

**Nicolas Martiau** (French pronunciation: [nikola maʁtjo]; 1591–1657) was a Frenchman who immigrated to the English colony of [Virginia](#) in the 17th century. He was born on the western island of [Île de Ré](#).

The garden behind the [Ernest Cognacq Museum](#) in [Saint Martin de Ré](#) holds a monument with a statue of [George Washington](#), with the base of the monument featuring a medallion representing Martiau. The monument was inaugurated on October 11, 2007, by the ambassador of the United States to France. The relationship between the two men is described on the monument.

## Life<sup>[\[edit\]](#)</sup>

Nothing is known of Martiau's youth except that he had learned to read by studying the Gospels and [the Bible](#). At the same time he absorbed the doctrine of [John Calvin](#), and learned to speak English. It is likely that, because of the political and religious context of the time, he was forced into exile in England since his signature is found on a register and a Huguenot church. On January 11, 1619, he was naturalised English. He married Englishwoman Elizabeth Jane Page. Nicolas Martiau's will written March 1, 1656/7, proven April 24, 1657, names daughters Elizabeth Reade, Mary Scarsbrook, Sarah Fuller, his three sons-in-law and provided freedom for slaves Phill and Nicholas. He also left one "heifer" to his servant Hugh Roy.

On May 16, 1620, Nicolas Martiau, aged 29, left England on the Francis Bonaventure in August 1620 and arrived in [Jamestown](#) where he built the fence defense which allowed the city to be spared in a massacre by the Powhatan Confederacy in 1622.<sup>[\[1\]](#)</sup> The success of this action earned him the title of "master engineer fences".

Nicolas Martiau was married to Jane Berkeley. In 1646, he remarried Isabel (Isabella) Beech, widow of Robert Felgate and George Beech. He died in [Yorktown, Virginia](#), in 1657.

## Notable descendants<sup>[\[edit\]](#)</sup>

- [George Washington](#) (1732–1799) – General of the [American Revolutionary War](#), first American President; 3rd great-grandson <sup>[\[2\]](#)</sup>

- [Thomas Nelson Jr.](#) (1738–1789) – Brigadier General, Signer of the [Declaration of Independence](#), Governor of Virginia; 3rd great-grandson <sup>[3]</sup>
- [Meriwether Lewis](#) (1774–1809) – American explorer, Governor of [Louisiana Territory](#); 4th great-grandson <sup>[4]</sup>
- [George S. Patton](#) (1885-1945) – General of the United States Army during World War II; 8th and 9th great-grandson <sup>[5]</sup>
- [Queen Elizabeth II](#) – Queen of the United Kingdom; 10th great-granddaughter<sup>[6]</sup>

## References<sup>[edit]</sup>

1. <sup>^</sup> ["Drought: A Paleo Perspective -- Lost Colony and Jamestown Drought"](#). 2009-09-13. Archived from [the original](#) on 2009-09-13. Retrieved 2021-09-21.
  2. <sup>^</sup> WikiTree contributors, "George Washington (1732-1799)," and "Nicolas Martiau (1591-1657)," WikiTree, <https://www.wikitree.com/index.php?title=Special:Relationship&action=calculate&person1Name=Washington-11&person2Name=Martiau-2> (accessed 23 August 2022).
  3. <sup>^</sup> WikiTree contributors, "Thomas Nelson Jr. (1738-1789)," and "Nicolas Martiau (1591-1657)," WikiTree, <https://www.wikitree.com/index.php?title=Special:Relationship&action=calculate&person1Name=Nelson-963&person2Name=Martiau-2> (accessed 23 August 2022).
  4. <sup>^</sup> WikiTree contributors, "Meriweather Lewis (1774-1809)," and "Nicolas Martiau (1591-1657)," WikiTree, <https://www.wikitree.com/index.php?title=Special:Relationship&action=calculate&person1Name=Lewis-5102&person2Name=Martiau-2> (accessed 23 August 2022).
  5. <sup>^</sup> WikiTree contributors, "George S. Patton (1885-1945)," and "Nicolas Martiau (1591-1657)," WikiTree, <https://www.wikitree.com/index.php?title=Special:Relationship&action=calculate&person1Name=Patton-1782&person2Name=Martiau-2> (accessed 23 August 2022).
  6. <sup>^</sup> WikiTree contributors, "Queen Elizabeth II (1926-2022)," and "Nicolas Martiau (1591-1657)," WikiTree, <https://www.wikitree.com/index.php?title=Special:Relationship&action=calculate&person1Name=Windsor-1&person2Name=Martiau-2> (accessed 23 August 2022).
- [Ernest Cognacq Museum](#) exhibit and monument.
  - [Genealogy](#)
  - Nicolas Martiau, the adventurous Huguenot, the military engineer, and the earliest American ancestor of George Washington, by John Baer Stoudt (Norristown, Pa.: [The Norristown Press] 1932).