



**KIDS  
DISCOVER**

# Washington

I'm the  
one-dollar  
man

**George's  
Christmas  
Cruise  
on the  
Delaware**

**Who's in  
George's  
Cabinet  
?**

**Why  
George  
Never  
Smiled**

# The First President

When George Washington died in 1799, General Henry Lee summed up his many achievements in just a few words. Washington, he said, was “first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.”

Most people remember Washington as the nation’s first president, but he was also an outstanding military leader. He led the nation to victory in the American Revolution, an eight-year fight for independence from Britain. Americans respected him for his boldness and bravery in combat and for his loyalty to his soldiers during very tough times.

Washington always tried to be honest and true to his word. He had a personal code of right and wrong. He also had a strong sense of duty to his country. Shy and modest, he never expected to be the nation’s first president, and he never sought the office. Yet, when the nation’s leaders convinced him that his country needed him, he agreed to serve. Luckily for us, as you will see, George Washington was the right person for the job.

► **WASHINGTON** appears on the dollar bill. By law, no living person should appear on U.S. currency and the person’s place in history must be well known.



► **WASHINGTON** was born on February 11, 1732, according to the Julian calendar, which was still in use in the first half of the 18th century. In 1752, the present Gregorian calendar was introduced, which moved all



dates forward by 11 days. As a result, Washington’s birthday was celebrated

on February 22. Today, however, we celebrate it on the third Monday in February.



▲ **THERE’S NO MISTAKING** this memorial to Washington in the nation’s capital. Over 555 feet tall, this towering marble slab

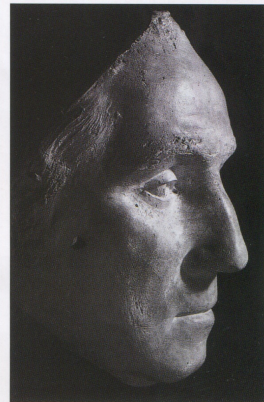
can be seen from many different parts of the city that is also named for the president. The Washington Monument

opened to the public in 1888. Today, festivals, concerts, and fireworks take place near the monument.

► **YOU PROBABLY** won’t find a painting of Washington with a big smile on his face. Here’s why. Washington wore a set of false teeth. They were made of ivory, metal, a cow’s tooth, and one of his own teeth. The teeth fit poorly and Washington tried to

