

THE WILMINGTON GAZETTE. GEN. GEO. WASHINGTON.

Virginia, Fairfax, ass. clerk of Fairfax County Court, do certify, that the subsequent copy of the last Will & Testament of George Washington, deceased, late President of the United States of America, with the Schedule annexed, is a true copy from the original, recorded in my office.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, this 23d day of January, 1800. GEORGE DENEALE, c. f. c.

In the name of God, Amen.

I GEORGE WASHINGTON, of Mount Vernon, a citizen of the United States, and lately President of the same, DO make, ordain, and declare this instrument which is written with my own hand, and every page thereof subscribed with my own name, to be my last WILL and TESTAMENT, revoking all others.—Imprimis. All my debts, of which there are but few, and none of magnitude, are to be punctually and speedily paid, and the legacies herein or bequeathed, are to be paid as soon as circumstances will permit, and in the manner directed.

Item. To my dearly beloved wife Martha Washington, I give and bequeath the use, profit, and benefit of my whole estate, real and personal, for the term of her natural life, except such parts thereof as are specially disposed of hereafter.—My improved lot in the town of Alexandria, situated on Pitt and Cameron streets, I give to her and her heirs for ever; as I also do my household and kitchen furniture of every sort and kind with the liquors and groceries which may be on hand at the time of my decease, to be used and disposed of as she may think proper.

Item. Upon the decease of my wife, it is my will and desire, that all the slaves which I hold in my own right shall receive their freedom. To emancipate them during her life, would though earnestly wished by me, be attended with such insuperable difficulties on account of their intermixture by marriages with the dower negroes, as to excite the most painful sensations, if not disagreeable consequences from the latter while both descriptions are in the occupancy of the same proprietor; it not being in my power, under the tenure by which the dower negroes are held, to manumit them. And whereas, among those who will receive freedom according to this devise, there may be some who from old age or bodily infirmities, and others who, on account of their infancy, that will be unable to support themselves, it is my will and desire that all who come under the first and second description, shall be comfortably clothed and fed by my heirs while they live; and that such of the latter description as have no parents living, or if living, are unable or unwilling to provide for them, shall be bound by the court until they shall arrive at the age of twenty-five years; and in cases where no record can be produced whereby their age can be ascertained, the judgment of the court upon its own view of the subject, shall be adequate and final. The negroes thus bound, are (by their masters or mistresses) to be taught to read and write and to be brought up to some useful occupation, agreeably to the laws of the commonwealth of Virginia, providing for the support of orphan and other poor children.—And I do hereby expressly forbid the sale or transportation out of the said commonwealth of any slave I may be possessed of under any pretence whatsoever. And I do moreover most pointedly and most solemnly enjoin it upon my executors hereafter named or the survivor of them, to see that this clause respecting slaves and every part thereof, be religiously fulfilled at the epoch at which it is directed to take place, without evasion, neglect or delay, after the crops which may then be on the ground are harvested, particularly as it respects the aged and infirm; seeing that a regular and permanent fund be established, for their support as long as there are subjects requiring it; not trusting to the uncertain provision to be made by individuals.—And to my mulatto man William, (calling himself William Lee) I give immediate freedom, or if he should prefer it (on account of the accidents which have befallen him and which have rendered him incapable of walking or of any active employment) to remain in the situation he now is, it shall be optional in him to do so; in either case, however, I allow him an annuity of thirty dollars during his natural life, which will be independent of the victuals and cloaths he has been accustomed to receive, if he chuses the last alternative; but in full with his freedom, if he prefers the first: and this I give him as a testimony of my sense of his attachment to me, and for his faithful services during the revolutionary war.

