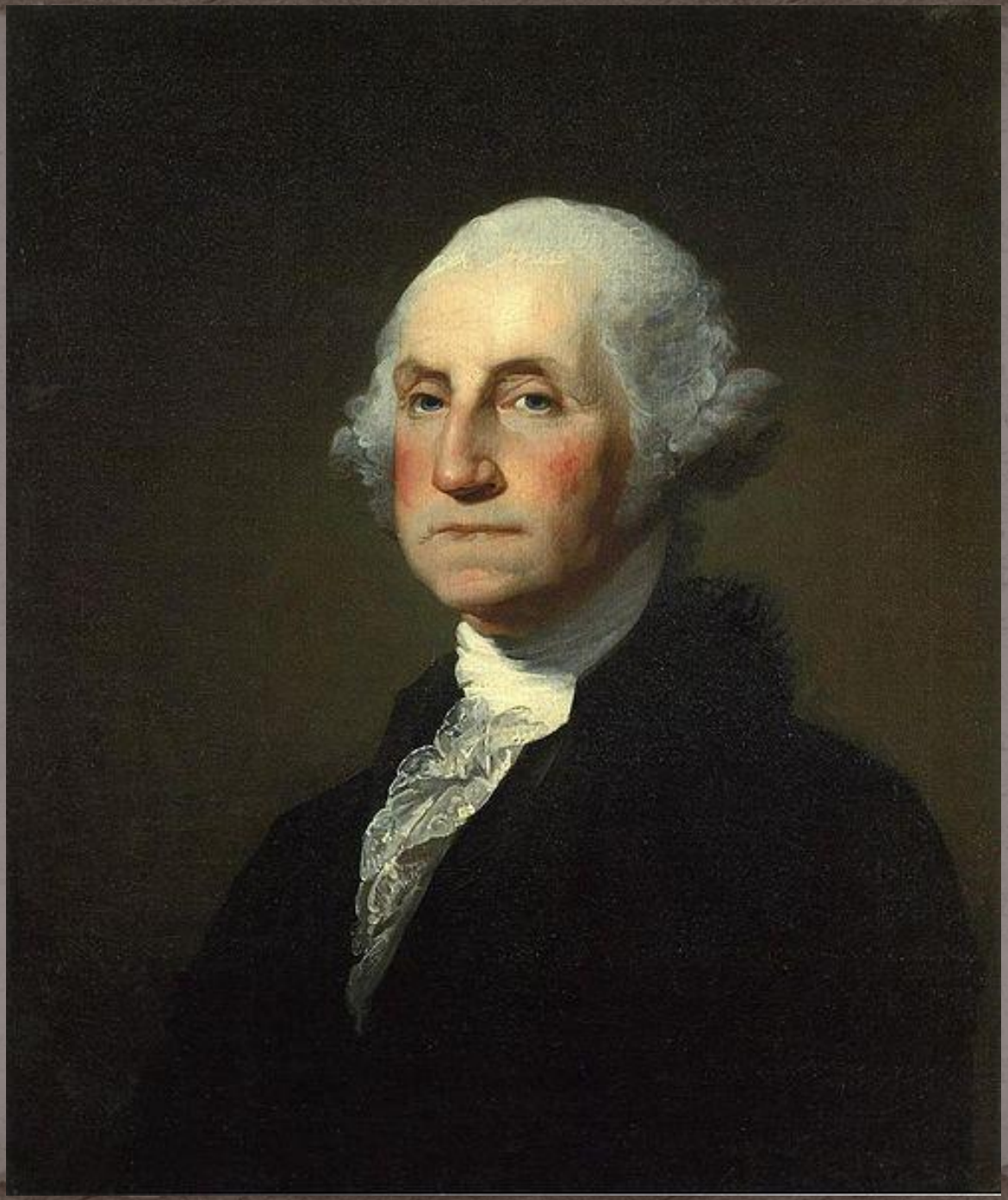
George Washington

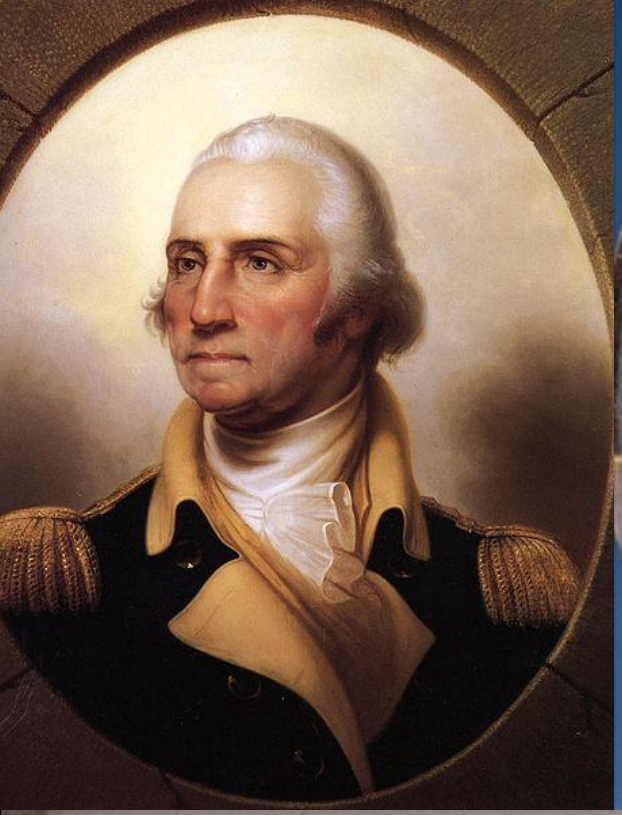
Alina Voronenko 4(2)



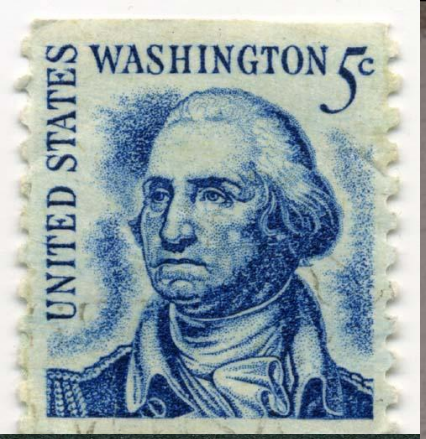
Personal details

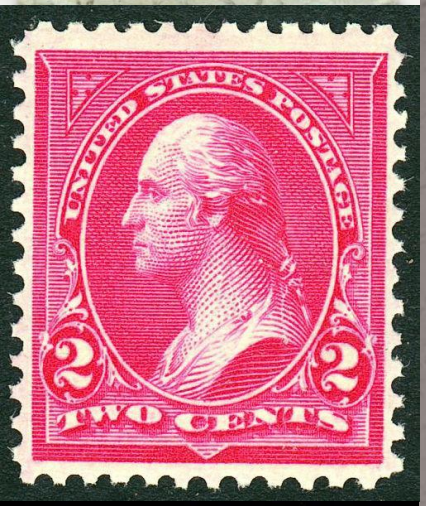
- **Born** February 22, 1732
  Westmoreland, Virginia, British America
- **Died** December 14, 1799 (aged 67)
