

# THE PAPERS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON



Number 11

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2009

## Annual Report by the Editor in Chief

The loss, just a few days ago, of W. W. “Bill” Abbot is sorely felt, but Bill’s name will live on at the Washington Papers—a project he helped found and headed from 1977–1992. No other name will ever be more closely associated with the volumes this project has produced. And that is as it should be.

This has been a particularly stable year for the project in respect to personnel. The only change to report is that Ben Huggins, who joined us about this time last year as a Postdoctoral Fellow, is now an Assistant Professor and Assistant Editor. Associate Editor David Hoth and Assistant Editor Carol Ebel inhabit the Presidential suite; Senior Editor Ed Lengel, Assistant Editors Bill Ferraro and Ben Huggins man the ramparts of the Revolutionary War office; Assistant Editor Jennifer Stertzler and Research Assistant Alexis Luckey hold down the Digital Edition office, Copy Editor Tom Dulan controls the quill, and Administrative Assistant Stacy Diggs-Allen and I try to ensure that everyone gets the support they need. That said, we will be losing Alexis (who edits our newsletter) as soon as this issue is put to bed, but it is some consolation that we are losing her to the Peace Corps.

I reported last year that we were moving into a production environment using XML as an editing mode and employing PubMan as a document

management system. At that time Bill Ferraro was just launching Rev War 21—the first volume to be done in the new environment. Now all of the editors are involved with volumes that will be done that way: Bill on Rev War 21; Ed Lengel and Ben

Huggins on Rev War 22, and David Hoth and Carol Ebel on Presidential 17. In one respect it is a new way of viewing what the editors do—now they are not just editing letterpress volumes, but also components of the Digital Edition—for their XML files will be used simultaneously for both purposes. In the next year we will be perfecting our cumulative index. At the same time, Stephen Perkins, who developed PubMan, will adapt his indexing system to our scheme of work. Our expectation is that these two efforts will be far enough along by the time the new XML volumes (Rev War 21 and 22, and Presidential 17) are finished to allow their indexes to be prepared using Perkins’ routine. It offers the significant ad-

vantage of both preparing a volume index and updating the cumulative index at the same time.

Since our last newsletter, we have added one volume, Presidential 15 (1 Jan. to 30 April 1794), bringing our total to sixty-one, and three more volumes were added to the Digital Edition, bringing the total there to fifty-five. In the same time period, one volume has gone to the press (Rev War 19) and two are in copy editing (Rev War 20 and Presidential 16). Three more are being edited (Rev War 21 & 22 and Presidential 17). There will



“Young Washington, Surveyor.” from *True Stories of great Americans for young Americans* by Elbridge S. Brooks and Thomas S. Meek.

be small delays as we switch to the new editing environment—editors will be given an additional three months to complete their first volumes using XML. This delay will be minimal, however, hardly noticeable in our continued pace of an average of two volumes a year.

While this has been quite a year on some fronts, it has been a year in which we have launched several new efforts that will enhance the Washington Papers and extend the project outreach efforts. Two new efforts will extend the scope of the papers—the creation of a Financial Papers Series, which will be done as an element of the Digital Edition, and the online publication of a comprehensive George Washington bibliography.

Two additional efforts are expanding our outreach. The first, The Civility Project: Where George Washington Meets the 21st Century, was launched in March 2009 with the help of Judith Martin, better known as “Miss Manners.” A team of University of Virginia undergraduates, under the sponsorship of the Washington Papers and “Miss Manners,” is studying the 110 “rules of civility” that Washington copied (and lived by), retaining and updating those they find still applicable, and developing new rules as appropriate. In early December 2009, they will issue a new set of 110 rules of civility for today. The second new outreach effort involves a partnership with UVA’s Travel and Learn program. The Washington Papers will offer an annual series of guided tours of the key battles of the war—visiting Concord, Lexington, and Boston in September 2010, Trenton and Princeton in 2011, etc. Elsewhere in this newsletter there is information about how you can learn more about this opportunity and enroll. We will be reporting in more detail on all of these in future newsletters.

Following, somewhat belatedly, in the footsteps of a number of the nation’s most prestigious schools, the College of Arts and Sciences has determined it must make a five percent assessment on gifts received for a particular restricted purpose. Proceeds from the assessment will be reallocated for the discretionary use of the dean toward priorities in the college. The assessment is small and will not have any significant impact on our work, and I note it solely in the spirit of transparency and full disclosure to our many donors who support the Washington Papers so generously. —*Theodore J. Crackel*

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## Presidential Series, Volume 16

### *Forthcoming in 2010*

In the following letter, which will be published in the forthcoming volume 16 of *The Presidential Series*, GW describes the duties expected of the new steward hired to care for his household in Philadelphia. After listing the qualities of a good and bad servant, the president describes the patterns of management necessary to maintain an orderly establishment and limit the time he must spend on household affairs. Washington’s comments reveal his constant desire to practice economy, yet demonstrate that the president remained aware of his duty to care for the less fortunate and to entertain guests in a manner that reflected his official status. The letter also provides a rare glimpse of the role that Martha Washington played in running the household.

—*Carol Ebel & David Hotb*

## To James Germain

Mr Germain, Philadelphia June 1st 1794

An honest man—a man attentive to his duty—and one who discharges the trust reposed in him with activity, zeal and integrity fears neither the inspecting eye, nor the chiding remarks of his Employer; because he feels something within him, that tells him, that the first measure is dictated by that prudence wch ought to govern all men who commits a trust to another—and that such a conduct as I have described above will be an effectual shield against the latter.

On the other hand

a dishonest man—one who is indolent, inattentive & careless; fond of company, pleasure & perhaps liquor, is always uneasy under restraints, and averse to a<ll> checks; and for the best reason (as it respects himself) in the world, for checks & enquiries will discover, if it does not prevent his knavery, and shew how unworthy he is to be entrusted.