Item. To the trustees (governors, or by whatsoever other name they may be designated) of the academy, in the town of Alexandria, I give and bequeath in trust, four thousand dollars, or, in other words, twenty of the shares which I hold in the bank of Alexandria, towards the support of a free school, established at, and annexed to the said academy, for the purpose of educating such orphan children, or the children of such other poor and indigent persons as are unable to accomplish it with their own means and who in the judgment of the trustees of the said seminary, are best entitled to the benefit of this donation.—The aforesaid twenty shares I give and bequeath in perpetuity; the dividends only of which are to be drawn for, and applied by the said trustees, for the time being, for the uses above mentioned; the stock to remain entire and untouched, unless indication of failure of the said bank should be so apparent, or a discontinuance thereof, should render a removal of this fund necessary. In either of these cases, the amount of the stock here devised is to be vested in some other bank, or public institution, whereby the interest may with regularity and certainty be drawn, and applied as above: And, to prevent misconception, my meaning is, and is hereby declared to be, that these twenty shares, are in lieu of and not in addition to, the thousand pounds given by the missive letter some years ago; in consequence whereof, an annuity of fifty pounds has since been paid towards the support of this institution.

Item. Whereas by a law of the commonwealth of Virginia, enacted in the year 1785, the legislature thereof was pleased (as an evidence of its approbation of the services I had rendered the public during the revolution, and partly, I believe, in consideration of my having suggested the advantages which the community would derive from the extension of its inland navigation under legislative patronage) to present me with one hundred shares of one hundred dollars each, in the incorporated company established for the purpose of extending the navigation at James River, from tide water to the mountains;—and also with fifty shares of one hundred pounds sterling each, in the corporation of another company likewise established for the similar purpose of opening the navigation of the river Potomac from tide water to Fort Cumberland; the acceptance of which, although the offer was highly honorable and grateful to my feelings, was refused as inconsistent with a principle which I had adopted, and had never departed from, namely, not to receive pecuniary compensation, for any services I could render my country in its arduous struggle with Great Britain for its rights; and because I had evaded similar propositions from other States in the Union. Adding to this refusal, however, an intimation that, if it should be the pleasure of the legislature to permit me to appropriate the said shares to public uses, I would receive them on those terms with due sensibility; and this it having contented to, in flattering terms, as will appear by a subsequent law, and sundry resolutions, in the most ample and honorable manner. I proceed after this recital, for the more correct understanding of the case, to declare,—that as it has always been a source of serious regret with me to see the youth of the United States sent to foreign countries for the purpose of education, often before their minds were formed, or they had imbibed any adequate ideas of the happiness of their own contracting too frequently, not only habits of dissipation and extravagance, but principles antiently to republican

government, and to the true and genuine liberties of mankind; which, thereafter, are rarely overcome.—For these reasons, it has been my ardent wish to see a plan devised on a liberal scale, which would have a tendency to spread systematic ideas thro' all parts of this rising empire, thereby to do away local attachment and State prejudices, as far as the nature of things would, or indeed ought to admit, from our national councils. Looking anxiously forward to the accomplishment of so desirable an object as this is (in my estimation) my mind has not been able to contemplate any plan more likely to effect the measure than the establishment of an UNIVERSITY in a central part of the United States, to which the youths of fortune and talents from all parts thereof, might be sent for the completion of their education in all the branches of polite literature; in arts and sciences, in acquiring knowledge in the principles of politics and good government, and (as a matter of finite importance in my judgment), by associating with each other and forming friendships in juvenile years, be enabled to free themselves in a proper degree, from these local prejudices and habitual jealousies which have just been mentioned; and which, when carried to excess, are never failing sources of disquietude to the public mind, and pregnant of mischievous consequences to this country—under these impressions, so fully dilated.

Item. I give and bequeath in perpetuity, the fifty shares which I hold in the Potomac company (under the aforesaid acts of the legislature of Virginia) towards the endowment of an UNIVERSITY to be established within the limits of the District of Columbia, under the auspices of the general government, should it incline to extend a fostering hand towards it; and until such seminary is established, and the funds arising on these shares shall be required for its support, my further will and desire is, that the profit accruing therefrom shall, whenever the dividends are made, be laid out in purchasing stock in the bank of Columbia, or some other bank, at the discretion of my executors, or by the treasurer of the United States, for the time being, under the direction of some honorable body should patronize the measure, and the dividends proceeding from the purchase of such stock, and so on, until a sum adequate to the accomplishment of the object, is obtained; of which I have not the smallest doubt before many years pass away, even if no aid or encouragement is given by legislative authority, or from any other source.

Item. The hundred shares which I hold in the James River company, I have given, and now confirm in perpetuity, to and for the use and benefit of Liberty Hall Academy, in the county of Rockbridge, in the commonwealth of Virginia.

