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When William Williams, whose remains rest in historic Cedar Grove cemetery here, painted the one and only portrait of George Washington in full Masonic regalia, he had his problems.

Aside from the usual challenge confronting an artist, Williams was faced with a subject who detested posing for his likeness on canvas. Because he was an important figure, the Father of Our Country could hardly avoid the ordeal on various occasions but it was no secret that it irritated him.

When Williams and other exasperated painters tried to engage the first President in relaxed conversation, they got nowhere. Instead of loosening his tongue with questions, quips and small talk, they discovered to their dismay that such tactics only made him withdraw into a shell.

Probably the first of many artists to squirm over Washington's lack of cooperation was Charles Willson Peale of Philadelphia. Peale was not only a talented portraitist, but an inventor, watchmaker, soldier, naturalist, and patriot. With such a background, he should have been able to engage G. W. in conversation, but he failed miserably.

At the time—1772—that Peale was called to Mount Vernon to paint Washington, the future great American was a militia officer and a gentleman farmer. Even then, before he had reached the pinnacle of fame and lasting esteem, and before posing for pictures became an unpleasant routine for him, the valiant Virginian was a reluctant subject.

Describing his attitude, with characteristic honesty, Washington told a friend, "Inclinations have yielded to importunity, I am now contrary to all expectations under the hand of Mr. Peale. But in so grave a mood, and now and then under the influence of Morpheus, I fancy the skill of this gentleman's pencil will be put to it in describing what manner of man I am."

Although a day would come when the talented Philadelphian would receive limited formal instruction in art, he was strictly a "do it yourself" fellow when he painted Washington. What he knew about portraits, he had picked up through his own initiative.

The Peale painting, like the one put on canvas by William Williams later, wasn't exactly a masterpiece. It has been described as provincial, and "somewhat stiff" but G. W. was sufficiently impressed. He hung it in the parlor at Mount Vernon, and permitted it to remain there for many years.

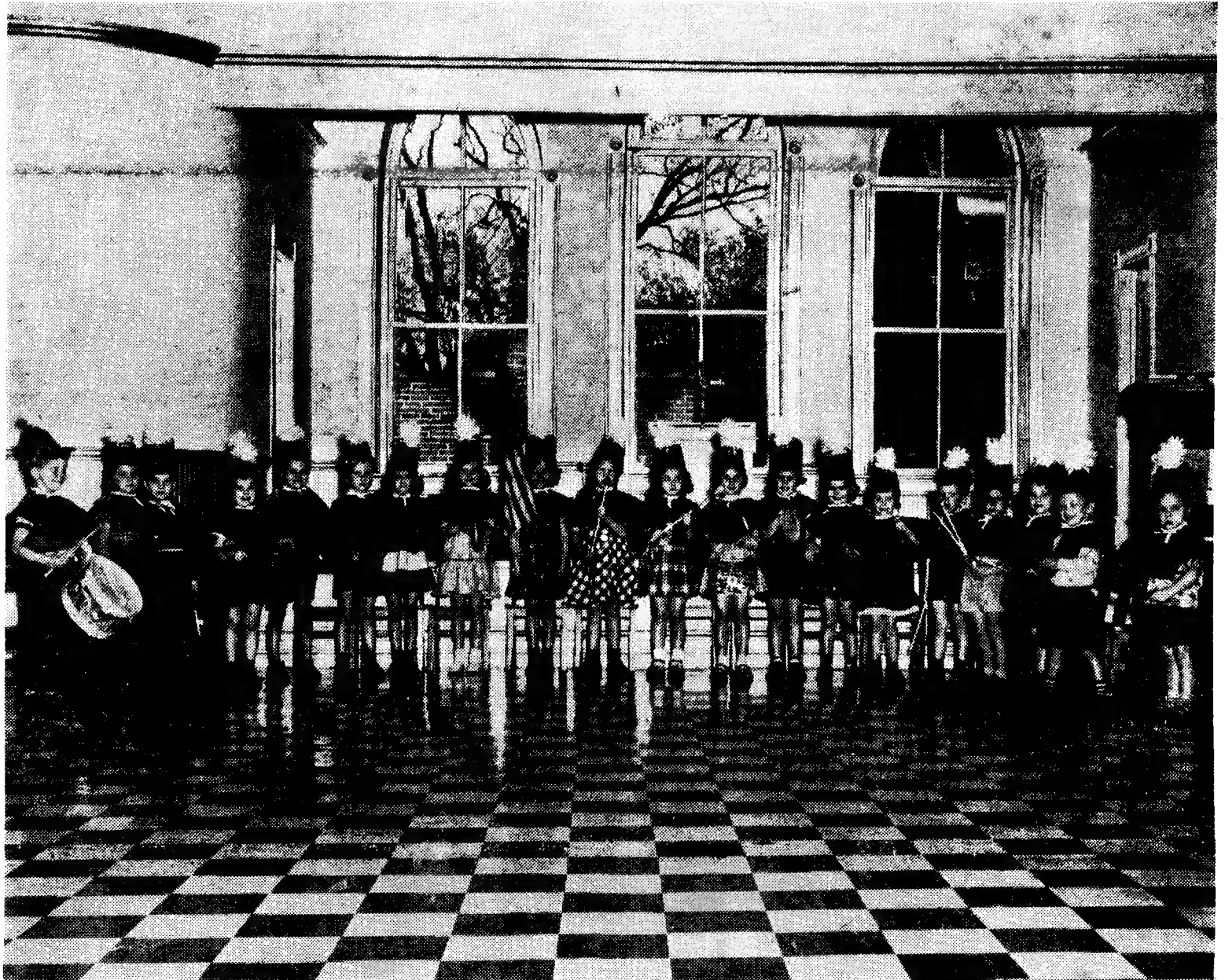
Neither Peale nor Williams profited greatly from the portraits they did of the First President. Their paintings were sold for a pittance. The Williams portrait, now enshrined by the Masonic Order at Alexandria, Va., is valuable, but Williams — lying in New Bern's Cedar Grove cemetery — can't reap belated benefits from his creation.

Gilbert Stuart, whose Athenaeum portrait of Washington is the most famous of all, was a smarter business man than Williams and Peale. History has it that he had already painted two pictures of G. W. — a bust and a full length — when he persuaded Washington to pose a third time.

It is said that the Father of our Country yielded to Stuart's pleadings with the understanding that his wife, Martha, would be given the picture when it was finished. Martha never did lay hands on the portrait.

The artist kept stalling, saying that he hadn't completed work on it. He still had it when death claimed him, and his family sold it to the Boston Athenaeum, to

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ONLY YESTERDAY—Pictured here are members of the first kindergarten class conducted by Celia Ferebee and Anna Gillikin at Christ Episcopal church. It doesn't seem possible that over half of the youngsters are college bound, while the others are high school seniors. Has it really been

that long? See if you can pick out Mary K. Hand, Martha Thompson, Johnny Ward, Susan Ferebee, Susan Mitchell, Bill Kafer, Johnny Dunn and others.—Photo by John R. Baxter.



INDIAN MAIDENS—The costumed 12-year-olds in this group performed in "Powatan" at New Bern's Masonic Theatre, more than 50 years ago. Included were Josie Bray, Mary Mitchell, Ivy Willis, Mary Turner, Ethel Land, Lila

Mary Mitchell, Ivy Willis, Mary Turner, Ethel Land, Lila Lillian Hill, Edna Duguid, Mary Emma Wallace, Libby McCoy, Jeanette Hill, Jenny Bell, Glennie Willis, Eva Land, and Louise Pierce.