

Conserving the Setting of George Washington Birthplace



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Prepared by
National Park Service
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
Division of Park and Resource Planning
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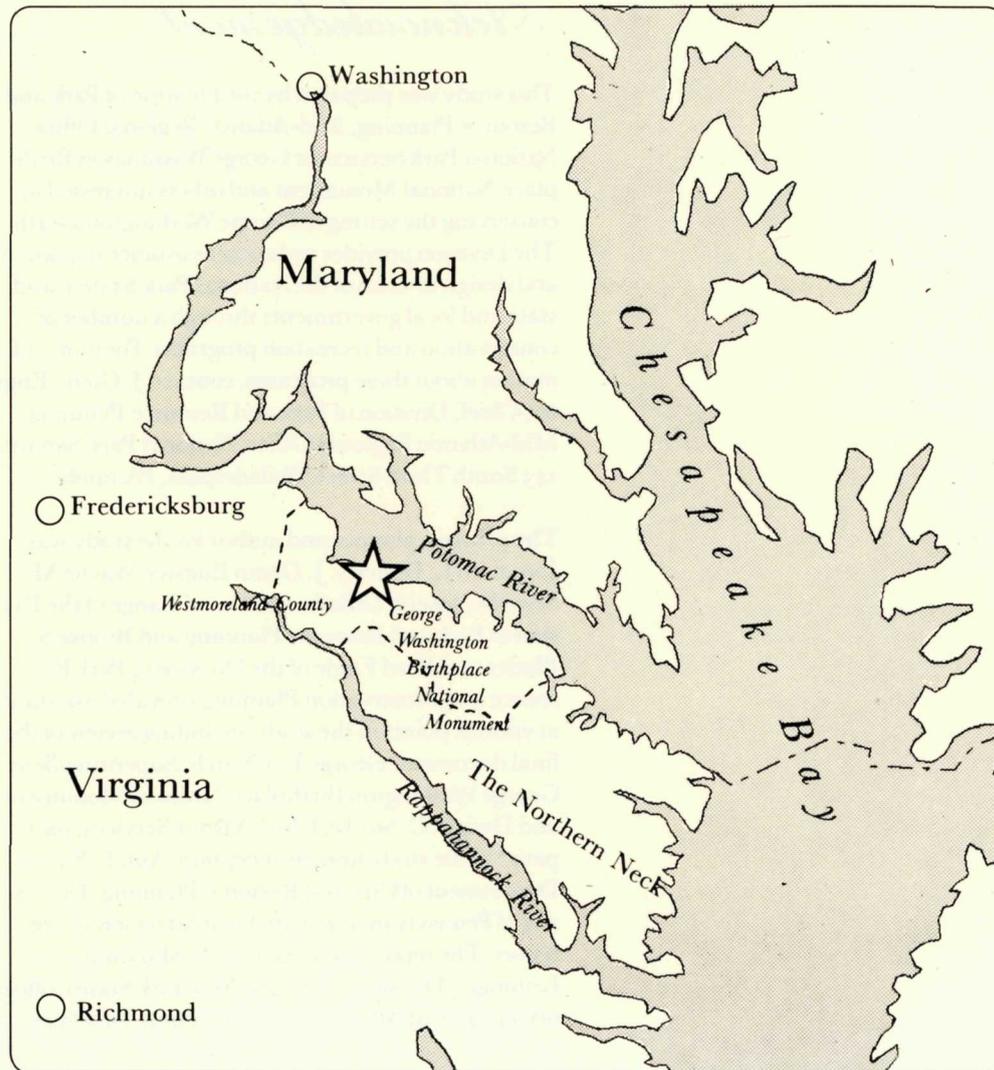


FIG 1 George Washington Birthplace National Monument lies in historic Westmoreland County, Virginia on the "Northern Neck" between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. The monument is about a 1 1/2 hour drive from Washington, D.C or an hour from Richmond, Virginia.

Introduction

George Washington Birthplace National Monument, bounded by the waters of Popes Creek, Bridges Creek and the Potomac River, contains many of the plantation grounds and historic sites associated with the family, birth and boyhood of George Washington. It is the heart of the plantation owned by Augustine Washington, George's father, and the site of the house where, in 1732, George was born. On the banks of Bridges Creek stood the second home of John Washington, George's great grandfather and the first Washington to settle in Virginia's Northern Neck. Near to this site is the Washington family burial ground containing the remains of the father, grandfather, and great grandfather of George Washington and other family members.

The birthplace was designated a national monument in 1930. At that time Congress determined that the monument was "... established and set apart for the preservation of the historical associations connected therewith..." (46 Stat. 58). The basic functions of the 538 acre monument continue today to be the memorialization of George Washington and his birthsite, along with the preservation of remaining historic resources of the area associated with his life.

George Washington Birthplace's setting in Virginia's Northern Neck and Westmoreland County is a relationship of enduring historic value. The county's historic atmosphere is sustained by the birthplaces or homes of Washington, James Monroe and Robert E. Lee, and nine other nationally or state recognized sites of historic significance, as well as the continuing rural, agricultural landscape. Crop fields, woodlands, wide estuaries and bays still pattern the countryside, retaining the area's peaceful beauty.

An important relationship also exists between George Washington Birthplace National Monument and its immediate vicinity, the Popes and Bridges Creeks area setting. Several area residents have ancestral roots in their land spanning 250 years; some are Washington family descendants. They hold a certain level of pride and interest in their close association with the birthplace of George Washington. Their lands, and those of their neighbors, make up much of the setting surrounding the national monument.

Visitors, local residents and park managers have long noted that private property adjacent to Washington Birthplace plays a major role in the rural historic scene of



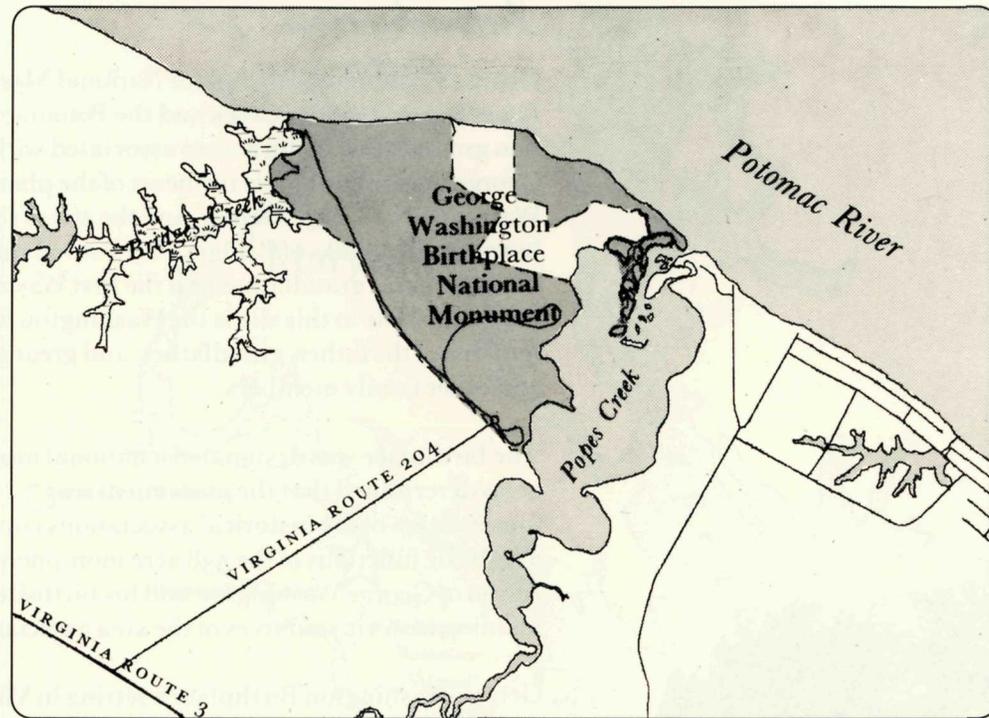


FIG 2 The 538 acre monument borders on the Potomac River, Popes and Bridges Creeks and private farmland. Virginia route 3, which spans the Northern Neck, and route 204 are the primary access roads to the birthplace.

the monument. Currently, the nearby lands are either farmed, forested or wetlands. These uses are consistent with the historical associations of the birthplace and enhance the monument's commemoration of George Washington. Inappropriate land and waterfront development adjacent to the national monument, however, could dramatically alter this rural historic scene.

The park's *Statement for Management* identifies the potential impacts of inappropriate land development as a significant issue. The *Statement for Management* also calls for the National Park Service to:

... promote conservation of the adjacent landscape that is critical and essential for maintaining integrity of the setting in which George Washington was born and lived, as viewed from George Washington Birthplace National Monument and the route 204 approach to the monument.¹

This study is a step in the conservation process.

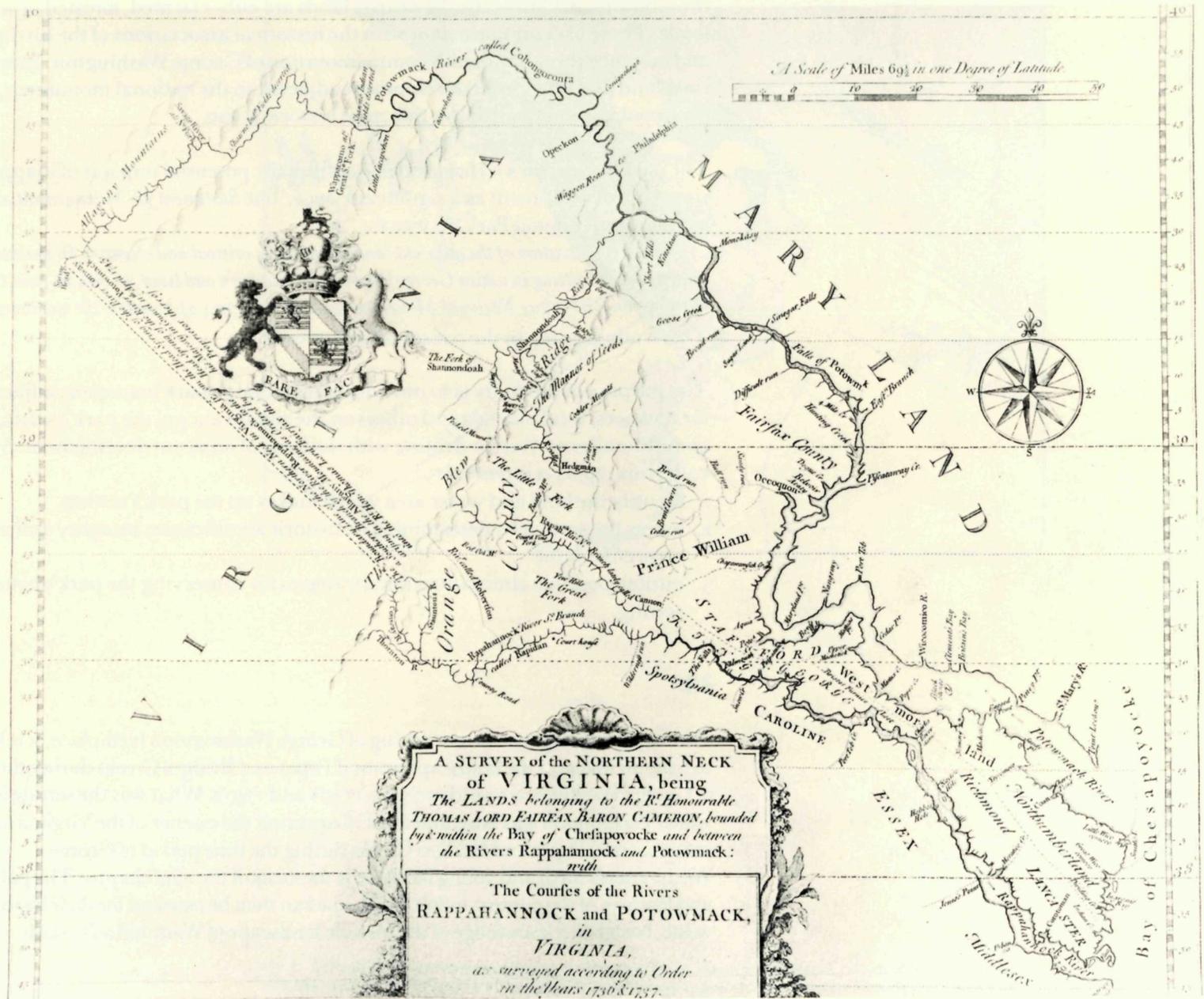
The purpose of the study is to provide information to park managers, adjacent landowners, local officials and others on the significance of the park's setting and to outline alternatives for dealing with the issue of adjacent development. Specifically, this report is intended to:

1. identify the land and water area which makes up the park's setting
2. assess the setting by determining its historic significance, integrity and interpretive value
3. outline possible alternatives and strategies for conserving the park's historic setting.



Prior to examining the current setting of George Washington's birthplace, it is helpful to have an image of the landscape around Popes and Bridges Creeks during the time of George Washington's residence, the 1730's and 1740's. What was the setting in which Washington was born and lived? Capturing the essence of the Virginia landscape around Popes and Bridges Creeks during the time period of George Washington's birth and young life there is the focus of the next chapter. The patterns and features of the current 1980's landscape can then be assessed for their historic value, based on a knowledge of the historic landscape of Washington's youth.

FIG 3 The Northern Neck is one of three "necks" created by the great tidal rivers of Virginia. Both the Potomac and the Rappahannock shorelines are divided by many creeks, bays and estuaries. Pops and Bridges Creeks (see arrow) are two of the Potomac's smaller estuaries.



The Historic Landscape of Popes & Bridges Creeks

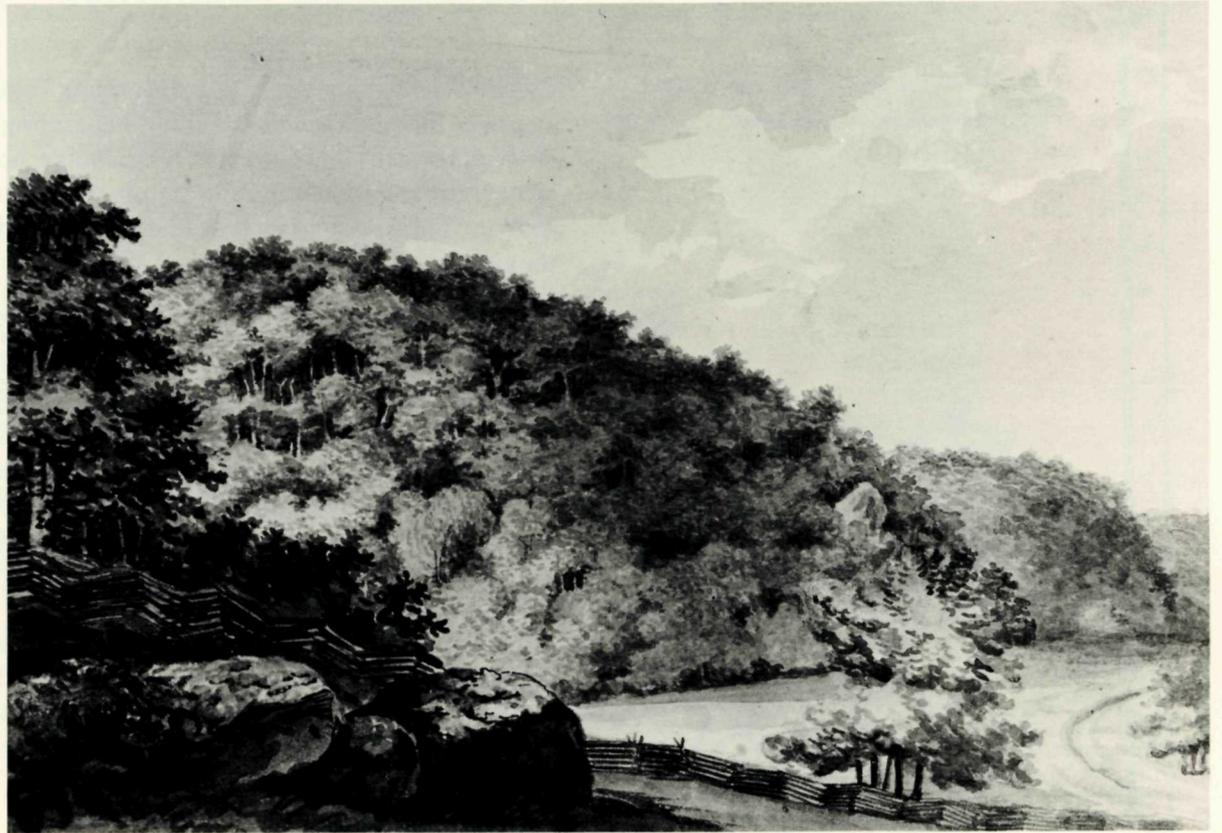
Precisely describing the scene surrounding Popes and Bridges creeks in the 1730's to 1740's is difficult if not impossible. No paintings, drawings, maps or detailed written descriptions are known to exist. It is possible, however, to piece together a description of what the major patterns and features of the landscape were, based on a variety of sources. These sources include: the journals and letters of visitors to Virginia during the eighteenth century; histories of Virginia plantation operations, agricultural practices, landownership and the Washingtons; and early Virginia maps.

