

THE PAPERS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON



Number 8

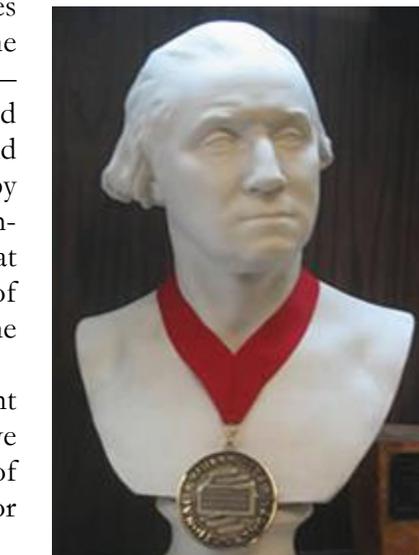
NEWSLETTER

Fall 2006

Annual Report by the Editor in Chief

I am pleased to report that the project continues to be extremely productive. Although only one volume, *Presidential 12*, edited by Christine Patrick, was issued in 2005, two volumes were delivered that year to the Press and both appeared in 2006—*Revolutionary War 15*, edited by Ed Lengel and issued in May, and *Revolutionary War 16*, edited by David Hoth and issued in September. We are now on a schedule that will have us deliver an average of two volumes every year until the project is completed.

The most remarkable moment for the project over the last twelve months, however, was the award of the National Humanities Medal for 2005. This recognition honors years of effort and the outstanding contributions of so many fine editors, research assistants, graduate students and others since 1969. We are the first documentary editing project so honored. I accepted the medal from President George W. Bush on behalf of the project at a ceremony in the Oval Office on November 10, 2005. We are pleased to have brought the medal to Charlottesville and for now it is proudly displayed in our office—hung around the neck of a 19th century copy of Houdon's bust of Washington. I believe that I can now detect a subtle, wry smile on his face, one I had never before noticed.



"The President of the United States of America Awards this National Humanities Medal to The Papers of George Washington for a project that has illuminated the thought and character of a towering figure of our Nation's founding. This comprehensive and important work will help make American's earliest days come alive for readers and scholars for years to come."

continued on page 2

Forthcoming in early 2007

Presidential Series, Volume 13

In the period covered by this volume, 1 June to 31 August 1793, GW focused his efforts as president

on keeping the United States neutral during the war between France and Great Britain. Although he had asserted a position of neutrality for the United States in the Neutrality Proclamation of 22 April 1793 (*Presidential Series*, vol. 12), GW now had to clarify exactly how his administration would maintain this stance. The greatest challenge came from the presence in U.S. ports of both British and French privateers and their prizes. Frequent correspondence with the state governors, especially Thomas Mifflin of

Pennsylvania and George Clinton of New York, kept GW informed of the latest arrivals.

Cabinet members Alexander Hamilton (Secretary of the Treasury), Thomas Jefferson

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Annual Report, continued from page 1

Our office space situation has been a source of concern on two counts. First, it has long been inadequate to our needs. In the past several months we have introduced additional full-time staff into our very tight quarters, making that an even more pressing matter. Second, the library has made it clear that it would like to have the space back. Recent conversations with persons in the Dean's office make me hopeful that adequate and convenient facilities for us may be found in the process of creating a new master space plan for the College of Arts and Sciences. This is space we might occupy at some point in the next four to five years.

Several important personnel changes have occurred in the past year. Frank Grizzard left the Washington Papers on 5 July, 2005 to launch his own project—the Lee Family Digital Archive, which is now hosted by Washington & Lee University. Frank had long headed our digital efforts, and, as will be detailed below, that

effort has taken on new, broader dimensions under Assistant Editor Jennifer Stertzler. Early in July of this year we lost our copy editor, James Guba, and, even more recently, long-time Research Assistant Beverly Kirsch. Guba's replacement is already aboard, but replacing Kirsch, with her long experience at the project, will be more difficult.

In early June, William Ferraro joined us from the U.S. Grant Papers at Southern Illinois University. He will join the team doing our *Revolutionary War Series*. Ferraro is working with Phil Chase on volume 19 and will step into Phil's shoes upon his retirement in the early spring of 2008. Also this June, Tom Dulan joined us as copy editor. He comes to us with many years of copy editing and

publishing experience. One additional full-time staff member, Research Assistant Alexis Luckey with the Digital Edition team, joined us in July.

Beginning with Ed Lengel's *Revolutionary War* 15, we have instituted a few changes in the makeup of the volumes. The first change, small but overdue, will be to recognize the work of the individual editor, whose name will appear on the dust jacket alongside that of the editor in chief. The second change is more substantive—the addition of a short (3–5 page) “introduction” in the front matter that discusses the context for the documents of the volume—the events and persons that occupied Washington's attention during the period therein. Finally, there is a change in the indexing that I believe will be advantageous to the user. This change will cause the sub-headings to appear alphabetically; up to now they have been arranged in numerical order according to the *first* page entry on which they appeared.

Other changes will likely appear in the next volume of the *Presidential Series* in early 2007. The most important of these will be appearance of maps in the endpapers of each volume. For the *Presidential Series*, those maps will be of Washington's farms and of the new District of Columbia, and they will appear in each edition of the *Presidential Series* until its completion. Maps will also appear in the endpapers of the *Revolutionary War Series* (beginning with volume 17)—depicting the northern and southern theaters of the war. In addition, we will soon begin adding, on the spine of the book and dust jacket, the full date of the first and last document in each volume instead of only the month and year. This will make it easier, when searching for a specific document or date, to pick the volume in which it appears.



President George W. Bush awarded the 2005 National Humanities Medal on November 10, 2005. Editor in Chief Theodore Crackel accepted the award on behalf of the project.

