

The Evolution of the Concept
of
Colonial National Historical Park

A Chapter in the Story of Historical Conservation

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Colonial National Historical Park came into being as a national monument through an act of Congress, which became law on July 3, 1930, implemented by a proclamation issued by President Herbert Hoover on December 30 of the same year. It, along with George Washington Birthplace National Monument, was in the forefront of a movement spearheaded by National Park Service Director Horace M. Albright, Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development Chairman William E. Carson and Congressional Representative Louis C. Cramton of Michigan, aided by many friends and collaborators in public and private life, that took the National Park Service solidly into the "historical-site-and-structure-preservation-and-reconstruction field." Consequently Colonial, in many respects, began as a pioneering activity and a testing ground for a program that grew intensively in the 1930s and more slowly, but constantly, in the years that followed. Robert Shankland in Steve Mather and the National Parks calls it "...the boldest plunge into history, one that marked a Park Service epoch..."^{1a}

The Colonial Park idea was a new departure. Unlike earlier attempts in the historical field, especially in the East, which almost invariably

1. The Park is one of the areas in the National Park System and is administered by the Bureau of the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior for the American people. It embraces Jamestown (jointly administered with the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. The Yorktown Battlefield, the Colonial Parkway (connecting Jamestown, Williamsburg and Yorktown), and the Cape Henry Memorial.

^{1a}. Published in New York in 1951, p. 297.

gave emphasis to the military side of our history with responsibility going to the War Department, this project called on the Department of the Interior and emphasized rather the unfolding of political and social processes. This became a new challenge for the National Park Service. "This social-political-economic emphasis in [the] Colonial National Monument idea, as contrasted with its military aspects, (which it may be admitted are still very important), should receive the widest recognition. It is essential to a clear understanding of the Colonial National Monument plan."²

Although the concept that ultimately brought Colonial into existence began to take form only in the 1890's, the spirit of commemorating the events that transpired within her boundaries goes a long way back. There was a major celebration at Jamestown in 1807 and thought of one even before that date. There have been celebrations at Yorktown for almost as long a time, the first of some proportions being that in 1824 when Virginia honored the visit of Lafayette. The first of truly national scope for Yorktown came in 1881 and 26 years later came the well-known Jamestown Exposition. In the intervening years

2. Verne E. Chatelain, the National Park Service's chief historian, writing in 1933 in a memorandum entitled "The Origin of the Colonial National Monument Idea," continued ... "it is well to note that the Colonial National Monument bill constituted the first instance where the National Park Service has entered into the realm of what is, strictly speaking, the supervision of a national historic park." (National Park Service, Washington Office files.)

there were many observances of a local, or regional, nature both at Yorktown and at Jamestown.

In more recent years JAMESTOWN DAY and YORKTOWN DAY³, as May 13 and, October 19 have come to be called, have been annual events as has CAPE HENRY DAY (April 26). In 1957 Jamestown's 350th anniversary was celebrated in a year-long observance that brought special attention to all of the areas in the Park as well as Williamsburg which forms a part of the historic "Triple Shrine" linked by Colonial Parkway.

It was through national celebrations that the Park concept developed and materialized and it was in the same manner that the first land was acquired by the Federal Government for commemorative purposes at both Yorktown and Jamestown. The Yorktown Centennial brought the Yorktown Victory Monument and its grounds while the Jamestown Exposition resulted in the Tercentenary Monument and its grounds at Jamestown. The Centennial gave rise, too, to the Park idea which was pushed to consummation by the events of the Yorktown Sesquicentennial. It was another celebration, in 1957, that brought the vigor of the National Park Service's MISSION 66 program to bear on Colonial and produced a long needed, more complete, state of development. This

3. For some information on early YORKTOWN DAY observances and the evolution of the idea of the annual observance, see Sarah C. Armistead's "Some Facts Relating to the Observance of Yorktown Day at Yorktown, Va." in Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine, Vol. 84, No. 10 (October, 1930), pp. 789-91.

nationwide parks improvement plan had one of its first clear manifestations at Yorktown and Jamestown.

Those who had charge of the Yorktown Centennial Celebration in 1881 desired that the Yorktown Battlefield be made a park. American and French representatives at the celebration expressed the hope that the Moore House and farm could be preserved "as a memorial of the friendly alliance...." The Yorktown Centennial Association was careful to point out that it had purchased the 500 acres of Temple Farm (Moore House). The intent was to donate this to the United States to be made into "Lafayette Park." Funds were not forthcoming, however, and the Association lost its title to the property.

Perhaps in part due to the efforts of New Jersey Congressmen (being spurred by a March 22, 1882, joint resolution of their state legislature), on June 5, 1882, a joint resolution was introduced into the National House of Representatives calling for the "purchase and preservation of Temple Farm and the Moore House at Yorktown, Virginia...." since it was felt that they would "carry with them through all time the memories of the siege and victory by which the allied armies of France and the American Colonies secured our nation's Independence."⁴ The "farm and

4. In the main, material cited from Congressional Acts, resolutions, bills and such is drawn from copies of these documents in History of Legislation Relating to the National Park System Through the 82nd Congress: Colonial National Historical Park compiled by Edmund B. Rogers in six looseleaf volumes.

house" would be "a memorial of the friendly alliance which then existed between the people of the two nations." The bill, also, had this language of a practical nature: "...the property can at this time be secured for a nominal sum, and...the product of the farm will probably be ample to preserve and keep the buildings in repair, and [they] ...are so located as to be well adapted for government purposes on occasions of naval inspections and review on York River." The area it was specified would be known as "Lafayette Park," and be under the control of the Department of the Interior. This measure, supported by the joint resolution of the legislature of New Jersey was referred to the House Military Affairs Committee but did not move any further toward becoming law.