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

A cultural landscape is the product of interaction between humans and a natural environment. In the seventeenth century, as Europeans first began settling in Virginia, they found a landscape shaped by natural ecological processes and the interaction of native Indians with the environment. Within a very short time a new cultural landscape evolved, with the topography, climate and ecology of Virginia playing a large role in its shaping.

Virginia, east of the Appalachians, lies in the embayed section of the Atlantic coastal plain, a low relief landscape of tidal rivers, bays, creeks, estuaries and wetlands. The Tidewater, as the region has been known since early settlement, is divided into peninsulas or "necks" by four principal rivers: the James, York, Rappahannock and Potomac.

The Northern Neck lying between the Rappahannock and the Potomac, has long had its own geographic identity. Popes and Bridges Creeks are among the smaller streams along the Northern Neck's Potomac shoreline. Popes Creek, about five miles long, opens into a broad estuary about two thirds of the way to the Potomac. The extensive wetlands along the upstream end of the estuary, tributaries and at the mouth of the creek have probably existed for centuries, though their size and plant species composition have varied with long-term water level changes. Wetlands vegetation along Bridges Creek has taken over what was probably once an open waterway, but dating this transition is difficult.² Natural and human accelerated erosion have changed the creek and river shorelines over time, and creek outlets have periodically been altered by tides and storms, but recent study results suggest that current shoreline patterns are similar in general form to those of the 18th century.³

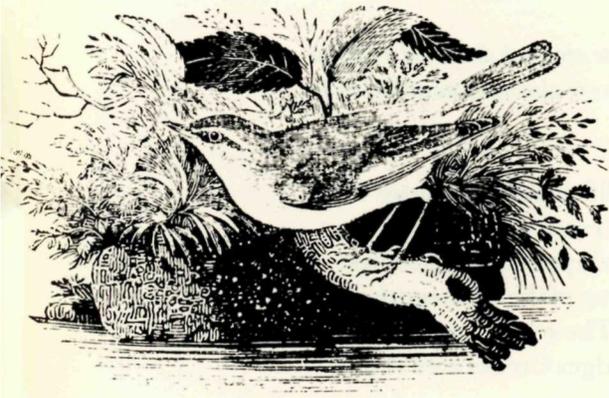


ILLUS 1 Inland from the Tidewater's rivers and creeks were large tracts of uncleared forest land. Oaks, pines, chestnuts, hickories and sweetgums dominated the woodlands, their specific distribution patterns dependent on topography, soil types and moisture. (*Benjamin Henry Latrobe, "View from Winsor, the seat of Daniel Hylton on the James River".*)

In the early 1700's the predominant inland vegetation pattern remained woodland. This, despite substantial clearing of land by Indians and settlers along the creeks. Hugh Jones, an English traveller in Virginia described the patterns in 1724: *The whole country is a perfect forest, except where the woods are cleared for plantations, and old fields, and where have been formerly Indian towns and poisoned fields and meadows, where the timber has been burnt down in fire-hunting or otherwise; and about the creeks and rivers are large rand morasses or marshes, and up the country are poor savannahs.*⁴

Those settlers living back from the cleared river land often even had the title "of the forest" attached to their names.⁵

The trees of the woodlands make up what is now known as the Oak-Pine forest region.⁶ Specific forest cover types within this region vary with their distribution related to topography, soil types and moisture. In the 250 years since George Washington's birth, the forests of the area have been altered by generations of tree-cutting, grazing and the decline of the American chesnut, a previously dominant species. Eighteenth century travelers to Virginia reported a variety of species, though no specific records of woodlands in the Popes and Bridges Creeks area are known, other than what can be inferred from deed references to "witness trees" marking property boundaries: hickory, pohickory, red oak, white oak, gum, mulberry, locust, poplar, chesnut and dogwood.⁷ This apparent diversity, combined with the ranges of soils and elevation levels, 0 to 170 feet, suggest a range of species and associations in the area. Water tolerant species were certainly prominent along shorelines, as were pines in regenerating old-fields.



The Tidewater area provided diverse and abundant wildlife and fish habitat. One traveller wrote:

*These waters are stored with incredible quantities of fish, such as sheeps-head, rock-fish, drums, white perch, herrings, oysters, crabs and several other sorts. Sturgeon and shad are in ... prodigious numbers.*⁸

Estuaries such as Popes Creek were productive shellfish habitats. Archeological data from shell deposits along the creek and nearby Potomac document heavy harvesting of oysters by Indians during the Woodland period (500 - 1600 A.D.).⁹ Trash pits from colonial structures near Bridges Creek show evidence of oysters, sturgeon, gar and catfish being consumed about 1700.¹⁰

Travelers in Virginia also took note of birds and wildlife; William Hugh Grove describing turkey vultures, crows, blackbirds, mockingbirds, bluebirds, cardinals, ducks and hummingbirds¹¹; Hugh Jones noting wild geese, teal, swans and mallards¹²; and William Byrd calling eagles and ospreys common sights and passenger pigeons abundant.¹³ The remains of songbirds, geese and wild turkey have also been identified in seventeenth and eighteenth century trash pits near Bridges and Popes Creeks.¹⁴

Deer, squirrels, raccoons, opossums and rabbits are often mentioned and were generally abundant. A planter with land on the eastern side of Popes creek listed 54 deerskins in an inventory of his property taken in 1724.¹⁵ Yet, that same year Hugh Jones related that “. . . venison in the lower parts of the country is not so plentiful as it has been, though there be enough and tolerably good.”¹⁶ Beaver, while common in almost all streams in the mid seventeenth century, was extinct in the Tidewater by 1700, due to trapping and the early use of skins as currency.¹⁷ Bears and wolves appear to have become rare near the riverside plantations by 1724 as Jones reported:

*There is no danger of wild beasts in traveling; . . . the wolves of late are much destroyed by virtue of a law, which allows good rewards for their heads . . . The bears are also much destroyed by the out-planters, etc. for the sake of their flesh and skins.*¹⁸

The rivers and creeks, flatlands, forest and fish and wildlife made Tidewater Virginia a region of diverse natural resources. Seventeenth century settlers in the Northern Neck readily made use of these resources and adapted their lifestyles, economy, and land uses to the Tidewater. By the beginning of the eighteenth century a distinctive pattern on the landscape was evident. The settlement history of the Northern Neck and particularly of the Popes and Bridges Creeks area shows the forces behind these patterns.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT · SETTLEMENT HISTORY

Humans are known to have inhabited Tidewater Virginia for over five thousand years. Shell middens unearthed along the shores of Popes Creek show evidence of Indian occupation during the Woodland period (and probably earlier during the latter part of the Archaic period 4000 B.C - 500 A.D.). The first European settlers of the Northern Neck came as refugees from Maryland, often to areas previously cleared or occupied by Indians. By 1653, the only colonized parts of the Northern Neck were narrow strips along the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers.¹⁹ Yet, the



potential for raising tobacco drew settlers and population rapidly increased;²⁰ new counties, including Westmoreland, were soon established.²¹

The first land patent in what is now Westmoreland County was granted in 1643, along the eastern shore of Popes Creek. This land soon passed into the Pope family for whom the creek is named. Hercules Bridges patented land in 1651 on the west side of what came to be Bridges Creek. On land between these two patents, and adjacent to the creeks and the Potomac, Henry Brooks patented 1020 acres in 1657.²² Brooks soon subdivided his land into a group of small 50-125 acre farms accommodating six to eight family units.²³

Washington family presence in the Northern Neck began in 1657 with the arrival from England of John Washington, great-grandfather to George. In the twenty years prior to his death in 1677, John Washington amassed land-holdings of over 10,000 acres in at least ten plantations. His land in Westmoreland County at one point amounted to some 5,000 acres, including 650 acres of the old Brooks patent near Bridges Creek. It was on this land that he lived the last ten years of his life as a planter, merchant, attorney, burgess and lieutenant-colonel in the militia.²⁴

John Washington bequeathed his land to his two sons. John, Jr., the eldest, received the Bridges Creek property; Lawrence (George Washington's grandfather) received land to the west on Mattox Creek. Lawrence Washington continued his father's example in public life, planter, county court member, burgess, sheriff, and lawyer. He also acquired additional lands. One such acquisition was the 400 acre Daniel Lisson estate, formerly part of the Bridges patent, on the west shore of Bridges Creek.²⁵

When Lawrence Washington died in 1698, his estate was divided among his three children. Augustine Washington, George's father, was bequeathed the Lisson tract. Augustine moved there around 1716, likely occupying housing already in existence from the Lisson ownership. Two years later Augustine purchased 150 acres, known as "Abbington",²⁶ on the west shore of Popes Creek, less than a mile from the Lisson tract. This land was possibly already extensively developed, as suggested by the substantial purchase price.²⁷ Through the purchase of Abbington, Augustine had begun the process of creating a large contiguous land holding in the Popes and Bridges Creeks area. A 215 acre plantation was added in 1726, 100 acres in 1728, 25 acres of marsh and islands at the mouth of Popes Creek in

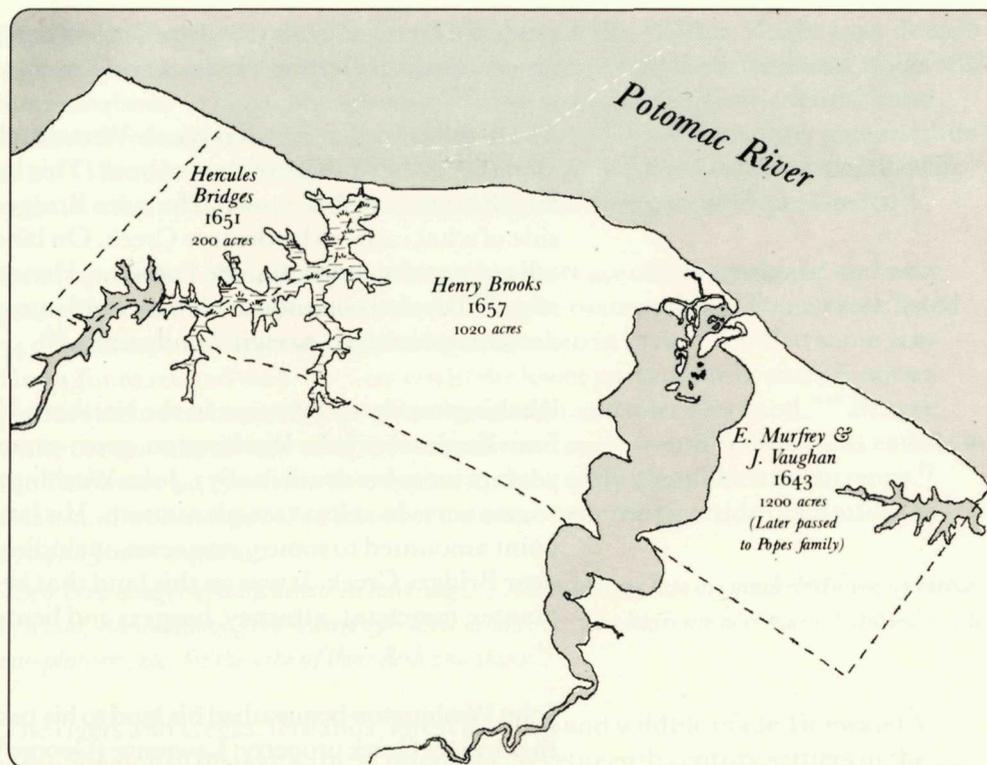


FIG 4 Early settlers along Popes and Bridges Creeks were Hercules Bridges, Henry Brooks and Edward Murfrey and John Vaughan. Portions of the Bridges and Brooks patents were soon obtained by George Washington's great-grandfather.

1734 and, lastly, 125 acres along Bridges Creek in 1742. A nearby disconnected parcel included two acres with a mill, several miles upstream on Popes Creek.²⁸

The first written reference to Augustine's residence at the Popes Creek plantation dates to 1726, though deeds suggest he may have occupied the farm as early as 1718. Between 1722 and 1726, Augustine constructed either a new residence, or renovated an old one, overlooking Popes Creek.²⁹ George Washington was born at this house in 1732, the fifth of Augustine's ten children. The family lived at Popes Creek until 1735, when they moved to Augustine's land at Little Hunting Creek, the future site of Mt. Vernon. Augustine died in 1743, owner of 10,000 acres in four counties.

The significance of the Popes Creek plantation lies not only in the fact that George Washington was born and lived there, but also that the land remained in family ownership into the 19th century. Moreover, it is quite possible that George spent much time there following his father's death in 1743.* Augustine Jr., George's half-brother, inherited Popes Creek and lived there until 1762, maintaining a productive and comfortable plantation.³⁰ His son William Augustine, then inherited the plantation and lived in the house until its destruction by fire in 1779.



During the 100 years between the first land patent on Popes Creek and the death of George's father in 1743, the Northern Neck was transformed from a landscape dominated by native forests and Indian cleared fields to one of small farms and great plantations. By the time of George's birth in 1732, the area around Popes and Bridges Creeks contained several farms: Augustine's units (Popes Creek and the Lisson tract), John Washington's land on Bridges Creek and possibly two or more families on part of the old Brooks patent between the Potomac and the two creeks.³² Across Popes Creek lay "Longwood", Daniel McCarty II's estate,³³ where a developed area of buildings may have still stood near the mouth of the creek; this area was the nucleus of the Popes tract in the late 17th century.³⁴ Up the creek about three miles Augustine owned a grist mill and land abutting the farm of

*The duration and frequency of George Washington's stays at Popes Creek following the move to Little Hunting Creek in 1735 are unknown. There is speculation that George may have lived there with his half-brother for some time after his father's death. Evidence of at least one visit at the age of fifteen does exist, as shown by a survey he completed near Bridges Creek. There are also records of short visits in 1752, 1768, and in 1771.³¹

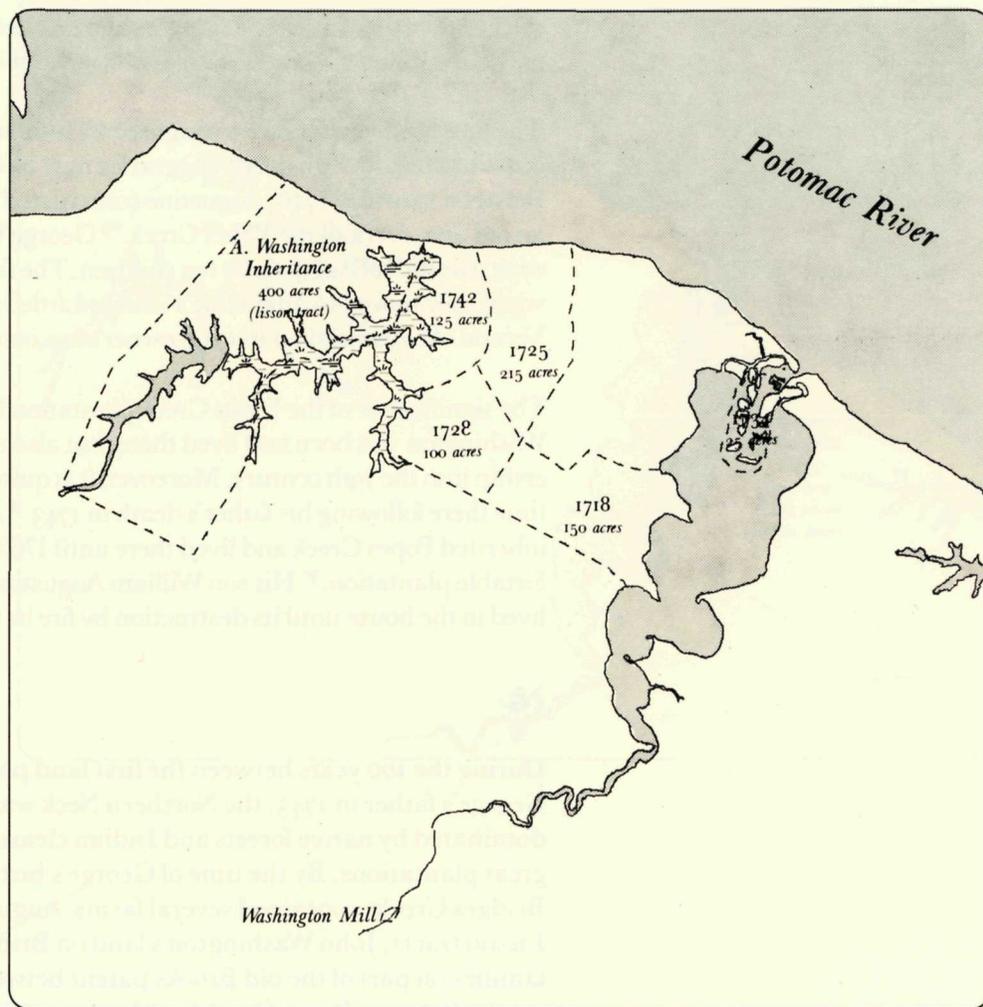


FIG 5 From his inheritance of land along Bridges Creek in 1716 until his last land transaction in 1742, Augustine Washington (George's father) built a fairly large plantation in the Popes and Bridges Creeks area. The nucleus of the plantation overlooked Popes Creek from the land Augustine acquired in 1718.

