**История. Текст 1.**

**Creating the Sacred: George Washington's Body and the Relics of Mount Vernon**

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My remains, with those of my deceased relations, and such others of my Family as may choose to be entombed there, may be deposited [in the Family Vault at Mount Vernon]. And it is my express desire that my corpse may be interred in a private manner, without parade or funeral oration.2

-From the Will of George Washington

Washington’s family honored his wishes to bury him at Mount Vernon, but ignored his requests for privacy. Four days after his death, a group of soldiers, clergymen, Masonic brothers, musicians, and citizens gathered at Mount Vernon for his funeral. The procession to the tomb even included Washington’s rider-less horse, equipped with the general’s saddle and pistols. After the service the guards volleyed rounds over the tomb as Washington’s family closed the vault. This ceremony was not very private, but it seemed so compared to the public spectacles of mourning for Washington. Beginning in December 1799 and lasting through February 1800, hundreds of mock funerals, eulogies, and sermons were held in his honor across the country. While the death of Washington stunned the nation, it did not prevent his memory from shaping American culture and politics during the early Republic. As one columnist proclaimed, “The name of Washington—the American President and General—will triumph over death—the unclouded brightness of his glory will illuminate future ages.” Washington’s character was very much a product of his own design, but the transformation from man to symbol rested heavily on the efforts of his nationalist contemporaries. The founding generation praised Washington’s qualities and accomplishments, declared him the ideal citizen, and encouraged Americans to be more like him.3

Historians have recognized the importance of memory to early American politic culture and the process of nation-building. David Waldstreicher and Len Travers argued that civic celebrations

**История. Текст 2.**

Fraternal groups such as the Society of the Cincinnati, the Freemasons, and Revolutionary War veterans organized patriotic events that displayed their loyalty to the country, bolstered their statuses and political agendas, and reminded Americans that Washington once belonged to their respective organizations. Politicians also frequently used Washington’s memory in their rhetoric to unify factions, parties, and the populace. The adoption of George Washington as a symbol for America and the Revolution made his memory extremely powerful, both as an instrument of political cohesion and as a means to legitimize the nation to Americans.4

4David Waldstreicher, *The Midst of Perpetual Fetes* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997

These cultural events constructed and reinforced the memory of Washington as the symbol of the ideal citizen, but national days of celebration shed little light on how Americans, citizens or not, remembered Washington personally. Historians have extensively explored Washington’s apotheosis and the culture built around it, but scholars have yet to examine two sources that connects the personal memory of individuals to the development of American nationalism: his tomb and physical remains.5 As Washington’s public memory became more contentious among local and regional identities, federal and state assemblies sought his body to validate their own conceptualizations of the American nation and Revolution. While these governments continuously fought over the possession of Washington’s body, individuals visited his grave and celebrated him in their own ways. Visitors were certainly influenced by the public memory of Washington, but the lack of a statue, monument, or gravestone allowed travelers the freedom to reconstruct Washington’s memory as they wished. Civic commemorations have illuminated the efforts of individuals and organizations to shape public memory, but pilgrimages were the result of a pilgrim’s conscious decision to commit a personal act of remembrance to the dead. These experiences can provide a deeper understanding of how individuals interacted with the dead and remembered their national heroes on a much more personal level.6

**История. Текст 3.**

In his study of death in America, cultural historian Gary Laderman acknowledged the perceived sacredness of Washington’s remains, but reasoned that since Protestant culture rejected the seemingly Catholic veneration of the body, Americans primarily remembered the symbol of Washington instead. Yet while Americans revered the ideal citizen Washington, thousands of “pilgrims” traveled to Mount Vernon to experience Washington’s tomb during the early Republic. These visitors identified these trips as “pilgrimages” and journeyed to Mount Vernon to pay respect to the remains of George Washington. Laderman’s assertion that Protestantism dominated early nineteenth-century American society and culture is a valid one, but this religious ethos was also a fundamental component of American nationalism. In her study of American Protestant pilgrimages, cultural anthropologist Gwen Neville theorized that since Protestant pilgrims were without saints or martyrs to worship, their community of believers ritualized the experience by creating the sacredness of a site over time. The growing community of pilgrims and their continuous presence transformed Mount Vernon into the nation’s shrine and Washington’s body into the civic relic of the American Revolution.7

As local, regional, and nationalist interpretations of Washington’s memory grew, so too did federal and state efforts to acquire his body for political and cultural legitimacy. Outside the realm of politics, the constant stream of pilgrims clashed with Washington’s family at Mount Vernon over the personal memory of the man. Pilgrims often took objects from the estate with them as souvenirs. Tree branches, flowers, and sticks were identified as “relics” and considered sacred, but to Washington’s family, these guests were mostly strangers who wreaked havoc in the home and on the grounds. His nephew Bushrod Washington eventually took legal measures to reassert his authority over the property, and by restricting the pilgrimage, he attempted to limit the experience of personal memory to “respectable” individuals only.

