



# AMERICANS *Becoming* TODAY

NO. 1 FOR COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG



## Newsline

**May 10, 1775:** The Second Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia and unanimously votes to appoint George Washington general and commander in chief of the new Continental Army.

**June 17, 1775:** The Battle of Bunker Hill begins hostilities in Massachusetts.

**July 3, 1775:** George Washington takes command of the Continental Army: 17,000 men in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**June–July 1776:** A massive British war fleet of 30 battleships with 1,200 cannons, 30,000 soldiers, 10,000 sailors, and 300 supply ships under the command of Gen. William Howe and Adm. Lord Richard Howe arrives in New York Harbor.

**July 4, 1776:** The United States Declaration of Independence is issued.

**August 27–29, 1776:** Washington's army is severely defeated at the Battle of Long Island.

**December 25–26, 1776:** Washington crosses the Delaware River with 2,400 men and conducts a surprise raid on 1,000 Hessians, forcing them to surrender at Trenton, New Jersey.

**January 3, 1777:** Washington and his troops win a second victory at the Battle of Princeton.

**October 7, 1777:** The Americans win their first major victory of the Revolutionary War at the Battle of Saratoga. News of the battle and the British removal of troops from Boston boosts European support for the American cause.

**May 12, 1780:** The worst defeat of the Revolutionary War occurs as the British capture Charleston and its 5,400-man garrison (the entire southern American army).

**May 25, 1780:** After a severe winter, General Washington faces a serious threat of mutiny at his winter camp in Morristown, New Jersey.

**October 14, 1780:** Gen. Nathaniel Greene is named new commander of the southern army and begins a strategy of rallying support and wearing down the British by leading Cornwallis on a six-month chase in the South.

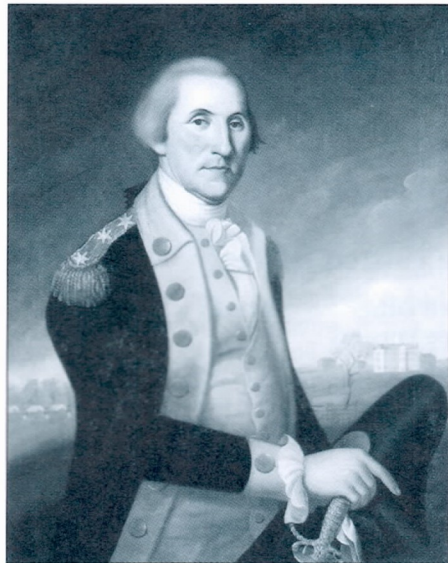
**June 10, 1781:** American troops under the Marquis de Lafayette and Baron von Steuben form a combined force in Virginia to oppose British forces under generals Benedict Arnold and Lord Cornwallis.

**August 14, 1781:** General Washington abandons an attack on New York in favor of Yorktown after learning that the French fleet is heading for the Chesapeake Bay. Washington then coordinates with General Rochambeau to rush their best troops to Virginia to destroy the British position at Yorktown.

**September 28, 1781:** General Washington, with a combined allied army of 17,000 men, begins the siege of Yorktown. French cannons bombard General Cornwallis and his 9,000 men day and night while the allied lines slowly advance and encircle them.

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## ELECTING A PRESIDENT



George Washington at Princeton, 1788–1789, Charles Willson Peale [1741–1827], The Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, Indiana



Inauguration of Washington at Federal Hall, 1789; Engraving by Amos Doolittle after Peter Lacour; Data: University of California, San Diego

### GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS April 30, 1789

George Washington took the first presidential oath of office of the United States on April 30, 1789, on the balcony of the Federal Hall's senate chamber on Wall Street in New York City. Washington had been elected president unanimously, while John Adams received the next highest number of votes and was elected vice president. Chancellor of New York Robert R. Livingston administered the oath of office. President Washington then gave his inaugural address before a joint session of Congress meeting inside the senate chamber.

#### Oath of Office

I solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. So help me God. (Note: Washington added this last sentence, "So help me God." See Constitution on page 3.)

