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THE

Official Guide

(Third Edition)

Written by

F. R. BANKS

Issued by authority of the
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ED. J. BURROW & CO. LTD., PUBLISHERS,
CHELTENHAM AND LONDON

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN



Washington's New
Council Chambers

Photo: Durham County Press

WASHINGTON

CO. DURHAM

WASHINGTON, District of Columbia, is many thousands of miles from Washington, County Durham, but there is, in fact, a stronger bond between these two historic places than the mere coincidence, as it might be thought, of their identical names. Washington D.C., derives its name from the famous George Washington, the first President of the United States and the leader of the forces that secured independence for the American Colonies in 1776. He was born in America in 1732, but his immediate ancestors hailed from England. In 1658, two brothers, John and Lawrence Washington, emigrated from the family seat of Sulgrave Manor, Northamptonshire: the former of these was the great-grandfather of George. The Washingtons reached Northamptonshire by way of Warwickshire, Lancashire and Westmorland, in each of which counties the family resided for a time, but originally they came from Washington, in the County of Durham, where they held the manor for nearly two hundred years before disposing of it to the Blaykeston family. Washington, the capital of the United States, is therefore in effect a direct descendant of Washington, County Durham.

The crest of the Washingtons of Washington consisted of a design of three mullets (a mullet is a five-pointed star, supposed to represent the rowel of a spur) and two bars, as shown on the seal of the deed transferring the estate to the Blaykestons in 1376, now in Durham Cathedral Library. The crest was usually known as the "three stars and two stripes". The coat-of-arms of George Washington, as evidenced in a book-plate dating from 1776 and bearing his signature, also consisted of the design of three mullets and two bars, and there cannot be any doubt that it was in homage to him that the Americans used his arms as the basis for the design of their National Flag—the famous "Stars and Stripes". Not only, then, does the capital of the United States take its name from Washington, in County Durham, but the National Flag of America is derived from the family arms of the Washingtons, Lords of the Manor of Washington.

This relationship gives the English Washington a proud and unique position in the country's history. Everyone knows of Washington, in the United States, but not everyone has heard of Washington, in the North of England. Where, then, is this place which deserves to be revered by all Americans and all who have regard for that country?

Washington is towards the north-east corner of the County of Durham, once a county palatine ruled over by the powerful prince-bishops, who exercised complete rights of sovereignty within its boundaries. It stands on the north side of the River Wear, between the ancient city of Durham, farther upstream, and the busy ship-building and coal-exporting town of Sunderland, at the river's mouth.

Washington

On the opposite bank of the river is Penshaw Hill, surmounted by a monument which is a distinctive landmark over the whole of the northern part of Durham.

Washington is from two to three miles east of the Great North Road at Birtley, which possesses the nearest station to it on the main London-Newcastle-Edinburgh railway. Washington has, however, two stations (Washington and Usworth) on that branch of the North Eastern Region lines which run from Newcastle to Penshaw, the latter only one station removed from Washington and a junction on the Durham to Sunderland line.

Its History . . .

Washington was created an Urban District in 1922, and is a combination of the former three parishes of Washington, Usworth and Barmston. The old spelling of Washington was Wessington, which means either the farm of the children of the marshy meadows or that of the children of Weasa, it is not known definitely which. Weasa would be a family name of Anglo-Saxon origin: the first mention of Washington is to be found in an Anglo-Saxon Charter dated 973. Usworth was formerly spelled Osurde and Useworth, which means the enclosure near the by-road, or perhaps that of the unknown God. Barmston, originally Berneston and then Barmestone, was the tun, or farm, of one named Bern.

In 1183 a William de Hertburn exchanged his native village of Hertburn (would this be Hartburn, in Northumberland?) for the village and manor of Wessington, changing his name at the same time as he took up his new estate. This William de Wessinton, as he then called himself, became the progenitor of the Washington family, the ancestors of George Washington. The Washingtons were Lords of the Manor from this time until 1376, a period of nearly two hundred years. The Washington coat-of-arms of three mullets and two bars can still be seen, the oldest in existence to be carved in stone, displayed on the front of the remains of the fourteenth-century Hilton Castle (or Hylton, as it is now spelled), about three miles east of Washington and also on the north bank of the Wear. (There is a tradition, though nothing more, that a Baron Hilton married a daughter of William Washington of Washington.) It has been suggested that this truly historic stone should find a place in America's National Museum.

