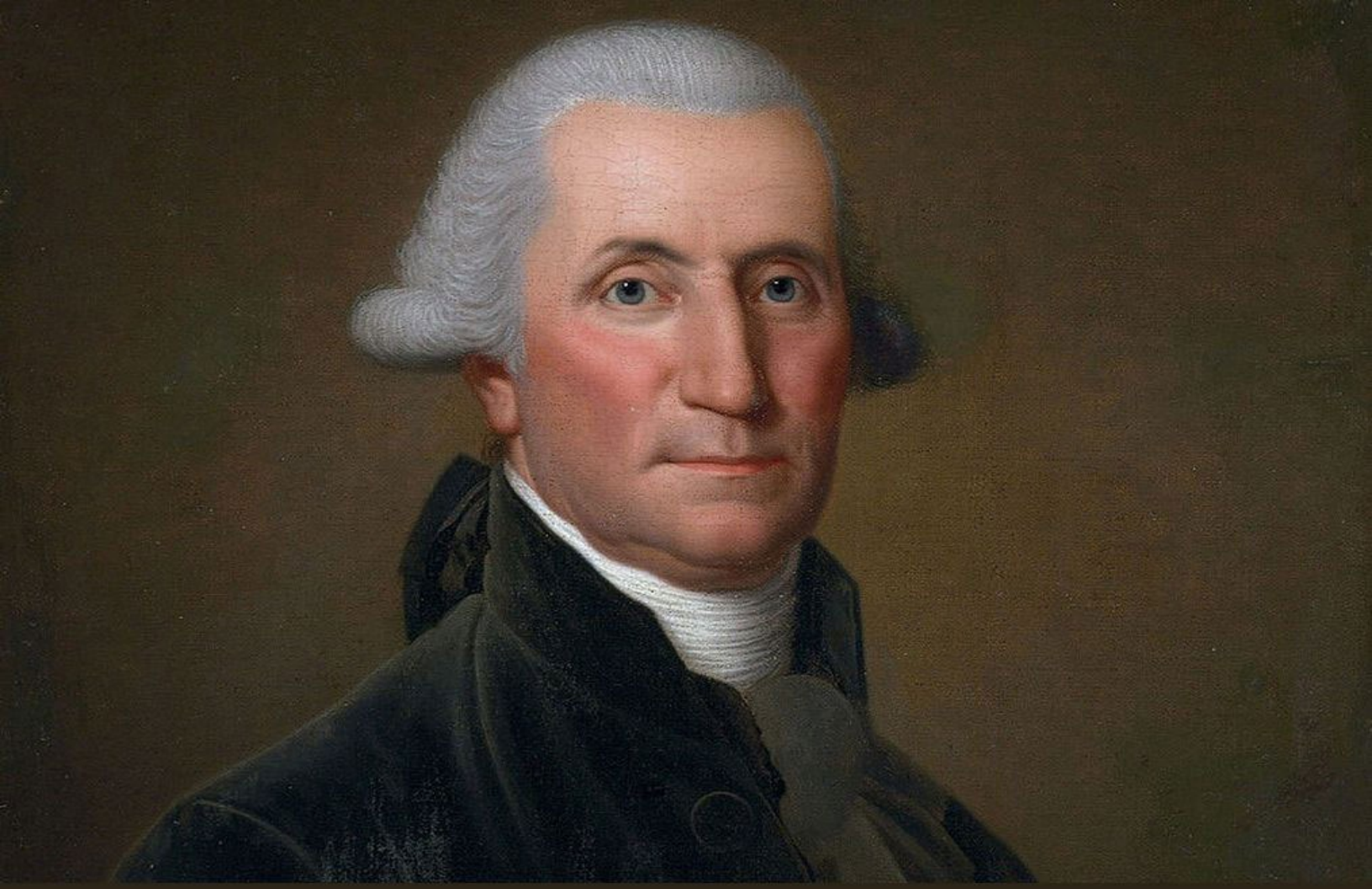

THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

VOLUME 1

WASHINGTON IRVING

EXTENDED ANNOTATED EDITION

The Life Of George Washington, Vol. 1

Washington Irving

Contents:

The Life Of George Washington, Vol. 1, W. Irving
Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9
Germany

ISBN: 9783849642167

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Washington Irving – A Biographical Primer

Washington Irving (1783-1859), American man of letters, was born at New York on the 3rd of April 1783. Both his parents were immigrants from Great Britain, his father, originally an officer in the merchant service, but at the time of Irving's birth a considerable merchant, having come from the Orkneys, and his mother from Falmouth. Irving was intended for the legal profession, but his studies were interrupted by an illness necessitating a voyage to Europe, in the course of which he proceeded as far as Rome, and made the acquaintance of Washington Allston. He was called to the bar upon his return, but made little effort to practice, preferring to amuse himself with literary ventures. The first of these of any importance, a satirical miscellany entitled *Salmagundi, or the Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff and others*, written in conjunction with his brother William and J. K. Paulding, gave ample proof of his talents as a humorist. These were still more conspicuously displayed in his next attempt, *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty*, by “Diedrich Knickerbocker” (2 vols., New York, 1809). The satire of *Salmagundi* had been principally local, and the original design of “Knickerbocker's” History was only to burlesque a pretentious disquisition on the history of the city in a guidebook by Dr Samuel Mitchell. The idea expanded as Irving proceeded, and he ended by not merely satirizing the

pedantry of local antiquaries, but by creating a distinct literary type out of the solid Dutch burgher whose phlegm had long been an object of ridicule to the mercurial Americans. Though far from the most finished of Irving's productions, “Knickerbocker” manifests the most original power, and is the most genuinely national in its quaintness and drollery. The very tardiness and prolixity of the story are skillfully made to heighten the humorous effect.

