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# The Road to the George Washington Presidency

★ *The 1st President* ★

★ *Certificate of Authenticity* ★



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★ *First Edition* ★

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George Washington in his boyhood leading other boys with swords lifted in mock charge.\*  
LC-USZ62-131806



Washington's Mount Vernon Estate.\* LC-USZ62-93527



Washington as a Farmer at Mt. Vernon.\* LC-USZC4-723

***“As the sword was the last resort for the preservation of our liberties, so it ought to be the first to be laid aside when***

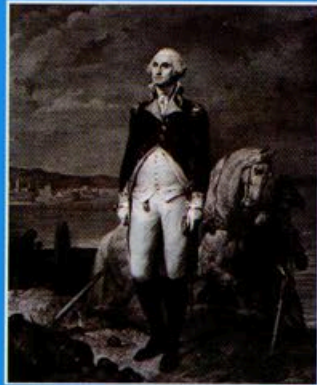
The First President of the United States, George Washington was born on February 11, 1731<sup>1</sup> to Mary Ball and Augustine Washington in Westmoreland County (later known as Wakefield), Virginia. Washington was the first child of Mary Ball and had nine siblings (six by his mother, Mary Ball and four by his father's first wife, Jane Butler). Washington's great-grandfather, John Washington Sr., established the Washington family in America when he immigrated to America from England in 1657 and accumulated more than 5,000 acres of land. Washington grew up in an aristocratic Virginian planter family who grew tobacco and prepared timber. Little is known about Washington's early years. His education likely included arithmetic, surveying, and geography, as his early careers indicate. Washington also briefed himself with civility, and transcribed at an early age, *Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation* in his copybook. Washington's father died when he was only 11 years old, leaving him to help his mother care for the plantation. Washington's half brother, Lawrence inherited an on

1. 1731 by the Old (Julian) Calendar, 1732 by the New (Gregorian) Calendar that Great Britain and the colonies adopted in 1752. September of that year; September was followed by September 14. At this time, New Years Day was also

estate he later named Mount Vernon, in honor of the admiral under whom he had served in the siege of Cartagena with Spain in 1740's, and Augustine received Wakefield. Ferry Farm went to Washington's mother, which would pass on to him after her death. Upon their father's death, Lawrence became a mentor to young Washington. After entertaining the idea of following Lawrence's example and joining the Royal Navy at the age of 16, Washington instead began a career as a surveyor in Shenandoah Valley, Virginia and received an official appointment as surveyor of Culpeper county, Virginia a year later in 1749. It has been recorded that Washington surveyed over 200 tracts of land between 1749 and 1799. At age 17, he produced a manuscript plan of Alexandria, Virginia—his first two of over 150 maps of his lifetime. With the savings from his earnings he made surveying, Washington made his first land purchase of 1,459 acres along Bull skin Creek in Frederick County, Virginia in 1752. That same year, Lawrence died of tuberculosis, and made Washington the executor and heir of his

(1 continued) moved from March 25 to January 1. Since then, historians have said Washington was born in 1732, and the celebration of his birth on February 22.

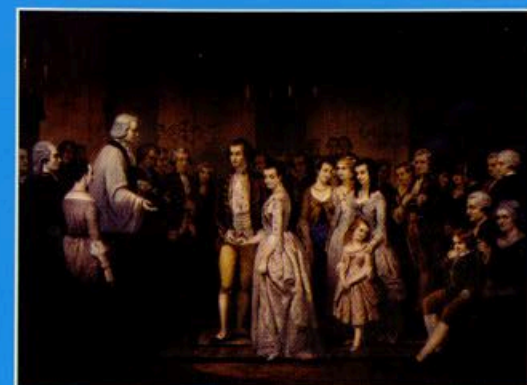




George Washington standing on bunker wearing military uniform.\*  
LC-USZ62-14094



Martha Washington at Mount Vernon.\*  
LC-USZ62-98589



Wedding of George Washington and Martha Custis on January 6, 1759.\* LC-USZ62-3914

*those liberties are firmly established.”-George Washington*

estate upon the death of his only daughter, if she bore no children—an event that occurred shortly thereafter. Thus, in 1752, at the age of 20, Washington became head of Mount Vernon, left surveying, and began a career in farming. Over time, Washington increased the estate to exceed 8,000 acres, and over the course of his life, he accumulated 52,194 acres in thirty-seven different locations.