There are some men, not intenti[on]ally dishonest, who, notwithstanding, do as much injury to those who employ them as if they were really rogues, and in several ways—such for instance, as entrusting that to others which was intended for

themselves only to perform thereby affording opportunities to persons in whom no confidence is placed, and where there is no responsibility, to help themselves to wh<at>ever they can filch with impunity, and ca<r>ry off without detection.

2d By inattention and carelessness in suffering things to be wasted & destroyed in the family which might, and ought to have been prevented.

3d By providing more for the use of that family (especially in the article of provisions) than is really necessary fo<r> the purposes for which they are designed—and particularly from not seeing tha<t> that which is provided, be set of, and turned to the greatest advantage, and not suffered to spoil—be misapplied—or taken away by the Servants without leave.

4th By not seeing that the Servants are always in their places—that they are sober—and attentive to the duties which are assigned to them; and by not preventing, as much as possible, the breakage of China, glasses & other brittle wares—the bruising, and other abuses of the Silver & other things of a similar kind though of lesser value—& by hiring jobbers, too frequently, to do things which might well be done without.

5th By not being sufficiently impressed with the magnitude of an evil which is not less pernicious because it is a common one—and that is—not attending to small as well as to greater matters. There is an old Scotch adage, than which none in the whole catalogue of them is more true, or more worthy of being held in remembrance—viz.—”that many mickles make a muckle” indicating that however trifling a thing may be in itself, when it stands alone, yet, when they come to be multipl<yed> they mount high which serves to prove, that nothing, however trifling, ought to be wasted that can be saved—nor bought if you can do well without it.

Having expressed these general ideas to you, it remains for me to add, in a more particular manner, what it is that I expect from your Stewardship.

In the first place I am to inform you, that all the Liquors—the groceries—and other shop articles of consequence, will be laid in by my Secretary.

Trifling articles, which are only wanted occasionally, will be provided by yourself. Provisions, and other articles of daily consumption, which are purchased in the common markets you are to provide on Market days, or at such othe<r> times & places as occasion may require. And that you may be enabled to do it on the best terms, find out the most respectable characters in the different lines that supply them and let these be the persons with whom you deal principally—taking care always that you receive full weight, full measure, or full count of all that you pay for & that it is brought home without diminutio<n>.

From Mr Dandridge you will obtain money to defray my expences, & with him you are to settle your accounts, weekly, enumerating in a book to be kept for that purpose, the species, & quantity (with the price

<fixed> to it) of every article that is bou<ght>; and the day it was bought. and where receipts can be taken to lay them before him. Ready money is to be paid for everything you purchase. I want no credit—and am averse to after reckonings.

The multiplicity of my public duties leaves me but little leisure to suggest domestic arrangements—to look into <the> æc<onomy> of the family—or to inspect the articles which are provided for its support. For this reason I require that <you w>ould advise with Mrs Washington on these several points & be governed by her <di>rections. My general id<ea>s on this subject are shortly thes<e>. 1st that my table <s>hall be handsomely but not extravagantly furnished on the days that company is en<t>ertained. 2d that a decent but econom<ical> board be spread at



*Washington in Philadelphia, November 1799. Sketch by Saint-Mémin. (John Hill Morgan, Life Portraits of George Washington and Their Replicas [1931].) Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.*

other times. And 3d that my domestics sh<sup>d</sup> be plentifully fed at all times with what is wholesome & proper <beyond> which <nei>ther in quantity nor quality you are no<sup>t</sup> to go; nor suffer them to carry anythin<sup>g</sup> away from the h<sup>ous</sup>e unless they have permission so to do.

Whatever remains after these purposes are served, and is not necessa<sup>ry</sup> for another day, I would have given to the poor and needy housekeepers in the <neigh>bourhood who may want & would <not> a<sup>pply</sup> for it.

As we never have suppers, nor sudden calls for extra dinners, it can be <no> difficult matter to ascertain, with certainty to what my expences (agreeably to the <illegible>ing mode of living) may be reduced; an<sup>d</sup> as it is essential I should know it that I <may> govern myself accordingly my desire is that precise and particular pains be ta<sup>ken</sup> to accomplish this. The morning is the proper season for marketing—Le<sup>t</sup> it be a rule therefore to go thither early and knowing your wants, provide accordingly every article of which, and all the expenditures of the day are to be entered in a book as before directed; which book is, the succeeding morning, immediately after I rise from Breakfast (& before the Officers of Government are coming in) to be laid before me that I may see what the expences of the preceeding day has been. The weekly account, as you have been informed before, is to be settled at the end of it, with my Secretary—Mr Dandridge—And as the Provisions for the day will be brought in before Breakfast, they may, when Mrs Washington rises from it, be shewn to her.

Let the Cellars, and other places of deposit be cleaned out, & put in proper order for the reception & safe keeping of the Provisions of every species which are laid in & the keys thereof kept by you, or the Housekeeper and not a single article delivered thence but by one or the other & the purpose known.

To prevent clashing, in any of the duties which are to be performed by the Steward and Housekeeper, it will be proper for you and Mrs Emmer-son to arrange them between you, and aid (rather than counteract or thwart) each other in the duties of your respective functions.

To add that the yard, around the Houses, the Corners in which dirt collects, &ca should be kept

clean, can scarcely be necessary, because health as well as decency requires this. N<sup>or</sup> can it be necessary I hope to guard you against a practice which not only adds to the expence but is productive of other evils—I mean introducing company t<sup>o</sup> your tables.

I mean to be thus particular and exact (and you are informed of <it> beforehand) because my household expences hitherto, have run so much beyond all calculation that I am resolved to discover the cause, which according to my conception, must proceed from on<sup>e</sup> or other of the following—either that I am charged for things that have never been got, at least to the amount, or if got, from their not having been applied to advantage—or lastly, from waste, or being borne off again, after they have been brought into the house; which is not unlikely, as every one seems to have access to them. The first (if it has been practiced) is nothing short of sheer roguery; and the others, disreputable to any one who is entrusted with the managemt of the concerns of another; being equally injurious; for it is of little signification to the sufferer, whether he is cheated by the person or persons in whom he places a confidence, or by others through their inattention, & want of care. Nor in my opinion is there any difference in the criminality, as it respects themselves—the trust being equally violated; as the damage which they are employed to guard against is the same.

