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A SHORT HISTORY OF
GEORGE WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE NATIONAL MONUMENT
VIRGINIA

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Memorandum

To: The Director
From: Regional Historian, Region One
Subject: Short History - George Washington Birthplace NM

Transmitted herewith are original and one copy of a short history of George Washington Birthplace National Monument which was received in this office on February 11 without transmittal memorandum and without indication of authorship.

I am somewhat dubious as to whether or not this manuscript fully meets the requirements of the short history series but, as I am not entirely familiar with the standards of that type of production, I am passing it on to the Washington Office for disposition.

James W. Holland
James W. Holland
Regional Historian

Attachment *2*

Copy to: Supt., George Washington Birthplace NM

GWNA

A Short History of George Washington Birthplace
National Monument

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A SHORT HISTORY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE NATIONAL MONUMENT

INTRODUCTION

George Washington Birthplace National Monument in its very nature of restoration becomes an interest in one form or another to every class of visitor.

The student of natural history is astounded by the number of bird and animal species, by the large variety of flowers, by the interesting geological history of the region, and by the great wealth of other natural phenomena found within the bounds of the Monument.

The student of ethnology can find few places better suited for research and study. Scarcely a day passes that someone does not report the find of an arrow-head, a broken piece of pottery, or some Indian artifact.

The student of American history, especially one interested in the Colonial Period, is well rewarded by a visit to the Monument. A few of the stately colonial homes within a few miles of the Monument, and many others since disappeared, were built during the 17th and 18th centuries. Numerous other historic areas are within a short ride of the Monument, and the historian may spend days visiting and studying such places.

All who visit George Washington Birthplace are conscious of the beauty of the area, its historical background, and its importance as a National Shrine.

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The birthplace of George Washington is located in Westmoreland County in the Northern Neck of Virginia a land rich in history, charming in its hospitality, and inspiring in its scenic beauty.

This part of Virginia is called the Northern Neck because it is the northern most peninsula or "Necke" into which four great arms of the sea called rivers, have cut Virginia's tidewater region. The Northern Neck is formed by the cutting in of two mighty rivers which still bear their Indian names, Potomac, "River of Swans", and Rappahannock, "Quick-Rising-Water".

It originally embraced all the territory between the two rivers, an area which went back as far as the "headwaters" of the two rivers that King Charles 11 in 1673 and King James 11 (confirming Charles' action with one stroke of the pen,) gave as a grant to Lord Culpepper. The area comprised one-sixth of the present Commonwealth of Virginia. But now the term Northern Neck applies only to the territory between the two rivers which includes the counties of Northumberland, Lancaster, Westmoreland, King George, and part of Stafford a region approximately one hundred miles long and twenty miles wide. The Northern Neck of Virginia is a natural region as yet unspoiled by the innovations of modern civilization. It is historic and romantic. This region was the birthplace of such notable personages as George Washington, Madison, Monroe, Thomas Marshall (the father of John Marshall), Richard Henry Lee, Francis Lightfoot Lee, (the latter two were signers of the Declaration of Independence) General Robert E. Lee, and many others.

GENERAL TOPOGRAPHY

The general topography of this famous land is characterized by high terraces with undulating surfaces cut by many creeks, gorges, and comparatively level lower terraces. Some of the creeks flowing to the Rappahanock River head within a mile of the Potomac. Other creeks empty into tidal inlets or rivers, such as Nomini River and Yeocomico River. The general level of the tops of the terraces or ridges is about 150 feet above tide. One striking feature of the topography is Nomini Cliffs which extend nearly ten miles along the Potomac between Popes Creek and Currioman Bay.

GEOLOGY

It is evident to the layman that geology played a most important part in the history of the area. The rich soil formations which were brought from the higher levels of the Appalachians by stream and river action for countless generations probably influenced the first Indians to settle and plant the first crops. The tools used by the same early inhabitants were fashioned mainly of stone, and a large part of the weapons were hand-worked from geological material such as quartz, flint, and rhyolite found in the region. Clay, another geological material so abundant in the region, was used by the Indians to make pottery. The early settlers also located in this region largely because of a geological formation, the Potomac River. The river was the chief means of transportation and a means of communication. Since clay was abundant the settlers made bricks by hand for the construction of their homes.

