



The Survey and Design of the District of Columbia and Washington, D.C.

3 Hours

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Final Exam

1. The District of Columbia was established around the confluence of which two rivers?
 - a. The Anacostia and the Chesapeake
 - b. The Potomac and the Anacostia
 - c. The Potomac and the Cumberland
 - d. The Cumberland and the Shenandoah

2. This law, enacted in 1790, provided for the establishment of a permanent seat of the federal government.
 - a. The Residence Act
 - b. The Organic Act
 - c. The Capital Act
 - d. The Homestead Act

3. President George Washington proclaimed this location to be the beginning point for the survey of the district of Columbia.
 - a. Temple Hills
 - b. Falls Church
 - c. Arlington
 - d. Jones Point

4. This instrument was used by Benjamin Banneker to make astronomical observations for the survey of the District of Columbia.
 - a. Zenith sector
 - b. Circumferentor
 - c. Equal altitude instrument
 - d. Solar compass

5. The original boundary for the district of Columbia was made of a square with each side being how long?
 - a. 5 miles
 - b. 10 miles
 - c. 12 miles
 - d. 20 miles

6. The land for the District of Columbia was ceded to the United States by which two states?
 - a. Maryland and Pennsylvania
 - b. Virginia and Delaware
 - c. Delaware and Maryland
 - d. Maryland and Virginia

7. How many stone survey monuments were placed on the perimeter of the District of Columbia?
 - a. 4
 - b. 20
 - c. 40
 - d. 100

8. L'Enfant's plan for the City of Washington made use of this mathematical relationship?
 - a. The transitive property
 - b. The Golden Ratio
 - c. The rule of 77
 - d. The natural logarithm

9. In L'Enfant's plan, the wide diagonal travel ways crossing Washington were referred to as:
 - a. Boulevards
 - b. Parkways
 - c. Avenues
 - d. Broadways

10. The enhancement of the National Mall was a key component of which plan?
 - a. The Marshall Plan
 - b. The Senate Parks Plan
 - c. The McMillan Plan
 - d. The Capital Improvement Plan

The Survey and Design of the District of Columbia and Washington, D.C.

Objective: This course will study the original development of the District of Columbia and Washington, D.C., focusing particularly on the survey and layout of the district and the city and the stories of the people who accomplished this remarkable work.

Introduction

1. The District of Columbia in the Pre-Columbian Era

- a. Geography of the District of Columbia
- b. Topography and Geology of the District of Columbia
- c. Native Culture Prior to European Influence

2. The Early History of the District of Columbia

- a. European Settlement
- b. The Need for a Capital
- c. Site Selection
- d. Founding

3. Planning the City and Surveying the District of Columbia

- a. Biographical Sketches of Key Figures
 1. Major Andrew Ellicott
 2. Benjamin Banneker
 3. Benjamin Ellicott
 4. Joseph Ellicott
 5. Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant
- b. Survey of the District of Columbia
- c. Survey Monuments of the District
- d. Modern Preservation Efforts
- e. Entrance Markers

4. Planning and Surveying the City of Washington

- a. Pierre L'Enfant's Original Plan
- b. The Geometric Configuration of Washington, D.C.
- c. Andrew Ellicott's Contribution to L'Enfant's Plan
- d. L'Enfant's Dismissal
- e. Ellicott's Dismissal
- f. The McMillan Plan
- g. The Retrocession of the District of Columbia
- h. The Influence of Freemasonry on the Design of Washington, D.C.

Timeline of Historical Events

Conclusion

Introduction

On April 30, 1783, a mere nineteen days after Congress accepted Great Britain's petition for peace, bringing a close to the fighting of the Revolutionary War, the need for a permanent seat of government for the United States was first proposed by the legislature. Over the next several years, a team of distinguished surveyors and other professionals would establish the boundaries of the new federal district and develop the plan for a new capital city to serve the fledgling nation.

The United States, being a new nation, enjoyed the unique benefit of possessing a blank canvas, having the option to choose the location and the design of its new capital city. In the Old World, where city-states and kingdoms had been the norm, the development of cities typically preceded the founding of nations, and as such the capital cities were generally well established by the time a new nation was founded. The United States, with a new system of government and plenty of land at its disposal, had the opportunity to start from scratch and design a capital worthy of the high-minded ideals upon which the nation had been founded and to build a magnificent city to stand alongside the great cities of the world.

Influenced by the design motifs of the grand palaces and gardens of Europe, the plan of Washington represented a symbolic declaration to the powers of the world that this new nation was to be a major player on the world stage. Also, Washington, with its impressive stone buildings, its stunning architecture, lush parks, and its numerous monuments, was designed to evoke patriotism and inspire a sense of limitless possibility in the hearts of the citizens of the young nation.

*Come let me lead thee o'er this second Rome...
This embryo capital, where Fancy sees
Squares in morasses, obelisks in trees;
Which second-sighted seers, ev'n now, adorn,
With shrines unbuilt and heroes yet unborn...*

(Thomas Moore, "To Thomas Hume, from the City of Washington," 1804, in *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore*, 1853, vol. II, p. 296)

Today, Washington, D.C. is home to over twenty institutions of higher learning, over a dozen college and professional sports teams, numerous entertainment venues, and a selection of world-class restaurants and museums.

Section 1 – The District of Columbia in the Pre-Columbian Era

Geography of the District of Columbia

The land we know today as the District of Columbia was once mostly forest and swamp land drained by a major river, the Potomac, and its two tributaries, the Anacostia River and Rock Creek. First Lady Abigail Adams, upon her first visit to the area described it as a "wilderness",

claiming that the nearby city of Georgetown was “the very dirtiest hole I ever saw for a place of any trade.”

The City of Washington sits on the border between the Piedmont Plateau and the Atlantic Coastal Plain. This border is known as the fall line and represents the head of navigation of the Potomac River. The district is situated within the humid subtropical climate zone and experiences the four seasons distinctly. The district is in the form of a 10-mile square, the corners of which point in the cardinal directions, and is surrounded by the states of Maryland and Virginia.

Topography and Geology of the District of Columbia

The District of Columbia lies in two distinct geographic provinces – the Piedmont province and the Coastal Plain province. The Piedmont province sits at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains and its granite rock makes up the northwestern third of the district. The southeastern two-thirds of the district is covered by the flat Coastal Plain province, consisting of sedimentary deposits of gravel, sand, and clay overlaying bedrock that slopes at approximately 2 percent.

The most interesting topographic features in the district are the several natural terraces ascending like giant steps from the Potomac and Anacostia bottoms.

The approximate mean elevation of the district is 150 feet above mean sea level, with the highest point reaching an elevation of 420 feet.

The major waterways draining the district prior to development were the Potomac River, the Anacostia River, Rock Creek, Slash Run, St. James Creek, and Tiber Creek. As the district and city were developed, Tiber Creek and St. James Creek were eventually enclosed and run underground.

While today, the nation’s capital city is situated in the far eastern part of the country, it is important to note that at the time when the capital’s site was selected, its location was more or less centrally located relative to the states that comprised the nation. Not until the rapid westward expansion of American settlement occurred did Washington find itself in a decentralized position.

Native Culture Prior to European Influence

The archeological record suggests that the area we now know as Washington D.C. was populated by native peoples as early as 2,000 B.C.E. Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the area where the District of Columbia now exists was home to a rich and thriving native culture. An ample supply of water coupled with a dependable supply of fish and game animals, (turkey, geese, ducks, deer, elk, bison, and bear) made the area suitable for human civilization. Furthermore, the native residents raised crops of corn, squash, beans, and potatoes. Extensive trade networks existed between distant native groups. The location at the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, which flow year-round, and at the boundary between the Piedmont and the coastal plain made this area a popular trading center for coastal and interior communities.

Once yearly, the shad would migrate upriver from the Chesapeake Bay, leading to a gathering of the numerous native groups in the area to harvest and preserve the fish for their food supplies.

Around one thousand years ago, the native groups of this region gradually transitioned from a hunter-gatherer existence to an agrarian lifestyle.

The primary group inhabiting the Potomac-Anacostia region was the Piscataway. Other groups included the Anacostank, Pamunkey, Mattapanient, Nangemeick, and Tauxehent.

Nacotchtank (meaning “town of traders”) was the most populous of the three villages known to have existed in the area and was a major center of commerce. Another village, Nameroughquena, was located on the western bank of the Potomac. A third village which is thought to have been unnamed, sat on the bank of the Potomac just northwest of the present-day site of Washington.

The first European contact occurred in 1608 and within four decades the native population had been diminished by three-fourths. Many native people died of diseases introduced by the Europeans, while others died in combat. A great number also left to join tribes in other regions.

Section 2 - The Early History of the District of Columbia

European Settlement

European exploration of the Washington area did not occur until the 17th century when Captain John Smith first traversed the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, observing several native settlements.

Thomas Gerrard and George Thompson were the first colonial settlers in the area when they took possession of the Blue Plains tract in 1662. As more European settlers moved in, conflict with the native inhabitants increased to the point where Maryland officials built a fortress in what is now the District of Columbia.

In 1751, the Maryland legislature purchased 60 acres of land from two residents and established the settlement of Georgetown. Georgetown sat at the northernmost point on the Potomac river that was reachable by oceangoing vessels. Georgetown quickly became a busy center of commerce, moving goods into and out of Maryland. In 1789, Georgetown College (now University) was founded and is today regarded among the top institutions of higher learning in America.

The Need for a Capital

In the infancy of the nation, Independence Hall in Philadelphia served as the original location of the United States capital, hosting the early governmental functions of the nation, namely the First and Second Continental Congresses and the Congress of the Confederation.

In 1783, a throng of frustrated soldiers arrived at Independence Hall demanding payment owed to them for their service in the Revolutionary War. Governor John Dickinson was sympathetic toward the protestors and refused to have them removed. As a result of this protest, Congress temporarily relocated itself to Princeton, New Jersey.

Between the years of 1774 and 1789, the Continental Congress moved eleven different times, convening in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York.

The governor's reluctance to protect the nation's congress was a topic of discussion at the Philadelphia Convention in 1787. At this time, the delegates agreed, as set forth in Article One, Section 8 of the Constitution, to grant Congress the authority to "*exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of Particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards and other needful Buildings.*"

Site Selection

While the constitution did not provide for a specific location for the new federal district, James Madison argued that the nation's capital should necessarily be distinct from any particular state.

Two major issues influenced the selection of the location of the District of Columbia. Those issues were slavery and the assumption of revolutionary war debts.

The northern free states favored a northern location, while the southern slaveholding states preferred a southern location. Representatives of the northern states, led by New York's Alexander Hamilton, desired that the government relocate to Wright's Ferry on the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. The southern delegation, which included the influential Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, wished to place the government near Georgetown, Maryland, at the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers.

Further complicating the conflict between the northern and southern states was the issue of the revolutionary war debt owed to the nation by the individual states.

In 1790, Alexander Hamilton issued his first report on public credit. In his report, Hamilton stated that the United States could not maintain a stable economy as long as the individual states were struggling to pay back their war debts. Hamilton logically determined that the debts owed by the states had been incurred securing the liberty of the entire nation, so therefore the debts were the shared responsibility of the nation as a whole rather than of the individual states. A problem presented itself, however, in the fact that the states each owed vastly different debts. In general, the northern states carried significantly more debt than the southern states, and as such, the southern states were displeased with the concept of spreading the unequal debt equally across the entire nation.

