

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Mount Vernon

AND/OR COMMON

Mount Vernon

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 7 miles south of Alexandria

CITY, TOWN

Mount Vernon

___ VICINITY OF

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY

Fairfax

CODE

059

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
___DISTRICT	___PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	___AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	___UNOCCUPIED	___COMMERCIAL ___PARK
___STRUCTURE	___BOTH	___WORK IN PROGRESS	___EDUCATIONAL ___PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	___ENTERTAINMENT ___RELIGIOUS
___OBJECT	___IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	___GOVERNMENT ___SCIENTIFIC
	___BEING CONSIDERED	___YES: UNRESTRICTED	___INDUSTRIAL ___TRANSPORTATION
		___NO	___MILITARY ___OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Mount Vernon

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Registry of Deeds, ETC. Fairfax County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Fairfax

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1942

FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress/Annex, Prints and Photographs Division

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

"The mansion is an excellent example of Georgian architecture. Most striking is the high-columned, two-story piazza, which extends the full length of the structure and overlooks the Potomac. A triangular pediment tops the west elevation. Both the latter and the river facade have a central entrance and two side entrances. Two large interior chimneys mark the earlier ends of the dormered, hip-roofed mansion. A modillion cornice adorns the roofline and the pediment. The exterior wood siding is beveled, and its paint contains sand to give the appearance of stone. Windows of both facades are shuttered.

On the first floor are the musicroom, west parlor, banquet hall, a bedchamber, dining room, and library. The second floor contains the blue bedroom, Lafayette's bedroom, the yellow bedroom, Nelly Custis' bedroom, and George Washington's bedroom. The third floor includes three bedrooms and two store-rooms. The kitchen is outside but adjacent to the house.

A courtyard and bowling green, flanked by flower and kitchen gardens, extend from the west, or land, front of the house. To the north of the flower garden is a greenhouse. Various outbuildings, including smokehouse, workshops, and stables, have been restored in detail, as have the gardens and lawn. One modern building, built in 1928 in the same style as the other outbuildings, serves as a museum. The tombs of George and Martha Washington lie to the south of the mansion.

HISTORY

The history of the estate dates back to the late 17th century. In 1674 John Washington, the great-grandfather of George, and Nicholas Spencer obtained a 5,000-acre grant along the Potomac, and 16 years later their heirs divided it. In 1726 Mildred Washington (Mrs. Roger Gregory), who had inherited the Washington half, which was then known as Hunting Creek Plantation, sold it to her brother Augustine, George's father.

Augustine probably constructed the first portion of the present mansion over the foundations of a smaller, earlier dwelling that may have been erected by his father, Lawrence Washington, or his grandfather. From about 1735 until 1738, Augustine and his family, including young George, resided there after living at Wakefield, and in the latter year moved to the "Strother estate" (Ferry Farm), along the Rappahannock River opposite Fredericksburg. In 1740 Augustine deeded Mount Vernon to his eldest son, Lawrence, George's half-brother, who settled there at the time of his marriage 3 years later, and renamed the plantation Mount Vernon after Admiral Vernon, under whom he had served in the Caribbean. George spent part of his youth at the estate with Lawrence, who may have modified or rebuilt the house.

CONTINUED

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1752-1799

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mount Vernon was the home of George Washington, general, statesman, and first President of the United States. For the twenty years preceding the American Revolution, the cultivation of his farmland here was his major occupation. It remained his home throughout his rise to military and political fame, and was his place of retirement in 1797. He was buried on the grounds following his death two years later.

BIOGRAPHY

George Washington (1732-1799) was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He received little formal education but was well tutored at home. In 1748 he worked as an assistant surveyor to Lord Fairfax, owner of the five million acre Northern Neck of Virginia. He continued his survey work until 1752, when the death of his half brother Lawrence led to his inheriting Mount Vernon that same year.

Washington's first military assignment came in October 1753, when he delivered a British ultimatum to the French in the Ohio Valley. Its refusal precipitated the French and Indian War. In the spring of 1754 he was taking an advance party of 150 to the Forks of the Ohio to build a fort at that strategic point. Informed of a French ambush lying in wait ahead, he successfully attacked the party on May 28, but was forced to retreat to Great Meadows, where, defeated by the weather and the poor field-of-fire from his ill-placed Fort Necessity, he was forced to capitulate and return with his men to Tidewater. Washington was with General Braddock when his force was ambushed in July 1755, and helped to effect the escape of that army after heavy losses and the death of its commander.