In consideration of your performing these services—and in full expectation of your paying particular attention to the Cookery seeing that every thing appertaining to it is conducted in a handsome style, but without waste or extravagance I agree to allow you fifty guineas a year—and if I find myself much benefited by your skill, attention and œconomy, it may be an inducement to me to add something more to it after sufficient & satisfactory proofs shall have appeared of these facts.

Go: Washington

ALS (letterpress copy), DLC:GW.

James Germain succeeded Samuel Fraunces as steward for GW's household at Philadelphia in June 1794, and he continued in that post until 8 Dec. 1794 (Household Accounts).

You are cordially invited to:

The 1st Symposium on George Washington and The American Revolution:  
The Revolution Begins

Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, and Boston  
September 2010

A Travel & Learn Program from the  
University of Virginia's School of Continuing & Professional Studies

This program will highlight key battles and events of each year of the American Revolution as they were viewed through George Washington's eyes and pen. The series will be led by Theodore J. Crackel, professor and editor in chief of the Papers of George Washington, and his colleagues at the University of Virginia who know Washington, his correspondence, and his life intimately. They will be joined by handpicked American Revolution and Washingtonian scholars from across the country.

Our September 2010 inaugural program will be headquartered in Boston, Mass., and begins with the events of the spring and summer of 1775. We will explore the opening rounds of the War—from the first skirmish in Lexington and Concord between the “minutemen” and the British army to the retreat of the British out of Boston. We will also examine the role Washington played before and after he took command of the American forces around Boston.

**Preliminary Schedule Highlights**

Day One: Colonial Boston—“Revolution in the Offing”

Afternoon Tour: Walking tour of Old Boston—Boston Massacre, Faneuil Hall, Green Dragon Tavern, Paul Revere's house, and Old North Church

Opening Dinner and Lecture: “Coming of the War, Intelligence, and the Rides of William Dawes and Paul Revere”

Day Two: Lexington and Concord

Morning Tour: Lexington and Minute Man National Historical Park

Afternoon Tour: Concord, North Bridge, and the British Retreat

Evening Lecture: “The Revolution Begins and Washington Takes Command”

Evening Social: Informal gathering

Day Three: Bunker Hill and Washington Takes Command

Morning tour: Bunker Hill

Closing Lunch and Lecture: “Washington, Knox, Cannon and the British Retreat”

**Who Should Attend?**

This is a seminar for those history lovers interested in exploring not only the deeds, but also the hearts and minds of the men behind our nation. It is perfect for those with great knowledge of the Revolution and George Washington, as well as those wanting to gain more.

The topic of the 2nd George Washington and The American Revolution Symposium, dates to be determined, will be “Saving the Revolution: Crossing the Delaware and the Battles of Trenton and Princeton (December/January 1776–77).”

For registration information:  
email: [travelandlearn@virginia.edu](mailto:travelandlearn@virginia.edu), or visit: [www.virginia.edu/travelandlearn](http://www.virginia.edu/travelandlearn)



# Abbot Named To Edit Papers

William W. Abbot, the James Madison Professor of History at the University of Virginia, has been named editor of "The Papers of George Washington." He will replace Donald Jackson who is retiring from the University project in December for personal reasons.

In announcing the appointment, which is effective Jan. 1, 1977, University Vice President and Provost David A. Shannon said, "It is clear to everyone in American history that Bill Abbot, because of his eminence as a scholar and his experience as an editor, is ideal for this post."

Shannon noted that Donald Jackson, who has edited the Papers since the project began eight years ago, has gotten the work off to an excellent start. "The whole editing machinery is organized and working smoothly," he said.

"The Papers of George Washington," a joint project of the University and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, was begun in 1968 and is expected to take about 20 years to complete.

Researchers have tracked down and collected more than 125,000 letters to and from George Washington and more than 50 of Washington's personal diaries so far. Two volumes of diaries published this summer are the first of a projected 60- to 75-volume series.

Abbot, who is a former editor of the *Journal of Southern History* and the *William and Mary Quarterly*, joined the University of Virginia faculty in 1966. He previously taught at the College of William and Mary, Northwestern University and Rice University.

A specialist in early American history, Dr. Abbot is the author of "The Royal Governors of Georgia, 1754-1775." He is a native of Louisville, Ga., and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia and his master's and doctorate from Duke University.



WILLIAM ABBOT

## W.W. Abbot, 1922-2009

William Wright Abbot, Editor-in-Chief Emeritus of the Papers of George Washington documentary editing project and former James Madison Professor of History at the University of Virginia, passed away on the morning of August 31, 2009. He was 87 years old.

Born on May 20, 1922, in Louisville, Ga., Bill Abbot began undergraduate school at Davidson College, N.C., in 1939, and completed his AB at the University of Georgia in 1943. After service overseas in the U.S. Navy Reserve during World War II, Bill entered graduate school at Duke University, where he received his M.A. in 1949, and his Ph.D. in history in 1953. After graduation, he was appointed Assistant Professor of History at the College of William & Mary, where he eventually rose to the rank of Professor of History. In 1958 he married Eleanor Pearre, and they had two sons, William and John. Bill became James Madison Professor of History at the University of Virginia in 1966, and served as chairman of the History Department from 1972 to 1974. He retired in 1992.

Bill served as editor of the *William and Mary Quarterly* from 1955 to 1961, and as editor of the *Journal of Southern History* from 1961 to 1963. He also wrote two books, *The Royal Governors of Georgia, 1754-1775* (1959); and *The Colonial Origins of the United States, 1607-1763* (1975). His most remarkable work as a scholar, however, emerged from his stewardship of The Papers of George Washington as Editor-in-Chief from 1977 to 1992. Although the late Professor Don Jackson had founded the project in 1968, and as Editor-in-Chief had guided the publication of the six volumes of *The Diaries of George Washington*, Bill Abbot defined the scope and direction of the project as it published Washington's voluminous correspondence. Under Bill's leadership, 26 volumes of *The Papers of George Washington* were published in the *Colonial*; *Revolutionary War*; *Confederation*; and *Presidential Series*. As Editor-in-Chief Emeritus from 1996 to 1999, he also edited all four volumes of the *Retirement Series*.