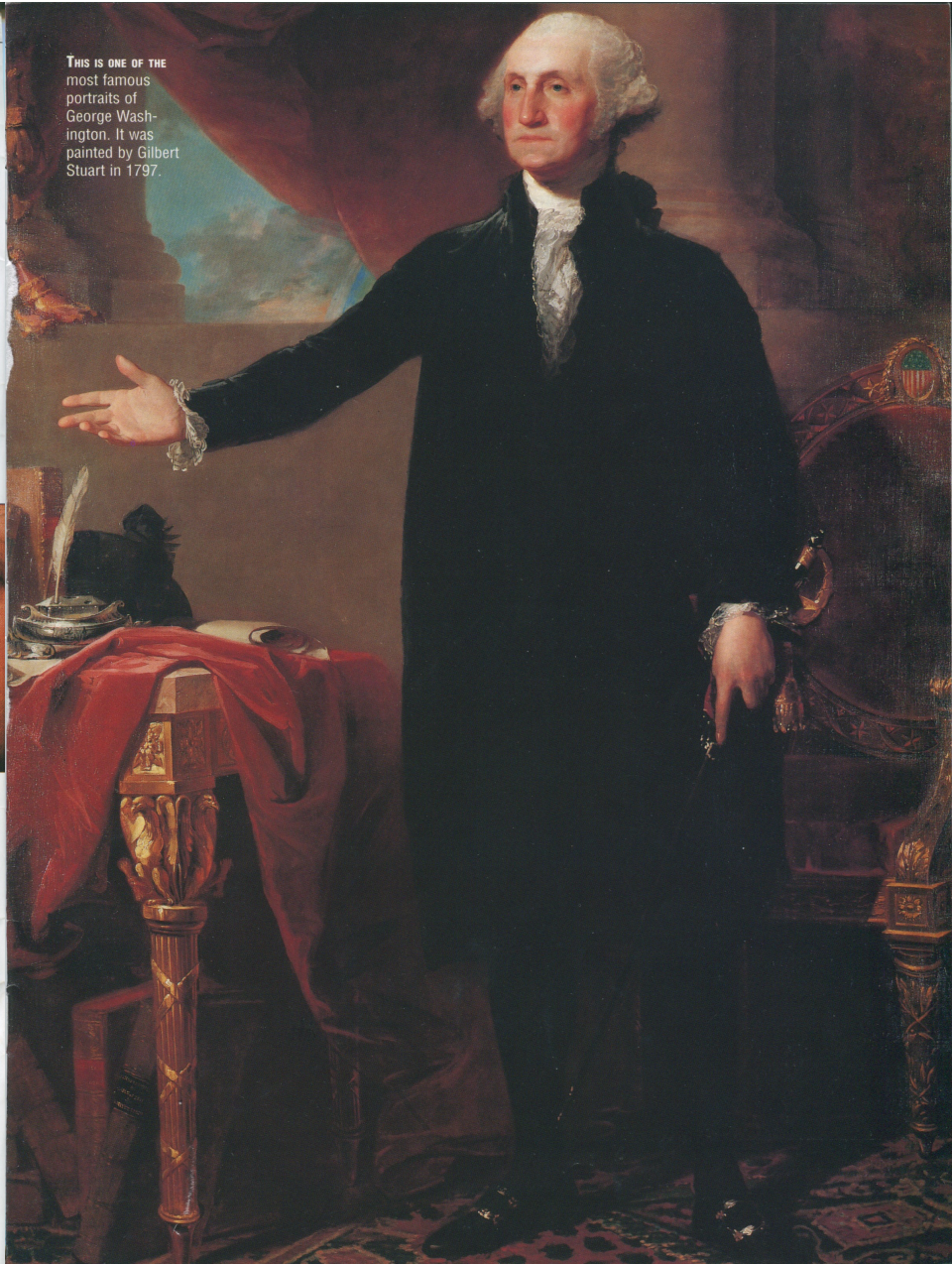


conceal them by keeping his mouth closed.



► **THIS MASK OF** Washington was made in 1785 by French sculptor Jean Antoine Houdon. It shows Washington as he really looked and may be the closest likeness we have to the actual man.

**THIS IS ONE OF THE** most famous portraits of George Washington. It was painted by Gilbert Stuart in 1797.



## The Growing-up Years

George Washington was born in 1732 at Bridges' Creek in Virginia. He was the oldest of five children of Augustine and Mary Ball Washington. He had a younger

▼ **GEORGE'S MOTHER,** Mary Ball Washington, lived to be 82, long enough to see her son elected president of the United States.



► **IN GEORGE'S DAY,** children practiced their handwriting by copying such things as these Rules of Civility, intended to teach children proper behavior. George wrote all 110 rules in his copybook.

### THINK PIECE!

What would be some Rules of Civility today?

► **GEORGE'S FORMAL** education began at around age seven and ended in his early teens. His studies included arithmetic, geography, astronomy, and surveying. Unlike some other colonies, Virginia had no public schools, so the children of the wealthy studied at home or went to England for schooling. George's father



had sent George's two older half brothers to school in England. But after Augustine's death, George's

sister and three younger brothers. Because Augustine had been married previously, George also had two older half brothers. When George was six, the family moved to Ferry Farm near Fredericksburg, Virginia. On the family farm,

formal studies ended.

► **HAVE YOU HEARD** that George Washington cut down a cherry tree and then confessed the dreadful act to his father? Well, it's probably not true. It was most likely made up by Mason Locke Weems for his book, *The Life and Memorable Actions of George Washington*, written in 1800, soon after Washington's death.

### Rules of Civility

*Every action done in company, ought to be with some sign of respect to those that are present.*

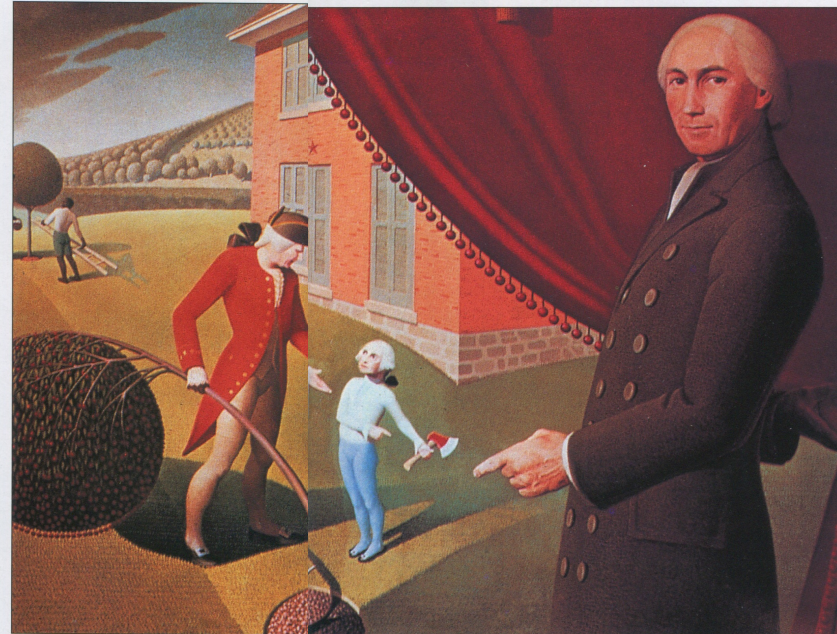
*In the presence of others sing not to yourself with a humming noise, or drum with your fingers or feet.*

*Cleanse not your teeth with the tablecloth.*

*Kill no vermin in the sight of others.*



▲ **LAWRENCE MARRIED** Anne Fairfax. She came from one of the richest and most powerful families in Vir-



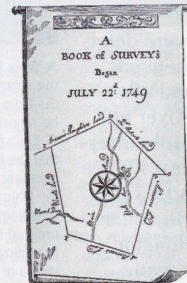
ginia. The connection with the Fairfax family helped George (above) find his first job, as a surveyor.