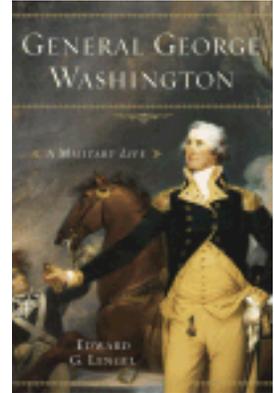
Our most significant new effort is the Digital Edition. Late in 2004 we joined Mount Vernon and the University of Virginia Press to launch an electronic edition of the Papers of George Washington under the Press's new digital imprint—Rotunda. Jennifer Stertz, who has spent several years with the staff as a research assistant, has been promoted to Assistant Editor and heads the new Digital Edition team. Stertz has been working on digital components of the project for some time and has taken charge of the day-to-day management of the new Digital Edition.

The digitization of the first 52 of the letterpress volumes is now completed. (Future volumes will be added to the Digital Edition a year or two after coming out in letterpress.) The project's role in this effort is multi-dimensional. We have worked with the press as they develop the appropriate XML coding and layout, and have found a number of ways by which we can add significant value to this new edition. First, all errors that have been detected in the letterpress edition are being corrected in the electronic edition. (The corrections for the first 52 volumes will likely be completed by the time you receive this newsletter.) Second, we will incorporate the index terms into the word-search capability. Slaves and slavery, for example, are words seldom used in Washington's letters, but many give important information about individual slaves, or the feeding, housing, employment, or disciplining of slaves, without using the specific terms. Searching the index terms as well as the text will ensure much more complete and meaningful searches. To accomplish that has meant the preparation of a cumulative index for all the volumes (something we have never had) and that work is well underway. We expect to accomplish these two efforts by the time the new edition is online—late 2006 or early 2007. Other follow-up tasks in the electronic edition will keep that team busy for years to come. The development and continued updating of the cumulative index is one of these, as is the addition of many documents that Washington would have seen or used but which were not included in the letterpress volumes. Transcriptions will also be linked to digital facsimiles of the original documents.

Documentary editing is hard work, but it occa-

sionally has its rewards. That was the case last year when Associate Editor Edward Lengel's new book, *General George Washington: A Military Life* (Random House, 2005) arrived to critical accolades which the project sometimes shared. Pauline Maier, while reviewing Lengel's book wrote:

"Why are books on the American Revolution so popular? Some have suggested that Americans now worried about the state of the nation like to read about a time when 'we had it right.' The truth may be simpler: The easy availability of modern, comprehensive editions of the papers of the Founding Fathers has allowed good writers without extensive historical training to write intelligent, readable books for broad audiences. Historians with strong storytelling skills, such as Joseph C. Ellis, also depend on modern editions of the founding fathers' papers.



"The people who know the subject best—the scholars' scholars of our time—are the editors who spend day after day and year after year copying and arranging those documents, adding introductions to explain their contexts and notes to identify obscure references. Edward G. Lengel is an associate editor of *The Papers of George Washington*, of which 52 volumes are in print, with another 40 to go. He has drawn on those papers, published and unpublished, in writing *General George Washington: A Military Life*. The book takes Washington from his first military experiences on the Virginia frontier during the 1750s, when he found 'something charming' in the sound of bullets whistling through the air, to his death in December 1799, when he was technically still on active service, supervising the re-creation of an American army during the undeclared war with France."

(*Washington Post*, Sunday, August 28, 2005)

Lengel's book was further honored as a finalist for the prestigious new Washington Book Prize.

—Theodore Crackel

Presidential Series, Volume 13, continued from page 1

(Secretary of State), Henry Knox (Secretary of War), and Edmund Randolph (Attorney General) assisted GW in developing the administration's neutrality position. During this time period the cabinet met frequently at GW's behest, both with and without him, to discuss not only specific incidents but also general policy. These meetings generated a series of cabinet opinions, including that of 3 August 1793, in which the administration established eight rules regulating the presence of foreign privateers and prizes within U.S. ports and territorial waters. GW's effort to solicit an opinion from the Supreme Court failed (Cabinet Opinion on Foreign Vessels and Consulting the Supreme Court, 12 July). The administration was also unsuccessful in its attempt to prosecute American citizens who volunteered for service on French privateers (Cabinet Opinion on French Privateers, 1 June).

The activities of Charles Edmond Genet, the French minister plenipotentiary to the United States, complicated the government's efforts at maintaining neutrality and, according to some contemporaries, injected an undue foreign influence into American politics. His failure to cooperate with the administration's directives concerning French privateers and prizes and his attempt to influence the American political process by appealing directly to the American people contributed to the cabinet's decision to ask the French government for Genet's recall (Cabinet Opinion on the Recall of Edmond Genet, 23 August). While some Americans opposed the neutrality policies of the administration, others did not, and GW received numerous letters of support from municipal and civic organizations in the maritime states. At the same time, an anonymous writer, using the pseudonym of Veritas [see below], wrote letters to GW of 3 and 6 June, in which he strongly criticized GW's presidency and which first appeared in the Philadelphia newspapers.

Other issues of national concern included Hamilton's requests for additional foreign loans, which GW approved on 8 August, and preparations for a peace treaty with hostile Indians in the Northwest Territory. GW also paid particular attention to the desire of the citizens of South Carolina and Georgia for a military expedition against

the Cherokees, Creeks, and other southern Indians. In order to assess the situation, GW consulted with Henry Knox, Gen. Andrew Pickens, and William Blount, the governor of the Southwest Territory. He also reviewed reports sent by federal Indian agent James Seagrove before deciding against the use of force at this time (GW to William Moultrie, 28 August). As always, GW continued to receive letters of application for federal appointments. A vacancy in the Baltimore customs office produced nineteen applicants for the lucrative position (David Plunket to GW, 7 August).

In his private life, Washington continued his struggle to micro-manage his Mount Vernon farms while living in Philadelphia, and the death in June of his estate manager, Anthony Whitting, provided additional anxiety as Washington searched for a replacement. He also continued his role as the patriarch of an extended family and at this time was particularly engaged in offering advice on estate management to Frances Bassett Washington, the widow of his nephew George Augustine Washington.

