

These two volumes present the reader with the writings of George Washington as a young man. They span the years when his youthful fascination with Sally Fairfax played a large part in his life and when he was in the process of discovering his military potential in the opening phases of the French and Indian War.

The Great Man of the Revolution is all too often cast in a frozen image. The burning passions below the dignified strong exterior have frequently been the topics of the pens of biographers. The scholar has long relished contact with the primary sources that present flashes of the humanity behind the patriotic stone image carved by two centuries of ingrained historical interpretation. Nowhere does this reality of the human Washington emerge more decisively than in the often-quoted comment by Washington in his letter to John Augustine: "I heard Bullets whistle and believe me there was something charming in the sound." This comment proved to be the sensation of Williamsburg, making him the most sought-after celebrity at parties and the object of the attentions of all the ladies.

Historians and the public view Washington as a great military figure, administrator, and symbolic national leader. Not very often does one think of him as a man given to writing poetry. As a member of the educated elite of the Old Dominion the refined skills were as much his milieu as the manly arts of hunting and war. His efforts in this regard are not noteworthy but they reflect the bent of his thought in the style of the time.

These volumes not only contain materials referring to the capitulation of Fort Necessity, including the French text, but they include, as well, references to Washington's life as a surveyor. His concern for the welfare of his troops and the endemic problem of desertion appear in his letters to Governor Robert Dinwiddie, who early recognized the talents of the young Washington. These letters reflect the same con-
cerns which would later occupy so much of his correspondence with Congress during the Revolutionary War: soldier’s pay, supplies, and questions of desertion.

The concerns of a planter such as the division of slaves, the lease of Mount Vernon, and other concerns of plantation life are contained within the volume. There are also numerous letters that attest to the friendship of Washington and the Fairfaxes.

Both volumes are welcome additions to the scholarship of the colonial era.

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(Charlottesville: The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion by the University Press of Virginia, 1983. Pp. xii, 338. Preface, selected bibliography, index. $27.50.)

John Dickinson was one of the most important and influential political figures of the entire Revolutionary era. Without question he properly belongs, along with such better-known public-spirited individuals as Samuel Adams, James Otis, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry, on any list of men who played significant and conspicuous roles in the exciting pre-Revolutionary period, 1763-1775. It is strange, therefore, that this prominent Pennsylvania and Delaware statesman is not today well-known, greatly admired, or widely written about.

John H. Powell’s popularly written twenty-six-page pamphlet The House on Jones Neck and Stanley K. Johannesen’s “John Dickinson and the American Revolution,” Historical Reflections [2 (Summer 1975) : 29-49] are among the readily available short monographs on Dickinson. As for the more lengthy and complete monographs, except for the now outdated Charles J. Stillé, The Life and Times of John Dickinson (Philadelphia, 1891) and David L. Jacobson’s somewhat specialized study entitled John Dickinson and the Revolution in Pennsylvania (Berkeley, 1965), there has not been published a full scholarly biography of the “Penman of the Revolution.”

Happily this neglect has now been remedied. Milton E. Flower (retired professor of political science at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania) has written an engaging and well-researched full-