

MARTHA WASHINGTON.

The Wife of Our First President, and Her Characteristics.

The manners of Martha Washington are said to have been most engaging. She never assumed to be anything extraordinary intellectually, wasn't much of a reader, but her elegance of manner has been mentioned again and again in descriptions of that historic time when she was the first lady of the land, the wife of the revered first president of the United States.

She is described as having been rather below medium height, but daintily formed, with a pleasing face and dark hazel eyes. The picture given here is from an engraving taken from Gilbert Stuart's painting in her later years. Perhaps the best sketch of her now in print is the one in Laura C. Holloway's popular book, "The Ladies of the White House," which also contains a fine engraving of her in her youth, as well as one when she had become a white-haired grandmother, engraved from Stuart's picture. Therein is charmingly told the story of her first meeting with the illustrious Washington, then a young colonel. It was in 1755, at the house of Mr. Chamberlayne, at New Kent, Va., while Washington was on his way to Williamsburg, attended by a body servant.

She was 26, beautiful, rich and a widow. He was near the same age, famous and handsome. They were mutually pleased, and after a few meetings arranged for a marriage.

Martha Danbridge was the daughter of a Virginia planter, and was born in 1732. Her education was such as the limited facilities of the times afforded, her social pleasures compassed by the society of Williamsburg. When very young she was married to Col. Custis, a refined, polished and generous man. They lived not far from the plantation of Mrs. Custis' father, happy and blessed during a few fleeting years. They had three children, the eldest an unusually bright boy, who died a few months before his father. Col. Custis died of consumption, leaving his young widow the possessor of a rich estate.

Her country home, where Washington became engaged to her, was called the White House. From that the executive mansion at Washington took its name.

The Washingtons began life at Mt. Vernon. They were wealthy and refined, and the best society of the country was glad to do



them honor. For fifteen successive years Washington was a member of the legislature of his state. His wife always accompanied him to Williamsburg, then the capital of Virginia. And so, treading on flowers, time slipped away noiselessly for these happy people. Then came a time at last when for eight years the boom of cannon and the roar of musketry shook every home in the land. The happy family at Mt. Vernon suffered disruption with the rest, for its head was the leader of the old Continentals, who faltered not.

Every year in October Mrs. Washington, loaded with supplies, visited her husband in camp and spent the winter with him. Each year she hoped would end the war and conclude his long absence. At last, when peace was declared and the country for which the others fought became really their own, Washington was once more called from his home to assume the presidential chair, which he filled conscientiously for eight years, and then refused a third nomination.

The seat of government was then in New York. The president's house was elegantly furnished, and almost as formally conducted as the home of a king. Mrs. Washington was an aristocrat by nature, and, in accordance with the custom of the times, conducted her receptions after the manner of English and French drawing rooms. The republican court, then located at No. 3 Franklin square, New York, called together the most elegant and estimable of the country. Very different from the present

WASHINGTON'S FAMILY.

The English Ancestors of the Man Who Whipped England.

The author of the book entitled "Mothers of Emigrant Men" said that while collecting material for her work she was many times forced to think that eminent men had no mothers, the difficulty of finding out anything about them being so great. In the case of Washington's father, though we know all about his ancestry, we know but little of his character. His ancestry can be traced back to the thirteenth century, but of the man himself we know scarcely more than the date of his birth and death. What he was in appearance, mind and character we cannot learn. They were not close chroniclers in that early day. The daily newspaper was unknown and the writers of biographies were few. And then, the father of Washington died when the son who made him an object of interest to Americans was only 11 years old.



His name was Augustine Washington, and he was a wealthy Virginia planter. His first wife's name was Jane Butler. She died leaving three children. His second wife was Mary Ball, the mother of the first president of the United States. At the age of 19 Augustine Washington died. By his second wife he had six children, one of whom died in childhood.

The Washingtons were the descendants of an old family of the English aristocracy. The name was first known about the middle of the thirteenth century. Before that a manor of that name in the County of Durham was owned by William de Hertburne, who, as was the custom in those days, took the name of his estate. From him descended both the English and American branches of the Washington family. Various mementoes prove that they were from the beginning people of wealth and distinction. The ancient seat of the family is said to be yet well preserved. It is of stone and crenelated towers. In some of the rooms are the remains of fine carving, on the mantel pieces, elaborately carved, are the family arms, as represented in the picture, richly emblazoned upon escutcheons. The shield with the stars and stripes is Gen. Washington's seal.