  Mount Vernon, Virginia, U.S.
- Resting place

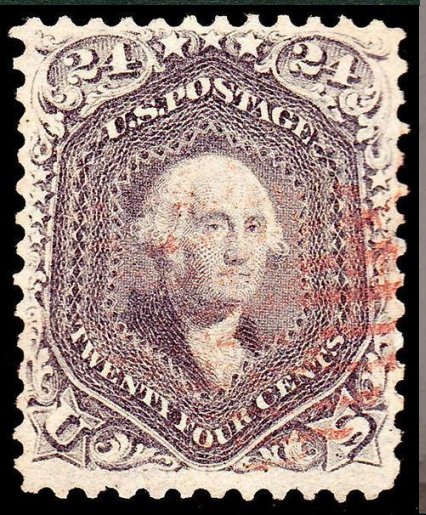
  Washington Family Tomb
  Mount Vernon, Virginia



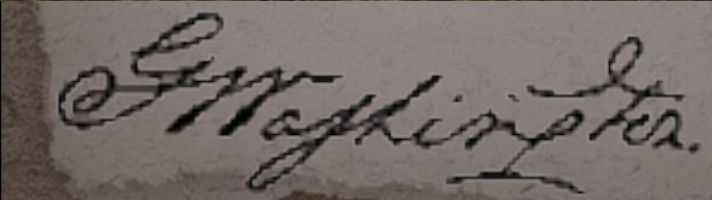
- Washington was elected president as the unanimous choice of the 69 electors in 1788, and he served two terms in office.







