

ill Washington was he sent for Dr. Dick of Alexandria and Dr. Gustavus Brown of Port Tobacco.

Despite their combined efforts George Washington died on December 14, 1799, mourned by a nation as a hero and by the people of Charles County as a friend and neighbor.

Footnotes: As all the references herein are to be found in **The Diaries of George Washinton**, Vols. I to VI, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1976-1981, I have not footnoted each one. They may be checked by year date in the proper volume.

The incident about Daniel Jenifer Adams and the land George Washington acquired in the Western Section of Charles County is more fully explained in Vol. III, 1771-1775; 1780-1781.

BOYS' STATE — GIRL'S STATE

As in past years, the Historical Society helps to send children of members to the American Legion summer Leadership Political Awareness programs. If your daughter or son is now a Junior in high school, and might be interested, please contact Sandra Mitchell 934-8086 by March 29 for girls, and April 29 for boys.

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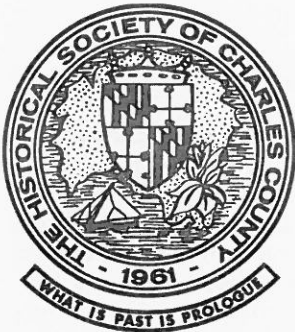
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles of historic interest on Souhern Maryland are requested for possible publication in future issues of **The Record**. Please send your typewritten manuscripts and other communications to: Editor, **The Record**, P.O. Box 261, Port Tobacco, Maryland 20677.

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The RECORD

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NEIGHBOR WASHINGTON¹
By Margaret Brown Klaphor²

In the eighteenth century Tidewater Maryland and Tidewater Virginia were a social community tied together by the Potomac River. The river was a highway for commerce shared by the two areas and a pathway for people leading to friendship and romance.

In order to understand George Washington, in preparation for the major exhibition about him which the Smithsonian Institution staged on his 250th birthday in 1982, it was necessary for one to understand this tidewater society. Washington's own diaries proved to be the most helpful references we consulted as we worked on the script for the exhibition. I became more and more impressed with how much George Washington was like the people of Charles County I had known all my life. I found his lifestyle to be similar to the one that had persisted in Charles County until well into the twentieth century. Then, to my delight, I found many specific references in his diary to places and people in Charles County. This lecture was a result of that research, speaking first to the man and his lifestyle and then to the specific references to Charles County which can be found in his diaries.

George Washington was first and foremost a farmer, an occupation he called "the most delectable of pursuits." His diary entries are filled with information about the crops he planted and the yield he got from those crops. His livestock is listed and assessed. When hogs were killed he records their weights; when sheep are sheared he enters the yield of wool. He was to understand sooner than most the problems of being a tobacco farmer and, though he seems to have had a small tobacco crop always, by the 1770's he was diversifying his crops to include grains. Then he built a mill so he could sell flour which was easier to ship to the West Indies than whole grain. He also shipped fish - dried herring was not only a money crop, it was also a staple of the diet of his slaves. He had large sheds on the river below Mount Vernon to process the fish.

As you can expect from a man who prospered at the whim of nature, he carefully recorded every aspect of the weather for each day. By the end of the Revolution he acquired a thermometer so in addition to his observations he

entered the temperature for each day at morning, noon, and night. He recorded snowstorms, floods, droughts, thunderstorms, ice, sleet. The daily activities of his life were predicated on the weather. His diary records his worry as crops fail, when insects like the Hessian fly attack his grain. In short, he was beset by all the worries of a farmer.

The diaries reveal a man of extremely methodical mind. He like to count things, to weigh them; and he delighted in little experiments which he hoped would improve the efficiency of his household and his farm. He measured the burning time of candles to see if those made of spermaceti burned longer than those of tallow. He timed his slaves when they cut trees so he could figure how long it would take to clear a grove.

It was this kind of careful evaluation which would prove as useful to him as General and President as it was to him as a farmer and householder.

He was a man who loved to hunt. His diary records over and over "Went a hunting," "Went a fishing," "Went a ducking." Above all he and his neighbors loved to fox hunt. Day after day, they "Went a fox hunting. Started a fox and run it into a hole but did not catch it." He delighted in his fox hounds, recording their breeding carefully, listing puppies when they were born and calling each dog by name.

