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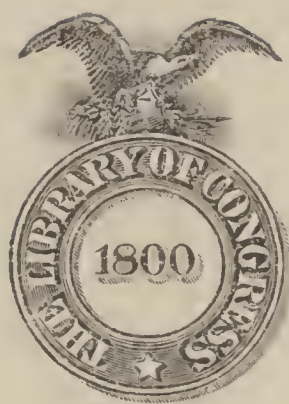
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Street nomenclature of
Washington City.

Washington, D.C., 1897



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STREET NOMENCLATURE OF WASHINGTON CITY.



ADDRESS BY

ALEXANDER B. HAGNER

BEFORE

THE COLUMBIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DELIVERED MAY 3, 1897.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY THE LAW REPORTER COMPANY.

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ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I am to occupy some portion of your time this evening with a business talk on a very matter-of-fact topic. I propose to say something with reference to the selection of appropriate names for the principal streets within the original boundaries of our city, as laid out under the direction of its great founder.

There can be no greater boon to a city than spacious and convenient streets and avenues. They stand for its arteries and veins as public parks do for its lungs. But their value is incomplete unless there exists an orderly and methodical system of suitable names, so arranged as to enable the resident and the stranger within its gates to ascertain for themselves and without needless trouble or delay the relative positions of the different highways through which they may be called to pass on business or pleasure. And in applying such a system to the Capital of the foremost nation of the world, it is eminently proper that its streets should be dignified by the names of the builders of the nation and the city, and thus present a continual reminder to old and young of the history of the country in which we live.

It seems to have been only within this and the latter part of the last century that the importance of regular or wide streets was recognized by the builders of cities. True, Herodotus informs us that from each of the many small gates in the outer walls of Babylon, straight streets, the width of which is not stated, ran to the opposite gates. But Herodotus also says the walls of the city were more than three hundred and seventy feet high and ninety feet thick. Warned by the redundant imagination of our friend Father

Hennepin, who described the Falls of Niagara which he actually saw with his own eyes only two centuries ago as six hundred feet high (only three times the true measure), we may well hesitate to adopt all the statements of Herodotus, without at all meaning to intimate that the father of history was also near of kin to another gentleman familiarly called the father of—something else. Such exaggerations belong to the ages of travelers' tales.

“Of antres vast and deserts wild, . . .
The anthropophagi and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.”

In cities of which we know anything from reliable accounts, an inexplicable economy in the breadth and directness of the streets seems to have been the rule. In Rome, at as recent a period as the reign of Augustus, there were but two *viæ* or streets wide enough for the comfortable passage of wagons and chariots; the other thoroughfares, which were known as *vici*, were narrow and devious alleys, constantly blocked by city traffic; thus graphically described by Juvenal, as rendered by Gifford:

“Hark, groaning on the unwieldy wagon speeds
Its cumbrous freight tremendous; o'er our heads
Projecting elm or pine, that nods on high
And threatens death to every passer by.”—*Sat.*: 3, 384.

Sir Thomas Moore, in his *Utopia*, undertook to picture a community as far surpassing all existing nations in the beauty and comfort of its homes and cities as in the wisdom of its government.

The material elegancies of the Utopian cities were held up to the reader as very great improvements upon the existing conditions in any of the great capitals in the known world in the year 1515, when the book was written. We may comprehend, therefore, the existing insignificance and

discomforts of the streets in those great cities, by the boastful statement that in Amaurot, the grand metropolis of the perfected country, the streets although very convenient for all carriages and well sheltered from the winds were full *twenty* feet broad.

The present plan of London after the suppression of numerous tortuous lanes, gives one some idea of its former labyrinth of alleys that bore the names of streets. Boston and New York went through the same street evolution; and the twistings of Milk and Franklin streets in the former city and of Maiden Lane and William street in the latter, survive as reminders of the network of insufficient by-ways that were absorbed by the change.

Mean streets deserve and will generally receive mean names. Hogarth has immortalized Gin Lane and the Seven Dials; but they were quite as refined appellations as Cow Lane, Hog Alley, Paddy's Alley and Black Horse Lane, which McMaster says were the accepted names of much-used thoroughfares in Boston at the Revolutionary period.

Fortunately the city of Washington at its birth was free of such perplexing inheritance of disorder; and whatever discomforts and blemishes of this description exist here now, are the results of our own negligent administration of the trust confided to us.

As all are aware, it was the hand of the incomparable Washington that directed the organization of the city. In its establishment he took a constant interest; and his last official act as President, on the 3d of March, 1797, was a communication to the Commissioners on several important matters connected with the public buildings and streets. Up to as late a period as 1791 he had suppressed his own name in speaking of what he had always called "The Federal

City;" though the people of the country had long before agreed upon a more appropriate appellation. In September of that year, Messrs. Johnson, Stewart and Carroll, the first Commissioners of the new District, addressed the following letter to Major L'Enfant, from Georgetown:

"Sir—We have agreed that the Federal District shall be called 'The Territory of Columbia,' and the Federal City, 'The City of Washington:' the title of the map will therefore be 'A Map of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia.'