By 1753, Washington had mastered surveying, map making, tobacco growing, raising stock, raising a farm. Washington also gained militia experience during this time, when both Britain and France strove to occupy the upper Ohio Valley. Washington was sent as colonel by Virginia's governor, Robert Dinwiddie to assert Britain's claim. Washington successfully carried the ultimatum, and continued his military service in 1754 as colonel in the French and Indian War, a war that lasted until 1763. After Washington's defeat at Fort Necessity in 1754, the British sent General Edward Braddock to Virginia, whom Washington volunteered to serve under as an aid in the expedition against the French.

\* Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division

During this time Washington, copied General Braddock's general orders into one of his letter books in pursuit of gaining military education. Washington gained fame during this time for his bravery under fire, and Governor Dinwiddie appointed him to command Virginia's troops under the rank of colonel. However, British officials directed the major war operations and Washington grew frustrated by his insubordination. Despite his rank in authority, Washington disputed with British officers on the best route for an advance to Fort Duquesne. Hence, Washington resigned by late 1758 due to his irritation about not rising in rank and the military's inadequate supplies and support from the colonial assembly and royal governor.

Upon leaving the militia and returning to Mount Vernon, Washington married Martha Dandridge Custis, a wealthy widow and mother of 2 children. Washington and Martha never shared children of their own, raising only her two children from a previous marriage. During 1759-1774, Washington managed his plantations, developed a fishery

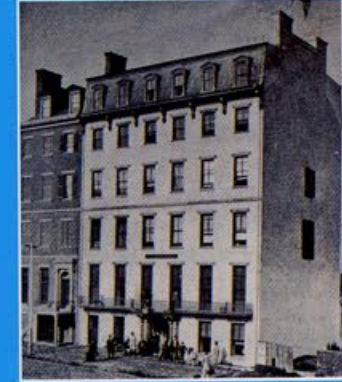




George Washington and his family.\* LC-USZ62-91986



George Washington full-length portrait as the first President of the United States.\* LC-USZ62-7585



Former mansion of George Washington, built and occupied by him in 1776. Remolded and opened as a hotel by N.J. Hillman in 1876, Washington, D.C.\* LC-USZ62-92287

the Potomac, operated a mill and sat in the Virginia House of Burgesses. During this time, tensions between America and Britain grew over British laws. Washington supported the protests against British policies and Virginia's non-importation movement, as he grew disgruntled by laws that required him to send his tobacco to Britain where it was sold for him by British merchants and in turn was required to purchase finished goods that he needed from Britain—his profits suffered and he made efforts to free himself from the bondage to British traders. Resentful towards British restrictions and importations, Washington decided to represent Virginia at the First and Second Continental Congress in 1774 and 1775 respectively. The Continental Congress sought to deem the British parliament's power over America unconstitutional, and consequently financed a war against Britain, established a foreign policy and sought to gain allies. With militia experience under his belt, Congress appointed Washington military advisor to New York in 1775, and weeks later Commander-in-Chief of the entire military to aid

2. Posthumously promoted "6-star" General of the Armies by Congress in 1976. Joint Resolution of Congress, Public Law 94-479, dated 11 October 1976 provided for the posthumous appointment of George Washington to the Grade of General

forces against the British in the American Revolution. Washington did not seek this position, nor did he ask for monetary reimbursement: "As, to pay, Sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it."