Much as he loved to fox hunt, Washington wrote that in 1792 he had given up his fox hounds because they frightened the deer he had installed in the deer park he laid out at Mount Vernon in 1785.

In addition to hunting, the diary records his delight in the theater. He attended whenever he was in distance of a performance: in Williamsburg, Alexandria, Dumfries, Annapolis, New York and Philadelphia. He liked the races so much he attended the fall races in Annapolis and in Alexandria each year. After a day at the track, the gentlemen played cards at night. George Washington, ever methodical, kept a running count of money won and money lost at cards over a twenty-year period and the two columns balanced perfectly at the end of that time.

Music was part of life at Mount Vernon. A dancing master and a music teacher came to the house and musical instruments and song books were included in the household orders to England.

The tidewater lifestyle was much the same on both shores of the Potomac as remnants of it still existed in Charles County in the twentieth century.

Aside from the similarity of lifestyle Charles Countians can relate to George Washington in an even more specific way as his diaries are filled with references to the County and the people who lived here.

The first is dated February 4, 1760. He writes "Dispatched Foster (one of his overseers) to Occoquan, to proceed thence, in Bailey's vessel, to Port Tobacco for 100 bar-

1. Lecture for Charles County Historical Society, February 13, 1982

2. Curator, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

rels of corn which Captain Posey purchased of Mr. Hunter, the Priest, for my use.” The Mr. Hunter referred to here was Father George Hunter, then superior of the Society of Jesus who lived at St. Thomas Manor.

Many of these early diary entries pertain to his trips to Williamsburg for meetings of the House of Burgesses. Before the Revolution it was faster and easier to cut across Charles County when he wished to go to Williamsburg or to the Northern Neck than it was to travel on the Virginia side. In April 1760 when a week of hard rain had swollen the swamps and streams on the Virginia shore Washington records on April 19 “Crossed at Mr. Posey’s Ferry and began my journey to Williamsburg about 9 o’clock. About 11 I broke my Chair and had to walk to Port Tobacco where I was detained the whole day getting my chair mended, No smith being within six miles, Lodged at Dr. Halkerston.” [John Posey’s ferry crossed from below Mount Vernon to Marshall Hall. Robert Halkerston had lived in Fredericksburg when Washington was a boy and they were fellow Masons in the Fredericksburg lodge.]

April 20 “Set out early and crossed at Cedar Point by 10 - the day being very calm and fine. Dined and lodged at my Brother’s . . .” [Cedar Point was a 13 mile ride from Port Tobacco. Here he probably took Hooes Ferry. Washington’s brother Samuel had a home on the Potomac in Stafford County, Virginia, not far from the ferry landing.]

On his return trip April 30 he reached Hooes Ferry on his way home but “the wind blew too fresh to cross: detained there all night.”

The next morning he got over early and reached home before dinnertime.

In August, 1768, Washington went by way of “Nangamy” to his brother’s for the christening of a new baby. He was picked up there by his schooner and that night they lay off Captain Laidler’s [Lower Cedar Point]. The next day “Hauling seine upon the Bar of Cedar Point for Sheep’s head but caught none. Run down below the mouth of Machadock and came to.” After visiting relatives and friends in the Northern Neck he started back up river Sept. 1. He got off at brother Sam’s and then crossed over the lower point of Nanjemoy on Sept. 5 where he met his “Chariot” and returned home.

The route across Charles County was used in 1771 and in May, 1772, on his way back from Williamsburg with Mrs. Washington and her daughter Patsy. He again crossed the river at Widow Martin’s landing in Nanjemoy. On the way they passed Nanjemoy Church, Durham, and went by the Widow Eilbeck’s [Araby] to “my own Ferry” as Washington now owned the Posey ferry in Mount Vernon neck.

In operating his ferry as a public ferry, George had occasion in 1788 to complain to Francis Speake, tobacco inspector at Chicamuxen warehouse in Charles County, that by ferrying passengers across the river without authorization, Speake was depriving Washington’s public ferry of its legitimate revenue.

In March, 1773, Washington set out for Williamsburg about 8 o’clock. “Dined at Portobacco and Lodged at Laidler’s.” He usually covered this whole distance in about five hours so we can imagine that he had spent much of the day and had dinner with Charles County friends so they could exchange views about the growing revolutionary sentiment and activities in both colonies. By then Washington was one of the leaders in the Fairfax Non-Importation Association

and was active in the Fairfax Militia. On his way home he again stopped at Port Tobacco and breakfasted there - once again taking time to relay the latest from Williamsburg.

