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George Washington's birthday brings to mind the sultry summer morning we climbed the steps to the top of the Washington Monument, and came back down those selfsame steps. That was a long time ago.

Right smack in the middle of the towering structure, on the way down, we encountered two drunks arguing. They wanted to go in opposite directions, and neither showed the slightest inclination to give in to the other.

When last we saw them, they were shouting profanity and shaking their fists, while seated in wobbly condition on one of the steps. We've wondered since how long it took to settle the issue.

As a small townner who regarded the Washington Monument as a shrine to respect, it surprised us to see names and comments scrawled on its interior. Apparently, many visitors considered the insides of the shaft no more sacred than the wall of a public rest room.

This form of desecration appeals to a lot of folks you would expect better of. For example, so much lipstick has been smeared on the Statue of Liberty that in desperation the Federal Government resorted to the use of lipstick-resistant paint to minimize the vandalism. If you think we're kidding, ask Uncle Sam.

The best known story about the Father of our Country, at least about his boyhood, is the legend that has him refusing to tell a lie, after cutting down a cherry tree. Every youngster in school hears it before advancing very far on the road to education.

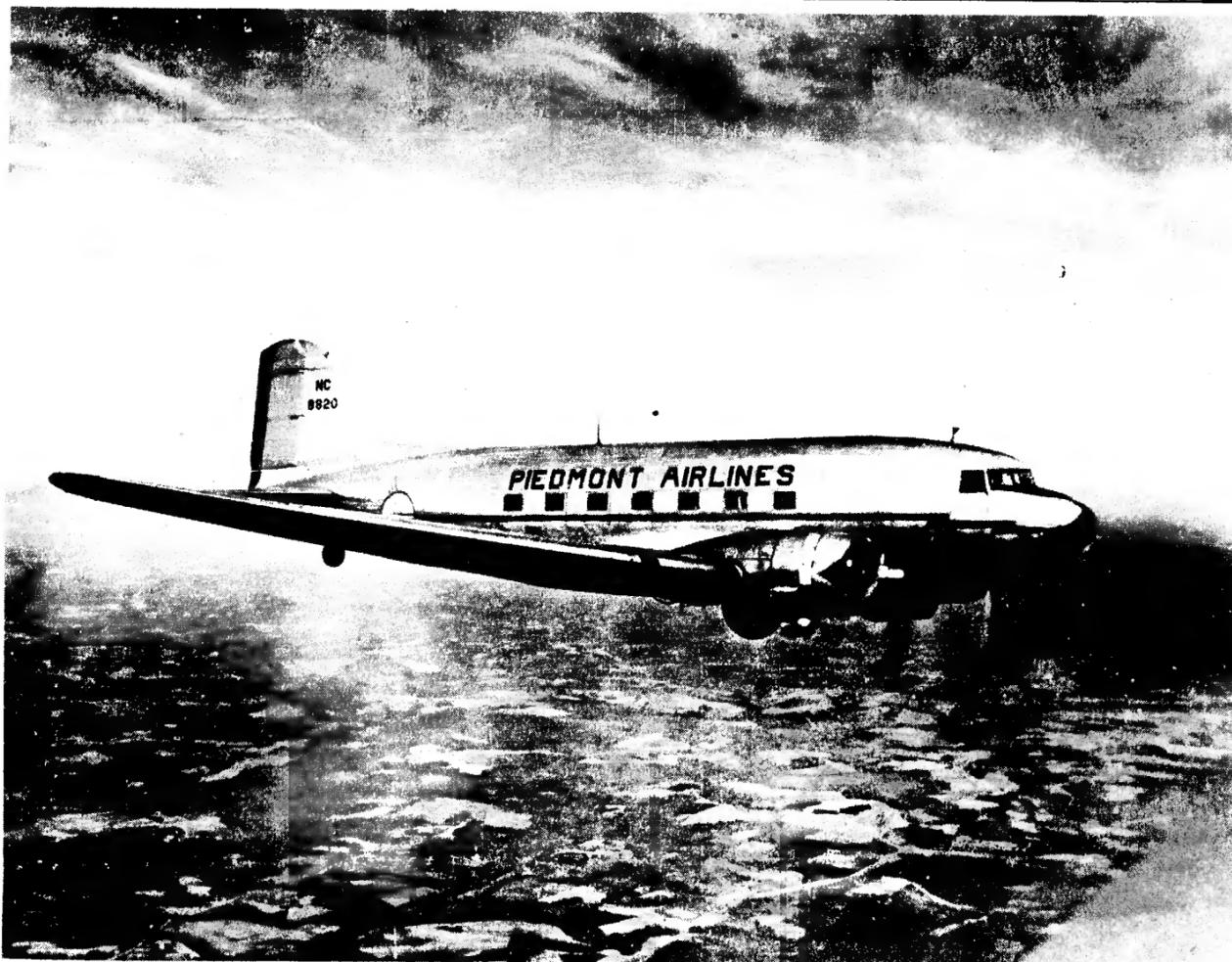
There's another story you may not have heard, the story of the knife. When Washington was eleven years old his father died. Shortly after, the boy took up his residence at Mount Vernon with his half-brother, Lawrence. Through the influence of a neighbor, William Fairfax, he obtained a commission as midshipman in the English Navy, but the future President's mother said she did not want him to go.