► **AT MOUNT** Vernon, George learned many new skills. He went to parties held by the Fairfax family, where he learned to dance, dress well, and practice good manners. He became an excellent horseback rider and polished his hunting and riding skills foxhunting with the first families of Virginia.

George learned to ride horseback and to fish and go boating on the nearby Rappahannock River. He often went across the river to explore the docks and wharves of Fredericksburg. When George was 11, his father died. With his father's death,

George became closer to his older half brother Lawrence. He went often to visit Lawrence on his farm called Mount Vernon, and at age 16 he went to live with him. At Mount Vernon, a new and different kind of life opened up for George.

▼ **GEORGE WILLIAM** Fairfax, a wealthy relative of Lawrence's wife, invited George to join a group going to the Virginia frontier to survey land belonging to the Fairfax family. George knew a little about surveying, or measuring land, from studying a few books and trying out the tools his father had left him.



▲ **THE 1748 TRIP** into the wilderness was exciting for 16-year-old George. The men rode on horseback for days, talked with the Native Americans they met, and slept in blankets out in the open. Not every part of the trip was fun, however. In his diary, Washington recorded a night he spent under a "thread Bear blanket with double its Weight of Vermin such as Lice, Fleas & c."



▲ **WHEN GEORGE** was 19, Lawrence (above) became ill with tuberculosis. George traveled with him to the West Indies, where he hoped to find a cure. However, Law-

rence got no better and returned to Virginia, where he died in the summer of 1752. His death was a terrible blow for George, who loved his brother dearly.



# A Military Career...

By the time Washington turned 21, two powerful nations, Britain and France, were about to go to war for control of North America. Both countries had settlers there. The British colonies along the Atlantic coast of North America were growing much more rapidly than the French ones farther inland. Many British colonists were eager to move west across the Appalachian Mountains and into the Ohio Valley, but the French were determined to keep them out. They claimed land all along the Ohio River and wanted to protect their territory. When at last France and Britain went to war over land in North America, George Washington's military career began.



▲ **IF FRANCE HELD** onto its land in the Ohio Valley, the British colonies could not expand west. If British settlers

moved into the Ohio Valley, what would stop them from going all the way to the Mississippi? The stage was set for war.



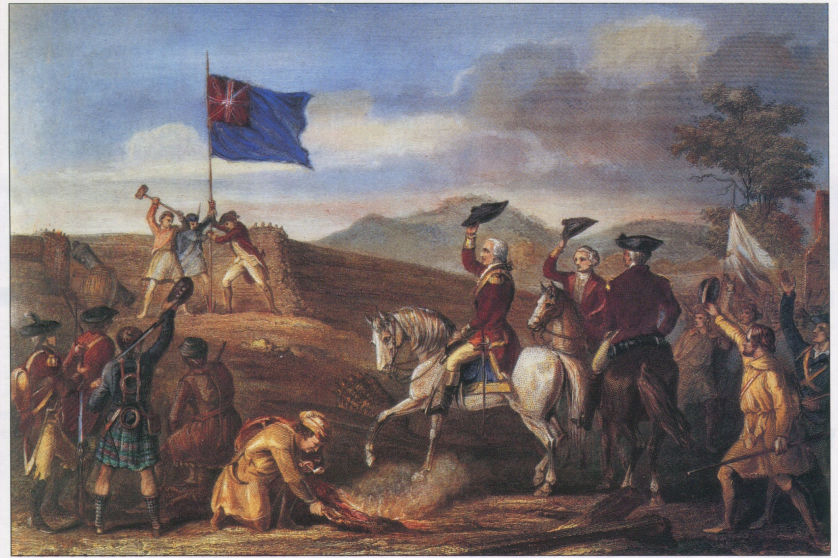
▲ **WHEN WASHINGTON** returned from the Ohio territory, he reported to the Virginia governor that the French were not leaving the Ohio Valley. Washington was ordered to return the following year with a group of

volunteer soldiers to build a small British fort on the Ohio River. On the way there, he learned that the French were already building Fort Duquesne nearby. The French and British clashed as Wash-

► **THE BRITISH FELT** that some areas claimed by the French belonged to them. In 1753, King George of England asked Virginia's British governor to send someone into Ohio territory to find out what the French were up to. Because of Washington's earlier experiences exploring the backcountry, the governor picked him for the job.



▲ **BY 1754, THE** British were at war with the French and their Indian allies for control of the Ohio Valley. The French and Indian War lasted until 1763. One of the early battles ended in disaster for the British. General Edward Braddock (above) led a large group of British soldiers into the Ohio Valley to seize Fort Duquesne. Washington went along as the general's aide.