The legislatures of the states of Virginia, New York, New Jersey, and Maryland each proposed to offer land for the placement of the national capital. James Madison, Thomas

Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton agreed upon the location along the Potomac River near Georgetown and on the boundary between Maryland and Virginia, which at the time were slave-holding states. As a compromise for the selection of a site in the South, Hamilton, Madison, and Jefferson developed an agreement by which the southern states would assume a share of the Revolutionary War debt owed by the northern states.

Founding

On December 23, 1788, the General Assembly of Maryland passed legislation permitting the cession of land to the federal government for the creation of the new federal district. Nearly a full year later, in December of 1789, Virginia's General Assembly enacted similar legislation. On July 16, 1790, the First United States Congress enacted the Residence Act, which was signed into law by President George Washington creating a site for the national capital and the permanent seat of the federal government, described as:

“...a district of territory, not exceeding ten miles square, to be located as hereafter directed on the river Potomack, at some place between the mouths of the Eastern-Branch and Connogochegue...”

The “Eastern-Branch” mentioned in the Act is today known as the Anacostia River.

The capital was to be made up of two distinct parts. The larger part was the 100-square mile federal district, and the smaller part was the federal city in the middle of the district.

The Residence Act authorized the President to make the final selection of the site for the district. The site chosen was just below the furthest navigable inland point on the river. President Washington named a board of three Commissioners to oversee the acquisition and planning aspects of the new federal district and capital city. These commissioners named the federal district “The Territory of Columbia” and the capital city the “City of Washington.”

On March 30, 1791, President George Washington made a proclamation establishing Jones Point in Virginia as the beginning point for the survey of the Territory of Columbia. The proclamation also detailed the methods by which the Territory's boundary was to be surveyed. The team of Major Andrew Ellicott, his brothers Benjamin and Joseph Ellicott, Isaac Roberdeau, Isaac Briggs, George Fenwick and Benjamin Banneker was assembled to conduct the survey.

Section 3 – Planning and Surveying the District of Columbia

Biographical Sketches of Key Figures

Andrew Ellicott

Andrew Ellicott was born in 1754 in Bucks County, Pennsylvania as the eldest of nine children born to Joseph and Judith Ellicott. Ellicott was educated at a local Quaker school and displayed an early talent for mathematics. In 1775 when revolutionary fighting broke out, Ellicott enlisted in Maryland's state militia, eventually ascending to the rank of major. At the conclusion of the war, Ellicott returned to his family home in Maryland. In 1784 he was selected

to work on a survey of the extension of the Mason-Dixon line, marking the boundary lines between Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland.

In 1785, Ellicott moved, along with his wife and children, to Baltimore where he earned his living by teaching mathematics at the Baltimore Academy. Being well-respected, Ellicott was elected to the General Assembly of Maryland in 1786. Later in 1786, Ellicott began work on a survey to establish the western line of Pennsylvania as it bordered the Ohio Country. This border line, which runs north-south at a west longitude of 80 degrees 31 minutes 12 seconds, would come to be well-known as the "Ellicott Line". This line would later serve as the principal meridian for the surveys of the Northwest Territory.

Having gained a considerable reputation for his surveying expertise, Ellicott was tasked by President George Washington, at the recommendation of Benjamin Franklin, to survey the land between Lake Erie and Pennsylvania to establish the boundary between western New York and the federal territory. In the process of this survey, Ellicott conducted a topographical survey of the Niagara River and Niagara Falls.

In 1791, at the request of Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Ellicott began the work of surveying the boundaries of the Territory of Columbia, which would ten years later become the District of Columbia. Ellicott was accompanied by a survey team including Benjamin Banneker, as well as Ellicott's brothers Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott. The team placed forty stone boundary monuments at distance intervals of approximately one mile, around the perimeter of the one hundred square mile district. Most of these monuments still exist.

The following year, Ellicott surveyed the location of what would become the City of Washington at the center of the Territory of Columbia, near the confluence of the Potomac River and the Anacostia River. This survey will be covered in detail in the body of this course.

In 1794, Ellicott was tasked by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to lay out the city of Erie for the purpose of establishing a port city on the Great Lakes.

In 1796, Ellicott accepted a commission from George Washington to survey the southern border dividing the Spanish lands in Florida and the United States in accordance with the terms of the treaty of San Lorenzo. A well-known remnant of this survey exists today along the thirty-first parallel as the border between Alabama and Florida.

Ellicott later declined an offer from President Thomas Jefferson to assume the post of Surveyor General of the Northwest Territory but accepted an offer from Pennsylvania Governor Thomas McKean for the position of Secretary of the Pennsylvania Land Office.

In 1803, President Jefferson employed Ellicott to mentor Meriwether Lewis of the soon-to-begin Lewis and Clark Expedition. Lewis lived at Ellicott's home and studied surveying methods and techniques.

In 1813, Ellicott accepted a position teaching mathematics at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

Andrew Ellicott died of a stroke on August 28, 1820 at his home and is buried at the United States Military Academy Post Cemetery in West Point.

Benjamin Banneker

Benjamin Banneker was born a free African American in 1731 in Baltimore County, Maryland. Having limited opportunity to receive formal education, Banneker was mostly self-taught in the areas of mathematics, science, astronomy, and the humanities.

At the age of 21, Banneker crafted a functioning wooden clock by carving an enlarged replica of each part of a pocket watch. This clock was said to have operated without fail throughout the duration of Banneker's life. In 1722, the Ellicott family relocated from Pennsylvania and took up residence near Banneker's farm and the parties became friends. With books and equipment on loan from the Ellicott family, Banneker continued his self-study of astronomy. Later in life, with his advanced understanding of astronomy, he authored a popular series of almanacs.

In 1791, Andrew Ellicott hired Benjamin Banneker to assist him in the survey of the newly conceived federal district that would become the District of Columbia. Banneker's duties on this survey consisted mostly of conducting astronomical observations and maintaining a precise clock by which celestial positions could be related to points on the ground.

After leaving the survey of the federal district, Banneker focused his efforts on his astronomical works and his almanacs. Banneker was a staunch, lifelong opponent of slavery and his almanacs frequently contained writings in support of this position. Banneker also corresponded with President Thomas Jefferson, petitioning on behalf of enslaved people.

Banneker was never married and died at his home in 1806 at the age of 74. An obelisk stands in his memory at the Mount Gilboa African Methodist Episcopal Church in Oella, Maryland. On the day of his funeral, a fire destroyed Banneker's home and most of his papers were lost. The Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum in Baltimore County, Maryland honors the contributions of this remarkable American.

Benjamin Ellicott

Benjamin Ellicott, brother of Andrew and Joseph Ellicott, was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1765. In the year 1789, he worked alongside his brother on the survey of the western boundary line of the State of New York. From 1791 to 1793, Ellicott worked on the surveys of the District of Columbia and the City of Washington. Following this work, Ellicott joined the Holland Land Company directing surveys throughout western Pennsylvania and western New York.

In 1803, Ellicott assumed the position of Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Genesee County, New York. In 1817, Ellicott was elected as a New York representative in the United States Congress. Ellicott retired to Williamsville, New York in 1826 and died the following year.

Joseph Ellicott

Joseph Ellicott, brother of Andrew and Benjamin Ellicott, was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1760. In 1791, Ellicott joined his brothers on the survey of the District of Columbia and the City of Washington. After this project, Ellicott went to Georgia to survey the boundary of that state's treaty with the Creek tribe.

Ellicott later joined his brother Benjamin at the Holland Land Company. He laid out the Cities of Batavia and Buffalo in New York and was an early advocate for the construction of the Erie Canal, connecting the Hudson River to Lake Erie.

In his lifetime, Ellicott accumulated considerable wealth, but sadly his elder years were consumed by a serious mental disorder. Ellicott was committed to a New York asylum, where he died in 1826. Ellicott was tremendously respected in his lifetime and his name has been given to several streets, two towns, a school, and a number of buildings.

Pierre Charles L'Enfant

Pierre Charles L'Enfant was a French American military engineer best known for his planned design for Washington, D.C.

L'Enfant was born in 1754 in Paris, France into an aristocratic family. The son of an artist, L'Enfant entered the Royal Academy in the Louvre to study art. In 1777, before he had completed his studies, he left school for America to join the colonial forces in the Revolutionary War. He served as an engineer under Major General Lafayette in the Continental Army, rising in rank to the commission of Captain in the Corps of Engineers in 1779.

Later in 1779, L'Enfant was wounded in battle at Savannah. After recovering and returning to combat, he was captured and taken as a prisoner of war when Charlestown, South Carolina was surrendered to the British. After being exchanged in 1780, L'Enfant served with General George Washington for the balance of the war. He was ultimately promoted to the rank of Major in the Corps of Engineers, serving in that capacity until his discharge in 1783 when the Continental Army was disbanded.

After the war, L'Enfant entered practice as a civil engineer in New York City, famously redesigning New York's City Hall for the First Congress of the United States. While working in New York, L'Enfant joined the Freemasons, whose symbols and traditions would later influence his plan for Washington, D.C.

L'Enfant was a close friend of Alexander Hamilton and several of their letters are preserved in the Library of Congress.

The newly adopted Constitution of the United States granted Congress the authority to establish a federal district covering an area of ten miles square. The Residence Act of 1790 provided for the federal district and national capital to be situated along the Potomac River. In 1791, President George Washington appointed L'Enfant to plan the Federal City under the supervision of a three-person board of Commissioners, who were likewise appointed by Washington.

L'Enfant began his work on March 9, 1791, which will be covered in detail throughout this course.

After leaving the Washington area, L'Enfant continued his career by developing the plan of the city of Paterson, New Jersey, designing a mansion in Philadelphia for Robert Morris, and overseeing the reconstruction of Fort Mifflin on Mud Island near Philadelphia. Beginning in 1813, L'Enfant took a position as a professor of engineering at West Point.

L'Enfant lived his final years in modest circumstances and died on June 14, 1825, leaving behind only a few meager possessions, including his compasses, books, and surveying instruments. He was originally buried in Prince George's County, Maryland. On April 28, 1909, L'Enfant's remains were disinterred and transported with a military escort to Washington, D.C., where his body received the great honor of lying in state in the Capitol Rotunda for three hours. His body was then transported to Arlington National Cemetery where it was permanently interred in a place of distinction among the great people of our nation.

On May 22, 1911, the monument at L'Enfant's grave was dedicated by President William Howard Taft. The monument is a marble slab facing east adjacent to Arlington House, on the hill just behind President Kennedy's gravesite. The inscription on the monument reads:

PIERRE CHARLES L'ENFANT ENGINEER – ARTIST – SOLDIER UNDER THE
DIRECTION OF GEORGE WASHINGTON DESIGNED THE PLAN FOR THE
FEDERAL CITY * MAJOR U.S. ENGINEER CORPS 1789 CHARTER MEMBER OF
THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI DESIGNED ITS CERTIFICATE & INSIGNIA
* BORN IN PARIS, FRANCE AUGUST 2, 1755 DIED JUNE 14, 1825 WHILE
RESIDING AT CHILHAM CASTLE MANOR PRINCE GEORGE'S CO MARYLAND
AND WAS INTERRED THERE REINTERRED AT ARLINGTON APRIL 28, 1909.

A reproduction of L'Enfant's map is carved into the marble slab atop his grave, which sits atop a picturesque hill overlooking Washington.

Survey of the District of Columbia

On February 11, 1791, acting upon the instruction of Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Ellicott began his work on laying out the four experimental lines of the ten-mile square federal district. After establishing a campsite at a high point in the proposed square district, Ellicott's next order of business was to make the initial astronomical observations in order to establish positional control for his survey. Ellicott hired Benjamin Banneker, who was a well renowned surveyor and astronomer from Maryland, to make the necessary observations to establish the southern corner of the district at Jones Point.

