

Manners & Mores of Washington's America Background Information

It is highly doubtful that the list of “110 Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation” that George Washington hand-copied sometime before the age of sixteen -- and that is sometimes sold today as George Washington’s “etiquette book” -- actually comprises his own personal list of decorum rules. There is a good chance that the list was a school curriculum staple of a sort that would not have been uncommon in his day, and that copying it may well have been nothing more than a way of practicing penmanship. But whether it was his personal list or a standard “recipe” of general rules for civil behavior that many children learned, the Rules can provide a window into the ethics and manners of Washington’s times.

