

Talking Points  
Senator Mike Miller  
Accokeek Foundation Educational Center Inaugural Lecture  
December 12, 2004

It is a pleasure and an honor to be with you this evening for the first Inaugural lecture in your new education building. As the first indoor classroom for the more than 6,000 students that come here each year, and for public programs such as this, it appropriately enhances the foundation's ability to keep alive the memory of Maryland's rich agricultural history and the lessons to be learned from it.

My remarks tonight are about the neighborhood over two hundred years ago, when George Washington lived just across the Potomac River and frequently came to visit his Maryland friends for work and recreation, just as they often returned the favor.

Over the course of his life, Washington spent a considerable amount of time in Maryland, traveling its roads and visiting with friends. We know a lot about those visits. On the 200th Anniversary of his birth in 1932, a Maryland Commission exhaustively studied his travels in Maryland, and produced a fine map by J. Spence Howard, a copy of which I am pleased to present to you tonight for display here in the educational center. In all the Howard map records 90 places Washington visited in Maryland exclusive of individual houses in Annapolis and Baltimore.

In addition Caleb Magruder published a series of articles in the Enquirer-Gazette in 1932 documenting the 81 recorded times over his life that Washington entered Prince George's and Charles Counties for business and pleasure.

Washington was as comfortable in Maryland as he was in Virginia and considered the Potomac a vital, common thoroughfare for both. From his perspective he could look across the river to his friends the Digges's at Warburton Manor and to the Marshall's at Marshall Hall. He would not think twice about visiting the Calvert's at Mount Airy and indeed would struggle to keep his step son's interests focused on education when Jack's mind was on Eleanor ("Nelly") Calvert.

Washington had no children of his own. While he would come to consider Lafayette as close to a son as he would ever have, he was also devoted to his immediate adopted family, Martha's children, Jack and Patsy Custis. Patsy suffered from Epilepsy. For Patsy there were a number of occasions when he requested calming medicines be sent from Annapolis and he recorded her last moments in a diary entry in June of 1773:

*[Patsy] rose from dinner about four o'clock in better health and spirits than she had appeared to have been in for some time; soon after which she was seized with one of her usual fits and expired in it in less than two minutes without uttering a word, a groan, or scarce a sigh. This sudden and unexpected blow ... has almost reduced my poor wife to the lowest ebb of misery.*

Jack, who would die of fever in the service of his country at the battle of Yorktown in October 1781, was constantly a challenge, especially when it come to the education that Washington felt he sorely needed. Entrusted to the care of the pistol packing priest, the Reverend Jonathan Boucher, Jackie proved to be a handful. As Washington explained to Boucher:

His mind [is] a good deal released from study, and more than ever turned to dogs, horses, and guns; indeed upon dress and equipage, which till of late, he has discovered little inclination of giving into. I must beg the favor of you, therefore, to keep him close to those useful branches of knowledge which he ought now to be acquainted with, and as much as possible under your own eye. Without these, I fear he will too soon think himself above control, and be not much the better for the extraordinary expense attending his living in Annapolis ....

The time of life he is now advancing into requires the most friendly aid and counsel (especially in such a place as Annapolis); otherwise the warmth of his own passions, assisted by the bad example of other youth, may prompt him to actions derogatory of virtue and that innocence of manners which one could wish to preserve him in; ...[do not allow him] to be rambling about of nights in company with those who do not care how debauched and vicious his conduct may be ...

The Reverend Boucher did not have an easy time of it. He replied that "I must confess to you, I never did in my life know a youth so exceedingly indolent, or so surprisingly voluptuous; one would suppose nature had intended him for some Asiatic prince."

Visits to Mount Airy did not help. There Jackie fell in love with Eleanor "Nelly" Calvert who he ultimately married, possibly shotgun style. It seems that Martha did not attend the wedding and it took place rather suddenly.

Just because George Washington was concerned about his stepson's imbibing too much of the good life, didn't mean that our future President didn't enjoy it a bit himself. His love of cards, the company of lovely women, and his fondness for attending the races anywhere, but particularly Annapolis are well known.