◀ **GENERAL BRADDOCK** refused to let his troops use the hit-and-run tactics the French had learned from Native Americans. Instead, the general ordered his men to march in a straight line. They made easy targets for their enemies

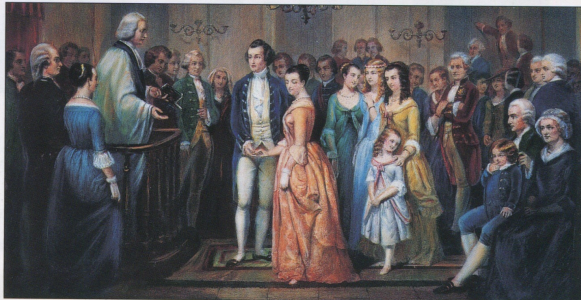
shooting from behind trees. Twelve miles from Fort Duquesne, the long column of redcoats was attacked by the French and their Indian allies. Almost 900 men, including General Braddock, died in the battle.

▲ **DESPITE THEIR** defeat, the British officers in Braddock's army spoke highly of Washington's courage and firmness in battle. He was building a reputation throughout the colonies as a capable military leader. Later in the war, Washington helped take Fort Duquesne from the French and helped raise the British flag there. The French and Indian War ended with a British victory. The French pulled out of all of North America.

# ...& Marriage

► **ON JANUARY 6,** 1759, George Washington married Martha Dandridge Custis, a young widow with two small children. Martha's first husband had been a wealthy Virginia planter. He left her a large

sum of money and 17,000 acres of land, along with many enslaved African Americans. With his own land and hers, Washington was now a wealthy man and a member of Virginia society.



◀ **GEORGE WAS OVER** six feet, three inches tall—quite tall for a man at that time. Martha was short, barely five feet. Martha would tug on the lapels of George's jacket when she wanted him to lean down and talk to her. George called Martha a "quiet wife" with a "quiet soul."

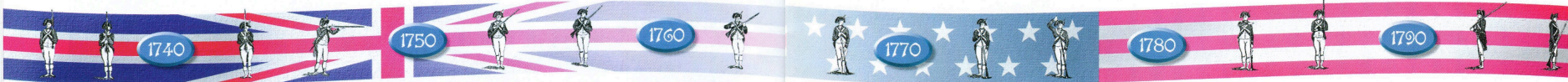
► **MARTHA AND** George never had any children of their own, but George adopted Jacky and Patsy, Martha's children from her first marriage.



# Washington's America

In 1732, George Washington was born in Virginia, one of 13 British colonies stretching along the Atlantic American

seacoast from Massachusetts to Georgia. Most people were farmers. Few people lived in cities. By the time Washington was 31 years old, in 1763, Britain had fought the French for and won control of North America to the Mississippi River.



1732

▶ **GEORGE WASHINGTON** is born in Virginia to Augustine and Mary Washington.



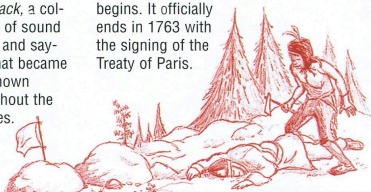
1754

◀ **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN** begins publishing *Poor Richard's Almanack*, a collection of sound advice and sayings that became well known throughout the colonies.

1755

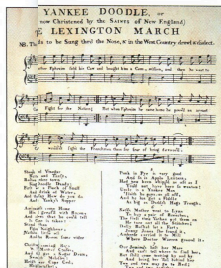
▶ **BRITAIN DECLARES** war on France, and the French and Indian War begins. It officially ends in 1763 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris.

Britain gains all French lands in North America.



1760

▶ **THE WORDS OF** the song "Yankee Doodle" are written by Dr. Richard Shuckburg, a British army surgeon, to mock the ragged American troops.



1765

◀ **ANGRY AMERICAN** colonists protest the Stamp Act, which requires all legal documents and many other items to carry a stamp that shows a tax has been paid.



1770



◀ **PATRICK HENRY** gives a fiery speech opposing the Stamp Act. The British government agrees to repeal it.

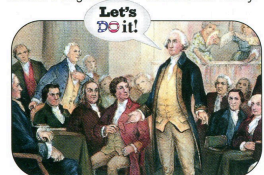
1774

◀ **THE FIRST CON**tinental Congress meets in Philadelphia. Delegates from all the colonies except Georgia attend. The Congress threatens a boycott of British goods, such as tea, if the British do not lift their restrictions on the colonies.

1775

▶ **THE AMERICAN** Revolution begins. The Second Continental Congress

elects George Washington commander of the Continental Army.



1776



◀ **THOMAS PAINE** writes *Common Sense*, a pamphlet urging Americans to declare "the free and independent states of America." On July 4, the Declaration of Independence is adopted.

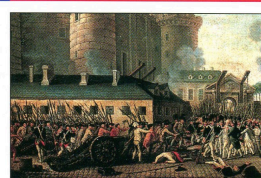
1781

▶ **BRITAIN'S LORD** Cornwallis surrenders to Washington at Yorktown. This brings an end to the war in the 13 colonies, but fighting continues elsewhere until a peace treaty is signed in 1783.



