

WASHINGTON

***PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY
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Washington. Is there a word in the English language which evokes great memories, provokes deep feelings, connotes different meanings, or stirs strong emotions more than the word *AWashington@*? What originated as the name of the father of our country and the capital of this nation has since evolved into a symbolic representation of a whole gamut of subjects from the solutions to problems, to the best and worst of politics, to conflict between good and evil. The term *AWashington@* has become fodder for demagogues and the target of comedians. How frequently have you heard political pundits, commentators in the media, and talkshow hosts tell us that *Athe problem is Washington@*? Maybe, you can recall the punchline from the bad joke from years ago that went something like this: *A It is so disturbing that it makes you want to write Washington. Washington, why would you write to him? He=s been dead for years.@*

Remember how throughout the Cold War, Washington was repeatedly juxtaposed with Berlin, Moscow, and Hanoi to represent capitalism versus communism, prosperity versus conflict, and freedom versus tyranny.

Notwithstanding all of the above and other incessant verbal bombardments that use and misuse the expression *AWashington@*, what did you first think this evening when you heard the word *AWashington@*? Consider where you are tonight. Admittedly, we are at the northeast

corner of Fourth and Lawrence Streets in the Lytle Park historic district of downtown Cincinnati. But I ask you to close your eyes and try to imagine a cold November evening 220 years ago in 1791. Imagine what would be around you if you were in the very spot that you now occupy. You would not be many meters north of the outer wall of Fort Washington. You could see in the moonlight the tall oaken timbers that formed the protective exterior of this fortress. You might smell the smoke from the burning logs by which the sentries could occasionally warm themselves. You could hear the singing of the soldiers of the garrison as they were about to retire to their bunks, having been primed at dinner by rum and ale. You could also hear in the distance the occasional howl of a wolf, and the whistling of the wind whipping up the valley from the Ohio River and deflecting off the western walls of the fort. You could feel the air becoming colder as the night progressed beyond the sunset three hours earlier. And you would wish you were wrapped in a bearskin hide to keep from shivering.

You would also hope that the patrol from the fort had scoured this area thoroughly, lest you be in danger of a hostile attack and a victim of the types of unspeakable atrocities that had struck fear in the hearts of the whites who had ventured into the Ohio territory.

Most assuredly, to the members of this Club, the word *Washington* should have special meaning. The area around our Club is steeped in history and really, to be correct, should be known as the Fort Washington historic district, as the importance of Fort Washington cannot be overstated. Thus, it is hoped that the presentation of this paper will provide historical perspective for the significance of Fort Washington, the greatness of our first President, the influential role of Native Americans at that time, the events that settled this territory, and the corresponding growth of our great republic and its westward expansion.

Many have mistakenly associated Fort Washington with the young George Washington

who came from Virginia to survey the Ohio territory, or with Colonel Washington on expedition in the Ohio Valley during the French and Indian War of 1756 to 1763. Others have falsely assumed that Fort Washington must have been erected by General George Washington during the American Revolutionary War to repel the British from strongholds along the Ohio River. Some others have erroneously believed that Fort Washington played a role in the War of 1812 when the British regained control of Michigan and pushed south into Ohio.

In actuality, George Washington was never at Fort Washington, and Fort Washington existed only for a relatively brief period of time, just about 15 years from 1789 to approximately 1804. Its purpose and use were confined to the Indian wars in the Northwest Territory in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Nevertheless, Fort Washington was essential to the newly formed Union and had a positive and permanent effect on the emerging nation. Regrettably, the history of this great fort was not well kept; and its historical significance has not been duly emphasized. According to records of the Cincinnati Historical Society, historians have referred to the establishment of Fort Washington in 1789 as the greatest single event in the history of Cincinnati. Yet, there was much debate over the precise location of the fort and its years in service. Nonetheless, the success of Fort Washington, when examined in the fullness of time, reveals an endless flow of good fortune for America.