"We have also agreed that the streets shall be named alphabetically one way, and numerically the other: the former divided into North and South letters, the latter into East and West numbers, from the Capitol. Major Ellicott, with proper assistance, will immediately take and soon furnish you with soundings of the Eastern Branch, to be inserted in the map. We expect he will also furnish you with the direction of the proposed post-road which we wish to have noticed in the map."

In accordance with this order the streets were laid out: except that J street was omitted from the lettered streets, doubtless to prevent confusion from the resemblance of I and J when written. The extremest lettered street, both North and South, was named W. The farthest of the numbered streets to the East was 31st; the farthest to the West, 26th.

Of the lettered streets, the majority are ninety feet wide and only three less than eighty feet; F street North and G street South have a width of one hundred feet, and K street North of one hundred and forty-seven feet.

Of the numbered streets, sixteen range from one hundred feet to one hundred and twelve feet wide; and Sixteenth street North measures one hundred and sixty feet. North and South Capitol streets are each one hundred and thirty

feet wide ; East Capitol street one hundred and sixty feet ; and Four-and-a-half street one hundred and ten feet ; Thirteen-and-a-half street, seventy feet ; Canal street thirty feet wide, and Water street sixty. Of the nineteen original avenues named after States, twelve are one hundred and sixty feet wide ; three one hundred and thirty, and four one hundred and twenty feet. There was not a street laid down on the plat, except a few of the most insignificant, which has not a greater width than Chestnut or Walnut street in Philadelphia, hitherto considered examples of elegance and comfort. The designers of Washington, warned by the blunder made in this respect in other cities, transferred to the bed of the streets the land which would have been practically useless if left to give superfluous depth to the lots.

So far as the nomenclature of the numbered streets is concerned, the system was excellent when adopted and cannot be improved now ; but the applications of the alphabetical system to the lettered streets although in the right direction soon developed inconveniences which have continued to increase, and which should now be corrected without further delay. Blunders and absurdities long endured become so hardened by time that correction is often well nigh impossible ; and so the gay equestrians will continue to gallop along Rotten Row, and the busy crowds will throng Pall Mall, with only a hopeless laugh at the absurdity of the names, until Mrs. Barbauld's "ingenuous youth" "from the Blue Mountain, or Ontario's Lake"—(the precursor of Macauley's New Zealander)—shall "press the sod," "when London's faded glories rise to view." Fortunately, in Washington we are in full time to make the proper corrections without running counter to the inveterate habits of centuries.

It is evident the proposed plan of naming the streets, so

far as the numbers are concerned, was adopted from the city of Philadelphia, which was then the seat of Government. From that city, also, were derived many of our existing building regulations for the new capital, first promulgated by President Washington in October, 1791. It was then, by far, the most important city in the United States, excelling New York in population, wealth and refinement, and the regularity of its plan was almost unique for that time. The streets running north and south were numbered as they remain to this day. To those running east and west, as far as the city had then been built, were given the names of forest trees; an arrangement supposed to be appropriate for the streets in the Capital of a State so exceptionally well wooded that the fact was proclaimed in the charter name, Pennsylvania.

But a great part of the advantage of the numerical arrangement of streets running north and south is lost, where those running east and west have no alphabetical relation to each other. The citizen of Philadelphia to-day has no ready method of ascertaining the relative position of this class of streets, after the familiar jingle has spent itself:

“Market, Arch, Race and Vine,
Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce and Pine.”

Beyond these limits even the old resident must be guided only by his personal knowledge of the actual location of particular streets, acquired by experience and observation, while the stranger who stands most in need of information on the subject must rely only upon those of whom he may make inquiry.

In Washington, by reason of the alphabetical relation of the lettered streets, one by moderate observation can frame an easy system of mnemonics by which he can readily

locate with accuracy the position of any particular number on any numbered street.

Commencing, for example, with the letter H on any numbered street north of the Capitol, the fact that 8 and H sound very much alike will enable one to remember that all numbers north of H street begin with 800. So the presence of I in the word nine will suggest that all the numbers north of I street begin with 900, and of course all above K with 1000. The letter L sounds so much like eleven that one will be reminded that numbers above L begin with 1100; and, reckoning thence, that all above M begin with 1200; and above N with 1300. As fourteen is the first number that contains the letter O, it is easy to remember that the numbers above O begin with 1400; and so on, without repeating the others, until we reach the last letter, W, the sound of which suggests a double number, 2200, as the beginning of those above W.

Under no circumstance should the efficient suggestion afforded by the alphabetical relation of the lettered streets be abandoned; all we propose is to improve it by abolishing certain obvious defects in the execution of the wise design.

Much of what I shall say may have already occurred to those who have given any thought to the subject, and the particular suggestions I shall make by way of remedy were presented several years ago in a communication I addressed to *The Evening Star*.