William Lord. Further east of the creek and the McCarty land was Thomas Lee's large plantation of Stratford. Beyond that, ten miles from Popes Creek, was Nomin Bay, an area of many large plantations.

The main occupation of most of these Northern Neck landowners – including Augustine Washington -- was farming. Tobacco was the dominant money crop, while Indian corn was raised as a primary food staple. The nature of farming and the physiography of the Tidewater combined to produce a dramatic impact on the organization and patterning of the landscape through the 17th and 18th century. These landscape patterns are described in the following sections.*

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LANDSCAPE PATTERNS

Overall Patterns of Landscape Organization

The primary landscape patterns of early eighteenth century Tidewater Virginia were described by Hugh Jones in 1724. Of the four rivers creating the Tidewater's "necks", Jones notes:

Into these rivers run an abundance of great creeks or short rivers, navigable for sloops, shallops, long-boats, flats, canoes and periaguas.

These creeks are supplied with the tide, . . . and also with fresh-water-runs, replenished with branches issuing from the springs, and soaking through the swamps; so that no country is better watered, for the conveniency of which most houses are built near some landing-place; so that any thing may be delivered to a gentleman there from London, Bristol, etc. with less trouble and cost, than to one living five miles in the country in England; . . . only the party to whom the goods belong, is in gratitude engaged to freight tobacco upon the ship consigned to her owners in England.

Because of this convenience, and for the goodness of the land, and for the sake of fish, fowl, etc. gentlemen and planters love to build near the water; though it be not altogether so healthy as the uplands and barrens, which serve for ranges for stock.

In the uplands near the ridge generally run the main roads, in a pleasant, dry, sandy soil, free from stones and dirt, and shaded and sheltered chiefly by trees; in some places being not unlike the walds in Greenwich Park.

*The landscape pattern categories used in this section were developed by Robert Z. Melnick in his work for the National Park Service on rural cultural landscapes.^{35, 36}

ILLUS 2 Plantations lay along the banks of the Potomac and other rivers and creeks because of the ease of shipping tobacco by water. Inland from the rivers and plantations were large tracts of woodlands. (Benjamin Henry Latrobe, "View from the porch of Rippon Lodge" by permission, Maryland Historical Society.)



*Thus neither the interest nor the inclinations of the Virginians induce them to cohabit in towns; so that they are not forward in contributing their assistance towards the making of particular places, every plantation affording the owner the provision of a little market; wherefore they most commonly build upon some convenient spot or neck of land in their own plantation, though towns are laid out in each country...*³⁷

The influence of topography and the cultivation and transportation of tobacco combined to create a pattern of plantations along the Tidewater region's rivers and creeks. Plantation seats -- the main house and dependencies --, farm buildings, slave housing, cultivated fields, oldfields, orchards, marshes, open water and woodlands made up the riverside plantation scene. Near Popes and Bridges Creeks, the landscape followed the general patterns of the Tidewater. Augustine Washington's plantation fronted on both creeks and the Potomac; "Longwood" plantation on the opposite shore of Popes Creek, and several smaller farms filled in some of the gaps. Interspersed with the fields were small wooded areas, with the larger woodlands a short distance inland.

Patterns of Land Use:

The land use unit of Tidewater Virginia was the plantation. Each plantation and its subunits -- smaller, relatively self-sufficient farms called quarters -- had distinct areas and identities. One Virginian described his plantation in 1686:

The plantation where I now live contains one thousand acres at least, seven hundred acres of which are a rich thicket, the remainder good heavy plantable land without any waste either by marshes or great swamps . . . and upon it, there are three quarters well furnished with all necessary houses, grounds and fencing, together with a choice crew of negroes at each plantation . . . there being twenty-nine in all with stocks of cattle and hogs in each quarter. Upon the same land is my own dwelling house . . . and all houses for use furnished with brick chimneys, four good cellars, a dairy, dove cot, stable, barn, henhouse, kitchen and all other conveniences. . . . About a mile and a half distant a good water grist mill, whose tole I find sufficient to find my own family with wheat and Indian corn for our necessities and occasions.³⁸

Augustine Washington's Westmoreland County land consisted of several quarters. The "Bridges Creek Quarter" had an identity distinct from, yet connected to, Augustine's land on Popes Creek; the quarter maintained the necessary equipment and buildings for independent operation. Daniel McCarty's land in Westmoreland County had at least three units, one across Popes Creek from Augustine's land.³⁹ The smaller single landholdings of the area were probably not divided into smaller farms.

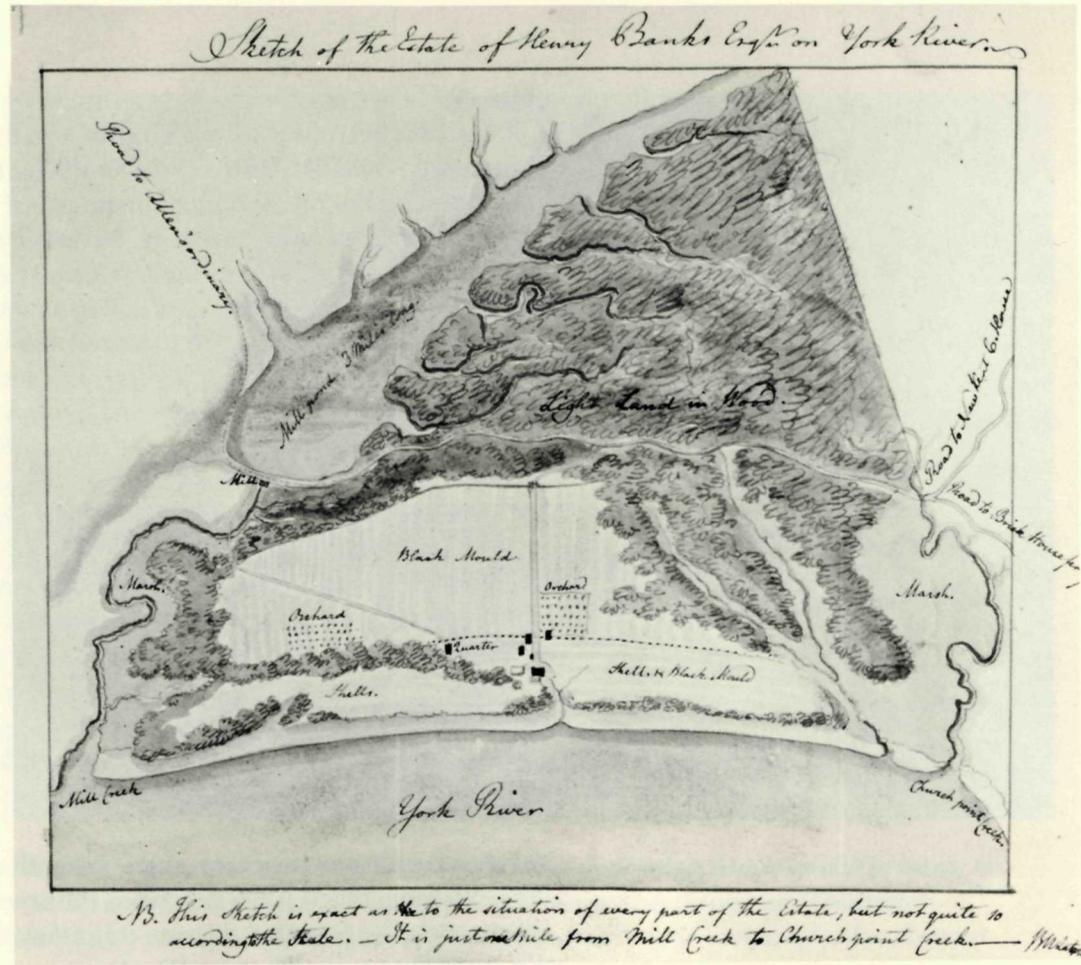
Tobacco farming on the plantations was perhaps the greatest single influence on the landscape. Hugh Jones described the process in 1724:

When a tract of land is seated, they clear it by felling the trees about a yard from the ground, lest they should shoot again. What wood they have occasion for they carry off, and burn the rest, or let it lie and rot upon the ground.

The land between the logs and stumps they how up, planting tobacco there in the spring, inclosing it with a slight fence of cleft rails. This will last for tobacco for some years, if the land be good; as it is where fine timber, or grape vines grow.

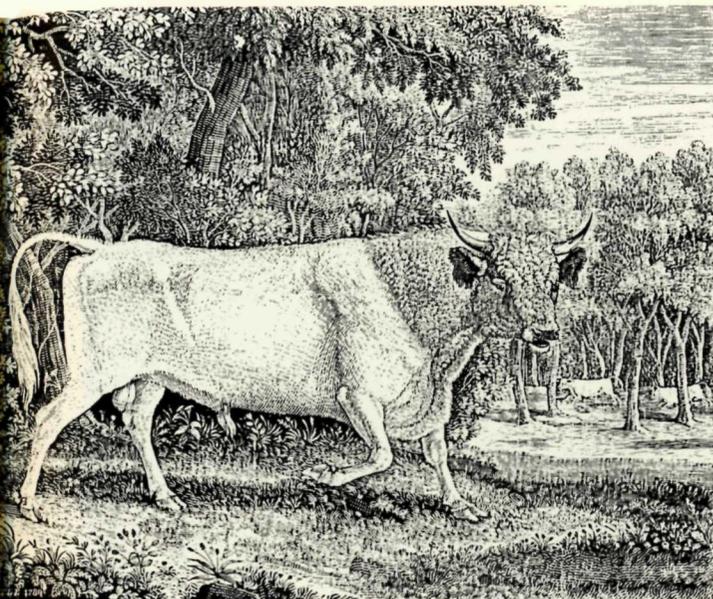
Land when tired is forced to bear tobacco by penning their cattle upon it; but cow pen tobacco tastes strong, and that planted in wet marshy land is called nonburning tobacco, which smoaks in the pipe like leather, unless it be of a good age.

When land is tired of tobacco, it will bear Indian corn, or English wheat, or any other European grain or seed, with wonderful increase.⁴⁰



ILLUS 3 "Sketch of the Estate of Henry Banks Esqr. on York River" shows many of the land use patterns of a typical single unit plantation. The main house, backed by crop fields and orchards, overlooks the river. Strips of woodland line stream banks with the main woods lying inland behind the crops. Marshes surround most of the tidal creeks. (Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1796, by permission, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.)

The manner of cultivation, requiring weed-free soils over a long growing season, rapidly eroded the land, forcing a continual need for new clearings.⁴¹ Fields were planted in tobacco for 2-4 years, followed by other grain crops, as Jones observed. After 7-10 years of cultivation, fields lay fallow for 30 or more years, though they may well have been kept clear by grazing livestock. One estimate of 1730's crop succession patterns suggests approximately 25% of plantation land was in crops, 25-50% in oldfields and second growth, and 25% in mature timber.⁴² By 1732, land near Popes and Bridges Creeks had been under cultivation for at least sixty years, certainly long enough for much acreage to have been cleared. Field sizes



ILLUS 4 Livestock on Augustine Washington's plantation included cattle, oxen, horses, hogs, and sheep. Most stock on plantations grazed freely throughout woodlands, oldfields, marshes and orchards. Only cropfields and gardens were fenced against the animals.

were small, however, due to the limitations of hand cultivation. Planting methods (no contour plowing, hand drilling of seed holes, stumpy fields and inconsistent growth of seed strains) also produced spotty growth among field crops.

In addition to tobacco, plantation agriculture supplied field, garden and orchard crops. Indian corn, in particular, was abundantly planted. Interspersed with the corn, some planters grew beans, the same companion cropping pattern long used by native Indians.⁴³ Orchards, particularly peaches, and vegetable gardens were visible features of plantations, often near the main house and dependencies. By the late seventeenth century one traveler noted that “. . . there are few Planters, but that have fair and large Orchards, some where of have twelve hundred Trees and upward . . .”⁴⁴ Augustine Washington reportedly had some one thousand trees.

Livestock, such as the several hundred animals owned by Augustine Washington at Popes Creek in 1742, were common to all plantations, though usually not in as great number.⁴⁵ Most land on the plantation was available for raising stock as crops were fenced rather than animals. The extensive wetlands of Bridges and Popes Creeks, Digwood Swamp and Dancing Marsh were probably all used for free grazing.

Nearby woodlands were greatly influenced by plantation farming practices and the constant demand for wood. Understory and vine growth may have been completely lacking due to the grazing livestock. Firewood, as well as rail fencing and building materials came from the immediate area. Clearing was often extensive along waterways, as that wood was the easiest to transport to where it was to be used. The value of woodlands to the plantations caused Augustine Washington Jr. to write conditions into a 1750 lease of land that there be “no manner of waste of the timber growing or lying”, especially ‘of the board or Rail Timber.’”⁴⁶

Forest growth patterns in the Popes and Bridges Creeks area are inferred from several records. On the west side of Bridges Creek, 400 acres were substantially cleared by 1695 when the tract was described as a “. . . peace of Land withoutt timber, and houses tumbling down.” Land bordering this tract to the southeast and southwest was described as “the main woods” in a property deed, implying lack of clearing.⁴⁷ These woods probably extended southeastward towards Popes Creek as Blenheim, a nearby home built in 1780, was sited in the woods away from the Potomac so that the British could not see it.⁴⁸ Clearing patterns on the east side of Popes Creek are unknown.



ILLUS 5 Slaves worked the stump-filled tobacco fields which were common to most all plantations in the Tidewater, including the Washington's and others near Popes Creek. This scene comes from a farm near Fredericksburg. (Benjamin Henry Latrobe, "An overseer doing his duty", 1798, by permission, Maryland Historical Society.)

Within the patterns that these land uses imposed on the natural environment, more specific patterns detailed the landscape: circulation routes, the clustering of built structures, boundary demarcations between use and ownership areas and the smaller details of buildings and the environment.

Circulation Routes

In 1730-1750 Virginia transportation was either by various form of boat or by horse, carriage or foot. Water transport was a key element in the Tidewater economy due to the shipping and sale of tobacco. All plantations on navigable rivers and creeks used

water routes, though usually more for shipping than for local personal travel.⁴⁹ Popes and Bridges Creeks were probably too shallow for large ships to navigate, so area plantations either transported tobacco in shallow draft boats to the Potomac or rolled the hogsheads to landings at riverside. The eighteenth century locations of these landings are not known.



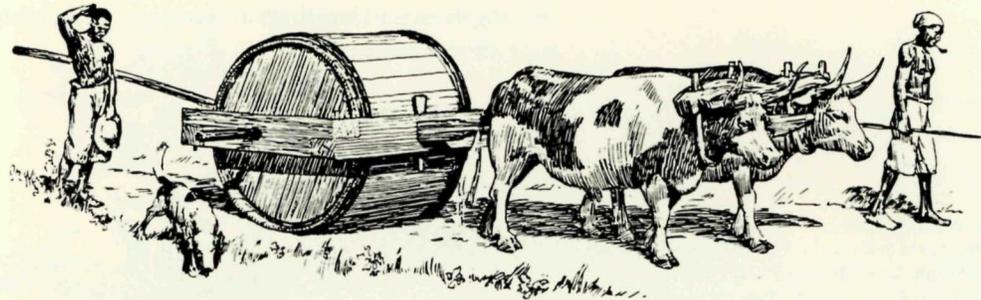
ILLUS 6 Wharves and landings were common to all plantations along rivers and creeks. Where the water was of sufficient depth, larger ships docked at the wharves for unloading supplies and taking on tobacco. On smaller creeks, shallow draft boats transported tobacco from landings to the ships in the river. (© Edwin Tunis, by permission, Harper and Row.)

Land transportation was necessitated by travel to nearby plantations, churches, county courts and other social and business functions. Horse paths often followed what were originally Indian trails through the Northern Neck. Not until the eighteenth century when wheeled carriages came into use were the routes widened, and overseers appointed to keep them clear.⁵⁰ These routes followed the ridges or “high ways” above stream headwaters to avoid the creeks, ravines and marshes, thus taking them through forests of huge trees.⁵¹ Hugh Jones described travel along these routes:

*The worst inconveniency in travelling a-cross the country, is the circuit that must be taken to head creeks, etc. for the main roads wind along the rising ground between the rivers, though now they much shorten their passage by mending the swamps and building of bridges in several places; and there are established ferries at convenient places, over the great rivers.*⁵²

In the Popes and Bridges Creeks area, a public road traversed the Northern Neck, running just north of Augustine Washington’s mill on Popes Creek. The road ran through cleared and cultivated areas at times, as evidenced by a Popes Creek farmer’s efforts to have a road diverted temporarily to avoid disturbance of his wheat field.⁵³ Plantations on either side of the creek connected to this route along high ground.⁵⁴ A series of cart and sled tracks and rolling roads connected various parts of the plantations: fields were connected to barns, the quarters to the main plantation house, and storage areas to the river landings. Rolling roads, smooth

hard dry paths, were maintained solely for rolling hogsheads of tobacco from the tobacco barns to the wharves for shipping. The precise routes are not known.