—Christine Sternberg Patrick

From Veritas

No. II.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

SIR,

June 3. [1793]

IN countries where *the people* have little or no share in the government, (as in Great Britain for instance) it is not uncommon for the executive to act in direct opposition to the *will of the nation*. It is to be hoped that the practice of apeing the absurd and tyrannical systems of Britain, though already carried to an alarming extent in this country, will never proceed so far, as to induce our executive to try the vain experiment of officially opposing the *national will*. An attempt of this kind, at present, would be scouted with deserved contempt, and bring ruin on its author; and such must continue to be the case, unless government shall be able to establish so much corrupt influence as, with the aid of bayonet-logic, will be sufficient to support it, in defiance of the people.

Had you, Sir, before you ventured to issue a proclamation which appears to have given much

uneasiness, consulted the *general* sentiments of your fellow-citizens, you would have found them, from one extremity of the Union to the other, firmly attached to the cause of France. You would not have found them disposed to consider it as a “duty” to forget their debt of gratitude to the French nation; or to view with unconcern, the magnanimous efforts of a faithful ally, to baffle the infernal projects of those despots who have confederated for the purpose of crushing her infant liberty. Neither would you have found them so far divested of the feelings of men as to treat with “impartiality,” and equal “friendship,” those tigers, who so lately deluged our country with the blood of thousands, and the men who generously flew to her rescue and became her deliverers. No, Sir—had even no written treaty existed between France and the United States, still would the strongest ties of amity have united the people of both nations; still would the republican citizens of America have regarded Frenchmen, contending for liberty, as their brethren; still would they have sympathized with them in their misfortunes, and have exulted in their success. Such, unquestionably, is the disposition of the generality of the people of the United States with respect to the French revolution. To such a people it would have been a pleasing circumstance, to have been able to discover in the proclamation a recognition of the treaties with France. That so little attention has been paid to the clamours which have arisen on this subject, in various parts of the Union, is to be lamented by every friend to the general government. Had you, Sir, considered the importance of retaining your popularity, you would, perhaps, have listened to the murmurs of the citizens; and have *deigned* to give them such explanations as might appear necessary to clear up the doubts which yet distract their minds. If this would have been *descending too far*, the secretary might have been authorized to satisfy the doubts or correct the mistakes of the people.

It ought never to be forgotten by our magistrates, that popular opinion is the basis of our government; and that when any public measure is not well understood, it would be by no means degrading to the authors of that measure, however exalted their station, to explain. Let me intreat you, Sir, to deal candidly with the people; and,

without loss of time, to remove their anxiety, by informing them whether it is intended that the treaties with France are to be observed or not.

I am aware, Sir, that some court-satellites may have deceived you, with respect to the sentiments of your fellow citizens. The first magistrate of a country, whether he be called a king or a president, seldom knows the real state of the nation, particularly if he be so much buoyed up by official importance, as to think it beneath his dignity to mix occasionally with the people. Let me caution you, Sir, to beware that you do not view the state of the public mind, at this critical moment, through a fallacious medium. Let not the little buzz of the aristocratic few, and their contemptible minions, of speculators, tories, and British emissaries, be mistaken for the exalted and general voice of the American people. The spirit of 1776 is again roused; and soon shall be mushroom-lordlings of the day, the enemies of American as well as French liberty, be taught that American whigs of 1776, will not suffer French patriots of 1792, to be vilified with impunity, by the common enemies of both.

VERITAS.



Published in May 2006

Revolutionary War Series, Volume 15

Volume 15 of the *Revolutionary War Series* documents a period that includes the Continental army’s last weeks at Valley Forge, the British evacuation of Philadelphia, and the Battle of Monmouth Court House. The volume begins with George Washington’s army at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, celebrating the new alliance between the United States and France. Washington joined in the festivities but did not become complacent, and as the celebrations ended he redirected his attention to winning the war. Over the next few weeks Steuben drilled the soldiers incessantly while Washington and Congress conducted a much-needed overhaul of the army’s structure and administration.

The benefits of the training became apparent on the evening of 19 May, when a large detachment under Major General Lafayette deftly evaded

an attempted British entrapment at Barren Hill, Pennsylvania. Yet Washington had little time to ponder his troops' new efficiency and discipline. The British evacuation of Philadelphia began on the morning of 18 June, as General Henry Clinton's army crossed the Delaware River and marched east-northeast across New Jersey toward a rendezvous with British transport ships at Sandy Hook. The Continentals at first pursued at a respectful distance, but on 24 June Washington overrode the objections of some of his general officers and send forward a detachment of 5,600 men under Major General Charles Lee to seek opportunities for attack. That opportunity came at Monmouth Court House on 28 June, in the midst of a brutal heat wave that claimed the lives of dozens of soldiers on both sides.

Lee's attack at first caught the British by surprise, but General Cornwallis formed up his troops for a counterattack and easily drove Lee's detachment from the field. Washington meanwhile hurried forward with the remainder of his army and encountered Lee and his fleeing troops a short distance west of Monmouth Court House. Berating the dejected Lee for failing to follow orders, Washington stopped the retreat and formed a new line of defense. The remainder of the battle consisted of a series of closely fought encounters as Cornwallis attempted and failed to dislodge the Americans from their positions. That night the British withdrew east with the rest of Clinton's army, marching to Sandy Hook and thence sailing to New York, leaving Washington and his army in possession of the battlefield. Clinton considered the battle a successful delaying action; Washington, with equal certainty, declared it a glorious American victory.

—Edward G. Lengel



Published in September 2006
Revolutionary War Series, Volume 16

The summer of 1778 was a time of enormous optimism for GW and other supporters of the American cause. The welcome news of a French alliance in May had been followed by the British evacuation of Philadelphia in mid-June and

capped by what the Americans believed to be a glorious victory at the Battle of Monmouth on 28 June. It seemed possible that the British, weakened by the loss of “at least 2000 Men & of their best Troops” in the march through New Jersey (GW to John Augustine Washington, 4 July), might even abandon their remaining strongholds at New York City and Newport, R.I., for Canada or the West Indies.

