

SENATOR RICHARD S. MADALENO, JR.
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Tonight I want to tell you a tale of two Washingtons: one about George Washington, and one about the creation of the city that bears his name and is such a large part of so many of our lives today. The two tales tell the story of Washington's vision for the future and his quest of a legacy that would unite the nation and establish a grand capital city to rival London and Paris - a new Rome to enlighten the world.

George Washington was a person of immense talent. He was a charismatic leader who almost single-handedly kept the Continental Army together through the Revolutionary War by the sheer force of his will. George Washington was also big dreamer. Like many of his contemporaries, he had a vision of an American nation stretching far to the west. A vision that was simply too big for a series of small colonies constrained by distant British masters. He possessed grand ambitions to be successful in government and business. From his first trip to the west as an officer in the British army, he sought out land to own and develop. His desires for wealth and his love of this area led him to be an outspoken advocate of the Potomac Valley and an active participant in various schemes to improve the river. He consistently argued for policies and plans that would grow the fledgling American economy. Washington's dreams also often blinded him to the nightmare of slavery. His many accomplishments would have been simply impossible without his ownership of fellow Americans and their forced labor on his estate and on so many of his projects.

The tale of the two Washingtons starts right here, in the Old Senate Chamber, in 1781.

Following the big victory at Yorktown and the surrender of a sizeable portion of the British forces in North America, General Washington travelled to Philadelphia to report to the Continental Congress on the future of the war. His journey took him through Annapolis, where, over three days of festivities, his stunning victory was celebrated. The members of this legislature were so taken by his visit that the day after his departure, the House of Delegates directed Governor Thomas Sim Lee to commemorate the occasion with the installation of the General's portrait for permanent display in the State House.

Governor Lee contracted with Maryland-native Charles Wilson Peale to prepare the portrait. Peale was an ardent revolutionary himself who greatly admired Washington. Peale thought a simple portrait would be an insufficient honor to such a great hero. Instead, he painted an enormous painting depicting the moment of victory at Yorktown featuring Washington, Lafayette, and Marylander Charles Tilghman. As it would take Peale nearly three years to finish the work, it was not ready for Washington's return to this chamber a year later to resign his commission as commander in chief.

After leaving the army, Washington returned to Mount Vernon and resumed his efforts to foster development along the Potomac River. Washington, like many Virginians and Marylanders, believed the Potomac was the best route to establish a transportation connection to the west. He and other leading local politicians, who also happened to be the leading landowners, envisioned a series of canals that would make the Potomac accessible from Georgetown all the way to the Ohio River via one of its tributaries.

With this in mind, George Washington would use his return to the State House the following December for the public unveiling of Peale's masterpiece, again in this very chamber, to lobby the General Assembly to support his new canal plan. In his first foray back into public life, Washington would spend a week in Annapolis cajoling our predecessors to charter the Patowmack Canal Company. Working with his Maryland partners, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll, and Samuel Chase (whose portraits adorn our current chamber), he got the charter approved and secured a \$3,333 appropriation (roughly \$2 million in current dollars) for the project.

Washington saw this as an excellent business proposition for himself and an essential investment in tying the western territories to the east coast. He worried that the lack of easy westward transportation connections would push the Northwest Territories back into European hands.

To further this goal, with his partners, he successfully pushed Maryland and Virginia to establish a free trade zone along the Potomac and laid out a series of small canals alternating on sides of the river to get around the biggest natural obstacles like Great Falls and Little Falls. Washington thought the Maryland/Virginia free trade agreement was a model for the rest of the country. He was a leading proponent of a free trade convention of the states that was held here in Annapolis in 1786. When only twelve representatives from six states made it in time for the convention (even Maryland failed to appoint representatives), the delegates agreed to try again the following year in Philadelphia with more time to assemble the states and with a much bigger agenda.

The Philadelphia Convention, chaired by Washington, would result in a new constitution that made interstate trade the sole responsibility of Congress and that envisioned a ten-mile square federal district to house the capital outside the jurisdiction of any single state. The capital had been bouncing between various towns since congress fled unpaid soldiers demonstrating in Philadelphia in 1783. The governor of Pennsylvania sympathized with the soldiers and refused pleas from Congress for protection. Understandably, Congress wanted a federal district as insurance against fickle governors loyal more to their constituents than the federal government.

