

National Park Service

George Washington Birthplace National Monument



Administrative History  
1930-2000

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<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Early Memorialization and the Creation of a National Monument .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>A Brief History of Popes Creek Plantation .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Memorialization of Washington's Birthplace, 1815 – 1930 .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>The Colonial Revival and the Rise of Historical Preservation .....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>The Wakefield National Memorial Association: A New Vision for Washington's Birthplace .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>The National Park Service Arrives at Wakefield .....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Building the Memorial Landscape, 1930-1932.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>A Turbulent Prelude to Property Transfer.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>The Monument is Established .....</i>	<i>32</i>
<b>2. Archeology and the Problem of Building X, 1881-1950.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<i>Archeology and Controversy under the War Department, 1879-1898 .....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>The WNMA's Memorial Vision, 1925-1930.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Building X Uncovered, 1930-1932.....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Archeological Planning and Controversy, 1932-1940 .....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>The Rodnick Report .....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Signs and Meaning at Washington's Birthplace.....</i>	<i>57</i>
<b>3. Making a Monument into a Park, 1931-1940.....</b>	<b>62</b>
<i>The Log House Tea Room.....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Building the Monument's Physical Infrastructure .....</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>The Rockefeller Horse Barn.....</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>Early Planning Difficulties and the Administration-Museum Building Debates .....</i>	<i>74</i>
<i>Failed Hope for a Museum Building.....</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Adjacent Landowners and Land Policy, 1931-1940 .....</i>	<i>84</i>
<b>4. Visitor Experience and Interpretation, 1932-1940.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<i>Touring the Monument During the 1930s.....</i>	<i>97</i>
<i>Early Interpretation at Washington's Birthplace .....</i>	<i>101</i>
<i>Louise du Pont Crowninshield and a New Interpretive Direction.....</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>Refurnishing the Memorial House .....</i>	<i>107</i>
<i>The WNMA's New Interpretive Role.....</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Annanias Johnson and an Early Living Farm .....</i>	<i>110</i>
<i>Visitor Reactions and Racial Discord.....</i>	<i>113</i>
<i>Visitor Fees.....</i>	<i>116</i>
<b>5. The Impact and Aftermath of World War II, 1940-1955.....</b>	<b>119</b>

<i>Visitors and Visitation during the War Years</i> .....	120
<i>The War and Understaffing</i> .....	122
<i>Community Relations</i> .....	124
<i>Post-War Recovery</i> .....	127
<i>New Hopes for the Log House Tea Room</i> .....	131
<i>New Directions for the WNMA</i> .....	133
<i>Post-War Impact on Land Policy</i> .....	137
<b>6. Mission 66—A Prelude to Change, 1955-1966</b> .....	<b>141</b>
<i>Visitor Experience, 1955-1966</i> .....	143
<i>Reinstitution of Visitor Fees</i> .....	145
<i>Understaffing</i> .....	146
<i>Mission 66 Planning and Administrative Reorganization</i> .....	148
<i>Interpretation</i> .....	152
<i>New Leadership for the WNMA</i> .....	157
<i>Land Policy</i> .....	162
<b>7. Living History and Modernization, 1966-1980</b> .....	<b>165</b>
<i>The 1968 Master Plan</i> .....	166
<i>New Research for New Interpretive Directions</i> .....	169
<i>The Colgate Morgan Horse Farm</i> .....	171
<i>Dwight Storke and Costumed Interpretation</i> .....	173
<i>Re-inhabiting the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen</i> .....	176
<i>Planning a New Visitor Center</i> .....	178
<i>Archeology and Protection of Historic Resources</i> .....	181
<i>Completing the Interpretive Landscape</i> .....	184
<i>Bicentennial Changes for the WNMA</i> .....	186
<i>Land Policy and Neighbor Relations</i> .....	188
<b>8. Unfunded Expansion and the Problem of Changing Leadership, 1980-1995</b> .....	<b>194</b>
<i>Thomas Stone National Historic Site</i> .....	195
<i>1987 Adjacent Lands Study</i> .....	199
<i>The GWBMA and the Meaning of Interpretation</i> .....	203
<i>Administrative Overhaul Under Dwight Storke</i> .....	207
<i>Living History Reborn</i> .....	210
<i>Interpreting Slavery</i> .....	213
<b>9. Recent Trends and Reorganization since the 1990s</b> .....	<b>217</b>
<i>The Turn Away from Living History</i> .....	220
<i>Recent Trends</i> .....	224

<i>Current Land Concerns</i> .....	225
<i>The George Washington Boyhood Home at Ferry Farm</i> .....	227
<i>The George Washington Birthplace Memorial Association</i> .....	229
<i>Interpretation Today</i> .....	230
<b>10. Recommendations</b> .....	<b>234</b>
<i>Suggestions for Interpretive Planning</i> .....	235
<i>Administrative Obstacles to Interpretive Innovation</i> .....	241
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>246</b>
APPENDIX 1: <i>Washington Ancestry</i> .....	247
APPENDIX 2: <i>Summary of Bills and Resolutions Introduced in Congress Relevant to the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 1879-1950</i> .....	248
APPENDIX 3: <i>Establishing Legislation, George Washington Birthplace National Monument</i> .....	254
APPENDIX 4: <i>Visitation, 1931-2000</i> .....	256
APPENDIX 5: <i>1972 Boundary Expansion Legislation Enabling Inclusion of Shouse Tract</i> .....	257
APPENDIX 6: <i>1978 Boundary Expansion Legislation Enabling Inclusion of Horner Tracts</i> .....	259
APPENDIX 7: <i>1993 Boundary Expansion Legislation Enabling Inclusion of Horner Tract</i> .....	261
APPENDIX 8: <i>2002 Boundary Expansion Legislation Enabling Inclusion of Muse Tract</i> .....	263
APPENDIX 9: <i>1998 Legislation Establishing Relationship with Ferry Farm</i> .....	264
APPENDIX 10: <i>Superintendents of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument</i> .....	265
<b>Illustrations</b> .....	<b>266</b>
ILLUSTRATION 1: <i>The Mary Jones Smith Memorial Garden, 1931</i> .....	267
ILLUSTRATION 2: <i>Boundary and Land Status Map, ca. 1944</i> .....	268
ILLUSTRATION 3: <i>Colonial Crop Layout, 1933</i> .....	269
ILLUSTRATION 4: <i>MISSION 66 Administrative Reorganization</i> .....	270
ILLUSTRATION 5: <i>Diagrams from Thomas Harrison’s 1966 Interpretive Prospectus</i> .....	271
ILLUSTRATION 6: <i>“Schematic, Visitor Center, .....</i>	272
ILLUSTRATION 7: <i>Administrative Organization under Dwight Storke</i> .....	273
<b>Maps</b> .....	<b>274</b>
MAP 1: <i>17th-Century land patents, from Hatch, Popes Creek Plantation, p. 169.</i> .....	275
MAP 2: <i>Memorial Landscape, 1933</i> .....	276
MAP 3: <i>1968 General Development Plan</i> .....	277
<b>Images</b> .....	<b>278</b>
Image 1: <i>Federal monument, ca. 1896.</i> .....	279
Image 2: <i>Portrait of Josephine Wheelwright Rust, date and artist unknown.</i> .....	279
Image 3: <i>Albright, Rust, and planning team visit the Monument, ca. 1930.</i> .....	280
Image 4: <i>Albright, Rust, and planning team visit Washington family burial ground, ca. 1930.</i> .....	280

<i>Image 5: Lowering the granite obelisk, 1930.</i>	281
<i>Image 6: Rolling the granite obelisk to its new location, 1930.</i>	281
<i>Image 7: Brick kilns at Wakefield, ca. 1930.</i>	282
<i>Image 8: Washington family burial ground surrounded by block wall erected by Colonial Dames in 1906.</i>	282
<i>Image 9: FAC at Washington family burial ground, ca. 1931.</i>	283
<i>Image 10: May 14, 1932 Public dedication ceremonies with Secretary of the Interior, Ray Wilbur, at center.</i>	283
<i>Image 11: War Department Engineer J. Arthur Hook excavates around the granite obelisk in 1926.</i>	284
<i>Image 12: Building X uncovered, ca. 1936.</i>	284
<i>Image 13: The Memorial House with bronze tablet on stone pedestal, ca. 1931.</i>	285
<i>Image 14: Detail of stone pedestal with commemorative bronze tablet.</i>	285
<i>Image 15: U.S. post office in basement of Memorial House, ca. 1932.</i>	286
<i>Image 16: Postmaster Julia Washington.</i>	286
<i>Image 17: Post office, ca. 1936.</i>	287
<i>Image 18: The Log House pictured not long after construction, ca. 1932.</i>	287
<i>Image 19: The Log House Tea Room main dining room, ca. 1932.</i>	288
<i>Image 20: Superintendent's home pictured not long after construction, ca. 1932.</i>	288
<i>Image 21: Hough's "temporary museum" in Memorial House basement, ca. 1932-1940.</i>	289
<i>Image 22: Approach road, ca. 1931.</i>	290
<i>Image 23: Approach road (Rt. 204), 2004 (photo by author).</i>	290
<i>Image 24: Aerial view of approach road, granite obelisk, parking lot, and Memorial House.</i>	291
<i>Image 25: Aerial view of Popes Creek, Memorial House, cedar grove, and footbridge, ca. 1932.</i>	291
<i>Image 26: Superintendent Phillip Hough.</i>	292
<i>Image 27: Superintendent Hough leads a tour.</i>	292
<i>Image 28: A visitor signs the guest register inside the Memorial House, date unknown.</i>	292
<i>Image 29: A costumed WNMA member serves cider and gingerbread on Washington's Birthday.</i>	293
<i>Image 30: Approaching the Washington family burial ground, ca. 1932.</i>	293
<i>Image 31: Potomac River beach parking lot, ca. 1932.</i>	294
<i>Image 32: Potomac River beach parking, 2004 (photo by author).</i>	294
<i>Image 33: War Department Potomac River pier built in 1896 and removed in 1934.</i>	295
<i>Image 34: Memorial House with bear skin rug from Yellowstone National Park, 1932.</i>	295
<i>Image 35: The Memorial House as redecorated by Louis Crowninshield, ca. 1940.</i>	296
<i>Image 36: Early costumed interpretation in the Memorial House, 1937.</i>	296
<i>Image 37: Visitors tour the colonial crops demonstration area, ca. 1935.</i>	297
<i>Image 38: World War II brought numbers of military personnel to the Monument including these sailors walking along a park road.</i>	297
<i>Image 39: Monument staff retrieve a spent naval parachute flare, ca. 1941.</i>	298
<i>Image 40: Assembly plans for greenhouse purchased by Louis Crowninshield.</i>	298

<i>Image 41: WNMA member stands amid corn with greenhouse in background, ca. 1952. ....</i>	<i>299</i>
<i>Image 42: The WNMA sell plants from their greenhouse inside the Memorial House, ca. 1952. ....</i>	<i>299</i>
<i>Image 43: NPS Director Hartzog celebrates the opening of the Monument's Morgan Horse Farm on October 8, 1969. ....</i>	<i>300</i>
<i>Image 44: Aerial views of the Morgan Horse Farm. ....</i>	<i>301</i>
<i>Image 45: Inside the Colonial Kitchen sometime after 1972. ....</i>	<i>302</i>
<i>Image 46: The Visitor Center under construction in 1976, view from Popes Creek. ....</i>	<i>303</i>
<i>Image 47: The Visitor Center complete, view from parking lot. ....</i>	<i>303</i>
<i>Image 48: Old entrance station reused as chicken coop (photo by author). ....</i>	<i>304</i>
<i>Image 49: The Washington home foundations outlined with oyster shell, Memorial House in background. ....</i>	<i>304</i>
<i>Image 50: Costumed and un-costumed staff work side by side (photo by author). ....</i>	<i>305</i>
<b>Guide to Sources and Works Cited .....</b>	<b>306</b>

## Preface

The creation of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument on January 23, 1930 marked a pivotal moment in the history of the National Park Service (NPS). Although the NPS already managed a variety of historic sites—in addition to its wealth of parks acquired primarily for their natural splendor—Washington’s Birthplace represented a bold new foray into public history, what Director Horace Albright referred to as going “rather heavily into the historical park field.”<sup>1</sup> Never before had the NPS managed a site so deeply entwined within the popular iconography of the nation’s historical conscience. Nor had the NPS ever experimented with historical reconstruction on the magnitude of the Wakefield National Memorial Association’s architectural tribute to George Washington’s family home.<sup>2</sup> Washington’s Birthplace cemented the NPS’s commitment to historic preservation, laid the groundwork for consolidation of other federal historic sites under the NPS, and has consequently influenced the development and maturation of the Service’s historical vision.<sup>3</sup>

There is another story to tell about Washington’s Birthplace. The Wakefield National Memorial Association (WNMA), born of the Colonial Revival and bred on the commemorative *zeitgeist* of the 1920s, brought considerable interpretive weight to bear on the Park during its first decades. The collision of those two forces ignited a controversy with considerable implications for the future of the Monument. Consequently, the Monument has, during its seventy-five years, vacillated between high positions at the forefront of interpretive innovation and low points amid the murky backwaters of marginal significance. In between exists a fascinating story about memory, community, and the decisions made about both in the service of our country’s historical imagination. Beyond satisfying the requirements of the project at hand,

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<sup>1</sup> Horace Albright cited in John Ise, *Our National Park Policy, a Critical History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> Hal Rothman provides an excellent discussion of the Park’s significance during the formative years of NPS expansion into historic preservation in *America’s National Monuments, the Politics of Preservation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), pp. 197-202.

<sup>3</sup> Barry Mackintosh argues that acquisition of Washington’s Birthplace—as well as Colonial National Monument in Virginia and Morristown National Historical Park in New Jersey—effectively “overcame” congressional opposition to the NPS’s involvement in managing historical parks that had until then been overseen primarily by the U.S. War Department. This being the case, NPS’s success at Washington’s Birthplace led to the National Parks Act of 1933 which placed all federally owned historic properties under NPS management. See Barry Mackintosh, *The National Park Service* (New York & Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), pp. 36-39.

I hope that this administrative history of Washington's Birthplace encourages others to rediscover the Park's significance to NPS history.

I owe my own fortunate discovery of Washington's Birthplace to Rich Lowry and Heather Huyck who first approached me about undertaking this project. They, together with Paul Weinbaum, Clifford Tobias, and Carol Cook facilitated the project, read drafts, and patiently led me through the complexities of researching and writing an administrative history. I received a variety of assistance from the College of William & Mary including help from Kim Phillips who facilitated the later stages of this project and research assistance from Merit Kaschig. At the Birthplace, Superintendent Vidal Martinez also read drafts of this report while providing valuable guidance and even more valuable good humor. Steve McCoy too read a draft of this report and proved an apt contact person. Rijk Morawe and Vickie Stewart tolerated my continual requests for access to the Monument's archives. Mimi Woodward, Linda George, and Ellen Martin took time out of their all-too-busy schedules to put me in touch with the Monument's recent administrative records. I am especially indebted to Dick Lahey, Andrew Packet, Roberta Samuel, and John Frye for providing ready opportunities to *not* talk about my research.

Numerous individuals answered questions and gave generously of their own time to accommodate my requests for interviews. My thanks go to George Church, John Donahue, John Frye, Chester Harris, Betty Horner, Janice Frye, John Karish, Jimmy Latane, Vidal Martinez, Roberta Samuel, Dwight Storke, Mimi Woodward, Russell Smith, Boyd Sponaugle, and Wayne Saunders. Finally, I received endless assistance from the staffs of the National Archives and Records Administration's sites in Washington, DC, College Park, MD, and Philadelphia, PA. David Nathanson led me to valuable material in the NPS History Collection at the Harpers Ferry Center and Tom Durant let me invade his office for a day.



## CHAPTER 1

### Early Memorialization and the Creation of a National Monument

Philip Hough<sup>1</sup> arrived on February 16, 1932 at the George Washington Birthplace National Monument just in time to celebrate the birthday of the Park's namesake. Repairs to damage caused by the harsh winter of 1932 occupied the new superintendent's first days but, having recently left a post as Assistant Chief Ranger at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Hough was no stranger to harsh weather and certainly reveled in the otherwise exciting atmosphere at the Birthplace.<sup>2</sup> The Wakefield National Memorial Association (WNMA) had just completed its decade-long effort to construct what they called a "replica" of the house in which George Washington was born. The project attracted widespread public interest resulting, in part, from the involvement of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who had visited the monument just two weeks prior to Hough's arrival.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond Rockefeller's role, Americans hardly needed a reason to be excited about George Washington in 1932. Not since the days of the Early Republic had reverence for the esteemed first president reached such a fever pitch. Led by U.S. Representative Sol Bloom—a veritable P.T. Barnum of governmental propaganda—The United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission saturated the country with Washingtonia in part to celebrate his birthday, but also in hopes of cheering a nation hit hard by economic depression.<sup>4</sup> Bloom applauded the WNMA's patriotic zeal in raising funds through

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<sup>1</sup> In a 1950 letter to Director Drury, Louise du Pont Crowninshield spells Hough's name "Hoff" suggesting a probable pronunciation of the Superintendent's last name. Betty Horner and Chester Harris, who did have brief contact with the first Superintendent—pronounce the name "huf." See Crowninshield to Drury, 10 January 1950, Folder "master plan d1815" in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, George Washington Birthplace National Monument Archives (GEWA), and Betty Horner, interview with author, 30 July 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Superintendent's Monthly Report (SMR), February 1932, NPS Records, GEWA.

<sup>3</sup> SMR, January 1932, NPS Records, GEWA.

<sup>4</sup> Bloom's story is a fascinating one in its own right. A natural born publicist and entrepreneur, Bloom began his long career by securing a seat on the 1893 Chicago World's Fair Commission at the young age of twenty one. Unsurprisingly, the commission put Bloom in charge of selecting concessions for the Fair's famous Midway. For a fun and fascinating account of this early phase of Bloom's career, see Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003). Washington mania spread even beyond the United States when the Bicentennial Commission convinced eighty-one countries to observe the president's birth resulting in, among other idiosyncratic monuments, a bust of Washington in Saigon and the dedication of *Washingtonstrasse* in Germany. See Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here, Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876-1986* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 329.

public subscription. The Monument basked in the media glow created by movie crews, press corps, visiting dignitaries, and a highly publicized mail drop by famed aviator Major James Doolittle.<sup>5</sup>

In a 1932 issue of the NPS's publication, *Historical Notes*, NPS Assistant Historian Elbert Cox explained that although much of the Washington hype was "for purely commercial reasons," the NPS's contribution was different: "At George Washington Birthplace National Monument the restoration of the long-neglected old Wakefield estate will picture for the visitor the birthplace of more than two hundred years ago."<sup>6</sup> The George Washington Birthplace National Monument opened amid this spirit of celebration and promised to recreate for the country the scene of its most beloved hero's birth. Fulfilling that promise, however, would prove more difficult than anyone could predict.

### **A Brief History of Popes Creek Plantation<sup>7</sup>**

George Washington's birth occurred during a time of relative calm in colonial America. British control of the eastern colonies had more or less stabilized with the breaking of Native American power east of the Appalachians. Colonists—Virginians foremost among them—had begun to exert their own political will by way of assemblies. This move to self-government resulted, in part, from the prosperity

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<sup>5</sup> Marling offers a good overview of the glitz and fanfare generated by Sol Bloom's commission and also indicates that Bloom kept quiet about the Monument's congressional appropriation in his praise of public subscription. Marling, *George Washington Slept Here*, p. 348. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes addressed the crowd at the May inaugural ceremony and Hough reported later that summer that "Major James Doolittle sped over Washington's birthplace on the official bicentennial flight and dropped a package of mail at 8:45 am. Between dawn and dusk on this date major Doolittle covered nearly all the land seen by George Washington in his life time in the country." For other descriptions of the Monument's opening, see Robert White's account of the February 11, 1932 birthday celebration and Hough's account of the February 22, 1932 bicentennial celebration both in File H16 "Special Reports," NPS Records Box 6 of 25, GEWA. Fragments of the streamers tied to Doolittle's package are attached to SMR, July 1932, GEWA. File "A8215 Annual-February 22" in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA contains various correspondence regarding the dedication ceremony and periodical coverage of bicentennial events.

<sup>6</sup> Elbert Cox, "Virginia Editorial" in *Historical Notes* 6:2 (March-April 1932) pp. 1-2 in folder "Colonial National Monument," NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>7</sup> The early history of the area surrounding Washington's Birthplace is discussed at length in Oculus, John Milner Associates, Inc., *Cultural Landscape Report, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, Virginia*, Cultural Landscape Report, 2 vols., July 1999. The cultural landscape report offers a thorough mix of original research and secondary scholarship and, given that the scope of the present project does not include the years preceding the arrival of the NPS at Popes Creek, I rely on it at length here. Charles E. Hatch, Jr., *Popes Creek Plantation, Birthplace of George Washington* (The George Washington Birthplace National Memorial Association, 1979) offers insight into these early years as does Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Preservation Comes of Age, From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, Volume I (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981). Also see Joy Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief: Archaeology and Meaning at George Washington Birthplace National Monument" in Paul A. Shackel, ed. *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001) and Sandra Gioia Treadway, "Popes Creek Plantation, Birthplace of George Washington" in *Virginia Cavalcade* 21 (Spring 1982), pp. 192-205.

afforded Chesapeake tobacco planters by an ever-flourishing Atlantic economy. That economy relied on forced labor and expanded dramatically during the early eighteenth century as continued importation of slaves augmented an already naturally expanding population of forced laborers. Washington's early years at Wakefield unfolded during a period not yet complicated by slave revolt (Stono Rebellion, 1739), the first Great Awakening (1740s), or the series of trade-disrupting battles initiated by King George's War (1744-48).

The short-lived calm of the 1730s, however, followed a preceding century of upheaval. The lands surrounding Washington's Birthplace, until the middle of the seventeenth century, laid within the realm of the Powhatan Confederacy wherein the Pissasecks favored the shores of Popes Creek and the Potomac for seasonal oyster harvesting camps.<sup>8</sup> European colonization and, consequently, displacement of native peoples began in the early 1650s when Henry Brooks became one of the first white settlers to take up permanent residence in what the Virginia Assembly declared Westmoreland County in 1653. Though densely forested and interspersed by swamps and marshland, the Brooks tract lay strategically between Bridges Creek and Popes Creek with ready access to the Potomac River and, beyond, the Atlantic Ocean. Brooks recognized his geographic advantage within an increasingly profitable Atlantic trade network and wasted no time settling on his 1,020 acres, doing so even before the issue of his 1657 land patent (Map 1).<sup>9</sup>

Brooks almost immediately parceled out his tract, selling portions to two parties by 1656. Nathaniel Pope, finding life for Protestants increasingly uncomfortable among Maryland's Catholic majority, bought the second tract to establish a more stable home place for his daughter Anne and son-in-law John Washington. In 1664, the newlyweds made a home at Bridges Creek and so began the familial presence commemorated today. John Washington expanded his holdings by purchasing, among other tracts, a 150-acre parcel previously given to Lydia and Lawrence Abbington by Henry Brooks. The portion of that land purchased by Augustine Washington, Sr. from Joseph Abbington in 1694 now

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<sup>8</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.3-2.5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 2.4, 2.8, 2.10-2.11

constitutes the Monument's core historic area. Nearly a half dozen home sites existed on what is now Monument property within a mere decade of Brooks' original patent.<sup>10</sup> It is easy to forget amid the Park's present rural calm that by mid-seventeenth-century standards the land between Popes and Bridges Creeks bustled with activity and was poised to witness an explosion of commercial prosperity in the years ahead.

The Washington family (Appendix 1) invested their late seventeenth-century tobacco profits in further land expansion. John's son Lawrence inherited a substantial tract of his father's land and purchased an additional thousand acres, all of which passed to Lawrence's son, Augustine, in 1698. The plantation reached a height of prosperity and efficiency under Augustine's ownership. Through further land acquisitions by way of marriage to Jane Butler in 1715 and a full purchase of the Abbington tract in 1718, Augustine consolidated the family enterprise into a single massive operation and, in 1727, brought his family to live at Popes Creek in a style befitting a wealthy landowner. The house they occupied—renovated and expanded in 1722—is represented today by the Monument's Memorial House.<sup>11</sup> Although George Washington left Popes Creek at age three and spent the majority of his boyhood years about forty miles west of Wakefield at Ferry Farm, Virginia, his early years at Popes Creek can be understood as the culmination of a much greater story involving the Anglicization of the Chesapeake Bay region within the greater context of a new world order based on the circulation of goods, people, and cultures throughout the Atlantic World.

Although George Washington revisited his birth site in later years and refined there the surveying skills that later contributed to his military and entrepreneurial successes, the histories of George Washington and of Popes Creek Plantation more-or-less diverged by the 1740s. George's half brother Augustine Washington inherited the family estate in 1743 and passed the land in 1762 to his son, William Augustine Washington, who renamed the plantation "Wakefield." The Washington family's tenure on the old Abbington tract ended on Christmas Day 1779 when fire destroyed the house where George Washington was born, an event responsible for the name "Burnt House Point" still in use today. William

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 2.11, 2.15, 2.17, 2.19.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 2.20, 2.24-2.25.

Washington temporarily removed the family to a nearby farm called Blenheim. He built a new family seat (Haywood) in 1784 near the mouth of Bridges Creek. Although William Washington salvaged brick from the old building for his new home, he left nothing but charred remains to mark the site of George Washington's birth.<sup>12</sup>

### **Memorialization of Washington's Birthplace, 1815 – 1930**

Washington family property changed hands frequently during the years following the destruction of the birth home. Economic pressures prompted crop diversification, and consequently, significant changes in the social and agricultural landscape throughout the latter eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. All the while, a profound spirit of reverence emerged among the citizens of the Early Republic for the leaders of the American Revolution. In this spirit in 1815 George Washington Parke Custis (George Washington's adopted grandson) traveled to the site of the old Washington plantation to memorialize the birth site of his legendary namesake.<sup>13</sup> Various accounts tell the story of Custis constructing a small marker from the bricks of a crumbling chimney atop what he presumed to be the location of Washington's birth home. Although it is likely that Custis missed his mark and despite evidence that a local farmer relocated the makeshift memorial some years later, the Custis memorial came to be recognized in local lore and custom as the *exact* site of Washington's birth.<sup>14</sup> Just prior to the Civil War, Lewis Washington further legitimized the Custis site by deeding a sixty-foot square lot—presumably the birth house location—and the Washington family's nearby burial ground to the Commonwealth of Virginia under the condition that the sites be protected and appropriately marked. Although the Commonwealth defaulted on its end of the agreement given the more pressing concerns of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 2.31.

<sup>13</sup> Relying largely on Hatch's *Popes Creek Plantation*, Paul Carson provides a succinct overview of early memorialization at Wakefield in Carson, "The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington's Birthplace" in *Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine*, December 1986, pp. 4111-4115. Also see Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.35-2.37.

<sup>14</sup> See Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief," pp. 199-201 and Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, pp. 64-69 for descriptions of Custis' visit. Also see Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.37-2.38.

war, this transfer of deed marked the beginning of government involvement in the memorialization of Washington's birth site.<sup>15</sup>

Realizing that Civil War-ravaged Virginia could hardly do justice to the spirit of the transfer, a patriotic post-war U.S. Congress appropriated \$3,000 for a land survey and sent a party of officials led by Secretary of State William M. Evarts to inspect the site and determine a course of action during the summer of 1879.<sup>16</sup> Evarts and his party traveled down the Potomac River and met, among others, John E. Wilson (the former owner of the Wakefield parcel given to Virginia) at Bridges Creek on October 31, 1879. Accounts of this trip indicate that the Custis stone no longer stood at the presumed birthplace site though a crumbling chimney did remain. Evarts, having considered the testimony of Wilson and other locals, accepted the chimney as belonging to the original building and thus the best approximation of its location. The exploratory party returned to Washington and Evarts requested that Congress appropriate \$30,000 to accomplish the necessary memorialization. Congress followed suit on February 26, 1881 and on April 21, 1882, Virginia Governor William E. Jameson officially conveyed the property it had received from William Lewis Washington in 1858 to the United States.<sup>17</sup> As with other federally-owned historic sites of the time, Washington's Birthplace became the responsibility of the U.S. War Department, which placed it under the supervision of the Army Corps of Engineers.

Evarts, recognizing a need for further Congressional appropriation to improve access to the site by means of water and land, delayed construction of the monument. In the meantime, the new Secretary of State, James G. Blaine, approved construction plans drawn by Boston architects Home and Dodd on April 24, 1881. The plans proposed moving the Washington family burial vault to the presumed site of Washington's birth, adjacent to the crumbling chimney, where both would be enclosed by a granite surround including bronze doors and a grill for viewing. John E. Wilson, an adjacent landowner and

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<sup>15</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.36, 2.44.

<sup>16</sup> The appropriation was authorized by H.J. Res. 94, 46<sup>th</sup> Congress, and would be worth approximately \$55,000 today based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, p. 2.41.

<sup>17</sup> The appropriation would be worth about \$550,000 today, based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, pp. 70-71. See H Res. 315, 46<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Washington family representative, opposed the plan and successfully agitated for a reconsideration of the burial ground treatment.<sup>18</sup> In 1893, Congress approved plans for construction of a 50-foot memorial granite obelisk and a wharf granting access to the site by boat from the Potomac River. John Crawford & Son of Buffalo, New York designed the thirty-five ton obelisk. Including construction of an iron fence, landscaping, and construction of foot paths, the entire project cost \$12,057. Following completion of the monument in 1896, the Corps of Engineers Office of Public Buildings and Grounds maintained the site under the supervision of a caretaker appointed by the War Department (Image 1).<sup>19</sup>

Scant records render unclear exactly what transpired at the site during the first two decades of the twentieth century. If the War Department's activity elsewhere is any indication, we can surmise that the monument remained relatively unchanged during these years. The War Department had become something of a default custodian of historic properties in the postbellum United States following its 1861 seizure and subsequent restoration of the Robert E. Lee home in Arlington, VA. The unintended consequence of the Lee home restoration was the eventual use of the War Department as a protector of federally-acquired historic properties including Civil War battlefields at Chattanooga, Gettysburg, Shiloh, and Vicksburg. But the War Department tended its properties—including Wakefield—inconsistently and, in some cases, with relative abandon.<sup>20</sup> Private funds supported occasional improvements as in 1906 when the Colonial Dames in Virginia constructed a thirty-six-foot square concrete block wall around the Washington family burial vault. Two of the original family gravestones as well as the names of seventeen other family members were set into a cement floor poured on each side of the vault.<sup>21</sup> Save this improvement, no development occurred during the War Department's tenure though cursory

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<sup>18</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.45; v. 2, p. C-2. John E. Wilson—who had married William Augustine Washington's granddaughter Betty—inherited the land at Wakefield in 1867 from his father, John F. Wilson, thus bringing the land back into Washington family ownership. See Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 63.

<sup>19</sup> See S.J. Res. 102, 52<sup>nd</sup> Congress. The project would cost about \$260,000 today, based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.45, 2.46 and v. 2, p. C.2. See NPS Records Box 17 of 25, GEWA for a large-format facsimile of 1889 Corps of Engineers map with schematic drawings of the granite shaft.

<sup>20</sup> Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, pp. 469-77.

<sup>21</sup> Dr. Augustine Latane performed this work; see Hough to Mr. Wilhelm, 10 April 1939, in "master plan d1815" in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

archeological investigations during 1881-82 did fuel significant debate concerning the actual location and character of the Washington birth home (see chapter 2).

### **The Colonial Revival and the Rise of Historical Preservation**

The War Department's early forays into historic preservation—as at the Lee home and at Washington's Birthplace—unfolded against the backdrop of a larger movement in the United States generally referred to as the Colonial Revival. Most scholars attribute the beginning of the Colonial Revival to a sort of nostalgic patriotism widespread during the 1850s and 60s.<sup>22</sup> The long-rising sectional tensions of the decades preceding the Civil War coincided with the deaths of the last of the great leaders of the Early Republic.<sup>23</sup> Some Americans associated the deaths of these leaders with the unraveling of the republic and sought to preserve national integrity by honoring the dead through preservation of their homes. The historic house movement dedicated itself to sites associated with George Washington, specifically his wartime headquarters in the Hasbrouk House at Newburgh, New York, in 1850 and at his adult home in Mount Vernon, Virginia, in 1853.<sup>24</sup> The Mount Vernon case proved especially influential. Throughout the country, wealthy women had come to recognize historic preservation as a means by which to publicly express their patriotism and political will prior to congressional approval of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1919. At Mount Vernon, just such a group of women banded together in 1860 and raised enough money to purchase Washington's home for this purpose. The success of and publicity surrounding this effort inspired other women's associations to restore historic homes throughout the eastern states during the latter quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

Although the Civil War briefly stifled the historic preservation movement, it did not extinguish the nation's fascination with all things colonial. During these years, the U.S. Sanitary Commission raised

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<sup>22</sup> Joel J. Orosz, *Curators and Culture, the Museum Movement in America, 1740-1870* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1990), p. 180.

<sup>23</sup> John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, for example, all died between 1820 and 1840.

<sup>24</sup> John A Herbst, "Historic Houses," in Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), p. 98.

<sup>25</sup> See Marling, *Washington Slept Here*, pp. 53-84 on the Mount Vernon restoration and pp. 85-114 for a discussion of the historic house movement. Patricia West provides an especially insightful discussion of the Mount Vernon Ladies' political motivations in *Domesticating History, the Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Washington & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).



money for the care of Union soldiers through a series of charity events called Sanitary Fairs. Sanitary Fairs frequently offered paying visitors the opportunity to dine in simulated colonial kitchens where costumed women served period food.<sup>26</sup> The first of these appeared in 1864 at the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair and, unsurprisingly, opened on George Washington's birthday. Post-war variations on this theme included the Martha Washington Tea, a prim and proper affair during which ladies in colonial dress served tea to one another as in 1873 during a celebration of the Boston Tea Party. Charitable teas grew increasingly elaborate and featured grand balls and elegant pageants. The popularity of teas spread throughout the country and, by 1875, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association sponsored its own teas in Richmond and Baltimore.<sup>27</sup>

The 1876 International Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia further popularized the colonial revival. Among the most popular exhibits at the Centennial Exposition was the New England Farmer's Home colonial kitchen. Nearby, the Philadelphia Patent Office presented a recreation of Washington's Morristown, New Jersey headquarters in which the general's clothes laid draped across period furniture as if awaiting his return.<sup>28</sup> The Centennial Exhibition revealed to the general public for the first time on a large scale the evolving influence of the Colonial Revival and the emergence of life-like tableau as a form of historical representation. The effect was twofold. Presentations of colonial life fueled popular patriotism throughout the beginning of the twentieth century while encouraging refinements of the representational techniques later made famous at Colonial Williamsburg and ultimately used at Washington's Birthplace. Perhaps more importantly, amid the commercial boom of the postwar era, displays of colonial life at the Centennial Exhibition served as a kind of three-dimensional catalog simultaneously arousing interest in and making available for sale colonial reproductions of furniture and other domestic furnishings.<sup>29</sup> Public desire for colonial-style bric-a-brac ballooned during the latter years

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<sup>26</sup> Rodris Roth, "The New England, or 'Olde tyme,' Kitchen Exhibit at Nineteenth-Century Fairs" in Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985), pp. 160-61.

<sup>27</sup> Marling, *George Washington Slept Here*, p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>29</sup> West, *Domesticating History*, p. 42.

of the nineteenth century thereby creating a willing market for the very products and experiences offered by a new wave of historic homes and museums.

The Colonial Revival carried with it ideological overtones. Historian Mike Wallace argues that labor-related violence at the end of the nineteenth century motivated a xenophobic moneyed elite to seek ways to “Americanize” an ethnically diverse working class. The Colonial Revival, he argues, sought to acculturate immigrants through exposure to historic homes, war shrines, soldier monuments, and other patriotic monuments.<sup>30</sup> For the wealthy descendants of America’s first families who desired to remind the *nouveau riche* of its incivility, this project included a reinvestment in genealogy and resulted in a turn in period rooms and museums toward a more “dignified” past, what historian Celia Betsky describes as a shift “from the spinning wheel to the spinet.” Thus, unlike the 1876 Centennial Exhibition’s popular colonial kitchen display, Chicago’s 1893 Columbian Exhibition featured genteel sitting rooms in private historic homes.<sup>31</sup> By 1924, when the Colonial Revival found its fullest expression in the famed American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the movement’s ideological disposition had become evident. R.T.H. Halsey, the American Wing’s first curator, understood his exhibit as a defense against the “foreign ideas utterly at variance with those held by the men who gave us the Republic.”<sup>32</sup> Although the motives and methods may have changed in the seventy years since the Mount Vernon ladies began their work, the belief in the moralizing powers of historical objects—especially as an antidote to modernity—had not.

### **The Wakefield National Memorial Association: A New Vision for Washington’s Birthplace**

The influence of the Colonial Revival spread to Washington’s Birthplace by way of Josephine Wheelwright Rust (Image 2). Rust was born just a few miles away at Oak Grove in 1864 to a

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<sup>30</sup> Mike Wallace, “Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States” in *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), pp. 7-8.

<sup>31</sup> Celia Betsky, “Inside the Past: The Interior and the Colonial Revival in American Art and Literature, 1860-1914” in Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985), p. 266. For an excellent discussion of the manner in which domestic textile production changed over time and resonated in gender roles and cultural interactions (especially turn-of-the-century mythologies concerning eighteenth-century lifeways), see Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: Knopf, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> William B. Rhoads, “The Colonial Revival and the Americanization of Immigrants” in Axelrod, pp. 348-49. For a good discussion of the American Wing, Halsey, and the ideological underpinnings and wide influence of both, see Wendy Kaplan, “R.T.H. Halsey, An Ideology of Collecting American Decorative Arts” in *Winterthur Portfolio* 17:1 (Spring 1982) pp. 43-53.

Confederate surgeon who traced his lineage to Colonel John and Anne Pope Washington. Although she spent the majority of her adult life in Richmond, Virginia and Washington, DC the Westmoreland County native maintained close ties to her Washington family roots.<sup>33</sup> In 1923, Rust banded together a number of wealthy associates, mostly women, to form the Wakefield National Memorial Association (WNMA). Incorporated on January 18, 1924, the group resolved to build a replica of Washington's birth home atop his birth site, restore his family's burial ground, and make the site a prominent national attraction.<sup>34</sup> The group's first public meeting on February 22, 1924 in Washington, DC's Memorial Continental Hall, included addresses by Chief Justice William Howard Taft, Senator Simeon D. Fess, and Senator Claude A. Swanson who had, in 1922, lobbied unsuccessfully for the creation of an eastern park. By the early part of 1926, the WNMA had raised enough money to pay \$12,000 (about \$125,000 today) for seventy acres surrounding the Government's 11-acre monument including rights of way and fifty feet of land encircling the Washington family burial ground.<sup>35</sup>

Like other well-respected ladies associations of the time, the WNMA had friends in high places. It recruited U.S. Fine Arts Commissioner Charles Moore to be its vice president and made Charles Hoppin, a noted Washington family genealogist, its historian. Moore's involvement ensured the WNMA a voice in governmental circles and Hoppin's influence eventually secured a lucrative audience with John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In 1926, New York Senator James W. Wadsworth, Jr. and Virginia Representative Schulyer O. Bland introduced a bill granting the WNMA congressional authorization to enact their plans.

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<sup>33</sup> Although this report does not explore Rust's life and family history in detail, future study would certainly benefit from a consideration of how her family's Confederate leanings informed Rust's later notions about history and memorialization of George Washington in the Northern Neck of Virginia. See "Tribute to Mrs. Josephine Wheelwright Rust presented by Dalton W. Mallory on the occasion of the unveiling of her portrait" (approximately 1994) in folder "A3615" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>34</sup> The minutes of the WNMA's first meeting also indicate its interest in building "a log cabin as emblematic of the home of the first settlers." This structure would become the Log House Tea Room. "Minutes of the First Meeting of the Wakefield National Memorial Association, June 11, 1923," Wakefield Files, FAC Records, RG 66, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

<sup>35</sup> Swanson cosponsored an unsuccessful bill to establish the Appalachian National Park in Virginia. He was more successful in 1928 with legislation expanding the then new Shenandoah National Park. See Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 252, 257. Josephine W. Rust, "Wakefield National Memorial Association, Report of the President," 11 June 1930, in Box "GEWA—Annual Reports," Harpers Ferry Center Archives, Harpers Ferry, WV (HFCV). This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

President Calvin Coolidge signed it into law on June 7, 1926 and thereby granted the WNMA permission to “build...a replica of the house in which George Washington was born.”<sup>36</sup>

The WNMA’s granting legislation set the stage for construction of the memorial landscape but it also included two provisions that would complicate events at the Monument in the years to come. First, the Congress expected the WNMA to build a “replica” of Washington’s birth home. Whether or not the WNMA did build a true replica, as we will see, fueled controversy at the birthplace well into the 1940s. Secondly, the act required that both the United States Fine Arts Commission (FAC) and the Secretary of War give advance approval to all WNMA plans. During the early days of historic preservation, the FAC’s involvement was intended to provide interpretive guidance (*i.e.* an assurance of some degree of authenticity) otherwise unavailable from the War Department. That an FAC commissioner—Charles Moore—was vice president of the WNMA made this provision, at the time, a mere formality.

The War Department’s role presented a larger stumbling block. Despite the WNMA’s legislative mandate, the War Department still operated the Monument on behalf of the federal government and had its own ideas about how to appropriately memorialize George Washington. The WNMA had already butted heads with the War Department in 1925 over the latter’s construction of what the WNMA considered to be a historically inappropriate concrete access road. Tensions reemerged when the WNMA hired Washington, DC architect Edward W. Donn, Jr. in 1927 to draft plans for a Memorial House, a stylized log cabin, and for restoration of the Washington family burial ground.<sup>37</sup> Secretary of War Dwight Davis dismissed the WNMA’s plans and indicated to Rust in a January 31, 1928 letter that the War Department would seek its own appropriation to hire an architect and devise memorialization plans. Davis succeeded in securing the appropriation and an architect, but the War Department’s plans called for

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<sup>36</sup> See HR 6985, HR 10131, S 2299, HR 7369, and HJ Res. 198, 69<sup>th</sup> Congress.

<sup>37</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.53. Donn previously worked on the restored Woodlawn Plantation at Mount Vernon. Oculus, v. 1, p. 2.54. A folder titled “lands” in NPS Records Box 16 of 25, GEWA, contains a large format 17 February 1926 map of Wakefield drawn by the Corps of Engineers showing land obtained by the WNMA in relation to surrounding area with details concerning ownership of properties along the approach road. The map also includes fairly detailed drawings of Latane family property with its various buildings. A map of proposed development commissioned by the WNMA in December 1927 attests to their grandiose expectations and includes a large airstrip adjacent to what is now Route 204 as well as a channel cut through Popes Creek to accommodate large vessels. See 1927 map in folder “2.11 Wakefield Development—War Dept.,” NPS Records Box 6 of 25, GEWA.

an exorbitant \$450,000 (about \$5 million today)—an unlikely sum to be granted by Congress. Unable to devise a sufficiently affordable plan to compete with Rust’s vision, Davis relented and the WNMA obtained more-or-less carte blanche at Wakefield by 1929.<sup>38</sup>

The WNMA’s legislative victories and Donn’s preliminary drawings of the memorial landscape helped the group generate public interest in its project, but the real boon to public relations and financial feasibility came with the involvement of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In July 1928, historian Charles Hoppin presented Rockefeller with “a leather covered book containing, indexed, every available map, picture and other matter relating to Wakefield.”<sup>39</sup> Hoppin’s gift evidently convinced Rockefeller of the practicability of the WNMA’s project. The wealthy industrialist purchased 267 acres adjacent to the birth site for \$115,000 and placed it within his River Holding Company for release to the WNMA on January 7, 1930, at which time Rockefeller expected the group to have raised an equivalent purse through public subscription.<sup>40</sup> Rockefeller’s involvement certainly legitimized the WNMA’s vision, but satisfying his request for matching funds would prove more difficult than Rust and her associates expected.

### **The National Park Service Arrives at Wakefield**

By the end of 1929, the WNMA seemed to have established itself as the sole guardian of Washington’s legacy at Popes Creek. Even the War Department acknowledged the group’s supremacy when Secretary of War James W. Good formally approved the WNMA’s construction plans on April 30, 1930.<sup>41</sup> But the WNMA was still not the only organization interested in making a mark at Washington’s

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<sup>38</sup> Beasley, “The Birthplace of a Chief,” pp. 205-06. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. For greater detail concerning Davis’ resistance to the WNMA, see Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.55-2.57. Folder “WNMA A42” in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA, contains a variety of relevant correspondence between the WNMA and the War Department. Also see Beasley, pp. 206-07.

<sup>39</sup> Rust, “Wakefield National Memorial Association, Report of the President.”

<sup>40</sup> See “Wakefield, Birthplace of George Washington,” Report No. 45 accompanying S. 1784, 71<sup>st</sup> Congress. \$115,000 would be equivalent to about \$1.25 million today based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. Rockefeller had previously and more famously funded the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg and therefore already had experience with projects like the WNMA’s restoration of the Wakefield property. He also had experience funding NPS projects and contributed large sums to Acadia National Park in Maine and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee. See Barry Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System*, (U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, Produced by Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, 1991), p. 23.

<sup>41</sup> Rust, “Wakefield National Memorial Association, Report of the President.”

Birthplace. The National Park Service, created in 1916, had until the late 1920s focused its attentions on the preservation and protection of primarily natural resources in the western states. All the while, NPS Assistant Director Horace Albright envisioned an expansion of the NPS's mission to include protection of the nation's historical resources. Having succeeded Director Stephen Mather in 1928, Albright had already initiated plans to create Colonial National Monument (Virginia) and now, aware of the events unfolding at Wakefield, recognized that NPS control of Washington's Birthplace would further his vision of a historically-minded NPS.<sup>42</sup>

His timing was perfect. The WNMA had acquired power, prestige, and the promise of funding through its association with Rockefeller. It could not, however, fulfill its promise to match his contribution. Despite attempts to garner interest in its project through various publications and picturesque post cards depicting the not-yet built Memorial House, the WNMA simply could not make ends meet through public subscription.<sup>43</sup> Rust turned once again to Congress for assistance. She convinced Representative Bland to hurry yet another appropriation bill through the House on behalf of the WNMA and Virginia Senator Claude A. Swanson followed suit in the Senate. Albright acted quickly and called in a favor from his friend and supporter, Michigan U.S. Representative Louis Cramton.<sup>44</sup> In floor debate, Cramton argued that Rockefeller would only deliver on his end of the deal with some guarantee that the Wakefield restoration would be authentic and well maintained. He proposed that only if the WNMA deeded its Wakefield interests to the NPS—the only organization, according to Cramton, capable of ensuring Rockefeller's wishes—should Congress further fund the group's project.

This was an attractive argument in 1930 because, at that time, congress preferred to avoid allocating funds to buy park land. Unlike in the west, where the federal government owned wide

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<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of the NPS's earliest parks in the west, see Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, pp. 12-24. Ise discusses Albright's evolving vision for historical parks in *Our National Park Policy*, p. 344.

<sup>43</sup> Folder "Transfer to Govt." in NPS Records Box 6 of 26, GEWA contains one such 1927 postcard depicting the future Memorial House. This file also contains Ella Loraine Dorsey's "Restoration of Wakefield—Birthplace of Washington" which is typical of the promotional literature produced by the WNMA at this time.

<sup>44</sup> See S 1784, 71<sup>st</sup> Congress. Cramton had already showed an interest in historic preservation with his involvement in the restoration of the Lee home during the 1920s. See Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, VI, p. 2-58. Cramton also demonstrated commitment to Albright's vision for the NPS when he proposed the "Cramton Bill" that, when signed into law in December 1930, created Colonial National Monument. Visit <http://www.nps.gov/colo/> for a history of Colonial National Monument.

expanses of land, opening a park in the east required land purchase and so congress smiled on opportunities to involve private donors.<sup>45</sup> Rockefeller—given his net worth and tract record with the NPS in Yosemite and on his own project in Colonial Williamsburg—appeared to be the perfect candidate. Cramton’s congressional peers accepted his argument and the WNMA, faced with no other alternative but financial ruin, agreed to the bill.<sup>46</sup> With that, Congress appropriated \$15,000 to relocate the granite obelisk erected in 1896 and an additional \$50,000 to support the WNMA’s construction plans (a total of about \$715,000 today). Presidential approval on January 23, 1930 formally established the George Washington Birthplace National Monument (Appendix 3).<sup>47</sup>

Albright was careful to involve himself in drafting the Monument’s founding legislation. He knew that no credible record of the original building’s appearance existed and that various archeological investigations sponsored by both the War Department and the WNMA raised suspicions concerning the location and physical orientation of the Memorial House (see chapter 2). Still, the WNMA hoped to complete its work in time to celebrate Washington’s 200<sup>th</sup> birthday and, no less significantly, channel national excitement created by Sol Bloom’s Bicentennial Commission into public fanfare for the Monument. Albright shared this desire and envisioned Washington’s bicentennial as the perfect opportunity to publicly reveal his new vision for the NPS. The Director betrayed his eagerness (and flair for public relations) to publicize the Wakefield project by publishing two accounts of the project in the *New York Times* in 1931.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Macintosh, *The National Park Service*, p. 35.

<sup>46</sup> Rust’s account of these hearings indicates that the WNMA worked in collaboration with the U.S. Bicentennial Commission to propose the appropriation bill that Bland and Swanson presented to Congress. See Rust, “Wakefield National Memorial Association, Report of the President.”

<sup>47</sup> This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. See Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 154-55 for a discussion of the variable and often inconsistent rationale underlying the differences between national monuments and national parks. Barry Mackintosh explains that national monuments “include areas with at least one resource of national importance. [They are] usually smaller than national parks.” See Mackintosh, *The National Park Service*, p. 19. President Hoover created the Monument by signing S. 1784, 71<sup>st</sup> Cong., approved January 23, 1930.

<sup>48</sup> See Horace Albright, “Wakefield Washington Shrine Was Begun After Long Study” in *New York Times*, 19 July 1931, p. XX6 and Horace Albright, “Washington’s Boyhood Homes: The Place Held by Wakefield” in *New York Times*, 29 March 1931, p. X16. Albright’s final report, “A Report on the Rehabilitation of the Birthplace of George Washington by Horace Albright, January 14, 1932,” is in folder “Transfer to Govt.” in NPS Records Box 6 of 26, GEWA.

Not willing to compromise the public relations boon presented by this opportunity, Albright never questioned the WNMA's plans to build a replica house. He did, however, build a safeguard into the Monument's founding legislation. When President Hoover signed S. 1784, he did not immediately transfer the WNMA's property to the NPS. Instead, the bill provided financial support for the organization to build "a replica of the house in which George Washington was born" and for "restoring and improving the gardens and grounds...and erecting such other buildings as shall be deemed necessary." Upon completion of these tasks, "said building and all lands owned by the [WNMA] shall ...be conveyed to the United States as a gift for administration, protection, and maintenance."<sup>49</sup> Until that point, then, the NPS exercised no official role in decisions concerning construction of the memorial landscape. Retention from HR 10131 of the provision requiring the FAC to approve construction plans, and the addition to this provision of approval by the Secretary of the Interior, did place ultimate responsibility for the quality of the work done at Wakefield into the hands of government entities, but it also freed the NPS of any responsibility for the WNMA's work.<sup>50</sup>

### **Building the Memorial Landscape, 1930-1932**

Despite his precautions, Albright was not completely comfortable allowing the WNMA's plans to unfold at Wakefield wholly unsupervised. At an April 12, 1930 WNMA meeting, Albright suggested that the group take advantage of the surveying services of NPS engineer O.G. Taylor who, until then, served

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<sup>49</sup> Note that this clause refers to transfer of "said building." It is unclear whether the singular "building" refers to collective construction—*i.e.* the totality of building activity—or only to the Memorial House. Questions regarding ownership of the Log House Tea Room and, to a lesser extent, the Colonial Kitchen strained relations between the NPS and the WNMA in later years and may very well have resulted from the ambiguous wording of this legislation.

<sup>50</sup> Hatch provides the best overall account of events occurring between the formation of the WNMA and the creation of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument. See *Popes Creek Plantation*, pp. 478-93. Presuming that Albright was fully aware of the building controversies surrounding the location and character of the original birth house, his guiding hand in the creation of S. 1784 intentionally and officially safeguarded the NPS from whatever criticism might arise in years to come. Albright's legislative slight of hand may have protected the NPS from direct criticism, but it failed to take into account another potential pitfall that continues to create administrative dilemmas. S. 1784 makes no provision for the functional or legal relationship between the WNMA and the NPS following transfer of property from the former to the latter. As Albright would soon discover, the WNMA had no intention of walking away from their grand achievement, even if it did officially belong to the U.S. Government.



as a resident engineer at Yosemite National Park.<sup>51</sup> The WNMA agreed to this—and additionally agreed to consult with NPS landscape architects—though it is unclear how formal a role the WNMA expected of NPS agents. Rust, for instance, referred to Taylor as a “liaison officer,” suggesting that she understood him to be more of a go-between than an integral planner. Nonetheless, Donn had already made substantial progress on plans for the memorial landscape.<sup>52</sup> He envisioned a cedar-lined approach to the monument leading to and encircling the repositioned granite obelisk beyond which visitors proceeded to parking areas along the left side of the entry road. This plan placed the Memorial House, a kitchen building, and an ornamental garden just beyond the parking lot behind a brick wall enclosure. Donn also anticipated in his design a trail network similar to that which currently parallels the Popes Creek shore line.<sup>53</sup> In a further elaboration of Donn’s vision, Rust noted that the WNMA desired a new base for the granite obelisk to replace the old “funeral design of the 1890s.” Moore agreed that, “the monument is of a design once used in cemeteries, but now generally regarded as inappropriate even for such uses. It is manifestly inappropriate to mark a birthplace.” Rust also indicated that the Memorial House was to be used as a museum and that the Colonial Kitchen would “contain the heating plant and other conveniences, and quarters for the caretaker (Images 3 & 4).”<sup>54</sup>

Construction commenced during the summer of 1930. James O. Caton & Sons moved the granite obelisk and re-cut its base and pedestal between August and December 1930.<sup>55</sup> Given the technology

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<sup>51</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Wakefield National Memorial Association, 12 April 1930, Wakefield Files, FAC, RG 66, NAB.

<sup>52</sup> Rust, “Wakefield National Memorial Association, Report of the President.” See drawing “WAKEFIELD, showing development of the eleven acres owned by the government of the United States—suggested by Edward W. Donn, Jr., Architect,” 19 February 1929, Wakefield Files, FAC, RG 66, NAB. Donn’s drawing includes plans for the birth site, the log house, camping areas, a dock at Duck Hall, and his proposal for a lavish new base for the granite obelisk.

<sup>53</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.58-2.59.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Moore to Josephine Rust, 1 December 1927, in folder “Transfer to Govt.,” NPS Records Box 6 of 26, GEWA. Mrs. Harry Lee Rust, Sr., “Restoration of George Washington’s Birthplace,” 15 December 1930, Wakefield Association Files, FAC, RG 66, NAB.

<sup>55</sup> S. 1784 provided \$15,000 for removal of the granite obelisk, but it did not specifically make that money available to the WNMA. Therefore, it is likely that the War Department contracted directly with James O. Caton & Sons. See O.G. Taylor, “Condensed Report of Restoration Work to Date,” 10 September 1930, Wakefield files, FAC, RG 66, NAB. Oculus makes reference to the vague details of this operation in *Cultural Landscape Report*, n. 183, p. 2.59, especially with regard to the handling of the base pedestal and what is referred to as the “base extension stone.”

available in 1930 and the remote location of the Monument, moving the granite obelisk presented a considerable challenge and the process became something of a local spectacle. Using nothing more than an enormous wooden derrick and human muscle power, workers gently lowered the massive obelisk onto a series of greased logs and rolled it toward its new site. Using the derrick once again, workers raised the obelisk and repositioned it atop its new base (Images 5 & 6).<sup>56</sup>

The WNMA next turned its sights toward constructing the Memorial House. On December 12, 1930, Rust and associates contracted J.J. Jones and Conquest of Richmond to construct the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen at a cost of \$45,000 (about \$500,000 today).<sup>57</sup> With characteristic flair, Albright intervened behind the scenes and encouraged Assistant Director Arthur Demaray to suggest that Rockefeller's representative and Colonial Williamsburg notable, Kenneth Chorley, lend the assistance of his brick makers. Chorley agreed and sent contractors Todd & Brown, Inc. to Wakefield on July 8, 1930, where they erected a kiln above suitable clay deposits between six hundred and one thousand feet west of the Memorial House construction site (Image 7).<sup>58</sup> The crew made more than enough bricks by November 20, 1930 and, thus supplied, builders worked throughout the year using the native clay brick and completed construction of the Memorial House in the summer of 1931.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> File "D46 monument shaft and curbing," NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA, contains all work descriptions and blueprints relevant to the relocation of the monument shaft and later curbing including blueprints illustrating new base configurations. Horace Albright visited Wakefield during the removal of the granite obelisk and filmed portions of the work. Albright's film is silent, but a recorded interview with one of the men who worked on the removal crew conveys some sense of the enormity of the task and the excitement generated by the project. See Albright Videotape, HMA-4 (Old Part #2), "West," Harpers Ferry Center Graphic Collections and Archive for Interpretive Media (HFCPC). An anonymous undated (presumably mid-1970s) interview with a Mr. Combs is stored in the film projection room of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument Visitor Center and describes Combs' involvement in the removal of the granite obelisk.

<sup>57</sup> This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>58</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.59-2.60.

<sup>59</sup> For a description of the brick-making process, see Taylor, "Report on Brick Making," Annual Report to the Director, NPS Records, RG 79, NAB. Also see mention of the process in tribute to Mrs. Josephine Wheelwright Rust presented by Dalton W. Mallory on the occasion of the unveiling of her portrait (presumably 1994) in folder "A3615" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. As with the removal of the granite obelisk, Albright filmed the brick makers at work. See Albright Videotape, HMA-4 (Old Part #2), "West," HFCPC.

Construction of the memorial landscape occasionally gave rise to disagreement between the WNMA and the NPS.<sup>60</sup> Donn and Rust had planned from the beginning to include lodging facilities and a store on the Monument's grounds. Landscape architect Charles Peterson—the first NPS landscape architect assigned to the eastern parks—became involved with the Wakefield project at Albright's request and reluctantly approved the WNMA's plans to build a lodge at Duck Hall (what would eventually become the Log House—see chapter 3). He was less willing to accept a store at the Memorial and considered the idea “startling,” adding “it would be easy to do something terribly wrong with this building.” Peterson protested vehemently when the WNMA explained their plans to add a refreshment stand at the Memorial House arguing that “the dignity of Washington's Birthplace must be maintained at all costs.”<sup>61</sup>

His anger is unsurprising considering the even larger problem he contended with the previous year concerning the Park's Colonial Garden. Recognizing that his concurrent responsibilities at Colonial National Monument would cut into work at Wakefield, Peterson requested that the NPS assign another landscape architect to the project. The NPS transferred landscape architect Vivian Roswell Ludgate from the San Francisco office and in November 1930 Peterson asked him to research colonial gardens in order to design a plot to abut the Memorial House. Ludgate proposed that the Colonial Garden be divided into two sections filled with period-specific plants and surrounded by a brick walk and boxwoods believed to have been grown from cuttings taken from Popes Creek during Washington's lifetime.<sup>62</sup>

Little did he or Peterson know that the WNMA already had very specific plans for the garden. The WNMA, prior to the NPS's involvement and in efforts to raise money to match the Rockefeller donation, had taken financial gifts from wealthy donors who hoped to associate their own names with the memorial landscape. Rust explained in her June 1930 presidential report that “the four rooms on the first floor of the Birthplace have been taken as memorials.” The entire state of Connecticut received a room

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<sup>60</sup> Folder “d32 landscaping” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA, contains descriptions of original landscaping, road work, fence construction, and 1931 contract with Davey Tree Experts.

<sup>61</sup> Peterson to Demaray, 26 June 1931 and 11 August 1931, NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>62</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.61-2.62, including n. 194.

on the second floor in thanks for the \$5,000 (about \$53,000 today) contribution sent by Governor Trumbull in 1929. Even the chimneys were dedicated to wealthy donors. Finally, Rust very specifically indicates that “Mrs. J.S. Moore and her children, Mrs. William Dusenberry Sherrard and Messrs. Moore, will restore the old-fashion flower garden.”<sup>63</sup>

So, when Ludgate presented his plan at a November 1930 meeting, Rust spoke out in opposition. She returned several days later with WNMA member Mary Eva Moore Sherrard and an independent landscaper hired by the WNMA.<sup>64</sup> Sherrard’s mother—Mary Smith Jones Moore—had died since paying for the privilege of restoring the “old-fashion flower garden,” but her daughter remained intent on fulfilling the memorialization. Specifically, Sherrard desired a prominent central location for a sundial erected as a memorial to her own family (Illustration 1). She suggested that “we could drop the idea and word ‘Colonial’ and conceive of a flower garden with seats placed where we could enjoy the central sundial...we would like to have the Sun-Dial in the center of a round plot with paths radiating from it.”<sup>65</sup> Peterson informed Albright of the situation and, clearly pushed beyond his willingness to compromise, the Director wrote directly to Rust determined to convey some sense of the NPS’s commitment to authenticity and historical professionalism:

We are trying to put something in Wakefield that will be as nearly as possible what existed there when Washington was born. We are trying to follow the same general principles of landscaping that are being followed at Williamsburg. If we do anything less than this we are bound to receive criticism...The thing that disturbs me more than anything else that Mrs. Sherrard said is that part of her statement—“above all we want the memorial tablet in a conspicuous place and we want a beautiful garden and not a sentimental one.” The underlining is mine. She seems to be more interested in memorializing Mary Smith Jones Moore than she is George Washington. Don’t you

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<sup>63</sup> Rust, “Wakefield National Memorial Association, Report of the President.” Rust lists the recipients but does not indicate which rooms belonged to who: Jere Hungerford Wheelwright, by his son Jere Hungerford Wheelwright, Jr.; Mrs. William Ruffin Cox, by the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Virginia; Mary Ball Washington, by the Committee of the Northern Neck of Virginia; and Jane Barr Newton, by her great, great grandchildren Sara and Alice Worthington. Curiously, the Commonwealth of Virginia did not receive a memorial room despite Governor Byrd’s involvement in appropriating \$5,000 for restoration of the burial ground and an additional \$10,000 for construction of the memorial landscape. For donations of \$2,000 Henrietta (Dawson) Ayres Sheppard secured a chimney for her parents Richard Johnson Ayres and Elizabeth Hack (Dawson) Ayres and Mrs. James W. Wadsworth, Jr. and her sister Mrs. Payne Whitney bought a chimney for their father, former Secretary of State John Hay. Modern price figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>64</sup> Ludgate to Director, 17 Nov. 1930, in folder “D32 Landscaping,” NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>65</sup> Sherrard to Rust, 12 April 1931, Wakefield files, FAC, RG 66, NAB. Also cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.63.

think we might let Mrs. Sherrard's donation go by the board and try to raise the money elsewhere?<sup>66</sup>

Rust did offer to return Sherrard's money and Sherrard supposedly accepted. By December 1931, work in the garden commenced according to Ludgate's plan and included construction of a hand-hewn picket fence.<sup>67</sup> Almost two years later, however, Sherrard remained "very bitter in her denunciation of the restored colonial garden" and Superintendent Hough echoed Peterson's suggestion in a letter to WNMA interim President, Maude Worthington, that "in view of this apparent fundamental misunderstanding... would it not be well...to return Mrs. Sherrard's donation and pursue the development of our garden in accordance with our approved plans and instructions."<sup>68</sup>

The Colonial Garden fiasco speaks volumes about the difference of interpretive vision held by the two organizations and demonstrates that the NPS, despite its reliance upon the WNMA for grass roots support and financial backing, was determined to stay the course promised to Congress by Cramton and Albright. Moreover, the garden situation revealed the difficulties faced by collaborating with an association funded almost entirely by donors. Peterson understood the disagreement as a mandate to avoid future conflict and suggested that "the Landscape Division will have to place itself in the position of the earnest, but somewhat boorish prophets of Israel, who were continually predicting calamities."<sup>69</sup>

Divergent opinions also surrounded the WNMA's renovation of the Washington family burial ground. The WNMA initially sought to create a tomb at the burial ground reminiscent of the tomb at Mount Vernon and Moore envisioned circular brick paths and dense plantings surrounding the

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<sup>66</sup> Albright to Rust, 17 April 1931, in folder "D32 landscaping," NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>67</sup> See Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.63 and SMR, December 1931.

<sup>68</sup> Hough to Worthington, 26 April 1934, Box 2219, file 601-10 National Park Service Records, RG 79, National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP).

<sup>69</sup> Albright had discovered that because some of the money donated to the WNMA came from the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Virginia Art Commission would have to approve the plans for the Wakefield development. The size of the Monument with its intricate money trail and ominous interpretive complexities further concerned Assistant Directors Arno Cammerer and Arthur Demaray who, along with Albright, continually relied on the Fine Arts Commission safeguard to prevent direct criticism of the NPS's role at Wakefield. Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, pp. 485-86. Peterson to Albright, 27 April 1931, Loose folder d32 landscaping, NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

gravesites.<sup>70</sup> By 1930, Donn had formulated the “sarcophagus like tomb” plan visible today and, between 1930 and 1931, he directed the removal of the concrete and cement work added by the Colonial Dames in 1906 and re-set the two original gravestones behind the original burial vault (Image 8). William A. Gault & Son, Inc. of Baltimore excavated the area prior to restoration and made detailed drawings of thirty-two gravesites, twenty of which lay outside of the vault and some beyond the walled enclosure.<sup>71</sup> The Episcopal Bishop of Washington, Reverend James E. Freeman led the recommitment services that witnessed the remains of these bodies—“each in a silk bag tagged with a silver label bearing the coordinate measurements of the original location”—replaced in the vault restored with original bricks reclaimed from the site. Gault & Son covered the vault with a three thousand pound lid and added a new Aquia freestone table stone on April 27, 1931.<sup>72</sup> A new wall, built with bricks left over from construction of the Memorial House, enclosed the grave site and opened onto a gravel path stretching between the burial ground and the approach road along attractively landscaped grounds (Image 9).

All the while, the NPS landscape division had developed its own plans for renovation of the burial ground. Rust requested a copy of the NPS’s plans and Peterson requested a copy of the WNMA’s plans in November 1930. Peterson, however, did not comment on the WNMA’s plans until April 1931, well after work had begun on the burial ground site. In a letter to Albright, Peterson expressed his concern about the “advisability of placing this extremely formal plan out by itself in the middle of a Virginia corn field.”<sup>73</sup> Moore caught wind of Peterson’s criticism and himself wrote to Albright claiming that the WNMA’s plans reflected typical graveyards of the colonial period. Peterson remained suspicious—especially given that this very same argument allowed construction of what he considered a

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<sup>70</sup> Moore to Albert Bushnell Hart, Harvard University, 17 February 1928, Wakefield Association files, FAC Records, RG 66, NAB. See Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, 2.67-2.68 for details concerning early plans for the burial ground.

<sup>71</sup> Gault & Son used a Latane family home as a staging site for their work and hung the temporarily exhumed Washington family remains in sacks suspended from a bedroom ceiling. The Latanes later joked about hosting the entire Washington family all at once. Thanks to Brooke Blades, former MAR archeologist, for bringing this story to my attention.

<sup>72</sup> Rust, “Wakefield National Memorial Association, Report of the President.” Also see Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.71.

<sup>73</sup> Peterson to Albright, 9 April 1931, GEWA. Cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.69 though no specifics are provided concerning the location of this letter within the GEWA.

highly suspect Memorial House (see chapter 2)—and dispatched Ludgate to photograph “any additional colonial burying grounds” to determine exactly what was typical of the period.

But Peterson misunderstood the WNMA’s intent. He assumed that the WNMA intended all commemorative improvements at Wakefield to resemble as best as possible the landscape as it appeared during the life of George Washington. The WNMA, however, sought only to replicate the Memorial House and its immediate surroundings. Elsewhere, the WNMA saw fit to build on as monumental a scale as possible to pay homage to Washington in a way that the Memorial House—which they considered to be a much too humble monument by itself—could not. The opposing camps eventually agreed at a meeting on May 11, 1931 to minimize the grand planting scheme originally envisioned by the WNMA.<sup>74</sup> As with the Colonial Garden, the treatment of the burial ground revealed the differences between the interpretive visions of the NPS and the WNMA.

### **A Turbulent Prelude to Property Transfer**

As the memorial landscape took shape, it appeared that Albright’s skillful politicking and his careful negotiation of divergent interpretive visions had resulted in a victory for his own historical vision. The practical details of that vision, however, did not unfold as smoothly. In the months leading up to the official transfer of the WNMA’s property to the Department of Interior, no one was sure exactly how much land was involved in the deal. This may have been due to the omission of an acreage tally in the establishing legislation (Appendix 3). As of 1930 Albright counted 11.88 government acres, 100 acres purchased by the WNMA, and 254 acres from Rockefeller’s River Holding Company for a total of 355.88 acres. When Rockefeller finally submitted his deed in February 1931, he did so for a tract of 273 acres—nine acres more than Albright originally expected. A monthly report for April 1931, however, counted the gift worth 265 acres. Two months later, when President Herbert Hoover signed legislation extending

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<sup>74</sup> See Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.69-2.70 for summary of these events and citations of relevant correspondence.

the Monument's boundaries to include the Rockefeller tract, the official acreage tallied 394.47 including the WNMA land deeded in June 1931.<sup>75</sup>

Other logistical difficulties plagued the transfer process. The Secretary of War notified Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes that Major Brehon Somervell of the War Department had prepared to transfer funds and property to the NPS on February 28, 1930.<sup>76</sup> Two months passed, however, and the transfer remained incomplete because, according to Somervell, "some minor charges against the appropriation...were made during the month of March." The War Department had evidently incurred additional expenses—most likely in connection with removal of the granite obelisk—after having already initiated transfer of monies remaining from the S. 1784 appropriation to the NPS. Newly appointed NPS Director Arno Cammerer, eager to avoid delays, dashed off an immediate response to Somervell assuring him that funds would be redistributed back to the War Department when and as needed.<sup>77</sup>

These logistical complications—as common as they may have been throughout the park system—point to the logistical complexity of coordinating a four-party land transfer and perhaps an administrative inability to facilitate such a large project. Other events added to the confusion. Amid all the chaos, Mary Pomeroy of Washington, DC contacted Kenneth Chorley announcing her desire to sell a ninety-acre tract with a seven-room house allegedly part of the original Wakefield farm. Chorley referred the letter to Albright who passed it to Associate Director Arthur Demaray who responded a week later that the government was not interested in purchasing more land but was curious about the location of the property. It is not clear whether the veracity of Pomeroy's claim was in doubt or if the government

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<sup>75</sup> SMR, April 1931. Details concerning acreage cited in anonymous summary of property exchange and legislative matters bearing on the Monument, date unknown though presumably written in 1935, (Box 2219) 550-610, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. The superintendent's June 1931 monthly report notes that "on June 22 the Association deeded their entire real estate holdings, consisting of about 100 acres of land in three separate parcels to the United States...the transfer of this property at this time was made to enable the government to re-locate and construct the highway between the birth site and the burial ground."

<sup>76</sup> Secretary of War to Secretary of the Interior, 28 February 1930, (Box 2219) 550-610, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>77</sup> Somervell to Department of Interior, 4 April 1930, and Cammerer to Somervell, 4 April 1930, (Box 2219) 550-610, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.



simply did not have the money or patience to contemplate additional land transactions, but discussion of the Pomeroy tract does not appear in subsequent correspondence.<sup>78</sup>

Additionally, the government did not know exactly what land it held title to. In October 1931, Raymond Washington “having been made somewhat uneasy by our activities in the neighborhood,” informed Associate Engineer Robert P. White—then Acting Supervisor of the monument—that he held a lease to the very spot where NPS planners were preparing to build staff quarters and roads.<sup>79</sup> White wrote to Engineer O.G. Taylor earlier that year about the “sprit of unrest and dissatisfaction on the part of the [neighboring] Latane brothers” regarding government changes to a Wakefield access road. In this case, Taylor was not even able to locate the deed granting right of way to the government.<sup>80</sup> And only a month before the official public transfer ceremony, some doubt arose concerning the validity of the government’s claim to the land surrounding the Washington family burial ground. The source of this claim is unknown, but Assistant Director Conrad Wirth assured all involved that the NPS did have right to the tract in question.<sup>81</sup>

### **The Monument is Established**

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<sup>78</sup> Pomeroy to Chorley, 28 May 1930; Chorley to Albright, 2 June 1930; Demaray to Pomeroy, 7 June 1930, (Box 2219) 550-610, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>79</sup> Taylor to Director, 27 October 1931: “Inasmuch as one contemplated site for our new residences and monument utilities area is on the Raymond Washington tract and the two Y branches of the road leading to the Duck Hall property traversed this same tract we may find that we are in a position which will not allow us to go ahead as freely as we had contemplated. It is my impression though that this tract of land was deeded to the United States...that being the case there would be nothing to actually prevent us going ahead as we pleased, but even so if we do go ahead and build what we wish to build we should respect, insofar as possible, all the promises which Mrs. Rust made at the time of the purchase from Raymond Washington.” Also see the 1934 special use permit granting the Washington family use of the tract of 31.5 acres formerly owned by them for occupying the old homestead and farming adjacent lands of the tract at a \$2.00 lease. Both documents in file “D34 Raymond Washington Place,” NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>80</sup> Taylor to White, 13 August 1931, file “D34 Raymond Washington Place,” NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>81</sup> See W.M. Lanier to Albright, 31 March 1933, folder “Transfer to Govt.,” NPS Records Box 6 of 26, GEWA, and anonymous summary of property exchange and legislative matters bearing on the Monument, date unknown though presumably written in 1935, (Box 2219) 550-610, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. Questions persisted even beyond the dedication ceremony though and, in March 1933, W.M. Lanier wrote to Albright suggesting that the NPS claim was invalid given that it was the Washington heirs, not the state of Virginia, who originally deeded the land to the United States in 1832. This accusation also faded in time, but each of these incidents demonstrate the extent of the confusion surrounding the Monument’s establishment and suggest that, in their hurry to take one more step toward fulfilling Albright’s vision, the NPS moved at a pace sometimes more reckless than brisk.

Despite various disagreements, controversies, and residual tensions, the WNMA and the NPS had jointly satisfied all legislative requirements for property transfer by the summer of 1931. The WNMA agreed to commence with the transfer of its land and property holdings and legally transferred their deed to the government on June 22, 1931. As if on cue, Josephine Rust died four days later.<sup>82</sup> Her death stunned the NPS and the WNMA and left serious questions concerning the future of the Birthplace in the minds of both. Nonetheless, work continued at the Monument and, indeed, much remained to be done. The WNMA had yet to construct its log lodge at Duck Hall and the NPS had not even begun to build the offices, houses, and physical infrastructure required by a staff and superintendent and, most importantly, the visiting public. Superintendent Phillip Hough, who arrived in time to witness the first celebration of Washington's birthday in the Memorial House and later enjoyed the pomp and circumstance surrounding the public transfer ceremony on May 14, 1932, would come to play a pivotal role in deciding the course of development at Popes Creek. He would do so, however, without first-hand knowledge of the various development and interpretive controversies that unfolded prior to his arrival. Unbeknownst to him, Hough would soon inherit the complicated legacy of these controversies and find himself embroiled within one of the most difficult interpretive challenges in NPS history.

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<sup>82</sup> "Tribute to Mrs. Josephine Wheelwright Rust presented by Dalton W. Mallory on the occasion of the unveiling of her portrait" (approximately 1994) in folder "A3615" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA, p. 4.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Archeology and the Problem of Building X, 1881-1950**

Neither Hough nor the crowds of visitors gathered to celebrate the dedication of Washington's Birthplace would have had any reason to suspect, amid the excitement and pristine weather of May 14, 1932, that questions concerning the authenticity of the Wakefield restoration lingered in the minds of important parties to that project.<sup>1</sup> WNMA vice president Mrs. Anthony Wayne Cook and Secretary of the Interior Ray Wilbur delivered glowing patriotic speeches honoring the restoration effort and the memory of George Washington whose two hundredth birthday gave special importance to the celebration. WNMA members dressed in colonial costumes and served refreshments to visitors as a military band rounded out the festivities (Image 10).<sup>2</sup> Unsurprisingly, neither Cook nor Wilbur mentioned the unidentified foundations recently discovered only a few hundred feet from the Memorial House. The implications of that discovery may not have been fully appreciated by either Wayne or Wilbur, but the uncovering of what was termed Building X marked the latest chapter in a controversy at least forty years in the making. Although disagreements concerning the design of the memorial landscape may have variously intensified relations between the WNMA and the NPS, the discovery of Building X forced representatives of each to choose sides in an interpretive battle that has only recently subsided.

