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Exploring George Washington's Leadership

Intended Grade Level: High School (9-12)

Lesson Purpose: George Washington's name is instantly recognizable to students; his face is still one of the most familiar of figures in American history. But many Americans seem to know less and less about the remarkable career of the man who was the leader among leaders during the founding of our nation. Some may argue that Washington has lost his relevancy; however, many of his best qualities are timeless and require little explanation. He was a man of tremendous integrity and courage who deeply believed in service to his country – qualities that led his contemporaries to call him “The Father of His Country.” But, Washington was also creative, entrepreneurial, and generous with his heart, his mind, and his money. He consistently established the highest standards for his own actions, and he seldom disappointed his peers. In short, George Washington demonstrated that armies can best be led, and governments can best be managed by individuals of character. With this lesson plan, students will understand that this is a legacy that remains relevant in our modern world.

Lesson Objectives:

- Discuss concepts of strong leadership and identify qualities that made Washington a strong leader.
- Analyze how ideal leadership qualities may change over time.
- Understand that Washington became a symbol of the United States in the eyes of his countrymen and on the world stage.
- Read and interpret primary source documents and images.
- Apply historical research, analysis, and discussion to completing projects that explore and analyze 18th century situations, challenges, or events.
- Effectively work within collegial groups to complete assigned tasks and discussion topics.

National Standards:

NSS-USH.5-12.3 ERA 3: REVOLUTION AND THE NEW NATION (1754-1820s)

- Understands the causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in forging the revolutionary movement, and the reasons for the American victory



- Understands the impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society
- Understands the institutions and practices of government created during the Revolution and how they were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system based on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights

NSS-C.9-12.2 FOUNDATIONS OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM
What are the Foundations of the American Political System?

- What is the American idea of constitutional government?
- What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?
- What is American political culture?
- What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?

NSS-C.9-12.5 ROLES OF THE CITIZEN
What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?

- What is citizenship?
- What are the rights of citizens?
- What are the responsibilities of citizens?
- What civic dispositions or traits of private and public character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?
- How can citizens take part in civic life?

NL-ENG.K-12.1 READING FOR PERSPECTIVE

Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

NL-ENG.K-12.3 EVALUATION STRATEGIES

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

Time Frame: Approximately one class session

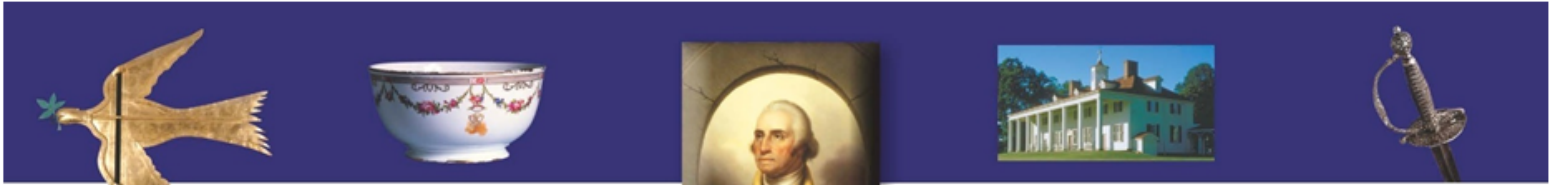
Procedure:

1. As a class, brainstorm characteristics that the students feel a strong leader should have. Next, list all of George Washington's roles (ex: surveyor, soldier, farmer, entrepreneur, President, etc.) that the students know. Discuss which leadership



characteristics George Washington would have used for each role in his life, adding new leadership characteristics if necessary. Post the lists in the classroom where your students can refer to them.

2. George Washington wrote over 40,000 letters. His correspondence provides historians and scholars with insight into his roles as a businessman, a plantation owner, and a family man as well as providing significant information about Washington's remarkable accomplishments as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army and as our nation's first president. Included in this packet are excerpts from eight documents that reveal Washington's ideas and leadership qualities at crucial moments in our nation's history. Divide the class into four groups. Give each group two of the primary documents contained within this lesson. As students read, they should consider who created the document, when the document was created and why the document was created.
3. As a group, have students answer the questions on the Worksheet. Have a group spokesperson share answers for each document with the class. Discuss what George Washington meant when he said the country must strive for "National Character."
4. As a class, create a timeline of Washington's life and careers. You may want to refer to the timeline on the Mount Vernon website. Each group should identify where their documents will be placed on the timeline. Ask if they see any changes in Washington's beliefs or leadership characteristics over time.
5. Many historians believe that the Constitution was written with George Washington in mind as the first president and, therefore, the powers of the executive office are relatively vague. Students will now write a position description for the first President keeping in mind that they want George Washington for the job.



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Read the documents and answer the following questions.

What is "leadership?" What makes a person a good leader?

Can leadership characteristics change over time? What would make them change?

What were George Washington's greatest strengths as a leader? When or how did he display these strengths?

Did George Washington feel a need to set an example for future Presidents or political leaders? If yes, did he succeed?



Transcription: *George Washington to Bryan Fairfax*

Mount Vernon July 20th 1774.

Dear Sir,

Your Letter of the 17th was not presented to me till after the Resolution's (which were adjudg'd advisable for this county to come to) had been revis'd, alterd, & corrected in the Committee; nor till we had gone into a general Meeting in the Court House, and my attention necessarily call'd every moment to the business that was before it; I did however upon receipt of it (in that hurry & bustle) hastily run it over, and handed it round to the Gentlemen on the Bench, of which there were many; but as no person present seem'd in the least disposed to adopt your Sentiments – as there appeard a perfect satisfaction, & acquiescence to the measures propos'd (except from a Mr Williamson, who was for adopting your advise litterally, without obtaining a Second voice on his Side) – and as the Gentlemen to whom the Letter was shown, advis'd me not to have it read, as it was not like to make a Convert, & repugnant (some of them thought) to the very principle we were contending for, I forebore to offer it otherwise than in the manner abovementioned, which I shall be sorry for, if it gives you any dissatisfaction in not having your Sentiments read to the County at large, instead of communicating them to the first People in it, by offering them the Letter in the manner I did.

That I differ very widely from you, in respect to the mode of obtaining a repeal of the Acts so much, & so justly complaind of, I shall not hesitate to acknowledge; & that this difference in opinion may, probably, proceed from the different Construction's we put upon the Conduct, & Intention of the Ministry, may also be true; But as I see nothing on the one hand, to induce a belief that the Parliament would embrace a favourable oppertunity of Repealing Acts which they go on with great rapidity to pass, in order to enforce their Tyrannical System; and on the other, observe, or think I observe, that Government is pursuing a regular Plan at the expence of Law & justice, to overthrow our Constitutional Rights & liberties, how can I expect any redress from a Measure which hath been ineffectually tryd already – For Sir what is it we are contending against? Is it against paying the duty of 3d. pr lb. on Tea because burthensome? No, it is the Right only, we have all along disputed, & to this end we have already Petitiond his Majesty in as humble, & dutiful a manner as Subjects could do; nay more, we applied to the House of Lords, & House of Commons in their different Legislative Capacities setting forth that, as Englishmen, we could not be deprivd of this essential, & valuable part of our Constitution; If then (as the Fact really is) it is against the Right 130 of Taxation we now do, & (as I before said) all along have contended, why should they suppose an exertion of this power would be less obnoxious now, than formerly? and what reasons have we to believe that, they would make a Second attempt whilst the same Sentiments fill'd the Breast of every American, if they did not intend to inforce it if possible? The conduct of the Boston People could not justify the rigour of their Measures, unless their had been a requisition of payment & refusal of it; nor did that



measure require an Act to deprive the Governmt of Massachusetts Bay of their Charter; or to exempt Offenders from tryal in the place, where Offences were Committed, as there was not, nor could not be, a single Instance produced to manifest the necessity of it – Are not all these things self evident proofs of a fixed & uniform Plan to Tax us? If we want further proofs, does not all the Debates in the House of Commons serve to confirm this? and hath not Genl Gage’s Conduct since his arrival (in Stopping the Address of his Council, & Publishing a Proclamation more becoming a Turkish Bashaw than an English Govr & declaring it Treason to associate in any manner by which the Commerce of Great Britain is to be affected) exhibited unexampled Testimony of the most despotick System of Tyranny that ever was practiced in a free Government. In short what further proofs are wanting to satisfy one of the design’s of the Ministry than their own Acts; which are uniform, & plainly tending to the same point – nay, if I mistake not, avowedly to fix the Right of Taxation – what hope then from Petitioning, when they tell us that now, or never, is the time to fix the matter – shall we after this whine & cry for relief, when we have already tried it in vain?, or shall we supinely sit, and see one Province after another fall a Sacrafice to Despotism? If I was in any doubt as to the Right wch the Parliament of Great Britain had to Tax us without our Consents, I should most heartily coincide with you in opinion, that to Petition, & petition only, is the proper method to apply for relief; because we should then be asking a favour, & not claiming a Right wch by the Law of Nature & our Constitution we are, in my opinion, indubitably entitled to; I should even think it criminal to go further than this, under such an Idea; but none such I have, I think the Parliament of Great Britain hath no more Right to put their hands into my Pocket, without my consent, than I have to put my hands into your’s, 131 for money; and this being already urged to them in a firm, but decent manner by all the Colonies, what reason is there to expect any thing from their justice?

As to the Resolution for addressing the Throne, I own to you Sir I think the whole might as well have been expung’d; I expect nothing from the measure; nor shd my voice have accompanied it, if the non-Importation Scheme was intended to be Retarded by it; for I am convinc’d, as much as I am of my Existance, that there is no relief for us but in their distress; & I think, at least I hope, that there is publick Virtue enough left among us to deny ourselves every thing but the bare necessaries of Life to accomplish this end – this we have a Right to do, & no power upon Earth can compel us to do otherwise, till they have first reducd us to the most abject state of Slavery that ever was designd for Mankind. The Stopping our Exports would, no doubt, be a shorter Cut than the other, to effect this purpose, but if we owe Money to Great Britain, nothing but the last necessity can justify the Non-payment of it; and therefore, I have great doubts upon this head, & wish to see the other method, which is legal, & will facilitate these payments, first tried.

