



GEORGE WASHINGTON  
A NATIONAL TREASURE

# Patriot Papers

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

## "George Washington: A National Treasure" on Tour

### *National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Opens Exhibition*

On February 15, 2002, the National Portrait Gallery's iconic image of the father of our country began a national tour at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas. For the first time in history, this prized image—the life-sized portrait of George Washington by artist Gilbert Stuart—has gone on the road. An artifact whose historical and cultural significance has been compared to that of the Liberty Bell and the Declaration of Independence, the painting is one of the most important visual documents of the founding of our nation.

Senator and Mrs. William Bingham of Philadelphia commissioned the portrait from Stuart in 1796 as a gift for the British Marquis of Lansdowne, who sympathized with colonial grievances before the Revolutionary War. Thus the painting is often referred to as the "Lansdowne" portrait to differentiate it from Stuart's other images of Washington.

For more than 200 years, the painting remained in private hands; it was incorporated into the collection of the 5th Earl of Rosebery in the 1880s. It later hung in a castle in Scotland.

In 1968 the Lansdowne portrait was loaned to the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., where it served as the cornerstone of the museum's opening exhibition. For thirty-two years, it graced the Gallery's rotunda, greeting visitors as they ascended the building's grand staircase to the second floor. But in the fall of 2000, its British owner notified the Gallery of his decision to sell it at auction if the Gallery could not meet his asking price of \$20 million. The search for a benefactor to the Gallery—and to the nation—began.

In March 2001, a \$30 million gift from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation of Las Vegas, Nevada, assured that the painting would remain in the United States. Of that amount, \$20 million went to purchase the painting, \$4 million to renovate a gallery space dedicated exclusively

#### *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

to the portrait, and \$6 million to ensure that the portrait would be shared with the American people. After the exhibition closes in Houston, it continues to seven other cities, concluding with the portrait's return to its permanent home in the National Portrait Gallery.

Originally, the portrait hung in Lord Lansdowne's London house on Berkeley Square, accompanied by other artworks, including a sculpture of the Roman general Cincinnatus, with whom Washington is often compared. Reportedly, Cincinnatus left his plow to save the Roman republic, then relinquished his public role and returned to private life. The parallel between Cincinnatus and Washington as men of service is striking.

This "man of service" is the George Washington that the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation wanted America to see. Here was a man who served as commander in chief of the Continental army, who shaped the American presidency, who guided the country through the "fragile experiment" of democracy. Certainly others had greater intellect and were better educated, more articulate, and of

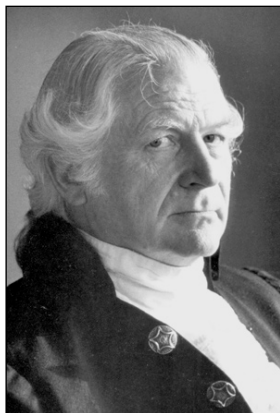


The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, acquired Gilbert Stuart's 1796 Lansdowne portrait of George Washington in 2001 as a gift to the nation through the generosity of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation.

calmer disposition. But Washington was chosen. Unanimously elected to the presidency, he served two terms and then retired from office. Here was a man who refused to be king.

Join the tour at one of its eight locations as the National Portrait Gallery explores this man of character, self-sacrifice, and patriotism. Or follow the tour online, through the Gallery's Lansdowne website at [www.georgewashington.si.edu](http://www.georgewashington.si.edu).

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



PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK MANNING, NEW YORK TIMES

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

*"For thousands of Americans, William Sommerfield is George Washington."*

—RICHARD BROOKHISER, WASHINGTON BIOGRAPHER

Hailed by historians and politicians as the definitive dramatic portrayer 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.

The only man ever to interpret Washington at the general's home, Mount Vernon in Virginia, Sommerfield draws on more than 10 years of research and performance when creating his character. Every detail, from costume to powdered hair and dress sword, is historically accurate; he even captures the flourish of Washington's signature.

In 1989 the Bicentennial Commission on the Constitution selected Sommerfield to portray Washington for the eight-day journey from Mount Vernon to New York in a re-creation of the inaugural ride, culminating in the swearing-in of the first President. He has continued to captivate audiences on NBC's *EyeWitness to History*, the DC Bicentennial Celebration, the National Bill of Rights Tour, *Good Morning America*, the *Today Show*, and A&E's *The Crossing*. He has appeared in *Time* magazine and the *New Yorker*, and on the covers of *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, and the *Times* of London.

