

Protecting the Boundary and Corner Stones of the District of Columbia



SOUTH CORNER STONE IN WATERS OF THE POTOMAC.

A DEEP conviction that the oldest and original boundary marks of a section of the country as important, significant and historically interesting as the District of Columbia should be carefully preserved, has led a number of Washingtonians to adopt this question for serious consideration.

The Daughters of the American Revolution are advocating that these stones be recovered and saved from further demolition. The society has gained the support of a number of influential persons, and through their efforts it is believed that something will be done.

F. E. Woodward is enthusiastically interested in the renovation of the stones and their protection for the future. He has delivered a number of lectures on the subject before numerous formal assemblies, as has also Col. William W. Harts, superintendent of public parks and grounds.

More than 125 years ago Gen. Washington supervised the survey which led to the boundary stones being placed about the District. At that time this city was unnamed, though referred to as the Federal City. Neither was the District of Columbia named, but the plot of ground surveyed embraced a piece of land ten miles square. This original ten-mile square ran on one side from the south corner stone, near Alexandria, to Falls Church, Va., on one hand, and on the other, ten miles due northeast, to where the Chesapeake Beach railway station is located at the present time. The other two sides of the square ran from Falls Church and Chesapeake Beach station, respectively, to Woodside, Md.

The inaccuracies in some instances amount to as much as forty feet in a mile, and in one case there is a short age of 138 feet.

In the year 1845 a part of this original ten-mile square section was ceded back to Virginia. However, the location of the stones has not been changed and Virginia citizens are apparently as interested as Washingtonians in having the stones recovered.

In all, there are forty of the stones, only one of which has been irrevocably lost. The stone was taken from the sandstone quarries of Aquia creek, Va., and is the same material from which the first public buildings of the District were made. These quarries were leased by the United States government.

A large number of stones were laid in 1791, and the rest the following year. The stone mileposts measure one foot wide by one foot deep. Two feet of smooth stone protrudes from the ground, and two feet of the rough stone lie imbedded. They all have leveled tops, the surfaces showing plainly that they were not dressed, but sawed out. Each of the four faces bears an interesting inscription. In a sense each inscription is a symbol of the times and the minds of the people. A severe struggle for the existence of the colonies had been survived. Each new state felt that she had paid in full the price for freedom, and so, to a certain extent, was jealous of it and determined to protect it in every possible way. On the sides of the stones facing Virginia and Maryland the names of those two states are cut. On the opposite face does not appear "D. C.," but instead, in large, clear, well cut capitals, this: "Jurisdiction of the United States." From this comes the expression not infrequently heard, "Jurisdiction stones." Another interesting and informing item inscribed on the stones is the variation of the compass.

The four corner stones are somewhat larger and taller than the milestones. The first corner stone to be placed was the one near Alexandria. This was laid by the Masonic Lodge of Alexandria 125 years ago, with appropriate ceremonies. Some years after a lighthouse was built, and the stone disappeared. For seventy-

Since the original survey these measurements have been gone over and it has been proved that the milestones which were placed between the corner stones are not exactly a mile apart, and the stone disappeared. For seventy-

DAUGHTERS of American Revolution Advocating That Stones Be Recovered and Saved From Demolition—Society Has Gained Support for the Work—Gen. Washington, One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years Ago, Supervised Survey Which Led to the Stones Being Placed Around the Ten-Mile Square—City Was Unnamed at That Time.

five years it was buried behind the foundation of the lighthouse. Several years ago a man interested in the recovery of the District's corner stones made a trip to Alexandria, found his way to the lighthouse and unearthed the relic.

The north corner stone stands as erect as any sentinel today. It is imbedded in an old corn field.

The east corner stone stands on the old Lee estate, in the midst of a rich and cultivated field. The west stone is near Falls Church, just one mile north of it. It is badly broken, a piece of quite good size having been severed from the monument stone itself. The broken piece is not lost, however, but lies near at hand.

Of the other boundary stones, classed as mile stones, fourteen are reported in really very fair condition; ten others show signs of the wear and tear of exposure to all kinds of weather; eight are in dense woods, all rather difficult to find; eight others are in fields which are well cultivated, and they have been undisturbed. Six of the thirty-nine are in bad condition, one lies partially buried by the Potomac, whose waters swirl and sweep around it. This stone is just below the mouth of Oxon run. It is in fair condition. In order to examine it a trip in a rowboat is necessary. Still another one is worn almost as smooth as rocks, constantly washed by a stream of swift water. Three lie near a roadside, four are on open ground and quite unprotected, being at the mercy of the elements and vandalism.

There are spots where water or a steep pitch mark the end of a mile, and it has been suggested that these boundary monuments be transplanted to a better location.