I cannot conclude, without expressing some concern that I should differ so widely in Sentiments from you in a matter of such great Moment, & general Import; & should much distrust my own judgment upon the occasion, if my Nature did not recoil at the thought of Submitting to Measures which I think Subversive of every thing that I ought to hold dear and valuable – and did I not find, at the sametime, that the voice of Mankind is with me. I must appologize for



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sending you so rough a sketch of my thoughts upon your Letter. when I look'd back and saw the length of my own, I could not, as I am also a good deal hurried at this time, bear the thoughts of making off a fair Copy. I am Dr Sir Yr Most Obedt Humble Servt



Transcription: *George Washington to Henry Laurens, President of Congress,*

Fredericksburgh, November 14, 1778.

Dear Sir: This will be accompanied by an official letter on the subject of the proposed expedition against Canada. You will perceive I have only considered it in a military light; indeed I was not authorised to consider it in any other; and I am not without apprehensions, that I may be thought, in what I have done, to have exceeded the limits intended by Congress. But my solicitude for the public welfare which I think deeply interested in this affair, will I hope justify me in the eyes of all those who view things through that just medium.

I do not know, Sir, what may be your sentiments in the present case; but whatever they are I am sure I can confide in your honor and friendship, and shall not hesitate to unbosom myself to you on a point of the most delicate and important Nature.

The question of the Canadian expedition in the form it now stands appears to me one of the most interesting that has hitherto agitated our National deliberations. I have one objection to it, untouched in my public letter, which is in my estimation, insurmountable, and alarms all my feelings for the true and permanent interests of my country. This is the introduction of a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of that Province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion and former connexion of government. I fear this would be too great a temptation, to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy. Let us realize for a moment the striking advantages France would derive from the possession of Canada; the acquisition of an extensive territory abounding in supplies for the use of her Islands; the opening a vast source of the most beneficial commerce with the Indian nations, which she might then monopolize; the having ports of her own on this continent independent on the precarious good will of an ally; the engrossing the whole trade of New found land whenever she pleased, the finest nursery of seamen in the world; the security afforded to her Islands; and finally, the facility of awing and controuling these states, the natural and most formidable rival of every maritime power in Europe. Canada would be a solid acquisition to France on all these accounts and because of the numerous inhabitants, subjects to her by inclination, who would aid in preserving it under her power against the attempt of every other.

France acknowledged for some time past the most powerful monarchy in Europe by land, able now to dispute the empire of the sea with Great Britain, and if joined with Spain, I may say certainly superior, possessed of New Orleans, on our Right, Canada on our left and seconded by the numerous tribes of Indians on our Rear from one extremity to the other, a people, so generally friendly to her and whom she knows so well how to conciliate; would, it is much to be apprehended have it in her power to give law to these states.



Let us suppose, that when the five thousand french troops (and under the idea of that number twice as many might be introduced,) were entered the city of Quebec; they should declare an intention to hold Canada, as a pledge and surety for the debts due to France from the United States, [or, under other specious pretences hold the place till they can find a bone for contention], and [in the meanwhile] should excite the Canadians to engage in supporting [their pretences and claims]; what should we be able to say with only four or five thousand men to carry on the dispute? It may be supposed that France would not choose to renounce our friendship by a step of this kind as the consequence would probably be a reunion with England on some terms or other; and the loss of what she had acquired, in so violent and unjustifiable a manner, with all the advantages of an Alliance with us. This in my opinion is too slender a security against the measure to be relied on. The truth of the position will intirely depend on naval events. If France and Spain should unite and obtain a decided superiority by Sea, a reunion with England would avail very little and might be set at defiance. France, with a numerous army at command might throw in what number of land forces she thought proper to support her pretensions; and England without men, without money, and inferior on her favourite element could give no effectual aid to oppose them. Resentment, reproaches, and submission seem to be all that would be left us. Men are very apt to run into extremes; hatred to England may carry some into an excess of Confidence in France; especially when motives of gratitude are thrown into the scale. Men of this description would be unwilling to suppose France capable of acting so ungenerous a part. I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favourable sentiments of our new ally and to cherish them in others to a reasonable degree; but it is a maxim founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it. In our circumstances we ought to be particularly cautious; for we have not yet attained sufficient vigor and maturity to recover from the shock of any false step into which we may unwarily fall.

If France should even engage in the scheme, in the first instance with the purest intentions, there is the greatest danger that, in the progress of the business, invited to it by circumstances and, perhaps, urged on by the solicitations and wishes of the Canadians, she would alter her views.

As the Marquis clothed his proposition when he spoke of it to me, it would seem to originate wholly with himself; but it is far from impossible that it had its birth in the Cabinet of France and was put into this artful dress, to give it the readier currency. I fancy that I read in the countenances of some people on this occasion, more than the disinterested zeal of allies. I hope I am mistaken and that my fears of mischief make me refine too much, and awaken jealousies that have no sufficient foundation.

But upon the whole, Sir, to wave every other consideration; I do not like to add to the number of our national obligations. I would wish as much as possible to avoid giving a foreign power



new claims of merit for services performed, to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensable. I am, etc.

I believe and upon good grounds, the scheme for an expedition into Canada in concert with the Arms of France, originated in the breast of the Marquis de lafayette, encouraged probably by conferences with Count d'Estaing and I also believe it to be the offspring of the purest motives so far as respects that origin, but this is not sufficient to engage my concurrence in a measure big with eventful mischiefs. As deeply as my very limited time and faculties had suffered me to penetrate, I had often contemplated our delicate connexion with France, and although it is painful to talk of one's own foresight, I had view'd and foretold fifteen Months ago the humiliating state, to which our embryo Independence would be reduced by courting from that Nation the loan of more Money than should be actually necessary for the support of the Army and of our unfortunate Navy.

I was one of the six unsuccessful opponents to the resolution for borrowing Money from France for paying the Interest of our loan Office Certificates; we have in this single article plunged the Union into a vast amount of debt, and from neglecting to exert our very small abilities or even to shew a leading disposition to cancel any part of the former demand against us, our Bills for that Interest are now floating in imminent danger of dishonor and disgrace; fully persuaded of the true value of National honor I anxiously wished to support our own by a propriety and consistency of conduct and I dreaded the consequences of subjecting our happiness to the disposal of a powerful Creditor, who might on very specious grounds, interpret National honor to our destruction. I warned my friends against the danger of Mortgaging these States to foreign powers. Every Million of Livres you borrow implies a pledge of your Lands, and it is optional in your Creditor to be repaid at the bank of England with an exorbitant Premium, or to collect the Money due to him in any of your Ports, and according to his own mode, whenever National Interest shall require the support of pretended National honor; hence Your Excellency will perceive what were my feelings, when the propositions for subduing Canada by the aid of a french Fleet and Army were first broached to me. I demurred exceedingly to the Marquis's scheme and expressed some doubts of the concurrence of Congress, this was going as far as I dared consistently with my Office or considering him as a Gentleman of equal honor and tenacity. I trusted the issue of his application to the sagacity of Congress, the business was referred to a Committee who conferred with the Marquis, their Report was framed agreeably to his wishes, but the House very prudently determined to consult the Commander in Chief previously to a final determination, and, although Your Excellency's observations are Committed, I am much mistaken if every Member of Congress is not decided in his opinion in favor of them. If the prosecution of so extensive a project is from the present state of our Army and funds impracticable on our part, it becomes altogether unnecessary to discuss the point in a Political view, and I trust the Marquis will be satisfied with such reasonings in apology for our desisting from the pursuit of his favorite enterprise, as our circumstances will dictate.



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The immense debts which we are involved in abroad and at home demands the most serious attention and calls for an exertion of the collected wisdom of all these States, in order to secure what we have saved from the ravages of the Enemy. I am very short sighted, if there be at this time any encouragement for attempting distant conquests. I have been uniformly averse from every proposition which tended to dissipate our strength, and to accumulate our debt; events have confirmed my opinions, and at this Instant taking in view all circumstances, I have doubts of the policy and more of the success of the pending expedition against East Florida.



Transcription: *George Washington's Circular to State Governor,*

Circular to the State Governors (Four Pillars of Republican Government)

Head Quarters, Newburgh, June 14, 1783

Sir:

The great object for which I had the honor to hold an appointment in the Service of my Country, being accomplished, I am now preparing to resign it into the hands of Congress, and to return to that domestic retirement, which, it is well known, I left with the greatest reluctance, a Retirement, for which I have never ceased to sigh through a long and painful absence, and in which (remote from the noise and trouble of the World) I meditate to pass the remainder of life in a state of undisturbed repose; But before I carry this resolution into effect, I think it a duty incumbent on me, to make this my last official communication, to congratulate you on the glorious events which Heaven has been pleased to produce in our favor, to offer my sentiments respecting some important subjects, which appear to me, to be intimately connected with the tranquility of the United States, to take my leave of your Excellency as a public Character, and to give my final blessing to that Country, in whose service I have spent the prime of my life, for whose sake I have consumed so many anxious days and watchfull nights, and whose happiness being extremely dear to me, will always constitute no inconsiderable part of my own.

Impressed with the liveliest sensibility on this pleasing occasion, I will claim the indulgence of dilating the more copiously on the subjects of our mutual felicitation. When we consider the magnitude of the prize we contended for, the doubtful nature of the contest, and the favorable manner in which it has terminated, we shall find the greatest possible reason for gratitude and rejoicing; this is a theme that will afford infinite delight to every benevolent and liberal mind, whether the event in contemplation, be considered as the source of present enjoyment or the parent of future happiness; and we shall have equal occasion to felicitate ourselves on the lot which Providence has assigned us, whether we view it in a natural, a political or moral point of light.