As this volume, which covers the period from 1 July to 14 September 1778, opens, GW, having concluded that he could not seriously hinder the British evacuation from New Jersey to New York, was putting his army in motion to take up a position better suited to the defense of the Hudson River. Even before that movement was completed, GW received welcome news of the arrival on the American coast of a powerful French fleet commanded by the Count d'Estaing. For once GW would be planning a campaign in which an American ally and not the British controlled the sea lanes.

GW's preferred alternative was clearly to capture the main British army at New York, and he stationed his army at White Plains where it could cooperate with the French navy in joint operations against the city. However, he also anticipated the possibility of an attack on the British forces at Rhode Island, and directed Maj. Gen. John Sullivan to prepare for such an eventuality, authorizing him to “immediately apply in the most urgent manner, in my name” for an additional 5,000 men (GW to Sullivan, 17 July). As it turned out, the pilots determined that it was inadvisable for the larger French ships to attempt to enter New York Harbor, so GW detached two brigades and some of his most trusted generals to assist Sullivan in the attempt to take Newport, and d'Estaing's fleet sailed east to support that operation.

In consequence, the most crucial activity of the summer campaign would depend on the diplomacy, energy, and strategy of someone other than GW. If Sullivan and d'Estaing succeeded in capturing Newport, they would cement the French and American alliance with a glorious victory, and, by taking a second British army, might force the British to sue for peace. With American expectations of ultimate success raised to a high pitch, GW could only pepper Sullivan with letters con-

veying what little useful intelligence he could gather from New York, offering suggestions about what Sullivan might do to improve the chances for victory, encouraging Sullivan's diligence and energy, and above all pleading for information: "Even if nothing material should happen in the course of a day or two, just to hear that all is well will be a relief to me" (GW to Sullivan, 4 Aug.).

Unfortunately the venture, which began with glowing reports of high morale and good understanding among allies, degenerated into disappointment and recriminations as weather and circumstance combined to defeat the objects of the American expedition. On

10 August, as Sullivan was preparing to attack, Admiral Richard Howe's British fleet from New York, strengthened with the first arrivals of a naval reinforcement from England, appeared off Rhode Island, and d'Estaing sailed away to meet them. Then both fleets and armies were battered by a massive three-day storm. When d'Estaing appeared again on 20 August, it was only to announce that his fleet would withdraw to Boston for repairs. Sullivan's position thus became untenable. He could not hope to reduce Newport without the aid of the French fleet, and the narrow window of French sea superiority was closing. Although Sullivan continued siege operations for another week in hopes of a prompt French return, by the 28th he decided to withdraw to the northern end of the island, and after an inconclusive battle with pursuing British troops on 29 August, Sullivan, advised by GW of British reinforcements, successfully withdrew to the mainland.

The summer of promise had ended in nothing.



Instead of celebrating victory, GW was carefully trying to soothe French feelings wounded by Sullivan's protests of their withdrawal and to insure that American trust in the French alliance would not be severely damaged by the unexpected failure of the Rhode Island expedition. With the arrival of more of the reinforcing fleet, the British once again had control of the sea and the initiative. Although GW asked a council of war on 1 September

to consider whether his army might make an assault on New York City while the British forces there were weakened by the troops sent to trap Sullivan on Rhode Island, his generals were agreed that such a project was foolish. As the volume closes, GW was

withdrawing his army to positions better suited to react defensively to British actions, whether directed against the French fleet at Boston or the American posts on the Hudson River.

Although the Newport expedition dominates this volume, other important events occurred during the period. A mixed force of Loyalists and Indians destroyed the American settlement at Wyoming in Pennsylvania, and New York frontier communities also became increasingly concerned about the possible threat from that source. In mid-July GW detached the 4th Pennsylvania Regiment and a part of the rifle corps to assist in frontier defense, but the larger detachments to Rhode Island left him unable to offer more help.

Courts were held to consider Maj. Gen. Charles Lee's recent behavior at the Battle of Monmouth and Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair's role in the loss of Ticonderoga in 1777, with Maj. Gen. Philip Schuyler's trial for Ticonderoga awaiting the completion of St. Clair's. The necessary engagement of

generals on those courts exacerbated the chronic shortage of qualified general officers, and GW continued to press Congress to fill vacancies more promptly.

He also pressed Congress for completion of the army reorganization, and by mid-September the members of the Congress sent to camp to join with GW as a reorganization committee had begun considering a number of long-standing disputes about the ranks of officers.

Precisely because GW's strategic decisions had given the main active roles to others, this volume is particularly revealing of his diplomatic skills, whether it be in dealings with the French, with Congress, or with his subordinate officers. The advice that GW sent to Sullivan also provides useful information about the military precepts that he tried to follow. Moreover, his awareness of the importance of intelligence and his efforts to obtain it are well displayed, even though the results fell short of what he and Admiral d'Estaing desired.

—David R. Hoth

To Lund Washington

Dear Lund, White plains Augt 15th 1778.

Your Letter of the 29th Ulto, Inclosing a line from Captn Marshall to you came to my hands yesterday—I have no reason to doubt the truth of your observation, that this Gentleman's Land, & others equally well situated, & under like circumstances, will sell very high—The depreciation of our money—the high prices of every article of produce, & the redundancy of circulating paper, will, I am perswaded, have an effect upon the price of land—nor is it to be wondered at, when a Barl of Corn which used to sell for 10/. will now fetch 40—when a Barl of Porke that formerly could be had for £3. sells for £15. & so with respect to other Articles which serves to enable the Man who has been fortunate enough to succeed in raising these things to pay accordingly; but, unfortunately for me, this is not my case; I have premised these things to shew my inability, not my unwillingness, to purchase the Lands in my own Neck at (almost) any price. & this I am yet very desirous of doing if it could be accomplished by any means in my power, in the way of Barter for

other Land—for Negroes (of whom I long every day more & more to get clear of)—or in short for any thing else (except Breeding Mares and Stock of other kinds) which I have in my possession—but for money I cannot, I want the means. Marshalls Land alone, at the rate he talks of, would amount to (if my memory of the quantity he holds is right) upwards of £3000. a sum I have little chance, if I had much inclination, to pay; & therefore would not engage for it, as I am resolved not to incumber my self with Debt.