An observatory tent was set up over the stump of a tree that was cut down for the purpose of creating a stable working platform. Andrew Ellicott and Benjamin Banneker directed the installation of the surveying instruments. An astronomical clock was installed against the tree stump under the tent, along with the six-foot zenith sector which was used to make meridional observations for the purpose of determining latitude. Also, among the instruments was a smaller 19-inch zenith sector, which was less accurate than the larger zenith sector but had the advantage of portability. Both zenith sectors were manufactured by famed craftsman and scientist David Rittenhouse.

Ellicott made use of three telescopes for his field observations. The first was a Dolland achromatic telescope with a terrestrial eyepiece with a magnification factor of sixty times. Also, at Ellicott's disposal were two smaller achromatic sliding-tube telescopes.

Other equipment used by Ellicott included an 8-inch circumferentor for measuring horizontal angles, a regulator clock, several sextants, a surveying compass, an artificial horizon, thermometers, two stop watches, a pair of two-pole chains, and two sets of drafting instruments. Ellicott also used a transit and equal altitude instrument which he had constructed himself and had used previously on his survey of the western border of the State of New York.

Folklore recalls the image of Benjamin Banneker lying flat on his back making celestial observations. This is due to the configuration of the zenith sector having its eyepiece at the bottom, requiring the observer to lie upon the floor or ground to use it. Banneker is believed to have monitored the paths of six stars over the course of several nights to determine the precise location of the initial station of the survey.

Ellicott established his office and quarters in Alexandria at the start of the survey, later relocating to Georgetown as the survey progressed.

The preliminary survey of the perimeter boundary commenced at Alexandria Courthouse and ran south to the initial point placed at Jones Point at Hunting Creek on the Potomac River. Ellicott, Banneker, and their crew of six men made their first observations on February 11, 1791. The procedure for creating the square began with the tracing of a meridian line at Jones Point on the west side of the Potomac river. A 45-degree left angle was turned toward the northwest from the meridian line and ten miles were carefully measured by chaining to the west corner of the square to a point near what is now West Falls Church, Virginia. From this western corner, a 90-degree left angle was turned from the line previously run and again, ten miles were chained on this line running northeast to a point near Woodside, Maryland. This procedure was repeated to run the northeast line of the square ten miles to the area known as Chesapeake Junction. The crew then returned to the beginning station at Jones' Point and surveyed ten miles northeast to the terminal point of the northeast line of the square, thereby closing the boundary.

In an address by Mr. Fred E. Woodward, delivered on October 12, 1916, the district line was explained thusly:

Briefly described, the line of the original District of Columbia is as follows; beneath the southern sea-wall of the miniature light-house on Jones Point, below Alexandria, Virginia, encased in a concrete cage, which was constructed in 1913 by Col. W.C. Langfitt of the United States Engineers, may be seen the initial or southern corner stone of this District. On April 15, 1791, just 125 years ago, the Master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22 of Masons, poured corn, wine and oil upon this carefully oriented stone and pronounced it good.

Standing at this stone, facing North-West as nearly as their instruments of survey allowed, the lines of the District were extended up the long ascent of Shutters Hill, following closely the Leesburg Turnpike, through Glen Carlyn and over Upton Hill to West Falls Church, a distance of ten miles to the West Corner.

Turning now at a right angle, the line extends North-East through woods and fields, across the Old Dominion Railroad, across the Potomac River above Chain Bridge, through Tenallytown, Chevy Chase Circle, Pinehurst, Rock Creek Park, to the North Corner at Woodside, Maryland, another 10 miles.

Turning at a right angle to the right, the line passes through the grounds of Hon. Blair Lee, Through Takoma Park, the Reform School, Kenilworth and Burrville, to the low ground near the Station of the Chesapeake Beach Railroad, to the East Corner, another ten miles.

Again turning at right angles, the line extends along the high ground of the Bowen Road, down the valley of the Oxon Run, the high plateau of the Wheeler Road, to Blue Plains and finally on across the Potomac River to the point of beginning, Jones Point Light House.

At the end of every mile there was erected a stone 12 inches square and about two feet above ground; and a broad path, 40 feet wide or 20 feet on each side, was cut through the woods largely along the entire line. Our brief time does not permit me to describe the condition of these stones, but generally speaking they are not well preserved, suffering not only from the hand of Time, but also from careless marauders and vandals. Time, with an artist's pencil, paints the beautiful color of antiquity on these stones.

All distances on this survey were meticulously measured with two-pole (33-foot) chains that were inspected and adjusted by Andrew Ellicott at the end of each workday to ensure that the links of the chains had not opened or deformed in any way. Furthermore, the chains were carefully leveled and plumbed when traversing uneven ground and it was traced by Ellicott with his transit and equal altitude instrument.

The boundary of this preliminary survey was approved by Congress, with the notable amendment that all public buildings to be erected were to be erected upon the Maryland side of the Potomac River.

On March 29, 1791, President Washington arrived at Georgetown to examine the land with the three commissioners, Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, and Major Andrew Ellicott. On this same visit, finding the conditions to be satisfactory, President Washington met with the landowners in the area to negotiate the terms of land acquisition. General terms were agreed upon with all nineteen property holders. With the land being secured, President Washington instructed the three commissioners to proceed with the final survey and permanent monumentation of the lines and corners of the new district. Of the 100 square mile district, the State of Maryland ceded approximately 64 square miles and the State of Virginia ceded approximately 36 square miles.

Per the instructions of the commissioners, stone monuments were set at each of the four corners of the square district. Additionally, nine stone monuments were placed between each of the corner stones at one-mile intervals. The forty stone monuments for the survey were sawed from a sandstone quarry at Aquia Creek, downstream from Alexandria, Virginia, and were carried to the new district on Barges up the Potomac River. The half-ton stone monuments,

which were one-foot square at the base and beveled at the top, were set with two to three feet sticking up out of the ground. On the sides facing inward toward the district were inscribed the words "Jurisdiction of the United States" and the identification number of the stone. On the opposite face of each stone was inscribed "Maryland" or "Virginia", depending on the location. A third face of each stone was inscribed with distance in miles from the adjacent boundary corner, and on the fourth face was inscribed the magnetic variation of the compass for that location.

The initial monument at Jones Point, was set on April 15, 1791 with considerable ceremony. A newspaper excerpt describing the proceedings follows:

"At three p.m. the municipal authorities of Alexandria repaired to the house in which the Commissioners of Washington were residing, after uniting with them in a glass of wine to the sentiment 'May the stone which we are about to place in the ground remain an immovable monument of the wisdom and unanimity of North America'. The company proceeded to Jones' Point in the following order: Town Sergeant; Daniel Carroll, Commissioner, and Mayor of Alexandria; Andrew Ellicott, Surveyor and Recorder; the Alderman and Common Council not Free Masons; strangers; Master of Lodge No. 22 of Alexandria, with David Steward on his right, and James Muir, Pastor of that Episcopal Parish, on his left; followed by the rest of the fraternity and citizens, two by two. Ellicott, 'Geographer General', then ascertained the precise location, as defined by the President's Proclamation, whereupon the Master of the Lodge and Dr. Stewart, aided by the craft, planted the original or corner-stone of the Federal Territory in accordance with the impressive rites of Masonry, after which a deposit of corn, wine and oil was made upon it. The Rev. James Muir delivered an address; and after partaking of refreshments the procession returned to the city and closed the ceremonies with a banquet and appropriate toasts and speeches".

Dr. E.C. Dick optimistically toasted:

"May jealousy, that green-eyed monster, be buried deep under the work we have this day completed, never to rise again within the Federal District"

On New Year's Day of 1793, Major Andrew Ellicott returned to Philadelphia to give report of his survey. He was given a grand banquet and presented a gift of two silver cups. One of these cups remains in the museum at Memorial Continental Hall, the National Headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Major Ellicott's comments at the occasion were recorded for posterity:

"It is with great pleasure that I report to you that the lines are now opened and cleared 40 feet wide, 20 feet on each side of the line. I have set up square milestones, marked progressively except in a few places where the miles terminated in a declivity or in the water. In such case, the measurement was carried either forward or backward until firm ground was reached and the exact distance then marked on the stone in miles and poles."

Given the historical importance of the boundary stones of the District of Columbia, great attention has been devoted to their preservation. The District of Columbia Daughters of the

American Revolution in 1915 resolved to have iron fences erected around each of the boundary monuments. The fences installed around the corner stones were five feet by five feet and cost \$43 each. The fences around the line monuments were three feet by three feet and cost \$18 each. Upon each fence was affixed a bronze marker identifying the D.A.R. chapter responsible for stewardship of the fence.

Survey Monuments of the District

Of interest to modern land surveyors are the recovery notes pertaining to the forty original stone monuments found at the corners and along the boundary lines of the District of Columbia. Boundary markers are as old as human civilization itself. For as long as people have occupied and possessed land, they have taken care to mark the border lines between their land and the lands of others. As surveyors are called upon to record the location, material, condition, and other information regarding recovered monuments. Mr. Kenneth Lawrence took great care to recover and describe the markers on the boundary lines of the District of Columbia and the detail in which he describes the monuments stands as a reminder to the surveyor of the importance of the use of descriptive language when identifying recovered survey monuments. Excerpts from his notes follow:

South Corner. – Located on Jones Point in Alexandria, Virginia. The front of the stone can be seen only by approaching the location by boat on the river. It stands underneath the front steps of the old, abandoned lighthouse which now stands on a military reservation. It can also be viewed from the top, inside the fence, through a small hole directly over the center of the stone. The stone is well protected but in very poor condition. I could make out no lettering at all on the visible sides. There is nothing on the fence at any place to indicate that this is the cornerstone of the old Federal District.

West Corner. – This stone stands just off Meridian Avenue a short distance south of 29th Street in Falls Church, Virginia. The stone is in rather poor condition as the edges and top are badly broken and pitted. A huge oak tree has sprung up from the base of the stone and it is a wonder that its roots have not broken the stone. The fence is in good condition but has no plate of any kind to identify the stone which it surrounds.

North Corner. – This stone is located very close to the south side of the East-West highway, near Silver Spring. It is leaning slightly and is in fair condition but has badly battered edges. The circular fence which surrounds the stone is overgrown with vines, is rusting, and in need of paint. The plat on this fence was supplied by the Maryland Chapter, D.A.R.

East Corner. – This stone is located a short distance east of the intersection of Eastern and Southern Avenues in a small swamp. The stone is in good condition with deep lettering that is easily read. This stone still shows the saw marks from when the stone was cut a century and a half ago. The circular fence around the stone is in good condition, but urgently needs a coat of paint. The chapter marker on this fence was placed here by the District of Columbia Chapter, D.A.R.

Southwest 1. – This stone is located at the corner of Wilkes and Payne Streets in Alexandria, Virginia...originally about 100 yards south of the house at 1200 Wilkes Street...

Southwest 2. – This stone is located a few yards north of King Street on Russell Road, practically in the shadow of the Masonic Memorial. I am inclined to think this stone is a “fake”, however, for these reasons: It is not a foot square as are all the other stones; the top part of the stone is rough, where it should be smooth; there is no trace of lettering anywhere on the stone and the stone is nearly half a mile from its proper location.

Southwest 3. – East of Chinquapin Village on the south side of King Street, directly opposite 3019 King Street. This stone was so covered with vines, weeds, and trees that I searched for it for parts of three different days before finding it.

Southwest 4. – This stone is located on the shoulder of the Alexandria-Leesburg Turnpike on the north side of the road, a short distance north of Wakefield Street. It is in extremely poor condition and should be replaced with a duplicate of the original.