1787

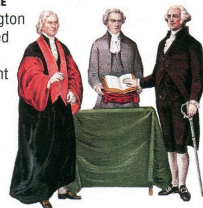
▶ **THE U.S. ISSUES** its first coin. On one side are 13 interlocking circles with the words, "We Are One." On the other side, it says, "Mind Your Business." The Constitution of the U.S. is drawn up in Philadelphia.



▶ **THE FRENCH REVOLU**tion begins with the storming

of a French prison called the Bastille.

▶ **GEORGE WASHINGTON** is elected first president of the United States.



1790

▶ **THE FIRST CENSUS** of the U.S. is taken, with 3,929,214 Americans counted.

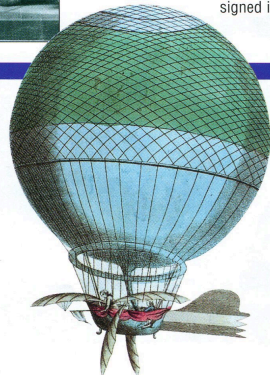


1791

▶ **THE BILL OF RIGHTS** is added to the Constitution. These ten amendments provide guarantees of such basic rights as freedom of speech and religion.

1792

▶ **IN PHILADELPHIA**, François Blanchard becomes the first person to successfully fly a hot-air balloon in the United States. He carries a note from President Washington, explaining that when he lands he should not be mistaken for a space alien.



1796

▶ **JOHN ADAMS** is elected the second president of the United States, having served as vice president under Washington. The Adams family becomes the first family to live in the White House, moving there in 1800, when the capital

moves from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C.



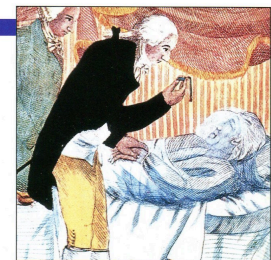
1797

▶ **WASHINGTON'S** Farewell Address is published, and he retires to Mount Vernon.