Marshall is not a necessitous Man—is only induced to offer his Land for Sale in expectation of a high price—& knowing perhaps but too well my wish to become possessed of the Land in that Neck will practice every deception in his power to work me (or you in my behalf) up to his price, or he will not sell. this should be well looked into, and guarded against—If, as you think, & as I believe, there is little chance of getting more (at any rate) than the reversion of French's Land, I have no objection to the Land on which Morris lives going in exchange for Marshalls, or its being sold for the purpose of paying for it, but remember, it will not do to contract at a high price for the one, before you can be assured of an adequate Sum for the other—without this, by means of the arts which may be practiced, you may give much and receive little, which is neither my Inclination nor intention to do. If Negroes could be given in Exchange for this Land of Marshalls, or sold at a proportionable price, I should prefer it to the sale of Morriss Land as I still have some latent hope that Frenchs Lands may be had of D—— for it. but either I wd part with.

Having so fully expressed my Sentiments concerning this matter, I shall only add a word or two respecting Barry's Land. The same motives which induce a purchase in the one case prevail in the other, and how ever unwilling I may be to part with that small tract I hold on difficult Run (containing by Deed, if I recollect right 275 acres, but by measurement upwards of 300) on acct of the valuable Mill Seat Meadow Grds &ca yet I will do it for the sake of the other but if the matter is not managed with some degree of address you will not be able to effect an exchange without giving instead of receiving, Boot—For this Land also I

had rather give Negroes—if Negroes would do for to be plain I wish to get quit of Negroes.

I find by a Letter from Mr Jones that he has bought the Phæton which you sold Mr Geo: Lewis and given him £300 for it—I mention this, with no other view than to remind you of the necessity of getting the Money for wch you sold it, of Lewis (if you have not already done it)—He, probably, will prepose to settle the matter with me, but this, for a reason I could mention, I desire may be avoided.

In your Letter of the 29th you say you do not suppose I would choose to cut down my best Land, & build Tobo Houses, but what Am I to do—or—how am I to live—I cannt Support myself if I make nothing—& it is evident from yr acct that I cannot raise Wheat if this Crop is likely to share the fate of the three last. I should have less reluctance to clearing my richest Lands (for I think the Swamps are these & would afterwards do for meadow) than building Houses.

I should not incline to sell the Land I had of Adams unless it should be for a price proportioned to what I must give for others. I could wish you to press my Tenants to be punctual in the payment of their Rents—right & Justice with respect to my self requires it—& no injury on the contrary a real service to themselves as the Man who finds it difficult to pay one rent will find it infinitely more so to pay two, & his distresses multiply as the rents increase. I am &ca

G. W——n

To Major Alexander Clough

Sir Head Quarters White plains 25 Augt 1778

I recd yours of yesterday late last Night. I am very anxious to obtain a true account of what is passing in New York, and am therefore endeavouring to send in a variety of persons from different quarters who have no connexion or communication with each other. By comparing their accounts, I shall be able to form a pretty good judgment. I have desired them to attend particularly to some matters of which the inclosed are the Heads. I shall be obliged to you to procure some intelligent person to go into the City, and as it will be unsafe to give him a written paper, I desire you to

impress the inclosed upon his memory by repeating them to him; when he returns, let me know his Answer to each head. If the person, who goes in, cannot make an excuse of Business, he must be allowed to carry a small matter of provision in, and bring something out, by way of pretext. I am &c.

To Major General William Heath

Head Quarters White plains 28th Augt 1778

Dear Sir

The unfortunate circumstance of the French Fleet having left Rhode Island at so critical a moment, I am apprehensive, if not very prudently managed, will have many injurious consequences, besides merely the loss of the advantages we should have reaped from succeeding in the Expedition. It will not only tend to discourage the people, and weaken their confidence in our new alliance, but may possibly produce prejudices and resentments, which may operate against giving the Fleet such Zealous and effectual assistance in its present distress, as the exigence of affairs and our true interest demand. It will certainly be sound policy to combat these effects, and whatever private opinions may be entertained, to give the most favorable construction, of what has happened, to the public, and at the same time to put the French Fleet, as soon as possible, in condition to defend itself and be useful to us.

The departure of the Fleet from Rhode Island is not yet publicly announced here, but when it is, I intend to ascribe it to necessity, from the damage suffered in the late storm. This, it appears to me, is the Idea which ought to be generally propagated. As I doubt not the force of these Reasons will strike you equally with myself, I would recommend to you to use your utmost influence to palliate and soften matters, and induce those, whose business it is to provide succours of every kind for the fleet, to employ their utmost zeal and activity in doing it. It is our duty to make the best of our misfortune, and not to suffer passion to interfere with our interest and the public good.

