



**GEORGE WASHINGTON  
A NATIONAL TREASURE**

# The Patriot Papers

**PATRIOT** n. [Fr patriote < LL. patriota, fellow countryman < Gr patriotes < patris, fatherland < pater, FATHER]

## George Celebrates Birthday in the Hollywood Hills Smithsonian Exhibition Opens in Seattle in March

*National Portrait Gallery Tours "George Washington: A National Treasure"*

Driving through the sunlit streets of Los Angeles, I saw him, suspended from a lamppost on Fairfax Avenue, just off Wilshire Boulevard. As I caught a glimpse of the Hollywood Hills, there he was again, shrouded by the morning mist. George Washington had come to LA to celebrate his birthday, and hundreds were flocking to see him. The event: "George Washington: A National Treasure," an exhibition from the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. The place: LACMA—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

On Presidents' Day 2002, "George Washington: A National Treasure" began a nationwide tour at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas. One year later, George Washington celebrated Presidents' Day in Los Angeles, reigniting the spirit of Washington for thousands of Americans. And on March 21, 2003, the exhibition opened at the Seattle Art Museum. With this tour, made possible through the generosity of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC, is sharing the spirit of George Washington with students across America.

Painted in 1796 by artist Gilbert Stuart, the portrait is considered one of the most important visual documents of the founding of our nation. Its historical and cultural significance has been compared to that of the Liberty Bell and the Declaration of Independence. At the tour's end, the portrait

### *Coming Soon to a Museum Near You*

**The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston:**  
February 15-June 16, 2002

**Las Vegas Art Museum:**  
June 28-October 27, 2002

**Los Angeles County Museum of Art:**  
November 7, 2002-March 9, 2003

**Seattle Art Museum: March 21-July 20, 2003**

**The Minneapolis Institute of Arts:**  
August 1-November 30, 2003

**Oklahoma City Museum of Art:**  
December 12, 2003-April 11, 2004

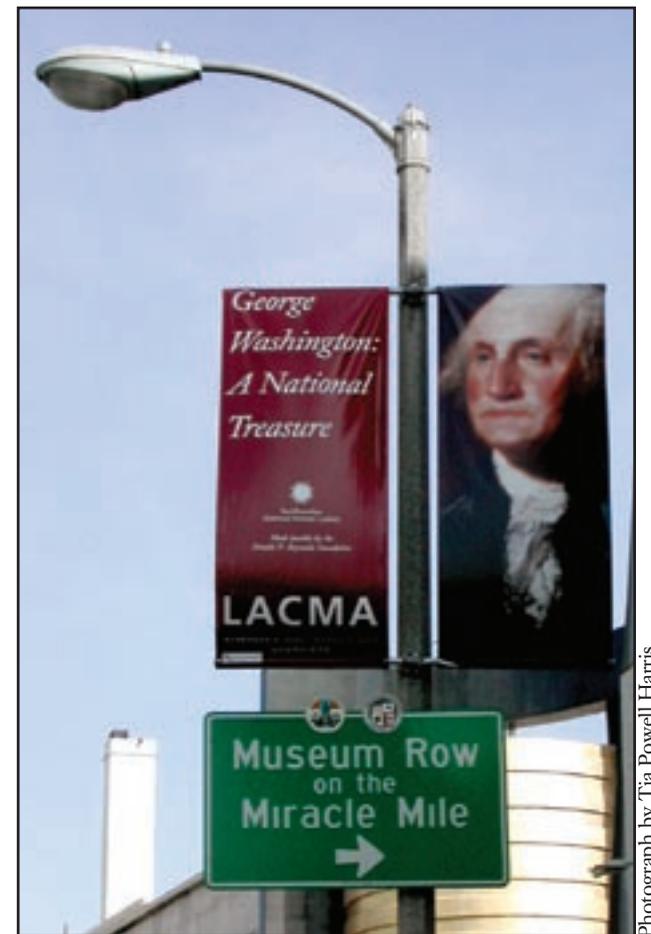
**Arkansas Arts Center: April 23-August 22, 2004**

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Fall 2004**

will return to its permanent home in the Portrait Gallery.

"I thought it was going to be small," said Patricia Vargas, visiting with her mom, Lupe. "But it was huge!" The 8-foot life-size painting does dwarf many of its younger visitors. Museum docents lead daily school tours as hundreds of children stare wide-eyed at all 6'3" of Stuart's *George Washington*. "Do you think he was a good man?" "Of course," answered ten-year-old Gabe Wingert. "He started a country."

The iconography—the rainbow, the flag, the inkwell, the blue sky, the sword—was another favorite topic of discus-



Photograph by Tia Powell Harris

sion. "And what do you think that scroll is, rolled up on the desk?" "I think it's the Declaration of Independence," volunteered Gabe. But his sister Linda had a more inventive idea. "Maybe those are George Washington's bills." Good answer. You might be right, Linda. After all, it costs a lot to start a country, right Gabe?

## Tennessee Catches the Spirit and Declares GW Education Day

Tennessee caught the spirit and declared December 17, 2002, George Washington Education Day throughout the state. West Elementary School in Mount Juliet hosted the event where educators from the Smithsonian presented the state of Tennessee with a framed reproduction of the original "Lansdowne" portrait of George Washington. The day was celebrated with tricorn hats, knee-high stockings, and a red, white, and blue-flocked Christmas tree. Costumed students presented a living timeline that debunked common myths about the founding father, including the myth that Washington wore wooden teeth. (Actually his teeth were made from human teeth, cow's teeth, and ivory.) Other students read their winning essays on Washington and even reenacted Washington's famous crossing of the Delaware. Nevada and South Carolina held similar celebrations.

Although the 205-year-old portrait will visit only eight cities, the National Portrait Gallery hopes to affect all 50 states. "Our goal is to create excitement about George Washington as an American hero," said NPG education



Young GW reenactor Cody Hartley comes "face to face" with George.

director Carol Wyrick. "The greatest legacy he left us was his selfless service to his fellow man. We're asking all Americans to follow his example and give time to both country and community."