### **Archeology and Controversy under the War Department, 1879-1898**

Complications identifying the actual site of Washington's birth arose well before either the WNMA or the NPS even existed. Following the 1879 Congressional appropriation that sent Secretary of State Evarts down the Potomac River to determine a suitable course of action at Wakefield, it had become

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<sup>1</sup> There is no way to determine, with available documents, what Hough knew about the various controversies surrounding construction of the Memorial House upon his arrival at Popes Creek. Considering that his sympathies clearly laid with the WNMA, it is evident that any briefing by the NPS prior to his arrival did not convince Hough that there was any reason to question the assumptions underlying the design and construction of the Memorial House.

<sup>2</sup> For correspondence and reports regarding bicentennial celebrations at GEWA, *New York Times* coverage of the dedication ceremony, the address delivered by Secretary of the Interior Ray Wilbur, information regarding traffic flow through the Park during the event, letters from W.A.R. Goodwin and Kenneth Chorley of Colonial Williamsburg, and a memo indicating that the event featured reenactors of both slaves and gentry, see (Box 592) files 832 and 857, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. A wealth of documents produced by the Bicentennial Commission, scripts of bicentennial pageants performed at GEWA, and costumes worn during those performances are stored available at GEWA.

accepted in governmental circles that the Custis stone had indeed marked the site of Washington's birth, even though the stone no longer existed at the time of Evarts' visit. Northern Neck resident John E. Wilson and others showed Evarts where the stone would have been—next to the remains of the crumbling chimney—and convinced him to memorialize that site. Evarts returned to Washington and obtained an additional appropriation to draft plans for the site. The Department of State sent Civil Engineer F.O. St. Clair to Popes Creek between 1881 and 1882 with an eye toward “determining the character of the substrata.” No records of these first archeological excavations at Wakefield remain although correspondence indicates that St. Clair uncovered “pieces of china, hinges and a candle...a silver teaspoon...[and] a bunch of keys.”<sup>3</sup>

St. Clair never intended to verify the location of the birth house, but his work did stir the concerns of local residents. Wilson and R.J. Washington spoke with St. Clair about his work and, upon learning of the government's plan to enclose the old chimney, protested in a May 5, 1881 letter to the new Secretary of State, James G. Blaine, that “this chimney was never a part of the original building; and is 45 to 50 feet from the nearest point of the foundations of the old mansion.”<sup>4</sup> It is unclear why Wilson, who had identified the site for Evarts in the first place, launched this protest. It is possible that Evarts simply misunderstood Wilson's initial identification. In any event, relying on Evart's confidence that the old chimney marked the true spot and additionally believing that the sixty-foot-square parcel transferred to the Government did indeed outline the foundations of the original house, Blaine turned a deaf ear to Washington and Wilson's protest.<sup>5</sup>

St. Clair did determine through his survey that the amount of government land at Wakefield would not support adequate memorialization and so submitted two proposals to yet another new Secretary of State, Frederick F. Frelinghuysen, on March 12, 1882. He suggested that the government acquire

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<sup>3</sup> Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 71. Hatch cites Hoppin, “The House in Which George Washington was Born,” in *Tyler's Quarterly Historical Magazine* 8:2 (October 1926), p. 100. Rodnick, “Orientation Report,” p. 40 cited in Beasley, “The Birthplace of a Chief,” p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> Rodnick, “Orientation Report,” p. 26 cited in Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 72. This also discussed in Beasley, “The Birthplace of a Chief,” p. 202.

<sup>5</sup> See Beasley, “The Birthplace of a Chief,” p. 202 and Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 72. Hatch indicates that no Federal records remain documenting “how this suggestion was handled.”

either an additional eleven acres and a 100-foot right-of-way to Bridges Creek or a three-hundred-square-foot parcel around the presumed birth site and a fifty-foot right-of-way. Frelinghuysen granted a compromise: eleven acres and a fifty-foot right-of-way. The government purchased twenty-one acres from Wilson on July 10, 1883, making for slightly more than eleven acres encompassing the birth site and the right of way.<sup>6</sup> Work stalled, however, without ready access to the remote rural site. Not until February 25, 1893 did Congress appropriate the necessary funds to build a wharf on the Potomac River. That appropriation also granted the War Department authority to construct its memorial granite obelisk.

Memorialization efforts resumed in 1895 and Army Engineer Corps Colonel John M. Wilson arrived at Wakefield to supervise erection of the granite obelisk. Bureau of Public Parks and Grounds Captain John Stewart served as the primary on-site supervisor and, consequently, led archeological investigations preceding construction of the monument. Wilson revised Evarts' previous construction plans and, rather than creating a granite surround to support the obelisk, preferred laying a concrete slab atop the presumed location of the birth site.<sup>7</sup> He requested that Stewart excavate the site in preparation for construction, but Stewart's findings only raised further concern. Stewart focused his investigation on the center of the original sixty-square-foot Lewis Washington tract, the spot popularly believed to be where Custis placed his memorial stone in 1815. What he discovered there did not resemble anything reminiscent of a wealthy landowner's home. Instead, Stewart uncovered a two-room brick foundation approximately thirty feet long and twenty feet wide. The foundation suggested a building oriented along an east-west axis.<sup>8</sup>

Stewart's findings disappointed local residents whose collective memory recalled and expected a much larger building. Historian Charles Hatch notes that the excavation prompted a host of apologies and explanations by the War Department and historian David Rodnick later observed that "the excavation in 1896 must have surprised many of the people in that neighborhood is evidenced by the rumors that rose

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<sup>6</sup> Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 72.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief," pp. 202-203. Beasley notes that "Stewart made only two maps of his excavations, with no mention of any associated artifacts." Also see Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, pp. 73-74.

later that the monument was placed on the wrong site.”<sup>9</sup> Despite these concerns, the government continued with its plans to build the Potomac River wharf and granite obelisk. Struck by the discrepancy between Stewart’s findings and local memory, John E. Wilson once again criticized the government’s work in an October 4, 1898 letter, arguing that Stewart had failed in “uncovering *all* of the foundations.”<sup>10</sup> Wilson did not necessarily question the location of the foundations, but he did consider something amiss about the orientation of the building documented by Stewart.<sup>11</sup> Even so, the granite obelisk had been erected and thus came to mark physically and in the minds of visitors the precise spot of George Washington’s birth. Wilson’s protests between 1881 and 1896 indicate that the Government did hear credible challenges to their acceptance of the Custis stone legacy. It is not clear why they ignored Wilson, but the decision to do so resonated for another sixty years at Washington’s Birthplace.

### **The WNMA’s Memorial Vision, 1925-1930**

Construction of the granite obelisk marked the beginning of a quiet period at the monument. That changed with the WNMA’s arrival in the early 1920s. The WNMA’s intent to build a “replica” house revived concerns about the actual location and orientation of the original house. Charles Moore—WNMA Vice President and Fine Arts Commissioner—expressed his own concern in 1926: “the location has never been investigated; and there is reason to believe that the monument which ostensibly marks the site [is] built over the ruins of an outhouse, one chimney of which was standing within the memory of persons now living.”<sup>12</sup> Moore contacted the Army Corps of Engineers, which, under Major James O’Connor, had been put in charge of constructing an approach road to the monument. Moore requested that the Corps perform excavations at the birth site, but O’Connor responded that their funding extended

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<sup>9</sup> Cited in Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 75.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>11</sup> Wilson wrote, “About the fronting of the house—the only land approach was from the west—Popes Creek and one of its arms cutting off all access from the other three directions. The foundations of a double chimney at the west end seem to prelude [*sic*] the supposition that was the front. If it fronted north it would look across an arm of Popes Creek toward the dwelling place one-half mile off of a family of Wicklifs who emigrated to Kentucky about the close of the last century. Looking toward the south is a large expanse of level ground, the present fertility of which shows the effect of old manuring and the presence to this day of bulbs of several varieties of flowering plants, seem to indicate that the garden and orchard were in that direction.” Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, n. 66, p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> Cited in Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 84.

only to construction of the approach road.<sup>13</sup> Moore then petitioned the United States Engineer's Office to have the site re-excavated prior to altering the memorial landscape. Secretary of War Dwight Davis granted the WNMA a permit to conduct the work with private funds and assigned the task to War Department Engineer J. Arthur Hook who arrived at Popes Creek on April 9, 1926. Hook's probing (literally—he did not excavate, but rather used a probing stick) pointed to discrepancies between the archeological record and local memories of the site. Hook returned on May 10—this time under the close supervision of Josephine Rust—and excavated around the obelisk's iron fence enclosure (Image 11). Hook discovered pottery sherds, broken buckles, a clay pipe, and various broken china and glass. Elsewhere he uncovered two faint pillar imprints, oyster shell deposits, and pine bark and crushed stone.<sup>14</sup>

The WNMA enjoyed working with Hook and Rust described him as “painstaking, interested and efficient.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Hook's work made a positive impact on WNMA coffers. Hook uncovered several pieces of salt-glaze ware that he took to the Smithsonian Institution where Dr. Walter Hough used them to create a reproduction of “the famous Boar's Head platter and other pieces.” The Lenox Company fashioned a line of dishware from the reproductions and paid the WNMA—desperate at the time to match Rockefeller's substantial contribution—a five percent commission on sales which added up to nearly \$5,200 (about \$56,000 today) by the end of April 1928. Having discovered no additional foundations, however, Hook could no more argue for an alternative location for the Washington birth site than he could corroborate claims that the obelisk marked the true site.<sup>16</sup>

Despite Rust's excitement over Hook's work, Charles Moore remained concerned about the possibility of creating an actual replica of Washington's birth site at Popes Creek. Toward the end of

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<sup>13</sup> Moore to O'Connor, 25 April 1925, and O'Connor to Moore, 15 June 1925, Wakefield Association files, FAC Records, RG 66, NAB.

<sup>14</sup> Beasley, “The Birthplace of a Chief,” p. 205, Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 84. Hook described his first day of work in Hook to War Department, 9 April 1926, Wakefield Files, FAC, RG 66, NAB. Folder “miscellaneous notes,” in NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA contains an 8 ½ “x 11” drawing of Hook's 1926 excavations.

<sup>15</sup> Rust, “Wakefield National Memorial Association, Report of the President.”

<sup>16</sup> The modern value of the commission reported by Rust is based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. Regarding Hook's work, see Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 84. David Rodnick's supplemental notes to his “Orientation Report” indicate that Hook was asked only to make measurements of the site; all archeological work was performed at his own personal expense and out of curiosity. See “Supplemental notes” appendix of Rodnick's final report, HFCA.

1926, Moore revealed in a letter to historian Lyon G. Tyler a startling difference of approach to the WNMA's project:

It is proposed by the Wakefield National Memorial Association to maintain the outlines at least of these foundations. The rest house and museum which the Association expects to build will be erected on a convenient site, but not on the birthplace site, which will show the outlines of the house. The new structure will show a house of the period, but of course, will not attempt to reproduce the Washington house.<sup>17</sup>

Moore certainly did not speak on behalf of the entire WNMA—which remained firmly committed to building an exact replica of the birth house—and one can only imagine Rust's outrage had she known that Moore entertained an alternative plan. Even at this early date, important individuals party to the Wakefield project had grave doubts about its wisdom.

Hook released his findings in three published reports. One of his reports emphasized the disconnect between the archeological record and local beliefs concerning the location and orientation of the birth site.<sup>18</sup> The War Department, unsettled by Hook's evaluation and skeptical about the WNMA's plans, sent its own representatives in 1927—including landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.—to assess the viability of the WNMA's plan. Olmsted's involvement reveals the severity of the War Department's concern. As inheritor of his father's landscape design legacy (Olmsted, Sr. is famous for designs including New York's Central Park and Chicago's 1893 Colombian Exhibition), Olmsted, Jr. championed scenic preservation during the early twentieth century and even drafted portions of the 1916 Act of Congress that authorized creation of the NPS. NPS Director Stephen Mather frequently called upon his expert advice and, in many ways, Olmsted, Jr. is responsible for the NPS's persistent efforts to preserve significant landscapes by facilitating—not blocking—public access.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Moore to Tyler, 10 November 1926, Wakefield Association files, FAC Records, RG 66, NAB. Also cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, n. 155, pp. 2-52 – 2-53.

<sup>18</sup> Rodnick cited in Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief," p. 205.

<sup>19</sup> Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design, Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), pp. 5-6. Carr discusses Olmsted's contributions to the history of NPS landscape design. Prior to visiting the Birthplace, Olmsted had just completed a project at the Lincoln Boyhood Home. See chapter 1 of Jill York O'Bright, "'There I Grew Up...,' A History of the Administration of Abraham Lincoln's Boyhood Home" 1987, <[www.nps.gov/libo/adhi/adhi1.htm](http://www.nps.gov/libo/adhi/adhi1.htm)> (15 May 2006).



At Wakefield, Olmsted, Jr. declared that construction of a replica house on the original site would not only be unwise but would constitute a serious interpretive blunder by giving visitors the impression that the reconstruction was in fact the actual house in which George Washington was born. Olmsted communicated these concerns directly to Charles Moore in a March 18, 1929 letter.<sup>20</sup> Additional pleas for caution came from Colonial Williamsburg visionary W.A.R. Goodwin. Despite these weighty admonitions, the WNMA did not relent and once Congress transferred the federal holdings at Wakefield from the War Department to the Department of the Interior on January 23, 1930, Rust no longer needed permission from the War Department to continue with her project.

The WNMA's persistence is astonishing in hindsight given the inconclusiveness of its own historical research. Washington family genealogist and WNMA Historian Charles Hoppin could not produce any primary documentation verifying the birth home's structural characteristics, location, or orientation. Hoppin admitted as much in 1926: "No picture of it [the house] or any part of it, and no list of anything that was in the house, indicative of either the size, style or character of the house, has ever been published, or in any way authentically presented in this country."<sup>21</sup> Hoppin seems to have been less concerned with determining the character of the house than with discrediting competing claims, particularly the popular depiction put forth in Benson J. Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*, which Hoppin called "utterly discredited and hopelessly inadequate."<sup>22</sup> So, by 1927, despite several excavations and extensive textual research, the WNMA had no other source for their memorial vision than local lore, the presumed placement of the Custis stone, and George Corbin Washington's 1813 demarcation of the sixty-foot square supposedly corresponding with the outline of the house's foundations.

Undeterred, the WNMA hired Washington, DC architect Edward Donn, Jr. to weave these various fragments of historical hearsay into plans for what the Association's granting legislation specified to be a replica of the actual birth house. Donn's first attempt featured a twenty by forty foot building

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<sup>20</sup> Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief," p. 205.

<sup>21</sup> Cited in Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 85.

<sup>22</sup> Hoppin cited in Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 85. Hoppin assails Lossing and Currier and Ives for spreading misinformation in his typically venomous fashion in Charles Arthur Hoppin, "Was Washington Born in a Cabin?" in *Antiques* (February 1931), pp. 98-101.

aligned along an east-west orientation. Donn simply could not make this proposal match the foundations excavated at the site. He drafted a new plan for an even larger building to completely contain the old foundations. The WNMA accepted it on October 17, 1927. The new plan proposed a fifty by thirty-eight foot building constructed along a north-south orientation.<sup>23</sup> As designed, the Memorial House was significantly larger than the foundations excavated in 1896 and oriented at a right angle to them. Nonetheless, the Washington family descendents accepted the plan as reflecting the sum of local memory and lore. Mrs. John B. (Mary Minor) Lightfoot—a niece of George Washington Ball—recalled a picture of the house owned by her uncle that featured ten dormers, four chimneys, and native brick exterior walls. Hoppin considered the correspondence between Lightfoot’s distant memory of the long-lost image and Donn’s plans the ultimate stamp of authenticity.<sup>24</sup> That the WNMA did not pay similar attention to oral history with regard to the location of the house—recall John E. Washington’s protests—is striking.

Finally, during the course of his preparatory excavations, Taylor discovered the foundation of a small chimney fifty feet west of the obelisk. All parties involved agreed that the chimney was in fact the one George Washington Parke Custis reported to be still standing in 1815. The WNMA incorporated the new discovery into its plans to build a reproduction colonial kitchen. Curiously, as Joy Beasley points out, tradition held that Custis erected his makeshift monument immediately adjacent to the chimney—not fifty feet away. That nobody recognized this discrepancy is remarkable and points to the precarious nature of planning leading to the creation of the memorial landscape at Washington’s Birthplace.<sup>25</sup>

The WNMA moved forward and by 1930 had obtained Congressional approval to continue with their work. O.G. Taylor excavated at the site of the proposed Memorial House one last time in September 1930 only to confirm the findings documented in 1881-82, 1896, and 1926. This would be the last time these foundations would ever be seen as FAC approval of the WNMA’s building plans approved destruction of the old foundations to make way for construction of the Memorial House. NPS landscape

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<sup>23</sup> Folder “miscellaneous notes,” NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA contains a large-format copy of Donn’s 20 October 1930 proposed plans for the reconstructed memorial house.

<sup>24</sup> Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 85.

<sup>25</sup> Beasley, “The Birthplace of a Chief,” p. 206.

architect Charles Peterson railed against the destruction. He called it “One of the most culpably destructive operations of which I have ever heard...a great archeological crime.” NPS Assistant Director Arno Cammerer wrote to Albright concerning Peterson’s reaction and expressed his hope that “Peterson will consider his opinions privately and not give voice to them publicly to our and his embarrassment.”<sup>26</sup> Albright did not intervene on behalf of the NPS and the WNMA proceeded with construction in 1930.

The WNMA’s construction of the Memorial House amid conflicting evidence regarding its original location and design raises questions about the group’s vision for the Monument. In part, the WNMA’s stubbornness implies a distrust of the then new field of historical archeology. It is also clear that the WNMA, under Rust, favored a sort of memorialization not wholly mediated by a concern for authenticity. Almost a decade after completion of the Memorial House, historian David Rodnick suggested that Rust had actually “prevailed upon the architect [Donn] to pattern the restoration along the lines of Twiford,” Rust’s own childhood home.<sup>27</sup> Whatever motivations informed the Memorial House’s design, it is undeniable that the WNMA created what would become the most challenging and consequently single most influential interpretive challenge bearing on the administration of the Monument to the present day. The inescapable irony and fortunate consequence of this oversight rests in the WNMA’s unwitting preservation of the actual birth site foundations by way of its own stubborn adherence to the Custis stone legacy.

### **Building X Uncovered, 1930-1932**

Even before work began on the Memorial House, however, Donn noticed a curious mound some hundred feet south of the building site and requested that Taylor dig an exploratory trench. Taylor uncovered the foundations of yet another building, this one far more substantial than the 1896 discovery. He described the discovery in a September 30, 1930 report to the FAC:

Only one foot under the surface a chimney foundation was discovered. Excavating was continued so far as we had any lead until we had uncovered a ‘U’ shaped building of considerable size. The long side is the bottom of the ‘U’, and it is 58 feet long and 19 feet wide. The

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<sup>26</sup> Beasley, “The Birthplace of a Chief,” p. 209.

<sup>27</sup> David Rodnick, “Orientation Report on the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, Virginia,” report prepared for the National Park Service, October 17, 1941, HFCA.

foundations are 18 inches thick and a cross wall, without any opening, divides the cellar into two rooms. The bottom of the cellar walls are from 5 to 7 feet below the surface, and there is a cellar fireplace in the extreme ends of each room (Image 12).<sup>28</sup>

Donn, startled by the size of the foundations (significantly larger than the presumed birth house foundations), sketched a plan of what the structure may have looked like and asked Hoppin for his opinion. Hoppin, ever concerned about protecting the reputation of the WNMA and not at all willing to delay construction of the Memorial House, brushed aside the obvious significance of the foundations Taylor referred to as “Building X.” He replied on October 24, 1930 that, “I do not believe that there is anything whatever, or ever was anything, that can or ever could alter the site of the birthhouse...I have no particular interest in the other buildings located elsewhere other than that their existence at one time or another proves that the birthhouse was solely used as a residence for the members of the Washington family.”<sup>29</sup>

Hoppin’s response did not allay Donn’s concerns. The Memorial House contractor, Edwin Conquest, remarked to a WNMA member during construction of the house that “Mr. Donn states that it is not his idea that the present building is to represent an exact reproduction of Washington’s birthplace.” Moreover, Donn expressed his desire to Albright that visitors might “stop using the word *replica* to describe the building he had designed as typical of the period.”<sup>30</sup> Later correspondence, however, seems to have convinced the architect of Hoppin’s position. Hoppin suggested that Building X actually represented a collection of outbuildings used to store belongings listed in a 1762 Washington household inventory that could not have all fit in the actual birth house. He further argued that servants likely occupied the outbuildings. Donn eventually accepted Hoppin’s arguments given that, from the Architect’s point of view, Building X could not have been a family residence because it had evidently begun as a single-room building. Donn also argued that the excavated fireplaces were not large enough for use in kitchens and so pointed to a non-domestic purpose for Building X.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Cited in Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 88.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, p. 490.

<sup>31</sup> Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, pp. 88-89.

Donn only voiced his change of opinion, though, after completion of the Memorial House in a December 10, 1932 letter to NPS Landscape Architect Charles Peterson.<sup>32</sup> Although Taylor uncovered Building X nearly two months prior to the beginning of work on the Memorial House, heated controversy surrounding the decision did not arise until after completion of the House.<sup>33</sup> This is not to say that suspicions had not already been roused. Moore, Donn, and Taylor all had reservations about the exact location of the house. As historian Joy Beasley argues, the very term “Building X” indicated an at least partial recognition of the site’s probable importance. After all, other sites uncovered during preliminary archeological investigations included a so-called “ice house” and the “barn site,” although no more evidence existed to support these conclusions than what had been discovered at the Building X site.<sup>34</sup> Given these very real concerns, it is unclear why neither the NPS nor the WNMA took steps to further investigate the location of Washington’s birth house. In hindsight, Donn’s justification of the Memorial House’s location rings strikingly naïve for an architect supposedly well versed in colonial Virginia architecture, regardless of the nascent state of historical archeology during that period. Hoppin’s arguments clearly served to protect the famously irascible historian’s own reputation.

Most notable among the voices missing from these early conversations are those of Josephine Rust and Horace Albright. Rust had fallen ill by the time of the Building X discovery and would soon die; it is likely that the WNMA sheltered her from controversy during her last days. Albright’s silence regarding the Building X question is understandable in hindsight. The WNMA sought to complete its project by 1932 in time for the Washington Bicentennial, which had already begun to generate national excitement. The Director understood that the free publicity afforded by the Bicentennial would bolster the NPS’s debut on the historic preservation scene. Given the NPS’s lack of resources, both human and financial, Albright had no choice but to follow the WNMA’s lead to have the site ready in such short order. Moreover, the fields of historic preservation and historical archeology had only begun to be professionalized by the early 1930s and it was not then immediately evident what was at stake at

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<sup>32</sup> Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 88.

<sup>33</sup> Rodnick, “Orientation Report,” p. 63.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

Wakefield.<sup>35</sup> The NPS certainly did not possess the sort of professional staff necessary to undertake such a project and perhaps underestimated the WNMA's determination and ability to leave its own mark on the Monument.

So, as work commenced on the Memorial House, Taylor backfilled the Building X site and at the Monument's formal dedication ceremony on May 14, 1932, speeches by Secretary of the Interior Wilbur and WNMA Vice President Mrs. Anthony Wayne Cook lauded the fruits of their cooperative effort without raising the specter of archeological controversy.<sup>36</sup> But rumors began circulating even before the Monument's dedication. In a 1932 memo to the Director, NPS Chief Historian Verne Chatelain described "read doubt [in media circles] that the birth site itself is correctly located, not to mention the house."<sup>37</sup> If Albright and the NPS did in fact look the other way for the sake of expediency, Chatelain demonstrated that their decision to do so had already begun to reap repercussions. Indeed, the decisions and events of 1930 to 1932, especially as they bear on interpretation, continue to resonate today.

### **Archeological Planning and Controversy, 1932-1940**

Excavations leading to construction of the Memorial House and to the discovery of Building X constituted only two archeological fronts during the WNMA's memorialization campaign of 1930 to 1932. Before transferring its property to the NPS in 1931, yet while still enjoying the services of NPS Engineer Taylor, the WNMA turned its attention to the Washington family burial ground. Taylor uncovered another foundation just under two hundred feet southeast of the burial ground. Taylor and the

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<sup>35</sup> Historical archeology, unlike traditional archeology, which studies the artifacts of pre-historic life, is concerned with the material remains of modern cultures. As practiced in the United States, "modern" generally refers to the years proceeding European discovery and settlement of North America. The NPS employed a number of qualified archeologists by the 1930s, especially given the importance of archeology in the southwestern parks. It would have had difficulty, however, finding individuals capable of appreciating the archeological subtleties—such as postholes and garbage pits—typical of the often impermanent construction common in colonial Virginia. The classic introduction to historical archeology is James Deetz, *Invitation to Archaeology* (Garden City, NY: The Natural History Press, 1967). For a more recent discussion of historical archeology, especially with regard to its emphasis on colonialism and capitalism, see Charles E. Orser, Jr., *A Historical Archaeology of the Modern World* (New York & London: Plenum Press, 1996). It is evident, however, that by 1937 the NPS recognized at least some difference between history and archeology—a survey of park resources issued that year inquires about "historical *and* archeological data" (italics are mine). See Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, p. 274.

<sup>36</sup> See copy of address by Mrs. Anthony Wayne Cook at the 14 May 1932 transfer ceremony in folder "Transfer to Govt.," NPS Records Box 6 of 26, GEWA. This file also contains a variety of periodical coverage of the opening ceremonies.

<sup>37</sup> Chatelain to Bryant and Demaray, 5 March 1932, file "publicity matter" in NPS Records Box 17 of 25, GEWA.

WNMA presumed this fourteen-by-twenty-foot brick foundation to be part of the Colonel John Washington homestead. Additional findings in the area, including a casement window, suggested the presence of an even larger house.<sup>38</sup>

Following the transfer of Monument property to the government, the NPS assumed control of all archeological explorations although the WNMA still financed various digs. This was the case in 1934 when a reinvestigation of the John Washington site near the burial ground revealed a 1679 coin and personalized bottle seals.<sup>39</sup> Further excavations closer to the Potomac River revealed another brick foundation assumed to mark an outbuilding associated with the original Henry Brooks homestead. Although relevant to the Monument's mission, these digs—some distance away from the birth site—may have been intended to draw attention away from controversy surrounding Building X. An additional, purely accidental discovery on March 30, 1935, however, refocused attention back on the core historic area. Park staff happened upon a fourteen-foot square brick floor and foundation just west of the Colonial Kitchen. Hough and his staff assumed this structure to be the remains of a smokehouse.<sup>40</sup>

Interest in archeological resources was certainly not limited to Washington's Birthplace. In fact, the 1935 Historic Sites and Building Act made identification and preservation of archeological resources a federal mandate in the parks. The Act's requirement that parks survey historic and archeological sites, investigate them, and erect tablets and, in some cases, restore lost structures resonated at a park whose archeological context had created so much concern only years prior.<sup>41</sup> Superintendent Hough, spurred by the discovery of foundations near the burial ground and eager to once and for all lay to rest the Building X controversy, sought desperately for ways to sponsor a park-wide archeological survey. A Virginia Economic Relief Act (VERA) program looked promising during the fall of 1934. VERA offered as much labor as necessary for the project but could only provide \$42 per month for a supervisor, not enough to

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<sup>38</sup> Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 89.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 358 and Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, pp. 51-52.

employ a qualified archeologist.<sup>42</sup> Undeterred and motivated by the smokehouse discovery, Hough drafted a full-fledged archeological program in March 1936. He proposed to investigate seven sites and to launch an “exploratory survey near the mansion house for Henry Brooke’s [*sic*] dwelling” with labor provided by CCC camp SP-19 and supervised jointly by historian Oscar F. Northington, Jr. and assistant architects Stuart Barnette and H. Summerfield Day.<sup>43</sup>

Director Cammerer approved the plan on March 25, 1936, and work began that spring. Much to Hough’s dismay, the excavations at Building X supported exactly the conclusion he had hoped to dispel. Excavations revealed, “a substantial multi-cellared brick foundation enclosing an ash and burned rubble layer...strongly suggest[ing] that Building X, rather than the foundation sealed beneath the Memorial House, was the true Wakefield. An additional 14,000 artifacts unearthed at the site further supported this conclusion.”<sup>44</sup> Still convinced that the Memorial House did, indeed, mark the original birth site, Hough’s excitement to uncover Building X cooled by the fall of 1936 and sources suggest that the superintendent may have attempted to cover up the evidence. Acting Chief of research A.P. Stauffer reported that, although he and the committee appointed to inspect the foundations (including Regional Historian Roy Appleman, Day, Barnette, and Northington) “were strongly of the opinion that the foundations should be left uncovered until the committee has an opportunity to examine them again,” Hough pushed vigorously to backfill the discovery.<sup>45</sup> Ironically, Hough’s obstinacy in this matter may very well have undermined his own archeological agenda. The real significance of Building X could not be disguised forever and

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<sup>42</sup> Hough: “An offer was made by the Virginia Relief Administration to supply as much labor as we need for archaeological research, but the top wages they can offer for a supervisor is \$42 per month. This means but one thing and that is we will be unable to secure competent direction. The National Park Service states that they cannot supply supervision for our archaeological project; hence this entire opportunity is lost for the balance of this year at least, and for the third time we have lost the benefit of free labor.” SMR, July 1935, GEWA. Hough provides further details concerning this situation in his December 1934 monthly report and 1935 annual report. \$42 is roughly equivalent to \$550 today based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>43</sup> For Hough’s notes regarding various archeological finds prompting his proposal and comments concerning the necessity of additional archeological work for drafting a master plan, see SMR, March 1935 & May 1935, and Superintendent’s Annual Report (SAR), 1935, GEWA. See Rodnick, “Orientation Report,” p. 69 for a thorough discussion of work performed under Hough’s plan. Additional details are contained in SAR, 1936, GEWA.

<sup>44</sup> Beasley, “The Birthplace of a Chief,” p. 212.

<sup>45</sup> Stauffer to Branch Spalding (unidentified NPS official), 19 October 1936, file “H2215 Historical Research GEWA” in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.



Hough would eventually have to come to terms with the reality of the archeological situation at Popes Creek.

Other problems complicated Hough's archeological program. There was no shortage of labor though, according to Hough, "the CCC boys haven't much instinct to punish themselves." Additionally, supervision remained partial as Day apparently vanished from the scene and Northington and Barnette spent alternating weeks at Wakefield and Fredericksburg. Budget cutbacks resulted in the termination of Hough's archeological program by the end of 1936.<sup>46</sup> Hough attempted to revive the program but admitted in April 1937 that "much to our regret it appears as though our archeological program has completely collapsed by failure to secure a supervisor. It does seem a shame that since we can get free labor from a CCC camp that for lack of a supervisor the entire opportunity is lost."<sup>47</sup> Hough had good reason to be upset. Although skepticism concerning the Wakefield restoration had always existed at various levels of the NPS, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes himself found the results of Hough's 1936 archeological program too provocative to ignore.

Determined to settle the Memorial House's status as a replica, Ickes requested an investigation by A.P. Stauffer of the Branch of Historic Sites regarding the construction of the Memorial House and by Stuart Barnette regarding the authenticity of the building. The current whereabouts of these reports are unknown and, in fact, both vanished relatively soon after being submitted. Fortunately, Ickes' administrative assistant Leona Graham did copy portions of Stauffer's report for Assistant Secretary Burlew on July 9, 1937. Although not complete, Graham's memo—which begins, "Conclusion: that the

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<sup>46</sup> SMR, April 1936 and December 1936, GEWA. Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief," p. 213.

<sup>47</sup> SMR, April 1937, GEWA. Hough further described the situation: "Here we are frankly disappointed since with free labor available we are obliged to do nothing because no supervisor can be supplied. The monument is about to receive delivery of a special truck and spend over \$600 of our funds for this work, yet it seems now there won't be any work to do. Attempts are being made to interest the Association in obtaining the cooperation of the Carnegie Institution, who might supply the supervision, since the Park service cannot furnish such a man. Archeology is felt to be our basic opportunity for research, since all the records so far studied have produced so little information. Here in the ground some day will be found most of the information to be had about this place." SMR, May 1937, GEWA.

design at Wakefield is not authentic”—indicates that backfilling was not enough to keep the specter of Building X long out of view.<sup>48</sup>

Graham’s memo shows us that Stauffer criticized the WNMA for proceeding with its work without any documentation of the original house. He pointed out that the Association only attempted a replica “as nearly as may be practicable.” Moreover, Barnette’s report—according to Stauffer—“raises serious question as to whether the restoration is even typical of Colonial Virginia dwellings.” Stauffer argued that although the WNMA’s granting legislation specifically called for the erection of a replica, both the FAC and the NPS had been complicit in allowing “deviation from the statutory requirements respecting authenticity of design.” The NPS’s defense against Stauffer’s accusations of complicity is also summarized in Graham’s memo. It was the WNMA’s responsibility, after all, to observe its own congressional mandate. And had not the FAC been named by congress to approve all construction plans (a condition wisely inserted by Albright into the original legislation)? Finally, “there was...lacking the professional historical approach [then] that appears to prevail in the Service today.” Indeed, the NPS Branch of Historic Sites and Buildings had not even come into being as of 1931. And, most importantly, the WNMA’s granting legislation did not even require the NPS to become involved in the project until after the Association had completed construction of its replica building.

Finally, Stauffer criticized the WNMA for not paying due attention to the archeological work undertaken by Hook and Taylor. Why did the WNMA—including Donn—ignore archeological evidence that clearly revealed the Memorial House plans to be inaccurate? Graham’s memo suggests that the Association’s determination to complete the Memorial House in time for Washington’s 200<sup>th</sup> birthday “would preclude careful historic research or consideration of archeological findings.” But the memo also questioned Rust’s own motivations and raised the question of Twiford and its likely influence on the Memorial House design.

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<sup>48</sup> Untitled folder in NPS Records Box 16 of 25, GEWA contains file no. 112, “statements as to original place” containing testimonials by local residents regarding the location of the original house. This file also contains the 9 July 1937 Graham memorandum. Graham indicates that Barnette submitted his report on May 10, 1937.

These reports convinced Ickes that, if nothing else, the marker identifying and explaining the Memorial House's significance could no longer claim the structure to be either a replica or a reproduction of Washington's birth house. Thus began a long and heated controversy between the NPS and the WNMA with regard to the authenticity of the Memorial House and its consequent interpretation.<sup>49</sup> In a last attempt to verify the authenticity of the Memorial House, FAC chairman and WNMA official Charles Moore requested that noted historical architect Fiske Kimball—whom Moore considered “the best authority on Colonial architecture”—offer his opinion on the Building X question. Kimball concluded in September 1937 that the foundations beneath the Memorial house were “inadequate for those of Washington's birthplace” and that there was “no escape from the belief that [Building X remains] were the foundations of the mansion house.”<sup>50</sup>

These various reports galvanized relations between Hough, NPS officials, and the WNMA. Hough and the WNMA clung tenaciously to the belief that the Memorial House was in fact a replica of Washington's birth house. The curious disappearance of so many official documents concerning the controversy left their position relatively unassailable. As noted above, only excerpts remain from Ickes' requested evaluation. Moreover, no official reports of the 1936 excavations had reached NPS files. Stuart Barnette—who had become primarily responsible for the project—never submitted a final report and had since relocated to another project. During the spring of 1939, Acting Supervisor of Historic Sites Francis Ronalds confronted Chief of the Branch of Plans and Design Thomas Vint about the situation: “In view of the primary importance of Washington's Birthplace and the many problems presented by the existence of such large and pretentious foundations as those of Building X, it is suggested that Mr. Barnette be asked to complete his report and measured drawings at an early date.”<sup>51</sup> Vint recognized the particular sensitivity of this problem especially as it bore on the then very public controversy surrounding Building X. Within a week he sent another memo increasing the pressure on Acting Regional Director

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<sup>49</sup> Rodnick, “Orientation Report,” p. 88.

<sup>50</sup> Rodnick, “Orientation Report,” p. 89 and Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 213.

<sup>51</sup> Ronalds to Vint, 11 May 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, National Archives, Mid-Atlantic Region, Philadelphia, PA (NAMAR).

Herbert Evison to account for the oversight adding that “it seems to me vitally important that a full and complete record of this archeological work be placed in the records in order that no criticism of this service’s responsibilities in this regard can be offered.” Evison responded bluntly that Barnette had been relocated to Salem, Massachusetts, and would not be able to recommence work on the report for some time.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Rodnick Report**

Bureaucratic complications aside, Hough’s 1935 archeological program had uncovered substantial evidence to support the argument that Building X was indeed the remains of Washington’s actual birth house. Even so, neither Hough nor the WNMA were willing to accept the findings. In early 1939 the superintendent explained his position to Harry Lee Rust, the WNMA’s secretary and Josephine Rust’s widower. Hough understood that the NPS had “come to the conclusion that the present memorial mansion does not mark the site of the house in which George Washington was born,” but he still believed that “Mr. Custis must have been correct in 1815.”<sup>53</sup> The superintendent managed to coordinate a conference in January 1939 to reconsider the problem. The result was yet another plan for a large-scale archeological investigation to settle the Building X question and, in Hough’s mind, once and for all put to rest any suspicions that the Memorial House did not mark the actual site of Washington’s birth.<sup>54</sup> By September 1941, the program began, “calculated to reveal the entire story of the homes of John and Augustine Washington at Bridges and Popes Creeks respectively. It is anticipated that the work will extend through several years and will be obliged to temporarily destroy the beauty of our grounds while trenching work proceeds.” CCC SP-19 senior foreman and historian, David Rodnick arrived at the site on

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<sup>52</sup> Vint to Evison, 20 May 1939, includes attached copy of a memo dated 11 May 1939 from Ronalds; Evison to Director Cammerer, 26 May 1939 (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

<sup>53</sup> Hough to Rust, 14 January 1939, file “H2215 Historical Research GEWA” in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>54</sup> Hough declared in his 1940 Annual Report that the “Monument needs a complete archeological research program, followed by the reconditioning of the several outbuildings in order to present a more authentic picture of the colonial home place.”

August 28 and took charge of the program. Hough greeted Rodnick's arrival with enthusiasm and felt assured that "this long needed work we feel will greatly improve our knowledge of the area."<sup>55</sup>

Rodnick's work certainly did "greatly improve" knowledge of the area, but not at all in the way Hough had hoped or imagined. The archeology program generated considerable local interest. The Fredericksburg *Free-Lance Star* announced "Excavations Planned to Find Exact Site of Washington Home."<sup>56</sup> Hough chaffed at that particular headline, throwing doubt as it did on his firm belief that the Memorial House already did mark the exact site of Washington's birth home. But for Hough, the worst had yet to come. The beginning of American involvement in World War II meant the end of NPS cooperation with the CCC at Wakefield and, in addition to heightening an already severe labor shortage, brought Hough's archeological program to a halt by December 5 when it was announced that Camp SP-19 was scheduled for transfer to Quantico, Virginia.<sup>57</sup> Faced with this change of circumstances, Rodnick devoted his four months of service at Popes Creek to a thorough evaluation of all documents and records relating to the Building X controversy. "Orientation Report on the George Washington Birthplace National Monument," released in October 1941, instantly revived the Building X controversy.<sup>58</sup> Not surprisingly, the report demonstrated that Building X did in fact mark the original site. Hough bellowed with dismay. An article on the front page of the *Washington Post* asked, "was a mistake made 10 years ago in erecting the memorial mansion at Wakefield, Va., birthplace of George Washington?"<sup>59</sup> A befuddled though defensive Hough responded, "while the bulk of the article was favorable to the monument, its headline and introduction cast doubt on the location of the memorial mansion, and it has hurt the place."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> SMR, September and August, 1941, GEWA.

<sup>56</sup> "Excavations Planned to Find Exact Site of Washington Home" in *Free-Lance Star* (October 27, 1941).

<sup>57</sup> SMR, December 1941.

<sup>58</sup> Copies of Rodnick's report are available in several locations including the GEWA and library, the National Archives in College Park, MD, and at the Harpers Ferry Center in Harpers Ferry, WV. The Harpers Ferry Center possesses the most complete Rodnick materials including drafts of the report, addenda, and Rodnick's own handwritten research notes.

<sup>59</sup> Edward T. Folliard, "CCC Spades Stir Controversy On Washington's Birth Site; Controversy On Wakefield Stirred Anew" in *The Washington Post* (Oct 26, 1941), pp. 1, 2.

<sup>60</sup> SMR, October 1941, GEWA.

In reality, Rodnick's report did not forward any conclusions or evidence that had not already been in circulation at one time or another. It did however condense all the various debates surrounding Building X into one official document while providing a very frank and oftentimes condemnatory evaluation of the motivations and decision-making processes leading to and following the construction of the Memorial House. No one had, until this point, publicly and officially held the WNMA accountable for its work at Wakefield and, even more significant, no one prior to Rodnick—save A.P. Stauffer whose report to Ickes mysteriously vanished—had so blatantly challenged Hoppin's authority in the matter. Rodnick took special pains to dismiss the tentative conclusions arrived at by Hough and others following the 1935 excavations at Wakefield. Given that these conclusions found their only official expression in Hough's September 1936 monthly report suggests that the superintendent may have taken specific umbrage with this portion of the report. Rodnick devoted several pages to dispelling Hough's notion that Building X could not be the original site due to its obvious structural accumulation over time, its orientation overlooking Popes Creek, a lack of building hardware uncovered during excavation, and the presence there of nineteenth-century artifacts.<sup>61</sup> The report specifically discredits Hoppin's various unsubstantiated statements about the history of the original house. It also sheds serious doubt on the credibility of the NPS's own handling of research materials with specific reference to the lost Stauffer-Barnette report.<sup>62</sup>

Needless to say, reactions to the Rodnick report within the NPS were many and varied. Recently minted Director Newton B. Drury dashed off a letter to WNMA President Louise du Pont Crowninshield even before formal review of the report had ended. Drury indicated that the evidence would demand "the formulation of a plan for exhibition of those foundations" and that the Memorial House would eventually "house and display the many pieces of Washingtonia" donated by the WNMA as well as artifacts excavated at the site.<sup>63</sup> Fiske Kimball, when asked his opinion, reiterated his long-standing belief that Building X was the original house and suggested to Supervisor of Historic Sites Ronald Lee that once

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<sup>61</sup> Rodnick, "Orientation Report," pp. 76-81.

<sup>62</sup> See Rodnick, "Orientation Report," p. 80 on Hoppin and pp. 86-88 on the missing documents.

<sup>63</sup> Drury to Crowninshield, 21 November 1941, file "homesite controversy" in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

Moore and Hoppin “have passed from the scene, it might be good to pull down the memorial mansion.”<sup>64</sup>

Kimball also suggested creating a model of the “whole group, which could be exhibited and serve as a corrective of any misconceptions.”

Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites Roy Appleman’s official comments lavished the report with praise. Following several minor suggestions for adjusting grammar and tone (Appleman seemed eager to slightly lessen the blow to the WNMA, at least on paper), he concluded:

Finally, I wish to say that in my opinion this report reaches a very high degree of objectivity and of careful scientific analysis of available facts and that it is something of a masterpiece in its synthesis and presentation of the various materials, a great proportion of which was somewhat confused and difficult to integrate. This report is the best of its kind that I have seen prepared by park Service personnel.<sup>65</sup>

Appleman’s remarks capture the general tone of the NPS’s reaction. Lee forwarded the comments to Drury with an attached note asking, “will you see if Mr. Albright’s article can be located...we should begin prep. [*sic*] of memo to secty. [*sic*].” Lee referred to Albright’s 1931 *New York Times* piece lauding the authenticity of the reconstruction at Wakefield.<sup>66</sup> Rodnick’s report reverberated throughout the NPS and those in power quickly turned their thoughts to damage control and reputation maintenance.

Most striking, however, are Hough’s various responses. Although the Superintendent filed a formal response in January 1942, he labored long and hard over the form and style of his response. Rodnick’s report more-or-less officially discredited Hough’s belief that the Memorial House marked the site of the birth house. Not surprisingly, the superintendent did not relinquish his position without some difficulty. Hough explained as much in his official response: “what comments to make on this report is a matter over which I have thought a great deal. I have written at least six memoranda, only to believe that none were adequate.” He continues:

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<sup>64</sup> Kimball to Lee, 18 December 1941, (Box 2214) file 207, National Park Service Records, Central Classified Files, RG 79, NAB.

<sup>65</sup> Roy Appleman official comments, 5 January 1942, (Box 2214) file 207, National Park Service Records, Central Classified Files, RG 79, NAB.

<sup>66</sup> Albright actually wrote two such articles for the *New York Times*, it is not clear which one Lee referred to. See Horace Albright, “Wakefield Washington Shrine Was Begun after Long Study” in *New York Times*, 19 July 1931, p. XX6; and Horace Albright, “Washington’s Boyhood Homes: The Place Held by Wakefield” in *New York Times*, 29 March 1931, p. X16.

As I view the matter what we primarily need is a decision of policy. It should be determined for once and for all whether the place is a Memorial – or a Restoration.

Shortly after Mr. Chatelain took office as the first Historian in the Park Service it was decided that we were a memorial. It is the only safe ground upon which we can stand. For nearly ten years we have interpreted the place as a Memorial and nearly 600,000 visitors have enjoyed it as such. We feel that criticism now of the place as an unauthentic restoration is unwarranted, ill timed and unfortunate.

If and when the time comes that research can prove what the home in which Washington was born was like, we feel that the proper thing to do is to gracefully remove the Memorial Mansion and construct a replica. Until such time comes we should continue to interpret the building as a Memorial House. We feel that to do otherwise is to lose sight of the larger values of the Monument and our responsibility to the public. After all, we have custody of Washington's Birthplace – and it is our duty to protect and administer it for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.

Our greatest value is the inherent quality of the place. It has fine esthetic and sentimental value as well as historic association. We do have certain positive values which cannot be denied, and they should be protected.

The work of building and furnishing the Memorial mansion has been done by patriotic and unselfish ladies as a tribute to George Washington and his parents. Under the circumstances no one could have done better. That their efforts have been successful seems amply vouched for by the thousands upon thousands of expressions of appreciation received from the public.

The public, as I view it, is the jury which will say finally what is right and what is wrong, and after all it is the public whom we are employed to serve.<sup>67</sup>

A note attached to a copy of Hough's response—presumably in the superintendent's handwriting—includes what appear to be additional thoughts on the Building X situation: "Suggest the mansion be not taken down, at least not in the immediate future;" "that the mansion be considered a museum housing period furniture;" and "that attention be focused on building X as the birthplace."

Hough's response clearly conveys a sense of disappointment and a concern for preserving both the integrity of the Monument and its relationship with the WNMA. Earlier drafts of his response are significantly less restrained. In one draft, Hough accused Rodnick of bias claiming, "it is evident that the author performed this work while Acting on the preconceived conclusion that the present Memorial mansion had been built on the wrong site." Another attempt speaks to what must have been a tense

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<sup>67</sup> Hough to Director Drury, 7 January 1942, (Box 2214) file 207, National Park Service Records, Central Classified Files, RG 79, NAB.



relationship between researcher and superintendent declaring “I have done my best to play ball with Dr. Rodnick.” An especially bitter draft claimed outright ineptitude:

Apparently the present program is dedicated to disprove Washington’s Birthplace without evidence—only on conclusions of inexperienced men or men of limited research, timid men who may be scholarly but are of limited vision and appreciation...Instead, what we need is a member of the Mon. [sic] staff, in sympathy with the finer aspects of this place, dedicated to learn the simple truth—to proceed slowly with as little disruption of the place as possible...After all, this is Washington’s Birthplace, and it has been dedicated to the use and enjoyment of the people. It is our duty to protect it and make it useful to the people. What is presented should be direct and affirmative. Since there appears no possibility of ever being able to offer a restoration—why discredit the present memorial buildings. It is bound to alienate the Association ladies who have done a fine job here in a purely patriotic spirit, at considerable cost of time and money. None have sought personal credit—only meaning to honor George Washington and his parents.<sup>68</sup>

Hough’s emphasis here on the public’s role as jury and on the importance of honoring the WNMA’s contribution is significant. Although his official response, when considered in light of previous less measured drafts, demonstrated the superintendent’s willingness to resolve the matter by way of policy, its call to defer to public opinion—a significant theme within the drafts as well—suggests the beginnings of a divide between Hough’s interpretive vision and the NPS’s own increasingly professional vision. Hough’s inability to accept Rodnick’s conclusions reveals his reluctance to accept the validity of new modes of historical investigation—specifically, historical archeology.

Surprisingly enough, despite the quality and vigor of Rodnick’s report, doubts persisted beyond Hough’s own reservations. Although debate concerning Building X remained on the back burner during the war years, responses to Rodnick’s report resurfaced soon thereafter. In 1947, regional archeologist J.C. Harrington cautioned the Regional Director against making any final conclusions “until full and complete information on the site is secured.”<sup>69</sup> Although it is not clear what more information could be secured—two excavations had already more-or-less ravaged the site—Harrington’s position surely bolstered Hough’s feelings on the subject. Still, there is evidence that even Hough had come to doubt his

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<sup>68</sup> See unlabeled file in NPS Records Box 17 of 25, GEWA, for a variety of correspondence regarding Rodnick’s report. Of most interest are several drafts of Hough’s official response to Rodnick’s report that are far more impassioned than the official response. Additional copies of these various drafts can be found in a manila envelope in NPS Records Box 21 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>69</sup> Harrington to Regional Director, 27 August 1947, file “history” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

own position on Building X by the late 1940s. In a letter to a fellow superintendent, Hough outlined his argument and wondered if its premises were legitimate:

If you have been good enough to follow me thus far, may I ask you as a friend, this question. You majored in History, and I want to ask you as an Historian, do you consider this case a good case? I had good training in science and I'll admit that it isn't scientifically sound. But I can't help but feel that the case is true none the less. Have I got a point worth taking up with my historical superiors to see if we may say on the sign that the memorial house marks the site of the original house?<sup>70</sup>

Still, to whatever extent Hough may have questioned his own rationale, it is clear that he still held dear to his original position. A visitor handbook penned by Hough in 1951 makes no mention of Building X as a possible site of the birth house and somewhat elliptically remarks “there are various possible solutions, but none are conclusive.”<sup>71</sup> The NPS also remained, on paper at least, ambivalent about the Building X controversy. Not long after Hough's death, however, an anonymous letter to park ranger and historian Carl Flemer revealed that “as it stands we are almost positive that the site of the birth home is...where building “x” is located” and that “one of the first things the new superintendent will have to do will be to revise all signs which are not correct.”<sup>72</sup>

### **Signs and Meaning at Washington's Birthplace**

Both Hough's letter to superintendent Hummel and the anonymous letter to Carl Flemer refer to perhaps the most immediate problem resulting from the discovery and study of Building X: how to word the interpretive sign in front of the Memorial House. Though the wording of a sign may seem inconsequential, the Memorial House placard came to mark the metaphorical battleground upon which the WNMA and the NPS fought to assert their understandings of the historical value of the Memorial House. In 1931, Moore requested that Donn cast an inscribed metal tablet to be placed in front of the Memorial

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<sup>70</sup> The recipient is identified only as “Hummel.” This is most likely Edward A. Hummel who served as superintendent of Colonial National Historical Park from 1946 to 1952. Hough to Hummel, 25 February 1947, file “H22-Misc. Historical data” in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>71</sup> “Material For a 56-Page Historic Handbook on George Washington Birthplace National Monument by Philip R. Hough, Superintendent,” submitted to Regional Director, Region One, 11 January 1951 in NPS Records, Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA, p. 19.

<sup>72</sup> Anonymous to Flemer, 16 February 1954, file “early correspondence, in-coming” in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

House explaining the significance of Washington's birth site and the WNMA's role at Wakefield.<sup>73</sup>

Donn agreed and the WNMA approved the following inscription at its November 30, 1931 meeting:

George Washington was born on this spot February 22, 1732, in a house built by his father, Augustine Washington, about 1718. He devised the estate to his son Augustine (1720-1762), in 1743. From 1743 to 1748 George Washington here spent a portion of his youth. In 1762, the estate passed to William Augustine Washington, the last occupant of the house, which burned December 25, 1780, and was never rebuilt. His grandson Lewis W. Washington in 1858, conveyed the site of the birthplace to Virginia, and in 1882, Virginia conveyed it to the United States. A monument erected in 1896, marked the site until removed to its present location in 1931. In 1923 the Wakefield National Memorial Association was organized to recover the lands of the Washingtons and to restore the birthplace of George Washington and the burial ground of his ancestors. The Association under the presidency of Mrs. H.L. Rust, Sr. with the consent of the government, accomplished its object, Edward W. Donn, Jr., F.A.I.A., being the architect. The golden book of Wakefield records the names of the patriotic givers. In February 1932, an estate of 367 acres was turned over to the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, to be administered forever as the George Washington Birthplace National Monument at Wakefield. *The house is not a copy of the original: it is typical of Virginia houses of the period* [italics added].<sup>74</sup>

That Moore asked Donn to write the inscription rather than WNMA historian Charles Hoppin is telling and understandable in hindsight. Historian Charles Hosmer notes that "Hoppin had never respected Moore's sense of history."<sup>75</sup> Hoppin's frequent tirades in the press and in private correspondence demonstrate that the cantankerous historian rarely respected anyone's sense of history save his own. But Hoppin found Moore especially frustrating. Despite his continued support of the WNMA, Moore had always questioned the veracity of the Memorial House. That Moore exercised a veto on the WNMA by way of his affiliation with the FAC no doubt added to the threat perceived by Hoppin. Still, Hoppin could not contain his rage upon reading the last sentence of Donn's inscription. Where Donn had done his best to succinctly explain a complicated design process, Hoppin perceived a direct and pointed refutation of his own research.

The WNMA mounted its bronze tablet with Donn's inscription atop a stone pedestal in front of the Memorial House in 1931 (Images 13 & 14). Soon thereafter, Hoppin launched a campaign to have the placard removed and enlisted the assistance of W. Lanier Washington who still chaffed at the claim that

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<sup>73</sup> Hosmer provides the best account of these events in *Preservation Comes of Age*, beginning on p. 490.

<sup>74</sup> See Flemer notebooks as cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.20.

<sup>75</sup> Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, p. 492.

the Birthplace had been deeded to the government by the Commonwealth of Virginia and not by the Washington family (see chapter 1). Washington dashed off a scathing letter of complaint to WNMA Vice President Mrs. Anthony Wayne Cook in 1932 explaining his own grievance and requesting that Hoppin be granted authority in the matter.<sup>76</sup> Although Washington signed this letter, its tone is suspiciously reminiscent of Hoppin's own style and it is possible that Hoppin penned the letter himself on behalf of Washington.

Authorship notwithstanding, the complaint had its desired effect and soon drew Horace Albright into the fray. Ever one to avoid a controversy, Albright discussed the matter with Associate Director Demaray and, recognizing the lingering volatility of Hoppin's besmirched reputation, agreed in early 1933 to have the placard removed going as far as to wipe the slate clear by having Hough's own correspondence on the sign crisis removed from NPS files.<sup>77</sup> WNMA President Worthington asked that Hough take down the sign and place it in storage. Hough did so and additionally removed the stone pedestal and concrete base—which weighed over a ton—on January 30, 1933.<sup>78</sup>

In the wake of the 1931-33 sign crisis, the NPS tread lightly on matters of memorialization by means of placards and signs. In 1934, for example, the Daughters of the Cincinnati requested permission to plant a memorial tree at the Monument. Demaray explained to Hough that “there is no objection to the planting of a tree but we must avoid tablets and ceremonies which form the beginning of a long series.”<sup>79</sup> Caution alone, however, could not solve the problem of how to accurately and equitably explain the Memorial House to the public. The NPS made its own attempt to solve this problem, and on May 5, 1938 posted a new sign with both more measured language and with the approval of Secretary Ickes:

George Washington Birthplace National Monument established January 23, 1930. The memorial house was erected 1930-1931 by the Wakefield National Memorial Association under the authority of Congress. George Washington was born near this site on February 22, 1732. The original home built by his father Augustine, 1723-1726, was occupied by him until 1735.

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<sup>76</sup> Washington to Cook, 19 September 1932, file “early correspondence, in-coming” in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>77</sup> See SMR, April 1932, GEWA; and Albright to Worthington, 7 January 1933, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. Curiously, Hough thought the central issue in the sign crisis “hinges on the point as to who gave title to the federal government in 1882”—see SAR, January 1933, GEWA.

<sup>78</sup> SMR, January 1933, GEWA.

<sup>79</sup> Demaray to Hough, 9 March 1934, in (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

According to family tradition the house was burned during the Revolutionary War. This house is neither a reproduction nor a facsimile of the original. Its design follows a Virginia type plantation house of the eighteenth century.<sup>80</sup>

The NPS may have gone ahead with the new sign expecting that the WNMA, under the leadership of President Crowninshield, would be more amenable to a frank account of the Monument. If so, the NPS evidently overestimated Crowninshield's influence. Still sensitive about the credibility of their restorative project, the WNMA erupted in anger.<sup>81</sup>

In January 1939, the WNMA bypassed the NPS completely and wrote directly to Senator Carter Glass complaining that the sign "is in direct opposition to the aims and objectives of the" Association and "neither does it agree with Secretary Wilbur's speech of acceptance when this property was presented to the United States government by the above named association in 1932." Responses arrived from Senator Glass and Assistant Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Cloperman, but neither satisfied the WNMA.<sup>82</sup> Undeterred, the WNMA turned to their old mainstay, Charles Hoppin. In typical fashion, Hoppin issued a scathing letter to Josephine Rust's widower—who had since become the WNMA's secretary—attempting to discern exactly what the situation was at Washington's Birthplace and further inquiring as to the status of the Log House for which Hoppin presumed the NPS was attempting a hostile takeover.<sup>83</sup> Some portion of this outcry must have caught the NPS's ear for in October 1939, following a visit to the Park, Acting Assistant Director J. R. White wrote to Hough, "the wording of the sign at the park entrance, particularly where it says, "This house is neither a reproduction nor a facsimile of the original," is most deterrent to travel. I shall take up with the Director the possibility of changing the wording on this

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<sup>80</sup> See Flemer notebooks as cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.20.

<sup>81</sup> In his May 1938 SMR, Hough remarked, "The new sign...has distinctly met with unfavorable reaction by the public. However, we believe that it is necessary—like it or not—and that the simple truth should hurt no honest person." This comment may suggest a shift in Hough's opinion of the Building X controversy.

<sup>82</sup> Ames to Glass, 7 January 1939, in file "WNMA Members and Meetings" in NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA. 1 March 1939 "Minutes of the WNMA (Northern neck Branch)," Wakefield National Memorial Association Records, 1923-1985, Series III, Secretary's Files, Unprocessed Material, Box 18 of 37, GEWA.

<sup>83</sup> Hoppin to Rust, 1939, in file "WNMA member and Meetings" in NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

sign.”<sup>84</sup> Records do not reveal whether or not the NPS changed the text of their new sign, but they do indicate that the sign was removed in 1946.<sup>85</sup> Not until March 1953 did the Monument erect a sign that, though humorously vague, satisfied the WNMA:

George Washington was born in a house on these grounds, February 22, 1732, and spent the first three years of his life here at his father’s plantation on Popes Creek. According to tradition, the birthplace house, the appearance of which is unknown, was burned on Christmas Day, 1779. The present memorial house was built by the Wakefield National Memorial Association under authority of an Act of Congress approved in 1926. Here one may feel, and catch the spirit of, the Colonial Virginia that molded Washington, the boy and the man.<sup>86</sup>

Conflict between the WNMA and the NPS regarding how to appropriately word what, by any other account, might seem like an insignificant sign, reveals a staggering difference of perspective at Washington’s Birthplace. The WNMA perpetuated a commemorative mode of history typical of and popularized by the Colonial Revival in this country. Its commitment to Custis’s legacy reveals a desire to commemorate not just George Washington, but also the entire trajectory of Washington commemoration at Popes Creek. The WNMA sought to figure itself as an important contributor to a long history of Washington commemoration and, to that end, the Memorial House was a fitting monument. The NPS, on the other hand, valued the birthplace because it offered an opportunity to instruct the public about the realities of Washington’s life in colonial Virginia. Authenticity—not commemoration—was of utmost importance to the NPS’s project. The sign conflict therefore reveals a contest of meaning at Washington’s Birthplace—a battle between two organizations to define how the public should understand the past. Disagreement about how to do history at Washington’s Birthplace, as we will see in the following chapter, consequently filtered into the practical challenges of creating a National Park.

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<sup>84</sup> “Park entrance” in this context refers to the entrance to the core historic area which was more-or-less immediately in front of the Memorial House. White to Hough, 17 October 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, Central Classified Files, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

<sup>85</sup> File “D66 Signs, Markers” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA contains lengthy correspondence regarding problem of narrative sign at entrance to memorial house during the 1940s.

<sup>86</sup> See Flemer notebooks as cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.20.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Making a Monument into a Park, 1931-1940**

Amid the various controversies surrounding Building X, the NPS initiated its own program for making what had been a remote monument into an accessible public facility. Responsibility for overseeing that project first fell to Associate Engineer Robert White until Phillip Hough arrived in 1932 and assumed control as the Park's first full-time superintendent. Harold Broderick joined the staff as senior gardener on December 7, 1931, and Mrs. Henry Mason, employed by the WNMA, served as hostess and default supervisor of the Memorial House. Aside from Hough and Broderick, the NPS employed only one other full-time laborer and hired day laborers when necessary.<sup>1</sup>

Understaffing constituted a significant problem throughout the Park system during the 1920s and 30s when early hopes for a self-sustaining NPS faded as visitation increases outpaced congressional generosity.<sup>2</sup> White complained about understaffing as early as April 1931 when, aside from himself, only one other full-time laborer attended "to all the various duties of maintenance and protection."<sup>3</sup> The addition of gardener Broderick may have eased the problem, but not for long. NPS Office Order No. 234, issued in 1932, required each park to designate a point-of-contact for wildlife issues. Hough assigned the responsibility to Broderick thereby reducing the amount of time the gardener could devote to gardening.<sup>4</sup> By late 1932, Hough complained of "embarrassing" conditions wherein administrative, clerical, landscaping, and Memorial Mansion duties fell to only three regular employees, none of whom were trained as rangers or historians.

The Monument's size and interpretive complexity required the attention of maintenance personnel, landscape technicians, trained visitor guides, historians, and a clerical staff equipped to

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<sup>1</sup> SMR, July, November, and December 1931, GEWA.

<sup>2</sup> Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, pp. 87, 90. Understaffing characterized the difficult financial times of the 1930s, and the NPS struggled similarly at other parks. At the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace, for example, "there was no clerk; Mrs. Cissell did part-time typing and filing with no pay. The Superintendent's son hired as a laborer, acted in the position of guard and ranger, and a room in Superintendent Cissell's private residence served as the Park office." See chapter five of Gloria Peterson, "An Administrative History of Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site" 1968, <[www.nps.gov/abli/adhi/adhi5.htm](http://www.nps.gov/abli/adhi/adhi5.htm)> (15 May 2006).

<sup>3</sup> SMR, April 1931, GEWA.

<sup>4</sup> SMR, February 1932, GEWA.

manage an emergent park bureaucracy. Although day laborers could be had at low rates from the surrounding community, they were no substitute for trained NPS rangers. Hough found some relief in a seasonal ranger-historian program akin to a modern internship wherein college students met the public and performed small research projects.<sup>5</sup> Still, the Monument needed year-round help.

Although the Great Depression meant hard times for parks, visitation throughout the system continued at a steady pace creating a difficult situation where parks were required to manage persistent strains on resources with diminishing funds.<sup>6</sup> In this way, the Monument's popularity placed significant demands on its developing infrastructure. Approximately 120,000 visitors had come to Wakefield between the summer of 1931 and the end of 1933 and Hough found himself overwhelmed, for example, "by visitors insisting on leaving their names and addresses to receive [information] folders."<sup>7</sup> Preparation of materials for a visitor guide consequently occupied a substantial portion of the superintendent's time. The Monument also became popular among after-hours trespassers. During a single week in 1933, Monument staff turned away trespassers on four consecutive nights and, in one instance, intercepted a man who removed a length of fence "to get a party of ladies into the grounds."<sup>8</sup> A typical workday at the Monument therefore often extended well into the night.

Congressional appropriations for public works projects stimulated development throughout the NPS and eventually eased the Park's labor shortage. The arrival of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp SP-19 at nearby Westmoreland State Park in October 1933 promised some labor relief by way of the National Recovery Act.<sup>9</sup> Hough considered the CCC's arrival "of outstanding importance to us" and,

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<sup>5</sup> Temporary ranger-historians did wear NPS uniforms and presumably received some sort of compensation for their services. Hough took special interest in these individuals, often staying in touch and even corresponding by mail with those who would come to serve overseas during World War II (see wartime monthly reports).

<sup>6</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 326. The NPS actually expanded during the Depression. Americans looking for affordable vacations filled national parks and Washington recognized the power of these sites to bolster faith in American values. Ethan Carr attributes President Roosevelt's consolidation of the system in 1933 to a conscious investment in American identity. See Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, pp. 255-56.

<sup>7</sup> SMR, May 1933, GEWA.

<sup>8</sup> SMR, April 1933, GEWA.

<sup>9</sup> The CCC played a vital role in rescuing the NPS from the ravages of economic collapse. By 1935, the organization operated six hundred camps like SP-19 with nearly 120,000 workers. Of the 6,000 professionals hired to supervise CCC projects, many became life-long NPS employees thereby fundamentally influencing the NPS's character in years to come. See Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, p. 46.



on December 16, put sixty-nine corpsmen to work on various maintenance projects around the Monument. Federal relief, by way of the Civil Works Program, also provided a temporary tour guide. The local Virginia reemployment committee selected Robert Bruce Mass of Mount Holly, Virginia, to provide visitor services at the Monument and Hough set Mass to “learning the story of Wakefield” soon after his arrival.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the Monument’s popularity during 1932 and 1933 continued to push staff and facilities to the extreme limits of their operational capacity.

Operating shorthanded proved especially challenging during these early years given that daily tasks required supervision and coordination of efforts to construct roads, buildings, landscapes, and utilities. Moreover, given that the NPS had only begun to operate in the eastern states, NPS bureaucratic channels remained tenuous at best. White’s November 1931 report refers to the delay in receiving cost accounts due to the “recent installation of the system of forwarding copies from the disbursing office.” The Monument’s accounts remained under the authority of Colonial National Monument until being localized on February 4, 1933, while disbursing power remained at Yorktown.<sup>11</sup>

Continued collaboration with the WNMA also distracted NPS planners who, by 1932, sought to devote their sole attention to NPS-specific projects. Ludgate for example, had urged the WNMA to move quickly with its landscaping plans and advised them to expect exorbitant contractor fees. The WNMA did neither. Having drawn up a series of tentative landscape plans and gaining approval from the FAC in early 1932, the WNMA solicited bids for the work which far exceeded the Association’s \$10,000 (about \$135,000 today) limit causing Ludgate to remark in a letter to the Director, “evidently my preliminary suggestions were received lightly, and by their objections to their high prices, they are reacting as I expected.”<sup>12</sup>

### **The Log House Tea Room**

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<sup>10</sup> SMR, December 1933, GEWA.

<sup>11</sup> SMR, February 1933, GEWA.

<sup>12</sup> Ludgate to Director, 7 January 1931, Folder “d32 landscaping,” NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

Beyond landscaping, the WNMA busied itself with a host of other projects. In May 1932, for example, it established a post office in the basement of the Memorial House (Image 15). Julia Washington (Image 16) served as Acting Postmaster and, on the first day of operation, dispatched 350 letters primarily for collectors desirous of the Monument's unique Washington's Birthplace cancellation.<sup>13</sup> In October 1936, the post office relocated to its own small building built specifically for that purpose adjacent to the parking lot thus freeing the Memorial House basement for use by the NPS (Image 17).<sup>14</sup> The WNMA also installed metal barriers in the interior doorways of the Memorial House in July 1932 thus allowing visitors to view rooms and their contents while eliminating the chance of theft.<sup>15</sup>

Most prominent among the WNMA's ongoing development projects was the Log House Tea Room. The Association planned to build the combination restaurant, gift shop, and lodge at Duck Hall in memory of Josephine Wheelwright Rust (Map 2).<sup>16</sup> The WNMA justified their construction of a rustic log building by claiming that a "log house stood on this tract originally," though it is unclear what historic structure they had in mind.<sup>17</sup> The Duck Hall area had, in fact, been occupied during the colonial period although the particulars of that habitation were lost, in part, to the archeological caprice of development under the NPS. Construction of the picnic area destroyed the last remains of a brick building standing as late as 1931. Hough's 1934 archeological explorations revealed a double fireplace at the site, though neither the NPS nor the WNMA made any effort to investigate further. Even the discovery of two graves at the Log House site, revealed in preparation to install a fuel-oil tank, did not motivate either organization to action.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The WNMA intended the basement location to be temporary and planned on moving the post office to the Log House at a later date. See SMR, May 1932, GEWA.

<sup>14</sup> SMR, October 1936, GEWA.

<sup>15</sup> SMR, July 1932, GEWA.

<sup>16</sup> For discussion of the Log House during construction and comments regarding its intent as a tribute to Rust, see SMR, March, April, and July 1932, GEWA.

<sup>17</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.66. The Oculus report surmises that the WNMA's reference to a log house may mean the residence of Aitheson Gray, a former resident at Duck Hall. See n. 211.

<sup>18</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.78-2.79. Hough described the discovery in his July 1932 SMR: "In sinking the fuel oil tank at the log lodge two old graves were encountered. One skull was taken to the national

The WNMA once again employed the Jones & Conquest construction firm and work began on the Log House Tea Room in April 1932. Furnishings and equipment arrived in October and on the 31<sup>st</sup>, Director Albright signed a formal contract making Mrs. Henry Mason—the former Memorial House hostess—the official log house operator.<sup>19</sup> The Monument’s granting legislation required that the WNMA transfer all of its property and holdings to the NPS once it had completed its work. The spirit of that legislation would seem to suggest that the Log House and its contents instantly became NPS property upon its completion, even though the WNMA funded the entire operation. Records reveal no discussion, however, of the legality of Log House proprietorship at the time of its opening. Albright’s hiring of Mason as the business’s operator demonstrates that the NPS treated the WNMA as a concessioner at Wakefield although the NPS’s relationship with concessioners varied dramatically across parks.<sup>20</sup> The vagaries of this arrangement would come back to haunt Monument staff after World War II.

The Log House opened its doors on December 1, 1932, in the midst of a harsh winter and, consequently, slow business season (Images 18 & 19). The WNMA conceived the Log House as a place where visitors coming from some distance might lodge while exploring the Monument. Implicit in this idea was the assumption that the Birthplace would host a significant number of traveling visitors and that neighboring businesses were not sufficient to serve their needs. As it turned out, the Park did attract a large number of traveling visitors, but few made it a final destination. Most visitors made brief stops at

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museum for classification. In the absence of Dr. Hrdlička in Alaska, his Assistant Dr. Stuart pronounced it that of a colored woman who had been buried at least 100 years. The skull was left at the museum for further study.”

<sup>19</sup> It is not surprising that the WNMA was not able to sponsor construction of an administration or museum building in 1933 considering the expense it must have incurred by furnishing the Log House with nearly one hundred pieces of custom-made solid black walnut furniture, a complete stock of table linen and bedding, and kitchen equipment able “to feed an unlimited number.” SMR, October 1932, GEWA. Also see SMR, December 1932, GEWA for comments regarding the Log House’s opening. File “H3015B log house” in NPS Records Box 7 of 25, GEWA contains a report concerning construction of the Log House with good photos and some correspondence regarding the fate of the house during the war with one letter from Albright discussing the location of the house and justifying the location of residences (because the women, who would most likely be northerners, would prefer to live close to one another). Hough mentions Mason’s contract in his October 1932 SMR, GEWA.

<sup>20</sup> John Ise discusses the complexities and inconsistency of NPS concessioner policy in the years immediately preceding the creation of the Monument. He also notes that the NPS’s language replaced “concessionaire” with “concessioner” during NPS’s first years. See Ise, *Our National Parks Policy*, pp. 209-12. Despite the ambiguity of arrangements at the Monument, it is important to note that the Log House was not atypical in that women have played a historically prominent role in operating NPS park concessions. See Polly Welts Kaufman, *National Parks and the Woman’s Voice, A History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), pp. 153-54.

the Monument while traveling between Washington, DC and Williamsburg, Virginia. Although a traveler could make that trip today by car in approximately three hours, doing so prior to construction of Interstate 95 took considerably longer and the Monument made for a perfect midway rest stop on that trip.

Although needing restrooms and light snacks, day-trippers did not usually seek lodging or elaborate meals.

The Log House Tea Room, by way of its own slow business, created financial strains for the Monument. During a period when financial support was desperately needed for park development, the WNMA poured its money into a poorly planned business. In addition to furnishings and cooking equipment, expenditures also included grounds maintenance and general upkeep.<sup>21</sup> The removal of Mason from the Memorial House to the Log House additionally worsened Hough's staffing concerns, leaving no employees able to devote all their time to monitoring the building. By the end of 1934, it was evident that the Log House could not generate enough revenue to cover its own expenses and the WNMA announced its inability to further subsidize the operation.<sup>22</sup> Despite a brief surge in business during 1937, the Log House remained unviable and increasingly tasked the Monument's already limited staff and resources as the WNMA came to rely on Hough to maintain the place.<sup>23</sup>

The Log House's failure should not have surprised anyone at the time. The Depression created difficult times for concessioners throughout the Park system and despite a 1934 NPS-sponsored advertising campaign to boost visitor interest in park concessions, concessions in even the most popular parks—including Yellowstone and Glacier—were forced to close down.<sup>24</sup> The WNMA's insistence on operating a concession within this context must have frustrated Hough whose monthly reports reveal his

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<sup>21</sup> For example, the WNMA hired laborers to cut grass and otherwise maintain the Log House grounds. SMR, January 1933, GEWA.

<sup>22</sup> SMR, November 1932 and Annual Report, 1934, GEWA

<sup>23</sup> Take, for example, this: "I sent Mrs. Mason the lawn mower the following day and hope you were able to haul it up for her from wherever the express is left. I have heard nothing from her and am afraid the grass will be so tall it will be difficult to mow. If it is impossible to use a machine, I shall have to ask you to have someone scythe it off so that it can be started right. I think the outside appearance of the log house is vital to our securing revenue from it. Nobody likes to go to a place that is unkempt and unattractive. I hope you were able to have the fence whitewashed and the chairs repaired." Crowninshield to Hough, 3 May 1938, file "Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938" in Ancient Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>24</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 356.

suspicion that Mason was personally at fault for the Log House's failure given what he perceived as her lack of business savvy.<sup>25</sup> The situation came to a head after Hough received a series of complaints described in a 1940 letter to Mason:

On Sunday night a party of four people from Collingwood, N.J., came here intending to have dinner, spend the night and have breakfast. They were very much disappointed to find the log house closed at seven o'clock. They had been your overnight guests before and had come here especially to patronize the log house.

On Monday night two people came here to have dinner at the Log House and were disappointed at 6:30 to find the place closed up. They have been former patrons on a number of occasions.

When we last talked over this matter you agreed to keep the Tea Room open while the Monument was open. We are open until dark, which at this season means about 8:30 pm, and we are disappointed in having people make such complaints to us. We do not like to have people go away with regrets as to our service to the public. Within the past two months at least a dozen parties have come to me in the evening to express their disappointment in not being able to spend the night at the Log House. This, we hope will not go on. It should be so that we can recommend the Log House as a place to stay with the assurance that service will be available. I hope that you will arrange to keep open until dark with us, so that we may know whether or not to send you patrons, in the early evening hours.<sup>26</sup>

The WNMA had become, by way of the Log House and in the eyes of the public, an auxiliary of the NPS and so it is understandable that Hough would be upset with its failures of service. Nonetheless, the letter also demonstrates Hough's unrealistic expectation that everyone involved with the Monument invest the same hours typical of his own remarkable commitment to the place.

The rigors of long service may also have contributed to Hough's foggy recollection of his previous conversations regarding the WNMA's commitment at the Log House. Mason responded four days later that, "the last time we discussed the matter we agreed on six o'clock as the closing hour and I have never closed earlier, unless my clock was wrong. Often it is 6:30 or later." She added, "I don't see how I can comply with your request to stay open as long as you keep Wakefield open, because I would not be able to keep any help, and I certainly cannot undertake the work without it...If I lived here it would

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<sup>25</sup> Hough kept a close eye on activities at the Log House and determined that its failure resulted primarily from a lack of advertising, excessive overhead considering its scant clientele, and poor location. Experiments with limited hours during the winter months did little to help the situation. Hough's reports are full of comments regarding the Log House, see specifically SMR, July 1934, November 1934, January 1935, December 1935, October 1936, April 1937, and May 1937, GEWA.

