

THE MOUNT VERNON LADIES' ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNION  
MOUNT VERNON, VIRGINIA 22121  
(703) 780-2000

May 5, 1993

Mr. Eric Sakach  
The Humane Society  
of the United States  
5301 Madison Avenue, Suite 202  
Sacramento, CA 95841-7220

Dear Mr. Sakach:

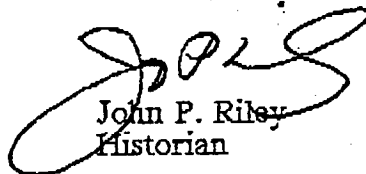
After searching the indices of the 39-volume The Writings of George Washington, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. and the Diaries of George Washington (Fitzpatrick, ed.), I have located just one reference to George Washington witnessing a cockfight.

As a 19-year-old young man in January 1752, he was in Yorktown where "A Great Main of [colcks fought . . . [be]tween Glouster and York for 5 pistoles each battle and 100 ye odd I left it with Colo. [John] Lewis before it was decided. . ." Whether Washington wagered on any of the fights we don't know.

I have seen another vague reference to Washington attending a cockfight but cannot lay my hands on it at the moment. As I recall, Washington is writing a gentleman and refers to seeing him at a recent cockfight.

By the numerous references in his diaries and letters to foxhunting, card playing and attending the theater, we know that these were some of Washington's favorite amusements. The two references to cockfighting in his voluminous writings and the absence of documentation or physical evidence of any cockpit at Mount Vernon leads me to believe that it was not an entertainment in which he participated in any great way.

Sincerely,



John P. Riley  
Historian