#### ADDRESS

Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives  
Among the vicissitudes incident to life no event could have filled me with greater anxieties than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order, and received on the 14th day of the present month. On the one hand, I was summoned by my country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection, and, in my flattering hopes, with an immutable decision, as the asylum of my declining years. . . . On the other hand, the magnitude and difficulty of the trust to which the voice of my country called me . . . ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies. In this conflict of emotions all I dare aver is that it has been my faithful study to collect my duty from a just appreciation of every circumstance by which it might be affected. All I dare hope is that if, in executing this task, I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances, or by an affectionate sensibility to this transcendent proof of the confidence of my fellow-citizens, and have thence too little consulted my incapacity as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me, my error will be palliated by the motives which mislead me, and its consequences be judged by my country with some share of the partiality in which they originated.

Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit in

this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. . . . No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than those of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency; and in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of their united government the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities from which the event has resulted can not be compared with the means by which most governments have been established without some return of pious gratitude, along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seem to presage . . .

By the article establishing the executive department it is made the duty of the President "to recommend to your consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." The circumstances under which I now meet you will acquit me from entering into that subject further than to refer to the great constitutional charter under which you are assembled, and which, in defining your powers, designates the objects to which your attention is to be given. . . . In these honorable qualifications I behold the surest pledges that as on one side no local prejudices or attachments, no separate views nor party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye which ought to watch over this great assemblage of communities and interests, so, on another, that the foundation of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality, and the preeminence of free government be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the affections of its citizens and command the respect of the world. I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction which an ardent love for my country can inspire, since there is no truth more thoroughly established than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness; between duty and advantage; between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous

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### COMMON CONCERNS FOR VOTERS

1790 2008

International Tensions and Unrest

The Economy: Debt and Trade  
Securing the Future

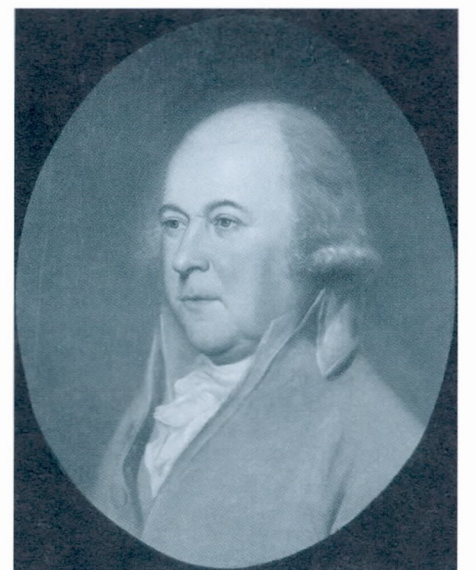
### THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION ARTICLE II

#### Section. 1.

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows:

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress; but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any Person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty-five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States.



John Adams: 1791–1794; Charles Willson Peale. 1741–1827; The Image Gallery, University of California, San Diego

In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the Same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by Law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation, or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or President shall be elected.

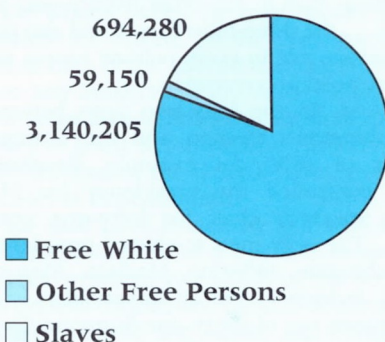
The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

[Continued on Page 3]

### UNITED STATES TODAY SNAPSHOT

#### 1790 Census of the United States



[Submitted by Kelly Govain]

## ELECTIONS

## “That They Might Have a Hand in the Governing of Themselves”

### History of Voting in Colonial America

Grant M. Hayden, Hofstra University law professor, wrote in the *Oxford Companion to American Law*:

The history of voting in the United States has not been characterized by a smooth and inexorable progress toward universal political participation. It has instead been much messier, littered with periods of both expansion and retraction of the franchise with respect to many groups of potential voters.

When the first English settlers landed at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, they brought with them English ideas of representative government, including a limited franchise. In 1619, Virginia's new governor, Sir George Yeardley, arrived in the colony with instructions from the London-based Virginia Company, the joint stock venture that had provided funds for the colonizing enterprise. These instructions included a call for a general assembly of representatives of the inhabitants. Yeardley's proclamation stated: “that they might have a hand in the governing of themselves, it was granted that a general assembly should be held yearly once, from each Plantation [settlement] freely to be elected by the inhabitants thereof.”