The Citizens of America, placed in the most enviable condition, as the sole Lords and Proprietors of a vast Tract of Continent, comprehending all the various soils and climates of the World, and abounding with all the necessaries and conveniencies of life, are now by the late satisfactory pacification, acknowledged to be possessed of absolute freedom and Independency; They are, from this period, to be considered as the Actors on a most conspicuous Theatre, which seems to be peculiarly designated by Providence for the display of human greatness and felicity; Here, they are not only surrounded with every thing which can contribute to the completion of private and domestic enjoyment, but Heaven has crowned all its other blessings, by giving a fairer opportunity for political happiness, than any other Nation has ever been favored with. Nothing can illustrate these observations more forcibly, than a recollection of the happy conjuncture of times and circumstances, under which our Republic assumed its rank among the Nations; The foundation of our empire was not laid in the gloomy age of Ignorance



and Superstition, but at an Epocha when the rights of mankind were better understood and more clearly defined, than at any former period; the researches of the human mind, after social happiness, have been carried to a great extent; the Treasures of knowledge, acquired through a long succession of years, by the labours of Philosophers, Sages and Legislatures, are laid open for our use, and their collected wisdom may be happily applied in the Establishment of our forms of Government; the free cultivation of Letters, the unbounded extension of Commerce, the progressive refinement of Manners, the growing liberality of sentiment, and above all, the pure and benign light of Revelation, have had a meliorating influence on mankind and increased the blessings of Society. At this auspicious period, the United States came into existence as a Nation, and if their Citizens should not be completely free and happy, the fault will be entirely their own.

Such is our situation, and such are our prospects: but notwithstanding the cup of blessing is thus reached out to us, notwithstanding happiness is ours, if we have a disposition to seize the occasion and make it our own; yet, it appears to me there is an option still left to the United States of America, that it is in their choice, and depends upon their conduct, whether they will be respectable and prosperous, or contemptible and miserable as a Nation; this is the time of their political probation; this is the moment when the eyes of the whole World are turned upon them; this is the moment to establish or ruin their national Character forever; this is the favorable moment to give such a tone to our Federal Government, as will enable it to answer the ends of its institution; or this may be the ill-fated moment for relaxing the powers of the Union, annihilating the cement of the Confederation, and exposing us to become the sport of European politics, which may play one State against another to prevent their growing importance, and to serve their own interested purposes. For, according to the system of Policy the States shall adopt at this moment, they will stand or fall; and by their confirmation or lapse, it is yet to be decided, whether the Revolution must ultimately be considered as a blessing or a curse: a blessing or a curse, not to the present age alone, for with our fate will the destiny of unborn Millions be involved.

With this conviction of the importance of the present Crisis, silence in me would be a crime; I will therefore speak to your Excellency, the language of freedom and of sincerity, without disguise; I am aware, however, that those who differ from me in political sentiment, may perhaps remark, I am stepping out of the proper line of my duty, and they may possibly ascribe to arrogance or ostentation, what I know is alone the result of the purest intention, but the rectitude of my own heart, which disdains such unworthy motives, the part I have hitherto acted in life, the determination I have formed, of not taking any share in public business hereafter, the ardent desire I feel, and shall continue to manifest, of quietly enjoying in private life, after all the toils of War, the benefits of a wise and liberal Government, will, I flatter myself, sooner or later convince my Countrymen, that I could have no sinister views in delivering with so little reserve, the opinions contained in this Address.

There are four things, which I humbly conceive, are essential to the well being, I may even venture to say, to the existence of the United States as an Independent Power:



1st. An indissoluble Union of the States under one Federal Head.

2dly. A Sacred regard to Public Justice.

3dly. The adoption of a proper Peace Establishment, and

4thly. The prevalence of that pacific and friendly Disposition, among the People of the United States, which will induce them to forget their local prejudices and policies, to make those mutual concessions which are requisite to the general prosperity, and in some instances, to sacrifice their individual advantages to the interest of the Community.

These are the Pillars on which the glorious Fabrick of our Independency and National Character must be supported; Liberty is the Basis, and whoever would dare to sap the foundation, or overturn the Structure, under whatever specious pretexts he may attempt it, will merit the bitterest execration, and the severest punishment which can be inflicted by his injured Country. On the three first Articles I will make a few observations, leaving the last to the good sense and serious consideration of those immediately concerned.

Under the first head, altho' it may not be necessary or proper for me in this place to enter into a particular disquisition of the principles of the Union, and to take up the great question which has been frequently agitated, whether it be expedient and requisite for the States to delegate a larger proportion of Power to Congress, or not, Yet it will be a part of my duty, and that of every true Patriot, to assert without reserve, and to insist upon the following positions, That unless the States will suffer Congress to exercise those prerogatives, they are undoubtedly invested with by the Constitution, everything must very rapidly tend to Anarchy and confusion, That it is indispensable to the happiness of the individual States, that there should be lodged somewhere, a Supreme Power to regulate and govern the general concerns of the Confederated Republic, without which the Union cannot be of long duration. That there must be a faithful and pointed compliance on the part of every State, with the late proposals and demands of Congress, *Union and liberty* or the most fatal consequences will ensue, That whatever measures have a tendency to dissolve the Union, or contribute to violate or lessen the Sovereign Authority, ought to be considered as hostile to the Liberty and Independency of America, and the Authors of them treated accordingly, and lastly, that unless we can be enabled by the concurrence of the States, to participate of the fruits of the Revolution, and enjoy the essential benefits of Civil Society, under a form of Government so free and uncorrupted, so happily guarded against the danger of oppression, as has been devised and adopted by the Articles of Confederation, it will be a subject of regret, that so much blood and treasure have been lavished for no purpose, that so many sufferings have been encountered without a compensation, and that so many sacrifices have been made in vain. Many other considerations might here be adduced to prove, that without an entire conformity to the Spirit of the Union, we cannot exist as an Independent Power; it will be sufficient for my purpose to mention but one or two which seem to me of the greatest importance. It is only in our united Character as an



Empire, that our Independence is acknowledged, that our power can be regarded, or our Credit supported among Foreign Nations. The Treaties of the European Powers with the United States of America, will have no validity on a dissolution of the Union. We shall be left nearly in a state of Nature, or we may find by our own unhappy experience, that there is a natural and necessary progression, from the extreme of anarchy to the extreme of Tyranny; and that arbitrary power is most easily established on the ruins of Liberty abused to licentiousness.

As to the second Article, which respects the performance of Public Justice, Congress have, in their late Address to the United States, almost exhausted the subject, they have explained their Ideas so fully, and have enforced the obligations the States are under, to render compleat justice to all the Public Creditors, with so much dignity and energy, that in my opinion, no real friend to the honor and Independency of America, can hesitate a single moment respecting the propriety of complying with the just and honorable measures proposed; if their Arguments do not produce conviction, I know of nothing that will have greater influence; especially when we recollect that the System referred to, being the result of the collected Wisdom of the Continent, must be esteemed, if not perfect, certainly the least objectionable of any that could be devised; and that if it shall not be carried into immediate execution, a National Bankruptcy, with all its deplorable consequences will take place, before any different Plan can possibly be proposed and adopted, So pressing are the present circumstances! and such is the alternative now offered to the States!

The ability of the Country to discharge the debts which have been incurred in its defence, is not to be doubted; an inclination, I flatter myself, will not be wanting; the path of our duty is plain before us; honesty will be found on every experiment, to be the best and only true policy; let us then as a Nation be just; let us fulfil the public Contracts, which Congress had undoubtedly a right to make for the purpose of carrying on the War, with the same good faith we suppose ourselves bound to perform our private engagements; in the mean time, let an attention to the chearfull performance of their proper business, as Individuals, and as members of Society, be earnestly inculcated on the Citizens of America, then will they strengthen the hands of Government, and be happy under its protection: every one will reap the fruit of his labours; every one will enjoy his own acquisitions without molestation and without danger. In this state of absolute freedom and perfect security, who will grudge to yield a very little of his property to support the common interest of Society, and insure the protection of Government? Who does not remember, the frequent declarations, at the commencement of the War, that we should be compleatly satisfied, if at the expence of one half, we could defend the remainder of our possessions? Where is the Man to be found, who wishes to remain indebted, for the defence of his own person and property, to the exertions, the bravery, and the blood of others, without making one generous effort to repay the debt of honor and of gratitude? In what part of the Continent shall we find any Man, or body of Men, who would not blush to stand up and propose measures, purposely calculated to rob the Soldier of his Stipend, and the Public Creditor of his due? And were it possible that such a flagrant instance of Injustice could ever



happen, would it not excite the general indignation, and tend to bring down, upon the Authors of such measures, the aggravated vengeance of Heaven?

For my own part, conscious of having acted while a Servant of the Public, in a manner I conceived best suited to promote the real interests of my Country; having in consequence of my fixed belief in some measure pledged myself to the Army, that their Country would finally do them compleat and ample Justice; and not wishing to conceal any instance of my official conduct from the eyes of the World, I have thought proper to transmit to your Excellency the inclosed collection of Papers, relative to the half pay and commutation granted by Congress to the Officers of the Army; From these communications, my decided sentiment will be clearly comprehended, together with the conclusive reasons which induced me, at an early period, to recommend the adoption of the measure, in the most earnest and serious manner. As the proceedings of Congress, the Army, and myself are open to all, and contain in my opinion, sufficient information to remove the prejudices and errors which may have been entertained by any; I think it unnecessary to say any thing more, than just to observe, that the Resolutions of Congress, now alluded to, are undoubtedly as absolutely binding upon the United States, as the most solemn Acts of Confederation or Legislation. As to the Idea, which I am informed has in some instances prevailed, that the half pay and commutation are to be regarded merely in the odious light of a Pension, it ought to be exploded forever; that Provision, should be viewed as it really was, a reasonable compensation offered by Congress, at a time when they had nothing else to give, to the Officers of the Army, for services then to be performed. It was the only means to prevent a total dereliction of the Service, It was a part of their hire, I may be allowed to say, it was the price of their blood and of your Independency, it is therefore more than a common debt, it is a debt of honour, it can never be considered as a Pension or gratuity, nor be cancelled until it is fairly discharged.

With regard to a distinction between Officers and Soldiers, it is sufficient that the uniform experience of every Nation of the World, combined with our own, proves the utility and propriety of the discrimination. Rewards in proportion to the aids the public derives from them, are unquestionably due to all its Servants; In some Lines, the Soldiers have perhaps generally had as ample a compensation for their Services, by the large Bounties which have been paid to them, as their Officers will receive in the proposed Commutation, in others, if besides the donation of Lands, the payment of Arrearages of Cloathing and Wages (in which Articles all the component parts of the Army must be put upon the same footing) we take into the estimate, the Bounties many of the Soldiers have received and the gratuity of one Year's full pay, which is promised to all, possibly their situation (every circumstance being duly considered) will not be deemed less eligible than that of the Officers. Should a farther reward, however, be judged equitable, I will venture to assert, no one will enjoy greater satisfaction than myself, on seeing an exemption from Taxes for a limited time, (which has been petitioned for in some instances) or any other adequate immunity or compensation, granted to the brave defenders of their Country's Cause; but neither the adoption or rejection of this proposition will in any manner affect, much less militate against, the Act of Congress, by which they have offered five years full pay, in lieu of the half pay for life, which had been before promised to the Officers of the Army.