Upon the death of his father, Irving had become a sleeping partner in his brother's commercial house, a branch of which was established at Liverpool. This, combined with the restoration of peace, induced him to visit England in 1815, when he found the stability of the firm seriously compromised. After some years of ineffectual struggle it became bankrupt. This misfortune compelled Irving to resume his pen as a means of subsistence. His reputation had preceded him to England, and the curiosity naturally excited by the then unwonted apparition of a successful American author procured him admission into the highest literary circles, where his popularity was ensured by his amiable temper and polished manners. As an American, moreover, he stood aloof from the political and literary disputes which then divided England. Campbell, Jeffrey, Moore, Scott, were counted among his friends, and the last-named zealously recommended him to the publisher Murray, who, after at first refusing, consented (1820) to bring out *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (7 pts., New York, 1819-1820). The most interesting part of this work is the description of an English Christmas, which displays a delicate humor not unworthy of the writer's evident model Addison. Some stories and sketches on American themes contribute to give it variety; of these Rip van Winkle is the most remarkable. It speedily obtained the greatest success on both sides of the Atlantic. *Bracebridge Hall, or the Humourists* (2 vols., New York), a work purely

English in subject, followed in 1822, and showed to what account the American observer had turned his experience of English country life. The humor is, nevertheless, much more English than American. *Tales of a Traveller* (4 pts.) appeared in 1824 at Philadelphia, and Irving, now in comfortable circumstances, determined to enlarge his sphere of observation by a journey on the continent. After a long course of travel he settled down at Madrid in the house of the American consul Rich. His intention at the time was to translate the *Coleccion de los Viajes y Descubrimientos* (Madrid, 1825-1837) of Martin Fernandez de Navarrete; finding, however, that this was rather a collection of valuable materials than a systematic biography, he determined to compose a biography of his own by its assistance, supplemented by independent researches in the Spanish archives. His *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (London, 4 vols.) appeared in 1828, and obtained a merited success. *The Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus* (Philadelphia, 1831) followed; and a prolonged residence in the south of Spain gave Irving materials for two highly picturesque books, *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada from the MSS. of* [an imaginary] *Fray Antonio Agapida* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1829), and *The Alhambra: a series of tales and sketches of the Moors and Spaniards* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1832). Previous to their appearance he had been appointed secretary to the embassy at London, an office as purely complimentary to his literary ability as the legal degree which he about the same time received from the university of Oxford.

Returning to the United States in 1832, after seventeen years' absence, he found his name a household word, and himself universally honored as the first American who had won for his country recognition on equal terms in the literary republic. After the rush of fêtes and public

compliments had subsided, he undertook a tour in the western prairies, and returning to the neighborhood of New York built for himself a delightful retreat on the Hudson, to which he gave the name of “Sunnyside.” His acquaintance with the New York millionaire John Jacob Astor prompted his next important work — *Astoria* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1836), a history of the fur-trading settlement founded by Astor in Oregon, deduced with singular literary ability from dry commercial records, and, without labored attempts at word-painting, evincing a remarkable faculty for bringing scenes and incidents vividly before the eye. *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (London and Philadelphia, 1837), based upon the unpublished memoirs of a veteran explorer, was another work of the same class. In 1842 Irving was appointed ambassador to Spain. He spent four years in the country, without this time turning his residence to literary account; and it was not until two years after his return that Forster's life of Goldsmith, by reminding him of a slight essay of his own which he now thought too imperfect by comparison to be included among his collected writings, stimulated him to the production of his *Life of Oliver Goldsmith, with Selections from his Writings* (2 vols., New York, 1849). Without pretensions to original research, the book displays an admirable talent for employing existing material to the best effect. The same may be said of *The Lives of Mahomet and his Successors* (New York, 2 vols., 1840-1850). Here as elsewhere Irving correctly discriminated the biographer's province from the historian's, and leaving the philosophical investigation of cause and effect to writers of Gibbon's caliber, applied himself to represent the picturesque features of the age as embodied in the actions and utterances of its most characteristic representatives. His last days were devoted to his *Life of George Washington* (5 vols., 1855-1859, New York and London), undertaken in an enthusiastic spirit, but which the author found exhausting and his readers tame.

His genius required a more poetical theme, and indeed the biographer of Washington must be at least a potential soldier and statesman. Irving just lived to complete this work, dying of heart disease at Sunnyside, on the 28th of November 1859.

Although one of the chief ornaments of American literature, Irving is not characteristically American. But he is one of the few authors of his period who really manifest traces of a vein of national peculiarity which might under other circumstances have been productive. “Knickerbocker's” *History of New York*, although the air of mock solemnity which constitutes the staple of its humor is peculiar to no literature, manifests nevertheless a power of reproducing a distinct national type. Had circumstances taken Irving to the West, and placed him amid a society teeming with quaint and genial eccentricity, he might possibly have been the first Western humorist, and his humor might have gained in depth and richness. In England, on the other hand, everything encouraged his natural fastidiousness; he became a refined writer, but by no means a robust one. His biographies bear the stamp of genuine artistic intelligence, equally remote from compilation and disquisition. In execution they are almost faultless; the narrative is easy, the style pellucid, and the writer's judgment nearly always in accordance with the general verdict of history. Without ostentation or affectation, he was exquisite in all things, a mirror of loyalty, courtesy and good taste in all his literary connexions, and exemplary in all the relations of domestic life. He never married, remaining true to the memory of an early attachment blighted by death.

