

Washington's Mother



MARY WASHINGTON HOUSE, FREDERICKSBURG, VA.



WASHINGTON AND HIS MOTHER



MARY WASHINGTON MONUMENT



ROOM IN WHICH WASHINGTON RECEIVED HIS MOTHER'S BLESSING

Photograph Courtesy Virginia State Chamber of Commerce.

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

IN THE town of Fredericksburg, Va., there stands a lofty stone shaft which is said to have the unique distinction of being the only monument in the United States erected entirely by the efforts of women.

Perhaps the simple inscription on the monument explains the reason for that distinction. It reads "Mary, the Mother of Washington."

As the annual celebration of Mother's Day—it is May 12 this year—approaches, all Americans should be interested in the story of this mother who gave to the nation one of its greatest men.

Washington himself once said that his mother was the most beautiful woman he ever saw, but even more interesting than this natural tribute paid by a son is the testimony contained in a letter written in 1772. Curiously enough this letter was found in a deserted house near the York river during the Civil war.

It reads as follows: "Mrs. Burg, ye 7th of Octr, 1722—Dear Sukey; Madam Ball of Luncester and Her Sweet Molly have gone Hom. Mama thinks Molly the Comeliest Maiden She Knows. She is about sixteen yrs. old, is taller than Me is very Sensible, Modest and Loving. Her Hair is like unto Flax, Her Eyes are the color of Yours and her Cheeks are like May Blossoms. I wish You could See Her."

The "sweet Molly" referred to in that letter was Mary Ball, who on March 6, 1730, became the wife of Augustine Washington, a friend and neighbor of her father's, and it was on February 22, 1732, that she gave birth to the boy who was destined to be the founder of a new nation. In addition to being a woman of great beauty Mary Washington seemed to have been a remarkable woman in many respects. "A silent, serious, woman, she was, self-contained, self-respecting, and reserved," says an early writer. "During the forty-six years of her widowhood she managed her household and farm without the assistance of any adviser and reared her children to usefulness and honor, and saw them go forth into the world equipped for its work and pain. That they each and all revered her, and sought her council in every emergency is sufficient testimony of her worth and ability. Mrs. Washington's lack of personal ambition and her constitutional reserve were qualities which prevented her from becoming popularly known to the public, even at a time when the people were eager for any opportunity to show her honor. But no demonstration was ever made in her behalf and there is but one instance recorded when she appeared in public with her son."

Another tribute to Mary Washington is contained in the statement of Lawrence Washington, of Chotank, who wrote as follows: "I was often here (at the home on the Rappahannock) with George—his playmate, school-

mate and young man's companion. Of the mother I was more afraid than of my own parents; she awed me in the midst of her kindness; and even now, when time has whitened my locks and I am the grandfather of a second generation, I could not behold that majestic woman without feelings it is impossible to describe."

"Mother and son were much alike in character, personal appearance and conduct. Both were wanting in humor and imagination, and both possessed in an extreme degree conscientiousness, gentleness and determination," says the writer previously referred to. More recent historians have shown that more than once during Washington's early life there was a clash of these two strong wills, but there was a strong bond of affection between them, nevertheless.

At the outbreak of the Revolution Washington, realizing the dangers which the war would bring to Virginia, tried to induce his mother to move into town from her home on the Rappahannock opposite Fredericksburg. She had previously declined the offer of a home with her daughter, Mrs. Betty Washington Lewis, declaring that she preferred to rule her own home. But at last Washington's insistence prevailed, and in March, 1775, he and his sister moved her, still protesting, into a home in Fredericksburg, which Washington had bought from Michael and Esther Robinson in 1772. It was a part of the original Kenmore estate. Betty Lewis' home. The garden was separated from the Kenmore garden by a fence and gate. Just as it was American women who erected the monument to Mary Washington, so it was a group of American women who have preserved the unpretentious cottage where Mary Washington lived from March, 1775, until August, 1789.

