

Civility in Hunkertown – Part 2 of 2
Robert Sachs, P.M.

President Washington’s “Rules of Civility” were what the young Washington copied from a book, entitled, *Youth’s Behavior, Or, Decencie in Conversation Among Men*, by Francis Hawkins, published in 1668. The original material for Hawkins’ book came from a 1595 French Jesuit text, entitled “Bienseance de la conversation entre les homes.”

Apropos for clergy and laymen, no doubt, as those who were literate at this time were of an upper class within society, this work was intended for young men of privilege. Thus, in civil society, it would have been presented to them by their parents, mentors, or teachers with the sole intent of helping their young men become pleasing, to advance, and be respected and influential. The chapter that grabbed young George’s attention was “The Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation.” The manuscript of rules that he copied down was simply entitled, “The Rules of Civility,” with his original being preserved at the Library of Congress.

We shall be going through many of these “Rules” as one of the main focus of the blogs.

1. “Every Action done in Company ought to be with Some Sign of Respect to those that are Present.”

Commentary: To accomplish such action requires that you know yourself and know the company you are in. If you practice some form of mindfulness discipline, then, being in a higher level of integrity within yourself, not only will that present an aire that is pleasing, but you will naturally be more attentive to the responses of those around you. At the same time, if the social or political dimensions of the encounter require a higher

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level of decorum and/or sensitivity to social or cultural nuances of those present, then it is good to have knowledge of these aspects and/or be informed accordingly.

In general, try not to let people feel left out, even if you are not talking to them specifically. We all know what it feels like when there is an insider feeling and we are on the outside.