If after all, a spirit of disunion or a temper of obstinacy and perverseness, should manifest itself in any of the States, if such an ungracious disposition should attempt to frustrate all the happy effects that might be expected to flow from the Union, if there should be a refusal to comply with the requisitions for Funds to discharge the annual interest of the public debts, and if that refusal should revive again all those jealousies and produce all those evils, which are now happily removed, Congress, who have in all their Transaction shewn a great degree of magnanimity and justice, will stand justified in the sight of God and Man, and the State alone which puts itself in opposition to the aggregate Wisdom of the Continent, and follows such mistaken and pernicious Councils, will be responsible for all the consequences.

Before I conclude the subject of public justice, I cannot omit to mention the obligations this Country is under, to that meritorious Class of veteran Non-commissioned Officers and Privates, who have been discharged for inability, in consequence of the Resolution of Congress of the 23d of April 1782, on an annual pension for life, their peculiar sufferings, their singular merits and claims to that provision need only be known, to interest all the feelings of humanity in their behalf: nothing but a punctual payment of their annual allowance can rescue them from the most complicated misery, and nothing could be a more melancholy and distressing sight, than to behold those who have shed their blood or lost their limbs in the service of their Country, without a shelter, without a friend, and without the means of obtaining any of the necessaries or comforts of Life; compelled to beg their daily bread from door to door! Suffer me to recommend those of this description, belonging to your State, to the warmest patronage of your Excellency and your Legislature.

It is necessary to say but a few words on the third topic which was proposed, and which regards particularly the defence of the Republic, As there can be little doubt but Congress will recommend a proper Peace Establishment for the United States, in which a due attention will be paid to the importance of placing the Militia of the Union upon a regular and respectable footing; If this should be the case, I would beg leave to urge the great advantage of it in the strongest terms. The Militia of this Country must be considered as the Palladium of our security, and the first effectual resort in case of hostility; It is essential therefore, that the same system should pervade the whole; that the formation and discipline of the Militia of the Continent should be absolutely uniform, and that the same species of Arms, Accoutrements and Military Apparatus, should be introduced in every part of the United States; No one, who has not learned it from experience, can conceive the difficulty, expence, and confusion which result from a contrary system, or the vague Arrangements which have hitherto prevailed.

If in treating of political points, a greater latitude than usual has been taken in the course of this Address, the importance of the Crisis, and the magnitude of the objects in discussion, must be my apology: It is, however, neither my wish or expectation, that the preceding observations should claim any regard, except so far as they shall appear to be dictated by a good intention, consonant to the immutable rules of Justice; calculated to produce a liberal system of policy, and founded on whatever experience may have been acquired by a long and close attention to



public business. Here I might speak with the more confidence from my actual observations, and, if it would not swell this Letter (already too prolix) beyond the bounds I had prescribed myself: I could demonstrate to every mind open to conviction, that in less time and with much less expence than has been incurred, the War might have been brought to the same happy conclusion, if the resourses of the Continent could have been properly drawn forth, that the distresses and disappointments which have very often occurred, have in too many instances, resulted more from a want of energy, in the Continental Government, than a deficiency of means in the particular States. That the inefficiency of measures, arising from the want of an adequate authority in the Supreme Power, from a partial compliance with the Requisitions of Congress in some of the States, and from a failure of punctuality in others, while it tended to damp the zeal of those which were more willing to exert themselves; served also to accumulate the expences of the War, and to frustrate the best concerted Plans, and that the discouragement occasioned by the complicated difficulties and embarrassments, in which our affairs were, by this means involved, would have long ago produced the dissolution of any Army, less patient, less virtuous and less persevering, than that which I have had the honor to command. But while I mention these things, which are notorious facts, as the defects of our Federal Government, particularly in the prosecution of a War, I beg it may be understood, that as I have ever taken a pleasure in gratefully acknowledging the assistance and support I have derived from every Class of Citizens, so shall I always be happy to do justice to the unparalleled exertion of the individual States, on many interesting occasions.

I have thus freely disclosed what I wished to make known, before I surrendered up my Public trust to those who committed it to me, the task is now accomplished, I now bid adieu to your Excellency as the Chief Magistrate of your State, at the same time I bid a last farewell to the cares of Office, and all the employments of public life.

It remains then to be my final and only request, that your Excellency will communicate these sentiments to your Legislature at their next meeting, and that they may be considered as the Legacy of One, who has ardently wished, on all occasions, to be useful to his Country, and who, even in the shade of Retirement, will not fail to implore the divine benediction upon it. I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection, that he would incline the hearts of the Citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to Government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow Citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the Field, and finally, that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do Justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that Charity, humility and pacific temper of mind, which were the Characteristicks of the Divine Author of our blessed Religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy Nation.



Transcription: *George Washington to Bushrod Washington*

Mount Vernon Novr 9th 1787.

Dear Bushrod,

In due course of Post, I received your letters of the 19th & 26th Ult.; and since, the one which you committed to the care of Mr Powell. I thank you for the communications therein, & for a continuation, in matters of importance, I shall be obliged to you.

That the Assembly would afford the people an opportunity of deciding on the proposed Constitution I had hardly a doubt; the only question with me was, whether it would go forth under favourable auspices, or be branded with the mark of disapprobation. The opponents, I expected, (for it has ever been, that the adversaries to a measure are more active than its friends) would endeavour to give it an unfavourable complexion, with a view to bias the public mind. This, evidently, is the case with the writers in opposition; for their objections are better calculated to alarm the fears, than to convince the judgment of their readers. They build them upon principles which do not exist in the Constitution – which the known & literal sense of it, does not support them in; and this too, after being flatly told that they are treading on untenable ground and after an appeal has been made to the letter, & spirit thereof, for proof: and then, as if the doctrine was uncontrovertable, draw such consequences as are necessary to rouse the apprehensions of the ignorant, & unthinking. It is not the interest of the major part of these characters to be convinced; nor will their local views yield to arguments which do not accord with their present, or future prospects; and yet, a candid solution of a single question, to which the understanding of almost every man is competent, must decide the point in dispute – namely – is it best for the States to unite, or not to unite?

If there are men who prefer the latter, then, unquestionably, the Constitution which is offered, must, in their estimation, be inadmissible from the first Word to the last signature, inclusively. But those who may think differently, and yet object to parts of it, would do well to consider, that it does not lye with one State, nor with a minority of the States, to superstruct a Constitution for the whole. The seperate interests, as far as it is practicable, must be consolidated – and local views as far as the general good will admit, must be attended to. Hence it is that every state has some objection to the proposed form; and that these objections are directed to different points. That which is most pleasing to one, is obnoxious to another, and vice versa. If then the Union of the whole is a desirable object, the parts which compose it, must yield a little in order to accomplish it; for without the latter, the former is unattainable. For I again repeat it, that not a single state nor a minority of the States, can force a Constitution on the majority. But admitting they had (from their importance) the power to do it, will it not be granted that the attempt would be followed by civil commotions of a very serious nature? But to sum up the whole, let the opponants of the proposed Constitution, in this State, be asked – it



is a question they ought certainly to have asked themselves; What line of conduct they would advise it to adopt, if nine other States should accede to it, of which I think there is little doubt? Would they recommend that it should stand on its own basis – separate & distinct from the rest? Or would they connect it with Rhode Island, or even say two others, checkerwise, & remain with them as outcasts from the Society, to shift for themselves? or will they advise a return to our former dependence on Great Britain for their protection & support? or lastly would they prefer the mortification of coming in, when they will have no credit there from? I am sorry to add in this place that Virginians entertain too high an opinion of the importance of their own Country. In extent of territory – In number of Inhabitants (of all descriptions) & In wealth I will readily grant that it certainly stands first in the Union; but in point of strength, it is, comparatively, weak. To this point, my opportunities authorize me to speak, decidedly; and sure I am, in every point of view, in which the subject can be placed, it is not (considering also the Geographical situation of the State) more the interest of any one of them to confederate, than it is the one in which we live.

The warmest friends to and the best supporters of the Constitution, do not contend that it is free from imperfections; but these were not to be avoided, and they are convinced if evils are likely to flow from them, that the remedy must come thereafter; because, in the present moment it is not to be obtained. And as there is a Constitutional door open for it, I think the people (for it is with them to judge) can, as they will have the aid of experience on their side, decide with as much propriety on the alterations and amendments which shall be found necessary, as ourselves; for I do not conceive that we are more inspired – have more wisdom – or possess more virtue than those who will come after us. The power under the Constitution will always be with the people. It is entrusted for certain defined purposes and for a certain limited period to representatives of their own choosing; and whenever it is exercised contrary to their interests, or not according to their wishes, their Servants can, and undoubtedly will be, recalled. There will not be wanting those who will bring forward complaints of mal-administration whenever they occur. To say that the Constitution may be strained, and an improper interpretation given to some of the clauses or articles of it, will apply to any that can be framed – in a word renders any one nugatory – for not one, more than another, can be binding, if the spirit and letter of the expression is disregarded. It is agreed on all hands that no government can be well administered without powers; and yet, the instant these are delegated, altho those who are entrusted with the Administration are taken from the people – return shortly to them again – and must feel the bad effect of oppressive measures – the persons holding them, as if their natures were immediately metamorphosed, are denominated tyrants and no disposition is allowed them, but to do wrong. Of these things in a government so constituted and guarded as the proposed one is, I can have no idea; and do firmly believe that whilst many ostensible reasons are held out against the adoption of it the true ones are yet behind the Curtain; not being of a nature to appear in open day. I believe further, supposing these objections to be founded in purity itself that as great evils result from too much jealousy, as from the want of it. And I adduce several of the Constitutions of these States, as proof thereof. No man is a warmer advocate for proper restraints, and wholesome checks in every department of government than I am; but neither my reasoning, nor



my experience, has yet been able to discover the propriety of preventing men from doing good, because there is a possibility of their doing evil.