Take for example his record of a visit to the Maryland capital in 1771:

1771 September 21

Set out with Mr. Wormely for the Annapolis Races. Dined at Mr. Willm. Digge's and lodged at Mr. Ignatis Digge's.

22. Dined at Mr. Samuel Galloway's and lodged with [Reverend] Mr. Boucher in Annapolis.

23. Dined with Mr. Lloyd Dulaney and spent the evening at the Coffee House.

24. Dined with the Governor [Robert Eden] and went to the play and ball afterwards.

25. Dined at Dr. Stewart's and went to the play and ball afterwards.

26. Dined at Mr. Rideout's and went to the play after it.

27. Dined at Mr. Carroll's and went to the ball.

28. Dined at Mr. Boucher's and went from thence to the play and afterwards to the Coffee House.

During this time, Washington records losing over L13, presumably during card games, as opposed to the horse races (on subsequent visits, Washington does record his losses on the races). source: <http://www.whatsupmag.com/feb03/gw.shtml>

Washington was not adverse to investing in a lottery and even used one to determine the color of the uniforms to be worn by his troops.

*I inclose you a certificate which will show what colored cloathing the troops of each state are to have as determined by lot. In any issues you make, you must govern yourself by this.*

*I wish you to know as soon as may be what quantity there is of each color. You will endeavour to ascertain it as near as you can and give me information.*

*As it was apprehended that there might be a surplus of Blue Cloathing after supplying the troops of North Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey and New York agreeable to lottery No. 149 There was a second draft for the choice of Blue, which is to be agreeable to lottery No. 2. I am etc.50*

*[Note 49: Lottery No. 1, which is attested by all the aides, Henry Ph. Livingston, Caleb Gibbs, and Alexander Scammell, shows that North Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York drew blue, through Harrison, Tilghman, Hamilton, and Livingston; while Virginia and Delaware, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Hazen's regiment drew brown, through Meade, McHenry, Gibbs, and Scammell. Lottery No. 2 gave Massachusetts first choice for any blue left over, Virginia and Delaware second, New Hampshire and Hazen's regiment third, and Pennsylvania last. The lotteries and the tickets drawn are in the Washington Papers under date of Oct, 28, 1778.]*

*[Note 50: The draft is in the writing of Alexander Hamilton. The last paragraph is in the writing of Tench Tilghman, and the phrase in brackets is in the writing of Washington.]*

Washington was first and foremost a good neighbor. He once noted in his diary that Mt Vernon felt more like a well stocked tavern filled with guests, but that did not deter him from entertaining.

If we were to just look at his surviving diary entries for this evening, December 12 we can easily take the measure of George Washington's commitment to being a good neighbor and of his steadfast

interest in improving the beauty and productivity of the plantations that lined the river.

Take for example the entries encompassing December 12, 1771:

9. *Went to meet Govr. Eden at Mr. Willm. Digges's where we dined. In the Afternoon the Govr. Mr. Calvert, Majr. Fleming Mr. Boucher, Mr. Geo. Digges and Doctr. Digges came over with me.*

*Benedict Calvert (C.1724--1788), an illegitimate son of Charles Calvert, fifth Baron Baltimore (1699--1751), lived at Mount Airy (later called Dower House) in Prince George's County, Md., near present-day Rosaryville. Born in England, he was known in his early years as Benedict Swingate, but Lord Baltimore, while refusing to identify Benedict's mother, acknowledged him as his son and provided well for him. Benedict took the Calvert name and at the age of 18 went to Maryland, where in 1745 he was appointed collector of customs at Patuxent and in the following year became a member of the provincial council. In 1748 he married a distant relation, Elizabeth Calvert (1730--1798), daughter of the Charles Calvert who was governor of Maryland 1720--27 (NICKLIN [2], 58, 313--14; W.P.A. [2], 464--65).*