Item. I release, exonerate and discharge the estate of my deceased brother, Samuel Washington, from the payment of the money which is due to me for the land I sold to Philip Pendleton, (lying in the county of Berkeley) who assigned the same to him, the said Samuel, who, by agreement, was to pay me therefor: And whereas, by some contract, (the purport of which was never communicated to me) between the said Samuel and his son, Thornton Washington, the latter became possessed of the aforesaid land, without any conveyance having passed from me, either to the said Pendleton, the said Samuel, or the said Thornton, and without any consideration having been made, by which neglect neither the legal or equitable title has been alienated; it rests therefore with me to declare my intentions concerning the premises and these are to give and bequeath the said land to whomsoever the said Thornton Washington (who is also dead) devised the same, or to his heirs forever, if he died intestate; exonerating the estate of the said Thornton, equally with that of the said Samuel, from payment of the purchase money, which, with interest, agreeably to the original contract with the said Pendleton, would amount to more than a thousand pounds: And whereas, two other sons of my said deceased brother Samuel, namely, George Steptoe Washington, and Lawrence Augustine Washington, were, by the decease of those to whose care they were committed, brought under my

protection, and in consequence have occasioned advances on my part for their education at college and other schools, for their board, clothing and other incidental expenses, to the amount of nearly five thousand dollars over and above the sums furnished by their estate, which sum it may be inconvenient for them or their father's estate to refund—I do, for these reasons, acquit them, and the said estate from the payment thereof—my attention being that all accounts between them me, and their father's estate and me, shall stand balanced.

Item. The balance due to me from the estate of Bartholomew Dandridge, dec. (my wife's brother) and which amounted, on the first day of October, 1795, to four hundred and twenty-five pounds (as will appear by an account rendered by his deceased son, John Dandridge, who was the acting executor of his father's will) I release and acquit from the payment thereof; and the negroes (then thirty three in number) formerly belonging to the said estate, who were taken in execution, sold and purchased in on my account, in the year (blank) and ever since have remained in the possession, and to the use of Mary, widow of the said Bartholomew Dandridge, with their increase, it is my Will and desire shall continue and be in her possession, without paying hire, or making compensation for the same, for the time past or to come—during her natural life; at the expiration of which, I direct that all of them, who are forty years old and upwards, shall receive their freedom; all under that age and above sixteen, shall serve seven years, and no longer; and all under sixteen years shall serve until they are twenty-five years of age, and then be free.—And to avoid disputes respecting the ages of any of these negroes, they are to be taken into the court of the county in which they reside, and the judgment thereof, in this relation, shall be final, and record thereof made, which may be adduced as evidence at any time thereafter, if disputes should arise concerning the same.—And I further direct, that the heirs of the said Bartholomew Dandridge shall, equally share the benefits arising from the services of the said negroes, according to the tenor of this devise, upon the decease of their mother.

Item. If Charles Carter, who intermarried with my niece Betty Lewis, is not sufficiently secured in the title to the lots he had of me, in the town of Frederickburg, it is my Will and Desire that my executors shall make such conveyances of them, as the law requires, to render it perfect.

Item. To my nephew William Augustine Washington, and to his heirs, (if he should conceive them to be objects worth prosecuting) a lot in the town of Manchester, (opposite to Richmond) No. 265, drawn on my sole account, and also the tenth of one or two hundred acre lots, and two or three half acre lots, in the city and vicinity of Richmond, drawn in partnership with nine others, all in the lottery of the deceased William Byrd, are given, as is also a lot which I purchased of John Hood, conveyed by William Willie and Samuel Gordon, trustees of the said John Hood, numbered 139, in the town of Edinburgh, in the county of Prince George State of Virginia.

Item. To my nephew, Bushrod Washington, I give and bequeath all the papers in my possession, which relate to my civil and military administration of the affairs of this country. I leave to him also such of my private papers as are worth preserving; and at the decease of my wife; and before, if she is not inclined to retain them, I give and bequeath my library of books and pamphlets of every kind.