As artistic director and chief writer of the American Historical Theatre in Philadelphia, Sommerfield re-creates history, bringing a piece of the past to life. Favorite performances include "The Glorious Burden," which explores the presidency, and "The Love Letters of George and Martha." Join George for an 18th-century news conference or a lesson in the minuet. Don't miss this trip back in time! Check local venues for details.



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. His friends urged him to return to Virginia and “show his face,” fearing that he would lose the election. But he chose to stay with his men, and was still successful in winning a seat in the House.

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 serious disease threaten the lives of all the soldiers camped there. General Washington has appealed for more supplies, but has not been successful. In the meantime, General Washington struggles alongside his men, while his political enemies threaten to remove his power. Some critics feel that others are better suited to lead the Continental army.



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

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. This happened just 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!

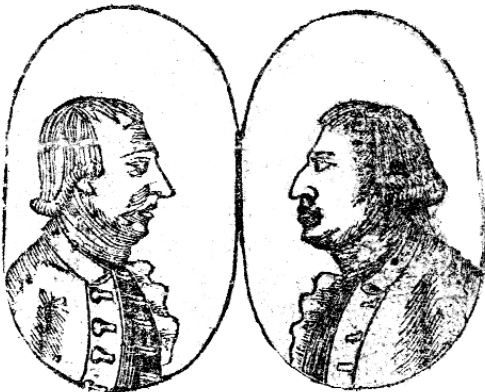
NEW YORK, 1789 (AP)—After months of debate to establish our new American government, the first official election was held on February 4, 1789. George Washington received all 69 electoral votes! Washington, who will be inaugurated on April 30 of this year, accepted the presidency, even though he wished to return to his estate at Mount Vernon and retire. “I was summoned by my country,” said Washington. He and his wife Martha will soon 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, Washington is doubtful about being the President again. He 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 could be difficult; there are debates over the interpretation of the Constitution. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, who helped create the National Bank and the National Mint, will continue to work with the President. Edmund Randolph will replace Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state.

Whiskey Rebellion  
Shakes Pennsylvania

PHILADELPHIA, 1794—Western Pennsylvanians have started a violent opposition to government taxes. They are launching the first major civil disturbance of President Washington’s term in office. Last week, U.S. Marshal David Lenox was trying to collect taxes on locally distilled liquor in Westmoreland County. 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 they will advance into Pennsylvania shortly.



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

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

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

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Felice A. Pulles  
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Vicki Fama  
REVIEW EDITOR: Dru Dowdy  
EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS:  
Kate Finch, Shirlee Lampkin  
THE PUDDING PAPERS:  
Margaret Christman, historian  
EDITORIAL STAFF:  
Terilee Edwards-Hewitt,  
Emily McDonough,  
Tia Powell Harris, Whitney  
Pickens, Emily van Agtmael  
GUEST COLUMNIST: J. K. Pulles  
DESIGN: Studio A, Alexandria, VA

The opinions expressed in The Patriot Papers are not necessarily those of the Smithsonian Institution or the National Portrait Gallery.

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.



Smithsonian  
National Portrait Gallery

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.”

- George Washington was only 11 years old when he inherited 10 slaves from his father in 1743.
- By the time he was 22 years old, Washington owned approximately 36 slaves.
- At his death in 1799, Washington had 316 slaves at Mount Vernon, 123 of whom belonged directly to him. The remaining 193 were “dower” slaves—those he acquired through his marriage to Martha.
- Approximately 75 percent of the slaves at Mount Vernon worked in the fields. Of these, nearly 65 percent were women.
- Washington did not buy or sell his slaves after the Revolutionary War.
- Washington allowed his slaves to marry, although such arrangements were not legally binding at that time.
- In his will, Washington freed all of the slaves he owned. His personal valet, William Lee, was released with a payment of \$30 per year for the rest of his life, a considerable sum in those days.

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

WANTED

A MILLER, who is a white Man, for a common Gristmill within a Mile of *Williamsburg*, to whom good Wages will be given.

SAMUEL COOKE.  
Petersburg, February 12, 1772

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

RUN AWAY FROM MY PLANTATION, called *Newport News*, on the 17th of *January*, a very likely Negro Fellow named *Strawbury*, 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

Did You Know...?

