

Americanism by Erna Haring

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February 22 is George Washington's birthday. This is one of the oldest of America's civic holidays, predated only by the celebration of the Fourth of July, according to David Barton ¹. who wrote this article on George Washington.

Washington was so honored in his own generation that the celebration of his birthday began in 1796 ¹ while he was still President. Three years later, he passed away and perhaps the most famous line from any of the hundreds of eulogies delivered on that sad occasion was the one given by Virginia Governor and Revolutionary Officer Henry Lee. In it he declared that George Washington was "first in war, first in peace ², and first in the hearts of his country men"

Over his lengthy career, Washington faced many dangerous situations and participated in many military battles. On several occasions, it appeared unlikely that General Washington would survive the many hazardous situations. A What would have been the impact on America had Washington been killed in any of those incidents?

President Calvin Coolidge answered that question this way

Washington was the directing spirit, without which there would have been NO Independence, NO Union - NO Constitution ¹, and NO Republic. | We cannot yet estimate him | We can only indicate our reverence for him and thank the Divine Providence which kept him to serve and inspire his fellow man.

Washington knew that he had indeed played a critical role in America's formation ¹. but he also recognized that his momentous influence was not the result of his own skills, but rather the favor of God. As he humbly acknowledged, "I have only been an instrument in the hands of Providence. This following quote is from Washington's Farewell Address in 1796. "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports ⁵. In vain

would that man claim the tribute of patriotism 1, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human

happiness., Let it simply be asked - Where is the security for property, for reputation . for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert these oaths.

And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. As reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle *

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I might add that George Washington has been called the Father of this county. Who could ask for a better example of a founding father than this man. Happy Birthday, Mr. President.