Affaires to Russia in 1789. This was the first year of the French Revolution and Genet’s deepening attachment for the movement soon was manifest. In 1792 he was expelled from St. Petersburg, but back at Paris the Girondists received him warmly. On the execution of Louis XVI and the declaration of war against the King of England –*

measures endorsed by Genet in the name of republicanism – the Gironde sent him to America where, to his fury, he discovered that not all revolutionaries adored the French goddess of Liberté. An account of this brief but tempestuous episode appears in these pages. Washington’s program of strict neutrality, rashly interpersonally embittered him. The President repaid Genet’s hostility by allowing him to remain in America after his recall. In truth, Genet owed his life to Washington: Paris Jacobins, newly come to power, would have beheaded this Girondist whose mission had been so singularly unsuccessful. “Citizen” Genet withdrew to a Long Island farm, wooed and won the daughter of Governor Clinton, and eventually became a citizen of the United States. In 1800 he moved upstate to Rensselaer County, where he continued his agricultural and scientific hobbies for more than thirty years. Oddly enough, when Genet died in 1834, it was on the anniversary of Bastille Day.
-Above is an etching of Genet from the Emmet Collection, New York Public Library.

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James Monroe, Persevering Politician *Best remembered for the “Doctrine” which carries his name, this serene grey-eyed man is distinguished also, in the words of one biographer, as “the last of the cocked hats” – the last Revolutionary figure to reach the White House. Because he succeeded Madison just as Madison had followed Jefferson, James Monroe sometimes is portrayed as the final heir of a “Virginia dynasty” which began with George Washington. More properly he was, from youth, the ambitious, plodding disciple of Jefferson, his neighbor at Charlottesville, and friend of Jefferson alone. Neither Madison nor Washington had reason to regard Monroe highly or to trust him. For years he was Madison’s keenest rival for the confidence of Jefferson and, excepting Aaron Burr, the only serious challenger for the chief lieutenancy of the Republican Party Jefferson was building. In 1788 he opposed Madison in the first Congressional election in Virginia; twenty years later he allowed discontents to sponsor him as a candidate against Madison for the Presidency. To Washington he was not a rival, but anathema – the personification of*



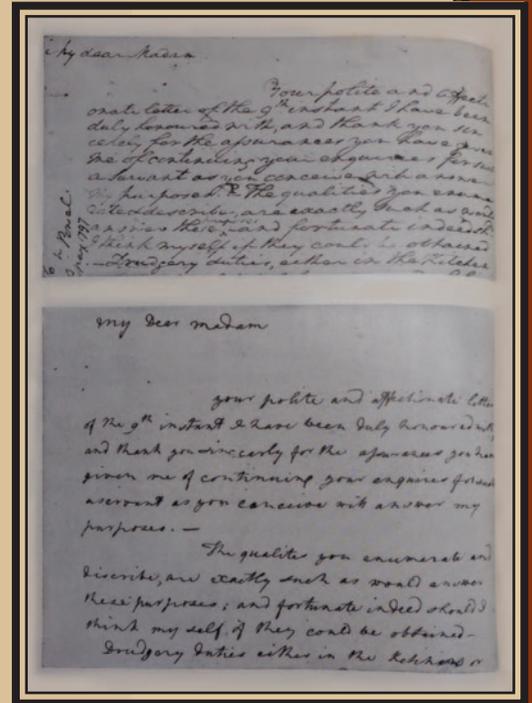
Anti-Federal and Francophile spirit in Virginia. As United States Senator after 1790 he proved an inveterate, if not articulate, critic of the Administration; as Minister to Paris from 1794 to 1796 his suspicion of Federalist policy makers at home, and a limitless enthusiasm for the cause of France, led him to diplomatic excesses which finally brought about his recall. Monroe found revenge in publication of A View of the Conduct of the Executive, which appeared late in 1797 under the imprint of Benjamin Bache of Philadelphia. As he read the diatribe, Washington marked his private copy with pungent interlineations. Had he chosen to declare Monroe a better Frenchman than an American, more of the cast of Genet and Adet than of a diplomat of his own nation, the indictment would have been accepted by many. When at 59 Monroe became Chief Executive, he served well and won the esteem of leaders in every section. So universal was his popularity in 1820 that he ran for re-election unopposed – but in Washington’s time his admirers were few. – Portrait by John Vanderlyn, Art Commission City of New York.