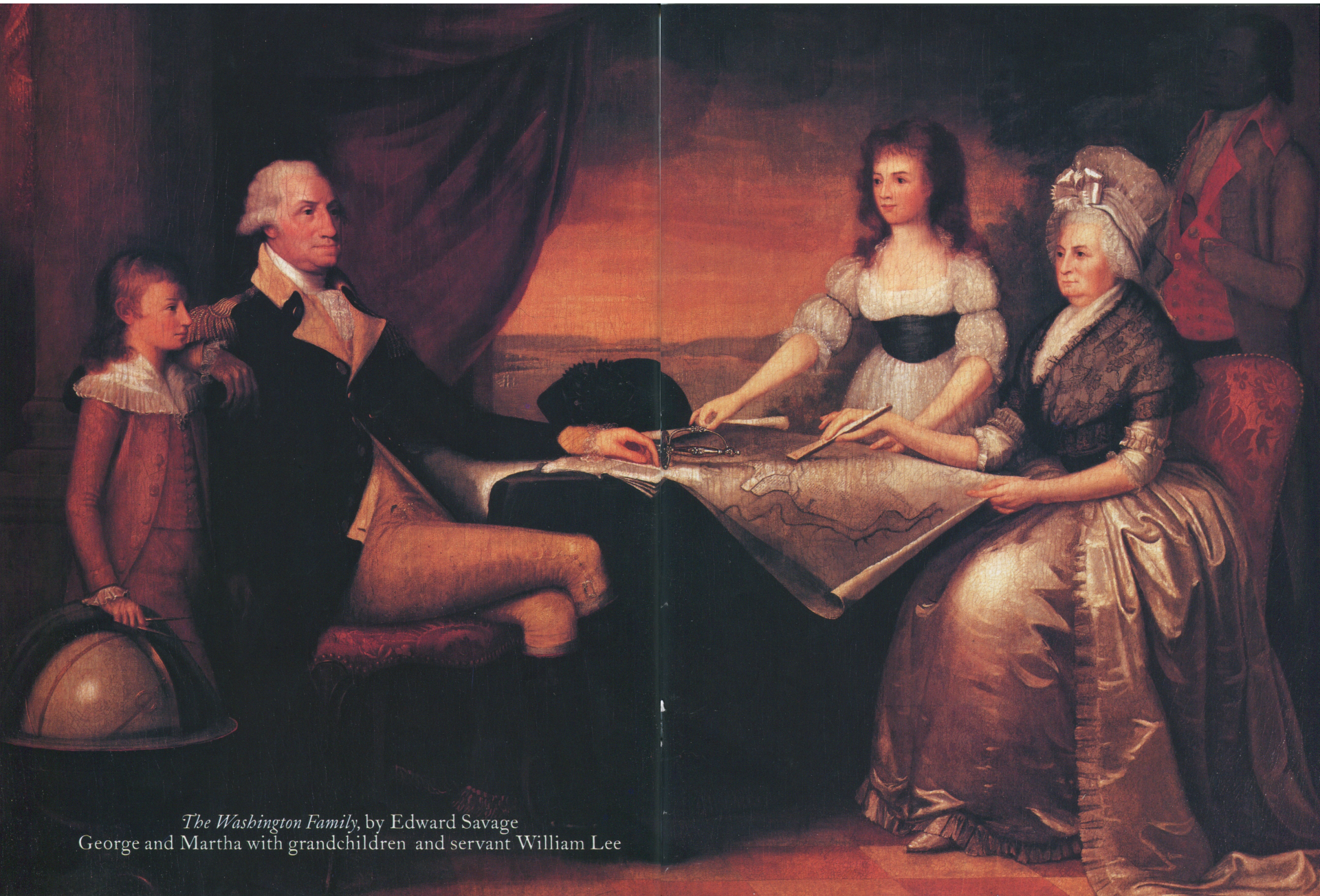


1799

▶ **GEORGE WASHINGTON** dies at Mount Vernon on December 14.



For more on George Washington, go to [pbs.org/georgewashington](http://pbs.org/georgewashington)



*The Washington Family*, by Edward Savage  
George and Martha with grandchildren and servant William Lee

# First in War: General Washington

After the French and Indian War ended, the British thought it only fair that the American colonies pay taxes to help support the British soldiers who were sent to the colonies to protect them. The British also expected the colonies to buy goods from Britain and to sell their own farm crops to Britain. Many colonists resented

both the taxes and Britain's economic policies. After all, the American colonies had no representatives in the British Parliament, where these decisions were made. By 1775, many colonists were calling for independence from Britain. When British soldiers and colonists exchanged shots at the battles of Lexington

and Concord, the American Revolution began. Soon after, in June 1775, America's leaders gathered in Philadelphia to prepare for war. They chose George Washington as commander-in-chief of the newly formed Continental Army. Modest as always, he warned, "I do not think myself equal to the command."



▼ WASHINGTON'S first job was to take his young, untried recruits and turn them into a well-trained military force. At first, he had prob-

lems even getting soldiers from the different colonies to work together. As Washington's men learned to respect him, they also began to follow orders and work together.

► THE WAR LASTED eight years. Some of the darkest days were at the beginning. By the end of 1776, even Washington was discouraged. His army had lost many battles to the British. "I am wearied to death," he said. "I think the game is pretty near up."



▼ IN SEPTEMBER 1776, fires destroyed one-fourth of New York City. The fires were reportedly set by patriots who wanted to slow the advance of British troops chasing the fleeing Continental Army. The British Army pushed the Amer-

icans out of New York across New Jersey and into Pennsylvania. Americans began to lose faith in the army.



▲ DESPERATE FOR A victory, Washington thought of a bold plan. On a snowy Christmas night in 1776, General Washington and his soldiers crossed the icy Delaware River from Pennsylvania into New Jersey and made a surprise attack on British forces

camped in Trenton. They captured more than nine hundred men. A few days later, another daring move led to a victory in nearby Princeton. These wins restored confidence in the army and showed Americans that the British could be beaten.

► AS THE WAR dragged on, Washington faced new problems. One of the worst times was the long, cold winter of 1777-78 that Washington and his men spent at their winter quarters in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. His soldiers rarely had enough food. Their clothes were so ragged that one officer described



► IN THE WINTER OF 1779, the Continental Army made camp in Morristown, New Jersey. Conditions were even worse than at Valley Forge. Terrible storms piled snow higher

them as the "naked regiments." Cold and hungry, some soldiers quit and went

home to their families, but others stayed because of their loyalty to Wash-

◀ IN 1778, FIGHTING shifted to the South. In 1781, the British headed north into Virginia and camped at Yorktown. French troops joined General Washington and his army



◀ BRITISH GENERAL Charles Cornwallis held out at Yorktown for three weeks before surrendering to Washington on October 17, 1781. British soldiers

in trapping the British there. This painting, made years after the war, shows General Washington with the French general Marquis de Lafayette at the Battle of Yorktown.

turned over their muskets to the Americans. During the ceremony, it is thought that the British army band played "The World Turned Upside Down."



# First in Peace: Mr. President

As the nation's first president, Washington had to figure out exactly what his job was. Americans had just fought a war to rid themselves of a king. They certainly didn't want another king. But what did they want? Americans decided to have a government by the people and for the people. No other nation at that time had such a government. Could Washington build a strong national government and unite the 13 states without the powers of a king?



▲ **AFTER THE AMERICAN** Revolution, Washington expected to return to Mount Vernon and lead a quiet life as a farmer. However, just a few years later, he went to Philadelphia as a delegate

to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and agreed to be its presiding officer. Washington's leadership there gave the nation confidence in the Constitution it produced.

