

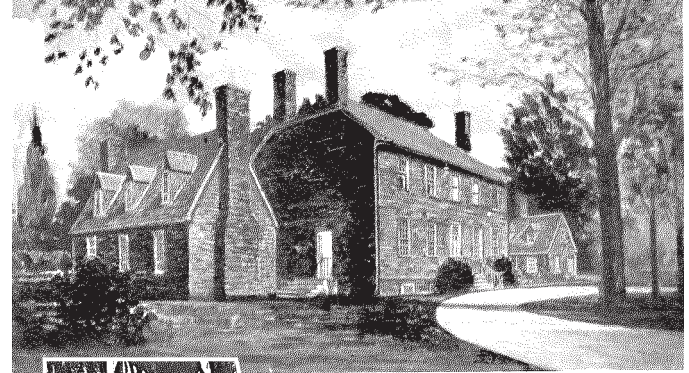
America's Historic Horse-Chestnut Tree

Kenmore had to be sold off in building lots, and the first to go was the land between the two homes. It was then, so they say, that General Washington, in one of his frequent visits to advise his sister about her affairs, planted the thirteen Horse Chestnuts.

But to return to the five trees which are remembered by Fredericksburg inhabitants: two were blown down in a severe storm and two died. This last survival has been carefully tended by its owner, Mrs. John F. Scott, but it needed more expert care. An appeal was made by Mrs. H.H. Smith, of the Kenmore Association, to Honorable Martin L. Davey, member of Congress from Ohio and President of the Davey Tree Expert Co. He was deeply interested and sent experts who worked for three weeks. They cut out the decayed wood from the trunk of the tree, making a cavity large enough for a man to stand erect. The branches also received treatment. Nearly two tons of concrete were used, and now the old Horse-Chestnut stands clean and whole, renewed to life and vigor.

How our great Washington would rejoice, and how close it brings us to him to feel that the life of this tree, which was in touch with his life, is prolonged indefinitely. The tree has been marked by Toccoa (Georgia) Chapter, D.A.R.

The patriotism which inspired Mr. Davey to give this work cannot be overestimated; the country owes him a debt of gratitude, and Fredericksburg especially, because he has restored to her one of her proudest possessions.



KENMORE, AT FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA, AS IT WILL BE WHEN RESTORED WITH OFFICE AND OUTBUILDING, AS THEY WERE IN THE DAYS OF COLONEL FIELDING LEWIS AND HIS WIFE BETTY.



HON. MARTIN L. DAVEY INSPECTING THE WORK OF HIS TREE EXPERTS ON THE HORSE-CHESTNUT TREE PLANTED BY WASHINGTON.

America's Historic Horse-Chestnut Tree

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BY MRS. VIVIAN MINOR FLEMING
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FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA, claims the honor of having one of America's most historic trees. It is a Horse-Chestnut, the last of thirteen which George Washington planted to shade the walk between his mother's cottage and Kenmore, his sister's home. He named these trees for the thirteen colonies, which seemed to be a fashion at that time. Alexander Hamilton did the same at his home just outside of New York, and there were others.

Many who are now living can remember five of these trees. They stood on what was at one time the Kenmore estate. They were handsome and stately and the old people loved to tell their story – How very anxious George was about his mother because she would persist in living at the old home, Ferry Farm, just across the river, where she was alone except for her housekeeper and servants. How Mrs. Lewis (Betty), the only daughter, besought the old lady to come and make her home with her. She would come visiting. There was a room at Kenmore which the old servants called "Old Miss Ma'y Washington's room," where she always liked to stay when she came to spend a few days, but she declined with some heat to give up the freedom of her country life.

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Washington had made up his mind to provide a home for his mother in spite of her objections, so in September, 1772, he bought the property known as the "Mary Washington House." It was a substantially built cottage with four acres of ground, making a spacious garden in which grew fruit trees, vines, flowers, box, vegetables, and so forth. It was separated from Kenmore, of which it was once a part, by a fence. A box walk was planted to the Kenmore gate, some changes and additions made, a kitchen and servants' quarters provided; thus the home was made ready for her when she might choose to occupy it.

It was not until March, 1775, that Mary Washington yielded to her son's importunities. At that time, when war seemed inevitable, Washington came to Fredericksburg and he and Mrs. Lewis made their mother comfortable in her new home. Soon afterward, Washington was called to take command of the army at Cambridge.

Mrs. Washington grew to like her little home, its proximity to her daughter, Betty, the convenience to church, and she loved a dish of gossip with her neighbors. But she made frequent visits to the farm, driving a gig, with a little boy on the floor to open the gates, and always brought back a jug of water from the Washington spring.

It was nearly seven years before she saw her son again. In this time, Colonel Fielding Lewis had died and his large fortune had been sacrificed to make the guns, the first made by the colonies, which helped to give America her freedom.