*Maj. William Fleming of the British army, currently acting commander of the 64th Regiment of Foot stationed at Halifax, Nova Scotia, was visiting the southern provinces for his health. He apparently returned north early the next summer when his regiment was moved to a post near Boston (Thomas Gage to William W. Barrington, 6 Jan. 1769, GAGE PAPERS, 2:493--94; DAVIES, 1:304).*

*Dr. Joseph Digges, son of William Digges and younger brother of George Digges, had studied at the University of Edinburgh but had not received a degree. During the Revolution he was surgeon to the Charles County, Md., militia 1777--78. In Oct. 1778 the Maryland state council gave him permission to go to Bermuda to recover his health, which had been bad "for some time past" (MD. ARCHIVES, 21:222). He was apparently taken prisoner by the British during the trip; on 1 Nov. 1779, he wrote GW from Teneriffe in the Canary Islands that he had been paroled but had not heard of his being exchanged, "from whence I conclude, that the Family at Warburton either believe me Dead, or have neglected writing me" (DLC:GW). Digges died at Teneriffe a short time later (RAMSBURGH, 131).*

10. *The above Gentlemen dined here as did Colo. Fairfax who went away in the Afternoon.*

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11. *The Govr. and all the Compy. dined at Colo. Fairfax's & returnd in the Afternoon.*

**12. The foregoing Gentlemen still here.**

13. *The Governor, and other Gentlemen cross'd over to Mr. Digges on their return home. I dined with them there & came back in the Aftern.*

14. *Went a fox hunting with John Parke Custis Lund Washington & Mr. Manley--killed a*

*Fox.*

*15. At home all day alone, in the Evening the same.*

Washington enjoyed a good party. He loved dancing, played cards for money, and followed the hounds on both sides of the river. On December 12, 1785 he describes in some detail one fox hunt:

*Monday 12th. Thermometer at [ ] in the Morning--[ ] at Noon and 58 at Night.*

*Morning cloudy and soft without any wind. In the Evening it began to Mizzle, and after dark to rain fast and continued to do so until I went to bed and how much longer I know not.*

*Majr. Farlie went away before breakfast, with 251 Diplomas which I had signed for the Members of the Cincinnati of the State of New York, at the request of General McDougall President of that Society.*

*After an early breakfast George Washington, Mr. Shaw & my self went into the woods back of Muddy hole Plantation a hunting and were joined by Mr. Lund Washington and Mr. William Peake. About half after ten Oclock (being first plagued with the Dogs running Hogs) We found a fox near Colo. Masons Plantation on little Hunting Creek (West fork) having followed on his*

*Page 248 { page image viewer }  
{illustration}*

*"The Death of the Fox," one of a series of hunting prints which hung at Mount Vernon during Washington's lifetime. (Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union)*

*Drag more than half a Mile; and run him with Eight Dogs (the other 4 getting, as was supposed, after a second Fox) close and well for an hour--When the Dogs came to a fault, and to cold Hunting until 20 Minutes after 12 When being joined by the missing Dogs they put him up a flesh and in about 50 Minutes killed [him] up in an open field of Colo.*

*Mason's--every rider & every Dog being present at the death.*

*Two Hounds which were lent, and sent to me yesterday by Mr. Chichester--viz.--a Dog named Rattler, & a Bitch named Juno--behaved very well. My French Dogs also come on--all, except the Bitch which raized Puppies, running constantly whilst the Scent was hot.*

*Mr. Peak & Lund Washington came home to dinner with us.*

*Alexander McDougall (1732--1786), a Scottish emigrant, was a prosperous New York merchant. He had been a leading radical in New York*

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*before the Revolution, and became a brigadier and major general in the Continental Army. He served in the Continental Congress in 1781--82, 1784--85 and was president of the New York chapter of the Society*

It was with great reluctance that he and Martha hung up their dancing shoes in November, 1799, a month before he died. When he and Mrs. Washington were invited to the assemblies, as dances were called, in Alexandria that winter he replied: "...alas! our dancing days are no more. We wish however, all those who ... relish ... so agreeable & innocent amusement all the pleasure the season will afford them.."

