



**VIRTUAL
SWIM
ALONG
THE
POTOMAC**



grounds to prevent the southern general from returning after the war. His estate was later made a national cemetery and his hilltop home still prominently stands overlooking the city across the river. Arlington County is also home to Arlington Ageless Masters.

6 Over your left shoulder, you glimpse the [Jefferson Memorial](#) peeking up above a pink cloud of hundreds of cherry trees in blossom along the river. But now your bucolic swim changes. Watch out for those patrol boats! With terrorism a concern, the Harbor Patrol on the river keeps a watchful eye on the bridges and on the [Pentagon](#), which is coming into view on your right. Roaring overhead are jets banking on their final approach to [Reagan Washington National Airport](#). Following the river, they are not allowed to fly directly over the White House or Washington. Cannons boom in the background in an attempt to frighten birds away from airport operations.



Jefferson Memorial

7 The water becomes murkier and the floating twigs and leaves give way to floating signs of development. The 10 mile long Anacostia River flows into the Potomac, carrying with it all the contaminants and debris associated with urban runoff. Instead of monuments and trees, the Naval Research Lab, hangars for White House helicopters, and the city's sewage treatment plant now pass by on the Washington side.

8 The Virginia side finds the Washington Sailing Marina, with its fleet of Sunfish filled with urbanites taking sailing lessons. They do not venture far into the river to bother your swim.



Alexandria

9 After swimming for nine miles, you come upon an old settlement with brick sidewalks, cobblestone streets, and quaint shops. This is [Old Town Alexandria](#), the second historic colonial seaport city you encounter on your swim. Its old homes and stores are still providing the services they did when George Washington shopped, ate, and partied there. It is also home to Alexandria Masters Swimming.



Jones Point Lighthouse

10 Above you is the congested Wilson Bridge, struggling to carry Interstate 95 traffic between Maine and Florida, as well as Virginia and Maryland. Construction cranes and barges abound, forcing you to swim detours around them. The bridge is being replaced by a new 12-lane span scheduled for completion years from now. Amidst all this stands the historic [Jones Point Lighthouse](#) that was constructed in 1856 to warn of the sand bars on the Potomac.

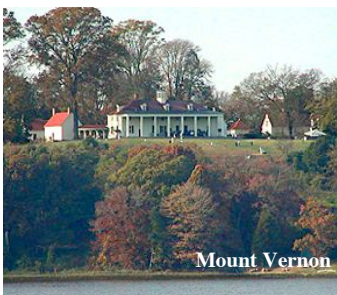
11 Trees and nature once again line both banks of the river, as it spreads to almost a mile in width. Heron and egrets replace bridge piers at the protected [Dyke Marsh](#) sanctuary in Virginia. Waterfowl are given this small refuge close to the larger areas set aside further downstream. Bird watchers mistake you for a sighting, and momentarily train their binoculars on you. To your left you spot what they came to see - the bald eagle pair that made the Maryland shore their home. [River Farm](#), the historic property of the American Horticulture Society headquarters with its gardens along the Potomac comes up at the 13 mile point.