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A Domestic Conspiracy Disclosed *Never at a loss for the spoken word or grateful gesture, Martha Washington was at ease with one person or with many. Her fingers, kept busy with knitting or darning, were occupied least often at her writing desk – unlike her articulate successor, Abigail Adams, whose pen always was “freer than my tongue.” Then, as early as 1787, Martha’s letters showed a definite change for the better, both in expression and in form, with fewer mistakes in spelling. This sudden improvement in the literary efforts of a matron of little schooling finds its explanation in the Powel Collection at Mount Vernon. Among these papers are several pairs of communications, each pair the same in date and context. One of each set is in Washington’s autograph, unsigned; the other clearly is a copy in Martha’s handwriting, with her signature. Fragments of two such letters are shown under date of May 20, 1797, addressed to Mrs. Elizabeth Powel. The top is the General’s; below is Martha’s copy. Manifestly, the General had been composing Martha’s letters for some time. Perhaps she sought her husband’s help; perhaps he offered to ease an effort so burdensome to her. ❖ In any event, it scarcely*

can be said that she made a “fair copy.” Although she took pains to spell out some of the words Washington had abbreviated, there are erroneous lapses from the model before her. Habit was stronger than precept, and quite unconsciously she wrote “discribe,” “boath,” “occations” and “authum.” And never did she spare an “I” in “needful” or “careful” or “untill.” ❖ Whereas Martha Washington may not have been an apt pupil, it should be recorded to her everlasting credit that she never failed to follow with consistent accuracy one example set by her husband – “never to oppose my private wishes to the public will.” – Courtesy of The Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association.

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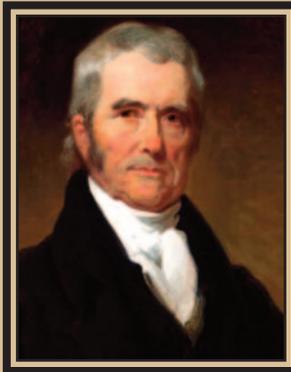


John Jay, Stalwart Under Public Wrath *More than any Federalist, more even than Alexander Hamilton, John Jay became a victim of merciless editorial attack and colossal public wrath in Washington's second administration. To this rigid, self-possessed New Yorker, whose vast pride and deep political and religious convictions were ingrained, censure was a consequence of duty – a repercussion to be coldly ignored rather than dreaded. While not once soliciting an appointment, he had been a public man for twenty years when the President sent him to England as Envoy Extraordinary in 1794. At the time he was Chief Justice, but earlier experience marked him as the most completely trained diplomatist in America. On November 19 of that year, the day he concluded a Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation with the British government, Jay wrote from London: "It must speak for itself... To do more was not possible." His philosophical calm was undisturbed three months later as he declared: "I knew and know that no attainable settlement or treaty would give universal satisfaction." Among Republicans and French sympathizers, he might have added, universal disgust would be manifest when*

the twenty-eight articles of his pact were known. Jay's treaty had failed appallingly to attain the specific objective of his mission. While Republican critics condemned the agreement and leveled their guns at "that damned arch-traitor, Sir John Jay," whom they actually accused of corruption by British gold, their real rancor was rooted in the idea that any treaty should be signed with the foe of France. With all its limitations, the Anglo-American rapprochement seemed to assure a lasting peace between the signatory powers; for the United States, young and defenseless, it dispelled threats of war with the most formidable navy in the world. This much Jay knew he had achieved, and he was not ashamed of his handiwork. Nor would characteristic aloofness permit him, in print or privately, to explain the negotiation or elucidate its terms. At the height of the clamor against him, with his effigy aflame in many towns he said simply, "The treaty is as it is." As it was, the treaty foreclosed his future. He served twice as Governor of New York and in 1801 retired to a farm in Westchester County. – The portrait by Joseph Wright. Courtesy of the New York Historical Society.

