The session will start shortly. Please note:

- Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
- You can participate through the Q&A function.
- If you have technical difficulties, please email firstfriday@gilderlehrman.org so we can assist you.
Gilder Lehrman Staff

Panelists

● Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator
● Victoria Ann Scovens - Eliza in the And Peggy Tour of *Hamilton*
● Rosanne Lichatin - 2005 National History Teacher of the Year

Support

● Zoya Siddiqui - Curatorial Intern
During the Session

- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature, which is at the bottom of your screen.
- Viewing in full screen is recommended to see the presenters and the presentation at the same time.

For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
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Today’s Documents

- A letter from Martha Washington about the end of the Revolutionary War
- A letter from Martha about her duties as her husband becomes president

Metropolitan Museum of Art
Martha Dandridge Custis (1731-1802)

- Born June 2, 1731
- Married Daniel Parke Custis May 15, 1750
  - One of the wealthiest men in Virginia
  - Exported tobacco
- Had four children
  - Daniel (1751-1754)
  - Frances (1753-1757)
  - John “Jacky” (1754-1781)
  - Martha “Patsy” (1756-1773)
- Widowed July 8, 1757
Martha Custis, Estate Manager

- Martha became the executor of Daniel’s estate.
  - She was not his heir.
  - She managed 17,500 acres of land and 300 enslaved people.
- The land and property were worth more than £40,000.
  - This is over $2.2 million today.
Martha married George Washington on January 6, 1759.

George left Mount Vernon in 1775 to command the Continental Army.

He returned to Mount Vernon when the war ended in 1783.
  ○ Martha visited him each winter.
  ○ She was an influential presence.
Martha Washington

to Hannah Boudinot,

January 15, 1784
Return to domestic life

“Your polite and affectionate congratulatory Letter on the termination of our troubles, and the return of the General to domestic life, would, under any circumstances, have been highly pleasing to me; but the value of it was particularly enhanced by the friendly terms in which you have conveyed them to us.”

“The difficulties, and distresses to which we have been exposed during the war must now be forgotten. We must endeavor to let our ways be the ways of pleasantness and all our paths Peace.”
“My little family are all with me; and have been very well till with in these few days, that they have been taken with the measles. – The worst I hope is over, and that I shall soon have them prattling about me again. – with best respects to M'r Boudenot, and love to miss Susan and your self – in which the General joins.”
Martha Washington to Frances B. Washington, June 8, 1789
Themes of the letter

- Martha’s journey to Philadelphia and New York
- Her grandchildren
- Health of family members
- George Washington and the presidential mansion
- Mount Vernon
- Procuring clothing

Library of Congress
Arrival in New York

“I set out on munday with Mrs Morris and her two Daughters, – and was met on Wednesday morning by the President Mr Morris and Colo H at Elizabeth town point with the fine Barge you have seen so much said off in the papers with the same oars men that carred the P. to New York dear little Washington seemed to be lost in a mase at the great parad that was made for us all the way we come The Governor of the state meet me as soon as we landed, and led me up to the House, the papers will tell you how I was complimented on my landing, – I thank god the Prdt is very well, and the Gentle men with him – are all very well, – the House he is in is a very good one and is handsomly furnished all new for the General.”
“I have not had one half hour to my self since the day of my arrival, – my first care was to get the children to a good school, – which they are both very much pleased at, – nelly shall begin Musick next week – she has made two or three attempts to write to you; but has never finished a letter – she is a little wild creature and spends her time at the windows looking at carriages, &c passing by which is new to her and very common for children to do.”
“All the genteel people say a crape cushing is not proper to send to you – but I think in the country where you cannot have a hair dresser they will do very well – my Hair is set and dressed every day – and I have put on white muslin Habits for the summer – you would I fear think me a good deal in the fashion if you could but see me – my dear Fanny send me by some safe convance my Black lace apron and handkerchief they are in one of my drawers in the chest of drawers in my chamber – and some thread lace or joining nett it is in one of the Baskets on the shelf in my closet they were fine net Handkerchiefs which I intended to make cap borders off.”
“I am pleased to hear that the domestick concerns goe on well – sickness is to be expected and Charlot will lay her self up for as little as any one will – it was right to give them more Bread if I did not put enough in each bundle – I am truly sorry to hear of another death in the family so soon.”
Deaths of George and Martha Washington

- George died December 14, 1799.
  - Martha is widowed for a second time.
- Mount Vernon is left to Bushrod Washington, George’s nephew.
  - Martha remains in the mansion.
- George’s will freed 123 enslaved people he owned upon Martha’s death.
- This did not include enslaved people from the Custis estate.
- Martha died May 22, 1802.
Q&A
Collection Digital Volunteers

Scripto - Robert L. Stone's World War II Letters

Since August 4:
75 student volunteers have transcribed over 800 pages

Projects include:
- The World War I Diary of Ella Jane Osborn, Army Nurse
- Sylvia Weiner’s Letters from the World War II Brooklyn Home Front
- Robert L. Stone’s World War II Letters
Collection Digital Volunteers

Benefits to students:
- Learn to read handwriting
- Have hands-on experience as historians
- Gain experience that can be used on college applications or resumes
- Fulfills volunteer or community service hours

Benefits to the Institute:
- Transcribed text increases accessibility of the documents
- Handwriting is not a barrier
- Used in text-to-speech programs for the visually impaired
- Easily searched by both our database system and online search engines
Upcoming Programs

- *Inside the Vault*, Thursday, January 7 at 7:30 pm ET (4:30 pm PT)
  - Featuring documents from the inauguration of George Washington

- *Book Breaks*, December 20 at 12 pm ET (9 am PT)
  - Colin G. Calloway, Professor of History at Dartmouth College, discusses his book *The Indian World of George Washington*

- Visit [gilderlehrman.org](http://gilderlehrman.org) for free resources for students, teachers, families, and history enthusiasts of all ages.