

## THE WORLD OF MARY BALL: CHAPTER SIX

# AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON:

### An ambitious entrepreneur, 1694–1743

Part six of a seven-part series that links the early years of Mary Ball, the mother of George Washington, to her Northern Neck heritage and her Washington connections.

BY PAULA S. FELDER  
FOR THE FREE LANCE-STAR

**A**UGUSTINE Washington was the grandson of John Washington, an early arrival in Westmoreland County in the Northern Neck. Augustine's father Lawrence (1659–98), also a prominent county leader, was schooled in England and married one of the three heiress daughters of the powerful Augustine Warner Jr. of Gloucester County.

**ONLINE** >> See Paula Felder's series at [fredericksburg.com/maryball](http://fredericksburg.com/maryball).

When he died in 1698, he left two sons, John (the elder) and Augustine, and an infant daughter, Mildred.

His widow remarried into one of the most prominent merchant families of Whitehaven. With her children, she accompanied her new husband, George Gale, back to Whitehaven on the west coast of England.

She died there in 1701 after childbirth, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Nicholas. If the instructions in her will had been followed, her children would have remained in England, where Gale had pledged to convey to them their rightful inheritance.



Chotank Creek was home to cousins of Augustine Washington.

For the next four years, the children were under the care of their stepfather, who placed the boys in Appleby, a highly regarded school in the Lake District of northern England. His years in Whitehaven and at Appleby made a lasting impression on Augustine, who would later enroll his older sons there.

But in Westmoreland County, Lawrence's executors sued George Gale, who came to Virginia in 1702 to appear before the Westmoreland grand jury. Representing him was George Eskridge.

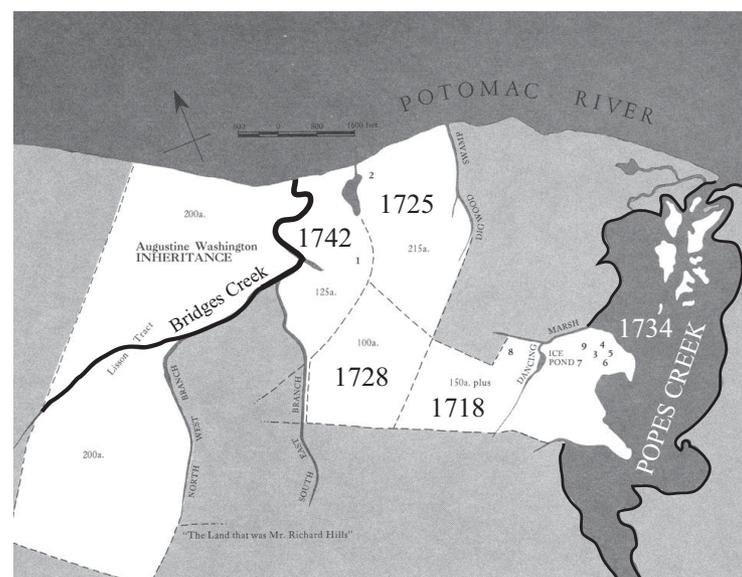
The Westmoreland jury found for George Gale, but its decision was overturned in the General Court of the colony.

And so, in 1704, the Washington children returned to Virginia to live on Chotank Creek near the western border of Westmoreland County with their guardian's family.

John Washington, Augustine's brother, remained in Gloucester County until his death in 1746.

Mildred, their younger sister, inherited the 2,500 acres that was a portion of the first Washington patent on Little Hunting Creek. Her last husband was Henry Willis, who brought her to Fredericksburg in 1734. She built a large home on a tract that is still called Willis Hill, next to what is today a national cemetery.

The guardian was tardy in dividing their father's estate, and so in 1712 the Westmoreland court approved the petition of the eldest son, John, to receive his share. Augustine and Mildred at once successfully petitioned the Westmoreland court to have



"POPES CREEK PLANTATION BIRTHPLACE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON"

In 1718, Augustine Washington acquired land on Popes Creek in Westmoreland County where he built a new home, eventually linking his properties up to his inheritance in Bridges Creek.

their older brother appointed as their guardian.

When he came of age, however, John Washington did not exercise his right as eldest son to the Washington land on Bridges Creek, and settled instead in Gloucester County on the Middle Peninsula.

And so, when Augustine turned 21, the 400 acres on Bridges Creek became his.

### AUGUSTINE'S FAMILY CIRCLE

The families in the Bridges Creek and Popes Creek neighborhood were typical of the tangled genealogies of the Northern Neck.

Jane Butler was the only child of Caleb Butler and his wife, Mary, of the Popes Creek neighborhood. The household also included children from a prior marriage of Mary Butler.

In 1715, 16-year-old Jane

Butler married Augustine Washington, who had just turned 21, and they settled on his Bridges Creek inheritance. In 1718, he added land on Popes Creek where the young family built a new home (now celebrated as George Washington's birthplace).

When he was barely 21, Augustine was appointed for the first of several terms as a justice on the Westmoreland County Court.

About 1717, George Eskridge married as his second wife the stepdaughter of Caleb Butler, thus becoming Augustine Washington's brother-in-law as well as his mentor.

### NEW OPPORTUNITIES ARISE

Although rural life seems peaceful from the distance of two centuries, it was really

SEE MARY, PAGE 7