The election of the representatives, or burgesses, as they were called, took place at the end of June 1619 with the inhabitants of the various settlements making known their choices orally or “by show of hands.” “Inhabitants,” in this case, was taken to mean the entire population with the usual exceptions of women, children, and underage apprentices. On July 30, the newly chosen burgesses from 21 areas of settlement scattered along the shores of the James River met at Jamestown together with the governor and his council of advisors. This meeting was the first representative assembly to take place in English-speaking America and marked the rudimentary beginnings in the long evolutionary process of America's experiment with representative government, including who could and who could not vote.

For the next 170 years this experiment spread to all 13 colonies and was adapted and modified over time by the various colonial legislatures. The right to vote, though more widespread in America than Britain, was still—by 21st-century standards—narrowly focused. Only those who were independent could vote; in other words, only those who were not subject to the will of another man were entitled. People considered dependents, such as women, children, Indians, African Americans (free or enslaved), white men with no property, and non-Protestants were excluded from the voting process.

Generally, this meant that only free white males over 21 years of age who met certain property qualifications could participate. In Virginia, that property could be 100 acres of undeveloped land, 25 acres with a house and plantation, a house and part of a lot in a town, or £50 worth of visible property (cash or possessions). Delaware required voters to own 50 acres of land or £40 worth of visible property. In Connecticut, citizens had to own land worth a yearly rent of £2 or livestock valued at £40.

Most colonial elections involved selecting representatives for the lower houses of the legislatures. Connecticut and Rhode Island voters got to choose their governors, but in the other colonies the English king appointed the chief executives, who in turn appointed the local officials. Voting was usually oral, following English tradition, although Pennsylvania, Delaware, and North Carolina did use some form of ballot.

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Virginians continued to cast their votes in their county courthouses after the Revolution. Courthouse for James City County, Virginia

## THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

In order to appreciate the reasons for the electoral college, it is essential to understand its historical context and the problem that the founding fathers were trying to solve. They faced the difficult questions of how to elect a president in a nation that

- was composed of 13 large and small states jealous of each other's rights and powers and suspicious of any central national government;
- contained only 4,000,000 people spread up and down a thousand miles of Atlantic seaboard, barely connected by transportation or communication (national campaigns were impractical even if they had been thought desirable);
- believed, under the influence of such British political thinkers as Henry St. John Bolingbroke, that political parties were mischievous if not downright evil; and
- felt that gentlemen should not campaign for public office. (The saying was, “The office should seek the man, the man should not seek the office.”)

How to choose a president without political parties or national campaigns and without upsetting the carefully designed balance between the presidency and Congress on one hand and between the states and the federal government on the other?

The Constitutional Convention considered several possible methods of selecting a president. One idea was to have the Congress choose the president. A second idea was to have the state legislatures select the president. A third idea was to have the president elected by a direct popular vote. Finally, a so-called “Committee of Eleven” in the Constitutional Convention proposed an indirect election of the president through a college of electors.

In the first design of the electoral college (described in Article II, Section I, of the Constitution)

Each state was allocated a number of electors equal to the number of its U.S. senators (always two), plus the number of its U.S. Representatives (which may change each decade according to the size of each State's population as determined in the decennial census). This arrangement built upon an earlier compromise in the design of Congress and thus satisfied both large and small states.

The manner of choosing the Electors was left to the individual state legislatures, thereby pacifying states suspicious of a central national government. . . .

The electoral votes were sealed and transmitted from each of the states to the president of the senate, who would then open them before both houses of the Congress and read the results.

The person with the most electoral votes, provided that it was an absolute majority (at least one over half of the total), became president. Whoever obtained the next greatest number of electoral votes became vice

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## POPULATIONS

### 1790 Census of the United States

States	Free White	All Other Free Persons	Slaves	Total
Vermont	85,268	255	16	85,539
New Hampshire	141,097	630	158	141,885
Maine	96,002	538	none	96,540
Massachusetts	373,324	5,463	none	378,787
Rhode Island	64,470	3,407	948	68,825
Connecticut	32,674	2,808	2,764	237,946
New York	314,142	4,654	21,324	340,120
New Jersey	169,954	2,762	11,423	184,139
Pennsylvania	424,099	6,537	3,737	434,373
Delaware	46,310	3,899	8,887	59,094
Maryland	208,649	8,043	103,036	319,728
Virginia	442,117	12,866	292,627	747,610
Kentucky	61,133	114	12,430	73,677
North Carolina	288,204	4,975	100,572	393,751
South Carolina	140,178	1,801	107,094	249,073
Georgia	52,886	398	29,264	82,548
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>3,140,205</b>	<b>59,150</b>	<b>694,280</b>	<b>3,893,635</b>



The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution did not provide full citizenship for all adults. In Virginia, free white men who did not own the required amount of property could not vote until the 1830s. Black adult men did not have the right to vote until passage of the 14th Amendment in 1865. Adult women did not win the right to vote until 1920. And finally, in 1924, the Citizenship Act allowed Native Americans to vote in federal elections.