Although Mary Washington had strenuously objected to leaving her plantation, she soon grew very fond of her little home in Fredericksburg, and enjoyed being near her daughter and her church at which she was a constant and devoted attendant. It was in this home that she lived, far from the dangers her son was encountering in the fight for liberty, but she was in constant receipt from him of news of that struggle. Here she received the courier to tell her of his splendid victory at Trenton, and it was here that he came to her after the battle of Yorktown, accompanied by French and American officers. It was on this occasion that for the one and only time she shared the honors that had come to her now-famous son. A grand ball was given in his honor in Fredericksburg and the proud mother, leaning on the arm of her son, was the belle of the evening.

It was here, too, that Marquis de

LaFayette came with Washington's nephew, Robert Lewis, to pay his respects to the mother of the greatest American. She received the courtly Frenchman in her garden, met all his fine phrases with dignity and gave him her blessing when he bade her good-by. As he left he said to a friend, "I have seen the only Roman matron of my day."

It was in this little home, too, that the last scene in the association of the Washington mother and son took place. In the spring of 1780, Charles Thompson, secretary of congress, arrived at Mount Vernon to notify Washington that he had been elected the first President of the new nation. After preparing to accompany Thompson to New York, then the capital of the United States, Washington rode to Fredericksburg to say good-by to his mother. Both knew that this would probably be the last time they would see each other, for Mary Washington was then past eighty years of age and suffering from cancer. After an affectionate greeting between mother and son, so says one account, Washington said, "The people, Madam, have been pleased, with the most flattering unanimity to elect me to the chief magistracy of the United States; but before I can assume the functions of that office I have come to bid you an affectionate farewell. So soon as the public business which must necessarily be encountered in arranging a new government, can be disposed of, I shall hasten to Virginia."

"You will see me no more," she interrupted him, "my great age, and the disease which is rapidly approaching my vitals, warned me that I shall not be long in this world. I trust in God. I am somewhat prepared for a better. But go, George, fulfill the high destinies which Heaven appears to assign you. Go, my son, and may that Heaven's and your Mother's blessing be with you always." She died on August 27, 1789, and was buried in a spot on the Kenmore estate which she herself had selected.

For many years the Mary Washington home belonged to various owners. In 1890 an effort was made to take it down and erect it again at the World's Columbian exposition in Chicago. The protest which this plan aroused resulted in the purchase of the house by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. Since that time it has been in charge of a Fredericksburg branch of the association which has opened it to the public. Last year it was the scene of a special observance of Mother's Day, and future years may see this spot become a national shrine on Mother's Day each year, when all Americans join the women of Virginia in honoring the mother of the first and greatest American.

Handkerchief in History

The handkerchief is one of the refinements of Roman civilization. It came into general use in polite society during the reign of Henry VIII of England. It is probably connected with ecclesiastical costumes and may have been an outgrowth of the mantle, which was originally of linen and worn over the fingers of the left hand and used for the same purpose for which the handkerchief was used to a

certain extent in France in the Eighteenth century. At this period handkerchiefs were richly ornamented. Women adopted the use of colored handkerchiefs as soon as the taking of snuff became an established custom.

The Time by Inches

When Bobbie was six, he was given a real watch which, regardless of quality or accuracy, had a loud tick. Naturally, the little fellow was very proud, and he would stroll up and down the street, stopping every mo-

ment or two to draw the timepiece from his pocket and regard it gravely.

Every passerby smiled at Bobby's performance, but the climax came when his little cousin, Betty, tripped along and asked him the time.

Bobby regarded his watch perplexedly for a moment, and then replied with dignity: "Two inches to four!"

There have been more than 120 rainy days above the normal since 1916 in England.

The Kitchen Cabinet

(© 1929, Western Newspaper Union.)
 Though you are blue as indigo,
 Look cheerful!
 You're prettier when you smile,
 you know
 Look cheerful!
 The world abhors a gloomy face,
 And tales of woe are common-
 place.
 So stir yourself, and take a brace—
 Look cheerful!
 —Anon.

GOOD THINGS TO EAT

There is nothing more appealing to the appetite than a well-made and seasoned fruit salad. It is refreshing, attractive and furnishes the zest to simple luncheon.