If Mr Ronald can place the finances of this Country upon so respectable a footing as he has intimated, he will deserve its warmest, and most grateful thanks. In the attempt, my best wishes – which is all I have to offer – will accompany him.

I hope there remains virtue enough in the Assembly of this State, to preserve inviolate public treaties, and private contracts. If these are infringed, farewell to respectability, and safety in the Government.

I never possessed a doubt, but if any had ever existed in my breast, re-iterated proofs would have convinced me of the impolicy, of all commutable taxes. If wisdom is not to be acquired from experience, where is it to be found? But why ask the question? Is it not believed by every one that these are time-serving jobs by which a few are enriched, at the public expence! but whether the plan originates for this purpose, or is the child of ignorance, oppression is the result.

You have, I find, broke the ice (as the saying is). one piece of advice only I will give you on the occasion (if you mean to be a respectable member, and to entitle yourself to the Ear of the House) – and that is – except in local matters which respect your Constituants and to which you are obliged, by duty, to speak, rise but seldom – let this be on important matters – and then make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the subject. Never be agitated by more than a decent warmth, & offer your sentiments with modest diffidence – opinions thus given, are listened to with more attention than when delivered in a dictatorial stile. The latter, if attended to at all, altho they may force conviction, is sure to convey disgust also.

Your aunt, and the family here join me in every good wish for you. and I am with sentiments of great regd and Affecte – Yours

P.S. The letter you sent by Mr Powell for Nancy was forwarded next day to Doctr Brown, for the best conveyance that should offer from alexandria.



Transcription: *George Washington to Henry Knox*

Mount Vernon April 1st 1789

My dear Sir,

The Mail of the 30th brought me your favor of the 23d – For which, & the regular information you have had the goodness to transmit of the state of things in New York, I feel myself very much obliged, and thank you accordingly.

I feel for those Members of the new Congress, who, hitherto, have given an unavailing attendance at the theatre of business. For myself, the delay may be compared to a reprieve; for in confidence I can assure you – with the world it would obtain little credit – that my movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied with feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution: so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an Ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill – abilities & inclination which is necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible, that I am embarking the voice of my Countrymen and a good name of my own, on this voyage, but what returns will be made for them – Heaven alone can foretell. Integrity & firmness is all I can promise – these, be the voyage long or short; never shall forsake me although I may be deserted by all men. For of the consolations which are to be derived from these (under any circumstances) the world cannot deprive me. With best wishes for Mrs Knox, & sincere friendship for yourself – I remain Your affectionate



Transcription: *George Washington to Catharine MaCaulay Graham*

New York Jany 9th 1790

Madam,

Your obliging letter, dated in October last, has been received; and, as I do not know when I shall have more Leisure than at present to throw together a few observations in return for yours, I take up my Pen to do it by this early occasion.

In the first place, I thank you for your congratulatory sentiments on the event which has placed me at the head of the American Government; as well as for the indulgent partiality, which it is to be feared however, may have warped your judgment too much in my favor. But you do me no more than Justice, in supposing that, if I had been permitted to indulge my first & fondest wish, I should have remained in a private Station. Although, neither the present age or Posterity may possibly give me full credit for the feelings which I have experienced on this subject; yet I have a consciousness, that nothing short of an absolute conviction of duty could ever have brought me upon the scenes of public life again. The establishment of our new Government seemed to be the last great experiment, for promoting human happiness, by reasonable compact, in civil Society. It was to be, in the first instance, in a considerable degree, a government of accomodation as well as a government of Laws. Much was to be done by prudence, much by conciliation, much by firmness. Few, who are not philosophical Spectators, can realise the difficult and delicate part which a man in my situation had to act. All see, and most admire, the glare which hovers round the external trappings of elevated Office. To me, there is nothing in it, beyond the lustre which may be reflected from its connection with a power of promoting human felicity. In our progress towards political happiness my station is new; and, if I may use the expression, I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely any action, whose motives may not be subject to a double interpretation. There is scarcely any part of my conduct wch may not hereafter be drawn into precedent. Under such a view of the duties inherent to my arduous office, I could not but feel a diffidence in myself on the one hand; and an anxiety for the Community that every new arrangement should be made in the best possible manner on the other. If after all my humble but faithful endeavours to advance the felicity of my Country & Mankind; I may endulge a hope that my labours have not been altogether without success, it will be the only real compensation I can receive in the closing Scenes of life.

On the actual situation of this Country, under its new Government, I will, in the next place, make a few remarks. That the Government, though not absolutely perfect, is one of the best in the World, I have little doubt. I always believed that an unequivocally free & equal Representation of the People in the Legislature; together with an efficient & responsible Executive were the great Pillars on which the preservation of American Freedom must depend. It was indeed next to a Miracle that there should have been so much unanimity, in points of



such importance, among such a number of Citizens, so widely scattered and so different in their habits in many respects, as the Americans were. Nor are the growing unanimity and increasing good will of the Citizens to the Government less remarkable than favorable circumstances. So far as we have gone with the new Government (and it is completely organized and in operation) we have had greater reason than the most sanguine could expect to be satisfied with its success. Perhaps a number of accidental circumstances have concurred with the real effects of the Government to make the People uncommonly well pleased with their situation and prospects. The harvests of Wheat have been remarkably good – the demand for that article from abroad is great – the increase of Commerce is visible in every Port – and the number of new Manufactures introduced in one year is astonishing. I have lately made a tour through the Eastern States. I found the Country, in a great degree, recovered from the ravages of War – the Towns flourishing – & the People delighted with a government instituted by themselves & for their own good. The same facts I have also reason to believe, from good authority, exist in the Southern States.

By what I have just observed, I think you will be persuaded that the ill-boding Politicians, who prognosticated that America would never enjoy any fruits from her Independence & that She would be obliged to have recourse to a foreign Power for protection, have at least been mistaken. I shall sincerely rejoice to see that the American Revolution has been productive of happy consequences on both sides of the Atlantic. The renovation of the French Constitution is indeed one of the most wonderful events in the history of Mankind: and the agency of the Marquis de la Fayette in a high degree honorable to his character. My greatest fear has been, that the Nation would not be sufficiently cool & moderate in making arrangements for the security of that liberty, of which it seems to be fully possessed.

Mr Warville, the French Gentleman you mention, has been in America & at Mount Vernon; but has returned, sometime since to France.

Mrs Washington is well and desires her Compliments may be presented to you. We wish the happiness of your fire side; as we also long to enjoy that of our own at Mount Vernon. Our wishes, you know, were limited; and I think that our plans of living will now be deemed reasonable by the considerate part of our species. Her wishes coincide with my own as to simplicity of dress, and every thing which can tend to support propriety of character without partaking of the follies of luxury and ostentation. I am with great regard Madam. Your Most Obedient and Most Humble Servant



Transcription: *Thomas Jefferson to George Washington*

Philadelphia May 23. 1792.

Dear Sir

I have determined to make the subject of a letter, what, for some time past, has been a subject of inquietude to my mind without having found a good occasion of disburthening itself to you in conversation, during the busy scenes which occupied you here. perhaps too you may be able, in your present situation, or on the road, to give it more time & reflection than you could do here at any moment.

When you first mentioned to me your purpose of retiring from the government, tho' I felt all the magnitude of the event, I was in a considerable degree silent. I knew that, to such a mind as yours, persuasion was idle & impertinent: that before forming your decision, you had weighed all the reasons for & against the measure, had made up your mind on full view of them, & that there could be little hope of changing the result. pursuing my reflections too I knew we were some day to try to walk alone, and if the essay should be made while you should be alive & looking on, we should derive confidence from that circumstance, & resource if it failed. the public mind too was then calm & confident, and therefore in a favorable state for making the experiment. had no change of circumstances supervened, I should not, with any hope of success, have now ventured to propose to you a change of purpose. but the public mind is no longer so confident and serene; and that from causes in which you are no ways personally mixed. Tho these causes have been hackneyed in the public papers in detail, it may not be amiss, in order to calculate the effect they are capable of producing, to take a view of them in the mass, giving to each the form, real or imaginary, under which they have been presented.

It has been urged then that a public debt, greater than we can possibly pay before other causes of adding new debt to it will occur, has been artificially created, by adding together the whole amount of the debtor & creditor sides of accounts, instead of taking only their balances, which could have been paid off in a short time: That this accumulation of debt has taken for ever out of our power those easy sources of revenue, which, applied to the ordinary necessities & exigencies of government, would have answered them habitually, and covered us from habitual murmurings against taxes & tax-gatherers, reserving extraordinary calls, for those extraordinary occasions which would animate the people to meet them: That though the calls for money have been no greater than we must generally expect, for the same or equivalent exigencies, yet we are already obliged to strain the impost till it produces clamour, and will produce evasion, & war on our own citizens to collect it and even to resort to an Excise law, of odious character with the people, partial in it's operation, unproductive unless enforced by arbitrary & vexatious means, and committing the authority of the government in parts where resistance is most probable, & coercion least practicable. They cite propositions in Congress and



suspect other projects on foot still to increase the mass of debt. They say that by borrowing at $\frac{2}{3}$ of the interest, we might have paid off the principal in $\frac{2}{3}$ of the time: but that from this we are precluded by it's being made irredeemable but in small portions & long terms: That this irredeemable quality was given it for the avowed purpose of inviting it's transfer to foreign countries. They predict that this transfer of the principal, when compleated, will occasion an exportation of 3. millions of dollars annually for the interest, a drain of coin, of which as there has been no example, no calculation can be made of it's consequences: That the banishment of our coin will be compleated by the creation of 10. millions of paper money, in the form of bank bills, now issuing into circulation. They think the 10. or 12. percent annual profit paid to the lenders of this paper medium are taken out of the pockets of the people, who would have had without interest the coin it is banishing: That all the capital employed in paper speculation is barren & useless, producing, like that on a gaming table, no accession to itself, and is withdrawn from commerce & agriculture where it would have produced addition to the common mass: That it nourishes in our citizens habits of vice & idleness instead of industry & morality: That it has furnished effectual means of corrupting such a portion of the legislature, as turns the balance between the honest voters which ever way it is directed: That this corrupt squadron, deciding the voice of the legislature, have manifested their dispositions to get rid of the limitations imposed by the constitution on the general legislature, limitations, on the faith of which, the states acceded to that instrument: That the ultimate object of all this is to prepare the way for a change, from the present republican form of government, to that of a monarchy of which the English constitution is to be the model. that this was contemplated in the Convention, is no secret, because it's partisans have made none of it. to effect it then was impracticable; but they are still eager after their object, and are predisposing every thing for it's ultimate attainment. so many of them have got into the legislature that, aided by the corrupt squadron of paper dealers, who are at their devotion, they make a majority in both houses. the republican party, who wish to preserve the government in it's present form, are fewer in number. they are fewer even when joined by the two, three, or half dozen antifederalists, who, tho they dare not avow it, are still opposed to any general government: but being less so to a republican than a monarchical one, they naturally join those whom they think pursuing the lesser evil.