Actually the first Federal holding in the present park area was a fact almost two decades before this action. It was the Yorktown National Cemetery established in 1866 to accommodate the internment of deceased Union soldiers. Burials made here were largely reinterments in the period from July 13, 1866, to February 23, 1867. In the main, they were the remains of those who first were buried at White House Landing, King and Queen Courthouse, Cumberland Landing, West Point, and Warwick Courthouse, all in Virginia.

The land purchase that covered this was for an acreage of 2,721 acres bought from Frederick W. Power for \$490. on March 10, 1868, although a small addition (.192 acre) was made on February 8, 1873, by

purchase from Lob Wolf for \$100. The Cemetery, including some 2,183 interments, remained in the custody of the War Department until transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of Colonial in 1933.⁵

A Congressional measure in 1888, that failed of passage, called "for the building of a road to the national cemetery at Yorktown." This would have allowed the expenditure of \$3,000, for "building, macadamizing, or shelling," as a permanent improvement, "the public road leading from the steamboat wharves in the town of Yorktown...[to] the centennial monument [and] to the national cemetery near said town..." This measure appeared again in 1889 and 1890 but each time failed of passage. In 1892 it died in the Military Affairs Committee and was no more successful in 1893, 1894, and 1895.

The earliest Federal holding in Yorktown that looked, perhaps, toward park purposes was the Yorktown Monument to the Alliance and Victory. The grounds had been secured and the cornerstone of the monument was laid on October 18, 1881, during the centennial observance of the Siege of Yorktown, to be completed four years

5. Attachment to Regional Chief of Operations H. Reese Smith's memorandum to the Superintendent, Colonial NHP, dated June 1, 1960, on the subject of "Report on the National Cemeteries in the National Park System."

later. This gave fulfillment to the resolution of the Continental Congress dated October 29, 1781, in which a call had been made for such a commemorative shaft.

The Senate Committee on Military Affairs, which considered the bill looking toward the erection of the Monument in its report of March 16, 1880, was of the opinion that it would be "unwise to adopt a precedent" which would look to the erection by the "National Government" of commemorative monuments of "revolutionary events" believing that "as a rule, such monuments shall be erected by the states, counties, cities, towns, or communities." The committee, however, found "no difficulty in making this an exception" since "The surrender at Yorktown was the crowning success of the revolution, and its event should be commemorated by national authority." Furthermore it was the opinion of the Committee that "there is no better time than the present...to carry out the resolve of 1781 by the necessary appropriation."

It is of interest in the direction of conservation and interpretation that when the bill⁶ to carry out the resolution of 1781 reached the Senate on April 1, 1880, it was directed that the language of its title be changed from "...a monumental column at Yorktown, Virginia, and for other purposes" to "...a monumental column at Yorktown,

6. House Resolution No. 3966.

Virginia, and to stimulate historic interest in the battle-fields of the war of the Revolution."⁷

The 1781 resolution was not implemented until the centennial celebration although in 1834 the citizens of Yorktown asked for a fulfillment of the pledge. The matter was before Congress then and again in 1836 when it was pointed out that "no event in our history is more worthy of commemoration than that which crowned the American revolution with success and triumph." A new movement for the building of the Monument got underway, with considerable public support, in 1875 and 1876 and this culminated in the Centennial Celebration which featured the cornerstone laying of the new memorial. It was pronounced complete in January 1885⁸, including a granite pavement immediately enclosed with a simple iron fence. The grounds adjoining were encompassed by another fence, this of wood.

For some time an Army enlisted man was detailed as "keeper" of the Monument. Efforts looking toward the establishment of a regular position of watchman were unsuccessful as were moves to construct quarters for the purpose. The matter was before Congress on several occasions in the late 1880's. A House of Representatives bill

7. House Resolution No. 3966.

8. "Yorktown Monument to the Alliance and Victory," a mimeographed statement by Charles E. Hatch, Jr. (revision of 1959).

introduced on January 10, 1887, would have, had it passed, led to the purchase of the Nelson House at Yorktown for a sum not exceeding \$5,000 for "the use of the keeper of the Yorktown Monument."

There had been private efforts at historical markings and monumentalization prior to public efforts. One in particular seems pertinent here. It is reported that by gift John W. Davis of Richmond was instrumental in the placement of a shaft of white marble on a base of James River granite. Standing 13-feet high it carried the inscription:

"Erected the 19th day of October, 1860, by the
regimental and company officers of the Twenty-first
Regiment of Virginia militia of Gloucester County,
and of the volunteer company attached hereto, to
mark the spot of the surrender of Cornwallis' sword
on the 19th of October, 1781."

This could well have been the first Yorktown monument and is supposed to have had a short life falling victim to relic hunters in the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. All traces of it were lost.