## Get on the Bus, Gus ... Make a New Plan, Stan

*LA Schools Support Local Communities. What's Your Plan?*

The kids from Malibu jumped on board. Lorraine Staab and her kindergartners from Webster Elementary School in Malibu led the way on a school initiative that supports the **School on Wheels**. The kids collect backpacks, lunch pails, pencils, crayons, and other assorted school supplies to equip this traveling school bus that tutors homeless kids in Santa Monica. Read on to see how kids around LA are studying history through service, benefiting both school and community.

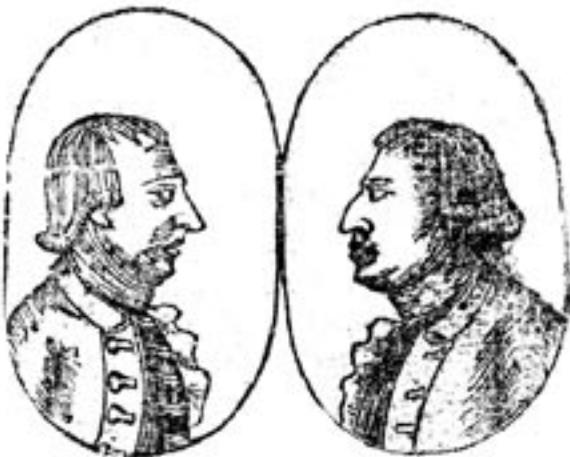
★ Virginia Goodrich from **Monterey Hills Elementary School** in South Pasadena and her 5<sup>th</sup>-grade class chose to support the Rare Breeds program at Colonial Williamsburg. Using the culinary arts to raise money, they chose a recipe from the historic Raleigh Tavern, baked gingerbread cookies in the shape of rare breeds, and sold their wares at a mock market square. Watch for the recipe in the next issue. *continued on page 8*

## Washington Wins Election to House from Fort Cumberland!

FREDERICKSBURG, 1758—George Washington, son of Augustine and Mary Ball Washington, has been elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses while serving with the British regulars at Fort Cumberland. Although urged by friends to return to the colony of Virginia and “show his face,” Washington opted to remain with his men and was successful in winning a seat in the House from Frederick County.

## General Washington Rallies Troops at Valley Forge

VALLEY FORGE, 1777–1778—General Washington struggles to keep his troops alive and well in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, this winter. Inadequate shipments of food, clothing, and supplies have left the regiments in shambles; poor hygiene and rampant disease threaten the lives of all the soldiers camped there. General Washington has made repeated appeals for increased supplies, but the mismanagement of the supply trade has yet to be resolved. In the meantime, General Washington struggles alongside his men while political rivals threaten to remove his power. Military and civilian critics, particularly Thomas Conway and Dr. Benjamin Rush, feel that there are several men who are better suited to lead the Continental army.



*The Glorious Washington and Gates, detail from Bickerstaff's Boston Almanack, 1778*

## Martha Washington Buries Fourth Child, John P. Custis

YORKTOWN, 1781—After losing two children in infancy and her daughter Patsy to epilepsy, Martha Washington lost her last child to camp fever. John Parke Custis, known as Jacky to family and friends, passed away on November 5 at Yorktown, merely seventeen days after the surrender of Britain's General Cornwallis. Jacky leaves behind a wife and four children. General and Mrs. Washington will raise the younger two children, Eleanor “Nelly” Custis and George Washington Parke Custis, at Mount Vernon, their home in Virginia.

## Washington Unanimous Pick for President at Convention!

NEW YORK, 1789 (AP)—After many months of debate to establish our new American government, the first official election was held on February 4, 1789. George Washington has received all 69 electoral votes! Washington, who will be inaugurated on April 30 of this year, accepted his new office, despite his overwhelming desire to return to his estate at Mount Vernon: “I was summoned by my country . . . from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection, and . . . with an immutable decision, as the asylum of my declining years.” Washington and his wife Martha will move to the country's capital, New York City.

## Washington Graciously Delays Retirement for a Second Term

PHILADELPHIA, 1793 (AP)—President George Washington has won his second election to the presidency of the United States! The inauguration will take place on March 4 in Philadelphia, the new capital of the United States. However, the prospect of returning to the stress of presidential life has left Washington doubtful. Washington wrote to his friend Henry Lee “that it was after a long and painful conflict in my own breast, that I was withheld from requesting, in time, that no votes might be thrown away upon me; it being my fixed determination to return to the walks of private life.” The next four years do in fact promise to be difficult; factionalism has already begun to sprout in government over constitutional interpretation. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, who was the driving force behind the creation of the National Bank and National Mint, will remain in the service of the President. Edmund Randolph will replace Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state.

## The Patriot Papers

*The Patriot Papers* serves students of all ages. It is published quarterly by the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 37012, Washington, D.C. 20013-7012

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Teaching materials to accompany the exhibition “George Washington: A National Treasure” are available to educators at no cost by visiting [www.georgewashington.si.edu](http://www.georgewashington.si.edu) or by calling 1-866-NPG-KITS.

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Smithsonian  
National Portrait Gallery

## Whiskey Rebellion Shakes Pennsylvania

PHILADELPHIA, 1794—Western Pennsylvanians have turned their resentment over recent taxes on whiskey into a violent opposition. They are launching the first major civil disturbance of President Washington's term in office. Last week, U.S. Marshal David Lenox met with resistance in Westmoreland County while trying to collect taxes on locally distilled liquor. Military action will be taken, much to the regret of the President: “I have accordingly determined to do so, feeling the deepest regret for the occasion, but withal, the most solemn conviction, that the essential interests of the Union demand it.” The army is being organized from other northern states, and it will advance into Pennsylvania shortly.

### *Wanted Immediately*

A PERSON to attend in a Store who will be constant and assiduous, understands Accounts, and can write a good Hand. Also, a Youth about fourteen or fifteen Years of Age, who can read well, and write tolerably. Inquire at the Post Office.



On Tuesday next,  
being the 14th Instant,  
A new COMEDY,  
called

FALSE  
DELICACY

By the author of  
A WORD TO  
THE WISE

*(It may not be improper to give Notice that the Theatre in Williamsburg will be closed at the End of the April Court, the American Company's Engagements calling them to the Northward, from whence, it is probable, they will not return for several years.)*

Was found  
November 9, 1787,  
on the Egypt Road

A Lady's  
TIPPET.