“Am I Not a Man and a Brother?”  
Wedgwood, England

\* Note that Native Americans were not counted, but it is estimated that there were likely more than 80 tribes with about 150,000 persons.

African Americans made up 19 percent of the population with 90 percent living in the South.

For white Americans, the average age in 1790 was under 16 years.

### Population of American Cities in 1790

Philadelphia	42,000
New York	33,000
Boston	18,000
Charleston	16,000
Baltimore	13,000
Williamsburg	Unknown

## The Three-Fifths Clause

In Article I, Section 2, of the Constitution of the United States, the three-fifths “representation” clause determined that each slave would count as three-fifths of a person when counted for representation in the House of Representatives in Congress.

“Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be en-

titled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.”

At the Constitutional Convention, a compromise granted slave states the advantage of being able to count each slave as three fifths of a person, thereby increasing the franchise of a slave master in proportion to the number of slaves he held in bondage. For example, a master voting with fifty slaves would actually be casting thirty-one votes, counting himself and his slaves. The slave, of course, had no vote. Not only did this clause empower the masters of slaves over nonslaveholders, but it increased the power of the slaveholding South in Congress. The South, in protecting slavery, had been struck a deal to insure that the southern slave states would indeed ratify the Constitution.

As Gary Wills argues in his book *Negro*

*President: Jefferson and the Slave Power*, “The slave states always had one-third more seats in Congress than their free population warranted—forty-seven instead of thirty-three in 1793, seventy-six instead of fifty-nine in 1812, and ninety-eight instead of seventy-three in 1833. . . . The deep South also imported more slaves from Africa in the twenty years from 1788 to 1808 (the year the international slave trade was legally banned) than in any other twenty-year period . . . the three-fifths rule would also play a decisive role in every political caucus and every political convention.”

And “In the sixty-two years between Washington's election and the Compromise of 1850, for example, slaveholders controlled the presidency for fifty, the Speaker's chair for forty-one years. . . . The only men re-elected president—Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson—were all slaveholders. . . . Eighteen out of thirty-one Supreme Court justices were slaveholders.”

[Submitted by Anne Willis]

## NEWS

## Washington's Farewell to His Troops

On December 23, 1783, in Annapolis, Maryland, George Washington made it possible for citizens of the new nation to freely elect its first president in 1788. On that cold December day, Washington entered the State House where the Congress was meeting and carefully read his prepared statement: "Having now finished the work assigned me . . . I retire from the great theater of action, and bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body . . . I here offer my commission and take my leave." Once again, Washington surrendered his military power and became a private citizen demonstrating that the new republic of 13 "free and independent states" should be governed by civilian authority.

In London, when King George III was informed that Washington had resigned and returned to private life, he replied, "If he does that, sir, he will be the greatest man in the world."

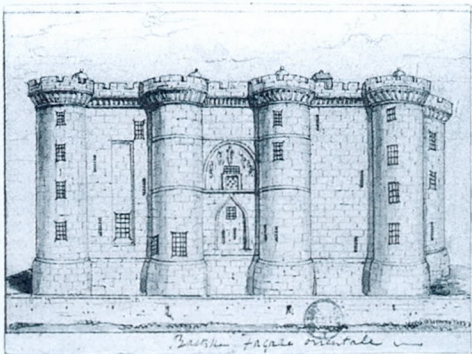
[Submitted by Anne Willis]

Washington and His Generals at Yorktown  
Painted ca. 1786  
Maryland Historical Society



## Europe in 1789

Russia's Catherine the Great was analyzing her options to dominate Europe after being defeated by the Turks in the Crimea, the threat of Prussia, and the invasion of Russia by the Swedes. Meanwhile, on July 14, 1789, a Parisian mob had already stormed the Bastille, and, on August 26 of that same year, they would pass the Declaration of the Rights of Man. A French nobleman argued that, "This dreadful America. Since it has been discovered, it has produced nothing but evil."