The similarity of sound of nearly one-third of the names of the lettered streets (being eight out of twenty-two), when spoken rapidly, causes constant and serious confusion and mistakes. B, C, D, E, G, P, T and V, to ordinary ears, may well be confounded, as they incessantly are.

Any one who stands near a telephone when a message is

being transmitted to either of these streets will generally hear, first, the tiresome repetitions of the particular street letter required by the clerk of the sender; then follow the inevitable inquiries from the receiver as to whether the sender meant to call B street or C street, or some other of the eight whose names sound so much alike; and lastly, the colloquy of the clerks at the two ends of the line repeating to each other several letters of the alphabet before they have arrived at a satisfactory understanding on the point. And when one considers that the annoyance with which he has thus become sensible is but one of a number of similar delays that constantly happen at that particular instrument, and that such annoyances are happening at every instrument, all over the city, he can begin to understand the extent of the general inconvenience. The like troubles result from the similarity of sound of the letters M and N; and of H and 8; L and Eleventh; of A and K; of U and W; and of I and Y. But to appreciate fully the bother, one must also observe what frequently occurs in any court in the city when the residence of a witness or party, or the locality of any act, is in question, and notice the constant difference between the opposing counsel, the court, and the members of the jury, as to what street had been really named by the witness: such misunderstandings almost forming the rule rather than the exception. Of course, from the same causes, repeated mistakes occur in the direction and delivery of letters, and in the daily talk of hundreds of people. When all these inconveniences are considered, it must certainly be admitted they rise to the importance of a very great nuisance that should be promptly abated.

The application of the alphabet to these streets at the

time they were named, afforded a valuable suggestion to be improved upon in the future; but it could scarcely have been intended as a permanent arrangement. Only one President had yet been chosen, and the range of selection was too limited to furnish an adequate supply of suitable names of prominent citizens. It may also have been considered that the great actors in the struggle for Independence were then too familiar, and their rivalries too recent, to allow the entire disappearance of personal jealousies; and so the adoption of the colorless names of the letters of the alphabet might have been the wisest choice for the time being.

How this arrangement was viewed at the time may be understood from the criticism of an English traveler upon this part of the system of names adopted for Washington. He writes: "There is not much taste, I think, displayed in the naming of the streets. Generals and statesmen might have lent their names, and helped in their graves to keep patriotism alive. A wag would infer that the north and south streets received their names from a pilot, and the east and west ones from an alphabetical teacher." (Davis' Travels, p. 170.)

But apart from this objection, the continued application to great thoroughfares, 100 to 160 feet in width and many miles in length, of such insignificant designations as B or C or P street, indicates a poverty of conception and of taste, a lack of dignity, and a want of appreciation of the importance of the city among the great capitals of the earth, that to-day would scarcely be expected in the staking off of a petty village boomed into short life by the moon-madness of speculation.

An obvious and easy remedy is to substitute for the several

letters affixed to the streets the names of eminent Americans beginning with the corresponding letters, thus preserving all the benefits of an alphabetical arrangement while removing all the objections we have been considering. The troubles from the similarity of names would entirely cease, while the streets would be adorned by designations bearing perpetual testimony of the gratitude of the republic towards its great benefactors.

In Boston this system has been applied to the fine streets crossing Commonwealth Avenue west of the Public Garden which have been named in order, Arlington, Berkley, Clarendon, Dartmouth, Exeter, &c. How paltry it would have been to call them after the letters of the alphabet alone! It would indeed have seemed the A, B, C of street nomenclature.

I suggest for the consideration of the members of the Society, that there should be applied to the streets running east and west in the original city, in the first place, the names of the Presidents; then, of the Vice Presidents; then of the Chief Justices of the Supreme Court, and afterwards of the Speakers of the House of Representatives, and of the more distinguished members of the different Cabinets, and of celebrated military characters; as far as possible excluding the names of living persons; and when these sources of supply become exhausted, to admit the names of other distinguished officials, including the earlier Mayors of the city; in all cases adopting first from the list of officials of the same grade the names of those who were earliest in service, and applying the first choice to the streets in the most thickly settled portion of the city, north of the Capitol.

There can be no more enduring and dignified form of recognition of a nation's gratitude to its benefactors than to affix their names to portions of the country itself. Statues

rise and fall with those who made them, or are removed to new locations as the whim of the moment may suggest; but when a great name has once, by law or by long usage, been deliberately joined to a mountain, a county, or to a great street in an important city, that name will generally adhere as long as the land itself endures. It is, therefore, especially important that such names should be conferred by competent authority and only after grave consideration; for the unworthy choice may survive as long as the deserving. "Ampersand" seems as firmly fastened to the mountain it belittles as "Washington" is to the sovereign peak of the White Hills of New Hampshire, or "Mitchell" to the monarch of the Black Mountains of North Carolina. And the same mortifying result will follow, where by inattention the authorities of a city have allowed carelessness or ignorance to impose an unworthy name upon an important street: and thus Milk Street and Maiden Lane will continue to annoy future generations because they have become too firmly fixed to admit of disturbance. What a mercy it is that Guiteau did not open a street through a lot in this city and bestow his name upon it, as apparently he might have done with impunity! For at one time it appears to have been considered by the authorities quite as a matter of course that the city would confer what seemed to be an inexpensive compliment upon any land owner who would relinquish a strip of land through his property as the bed of a new alley or street.