Whoever has lost the same, by applying to the Printers, and paying the expense of the advertisement, may have it again.

KING & QUEEN, MARCH 31, 1772

☞ WHEREAS MY APPRENTICE, Christopher Lewis, has absented himself from my Service, I therefore forewarn all Persons from employing or entertaining him under any Pretence whatever.

THOMAS HILL

## Valley Forge: *An Eyewitness Account*

In the winter of 1777, Commander in Chief George Washington moved his army to a winter camp at Valley Forge, some 20 miles outside of Philadelphia. For the next few months, the soldiers suffered from starvation, the lack of adequate clothing, and poor hygiene. Although morale was low, Washington managed to keep the struggling army together. A new quartermaster general, Nathanael Greene, and a German drillmaster, Baron von Steuben, helped bring supplies and order to the broken army. The following diary entry from Dr. Albigen Waldo describes the physical and emotional suffering endured by the troops at Valley Forge:

“December 14—Prisoners & Deserters are continually coming in. The Army which has been surprisingly healthy hitherto, now begins to grow sickly from the continued fatigues they have suffered this Campaign. Yet they still show a spirit of Alacrity & Contentment not to be expected from so young Troops. I am Sick—discontented—and out of humour. Poor food—hard lodging—Cold Weather—fatigue—Nasty Cloaths—nasty Cookery—Vomit half my time—Smoak’d out of my senses [by the smoke created by the guns]—the Devil’s in it—I can’t Endure it—Why are we sent here to starve and Freeze—What sweet Felicities have I left at home; A charming Wife—pretty Children—Good Beds—good food—good Cookery—All agreeable—all harmonious. Here all Confusion—smoke & Cold—hunger & filthiness—a pox on my bad luck. There comes a bowl of beef soup—full of burnt leaves and dirt. . . . Away with it Boys—I’ll live like the Chameleon upon Air. Poh! Poh! Cries Patience within me—you talk like a fool. Your being Covers your mind with a Melancholic Gloom, which makes everything about you appear gloomy. See the poor Soldier, when in health—with what cheerfulness he meets his foes and encounters every



*Battle of Bunker's Hill, near Boston* (detail) by Johann Gotthard Von Müller, after John Trumbull, engraving, 1788–1797. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

hardship—if barefoot, he labours thro’ the Mud & Cold with a Song in his mouth extolling War & Washington—if his food be bad, he eats it notwithstanding with seeming content—blesses God for a good Stomach and Whistles it into digestion. But harkee Patience, a moment—There comes a Soldier, his bare feet are seen thro’ his worn out Shoes, his legs nearly naked from the tatter’d remains of an only pair of stockings, his Breeches not sufficient to cover his nakedness, his Shirt hanging in Strings, his hair dishevell’d, his face meager; his whole appearance pictures a person forsaken & discouraged. He comes, and crys with an air of wretchedness & despair, I am Sick, my feet lame, my legs sore, my body cover’d with this tormenting Itch—my Cloaths are worn out, my Constitution is broken, my former Activity is exhausted by fatigue, hunger & Cold, I fail fast I shall soon be no more! And all the reward I shall get will be—‘Poor Will is dead.’ People who live at home in Luxury and Ease, quietly possessing their habitations, Enjoying their Wives & families in peace, have but a very faint idea of the unpleasing sensations, and continual Anxiety that Man endures who is in a Camp, and is the husband and parent of an agreeable family. These same People are willing we should suffer every thing for their Benefit & advantage, and yet are the first to Condemn us for not doing more!!”

## December 1790

PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE, 190 HIGH STREET, PHILADELPHIA. Senator Robert Morris’s dwelling at 190 High Street has turned out to be the best house available for the President’s use, and Mr. Morris has graciously agreed to move around the corner. Additions will be made to accommodate Mrs. Washington and her two grandchildren, Nelly, who is about twelve, and George Washington, who is about ten, as well as the President’s secretary and numerous servants. The bathing room has been

turned into a study to provide for a room in which the President can do business, but unfortunately, it will be necessary for visitors to walk up two flights of stairs and pass by the public rooms and private chambers to get to it. The President has insisted that the house is to be finished in a plain and neat manner and has ruled out tapestry or very rich and costly wallpaper. He has also ruled that the back yard be kept as clean as the parlor since it is in full view from the best rooms in the house.



*George Washington and His Family* by David Edwin, after Edward Savage, stipple engraving, 1798. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution



Throughout the coming months *The Patriot Papers* will address the issue of slavery during Washington’s time. In view of Washington’s many attributes and accomplishments, it is difficult to acknowledge his role as slave owner. Guest historians will share their perspectives; we invite you to share yours. Hopefully, through dialogue, we will increase our understanding.

—F. A. Pulles, editor  
PatriotPapers@npg.si.edu

## November 1796

RUNAWAY SLAVE. Mrs. Washington is greatly distressed by the loss of Olney Judge, her Mount Vernon servant so skilled in needlework. The girl, we hear, was lured away by a Frenchman who tired of her and left her stranded in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. President Washington has sent word that all will be forgiven if she returns to her mistress, but she has refused to come back unless promised her freedom. This puts the President in an awkward situation. Privately he has said that although he is sympathetic to her demand, setting her free would only reward her for running away, and would spread discontent among the rest of his servants (as he calls them), who by being faithful are more deserving of their freedom than the runaway. Above all, the President cautioned that no violent means should be used to bring her back, lest a mob or riot be excited. Rather than risk this happening, he would tell Mrs. Washington she must get along without the services of Olney Judge.

## December 1790

FREEDOM TOO GREAT A TEMPTATION. President Washington has brought a handful of servants from Mount Vernon, but he will be faced with the difficulty of complying with the Pennsylvania law freeing adult slaves who have lived in Pennsylvania for six months in a row. It is believed that the President, therefore, will have to shuttle these servants back and forth and suffer the inconvenience of sometimes being without his cook Hercules. Asked if he feared his slaves might take advantage of being in the north to run away, the President has privately conceded that “the idea of freedom might be too great a temptation for them to resist.”