. . . it's old buildings . . .

Washington possesses two buildings of great historic interest. One is the PARISH CHURCH, dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Con-



Photo: G. Eaton

Dame Margaret's Hall
National Coal Board Residential Training College

Washington

separated in 1833, it occupies the site of a much older building, and the list of Rectors dates back to 1196. In the church is a font of which the basin is of Norman origin. It stood in the old church, presumably for many hundreds of years, being discarded when that building was demolished in 1832. It was discovered in 1865 by the Rector, the Reverend Julius Shadwell, being used as a drinking trough for cattle, and he replaced it in its present position. Many generations of the Washington family must have been baptised in this font. The Washington Tombs were situated under the Lord's Porch in the old church, and the Lords of the Manor and their family retainers regularly worshipped in this chapel above the remains of their ancestors.

THE OLD HALL, adjacent to and on the south side of the Parish Church, embodies the remains of the ancient Manor House of the Washington family. The last Washington to own it died about 1400, but it continued in the possession of his heirs (Tempests and Mallorays) until it was purchased by the Bishop of Durham in 1613. The Bishop entirely remodelled the house for his son, utilizing the old materials and allowing substantial portions to stand, principally in the west wing; these include a pillar and portions of two blocked arches, and the jamb and part of the arched head of a twelfth-century window. After passing through various other hands the Old Hall was sold in 1896 and converted into tenements for thirteen families. But in 1934 the building was declared by the Urban Council to be unfit for human habitation and the tenants were removed. Together with the surrounding land, it was then offered for sale. A local Committee, formed some years ago with the object of preserving the historic building, was enabled to achieve the first step with its purchase. The roof was then made watertight and some of the additions of 1896 were removed, but the War prevented further work until 1951, when, through the efforts of Mr. Eric Underwood, sufficient funds became available to enable the complete rehabilitation of the Hall to be embarked upon. The work is still in progress and further monies are needed. When the work has been completed the Hall will be used partly as an Anglo-American museum and rest room for tourists, and partly for the social needs of the community.

... and its industries

The main industry of the district of Washington, in common with that of most others of the eastern part of Durham, is coal-mining. The three collieries at Washington, Glebe and Usworth employ more than 3,000 men. Other industries in the locality include the Washington Chemical Works, the Washington Iron Works and, among lighter industries, clothing manufacture, and radio-component assembly. There are four brickworks and several stone quarries. But Washington is by no means confined to industry, for within the bounds of the Urban District are sixteen farms and two market-gardens.

HOW WASHINGTON LIVES

PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICES

Electricity is supplied by the British Electricity Authority. Charges for domestic supply are either fixed charges plus $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per unit or a sliding scale tariff from 4d. to $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per unit. *Gas* is supplied by the Northern Gas Board. Good supplies are available in all parts of the district. *Water* is supplied by the Council, who obtain their supplies in bulk from the Sunderland and South Shields Water Company and the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company. *Transport*. There are two railway stations (Washington and Usworth) on the Newcastle to Durham via Penshaw line, although not now used for regular passenger services. There is a good Railway Parcel delivery service throughout the district. Omnibuses operated by the Northern General Transport Co., Ltd. and the Sunderland District Omnibus Co., Ltd. give frequent services to Newcastle, Durham, Sunderland, South Shields, Chester-le-Street, and Houghton-le-Spring. Purely local services are also operated by J. & T. Hunter (Washington) Ltd.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

A Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic is maintained by the Durham County Council in part of the Welfare Hall. All other public health services maintained by the County Council and the District Council are fully up to the required standard. Hospital services are within easy reach at Newcastle and Sunderland and infectious diseases receive treatment at the Chester-le-Street Isolation Hospital. All sewage, after partial treatment, is discharged into the River Wear. The water carriage system is in operation throughout the district.