<sup>26</sup> Hough to Mason, 25 June 1940, file "D34 log house tea room concession part II," in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. This file also includes a wealth of documents regarding operation of the Log House including rates and monthly financial reports.

be different, but this I cannot do, nor could anyone else and have room for overnight guests...The many nights I have spent here, have been in the public rest room, which I do not think you would find many willing to do.”<sup>27</sup>

Mason resigned at the end of 1940. Hough accepted her resignation though he urged Mason to reconsider and indicated that he would not seek out a new lessee until she was absolutely sure of her decision.<sup>28</sup> The eight-year Birthplace veteran remained firm, however, and listed insufficient pay and inadequate assistance among her reasons for leaving.<sup>29</sup> Mason’s resignation left Hough in a quandary about the Log House. Within three days of her final letter, Hough drafted his own to the Director requesting a conference with the Chief of Park Operations, explaining that “the Log House as it is cannot be an attractive business prospect, and how to improve it will be quite a problem.”<sup>30</sup>

Mason’s departure sent waves through the WNMA, especially given that Assistant Director Demaray and his wife were expected to attend an upcoming meeting of the WNMA at the Log House while visiting the Birthplace. Crowninshield wrote to WNMA member Mrs. A.E. Carver that she was “terribly upset about the Log House situation” and asked for suggestions to solve the problem.<sup>31</sup> The Wakefield ladies did host a lunch for Demaray, but finding a permanent solution to the Log House problem remained. Director Drury informally agreed with Crowninshield that the WNMA should retain operation of the facility—presumably through lease to another member—but nothing came of the agreement.<sup>32</sup> The arrival of World War II diverted attention and resources away from the problem and the Log House remained boarded up and unused during the duration of the war.

### **Building the Monument’s Physical Infrastructure**

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<sup>27</sup> Mason to Hough, 29 June 1940, in file “D34 log house tea room concession part II,” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>28</sup> Hough to Mason, 26 November 1940, in Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Mason to Hough, 3 December 1940, in Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Hough to Director, 7 December 1940, in Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Crowninshield to Carver, 10 March 1941 and Crowninshield to Carver, 11 March 1941 in file “WNMA member and Meetings” in NPS Records Box 6 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>32</sup> See 26 April 1941 “Minutes of the WNMA (Northern Neck Branch),” Wakefield National Memorial Association Records, 1923-1985, Series III, Secretary’s Files, Unprocessed Material, Box 18 of 37, GEWA.

The NPS undertook an array of its own construction projects between 1932 and 1940 that, combined with the WNMA's contributions, outlined the general shape of the Monument as it exists today. The majority of these projects unfolded without controversy. Within the core historic area, for instance, the Park contracted J.R. Lassiter in 1932 to construct a 400-foot wooden footbridge across Dancing Marsh.<sup>33</sup> The bridge connected the core historic area to the WNMA's Log House and to picnic grounds beyond. Monument staff in September 1932 cleared away the brick kilns erected in 1931 to make way for a new utility building.<sup>34</sup> Hough planted an orchard of plum and cherry trees along the north side of the Memorial House in 1939, which, according to tradition, had existed during the early nineteenth century, and, more importantly, created visual separation between the house and bathroom facilities.<sup>35</sup> And throughout the first decade of operation at the Monument, Hough developed a historic crops demonstration area adjacent to the entrance road between the granite obelisk and the parking area. Monthly reports suggest that the colonial crops delighted visitors and reveal the superintendent's particular fondness for the project (see chapter 4).

NPS planners worked beyond the core historic area as well. Charles Peterson planned a road and a traffic circle for Duck Hall Point in 1932 to accommodate visitors to the WNMA's Log House. Peterson also designed a picnic area for Duck Hall including rustic tables and benches built by the Anchor Post Fence Company of Washington, DC to plans used by the National Capital Parks.<sup>36</sup> In conjunction with these projects, the Park constructed a boat pier at Duck Hall Point in 1936 hoping that boat rentals might eventually entertain visitors while generating revenue for the Park.<sup>37</sup> The plan failed after a month because "the young man [hired to rent the boats] preferred to sleep his time out—hence the project was a

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<sup>33</sup> Hough described this project in his May and July 1932 SMRs: "Lassiter...constructed a pile driver on the job...the 250-pound weight, made of a section of gum log is raised by the concerted heave of four Negroes." Upon completion of the bridge in July 1932, "staining was accomplished in an extremely economical manner by simply brushing it with muddy water. The effect is gray and very closely simulating the appearance of weathered wood." It is not surprising that the bridge required frequent maintenance throughout its existence.

<sup>34</sup> See SMR, September 1932, GEWA. The kilns yielded approximately 20,000 unused bricks. Hough used some to build walkways at the new residences and stacked the remainder for later use. He also dumped "many loads of bats...in the old clay pit."

<sup>35</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.11.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., v.1, p. 2.78 and v. 2, p. c.15.

<sup>37</sup> SMR, May 1936, GEWA. See Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.79-2.80 for a discussion of planned development for a larger pier and to dredge Popes Creek that did not come to fruition.

complete failure.”<sup>38</sup> If visitors could not enjoy boat rentals, they could enjoy a series of nature trails. The Monument constructed clay and gravel nature trails in the Duck Hall area between 1935 and 1939 with an eye toward making “unpaved meandering walks...since the system encompasses much of the scenic beauty and interest for the nature student.”<sup>39</sup> These years also witnessed the construction of paved roads and parking lots near the core historic area, the Washington family burial ground, and Bridges Creek landing near the Potomac River beach. The NPS utilized either gravel-covered bituminous paving or bituminous-treated gravel for these projects. The primary parking area near the Memorial House provided spaces for two hundred vehicles.<sup>40</sup>

Peterson and Ludgate also went to some lengths to create period-correct fencing for the Monument where wood post-and-wire fences had previously stood under the War Department’s tenure. Settling on a combination of stake-and-rider and more traditional Virginia fences, the Monument constructed fences—often using CCC labor for this purpose—between the core historic area and the historic crops demonstration area, at the Monument entrance, and around the Rockefeller Horse Barn to create pasturage for Morgan Horses. Ludgate outlined guidelines for on-going maintenance of the fences and for general upkeep of Monument property and landscape in a grounds maintenance plan.<sup>41</sup>

Other projects proved more contentious. Peterson and Senior Assistant Director A.E. Demaray proposed in 1931 that employee residences should be situated in the decentralized fashion of traditional Virginia country houses. Peterson explained his reasoning:

Regarding the locations of the houses for government employees at Wakefield, I had hoped, as I mentioned to Mr. Albright, that these could be decentralized and placed on the ground as Virginia country houses would be. My idea in this is that our employees would be living the same kind of home life as other Virginia people in the neighborhood. One thing that would be unfortunate would be that a group of northerners should come in and live in a little isolated village to themselves, spending all weekend and other possible intervals in Washington or some place further north. It seems to me that the success of the Wakefield administration locally is going to

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<sup>38</sup> The young man in question was hired by G.W. Tate of Colonial Beach to whom the NPS granted a special use permit to run the operation. SMR, July 1936, GEWA.

<sup>39</sup> “George Washington Birthplace National Monument Master Plan,” 4 sheets, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1939, rev. 1940, cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.15.

<sup>40</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.16.

<sup>41</sup> See Oculus, pp. c.17-c.18 and “Grounds Maintenance Plan George Washington Birthplace National Monument,” no date, cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, pp. c.21-c.22.



depend on how well our new employees are going to fit themselves in to the community. Certainly Virginia country life is a pleasant thing as lived by the old families in the Northern neck, and if our new people will take a sympathetic attitude towards it they are going to have a much better time.<sup>42</sup>

Peterson's concern for relations between NPS staff and local residents is remarkable in hindsight, especially given that this very issue remains a concern at the Monument (see Chapter 8).<sup>43</sup> His suggestion, however, found opposition with other NPS planners who considered centralized utility connections a more important determiner of location. Peterson chafed at this opposition in a letter to Demaray, adding that "there is not much use in our making general plans if this is to be the procedure."<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, the NPS went ahead with construction plans in 1932 and grouped the two residences together west of Dancing Marsh and well out of sight of the Memorial House.<sup>45</sup>

Allen J. Saville, Inc. won the contract to build the two residences and their garages in 1932 and finished work by August (Image 20).<sup>46</sup> The houses—frame buildings on brick foundations—shared a garden and gravel paths completed in 1933 as well as a tennis court built in April 1934 with CWA labor.<sup>47</sup> That year, the Monument added a long hedge of wax myrtle between the garages in addition to mountain laurel, sweet bay magnolia, dogwoods, and huckleberries.<sup>48</sup> Though ample, the new residences, like the Memorial House, were at times unbearably hot in the Virginia summer and nearly always overrun with mice. Hough and gardener Broderick took to keeping "score" and by the end of 1932 Hough had trapped thirty-four mice whereas Broderick boasted over forty.<sup>49</sup> Hough requested an additional residence in 1933 but did not succeed in obtaining authorization to have plans drawn.

### **The Rockefeller Horse Barn**

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<sup>42</sup> Peterson to Demaray, 26 June 1931, folder "d32 landscaping," in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>43</sup> Betty Horner, for instance, is very sensitive to various superintendents' decisions to live away from the Monument and it is evident that she is not alone in this respect among other adjacent landowners. Betty Horner, interview with author, 30 July 2004.

<sup>44</sup> Peterson to Demaray, 11 August 1931, folder "d32 landscaping," in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. "Mr. Vint" refers to Thomas Vint, Chief of the Branch of Plans and Design.

<sup>45</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.16.

<sup>46</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.66-2.67.

<sup>47</sup> SMR, April 1934, GEWA.

<sup>48</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.16.

<sup>49</sup> SMR, November 1932, GEWA.

Hough did win one significant construction victory during the late 1930s. In May 1937, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. offered to donate three of his retired carriage horses—one Morgan stallion and two mares—to Washington’s Birthplace.<sup>50</sup> Hough jumped at the opportunity with an eye toward breeding the Morgan stallions to produce saddle mounts for other parks within the NPS. Following talks with the NPS, Hough secured a promise that if the horses were donated that CCC camp SP-19 would arrange for construction of a horse barn, paddock, and fencing. Rockefeller donated the horses that July, but Hough still did not have a barn. Planning delays resulted from concerns about disturbing archeological resources in the wake of Rodnick’s work. Regional Director Carl Russell commented on construction plans in a letter to the Director, arguing that the “stable is located too close to the historic area...where considerable archeological investigation must yet be done.”<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, with horses *en route* and an obligation to accommodate the benefactor who had played such an important role in the creation of the Monument, the NPS proceeded with plans to build the horse barn near the Memorial House. Following some difficulty locating lumber, construction under CCC supervision continued throughout the winter of 1937 and by February 1938, the project had been completed.<sup>52</sup>

Concern regarding the horse barn’s location also resulted from fears that the core historic area was becoming too congested with non-memorial buildings. The NPS had constructed a utility building—the Park’s primary maintenance facility prior to 1973—only a few hundred feet west of the Memorial House. Charles Peterson considered the colonial-style structure as “a valuable addition to the Colonial plantation picture” even with its three distinctly modern skylights.<sup>53</sup> But a horse barn immediately adjacent to the utility building cluttered the landscape. Acting Regional Director Herbert Evison wrote to the Director in October 1937 and explained that Regional Director Roy E. Appleman wanted all of the

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<sup>50</sup> SMR, May 1937, GEWA.

<sup>51</sup> Russell to Director, 13 October 1937, cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.10.

<sup>52</sup> See Acting Associate Director Tolson to Hough, 30 October 1937; Hough to Director, 26 February 1938; and Acting Assistant Director F.T. Johnston to Regional Officer, 28 July 1937, in file “D34 Barn,” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>53</sup> Peterson to Hough, 16 July 1932, cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.10.

utility buildings removed from the historic area.<sup>54</sup> Hough agreed and, in a 1938 letter to the Regional Director, suggested that the Park plant additional trees to conceal the area because “as one approaches the Monument, the most prominent feature is the end of the Utility Building and this should be de-emphasized.”<sup>55</sup> By the end of 1939, whether due to concern about clutter or archeology, Hough could not find a single NPS official willing to acknowledge his request for a small temporary addition to the horse barn. Materials sat spoiling on the ground and nobody could convince the CCC camp to perform the work earlier promised.<sup>56</sup> Care and maintenance of the Rockefeller horses quickly fell down the list of priorities at Washington’s Birthplace once the donation had been executed to Rockefeller’s satisfaction and the Monument disposed of the horses within only a few years as a result of wartime economic woes.

### **Early Planning Difficulties and the Administration-Museum Building Debates**

Despite its fate, construction of the horse barn constituted a singular victory within a larger battle to create a long-term building plan for the Monument. Rockefeller’s involvement helped Hough circumvent the archeological concerns then blocking other building initiatives. Herbert Evison raised this very issue in a memo concerning the Rockefeller barn project:

The building of the horse stable serves to emphasize, in Mr. Appleman’s opinion, the necessity for the establishment of a well considered and sound historical policy for the development and interpretation of George Washington Birthplace National Monument. A master plan for the historical area is an urgent need. Until this is provided, development at Wakefield can only be haphazard and possibly unfortunate. This historical master plan cannot be prepared until the historical documentary research, to which Mr. Northington has given some time, is pressed to a conclusion and extensive archeological work has been done. The problems to be solved by archeological investigation at Wakefield are extremely important and require the supervision of a trained and competent archeologist...we believe that a distinct obligation rests upon the National Park Service to provide for carrying out the basic historical and archeological investigation necessary for an historically sound development of this important site and its interpretation to the public. We consider it one of the most pressing problems in any of the historical areas in the region.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Evison to Director, 27 October 1937, cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.11.

<sup>55</sup> Hough to Regional Director, 26 January 1938, cited in Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 2, p. c.10.

<sup>56</sup> Assistant Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning Fred Johnston to Hough, 18 January 1939; Hough to Regional Director, 15 February 1939; Acting Assistant Regional Director J.H. Gadsby to Hough, 17 February 1939; Acting Associate Regional Director E.M. Lisle to Director, 24 March 1939 in file “D34 Barn,” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>57</sup> Memo from Herbert Evison, no date (probably 1937) or recipient, in file “D34 Barn,” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

Evidently, the promise of good relations with Rockefeller made the archeological problems at Popes Creek significantly less “pressing.”

Still, the problems of operating without a master plan remained. The NPS invested significant effort in creating a standardized planning protocol for parks during the 1920s. By 1932, master plans for national parks and monuments included a park development outline, a general plan, and a six-year program expressed visually in a series of large drawings. Horace Albright himself stressed the importance of these plans to shaping the future of the entire park system.<sup>58</sup> NPS Office Order No. 228 required submission of these plans from each park, but the Monument’s peculiar situation compromised its ability to comply. Hough explained that, “because of our unusual situation, in which the Wakefield National Memorial Association is by Congress authorized to make the Wakefield restoration in cooperation with the National Park Service, the matter of a master plan should be undertaken jointly with them.” Not able to submit a master plan, the superintendent did draft a tentative six-year program “which if nothing else will serve as a target with the hope that it will lead to discussions which will be helpful.”<sup>59</sup> Hough understood the difficulties he faced without a guiding document and in October 1933 wrote to Director Arno Cammerer that “the development and approval of a Master Plan for this monument is a vital need and a problem which should be undertaken as early as possible.”<sup>60</sup>

Cammerer agreed and, in November 1933, a committee composed of both NPS representatives and WNMA members drafted a development outline intended to initiate the master planning process.<sup>61</sup> The development outline did not, however, yield a master plan. NPS officials remained reluctant to commit to those aspects of a plan that Hough considered most vital, specifically construction of an

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<sup>58</sup> Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks, Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 301-02. McClelland provides a thorough overview of the history of park planning, see pp. 291-323. Also see Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, pp. 7-8, 197 especially with regard to Thomas Vint’s impact on landscape design in the NPS.

<sup>59</sup> Hough to Cammerer, 13 May 1933, (Box 2219) file 600.02, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. This letter includes the attached plan which is insubstantial, though does refer to a proposed weaving house, tobacco barn, and farmers produce stand.

<sup>60</sup> Hough to Cammerer, 25 October 1933, (Box 2219) file 600.01, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>61</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.85. Oculus argues that the development outline reveals the influence of Thomas Vint’s Western Field Office landscape style at the Monument by way of Vint’s agents, Charles Peterson and Roswell Ludgate.

administrative building and a museum even though Albright committed to providing an office building in 1931.<sup>62</sup> Although the NPS continually argued that construction of additional buildings and, consequently, master planning required thorough archeological investigation, it also continually failed to provide a suitable supervisor for this work. Inability to do so most likely resulted from NPS-wide pressures stemming from the rapid expansion of the Service into eastern historical sites during the early 1930s.<sup>63</sup> Charles Hosmer argues that the debate concerning where to locate new buildings at Wakefield stemmed directly from controversy surrounding the discovery of Building X in 1931.<sup>64</sup>

The need for additional workspace at the Monument, however, was pressing. By 1933, Hough had passed his Colonial Kitchen office to the Park clerk and relocated to what a visiting equipment engineer from the museum division described as “a crude basement room in the mansion house. This room has such a low ceiling that in places it is impossible to stand upright, and so damp that it certainly must be unhealthy. Every inch of space has been used and along the sides are cabinets of drawers containing sherds and artifacts.” The situation was so bad that a 1935 storm flooded Hough’s office leaving the floors and walls saturated for over a month and causing extensive damage to artifacts and files.<sup>65</sup>

Recognizing Hough’s need, the WNMA involved itself in the project and had already begun making preliminary inspections with regard to locating a new office building in December 1932.<sup>66</sup> President Worthington and her associates favored constructing the administration building atop the Building X foundations, although Charles Moore objected that “telephones, typewriters...should not be

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<sup>62</sup> Hough to R.A. Wilhelm, 10 April 1939, file “master plan d1815,” in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA. Hough reported that “long needed, long promised, and necessary development of the monument has failed to materialize. Proper office facilities, which Director Albright in 1931 committed the Park Service to provide, and in spite of A-1 priority for the past eight years, have not reached a stage where we can get a plan for such a structure. All efforts of this office to get research done, to the end that a development plan can be approved, have again been denied for 1940.” It is unclear whether the commitment referred to by Hough was made formally or not. SAR, 1933, GEWA.

<sup>63</sup> Memo for field officers from Cammerer, 29 October 1934, file “d32 landscaping” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>64</sup> Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, pp. 492-93.

<sup>65</sup> Museum Division Equipment Engineer A.B. Russell to Dr. C.P. Russell, 8 April 1936, (Box 2223) file 833.05, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. It may have been this very incident that is responsible for gaps in archived correspondence from this period. SMR, September 1935, GEWA.

<sup>66</sup> The WNMA’s preliminary inspections are mentioned in SMR, December 1932, GEWA.

allowed within the picket fence” and Albright seems to have preferred locating the structure near, though not atop the original building.<sup>67</sup> Correspondence between Albright, the WNMA, and landscape architect Charles Peterson suggests, however, that the WNMA was less than forthright with Hough concerning their construction plans. In a letter dated March 17, 1933, Hough told Albright about a meeting he had with WNMA President Worthington and Vice President Moore during which “the talk plainly indicated that the WNMA is planning to build the structure [administration building] this spring.”<sup>68</sup> Earlier that month, however, Peterson expressed concern to Albright regarding the WNMA’s plans, having been previously informed by WNMA Architect Donn that work on the plans had stopped due to financial concerns and that Worthington “seemed disinclined to talk about the matter.”<sup>69</sup> Albright dashed off a polite though pointed inquiry to Worthington and must have been taken aback by her response: “there is a financial side to the undertaking which I hope we can work out satisfactorily. The log house equipment cost more than was anticipated and contributions to our association's funds have slowed up considerably as was to be expected in these times.”<sup>70</sup>

It is unclear how NPS officials reacted to this discovery, but a letter dated March 20, 1933 from Assistant Director Demaray to Hough made no mention of the affair and concluded with an abrupt: “we have not heard from either Worthington or Moore. There is nothing further to be done until we do.”<sup>71</sup> It is also not clear why Demaray kept Hough in the dark, though the superintendent evidently realized the setback by the summer of 1933 when, in a monthly report, he referred to preliminary plans for an office

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<sup>67</sup> In a 5 January 1933 memo to himself, Albright noted that “the ladies would like to have the building put on the foundations of the old house which were discovered just west of the cemetery. I discussed the disadvantages of using these old foundations and suggested that they be left intact, putting the new building a little in the rear of these foundations, the building however, to be of the same size as the foundations indicated the former house was. There seems to be no objection to going ahead with the plans for the new building, this to be placed somewhat in the rear of the old foundations” in (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.; Hough to Albright, 17 March 1933, (Box 2223) file 870.1 part 2, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. Albright’s reference to a site “just west of the cemetery” is confusing and perhaps an error as no other secondary or primary account references this as an option for the administrative building.

<sup>68</sup> Hough to Albright, 17 March 1933, (Box 2223) file 870.1 part 2, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>69</sup> Peterson to Albright, 3 March 1933, (Box 2220) file 620, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>70</sup> Worthington to Albright, 13 March 1933, (Box 2220) file 620, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>71</sup> Demaray to Hough, 20 March 1933, (Box 2223) file 870.1 part 2, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

and museum building “which it is hoped to finance in the public works program.”<sup>72</sup> Hough was not alone in his search for funds to construct administrative facilities. Congress had capped the amount parks could spend on administrative facilities at \$1,000 in 1912. Recognizing that this was not nearly enough to accommodate park operations anywhere, let alone at the NPS’s largest parks, Director Mather successfully negotiated an increase to \$1,500 in 1918. The cap stayed there until 1940, though, and Hough and his fellow superintendents sought creative ways to generate funds for adequate administrative facilities.<sup>73</sup>

On October 25, 1933, Hough wrote directly to Albright requesting a meeting with him, Demaray, Peterson, Chatelaine, Moore, and Donn. Demaray agreed to a meeting on the condition that Hough submit a development outline to the proposed committee.<sup>74</sup> Peterson also agreed that Wakefield needed a master plan “even though it has been better furnished in the past with general plans than any other project we have in the east” suggesting a reluctance to commence planning given “the great pressure which we are under for producing working plans at this time.”<sup>75</sup> Hough submitted his outline—a markedly uncontroversial one—and Director Cammerer issued a direct invitation and explanatory note to Charles Moore of the WNMA.<sup>76</sup> By all measures, it appeared that by 1933 Hough had successfully initiated the master planning process. Although it is unclear what resulted from this first master plan meeting, a memo dated June 15, 1937 from Acting Regional Historian Rob Roy MacGregor and Associate Historian Roy E. Appleman to Resident Landscape Architect Raymond B. Poeppel, indicates that little to no progress had been made because “it is the opinion of the writers that such a plan cannot intelligently be prepared at the

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<sup>72</sup> SMR, June 1933, GEWA.

<sup>73</sup> Congress raised the cap to \$3,000 in 1940. See Ise, *Our National Parks Policy*, p. 207.

<sup>74</sup> Hough to Albright, 25 October 1933, (Box 2219) file 600.01, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. Demaray to Hough, 30 October 1933, (Box 2219) file 600.01, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>75</sup> The pressure he refers to no doubt resulted from the reorganization of August 10, 1933 during which the historical parks and national monuments formerly managed by other federal agencies were transferred to the NPS. Peterson to Hough, 27 October 1933, (Box 2219) file 600.01, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. For a brief discussion of the significance of this reorganization, see Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>76</sup> Hough’s outline makes no reference to either the museum or administration building although it is quite possible that the archived outline is partial. Cammerer to Moore, 29 November 1933, (Box 2219) file 600.01, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. Although Albright retired in August 1933, it appears that he remained involved in the planning process. Additionally, correspondence regarding this bout of master planning suggests that Hough’s timing was clearly intended to take advantage of WPA funding and labor support. See file “master plan d1815” in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

present time because of pending historical research and needed archaeological work.”<sup>77</sup> Correspondence concerning master planning ends abruptly at this point and did not resume until the end of 1938.

Chief of Operations Colonel John R. White revealed that plans for Hough’s administration building would be cut from that winter’s Department of the Interior appropriation bill to Congress in December 1938.<sup>78</sup> A sympathetic Crowninshield responded, “I am very distressed about the Wakefield situation. I am wondering if my being in charge there now could account for the antagonism of the Administration. All my family are of course very much against it but one would think that people could not be so unfair as to make a historic site suffer for the opinions of some one’s second cousins.” Crowninshield was referring to the activities of the American Liberty League, an organization funded by the Du Pont family for the purpose of resisting what it perceived as President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s socialist tendencies.<sup>79</sup> Given financial difficulties throughout the NPS and considering the continual controversies surrounding Building X and construction at Washington’s Birthplace, it is doubtful that politics played a significant role in dashing Hough’s plans. At the end of 1938, Hough urged Crowninshield to remind Director Cammerer that using the Colonial Kitchen as NPS office space contradicted the language of the Park’s founding legislation.<sup>80</sup>

Her doing so may very well have changed the NPS’s attitude for, still bereft of an archeological report, Hough pushed on and called for additional conferences in January 1939 that surprisingly resulted in the selection of four proposed sites for an administration building. At that time, it appears that the regional historian favored a location at the entrance to the monument next to the granite shaft.<sup>81</sup> Hough, however, preferred placing the building next to the parking lot. He eventually bowed to pressure from the

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<sup>77</sup> MacGregor and Appleman to Poeppel, 15 June 1937, (Box 2219) file 600.01, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>78</sup> Demaray to Crowninshield, 5 November 1938 and Hough to Crowninshield, 15 November 1938, file “Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938” in Ancient Box 6, GEWA. Also see Hough to Director, 6 December 1938, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>79</sup> For a history of the American Liberty League, see George Wolfskill, *The Revolt of the Conservatives: A History of the American Liberty League, 1934-1940* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

<sup>80</sup> Hough to Crowninshield, 26 December 1938, file “Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938” in Ancient Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>81</sup> Wilhelm to Regional Landscape Architect, 11 August 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.



Regional Office and agreed to the former location under duress, “since it appears at this time to be the best solution of this problem.”<sup>82</sup>

An April 1939 memo from the Acting Associate Regional Director instructed the superintendent to set aside portions of the annual budget for architectural services—\$900 to \$1200 (about \$12,000 to \$16,000 today)—indicating some confidence that action would be taken on one of these options.<sup>83</sup>

Whatever assurance Hough derived from this memo faded three months later when then Regional Director of Historic Sites Roy Appleman suggested a third option involving relocation of the entire parking area in addition to placing the proposed structure next to the granite shaft.<sup>84</sup> Planners returned to their drawing board and various proposals circulated throughout 1939 until Hough, when asked to comment on the proposals, suggested a compromise: “Couldn’t we build an office now where we need it, and move it in ten years or so to its permanent location when that time comes?”<sup>85</sup> Hough’s compromise struck a chord and Regional Director Hillory Tillotson immediately issued a memo to him requesting a comprehensive statement justifying the location. That February, Ludgate seconded Hough’s idea and on March 8, 1940, Director Cammerer approved plans for a temporary administration building. Construction began in July.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> The conferences leading to these decisions included Hough, Supervisor of Historic Sites Ronald F. Lee, Associate Research Technician Porter, Landscape Architect Harry Thompson, Architect A.B. Good, Architect Sutton, Regional Landscape Architect Ludgate, and Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites Roy Edgar Appleman. See Hough to Wilhelm, 2 September 1939; Hough to Regional Director, 20 September 1939, and Appleman’s technical review submitted to planning committee all in (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR..

<sup>83</sup> Acting Associate Regional Director to Hough, 7 April 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>84</sup> Appleman to planning committee, 18 July 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR. The proposed building is alternatively referred to as an administrative building and a combined administrative museum building suggesting that talks favored a single structure although there may have been confusion and/or varying expectations regarding exactly what the building’s ultimate purpose would be.

<sup>85</sup> Hough to Regional Director, 1 December 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

<sup>86</sup> Tillotson to Hough, 9 December 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR. Tillotson’s memo confirmed discussions of December 8 regarding location for the temporary administration building, included prints showing alternate locations proposed by Hough and Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites, and requested that a comprehensive statement justifying the location be prepared to forward to the Director. Also see Ludgate to Tillotson, 4 December 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

## Failed Hope for a Museum Building

Although Hough won a qualified victory in the battle for an administrative building, he lost his fight for a museum building. The superintendent wrote to Crowninshield later that year noting that despite the Director's full sympathies, securing further appropriations for a museum building was unlikely.<sup>87</sup> This came as quite an upset for Hough who had always championed the museum idea and, given that museums were common in the parks, had every reason to expect approval for one at Washington's Birthplace.<sup>88</sup> Beginning in 1932, Hough collected and displayed a variety of natural history specimens including shark teeth, vertebrae, shell fossils, petrified shellfish, and Native American artifacts in a portion of the Colonial Kitchen. Within months, however, the superintendent reported, "exhibit space is now surpassed by available artifacts." Colonial National Monument donated a number of CCC-built storage cases in 1935 but the size of Hough's collection still exceeded available display space.<sup>89</sup> In 1936 Hough initiated a museum program and obtained the Services of J. Paul Hudson as curator to formulate a museum plan. Hudson set to cleaning, classifying, and recording artifacts and in December 1936 began drafting a museum development plan.<sup>90</sup> Museum activities proceeded at a quick pace throughout 1937 and in March 1938 Hudson submitted "An Historical Museum for George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Prospectus and Tentative Exhibit Plan" to Hough who approved it and forwarded it to the Director later that year.<sup>91</sup> The plan called for a variety of wall displays, artifact cases,

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<sup>87</sup> Hough to Crowninshield, 18 December 1940, file "homesite controversy" in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>88</sup> Regarding museums in the early parks, see Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 200-202. If other parks were any example, Hough had every reason to expect positive response for funds to construct a museum. Both Stephen Mather and Horace Albright encouraged the construction of museums to further the NPS's interpretive and educational goals. Western parks featured museums as early as 1918. Architect Herbert Maier's designs for Yosemite's museums during the late 1920s established a prototype for museums throughout the Park system. See Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, pp. 143-44.

<sup>89</sup> SMR, October 1932, GEWA. Hough reported, "through a cooperative gesture by the Colonial National Monument, this monument will have several relic storage cases made at Yorktown by CCC men. At present our storage facilities are inadequate and we are in real need of proper means to keep our ever increasing quantity of relics." SMR, May 1935, GEWA.

<sup>90</sup> SMR, October and December 1936, GEWA.

<sup>91</sup> J. Paul Hudson, "An Historical Museum for George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Washington's Birthplace, Virginia, Prospectus and Tentative Exhibit Plan" in Old Files Box 6, GEWA. See file "D6215" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA, for the complete text of Hudson's 1936 preliminaries to a museum exhibit and justification for a museum. See file "1930s-1950s" in NPS Records Box 7 of 25 for final approved bound version of Hudson's 1938 GEWA Historical Exhibit Plan with illustrations.

and dioramas. Most striking, though, is the plan's inclusion of a rather large building, reflecting Hough's desire for a dedicated museum structure.

Hough's plans collapsed when NPS officials levied harsh criticism on Hudson's work. Assistant Historian Charles Porter criticized the exhibit for giving undue emphasis to Native American history. He additionally suggested that the museum make clear that the Building X controversy resulted not just from the NPS's involvement, but also from events stretching back into the War Department's stewardship and prior—a suggestion keeping with the NPS's early policy of safeguarding the Monument against criticism.<sup>92</sup> Hudson's plan did not even make it into drafts of the 1939 master plan and, according to Regional Director Tillotson, “will undoubtedly have to undergo reconsideration and revision.”<sup>93</sup>

Hough sought a last resort with WNMA President Crowninshield. Minutes from a 1938 WNMA meeting suggest that Hough had already at that date encouraged the group to agitate for the construction of an office and museum building and Crowninshield motioned to have the group's secretary make a direct appeal to Secretary Ickes.<sup>94</sup> At Hough's suggestion, Acting Associate Director Tolson informed Director Newton Drury that the WNMA might be willing to purchase materials for a museum building if the CCC constructed it.<sup>95</sup> Drury wrote to Crowninshield suggesting that a donation of \$2,500 (about \$33,000 today) would enable the CCC to construct a suitable building that would otherwise cost the NPS

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<sup>92</sup> Porter's criticism is harsh at times and can be seen in his “Technical Review,” Branch of Historic Sites, 28 June 1938, (Box 2223) file 833.05, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>93</sup> Tillotson added “from these comments it will be seen that the 1940 edition of the master plan cannot represent any material progression in development or interpretative planning...it will rather be a record brought to date of revisions made since the previous plan submissions.” Tillotson to Hough, 19 May 1940, (Box 2219) file 600.01, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. A 26 August 1939 memo from Ralph Lewis regarding the 1939 master plan includes comments from regional technicians stapled to the title and index sheet of the plan. Among these, the regional landscape architect recommends a cooperative study by historians, the museum division, and the superintendent to settle six general questions regarding the interpretive program. “While agreeing with the desirability of this study, we call attention to the fact that points 2 (the Park story) and 4 (the need for a museum building) were given quite thorough study during the seven months in which a museum curator was assigned to this monument. Referring to the Branch of Historic Sites comment, the interpretive statement therein recommended might well include an abstract from the curator's reports to indicate the status of museum planning as it pertains to general development plans”—includes handwritten comment at top stating “this report was not very favorably received by branch and historical site.” See (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

<sup>94</sup> See 25 April 1938, “Minutes of the WNMA (Northern Neck Branch),” Wakefield National Memorial Association Records, 1923-1985, Series III, Secretary's Files, Unprocessed Material, Box 18 of 37, GEWA.

<sup>95</sup> Tolson to Drury, 28 November 1940, (Box 2223) file 870.1 part 2, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

\$5,000.<sup>96</sup> Drury acted too fast and his proposal raised the ire of NPS officials who considered \$5,000 an extreme underestimate of the cost involved and who additionally cautioned against entering into premature dealings with the WNMA.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, there still did not exist a permanent development plan and NPS officials certainly did not want to enter into an entirely new building controversy so soon after settling the administration building problem.<sup>98</sup> As with so many outstanding concerns at the Monument, World War II put an end to debate concerning Hough's museum building and not until the late 1950's did the Monument reconsider Hudson's museum plan.

Ironically, Hough's attempts to secure a museum building ultimately forced him to pack up the very artifacts he hoped to display. The WNMA had always intended to furnish the Colonial Kitchen, like the Memorial House, with colonial furniture but could not do so as long as Hough maintained his artifact display.<sup>99</sup> Once the Director approved plans for the temporary administration building and it became clear that Hough's office would no longer be in the Memorial House basement, the WNMA jumped at the opportunity to rid their Colonial Kitchen of Hough's artifacts. At a 1940 WNMA meeting,

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<sup>96</sup> Drury to Crowninshield, 3 December 1940, (Box 2223) file 833.05, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>97</sup> Ludgate wrote "there is a question in my mind regarding the adequacy of the amount of \$5,000 for the construction of the proposed museum...An administrative decision on the above points should be made in Washington before the Service goes too far in its commitments to Mrs. Crowninshield and the WNMA." Ludgate to Regional Director, 16 December 1940, (Box 2223) file 833.05, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. The Acting supervisor of research and interpretation supported Ludgate's concern: "The tentative exhibit plan [presumably Hudson's plan] which has been approved for this museum calls for a single exhibit room approximately 19 feet x 38 feet. At a rough estimate, \$2500-3000 will be needed to purchase exhibit cases and \$4800 to prepare the exhibits. Since this area has a valuable collection of artifacts, adequate storage space above the basement also should be included in the building." Ned Burns to Regional Director, 20 December 1940, (Box 2223) file 833.05, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>98</sup> This sentiment found particular expression in a memo from Acting Regional Director Fred Johnston. "As you know, there has not been a definite administrative decision concerning permanent development of this area and naturally the addition of another building of such scope as the proposed museum building seems to be prolonging a procedure for adding structures to what at present is understood to be a temporary development program. It is the feeling of this office that definite decision concerning a permanent development program for George Washington Birthplace National Monument should be made before any additional buildings are considered for the area." Johnston to Director, 18 December 1940, (Box 2223) file 833.05, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>99</sup> Hough was lucky to have use of the Ancient Kitchen in the first place: "The construction of a small office building will only release one back room in the colonial style kitchen outbuilding, built and donated by the WNMA as an auxiliary house museum nine years ago to portray a colonial cooking establishment. The WNMA has been desirous for years now to furnish the structure in accordance with the purpose for which they built it; but the Park service has never provided space for the administration of the monument and we commandeered the kitchen for this foreign purpose immediately after it's completion." SMR, December 1939, GEWA.

Crowninshield asked the group to allocate funds to make the Memorial House basement ready for archival storage. Accordingly, the WNMA allocated \$500 (about \$6,500 today) that May for Hough's use.<sup>100</sup> This expenditure must have frustrated Hough considering that the WNMA had previously refused to contribute to the administration building effort. Nonetheless, Hough attempted to make the best out of the situation and lobbied for plans to make the basement display area accessible to visitors. Given a variety of safety issues and space limitations, however, Hough's proposals came up empty and by July 1940 he resolved to restrict public access in hopes that this action might further press the case for a museum building.<sup>101</sup> Still, the fate of Hough's prized artifacts left the superintendent dismayed and in a eulogy of sorts, he wrote:

To our sorrow, the temporary museum set up in the kitchen for the past 8 years was moved to retirement in the basement of the memorial mansion. The relic materials discovered here are what place the stamp of authenticity on the place more than any other factor and should not remain hidden from the people. The time has come when another structure should be rebuilt on the mansion grounds in order to show the archeological findings (Image 21).<sup>102</sup>

A great deal had changed at Wakefield since 1931 and Hough certainly learned in those ten years exactly what difficulties he faced as a superintendent and administrator, but it is his lament of the banished artifacts that symbolizes the greater loss of hope for an overall planning document and interpretive strategy.

### **Adjacent Landowners and Land Policy, 1931-1940**

Beyond NPS planners and WNMA members, Hough also worked closely with the Monument's neighbors and adjacent landowners. The most prominent of these were the Muse and Latane families. The Muse family owned several parcels of land both abutting and surrounded by Monument property. The Latane family, having sold portions of their land to Rockefeller's River Holding Company, leased

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<sup>100</sup> See 26 April 1940 "Minutes of the WNMA (Northern neck Branch)," Wakefield National Memorial Association Records, 1923-1985, Series III, Secretary's Files, Unprocessed Material, Box 18 of 37, GEWA. Also see Hough to Regional Director, 18 May 1940, (Box 2223) file 833.05, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>101</sup> Hough commented, "by thus closing the temporary museum it is hoped that some sort of action, omitting the alteration of the steps, can be had and the work prosecuted." SMR, July 1940, GEWA.

<sup>102</sup> SMR, October 1940, GEWA.

their former possessions back from the government after creation of the Monument to grow crops and pasture livestock.<sup>103</sup> The Latanes farmed land surrounding the Washington family burial ground and a parcel stretching from a Muse property access road to the Potomac River. Adhering to the traditional three-year crop rotation plan, the Latane operation blended well with the intended setting at Washington's Birthplace and the NPS constructed fences (first barbed wired and later split rail) to facilitate sheep and cattle grazing.<sup>104</sup>

Even so, adjacent landowners, who had always enjoyed more-or-less unmitigated control of their land, now found themselves confronted with a host of practical dilemmas consequent to bordering federally-protected lands. The problem of red foxes ranked high on this list. Several of the Park's neighbors derived substantial income from poultry sales and regularly hunted fox to prevent predatory damage to their stock. The arrival of the NPS at Wakefield meant imposition of restrictions against hunting on government property. Foxes thus found refuge on NPS property. Hough explained, in a 1935 wildlife report, that protecting foxes "places us almost in the light of harboring pests."<sup>105</sup> When the Muse family requested permission to hunt fox across Monument property, Hough denied the request, but only after consultation with Director Cammerer.<sup>106</sup> Cammerer issued a somewhat blunt response to both Hough and Muse arguing that adjacent landowners must "protect their property, by getting it under cover at night or by other means. It seems to me that this is an obligation that Mr. Muse is seeking to avoid by destroying the government's property—the foxes."<sup>107</sup>

The situation climaxed in 1941 when Mrs. Robert Muse drafted a petition "in which the superintendent was described as unreliable, unsympathetic, and just generally no good, and whose dismissal was demanded." Although other adjacent landowners opted not to sign the petition, tensions

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<sup>103</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.76.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., pp. 2.76-2.77.

<sup>105</sup> 1935 Annual Wildlife Report, George Washington's Birthplace National Monument, in unmarked file, NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

<sup>106</sup> Hough to Cammerer, 27 December 1935, in unmarked file, NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

<sup>107</sup> Cammerer to Hough, 10 January 1936, in unmarked file, NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

remained high and Hough visited Washington for a meeting with Associate Director Demaray and Victor Cahalane of the Fish and Wildlife Commission.<sup>108</sup> Demaray declined to change the regulations and suggested that Hough “lead a normal existence by not getting up too early in the morning,” meaning that the NPS could not enforce unseen violations, especially if they occurred prior to eight o’clock in the morning. Hough surely chaffed at Demaray’s encouragement to turn the other cheek, but the superintendent obeyed and the problem ended by 1942.

All the while, an even worse problem developed for both the Park and the Latane family. The Monument had become infested with Japanese beetles by 1937. Records indicate that the problem was so bad that extra labor had to be hired just to collect and dispose of the insects.<sup>109</sup> Once traps and hand harvesting failed to significantly reduce the infestation, the NPS approved a plan to treat the infected areas—especially along the boundary adjacent to the Latane property—with an extremely poisonous concentration of lead arsenate. Hough described the grisly aftermath in a letter to entomologist James Cooper:

There is a terrible situation right now, I think as a result of the arsenic treatment. The Latanes turned in their herd of registered or registerable Hereford cattle in on the field, one corner of which had been treated, and it looks like they would lose the works—as well as four horses. At present 3 horses are dead and 1 missing—11 cows are dead and the whole herd is sick. There were about 35 of the Herefords. The stock was turned in on Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup>, and the first sickness was noted on the afternoon of Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup>...Some of the cattle writhe in agony for hours and some just drop dead without notice. I am as sorry for the Latanes as a man can be, both for their financial loss and for the fact that they appear to have no redress, since they were given plenty and ample notice that the field was poisoned. They were on the ground while the work was being done, and seem to have used very poor judgment in doing what they did.<sup>110</sup>

As it turns out, Hough too was guilty of exercising “very poor judgment.” The field treated with poison also provided the Monument with its primary source of hay, a necessity for the recently constructed

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<sup>108</sup> Demaray requested the meeting after receiving a formal letter of complaint regarding hunting regulations signed by Mr. Mrs. Robert Muse, Mr. And Mrs. Harry Muse, Mr. And Mrs. Fred Muse, Mr. And Mrs. James Latane, Mr. And Mrs. William Latane, Mr. And Mrs. Lawrence Latane, Lawrence Washington, Elsie Washington, Mary Johnson, and Ellen Washington. See Hough’s account of this entire affair in a memo for the superintendent’s personal files, 10 October 1941, folder “Foxes N1419” in NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>109</sup> File “N 34 insects and other invertebrates” in NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA contains two reports regarding the Japanese beetle infestation during 1937 that explain the problem in detail with good photographs. Also see the included “summary report” prepared by Ivan H. Smalley for additional information and even better photographs of the process of spreading lead arsenate.

<sup>110</sup> Hough to Cooper, 18 November 1937, file “N4215 Weather Studies & Reports” in NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA.

Morgan Horse farm.<sup>111</sup> The financial burden of now having to buy hay from local farmers became so great by 1940 that Hough sought to renegotiate the Park's lease agreement because, "it does not seem like good economy to lease out most of our good fields (150 acres) for \$25 [about \$330 today] per year and then spend six times that much for hay which we could raise on part of that land."<sup>112</sup> Although the Latane family bore this development with surprising good will, it is impossible to gauge what damage the entire affair cast upon relations between the NPS and its neighbors at Wakefield.

Forging harmonious relationships with adjacent landowners represented just one aspect of creating a land policy to protect what Hough increasingly came to recognize as the Monument's most vital resource, its scenic beauty.<sup>113</sup> As early as 1931, Associate Engineer Robert P. White—then Acting supervisor of the Monument—complained that the monument approach was being "exploited by undesirable buildings" and lamented that "despite all efforts to prevent it, an electric transmission line was constructed on the approach road to Wakefield to within one half mile of the birth site."<sup>114</sup> White warned Albright in 1931 that plans to purchase land abutting the approach road might draw the ire of the Latane brothers, but that he supported the idea and additionally suggested that the government purchase the Muse property "which lie practically in the middle of the holdings here."<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Tillotson to Cooper, 9 March 1939, and Hough to Tillotson, 25 February 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, Central Classified Files, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

<sup>112</sup> Hough to Director, 25 April 1940, (Box 76) file 13, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, Central Classified Files, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>113</sup> This may seem an obvious premise from which to assert a land policy, but keep in mind that the Monument was a historic site—not a natural park. Moreover, its primary historical contribution—the Memorial House and its landscape—was totally contrived and, in fact, obscured the historical landscape. Arguing that the site's landscape was an essential resource was therefore difficult—did managing the memorial house and its surroundings qualify as "preservation" or not? Hough certainly recognized this as an important question especially into the 1940s as preservation came to be a primary NPS goal. In 1949, for instance, Director Drury exclaimed that "If we are going to succeed in preserving the greatness of the national parks, they must be held inviolate...If we are going to whittle away at them we should recognize, at the very beginning, that all such whittlings are cumulative and that the end result will be mediocrity. Greatness will be gone." See Drury cited in Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 7. To this extent, though, Drury was simply restating a fundamental premise of the National Parks Act of 1916, which gave form to the NPS: "The service...which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Also cited in Ise, p. 192.

<sup>114</sup> The "undesirable buildings" included a filling station and various other structures presumably of mixed residential and commercial purpose. SMR, April 1931, GEWA.

<sup>115</sup> White to Director, 15 December 1931, (Box 2213) file 201-06, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.



The problem of private land in national parks plagued the NPS since its earliest days. Director Mather had wrestled with congress for appropriations to purchase private lands at a number of parks but had little luck. By the end of the 1920s, congress had grown more willing to provide matching funds for land acquisition, but remained otherwise tightfisted.<sup>116</sup> Unsurprisingly, the NPS was unable to act on either of White's proposals and the problem of the approach road remained for Hough. In September 1933, Charles Peterson suggested trading a plot between the Washington family burial ground and Dogwood Swamp for land bordering the approach road, but Hough declined citing the historic value of the former property. Instead, the superintendent suggested making renewal of the Latane lease at Bridges Creek dependent on their transfer of a small parcel abutting the approach that Hough thought might have archeological promise.<sup>117</sup> Hough's proposal did not find favor with NPS officials. A few months later, motivated by Elizabeth Bowie's interest in selling her land near head of the Monument's approach road, Hough suggested an outright purchase of the approach right of way along with a two-hundred foot strip along each side. According to Hough, \$65,000 would buy the land and pay for improvements at the entrance.<sup>118</sup>

Hough's proposal coincided with the emergence of another land threat. In 1934, Everett Muse developed his own property facing the Monument from the opposite shore of Popes Creek (Illustration 2). What locals referred to as "Muse's Beach"—a combination vacation resort and campground complete with gambling and rumors of other sordid services—infuriated Hough who considered the place an "eyesore."<sup>119</sup> Hough requested approval for his approach road plan while seeking further assistance with the museum building problem. Acting Director Demaray replied that the NPS could not possibly afford a

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<sup>116</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 318-19.

<sup>117</sup> Peterson to Hough, 28 September 1933 and Hough to Peterson, 20 September 1933, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. SMR, November 1934, GEWA.

<sup>118</sup> About \$900,000 today based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>119</sup> SMR, June 1938, GEWA.

land purchase and suggested that “some friendly individual or organization” might help, adding, “the possibility of securing the area under the submarginal land program.”<sup>120</sup>

Assistant Director Conrad Wirth wrote to Regional Officer H.E. Weatherwax on May 13, 1935 requesting that he “make a quiet investigation” of the values of lands sought for acquisition by the Park.<sup>121</sup> Weatherwax dispatched an agent who visited Wakefield and, because Hough was not present at the time, spoke with a member of the WNMA:

He informed me that since the establishing of the national monument at Wakefield the people in the neighborhood had been speculating in real estate. Furthermore, very few, if any, of the properties outlined could, in his opinion, be obtained at any figure near the assessed valuation...More accurate details as to ownership could not be obtained for fear of arousing the suspicion of an already suspicious clerk. I was informed by the clerk that the buildings on the Morris property were shacks occupied by Negroes and that the valuation of \$300.00 [about \$4,000 today] as shown was considerably too high.<sup>122</sup>

According to a follow-up letter of May 18, 1935 from Weatherwax to Wirth, the investigating agent pretended to be a private individual intending to buy property, particularly waterfront property, and “we do not believe that any information has been given out which would lead any of the property owners to think that the United States Government was interested in the property.”

It is not evident how Hough and NPS officials reacted to this report, but it could not have been without some frustration and surprise. Hough met with the county assessor a month later and confirmed that “assessed values amount to approximately 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the actual values.”<sup>123</sup> For two years he had been trying to raise much more money than he probably needed to purchase the desired lands. Hough took a decidedly more aggressive stance on the issue in the face of the Muse’s Beach crisis by October 1935. Even before he realized the potential danger from the Muse development, Hough had already sought land acquisition for wildlife conservation, motivated primarily by the prevalence of duck hunters in and around

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<sup>120</sup> Hough to Director, 22 January 1935 and 26 March 1935 and Demaray to Hough, 10 May 1935, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>121</sup> Wirth to Weatherwax, 13 May 1935, in Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ferguson (no first name) to Weatherwax, 17 May 1935, in Ibid. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>123</sup> Hough, memo for files, 11 June 1935, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

Popes Creek.<sup>124</sup> The Muse Beach crisis forced a shift in approach, however, and Hough's correspondence during and after 1935 suggests urgency and fear.

In a confidential memo to the Director, Hough indicated that in addition to the development of Everett Muse's beach resort, Fred C. Muse had been approached by the Saunders Real Estate Company of Washington, DC who hoped to buy the property, subdivide it, and build a hotel.<sup>125</sup> He demanded that "Muses Beach and the threatened subdivision of the Fred Muse farm should be nipped in the bud" and included testimonials from Frederic A. Delano who described Muses Beach as "an outrage" and Dr. John C. Merriam who offered to "back me 100%."<sup>126</sup> The memo continues by suggesting that \$100,000 (about \$1.3 million today) could purchase the necessary lands and that funding should be sought immediately in case the next administration be less friendly to appropriations.<sup>127</sup> Most importantly, though, Hough laid out for the first time in an official capacity what would become the defining theme of his superintendency:

The atmosphere of peace, beauty, restfulness and isolation is the best thing we have here and it should be protected. A cheap resort on the Everett Muse property directly in the middle of our view has already been started, and every passing year it will be worse and the property be worth more...As superintendent of the George Washington Birthplace Monument, its interests are closer to my heart than anything else, and I naturally do not want to see it ruined during my administration by the loss of our priceless heritage—our atmosphere. This should be kept by all means a neat, rural farm; with a sense of distance from the next place. With the presence of tin-can campers already in the middle of our view from the portals of our mansion, on a small scale, the destruction of this environment has already started.<sup>128</sup>

Hough wrote to Crowninshield—only one day after Charles Moore warned Hough against involving her in anything but furnishing the Memorial House—and reiterated: "the original house is gone, but we still have something of the environment of the old place as manifested particularly by the view from the

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<sup>124</sup> Hough wrote "It has been proposed to acquire certain adjacent lands and add them to the monument for the purpose of wildlife conservation as submarginal land. A map was prepared showing the lands under consideration with pertinent data concerning them. Instructions have been received to prepare a detailed report in this connection." SMR, April 1934.

<sup>125</sup> Hough to Director, 28 October 1935, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>126</sup> Frederick A. Delano had served as president of the American Civic Association and, in 1933, was appointed by Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes to chair of the Public Works Administration's National Planning Board, which coordinated public works spending between federal, state, and local projects. See Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, p. 272.

<sup>127</sup> This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>128</sup> Hough to Director, 28 October 1935, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

portals of the restored house.”<sup>129</sup> Hough further suggested that “I think we would be justified in appealing to private philanthropy to save the situation here from spoliation.”

Crowninshield responded with indifference and, for the time being, seemed to bear out Moore’s warning. Undeterred, Hough issued a second appeal to the WNMA, this time writing to Charles Moore:

after all it is the Place here which is sacred. We still have some of the environment of the old place that was, and we should protect it just the same as natural wonders are protected in the National Parks. The key note of the place today is its feeling of peace, beauty and restfulness. It has isolation which was true of the old times, and a feeling of some distance from the next place. Do you not feel that...the Association might appeal to private philanthropy to eradicate these evils?<sup>130</sup>

Moore remained silent on the issue and so Hough continued alone. He made one last effort to enlist the support of Congressman Bland but to no avail and in a final 1935 letter to the Director, Hough indicated that the Saunders Real Estate Company offered \$18,500 (about \$250,000 today) to Fred C. Muse and that Muse might still take less if he were to sell to the government. Still, nothing came of these final efforts and correspondence regarding land acquisition fades with the end of 1935.<sup>131</sup>

Although there is no evidence that any of the Monument’s adjacent landowners attempted to sell or further subdivide their land in the years since 1935, Hough resumed his land campaign in late 1938 when Crowninshield demonstrated heightened interest in the problem.<sup>132</sup> The WNMA president wrote to the NPS Director regarding Hough’s appeals. Demaray issued a brief response indicating his recognition of the problem and interest in solving it. Unfortunately, the situation had worsened since 1935. By late 1938, Everett Muse—insistent on not subdividing his land—continued to build more rental cottages on

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<sup>129</sup> Moore to Hough, 20 April 1935, file “Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938” in Ancient Box 6, GEWA. Hough to Crowninshield, 29 October 1935, file “Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield, 1935-6-7-1938” in Ancient Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>130</sup> Hough to Moore, 5 November 1935, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>131</sup> This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. Hough to Bland, 6 November 1935; Bland to Hough, 7 November 1935; and Hough to Director, 21 December 1935, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>132</sup> See Hough to Crowninshield, 24 February 1937 and 5 Feb 1938, in file “Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938,” in Ancient Box 6, GEWA Archive.

Muse's Beach and refused to sell the 170 acres for less than \$50,000 (about \$650,000 today).<sup>133</sup> Hough again reiterated his views in a letter to Director Demaray:

The resort now consists of about fifteen shacks, and constitutes the only disturbing element in the environment at the birthplace of our national hero, George Washington. Our atmosphere of peace, beauty, and naturalness is the key note at this shrine, and deserves protection. Since it is our Chief function to protect that which is placed in our care, I respectfully recommend that the Service sponsor a bill to buy this Muse farm of about 170 acres. While the memorial mansion here is essentially a memorial—to keep in remembrance the house which gave us our national hero—the setting is authentic and this environment would be perfect if Muse's beach were eliminated. If the resort goes on and develops, it will effectively spoil the patriotic efforts that have been expanded here. Our naturally beautiful location with its broad, restful view, delightfully detached from the modern world of today, is a priceless heritage. It makes Wakefield what it is in its effect on visitors, hundreds of whom have been profoundly moved by their experience.<sup>134</sup>

Hough's memo further indicated that although the Monument approach remained a "cluster of old cheap buildings and a motley collection of signs, without sufficiently prominent signs to attract our own intended visitors," acquisition of the Muse Beach Resort was of the utmost importance.

Hough played to his new alliance with Crowninshield. He sent her a memo on the same day including a copy of his letter to the Director and asking, pointedly this time, "do you think the WNMA could raise another chest, to buy the land we need?"<sup>135</sup> The WNMA, however, was not the organization it once was. Crowninshield had not maintained the nationwide membership developed by Josephine Rust and, consequently, the WNMA lacked its once impressive ability to generate cash.<sup>136</sup> Crowninshield realized this and responded, "I really cannot undertake circularizing the Association. In fact I don't know who they are and I have not got the time or the energy left but do think it is an awfully necessary project

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<sup>133</sup> Demaray to Crowninshield, 5 November 1938 and Hough to Crowninshield, 15 November 1938, file "Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938" in Ancient Box 6, GEWA. Also see Hough to Director, 6 December 1938, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>134</sup> Hough to Director, 6 December 1938, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>135</sup> Hough to Crowninshield, 6 December 1938, file "Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938" in Ancient Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>136</sup> The WNMA's activity peaked in 1932 during celebration of Washington's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. At that time, Rust had personally courted ladies associations throughout the country in hopes of satisfying Rockefeller's matched-funding request. State chapters of the WNMA thus formed and contributed financially to the restoration effort. There is no evidence that these auxiliary chapters of the WNMA persisted beyond Rust's death and dedication of the Monument. Crowninshield did not share her predecessor's interest in creating a nation-wide organization, but rather concentrated on furnishing the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen.

and I will gladly give \$500 toward it if we can find any other people.”<sup>137</sup> \$500 (about \$6,500 today) would not go far in meeting Hough’s needs and the superintendent took Crowninshield’s suggestion to contact Mr. H.L. Rust, Jr.—WNMA secretary and widower of Josephine Rust—for assistance though without success.<sup>138</sup>

In one last glimmer of hope, Congressman Bland took renewed interest in the problem and in January 1939 requested that a bill be drafted adding various lands and the acquisition of scenic easements surrounding the Monument approach; specifically authorizing the purchase of the waterfront property between the Birthplace and Westmoreland State Park and requiring the Secretary of the Interior to convey 1000 acres of this land to the Commonwealth of Virginia for state park purposes, provided that the Commonwealth reimburse the Federal Government for 75% of the purchase price.<sup>139</sup> Even as the NPS drafted H.R. 8954 (Appendix 2), officials questioned the wisdom of Hough’s proposed acquisition. Associate Research Technician Charles Porter argued that the proposed addition would exceed the Monument’s administrative capacity given that such a large portion extended across Popes Creek and alternatively suggested acquiring a portion of Muse’s Beach just small enough to block development from view.<sup>140</sup>

Hough sought support for his position based on what he considered to be the importance of creating a wildlife refuge at the Monument and found, at least initially, some support for this plan.<sup>141</sup> Hough had originally obtained permission in 1934 from the Washington Office and the Wildlife Division to attempt

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<sup>137</sup> Crowninshield to Hough, 10 December 1938, in file “Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938” in Ancient Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>138</sup> Hough to Crowninshield, 26 December 1938, in *Ibid.* This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>139</sup> Wirth to Burson (Director of Parks, Virginia Conservation Commission), 29 March 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, Central Classified Files, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

<sup>140</sup> See Porter’s 24 August 1939 comments in (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, Central Classified Files, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

<sup>141</sup> “At your oral request, I interviewed officials of the biological survey in an effort to ascertain if waterfowl shooting might be prohibited on Popes Creek...Messrs. Elmer and Earnshaw...pointed out that under existing regulations it would be impossible to prevent erection of blinds...they suggested...cease artificial feeding at monument.” Victor H. Cahalane (Chief, Wildlife Division, Branch of Research and Information) to Hough, 10 November 1939, in (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, Central Classified Files, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

to create a refuge for migratory geese at the birthplace.<sup>142</sup> His new plan was somewhat more elaborate. First, Hough encouraged the Bureau of Biological Survey to consider creating a migratory waterfowl refuge at the Monument. The Bureau could then acquire park land using its own funds and without seeking special appropriation from Congress.<sup>143</sup> At the same time, Hough encouraged Congressman Bland to submit H.R. 8954 to allow for an expansion of the Park's boundaries. The plan stalled when Bland learned that the Secretary of the Interior's most recent report indicated that, given budget concerns, the bill was likely to fail.<sup>144</sup> Bland tried again by introducing a second bill, H.R. 18, on January 3, 1941 (Appendix 2). H.R. 18 would authorize the secretary to accept, purchase, or condemn somewhere around 2000 acres of land on the opposite bank of Popes Creek, otherwise known as Muse's Beach.<sup>145</sup> Bland's bill suffered a similar fate in Congress, presumably given the already pressing financial demands of military buildup. Any further interest in acquiring lands at Wakefield yielded to war concerns by 1942.

Despite Hough's fears, Muse's Beach never did grow out of control and neither the Muse family nor any other adjacent landowners ever did sell their lands to developers. Neither Hough nor the NPS ever quite recognized that the Monument's neighbors no more wanted developers controlling their land than they did the Federal Government. In hindsight, community pride in a shared heritage was Hough's greatest ally in the battle against development. Still, Hough did not realize this and fought diligently to protect the landscape he considered so vital to understanding George Washington's life, especially at a site so rife with interpretive conundrums.

Hough's failed effort to forge a land policy and the continuing legacy of Building X eventually doomed his even greater desire to draft a comprehensive master plan. The Park did produce a master plan in 1939, but its five sheets of drawings merely suggested anticipated development and did not include any

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<sup>142</sup> 1934 Annual wildlife Report, George Washington's Birthplace National Monument, in unmarked file, NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

<sup>143</sup> Roberts to Director, 10 May 1940, file "d32 landscaping" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. This file also contains several maps (land acquisition) and photographs.

<sup>144</sup> Unidentified office assistant to Cammerer, 6 January 1940, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>145</sup> See SMR, January 1941, GEWA.

narrative suggesting an overarching vision for development.<sup>146</sup> The plan identified the sites of various archeological investigations, for example, but simply and somewhat vaguely called for additional archeological and historical research. The plan also called for construction of a new administration building and a museum though Hough had already secured the fate of both through his willingness to settle for a temporary administration building. Most significantly, the plan called for acquisition of nearly 1600 acres of surrounding land demonstrating the superintendent's considerable fear of land development. But the 1939 master plan only constituted a partial victory for Hough. Despite his ongoing calls for substantial revision, the 1939 plan remained the Park's guiding document for nearly twenty years.<sup>147</sup> Years of difficulty managing the Park without an adequate staff, the complexities of interpretation at a site haunted by Building X, and the onset of World War II all but crippled Hough's hopes of formalizing an overarching developmental vision for Washington's Birthplace.

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<sup>146</sup> These documents are typical of early master plans consisting primarily of large drawings depicting anticipated changes to the built and natural landscapes. See "General Plan, George Washington Birthplace National Monument," Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Yorktown Office—Landscape Division. February 4, 1932. Job No. 1006. Microfiche, National Park Service Archives, Philadelphia, PA; "George Washington Birthplace National Monument Master Plan," 4 sheets, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1939 (rev. 1940), GEWA; "General Development Plan, Part of the Master Plan, George Washington Birthplace National Monument," Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Planning and Construction Division, Regional Office, July 1950, Drawing No. NM GWB 2004C, Microfiche, National Park Service Archives, Philadelphia, Pa; and "General Development Plan," part of the Master Plan, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Office of Resource Planning, November 1966 (rev. April 1967), GEWA. Also See folder "D2215," NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA, for 1933-1945 6-year advance plans.

<sup>147</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.86-2. 87 provides a good summary of the 1939 master plan. The Park did issue a revised plan in 1941, but it remained more-or-less identical to the 1939 version. The 1941 plan appears in records only in passing as in the February 1952 Master Plan Development Outline in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.



## CHAPTER 4

### **Visitor Experience and Interpretation, 1932-1940**

As archeological controversy, staffing and funding shortages, and planning debates unfolded behind the scenes at Wakefield, the Monument outwardly thrived during its first decade. By October 1933, over 100,000 visitors had made the trek to Washington's Birthplace.<sup>1</sup> Some of these visitors lived in the surrounding community and enjoyed the Monument's Potomac River beachfront and various picnic areas. Hough estimated that, as of 1930, approximately 20,000 people lived within an hour drive of Wakefield.<sup>2</sup> Most visitors encountered Washington's Birthplace while traveling from Washington, DC to Colonial Williamsburg and other points south. School and church groups also flocked to the Park during this period providing the Monument with its bulk of weekday visitors. In advance of a 1936 visit by 750 4-H Club members, Hough explained to WNMA President Crowninshield that "my plan is to allow them about 25 minutes on the Mansion grounds, after which they will repair to the picnic grounds for a tug-of-war tournament. This ought to keep them occupied and out of mischief for a while."<sup>3</sup> Although tug-of-war may not have offered the best opportunity to learn about the life of George Washington, it did demonstrate Hough's willingness to accommodate large tour and school groups which, though rarely if ever reaching 750 people, did constitute a significant portion of early visitation.

Prior to construction of Interstate 95 and before State Route 3—locally known as the "Kings Highway"—had been widened to accommodate high-speed travel, getting to Washington's Birthplace was easier said than done. Hough considered the effort required to visit Wakefield a positive deterrent to undesirable visitors. He considered the thirty-eight mile buffer between the Monument and Fredericksburg "perhaps a fortunate thing as we receive a very high type of visitor and have practically no trouble with the type of parties looking for amusement or excitement."<sup>4</sup> Visitors traveling from Washington, DC motored south down State Highway 1 until faced with a choice of proceeding on Route

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<sup>1</sup> Hough to Director, 31 October 1933, folder "master plan d1815" in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>2</sup> SMR, November 1934, GEWA.

<sup>3</sup> Hough to Crowninshield, 15 June 1936, folder "Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938" in Ancient Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>4</sup> SMR, November 1934, GEWA.

3 or following Maryland State Highways 5 and 3 to Morgantown, Maryland. At Morgantown, a ferry transported automobiles to Colonial Beach from where thirteen additional miles along back roads and Route 3 led visitors to Wakefield. Traveling north from Richmond involved more-or-less the same route taken today variously along Routes 17 and 3, though without the predictability of paved roads. Records show, for example, that Monument staff spent a great deal of time keeping Route 204 passable. The Peninsula Bus Company brought visitors from Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Norfolk to the intersection of Routes 3 and 204 where, still two miles distant from the Monument, travelers continued on foot or made arrangements for transportation at a local business.<sup>5</sup>

Although this final two-mile stretch did not belong to the NPS, it did mark the beginning of the visitor experience and, in a way, transitioned visitors from the relative hustle of Route 3 to the rural calm of Washington's Birthplace. Past a few homes and businesses near its intersection with Route 3, Route 204 opened unto majestic farmland owned and operated by the Latane family (Images 22 & 23). This landscape, shaped by centuries of traditional farming techniques and dotted with grazing sheep, cattle, and horses, set the mood for the Monument's historic setting.<sup>6</sup> The 1896 granite obelisk loomed in the distance and marked the formal entrance to the Birthplace. Route 204 transitioned into a park access road at the entrance, circled around the granite obelisk, and led visitors another quarter mile to a dirt parking lot located along what is now the southeastern edge of the ox yard. Visitors entered the Monument's historic area on foot through a white picket fence at the northeast end of the lot where one could see the Colonial Kitchen some hundred feet distant and, behind that, the Memorial House (Images 24 & 25).

### **Touring the Monument During the 1930s**

Hough wrote a "Historic Handbook" for the Monument in 1951. Having given tours for nearly twenty years—the Monument's interpretive landscape changed little during that time—Hough's account

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<sup>5</sup> See 1933 George Washington Birthplace National Monument visitor pamphlet, GEWA.

<sup>6</sup> "Many is the compliment we have received on the sheep, cattle and horses (which are not ours, but belong to the Latane Brothers; seen on the Latane farm before entering the monument." There is abundant evidence that Wakefield was well stocked in the colonial period—exact counts being preserved in inventories of 1743 and 1762. This office recommends the acquisition of a few sheep and geese to lend life and atmosphere." Hough to Director, 31 October 1933, folder "Master Plan d1815" in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

provides a thumbnail sketch of how visitors experienced the birth site during its first decades. Hough personally welcomed as many visitors as he could well before they encountered the Memorial House (Image 26). The superintendent's monthly reports frequently mention his preference for greeting visitors in person. Hough, amid his various other duties, kept a watchful eye on the parking lot from his office window in the Colonial Kitchen. The superintendent devoted the lion's share of his day to running back and forth between the Colonial Kitchen and the parking lot.

Having exchanged greetings, Hough led visitors into the core historic area toward the Memorial House along a "plain earth driveway" intended to recall a colonial wagon path.<sup>7</sup> He recounted the history of the Washington family at Popes Creek as visitors followed the path past rose bushes and winter jasmine. Observant visitors may have asked about the noticeably bare lawn to the right of the path covering the foundations of Building X though, considering his feelings about the controversy, Hough surely avoided lengthy discussion of the site. The dirt path led to a brick walkway joining the Memorial House, Colonial Kitchen, and extending beyond into the Colonial Garden (Image 27). Hough pointed out the hackberry tree and fig clusters in front of the Memorial House—both likely present during Washington's time at Wakefield—and ushered his guests into the "land front" of the building where, immediately to the right, stood a registration desk (Image 28). The WNMA offered a variety of items for sale in the Memorial House's central hall and accepted donations in a drop box set aside for that purpose. The Monument relocated WNMA sales items to an upstairs room in April 1932 prompting Hough to remark, "it is believed that the first impression on visitors entering the building is now much better."<sup>8</sup>

A ranger distributed free information folders and sold various booklets and handbooks from a desk situated along the left wall of the entrance hall. Hough introduced his guests to the ranger who then commenced a tour of the Memorial House. Tours of the Memorial House during the 1930s did not differ dramatically from tours today. Rangers led visitors through the house, commenting on its various

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<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the following description of a typical visit to Washington's birthplace is derived from "Material for a 56-Page Historic Handbook on George Washington Birthplace National Monument" by Philip Hough, submitted to Regional Director 11 January 1951 in folder "1920s-1960s Records," NPS Records Box 6 of 25, GEWA. Also see this file for a 1933 map of GEWA and various other relevant documents.

<sup>8</sup> SMR, April 1932, GEWA.

furnishings and providing some sense of how the Washington family may have used the space. Nobody, however, desired to linger in the Memorial House prior to July 1932. In that month, the Monument installed screens on the Memorial House windows and doors that “while not colonial, were an urgent necessity in as much as flies and mosquitoes had become a great nuisance.”<sup>9</sup> Visitors occasionally met costumed interpreters in the Memorial House. Beginning in 1935, the WNMA made an annual ritual of celebrating Washington’s birthday by serving hot cider and gingerbread made from old family recipes (Image 29).<sup>10</sup>

The tour proceeded to the Colonial Kitchen, which during the 1930s served a surprising variety of purposes for such a small building. Hough’s prized artifact displays occupied a sizeable portion of the first floor. Visitors browsed archeological artifacts culled from various excavations, Native American arrowheads discovered in the area, and a host of fossils and shark teeth gathered throughout the Monument grounds. Various artifacts and reproductions arranged about the fireplace suggested a working colonial kitchen. Amid all of this, Hough—and later the Park clerk—kept office in what must have been impossibly small quarters. Upstairs, a garret-style attic—originally intended to interpret servants’ lives—provided living quarters for park staff. In an attempt to achieve some degree of separation between interpretive exhibits and administrative facilities, the Monument constructed a partition “in the main room of the kitchen which will screen off the doors leading to the bathroom and office.”<sup>11</sup> Still, the Colonial Kitchen remained a crowded chaotic space with the “noises of typewriters, adding machines, and telephone bells [that] tend to spoil the desired effect.”<sup>12</sup>

Outside the Colonial Kitchen, Rangers pointed guests toward the colonial garden. Although the 1933 visitor’s guide promised a view “of many old fashioned herbs and plants such as were cultivated 200 years ago” the garden remained a ragged affair during its first years of operation. Planning

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<sup>9</sup> SMR, July 1932, GEWA.

<sup>10</sup> For references to Hough arranging this with the WNMA and the WNMA deciding to make it an annual event, see 22 February 1935 “Minutes of the WNMA (Northern Neck Branch),” Wakefield National Memorial Association Records, 1923-1985, Series III, Secretary’s Files, Unprocessed Material, Box 18 of 37, GEWA.

<sup>11</sup> SMR, January 1937, GEWA.

<sup>12</sup> Hough to Wilhelm, 10 April 1939, file “Packet Master Plan D1815” in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

disagreements between the NPS and the WNMA delayed serious efforts to create an accurate garden and, having only one growing season to mature, several plots remained uncultivated by 1933, drawing negative feedback from some visitors. A walk along Burnt House Trail, which extended beyond the garden through a stand of native red cedars along Pope's Creek, surely calmed the disappointed garden devotee. In fact, the trail pleased visitors so much that Hough proposed that it should have a management plan of its own.<sup>13</sup>

The guided tour of Washington's Birthplace, to the extent that one existed, ended at the Colonial Garden, but visitors frequently roamed at will beyond the core historic area. A waterside trail extended northeast past the "water front" of the Memorial House toward the three-hundred-foot long Dancing Marsh footbridge. The footbridge provided a scenic walk across Dancing Marsh Creek and joined the core historic area with Duck Hall point where stood the WNMA's Log House Tea Room. WNMA finance records and superintendent monthly reports suggest, however, that most visitors bypassed the Log House entirely and after using the restrooms located in what is now the Weaving Room, more likely returned to their cars and drove a little over a mile to see the Washington family burial ground. A 300-foot tree-lined gravel path led from the burial ground parking lot to the resting place of thirty-one members of the Washington family (Image 30). The remains interred there within the stone vault included George's father Augustine and his two wives, grandfather Lawrence, Colonel John Washington and his first wife Anne Pope, great uncle John and wife Anne, and brother Augustine Washington, Jr. and wife Anne. Several Aquia Creek freestone table stones and two of the burial ground's original gravestones listed the dead.

Leaving the burial ground and driving an additional half-mile down the burial ground access road, visitors encountered a turnaround where they might park and enjoy a picnic on a sandy Potomac River beach (Images 31 & 32). On a clear day, one might see from this point the outlines of President James Monroe's boyhood farmstead. Remnants of the pier built by the War Department at Bridges Creek in 1896 extended into the river from this site until their removal in 1934 (Image 33). Visitors arriving

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<sup>13</sup> Hough to Director, 31 October 1933, folder "Master Plan d1815" in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

from the Monument's core historic area might be surprised to discover a much livelier scene at the river beach. Tourists and residents alike—both White and Black—swam in the Potomac, relaxed on the beach, and hunted sharks' teeth in the receding tide. In fact, reports suggest that the Potomac River beach area was far more popular than the core historic area offering as it did a free recreational area for the entire Northern Neck. Leaving the beach area could be more difficult than entering. Visitors frequently mired their cars in the mud after heavy downpours atop the not yet paved access road and traffic circle. Those who did escape, unless remaining for the night or perhaps relocating to the shaded picnic ground adjacent to the Log House, typically left the Monument at this point. According to former Park Historian Paul Hudson, visitors rarely stayed long enough for prolonged tours save during spring and summer Sundays.<sup>14</sup> Hough later estimated that the average visitor spent just over an hour at the Monument: twenty minutes at the Memorial House, fifteen at the burial ground, another fifteen wandering the grounds, and only five minutes per visit to the Colonial Kitchen, Colonial Garden, and post office.<sup>15</sup>

### **Early Interpretation at Washington's Birthplace**

Hough's "Historic Handbook" describes how visitors moved between the Monument's various interpretive areas, but it reveals little about interpretation within those areas. Historian Paul Carson argues "that interpretation for the first 36 years of the Park consisted of little more than a peek at museum displays in the kitchen, a walk through the Memorial house, and a quiet stroll to enjoy the beautiful solitude of the area."<sup>16</sup> But it was exactly these aspects of a visit to Washington's Birthplace that placed it among the vanguard of historical sites in the 1930s. The Colonial Revival had popularized historical reconstructions by way of the colonial kitchens and costumed hostesses featured at sanitary fairs and charity teas. The phenomenon remained largely within the realm of popular novelty, however, until the late 1920 and early 1930s when the Metropolitan Museum of Art's American Wing, Rockefeller's sponsorship of Colonial Williamsburg, and the WNMA's construction of the Memorial House legitimized

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<sup>14</sup> See Hudson's Annual Wild Life Report, George Washington's Birthplace National Monument, 1933, in unmarked file (cover missing), NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

<sup>15</sup> See February 1952 Master Plan Development Outline, NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Carson, "The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington's Birthplace," pp. 4113-4114.

historical reconstruction as a serious device through which to inform Americans about the past. Visitors to Washington's Birthplace during the 1930s therefore witnessed a strikingly new interpretive undertaking.

The goals of that undertaking, however, remained unclear or, more specifically at Wakefield, up for grabs. The WNMA, under the leadership of Josephine Rust, pursued its work with an eye toward commemoration. It sought to honor Washington through a highly symbolic commemorative landscape. It considered the patriotic lessons of its Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen implicit and, thus, not requiring the kind of careful interpretive narrative favored by the NPS. The NPS sought to convey accurate information about the historical conditions surrounding and informing Washington's life. It likened the commemorative landscape to a picture of the past whose composition required both sensitivity to authenticity and a suitable 'caption' to organize the visitor's experience of the site. NPS Chief Historian Verne Chatelain expressed so much in a 1935 paper delivered to the American Planning and Civic Association:

The conception which underlies the whole policy of the National Park Service in connection with [historical and archeological] sites is that of using the uniquely graphic qualities which inhere in any area where stirring and significant events have taken place to drive home to the visitor the meaning of those events showing not only their importance in themselves but their integral relationship to the whole history of American development. In other words, the task is to breathe the breath of life into American history for those to whom it has been a dull recital of meaningless facts—to recreate for the average citizen something of the color, the pageantry, and the dignity of our national past.<sup>17</sup>

Despite his lofty vision, Chatelain failed to provide practical instructions for how exactly to use those "graphic qualities" at a site like Washington's Birthplace. In this way, responsibility for enacting the NPS's interpretive philosophy during the early 1930s fell to regional planners and park staff whom, at Wakefield, frequently butted heads with the WNMA. The conflict between the WNMA and NPS planners concerning the proper layout and purpose of the colonial garden is a case in point. Changes in

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<sup>17</sup> Cited in Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington: National Park Service, 1986), <[www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mackintosh2/index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mackintosh2/index.htm)> (1 May 2006). See specifically "Inaugurating the Program" in Chapter 2.