I propose also that the authorities shall abolish the incorrect and undignified addition of the words "North" and "South" to different streets beginning with the same letter. The practice is incorrect, because no lettered street north from the Capitol has any more connection with any simi-

larly lettered street south from the Capitol than it has with any other lettered street. G street North is not a part of G street South, nor does it touch or approach G street South through its whole course, any more than it approaches R street South. Practically the two G streets are as distinct from one another as W street North is from W street South, which are about five miles asunder. There is a reason why the portions of the numbered streets that lie respectively north and south from the Capitol should be designated accordingly, for this discriminates between different portions of the same street; but A street South is no more a part of A street North than it is of V street North.

This practice tends further to expose and emphasize the poverty of thought displayed in calling great streets after the letters of the alphabet, by thus needlessly duplicating this series of colorless names.

The notion that this plan assists the stranger in finding his way is entirely incorrect, for G street South or G street North cannot be more easily found than Grant street or Garfield street. The proposed plan extends the benefit of the alphabetical arrangement much more effectually than the use of the bare letters themselves.

The selection of appropriate names to fulfil the conditions of our plan was not as simple a matter as one might suppose. Our great men in the early days do not seem to have appropriated the letters of the alphabet for the purposes of initials with entire impartiality. While some of the letters, such as A, H, J, and M, have furnished more than enough initial letters for our purpose, such is not the case with other letters, as D, N, and O. There is but one name commencing with I in the roll of our Revo-

lutionary worthies. For this reason it is in some degree a necessity to substitute J in its place. This enables us to use three Presidential names which commence with that initial.

I will now read the list of the changes which I propose should be accomplished by Act of Congress, saying a word or two, as I read the list, to identify the least familiar of the names here suggested:

PRESENT AND PROPOSED NAMES OF LETTERED STREETS ORIGINALLY LAID DOWN ON THE PLAT OF THE CITY.

Present Name.	Proposed Name.	Public Service.
A Street North.	Adams.	President.
B Street North.	Buchanan.	President.
C Street North.	Cleveland.	President.
D Street North.	Dallas.	Vice-President.
E Street North.	Ellsworth.	Chief Justice Sup. Court U. S.
F Street North.	Fillmore.	President.
G Street North.	Grant.	President.
H Street North.	Harrison.	President.
I Street North.	Jefferson.	President.
K Street North.	King.	Vice-President.
L Street North.	Lincoln.	President.
* M Street North.	Madison.	President.
N Street North.	Nelson.	Signer Decl. of Independence, Gov. Va., and Gen.
O Street North.	Otis.	(James) Patriot.
P Street North.	Polk.	President.
Q Street North.	Quincy.	(Josiah) Patriot.
R Street North.	Rutledge.	Chief Justice.
S Street North.	Sherman.	(Roger) signer Decl. of Ind., of the Articles of Confederation and of the Constitution.
T Street North.	Tyler.	President.
U Street North.	Upsher.	Secretary State and Navy.
V Street North.	Van Buren.	President.
W Street North.	Washington.	President.

PRESENT AND PROPOSED NAMES—Continued.

Present Name.	Proposed Name.	Public Service.
A Street South.	Arthur.	President.
B Street South.	Bell.	Speaker of H. of Rep., 1834.
C Street South.	Clinton.	Vice-President, 1804.
D Street South.	Dearborn.	Secretary of War, 1801.
E Street South.	Everett.	Minister to England. Secretary of State.
F Street South.	Franklin.	
G Street South.	Garfield.	President.
H Street South.	Hayes.	President.
I Street South.	Jackson.	President.
K Street South.	Knox.	Secretary of War, 1789.
L Street South.	La Fayette.	
M Street South.	Monroe.	President.
N Street South.	Nicholson.	H. of Rep; Early Commodores in Navy.
O Street South.	Osgood.	P. M. General, 1789.
P Street South.	Pierce.	President.
Q Street South.	Quitman.	Maj. Gen. Mexican War. Governor of Mississippi.
R Street South.	Rush.	Signer Decl. of Ind., Surg. Gen.
S Street South.	Story.	Justice of Sup. Ct., 1811-1845.
T Street South.	Taylor.	President.
U Street South.	Underwood.	(Jos. R.) Judge. Senator.
V Street South.	Van Ness.	Member of the House of Rep. Mayor.
W Street South.	Walcott.	Secretary of Treas., 1795-1797. Signer of Decl. of Ind. and Articles of Confederation.

