

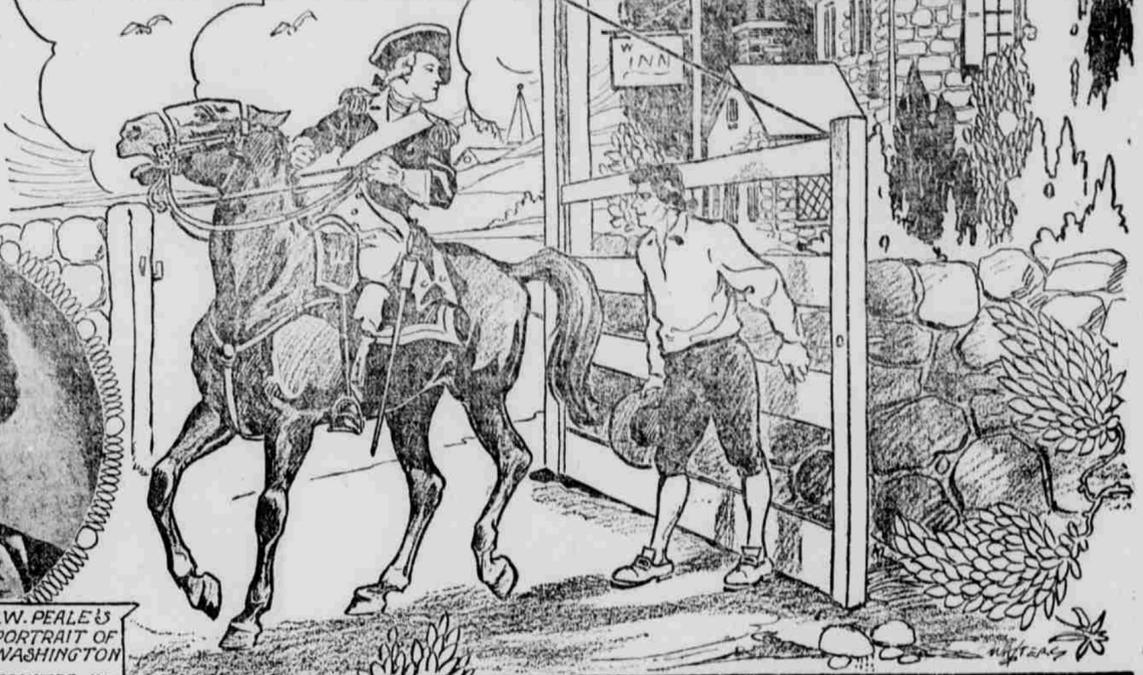
# HOW WASHINGTON "MADE" PHILADELPHIA

BY SAMUEL H. PIERCE

**W**ASHINGTON was more closely identified with Philadelphia than any other American city, and although more than a century has elapsed since his death, there are in existence there more buildings held memorable on account of the great American's visit than may be found elsewhere. It is true that the word tradition is often very loosely applied to some of the tales of Washington's visit to this or that house, but, after eliminating all the suspicious memorials, there still remain a very considerable number—far more than the average person appreciates.

When he first came to Philadelphia Washington was a young man of 25. He had traveled a good deal, considering with what expense and difficulty travel was accomplished in those days. He had been to the Barbados, and had been on military duty at Boston. It was a military assignment which took him to Philadelphia to confer with Lord Loudon before setting out to the frontier, for the French and Indian war was in progress. While there, it is said, he visited the playhouse, for there is to be found in his journal an entry reading: "March 17, by Mr. Palmes, tickets 52-6," meaning 52 shillings and sixpence. If he did visit the theater he must have gone to that old warehouse of William Plumstead, then on Water street near Pine, but no longer standing, for that is where the early companies gave their

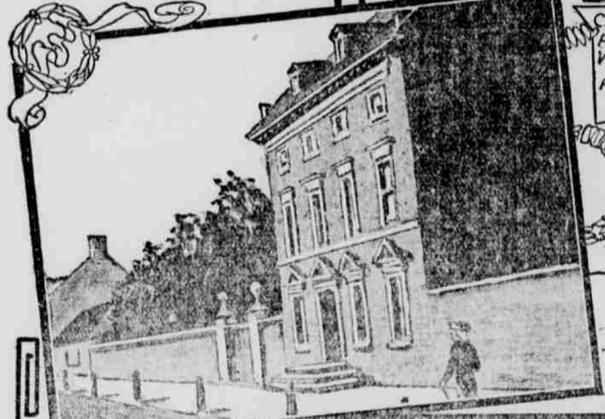
## PHILADELPHIA



performances while in Philadelphia. Aside from those national relics, Independence hall, Carpenters' hall, Christ church and St. Peter's church, it is a strange commentary on the vicissitudes of buildings to note that the majority of the places standing which have gained immortality by sheltering the first president are nearly all of them old inns, or taverns. In the majority of cases Washington's connection with the old houses is limited to having taken a meal in the old posthouses, and, indeed, the only other buildings identified with his Philadelphia visits are those where he was entertained, either publicly or socially.



