

George Washington

George Washington was born on February 22, 1732 in Westmoreland County, Virginia, although he grew up near Fredericksburg. In his childhood and adolescence, he studied math and surveying. When he was 16, he went to live with his brother Lawrence in Mount Vernon.

George was scarred with Smallpox before the age of 20, but inherited his brother's land (including Mt. Vernon) when he died in 1752.

Washington's military career began in 1753, when he was sent into Ohio country. In 1754, he battled the French and was forced to surrender Fort Necessity (near present—day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania). He continued as an officer in Ohio country, and served under the British general Edward Braddock when their army was ambushed by the French in 1755. Once again, Washington tasted defeat after their surrender of Fort Duquesne to French forces. Washington helped take Fort Duquesne back in 1758.

Washington was married to Martha Custis in 1759. Washington managed the family and estate until he took command of the Virginia troops just before the American Revolution. He was made commander of the Continental Army on June 15, 1775.

Washington proved himself an excellent leader, and won several decisive battles during the Revolution. As an advocate of a federal government, Washington became chairman of the Constitutional Convention and helped in getting the Constitution ratified. In 1789, he was inaugurated as America's first president.

Washington was re-elected in 1792, but refused a third term. On December 14, 1799, seventeen days before the new century, Washington died of acute laryngitis.