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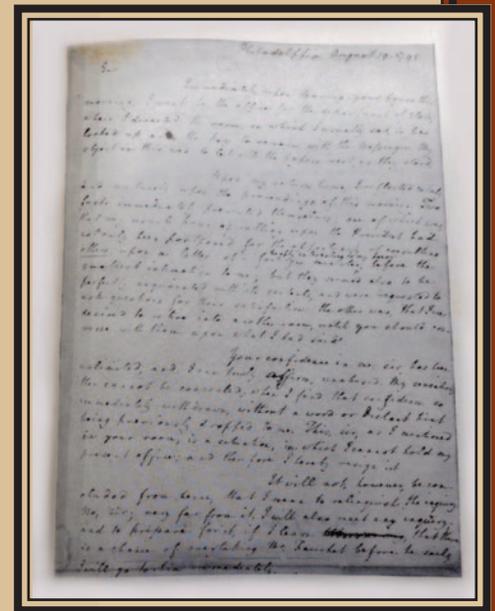
John Marshall, Gibraltar of Federalism *Thomas Jefferson once criticized the "lax, lounging hammers" of his cousin John Marshall, America's most notable jurist and authority on the Constitution. Yet Marshall's temperament was as closely akin to Jefferson's as divergent political beliefs would allow. A son of the frontier just as truly as was the sage of Charlottesville, this tall, unkempt Virginian likewise was essentially a philosopher, a comprehensive thinker whose sweep and grasp of principles made him sometimes impatient of details. Even while Rufus King had called Marshall's mind "one of the best organized... I have known," it remained the mind of an architect of theories rather than that of practical craftsman. To Justice Story, a long-time colleague, Marshall was in the habit of saying: "That, Story, is the law: you find the precedents." Similar as were their origins and early tendencies, Jefferson and his relative were hopelessly estranged after 1789. Marshall was a rock of Federalism in Republican Virginia, a supporter of the broadest concepts of*



*Hamilton, and the ardent admirer of George Washington, under whom he had served at Valley Forge. By 1795 the President was corresponding regularly with the Richmond lawyer, and that year offered him the Attorney Generalship. John Adams chose Marshall for the ill-fated “XYZ” mission to France and, upon his return in 1789, urged him to accept a place on the Supreme bench. When, instead, Marshall ran successfully for Congress, it was with encouragement and warm endorsement from Mount Vernon. Then, installed as Chief Justice a year after Washington’s death, Marshall felt a debt to his departed patron which he thought to pay by printed word. His *Life of George Washington*, published in five volumes between 1804 and 1807, proved a stylistic and financial failure, but it remained for half a century the largest literary monument to its subject. A greater tribute by far was Marshall’s labor, during thirty-four years in the chair of Chief Justice and through more than 1200 cases, to preserve the ideals of nationalism to which Washington had dedicated his Presidency. With marked discernment, Joseph Story addressed Marshall in 1833: “Your exposition of constitutional law ... can scarcely perish but with the memory of the Constitution itself.”* - The portrait of John Marshall by Henry Inman, 1832

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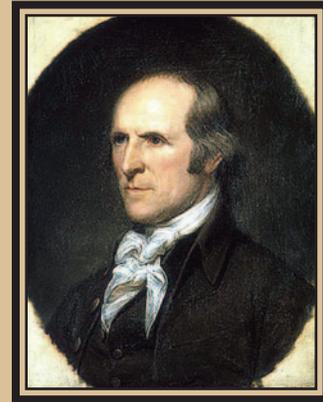
A Tragedy of Circumstances August 19, 1795 was a day George Washington did not soon forget. That morning, in the presence of Timothy Pickering and Oliver Wolcott, the President handed to Edmund Randolph a folded paper which the Secretary of State never had seen before. It was a diplomatic dispatch from the French minister, Joseph Fauchet, to his superiors at Paris – a letter written many months earlier but intercepted by a British cruiser and sent back to Philadelphia to the King’s envoy, George Hammond. Late in July Hammond disclosed the letter to his American friend, Secretary of the Treasury Wolcott, who gave it to Secretary of War Pickering for translation. On August 11 Pickering and Wolcott showed the intercepted dispatch to Washington, but the President withheld its contents from Randolph for eight days. It was Randolph whom Fauchet’s letter concerned. Certain ambiguous phrases by the Frenchman left an impression that the Secretary of State had attempted to sell official information to him. In silence Randolph studied the incriminating passages, then tried to explain them. Finally, Randolph’s composure broke when Washington asked Pickering and Wolcott to interrogate him, then conferred privately with them while the accused man waited in the next room. That same afternoon Randolph sent the President his resignation, a part of which is shown. “Your confidence in me, Sir,” he wrote aggrievedly, “has been unlimited and, I can truly affirm, unabused. My sensations, then cannot be concealed when I find that confidence so