As evidenced by the survey work of Israel Ludlow in 1790, the act of Congress establishing the fort, and the survey of Jared Mansfield in 1807 shortly after the fort was disassembled, the boundary of the U.S. military reservation in which the fort itself was located has fortunately been defined with certainty. This military reservation, established by the newly formed United States of America, consisted of 15 acres just to the east of the settlement which became Cincinnati, and was bounded on the north by Fourth Street, on the east by Ludlow Street,

by Broadway on the west, and by the Ohio River on the south. These streets were actually platted before the fort was constructed. As the 1790 surveys of Israel Ludlow show, Broadway was laid out at the time of the fort in a straight line extending all the way to the Ohio River. No longer is this the case. Ludlow Street also extended as a straight line from Fourth Street to the Ohio River. As a point of reference, the intersection of Fourth and Ludlow is diagonally opposite the front door of our Club, and Ludlow Street runs along the east side of the Guilford Building. Today, Ludlow terminates one block south at Arch Street, and the area beyond is occupied by Fort Washington Way. Arch Street, which is parallel to Fourth Street, runs behind the rear or south side of the Guilford Building and the former District 2 police station. Many years ago, Arch Street was known as School Street, presumably because of its adjacency to the then-Guilford School. Today, Iola Alley runs from Fourth Street to Arch Street between the Guilford Building and the University Club. Of course, none of these interior streets existed at the time of Fort Washington, as they were entirely within the area of the military reservation.

But where within this 15 acre military reservation was the fort actually located? It had long been theorized and deduced that the fort would have been out of the floodway, and at least at the top of the second cut or second bank above the Ohio River to protect the fort from flooding.

The actual banks of the Ohio River are, of course, located immediately adjacent to the river itself and are where the Public Landing was first established and still remains today to the south of Mehring Way. When the Ohio River reaches the flood stage of 52 feet, the river overflows these banks. The crest of the second bank or cut above the river is above the limit of most floods. For example, some 14 2 years ago in 1997, the flood reached 65 feet and was more than half-way up the bank of the second cut. The lower part of Broadway was all under water.

For reference, consider that the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center sits atop the second bank. This area is protected from most severe floods, like the one in 1997, but not from all of them. As the artist's rendering on the south wall of our club at the back of this hall shows, the flood of 1884 reached slightly more than 71 feet and covered the entire second bank, lapping at the foot of Third Street. Hence, it was concluded by historians that Fort Washington must have been built above Third Street to protect it from all possible flooding. Only the great flood of 1937 is known to have surpassed Third Street. As the high water mark on the building formerly located long ago at the southwest corner of Third and Broadway had demonstrated, the 1937 flood crossed Third Street, reaching about half-way up to Fourth Street. Accordingly, historians believe that the location of the fort within the military reservation would have been on the ground above the elevation of Third Street.

Historians also theorized and deduced that the fort would have to extend near the high ground of Fourth Street to ensure that the soldiers could fend off an Indian attack from the north. Considering the terrain and topographical features of that era, it would have been most probable that the Indians would have massed on the north side of the fort, probably right where you are sitting this evening. If the fort did not occupy the land close to Fourth Street, the Indians would have been able to exploit the high ground and have a distinct military advantage.

These theories of the historians were finally confirmed about a century and a half after the fort was gone when excavation was undertaken in the early 1950s for the Western & Southern garage located at the northeast corner of Broadway and Third Street. It was at this location that the excavation revealed the Fort Washington powder magazine. As the plaque on the building indicates, and as the records at the Cincinnati Historical Society confirm, the

magazine was a 5-sided structure made of hand-hewn timbers and planking. It was approximately 25 feet deep. The powder had to be stored underground and away from the habitable portions of the fort for safety and security reasons. It was known from old records and historical drawings of the fort that the fort proper occupied approximately 40,000 square feet, which would be 200 feet by 200 feet, almost an acre. As a result of this excavation discovery and other historical documents, the fort was able to be located north of Third Street, south of Fourth Street, and between Ludlow on the east and Broadway on the west. The discovery of the powder magazine from this 1952 excavation work produced the conclusion: It is the only significant identifiable evidence of the fort which has been found. Historians have described these findings as follows: Here was stored the ammunition for the expeditions of the Indian wars (1790-1795) which broke the Indian resistance and opened up the Northwest Territory to peaceful American settlement. This plaque also recognizes Fort Washington as The major military outpost of the United States in the Northwest Territory, 1789-1808.

The four corners of the fort each possessed a blockhouse within which cannons could be located, wielded about, and fired over a range of approximately 270 degrees. As a result, the entire perimeter of the fort could be covered by heavy cannon fire in all directions and provide double fields of fire along all exterior walls of the fortress. Such was necessary to protect the settlers and soldiers from potential attacks by the hostile tribes that were marauding throughout the Ohio territory.