Southwest 5. – This stone is nearly a twin to number four, being also broken off nearly even with the ground. This stone is located about 100 yards northeast of the Leesburg Pike at a point where a small creek crosses the road, between 25th Street and Walter Reed Drive.

Southwest 6. – This stone is located on the rim of a large gravel pit about 200 yards southeast of the Columbia Pike.

Southwest 7. – This stone lies a little over a hundred yards north of 5th Road South, just before the road turns southwestward, a short distance east of the village of Glencarlyn.

Southwest 8. – I’m afraid this stone has been seen for the last time. Early in the summer, it stood about 225 yards southwest of McKinley Street and Wilson Boulevard. It was far out of place as it should have been south east, instead. The stone was buried to its top in a little ditch that ran north and south. My negatives of this stone were overexposed and when I returned later in the summer to rephotograph the stone, I found a huge hole in its place. Considerable construction work is now going on in this vicinity and since the stone had no fence, it apparently has been hauled away with the dirt from the excavations.

Southwest 9. – This stone is located alongside Van Buren Street, a short distance north of Four Mile Run, in Falls Church Virginia.

Northwest 1. – This stone stands between Powhatan and Rockingham Streets at the Arlington County Line. The top is badly broken, and the edges are chipped considerably.

Northwest 2. – This stone stands just inside the fence at the top of a deep cutting on the south side of Old Dominion Drive. The stone is in very poor condition, its edges and top being considerably shattered.

Northwest 3. – This stone is located deep in the woods about 300 yards northwest of Chesterbrook Road at the County line and took me the better part of three days to locate. I finally found it by means of a compass, starting at Chesterbrook Road and working northeast, after directions from two different persons failed to put me at the stone. It is located on an old, abandoned road about fifty yards north of a small creek...

Northwest 4. – This stone is located a short distance north of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, quite near a single-track railroad. The stone leans slightly but is in good condition except for being a bit chipped on its corners.

Northwest 5. – This stone is located in rather dense woods on the Dalecarlia Reservoir grounds, a short distance north of the reservoir.

Northwest 6. – This stone stands at the side of Western Avenue at the point where it is joined by Fessenden Street. It is in poor condition, the top being badly battered and the inscriptions almost illegible.

Northwest 7. – This stone is located in a yard at 5600 Western Avenue, at a point where it is joined by 41st Street. The stone is buried even with the surface of the ground with only the tip visible. The people living on this property have torn the fence down, considering it unsightly, perhaps. They should be made to realize its importance, and perhaps even legal means taken to have it raised and protected, if possible. Mr. Baker and Mr. Woodward reported this stone in good condition at the times they visited it.

Northwest 8. – This stone stands less than a block southwest from Pinehurst Circle on a vacant lot. It is erect and in fair condition, the top corners being rounded a bit, but the inscriptions are easily read. The fence is in good condition and the paint peeling only slightly.

Northwest 9. – This stone stands just inside Rock Creek Park, about a hundred yards northeast of the intersection of Oregon and Western Avenues.

Northeast 1. – This stone is located very close to the south side of the East-West highway, near Silver Spring.

Northeast 2. – This stone also stands alongside the sidewalk on Eastern Avenue at the point where it is joined by 12th Street. The stone is in good condition except for its vertical edges which are chipped.

Northeast 3. – This stone is located just off Eastern Avenue at its intersection with New Hampshire Avenue.

Northeast 4. – This stone stands about forty or fifty yards northwest of where the District line crosses Sargent Road.

Northeast 5. – This stone is located in the front yard of a house at 4609 Eastern Avenue, near 22nd Street.

Northeast 6. – This stone is located at the side of Eastern Avenue at the point where it is joined by 34th Street. This stone is in very good condition considering that it has stood for over a century and a half near one of the oldest roads leading into the City of Washington.

Northeast 7. – This stone is located alongside the line fence, deep in Fort Lincoln Cemetery, over half a mile from Bladensburg Road.

Northeast 8. – This stone stands about 150 yards northwest from the intersection of Eastern and Kenilworth Avenues. It has no trace of protection from vandals and is severely damaged, especially on the top of the stone.

Northeast 9. – This stone is located at the side of Eastern Avenue, about 150 yards southeast of Sheriff Road. Unfortunately, the stone is now invisible, being buried under a huge slide of dirt and mud. Recent construction work on Eastern Avenue has caused much mud and silt to wash down hill and nearly cover even the fence.

Southeast 1. – This stone stands between D Street and Drake Place at the District line. The stone is in fair condition, leaning slightly, and somewhat chipped and shattered on the edges.

Southeast 2. – This stone stands in the front yard of a house at 4345 Southern Avenue, about 70 yards southwest of Ridge Road...The fence surrounding the stone has been very recently painted with bright aluminum paint and is very attractive.

Southeast 3. – This stone is located on Southern Avenue at Suitland Terrace. The stone is larger than the other intermediate stones and is in poor condition.

Southeast 4. – This stone is located at Southern Avenue and Naylor Road, on the south side of the road.

Southeast 5. – This stone is located about 200 yards south of where Oxon Run crosses Southern Avenue. It is in fair condition but has a large piece chipped from one of the upper corners.

Southeast 6. – This stone is in almost perfect condition and is the best specimen of the entire forty. It is a shame that this stone may eventually look like its neighbors as exposure to the elements dulls its trim lines. It would be wonderful if this particular stone could be replaced with a duplicate, and the original sent for safekeeping to some museum such as the Smithsonian.

Southeast 7. – This stone is located on Southern Avenue at the point where it is crossed by South Capitol Street, on the east bank of a small stream emptying into Oxon Run.

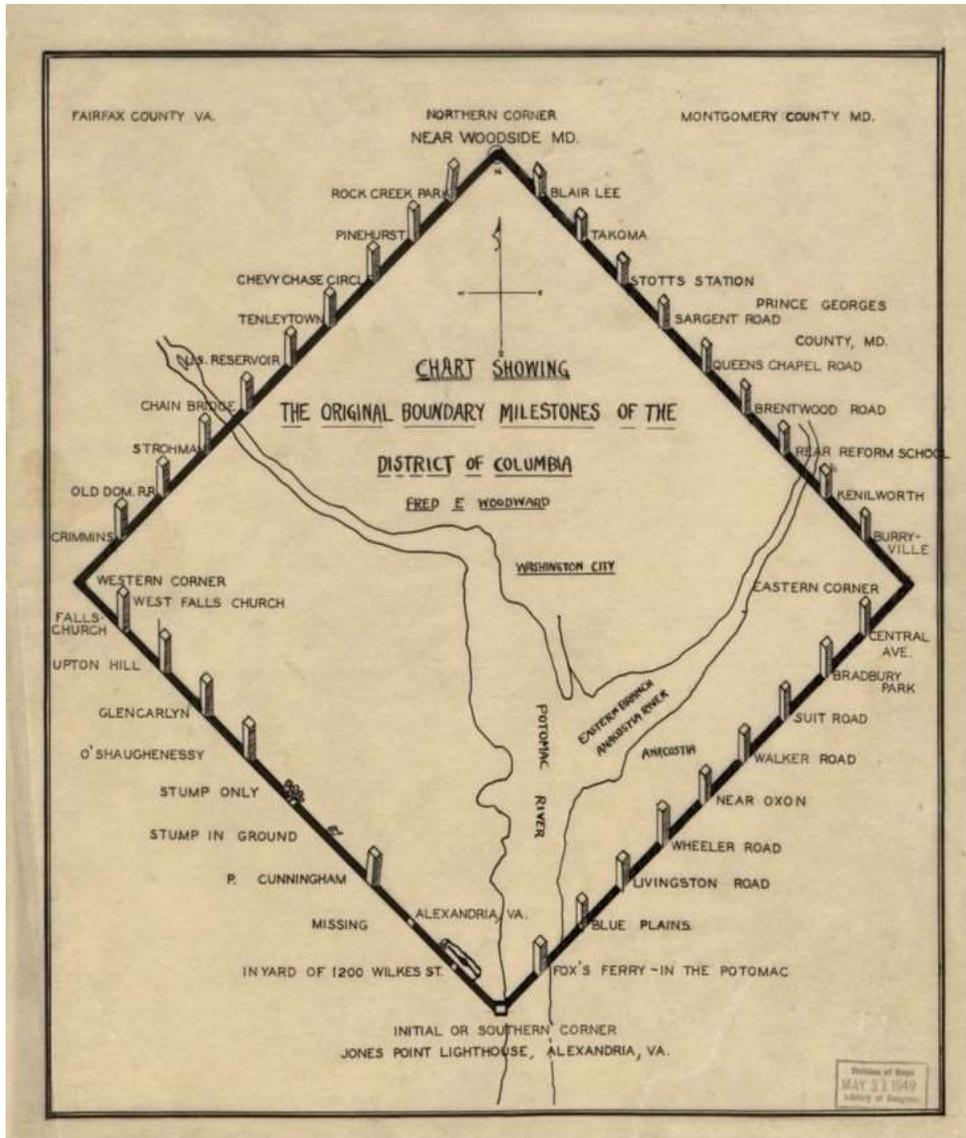
Southeast 8. – This stone is located on the edge of a swampy thicket near the mouth of Oxon Run, and about a quarter mile south of the Blue Plains Home.

Southeast 9. – This stone is located in the waters of the Potomac River at Fox Ferry Point. It is lying on its side about six feet from the shore and is completely covered by the river at high tide. It is very hard to reach this stone by any other means than a boat, as the land approach is through quite swampy ground. The stone is in fair condition considering its location, but the waters of the river are starting to dull the lines of the lettering. It would take considerable effort to move the stone back on dry land as it must weigh at least 800 pounds. My feeble efforts failed to move the stone the slightest fraction of an inch. This stone should be removed from the river at the earliest possible moment, and then moved back far enough so that the river will not soon undermine it again. This might have to be some distance as the riverbank is quite level here.

In addition to the forty stone markers at the corners of the district and along the lines thereof, a stone referred to as the “Jefferson Stone” or the “Center Stone” was placed approximately 100 yards west of the present location of the Washington Monument.

Jefferson Pier is the monument marking the intersection of the meridian which passes through the White House and the east to west line that passes through the Capitol Building.

The boundary stones which were placed during the survey of the District of Columbia represent the first survey monuments ever set at the direction of the United States Government.



Modern Preservation Efforts

In 1976, the National Capital Planning Commission published a report detailing the condition and history of each boundary stone. This report also made recommendations of suggested measures to preserve the stones.

In 1995, the Northern Virginia Boundary Stones Committee issued a list of recommendations for the purpose of documenting and preserving the 14 boundary stones situated within Virginia.

In 2008, the Northern Virginia Boundary Stones Committee announced that the governments of Arlington County, Fairfax County, Alexandria, and Falls Church had agreed to help pay for a project to protect the boundary stones in the form of matching funds to a federal grant to the District Department of Transportation.

In 2014, the National Park Service, the District of Columbia Office of Planning, the District Department of Transportation, and the Daughters of the American Revolution commenced a project to rehabilitate the monuments along the District's boundaries.

In 1916, Miss Ethelwyn Bassett Hall composed a poem in honor of a single milestone on the district boundary, the protection of which was entrusted to her chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The reverent tone of this poem informs us of the patriotic fervor that was once associated with these boundary markers. Also, it should serve to remind contemporary land surveyors of the permanence and significance of the monuments we set during our lifetimes.

ODE TO THE MILESTONE NO. 5 N.W.

