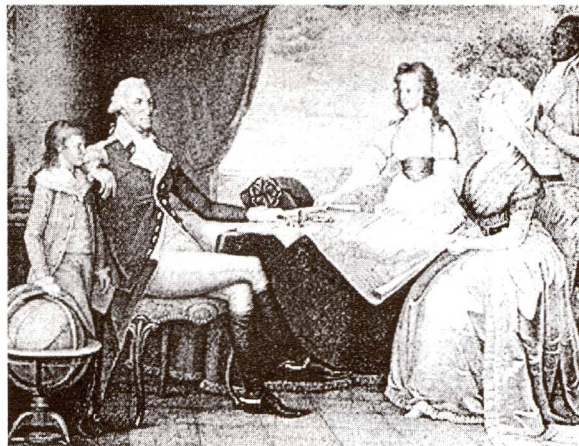


Fall 2001

## **"An Agreeable Consort for Life": The Wedding of George and Martha Washington**

By Mary V. Thompson



*"The Washington Family, "  
engraving by Edward Savage, after his own painting,  
published in Philadelphia and London, 1798.*

On the morning of January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1759, a young widow named Martha Dandridge Custis took as her second husband a young man named George Washington, not quite one year younger than herself, who had just a few weeks before given up his military career, to

take on a ready-made family and life as a Virginia planter. This wedding came at the end of a rather tumultuous eighteen months for the bride, during which she had faced tremendous loss and had to make a decision about the course of the rest of her life.

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Choosing well could bring happiness to both her two very young children and herself; making the wrong choice might jeopardize her children's inheritance, their emotional health, and her own chance to find fulfillment and joy.

The bride was born on June 2, 1731, at Chestnut Grove Plantation in New Kent County, Virginia. The eldest of eight children, she was named Martha after one of her cousins<sup>1</sup>. Her father, John Dandridge (1700-1756), was the son of a merchant in England and immigrated to America in 1714, with his older brother, Colonel William Dandridge (died 1743<sup>2</sup>). Martha's uncle William had a distinguished naval career and took part in Admiral Edward Vernon's siege of Carthage in the early 1740s, a campaign in which her new husband's older half-brother Lawrence was also involved. After he came to America, Martha's father, John, served as the clerk of New Kent County, as a colonel in the county militia, and also as a vestryman and warden of his parish church<sup>3</sup>. Martha Washington's mother was Frances Jones (1710-1785), who was the daughter of a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses and a young woman of possible Huguenot background. Martha's great-grandfather, the Reverend Rowland Jones (1640-1688), was a graduate of Oxford University and the first pastor of the Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg, Virginia<sup>4</sup>.

Very little is known about the bride's early years. As the eldest child in a large family, she probably assisted in raising her younger siblings. She probably received a typical education for a Virginia girl of the period, which would have stressed instruction in housekeeping, religion, music (according to one biographer, she played the spinet), and dancing. Her teachers would have been the adult women in her household and whatever itinerant tutors might have been hired by her fathers. A small woman, Martha eventually grew to about 5 feet tall, with brown hair and eyes, which in portraits, appear to be brown or hazel<sup>5</sup>. In her late teens, she caught the eye of Daniel Parke Custis (1711-1757), who, though twenty years her senior, was still one of the most eligible bachelors in the colony of Virginia. Daniel's father was initially opposed to his son's marriage to Martha, because the prospective bride's family was not as wealthy as he would have liked. After the intervention of some friends and actually meeting the young woman who had captured his son's heart, Custis finally gave his consent. Word of this change of mind came to Daniel in a letter from a friend:

"This comes at last to bring you the news that I believe will be most agreeable to you of any you have heard - that you may not be long in suspense I shall tell you at once - I am empowered by your father to let you

know that he heartily and willingly consents to your marriage with Miss [Martha] Dandridge - that he has so good a character of her, that he had rather you should have her than any lady in Virginia - nay, if possible, he is as much enamored with her character as you are with her person, and this is owing chiefly to a prudent speech of her own. Hurry down immediately for fear he should change the strong inclination he has to your marrying directly?"

Martha and Daniel were married in June of 1749<sup>8</sup>. In the eight years of their marriage, the couple had four children, two of whom died as toddlers. Daniel's sudden death in July of 1757, possibly from a heart attack, left her, at the age of 26, the wealthiest widow in Virginia, with a 17,500 acre estate to manage and two very young children, a three-year-old son and one year old daughter, to raise alone<sup>9</sup>.