ILLUS 7 Among various land transportation routes, smooth dry “rolling roads” were unique to the Tidewater plantations. Large hogsheads of tobacco were rolled along these roads to the landings at water’s edge. (© Edwin Tunis, by permission, Harper and Row.)

Boundary Demarcations:

Boundary marking patterns organized the landscape into areas of different use, ownership and government. In seventeenth and eighteenth century Virginia, natural features often determined boundaries. Early county boundary lines commonly followed the divide between watersheds.⁵⁵ The Westmoreland County line extended along the Potomac watershed, then dipped south to the Rappahannock and ended along the ridge between the two rivers.⁵⁶ Property lines were also often based on natural features. In the Popes Creek area shorelines and other streams often served as boundaries.⁵⁷ Topography also influenced certain use patterns; cropland clearings avoided untillable slopes and wetlands.⁵⁸

Other boundary markers included “witness”, or boundary, trees, as well as roads and fencelines. Hugh Jones observed that “. . . every five or seven years all people are obliged to go a procession round their own bounds, and renew their landmarks by cutting fresh notches in the boundary trees.”⁵⁹ A 1683 survey of land between Pope’s and Bridges Creeks documents a white oak, red oak, mulberry, gum and locust as witness trees.⁶⁰ Rail or “worm” fences separated out areas of cultivation. Tobacco and corn were “. . . secured by wormfences, which are made of rails supporting one another very firmly, in a particular manner.”⁶¹ Only the crops and gardens were fenced; as fields were moved or left fallow, the fences were dismantled and taken to a new field.

Clustering Arrangements

Travelers to 17th and 18th century Virginia voiced a common impression of the large plantations. Traveling by ship in 1732, William Hugh Grove wrote that the York river:

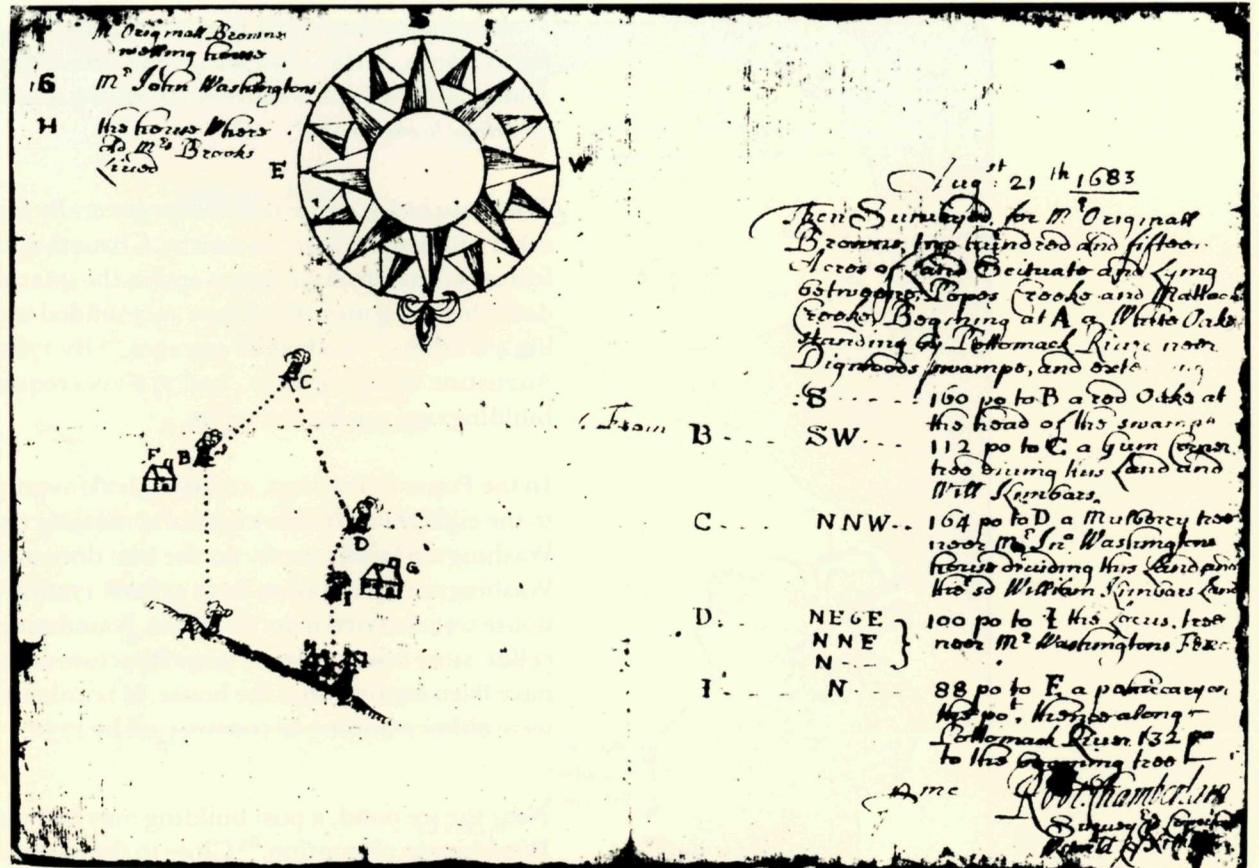


FIG 6 A 1683 survey along Bridges Creek and the Potomac identifies the “witness trees” (labeled A, B, C, D, I) which marked property boundaries. The trees were not always in open fields as it would appear, but also may have been in more wooded areas.

*... has pleasant Seats on the Bank which Shew Like little villages, for having Kitchens, Dayry houses, Barns, Stables, Store houses, and some of them 2 or 3 Negro Quarters all Seperate from Each other but near the mansion houses make a shew to the river of 7 or 8 distinct Tenements, tho all belong to one family.*⁶²

The main house of the plantation generally faced towards a river or creek, the other buildings clustered nearby. Clusters of slave housing were prominent visible features near the main house and in the quarters. Slave housing has been variously described as: a number of huts surrounded by small garden plots, "barrecks" housing 4-6 adults,⁶³ and small cottages.⁶⁴ By 1762, the Popes Creek Plantation, under Augustine Washington Jr., had 77 slaves requiring housing. The locations of these buildings are not known today.

In the Popes Creek area, archeological investigation has provided information as to the eighteenth century sites of some structures. Buildings associated with the Washington family are by far the best documented. The nucleus of Augustine Washington's plantation from at least 1726 onward was on Popes Creek. The main house was situated near the water. Foundations of a dairy, kitchen chimney, root cellar, store house, a fairly large structure of unknown use and an unlined cellar, have been located near the house. It is unknown, however, if all of these structures were either standing or constructed by 1732.

Near the ice pond, a post building may have served as an isolated field barn on the Washington plantation.⁶⁵ Close to the mouth of Bridges Creek is the home site of Henry Brooks, first landowner in the area, where a dwelling and nearby outbuilding were located.⁶⁶ A quarter mile up Bridges Creek was the site of the John Washington home and two outbuildings.⁶⁷ The Brooks and possibly the Washington buildings were standing in 1718 when Augustine Washington first inherited land in the area. These 17th century buildings probably served as quarters or tenements until demolished.⁶⁸ The building arrangement of Augustine Washington's plantation was probably typical of other farms in the vicinity.

Structure Design

By the mid 17th century, Virginians had developed small dwelling houses:
... usually of frame construction, weatherboarded, with cyprus, cedar, or white oak shingles. They were usually a story and a half high with a steep roof pierced with dormer windows. At

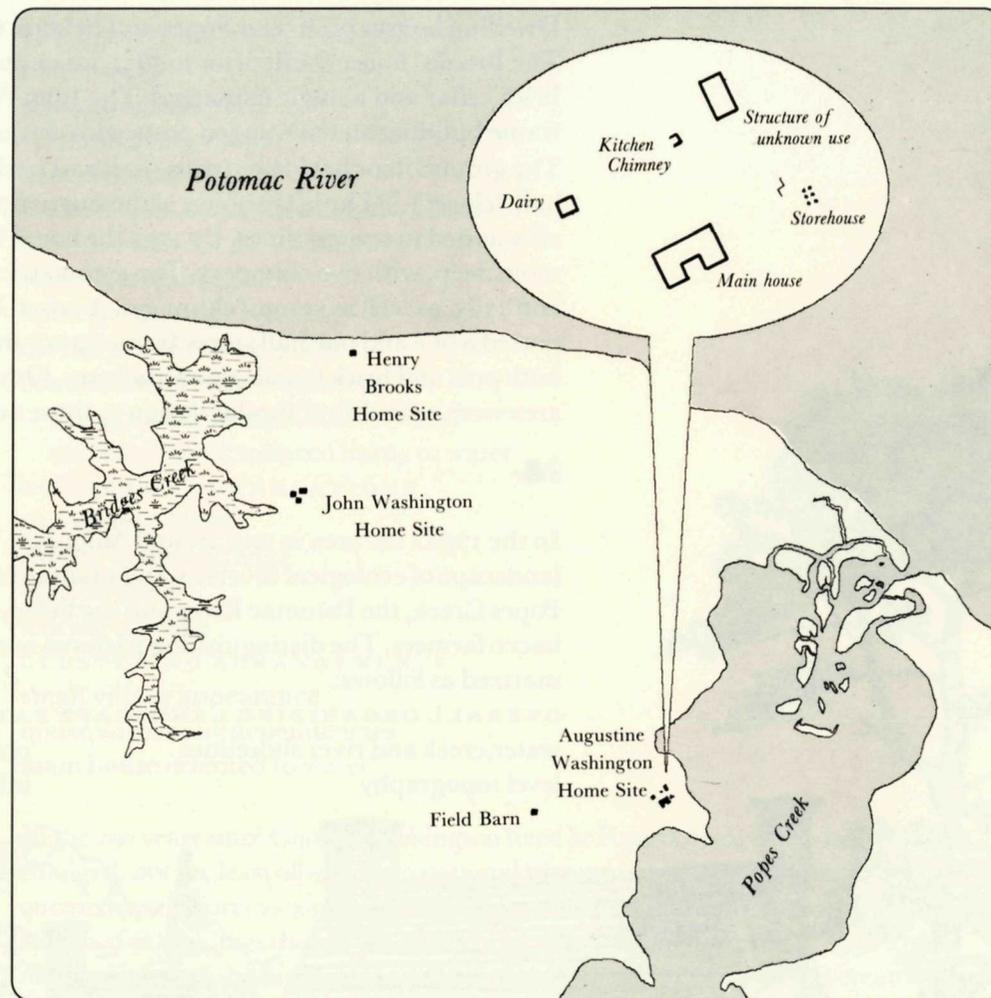


FIG 7 Archeological investigation within the national monument provides information on the siting of some 17th and 18th century buildings in the area. The main house of plantations such as Augustine Washington's was usually surrounded by various out-buildings and dependencies.

*each end stood a large chimney. Some were made of brick and covered with tile or slate. The bricks were as a rule made in the immediate vicinity of the building.*⁶⁹

In 1724 Hugh Jones could write that "the gentlemen's seats are of late built for the most part of good brick, and many of timber very handsome, commodious, and capacious."⁷⁰

Dwelling houses built near Popes and Bridges Creeks varied in size and details. The Brooks' house, built prior to 1651, was a one room or hall-plan building with a brick cellar and a single chimney.⁷¹ The John Washington house was a 20 x 40 foot frame building on ten wooden posts with chimneys on the east and west ends. The ground floor held two rooms (hall and parlor), with an entrance porch and hall "closet".⁷² The main house of the Augustine Washington plantation was probably added to several times. By 1730 the house followed a "hall-parlor" plan, one room deep, with two chimneys. Two symmetrical wings were added between 1740 and 1763, as well as several chimneys. A raised brick foundation probably supported a one and one half storey frame structure.⁷³ The outbuildings nearby were both post and brick foundation structures. Other structures in the Popes Creek area were probably of similar design to those on the Washington plantation.

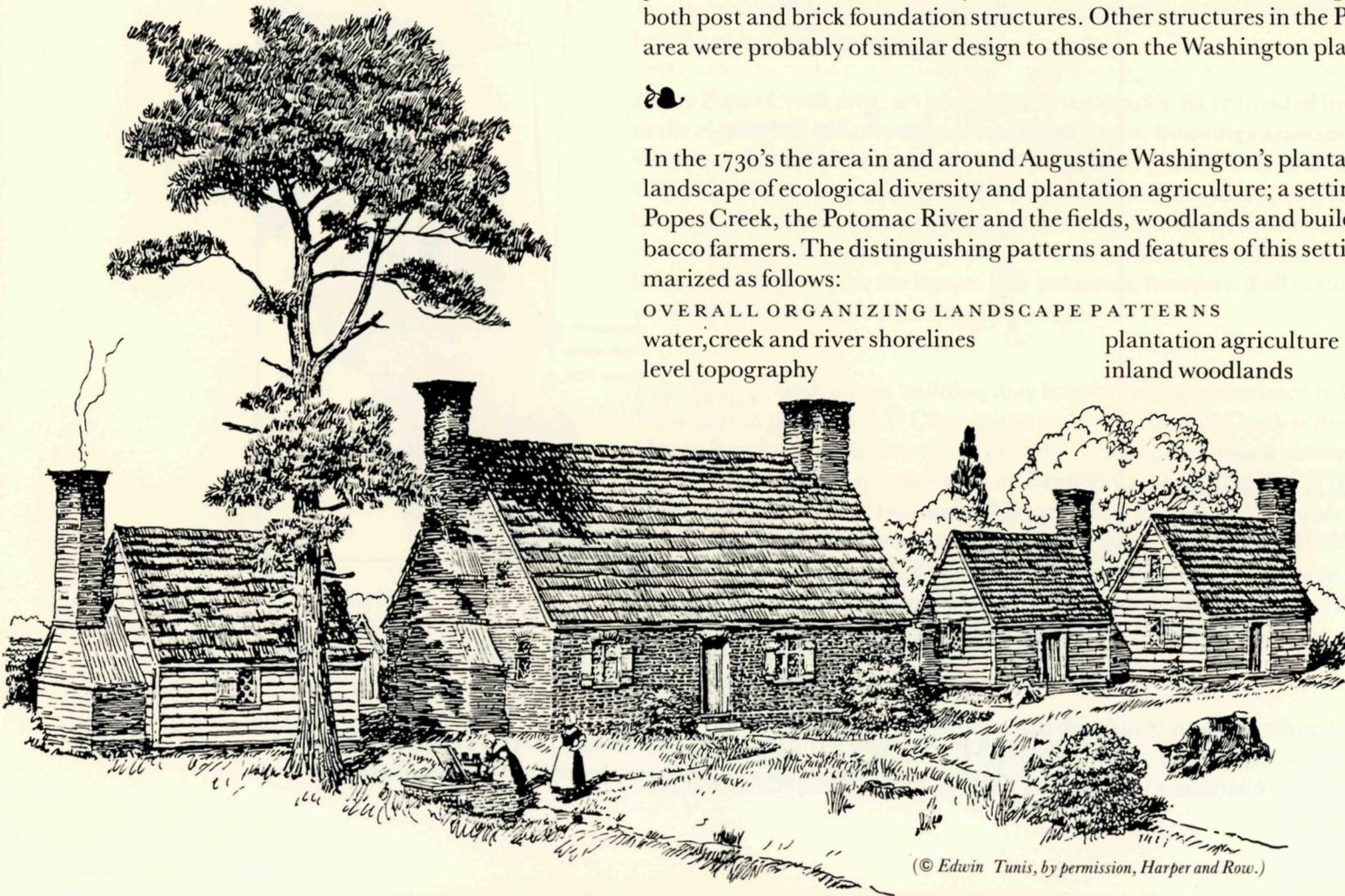


In the 1730's the area in and around Augustine Washington's plantation was a landscape of ecological diversity and plantation agriculture; a setting created by Popes Creek, the Potomac River and the fields, woodlands and buildings of tobacco farmers. The distinguishing patterns and features of this setting can be summarized as follows:

OVERALL ORGANIZING LANDSCAPE PATTERNS

water, creek and river shorelines
level topography

plantation agriculture
inland woodlands



SPECIFIC LAND USE PATTERNS

plantations
 tobacco cultivation
 self-sufficiency crops
 livestock grazing
 undeveloped lands (woodlands, fallow)

CIRCULATION PATTERNS

water transportation
 horse paths, ridge roads
 cartways and rolling roads
 connections: fields to quarters
 to main plantation, house to water
 and main road, tobacco barns to water

BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS

shorelines, slopes
 ridges, woodland edge
 witness trees

fencing of crops

CLUSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

small village appearance
 house with many dependencies
 main house oriented to water



In the 250 years since George Washington lived at Popes Creek, much has certainly changed, not the least of which is a national monument where a simple plantation once existed. Efforts to commemorate George Washington's birth through the construction of buildings during the 1890's (a 55 foot granite monument), 1930's (the memorial house and kitchen), and 1970's (the park visitor center) have created a landscape within the park that differs significantly from that of the 18th century Augustine Washington plantation. The landscape surrounding the park, while remaining agricultural, has undergone a natural evolution spurred by changing agricultural technology and economics. Yet, the setting of George Washington Birthplace retains certain patterns and features which maintain its significance today. Assessing the current setting of George Washington Birthplace National Monument, its extent and its distinguishing landscape patterns and features, helps in identifying the current historic values and conservation needs of the area.