HOUSING

In the district there are approximately 5,500 houses, of which 2,100 permanent houses and 258 temporary dwellings are owned and managed by the Council. Rents (including rates) for Council houses range from 22/11d. for the post-war three-bedroom house to 7/- for the aged persons' one-bedroom bungalow. The Council are continuing to build further houses to satisfy the present need.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The Local Education Authority is the Durham County Council, which has provided the following:

Washington

<i>School</i>	<i>Accommodation</i>
Washington Alderman Smith Grammar	480
Washington Glebe Secondary Modern	230
Usworth Colliery Secondary Modern	312
Usworth Colliery County Primary Junior	394
Usworth Colliery County Primary Infants	220
Washington Glebe County Primary	450
Washington Biddick County Primary	176
Springwell County Primary	300
High Usworth County Primary	280
Washington St. Joseph's R.C. Junior	430
Washington St. Bedes R.C. Infants	100
Washington Nursery	40

PUBLIC LIBRARY

A branch of the Durham County Superior Library Service was established in Washington in 1930 and offers a good selection of both fictional and non-fictional literature.

PUBLIC BATHS

The Council has plans prepared and the site purchased for the erection of Public Swimming Baths.

FACILITIES FOR RECREATION

At Usworth there is a Miners' Welfare Park, open to the public and providing facilities for football, tennis and bowls. It has also a putting green and a children's playground. A further Miners' Welfare Recreation Ground at Washington provides football and cricket pitches, etc. Open spaces for children's playgrounds are provided throughout the area on the Council housing estates.

Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Societies stage their productions in the Welfare Hall. Dancing is catered for at several halls. Public footpaths provide pleasant walks in the country and along the riverside.

ROAD SAFETY

The Washington Urban District Road Safety Committee was formed in October, 1946, at a meeting at which nearly fifty local organisations were represented. Within a fortnight of its inauguration a scheme of activities was prepared and begun. Road Safety propaganda has since taken many and varied forms and its effectiveness is undoubtedly reflected in the present extremely low accident rate.

LOCAL AUTHORITY INFORMATION

The Washington Urban District Council, created in 1922, extended its boundaries in 1937.

Area	5,758 acres
Population	17,795



Examples of Washington's
Housing Estates

Above: Aged Persons' Bungalows

Below: Post-war Houses



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Local Information

Density per acre	3.02
Rateable Value	£77,441
Rates	24s. 6d.

OTHER INFORMATION

Parliamentary Division: Chester-le-Street. Present Member:
Mr. P. Bartley (Labour).

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Church of England: Holy Trinity, Washington; Holy Trinity, Usworth. *Roman Catholic:* Church of Our Lady Immaculate, Village Lane, Washington. *Nonconformist:* Methodist, Springwell; New Rows Methodist, Washington; Edith Avenue Methodist, Washington; Usworth Colliery Methodist; Methodist, Village Lane, Washington; Biddick Methodist, Albert Place, Washington; Methodist, Station Road, Washington; Salvation Army, Manor Road, Washington.

The Old Hall

incorporating portions of the ancient
Manor House of the Washington family

Photo : G. Eaton



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AROUND WASHINGTON

THE RIVER WEAR should first be mentioned. It is the only river of any importance that is confined solely to Durham, the other major rivers, the Tyne, the Tees and the Derwent, all being shared with adjacent counties. Below Washington the Wear is partly commercialised, but above the village it threads many beautiful reaches, passing the picturesque ruins of Finchale Priory and flowing through the lovely grounds of Lumley and Lambton Castles before skirting Penshaw Hill, opposite Washington.

PENSHAW MONUMENT, on top of this hill, is a "temple" in the Doric style of architecture, erected in 1844 to the memory of the first Earl of Durham. The whole of the hill, except for the de-wooded slope which faces north-west across the Wear to Washington, is open to the public. One of the pillars of the temple is hollow and contains a newel stairway which leads to a walled parapet seventy feet above the ground giving an expansive view over most of the northern part of County Durham. The key to the door giving access to the stair may be obtained on application to the tenant occupying the house at the base of the slope facing eastward.

Stone from quarries in the neighbourhood of Penshaw has been used for many important buildings and other structures including London Bridge and the High Level Bridge over the Tyne at Newcastle.

LAMBTON CASTLE, upstream from Washington, is the property of the fifth Earl of Durham, and occupies a magnificent site above the river. It is an early eighteenth-century building which replaced an Elizabethan mansion. The Castle is now used by the Durham County Education Committee as a Residential College for Adult Education. The Castle is not open to the public.