Otis street will commemorate James Otis, the "flame of fire," as described by John Adams after his wonderful argument against the writs of assistance. Nelson street preserves the memory of the heroic Governor of Virginia, who pointed out the finest house in Yorktown, which belonged to himself, and urged the artillery to direct their fire upon it, as it would probably be occupied by Cornwallis.

Josiah Quincy is worthy to be remembered as one of the most energetic and constant of the early patriots.

To Edward Everett the country is chiefly indebted for the success of the patriotic effort of Miss Pamela Cunningham of South Carolina, a suffering invalid, to purchase the home of Washington and preserve it for the Nation.

Two gallant commodores in our earliest naval contests bore the name of Nicholson; from the beginning of the century the name has been represented in Congress; and among the early proprietors were Nicholson and Greenleaf.

The devotion of Generals Knox and Greene to the Father of his Country recalled in the army the affection of Craterus and Hephæstion for Alexander the Great, and his remark, "Craterus loves the King, but Hephæstion loves Alexander"; but both of our generals revered and loved Washington as well for his great achievements as Commander-in-chief as for his personal qualities of head and heart.

This legislation would not be complete without a supplementary provision changing the names of sundry small streets not laid down on the original map, but to which have been applied, with very slender show of authority I am inclined to think, some of the great names which are included in the list I have read.

A very serious embarrassment to visitors as well as to residents in a city, results from the duplication of names of the streets. In old cities this has become a great grievance. In London, according to Mogg's map, eleven streets bear the name of Duke; twelve are called James; fifteen Charles; seventeen George; seventeen John; eighteen Gloucester; eighteen Queen; nineteen Prince; twenty-one York; twenty-three King; twenty-three Church; and twenty-nine Park. The address of a letter to any such popular street is but a small part of the direction requisite for a sure

delivery, even with the excellent methods of the London postoffice.

No one who has not examined the subject can realize what bad progress in this direction we have already made in Washington. I find that of the names of Presidents and others included in the foregoing list, (reckoning alleys, courts, places, roads and streets) Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson and Washington each appear three times; Lincoln, Pierce and Grant each five times; Madison seven times; and there are, to a lesser extent, many repetitions of other names. It is time this sort of mischief should be stopped, and this can only be accomplished by legislative enactment.

As the present suggestions are intended only to secure appropriate names to the streets within the city as it was originally laid out, the only changes now proposed are in cases where the names now existing would conflict with those suggested in our list. The rectification of other cases of the kind may be left to the action of the Commissioners when they shall undertake to affix suitable names to the streets outside of the city proper, as they have been authorized to do by an existing statute.

In the performance of this most important duty, it is to be hoped the Commissioners will apply the alphabetical arrangement to the lettered streets. While there is nothing to prevent the extension of the present *numbered* streets to the extreme northern boundaries of the District, yet the lay of the land will only permit to a very limited extent, the extension of the present *lettered* streets to the land east and west outside of the city proper. It will therefore be necessary to lay off new lettered streets in the outside territory. This will be best accomplished by arranging it

in sections; to one of which might be applied the names of the Capital cities of the Union, as was suggested by Mr. Justice Brown; to another the names of our great rivers; to another the names of famous Indians, &c.: in each case preserving the alphabetical arrangement.

To avoid a repetition of the names applied in our list to the lettered streets, I have, as far as possible, selected names, commencing with the same initials as the former names; and of persons connected with the early history of the country or city.

The list submitted for your consideration contains the names of the—

STREETS, PLACES, COURTS AND ALLEYS WITHIN THE CITY AND DISTRICT, WHICH HAVE BEEN CALLED AFTER SOME OF THE NAMES NOW PROPOSED TO BE APPROPRIATED TO THE STREETS WITHIN THE ORIGINAL CITY; WITH THE SUBSTITUTES PROPOSED.

Present Name.	Proposed Name.	Public Service.
Adams Mill road fr. Columbia road.	Hancock.	Signer Decn. of Ind.
Adams st. Anacostia fr. Harrison.	Ames.	(Fisher) Patriot.
Arthur st. Anacostia fr. 62 Grant.	Allen.	(Ethan) Cont. Army.
Arthur Pl. nw. bet. B and C, N. J. ave. and 1st.	Calvert.	(Lord Baltimore.)
Buchanan st. fr. Monroe.	Barney.	(Joshua) Commodore.
Buchanan st. nw. west fr. Columbia road.	Pendleton.	(Edmund) President of 1st. Continental Congress.
Cleveland ave. nw. fr. 1219 W to 1224 Fla. ave.	Cass.	Secy. State and War. Governor General.
Clinton st. nw. fr. 11th ext. Piney Branch road.	Howard.	(John Eager) Cont. Army. Gov. of Md. Senator.
Clinton pl. nw. fr. 1120 Conn. Ave.	Chase	(Samuel) Signer Declaration of Independence.

STREETS, PLACES, COURTS AND ALLEYS—Continued.