## The United States Constitution

## Section. 2.

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges

of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law; but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate, by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session.

## Section. 3.

He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall



Map of New York and New Jersey; drawn by Major Samuel Holland and with additions by Thomas Pownall, 1776. The Image Gallery The University of California, San Diego

## WASHINGTON'S JOURNEY TO NEW YORK

For eight days, as Washington had made his way from Mount Vernon to the temporary home of the federal government, New York, the fledging nation had been in the grip of celebration. It was a time suffused with hope and symbolism. He left the great brick estates of Virginia and moved north, passing by neat little villages with two-story white wooden houses and spired churches. His carriage crawled under triumphal arches in endless towns, to clanging bells and flower petals strewn in his path, as he moved off through blazing sunshine and rain-streaked skies, heading for Manhattan. At Elizabethtown, New Jersey, he was transported on a ceremonial barge towed by thirteen pilots, across the Hudson River to New York City, accompanied by leaping porpoises and booming cannons. Masses of cheering people

came out see the president-elect, ships ran up their colors, church bells pealed, and, when Washington landed at the foot of Wall Street and walked to his house on Cherry Street, tears ran down his cheeks—several times he was seen stopping to wipe his eyes. And that night, while thousands of candles were set aglow in windows all across the city, Washington surrendered himself to a noisy and packed reception, a state dinner given for him by the governor. Shortly thereafter, on a brilliant sunny day, April 30, Washington boarded an elaborate carriage to make the inaugural pilgrimage to Federal Hall, overlooking Wall Street.

Children waved, people cheered, and a band played. The papers screamed with news of the day's events. And from Broad Street to the Battery, from the waterfront to Golden Hill, ten thousand New Yorkers jammed the roadways, climbed trees, and hung out their windows to catch a glimpse of the fifty-seven-year-old Virginian, while on the Hudson River, ship captains held their breath in anticipation and flags snapped in the wind. Wagons ground to a halt underneath thickets of trees in the distance, and the thump and swish of feet could be heard all along Wall Street, as spectators elbowed themselves closer to the president-elect. Finally, the crowd caught sight of Washington himself in the presidential coach, richly appointed with velvet, tassels, and a handsome seat; a roar of applause sounded from the throng as he made his way to the appointed spot and just as quickly suspended as he stood, towering over the other men.

With Vice President John Adams standing beside him, and flanked by Federal Hall's neoclassical splendor and magnificent backdrop of gold stars on a blue background, the presidential party moved onto the splendid second-story balcony. As Washington rose, the crowd tipped forward to catch every word, they shook their heads in silent affirmation and listened with awe and glee. Washington slowly set his hand on the Bible. . . . The crowd burst into applause and broke into tears, and chanted back: "Long live George Washington, President of the United States!" From a ship in the Hudson River, an artillery salvo exploded in the wind, and over the voices and above the guns rose the sound of massed church bells. [After his inaugural address] Washington "marched up Broadway to St. Paul's chapel, where he solemnly knelt in prayer.

[Source: Jay Winik, *The Great Upheaval: America and the Birth of the Modern World, 1788–1800*, Harper Collins Publishers, 2007, pp. 150–152]

Continued from page 1

judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

## Section. 4.

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

## WOMEN

## Martha Follows George

With her ten-year-old granddaughter and eight-year-old grandson in tow, and George's nephew Robert Lewis escorting her, Martha Washington embarked on a grand procession to New York. In Baltimore, the fact that she was fêted with fireworks and serenaded by musicians was considered big news by several journals. In Pennsylvania, "we were met by the President of the state with the city troop of horse and conducted safe to Greays Ferry, where a number of ladies and gentlemen came to meet me," Martha wrote to Fanny. The entourage proceeded to Philadelphia, where church bells rang, cannons fired, and citizens cheered. In response, first lady Martha Washington delivered her maiden speech: "Standing in the carriage [she] thanked the troops who had escorted her and the citizens also." The traveling party stayed with Molly Morris, who, along with her two daughters, accompanied Martha to New York, newspaper reporters trailing the carriage. After stopping on the way for a visit with the Livingstons at Liberty Hall, the women met their husbands on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. George Washington and Robert Morris escorted their wives to New York on "the fine barge you have seen so much said of in the papers with the same oars men that that carried the P. to New York," Martha wrote home. She was "complimented" by a huge crowd chanting, "God bless Lady Washington." If Martha hadn't realized that she would be playing a very public role before that greeting, she certainly knew it after. But she didn't need lessons in political savvy—the wealthy Mrs. Washington arrived wearing a homespun gown.