Of all the mischiefs objected to the system of measures beforementioned, none is so afflicting, and fatal to every honest hope, as the corruption of the legislature. as it was the earliest of these measures it became the instrument for producing the rest, & will be the instrument for producing in future a king, lords & commons, or whatever else those who direct it may chuse. withdrawn such a distance from the eye of their constituents, and these so dispersed as to be inaccessible to public information, & particularly to that of the conduct of their own representatives, they will form the most corrupt government on earth, if the means of their corruption be not prevented. the only hope of safety hangs now on the numerous representation which is to come forward the ensuing year. some of the new members will probably be either in principle or interest, with the present majority. but it is expected that the great mass will form an accession to the republican party. they will not be able to undo all which the two preceding legislatures, & especially the first have done. public faith & right will



oppose this. but some parts of the system may be rightfully reformed; a liberation from the rest unremittingly pursued as fast as right will permit, & the door shut in future against similar commitments of the nation. Should the next legislature take this course, it will draw upon them the whole monarchical & paper interest. but the latter I think will not go all lengths with the former, because creditors will never, of their own accord, fly off entirely from their debtors. therefore this is the alternative least likely to produce convulsion. But should the majority of the new members be still in the same principles with the present & shew that we have nothing to expect but a continuance of the same practices, it is not easy to conjecture what would be the result, nor what means would be resorted to for correction of the evil. true wisdom would direct that they should be temperate & peaceable. but the division of sentiment & interest happens unfortunately to be so geographical, that no mortal can say that what is most wise & temperate would prevail against what is more easy & obvious? I can scarcely contemplate a more incalculable evil than the breaking of the union into two or more parts. yet when we review the mass which opposed the original coalescence, when we consider that it lay chiefly in the Southern quarter, that the legislature have availed themselves of no occasion of allaying it, but on the contrary whenever Northern & Southern prejudices have come into conflict, the latter have been sacrificed & the former soothed; that the owers of the debt are in the Southern & the holders of it in the Northern division; that the Antifederal champions are now strengthened in argument by the fulfilment of their predictions; that this has been brought about by the Monarchical federalists themselves, who, having been for the new government merely as a stepping stone to monarchy, have themselves adopted the very constructions of the constitution, of which, when advocating it's acceptance before the tribunal of the people, they declared it insusceptible; that the republican federalists, who espoused the same government for it's intrinsic merits, are disarmed of their weapons, that which they denied as prophecy being now become true history: who can be sure that these things may not proselyte the small number which was wanting to place the majority on the other side? and this is the event at which I tremble, & to prevent which I consider your continuance at the head of affairs as of the last importance. the confidence of the whole union is centered in you. your being at the helm, will be more than an answer to every argument which can be used to alarm & lead the people in any quarter into violence or secession. North & South will hang together, if they have you to hang on: and, if the first corrective of a numerous representation should fail in it's effect, your presence will give time for trying others not inconsistent with the union & peace of the states.

I am perfectly aware of the oppression under which your present office lays your mind, & of the ardor with which you pant for retirement to domestic life. but there is sometimes an eminence of character on which society have such peculiar claims as to controul the predilection of the individual for a particular walk of happiness, & restrain him to that alone arising from the present & future benedictions of mankind. this seems to be your condition, & the law imposed on you by providence in forming your character, & fashioning the events on which it was to operate: and it is to motives like these, & not to personal anxieties of mine or others who have no right to call on you for sacrifices, that I appeal from your former determination & urge a revisal of it, on the ground of change in the aspect of things. should an honest majority result



from the new & enlarged representation; should those acquiesce whose principles or interests they may controul, your wishes for retirement would be gratified with less danger, as soon as that shall be manifest, without awaiting the completion of the second period of four years. one or two sessions will determine the crisis: and I cannot but hope that you can resolve to add one or two more to the many years you have already sacrificed to the good of mankind.

The fear of suspicion that any selfish motive of continuance in office may enter into this sollicitation on my part obliges me to declare that no such motive exists. it is a thing of mere indifference to the public whether I retain or relinquish my purpose of closing my tour with the first periodical renovation of the government. I know my own measure too well to suppose that my services contribute any thing to the public confidence, or the public utility. multitudes can fill the office in which you have been pleased to place me, as much to their advantage & satisfaction. I, therefore, have no motive to consult but my own inclination, which is bent irresistably on the tranquil enjoyment of my family, my farm, & my books. I should repose among them it is true, in far greater security, if I were to know that you remained at the watch, and I hope it will be so. to the inducements urged from a view of our domestic affairs, I will add a bare mention, of what indeed need only be mentioned, that weighty motives for your continuance are to be found in our foreign affairs. I think it probable that both the Spanish & English negociations, if not completed before your purpose is known, will be suspended from the moment it is known; & that the latter nation will then use double diligence in fomenting the Indian war. With my wishes for the future, I shall at the same time express my gratitude for the past, at least my portion in it; & beg permission to follow you whether in public or private life with those sentiments of sincere attachment & respect, with which I am unalterably, Dear Sir, Your affectionate friend & humble servant



Transcription: *George Washington's Will, 1799*

Mount Vernon, 9 July 1799

In the name of God amen I George Washington of Mount Vernon--a citizen of the United States, and lately President of the same, do make, ordain and declare this Instrument; which is written with my own hand and every page thereof subscribed with my name, to be my last Will & Testament, revoking all others.

Imprimus. All my debts, of which there are but few, and none of magnitude, are to be punctually and speedily paid--and the Legacies hereinafter bequeathed, are to be discharged as soon as circumstances will permit, and in the manner directed.

Item. To my dearly beloved wife Martha Washington I give and bequeath the use, profit and benefit of my whole Estate, real and personal, for the term of her natural life--except such parts thereof as are specifically disposed of hereafter: My improved lot in the Town of Alexandria, situated on Pitt & Cameron streets, I give to her and her heirs forever; as I also do my household & Kitchen furniture of every sort & kind, with the liquors and groceries which may be on hand at the time of my decease; to be used & disposed of as she may think proper.

Item Upon the decease of my wife, it is my Will & desire that all the Slaves which I hold in my *own right*, shall receive their freedom. To emancipate them during her life, would, tho' earnestly wished by me, be attended with such insuperable difficulties on account of their intermixture by Marriages with the dower Negroes, as to excite the most painful sensations, if not disagreeable consequences from the latter, while both descriptions are in the occupancy of the same Proprietor; it not being in my power, under the tenure by which the Dower Negroes are held, to manumit them. And whereas among those who will receive freedom according to this devise, there may be some, who from old age or bodily infirmities, and others who on account of their infancy, that will be unable to support themselves; it is my Will and desire that all who come under the first & second description shall be comfortably clothed & fed by my heirs while they live; and that such of the latter description as have no parents living, or if living are unable, or unwilling to provide for them, shall be bound by the Court until they shall arrive at the age of twenty five years; and in cases where no record can be produced, whereby their ages can be ascertained, the judgment of the Court, upon its own view of the subject, shall be adequate and final. The Negroes thus bound, are (by their Masters or Mistresses) to be taught to read & write; and to be brought up to some useful occupation, agreeably to the Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, providing for the support of Orphan and other poor Children. and I do hereby expressly forbid the Sale, or transportation out of the said Commonwealth, of any Slave I may die possessed of, under any pretence whatsoever. And I do moreover most pointedly, and most solemnly enjoin it upon my Executors hereafter named, or the Survivors of them, to see that *this* clause respecting Slaves, and every part thereof be religiously fulfilled at the Epoch at which it is



directed to take place; without evasion, neglect or delay, after the Crops which may then be on the ground are harvested, particularly as it respects the aged and infirm; seeing that a regular and permanent fund be established for their support so long as there are subjects requiring it; not trusting to the uncertain provision to be made by individuals. And to my Mulatto man William (calling himself William Lee) I give immediate freedom; or if he should prefer it (on account of the accidents which have befallen him, and which have rendered him incapable of walking or of any active employment) to remain in the situation he now is, it shall be optional in him to do so: In either case however, I allow him an annuity of thirty dollars during his natural life, which shall be independent of the victuals and cloaths he has been accustomed to receive, if he chuses the last alternative; but in full, with his freedom, if he prefers the first; & this I give him as a testimony of my sense of his attachment to me, and for his faithful services during the Revolutionary War.

Item. To the Trustees (Governors, or by whatsoever other name they may be designated) of the Academy in the Town of Alexandria, I give and bequeath, in Trust, four thousand dollars, or in other words twenty of the shares which I hold in the Bank of Alexandria, towards the support of a Free school established at, and annexed to, the said Academy; for the purpose of Educating such Orphan children, or the children of such other poor and indigent persons as are unable to accomplish it with their own means; and who, in the judgment of the Trustees of the said Seminary, are best entitled to the benefit of this donation. The aforesaid twenty shares I give & bequeath in perpetuity; the dividends only of which are to be drawn for, and applied by the said Trustees for the time being, for the uses above mentioned; the stock to remain entire and untouched; unless indications of a failure of the said Bank should be so apparent, or a discontinuance thereof should render a removal of this fund necessary; in either of these cases, the amount of the Stock here devised, is to be vested in some other Bank or public Institution, whereby the interest may with regularity & certainty be drawn, and applied as above. And to prevent misconception, my meaning is, and is hereby declared to be, that these twenty shares are in lieu of, and not in addition to, the thousand pounds given by a missive letter some years ago; in consequence whereof an annuity of fifty pounds has since been paid towards the support of this Institution.

