



## *SCHOOLGIRL ENGRAVER*

In the eighteenth century, school children often made needlework or watercolor projects memorializing an historical event. In 1818, Sarah Wood of Woodstock, Vermont, did such a project, but instead of using paint or needle and thread, she made a copper engraving entitled, "Sacred to the Memory of George Washington." It is unusual that she would have selected engraving as the medium for her school project.

If you look closely at her print, you will see that standard symbols for mourning are used: the willow tree, and the grieving angel. Certain symbols relating specifically to President Washington are also used. The clock, for instance, is set at the approximate time of his death.

Engraving is done by making small grooves or scratches into a metal or wood plate, with special tools called burins. Once the design is complete, ink is rubbed over the plate which is then wiped clean so that ink remains only in the scratched areas. It is then printed on damp paper while being run through a printing press. The pressure of the press pushes the damp paper into the grooves of the engraving.