There is today at the southwest corner of the intersection of Fourth and Ludlow, less than 100 feet from the entrance to our club, a monument in the shape of a blockhouse in recognition of where Fort Washington once stood. Although the plaque on this monument states that Fort

Washington existed at this location from 1789 to 1808, some Cincinnati historians believe that the Army occupied the fort only until 1803 and that it was abandoned and disassembled in 1804. The plaque does correctly note that the blockhouse is a stone replica of a blockhouse of Fort Washington which was located on the site and which served as a major military base for the Northwest Territory.

This blockhouse monument is further evidence of the uncertainty that had long existed over the actual location of the fortress. Since 1901 when dedicated, and before 1988 when re-dedicated at its present location adjacent to the Guilford Building, this blockhouse monument was actually located on the south side of Third Street, but just west of Broadway. Since Broadway was the western boundary of the military reservation, this Fort Washington monument had been clearly placed outside the site of the fort.

Nevertheless, historical drawings and sketches of the fort which survived confirm early descriptions of the fort that it was a sturdy and stately fortress. Its walls were approximately two stories high and were made of solid hardwood timbers and planks. It was geometrically symmetrical, an equilateral rectangle, with a substantial blockhouse on each of the four corners as referenced above. It was known to be the strongest fort in the entire Northwest Territory.

It appears that one of these blockhouses would have been located in the vicinity to the southeast of the intersection of Fourth and Broadway, where today sits the University Club, a place rich in Ivy league tradition, historically populated with bluebloods, and a favorite place of Monday evening repasts for members of the Literary Club. Situated today opposite the University Club is the Queen City Club, which some maintain is more prestigious but less snooty. The site of the Queen City Club marks the eastern boundary of Cincinnati as it existed at

the time of Fort Washington.

The aforementioned Ludlow surveys from the 1790s reveal that the platting of the street grid for this area of Cincinnati and beyond provided the rights-of-way and development areas that accommodated the rapid growth of Cincinnati in the first half of the 19th century after the Indian uprisings had been suppressed and the influx of settlers was welcomed. Before the Civil War, Cincinnati grew to be one of the largest cities in the nation. These same surveys showed a street grid that lasted remarkably until the implementation of the 1948 Master Plan in the 1960s, more than a century and a half after Fort Washington.

The official plat prepared by Israel Ludlow in 1790 also showed the location of Lawrence Street, which runs along the west side of our club, and which provides the alley within which many of our members are presently illegally parked. At the time of Fort Washington, Lawrence Street extended southerly all the way to the Ohio River, intersecting with Third Street, with Pearl Street which became Second Street, and with Front Street which is now Mehring Way. Pike Street parallel to the east and Butler Street further to the east were similarly platted. Although historians lament the loss of Fort Washington and regret today that it could not be a site like Fort McHenry in Baltimore harbor where Francis Scott Key composed the Star Spangled Banner, or the Alamo in San Antonio where Colonel Travis and Davey Crockett fought to the death, it can be easily understood why Fort Washington was razed. It was both necessary and logical to complete the street grid over the former 15 acre site of the Fort Washington military reservation. With the ever increasing numbers of newcomers and settlers from the east, the ideal location of this land, and the demand for buildings to house the rapidly growing industries, businesses, and inhabitants, it was simply inevitable that all remnants of Fort Washington would pass.

This layout of streets and lots remained in place until the recommendations of the 1948

Master Plan became reality. This Master Plan did provide, however, for recognition of Fort Washington by proposing what became to known as Fort Washington Way. What today is known as Fort Washington Way was described in the 1948 Master Plan as the Third Street Distributor, connecting the Mill Creek Expressway to the west, which became Interstate 75, with the Northeast Expressway to the east, which became Interstate 71. The Master Plan also called for the redevelopment of the entire area south of Third Street which had been then known as the Bottoms and had become crime infested, blighted, susceptible to flooding, and an unsightly and aesthetically displeasing front yard between the downtown core and the riverfront. Interestingly, the Guilford Building across the street was shown as the proposed Natural History Museum. More interestingly, the 1948 Master Plan made a timely reference to public transit, stating: "Cincinnati and its environs are served through a network of surface streetcar and bus lines. The motor car has the advantage of flexibility of movement. The streetcar lines already converted have demonstrated the merit of the plan."