Dedicated by John Ball Chapter

October 1, 1916

Oh, record of stone

Oh, granite shaft!

We pay thro' you a tribute to the past

Of deeds well done, of honor won,

The history of things which last.

Our Fathers knew that ink will fade,

That paper fragile is;

But upon stone the winds and rain may beat

And armies pass with trampling feet

While you remain the same.

Your record stands, clear cut and true as steel,

And every eye that rest on you

Will greater love of country feel.

A hundred years and more you've stood

As guards to our dear land;

And now to-day we reverence pay

And with bowed heads before you stand.

Roll on, Oh years! Your progress bring, - - -

Buildings, and roads, and streets.

Move no, Oh stone, from your golden path,

But the District safely keep.

Original Federal Boundary Stone No. Five N.W.

District of Columbia

Placed 1791-1792

Protected by John Hall Chapter

Daughters of the American Revolution

October 1, 1916

With the boundary of the new Federal District having been successfully surveyed and monumented, the attention of the surveyors, government officials, and other professionals shifted to the development of the new Capital City.

As of today, 36 of the original boundary stones still exist. Thirteen of the stones now lie within Virginia due to the retrocession of the part of the district south and west of the Potomac River.

Entrance Markers

In addition to the boundary stones on the perimeter of the District, there also exists a group of stone markers known as the “Garden Club of America Entrance Markers”, which are situated on major roadways leading into the District of Columbia. Each of these markers are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A pair of entrance markers is found within Westmoreland Circle at the intersection of Western Avenue NW and Massachusetts Avenue NW. This is between the Northwest No. 5 and the Northwest No. 6 monuments on the District boundary.

Another pair of entrance markers is found standing alongside Wisconsin Avenue at Western Avenue NW in the Friendship Heights neighborhood of Washington. These markers are located between the Northwest No. 6 and Northwest No. 7 monuments on the District Boundary.

Additionally, a pair of markers is found in Chevy Chase Circle at the intersection of Western Avenue and Connecticut Avenue NW. These markers are between the Northwest No. 7 and Northwest No. 8 monuments on the District boundary.

A singular entrance marker is on a traffic island at the intersection of Alaska Avenue NW, Georgia Avenue NW, and Kalmia Road NW. This marker is situated between the Northeast No. 1 and Northeast No. 2 monuments on the District boundary.

Another singular entrance marker is located in Blair Circle in Silver Spring, Maryland at the intersections of Eastern Avenue NW, North Portal Drive NW, Colesville Road, and 16th Street NW. This marker is found between the North Corner monument and the Northeast No. 1 monument.

Section 4 – Planning and Surveying the City of Washington

Pierre L’Enfant’s Original Plan

In 1791, Major Pierre (Peter) Charles L’Enfant began his development of a plan for the new City of Washington at the request of President George Washington. L’Enfant had expressly petitioned Washington in 1789 for the commission to plan the city and received the appointment in 1791.

The group of three commissioners chosen to oversee the survey of the Federal District were selected to oversee the development of the Federal City. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson worked with President Washington to develop a conceptual plan for the new city and the sketch was sent to L’Enfant.

While Washington and Jefferson intended for L’Enfant to develop an overall layout for the streets and building sites for the city, L’Enfant envisioned a far more elaborate plan which included not only the layout of the city, but also the designs for the government buildings.

This philosophical difference in the expected scope of the project would in time become a point of friction between L’Enfant and the governmental leadership.

L’Enfant arrived in Georgetown on March 9, 1791 and lodged himself at Suter’s Fountain Inn. Washington arrived on March 28 and met with L’Enfant and the commissioners at length. After making an initial topographic survey of the land, L’Enfant identified the hills, waterways, and wetlands.

In his August 1791 report outlining his vision of the city plan, L’Enfant wrote:

“Having determined some principal points to which I wished to make others subordinate, I made the distribution regular with every street at right angles, North and South, East and West, and afterwards opened some in different directions, as avenues to and from every principal place, wishing thereby not merely to contract with the general regularity, nor afford a greater variety of seats with pleasant prospects, which will be obtained from the advantageous ground over which these avenues are chiefly directed, but principally to connect each part of the city, if I may so express it, by making the real distance less from place to place, by giving to them a reciprocity of sight and by making them thus seemingly connected, promote a rapid settlement over the whole extent...”

L’Enfant organized his planning of the city into a series of steps which are explained in brief:

Step One: L'Enfant determined a point of origin from which the design would proceed. L'Enfant selected Jenkin's Hill which was the highest point in the generally flat district. This hill is now known as Capitol Hill and is the symbolic center of the city. L'Enfant chose to make the Capitol the center rather than the White House, owing to the concept that the citizens (by way of their elected representatives), instead of the President, were at the center of the new government.

Step Two: L'Enfant created two streets intersecting at the origin point, running north-south and east-west. These streets are North Capitol Street, South Capitol Street, East Capitol Street, with the National Mall occupying the line running west. As L'Enfant was a student of antiquities, he selected a method of design that was an ancient Roman technique for city planning, where the north-south street was called the "Cardo" and the east-west street was called the "Decamanus".

Step Three: L'Enfant constructed a circle centered upon the Capitol which was 0.618 miles in diameter. L'Enfant intentionally used the Golden Ratio of 1 to 1.618 which will be covered in more detail.

Step Four: A second circle was constructed with a center point one mile east of the Capitol, having a radius of one mile.

Step Five: A third circle was drawn with its center at the Capitol, having a radius of 1.618 miles.

Step Six: Inside each of these circles, using the intersecting points, L'Enfant constructed star shapes (pentagrams), the lines of which would provide the alignments of the "Grand Avenues".

Step Seven: Replicating the circle and star patterns based on the Golden Ratio, L'Enfant selected the critical points for the locations of important buildings, public areas, and monuments.

Step Eight: Avenues were drawn radially from the White House at diagonal orientations.

Step Nine: The grid system of streets and blocks was constructed and conjoined with the system of diagonal avenues.

The geometric structure touched upon in these steps will be explored in greater detail in a later section.

L'Enfant sketched his plan in the Baroque style, with wide tree-lined streets and vistas that would visually connect important features in the city.

By June 22, L'Enfant had developed his first preliminary plan and presented it to Washington. On August 19, L'Enfant presented a more detailed map to the president. President Washington presented the map to Congress and the Commissioners.

L'Enfant's plan contained fifteen open spaces at the intersections of the radial avenues, each of which would be reserved for an individual state for the purpose of erecting statues or monuments to honor worthy historical figures.

The plan devised by L'Enfant encompassed the area bounded by Rock Creek, the Potomac River, the Anacostia River, and the base of the escarpment of the Atlantic Seaboard

Fall Line. The original plan also called out the locations of the Congress House (the Capitol Building) and the President's House (the White House). Jenkin's Hill was selected as the site for the Congress House while the President's House was designed on a ridge along the Potomac River. L'Enfant selected high points for the Congress House and the President's House but was careful to place them at a symbolic distance from one another, connected by a public walkway to be lined with important buildings.

Regarding his selection of Jenkin's Hill as the site of the Congress House, L'Enfant famously wrote:

"I could not discover one [location] in all respects so advantageous...[as] the western end of Jenkin's Heights [which] stands really as a pedestal waiting for a superstructure."

As for the site selected for the President's house, L'Enfant wrote:

"Two considerations determined me; first, to lessen the distance to the Federal House, and secondly to obtain a more extensive view down the Potomac, with a prospect of the whole harbor and the town of Alexandria; also to connect with more harmony the public walks and avenue of the Congress House with the garden park and other improvements round the palace, which, standing upon this high ridge, with a garden in a slope towards the canal would overlook the vast esplanade in the center of which, and at the point of intersection of the sight from each of the Houses, would be the most advantageous place for an equestrian statue."

L'Enfant's plan called for most of the streets to be designed in a grid format with the streets running east and west to be named for the letters of the alphabet and the streets running north and south to be numbered. Wider streets were designed diagonally through the grid and were to be named after the states. These diagonal streets were to be known as "grand avenues" and would intersect the gridded streets at plazas to be named in honor of important figures in the young history of America.

A noteworthy feature in L'Enfant's plan was a right triangle having a hypotenuse in the form of a grand avenue connecting the Congress House and the President's House. This grand avenue would be known as Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest. A 400-foot wide grand avenue was designed along the east-west line of this triangle, running for approximately one mile. Part of this grand avenue became the National Mall, which is situated between the Capitol Building and the Washington Monument and is flanked by the numerous buildings of the Smithsonian Institution.

Additionally, the plan called for the establishment of a monument placed one mile east of the Congress House for the purpose of marking the zero-point from which all distances and locations throughout the nation could be reckoned. This monument was referred to as the "Historic Column".

L'Enfant's survey identified the locations of twenty-five springs which would furnish an ample supply of fresh water in the early years of the new city. The survey also made careful note of the location of all streams and navigable waterways throughout the city. L'Enfant took care to design each of the public squares near a source of fresh water.

The L'Enfant plan proposed an intricate system of canals throughout the district. In this time period before railroads and motor vehicles, waterways were the preferred means by which to move heavy cargo. A city with a well-connected canal system would have tremendous built-in conveniences in the transportation of goods. Furthermore, a canal system was useful for the drainage of runoff and the transportation of waste.

The Washington City Canal was designed to pass the Congress House and the President's House, with a branch of the canal emptying into the Potomac River at the mouth of Tiber Creek. Another branch was created by channelizing James Creek, emptying into the Anacostia River at two separate points. The design of the city placed several important buildings along the canal system, including Judiciary Square, a national bank, and a church complex.

L'Enfant envisioned a great gathering place in homage to the Roman Forum, midway between the Capitol Building and the western bank of the Anacostia River. This spot became the popular Lincoln Park. At the bank of the Anacostia River, a port and marketplace were planned. With the city being situated on the fall line, meaning that cargo ships could go no further upstream, Washington was in a position to become a major commercial center. However, these commercial plans did not come to fruition and the would-be port and marketplace area is now occupied by the local professional soccer team's stadium.

L'Enfant's desired for the places of interest in Washington to be connected by vistas. In his design, he was mindful that a distance of about half a mile was the maximum distance at which the human eye could distinguish and appreciate large objects, such as buildings. With this guideline, L'Enfant achieved what he referred to as "reciprocity of sight" between the public squares, meaning that from any point of interest, the observer could look down a number of the broad streets and avenues and see additional points of interest. His goal was to create a sense of connection and closeness even across considerable distances.