The principal edition of Irving' s works is the “Geoffrey Crayon,” published at New York in 1880 in 26 vols. His *Life and Letters* was published by his nephew Pierre M. Irving (London, 1862-1864, 4 vols.; German abridgment by Adolf Laun, Berlin, 1870, 2 vols.) There is a good deal of miscellaneous information in a compilation entitled *Irvingiana* (New York, 1860); and W. C. Bryant's

memorial oration, though somewhat too uniformly laudatory, may be consulted with advantage. It was republished in *Studies of Irvine* (1880) along with C. Dudley Warner's introduction to the “Geoffrey Crayon” edition, and Mr. G. P. Putnam's personal reminiscences of Irving, which originally appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*. See also *Washington Irving* (1881), by C. D. Warner, in the “American Men of Letters” series; H. R. Haweis, *American Humourists* (London, 1883).

The Life Of George Washington, Vol. 1

Chapter I.

GENEALOGY OF THE WASHINGTON FAMILY.

The Washington family is of an ancient English stock, the genealogy of which has been traced up to the century immediately succeeding the Conquest. At that time it was in possession of landed estates and manorial privileges in the county of Durham, such as were enjoyed only by those, or their descendants, who had come over from Normandy with the Conqueror, or fought under his standard. When William the Conqueror laid waste the whole country north of the Humber, in punishment of the insurrection of the Northumbrians, he apportioned the estates among his followers, and advanced Normans and other foreigners to the principal ecclesiastical dignities. One of the most wealthy and important sees was that of Durham. Hither had been transported the bones of St. Cuthbert from their original shrine at Lindisfarne, when it was ravaged by the Danes. That saint, says Camden, was esteemed by princes and gentry a titular saint against the Scots. [Footnote: Camden, Brit. iv., 349.] His shrine, therefore, had been held

in peculiar reverence by the Saxons, and the see of Durham endowed with extraordinary privileges.

William continued and increased those privileges. He needed a powerful adherent on this frontier to keep the restless Northumbrians in order, and check Scottish invasion; and no doubt considered an enlightened ecclesiastic, appointed by the crown, a safer depositary of such power than an hereditary noble.

Having placed a noble and learned native of Loraine in the diocese, therefore, he erected it into a palatinate, over which the bishop, as Count Palatine, had temporal, as well as spiritual jurisdiction. He built a strong castle for his protection, and to serve as a barrier against the Northern foe. He made him lord high-admiral of the sea and waters adjoining his palatinate,—lord warden of the marches, and conservator of the league between England and Scotland. Thenceforth, we are told, the prelates of Durham owned no earthly superior within their diocese, but continued for centuries to exercise every right attached to an independent sovereign. [Footnote: Annals of Roger de Hovedon. Hutchinson's Durham, vol. ii. Collectanea Curiosa, vol. ii., p. 83.]

The bishop, as Count Palatine, lived in almost royal state and splendor. He had his lay chancellor, chamberlains, secretaries, steward, treasurer, master of the horse, and a host of minor officers. Still he was under feudal obligations. All landed property in those warlike times, implied military service. Bishops and abbots, equally with great barons who held estates immediately of the crown, were obliged, when required, to furnish the king with armed men in proportion to their domains; but they had their feudatories under them to aid them in this service.

The princely prelate of Durham had his barons and knights, who held estates of him on feudal tenure, and were bound to serve him in peace and war. They sat occasionally in his councils, gave martial splendor to his court, and were obliged to have horse and weapon ready for service, for they lived in a belligerent neighborhood, disturbed occasionally by civil war, and often by Scottish foray. When the banner of St. Cuthbert, the royal standard of the province, was displayed, no armed feudatory of the bishop could refuse to take the field. [Footnote: Robert de Graystanes, Ang. Sac., p. 746.]

Some of these prelates, in token of the warlike duties of their diocese, engraved on their seals a knight on horseback armed at all points, brandishing in one hand a sword, and holding forth in the other the arms of the see. [Footnote: Camden, Brit. iv., 349.]

Among the knights who held estates in the palatinate on these warlike conditions, was WILLIAM DE HERTBURN, the progenitor of the Washingtons. His Norman name of William would seem to point out his national descent; and the family long continued to have Norman names of baptism. The surname of De Hertburn was taken from a village on the palatinate which he held of the bishop in knight's fee; probably the same now called Hartburn on the banks of the Tees. It had become a custom among the Norman families of rank about the time of the Conquest, to take surnames from their castles or estates; it was not until some time afterwards that surnames became generally assumed by the people. [Footnote: Lower on Surnames, vol. i., p. 43. Fuller says, that the custom of surnames was brought from France in Edward the Confessor's time, about fifty years before the Conquest; but did not become universally settled until some hundred years afterwards. At

first they did not descend hereditarily on the family.—*Fuller, Church History. Roll Battle Abbey.*]

How or when the De Hertburns first acquired possession of their village is not known. They may have been companions in arms with Robert de Brus (or Bruce) a noble knight of Normandy, rewarded by William the Conqueror with great possessions in the North, and among others, with the lordships of Hert and Hertness in the county of Durham.

The first actual mention we find of the family is in the Bolden Book, a record of all the lands appertaining to the diocese in 1183. In this it is stated that William de Hertburn had exchanged his village of Hertburn for the manor and village of Wessyngton, likewise in the diocese; paying the bishop a quitrent of four pounds, and engaging to attend him with two greyhounds in grand hunts, and to furnish a man at arms whenever military aid should be required of the palatinate. [Footnote: THE BOLDEN BOOK. As this ancient document gives the first trace of the Washington family, it merits especial mention. In 1183, a survey was made by order of Bishop de Pusaz of all the lands of the see held in demesne, or by tenants in villanage. The record was entered in a book called the Bolden Buke; the parish of Bolden occurring first in alphabetical arrangement. The document commences in the following manner: Incipit liber qui vocatur Bolden Book. Anno Dominice Incarnationis, 1183, &c.