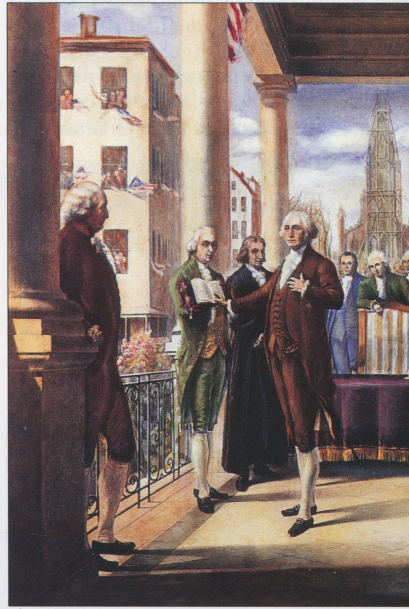
► **ON APRIL 14, 1789,** Secretary of the Congress Charles Thompson arrived at Mount Vernon to tell Washington he had been elected president. Washington reluctantly agreed, knowing it was his duty. One of the first decisions to be made was what to call the new president. Some suggested "His Highness" or "His Excellency." Lawmakers settled on "Mr. President."



▲ **WASHINGTON** worked hard to assert the power of the new government. In the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, farmers in western Pennsylvania refused

to pay a government tax on whiskey. The farmers shown above have tarred and feathered a tax collector. When thousands of farmers

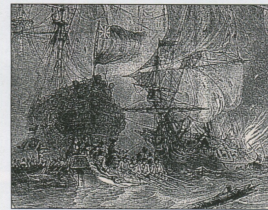
marched in protest, Washington called out 12,000 troops and led them part of the way himself. This show of strength ended the rebellion.



▼ **WHILE WASHINGTON** was president, lawmakers chose a site for a permanent capital city. Southerners wanted the capital

in the South. Northerners wanted it closer to them. Finally, lawmakers agreed to a site on the Potomac River,

just 12 miles from Mount Vernon. At the time it was called Federal City. Today we know it as Washington, D.C.



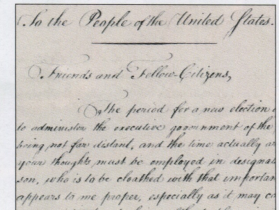
▲ **EVEN THOUGH HE** wanted to go home to Mount Vernon after four years as president, Washington agreed to stay on for a second term. During Washington's second term, war broke out between France and England.

Many Americans, including Thomas Jefferson, wanted the United States to favor France. After all, the French had helped the Americans win independence. But Washington worked to keep the young nation out of the conflict.



▼ **BY THE TIME** Washington's second term ended, he was no longer the popular hero he had been. The cause of the problem was politics. In the 1790s, political parties had just begun to develop. Two parties, each led by members of Washington's

original cabinet, sniped viciously at each other. Thomas Jefferson led the Republicans and Alexander Hamilton the Federalists. Because he sided with the Federalists on most issues, Washington was the target of ugly attacks by Republicans.



▲ **AFTER EIGHT** years as president, Washington stepped down. One of his last acts as president was to give the nation some advice. His Farewell Address, published in newspapers across the country, warned Amer-

icans to avoid political parties. He believed they would destroy the unity of the new nation. He also warned against becoming involved in Europe's affairs. He felt America should put all its energy into building its own government.

## WASHINGTON'S FIRST CABINET

► **DURING HIS** first term, Washington chose talented people to help him lead the nation. Under the new Constitution, Congress created the departments of war, state, and treasury. The three department heads and the Attorney General made up Washington's cabinet. Although the Constitution does not mention a cabinet, Washington regularly called his department heads together to advise him. Those who followed him as president have done the same.



**HENRY KNOX**, a trusted general during the Revolution, headed the Department of War.



**THOMAS JEFFERSON** headed the Department of State, which looked after the government's relations between the United States and other countries.



**ALEXANDER HAMILTON** ran the Treasury Department, which looked after the government's finances.



**EDMUND RANDOLPH** served as Attorney General, advising the government on legal matters.



# Home at Last: Mount Vernon

When George Washington stepped down as president, he returned to Mount Vernon. Although the estate had been Washington's home for 45 years, he had spent many years away from it. He and Martha were delighted to be back. "The General

and I," wrote Martha to a friend, "feel like children just released from school." Washington enjoyed farming, and he worked hard to get Mount Vernon running smoothly. By the end of his life, his eight thousand acres of land were divid-

## 1 GREENHOUSE

In the greenhouse, Washington liked to grow and experiment with unusual plants and trees. A slave who tended the fire to keep the greenhouse warm lived in the stove room.

## 2 SLAVE QUARTERS

Slaves at Mount Vernon slept, cooked, and ate in single-room wooden houses. They added to their food rations by planting gardens, raising chickens, fishing, and hunting.

## 3 SHOEMAKER'S SHOP

The shoemaker made shoes and boots and repaired such leather goods as harnesses and saddles.

## 4 BOTANICAL GARDEN

In this garden, Washington experimented with plantings. At first, tobacco was his main crop, but when the soil proved wrong and tobacco prices fell, he switched to wheat.

## 5 SALT HOUSE

The salt house stored salt for preserving and curing fish and meat. It also stored large barrels of salted fish, mostly shad and herring, caught in the Potomac River.

## 6 SPINNING ROOM

Here, 10 or more slaves sat at spinning wheels turning wool and flax into thread. Then weavers wove the thread into cloth for clothing or other goods.