ABORIGINAL HISTORY

When John Smith arrived in Virginia the Indian population was not dense except along navigable water courses. They derived their living principally from fish, oysters, crabs, etc. The great interior was covered with large trees and an occasional open space. The Indians went into the interior to hunt game of all kinds.

Three hundred and fifty years ago the Indians peopled all of these shores. They had their governments, towns, rulers, and those who were ruled. Today the Indian is gone almost as if he had never been here.

The first English in Tidewater Virginia including Captain John Smith, William Strachey, Gent., and that honorable gentleman, Master George Percy, in their astonishment at so strange a people, left accounts of the red man. Their old chronicles make the first dwellers here live again.

On the banks of the waterways may still be found deposits of oyster shells, in advanced states of decay, which presumably indicate the locality of the aboriginal settlements. In some cases they coincide with the position of the Indian towns shown on Captain John Smith's map. Near the surface have been found fragments of pottery, chips of stone, and scraps of stone implements. Many of these have been found at Wakefield. But in its entirety this amounts to little. Gone are the canoes, the frail houses, the so-called temples, the grave of chiefs and braves, and every vestige of their towns.

COMING OF THE WHITE MAN

Early in the morning of April 28, 1607 (O.T.) the expedition that counted in the permanent settlement of Tidewater Virginia sailed around Cape Henry which was named "in honour of our most noble Prince". The expedition consisted of three ships, the Sarah Constant, The Godspeed, and the Discovery under the sole charge and command of Captain Christopher Newport.

They advanced up the river which seems to have been called the Powhatan or Kings River and which they rechristened the James after their reigning monarch, and selected for a site an island which they called Jamestown. On May the fourteenth, "We landed our men which were set to work about the fortifications and others some to watch and ward, as it was convenient."

No sooner were the colonists entrenched at Jamestown than the explorations began. Captain Newport and a young adventurer named John Smith explored the different rivers and bays hoping to find the long looked for short cut to the Pacific.

After Newport's early return to England John Smith made himself the head of the colonists and after he and other explorers made known the farther reaches of Virginia's Tidewater, the dream of a short passage to India faded. The colonists came and found a good substitute for the riches of India on the shores and in the waters of the rivers. Gradually civilization extended to the fall line and the wilderness as such was no more.

Between the James River and the Northern Neck settlement progressed slowly. Not until 1651-52 were the new counties being recognized in the assembly. At this time the upper end of the Northern Neck was organized into a county called Westmoreland, then Virginia became Tidewater Virginia and not merely the area along the banks of the James River. In the Assembly for 1666 it is interesting to find the name of Col. John Washington listed for Westmoreland County.

THE WASHINGTON FAMILY

The Washington Name

Genealogists and students of the subject claim that the name of Washington was derived from that of de Wessyngton, a Saxon name known in England in the twelfth century. It was applied to the village of Wessyngton in Palatine Durham, an area under the control of William the Conqueror following his conquest of England in 1066. In 1183 a Norman Knight named de Hertburn exchanged the village of Hertburn for that of Wessyngton and at the same time took the latter name. As a result of changes and transmutations in spelling one version finally took form in the name of Washington. Thus it is that the Virginia Washingtons have been traced back to a Norman Knight named de Hertburn, who took the Saxon name of de Wessyngton, and that one of the most noted names in American history is related in its origin to the Norman Conquest of England.

THE ANCESTRY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

<p>(1)</p> <p>John Washington ----- Anne Pope Founder of the Washington family in Virginia. Born in England 1631-32. Emigrated to Westmoreland, Va. 1656-57. Died in Westmoreland Co. Virginia, 1677.</p>	<p>(1)</p> <p>Augustine Warner----- Mildred Reade Born in Gloucester Co. Va. 1642-43. Died in Va. 1681</p>	<p>(1)</p> <p>William Ball----- Hannah Atherwold Born in England. Emigrated to Va. 1657. Died in Va. 1680.</p>	<p>(1)</p> <p>Unknown-Unknown Born in England. Died in Va. 1694</p>
<p>Daughter of Lt. Col. Nathaniel Pope. Born in Md. or Va. Married John Washington about 1658. Died in Westmoreland Co. 1668.</p>	<p>Daughter of a French Wallon, Nicholas Marteau</p>		