The following is the memorandum in question:—

Willus de Herteburn habet Wessyngton (excepta ecclesia et terra ecclesie partinen) ad excamb. pro villa de Herteburn quam pro hac quietam clamavit: Et reddit 4 L. Et vadit in *magna caza* cum 2 Leporar. Et quando commune auxilium

venerit debet dare 1 Militem ad plus de auxilio, &c.—*Collectanea Curiosa*, vol. ii., p. 89.

The Bolden Buke is a small folio, deposited in the office of the bishop's auditor, at Durham.]

The family changed its surname with its estate, and thenceforward assumed that of DE WESSYNGTON. [Footnote: The name is probably of Saxon origin. It existed in England prior to the Conquest. The village of Wassengtone is mentioned in a Saxon charter as granted by king Edgar in 973 to Thorney Abbey.—*Collectanea Topographica*, iv., 55.] The condition of military service attached to its manor will be found to have been often exacted, nor was the service in the grand hunt an idle form. Hunting came next to war in those days, as the occupation of the nobility and gentry. The clergy engaged in it equally with the laity. The hunting establishment of the Bishop of Durham was on a princely scale. He had his forests, chases and parks, with their train of foresters, rangers, and park keepers. A grand hunt was a splendid pageant in which all his barons and knights attended him with horse and hound. The stipulations with the Seignior of Wessyngton show how strictly the rights of the chase were defined. All the game taken by him in going to the forest belonged to the bishop; all taken on returning belonged to himself. [Footnote: Hutchinson's Durham vol. ii., p. 489.]

Hugh de Pusaz (or De Pudsay) during whose episcopate we meet with this first trace of the De Wessyngtons, was a nephew of king Stephen, and a prelate of great pretensions; fond of appearing with a train of ecclesiastics and an armed retinue. When Richard Coeur de Lion put every thing at pawn and sale to raise funds for a crusade to the Holy Land, the bishop resolved to accompany him. More wealthy than his sovereign, he made magnificent

preparations. Besides ships to convey his troops and retinue, he had a sumptuous galley for himself, fitted up with a throne or episcopal chair of silver, and all the household, and even culinary, utensils, were of the same costly material. In a word, had not the prelate been induced to stay at home, and aid the king with his treasures, by being made one of the regents of the kingdom, and Earl of Northumberland for life, the De Wessyngtons might have followed the banner of St. Cuthbert to the Holy wars.

Nearly seventy years afterwards we find the family still retaining its manorial estate in the palatinate. The names of Bondo de Wessyngton and William his son appear on charters of land, granted in 1257 to religious houses. Soon after occurred the wars of the barons, in which the throne of Henry III was shaken by the De Mountforts. The chivalry of the palatinate rallied under the royal standard. On the list of loyal knights who fought for their sovereign in the disastrous battle of Lewes (1264), in which the king was taken prisoner, we find the name of William Weshington, of Weshington. [Footnote: This list of knights was inserted in the Bolden Book as an additional entry. It is cited at full length by Hutchinson.—*Hist. Durham*, vol. i., p. 220.]

During the splendid pontificate of Anthony Beke (or Beak), the knights of the palatinate had continually to be in the saddle, or buckled in armor. The prelate was so impatient of rest that he never took more than one sleep, saying it was unbecoming a man to turn from one side to another in bed. He was perpetually, when within his diocese, either riding from one manor to another, or hunting and hawking. Twice he assisted Edward I. with all his force in invading Scotland. In the progress northward with the king, the bishop led the van, marching a day in advance of the main body, with a mercenary force, paid by himself, of one thousand foot and five hundred horse. Besides these he had

his feudatories of the palatinate; six bannerets and one hundred and sixty knights, not one of whom, says an old poem, but surpassed Arthur himself, though endowed with the charmed gifts of Merlin. [Footnote: Onques Artous pour touz ces charmes, Si beau prisent ne ot de Merlyn. SIEGE OF KARLAVEROCK; *an old Poem in Norman French.*] We presume the De Wessyngtons were among those preux chevaliers, as the banner of St. Cuthbert had been taken from its shrine on the occasion, and of course all the armed force of the diocese was bound to follow. It was borne in front of the army by a monk of Durham. There were many rich caparisons, says the old poem, many beautiful pennons, fluttering from lances, and much neighing of steeds. The hills and valleys were covered with sumpter horses and waggons laden with tents and provisions. The Bishop of Durham in his warlike state appeared, we are told, more like a powerful prince, than a priest or prelate. [Footnote: Robert de Graystanes, Ang. Sac., p. 746, cited by Hutchinson, vol. i. p. 239.]

At the surrender of the crown of Scotland by John Baliol, which ended this invasion, the bishop negotiated on the part of England. As a trophy of the event, the chair of Schone used on the inauguration of the Scottish monarchs, and containing the stone on which Jacob dreamed, the palladium of Scotland, was transferred to England and deposited in Westminster Abbey. [Footnote: An extract from an inedited poem, cited by Nicolas in his translation of the Siege of Carlavarock, gives a striking picture of the palatinate in these days of its pride and splendor:—

There valour bowed before the rood and book,
  And kneeling knighthood served a prelate lord,
Yet little deigned he on such train to look,
  Or glance of ruth or pity to afford.