Some decades later another shaft, crude in character, was erected near the same spot which had been selected in 1860. Its location, near the later National Cemetery, was determined, it is reported, from traces

of trees planted to mark the spot by William Nelson, son of Thomas Nelson, Jr., about 1847, and by ballast stones dating from the Lafayette visit in 1824. This, placed after the turn of the 20th Century, was the work of Mr. Shaw then Superintendent of the National Cemetery. It, too, disappeared, being dismantled, it is said, in the interest of historical accuracy some twenty years later.⁹

The Park idea of 1882, despite defeat then, remained a hope. In June 1890 an official party made up of members of Congress, representatives of the Carpenters Association of Philadelphia and others journeyed to Yorktown to inspect the completed Monument to victory and alliance. The group also took "into consideration the subject of acquiring the Moore and Nelson mansions at Yorktown with the grounds thereto attached." The committee that dealt with the matter considered that it could not "recommend too strongly the securing of this historic spot by the general government." Mention was made of the earlier New Jersey action. In October 1890 the Carpenters Company of Philadelphia fully supported this position emphasizing that: "...the Government should secure the Temple farm and the historic Moore House to be preserved and placed in charge

9. A feature story on the "Old Yorktown Monument..." by Ernest C. Pollard in Richmond Times-Dispatch, Sunday, January 11, 1931, with picture of the Shaw shaft.

of an official to take care of the property and pay proper attention to visitors." The endorsement continued with the expression that the Moore House "should be secured by the Government and opened to the public."¹⁰

In 1892 a bill similar to that of 1882 was introduced in the United States Senate having been urged by the legislatures of New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, and North Carolina as well as by the Patriotic Sons of America, the Carpenters Association of Philadelphia, and the Daughters of 1776. This measure pointed out that the terms arranged at the Moore House on October 18, 1781, "virtually constituted a deed to American independence," that the 500 acres of "Temple Farm" on which the house stood were undivided and in a single ownership and further that the "old Moore House" "stands in good state of preservation." The bill's preamble erred, however, in its assumption that it was "the headquarters of General Washington, General Lafayette, and Count de Rochambeau immediately before and during the time of Cornwallis' surrender."

The existence of the Monument and the National Cemetery in rather detached location was one of the arguments advanced to promote additional Federal holdings in the battlefield. The provision for a

10. A History of the Monument Erected by the United States Government to Commemorate the Close of the Revolutionary War at Yorktown...(Philadelphia, 1880), pp. 8-4, 23-26.

road to link Temple Farm with these sites and the Yorktown wharf was stricken from the bill which placed a monetary ceiling of \$170,000. for the Temple Farm project.

Seemingly, despite public support, this 1892 bill did not move beyond the Senate's Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds nor did an identical House version of the bill have much more success in 1893.

There appears to be no direct relationship between this and the unsuccessful House measure in 1894 to purchase the Nelson House. Some of the language of this bill, however, showed the growing awareness of the need for conservation. It spoke of the residence being "a solid brick structure...still in a good state of preservation" and closely associated with the Yorktown Battlefield, General Thomas Nelson ("one of the central figures in the final act of the drama which closed the struggle for American independence on that historic field"), the 1781 bombardment, its occupancy by British officers and its association, in 1824, with the Marquis de Lafayette. It was carefully pointed out that:

such monuments of those eventful days are fast passing away before the corroding touch of time, and it is eminently proper that they should be preserved as memorials more precious than any that art could produce and should become the common property, even

as the memories they recall are the common heritage,
of the American people.¹¹

The Temple Farm "park" idea continued alive despite the Congressional failure to act. In 1899 bills identical with those before Congress several years earlier were introduced in House and Senate as well as in the next session in 1902. But, even with the added voice of the Utah legislature, it was all to no avail at this time. It failed yet again in 1904. Perhaps drawing on latent interest, in 1912 the then active Yorktown Historical Society invited the Senate to attend the "annual" celebration of the Surrender.

The activity of the 1830's and 1890's was in the stream of a developing conscience for historical preservation at the Federal level which saw military parks established at Antietam and at Chickamauga and Chattanooga in 1890, at Shiloh in 1894, Gettysburg in 1895, and Vicksburg in 1899. An Executive Order of June 22, 1892, pursuant to an act of Congress of 1889, reserved from the public domain the "Casa Grande Ruins" in Arizona and, in 1896, the "National Cemetery of Custer's Battlefield Reservation" was proclaimed.^{11a} National

11. House Resolution No. 5546.

11a. The Ford Theater where Lincoln was assassinated was acquired by the Federal Government in 1866 although the purpose, and use, which motivated this hardly gives it a niche in the story of conservation and preservation. The Lincoln Museum was still decades away in concept and actuality.

Cemeteries had already been developed at various Civil War battlefield areas, including Yorktown, following the authorization act of July 17, 1862.

The dedication of the Soldiers National Cemetery was the occasion for Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. As a matter of fact the movement that led to Gettysburg National Military Park actually began just a few months after the battle with the formation of the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association (April 30, 1864) which was in a position in 1895 to transfer its considerable acquisitions and responsibilities (600 acres, 17 miles of roads and 320 monuments and markers) to the Federal Government. The work of the Association had been dedicated to commemorating "the great deeds of valor, endurance, and noble self sacrifice, and to perpetrate the memory of the heroes, and the signal events which render the battlegrounds illustrious."^{11b}

A full-fledged proposal for a Yorktown National Military Park reached Congress in 1921. Identical measures were introduced into House and Senate, in the former by Walter H. Newton of Minnesota and in the latter by Frank B. Kellogg of Minnesota. The stated proposal was "to commemorate the campaign and siege of Yorktown, Virginia, and to preserve the history of the conflicts and operations of the campaign on the ground where it was carried on..." This would have, if it had passed, set aside an area of some seven square miles, as bounded in

11b. Gettysburg National Military Park by Frederick Tilberg, National Park Service Historical Handbook, Series No. 9, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1950, p. 50.

the bill. The right of eminent domain would have been evoked by the Secretary of War where necessary and "voluntary conveyance" failed. Controlled leasing and occupancy would have been permitted where no question of ownership was affected. Park affairs would have been in the hands of three commissioners named by the Secretary of War. One of these would have needed to be a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and one of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution. The restoration of "forts and lines of fortification" was anticipated as well as a marking program and "restoring the field to its condition at the time of the battle..."