Widows in 18<sup>th</sup> century Virginia were a sought-after commodity and one this rich, who was personable and pretty to boot, could not be expected to last long before being courted for a second time. In the spring of 1758, some eight to nine months after Daniel's death, John Tayloe wrote a gossip letter to William Byrd, III, in which he made the comment that "C.C. is very gay & says he has attacked the widow Custis." At least one historian has identified "C.C." as Charles Carter of Cleve (1707-1764), who was one of five sons of Robert ("King") Carter of Corotoman and a brother of Landon Carter of

Sabine Hall<sup>10</sup>. Educated in England, he had surveyed the Virginia wilderness and Shenandoah Valley as a young man and later served as a commissioner for Lord Fairfax. He was also a trustee for the town of Falmouth, a justice for King George County, as well as being the County Lieutenant, and served as a member of the House of Burgesses from 1736 until his death. In the spring of 1758, when he began his campaign to win the widow Custis, Carter was a widower, having lost his second wife in 1757, and was looking for a third to take over as mother to his large family of over ten children<sup>11</sup>.



*Engraving of the young "Widow Custis, "from a painting by John Wollaston, 1757.  
Washington and Lee University collection.*



While Carter may have thought his success with Martha Dandridge Custis was a sure thing, he did have competition. According to the story told by her grandson, it would have been about the time Carter was courting Martha that she and her children paid a visit to some friends, the Chamberlaynes. While they were there, a young army officer and his body servant stopped at the Chamberlaynes' for a few minutes on the way to Williamsburg to see the governor on business. Leaving his servant, Thomas Bishop, with their horses, George Washington was convinced to stay to dinner. Upon coming into the house, he met the young widow Custis and the two young people were quite taken with one another. Washington sent word out to Bishop that they would be spending the night at the Chamberlaynes'. It was said to have been late in the morning on the next day before Washington could bring himself to leave the company of the young widow and her children<sup>12</sup>.

Although the family believed the couple had never met before, it is almost certain that they had at least heard of one another and possibly had met earlier. While George Washington was often with his troops on the frontier in the 1750s, he also came to Williamsburg frequently on business, when he would have moved in the same social circles as the wealthy Custises. He was well-known for his military exploits,

both in America and Europe, while Martha, as the wife of one of the wealthiest men in the colony, would have been highly visible, as well<sup>13</sup>. If nothing else, they had to have known one another by reputation, through mutual friends. Martha's first husband's lawyer, Robert Carter Nicholas, for example, was married to Anne Cary, whose sisters, Sally and Elizabeth, had married two of George Washington's best friends, the brothers George William and Bryan Fairfax, of Belvoir and Towlston Grange, respectively. Nicholas also did legal work for George Washington<sup>14</sup>. A letter written by one of his fellow officers shortly after Washington married Mrs. Custis even suggests that he might have been attracted to her from afar for a very long time, but that she, being married to Daniel Parke Custis, had been unavailable:

"...I had the extreme pleasure of receiving your very agreeable favour by Mr [sic] Boyd and beg leave to present my hearty Congratulations on your happy union with the Lady that all agree has long been the just object of your affections .... 15"

There is probably no way to know, short of finding a letter in which she enumerated her thought processes in this matter, why Martha made the choice she eventually did. The two men had much in common: both had experiences on the frontier, were connected in some way with

the powerful Fairfax family, and were interested in agriculture. Both had plantations along Virginia's important rivers. From a strictly practical point of view, Charles Carter may have had some things weighing in his favor: he was well-established, was old enough to have gotten whatever "wild oats" there might have been out of his system, and his family was from the upper tier of the Virginia aristocracy. On the debit side may have been his age (he was 24 years older than Martha Dandridge Custis and she had already been married to, and buried, a husband 20 years her senior) and the large number of children he already had. George Washington came from a lower rung of the Virginia class structure - the Washingtons were actually closer to the Dandrighes in status<sup>16</sup>. His health at this point was tenuous - a recent severe illness had necessitated a three month leave of absence from his command - and his career in the military had kept him on the frontier and largely prevented him from building up and improving his plantation, Mount Vernon, which was located a considerable distance from the area in which Martha had always lived<sup>17</sup>. He was, however, closer to her age, brought no emotional baggage in the form of a dead wife for whom he might be grieving and/or other children to divert attention from her own small son and daughter, and had potential as far as his prospects were concerned (he was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses, for

example, the summer after he began courting her)<sup>18</sup>. He was also dashing, heroic, and a natural-born athlete.



