



## Our mission

*is to preserve our historic properties in Fredericksburg, Virginia and to interpret them through inclusive narratives that inspire an engaging and enduring understanding of the Washington family.*

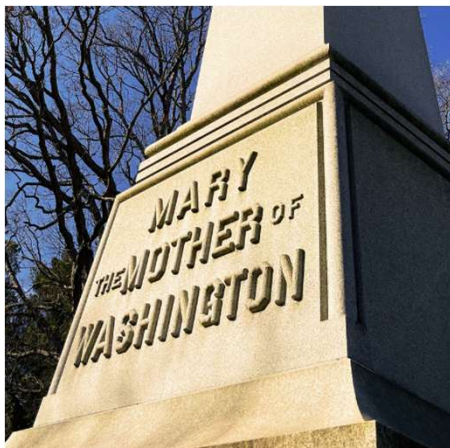
## A MONUMENTAL VISION

The Mary Washington Monument is the product of years of diligent efforts by American women, men and statesmen to honor the mother of the first US president, George Washington. Shortly after Mary Ball Washington's death in 1789, Congress declared that a monument be erected in her honor. For decades, multiple groups worked through starts and stops to bring this vision to life. More than a century later, today's monument was dedicated in 1894.

Washington Heritage Museums has taken on the stewardship of this important national symbol. We invite you to become part of the next chapter of Mary Washington's legacy as WHM strives to preserve and improve the Mary Washington Monument site so that more people can learn the story of *America's First Mother*. It is truly **A Monumental Vision: a campaign for the future.**

WHM is funded by museum admissions, grants, memberships, sponsorships and donations. WHM does not receive ongoing city, state or federal funding. Your partnership is critical to the success of this campaign, and ultimately to the preservation of the Mary Washington Monument site and its educational programs.

WHM became stewards of the Mary Washington Monument, Meditation Rock and the Caretaker's Lodge in 2023.



# MARY BALL WASHINGTON: *America's First Mother*



There are no known likenesses of Mary from life. Painting by Robert Edge Pine.

Mary Washington was a **remarkable woman**. Not only the mother who shaped the man that became the first president of the United States, George Washington, she was an independent-thinking trailblazer. Mary became an **entrepreneur** at 35 when her husband Augustine died. To protect her children's inheritance, she took over the sole management of the family farm with the help of their enslaved people.

Facing significant losses, Mary Washington was herself orphaned as a child and then became a young **single mother** upon the early death of her husband, Augustine. Though customary at the time, she did not remarry even though she had five young children and two step-children from Augustine. George, her eldest born, was just 11 years old at the time.

Mary Ball Washington instilled **strong morals and values** in each of her children. It is believed that she read and taught her children from Matthew Hale's *Contemplations: Moral & Divine*. George Washington often credited his mother for his uncompromising character. It was the same character that helped him rise as our first Commander-in-Chief.

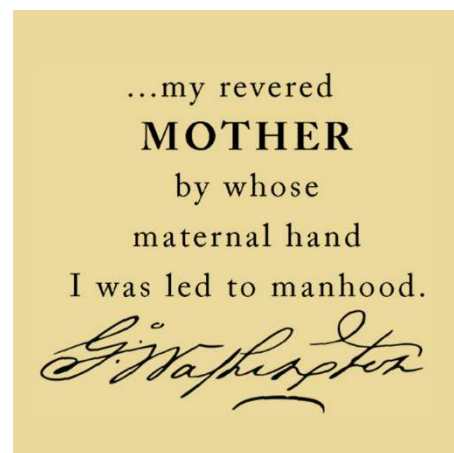


A depiction of George Washington's last visit with his mother in her Fredericksburg home before she died.

Mary Washington died August 25, 1789, at the age of 80 after a lengthy battle with **breast cancer**.

George Washington had ordered a small memorial stone for his mother's grave near **Meditation Rock**, but relic hunters had caused such significant damage to warrant its replacement. After much work to raise money for the monument, the **cornerstone of a monument**, the precursor to today's monument, was laid in 1833.

The first monument to Mary Washington was never finished. Years of damage inflicted by the Civil War and relic hunters made salvage impossible. The monument concept was resurrected in February of 1890 when two **women's groups**, **Mary Washington Monument Association** and the **National Mary Washington Memorial Association**, worked together to honor Mary Washington with a newly designed monument. In October of the same year, the **Daughters of the American Revolution** joined the effort making the monument project their first fundraising endeavor. In 1893, the new cornerstone was laid.



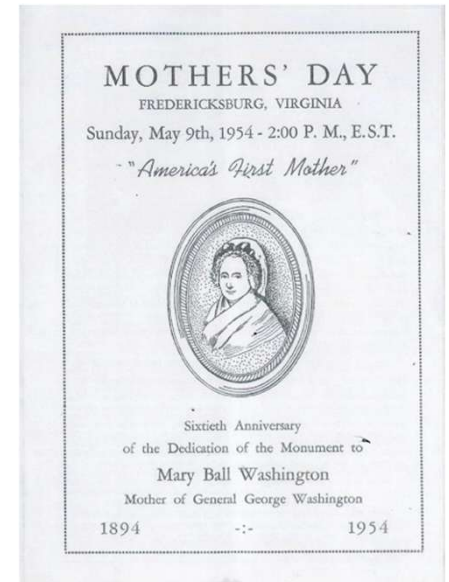
An 1875 sketch by Sid H. Nealy of the first unfinished Mary Washington Monument.

