

First Washington Monument in the U.S.



For hikers, the trail to the monument connects with the iconic Appalachian National Scenic Trail, offering both history and breathtaking views in one unforgettable destination.



Perched atop South Mountain, the Washington Monument holds a remarkable distinction: built in 1827, it is the nation's first monument dedicated to George Washington—predating the more widely known Washington Monument on the National Mall.

According to a local newspaper account, the celebration began at 7 a.m. on July 4, 1827, when most of Boonsboro's 500 residents gathered in the town square. Led by the Stars and Stripes and accompanied by the lively strains of a fife and drum corps, the procession marched two miles up the mountain to begin construction.

By noon, the community paused their work for a dedication ceremony and lunch. Construction resumed shortly after, and by 4 p.m., the monument stood 15 feet high atop a 54-foot circular base. The day concluded with a reading of the Declaration of Independence and a three-round salute fired by three Revolutionary War veterans. Workers returned that September to complete the project, bringing the monument to its full 30-foot height.

Over the years, the monument endured periods of disrepair and was rebuilt at least twice—most recently in 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Today, it is carefully maintained by the Maryland Park Service.

Visitors can also explore the monument museum, which showcases artifacts related to the monument's history and the nearby Battle of South Mountain. The museum is open weekends in April and October, and Thursday through Monday from May through September. It is closed during the winter months.