

Letters To The Editor

Boundary "Error"

Very interesting is your December 30 story in which it is implied that George Washington "slipped" in his survey of the boundary of the Federal district. It seems that Arlington County's survey department found that Washington "deviates from a true line by exactly zero derees, 1 minute and 14 seconds at one bearing point."

If the Arlington engineers would do a little checking they would find that it was not Washington who did the transit job back there in 1791. You know he was then President of the United States and had more important duties, so he employed the best engineer he could find.

The boundary of the District was laid out by Maj. Andrew Ellicott, early American astronomer and distinguished mathematician who served many years as professor of mathematics at the United States Military Academy at West Point. In 1789 he surveyed the Niagara River and made the first accurate measurement of the height of the falls, and in 1817, by order of the Government, made astronomical observations at Montreal for carrying into effect some of the articles of the Treaty of Ghent.

Major Ellicott is revered by many as the father of American civil engineering. Let the Arlington transitmen be not too hasty in branding Major Ellicott's measurements as inaccurate. Likewise they would find interesting reading in the Ellicott correspondence during the District survey, particularly in his adventures in what is now Falls Church.

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