

# **GUIDE TO WASHINGTON**

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Guide to Washington by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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## WASHINGTON.

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**W**ASHINGTON is in many respects the most interesting city in America. It is the favorite place of pilgrimage for many thousands of intelligent tourists, who are attracted from all parts of the world by the beauty of its streets and parks, the architectural proportions of its massive and many public buildings, the numerous statues and hundreds of other objects that interest the traveler.

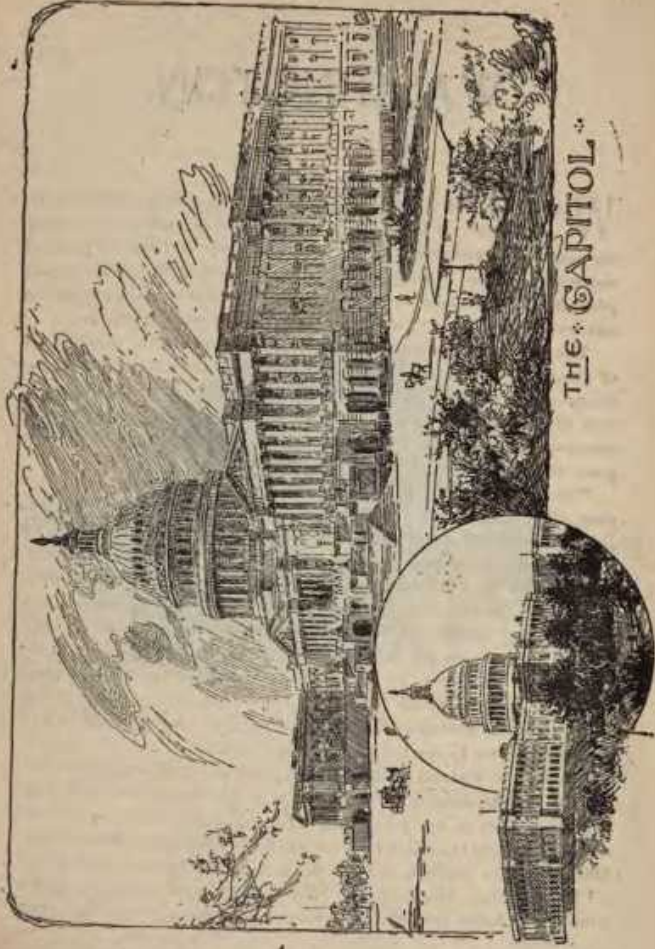
The subject of having a territory under the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress was one of the first to receive the attention of the legislators of the new Republic, and the establishment of a permanent seat of government two years after the form of government was adopted by the nation, was one of the most important acts of Congress in the early stages of the country's existence.

The Continental Congress opened its first session in Philadelphia, Sept. 5th, 1774, but on account of the advances made by the British Army and other causes later on, it was compelled to keep up a peripatetic existence, moving from Philadelphia to Baltimore, thence back to Philadelphia, to Princeton, N. J., Annapolis, Md., Trenton, N. J., and New York, where it continued its place of meeting until the adoption of the Constitution of the United States in 1788.

The struggle for the location of the National Capital began in the Continental Congress, and was only abandoned here to give place to graver matters which required the attention of that body, and to avoid the local irritation raised by the subject, then thought to be a serious question to the life of the New Republic.

In the first Federal Congress the matter was again made the subject of serious debate. New York was determined to hold on to what was then in her possession. Pennsylvania was extremely desirous of having the seat of power within her territory; New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia each were eager for the much desired prize.

No less than twenty-four different sites were proposed, and a number of cities offered inducements by agreeing to transfer their



THE CAPITOL



public buildings, while the citizens of Baltimore subscribed thirty thousand pounds for the erection of necessary buildings there.

Finally a bill passed the House Sept. 22d, 1789, selecting Pennsylvania as the place for the location of a permanent Capital.

This led to bitter opposition on the part of the Southern members led by Mr. Madison, who was supposed to express the views of President Washington.

The bill, however, suffered defeat on coming into the Senate, by having its consideration postponed.

At the next session of Congress the fight became hotter than ever, and many thought the existence of the Union depended upon the subject.

Finally, on the 8th of June, 1790, this vexed question was unexpectedly and amicably settled, and Congress recommended the selection of a site on the eastern or northeastern bank of the Potomac.