(2)

<p>Lawrence Washington-- Mildred Warner Born at Mattox Creek Westmoreland Co. Va. 1659. Died in Va. 1698</p>	<p>Born at Warner Hall Gloucester Co. Va. Married Lawrence Washington about 1686. Died in England 1701.</p>
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(2)

<p>Joseph Ball----- Born in England 1649. Died in Va. 1711</p>	<p>Mary Johnson A widow and mother of two children when she married Joseph Ball (about 17- Her maiden name is unknown. Died in Va. 17-1</p>
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(3)

<p>Augustine Washington----- Born in Va. 1694. Educated in England. Purchased Popes Creek plantation 1717-1718. Built house there 1723-26. Died near Fredericksburg 1743.</p>	<p>Mary Ball Born in Lancaster Co. Va. 1708 or 1709. Married Augustine Washington, 1731. Died in Fredericksburg, 1789.</p>
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(4)

George Washington
 Born at Popes Creek
 February 22, 1732
 Died at Mt. Vernon, Va.
 December 14, 1799

THE WASHINGTON FAMILY

John Washington

The first settlement in Virginia by George Washington's great-grandfather, the first of the line, was near present-day Mattox Creek, some five miles from the Monument. The immigrant John Washington arrived in the first part of 1657 and as a result of difficulties with the master of the vessel (Sea Horse out of London) on which he was employed, decided to remain in Virginia. He was befriended by Colonel Nathaniel Pope one of the more important landlords in the Northern Neck. Within a short time after his arrival, perhaps in 1658, John Washington married Ann Pope, the daughter of Colonel Pope. Upon the latter's death in 1659, John Washington, through his wife, received a parcel of land near Mattox Creek.

John Washington began to prosper in Virginia. In 1661 he was sworn in as a vestryman for Appomattox Parish, Westmoreland County. During the following year he was appointed a Justice of the Westmoreland County Court. By 1664 John Washington was given the title of Major and as an indication of the esteem in which he was held, the parish in which he was living was renamed Washington Parish.

On December 3, 1664, John Washington purchased a hundred acres of land from David Anderson, who acquired title to the tract from Henry Brookes in 1655. The site was on Bridges Creek, where the burial ground is now located. Here John Washington built his house and farmed his land.

John Washington's stature continued to rise during the following thirteen years evidently because of his abilities as a merchant as well as a planter. In 1672 he was referred to as Lieutenant Colonel in his appointment as Justice of the Westmoreland Court. Three years later as a merchant he was commissioned an agent by a Rotterdam firm.

Upon John Washington's death in 1677 the homestead near Bridges Creek passed to his son, John II. The Mattox Creek property was given to his eldest son Lawrence. John Washington's wealth at his death is indicated by the fact that his will disposed of 8,150 acres of land.

THE WASHINGTON FAMILY

Lawrence Washington

Lawrence was about 19 years of age when his father died. That he was a man of wealth is indicated by the fact that he served as a Burgess from Westmoreland County in 1685, at the age of 26 years, and also as a Justice for the county. 1690 he married Mildred Warner, a daughter of a wealthy land owner, and in 1692 his first child was born and named John. Their second child, Augustine, father of George, was evidently born in 1694.

In 1694 Lawrence Washington, merchant, bought a 400-acre tract of land from Robert Listum and others, of England, to add to his holdings he already owned. Upon his death in 1698 this Listum tract, which was situated north and west of Bridges Creek, passed to his son Augustine, who also received the Hills tract. John the eldest son received the family house, probably near Mattox Creek, while the daughter, Mildred, received the 2500-acre Hunting Creek plantation which was later to become Mt. Vernon. All in all Lawrence Washington left some 3600 acres of land.

Major Lawrence, the grandfather of George Washington, in his short but brilliant career of 39 years became a man of more importance and greater influence than has ever been brought to public notice.

