“George Washington: A National Treasure” Creates Excitement in Houston, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles

National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Tours Exhibition

In the spring of 1789, citizens crowded the New York shoreline, anxiously awaiting the arrival of their first President, George Washington. In a letter to his wife, Elias Boudinot captured the excitement:

New York, 24 April 1789
If it was in my Power, I could wish to give you an adequate account of the Proceedings of the Citizens of this Metropolis on the approach and the Reception of our President George Washington when he arrived here yesterday. . . . The Streets were lined with the Inhabitants as thick as the People could stand—Men, Women & Children—Nay I may venture to say Tens of Thousands. . . . Heads standing as thick as Ears of Corn before the Harvest when their [sic] stood up about 20 gentlemen & Ladies & with most excellent voices sang an elegant Ode prepared for the purpose to the Tune of God Save the King, welcoming their great Chief to the seat of Government—At the conclusion we gave them our Hatts [sic] and then they with the surrounding boats gave us their Cheers.

More than two hundred years later, cities once again await the arrival of George Washington. And once again the mood is festive as museums across the country welcome the National Portrait Gallery’s exhibition “George Washington: A National Treasure.” Students, many visiting Bodak at the Wish Tree, Above, close-up of Andrew.

Coming Soon to a Museum Near You

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

Reynolds Foundation, the exhibition opened at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas, on February 15, 2002, continued on to the Las Vegas Art Museum in Nevada, and opened November 7 at the Los Angeles County Art Museum (LACMA) in California. At the tour’s conclusion, the portrait will return to its permanent home in the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Painted in 1796 by artist Gilbert Stuart, the portrait was commissioned by Senator and Mrs. Bingham of Philadelphia as a gift for the British Marquis of Lansdowne, who sympathized with colonial grievances before the Revolutionary War. Thus, it is often referred to as the “Lansdowne” portrait. 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.

Continued page 8

Americans Pause to Remember, Students Make a Wish for the United States

One year after the tragedy of September 11, 2001, Americans have paused to remember and reflect. The Wall of Expression that surrounds the Old Patent Office Building in Washington, D.C., still stands as a memorial to those who sacrificed, a tribute to those who served, and an expression of hope for the future. And across the country at the Las Vegas Art Museum, students place their wishes for America on the “Wish Tree.”

“Those 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.

“George Washington: A National Treasure” is organized by the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, and made possible through the generosity of the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation.
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 regiments 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.

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.

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 wishing, 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.

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

The Glorious Washington and Gaine, detail from Bickertoff’s Boston Almanack, 1778

Martha Washington Buries Fourth Child, John P. Custis
YORKTOWN, 1781—After losing two children in infancy and her daughter Paty 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.
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. Albigence 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 Clothes—nasty Cookery—Vomit half my time—Sneak’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 & filthyness—a pox of Alacrity & Contentment not to be expected from so young Troops. Y et 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 Clothes—nasty Cookery—Vomit half my time—Sneak’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 & filthyness—a pox

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 cries with and 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, 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, 1788. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

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 SLAVE.

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

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George Washington and His Family by David Edwin, after Edward Savage, stipple engraving, 1788. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

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.george washington.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 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 hater 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 so to 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.”

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 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 had come from France to fight in the American Revolution when he was nineteen years old.
George 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 bedside, 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 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_ë dez) n. pl. [ME cantarides<FL cantharides, pl. of cantharis, kind of beetle, Spanish fly, Gr kanthrís, 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-taught. 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 3 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.
TRIPPIN’ THROUGH TIME

The Perils of Pampering

Faith’s Day at the Spa

“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.”

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?

Mistress Goody, My very best friend just broke up with her boyfriend. But now she’s going to be held at the City Public House Ball Room, on FridayEvening at 5 o’Clock.

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

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 she’ll be held at the City Public House Ball Room, on FridayEvening at 5 o’Clock.

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?

Mistress Goody, My very best friend just broke up with her boyfriend. But now she’ll be held at the City Public House Ball Room, on FridayEvening at 5 o’Clock.

In Other Words...