This measure failed of passage and was followed by one calling for an investigation of "the feasibility of establishing a national military park in and about Yorktown." Such a measure passed the House of Representatives on February 19, 1923, and went on to become law. A specific Yorktown military park bill was back in the House in 1924. This was very similar to that of 1921 although the proposed three-member commission to operate the park did not specifically require membership from any patriotic society or group. It failed of passage.

Yet another House bill to establish Yorktown National Military Park, this by Congressman S. Otis Bland on December 2, 1924, was tabled. This was a comprehensive measure that ran some 12 printed pages. It embodied the results of the study authorized by the act approved on March 2, 1923, and incorporated reduced limits and two parcels totaling

231 acres.¹² The right of condemnation where necessary was still a part of the bill, but stated efforts to work with private holders were also contemplated. It was expressly stipulated that no attempt would be made to prevent the erection and operation of the proposed Yorktown Hotel or the completion and preservation of the golf links of the Yorktown Hotel Company. This bill went to the Committee on Military Affairs where it came to rest. At the time when Mr. Bland filed this bill he also filed the first measure looking toward the Yorktown Sesquicentennial in 1931. It called for a Commission and commemoration by special postage stamps and silver 50¢ coin issues.

In 1925 a War Department report recommending the establishment of military parks throughout the country included Yorktown. This, if carried out, would have brought a park along the lines of that existing at Gettysburg.

In 1925 there was considerable interest, as reported in the Richmond Times-Dispatch on May 20, in "The national movement for the restoration and perpetuation of the battlefield of Yorktown [as] is being actively directed by three organizations [The Yorktown Trinity]: The Yorktown Historical Society, the World Forum of Freedom at Yorktown, and the Yorktown Country Club." There were

12. The commission report was made on January 14, 1924, and published as a part of the hearing on House Resolution No. 9521, 68th Congress, 1st Session.

organizational and publicity meetings as well as attempts to set up state, national, and even international groups.¹³ The activity became designated as "The Yorktown Monument" which was, also, the subject of a brochure issued by the three sponsoring Yorktown organizations from their executive offices in New York City. The Monument was dedicated to "the restoration and perpetuation of Yorktown." Its brochure related that this town "witnessed the crowning victory of the Revolutionary War...This glorious victory completed the independence of the American colonies and assured the establishment of the United States...Yorktown is a place of universal interest and eternal importance."^{13a}

The activity was not destined to marked success. Tangible evidences took the form of the long-standing frame of the never finished Yorktown Hotel ("Yorktown Manor"), of the establishment of the Yorktown Golf Course which was to endure for twenty years, and to the Yorktown Celebration on October 19, 1925. The promotional aspects of the movement earned such headlines as that in

13. Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 19, 1925.

13a. "Scrap Book: Yorktown Country Club, Yorktown, Virginia" begun by Joseph D. Evans (1924) and continued to 1926 then being pursued by H. R. Conner (photographs, newspaper clippings, correspondence, programs, advertisements), in the files of Colonial National Historical Park, Yorktown, Va.

the Baltimore Sun on October 31, 1926--"Historic Yorktown Millionaire Playground." The three sponsoring organizations did not long survive.¹⁴

The still unsuccessful Yorktown park bill was introduced in somewhat altered form early in the 1st Session of the 69th Congress (December 7, 1925) by Mr. Walter H. Newton of Minnesota. Two months later Mr. Bland was back again with his bill but it failed again as did that of Mr. Newton. Undaunted, however, Mr. Bland was back on January 27, 1927, with a new bill for a new approach. This time he wanted a grant of authority to "authorize the location of historic

14. As reported in the Richmond News Leader, May 20, 1925:

The function of the Yorktown Historical Society is to interpret and disseminate the facts of history associated with Yorktown; and to preserve and universalize the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity vouchsafed to all mankind through the achievement of the independence of America.

The function of the World Forum of Freedom is to provide at Yorktown a world assembly, having deliberate, consultative and advisory powers. Its purpose is the discussion and consideration of economic, educational, historical and political problems; its object is the development of national understanding and international good will; its mission is the fostering of the spirit of liberty, the advancement of the cause of freedom, and the promotion of human welfare throughout the world.

The function of the Yorktown Country Club is to create a living memorial to the Revolutionary patriots who fought for American independence at Yorktown; to beautify and maintain the historic battlefield of Yorktown in perpetuity; to provide suitable accommodations and pleasing recreations for patriotic visitors to this national shrine, and to constitute a vitally interested membership as hereditary custodians of Yorktown for posterity.

points at Yorktown, Virginia, and for a survey with a view to the establishment of a national military park at the said place." On the same day in another bill he proposed the acquisition of the Moore House and certain other property at Yorktown and the establishment of the same as a national monument. This he followed in two weeks with an amended bill of like intent. A stated reason was that the property was in imminent danger of getting into the wrong hands as it was "now subject to sale, and may be sold at any time" and it rightfully "should be owned, preserved, marked, and cared for by the United States as a national monument." When this measure failed, Mr. Bland brought it back again on January 26, 1928, adding that the property at any time "may be destroyed or materially changed." But success was not to reward this effort either.

Actually the property was on the verge of being made into a subdivision and the Moore House, itself, appeared to be in danger of demolition. Fortunately at this juncture, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., stepped in and purchased the historic house and a small area about it in order that it might be preserved for any such action as Congress might take.