- Since 1847, one of the defining hallmarks of a U.S. President is his appearance on U.S. currency and postage. George Washington appears on contemporary U.S. currency, including the one-dollar bill and the U.S. quarter dollar. On U.S. postage stamps Washington, along with Benjamin Franklin, appeared on the nation's first postage stamps in 1847. Throughout U.S. postal history Washington appears on many postage issues, more than all other presidents combined.

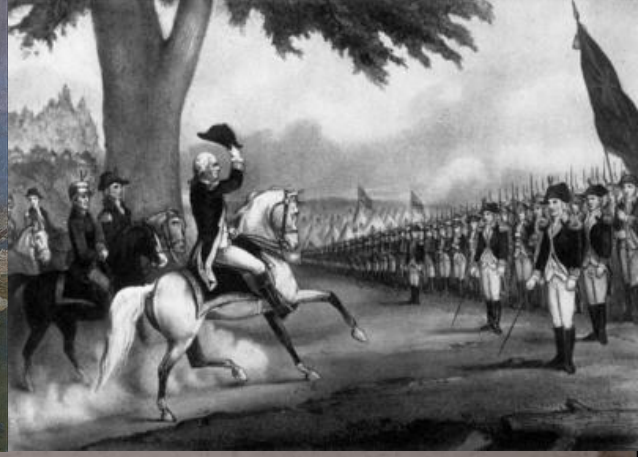


- Washington's retirement to Mount Vernon was short-lived. He made an exploratory trip to the western frontier in 1784, was persuaded to attend the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, and was unanimously elected president of the Convention. He participated little in the debates, but his high prestige maintained collegiality and kept the delegates at their labors. The delegates designed the presidency with Washington in mind, and allowed him to define the office once elected. After the Convention, his support convinced many to vote for ratification; the new Constitution was ratified by all thirteen states.

A mezzotint of Martha Washington, based on a 1757 portrait by Wollaston

The Washington Family by Edward Savage, painted between 1789 and 1796, shows (from left to right): George Washington Parke Custis, George Washington,Eleanor Parke Custis, Martha Washington, and an enslaved servant: probably William Lee or Christopher Sheels.

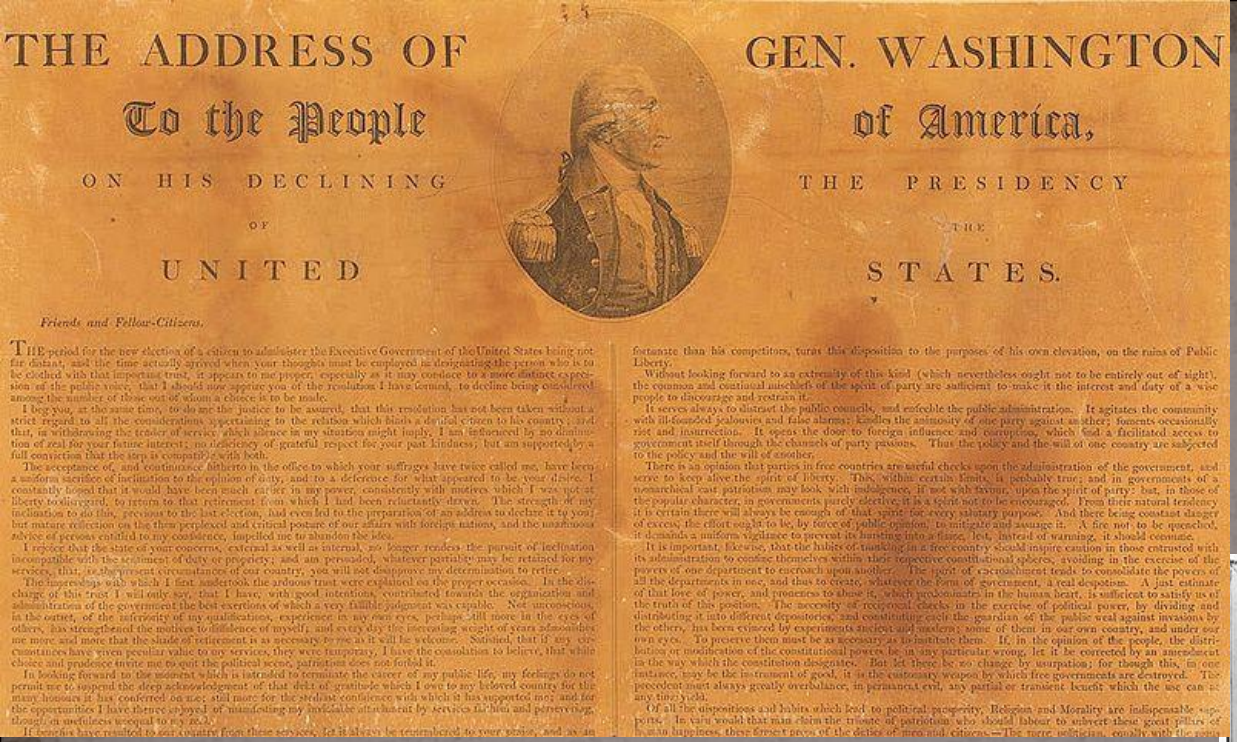




Battles/wars

Presidency (1789–1797)