George Washington’s farm in Charles County was acquired somewhat unexpectedly. In 1772 a young man named Daniel Jenifer Adams of Charles County was employed by George Washington and some Alexandria merchants to go as an agent to the West Indies on a vessel they owned to sell the flour they had milled. Young Mr. Adams took the money from the flour, set sail around the Caribbean in the vessel they owned and eventually returned to Virginia penniless. For the next three years Washington tried to collect the debt owed him by “that worthless young fellow.” To settle the debt Adams eventually gave George Washington 550 acres of family land in Charles County in 1775.

The next record of the land in the diary reports that in September, 1785, Mr. Cawood, Sheriff of Charles County “came here in the forenoon with an account of Taxes of the land I hold in that County in Nangemy neck. . . . Promised to get Dr. Craik to enquire into the matter and to lodge the money with him to pay it.”

A year later in October Washington writes “In afternoon George Dunnington a tenant of mine in Charles County Maryland came in to give an account of the situation of the place on which he lives and of the attempt to take part of the land away by one Strumat.”

Prompted to action at the thought of losing any of his land Washington on October 29 “Crossed the river with intention to view and survey my land in Charles County, Maryland. Went to and lodged at Governor Smallwoods about 14 miles from the Ferry.”

On the 30th “About one o’clock accompanied by the Governor I set out to take a view of my land which lay 12 miles from his House. After doing which and find it rather better than I expected we returned to the Governors having from the badness of the weather and wetness of the ground given over the idea of Surveying. The land lies full level enough. The Clearest part is lively and Good though much abused. The wood part of which there is a good deal is tolerably full of rail timber and wood (Chiefly Spanish oak and Black Jack) but the soil is thin and of mean quality though very capable of improvement would sell for 35 or 40 shillings Maryland Currency per Acre and seems to have an inclination to buy it himself.”

While in Charles County he has learned that the John Stromat who was reported to be taking part of the property had surveyed and registered a strip of waste land which intruded on some of the acreage belonging to Washington. Stromat agreed to withdraw the claim if Washington would pay the cost of the warrants.

Smallwood did not buy the farm and it was in Washington’s estate when he died. In his will Washington lists it as 600 acres worth \$6 an acre and says “I am but little acquainted with this land although I have been on it. It was received (many years since) in discharge of a debt due me from Daniel Janifer Adams, at the value annexed thereto and must be worth more. It is very level, lies near the River Potomac.”

There was an endless flow of friends, neighbors, relatives and the idly curious coming and going from Mt. Vernon and among these listed in the diary we find many familiar Charles County names. Especially after the Revolution, when Alexandria became a trade center for the upper Potomac, we find

Charles Countians en route to Alexandria coming as far as Mount Vernon, spending the night there and going on to Alexandria the next day. Frequently they stopped again on their way home. Among the names found repeatedly in the diaries are:

Thomas Marshall, his sister Miss Hanson, “who crossed over the River, drank Tea and returned” August, 1785.

Hugh Mitchell who dined at Mt. Vernon, December 11, 1785.

Mr. Stoddert identified as Thomas Marshall’s son-in-law.

Samuel and Thomas Hanson of Green Hill, who had been Jack Custis’ schoolmates at Annapolis.

Col. Simms who dined there when on his way to Port Tobacco court, Sept. 1786.

Mr. and Mrs. Fendall - Mrs. Fendall was daughter of Squire Lee of Blenheim. In Sept. 1786 they spent the night both going to and coming from Charles County.

Stonestreets, and Edelins are recorded more than once.

Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, Dr. Daniel Jenifer, Walter Hanson Jenifer, Mr. Thomas Stone, John Hoskins Stone are also recorded.

Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer came to see Washington as early as 1768. When Jack Custis went to school in Annapolis Mayor Jenifer (as Washington calls him) came to Mount Vernon frequently with Custis and his tutor, the Reverend Boucher, and Washington dined at Jenifer’s on his annual trips to Annapolis to the races.