CHESTER-LE-STREET. This ancient town, situated on the Great North Road, about five miles from Washington, occupies the site of a Roman station on the road which ran from Eboracum (York) to Pons Aelius (Newcastle); hence its name. No signs of the camp remain, but its boundaries have been traced with fair certainty. Chester-le-Street was also for 113 years the see of a bishopric. When the Danes descended on Holy Island, off the coast of Northumberland, in 1875, the monks of the Priory of Lindisfarne hurriedly disinterred the body of St. Cuthbert, which had been buried there, and escaped

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Around Washington

with it to the mainland. They wandered from place to place for seven long years, finally settling at Chester-le-Street, and here the see was established from 882 until it was removed in 995 to its final home at Durham. The deserted Roman fortifications undoubtedly influenced the selection of the site here, a fact borne out by the presence of the churchyard within the lines of the camp.

THE PARISH CHURCH, dedicated to St. Mary and St. Cuthbert, is a short distance east of the main street. There is no trace of the first church which was built here. The present church consists of a chancel; a nave, with the usual aisles and with a chapel on the north side; a tower at the west end with a remarkable spire, 156 feet high; and an anchorite's cell, occupying the north-west bay. The main entrance is by the west door. The most notable objects are the series of monuments of fourteen members of the Lumley family, placed here by John, Lord Lumley, in 1594. Eleven of these, however, are known to be forgeries, the work of Elizabethan craftsmen.

LUMLEY CASTLE, about a mile east of Chester-le-Street, stands on an elevated ridge enclosed by the River Wear on one side and the Lumley Beck on the other. The house, though still the property of the Earl of Scarbrough, is now part of the University of Durham, to which it was leased in 1946. The interior is open to the public on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. (admission 6d.), except for certain periods during the University vacations, generally the staff holiday periods, *i.e.* Christmas and New Year, Easter and two or three weeks in August. The exterior is open to view at any time, as a public path passes below the house, across the fine park which slopes down to meet the Wear.

The Castle remains today very largely as it was left at the end of the fourteenth century by Sir Ralph Lumley, who was responsible for most, if not all, of the present structure. The east gateway of the building, originally the main entrance, is flanked by two square turrets connected by a parapet which has a battlement and also machicolations for annoying an attacker. Opening from the south side of the gateway is a guard-chamber, in the floor of which is the entrance to the dungeon, a gloomy apartment ten feet square and sixteen feet deep. The interior of the Castle has been much altered at various times, particularly in the sixteenth century by Lord John Lumley and in the eighteenth by Sir John Vanbrugh. The baron's hall, originally occupying the greater part of the west side, and the very large kitchen, which covers the whole area of the north-west tower at ground level, are the most interesting parts. The state apartments were mostly on the south side. Outside the west front is a remarkable sundial having twenty-four faces.

Washington

Other places of interest within easy reach of Washington are the county town of Durham (twelve miles), with its Norman cathedral and dominating castle, both standing on a high peninsula almost surrounded by the Wear; Finchale Priory (eleven miles), in a charming position on the banks of the same river; Houghton-le-Spring (five miles), whose fine thirteenth-century church contains a monument to Bernard Gilpin, "the Apostle of the North", who was rector here from 1558 to 1583; Newcastle (seven miles), with the keep and gate-house of a Norman castle, St. Nicholas' Cathedral and its famous lantern tower, and a wealth of other interest; the shipyards and engineering works of Sunderland (seven miles); South Shields (nine miles), which combines the functions of sea-side resort and port, at the mouth of the Tyne; and, between the last and Sunderland, the pleasant, quiet sea-coast villages of Marsden and Whitburn.

The Colliery Welfare
Hall and Institute

Photo: G. Eaton



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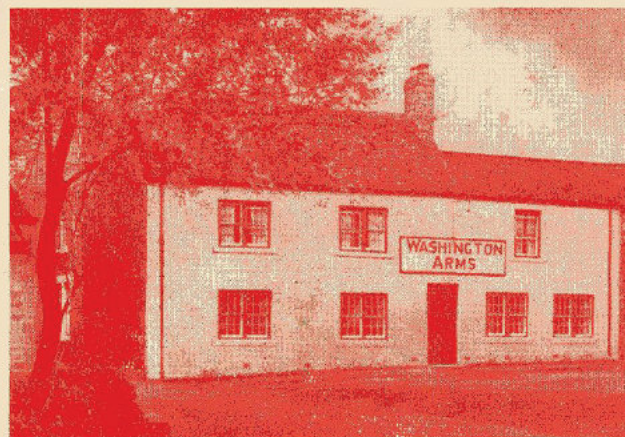
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