HERE BORN 1732
WASHINGTON BORN

Assessing the Setting of George Washington Birthplace

PERSPECTIVE

Any historic area has a range of physical settings, from the large scale to the small scale. A large scale setting for the George Washington National Birthplace might be Virginia's Northern Neck; a smaller scale might focus on Westmorland County or on the Popes and Bridges Creeks watersheds. The precise determination of the setting boundaries depends on the perspective from which the setting is being examined.

George Washington Birthplace National Monument management objectives emphasize a visual perspective for determining the setting: objectives address the landscape adjacent to the park "...that is critical and essential for maintaining integrity of the setting in which George Washington was born and lived, *as viewed from George Washington Birthplace National Monument and the route 204 approach to the monument.*"⁷⁴

Why route 204? Many have noted that approach roads to national parks and other historic and natural conservation areas play the important role of instilling in visitors a feeling for the setting of the park. Visitors to George Washington Birthplace travel by car or bus first along Virginia route 3, the major 2-lane road spanning the 85 miles of the Northern Neck between Fredericksburg and Kilmarnock, and then down Virginia route 204, a 2-mile spur from route 3 to the national monument. The transition from route 3 to route 204 is a noticeable one. From a map it is clear that 204 leads nowhere but to the monument and neighboring farms and houses. A sign, 20 yards down route 204 from the route 3 intersection, announces that the monument is only two miles ahead. Traffic slows and the woodlands and a few nearby houses close in on the road. One is now approaching the monument with a sense of having entered a different environment. For these reasons, route 204 is an important approach component of the setting of Washington's Birthplace.

The majority of the setting, however, is seen and experienced from current visitor use areas within the national monument: historic sites, interpretive markers, park roads, the visitor center and picnic area. These locations, termed "viewpoints", are the areas from which a sense for the setting of George Washington's birth is gained.

Detailed field research is required to determine the boundaries of the birthplace setting. Once the area is known, the landscape patterns and features can be examined for their historic significance, integrity and interpretive value. Methods

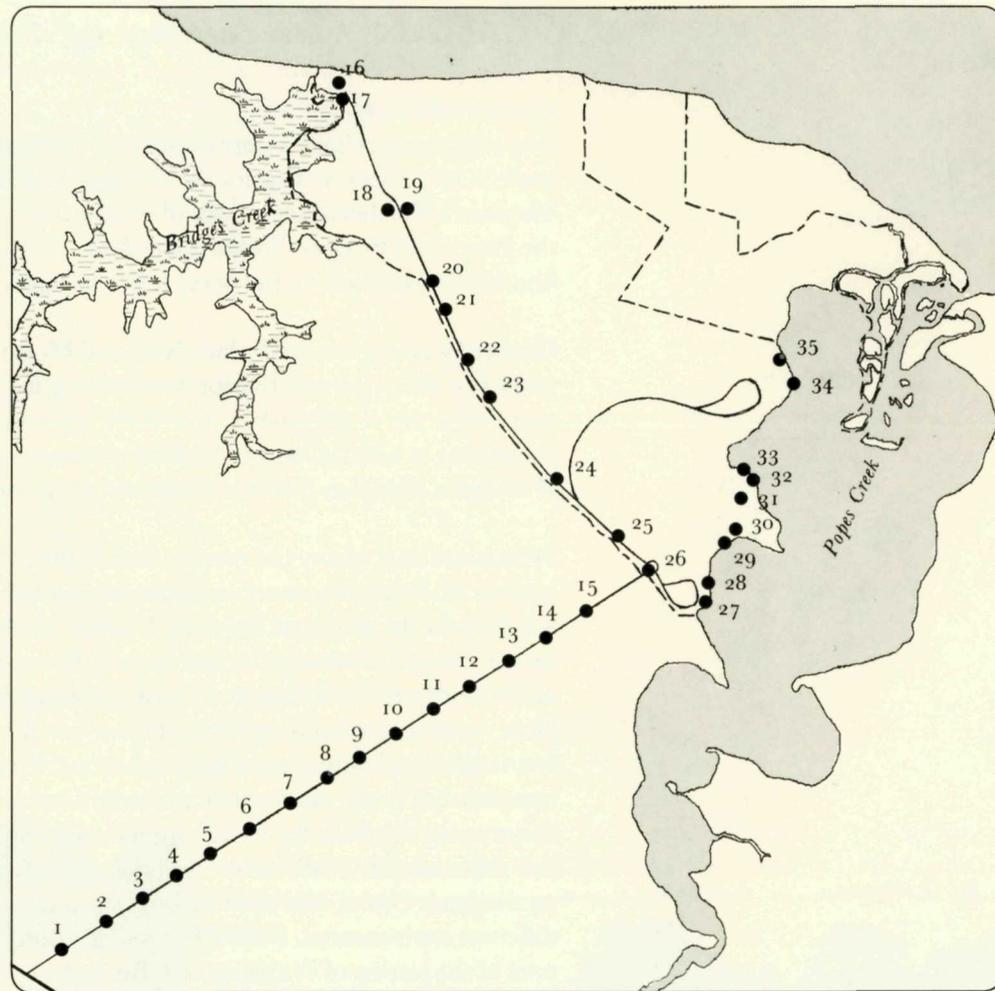


FIG 8 Thirty-five viewpoints, all located at various high visitor use areas and along route 204, are designated as locations from which the setting of Washington's Birthplace is defined. The land and water visible from the viewpoints is readily mapped.

for these steps in the assessment process are outlined below, followed by an evaluation of the current setting of the birthplace.

SETTING DEFINITION AND DOCUMENTATION METHODS

For the purposes of this study, view points from which the setting is defined include: seven interpretive markers, the visitor center deck, picnic area, memorial house, Washington monument and points along the park's "Beach Road" and route 204. The area visible from any view point is determined by a number of factors, particularly: the patterns of cleared fields and forest growth, changes in to-

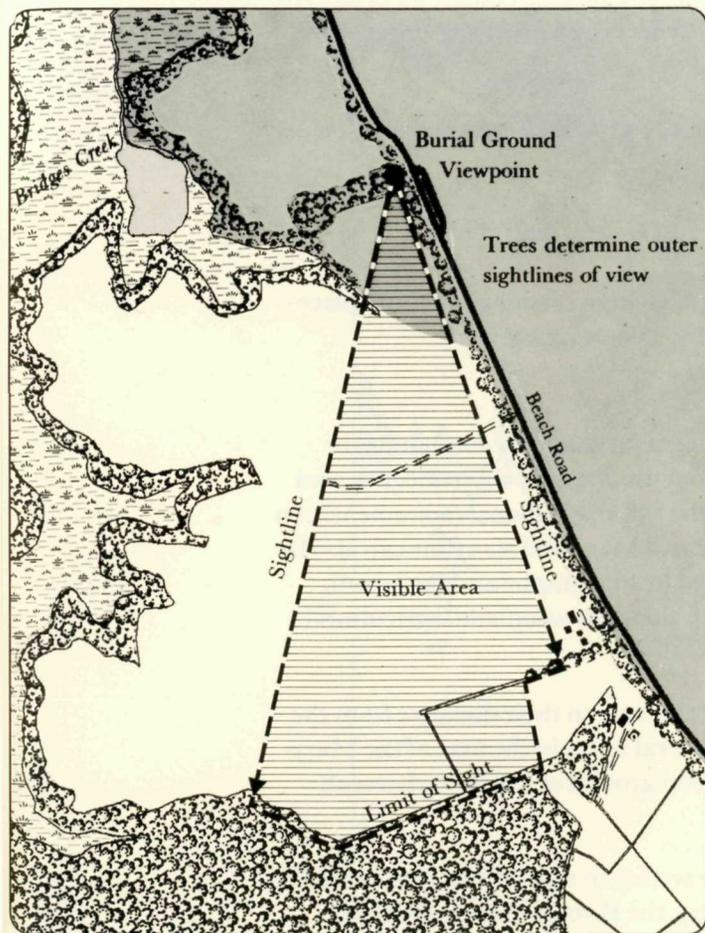


FIG 9 From a fixed viewpoint, such as this one near the Washington family burial ground, the view is mapped by defining its outer sightlines and the distant limit of sight. Here the sightlines are determined by trees along the Beach Road and trees extending from a small branch of Bridges Creek. The distant limit of sight is created by part of a hedgerow and the woodland edge.

pography, and individual features which obstruct a wide open view of the adjacent landscape (buildings and trees, for example). Views of the setting range from panoramas over the Potomac and Popes Creek to views interrupted regularly by vegetation (such as along the Beach Road).

Defining the extent of all views of the setting from the designated viewpoints is complicated by the fact that the viewpoints are of two types: linear features (roads) and fixed points (all other). Views from roads are experienced in a continuous sequence from a moving vehicle with no set stopping points; views from fixed points, such as an interpretive marker, are usually experienced from a stationary standing position. The view from each fixed point can be relatively easily mapped and documented through identifying the limits of sight. To facilitate mapping of the continuous sequence views from roads a similar technique must be adopted. The view from each selected viewpoint along the road is mapped individually. However, a composite of all mapped views includes all the area visible along the road. This is the reason that viewpoints along route 204 are so closely spaced.

This study documents views in three ways: 1. through a series of photographs forming a panoramic sweep of the view, 2. with maps developed from a 1:8000 scale aerial photograph of the area, and 3. by describing on a data sheet the precise location of the viewpoint, bearings of the left and right view borders, visibility information, certain features of the view and other pertinent information.*

SETTING EVALUATION CRITERIA

Once the geographic area that makes up the current setting is defined, the patterns and features of the landscape can be assessed. Simply put, the assessment process is a comparison of the current and historic landscapes. It is an evaluation of the historic integrity of the area: does the landscape still retain the distinguishing characteristics which gave it historic identity and which existed during the 1730's? The following criteria help to answer these questions:⁷⁶

is the physical environment of the area the same as during the historic period? Does it illustrate the same conditions, relationships, concepts of nature, aesthetic preferences or traditional land use activities?

is the design of the setting maintained from the historic period through the visual relationships of features: spacing, circulation patterns, boundary defining elements, structures?

* Field research was performed in June and July under full foliage conditions and rechecked in winter. Basing the setting definition initially on full-foliage is logical in that over 75% of the park's visitation occurs during this time. Photographic documentation techniques were adapted from work by Richard C. Smardon.⁷⁵

are the materials of the physical elements, buildings, structures, fencing, the same as in the historic period?

do planting details, fence and building construction, farming practices still retain evidence of the 1730's workmanship in building and altering the area?

does the setting evoke an historic or aesthetic feeling for a past period of time?

Described below is the assessment of the setting of George Washington's birthplace—its visible limits, land and water area, patterns and historic integrity.

ASSESSMENT

A composite map of the birthplace's visible setting is produced by combining the mapped view from all viewpoints. Landward from the Potomac shoreline, this area totals approximately 1100 acres (not including the 538 acre national monument). An additional 65 square miles of the Potomac River and Maryland shoreline can also be seen. The limits of the visible area are determined by topography and the growth pattern of trees in hedgerows, stream buffers and along the woodland/agricultural field edge.*

Within the visible area, elements of the landscape vary in their distance from the viewer's location, ranging from very close to several miles in the case of the Maryland shore. Details are more noticeable in the foreground of a view and overall patterns and contrasts in the background.

A convenient method for examining the entire setting in more detail is to break it into five relatively distinct view areas: route 204, the Potomac River, Bridges Creek, Beach Road farmland and Pope's Creek.

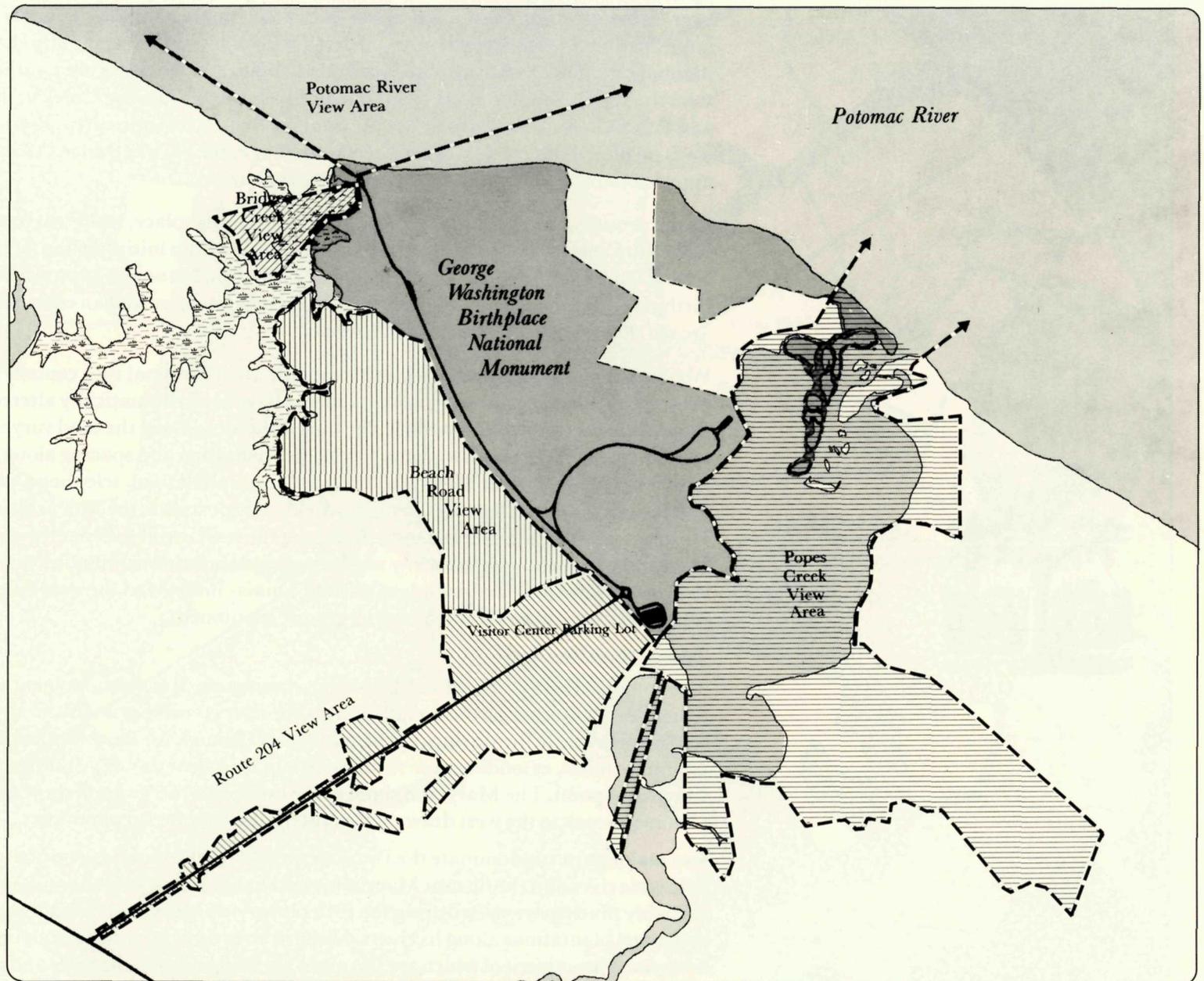
Route 204 View Area

The area visible along route 204 is initially defined by the woodland edge parallel to the road. This linear pattern is broken in five areas where the tree cover opens

*One implication of a border defined primarily by tree growth is that structures outside the setting's land boundary may be visible if they are significantly taller than tree height (approximately 50 feet). The 200 foot high telephone relay tower near Morris Store is a good example.

Within the setting border are several small (less than ten acre) pockets of woodlands, such as along Dancing Creek. Though the interiors of these woodlots are not fully visible from the viewpoints, their surrounding edges are visible on several sides.

FIG 10 A composite map of the birthplace setting is produced by overlaying all mapped views. The resulting area includes over 1100 acres inland from the Potomac. Five view areas are: route 204, Potomac River, Bridges & Popes Creeks and Beach Road.



up around houses, garden plots and a ten acre crop field. Approximately 1.2 miles from the route 3 intersection 204 leaves the woods entirely, entering an area of large open crop fields and pasture which is also visible from viewpoints in the monument. (This area of overlap is included in the route 204 view area, rather than the Beach Road, to avoid redundancy.) Trees along Dancing Creek to the left and Popes Creek to the right define the limits of sight in this open area. Route 204 leads on directly to the 55 foot granite monument at the park entrance. A total of approximately 200 acres is visible in the 204 view area.