**История. Текст 4.**

**The Construction of the American Nation and the Public Memory of Washington**

After George Washington’s death, Congress unanimously approved a recommendation seeking Martha Washington’s permission to move his body to the new national capital, Washington, D.C. “There can be no doubt” wrote President John Adams, “that the nation at large, as well as all the branches of the government, will be highly gratified by any arrangement which may diminish the sacrifice she makes of her individual feelings.” Martha responded favorably to the resolution, citing her deceased husband as “the great example which I have so long had before me, never to oppose my private wishes to the public will.” While this agreement disregarded Washington’s will, there remained the fact that he himself had signed off on the design and construction of the Capitol during his Presidency. Martha’s blessing justified the federal proposal. Officials planned to build a “marble monument…designed as to commemorate the great events of his military and political life,” place it inside the center of the Capitol, and inter him underneath it during the celebration of its completion. The proposal, however, was not supported by everyone. In his discussion of the establishment of the capital city, one South Carolinian noted, “If anything would hasten the downfall of this tottering fabric of government, it certainly would be the ridiculous removal [of Washington’s body] in question.” This opinion, printed nearly a year after the resolution and correspondence, came much too late. Five days after Washington’s funeral, Congress secured assurances that the federal government would possess the remains of the nation’s preeminent citizen.10

In the meantime, Washington’s body remained in the family vault, and the grounds quickly became a haven for Federalist supporters who politicized the journey and criticized those who abstained from the pilgrimage. President John Adams and his wife Abigail traveled to the estate to visit the widow and pay their respects during the summer of 1800.

**История. Текст 5.**

Democratic-Republicans envisioned the American nation, Washington, and the Revolution quite differently from Federalists. They promoted the Declaration of Independence and its rhetoric of democracy and equality. They firmly rejected European forms of decadence and elitism, and accused Federalists of Anglo-aristocratic hero worship. While they acknowledged Washington’s contributions to America as a military commander, they dismissed his political accomplishments in an attempt to sever his memory from the Federalist Party’s control. Federalists responded by accusing Democratic-Republicans of obstructing efforts to memorialize Washington with statues, monuments, and mausoleums. One Federalist suspected the party of trying to “blot out the name of Washington, by refusing with disdain to commemorate his virtue.” Another writer blamed all Americans, asking “How then, fellow countrymen, have ye permitted two whole years to pass…the traveler still to ask in vain, Where is the National Monument, sacred to public and private virtue, to the manes of the illustrious Washington?” While Washington enthusiasts chastised Jefferson and his party, even former Federalist President John Adams struggled with the idea of using national means to memorialize his body in grandiose ways. One proposition to build a massive pyramid over his tomb appeared not only excessive but also monarchical. “I am unwilling, from principle, to waste even my might, entirely on a mausoleum, a huge pyramid of useless stone,” wrote Adams, “which might be well enough to guard the body of an Egyptian tyrant—but Washington will never, never want friends to protect his ashes, while virtue, patriotism, or pure republican principles are dear to the American people.” While many cultural contemporaries worked endlessly to elevate Washington to divine status, Congressmen failed to appropriate federal funds or space to match their nationalist efforts.12

**История. Текст 6.**

During the War of 1812, Democratic-Republican war hawks believed that the pilgrimage could inspire patriotism and encourage citizens to enlist in the fight against the British. “Youth of America, have you not ambition enough to imitate Washington…Go then, sons of Columbia—Go to the tomb of Mount Vernon. There call on the name of Washington, and seek if perchance his spirit may invigorate you.” This nationalist fervor quickly disappeared as the war dragged on, but this fading optimism did not mean that Washington’s body was no longer significant. The burning of the national capital by the British only furthered the divide between war hawks and doves, and the mere presence of the enemy facilitated disturbing rumors about their intentions. One writer suspected the British of trying to steal Washington’s body and transport it to Westminster Abbey. This gossip also imagined that the British might construct “a magnificent monument that would announce to future ages that ‘There lay the remains of the Founder of Independence of a nation that had neither valor to defend his ashes, nor gratitude to afford them a Tomb.’” These stories illuminate the perceived power of Washington’s body, and how politicians linked American morale and the protection of his remains with the defense of the nation.13

After the war, the rebuilding of the Capitol and the nation resurrected the 1799 resolution to exhume Washington’s body. The Virginian House of Delegates, however, petitioned Bushrod Washington for his uncle’s remains, hoping to inter it beneath a monument in Richmond. *The Richmond Enquirer* announced these plans and quipped, “If Congress have failed in doing *their* duty, it is time for Virginia to do her’s.” A writer for the *Daily National Intelligencer* in Washington, D.C. argued that Congress had received earlier consent from Martha Washington, and that “It should be ascertained…that Congress decline the charge [of reburial], before it be taken from their hands.”