- He came from a blended family, having two older stepbrothers and one stepsister; he was the eldest of the children by his father’s second wife.
- He was actually born February 11, not February 22? England changed its calendar when he was a boy, causing his birthdate to become February 22.
- His father died when he was 11 years old?
- He often had a bad temper but slowly learned to control it?
- He loved horseback riding, dancing, and farming?
- He was not always a good student?
- He did not always get along very well with his mother, who was bossy and controlling?
- His older half-brother Lawrence was one of the most important people in young George’s life?
- He had two stepchildren, but no children of his own.

Possessions

Today, most of us own many more things than we really need to live on. When George was 11 years old, his family made an inventory (or list) of their possessions. Here is what they owned, besides their land:

- |                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| • 16 pairs of sheets | • A looking glass (mirror)     |
| • 17 pillowcases     | • One silver-plated soup spoon |
| • 13 beds            | • 18 small spoons              |
| • A couch            | • 7 teaspoons                  |
| • Desks              | • A watch                      |
| • Chairs             | • A sword                      |
| • A fireplace set    | • 11 china plates              |
| • Tablecloths        | • 20 slaves                    |
| • Napkins            |                                |

How many of these same items are owned by your family today? Are you surprised to see “slaves” listed as part of the inventory of possessions? If you were to make an inventory of every item in your home, how long do you think the list would be? How many items would be unfamiliar to George Washington?



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.

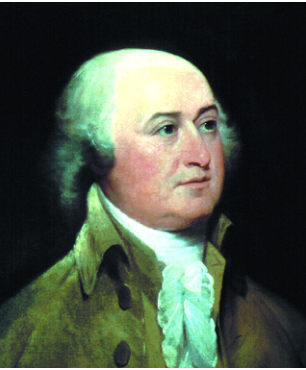
*\*Editor's note—We apologize in advance for any improprieties, insults, or slanderous remarks on the part of our correspondents. They are, at times ill-mannered, sometimes indiscreet, and, at all times, want of wit.*

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



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

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.

“of all princes  
of the Earth”

—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

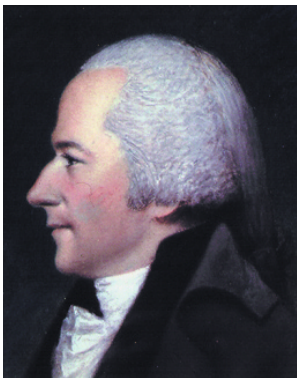


May 30, 1789

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.”

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.”



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

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.”



## George Washington Dies at 67

After riding outside during very bad weather last Thursday and Friday, George Washington became ill on Saturday, December 14. An infection known as epiglottitis gave him a sore throat, fever, and difficulty breathing.

Doctors tried a practice called bloodletting: they made small cuts on his arm to take out blood. They hoped to relieve the pressure in his throat so he would be able to breathe better. Unfortunately, bloodletting did not help. Doctors also gave him many different fluids to gargle or swallow, including a mixture of vinegar, molasses, and butter. None of these cures helped the former President breathe easier.

His friend Tobias Lear wrote that Washington grew calm late in the evening, checked his own pulse, and then died peacefully in his bed. His wife Martha was with him, as well as several servants, doctors, and friends.

An elaborate funeral is planned for Wednesday, December 18, including gun salutes and a procession.

### WOULD YOU SIGN A LOYALTY OATH?

During the Revolutionary War, the British would have required you to sign an oath similar to this ...

"I voluntarily take this OATH to bear Faith and true Allegiance to His MAJESTY KING George the Third; — and defend to the utmost of my Power, His sacred Person, Crown, and Government, against all Persons whatsoever."

Would you have signed? How many colonists do you think were loyal to the British crown?

I INTEND  
to leave the  
COLONY  
soon.