As the primary access route to George Washington Birthplace, route 204 has a significant role in the birthplace's setting; it establishes an initial feeling for the setting landscape – creating a visual theme – which builds as one approaches the birthplace. Travelers sense the approach to their destination and an entrance to an area of slower pace and greater permanence.

Woodlands, crop fields and gardens at roadside are traditional 18th century land uses, though orientation and growth patterns have been dramatically altered by the placement of the modern road. The nine residences along the road vary in age and design from the 1850's to the 1950's; their orientation and spacing along the road is not characteristic of the 18th century. The asphalt road, telephone lines and the post and wire fencing along crop fields also post-date the 18th century. However, the existing overall landscape along the road is still sufficiently wooded and rural in appearance to convey a feeling of approach to Washington's birthplace and an entrance into the birthplace setting. This is climaxed as the road enters the broad agricultural fields and nears the granite monument.

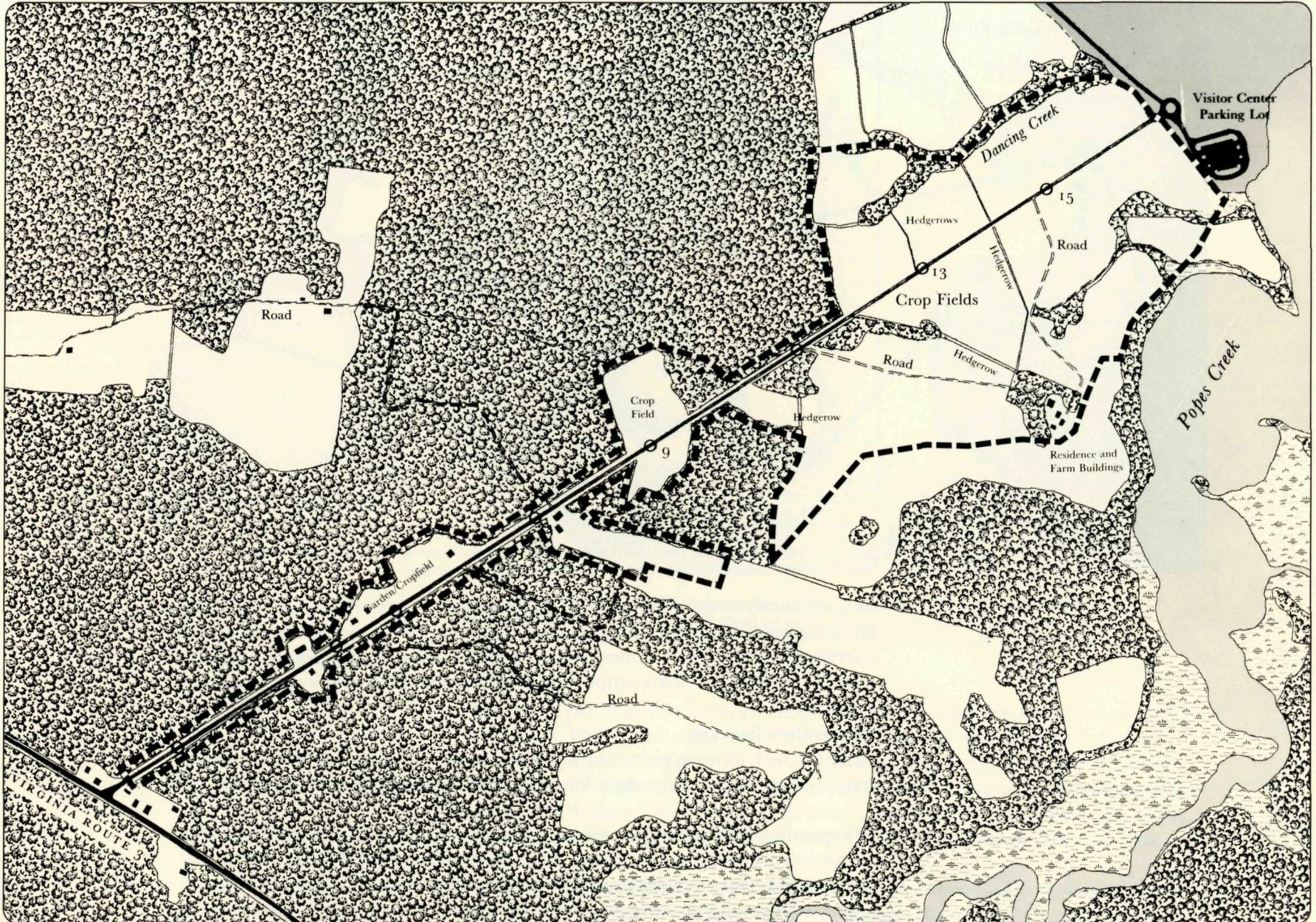


Potomac River View Area

The Potomac River forms the northeast boundary for much of the monument and has a significant influence on the overall setting. The river is visible primarily from the beach northwest of the Washington Family Burial Ground. An area of approximately 65 square miles, extending over 12 miles distant on a clear day, is visible from the beach viewpoint. The Maryland shore to the north and the Virginia shore near Colonial Beach to the west draw the distant limits of the broad panorama.

Two major patterns dominate the Potomac view area: the broad sweep of the five mile wide river and the distant Maryland shoreline. The forested shoreline was probably much more open during the 18th century, as Maryland, like Virginia, had many plantations along its rivers. Modern structures have been built on the river, most prominent of which are the route 301 bridge across the river and the Morgantown powerplant, both 11 1/2 miles upstream. Yet, on hazy days these

FIG 11 Approximately 200 acres are visible in the route 204 view area. The overall landscape along the road is still sufficiently wooded and rural in appearance to convey a feeling of approach into the birth-place setting.



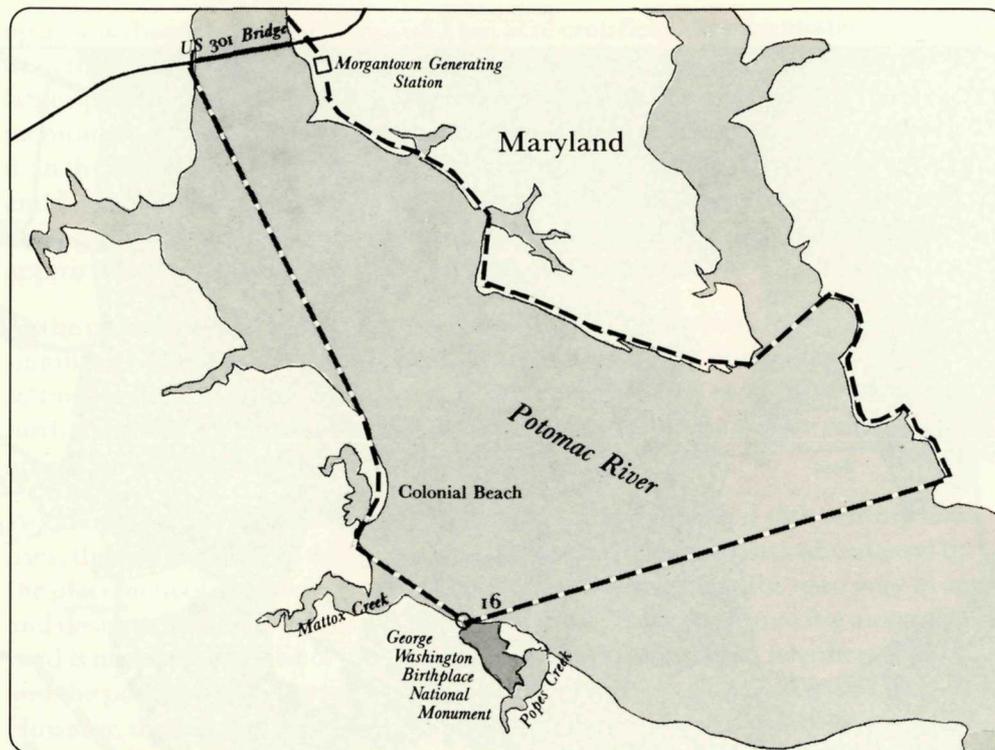


FIG 1 2 The Potomac River view area is visible as a great panorama from the beach at the northwest corner of the park. Over 65 square miles – mostly water – are within sight.

uses are barely noticeable. Even with good visibility they are so distinctly in the far background that they appear outside the setting of the birthplace, beyond the barrier of the great river. Other river uses such as boating, shipping, fishing are traditional. Modern boats simply remind observers of the river's continual use.

Bridges Creek View Area

Bridges Creek, forming part of the western boundary of the monument, is visible from a viewpoint at the beach parking area. Approximately 35 acres are within view.

This portion of the birthplace setting is the closest to a purely natural landscape. It consists primarily of an expanse of tidal wetlands bounded by an undulating line of dense trees and undergrowth which separate the wetlands from a barely visible background of cultivated fields. The shoreline tree growth is a prominent

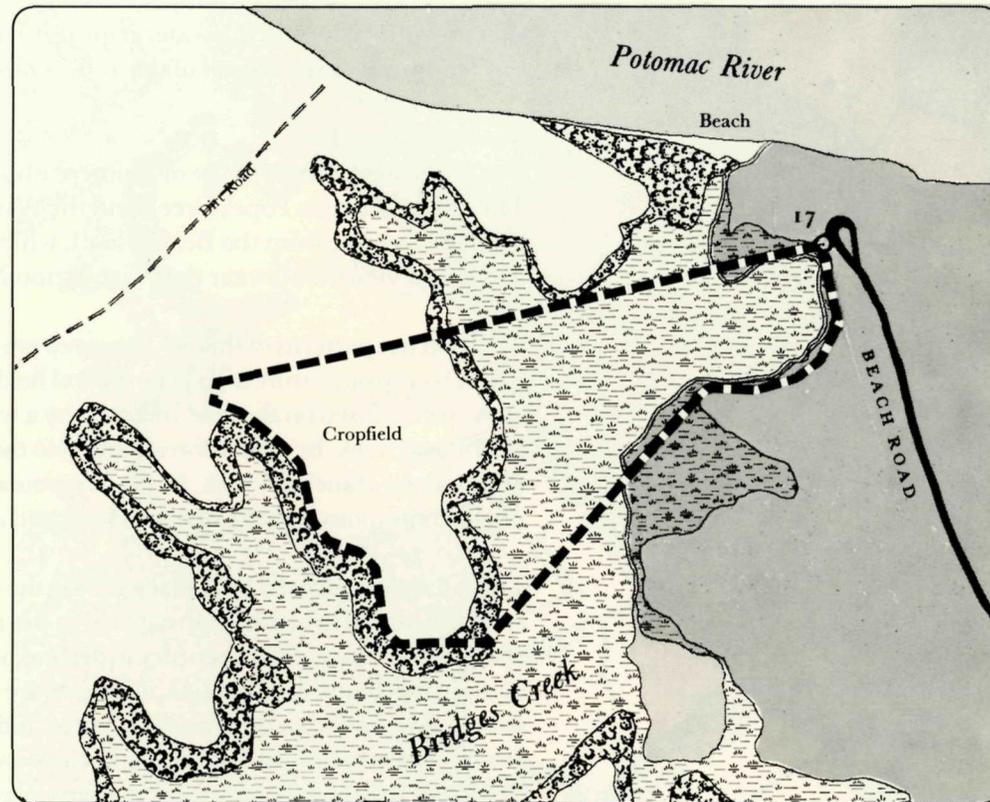


FIG 13 The Bridges Creek view area is the portion of the setting closest to a purely natural area. A slow meandering creek and acres of wetland grasses are backed by oaks along the shoreline. The cropfields beyond, once part of Augustine Washington's plantation, are partially visible through the trees.

boundary pattern of the area, giving the wetlands a complete, yet broad sense of enclosure. During the 18th century, the shorelines may well have been cleared, extending the limits of sight further and wider over the level fields beyond. Land on the far side of the creek and wetlands was farmed by Augustine Washington as part of his Bridges Creek Quarter. No structures are visible in the view area today, though the buildings of the Bridges Creek Quarter may have once been visible.

Despite the possible differences, the present scene conveys a strong feeling of constancy. Change in the wetlands environment has occurred only through succes-

sion and alterations in the water regime. Overall, the view today is wholly unspoiled by major intrusions of the 20th century.

Beach Road View Area

The southwest border of the monument abuts private farmland for 1 1/4 miles. The farms between Popes Creek and the Washington family burial ground are primarily visible from the Beach Road, which parallels the boundary, as well as from fixed viewpoints near the Washington Monument and the burial ground.

The land use patterns of this 235 acre area are dominated by the 90% of visible land which is crop or pasture land. The several fields, dissected by hedgerows and fence-lines, are enclosed on the rear and sides by a woodland edge that runs along a branch of Bridges Creek, by a large forested area to the southwest and by the narrow strip of woods along Dancing Creek. In the foreground, actually just inside the park border, runs a continuous line of deciduous trees and a mile of 18th century style rail fence.

These patterns give the birthplace setting the distinct identity of an active farming area, the same identity the setting held in the 1730's. The details of many components of this landscape are 20th century in design, but still traditional in function. Due to modern mechanical cultivation, field sizes are much larger and crops are in even spaced rows. Tobacco is no longer planted and tree stump cluttered fields have disappeared, but other traditional crops, such as corn, continue to be grown. The two small clusters of buildings – three farm storage structures and one house with a small barn and storage area – are traditional uses, though of 1920-1940 design. The modern commemorative rail fencing, while adding to the historic image of the landscape, may not have extended for such a distance in the 18th century.

Popes Creek View Area

The largest section of the setting includes much of Popes Creek and the farmlands along its eastern shore. This area is visible from eight fixed and heavily visited viewpoints in the birthsite and picnic areas. These viewpoints include the visitor center, interpretive sign locations along the trail to the birthsite, the memorial house lawn and others. For the most part, views are broad panoramas. Over 680 acres of estuary, neighboring wetlands, farmland and woodlands are visible from the designated viewpoints. Portions of the Potomac River are also visible from several viewpoints.

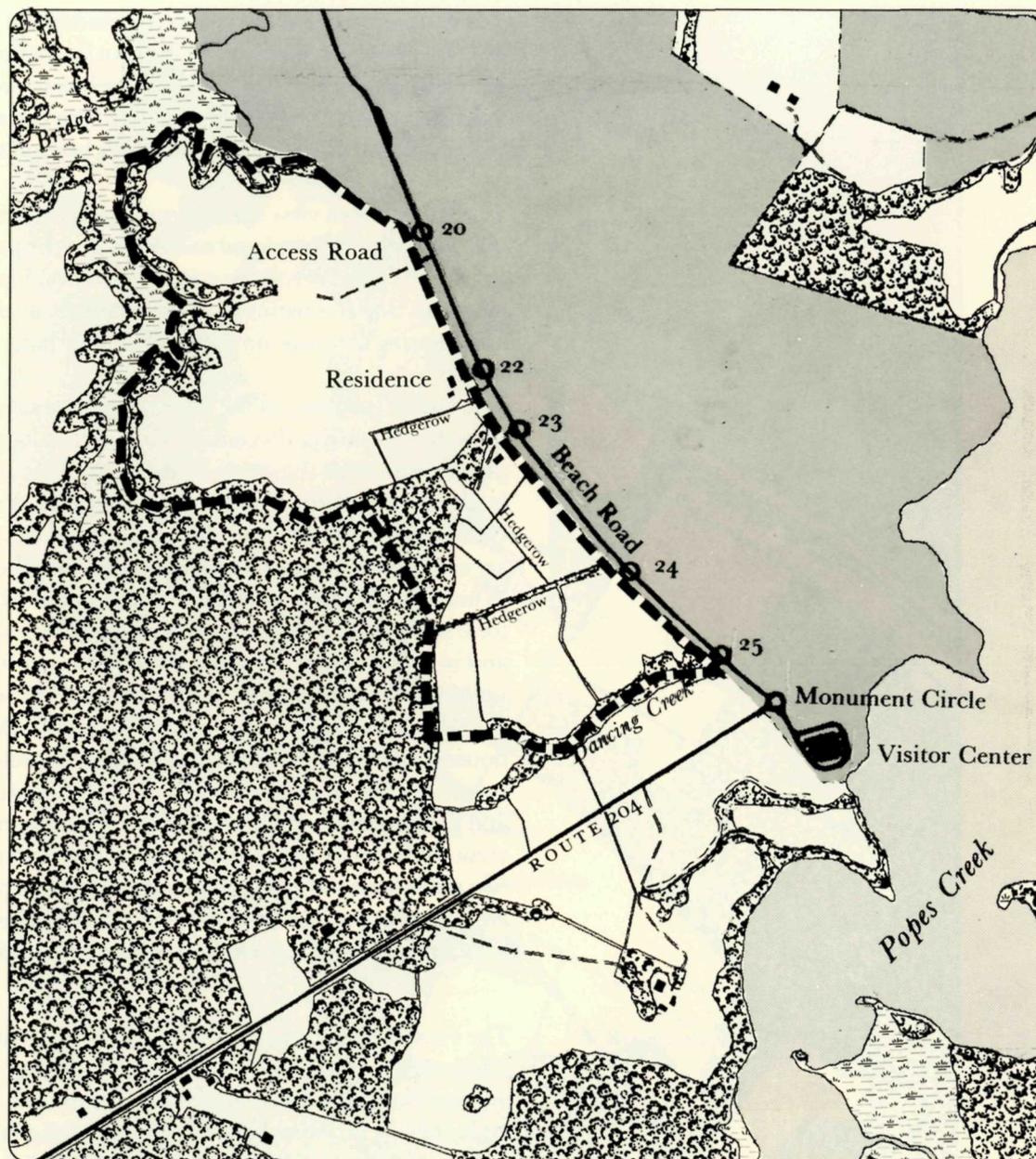


FIG 14 The Beach Road offers the closest views of neighboring farmland, giving the setting the distinct identity of an active farming area. Land uses in this view area – crop fields, pasture, hedgerows, woodlands and farm buildings – are traditional, though some components are 20th century in design or materials.

