

Washington Unique in That It Is the Only World Capital Founded by the Government Itself—Something About City's Origin and Its History—Monuments to Honor Nation's Heroes.

WASHINGTON as a world capital has a unique distinction in that it is the only one founded by the government itself. It was no haphazard thing, placing the seat of the young republic in its present location. Congress and the people gave it long and careful consideration, and dispute and argument raged around its selection.

Two other cities had been selected in turn for the high honor, New York and Philadelphia. Both proved, for sundry reasons, finally undesirable in this capacity, and the wisdom of George Washington, who first saw the advisability of a Potomac River site, was vindicated.

In the pre-Revolutionary days the present Washington was the seat of tribal councils of the Manahoacs. In the spring the tribe assembled at what is now Washington to catch the tuscious shad and herring as they "run" in the river, and to hold their yearly councils.

Saw a Future Rome.

The first white settlement here was by a group of Scotch and Irish people. They obtained patents and designated the new settlement as "New Scotland." Some of their descendants are still in Washington—the F. F. W.'s, so to speak. A tradition has it that a certain man—Pope by name—of this colony established his home on what is now "Capitol Hill," on top of the hill where the Capitol of the United States now stands.

With prophetic vision he named his crude plantation "Rome" and a little stream at the foot of the hill the "Tiber." He talked constantly of a capital city greater than Rome, that should some day rise on the spacious plateau where he cultivated his crops.

The next development of the location of the present District was the laying out of ancient Georgetown by the Maryland assembly in 1751. It was named for the George then on the throne of England and not for George Washington, as so many suppose.

Georgetown soon became a metropolis of the colonial period. Hither came the gay planter families from Maryland and Virginia to select their picturesque costumes and to spend a few days in "town." A social air grew around the place and it was a favorite haunt with George Washington, who often came up from Mount Vernon, where he was staying with his brother, Lawrence Washington, to indulge in a little city gaiety.

Believed in Its Future.

Below Georgetown several little settlements were formed, especially on the Maryland banks of the Potomac. What is now the Capital City proper was divided into prosperous plantations. George Washington felt so keenly the possibilities of Georgetown and its vicinity that he went on an exploration tour of the upper Potomac in 1785 to ascertain if the river could be navigated above tide water at Georgetown.

The results of their exploration was that a company was finally organized for the improvement of the river, and nearly a million dollars expended in a series of years.

The question of a permanent seat of government was discussed for many years before it was finally decided. The matter was discussed in the convention held in Philadelphia in 1787 to revise the Federal system of government, but it was not finally decided until the second session of the First Congress under the Constitution held in New York in the summer of 1790. New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Trenton, Harrisburg, all were persistent claimants. Maryland and Virginia had offered a site which was finally accepted by act of Congress in July, 1790—giving the sole power to President Washington to select a site. "Federal territory" not exceeding ten miles square on the River Potomac at some space between the mouths of the Eastern Branch and the Conogochegue for the permanent seat of the government of the United States. It was proposed to move the seat of government from Philadelphia in ten years' time or in 1800.

How District Was Bounded.

The original boundaries of the Federal territory were as follows: "Beginning at Jones' Point, being the upper cape of Hunting Creek, in Virginia, and at an angle in the outset of forty-five degrees west of the north, and running in a direct line ten miles for the first line; then beginning again at the same Jones' Point, and running another direct line at a right angle with the first, across the Potomac ten miles for the second line; then from the termination of the said first and second lines, running two other direct lines, of ten miles each, the one crossing the Eastern branch of the Potomac, and the other the Potomac, and meeting each other in a point." This territory was ten miles square, or one hundred square miles, and comprised sixty-four thousand acres of fertile lands situated between 38 degrees, 48 minutes and 38 degrees, 59 minutes north latitude.

Later the part south of the Potomac river was ceded back to Virginia. With the permanent seat of government secured and ten years al-

lowed for the removal, the next thing was to secure an architect who should build the foundations of the future world capital wide and deep. The man chosen was Maj. Pierre L'Enfant, a French engineer, who had given valiant service to the American cause as a volunteer officer in the French detachments. He was to work under the direction of Gov. Thomas Johnson and the Hon. Daniel Carroll, of Maryland, and Dr. David Stuart, of Virginia.

First Boundary Stone Laid.

The President himself, as a surveyor, took an enormous interest in the plotting out of the site. On April 15, 1791, the first boundary stone was laid at Jones Point, on the Virginia side of the Potomac, with impressive Masonic ceremony, in the presence of a large assemblage. These commissioners determined to call it the Territory of Columbia and the city to be established was to be named Washington, with the full consent and gratitude of the man who had made that name illustrious for all time.

Associated with L'Enfant in the laying out of the Capital City was a young Marylander, Andrew Ellicott by name. Later Andrew Ellicott became professor of mathematics at West Point. The streets and squares were chiefly laid out by him. Before the erection of any building was permitted an exact survey was made and properly recorded, a caution which has saved much litigation and uncertainty in the years since then.

States Are Liberal in Aid.

Too much cannot be said of the noble interest taken by the States of Maryland and Virginia in the new Capital. Their legislatures generously voted a large sum of money as a gift to the United States to aid in the erection of the public edifices. The men of these States seemed highly sensible of the distinguished honor which had been conferred on them by having the capital of the new republic located within their borders and this sympathy was of great inspiration and assistance to the Congress and commissioners charged with making a world capital out of the material at hand.

In the office of the architect of the Capitol is a torn and dingy paper—fast fading away. Yet it was once the elegant design made by L'Enfant of America's Capital—made with the precision and fidelity to art of the master architect. Time has established the great merit of his plan, although he knew the bitterness of detractors in his lifetime and went to his grave an embittered, disillusioned man, when the wisdom of his work is visible in beautiful avenues, and shaded parks, the wide streets, the magnificent distances that make this one of the most beautiful cities of the world.

