

# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCHES INSPIRE

## THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

Lots of Northamptonshire families have junior members who emigrated to the New World in the 17th Century. Their American descendants visit often to trace their roots. George Washington, the first US President, was born into the Washington family who had migrated to America from Northamptonshire in 1656. George Washington's ancestor, Lawrence Washington, was Mayor of Northampton on several occasions and it was he who bought Sulgrave Manor from Henry VIII in 1539. It was George Washington's great-grandfather, John Washington, who emigrated in 1656 from Northamptonshire to Virginia. Before Washington's ancestors moved to Sulgrave, they lived in Warton, Lancashire.

The **Canons Ashby** Drydens and the **Sulgrave Manor** Washingtons both have burials in the respective parish churches. In St James, Sulgrave look out for the window with Washington heraldic arms, brass to Lawrence Washington and his wife, and The Washington Pew.



There are some more Washingtons buried along with the Spencer family line in the wonderful church of St Mary and St John in **Great Brington**. George Washington's great-great-great grandfather Lawrence is buried there. The nearby church of All Saints at Holdenby is beautiful and ancient, well worth a visit perhaps after lunch at the ever popular Althorp Coaching Inn. The Saracen's Head in Little Brington is also highly recommended and worth a detour.



Those with plenty of time can extend their trip to include a visit to **All Saints', Northampton**.

Lawrence Washington, born c.1500, was mayor of Northampton in 1532 and 1545 and is a direct descendent of the Washingtons of Virginia. He lived at Sulgrave Manor.



There are many entries in the registers of All Saints' relating to the family of a certain Daniel Washington in the reigns of James I and Charles I, but his exact relationship to the head of the family has never been quite clear.

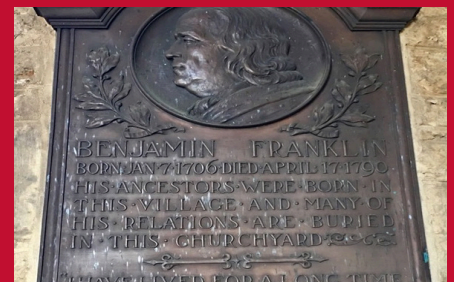
As to the New England pioneers, Thomas Dudley, deputy to John Winthrop, first governor of Massachusetts and afterwards his successor in that office, was once a parishioner of All Saints', his wife being the daughter of Edmund Yorke of Northampton. He was the son of Captain Roger Dudley (who served under King Henry of Navarre, and was killed at the battle of Ivry) and is supposed to have been born in or near Northampton.

Besides the Washingtons and the Dudleys, the names of many families of early Virginia and New England appear in the registers of All Saints'. Indeed, one of the early counties of Virginia was named Northampton, and one of the early towns of Massachusetts received a similar designation.

Other Northamptonshire churches with American connections include:

### Ecton, St Mary Magdalene

Benjamin Franklin's family came from Ecton, just outside Northampton. Beside the main door of the church are the graves of his aunt and uncle. Much visited by American tourists, many of whom place US dollars on the gravestones. Good food at The World's End pub on the main road.



### Easton Neston, St Mary

The walls here are covered with a variety of tablets: the Anglo-American ancestry of the family revealed in their inscriptions.





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## Grafton Underwood, St James

A late 13th and early 14th century gothic with interventions in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The main piece of stained glass from the 20th century is to be found in the south aisle; put up as a memorial to the American 384th Bombardment Group appropriately a large bomber aircraft crosses the window in Brian Thomas's design of 1977.



Half a mile or so from Grafton Underwood on the road to Geddington you will find an interesting USAAF Memorial recording the first and last raids in WW2. In Geddington itself, a lovely rural Northamptonshire village, the Star Inn is recommended.



## Polebrook, All Saints

With trefoiled panels and circular pedestal, the font here dates from the later part of the 13th century. The American Stars and Stripes fly in the north transept, where there are plaques on the wall commemorating the outstanding courage of Walter Truemper and Archie Mathies who were members of the 510th Squadron based at Polebrook airfield during World War Two.



## Spratton, St Andrew's

Amphyllis Twigden was baptised in the 13th century font in St Andrew's Parish Church in Spratton on 2nd February 1602. She married the Reverend Lawrence Washington who was born in Sulgrave Manor.

They were the great-great grandparents of George Washington.

In the centre of the nearby village of **Creaton** in Grooms Lane, are the foundations of the house where Amphyllis lived. Her two sons, John and Lawrence left England for America and arrived in Virginia in 1657.

They prospered and in 1674 Lieutenant Colonel John Washington acquired 5,000 acres of land that he named Mount Vernon. Later it became home to George and his wife Martha Washington. Enjoy wonderful food at the nearby Red Lion, East Haddon.



## Thrapston, St James

Discover the Arms of the Washington family, originally in Montague House in Chancery Lane nearby, reputed home of Sir John Washington. Several cafes in the town centre and an excellent fish and chip shop with seating.



## DISCOVER MORE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCHES TRAILS



SCULPTURE



STAINED GLASS



ORGANS

## IF YOU WANT TO BE INSPIRED, LOOK NO FURTHER.