### RUN AWAY FROM MY PLANTATION,

called *Newport News*, on the 17th of *January*, a very likely Negro Fellow named *Strawsbury*, about thirty Years of Age, has lost one of his fore Teeth, and had on a Cotton Waistcoat and Breeches, Plaid Stockings, and Negro Shoes. The Negroes upon the Plantation saw him go away with two Sailors; he can read, and I imagine he will attempt to go out of the Country on Board a Vessel. I do hereby forewarn all Masters of Vessels from carrying him away, as they shall answer it at their Peril. Whoever brings the said Negro to me, in *York County*, shall have TEN POUNDS Reward if he is taken in this Colony, and TWENTY POUNDS if out thereof.

WILLIAM DIGGES, Junior

We interrupt this edition of *The Patriot Papers* news to bring you the nearly news—a collection of intimate historical glimpses into the past, captured in not-so-living color in *The Pudding Papers*. The complete episodic adventures can be viewed at your leisure at [www.georgewashington.si.edu](http://www.georgewashington.si.edu). Our on-the-scene trusted correspondents include: Silas Silvertongue, our presidential reporter; Titus Blunt, our congressional correspondent; and our own Prudence Pudding, who provides social notes from all over. (We leave it for you to decide, dear reader, whether she is an upstart hussy or a man in disguise.) In the spirit of the freedom of the press guaranteed by our new Bill of Rights, we intend to act as a watchful eye and a listening ear, sometimes bringing a plate of gossip, but never a dish of scandal.

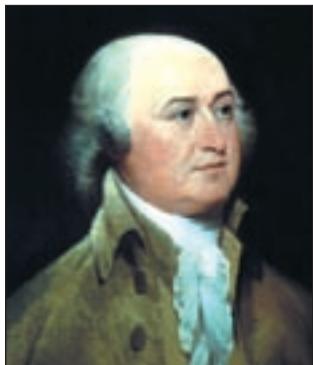
*\*Editor's note—We apologize in advance for any improprieties, insults, or slanderous remarks on the part of our correspondents. They are, at times ill-mannered, sometimes indiscreet, and, at all times, want of wit.*

## April 23, 1789

HE COMES! HE COMES! George Washington, President-elect of the United States, has just set foot on the New York shore after an eight-day triumphal journey from Mount Vernon. The excitement here is unbelievable. Thousands line the streets—all you can see are heads standing as thick as ears of corn before the harvest. Ladies are crowded in every window, anxious for a glimpse of the illustrious man. “I have seen him!” we heard one young lady call out, “and though I had been entirely ignorant that he was arrived in the city, I should have known at a glance that it was General Washington: I never saw a human being that looked so great and noble as he does. I could fall down on my knees before him.” Washington, it can well be believed, is more popular than the new government he is to head.

## May 14, 1789

WHAT IS THE PRESIDENT TO BE CALLED? Debate, we are told, rages behind the closed doors of the Senate over a proper title for the President. Vice President John Adams and a number of the senators have insisted that a grand and high-sounding name, such as “Elective Excellency” or “Elective Highness,” is necessary to give respect to the office. Sources tell us that the committee appointed to draw up a list of titles “of all the Princes of the Earth” has recommended “His Highness the President of the United States of America, and Protector of their Liberties.” But the House of Representatives refuses to agree, and Mr. Washington will be simply called President of the United States. As one member of Congress told us, no other title was necessary to add to the respect the whole country had for General Washington.



John Adams by John Trumbull (detail), oil on canvas, circa 1793. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

*“Elective Highness”*

—a suggested title for the President of the United States, 1789



Martha Washington (above left) by an unidentified artist, after Gilbert Stuart and Charles Willson Peale, oil on canvas, 1800–1825. Abigail Adams (above right) by Raphaele Peale, hollow-cut silhouette, 1804. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution



## May 30, 1789

THE PRESIDENT'S LADY. Mrs. Washington, who needed some time to prepare for her journey, has now arrived in New York. The President's lady will give no interviews to the press, but this correspondent has talked to many of her friends and acquaintances. Mrs. Adams, the Vice President's lady, who first met Mrs. Washington when she came to be with the general in Cambridge at the beginning of the war, told *The Patriot Papers* that Mrs. Washington is a lady of patience and prudence. “Her manners are modest and unassuming, dignified and feminine, not the Tincture of ha'ture about her.” Others tell us that Mrs. President Washington [no one thought to call her the first lady] is very friendly and likes to talk, but never about politics. “I little thought that when the war was finished that anything would call the General into public life again,” she had told friends. “Yet I cannot blame him for having acted according to his ideas of duty in obeying the voice of his country.”

## July 9, 1790

WHERE IS THE CAPITAL TO BE? Ever since the old Congress left Philadelphia in 1783, arguments have raged over where the permanent seat of government should be built. At last, the residence is decided. The government is to leave New York and spend the next ten years in Philadelphia. The permanent capital will be a new city created on the banks of the Potomac River, the exact location to be chosen by President Washington. Some folks speculate that it will not be far from Mount Vernon. New Yorkers, after they have gone to so much trouble and expense to accommodate the government, feel betrayed, and one angry letter to the editor speaks of the President as the country's “former favorite guardian and deliverer.”



Thomas Jefferson (above left) by Mather Brown (detail), oil on canvas, 1786. Gift of Charles Francis Adams. Alexander Hamilton (above right) by James Sharples, pastel on paper, circa 1796. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

## February 1792

POLITICAL PARTIES. Not a word about political parties in the Constitution, but they are here and with a passion. Federalists, who are friends of the government, and the Republicans, who find much to criticize, are at it tooth and nail. Most folks say the parties started over the differences between Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. Hamilton, the friend of business and manufacturers, has pushed for a strong federal government; Jefferson, who wants to see America stay a land of farmers, is deeply suspicious of moneymen and banks. But what has really stirred things up is the war between France and England, with the Republicans being passionately on the side of France, which has beheaded its king and become a republic, and the Federalists seeing the old mother country as an important trading partner. The President, who wants to keep both Hamilton and Jefferson in his cabinet and to steer a neutral course between France and England, is beset by difficulties.

## August 2, 1793

THE PRESIDENT ENRAGED. Sources tell us that the President lost his usually well-controlled temper at a recent meeting of his cabinet. Shown a satiric piece describing his head being chopped off by the guillotine, printed in Republican editor Philip Freneau's newspaper, the President went suddenly into a towering rage, spoke bitterly of the newspaper abuse to which he had been subjected in past months, and defied any critic to indicate one selfish act committed by him in office. He said he would rather be a farmer than emperor of the world, and yet that “rascal Freneau” insinuated that he would like to be a king. To add insult to injury, Freneau sent three copies of every issue to the President's dwelling.