Francis Jukes. "Mount Vernon in Virginia, George Washington's home at Mount Vernon." /800.  
Library of Congress.

Exactly when the widow Custis and George Washington made the decision to marry is not known, but the wedding took place at the bride's home, called the White House, on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1759, about nine to ten months after their meeting at the Chamberlaynes'<sup>19</sup>. According to her descendants, the bride wore a "petticoat of white silk interwoven with silver.. The overdress, open in front, a deep yellow brocade with rich lace in the neck and sleeves. Ornaments of pearls. Her shoes were purple satin with silver trimmings."<sup>20</sup> As is so often the case, no one seemed to recall what the groom was wearing. The only evidence for his appearance that day comes from an elderly

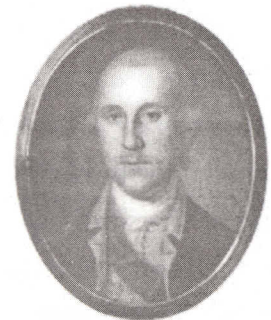
family slave, who told Martha's grandson long years later that "Many of the grandest gentlemen, in their gold lace, were at the wedding, but none looked like the man himself!"<sup>21</sup>



*According to family tradition, Martha wore these brightly-colored slippers imported from England. Covered in an aubergine silk, the slippers are trimmed in metallic lace composed of sequins and metal threads. They are lined with a combination of kid leather, linen, and woven silk. Collection of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.*

Eight months after his marriage to Martha Dandridge Custis, George Washington wrote from Mount Vernon to his agent in England to announce that "I am now I beleive [sic] fixd at this Seat with an agreeable [sic] Consort for Life and hope to find more happiness In retirement than I ever experienced amidst a wide and bustling World.,<sup>22</sup> Like many couples, the Washingtons would learn that there were a mixture of similarities and differences, which strengthened and enriched their relationship, and also kept it from getting boring. More than a foot taller than his petite wife, George

Washington shared with her a love of horses and dogs.<sup>23</sup> Both enjoyed life in the country and gardening.<sup>24</sup> They shared a strong work ethic, both rising early each day to get a quick start on things that needed to be done.<sup>25</sup> According to one of Mrs. Washington's granddaughters, they also shared a similar religious faith.<sup>26</sup> Both were the oldest children in their families, a circumstance which probably gave them each a serious approach to life, and perhaps a certain rigidity.<sup>27</sup> Both liked to keep up with current affairs through reading newspapers – George Washington at one point subscribed to as many as ten.<sup>28</sup>



*Charles Wilson Peale painted watercolor on ivory miniatures of both George and Martha Washington in Philadelphia one year into the Revolution (1776) and just a few weeks after the Declaration of Independence was signed.*

*A grandson recalled that George Washington wore a miniature of Martha around his neck "through all the vicissitudes of his eventful career."*

*Collection of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.*



There were differences, however. Where George Washington as a young man had plans for a career in the British navy, it was reported by one friend that his wife did "not Love the water" and given a choice, preferred to travel by land.<sup>29</sup> There is even some suggestion that she, married to a man who traversed much of the country between the Atlantic Ocean and the Ohio River Valley and from what is now Maine to Georgia, really didn't like to travel at all.<sup>30</sup> He was relatively abstemious at the table, but she had a hearty appetite.<sup>31</sup> While he was habitually quiet and tended to be a bit reserved with strangers, she was warm and talkative, the kind of person almost everyone came to love.<sup>32</sup> They would be happily married for forty years. In the matter of her second husband, Martha Dandridge Custis had chosen wisely - as had he.



While no images of the Washington wedding exist, Lemarcier created this engraving c.1853. "Life of George Washington - The Citizen Wedding of George Washington and Martha Custis" Library of Congress.

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### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Polly Longworth, "Portrait of Martha, Belle of New Kent," *Colonial Williamsburg* (Summer 1988, 4-11), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Longworth, "Portrait of Martha, Belle of New Kent," 4.

<sup>3</sup> Longworth, "Portrait of Martha, Belle of New Kent," 4.