The stones on the southwest side of the original boundary survey, and a few on the northwest side, mark the boundary today between the counties of Alexandria and Fairfax, Virginia. One of these Virginia stones reposes in the back yard of a Virginian.

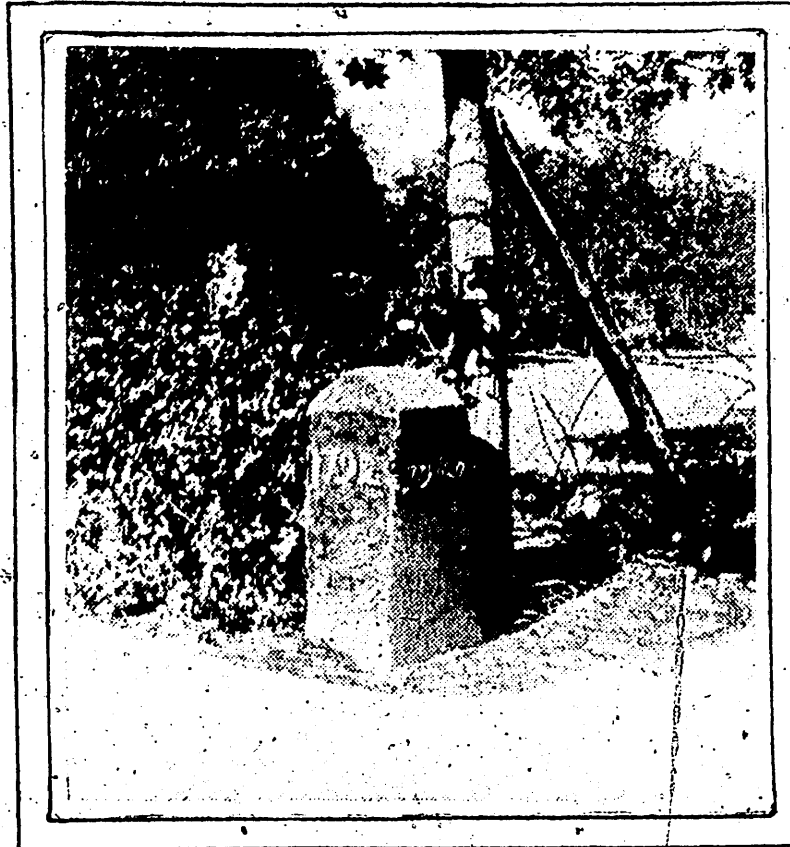
The stone, known as No. 7 on the southwest side, is far from erect; indeed, it sways in quite a dissipated fashion, and there are other indications of a hard life—a bullet mark or two and a battered appearance. The date is absolutely worn away.

The next milestone, No. 8, along this boundary line is lost. It stood on the road near Throckmorton or Upton hill. It fell into a bank which had threatened for a long time to cave in, where it lay for a considerable period and at last vanished completely.

West of Chevy Chase Circle, approximately a quarter of a mile, there is a stone remarkably well preserved. It stands erect, shows little disintegration from weathering and the lettering is easily read.

On the east side of Chevy Chase, well concealed in the dense woods, in a restful, tranquil spot is a picturesque milestone, well decorated with moss.

One of the finest stones on the Maryland line is No. 7, on the northeast side. It would be almost flawless if it were not for the disfiguring scar which runs from the top one foot down the side. This particular stone is so hard to locate that those who wish to examine it for some purpose find



BOUNDARY STONE IN TAKOMA PARK.

it expedient to employ a guide. It is about three-quarters of a mile from the Reform School.

An interesting stone on the southeast line is No. 5. To the ambitious and enthusiastic walker a long ramble is assured if he makes No. 5 his goal. Its surroundings are somewhat incongruous, and historical romance flees when one learns that it is planted in the very heart of a truck farm—and, worse still, one finds it in the potato patch. A large piece of stone has been clipped from its top.

Many people who have seen all these stones aver that the one to take the prize for being in the most excellent condition is No. 6, on the southeast line. It stands on a rise of ground near Wheeler Pond. It has kept beautifully straight all these years, its edges are not badly blunted or chipped and the lettering is still fine. This stone is tucked away beneath the protecting branches of a sassafras tree.

No. 8, on the southeast line, is in better condition than the majority. It is located about a quarter of a mile from the new powerhouse of the District. Several others of the famous old stones which have not been mentioned are little better than stumps, their tops having been broken off.

A man in Virginia who found one of these boundary stones in his yard was much annoyed. He declared that it was in his way, so he dug it up. Many of the Virginia stones seem to have

that the expense will be something like a thousand dollars.

The stones are now being parceled out for future work. Virginia has raised enough money for a fair share of the work and is eager to contribute to the proper preservation of these earliest memorials of the city of Washington and the District of Columbia.