There time has heard the peal rung out at night,
  Has seen from every tower the cressets stream,
When the red bale fire on yon western height
  Had roused the warder from his fitful dream.

Has seen old Durham's lion banner float
  O'er the proud bulwark, that, with giant pride
And feet deep plunged amidst the circling moat,
  The efforts of the roving Scot defied.]

In the reign of Edward III. we find the De Wessyngtons still mingling in chivalrous scenes. The name of Sir Stephen de Wessyngton appears on a list of knights (nobles chevaliers) who were to tilt at a tournament at Dunstable in 1334. He bore for his device a golden rose on an azure field. [Footnote: Collect. Topog. et Genealog. T. iv., p. 395.]

He was soon called to exercise his arms on a sterner field. In 1346, Edward and his son, the Black Prince, being absent with the armies in France, king David of Scotland invaded Northumberland with a powerful army. Queen Philippa, who had remained in England as regent, immediately took the field, calling the northern prelates and nobles to join her standard. They all hastened to obey. Among the prelates was Hatfield, the Bishop of Durham. The sacred banner of St. Cuthbert was again displayed, and the chivalry of the palatinate assisted at the famous battle of Nevil's cross, near Durham, in which the Scottish army was defeated and king David taken prisoner.

Queen Philippa hastened with a victorious train to cross the sea at Dover, and join king Edward in his camp before Calais. The prelate of Durham accompanied her. His military train consisted of three bannerets, forty-eight knights, one hundred and sixty-four esquires, and eighty archers, on horseback. [Footnote: Collier's Eccles. Hist.,

Book VI., Cent. XIV.] They all arrived to witness the surrender of Calais, (1346) on which occasion queen Philippa distinguished herself by her noble interference in saving the lives of its patriot citizens.

Such were the warlike and stately scenes in which the De Wessyngtons were called to mingle by their feudal duties as knights of the palatinate. A few years after the last event (1350), William, at that time lord of the manor of Wessyngton, had license to settle it and the village upon himself, his wife, and "his own right heirs." He died in 1367, and his son and heir, William, succeeded to the estate. The latter is mentioned under the name of Sir William de Weschington, as one of the knights who sat in the privy council of the county during the episcopate of John Fordham. [Footnote: Hutchinson, vol. ii.] During this time the whole force of the palatinate was roused to pursue a foray of Scots, under Sir William Douglas, who, having ravaged the country, were returning laden with spoil. It was a fruit of the feud between the Douglases and the Percys. The marauders were overtaken by Hotspur Percy, and then took place the battle of Otterbourne, in which Percy was taken prisoner and Douglas slain. [Footnote: Theare the Dowglas lost his life, And the Percye was led away. FORDUN. *Quoted by Surtee's Hist. Durham*, vol i.]

For upwards of two hundred years the De Wessyngtons had now sat in the councils of the palatinate; had mingled with horse and hound in the stately hunts of its prelates, and followed the banner of St. Cuthbert to the field; but Sir William, just mentioned, was the last of the family that rendered this feudal service. He was the last male of the line to which the inheritance of the manor, by the license granted to his father, was confined. It passed away from the De Wessyngtons, after his death, by the marriage of his only daughter and heir, Dionisia, with Sir William Temple of

Studley. By the year 1400 it had become the property of the Blaykestons. [Footnote: Hutchinson's Durham, vol. ii., p. 489.]

But though the name of De Wessyngton no longer figured on the chivalrous roll of the palatinate, it continued for a time to flourish in the cloisters. In the year 1416, John de Wessyngton was elected prior of the Benedictine convent, attached to the cathedral. The monks of this convent had been licensed by Pope Gregory VII. to perform the solemn duties of the cathedral in place of secular clergy, and William the Conqueror had ordained that the priors of Durham should enjoy all the liberties, dignities and honors of abbots; should hold their lands and churches in their own hands and free disposition, and have the abbot's seat on the left side of the choir—thus taking rank of every one but the bishop. [Footnote: Dugdale Monasticon Anglicanum. T. i., p. 231. London ed. 1846.]

In the course of three centuries and upwards, which had since elapsed, these honors and privileges had been subject to repeated dispute and encroachment, and the prior had nearly been elbowed out of the abbot's chair by the archdeacon. John de Wessyngton was not a man to submit tamely to such infringements of his rights. He forthwith set himself up as the champion of his priory, and in a learned tract, *de Juribus et Possessionibus Ecclesiae Dunelm*, established the validity of the long controverted claims, and fixed himself firmly in the abbot's chair. His success in this controversy gained him much renown among his brethren of the cowl, and in 1426 he presided at the general chapter of the order of St. Benedict, held at Northampton.

The stout prior of Durham had other disputes with the bishop and the secular clergy touching his ecclesiastical functions, in which he was equally victorious, and several

tracts remain in manuscript in the dean and chapter's library; weapons hung up in the church armory as memorials of his polemical battles.

Finally, after fighting divers good fights for the honor of his priory, and filling the abbot's chair for thirty years, he died, to use an ancient phrase, "in all the odor of sanctity," in 1446, and was buried like a soldier on his battle-field, at the door of the north aisle of his church, near to the altar of St. Benedict. On his tombstone was an inscription in brass, now unfortunately obliterated, which may have set forth the valiant deeds of this Washington of the cloisters. [Footnote: Hutchinson's Durham, vol. ii., passim.]