As Commander-in-Chief, Washington started and trained the build up of the first American army, and also recruited and trained the second American army that ultimately helped to defeat the British. Washington's early experience surveying and map making earned him the ability to make his own field sketches as he led his army during the Revolutionary War. Washington soon realized the need to incorporate a geographer to the Continental Army, and in 1777 appointed Robert Erskine as the first geographer. Washington's defeat of the British came on March 17, 1796 when his army pushed the British to evacuate Boston and again on October 17, 1777 when the British

(2 continued) of Armies of the United States, such appointment to take effect on July 4, 1976. This resolution stated, "It is considered fitting and proper that no officer of the United States Army should outrank Lieutenant General Washington."





George Washington presiding at the signing of the Constitution of the United States in Philadelphia on September 17, 1787\*LC-USA7-34630

surrendered at Saratoga, New York. With the British defeated in the North, they moved to overtake the South. However, by this time, France had become an ally to the United States giving Washington the support needed for ultimate victory against the British throne in March 1782; resulting in England giving independence to the United States.<sup>3</sup> Following the end of the war in 1783, Washington also served as peacemaker, persuading the disgruntled army officers to seek a peaceful resolution to Congress's failure to fulfill their pay. Washington appealed to Congress for resolution of the matter, and Congress granted the officers 5 years' full pay, ending the conflict. With the end of the battle, Washington voluntarily resigned as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army that same year.

The years following the war proved difficult for the confederate states. Debts rose in response to money shortages, and the production of more money to meet these debts created a depreciation to the loss of the creditors. This led to the Shay's Rebellion—an

3. The Declaration of Independence was formally adopted before the end of the war on July 4, 1776.

effort to overthrow the state government of Massachusetts. Washington and others believed the troubles stemmed from a weakness of the central government under the Articles of Confederation. Washington believed that they should revise the Confederation with a Constitution that would grant a stronger central government, protect creditors against state laws, grant the Union a uniform and non-depreciating currency, and grant it the ability to collect taxes to pay national debt and obtain revenues for current needs. To meet these needs, Washington helped to organize the Constitutional Convention that met in Philadelphia May 1787. As a delegate of Virginia, Washington presided over the Constitutional Convention as its president. Washington helped to persuade the legislatures to ratify the Constitution. The revisions also included a provision of a balanced government of three branches—executive, legislative, and judicial; and allowed the federal government to manage the common affairs of the union and the states to control their own state-related issues over property, business, schools, family relations, and nonfederal crimes. Calling for a president to preside over the federal government, Congress unanimously elected Washington the first president of the United States in New York City on April 30, 1789. George Washington served as the 1st President of the United States from April 30, 1789 to March 3, 1797.

Washington served two terms and did not seek a third term, establishing a two-term tradition that only broke twice by later Presidents, Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt.<sup>4</sup> Upon leaving office in 1797, Washington resumed his occupation in agriculture at his Mount Vernon Estate. After reluctantly accepting command of the army in 1798 to fight a war with France, Washington convinced President John Adams to end the quarrel with France and his retirement resumed for less than three years before dying on December 14, 1799 from a throat infection.

President George Washington was paramount in starting the foundation of our present government. His administration established a military system, court system, an executive department, and America's first financial policies.