Washington retired from the army in 1758 and immediately thereafter married Martha Dandridge Custis, in January 1759. Until the eve of the Revolution he occupied most of his time becoming one of the richest, largest, and most industrious planters in Virginia. It has been computed that in the seven years prior to 1775, Mount Vernon had over 2,000 guests, most of whom stayed to dinner if not overnight.

CONTINUED

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Cunliffe, Marcus, George Washington: Man and Monument (1958).
 Ferris, Robert G., The Presidents...(1976).
 Fitzpatrick, John C., George Washington Himself (1933).
 Little, Shelby, George Washington (1931).
 Works Project Administration, Virginia: A Guide to the Old Dominion (1940).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY C. 400

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	3, 1, 9	7, 5, 0	4, 2, 8, 7	5, 4, 0	B	1, 8	3, 1, 9	7, 0, 0	4, 2, 8, 6	2, 8, 0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C	1, 8	3, 1, 7	3, 3, 0	4, 2, 8, 5	5, 2, 0	D	1, 8	3, 1, 7	6, 5, 0	4, 2, 8, 7	2, 4, 0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY (Original done by Stephen Lissandrello)

NAME/TITLE Marilynn Larew, Historian, Landmarks Review Project

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>Historic Sites Survey Division, National Park Service</u>	<u>5/10/77</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>1100 L Street NW.</u>	<u>202-523-5464</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Washington</u>	<u>D.C. 20240</u>

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE

landmark
 LOCAL Designated: Dec 19, 1960

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been ~~found~~ ^{certified} according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Stephen Lissandrello
 date 9/13/77

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<u>[Signature]</u>	DATE <u>9/13/77</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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In 1754, or 2 years after Lawrence's death, George leased the property, then over 2,600 acres, from Lawrence's widow who had a lifetime right to it; upon her death in 1761, George inherited it. In 1757-58, in preparation for his marriage the following year to Martha Custis, George thoroughly rebuilt the 1 1/2-story Georgian structure, which then contained four rooms bisected by a central hall on each floor. He enlarged the residence to 2 1/2 stories and remodeled it to a more impressive Palladian form. Because of his long absences on military duty in the French and Indian War until late in 1759, the bulk of the construction was supervised by William Fairfax, a neighbor.

For the next 15 years after his marriage in 1759, Washington lived as a prosperous planter, and made no further changes of consequence in his residence. In 1773 he decided to enlarge it, but he had hardly begun to do so when, in 1774-75, he went to Philadelphia to serve in the First and Second Continental Congresses. In the latter year, he was appointed as commander in chief of the Continental Army.

While Washington was away during the War for Independence, a distant kinsman, Lund Washington, carried out his plans for the estate. Lund enlarged the relatively modest main house from five to nine bays; constructed the piazza; added the detached, flanking wings, which connected to the central mansion by means of curving light arcades; built outbuildings; landscaped the grounds; and extended the gardens.

George found the mansion almost completed in 1781, when he stopped off on his way to and from Yorktown. After resigning his commission 2 years later, he returned to Mount Vernon; and in 1787 concluded the remodeling, when he placed the large octagonal cupola on the center of the roof.

That summer, Washington again traveled to Philadelphia, where he served as president of the Constitutional Convention. Two years later, elected as U.S. President, he departed once more and for the following 8 years was able to return only about twice a year. In 1797 he did so a final time, to retire; he died at Mount Vernon 2 years later. His wife lived there until she passed away in 1802. His nephew, Bushrod Washington, inherited the property, which remained in the family until 1858."

¹ Robert G. Ferris, *The Presidents...* (1976), pp. 565-67.

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As relations between England and the Colonies deteriorated, Washington was slow to become aroused by what others were calling British tyranny, but by 1769 he was openly advocating commercial warfare with the mother country. When the Virginia provincial convention elected him a delegate to the First Continental Congress in 1774, he took his seat in full uniform. The one-time moderate had been radicalized.

On April 19, 1775, British and American troops clashed at Lexington and Concord. On June 15, the Second Continental Congress unanimously elected Washington to command its armies. This was chiefly the fruit of a political bargain by which New England offered Virginia the chief command as its price for the adoption and support of the New England army. It was hoped the appointment would help foster a stronger sense of unity between northern and southern colonies.