Obediently, he surrendered his commission and returned to his studies, back to surveying and mathematics. Among the items of his mother's next order to England, for annual supplies, was one for a good penknife, this she presented to the boy as a reward for submission to her will, with the injunction, "Always obey your superiors."

He carried the token with him through life, as a reminder of his mother's command, and to General Knox explained its significance. At Valley Forge, when a vacillating and timid Congress failed to provide food and shelter for his ragged and starving army, in desperation and despair, yielding temporarily to his feelings and sympathy for his men and in disgust with Congress, he wrote his resignation as Commander-in-Chief.

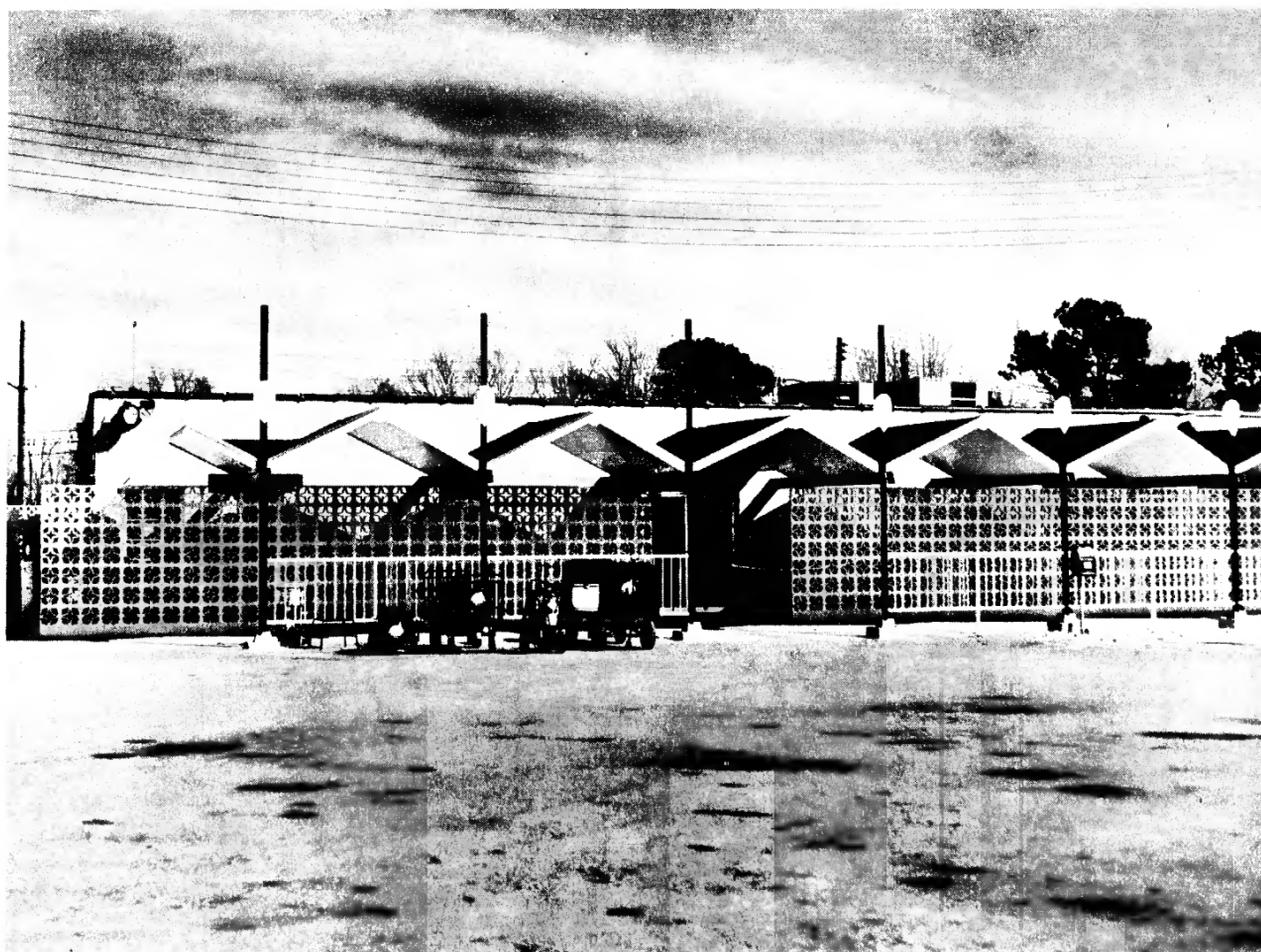
Washington summoned his staff and notified them of his

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END OF AN ERA—Pictured here is one of the DC-3's that handled Piedmont Airlines very first passengers 15 years ago. As part of its fifteenth anniversary celebration Wednesday, part of which was a final DC-3 landing here, the airline has retired its last aircraft of this

type. From now on the Piedmont fleet will consist entirely of F-27 prop-jet and Martin 404 Pacemakers. Three New Bernians, Mike Holton, Robert Thomason and Baxter Slaughter are veteran Piedmont pilots.



QUITE AN IMPROVEMENT—This scene now greets air travelers arriving at New Bern's Simmons-Knott Airport. Work is continuing on the terminal, assuring attractiveness as well as service for the many who will

make use of its facilities in the days and years to come. The transformation, long needed, will give visitors a much better impression of New Bern, from the outset, than they had in the past.—Photo by Charles Carter.