The distant border of the visible area is defined primarily by the pattern of woodland growth. However, topography is also a factor on the eastern side of Popes Creek. Elevation increases from sea level at shoreline to over 150 feet along a series of hilltops running northeast/southwest between the Potomac and route 3. Portions of the woodland overstory are visible on these hills beyond the woodland edge.

The Popes Creek view area is dominated by the creek. The waters of the wide estuary take up the foreground and midground of the panorama and set the view's peaceful tone. The waterfowl on the creek, the undeveloped shoreline and the extensive wetlands are characteristic of a scene relatively unchanged since the 18th century. Fishing and hunting continue on the creek as they have for hundreds of years.

The visible land uses of the Popes Creek area are traditional. Agricultural fields, though altered by 20th century farm technology like those along the Beach Road, are prominent across the creek. Woodlands, which form the background of the scene and in places extend down to the creek shoreline, are probably more extensive than during George Washington's time. Other patterns, details and materials of the area which are not traditional are usually obscured by either distance, trees or angle of view. Where the McCarty plantation once operated in the early 18th century four non-historic residences with clustered farm buildings are sited among the fields or at field and woodland edge. Because of their distance from the birthplace, the details of the buildings are not discernable. Shoreline trees near the mouth of Popes Creek obscure the visibility of most homes on the Potomac at Muses Beach, though the cluster of houses is partially visible during winter. (Development near this point has an historical antecedent in the former site of an 18th century Popes Creek farm). Utility lines and paved roads are not visible from the monument because of distance and angle of view. Only one major structure, a 200 foot high radio/telephone tower, located over two miles from the monument, presents a sharp contrast to the landscape. The higher elevations in the background of the view area increase the potential for tall man-made structures to intrude upon the monument's setting.

The Popes Creek view area is central to the setting of George Washington's birthplace. The broad undeveloped estuary, naturally vegetated shorelines, extensive wetlands, and active farmlands have evolved over time as agricultural technology, economics and other social forces have changed. But they are still the basic landscape components which have existed in the area since before the birth of George Washington.

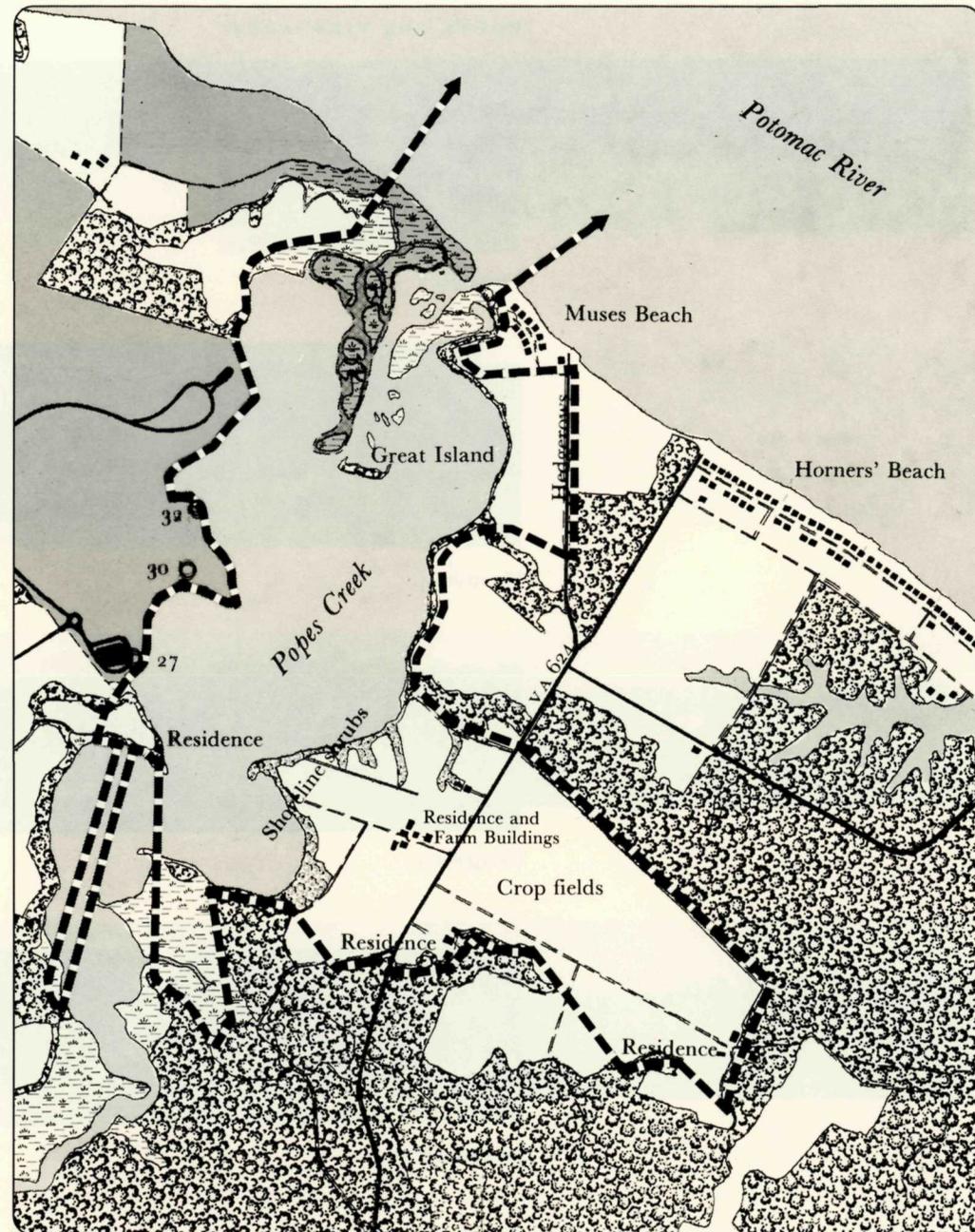


FIG 15 The Popes Creek view area includes over 680 acres of estuary, neighboring wetlands, farmlands and woodlands, all visible from viewpoints in the birthsite and picnic areas. The distant limits of the site are created by patterns of field clearing and woodland edges.

ROUTE 204 VIEW AREA



Viewpoint 2



Viewpoint 4



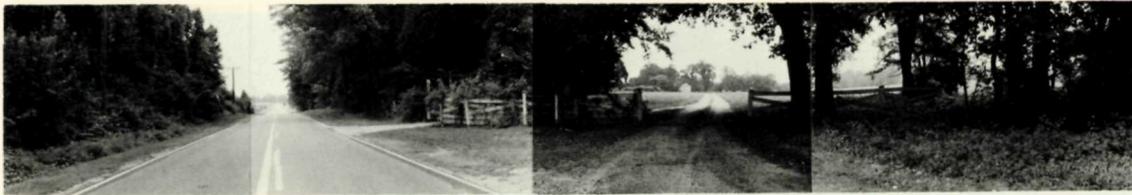
Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 7



Viewpoint 9



Viewpoint 11



Viewpoint 13



Viewpoint 15

POTOMAC RIVER VIEW AREA



Viewpoint 16

BRIDGES CREEK VIEW AREA



Viewpoint 17

BEACH ROAD VIEW AREA



Viewpoint 20



Viewpoint 22



Viewpoint 23



Viewpoint 24



Viewpoint 25

POPES CREEK VIEW AREA



Viewpoint 27



Viewpoint 30



Viewpoint 32

ROAD VIEW AREA



Popes and Bridges Creeks remain natural, undeveloped water bodies in the midst of farm and forest. The peaceful expanse of Popes Creek and the undeveloped wetlands along Bridges Creek give a feeling of timelessness and continuity to the setting of George Washington Birthplace. The broad Potomac, despite a few distant intrusions, seems a barrier to the twentieth century world. Wildlife are abundant as in the 18th century. Osprey and bald eagles nest near Popes Creek. Egrets and herons are common, while large concentrations of geese, swans and ducks continue to gather on Popes Creek in late fall. The agricultural fields bordering the creeks have probably been farmed continuously (except during periods of fallow) since the 17th and 18th centuries. The farmlands across Popes Creek and along the Beach Road even maintain somewhat of a plantation appearance—a few house and farm building clusters surrounded by fields. Woodlands enclose the landscape, forming the distant boundary of all that is visible from the birthplace.

The distinguishing patterns and features which maintain the historic identity of this setting, and a visible connection with George Washington Birthplace, can be summarized as follows:

OVERALL SETTING

abundant open water
undeveloped shorelines
agricultural uses amongst natural lands
low density of residential structures

ROUTE 204 VIEW AREA

narrow road with dirt/gravel driveways
woodland enclosure
small crop and garden clearings
low density of residential structures
open agricultural fields

POTOMAC VIEW AREA

breadth of the Potomac

BRIDGES CREEK VIEW AREA

natural wetlands
trees along wetland edge

background agricultural use

BEACH ROAD VIEW AREA

agricultural (pasture and crops) use
treeline and rail fencing at park/private boundary
woodland edge enclosing fields
low density of structures
rural structure design

POPES CREEK VIEW AREA

broad open undeveloped estuary
estuary wildlife
natural wetlands
undeveloped shoreline
agricultural use
low density of structures
woodland edge enclosing fields and estuary.

The overall environment appears largely untouched by many aspects of 20th century urban, technological society. Even with the advent of modern roads, utilities, materials and new farm technology, there is still a visible connection to an earlier time. The agricultural landscape has evolved over 250 years, incorporating new patterns and elements, but it is still united by a continuity of primary human uses and major natural features. This alone is significant, but the landscape's association with the birthplace of George Washington and the memorialization of him through the national monument gives the area national significance.

The conservation of the basic patterns and features of this landscape is essential to maintaining the historic significance and integrity of the setting of George Washington Birthplace National Monument.

Conserving the Setting

ISSUES AND IMPACTS

The potential for inappropriate land and waterfront development threatens to alter the character of the setting of George Washington Birthplace National Monument and destroy the significance and value which the landscape has accumulated over the past 250 years. Preservation of the area's historic values is a concern of the National Park Service and the public.

Westmoreland County maintains its traditional agricultural heritage, but has, for a number of years, attracted second-home and recreational development. County planners have noted a growth rate in housing units significantly greater than the population growth rate, confirming the increasing number of seasonal residents. Most of the development has occurred on or near river and creek shorelines. While this has not taken place within the setting of George Washington's birthplace, extensive residential development has occurred just outside the setting along the Potomac at Muses' and Horner's Beaches. With the shoreline development trend and the attractiveness of Popes Creek, the potential for this type of subdivision within the setting does exist.

The traditional landscape surrounding the national monument today is not permanent, despite its continuity through recent centuries. Alteration of the setting landscape, or the distinguishing patterns and features which provide its historic identity, could easily destroy or degrade the setting's historic value. In fact, due to the prominence of the setting in the visitor experience of George Washington Birthplace National Monument, degradation could affect the ability of the monument to fulfill its commemorative and interpretive objectives.

The potential for the greatest degradation of historic value lies in inappropriate residential, waterfront or more intensive development within the setting. Several kinds of alterations would be most likely to have a major impact on either the overall setting or the specific view areas: 1. a change in the major land use patterns, 2. changes in the density, spacing, orientation or design of built areas, and 3. changes in certain specific landscape patterns.

Land use change:

Of the distinguishing patterns of the setting, two are most visible: the abundance



of undeveloped land and water and the predominance of agriculture as the primary intensive land use. These are part of a tradition of land use which has existed in the area for 300 years. Land uses compatible with the traditional landscape include: crop farming, pasture, orchards, gardens, fallow land and oldfields, woodlots and woodlands, single-family farm dwellings and accessory uses (see density discussion below), farm storage buildings (barns, sheds) associated with single farms, small private boat landings associated with single farms, traditional cemeteries, and hunting blinds.

Certain land uses have never been components of plantation landscapes, nor are they components of the existing setting of Washington's birthplace. Because of their function, appearance and location they would be incompatible with traditional, historic patterns. In broad terms, these uses would include: non-farm residential developments (see density discussion below), light or heavy industry, business and commercial uses (other than agriculture and those activities which can be conducted within existing homes), marinas, campgrounds and other intensive recreational facilities, mobile homes, major above-ground utility lines, oil or gas drilling, billboards and other large commercial advertising signs.

Changes in the density, siting, spacing, orientation or design of built areas:

Existing single-family residences and structures associated with agriculture are generally compatible with the historic landscape. New development which brings about a major increase in the existing housing density, or a change in the patterns of siting, spacing, orientation and design of structures, could destroy the historic integrity of the setting. Certain land areas, such as shorelines, wetlands, crop fields and pastures, are particularly sensitive to this kind of change.



The creek shorelines and wetlands of the birthplace setting are visually prominent, serving as the interface between land and water. In their lack of development, they are little changed since the 18th century. Impacts from new built areas could easily destroy the historic characteristics. Structural development on shorelines and wetlands should generally be limited to hunting blinds and traditional small private boat landings.

Agricultural fields and pastures, due to their visibility and importance in the historic landscape, are also quite sensitive to certain types of development. Non-farm development can threaten not only the traditional visual characteristics of the

area, but also the overall viability of the local agricultural economy.

Currently, the houses in the Popes Creek and Beach Road view areas (route 204 is discussed separately below) are located in or near agricultural fields at a density compatible with both farming and 18th century landscape patterns. (The approximate current housing density in the crop fields visible across Popes Creek is one residence plus accessory buildings per 55 acres of open fields.) A major increase in development in these areas could significantly change the landscape from its traditional density patterns and thus degrade its historic value. In the Bridges Creek view area, no buildings are currently visible. The siting of new development along the shoreline or wetlands that make up most of the area would be incompatible with historic patterns. Across the Potomac on the Maryland shore, however, housing development would be too far distant to cause a significant impact on the birthplace setting.

The siting, spacing, orientation and design of structures within the setting is equally important. In certain locations it may be possible to minimize the impact of a proposed new single structure through detailed consideration of view sight-lines from the designated viewpoints. If any limited clustered residential or farm development were to occur in the future, structures should be clustered in distinct farm or plantation units; siting of buildings in a straight line along a road or parallel to a shoreline should be avoided. Certain accessory uses which would be incompatible with the traditional landscape, such as satellite dish receivers, should be placed so that they are not visible from the viewpoints. Architectural design and materials are of particular importance for any structures sited within the foreground of the view areas (0 to 1200 feet from viewpoints). The use of materials such as wood and brick, as well as design consistent with traditional plantation or rural architectural styles, would best reflect the setting's historic values.

The amount and type of development along route 204 is different from that of the other view areas and thus requires separate discussion. Sited along 204 are nine residences, all fronting on the road. While these buildings are more densely spaced than those in the Popes Creek area, their small number is compatible with the road's rural characteristics. Siting of additional residences, however, could begin to adversely affect the road's character. To avoid this, density should be kept low (one residence per 500 feet of road frontage) or new residences should be sited behind the forest edge (outside the setting's visible border) whenever possible.

Changes in other distinguishing patterns and features:

Along with the changes discussed above, alterations in the following specific patterns and features could also degrade the birthplace setting:

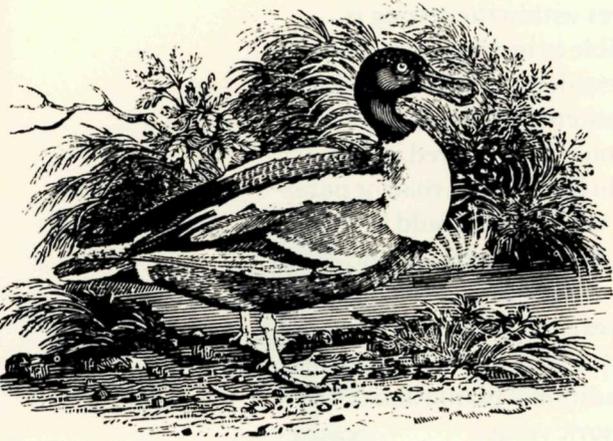
Boundary demarcations: tree and large shrub growth in a number of locations visually defines the setting's border, as well as important use boundaries within the setting. In some cases tree growth also screens modern structures. An effort should be made to maintain existing trees within the setting. In order to maintain the visual boundary at the setting border, a minimum depth of woodland growth along the border is required: a 120 foot deep growth of 45 foot tall native trees with natural understory forms an effective year-round visible barrier.