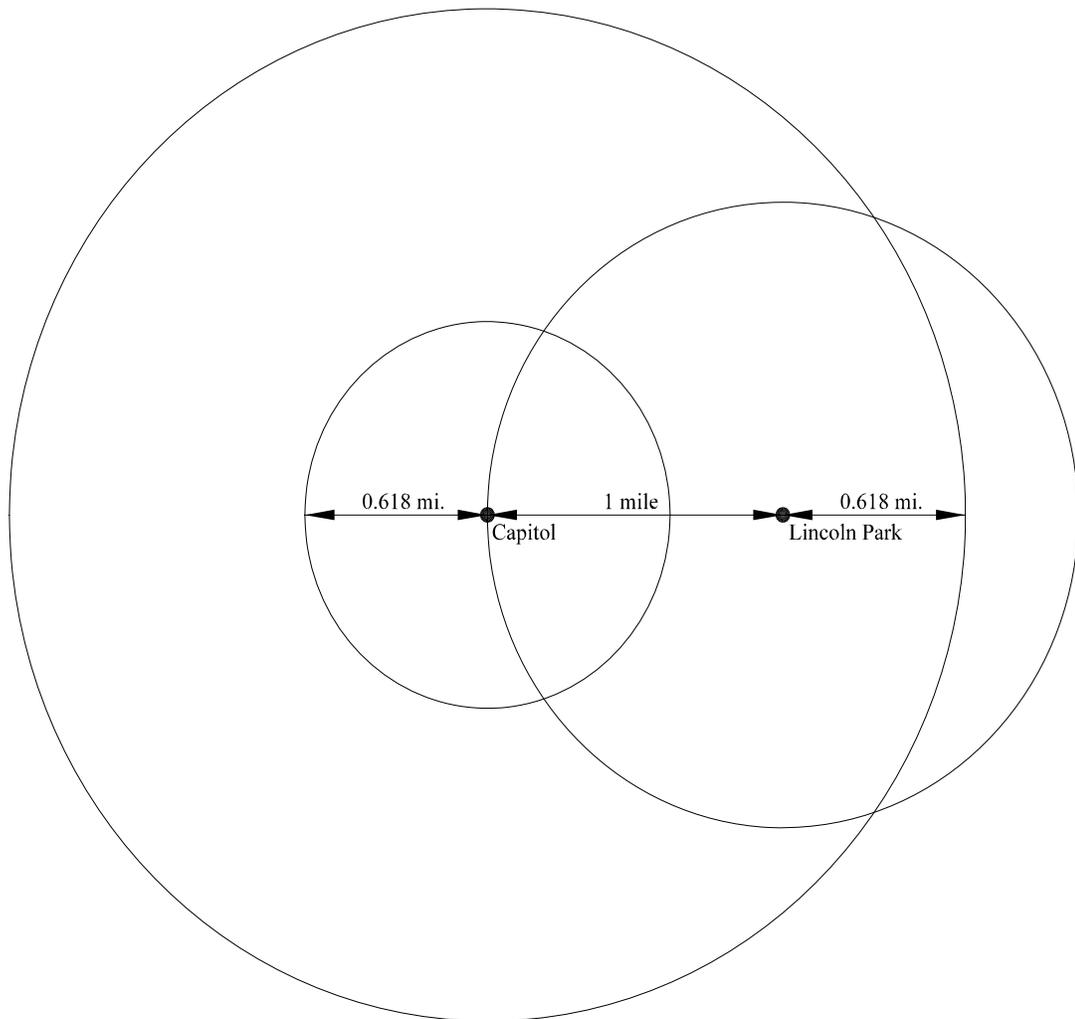
As L'Enfant worked to complete his design, pressure mounted on him to produce a finished map so lots could be offered for sale to the public. President Washington and Congress approved of L'Enfant's plan and were content to proceed with it, but L'Enfant persisted that his plan was not exactly as he wanted it and withheld his maps. Conflict arose as the government did not have the money necessary to build the city as designed and needed to sell lots to raise funds. Despite L'Enfant's hesitance, October 17, 1791 was selected as the date to offer lots in Washington for sale to the public. With no map readily available for the prospective purchasers, confusion and frustration prevailed at the sale and only thirty-five lots were sold, raising a disappointing \$2,000.

Dissatisfied with his failure to provide printed maps for the lot sale, the Commissioners began to move toward L'Enfant's dismissal. On October 21, the Commissioners requested that the president arrive at a dollar amount that would fairly compensate L'Enfant for his service to date. In December, Washington penned a letter to the Commissioners in defense of L'Enfant writing:

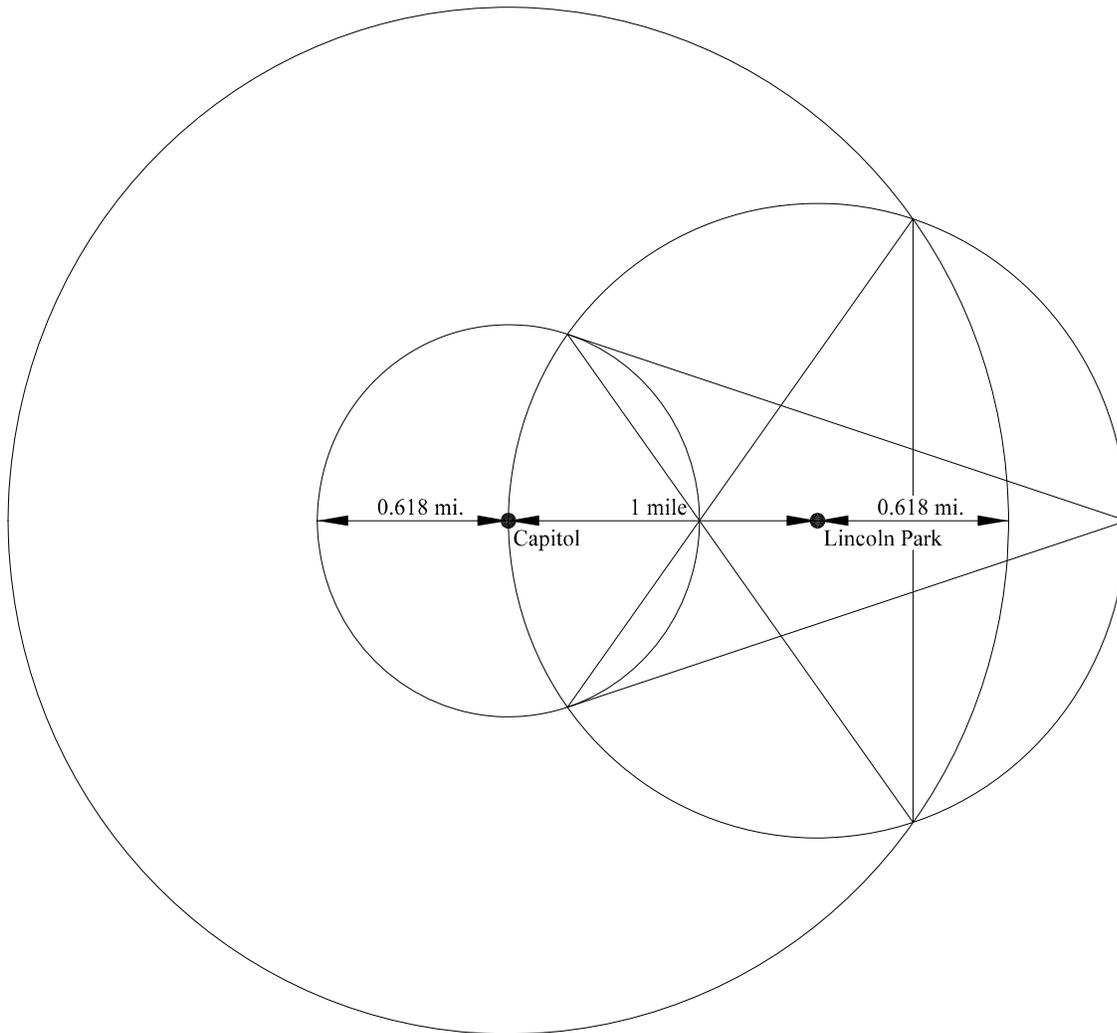
"The work of Major L'Enfant, which is greatly admired, will show that he had many objects to attend to and to combine, not on paper merely, but to make them correspond with the actual circumstances of the ground."

At the first glance of the above map, the geometric structure of the City's layout is apparent. Numerous triangles formed by the streets and avenues are quickly spotted. Also jumping off the page are the familiar grid pattern of blocks, the parallel diagonal avenues, and the deliberate spacing of the points of interest.

L'Enfant made effective use of the Golden Ratio (1 to 1.618) in the spatial relationships in the city design. The Golden Ratio is present when the ratio of two quantities is the same as the ratio of their sum to the larger of the two quantities. This ratio is a common underlying fundamental structure found in nature, art, and architecture. The spatial evidence of the Golden Ratio is particularly evident in the layout around the Capitol Building. Holding the Capitol Building as an anchor point, a circle of 0.618-mile radius was constructed. Then a point was placed one mile west of the center of the circle, at the location of Lincoln Park, thereby forming the ratio of 1 to 0.618. A second circle, centered at the Lincoln Park point, was drawn with a radius of one mile. A third circle of radius 1.618 (in keeping with the Golden Ratio) was drawn, centered upon the Capitol site, yielding the figure shown below.

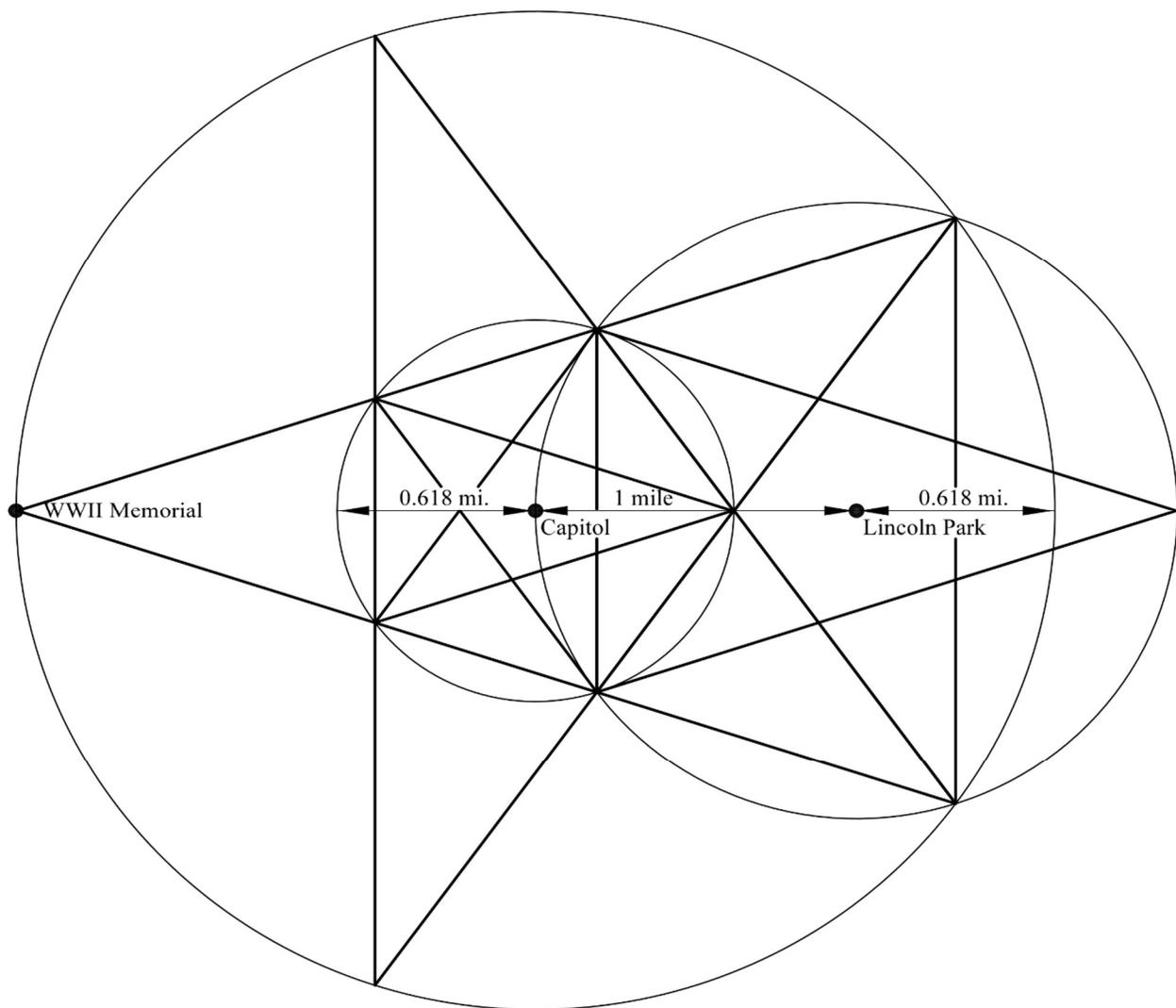


By simply connecting the key points of these interconnected circles, a perfect pentagram is created as shown:



Replicating this geometric construction process produces a pattern of overlapping pentagrams. This pattern would serve as a guide to L'Enfant, who used the lines of these pentagrams to trace the alignments of the avenues on his plan and he placed important features at many of the points of the pentagrams. In the years to follow, the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, and the Pentagon would be placed according to this original cascading pattern of pentagrams.