By this time the primitive stock of the De Wessyngtons had separated into divers branches, holding estates in various parts of England; some distinguishing themselves in the learned professions, others receiving knighthood for public services. Their names are to be found honorably recorded in county histories, or engraved on monuments in time-worn churches and cathedrals, those garnering places of English worthies. By degrees the seignorial sign of *de* disappeared from before the family surname, which also varied from Wessyngton to Wassington, Wasshington, and finally, to Washington. [Footnote: "The de came to be omitted," says an old treatise, "when Englishmen and English manners began to prevail upon the recovery of lost credit."—*Restitution of decayed intelligence in antiquities.* Lond. 1634.

About the time of Henry VI., says another treatise, the de or d' was generally dropped from surnames, when the title of *armiger*, *esquier*, amongst the heads of families, and *generosus*, or *gentylman*, among younger sons was substituted.—*Lower on Surnames*, vol i.] A parish in the county of Durham bears the name as last written, and in

this probably the ancient manor of Wessyngton was situated. There is another parish of the name in the county of Sussex.

The branch of the family to which our Washington immediately belongs sprang from Laurence Washington, Esquire, of Gray's Inn, son of John Washington, of Warton in Lancashire. This Laurence Washington was for some time mayor of Northampton, and on the dissolution of the priories by Henry VIII. he received, in 1538, a grant of the manor of Sulgrave, in Northamptonshire, with other lands in the vicinity, all confiscated property formerly belonging to the monastery of St. Andrew's.

Sulgrave remained in the family until 1620, and was commonly called "Washington's manor." [Footnote: The manor of Garsdon in Wiltshire has been mentioned as the homestead of the ancestors of our Washington. This is a mistake. It was the residence of Sir Laurence Washington, second son of the above-mentioned grantee of Sulgrave. Elizabeth, granddaughter of this Sir Laurence, married Robert Shirley, Earl Ferrers and Viscount of Tamworth. Washington became a baptismal name among the Shirleys —several of the Earls Ferrers have borne it.

The writer of these pages visited Sulgrave a few years since. It was in a quiet rural neighborhood, where the farm-houses were quaint and antiquated. A part only of the manor house remained, and was inhabited by a farmer. The Washington crest, in colored glass, was to be seen in a window of what was now the buttery. A window on which the whole family arms was emblazoned had been removed to the residence of the actual proprietor of the manor. Another relic of the ancient manor of the Washingtons was a rookery in a venerable grove hard by. The rooks, those stanch adherents to old family abodes, still hovered and

cawed about their hereditary nests. In the pavement of the parish church we were shown a stone slab bearing effigies on plates of brass of Laurence Wasshington, gent., and Anne his wife, and their four sons and eleven daughters. The inscription in black letter was dated 1564.]

One of the direct descendants of the grantee of Sulgrave was Sir William Washington, of Packington, in the county of Kent. He married a sister of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the unfortunate favorite of Charles I. This may have attached the Sulgrave Washingtons to the Stuart dynasty, to which they adhered loyally and generously throughout all its vicissitudes. One of the family, Lieutenant Colonel James Washington, took up arms in the cause of king Charles, and lost his life at the siege of Pontefract castle. Another of the Sulgrave line, Sir Henry Washington, son and heir of Sir William, before mentioned, exhibited in the civil wars the old chivalrous spirit of the knights of the palatinate. He served under prince Rupert at the storming of Bristol, in 1643, and when the assailants were beaten off at every point, he broke in with a handful of infantry at a weak part of the wall, made room for the horse to follow, and opened a path to victory. [Footnote: Clarendon, Book vii.]

He distinguished himself still more in 1646, when elevated to the command of Worcester, the governor having been captured by the enemy. It was a time of confusion and dismay. The king had fled from Oxford in disguise and gone to the parliamentary camp at Newark. The royal cause was desperate. In this crisis Sir Henry received a letter from Fairfax, who, with his victorious army, was at Haddington, demanding the surrender of Worcester. The following was Colonel Washington's reply:

SIR,

It is acknowledged by your books and by report of your own quarter, that the king is in some of your armies. That granted, it may be easy for you to procure his Majesty's commands for the disposal of this garrison. Till then I shall make good the trust reposed in me. As for conditions, if I shall be necessitated, I shall make the best I can. The worst I know and fear not; if I had, the profession of a soldier had not been begun, nor so long continued by your Excellency's humble servant,

HENRY WASHINGTON. [Footnote: Greene's Antiquities of Worcester, p. 273.]

In a few days Colonel Whalley invested the city with five thousand troops. Sir Henry dispatched messenger after messenger in quest of the king to know his pleasure. None of them returned. A female emissary was equally unavailing. Week after week elapsed, until nearly three months had expired. Provisions began to fail. The city was in confusion. The troops grew insubordinate. Yet Sir Henry persisted in the defence. General Fairfax, with 1,500 horse and foot, was daily expected. There was not powder enough for an hour's contest should the city be stormed. Still Sir Henry "awaited his Majesty's commands."

At length news arrived that the king had issued an order for the surrender of all towns, castles, and forts. A printed copy of the order was shown to Sir Henry, and on the faith of that document he capitulated (19th July, 1646) on honorable terms, won by his fortitude and perseverance. Those who believe in hereditary virtues may see foreshadowed in the conduct of this Washington of Worcester, the magnanimous constancy of purpose, the disposition to "hope against hope," which bore our

Washington triumphantly through the darkest days of our revolution.