4. The two-term limit is now established in the 22nd Amendment of the Constitution.



## The Presidential Election 1789



Washington state victories: 69 - 100%  
Territories

Electoral votes total: 69

Total: 69  
Not Voting: 12

## The Presidential Election 1792



Washington state victories: 132 - 100%  
Territories

Electoral votes total: 132

Total: 132  
Not Voting: 3

## George Washington: While in Office

**1789** Five executive departments created to form the president's cabinet • The Tariff Act & Tonnage Act; levied taxes for government support • Federal and Supreme court system established by the Judiciary Act of Sept. 24 • Signed first act concerning the administration of oaths • North Carolina became the 12th State admitted to the Union • Thanksgiving proclamation that set aside Thursday, November 26 as "a day of public Thanksgiving and Prayer" **1790** First national census conducted to determine taxation and congressional representation of states • Funding Act; made provisions for paying old debts of the Union and the states • Supreme Court held first session • Rhode Island became 13th state admitted to the Union **1791** The President's cabinet held its first meeting • Federal Capital established at a site along the Potomac River, later named Washington, D.C. • Excise Act that levied government taxes • National banking system established by the Bank Act • Patent Law; Gave inventors exclusive rights to their inventions for 14 years • Bill of Rights take effect • Vermont became the 14th state admitted to the Union **1792** Unanimously reelected president • Political parties began to develop: US-Federalist and Democratic-Republicans • Coinage Act established a national mint • New York Stock Exchange organized May 17 • Post Office established as a separate entity • Kentucky became the 15th state admitted to the Union **1793** War breaks out between Britain and France • U.S. issued a proclamation of neutrality<sup>1</sup> • French-American alliance on April 22 not upheld by Britain who disrespected wartime trade and seized American ships **1794** Jay's Treaty of November 19 • Indians defeated in the Battle of Fallen Timbers and they surrender Ohio Valley • Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania over excise tax on the manufacture of whiskey and federal troops are called to suppress the rebellion • Congress authorized the formation of the US Navy **1795** Jay Treaty ratified and British troops were required to withdraw from the U.S. • Treaty of Greenville—Indian tribes gave up most all their lands in Ohio, allowing the formation of a new state • Treaty of San Lorenzo—Spain granted a three-year privilege of using New Orleans as a port for shipment abroad • Pinckney's Treaty with Spain opened

<sup>1</sup> Urged all nations to be impartial to all nations in matters of war and not to send aid to either party.



navigation on Mississippi River • Washington posed for Stuart's portrait that now is on the one dollar bill • 11th Amendment ratified • Tennessee became the 16th state admitted to the Union **1796** British adhered to the Jay's Treaty and evacuated all 7 posts it held within America • Washington's administration ended March 3

## Key Establishments

- Preserved peace while in office
- Tradition of 2 presidential terms created
- Federal court system established by the Judiciary Act of September 24, 1789
- Appointed the first 10 justices of the Supreme Court
- Country's financial system established
- Indian threat east of the Mississippi eliminated
- Jay's Treaty and Pickney's Treaty enlarged U.S. territory
- Presidential authority to appoint and remove executive officers implemented

## George Washington: Personal Trivia

**Presidential Number:** 1 **Years President:** 1789-1797 **Age at Inauguration:** 57 **Terms:** 2 **Political Party:** Federalist **State Represented:** Virginia **First Lady:** Martha Dandridge Custis Washington **Vice President:** John Adams **Birthday:** February 11, 1731<sup>2</sup> **Birthplace:** Pope's Creek (Wakefield) Westmoreland County, Virginia **Birth Name:** George Washington **Nickname:** "Father of His Country," "First Farmer of the Land" **Parents:** Mary Ball and Augustine Washington **Education:** Attended school irregularly for 7 or 8 years (exact extent and method unknown) **Professions:** Planter; Surveyor; Farmer; Served in Virginia Militia; Commander in Chief of Continental Army; First President of the United States of America **Pre-Presidential Offices:** Member of Virginia House of Burgesses; Justice of Fairfax County; Delegate to First and Second Continental Congresses; President of the Constitutional Convention **Occupation after Presidency:**

Planter and General of the Army **Religion:** Episcopalian **Hobbies:** Sturgeon fishing, fox and duck hunting, horseback riding, racing, theatre, duck hunting, billiards and cards **Favorite Foods:** Ice cream and fish **Children:** Adopted two children from his wife's first marriage **Pets:** Horse named Nelson **Died:** Mount Vernon, Virginia, December 14, 1799

## Notable Facts

**First president** of the United States. **First president** to appear on a postage stamp. **Only president** elected unanimously.<sup>3</sup> **One of two presidents** who signed the U.S. Constitution. **First man** in American history to be a Lieutenant General.<sup>4</sup> **Only president** to die in the 1700s. **Only president** with an inauguration speech of only 183 words long, taking only 90 seconds to read at his second inaugural address. **First signer** of the Constitution. **First president** to issue a presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation on October 3, 1789.