THE WASHINGTON FAMILY

Augustine Washington

Augustine Washington, the father of George, was evidently born on the 700-acre tract given by Colonel Pope to his daughter, somewhere near Mattox Creek. At his father's death he was but four or five years old.

On April 20, 1715, at the age of 21, he married Jane Butler, daughter of a prominent attorney in Westmoreland County. Their home at this time was apparently on the Listum tract, because on November 20 1716, Augustine Washington sold Mark Cullum 30 acres of land bounded on the north and northwest by Bridges Creek and on the southwest with a run and swamp "dividing this land and the land of Augustine Washington now in tenure and occupation of the said Washington."

In a series of deeds dated February 18, 1717, February 19, 1717, and September 4 and 5, 1718, 150 acres of land bounded by Dancing Marsh, Popes Creek, and Nathaniel Washington's line were transferred from possession of Joseph Abbington to Augustine Washington. This land was originally part of the patent 1,020 acres received by Henry Brookes in 1657, and renewed in 1662. The 100 acres bought by John Washington 1st. in 1664 was also part of the Brookes' patent.

According to C.A.Hoppin, who does not state his source of information, Augustine Washington lived in the homestead of the Abbingtons soon after purchasing the tract of 150 acres. It was while living here that he built, "close by" the house in which his son, George was born.

When Augustine Washington built his manor house is not definitely known. It was built at some time between 1718 and 1726, but the only evidence for this is a claim filed by Augustine Washington on March 30, 1726, against the estate of David Jones, for failure of the deceased to complete his home.

On November 24, 1729, Jane Butler Washington, first wife of Augustine Washington, died and was buried in the family vault at Bridges Creek. On March 6, 1730, Augustine Washington married Mary Ball, daughter of William Ball of Lancaster County, and on February 11, 1732 (O.T.) their first son George was born in the "Ancient mansion seat" near Popes Creek.

Young George did not remain long at Wakefield. In 1735 Augustine Washington moved his family to the Hunting Creek plantation (Mt. Vernon) in Prince William County, and from thence to the

Strother plantation, near Fredericksburg in 1739. The reason for this move may have been that Augustine wanted to be close to the source of supplies for the Principio Iron Mines in which company he was one of the principal shareholders.

Augustine Washington died in 1743, and was also buried in the Bridges Creek vault. His estate at Popes Creek, later identified as Wakefield, was bequeathed to his second son Augustine II. The other estates were left to the rest of the family.

William Augustine Washington

George Corbin Washington

Upon Augustine Washington II's death in 1762, his estate went to his son William Augustine, who was but five years of age at that time. Augustine Washington's wife, Anne Aylett Washington, received a life interest in the home, or Popes Creek plantation. The evaluation of the property left by Augustine II amounted to approximately 4,600 pounds. (No detailed attempt is made here to compare the purchasing power of the medium of exchange in the early 18th century with that of the present day but to illustrate its greater value some examples are considered. The average farmer left an estate of 16 pounds; a pound of beef cost 1 penny; teachers on a plantation received board, room and 1 pound per year per pupil.) Augustine II's stock and slaves alone were valued at a little more than 2,500 pounds. This is the inventory on which the building of the Memorial Mansion and the furnishings in it are partially based.

William Augustine Washington was but 17 years of age when his mother died in 1774. He lived at this manorial mansion until Christmas Day 1779, when the house caught fire. According to family tradition the "house of Wakefield was destroyed on Christmas Day of the year 1779 by a fire started while William Augustine Washington was entertaining a company of friends."

After the fire William Augustine moved to Blenheim and then began the building of a house on the Potomac River some two miles west from the present monument. It was completed about 1784, and named Haywood. William Augustine lived here until 1800 when he moved to Georgetown, C.C., where he died in 1810.

By his will dated July 12, 1810, William Augustine Washington left the 1,300-acre Wakefield tract to his son, George Corbin Washington. The latter sold the property on October 13, 1813 to Mr. John Gray, of Stafford County, reserving for the Washington family the ownership of the family burial ground at Bridges Creek and 60 feet square of ground "on which the house stood in which George Washington was born."