The selection of the site of the Fort Washington military reservation was quite strategic. It had to be adjacent to the Ohio River, the main means of travel from the east. It had to be located on the frontier, and the area of what is now known as Cincinnati was truly the frontier. It was ideally situated opposite the confluence of the northerly flowing Licking River and the westerly flowing Ohio, with the Licking providing a link to Kentucky and its southern environs, and the Ohio providing a connection to the Mississippi and Missouri River systems. The site of the fort also had to be the place of a natural settlement, and this terrain ideally fulfilled these conditions.

The first settlement in the area was Columbia, founded in 1788 along the Ohio River near

the mouth of the Little Miami River. At approximately the same time, the settlement known as Losantiville was laid out on the northerly banks of the Ohio opposite the Licking River. During the following year, 1789, Fort Washington was built to protect the early settlers who numbered less than 200. . General Arthur St. Clair, appointed governor of the Northwest Territory by Congress in 1787, arrived at Fort Washington in 1790. He then renamed the settlement known as Losantiville to Cincinnati, in honor of the organization of American Revolutionary War officers who in 1783 had formed the Society of the Cincinnati, named after the famous Roman citizen soldier Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus. Each of the original 13 colonies formed a chapter of the Society of Cincinnati as a hereditary, military, and patriotic organization, and the society elected General George Washington as its first president. Hence, it was most appropriate that the fort in Cincinnati be named Fort Washington.

Cincinnati was also the ideal location for one of the first settlements in the Northwest Territory, and Cincinnati became a part of the manifest destiny of settlers from the east. Since this site was in a large flat basin, adjacent to and above the Ohio River, drained by the Mill Creek, and surrounded by a crescent of seven hills, it was perfect for the development of a city. Although there has been argument for years as to what are the seven hills of Cincinnati, and does Cincinnati have seven hills or actually many more, there are in fact seven distinct and prominent elevated areas in a semi-circle that form the basin. Clockwise from the west they include Price Hill, Fairmount, Fairview Heights, Clifton Heights, Mt. Auburn, Walnut Hills, and Mt. Adams, as they are known today.

Cincinnati became the capital of the Northwest Territory because of the presence of Fort Washington which protected its settlers and which served as the staging place for the military operations necessary to secure the peace and ensure the tranquility. Regrettably, many students

today do not even know what the Northwest Territory was, when it existed, and where it was situated. More often than not, when asked what states comprise the Northwest Territory, they likely but unfortunately answer Oregon and Washington. In actuality, the United States Congress established the Northwest Territory in 1787 as a U. S. territory for the land west of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, north of the Ohio River, east of the Mississippi River, and south of the Great Lakes. From this territory, five states and part of a sixth were carved out, beginning in 1803 with the State of Ohio as the 17th member of the Union. In 1816, Indiana became the 19th state, followed by Illinois as the 21st state in 1818. Previously, they formed the Indiana territory of the Northwest Territory. The Michigan territory had been awarded to the United States in 1783 pursuant to the armistice with the British after the U. S. War of Independence. However, the British refused to leave Detroit and continued to agitate the Indians against the American settlers. Michigan became the 26th state in 1837. Wisconsin became the last state fully carved out of the Northwest Territory in 1848 as the 30th state. The eastern portion of Minnesota east of the Mississippi River was the only remaining part of the Northwest Territory; Minnesota became the 32nd state in 1858.

The Northwest Territory was exceedingly important to the newly formed United States of America for many reasons, the least of which was not financial. Previously, the Commonwealths of Virginia and Massachusetts and the States of Connecticut and New York had claims to the lands in this territory. After the American Revolutionary War and the establishment of the United States of America, these claims were ceded to the new central government. The sale of these lands became necessary to pay off the debt incurred during the Revolutionary War. In order to do so, it was necessary to create American settlements throughout the Northwest Territory, but such could not be accomplished with the rampant

hostility of the Native Americans who were encouraged, financed, and directed in great part by the British.