December 12, 1799, marked a very sad occasion for Washington's neighbors as well as the Nation. Devoted to the improvements on his plantation and always attentive to the needs of his estate, he chose to ride his inspection rounds in the worst of weather. The entry in his diary is matter of fact. The following morning would be his last as explained by a footnote in the most recent edited edition:

*[December 12, 1799] Wind in the same place but not hard. Mer. 28 at Night.*

On 12 Dec. in the midst of the day's severe weather GW rode out to supervise winter activities at the various farms, becoming wet and chilled in the course of his ride. On the 13th, in spite of a developing cold and sore throat, late in the day he went out on the front lawn to mark some trees for cutting. During the night he awoke with an inflammation of the throat but dissuaded Mrs. Washington from waking any members of the household until morning. Through the day of 14 Dec. he received various treatments commonly in use for such an illness, and he was attended by doctors James Craik, Gustavus Richard Brown, and Elisha Cullen Dick. On the evening of 14 Dec. GW died in his bed at Mount Vernon (see FREEMAN, 7:618--25).

Even at the end he had a Maryland friend and colleague at this side. His physician was Dr. James Craik of La Grange (named after Lafayette's home outside Paris), a home that is still standing near La Plata in Charles County.

La Grange Maryland State Route 6, west of US Route 301, LaPlata, MD 20646  
This home was owned by Dr. James Craik, a friend and physician to George Washington. Privately owned

Dr. Craig, in the context of the prevailing medical treatment of the day, did his best to save his friend by bleeding him, although if a colleague's suggestion of a tracheotomy before he strangled had been adopted Washington might have survived the inflammation of his throat.

So distraught were all of his friends that one dashed off a note suggesting a means of revival:

*Dr. William Thornton, architect of the Capitol and well-trained physician originally from England dispatched a message to Mount Vernon [the Monday following Washington's death] requesting of Martha Washington that he be permitted to warm the corpse of Washington and perform a tracheotomy in an effort to restore Washington's life! Appropriately Mrs. Washington refused.*

But it is not in death that we want to remember George Washington. It is in his zest for life and his attentiveness to his Maryland friends.

We are all aware of the major events in Washington's life that took place in Maryland, the most significant of which is his resignation of his commission as Commander in Chief which took place in a moving ceremony in the Senate Chamber of our State House in Annapolis. Once a year the Senate

convenes there in honor of Washington's birthday and in commemoration of his many visits to our capitol. A congressman present at the resignation ceremony on December 23, 1783, wrote a friend:

Tuesday morning, Congress met, and took their seats in order, all covered. At twelve o'clock the General was introduced by the Secretary, and seated opposite to the president, until the throng, that filled all the avenues, were so disposed of so as to behold the solemnity. The ladies occupied the gallery as full as it would hold, the Gentn: crowded below stairs. Silence ordered, by the Secretary, the Genl. rose and bowed to congress, who uncovered, but did not bow. He then delivered his speech, and at the close of it drew his commission from his bosom and handed it to the president. The president replied in a set speech, the General bowed again to Congress, they uncovered and the General retired. After a little pause until the company withdrew, Congress adjourned. The General then stepped into the room again, bid every member farewell and rode off from the door, intent upon eating his christmas dinner at home. Many of the spectators, particularly the fair ones shed tears, on this solemn and affecting occasion. Sir Robert Eden and Mr. William Harford attended very respectfully. They were also at the public dinner and the dance

What most people don't know is that Washington was back in Annapolis exactly a year later to lobby on behalf of his neighbors and for the future of the Potomac River as the gateway to the Ohio. As Washington explained to his protégé the Marquis de Lafayette, he found himself back in Annapolis as the principal and at times sole advocate of opening up the navigation of the Potomac to the west. He proved a consummate lobbyist, persuading the legislature, who incidentally were meeting in the shadow of our magnificent full length triple portrait of Washington, Lafayette and Tilghman by Charles Willson Peale, to provide funding and to agree to jointly work with Virginia on a Potomac Canal from tidewater to the Ohio river.