C. W. PEALE'S PORTRAIT OF WASHINGTON PAINTED IN 1787



HOUSE OCCUPIED BY WASHINGTON WHILE PRESIDENT

Between 1757 and 1773 it does not appear that Washington visited the city, but in the latter year he passed through Philadelphia on his way to New York, where he placed his stepson in King's college. Thereafter he was more frequently seen there, and after he left New York, in 1790, when the capital was removed to Philadelphia, he never again visited New York, and the last years of his life were passed very largely in Philadelphia.



WASHINGTON IN HIS MILL

It appears that Philadelphia very nearly had Washington for a permanent resident at one time. When congress decided to move the national capital from New York to Philadelphia Washington, of course, had "inside information" that the project was in view. At that time he is said to have attempted to purchase a farm near the Quaker city, being keen enough as a large landowner to see that there would be a large rise in the values of property here. Where this farm was located does not appear, but Washington was unable to bring about the transfer. Some time later he was successful in purchasing some town lots in the new city of Washington, which was being laid out as the federal capital.

Under the date November 27, Marshall notes: "About ten, Lady Washington, attended by the troop of horse, two companies of light infantry, etc., left this city, on her journey to the camp at Cambridge."

In May of the following year Washington was in Philadelphia again on the 27th of that month. The diarist remarks: "Past two took a walk to see the review of sundry battalions of militia and the recruits, which were drawn up regularly with the troop of horse and train of artillery. The generals were Washington, (chief), Gates and Mifflin, with the congress, members of assembly, a number of clergymen, officers, etc., and a vast concourse of people, between 20 and 30 of the Indians of the Six Nations." On June 5 the generals and their aides left for New York.

During the next two years a great deal of the campaign had its scenes near the city. Part of the time Philadelphia was in the hands of the British, and in October, 1777, the battle of Germantown was fought. While Washington and his army were in the neighborhood, the old inns on the outskirts of the town were visited by him at times, in this way we have the tradition of his visit to Valley Green on the Wissahickon, Carlton, to Germantown, and to the old Abbey hotel on Wissahickon avenue.

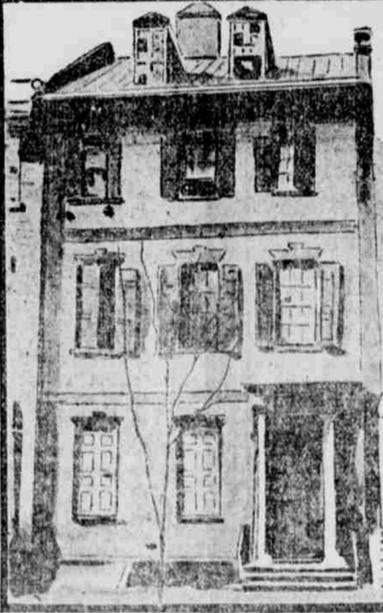
The next year Washington is found in the southwestern part of Philadelphia, and here he is pictured doing a very gallant act at the old Blue Bell inn, at Darby road

to the city from Schuylkill ferry by the colonel and other officers and light infantry of the Second battalion and the company of light horse, etc."

Perhaps no woman ever had been so ceremoniously received in this country before. Mrs. Washington remained in the city for several days, and a ball had been arranged for her at the New Tavern. But it was pointed out that congress had expressly forbidden such festivities during stirring times, and the distinguished visitor, when the matter was brought to her attention, graciously recalled her acceptance, and the dance was not given.

One of the young girls remarked that she would like to see if a kiss would remove the sober look on the face of the general. Washington arose and presented himself at the door. The young women were confused, and as none of them would acknowledge she was the culprit, Washington said: "Then I shall have to kiss you all." And he did.