Many tribes migrated through and occupied various portions of the Northwest Territory. These tribes were mostly hunters, and all sorts of wildlife was available to them, including bear, beaver, deer, and wolves. The predominant tribes in Ohio were the Miami, Shawnee, and Lakota. When the ferocious Iroquois were pushed out of New York and Pennsylvania by settlers, they ravaged the natives in Ohio, pushing these tribes further west through and beyond the Indiana territory. The white man feared the Iroquois, as horror stories of confrontations between these warriors and settlers spread across the frontier. Illinois, which had been part of lands ceded by the French to Britain east of the Mississippi River after the French and Indian War, was home to the Sac and Fox in the north, the Illinois in the central, and the Cahokia in the south. Tribes in Michigan included the Ottawa, Miami, Potawatomi, Huron, and Wyandot. Wisconsin had become home to many Indian tribes after the last glacial period, and during the time of the Northwest Territory it included Chippewa, Winnebago, Potawatomi, Illinois, Miami, Huron, Ottawa, and Sioux.

Although President Washington wanted to resolve conflicts with the Indians through conferences and negotiation, hostilities became inevitable. The second commander of Fort Washington after General St. Clair was General Josiah Hamar. In late 1790, his army was ambushed and severely defeated by a war party of the Miami led by their feared chief, Little Turtle. This defeat of the U. S. Army emboldened tribes throughout the Ohio territory. With the British exploiting this weakness and giving aid and assistance to the Indians, the situation was becoming critical. The Indians were now in open revolt, and their raids came dangerously close to Cincinnati, even with the presence of Fort Washington and its garrison of troops. Fear had

been struck into the hearts of the settlers. The scariest moment came in the summer of 1791 when the blacksmith of Fort Washington, John Van Cleve, ventured out of the fort and northwest into the area which later became known as Over-the-Rhine. While in the vicinity of what today is known as Elm Street where Music Hall is located, Mr. Van Cleve was attacked, stabbed multiple times, scalped and killed. Now, some 220 years later, conditions around Music Hall are quite different in many ways, yet similar in other ways. It is still possible to be stabbed and killed near Music Hall but highly improbable that the victim would be scalped. According to legend, the settlers' fears of the Miami led to such animus that the white people would refer pejoratively to the Miami as "Redskins". Years later, that intellectual institution of higher education in nearby Oxford, Ohio, would maintain that it adopted the nickname "Redskins" as a sign of affection. After sustained protestations from members of the Miami tribe, the institution relented, as some of you know firsthand.

These open, unprovoked attacks on settlers forced President Washington to appoint General Anthony Wayne, known as "Mad Anthony", commander in chief of the United States Army to suppress the hostile Indians. He was the third commander of Fort Washington which had become the staging area and supply source for all of the northern forts including Fort Wayne in northeast Indiana not far from the Ohio border. From Fort Wayne, General Wayne led his famous expeditionary force that defeated the Shawnee under Chief Blue Jacket in 1794 in the pivotal Battle of Fallen Timbers near Toledo.

No reference to the Indian Wars in the Northwest Territory would be complete without reference to the legendary Tecumseh. Perhaps the greatest Native American leader who ever fought in the Northwest Territory, Tecumseh was born in nearby Springfield, Ohio in 1768.

Tecumseh was known as a skilled orator, a military tactician, and an advocate of intertribal alliances. In order to understand his motivations and decisions, it is necessary to study his upbringing. His father, a Shawnee, was killed by whites in 1774 when Tecumseh was only 6 years old. His mother, a Muskogee, left him at the tender age of 7 when her nomadic tribe migrated to Missouri. He was then adopted by the Shawnee Chief Blackfish. He had several white foster brothers who had been captured by Blackfish, which mistakenly led some to believe previously that Tecumseh was part white. Interestingly, one of the whites captured among his several white foster brothers was frontiersman Daniel Boone. But, shortly after his capture, the wily Boone escaped, with the other whites remaining permanent property of the Shawnee. Although some have alleged that the Literary Club is anti-feminist, surely an unfounded accusation, such sentiment might nevertheless lend understanding to Tecumseh's hatred of white people. It was his mother who instilled this hatred in him. She reviled him with stories of invasion, murder, and massacre by the whites.

Beginning at age 14, he fought with the British against the colonists in the American Revolutionary War. As he grew older, Tecumseh led numerous predatory Shawnee raids against flatboats coming down the Ohio River. At age 26, he fought valiantly in the Indian defeat at the Battle of Fallen Timbers but was able to escape and fight on later. He also fought in the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811 near Lafayette, Indiana, where the victorious general William Henry Harrison was made famous.

During the War of 1812, Tecumseh joined forces with the British and organized what may have been the most formidable Indian force ever in North America when he captured Detroit and 2,500 U.S. army soldiers. His demise came in 1813 at age 45 while still a warrior and fighting with British General Henry Procter against the Americans in Ontario where he was

fatally slain. Tecumseh's role in the history of Ohio continues to this day to be recognized and praised, even though he fought with the enemy.