HISTORY OF THE AREA DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In June, 1815, George Washington Parke Custis, step-grandchild of George Washington, came to Wakefield to commemorate the exact spot on which George Washington was born. His account of the trip was as follows:

"In June, 1815 I sailed on my own vessel, The 'Lady of the Lake', a fine topsail schooner of ninety tons, accompanied by two gentlemen, Messrs. Lewis and Grimes, bound to Popes Creek in the county of Westmoreland, carrying with us a slab of freestone, having the following inscription:

Here
The 11th of February, 1732 (old style)
George Washington
Was Born.

We anchored some distance from the land, and taking to our boats, we soon reached the mouth of Popes Creek, and proceeding upwards we fell in with McKenzie Beverly, Esq., and several gentlemen composing a fishing party and also the overseer of the property that formed the object of our visit. We were escorted to the spot, where a few scattered bricks alone marked the birthplace of the chief.

We gathered together the bricks of an ancient chimney that once formed the hearth around which Washington in his infancy had played, and constructed a rude kind of pedestal, on which we reverently placed the First Stone, commending it to the respect and protection of the American people in general, and the citizens of Westmoreland County in particular.

Bidding adieu to those who had received us so kindly, we re-embarked and hoisted our colors, and being provided with a piece of cannon and suitable ammunition, we fired a salute, awakening the echoes that had slept for ages around the hallowed spot.... Thus was the first memorial erected at the Birthplace of George Washington."

In 1846 John F. Wilson bought the Wakefield estate, including Duck Hall, (which had never belonged to the Washingtons, but had been added to Wakefield by John Gray.) and cultivated the acres that were fertile. The land about the ruined birthplace became a cornfield, the burial ground, a tangle of weeds in a plowed field.

At the death of George Corbin Washington his reservations of birthsite and burial grounds descended to his son, Lewis Washington, who presented them to the State of Virginia. They were accepted by the assembly, by the Act of January 1858, with conditions that they be suitably marked and cared for, unfortunately the conditions were not fulfilled by Virginia.

THE ACQUISITION OF THE MONUMENT AREA

The first step toward making the area one of National importance occurred in the provisions of the sale of Wakefield in 1813. These provided that the family burial ground and the 60 foot square birthplace site on Popes Creek be reserved from sale. Following this transaction these reserved sites were deeded to the State of Virginia.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the War Between the States prevented Virginia from doing anything about the two areas, even though the legislature had appropriated \$5,000 and authorized a survey of the property.

No progress was made until 1879. On June 17 of that year Congress passed a joint resolution, amended on February 26, 1881, appropriating \$30,000 for the purpose of erecting a memorial. Virginia directed her Governor (April 21, 1882) to convey to the United States the lands which had been given by Lewis Washington.

In 1883, the United States Government bought nearly 12 acres of land surrounding the birthsite and 9.85 acres constituting a right-of-way 50 feet wide and approximately 1.6 miles long, connecting the birthsite, the burial grounds, and the Potomac River at the mouth of Bridges Creek.

In 1895 the granite shaft (now at the entrance circle) marking the birthsite was completed by the Federal Government.

THE WAKEFIELD NATIONAL MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Nothing further of note occurred concerning the birthplace until the organization of the Wakefield National Memorial Association. This took place in Washington, D. C., on Washington's Birthday in 1923, under the leadership of Mrs. Josephine Wheelwright Rust. The Association was incorporated the following year on January 18, 1924, under the laws of Virginia. The stated object of this Association was to recover the long neglected birthplace of George Washington, restore it, and make it a shrine for all the people. On January 26, 1924, within a few days after its incorporation, the Association purchased the 70 acres of "Duck Hall" property which adjoined the Government reservation on the north.

By act of Congress, approved June 7, 1926, the Wakefield National Memorial Association was given the authority to erect a building on the Government-owned land. This building was planned to duplicate the Augustine Washington house as nearly as was possible, with the provision that the plans would be approved by the National Fine Arts Commission and the Secretary of War, and that when the work was completed the building would be turned over to the United States Government.

In a number of purchases made in 1929, the Association and Mr. John D. Rockefeller Jr. acquired enough acreage to bring the holding of the Government to 394.47 acres, which it is today.

