

## Mount Vernon Chapter NSDAR Historical Highlights



**The piazza at Mount Vernon, home of George Washington, where the Mount Vernon Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution was organized on May 13, 1893.**

**Organizing Regent:**  
Miss Susan Riviere Hetzel

**Chapter Colors:**  
Blue and White

**Chapter Motto:**  
“For Home and Country”

### **The early years of our chapter:**

“It was on the 13th day of May 1893, that a group of women, journeyed to Mt Vernon, and in that revered spot, where the beauty of nature blended with the loftiest association, the first steps were taken towards the organization of a new chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. This is the only chapter in the National Society of the more than 2500 chapters, ever to have had this rare privilege. No wonder this honor was granted them, for not only did they have the name Mt Vernon, but, they had on its roll, as Charter Members, the five daughters of John Augustine Washington, the last private owner of Mt Vernon. These five daughters were born in the Mt Vernon mansion. The organizing Regent was Miss Susan Riviere Hetzel, a Charter Member of the National Society (National #13). To Miss Hetzel’s foresight and quick action, we are indebted for securing the name Mt Vernon for a Virginia chapter. Miss Hetzel realized that this name should rightfully go to a chapter in Alexandria, the home town of General Washington. She heard that a distant state was considering the name and acted promptly. With the assistance of Mrs. Eleanor Washington Howard, plans were hurriedly forwarded and confirmation secured. Mt Vernon was the third Virginia chapter and 48th in the National Society.”

*This quote is written in the 1893 Mount Vernon Chapter NSDAR book of chapter minutes in lavishly scrolled handwriting on very thin parchment paper. (The author and exact date of entry are unknown.)*

- 1893 On June 15, 1893, the anniversary date on which General Washington received his commission from the Continental Congress in Philadelphia as Commander-in-Chief, the Mt Vernon Chapter held its 2nd meeting. Mrs. Marshall MacDonald, first Treasurer General, was elected to membership. She continued her membership during her 90 year lifetime. The chapter adopted its first By-Laws and set a regular meeting date.
- 1894 With a steadily growing membership, on January 19th, Mrs. Moran presented a Certificate of Deposit for \$240, the proceeds from her novelette, "Miss Washington of Virginia." The funds were donated to the building of the National Hall of the DAR. The Chapter advocated for membership by lineal descent only which was adopted by the Congress in 1894. To assist in historic restoration, at the May 15th meeting, two projects were undertaken: restoration of the Old Pohick Church where General Washington worshipped and placement of a tablet at Mt Vernon in the memory of John Augustine Washington. Unfortunately, the records of the Ladies Association show that the tablet was not placed as a suitable inscription could not be agreed upon. Many believe it was because Colonel Washington, who lost his life early in the war, was an officer on the staff of General Robert E. Lee. At the May meeting, it was agreed to hold the installation of officers at this designated as the annual meeting. In December, the members donated \$15 to the Association for Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, which invited them to their state meeting.
- 1895 The Chapter conferred on Miss Eliza Washington a Hereditary Life member of the Mary Washington Society. She became their National President for many years. A liberal contribution was given to the Mary Washington Memorial Association for a monument in memory of Mary, mother of Washington. At the May meeting, Miss Washington was elected the Chapter's 2nd Regent.
- 1896 The Chapter enrolled itself as a Life Member of the Association for Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and donated \$20 for the work at Jamestown. The Chapter was honored to have "Two Real Daughters" on its rolls: Mrs. Marye of Fredericksburg, daughter of William Jett who served under General Washington and was at the surrender of Yorktown, and Mrs. Mary Clarke of Manassas. The National Society honored its "Real Daughters" with a gold spoon and small stipend for life.
- 1897 Mrs. Eleanor Selden Washington was elected Vice President General of the National Society. This was the beginning of a series of important offices held by devoted Mt Vernon members. The Chapter on behalf of the Lexington, MS, DAR Chapter planted a Massachusetts Elm on the Mt Vernon grounds.
- 1898 Fortunately, the Spanish American War was short lived. The National Society donated many hours to the war effort and many of its members enlisted as nurses. Four members of were elected as National Officers: Mrs. MacDonald, 1st Treasurer General, Mrs. Eleanor Washington Howard, Vice President General, Miss Susan Hetzel, Registrar General and Mrs. Albert Brockett, Vice President of Organizing Chapters. The Chapter donated \$50 to the building fund of Memorial Continental Hall.
- 1899 Continuing to prosper, Mrs. Eleanor Washington Howard presented to the National Board a Prayer Book for use at their meetings. The Chapter sponsored