How this settlement came about will be seen from the following:

The Government was engaged in the effort to fund its debts; and among the troublesome propositions introduced was one providing that the General Government should assume the debts incurred by the several States in carrying on the Revolutionary War, amounting to \$20,000,000. This measure was urged by the North, which had furnished the greater portion of the men and means, on the ground that the expenditure had been for the benefit of the country as a whole, while it was unpopular at the South because it would increase their proportion. Hamilton found that to carry the measure would require some southern votes; and in connection with Jefferson, who was greatly interested in having the Capital located in Virginia, or as near as possible, it was arranged that the latter should induce the Virginia delegation to vote for the assumption, while Hamilton was to induce the New York delegation to give up their preference for the location of the Capital at the North.

The result was that the bill locating the Capital on the Potomac passed on the 16th of July, and that for the assumption of the debts on the 4th of August, 1790.

#### PLAN OF THE CITY.

In 1777 there came to this country, to serve in the war for independence, a Frenchman by the name of Pierre C. L'Enfant. He was an engineer by profession, and served under Count D'Estaing, being

severely wounded in the assault on Savannah. He was afterward employed by Congress, and was made a major of engineers in 1783.

L'Enfant became acquainted with President Washington, and was selected by him to make a plan of the new Federal City, which was afterward approved, and he was employed to superintend its execution, assisted by Andrew Ellicott, a bright Pennsylvanian who, with his brother, had established the town of Ellicott's Mills, now a prosperous town on the main stem of the B. & O., 15 miles from Baltimore.

L'Enfant's plan met the full approval of Washington and also of Jefferson, then Secretary of State, of whom it was said that "he almost monopolized the artistic taste and knowledge of the first administration."

Washington desired that "the Capitol" should be located in the centre of the city, and the public buildings, more than a mile distant, in the western section.

What first attracts the attention of strangers is the unusual width of the streets and avenues, the former averaging from 90 to 130 feet and the latter 160 feet, while the side-walks are from 10 to 20 feet wide.

A better idea of this may be obtained by comparing the amount of ground occupied by streets in other cities. For instance, the street area in Boston is 26 per cent., Philadelphia 29, New York 35, Berlin 26, Vienna 35, Paris 25, while the area covered by streets in Washington is 54 per cent.

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, while others meet at the White House.

Strangers find it very confusing, as these avenues cross the streets diagonally, and for squares the street is lost. A duplication of the names of the streets is another difficulty. It is well to understand the method of numbering. Commencing at the Capitol the streets running north and south are designated by numbers and those running east and west by letters. Therefore we have A, B and C, etc., north, and A, B and C, etc., south; 1st, 2d, 3d, etc., east, and 1st, 2d, 3d, etc., west. To simplify matters, however, a system of beginning each square with an additional 100 has been adopted, so

that one is enabled to tell exactly how many squares one is from the Capitol. A large number of parks in different shapes are formed throughout the city by the intersection of avenues. These are being ornamented with flowers, shrubbery, statuary and fountains.

South of Pennsylvania Avenue, extending from the Capitol to the White House, is a large reservation called the Mall. The National Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Agricultural Department, Washington's Monument, the ponds for fish culture, and the Botanical Garden are situated on this reservation.

A recent writer, in describing the condition of Washington in early times, says:

"Pennsylvania Avenue, the 'Appian Way' of our Republic, was graded while Jefferson was President, at a cost of \$14,000. He personally superintended the planting of four rows of Lombardy poplars along that portion of it between the Capitol and the White House, a row along each curbstone, and two equi-distant rows in the roadway, which was thus divided into three parts, like Unter den Linden at Berlin. In the Winter and Spring the driveway would often be full of mudholes, some of them ankle-deep, and some of the cross streets would be an almost impassable bed of red clay, worked by passing horses and wheels into a thick mortar. On one occasion, when Mr. Webster and a friend undertook to go to Georgetown in a hackney coach to attend a dinner party, the vehicle got stuck in a mudhole and the driver had to carry his passengers one at a time to the side-walk, where they stood until the empty carriage could be pulled out. Mr. Webster, narrating this incident years afterward, used to laugh over his fears that his hearer would fall beneath his weight and ruin his dress suit."

Some idea of the growth of Washington may be gained from the following extract taken from the last annual report made to Congress by the District Commissioners:

The total expenditure of money from the National Treasury for the District of Columbia down to the year 1876 was \$92,112,395. Of this sum \$17,184,191 was expended upon the Capitol; Patent Office, \$13,107,149; Department of State, \$4,989,248; Treasury Department, \$7,062,942; Navy Department, \$3,899,136; Post-office, \$2,124,504; War Department, \$2,040,065; Executive Mansion, \$1,640,449; Department of Agriculture, \$3,174,192; public grounds and streets, \$7,842,831; Library of Congress, \$1,575,847, and works