WNMA leadership, however, eventually brought the two organizations into something resembling, though not always achieving, interpretive accord.

Chatelaine's suggestions notwithstanding, park staff and agents on the ground at Wakefield during the early 1930s struggled more-or-less independently to blaze their own interpretive path. Interpretation, however, necessarily took a back seat to constructing an infrastructure and negotiating relations with adjacent landowners so that, by the end of the decade, the NPS had not even managed to draft an official interpretive statement stating exactly how long Washington had been associated with the property or to what extent it might be argued that his time there bore any influence on the general's later life.<sup>18</sup> It is therefore not surprising that early interpretive decisions often defaulted to the WNMA. This was especially the case with the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen. Having built both buildings with their own money, the WNMA considered the house and kitchen home turf even after transfer of its property to the government.

The commemorative focus of the WNMA, however, was almost entirely concerned with outward appearances. The presence of light switches and electrical sockets, as noted by visitor complaints, indicates an indifference to authenticity within the house. Moreover, the WNMA charged its architect, Edward Donn, with furnishing the Memorial House and although Donn may have claimed expertise in colonial architecture, it is not evident that he had any training in decorative arts.<sup>19</sup> Photographs taken by NPS photographer George Grant during three days in May 1932 reveal that the WNMA furnished the Memorial House in a style intended to evoke rather than recreate the material world of Washington and his family. Highly idiosyncratic buffalo hides and a bear skin rug received from Yellowstone National Park covered the floors of two rooms while black walnut furniture made by the same Harrisonburg, Virginia craftsmen who outfitted the Log House filled the Memorial House as well (Image 34). Finally,

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<sup>18</sup> Associate Research Technician Charles W. Porter voiced concern regarding this deficiency in comments regarding the 1939 master plan: "Besides the historical base map of the Mansion area, there is a need for an interpretative statement indicating how long George Washington was Associated with the Wakefield area and pointing out what traits or qualities he may have inherited or acquired from the Virginian plantation environment into which he was born." 24 August 1939, (Box 76) folder 12, Records of the National Park Service NE Region, Central Classified Files, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMAR.

<sup>19</sup> SMR, November 1931, GEWA.



nine four-by-six-inch silver plates fastened to doors and walls honored cash gifts made by various wealthy supporters of the WNMA's project.<sup>20</sup> Although the WNMA devoted itself to honoring the life of Washington, it never lost site of its own role in that commemorative effort and considered the interior of the Memorial House an appropriate venue in which to honor its own contribution.

The WNMA's initial furnishing of the Memorial House should not be thought of as intentionally inaccurate or insubstantial. On the contrary, Rust and her associates expressed through the Memorial House a perfect instance of the commemorative spirit fostered by the Colonial Revival. By 1930, however, some devotees of the Colonial Revival had begun to consider authentic recreation an ideal in its own right and though the Monument at Popes Creek certainly occupied a position at the forefront of historical interpretation, the interior of the Memorial House paled in significance to exhibits at sites like Colonial Williamsburg. This said, aesthetic concerns fell by the wayside during the excitement and sadness of 1931. Josephine Rust's death—only four days after she signed the deed transferring the WNMA's property to the government—left the WNMA in a state of organizational disarray. Associate Engineer White reported that “there has been no driving force behind the WNMA's plan” since Rust's death and described a “lull in the cooperative work” between the government and the WNMA.<sup>21</sup> Charles Moore assumed leadership responsibilities following Rust's death, but eventually passed the torch to Maude Worthington. Worthington spent most of her two years as president in England in search of suitable antiques with which to devise a furnishing plan for the Memorial House. Although Worthington did acquire a few antiques for the house, health concerns prevented her from continuing.<sup>22</sup> Beyond construction and operation of the Log House Tea Room, the WNMA consequently limited its activities

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<sup>20</sup> SMR, May and November 1932, GEWA. Hough remarked that the same furniture makers also provided services to Colonial Williamsburg. One year later, Hough initiated an effort to catalogue the Memorial House furnishings by listing each item on an index card. These index cards are stored at GEWA though it is not clear if they are complete or inclusive. See SMR, November 1933, GEWA.

<sup>21</sup> SMR, July 1931, GEWA.

<sup>22</sup> See Master Plan Development Outline, February 1952, NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

between 1932 and 1935 to souvenir sales and hosting social events including the annual celebration of Washington's birthday.<sup>23</sup>

### **Louise du Pont Crowninshield and a New Interpretive Direction**

Charles Moore recognized the Memorial House's interpretive potential and approached Louise du Pont Crowninshield about assuming leadership of the WNMA. Born Louise Evelina du Pont in 1877, Crowninshield inherited the wealth and renown of her family's early nineteenth-century forays into gunpowder production and subsequent involvement in arms and defense contracting. Crowninshield developed an interest in colonial furnishings as her brother, Henry Francis du Pont, redesigned and renovated the family's Winterthur estate in Delaware in the fashion of a traditional European country house. The Winterthur Museum was then, as it is now, widely respected for its collection of eighteenth and nineteenth-century furnishings and period rooms. Crowninshield further associated herself with a number of historic preservation efforts including the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities' restoration of the Derby House in Salem, Massachusetts; the restoration of her family home at Mutchanin, Delaware; and the restoration of George Washington's sister's Kenmore Estate in Fredericksburg, Virginia. After World War II, Crowninshield became one of the first trustees of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.<sup>24</sup> Although not formally trained as a historian of decorative arts, Crowninshield had become—by way of her great interest, involvement in, and generous patronage of the field—a well-respected authority. As WNMA president, a figure like Crowninshield promised to distinguish the Monument among historic sites and, amid the controversies surrounding Building X, create an air of legitimacy eagerly sought by Hough.

Considering Crowninshield's notoriety and the extent of her various commitments, Moore must have been delighted when she accepted his offer in 1935. In fact, he cautioned Hough against making too great demands on her lest she change her mind: "She is a very busy woman and has many interests, and it is not desirable to bother her with such matters as the acquisition of the Muse Farms or other general

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<sup>23</sup> Hough describes these early birthday celebrations in SMR, February 1935, GEWA. This report includes a lengthy description and photos of the birthday celebration.

<sup>24</sup> Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, pp. 175-76, 656, 913, 924.

business of the sort.”<sup>25</sup> Even though, as we will see, Hough did pester Crowninshield about “other general business of the sort,” she did not change her mind about furnishing the Memorial House and would, in time, become a valuable supporter of Hough’s agenda. In the meantime, she ushered in a new era for the WNMA and its relationship with the NPS. Her ability to do this stemmed, in part, from having *not* been involved with the WNMA in prior years. In a letter to Hough, Crowninshield referenced Charles Hoppin and asked, “have you ever heard of him or his papers?” Hough found a fast friend in the wealthy philanthropist who shared his convictions about Building X.<sup>26</sup> Most importantly, Crowninshield introduced an interpretive vision in accord with the NPS’s own goals at Wakefield.

That vision just so happened to represent the vanguard of the Colonial Revival during the early 1930s. Crowninshield put Washington’s Birthplace on the map of important historic preservation sites by linking it, through her presence, to other significant events and individuals in the field. Foremost among these was the American Wing exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Opened in 1924, the American Wing presented colonial furnishings and artifacts in period rooms and constituted one of the most significant pillars of the Colonial Revival in this country. Crowninshield had multiple connections to the American Wing. Henry du Pont frequently consulted with the exhibit’s creators regarding his own work at Winterthur and accordingly involved his sister in these relationships. More directly, Crowninshield’s close friend Bertha Benkard—who would also come to significantly influence the direction of the Winterthur project—was directly involved in the exhibit and frequently accompanied

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<sup>25</sup> Moore to Hough, 20 April 1935, file “Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938” in Ancient Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>26</sup> Crowninshield to Hough, 12 July 1937, file “Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938” in Ancient Box 6, GEWA. Hough’s response is also telling with regard to past relations with the WNMA: “What he offers sounds good—almost too good. Mr. Hoppin is a commercial gentleman, in spite of his references to his gratuitous services...Our historians are quite frankly irked by his continuous references to the wonderful things in his possession or at his disposal—but he never comes out and puts his cards on the table. We now doubt that he has much up his sleeve.” See Hough to Crowninshield, 25 January 1938, in *Ibid.* Despite being new to GEWA, Crowninshield eventually came to side with the WNMA regarding the location of the Memorial House as suggested in a letter to Director Demaray where she comments that despite that “the house is not the original one—although, I firmly believe, on the exact foundation.” Crowninshield to Demaray, 26 October 1938, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP. Moreover, Crowninshield considered Rodnick’s 1940 investigation work an unnecessary disruption to the rural calm at GEWA. See Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, pp. 607-10.

Crowninshield on visits to Wakefield.<sup>27</sup> No sooner had Crowninshield signed on at Wakefield did Joseph Downs, head curator of the American Wing, visit the Park and “expressed himself in highly favorable terms of what the government has begun here at Washington’s birthplace and in a general way of its accomplishment to date.” Hough took his cues accordingly and, perhaps eager to maintain these ties with the American Wing, traveled north “primarily to study colonial period exhibits at the Metropolitan Museum of art in New York.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Refurnishing the Memorial House**

As of 1935, the Memorial House contained a hodgepodge of inappropriate reproduction furnishings and decorations. Minutes of the WNMA reveal that, immediately upon her arrival, Crowninshield announced her intent to keep “the relics and furniture of the period prior to 1753 when George Washington was a child. She wished to have only original pieces and dispose of all reproductions.”<sup>29</sup> For over five years Crowninshield inundated the Monument with furnishings carefully selected and purchased—mostly at her own expense though also with funds generated by the WNMA through contributions and fund-raising events—from collections throughout the eastern states and Europe. Monthly reports refer to regular shipments received from Crowninshield accompanied by specific instructions for how each item was to be placed and maintained in the memorial house. Hough dutifully followed her instructions and enjoyed seeing her reactions to his work during her periodic visits to Wakefield.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See SMR, October 1935 and April 1940, GEWA. Benkard—later Bertha Benkard-Rose—herself played a significant role in the Colonial Revival and the development of historic preservation in this country. Of most direct relevance to the Monument, Benkard-Rose directed the restoration of nearby Stratford Hall. She also supervised the restoration of Sagamore Hill, which has since become an NPS site. See “Mrs. Reginald P. Rose, 1906-1982” in *Theodore Roosevelt Association Journal* (1982), pp. 15-16.

<sup>28</sup> SMR, November 1935, GEWA.

<sup>29</sup> 25 April 1938 “Minutes of the WNMA (Northern Neck Branch),” Wakefield National Memorial Association Records, 1923-1985, Series III, Secretary’s Files, Unprocessed Material, Box 18 of 37, GEWA.

<sup>30</sup> Acting NPS Director J.R. White thanked Crowninshield on behalf of the Service: “A few days ago I paid my first visit to George Washington Birthplace National Monument at Wakefield and Superintendent Hough pointed out with particular pride the magnificent collection of colonial furniture which has been assembled in the building. He told me of the great personal interest and the financial assistance that you have given in the collection of this furniture and I desire to express to you, both personally and officially, my appreciation. You have been very modest in claiming credit for this donation and I know that you have a continuing interest in the problems of development at Washington’s Birthplace.” White to Crowninshield, 18 August 1939, (Box 76) file 12, Records of the National Park

Crowninshield's efforts occasionally created difficulties for the Monument. Hough wrestled, for instance, with ways to preserve three straw beehives Crowninshield contributed for use in the colonial garden. Maintenance staff eventually constructed wooden boxes to protect the hives from rain and snow.<sup>31</sup> Protecting Crowninshield's furnishings also occasionally strained the Monument's operating budget. Hough had not anticipated, for instance, the expense of cleaning delicate draperies, something that "will present a problem not provided for in our budget."<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, the benefits of Crowninshield's work outweighed the costs. With the arrival of Crowninshield's furnishings—specifically purchased for the Memorial House—Hough unburdened himself of the responsibilities of caring for other peoples' property. He reported in late 1937 that "authority has been received from Washington to release...the items desired for removal by [WNMA member] Mrs. Amy Chandler. Following this removal all items of house furnishing in the memorial mansion will be here on a permanent basis and it will indeed be a pleasure to be responsible for no more loaned antiques."<sup>33</sup> The WNMA decided to donate all furnishings—nearly four hundred pieces—to the Monument in 1945 and Hough prepared an inventory to facilitate the transfer.<sup>34</sup>

Crowninshield's refurnishing project neared completion by the end of 1940 and created a markedly different visitor experience within the Memorial House. The interior now did reflect, to the best of anyone's knowledge, the material world of a well-to-do mid-eighteenth-century Virginia plantation family (Image 35). Moreover, Crowninshield completed her project by funding alternations to the building's chimneys. Construction in 1931 did not include completion of the chimneys so, in October 1940, Crowninshield had the chimneys unsealed and installed dampers to allow for fires during special

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Service NE Region, Central Classified Files, 1936-1952, RG 79, NAMARA. Hough referenced these visits in his monthly reports as in October 1935 when Crowninshield "visited to install new antique furnishings for the restored mansion" with her friend, Bertha Benkard.

<sup>31</sup> SMR, April and December 1936, GEWA.

<sup>32</sup> SMR, September 1936, GEWA.

<sup>33</sup> SMR, November 1937, GEWA.

<sup>34</sup> SMR, December 1945, GEWA. Hough included a list of the Memorial House's new furnishings in his 1940 Annual Report.

occasions.<sup>35</sup> With working fireplaces, costumed interpreters could now present a fuller picture of colonial domestic life and so initiated a new interpretive direction at Washington's Birthplace (Image 36).

Crowninshield also purchased furnishings for the Colonial Kitchen, but she left her most significant mark on the Memorial House. Hough included a list of those furnishings donated by Crowninshield in his 1940 Annual Report, but photographs of the Memorial House interior more fully demonstrate the dramatic change witnessed in that year.<sup>36</sup>

### **The WNMA's New Interpretive Role**

Hough and Crowninshield worked closely together during the refurnishing of the Memorial House and developed a warm friendship. Hough considered Crowninshield a confidant in matters of policy and disagreement with the NPS. In a 1940 letter, for example, Hough urged Crowninshield to keep their conversations regarding the Building X controversy "within the family," because his statements regarding "matters of policy...should first be approved by the Department in Washington."<sup>37</sup>

Crowninshield, in turn, respected Hough's interest and careful stewardship. She expressed her pleasure with the Wakefield project to Director Demaray and called it "the most charming of any of the Virginia historic houses with the possible exception of Mt. Vernon."<sup>38</sup> By 1937, the du Pont heiress had grown to trust the NPS's ability to manage historic preservation and urged William Sumner Appleton—president of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities—to donate the Derby House and other historic properties to the Service.<sup>39</sup>

Crowninshield's refurnishing project also provided new opportunities for the WNMA. Under Rust and during the excitement of Washington's bicentennial, the WNMA enjoyed a national membership with chapters in several states. The sheer cost of undertaking the Wakefield project required national support and these chapters existed, in large part, because of Rust's ambitious nationwide public relations

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<sup>35</sup> SMR, October 1940, GEWA. Renovations of the chimneys required that the main room heat register, previously installed in the fireplace, be moved into the far corner of the room.

<sup>36</sup> See SAR, 1940, GEWA for a list of furnishings then on display in the Memorial House.

<sup>37</sup> Hough to Crowninshield, 18 December 1940, file "homesite controversy" in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>38</sup> Crowninshield to Demaray, 26 October 1938, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>39</sup> Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, p. 176.

efforts. Following her death, however, only the local Northern Neck branch remained. The ladies of the Northern Neck found themselves unorganized and uncertain about their role in the wake of Rust's death, especially as questions concerning Building X placed the WNMA's work under scrutiny.

The WNMA thus fashioned itself into something of an interpretive auxiliary and events coordinator. Beginning in 1935, celebration of Washington's birthday became the WNMA's primary focus once. By 1936, the Northern Neck branch made themselves available to Hough, given due notice, for any event for which he desired costumed hosts. The WNMA even occasionally went so far as to stage monthly meetings in full costume.<sup>40</sup> Although celebration of Washington's birthday lapsed for two years, the WNMA agreed in 1938 to make the event an annual staple, adding that "some young ladies from each organized county in costume" would host these events.<sup>41</sup> When not hosting events or performing costumed interpretation, the WNMA attended to furnishings. Crowninshield requested that members replace old fabrics and launder drapes and linens when necessary. Hough loved the idea, remarking that "this would solve what is sure to become a problem under government methods of management."<sup>42</sup>

The superintendent did his part to reciprocate when possible as with his support of the WNMA's Northern Neck school fundraiser. Seeking opportunities to fund Crowninshield's furnishing program during the hard economic times of the late 1930s, the WNMA worked with local elementary schools to create a program where students contributed pennies toward the cost of an individual piece of furniture selected and purchased by Crowninshield. Hough helped out by visiting schools and giving talks about the Birthplace and the life of George Washington. The program simultaneously raised funds for the WNMA while cultivating interest in the Birthplace. Within a year the program achieved positive results and the WNMA worked with the Birthplace and local schools to make it an annual ritual.<sup>43</sup>

### **Annianias Johnson and an Early Living Farm**

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<sup>40</sup> 22 February 1936 "Minutes of the WNMA (Northern Neck Branch)," Wakefield National Memorial Association Records, 1923-1985, Series III, Secretary's Files, Unprocessed Material, Box 18 of 37, GEWA.

<sup>41</sup> 25 April 1938 "Minutes of the WNMA" in Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> SMR, December 1945, GEWA.

<sup>43</sup> 26 April 1937 and 25 April 1938 "Minutes of the WNMA (Northern Neck Branch)," Wakefield National Memorial Association Records, 1923-1985, Series III, Secretary's Files, Unprocessed Material, Box 18 of 37, GEWA .

Although the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen constituted the Monument's primary interpretive spaces during the 1930s, visitors also enjoyed strolls through a colonial crops demonstration area. Hough initiated plans for this project almost immediately upon arriving at Popes Creek believing that although "these colonial crops are for display rather than profit...it is believed that if arrangements can be worked out, that twists of Wakefield tobacco can be sold as souvenirs at the log house."<sup>44</sup> The Monument planted two acres of tobacco in March 1933 and, by October, visitor interest convinced Hough that the farm should be developed further (Image 37 & Illustration 3). In fact, the superintendent hoped to offer an abandoned house on the Raymond Washington tract to an individual hired solely to tend to the crops although Hough never found a willing tenant.<sup>45</sup>

He did, however, find Annanias Johnson. Johnson was born into slavery sometime between 1850 and 1860 and had spent his entire life working in the fields at Wakefield. Hough hired him to tend the Monument's tobacco crop in March 1933. Although elderly and in declining health, Johnson offered expertise in tobacco cultivation and a tangible link to what Hough considered a noble antebellum south:

Tobacco seed beds were prepared and sown by the venerable Annanias Johnson. The old fellow, now 82 years old, is failing rapidly. It is doubtful that he can carry on alone this year in caring for the tobacco patch, since his eyesight has become so poor he cannot be trusted. It will be a sorry day when he passes. Annanias is the last Wakefield slave alive and is a darkey of the old school who can never be replaced. When he goes, his type will be only a memory in this section. Many is the picture that has been snapped of him by our visitors as he worked in his tobacco patch, and we have had people say that they appreciated him more than anything else we had on the place. This is true of visitors from the deep south especially. Wakefield owes him a living as much as anyone owes anything to anybody. He has worked all of his 82 years on the place and he has often said, "I've done sweat on every foot of Wakefield." Even if he cannot work he is worth a good deal just to have him around for authentic local color and interest.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> SMR, December 1932, GEWA.

<sup>45</sup> SMR, March and October 1933, GEWA. Hough's March 1934 Monthly Report sheds further light on this proposal. Once the Director granted Hough authority to lease the old Raymond Washington house to a tenant, Hough specifically sought out potential African-American renters. It is unclear why he specifically sought out Black tenants, though possible that—since Hough desired the tenant to operate the crop demonstration area—he hoped to informally interpret slave life on a colonial plantation. His plan failed when Hough discovered that no interested African-American tenants owned cars and so could not reach schools, stores, and churches from the remote site.

<sup>46</sup> SMR, March 1942, GEWA.



Although Hough expressed great affection for Johnson, going so far as pay for his cataract surgery and a set of false teeth, his portrayal of Johnson as a human museum piece is unsettling.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Hough's inclusion of cotton at the farm—an inappropriate crop for a park attempting to maintain a distinctly colonial character—combined with Johnson's presence reveals that though Hough's crop demonstration area may have constituted an innovative interpretive effort, its educational message suffered from a lack of historical understanding and thus conveyed less about the life of George Washington than it did the prevailing racial attitudes of the time.

Hough and Johnson maintained the crop demonstration area throughout the 1930s until wartime financial restrictions forced Hough to cut the farm from his operational budget in April 1943.<sup>48</sup> Johnson died four years later. Hough honored Johnson in his May 1947 monthly report:

Annanias Johnson  
In memoriam

The curtain has run down on the last act of the old way of life on the "Wakefield" farm of the Washingtons of Westmoreland Co., Virginia.

"Uncle" Annanias Johnson, the last "Wakefield" slave has passed away.

On May 15<sup>th</sup> the venerable colored man died. According to the best information he had underestimated his age by ten years, and was in fact about 96 years old. He was born a slave on "Wakefield" farm and worked its acres most of his life, remembering well the days when oxen were the standard source of farm power, and horses were used mostly for riding and drawing carriages.

He worked for the monument from 1932 until 1940 when blindness obliged him to stop. When about 85 years old Annanias usually walked five miles to work on the Monument, and then walked home.

The old darkey used to raise patches of tobacco, cotton, and ground peas (peanuts) near the entrance of the Monument where many people saw these famous old crops for the first time. Many were the pictures snapped of this interesting old fellow with the white hair and intense black skin. He was all black, and proud of it, once telling the writer that his grandfather was captured in the African wilds and brought to this country for sale.

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<sup>47</sup> Hough enlisted Crowninshield's assistance in both cases. Hough to Crowninshield, 4 May 1938 and Hough to Crowninshield, 14 May 1938, file "Mrs. F.B. Crowninshield 1935-6-7-1938," in Ancient Box 6, GEWA. Also see SMR, July 1942, GEWA.

<sup>48</sup> SMR, April 1943, GEWA.

He was the last of his kind, and there never again will be a man like him at this place. We have no good still pictures of Annanias Johnson, but we are fortunate to have excellent kodachrome movies of the old ex-slave hoeing tobacco at Washington's Birthplace to remember him by.

Although Hough's "kodachrome movies" of Johnson are long lost, one need not see footage of Johnson to recognize that, despite the Monument's fondness for him and Hough's special interest in interpreting colonial agriculture and plantation life, the particular circumstances of Johnson's employment at the Monument conveyed very clear messages about race and power to visitors and staff alike.

### **Visitor Reactions and Racial Discord**

The Monument logged few visitor complaints during its first years. Many visitors expressed special fondness for the quiet setting and natural landscape. To some extent, historical resources competed with less historically significant attractions for visitor interest. The Monument had acquired three wild turkeys from a state game farm in 1934 that, within the year, increased to fourteen. These feathered attractions "proved quite interesting to visitors who have never had an opportunity to see a wild turkey."<sup>49</sup> Turkeys did not cure all ills, however. Complaints suggest that the visiting public was more sensitive to idiosyncrasy than the NPS had expected. Concerning the historic landscape, Hough noted several complaints about the Monument's lack of large trees and farm animals and some consternation regarding cast iron drinking fountains and overhead electric lines across the burial ground access road. Visitor sensitivity to historic integrity extended into the interiors of the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen. Prior to Crowninshield's refurnishing project, visitors frequently commented on the "new" appearance of the furniture, especially in the dining and living rooms. Unfavorable comments most frequently concerned electrical outlets and switches installed throughout the house.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the now generally accepted notion that interpretive interest in the lives of slaves and other disenfranchised Americans emerged during the 1960s and 1970s, Hough observed as early as 1934 that many visitors criticized the Monument's lack of period-correct outbuildings. He mused that "I presume

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<sup>49</sup> See 1934 and 1935 Annual Wildlife Reports in unmarked file (cover missing), NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

<sup>50</sup> Hough mentions these complaints in Hough to Director, 28 September 1934, in file "complaints," NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

that our personnel has been asked a thousand times, “Where did the slaves stay?”<sup>51</sup> Save the possible exception of Annanias Johnson’s involvement with Hough’s colonial crops demonstration area, the Monument did not explicitly interpret slavery during the 1930s. Race relations did, however, bear on administrative concerns regarding visitor experience at the Birthplace. After reading a landscape report, for instance, Director Demaray raised the issue in a 1931 letter to Albright:

There is another matter which should be mentioned at this time. If the recreational area is developed at Pope’s Creek and the Wakefield Memorial Association places their proposed recreational building [presumably the Log House Tea Room at Duck Hall] at this location, there will be need of another recreational area where colored people can go. When we were at Wakefield this time, we went down to the old wharf on the Potomac River beyond the burial ground and found colored people bathing there. I understand that more and more this area is being utilized by colored people. I think this situation should be frankly met by encouraging the colored people to go to this point and by providing tables and other picnicking facilities for limited use by colored people.<sup>52</sup>

Historical accounts of NPS policy regarding segregation in southeastern parks are regrettably few. What documentation exists for Virginia parks suggests that the Federal government generally recognized local laws and customs regarding segregation of public facilities. In Virginia, that would have meant adherence to severe Jim Crow segregation codes.<sup>53</sup> Although NPS historians today disagree about the extent of formalized planning of segregated facilities during the 1930s, Demaray’s letter to Albright indicates that this kind of planning did occur during the 1930s.<sup>54</sup> In fact, in 1933 the Monument did construct a “comfort station” behind the residential area “for the use of such colored people as may be

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<sup>51</sup> Hough to Director, 28 September 1934, file “complaints” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>52</sup> Demaray to Albright, 6 August 1931, folder “d32 landscaping” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>53</sup> Shenandoah National Park, where discussions concerning separate facilities began around 1936, provides another example of segregation in Virginia parks. See U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, “Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase), Shenandoah National Park, Skyland, Lewis Mountain, and Big Meadows,” Robinson & Associates, Inc. in association with architrave, p.c., architects, Washington, DC, November 4, 2002. Section 8, pp. 57-69 provides an account of the collision between state segregation policy and NPS anti-segregation attitudes especially with regard to the creation and operation of the Lewis Mountain campground and lodge/cabin area between 1936 and 1947 in Shenandoah National park. My thanks to Clifford Tobias for providing these references. It is imperative that a substantial study of segregation in the parks be undertaken by the NPS.

<sup>54</sup> Another example is the October 1938 issue of *The Regional Review* (1:4) that includes a section titled “Negro Recreational Program Gains Momentum” indicating that plans for segregated facilities in Great Smoky Mountains National Park had been approved by the Acting Secretary of the Interior. Also mentioned are preliminary studies for segregated camps and day use area “on federal Recreational Demonstration lands in the West Branch Section 20 miles southwest of Richmond”; an approved master plan including “similar facilities near” Crabtree Creek Recreational Demonstration Area in North Carolina; and a CCC camp in the Shelby County Negro Recreational Area in Memphis, Tennessee.

working in that section.”<sup>55</sup> It is unclear, however, whether this structure was planned and, if so, by whom—the CCC may very well have built the comfort station for its own workers.

Hough never sought approval to furnish segregated facilities for the Monument, though the option was clearly available by 1938 when accusations of racism generated the most substantial visitor complaint filed against the Park during its first decade of operation. Sister M. Dominica of Saint Augustine’s Convent visited the Birthplace on June 14, 1938 with the Director of the convent’s school and a party of African-American children.<sup>56</sup> Although Sister Dominica had visited Popes Creek previously and enjoyed her visits, events turned sour on June 14:

I was amazed when we reached the gates yesterday and were told by the superintendent that it was the law that colored people should be segregated from the whites on the picnic grounds. He then jumped into his car and escorted us to the place he claimed that was set aside for colored. It was about a mile from the mansion, and if we had gone much further we should have been in the water. There were no tables or benches such as you would expect to find in a picnic ground or any other conveniences. The superintendent returned later and brought two old and dirty buckets of water for us to drink from, also an old dirty dipper, and trash can. He told us that if we left any trash he could, according to law, compel us to come back and clean it up...Then too, at the tea room we were told that they did not sell soft drinks or ice cream, a statement which was untrue, but, that we could get both at the Post Office.<sup>57</sup>

Director Cammerer issued an immediate apology to Sister Dominica and requested an explanation from Hough. The superintendent dismissed the complaint, accused a young member of Dominica’s tour group of stealing, and concluded:

All in all, this is the most unpleasant visitation we have had in the seven summer seasons I have been here, —and all that happened was due to the fact that they were segregated for their lunch only. All I can say is that that is the way its done in Virginia. If I did wrong, I’m sorry, —but then again if I had let them in the regular picnic ground we would no doubt be having complaints from the white visitors. This matter may become a real problem. I would say off-hand that not more than one percent of our visitors are colored, and it does not seems justifiable to maintain a special picnic ground for them, and if we did we would soon be swamped with colored people. That kind of news travels fast.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> SMR, May 1933, GEWA.

<sup>56</sup> Although the official NPS report does not specify, it is likely that Dominica belonged to the convent of the Saint Augustine Roman Catholic Church, a historically African-American church in Washington, D.C.

<sup>57</sup> Dominica to Cammerer, 15 June 1938, folder A3615 in file “1950s reading file” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>58</sup> Hough to Cammerer, 16 June 1938, “1950s reading file,” folder A3615, NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

These last two sentences make the issue clear. Regardless of how events actually unfolded on June 14, it is evident that Hough's own racial attitudes curtailed any hopes for an inclusive visitor policy at Washington's Birthplace:

I fully realize that this place is open to all people, under definite regulations. We have never drawn any line except in the matter of their eating. We do not ignore colored visitors. We answer their questions civilly and try to give them the essential information about the place, --but we do not go out of our way to encourage them to come here.

Hough received barely a slap on the wrist for this incident. Cammerer responded to Hough's account with nary a word of reprimand, instead writing, "at Fort Pulaski National monument and other areas we have separate comfort stations for colored people...If you make arrangements as above outlined, I think you will have no further trouble."<sup>59</sup> Cammerer's letter evidently convinced Hough that segregated facilities would eliminate problems like that arising amid the Dominica complaint and, consequently, the 1939 master plan identifies a proposed "picnic area" between the Bridges Creek landing turnaround and the pond adjacent to the Henry Brooks site to accommodate segregated facilities.<sup>60</sup> However, there is no evidence that suggests the Monument ever formally maintained segregated facilities.

### **Visitor Fees**

The vast majority of visitor complaints during this period concerned visitor entry fees.<sup>61</sup> In spring 1939, Secretary of the Interior Ickes approved an amendment to Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations to require that NPS sites—including Washington's Birthplace—collect an admission fee of ten cents for adult visitors. The Park first collected fees on April 28 during Virginia Garden Week and escaped immediate protest because, in Hough's words, "they [the visitors] were the type expecting to pay

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<sup>59</sup> Cammerer to Hough, 20 June 1938, "1950s reading file," folder A3615, NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. Cammerer to Hough, 20 June 1938, file "A 3615 Complaints about service and personnel" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. Apparently Kings Mountain National Military Park encountered similar difficulties at roughly the same time as GEWA. See Acting Regional Landscape Architect K.A. Tapscott to Colonial National Historical Park Resident Landscape Architect R. A. Wilhelm, 16 July 1938, folder "master plan d1815" in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>60</sup> See Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.86.

<sup>61</sup> The NPS experimented with entrance fees at numerous parks throughout its first decades. For a thorough discussion of the significance of fees and their role in financing the parks, see Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 619-38.

anyway.”<sup>62</sup> By the third day, however, the Monument began receiving complaints, some coming from “some of the best friends of Wakefield residing in our section.” Hough recognized that complaints regarding entrance fees had become intertwined with the sign crisis. He described the situation to the regional Director in a 1939 memo: “Some people are not interested in seeing the place after they read this sign, and they would be wanting their money back—which would lead to many difficulties. I think it is only fair to let people read this sign before they decide to pay an admission charge.”<sup>63</sup>

The Regional Director did not approve Hough’s request in time, though, to avoid outcry from the WNMA. Amid a flurry of letters regarding the sign crisis, the WNMA resolved to officially protest the admission fee and contacted Representative Bland who wrote directly to Secretary Ickes. The situation worsened when the *Washington Post* mistakenly announced that a fee of twenty-five cents would be collected.<sup>64</sup> Charles Hoppin joined the fray and bombarded Ickes as well as Kenneth Chorley with fee protests. Ickes shrugged off the protests emphasizing the Department of the Interior’s legal right to impose fees and urging the opposition to be patient until it could be ascertained what effect fees would have on visitation. Hough erected a temporary fee collection booth and gates across the entrance to the Memorial House lawn and, in a reluctant acceptance of defeat, the WNMA “decided to drop the matter until the next administration.”<sup>65</sup>

After a month of fee collection, it appeared that the policy had no impact on attendance figures. Moreover, the superintendent reported that the vast majority of visitors paid the fee without comment and that only a very small portion did so under protest. Still, Hough considered that small number enough to constitute a problem and wondered if increasing the number of items available for purchase at the Monument would not provide a better solution to the problem of revenue generation.<sup>66</sup> Collecting fees

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<sup>62</sup> SMR, April 1939, GEWA.

<sup>63</sup> Hough to Tillotson, 1 April 1939, in folder “master plan d1815” in NPS Records Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>64</sup> SMR, April 1939, GEWA.

<sup>65</sup> See “Minutes of the Wakefield National Memorial Association (Northern Neck Branch),” 24 April 1939 and 26 April 1940, in Wakefield National Memorial Association Records, 1923-1985, Series III, Secretary’s Files, Unprocessed Material, Box 18 of 37, GEWA; Ickes to Bland, 14 June 1939, (Box 76), Records of the National Park Service NE Region, Central Classified Files, 1936-1952, RG 79, NACP; and SMR, April 1939, GEWA.

<sup>66</sup> SMR, May 1939, GEWA.

also created strains on an already meager staff who could not afford to devote a ranger to fee collection duties. Still, the Monument continued to collect fees until 1949 when NPS policy permitted a suspension of the fee requirement. Hough sighed a breath of relief in his September 1949 monthly report and noted “many expressions of appreciation have been received from the public since this change in policy.”<sup>67</sup>

The problem of visitation fees reveals the significance of visitor concerns to Hough and his staff during the Monument’s first decade of operation. Hough understood that, for his park to be successful, it would have to speak to and accommodate a diverse visitor demographic. Just as he recognized public disinterest in fees, the superintendent also knew only too well that thoughtful visitors sniffed out idiosyncrasy at every turn. Louise Crowninshield’s arrival at Popes Creek went a long way toward diverting visitor attention away from the inconsistencies spawned by early furnishing efforts. Hough’s experiments with an early living farm also sought to divert visitor attention away from interpretive gaps in the commemorative landscape. In Hough’s farm concept, however, we witness the unfortunately reality of early twentieth-century race relations. The stories of Annanias Johnson and Sister Dominica make clear that Hough’s desire to accommodate a diverse public had its limits. In following years, massive socioeconomic changes in this country resulting from our involvement in World War II, would only increase the diversity of park visitors and create new challenges for Hough and his staff.

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<sup>67</sup> SMR, September 1949, GEWA.

## CHAPTER 5

### **The Impact and Aftermath of World War II, 1940-1955**

World War II marked the beginning of a turning point in the history of Washington's Birthplace. By the late 1930s, Superintendent Hough had lost some ground in his battles for land acquisition and building construction, but he had also demonstrated savvy for negotiating the bureaucratic tangle of NPS, governmental, and community stakeholders. Hough's ability to balance those interests while maintaining the Monument's physical infrastructure and seeking new interpretive directions rested on his ongoing effort to secure funding and labor sources when and where available. Doing so, however, became increasingly challenging with the advent of tensions in Europe during the late 1930s and the United States' entry into that conflict during the next decade. World War II created hard times throughout the NPS. Congress halved park appropriations just as overall visitation peaked at nearly twenty-one million in 1941.<sup>1</sup> Newton Drury became Director in 1940, only a year before U.S. deployment abroad. Drury fought diligently, and largely successfully, to protect NPS resources from military acquisition. This battle for self preservation, however, exerted extreme pressures on small parks like Washington's Birthplace which rarely had more than three permanent staff members.<sup>2</sup>

That battle also exerted extreme pressures on an aging superintendent. Throughout the 1940s, Hough worked vigorously to keep the Monument afloat while lecturing throughout the community in support of the NPS's work at Wakefield.<sup>3</sup> Although the superintendent underwent major surgery in 1942 for treatment of various gall bladder, appendix, and stomach problems, he nonetheless remained a remarkable physical presence in and around the Monument.<sup>4</sup> Hough also took great pains to remain in

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<sup>1</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding Drury's commitment to preservation, see George B. Hartzog, Jr., *Battling for the National Parks* (Mt. Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell Limited, 1988), p. 81. U.S. entry into World War II translated, for the NPS, into a reduction of appropriations from \$21 million in 1940 to \$5 million in 1943 a nearly fifty-percent reduction in full-time employees, and reductions in overall visitation from 21 million in 1941 to six million in 1942. Moreover, NPS headquarters were banished to a Chicago warehouse until 1947 so as to free from in Washington for war-related government operations. Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> See Superintendent's 1940 Annual Report for example of Hough's annual speaking schedule.

<sup>4</sup> A telling report indicates that "the memorandum regarding physical labor by superintendents was late in this case as his hands were already hardened from much axe work in clearing up our trails and picnic grounds." SMR, March 1943, GEWA.



touch with former employees deployed overseas. Monthly reports during these years include frequent reference to the various wartime travels of men once employed at the Park.<sup>5</sup> Though the rigors of maintaining the Monument certainly took their toll on Hough, only during his last years did the superintendent express real pessimism regarding the state of operations at Washington's Birthplace. During the summer of 1952, an exasperated Hough quipped, "all hands were more than busy, this time especially the superintendent, who just could not run the area and keep up with the demands for extra paperwork."<sup>6</sup> After two decades as superintendent of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Hough died of a sudden heart attack just days before Christmas Day 1953.

### **Visitors and Visitation during the War Years**

Hough witnessed dramatic changes during his last years at Washington's Monument stemming primarily from U.S. involvement in World War II, which literally changed the face of the average visitor during the 1940s. Soldiers flocked to the Monument as early as August 1941 and Hough believed that "such visits will inspire patriotism among the men of our armed forces. (Image 38)"<sup>7</sup> His remark reflected wider sentiment concerning the appropriate role of museums during wartime. Prior to the war, American museum professionals debated the propriety of using historic sites as tools for expressing and instilling patriotism. On one hand, what better venue than the museum to declare the virtues of American patriotism? On the other hand, the totalitarian regimes of Europe used museums precisely to forward nationalist ideology. Wartime cutbacks, however, encouraged superintendents and others to couch requests for funding in patriotic terms. The American Association of Museums, for example, declared their intent to "fortify the spirit on which Victory depends" in 1941 and Colonial Williamsburg offered its services as a site for military wartime orientation.<sup>8</sup>

In his 1940 annual report, Hough registered an official "expression of regret over the turn of world affairs...since this monument has always enjoyed wide international patronage" and hoped "to

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<sup>5</sup> Correspondence with men abroad brought the front home as when former ranger-historian Paul Dewitt sent a "bashed-in" German helmet back from Europe. SMR, September 1945, GEWA.

<sup>6</sup> SMR, July 1952, GEWA.

<sup>7</sup> SMR, August 1941, GEWA.

<sup>8</sup> Patricia West, *Domesticating History*, p. 134.

preserve the peacefulness of this spot, making it a place to forget the trouble of the world and where one may reflect upon the past in a scene of natural beauty.”<sup>9</sup> Decline in travel to the Monument, however, was not limited to international visitors. Approximately 60,000 visitors traveled to the Monument in 1940. By the end of 1941, with increased taxes resulting from defense buildup and the regulation of gasoline sales, overall visitation dropped to nearly 15,000.<sup>10</sup> Tire rationing and additional restrictions on unnecessary travel dropped visitation to roughly 8,000 in 1942.<sup>11</sup> As Hough anticipated, formal entry into war marked significant reductions in visitation and forced would-be visitors to adapt accordingly: “One unusual trend in travel, and which may be developed, was the appearance of visitors on bicycles. Two such parties came in March, one a school group of seven boys from Connecticut.”<sup>12</sup>

The war colored relations between staff and visitors. In April 1942, for instance, a group of students visiting from Venezuela, Cuba, Colombia, and Spain made for a somewhat tense situation as they, according to Hough, “made it evident that they were of pre-Axis [*sic*, presumably “pro”] sympathies” although “none of our men entered into any argument with them.”<sup>13</sup> A significant portion of visitors during this period included military personnel. In September 1942, two units of the 757<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion from Camp A.P. Hill paid their respects to Washington’s Birthplace. Wakefield, being roughly seventy-five miles south of the camp, offered a perfect destination for the men charged with breaking in military vehicles requiring 150 miles of road time before deployment abroad.<sup>14</sup>

By October 1943, perhaps in reaction to Allied victories in Italy and Russia, visitation increased for the first time since U.S. entry into the war.<sup>15</sup> By spring 1945, Allied victory appeared secure and, along with promises of increased gasoline reserves in the near future, boosted visitation—almost quadrupling overnight. As hostilities waned, the Park hosted increasing numbers of servicemen returning from combat. By August 1945, Popes Creek began “to receive numbers of returned men—some ex

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<sup>9</sup> SAR, 1940, GEWA.

<sup>10</sup> SMR, October 1941, GEWA.

<sup>11</sup> SMR, December 1941, GEWA.

<sup>12</sup> SMR, March 1942, GEWA.

<sup>13</sup> SMR, April 1942, GEWA.

<sup>14</sup> SMR, September 1942, GEWA.

<sup>15</sup> SMR, October 1943, GEWA.

prisoners of war from Germany. We do nothing to encourage them to talk about it but some men seem to want to tell you, so we listen with sympathy.”<sup>16</sup> Visitation doubled once again with the end of gasoline rationing and the official end of hostilities in Europe and the Pacific, needless to say, spurred an “immediate jump” in park visitation bringing about 40,000 visitors to the Monument by the end of 1946.<sup>17</sup>

### **The War and Understaffing**

As the war altered visitation trends, it decimated hopes for an improved labor situation. All parks suffered from the abandonment of CCC camps beginning in 1942. Moreover, military services drew employees out of NPS service and though the NPS did what it could with who it could find, full-time employment dropped over fifty percent throughout the parks by 1943.<sup>18</sup> Hough’s concerns regarding understaffing worsened on the eve of World War II as it became apparent that the CCC would not live up to its promises of assistance. CCC labor from Camp SP-19 stationed at Westmoreland State Park provided assistance with various construction, clean up, and archeological work throughout the 1930s. In 1940, Hough secured “some necessary development achieved through splendid cooperation of [the] CCC” that year.<sup>19</sup> Future collaboration looked promising. As of June 1941, the CCC indicated that it would assist with the construction of two buildings—a ranger quarters and a temporary museum building—and would provide an archeological foreman for various research.<sup>20</sup> Hough was especially enthused about the latter given his desire to launch a serious long-term archeological investigation to end controversy surrounding the Building X foundations. The CCC seems to have promised more than it could deliver, though, and a disappointed Hough reported, “we have materials on hand purchased in December for CCC work which are now spoiling for lack of use.”<sup>21</sup> If labor relief was to be found, the

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<sup>16</sup> SMR, August 1945, GEWA.

<sup>17</sup> SMR, May and August 1945, GEWA.

<sup>18</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 448.

<sup>19</sup> SAR, 1940, GEWA.

<sup>20</sup> SMR, June 1941, GEWA. Although the NPS generally provided its own researchers for these types of projects during this period, it evidently benefited from the work of non-NPS staff as when historian David Rodnick—a senior foreman at CCC Camp SP-19—arrived on behalf of the CCC to perform research that would ultimately rekindle the Building X controversy.

<sup>21</sup> SMR, April 1941, GEWA.

CCC could not be relied on to provide it. In this specific case, with regard to the spoiled materials, relying on the NPS could prove detrimental in the long run.

The situation worsened with war. In December 1941, immediately following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Monument staff began serving watch at the air observation post in Morris' Store. They devoted one night per week, from 9 pm to 7 am, to watching for attempted air raids on Washington, DC. Despite Hough's willingness to support the effort, he recognized that "it leaves the men really unfit for work the next day."<sup>22</sup> Rapid enlistment following Pearl Harbor made matters worse. A valued park farm hand departed for service in April 1941 and the Monument's only full-time ranger assigned to public contact responsibilities enlisted in the Navy that December.<sup>23</sup> Military buildup at home also drew labor away from the Monument. As of January 1942, Dahlgren naval base paid new employees \$3.80 (about \$43 today) per day with the possibility of promotion every six months. The NPS simply could not compete with these wages and so the Monument lost one temporary laborer to Dahlgren that January and by February other temporary laborers began asking for raises that Hough could not provide. In October 1943, Hough lamented the loss of his best part time laborer who left abruptly and without notice.<sup>24</sup>

By the spring of 1944, Hough determined that he could not continue the Monument's agricultural program without an adequate labor force.<sup>25</sup> Inability to continue farm operations must have devastated Hough who was very fond of the project and also considered it his primary means to shift visitor focus away from the controversial Memorial House. The superintendent sought assistance from the throngs of returning veterans but discovered that "those approached seem to have no intention of working this summer. In a way, we do not blame them, since those who have seen fighting service deserve a rest and should have it."<sup>26</sup> Hough hoped to promote temporary laborer Mackenzie Jackson to the permanent gardener position but doing so required hiring an additional laborer. Although the war had ended,

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<sup>22</sup> SMR, December 1941, GEWA.

<sup>23</sup> SMR, December and March 1941, GEWA.

<sup>24</sup>Modern equivalencies for wage figures are based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. SMR, January 1942, February 1942, and October 1943, GEWA.

<sup>25</sup> SMR, March 1944, GEWA.

<sup>26</sup> SMR, May 1945, GEWA.

Dahlgren continued to draw labor away from the Park.<sup>27</sup> Hough did eventually promote Jackson, though without finding a replacement. Given Dahlgren's post-war \$1.19 (about \$8.45) hourly wage, Hough could not foresee securing extra help anytime soon.<sup>28</sup>

Wartime shortages also took a toll on the Monument's physical infrastructure. By war's end, heating systems barely operated and all automotive equipment required serious maintenance. Staff housing, already substandard prior to the war, remained egregiously insufficient.<sup>29</sup> A severe ice storm in early 1945 had washed out the old ice pond damn—the Park's only source of water for fighting fires—and scattered fallen tree limbs across the Monument thus razing fire hazard. Most visibly, the cedar grove and picnic grounds had grown over with weeds and wooded areas remained littered with deadfall. Trails and paths throughout the Park had grown "mostly unrecognizable" and practically useless.<sup>30</sup> To make matters worse, Japanese beetles continued to plague the Park and surrounding community. In 1946, Hough estimated necessary repairs ranging from \$12,000 to \$15,000 (about \$113,000 to \$142,000 today)—a far cry from scant appropriations made by the NPS that year.<sup>31</sup>

## **Community Relations**

Dahlgren Naval Proving Grounds made the realities of war even more real at Washington's Birthplace. About ten miles north of Wakefield, Dahlgren buzzed with activity during World War II and, by May 1942, literally jolted the Monument with regular ordnance volleys. Hough described a typical scene:

Early in May a great many explosive shells were shot into the Potomac River from Dahlgren Naval proving grounds. On a number of days quite a show could be seen from the shore near the mouth of Bridges Creek, with some shells exploding under the surface which sent up great geysers of water—others exploded above the surface, sending countless fragments churning into the river for hundreds of feet around. This shooting killed a great quantity of fish. Following one

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<sup>27</sup> SMR, September 1951, GEWA.

<sup>28</sup> SMR, October 1951, GEWA.

<sup>29</sup> The staff frequently blamed ill health on poor facilities as in Hough's January 1942 Monthly Report: "Considerable sickness among our personnel has caused more sick leave taking than in any year heretofore. The reasons for this we think is the inefficient oil heating system in stalled by the CCC in the office building. We propose to remedy this by installing an old fashioned but effective wood burning stove."

<sup>30</sup> SAR, 1946, GEWA.

<sup>31</sup> The entirety of the above is drawn from Hough's 1946 annual report. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

northeast wind after a bombardment, the dead fish littered our shores with one or more carcasses for every lineal foot of beach front. Hardheads, perch, flounders and eels made up the bulk of the dead fish. While nothing can be done in this connection—since our national safety must come first—it is regrettable.<sup>32</sup>

The Navy erected a range station at the Monument's Potomac River beachfront in November 1940 with plans drawn in conjunction with the Regional Office. Dahlgren staff, engaged in the testing of experimental munitions, measured flight trajectories from this station and reported the bearings by way of radio telephone. When artillery fire from Camp A.P. Hill—twenty miles west of Wakefield—accompanied the Dahlgren tests, Monument staff must have felt surrounded.<sup>33</sup>

Curiosity accompanied fear as odd military-related sightings periodically broke the monotony of low visitation during the war years. On June 1, 1943, for example, a military aircraft circled the Park making “a thorough inspection of our mansion grounds” and, at one point, attempted to land on Route 204 until turned away by an approaching school bus.<sup>34</sup> Rumors that Dahlgren was looking for a remote site to test bombs sent a nervous park neighbor, Lawrence Latane, to visit Dahlgren authorities where he learned that although the Navy had considered taking over the Haywood farm for this purpose, its proximity to Wakefield ruled out the idea.<sup>35</sup> An even more frightening incident occurred in September 1944 when a “queer contrivance” washed up along the Monument's shoreline. Hough contacted Dahlgren whose officials warned him not to approach the object given that testing included some “mighty dangerous stuff these days.” The unidentified object remained on the beach for six days until retrieved by Dahlgren troops. Not until after the war did Hough and his staff learn that Dahlgren had been engaged in tests of radio controlled bomb fuses.<sup>36</sup>

To some extent, the Dahlgren problem brought the Park together with the surrounding community. An unfortunate combination of weather conditions and misfires from Dahlgren naval base

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<sup>32</sup> SMR, May 1942, GEWA.

<sup>33</sup> SMR, November 1940 and September 1942, GEWA.

<sup>34</sup> SMR, June 1943, GEWA. In his October 1943 monthly report, Hough noted that “the black squares atop the sealed chimneys of the mansion were repainted against a possible aerial photograph which would render an odd appearance for the structure.”

<sup>35</sup> SMR, May 1943, GEWA.

<sup>36</sup> SMR, September 1944 and September 1945, GEWA.

made the 1940s perhaps the most fire-prone decade in Popes Creek history. Given their distance from the nearest fire fighting facilities in Oak Grove, Virginia, residents of the Northern Neck frequently joined together to fight fires on neighboring farms. In September 1941, Hough deployed his firefighting gear for the first time in ten years to help extinguish a four-acre grass and bush fire on lands owned by Harry and Robert Muse.<sup>37</sup> The first fire of any consequence on park property broke out in February 1942 when, for reasons unknown, four straw stacks ignited immediately adjacent to the west corner of the utility area damaging five panels of rail fence in the process. Several fires threatened the Park's boundaries during April 1942, at one point traveling six miles in three hours and jumping across a half-mile-wide ploughed field. Lightning seriously damaged a utility building in August 1942, ruining tools, electrical fittings, and burning a hole through a water tank.<sup>38</sup>

Most striking were incidents related to the testing of munitions at Dahlgren naval base. Hough's full account of one such incident in early 1943 demonstrates the hazards presented by the naval base:

On February 18 we all turned out to suppress a fire started in the marsh on the Harry Muse property in front of the mansion, caused by sparks falling from a naval parachute flare. These parachute flares are dropped every day when there is blue sky and are beautiful to behold. A B-25 bomber makes runs over the river releasing usually four of these flares spaced a thousand yards or so apart. They burn about 3.5 minutes suspended by a 12-foot silk parachutes which drift off and usually sink in the river. There will be about 8 runs and we see 30 to 40 beautiful parachutes destroyed daily. Two have been salvaged on or near the monument (Image 39).

Perhaps 5% of the flares are defective. Some do not open the chute and a blazing mass plunges into the river. If they hit on land they would indeed be like heavy fire bombs. Occasionally as on Feb. 18 the aviators are in error on their air currents and the flares drift inland. I picked up the cinders of the spark that set fire to the marsh. It had a strong smell of phosphorous. The fire was held to about 4 acres as all neighbors turned out at once and a vigorous band they were. A fresh wind was blowing and had the flames reached woodland anything could have happened.<sup>39</sup>

A similar incident occurred in October 1943 when naval flares set fire in two places on the Harry Muse farm though he stopped the blaze without assistance from park staff.<sup>40</sup> Westmoreland County experienced its worst fire since 1900 in December 1943 when about two thousand acres burned west of

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<sup>37</sup> SMR, September 1941, GEWA.

<sup>38</sup> SMR, February, April, and August 1942, GEWA.

<sup>39</sup> SMR, February 1943, GEWA.

<sup>40</sup> SMR, October 1943, GEWA.

and, fortunately, at some distance from the monument.<sup>41</sup> In addition to any improved neighbor relations collaborative fire fighting may have encouraged, the fire epidemic of the 1940s also spurred a concerted effort to modernize firefighting equipment at the Monument. With renewed funding following war's end, Hough received from Petersburg National Military Park<sup>42</sup> a GMC 1.5-ton pump truck capable of holding three hundred gallons of water that "relieves a considerable anxiety in these parts."<sup>43</sup> Within a year, the Park also began cooperating with the newly organized Westmoreland Country Fire Department. So began the Monument's long tradition of maintaining excellent safety resources and preparedness.<sup>44</sup>

### **Post-War Recovery**

The end of World War II certainly relieved tensions at the Monument, but it did not alleviate all problems. In fact, the immediate post-war years created new problems throughout the Park system. While appropriations remained modest—given pressing war debts—visitation spiked. In 1946, the system welcomed nearly twenty two million visitors.<sup>45</sup> The return of busses heralded this boom at the Monument. Thirty busses full of school children visited the Monument in May 1947. Greyhound resumed bus services to Wakefield from both Richmond and Washington in 1946 and indicated its interest in creating a permanent shuttle bus.<sup>46</sup> The Monument also regained local interest, especially after the NPS stopped collecting admission fees on September 10, 1949. Hough referred to this action as "unquestionably...the best thing the National Park Service has done for the people here in the past ten years" and noted a resulting twenty-percent increase in visitation.<sup>47</sup> By the early 1950s park visitation stabilized at a level that persisted for a decade. While annual visitation during the 1930s averaged 50,000 people, it jumped to around 70,000 during the 1950s.

Still, sustaining visitation increases proved difficult after the war. Hough attributed post-war visitation flux to "the increased cost of living which is so apparent to all of us, and to the general

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<sup>41</sup> SMR, December 1943, GEWA.

<sup>42</sup> Designated Petersburg National Battlefield in 1962.

<sup>43</sup> See January 1947 SMR and 1947 SAR, GEWA.

<sup>44</sup> SMR, March 1948, GEWA.

<sup>45</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 455.

<sup>46</sup> SMR, January 1946 and May 1947, GEWA.

<sup>47</sup> See 1950 SAR and SMR, September 1949, GEWA.



apprehension caused by the uncertainty of the future, due to the worldwide unrest.”<sup>48</sup> Visitors also complained about the lack of directional signs along Route 3. In January 1946, a committee of county citizens proposed the erection of a sign at the corner of Routes 301 and 3 to direct tourists toward Wakefield and Robert E. Lee’s family home at nearby Stratford. This effort grew in opposition to “the damaging effects of the Route 17 and Williamsburg signs which seek to swell their patronage at our expense.”<sup>49</sup> The travel situation had not, however, improved by 1951. Hough reiterated his complaints in March of that year noting that “from our constant contact with the traveling public and listening to the frequent complaints as to the lack of directional information along the highways, our visitation can be quadrupled...[if] good signs are provided.”<sup>50</sup> Not until 1953 did the Commonwealth launch a serious sign program. In that year, the Historyland Highway Association convinced the Virginia highway department to advertise Route 3 as the Historyland Highway so as to “relieve pressure on the main north south highways numbered 1 and 301.” Virginia committed \$36,000 (about \$250,000 today) to the construction of new signs. Although Hough spoke before the Virginia Highway Commission in support of the proposal, he would not live to see the new signs.<sup>51</sup>

Neither did the end of World War II put a stop to Hough’s understaffing problem. Although, the February 1946 transfer of S.M. Miller from the Blue Knob Recreation Demonstration Area to fill the clerk position provided some relief, NPS-wide policy concerns contributed further to understaffing woes.<sup>52</sup> Regulations limiting the workweek to five and a half days went into effect in July 1946 and created a difficult situation at the Birthplace. At no time could the Monument’s three permanent employees be simultaneously present on any one day of the week. This change held especially dire implications for grounds maintenance. Keeping up appearances at Wakefield meant taking care of twenty-seven acres of lawn and two gardens. One man working only five days a week proved terribly

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<sup>48</sup> SMR, November 1947, GEWA.

<sup>49</sup> SMR, January 1946, GEWA.

<sup>50</sup> SMR, March 1951, GEWA.

<sup>51</sup> This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. SMR, May 1953, GEWA.

<sup>52</sup> SMR, February 1946, GEWA.

inadequate for this task. Hough complained that “at Mount Vernon they use twelve men for approximately the same area of grounds and gardens.”<sup>53</sup>

Hough looked to Monument neighbors, especially the Latane family, for temporary solutions to labor shortages. In 1946, for example, the Park arranged with the Latanes “to load, haul, and stack our hay on a share and share basis.” Additionally, the Monument leased all of its arable land to the Latanes beginning in 1948 keeping only the fields abutting either side of the approach along Route 204. When NPS fences deteriorated beyond maintenance in 1949 and the Park could not afford to hire laborers, the Latanes contributed their own time and effort to the project. Hough also arranged to pay the Latanes to bale hay in the field rather than cutting it for storage on park property. Doing so made up in labor time and storage space the \$28 necessary to produce 206 bales from four acres.<sup>54</sup>

Nonetheless, Hough confessed in 1948 that despite doing well for the year, “it is behind the scenes that our lack of means to properly protect and maintain show up sharply...[due to] operating in the face of increased use with approximately half of the necessary forces.” Hough pursued a variety of actions to lesson the blow including eliminating three horses and twenty six sheep, leasing all of the Park’s remaining farm land to the Latane family (save two small stretches along the approach road), and moving accounts handling to Fredericksburg National Military Park to simplify office work in lieu of a permanent clerk.<sup>55</sup> The situation was so bad that, in 1950, absolutely no outside labor could be found to perform desperately needed repairs to the Rockefeller Horse Barn and post office. Ranger Joseph Vaughn, acting as superintendent while Hough was absent on sick leave, put ranger Carl Flemer (noted for his carpentry skills) in charge of the project adding that “any...employees who will have occasion to lend a hand on the barn will be under your supervision.”<sup>56</sup> A second NPS-wide policy made the prospects of increasing the grounds force all but impossible. Following a reappraisal of staff quarters in August

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<sup>53</sup> SMR, July 1946 and March 1948, GEWA.

<sup>54</sup> SMR, August 1946 (submitted by Acting Superintendent S.M. Miller), February 1948, March 1948, January 1949, and August 1951, GEWA. \$28 is equal to approximately \$200 today based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>55</sup> SAR, 1948, GEWA.

<sup>56</sup> See Regional Director to Hough, 14 June 1950; Vaughn to staff, 6 October 1950; and Vaughn to Flemer, 6 October 1950 in file “D34 Barn,” NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

1952, the NPS issued a system-wide rent increase. The superintendent remarked, “this is going to be a body blow to all concerned since it is exactly the same thing as a cut in wages.”<sup>57</sup>

More visitors also meant increased security concerns throughout the Park system and vandalism became a serious problem at big parks including Yellowstone as well as small parks like the Birthplace.<sup>58</sup> Hough called for the addition of two permanent laborers in 1947 solely for “protection and maintenance of property” and hoped to refill the night watchman position that had remained vacant during the course of the war.<sup>59</sup> He also worried about the rekindling of tensions surrounding fishing rights along the Potomac River. In 1947, the Maryland legislature dissolved the Mount Vernon Pact of 1786 thereby asserting full control of the Potomac River including those portions previously controlled by Virginia. The inevitable “oyster war” Hough anticipated gave him cause for concern because similar problems in the past had “and may again result in killings on the river.”<sup>60</sup>

Unusually heightened security concerns continued throughout the late 1940s and 50s. Beyond a relatively insignificant collision between a car and the curb surrounding the granite obelisk on Christmas night 1948, a more disconcerting bout of vandalism began in June 1950.<sup>61</sup> On June 19<sup>th</sup> of that year, a staff member noticed that someone had attempted to remove the burial ground vault lid. Had this been an isolated case it may have elicited little reaction but a repeated attempt that October raised curiosity. An additional incident occurred at the burial ground on January 12, 1951, when someone scratched the letters “TW” on the vault cover.<sup>62</sup> Neither the perpetrators nor their motives were ever determined though the series of events made clearer than ever the need for a night watchman and additional park security.

Illegal duck hunting also presented difficulties by the early 1950s and without patrolmen, the Monument remained unable to enforce game laws. On one occasion the Fish and Wildlife Service stepped in and apprehend a number of violators by seaplane. Arrests were made, but Hough could not

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<sup>57</sup> SMR, August 1952, GEWA.

<sup>58</sup> Ise discusses the problem of vandalism in *Our National Park Policy*, p. 456.

<sup>59</sup> SAR, 1947, GEWA.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> SMR, November 1948, GEWA.

<sup>62</sup> SMR, June and October 1950 and January 1951, GEWA.

rely upon this kind of intervention with any regularity.<sup>63</sup> The strangest security “threat” arose after staff received reports from visitors of an “animal reported looking like a monkey [that] was very lean and carried a 2-foot tail coiled like a clock spring. The head and face was described as flat and catlike. Color was brown.”<sup>64</sup> Human trespassers presented the most serious threat. In August 1953 vandals struck Washington’s Birthplace once again. Intruders entered the Log House one night late that month and attempted to steal a deer trophy. The vandals could not fit the trophy’s antlers through the building’s small windows, so they absconded instead with a small lamp. Hough, unable to investigate on his own, contacted the FBI regarding the situation though apparently no formal investigation ensued.<sup>65</sup>

### **New Hopes for the Log House Tea Room**

Hough’s inability to guarantee protection of the Log House and its property suggests that the WNMA’s presence at Pope’s Creek still strained already slim Monument resources. Indeed, no aspect of operations at Washington’s Birthplace suffered more during the war than the WNMA’s Log House Tea Room. Mason’s resignation in 1940 left the NPS and the WNMA in a quandary concerning the fate of the none-too-successful business. Hough visited Washington, DC in January 1941 to discuss the matter and received word during a later trip to Washington that plans were underway to incorporate a government-run operation dedicated solely to the operations of NPS concessions.<sup>66</sup> Hough understood this to mean “that it will be some time before our hospice can be reopened.” In the meantime, the WNMA met with Crowninshield and Director Drury and requested that the NPS grant them rights to the operation. Hough’s reports indicate that a prospective operator had been selected in May 1941 though, having determined it too late in that season to make a go of the business, made no headway with the operation.<sup>67</sup>

The building remained unused during this period of indecision and, consequently, fell into ill repair. Not having adequate funds to repair the structure and faced with the realities of war, the WNMA

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<sup>63</sup> SMR, January and February 1951, GEWA.

<sup>64</sup> SMR, July 1952, GEWA.

<sup>65</sup> SMR, August 1953, GEWA.

<sup>66</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 356.

<sup>67</sup> SMR, January, February, April, and May 1941, GEWA.

decided to table the issue until 1942 when resources might be generated to perform necessary repairs. A year was not enough, however, and in March 1942 Crowninshield explained to Director Drury that the WNMA would not be able to keep the operation afloat and that “most of the members are against giving the things to the Government. They still resent the sign, the doubt on the site [Building X controversy], and proposed evacuation but I might be able to swing them.”<sup>68</sup> Crowninshield’s reference to “giving the things to the government” refers to the WNMA’s concern regarding the fate of the furniture, cooking equipment, and various furnishings purchased with WNMA funds for the Log House. Her mention of resentment surrounding “the sign” and “doubt on the site” reveal that the Log House issue had become intertwined with suspicion of NPS intent to discredit the WNMA’s role at Wakefield. Drury responded to “confirm the understanding that no effort will be made to open the Log House Tea Room for business during the war, that the Association will be responsible for the maintenance and protection of the equipment until a decision has been reached as to its future, and that the proposal to donate the equipment will be held in abeyance until there is some prospect of finding a satisfactory operator.”<sup>69</sup> The Log House remained boarded up between 1942 and 1946. No mention of it appears in either NPS or WNMA records from those years.

Crowninshield’s reference to a “proposed evacuation” also indicates that the WNMA had known about NPS plans to take over the operation as early as 1942. If that revelation caused discontent, tempers cooled during the war years. When the WNMA held its annual meeting in April 1946, it agreed to lease its equipment to the new government operators “in return for a reasonable share in the profits.”<sup>70</sup> The new operator, Government Services, Inc. (GSI), set to work and though delayed by its inability to employ an adequate staff, sent a maintenance crew to perform necessary repairs. With repairs complete and having hired an operating staff from the local community, GSI reopened the Log House Tea Room on July 19, 1946, after nearly six years of inactivity. Hough applauded the quality of the meals and service

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<sup>68</sup> Crowninshield to Drury, 27 March 1942, file “WNMA member and Meetings” in NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA Archive. This file contains a variety of correspondence regarding the new charter and efforts to incorporate during the 1940s.

<sup>69</sup> Drury to Crowninshield, 12 May 1942, in *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> SMR, April 1946, GEWA.

and considered the Park “fortunate that Government Services, Inc. are taking over as certainly no small operator could do as well.”<sup>71</sup>

GSI did not provide the cure-all Hough hoped for. The 1947 season marked the first year of a five-year contract entered into between GSI and Washington’s Birthplace. GSI hired Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Andrews to supervise the Log House and doors opened on July 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>72</sup> The late opening—delayed by additional maintenance—foreshadowed more serious problems. Upon closing after only four months of operation, the Log House reported a loss of \$1,600 (about \$12,000 today) and, consequently, GSI terminated its contract with the Andrews family.<sup>73</sup> This poor showing stalled GSI’s interest in doing business at Wakefield and Hough heard rumors just prior to the 1949 season of GSI’s plans to pull out of Wakefield. Hough lamented that, “it is too bad that this hospice which is as attractive as any to be found anywhere never has had a good operator since Mrs. Mason gave it up. Someone with “gumption” could make it a good thing.”<sup>74</sup> A January 1951 letter from the Acting Director to the Regional Director suggesting that the Log House be ended as a concession and “put to some other use” indicates that GSI’s withdrawal all but ended visitor accommodations at the Log House Tea Room.<sup>75</sup>

### **New Directions for the WNMA**

The fate of the Log House laid heavy on the hearts of those members of the WNMA who had been with the organization since its beginning.<sup>76</sup> No longer affiliated with the Log House and divested of its claim to the Memorial House furnishings, what role remained for the WNMA? Moreover, WNMA ranks had dwindled over the years. Declining membership was on everyone’s mind during the May 1947 annual meeting. Virtually all talk centered on one issue: expanding membership. Hough understood the

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<sup>71</sup> SMR, May, June, and July 1946, GEWA. Also see SMR, September 1946 and 1946 SAR, GEWA.

<sup>72</sup> See SMR, June and July 1947 and SAR, 1947, GEWA.

<sup>73</sup> See 12 June 1948 memo from Hough to the Director’s office included in SAR, 1948, GEWA. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>74</sup> SMR, March 1949, GEWA.

<sup>75</sup> See 8 January 1951 letter from the Acting Director to the Regional Director suggesting that the Log House be ended as a concession and put to some other use in file “D34 Barn” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>76</sup> See file “WNMA member and Meetings” in NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA for small composition book containing list of dues-paying members active between 1945-57.

rationale behind membership expansion as an effort “to make it [the WNMA] more representative and useful, by encouraging admittance of associate members.”<sup>77</sup>

Expansion did not necessarily make the WNMA more useful, though another initiative did. The Monument’s chronic understaffing and the increasing vandalism raised fears concerning the well being of valuable artifacts on display in the Memorial House. An eighteenth-century fork and several pewter spoons vanished in 1948. Additional antique tableware turned up missing later that year.<sup>78</sup> With this in mind, the WNMA held an annual meeting in May 1949 and resolved to “employ one of its members to be at the memorial buildings... for three months every day, to help protect the numerous antique furnishing items they have donated to the government, and which with our skeleton force we are unable to properly protect.”<sup>79</sup> Hough loved the idea. Two months later, he judged the WNMA’s new role a success noting that theft had all but ceased and that the attendant additionally proved “an excellent person for public contact work.” Reports indicate that the WNMA continued this role through 1952.<sup>80</sup>

At the same time, the WNMA initiated another somewhat more controversial project. In February 1937, the WNMA responded to the popularity of the colonial garden by starting its own cutting garden behind the Monument’s maintenance barn. The garden contained 432 square feet of perennials and a smaller portion of annuals with some herbs. The garden produced decorative arrangements for the Monument and a lucrative business for the WNMA, which sold cuttings to visitors.<sup>81</sup> Following the war, and bereft of income from the Log House, Crowninshield sought to develop the cutting garden. She did so, however, without consulting Hough. In August 1951, when Hough received notice that a greenhouse was on its way for delivery, he brimmed with anger. Where would he put it? Who would receive the

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<sup>77</sup> SAR, 1947 and SMR, May 1947, GEWA.

<sup>78</sup> SMR, June and October 1948, GEWA.

<sup>79</sup> SMR, May 1949, GEWA.

<sup>80</sup> SMR, July 1949 and April 1952, GEWA.

<sup>81</sup> It is not clear who funded and tended to the garden though it is likely that both the WNMA and NPS contributed. See Hough’s February 1937 Monthly Report. Also see file “n18 plant life (not forestry)” in NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA for a 1940 schedule of rates proposed for sale of surplus plant materials including a variety of seeds, cuttings, roots, bulbs, seedlings, herbs, and trees.

proceeds from its use? And, most importantly, who would operate and maintain the greenhouse?<sup>82</sup> The regional Director, equally surprised by news of the greenhouse, urged Hough to “inquire from Mrs. Crowninshield just what her intentions are.” By September 1951, the Regional Office did grant the WNMA authority to erect the greenhouse atop the cutting garden. WNMA funds hired of two laborers to erect the structure that November and, by February of the following year, the greenhouse was ready for operation despite complications resulting from a faulty heating system (Images 40 & 41).<sup>83</sup>

The greenhouse proved an overwhelming success and briefly reinvigorated the organization. An October 1952 meeting appointed a horticultural committee and income from the sale of plants prompted the WNMA to cease its sale of candy bars, which pleased Hough as discarded candy wrappers fueled a growing litter problem at the Monument (Image 42). Moreover, the WNMA resolved to bankroll all expenses related to operation of the facility.<sup>84</sup> Hough acknowledged, “there is no question but that a brisk business in living plants...can be developed here” but worried,

It boils down to the same old question—“who is going to do the work?” We can and do produce plenty of surplus plant materials incidental to our regular operations—but then someone will have to do the processing such as potting and packaging as well as to furnish the supplies. We hope this will be arranged at the October meeting of the Association here.<sup>85</sup>

The WNMA did raise the issue at its October 1952 meeting and agreed to pay the Monument’s gardener regular overtime for extra time devoted to the green house.<sup>86</sup> Hough agreed to this arrangement, but after six months of long hours for the gardener and, consequently, the Monument’s own inability to operate with an already short staff, Hough contacted the Regional Director and asked for a “legal decision” in the

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<sup>82</sup> Hough to Regional Director, 7 August 1951, file “D34 Green-Hot House” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. Also see SMR, August 1951, GEWA. That Crowninshield proceeded without consulting Hough points to their informal professional relationship. Similar informality had created problems in the past. When, for example, Hough decided to thin the Monument’s sheep flock—previously donated by the WNMA but cared for by park staff—it was not clear how or what bureaucratic procedure to initiate given that disposal of any government property required a variety of formal requests and applications. See file “S 1415 Sheep” in NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA, for various correspondence regarding sheep at Wakefield. This correspondence suggests that by 1950, when Hough sought to dispose of some sheep, it was not clear who owned them and how to dispose of them given that the WNMA donated the original flock. Although this did not constitute a significant problem, it does point to difficulties resulting from such a close and occasionally ambiguous relationship with the WNMA.

<sup>83</sup> Regional Director to Hough, 8 August 1951, file “D34 Green-Hot House” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. SMR, September 1951, November 1951, February 1952, and September 1952, GEWA.

<sup>84</sup> SMR, October 1952, GEWA.

<sup>85</sup> SMR, September 1952, GEWA.

<sup>86</sup> SMR, October 1952, GEWA.



case.<sup>87</sup> Crowninshield's bold effort to reinvigorate the WNMA and generate income was, from the Park's perspective, too bold and constituted a serious draw on Monument resources. The greenhouse operation continued for a few years as evidenced by constant complaints in Hough's reports concerning faulty equipment and WNMA requests for additional space. Records do not indicate when the operation officially folded.

Complications resulting from management of the greenhouse prompted the NPS to reconsider its relationship with the WNMA. On January 30, 1952, Regional Chief of Concessions E.V. Buschman visited Wakefield and met with Hough, two representative of the WNMA, and the postmaster. The WNMA, until this point, had operated rather freely under the rubric of its founding legislation. In addition to operating the Log House and participating in the furnishing and protection of the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen, the WNMA sold a variety of items including books, pamphlets, souvenirs, snacks, and—most recently—plants (Image 42). The addition of this final item and construction of the greenhouse demonstrated that the NPS exercised very little official control over what the WNMA could or could not do and sell at Wakefield. Hough's informal rapport with Crowninshield may have sustained the Monument until that point, but regional planners recognized the possibility of future complications not unlike the greenhouse situation. Buschman desired to consolidate all aspects of WNMA operation into one manageable entity and suggested that the group sign a concession permit that would regulate all WNMA activities related to sales.

The WNMA chafed at the idea citing their "authority direct from Congress to build, operate and maintain the Memorial House here."<sup>88</sup> This request, coming at a time when some members of the WNMA still felt wrongly evicted from the Log House, damaged any residual good feelings surrounding the success of the green house. Buschman's request that the group sign a revocable concession permit received staunch opposition. Extant WNMA records are incomplete and unfortunately do not reveal how negotiations with Buschman unfolded. By April 1952, however, the WNMA conceded and agreed to

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<sup>87</sup> Hough to Regional Director, 20 April 1953, file "D34 Green-Hot House" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>88</sup> SMR, January 1952, GEWA.

Buschman's terms. The Monument received signed copies of the new concession permit in August along with a schedule of rates for sales of plants and souvenirs.<sup>89</sup>

Although the particulars of this agreement are unavailable, records suggest an unfortunate aftermath. The last mention of WNMA members serving as Memorial House attendants occurs in April 1952. A few years later, the WNMA requested that an alarm system be installed in the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen to protect unattended furnishings.<sup>90</sup> Thus, whether in protest or due to dwindling membership, the WNMA retreated from the core historic area following the Buschman affair. Moreover, the WNMA turned its attentions to George Washington-related activities beyond the purview of the NPS. In 1953, for instance, the WNMA channeled its funds into a garden party and travel brochure for the Virginia Travel Council.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, Crowninshield stepped down as president in 1956 and died two years later.<sup>92</sup> Having lost its leader and feeling marginalized by the NPS, the WNMA once again found itself in an organizational crisis not unlike that of early 1932.

### **Post-War Impact on Land Policy**

Hough found his own crisis in a reawakening of land concerns following the war. The superintendent had abandoned his land campaigns of the late 1930s amid the buildup of military tensions abroad. Economic prosperity and the consequent suburbanization of the late 1940s and early 1950s, however, injected his concern with a sudden immediacy. In 1947, for instance, the Gouldmans brought a new wholesale beer business to the Wakefield Inn at the corner of Routes 3 and 204.<sup>93</sup> Of greater concern was a boom in local subdivisions, especially across Popes Creek. Hough reported a substantial portion of Gordon and Garnett Horner's waterfront property adjacent to Muse's Beach subdivided into eighteen fifty-foot lots.<sup>94</sup> An additional threat emerged when Bob Muse declared his intent to subdivide his

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<sup>89</sup> SMR, April and August 1952, GEWA.

<sup>90</sup> SMR, December 1954, GEWA. Actually, efforts had been made to install an alarm system as early as 1950 though the system proved terribly unreliable and effectively useless; see SMR, May and June 1950, GEWA for details regarding early installation.

<sup>91</sup> SMR, April 1953, GEWA.

<sup>92</sup> SMR, May 1955 and 1956, GEWA.

<sup>93</sup> SMR, July 1947, GEWA.