## April 1796

GEORGE WASHINGTON LAFAYETTE. The fourteen-year-old son of the Marquis de Lafayette arrived in Philadelphia on the 11th of this month. His father, who had tried to save the King and Queen of France from losing their heads, remains in prison, and the lad has been sent to America to be under the protection of President Washington. “I will be his friend,” the President declared and has taken him into his household, even though he worries that the revolutionary government of France might take offense. He has instructed young Lafayette to study hard to be worthy of his father. Washington has a special place in his heart for the Marquis de Lafayette, who came from France to fight in the American Revolution when he was nineteen years old.

## Washington's Final Hours

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS FROM TOBIAS LEAR

George Washington, beloved general and first President of the United States, has died at his home at Mount Vernon at the age of 67. His illness was short: after riding out in bad weather on Thursday, December 12, General Washington was taken with a fever and respiratory problems. Although doctors made numerous attempts to save his life, Washington passed on with the dignity and courage he had displayed throughout his many years of military and civic service.

Washington's close friend and personal secretary, Tobias Lear, was with the general throughout his illness. Recounted here are Lear's recollections of these final hours:

"I found the General breathing with difficulty, and hardly able to utter a word. . . . A mixture of Molasses, Vinegar, and butter was prepared to try its effects in the throat; but he could not swallow a drop. Whenever he attempted it, he appeared distressed . . . and almost suffocated. Rawlins came in soon after sunrise, and prepared to bleed him. When the arm was ready the General, observing that Rawlins appeared to be agitated, said, as well as he could speak, *'Don't be afraid.'*

Dr. Craik came in soon after and, upon examining the General, he put a blister of Cantharides\* on the throat, took some more blood from him, and had a gargle of Vinegar and sage tea, and ordered some Vinegar and hot water for him to inhale the steam, which he did; but in attempting to use the gargle, he was almost suffocated.

Upon Dr. Dick's seeing the General . . . he was bled again; the blood came very slow, was thick, and did not produce any symptoms of fainting. About half past four o'clock, he desired me to call Mrs. Washington to his bed side, when he requested her to go down into his room, and take from his desk two Wills . . . and bring them to him, which she did. Upon looking at them, he gave her one, which he observed was useless . . . and desired her to burn it.

He said to me, *'I find I am going, my breath cannot last long. I believed from the first that the disorder would prove fatal. . . .'*

About ten minutes before he expired, . . . his breathing became easier; he lay quietly; he withdrew his hand from mine and felt his own pulse. I saw his countenance change. . . . The General's hand fell from his wrist—I took it in mine and put it into my bosom. Dr. Craik put his hand over his eyes and he expired without a struggle or a sigh!

During his whole illness he spoke but seldom, and with great difficulty; and in so low and broken a voice as at times hardly to be understood. His patience, fortitude, and resignation



*George Washington in His Last Illness*, an etching done in 1800 by an unidentified artist, is an example of the public's fascination with the death of its first American hero. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

never forsook him for a moment. In all his distress, he uttered not a sigh, nor a complaint; always endeavoring to take what was offered him, and to do as he was desired by the Physicians."

\* blister of Cantharides: cantharides (kan thar\_ē dez) n. pl. [ME cantaridesffL cantharides, pl. of cantharis, kind of beetle, Spanish fly, Gr kanthris, blister beetle] dangerous, sometimes fatal, preparation of powdered, dried Spanish flies, formerly used internally as a diuretic and aphrodisiac and externally as a skin irritant.

## Did George Washington Stand a Chance?

### *Colonial Practice of Bloodletting Helped Cause Washington's Death*

—by Vicki Fama, assistant editor

Today, it is easy to criticize the medical methods performed in colonial times. When we read that George Washington died of a simple bacterial infection, we wonder why measures we now consider primitive, such as bloodletting, were even employed in the fight to save the first President's life. Medical training was primitive as well: although some American doctors were fortunate enough to study in England or Scotland, others were less fortunate. American medical schools did not yet exist; thus, many doctors were self-trained. In view of our present medical understanding, did George Washington even stand a chance of being saved?

Colonial medicine was based on European medical methods and theories; no one then understood how diseases or infection spread. One of the main theories focused on the

need for a total balance of tension and fluids in the body; this delicate balance was essential to both physical and mental health. This concept played an important role in Washington's death.

On the morning of December 14, 1799, George Washington, who had felt ill for several days, sent for a plantation worker who could bleed him. Bloodletting was a common practice: by releasing blood from the body of a sick person, doctors believed they could alleviate excessive pressure and tension and return the body to a healthy balance. Washington's doctors may have thought that bloodletting would thus extract the constricting fluids around his throat. However, within 2 hours, Washington was bled several times, losing an estimated 5 pints of blood—approximately one-third of the blood in his body! This was certainly a factor in his death.

The doctors also tried other methods of withdrawing fluids. Washington was given an tartar emetic, which induced vomiting. Again, this practice would have dehydrated him and lessened his chance of recovery.

Washington was also subjected to the intake of fluids. Doctors tried to administer mixtures of molasses, vinegar, and butter, hoping to heal his throat from the inside. They also used a gargle of vinegar and sage tea for the same purpose. But because of the severe swelling of Washington's

throat, both attempts were unsuccessful and even threatened to choke the sick General.

The most dramatic medical treatment, proposed by Dr. Elisha Dick, was a tracheotomy (the creation of an air hole in the throat to allow for easier breathing). While the other physicians treating Washington rejected the idea, some scientists today believe that a tracheotomy could have been beneficial. Nonetheless, the lack of sterile equipment and anesthesia might have easily caused a deadly infection or put Washington's body in shock, an equally threatening possibility.

The doctors who cared for the dying George Washington did all that they thought medically possible. While it is tempting to judge their methods with the benefit of hindsight, we should appreciate the context and limitations of the colonial era. George Washington died the way he lived, with courage and a belief in a greater force beyond mankind.