Following the ratification of the Constitution, our predecessors seized on the opportunity of gaining the national capital and adopted a measure stating "it is in the interest of this state to hold out every invitation, as an inducement to congress to fix their permanent residence within the limits of this state...and that as the fixing upon the banks of the Patowmack will be equally to the advantage of this state as that of Virginia...[Maryland] ought to share in the expenses which may be necessary in the accomplishment of this object. ...The proposition of Virginia ought to be acceded to, and [Maryland] should pass [a law] promising an advance of \$72,000...to be applied in such manner as congress shall direct towards erecting public buildings." Little did they know that this grant would bring the biggest return on investment of any economic development incentive package in our state's history. However, the Potomac plan faced stiff competition from proposals by Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and South Carolina. Even Maryland was divided with many merchants favoring Baltimore as our state's preferred location.

Building a national economy and establishing a new capital would dominate the debate in the new congress and the debate in Washington's first cabinet. After roaming between various towns, Congress had settled into New York City in 1785 and had stayed. Now President, George Washington moved to New York, as did the new Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and the newly elected Representative James Madison, who was the de facto majority leader. They were joined in the leadership of the new government by Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton. By then Hamilton had become one of New York's most important citizens. Most people believed Hamilton wanted to keep the capital in New York permanently, but he had much bigger plans to accomplish.

Many of the northern states were struggling to repay their wartime debts. Debt payments exceeded what most states brought in in annual revenues. Continued hostility with Great Britain had reduced trade for northern businesses, and the new constitution had eliminated state taxes on interstate commerce. This debt load threatened to bankrupt states just as a new national government was taking shape. The slave labor enabled agricultural economies of the southern states to fare much better during this time. Most southern states had paid off their debts, and their congressional representatives were not interested in bailing out their northern counterparts and their city-dwelling residents. This idea was especially galling to the Virginian aristocrats. The assumption of unpaid northern state debts by the national government would mean higher taxes for their constituents – a risky proposition for any politician looking to win reelection.

To most Southern members of Congress, meeting in New York City was a significant inconvenience. It was far from home and difficult for them to keep up their slave-dependent lifestyle. Washington and his fellow Virginians struggled in their daily lives with fewer household slaves. Favorite slave cooks and servants were exposed to a vastly different world and many free African Americans. The slaveholders were fearful of their human property slipping off on a boat or up river to freedom. When a divided Congress selected a site on the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania for the new federal capital district, the defeated Southerners were even more dismayed as Pennsylvania had enacted an abolition law freeing any slave in the state in residence for more than 90 days. Their pampered days with their favorite slaves would be over. Hamilton seized upon their anxiety and discomfort to offer a compromise that would reverberate through American history.

On the evening of June 20th, 1790, Jefferson hosted Hamilton and Madison for a private dinner to finalize a grand bargain to settle both the so-called "assumption question" and the "residency question". Hamilton offered the votes of the northern members for a change in the 'residency' of the capital. He proposed a site on the Potomac in Maryland, long preferred by and quite financially beneficial to President Washington, in exchange for Madison's commitment of southern votes for his debt assumption plan. To gain the critical votes of the Pennsylvania delegation, the bargain included a temporary relocation of the capital back to Philadelphia with the proviso that Philadelphia would be the permanent location if the new federal district was not complete by 1800. It was a gamble the Philadelphians were willing to make to cement their status as America's preeminent city. The grand bargain was an exercise in compromise and vote trading that would become a hallmark of America's unique experiment in legislating policy.

In just three weeks, Madison and Hamilton would push the compromise through Congress to Washington's desk. Several Maryland Congressman flipped their position on the debt plan to get the capital for our state. Angry merchants in Baltimore and the Eastern Shore would vent their frustrations with those officials who had supported the Potomac compromise. That November, with the entire congressional delegation elected at-large, those Congressman who supported the deal were thrown out of office thanks to an overwhelming and questionable 99% turnout of voters in Baltimore City. In response, the General Assembly, still dominated by the Federalists, would quickly end the practice of at-large congressional elections to limit the voting power of Baltimore. This political realignment would be the end of Federalist domination of Maryland politics and would foreshadow regional factionalism in our state for generations to come.

The final plan for the capital delegated the exact site decision to President Washington. He was to choose a location any where from the Eastern Branch of the Potomac, currently known as the Anacostia River, to Williamsport. This zone greatly disappointed those Marylanders who favored Baltimore or Fort Cumberland. After surveying the land with great fanfare, few were surprised that Washington chose the site closest to Mount Vernon for the new city. However, Washington did surprise many when he proposed the federal district extend into Virginia and include the city of Alexandria, including many of his properties and those of Martha's family. (The enormous Custis plantation in Arlington would eventually pass down to Martha's descendent Robert E. Lee. Seized by the federal government for his treason during the Civil War, the Lee-Custis estate is now the Arlington National Cemetery.)