Those who had the privilege of working with Bill during his long and exceptionally distinguished career will remember him as a gifted historian and cordial colleague, who was devoted not just to learning, but to sharing knowledge with others for the betterment of all. He was a thoroughgoing gentleman, a mentor to younger scholars, and a magnificent human being. He will be missed.

—Ed Lengel

## Who Forged this George Washington Letter?

There certainly has been abundant scholarship on George Washington, and few subjects have drawn attention as persistently as his relationship with Jacob Duché, an Anglican minister who served as the first chaplain of Congress and was forced to flee to England after urging Washington in October 1777 to negotiate a settlement with the British that would renounce the independence of the United States. Since the latter nineteenth century, at least seven journal articles or scholarly productions have probed Duché's life and his relationship with Washington, the most recent and exhaustive being Clarke Garrett's "The Spiritual Odyssey of Jacob Duché," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 119 (April 16, 1975): 143–55. Numerous newspaper articles and brief notices also have appeared in print.

The modern edition of *The Papers of George Washington* has presented the major exchanges of correspondence involving Washington and Duché from 1777 and 1789 in its *Revolutionary War Series*, 11:430–37, 497, 527–28, and *Presidential Series*, 3:394–96. Another significant exchange of letters between the two men from 1783 is targeted for inclusion later in the *Revolutionary War Series*. The whole issue of Washington's correspondence with Duché was reopened for the project editors, however, with the discovery of a long undated letter, purportedly from Washington to Duché, printed in the *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser* (Boston), 8 April 1779, and apparently reprinted from this source in the *New-Hampshire Gazette, or State Journal, and General Advertiser* (Portsmouth), 14 Sept. 1779. These items surfaced while doing a "Washington" keyword search in the Early American Newspapers electronic database.

Previously unknown to the Papers of George Washington editors, and never being mentioned in the many scholarly articles and miscellaneous notices examining the relationship between Washington and Duché, the letter merited unusual scrutiny. Sparing details for a future article that probes the matter in depth, the conclusion was that this letter was forged, but that the forgery was a clever one likely done by a person familiar with Wash-

ington's style and views. Hoping to find some leads on the forger from the correspondence or history of the newspaper editors, research was undertaken on John Gill of the *Continental Journal* and Daniel Fowle of the *New-Hampshire Gazette*, but these efforts did not point in any obvious direction. Project editors subsequently have pondered over who might have had the knowledge, animus, and spleen to concoct such a letter that could embarrass, or even compromise, the commander-in-chief. To date, however, no person has come to mind that can be deemed a reasonably plausible, let alone promising, candidate.

If you ever have seen this forged letter from Washington to Duché, or come across a reference, or would like to suggest the possible forger, please contact Bill Ferraro with your information or thoughts. He can be reached at the Papers of George Washington, University of Virginia, via e-mail at [wmf4f@virginia.edu](mailto:wmf4f@virginia.edu) or phone, 434-243-8870. What follows is a transcription of the head note and letter from the *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser* (Boston), 8 April 1779.

—Bill Ferraro

*The following is a copy of a letter sent by his Excellency Gen Washington to the Rev. Mr. Jacob Duché, in answer to a letter published in this Journal, Feb. 19, 1778, from that Gentleman to his Excellency.*

SIR, Your letter to me having been publicly shewn by you to many of your acquaintance, I have reason to suppose my answer will meet with the same treatment.—This expectation alone might be sufficient to excuse a person in my particular situation from writing you an answer at all; but I am so entirely convinced of the honesty of your heart, that I am unwilling you should suspect me of slighting you in any respect. At the same time, I am so fully persuaded of the justice of the cause in which I am engaged, that I will freely profess myself to all the world ready to encounter much greater difficulties than any I have yet experienced in support of it.

I am persuaded your letter (for it is without a date) was written when the prospects of the United Colonies were less flattering than they are at present; and though it was written with the most simple integrity, yet it certainly was not dic-

tated by a spirit of prophecy. In a word, Sir, I think you may be a well meaning divine, but your politics seem to have sophisticated your faith.—Would any serious pastor, unclouded by political prejudice, and whose zeal was wholly confined to the furtherance of the true religion; would any such man hesitate a moment to assist a congregation in prayer, because they had scruples about praying for some particular potentate, or his royal family? Would any such man proclaim to all his flock, that the Christian religion was a mere state engine—that rather than omit a particular state prayer or two from the formulary, it might be doubted whether it would not be better to shut up the churches, and not pray at all? I trust, Sir, I have a sense of religion as well as yourself; and I can assure you I have been shocked at hearing and feeling the weakness and vanity of particular ministers, who have rudely resisted the ordinances respecting the liturgy, and wantonly insulted the established au[t]hority of the state, by imposing a prayer on their audience on a subject in which the general doctrines of religion have no concern, and on which they were at liberty to be wholly silent. Congress did not order them to pray for this or that particular ru[l]ler, they only enjoined them silence on the subject; and why the ministry should not choose to fight, rather than to provoke their congregations and their governors by a positive disobedience of public orders, I cannot tell, unless, perhaps (which however I will not impute to yourself) they judge it to be more for their purpose to appear meritorious in the eye of a temporal, than of an heavenly tribunal.