<sup>94</sup> SMR, December 1947, GEWA.

property thus raising fear that new residents would use Monument roads to access private homes.<sup>95</sup>

Moreover, the Commonwealth of Virginia had acquired a significant amount of local property through its construction of Westmoreland State Park. Congressman Bland explained to Associate Director Conrad Wirth in a June 1949 letter that residents felt that their county's "tax potential is being cut into quite severely" and that local residents had complained about a lack of private sites for establishing clubs and hosting parties. Muse's Beach remained among the few of these places left.<sup>96</sup>

Hough's struggle was not singular. By the 1950s, private owners possessed nearly 300,000 acres of inholdings throughout the national park system.<sup>97</sup> But Northern Neck developers also turned an eye toward the water. In 1948 a group of local residents expressed interest in dredging Popes Creek to allow recreational boat access to Muse's Beach and other residential points. Hough recognized a potential advantage for Monument visitation in the dredging proposal, but also feared that a marina immediately opposite Wakefield's shoreline would jeopardize its historic viewshed.<sup>98</sup> Congressman Bland's introduction of H.R. 229 in February 1949, proposing surveys and estimates for the boat channel, met only disinterest.<sup>99</sup> A second bill, H.R. 5145, introduced by Bland on June 15, 1949, did garner significant interest, though little of it positive. This bill, calling for the extension of Monument boundaries, received "immediate local opposition...as none want to sell anything to the government."<sup>100</sup> NPS regional planners visited Wakefield on July 25, 1949 specifically to discuss the bill with Hough and key adjacent landowners C.E. Muse and James Latane. Both landowners reiterated their unwillingness to sell their land to the government.<sup>101</sup> Hough quickly realized that his nearly fifteen-year long land acquisition battle was quickly coming to an unsuccessful close. In his 1950 annual report, Hough recognized that despite

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<sup>95</sup> See 12 June 1948 memo from Hough to the Director's office included in SAR, 1948, GEWA.

<sup>96</sup> Bland to Wirth, 27 June 1949, file "F3815 legislation" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. Also see file "D32 Landscaping" for copies of H.R. 18, 1941; H.R. 5145, 1949.

<sup>97</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 483.

<sup>98</sup> SMR, July 1948, GEWA.

<sup>99</sup> SMR, February 1949, GEWA.

<sup>100</sup> SMR, June 1949, GEWA.

<sup>101</sup> SMR, July 1949, GEWA.

the desirability of acquiring more land “it would not be the best thing to resort to condemnation proceedings, as such would be utterly disruptive to our local public relationship.”<sup>102</sup>

The land situation seemed to worsen every year. Bland died soon after introducing H.R. 5145 and his successor, Representative Edward J. Robeson, Jr., refused to reintroduce the bill because of opposition from Westmoreland County’s Commonwealth’s Attorney Ferdinand F. Chandler.<sup>103</sup> Additionally, Jack Goldman purchased an acre of marshland from the Commonwealth in 1950 allowing him to erect a duck blind in the “grassy patch” immediately in front of the Memorial House.<sup>104</sup> Hough complained in 1951 about a “colored store” along Route 204 calling it a “bad nuisance and a confusion to visitors trying to find the entrance to Washington’s Birthplace.”<sup>105</sup> By 1953, Hough had failed to win any of the land wars he had waged since 1932. In a letter to the Director, Hough expressed his frustration: “Apparently those who worked here during the development days were so intent on building the memorial building the great basic fact was overlooked. This is the birthplace of George Washington, and all that remains today that he might recognize were he able to return would be the view. Nothing was done about obtaining the property that controls the environment, and which is an heritage from the past.”<sup>106</sup> He did not know it then, but Hough had—as we will see—put into words exactly the rationale that would fundamentally alter interpretation at the Birthplace in decades to come.

The years during World War II and immediately after rank among the most difficult in Monument history. Nonetheless, Hough remained stubbornly committed to the protection of Washington’s Birthplace from the ravages of a wartime economy, chronic labor shortages, and fierce assaults on his own faith in the veracity of interpretation at the Park. In early 1950, W.H. Crock Ford published an exposé on Hough and the Birthplace in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. “The Historic Case of...The Misunderstood Marker” depicts a burdened superintendent who, though having turned down

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<sup>102</sup> SAR, 1950, GEWA.

<sup>103</sup> See master Plan Development Outline, February 1952, NPS Records, Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>104</sup> SMR, October 1950, GEWA.

<sup>105</sup> Hough to Regional Director, 22 May 1951, file “entrance roads” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>106</sup> From Hough’s response to the Director’s request for statements regarding protection and conservation through interpretation in Hough to Director, 29 September 1953, in file “K1815 interpretive activities services,” NPS Records Box 7 of 25, 1930s-1950s Records, GEWA.

three opportunities for reassignment during his tenure at Popes Creek, struggled to maintain his optimism.<sup>107</sup> Hough, embarrassed by the article, apologized to the Director and considered “the references to the shrug of my shoulders; the gleam in my eye; and the resolute front...particularly distasteful.”<sup>108</sup>

Hough spent a significant portion of his final years updating the Park’s master plan. His 1953 Master Plan Development Outline is typical in its emphasis upon increasing available staff, protecting historic viewsheds, and building a visitor center and museum. It was also Hough’s last opportunity to influence the direction of development at Washington’s Birthplace. Hough died of a heart attack on December 21, 1953.<sup>109</sup> In some ways, Hough’s death opened the way for a fresh start at the Monument and allowed new ideas concerning administration and interpretation into circulation. Still, that so many of Hough’s initiatives—including protection of historic viewsheds, creation of a living farm, and construction of a permanent administration building—came to fruition after his death reveal the remarkable foresight of the Monument’s first superintendent.

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<sup>107</sup> W.H. Crookford, “The Historic Case of...The Misunderstood Marker” in *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 19 February 1950 in file “K46 Radio and Television Activities” in NPS Records Box 7 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>108</sup> Hough to Director, 21 February 1950, file “K46 Radio and Television Activities” in NPS Records Box 7 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>109</sup> SMR, December 1953 (submitted by Acting Superintendent Joseph Vaughn), GEWA.

## CHAPTER 6

### **Mission 66—A Prelude to Change, 1955-1966**

The 1940s marked a pivot point in Monument history when the limited developmental gains of the 1930s succumbed to the financial and staffing demands of World War II. The early 1950s, however, witnessed a series of events that, by merit of their simultaneity and in conjunction with the aftermath of World War II, set the Monument on an entirely new developmental trajectory. Hough's death in 1953 marked the end of a formative era at the monument by in large defined by the first superintendent's developmental vision and negotiation of relationships between the Park, the NPS, and the WNMA. Crowninshield's departure from the WNMA in 1956 left the organization bereft of strong leadership for the first time since Rust's death in 1931. The combined loss of these two influential figures had both negative and positive ramifications for Monument operations. In some ways, it allowed for creative responses to old problems. It also, however, wiped institutional memory from the ranks of Monument leadership and left the leaderless WNMA without a champion in the Park or among its own ranks. These changes accompanied the beginning of a new NPS-wide initiative called Mission 66. Implementation of the Mission 66 vision fell to a new superintendent not at all certain what to make of the WNMA and its, by 1955, uncertain role at Wakefield.

Other NPS sites shared the Monument's difficulty managing a failing infrastructure amid dramatic post-war visitation increases. These increases resulted from the emergence of a newly mobile American middle class buoyed by a post-war economic boom that enabled unprecedented numbers of young families to spend their leisure time traveling the nation's new interstate highway system. Heavy use of facilities combined with significant wartime budget reductions left many parks in tatters thus opening the NPS to public criticism.<sup>1</sup> Director Conrad Wirth proposed a solution in 1955. Wanting to improve the Park system by the NPS's fiftieth anniversary, Wirth announced the beginning of Mission 66 on February 8, 1956. Mission 66 was proposed as a ten-year program to improve and modernize

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<sup>1</sup> The increase in visitation during this period was astonishing: from 6 million visitors in 1942 to 33 million in 1950 to 72 million in 1960. Mackintosh, *The National Park*, p. 64.

facilities, staffing, and resource management.<sup>2</sup> This modernization project manifested most visibly in NPS architecture. Rustic New Deal-era park buildings gave way to more functional user-friendly structures bearing a distinct modernist aesthetic reflecting Mission 66's emphasis on visitor experience. Mission 66 planners paid attention for the first time to the way visitors experienced parks, both physically and interpretively. Planning documents of this period frequently feature flow charts and line drawings depicting visitor movement through buildings and displays.

Implementation of Mission 66 initiatives at Wakefield fell to superintendent Russell A. Gibbs, who entered duty on March 26, 1954.<sup>3</sup> Gibbs previously served at parks including Homestead National Monument and Hopewell Village National Historic Site, where a Masters degree in History from the University of Nebraska served him well.<sup>4</sup> The Monument almost immediately benefited from his fresh perspective. Instead of advocating for the construction of ranger housing as had Hough, for example, Gibbs suggested that the Log House be converted for this purpose. This obvious solution escaped Hough who could not envision the Log House as anything but a concession and perhaps remained fearful of WNMA backlash.<sup>5</sup> Over time, Gibbs' fresh perspective eased implementation of the administrative and infrastructural changes resulting from Mission 66.

If Gibbs offered a fresh perspective on activities at the Monument, he also approached his responsibilities with a degree of bureaucratic detachment. Unlike Hough, who so often waxed philosophical about the importance of the Monument and documented every aspect of Monument operations through reports and correspondence, Gibbs introduced a somewhat more even-handed

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<sup>2</sup> For a summary of Mission 66 and its impact, see Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, p. 64-67; Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 546-50; and Hartzog, *Battling for the National Parks*, pp. 84-87.

<sup>3</sup> SMR, March 1954, GEWA.

<sup>4</sup> James Berry, "Decade Required, Job With park Service Was Difficult to Gain" in *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 28 December 1959.

<sup>5</sup> Hough to Regional Director, 29 January 1952, file "D2215" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA. This file also contains advance plans drafted throughout 1955 demonstrating that Hough ultimately was denied permission to build additional park structures (residences and support buildings) and asked to make proposals for public buildings. In this way, Hough never won his battle for a new home and died soon after being berated for continually requesting construction of non-public buildings.

business-like approach to the superintendency.<sup>6</sup> His reports and correspondence are brief, succinct, and impersonal in ways that reflect larger shifts in the NPS stemming from a burgeoning post-war NPS bureaucracy. Therefore, the 1950s mark a transitional point in the quantity and tone of Monument records, creating challenges for the researcher attempting to explain the administrative context within which the Monument operated during the post-war era.

### **Visitor Experience, 1955-1966**

Records do suggest, however, that Gibbs made visitor experience a primary concern. Gibbs communicated with Historian Frank Barnes about the problem of contacting Monument visitors with such a limited staff. Barnes relayed Gibbs' worries to the Regional Chief of Interpretation in 1954, remarking that Gibbs considered a dedicated contact station "as [a] top need at the area" especially during the winter season when provisions for official contact remained solely within the Memorial House. Although a staffed sentry box near the granite obelisk traffic circle welcomed visitors during the summer, it also put demands on a continually shorthanded staff. Barnes suggested that the Colonial Kitchen be converted for visitor contact, but Mission 66 would provide a different solution within a few years.<sup>7</sup>

Gibbs' concern about visitor contact, reflects larger administrative concerns about the impact of increasing visitation figures. About 77,000 visitors toured the Monument in 1953. By 1961, visitation had skyrocketed to nearly 126,000. Washington's Birthplace felt the pressure by 1959 when, for the first time in park history, an employee "had to be assigned to the parking area in order to efficiently park cars and provide adequate space for the visitors."<sup>8</sup> The crowds included a number of dignitaries. Former Director Horace Albright paid a special visit in 1957 to revisit the Park that figured so prominently in his reinvention of the NPS. News legend Edward R. Murrow spent a day at Wakefield in 1961.<sup>9</sup> On August 22, 1962, Washington's Birthplace participated in the NPS-wide billionth visitor day and picked as their

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<sup>6</sup> Continually increasing demands created by a burgeoning NPS bureaucracy, however, can also be blamed for the significant reduction/impersonal nature of Monthly Reports.

<sup>7</sup> Barnes to Regional Chief of Interpretation, 17 September 1954, file "D32 Landscaping" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>8</sup> SMR, February 1959, GEWA.

<sup>9</sup> SMR, March 1957 and September 1961, GEWA.



honorary billionth visitor Dr. Robert E. Moddy, Chairman of the Boston University History Department. Although visitation dropped back to about 72,000 by 1965, a second upswing occurred during the end of the decade bringing nearly 133,000 to Wakefield in 1968.

As Hough discovered in the years following World War II, more visitors meant more problems and, unfortunately, even after Hough's tenure not all visitors received fair and equal treatment. In June 1960, for instance, Monument employee Edward Saunders was arrested and briefly jailed for "bothering a colored school group at the picnic area." Gibbs accompanied Saunders to court and concluded his brief comments on the event with a dismissive "there are hopes that this may tend to subdue these "mammy cats [*sic*]." <sup>10</sup> That Saunders was allowed to remain on staff after this event and that Gibbs received no reprimand for inclusion of such an appalling racial epitaph in an official NPS report speaks volumes about attitudes toward racial discrimination at the time. The lack of a formal complaint on behalf of the assaulted party further suggests that victims of prejudice did not feel comfortable seeking redress.

A very different visitor complaint reached the Director's office in 1959. Mrs. C.C. Warfield visited the Park on August 13, 1959 and expressed utter dismay at what she encountered there. Mrs. Warfield claimed to have been an original member of the WNMA and though not having visited the Monument in twenty-eight years, leveled vehement criticism on the Park and its staff for interpretive shortsightedness and disregard for visitor comfort. She criticized the color of the Memorial House's walls, the treatment of its wooden floors, and its shabby decorations. Warfield also complained about a guide's claim that the house was an approximation rather than an exact reproduction of the Washington birth home. Gibbs and his staff dismissed Warfield's remarks as nothing more than the rantings of a confused old lady. <sup>11</sup> What they failed to understand was that Warfield's complaints demonstrated the persistence of old ideas about proper commemoration. Hough would have immediately recognized Warfield's motivation as originating with early interpretive efforts at the Monument and, though not necessarily agreeing with the woman, would have diffused the situation in a mannerly way. It is thus

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<sup>10</sup> SMR, June 1960, GEWA.

<sup>11</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 31 August 1959, file "1959 Reading files" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA. Also see SMR, August 1959, GEWA for a brief account.

evident that the deaths of Hough and Crowninshield left a massive void in the staff's institutional memory.

### **Reinstitution of Visitor Fees**

The lack of formal complaints during this period may be somewhat misleading for it is evident that numerous visitors expressed dismay regarding the institution of visitor fees. Having ceased fee collection in 1949, the NPS again requested that its parks collect entrance fees in 1954. Washington's Birthplace began collecting fees on July 1.<sup>12</sup> Public dissatisfaction, especially among local residents, became evident soon thereafter and by December 1954, Gibbs complained about "visitors to the grounds who avoided, to the best of their ability, payment for tickets at the mansion." Some visitors went to great lengths to avoid the fees as in July 1957 when one visitor smuggled in two others in the trunk of a car.<sup>13</sup>

Gibbs attributed the problem, in part, to the lack of a ticket collection booth at the Monument's entrance. Mission 66 funds allowed for the construction of a ticket booth in 1960, but improved collection procedures did not soothe the public's distaste for fees.<sup>14</sup> The Department of Interior's requirement of NPS sites to generate revenue by way of visitor fees simply did not make sense to visitors unaware of the Monument's role within a larger NPS. In 1965, for instance, the Secretary of the Interior proposed an additional fifty-cent usage fee for picnic grounds on top of the base fifty-cent park entrance fee. Had this proposal been enacted, picnickers at the Birthplace would have paid a dollar to use facilities significantly less accommodating than those offered at nearby Westmoreland State Park for a mere thirty-five cents.<sup>15</sup> Insomuch, this episode demonstrated that NPS planners—struggling to accommodate the needs of more and more diverse parks—had become increasingly less present at the Monument and consequently less aware of its particular community context.

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<sup>12</sup> SMR, June and July 1954, GEWA. For a larger discussion of fee collection in parks as a method for offsetting operating costs, see Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, pp. 633-38.

<sup>13</sup> SMR, December 1954 and July 1957, GEWA.

<sup>14</sup> SMR, June 1960, GEWA.

<sup>15</sup> George Schesventer to Superintendent, Fredericksburg National Military Park, 20 March 1965, file "1965 Reading File" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

Although this particular fee did not go into effect, the standard entrance fee did rise over time. Until the mid-1960s, visitors could enter the Park for twenty-five cents per person. A 1965 Congressional order raised the fee to fifty cents for all visitors sixteen years old and above.<sup>16</sup> Although there is no evidence of correlation, visitation dropped dramatically during this period and the superintendent secured permission to keep the Park open longer in hopes of attracting more visitors. Beginning on July 4, 1965 visitors could enter the Park anytime between 8 am and 9pm. By the end of the month, though, it was clear that increased hours did not boost visitation. Departing seasonal rangers ended the experiment in August and the superintendent determined that though a fair number of people visited between five and six p.m., few visited between six and nine.<sup>17</sup>

### **Understaffing**

The difficulties experienced with fee collection reveal the ongoing problem of operating with an inadequate staff. Gibbs had already complained about staff shortages in April 1954. The situation worsened in July when, during a single week, a recent hire opted not to work at the Monument, the administrative aide resigned, and a third position remained vacant for want of decent applicants.<sup>18</sup> Temporary appointments filled these positions for a period but limited funds forced an early termination of seasonal employees in July 1955.<sup>19</sup> The situation did not improve in following years and Gibbs frequently found himself working side by side with the maintenance and grounds keeping crew. Responsibility for mowing lawns actually fell to office support staff for a period.<sup>20</sup> By 1964, Westmoreland County had been classified as an economically depressed area and thus qualified for relief under the 1962 Accelerated Public Works Act. The APW channeled Federal money into state public works projects thus enabling the Park to complete a variety of minor maintenance tasks including the

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<sup>16</sup> Schesventer to Bixler Tours, 5 April 1965, in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>17</sup> SMR, July and August 1965 in file "1965 Reading File" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA. The introduction of an NPS conservation sticker—which functioned more-or-less like today's Golden Eagle Pass—further complicated the situation. See Schesventer to Regional Director, 23 August 1965, file "1965 Reading File" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>18</sup> SMR, April and July 1954, GEWA.

<sup>19</sup> SMR, August 1954, June and July 1955, GEWA.

<sup>20</sup> SMR, August 1959 and April 1961, GEWA.

demolition of the long-abandoned Raymond Washington buildings.<sup>21</sup> Even so, problems with understaffing persisted and extended to interpretation and visitor contact. By the end of Mission 66, Washington's Birthplace still reported the burial ground, Colonial Garden, and Colonial Kitchen officially unattended, noting that "no personnel are assigned to any of the above areas but when the man on duty is not busy at the mansion he does go to the colonial Garden and Kitchen to help the visitor."<sup>22</sup>

Similar concerns extended to law enforcement. NPS sites have, since 1940, been required to enforce or allow enforcement of state laws on federal land even when state law extends beyond federal regulations.<sup>23</sup> Various acts of vandalism, tampering with the Washington family burial vault, trespassing by hunters, theft of antiques, and even one occasion where two boys were apprehended using tools and equipment housed in the utility building, occurred throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>24</sup> Trespassing usually involved hunting violations or speeding motorists who proved especially troublesome during this period.<sup>25</sup> Traffic enforcement required road patrols but Gibbs could not devote any staff to regular patrolling. The superintendent frequently reminded the local sheriff and state patrolmen that given the Park's limited jurisdiction, local law enforcement maintained authority within park boundaries and should extend their patrols to include Washington's Birthplace.<sup>26</sup> Gibbs reported in 1961 that "several times in recent months we have been visited by local, state and federal game wardens. They have been particularly interested in reported shooting over baited blinds and illegal duck species. More recently

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<sup>21</sup> See file "1964 Reading File" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA for variety of documents regarding the APW including an undated and unsigned document titled "information on conditions affecting employment" concerning Westmoreland County's economic situation. Also see SMR, January 1964, GEWA for description of work done with APW assistance.

<sup>22</sup> Schesveter to Regional Director of Operations, 3 April 1965, file "1965 Reading File" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>23</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 441.

<sup>24</sup> See SMR, April 1955; August 1958; May 1959; March 1962; January 1963; August 1963, GEWA; and Schesveter to Director, 6 December 1963, file "1965 Reading File" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>25</sup> SMR, December 1959, GEWA.

<sup>26</sup> See "Calendar Year 1959 Law Enforcement Summary," 7 January 1960, file "Daily correspondence calendar year 1960" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA. File "w30 jurisdiction" in NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA contains correspondence from mid-1950s regarding questions of jurisdiction at the Monument and leading to discovery that the federal government maintained only proprietary jurisdiction—the right to enforce federal laws on property owned by the government. Given that the government did not own all of the land within its boundaries—including the Monument's route 204 approach—it was not always evident when rangers could or could not enforce, for example, traffic regulations. Gibbs also inquired about race laws and received a response indicating that federal non-discrimination policy applied to all government property regardless of state laws.

their interest has been the alleged market in night shooting.”<sup>27</sup> Still, enforcement and protection remained a significant problem at Wakefield throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s.

Of even greater concern was the Monument’s decades old physical infrastructure. The footbridge built in 1932 across Dancing Marsh had grown weak and gave way during a storm in 1963.<sup>28</sup> Utility failures outpaced regular maintenance schedules. For instance, Gibbs replaced the water heater in the Memorial House in October 1954.<sup>29</sup> Replacing one part of the heating system, though, revealed the inadequacy of the remaining components and thereby required further repairs. This all occurred coincidentally with failures of the ice pond water pump and demonstrates the extent to which an unlucky combination of mechanical failures could quickly plunge the Monument into dire financial straits. Gibbs, in a memorandum to the Regional Director, remarked on this “unusual run of bad luck with our utilities this year mainly because of their age.”<sup>30</sup> One equipment problem even jeopardized public health. Gibbs reported in 1961 that the residence area septic tank “effluent has not flowed through the absorption trenches for many years,” referring to correspondence from 1934 concerning the same problem. Gibbs’ own attention to the problem came only after a staff member noticed a “pond of sewage” behind the residences.<sup>31</sup> In many ways, that “pond of sewage” symbolized the state of the Monument’s physical plant during the Mission 66 years.

### **Mission 66 Planning and Administrative Reorganization**

In 1955, Director Wirth inaugurated Mission 66 by requesting that each park submit a development plan. Gibbs and staff set to work in 1955 and within a year had crafted a Mission 66 proposal not unlike Hough’s previous master plan drafts. The Monument’s Mission 66 prospectus reads

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<sup>27</sup> SMR, January 1961, GEWA. The “alleged market in night shooting” most likely involved the hunting of deer—illegal on Federal property—after hours.

<sup>28</sup> The original footbridge had been “sealed” with river mud and, unsurprisingly, required partial reconstruction in 1939. See SMR, August 1939, GEWA. Also see Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.87. The bridge was not rebuilt after its destruction in 1963.

<sup>29</sup> SMR, October 1954, GEWA.

<sup>30</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 16 March 1959, file “1959 Reading files” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA. \$1 in 1959 was approximately equal to \$6 today. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 16 May 1961, file “Reading File—1961 Calen Year” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

like a wish list culled from the previous twenty years of superintendents' complaints and requests.<sup>32</sup> It includes proposals for a new administrative and museum building to serve as the primary contact point for visitors and to provide space for the sale of WNMA items. Other familiar themes include requests for an expanded archeological program and aggressive land acquisition policy to ward off intrusive development. A proposal for a modest two-stop wayside exhibit appears here marking the beginning of what would later develop into a substantial wayside program. The prospectus highlights the need to dredge Popes Creek in order to prevent sediment buildup and indicates a need for increased patrol forces to regulate access to the Potomac River beach. Most striking about the prospectus is its references to improving visitor circulation. The Monument, especially under Hough, had always encouraged visitors to roam the grounds at will. The 1956 prospectus, however, typifies Mission 66 thinking in that it suggests that giving order to the visitor experience, especially by building an adequate visitor center, would improve the site's interpretive value. The proposal allocates \$224,500 for a 4,500-square foot visitor center and lists the project as a top park priority.<sup>33</sup>

The final Mission 66 plan—reviewed and revised by the Regional Office—preserved the spirit of the prospectus, though with slight modifications.<sup>34</sup> The final version, for instance, calls for the erection of new highway markers to alleviate motorist confusion *en route* to Wakefield. It emphasizes development of a utility area and calls for the construction of two employee residences. Most significantly, the final Mission 66 document reduces proposed allocations for utility work and building construction, leaving the final estimate about \$13,000 (about \$81,000 today) short of what the Monument requested.<sup>35</sup> Still, the report did focus more attention on visitor experience. Traffic counting and money handling procedures,

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<sup>32</sup> For various references to planning status, see SMR, July 1955 and March 1956, GEWA. "George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Mission 66," 20 April 1956, in folder "A-98 Mission 66" in NPS Records Box 21 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>33</sup> This is equal to about \$1.5 million today based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>34</sup> "Mission 66 for George Washington Birthplace National monument" in folder "A-98, Mission 66," NPS Records Box 21 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>35</sup> This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

for instance, received increased attention during 1960 and 1961.<sup>36</sup> Immediately after the study and perhaps in the wake of increased complaints about the frequently muddy walk between the parking lot and the Memorial House, work began on a brick path between the two areas.<sup>37</sup> Making plans into reality proved difficult, though, and by 1963 it became evident that hopes to complete Mission 66 development at Washington's Birthplace by 1966 were entirely unrealistic. Regional Director Elbert Cox wrote to Gibbs that year indicating that though minor road work and various utility and building improvements would occur on schedule, some aspects of the development plan would have to wait for completion until 1973.<sup>38</sup>

Even so, Mission 66 encouraged the development of an entirely new and revised master plan during the early 1960s.<sup>39</sup> Upon approval of the Park's Mission 66 prospectus, Director Conrad Worth requested that the Park update its master plan and development outline "into agreement therewith."<sup>40</sup> Gibbs and staff set to work and Acting Director Hillory Tolson, approved the new master plan on September 7, 1961—Gibbs added to the document throughout the next two years.<sup>41</sup> The 1961-63 master plan, not unlike the Monument's Mission 66 prospectus, gives voice to concerns dating back to the earliest years of Hough's superintendency. It calls for additional archeology, seeks to acquire inholdings to prevent development, requests a visitor center, and reemphasizes the importance of protecting natural resources and viewsheds in ways that foster interpretation of the eighteenth-century landscape.

Although Mission 66 is generally recognized as having its greatest impact on physical landscapes at NPS sites, the project had far greater implications for administrative organization and management practice at Washington's Birthplace. After World War II, the NPS developed a complex bureaucracy, in

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<sup>36</sup> See SMR, April 1960; May 1961; and June 1961, GEWA for comments regarding improvements to traffic counting practices.

<sup>37</sup> See SMR, May 1958 and May 1961, GEWA.

<sup>38</sup> Cox to Gibbs, no date, file "A 9815, Mission 66" in NPS Records Box 21 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>39</sup> See file "1963 reading file" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA for various correspondence regarding master planning during this period.

<sup>40</sup> Wirth to Regional Director, Region One, 17 May 1957, HFCA.

<sup>41</sup> "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Mission 66 Edition," 7 September 1961. I have not located a complete draft of the final plan, which is divided into three volumes. Portions of Volume I and III are located in an unlabeled green folder HFCA. A draft version of various portions of Volume I is in folder "Master Plan D18" in NPS Records, Box 8 of 25, GEWA.

part as a way to monitor and maximize resources in the face of wartime cutbacks. Hough complained during his latter years about increased paper work resulting from NPS interest in boosting park accountability. Between 1951 and 1954, Hough frequently corresponded with NPS officials regarding requirements for submission of annual reports and seems to have had some difficulty understanding the motivation for these reports and the protocol for their submission.<sup>42</sup>

Superintendent Gibbs, although assisted by Administrative Aide Sherman W. Perry beginning in 1954, felt similarly about the growing bureaucracy. Mission 66 added to the perceived burden. Gibbs remarked in a 1959 report about “an unusual number of reports submitted” including a quarters reappraisal, an inventory of non-expendable property, a survey of surplus items, and an outline of needed research projects.<sup>43</sup> Monthly reports from these years reference administrative tasks not previously mentioned. In late 1960, for example, disposal of “useless” records occupied a good portion of the administrative workload.<sup>44</sup> Within months, Gibbs reported to the Regional Director that he had established a centralized file plan intended to “speed up files operation, reduce cost, and [to facilitate] the proper safeguarding of valuable record material.”<sup>45</sup> Most telling, with regard to bureau-wide administrative changes made at Washington’s Birthplace, is Gibbs’ 1961 remark that “our bookcases do not have enough vertical space to accommodate the NPS administrative Manuals and the Handbooks so they have been arranged on top of the filing cases as the shelf.”<sup>46</sup>

Gibbs delegated much of this work to his administrative aide. Prior to 1956, the superintendent directly supervised everyone employed at the Monument. Although his administrative aide assisted with clerical duties, the superintendent retained first contact with all employees on all issues and matters pertaining to operation of the Monument. With the advent of Mission 66, however, the Regional Director

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<sup>42</sup> See SAR, 1951, GEWA for reference to a letter from Director Demaray to all field offices regarding submission of Annual Reports with rationale for doing so. SAR, 1953-1954, GEWA include reference to correspondence between Hough and the Regional Office regarding misunderstandings about when and why to file annual reports—Hough noted that none had been filed since 1948.

<sup>43</sup> See SMR, December 1954, GEWA regarding Perry’s addition and SMR, January 1959, GEWA for Gibbs’ remarks concerning excessive reports.

<sup>44</sup> SMR, December 1960, GEWA.

<sup>45</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 11 February 1961, file “Reading File—1961 Calen Year” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>46</sup> SMR, December 1961, GEWA.



requested that Gibbs initiate an administrative reorganization. The superintendent responded in the summer of 1956 with an addendum to the Mission 66 prospectus.<sup>47</sup> Gibbs' addendum included a revised chart that, though indicating plans for increased staffing, most importantly reorganized the relationship between the superintendent and park staff by way of the administrative aide. The reorganization posited the administrative aide as an intermediary who, by undertaking most duties related to daily management of the Park, reported to the Superintendent who consequently had more time to focus on larger issues (Illustration 4).

Administrative reorganization reflected NPS-wide changes unfolding, in part, as a result of Mission 66's goal to modernize NPS sites by 1966. It also bolstered the Monument's justification for a new administrative facility. Discussions regarding additions to the temporary administration building built in 1940 had begun well before Mission 66. Preliminary planning for an addition began after Hough's redrafting of the master plan in 1950.<sup>48</sup> Regional planners visited the monument in 1954 to review proposed additions but, again, no plans were agreed upon for another decade.<sup>49</sup> When it became evident that the visitor center and the administration building called for in the Park's Mission 66 prospectus would not materialize in due time, Gibbs—needing space for all those new administrative manuals—settled for a small addition of storage space to the temporary administration building and solicited construction bids in 1964.<sup>50</sup> The Park would not receive a new administration facility until the 1976 Bicentennial.

## **Interpretation**

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<sup>47</sup> See Gibbs to Regional Director, 19 June 1956, in folder "A-98 Mission 66," in NPS Records, Box 21 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>48</sup> At that time, Hough suggested incorporating the old iron gate from the original 1896 granite shaft surround. Ever concerned to maintain some sense of institutional history, Hough had saved the gate from requisition during a wartime scrap metal drive, but his idea apparently found no support with planners and work on additions to the administration building stalled as well. Hough to Regional Director, 2 August 1950, in file "D34 Administration Building" in NPS File Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>49</sup> These included R.F. Lee and Ralph Lewis. SMR, November 1954, GEWA.

<sup>50</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 25 March 1964, file "1964 Reading File" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA. Also see W. Mikell (Acting Regional Chief of Operations and Maintenance) to Gibbs, 25 February 1964, NPS Records Box 17 of 25, GEWA regarding plans and specifications for additions to administration building and file "ADDITION to office, proposed plans" in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA for blueprints and bid materials for this work.

Although the Monument did not get a new administrative building during the Mission 66 years, it did win a small victory in another longstanding battle. After years of lobbying for a plan to display artifacts excavated during the Monument's early years, Superintendent Hough finally caught the attention of the Chief of Historical Investigations, H.L. Peterson. Peterson visited Hough on February 10, 1954 and agreed that a plan should be devised to display the "real treasure of authentic Washington items." Peterson shared his impressions with Chief Historian Herbert Kahler who requested that the Regional Director consider the problem.<sup>51</sup>

Although Hough died amid these discussions, Gibbs arrived in time to dust off Paul Hudson's 1938 museum plan and received approval to convert one side of the Colonial Kitchen into a display area for artifacts.<sup>52</sup> The plan more-or-less recreated the state of affairs prior to 1940, before the WNMA refurnished the building under Crowninshield. WNMA pressure no longer a consideration, Gibbs renovated the building in August 1954 and requested that Paul Hudson—since relocated to Colonial National Monument—provide temporary assistance with design and set up of the small museum.<sup>53</sup> Creating and installing displays, however, proved more expensive than anyone expected. Hudson's plan called for five artifact cases and six wall displays. The Park could certainly not foot the bill for this and so Hudson secured a promise of funding from the Eastern National Park and Monument Association.<sup>54</sup> This promise turned out to be less credible than Hudson anticipated, though, and the Park received word that the ENPMA might not be able to make good on their part of the deal until as late as 1957.<sup>55</sup> Concluding a summary of the situation in a letter to the Regional Chief of Interpretation, Hudson quipped "we will pay the bills, but the next time I will not let my enthusiasm for a small area run away with me."<sup>56</sup> With some inordinate stroke of luck, the Park did pay its bills by convincing the WNMA to cover the

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<sup>51</sup> Peterson to Chief Historian Herbert Kahler, 16 February 1954; and Kahler to Elbert Cox, 17 February 1954, HFCA.

<sup>52</sup> These planners included "Mesrs. Hudson, Smith, and Ludgate" and, later, "Mr. Buffmire from the museum laboratory." See SMR, March and May 1954, GEWA. Also see various relevant correspondence in file "D32 landscaping" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>53</sup> SMR, June-September, 1954, GEWA.

<sup>54</sup> James Holland (Executive Secretary) to Herbert Kahler (President, ENPMA), 1 September 1954, file "D32 landscaping" in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>55</sup> Holland to Kahler, 22 September 1954, in *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Hudson to Charles Harrison, 24 September 1954, in *Ibid.*

expense and on October 12, 1954, Paul Hudson and artist Sidney King added some final touches and opened the room to the public to what Gibbs described as “many encouraging comments on the displays.”<sup>57</sup>

During a brief visit following completion of the new artifact display, Kahler determined that the Memorial House Furnishings had never been properly catalogued. Hough’s record keeping system had become outdated and inaccurate and Gibbs struggled unsuccessfully to update the system. NPS Chief of Interpretation Ronald Lee suggested that Museum Curator Vera Craig be temporarily reassigned from Morristown National Historical Park to the Monument in order to create a standard accession and catalog procedure for the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen furnishings. Lee additionally suggested that Craig place permanent catalog numbers on the furnishings and that the entire project be funded through the NPS’s Museum Branch’s program for the preservation of scientific and historic collections with possible contributions from the Monument.<sup>58</sup>

Craig arrived at the Monument in March 1955 and spent several weeks creating individual information cards for nearly nine hundred items on display in the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen.<sup>59</sup> Harry Waldrus, a museum preservation specialist with the Museum Branch, accompanied Craig and determined that the Memorial House suffered from more than inadequate documentation. Waldrus identified numerous examples of rodent and insect damage, rotting and decaying wood and textiles, rusting flatware and wall fixtures, and decomposing historic letters set on desks for display purposes.<sup>60</sup> Waldrus offered a list of suggestions for correcting these problems. Gibbs considered the project a great success and lauded Craig and Waldrus in a March 30, 1955 letter to the Director.<sup>61</sup> He also contributed the assistance of his own administrative aide, who invested considerable time drafting a

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<sup>57</sup> SMR, October 1954, GEWA. Sidney King created interpretive paintings for parks throughout the east, most famously at Colonial Jamestown.

<sup>58</sup> Chief of the Division of Interpretation Ronald Lee to Elbert Cox, 8 December 1954, in HFCA.

<sup>59</sup> SMR, March and July 1955, GEWA.

<sup>60</sup> Waldrus to Chief, Museum Branch, 23 March 1955, HFCA.

<sup>61</sup> Gibbs to the Director, 30 March 1955, HFCA.

catalogue book of information compiled by Craig.<sup>62</sup> Gibbs later praised the book as a useful interpretive tool for seasonal ranger historians who otherwise would not have time to learn about the antique collection in any significant detail.<sup>63</sup> The museum team determined the replacement cost of all antiques valued over \$50 to be nearly \$73,000, a significant asset and no doubt a prominent collection for such a small park.<sup>64</sup>

Even so, by 1961, Gibbs realized that the Park's inability to afford a permanent trained historian prevented the Monument from creating an up-to-date interpretive plan.<sup>65</sup> A study undertaken that year provides a glimpse of the Park's interpretive dilemma. In conjunction with a management training program in Washington, D.C., six rangers from various parks set out to demonstrate how the NPS might better evaluate the effectiveness of programming at historic sites. The group attended a ranger activities conference and a conference of the chiefs of interpretation, and determined that NPS attention to visitor experience suffered throughout the system because parks failed to recognize the variety and complexity of visitor needs.<sup>66</sup> The team tested its hypothesis at Washington's Birthplace. Their methodology was simple: visit the Park as tourists, record immediate impressions of the visit, and communicate with park staff only after concluding the study. Despite being a mere training exercise, this study is significant in that it represents the earliest official effort to understand the visitor experience at Washington's Birthplace—the results were anything but glowing.

To some extent, the problems cited by the review committee are not at all surprising. The committee had difficulty just finding the Park given a lack of highway directional signs. It initially mistook George Washington's boyhood home at Ferry Farm for Washington's Birthplace. Additional confusion resulted upon arriving at the Monument where entry signs did not make clear how or where to

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<sup>62</sup> SMR, April 1955, GEWA.

<sup>63</sup> SMR, February 1956, GEWA.

<sup>64</sup> About \$460,000 today based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003. SMR, April 1958 and October 1959, GEWA.

<sup>65</sup> Gibbs to Director, 20 January 1961, file "Reading File—1961 Calen Year" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>66</sup> Robert R. Jacobsen, Richard G. Cover, Bruce W. Shaw, Richard A. Elasedel, Keith E. Miller, and Edward J. Widmer, "A Study of Visitor Impressions at George Washington's Birthplace National Monument and Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park," April 1961, p. 1 (GEWA library).

pay entrance fees. The committee took issue with the lack of trash receptacles and sanitary facilities at the burial ground and at the Potomac River beach front. It found the picnic area even more disconcerting with “vehicles driving through the luncheon area” and “fireplace and tables...either in...poor or unsafe condition.”

More significant, in hindsight, was the committee’s experience of the core historic area: “We felt that the information at this point was hard to assemble. Most of the required information was present, but it was scattered and difficult to understand and it does not immediately invite one to tour the mansion grounds.”<sup>67</sup> This portion of the report sheds a very different light on the complaints filed by Mrs. Warfield whose confusion regarding where to park and how to access the Memorial House was so flippantly dismissed by Superintendent Gibbs and his staff. The report’s last sentences, however, offer the most damning critique:

In our opinion we learned very little of George Washington’s childhood...The MISSION of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, as presently stated, is “to commemorate the birth and boyhood of George Washington and to present the story of his family background in these formative years. A pleasant pastoral scene is presently being maintained. With this exception we believe that the MISSION is not being fulfilled.”<sup>68</sup>

The review committee recommended installation of a sign and trailside exhibit to solve these problems.

Gibbs used the report as a way to stimulate the planning process in hopes of getting “squared away on just what our Service’s Mission 66 plans are.”<sup>69</sup> Only by the end of Mission 66 programming would Gibbs’ requests be answered. In March 1965, Regional Curator Elizabeth Albro, Regional Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services Charles Shedd, Regional Historian Thomas Harrison, and the Monument’s management assistant met to discuss an interpretive prospectus and furnishing plan for the Birthplace.<sup>70</sup> Although the team did make progress toward both, Gibbs would not be present to see either

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<sup>67</sup> Jacobsen et al., “A Study of Visitor Impressions,” p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>69</sup> Gibbs to unknown recipient, in file “Reading File—1961 Calen Year” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA. This is perhaps the first time that Gibbs used formal correspondence as forum to express discontent with lack of planning at the Park—a practice Superintendent Hough engaged in regularly.

<sup>70</sup> SMR, March 1965 in “1965 reading file” in NPS Records, Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

the results or the even larger interpretive changes that would soon launch the Monument in an entirely new direction.

### **New Leadership for the WNMA**

The WNMA experienced its share of ups and downs during the previous thirty years, but the Mission 66 era witnessed one of the WNMA's most significant periods of reinvention. In 1954, while acquainting himself with the Park and with an eye toward creating additional staff residences, Superintendent Gibbs turned his attention toward the defunct Log House Tea Room. No one, however, could determine who actually owned the Tea Room. Gibbs could not find any indication within park records of formal ownership on behalf of the NPS or the WNMA. Gibbs eventually did determine that the NPS held title to the building and, by 1957, he had performed enough maintenance and rehabilitation work to make the Log House suitable for seasonal ranger quarters.<sup>71</sup> Considering the extent of controversy surrounding the Log House in previous years, it is remarkable that no one—especially no one among the WNMA—challenged Gibbs' plans. The absence of resistance speaks to the waning influence of the WNMA on Monument planning initiatives. The WNMA's influence decreased as Crowninshield became less visible in the years between Hough's death and her own. Gibbs received word of Crowninshield's death on July 12, 1958, and immediately contacted officers of the WNMA. His remark that "this may have some effect on the operation or continuance of the WNMA" reveals a certain prophetic understatement.<sup>72</sup>

The WNMA had remained active during the mid 1950s, but the NPS's redefinition of the organization as a concessionaire in 1952—combined with Crowninshield's increasingly distant leadership—had taken its toll on morale. Annual meetings, once held in the Log House, now took place in the superintendent's office thus implying subservience to the NPS.<sup>73</sup> The lion's share of WNMA activity involved maintenance of the greenhouse. The WNMA poured its funds into the small nursery

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<sup>71</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 4 June 1954, file "WNMA member and Meetings" in NPS Records Box 6 of 25, GEWA. SMR, April 1957, GEWA.

<sup>72</sup> SMR, July 1958, GEWA.

<sup>73</sup> SMR, May 1957, GEWA.

operation. It constructed lattice sun shades in June 1955, built display shelves in 1957, and added a small patio and additional door to the post office building in 1958 to accommodate increased plant sales.<sup>74</sup> The greenhouse promoted a substantial business—especially with the addition of boxwoods to its inventory—and in 1965, the superintendent lobbied on behalf of the WNMA for the doubling of facilities devoted to raising and selling plants.<sup>75</sup> The WNMA also continued the tradition of serving spiced cider and gingerbread in colonial costume to visitors on George Washington’s birthday between 1955 and 1960.<sup>76</sup>

Without strong leadership, however, the WNMA considered disbandment at its 1958 annual meeting. The group postponed discussion of disbandment until the following year and began investigating the legal steps necessary to dissolve the WNMA. Gibbs advised “the President how they may donate their assets to the National Park Service,” by suggesting that the organization transfer its assets to the National Park Trust Fund Board or to the Eastern National Park and Monument Association through which funds could be specifically earmarked for Washington’s Birthplace.<sup>77</sup> The WNMA did not, however, take steps to disband at their 1959 annual meeting. Instead the Association initiated a campaign to increase its membership.<sup>78</sup> The immediate rationale for this change of direction is unclear. The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s coincidental creation of an award for distinguished contributions to the field of historic preservation in honor of Crowninshield may have revived the WNMA’s pride in its own accomplishments at the Monument.<sup>79</sup> No matter the reason, the WNMA rallied and sought new ways to assert itself at Washington’s Birthplace.

The question of leadership remained. Until Crowninshield’s death, the group had always enjoyed the strong leadership of prominent national figures able to negotiate with government and local officials

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<sup>74</sup> SMR, June 1955; October 1956; July and August 1957; and June 1958, GEWA. File “WNMA member and Meetings” in NPS Records Box 6 of 25, GEWA, contains WNMA meeting minutes from 23 October 1956. Unfortunately WNMA records do not reference the green house operation at any length.

<sup>75</sup> Schesventer (Management Assistant) to Superintendent, Fredericksburg National Military Park, 11 January 1965, file “1965 Reading File” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA. .

<sup>76</sup> See February SMRs for summary of Washington Birthday events.

<sup>77</sup> Gibbs to Mrs. James Jesse, 28 October 1958, file “WNMA Members and Meetings” in NPS Records Box 6 of 25, GEWA. Also see SMR, October 1958, GEWA.

<sup>78</sup> SMR, April 1959, GEWA.

<sup>79</sup> Hardinge Scholle (Properties Officer of National Trust for Historic Preservation) to Gibbs, 2 October 1958, file “WNMA member and Meetings” in NPS Records Box 6 of 25, GEWA.

while injecting the WNMA with their own noblesse oblige. If the WNMA was to reinvent itself, it would have to do so under local leadership—the ladies of the Northern Neck would have to assume complete and total responsibility for the direction of the WNMA. At the 1960 annual meeting the WNMA elected a new batch of officials all from the local community. Janie Mason (former operator of the Log House Tea Room) assumed the presidency; Mrs. Neale Sanders became the vice president with the assistance of Mrs. J.R. Carver as second vice president and Mrs. E.T. Ames as third vice president; Mrs. James Latane became the secretary; and Mrs. Margaret Lowery assumed the duties of treasurer.<sup>80</sup> Thus staffed, the WNMA emerged as something of a community action group and amended its by-laws in such a way as to allow membership by invitation only. Former WNMA member Betty Horner recalls that during this period, WNMA members deliberated behind closed doors over the suitability of membership candidates who waited for a decision in an adjacent hallway.<sup>81</sup>

Within a year, the WNMA launched its first earnest initiative since reorganization. On January 30, 1962, Mason wrote directly to Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall indicating that “the ladies of the Wakefield Memorial Association would like to have their legal status determined by the National Park Service, as to the furniture purchased by the WNMA and placed in the Log House when the Log House was in operation as a “Tea Room.” A reply from the assistant secretary of the interior including a copy of a letter from former Secretary Ray Wilbur demonstrating that the NPS had received the furniture as a donation from the WNMA in 1932 did not satisfy Mason. She countered that the Log House had not yet been equipped or furnished in 1932 and that its contents thus remained the property of the WNMA.<sup>82</sup> These exchanges marked only the beginning of a prolonged battle and, consequently, a low point in relations between the NPS and the WNMA.

The Regional Office, eager to head off debate concerning ownership of the Log House, urged Gibbs to examine the WNMA’s records which, by merit of its 1952 concessionaire agreement with the

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<sup>80</sup> SMR, April 1960, GEWA.

<sup>81</sup> Betty Horner, interview with author, 30 June 2004.

<sup>82</sup> Mason to Udall, 30 January 1962, unlabeled file in NPS Records Box 17 of 25, GEWA. This file contains brief correspondence relating to the WNMA’s inquiry regarding ownership of the Log House and its furnishings. Gibbs to Regional Director, 7 August 1962, file “1962 Yellows” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.



NPS, should have been made freely available to the superintendent. In fact, the records never had been made available to the NPS and, furthermore, it was not clear that the WNMA itself knew of their whereabouts. Gibbs did eventually succeed in locating some records “covering many years...stored in numerous cardboard boxes on a member’s back porch. They are not being made available to us for examination. We have offered to index and store them. There should be much information useful for the museum catalog and card files.”<sup>83</sup> Mason heard about Gibbs’ interest in the WNMA’s records and launched a counter strike to block the perceived invasion of privacy. She protested Section 10 of the of the Association’s concession permit, arguing that the organization’s records were “no business of the government” and that the agreement “gives too much power to the Superintendent.” Mason additionally threatened to involve her son, a lawyer, in further discussions about the Association’s legal relationship with the NPS.<sup>84</sup> In hopes of reaching a compromise, the NPS proposed a series of small changes to the concession permit including the waving of a franchise fee given the “Association’s excellent record of assistance to the National Park Service and this area as avowed in their certification of incorporation.” The NPS did not, however, relinquish its ownership of the Log House or its furnishings. Neither did it retract its request for access to WNMA records.

The WNMA grudgingly accepted the changes to the concession permit, perhaps after Mason received further confirmation from Acting Regional Director Raymond Mulvany that the NPS assistant solicitor determined all furnishings to be the possession of the government.<sup>85</sup> Even so, a special 1962 meeting to collect signatures for the permit, Gibbs noted that Mason, though still pushing the WNMA’s case for ownership of the Log House furnishings, did not mention the response she had previously received from the assistant secretary of the interior suggesting that he too had received a copy of the letter.<sup>86</sup> In April 1963, when Mason did finally admit to receiving the letter, she dismissed it as inaccurate

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<sup>83</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 17 April 1962, file “1962 Yellows” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA. Also see SMR, April 1962, GEWA.

<sup>84</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 3 July 1962, file “1962 Yellows” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>85</sup> See Mulvany to Mason, 19 December 1962; and Assistant Solicitor Bernard Meyer to the Director, 27 November 1962 in HFCA.

<sup>86</sup> See file “1962 Yellows” NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA and SMR, December 1962, GEWA.

and pledged to search through the WNMA records, warning that her son, lawyer George Mason Jr., was prepared to appeal the case to Congressman Smith.<sup>87</sup> The WNMA finally did permit access to its records, but it is likely that Mason's own inspection of the materials resulted in the removal of key documents. Regional Officer C.C. Thomas performed an audit of the WNMA's records a year later and determined that, in fact, a number of records were missing.<sup>88</sup>

Although the WNMA did not win its battle to reclaim ownership of the Log House furnishings, it is evident that some portion of the items donated had vanished over the years. In part, this resulted from NPS failure to demand accountability of the WNMA in previous years. Gibbs attempted to catalogue the items and compare the inventory with what Superintendent Hough recorded in 1940, but "there appears to be no way to trace them or to account for them."<sup>89</sup> Correspondence regarding the Log House ebbed in the years following the handover of WNMA records. Gibbs submitted a summary of the situation to the Regional Director in 1964 suggesting that, given its troubled history, the Log House might be best put to housing park staff.<sup>90</sup>

As the Mission 66 era came to a close, the Log House remained in limbo and relations between the WNMA and the NPS hit an all-time low. Remarkably, lingering tensions surrounding the Building X controversy continued to color the relationship. In February 1964, Gibbs took the bold step of suggesting to the Regional Director that the Park's new information folder be frank about the Building X foundations despite the fact that "some members [have]...always objected to the wording of the sign seen as the visitor approaches the Memorial mansion. They insist that the house is on the exact site of the birthhome."<sup>91</sup> That same month, the WNMA refused to host Washington's birthday celebration and, had

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<sup>87</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 22 April 1963, file "1963 reading file" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>88</sup> SMR, October 1963 and January 1964, GEWA. If the current condition of the WNMA's meeting minutes is any indication of the state these records were in upon their turn over, it is evident that significant portions of minutes and correspondence are missing considering serious chronological gaps. Gibbs suggested as much in his January 1964 Monthly Report: "The WNMA records are being examined and a filing arrangement started from the dozen or so cardboard Boxes of material. There appears to be very little information that might be useful for our museum card records."

<sup>89</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 11 December 1963, file "1963 reading file" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>90</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 12 March 1964, in Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 29 February 1964, in Ibid.

Gibbs' wife not volunteered to host the event, February 23 would have marked the first lapse in observation of the General's birthday since 1932.<sup>92</sup>

## **Land Policy**

In addition to museum planning and working with the WNMA, Gibbs inherited yet another of his predecessor's ongoing concerns during the Mission 66 years. The mid-1950s witnessed a variety of businesses open or change hands on and near the Monument's approach along Route 204. In February 1956, for instance, Preston Balderson sold an acre of land at the intersection of Routes 3 and 204 to a Washington, DC resident who subsequently opened an antique shop there.<sup>93</sup> Hugo Sorivi announced his plans to open the "Wakefield Inn" at the intersection a month later and applied for a permit to sell wine and beer at the establishment.<sup>94</sup> Non-commercial building also increased along the approach road. Two new residences appeared along Route 204 by 1958 and G.M. Johnson placed a trailer on another parcel giving rise to rumors that he intended to build a dance hall there. Gibbs was not alone in his fears regarding development of Route 204. James Latane considered buying a portion of the land simply to prevent the construction of a "bar and dance hall." Roadside development reflected Westmoreland County's improved economic situation during the mid-1950s, but it also jeopardized Mission 66 land planning as nearly all of the new buildings occupied the proposed "buffer strip area" earmarked within boundary expansion plans for acquisition in the Park's Mission 66 prospectus.<sup>95</sup>

Other land concerns fostered cooperation between the Monument and its neighbors. Local residents presented a petition in April 1959 to the NPS and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requesting the dredging of Popes Creek to prevent additional sediment accumulation. Their campaign succeeded and within a year a channel had been cut through the creek.<sup>96</sup> Conversely, community action could also take

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<sup>92</sup> SMR, February 1964, GEWA. Also see 6 October 1966 WNMA meeting minutes in file "WNMA" in NPS Records Box 16 of 25, GEWA for summary of various social activities, plans for purchases, and light maintenance to house and furnishings.

<sup>93</sup> SMR, February 1956, GEWA.

<sup>94</sup> SMR, March 1956, GEWA.

<sup>95</sup> SMR, April 1958 and September 1959, GEWA. Also see file "1959 Reading files" in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA with special regard to Gibbs to Regional Director, 17 February 1959.

<sup>96</sup> SMR, April 1959 and September 1960, GEWA.

the form of collective inaction. Despite the impressive ability of the Park and local community to quickly and collectively protect county property against fire, neither Gibbs nor local residents moved too quickly in June 1960 in response to a fire at ‘Piggy’ Wall’s “shack” on Route 204. Though the community fire squad prevented the blaze from reaching nearby woodlands, they did not manage to save Wall’s home leaving Gibbs to comment, “this complete removal of the eye sore takes care of an unsightly problem of some years.”<sup>97</sup>

Although Gibbs recognized that Mission 66 planning might be jeopardized as a result of local development and despite the relatively cordial relations he enjoyed with adjacent landowners, the superintendent was not able to take decisive action with regard to land policy. His inability resulted, in part, from a greater inability to locate necessary land deed information stemming from poor file management systems and a loss of institutional memory. This is not to say that Gibbs did not try. In fact, these years mark the beginning of a new approach to land policy that would resonate for many years to come. By early 1959, Gibbs had begun to update the Park’s boundary status report in order to evaluate the likelihood of fulfilling Mission 66 goals. Given the development activity described above, it became evident that outright acquisition of property along the approach road might not be the most effective land policy. Gibbs suggested to the Regional Director that the NPS consider protecting land adjacent to Route 204 by entering into scenic easement agreements with adjacent landowners.<sup>98</sup> The Regional Office expressed interest in Gibbs’ easement proposal and encouraged him to further develop the idea.

At the same time, however, a NPS-wide request to compile accounting records for all real property—including land—led to Gibbs’ discovery that the Monument’s files lacked important land ownership records.<sup>99</sup> The Regional Office sent J.R. McConaghie to assist with the boundary and land status report but missing records complicated the process.<sup>100</sup> Gibbs and his staff were not able to generate accurate land value estimates, as “there has been very little land of any kind sold in this vicinity in some

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<sup>97</sup> SMR, June 1960, GEWA.

<sup>98</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 28 January 1959, file “1959 Reading files” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>99</sup> Gibbs to Director, 10 February 1959, in Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> SMR, May 1959, GEWA.

years.” Moreover, the report’s suggestion of proposed additions did not even address the land west of Bridges Creek along the Potomac River that “has been placed in the hands of a real estate dealer for sale or possibly housing development.”<sup>101</sup> It had become apparent by 1960 that Washington’s Birthplace lacked the ability to take decisive action with regard to land policy given its remarkable unawareness of its own land history. The Regional Office attempted to help in this regard and dispatched Clifford Harriman and E.J. Clancy to the Westmoreland County Court House “to determine what additional study would be necessary for the Legislative Program.”<sup>102</sup> Still, that Mission 66 did not produce a coherent land policy for the Monument points to a history of poor record keeping and suggests that the Monument itself lacked the resources and perhaps the foresight to take full advantage of the program’s resources.

It appears, therefore, that Mission 66 did not ultimately have a significant direct impact on goings on at Washington’s Birthplace. Regional Curators did assist interpretation by cataloging artifacts and devising furnishing plans. And Mission 66 administrative and record-keeping changes certainly influenced the amount and type of work done by park staff. But chronic understaffing compromised the Park’s ability to meet the demands of increased visitation by new kinds of visitors. And without a dedicated administrative building or a long-term management plan, the Park would remain unable to become a modern historic site. Moreover, Park management took a dramatic turn in 1964. Superintendent Gibbs left the superintendency that year and, rather than replace him, the NPS shifted administration of the Monument to the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park and Cemetery on August 9, 1964 under the guidance of Superintendent George Schesventer. As we will see in the following chapter, although Mission 66 did not modernize Washington’s Birthplace, new leadership did encourage a spirit of reinvention that heralded dramatic changes in the decade to come.

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<sup>101</sup> Gibbs to Regional Director, 18 May 1960, file “Daily correspondence calendar year 1960” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>102</sup> See SMR, February and March 1962, GEWA and Gibbs to Regional Director, 20 January 1962, file “1962 Yellows NPS Records” in NPS Records Box 10 of 25, GEWA.

## CHAPTER 7

### **Living History and Modernization, 1966-1980**

Mission 66 succeeded in modernizing the national parks by improving roads, building visitor centers, and updating park bureaucracies. At the same time, and in large part as a result of George Hartzog's directorship (1964-1972), the NPS witnessed impressive growth. Under Hartzog, the park system added sixty eight parks. Natural resource management received new focus, especially beginning in 1963 with the release of the so called Leopold Report that encouraged preservation of natural landscapes. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 gave birth to the National Register of Historic Places that enabled the NPS to protect historic landmarks in both public and private ownership. The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 encouraged land acquisition throughout the park system. And, in 1964, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall requested that the system be organized into natural, historical, and recreational parks. Director Hartzog responded with the 1972 National Park System Plan that divided historical sites into thematic categories in hopes of identifying and filling gaps in the NPS's collection of historical parks.<sup>1</sup>

Hartzog's emphasis on expanding and improving historical parks inspired significant changes in the way NPS sites interpreted historic resources.<sup>2</sup> The roots of NPS interpretive thinking concerning historic sites date back to 1930 when Horace Albright created the Branch of Research and Education. Congress supported Albright's vision in 1932 by voting over \$22,000 for employees to develop "educational work."<sup>3</sup> By 1941, the NPS employed a number of geologists, biologists, historians, and museum experts to craft its interpretive programs and increasing numbers of university students used the parks as living laboratories.<sup>4</sup> As we have seen at Washington's Birthplace, however, interpretive programming remained more-or-less unchanged at many historic sites since the early 1930s.

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<sup>1</sup> Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, pp. 64-67.

<sup>2</sup> For Hartzog's thoughts on the impact of Mission 66, environmentalism in the NPS, and Udall's classification of park types, see *Battling for the National Parks*, pp. 84-89, 102-103.

<sup>3</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 345.

<sup>4</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 446.

That changed during the 1960s. In response to the Leopold Report, parks increasingly sponsored environmental educational programs and environmental interpretation that stressed the historical significance of natural landscapes.<sup>5</sup> Emphasis on natural landscapes, especially at rural sites like Washington's Birthplace, created opportunities to experiment with living history.<sup>6</sup> With the example of John D. Rockefeller's Colonial Williamsburg restoration in mind, American museum professionals began discussing the possibility of creating living agricultural museums during the 1940s.<sup>7</sup> Real interest in developing the living farm concept emerged during the 1960s following historian Marion Clawson's proposal "that we establish in the United States a system of living operating historical farms, to portray some of the main elements of U.S. agricultural history."<sup>8</sup> Clawson's proposal accompanied and drew strength from new directions in historical methodology. The 'New Social History,' with its interest in the lives and stories of the disenfranchised and working poor, legitimized Clawson's mandate, which consequently struck a chord in Washington.<sup>9</sup>

### **The 1968 Master Plan**

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<sup>5</sup> Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, p. 65.

<sup>6</sup> European folklorists first breathed life into the living history concept as collectors of regional folklore and material culture found academic peers among a new breed of social historians who shared an interest in preserving what they perceived to be a vanishing pre-industrial way of life. Artur Hazelius' Skansen museum, opened near Stockholm, Sweden in 1891, is often recognized as the first outdoor living history museum. John D. Rockefeller's Colonial Williamsburg and Henry Ford's Greenfield Village both opened during the late 1920s and represent the first significant examples of the outdoor village model in the United States. Concerning the origins of the outdoor museum, see Mark B. Sandberg, *Living Pictures, Missing Persons: Museums, Mannequins, and Modernity* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Warren Leon and Margaret Piatt, "Living-History Museums" in Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *History Museums in the United States, A Critical Assessment* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), p. 70. The years between 1945 and 1965 witnessed an explosion of museums and historic sites that embraced some form of living history interpretation. These include but are not limited to The Farmers' Museum, New York (1944), Old Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts (1946), Plimoth Plantation, Massachusetts (1947), Shelburne Museum, Vermont (1947), Museum Village, New York (1950), Old Salem, North Carolina (1950), Historic Deerfield, Massachusetts (1952), Landis Valley Museum, Pennsylvania (1953), Hagley Museum, Delaware (1957), Hope Lodge, Pennsylvania (1957), Hancock Shaker Village, Massachusetts (1960), Erie Canal Museum, New York (1962), Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm, Pennsylvania (1963), and Strawberry Banke, New Hampshire (1965).

<sup>8</sup> Marion Clawson, "Living Historical Farms: A Proposal for Action" in *Agricultural History* 39:3 (April 1965), p. 110.

<sup>9</sup> For discussions of the impact of 1960s and 1970s cultural upheaval on the development of living history, see Cary Carson, "Living Museums of Everyman's History" in *Harvard Magazine* 83 (July-Aug. 1981): 22-33; John D. Krugler, "Behind the Public Presentations: Research and Scholarship at Living History Museums of Early America" in *William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series 48 (July 1991): 347-386; and Mike Wallace, "Museums and Controversy" in *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

Clawson's article found favor with Secretary Udall who appointed Roy E. Appleman to investigate relevant NPS opportunities. Director Hartzog urged Appleman to work with speed on the initiative so as to compete with the Smithsonian's own fledgling initiatives.<sup>10</sup> Appleman and others met in 1966 to identify parks especially suitable for experimentation with living history—Washington's Birthplace made the short list. Monument staff had already begun revising their master plan when Appleman made a personal visit to Wakefield to discuss the new initiative. Park historian Thomas J. Harrison revised the Park's interpretive prospectus in January 1966.<sup>11</sup> The prospectus suggested that the time had come to exert greater control over visitor movement through the Park and thus, greater control over the historical message conveyed to visitors. Integral to this plan was completion of the long-awaited visitor center that, in 1966, still lingered on the distant horizon. Harrison also called for a series of wayside exhibits to further organize the visitor's experience. Detailed flow diagrams illustrate what Harrison had in mind (Illustration 5).

Roy Appleman reviewed a draft of the plan in 1967 and requested that Ernst Christensen revise it to include a plan for a living farm.<sup>12</sup> Christensen wrote to the superintendent that,

Such a farm should be designed to depict typical farming practices used during the middle of the eighteenth century in that part of Virginia. It should be as historically accurate as possible. It should avoid both the zoo atmosphere and the pitfall of an animal show that would detract from

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<sup>10</sup> The Smithsonian Institution's Curator of Agriculture, John Schlebecker, was first to respond to Clawson's mandate. He initiated the Living Historical Farms Project which proposed to evaluate extant Smithsonian programs with living farm potential in search for an opportunity to create a nation-wide program. The project did not produce any concrete results, but it did promote additional interest in the living farm idea and encouraged emergent living history programs like that at Darwin Kelsey's Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts. Kelsey's conversion of an old farm into a working farm museum demonstrated the perfect interpretive fit between operational historic farms, costumed interpretation, and hands-on exhibits. A symposium at Old Sturbridge Village in 1970 resulted in the creation of the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM). That organization, operating under the auspices of the Smithsonian, grew quickly into the most prominent supporter of living history museums in the United States and, as such, bore various degrees of influence on virtually every living history operation begun in following years. Jay Anderson suggests that the 1974 issue of *Museum News* "is a benchmark for the living history movement. With this issue of the journal of the American Association of Museums, historical simulation became respectable as a medium of museum interpretation." See Robert Ronsheim, "Is the Past Dead?" in Jay Anderson, *A Living History Reader, Volume One, Museums* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1991). Hartzog discusses his early impressions of living farms in *Battling for the National Parks*, p. 144.

<sup>11</sup> See 1966 rough draft of Thomas J. Harrison, "Interpretive Prospectus for George Washington Birthplace National Monument," in unlabeled black folder in Seth Box 4, GEWA.

<sup>12</sup> See Carson, "The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington's Birthplace," p. 4115.



the monument's...endeavor to provide the sights, sounds and the way of life seen, heard, and experienced by the child, boy, and young man, George Washington.<sup>13</sup>

Park staff drafted a new master plan in accordance with Christensen's recommendations and, in 1968, the Park issued not its first, but definitely its most elaborate guiding document to date. The plan shifted interpretation away from commemoration of Washington—*à la* the hero worship typical of the Colonial Revival—toward understanding the historical context of Washington's early life. In addition to calling for "presentation of the farm as the boy Washington knew it," the plan proposed additional archeological research, self-guided nature walks, seasonal interpretation of waterfowl populations, a sizeable visitor center, improved law enforcement, and a variety of lesser improvements. Although the plan did not specifically identify Building X as the actual site of Washington's birth, it did lean in that direction and demanded that further archeological work be performed to clarify the issue.

In hindsight, the 1968 master plan was extremely ambitious. An attached general development plan—begun in 1966 and subsequently revised in 1967—demonstrates the Monument's desire to remove non-interpretive structures from the core historic area. It called for the demolition of a comfort station, storage shed, stables, utility shed, post office, parking area, and the old temporary administration building. Most significantly, the plan outlined development for a substantial living farm facility. As of 1968, the Monument leased about 170 acres of land to adjacent landowners through special agricultural permits. The master plan proposed to honor those permits until and if the Monument desired to expand its farm operation which would be located in and around the Muse family inholding (Map 3). Finally, the plan repeated requests from previous master plans for acquisition of lands along Route 204 and—in a surprising return to the pre-war era—revival of the Log House as a restaurant and lodge.<sup>14</sup>

Raymond Freeman, Acting Assistant Director of Cooperative Activities, withheld approval of the plan's proposed boundary extensions and land acquisitions and requested that the Regional Director

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<sup>13</sup> Christensen to Superintendent, Fredericksburg National Military Park, 25 July 1967, cited in Carson, "The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington's Birthplace," p. 4115.

<sup>14</sup> Interest in resurrecting the Log House followed proposals to create a "Potomac Heritage Trail" intended to link the Monument with Ferry Farm, Williamsburg, and Yorktown. It is not clear who proposed the heritage trail though it is evident that the proposal never came to fruition. See Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, pp. 2.88-2.89 for details concerning this proposal and additional descriptions of the 1968 master plan.

investigate alternatives leading to scenic control of lands marked for acquisition. Freeman argued that Congress would probably not grant boundary extensions predicated on expensive fee acquisition of desired lands. Rather, he suggested that the Monument explore cooperative agreements with other state and local governmental agencies, easements with “options to buy later,” and any other means suggested by the Regional Director. Additionally, Freeman argued against reviving the Log House Tea Room lest it fall victim to its previous fate. He suggested that the building be used as quarters for seasonal hires and for other management purposes.<sup>15</sup>

The most dramatic response to the 1968 master plan occurred during August 19-20, 1968 when the largest interpretive planning conference “ever assembled in the Service” met at Washington’s Birthplace to discuss the Park’s new direction.<sup>16</sup> Topics of discussion ranged from proposed interpretive exhibits for the new visitor center to ideas concerning wayside exhibits. Attendees agreed that Memorial House furnishings should be made “more human in aspect” and less like a museum so that “the furnishings suggest activities.” Discussion concerning the Living Farm is notable for what was not ultimately included in the landscape. Planners argued that “the Living Farm should be related more to the water—with fish nets, fish barrels, net house, wharf and boats” though these features never did appear. Most significantly, the conference put forth in plain language evolving attitudes about the Building X controversy: “we will probably have to get off the pot on calling this Building “X”. If it is the site where GW was born, we should summon a little more dignity and call it the Birthplace Site.”<sup>17</sup>

### **New Research for New Interpretive Directions**

The 1968 master plan prompted three research projects deemed essential for interpretive planning. The first of these, a critical assessment of past archeological work, echoed the orientation report submitted by David Rodnick over two decades before. The NPS hired Bruce Powell in 1968 to

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<sup>15</sup> Freeman to Chief, Office of Resource Planning-WSC, 13 July 1967, in Box GEWA 1, Cultural Resources Bibliography, NPS Harpers Ferry Center (Willow Springs), Charles Town, WV.

<sup>16</sup> This meeting included Bill Holliman, Don Jackson, Bob Walker, Bob Nash, Ernst Christensen, Don Benson, Rick Krepela, Al Swift, Charles Hatch, Charles Shedd, and Alan Kent—“Others joined the group from time to time.” See Kent to Shedd, 22 August 1968, HFCA.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. This memo summarizes discussions held at the conference on the afternoon of August 20, 1968.

evaluate all past archeological work including Rodnick's report and to make recommendations for future studies. Unsurprisingly, Powell's conclusions more-or-less repeated those of the Rodnick report. The final report cautioned against additional historical reconstructions pending further investigation of already developed areas. Most importantly, Powell did not mince words regarding Building X and suggested "that Building X be re-excavated, stabilized, and permanently exhibited to the public...*I also recommend that it be identified as the birth site of George Washington.*"<sup>18</sup>

Former Ranger-Historian Charles Hatch's *Chapters in the History of Popes Creek Plantation* appeared shortly after Powell's report.<sup>19</sup> Hatch's volume is the most substantial study of Washington family history within the Northern Neck of Virginia. Though originally written as an interpretation handbook, Hatch's book has since been edited and published. Hatch's account ends with the establishment of the Monument under the NPS, but his book remains the most thorough treatment of Monument history and, as such, an invaluable resource. Finally, Robert Nash's interpretive prospectus rounded out this triumvirate. Nash distilled the main themes put forth in the 1968 master plan into a series of guides for each interpretive unit (*e.g.* the Memorial Mansion, the Colonial Kitchen, and the Living Farm) and created something of a how-to guide for would-be tour leaders.<sup>20</sup> Together with the master plan, these documents guided staff in their efforts to recreate Washington's Birthplace and on June 18, 1968, public ceremonies marked the official opening of the Park's Living Farm.<sup>21</sup>

The cumulative results of research stemming from the master plan found formal expression in a development concept plan proposed in August 1970 and approved in May 1971.<sup>22</sup> The development concept plan touched on a number of changes to the master plan, put forth a detailed approach to implementing living history at the Birthplace, and stressed the importance of all staff being in costume

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<sup>18</sup> See Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief," pp. 214-15.

<sup>19</sup> Hatch first entered duty at the Monument as a student technician in June 1937, just prior to entering the doctoral program in history at the University of Virginia. Hough commented that "it is hoped he may find time for research" in SMR, June 1937, GEWA.

<sup>20</sup> Carson, "The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington's Birthplace," pp. 4117-4118.

<sup>21</sup> "'Living' Colonial Farm at George Washington Birthplace to Open June 18," press release for 16 June 1968, in Box "GEWA-Annual Reports" in HFCA, Harpers Ferry, WV.

<sup>22</sup> Development concept, 1970, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, NPS Files Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

when visible to the public.<sup>23</sup> It included a list of implementation details leading to complete isolation of the core historic area through “removal of the existing parking lot, administration office, and Post Office, as intrusions on the “living farm” theme.” This final adjustment permitted full expression of the motivations underlying the living farm concept. The development concept plan also called for improved utilities with special emphasis on construction of a more substantial water system to accommodate increased demand for fire protection and additional facilities including a new Morgan Horse Farm. Most importantly, the development concept plan proposes the “positive interpretation of “Building X” as the birth site.” Although it was evident by the early 1970s that interpretation leaned in this direction, the mandate had not been formalized until this point.

### **The Colgate Morgan Horse Farm**

The development concept plan describes the addition of a Morgan horse breeding farm as integral to “new interpretive approaches” at the Monument.<sup>24</sup> As of 1968, the NPS raised Morgan horses at a facility built for that purpose at Point Reyes National Seashore, California. Director Hartzog envisioned a bi-coastal system with a second site to provide horses for the eastern parks. Hartzog called NPS Regional Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services Chester Harris on January 20, 1968 and indicated that Mrs. Richard M. Colgate—wife to the toothpaste mogul—desired to visit the Monument with the expressed

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<sup>23</sup> Development concept, p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Although planners may have forgotten the Park’s previous forays into horse breeding, there was certainly nothing new about the idea in 1970. Although Hough’s attempt to raise Morgan stallion mounts for the Capitol Parks Police failed during the 1940s amid wartime cutbacks, murmurs of reinvigorating the horse farm emerged soon after the war. As early as 1951, the U.S. Park Police requested that Washington’s Birthplace once again consider raising Morgan colts for police mounts. Although continual budget restrictions stymied this idea, interest again resurfaced in the mid 1960s. In October 1965, a representative of the Regional Office’s Division of Resource Management and Visitor Protection visited the Monument “to inspect it as to its possibilities of being made into a remount and training station for horses that will be used by mounted ranger patrols in other Parks.” There is some speculation that NPS Director George Hartzog’s own equestrian interests motivated this renewed interest in horse breeding at Popes Creek. The file “716 Horses” in NPS Records Box 14 of 25, GEWA covers the history of horse operations at Wakefield from 1933 to 1966. For various references to raising horses at the Monument, see SMR, October 1951 and October 1965, in file “1965 reading file” in NPS Records, Box 10 of 25, GEWA. Concerning Hartzog’s personal interest in the horse farm, see John Donahue, interview with author, 14 May 2004 and Dwight Storke, interview with author, 20 May 2004—apparently Hartzog enjoyed horseback riding at the Park. The correspondence of his appointment to the directorship in 1964 and renewed interest in the horse farm at the same time seems to point in this direction.

interest of donating horses and funds to support a ranch there.<sup>25</sup> Harris accompanied Colgate to the Park the following day. She approved of the site and, on October 8, 1969, the Park officially dedicated its new Morgan Horse Farm with twelve Morgan horses donated by Colgate and officially accepted by Director Hartzog during public ceremonies (Images 43 & 44).<sup>26</sup>

Hartzog claimed that the horse farm, in addition to providing mounts for the NPS, would “enhance the ‘living farm’ concept of the National Monument” and the 1971 development concept plan casts the operation in a similar interpretive light. Even so, the ranch—built between the staff residence area and the Washington Family burial ground—stood well beyond walking distance of the core historic area. Its modern buildings—including a barn, four paddocks, a clay-surfaced training ring, and six pasture sheds—did not fit within any definition of an eighteenth-century aesthetic.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the horse farm remained operationally separate from both the core historic area and the Park’s Living Farm operation. Former Interpretive Specialist and Superintendent Dwight Storke recalls that the new facility hired its own employees and required little assistance from Monument employees. Unfortunately, records concerning the legal and administrative circumstances of the farm’s initial organization are unavailable. A January 1971 cooperative agreement between the NPS and the Eastern National Park and Monument Association (ENPMA), however, does support Storke’s account by indicating that the ENPMA assumed primary responsibility for administering the horse farm. The cooperative agreement indicates that the ENPMA formally received Colgate’s donation and agreed to “maintain the...horses...and to provide for their complete care while in the custody of the Service.” “Care,” in this context, included funding expenses related to showing horses, stud services, and record keeping.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Chester Harris, interview with author, 28 January 2005.

<sup>26</sup> See “Morgan Horse Farm Dedication at Washington’s Birthplace October 13” press release, 8 October 1969, in Box “BEWA-Annual Reports,” HFCA.

<sup>27</sup> See Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.90.

