



ENGINEERING ACHIEVEMENT

There is still water in the George Washington Canal, near the Great Falls of the Potomac.

senger traffic almost as soon as it was built, it carried freight for almost a century before it was finally abandoned.

Like most other engineers, Washington didn't always guess right; his judgment was in error at least once—and rather expensively so for him, too. With five partners, he promoted a promising-looking project for draining Dismal Swamp in Virginia. He didn't succeed in draining it—and neither has anybody else, to this day.

Washington's keen interest in farming has often been cited as another evidence of his science-mindedness. This is true enough; neatly bound sets of leading English agricultural journals of his day are still to be seen on the shelves of his library at Mount Vernon. His own notes on plant breeding, soil analysis,

fertilizer use and other agricultural subjects occupy a considerable part of his later papers. He had a personal hand in all the multifarious business of a great farm of the late eighteenth century: milling, distilling, tanning, blacksmithing, wagon-making, brickmaking, spinning and weaving. He completely renovated the old mansion house, making the drawings for the job himself. And he invented a horse-drawn barrel-plow that furrowed the soil and planted the seed in one operation.

The encouragement which technology and invention later received in this country bear forever the Washington imprint. He advocated the passage of a patent act, and the first such law framed by Congress for the protection of American inventors bears his signature.

Science News Letter, February 21, 1942

65 cases of meningitis scattered throughout the entire nation with no concentration in any one place to suggest an epidemic brewing. The total number of cases is slightly above the five-year median of 55 cases.

The federal health service, however, points out, as do Dr. John H. Dingle and Dr. Maxwell Finland, of Boston, in their report to *War Medicine*, that conditions are favorable right now for a meningitis outbreak. The cold weather still prevalent in most parts of the country which keeps people indoors in close association with each other favors the spread of this disease.

"An outstanding feature of the disease has been its occurrence during wartimes in epidemics involving both military and civilian populations. During World War I there were 5,839 cases of meningococcal meningitis in the United States Army, with 2,279 deaths, a case mortality rate of 39%. Although the attack rate and the military noneffectiveness rate have usually been low, the sudden way in which the disease strikes, its mysterious manner of spread and its high mortality may have a serious effect on the morale of civilian and military personnel.

"These features, the unprecedented incidence of the disease in England since the outbreak of the present conflict—a total of 12,500 cases occurred during 1940—and its occurrence on this continent in Nova Scotia all point to the possibility that this country may be confronted with outbreaks of this disease in the near future."

The sulfa drugs, these doctors point out, have improved the outlook in this disease considerably, and "may offer a useful prophylactic measure in the prevention of its epidemic spread."

Science News Letter, February 21, 1942

PUBLIC HEALTH

Meningitis Epidemic Warning Issued in AMA-NRC Report

No Evidence At Present of Outbreak But War Medicine Points to Possibility of One in Near Future

WARNING that an epidemic of meningitis, also called cerebrospinal fever, may occur in this country in "the near future" appears in *War Medicine*, published by the American Medical Association acting in cooperation

with the National Research Council.

No evidence of an epidemic now or in the immediate future appears in the weekly reports to the U. S. Public Health Service. Latest figures available, for the week ending Jan. 31, showed a total of

PSYCHIATRY

Worry During War Normal But Shouldn't Harm Work

IF YOU'RE worried and depressed about the war, don't feel that you are abnormal—everybody is reacting the same way. This is the advice contained in a bulletin just released by the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis in New York.

However, the bulletin goes on to say, if you are so worried that you can't do your job properly, then your anxiety probably has nothing to do with the war and represents a personal problem for which you should consult a psychiatrist.

Science News Letter, February 21, 1942