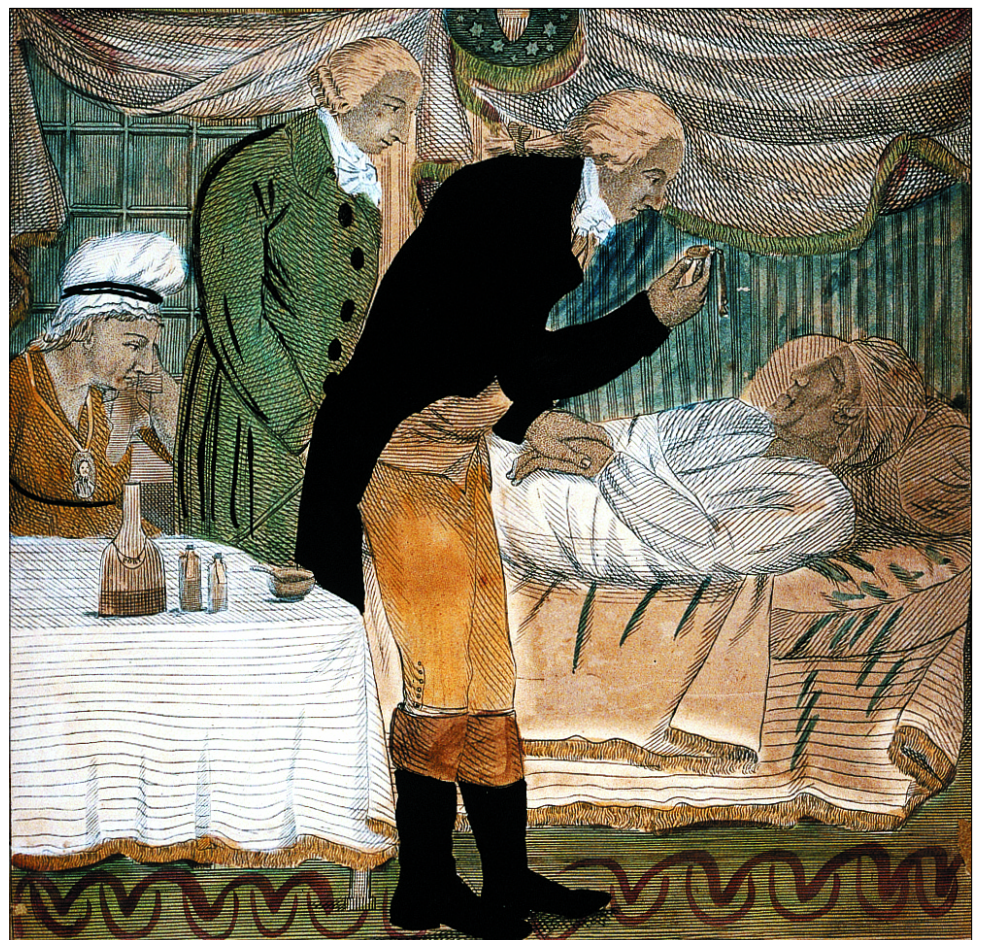
THOMAS  
HOGG

*Philadelphia Porter,  
Beer, and Cyder,*



## The President with No Teeth!

When George Washington became the first President of the United States in 1783, he had only one of his teeth left in his mouth. As a boy, he had cracked walnut shells with his teeth and, as a result, many of them fell out before he was thirty! Over the years, Washington wore several sets of false teeth. Even though many people today believe that these teeth were made out of wood, there is no proof that he ever had wooden teeth. His dentures were made of many things. They were often a combination of human teeth, animal teeth, and ivory. They were put together with wire and a spring, which allowed the dentures to open and close. Throughout his life, Washington had trouble speaking, chewing food, and smiling. The false teeth could be painful and they sometimes made his cheeks and lips puff out. Fortunately modern dentistry now allows painless smiles for even the greatest of walnut lovers.



*George Washington in His Last Illness*, an engraving 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

## 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 think that medicine during the colonial era was crude and painful. Many doctors at the time were self-trained. If he had lived today, George Washington could have been cured with antibiotics. But in 1799, could Washington have gotten better after the treatments he received?

Colonial medicine was based on European medical methods and theories. No one 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. To achieve this balance, Washington's doctors bled him several times. They may have thought that removing extra blood would lessen the swelling in his throat. Unfortunately they took so much blood that it was hard for Washington's body to fight the illness.

Doctors also made Washington gargle with mixtures of vinegar, molasses, and butter. These were used to open up his throat. But his throat was too swollen, and he had a lot of trouble swallowing. He almost choked a couple of times too.

Finally, doctors tried to make him vomit to take out any bad fluids. This can cause the body to lose too much water, and that can make someone sicker.

Even though Washington's doctors did a lot of things that modern doctors would not do, they tried very hard to help him. They used medical practices that were believed to be the most helpful. Washington knew that he was very ill, and he died peacefully.