<sup>28</sup> “Cooperative Agreement between the National Park Service and the Eastern National Park and Monument Association,” 29 January 1971, in Seth Box 1, GEWA. The 1971 cooperative agreement does suggest that the farm had been operated under the supervision of the ENPMA since its inception, though without an agreement from 1968, it is impossible to know—although this agreement may very well be a revision of a prior agreement. Neither the GEWA nor the ENPMA possess records from the operation. The Monument continued to operate under the management of the Fredericksburg National Military Park during these years, though that park does not retain any records relating to the horse farm. The ENPMA’s Acting Chairman Harold L. Peterson signed the cooperative

It is also unclear exactly how long the horse farm existed. A 1999 cultural landscape report indicates that the farm remained active until 1976.<sup>29</sup> Annual superintendent reports tell another story. According to Superintendent Marlo Acock's reports, the farm ceased "production and training of mounts for park rangers and park policemen" in 1972 and had, during that year, been fully integrated into the Park's living farm concept with a decision to provide working harness teams, pack horses, and riding horses from the horse farm's stock for the Living Farm operation.<sup>30</sup> By the end of the following year, Acock reported incorporating "the personnel and resources of the former Morgan Horse Farm into the interpretive and maintenance programs. This was done through a successful herd reduction, conversation of the horse farm into the maintenance and utility area, and the movement of personnel into the divisions of area services and visitor services."<sup>31</sup> It appears that the horse farm only operated between 1968 and 1972.<sup>32</sup>

### **Dwight Storke and Costumed Interpretation**

Though short-lived, the Morgan Horse Farm left a substantial imprint on the landscape that consequently facilitated the Monument's desire to remove non-interpretive activities from the core historic area. Until 1973, the Park's maintenance facilities occupied a large barn built in 1932 adjacent to the Memorial House. Dwight Storke—then serving as Chief Ranger—and Superintendent Marlo Acock recognized the opportunity presented by the vacant stables and, keeping in line with the development concept plan's mandate to isolate the historic area, relocated maintenance operations to the larger

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agreement along with the Southeast Regional Director, David D. Thompson. Therefore, records of the horse farm operation may exist at NARA facilities in Atlanta although archivists assure me that there are no remaining records relating to the Birthplace in Atlanta.

<sup>29</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v.1, p. 2.90.

<sup>30</sup> SAR, 1972, in Box GEWA, HFCA.

<sup>31</sup> SAR, 1973, in Box GEWA, HFCA.

<sup>32</sup> The circumstances surrounding its closing are equally unclear. Storke claims that the Horse Farm became a financial liability for the NPS as a host of variables including marginal breeding success eventually cost the farm more than it could provide in service to the NPS. Correspondence reveals that the ENPMA denied the farm's requests to purchase a show cart to boost visibility and attract potential breeders thereby supporting Storke's account. Chester Harris further suggests that Director Hartzog found purchasing grown horses on an as-needed basis more economical than raising horses at two separate ranch facilities. Seth Box 1, GEWA contains denied requests for ENPMA support of show horses. Chester Harris, interview with author, 28 January 2005. Dwight Storke, interview with author, 20 May 2004.

buildings constructed for the Morgan Horse Farm.<sup>33</sup> Acock's 1972 annual report indicates that the move occurred that year and created additional space for interpretive activities in the old maintenance building.

Despite the advantage of more commodious facilities, the relocation prevented maintenance staff from quickly and regularly attending to the needs of the core historic area. By 1970, however, costumed interpreters had already been encouraged to "perform a greater percentage of the normal maintenance tasks [including cleaning of the Memorial House and attending to crops and livestock] of the area using the methods and tools of the eighteenth century."<sup>34</sup> Realizing this, Storke worked toward redefining maintenance job descriptions to include interpretive activities. So, by the mid 1970s, employees hired as maintenance personnel donned costumes and formed the front-line interpretive force at Washington's Birthplace. Paul Carson notes, "ultimately this situation would lead to a gradual transition of farm workers from being employed as laborers on the maintenance staff to interpreters on the interpretive staff over the next few years."<sup>35</sup> In 1973, for the first time, all interpretive staff donned "fully documented period clothing" and so fulfilled the living history concept envisioned by the various planning initiatives undertaken between 1968 and 1971.

Dwight Storke played a significant role in bringing those initiatives to fruition. Storke, whose family had owned property in the area for over three hundred years and claimed ancestral ties to the Washington family, studied history and education in college. He joined the NPS and studied living history interpretive methods at the Horace M. Albright Training Center at Grand Canyon National Park. When Storke entered into service at Washington's Birthplace in 1971, he brought a wealth of local knowledge and contagious enthusiasm to the Living Farm project. In addition to rearranging the Park's maintenance and interpretive departments, Storke championed daily tour programs, almost single-handedly created the Park's domestic crafts program, and streamlined all aspects of costumed

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<sup>33</sup> Former Superintendent John Donahue notes that, because of this building exchange, GEWA's maintenance facilities are among the best in the NPS for a park of its size. See John Donahue, interview with author, 14 May 2005, and Dwight Storke, interview with author, 20 May 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Management Assistant James R. Walker, "Annual Report of Information and Interpretive Services, 1969" in Box GEWA, HFCA.

<sup>35</sup> Carson, "The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington's Birthplace," p. 4119.

interpretation. Superintendent Marlo Acock granted Storke a \$200 (about \$900 today) special achievement award in 1972 for his work as interpretive specialist and for “special achievement in the formulation and operation of the living history interpretive program.”<sup>36</sup>

Storke’s own personal background and long-standing relationship with residents of the Northern Neck proved invaluable to development of the living history program. Friendly with the WNMA, Storke encouraged the group to assist with costumed interpretation inside the Memorial House and at various craft demonstrations throughout the Park. Warmed by their new increasingly visible role at the Birthplace, the WNMA provided funds for purchase of more accurate costumes for themselves and for park employees.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, Storke staged a three-day orientation program for interpretive staff that included a “seminar on methods and attitudes necessary to effectively interpret the feeling of the Colonial Era” and a packet containing historical information about the Washington family. Storke rounded out his orientation program with visits to other living history sites.<sup>38</sup>

A three day-program, though impressive for the time, was not enough to fully orient new interpreters to the “feeling, attitude, and historical information they would need to effectively interpret George Washington’s Birthplace to the visitors.”<sup>39</sup> Former employee Janice Frye hired on as one of the first costumed interpreters at the Birthplace during the summer of 1972. Fresh out of high school at that time, Frye recalls enjoying her new job, but remembers very little about preparing to give costumed tours of the Birthplace.<sup>40</sup> Ranger Roberta Samuel describes learning how to do the job by trial and error and by observing other employees’ successes and failures. The situation could become downright uncomfortable when, as in Samuel’s case, costumed African-American interpreters suffered racial slurs from both Black and White visitors. Even the least historically savvy visitor must have recognized the not-so-subtle suggestion that an African-American interpreter in costume evoked slave life, and this well before formal

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<sup>36</sup> SAR, 1972, in Box GEWA, HFCA. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Carson, “The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington’s Birthplace,” p. 4119.

<sup>38</sup> Dwight Storke, “An 18<sup>th</sup> Century Summer at George Washington’s Birthplace,” included with SAR, 1972, in Box GEWA, HFCA.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Janice Frye, interview with author, 21 January 2005.



attempts at interpreting slavery. It was not uncommon for visitors to offer to “buy” Samuel. Although she took this abuse in stride and did not seek redress through the Monument, one can only imagine how difficult it must have been to deal with this daily barrage, especially without formal training.<sup>41</sup>

### **Re-inhabiting the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen**

Despite these early growing pains, the new Living Farm and the core historic area witnessed an explosion of costumed interpretive activity during the early 1970s. Storke and his interpretive program adhered closely to suggestions set forth in the 1971 development concept plan. By 1972, costumed interpreters prepared Washington family recipes in the Colonial Kitchen, often with vegetables from the Colonial Garden, and offered samples to visitors (Image 45).<sup>42</sup> Kitchen interpreters also made beeswax candles and soap and described procedures for stringing lemons for drying, washing wool, and drying herbs. Costumed interpreters stationed in the Memorial House demonstrated quilting, spinning, flower arranging, carding, needlepoint, and pewter polishing. A few hundred feet southwest of the Memorial House, in the field where Hough once staged portions of his colonial crop demonstration, a costumed ox-driver discussed and demonstrated eighteenth-century techniques for using draught animals. Most significantly, 1972 marked the first year in Monument history that guides offered regularly scheduled tours of the core historic area. The rise of living history at Washington’s Birthplace created a structured visitor experience unlike any the Park had offered during its previous forty years.

Living history demonstrations in the Memorial House and Colonial Kitchen satisfied, in part, the development concept plan’s suggestion that the Memorial House be made less like a museum and more like a lived-in home. Rooms in those two buildings, however, remained decorated more-or-less as Louise Crowninshield had furnished them during the late 1930s and early 1940s. In 1965, Assistant Regional

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<sup>41</sup> See Roberta Samuel, interview with author, 25 May 2004.

<sup>42</sup> Dwight Storke, “An 18<sup>th</sup> Century Summer at George Washington’s Birthplace,” included with SAR, 1972, in Box GEWA, HFCA. Prepared items included Washington cake, ginger cakes, sweet potato buns, batter break, sugar cakes, apple pie, sweet rolls, colonial salad, apple fritters, loaf break, born muffins, spice balls, biscuits, Washington bread pudding, Washington incomprehensible puddings, tea cakes, corn meal cakes, Washington French rolls, Washington pickled cucumbers, blackberry pie, upside-down cake, and cooked beets.

Director Lisle requested that a furnishing plan be created for the Memorial House.<sup>43</sup> It is not clear what prompted Lisle's request—Vera Craig's 1955 cataloging project may have motivated it—nor is it evident what if any role the Monument played in making this request. Director Hartzog created a new Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services the previous year and it is possible that the division's Chief, Bill Everhart, sought to address as many long-standing projects as possible in his quest to bring interpretive planning up to speed with the infrastructural improvements of Mission 66. Ralph Lewis, Chief of the Branch of Museum Operations, suggested that Craig be dispatched once again to perform the study but there is no evidence that the proposal ever came to fruition.

The NPS selected Washington's Birthplace in 1973 as an official location for celebration of the upcoming Bicentennial, thus making the Park eligible for portions of the \$100 million allocated to the NPS as part of the Bicentennial development program.<sup>44</sup> Taking advantage of this opportunity, the Monument requested furnishing studies for both the Memorial House and the Colonial Kitchen from the then barely one-year-old Denver Service Center (DSC).<sup>45</sup> The creation of the DSC—a centralized planning, design, and construction project management office—typified the NPS's increased specialization in planning and design during the 1970s. Where physical development previously fell to park and regional planners, now matters of facilities management required consultation with DSC planners. Sarah Olson, of the DSC's historic preservation team, submitted "Historic Furnishing Study, the Ancient Kitchen and Colonial Garden" in April 1974. The sixty-page report provides a succinct summary of the Wakefield story as it bears on the Colonial Kitchen and provides information concerning colonial cooking tools and practices. The study does not make specific recommendations, but rather provides a glimpse of how an eighteenth-century Northern Neck kitchen might appear and function.

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<sup>43</sup> See Chief of Branch of Museum Operations Ralph Lewis to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 26 October 1965, in Box GEWA 1, Cultural Resources Bibliography, NPS Harpers Ferry Center (Willow Springs), Charles Town, WV.

<sup>44</sup> See Merrill J. Mattes, "Landmarks of Liberty, a Report on the American Revolution Bicentennial Development Program of the National Park Service" (draft), Washington: Department of the Interior, 1989.

<sup>45</sup> See file "GWB Furnishing Study Draft" and Sarah Olson's November 1974 "Historic Furnishing Study, the Ancient Kitchen and Colonial Garden" in file "folder" in NPS Records Box 17 of 25, GEWA.

Though the Monument seems to have had no problems working with the DSC on the Colonial Kitchen study, the Memorial House study proved altogether disastrous. DSC Supervisory Historian Edwin Bearss contacted the Monument in April 1973 to confirm initiation of the study by DSC Historian George J. Svejda.<sup>46</sup> In the meantime, Svejda—who had already been cited for poor performance—had been transferred to the National Capital Parks and, prior to his transfer, submitted only a partial draft of the study he previously claimed to be nearly complete.<sup>47</sup> The DSC contacted recently appointed Superintendent Don Thompson in December 1974 and explained that “the Furnishing Study by G. Svejda received in October is professionally worthless...we admit that the only way to get the Furnishing Study you need is to start over again. We believe that \$10,000 would do it, assuring that a competent employee is assigned, and that’s the only kind we have left!”<sup>48</sup> Thompson wrote to Regional Curator William Jedlick who forwarded the inquiry to Regional Director Chester Brooks. Brooks contacted the DSC and requested a copy of Svejda’s unfinished report to determine “whether we should complete a new Furnishing Study ourselves or whether funds should be allocated to contract for a new Furnishing Study though you.”<sup>49</sup> After considering Svejda’s materials, Brooks evidently settled for the first option and Jedlick submitted an “Interim Furnishing Study and Plan” in April 1977.<sup>50</sup> Jedlick’s draft study included recommendations for exhibition of rooms within the Memorial House keeping with the suggestions put forth by the development concept plan.

### **Planning a New Visitor Center**

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<sup>46</sup> Bearss to Acock, 9 April 1973, in NPS Records, Box 17 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>47</sup> See series of correspondence regarding Svejda’s performance: DSC Historic Preservation Team Acting Manager John Luzader to DSC Acting Manager Donald Benson, 11 October 1974, and Benson to WASO Deputy Director, 15 October 1974, in NPS Records, Box 17 of 25, GEWA. Merrill Mattes describes these years as difficult for DSC because, despite substantial demands to undertake Bicentennial development projects, federal staffing limitations and an under qualified employee pool complicated project assignment. See Mattes, “Landmarks of Liberty.” Svejda’s case may have been more complex, though. Svejda had previously been embroiled in a 1965 controversy surrounding interpretation of African American immigration at the Statue of Liberty National Monument during which at least one Congressman called for his resignation. See Barbra Blumberg, “Celebrating the Immigrant, an Administrative History of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, 1952-1982, 1985, Cultural Resource Management Study No. 10, Division of Cultural Resources, North Atlantic Regional Office, p. 33.

<sup>48</sup> DSC Historic Preservation Team Manager Merrill J. Mattes to Superintendent Don Thompson, 24 December 1974, in NPS Records, Box 17 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>49</sup> Thompson to Jedlick, 6 January 1975, and Brooks to Mattes, 18 January 1975, in *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> I have not seen this report. GEWA archive technician Vickie Stewart reports it to be in her files.

Although the Monument's core historic area had always been construed as an interpretive landscape—by superintendents and visitors alike—creation of the Living Farm transformed that landscape in ways that shifted interpretive focus away from the Memorial House and toward what had become a living, functional landscape. Removal of maintenance facilities to the old Morgan Horse Farm, for instance, allowed conversion of the old building into a demonstration shed where interpreters practiced and discussed eighteenth-century crafts. Additions called for in the 1968 master plan, including conversion of restrooms into a spinning and weaving room and construction of a corncrib, oxen shed, small tobacco barn, and various livestock pens, also created a landscape more evocative of an eighteenth-century plantation.<sup>51</sup> The Monument additionally revived Hough's colonial crops demonstration concept (though not then attributed to Hough) in 1973 and planted 140 acres in hay and other crops to provide feed for livestock and to interpret colonial agricultural practices.<sup>52</sup> In sum, these additions permitted Monument staff to use the landscape as a tool by which to interpret George Washington's lived experience rather than, as had been done more-or-less until that point, to simply honor his memory.

The old temporary administration building remained the sole obstacle preventing full realization of the development concept plan. Removing maintenance facilities to the old Morgan Horse Farm and converting the restrooms adjacent to the Memorial House into a spinning and weaving room initiated the development concept plan's call for isolation of the core historic area. Administrative offices—though small—still occupied a prominent position near the Memorial House. Hough and others had repeatedly called for a new administrative building since the 1940s. Mission 66 promised to provide a visitor center—to accommodate administration and visitor orientation—but there is no evidence of plans drawn in direct conjunction with Mission 66 initiatives. Harrison's January 1966 tentative interpretive prospectus outlined at length how a visitor center might function, but it did not include schematics.

The first tentative schematic for a visitor center grew out of the August 19-20, 1968 interpretive planning conference convened at the Monument to discuss the 1968 master plan and its interpretive

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<sup>51</sup> See Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.92.

<sup>52</sup> SAR, 1973, in Box GEWA, HFCA.

implications (Illustration 6).<sup>53</sup> Chief of Design and Construction H. Reese Smith, distributed the schematic—based, he noted, on discussions at the interpretive conference and from review of Harrison’s prospectus—in September 1968 for review and inclusion in the Park’s new interpretive prospectus. The schematic portrays a long low brick building including a lobby, administrative offices, exhibit area, concession and post office facilities, and a large audio-visual theatre. Arrows and dotted lines indicate intended movement of visitors through the visitor center reflecting, again, discussions at the interpretive conference and the continued influence of Mission 66 design philosophy.<sup>54</sup>

Reactions to the schematic appear to have been largely favorable although correspondence throughout 1968 indicates some concern over the size of the audio-visual theatre and its seating configuration.<sup>55</sup> The proposal made its way into the Park’s 1971 development concept plan and includes plans for elaborate visual displays like this device intended for the lobby:

a rear-projection 16mm silent film which would run for several minutes. Its purpose will be to show the lifecycle of the “living farm,” and it will follow the seasons at the farm, showing the visitor that he is seeing but one segment of a much larger story. As the most logical time to see this exhibit would be after the visitor has completed his tour of the historic farm, the device will be mounted in the wall of the Visitor Center, and the image will be projected to the outside through the use of a mirror. When inclement weather would prevent the visitor from standing outside for a long period of time, the mirror could be changed, and the image projected inside the lobby.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Chief of Design and Construction H. Reese Smith to WASO Chief of Planning and Interpretive Services William Ingersoll, 16 September 1968, in Box GEWA 1, Cultural Resources Bibliography, NPS Harpers Ferry Center (Willow Springs), Charles Town, WV.

<sup>54</sup> These early schematics—very similar to plans finalized during the 1970s—communicate the design cues typical of Mission 66 visitor centers built throughout the Parks during the 1960s. For a discussion of design philosophy during this period, see Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers, The History of a Building Type* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), pp. 6-38. This does not necessarily mean that the Monument’s visitor center falls within the period of significance associated with Mission 66. Allaback argues that that period properly spans the years 1945 to 1972, when reorganization and leadership change fundamentally altered service operations. See pp. 267-68.

<sup>55</sup> See Fredericksburg Battlefield Superintendent William Holloman to Regional Director, Southeast Region, 8 October 1968; Acting Assistant Regional Director of Operations Fred Arnold to Director Regional Director, 16 October 1968; Rick Krepela to Alan Kent, 4 November 1968; and Acting Chief of Planning and Interpretive Services William Ingersoll to Chief of Design and Construction, 27 December 1968, in Box GEWA 1, Cultural Resources Bibliography, NPS Harpers Ferry Center (Willow Springs), Charles Town, WV.

<sup>56</sup> Development Concept, 1970, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, NPS Files Box 19 of 25, GEWA, p. 6.

The development concept plan also details an elaborate orientation film involving three screens on which various projected images communicated different themes to the accompaniment of recorded sounds (“sounds of the plantation, the animals, the slaves, the children laughing, etc.”) and a narrated voice over.

### **Archeology and Protection of Historic Resources**

Discussions concerning the proposed visitor center unfolded concurrently with the NPS’s unveiling of its system-wide Bicentennial development program that promised financial support for the project. Planning requirements leading to alterations of historic structures and landscapes, however, had grown significantly more complicated since the Monument’s construction during the early 1930s. The nationwide developmental frenzy of the post-war years threatened historic resources throughout the country and Congress responded with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966. NHPA required that the Secretary of the Interior, by way of the NPS, compile a National Register of Historic Places including all historic parks. The act further required that state historic preservation officers review any federal actions affecting sites listed on the register.<sup>57</sup> NHPA Section 106 required that any alteration or development of registered or Register-eligible sites be preceded by careful consideration and documentation.<sup>58</sup>

At Washington’s Birthplace, this meant a reexamination of the archeological record. Bicentennial development—based on proposals put forth in the 1968 master plan and 1971 development concept plan—involved demolition of the old administrative building, removal of the old parking lot, and construction of the visitor center and a new parking lot. In 1974, the DSC contracted Southside Historical Sites, Inc. of Williamsburg, VA under the direction of Norman Barka to perform preliminary excavations in advance of the construction work.<sup>59</sup> Preliminary investigations focused on the area encompassing the Colonial Garden revealed “a possible wing of the birth house,” an artifact-rich colonial trash pit, traces of a previously unidentified structure, and evidence of prehistoric activity.<sup>60</sup> Additional archeology at the

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<sup>57</sup> Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, p. 72.

<sup>58</sup> See Barry Mackintosh, “The National Park Service and Cultural Resources” *CRM* 4 (1999).

<sup>59</sup> See SAR, 1974 in Box “GEWA-Annual Reports” in HFCA, and Mattes, “Landmarks of Liberty.”

<sup>60</sup> Mattes, “Landmarks of Liberty.”

site of the proposed visitor center and parking lot revealed a substantial prehistoric shell midden demanding careful construction of the parking area to avoid disturbing the resource.<sup>61</sup>

Beyond satisfying Section 106 compliance requirements, the 1974-75 excavations figure prominently in the history of archeological study at Washington's Birthplace. Later review determined that evidence of an earth-fast structure (a common style of early impermanent tidewater architecture) in the Colonial Garden—"along with the presence of an apparent root cellar within it"—likely points to the presence of a slave quarter adjacent to the birth house.<sup>62</sup> Never before had evidence of slavery been accounted for at Popes Creek in any formal way. In fact, it is doubtful that archeologists would have recognized the presence of post-hole architecture or have known what it indicated prior to the early 1960s. Barka and his team, then on the very forefront of the still developing discipline of historical archeology, identified a historical resource with remarkable significance bearing on both the Park and on colonial Virginia's role within the Atlantic World.<sup>63</sup>

Though not necessarily tied to the Bicentennial development program, NHPA Section 106 compliance review also raised questions about the Washington family burial ground. The 1971 development concept plan curiously omits mention of the burial ground—a prominent stop on the standard birthplace tour in years past. This oversight may have resulted from conundrum then growing around appropriate treatment of the original Washington family grave markers set into the ground during the WNMA's construction of the memorial burial vault. Concerns over the proper treatment of the original markers extended well back into the first years of the Monument. Superintendent Hough, recognizing that erosion might eventually render the stones illegible, made charcoal rubbings of their inscriptions in 1935.<sup>64</sup> Within ten years the superintendent realized that he was right in anticipating further damage to the stones. The problem received attention from the Regional Office in 1947 when regional Engineer W.E. O'Neil, Jr. recommended that the Park experiment with colorless waterproofing

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<sup>61</sup> Oculus, *Cultural Landscape Report*, v. 1, p. 2.94.

<sup>62</sup> Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief," p. 215.

<sup>63</sup> See field notes from 1974 archeological work in NPS Records Box 17 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>64</sup> Hough's rubbings can be seen in file "H18 Gravestones" in NPS Records Box 7 of 25, GEWA.

compounds as had been used at Fort Pulaski National Monument to preserve gray savannah brick.<sup>65</sup>

Hough experimented in 1947 with protective coatings of polyninyl acetate donated by the Dupont Company.<sup>66</sup> This treatment apparently did not achieve the intended results. Wm. A. Gault & Sons of Towson, Maryland, visited the Monument in 1963 to rehabilitate the table stones erected in conjunction with the WNMA's restoration of the burial ground and commented on the continual deterioration of the original grave markers.<sup>67</sup>

A team of regional officers and technicians from the recently created Harpers Ferry Center for Interpretive Media (HFC) compiled a list of three preservation options following a host of meetings and visits to the birthplace in 1974. The stones could be preserved on location; protected by some sort of transparent cover; stored off-site in a protective covering and replaced with new stones; or actually built into the walls of the Visitor Center as a permanent display. Superintendent Don Thompson showed interest in the third option but, by November 1974, shared Interpretive Specialist Dwight Storke's preference for on-site preservation.<sup>68</sup> Discussions regarding what once would have been an uncontroversial problem grew heated amid the NPS's increasingly serious commitment to the preservation of historic resources. In the spring of 1975, Assistant to the Regional Director Charles Shedd issued a sharp response to the HFC:

I do see a need for in-place preservative treatment, and perhaps better protection from non-NPS vandalism; to remove the stones for use as museum curiosities is desecration; to remove the stones to storage and substitute them with fake ones is pointless. I believe that we should preserve historic remains by means that are feasible, sensible and proper. While removing gravestones in order to preserve them is feasible, I think it is neither sensible nor proper. I hope we can resist the temptation to, in the name of historic preservation, rob the dead of the memorials their loved ones placed to mark their resting places. Incidentally, the Statue of Liberty has turned green. Where was the NPS?<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> W.E. O'Neil, Jr. to Director, 25 September 1947, in Box "GEWA-Annual Reports," HFCA.

<sup>66</sup> Hough's relationship with Crowninshield and her membership in the du Pont family most likely facilitated this donation. SMR, December 1947, GEWA.

<sup>67</sup> SMR, October and November 1963, GEWA.

<sup>68</sup> See Betsy Hunter to Art Allen, 11 November 1974 and Thompson to Manager (Harpers Ferry Center), 10 October 1974, file "curatorial info and correspondence" in NPS Records Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>69</sup> Shedd to Director, NPS, 24 April 1975, file "GEWA burial ground" in Seth Box 1, GEWA.



Shedd's response reveals that the NPS did not necessarily think with one mind concerning the practice of historic preservation during the 1970s. His argument registered with planners who, at a May 1975 meeting, further deliberated over the cost of various treatments and their consequent effects on the historic landscape only to decide "not to provide any preservation treatment to the stones and leave them in place."<sup>70</sup>

### **Completing the Interpretive Landscape**

Similar controversy did not attend design and construction of the Visitor Center. Working from the 1968 schematic and with ideas put forth in the master plan and 1971 development concept plan, DSC Architects Jud Ball and George Hoffman, in coordination with Landscape Architect Merrick Smith, drafted preliminary plans for the new building. Architect Robert Campisi and Landscape Architect Don Fox finalized the plans and produced a set of working blueprints. The DSC contracted the project to Boyer and Henderson, Inc. of Williamsburg, Virginia. W.C. Strat, Inc. of Fredericksburg, Virginia handled construction of roads, utilities, and the parking lot whereas G. Elvin Grinder Construction Company of Indian Head, Maryland constructed the new trail system.<sup>71</sup>

The DSC selected Daniel Peterson in 1974 to supervise all of these projects and to answer design questions.<sup>72</sup> Work commenced on the Visitor Center in 1975 at a steady clip and with Peterson's assurances of a January 1976 completion date. A number of factors delayed construction. Heavy rains and freezing temperatures slowed work on all projects at one time or another. In October 1975, detection of an oil leak from a tank buried adjacent to the Visitor Center attracted the attention of the Coast Guard which required the contractor to test the tank for leaks. The Coast Guard then turned the situation over to the state Water Control Board which required further tests. Both groups determined in November 1975 that the tank was not faulty after all. As if tank-related delays were not enough, Pearson had to call for a brief work stoppage on October 8 while a film crew worked on an orientation film for the Visitor Center's

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<sup>70</sup> Memo for files by Arthur Allen, 23 May 1975, file "curatorial info and correspondence" in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>71</sup> Mattes, "Landmarks of Liberty."

<sup>72</sup> SAR, 1974, in Box GEWA, HFCA.

audio-visual theatre. Work crews completed the job in April 1976 and final inspection occurred on May 7, 1976—four months after the intended deadline, though just in time to accommodate summer crowds gathering to celebrate the Bicentennial. Construction of the Visitor Center cost \$721, 480 (about \$2.3 million today) (Images 46 & 47).<sup>73</sup>

The completed Visitor Center resembled a mirror image of the 1968 schematic with a slight reorientation of the audio-visual theatre. The design intent, however, remained intact. Where the old administrative offices occupied a space within eyeshot of the Memorial House, the new Visitor Center sat along Popes Creek at some distance and immediately behind a bluff separating the structure and all of its attendant activities from the core historic area. Administration, cultural resources, and the WNMA's gift shop and post office all found a home there and for the first time in park history, all divisions save maintenance shared a single roof. The Visitor Center epitomized the sort of functional modernism typical of Mission 66 buildings with its reliance on concrete superstructure and prefabricated structural units, orientation with an eye toward visitor flow, low profile, and its earthy brick exterior.<sup>74</sup>

Where visitors entering the Monument once drove directly toward the Memorial House, they now veered to the right at the granite obelisk and parked in a lot out of sight of the historic area. The Visitor Center, positioned at the foot of the parking area and overlooking Popes Creek, provided an initial reference point for visitors and resumed the services previously offered at the entrance station (which, consequently, found new life as a chicken coop (Image 48)). Here, visitors paid fees, collected park information, and engaged uniformed rangers stationed at a central desk. Information desk daybooks kept by rangers during the late 1970s and stored in the Monument's archives provide glimpses into the daily routines—and frequent monotony—of desk attendants.<sup>75</sup> The filming that interrupted construction of the

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<sup>73</sup> For documents regarding construction of the Visitor Center, see bottom right drawer of large filing cabinets immediately outside GEWA Kitchen; NPS Records Box 17 of 25, GEWA for 60s/70s correspondence and progress reports; and GEWA Bicentennial file maintained by NPS Bicentennial Coordinator Lawrence B. Coryell. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>74</sup> See Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*.

<sup>75</sup> See Visitor Center day books in NPS Records Box 23 of 25, GEWA. Contrary to what one might expect, the day books provide very little information concerning day-to-day operations at the Monument.

visitor center resulted in “A Childhood Place,” produced by Rick Krepela of the HFC and shown in the Visitor Center’s 110-seat sloped auditorium. HFC technicians Ike Ingram and Ben Miller created a number of interpretive exhibits for the Visitor Center lobby.<sup>76</sup>

The new trail system, leading visitors out of the Visitor Center, into the core historic area, and back again, received final inspection on June 15, 1976. Keeping with the goal of aesthetic and developmental separation, the trail system directed visitors away from the Visitor Center and into the core historical area without ever allowing simultaneous views of both until, “arriving at the historic ground, the visitor first views the outline of the birthplace structure traced in oyster shell” (Image 49). The trail system not only achieved the desired separation, but also emphasized the birth house foundations over the Memorial House—a significant shift in interpretation at the Birthplace. Wayside exhibits, designed by HFC technician Ray Price, lined the trail and explained significant viewsheds while providing important historical background.<sup>77</sup>

A few additional improvements funded by Bicentennial program funds rounded out the 1974-75 construction itinerary. A high-capacity water tower finally alleviated the Monument’s dependence upon an unreliable water pump at the ice pond. A new sewer system and fire protection improvements satisfied long-standing needs as well. Finally, rehabilitation of the Log House including the construction of a new comfort station marked the first substantial upgrades to that building in years.<sup>78</sup> These improvements, combined with construction of the trail system, the parking area, and the Visitor Center, readied the Monument for celebration of the nation’s Bicentennial and created the scene and facilities experienced by visitors today.

### **Bicentennial Changes for the WNMA**

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<sup>76</sup> Mattes, “Landmarks of Liberty.”

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. This said, Management Assistant James Walker’s 1969 annual report of information and interpretive services indicates that the Log House had undergone some renovation leading up to the opening of the Living Farm and that “on February 22...the Log House was opened to the public for the first time since the early 1940s.” It is unclear what these renovations included though, given the extent of the 1974-75 work, it is doubtful that they were substantial. File “WNMA agreements” in NPS Records Box 18 of 25, GEWA includes blue prints from this period displaying first floor layout of log house with a proposed kitchen addition.

In ways reminiscent of Washington's 1932 Bicentennial, the American public found itself swept up in the patriotic celebrations surrounding the 1976 Bicentennial. Visitation boomed during the 1970s, peaking at nearly 205,000 in 1974. The Bicentennial year itself did not prove as lucrative as expected, bringing in only 136,000 visitors, but the Monument nonetheless celebrated with a variety of special programs and activities all against the backdrop of its new interpretive landscape and Visitor Center.<sup>79</sup>

The WNMA also found itself thrust into a significant period of change along with the rest of the Park during the late 1960s and 1970s.<sup>80</sup> Creation of the Living Farm provided new roles for the WNMA at Washington's Birthplace. Even so, following President Mason's campaign to reclaim the Log House furnishings and amid a continual loss of elder members, the organization suffered a fifty-percent drop in membership between 1971 and 1973.<sup>81</sup> Involvement of remaining members in interpretive activities—especially within the Memorial House—caused Superintendent Don Thompson to realize that the WNMA's 1952 concession permit was not only inappropriate, but potentially problematic given that it did not specify the relationship between the WNMA and the NPS as it bore on activities beyond the sale of souvenirs and operation of the post office.

Thompson summarized the situation in a 1976 memo to the Regional Director. He reported that the “working relationship with the Ladies is good despite many of the Ladies’ disinterest in the Park’s programs and some of the older members’ natural feelings of proprietorship,” but “the WNMA is wearing the wrong hat. Historically, the role is of a cooperating association and not as a concessionaire.”<sup>82</sup>

Dwight Storke describes this as a very difficult period for relations with the WNMA. As Thompson suggests, elder members of the group considered any formalization of their relationship to the Park

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<sup>79</sup> NPS records Box 15 of 25, GEWA contains a list and descriptions of Bicentennial activities including a 1974 re-enactment, 1975 essay and poster contexts, Washington's Birthday, living history school days, Storke's marionette program, special visitation day for disabled children, and a candlelight open house.

<sup>80</sup> Although the 1970s brought significant changes to the group, very few records produced by or concerning the WNMA remain in GEWA today. This may be a result of the WNMA's waning activity during these years as well as its cool relationship with the Park.

<sup>81</sup> The WNMA counted 63 members in 1971 and only 29 in 1973. See blue folder in NPS Records Box 20 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>82</sup> Thomson to Regional Director, 17 September 1976, NPS records Box 15 of 25, GEWA. Also see Chester Harris (Regional Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services) to H. Harston Smith, 17 October 1975, file “curatorial info and correspondence” in NPS Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

beyond the very vague description provided in the granting legislation, as an invasion of WNMA rights and representative of the government's attempt to limit the group's role at the Monument.<sup>83</sup>

The WNMA underwent internal changes as well. Betty Horner indicates that many of the elder members had passed away and so a new, younger generation of members began to fill the organization's ranks.<sup>84</sup> This demographic shift may very well have been responsible for the WNMA's increasing willingness to reconsider its relationship to the Monument. In 1979, after discussions with Thompson and Storke (a long time acquaintance of the elder members and their families), the WNMA agreed to reorganize once again as a cooperating association, thereby ceding their concessionary self-determination though regaining the opportunity to make more specific their interpretive role at the Monument. With its change of status, the group also changed its name to The George Washington Birthplace Memorial Association (GWBMA), reflecting its cooperative relationship with the NPS. A clause in their new agreement—"the Ladies must be considered in plans and decisions of the Park especially as they affect the Memorial Mansion area"—suggests movement in this direction.<sup>85</sup> The change seems to have been for the better as the GWBMA increased its membership dramatically by the end of the following year.<sup>86</sup>

### **Land Policy and Neighbor Relations**

Although the Monument's foray into living history gave rise to a new sense of optimism and possibility at Washington's Birthplace, it also set into motion a series of events that would eventually compromise what had become relatively stable relations with adjacent landowners. The Park had relied for decades on its adjacent landowners—especially the Latanes—to help preserve the Monument's historical setting by continuing to work their land with more-or-less traditional farming techniques. In the case of the Latanes, the Park had issued annual special use permits at a nominal fee for the family to farm about 125 acres of Monument property. This all changed, however, with the advent of the Living Farm. In 1968, the Park did not reissue James Latane's special use permit but rather expanded the Living Farm

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<sup>83</sup> Dwight Storke, interview with author, 20 May 2006.

<sup>84</sup> Betty Horner, interview with author, 30 June 2004

<sup>85</sup> GEWA Statement for Management, 1979, NPS Records Box 15, GEWA.

<sup>86</sup> The WNMA boasted 70 members by 1980. See blue folder in NPS Records Box 20 of 25, GEWA

onto the land he previously farmed. The change, according to the Regional Director, “has...antagonized him. He feels that ample notice was not served him in view of the fact that he has fertilized and improved the soil over the years which to him represents a goodly sum of money and much work.”<sup>87</sup> Although Latane’s anger is understandable, the NPS’s refusal to reissue the use permit was perfectly legal and had always been a possibility. Nonetheless, as Hough and Gibbs had feared in the past, poor relations with neighbors generally translated into reduced flexibility with regard to possibilities for future land acquisition. Indeed, after losing access to park property, Latane “expressed complete opposition to any further expansion of the birthplace and refused to consider any offer [to sell his land].”<sup>88</sup>

He was not alone. Pursuant to the 1968 Master Plan, the Monument initiated an investigation into the possibility of land acquisition. The Park identified thirteen tracts desired for acquisition as of the beginning of 1970. The largest included land owned by James Latane (245 acres), Charles Muse (150 acres), and Gordon Horner (123 acres).<sup>89</sup> Having assessed local property values, NPS representatives personally confronted landowners—often while at work in their fields—to discuss their willingness to negotiate sales. Successful preliminary negotiations with Catherine Shouse regarding purchase of her inholding convinced land agents that other neighbors might be easily persuaded. Government agents scoured the area making offers to other landowners, but were “met with total resistance...They are very clannish and none of them are interested in selling...necessary legislation should be pressed. While it is hoped it will not be necessary to resort to it, condemnation authority should be requested in the legislation.”<sup>90</sup> Considering the history of suspicion among adjacent landowners regarding what was often perceived as the NPS’s outright land greed, unwillingness to negotiate land exchange should not have come as a surprise. Moreover, the heavy-handed approach of tromping through fields and cornering owners on their own property certainly did not facilitate positive relations. Several years later,

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<sup>87</sup> J. Leonard Volz (Regional Director) to Director, 30 January 1970, file “Paperwork Information” in Seth Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Walker to Superintendent, Fredericksburg NPS Group, 28 January 1970, file “Paperwork Information” in Seth Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>90</sup> J. Leonard Volz (Regional Director) to Director, 30 January 1970, file “Paperwork Information” in Seth Box 6, GEWA.

Superintendent George Church explained to the Regional Director that park neighbors had grown “nervous” from memories of “appraisers marching through their fields in the early 1970s.”<sup>91</sup>

Aggressive land policy of this sort was not uncommon prior to 1971. Public Law 91-646, signed on January 2, 1971, created the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Relocation Act). The Relocation Act established and standardized procedures to ensure that the government pays fair market value for desired lands. It also provided relocation benefits such as covering sellers’ moving expenses, not forcing sellers to leave their property immediately upon sale, and not requiring sellers to pay rent while in residence on land sold to the government. Prior to creation of the Relocation Act, the NPS dealt with land acquisition on a case-by-case basis with no overarching standardized policy, thereby giving rise—as at Washington’s Birthplace—to occasional lapses of good judgment.<sup>92</sup>

The public relations blunder resulting from land assessments during the 1970 threatened to deprive the Monument of an ideal opportunity to fulfill its land acquisition program. Floor debate concerning HR 10086—an omnibus bill proposing boundary expansions for several parks—had already begun as of late 1971. Superintendent Acock worked hard to reestablish credibility within the community by encouraging “staff and wives [to participate] in public relations activities...Tangible results have included an approved resolution by the Wakefield National Memorial Association in support of the Birthplace land acquisition program and the acceptance of the land acquisition program by the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors.”<sup>93</sup> The Association drafted a formal resolution encouraging the “Congressional Delegates of the State of Virginia and those of the Congress of the United States...[to] encourage the legislation required to insure that the Birthplace...will be left unimpaired for future generations.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Church to Regional Director, 17 May 1982, file “Paperwork Information” in Seth Box 6, GEWA.

<sup>92</sup> My thanks to former Northeast Region Realty Officer Boyd Sponaule for discussing with me the finer points of NPS realty concerns.

<sup>93</sup> SAR, 1972 in Box “GEWA,” HFCA.

<sup>94</sup> Resolution, 14 October 1971, NPS Records Box 20 of 25, GEWA.

Securing boundary expansions and land acquisitions during the early 1970s involved more than simply earning community support. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), for instance, required that boundary expansion requests be accompanied by a study of the potential environmental impact of that expansion. Monument staff worked to generate an environmental impact statement for a legislative support data package in time for inclusion within HR 10086.<sup>95</sup> The DSC contributed a cost estimate survey to the package and, with the other supporting materials and the support of the GWBMA and the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, the Monument submitted its package in time for inclusion within HR 10086. Following Senate approval of the omnibus bill, President Nixon signed it into law on April 11, 1972. The Monument received authorization for boundary expansion and a \$57,000 (about \$250,000 today) allocation to facilitate purchase of lands within the expanded boundary (Appendix 5).<sup>96</sup> In part, this was only a small victory for the Monument's overall land acquisition plan as it expanded boundaries only to include the 62.3-acre inholding sold to the government by Catherine Shouse in 1972.<sup>97</sup> Nonetheless, expansion under the omnibus bill enabled the Monument's first legislatively approved land acquisition since its establishment in 1930.

Expansion efforts continued throughout the 1970s. The Monument continued to push for boundary expansion and land acquisition in 1973 though with the specific purpose of preventing development and protecting historic viewsheds. A June 1973 support package cites as its justification the impending development heralded by nearby subdivisions, a need to protect the approach road from development and deter "private access...now provided over park maintained roads" (presumably referring to the Muse situation discussed in chapter 6), and a desire to protect waterways so as to preserve the historic setting and migratory waterfowl habitats.<sup>98</sup> The support package also cites shoreline erosion as a significant problem and suggests that studies be issued to determine the extent of damage. Superintendent

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<sup>95</sup> SAR, 1972 in Box "GEWA," HFCA.

<sup>96</sup> This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

<sup>97</sup> J. Leonard Volz (Regional Director) to Director, 30 January 1970, file "Paperwork Information" in Seth Box 6, GEWA. Public Law 92-272 (11 April 1972) allowed for a boundary adjustment and purchase of the Shouse tract, increasing total holdings to 455.98 acres. See "Legislative Support Data, June 1973" in Seth Box 1, GEWA.

<sup>98</sup> See "Legislative Support Data, June 1973" in Seth Box 1, GEWA.



Hough first expressed concern about shoreline erosion in 1932, but 1973 marks the first time that the topic reemerged as a significant concern requiring substantial study.<sup>99</sup>

The GWBMA once again issued a resolution in support of the Monument's effort citing "immediate danger of a subdivision or subdivisions being initiated on adjacent and surrounding properties."<sup>100</sup> Representative Thomas N. Downing, with the continued support of the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, also set to work on the pending legislative package.<sup>101</sup> Once more, the Monument drafted an environmental impact study and released it for public review in June 1974. The complete legislative proposal requested an expansion of boundaries to facilitate acquisition of 722 acres of privately-owned land and 390 acres of state land by first right of refusal in the event the landowner wanted to sell. The NPS had recognized that, given their discussions with adjacent landowners, outright and immediate purchase would not work in the case of Washington's Birthplace. Superintendent Acock's 1974 annual report indicates that although the Park's environmental impact study passed initial Department of the Interior review and had been distributed for comment, a final version had not yet been received as of the end of the year.<sup>102</sup> A 1975 park expansion omnibus bill presented a new opportunity to move the legislation forward and Representative Downing introduced HR 9986 on October 2, 1975.<sup>103</sup>

In its final version, H.R. 9986 sought to authorize the acquisition of 1,065 acres for the Birthplace at an estimated cost of \$3,820,000 (about \$13 million today).<sup>104</sup> Evidently too ambitious, the proposed expansion died in Congress. Continued negotiations with Gordon and Garnett Horner, however, did result in the acquisition of two small inholdings totaling roughly eighty acres in 1978. The National Parks and Recreation Act of that year included the acquisition in its legislation and increased the Monument's allowable holdings to 538.23 acres (Appendix 6). Acquisition of this tract and the Shouse

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<sup>99</sup> Hough referred to local claims that shorelines wore away "at the rate of three feet a year." Although Hough mapped a 1,400-foot stretch of shoreline in order to study the problem, it is not clear if he ever completed the study or if documentation of this study exists. See SMR, October 1932, GEWA.

<sup>100</sup> Resolution, 4 January 1973, in Seth Box 1, GEWA.

<sup>101</sup> SAR, 1973, in Box GEWA, HFCA.

<sup>102</sup> SAR, 1974, in Box GEWA, HFCA.

<sup>103</sup> Regional Director Chester Brooks to Associate Director (Legislation, WASO), 26 June 1975, file "Legislative Support Data" in Seth Box 1, GEWA.

<sup>104</sup> Robert Landau to Legislative Counsel, 19 February 1976, in Ibid. This figure is a rough estimate based on adjustments for inflation according to Consumer Price Index statistics from 1800 to 2003.

tract, however, paled in comparison with the Park's intended goal of an over one thousand-acre expansion and consequently led park planners to reconsider their approach to land acquisition during the 1980s.

## CHAPTER 8

### **Unfunded Expansion and the Problem of Changing Leadership, 1980-1995**

The Monument's investment in living history during the late 1960s and 1970s was not unique. Living history programs grew throughout the park system during the mid-1970s. It did, however, mark a critical turning point in the history of a park that had long wrestled with crises of authenticity and public relations stemming from the Memorial House and its uneasy relationship with Building X. The Monument's Living Farm shifted visitor attention away from the Memorial House thereby creating a degree of interpretive freedom previously unavailable at the Birthplace. In this regard, although costumed interpretation proliferated throughout the park system and beyond, it played a particularly important role at Washington's Birthplace. Consequently, the Monument had earned, by the late 1970s, a reputation throughout the NPS for interpretive excellence. That reputation attracted George Church to the Park in 1981 as the replacement for Superintendent Don Thompson.<sup>1</sup> With the assistance of Interpretive Specialist Dwight Storke, Church continued to invest in living history. Storke himself received impressive recognition in 1984 when Regional Director James Coleman, Jr. visited the Park to present him with the prestigious Freeman Tilden award for interpretive excellence.<sup>2</sup>

But even as Church and Storke sought new ways to explore the possibilities presented by living history, shifts in Interior Department and NPS leadership conspired to chart a different path for parks during the 1980s. In response to the expansionist tendencies of NPS leadership during the 1970s, Director Russell Dickenson—appointed in 1980—favored a shoring up of extant resources over the addition of new parks. James G. Watt, who President Ronald Reagan appointed as Secretary of the Interior in 1981, supported Dickenson's vision and encouraged the NPS to invest increasingly scant Federal funding in efficient management of park resources.<sup>3</sup> The 97<sup>th</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup> Congresses complied with both by investing over a billion dollars into extant park resources by way of the Park Restoration and

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<sup>1</sup> George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

<sup>2</sup> SAR, 1984 in Box "GEWA" in HFCA.

<sup>3</sup> See Secretary Watt's 1981 "Letter on National Park Management" in Lary M. Dilsaver, ed., *America's National Park System, the Critical Documents* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1994).

Improvement Program. Dickinson's replacement, Director William Penn Mott, shifted NPS focus back to growth and interpretation beginning in 1985, but not before Secretary Watt returned to the parks responsibility for undertaking all functions mandated by the National Register, the Natural and Historic Landmarks Programs, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.<sup>4</sup>

These new responsibilities presented considerable challenges, however, at a small park like the Monument that did not have a dedicated resource manager. At Washington's Birthplace, performance of resource management tasks became a collateral duty shared by all park staff.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the number of available staff had decreased. According to former Park Historian Paul Carson, the Monument's pool of interpretive staff thinned significantly following the Park's celebration of the nation's Bicentennial.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, programmed bicentennial funds had also expired and, with a national energy crisis unfolding during the late 1970s and early 80s, soaring operating costs made staff expansion all but impossible.<sup>7</sup> To make things worse, positive gains in public exposure during the Bicentennial attracted crowds to the Park's beaches and recreational facilities during the early 1980s. Increased visitor usage of park facilities raised operating costs even further and threatened to divert valuable funding away from the protection of park resources.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps most significantly, these emergent challenges threatened the Park's living history program at a time when the Memorial House's interpretive dominance had only just been checked.

### **Thomas Stone National Historic Site**

Although the Monument had become accustomed over the years to operating with limited staff and finances, the early 1980s introduced an entirely new challenge. In 1977, Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus appointed William J. Whalen as NPS Director. Whalen maintained close ties with

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<sup>4</sup> Responsibility for these functions had been consolidated and centralized within the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service during the late 1970s, but Mott considered that arrangement inefficient. Regarding changes in NPS leadership during the 1970s and shift away from expansion during the 1980s, see Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup> Thanks to GEWA Resource Manager Rijk Morawe for clarifying this problem.

<sup>6</sup> Carson, "The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington's Birthplace," p. 4121.

<sup>7</sup> SAR, 1979, in Box "GEWA" in HFCA.

<sup>8</sup> This particular problem is discussed in Statement for Management, George Washington Birthplace National monument, 1979, NPS Records Box 15 of 25, GEWA.

California Representative Phillip Burton who, as chairman of the House subcommittee on parks, championed expansion of NPS holdings.<sup>9</sup> Their influence secured enactment of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 that authorized fifteen new parks, including Thomas Stone National Historic Site (THST). One of the four Maryland signers of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Stone constructed a house in Charles County, Maryland, in the early 1770s. The building and its dependencies fell out of family ownership in 1936 and the house burned on January 1, 1977. When the NPS acquired the site, it had no plan for its future, let alone any idea about who might manage it. Associate Regional Director of Cultural Resources John Bond asked Superintendent Thompson if he would accept responsibility for the Park. Chief Ranger Dwight Storke assured Thompson that Monument staff could handle the additional responsibility and so THST fell under park management in 1981.<sup>10</sup>

Nearly forty-five minutes distant by car and accompanied by a mere \$3300 budget, the new park presented significant administrative difficulties for Monument staff. The site's limited budget did not allow for substantial improvements. Development—facilitated by the NPS's Williamsport Preservation Training Center in Williamsport, Maryland—plodded along through the 1980s. George Church recalls that, by the end of his superintendency in 1989, THST occupied more of his time than Washington's Birthplace.<sup>11</sup> THST emerged as one of the most pressing problems facing administration in 1990 and demanded "efforts to secure funding so that Thomas Stone NHS can become a viable park."<sup>12</sup> A substantial funding package from the Commonwealth of Virginia permitted the Monument to open the site in 1992 with temporary facilities.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. and George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

<sup>11</sup> The 1986 Operations Evaluation, for instance, cites THST as being responsible for increased necessity for the Superintendent's physical presence on park grounds and even suggests that "a decision needs to be made for managing Thomas Stone as a separate entity." This report also connects THST directly with "an increase in workload." See Operations Evaluation, 1986, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, file "operations evaluation" in Seth Box 4, GEWA and addendum to same in Seth Box 6, GEWA. For documents concerning restoration and maintenance of THST during the late 1980s and early 1990s, see file "H30 Historic Structures & Sites" in Seth Box 5, GEWA.

<sup>12</sup> 1990 Operations Evaluation, file "A54 Operations Evaluation IN-House" on top shelf of Central File Notes overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>13</sup> See Dwight Storke, interview with author, 17 May 2004; and 1992 Operations Evaluation, file "1992 In House Operations Evaluation" on top shelf of Central Administrative Files, overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

The Monument's maintenance staff suffered the brunt of THST's day-to-day impact. Inclusion of THST forced the maintenance department to split its budget between two parks, one of which required regular eighty-mile round trip visitations. The Monument's maintenance division thus managed to maintain one park at relatively high standards while performing a majority of the work necessary to open another. Moreover, communication with and supervision from project support staff at the DSC was not always forthcoming and created yet another management hurdle.<sup>14</sup> In 1998, after years of operating on a shoestring budget, THST received a \$360,000 budget increase.<sup>15</sup> The completed facility opened to the public on November 1, 1997, and the 1998 budget increase funded site-specific hires thereby reducing the strain on Monument resources. Until 1998, however, THST constituted a significant draw on Monument resources.

Managing two parks was especially difficult at a time when frequent changes in NPS leadership meant rapid succession of often contradictory planning mandates. Although THST fell under Monument management at a time when Director Whalen pursued an expansionist vision for the NPS, the practical realities of operating a second park only became evident under Director Russell Dickenson who, following his appointment in 1980, pushed to limit expansion and, consequently, resources allocated to support new acquisitions. When President Regan appointed James G. Watt as Secretary of the Interior, Watt and Dickenson worked together to convince the 97<sup>th</sup> Congress to curtail appropriations to new parks.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, just as THST came under Monument management, heightened emphasis on accountability and eliminating fiscal waste within the NPS—initiatives intended to correct the very excesses typified by THST—placed even greater administrative and, thus, financial demands on the Monument.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> In 1994, Mimi Woodward responded to a survey concerning the role of the Denver Service Center with regard to improvements at THST and indicated that poor communication and supervision from Denver complicated work at the new park. See Woodward's responses to the 17 May 1994 survey in file "A2623 Reports Situation" in Central File Notes, GEWA.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, p. 86.

<sup>17</sup> George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

It fell to Superintendent George Church to handle what, in every respect, looked like a management crisis. To combat financial shortfalls, the NPS issued requests for parks to seek new opportunities for outside funding and to utilize volunteer labor whenever possible.<sup>18</sup> Church took the suggestion seriously and in 1983 made a public request for assistance. He sent letters to members of the surrounding community encouraging them to consider ways to support a park that, he reminded everyone, required “no fee to visit.”<sup>19</sup> Church recalls an abundant and positive response to requests for assistance during the 1980s.<sup>20</sup> The local community was especially generous with volunteer assistance. The NPS’s Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program provided assistance on the farm, in the craft shops, and occasionally helped direct traffic for special interpretive programs.<sup>21</sup>

Church also negotiated a variety of useful money-saving exchanges with Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia. College interns assisted with cleaning and documenting artifacts under the supervision of Regional Curator Alice Guerrant.<sup>22</sup> Several excavations throughout the years had resulted in a huge collection of historic objects though only those artifacts considered unique or unusual ever found their way into public display and seldom, if ever, were they used to “tell the story” of Popes Creek Plantation.<sup>23</sup> The Park successfully petitioned for funds to revamp archeological displays for Washington’s 250<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration.<sup>24</sup> With assistance from the Mary Washington interns, Guerrant

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<sup>18</sup> George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

<sup>19</sup> News release, 1 November 1983, NPS Records Box 20 of 25, GEWA. The mailing included a gifts brochure outlining several areas of need including improving programs and facilities, protecting people and resources, and sponsoring the care of plantation animals. Specific items include “help with costumed interpretation on the Colonial Farm,” “provide unique entrance sign, \$3,500,” “plant flowering shrubs, \$25,” “outline birthhouse site with brick \$3,500.”

<sup>20</sup> George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 1984, in Seth Box 4, GEWA. The local press also covered the Monument’s struggle to raise funds and generate volunteer interest. See “Washington’s Birthplace seeking contributions from private donors” in *Times Dispatch* (1983) and “Donations to Washington Birthplace now accepted” in *Westmoreland News* (1983), file “K3415 Newspaper Articles GEWA” in Seth Box 4, GEWA. File “P94 Volunteer Employment Program,” Third Drawer of Central Administrative Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA contains a wealth of information regarding the VIP program at GEWA in addition to documents concerning internship agreements with Mary Washington College.

<sup>22</sup> Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 1984, in Seth Box 4, GEWA.

<sup>23</sup> Carson, “The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington’s Birthplace,” p. 4123.

<sup>24</sup> It is not evident that this effort clarified the story for visitors. Clifford Tobias recalls visiting the Birthplace in 1991 and noting that visitors remained relatively indifferent to the artifacts displayed in the visitor center, although

completed the project in 1985, having cleaned, documented, and stored nearly 100,000 artifacts thus making the collection available for the first time to serious researchers.<sup>25</sup> This work represented an increased recognition of the value of all archeological artifacts within the Park's collection including, as Joy Beasley points out, "those associated with American Indians and African-Americans."<sup>26</sup>

Church also negotiated an agreement during the summer of 1985 wherein, in exchange for payment of heating bills, the College utilized the infrequently used Log House for lectures and study sponsored by the Mary Washington Center for Historic Preservation.<sup>27</sup> Church remembers this agreement fondly recalling it to be "such a deal."<sup>28</sup> The deal ended in 1995 when, rumor has it, students staged a paint gun battle and ensnared several cows in the crossfire. James Latane recalls confronting a professor who organized a footrace on Latane land without obtaining prior permission. Latane also notes that the Park had placed so many conditions on its use of the Log House that the College struggled to stage its own events there.<sup>29</sup> The College only met at the Log House three times in 1994 before ending their agreement with the Park.<sup>30</sup> The Park resumed complete control of the building on March 7, 1995.<sup>31</sup>

### **1987 Adjacent Lands Study**

Amid this period of precarious expansion, protection of historic viewsheds once again ranked high among Monument planning priorities. The failed land program of the 1970s had left unsatisfied the 1968 master plan's call for protection of the Monument approach and other viewsheds. Other privately owned land abutting the Park still retained agricultural zoning rights thereby permitting owners equipped with a conditional use permit to "conduct unfavorable types of business" or to build residential structures

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they seemed to be interested in the large time line displayed on the nearby wall. Tobias to Seth Bruggeman, electronic mail, 3 March 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Carson, "The Growth and Evolution of Interpretation at George Washington's Birthplace," p. 4123.

<sup>26</sup> Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief," pp. 215-16.

<sup>27</sup> See George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004; and "College, Park Service dedicate cabin outpost in Westmoreland" in *Free Lance Star* (1985), file "Newspaper Articles GEWA" in Seth Box 4, GEWA.

<sup>28</sup> George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

<sup>29</sup> James Latane, interview with author, 22 July 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Management Team Meeting minutes, 16 December 1994, file "MTM's 1995" in third drawer of Central Administrative Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>31</sup> Acting Superintendent Lawrence Trombello to John Wiltenmuth (Director, Physical Plant, Mary Washington College), 24 February 1995, file "blue" in third drawer of Central Administrative Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.



on plots as small as 25,000 square feet.<sup>32</sup> Though the superintendent acknowledged the Westmoreland County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors' favorable attitude toward protection of historic and natural sites, he feared that local attitudes might change with time and shifts in leadership. Moreover, state laws permitting duck and goose hunting on Popes Creek continued to impede the Park's ability to maintain aesthetic continuity and thus brought fears of additional intrusions by way of land development into sharp relief.<sup>33</sup>

In 1982, the NPS had issued a revision of its 1979 Land Acquisition Policy to correspond with the themes established in the Department of the Interior's own proposed Land Protection Policy. Unlike the 1979 document, the revision emphasized the use of "less-than-fee land protection methods, such as easements and zoning, with acquisition of fee title being considered only when alternatives are inappropriate or inadequate."<sup>34</sup> The new proposal required that all parks having non-federal inholdings prepare "land protection plans" and that these plans "reflect the emphasis on less-than-fee alternatives." Church, in a memo to the Regional Director, expressed an eagerness to create a protection plan.<sup>35</sup> Only recently had Church been "raked...over the coals" by Florence Muse for suggesting that her family might do well to let some of their land go fallow. He explained to the Regional Director that past land practice made for a situation in which *any* discussion of land concerns with neighbors required the utmost of delicacy and tact.<sup>36</sup>

In some instances, as with the Muses, the Park extended use of Monument property in exchange for various maintenance tasks. In 1983, Goodwin Muse agreed to maintain a government access road—including dragging the roadway surface twice a year, fixing potholes, and clearing snow and ice—in trade

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<sup>32</sup> Statement for Management, 1979, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, NPS Records Box 15 of 25, GEWA. This file includes copies of the 1979 boundary-expansion legislation.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Director to Regional Directors, 15 April 1982, file "L1415 Land Protection Plan Instructions" in GEWA overflow file storage, second drawer (from top), GEWA.

<sup>35</sup> Church to Regional Director, 17 May 1982, in *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

for continued use of twenty-two acres of park farmland.<sup>37</sup> In some ways, though, cooperative relationships became increasingly complicated during the 1980s, especially in the wake of NEPA. Church explained to Muse in late 1982 that “we have had new more stringent requirements placed on us for the recording and use of pesticides on federal property” and indicated that park staff could make unannounced inspections “at any time.”<sup>38</sup> Church recalls discovering numerous open cans of unlabeled pesticides while inspecting a Latane farm outbuilding and realizing that management of land leases had become a bigger responsibility than he ever anticipated.<sup>39</sup>

Church’s response to the Regional Director with regard to alternative land protection practices also reveals some movement in this direction prior to or coincidentally with the release of the NPS’s 1982 Land Acquisition Policy. Early efforts of this type resulted, by 1986, in “a quiet arrangement with the Virginia Outdoor foundation” wherein the foundation, not the Park, initiated discussions with landowners concerning the use of agricultural leases to protect park viewsheds.<sup>40</sup> Regional Officers visited the Park frequently during this period. Among these was Historical Architect Reed Engle who, according to Church, played a pivotal role in the study. Engle recognized that the Monument’s various land concerns merited more attention than what might be offered in a standard management plan. His encouragement led to the drafting of an additional study conducted in 1986 and released in 1987 under the title “Conserving the Setting of George Washington Birthplace, an Adjacent Lands Study.”<sup>41</sup>

The Adjacent Lands Study argued that the land surrounding Washington’s Birthplace was not merely a natural landscape, but also a historic landscape—a material relic of the eighteenth century—and should be protected like any other historic resource. Church used the study as an opportunity to launch a widespread public relations campaign and several newspaper articles appeared soon thereafter. An article

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<sup>37</sup> Church to Muse, 11 January 1983, file “A44 Memorandum of Agreement H Goodwin Muse” in Central File Notes, GEWA administrative offices.

<sup>38</sup> Church to Muse, 14 December 1982, in *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

<sup>40</sup> See response to questionnaire issued by the Southeast Region (most likely during fiscal year 1986) in file “operations evaluation” in Seth Box 4, GEWA.

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan L. Doherty, *An Adjacent Lands Study, Conserving the Setting of George Washington Birthplace* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, Division of Park and Resource Planning, October 1987).

in the *Westmoreland News*, for instance, featured responses from a variety of prominent local figures including Betty Horner who said “It’s true there’s been no growth yet...but many landowners can’t make it to the meetings called to discuss the Park’s future and they’re concerned about whether the Park Service might reach out for more land...I think if you went to see each one...and sat down and said you’d like to have first refusal on their property, I think that would be the way to go.”<sup>42</sup> Some landowners remained skeptical about the NPS’s intent. Lawrence W. Latane, Jr., who had donated four hundred acres in two easements, remarked, “I think they have good ideas...but...if they don’t get the preservation of views, I’m pretty sure they will come in and get the land.”<sup>43</sup>

The Adjacent Lands Study formalized a long-developing approach toward land policy, pointed out various threats from development to the historic landscape, and suggested ways by which the NPS and its neighbors could cooperate. It did not establish a clear agenda for action and, in fact, left implementation more-or-less up to the Park. Still, considering the Park’s planning history, these were significant accomplishments. In a letter to the president of the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), Regional Director James Coleman, Jr. suggested that “the approach used at George Washington’s Birthplace can also be used at other units of the National Park System.”<sup>44</sup> The study also encouraged community action. Church suggested to Betty Horner—who then served as a chairperson on the Westmoreland County Planning Commission—that she interpret the Park’s plan as a mandate for the county to consider, during development of its own comprehensive plan, extension of wetlands zoning ordinances, support for public sewers and water in agricultural areas prone to development, and amending the county’s zoning ordinance to “reduce the density of housing in agricultural zones” and prevent construction of “golf courses, mobile homes, various commercial uses and advertising signs.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> “Park Service looking for help preserving setting” in *Westmoreland News*, 19 November 1987, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> “Protecting Washington’s View, National Park Service seeks to preserve setting of birthplace” in *Free Lance Star* (November 1987).

<sup>44</sup> Coleman to Paul Pritchard, 9 November 1987, file “L32 GEWA Boundary” in Seth Box 4, GEWA.

<sup>45</sup> Encouraging construction of public sewers and water utilities “means commercial and retail development can be directed to use specific limited areas thereby preserving more open space and the rural character of the county.” See Church to Betty Horner, 28 April 1988, file “Westmoreland County / Northern Neck” in Seth Box 6, GEWA.

The Adjacent Land Study made an impression on the community, including Betty Horner whose family put twelve acres of land up for sale in 1990. The superintendent immediately contacted the Regional Office and the Conservation Fund who encouraged Congressman Herbert Bateman to introduce a bill in the House of Representatives approving purchase of the parcel in addition to another 113 acres through easement. The bill stalled in the Senate.<sup>46</sup> Interest in the acquisition resurfaced during the spring of 1993 under the Presidential Sites Land Protection Initiative. Bateman introduced HR 819 on February 4, 1993 to expand the Monument's boundaries to facilitate acquisition of the Horner Tract. The bill passed the House and became S 326 co-sponsored by Senators John Warner and Charles Robb. Storke notified the National Park Trust that year that "there is legislative initiative pending or likely to arise...to add 12 acres to monument property."<sup>47</sup> S 326 succeeded in the Senate and became public law on May 3, 1993 (Appendix 7). Boundaries expanded, the Monument now waited for negotiations with the Horners to unfold. Betty Horner and her brother-in-law Garnett Horner eventually accepted an offer from the Conservation Fund in 1995, thereby bringing twelve acres into the boundaries of the Monument.<sup>48</sup> Following the purchase, the superintendent reported that "this has prevented potential development that would have added unacceptable pressures on resources and larger traffic flows not related to visitation."<sup>49</sup>

### **The GWBMA and the Meaning of Interpretation**

Although the Park succeeded in community outreach with regard to land policy, maintaining its relationship with the GWBMA proved another challenge altogether. On one hand, the GWBMA had become an increasingly young and politically active organization. Betty Horner herself belonged to the Association and, in her capacity as county planning commissioner, extended the Association's interests beyond the Monument. On the other hand, though, the Association remained committed to its own

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<sup>46</sup> "House Agrees to expand Washington Birthplace Parkland," *The Journal* (20 November 1991). File "L1417 Acquisition of Land (Boundary Adjustments)" in Central File Notes, GEWA, contains a variety of documents relevant to the acquisition of the Horner tract including the congressional testimony of adjacent landowners, WNMA members, and Betty Horner.

<sup>47</sup> Storke in response to inquiry from National Park Trust regarding Presidential Sites Land Protection Initiative, 29 March 1993, file "L30 Land Use" in Seth Box 3, GEWA.

<sup>48</sup> Management Team Meeting minutes, 4 October 1995, file "MTM's 1995" in third drawer of Central Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA:

<sup>49</sup> SAR, 1996, file "A2621 Annual Narrative Report" in Central Files, GEWA.

standards of appropriate commemoration and confusion regarding the GWBMA's role at the Birthplace, especially in the wake of its 1979 reorganization, created an uneasy situation.

The GWBMA had always understood its purpose and responsibilities at the Monument as being specifically linked to the Memorial House. The Park's turn toward living history during the 1960s and 70s only reinforced this assumption by giving Association members new opportunities to be present within the building. As we have seen, however, the NPS sought to limit overall emphasis on the Memorial House. These conflicting goals increasingly collided. In June 1982, for example, the GWBMA—which had created its own furnishing committee—met with Regional Curator William Jedlick, Chief Ranger Dwight Storke, and Cultural Resources and Interpretation Manager Gina Moriarty. When asked for his thoughts on the status of the Memorial House, Jedlick explained that though a furnishing study was needed and that some work was required to make the building's furnishings consistent with what George Washington would have experienced, there was really nothing the GWBMA could or should do to help the process along. Rather, Jedlick suggested that the GWBMA devote its energies to other interpretive activities so as to de-emphasize the Memorial House's traditionally prominent place on the commemorative landscape.<sup>50</sup>

Jedlick's suggestion triggered a flurry of dismay among GWBMA members. One member responded that the GWBMA had never done anything *but* support interpretation. Although the NPS understood "interpretation" to mean all various interpretive activities at the Monument, the GWBMA considered "interpretation" to mean only those activities that occurred in the Memorial House. Nobody at the meeting that day recognized this subtle though highly problematic misunderstanding—a misunderstanding that had been over fifty years in the making. The meeting intensified when the GWBMA accused the Park of not involving the Association's furnishing committee in decisions regarding the Memorial House. Moriarty responded that the GWBMA had no authority to make changes in the Memorial House and could not, as it had on occasion, rearrange artifacts without permission from

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<sup>50</sup> Audio recording of 27 June 1982 GWBMA furnishing committee meeting with Mid-Atlantic Regional Curator, Bill Jedlick, Chief Ranger Dwight Storke, and Cultural Resources and Interpretation Manager Gina Moriarty, GEWA.

the Park. Exasperated, one Association member explained, “we feel like all we are needed for is to make money...[but] we are supposed to be an *arm* of the Park Service.” The NPS did, in fact, rely on the group primarily to make money and it hoped that money would support other interpretive programming and various maintenance projects. Still, the GWBMA struggled to maintain its sense of purpose. Toward the end of the meeting, a dismayed member lamented, “I just want to know what our role is.”<sup>51</sup>

It had become increasingly difficult for the Association to understand its role at the Monument as decades old arrangements succumbed to changes felt throughout the Northern Neck. As of 1983, for example, the GWBMA continued to manage the post office that had been in continual operation at the Park since 1932. During those five decades, no matter what the nature of the relationship between the two groups, the GWBMA always maintained unquestioned control of the post office. The post office itself served as something of a community gathering point where adjacent landowners picked up mail and exchanged niceties with park staff and GWBMA members. With no more than ten regular postal customers, however, Church could not justify continuing the operation and informed community members of its discontinuation in 1983.<sup>52</sup> Church justified the change by explaining that the space previously occupied by the post office would be put to making the GWBMA’s bookstore “the definitive book store on George Washington.” He assured customers that the GWBMA would continue to maintain a contract station where the unique Washington’s Birthplace postage cancellation might still be obtained.<sup>53</sup> But Church’s assurances offered little consolation to long-time post office customers and it soon became apparent, as Church recalls, that “we really stepped on some toes.”<sup>54</sup>

Local resident John Chewing spoke for the betrodden in an August 1983 letter to Virginia Senator Paul Trible on behalf of the post office’s regular customers:

The people of Washington’s Birthplace need help. 50 years ago, the Post Office and the National Park Service started together. A building was erected to house the gift shop and the post office.

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<sup>51</sup> Some debate surfaced during this meeting regarding whether or not the Memorial House stood on the exact spot of Washington’s birth thereby revealing that the WNMA had not even come to terms with the Building X controversy.

<sup>52</sup> Church to Payne, 5 May 1983, file “A94 Post Service” in Seth Box 4, GEWA.

<sup>53</sup> Church to park residents and postal customers, 6 May 1983, in Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

Now the Park Service has given the post office until Sept. 19 to vacate the building, the Post office having no place to go, is closing. The space the post office was in is 7 feet. How can a space so small be of so much value to the Park? and do away with an institution of postal service. We cannot do anything on our own and I know you are busy, but if you could help us, the people of Washington's Birthplace would be most grateful. We feel we are asked to give up so much for so little gain for the Park.<sup>55</sup>

Senator Tribble evidently contacted the Acting Deputy Director of the U.S. Postal Service with regard to Chewing's complaint. According to Church, the post office was quite happy to oblige his request to reduce postal services to the Birthplace given the excessive expense involved in serving so few customers. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Acting deputy Director responded in support of the decision, noting that "the space the post office now occupies...will be redesigned to better present the George Washington story...The postal operation now occupies twenty percent of the building space...[and] is open on a limited basis...Fewer than a dozen local patrons are served, in addition to park visitors," and adding that lock boxes would accommodate remaining customers.<sup>56</sup> There is no further discussion of the problem in park documents and this final exchange seems to have drawn debate to an official close. Nonetheless, tempers—especially among the GWBMA—continued to run high and Church believes that the group "never forgave us."<sup>57</sup>

Without any claim to the Memorial House and having lost with the post office its last claim to autonomy at the Birthplace, the GWBMA retreated into marginality. At an April 1984 meeting, the GWBMA proposed, voted on, and accepted an amendment to its bylaws officially recognizing itself as a general-purpose non-profit organization with the sole purpose of supporting the Birthplace through its operation of the bookstore.<sup>58</sup> Relations between the Association and the NPS thereafter remained largely relegated to the business of store operations. Immediately prior to his retirement, Church expressed concern regarding operation of the shop. The gift shop earned little to no profit during the previous year and would have collapsed had it not been for subsidization through the GWBMA. Church suggested a

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<sup>55</sup> Chewing to Tribble, 6 August 1983, in file "A94 Post Service" in Seth Box 4, GEWA.

<sup>56</sup> David Wright to Tribble, 16 September 1983, in Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> George Church, interview with author, 17 May 2004.

<sup>58</sup> Notice of meeting of the WNMA, 12 April 1984, in NPS Records Box 20 of 25, GEWA.

reevaluation of pricing guidelines and inventory selection.<sup>59</sup> Thus motivated, the GWBMA endeavored to improve the operation and funded a significant expansion during 1990 and 1991. Reports indicate that following a December 1991 ribbon cutting ceremony, the expanded shop produced a substantial return on sales and boasted a more diverse inventory “that appropriately met park interpretive themes.”<sup>60</sup> GWBMA activity centered on the gift shop during the decade and in 1996 the GWBMA voted to donate its various historical records to the Park archives. In some ways, especially given the heated debate concerning handing over of records during the 1950s, this donation marked a symbolic end of the GWBMA as a significant independent entity at the Monument.<sup>61</sup>

### **Administrative Overhaul Under Dwight Storke**

The GWBMA’s decline during the 1980s coincided with a larger shift of focus away from interpretation and toward securing badly needed financial support at a time when the Monument and its staff seemed more thinly stretched than ever before. The Park’s Living Farm suffered accordingly. Throughout the park system, post-Bicentennial financial shortfalls put pressure on parks to demonstrate that their expensive living history programs supported basic goals.<sup>62</sup> As early as 1973, Northeast Region Interpretive Specialist Frank Barness suggested that “our currently over-stressed living history activities may just possibly represent a tremendous failure on the part of our traditional interpretive programs—above all, a cover-up for lousy personal services.”<sup>63</sup> Barnes also recognized the extent to which the theatrics typical of living history frequently compromised the Parks’ ability to interpret serious historical issues. Specifically, he cited the Booker T. Washington National Monument’s failure to present the harsh realities of slavery and the “impression of fun” conjured by simulated encampments and firearms

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<sup>59</sup> Church to Carl F. Flemer, III, 3 January 1989, file “A42 Cooperating WNMA general Correspondence” in Central File Notes, GEWA.

<sup>60</sup> See file “A42 Cooperating WNMA Annual Reports” in second drawer of Central Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA. The WNMA performed additional refurbishments in 1997. See Annual Report for George Washington Birthplace National Monument Association, “A2621 Annual Narrative Report” in Central Files, GEWA

<sup>61</sup> John Donahue to Cathy Perry, 1 October 1996, file “A42 Cooperating WNMA general Correspondence” in Central File Notes, GEWA. That the Association donated its records in 1996 further points to an incomplete handing over of records during the 1950s

<sup>62</sup> National Park Service, “Comprehensive Interpretive Planning” (Fall 2000), p. 3.

<sup>63</sup> Cited in Chapter 3 of Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* 1986, <[www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mackintosh2/index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mackintosh2/index.htm)> (15 May 2006).



demonstrations at battlefield parks.<sup>64</sup> Barnes was not alone. NPS historians Robert Utley, Roy Appleman, and John Luzader all expressed concern regarding the frequency with which living history demonstrations failed to encourage an understanding of parks and their significance. As time went on, it became increasingly apparent that, though living history demonstrations certainly attracted a large visiting public, they often made for questionable educational experiences, especially when overzealous costumed interpreters strayed too far from intended interpretive themes.<sup>65</sup>

But what must have seemed like constantly shifting prerogatives in Washington enabled one last window of opportunity for those committed to living history in the parks. William Penn Mott replaced Director Dickenson in 1985 and, unlike his predecessor, favored an expansionist stance predicated on substantial investment in interpretation and public education.<sup>66</sup> Mott's vision found especial favor with Dwight Storke who was integral to the creation of the Living Farm during the late 1960s. Storke had left the chief ranger position at Washington's Birthplace during the mid-1980s to accept the superintendency of Richmond National Battlefield Park. He returned, however, to replace Church as superintendent of the Monument in 1989. Encouraged by Mott's reinvestment in interpretation, Superintendent Storke set to making living history a primary focus at the Birthplace.

Ironically, almost immediately following Storke's appointment, the winds of change blew once again through Washington and newly elected President George H.W. Bush replaced Mott with James M. Ridenour in 1989. Ridenour again turned the tide and recommitted the NPS to conservative expansion and cautious expenditure. Even so, Storke worked with Ridenour-era initiatives to bolster the Park's

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<sup>64</sup> Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service*.

<sup>65</sup> Mackintosh also references this problem in *Interpretation in the National Park Service*. Warren Leon and Margaret Piatt refer to this phenomenon as an "almost-religious belief in living-history re-creation" in "Living History Museums" in Leon and Rosenzweig, *History Museums in the United States*, p. 83. For a discussion of how living history presentations are always already ideological, see Mark Leone, "The Relationship Between Artifacts and the Public in Outdoor History Museums" in Jay Anderson, *A Living History Reader, Volume One, Museums* (Nashville: American WNMA for State and Local History, 1991), p. 180. David Glassberg raises several questions living history advocates frequently fail to consider with regard to educational accountability in his critique of Jay Anderson's *Time Machines*. See David Glassberg, "Living in the Past" in *American Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), pp. 305-310. For one of the most frequently cited considerations of problems common to living history interpretation, see Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum, Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University press, 1997).