Copied After Versailles.

L'Enfant is believed to have partially followed the work of Le Notre in Versailles, the seat of the French government buildings. Broad transverse streets and avenues, numerous open squares, parks, circles and triangular reservations were marked on the plan, the places for the public buildings were indicated, and everything was designed upon a spacious scale.

Special features of the plan are: The Capitol is the geographical center of the city.

The city is divided into rectangular squares by streets running east and west and north and south.

In addition to these, a series of broad avenues are arranged to intersect each other at the Capitol like spokes at the hub of a wheel.

Another series intersect at the White House, others still are arranged diagonally in other portions of the city.

The avenues are named after the States, and at nearly every point where they intersect there is left an open space, some triangular, others round, and others rectangular, these with others still larger being known as public reservations, thus forming throughout the city a large number of parks, which have been improved by ornamental shrubbery, flower beds, statuary and fountains.

Mall a Place of Beauty.

In addition is the large reservation—the Mall—extending on the south of Pennsylvania avenue from the Capitol to the White House. In this are located the National Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, the Agricultural Department, Washington Monument, Medical Museum, &c.

In October, 1800, the government moved in and took possession. The arrival of the officials, consisting of President John Adams, Secretary of State John Marshall, Secretary of the Treasury Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of War Samuel Dexter and Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert, was a gala day. The 3,000 inhabitants gathered on the banks of the Potomac to welcome the packet which came slowly up the river bearing the records and furniture of the departments. The President's house had been nearly completed, the small buildings erected for the executive departments were nearly finished. One wing of the

Capitol was done and ready for Congress, which began its sessions in November.

The officials soon became disgruntled with the inconveniences of the "wilderness city," as it was called. Some even vented their feelings by writing letters in derision to out-of-town papers. The favorite expression was "the city of magnificent distances set in a mud hole almost equal to the great Serbonian bog." Other pet names were "capital of miserable huts," "a city of streets without houses."

Gives a Vivid Description.

The Hon. John Cotton Smith, of Connecticut, a member of the House of Representatives wrote what is considered the most graphic description of the new Capital as it appeared in the first years of the nineteenth century. He writes:

"Our approach to the city was accompanied with sensations not easily described. One wing of the Capitol only had been erected, which, with the President's house, a mile distant from it, both constructed with white sandstone, were shining objects in dismal contrast with the scene around them. Instead of recognizing the avenues and streets portrayed on the plan of the city, not one was visible unless we except a road, with two buildings on each side of it, called New Jersey avenue.

Here and There a House.

"The Pennsylvania avenue, leading, as laid down on the paper, from the Capitol to the presidential mansion, was nearly the whole distance a deep morass covered with elder bushes which were cut through to the President's house, and near Georgetown a block of houses had been erected which bore the names of the six build-

ings, during the invasion and after that baptism of fire all talk of removing the seat of government from Washington died away.

The Monroe administration saw improvements generally and several fine residences were erected. In 1822 the city contained nearly 15,000 inhabitants. There were 2,229 dwellings, numerous churches and stores. By 1829 it had grown to 20,000 and the increase in population has been steady ever since.

More and more public buildings were placed here and by 1861 it had gained a population of 61,000 people and was described as a "big, sprawling city, magnificent in some parts, dilapidated and dirty in others."

Given Over to Soldiers.

During the civil war days and years the city was a huge military encampment. Troops were constantly marching through it; all its available buildings were given over to military purposes. Several attempts were made to capture the city by the Confederates, none of which was successful. The grand review of the Union troops in May, 1865, took two days in the passing and was witnessed by thousands.

City Takes on Shape.

In 1870 a determined effort began to remove the capital to St. Louis. At this the citizens of Washington took fright and steps were taken to improve and beautify it. The Western City was willing to spend millions to win the coveted prize. Alexander H. Shepherd proved the man of the hour. He saved the city its proud position as capital of the nation, and under his direction, much of it was rebuilt, a sewer system installed and more than \$20,000,000, a large sum in those more simple days, were expended on improvements. Within ten years Washington had risen from the civil war stagnation, beautiful and inspiring,

and the talk of removal was once more silenced. In 1880 the population was 147,293. Soon after it leaped to its 250,000 population, which represents its normal population until the world war began, when it grew overnight to nearly 500,000.

Nation Honors Its Heroes. There is a maxim that republics are notoriously ungrateful, but the emphasis which has been laid on monumental features memorial of the nation's great and good proves the United States has been proud to remember her heroes of peace and war.

Towering above all other monuments and statues is the Washington monument—a stately marble shaft 555 feet high and is the tallest piece of masonry in the world. One hundred seventy-nine memorial stones feature its interior, representing 40 States, 16 cities, 15 lodges of Free Masons, 13 of Odd Fellows, 7 of Sons of Temperance and numerous political organizations. The total cost of the monument, completed in 1885, was \$1,300,000.

Another master monument now nearly completed is the imposing Lincoln monument in the form of a Greek temple of white marble surrounded by Doric columns, 40 feet in height. The central feature is a bronze statue of Lincoln by Daniel C. French. On the walls will be lettered in brass the second inaugural and the Gettysburg address.

A unique memorial to the memory of the founders of the republic and those who lost their lives in the great war, and which will provide one of the badly needed great halls to Washington's civic and national life, is the George Washington Memorial building which will be erected on a site given by the government next to the New National Museum facing the Mall. The plan calls for an auditorium with a seating capacity of 7,000 or more.