Amusements of Our First President Told

That both the President ond Mrs. Washington suffered from homesickness while in executive residence in New York and Philadelphia, is recorded in history. Mrs. Washington wrote to Mrs. Fanny Washington whom she had left in charge at Mount Vernon: "I never go to any public place. Indeed I think I am more like a State prisoner than anything else; which I must not depart from, and as I cannot stay at home a great deal."

The President, in writing to a friend in Virginia regarding the dignity of his position, said, "God knows it has no charms for me. I had rather be at Mount Vernon with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the seat of government by officers of State and representatives of every power in Europe."

Yet, as we are informed by the United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, there was no lock of gayety in either city with a continual round of balls, dinner-parties, theatres, concerts, and other diversions, and if the Chief Executive and his wife could not join in the most exciting past-times of the capitol, they could at least follow their inclinations in many respects.

In Colonial times there was a passion for gambling in certain quarters and bets were placed on all games. Loo or as Washington cometimes spelled it "Leu" was the most popular, and it was no uncommon thing for a man or woman to win or lose two or three hundred dollars at a sitting. There is no record, however, of Washington's winning more than three pounds, or of losing more than nine pounds, fourteen shillings and nine pence. In fact, Washington always played for small stakes. He seemed to be interested in the game and the diversion it afforded rather than in the winnings.

Washington's fondness for cards and billiards shows in his diary an account where before he became President he often recorded that he had been "home all daw at cards," and itemized purchases of "one dozen packs playing cards."

Washington's natural fondness for horses and racing and sometimes cock-fighting during his life, was entirely in keeping with the traditional tastes of the Virginia gentleman. He not only subscribed liberally to most of the racing purses, but ran his own horses, attending in person, and betting moderately on all the results. He was fond of riding to hounds, and when at Mount Vernon, this was one of his favorite pastimes.

He loved hunting and fishing and dragging for sturgeon, too, and often went duck hunting. Although these pursuits were for the most part impossible while Washington was in office, he did occasionally manage to slip away. In 1790 a paper records, "yesterdoy afternoon the President of the United States returned from Sandy Hook and the fishing banks, where he had been for the benefit of the sea air, and to amuse himself in the delightful recreation of fishing. We are told he has had excellent sport, having himself caught a great number of black sea bass and black fish—the weather proved remarkably fine, which altogether with the salubriety of the air and wholesome exercise, rendered this little voyage extremely agreeable, and cannot fail we hope of being serviceable to a speedy and complete restoration of health."

Both the President and Mrs. Washington were exceedingly fond of the theatre in spite of the vigorous opposition accorded this art in every State in the Union. During his Presidency, Washington used the theatre for entertaining, his ledger showing purchases of tickets bought and sent to various ladies and gentlemen with the invitation to occupy a seat in his box.

They went to puppet shows, to see dancing bears and to Mrs. Bowen's wax-works at No. 74 Water Street, New York, and also attended the circus where a famed equestrian of the time performed in the ring with his company of skilled riders and acrobats.

Although Washington was extremely fond of dancing, and was an accomplished dancer of the period, the concensus of opinion is that neither he nor Mrs. Washington danced while he was in office. Some historians maintain that he danced at a ball which was given in his honor soon after his first inauguration, and before Mrs. Washington had arrived from Mount Vernon. On this occasion, he is said to have danced the cotillion with Mrs. Peter Livingston and Mrs. Maxwell, and to have led the minuet with Mrs. Maxwell's sister, Miss Van Zandt, one of the famous beauties of New York.

TAKE CARE WHEN YOU SKIN RABBITS

Reminding hunters, market men, housewives and others who handle game, as the hunting season opens, of the danger of contracting tularemia, or rabbit fever, through contact with infected animals, Dr. R. H. Riley, Director of the State Department of Health, advises sportsmen and food handlers to take special precautions in skinning rabbits and preparing the meat for the table.

He said: "Rabbit fever—or, to use the medical name, tularemia—is an infectious disease to which rabbits and other small animals are susceptible and which human beings contract through handling the animals. The disease spreads from animal to animal through the bite of infected ticks. It may also be spread by the bite of a certain species of fly. Human beings contract the disease in two ways, either through the infected animals or through the bite of infected ticks. As the insects continue to carry the infection over long periods, care should be taken at all seasons to avoid being bitten by them.

"The presence of the disease in animals that are being skinned or are exposed for sale can be detected by a characteristic appearance of the liver and spleen which is dotted with tiny white or yellowish spots. The infection may be picked up by persons who handle the game, through a scratch or break in the skin, or may be carried into the eyes or nose in rubbing the hands over the face, after they have been in contact with the diseased animals.

"A disease that corresponds closely to what we now call tularemia, or rabbit fever, has been known to hunters and market men for a long time, but it has only been comparatively recently that its source has been studied and its method of transmission discovered. The disease has often been mistaken for typhoid fever, which it may resemble at the start. Sometimes, the attack begins with a severe chill and with other symptoms that resemble grippe. In many cases an ulcer develops where the infection has entered the body and the nearby glands become greatly enlarged.

"The disease requires prompt medical treatment and the famly physician should be called for those wh develop symptoms that suggest rabbit fever. The doctor's diagnosis may be confirmed by blood tests and the laboratory of the State Department of Health is prepared to make the necessary tests and will do so at the request of the attending physician or the county health officer.

"Tularemia was made reportable in Maryland in 1928 and since then 58 cases—30 in Baltimore City and 28 in the counties—have been reported to the State Department of Health. There have been 6 deaths.

"Tularemia occurs principally in wild rabbits. It has not been found in rabbits raised in rabbitries. Thru cooking of the meat destroys the germ. Thoroughly cooked rabbit is accordingly harmless."

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This word is correctly pronounced "pump-kin," both "p's" being sounded. It is frequently mispronounced "pum-kin" with the second "p" silent.

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Catty—Ah, then you're not his first wife.

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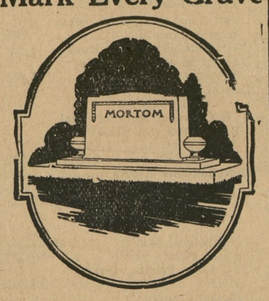


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