*immediately withdrawn, without a word or distant hint being previously dropped to me.” Randolph set about at once to establish his innocence, and in December published *A Vindication*. If this documented pamphlet of 103 pages satisfied the President that Randolph was guiltless, Washington wrote nothing then or later in his defense. With statements that the Chief Executive had “prejudged the question” and practiced “stratagem” against him, Randolph already had written too much. These aspersions, and others more caustic, made reconciliation impossible between the President and the man who had been his closest associate in public life. To Edmund Randolph, this affair was the tragic end of a promising career. To Washington, it was the tragic loss of a treasured relationship.- The image of the letter is courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

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Pickering and Wolcott: Posterity Must Judge Them *If nothing else were needed to leave a cloud over their long public service, these two avid Federalists of Washington’s Cabinet would find it difficult to explain to posterity their conduct in the summer and fall of 1795. Both newly appointed that year, Secretary of War Timothy Pickering (above) and Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, used the ambiguous intercepted letter of a foreign agent to force the resignation of Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State and the President’s confidential adviser. The disgrace of Randolph – inevitably a result of unsubstantiated charges of treason and defalcation of diplomatic funds – was entirely of their manufacture; the ruin of his career was their work alone. However certain they may have been of Randolph’s guilt at the time, or however reasonable their desire to remove the one Cabinet officer who stood in the way of immediate ratification of Jay’s treaty, the machinations of Pickering and Wolcott in this episode violated every fundamental of fair play. Both*

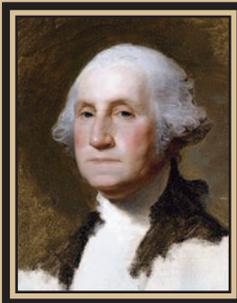
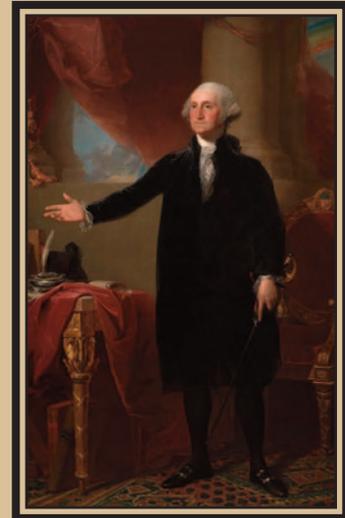


distinguished New Englanders already had earned Washington’s respect by indefatigable performance – Pickering as Quartermaster General in the Revolution and Postmaster General since 1791, Wolcott as Auditor, and then Comptroller of the Treasury – and each climbed higher on Randolph’s wreckage. Pickering became Secretary of State, and he and Wolcott continued in office under President Adams. Pickering’s portrait by Peale hints a harshness and irascibility which, in time, were matched by too much native candor to conceal adherence to the views of Alexander Hamilton, and for this Adams dismissed him in 1800; Wolcott’s subservience to Hamilton was furtive enough to allow this glad and gracious man to escape purge. Eventually, Pickering emerged as chieftain of the “Essex Junto” of angry Federalists, and blackened his record by disunionist scheming. Apostasy stained Wolcott’s later life: he was a Republican in everything but name by 1817, and under these colors

remained as Governor of Connecticut for ten years. In final judgment of his old colleague, Pickering questioned Wolcott's sanity. Washington well might have questioned the benignity of both men in 1795. - The portrait of Pickering by Charles Willson Peale, Courtesy of the Independence, National Historical Park Collection. Portrait of Wolcott by John Trumbull. Reproduced by permission of the owner, Nicholas Roosevelt, Big Sur, California. Photograph courtesy of Frick Art Reference Library.