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 would have weakened Washington enough to kill him.





MISS FAITH PROCTOR

18th-Century Paradise Lost

Faith’s Fashion Frenzy

—BY J. K. PULLES

Hi! My name is Faith Proctor. I was raised in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts by Abigail and John Proctor, two very sensible people who believe in a life of simplicity and purity. For more than 200 years, we Proctors have preserved the ideals set forth by George Washington, our nation’s first President. It was not until my recent 18th birthday that I learned of the existence of my distant cousins in Washington, D.C. My parents decided it was time that one of us ventured into “big-city America” to see what advances had been made.

Meeting my aunt, uncle, and cousins was enormously exciting, and I was simply awestruck by all of the amazing inventions of the 21st century outside world. First and foremost in my thoughts, however, is my trip with my cousin Melody to the “mall.” At Melody’s first mention of the

mall, my heart pounded with fear. Mistaking the word for “maul,” I feared they planned to leave me in the forest to be attacked by wolves. Melody carefully explained that the mall was like a large market where tradesmen gathered to sell their wares. My fears allayed, we entered the maze. I was shocked to see all the women in pants! The most popular pants seemed to be a very low-slung pair of dungarees called “hipsters.” I think they should be called “come hither misters,” for this will most certainly be the effect of wearing such pants. Looking down at my own ankle-length skirt and quilted petticoat, I reminded myself of the prudence of keeping some details hidden from young gentlemen.

We next came upon a shoe seller called Paidless. Over the door hung a sign that read “Buy One, Get One Free.” Well obviously! One wouldn’t get very far with only one shoe and no mate. This seemed to me a most unscrupulous vendor. Upon entering the store, I found none of the sturdy leather lace-up boots to which I am accustomed, but instead found boxes and boxes of large wedges of cork and wood with small straps of leather attached to the top. How uncomfortable and impractical! However would one walk to the well?

Leaving the shoe-seller, we entered a very large vendor called Gracy’s, with many varied wares to sell. In the clothing area, my eyes fell upon a one-armed shirt! I asked Melody if this was another “buy one get one free” swindle, wherein the other sleeve would be supplied only after pur-

chase. Melody explained to me that this was the way the shirt was supposed to look. And she thinks that I am naïve! What good is a shirt with one arm? What a terrible sunburn one would have after working in the field all day. Glancing in a mirror at my own clothing, I was thankful for my high-collared blouse with two full sleeves.

Our next stop was at Linens, Loofas, & After, a vendor that sells toiletries. I was thoroughly shocked to find men and women browsing together! Hiding my surprise, I began to peruse the soaps and finally had to ask the vendor where I could find the lye soap. She had never heard of lye soap! She said that she recommended the “cucumber-melon” soap. Cucumber melon? Why would a person put cucumbers and melons in their soap? How unsanitary!

Our final stop was a clothier called the Snap. Inside they sold many sheer, knee-length, belted nightgowns that women wore over their clothes. My cousin Melody told me they were called “dusters.” Obviously these are clothes only to be worn by maids. It is very strange that a vendor sells only clothing for one profession!

All in all I had a wonderful experience at the mall. However, I believe that in 200 years people’s sensibilities have regressed, for I saw the most impractical choices in dressing oneself. And still I wonder, with no blacksmith, who will shoe your horse while you shop?

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!

Dear Mistress Goody,  
*I heard a really bad thing about one of my best friends. I think our other friends should know how this girl is acting when we’re not around. Should I tell them?*

**Rule 79: Be not apt to relate news if you know not the truth thereof. In discoursing of things that you have heard, name not your author. Always, a secret discover not [that is, do not reveal].**

In other words . . . don’t pass rumors if you’re not sure they’re true. Best to keep a secret a secret and not tell at all, unless her actions are such that they may do harm to her person or to that of another. Then ‘tis kind and quite your duty to reveal the truth to your superiors or loved ones.

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 in the ladies’ powder room 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,  
*I am a high school girl. I suppose the guys think I’m cute, because I get asked out on dates a lot. I go and have a nice time, but eventually they are ready to get “serious.” They all want to be my only boyfriend. My problem is I don’t know how to pick a good boyfriend. And that means I won’t know how to pick a good husband! I mean, what does a girl look for in a guy? Can you help me?*

Mistress Goody has contemplated this very question many, many times. I’ve always found the male point of view regarding love and marriage most helpful. As a matter of fact, the most sage advice comes from George Washington in a letter he wrote to Martha’s granddaughter, Nelly Custis. I will share a portion of it with you here. I do hope this “checklist” of sorts helps to settle your quandary.