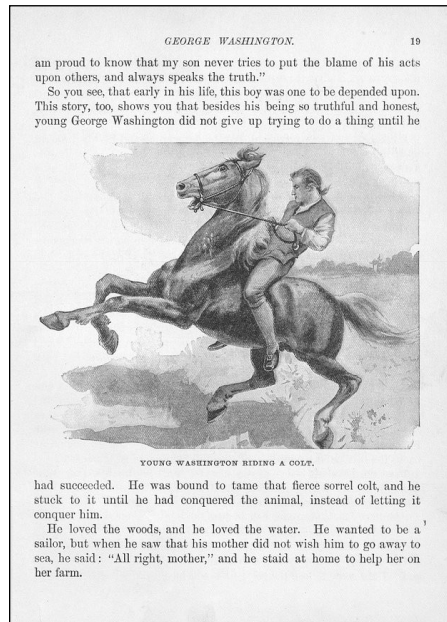
You are pleased, Sir, to speak very freely of the members of Congress. They are my masters; and while I can assist the public cause by obedience to their orders, without doing violence to my own sense of moral duty, I will serve them faithfully. Should the time come (which I dare not suppose) when their commands and my sense of duty mili-

tate, I will quietly retire, and will be aware how I follow the many examples I have seen, of endeavouring to set the state in an uproar by an ill timed opposition to them.

Your representation of the present state, and future prospect of our affairs, is strong, pathetic, and ornamented with great powers of rhetoric; but it is not founded on fact. The French gentleman you speak of must be an extraordinary character, or must have a very strange opinion of your understanding, to declare to you that he had negociated a treaty with Congress, and at the same time to profess to you that he hoped the Americans would never think of independence. If there is no independency, there can be no Congress; and if there is no Congress, his nego[tia]tion is nothing. He would have done more wisely to have staid at home, than to have voyaged to America, to negotiate a treaty with a set of public characters which he hoped would never exist, or to fill the mind of an honest clergyman with his paradoxical politics. You say you are well informed of the state of France;

Dr. Franklin too affects to have some knowledge on that subject; but your own account diff[er]s so widely from that of Franklin's, (whom I believe to be a very honest man) that one or other of you must be duped by your intelligences[.] As Dr. Frank[l]in is on the spot, has lived much in public life, and has been very conversant with men and manners I am unwilling to disbelieve the intelligence he transmits to us.

What a picture do you draw, my worthy friend, of the present state of Great-Britain and America? You say that in Great-Britain, all ranks of men are unanimous. We know the contrary. The large Minorities in both Houses of Parliament; the rank, fortune, and abilities of those who compose the Minorities, are an immediate contradiction to your affection of unanimity. Besides, we all know that the system of the present government of that country is /Power/. Their Sovereign idolizes that



"Young Washington Riding a Colt." from *True Stories of great Americans for young Americans* Elbridge S. Brooks and Thomas S. Meek.



destructive phantom; his Ministers seek to gratify him in it by every means, however dishonest; and he suffers himself to be cajoled by their flattering engagements. He has personally affronted many respectable characters in his dominions, because he suspected they would oppose his aim. These, together with many others who are apprised of his principles, are resolved to stand in the breach between power and liberty; they will steadily oppose every infringement on the balance of the constitution; they consider the present system of British politics respecting America, as founded in tyranny; and they knew that while they support such measures, they support their own liberties.

Whence is it that you have procured your intelligence of the condition of America. I have already told you that your letter was not dictated by any spirit of prophecy. Where is the British army you talk of, as having passed unmolested through a vast extent of country? You surely did not hint at Mr. Burgoyne's expedition: And as to the army under Sir William Howe, you are aware that, not expecting to be allowed to pass unmolested by land, it came by sea to possess itself of Philadelphia, and that it has not made an excursion 15 miles from that city since it first arrived there.

Having made use of you best rhetoric to awaken my fears, you lastly endeavour to make an impression on my vanity. You tell me, that the existence of the army, and the whole support of the present contest on the part of America, depends on me, and you intreat me to use my influence with Congress to procure the resolution of Independency to be rescinded, and to prepare some well digested, constitutional plan of reconciliation for the consideration of the Commissioners. Consider, my good Sir, how this contest began, and how it has been carried on. We on this Continent were quiet, easy, and well affected to our mother country, till we were alarmed with her intention to destroy our constitutional rights. She first, injured us. We remonstrated. She treated our remon[st]rances with the most supercilious disdain, and provoked us to appeal to that power who has hitherto graciously supported us. She has passed acts to restrain us from all trade, nay if posable, to starve us; and has so utterly cast us off, that we have been driven by force into a declaration of independency.

She still persists in requiring from us unconditional submission. I am credibly informed, it was the language of Ministers on the first day of the session of Parliament. I am far from feeling myself to be a person of the consequence you attribute to me: I derive my au[t]hority from Congress, and should particular circumstances remove me from the head of the army, I doubt not there are many gentlemen of rank and experience to whom the soldiers would readily submit themselves. But suppose I could persuade myself that I had the influence and authority you say I have, what would mankind think of me, who, at the head of three millions of people, bravely withstanding the attempts of their oppressors, and now, in all human probability, on the very point of success, should persuade this people to renounce all their advantages, and to gratify our enemies by first rescinding a resolution taken in a season much more perilous than the present? To what purpose too, shall we rescind It? Are any offers made to us? We have none to make; we only desire to remain unmolested. Have we any assurance that in the moment when we rescind our resolution, and forego what little alliance we have with France, we shall again be receiv'd into friendship with Great-Britain? The Commissioners offer us pardon. We want no pardon. We have done nothing wrong. We have only defended our natural political rights. What constitutional plan of reconciliation can we prepare, which is more likely to be accepted, than the plan of independency? The Ministers of Great-Britain who conduct the war against us, are insolent and insidious; are to be controuled only by their fears: 'Till they fear us, they will assume a right to oppose us; and when they fear us, like other tyrants, they will fear us basely, and grant us all we can desire[.] I think that at the hands of these men we shall easily obtain a recognition of Independence, as a full security for the protection of our constitutional liberty. These being my sentiments, I must wait to hear some proffers from the Commissioners before I take any step towards sheathing my sword. I have drawn it in the cause of my country, and by the blessing of God, will employ it faithfully, till my Country is restored to peace and security.

