

Commonwealth of Virginia

County of New Kent.

Meeting of the Board of Supervisors
of New Kent County, August 11, 1958

Whereas, the marriage of George Washington and Martha Dandridge Custis was solemnized January six, seventeen hundred fifty-nine; and

Whereas, according to family tradition as stated by George Washington Parke Custis, grandson of Martha Washington (who became her adopted son in November, seventeen hundred eighty-one), and as stated by the son-in-law of George Washington Parke Custis, General Robert E. Lee, and other family members, this famous marriage was solemnized in historic Saint Peter's Church of New Kent County, Virginia, which is known as the "First Church of the First First-Lady"; and

Whereas, nineteen hundred fifty-nine will be the Bicentennial Year of this historic occasion; and

Whereas, the General Assembly of Virginia, at its nineteen hundred fifty-eight session, passed a joint resolution urging that the Bicentennial anniversary of the marriage of George Washington and Martha Dandridge Custis be celebrated appropriately throughout the United States by all interested agencies, organizations, and individuals;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved by the Board of Supervisors of New Kent County, Virginia, that all interested agencies, organizations, and individuals throughout the United States be urged to commemorate appropriately the Bicentennial anniversary of the marriage of George Washington and Martha Dandridge Custis.

It is Ordered that the County Clerk of New Kent County be directed to publicize this Resolution among interested agencies, organizations, and individuals.



Virginia S. Anderson
County Clerk of New Kent County,
Virginia

J. A. Pearman
Chairman, Board of Supervisors of
New Kent County, Virginia

Historic New Kent County, founded sixteen hundred fifty-four: Birthplace of Martha Washington, June second, seventeen hundred thirty-one.



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ALEXANDRIA.

SATURDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 30, 1848.

Washington's Marriage in 1759.

We learn that Mr. J. B. Stearns, a distinguished artist of New York, and lately from Europe, has been for some days at Arlington House, in this vicinity, engaged in making very beautiful and successful copies from the original pictures of Colonel and Mrs. Washington, the one of the date of 1772, by Peale, and the other of 1759, by Woolaston, with a view to the painting of a large picture of Washington's Marriage, founded upon the relation of that interesting event, in the Custis recollections and private memoirs of the Life and Character of Washington.

The scene is laid in the ancient Parish Church of St. Peter's, County of New Kent, a colony of Virginia, time 6th of January, 1759.

In the fore ground, and near the altar, appears the Rev. Dr. Mossom, the officiating clergyman, in full canonicals; he is about to present the marriage ring. The Bridegroom is in a suit of blue and silver, lined with red silk, embroidered waistcoat, small clothes, gold shoe and knee buckles, dress sword, hair in full powder. The Bride in a suit of white satin, rich point laced ruffles, pearl ornaments in her hair, pearl necklace, earrings and bracelets, white satin high heeled shoes, with diamond buckles; she is attended by a groupe of Ladies, in the gorgeous costume of that ancient period. Near to the Bridegroom, is a brilliant groupe, comprising the vice regal Governor of Virginia, several English army and navy officers then on Colonial service, with the very elite of Virginia, chivalry of the old regime. The Governor is in a suit of scarlet, embroidered with gold, with bag wig and sword; the gentlemen in the fashion of the time.

But among the most interesting and picturesque of the personages in the various groups, is Bishop, the celebrated body servant of Braddock, and then of Washington, with whom he ended his days, after a service of more than forty years.

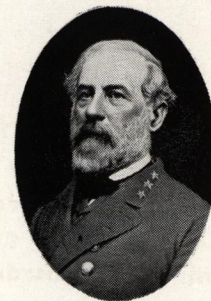
This veteran soldier of the wars of George II. forms a perfect study in the picture. His tall, attenuated form and soldierly bearing, as with folded arms, and cocked hat in hand, respectfully, he has approached the bridal groupe, gives a touching interest to the whole scene. He is in a scarlet coat, and is booted and spurred, having just dismounted, and relinquished the favorite charger of his chief, to a groom.