Present Name.	Proposed Name.	Public Service.
Decatur st. ne. fr. N. Cap. bet. O and P.	Bayard.	Senator. Commissioner to Ghent.
Fillmore st. Anacostia fr. Harrison.	Forsyth.	Secretary of State ; Minis- ter to Spain. Senator.
Franklin st. nw. fr. 1st to 2d and fr. N. J. ave. to 5th above P.	Campbell.	(William) Hero at King's Mountain, 1780.
Garfield ave. sw. fr. Del. ave. to B.	Galletin.	Secretary of Treas., 1801.
Garfield ave. Washington Heights.	Jay.	First Chief Justice.
Grant st. Anacostia fr. 334 Monroe.	Greene.	(Nathaniel) General.
Grant ave. nw. fr. Bright- wood ave. to Fla. ave. and 10th.	Hamlin.	Vice-President.
Grant pl. nw. fr. 720 9th to 10th.	Colfax.	Vice-President.
Grant road fr. Tennally- town to Broad Branch road.	Randolph.	(Peyton) Prest. First Con- tinental Congress.
Grant st. nw. fr. Pine to Brown road.	Decatur.	Commodore.
Harrison ave. se. fr. 13th to 14th above C.	Hamilton.	Secretary of Treas., 1789.
Harrison st. Anacostia fr. Monroe.	Hendricks.	Vice-President.
Hayes court nw. fr. 18th above D.	Pickering.	(Timothy) Secretary of State, 1795.
Jackson st. Anacostia fr. Monroe.	Irving.	Minister to Spain. Biogra- pher of Washington.
Jackson st. ne. fr. 721 N. Cap. to 1st.	Tilghman	(Colonel, Tench) aide to Washington.
Jefferson ave. nw. fr. 3025 Water to 3028 M.	Smallwood.	Governor of Maryland. Major General.
Jefferson pl. nw. fr. 1218 Conn. ave. to 1227 19th.	Scott.	Lieutenant General.
Jefferson st. Anacostia fr. Monroe.	Izard.	(Ralph) Commr. to Tus- cany. Senator, 1781.

STREETS, PLACES, COURTS AND ALLEYS—Continued.

Present Name.	Proposed Name.	Public Service.
King alley se. bet. 14th and 15th st., S. Car.ave. and C.	Kendall.	(Amos) Post Master General, 1833.
King ne. fr. Bladensburg road.	Wirt.	(Wm.) Attorney General, 1817-29.
Knox alley sw. fr. 328 E to 327 F.	Key.	(Francis S.) Star Spangled Banner.
LaFayette ave. Montello fr. Queen.	Jenifer.	(Daniel of St. Thomas) Signer of Constitution from Maryland.
Lincoln ave. fr. Fla. ave. and N. Cap. to Harewood and Bunker Hill roads.	Marshall.	Chief Justice, 1801-55.
Lincoln sq. E. Cap. fr. 11th to 13th.	Lincoln.	
Lincoln st. Anacostia fr. Johnson.	Southard.	Secretary of Navy. Senator. Author of important report explaining the financial situation of the Government with respect to the Dist. of Columbia.
Lincoln st. nw. fr Brightwood ave.	Laurens.	(Henry) Minister to Netherlands. Imprisoned in Tower.
Lincoln Terrace nw. hd. 15th and Fla. ave.	Mercer.	General. Killed at battle of Princeton.
Madison st. nw. fr. 1522 14th to 1519 17th.	Webster.	Secretary of State, etc.
Madison ave. nw. fr. 518 1st to 519 2d.	Dexter.	(Samuel) Secretary of War and State, 1800-1.
Madison court nw. fr. 1216 Madison.	Muhlenburg.	(Fredk. A.) 1st Speaker, 1789.
Madison st. Anacostia fr. Adams.	Macon.	Speaker, 1801-7.
Madison st. nw. fr. 6th to 7th above M.	Pinckney.	(William) Atty. Genl. Minister to England.
Madison st. nw. fr. 621.	Morgan.	(General Daniel) Member of Congress.

STREETS, PLACES, COURTS AND ALLEYS—Continued.

Present Name.	Proposed Name.	Public Service.
Monroe st. Anacostia fr. the bridge to Jefferson.	Morton.	Vice-President.
Pierce pl. nw. fr. 1418 14th to 1825 16th.	Johnson.	President.
Pierce st. Anacostia fr. Harrison.	Putnam.	General.
Pierce st. nw. fr. 1140 N. Cap. to 1135 N. J. ave.	McKean.	Signer Declaration of In- dependence and Articles of Confederation. Gov- ernor. President of Con- gress.
Pierce Mill rd. fr. Rock- ville tpk. to Rock Creek.	Gales.	Mayor of Washington.
Pierce-st. alley nw. fr. 203 L to 140 Pierce.	Clay.	Commissioner to Ghent. Speaker 1811-25. Secre- tary of State.
Polk st. Anacostia fr. Jef- ferson.	Prescott.	Colonel at Bunker Hill.
Quincy st. ne. bet. 1st and 2d and Q and R.	Winthrop.	Speaker, 1847.
Taylor alley sw. fr. 478 G to 481 H.	Tompkins.	Vice-President twice.
Taylor st. Anacostia fr. Harrison.	Taney.	Chief Justice.
Washington court nw. fr. 480 Washington.	Hull.	Commodore.
Washington st. Anacostia fr. Monroe.	Woodbury.	Justice United States Su- preme Court, Secretary of Treasury.
Washington st. nw. fr. 722 4th to 715 5th.	Sumpter.	Brigadier General in Revo- lution. Senator. Minis- ter to Brazil.