a special service in December at Christ Church, Alexandria, in commemoration of the death of General Washington on December 14, 1799. It was well attended by members and residents.

It is interesting to note that the names of the Charter Members meant much to Alexandria and Virginia. In addition to Miss Hetzel, whose National number was 13, there were six other Charter Members of the National Society: Mrs. Marshall MacDonald, 1st Treasurer General (#25), Mrs. Eugenia Washington Brown (#225), Miss Jennie Morris Moore (#249), Mrs. Francois Moran (#410), Mrs. Mary Washington Keyser (#578) and Mrs. Annie Greene (#707).

### **Service and project records:**

- 1896 Chapter became Life Member, Association for the Preservation of/ Virginia Antiquities.
- 1896 First project through the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities: the restoration of Jamestown.
- 1901 Initiated restoration of Old Pohick Church.
- 1906 Contributed one-tenth the cost of Virginia Column, Memorial Portico, and Continental Hall, Washington, D.C.
- 1907 Established DAR Shelf in Alexandria Library.
- 1909 Placed sun dial in churchyard, Christ Church, Alexandria.
- 1909 Placed plaque on Christ Church, Alexandria, in memory of George Washington's pallbearers.
- 1911 Contributed \$100 for south door, Old Pohick Church. (Plaque placed.)
- 1912 Donated Hepplewhite style china cabinet to Virginia Room, DAR Museum, in memory of Mrs. E. S. Washington Hunter.
- 1912 Erected fountain at Cameron and Fairfax Streets, Alexandria, in honor of Revolutionary events.
- 1913 Copied entire text of Christ Church Vestry Book, Alexandria.
- 1915 Placed copy of Charles Willson Peale's portrait of George Washington in the Virginia Room, DAR Museum.
- 1915 Placed marker on grave of "Real Daughter," Mrs. Jane Christian Marye, in Fredericksburg.
- 1917 Placed marker on original District of Columbia Boundary Milestone at Wilkes and Payne Streets, Alexandria.
- 1917 Copied Text of Register of Old Presbyterian Meeting House for publication in DAR Magazine.
- 1917-21 Supported three French orphans.
- 1920 Placed marker on District of Columbia Boundary Milestone, at Russell Road and King Street, Alexandria.
- 1922 Placed crystal chandelier in Virginia Room, DAR Museum, in memory of Mrs. Ruth Ashton Powell.
- 1922 Placed marker on grave of Charles Alexander, Revolutionary Soldier in Old Pohick Churchyard.
- 1922 Placed marker on grave of "Real Daughter", Mrs. Mary Chamberlain Clark.
- 1922 Placed marker on grave of George Hunter, Surgeon, Revolutionary Navy, in Pohick Churchyard
- 1926 Received from the U.S. Congress the deed to Jones Point Lighthouse, reputedly the oldest (1855) inland lighthouse that was restored by the chapter during the year. Placed chair in Constitution Hall in memory of Mrs. Eleanor Jamieson, past chapter regent.