We have little note of the Sulgrave branch of the family after the death of Charles I. and the exile of his successor. England, during the protectorate, became an uncomfortable residence to such as had signalized themselves as adherents to the house of Stuart. In 1655, an attempt at a general insurrection drew on them the vengeance of Cromwell. Many of their party who had no share in the conspiracy, yet sought refuge in other lands, where they might live free from molestation. This may have been the case with two brothers, John and Andrew Washington, great-grandsons of the grantee of Sulgrave, and uncles of Sir Henry, the gallant defender of Worcester. John had for some time resided at South Cave, in the East Riding of Yorkshire; [Footnote: South Cave is near the Humber. "In the vicinity is Cave Castle, an embattled edifice. It has a noble collection of paintings, including a portrait of General Washington, whose ancestors possessed a portion of the estate."—*Lewes, Topog. Dict.* vol. i., p. 530.] but now emigrated with his brother to Virginia; which colony, from its allegiance to the exiled monarch and the Anglican Church had become a favorite resort of the Cavaliers. The brothers arrived in Virginia in 1657, and purchased lands in Westmoreland County, on the northern neck, between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. John married a Miss Anne Pope, of the same county, and took up his residence on Bridges Creek, near where it falls into the Potomac. He became an extensive planter, and, in process of time, a magistrate and member of the House of Burgesses. Having a spark of the old military fire of the family, we find him, as Colonel Washington, leading the Virginia forces, in co-operation with those of Maryland, against a band of Seneca Indians, who were ravaging the settlements along the Potomac. In honor of his public

services and private virtues the parish in which he resided was called after him, and still bears the name of Washington. He lies buried in a vault on Bridges Creek, which, for generations, was the family place of sepulture.

The estate continued in the family. His grandson Augustine, the father of our Washington, was born there in 1694. He was twice married; first (April 20th, 1715), to Jane, daughter of Caleb Butler, Esq., of Westmoreland County, by whom he had four children, of whom only two, Lawrence and Augustine, survived the years of childhood; their mother died November 24th, 1728, and was buried in the family vault.

On the 6th of March, 1730, he married in second nuptials, Mary, the daughter of Colonel Ball, a young and beautiful girl, said to be the belle of the Northern Neck. By her he had four sons, George, Samuel, John Augustine, and Charles; and two daughters, Elizabeth, or Betty, as she was commonly called, and Mildred, who died in infancy.

George, the eldest, the subject of this biography, was born on the 22d of February (11th, O. S.), 1732, in the homestead on Bridges Creek. This house commanded a view over many miles of the Potomac, and the opposite shore of Maryland. It had probably been purchased with the property, and was one of the primitive farm-houses of Virginia. The roof was steep, and sloped down into low projecting eaves. It had four rooms on the ground floor, and others in the attic, and an immense chimney at each end. Not a vestige of it remains. Two or three decayed fig trees, with shrubs and vines, linger about the place, and here and there a flower grown wild serves "to mark where a garden has been." Such at least, was the case a few years since; but these may have likewise passed away. A stone [Footnote: Placed there by George W. P. Custis, Esq.] marks

the site of the house, and an inscription denotes its being the birthplace of Washington.

We have entered with some minuteness into this genealogical detail; tracing the family step by step through the pages of historical documents for upwards of six centuries; and we have been tempted to do so by the documentary proofs it gives of the lineal and enduring worth of the race. We have shown that, for many generations, and through a variety of eventful scenes, it has maintained an equality of fortune and respectability, and whenever brought to the test has acquitted itself with honor and loyalty. Hereditary rank may be an illusion; but hereditary virtue gives a patent of innate nobleness beyond all the blazonry of the Herald's College.

Chapter II.

THE HOME OF WASHINGTON'S BOYHOOD—HIS EARLY EDUCATION—LAWRENCE WASHINGTON AND HIS CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST INDIES—DEATH OF WASHINGTON'S FATHER—THE WIDOWED MOTHER AND HER CHILDREN—SCHOOL EXERCISES.

Not long after the birth of George, his father removed to an estate in Stafford County, opposite Fredericksburg. The house was similar in style to the one at Bridges Creek, and stood on a rising ground overlooking a meadow which bordered the Rappahannock. This was the home of George's boyhood; the meadow was his play-ground, and the scene of his early athletic sports; but this home, like that in which he was born, has disappeared; the site is only to be traced by fragments of bricks, china, and earthenware.

In those days the means of instruction in Virginia were limited, and it was the custom among the wealthy planters to send their sons to England to complete their education. This was done by Augustine Washington with his eldest son Lawrence, then about fifteen years of age, and whom he no doubt considered the future head of the family. George was yet in early childhood: as his intellect dawned he received the rudiments of education in the best establishment for the purpose that the neighborhood afforded. It was what was called, in popular parlance, an "old field school-house;" humble enough in its pretensions, and kept by one of his father's tenants named Hobby, who moreover was sexton of the parish. The instruction doled out by him must have been of the simplest kind, reading, writing, and ciphering, perhaps; but George had the benefit of mental and moral culture at home, from an excellent father.

Several traditional anecdotes have been given to the world, somewhat prolix and trite, but illustrative of the familiar and practical manner in which Augustine Washington, in the daily intercourse of domestic life, impressed the ductile mind of his child with high maxims of religion and virtue, and imbued him with a spirit of justice and generosity, and above all a scrupulous love of truth.

When George was about seven or eight years old his brother Lawrence returned from England, a well-educated and accomplished youth. There was a difference of fourteen years in their ages, which may have been one cause of the strong attachment which took place between them. Lawrence looked down with a protecting eye upon the boy whose dawning intelligence and perfect rectitude won his regard; while George looked up to his manly and cultivated brother as a model in mind and manners. We call particular attention to this brotherly interchange of affection, from

the influence it had on all the future career of the subject of this memoir.