I am, Sir, your sincere friend,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

## Washington's Spurious Letters

In the spring of 1777, a bookseller in London's Paternoster Row offered for sale a pamphlet entitled *Letters from General Washington to Several of His Friends in the Year 1776*. It contained seven letters that Washington had supposedly written to his wife, stepson, and farm manager, along with an introduction explaining how they had been found after the capture of Forts Washington and Mifflin in November 1776. The two forts stood on opposite sides of the Hudson River, the former on northern Manhattan and the latter in New Jersey; and when the British captured Fort Mifflin, the American commander-in-chief watched the surrender from Fort Mifflin. A few days later the British boarded flatboats and rowed across the river, forcing General Washington to flee and abandon a number of sick troops along with most of his equipment.

According to the pamphlet's introduction, a Loyalist observing Fort Mifflin's occupation had noticed a suspicious-looking mulatto among the sickly American prisoners staggering into custody. Upon interrogation, the mulatto admitted that he was Billy Lee, George Washington's longtime personal manservant and inseparable companion. Lee claimed that his former master had left him in the lurch, fleeing the stricken fort and leaving him behind along with a small portmanteau. Before rejoining his fellow prisoners, Lee entrusted the portmanteau to the Loyalist's keeping. Inside were some stockings, a few odd shirts, an almanac, and a bundle of letters. The letters were personal in nature, and contained no military intelligence; but they were valuable all the same. Judging by them, Washington was neither the bold man of action idolized by patriotic Americans nor the brute portrayed by British propaganda. He was a milksop, and a British sympathizer to boot.

"Tell me," Washington asked his farm manager in one of the letters, "am I, do you think, more subject to fears than other men? For I will not conceal it from you, that, at this moment, I feel myself a very coward." It was not that he feared British bayonets or bullets. Rather, he had come to believe that "we have overshot our mark: we have grasped at things beyond our reach; it is impossible we should succeed"; in short, that the war

was lost. From the start, Congress had woefully mismanaged the war, turning to arms prematurely and forcing open conflict with what he called "our fellow-subjects" in the British Army; and then, perversely, preventing General Washington from putting his army in fighting trim. Now, with the Continental army demoralized and in disarray, he was forced to live a charade, feeding lies to the American public in order to maintain support for the war. "Thus circumstanced," he groaned, "can you point out a way in which it is possible for me to resign, just now as it were, on the eve of action, without imputation of cowardice?" Alas, he concluded, "there is no such way."

The whining continued in a letter to Martha, in which the general expressed his secret longings for peace. "We must, at last, agree, and be friends," he wrote; "for we cannot live without them, and they will not without us: and a bystander might well be puzzled to find out, why as good terms cannot be given and taken now, as when we shall have well nigh ruined each other by the mutual madness of cutting one another's throats." As for King George III, Washington pined for him like a child for his father. "I love my King; you know I do: a soldier, a good man cannot but love him. How peculiarly hard then is our fortune to be deemed traitors to so good a King! But, I am not without hopes, that even he will yet see cause to do me justice: posterity, I am sure, will."

The letters were fakes. Billy Lee had not been captured at Fort Mifflin, and the portmanteau filled with laundry and letters did not exist; but of course that did not stop the British from pretending otherwise. The pamphlet containing the spurious letters was a hit in London, and several months later, while the Continental army huddled miserably at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777-78, Loyalist newspapers in North America reprinted it. "The arts of the enemies of America, but all wicked as they are various," complained Richard Henry Lee in forwarding the letters on to Washington in January 1778; "the design of the Forger is evident, and no doubt it gained him a good Beef Steak from his Masters."

Washington treated the letters with contempt, even sending one to Martha in order "to let her see what obliging folks there were in the world." He did not expect his countrymen to take them

seriously, and he was right. Although the British and their sympathizers put some effort into publicizing the letters, reprinting them as handbills and hawking them in the streets, they generated such little interest that Washington did not even think it necessary to issue a public denial. The only thing that bothered him was the identity of the forger. Clearly, he knew about Washington and his family; he may even have met them. "These letters are written with a great deal of art," he told Richard Henry Lee. "The intermixture of so many family circumstances . . . gives an air of plausibility, which renders the villainy greater . . . who the author of them is, I know not; from information, or an acquaintance, he must have had some knowledge of the component parts of my family." Still, the public ignored the letters, and Washington, occupied with far more important affairs, quickly forgot about them.

Eighteen years later, the forgeries assumed a more sinister aspect. By the autumn of 1795, governing the United States had never been more difficult. In Congress and the president's own cabinet, bitter factions had formed in the course of disputes over finances and foreign policy. Grouped loosely around Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, these factions became known popularly as the federalists and republicans. Their biggest point of contention concerned America's relations with Britain and France, which were engaged in an on-and-off-again war that would eventually erupt into global conflict. The federalists, disgusted by the increasing radicalization of France after the revolution of 1789, favored good relations with Britain. The republicans, by contrast, were enthralled by French political and social developments and considered Britain, with its conservative political structure and arrogant treatment of the United States since the peace treaty of 1783, to be America's natural enemy.

Washington, while sympathizing generally with the federalists, refused to identify himself with any faction and fought to maintain unity in government. In 1795, however, a series of events wrecked the image of detachment that he worked so hard to maintain in public, and sucked him into the vortex of factional politics. In November 1794, Chief Justice John Jay signed a treaty with Great Britain that resolved some disputes over

western lands and other issues but failed to address the Royal Navy's practice of impressing American sailors into service on its ships. Jay's simple presence in Britain had already infuriated the republicans, so the treaty was kept secret until the senate, after bitter debate, approved it behind closed doors on June 24, 1795. Before Washington had a chance to publicize the treaty, however, the *Aurora*, a virulently republican Philadelphia newspaper run by Benjamin Franklin Bache, acquired a copy through a leak and published it, accusing the government of having tricked and betrayed the American public.

The outcry that ensued dwarfed anything that had been seen in America since the Boston Tea Party. Jay was burned in effigy across the country, and Hamilton stoned at a public meeting in New York City. British flags were burned or trampled in the streets, and radicals spoke openly of the guillotine. Republican newspapers, most notably the *Aurora*, fanned the flames with scurrilous attacks on the federalists, who responded in kind but without as much effect. Washington's decision to approve the treaty, which he made public on Aug. 12 after weeks of anguished uncertainty, plunged him into the center of the firestorm. Hitherto irreproachable, he was now cursed for "his cold, aloof, arrogant manner; his lack of intelligence and wisdom; and his love of luxury and display."