Two miles from Malmesbury, in the cemetery of Garsden church, there is a monument erected to the memory of "Sir Lawrence Washington, Niles' grandson of the first proprietor of the name, and an ancestor of Gen. Washington. Sir Lawrence Washington died in May, 1643. Two of his sons, John and Lawrence, emigrated to Virginia in 1657, and settled at Bridge Creek, on the Potomac, in Westmoreland county. John Washington took part in the military expeditions against the Indians, and attained the rank of colonel. He married Ann Pope, and had two sons, Lawrence and John, and a daughter. Lawrence married Mildred Warner, of Gloucester county, and had three children, John, Augustine and Mildred. Augustine became the father of Gen. Washington.

The house in which George Washington was born was destroyed before the revolution. George W. P. Custis placed upon its site a slab of freestone, represented in the accompanying picture, bearing this inscription: "Here, the 11th of February, 1732, George Washington was born." This date is old style, as was every date until 1753, when the new style of calendar was adopted. The house stood about half a mile from the junction of Pope's creek with the Potomac, in Westmoreland county, the "Athens of Virginia." The county acquired this name on account of having produced a great number of distinguished men. The house in the accompanying engraving is an exact counterpart of the one in which Washington was born, and belonged to the Washington estate.



This modest stone was the first monument ever raised to the memory of Washington. In June, 1815, a few days before the cornerstone of the Washington monument at Baltimore was laid, Mr. Custis, Samuel Lewis, nephew of Washington and captain in Baylor's regiment of horse; William Grymes, son of a distinguished officer in the Life Guards, and the captain of "The Lady of the Lake," brought the inscribed tablet and deposited it with solemn ceremony. They wrapped it in—



"The blessed flag! Sign of our precious past, Triumphant present, and our future vast," And bore it in their patriotic arms to its resting place. With the bricks of the old chimney that had once formed the hearth in the home of Washington's infancy they constructed a rude pedestal, upon which they reverently placed this, the first monument to the first of patriots, "commending it to a respect and protection of the American people in general and the citizens of Westmoreland county in particular."

A Historic Landmark.

Franco's tavern, where Washington had his quarters when the British evacuated New York, is still standing. The picture represents it as it is. It is an

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The second year of Washington's administration the seat of government was removed to Philadelphia, where the same ceremony was observed in the management of the president's household as at New York. The house chosen was on Market street, between Fifth and Sixth, on the south side, and it was handsomely furnished. No house was provided for the president by the government then, as now. The first president rented and furnished his own.

Mrs. Washington held her receptions, or drawing rooms, as they were called, on Friday evening of each week. The guests assembled early, and left before 10:30. These occasions are said to have been exceedingly stiff, solemn and awkward. The atmosphere of awful dignity that radiated from the great Washington rather overpowered the guests. It was an honor to be admitted, but it was also a fearful trial to any addicted to naturalness of manner or buoyancy of spirits.

The lady of the mansion sat at the head of the room, and the guests were placed in a circle around which the president passed, speaking ceremoniously to each one. There is nothing to tell us what Mrs. Washington wore on these occasions, or how she looked. The society reporter had not then been invented, as it was the age of bronze, not tinsel. We know, however, that the president powdered his hair and never offered his hand to any of his guests, and that he wore the old Continental uniform.

At this time Mrs. Washington was 58 years old, as was the general, both having been born in the same year. Mrs. Washington's children, Martha and John Parke Custis, were cherished and guided by Washington as tenderly as if they had been his own. Both died after reaching maturity. The son, who was a colonel in Washington's army, was married, and left a widow and four children. Washington adopted two of the children at once, and reared them with the most conscientious care.

Washington died on Dec. 14, 1799. She turned from the chamber that held his dead form, never to enter it again. This was the last event of her life. Thirty months later, in the spring of 1801, at the age of 70, she, too, slipped out of life, leaving a look of peace on her dead features.

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immense building, located on the corner of Broad and Pearl streets, near the Battery. It was there the principal officers of the army yet remaining in the service took leave of their beloved chief. Washington entered the room where they were assembled, and, taking a glass of wine in his hand, said, with a heart full of love and gratitude: "I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." One by one they grasped his hand, while tears and sobs stifled their words. He kissed each one, and wept with them. Heroic souls they had gone through the long and awful war with dry eyes, but when it was over, and peace separated them, they wept like women.



The first American Bull fight—George Washington and the Eagle vanquish John Bull.

He Did It with His Little Hatchet.



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