By act of Congress, January 23, 1930, the land owned by the Government at the birthplace was transferred from the War Department to the Department of the Interior and the area was designated the George Washington Birthplace National Monument.

THE MEMORIAL MANSION

On January 23, 1930, Congress authorized an appropriation of \$65,000: \$15,000 to be used for the removal of the granite monument from the birthsite to a new location (now at the entrance circle); \$50,000 to be used by the Wakefield National Memorial Association for "rebuilding the house, restoring and improving the ground of Wakefield, and erecting other buildings as might be deemed necessary."

The contract for building the colonial mansion was awarded to Jones and Conquest of Richmond in 1930, who immediately entered upon the work and completed the building in 1931 within the contract sum of \$45,130. The Wakefield National Memorial Association supplied the bricks, which were made by hand and burned on the premises.

It is believed that the clay for these bricks came from the same pit that supplied materials for bricks used in the original house.

The Memorial Mansion house was opened to the public in July 1931. Since that time the Wakefield Memorial Association has been active in furnishing the house with suitable pieces of household effects representative of the Colonial Virginia life of the early eighteenth century. Over 300 antique articles of the period already have been placed in the memorial structure.

Only one item of furnishings, a small tilt-top table, saved by William Augustine Washington at the time of the fire in 1779, is known to have been in the original house. The following history of this table was given by Mrs. Sarah T. Washington, daughter of Colonel William Augustine Washington, nephew of General George Washington, on the 2nd day of August, 1883.

" this table was taken out of the residence of the father of General Washington at Wakefield on Popes Creek, when the house burned, which happened during the Revolutionary War. It is supposed that this table was a heirloom, and descended to the father of General Washington from some of his ancestors that came to this country in 16--. this was the impression of the family."

THE COLONIAL KITCHEN

The last brickwork above ground at Wakefield of any of the original buildings apparently belonged to the old kitchen chimney. In a sketch made on the ground in 1872, the chimney is shown standing.

In 1930 the foundations of the kitchen were uncovered, and subsequently a typical colonial kitchen building was constructed on the site and has been completely furnished with utensils belonging to the mid-colonial period.

In one of the kitchen rooms there is being equipped a Museum Room for displaying many of the artifacts and relics found about the old foundations. This is proving to be one of the most interesting attractions on the Monument.

THE COLONIAL GARDEN

A brick walk, bordered by boxwood hedges, leads from the Mansion House to the Colonial Garden. Most of the plants in the restored garden are known to have been cultivated 200 years ago or longer. Here are old herbs such as Sage, Thyme, Hyssop, Rue, and among the flowers are many old roses, hollyhocks, lilies, forget-me-nots etc. 145 plants are listed in the present garden.

As a background, the garden has the deep green of a magnificent cedar grove that covers a water-encircled point called for many years, "Burnt House Point."

THE WASHINGTON FAMILY BURIAL GROUND

The Washington Family Burial Ground is located on the Monument property, one mile west of the Monument Circle, near the mouth of Bridges Creek. Thirty-one members of the Washington family are buried in the plot, including John Washington (George's great-grandfather), Lawrence Washington (George's grand-father) and Augustine Washington (George's Father). There are two original gravestones, one with the dates 1690 and 1696 to the memory of John and Mildred Washington an uncle and aunt of George Washington, who died as children; and the other dated 1729 to the memory of Jane Butler, the first wife of Augustine Washington, the father of George.

The burial grounds have been landscaped, and are enclosed by a brick wall of Colonial type.

The Washington Descendents
Now Living on Old WAKEFIELD FARM

It is an interesting fact that at the present time there are Washington descendents living on Wakefield Farm. The youngest generation of this present day Wakefield family is the eleventh generation of John Washington, the great-grandfather of George Washington.

After George Corbin Washington sold Wakefield (1813) the farm changed ownership several times before it was sold to John F. Wilson (1846) of Maryland. Mr. Wilson's son, John L. Wilson, married Elizabeth Washington, the granddaughter of William Augustine Washington who owned Wakefield at the time it burned. Thus the descendents of Augustine Washington returned to live on Wakefield again.