By several late accounts from New York there is reason to beleive the enemy are on the point of some important movement. They have been some

days past embarking Cannon and other matters—and yesterday an hundred and forty transports fell down to the Hook. These and other circumstances indicate something of moment being in contemplation. Whether they meditate any enterprise against this army, mean to transfer the War elsewhere, or intend to embrace the present opportunity of evacuating the Continent is as yet uncertain. If they have a superior fleet on the Coast, it is not impossible they may change the seat of the War to the Eastward, endeavouring by a land and Sea cooperation to destroy or possess themselves of the French Fleet. With an Eye to an event of this kind, I have desired General Sullivan, if he makes good his Retreat from the Island, to disband no more of his troops than he cannot help; and I would recommend to you to have an eye to it likewise, and by establishing Signals and using other proper precautions to put things in a train for calling out your Militia at the shortest notice. I am Dear Sir Your most obt & hum: Servt
Go: Washington



Forthcoming in 2007

Revolutionary War Series, Volume 17

Of the headquarters that GW occupied for any length of time during the Revolutionary War, perhaps none was more remote or obscure than the one where he lived and worked for much of the fall of 1778. In his numerous letters and orders of this period, this headquarters was variously designated as being either at or near Fredericksburg (now Patterson), N.Y., a village just west of the Connecticut state line some seventy miles north of New York City. “Near” was the more accurate term, for GW actually resided at Pawling, N.Y., another village about four miles farther north. Located among scenic but swampy lowlands between two high ridges, these villages were virtually invulnerable to a surprise attack by the British and German forces stationed in and around New York City. Nor apparently was the security of GW’s headquarters compromised by the fact that one of his hosts in Pawling was a passive Loyalist. John Kane had refused to countenance rebellion in 1775, but he had taken an oath not to communi-

cate with the British. There is no evidence that Kane broke that vow until August 1779—several months after GW had left his house—when Kane crossed the lines into New York City, remaining there under British protection for the last years of the war.

The remoteness and obscurity of GW’s headquarters during the fall of 1778 and the dearth of dramatic military and political events during this period do not mean, however, that it was a time of inactivity or insignificance for the American commander in chief. It was rather a time of delicate transition for the wobbly new Franco-American alliance and for British strategists yet unwilling to concede defeat. Both circumstances required GW to exercise the sort of mental nimbleness that he had demonstrated during the first three years of the war. Equally pressing were the immediate problems of British raids—threatened and real—on the extensive American frontiers and coasts. Within the Continental army, troubling breakdowns in discipline and morale demanded GW’s close attention, as did the logistical and political difficulties of planning proper troop dispositions for the coming winter—the fourth straight winter that he would not see home.

Volume 17 opens on 15 Sept. 1778 with GW marching most of his army about forty miles north from White Plains to new positions running in a rough northerly arc from West Point on the Hudson River through Fishkill and Fredericksburg to Danbury, Connecticut. His reasons for this re-deployment were threefold: to provide better protection for his army, on which more than anything else rested the fate of the American cause, to strengthen the defenses of the strategically important Hudson highlands, and to be in a better position in case of need to march rapidly to the aid of the French fleet refitting in Boston Harbor.

A week later GW’s new arrangement was put to a test of sorts when the British commander in chief, Gen. Henry Clinton, sent a force of about seven thousand men under Lt. Gen. Charles Cornwallis into northern New Jersey and a force of about five thousand men under Lt. Gen. Wilhelm von Knyphausen into southern Westchester County, New York. Their purposes were to probe the American outposts, obtain intelli-

gence, and gather much-needed provisions and forage from the countryside. Clinton also harbored hopes that GW might be enticed to come down from the mountains and risk his army in open battle. GW was not so tempted. After satisfying himself that the British did not intend to invade the highlands, he pursued a containment policy, relying on militia and selected Continental units to keep the enemy foraging parties within reasonable bounds while assisting the local inhabitants to move or destroy their grain, hay, and livestock. The survival of the Continental army could not be jeopardized for any amount of food and fodder.

The British succeeded, however, in springing a trap on one of GW's former aides-de-camp. Shortly before dawn on 28 Sept., a large detachment of British infantry surprised Col. George Baylor's regiment of Continental light dragoons near Old Tappan, N.J., rushing into the sleeping American camp and bayoneting many of the dragoons, including Baylor, before they could effectively resist. The ferocity of the attack and the exaggerated initial casualty reports prompted some Americans to call it a "massacre." The official casualty toll, reported about three weeks later, proved to be less severe than originally feared, but it was bad enough. Out of about a hundred and twenty officers and men present, sixteen had died, twenty-four had been wounded, and thirty-eight, including eight of the wounded, had been captured—a total of seventy casualties. Although GW's public reaction to news of Baylor's disaster was relatively restrained, he must have wondered how his young friend could have been caught literally napping after repeated admonitions to officers to take every possible precaution when operating near enemy lines. Inspector General Steuben attributed Baylor's failure to bad discipline.

The reforms that Steuben had begun introducing the previous spring at Valley Forge were improving the army's training and discipline. Still, disciplinary breakdowns occurred more often than GW liked. He was chagrined to learn of another disgrace on 7 Oct. when a small patrol from Col. Elisha Sheldon's Continental light dragoon regiment was surprised and captured in Westchester County due to a junior officer's inattention. Marauding soldiers also incurred GW's displeasure.

In the general orders for 23 Oct., he approved stiff punishments for a number of such offenders, including a Massachusetts private named Hate-evil Colson, who clearly did not hate evil enough. Colson had brazenly robbed a Fredericksburg inhabitant, a crime for which he was sentenced to receive a hundred lashes. Whether or not GW found Colson's first name as amusing as many have, he certainly was not amused that three members of his personal guard had been convicted of a similar crime. "Shocked at the frequent horrible Villainies of this nature committed by the troops of late," GW confirmed their death sentences in order "to make Examples which will deter the boldest and most harden'd offenders."

As it happened, two of the condemned guards did not become such examples, because they escaped before their executions could be carried out, and several months later GW pardoned one of them at the earnest request of the soldier's father. GW also spared the life of a condemned deserter in the general orders for 28 Oct., "on account of the recent instances of many criminals having been executed for breaches of military duty"—a very different sort of reasoning than he had used just five days earlier to approve executions. GW's policy, nevertheless, was a consistent, if rather delicate, one of maintaining the support of both civilians and soldiers by protecting their rights and interests as equally as he could. The lives and property of citizens, GW made abundantly clear, were to be respected and protected at all costs, but he would never allow military discipline to become systematically draconian. It was for the latter reason that GW took care in his general orders for 11 Oct. to express his hope that the army's new police force—a European-style unit with a European name, the *Maréchaussée* Corps, and a European commander, Bartholomew von Heer—would do more to prevent than punish crime "by putting men on their Guard."