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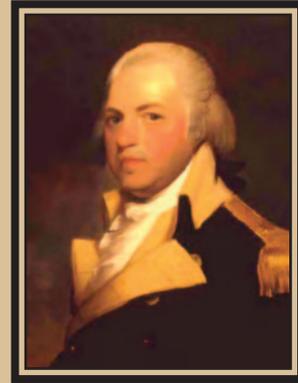
Stuart Painted Character, Not Costume *Of the numerous portraits of George Washington from life, those by Gilbert Stuart are justifiably the most famous. Stuart's death in 1828 left a score of great canvasses and an unparalleled reputation behind him, and the next century produced no American portraitist to challenge his foremost place. This son of a Rhode Island millwright awakened to his calling at 13; seven years later, in 1775, he arrived penniless in London to become a pupil of the renowned Benjamin West. By 1787, Stuart removed to Dublin, his clientele was distinguished and his prestige at the Royal Academy equal almost to that of West, Gainsborough, and Joshua Reynolds. An ability to capture in oils the innate character and permanent cast of a face, rather than transient expressions of mood, was Stuart's rare gift; improvident, lavish living was his weakness. In 1792, harassed by creditors both in England and Ireland, Stuart devised a plan to recoup his fortune: he would return to America to make several portraits of the national hero, General Washington, and sell copies by subscription. His first effort, finished early in 1795, was a delineation of the right side of the President's face – the "Vaughan Type" it came to be called – and the painter took orders for thirty-nine duplicates. A year later he began a full length representation in formal dress, the "Lansdowne Type," which is shown here. According to Washington Custis, this magnificent work was not modeled entirely by its subject; the hand allegedly was after a wax impression of Stuart's own, and the figure posed by a friend of the artist who was not as large a man as*



Washington. Possibly this charge is borne out by the fact that Stuart completed the "Lansdowne" original in Germantown, not in Philadelphia. Within a few months the President sat for him again. The third and most familiar portrait, the "Athenaeum Type," was a likeness of the left side of Washington's face. Stuart did not finish his masterpiece below the neckline, and never was allowed by critics to forget it. "I copy the works of God," he once explained, "and leave clothes to tailors and mantua-makers." Above is the George Washington Lansdowne Portrait April 12, 1796, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, and left is the Athenaeum Portrait, 1796, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

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Henry Lee, Man of Sword and Impulse *Claim to the confidence and genuine esteem of George Washington was the legitimate boast of four men, each a generation his junior, whose endowments and experiences were not dissimilar. There was much of genius and a measure of tragedy in the lives of Lafayette, Hamilton, Edmund Randolph – and “Light Horse Harry” Lee. If Washington’s attachment to the first three was almost paternal, so was his regard for this scion of Leesylvania who early avowed himself “wedded to my sword,” and then showed his mettle as a flamboyant and successful colonel of cavalry in the Revolution. Henry Lee’s marriage in 1782 to a wealthy cousin, Matilda of the Stratford Lees, allowed him to indulge in politics, land speculation, and habits of extravagance, but within eight years his wife was dead and her fortune diminished. By 1793, in ripe manhood at 34 and now the acknowledged leader of Virginia Federalist and Governor of his State, he took Washington’s advice, declined a high rank in the army of the French Republic, and married handsomely again, this time the great granddaughter of “King” Carter. When the President chose him for supreme command of the militia that marched against the “Whiskey” insurrectionists in 1794, Lee was at the summit of his career – a career doomed by the flaw of financial irresponsibility. Even Washington’s faith soon was shaken by Lee’s carelessness in contract, but friendship survived this strain. The master of Mount Vernon endorsed Lee for Congress in 1798; the next year Americans heard Lee’s stirring eulogy: “First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen!” Meanwhile Lee had lent Robert Morris his last 40,000 dollars of cash; Morris was now in debtors’ prison and creditors were at Lee’s door. Before he finally was jailed for debts in 1808, a fifth child, Robert Edward, was born at Stratford. When Henry Lee died ten years later at 62, an impoverished refugee on the coast of Georgia, he bore the scars of a beating suffered in 1813 at the hands of a mob in Baltimore. The old commander of “Lee’s Legion” had rushed in recklessly to help a friend whose unpopular newspaper was facing ruin at the time. Life had been expensive for this man of impulse who never counted the cost.- After the original Gilbert Stuart portrait now in possession of Mr. Carter Lee Refo, Richmond, Virginia.*