## Interesting Facts

- Borrowed money to go to his presidential inauguration
- Had only one tooth and wore dentures made of human or animal teeth, ivory or lead
- Refused to wear a powdered wig, and instead powdered his red-brown hair
- Issued an order that forbade swearing throughout the Army
- Congress Appointed \$25,000 year for his salary as president
- No White House: the government did not provide a presidential mansion and Washington maintained his own household expenses
- Population of the United States was 3,929,214 when Washington was President
- 16 States were in the Union when Washington's presidential term ended
- John Jay selected as the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

<sup>2</sup> In 1752, Great Britain and American colonies switched calendars from Julian to Gregorian, which eliminated 11 days from September of that year: September was followed by September 14. At this time, New Years Day was also moved from March 25 to January 1. Since then, historians have said Washington was born in 1732, and the celebration of his birth on February 22.

<sup>3</sup> Not elected as a party candidate. Received all 69 of electoral votes cast.

<sup>4</sup> Posthumously promoted "6-star" General of the Armies by Congress in 1976. Resolution stated that "no officer of the United States should outrank Lieutenant General Washington."

## George Washington : The Time Line

1752

1732

Born on February 22nd to Mary Ball and Augustine Washington at Wakefield Farm, Westmoreland County, Virginia\*\*

1747

Copied the "Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation" in his copybook

1749

Received official appointment as surveyor of Culpeper county, Virginia  
Also surveyed in Frederick and Augusta counties  
Helped lay out Belhaven, (now Alexandria), Virginia

1751

Went to Barbados with half-brother Lawrence and returned with light scars from an attack of smallpox

1748

Began a career surveying Shenandoah Valley

1743

Father died at age 11, and he helped his mother with the plantation

\* Library of Congress Photographs and Prints Division

\*\*1732 by the Old (Julian) Calendar, 1732 by the New (Gregorian) Calendar that Great Britain and the colonies adopted in 1752.



Inherited rights to Mount Vernon plantation  
Left surveying and began farming Mount Vernon  
Made first land purchase of 1,459 acres

**1754**

Lead Virginia forces against French in the upper Ohio River Valley  
Built Fort Necessity at Great Meadows, Pennsylvania that he surrendered to the French after a brief battle  
Resigned commission as lieutenant

**1759**

Married widow M

**1755**

Reentered military service as an aide to General Edward Braddock  
Gained promotion to colonel of the reorganized Virginia colonial



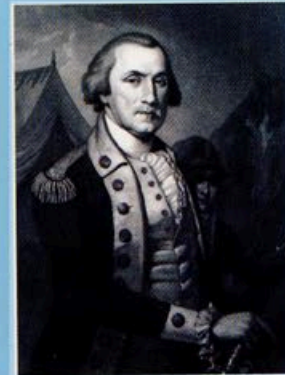
General Washington at Mt. Vernon\*  
LC-USZ62-99148

**1754-1763**

French and Indian War

**1753**

Lead Virginia expedition to challenge French claims to the Allegheny River Valley



George Washington in Uniform\*  
LC-USZ62-113388

**1759-17**

**1758**

Wrote Speaker of the House with complete  
Commanded 700 men to defeat the French  
Resigned his commission as Commander  
Elected to a term in the House of Burgesses



Martha Dandridge Custis on January 6th and assumed parental care of her children, Martha ("Patsy") and John Parke ("Jacky")

**1760**

Gradually increased Mount Vernon estate to exceed 8,000 acres

**1773**

Stepdaughter, Martha ("Patsy") Custis died of epilepsy

**1775**

Delegate to the Second Continental Congress  
American Revolutionary War began (the 13 colonies against Britain)  
At age 43, appointed military advisor for New York & Commander in Chief