The year 1928 was, however, a successful year for the legislation authorizing the Sesquicentennial Celebration. A commission to formulate and submit plans was approved by joint resolution of House and Senate. In the meanwhile late in 1929 the War Department reported

on its study of the Nation's battlefields undertaken as the result of an act of 1926 calling for a survey for "commemorative purposes."^{14a} This was a survey of those areas not yet set aside or treated commemoratively and a classification system had been worked out previously, in 1925, by the Army War College. This had stemmed from a rash of measures to commemorate battlefields with more than twenty bills being introduced in Congress from 1923 to 1925 calling for the establishment of national military parks. Those in Class I (there were four classes) were deemed "worthy of commemoration by the establishment of national military parks." The report listed two such areas in this class, Saratoga and Yorktown. In the case of Yorktown it was pointed out that the next step was the appropriation of \$6,000 to make the "survey to determine the cost of establishing a national military park...."¹⁵ Legislation to implement this was introduced into the House by Representative Lister Hill of Alabama in April 1930. This, however, in the case of Yorktown, was destined to give way to other measures pending or in the making. When the Secretary of War made another report on the battlefield studies in December 1930 there was reference to the now approved Colonial measure and it was stated that: "No

14a. It is of particular note that Lt. Col. Howard L. Landers of the Historical Section of the Army War College was detailed in August 1927 to carry on studies and investigations relative to the War Department's responsibilities under this 1926 act. It was Landers who authored the volume, The Virginia Campaign and the Blockade and Siege of Yorktown 1781, published by the Government Printing Office in 1931 as Senate Document No. 273, 71st Congress, 3rd Session.

15. Senate Document No. 46, 71st Congress, 2nd Session.

action would be taken by the War Department to commemorate the Battle of Yorktown, so long as the question of including the battleground in the Colonial National Monument is being investigated by the Interior Department."

The Yorktown element of the Colonial idea was the first in the field springing out of the Centennial observance in 1881. This is rather interesting since in point of time, and in thought at least, it was within a decade of the Yellowstone Park idea. Interest in the Jamestown element of the Colonial idea came to the fore as thoughts turned to observance of the 300th anniversary of the first permanent English settlement there in 1607.

On March 5, 1902, a measure was introduced into the House of Representatives that called for the acquisition of Jamestown Island "and appurtenances" and the creation of "The Jamestown National Park" to be placed "under the control of the Secretary of the Interior." Already the United States had been instrumental in the construction of a substantial seawall along the James River edge of the Island about which Congress directed an accounting in 1904. The provisions of the bill implied that the area could be operated by a "reputable historic, preservation, or archaeological organization" if properly limited or controlled. It recognized the need for "examinations, excavations, and the gathering of objects of interest." It, also, recognized the need for construction of facilities for "the accommodation of the public" and envisioned an expenditure that could reach \$300,000.

The 300th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, it was pointed out, would be observed in 1907 with "living ceremonies" which would be "under the lead of the State of Virginia." All of this was right and proper since, it was pointed out, "the first permanent English settlement within the boundaries of the present United States of America was made on the peninsula of Jamestown..." Certainly "...the birthplace of Anglo-Saxon civilization in the western world should be taken into the care of the National Government, saved from destruction, and thrown open to the American people as a memorial of one of the most signal events in the history of the world...." Moreover it "was the scene of important operations during both the Revolutionary and the Civil Wars, of which latter conspicuous fortifications still remain..." Time was of some urgency, too, since "the complete obliteration of this historic site is threatened by the elements" which already had "converted the peninsula into an island" and buried many of the original foundations under the encroaching river.¹⁶

This bill went to the Committee on Military Affairs and seemingly died there. It was, in its original form, introduced in the House again in April 1904 to suffer, the second time, a same fate. A 1907 celebration measure had more success and this passed on March 3, 1905. The act

16. H.R. No. 12,142.

provided for an observance of the birth of the American nation by holding an international naval, marine, and military celebration in the vicinity of Jamestown on the waters of the Hampton Roads. It also called for the appropriation of:

Fifty thousand dollars, for a permanent monument upon the place of the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, and in commemoration thereof; the sale of site and design to be selected by the Commission thereafter named, subject to the approval of the President, Provided, that the site be donated to the United States by proper deed.

This deed, a donation by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, was forthcoming on July 25, 1906, to the extent of 1.26 acres. This was the first Federal holding at Jamestown in the area now embraced in the Park. It was deeded to the United States of America as a site on which "to erect, keep and maintain...a monument commemorative of the birth of the American Nation...."¹⁷ The monument, the Jamestown Tercentenary Monument, was erected in 1907, the anniversary year. This year, too, was the occasion for construction of the federally financed Rest (Relic) House^{17a} in the Association's Jamestown grounds, a convenience for expected travelers.

On May 28, 1906, a special bill introduced in the House called for the sum of \$10,000 to aid in the erection of a memorial monument at Jamestown by the Pocahontas Memorial Association of the United

17. From the deed, a copy in the files of Colonial NHP.

17a. The Relic House was renovated for assembly purposes and renamed the Thomas Dale Meeting House in 1963 by the Association.

States, a national organization created in 1906 for the specific purpose of erecting an appropriate memorial to Pocahontas. Guarantees would need to be arranged, however, before any funds could be turned over to the Association treasurer, Charles C. Glover. This was the first of a number of such measures for this purpose, none of which succeeded. In 1906 the objective was the erection of the memorial "in connection with the 1907 exposition" then being planned.