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Theirs the Saddest Mission *“The hand of an unknown artist fashioned the charming silhouette, in black and white, without benefit of crayon or brush, captured the individuality of the eldest and the youngest of the three doctors who last waited on Washington. The very posture and outline of the substantial figure in the cocked hat suggest the attributes of solidity and reliability Washington found in this lifelong physician-friend. James Craik, two years Washington’s senior, was Scottish born and schooled in Edinburgh before he emigrated to America. In 1754 he became surgeon to Col. Joshua Fry’s Virginia Regiment, then served under Washington in the frontier forces. Throughout the Revolution the Commander-in-Chief knew him to be indispensable in loyalty and in line of duty. But he was more than “compatriot in arms”; he shared peaceful pleasure as well as public and personal burdens. Doctor kept pace with General as*



they rode to hounds at Mount Vernon or made long excursions to the Ohio. ❖ Thirty five years after their first meeting in the grim days of Fort Necessity, Washington said of him: “The habits of intimacy and friendship in which I have long lived with Dr Craik, and the opinion I have of his professional knowledge, would most certainly point him out as the man of my choice in all cases of sickness. I am convinced of his sincere attachment to me, and I should with cheerfulness trust my life in his hands...”

In 1799 James Craik was to meet the test he could not master in that most devastating of all duties a doctor is called to perform – to fight valiantly, yet hopelessly, as death takes a beloved friend. ❖

Across from Doctor Craik here, as if in earnest conversation, is his Alexandria colleague, Elisha Cullen Dick. Although a generation away from him, the younger man had achieved both medical and Masonic eminence. It was Doctor Dick who, with admirable presence of mind, forever marked the moment of Washington’s death by stopping the mantel clock. Its hands still point to twenty minutes past ten. - The silhouette is in the Joseph Lyons Miller Collection of Richmond Academy of Medicine. The painting of Washington on his Deathbed is by Junius Brutus Stearns, 1851 .



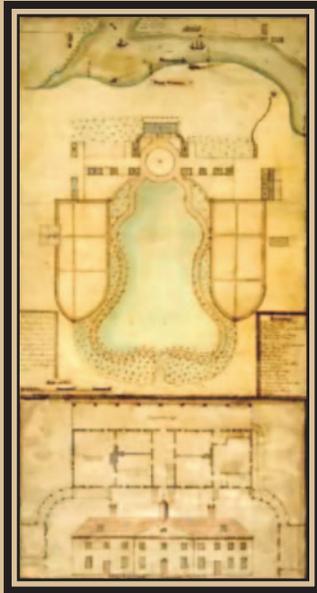
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Mount Vernon – Portrait of a Man A picture of Mount Vernon is, as well, a portrait of George Washington. No likeness of the man himself could, in a sense, more graphically represent him or more truly speak for him, so inextricably blended have they become. This – his “vine and fig tree,” his “tranquil theatre,” his chosen scene for “calm and pleasing shades of retirement,” his “haven of rest” – was more than home; it was a part of his very being. Personified there were the ambitions, the hope, the dreams, the frustrations, the accomplishments



of a lifetime. This drawing was made not long after Washington’s death by William Birch. ❖ As a boy of 11, George first came under its spell when he visited his brother Lawrence’s home on Little Hunting Creek, newly built and newly named Mount Vernon. There young George found increasing delight in the household of his beloved

This drawing is in the Phelps Stokes Collection, New York Public Library.