# A MONUMENTAL VISION: *a campaign for the future*



Postcard mailed from Fredericksburg to Urbana, Massachusetts May 18, 1922

In May of 1894, amid great fanfare including US President Grover Cleveland and Virginia Governor Charles O'Ferral, the monument that can be seen today was dedicated. It is widely considered the **first monument funded and erected by women, for a woman.**



On Mother's Day 1954, America's First Mother was celebrated for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mary Washington Monument dedication. US President Dwight Eisenhower attended the grand event and **laid a wreath** in Mary's honor.

In January 2023, Washington Heritage Museums engaged with the City of Fredericksburg to write a new chapter for the Mary Washington Monument. The City transferred the property, by deed of gift, to Washington Heritage Museums. Since 1900, guests from across the nation and around the world have visited the Mary Washington House, and later, additional 18th-century Washington Heritage Museum properties. The interpretations presented at these museums convey the role that Fredericksburg and its people played in **the life of George Washington, his family, and his contemporaries.**

The Mary Washington Monument today. It is a Garden Club of Virginia Restoration Site.



***Nor will she be forgotten; she who bent the twig to incline the tree to glory.***

*-George W. Parke Custis, 1826*

Washington Heritage Museums' **vision** for the Mary Washington Monument, Gravesite, Meditation Rock, the Eskridge Oak, Gordon Cemetery and the Caretaker's Lodge includes a thorough interpretation of the sites through both interior and exterior improvements and preservation. WHM proposes to interpret **Mary Washington's life and death** and the **remarkable history** of the Monument's creation.

Whether through more **accessible pathways**, or the introduction of a small museum and visitor's center, audiences will have an opportunity to learn about the life of the mother who raised our first president, and the tremendous efforts that were brought forth by many people throughout history to honor her.



## OPPORTUNITIES *for* SUPPORT

- Obelisk Society – *gifts of \$130,000 or greater*
  - Cornerstone Steward – *gifts from \$100,000 to \$129,999*
  - Mary Ball Washington Circle – *gifts from \$50,000 to \$99,999*
  - Preservation Pioneers – *gifts from \$25,000 to \$49,999*
  - Revolutionary Partners – *gifts from \$10,000 to \$24,999*
  - Meditation Rock Guardians – *gifts from \$5,000 to \$9,999*
  - Patriot Club – *gifts from \$1,000 to \$4,999*
  - Supporter – *gifts of all levels are needed and appreciated*
- 



*L to R: Kelly Johnson, monument campaign co-chair, Gail Braxton, monument campaign honorary chair, and Rennie McDaniel, monument campaign co-chair.*

*We need to ensure this site and its place in the history of Fredericksburg and our nation are preserved for generations to come. Mary Ball Washington's story is invaluable to our nation's history and the formative role that women played in the creation of our nation. We endeavor for all who visit the Mary Washington Monument site to leave with a clear appreciation and understanding of America's First Mother.*

*Chuck Fennell  
Chairman, Board of Directors*

### *How to Donate*

**Mail:** please return the Commitment form in the enclosed envelope or mail your gift to:  
Washington Heritage Museums  
1300 Charles Street  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

**Online:** please scan the QR Code with your smart phone or use this link:  
[www.bit.ly/marywashingtonmonument](http://www.bit.ly/marywashingtonmonument) to go to our secure donation site

**Telephone:** please call Anne Darron 540-373-5630

**Stock, Wire or Electronic Funds Transfer:** please call Anne Darron 540-373-5630



Washington Heritage Museums is a 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.



# A MONUMENTAL VISION: *commitment*



- ☐ **Yes**, please accept my gift to Washington Heritage Museums to further the preservation and interpretation of the Mary Washington Monument grounds and associated sites.

## COMMITMENT LEVEL

- ☐ Obelisk Society – gifts of \$130,000 or greater
- ☐ Cornerstone Steward – gifts from \$100,000 to \$129,999
- ☐ Mary Ball Washington Circle – gifts from \$50,000 to \$99,999
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- ☐ Meditation Rock Guardians – gifts from \$5,000 to \$9,999
- ☐ Patriot Club – gifts from \$1,000 to \$4,999
- ☐ Supporter – my personal gift of \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_ I am enclosing a check payable to *Washington Heritage Museums*.

\_\_\_\_ Please invoice me \_\_\_\_ Via email \_\_\_\_ Via USPS

\_\_\_\_ I wish to donate securely via credit card online at [www.bit.ly/marywashingtonmonument](http://www.bit.ly/marywashingtonmonument) or the QR Code below.  
*To maximize the impact of your gift, please consider covering the credit card transaction fees at checkout.*

\_\_\_\_ I wish to make my gift in \_\_\_\_ honor / \_\_\_\_ memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please provide detailed instructions on reverse.*

\_\_\_\_ My employer, \_\_\_\_\_, is a matching gift company.

\_\_\_\_ Please contact me about including WHM in my estate planning.

Donor name *exactly* as it is to be published: \_\_\_\_\_

*Unless otherwise specified, individual donors will be listed with first and last name(s) along with the donation amount. If you prefer, \_\_\_\_ do not post my name with my donation amount; \_\_\_\_ post my name, but not the donation amount.*

Enter your commitment online via the QR Code or you may mail, email or fax your commitment to:

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540-538-0696 (Text)



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