This proposal, in the same form, was introduced again in January 1907 and a month later its form was changed to be a memorial commemorating "the preservation of the first permanent settlement of the English-speaking people on the Western Hemisphere, at Jamestown...through the gracious intervention of the Indian princess Pocahontas." The thought now was to erect it "on the grounds of the forthcoming Jamestown Exposition" by May 1. Two weeks later, however, a new bill was introduced to place it at Jamestown rather than on the exposition grounds. All of these were House bills that went to the Committee on the Library and seemingly were laid to rest there.

In 1908 two bills were introduced in the Senate for the general purpose of aiding in erecting the Pocahontas Monument but now in the amount of \$5,000 and one did pass on May 7, 1908. The artist, William Ordway Partridge had completed his work, but only half of his \$10,000 was in sight. This measure was on a matching funds basis and placed all "responsibility for the care, keeping, and preserving" of

the monument on the Pocahontas Memorial Association. The three House versions of this measure in early 1908 were not as successful. This was as close to passage as the measure came despite a number of later tries from 1909 to 1917. In the 1909 and 1911 bills there was reference to "completing" the monument and there was the feature of matching funds.

In 1911, a bill calling for the establishment of "The Jamestown National Park," almost identical with earlier bills, was before Congress. It pointed to the fact that such action was necessary since "knowledge of the history and respect of the tradition of a Nation by its citizens conduce to love of country, civic pride, and loyalty to established institutions." This new effort also died in Committee.

From 1912 to 1917 the Senate several times considered a measure designed to provide "an iron picket fence around the Jamestown Monument" as proposed by the Treasury Department, in whose custody it was, but this effort never succeeded in passage. The matter of Jamestown, its preservation and message, continued, too, from time to time to be called to the attention of Congress as when on July 29, 1919, Congressman S. Otis Bland introduced a House Resolution calling for that body, when it adjourned on the next day, July 30, to do so "in commemoration of the three-hundredth anniversary of the first session of the first

legislative assembly which ever met in America," this being "jointly considered as one of the great events in the history of this Republic and the world."

Although not successful there was a new approach to the Jamestown park idea in 1921. A joint resolution was entered in the House and Senate calling upon the Secretary of the Treasury to name a commission to investigate and appraise the value of Jamestown Island and to make recommendations relative to its purchase since it was where the first permanent English settlement in America had been made and the place where "Anglo-Saxon institutions...first obtained their permanent foothold in the New World." Besides "this historic spot not only possesses a unique interest in the sacred tradition of this Nation, endeared alike to the North and South, East and West, but also recalls in a singular manner the common ties of blood and language which unite us with the mother country, and which have been reunited and strengthened by more than a century of unbroken peace" It did not seem right to allow the continued exposure of the area "to the vicissitudes of private ownership, the temptations of money-making enterprises, and the physical destructions by the erosive agencies of nature."

In 1922 the first of several measures was introduced calling for the construction of a "public wharf at Jamestown" and the "laying of a

granolithic walk" from the wharf to the monument. This effort persisted almost annually until 1927.

Even though the Colonial Park idea in 1930 broke new ground in concept it built on the considerable thinking that had preceded it in regard to Jamestown and to Yorktown and even in regard to the connecting roadways that the Cramton measure specified. The unique and close relationship of Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown, so fully stated in 1930, was as a matter of record recognized as early as 1909 when the Common Council of the City of Williamsburg, on January 9 of that year, moved that action be taken to connect them by a roadway. The council resolved that Virginia's Senators and the district's representative in Congress "be requested to secure an appropriation for the building of a macadamized road connecting the historic places of Jamestown on the James River and Yorktown on the York river, a distance of about 20 miles." The Councilmen felt with "confidence that the American people...would justify this expenditure as a patriotic duty, thus connecting the first permanent settlement of the English speaking people on this continent and the birthplace of American liberty."

Evidently rather prompt action followed this resolution for on February 27 the York County Supervisors "unqualifiedly endorsed" a bill which Representative John Lamb had introduced late on January 25 requesting a federal appropriation of \$100,000 to build a military

road from Yorktown to Jamestown. It was early in 1910 that the James City County Supervisors endorsed the project. The occasion was the expected visit of a Congressional Committee. It was planned that the Committee would come down in mid-May "for the purpose of viewing the public roads from Jamestown to Yorktown, looking to the building and establishing of a military road between said points."

The Lamb measure of 1909 called for the Secretary of War "to construct a suitable military road, with necessary bridges, out of such materials as may be found most suitable and best fitted." The road was to follow "the most convenient and feasible route between said points." The Office of Public Roads of the Department of Agriculture would be delegated the survey and construction supervision responsibilities. Consent of local governing bodies would be required prior to construction and "free offers of all necessary rights of way" would be encouraged. The bill went to the Committee on Military Affairs where it seemingly found a home and a second introduction of the measure on March 27 had the same fate.

It would appear that little came of this, or of the next action by the James City Supervisors. On November 1, 1910, they appointed D. Warren Marston, one of their own number, to meet with representatives from Williamsburg and York County "to formulate and further the project of building a military road from Jamestown to Yorktown."

The Congressional bill of 1911 accomplished no more.¹⁸ These actions, however, seem to constitute the inception of the idea that became the Colonial Parkway when it was proposed 20 years later. Thus, it came out of the area--a product of the local people.