*“When the fire is beginning to kindle, and your heart growing warm, propound these questions to it. Who is the invader? Have I competent knowledge of him? Is he a man of good character? A man of sense? For be assured a sensible woman can never be happy with a fool. What has been his walk in life? Is he a gambler? A spendthrift?, a drunkard? Is his fortune sufficient to maintain me in a manner I have been accustomed to live? And is he one to whom my friends have no reasonable objection? If these interrogations can be satisfactorily answered, there will remain but one more to be asked; that, however, is an important one. Have I sufficient ground to conclude that his affections are enjoyed on me? Without this the heart of sensibility will struggle against a passion that is not reciprocated.”*  
—Go. Washington



MISTRESS GOODY





## 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, 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*.

### Philadelphia, July 13, 1793

RICKETT'S AMPHITHEATRE. Word that the President and his family were to attend a performance of Mr. John Bill Rickett'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."

### 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



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

cases enclosed with wire and glass. She was astonished to see Mr. Peale take out a black snake about four or five feet long 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*.

## 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.*

## REVOLUTIONARY TEA

*There was an old lady lived over the sea  
And she was an island queen.  
Her daughter lived off in a new country  
With an ocean of water between.  
The old lady's pockets were full of gold  
But never contented was she,  
So she called on her daughter to pay her a tax  
Of three pence a pound on her tea,  
Of three pence a pound on her tea.*

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

Submit to PatriotPapers@npg.si.edu

## FUTURE FLASH: Patriots Prove Victorious in Great Bowl on the Green

Recently I, Mistress Goody, was privy to a most unusual glimpse into the future regarding our fellow countrymen. It seems that on Sunday, February 3, 2002, a rather unusual sporting event pitted a most honorable group of fellow Patriots from my beloved New England against a rather brutish bunch of Rams from the remote region of Missouri. It took place in a very large Bowl somewhere in the South. Very large men wearing tight breeches and silk stockings bandied about the green in a quest to capture a small oval pigskin. The poor pig was repeatedly thrown, kicked, and spiked into the ground. And I'm afraid our fellow countrymen grew rather violent as the afternoon progressed. Such pushing, shoving, shouting, and spitting have never before, I assure you, been witnessed by Mistress Goody, who prefers more refined entertainment. Several gentlemen grew so agitated as to hurl themselves at their opponents; others, totally unruly, grabbed legs, arms, and all accessible appendages, and flung their counterparts to the ground. Although Mistress Goody certainly found it to be a most discourteous display, lacking in all decorum and civility, it is fortunate that our beloved Patriots proved victorious.

Affectionately, Constance Goody—a former Bostonian



# Pledge It Forward—From Self to Service:

*A Challenge from The Patriot Papers* — F. A. PULLES, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

When studying George Washington, I was struck by his reluctance to accept the presidential nomination. In this age of costly campaigns, hanging chads, and fights to the bitter end, it's hard to imagine. But perhaps Washington's hesitancy was understandable. In 1788 he was fifty-six years old and had already sacrificed many years in service to his country. In 1783, after eight-and-a-half years as commander in chief of the Continental army, he had resigned his commission. His own affairs and the management of Mount Vernon absorbed his energies, and he had stressed the finality of his retirement. But when unanimously elected, he served. His formal notification of nomination to the presidency praised him for "the proof given of patriotism, of his readiness to sacrifice domestic separation and private enjoyment to preserve the liberty and promote the happiness of the country."

Washington was far more reluctant to consider serving a second term. Historian Marcus Cunliffe writes:

*He celebrated his sixtieth birthday in February 1792, and felt older than his years. He had survived serious illnesses in 1790 and 1791. He was, he complained, growing deaf; his eyesight was deteriorating; and his memory was beginning to be defective. Yet the detailed, and far from absent-minded, letters that he wrote on Sundays and sent to his agents at Mount Vernon on points of farm management, reveal that he was not so much tired of life as tired of being President.*

But his colleagues felt that only he could lead at this difficult time. Thomas Jefferson's plea, "I cannot but hope that you can resolve to add one or two more to the many years you have already sacrificed to the good of mankind," and Hamilton's request to make "a further sacrifice, trusting that it need not continue above a year or two more," helped press him to service. In a letter to his friend Henry Lee dated 1793, Washington confided that he had decided to accept a second term of office

only "after a long and painful conflict in my own breast." He was reelected unanimously. Again, he served the whole term.