*A modern analysis by White McKenzie Wallenborn, M.D., concludes that Washington died from acute epiglottitis, which is a bacterial inflammation of the epiglottis, a flap at the root of the tongue that prevents food from entering the windpipe. However, some doctors today believe that the excessive loss of blood alone would have weakened Washington enough to kill him.*



MISS FAITH PROCTOR

## The Perils of Pampering

### Faith's Day at the Spa

—BY J. K. PULLES

Never again! I have never in my life been subjected to such torture. Faith Proctor here again to tell you about my day at the spa.

You may remember that after leaving my rural Massachusetts home to meet my distant relatives in Washington, D.C., I encountered a great many wonderful things in your modern cities. I've already told you about my fascinating trip to the mall. Well, after visiting the mall, my cousin Melody told me that our next visit should be to the spa. She said, "What use are our great new clothes without a makeover?" Eager to try all of the exciting things the city had to offer, I quickly agreed to a "makeover."

We entered Vittorio's the next morning. They sent us to a beautiful lounge, where a woman handed us robes and sandals. Immediately Melody began removing her blouse! I gasped and said, "Melody! Have you brought me to a house of ill repute? I will not be a part of this!" Melody laughed and explained that we were supposed to undress and put on the robes and sandals. Imagine! Walking around in front of strangers in your bathrobe! I nearly ran right out of Vittorio's for fear that my virtue was in danger. Melody finally convinced me to stay, so I reluctantly put on the robe and sandals. Clutching the robe tightly around me, we left the lounge and entered a small white room

with two tables. After a moment, two men came in the room and handed us each a white bedsheet. They then asked us to remove our robes and lie on the tables. "I knew it!" I shouted. "This is a brothel! And to think, you even expect us to make the beds! I have never in my life been treated with such disrespect!" Melody grabbed me and calmly explained that these men were professionals. They expected us to lie on the tables and cover ourselves with sheets. They would then lay their hands on us and make our sore muscles feel better. "Oh!" I said. "I understand. This is that new religion—hands-on healing. My Mama told me about these people. Well, I'm not going to change my religious beliefs, but I suppose if these men are men of the cloth it would be okay for me to remove my robe." An hour later I was completely relaxed and willing to consider this new religion!

It was only then, after they had lured me in, taken my clothes, and relaxed all of my muscles, that the torture began. Melody and I were ushered into another small room with several reclining chairs. Two women entered the room and asked us to sit in the large, comfortable chairs. One of the women approached me and began to put a hot, sticky glue on my face. "What is that?" I asked. The woman told me it was wax! "Wax!" I gasped. "You're making me into a human candle. This is a human sacrifice! Run, Melody, run!" I couldn't understand why Melody just sat there. Laughing, the woman told me to please sit back down. She said she was simply removing hair from my face. I sat back in the chair, still not completely understanding what was about to happen. After applying more hot wax to my face the woman grabbed strips of paper and put them on top of the wax. After a moment, the woman told me to relax and, grabbing the edge of the paper, she ripped it from my face. "AAAAAH!" I shrieked. "Why are you doing this to me? I will not succumb to your torture—I will not join your religion!" I struggled to get out of the chair, but the woman kept applying the horrible hot wax. I passed out as she began applying the hot

wax above my eyes.

I woke up some time later in a dim room with my feet in a toilet. Reclining in a large, leather chair, I was surrounded by hundreds of tiny bottles of colored liquid. A woman came into the room and told me she was going to give me a "pedicure." "A pedicure? A cure? Oh thank you! Finally, something to soothe me after that excruciating hot wax torture!" She sat down on a small stool in front of my feet. She pushed a button and the toilet started to gurgle and swirl. I jerked my legs up and away from the flushing toilet. The woman asked me to please put my feet back in the water. "No thanks," I said. "I've already been covered in glue and I don't want my feet sucked into a toilet." The woman looked at me strangely but agreed to turn it off. Once the swirling stopped, I slowly lowered my feet back into the water. Just then the woman pulled open a drawer and began to remove shiny silver scalpels and scissors from the drawer. It was then I realized her diabolical plan. I jumped from the chair, pushed the woman down, and ran screaming through the hall. The woman began to chase me with her torture instruments. Slipping and sliding on wet feet, I searched frantically for the exit. Turning left and right, down hallway after hallway, I finally saw a sign that said, "Tranquillity Pond, this way." I was sure that was the answer. The sign would lead me back to the nice men of the cloth from the white room and they would help me. I heard the woman behind me, calling my name. Faster and faster I ran, bursting through the door to the Tranquillity Pond and flying headlong into a pool of mud. Mud splashed all around me, covering the woman and one of the religious men standing over the pond. I was mired in a pond of mud, but for the first time in weeks, I felt at home.

Well, I'm willing to try almost anything once, but once was enough for me. No more hands-on healing, hot wax torture, or gurgling foot toilets for me. I'll stick to beauty the old-fashioned way—with a pinch to the cheek and a touch of powder to the nose.

## In Other Words...

Mistress Goody's Column of Advice on subjects other than politics and war.

RESPECTFULLY BASED ON *THE RULES OF CIVILITY*

—BY T. POWELL HARRIS

In 1745, in the colonial frontier town of Fredericksburg, Virginia, thirteen-year-old George Washington recorded *The Rules of Civility* in his workbook, probably as a dictation exercise. These "guidelines for the respectable gentleman" would influence him throughout his life, guiding him in both social and professional situations. Translations and variations abound, but all stress etiquette, chivalry, and courtesy, often rather elusive concepts in the 21st century.

Fortunately, there is one who understands the rules well; in fact, she still recommends their use today. Let us recall a character from the past to offer advice on life, love, and learning. We give you the "Toast of George Town"—our own Mistress Goody, always informed, always respectable, and very, very good.

Mistress Goody,

*There's this really cool group of kids that I want to hang out with. Sometimes they do mean things to people. Like once I know they broke into a teacher's car. They didn't take anything. It was just a practical joke, sort of. My mom says I shouldn't want to be associated with anyone who might lead me into trouble one day, but I think it's all about a little fun. What do you say?*

**Rule 56: Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation. For 'tis better to be alone than in bad company.**

I think you get Mistress Goody's point!