The *Aurora*, as usual outdoing all the other newspapers in its vitriol, denounced the president's "self-love" and painted him as a soft-headed blunderer who had become entranced by the wily Alexander Hamilton and his federalists. Washington's supposed refusal to become king, so often trumpeted by the federalists, was now turned on its head, and he was painted as a monarch in all but name. "I believe that man wants to be a king," the newspaper thundered in November 1795, "who chooses the advocates for kingly government as his first councillors and advisers." Nor did Bache have any difficulty in enlisting supporters to join him in denouncing the president. A detractor named John Beckley, signing himself the "Calm Observer," wrote editorials showing that Washington had received advances on his presidential salary before it was earned, and that he had frequently overdrawn it. Washington's bulldog,

Alexander Hamilton, was unable to refute the charges completely for the very good reason that they were accurate. Although the president had not requested any of the advances, and had never received any funds for which there had not been an explicit appropriation by Congress, the mere fact that he had overdrawn was enough, in republican eyes, to justify his impeachment. Thomas Paine, a former friend embittered by Washington's refusal to help free him from imprisonment during the French Revolution, wrote a vicious "open letter" slamming the president's "egotism" and "fraudulent" character, and presenting a revisionist summary of the Revolutionary War that reduced the battles of Trenton and Princeton to "successful skirmishes . . . that would scarcely be noticed in a better state of things." "You slept away your time in the field," Paine raged, "till the finances of the country were completely exhausted, and you have but little share in the glory of the final event." The great man, the paragon of virtue and morality, was to Paine "treacherous in private friendship . . . and a hypocrite in public life."

Not coincidentally, the *Aurora* and other republican newspapers also rediscovered the seven spurious letters that Washington had thought buried in the past. On Sept. 10, 1795, a printer in New York City published a two-volume edition of Washington's official Revolutionary War correspondence, titled *Original Letters to the Congress*. The volumes had been prepared with Washington's sanction and contained transcriptions of letters that he had written to Congress up to the end of 1778. Supporters of the president hailed the publication, declaring that it would remind the nation of his heroism and sacrifice during the struggle for independence. To some, however, the official letters offered an incomplete picture of Washington the man. On Sept. 11, therefore, the New York *Daily Advertiser* published an "extract of a letter (published as authentic) from the President of the United States, to Mr. Lund Washington, written in 1776." It was from one of the seven spurious letters that the British had forged in 1777, but the newspaper did not bother to say so; nor did the publisher of *Domestic and Confidential Epistles*, a pamphlet containing all of the spurious letters that was released to the public a short time later by no

less a figure than James Rivington, who had popularized the forgeries during the war as publisher of the Loyalist New York *Royal Gazette*. "The world is, without doubt, greatly indebted to the industrious compiler of the two volumes of *Original Letters*," read the preface to the *Domestic and Confidential Epistles*, "but the collection must certainly be looked upon as in a mutilated state, so long as it remains unaccompanied with the Epistles, etc., which are now respectfully submitted to the patronage of the public, and which form a supplement absolutely necessary to render the work complete." Bache's paper picked up the letters eagerly and used them to prove GW's lifelong preference for England and monarchical government.

For republicans, the *Domestic and Confidential Epistles* offered an obvious lesson. Not only had Washington not been the bold and fearless leader portrayed by federalist propaganda; he had even sympathized with the British. Benjamin Franklin Bache, the publisher of the *Aurora*, pounced gleefully on the spurious letters and declared them authentic reflections of Washington's true character and conduct during the war. The hounding continued all the way to the end of Washington's second term, long after public opinion had turned in favor of the Jay Treaty and away from the republicans, and significantly influenced his decision not to seek a third term in office. His refusal to denounce the spurious letters publicly only encouraged his opponents, who declared that his silence vindicated their claims. Washington did not repudiate them until his last day in office, March 3, 1797, when he sent a public letter to the secretary of state that was printed and distributed throughout the country. There the matter dropped so far as the press was concerned, and the spurious letters disappeared from circulation. Washington remained bitter about his enemies' attempt "to wound my character and deceive the people," however, until the end of his life. And there was one last indignity: just after he resigned, the *Aurora* falsely accused Alexander Hamilton of writing Washington's Farewell Address.

—Ed Lengel

**We could use your help!**

*If you hear of a Washington document that has surfaced please let us know. See contact information on page 1.*

## Benefactors Finance Reprinting of George Washington's Diaries and Other New Project Endeavors

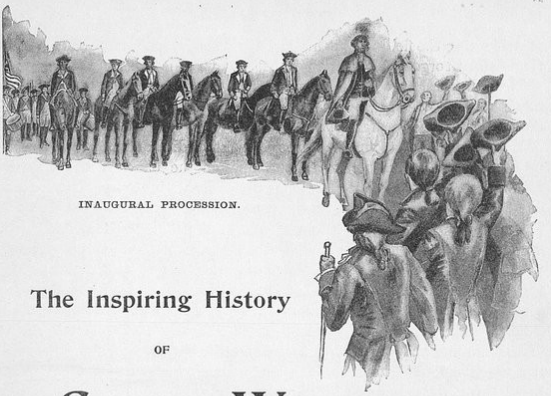
Jim and Jo Carol Porter of Fairfax Station, Va., recently made a gift to the project that allowed the reprinting of the first two volumes of Washington's diaries. "These volumes," said Ted Crackel, editor in chief of the Washington Papers, "had been out of print for several years, and it is wonderful to have them available again." The reprinted volumes, and the rest of Washington's diaries, may be purchased through the University of Virginia Press.

The Porters already had established themselves as longtime supporters of George Washington's Mount Vernon. Jo Carol Porter is a member of The Life Guard Society of Mount Vernon, which undertakes special projects in support of the home and farm. Jim Porter recently retired as a partner with Price-waterhouse Coopers, one of the nation's largest and most respected accounting firms.

