

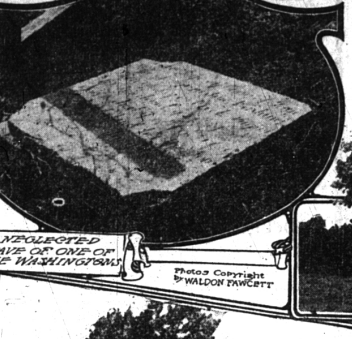
George Washington's Birthplace

BY WALDON FAWCETT

FORGE WASHINGTON'S home and tomb at Mount Vernon have become a Mecca for continual pilgrimages to a grateful nation, to say nothing of the frequent visits of distinguished foreigners; but, oddly enough, the birthplace of the Father of His Country, located some miles nearer the mouth of the Potomac, is neglected and to a considerable extent unknown. Fortunately a movement has been recently inaugurated to restore and preserve Wakefield plantation, where Washington was born and where he spent his boyhood. This project is coincident with the plan for the restoration of Stratford, the birthplace of Robert B. Lee.

The opportunities for a memorial shrine to the military leader of the confederacy are, however, somewhat superior to those at Wakefield, for whereas the ancestral home of the latter is yet standing in a fair state of preservation there are no remnants of the old buildings at Wakefield save some tumble-down log structures uncertain of their future. It is reported to have once served as slave quarters, but which are now utilized as cow corrals.

The old manor house in which George Washington opened his eyes upon the world was burned in the last century, but the brick chimney, within the arch of which four people could sit, and the cornerstone with a portion of the foundation were saved. Shortly before the civil war the historic farm passed into the hands of a family which at the outset showed



A NEOLITHIC GENIUS
BIRTHPLACE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

promise of a family which at the outset showed some appreciation for its associations. A succeeding generation, however, demolished the chimney and the remnants of the walls in order to secure the bricks.

A marble slab bearing an inscription giving the date of Washington's birth and other information, which had been set into the great arch of the fireplace as mentioned, was removed to the old family burying ground, but in placing it beneath two ancient fig-trees, planted by the

mother of Washington, it was broken and its fragments lie there to secure the bricks. Later on picnic parties landed on the sandy beach and made such a practice of carrying away the bricks as souvenirs that John W. Wilson, the owner of the farm, took steps to prevent further trespassing. Only a few of the old bricks, together with the cornerstones, are now left. These bricks—

... served as ballast for the vessels, which also brought all the woodwork and other furnishings. The broad portico of the old house faced the Potomac, which is here miles in width, and in that estimation many persons the view at this point surpasses that at either Arlington or Mount Vernon.

In the year 1895 the national government erected at Wakefield a miniature copy of the Washington national monument with the inscription:

... On these occasions the president and Mrs. Washington were conducted to a sofa placed under a canopy. The president did not stay there much, but moved about among the guests with the dignified courtesy which was always marked him in society.

On his birthday in 1797 he and Mrs. Washington were in Philadelphia. The ships in the harbor were dressed with flags and the houses decorated. Every half hour the church bells rang. Government officials and foreign diplomats called to congratulate him. The ball at night in the amphitheater, specially erected for the occasion, lasted for several hours. There were about 500 guests and according to an eye witness "very courteous behavior, polite pleasantry and approval; even Democrats forgot for a moment their enmity."

The next year, 1798, Washington attended the celebration given by his friends and neighbors at Alexandria and some accounts declare that it was the last time he did so. He was at Mount Vernon in 1799 on his birthday, it being the occasion of one of the greatest festivities in the history of the nation, which continued the candlelight in the banquet room and was attended by the gentleman from all the country around. In spite of the wedding, however, Washington seems to have slipped away for a look in his doings at Alexandria; for there is an account of that celebration in an old copy of the Alexandria Gazette in which his presence is mentioned. The great event of that particular day was a sort of mass attack on the town by three companies of the revolution. They were embarked on the wedding night and did not remain in Alexandria until after the celebration. They were succeeded in making two landings, but after a heavy and continuous street fighting were finally compelled to surrender.

The general had arrived soon after the affair began and when the evolutions were closed he presented his highest respects to all the parties engaged in them. Apparently being due for the wedding night the general did not remain for any of the dinners which followed and which so extremely a number of toasts were drunk that one soldier at the thought of how the youthful soldiers acquitted themselves at the ball in the evening.

That was the last of his birthdays which Washington himself lived to celebrate, but his home town faithfully continued the custom. G. W. P. Custis, the grandson of Mrs. Washington, spoke at the public dinner in 1849 and said that was the sixtieth celebration of February 22. Custis he had attended in Alexandria. The account of that dinner, by the way, says that "the

tion "Washington's Birthplace," and in small letters at the base the words: "Erected by the United States, A. D. 1895." Lately plans have been projected for rebuilding the old mansion, consisting in a conspicuous portion of the structure the few bricks remaining from the old house and using the original cornerstone.

The old family burying ground at Wakefield has recently been put in place a granite slab in memory of Augustine Washington, father of George Washington. This stone was provided by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. In the graveyard, also, is a marble slab bearing an inscription that indicates that it was placed in its present position in 1729.