Lawrence Washington had something of the old military spirit of the family, and circumstances soon called it into action. Spanish depredations on British commerce had recently provoked reprisals. Admiral Vernon, commander-in-chief in the West Indies, had accordingly captured Porto Bello, on the Isthmus of Darien. The Spaniards were preparing to revenge the blow; the French were fitting out ships to aid them. Troops were embarked in England for another campaign in the West Indies; a regiment of four battalions was to be raised in the colonies and sent to join them at Jamaica. There was a sudden outbreak of military ardor in the province; the sound of drum and fife was heard in the villages with the parade of recruiting parties. Lawrence Washington, now twenty-two years of age, caught the infection. He obtained a captain's commission in the newly raised regiment, and embarked with it for the West Indies in 1740. He served in the joint expeditions of Admiral Vernon and General Wentworth, in the land forces commanded by the latter, and acquired the friendship and confidence of both of those officers. He was present at the siege of Carthagena, when it was bombarded by the fleet, and when the troops attempted to escalade the citadel. It was an ineffectual attack; the ships could not get near enough to throw their shells into the town, and the scaling ladders proved too short. That part of the attack, however, with which Lawrence was concerned, distinguished itself by its bravery. The troops sustained unflinching a destructive fire for several hours, and at length retired with honor, their small force having sustained a loss of about six hundred in killed and wounded.

We have here the secret of that martial spirit so often cited of George in his boyish days. He had seen his brother fitted

out for the wars. He had heard by letter and otherwise of the warlike scenes in which he was mingling. All his amusements took a military turn. He made soldiers of his schoolmates; they had their mimic parades, reviews, and sham fights; a boy named William Bustle was sometimes his competitor, but George was commander-in-chief of Hobby's school.

Lawrence Washington returned home in the autumn of 1742, the campaigns in the West Indies being ended, and Admiral Vernon and General Wentworth being recalled to England. It was the intention of Lawrence to rejoin his regiment in that country, and seek promotion in the army, but circumstances completely altered his plans. He formed an attachment to Anne, the eldest daughter of the Honorable William Fairfax, of Fairfax County; his addresses were well received, and they became engaged. Their nuptials were delayed by the sudden and untimely death of his father, which took place on the 12th of April, 1743, after a short but severe attack of gout in the stomach, and when but forty-nine years of age. George had been absent from home on a visit during his father's illness, and just returned in time to receive a parting look of affection.

Augustine Washington left large possessions, distributed by will among his children. To Lawrence, the estate on the banks of the Potomac, with other real property, and several shares in iron works. To Augustine, the second son by the first marriage, the old homestead and estate in Westmoreland. The children by the second marriage were severally well provided for, and George, when he became of age, was to have the house and lands on the Rappahannock.

In the month of July the marriage of Lawrence with Miss Fairfax took place.

He now gave up all thoughts of foreign service, and settled himself on his
estate on the banks of the Potomac, to which he gave the name of MOUNT
VERNON, in honor of the admiral.

Augustine took up his abode at the homestead on Bridges Creek, and married
Anne, daughter and co-heiress of William Aylett, Esquire, of Westmoreland
County.

George, now eleven years of age, and the other children of the second marriage, had been left under the guardianship of their mother, to whom was intrusted the proceeds of all their property until they should severally come of age. She proved herself worthy of the trust. Endowed with plain, direct good sense, thorough conscientiousness, and prompt decision, she governed her family strictly, but kindly, exacting deference while she inspired affection. George, being her eldest son, was thought to be her favorite, yet she never gave him undue preference, and the implicit deference exacted from him in childhood continued to be habitually observed by him to the day of her death. He inherited from her a high temper and a spirit of command, but her early precepts and example taught him to restrain and govern that temper, and to square his conduct on the exact principles of equity and justice.

Tradition gives an interesting picture of the widow, with her little flock gathered round her, as was her daily wont, reading to them lessons of religion and morality out of some standard work. Her favorite volume was Sir Matthew Hale's Contemplations, moral and divine. The admirable maxims therein contained, for outward action as well as self-government, sank deep into the mind of George, and,

doubtless, had a great influence in forming his character. They certainly were exemplified in his conduct throughout life. This mother's manual, bearing his mother's name, Mary Washington, written with her own hand, was ever preserved by him with filial care, and may still be seen in the archives of Mount Vernon. A precious document! Let those who wish to know the moral foundation of his character consult its pages.

Having no longer the benefit of a father's instructions at home, and the scope of tuition of Hobby, the sexton, being too limited for the growing wants of his pupil, George was now sent to reside with Augustine Washington, at Bridges Creek, and enjoy the benefit of a superior school in that neighborhood, kept by a Mr. Williams. His education, however, was plain and practical. He never attempted the learned languages, nor manifested any inclination for rhetoric or belles-lettres. His object, or the object of his friends, seems to have been confined to fitting him for ordinary business. His manuscript school books still exist, and are models of neatness and accuracy. One of them, it is true, a ciphering book, preserved in the library at Mount Vernon, has some school-boy attempts at calligraphy; nondescript birds, executed with a flourish of the pen, or profiles of faces, probably intended for those of his schoolmates; the rest are all grave and business-like. Before he was thirteen years of age he had copied into a volume forms for all kinds of mercantile and legal papers; bills of exchange, notes of hand, deeds, bonds, and the like. This early self-tuition gave him throughout life a lawyer's skill in drafting documents, and a merchant's exactness in keeping accounts; so that all the concerns of his various estates; his dealings with his domestic stewards and foreign agents; his accounts with government, and all his financial transactions are to this day to be seen posted up