WASHINGTON FAMILY
(WAKEFIELD)

1634-1677	1. John Washington	M.	Anne Pope
1659-1698	2. Lawrence "	M.	Mildred Warner
1694-1762	3. Augustine "	M.	Jane Butler
	(G.W.'s father)		
1720-1762	4. Augustine Washington Jr.	M.	Ann Aylett
1757-1810	5. Wm. Augustine "	M.	Sarah Tayloe
1800-1886	6. Sarah Washington	M.	Lawrence Washington
1838-1922	7. Elizabeth "	M.	J.L. Wilson
1857-1936	8. Susan Wilson	M.	Wm. C. Latane
1888-	9. James Latane	M.	Martha Flemer
1917-	10. James Latane	M.	Margurite Hill
	W.		
	11. 1949 James		
	1951 Ellen		
	1954-William		

PRESIDENTS OF THE WAKEFIELD ASSOCIATION

Mrs Harry L. Rust, the president of the Association during the period of its greatest achievement, died in 1931 just before the Memorial Mansion was completed.

She was succeeded in the presidency by Mrs. Alice Rice Worthington, who retired in 1935 and was in turn succeeded by Mrs. Francis B. Crowninshield the present active and very able president of the Association.

SUPERINTENDENTS OF WAKEFIELD

After the establishment of Wakefield as a National Monument the National Park Service transferred Philip R. Hough from the Great Smoky Mountain National Park to George Washington Birthplace National Monument as its first superintendent. He was superintendent for nearly twenty-two years until his death in December 1953.

Upon the death of Superintendent Hough the National Park Service transferred Superintendent Russell A. Gibbs from Chalmette National Historical Park, Louisiana to Washington Birthplace as its present superintendent.

FLORA OF THE REGION

Trees and Shrubs. There have been recorded fifty-four native species of trees and shrubs growing within the Monument Area.

Wild Flowers. Forty-two families and 117 species of wild flowers are found within the Monument boundaries and listed by former Senior Landscape Gardener Harold J. Broderick.

ANIMALS OF THE REGION

Mammals. Because of their nocturnal habits and elusiveness, the wild animals are seen by only a few people, therefore, from the standpoint of public interest they hold second place to the domesticated animals. Fortunately a large section of the Monument is wooded, and such an area is a natural habitat for the wild animals of the region. Here may be seen squirrels, rabbits, muskrats, skunks, opossums, weasels, deer, mink and both the gray and red fox.

Birds. The many species of birds inhabiting the Monument grounds especially the conspicuous water birds such as duck, swan, geese, heron, and egret are of great interest to the visitors. A check list of 170 species of birds was also made by Mr. Broderick. 400 Whistling Swan have been counted on Popes Creek at one time this winter of 1954-55.

Other Animal Life. Reptiles, amphibia, fishes, insects and other members of the Animal Kingdom are found in great abundance on the Monument Area.

HOW TO REACH THE MONUMENT

Washington's Birthplace is reached very easily by automobile from Washington, D. C., Baltimore, and Richmond as shown on the map. It is on the main North and South route to the historic Williamsburg, a place visited by many thousands every year

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Area Adjoining the Potomac River

The north northwest corner of George Washington Birthplace National Monument is frequently used by the public as a bathing beach. This problem has apparently always faced the superintendent. With the 25¢ fee now being charged the number of visitors using this as a bathing beach has lessened but there are many who use the park for swimming only. Many of the local people also use this swimming beach. To close the beach might not be too well received by them, but to let it stay open for swimming poses the problem of safety. The staff at George Washington Birthplace is not large enough to patrol this area often with the result that should someone drown the possibility of a tort action might arise.

An additional phase of this problem is that of dressing and undressing in automobiles or in the surrounding bushes. A visitor, especially on week ends, might come upon people who not being very modest are disrobing in the open.

An additional problem is created by the quantity of trash that is left along the beach.

We have no authority over the waters of the Potomac River as that is part of Maryland. Therefore we are unable to place any restrictions for swimming. We could only restrict visitors from the beach area. Unless this is done our only alternative is an adequate staff to patrol the area in the interest of safety, sanitation and public interest.