Washington's life was one of service and sacrifice. And it came at a great cost—to his health, to his marriage, to the productiveness of Mount Vernon. Throughout our country's history, Americans have been asked to serve and sacrifice for the good of country and community. On September 11, we were called once again and America answered. Many sacrificed; many served.

As the 2000 film *Pay It Forward* suggests, it is often difficult to pay back those who have influenced our lives—our forefathers, our mentors, our heroes, our friends. But we can pay it forward. We can give to the next generation. We can care about community.

The National 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. Pick a project, pledge your time, and make a difference. If a high-school student tutors one child, once a week, if a 6th grader reads to an elderly shut-in, if kids in South Texas start a small library by collecting used books, if senior citizens plant flowers on Main Street, if teens answer a hotline, volunteer at a shelter, or simply read to a child, we would all be stronger. E-mail us your pledges; write to us about your projects. We'd like to recognize Americans working for America and will feature your pictures and stories 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)



Ismael Rosas, Charlie Rinehart, and Marielly Garza (left to right) from Sparks Elementary School in Pasadena, Texas, catch the spirit and contribute to the "By George We've Got It" campaign, hoping to help save the treasured Lansdowne portrait of George Washington.

## Students in Pasadena, Texas Help Fund The Patriot Papers

*Their Campaign—  
"By George We've Got It, Help Us Keep It"*

When the National Portrait Gallery announced in February 2001 that it needed \$20 million to keep the Lansdowne portrait of George Washington, the children of the Pasadena Independent School District decided to do something about it. They wanted to save *George* from the auction block.

They developed the "By George, We've Got It, Help Us Keep It" campaign to raise funds for the famous Gilbert Stuart painting. The school district set a goal of one dollar for every student in PISD, and the children raised an inspiring \$4,200 before the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation donated the needed \$20 million. The monies raised by Pasadena students helped to fund *The Patriot Papers*.

As a Texas Recognized District for outstanding student achievement, the Pasadena District has been involved in local fundraising projects before. Its students contributed to the saving of the Alamo, the San Jacinto Monument, and the renovation of the battleship *Texas*. The Lansdowne portrait, like these other American treasures, is one that the children of Pasadena hoped to save.

Although most of the children had never seen the Lansdowne portrait in person, their enthusiasm for saving the national treasure was high. District spokesman Kirk Lewis also saw great potential in the project: "This is a teachable moment in terms of our national art history and national American history. It's a great way to energize our kids to learn about our country."

The "By George" campaign began as a local project, but gained national attention with its call to raise money. The school district challenged other school districts in the area to join the campaign. Ultimately, the Pasadena fundraisers hoped to relay the challenge across the nation. Fortunately for all Americans, the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation contributed the needed funds in March 2001.

Just as George Washington sacrificed his time and energy for the good of the nation, so too have the children of the Pasadena Independent School District. They have shown the country that national spirit is alive in our nation's youth. The National Portrait Gallery thanks those in Pasadena who contributed to the Lansdowne portrait campaign. We also encourage all Americans to continue the spirit of giving in their own communities, school districts, and neighborhoods by joining our current campaign "Pledge It Forward—Self to Service." Take your lead from Pasadena and take time to make a difference.

## Together, Museums Create Wall of Expression

On the morning of September 11, 2001, Americans watched in horror as we witnessed the sheer force of hatred. As a nation we mourned, and as a nation we must heal.

Voicing our collective sorrow, we used art as our medium and created the Wall of Expression, seeking to heal ourselves and support a grieving nation. This wall stands as a memorial to those who sacrificed, a tribute to those who served, and as an expression of hope for the future.

*"These are the times that try men's souls.  
The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot  
will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of  
their country; but he that stands it now, deserves  
the love and thanks of man and woman."*

THOMAS PAINE, FROM *The American Crisis*, DECEMBER 1776



Dedicated to those who sacrificed and served on September 11, 2001, and the weeks following, the Wall of Expression surrounds the Old Patent Office Building at 8th and F Streets in Washington, D.C. The building, home of the National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, is currently undergoing extensive renovation while its collections tour the world.