Mistress Goody,

*At the lunch table most everyone eats and talks at the same time. I think that's pretty gross. What do you think?*

The rules of dining etiquette are quite clear; let them guide your acquaintances in all their culinary endeavors:

**Rule 90: Being set at meat, scratch not neither spit, cough nor blow your nose, except when there is a necessity for it.**

**Rule 100: Cleanse not your teeth with the tablecloth, napkin, fork, knife; but if others do it, let it be done with a pick tooth [i.e., a toothpick].**

Mistress Goody,

*My very best friend just broke up with her boyfriend. But now he asked me out, and she'll just die when she finds out. Should I go? What should I do? He's awfully cute.*

My, my, this is a distressing dilemma. Mistress Goody recalls a situation of her own. It was 1796 at the George Town Ball. I cut quite a stunning figure that evening in my green taffeta gown and brocaded mules. Miss Prudence Petticoat of Philadelphia was pursued by a most evocative gentleman, but when her dance card was full, he pursued me! I'm afraid that a most unladylike tiff ensued shortly thereafter . . . but I digress. My advice to you, my dear, is found in

**Rule 22: Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of another.**

To join the gentleman in frivolity so soon after her heartbreak is unconscionable, not to mention terribly tacky. It certainly shows little regard for your intimate friend and calls into question your upbringing. Heed also

**Rule 110: Labour to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.**

Have you misplaced yours, my dear?



MISTRESS GOODY

## Annual City Ball

The Ladies and Gentlemen are respectfully invited to the annual Ball, to be held at the City Public House Ball Room, on Friday Evening at 5 o'Clock.

*Gentlemen must provide themselves with tickets of admission, which may be had of Mr. Wadson.*

- \* No Lady to be admitted in a nightgown and no gentlemen in boots.
- \* Couples to dance their minuets in the order they stand in their individual sets.
- \* No dance to begin after 11 at night.
- \* No tea, coffee, negus or other liquor to be carried into the dancing room.



## Social Notes from All Over...

Patience Wright by an unidentified artist, etching, 1775. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

### Philadelphia, January 1791

MRS. WASHINGTON'S DRAWING ROOM. On Friday evening at eight, your humble correspondent was among the ladies and gentlemen in attendance at Mrs. Washington's weekly reception. Mrs. Washington, plainly dressed, but in a gown of rich silk, sat on a sofa by the fireplace and arose to greet her guests with a curtsy which each lady returned. Each gentleman bowed low. Coffee, tea, and cake were served, and had I come in the summer, I would have been offered lemonade and ice cream. The ladies swish about, and as candlelight is a great improver of beauty, they appear to great advantage. President Washington circulated among the crowd, chatting agreeably with all the ladies. It is said that he keeps count of the numbers who come to pay their respects to Mrs. Washington and was pleased to find the room so crowded.



"Death March and Monody," sheet music, circa 1799-1800. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

### Philadelphia, April 1791

OUT AND ABOUT. The President of the United States, it is well known, is very fond of the theater and has gone outside the city to Southwark, where plays are performed. During an affecting moment leading to a happy ending, Washington was observed to shed a tear. As the humorous scenes unfolded, those playing the parts of Priscilla Tomboy and Young Cockney received the approving smiles of the old hero. General Washington goes often to concerts but has been heard to say, "I can neither play Musick nor sing Songs."

### Philadelphia, July 13, 1793

RICKETTS'S AMPHITHEATRE. Word that the President and his family were to attend a performance of Mr. John Bill Ricketts's dangerous feats on horseback brought a large crowd this evening to what is called the Circus. The acrobatic performance was held to raise money to buy firewood for the poor during the coming winter. Mr. Ricketts, demonstrating his agility by drinking a glass of wine while on horseback, raised his glass to the health of "The Man of the People." This produced an immediate clap of applause and a loud hurrah from every part of the Circus. Mr. Ricketts has expressed his agreement with those who call General Washington the finest horseman of the age, saying "I delight to see the general ride, and make it a point to fall in with him when I hear that he is abroad on horseback; his seat is so firm, his management so easy and graceful, that I who am a professor of horsemanship, would go to him and learn to ride."



Charles Willson Peale, self-portrait, oil on canvas, circa 1791. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

### Philadelphia, September 1796

PEALE'S MUSEUM. A visit to Mr. Peale's museum, Prudence Pudding tells us, is well worth the admission fee of one fourth of a dollar, if only to see the huge American buffalo. Peale's rooms are filled with monsters of the earth and sea, a rich array of birds, and a great collection of the bones, jaws, and teeth of tigers, sharks, and many other fearful animals. In one room are rattle, black, and spotted snakes, confined in cases enclosed with wire and glass. She was astonished to see Mr. Peale take out a black snake about four or five feet long, which he permitted to touch his cheek and twine itself around his neck. In the yard and stable were eagles, owls, baboons, monkeys, and a six-footed cow. Mr. Peale is also a painter, and there can be seen in his museum more than a hundred portraits of the more noteworthy personages of our country, including our illustrious Washington.

### June 1791

THE PRESIDENT ON TOUR. When he entered upon the duties of his office, George Washington decided he would visit all parts of the United States to please the citizens and to see how they felt about the new government. Silas Silvertongue, who is with the President's party, reports that they are nearing the end of their two-month journey of 1,887 miles. Everywhere there has been a remarkable outpouring of affection for the President, Silvertongue informs. Towns have been in a bustle of preparation, and at every stop the citizens have come out to meet him with addresses of welcome. Ladies, some rouged up to the ears, have bedecked themselves with sashes and headbands painted with images of the President and patriotic slogans. The festivities include the ringing of bells, bands of music, cannon salutes, and some VERY BAD POETRY. (See poetry box, upper right.)

### Philadelphia, February 1797

NEW THEATER ON CHESTNUT STREET. We are informed that the President of the United States intends visiting the theater this evening and has sent his carriage to bring the Vice President and his family to join him. The play to be performed is *Columbus, or, A World Discovered*, and it will display scenery, machinery, and decorations, the likes of which have never been seen before. A representation of a storm, an earthquake, a volcano eruption, as well as a procession of Indians, await all who enter. *Columbus* will be followed by a farce called *A Wife at Her Wit's End*.