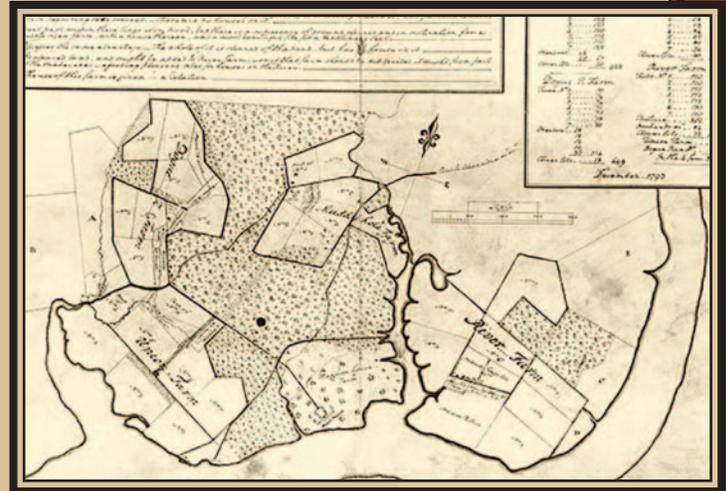
Lawrence, in neighboring farms and friends, in the sheer beauty of setting. The boy may not have known it then, but his course already was fixed toward the goal of landed proprietor. He could not have known then that before his 23rd birthday, this Potomac plantation would be legally his. But forever after, Mount Vernon was the polestar of his existence. ♦ Almost from the first, Washington went persistently about the improvement and expansion of his property, in spite of painfully long absences and uncomfortably short funds. When at last he withdrew from public service, his acreage had more than tripled and the shining white Mansion House, from its bluff above the shining Potomac, overlooked some thirteen square miles within the Mount Vernon tract. But titles of Commander-in-Chief, of President, or of master of Mount Vernon would have been meaningless to Washington without the “most enviable of all titles, the character of an honest man.” Because he believed that “human happiness and moral duty” were “inseparably connected,” he had the reward of “an approving conscience.” Mount Vernon may not have given him the ample livelihood he coveted and needed, but, more importantly, it had given him the amplitude of a life he cherished, where “pervading all was Peace.”

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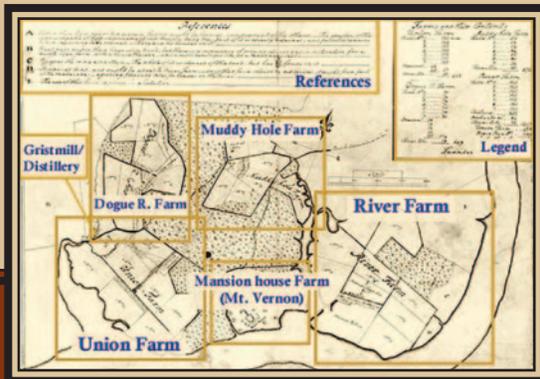
Samuel Vaughan, an Englishman who immigrated to America, visited Mount Vernon in August 1787. In his journal, he described Mount Vernon and made the earliest-known sketch of the grounds. He later mailed George Washington a more detailed and finished plan of the estate (pictured above) based on his earlier sketch. (Mount Vernon Ladies' Association)



Shown is Washington's drawing of his farms and their contents at Mount Vernon, 1793. It was printed in *The Papers of George Washington*, Retirement Series, vol. 4, April - December 1799, pp. 460-61. (Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California)



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BIRDS EYE VIEW OF
MOUNT VERNON,

1. Church
 2. Green House
 3. Tavern or Hall
 4. Wash House
 5. Stable
 6. Barn
 7. Kitchen
 8. Office
 9. Library
 10. Billiard Room
 11. Drawing Room
 12. Parlor
 13. Dining Room
 14. Entrance



Above: Birds eye view of Mount Vernon, 1859

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Left: Tomb at Mount Vernon previously attributed to William Henry Barlett.



"Prayer at Valley Forge" painting by Arnold Friberg completed in 1975.

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George Washington's Gravesite

Left: This painting is one of a group of views of Mount Vernon executed by Russell Smith during or just after his 1839 visit to the estate. At the time, George Washington's Mount Vernon—and particularly the old and new tomb—were revered as national pilgrimage sites. This inventive painting does not directly feature a gravesite, but incorporates the white fence above the old tomb as an allusion to it. The additional inclusion of a figure in black—likely representing a mourner—suggests the collective national bereavement for Washington during the period.



The Houdon Bust of George Washington

Right: Perhaps the one treasured object above all others in the vast Mount Vernon collection is it's Jean-Antoine Houdon's terracotta bust of George Washington. During Houdon's two week stay there in October 1785, he sculpted this, and it was in all probability fired in Mount Vernon's bake oven. It is considered to be the most accurate likeness of George Washington.



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