In ancient cosmology, the pentagram, which is a manifestation of the Golden Ratio, symbolized the Earth and its people. In this way, L'Enfant placed the Capitol as the focus of his plan, signifying that the citizens of the United States were to be at the center of the government.



Andrew Ellicott's Contribution to L'Enfant's Plan

At the direction of the Commissioners, Major Andrew Ellicott, who had been surveying the boundaries of the new Federal District, also aided Major L'Enfant in the planning and surveying of the Federal City. In February 1792, Ellicott explained to the Commissioners that L'Enfant had refused to provide him with the original version of the plan of the city. Despite the protest of L'Enfant, Ellicott and his brother Benjamin Ellicott began to revise the plan.

Many of Ellicott's revisions were minor, including the straightening of Massachusetts Avenue, the removal of several of L'Enfant's plazas, and the removal of some of the circles formed at the intersections of streets and avenues. Most notably, however, was the lasting change which forevermore identified the Congress House as the "Capitol".

Ellicott's plan included the names for all of L'Enfant's grand avenues, lot numbers, and channel depths for the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers.

L'Enfant's Dismissal

On February 26, 1792, Thomas Jefferson issued a letter of dismissal to L'Enfant citing his refusal to provide prints of his plan in time for the October 1791 land sale. Also cited was the demolition of the house of Daniel Carroll, whose uncle was a Commissioner, and the claim that L'Enfant had defamed the Commissioners, calling them ignorant and unfit.

On March 6, 1792, Jefferson wrote a letter to the Commissioners stating that President Washington thought that a sum of \$2,500 or \$3,000 would constitute fair compensation for L'Enfant's service, but that the decision belonged to the Commissioners. In a second letter, dated March 8, 1792, Washington wrote directly to Commissioner Stuart suggesting a cash payment of 500 guineas (approximately \$2,750 at the time) plus a lot in the new city would be an appropriate settlement.

L'Enfant did not accept any of these proposals and did not request any compensation for his work until after President Washington died in 1799, at which point he submitted a series of ten requests for payment. L'Enfant's demand was a payment of \$8,000 for a year's labor plus \$37,500 for his rights to the profits on the sale of his engraved plan, plus \$50,000 for what he referred to as "perquisites of right in particular negotiations and enterprise". At last, in 1810, Congress passed a bill awarding L'Enfant \$666.66, plus interest backdated to 1792, for a total of \$1,394.20 which was owed to his creditors and immediately claimed.

After L'Enfant was dismissed by President Washington, Jefferson engaged Boston printer Samuel Hill to produce 4,000 copies of Major Ellicott's version of the plan. In November 1792, the Philadelphia publisher Thacker & Vallance distributed prints of the plan to the major cities of the country, establishing Ellicott's revised plan as the guide for the development of the city.

Curiously, Ellicott's plan, which was based largely upon the L'Enfant plan with relatively minor modifications, was published without credit or acknowledgement of L'Enfant's work anywhere on the face of the plan. In fact, for the following 95 years, no published plan of the city would bear L'Enfant's name.

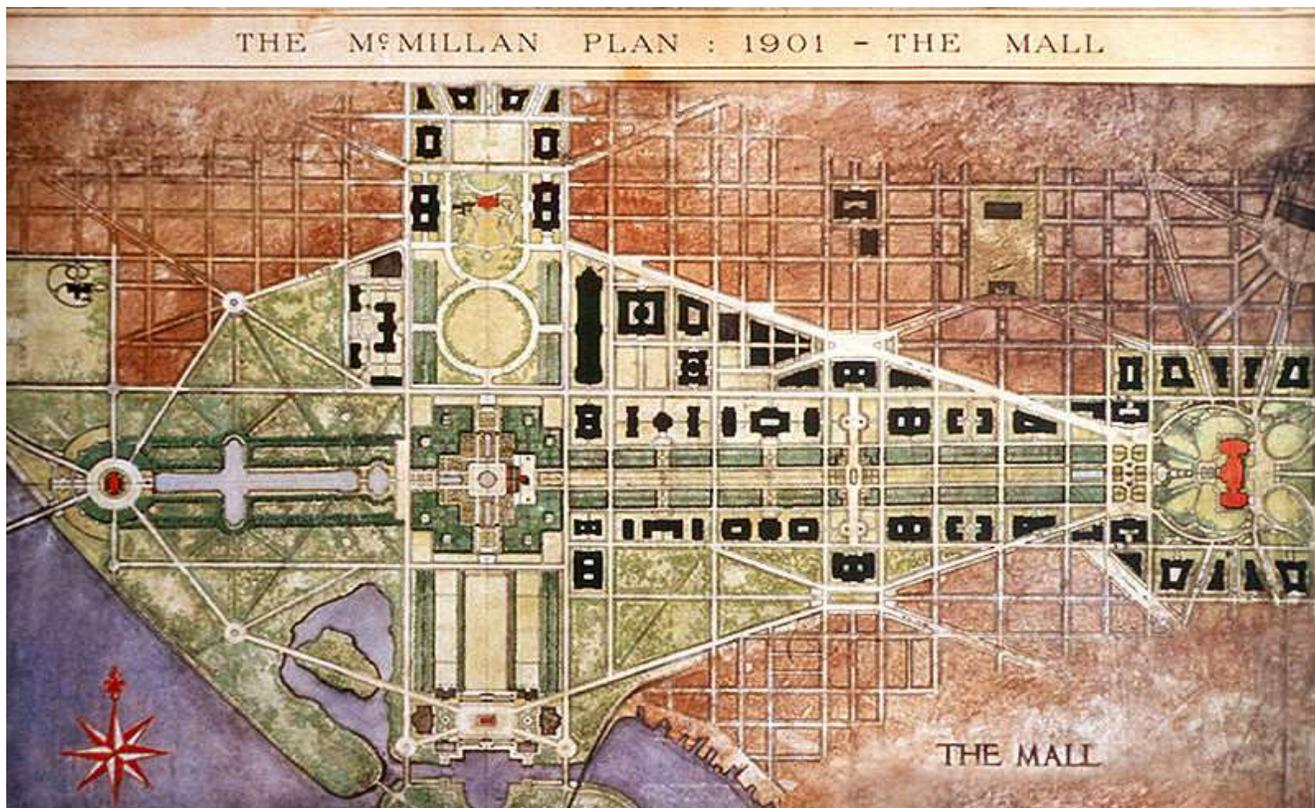
Ellicott's Dismissal

Ellicott immediately succeeded L'Enfant and with his team of surveyors Benjamin Ellicott, Joseph Ellicott, Isaac Briggs, George Fenwick, and James R. Dermott proceeded with their layout of the city according to the revised plan.

In the fall of 1792, Dermott had been sent by Ellicott with a crew to clear trees and brush on Pennsylvania Avenue, and was discharged within a few days. Dermott encountered Commissioner Stuart in Virginia shortly thereafter and explained to him the circumstances of his dismissal. Dermott also complained to the commissioner of the haphazard survey work being done in Washington. Commissioner Stuart insisted that Dermott make a statement before the Board of Commissioners, and his statement triggered a further investigation. In the course of the investigation, several city blocks were resurveyed and found to be incorrect. The Commissioners determined that some city blocks were laid out without having been measured at

all. Based upon the findings of the Commissioners, Ellicott and his team of assistants were dismissed on March 12, 1793.

The McMillan Plan



The McMillan Plan was an overall planning document for a system of parks and monuments in Washington, D.C. Formally titled “The Report of the Senate Park Commission. The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia”, it was created in 1902 by the Senate Park Commission which was chaired by Michigan Senator James McMillan.

The focal point of the McMillan plan was the updating of the National Mall. McMillan proposed to make the Mall into the core of the city. Designed in the figure of a cross with axes running north-south and east-west, McMillan’s plan sought to arrange the mall with sites of importance at key positions within the figure. The Capitol Building anchors the east end of the cross and the White House occupies the north end. The Washington Monument occupies the intersecting point of the axes and the Lincoln Memorial sits at the west end. The south end of the cross was to be anchored by East Potomac Park for the purpose of public recreation. The plan also provided for the construction of museums, memorials, and cultural centers along the east-west axis of the Mall. Additionally, the plan included a design for the construction of a public plaza around the Washington Monument.

Another objective of the McMillan plan was the demolition of the B&P Railroad terminal to make way for the modern Union Station. After much political wrangling over reimbursement, the B&P terminal was razed in 1908.

McMillan's plan called for the ornate and intricate landscaping of the existing Mall to be replaced by a vast expanse of grass, flanked by orderly rows of trees. This design was influenced heavily by the landscape at the Palace of Versailles.

The McMillan plan further suggested the construction of impressive office buildings around Lafayette Square and the Capitol building, along with a network of public parks to be connected by new parkways. Also, the plan called for the construction of two large reflecting pools.

While it was never adopted by Congress, many elements of the McMillan plan were put into place in the following years. Familiar sites that owe their existence to the McMillan Plan include Union Station, the Lincoln Memorial, the Arlington Memorial Bridge, and the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial. The McMillan Plan remains an integral part of the federal government's urban planning policy for Washington, D.C.

The implementation of the Senate's McMillan Plan received staunch opposition from the House of Representatives, owing to Speaker Joseph Cannon's protest that the House had been completely bypassed in the development of the plan. Over the years, many aspects of the plan were subjected to political scrutiny by those opposed to it. Compromise solutions were reached regarding the new Department of Agriculture Building, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Freer Art Gallery.

The Retrocession of the District of Columbia

The original boundary of the District of Columbia was a square, ten miles on each side, with the corners pointing in the cardinal directions. However, a quick glance at a map of the district shows a square with the southeast part missing. This is due to the retrocession.

The retrocession of the District of Columbia refers to the process by which land that had formerly been ceded by the State of Virginia to the federal government for the purpose of the creation of the federal district, was returned back to the state. The land for the federal district was originally ceded by the states of Virginia and Maryland in 1790, but in March of 1847, after a lengthy process of state and federal approval, the Virginia portion of the district was released by the federal government.

The Residence Act of 1790 provided for a 100-square mile district straddling the Potomac River upon land that was ceded to the United States by Virginia and Maryland. The Organic Act of 1801 caused the district to be under the jurisdiction of the United States Congress.

For the creation of the District, Virginia ceded approximately 31 square miles lying west of the Potomac River to the district, while Maryland ceded approximately 69 square miles lying east of the Potomac River. Virginia's cession included the city of Alexandria and the surrounding area.

The Organic Act of 1801, granted exclusive control of the territory to the federal government, meaning that the people living within the district were no longer citizens of any state. Accordingly, they found themselves disenfranchised and with no representation in

Congress. Furthermore, these citizens were unhappy with their inability to self-govern. Their community officials were selected by presidential appointment rather than by election. As time went on, these grievances caused the residents to grow increasingly dissatisfied with their conditions. As a result, they contemplated a variety of possible remedies, including statehood and retrocession.

