

## Visit Lancaster County and the Mary Ball Washington Museum & Library

### Mary Ball Washington Museum & Library GENERAL INFORMATION

The Mary Ball Washington Museum & Library, Inc. (MBWML) is a 501c3 non-profit history and historic preservation organization located on Route 3 in the heart of the Lancaster Courthouse Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Founded in 1958, its mission is to discover, collect, preserve, understand and interpret the history of Lancaster and surrounding counties through museum exhibits, genealogy library collections, research projects, publications, educational programs and community activities. The organization manages several historic buildings and a research library which are open to the public for a fee and holds a variety of special events and public programs for all ages.

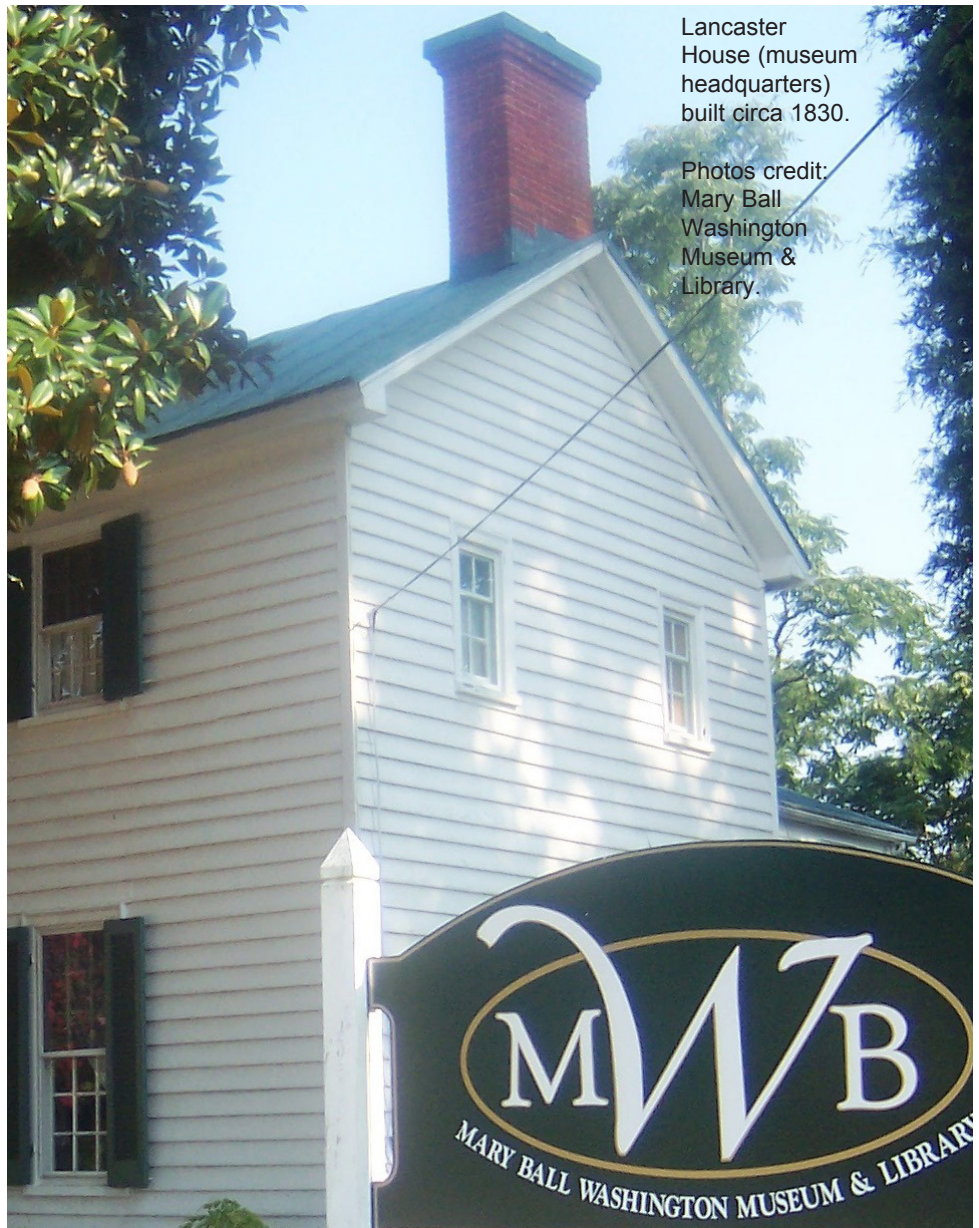
The organization is named in honor of Mary Ball Washington, one of Lancaster's most famous native daughters and mother of George Washington. Mary Ball was born a few miles from Lancaster Court House near Lively on the Ball family property later known as Epping Forest Plantation.

The museum and library collections focus on the history of Lancaster and surrounding counties and are housed in the historic buildings of the old jail, clerk's office, Lancaster House and a separate Genealogy & History Research Library. MBWML has been receiving treasured gifts of antiques, historical artifacts and genealogy materials from community members for over 50 years now. Collections relate to many of our nation's great founding as well as to the ordinary people who shaped the fabric of our local communities and towns.

The Museum collections and archives include household goods, furniture, paintings, photographs, letters, papers, maps and other items that span some three centuries of history of the area. The Library contains published records of Lancaster County, the Northern Neck, the Tidewater area and other Virginia locales and nearby states. More than 8000 books, manuscripts and microfilm holdings include court and business records, census data, family histories, county histories, Virginia vital records, church records, family charts and research shared by other genealogists. Nearly all of Lancaster's court records back to its formation in 1651 still exist at the nearby courthouse and the Library should be the researcher's first stop to find indexes to these deeds, wills, order books and other county records. A searchable online card catalogue of the majority of the library's holding is available at [www.mbwml.org](http://www.mbwml.org).

MBWML's facilities and educational activities are open to the public, but the organization also offers a membership program with special benefits to annual donors from \$35 and up.

The museum is regularly open Wednesday – Friday 10 – 4 and occasional Saturdays. Admission is \$3 and includes a self-guided tour brochure. The library is regularly open Tuesday – Friday 10 – 4 and Saturday 11 – 3, with a \$5 daily use fee. Appointments are not required for individual visitors or researchers. However, as a volunteer organization, MBWML's schedule may be subject to occasional changes and visitors are encouraged to confirm the hours of operation before their planned visit, especially if driving long distances. Other museum and library hours may also be available by appointment. Group visits must be arranged in advance.



Lancaster House (museum headquarters) built circa 1830.

Photos credit: Mary Ball Washington Museum & Library.