In 1779 the commander-in-chief of the army is in Philadelphia again. This time he sat to Charles Wilson Peale, at the invitation of the supreme executive council. Peale's studio was at Third and Pine streets, and it is believed that it was there that Washington gave the artist the necessary sittings for the picture which subsequently was defaced by the British, although it has frequently been said that the portrait was destroyed. This, as Charles Henry Hart has pointed out, was not the case, and the portrait is still in existence. It was during this time that Washington was a guest at a ball given by the Powells at their mansion, 244 South Third street.



POWELL MANSION 244 SOUTH 3RD ST. WASHINGTON IS SAID TO HAVE DANCED A MINUET HERE

The war was drawing to an end, and Washington was giving it the finishing touches in the south. He did not appear in Philadelphia again until after the surrender of Cornwallis, when he visited the city that he might consult with congress concerning the future operations of the army. During this visit he was the guest of honor at an entertainment given by the French minister. This was a concert, very likely given at the City Tavern, and in January following he was a guest at the Southwark theater, where a special program had been prepared, the plays being the French comedy "Eugenie," by Benmarchain, and "The Lying Valet," an English farce. The playhouse was decorated for the occasion, and Washington's name in large letters was displayed in a conspicuous manner in an ingenious illumination.

When Washington returned to the Quaker city in July of the same year there were more entertainments in his honor. One of these was given in a specially erected apartment to the house of the French minister, and the occasion was the birthday of the dauphin of France. There was a concert, followed by fireworks, a ball and a supper.

Like the celebrated Cincinnatus, Washington, having finished his public work, returned to his plow. He did visit the city in May, 1784, when he attended a meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati. On May day he dined with Robert Morris at the Hills, now Lemon hill, and while there the Sons of St. Tammany, who were banqueting at Mr. Pole's country seat, went to Morris' and saluted the general on their way home.

In 1787 Washington was called from his retirement to attend the federal convention, and once more Philadelphia entertained him.

Washington's next appearance in that city was in the early part of the year 1789, when he was on his way to New York to be inaugurated first president of the United States. On this occasion, as might be expected, he was received as only a conqueror and hero could be. He was met at Gray's Ferry, where he crossed the river on the old floating bridge, by a vast procession. Children sang patriotic songs, the bridge was festooned, and there was a very modest triumphal arch erected at the Philadelphia side of the river. Under this the president-elect passed. He was escorted through the city, and the troops and the other escort did not leave him until they had set him down at the Jolly Post, in Frankford. The Jolly Post, being on the road to New York, was frequently the stopping place of Washington during his many journeys to and from the east.

The state of Pennsylvania erected a large and handsome building on Ninth street, where the postoffice now stands, which it was intended should be the residence of the president. It was not finished when Washington came to Philadelphia to continue his first term, and he very wisely rented the house of Robert Morris, then on Market street between Fifth and Sixth streets. For the next seven years, excepting during the yellow fever epidemic, Washington occupied this mansion, which, during the British occupation of the city, had been the residence of Lord Howe.

In 1793 the yellow fever struck terror to the heart of every resident of the city, and the government offices were removed to Germantown, which was regarded as safe from the ravages of the epidemic. There Washington rented from Major Franks the house on Germantown road now numbered 5442 and known as the Morris house. While president and a resident of the Quaker city Washington visited practically every prominent citizen. He was frequently a guest at one or other of their houses. He was fond of the theater, and after the ban had been removed he is found once in a while at the old South Street house, where he was particularly pleased with the acting of Thomas Wignell, a cousin of Hallam and a fine comedian.

It was not long before the congress appointed him as commander-in-chief, and he was plunged into that military duty which kept him engaged for the next six years. On June 20 Washington reviewed the city militia, then exercising on the commons, and shortly thereafter the general was on his way to take command of the little

He arrived in Philadelphia on November 10, 1798, being escorted by the Macpherson Blues, and went to lodgings at Mrs. White's. This house was numbered 9 North Eighth street, and was on the east side of the street between Market and Filbert streets, the site now occupied by a store. The month he spent there at that time was largely taken up with dinners and other entertainments. He dined with the cabinet officers, with Bishop White, with Samuel Morehead, with Mr. Bingham, and was at Belmont with Judge Peters. He also was entertained by Gov. Mifflin and Mr. Rawle.

This was Washington's last visit to the city. He left there on December 14, and Philadelphia never saw him again. The following year, late in December, the sad news of his death was received, and the new nation immediately was wrapped in mourning.