In March 1776 Washington successfully completed the siege of Howe's army in Boston, and hurried south to defend New York. From August through November, his army was beaten badly at Long Island (August 22), White Plains (October 28), and Fort Mifflin (November 20). Washington's army declined further in numbers through desertion as it retreated towards Delaware, until armed resistance to British rule seemed almost at an end. His army had dwindled from 20,000 men to 6,000, but the night of December 19 he crossed the half-frozen Delaware River to attack the strong Hessian outpost at Trenton. Only 2,400 men made the rendezvous, but they were sufficient to rout the enemy force and revive American resistance. A second victory at Princeton on January 3 brought recruits flocking to camp in the spring and encouraged foreign sympathizers with the American cause.

In 1777 Washington was defeated at Brandywine and Germantown and forced to abandon Philadelphia to Howe. The army took up winter quarters at Valley Forge, where it suffered horribly from lack of food, clothing, and shelter. That Washington was able to field an effective army the following spring is the most cogent demonstration of the character and courage he possessed and imparted to the men under his command. He survived the intrigues of his enemies and in the spring of 1778 led his men against the retreating British army, now under Sir Henry Clinton. Victory at Saratoga the previous year had led to French entry into the war. This forced Clinton to retreat to New York City and permitted Washington to carry out his most brilliant campaign. On August 19, 1781, Washington marched south with his army to cooperate with the French fleet against the British under Cornwallis at

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Yorktown, Virginia. Seven thousand British regulars were cut off when their supporting fleet was driven away by the French admiral de Grasse, and invested by land before October. Just two weeks after Washington's army of 5500 Continentals, 5000 French and 3500 Virginia militia arrived in Williamsburg. The surrender of Cornwallis' entire command on October 19 brought the war to a virtual close.

Washington returned to Mount Vernon, but in 1789 was unanimously chosen first President under the newly adopted Federal Constitution. The first crisis of his administration was the outbreak of war between England and revolutionary France in 1793. Washington's adherence to Alexander Hamilton's view that America should disregard her alliance with France and maintain a strict neutrality led to Thomas Jefferson's resignation as Secretary of State. It also avoided a war the young Nation was in no condition to fight. The suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion by Federal troops in 1794, and the signing of the not entirely favorable Jay Treaty with Great Britain in 1795 tended further to align Washington with the Federalist party, though he desired above all else that such partisanship not exist. In 1798 he declined a third term, setting a precedent left unbroken until 1940. He retired to his home at Mount Vernon in 1797, and died there two years later.