<sup>4</sup> Much of the information about Martha Washington's family came from the following sources: Wilson Miles Cary, "The Dandrighes of Virginia," *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* (July 1896), 30-39; Wilson Miles Cary, "Descendants of Rev. Rowland Jones, First Rector of Bruton Parish, Va.," *William and Mary College Quarterly Magazine* (January 1897, 192-197), 192-193; Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography*, Volume 11 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 276-302; Lyon G. Tyler, "Bruton Church," *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* (January 1895, 169-182), 171; Lothrop Withington and H.F. Waters, "Virginia Gleanings in England," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (April 1903), 412.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen McCallister Clark, "The Life of Martha Washington," in "Worthy Partner": *The Papers of Martha Washington*, compiled by Joseph E. Fields (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1994, xix-xxvii), xx; for Martha Washington's ability to play the spinet and more on her education, see Longworth, "Portrait of Martha, Belle of New Kent," 6.

<sup>6</sup> Longworth, "Portrait of Martha, Belle of New Kent," 6. For Martha Washington's height, see R.W.G. Vail, editor, "A Dinner at Mount Vernon: From the Unpublished Journal of Joshua Brookes (1773-1859)," *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly* (April 1947, 72-85), 75.

<sup>7</sup> Power to Daniel Parke Custis, no date [probably 1749], in Mary Custis Lee, "Memoir of George Washington Parke Custis," *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*. By

*His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis, With A Memoir of the Author By His Daughter; And Illustrative and Explanatory Notes By Benson I. Lossing* (Philadelphia: J.W. Bradley, 1861, 9-72), 20n.

<sup>8</sup> Longworth, "Portrait of Martha, Belle of New Kent," 8.

<sup>9</sup> Clark, "The Life of Martha Washington," xx; Longworth, "Portrait of Martha, Belle of New Kent," 10.

<sup>10</sup> John Tayloe to William Byrd, III, Williamsburg, 4/4/1758, in *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, 1684-1776*, Volume II, edited by Marion Tinling (Charlottesville, Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 1977), 646 & 646n.

<sup>11</sup> Fairfax Harrison, editor, "The Will of Charles Carter of Cleve," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (January 1923, 39-69), 39-44.

<sup>12</sup> George Washington Parke Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington, By His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis, With A Memoir of the Author By His Daughter; And Illustrative and Explanatory Notes By Benson I. Lossing* (Philadelphia: J.W. Bradley, 1861, 9-72), 499-501.

Washington's financial records show that he visited the widow Custis at the White House on March 16<sup>th</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup> of 1758; he made another visit to her home on June 6<sup>th</sup> of the same year (see *The Papers of George Washington*, Colonial Series, Volume 5, edited by W.W. Abbot (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1988), 102n-103n, 221 n).

<sup>13</sup> Clark, "The Life of Martha Washington," xx. In regard to George Washington's international reputation, the journal of his exploits during a 1753-1754 mission to the French in the Ohio territory was published in Williamsburg in 1754 and was printed in colonial newspapers in Maryland and Massachusetts; and his diary and other papers from his 1754 mission to the Ohio country was published in both France and England (see *The Diaries of George Washington*, Volume I, edited by Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 160n-161 n, 166-173.

<sup>14</sup> For the fact that Robert Carter Nicholas was Daniel Parke Custis's lawyer, see Robert Carter Nicholas to Martha Dandridge Custis, 8/7/1757, "Worthy Partner," 3-4; for the relationship between Nicholas' wife and the Fairfaxes, see *The Diaries of George Washington*, Volume 2, edited by Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 38n. For the fact that Nicholas was doing legal work for George Washington at this period, see Robert Carter Nicholas to George Washington, 1/5/1758, *The Papers of George Washington*, Colonial Series, Volume 5, 79. Interestingly, Nicholas was also the nephew of Martha Dandridge Custis's other suitor, Charles Carter of Cleve (see "Carter Papers," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Volume 5, Number 4 (April, 1898, 408-428), 413, 415 & 415n.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Stewart to George Washington, 1/16/1759, *The Papers of George Washington*, Colonial Series, Volume 6, edited by W.W. Abbot (Charlottesville, Va: University Press of Virginia, 1988), 187-188.

<sup>16</sup> Mount Vernon director, James C. Rees, believes that after her early experience with the Custis family, in which she had to win over a prospective father-in-law, who initially looked down on her, Martha may have been reluctant to take on the Carters, another family from the upper ranks of the Virginia aristocracy (conversation with the author, September 2001). She would, thus, have felt more comfortable with George Washington, whose family was more like the one in which she had grown up.