Most people are also not aware of the loyalty Washington had for his friends and neighbors. The Marshalls of Marshall Hall frequented Mount Vernon, and Washington often used the Posey ferry which ran to Marshall Hall, and which he rented at the rate of 1 shilling a ride for a man and a horse. At one point in 1771 he was in arrears to John Posey for 20 such trips.

John Posey's ferry crossed the Potomac River from the lower point of the Mount Vernon neck to Marshall Hall in Charles County, Md., home of Capt. Thomas Hanson Marshall (1731--1801) and his wife Rebecca Dent Marshall (c. 1737--1770). By using Posey's ferry, GW could cut across Charles County, past Port Tobacco, and recross the Potomac, entering Virginia in the Chotank area of King George County. In this way he saved himself from traveling the lower "Potomac Path" on the Virginia side of the Potomac, which crossed a number of swamps and small streams now swollen by a week of hard rains. Robert Halkerston had lived in Fredericksburg during GW's youth, where he was a founding member of the Masonic Lodge in 1752 and was probably present at the 1753 lodge meetings in which the young GW was initiated, passed, and raised into Masonry.

A typical entry for the Marshalls was the visit to Mount Vernon of Dr. John Marshall, the son of the owner of Marshall Hall, on a balmy day in August of 1785:

In the Afternoon--Doctr. Marshall and his Sister, and Miss Hanson crossed the River, drank

Tea, and returned.

(Dr. Thomas Marshall (c. 1757--1829), son of Thomas Hanson Marshall of Marshall Hall, Charles County, Md., had lost his eyesight during his service as a surgeon in the Revolution. His sister, Mary, Marshall (1767--1789), married Philip Stuart in 1787 (GERALD, 173--75).

Of all the neighbors, George Washington most frequently visited the Digges's at Warburton Manor. Caleb Magruder found nearly 20 recorded visits in the diaries that Washington kept sporadically over the years, but there were undoubtedly countless more. The home of William and his second son George Digges for most of Washington's life at Mount Vernon, stimulated the fertile imagination of Washington Irving who turned the rather routine crossings into an undocumented ceremony of magnificent proportions:

The Potomac, in the palmy days of Virginia, was occasionally the scene of a little aquatic state and ostentation among the rich planters who resided on its banks. They had beautiful barges, which, like their land equipages, were imported from England; and mention is made of a Mr. Digges who always received Washington in his barge, rowed by six negroes, arrayed in a kind of uniform of check shirts and black velvet caps. (Irving, Washington, I: 293)

All Washington records is using his own boat and there is no documentation of such a splendid ceremony (sometimes embellished by flags being waved on either shore). What we do know about Washington's loyalty to his friends is evident in the lobbying he did on behalf of the eldest of the Digges' sons. It was the English tradition to entail estates, meaning leaving the whole of the lands of a family to the eldest son. Thomas Digges, the father of William established such an entail on Warburton Manor and the lands passed to his son William. William eldest surviving son, Thomas Attwood Digges, did not please his father and as a result of some unknown scandal left for Europe where he wrote the first novel by an American, and generally got himself in trouble acting as an American spy during the Revolution. Thomas not only alienated his father. He also angered Benjamin Franklin to the point where Franklin had no kind words to say about him, even characterizing him as a thief and a rogue. George Washington knew differently. When Thomas's younger brother's heirs sought to break the entail and prevent Thomas from inheriting Warburton manor, George Washington came to his defense. He helped stall the efforts to confiscate Thomas's property on the grounds he was disloyal, and did much to persuade the Maryland Legislature to pass a special act securing Thomas's ownership of Warburton Manor.