By far George Washington’s most intimate friend from Charles County was Dr. James Craik. It was a friendship which began in 1754 when he and George Washington were both serving in the Virginia Militia during the French and Indian War. Dr. Craik was with the Virginia troops on the Braddock Campaign, when Washington won military reputation for his role in the fighting. After the war Dr. Craik settled in Charles County.

From that time on he was a frequent visitor at Mount Vernon both as a friend and as a physician, attending both the family and the slaves. The diary in 1760 records:

“Jan 18 - I found the Potomac River quite covered with ice and Dr. Craik at my house.”

“Jan 20 - visited at Belvoir today carrying Dr. Craik with us who spent the evening there.”

“Jan 22 - Dr. Craik dined here.”

“Jan 23 - Dr. Craik left this for Alexandria.”

Such frequent visits became less frequent after Craik married Mariamne Ewell in November of 1760. She was related to George Washington through her mother Sarah Ball Ewell and was from Prince William County, Virginia. The Craiks had nine children, 3 girls and 6 boys, and all the family were frequent and welcome visitors at Mount Vernon.

In October 1770 Washington and Craik journeyed to Western Pennsylvania and the Ohio Country to locate the bounty lands promised to the men of the Virginia Regiment for service in the French and Indian War. They found the land to be rich and on the whole “exceedingly valuable.” There was much game. They killed their first Buffaloes and found swans, geese and duck in the river bottoms. At the mouth of the Great Kanawha in West Virginia they turned back and the next spring they went to Winchester to report on the trip to their fellow officers.

The diaries record visits from Dr. Craik in almost every month and frequently his wife was there too. One such visit was made after Martha’s only daughter died in 1773 at the age of twenty.

The close association continued during the Revolution when Dr. Craik was Surgeon General of the Continental Army. After the war the two men made a journey west to inspect their lands. This time Washington’s nephew Bushrod went with him and Craik took his oldest son William. In addition to assessing their own lands, Washington was interested in the temper and disposition of the settlers on the frontier. The information gained on the trip would prove valuable to him as President a few years later. It was an easy and companionable trip as Craik and Washington separated often to attend to personal business, met again at an appointed spot, travelled on together, only to part when expedient. Craik arrived back at Mount Vernon four days before General Washington.

In 1785, James Craik, Jr. came to Mount Vernon to fetch Martha’s niece, Fannie Bassett, to Charles County for the wedding of his sister Sally. Sally married Dr. Daniel Jenifer on January 25. Fanny stayed with the Craiks enjoying the wedding festivities until February 9 when William brought her back to Mount Vernon.

The senior Dr. Craik moved to Alexandria in 1786 and the family continued to come and go at Mount Vernon.

One son, named for George Washington, is mentioned in the diary in 1785. “This day I told Dr. Craik that I would contribute 100 dollars per annum towards the education of his sone George Washington either in this country or in Scotland.” George Washington Craik studied law and served as private secretary to George Washington the last year of his Presidency.

Back at Mount Vernon after his retirement the Craiks continued to visit the Washingtons. On May, 1798, the Craik family and Miss Barnes of Charles County came to dinner. Mr. Pye of Charles County was there on June 11 along with Dr. Craik, Bishop John Carroll and Thomas Digges of Prince Georges County.

By now the Washingtons were facing the usual problems of old age. Dr. Benjamin Fendall of Cedar Hill in Charles County visited Mount Vernon on the 7th of December, 1797. He came to make a set of teeth for Martha Washington. In March Washington wrote asking for the teeth. “She prays that they may be finished without further delay as she is in want of them and must apply elsewhere if not done.” More than a year later August 10, 1799 Dr. Fendall wrote that he was sending Mrs. Washington’s teeth by a servant: “They are as nearly as I can recollect like the old ones. As there are so many ways to make and shape Teeth it would be almost impossible to make them exactly alike, after some time, without the old ones present. The model I took has also by accident sustained some injury. I am extremely sorry your lady has been obliged to wait so long owing to my long absence from home and my illness after I arrived at Cedar Hill.”

In 1799 Martha was ill in September and despite Dr. Craik’s attendance she did not fully recover until late October. On December 12 George Washington rode out in the wind, snow and sleet around his farms returning home wet and chilled. Despite a sore throat the next day he went out and marked trees on the lawn for culling. During the night he developed a severe inflammation of the throat. Martha sent for Dr. Craik as soon as it was daylight. When Craik saw how