COMPLETION OF ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

There has been considerable excavating of the Park area since the National Park Service assumed control of George Washington Birthplace however much remains to be done. The excavating should be completed and artifacts put on display. The amount of man hours needed to complete this work would probably run into the thousands. It would take months to prepare and properly catalogue the artifacts stored here now. When the excavating is completed and the artifacts catalogued a much clearer picture of the colonial life as portrayed through these artifacts will be seen by the visitor. The more complete the picture of an area, the more complete the satisfaction of the visitor.

CATALOGUING OF ANTIQUES

To date there is not a complete file on hand of the furniture, china, and other furnishings to be found in the Museum and Mansion. The need of an expert is desirable in cataloguing the antiques. Although the staff can probably do a great deal along this line the final judgement should be given by one who is well qualified in the field. The prime reason for cataloguing would apparently be to enable employees to answer most any question that a visitor might have about any piece. Of importance also is the amount of antiques the National Park Service has under its control. At present if a fire should destroy this area much information as to what is here would be lost forever. A complete study of the antiques will again afford the staff an opportunity to be of greater service to the visitor who is the prime objective of the National Park Service. By being able to give the best to all visitors we will then be accomplishing the ultimate in relations as far as interpretation is concerned.

DEDICATION SERVICES

On June 22, 1931 the buildings and lands of the Wakefield National Memorial Association were deeded over to the United States by Mrs. Josephine W. Rust, President.

On February 11, 1932 a memorial dedicatory service was held at George Washington Birthplace National Monument. The first part of the program for the day was held at noon and consisted of a memorial service for Mrs. Josephine W. Rust, President and organizer of the Wakefield National Memorial Association. Dr. Charles Moore, Chairman of the National Fine Arts Commission and Vice President of the Wakefield Association was in charge of arrangements. Services were conducted by Dr. Bland Tucker assisted by Thomas Baker.

The second part of the ceremony involved the planting of three trees; a sycamore in memory of Mrs. Rust; an ash, in tribute to Nicholas Martieau, French ancestor of George Washington; and an elm, as a tribute to George Washington.

The trees were individually accepted in behalf of the United States by Horace M. Albright, Director of the National Park Service.

The formal dedication was on May 14, 1932 when 367 acres of land and the buildings were formally presented to the Secretary of the Interior, Hon. Lyman Wilbur by the first vice-president of the Wakefield National Memorial Association, Mrs. Anthony Wayne Cook.

WASHINGTON BI-CENTENNIAL

The year 1932 dawned with many plans for the celebration of the bi-centennial of George Washington's birth. Here at "Wakefield" a special program was held.

At day-break, February 22, 1932, the flag was raised by the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 33, Washington, D. C. At ten o'clock, the approximate hour of George Washington's birth the National Broadcasting Company went on the air with a program dedicated to George Washington. Introductory remarks were made by State Senator, Robert O. Norris Jr. who also introduced the main speaker the Hon. J. Sinclair Brown, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates.

At the conclusion of the radio program a tableau was opened to the public. The Northern Neck Chapter of the Wakefield National Memorial Association had arranged to have contumed people in each room of the Mansion depicting life of 200 years ago.

Over near the kitchen, the colored choir of the New Zion Baptist church, in costume, sang old time songs.

Lunches were served by the school leagues of Montross and Oak Grove, Virginia.

TRI-CENTENNIAL OF WESTMORELAND COUNTY

On May 16, 1953 a garden party held by the Wakefield National Memorial Association in honor of Westmoreland County's 300 anniversary was held at George Washington Birthplace National Monument. Present at the party were many descendents representing their ancestors who lived in the Northern Neck during the time of Washington. Direct descendents of the Washington family were also present. A musical program, by the Martha Washington College students, was given as part of the entertainment. Light refreshments were served to all visitors.

ANNUAL CELEBRATION

On February 22 of each year a celebration of the birth of George Washington is held. Usually the ladies of the Wakefield National Memorial Association are in costume and serve refreshments to all visitors.

THE GOLDEN BOOK

The Golden Book of Wakefield lists contributors (\$5. or more) to the Birthplace of George Washington as of June 30, 1932. 45 states and the District of Columbia are represented. Contributions ranged from \$5.00 to \$5000.00.

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