Two of the stones, with commemorative services, patriotic songs, etc., have been cared for and placed. Pictures were also taken upon these occasions. One of the stones stands at the District line near Chain bridge. The commemorative services took place before a considerable crowd last spring.

The other stone is west of Chevy Chase Circle, on the edge of Bell road. The people who had gathered there heard some patriotic addresses and old songs. On the 15th of April of this year commemorative services were held at the east corner stone, where an iron fence eight feet in diameter and five feet in height was erected to keep this important landmark intact. The ceremony was under the auspices of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The Boy Scouts were out in force, and children decorated both fence and monument with flowers. The Rev. Paul Hickok was called upon for the opening prayer. Patriotic speeches were made by Representative S. D. Fess of Ohio, whose subject was George Washington; B. W. Murch, school supervisor, talked on how the corner stone represented the Masonic order; F. E. Woodward on "Mile Stones, Old and New," while Mrs. Mary Lockwood and others addressed the crowd.

Robinson White presented the D. A. R. with a deed to the piece of land eight feet square on which stands the monu-



NORTHEAST BOUNDARY STONE.

ment. The society in turn presented the same to President Wilson for the United States, and Col. Harts acknowledged their presentation. The band played a number of appropriate and inspiring selections. The ceremony was especially significant in that it took place exactly 125 years after the first stone was placed.

The day before, the 14th of April, the north corner stone was commemorated in a similar fashion.

There is a plan now afoot for putting

a boulevard around the original boundary line of the District. If this is done, the boundary stones will quite naturally assume a new importance, and it will be necessary to do something with them.

If the Daughters of the American Revolution have the success hoped for, and the work forges ahead satisfactorily, each stone will have its fence and will have been renovated as perfectly as possible within the next three years.

Consolation.

A SENATOR said in the course of an armor-plate argument: "Your plea, sir, only makes matters worse. You are as bad as the old bachelor."

"A young husband complained bitterly to an old bachelor about his wife's extravagance.

"Why," he said, they told me that two could live as cheaply as one, I never dreamed my wife would prove such an expense."

"Ah, yes, my boy," said the old bachelor, "a wife is an expensive article, that is true, but, then, you must remember that she lasts a very long time."

A Poor Shot.

WALTER WINANS, of the millionaire Baltimore family, is a champion revolver shot, and on his estate in England he has been training sharpshooters for the allies since the beginning of the war.

Mr. Winans was not always a good shot. He tells a story, in fact, of a time when he was such a poor shot that a boy, after watching his performance for an hour or so, touched his cap to him and said:

"Say, mister, gimme a dime and a start as far as the fence, and you can let go both barrels at me."

The Better Course.

ARNOLD DALY was talking about the fashions.

"First the slashed skirt and now the short skirt," he said, "have certainly brought, the stocking into marked prominence.

"The stocking—the silk stocking—in the streets, in the restaurants, meeting in and out of motor cars, and above all in the illustrations of the magazines—the stocking flashes its beauty on us everywhere.

"I heard a theatrical man say the other day:

"What shall we do to testify to our regret for the boss' death? Close down the show."

"Close down the show? No," said his assistant, "We'll put the chorus in black stockings."

Maintaining Discipline.

DISCIPLINE, said a government official at a dinner in Washington, "naval discipline must be maintained at all costs.

"They tell a story to illustrate this.

"A naval officer said to a seaman:

"What idiot told you to dump that pile of dunnage there?"

"It was the captain, sir," the sailor answered.

"Humph," said the officer, "let it remain there, then, and take twelve hours in irons, my man, for calling the captain an idiot."

A Neat Rebuke.

THE late Richard Harding Davis was once persuaded to dine with a new rich millionaire in a cream-colored palace on 5th avenue.

The millionaire told how much everything had cost—how much his Ming vases had cost, how much his gobelin tapestries had cost, the price of his Louis Seize furniture and so forth.

"After dinner the man produced, with the cigars, a bottle of 125-year-old brandy. He told how much this had cost, of course.

Mr. Davis sipped the old brandy from the enormous glass in which old brandy is always served.

"Yes, sir," said the millionaire, "that stuff cost me just—"

"Excuse me," said Mr. Davis, holding out his glass, "but, it's so very good, would you mind letting me have about \$4.75 worth more of it, please."

No Complaint.

D. R. LYMAN ABBOTT, the divine, said, at an anti-suffrage dinner in New York:

"The masculine tyranny that women complain of is often a blessing in disguise.

"Men are so hideously lacking in self-control, a young girl once said to her mother.

"Well, don't find fault with that," the mother answered, "if they weren't most girls would die old maids."