Rail fencing along the national monument property line is a major boundary marker strongly associated with the 18th century. The post and wire fencing enclosing fields along route 204 and the Beach Road is of 19th and 20th century materials, but of relatively small visual impact. Replacement of either fence type with fencing of greater contrast to the historic landscape would be undesirable.

Circulation routes: route 204 and the Beach Road are asphalt paved roads. Access routes to houses and fields from these roads are currently simple dirt or gravel. Use of paving materials, such as chip-top, gravel, sand or soil, will minimize the contrast of modern roads with the surrounding landscape.

Vegetation types: most wooded areas within and bordering the setting are mixed deciduous or mixed deciduous and coniferous stands. Planted single species stands, such as pine, would not have been commonly found in 18th century Virginia and should be avoided in the future.

Estuary and wetlands wildlife habitat: a decline in creek water quality could threaten the fish and wildlife of Popes and Bridges Creeks, a visible part of the scene today and a reason for the area's initial settlement. Activities degrading water quality or destroying fish and wildlife habitat along the creeks should be minimized.





A CONSERVATION APPROACH

Interest in the birthplace and its setting is broad. Landowners obviously have a vested interest in the future of the area. The 150,000 visitors who come to the monument every year also have a concern for the birthplace setting, as do non-profit groups such as the George Washington Birthplace National Memorial Association and other private conservation organizations. Westmoreland County, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the federal government all work towards assuring that the national monument continues to preserve, commemorate and interpret the site of George Washington's birthplace.

Cooperation between landowners, government and private organizations is critical to effective conservation of the setting landscape. The National Park Service cannot and should not act alone. The existing integrity of the setting is primarily due to good management practices and the commitment to a farming lifestyle that area residents hold. Moreover, the National Park Service has no authority to acquire additional lands for protecting the setting of the monument and no plans to seek that authority.

A cooperative conservation effort has already begun. In August 1985, National Park Service staff held a public meeting to obtain input on issues of concern related to the monument. One of twelve significant issues identified at the meeting was that of adjacent lands conservation – conserving the setting of Washington's birthplace. The National Park Service used information provided at the meeting by local landowners, interested citizens, and county and state officials in preparing the recently released *Statement for Management* for the monument. National Park Service staff and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation also met with landowners specifically to discuss the issue of conserving the birthplace setting. The National Park Service will take a lead role in assuring that this cooperative effort continues. There are several steps which can be taken to help promote conservation of the birthplace setting:

1. *The National Park Service will continue to establish and maintain dialogue with public and private groups and individuals who have an interest in the birthplace setting. Among those who can play a role in implementing various conservation methods are: all landowners in the setting, the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, Association for Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.*

2. *The National Park Service will work with these groups and individuals to help define the exact roles which they can play in the conservation process. These roles may include provision of technical assistance, monitoring of development proposals, regulation, acceptance of interests in land, and others.*

3. *The National Park Service will help establish and participate in agreements and informal cooperative arrangements which help to conserve the birthplace setting. One form of cooperation between landowners and the National Park Service would be through shared involvement in planning activities which impact either party's interests. The National Park Service will continue to fully involve landowners in park planning, particularly the general management plan scheduled to begin in the future. A similar cooperative relationship at Glacier National Park in Montana evolved from National Park Service and adjacent landowner concerns over the impacts of public and private development and land use decisions. Landowners became involved in park planning and also initiated a local plan for private lands nearby. Landowners, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the county and state agencies additionally signed an agreement establishing regular meetings to address issues of concern.⁷⁷*



4. *Landowners could notify park staff of their plans to change land uses or build new structures. The National Park Service could then provide information on siting and design which would minimize negative impacts on the birthplace setting. Landowners in the setting might also collectively form a working group which meets periodically with park staff and others to address conservation and other issues.*

5. *The National Park Service is willing to assess the impacts of proposed development on the historic patterns, features and values of the birthplace setting. Through the data base established by this study, along with site specific field work, the National Park Service can provide information to landowners and local, state and federal land use permitting agencies on the effects of proposed development, construction, tree-cutting and other land use and design changes, as well as how to minimize negative effects. A formal arrangement between the National Park Service, Westmoreland County, the Commonwealth of Virginia and other agencies involved in regulating and permitting land and water uses could greatly facilitate this impact assessment process. In a similar situation involving the area around Biscayne National Park in Florida, the county, state, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and National Park Service cooperated to establish a "park protection zone" through a memorandum of agreement which makes the park a party in the review of all development applications. The county, on its own initiative, also made zoning changes to protect wetlands and limit incompatible visual intrusions which might impact the park.⁷⁸*

6. The National Park Service will provide further information to landowners, visitors, government and others on the specific conservation methods necessary for assuring the long term protection of the historic values of the birthplace setting. The matrix (Fig. 16) shows several of the techniques and programs which may be useful in conserving the setting's distinguishing patterns, their effectiveness and the process used. Discussed below are more detailed descriptions of these methods, plus an evaluation of their benefits and limitations.



LAND CONSERVATION METHODS

Conservation Easements

Through a conservation easement, landowners can sell or donate certain development rights from their property to a public agency or a non-profit land trust while retaining ownership of the property. The specific types of restrictions are written into the easement and attached to the deed. Landowners accrue several principal benefits from donating easements: 1. they are assured that their land will remain the way they want it to, 2. they retain the use rights they require for farming, residing on and selling the land, and 3. they are eligible for "charitable" deductions from state and federal income taxes. In Virginia, county governments and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation are the primary groups which accept conservation easements. In fact, one 379 acre easement immediately adjacent to the birthplace setting has already been donated to Virginia Outdoors. The Foundation can also work with landowners to develop an appropriate conservation plan which meets both landowner and conservation needs. Agreements can also be made between a landowner and a land trust, such as Virginia Outdoors, whereby the landowner would offer the trust a "right of first refusal" on the sale of any property. This would give the trust an opportunity to purchase the property, place an easement on it and resell it, or to assist the landowner in locating "a conservation buyer" who might be interested in donating an easement, following purchase.

Conservation easements are probably the most effective means of conserving the setting of Washington's birthplace. Easements can be designed specifically to maintain the historic patterns and land uses within the setting, while still keeping the property in private ownership and use.

Distinguishing Patterns of the Birthplace Setting		Conservation Methods														
		Conservation easements	Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan (1981) (including County Zoning)	County Historic District Ordinance	Increased shoreline setback requirements	Agricultural zoning	Special assessments for agricultural forest and open space real estate	Agricultural and forestal districts	LESA use in county planning	National Historic District Designation	Virginia Regulations	US Subaqueous Lands \$404 Permits	US Army Corps of Engineers Coastal Zone Management			
Overall Setting	<i>abundant open water</i>												I	R	R	R
	<i>undeveloped shorelines</i>	D			R	R		I	I				I			
	<i>agricultural uses amongst natural lands</i>	D	P		R		R	I	I	P	I					
	<i>low density of residential structures</i>	D	P		R		R	I	I		I					
Route 204 View Area	<i>narrow road with dirt/gravel driveways</i>												I			
	<i>woodland enclosure</i>	D						I	I							
	<i>small crop and garden clearings</i>															
	<i>low density of residential structures</i>	D	P		R		R	I	I		I					
	<i>open agricultural fields</i>	D	P		R		R	I	I		I					
Potomac View Area	<i>breadth of the Potomac</i>														R	R
Bridges Creek View Area	<i>natural wetlands</i>	D	P	R								I			R	R
	<i>trees along wetland edge</i>	D				R						I				
	<i>background agricultural use</i>	D	P		R		R	I	I	P	I					
Beach Road View Area	<i>agricultural use (pasture and crops)</i>	D	P		R		R	I	I	P	I					
	<i>treeline and rail fencing at park/private boundary*</i>															
	<i>woodland edge enclosing fields</i>	D						I	I		I					
	<i>low density of structures</i>	D	P		R		R	I	I		I					
	<i>rural structure design</i>	D			R						I					
Popes Creek View Area	<i>broad open undeveloped estuary</i>				R							I	R	R	R	
	<i>estuary wildlife</i>			R									R			R
	<i>natural wetlands</i>	D	P	R							I			R	R	
	<i>undeveloped shoreline</i>	D			R	R		I	I		I					
	<i>agricultural use</i>	D	P		R		R	I	I	P	I					
	<i>low density of structures</i>	D	P		R		R	I	I		I					
	<i>woodland edge enclosing fields and estuary.</i>	D						I	I		I					

* Maintained by the National Park Service

FIG 16 This table presents a number of methods for conserving the birthplace setting's distinguishing patterns. The symbols show which patterns are affected by each method, as well as the primary process by which the pattern is conserved, i.e. D = through a deed restriction, P = through local planning, R = by local, state or federal regulations, and I = by providing an incentive for conservation. The *Land Conservation Methods* section describes this information in greater detail.

Westmoreland County Comprehensive Planning

The county's current comprehensive plan was adopted in 1981.⁷⁹ Several of the objectives contained in the plan are relevant to conservation of the birthplace setting:

1. consider implementation of Virginia enabling legislation concerning historic zoning designations;
2. encourage owners of historic properties to preserve and maintain them;
3. protect valuable wetlands and marshlands;
4. preserve prime agricultural lands through provision of public sewers and water elsewhere;
5. revise county zoning to limit the broad and conflicting uses permitted in the agriculture zone;
6. discourage new land uses in areas used for, or prime for, agriculture and forestry;
7. take special steps to preserve open space and the rural character of the county.

While these objectives are not specific to the birthplace setting, their implementation could contribute significantly to its conservation.

Westmoreland County Zoning

The primary method for implementing the comprehensive plan is the county's zoning ordinance.⁸⁰ While land in and around the setting of George Washington Birthplace is zoned "agriculture" (A-1), the permitted housing density—one unit/.57 acres—is much higher than that compatible with farming and the historic landscape. Moreover, a variety of land uses incompatible with the setting are permitted or conditionally permitted in the agriculture zone (for example, golf courses, mobile homes, various commercial uses, advertising signs).

One example of using zoning to conserve lands adjacent to a national park comes from San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, in Texas. The city council worked with park staff to create and rezone a "park protection area" to help conserve the surrounding historic scene.⁸¹

Westmoreland County has adopted a "wetlands zoning ordinance", which gives important protection to wetlands within the setting (and the rest of the county). The ordinance limits uses in wetlands to water-dependent piling structures (such as piers, duck blinds and boat houses), farming and outdoor recreation activities which require no buildings. Any other use requires a permit from the County Wet-



lands Board. Conscientious regulation of wetlands activities under this ordinance should offer substantial protection to the Popes and Bridges Creeks wetlands, particularly as these wetlands are all classified as of highest environmental value^{82*}

Additional zoning measures which could contribute to conservation include the following.

Historic District Zoning

Virginia law permits counties to establish districts around sites or areas of historic importance so as to conserve their historic value. An historic district encompassing the birthplace setting would be an effective way of conserving the historic landscape. Within the district, any proposed development would be reviewed based on such factors as design, materials, siting and relationship to overall historic landscape patterns. While a number of Virginia counties have now established historic districts in both rural areas and towns, Westmoreland County has not yet done so.

Shoreline Setback Requirements

Zoning regulations which establish minimum building setbacks along rivers and creeks can be effective in helping maintain water quality. Additionally, these measures could prevent shoreline development which would be incompatible with the setting's historic land use patterns. The current 25 foot minimum setback would have to be substantially increased. In some states, 300 to 1000 foot setback is required.

Agricultural Zoning

Establishing zoning districts which support agriculture could be the county's most effective means for assuring the preservation of agricultural land. Moreover, agricultural zoning could contribute to conservation of the birthplace setting if the districts help control the subdivision of farmland for other uses and limit the density of housing development.

While the county currently does have agricultural zones encompassing the birthplace setting, the allowable density is too high for assuring the continuation of a



*Except for those at the outlet of Popes Creek which are rated somewhat lower. However about half of these are included within park boundaries.

farming landscape. Common zoning methods for maintaining viable farm sizes include: 1. large fixed minimum lot sizes, 2. “fixed area-based allocation zones”, 3. “sliding scale area-based allocation zones”.

Effective large lot agricultural zoning creates minimum lot sizes roughly equivalent to the size of functioning commercial farms in the county. In one national study of these zones, the average required lot size was 35 to 40 acres.⁸³ Fauquier County, Virginia has a sliding scale formula, covering 90% of the county, which permits an average of one building for each 25 to 30 acres in a parcel of record. However, the buildings must be clustered on small lots leaving one large lot – containing approximately 85% of the land – with a permanent conservation easement. A unique feature of this zoning is its allowance of “instant transfer of development rights”.⁸⁴ If this were adopted in Westmoreland County, it would for example, permit a birthplace setting landowner to sell his future development rights to another landowner in the county who wanted to develop his land more intensively. Development on the setting land would then be under a permanent easement.

Agricultural Preservation Measures Other Than Zoning

Several farmland and forest protection measures have been adopted in Virginia which could offer some benefits to birthplace setting conservation. One of these has been adopted in Westmoreland County.

Ordinance for Special Assessments for Agricultural, Horticultural, Forest or Open-Space Real Estate

Westmoreland County adopted this ordinance in 1983, providing an opportunity for farmers to reduce their property taxes through use-value taxation. Participation in the program is voluntary and land must be found eligible in one of the four real estate categories. The land is then taxed at its current use-value, with the difference between that and fair market value considered a deferred tax. If the landowner changes his acreage or the land use becomes non-qualifying, a roll-back tax – up to six years of deferred taxes, plus simple annual interest – becomes due. One Virginia County has attached a requirement to this program which could be very effective in helping conserve the birthplace setting if Westmoreland County followed suit: collected roll-back taxes go into a fund used exclusively for county purchase of conservation easements.

Agricultural and Forestal Districts

Under Virginia law, landowners meeting certain requirements can apply to county government for the creation of an agricultural or forestal district. Approval of the district automatically qualifies all land used for farming or forestry for use-value taxation. Additionally, the district is protected against regulations which would promote urbanization.

Virginia Land Evaluation and Site Assessment System (L E S A)

LESA is an objective system developed by the Soil Conservation Service for characterizing farmland based on soils, land capability and productivity, land use regulations, location, percentage of farmland in agriculture and other factors for an overall assessment of the land's agricultural viability. Using LESA as an evaluation tool in the county's land use planning and permitting process could help decision makers maintain the best farmlands in Westmoreland County in agricultural uses. Over half the currently active farmland within the setting is classified as prime agricultural soil by the Soil Conservation Service.⁸⁵

National Register Designation

The National Register of Historic Places is a listing of the Nation's most historic and culturally significant districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects. Listing on the National Register has three principal benefits: 1. listing can change the way a community perceives its historic resources and thus stimulate local preservation efforts, 2. federal agencies must take into account the comments of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation before proceeding with any project which may have an effect on a listed property, and 3. federal tax credits are available for rehabilitation of historic structures. George Washington Birthplace National Monument is currently listed on the Register. The entire setting of the birthplace could possibly be added as an historic district, as it appears to meet primary criteria.

Other Conservation Programs

A number of other state and federal conservation programs, mostly regulatory, already offer the birthplace setting some protection. Development in Popes and Bridges Creeks is controlled through Virginia's ownership and regulation of the creek bottoms (under 62.1-1 to 62.1-3.03 of the Virginia Code). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permitting process regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into the creeks and tidal wetlands. The Coastal Zone Man-

agement Act, implemented by several state programs in Virginia, encourages state and federal consistency in any actions or permits affecting Popes and Bridges Creeks and the Potomac.





The Future of the Birthplace Setting

After 250 years in a rapidly changing world, it is unusual for the setting of the birthplace of George Washington to have retained so much of its beauty and value. The fact that the landscape has maintained its significance is due primarily to the continued farming of the land, both by relative new-comers and by those whose ancestral roots go back to the Washingtons themselves. As shoreline development pressures increase in Westmoreland County, however, the possibilities for incompatible land uses to destroy the settings historic integrity also increase. This fragile landscape of open waters, natural wetlands, corn crops and forests can easily be altered beyond historic recognition if visual intrusions and alterations to distinguishing patterns are not protected against.

Conservation of the setting of George Washington's birth is truly an issue of choice. Together, the National Park Service, landowners, visitors, interest groups, and county and state government have a choice as to how this valuable national, regional and local resource should be maintained. This report suggests a cooperative process and a number of methods through which conservation can be approached. The National Park Service will continue to promote and facilitate this effort through discussions, meetings, information and assistance. The overall success of the conservation effort will remain, however, a matter of choice and commitment at all levels of private and public interest.

With commitment, in ten years, fifty years or perhaps another two hundred and fifty years, the setting of the birthplace of George Washington, the nation's first great leader, will still be as recognizable as it is today.



For more information about this conservation effort, please contact the Superintendent, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Washington's Birthplace, VA 22575, ☎ (804) 224 1732.

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71. Hatch, *Popes Creek Plantation*, p. 150.
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77. Personal communication from Alan O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent, Glacier National Park, Montana.
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