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The One Hundred and Seventy-Sixth Anniversary of Washington's Birth



Woodlawn Mansion, Westmoreland County, Virginia, One of Washington's Earliest Homes.

George Washington was born on the banks of the Potomac, in Westmoreland county, Virginia, on February 22, 1732.

At the age of 16 he was a good surveyor and at 19 he was adjutant of one of the Virginia militia districts, with the rank of major.

At the age of 21 he was selected by Gov. Dinwiddie of Virginia as a "person of distinction," under orders of the British government, to demand an explanation of the French, who were forming settlements in the northwest and in the Mississippi valley.

At the age of 23 he was commissioned as colonel in the British army, and from that time, when as a "soldier of the king" he became distinguished on the field, until he took leave of

his officers on November 23, 1783, after having overthrown the royal government, he was the most important factor in the affairs of the new country.

Ending an eventful and successful military career, he retired to his home at Mount Vernon, Va., from which place in 1784 he wrote to Lafayette: "I have become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac, and under the shadow of my own vine and fig tree, free from the bustle of the camp, . . . I am solacing myself with those tranquil enjoyments of which the soldier who is ever in pursuit of fame, the statesman . . . and the courtier . . . can have little conception."

At the time Washington wrote the quoted words to Lafayette he had no thought that he would be called as the president of the republic, the liv-

ing reality of which he had created. But so, and on the 30th day of April, 1789, having been elected on the 6th day of the same month, he took the oath of office in New York city, having journeyed to that place from Mount Vernon in his private carriage.

Washington served his country as its first chief executive for a period of eight years—two terms—and declined a third term. No other president since Washington has enjoyed that distinction.

The national government, in conjunction with the states, has undertaken to do honor to his memory by making his birthday a national holiday and by erecting monuments of marble pointing skyward, but the grandest and most expressive tribute is embraced in the lettering: "First in War, First in Peace, First in the Hearts of His Countrymen," as chiseled on the statue which stands on the plaza at the east of the capitol.

Washington was a very enthusiastic Mason, and was identified with the lodge in Alexandria, Va., which was chartered in 1783 under the Pennsylvania jurisdiction, but in 1788 it was rechartered as the Alexandria-Washington lodge, No. 22, and Washington was named as worshipful master in the charter.

Christ church, Alexandria, Va., ivy and moss covered, was completed and delivered over to the vestry on February 27, 1773, the construction having begun January 1, 1767. Col. Washington was one of the first vestrymen of the church, and on the

an old burial ground, and some very old tablets, antedating the construction of the church, are still standing, and are in a remarkable state of preservation.

The square pew, with open door, on the right of the pulpit and under the balcony, is pew No. 5, which was occupied by Col. Washington when attending services there until the date

A similar tablet, placed to the memory of Gen. Robert E. Lee, occupies similar space on the wall to the left of the pulpit. Gen. Lee was a vestryman of the church at the commencement of the civil war, and the pew occupied by him is across the aisle from and a little to the rear of the Washington pew. This pew is indicated by a silver plate showing his

ver plate, bearing his autograph, is on the top of the pew door. Originally all the pews in the church were built in a square form, but later, with the exception of the Washington pew, were changed to the present-day style of construction.

On the east wall, under the balcony and to the right of the pulpit, is a memorial tablet placed to the memory of Gen. Washington. The day that it was turned over by the builders he purchased pew No. 5 for the sum of £36.10 shillings, agreeing also to pay an annual rental of £5 for the same.

The church was consecrated by Bishop Claggett of Maryland on June 14, 1814. This ancient and historic edifice is still used as a place of worship. It is kept open every week day, and is annually visited by thousands. A small admission fee is charged for the purpose of defraying the expense of keeping it open to the public. In the rear of and on the south side is

received his commission in 1755, as a colonel in the British army, from Gen. Braddock, in the Carlyle house, at Alexandria, Va. This house was erected in 1732 by John S. Carlyle on the brow of a hill, and its base rests on an old fort built in 1615 by Capt. John Smith on one of the occasions when he came up the Potomac to trade with the Indians. Originally the house was reached by a fine flight of stone steps from a beautiful lawn reaching to Fairfax street and adorned by 16 Lombardy poplars arranged in four parallel rows. The poplars and lawn have long since disappeared, and long ranges of rooms of the present Braddock house occupy their site, and the house is only visible to the public from the eastern or rear side.

It was also in this house that the unfortunate expedition against Fort Duquesne was arranged by Gen. Braddock and the governors of Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia, in 1755.

THE LOVE AFFAIRS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

We are so accustomed to pictures of George Washington in a rigid attitude, with sternly compressed lips and generally forbidding expression, that we forget he was ever young and a human being of flesh and blood like the rest of us.

Instead of being a cold-blooded prig Washington was magnetic in personality and a great social favorite. He was the finest horseman in Virginia, an exceedingly graceful dancer and a dandy in ruffles, gold lace, velvet, silk stockings and diamond