GW also walked a fine line after Congress burdened him with two pieces of morality legislation. An act of 12 Oct. enjoined the officers of the army to enforce obedience to "the good and wholesome Laws provided for the preservation of Morals among the Soldiers." An act passed four days later prohibited military or civilian office-

holders from encouraging or attending theatrical entertainments. A lifelong lover of the theater, GW simply ignored the latter act, and he adroitly adapted the requirements of the first one to accord more closely to his own principles and, more practically, to bolster military discipline. In the general orders for 21 Oct., GW urged his officers to encourage “Purity of Morals” by example as well as by “penalties of Authority,” observing that morality was “the only sure foundation of publick happiness . . . and highly conducive to order, subordination and success in an Army.” He particularly deplored robberies, riot, licentiousness, and the “wanton Practice of swearing.”

In mid-October GW began the time-consuming task of planning for the coming winter. As was his practice in such matters, he elicited both oral and written opinions from his generals and then made up his own mind. A majority of the general officers favored establishing the army’s winter quarters in the Hudson highlands, and several further recommended that large detachments should be stationed in western Connecticut or northern New Jersey or both. Brig. Gen. John Nixon proposed splitting the army equally between the highlands and Danbury. Brig. Gen. Henry Knox suggested concentrating most of it at Ridgefield, Conn., or somewhere along the road running west from that town. Four generals, however, advised GW against wintering substantial numbers of troops east of the Hudson River for two essential reasons: flour and forage. Nathanael Greene, Alexander McDougall, Lord Stirling, and William Maxwell were concerned, among other things, that the Continental army’s already hard-pressed supply line running from the middle states could not be adequately sustained during the winter months. The best alternative, they thought, was to send a major part of the army to those states, in particular to New Jersey and more particularly, Greene and McDougall suggested, to the old camp at Middlebrook, N.J., which, as Greene reminded GW on 18 Oct., was located “in a plentyful Country.” GW agreed with them. On 29 Oct. GW told Greene that he had decided to divide the army for the winter among Danbury, West Point, and Middlebrook, but the exact numbers sent to the latter two places would depend on the enemy’s winter-

time strength at New York, which remained unclear even at that late date.

The Americans sensed impending changes in British strategy, but the complex movements of enemy ships, troops, and supplies during September and October obscured their designs. The burning questions in GW’s mind concerned the likelihood of the British invading the Hudson highlands, attacking the French fleet at Boston, or evacuating New York City altogether. By mid-October he had correctly reasoned that they would do none of those things. Yet certainty eluded him. Although satisfied in his own mind that a British expedition preparing in New York was destined for the West Indies rather than Boston, as some intelligence reports suggested, GW deemed the French fleet, as he told Vice Admiral d’Estaing on 16 Oct., “an object too precious to the common cause” to leave anything to chance. Over the next few days he ordered two Continental divisions to march as far as the Connecticut River to be in closer supporting distance if occasion required. GW also was reluctant to believe that the pending departures of the five-thousand-man West Indies expedition and other detachments from the New York garrison presaged a general British evacuation of the city, but in the absence of definite evidence, he again hedged his bets. Resorting to reverse logic, he wrote his stepson John Parke Custis on 26 Oct. that he could “give no better reason for their staying [at New York] than that they ought to go. their uniform practice is to run counter to all expectation.”

GW understood both the uses and limits of logic in analyzing intelligence reports. In three-and-a-half years of war, he had learned that the British would not always choose any course of action just because he and other American leaders thought it was the most reasonable one for them to take. GW also appreciated the importance of casting a wide net in gathering intelligence and of keeping intermediaries between him and the sources of that information most of the time. During the fall of 1778, his principal intelligence managers were Brig. Gen. Charles Scott and Maj. Benjamin Tallmadge in Westchester County, N.Y., and in northern New Jersey, Brig. Gen. William Maxwell and Major General Stirling. GW sent

them instructions, and they forwarded to him news of all sorts. Their sources included scouts and patrols, local inhabitants, deserters and prisoners of war, newspapers and intercepted letters, captured orderly books, and spies. Prominent among the scouts were Maj. Henry Lee, Jr., in Westchester County and Maj. Richard Howell in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The few identifiable spies include the senior and junior Samuel Culpers (the pseudonyms of Abraham Woodhull and Robert Townsend), who operated on Long Island and in New York City, and John Vanderhovan, who gathered intelligence in the camps and coffeehouses of Staten Island. Always eager for information about the enemy's intentions, GW directed Rev. Alexander McWhorter on 12 Oct. to try to obtain useful intelligence from two men who had been condemned to death for spying and counterfeiting when he undertook to "prepare them for the other world." What, if anything, they confessed to the clergyman before they went to that other world on 3 Nov. is not known.

Hard experience had taught GW to be critical of intelligence reports because they often were too vague to be of much use or turned out to be based on misapprehensions, idle talk, or deliberate enemy fabrications. "False intelligence," GW wrote Brigadier General Scott on 25 Sept., "may prove worse than none." A spy "should . . . examine well into, & compare matters before he transmits accts; always distinguishing facts of his own knowledge from reports." No detail was too small for GW's purposes, for, as he told Major General Stirling on 6 Oct., "things of a seemingly trifling nature when conjoined with others of a more serious cast may lead to very valuable conclusions." The two questions that GW most wanted answered in regard to the rumored British evacuation of New York were whether or not they were laying in fresh supplies of forage and firewood in the city, and whether or not the civilian merchants who supplied the British army many of its needs were packing up their goods. The British, he knew, could not spend the winter in New York without adequate forage and fuel, and they could not leave without taking the merchants with them.