The Colonial park idea, calling for the preservation of Jamestown and Yorktown along with Williamsburg and the recognition of the continuity and interlocking nature of their messages, developed into full maturity in the late 1920's. In its adopted form it seemingly grew independently from two directions at about the same time both perhaps sparked by numerous earlier proposals. Consequently the credit and honor for originating the concept that succeeded is shared between William E. Carson, who at the time was Chairman of the Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development, and Kenneth Chorley, then heading the Williamsburg Holding Corporation, the organizational forerunner of Colonial Williamsburg.

Both men were close to the scene and in a position to be aware of the conditions in the Jamestown-Yorktown area which threatened to destroy existing irreplaceable historic values. They were able to give concrete expression to the general concern and awareness that various

18. Fred Frechette, "Motorists on Parkway Will Travel on Dream" in Richmond Times-Dispatch, September 30, 1956, Section D, p. 1. There was a similar story in the Newport News Daily Press on the same date. The writer, also, had access to Mr. Frechette's notes.

individuals and patriotic organizations had evinced for the area for some time. "Equally plain ~~/to them/~~ were the chances of commercial exploitation and virtual destruction of its original features. Something needed to be done and that without delay."¹⁹

On July 13, 1928, Mr. Chorley visited Yellowstone National Park where, at Old Faithful, he saw Horace Albright who was Superintendent of that area and soon (January 12, 1929) to become Director of the National Park Service. They talked in detail of Jamestown, Yorktown, and Williamsburg (particularly of the activities of the Williamsburg Holding Corporation) at this meeting and on several other occasions in the immediate months which followed. Mr. Albright later commented that: "It appears that sometime during these visits with Mr. Chorley I talked to him about the idea which grew into the Colonial National Monument plan."

Consequently when Mr. Albright received William E. Carson's memorandum of March 26, 1929, carefully stating the Colonial concept, he viewed it as a significant and "curious coincidence" since "Mr. Carson's suggestions were remarkably like Mr. Chorley's, which I already had in my possession...."

The most important effect of the Carson memorandum was that it set everything in motion. I had already given

19. Colonial National Monument, Historical Notes, I, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb., 1932), pp. 2-3.

some thought to the suggestions of Mr. Chorley. Therefore, when Mr. Carson submitted his excellent suggestions, I immediately took the matter up with the Secretary of the Interior, Ray Lyman Wilbur⁷, whose reaction was most favorable.²⁰

The idea had been some time in the making with Mr. Carson, whose Virginia Commission had among its responsibilities its charge to preserve Virginia history. It was in January 1928 that a delegation from the Peninsula, headed by Senator Saxon W. Holt and Assemblyman Ashton Dovell, appeared before the Commission on Conservation and Development to urge the State to acquire Jamestown Island. This led to a consideration of the advisability of making a park of Jamestown Island. Inevitably this became involved in the thinking of preservation needs at Yorktown and in Williamsburg.

These three famous shrines, Jamestown, Williamsburg and Yorktown, were in men's minds as places that should be parked for the benefit of future generations, but wholly unconnected. On the details there was general disagreement. Most people thought that the state should own one, the United States another, the Rockefeller Foundation the third.²¹

20. A letter from Albright to H. J. Eckenrode dated January 13, 1933, in NPS Washington Office files.

21. "Origin of the Colonial National Monument," a manuscript paper prepared by H. J. Eckenrode, presumably in 1933; a copy is in NPS Washington Office files.

Coordination and definition was needed and at this juncture the Carson proposal reached Mr. Albright. It called for "an historic national park in Virginia, including Jamestown, Williamsburg and Yorktown."

He pointed out that:

These three areas, which are closely adjacent, if combined in an historic national park or state and national park, would present to the nation and to the world many of the most salient facts associated with the birth of the nation and the birth of the nation's liberties....

How wonderful if the National Government would sense this opportunity and conserve the values contributed from the past through the present to the future. It would appeal not alone to all liberty loving Americans, but to those who throughout the world love liberty and the shrines of liberty and the traditions by which the early history of our country is enriched.

If the opportunity which now faces us in view of the events which will be recalled in 1932 is not taken advantage of, we will then have lost the psychological advantage and incentive which comes only once in the century of a Nation's life.

Mr. Carson was well aware of the progress being made in Williamsburg by Mr. John D. Rockefeller and he wrote that: "This work will cost many millions of dollars. It is one of the most spectacular, extensive, and interesting pieces of restoration that has ever been attempted."²²

Mr. Carson's proposal reached very receptive ears in the person of Mr. Albright who was quite willing to "think this over" and to give his "reactions." He replied on March 27 that "I am delighted with your letter about the Jamestown, Williamsburg, Yorktown proposition. I am certainly going to show it to the Secretary at the first opportunity." On the same day Mr. Albright wrote Mr. Chorley commenting that Mr. Carson "makes an almost identical proposition [as yours], except that he is not bringing in the idea of connecting roads or parkways."²³

Having received encouragement, Mr. Carson went to work with vigor as did Mr. Albright. There were some formidable hurdles. State and federal authorities needed to be won over as did Congress and the Virginia Assembly. There was, also, the matter of inertia in many quarters. Mr. Albright found Secretary of the Interior Wilbur receptive and he gave the idea his sanction. He was

22. "Origin of the Colonial National Monument," pp. 4-7.

23. Letter of Director Horace M. Albright to Mr. Kenneth Chorley, a copy is in NPS Washington Office files.

persuasive and helpful, too, in getting the support of President Herbert Hoover. Mr. Carson proved equally successful in enlisting the aid of then Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd as well as Governor-Elect John Garland Pollard.