The very next day, official visitors arrived to be "received" by Lady Washington. A schedule was soon set up for receptions at the Cherry Street house. Tuesday would be the day the president greeted gentlemen guests; on Fridays Mrs. Washington would entertain anyone who wanted to come by, as long as they were properly dressed. One visitor reported that the receptions "were numerously attended by all that was fashionable, elegant, and refined in society; but there were no places for intrusion of the rabble in crowds, or for the mere coarse and boisterous partisan—the vulgar electioneer—or the impudent place hunter." Just two days after she arrived in New York, Martha hosted the first official reception of the republic, part of a schedule so busy that she complained to Fanny, "I have not had one half hour to myself since the day of my arrival. My first care was to get the children to a good school which they are much pleased at." Think of her trying to figure out her new job while caring for several young children. And they weren't very well-behaved children. Of course, the president's wife's appearance was as important then as it is today: "My hair is set and dressed every day," she told her niece, and while she was first lady she ordered "a set of teeth . . . make them something bigger and thicker in front and a small matter longer."

[Source: Cokie Roberts, *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation*, Harper Collins, 2004, pp. 230–231]



Lady Washington

## FORUM



Letter from  
Margot Creveaux-Gevertz  
**History in the Making,  
Then and Now**

With the country engaged in an unprecedented presidential election this year, many of our summer guests will be energized and excited by the evolution that has taken place in America since the Revolutionary War. What a wonderful opportunity to explore the realization of “we the people,” and encourage discussion and reflection on the circumstances that prompted the choices made back in the 18th century and their immediate and future consequences in the context of today’s presidential race!

What can we say about the very first election, which set the stage for the debates and events of 2008? This issue of *Becoming Americans Today* takes a look at the election of George Washington in 1789 and includes answers to questions about who could run for the office of president, who had the right to vote, how the votes were counted, and the evolution of the electoral college. We also get a sense of the first inauguration as perceived by Washington and by the crowd gathered for the event that day at New York City’s Federal Hall.

Going forward in time, the fact that in 2008 both a woman and an African American were running for the presidential office adds new dimension to discussions about the evolution of the vote and who can become president. One way to highlight this might be to consider how Lady Washington felt about her new duties in 1789 (page 3) and wonder how Cindy McCain or Michelle Obama might feel, when one of them becomes first lady. Of course, the most notable and compelling comparison would be to compare the lives and political and emotional journeys of George Washington, John McCain, and Barack Obama, regardless of the outcome of the election this November.

One more comparison we might draw between the two historic elections is the uncertainty of the times in both instances. Perhaps our guests this summer will find reassurance in realizing that, whatever the outcome of the election in 2008 and the uncertainties of our own time, the institutions that enabled the first election have proven strong enough to hold us together and allow us to evolve as a nation of “we the people.”

Have a great summer!

## Newsline

- October 19, 1781:* As its band plays the tune “The World Turned Upside Down,” the British army marches out in formation and surrenders at Yorktown.
- September 3, 1783:* The Treaty of Paris is signed by the United States and Great Britain. Congress ratifies the treaty on January 14, 1784.
- November 2, 1783:* George Washington delivers his farewell address to his army.
- May 25, 1787:* The Constitutional Convention begins in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, with 55 of 73 delegates attending. George Washington is nominated as president of the Constitutional Convention.
- September 17, 1787:* Thirty-nine delegates vote to approve and then sign the final draft of the new Constitution.
- July 2, 1788:* Congress formally announces that the Constitution of the United States is now in effect, having been ratified by the required nine states.

## MADE IN AMERICA

## Our new President’s choice is American-made cloth!

And not just because it’s trendy, either. An April 10, 1789, letter from the president to General Knox thanks him for obtaining cloth and buttons for a dress suit. The great man comments: “The cloth and buttons which accompanied . . . really do credit to the manufactures of this Country.” It is rumored that the deep-brown broadcloth, shrunk and napped to resemble velvet, and the engraved buttons with their triumphant eagle decoration, were used for President Washington’s inaugural suit.

Eliza S. M. Quincy, eyewitness, notes that the president’s appearance on a balcony “was announced by universal shouts of joy and welcome. He was dressed in a suit of black velvet, and his appearance

was most dignified and solemn. Advancing to the front of the balcony, he laid his hand on his heart, and bowed several times, and then retreated to an arm-chair near the table.”