**1774**

Quebec Act  
Delegate to the First Continental Congress

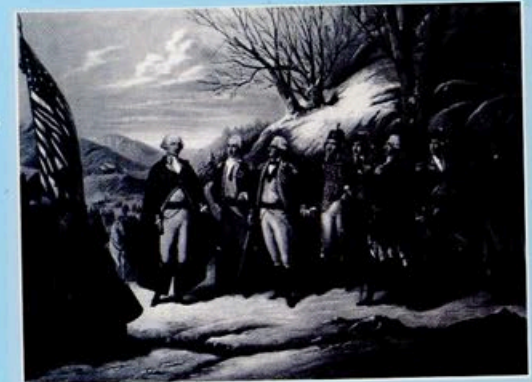
**1770**

Justice of the Peace of Fairfax County, Virginia

**1774**

Managed plantations and sat in the Virginia House of Burgesses  
Acquired more land near Mount Vernon and in the Ohio Valley  
Diversified agricultural production to include wheat and tobacco

Complaints of inadequate support for the colonial forces  
British captured Fort Duquesne  
Defeat of Virginia colonial forces  
British



General Washington standing with Johann DeKalb, Baron Von Steuben, Kazimierz Palaski, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Lafayette, John Muhlenberg and other officers during the Revolutionary War\* LC-USZ62-67559

**1775-1781**



1776

British evacuated Boston  
Townsend Revenue Act levied taxes on tea, paper, lead, glass, and painter's colors  
Declaration of Independence adopted July 4th

1778

Battle of Monmouth

1783

Revoluti  
Treaty o  
Returne

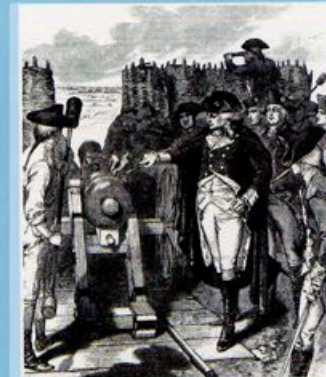
Britain)  
ander in Chief of the Continental American Army



Washington sheltered in a farm house (Military Service 1732-1799)\*  
LC-USZ62-112538



Washington at Battle of Monmouth 1778\* LC-USZ62-103570



George Washington firing the 1st gun  
at the British Works October. 9, 1781\*  
LC-USZ62-106664

1777

Created the office of Geographer to the Continental Army

1781

Won a climatic victory at the Battle of Yorktown, Vir

33

Commander of the Continental Army during the American Revolution

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French War ended  
Paris signed  
Treaty of Paris  
to Mount Vernon

1785

Hosted Mount Vernon Conference at his estate as a means to create a stronger central government

1789

Inaugurated in New York City on April 30th as the first President

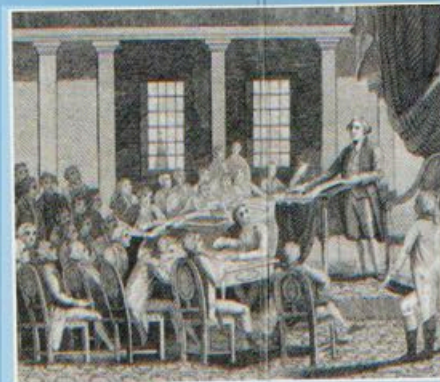
1790

Government moved from New York to

1793



"Evacuation Day" and Washington's triumphal entry in NYC  
November 25, 1783\* LC-USZC4-737



Convention at Philadelphia, 1787. LC-USZ62-92869

1787

President of Constitutional Convention that drafted the US Constitution

1789-1797

First President of the United States of America

1792

Elected President



## George Washington : The Time Line

Philadelphia

Superintended relocation of government from Philadelphia to the District of Columbia and laid the cornerstone of the Capitol on September 18th

**1797**

Second term of President was over and John Adams assumed the Presidency. Retired to Mount Vernon and spent time farming

**1800**

Arranged for the freedom of his slaves in his last will and testament after the death of Mrs. Washington. Will also executed his land accumulation of 52,194 acres to be sold or distributed in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, Kentucky and the Ohio Valley

**1799**

Successfully encouraged President John Adams to end quarrel with France and forgo war. Died at age 67 at his Mount Vernon estate on December 14th of a throat infection

**1798**

Agreed to command a projected army against France

**1794**

Raised an army of 15,000 to force the people of Pittsburgh to end Whiskey Rebellion (no fighting force was needed)

at for a second term