



Did Washington like to dance? At a ball held during the Revolutionary War, he and General Greene's wife danced together "upwards of three hours" without stopping.

GEORGE WASHINGTON COULD TELL A LIE, AFTER ALL

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THESE were a good many things about George Washington to make his contemporaries like him, and to make us like him, too; but these are so largely overlooked or actually concealed in most of the history books, that many of us have about as much affection for him as we have for Niagara Falls.

Take for instance the pious legend that he could not tell a lie. That is a most unfortunate way of putting an important fact about the character of this great man. It would be more accurate, and also more complimentary, to say he hated a lie.

This avoids bringing upon him the suspicion of being mentally defective, through an inability to invent, at need,



To avoid the dust of horsemen who wanted to attend his coach, Washington told them he would leave at 8 o'clock—then got started at 5.



Washington was a great card player, but the stakes were never high. His accounts show losses for an evening up to \$35, and winnings up to \$60.

Examination of the diary kept by the father of his country reveals a very human person, and one who knew how to tell a fib, too, despite all that has been written to the contrary

a plausible untruth. It also shows fairly his attitude toward habitual mendacity.

That he could and did, on rare occasions, make statements that were intentionally deceptive, may be readily illustrated from his own words.

For instance, at one place in his diary he describes a more or less white lie which he told in order to avoid some inconvenience and discomfort during his journey through the south in 1791. The roads he was traveling over were dusty, so he practiced a little deception in order that he might travel in comfort.

"HAVING suffered very much by the dust yesterday," says the diary (Volume IV, page 161), "and finding that parties of Horse and a number of other Gentlemen were intending to attend me part of the way today, I caused their enquiries respecting the time of my setting out, to be answered that I should endeavor to do it before eight o'clock, but I did it a little after five, by which means I avoided the inconveniences above mentioned."

Another instance of his mild unvaracity appears in the same year, when he feared some of his slaves that had been taken with the family to Philadelphia might claim their freedom, under the Pennsylvania laws. He wrote his secretary to get them back into Virginia by hook or by crook, or, as he expressed it, "under pretext that may deceive both them and the public."

He was quoted as having said also that he once encountered mosquitoes so efficient that they "used to bite through the thickest boot." This statement so disturbed President Timothy Dwight, of Yale, that he said Washington's real statement must have been that the mosquitoes bit through his stockings above his boots.

The abundant evidence that Washington was honest, brave, patriotic, and a great many other splendid things, has commonly crowded his pleasant vices out of the picture.

FOX hunting was, of course, a perfectly proper sport for a country gentleman, and it was Washington's favorite pastime while at home in Mount Vernon. Several hundred such hunts are mentioned in the diary, some of them lasting six or seven hours, with due credit given by name to each of his numerous pedigreed hounds.

When away from Mount Vernon, he often found diversions that were, perhaps, less invigorating and respectable than fox hunting. He was fond of card playing, and, like most of the gentlemen of his time and place, he played

for money.

He was in no sense a plunger. His accounts show losses for an evening as high as \$35, and winnings, up to \$60. In one of his account books he strikes a balance between what he had won and what he had lost during the preceding three years. He was about \$30 in the hole.

A man so fond of good horses as he was could hardly fail to enjoy seeing them race. "Went up to Alexandria to the Purse Race," says the diary. The only surprising thing about this entry is its date: May 16, 1799. He was then 67 years old, and he died the following December.

Sometimes one of his horses was in the race. Sometimes he spent several days at the races, spicing his enjoyment by theater parties and dancing.

and by placing a few bets.

Cockfighting was probably the lowest form of sport in which Washington indulged. The fact that the diary mentions this sport only once, and that once when he was only 20 years of age, permits us to hope that this brutal diversion was not a habit with him.

Nevertheless, the great man, well cognizant of all activities about him, had this to say about the questionable sport of cockfighting in 1752:

"A Great Main of cocks fought in Yorktown 'tween Gloucester and York for 5 pistoles each battle and 100 ye odd. I left it with Colo. Lewis before it was decided and had part of his chariot to his house."

ONE diversion which was undoubtedly a habit with him was dancing.

"Went with the family to a Ball in Alexandria," says the diary for Feb. 12, 1798, its author being then 66 years young. Perhaps he did not take part in the dancing on this occasion, though he seems to have done so at a dance only two years before.

The jolly dancing parties held by Washington and his officers during the Revolutionary War are too widely known to need describing here. As a sample of Washington's enthusiastic participation in these, the following item from General Greene will suffice:

"We had a little dance at my quarters a few evenings past," writes the general. "His Excellency" (Washington) "and Mrs. Greene danced upwards of three hours without once sitting down."

There is plenty of evidence to show that, in the midst of fair games and lively chatter, Washington was neither near-sighted nor tongue-tied.

During his tour of New England in 1789, he mentions the beauty of the ladies in only three of the numerous places he visited, namely, Boston, Salem, and Portsmouth. Of those he met in Boston, he wrote: "Their appearance was elegant, and many of them very handsome."



The famous cherry tree incident, as depicted in an old-time sketch . . . an incident which gave Washington a reputation for unvarying veracity which he himself would never have claimed.