The two were honored at a reception in May hosted by the University of Virginia Press and attended by several representatives of the Press and the Washington Papers, as well as by university executive vice president Leonard W. Sandridge. At an earlier luncheon with the entire Washington Papers staff, the Porters demonstrated a lively interest in early American history and in the Washington Papers project.



*Jim and Jo Carol Porter on a visit to UVa in May.*



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OF  
**GEORGE WASHINGTON,**  
First President of the United States.

**D**O you know what the twenty-second of February is? It is the birthday of George Washington. Do you know who George Washington was? He was the greatest and best man that ever lived in this dear home-land of yours, which you call America.

He had no little boys or girls of his own, but he has always been called "The Father of His Country." Do you know why people call him that? Let me tell you how he got this name.

Many years ago, on the twenty-second of February, in the year 1732, a little baby was born in a comfortable-looking old farm-house down in Virginia. This baby was named George Washington.

His father was a farmer, who planted and raised and sold large crops

2 (17)

"The Porters' interest in and knowledge of Washington and Mount Vernon is extraordinary," said Crackel. "When I showed Jim Porter samples of the extensive financial records of Washington's farms and other enterprises, he immediately recognized their significance and the great opportunity they will provide future historians and scholars in many fields."

The Porters have also generously offered their support to three other project endeavors—a scholars' conference in October, the creation of a Financial Papers Series to accompany the Digital Edition, and the publication of a comprehensive George Washington bibliography. The George Washington Bibliography Project will produce a fully digitized, searchable, and annotated bibliographic listing of every book or magazine article published in English since the eighteenth century that focuses substantively on George Washington or some aspect of his life and achievements. In its initial form, due to be complete by the end of 2010, the bibliography will focus entirely on children's literature. Senior Editor Ed Lengel will spearhead the project.

"Inaugural Procession." from *True Stories of great Americans for young Americans* by Elbridge S. Brooks and Thomas S. Meek.



## The Civility Project: Where George Washington Meets the Twenty-First Century

As a young man, George Washington was concerned enough with matters of propriety that he copied for his own use a set of 110 rules for behavior and conversation. More to the point, he seems to have lived by them.

In an effort to revive his spirit of civility, The Washington Papers has partnered with Judith Martin, author of the *Washington Post's* nationally syndicated "Miss Manners" column and numerous books on etiquette

and society, to rewrite the rules of civility for 21st-century Americans. The project is being undertaken by University students and chaired by Washington Papers student assistant Erica Mitchell. The team is soliciting input on new rules of behavior from students and will work in conjunction with Martin and the Washington Papers to release an updated set of rules in early December. Anyone who wishes to participate may submit their own suggestions online at <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/civility>.



Dean of Students Allen Groves, Judith Martin, Ted Crackel, and Erica Mitchell addressed university students at the Civility Project kickoff in the Rotunda on March 20. Photo credit: University of Virginia/Jane Haley.

## Staff News

Senior Editor **Ed Lengel's** article "George Washington, Spymaster" appeared in *Military History*, June 2009. Lengel spoke at the George Washington Masonic Memorial in Alexandria, Va. (February 2009); U.S. Army Heritage Education Center in Carlisle, Pa. (February); Robert E. Lee Memorial Chapel in Lexington, Va. (March); Society of Colonial Dames in Washington, D.C. (April); South Carolina Sons of the American Revolution in Santee, S.C., (April); UVA College of Arts and Sciences Foundation (April); and the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Library in Staunton, Va. (May). He also appeared on "George Washington's Weather," as a guest historian for The Weather Channel in February.

Assistant Editor **Carol Ebel** is serving as a committee member of The Civility Project: Where George Washington Meets the 21st Century." She gave a talk entitled "George Washington: Public Leader, Private Citizen," to the Appling County Heritage Center, in Baxley, Georgia, on 18 Jan. 2009. Ebel attended the NHPRC Institute for the

Editing of Historical Documents at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, June 16–20.

**William M. Ferraro** addressed members of the George Washington Society in Wilmington, Del., on "George Washington's Mind, or, A General's Genius" on the evening of 16 April. He plans to expand this presentation into an article. Ferraro also organized "Exploring 'Whither the Revolution?': Research Opportunities Using the Founding Era Papers," a panel at the annual meeting of the Society of Historians of the Early American Republic (SHEAR), held this past year in Springfield, Ill., between 16 and 19 July. For this session, he delivered a paper, "George Washington Lived in a Complicated World," which he illustrated with index entries and documents accessed through a live internet feed to the *Digital Edition of the Papers of George Washington*. Ferraro's sketch, "Hoyt Sherman," appeared in *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa* (University of Iowa Press, 2008): 461–63. The item was an outgrowth of his longstanding research interest in the extended family of



John and William Tecumseh Sherman. Hoyt Sherman was the youngest of the six Sherman brothers and gained prominence as a businessman in Des Moines. Ferraro recently learned that his essay "Editing, Politics, Money and the AHA's Special Meeting for the George Washington Bicentennial" has been accepted for publication by *Perspectives on History*, the widely read newsmagazine of the American Historical Association. The essay features the challenges John C. Fitzpatrick overcame to launch the *Writings of Washington* (1931–1944), the thirty-nine-volume edition being supplanted by the Papers of George Washington.

In December 2008, Assistant Editor **Jennifer Stertz** was invited to attend and give a presentation at the meeting of Porta Historica in London, England. Porta Historica is an international network of historical research institutions that are interested in documentary editing and online resources. The presentation dealt with all aspects of creating and maintaining the digital edition of the Washington Papers. In March, Stertz attended the annual meeting of the Society for Textual Scholarship and gave a paper entitled "Access and the Digital Documentary Edition."

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The Packard Humanities Institute

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*We appreciate and acknowledge a gift of any amount. All donors receive our newsletter and acknowledgement on the website. Gifts of \$500 receive a future volume signed by the editors. Gifts of \$1,000 receive a signed future volume as well as formal acknowledgement in the book.*

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(21 volumes—15 to date)
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