Coincidentally, General William Henry Harrison's rise to fame and his election as the ninth president of the United States are attributed directly to his accomplishments as an Indian fighter in Ohio and Indiana. Although born in Virginia, William Henry Harrison is lauded as Ohio's first president, as evidenced by his statue prominently displayed at Eighth and Elm in downtown Cincinnati. Seven other native born Ohio presidents followed, including Ulysses S. Grant, the 18th president, Rutherford B. Hayes, the 19th president, James A. Garfield, the 20th president, Benjamin Harrison, the 23rd president, William McKinley, the 25th president, William Howard Taft, the 27th president, and Warren G. Harding, the 29th president. No other state has produced so many presidents. All of these presidents are highly honored in Ohio and most exceptionally so in Cincinnati. There is the large statue of President Garfield at the corner of Garfield Place and Vine Street. The William Howard Taft House on Auburn Avenue is a national monument. Rutherford B. Hayes has been exceptionally recognized in a paper past delivered in this very room. The Warren G. Harding Society meets annually in Cincinnati on the anniversary of his birthday every November 3rd. There is a prominent portrait of General Ulysses S. Grant on display in the Queen City Club. One would only hope that someday George Washington can be similarly honored here in Cincinnati if not at our club. For it was General Washington, President Washington, and Fort Washington which made all of this possible.

After Ohio became a state in 1803, the stability of the Northwest Territory was finally determined, and the gateway to the west was permanently opened. Also in 1803, the United States under President Jefferson acquired the Louisiana territory, consisting of the land west of

the Mississippi River and east of the Rocky Mountains, from France for the sum of \$15 million; and it was the Ohio River, flowing past Cincinnati and Fort Washington, which provided the connection from the east to the Louisiana territory. Ohio became known as the state with beautiful river valleys, expansive lakefronts, heavily wooded forests, softly rolling hills, and flat open plains. The name "Ohio" comes from the Iroquoian word meaning "great water" or "beautiful river". Is it not ironic that such a ferocious tribe could give such a comforting name to our homeland. Ohio grew to a state of highly urbanized and industrialized population centers while retaining open rural agrarian areas of extensive farms and pasture lands. Today, more than 75,000 citizens of Ohio are believed to have Indian blood.

We in Ohio are so fortunate to be the beneficiary of the great works of George Washington. Of all the places named after him, Fort Washington might have had the most meaning and significance to him. Many schools, streets, and communities have been named after George Washington, but he really had no connection or association with any of them. The Washington Monument, although a beautiful and stately memorial, was not begun to be constructed until 1848, not completed until 1884, and not dedicated until 1885, all long after the death of President Washington in 1799. Although Washington, D.C. is, of course, named after President Washington, he never lived in Washington, and the White House was first occupied by President John Adams. The capital offices were moved from Philadelphia to Washington in October, 1800, almost a year after the passing of George Washington.

On the other hand, Fort Washington was named by Congress in his honor and while he was president. It was the most important fort of the United States army during his lifetime. Other prominent forts during his lifetime had been under the Continental army or state militia,

not the United States army. It is also quite significant to have a fort named after George Washington, because he will always be remembered as the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, leading the 13 colonies to victory over the powerful British army in the U.S. War of Independence. Often overlooked are the extent of his military victories and the variety of strategies he employed on the battlefield. Historically, many generals have been known for winning one great battle, while General George Washington won many great battles. Some generals had superior trained forces, superior numbers of troops, superior funding and financial backing, and superior equipment, but Washington had none of these *B* only the strength of his character. Alexander the Great and General Ulysses S. Grant won major battles through sheer numbers of soldiers. Hanibal and Rommel prevailed with advantageous geographical conditions. Julius Caesar and Napoleon Bonaparte had forces with superior equipment and exceptional training. Genghis Khan and Atilla the Hun triumphed through the infliction of terror and fear, and their complete disregard for human suffering and misery. In contrast, George Washington's success was due to the quality and strength of his character, the inspiration and compassion of his leadership, and the guile and resourcefulness of his tactics.