The joke’s on you, Ms. Quincy—no black velvet for our president, but good old American broadcloth!

## TREND WATCH

Softer hair (but still plenty of up-dos and ornamentation), big hats, and natural feminine curves fore and aft (replacing wide panniers) are the watchwords of 1789. Goodbye to getting stuck in doorways; hello, Lady Liberty!

[Submitted by Andrea Squires]



What’s hot

## The Inaugural Ball

After the inauguration a “resplendent inaugural ball was held.” Betsy Hamilton later described the great occasion: “I was at the inaugural ball . . . which was given early in May at the Assembly Rooms on Broadway, above Wall Street. It was attended by the President and Vice-President, the Cabinet officers, a majority of the members of Congress, the French and Spanish Ministers, and military and civil officers, with their wives and daughters. Mrs. Washington had not arrived in New York from Mount Vernon, and did not until three weeks later. On that occasion every woman who attended the ball was presented with a fan, prepared in Paris, with ivory frame and when open displayed a likeness of Washington in profile.”

[Source: Cokie Roberts, *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation*, Harper Collins, 2004, pp. 228–229]

## Elections

## Voting and the United States Constitution

During and after the Revolution, questions were debated about extending the franchise and altering property requirements in the new representative government. Benjamin Franklin thought the property requirement was ridiculous. He wrote

Today a man owns a jackass worth



What’s not

## Buzz on the Ball

Preparations were made by the managers of the City Assemblies for an Inauguration Ball, but as Mrs. Washington did not accompany the President to New York, the design was abandoned. A week after, however, on the evening of Thursday, the seventh of May, a very splendid ball was given at the Assembly Rooms . . . the President danced during the evening in the cotillion with Mrs. Peter Van Brugh Livingston and Mrs. Maxwell, and with the latter in a minuet.

*Editor: Sadly, Lady Washington could not attend.* National Archives, Letters of George Washington to Henry Knox Quincy, *Memoir of Life of Eliza S. M. Quincy*, 50–52. The Costumer’s Manifesto, Tara Maginnis, Ph.D.

George Washington’s Inauguration—The Ball  
<http://www.iment.com/maidalfamilytree/henry/history/inauguration/index.htm#ball>

50 dollars and is entitled to vote; but before the next election the jackass dies. The man in the meantime has become more experienced . . . and he is therefore better qualified to make a proper selection of rulers—but the jackass is dead and the man cannot vote. Now, gentlemen, pray inform me, in whom is the right of suffrage? In the man or in the jackass?

In contrast, another founding father and signer of the Declaration of Independence, John Adams, strongly believed the property requirement should be retained.

It is dangerous to open so fruitful a source of controversy and altercation as would be opened by attempting to alter the qualifications of voters; there will be no end to it. New claims will arise; women will demand the vote; lads from 12 to 21 will think their rights not enough attended to; and every man who has not a farthing, will demand an equal voice with any other.

When the Constitution was written in 1787, voting rights for the new republic were to be determined by the laws of each individual state. This meant that little changed regarding who had the franchise—property-owning, free, white males age 21 or older. There were exceptions. In 1790, New Jersey adopted a new election law that termed voters “he or she” and enfranchised women and African Americans both. This law remained

## POLITICS

Electoral College *Continued from page 2*

president, an office which they seem to have invented for the occasion since it had not been mentioned previously in the Constitutional Convention. In the event that no one obtained an absolute majority in the electoral college or in the event of a tie, the U.S. House of Representatives would choose the president from among the top five contenders. They would do this (as a further concession to the small states) by allowing each state to cast only one vote with an absolute majority of the states being required to elect a president. The vice presidency would go to whatever remaining contender had the greatest number of electoral votes.

## The Second Design

The first design of the electoral college lasted through only four presidential elections. In the meantime, political parties had emerged in the United States. The very people who had been condemning parties publicly had nevertheless been building them privately. The idea of political parties had also gained respectability through the persuasive writings of such political philosophers as Edmund Burke and James Madison.

One of the accidental results of the development of political parties was that, in the presidential election of 1800, the electors of the Democratic-Republican party gave Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr (both of that party) an equal number of electoral votes. The tie was resolved by the House of Representatives in Jefferson’s favor, but only after 36 tries and some serious political dealings, which were considered unseemly at the time.

