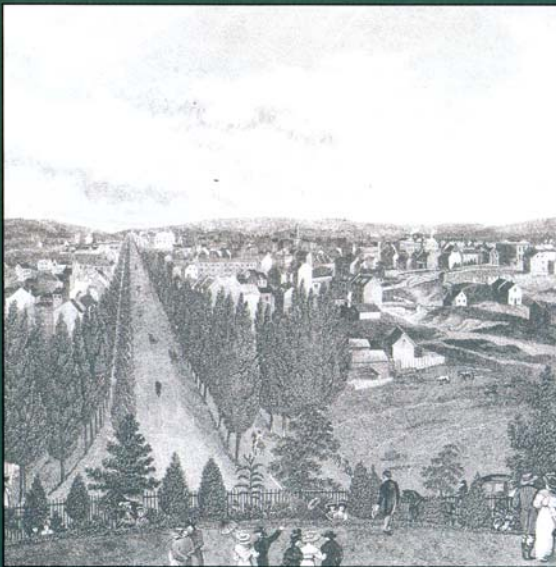


Artist's View of Early Washington, D.C.



Washington, D.C., like the United States itself, has a long history of growth and development. The beginning of the nation's capital goes back to the Revolutionary War and the birth of the world's leading democratic republic. Between 1776 and 1783, the American colonies fought and won their freedom from Great Britain. In 1790, one year after **George Washington** became the first president, Congress decided to build a new city along the Potomac River on land the states of Maryland and Virginia gave for the "Federal City." A French engineer, **Pierre L'Enfant**, designed the new city, which was soon named Washington in honor of the president.

During the past 200 years, the Capitol and the city have grown and seen many changes. Washington, D.C., was a small and uncomfortable place to live with a population of only 3,000 people in 1800. It expanded to 61,000 by the early 1860s during the Civil War. Today the city has a population of approximately 700,000 with more than 2 million people living in the metropolitan area that includes the surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia.

Washington, D.C. Today

