



June 2, 2015

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**Mount Vernon Place Conservancy Reveals Contents of Two Time Capsules Discovered in
Baltimore's Washington Monument
Announcement of Monumental Bicentennial Celebration July 4, 2015**

BALTIMORE, MD –Mount Vernon Place Conservancy officials will unveil today the contents of the Washington Monument's 1815 cornerstone and open the Monument's 1915 Centennial Time Capsule at the Walters Art Museum.

Since January 2014 the Monument, the first to honor George Washington in the United States, has been undergoing a \$5.5 million dollar restoration by the Conservancy.

During the course of restoration, not one, but two time capsules were discovered. Both were located during construction investigations by project superintendent George E. Wilk II of Lewis Contractors.

“The artifacts contained in the cornerstone are incredible finds and reveal much about what the Washington Monument represented to those who erected it 200 years ago,” said Lance Humphries, chair of the Conservancy's restoration committee. “We wait with great anticipation to open the 1915 Time Capsule to understand what the Monument meant to Baltimoreans a century ago.”

The Conservancy will celebrate on July 4, 2015, the bicentennial of the laying of the Washington Monument's cornerstone, and will re-dedicate the monument and open it once again to the public.

The 1915 Time Capsule

The 1915 Centennial Time Capsule was discovered in October 2014 behind a bronze plaque commemorating the Monument's Centennial. On October 29, 2014, the plaque was removed from the wall, and the time capsule carefully moved to the nearby Walters Art Museum for study and safekeeping. Since January it has been on display unopened at the museum.

The contents of the 1915 Time Capsule, a sealed copper box, are unknown. X-rays of the copper box taken by the Conservation Lab of the Walters suggest that the box contains various paper materials and coins, items mentioned in contemporary accounts, as well as other unidentified items.

Because the Monument has experienced extensive water infiltration over time, there were initial concerns the time capsule's contents might be in poor condition. However, when the copper box was finally fully revealed, it was discovered that it was soldered closed. X-rays lead conservators at the Walters to be hopeful that the items are in good condition.

Terry Drayman-Weisser, Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director of Conservation & Technical Research at the Walters, will extract the items, assisted by conservator Gregory Bailey.

The Monument's 1815 Cornerstone

The Monument's original cornerstone was found in February 2015. While the Monument's 1815 cornerstone ceremony is well documented, the location of the cornerstone was lost to time.

Brought to the surface on February 18, 2015, the cornerstone's outer lid was removed, revealing an inner lid carved with the names of the Monument's original stone cutters and masons. Beneath this were three glass jars stuffed with newspapers and wrapped bundles. Barely visible below the jars was a metal plate said in the original accounts to commemorate the day.

Since that time conservators from the Walters have removed the items from the well. Because of the fragile nature of the paper items, the jars were taken to the Maryland State Archives, where conservators from the Archives and the Walters carefully removed the items from the jars. Despite their age and original damp condition, the items are in remarkably good preservation.

The three jars appear to have been assembled by different individuals. Each tells a different story. All contained newspapers from Baltimore and elsewhere, and other items.

One of the large jars, sealed with a cork, appears to have been the official jar, as it contained the items mentioned in the period accounts, and some items not mentioned.

The items relating to Washington, including his likeness and a published copy of his Presidential farewell address were included in the first jar. Ten United States coins in copper, silver and gold, a "Joseph Sansom" medal of Washington, as well as a medal honoring the Duke of Wellington's successful military campaigns in the Spanish Peninsular Wars are included.

The second large jar contained a copy of the *Holy Bible* published in Baltimore by John Hagerty in 1812. Like a small volume in the first jar, it celebrates advances in local printing technology, being printed in miniscule “Diamond Type” developed at the Baltimore Type Foundry.

The smallest jar held examples of the *Federal Gazette* from July 5 and 6, 1815. The latter date includes a full account of the laying of the cornerstone. The presence of this jar was a complete surprise as the original accounts suggest that the cornerstone was laid and sealed on July 4. The event organizers, however, clearly returned and added these accounts to the cornerstone offerings.

Perhaps the most important item found in the well is a copy of the Declaration of Independence, reprinted in the *Federal Gazette* on July 3, 1815, the day before the cornerstone was laid. This paper was placed on top of the jars before the lid was sealed.

“While it is well known that the Monument is the first erected to George Washington, the selection of this item for such a prominent placement adds new meaning to the Monument, and increase its significance” states Lance Humphries, chair of the Conservancy’s restoration committee.

“American national independence was fresh in the minds of Baltimoreans of July 1815,” states Humphries. “They had just played a key role in re-securing that freedom during the Battle of Baltimore the previous fall.”

This new information suggests that to those who erected it, the Baltimore Washington Monument was not only a monument to Washington, but one of the first major monuments to American national independence.

An inventory of the contents is attached.

Items to Go on Exhibition

Selected items from both the 1815 Cornerstone and 1915 Time Capsule will go on display at the Maryland Historical Society beginning July 4th, 2015.

About the Monumental Bicentennial Celebration

On July 4, 2015, the bicentennial of the laying of its cornerstone, the Washington Monument will be re-dedicated and re-opened to the public. The Monumental Bicentennial Celebration, presented by **Bank of America** and the **Mount Vernon Place Conservancy**, will include a Naturalization Ceremony at 8:30 am, a formal ribbon cutting at 10:45 am, and an old-fashioned family-friendly county fair from 11:30 am to 5:00 pm. The country fair will include live music, hands-on activities, children’s crafts and colonial games, a petting zoo, and picnic fare including a whole pig roast! Admission is free.

For more information:

Conservancy website: <http://mvpconservancy.org/>

Monumental Bicentennial website: <http://monumentalbicentennial.org/>
Conservancy YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm7IiyJiHv-ddenwgYKDlrg>
Conservancy Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/mountvernonplace>

PHOTOS OF TIME CAPSULE CONTENTS

For photos of the cornerstone, time capsule and a video link about their discovery, see below. Each Dropbox folder also contains a list of captions for the photos and the Media Advisory and Press Release for the June 2, 2015 press conference.

Please credit all photographs: “Photo Courtesy of Mount Vernon Place Conservancy”

To View Photos of **1815 Cornerstone Contents**

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/f5m8ojc98n28a31/AAA_Wz7DWIc2cfKp9OIkb-ANa?dl=0

To view Photos of **1915 Time Capsule Contents** Revealed During Press Conference
To be published immediately following press conference

Click below to view Hi Resolution video footage of the discovery of both the cornerstone and time capsule.

Monument Minutes: Mysteries of the Monument

<https://vimeo.com/hartlove/review/123105155/ad251f6b08>