

# Ancient District Boundary Marker Set by Washington



## Weather-Beaten Stone Is Protected by Fence; Placed in 1792.

Just off Southern avenue in Randle Highlands stands a small gray stone pillar, weather-beaten and worn, with old-fashioned lettering on its four sides. It is one of the original boundary stones of the District of Columbia, and was put there in 1792 by George Washington.

On the side of the pillar toward the District this inscription is carved on the stone:

Jurisdiction  
of the  
United States  
Miles 2

Opposite this, on the Maryland side, appears the name of that State, while the date "1792" appears on the South side. The lettering on the North side has been nearly obliterated, only the figure 4 and a capital E remaining.

In addition to being a boundary stone, it also served as a mile post on Southern avenue. The stone is just two miles from the eastern corner of the ten mile square which originally comprised the District.

A high iron fence which surrounds the stone was erected in 1913 by the Marcia Burns Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The authenticity of the stone is vouched for by this organization, whose plaque on the fence proclaims it an "original Federal boundary stone." The chapter still looks after the marker, keeping it from being choked by weeds and keeping the fence painted.

The District of Columbia was laid out in 1792 as a result of a compromise between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. Jefferson, a Southerner, favored placing the National Capital in a Southern State, while Hamilton, who had adopted New York State as a home, favored either New York City or Philadelphia.

Jefferson also opposed the payment by the new national Government of debts contracted by the colonies during the Revolution. Virginia had few such debts, while other States, particularly some of the smaller ones in the North, had borrowed a great deal of money for purposes of the war. Jefferson naturally opposed having his native State pay equally with others whose debts were larger.

Hamilton, however, held that to repudiate the debts of the colonies would ruin the credit of the young republic. He proposed to Jefferson that if Jefferson would cease his objection to having the Federal Government take over the debts of the colonies, Hamilton would agree to locate the capital in a Southern State. Jefferson agreed to the compromise.

In order to prevent a dispute between Maryland and Virginia, the two most important Southern States, it was decided to locate the Capital City in both of them. The site chosen had the advantage of being close to Mount Vernon, home of the President.

The area originally laid out included both the present city of Washington and what is now Arlington County. This was given back to Virginia in 1828, when it appeared

that the part of the city on the Maryland side of the Potomac would never fill its boundaries. Arlington County originally belonged to the city of Alexandria after the cession.

The stone is at the corner of Southern avenue and Mitchell avenue in Bradbury Heights, Md. Grading of Southern avenue has lowered the street somewhat, so that it is now on a bank about six feet above the level of the roadway.

Only on the north side of the pillar has the lettering disappeared, apparently through the effects of weather. On the other sides it is still clear and deep. The stone is apparently some sort of granite, weathered to an extremely dark color.