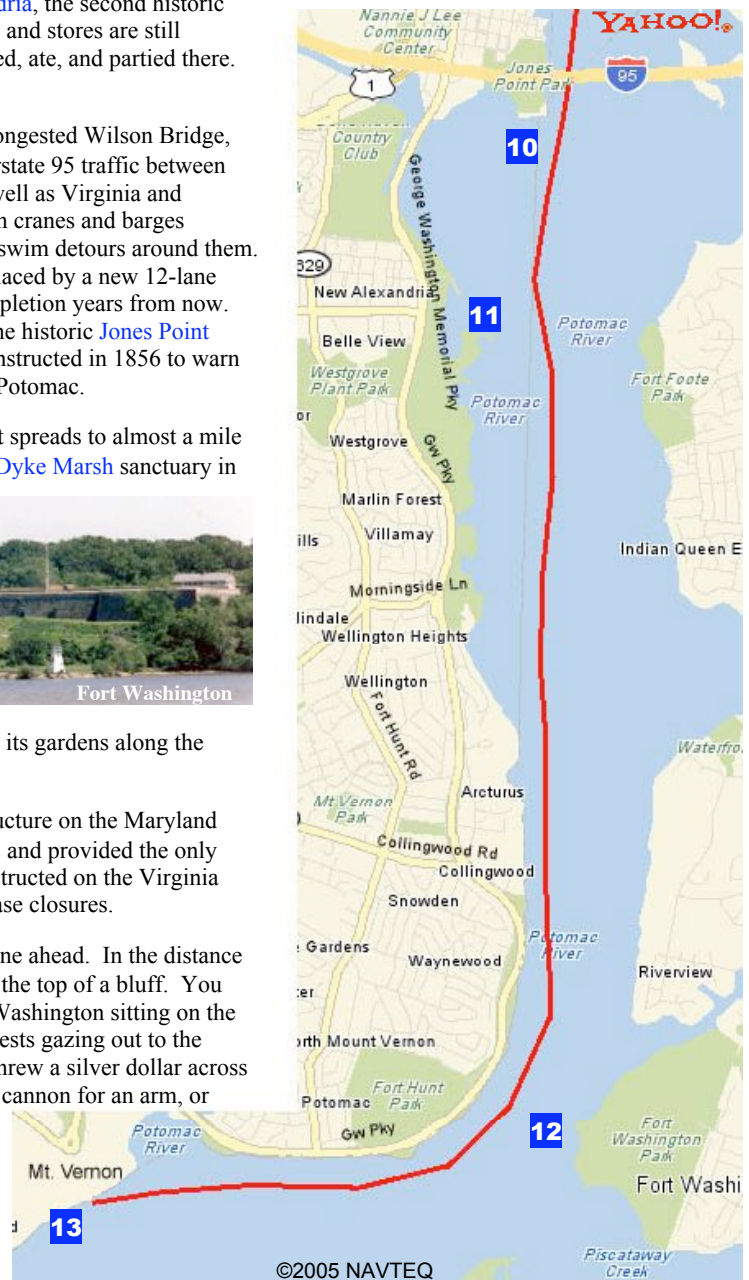
Fort Washington

12 Behind the sail of a passing vessel you spot a large stone structure on the Maryland hillside. [Fort Washington](#) was constructed after the War of 1812 and provided the only protection of our capital until the Civil War. [Fort Hunt](#) was constructed on the Virginia side about 100 years later in 1904, and became one of the first base closures.

13 The wide river now turns to the west as you spot the finish line ahead. In the distance stands George Washington's stately [Mount Vernon](#) plantation at the top of a bluff. You can almost picture General Washington sitting on the veranda with his frequent guests gazing out to the river. (It is not true that he threw a silver dollar across the Potomac unless he had a cannon for an arm, or liked throwing away a lot of money.) Congratulations. Your 19 mile journey along one of American's most famous waterways is now complete.



Mount Vernon



©2005 NAVTEQ

★REFERENCES★

Fletcher's Boathouse	http://www.fletchersboathouse.com/
C&O Canal	http://www.paulmcgeheear.com/pages/OldC&OCanalAtGeorgetown.htm
C&O Canal	http://www.nps.gov/choh/
Georgetown	http://www.georgetowndc.com/aboutgeorgetown.php
Thompson's Boathouse	http://www.thompsonboatcenter.com/pics.htm
Watergate	http://www.mustseewashingtondc.com/attractions/watergate-complex.html
Kennedy Center	http://www.kennedy-center.org/
Mount Vernon Trail	http://bikewashington.org/trails/vernon/vernon.htm
Iwo Jima Marine Corps War Memorial	http://www.nps.gov/gwmp/usmc.htm
Lincoln Memorial	http://www.nps.gov/linc/
Washington Monument	http://www.nps.gov/wamo/home.htm
Arlington Memorial Bridge	http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dc69.htm
Arlington National Cemetery	http://www.arlingtoncemetery.org/
Arlington	http://www.nps.gov/arho/
Jefferson Memorial	http://www.nps.gov/thje/
Pentagon	http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pentagon/facts.html
Washington Reagan National Airport	http://www.mwaa.com/national/history.htm
Old Town Alexandria	http://www.funside.com/visitor_timeline.asp
Jones Point Lighthouse	http://www.lighthousefriends.com/light.asp?ID=439
Dyke Marsh	http://www.fodm.org/
River Farm	http://www.ahs.org/river_farm/history.htm
Fort Washington	http://www.nps.gov/fowa/
Fort Hunt	http://www.nps.gov/gwmp/fohu/fohu-history.htm
Mount Vernon	http://www.mountvernon.org/

The Virtual Swim Along The Potomac was developed by Ray Novitske who swims with Alexandria Masters Swimming, and included assistance and support from Ann Svenson of DC Masters.