Item. Having sold lands which I possessed in the State of Pennsylvania, and part of a tract held in equal right with George Clinton, late governor of New York, in the State of New York; my share of land and interest, in the Great Dismal Swamp, and a tract of land, which I owned in the county of Gloucester—withholding the legal titles thereto, until the consideration money should be paid—and having moreover leased, and conditionally sold (as will appear by the tenor of the said leases) all my lands upon the Great Keyhawa, and a tract upon Difficult run, in the county of Loudoun, it is my Will and Direction that whensoever the contracts are fully and respectively complied with, according to the spirit, true intent and meaning thereof, on the part of the purchasers, their heirs or assigns, that then, and in that case,

conveyances are to be made, agreeable to the terms of the said contracts, and the money arising therefrom, when paid, to be vested in bank stock;—the dividends whereof, as of that also which is already vested therein, is to inure to my said wife during her life, but the stock itself, is to remain and be subject to the general distribution hereafter directed.

Item. To the earl of Buchan, I recommend "the box made of the oak that sheltered the great Sir William Wallace after the battle of Falkirk," presented to me by his lordship, in terms too flattering for me to repeat, with a request "to pass it, on the event of my decease, to the man in my country, who should appear to merit it best, upon the same conditions that have induced him to send it to me." Whether easy or not to select the man who might comport with his lordship's opinion in this respect, is not for me to say; but conceiving that no disposition of this valuable curiosity can be more eligible than the recommitment of it to his own cabinet, agreeably to the original design of the goldsmith's company of Edinburgh, who presented it to him, and at his request, consented that it should be transferred to me—I do give and bequeath the same to his lordship; and in case of his decease, to his heir, with my grateful thanks for the distinguished honor of presenting it to me; and more especially for the favorable sentiments with which he accompanied it.

Item. To my brother Charles Washington, I give and bequeath the gold heated cane left me by Dr. Franklin, in his will. I add nothing to it, because of the ample provision I have made for his issue. To the acquaintances and friends of my juvenile years, Lawrence Washington and Robert Washington, of Choptank, I give my other two gold heated canes, having my arms engraved on them; and to each (as they will be useful where they live) I leave one of the spy glasses, which constituted part of my equipment, during the late war. To my compatriot in arms and old and intimate friend, Dr. Craik, I give my bureau or, as the cabinet-makers call it, Tambour Secretary and the circular chair, an appendage of my Study. To Dr. David Stuart I give my large shaving and dressing table, and my telescope. To the reverend, now Bryan Lord Fairfax, I give a Bible, in three large folio volumes, with notes—presented to me by the right reverend Thomas Wilson, bishop of Soder and Man. To general De la Fayette I give a pair of finely wrought steel pistols, taken from the enemy in the revolutionary war.—To my sisters-in-law, Hannah Washington and Mildred Washington—to my friends Eleanor Stuart, Hannah Washington of Fairfield, and Elizabeth Washington, of Hayfield, I give each a mourning ring, of the value of one hundred dollars. These bequests are not made for the intrinsic value of them, but as mementos of my esteem and regard. To Tobias Lear I give the use of the farm which he now holds, in virtue of a lease from me to him and his deceased wife (for and during their natural lives) free from rent during his life; at the expiration of which, it is to be disposed of as is herein after directed. To Sally B. Haynie, (a distant relation of mine) I give & bequeath three hundred dollars. To Sarah Green, daughter of the deceased Thomas Bishop, and to Ann Walker, daughter of John Alton, also deceased, I give each one hundred dollars, in consideration of the attachment of their fathers to me; each of whom having lived nearly forty years in my family. To each of my nephews, William Augustine Washington, George Lewis, George Steptoe Washington, Bushrod Washington, and Samuel Washington, I give one of the swords or cut-throats, of which I may be possessed; and they are to choose in the order they are named. These swords are accompanied with an injunction not to unsheath them for the purpose of shedding blood, except it be for self defence or in defence of their country and its rights; and in the latter case to keep them unshathed, and prefer falling with them in their hands to the relinquishment thereof.

And now, having gone through these specific devises, with explanations for the more correct understanding of the meaning and design of them, I proceed to the distribution of the more important parts of my estate in manner following:—First. To my nephew Bushrod Washington, and his heirs, partly in consideration of an intimation to his deceased father, while we were bachelors, and he had kindly undertaken to superintend my estate during

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In the original manuscript: George Washington's name was written at the bottom of every page.