Washington knew how to be persuasive and the Maryland legislature found his defense of his neighbor compelling. In 1794, while Thomas Digges was still in England, Washington received a letter from Thomas Digge's brother-in-law noting that:

When I last had the honor of dining with you in this town, I mention'd the information given by some people in Maryland to the executive of that state respecting the estate of Thomas Digges, & wishing to bring it under the confiscation laws. This business is now drawing to a crisis ... I feel a flattering confidence, that you will with pleasure step forward, & testify what you know of Mr. Digges during & since the War, as you will thereby not only do justice to his patriotic Character, but perhaps save [the] estate to the



descendants of an old friend & neighbour, & to a family which from strong habit of intimacy with yours, I have every reason to believe you honor with your friendship.

Two weeks later Washington replied in a letter that I expect was widely circulated in Annapolis:

Your letter of the 14th instant came to hand in due course of post, and would have received an earlier acknowledgement had I not been pressed with other business.

I have no hesitation in declaring that the conduct of Mr. Thomas Digges towards the United States during the War (in which they were engaged with Great Britain) and since as far as the same has come to my knowledge, has not been only friendly, but I might add zealous.

When I conversed with you on this subject in Alexandria, I thought I recollected a special and pointed instance of beneficial service he had rendered this Country in sending me between the leather and pasteboard cover of a book, some important intelligence; but upon reflecting more maturely on the matter since, I am unable to decide positively whether it was from him, or another gentleman this expedient was adopted to elude the consequences of a search. Be this however as it may, it is in my recollection that various verbal communications came to me, as from him, by our Captives, who had escaped from confinement in England; and I think I have received written ones also: but the latter (if at all) must have been rare on account of the extreme hazard of discovery, and the consequences which would follow, both to the writer and bearer of such correspondences.

Since the War, abundant evidence might be adduced of his activity and zeal (with considerable risque) in sending artizans and machines of public utility to this Country I mean by encouraging and facilitating their transportation as also of useful information to the Secretary of State, to put him on his guard against nefarious attempts to make Paper, &ca. for the purpose of counterfeiting our money. Until you mentioned the doubts which were entertained of Mr. Digges' attachment to this country, I had no idea of its being questioned.

With esteem, &c.

P.S. Since writing the foregoing letter, I have seen and conversed with Mr. John Trumbull respecting Mr. T. Digges. The former, before he was committed to the Tower of London, was well acquainted with the latter in England, and much in his company. To him Mr. Digges always appeared well attached to the rights and interests of the United States. Knows that he was active in aiding our citizens to escape from their confinement in England; and believes he was employed to do so by Doctr. Franklin. Mr. Trumbull has never seen Mr. Digges since he left the Tower, but has heard that a difference arose between him and the Doctr. not from any distrust entertained by the latter of disaffection in the former; but on the settlement of their accounts.

The preceding statement is made from the best recollection I have of the subject. The expression might (if I had had more leisure) be more correct, but not more consonant with truth. Such as it is you are welcome to make what use you please of it.<sup>70</sup>

(Letters of Thomas Digges, 1982, p. lxxvii-lxxviii)

Shortly there after the Maryland legislature passed an act confirming Thoms Digges's title to Warburton Manor and in 1798 Thomas Digges returned home for the first time since he had been either banished or at least encouraged to leave by his father.

(1795 Laws of Maryland Chapter 76

<http://msaweb/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/000001/000647/html/am647--68.html>)

Washington's kindness towards the neighbor of his youth did end with helping him recover his estate. In February and again in June, 1799 Thomas Digges visited Mount Vernon in the company of family and distinguished friends:

8. February 1799 Wind Easterly. Morning heavy & Mer. at 28. Dripping rain now & then through the day. Wind shifting to the southward & fresh. Mr. Thos. Digges dined here & returned. Mr. Tracy came to dinner.

Thomas Atwood Digges (1742--1821) was the sole surviving son of William Digges of Warburton. Thomas and his brother George (d. 1792) had been in school in England when the Revolution broke out, and although George soon returned home to Maryland, Thomas remained in England. There he followed a controversial and frequently discreditable career. During the Revolution he undoubtedly worked to alleviate the sufferings of American prisoners of war in Britain, but he also seems to have pocketed a large portion of the money sent him for this purpose and was accused of being both a double agent and a thief (WMQ, 3d ser., 22 (1965), 486--92; Pa. Mag., 77 (1953), 381--438). Thomas Digges arrived back in America in 1798 and took up residence at Warburton.