Washington's military encounters are lengthy and impressive. Although American history books were well known for relating his lifetime of accomplishments, no examination of Washington is proper without recognition of specific courageous and heroic achievements. At age 21, and a member of the Virginia militia, Washington trekked several hundred miles to the Ohio valley to negotiate with Indians aligned with the French and hostile to the British. Because of severe weather conditions, frozen ground, and deep snow, Washington and his guide were unable to continue on horseback and had to proceed on foot. The forests were infested with

Indians and he was confronted by a hostile who fired at him point blank only to miss. Later, when crossing the icy waters of the Allegheny River, Washington and his guide were thrown from their makeshift raft and barely survived drowning, hypothermia, and exposure.

The following year in 1754, Washington encountered combative French soldiers near Fort Duquense in Pennsylvania about which he later wrote: *I have heard the bullets whistle; and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.*⁶

In 1755, while serving under General Edward Braddock when Braddock's troops were surrounded by a French and Indian force, two of the horses Washington was riding were shot and killed, and four bullets penetrated his coat.

In 1775, 12 years after the French and Indian War, George Washington was elected unanimously as Commander in Chief of the proposed Continental Army. He humbly accepted, stating famously, *Although I am truly sensible of the high honor done me in this appointment, yet, I feel great distress from a consciousness that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust.*⁶ He refused a salary and asked only that Congress pay his expenses. In March 1776, after Washington received an honorary doctorate from Harvard College, he led his troops from Boston to New York City to confront the British. Has anything like that ever occurred since? In several battles in and around New York, Washington skillfully employed retreating actions that saved his army from complete destruction and devastation, as his Continental army troops were outmanned by the British, superior in both number and training.

When things seemed almost completely desperate, Washington made the most daring move of his military career. On Christmas night, 1776, he led the silent crossing of the frigid

Delaware River and the surprise raid on the unsuspecting British mercenaries at Trenton in a brilliant tactical maneuver that turned the fate of the war.

Throughout the Revolutionary War, Washington had been plagued by desertions, inadequacy of food and provisions, lack of reliable arms for his troops, inaccurate and unreliable intelligence, and by recalcitrant governors more interested in the defense of their respective colonies than the support of an emerging nation. The lowest point came in the winter of 1777 at Valley Forge, 20 miles from Philadelphia. Washington's soldiers were suffering from bitter cold and frost, lack of nourishment, and eroding morale. Through the strength of his character, the obvious compassion for his men, and undeterred leadership in overcoming a woeful lack of support in Congress, Washington was able to bide his time and allow his troops to regroup. Ultimately, he was able to trap General Cornwallis and the British army in Yorktown, Virginia, where Cornwallis was forced famously to surrender on October 17, 1781, effectively ending the war and insuring American independence.

Those closest to Washington who saw his hardships and triumphs concluded that it was Washington and Washington alone who saved this nation. His unassailable and unflinching courage under the most difficult and stressful of times and conditions inspired those under him to persevere and rise up and not be defeated.

Perhaps, as the members of this august assemblage can appreciate better than most, the truest revelations of a man's character may be found in his written words. Washington's writings are especially insightful. Among them:

How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because some day in life you will have been all of these. @

His understanding and sympathy for others can be found in the following:

*ALet your heart feel for the afflictions and distress of everyone,
and let your hand give in proportion to your purse.@*

Washington=s suspicion of government and his belief in the need for the checks and balances adopted in our Constitution can be traced to his words:

AThe marvel of all history is the patience with which men and women submit to burdens unnecessarily laid upon them by their governments.@

Washington was so appreciated for his humility and especially his complete lack of egotistical behavior, which unfortunately is a trait found far too often among persons in powerful positions. Said Washington:

AIN looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me.@

What may separate Washington most from other generals made famous in history was Washington=s revile toward war:

AMy first wish is to see this plague of mankind, war, banished from the earth.@

Hence, it is easy to see why Colonial Americans and the citizens of the emerging nation viewed George Washington as first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen, knowing how Washington truly felt:

AIIf after all my humble but faithful endeavors to advance the felicity of my country and mankind, I may indulge a hope that my labors have not been altogether without success, it will be the only real compensation I can receive in the closing of my life.@

Thus, my fellow members, it is hoped that you appreciate the hallowed ground on which this club sits, the significance and importance of Fort Washington in the formation of our growing nation, and the character traits of President George Washington that enabled him to survive many trials and travails, so that we may be here this evening. And thus, may you be so inspired when it comes your time to be the one who comes with a paper.