<sup>17</sup> For more on Washington's illness, see Robert Stewart to Robert Dinwiddie, 11/9/1757; George Washington to Charles Green, 11/13/1757; George Washington to Sarah (Sally) Cary Fairfax, 11/15/1757; Robert Rutherford to George Washington, 11/22/1757; Robert Stewart to George Washington, 11/24/1757; Robert Dinwiddie to Robert Stewart, 11/15/1757; Robert Stewart to John Stanwix, 11/24/1757; James Craik to George Washington, 11/25/1757; Alexander Boyd to George Washington, 12/6/1757; George Mason to George Washington, 1/4/1758; John Stanwix to George Washington, 1/13/[1758]; George Washington to John Blair, [1/30/1758]; George Washington to John Blair, [1/31/1758]; John Hall to George Washington, 2/14/1758; George Washington to John Blair, 2/20/1758; Nathaniel Thompson to George Washington, 2/20/1758; Charles Smith to George Washington, 2/23/1758; George Washington to John Stanwix, 3/4/1758; John Stanwix to George Washington, 3/10/1758, in *The Papers of George Washington*, Colonial Series, Volume 5, 46, 51-52, 56, 57, 58, 62, 63-65, 68, 77, 80-81, 82, 86, 94, 95-96, 100-102, 104, 109-110, 116.

<sup>18</sup> For George Washington's election to the House of Burgesses, see Charles Smith to George Washington, 7/26/1758, with its various enclosures, in *The Papers of George Washington*, Colonial Series, Volume 5, 331-344.

<sup>19</sup> Clark, "The Life of Martha Washington," xx-xxi; Longworth, "Portrait of Martha, Belle of New Kent," 10-11.

<sup>20</sup> "Yr Entire Go Washington:-" *The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union Annual Report 1976* (Mount Vernon, Virginia: The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, 1977, 22-24), 22-23.

<sup>21</sup> Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, 502.

<sup>22</sup> George Washington to Richard Washington, 9/20/1759, *The Papers of George Washington*, Colonial Series, Volume 6, 359.

<sup>23</sup> For George Washington's interest in horses, riding, and dogs, see Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, 384-389. For Martha Washington's interest in horses and riding, see Martha Washington to Anna Maria Dandridge Bassett, 11/18/1777, in "Worthy Partner": *The Papers of*



*Martha Washington*, compiled by Joseph E. Fields (Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 1994), 174; Lund Washington to George Washington, 31/12/1783 (manuscript, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association; typescript, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association); George Washington to the Secretary of War, 1/29/1789, in *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, 39 volumes, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-1944), 30:183-184; entry for 9/14/1787, regarding Mrs. Washington's saddle, Mount Vernon Storehouse Account Book, 1/1/1787-12/31/1787 (manuscript, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association; typescript, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association); and, in the Curatorial Collections, W-560, an iron or steel stirrup, said to have been Mrs. Washington's. For Martha Washington's interest in dogs, see George Washington to George Augustine Washington, 8/12/1787, in *The Papers of George Washington*, Confederation Series, Volume 5, edited by W.W. Abbot (Charlottesville, Virginia, and London: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 287, 289n; Frederick Kitt to George Washington, 1/15/1798, in *The Papers of George Washington*, Retirement Series, Volume 2, edited by W.W. Abbot (Charlottesville, Virginia, and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 25, 26n.

<sup>24</sup> For George Washington's interest in country life and farming/gardening, see George Washington to Charles Armand-Tuffin, 10/7/1785; George Washington to Alexander Spotswood, 2/13/1788; George Washington to Reverend William Gordon, 10/15/1797, in *The Writings of George Washington*, 28:289, 29:414; 36:49. For Martha Washington's love of country life and especially life at Mount Vernon, see Martha Washington to Mercy Otis Warren, 12/26/1789; Martha Washington to Frances Bassett Washington, 7/1/1792, in "Worthy Partner," 223, 239. For Martha Washington's influence on gardening at Mount Vernon, see J.D. Norton and Susanne A. Schrage-Norton, "The Upper Garden at Mount Vernon Estate, Its Past, Present, and Future: A Reflection of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Gardening, Phase II: The Complete Report, 9/25/1985" (unpublished report prepared for the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association), 42-46. For her knowledge of gardening/horticulture, see Martha Washington to Hannah Bushrod Washington, 6/22/1784, in "Worthy Partner," 194 and Manasseh Cutler, 1/2/1802, in William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins Cutler, *Life Journals and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler, LL.D. By His Grandchildren*, Volume II (Cincinnati, Ohio: Robert Clarke & Co., 1888), 58.

<sup>25</sup> Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, 162-163, 509.