Item. Whereas by a Law of the Commonwealth of Virginia, enacted in the year 1785, the Legislature thereof was pleased (as a an evidence of Its approbation of the services I had rendered the Public during the Revolution--and partly, I believe, in consideration of my having suggested the vast advantages which the Community would derive from the extensions of its Inland Navigation, under Legislative patronage) to present me with one hundred shares of one hundred dollars each, in the incorporated company established for the purpose of extending the navigation of James River from tide water to the Mountains: and also with fifty shares of one hundred pounds Sterling each, in the Corporation of another company, likewise established for the similar purpose of opening the Navigation of the River Potomac from tide water to Fort Cumberland, the acceptance of which, although the offer was highly honourable, and grateful to



my feelings, was refused, as inconsistent with a principle which I had adopted, and had never departed from--namely--not to receive pecuniary compensation for any services I could render my country in its arduous struggle with great Britain, for its Rights; and because I had evaded similar propositions from other States in the Union; adding to this refusal, however, an intimation that, if it should be the pleasure of the Legislature to permit me to appropriate the said shares to *public uses*, I would receive them on those terms with due sensibility; and this it having consented to, in flattering terms, as will appear by a subsequent Law, and sundry resolutions, in the most ample and honourable manner, I proceed after this recital, for the more correct understanding of the case, to declare--

That as it has always been a source of serious regret with me, to see the youth of these United States sent to foreign Countries for the purpose of Education, often before their minds were formed, or they had imbibed any adequate ideas of the happiness of their own; contracting, too frequently, not only habits of dissipation & extravagance, but principles unfriendly to Republican Governmt and to the true & genuine liberties of Mankind; which, thereafter are rarely overcome. For these reasons, it has been my ardent wish to see a plan devised on a liberal scale, which would have a tendency to sprd systemactic ideas through all parts of this rising Empire, thereby to do away local attachments and State prejudices, as far as the nature of things would, or indeed ought to admit, from our National Councils. Looking anxiously forward to the accomplishment of so desirable an object as this is (in my estimation) my mind has not been able to contemplate any plan more likely to effect the measure than the establishment of a UNIVERSITY in a central part of the United States, to which the youth of fortune and talents from all parts thereof might be sent for the completion of their Education in all the branches of polite literature; in arts and Sciences, in acquiring knowledge in the principles of Politics & good Government; and (as a matter of infinite Importance in my judgment) by associating with each other, and forming friendships in Juvenile years, be enabled to free themselves in a proper degree from those local prejudices & habitual jealousies which have just been mentioned; and which, when carried to excess, are never failing sources of disquietude to the Public mind, and pregnant of mischievous consequences to this Country: Under these impressions, so fully dilated,

Item I give and bequeath in perpetuity the fifty shares which I hold in the Potomac Company (under the aforesaid Acts of the Legislature of Virginia) towards the endowment of a UNIVERSITY to be established within the limits of the District of Columbia, under the auspices of the General Government, if that government should incline to extend a fostering hand towards it; and until such Seminary is established, and the funds arising on these shares shall be required for its support, my further Will & desire is that the profit accruing therefrom shall, whenever the dividends are made, be laid out in purchasing Stock in the Bank of Columbia, or some other Bank, at the discretion of my Executors; or by the Treasurer of the United States for the time being under the direction of Congress; provided that Honourable body should Patronize the measure, and the Dividends proceeding from the purchase of such Stock is to be vested in more stock, and so on, until a sum adequate to the accomplishment of the object is obtained, of which I



have not the smallest doubt, before many years passes away; even if no aid or encouraged is given by Legislative authority, or from any other source.

Item The hundred shares which I held in the James River Company, I have given, and now confirm in perpetuity to, and for the use & benefit of Liberty-Hall Academy, in the County of Rockbridge, in the Commonwealth of Virga.

Item I release exonerate and discharge, the Estate of my deceased brother Samuel Washington, from the payment of the money which is due to me for the Land I sold to Philip Pendleton (lying in the County of Berkeley) who assigned the same to him the said Samuel; who, by agreement was to pay me therefor. And whereas by some contract (the purport of which was never communicated to me) between the said Samuel and his son Thornton Washington, the latter became possessed of the aforesaid Land, without any conveyance having passed from me, either to the said Pendleton, the said Samuel, or the said Thornton, and without any consideration having been made, by which neglect neither the legal nor equitable title has been alienated; it rests therefore with me to declare my intentions concerning the Premises--and these are, to give & bequeath the said land to whomsoever the said Thornton Washington (who is also dead) devised the same; or to his heirs forever if he died Intestate: Exonerating the estate of the said Thornton, equally with that of the said Samuel from payment of the purchase money; which, with Interest; agreeably to the original contract with the said Pendleton, would amount to more than a thousand pounds. And whereas two other Sons of my said deceased brother Samuel--namely, George Steptoe Washington and Lawrence [Charles] Augustine Washington, were, by the decease of those to whose care they were committed, brought under my protection, and in consequ[ue]nce have occasioned advances on my part for their Education at College, and other Schools, for their board--cloathing--and other incidental expences, to the amount of near five thousand dollars over and above the Sums furnished by their Estate wch Sum may be inconvenient for them, or their fathers Estate to refund. I do for these reasons acquit them, and the said estate, from the payment thereof. My intention being, that all accounts between them and me, and their fathers estate and me shall stand balanced.

Item The balance due to me from the Estate of Bartholomew Dandridge deceased (my wife's brother) and which amounted on the first day of October 1795 to four hundred and twenty five pounds (as will appear by an account rendered by his deceased son John Dandridge, who was the acting Exr of his fathers Will) I release & acquit from the payment thereof. And the Negros, then thirty three in number) formerly belonging to the said estate, who were taken in execution--sold--and purchased in on my account in the year [] and ever since have remained in the possession, and to the use of Mary, Widow of the said Bartholomew Dandridge, with their increase, it is my Will & desire shall continue, & be in her possession, without paying hire, or making compensation for the same for the time past or to come, during her natural life; at the expiration of which, I direct that all of them who are forty years old & upwards, shall receive their freedom; all under that age and above sixteen, shall serve seven years and no longer; and all



under sixteen years, shall serve until they are twenty five years of age, and then be free. And to avoid disputes respecting the ages of any of these Negros, they are to be taken to the Court of the County in which they reside, and the judgment thereof, in this relation shall be final; and a record thereof made; which may be adduced as evidence at any time thereafter, if disputes should arise concerning the same. And I further direct, that the heirs of the said Bartholomew Dandridge shall, equally, share the benefits arising from the services of the said negros according to the tenor of this devise, upon the decease of their Mother.

Item If Charles Carter who intermarried with my niece Betty Lewis is not sufficiently secured in the title to the lots he had of me in the Town of Fredericksburgh, it is my will & desire that my Executors shall make such conveyances of them as the Law requires, to render it perfect.

Item To my Nephew William Augustine Washington and his heirs (if he should conceive them to be objects worth prosecuting) and to his heirs, a lot in the Town of Manchester (opposite to Richmond) No. 265--drawn on my sole account, and also the tenth of one or two, hundred acre lots, and two or three half acre lots in the City, and vicinity of Richmond, drawn in partnership with nine others, all in the lottery of the deceased William Byrd are given--as is also a lot which I purchased of John Hood, conveyed by William Willie and Samuel Gordon Trustees of the said John Hood, numbered 139 in the Town of Edinburgh, in the County of Prince George, State of Virginia.

Item To my Nephew Bushrod Washington, I give and bequeath all the Papers in my possession, which relate to my Civil and Military Administration of the affairs of this Country; I leave to him also, such of my private Papers as are worth preserving; and at the decease of wife, and before--if she is not inclined to retain them, I give and bequeath my library of Books and Pamphlets of every kind.

Item Having sold Lands which I possessed in the State of Pennsylvania, and part of a tract held in equal right with George Clinton, late Governor of New York, in the State of New York; my share of land, & interest, in the Great Dismal Swamp, and a tract of land which I owned in the County of Gloucester; withholding the legal titles thereto, until the consideration money should be paid. And having moreover leased, & conditionally sold (as will appear by the tenor of the said leases) all my lands upon the Great Kanhawa, and a tract upon Difficult Run, in the county of Loudoun, it is my Will and direction, that whensoever the Contracts are fully, & respectively complied with, according to the spirit; true intent & meaning thereof, on the part of the purchasers, their heirs or Assigns, that then, and in that case, Conveyances are to be made, agreeably to the terms of the said Contracts; and the money arising therefrom, when paid, to be vested in Bank stock; the dividends whereof, as of that also wch is already vested therein, is to inure to my said Wife during her life--but the Stock itself is to remain, & be subject to the general distribution hereafter directed.



Item To the Earl of Buchan I recommit "the box made of the Oak that sheltered the Great Sir William Wallace after the battle of Falkirk" presented to me by his Lordship, in terms too flattering for me to repeat, with a request "to pass it, on the event of my decease, to the man in my country, who should appear to merit it best, upon the same conditions that have induced him to send it to me." Whether easy, or not, to select *the man* who might comport with his Lordships opinion in this respect, is not for me to say; but conceiving that no disposition of this valuable curiosity can be more eligible than the re-commitment of it to his own Cabinet, agreeably to the original design of the Goldsmiths Company of Edinburgh, who presented it to him, and at his request, consented that it should be transferred to me; I do give & bequeath the same to his Lordship, and in case of his decease, to his heir with my grateful thanks for the distinguished honour of presenting it to me; and more especially for the favourable sentiments with which he accompanied it.