THE ADDRESS OF GEN. WASHINGTON

To the People of America,

ON HIS DECLINING THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens.

THE period for the new election of a citizen to administer the Executive Government of the United States being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprize you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured, that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country; and that, in withdrawing the tender of service, which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety; and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that, in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust I will only say, that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied, that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe, that while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honours it has conferred on me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal.

If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an

fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight), the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

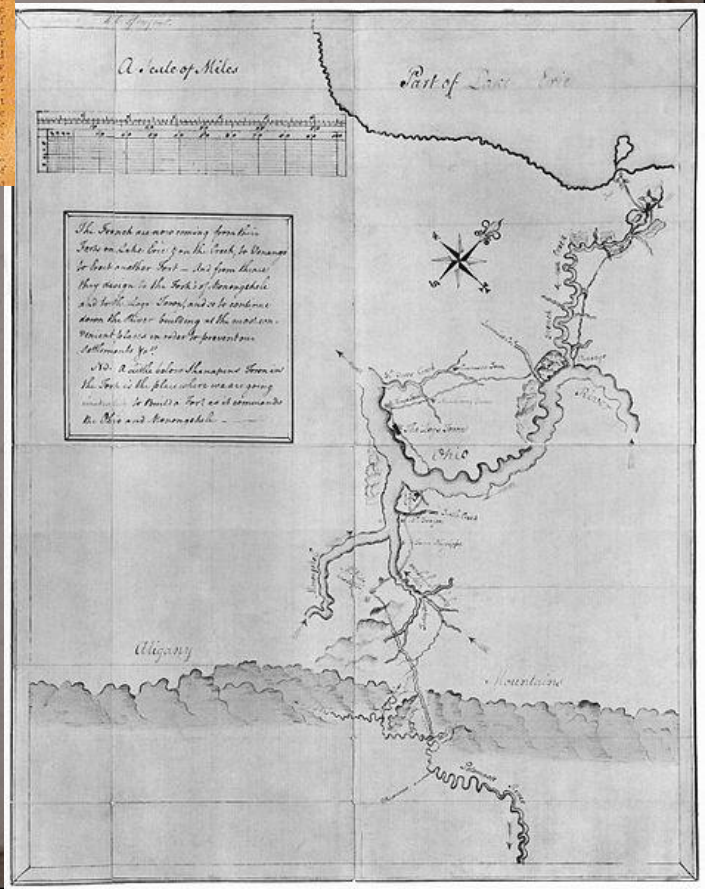
It serves always to distract the public councils, and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one party against another; foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and the will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This, within certain limits, is probably true; and in governments of a monarchical cast patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favour, upon the spirit of party: but, in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warning, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern; some of them in our own country, and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance, in permanent evil, any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