## 7 MANSION

Washington rebuilt the 8-room farmhouse he

inherited from Lawrence into a 20-room mansion. Martha and George welcomed all guests and enjoyed entertaining with teas, barbecues and clambakes, as well as formal dinners.

## 10 SMOKEHOUSE

The smokehouse held hams, bacon, and pork sides as they aged. The meat was salted, smoked, or dried to preserve it.

## 8 KITCHEN

In the kitchen, slaves prepared daily meals under Martha's direction. George's favorite breakfast was three cornmeal cakes "swimming in honey and butter" plus three cups of tea without cream. Among his other favorite dishes were crab-meat soup, sweet potatoes with coconut, ham with oyster sauce, and string beans with mushrooms.



## 9 STOREHOUSE

The storehouse held clothing for slaves, tools, nails, and goods Washington bought in Britain and other parts of the United States.



## 11 WASHHOUSE

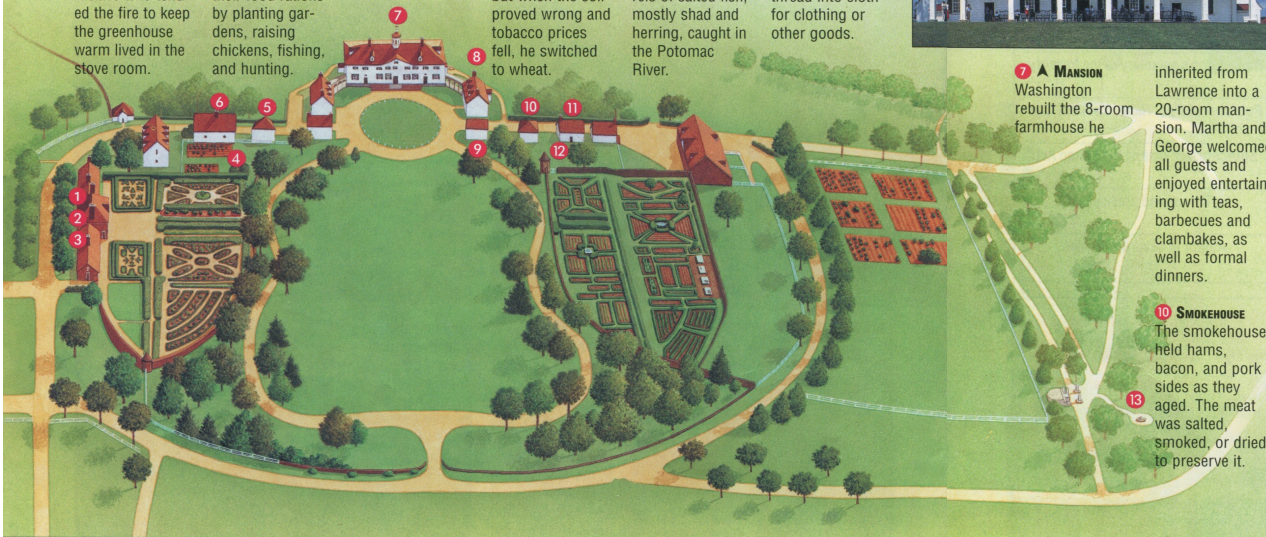
The slaves who worked here had a heavy workload. Six days a week, they washed, dried, and ironed not only the family's clothes but those of the many guests who came to visit.



## 12 LAUNDRY YARD

This area was used for drying clothes and linens in the sun.

**13 SLAVE BURIAL GROUND** The slave burial ground and memorial is for Mount Vernon's slaves.



◀ **THE SUCCESS** of Mount Vernon depended on the hard work of its enslaved African Americans. By the time he died, Washington had

over three hundred slaves. They worked in various jobs as housekeepers, weavers, carpenters, brick-makers, cobblers, nurses, handy-men, and cooks. Many were also field hands.



◀ **WASHINGTON TOOK** a young slave, William Lee, to war with him. Lee was at Valley Forge and at the siege of Yorktown. When the war ended, many slaves found freedom in the Virginia legislature's law of 1783,

which freed all slaves who had contributed toward American independence. Unlike most other southern planters of his time, Washington grew to believe that slavery was wrong. He freed his slaves in his will.

▶ **At MOUNT VERNON**, Washington kept to the same routine as much as possible. He got up at dawn, shaved, and had his long hair combed and tied back with a ribbon. After breakfast at 7:00 a.m., he rode off on

horseback to inspect his farms. He returned to change for dinner, served promptly at 3:00 p.m. Tea was served at 6:00 p.m. and a light supper at 9:00 p.m. Unless visitors came, Washington liked to go to bed early.



TELESCOPE USED BY WASHINGTON AT MOUNT VERNON

ed into five farms. Each farm had its own overseers, workforce of slaves, livestock, tools, and buildings. After checking on his farms one snowy December morning in 1799, Washington came down with a cold and soon had a high fever. On December 14, at age 67, he died. Congress had built a special vault for

him under the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. But the vault remains empty to this day, because the nation's first president wanted to be buried at Mount Vernon. And so he was. Having worked long and faithfully for his country, George Washington at last rested as a private citizen.