Throughout the early years of the nineteenth century, Congress heard several proposals relating to retrocession. Many members of congress found the disenfranchisement of American citizens to be an affront to the founding principles of the nation. In 1803, a retrocession bill by Massachusetts Representative John Bacon was soundly defeated in the House. The following year, a similar bill proposed by Virginia Representative John Dawson was rejected outright. Additional bills proposing retrocession were defeated in 1806 and 1820.

By 1822, the residents of the District of Columbia redoubled their efforts to improve their political circumstances. A committee petitioned congress to either officially make the district into a territory or to retrocede the land back to the states. Also in 1822, bills were introduced proposing the return of Alexandria to Virginia and Georgetown to Maryland, but it was not until the 1830's that the retrocession picked up any lasting momentum.

In 1832, the Chairman of the Committee on the District of Columbia, Phillip Doddridge, was working on legislation to once again address the grievances of the citizens. Doddridge questioned the Town Council of Alexandria as to whether they would prefer to pursue retrocession to Virginia, be granted a representative in Congress, or establish a District legislature. Votes were cast on January 24 with 437 voters preferring no change, 402 voters preferring retrocession to Virginia, and one voter each preferring a congressional representative and District legislature.

The grievances of the citizens once again came to a head in 1835 as the Common Council of Alexandria appointed a committee to report the town's concerns before Congress. This committee presented a lengthy and detailed plan for retrocession, but Congress declined to deliberate upon the matter.

In 1836, a proposal to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia was brought before the Senate. In response to this, Senator William C. Preston of South Carolina introduced a bill seeking to retrocede the entire district back to Virginia and Maryland. His stated motivation was to prevent the matter of slavery in the district from being repeatedly brought before Congress. The proposals for abolition and retrocession both failed to even be brought to a vote.

In 1837, the City of Washington began to seek the establishment of a territorial government for the District of Columbia, and once again, the subject of retrocession was hotly debated.

In 1840, representatives from the banks of the District of Columbia went before Congress to request new charters. The recharter bill got tied up in political arguments and ultimately failed, forcing the banks to shut down. In July of 1840, dissatisfaction with this result prompted the citizens of Alexandria to convene a meeting and to organize yet another retrocession effort. Simultaneously, Mississippi Senator Robert J. Walker introduced legislation proposing to

determine the willingness of the residents of the District of Columbia, but outside of Washington, to retrocede. This measure failed.

In August of the same year, the residents of Alexandria provided a document to congress stating that of their voting population, 700 citizens favored retrocession while only 12 citizens were opposed to it. On September 28, the Common Council of Alexandria ruled to approve a vote on the subject to be held on October 12. The outcome of this vote was 666 to 211 in favor of retrocession.

In 1846, Lewis McKenzie, who sat on Alexandria's Common Council, reignited the retrocession movement when he made a motion to the mayor to once again send the results of the 1840 vote in favor of retrocession to both Congress and the Virginia Legislature. This motion was approved unanimously on the 8th of January. Upon receipt of these results, the Virginia legislature quickly requested that two representatives from Alexandria come to Richmond for further discussion of the matter. The council selected as their representatives an attorney, Francis L. Smith, and Councilman Robert Brockett. On February 2, 1846, having heard the case presented by Smith and Brockett, the Virginia General Assembly unanimously passed an act accepting the retrocession of Alexandria County, pending the approval of the United States Congress.

The House of Representatives passed a resolution to further study the matter of retrocession on February 16. During the debate, the question of constitutionality arose, but after much consideration, the bill passed by a 95-66 vote.

The bill moved on to the Senate, but not before an opposition group produced a petition with 150 signatures against it. The Washington Common Council also opposed the retrocession of Alexandria. However, despite the opposition the bill was passed in the Senate by a vote of 32-14 and on July 9, 1846, the bill was signed into law by James K. Polk.

The referendum was held on September 1st following a series of lively public debates. The first ballot in favor of retrocession was ceremoniously cast by Mayor William Veitch. The final tally was 763-222 in favor of retrocession. When the results were announced, a celebration erupted in the streets of Alexandria. President Polk certified the referendum and signed the proclamation of transfer on September 7, 1846.

The Influence of Freemasonry on the Design of Washington, D.C.

The uniqueness and complexity of the design of Washington, D.C. sets it apart from all other American cities and also from the major cities of the world. Throughout the early history of human civilization, city designs came about organically through patterns of usage by the residents. Proximity and access to water, trading centers, and occupational destinations, along with topography, dictated the travel ways of early cities.

Later came planned cities with streets more or less in a grid pattern intersecting at right angles, providing convenient transportation and access to points of importance. This style of development dominated urban planning throughout the second millennium and remains the most familiar style today.

Shunning traditional methods of city planning, L'Enfant envisioned an intricate hybrid system of streets on a grid layout, wide diagonal avenues, and circles and squares at the intersections. L'Enfant desired to create a symbolic design, inspired by the idea of the thirteen colonies joining together to bring forth a new nation and new age of self-government. L'Enfant was a true believer in the American cause, having been born and raised in France, and leaving home as a young man to volunteer for service in the American Revolution. Believing that the United States was unmatched by any other nation and stood as an example to the rest of the world, he was determined to design the most magnificent city the world had ever known.

The influence of masonic symbolism is apparent throughout Washington, D.C., which is not surprising as a great many of the key figures in early American history were freemasons, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock to name but a few. The most notable Freemason, however, was Pierre L'Enfant, who was initiated into the Holland Lodge No. 8 in New York in 1789.

It is understandable that the Freemasons, whose organization makes much use of symbolism in their rites, ceremonies, and artwork, would likewise make use of familiar symbols in the planning and design of Washington. Of particular note is the right triangle that has its vertices at the three most prominent structures on L'Enfant's plan – The Capitol Building, the White House, and the Washington Monument. It is interesting to contemplate the thought process of L'Enfant, who when beginning his work chose to use a foundational mathematical figure to locate the foundational structures of his design from which the rest of the plan could grow. The right triangle symbolizes order, stability, and strength.

Masonic symbolism is evidenced by the compass figure formed by tracing a line from the White House to the Capitol Building to the Jefferson Memorial and the square figure formed by tracing Washington Avenue SW and Louisiana Avenue NW.

The grounds of the Capitol Building, its walkways, and the adjacent avenues seem to trace the figure of an owl when viewed from the air. It is not certain whether or not L'Enfant intentionally sought to create the image of an owl, but it is worth noting that owls are commonly depicted in masonic artwork.

Perhaps even more so than in the layout of the city, the architecture of the government buildings in the city exhibit masonic influences. The obelisk of the Washington Monument is the most iconic example.

Freemasons have laid the ceremonial cornerstones at most of the major government buildings. Most significantly, in 1793, President George Washington presided over the laying of the cornerstone of the Capitol Building. A newspaper excerpt describing the proceedings follows:

“On Wednesday, one of the grandest Masonic processions took place, for the purpose of laying the corner stone of the Capitol of the United States, which, perhaps, was ever exhibited on the like important occasion. About ten o'clock Lodge No. 9 was visited by that congregation so graceful to the craft, Lodge No. 22, of Virginia, with all their officers and regalia; and directly afterward appeared on the southern bank of the Grand

River Potomack one of the finest companies of volunteer artillery that has been lately seen, parading to receive the President of the United States...The President of the United States and his attendant brethren ascended from the cavazion to the east of the corner stone and there the Grand Master, pro tem., elevated on a triple rostrum, delivered an oration fitting the occasion, which was received with brotherly love and commendation.

Timeline of Historical Events:

1752: The first survey of Georgetown was completed.

1783: The United States Constitution includes a provision for the establishment of a new district and city to serve as the permanent seat of the federal government.

1789: The Town of Georgetown, Maryland was incorporated, and Georgetown College was founded.

1790: The Residence Act provided for a national capital along the Potomac River and authorized President Washington to appoint commissioners to manage the project.

1791: The survey of the future District of Columbia was begun by Major Andrew Ellicott, Benjamin Banneker, and their team.

1791: Major Pierre L'Enfant's plan for Washington was introduced.

1792: Construction was started on the future White House.

1800: The seat of the Federal Government is relocated to Washington, D.C. from Philadelphia.

1800: Second President John Adams along with First Lady Abigail Adams move from Philadelphia to take up residence as the first occupants of the White House. Interestingly, the Adams family only occupied the White House from November 1800 through March 1801. Adams had been defeated in the November 1800 election by Thomas Jefferson, who was inaugurated as President on March 4, 1801.

1801: The District of Columbia was officially established by Congress.

1802: The City of Washington was incorporated, and a local government was established.

1803: Construction of the United States Capitol Building began under the supervision of architect Benjamin Latrobe.

1814: As the result of a British invasion during the War of 1812, the White House, the Capitol Building, and several other government buildings were burned by British forces commanded by Major General Robert Ross.

1846: The retrocession of a portion of the District of Columbia to the State of Virginia was passed.

1847: The Smithsonian Institution was established by Congress

1848: Construction began on the Washington monument. The monument was completed in 1884.

1863: The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln.

1871: Congress passed the District of Columbia Organic Act of 1871, establishing a new territorial government for the entire District of Columbia.

1901: The McMillan Plan brought new life to the L'Enfant plan and established the modern National Mall.

1922: The Lincoln Memorial was completed.

Statehood Movement

The District of Columbia statehood movement advocates for the elevation of the District of Columbia to the status of a U.S. state. Statehood would grant the citizens of the District full voting representation in Congress. The lack of congressional representation has been a point of conflict for the entire history of the District.

In 1888, a proposal was brought before Congress petitioning for voting representation, but nothing meaningful came of it. In 1921, Senator Wesley Livsey Jones of the State of Washington introduced a bill that would have permitted Congress to consider that residents of the District of Columbia as though they were citizens of a state. Subsequent efforts to gain congressional representation failed, however in 1961, the 23rd Amendment to the Constitution was adopted, granting the District of Columbia votes in the Electoral College, thereby allowing the citizens to vote in a presidential election for the first time in 1964.

Bills to address congressional representation were voted upon on 1967 and 1972 but failed to pass. In 1978, the District of Columbia Voting Rights Amendment was proposed but like similar measures in the past, failed to gain passage.

In 1980, voters in the District of Columbia began to pursue full statehood. Citizens convened a constitutional convention in 1982 and ratified a new constitution for the new state to be called "New Columbia". In 1987, another state constitution was drafted for New Columbia. Both of these initiatives failed to make it out of committee in Congress. Since then, more than a dozen statehood bills have been introduced in Congress, with only two of them making it out of committee. In 1993, one of these bills advanced to the floor of the House for debate and the matter of statehood was brought to a vote. The bill for statehood was soundly defeated by a vote of 277 to 153.

In 2016, District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser called for a vote on whether to once again pursue statehood. The vote was 85 percent in favor of statehood. While "The State of New Columbia" was the name stated on the ballot, the District Council passed a resolution just before the election to change the name of the proposed state to "The State of Washington, D.C.", with the "D.C." to stand for "Douglass Commonwealth", in honor of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

Even still, the issue of statehood for the District of Columbia is alive in the House and the Senate and remains at this moment a mostly party-line issue within the legislatures, with Democrats in favor of statehood and Republicans opposed to it.

Conclusion

There is much about the District of Columbia and Washington, D.C. to fascinate the modern surveyor. From the creation of the district boundary to the planning and layout of the city itself, many of the giants of our profession played major roles in the original establishment and development of our nation's capital.