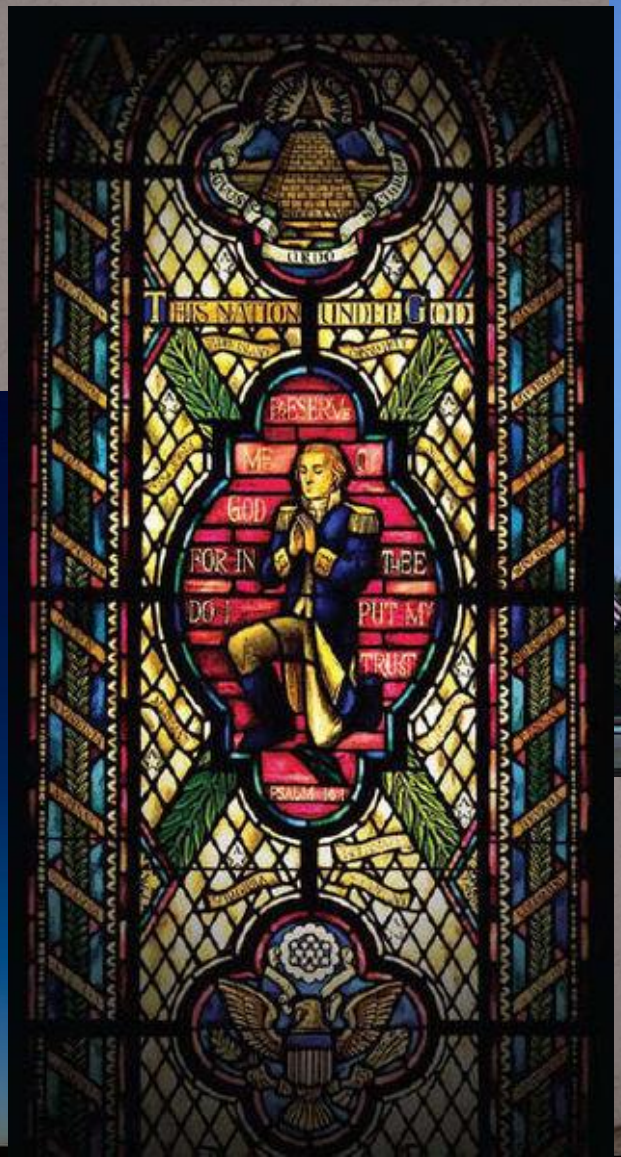
Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious

Washington's map, accompanying his *Journal to the Ohio* (1753–1754).

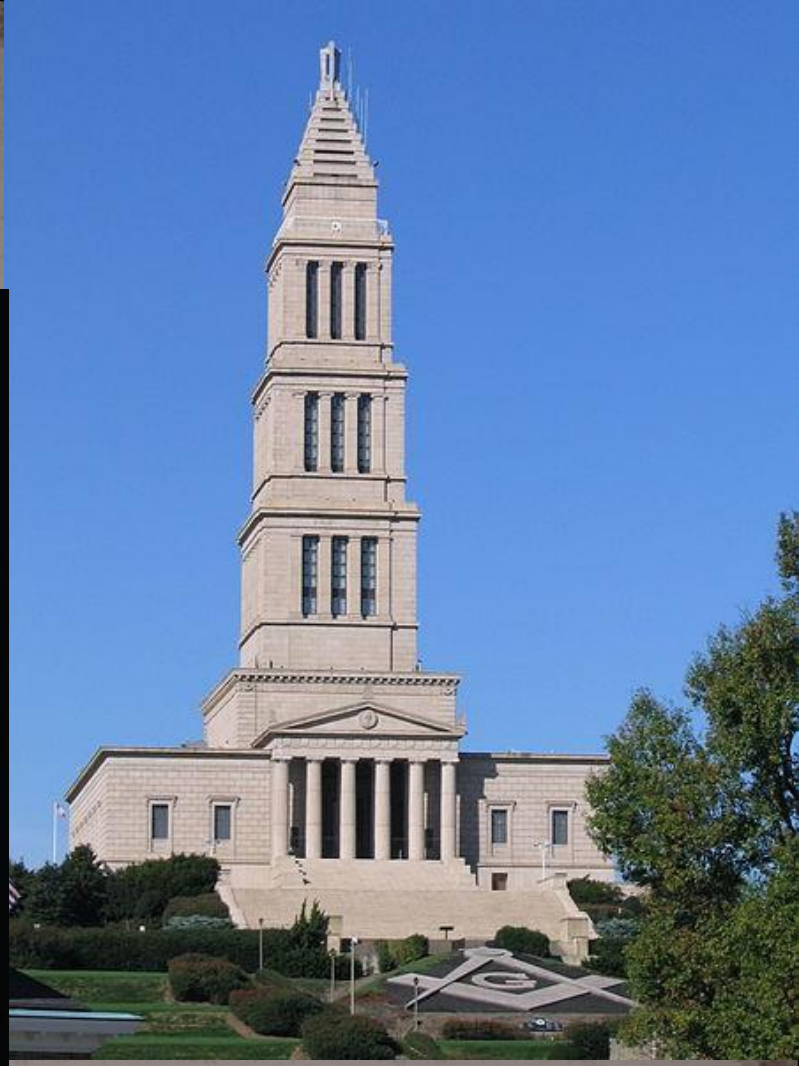


Washington's Farewell Address (September 19, 1796)

Stained glass window of Washington kneeling in prayer, Capitol Prayer Room, U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C.



Washington Monument



The George Washington Masonic National Memorial,Alexandria, Virginia

Lieutenant General George Washington

oak on the Washington`s grave