## POET'S CORNER... SOME VERY BAD POETRY

George

*There was a young General  
named George*

*Who led troops in the Valley at Forge*

*His horse was a dolly*

*Who took bullets so jolly*

*And now he has a horse no more.*



We take no responsibility for the quality of the work herein. GOOD POETRY SOUGHT.

Submit to PatriotPapers@npg.si.edu

## Will the Real George W. Please Stand Up?

Actor William Sommerfield brings George Washington to your community for a 3-day trip back in time.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK MANNING, NEW YORK TIMES

Hailed by historians and politicians as the definitive dramatic portrayal of George Washington, William Arthur Sommerfield fascinates audiences with the insights, warmth, and humor of our first President. Sommerfield strips away the marble image of the ideal man and replaces it with a portrayal of George Washington, the intensely human being—a man of humor, anger, sorrow, failure, sacrifice, and love.

Check local venues for details.

EDITOR'S CHOICE:

## The Power of the Penny Challenges the GW Dollar On Wisconsin! Hudson Middle School Raises \$4,000 in One Week

I'm afraid that the stern George Washington who embraces the dollar bill would have blinked recently when seeing the power of the dollar challenged by the penny. Capturing the spirit of the holiday season, students from Hudson, Wisconsin, set out to raise funds to buy Christmas presents for needy children in the area. But in the spirit of George Washington and the American Revolution, they "declared war" on fellow students.

The Kids Who Care Club, advised by teacher Michelle Miller, pitted House against House (each grade has 3 Houses) in a weeklong battle that saw the penny triumph. (Sorry, George!) Each House placed its penny jar in plain view and began collecting pennies, in hopes of winning the coveted ice cream party at battle's end. But the spies from fellow Houses set out to sabotage the best-laid plans with silver and GW dollars. Pennies garnered positive points, but a quarter from the opposition eliminated 25 pennies; a dollar wiped out 100. "It's always more fun to sabo-



The Kids Who Care (back row, left to right): Maddie Giordana, Amal Habib, Kristin Pelzel, Cellie Svensgaard, Trista Baskin, Katie Benoy; (front row): Usman Mohammad, Jessica Fink



teacher Carol Gilbert. "The kids accepted the challenge and really got into the game." *The Patriot Papers* salutes you, Hudson. Thanks for **Pledging It Forward**.

*Thanks to teacher Carol Gilbert for submitting this story. Our thoughts and prayers go with you as you face a new challenge of your own.*

—*The Patriot Papers* editor  
and everyone at Hudson Middle School

## Students Play Santa: Adopt Kids from Star Tree

Students from West Elementary School in Mount Juliet, Tennessee, decided to play Santa over the holidays and spread some Christmas cheer to needy children in the Nashville area. They set up a Star Tree covered with the names of kids who wouldn't find much under their Christmas tree. Then students, parents, and classes selected stars from the tree labeled with a child's name and age. Each child then shared his list of the toys, clothes, or shoes that he or she hoped Santa would bring. "I think it's a good idea," said Tyler Cothron, "because I feel a lot better when I give something to somebody."

Tina King's 4<sup>th</sup>-grade class chose 4 stars this year. Students contributed what they could, and then **Special Santas** went on a shopping spree, selecting just the right gifts for their adoptees. Dolls, trucks, an Xbox, even bicycles soon waited beneath the tree for that special someone, promising to make Christmas shine a little brighter for all.

"It cheers your heart," said Kiarra Clemons, "when you give to others the things they can't buy that you get." Andy Coggins was a little more practical. "I think it's very nice to help people," he said, "because I would feel very bad if I woke up on Christmas morning with no presents under the tree."

So would we, Andy. *The Patriot Papers* salutes you and all of the stars at West Elementary for **Pledging It Forward**.

## Get on the Bus, Gus...

*continued from page 1*

★ U.S. history students from **Lancaster High School**, **Highland High School**, and **Quartz High School** interviewed World War II veterans to better understand war in Europe and the Pacific. The veterans' stories inspired the kids to create their own USO show, complete with historical artifacts, vintage war movies, and popcorn. This led several students to Washington, DC, where they attended the groundbreaking ceremony dedicating the World War II monument.

★ Teacher Kristin Miller pairs with the **Audubon Society** to instill a love of nature, an appreciation of wildlife, and a respect for environmental conservation in her students. This year, their six-year partnership led to the creation of a rain forest.

★ Sharon Rose's students at **Woodlake Avenue Elementary School** in Woodland Hills each donated a favorite book to a local shelter for abused mothers and children. "It helps kids realize that many children don't have the same advantages as they do," said Rose. "It's also a great way to support reading and literacy."



NPG salutes educators Ruth Greene, Lorraine Staab, and Kelly Cook for their creativity in the classroom

★ In **Pomona**, 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and their parents volunteer at the local animal shelter, where they clean, wash, socialize with, and "talk to the animals."

★ Another class at **Webster Elementary** is knitting 10-inch squares that they will sew together to make quilts for kids in Africa.

★ Ruth Greene, teacher of advanced composition and expository composition at **Venice High School**, used "George Washington: A National Treasure" to create a four-week unit that explored art, symbolism, and speech writing. "The Lansdowne portrait was the perfect springboard. The kids will never look at a speech or a portrait in quite the same way." (Teachers: Ms. Greene's innovative lesson plan, complete with rubrics, will soon be posted on our website. Check it out.)

★ Kibbles and bits: Those same adventurous kindergartners from **Webster Elementary** set out to be kind to animals at the **Agora Animal Shelter**. They sold dog biscuits and cat treats 10 for a dollar and collected enough money for the shelter to buy a new surgical table. That's a lot of puppy treats and meow chow. Congratulations!

## Pledge It Forward—Self to Service

*A Challenge from The Patriot Papers*

—*F. A. Pulles, Editor-in-chief*

The Portrait Gallery's Office of Education would like to recognize those who continue to care about community. We challenge you to *Pledge It Forward*—pledge time to your schools, youth organizations, senior centers. We'll feature your stories and photos on our website at [www.georgewashington.si.edu](http://www.georgewashington.si.edu). Projects of particular merit will be published in *The Patriot Papers*. Get creative; get busy. And together, we can build a community of caring. Write to us at [PatriotPapers@npg.si.edu](mailto:PatriotPapers@npg.si.edu).