There was more work to be done, however, and in November 1929 Mr. Carson promoted a visit of congressmen and others to the area to give them a firsthand view of the possibilities. This group, with Dr. H. J. Eckenrode and Col. Bryan Conrad of the Virginia Commission acting as "guides and advisors," included Representative Louis C. Cramton of Michigan who was Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Appropriations. During this visit Mr. Cramton was completely won to the idea which he described as "a memorial to the Colonial period." His own thought about what became the Colonial Parkway was: "I would like the visitor to Jamestown to be able to drive on to Williamsburg and to Yorktown, without the impression of the early days being driven from his mind by a succession of hot dog stands and tire signs, etc., along the highways and hence would like a new highway as a part of the new park, on a strip sufficiently wide to protect it by trees shutting out all conflicting modern development..."

Soon after return to Washington, Mr. Cramton called a meeting in his office and Messrs. Carson, Chorley, and Albright were there. With the technical aid of the Service's Arthur Demaray and George A. Moskey the frame of a bill was drafted and later tested, by Mr. Carson, among

various Virginia leaders and newspaper editors. After persuasion that it would give the bill a more national appeal and with the support of Virginia Congressmen assured, Mr. Cramton agreed to introduce the bill in Congress which he did in the House of Representatives on January 10, 1930. Congressmen Schuyler Otis Bland and Andrew J. Montague of Virginia's First and Third Districts, in which the Park would lay, endorsed this procedure. The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Lands and in turn to the Department of the Interior. All reports were favorable.

Now some opposition began to crystalize, particularly in the Williamsburg area. There was concern for Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities property at Jamestown. There was concern, too, over the possible removal of taxable property in large amounts by the Federal Government in the City of Williamsburg. Mr. Cramton and others sought to deal with these objections, ably and vigorously voiced by Judge Frank Armistead and Mr. Channing M. Hall particularly in a public meeting on April 21, 1930. Mr. W. A. Bozarth of Williamsburg presented a petition in favor of the park bill which was strongly supported in the presentation by Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin, a loyal supporter of the project from its beginning and one who did important work in the "molding of public opinion" and in keeping alive

"the true conception of the program." His ideas, too, "probably caused Mr. [John D.] Rockefeller's support at Williamsburg in the first instance."²⁴

The matter of the "Williamsburg revolt" was unresolved, however, and a public hearing in Washington was necessary. This was on May 6, 1930, and a compromise amendment on the matter of land and taxes, proposed by Mr. Cramton, proved the solution. The compromise language was:

That condemnation proceedings herein provided for shall not be had, exercised, or resorted to as to lands belonging to the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities... or to the City of Williamsburg, Virginia, or to any other lands in said city except such lands as may be required for a right of way not exceeding two hundred feet in width through the City of Williamsburg to connect with highways or parkways leading from Williamsburg to Jamestown and to Yorktown.

In addition there was a special clause in the event that lands and/or buildings, structures, and such in Williamsburg were donated to the United States and became revenue producing. In this case the locality would benefit.

The next day Mr. Cramton introduced a revision of his original bill in the House. It now had the full support of Mr. Hall and Congressman Montague. The bill was introduced in the Senate by Senator Gerald P. Nye

24. Quoted in the previously cited letter from Albright to Eckenrode, January 13, 1933.

of North Dakota on June 2 and was favorably reported on June 5. The favorable attitude of the House and Senate was in part the work of Mr. Carson who arranged to take Congressional Committee groups to see the area. In football parlance Carson ran the interference and Cramton carried the ball.

The passage of the bill was swift and it had the expressed approval of a joint resolution of the General Assembly of Virginia, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the American Civic Association, and the strong urging of The United States Yorktown Sesquicentennial Commission. It cleared the House on June 9 and the Senate on June 11. It emerged from conference and was cleared by the Senate on June 26 and the House the next day to become law with Presidential approval on July 3 carrying the limitations on area and cost written in by the Senate. The cost limitation was due to be lifted within a year and the acreage limit was raised substantially.

In all of this Mr. Cramton played a leading role and he was quick to comment on the valuable part played by William E. Carson. He later wrote of this:

While many must contribute in the advancement of any such cause, it is to Wm. E. Carson,...more than to any other person, that credit for this providential development at the right time is due. His enthusiasm and high pressure support of the monument made possible the success that

otherwise would have been entirely impossible in securing the original legislation, working out the necessary surveys that made possible the early issuance of the Presidential Proclamation on December 30, 1930, and in securing the important amendatory legislation.²⁵

Colonial National Historical Park,²⁶ was successfully launched and its dedication was a feature of the Sesquicentennial of the Siege of Yorktown in 1931. Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior, in his dedicatory address²⁷ at Yorktown on October 16 of that year concluded with these remarks:

In setting aside these national shrines for the benefit, enjoyment, and satisfaction of all of us, we can well thank Virginia for her great contributions to our national life. Virginia has cherished these sacred memorials with their stimulating associations, and she may well feel that "what is hers within this area is also a national inheritance, a national trust, and a national responsibility..." May these choice spots ever remain the cherished treasures of a free,

25. Quoted in the previously cited letter from Albright to Eckenrode, January 13, 1933.

26. Established as Colonial National Monument the designation was changed to Colonial National Historical Park by act of Congress in 1936.

27. Dedication of the Colonial National Monument: Address by Dr. LYMAN Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior, At the Dedication of the Colonial National Monument at Yorktown, Virginia, October 16, 1931. Washington, 1932 (Senate Document No. 19, 72nd Congress, 1st Session).

wholesome, self-governing people, proud of its early origins and
of the vision, steadfastness, and valor of our first leaders.