Washington's change in plans for the district needed congressional approval. Hamilton again seized on this opportunity and traded northern votes for the Alexandria amendment in exchange for southern support for his proposed national bank – the precursor of our current federal reserve bank. Always suspicious of Virginia's power, northern congressmen included a provision mandating the construction of all public buildings on the Maryland side of the river.

George Washington was now tasked by Congress with constructing a grand city out of the wilderness with the added complication of no federal funds. As an experienced and successful land speculator, Washington was confident that the new federal district would attract investors from across the country and Europe anxious to buy into the greatest money making opportunity in the new country. Confident that his Potomac canal plan would be the critical western connection the country needed, he envisioned the new federal city would soon become America's largest port – a vibrant commercial and political center to rival London and to guarantee his vision for American dominance over the entire continent.

To accomplish the plan, he appointed three fellow local land speculating politicians as commissioners to manage the endeavor. Former Maryland Governor Thomas Johnson, Maryland Senator Daniel Carroll, whose plantation was the largest in Montgomery County, and Virginian David Stuart, whose wife Eleanor Calvert Custis was a member of Maryland's Calvert family and the widow of Washington's stepson, were initially appointed. The President's first directive to the commissioners was to select a name for the new district. He had Jefferson attend the meeting to let them know he had no expectation that the new city would be named for him. With the idea planted, the commissioners picked "Washington" as the city's name and "Columbia" as the name for the entire district. The name Columbia had been a favorite of the founders to counter the mythical image of Britannia.

The commissioners hired another Marylander Andrew Ellicott to fix the exact boundaries of the district. In turn, Ellicott would hire Maryland's preeminent mathematician and his longtime family friend Benjamin Banneker to do the astronomical calculations to layout the boundary markers.

Washington recruited another personal favorite, Pierre L'Enfant, to design the city. L'Enfant's grand design embodied Washington's vision for the city with grand boulevards radiating out from the capitol building and executive mansion like rays of light to all corners of the continent. It was a significant departure from the modest plan prepared by Jefferson to add a small government complex adjacent to Georgetown.

The commissioners established a budget of \$1 million to build the infrastructure of the city and construct the public buildings. The Maryland General Assembly granted the commission the power of eminent domain to acquire the necessary property and appropriated \$72,000 promptly. Virginia pledged \$120,000, and the commissioners were confident that another \$800,000 would be raised quickly through land sales. Washington travelled to Georgetown to personally negotiate land purchases with local owners. He used his charm and charisma to earn their participation. He enticed people with his confidence that wealthy Americans would flock to the new city.

Unfortunately, Washington's vision would soon be battered by 18th century reality. A new city would need to rise from a combination of wilderness and farmland, but L'Enfant's design centered the new city hours away by horse and boat from existing merchants and laborers in Georgetown and Alexandria. People were needed to build the city, but no housing was available. Washington mandated that all new housing had to be constructed with bricks and be two stories tall. He did not want shacks in the heart of his city. The pace of construction was extremely slow.

The first auction was a complete failure when only \$8,000 was raised. To add insult to injury, Virginia was perpetually delinquent in meeting its pledge, so the commissioners were entirely dependent on Maryland's contribution. To begin the work, the commissioners rented slaves from nearby plantations in Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

Two-thirds of the workforce to build America's new temple of democracy were American slaves, who would be forced to do the backbreaking work of cutting trees, clearing land, leveling hills, digging foundations, making bricks, and building walls in the sweltering heat and humidity of summer and the freezing cold of winter. Away from their normal confinement and living in even more squalid conditions, these Americans would have their hair and eyebrows forcibly shaved to more easily identify those who resisted captivity by escaping. Unlike their white contemporaries and the remarkable Benjamin Banneker, these African Americans would remain anonymous except for a few first names in property logs and invoices. The efforts Kitt and Bob, Charles and Peter, Nace, Basil, Will, Auston, James, and George would never be properly rewarded and their contributions would be whitewashed from history until recently.