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

Respectfully Based on The Rules of Civility

I n 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 bang out with. Sometimes they do mean things to people. Like once I knew 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 6: Labour to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience. Have you misplaced yours, my dear?

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 FridayEvening at 5 o’Clock.

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

*No Lady to be admitted in a nightcap and no gentlemen in stockings.
*No dance to begin after 11 at night.
*No tea, coffee, sodas or other liquor to be carried into the dancing room.
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 curtsey 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 swished 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.

Philadelphia, July 13, 1793

RICKETT'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."

Philadelphia, September 1796

PEALES 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 Divorced, 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 Wife's End.

POET'S CORNER

SOME VERY BAD POETRY

George

There was a young General 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.

Hailed by historians and politicians as the definitive dramatic portrait 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 Patriot Papers Salutes the “Kids Who Care”
They “Pledged It Forward” and Adopted Grandparents at Silver Ridge

Fourteen 4th and 5th graders from Jacobson Elementary School in Las Vegas, Nevada, wrote a grant that enabled them to bridge the generation gap and “adopt a grandparent.” Once the grant was approved, the group grew to 44, and they adopted the entire Silver Ridge Healthcare Center. “They love it when we come to visit them, and we love to see their smiles,” remarked student Taylor Stasik. Under the direction of Gifted and Talented Specialist Barbara Kern, the students crafted colorful vases and flowers to brighten the room of each resident. And in celebration of Flag Day and the Fourth of July, the kids stitched 144 patriotic pillows decorated on both sides with the American flag, and presented them to their new “adopted grandparent.” “We were so excited,” said Tommy Niyanloukou. “When the day came, we were giving letters and pillows to everyone.” And when the whole school became involved, kids from kindergarten to 5th grade made 500 placemats for Silver Ridge. “It was fun to go to visit people who didn’t have much family in Las Vegas,” said Vivian Estrada. Josue Ceschi agreed, “Some of the people hadn’t seen a visitor for quite awhile. To have such a great impact just by visiting was amazing.”

“I’m so proud of my kids and how they have extended themselves into our community and into our country,” said Ms. Kern. “We celebrate their caring.” Student Michael Wray was more philosophical: “It was a unique experience. It taught me that being old is not a bad thing or a good thing. It’s a stage of life, and you can’t avoid it.” True, Michael. But life is much nicer for the residents of Silver Ridge, who now have a whole new generation of friends.

Kudos to Kern’s Kids,
Félice Pulles, Editor-in-Chief

“George Washington: A National Treasure” Creates Excitement Across America

from page one

At the Las Vegas Art Museum, home to the portrait for the last 18 weeks, Lansdowne Tour Coordinator Cynthia Dunn reports that 15,000 students have visited “George” through school tours, and now wear lapel stickers claiming “I saw the President today.” Students in Lexington, South Carolina, hosted the first George Washington State Education Day. Their “commitment to country” shows in everything from their Veterans Day ceremony to a salute to New York’s firefighters. And in Pasadena, Texas, kids even drew their own versions of the portrait. Join the tour now in Los Angeles and let LACMA introduce you to this treasured portrait saved from the auction block for the American people, and to this true patriot, a man who shaped the American presidency and guided the country through the “fragile experiment” of democracy. Don’t forget our website: www.georgewashington.si.edu!

Teenage Republicans Get Political in Las Vegas

Every weekend the Teenage Republicans of Green Valley High School in Henderson, Nevada, hit the campaign trail. An affiliate of the National Teenage Republicans, the chapter encourages others to get involved in the political process. Led by adviser Regan Mitchell, a teacher of both United States and world history, they promote the “Kids Voting” campaign, now active in 38 states, by registering both student and adult voters. “We’re especially busy now because it’s an election year,” said Ms. Mitchell. “The kids actively campaign every weekend supporting candidates in assembly races all the way up through Congress. Many of these kids are interested in pursuing politics; this gives them an inside view.” The group also organized and led a flag retirement ceremony honoring those lost in the September 11 tragedy. Keep up the good work Green Valley—maybe your political journey will lead you to Washington!