Item To my brother Charles Washington I give & bequeath the gold headed Cane left me by Doctr Franklin in his Will. I add nothing to it, because of the ample provision I have made for his Issue. To the acquaintances and friends of my Juvenile years, Lawrence Washington & Robert Washington of Chotanck, I give my other two gold headed Canes, having my Arms engraved on them; and to each (as they will be useful where they live) I leave one of the Spy-glasses which constituted part of my equipage during the late War. To my compatriot in arms, and old & intimate friend Doctr Craik, I give my Bureau (or as the Cabinet makers call it, Tambour Secretary) and the circular chair--an appendage of my Study. To Doctor David Stuart I give my large shaving & dressing Table, and my Telescope. To the Reverend, now Bryan, Lord Fairfax, I give a Bible in three large folio volumes, with notes, presented to me by the Right reverend Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor & Man. To General de la Fayette I give a pair of finely wrought steel Pistols, taken from the enemy in the Revolutionary War. To my Sisters in law Hannah Washington & Mildred Washington; to my friends Eleanor Stuart, Hannah Washington of Fairfield, and Elizabeth Washington of Hayfield, I give, each, a mourning Ring of the value of one hundred dollars. These bequests are not made for the intrinsic value of them, but as mementos of my esteem & regard. To Tobias Lear, I give the use of the Farm which he now holds, in virtue of a Lease from me to him and his deceased wife (for and during their natural lives) free from Rent, during his life; at the expiration of which, it is to be disposed as is hereinafter directed. To Sally B. Haynie (a distant relation of mine) I give and bequeath three hundred dollars. To Sarah Green daughter of the deceased Thomas Bishop, & to Ann Walker daughter of Jno. Alton, also deceased, I give, each--one hundred dollars, in consideration of the attachment of their fathers to me; each of whom having lived nearly forty years in my family. To each of my Nephews, William Augustine Washington, George Lewis, George Steptoe Washington, Bushrod Washington and Samuel Washington, I give one of the Swords or Cutteaux of which I may die possessed; and they are to chuse in the order they are named. These Swords are accompanied with an injunction not to unsheath them for the purpose of shedding blood, except it be for self defence, or in defence of their Country and its rights; and in the latter



case, to keep them unsheathed, and prefer falling with them in their hands, to the relinquishment thereof.

And now

Having gone through these specific devises, with explanations for the more correct understanding of the meaning and design of them; I proceed to the distribution of the more important parts of my Estate, in manner following--

First To my Nephew Bushrod Washington and his heirs (partly in consideration of an intimation to his deceased father while we were Bachelors, & he had kindly undertaken to superintend my Estate during my Military Services in the former War between Great Britain & France, that if I should fall therein, Mount Vernon (then less extensive in domain than at present) should become his property) I give and bequeath all that part thereof which is comprehended within the following limits--viz.--Beginning at the ford of Dogue run, near my Mill, and extending along the road, and bounded thereby as it now goes, & ever has gone since my recollection of it, to the ford of little hunting Creek at the Gum spring until it comes to a knowl, opposite to an old road which formerly passed through the lower field of Muddy hole Farm; at which, on the north side of the said road are three red, or spanish Oaks marked as a corner, and a stone placed. thence by a line of trees to be marked, rectangular to the back line, or outer boundary of the tract between Thomson Mason & myself. thence with that line Easterly (now double ditching with a Post & Rail fence thereon) to the run of little hunting Creek. thence with that run which is the boundary between the Lands of the late Humphrey Peake and me, to the tide water of the said Creek; thence by that water to Potomac River. thence with the River to the mouth of Dogue Creek. and thence with the said Dogue Creek to the place of beginning at the aforesaid ford; containing upwards of four thousand Acres, be the same more or less--together with the Mansion house and all other buildings and improvemts thereon.

Second In consideration of the consanguinity between them and my wife, being as nearly related to her as to myself, as on account of the affection I had for, and the obligation I was under to, their father when living, who from his youth had attached himself to my person, and followed my fortunes through the viscissitudes of the late Revolution--afterwards devoting his time to the Superintendence of my private concerns for many years, whilst my public employments rendered it impracticable for me to do it myself, thereby affording me essential Services, and always performing them in a manner the most felial and respectful--for these reasons I say, I give and bequeath to George Fayette Washington, and Lawrence [Charles] Augustine Washington and their heirs, my Estate East of little hunting Creek, lying on the River Potomac; including the Farm of 360 Acres, Leased to Tobias Lear as noticed before, and containing in the whole, by Deeds, Two thousand and Seventy seven acres--be it more or less. Which said Estate it is my Will & desire should be equitably, & advantegeously divided between them, according to quantity, quality & other circumstances when the youngest shall have arrived at the age of



twenty one years, by three judicious and disinterested men; one to be chosen by each of the brothers, and the third by these two. In the meantime, if the termination of my wife's interest therein should have ceased, the profits arising therefrom are to be applied for th[e]ir joint uses and benefit.

Third And whereas it has always been my intention, since my expectation of having Issue has ceased, to consider the Grand children of my wife in the same light as I do my own relations, and to act a friendly part by them; more especially by the two whom we have reared from their earliest infancy--namely--Eleanor Parke Custis, & George Washington Parke Custis. And whereas the former of these hath lately intermarried with Lawrence Lewis, a son of my deceased Sister Betty Lewis, by which union the inducement to provide for them both has been increased; Wherefore, I give & bequeath to the said Lawrence Lewis & Eleanor Parke Lewis, his wife, and their heirs, the residue of my Mount Vernon Estate, not already devised to my Nephew Bushrod Washington; comprehended within the following description--viz.--All the land North of the Road leading from the ford of Dogue run to the Gum spring as described in the devise of the other part of the tract, to Bushrod Washington, until it comes to the Stone & three red or Spanish Oaks on the knowl. thence with the rectangular line to the back line (between Mr Mason & me)--thence with that line westerly, along the new double ditch to Dogue run, by the tumbling Dam of my Mill; thence with the said run to the ford aforementioned; to which I add all the Land I possess West of the said Dogue run, & Dogue Crk--bounded Easterly & Southerly thereby; together with the Mill, Distillery, and all other houses & improvements on the premises, making together about two thousand Acres--be it more or less.

Fourth Actuated by the principal already mentioned, I give and bequeath to George Washington Parke Custis, the Grandson of my wife, and my Ward, and to his heirs, the tract I hold on four mile run in the vicinity of Alexandria, containing one thousd two hundred acres, more or less, & my entire Square, number twenty one, in the City of Washington.

Fifth All the rest and residue of my Estate, real & personal--not disposed of in manner aforesaid--In whatsoever consisting--wheresoever lying--and whensoever found--a schedule of which, as far as is recollected, with a reasonable estimate of its value, is hereunto annexed--I desire may be sold by my Executors at such times--in such manner--and on such credits (if an equal, valid, and satisfactory distribution of the specific property cannot be made without) as, in their judgment shall be most conducive to the interest of the parties concerned; and the monies arising therefrom to be divided into twenty three equal parts, and applied as follow --viz.

To William Augustine Washington, Elizabeth Spotswood, Jane Thornton, and the heirs of Ann Ashton; son, and daughters of my deceased brother Augustine Washington, I give and bequeath four parts; that is--one part to each of them.



To Fielding Lewis, George Lewis, Robert Lewis, Howell Lewis & Betty Carter, sons and daughter of my deceased Sister Betty Lewis, I give & bequeath five other parts--one to each of them.

To George Steptoe Washington, Lawrence Augustine Washington, Harriot Parks, and the heirs of Thornton Washington, sons & daughter of my deceased brother Samuel Washington, I give and bequeath other four parts, one part to each of them.

To Corbin Washington, and the heirs of Jane Washington, Son & daughter of my deceased brother John Augustine Washington, I give & bequeath two parts; one part to each of them.

To Samuel Washington, Francis Ball & Mildred Hammond, son & daughters of my Brother Charles Washington, I give & bequeath three parts; one part to each of them. And to George Fayette Washington. Charles Augustine Washington & Maria Washington, sons and daughter of my deceased Nephew Geo: Augustine Washington, I give one other part; that is--to each a third of that part.

To Elizabeth Parke Law, Martha Parke Peter, and Eleanor Parke Lewis, I give and bequeath three other parts, that is a part to each of them.

And to my Nephews Bushrod Washington & Lawrence Lewis, and to my ward, the grandson of My wife, I give and bequeath one other part; that is, a third thereof to each of them. And if it should so happen, that any of the persons whose names are here enumerated (unknown to me) should now be deceased--or should die before me, that in either of these cases, the heirs of such deceased person shall, notwithstanding, derive all the benefits of the bequest; in the same manner as if he, or she, was actually living at the time.

And by way of advice, I recommend it to my Executors not to be precipitate in disposing of the landed property (herein directed to be sold) if from temporary causes the Sale thereof should be dull; experience having fully evinced, that the price of land (especially above the Falls of the Rivers, & on the Western Waters) have been progressively rising, and cannot be long checked in its increasing value. And I particularly recommend it to such of the Legatees (under this clause of my Will) as can make it convenient, to take each a share of my Stock in the Potomac Company in preference to the amount of what it might sell for; being thoroughly convinced myself, that no uses to which the money can be applied will be so productive as the Tolls arising from this navigation when in full operation (and this from the nature of things it must be 'ere long) and more especially if that of the Shanondoah is added thereto.

The family Vault at Mount Vernon requiring repairs, and being improperly situated besides, I desire that a new one of Brick, and upon a larger Scale, may be built at the foot of what is commonly called the Vineyard Inclosure, on the ground which is marked out. In which my



remains, with those of my deceased relatives (now in the old Vault) and such others of my family as may chuse to be entombed there, may be deposited. And it is my express desire that my Corpse may be Interred in a private manner, without parade, or funeral Oration.

Lastly I constitute and appoint my dearly beloved wife Martha Washington, My Nephews William Augustine Washington, Bushrod Washington, George Steptoe Washington, Samuel Washington, & Lawrence Lewis, & my ward George Washington Parke Custis (when he shall have arrived at the age of twenty years) Executrix & Executors of this Will & testament, In the construction of which it will readily be perceived that no professional character has been consulted, or has had any Agency in the draught--and that, although it has occupied many of my leisure hours to digest, & to through it into its present form, it may, notwithstanding, appear crude and incorrect. But having endeavoured to be plain, and explicit in all Devises--even at the expence of prolixity, perhaps of tautology, I hope, and trust, that no disputes will arise concerning them; but if, contrary to expectation, the case should be otherwise from the want of legal expression, or the usual technical terms, or because too much or too little has been said on any of the Devises to be consonant with law, My Will and direction expressly is, that all disputes (if unhappily any should arise) shall be decided by three impartial and intelligent men, known for their probity and good understanding; two to be chosen by the disputants--each having the choice of one--and the third by those two. Which three men thus chosen, shall, unfettered by Law, or legal constructions, declare their sense of the Testators intention; and such decision is, to all intents and purposes to be as binding on the Parties as if it had been given in the Supreme Court of the United States.

In witness of all, and of each of the things herein contained, I have set my hand and Seal, this ninth day of July, in the year One thousand seven hundred and ninety nine and of the Independence of the United States the twenty fourth.