- 1929 Placed marker at Rippon Lodge, home of Bushrod Washington.
- 1931 Re-cut inscription on tomb of "Female Stranger" in St. Paul's Cemetery, Alexandria.
- 1932 Planted eight honey locust trees on first island south of Alexandria, on Mount Vernon Boulevard, in memory of eight U.S. presidents from Virginia. (*Belle Haven parking lot along Potomac*)
- 1934 Placed marker on walnut tree from Mount Vernon, planted in Anacostia Park.
- 1934 Began awarding annual History Medals in Alexandria schools.
- 1936-48 Restored large portion of wall, front window, and entrance to the larger building of Gadsby's Tavern; placed large mirror in ballroom, honoring Mrs. Robert Reese.
- 1948 Became Founding Member of Woodlawn Foundation, with gift of \$1000.
- 1955 Presented "Soiree at Woodlawn," a period play with music, at Christ Church, Alexandria.
- 1955 Placed marker on grave of Mrs. Nellie Selden Uhler, a "Real Granddaughter" in Ivy Hill Cemetery, Alexandria
- 1956 Donated chandeliers in Gadsby's Tavern ballroom in memory of Mrs. Louisa Swann Sinclair. (*Past Chapter & State Regent*)
- 1956-61 Awarded annual Nature Camp Scholarship as memorial to Mrs. Rebecca Ramsey Reese.
- 1957 Republished booklet first issued in 1909, "George Washington's Last Guard of Honor."
- 1958 Dedicated marker, placed by Miss Kathleen Douglass in 1951, on grave of Major Samuel Cooper, her Revolutionary ancestor, in Old Christ Church Cemetery, Wilkes Street, Alexandria.
- 1964 Deed to Jones Point Lighthouse conveyed to the National Park Service, Department of Interior.
- 1966 Placed chair in Constitution Hall in memory of Mrs. Frances Virginia Johnston Robinson, past Chapter Regent
- 1967 Re-dedicated Memorial Fountain when moved to Gadsby's Tavern Square from the corner of Cameron and Fairfax Streets.
- 1968 Placed marker on grave of William Triplett, Lieutenant in Revolution, Round Hill Cemetery, Lorton, Virginia.
- 1968 Celebrated at Mount Vernon Estate the 75th Anniversary of the organization of the Mount Vernon Chapter.
- 1969 Moved marker placed in 1932 in memory of eight U.S. Presidents from Virginia, to another location near Mount Vernon Boulevard.
- 1971 Placed marker at historic Aldie Mill, Aldie, Virginia.
- 1976 Planted dogwood tree in garden of Lee-Fendall House, Alexandria.  
Placed sundial in garden of Carlyle House, Alexandria.
- 1977 Replaced china cabinet in Virginia Room, Continental Hall, in memory of Mrs. E. S. Washington Hunter.
- 1977 Marked grave of Mrs. Charles Calvert Smoot, past Chapter Regent.
- 1978 Placed plaque at Jones Point, Alexandria, honoring Mistress Margaret Brent (circa 1601-1671), first private owner of the rectangular plot of land on the Potomac River, above Hunting Creek, which became the nucleus of Alexandria.
- 1985 Dedicated plaque for the original first District of Columbia Boundary Stone at Jones Point.
- 1986 Signed 25-year lease with National Park Service for Jones Point Lighthouse for the purpose of restoration.
- 1987 Presented American Heritage Potpourri Exhibit, Lyceum Alexandria.