<sup>66</sup> Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, pp. 86-87.

Living History program. In the spirit of reducing expenses, Storke focused on the VIP Program and, in 1990, the Park received over four thousand hours of volunteer time. VIP reports throughout the decade suggest that continuation of the Living Farm and craft demonstration areas relied almost wholly on volunteer labor.<sup>67</sup> Seeking further revenue, Storke increased programming at the Log House conference center by hosting training sessions for regional staff and other Federal groups in addition to continuing the Mary Washington College agreement.<sup>68</sup>

Storke also initiated a significant administrative reorganization. Previously, maintenance and resource management staff reported to separate managers. Storke created a new supervisory park ranger position responsible for coordinating efforts between both interpretation and resource management staff.<sup>69</sup> This change not only facilitated inter-division communication, it also improved attention to visitor services—a primary goal of Storke’s superintendency—by bringing the collective efforts of these operational units under the supervision of an individual specifically charged with creating ways to improve the visitor experience at Popes Creek.<sup>70</sup> Storke additionally clarified the organization of the Park’s three divisions—administration, maintenance, and resource management—by appointing a leadership position within each (Illustration 7). This change permitted pay equity among the three division leaders thereby adding to employee morale and leadership incentives.<sup>71</sup>

Within this larger reorganization, Storke set to modernizing his core administrative unit and, in 1989, hired Mimi Woodward to be the Park’s Administrative Officer. Woodward had previously worked

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<sup>67</sup> See 1990 Operations Evaluation on top shelf of Central Administrative Files, Overflow filing cabinet, GEWA and file “P94 VIP Reports” in third drawer of Central administrative files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>68</sup> 1992 Operations Evaluation, file “1992 In House Operations Evaluation” on top shelf of Central Administrative Files, overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>69</sup> SAR, 1991, file “A2621 Annual Narrative Report” in central Administrative files, GEWA. This change would eventually make a physical impact at the Park as when, in 1992, Stroke remodeled a space in the rear of the craft workshop to serve as an office for resource management and law enforcement use. See SAR, 1992, file “A2621 Annual Narrative Report” in central Administrative files, GEWA.

<sup>70</sup> SAR, 1991, file “A2621 Annual Narrative Report” in Central Administrative Offices, GEWA. Also see organizational chart in file “1992 In-House Operations Evaluation” on top shelf of Central Administrative Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>71</sup> This wave of upgrades raised the Maintenance Foreman from WS-8 to WS-9 and the Administrative Officer from GS-7 to GS-9. The Supervisory park Ranger remained a GS-11. Storke also regraded other positions including one laborer position and the gardener position. See 1992 Operations Evaluation, file “1992 In House Operations Evaluation” on top shelf of Central Administrative Files, overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

at the Park from 1981 to 1986 and already distinguished herself as a capable administrative technician. Given her proven skills and good relations with regional offices, Storke enticed Woodward back to the Monument and recalls that she introduced a marked professionalism to the job. In the Park's 1990 Operations Evaluation, Regional Director James Coleman observed that "reorganization and enhancement of the Administrative Division, both in appearance and methodology, is consistently excellent."<sup>72</sup>

### **Living History Reborn**

Storke put this freshly streamlined administrative unit to the work of reviving the Park's living history program. In 1990, he issued statement of purpose (SOP) that established strict guidelines regarding the use and care of park-provided costumes.<sup>73</sup> The new SOP required that everyone working in the historic area—whether maintenance or interpretive personnel—wear accurate period dress and maintain historically acceptable behavior therein. Storke expanded the interpretive division a year later by adding two rangers, an interpretive specialist, a chief ranger, and by reclassifying the Park's primary farmer and demonstrator from a maintenance position to an interpretation position.<sup>74</sup> The Monument's Living Farm slowly regained its previous intensity. As of 1992, the Monument cultivated an acre of corn, a quarter acre of tobacco, and twelve acres of hay. Additionally, it boasted ten cows, four hogs, nine sheep, six hens, and two horses.<sup>75</sup> Livestock demonstrations proved especially popular among visitors due, in part, to Ranger Andrew Packett's work toward establishing an entirely registered herd of Devon milking cattle. Packett, who received the Freeman Tilden Award for interpretive excellence, worked extensively with other living farm operators throughout the East to arrange exchanges of animals, crops, and seeds typical of the eighteenth century.<sup>76</sup>

Storke, following an especially fortuitous though unexpected encounter with representatives of the Drackett Company in 1992, secured an \$80,000 donation for restoration of the Park's long-neglected

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<sup>72</sup> 1990 Operations Evaluation, file "A54 Operations Evaluation In-House" in Central file Notes, GEWA.

<sup>73</sup> Venuto to Interpretive Staff, 13 March 1990, in NPS Files 23 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>74</sup> SAR, 1992, file "A2621 Annual Narrative Report" in central Administrative files, GEWA.

<sup>75</sup> From response to 1992 Crop and Livestock Survey, file "L30 Land Use" in Seth Box 3, GEWA.

<sup>76</sup> SAR, 1992, file "A2621 Annual Narrative Report" in central Administrative files, GEWA.

Burt House Point Trail.<sup>77</sup> The trail, a short loop encircling the stand of red cedars adjacent to the Memorial House, was first established during the early 1930s but had since fallen out of use. The funding earned the Birthplace a prime spot amid advertisement copy pushing the NPS's Great American Clean-up Campaign that year.<sup>78</sup> More importantly, the money supported a new interpretive direction at the Birthplace. Until 1992, Monument staff had not purposely emphasized any aspect of the memorial landscape. Indeed, most superintendents all the way back to Hough had done everything possible to shift visitor interest away from the memorial landscape and toward the interpretive story told about George Washington. Storke, however, recognized that the early history of the NPS was itself worthy of interpretation—especially as it bore on efforts to interpret George Washington's Birthplace—and so set to restoring what he referred to as the first historic trail in a national park. A May 15, 1993 ribbon cutting ceremony marked the official reopening of Burnt House Point Trail.<sup>79</sup>

Storke had even bigger plans for the money. In addition to restoration of the trail, he envisioned a reconstruction of the 400-foot Dancing Marsh footbridge that once joined the historic area with the Log House. Originally built in 1931, the bridge had long since washed away but, using old photos, Historical Architect Jeffrey Pascale suggested that a new bridge could be built in relatively short order for approximately \$90,000 of which \$60,000 would come from the Drackett donation.<sup>80</sup> The reconstructed bridge never materialized and, though briefly reconsidered in 1995, it remains unclear exactly what happened to the portion of the Drackett contribution earmarked for this purpose.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Dwight Storke, interview with author, 20 May 2004.

<sup>78</sup> See Superintendent's 1992 Annual Report, "A2621 Annual Narrative Report" in Central Administrative Files, GEWA and 1992 Operations Evaluation, Central Administrative Files, top shelf of overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>79</sup> Although Storke refers to this as "the first historic trail in a national park," it has never been classified as a national trail like, for example, the Appalachian Trail. The significance here lies in Storke's reconsideration of the memorial landscape following years of interpretive movement away from the core historic area. The trail opening ceremonies were unusually elaborate. See a guest register, photocopies of newspaper articles, and several ceremony programs, NPS Records Box 23 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>80</sup> Pascale to Chief, Park Historic Preservation Division, MARO, 21 January 1995, file "H2215 Triple XXX (photos, etc.)" in Seth Box 3, GEWA.

<sup>81</sup> Minutes from a 1995 GEWA management team meeting include mention of this project though make no reference to previous attempts and failures thus pointing again to an ongoing problem with lapses of institutional memory at the Birthplace. See file "MTM's 1995" in third drawer of Central Administrative Files, overflow filing cabinet, GEWA. Some of the money may have been used for rehabilitation of the Dancing Marsh Trail during 1993. See

Storke also initiated an overhaul of the Park's series of wayside exhibits. A variety of wayside exhibits had been installed at the Park during the 1970s. These trailside signs interpreted various features of the built and natural landscape with captions written to approximate what Washington may have thought about Popes Creek. Aside from their questionable educational value, the signs showed signs of deterioration and decay by the late 1980s. Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management Louis Venuto proposed in 1989 that a new series of between fifteen and twenty outdoor wayside exhibits be constructed at "key historic and natural sites in the Park. These signs would provide basic orientation and some historic information."<sup>82</sup> Regional Director James Coleman agreed in his 1990 Operations Evaluation that wayside exhibits required attention and suggested that the Park request by way of Regional Chief of Interpretation Russell Smith that the Harpers Ferry Center produce the signs.<sup>83</sup> The Park had produced a full-length plan in 1993 including justifications and descriptions of the proposed exhibits.<sup>84</sup> Records indicate that installation of the exhibits began in 1994 and continued into 1995 when, with funding provided by a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation EPA Office, the Park installed a final wayside exhibit at the Potomac River.

Storke next turned his attentions toward developing the Monument's artifact collection and in 1990 initiated efforts to convert the Park's museum catalog records into the Automated National Cataloging System (ANCS).<sup>85</sup> Doing so complied with cultural resource management initiatives and facilitated Storke's desire to move the artifact collection back into the basement of the Memorial House.<sup>86</sup> With approval for the cataloging project, the regional office contracted out the work to Espey, Huston & Associates in 1992.<sup>87</sup> No sooner had the contracting firm completed work on the first phase of the cataloging project than Storke set to moving the collection. By 1992, all catalogued artifacts had been

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correspondence regarding this lesser-known trail in file "N16 Management of Natural Resources" in Seth Box 5, GEWA.

<sup>82</sup> Venuto to Philip Semisch, 28 September 1989, NPS Records Box 23 of 25, GEWA.

<sup>83</sup> 1990 Operations Evaluation on top shelf of Central Administrative Files, Overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>84</sup> Refer to file "D24 Cyclic Maintenance Project List" in Seth Box 5, GEWA for this plan in addition to various correspondence, reports, and other materials produced in support of the plan.

<sup>85</sup> See 1990 Operation Evaluation comments by Regional Director James Coleman in folder "A54 Operations Evaluation IN-House," Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

<sup>86</sup> See 1990 Operations Evaluation on top shelf of Central Administrative Files, Overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>87</sup> 1992 Operations Evaluation, Central Administrative Files, top shelf of overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

returned to their old home in a newly remodeled storage space in the Memorial House basement.<sup>88</sup> Still, problems arose delaying the project and resulting in unexpected expenses. Espey, Huston & Associates technician Alain Outlaw explained that although thousands of artifacts had been assigned accession numbers during the 1970s, “unfortunately the numbers were never marked on those objects or their containers.”<sup>89</sup> Despite these difficulties, the firm did eventually complete cataloging of the final 25,000 artifacts and Storke added them to the collections in the Memorial House basement in 1993.<sup>90</sup> With this, storage of the artifact collection returned to more-or-less its late 1930s status and, with the exception of the addition of a steel security cage in 1997, all saved documents concerning the Monument’s history reside as they have since 1976 in the basement of the Visitor Center.<sup>91</sup>

### **Interpreting Slavery**

Portrayal of the lives of slaves at Popes Creek ranked among the most significant interpretive efforts at the Monument during the 1980s and 1990s. Visitors expressed interest in slavery during the 1930s and various references to the possibility of interpreting slavery at the Monument appear in planning documents dating to the 1970s, but longstanding trepidation throughout the American museum community about interpreting slavery prevented any real efforts to interpret slavery anywhere in this country until the 1980s.<sup>92</sup> The Park devoted an entire day in 1984 to special activities concerning the lives of slaves on Popes Creek Plantation.<sup>93</sup> Though only a small foray into interpretation of slavery and a cautious one at that—a 1984 report refers to “examination of slavery in the interpretive program” as a

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<sup>88</sup> SAR, 1992, file “A2621 Annual Narrative Report” in Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

<sup>89</sup> Contracting Officer Technical Representative Martha Walker to MARO Contracting Officer Mildred Johnson, 30 August 1993, file “Blue” in third drawer of Central Administrative Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>90</sup> SAR, 1993, file “A2621 Annual Narrative Report” in Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

<sup>91</sup> SAR, 1997, file “A2621 Annual Narrative Report” in Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

<sup>92</sup> Early reports concerned with identifying opportunities to interpret African-American history within the Park system routinely bypassed the Monument. “A Summary Report of thirty Sites Determined to be Significant in Illustrating and Commemorating the Role of black Americans in United States History” prepared by the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation in December 1973 makes no mention of Washington’s Birthplace. Joseph E. Harris led a Howard University research team in a September 1978 study titled “Afro-American History Interpretation at Selected National Parks” that also neglected the Birthplace. This is especially unfortunate as archeological work under Norman Barka during 1974-75 had produced tangible evidence of a possible slave residence in the Colonial Garden area.

<sup>93</sup> “Starring role to go to slaves’ way of life in program at park” in *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 1984, file “K3415 Newspaper Articles GEWA” in Seth Box 4, GEWA.

“controversial issue”—the program represented an important step at a park that had historically ignored the role of African Americans in colonial Virginia.<sup>94</sup> The same report calls for a general background study:

Also needed is a study of the functions and lifestyle of the slaves and the indentured servants. Where did they live? What did they eat? How was their treatment? Did these things vary slave vs. servant or even house slave vs. field slave? What religious practices were they allowed? What, if any, recreational diversions did they enjoy? What kind of clothing did they wear?<sup>95</sup>

An additional study by University of Maryland Eastern Shore Historian Hayward Farrar prepared for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in February 1990 made several recommendations for interpretation at the Park, calling specifically for reference of slavery in an informational brochure, reconstruction of slave quarters at the Monument, and the involvement of scholars in directing those initiatives.<sup>96</sup>

The Park responded to those reports in 1992 when it celebrated the opening of its first substantial effort to interpret slavery based on research compiled primarily by the Park’s interpretive specialist Paul Carson. A local newspaper announced the opening of the Park’s Household Slave Quarters Room that “will show visitors the way African-Americans lived their lives on the plantation.”<sup>97</sup> Despite garnering substantial press coverage, the reconstructed slave quarters seem to have fallen short of their mark. Ranger Roberta Samuel, reflecting on the exhibit, notes that “people don’t even realize that’s what it’s supposed to be.”<sup>98</sup> It is not clear what, if any, support Carson received in his research program. Concurrently, Regional Chief of Interpretation Russell Smith had to exert considerable pressure on HFC planners to include material concerning slavery in the Park’s new visitor brochure.<sup>99</sup> That the NPS’s

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<sup>94</sup> See file “operations evaluation” in Seth Box 4, GEWA. NPS Records Box 23 of 25, GEWA contains a variety of documents referring to various initiatives to interpret the lives of the disenfranchised and underrepresented at Popes Creek and suggests that staff member Paul Carson played an important role in the development of multicultural programming.

<sup>95</sup> Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 1984, in Seth Box 4, GEWA.

<sup>96</sup> Hayward Farrar, “African-American History at the Hampton, Booker T. Washington Birthplace, George Washington Birthplace, Jamestown and City Point National Historic Sites,” February 1990.

<sup>97</sup> “New Exhibit Opens at Birthplace,” *The Journal*, 29 January 1992, file “K3415 Newspaper Articles” in Seth Box 5, GEWA. This Box contains a variety of articles regarding multicultural events at the Monument during this period.

<sup>98</sup> Roberta Samuel, interview with author, 26 May 2004.

<sup>99</sup> See Interpretive Specialist Ron Thomson to Smith, 5 March 1993; Smith to Regional Director John Reynolds, 5 March 1993, and Russell Smith, interview with author, 14 December 2004.

primary interpretive media center remained disinclined to discuss slavery as late as 1993 indicates the difficulty park interpretive specialists interested in interpreting slavery must have encountered during this period.<sup>100</sup>

It appears that whatever efforts resulted from Carson's project faded by the mid-1990s. Superintendent John Donahue visited the Park immediately preceding his replacement of Dwight Storke and asked an interpreter about slaves at Popes Creek. The interpreter replied, "they had slaves here, but the slaves really enjoyed being here...no slave ever escaped."<sup>101</sup> With this experience in mind, Donahue used money provided in 1996 by a NPS grant and through a cooperative agreement with George Washington University to sponsor a review of the Monument's interpretive program. The review team—including Historians James Horton and John Vlach and graduate students from the university's American Studies Program—found the Birthplace dreadfully lacking and cited significant problems with the living history program including ill-prepared and uninformed interpreters.<sup>102</sup> Additionally, an NPS interpretive review conducted a year later involving several NPS and Monument staff resulted in similar conclusions about the Monument's interpretive program and stressed the discontinuity of the historic area's various exhibits and the Park's overall failure to fully communicate that the Memorial House is not the actual building in which Washington was born.<sup>103</sup>

This was certainly not the first time questions were raised regarding the effectiveness of interpretation, especially regarding the Memorial House. Storke himself recognized the problem and noted that despite the shell outline used to identify the foundations of the actual birth house, "the birth site itself is of minimal impact and remains lost in the perceptions of most visitors."<sup>104</sup> Storke also recognized the Monument's shortcomings regarding multi-cultural interpretation. He realized that "permanent

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<sup>100</sup> For an especially insightful discussion of the political ramifications of interpreting race at national park sites, see West, *Domesticating History*, pp. 129-58. Also see *CRM* volume 20, no. 2 (1997) for several articles concerning interpretation of slavery at NPS sites.

<sup>101</sup> John Donahue, interview with author, 14 May 2004.

<sup>102</sup> Historical Interpretation and the National Park Service at George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 1 November 1996, RPT-014, GEWA Library.

<sup>103</sup> Interpretive Review, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 13 February 1997, RPT-007, GEWA Library.

<sup>104</sup> Storke to Jeffrey Marion, 13 August 1992, file "N22 Research Programs" in Second Drawer of Central Administrative Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.



exhibits on the untouched land Native Americans knew prior to colonization and exhibits that address the work of servants and slaves need to be added. Visitors of varying cultures should SEE that more than one type of human being was responsible for colonizing the New World.” Nonetheless, changes of this variety did not come easy at Popes Creek. Even armed with interpretation review studies, Storke’s replacement had difficulty convincing staff members of the importance of interpreting slavery and recalls, “people [being] adverse to getting too much into the slave issue.”<sup>105</sup> Nonetheless, the emergence of efforts to interpret slavery during this period is significant and speaks to the effectiveness of new trends in interpretive and cultural resource management planning.

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<sup>105</sup> John Donahue, interview with author, 14 May 2004.

## CHAPTER 9

### **Recent Trends and Reorganization since the 1990s**

Although Superintendent Dwight Storke managed to reinvigorate the Monument's Living Farm during the 1980s, the golden years of living history had come to and end. Director Mott's interest in bolstering interpretation and public education briefly revived front-line interpretation at the Monument, but his replacement, Director James M. Ridenour, pushed the NPS into a new era of fiscal conservatism and self assessment beginning in 1989. Ridenour believed that the NPS's interests had been too freely surrendered to Congress. Acquisitions like THST, he argued, represented the kind of "pork barrel politics" undertaken by congressmen eager to garner favor with constituencies.<sup>1</sup> Rather than expand acquisitions, Ridenour encouraged environmental protection, cooperation with public and private organizations to protect land, and avoidance of property condemnation except when absolutely necessary. The new director focused the NPS on technology initiatives such as creating a service-wide electronic mail system. Moreover, Ridenour championed the creation of a centralized office of strategic planning in Denver and initiated a host of planning projects designed to take stock of operations during the NPS's seventy-fifth anniversary.<sup>2</sup>

Superintendent John Donahue brought with him a similar set of management goals to the Monument when he replaced Dwight Storke in 1994. He immediately pledged to review and upgrade, where necessary, every staff position in the Park.<sup>3</sup> It just so happened that this announcement corresponded with the NPS's Ranger Careers Program and so, determining that all Monument rangers had fulfilled their duties for some time at high levels of performance, Donahue instantly upgraded all rangers to the GS-9 pay rating. Administration and Maintenance staff expressed some dismay that their ranks had not been upgraded, so Donahue began a review process that would eventually span nearly his entire superintendency and resulted in the upgrading of almost all Monument employees. Donahue explains

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<sup>1</sup> James M. Ridenour, *The National Parks Compromised: Pork Barrel Politics and America's Treasures* (Merrillville, IN: ICS Books, Inc, 1994), pp. 78-83.

<sup>2</sup> Ridenour, *The National Parks Compromised*, pp. 59, 63, 71, 210. Also see Mackintosh, *The National Park*, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise noted, see John Donahue, interview with author, 14 May 2004 for the following account.

that an unfair rating system existed at the Park wherein the Park employed, for example, mechanics assistants, but no mechanics. He thus envisioned grade review as being necessary for fostering a professional work environment, though he made clear to his employees that grade hikes would mean a reduction in seasonal hiring.

Donahue's superintendency also marked the end of military presence at the Birthplace. The Navy had maintained a range finding station at the Potomac River beach since the 1940s. Built during World War II, the small structure permitted Dahlgren military personnel to evaluate munitions testing but had fallen out of regular use since the 1970s and thus constituted an unsightly mar on the historic landscape. Donahue took an aggressive approach to the problem and wrote to a Dahlgren official in 1995 indicating the Monument's "preference at this time is to restore the historic scene which will require the termination of the memorandum of understanding."<sup>4</sup> Talks began in September 1995 and eventually resulted in the relocation of Dahlgren's testing facilities outside of park boundaries.<sup>5</sup> Taken in combination with Dwight Storke's previous restoration of the Burnt House Point trail, removal of the range station represented a second step toward restoring the Monument's landscape to its pre-war appearance.

But even as Donahue undertook to streamline park operations, shifts in Washington once again heralded a new regime of administrative changes. Director Roger G. Kennedy replaced Director Ridenour in 1993 and set into motion a system-wide overhaul of long-standing NPS administrative units. The Monument's position within the NPS structure had remained relatively constant since its inclusion within the Mid-Atlantic Region in 1973. During the summer of 1994, however, Donahue announced to his staff that the Monument had become part of the new Northeast Field Area.<sup>6</sup> The Northeast Field Area

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<sup>4</sup> Donahue to Joan Markley, 16 May 1995, "reading file" on third shelf of Central File Notes overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>5</sup> See file "MTM's 1995" in third drawer of Central Administrative Files, overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>6</sup> See Recommendation for Restructuring the National Park Service, July 1994, file "A64 Organization Re-Organization/Streamlining" in Seth Box 3, GEWA. Donahue explained the concept of "clustering" during a 6 April 1995 management team meeting and further explained the significance of being included within the Northeast Field Area at a 9 August 1995 meeting. See minutes for both in file "MTM's 1995" in third drawer of Central Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

combined what had been the North Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic region into one unit and centralized regional support for the Park in the Chesapeake System Support Office.

The reorganization triggered downsizing within Regional Offices, which subsequently translated into more administrative work for Monument staff.<sup>7</sup> Combined with ongoing system-wide efforts to improve use of computer technology in the parks—something Donahue eagerly supported—the administrative reorganization created problems at a park as historically resistant to computerization as Washington’s Birthplace. Monument division leaders found themselves having to perform routine administrative tasks previously delegated to the Administrative Officer and her staff. As a result, Mimi Woodward’s administrative unit increasingly functioned as an enforcer of administrative regulations and, needless to say, frequently fell out of favor with the Park’s various divisions.

Woodward recalls one occasion when the NPS required all parks to use a new inventory control software package. The software proved so cumbersome and so ill-suited to its purpose that Woodward created an alternative property inventory that required extra labor hours and ultimately created increased friction among division leaders.<sup>8</sup> In 2000, the superintendent reported that:

Information management needs have become overwhelming over time. Demands by Washington and Regional offices require parks to purchase bigger, faster, and different software and hardware in order to accomplish the myriad of tasks and reports. Printer cartridges, though taken individually may not seem like a large purchase, but when two parks the size of GEWA and THST purchase cartridges for a one-year period, the cost is over \$3500. This is one of the many examples of increased costs over time.<sup>9</sup>

To make things worse, communications with the regional office had evidently suffered with the reorganization. In December 1994, for example, the Park could not find a single regional officer to answer urgent questions concerning the Monument’s law enforcement jurisdiction status.<sup>10</sup> In this way,

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<sup>7</sup> Mimi Woodward, interview with author, 2 July 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> SAR, 2000, file “A2621 Annual Narrative Report” in Central Files, GEWA.

<sup>10</sup> Questions concerning jurisdiction arose during a 16 December 1994 management team meeting: “We have been operating under the premise that our park jurisdiction is proprietary. Mike Greenfield at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania has been researching Federal Jurisdiction status of parks in Virginia. It appears that most of the Park would be under Exclusive jurisdiction with some under concurrent. This situation exists at other NPS sites in Virginia. For the time we are to continue working under “good faith” of proprietary jurisdiction while the Regional Law Enforcement Specialist pursue this further.” SAR, 2000, file “A2621 Annual Narrative Report” in Central Files, GEWA.

Donahue's arrival at Washington's Birthplace occurred amid serious problems concerning communications, NPS expectations, and the Park's ability and willingness to accommodate change.

### **The Turn Away from Living History**

Most significantly, however, Donahue did not consider living history essential to interpretation at Washington's Birthplace. He felt that interpretation prior to his arrival was headed "completely in the wrong direction" and, although living history demonstrations may have livened the historical setting, they did nothing to shift interpretive focus away from the idiosyncratic Memorial House.<sup>11</sup> Donahue issued a memo to park staff after six months at the Birthplace conveying his impressions of the operation:

I also want to remind everyone that the natural and the cultural resources within our sites are woven together like the threads of a quilt. They cannot be separated without destroying the whole, nor can they be prioritized. The land and waters and wildlife of these sites deserve and will receive the same protection here as they do in Yellowstone National Park.<sup>12</sup>

Donahue's insistence on placing cultural and natural resources on equal footing at the Birthplace marked a new direction for park staff. The Park was certainly no stranger to environmental stewardship. Just before his departure, for example, Dwight Storke had the Monument added as a reserve site within the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve System by facilitating a relationship with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.<sup>13</sup> Still, having a background in NEPA compliance, Donahue's particular interest in environmental policy left a distinct mark on park activities and, by 1998, resulted in the Monument being recognized as a model park for compliance with environmental laws.<sup>14</sup> In 1999, Donahue took resource management a step further by dividing what had long been a joint law enforcement and resource management position into two separate positions and, for the first time in park history, hired a dedicated natural resources manager.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> John Donahue, interview with author, 14 May 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Donahue to GEWA/THST staff, 3 January 1995, file "Blue" in Third Drawer of Central Administrative Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA.

<sup>13</sup> 1990 Operations Evaluation on top shelf of Central Administrative Files, Overflow filing cabinet, GEWA. Also see file "A44 memorandum of Agreements VIMS" in Central file Notes, GEWA.

<sup>14</sup> FY 1998 Annual Narrative Report, Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

<sup>15</sup> Thanks to GEWA Resource Manager Rijk Morawe for clarifying this matter.

This is not to say that Donahue slighted cultural resources. In fact, the Monument sponsored its most comprehensive cultural resource report under Donahue's administration. Work on the Monument's cultural landscape report (CLR) began in 1995 in coordination with the Northeast Region's Philadelphia Support Office and the OCULUS cultural resource management consulting firm. It was a good time to undertake a reassessment of park resources, especially historic resources. In 1991, the NPS had been directed by Public Law 101-628 to revise its thematic framework for interpreting history to reflect the substantial impact of New Social History on historical knowledge and methodology. The NPS released its revised framework in 1994 thereby requiring historical parks to revise their own interpretive programs accordingly.<sup>16</sup> Liz Sargent, an OCULUS project leader, recalls that the CLR also grew out of long-standing calls in park planning documents, including the 1966 interpretive prospectus, for extended studies of the Park's historic landscape.<sup>17</sup> She also notes that the early 1990s witnessed an increased interest in Colonial Revival architecture as parks developed during the 1930s had "just exceeded the 50-year 'historic' mark, and various individuals and organizations around the country were exploring a context for the Colonial Revival."

Sargent also points out that uncertain times within the NPS motivated initiation of the project. During the course of the project,

We witnessed various NPS initiatives that promoted centralization through the upgrading of the Denver Service Center, the subsequent downgrading of DSC, the rise of the role of the regions and the subsequent decline of the role of the regions, with a concurrent rise of the role of the individual park. We also experienced a government shutdown during the project. All of this made it very difficult for the NPS personnel to anticipate the future.<sup>18</sup>

Amid this climate of uncertainty, the CLR promised improved funding opportunities for the Park.

Treatment projects proposed in the CLR enabled the Park to generate cost estimates useful for submitting funding requests. Sargent notes that Shaun Eyring, Northeast Regional Historical Landscape Architect,

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<sup>16</sup> NPS, "History in the National Park Service, Themes and Concepts" (Washington, DC: 1994), <[www.cr.nps.gov/history/hisnps/NPSThinking/revthem.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/hisnps/NPSThinking/revthem.htm)> (18 May 2006) .

<sup>17</sup> My thanks to Liz Sargent for answering questions concerning the 1999 CLR. Her response to my questions is the basis for this account of events and motivations surrounding creation of the study.

<sup>18</sup> Liz Sargent to Seth Bruggeman, electronic mail, 25 January 2005.

played a central role in developing the CLR's scope of work thereby ensuring that the Park would receive a useful tool for "securing future management and maintenance monies."

Although vital for preservation of park resources and development of interpretive programming, resource management initiatives of this variety did not garner as much public interest as had the Living Farm. The long-term rehabilitation of the Washington family burial ground is a case in point. In 1982, the Park received cyclic authorization to replace the lids on two memorial sarcophagi constructed by the WNMA at the burial ground in 1932.<sup>19</sup> Work continued at the burial ground in 1984 with removal of two original grave stones for conservation treatment—a three year undertaking by the HFC.<sup>20</sup> In 1992, the Regional Office earmarked \$30,000 for repointing and repairs of the brick wall surrounding the burial ground. The Park worked with the Williamsport Preservation Training Center on this project and by the end of 1993 had completed the task.<sup>21</sup> Despite the significance of this project and the remarkable financial and personnel resources required to satisfy related Section 106 compliance, coordinate efforts with contractors, and physically perform the work, visitors and community members alike bemoaned what they perceived as a waning of activities at the Monument during the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the public misperception, behind-the-scenes planning activities struggled to keep in step with national mandates. The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) required that federal agencies incorporate performance management goals—goals targeting measurable outcomes rather than recognizable efforts—into their planning strategies. The NPS responded to GPRA by issuing a strategic plan in 1997 that required individual parks to develop performance plans in accord with the NPS's own performance goals. With a recently completed CLR in hand, the Park set to drafting its own strategic plan. Acting Superintendent David Herrera coordinated the effort following Superintendent

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<sup>19</sup> SAR, 1982, in Box "GEWA" in HFCA.

<sup>20</sup> SAR, 1984, in Box "GEWA" and 1987 in Box "GEWA-Annual Reports" in HFCA.

<sup>21</sup> See Chief, Park Historic Preservation Division, MARO, to Chief, Williamsport Preservation Training Center, 7 December 1992, file "H30 Historic Structures & Sites" in Seth Box 5, GEWA. Task Directive, Preservation of Cemetery Walls, Phase I, GEWA, 19 April 1993, file "D18 Planning Program" on top shelf of Central Files overflow filing cabinet, GEWA, provides an extensive description of the project. Also see SAR, 1993, file "A2621 Annual Narrative Report" in Central Files, GEWA.

<sup>22</sup> See Betty Horner, interview with author, 30 June 2004, and Janice Frye, interview with author, 21 January 2004.

Donahue's acceptance of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area superintendency in March 2000. Herrera and his planning team incorporated findings from the CLR, a 1999 Interpretive Plan, a 1994 Collections Management Report, a 1999 analysis of the condition of park structures and facilities, and field observations compiled during monitoring of exotic plants and wildlife. The Park submitted its 2000-2005 Strategic Plan on April 15, 2000.<sup>23</sup> The plan stresses the problem of understaffing and underfunding as had nearly every planning document produced by the Park throughout its history. It also refers to excessive demands resulting from NEPA and NHPA, Section 106 compliance as primary factors affecting performance. Moreover, its long-term goals focus on protecting and managing natural and environmental resources, preserving museum collections and historic resources including archeological sites and materials, and improving visitor experience and facilitating staff diversity.

But, even though the Strategic Plan pledges to ensure that "visitors understand and appreciate the significance of the Park," the decline of the Park's Living Farm complicated the public picture at Washington's Birthplace. To this day, visitors still encounter remnants of the living history program, but those remnants—consisting of infrequent costumed demonstrations, glimpses of generally non-working heritage livestock<sup>24</sup>, and costumed and uncostumed rangers working side by side within the memorial landscape—are more often confusing than informative (Image 50). Moreover, the juxtaposition of the Memorial House and the outlined foundations of Washington's actual birth house also confuses visitors.<sup>25</sup> After seventy-five years of efforts to de-emphasize the Memorial House, the WNMA's primary contribution to the memorial landscape continues to dominate visitor experience leading many to leave the Park thinking—as Frederick Law Olmsted predicted in 1929—that the Memorial House is the original building or, at least, a replica of it. As throughout the Monument's history, today's administrative

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<sup>23</sup> Strategic Plan for George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Fiscal year 2001-2005, approved by Acting Superintendent David P. Herrera, 15 April 2000, in file "A64 GPRA Strategic Plans 2001-2005," Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

<sup>24</sup> The monument's heritage breed livestock program is the most visible remnant of the living farm and continues to garner attention. See Rob Hedelt, "Bringing Back Old Breeds" in *The Free Lance-Star*, 2 December 2004: C1, C12.

<sup>25</sup> For a brief discussion of this problem, see Comprehensive Interpretive Plan, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, March 1999.



challenges and planning decisions result largely from a complicated and often ambiguous interpretive context.

### **Recent Trends**

Managing those challenges currently falls to Donahue's replacement, Superintendent Vidal Martinez. Martinez entered duty in 2000 just as the Regional Office chose the Monument as a test site for its new Management Assistance Program (MAP).<sup>26</sup> MAP reviews identified for new superintendents pressing park management issues through periodic on-site evaluation. The Monument's MAP team provided Martinez with a punch list of recommendations upon his arrival. It identified several primary management concerns including a need to improve community relations, the importance of obtaining a general management plan, a review of planning documents, the desirability of archeological work, and the need for a management position review.

Martinez took the list seriously and continues to do so, but also discovered other problems. For one, Washington's Birthplace had grown invisible to the visiting public amid a competing landscape of popular Civil War attractions. Official signage referred to the birthplace as Popes Creek Plantation thus rendering unclear the site's association with George Washington. Martinez himself confused Ferry Farm with the Monument during his first trip to the area. He determined to make Washington's Birthplace widely recognizable to the general public and has since involved himself in the resurrection of the Westmoreland County Tourism Council and, in 2001, arranged for the George Washington's Fredericksburg Foundation to fund an interpretive wayside exhibit at a local welcome center and rest stop along Interstate 95.<sup>27</sup> No less significant is the amount of Martinez's time required by Thomas Stone National Historic Site. Despite great gains during the previous decade, THST continues to draw on Monument resources. Martinez estimates that he still devotes thirty percent of his time to management of THST.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Vidal Martinez, interview with author, 2 July 2004.

<sup>27</sup> See response to Resources Planning and Restructuring Report, Phase II, 20 July 2001 in file "A64 Workforce Planning and Restructuring;" Central Files, GEWA administrative offices.

<sup>28</sup> Vidal Martinez, interview with author, 2 July 2004.

Superintendent Martinez arrived in time to lead the Monument through the aftermath of yet another dramatic system-wide reorganization of NPS units. Robert G. Stanton replaced Director Kennedy in 1997 and initiated a new reorganization to address problems with Kennedy's system. This second reorganization created NPS support offices and park clusters designed to make support services and resources more accessible to parks. On one hand, these changes benefited the Monument by placing more decision-making responsibilities in the hands of the superintendent thus encouraging peer review and improving accountability at the Park level. Moreover, the reorganization encouraged several successful resource-sharing initiatives between the Monument and other parks within its cluster. As of 2001, the Monument received contracting services from Shenandoah National Park for procurement required by large projects. Shenandoah National Park also provided the Services of its Virginia Invasive Vegetation Management Team beginning in 2001 to address what had grown into a serious problem at the Park.<sup>29</sup> In return, the Monument contributed the services of its administrative officer to the NPS-wide Introduction to Park Program Management instructional team that trains field-level employees in the Northeast Region. The resource accessibility sought by the reorganization has not, however, always panned out. The Monument occasionally struggles to obtain technical support from within its cluster, especially with regard to contracting and personnel management. This problem results, in part, from the cluster's host park's inability or unwillingness to provide services to other parks when they find themselves shorthanded.<sup>30</sup>

### **Current Land Concerns**

Relationships with adjacent landowners also remain a concern. Park neighbors still, in some cases, recall the Park's disastrous 1970s land campaign and remain cautious, if not guarded, about future land negotiations with the NPS.<sup>31</sup> The Park has its own concerns and continually worries about the

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<sup>29</sup> The Virginia Invasive Vegetation Management Team has since been reorganized into the Northeastern Exotic Plant Management Team. Thanks to Rijk Morawe for clarification.

<sup>30</sup> Resources Planning and Restructuring Report, Phase II, 20 July 2001 in file "A64 Workforce Planning and Restructuring;" Central Files, GEWA administrative offices.

<sup>31</sup> James Latane recalls at least one NPS representative being disciplined for his or her involvement in the 1973 scenario and personally attributes the heavy-handed land practices of the 1960s and 1970s to "empire building"

possibility of adjacent landowners allowing development that might draw on the Park's resources or otherwise interfere with historic viewsheds. Acquisition of remaining inholdings remains a top priority. Following acquisition of the Horner tract in 1995, 115 acres of land owned by the Muse family remained within park boundaries. Goodwin Muse willed the land to his wife Florence following his death in 1999. Shortly thereafter, the Park discovered that Florence Muse had advertised the land for sale without notifying the Park. Superintendent Martinez spoke with Muse and, following additional conversations with the Conservation Fund, determined that she would be willing to sell the land to the NPS. The Park required a boundary adjustment before entering into negotiations and so called upon long-time supporter Congressman Herbert Bateman. Bateman died, however, while developing a legislative proposal and as efforts consequently stalled, Muse continued to seek out buyers and passed portions of the land to another member of the Muse family.<sup>32</sup> Amid the delay, misunderstandings concerning road access and land maintenance raised tensions.<sup>33</sup>

Martinez approached Bateman's replacement, Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis, after her election in 2000. Davis recognized the desirability of acquiring the land and drafted her own legislative proposal, HR 3449. The bill passed the House and, with the support of Senators George Allen and John Warner, passed in the Senate becoming public law 107-354 in 2002 (Appendix 8). Public Law 107-354 authorized an expansion of the Monument's boundaries to include the 115-acre Muse tract. To date, however, no action has been taken toward purchasing the land. Martinez identifies a lack of funding as the primary difficulty facing acquisition. Moreover, since 2002, Muse has contracted with a real estate broker who continues to advertise the land for sale to private buyers and, on one occasion, attempted to

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within the Park. James Latane, Jr., interview with author, 22 July 2004. Betty Horner recalls the 1970s similarly, saying that "we kept abreast of what was going on over there for our own protection," adding that now, "we all feel they have their eye cast around." See Betty Horner, interview with author, 30 June 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Larry Muse—son to Goodwin and Florence—acquired a portion of the property at this time and, in turn, took over the special use permit previously issued to Goodwin Muse in which Muse was allowed use of the land in trade for preservation of the historic setting by way of mowing and general maintenance. Larry Muse eventually defaulted on this agreement therefore burdening the Monument with additional grounds keeping responsibilities. See 2000-2001 correspondence between Martinez, Larry Muse, and the Farm Service NPS in file "A44 Memorandum of Agreement H. Goodwin Muse," Central Files, GEWA Administrative offices.

<sup>33</sup> GEWA failed to fulfill road access and land maintenance provisions established during the transfer of the Shrouse tract. See 14 June 2001 complaint regarding GEWA's failure to maintain access to Muse's Neck Cemetery in file "A36 Complaints," Central Files, GEWA Administrative offices.

divide the tract into several parcels for individual sale. The Monument worked with Regional Realty Officer Boyd Sponaule to address this problem and determined that a new land survey must accompany efforts to purchase the land. Without the survey, and still without adequate funding, the fate of the Muse inholding remains uncertain and constitutes a significant administrative concern.<sup>34</sup>

In some cases, land loss rather than land acquisition constitutes a primary concern. The Park initiated an erosion control study in 2001 to determine the extent of damage to cliffs along the Potomac River and along the Popes Creek shoreline.<sup>35</sup> This was not the first time the Monument identified problems associated with erosion. Superintendent Hough first expressed concern about shoreline erosion in 1932.<sup>36</sup> Not until 1973 did the problem attract any significant attention.<sup>37</sup> Despite the 2001 preliminary study and others like it throughout the Monument's history, the Park has not yet determined a plan of action to address the erosion problem. Shoreline erosion is not unique to the Monument. NPS Regional Chief Scientist John Karish recalls working on similar problems at Richmond National Battlefield Park and at Assateague Island National Seashore, noting special successes at the latter.<sup>38</sup>

### **The George Washington Boyhood Home at Ferry Farm**

An entirely different matter of land acquisition added to these concerns in 2002. The possibility of adding George Washington's boyhood home at Ferry Farm on the Rappahannock River to the Monument has figured in planning initiatives since the mid 1970s. Virginia congressman William Scott, responding to Ferry Farm's placement on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, introduced

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<sup>34</sup> Vidal Martinez, interview with author, 2 July 2004. Also, file "L1417 Land Acquisitions-Muse Property," Central Files, GEWA administrative offices, contains a variety of relevant newspaper articles in addition to several more folders in this series full of documents concerning the Muse property acquisition through the 1990s and early 2000s.

<sup>35</sup> Annual Narrative Report, 200, in file "A2621 Annual Narrative Report," Central Files, GEWA administrative offices. Despite the Monument's numerous attempts to study the erosion problem throughout its history, I have not located any comprehensive survey or account of these studies. NPS Northeast Region Hydrologist Alan C. Ellsworth summarizes the erosion problem as well as concerns attending other matters of natural resources at the Monument in "George Washington Birthplace National Monument (GEWA) Natural Resource Synthesis," prepared for the GEWA GMP project, 15 July 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Hough referred to local claims that local shorelines wore away "at the rate of three feet a year." Although Hough mapped a 1,400-foot stretch of shoreline in order to study the problem, it is not clear if he ever completed the study or if documentation of this study exists. See SMR, October 1932, GEWA.

<sup>37</sup> The Park initiated a small-scale erosion-monitoring program in 1973 but it is not clear whether that program produced any results or was ever completed.

<sup>38</sup> John Karish, interview with author, 29 December 2004.

legislation to make Ferry Farm a national historic site. The legislation required that a committee—including NPS Virginia State Office Director Charles Marshall, the superintendent of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, and Monument Management Assistant Marlo Acock—evaluate the feasibility of acquiring the site. The committee suggested several possibilities for managing the proposed site, including management by the Monument, but the NPS did not take any action in the face of opposition from the site’s private owners and did not at that time consider the site vulnerable to imminent threat.<sup>39</sup>

Ferry Farm remained untouched until 1990 when its owners sought a deal to allow commercial development on the property. Stafford County, Virginia, acquired the site’s core historic area as part of this deal and hired Espey, Huston & Associates to evaluate the site’s archeological resources.<sup>40</sup> In 1996, the threat of a proposed shopping center triggered a grass-roots preservation campaign resulting in a full-purchase by the Kenmore Association of both the county’s portion of the site and that remaining vulnerable to commercial development. The Kenmore Association sponsored a series of archeological investigations beginning in 1997 that continue today.

While under the Kenmore Association’s ownership, Ferry Farm once again attracted NPS interest. Virginia Senator John Warner introduced S 2086 in 1998 to acquire a less than fee interest in eighty-five acres encompassing Ferry Farm. The bill became law as Section 509 of Public Law 105-355 and, beyond authorizing a conservation easement and a limited cooperative agreement with the Kenmore Association, required that the NPS again evaluate Ferry Farm’s feasibility for inclusion within the National Park System (Appendix 9). The resulting 2002 Special Resource Study determined that Ferry Farm, although nationally significant, would not contribute substantially to the system’s ability to interpret George Washington and so, for the time being, does not merit inclusion within the National Park System. Still, the NPS retains monitoring responsibilities at the site by way of its cooperative agreement

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<sup>39</sup> See National Register of Historic Places nomination form, pp. 12-13. The NRHP form refers to a June 1972 study. The Harpers Ferry Center holds a report titled “Proposed George Washington Boyhood Home, Ferry Farm, Suitability-Feasibility Report” dated 1974.

<sup>40</sup> See Alain C. Outlaw et al. of Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc., “A Study of the Architecture, the History and the Archaeology of George Washington’s Ferry Farm,” January 1993.

with the Kenmore Association—rechartered as the George Washington’s Fredericksburg Foundation in 1999—and thus the future of the NPS’s relationship with Ferry Farm by way of the Monument remains uncertain.<sup>41</sup>

### **The George Washington Birthplace Memorial Association**

The 2002 boundary expansion demonstrated an ongoing interest in protecting viewsheds and natural and historical resources, but it also revealed an ongoing difficulty with the GWBMA. Following Congressman Bateman’s death, Martinez sought support from the local community in his effort to convince Congresswoman Davis of the importance of acquiring the Muse inholding. He approached the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, which agreed to support Martinez by writing letters of support and by testifying in Washington, DC.<sup>42</sup> The Monument’s 2000 MAP review suggested that opportunities be sought to foster a more productive relationship with the GWBMA and so Martinez also approached the Association for support in his legislative campaign.<sup>43</sup> Although the GWBMA agreed to sign a letter written by Martinez, they were not willing to take a more active role and declined to contribute materially to the legislative campaign.

The Association’s reluctance to assist Martinez is not surprising given the history of relations between the two organizations. The current manifestation of the organization that was responsible for raising Washington’s Birthplace to national acclaim during the late 1920s and early 1930s, the GWBMA—renamed the George Washington Birthplace Association (GWBA) in 2004—has since been relegated to managing a book and souvenir store. Ill feelings left over from conflict between the two groups during the early 1980s likely persist among older members who feel as if the organization was unjustly divested of its last claims to authority at the Birthplace. The GWBA’s current president, Jan Beckett, a co-owner of Northern Neck Heritage Tours, has demonstrated an interest in widening the

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<sup>41</sup> See National Park Service, “George Washington Boyhood Home, Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment,” July 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Betty Horner, who then sat on the Board of Supervisors, assisted generously with this effort and traveled to Washington on behalf of the Monument.

<sup>43</sup> Vidal Martinez, interview with author, 2 July 2004.

association's scope of activities. Martinez hopes that the GWBA will eventually serve as an advocate for protection of the entire Monument.

### **Interpretation Today**

Current interpretive programming at the Monument adheres to goals put forth in the Park's Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP). The NPS outlined new procedures in 1995 for enabling parks to undertake their own comprehensive interpretive planning projects.<sup>44</sup> Superintendent Donahue initiated the process at Washington's Birthplace and approved a CIP on March 4, 1999. The plan, developed with input from Monument staff and representatives of the Philadelphia and Boston Support Offices, complemented the Monument's Cultural Landscape Report, also completed in 1999. Taken together, the two present a radical departure from previous interpretive activities.

The CIP proposes a number of interpretive redirections specifically intended to move away from living history. It proposes to "shift from generic colonial plantation interpretation...to George Washington's life and accomplishments;" "shift from focusing on Washington's young years to his entire life of achievement;" and "create an integrated and complete park experience that goes beyond the commemorative area."<sup>45</sup> The plan offers a single primary interpretive theme—"George Washington was the transcendent leader of the American Revolutionary era whose actions were crucial to the establishment of the United States as an independent nation founded on principles of universal liberty"—and three sub themes with emphasis upon the impact of Atlantic World colonial society on Washington's character and career, popular commemoration of Washington since his death, and the inconsistency between Washington's use of slave labor and his espoused ideology of universal liberty. The plan identifies the interpretive conundrum presented by the Memorial House's tendency to wrest visitor attention away from the actual birth site, suggests that efforts be made to recreate portions of the commemorative landscape as it appeared when built during the 1930s, encourages outreach and curriculum-based education programming, and calls for continued archeological investigations.

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<sup>44</sup> NPS, "Comprehensive Interpretive Planning" (Washington, DC: 2000), <[www.nps.gov/hfc/products/ip.htm#](http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/ip.htm#)> (18 May 2006).

<sup>45</sup> Comprehensive Interpretive Plan, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, March 1999.

Work toward this final goal by way of a cooperative agreement with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has been especially productive in recent years and has set the Monument on a path toward filling vital gaps in the archeological record at Popes Creek. A team led by Joe Jones, Julie Richter, Elizabeth Grzymala, and Paul Moyer undertook a comprehensive survey of the Monument's archeological resources in 1999. This initial foray contributed to a critical analysis of identified resources by R.G. Gilmore, Paul Moyer, and Carrie Alblinger in 2001. This project is especially important in that it, for the first time, positively identified and documented what had previously only been suspected of being eighteenth-century slave quarters. Moreover, this study documented a small late seventeenth-century farmstead as well as a variety of indications of Native American occupancy. Finally, Jameson Harwood and Marley Brown, III conducted an evaluation of threatened archeological resources in 2002 demonstrating that not only does Monument property contain vast archeological resources of significance, but that those resources face daily threats and must be stabilized for purposes of preservation and interpretation.<sup>46</sup>

The Monument has also been particularly successful in satisfying its curriculum-based education programming goals by securing outside grant monies. In 2001, the Park partnered with the National Park Foundation and received grant money to pay for educational materials used by teachers and students during park visits.<sup>47</sup> In conjunction with five other historic sites and a host of school systems and the College of William & Mary, the Park shared in a three-year \$1 million education grant from the U.S. Department of Education for teaching American history in 2002. This award enabled the Monument to work with the Westmoreland County Public School System to develop standards-based educational

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<sup>46</sup> See Joe B. Jones et al., *Comprehensive Archaeological Survey of George Washington Birthplace National Monument* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, College of William and Mary, March 1999); R.G. Gilmore, et al., *An Archaeological Assessment of George Washington's Birthplace National Monument* (Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, March 2001); and Jameson M. Harwood and Marley R. Brown, III, *An Archaeological Evaluation of Threatened Cultural Resources within the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Colonial Williamsburg Archaeological Reports* (Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Archaeological Research, April 2002).

<sup>47</sup> See response to Resources Planning and Restructuring Report, Phase II, 20 July 2001 in file "A64 Workforce Planning and Restructuring;" Central Files, GEWA administrative offices.



programming and teacher workshops.<sup>48</sup> The Park, in partnership with the Northern Neck Tourism Council, received a \$14,000 grant from the Chesapeake Bay Gateways program in 2003 leading to additional collaboration with Richmond County, Essex County, and Westmoreland County Public Schools.<sup>49</sup> Among the Monument's most popular educational initiatives is "How Math and Science Changed George Washington's Life," a standards of learning-based program for middle school students developed by park Ranger Andrew Packett in conjunction with Richmond County Public Schools with funding from the Exxon Foundation, the National Park Foundation, and the NPS's Parks as Classrooms program. The Park achieved all of this without, as recommended by the CIP, hiring an education specialist. Ranger Andrew Packett provided substantial support for educational programming but recently left the NPS thus raising questions concerning the success of continued programming.<sup>50</sup>

The CIP's other two primary suggestions, recreating the 1930s memorial landscape and revising interpretive treatment of the Memorial House—perhaps the most ambitious of the proposals—receive mixed attention at the Park. Dwight Storke anticipated these suggestions when he spearheaded restoration of Burnt House Point Trail in 1992 and sought unsuccessfully to rebuild the Dancing Marsh Bridge. Superintendent Martinez has expressed similar interest in replacing modern traffic gates with 1930s-style structures and presenting the granite obelisk as it appeared when first erected. Although the CLR also urges the Park in this direction, there is no formal plan for recreating the commemorative landscape. Nor has interpretation of either the Memorial House or the outlined foundations of the original house undergone any significant change. The CIP suggests substantial changes in this regard, going as far as to suggest inverting the standard tour so that visitors enter the Memorial House from the water side so that upon exiting they view the original foundations without the distracting backdrop of an erroneous

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<sup>48</sup> Annual Narrative Report, 2003, in file "A2621 Annual Narrative Report," Central Files, GEWA administrative offices.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> The 1999 CIP recommends the hiring of an educational specialist although, at that time, the Park did not have funding to establish the staff position and wondered if it would not be more appropriate to create a position for a historian. A year later, the Park reported that "these programs are very popular with the schools and require much staff time to develop and to present. The demand for curriculum based interpretive programs is growing. Until the Park has funding for an educational specialist, these programs will draw staff and resources away from the traditional park users and daily interpretive operations." See Annual Narrative Reports, 2000 and 2001, in file "A2621 Annual Narrative Report," Central Files, GEWA administrative offices.

reconstruction. Nonetheless, the problems Associated with interpreting the Memorial House have remained relatively constant for seventy-five years.

## CHAPTER 10

### **Recommendations<sup>1</sup>**

The suggestions put forth by the CIP are worthy and merit consideration, but also raise serious concerns when considered in light of the Monument's overall history of interpretive planning. A critical review of that history—in part the goal of this administrative history—demonstrates the centrality of interpretive decisions to all other administrative concerns at the Birthplace throughout its history. Nearly every administrative decision made during the past seventy-five years concerning land acquisition, staffing, resource distribution, landscaping, construction, and public relations has, in one way or another, grown out of the Park's various attempts to define its place within the legacy of George Washington and the commemoration of him. The lion's share of developmental difficulties experienced by the Park between its founding and the living history explosion of the Bicentennial period, for example, can be directly attributed to the then uncertain status of the Memorial House and its relationship to "Building X." Now that the NPS positively interprets the Building X foundations as the actual site of Washington's birth, it is necessary that the Park aggressively pursue a bold new interpretive approach. The CIP's goals aim to fix problems created by the historically rocky relationship between the Monument's commemorative and historic resources. But, to effectively do so, the Park must accept that relationship as a topic worthy of interpretation in its own right. The Monument must embrace a flexible interpretive plan that seriously considers the historic, commemorative, and historiographical significance of the Park as it bears on our nation's history and past efforts to portray that history.

In part, the Monument's inability to move beyond these interpretive difficulties results from the very ambiguity of its own interpretive statements. Since the beginning of interpretation at Washington's Birthplace, the NPS has deployed extremely imprecise though suggestive language to describe its interpretive mission for the very reason that an extremely imprecise though suggestive building marked the site it interpreted. Superintendent Hough masterminded this approach by invoking the power of place:

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter includes suggestions based on my own observations of the Monument and its operation between 2004 and 2005. These suggestions result, in part, from lengthy informal discussions with park staff and visitors.

“after all it is the Place here which is sacred. We still have some of the environment of the old place that was, and we should protect it just the same as natural wonders are protected in the National Parks.”<sup>2</sup> The 1987 Adjacent Lands Study used similar rationale to encourage protection of the Monument’s natural landscape. To that end, invoking the power of place is useful for promoting environmental stewardship. But interpretive messages that associate George Washington’s character with the Monument’s landscape—a message still conveyed at the Park today—are no longer necessary now that methodological advances in history and archeology make it possible to pose interpretive messages in a very clear, precise language that raise the Monument above the level of shrine.

Ironically, early commemorative efforts left such a strong mark on all subsequent interpretation that even documents like the CIP, that attempt to break the pattern, unwittingly perpetuate a historical sensibility reminiscent of the Colonial Revival. How, for instance, can a park accurately and responsibly interpret Washington’s “entire life of achievement” at a site that claims barely three years of the man’s infancy? And what exactly is a “transcendent” leader? In this way, the CIP’s goals are often vague, occasionally unsupportable, and at times, conflict with other stated management goals. For example, the Park’s 2000 Resources Management Plan—drafted in conjunction with the CLR and coincidentally with the CIP—pledges the Monument to “preserve the natural and cultural resources that are represented at the Park and those resources which are essential for commemorating George Washington’s *birth* [italics added].”<sup>3</sup> So, where the CIP promises to interpret Washington’s entire life, the Park’s resource manager is only committed to protect resources relevant to his birth. It is not at all surprising that a tour of the Monument remains a confusing affair, that park staff are themselves not necessarily in agreement about the purpose of their park, and that there seems to be no singular interpretive direction at the Monument today.

### **Suggestions for Interpretive Planning**

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<sup>2</sup> Hough to Moore, 5 November 1935, (Box 2219) file 608, National Park Service Records, RG 79, NACP.

<sup>3</sup> Resources Management Plan, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, approved by Acting Superintendent Lawrence P. Trombello, 2 February 2000.

Historian and Martin Van Buren National Historic Site Curator Patricia West argues that “there are implications in the history of historic house museums for interpretive and curatorial planning.” She suggests that,

A reformed vision of the function of the “administrative history” would include an account of what obstacles the museum’s history presents to full interpretation, explain why certain interpretive avenues were pursued with gusto while other languished or even had their material remains destroyed by the museumization process. It would clarify what intentions and wishes former constituencies brought to bear on the museum’s development and would align these historical influences with those of the communities we wish to reach today.<sup>4</sup>

West’s work is especially relevant to Washington’s Birthplace and this administrative history is, to some extent, a response to her suggestions. Having considered the Monument’s history as an obstacle to interpretation, realizing why the Park chose its various interpretive directions, and seeing how its “constituencies” have variously brought pressure to bear on the Park, it is important to determine a course of interpretive action that will make these historical influences apparent and understandable to the visiting public. Doing so is an interpretive and administrative task.

In order to pursue a responsible interpretive path, the Monument must unburden itself of two long-standing interpretive themes. First, emphasizing the Monument’s natural landscape as a historic resource and seeking to understand George Washington by understanding that landscape as an artifact of his time is not effective. This is the approach Superintendent Hough heralded in the face of the Building X controversy, that the Park’s Living Farm formalized, and that the 1987 Adjacent Lands Study made policy. It is well intentioned, but is predicated on two erroneous assumptions: that the landscape remains relatively unchanged since the eighteenth century and that one can understand Washington’s “character” by understanding the landscape. What *is* significant about the landscape is *how much it has changed* since Washington’s time. Significant changes stemming from crop diversification, industrialization, and demographic shift (especially with regard to racial and socioeconomic composition) are everywhere reflected in the landscape surrounding Washington’s Birthplace and tell a significant story about the country’s development that does not receive substantial interpretation at the Monument. Linking

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<sup>4</sup> West, *Domesticating History*, p. 162.

landscape to character—a prominent theme in guided tours and in the Visitor Center film—lacks critical heft and suggests that interpretive messages developed during the late 1960s and 1970s still hold sway at the Birthplace.

Secondly, it should not be the Park's responsibility, as recommended in the CIP, to use the Monument as a lens through which to examine the entirety of Washington's life. The Monument has wrestled with its significance since its inception for the very reason that the site did not play a terribly important role in Washington's life. Being able to claim only the first three years of Washington's life and an occasional return visit renders the Monument relatively insignificant with regard to understanding the man, his life, or his accomplishments. It must be kept in mind that the significance attached to the site originally grew out of a very specific ideological context prevalent during the Colonial Revival and expressed at Popes Creek by the WNMA. To this extent, the NPS continues to pursue an interpretive mission shaped by the WNMA's commemorative vision and, to that extent, the Monument still conveys something of the shrine. The Monument must accept that its ability to interpret Washington's life pales in comparison to sites like Mount Vernon where Washington's imprint on the land is visible and where his imprint on the world reached maturity.

In other words, the fact of Washington's birth is perhaps the least significant aspect of George Washington's Birthplace National Monument. What is significant is the story of why Washington was born where he was when he was. The Monument possesses a rich collection of historic resources suitable for interpreting the realities of eighteenth-century European settlement, Native displacement, and the emergence of an Atlantic World witness to an unprecedented mingling of free and enslaved peoples of remarkably diverse origins. Focusing specifically on Washington's birth or attempting to speak specifically about the course of his life does injustice to the interpretive possibilities present at Popes Creek. Positing the landscape as a primary contributor to the man's character severely understates the entirely more tangible and recognizable impact of the historical circumstances of his birth on his understanding of self, property, and duty. Not until the monument seriously considers these themes will it free itself of the interpretive limitations indicative of the past seventy-five years.

The Monument must also recognize that its interpretive messages are always already racialized. The story currently told at Popes Creek is the story of how White Americans remember George Washington. The Memorial House and the surrounding commemorative landscape—built in large part by poor Black and White Americans for the enjoyment of predominantly well-off White tourists—are themselves artifacts of a markedly racialized history. Interpretive handling of slavery at Popes Creek is woefully inadequate and frequently inaccurate. Visitors do not leave understanding the omnipresence of enslaved labor in the eighteenth century or the very real differences between early eighteenth-century bondage and the more readily recognizable plantation slavery of the mid-nineteenth century. This is not a problem that can be solved by simply building a more substantial slave quarter. An interpretive message concerning slavery cannot be added to an extant interpretive program for the very reason that slavery and race relations must be integral to every story told about Popes Creek in order to achieve any level of accuracy and interpretive integrity. The CIP alludes to this but is too reserved in its mandate for additional discussion of slavery at the Monument.

To this end, the Monument would do well to turn its interpretive gaze back on itself. By merit of its own legislative mandate and the commemorative gusto of its early planners, the Monument has remained committed to the life of a single man. Consequently, it has made virtually no effort to tell a remarkably important story about itself. The history of Washington's Birthplace is foremost a story about how Americans construct and remember their past. The Monument occupies an especially conspicuous role in that story given that it was at Popes Creek in 1930 that the Federal Government first decided to play a substantial role in how that past is remembered. Disagreements between the NPS and the WNMA concerning how to go about presenting Washington's Birthplace to the public point to rifts between how a government and its governed desire to be remembered. The avenues for inquiry in this regard are considerable: Who writes the past? Who does not? How is it decided what stories to tell? What stories are not told and why? The creation of Washington's Birthplace National Monument in no way marks the

beginning of public history in this country, but it does represent a significant flashpoint in its development and should be considered and interpreted at the Birthplace today.<sup>5</sup>

Within this story, however, is another equally significant story about the people responsible for building Washington's Birthplace. Hundreds of patriotic women's associations formed between the mid-nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, but few were as successful as Josephine Rust's WNMA in establishing a substantial goal and achieving it. Moreover, by building the Memorial House, the WNMA figured itself as a powerful force in the early days of historic preservation and remained on the vanguard under the leadership of Louise Crowninshield. It is absolutely essential that the Monument interpret this history and pay consideration to the significant and often primary role of women in preserving the nation's collective memory by way of historic preservation. Equally important is recognizing the implications of the WNMA's encounter with the NPS at Wakefield. Each brought to the project very different notions about the past and how to present it to the public. Today's juxtaposition of the Memorial House and the oyster-shell outline above the original foundations (Image 49) speaks volumes about these differences and offers a wonderful and striking opportunity to discuss the significance of the Colonial Revival, the influence of its women leaders, and the rapidly changing technologies of historical investigation that brought the NPS's professional male staff into confrontation with a remarkably powerful ladies association.<sup>6</sup>

Requisite to telling any important story about Washington's Birthplace is a radical reinvention of the Memorial House. The Memorial House bears no tenable relationship to the structure it signifies or to the lives of the people it is used to interpret. At best, it and its contents serve tribute to the efforts of the WNMA, that organization's particular historical vision, and the efforts of others to re-present that vision.

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<sup>5</sup> To the extent that I advocate a reflexive approach to future interpretation, I do not agree with the CIP's recommendation that the Monument pursue opportunities to reconstruct the 1930s commemorative landscape. Although preservation of that landscape is desirable, the Monument cannot and should not suffer any more reconstructions. The WNMA's 1930s building agenda and the 1970s Living Farm project created more than enough interpretive veneers at Popes Creek.

<sup>6</sup> The Monument must tell a more substantial story about the role of women throughout its history—interpreting domestic activities is not nearly adequate. A positive move in this direction would demonstrate how the ladies associations—including the WNMA—of the Colonial Revival perpetuated the very notion of republican motherhood forged during the late eighteenth century.



At worst, it breeds ambiguity and perpetuates misconceptions about the reality of plantation life in the eighteenth-century. As presented, it will continue to draw attention away from the original birth site foundations and will always be mistaken by some as the actual house or a replica of it. All past efforts to de-emphasize the Memorial House have failed for the very reason that no sign, wayside exhibit, or interpretive presentation is powerful enough to contain the Memorial House's commanding presence or wipe it from popular memory. Nothing less than a physical alteration will serve that purpose, a de-shrining.

The CIP suggests inverting the typical tour route so that visitors experience the original foundations without the Memorial House in the background. This is a wise suggestion though alone not enough to achieve the desired effect. Virtually all aspects of the visitor experience convince visitors that the Memorial House is in fact the real thing. The Visitor Center film—a wonderful artifact of 1970s public history—provides no guidance in this regard and, if anything, posits the Memorial House as the site's main attraction.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the very layout of the Park as designed during the Bicentennial renovations, physically prioritizes the Memorial House in a way that suggests that it should be the focal point of visitor experience.

A possible solution would convert the Memorial House into an interpretive extension of the Visitor Center. Leaving the Visitor Center, visitors would walk directly to the Memorial House where, having entered through the river side, they would browse exhibits concerning the history of the Park with specific displays about the WNMA, the arrival of the NPS, and interpretive efforts since including the Living Farm. These displays would replace the furnishings in all but one room. Furnished rooms always convey a sense of historical immediacy that visitors interpret as authentic if not original. One room

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<sup>7</sup> In many ways, the Visitor Center film constitutes a primary obstacle to effective interpretation at the Monument. Visitors watch the film before entering the Monument's historic area. Their initial understanding of the site and its significance is therefore shaped by a film that omits any reference to the history of the Monument (it showcases the Memorial House and makes no reference to the actual house foundations), poses highly ambiguous and oblique references to forced labor, and romanticizes eighteenth-century plantation life with a sentimental first-person narration. The interpretive themes expressed by guides who attempt to de-romanticize colonial life and focus attention on the birth site foundations therefore run counter to the information first presented to visitors upon their arrival. The Monument must produce a new orientation film and, until then, cease showing the current film.

should remain furnished in order to interpret the WNMA's role at the Monument. The remaining rooms, however, should serve to explain that the Memorial House is not a replica but rather a tribute to the real building whose original foundations can be viewed after leaving the Memorial House.

### **Administrative Obstacles to Interpretive Innovation**

Any seemingly simple reconfiguration of the Memorial House will be considered radical and, presumably, radically controversial. Three factors will bear significantly on any move in this direction: interpretive inertia, a potential backlash from the community and visiting public, and the continual though occasionally limiting presence of the GWBA. Any dramatic reinvention of the Memorial House will sacrifice years of planning and expense invested in its presentation. Seventy-five years of singular focus, however, should not eclipse the severity of the interpretive problems manifest in the current configuration. Moreover, members of the immediate community and surely scores of visitors who have fond memories of the Birthplace will chafe at any alteration of the Memorial House. Revision of the Memorial House will be perceived as an act of governmental tampering with local history. Nonetheless, the NPS cannot sacrifice integrity for the sake of public opinion and a change of this caliber should be recognized as an effort to make the Memorial House not only more effective as an interpretive tool, but more inclusive to groups traditionally neglected by its implied narratives.

The role of the GWBA will be most difficult to negotiate. It is no longer clear from where the GWBA derives its authority to involve itself in matters of interpretive planning. Its cooperative agreement with the NPS provides for an advisory role, but not one that is in any way binding. The Monument must determine whether or not the GWBA still derives authority from its 1926 granting legislation. If not, then the superintendent might be advised to make a more aggressive stance in determining and possibly renegotiating the GWBA's role at the monument. Any attempt to interpret the WNMA's significant part in the Monument's history can only serve to bring the GWBA into more prominent focus and should be presented to the organization in these terms.

Adjacent landowners and community members previously involved with the GWBA are also likely to oppose substantial interpretive recalibration. Some neighbors lament the passing of the

Monument's Living Farm. Betty Horner considers the downscaling of costumed interpretation a sure sign of managerial malpractice and suggests that others share her feelings.<sup>8</sup> This negative public perception demonstrates the Monument's failure to adequately communicate to community members and visitors alike the reasons for shifts in interpretive programming. It also reveals why tensions concerning land acquisition linger in local memory even after thirty years. The Monument, with its continual fear of local land development, fails to recognize that its most effective weapon against development is its neighbors' own sense of history and identity. Residents of the Northern Neck are fiercely proud of their heritage. Moneyed land-owning residents who trace their ancestry to the nation's earliest leaders have no more interest in selling their land to developers than does the Park. Adjacent landowners construe the Monument's fears concerning development as an insulting refusal to recognize the interests and values of the community. Nothing short of continued investments in public relations and perhaps a prominent exhibit on the history of the Northern Neck and its families will allay these tensions.

Concerns regarding the demise of the Living Farm and future interpretive directions are not limited to neighbors. The Monument's staff also harbors concern and, in some cases, confusion about the Monument's mission and significance. Some employees remain wed to the living farm model so popular during the previous two decades and consider a reduction of costumed interpretive activities equivalent to a failure of vision. The influence of Dwight Storke, whose managerial style found tremendous favor with the staff and the community, is palpably present at the Monument and some employees associate his departure with the beginning of a downward spiral. Not enough has been done to communicate NPS-wide changes in management strategies and interpretive priority to the entire staff. Unfortunately, some employees understand the Monument's flux as an entirely isolated phenomenon tied directly to the whims of the superintendent. This perspective fails to recognize the impact of NPS-wide trends and the very real administrative difficulties faced by superintendents.

All Park employees must understand and share common interpretive goals. Not all employees share a common understanding of the Park's significance. Some consider the Monument primarily

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<sup>8</sup> Betty Horner, interview with author, 30 June 2004.

significant as a site to honor Washington, others cite the importance of understanding Washington's life and achievements, and few fully understand the larger significance of Washington's Birthplace within the context of early American history. Moreover, only a small minority agree that the history of commemorative efforts at the Birthplace merit serious interpretive attention. Disagreement concerning the significance and, consequently, the mission of the Monument constitutes a substantial barrier to affecting change and demonstrates the persistence of previous interpretive strategies no longer officially embraced by the CIP.

Disagreement of this variety also speaks to the desirability of creating a full-time historian position. The Monument desperately needs a committed and knowledgeable historian able to communicate historical significance, explain interpretive rationale, and function as keeper of the Monument's institutional memory. At present, the Monument cannot quickly and accurately respond to questions concerning the history of interpretive programs, land acquisition, building construction, commemoration, or planning initiatives. In this regard, a historian is necessary not only to communicate and reinforce the Park's mission, but also to facilitate management of historical information frequently called upon for purposes of planning, maintenance, and resource conservation. The long-term expense in labor hours of redundant efforts necessary to fulfill these responsibilities under the current arrangement certainly exceeds the cost of hiring a full-time historian.<sup>9</sup>

Ready access to the Monument's archives for all employees might also lend toward explaining interpretive themes and park significance. The Birthplace possess an incredibly rich and largely underutilized collection of primary materials concerning the Washington family, its residence at Popes

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<sup>9</sup> The absence of a device through which to safeguard institutional memory has long complicated planning efforts at the Monument. The successive deaths of Superintendent Hough and Louise Crowninshield, for instance, left a massive void in the staff's institutional memory and, beyond simply representing a symbolic end to an old period of park development, foreshadowed the very sort of institutionalized amnesia that has since prevented park superintendents from learning from the successes and mistakes of their predecessors. In some cases, this problem caused tensions as in 1954 when nobody was sure who owned the Log House and the WMNA launched a campaign to reclaim its contents. Boundary disputes and land concerns also bring this problem into relief. When a member of the Muse family complained about the Park's handling of the family's cemetery in 2003, the Park—rather than consulting its own records—resorted to contacting former employee Janice Frye to determine exactly what was at stake. More recently, the Park asked me to help compile a brief history of maintenance operations at the employee residences in response to concerns regarding the possibility of a needed repair disturbing archeological resources. The frequency of these kinds of requests emphasizes the need for a permanent staff historian.

Creek, twentieth-century efforts to commemorate Washington, and the NPS's substantial role in shaping early approaches to public history. Unfortunately, limited resources have rendered the Park unable to organize its holdings. The situation has improved. As late as 2000, curatorial and archive management constituted a collateral duty for rangers otherwise engaged in interpretation. Superintendent Martinez transferred these responsibilities to the resource management division and, using Student Career Employment Program funds donated by each division, hired a student intern from Mary Washington College's Historic preservation program to manage the collection.<sup>10</sup>

Despite this positive change, the collection still languishes amid financial and staffing shortages that hinder access. The archive curator would benefit significantly from guidance provided by a historian versed in the periods of significance touched upon by the collection. Moreover, organizing the collection and making it more readily accessible to research historians might lead to exciting cooperative projects. Scholarly interest in the history and development of public history, historic preservation, and historic house museums is on the rise in this country. The monument should capitalize on this trend by organizing its archives and aggressively advertising their availability to scholars whose own research might positively benefit the Park's interpretive and educational goals. Making these holdings more accessible to park staff would also lend toward generating a greater awareness of the Park's significance and history.<sup>11</sup>

A number of NPS regional employees who have at one time or another worked with the Monument refer to it as something of a hidden gem within the National Parks System. The Monument certainly is a gem, but by no means should it remain hidden. Various interpretive programs have only begun to explore the wide range of possibilities manifest in the Birthplace. The stories capable of being told there are stories of utmost significance and, fortuitously, of especial relevance to current trends in

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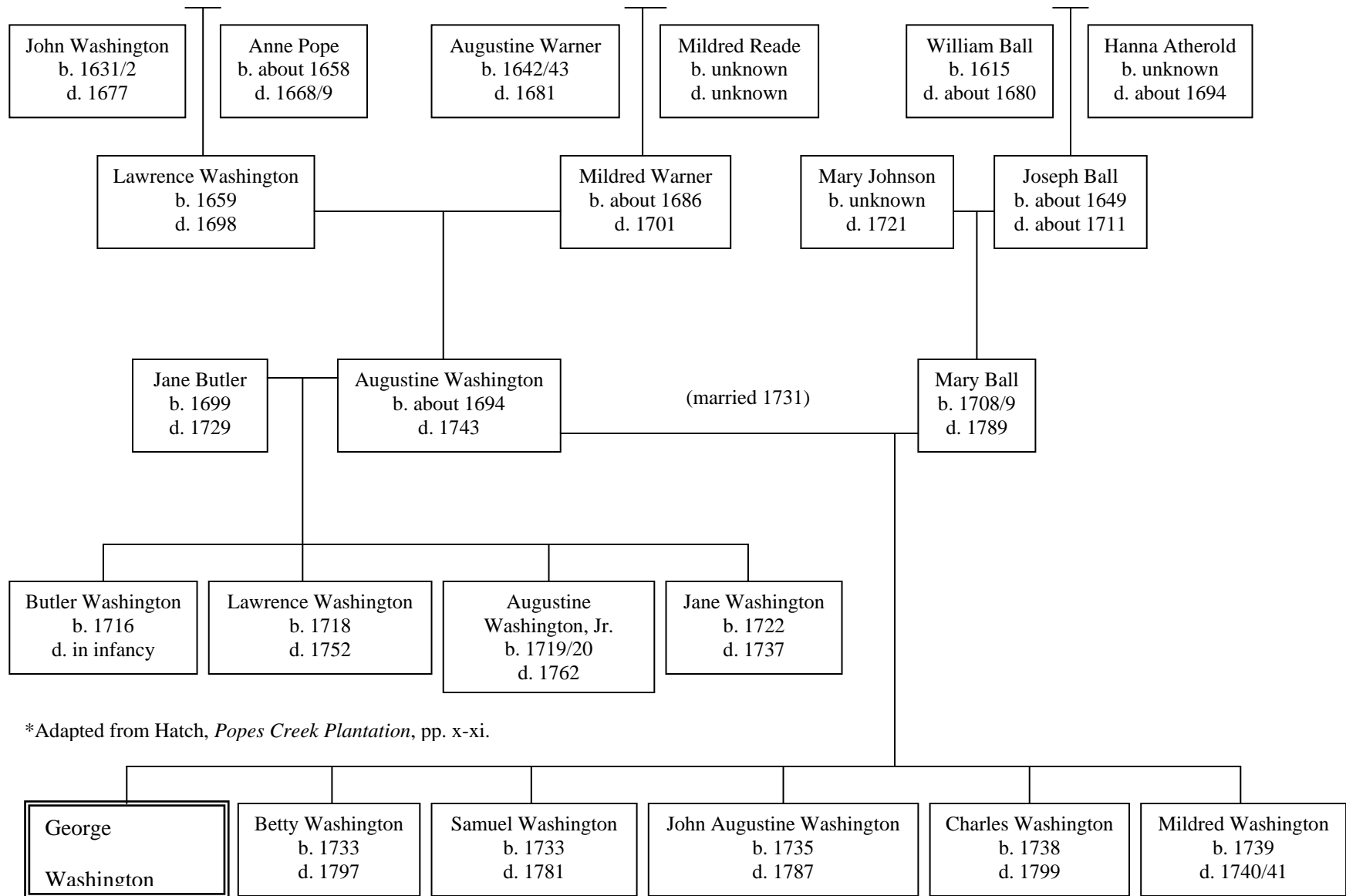
<sup>10</sup> Vidal Martinez, interview with author, 2 July 2004.