11. [June 1799] Morning clear & calm. Evening a little cloudy with the wind Southerly. Mer. 62 in the morning & 76 at Night. Bishop Carroll, Mr. Digges & his Sister Carroll--Mr. Pye & Doctr. Craik all dined here.

Bishop John Carroll (1735--1815), son of Daniel Carroll (1696--1750/51) of Upper Marlboro, was born in Upper Marlboro, Md., studied for the priesthood at the Jesuit College at Liege, and returned to Maryland in 1774. While sympathetic to the American revolutionaries his only major activity in the Revolution was in accompanying the American mission to Canada in 1776. After the Revolution, Carroll became the first Roman Catholic bishop in the United States. HIS SISTER CARROLL: Although GW may have meant Bishop Carroll's unmarried sister Elizabeth Carroll, he probably meant Thomas Digges's sister Elizabeth Digges Carroll (1743--1845), widow of Bishop Carroll's nephew Daniel Carroll, Jr., of Rock Creek (d. 1790).

Mr. Pye is probably one of the members of the Pye family of Charles County, Md. A Mr. Charles Pye had been entrusted by Thomas Atwood Digges with a

box of seeds sent GW by a London seedsman during the previous year (Digges to GW, 10 April 1798, DLC:GW).

Washington's legacy to his Maryland neighbors and to the Nation as a whole fills volumes written and unwritten.

He gave good advice as he left office in his farewell address. So impressed was the Maryland legislature with his wisdom that his speech was recorded verbatim in the legislative journals.

He foresaw the looming problem slavery represented to the future of America and freed the slaves he owned upon his death. Today, only one of two known national memorials to slaves is located just across the river at Mount Vernon.

He also understood the importance of education and research, particularly agricultural research. His neighbor, Thomas Digges, sent him seeds from abroad, and knew what most historians have forgotten or overlooked, that it was not tobacco cultivation that exhausted the soil. Washington knew that it was the extensive planting of wheat, no matter how necessary to the economic future of plantations along the Potomac, that would lead to the erosion of the soil and the silting up of the navigable streams feeding into it. He did not live to see it happen, but the demise of Piscataway creek owed itself to the persistent deep plowing and consequent runoff of the extensive crops like wheat, not the planting of tobacco.

Washington's love of the River and what it represented to the future of America knew no bounds. He convinced the Maryland Legislature to give up 5 square miles of its sovereign territory on its banks for the Nation's Capital and successfully lobbied us to qualify our sovereignty over the upper Potomac for one of the earliest and grandest schemes for internal improvement. Some even might try to argue that the conference held at Mount Vernon in March of 1785 was the ultimate reason we lost our case with Fairfax over the use of the water of the Potomac, but that would be a misreading of history and unfair to the man of vision. Washington in fact knew that the Mount Vernon Conference and the resulting compact was not about the river above the Great Falls (where Fairfax has its intake pipe) but about the navigable river below the falls. He had already settled the question of use of the river above the falls with the establishment of the Potomac Company, a bargain with Maryland that did not encompass surrendering any of the water of the River. Someday before it is too late, perhaps the Supreme Court will realize its egregious misreading of history and decide in our favor, but I would not hold your breath.

In reflecting on Washington's Maryland we should recall the assessment of Marcus Cunliffe in *George Washington, Man and Monument*:

Washington's is a ... a deeply satisfying record. here was a man who did what he was asked to do, and whose very strength resided in a sobriety some took for fatal dullness; who in his one person *proved* the soundness of America. A good man, not a saint; a competent soldier, not a great one; an honest administrator, not a statesman of genius; a prudent conserver, not a brilliant reformer but in sum an exceptional figure.

To which I would add "an exceptionally good neighbor and friend to Maryland."

Thank you