As the clock ticked down toward the 1800 deadline, George Washington would become even more actively involved in the project. He would push the commissioners to support ever riskier financial schemes. He would support raising funds through a lottery, with the two grand prize winners to receive a hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue and a mansion neighboring the yet-to-be-built presidential residence. Neither structure was ever built, and the lottery collapsed. He would support selling large tracks of land at bargain prices in exchange for promised investments and loans. The eventual collapse of this scheme would result in the impeachment of Pennsylvania's state treasurer, the removal of one of its US Senators, and the bankruptcy of the wealthiest person in the country.

The whole project was once again saved by the need of another legislative compromise. This time northern merchants were desperate to gain approval of a new trade deal with Great Britain. Under the terms of the deal known as the "Jay Treaty," the British offered to finally abandon their forts on the American side of the Great Lakes, including Detroit, and to use their navy to protect American shipping. The United States promised to restrict the size of American merchant vessels and to deny port access to French naval vessels. The deal greatly offended pro-French officials like Jefferson and Madison who felt that Washington was deserting his old French allies. Hamilton again offered the deal saving compromise. With northern support, Congress would finally provide direct funding for construction of the city in exchange for southern support for implementing the new treaty.

Still short of funds, Washington would have to return to Annapolis one last time to make a personal appeal for a \$100,000 line of credit from our state government. Thanks to his intervention, the State Senate approved the loan by only one vote.

Washington would soldier on with the project even as others started to see it as a folly. Many observers believed the whole endeavor would collapse upon his death. His successor as president, John Adams, never caught Potomac fever and promised to do no more than what was legally necessary to advance the effort. A committed Federalist, Adams had little desire to move the capital to a rural southern outpost perpetually dependent on slave labor for survival.

After retiring from the presidency in 1797, Washington returned to Mount Vernon and his focus on the Potomac. He travelled frequently to the city to check on progress and regularly sent directions to commissioners. He fought against efforts to reduce costs to relocate the president's mansion and office to Capitol Hill. Both he and Adams believed that a strong and independent executive branch needed to not only legally separate but physically distant from the Congress. Both presidents had grown tired of Congressman meddling in executive departments by regularly wandering into their offices. A long journey down Pennsylvania Avenue would keep Congressmen on their side of the city.

By the time of Washington's sudden and unexpected death in 1799, his city was close to being ready, albeit in minimal condition. While L'Enfant's extravagant plan offended their yeoman farmer sensibilities, Jefferson and Madison had grown weary of Philadelphia. The wealthy merchants of the city had grown too influential in the Halls of Congress with promises of money and gifts. Southerners had also grown resentful of America's largest and most prosperous free African American community. They yearned for America's great new national capital and commercial center to be safely ensconced in slave-holding territory.

We probably all know the story from here. President Adams and Congress relocate to the new City of Washington before the deadline, but the canal company and the dream of a Potomac route to the west fail miserably. The great Metropolis of America grows on the Hudson instead. A national capital based in the south helps enable slavery's despicable continuation. By 1843, a new generation of Maryland legislators grows frustrated with the lack of economic benefits from the federal city and actually passes a resolution demanding our original \$72,000 refunded with interest. This request, which is repeated several times, is never granted by Congress.

However, the grand capital city as the embodiment of our democratic aspirations and our national unity survives and eventually thrives. The public buildings that evolve over the decades become iconic images for freedom seeking individuals around the world. L'Enfant's vision of liberty lighting the continent and the world from the heart of our democracy does come to pass.

As Americans and particularly as Marylanders, we are the current beneficiaries of this legacy of hope and sorrow, of greed and unrelenting faith and optimism. The framers of our Constitution envisioned a strong federal government with a vibrant, functioning national capital to protect and perpetuate the Union. Lincoln understood the importance of the symbols of our democratic faith. He would not delay work on the Capitol Dome even during the height of the Civil War. As we struggle to find common purpose in this challenging time, the vision of Washington – the man and his city – offer us a call down through the centuries for a unity of purpose and spirit. I fear we place ourselves at great peril if we turn away from that vision. Together, we must not let this dream of a brighter future for our country and for humanity perish.

WITH SINCERE THANKS AND APPRECIATION FOR THE HELP AND ASSISTANCE OF ELAINE RICE BACHMANN, DEPUTY STATE ARCHIVIST, MIMI CALVER WITH FRIENDS OF THE MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES, AND THE OTHER UNNAMED RESEARCHERS AT THE STATE ARCHIVES WHO PUT TOGETHER DOCUMENTS HELPFUL TO PUTTING TOGETHER THIS SPEECH.