<sup>11</sup> A reinvention of the Memorial House as an interpretive extension of the Visitor Center might involve centralizing all archival materials in the house and creating a research room on the second floor not unlike the configuration of the Westmoreland County Museum and Library in Montross, VA (which was designed after the Memorial House and built in honor of Josephine Wheelwright Rust). The Monument's archeological holdings already reside in the Memorial House basement. Uniting material and textual holdings in a central research space would lend substantiality to the utility of the collection for researchers.

historical scholarship. With some foresight and substantial effort, the Monument can once again launch itself into the forefront of interpretation as it has periodically throughout its past. Doing so, however, will require more than a mere revision of current strategies. It will require a wholesale reconsideration of the Monument's significance and a redeployment of resources, both cultural and natural, toward goals understood and shared by the Park, its neighbors, and the visiting public. Despite various disagreements among all of these groups, the Monument is especially fortunate in that its various constituencies do share very deep commitments to the place where we remember George Washington. Commitment breeds growth when nourished by good will and sound memory. The future of George Washington's Birthplace National Monument lies in coming to terms with its own history, telling that story, and allowing itself to grow from the experience.

## **Appendices**

## APPENDIX 1: Washington Ancestry\*





## APPENDIX 2: Summary of Bills and Resolutions Introduced in Congress Relevant to the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 1879-1950

### HJ Res. 94

1879

46<sup>th</sup> Congress

Joint resolution directing a monument be erected to mark the birthplace of George Washington.

H	6/10/79	1890	Harris (VA) passed
S	6/10/79	1888	Considered and passed
H	6/19/79	2195	Approved by president (6/14/79)

### H Res. 315

1880-81, 84

46<sup>th</sup> Congress

Joint Resolution Amending and re-enacting joint resolution, approved June 14, 1879, directing a monument to mark the birthplace of George Washington

H	4/28/80	2823	Petition relating to a monument to commemorate the birthplace of Washington proficing the committee be discharged and it be referred to Library.
H	6/3/80	4117	Harris (VA) passed House; Letter of Secretary of State in reference to a monument to mark the birthplace of George Washington and introduction of HJ Resolution 315
S	6/3/80	4101	Referred in Senate to Public Buildings and Grounds
S	6/9/80	4308	Reported without amendment
H	1/7/81	455	Petitions of citizens of Westmoreland County, VA, for the improvement of Pope's Creek.
S	2/22/81	1913, 1918	Passed Senate
H	3/1/81	2292	Approved by president (2/26/81)
H	5/19/84	4311	Relative to additional appropriations for a wharf and roadway as a means of approach to the monument at George Washington Birthplace; H Doc. 160. (48 <sup>th</sup> Congress)

### SJ Res. 115

1887

49<sup>th</sup> Congress

Amending and re-enacting joint resolution approved June 14, 1879 directing a monument to mark the birthplace of George Washington, as amended and re-enacted February 26, 1885—Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled.

S	2/28/87	2373	Library
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### SJ Res. 89

1888

50<sup>th</sup> Congress

Amending and Re-enacting joint resolution approved June 14, 1879, directing the erection of a monument to mark the birthplace of George Washington, as amended and re-enacted February 26, 1881.

S	6/4/88	4873	Cameron (PA) Library; Resolved, that the Secretary of State be, and he is hereby, requested to inform the House of Representatives what steps, if any, have been taken to accomplish the object set forth in said resolution (HJ Res. 94, 46 <sup>th</sup> Congress).
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H 7/16/88 6368 Brown (VA) Military Affairs; H Misc. Doc. 523.

**SJ Res. 11**

**1891-92**

**52<sup>nd</sup> Congress**

To provide for the construction of a wharf and roadway as a means of approach to the monument to be erected at Wakefield, VA, to mark the birthplace of George Washington.

S 12/14/91 45 Hoar (MA) Public Buildings and Grounds

H 3/25/92 2581 Petition for monument to George Washington referred to Library

**SJ Res. 102**

**1892-1897**

**52<sup>nd</sup>, 54<sup>th</sup>, and 55<sup>th</sup> Congresses**

To provide for the construction of a wharf as a means of approach to the monument to be erected at Wakefield, VA, to mark the birthplace of George Washington

H 7/20/92 6429 Daniel (VA) Library

S 7/20/92 6448 Reported without amendment

S 2/10/93 1411 Passed senate

H 2/11/93 1488 Referred in House to Library

H 2/17/93 1744 Reported without amendment (H Rept. 2527)

H 2/22/93 2009 Passed House

S 2/25/93 2148 Approved by President (2/25/93)

**54<sup>th</sup> Congress**

H 3/6/96 2552 Request for appropriation for employment of a watchman for monument at Wakefield, Virginia; Appropriations (HR Doc. 284)

S 2/8/97 1634 1665 Report on completion of projects authorized at Wakefield, Virginia; Library (S Doc. 114)

S 3/1/97 2523 Estimate of appropriation for Government wharf at Wakefield, VA; Appropriations (S. Doc. 170)

**55<sup>th</sup> Congress**

H 12/8/97 42 Appropriations (H Doc. 114)

**HR 11420**

**1916**

**64<sup>th</sup> Congress**

To improve the birthplace of George Washington

H 2/12/16 2488 Cary (WI) Appropriations

**HR 16025**

**1919**

**65<sup>th</sup> Congress**

To improve the birthplace of General George Washington

H 2/18/19 3738 Cary (WI) Appropriations

H 2/24/19 4191 Amended in House to provide wharf; Bland (VA)

**HJ Res. 42**

**1921**

**67<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Authorizing and directing the construction of a road from the monument marking the birthplace of George Washington, in Westmoreland County, VA, to the State highway running from Fredericksburg, VA, to Montross, VA

H 4/12/21 175 Bland (VA) Roads

**S 1914**

**1924**

**68<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Authorizing the appropriation of \$15,000 for the purpose of constructing suitable roads upon the Government-owned grounds at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, and for the purpose of improving and maintaining said grounds.

S 1/14/24 919 Swanson (VA) Military Affairs

**HR 5264**

**1924**

**68<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Authorizing the appropriation of \$15,000 for the purpose of constructing suitable roads upon the Government-owned grounds at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, and for the purpose of improving and maintaining grounds.

H 1/11/24 873 Bland (VA) Military Affairs

H 3/8/24 5185 Amendment of Bland (VA) to bill for repairs to fences and cleaning up and maintaining grounds around monument. Amendment to construct road within the reservation so as to provide a means of access to the memorial—to connect with State of Virginia road to boundary of reservation. Amendment to report of Chief of Engineers for year 1923 on page 2061.

**HR 6985**

**1926**

**69<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Giving consent of the United States to the Wakefield National Memorial Association to build upon Government-owned grounds at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, and for the purpose of improving and maintaining said grounds.

H 1/6/26 1610 Bland (VA) Military Affairs

**S 2299**

**1926**

**69<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Granting the consent of Congress to the Wakefield National memorial Association, Westmoreland county, VA, a replica of the house in which George Washington was born, and for other purposes.

S 1/8/26 5257 Wadsworth (NY) Public Buildings and Grounds

**HR 7369**

**1926**

**69<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Granting the consent of Congress to the Wakefield National memorial Association to build, upon Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, a replica of the house in which George Washington was born, and for other purposes.

H 1/11/26 1878 Bland (VA) Military Affairs

**HJ Res. 198**

**1926**

**69<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Authorizing certain funds appropriated for the reservation and monument at Wakefield, VA, to be made available for certain repairs to ex highways and lanes in said reservation.

H 3/11/26 5443 Bland (VA) Appropriations

**HR 10131**

**1926**

**69<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Granting the consent of Congress to the Wakefield National Memorial Association to build, upon Government-owned land at Wakefield Westmoreland County, Virginia, a replica of the house in which George Washington was born, and for other purposes.

H 3/8/26 5257 Bland (VA) Military Affairs  
H 4/15/26 7553 Reported without amendment  
H 5/3/26 8625 Passed House (H Rept. 898)  
S 5/4/26 8681 Referred in Senate to Military Affairs  
S 5/24/26 9883 Reported without amendment (S Rept. 910)  
H 6/17/26 11460 Approved by President (6/7/26)

**S 3513**

**1926**

**69<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Granting the consent of Congress to the Wakefield National Memorial Association to build, upon Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, a replica of the house in which George Washington was born, and for other purposes.

S 3/11/26 5374 Wadsworth (NY) Public Buildings and Grounds

**SJ Res. 75**

**1926**

**69<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Authorizing certain funds appropriated from the reservation and monument at Wakefield, Virginia, to be available for certain repairs to existing highways and lanes on said reservation.

S 3/17/26 5759 Swanson (VA) Appropriations

**SJ Res. 15**

**1927**

**70<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Authorizing certain funds appropriated for the reservation and monument at Wakefield, VA to be made available for certain repairs to existing highways and lanes on said reservation.

S 1/9/27 351 Swanson (VA) Appropriations

**HR 12807**

**1928**

**70<sup>th</sup> Congress**

To improve the birthplace of George Washington at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA

H 4/9/28 6136 Bland (VA) Military Affairs

**S 4531**

**1928**

**70<sup>th</sup> Congress**

To improve the birthplace of George Washington at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA

S 5/22/28 9429 Swanson (VA) Military Affairs

**S 1166**

**1929**

**71<sup>st</sup> Congress**

Appropriating money for improvements upon the Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, the birthplace of George Washington

S 5/20/29 1497 Swanson (VA) Appropriations

**HR 3038**

**1929**

**71<sup>st</sup> Congress**

Appropriating money for improvements upon the Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, the birthplace of George Washington.

H 5/16/29 1442 Bland (VA) Appropriations

**S 1218**

**1929**

**71<sup>st</sup> Congress**

Appropriating money for improvement at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, the birthplace of George Washington.

S 5/21/29 1597 Swanson (VA) Library

**HR 3211**

**1929**

**71<sup>st</sup> Congress**

Appropriating money for improvements upon the Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, the birthplace of George Washington

H 5/21/29 1687 Bland (VA) Appropriations

**S 1784**

**1929-30**

**71<sup>st</sup> Congress**

Appropriating money for improvements upon the Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, the birthplace of George Washington. [to move monument]

S 10/1/29 4091 Swanson (VA) Library

S 11/13/29 5832 Reported without amendment (S Rept. 45)

S 12/19/29 955 Amended and passed Senate

H 12/21/29 1078 Debated

H 1/20/30 1991, Amended and passed House  
1995

S 1/21/30 2020 Senate concurs

S 1/24/30 2266 Approved by President (1/23/30)

**HR 4655**

**1929-31**

**71<sup>st</sup>-72<sup>nd</sup> Congresses**

Appropriating money for improvements upon the Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, VA, the birthplace of George Washington

H 10/17/29 4643 Bland (VA) Appropriations

H 1/27/30 2487 Supplemental Estimate of appropriations to carry out Act of January 23, 1930; Appropriations (H Doc. 272)

**72<sup>nd</sup> Congress**

H 3/21/31 A 1662 Extension of Remarks, Bland (VA), "The Work of the Wakefield National Memorial Association."

**HR 9641**

**1932**

**72<sup>nd</sup> Congress**

To provide for the restoration of the first monument erected in memory of George Washington

H 2/23/32 4580 Lewis (MD) Military Affairs

**HR 8954**

**1940**

**76<sup>th</sup> Congress**

To provide for the addition of certain lands to the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, in the State of Virginia, and for other purposes.

H 3/18/40 3032 Bland (VA) Public Lands

**HR 18****1941****77<sup>th</sup> Congress**

To provide for the addition of certain lands to the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, in the State of Virginia, and for other purposes.

H      1/31/41      11      Bland (VA) Public Lands

**HR 5145****1949****81<sup>st</sup> Congress**

To provide for the addition of certain lands to the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, in the State of Virginia and for other purposes.

H      6/14/49      7686      Bland (VA) Public Lands

### APPENDIX 3: Establishing Legislation, George Washington Birthplace National Monument

(Public-No. 34-71st Congress)  
(S. 1784)

An Act Authorizing an appropriation for improvements upon the Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, Virginia, the birthplace of George Washington.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That there is hereby authorized to be appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$65,000, which shall be used and expended as follows: The sum of \$15,000 shall be used in moving the monument erected by the United States and now located upon the plot of ground owned by the United States at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, Virginia, to another site on said plot of ground; and the sum of \$50,000 shall be paid to the Wakefield National Memorial Association of Washington, District of Columbia, a corporation created by and existing under the laws of the State of Virginia for use by the said association (a) in erecting on the Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, Virginia, the building permitted by Act of Congress entitled "An Act granting the consent of Congress to the Wakefield National Memorial Association to build upon Government-owned land at Wakefield, Westmoreland County, Virginia, a replica of the house in which George Washington was born, and for other purposes," approved June 7, 1926; (b) in restoring and improving the gardens and grounds at Wakefield, Westmoreland County Virginia; and (c) in erecting such other buildings as shall be deemed necessary: Provided, That the plans for all said buildings and gardens to be constructed or restored hereunder and the location of said monument shall be subject to the approval of the Fine Arts Commission and the Secretary of the Interior, and the expenditure of said funds shall be subject to the prior approval of the Secretary of the Interior: Provided further, That said building and all lands owned by the Wakefield National Memorial Association shall on completion of the restoration be conveyed to the United States as a gift for administration, protection, and maintenance as hereinafter provided.

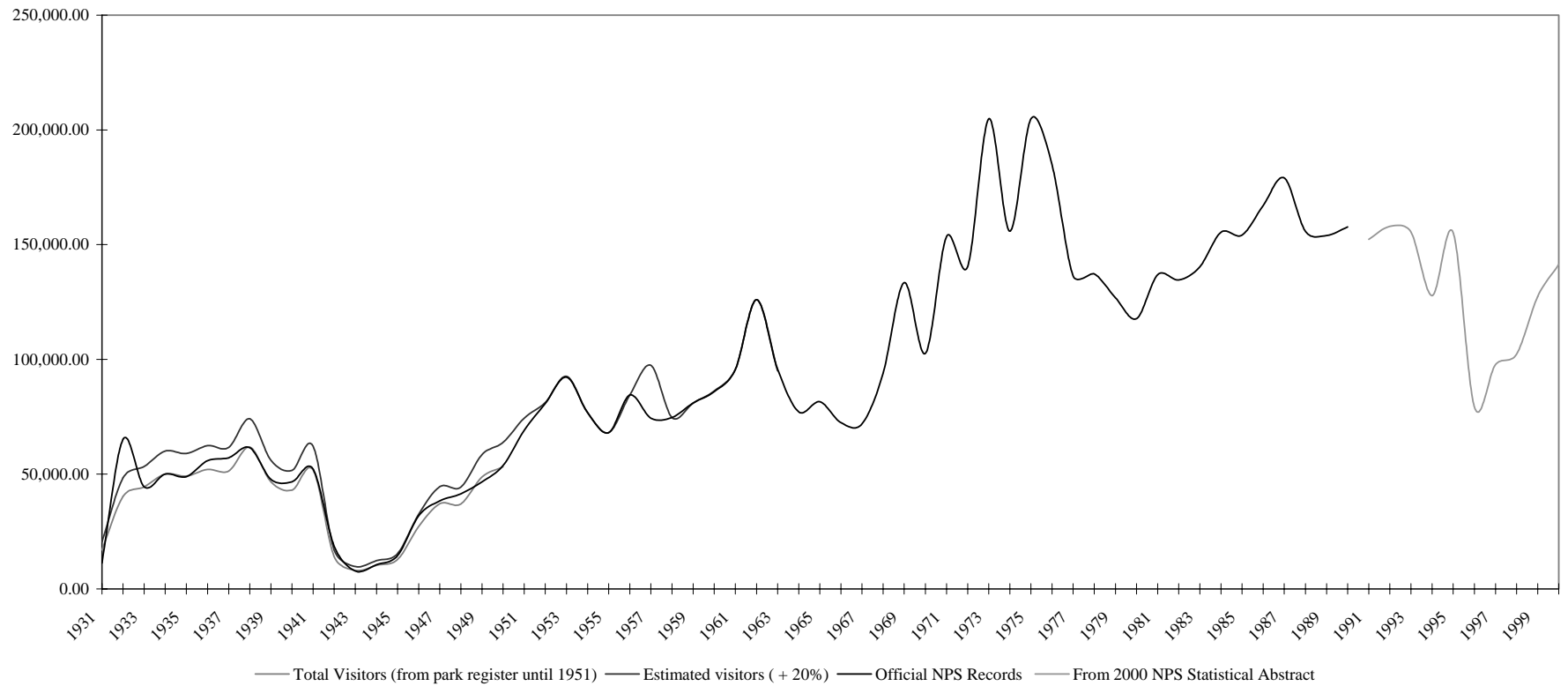
Sec. 2. That the said premises and all structures thereon shall constitute the George Washington Birthplace National Monument at Wakefield, Virginia, which is hereby established and set apart for the preservation of the historical associations connected therewith, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and the said national monument shall be hereafter administered by the National Park Service under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior subject to the provisions of the Act of August 25, 1916 (Thirty-ninth Statutes, page 535), as amended.

Sec. 3. All Acts or parts of Acts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

Approved, January 23, 1930.



## APPENDIX 4: Visitation, 1931-2000



## APPENDIX 5: 1972 Boundary Expansion Legislation Enabling Inclusion of Shouse Tract

### 13. George Washington Birthplace\*

An Act to provide for increases in appropriation ceilings and boundary changes in certain units of the

national park system, and for other purposes. (86 Stat. 120)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled,

#### TITLE III-BOUNDARY CHANGES

SEC. 301. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to revise the boundaries of the following units of the national park system:

(4) George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Virginia: to add approximately 62.3 acres;

SEC. 302. The boundary revisions authorized in section 301 shall become effective upon publication in the Federal Register of a map or other description of the lands added or excluded by the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 303. Within the boundaries of the areas as revised in accordance with section 301, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire lands and interest therein by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, exchange, or transfer from any other Federal agency. Lands and interests therein so acquired shall become part of the area to which they are added, and shall be subject to all laws, rules, and regulations applicable thereto. When acquiring any land pursuant to this Act, the Secretary (i) may tender, to the owner or owners of record on the date of enactment of this Act, a revocable permit for the continued use and occupancy of such land or any portion thereof subject to such terms and conditions as he deems necessary or (ii) may acquire any land pursuant to this Act subject to the retention of a right of use and occupancy for a term not to exceed 25 years or for the life of the owner or owners. Lands and interests therein excluded from the areas pursuant to section 301 may be exchanged for non-Federal lands within the boundaries as revised, or they may be transferred to the jurisdiction of any other Federal agency or to a State or political subdivision thereof, without monetary consideration, as the Secretary of the Interior may deem appropriate. In exercising the authority in this section with respect to lands and interests therein excluded from the areas, the Secretary of the Interior may, on behalf of the United States, retrocede to the appropriate State exclusive or concurrent legislative jurisdiction subject to such terms and conditions as he may deem appropriate, over such lands, to be effective upon acceptance thereof by the State. Any such lands not so exchanged or transferred may be disposed of in accordance with the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended.

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\* See *Laws Relating to the National Park Service*, Supplement III, February 1963 to December 1972 (1974).

SEC. 304. For the acquisition of lands and interests in lands which are added to the areas referred to in section 301, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary, but not more than the following amounts :

George Washington Birthplace National Monument, \$57,000.

Approved April 11, 1972.

## **APPENDIX 6: 1978 Boundary Expansion Legislation Enabling Inclusion of Horner Tracts**

### **11. George Washington Birthplace**

#### **An Act to authorize additional appropriations for the acquisition of lands and interests in lands within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in Idaho. (92 Stat. 3467) (P.L. 95-625)**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

#### **TITLE III-BOUNDARY CHANGES**

SEC. 301. The boundaries of the following units of the National Park System are revised as follows, and there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary, but not exceed the amounts specified in the following paragraphs for acquisitions of lands and interests in lands within areas added by reason of such revisions:

(7) George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Virginia: To add approximately eighty-two and twenty-five one-hundredths acres as generally depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, George Washington Birthplace National Memorial, Virginia", numbered 332-30,000-B and dated September 1978: \$450,000.

SEC. 302. Within twelve months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a detailed map or other detailed description of the lands added or excluded from any area pursuant to section 301.

SEC. 303. (a) Within the boundaries of the areas as revised in accordance with section 301, the Secretary is authorized to acquire lands and interests therein by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, exchange, or transfer from any other Federal agency. Lands and interests therein so acquired shall become part of the area to which they are added, and shall be subjected to all laws, rules, and regulations applicable thereto. When acquiring any land pursuant to this title, the Secretary may acquire any such land subject to the retention of a right of use and occupancy for a term not to exceed twenty-five years or for the life of the owner or owners. Lands owned by a State or political subdivision thereof may be acquired only by donation.

(b) (1) Lands and interests therein deleted from any area pursuant to section 301 may be exchanged for non-Federal lands within the revised boundaries of such area, or transferred to the jurisdiction of any other Federal agency or to a State or political subdivision thereof, without monetary consideration, or be administered as public lands by the Secretary, as the Secretary may deem appropriate.

(2) In exercising the authority contained in this section with respect to lands and interests therein deleted from any such area which were acquired from a State, the Secretary may, on behalf of the United States, transfer to such State exclusive or concurrent legislative jurisdiction over such lands, subject to such terms and conditions as he may deem appropriate, to be effective upon acceptance thereof by the State.

(c) It is the established policy of Congress that wilderness, wildlife conservation, and park and recreation values of real property owned by the United States be conserved, enhanced, and developed. It is further declared to be the policy of Congress that unutilized, underutilized, or excess Federal real property be timely studied as to suitability for wilderness, wildlife conservation, or park and recreation purposes. To implement this policy, the Secretary, the Administrator of General Services, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall establish a system with appropriate procedures to permit the Secretary full and early opportunity to make such studies and propose appropriate recommendations to disposing agencies for consideration in connection with determinations of further utilization or disposal of such property under existing law. Each affected executive agency is authorized

and directed to provide to the Secretary such advice and information relating to such studies as the Secretary may request.

SEC. 304. The authorities in this title are supplementary to any other authorities available to the Secretary with respect to the acquisition, development, and administration of the areas referred to in section 301.

Approved November 10, 1978.

## **APPENDIX 7: 1993 Boundary Expansion Legislation Enabling Inclusion of Horner Tract**

### **XI. NATIONAL MONUMENTS\***

#### **1. George Washington Birthplace**

PUBLIC LAW 103-25-MAY 3, 1993

Public Law 103-25  
103d Congress

An Act

To revise the boundaries of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

#### **SECTION 1. ADDITION TO NATIONAL MONUMENT.**

The boundaries of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument (hereinafter referred to as the "National Monument") are hereby modified to include the area comprising approximately 12 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled "George Washington Birthplace National Monument Boundary Map", numbered 332/SO,O11A and dated September 1992, which shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

#### **SEC. 2. ACQUISITION OF LANDS.**

Within the boundaries of the National Monument, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to acquire lands, or interests therein, by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange.

#### **SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENT.**

In administering the National Monument, the Secretary shall take such action as is necessary to preserve and interpret the history and resources associated with George Washington, the generations of the Washington family who lived in the vicinity, and their contemporaries, as well as 18th century plantation life and society.

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\* From *Laws Relating to the National Park Service*, Supplement VII, January 1991 to December 1994 (2001), p. 361.

#### SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

Approved May 3, 1993.

#### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 326:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 103-55 (Comm. on Natural Resources).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 103-14 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 139 (1993):

Mar. 17, considered and passed Senate.

Apr. 20, considered and passed House.

## **APPENDIX 8: 2002 Boundary Expansion Legislation Enabling Inclusion of Muse Tract**

PUBLIC LAW 107-354, December 17, 2002

Public Law 107-354  
107th Congress

An Act

To revise the boundaries of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

### **SECTION 1. ADDITION TO NATIONAL MONUMENT.**

The boundaries of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument (hereinafter referred to as the ``National Monument'') are hereby modified to include the area comprising approximately 115 acres, as generally depicted on the map entitled ``George Washington Birthplace National Monument Boundary Map'', numbered 332/80,023 and dated October 2001, which shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

### **SEC. 2. ACQUISITION OF LANDS.**

Within the boundaries of the National Monument, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the ``Secretary'') is authorized to acquire lands, or interests therein, from willing owners by donation, purchase with donated money or appropriated funds, or exchange.

### **SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENT.**

In administering the National Monument, the Secretary shall take actions necessary to preserve and interpret the history and resources associated with George Washington, the generations of the Washington family who lived in the vicinity and their contemporaries, and 18th century plantation life and society.

Approved December 17, 2002.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 3449 (S. 1943):

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 107-631 (Comm. on Resources).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 107-267 accompanying S. 1943 (Comm. on Natural Resources).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 148 (2002):

Sept. 24, considered and passed House.

Nov. 19, considered and passed Senate.



## APPENDIX 9: 1998 Legislation Establishing Relationship with Ferry Farm

PUBLIC LAW 105-355 (Section 509), November 6, 1998

Public Law 105-355  
105th Congress

### SEC. 509. GEORGE WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE NATIONAL MONUMENT, VIRGINIA.

(a) Acquisition of Easement.--The Secretary of the Interior may acquire no more than a less than fee interest in the property generally known as George Washington's Boyhood Home, Ferry Farm, located in Stafford County, Virginia, across the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg, Virginia, comprising approximately 85 acres as generally depicted on the map entitled "George Washington Birthplace National Monument Boundary Map", numbered 322/80,020, and dated April 1998, to ensure the preservation of the important cultural and natural resources associated with Ferry Farm. The Secretary of the Interior shall keep the map on file and available for public inspection in appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(b) Management of Easement.--The Secretary shall enter into a cooperative agreement with Kenmore Association, Inc., for the management of Ferry Farm pending completion of the study referred to in subsection (c).

(c) Resource Study.--Not later than 18 months after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this section, the Secretary of the Interior shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives a resource study of the property described in subsection (a). The study shall—

(1) identify the full range of resources and historic themes associated with Ferry Farm, including those associated with George Washington's tenure at the property and those associated with the Civil War period;

(2) identify alternatives for further National Park Service involvement at the property beyond those that may be provided for in the acquisition authorized under subsection (a); and

(3) include cost estimates for any necessary acquisition, development, interpretation, operation, and maintenance associated with the alternatives identified.

(d) Agreements.--Upon completion of the resource study under subsection (c), the Secretary of the Interior may enter into an agreement with the owner of the property described in subsection (a) or other entities for the purpose of providing programs, services, facilities, or technical assistance that further the preservation and public use of the property.

Approved November 6, 1998.

#### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY--H.R. 3910:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 144 (1998):

Oct. 10, considered and passed House.

Oct. 14, considered and passed Senate.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 34 (1998):

Nov. 6, Presidential statement.

## APPENDIX 10: Superintendents of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument\*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Oliver G. Taylor	Engineer	1/30/30	5/24/31
Robert P. White	Acting Superintendent	5/25/31	2/14/32
Philip R. Hough	Superintendent	2/15/32	12/22/53
Russell A. Gibbs	Superintendent	3/26/54	8/01/64
George Schesventer <sup>†</sup>	Superintendent	11/08/64	7/29/67
James R. Walker	Management Assistant	10/08/67	9/17/70
Marlo G. Acock <sup>‡</sup>	Management Assistant	10/04/70	1/05/74
Don R. Thompson	Superintendent	1/06/74	12/13/80
Dwight C. Storke, Jr.	Acting Superintendent	12/14/80	2/21/81
George D. Church	Superintendent	2/22/81	10/21/89
Dwight C. Storke, Jr.,	Superintendent	10/22/89	06/30/94
John Donahue	Superintendent	06/26/94	3/11/00
David Herrera	Acting Superintendent	3/08/00	7/29/00
Vidal Martinez	Superintendent	7/30/00	present

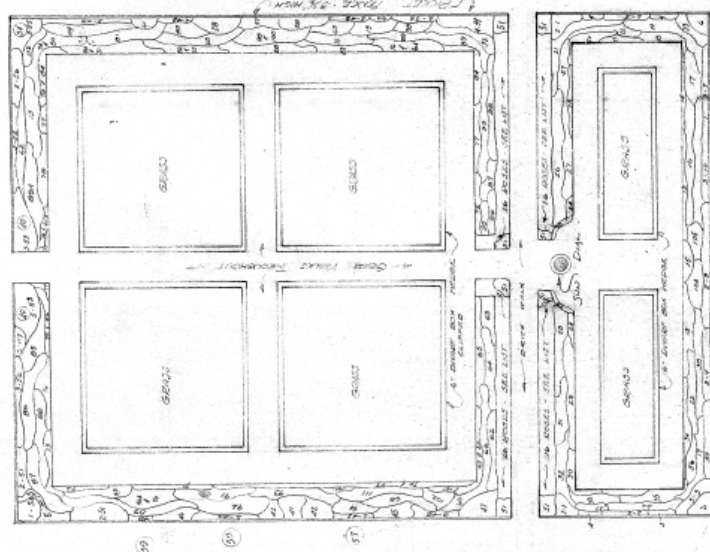
\* Historic Listing of National Park Service Officials, May 1, 1991 Revised May 1, 1991, as 75th Anniversary Edition, by Harold P. Danz, Associate Regional Director, Administration, Rocky Mountain Region [Washington, DC:] U S Department of the Interior/National Park Service, pp. 109-10.

<sup>†</sup> Administered by Superintendent, Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park and Cemetery from August 9, 1964.

<sup>‡</sup> Administration under supervision of the Virginia State Office, December 12, 1971 to July 29, 1977.

## **Illustrations**

**ILLUSTRATION 1: The Mary Jones Smith Memorial Garden, 1931 (courtesy of the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center).**



- NOTE -  
TREES AND SHRUBBY MATERIALS TO BE AS  
CLOSE AS CAN BE SECURED.

PLANTING LIST -

- [illegible]

ROSE VARIETIES -

- [illegible]

O. H. 17-12-22

Approved: May 13, 1933  
 Charles W. Becking, Jr.

## HALF-SIZE REPRODUCTION

1. Name of person: WILLIAM L. BROWN 200 1041  
2. Name of person: WILLIAM L. BROWN  
3. Name of person: WILLIAM L. BROWN

U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
LABORERS' UNION  
PROSECUTED  
IN  
FEDERAL COURT  
AT  
NEW YORK

MADY JONES SMITH MEMORIAL GARDEN  
RUST-HOLICE AUSTRIAN MUSEUM  
MADY JONES SMITH MEMORIAL GARDEN  
RUST-HOLICE AUSTRIAN MUSEUM

GEORGE WASHINGTON DISTRICT  
- 35 1/2 " 1" = 10"  
PLAN A-1

*E. N. Goulik*, M.R.  
Soviet Academy  
of Sciences,  
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Project	Start Date	End Date	Status	Progress (%)	Comments
Project A	2023-01-01	2023-03-31	Completed	100	Project A completed successfully.
Project B	2023-04-01	2023-06-30	In Progress	75	Project B is 75% complete.
Project C	2023-07-01	2023-09-30	Not Started	0	Project C has not started yet.

**POTOMAC RIVER**

**WAKEFIELD\***

**MANSION**

**POPES CREEK**

**NATIONAL MONUMENT**

**GORDON & GARNET HORNER**

**J.H. MUSE**

**F.C. MUSE**

**LAND STATUS**

TRACT	OWNER	ACRES
15	G.E. MUSE ESTATE	100.0
16	JAMES LATANE	22.0
18C	J.C. COULDMAN	1.0
28	GORDON HORNER	35.0
29	J.C. COULDMAN	1.0
32A	GORDON & GARNET HORNER	30.0
33	J.H. MUSE	20.0
34	J.H. MUSE	20.0
30	F.C. MUSE	92.3
31	GORDON HORNER	12.0
32	GORDON & GARNET HORNER	52.5
33	J.H. MUSE	88.0

**LEGEND**

- EXISTING MONUMENT BOUNDARY ————
- PROPOSED BOUNDARY - - - - -
- WOODED AREAS [Symbol]
- MARSHLANDS [Symbol]
- WOODLANDS [Symbol]
- FARMLANDS [Symbol]
- TRACTS [Symbol] 28

**SOURCE:** ALL MEASUREMENTS BY SCALE - SURVEYS NOT AVAILABLE.

**SCALE:** 1" = 1 MILE

**VIRGINIA STATE ROUTE 7**

Pope's Creek

FOOT BRIDGE

MENDION

GARDEN

UTILITY AREA

CORN (IF NEEDED)

CORN

COTTON

175'

150'

25'

PEANUTS

400'

175'

TOBACCO

175'

PARKING AREA

OVERFLOW PARKING

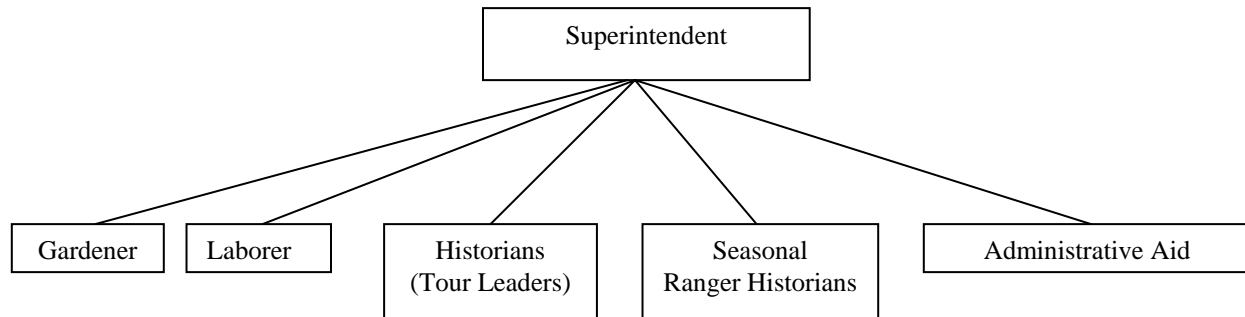
POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL CORN

MONUMENT

PLAN SHOWING PROPOSED  
1933  
COLONIAL CROP LAYOUT  
GEORGE WASHINGTON BIRTHPLACE NAT. MON.  
SCALE 1"=40' JAN. 11 1933.  
INTERIOR DEPARTMENT - LANDSCAPE DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - YORKTOWN OFFICE

#### ILLUSTRATION 4: MISSION 66 Administrative Reorganization

Organization prior to 1956:



Organization after 1956:

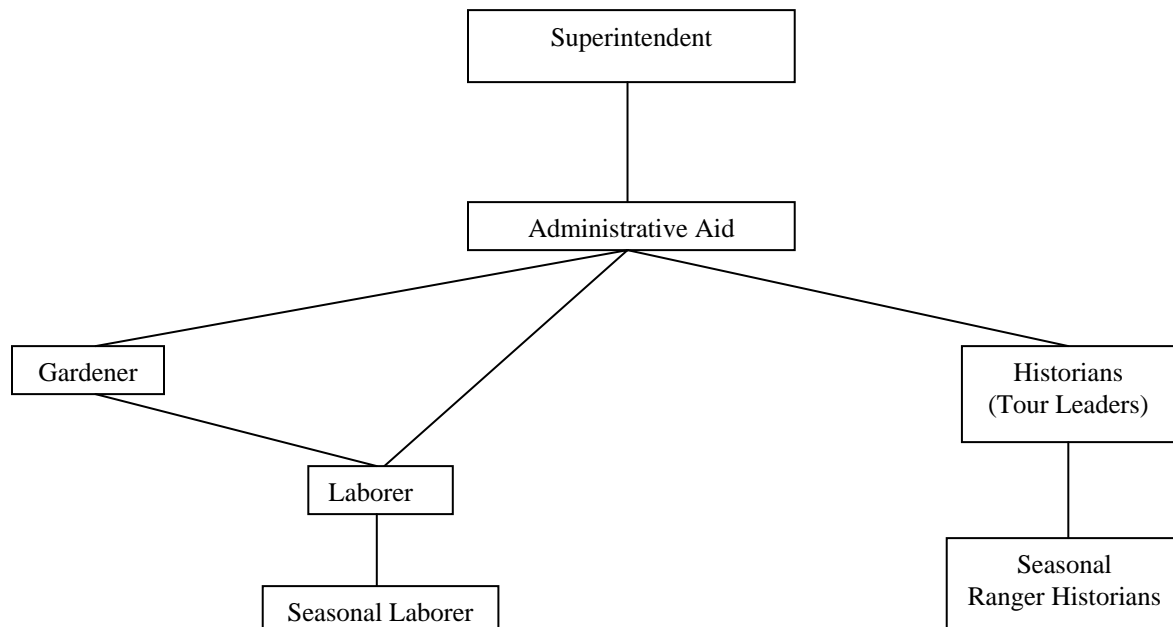
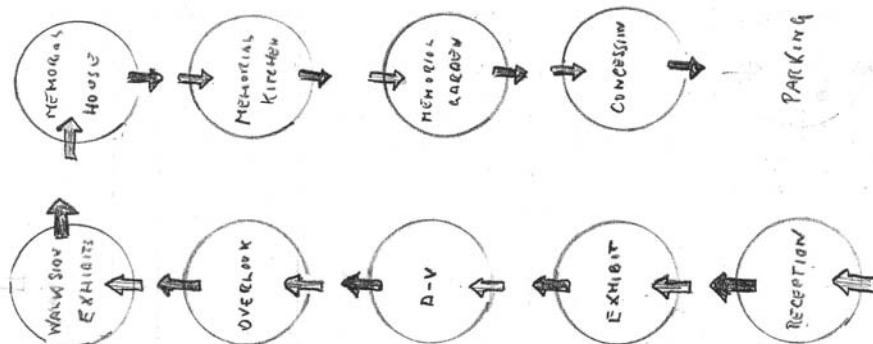
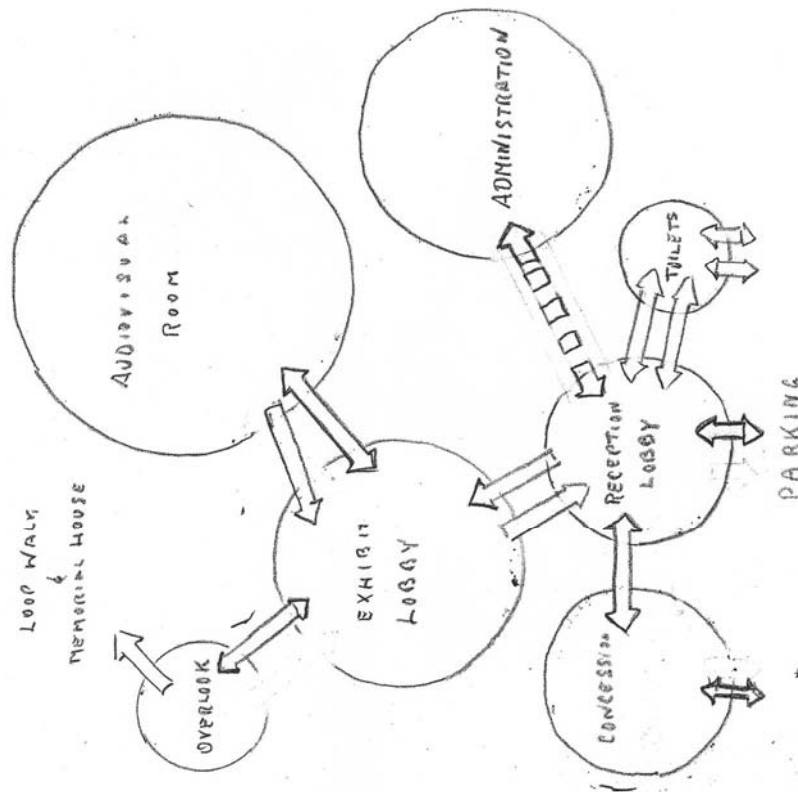


ILLUSTRATION 5: Diagrams from Thomas Harrison's 1966 Interpretive Prospectus



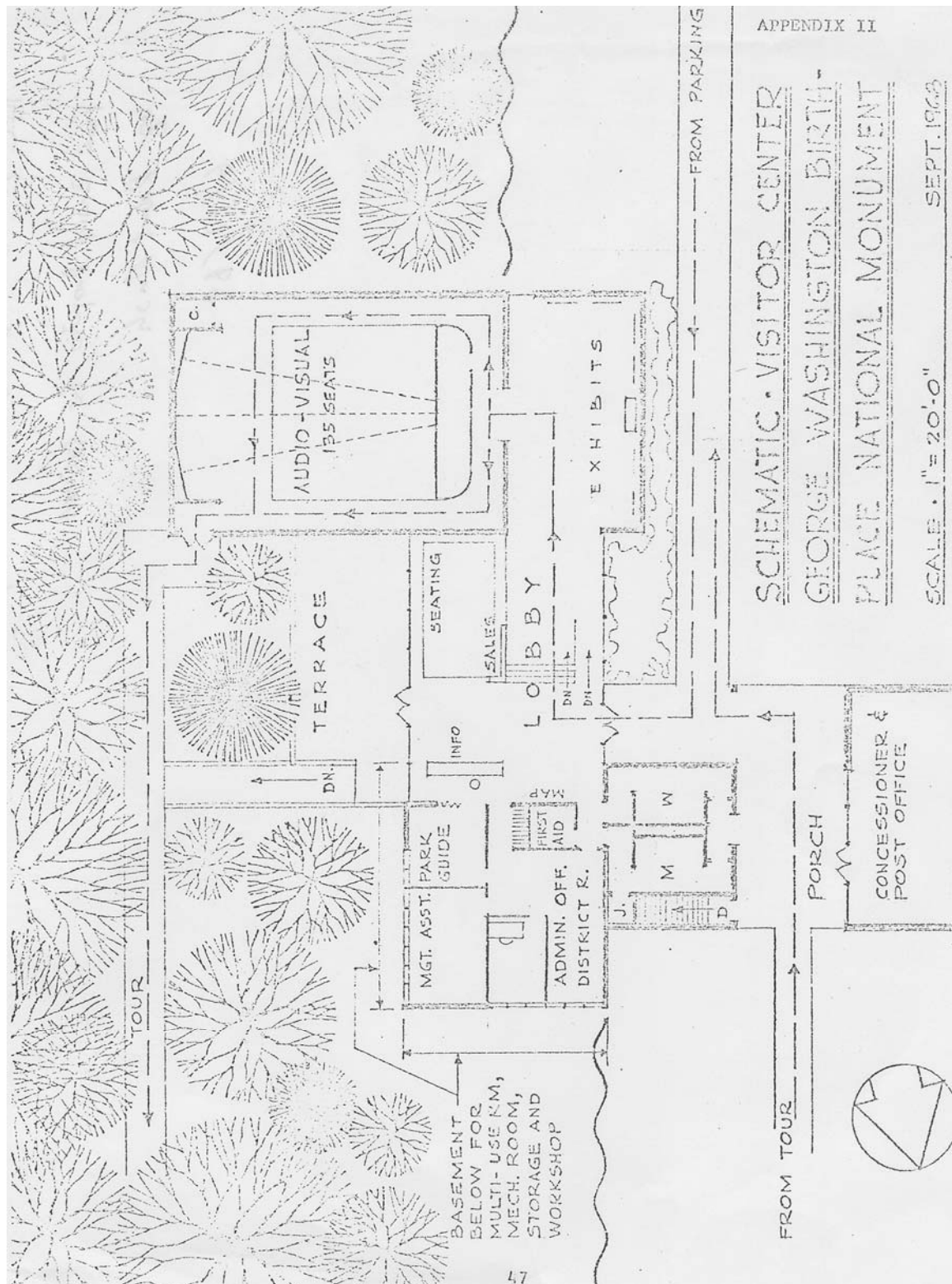
BIRTHPLACE ROOMS  
VISITOR SEQUENCE DIAGRAM



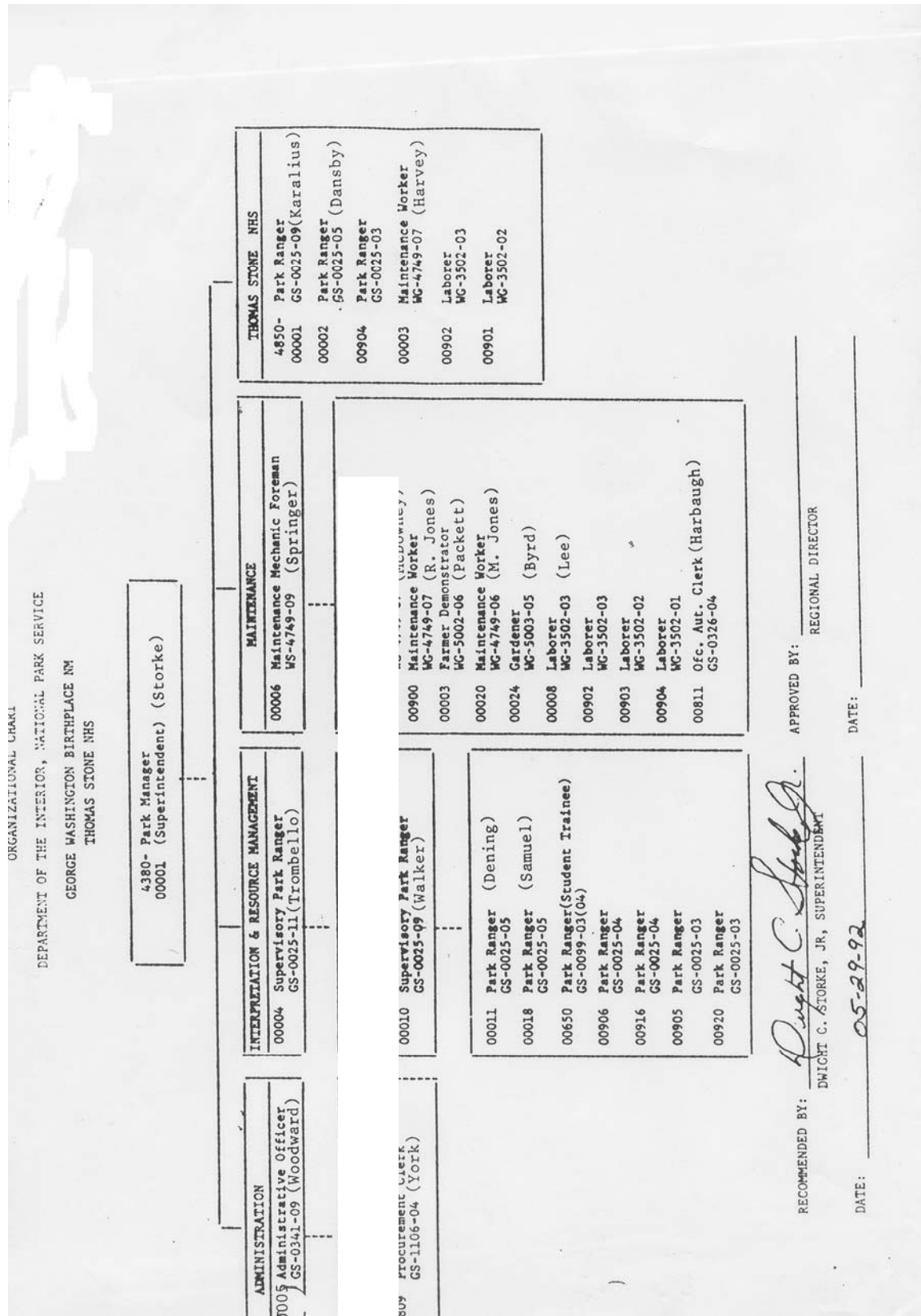
VISITOR CENTER  
SPACE - VISITOR FLOW DIAGRAM



ILLUSTRATION 6: "Schematic, Visitor Center, George Washington Birthplace National Monument" from Interpretive Prospectus, revised 17 June 1969, in Box "GEWA-Annual Reports." NPS Harpers Ferry Center Archives, Harpers Ferry, WV.

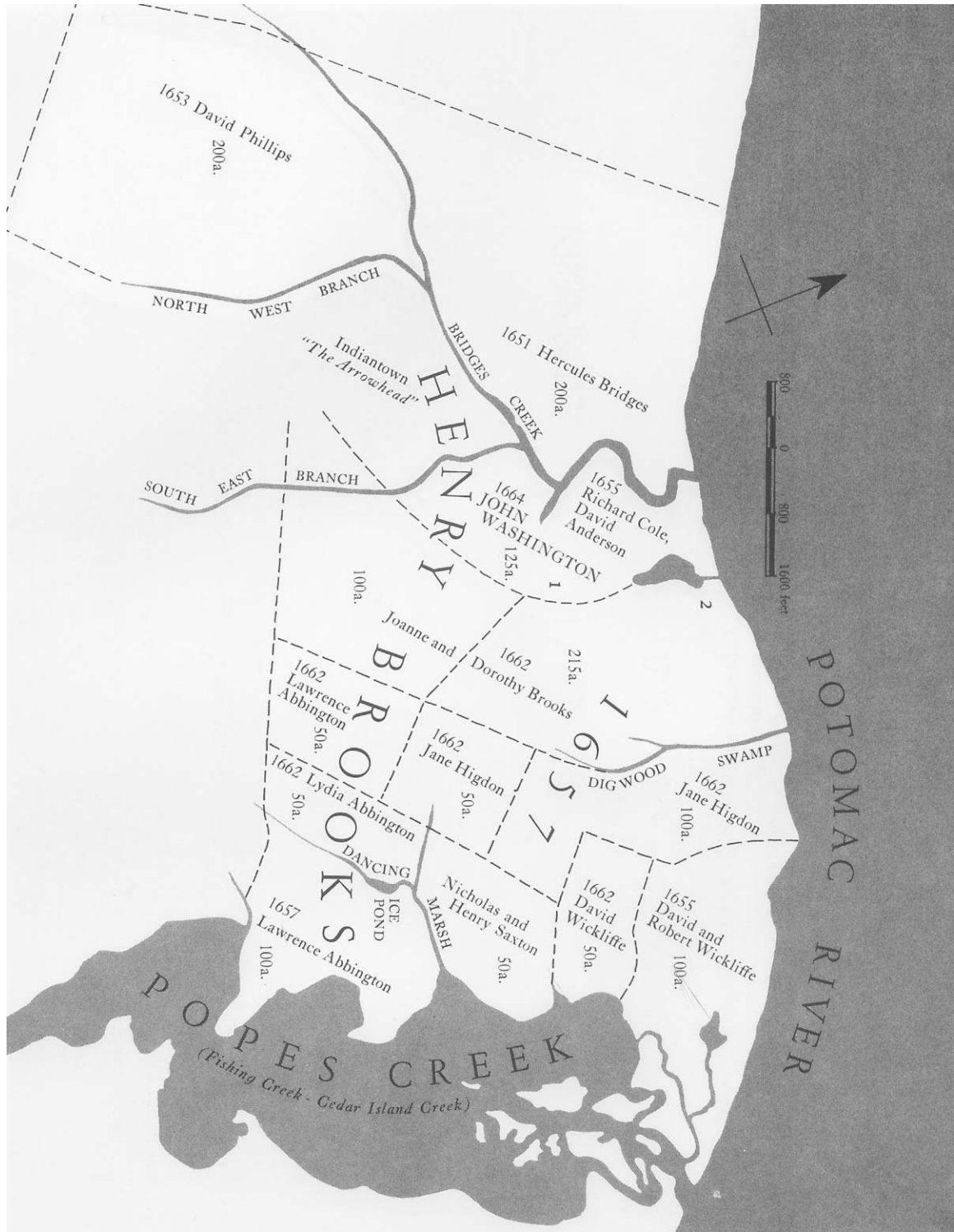


# ILLUSTRATION 7: Administrative Organization under Dwight Storke

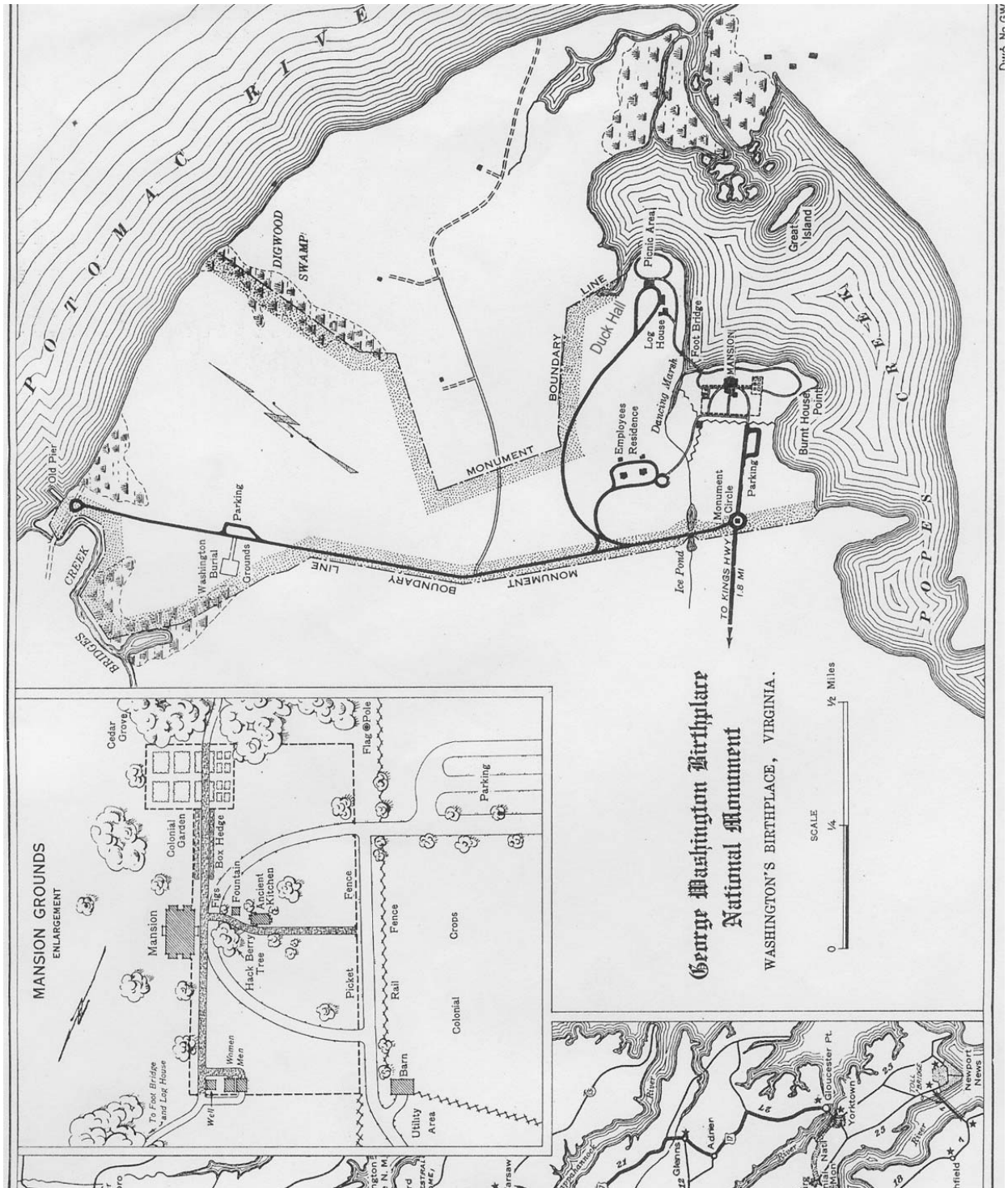


## Maps

MAP 1: 17th-Century land patents, from Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 169.



MAP 2: Memorial Landscape, 1933



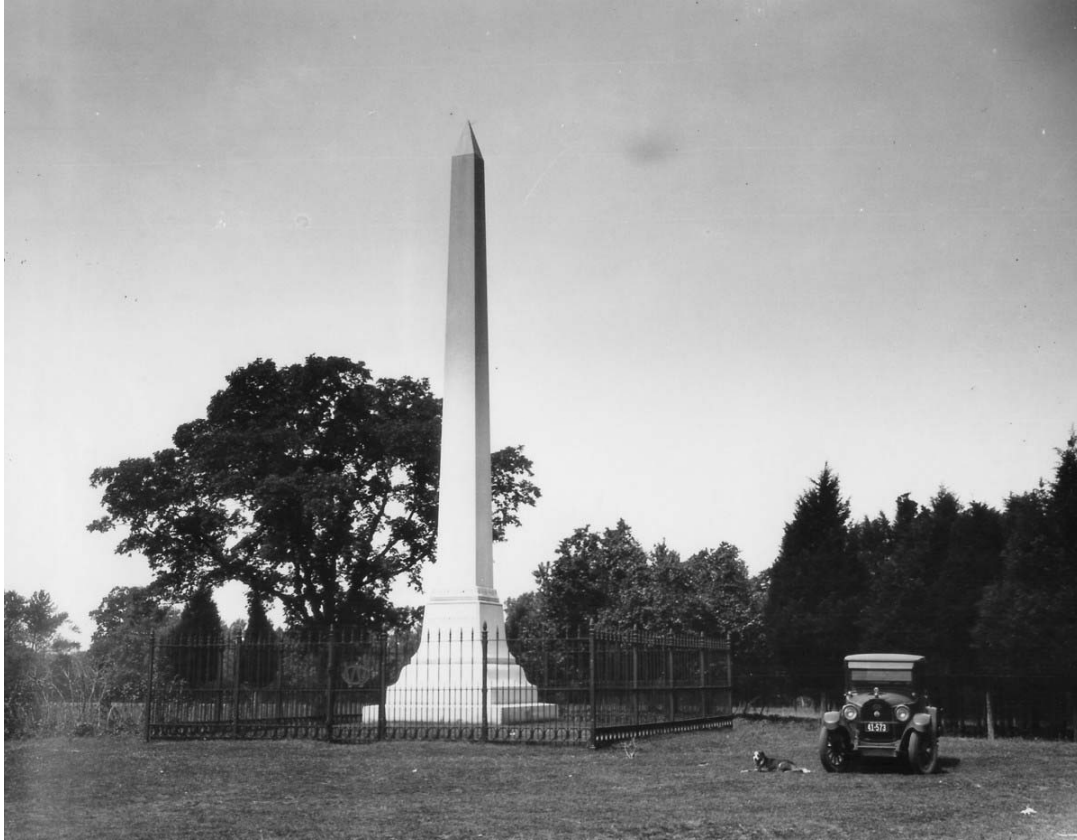
[illegible]

## **Images\***

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\* All images courtesy of GEWA Archives unless otherwise noted.





**Image 1: Federal monument, ca. 1896.**



**Image 2: Portrait of Josephine Wheelwright Rust, date and artist unknown.**





**Image 3: Albright, Rust, and planning team visit the Monument, ca. 1930.**



**Image 4: Albright, Rust, and planning team visit Washington family burial ground, ca. 1930.**



**Image 5: Lowering the granite obelisk, 1930.**



**Image 6: Rolling the granite obelisk to its new location, 1930.**



**Image 7: Brick kilns at Wakefield, ca. 1930.**



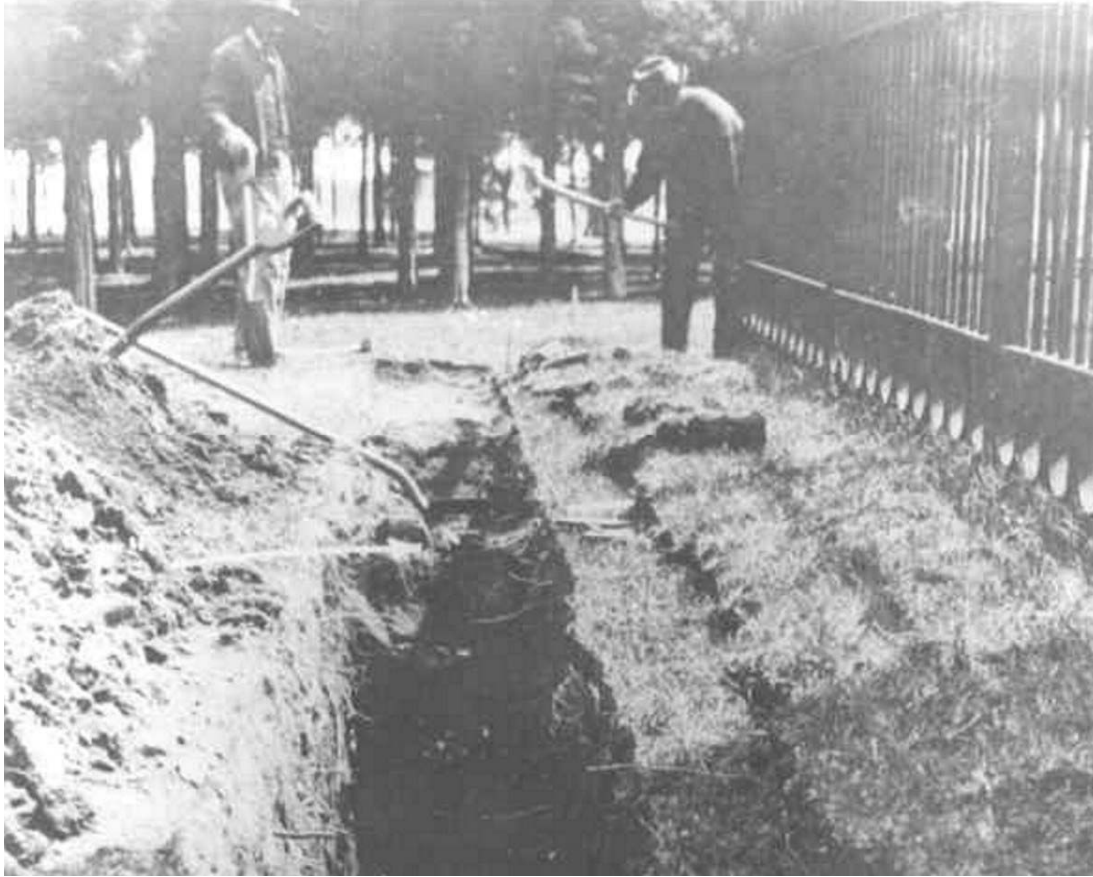
**Image 8: Washington family burial ground surrounded by block wall erected by Colonial Dames in 1906.**



**Image 9: FAC at Washington family burial ground, ca. 1931.**



**Image 10: May 14, 1932 Public dedication ceremonies with Secretary of the Interior, Ray Wilbur, at center.**



**Image 11: War Department Engineer J. Arthur Hook excavates around the granite obelisk in 1926.**



**Image 12: Building X uncovered, ca. 1936.**





**Image 13: The Memorial House with bronze tablet on stone pedestal, ca. 1931.**



**Image 14: Detail of stone pedestal with commemorative bronze tablet.**



**Image 15: U.S. post office in basement of Memorial House, ca. 1932.**



**Image 16: Postmaster Julia Washington.**



**Image 17: Post office, ca. 1936.**



**Image 18: The Log House pictured not long after construction, ca. 1932.**





**Image 19: The Log House Tea Room main dining room, ca. 1932.**



**Image 20: Superintendent's home pictured not long after construction, ca. 1932.**



**Image 21: Hough's "temporary museum" in Memorial House basement, ca. 1932-1940.**



**Image 22: Approach road, ca. 1931.**



**Image 23: Approach road (Rt. 204), 2004 (photo by author).**



**Image 24: Aerial view of approach road, granite obelisk, parking lot, and Memorial House.**



**Image 25: Aerial view of Popes Creek, Memorial House, cedar grove, and footbridge, ca. 1932.**



**Image 26: Superintendent Phillip Hough.**



**Image 27: Superintendent Hough leads a tour.**



**Image 28: A visitor signs the guest register inside the Memorial House, date unknown.**



**Image 29: A costumed WNMA member serves cider and gingerbread on Washington's Birthday.**



**Image 30: Approaching the Washington family burial ground, ca. 1932.**





**Image 31: Potomac River beach parking lot, ca. 1932.**



**Image 32: Potomac River beach parking, 2004 (photo by author).**



**Image 33: War Department Potomac River pier built in 1896 and removed in 1934.**



**Image 34: Memorial House with bear skin rug from Yellowstone National Park, 1932.**





**Image 35: The Memorial House as redecorated by Louis Crowninshield, ca. 1940.**



**Image 36: Early costumed interpretation in the Memorial House, 1937.**



**Image 37: Visitors tour the colonial crops demonstration area, ca. 1935.**



**Image 38: World War II brought numbers of military personnel to the Monument including these sailors walking along a park road.**



Image 39: Monument staff retrieve a spent naval parachute flare, ca. 1941.



Image 40: Assembly plans for greenhouse purchased by Louis Crowninshield.



**Image 41: WNMA member stands amid corn with greenhouse in background, ca. 1952.**



**Image 42: The WNMA sell plants from their greenhouse inside the Memorial House, ca. 1952.**



**Image 43: NPS Director Hartzog celebrates the opening of the Monument's Morgan Horse Farm on October 8, 1969.**



• AUG • 72



• AUG • 72



• AUG • 72

**Image 44: Aerial views of the Morgan Horse Farm.**



**Image 45: Inside the Colonial Kitchen sometime after 1972.**





**Image 46: The Visitor Center under construction in 1976, view from Popes Creek.**



**Image 47: The Visitor Center complete, view from parking lot.**





**Image 48: Old entrance station reused as chicken coop (photo by author).**



**Image 49: The Washington home foundations outlined with oyster shell, Memorial House in background.**



**Image 50: Costumed and un-costumed staff work side by side (photo by author).**

## **Guide to Sources and Works Cited**

### **Citation of Archival Material Archives and Record Groups**

Because duplicate copies of many of the documents cited in this administrative history exist in more than one archive and because this report is primarily intended to assist NPS staff engaged in planning activities bearing on the Birthplace, I have made every effort to identify precise locations of documents, especially those that reside at the Birthplace. Citations are therefore cumbersome at times, but should ease on-site location of valuable material. The vast majority of sources consulted in preparation of this administrative history reside in one of the following five archives:

#### **1. George Washington Birthplace National Monument Archives (GEWA)**

The Monument maintains a small though extensive archive of documents, textiles, and archeological artifacts spanning the entire history of occupation at Popes Creek. Holdings are especially rich with regard to the NPS's own history and its early dealings with the WNMA. The document collection, although roughly organized according to NPS record-keeping procedure, is chaotic and a partial finding aid does not accurately reflect the collection's breadth. Moreover, a wealth of important documents remains unprocessed. References to "Seth Box," "Old Files," and "Ancient Files" throughout the administrative history point to uncataloged materials in temporarily labeled boxes. Reference to "central administrative files" indicates material stored in the Monument's active files within its administrative office.

#### **2. National Archives and Records Administration—Mid-Atlantic Region (Philadelphia) (NAMAR)**

Of Particular interest at NAMAR are the records of the National Park Service, Northeast Region, Record Group 79. Significant material concerning the Birthplace resides in primarily three records series: Central Classified Files, 1936-1952; General Correspondence, 1952-1966; and Eastern Office of Design and Construction—Philadelphia Planning and Service Center—General Correspondence Files, 1954-66. NAMAR holdings provide important insights into planning developments during the 1950s and early 1960s.

#### **3. National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP)**

Citations of NACP material refer to the records of the National Park Service, Northeast Region, Record Group 79. Of special interest within Entry 7, Central Classified Files, are files 74, 101.1, 101.2, 206-08, 207, 207-002.3, 501.1, 600-02, 600.1, 601-09, 604, 608, 611, 620, 660-04.1, 740-02, 832, 833-05, 857, 867, 900-01, 900-02, 900-05, 900-05.1, 900-06.1, and 901. NACP materials are especially useful for documenting correspondence between Monument staff, regional officers, and WNMA members during the first two decades of operation.

#### **4. National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB)**

NAB contains important materials within the Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, Record Group 66. Documents referred to in this administrative history reside within entry 17 of records series Project Files, 1910-1952. NAM holdings are relatively scant with regard to Monument operations, but do provide valuable insights into the relationship between the FAC, the WNMA, and the NPS at Popes Creek.

#### **5. NPS Harpers Ferry Center (HFCA & HFCPC)**

The Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) includes two physically separate archive sites, both with material relevant to the Monument's history. The HFC Archives (HFCA) in Harpers Ferry, WV contains a variety of documents including annual reports, correspondence, and portions of various planning documents. This material primarily covers the last thirty years of monument operations. The HFC's Graphic Collections and Archive for Interpretive Media (HFCPC) in Charles Town, WV houses a variety of materials from the Cultural Resources Bibliography Collection—including David Rodnick's original hand-written notes and annotated manuscript—a number of images, and video footage of the early Monument filmed by Horace Albright.

## **Superintendents' Reports**

Superintendents' reports, both annual (SAR) and monthly (SMR), provide vital insight into day-to-day operations at the Birthplace and are especially useful for understanding the NPS's early relationship with the WNMA. Some reports include uncataloged photographs and other ephemera of special interest to the researcher. The reports are not centralized, but the following list details their various locations:

### Annual Reports (SAR)

Pre-1933: RG 79, entry 7, file 207-002.3, NACP.  
1933-1948, 1950: Box "Annual Reports," GEWA.  
1969, 1972-1974: Box "GEWA," HFC.  
1975: Old Files box #6, file "A 2621 Reports-Annual," GEWA.  
1979-1988: Box "GEWA," HFC.  
1989 to present: Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

### Monthly Reports (SMR)

1930-32: RG 79, entry 7, file 207-002.3, NACP.  
April 1931 to March 1956: Box "Monthly Reports," GEWA.  
January 1957 to October 1964: NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.  
January 1965 to November 1965: NPS Records Box 10 of 25, 1965 reading file, GEWA.

## **NPS Plans, Reports, and Studies Concerning GEWA**

This study relies on a host of planning documents and studies prepared by NPS regional offices, Monument staff, and independent contractors. The following list includes the majority of those materials organized by topic with, when available, information regarding their location at GEWA.

### Archeology

Gilmore, R.G., et al. *An Archaeological Assessment of George Washington's Birthplace National Monument*. Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, March 2001.

Harwood, Jameson M. and Marley R. Brown, III. *An Archaeological Evaluation of Threatened Cultural Resources within the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Colonial Williamsburg Archaeological Reports*. Williamsburg, VA: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Department of Archaeological Research, April 2002.

Jones, Joe B., et al. *Comprehensive Archaeological Survey of George Washington Birthplace National Monument*. Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, College of William and Mary, March 1999.

Outlaw, Alain C., et al. of Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. "A Study of the Architecture, the History and the Archaeology of George Washington's Ferry Farm." January 1993.

### Establishment

Albright, Horace. "A Report on the Rehabilitation of the Birthplace of George Washington by Horace Albright, January 14, 1932." File "Transfer to Govt.," NPS Records Box 6 of 26, GEWA.

Taylor, O.G. "Report on Brick Making," Annual Report to the Director, NPS Records, RG 79, National Archives, Washington, DC.

### Interpretation

"Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services" (1984). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. Seth Box 4, GEWA.

"Comprehensive Interpretive Plan" (March 1999). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

Farrar, Hayward. "African-American History at the Hampton, Booker T. Washington Birthplace, George Washington Birthplace, Jamestown and City Point National Historic Sites" (February 1990). GEWA Library.

Harrison, Thomas J. "Interpretive Prospectus for George Washington Birthplace National Monument (draft)" (1966). Seth Box 4, GEWA.

"Historical Interpretation and the National Park Service at George Washington Birthplace National Monument" (1 November 1996). GEWA Library.

Hough, Philip. "Material for a 56-Page Historic Handbook on George Washington Birthplace National Monument by Philip R. Hough, Superintendent" (11 January 1951). GEWA.

"Interpretive Review" (13 February 1997). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. GEWA Library.

Jacobsen, Robert R., Richard G. Cover, Bruce W. Shaw, Richard A. Elasedel, Keith E. Miller, and Edward J. Widmer. "A Study of Visitor Impressions at George Washington's Birthplace National Monument and Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National military Park" (April 1961). GEWA library.

### Management Plans

"Strategic Plan for George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Fiscal year 2001-2005" (15 April 2000). File "A64 GPRA Strategic Plans 2001-2005," Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

"Statement for Management, George Washington Birthplace National monument" (1979). NPS Records Box 15 of 25, GEWA.

### Master Plans and Addenda

- “General Plan, George Washington Birthplace National Monument” (4 February 1932). Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Yorktown Office (Landscape Division) Microfiche. NAMAR.
- “General Development Plan, Part of the Master Plan, George Washington Birthplace National Monument” (July 1950). Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Planning and Construction Division, Regional Office. NAMAR.
- “Master Plan Development Outline” (February 1952). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. NPS Records, Box 8 of 25, GEWA.
- “George Washington Birthplace National Monument, MISSION 66” (20 April 1956). File “A-98 MISSION 66,” NPS Records Box 21 of 25, GEWA.
- “Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of George Washington Birthplace National Monument, MISSION 66 Edition” (7 September 1961). I have not located a complete draft of the final plan, which is divided into three volumes. Portions of Volume I and III are located in an unlabeled green folder in the HFC library archives. A draft version of various portions of Volume I is in file “Master Plan D18,” NPS Records, Box 8 of 25, GEWA.
- “Development concept” (1970). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. NPS Files Box 19 of 25, GEWA.

### Operations Evaluations

- “Operations Evaluation” (1986). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. File “operations evaluation” in Seth Box 4, GEWA. Addendum to same in Seth Box 6, GEWA.
- “Operations Evaluation” (1988). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. File “A54 Operations Evaluation IN-House,” Central File, GEWA.
- “Operations Evaluation” (1990). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. File “A54 Operations Evaluation IN-House,” Central File, GEWA.
- “Operations Evaluation” (1992). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. File “A54 Operations Evaluation IN-House,” Central File, GEWA.

### Resource Management

- Doherty, Jonathan L. *An Adjacent Lands Study, Conserving the Setting of George Washington Birthplace*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, Division of Park and Resource Planning, October 1987.
- Ellsworth, Allan C. “George Washington Birthplace National Monument (GEWA) Natural Resource Synthesis” (15 July 2003). Central Administrative Files, GEWA.
- Hudson, J. Paul. “An Historical Museum for George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Washington’s Birthplace, Virginia, Prospectus and Tentative Exhibit Plan” (1936). Various

copies located at NACP and GEWA. File “1930s-1950s,” NPS Records Box 7 of 25, GEWA contains the final approved bound version of Hudson’s 1938 GEWA Historical Exhibit Plan with illustrations.

National Park Service. “George Washington Boyhood Home, Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment” (July 2002).

Oculus, John Milner Associates, Inc., *Cultural Landscape Report, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, Virginia* (2 vols.), July 1999.

Olson, Sarah. “Historic Furnishing Study, the Ancient Kitchen and Colonial Garden” (November 1974). File “folder,” NPS Records box 17 of 25, GEWA.

“Resources Management Plan” (2 February 2000). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

“Resources Planning and Restructuring Report, Phase II” ( 20 July 2001). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. File “A64 Workforce Planning and Restructuring,” Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

Rodnick, David. “Orientation Report on the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, Virginia” (17 October 1941). Various copies located at NACP, GEWA, and HFC. The HFC copy includes various drafts, extra material, and Rodnick’s hand-written research notes.

“Task Directive, Preservation of Cemetery Walls, Phase I, GEWA” (19 April 1993). George Washington Birthplace National Monument. File “D18 Planning Program,” Central Administrative Files, GEWA.

#### WNMA Reports and Publications

Hoppin, Charles. “The House in Which George Washington was Born.” *Tyler’s Quarterly Historical Magazine* 8, no. 2 (October 1926).

———. “Was Washington Born in a Cabin?” *Antiques* (February 1931).

Mallory, Dalton. “Tribute to Mrs. Josephine Wheelwright Rust presented by Dalton W. Mallory on the occasion of the unveiling of her portrait” (approximately 1994) in folder “A3615” in NPS Records Box 9 of 25, GEWA Archives.

Rust, Josephine W. “Wakefield National Memorial Association, Report of the President,” 11 June 1930, in box “GEWA—Annual Reports,” NPS Harpers Ferry Center Archives.

Rust, Mrs. Harry Lee Sr. “Restoration of George Washington’s Birthplace,” 15 December 1930, Wakefield Association Files, FAC, RG 66, National Archives, Washington, DC.

Taylor, O.G. “Condensed Report of Restoration Work to Date,” 10 September 1930, Wakefield files, FAC, RG 66, National Archives, Washington, DC.

#### Wildlife Reports

“Annual Wildlife Report” (1932). George Washington’s Birthplace National Monument. NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

“Annual Wildlife Report” (1933). George Washington’s Birthplace National Monument. NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

“Annual Wildlife Report” (1934). George Washington’s Birthplace National Monument. NPS Records Box 6 of 25, 1920s-1960s Records, GEWA.

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## **Film and Video**

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#### **Previously-Recorded Interviews**

GEWA possesses several uncataloged audio recordings of interviews with adjacent landowners and Northern Neck residents witness to the early years of development at Washington's Birthplace. Of particular interest is an interview with a Mr. Combs likely recorded during the mid-1970s regarding the removal of the granite obelisk; a 16 July 1976 interview with Stanley Coates concerning goings-on at the Monument during the early 1930s; a ca. 1976 interview with adjacent landowner James Latane, Sr.; and a 15 September 1993 interview with Goodwin Muse.