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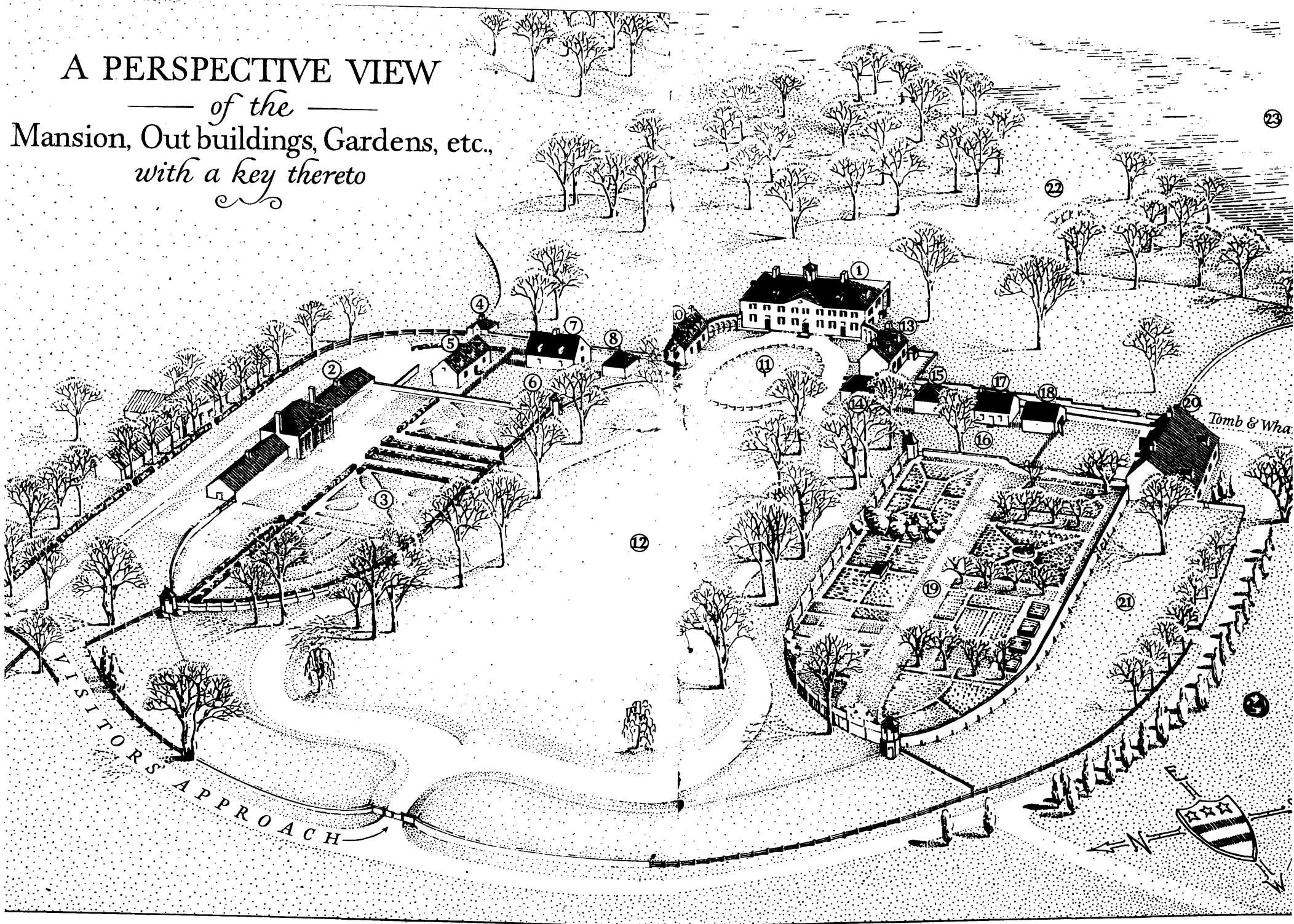
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George Washington owned 8000 acres at one time in the Mount Vernon area. Of the five farms Washington ran, four have been divided and subdivided since his death. The 500-acre mansion house farm remains almost intact, 430 acres being owned by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association. The Association has made excellent use of this property as an unobtrusive and historic setting for the Mount Vernon mansion and outbuildings. The boundary includes that portion of land owned by the association unintruded upon by the access highways, circle and entrance station. The landmark is, therefore, the property owned by the association which lies south of Virginia State Route 235 and Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway and east of Old Mount Vernon Road--Route 623 to the Potomac River. It includes about 400 acres as enclosed by the red lines on the accompanying map A, labeled "Topographic Survey, Mount Vernon" and dated January 1970.

Modern structures at Mount Vernon built for maintenance and tourist accommodation are situated out of sight from the historic buildings. These later structures do not contribute to the national significance of the landmark.

A PERSPECTIVE VIEW

— of the —
Mansion, Out buildings, Gardens, etc.,
with a key thereto



1. Mansion

2. Greenhouse and Quarters

3. Flower Garden

4. Icehouse

5. Museum

6. Paddock

7. Spinning-House

8. Storehouse

9. Paddock

10. Office

11. Courtyard

12. Paddock

13. Kitchen

14. Butler's House

15. Paddock

16. Laundry Yard

17. Washhouse

18. Coachhouse

19. Kitchen Garden

20. Stable

21. Paddock

22. Park

23. Potomac River

24. Vineyard Enclosure

References

Within these lines one or two well sized and convenient tenements might be formed - The greater part of the land is capable of high improvement for meadow; being low, part of it is already well mowed - and part may be better improved by being drained - There are no towns or villages near it -

There is a small house on these lands, but there is a sufficient number of houses cleared and in cultivation, from a small 1000 per acre with a house on it; and a most beautiful view of the plain settlements seat -

It is a fine view the whole is cleared land, but has no house on it -

It is a fine view, and might be used to form a farm; or, if that farm should be subdivided, it might be a good part of the smaller ones - offering pleasant sites for houses on the banks of the River -

The use of this farm is adapted to a plantation