Probably the principal reason for the neglect of Wakefield by the tourist throng that visits Mount Vernon is found in the isolation of Washington's birthplace. In connection with the erection of the governmental monument at Wakefield a substantial pier was built extending some distance out into the Potomac, but this pier is now in shod water and none of the larger steamers plying on the Potomac can reach it. In consequence the only available means of reaching Wakefield is to take passage on one of the steamers bound for Colonial Beach, the leading summer resort of the Potomac, and upon arrival at the beach to either charter a launch for the trip to Wakefield or else reach the same goal by a considerable drive over roads that are none too good. Even this time-consuming method of making a pilgrimage to Wakefield is impracticable in winter.

Washington is the mightiest name of the earth—long since mightiest in moral reformation. On that name an eulogy is expected. It cannot be done. To the man to the man alone would name of Washington is alike impossible. Let none attempt it. In solemn awe pronounce the name and in its naked, deathless splendor leave it shining on—Abraham Lincoln.

America has furnished to the world the character of Washington. And if our American citizens had done nothing else that alone would have entitled them to the respect of mankind.

Besides the birthright balls there was another feature of the early celebrations in Alexandria which was peculiar to that town. Washington had founded an orphan asylum there and when on his birthday orphans would be present at an orator, in one of the churches, the orphans were conspicuously present and came in for a special piece of attention. The account of the meeting in 1840 says that after the oration a collection was taken up for the benefit of the asylum.

The Alexandria celebrations were often addressed by G. W. P. Custis. In 1811 Richard Lee was the orator. Some idea of newspaper methods of that day may be had from the fact that although the celebration that time was mentioned in the Gazette of February 22, it was not until February 25 that a real account appeared.

During the civil war the celebration of the birthday ceased. Alexandria was ardently south in its sympathies and was, moreover, too much in the track of war to take notice of even its own pet anniversary. It was not until 1871 that it began a feeble revival of the old festival of the birth of the nation's first president. In 1872 the cadets paraded and there was a birthright ball once more. In 1874 a real celebration was arranged, with "thousands of strangers" came and upon which occasion "the houses that were mourning at Lee's death"—Robert E. Lee—"all displayed the American flag." Many houses displayed pictures of Lee and Washington side by side. But there was no birthright ball, and on the platform of the speaker's stand there was a vacant chair to honor the memory of G. W. P. Custis. "The old man eloquent."

Since 1876 the celebrations have been rather irregular in the town which originated them. But of late years a society at Washington has a permanent organization and carries out an elaborate programme every alternate year. Whereas the orphans used to be a center of birthday attention, the interest is divided now between the firemen and the soldiers.

Last year there were detachments of federal troops and of United States soldiers in addition to the District militia. At Washington has a permanent claim to pose as Alexandria's "favorite son" and these biennial affairs are the biggest things of their sort in the country. February 22 is the Alexandria's glorious Fourth.

... what then? She will have to find some means of earning an honest living other than delivering milk to a fussy lot of people who are afraid of a little pure water in their cowbuds. Herald.

Source of Teak Supply.

The world's supply of teak comes from Siam, India and Java. Teak wood is a tree attacked by the "white ant," which is so destructive to other woods in the tropics, and teak is thus largely used in Siam for the building of the better class of wooden houses.

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STARTED IN VIRGINIA

Come, boys, close the window and make a good fire. Wife, children, sit snug all around. 'Tis the day that gave birth to our country's blessed air.

Then let it with pleasure be crowned. Dear wife, bring round the wine of hard times.

On the day at least will't be merry. Come, all every glass it'll pour for the brim, If it not with alcohol—then sherry.

—Old Song.

THE honor of having originated the public observance of February 22 is one of which the town of Alexandria, Va., is justly proud. Alexandria was the birthplace of George Washington, whose church there; he voted and his physician lived there; he bought of its tradesmen, contributed to its charities, was head of its Masonic lodge, organized its fire brigade.

Washington and Alexandria either contradict the theory that a prophet is not appreciated at ways celebrated at the city which was the capital for the time being. At night there were gala performances at the theaters and a ball which the president and his wife attended.

It is recorded that one of these balls in Philadelphia was witnessed by the way that many of the young ladies were twined among their curls bandeaus embroidered with the words, "Long live

HARD PLIGHT OF THE COW

Water-Drinking Boys Put Herself in Line for Occupation of Gross Fraud.

The white and milky way which the gentle cow has so long traveled in peace and honor is now to be full of war and blood. The cow is being slaughtered on the right of the fence. A New York man has accused his Hol-

stein cow of being guilty of delivering milk below the standard of cleanliness. Her stock is watered and that is her responsibility for any of her up-to-date rogues.

The cow has been tried and found guilty. The dairyman in question and the yard pump have been acquitted. The farmer is to be tried for the crime. The judge has ordered the cow to be hung higher up the fence. The New York man has accused his Hol-

... water in their cowbuds. Herald.

... of our friends—Margaret DeLand.