I will add that as the names of less important officials or personages have been used in the lists only where there appeared no name of a President or Vice-President appropriate to a particular letter, it should result that when a President shall hereafter be chosen whose name will begin

with such particular letter, it might be substituted for that which had been temporarily used.

It appears unfortunate that the name of Washington should be applied to so insignificant a street as the present North W street, which is now one of the shortest in the series, cutting through a kind of "panhandle" in the extremest northern point of the city.

There was indeed no necessity to use the name of the Father of his Country at all, in this rearrangement of names, for his fame is secure enough without such reminder. To no one could Sir Christopher's great epitaph be more justly applied than to the man of men in whose honor the people have reared here the loftiest shaft of stone that ever pierced the clouds, and whose name comprehends the entire city.

But a practicable and not difficult change would convert W street into one of the most important avenues of the city. It will be seen from the plat that the old Boundary street, now called Florida avenue, meets W street North first at the western extremity of that street; after which it makes a loop to the north and east, in the course of which it again strikes W street at the eastern end. If Florida avenue, widened to the breadth of our widest thoroughfares, were called Washington avenue, and made to run straight through W street and thence pursue its route eastwardly with the course of that avenue to the Eastern Branch, the city would be encircled on the north by a grand girdle properly adorned by the name of him who guarded the whole country while he lived.

□ The name would be peculiarly appropriate, as there is within the limits of the city no thoroughfare which was so frequently traversed by General Washington as this.

The northern boundary of the city, as described by Free-

man the surveyor in his report of July 4, 1795, began at a point in this road on the eastern bank of a ford in Rock Creek, at what was formerly known as the old Paper Mill bridge where P Street bridge now stands. This was originally the road from Georgetown to Bladensburg. It formed part of an important communication between the southern and the northern colonies, crossing the Potomac at Georgetown, and passing through Vansville, a small village in Prince George's county, Maryland, where it is said Washington frequently spent the night; and was the post-road referred to in the letter of the Commissioners, which I have read. Running northeastwardly from its initial point, Boundary street skirted the base of the hills that run in a curve facing to the south around the plateau on which the principal part of the city is built.

I do not affirm that Washington always made use of this road in his journeys to the North. Strange to say, his journal very seldom states where he crossed the river. But the Georgetown Ferry was so much more convenient and safe than those across the much wider river near Mount Vernon, that the probabilities are in favor of its frequent selection. Weld, in his travels, speaking of Hoe's Ferry below Mount Vernon, describes the Potomac there as three miles wide, and says that boats crossing were often exposed to great risks from high winds; and he complains of the general insecurity of Virginia ferries and of the constant accidents to persons and horses in crossing them.

Twining came in 1796 by this road from Bladensburg to Georgetown. Washington's Journal under date of September 22d, 1787, shows he travelled over it on that day; for he states he breakfasted that day at Bladensburg, passed through Georgetown, dined at Alexandria and reached home by sun-

set, after an absence of more than four months. When Mrs. Washington followed her husband to New York, where he had gone to assume the Presidency, she took the route from Mount Vernon to Alexandria and Georgetown, and thence followed this road to Bladensburg. Washington doubtless continued to use it at times, as long as business required him to travel to the North, and certainly whenever he came to visit the Federal City, on which occasions he frequently lodged in Georgetown.

Some of these notable journeys were made to Annapolis long before the commencement of the Revolution. His visit to Boston to confer with Governor Shirley was in 1756, the year after Braddock's defeat, when he was but twenty-four years old. Perhaps the most interesting of these expeditions was that made on horseback in 1773, in company with Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendleton, all delegates from Virginia, on their way to attend the Second Continental Congress about to assemble at Philadelphia.

It was at the session of the Virginia Convention that elected these delegates that Washington had declared his readiness to raise one thousand men, sustain them at his own expense and march at their head to the relief of Boston. Five years before, he had told Arthur Lee at Mount Vernon, he was prepared whenever his country called him to take his musket on his shoulder in its defense.

To one who passes over this same ground to-day, it is truly interesting to recall that our Washington, more than a century ago, rode with his friends and servants along this country road under the shade of the fine oaks the survivors of which are still standing. Through the openings of the stately forest his observing eye rested on the waters of his beloved Potomac, that had flowed down more than

two hundred miles from its mountain "mother house," to encircle with its affectionate embrace the future Capital of the Nation, and to glide thence along the shores of Mount Vernon where now his remains repose in the peace that was won by his sword.