<sup>26</sup> Nelly Custis Lewis to Jared Sparks, 2/26/1833, in Jared Sparks, *The Life of George Washington* (Boston: Ferdinand Andrews, 1839), 521-522.

<sup>27</sup> See "Birth Order and Your Child," found on 6/26/2001, at the website of Family Links at the Parent and Child Guidance Center, 2644 Banksville Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15216 (<http://trillc.lnph.org/pcgclbjr/horde1.html>).

!! For Martha Washington's interest in newspapers, see Vail, editor, "A Dinner at Mount Vernon: From the Unpublished

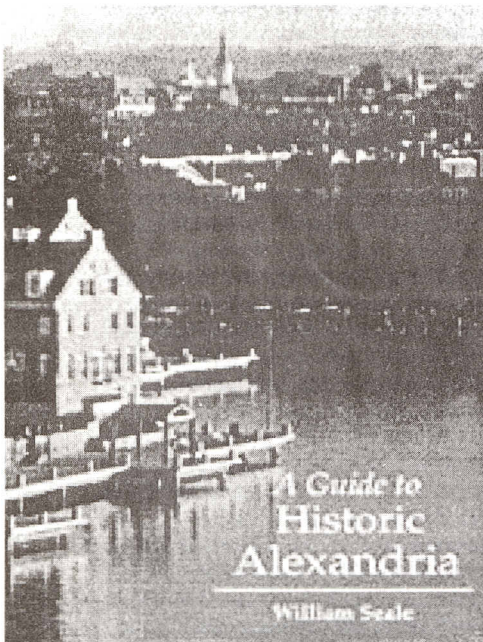
Journal of Joshua Brookes (1773-1859)," 81; for her husband's like interest, see Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Under Their Vine and Fig Tree: Travels through America in 1797-1799, 1805, with some further account of life in New Jersey*, translated and edited by Metchie J.E. Budka (Elizabeth, New Jersey: The Grassman Publishing Company, Inc., 1965), 103.

<sup>29</sup> For George Washington's plans for a naval career, or rather his older half-brother's plans for him, see David Humphreys' "Life of General Washington," with George Washington's "Remarks..." edited by Rosemarie Zagari (Athens, Georgia, and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), 7-8, 102n. For Martha Washington's dislike of the water, see Abigail Adams to her sister, 10/11/1789, in *New Letters of Abigail Adams, 1788-1801*, edited by Stewart Mitchell (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 29-30.

<sup>30</sup> For evidence that Mrs. Washington didn't like to travel, see George Washington to Reverend Jonathan Boucher, 5/21/1772, *The Writings of George Washington*, 3:84, in which Washington makes the statement, "Whether Mrs. Washington ever stretches as far as Annapolis or not, we shall certainly take some very early opportunity of making your acquaintance on this occasion." See also William Heth to George Washington, 5/3/1789, in *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, Volume 2, edited by Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1987), 204, in which the author mentions his efforts to calm what he saw as possible "female apprehensions," on Mrs. Washington's part, "on being drove by *Strange* coachmen, with *Strange* Horses."

<sup>31</sup> For George Washington limiting himself to one or two rather plain dishes at dinner, eschewing dessert, and partaking sparingly of wine, see Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, 169, 436n, 493; Nelly Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, 2/23/1823 (manuscript, private collection; typescript, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association). For an example of Martha Washington's appetite, seemingly injudicious in this case, see *Documentary History of the First Federal Congress of the United States of America*, Volume IX: *The Diary of William Maclay and Other Notes on Senate Debates*, edited by Kenneth R. Bowling and Helen E. Veit (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 74.

<sup>32</sup> For George Washington being quiet and reserved, see Nelly Custis Lewis to Jared Sparks, 2/26/1833, in Sparks, *The Life of George Washington*, 522; Abigail Adams to her sister, 7/12/1789, in *New Letters of Abigail Adams*, 15; Niemcewicz, *Under Their Vine and Fig Tree*, 102. For Martha Washington being a good conversationalist, see Olney Winsor to Mrs. Olney Winsor, 3/31/1788, in *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Volume 8, edited by John P. Kaminski and Gaspare J. Saladino (Madison, Wisconsin: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1988), 523; Niemcewicz, *Under Their Vine and Fig Tree*, 103. For the love of the soldiers in the Continental Army for Mrs. Washington, see Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, 403, 508-509. For Mrs. Washington inspiring love from others, see Abigail Adams to her sister, 7/12/1789, in *New Letters of Abigail Adams*, 1.



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