French Fruit Salad.—Take one cupful each of diced oranges and grapefruit, one cupful of seeded grapes, either white or red, one-half cupful of nut meats, and one-half cupful of diced marshmallows. Mix and chill the fruits. Drain off any juices. Serve in cups of lettuce and top with:

Dressing.—Take four egg yolks, beat until thick, add one teaspoonful of salt, one-third of a cupful of sugar, one-fourth teaspoonful of paprika and dry mustard, four tablespoonfuls of flour, one-half cupful of lemon juice, one cupful of water. Mix the dry ingredients and blend well with the water and lemon juice. Cook slowly and stir constantly until thick and creamy. Cool, add two-thirds of a cupful of whipped cream and serve with the salad.

Green Pepper Salad.—Take two or three even sized green peppers, parboil for five minutes after removing the seeds and white fiber. Chill. Mix one cream cheese with enough cream to moisten and add one dozen finely minced stuffed olives. Pack the peppers with this mixture and let stand to become firm. Slice in half-inch slices and serve on lettuce with mayonnaise dressing.

Stuffed Tomato Salad.—Cut one large cucumber into fine cubes, or chop parsley; add two tablespoonfuls of chopped onion and three of chopped green pepper. Fill firm ripe tomato cups with the mixture after adding a little salt, cayenne and salad dressing to season well. Top with a spoonful of thick mayonnaise and sprinkle with a bit of minced parsley. Serve on lettuce ice cold.

Tongue Salad.—Mix one cupful of cold boiled tongue cut into small cubes with one cupful of boiled potatoes cut into cubes; add two tablespoonfuls of chopped green pepper, one tablespoonful of finely minced onion and one-half cupful of minced sliced beets. Chill thoroughly and serve on lettuce with a highly seasoned mayonnaise dressing.

Coconut Jumbles.—Cream one-half cupful of butter, add one cupful of sugar, one beaten egg, one-half cupful of milk alternately with two cupfuls of flour sifted with one teaspoonful of baking powder, one-half teaspoonful of salt, and lastly fold in one cupful of coconut. Roll out about one-half inch thick and cut with a doughnut cutter. Sprinkle with granulated sugar and bake in a hot oven until delicately brown.

Something for Dinner.

For a clever way to use up bits of leftover meat and vegetables and at the same time have an appetizing dish, try the following:

Combination Loaf.—Take one cupful each of meat, cooked carrots, green peas cooked, one chopped raw onion, one stalk of celery chopped, mix all together with one beaten egg and a tablespoonful of melted butter, salt and pepper to season well. Put into a greased baking dish, sprinkle with buttered crumbs and bake in a moderate oven for a half hour. Serve baked potatoes and scalloped tomatoes with the loaf and the dinner will all be cooking at the same time, economically.

Stuffed Tomatoes.—Cut fresh ripe tomatoes into cups. Fill with chopped green pepper, apple and celery with a tablespoonful or two of chopped nuts. Season and mix with mayonnaise. Garnish with slices of hard cooked eggs and top with a spoonful of mayonnaise.

Orange Sauce.—Cook one tablespoonful each of flour and butter until smooth, add one-half cupful of boiling water, the same of sugar, and when well cooked add one-half cupful or more of orange juice with a little of the grated rind and serve at once.

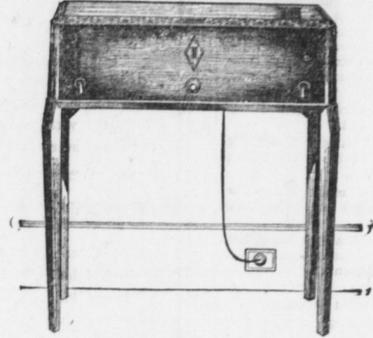
Mushrooms With Eggs.—Peel and chop a half cupful of mushrooms, cook in a tablespoonful of butter for three minutes. Break in four eggs, season, and stir lightly or beat before adding to the mushrooms. Cook until the eggs are creamy, add a half cupful of thick cream and serve on toast.

Cheese and Ham Sandwich.—Spread butter on very thinly sliced rye bread, add a bit of mustard, then a thin slice of white meat of chicken and on the chicken a silver of cooked Virginia ham and another thin wafer, like a slice of Swiss cheese. Press on an upper slice of the buttered bread and cut into halves. The entire thickness of the sandwich should not be more than one inch.

Nellie Maxwell

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