- 1989 Celebrated National Lighthouse Society's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, commemorating George Washington's signing of National Lighthouse Act and replaced plaque on first District of Columbia Boundary Stone at Jones Point Lighthouse.
- 1989 Presented American Heritage Exhibit at the Lyceum.
- 1991 Presented American Heritage Silver Exhibit at the Lyceum. Participated in Bicentennial Celebration and Re-enactment of the Placement of the First District of Columbia Boundary Stone at Jones Point, sponsored by the George Washington Masonic Lodge No. 22.
- 1992 Participated in the grave marking of former State Regents, Mrs. Eleanor Selden Washington Howard and Mrs. Louisa Johnson Swann Sinclair, also past Regents of Mount Vernon Chapter.
- 1992 Presented American Heritage Chinese Export Porcelain Exhibit at the Lyceum.
- 1993 Celebrated at Mount Vernon Estate, the 100th Anniversary of the organization of the Mount Vernon Chapter.
- 1993 Celebrated the "Relighting" of the lantern in the Jones Point Lighthouse after 67 years.
- 1994 Participated in the 4th of July "Salute to the Union" with Sea Explorers Ship No. 807 at Jones Point Lighthouse.
- 1995 Installed Fresnel lens in lantern at Jones Point Lighthouse, which put the lighthouse on official Coast Guard Marine Map for use in river navigation.
- 1996 Placed plaque on the Alexandria Tannery House at the site of the Wilkes Pottery.
- 2001 Marked the graves of Mrs. Ernest F. Langholz and Miss Myrtie Park, past Chapter Regents.
- 2001-15 Presented American Flag to Mount Vernon Ladies Association to be flown at Mount Vernon; laid a wreath at George Washington's tomb; presented a wreath to George Washington's Parish church, Christ Church in Alexandria to commemorate his birthday.
- 2002 Marked the graves of Mrs. James E. Lamb and Mrs. Cecil C. Brown past Chapter Regents.
- 2002 Published article regarding history of the Braddock cannon given by the chapter to the city of Alexandria written by chapter member, Mrs. Ann Smith Paul. Article is in the permanent collection at the NSDAR library.
- 2003-10 Conducted a ceremony to retire the American Flag by burning at Fort Ward Park, Alexandria, assisted by members of the Ann McCarty Ramsey Society, National Society Children of the American Revolution.
- 2006 Winner of the VADAR and DAR Eastern Division Outstanding Program for the ceremony retiring the American Flag by burning written by Judith Bednar, Chapter Regent.
- 2006 Celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Jones Point Lighthouse.
- 2008 Renovated and preserved two original nineteenth century Fresnel lens lanterns from the Jones Point Lighthouse and placed the lanterns on loan to the Lyceum, Alexandria, Virginia.
- 2009 Donated an American flag to DAR Crossnore School that was flown at Mount Vernon.

- 2010-12 Participated in Wreaths Across America at Alexandria National Cemetery to honor American veterans.
- 2010-11 Participated in the “Wounded Warriors” Program.
- 2011 Donated an American flag that had been flown at Mount Vernon to DAR Hindman Settlement School.
- 2011 Donated books to local elementary school.
- 2011 Donated a print of George Washington’s first tomb to Mount Vernon.
- 2011-13 Placed American flags on veteran’s graves at Alexandria National Cemetery.
- 2011-13 Conducted a ceremony to retire the American flag at Alexandria National Cemetery, Alexandria.
- 2011 Completion of the 25 year Jones Point Lighthouse contract with National Park Service.
- 2011 Held dinner for Wounded Warriors at Walter Reed Army Hospital. General and Mrs. Washington attended as well.
- 2011-17 Continued support and staffing of the July 4 Naturalization Ceremony at Mount Vernon Estates
- 2012 Donated money to Marie H. Yochum High School at Kate Duncan Smith DAR School. Donated money to restore the Lay Lights at National Headquarters
- 2013 Celebrated at Mount Vernon, the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the organization of the Mount Vernon Chapter.
- 2013 Donated four books to the Fred Smith National Library for the Research of George Washington.
- 2013-17 Began support of Lyles Crouch Traditional Academy in Alexandria during the celebration of Constitution Week
- 2014 Donated \$1700 toward the purchase of material and postage to sew and send quilts to military personnel deployed overseas.
- 2015 Collected books and magazines for the VA Hospital in Hampton, VA.
- 2015-16 Donated \$1000 to Mount Vernon Ladies Association for use at Mount Vernon Estate.
- 2015-17 Participated in Wreaths Across America at the Alexandria National Cemetery
- 2016 Donated \$1000 to State Regent’s Project, Ferry Farm (the boyhood home of George Washington).  
Donated 175 books to Norcross School Library.  
Continued support and staffing of the July 4th Naturalization Ceremony at Mount Vernon Estate.  
Donated books to Lyles Crouch Traditional Academy.
- 2016-17 Participated in Honor Flights welcoming World War II Veterans to the National Capitol Area.
- 2017 Donated \$1,000 for the Mount Vernon cupola and \$500 for the State Regent's Project.