Two of his biographers have indulged in interesting speculation as to the talk of these three travellers as they wended their way towards the scene of that grand parliament of which they were already the destined leaders; whose bold and sagacious action was to establish forever in the firmament of the nations a splendid and benignant constellation, shining with a steady effulgence that would forever cheer the friendless peoples, and "what is dark illumine," throughout the world.

Washington's familiarity with the topography of the District, in great part acquired during these journeys, enabled him to form a sound judgment as to the fitness of the location for the site of a great city. It would be pre-eminently appropriate that this, our *via sacra*, should bear the name of the most illustrious man who had ever passed over its surface.

The incomparable fabric of the builders of the nation should not be allowed to deteriorate in the hands of their descendants and successors. This Capital, that the valor and virtues of such men rendered possible, is entrusted in great part to the care of those whose good fortune it is to have their homes here.

The members of Congress, with occasional exceptions, naturally, cannot possess that personal knowledge of the needs of the District that will always enable them to determine for themselves as to the propriety of the various suggestions for its benefit that are constantly laid before them. They favor, I am sure, whatever measures they believe to be for

the real interests of the District, in whose advancement and embellishment they must have a just pride. What they reasonably may fear is the danger of being deceived by cunning and unscrupulous lobbyists into the adoption of selfish schemes of speculation.

It is the duty of our people to see that proper information is furnished to the legislators when necessary to thwart such projects. Within a few years Congress has established the Rock Creek Park, and at the session just closed it conferred upon the District an inestimable boon by enacting that the great reclamation from the bed of our noble river shall, by the name of the Potomac Park, be forever held and used by the Government as a national possession for the recreation and pleasure of the people. I am glad to bear public witness to the importance of the zealous labors of many of our citizens, and especially of Mr. Charles C. Glover, in the advocacy of these beneficent measures before a Congress that only required a candid and intelligent explanation to commend them to its favor.

I can not better close this subject than by quoting a passage from the opinion of the Supreme Court, delivered by Mr. Justice Story, (whose name we propose to affix to one of our streets,) in the case of *Van Ness vs. The City of Washington*, 4 Peters, 231. The court, speaking of the original proprietors of the lands comprehended within the District, uses this language :

“They might, and indeed must, also have placed a just confidence in the Government, that in founding the city it would do no act that would obstruct its prosperity or interfere with its great fundamental objects or interests. It could never be supposed that Congress would seek to destroy what its own legislation had created and fostered into being.

“On the other hand it must have been obvious that as Congress must forever have an interest to protect and aid

the city, it would for this very purpose be most impolitic and inconvenient to lay any obstruction to the most free exercise of its power over it. The city was designed to last in perpetuity, *capitoli immobile saxum*."

In bringing to a close these remarks, far too protracted, I ask from my auditors their support of the plan I have ventured to suggest, whenever its advocacy may appear to be needed.

At the conclusion of this address and of the discussion of the subject by members and others, the following resolution was adopted :

RESOLVED, on motion of Mr. Weller, "That a committee be appointed by the chair to prepare a memorial to Congress in connection with the paper of the evening, for the purpose of securing a change from the present scheme of naming the streets for letters to a system of alphabetical names commemorating Presidents, Vice-Presidents and other eminent citizens."

Seconded by Mr. Spofford and carried.

Under the resolution, the following committee was appointed by the President: MESSRS. JOHN A. KASSON, ALEXANDER B. HAGNER, MICHAEL I. WELLER, MARCUS BAKER, LEWIS J. DAVIS, MARTIN F. MORRIS, J. ORMOND WILSON.

The foregoing remarks are published at the request of a number of citizens who desired an opportunity to examine the plan at leisure. In the interest of brevity, there has

been no attempt to reproduce the extemporaneous remarks made at the time, which were chiefly of a biographical or historical character.

A few changes have been made in the original list of names by the substitution of some that seem to conform more fully to the general scheme suggested in the Address than those first given.

The plan of Mr. Justice Brown having been mentioned, it was considered proper to submit the Address to him before publication. His letter, which is an interesting contribution to the discussion, is, with his approbation, appended :

“SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

“WASHINGTON, D. C.,

“*June 19, 1897.*

“MY DEAR JUDGE: I have just finished reading your very interesting address upon the nomenclature of our streets, and hope that this will be the beginning of a movement which will eventuate in some change being made.

“While I am, perhaps, too partial to the scheme I suggested of naming the streets after the capitals of the States, there are certain practical objections to it which might interfere with any change being made at all, of which I think there is great need. I would be very glad to see the plan you suggest adopted, of naming them after the leading men of the country. Perhaps the committee that was appointed might co-operate with Mr. Dalzell, who has charge of a similar measure before the House of Representatives. I return the proof-sheets by my messenger.

Very truly yours,

H. B. BROWN.

Mr. JUSTICE HAGNER.

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