GW took great pains to communicate every piece of naval intelligence fully and promptly to

his French counterpart, Vice Admiral d'Estaing, not only to help protect the French fleet, but also to bolster the French alliance. Only a few months old, the American alliance with France was already strained after breakdowns in allied military cooperation during the summer at New York and Newport, R.I., and the death in early September of one of d'Estaing's junior officers during a bakery riot at Boston. Although GW and d'Estaing never met in person, their extensive correspondence between 17 Sept. and 31 Oct. 1778 soothed and sustained relations between their two countries at a crucial time when the new alliance might have been irreparably damaged. During that six-week period GW wrote to d'Estaing seventeen times, and d'Estaing wrote to GW twelve times. In addition to exchanging intelligence reports and discussing plans for the defense of Boston, the two men fulsomely praised one another and the alliance, carefully disguising any resentments and disappointments. GW diplomatically accepted d'Estaing's excuse that storm damage to his vessels had obliged him to abandon immediate operations against the British and to sail to Boston for repairs, but GW did not conceal his joy when the vice admiral finally decided to return to sea. GW wrote him encouragingly on 27 Oct.: "I cannot but ardently desire, that an opportunity may speedily be offered you of again exerting that spirit of well-directed activity and enterprise, of which you have already given proofs so formidable to our enemies, and so beneficial to the common cause.

For matters too complex or too delicate to be committed to paper, GW and d'Estaing relied on trusted intermediaries such as GW's aides-de-camp John Laurens and Alexander Hamilton, d'Estaing's aide-de-camp the marquis de Choin and French consul Jean Holker. Their most important intermediary was Lafayette, whose personal charm and political influence gained him the intimate confidence of both the general and the vice admiral. Lafayette, however, alarmed the two men greatly in early October by challenging the head of the nearly defunct British peace commission, Lord Carlisle, to a public duel because of an aspersion on France that the commission had made in its August manifesto. Unable to talk La-

fayette out of such a rash action, GW took some consolation from his belief that his friend would be saved from his own impulsiveness by Carlisle's greater discretion. That proved to be the case. Carlisle promptly declined the younger man's challenge on the grounds that the alleged injury was not of a private nature and that national disputes would best be left to the two countries' naval commanders.

The failure of the Carlisle peace commission to negotiate a political settlement and of the British military forces to crush the revolution in New England and the middle states, combined with France's entry into the war on the American side, induced many Americans in the summer and fall of 1778 to believe that victory and peace were at hand. GW was not one of them. In response to the question, "Can the Enemy prosecute the War?," which his friend Gouverneur Morris, a New York delegate to Congress, had posed in an unfound letter of 8 Sept., GW replied to Morris on 4 Oct. by turning the question around: "Can we carry on the War much longer?" GW's concern was not so much lack of American military strength as its lack of fiscal strength—specifically the weakness of the Continental currency and the destructive effects of runaway inflation on morale and the necessities of life. "What Officer," GW rhetorically asked Morris, "can bear the weight of prices, that every necessary article is now got to? A Rat, in the shape of a Horse, is not to be bought at this time for less than £200."

Although GW could not foresee in October 1778 that the British would soon try their hand at conquering the southern states and that the war would last another five years, he sensed that the British ministry still had both the financial means and the political will to continue the struggle. Ever a realist, GW recognized that American victory would not come cheaply in what had become a war of attrition as well as an international conflict involving North American, European and Caribbean theaters. As he had done since 1775, GW was once more adjusting his thoughts to meet new realities on the long road to American independence.

—Philander D. Chase

Staff News

On July 7, 2006, **David Hoth** and **Christine Patrick** gave a power-point presentation on documentary editing and the use of primary material in the classroom to the Monticello-Stratford Hall Seminar for teachers.

Christine Patrick, recently promoted to Associate Editor, was elected to serve as secretary of the Association for Documentary Editing, 2005-2006. Christine Patrick's article "Trials and Tribulations: As Found in the Journals of Samuel Kirkland" appeared in *Documentary Editing* (Fall 2005, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 107-13). She also wrote an entry on the "French and Indian War" and three other entries for the *Encyclopedia of New York State* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005). Christine Patrick presented a paper "A Witness to Despair: Samuel Kirkland and the Oneida Indians" at the Northeastern Native Peoples and the American Revolutionary Era, 1760-1810, conference at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum, Connecticut on September 23, 2005. She also presented "When the Calamity of the war came: The Sullivan Campaign of 1779" at the Conference on Iroquois Research, Rensselaerville, New York, October 2, 2005. She served as moderator and commentator for a session on "British New York" at the Conference on New York State History, June 1, 2006.

Phil Chase's biographical sketch of John Champe (d. 1796) appears in volume 3 of the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, which was recently published by the Library of Virginia. Champe, who was sergeant major of Light-Horse Harry Lee's Legion, earned his place in history by his daring but unsuccessful attempt to kidnap Benedict Arnold soon after the discovery of Arnold's treason and his escape to British occupied New York City.

New Staff Members

William M. Ferraro earned his A.B. in American Studies from Georgetown University and his A.M. and Ph.D. in American Civilization from Brown University. He previously worked as an NHPRC Fellow and Assistant Editor with the

Salmon P. Chase Papers, Claremont Graduate School, where he contributed to the first two volumes of a five-volume series. More recently, he was with the Ulysses S. Grant Association, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where he assisted with volumes 19–28 of the Papers of Ulysses S. Grant and also edited documents that will complete that project’s chronological series. Ferraro has been active in the Association for Documentary Editing and served as treasurer from 1997 to 2000.

Tom Dulan joined the GW Papers on June 1 after several years as an independent writer and editor. Tom previously spent 16 years as a newspaper journalist, most recently as a managing edi-

tor in the erstwhile Journal Newspapers chain in suburban Washington, D.C. He also served as adjunct faculty at George Mason University. Tom holds an M.A. in journalism from Penn State and a B.S. in communications from James Madison University.

Research Assistant **Alexis Luckey** received an M.A. in American Studies (focusing on digital technology) from the University of Virginia’s English Department. She worked on William Lee Miller’s Abraham Lincoln book project at the Miller Center of Public Affairs last year and recently returned from a five-month stint teaching English in Japan.

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