Through the large folding doors of the Church, is seen the old fashioned coach of the Bride, drawn by six horses; also the fine English charger, bequeathed to Washington by Braddock, after the fatal field of the Monongahela.

From the account of the marriage, handed down from those who were present at its celebration, it appears that the Bride and her Ladies occupied the coach, while the Provincial Colonel rode his splendid charger, attended by a brilliant cortege of the gay and gallant of the land.

Such was Washington's Marriage in 1759.

The reference to "Custis" in the above news article is to George Washington Parke Custis, grandson of Martha Washington, who was adopted by the Washingtons in 1781, when he was six months old, he lived at "Mount Vernon" from that time until 1804. In the year of his adoption he inherited the "White House" Estate, the former home of Mrs. Washington, which he owned up until the time of his death in 1857.



GENERAL R. E. LEE'S LETTER REGARDING ST. PETER'S CHURCH AND GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MARRIAGE

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA, October 23, 1869.

MY DEAR MISS JENNY:

I am very much obliged to you for your letter of the 19th and the contributions it contained for our little Church. Thank Dr. Pendleton's "Old Puseyete friend" and tell him that he is using the proper arguments to advance his cause. The Dr. is now in Baltimore advocating the claims of his church and would no doubt be glad to see him. He intends going as far as New York, but everyone that has money has so much to do with it that I fear that he will collect but little. I have mailed to your address at Brandon the circulars you desired. You must not concern yourself too much about them or do more than you think right. There are three or four churches in Va. in which I take peculiar interest. Grace Church in Lexington and St. Peter's in New Kent are two of them and both I think have claims upon the regard of the Community. The first for the opportunity it possesses of advancing the cause of religion among the young as set forth in the Appeal and the second for its association with the recollections of Gen'l Washington, his marriage and early history. Both of these I am trying to build up, and both I hope will share a portion of your kind attention and regard, and will have a place on your list of good works that claim your special interest. I visited St. Peter's this past Spring. It is three miles from the *White House* and in better days I was able to give it more attention. During the war it was made a stable of by Federal Cavalry. The Pulpit, Chancel, doors, windows, floor, etc. were broken and destroyed. Since the cessation of hostilities the neighbors and others have in the best way they could restored the doors, windows, floor and stoves, and procured the services of Mr. Kepler to preach for them every fortnight. On these occasions he makes the White House his resting place, going down every alternate Saturday and returning Monday or Tuesday. The Pulpit and Chancel ought also to be restored, and the whole church made worthy of its associations. It is one of the Old Colonial Churches, the bricks were brought from England, it is beautifully situated on the road from New Kent C. House to Richmond in a grove of native oaks and is the church where Gen'l Washington was married and attended in early life. It would be a shame to America if allowed to go to destruction. Please remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Gittings and their family, in which Mrs. Lee and my daughters unite in much love to you.

Most truly,
R. E. LEE.

Written to Miss Virginia Ritchie of Brandon, Virginia.

The "White House" Estate was the home of Martha Washington, as the wife and widow of Daniel Parke Custis. In 1757, it descended to her son, John Parke Custis, and upon his death in 1781, this property descended to his son, George Washington Parke Custis, who was then six months old. Also in 1781, George Washington Parke Custis and his sister, Nelly Custis, were adopted by the Washingtons, and from that time until 1804, these adopted children made their home at "Mount Vernon." The only child of George Washington Parke Custis, Mary Ann Randolph Custis married R. E. Lee in 1831. Under the terms of Mr. Custis' will, written in 1855, and probated in 1857, he devised the "White House" Estate to his grandson, W. H. F. Lee. However, this estate was charged with the payment of certain legacies. These were advanced by R. E. Lee out of his own funds, and thus he acquired a substantial pecuniary interest in the "White House" Estate, which he held up until the time of his death in 1870.

This is the first time that the full text of General Lee's letter has been available to the public. On many previous occasions it has been quoted partially, and erroneously stated to have been written October 23, 1865.