



"Farmer George"

➤ WASHINGTON is honored as soldier, statesman, engineer, city planner. Washington thought of himself primarily as a farmer. When he was at Mount Vernon he was happy; during all the many years he had to be away from that beautiful riverside estate his chief longing was to get back home and busy himself with management of the land and improvement of its production. "Farmer George" was a nickname his enemies tossed at him, but for Washington there was no sting in the epithet: farmer he was, and proud of it. His very name, George, is the Greek word that means a farmer.

Yet most of us, if we were suddenly to be asked what Washington did on his farm, or for American farming in general, would be stumped. We know one

unauthentic legend about a destructive adventure in an orchard at an early period of his life. But few of us ever get to hear of the many trees he had a hand in setting out, or of the fields whose fertility he strove to improve by crop rotation and better cultivation methods.

To anyone who goes there with land use uppermost in his mind, a visit to Mount Vernon is a revelation. It is a gentleman's house, but Washington was by no means what we think of when we use the somewhat derogatory phrase, "gentleman farmer." Farming is a business, a business that Washington knew. He made money at it, as his carefully-kept account-books still show. He aimed to improve himself in it: the bookcases still contain agricultural reference books and bound volumes of such farm journals as were available in his day. He was constantly improving the home ground; it is not unlikely that some of the old box bushes and at least two Lebanon cedars at Mount Vernon were planted by his farm-hands under his personal direction.

There is one homely anecdote (not of Parson Weems' telling!) that shows how Washington was able to do a real public service and at the same time make it pay for itself. Finding that the town of Alexandria (metropolis of the Potomac shore in his day) was ill supplied with fresh vegetables, he devoted a few acres at Mount Vernon to raising garden truck, and once a week sent to town a cart loaded with the produce. Farmer George was a practical soul.

*Science News Letter, February 22, 1947*

TEXTILES

**Electricity Scattered  
Southern Cotton Mills**

➤ COTTON MILLS in the South are more widely scattered than earlier in their history, due to the availability of electricity for power and of electrically operated air-conditioners that insure proper humidity, the American Institute of Engineers was told by J. D. McConnell of the Proximity Manufacturing Company, Greensboro, N. C.

The record of change and growth in the textile industry, particularly in the South, is closely tied to electric power. The first cotton mills were located on water power sites, both to be within mechanical transmission distance and in humidity conditions necessary in the proper processing of this material.

*Science News Letter, February 22, 1947*

PUBLIC HEALTH

**Americans to Get More  
Sanitary Food in Future**

➤ CLEANER, purer food for Americans in future is foreseen by U. S. Food and Drug Commissioner Paul B. Dunbar.

Food factories and warehouses will be more sanitary, he predicts, as a result of organized industry's efforts to bar insects, rats, mice and other sources of dirt and disease germs from their plants.

"The courts are not disposed to countenance the shipment of filthy food, insanitary factories or practices, or failure to protect sound food through storage negligence," he declared in his annual report to the President and Congress.

"The year 1946 saw the largest number of substantial penalties levied in the history of Federal food law enforcement. Six jail sentences and 32 fines of from \$1,000 to \$4,000 were imposed and 24 injunctions were granted to restrain further traffic in unfit food, either permanently or temporarily while corrections of objectionable conditions were in progress. Nine other injunctions are awaiting court hearing."

Actions to remove filthy and decomposed foods from the market involved nearly 70% of all food seizures in 1946.

*Science News Letter, February 22, 1947*

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