Since this sort of bargaining over the presidency was the very thing the electoral college was supposed to prevent, the Congress and the states hastily adopted the 12th Amendment to the Constitution by September of 1804. The 12th Amendment requires that each elector cast one vote for president and a separate vote for vice president rather than casting two votes for president with the runner-up being made vice president. Since the 12th Amendment, there have been several federal and state statutory changes which have affected both the time and manner of choosing presidential electors, but which have not further altered the fundamental workings of the electoral college.

Adapted by William C. Kimberling, Deputy Director, FEC Office of Election Administration  
[Submitted by Kelly Govain]

*Continued from page 2*

in effect until 1807, when a disputed election resulted in the loss of the vote for women and African American men. Vermont became the first state to drop all property and tax-paying qualifications. By 1790, religious requirements had been completely eliminated.

## The United States in the 1790s: An Experiment in Representative Government

On February 4, 1789, presidential electors, chosen in each state as provided under the new Constitution, cast ballots, unanimously electing George Washington first president of the United States. John Adams was elected vice president. The first Congress convened in April, and Washington took the oath of office in the temporary capital of New York City on April 30. In his inaugural address, the new president spoke of the “experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.” America’s great experiment in representative government had begun.

In the 1790s, the strong hand of George Washington guided the ship of state through the perilous waters of the new republic—at times beset by insurrections and civil unrest. Historian Jay Winik writes, “During the administrations of Washington and Adams, America ‘survived tumultuous political splits, cries of sedition at home and meddling in its internal affairs by outside powers [Britain and France], and almost irresolvable divisions over its sister revolution in Paris.’”

[Submitted by Nancy Milton]

## UNITY

## The New Nation

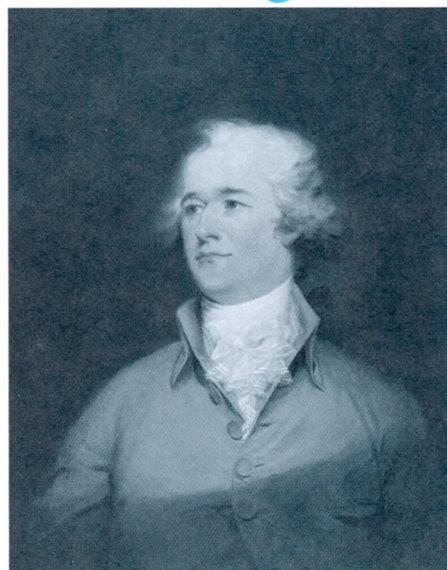
At first, the signs were promising. A slow process of healing had begun between the patriots and the Tories, and a number of loyalists who had not actively resisted the Revolution were able to return unmolested. Moreover, the United States had gained a vast new domain beyond the Appalachians; America became the undisputed mistress of an immense, rich, and sparsely settled territory. New roads branched out to the west and south. Straddling the landscape with hand-hewn homes and traveling by carriage or horse and buggy, Americans were increasingly everywhere, from the distant Pennsylvania Alleghenies to the mouth of the Mississippi, from the loamy banks of Nova Scotia to the arid plantations of the Carolinas. The country tentatively began an incipient national art; a thriving, rancorous press; and a devotion to education (including for women) and theater. Rejecting the sharply drawn class system of the European monarchies or the prerogative that had once only belonged to gentry, "Mr. and Mrs." came into vogue. Newspapers sprang up, as did almanacs, tracts, chapbooks, and periodicals. Great colleges were established. Major cities were also emerging and expanding: Boston and New York, Philadelphia and Annapolis, Trenton and Williamsburg, Albany and Lancaster, Raleigh and Columbia, and beyond. The country became a magnet for the hopes of immigrants and an inspiration for those who cherished freedom worldwide: England, France, Poland, Ireland, and even reformers in Russia. Increasingly sophisticated and wealthy Americans were filled with an extraordinary sense of optimism and a glowing sense of destiny. As the country experienced astonishing postwar growth and a heartbreaking vibrancy there was much to celebrate. . . .

The fragility of America as a Union from its very first days cannot be exaggerated. Unlike the Old World, America was not born out of ancient custom or claim, its people stitched together from the shadows of feudal, marauding bands, emerging as a nation by the time they could primitively write their own history. Where in most countries a sense of nationhood spontaneously arose over centuries, the product of generations of common kinship, common language, common myths, and a shared history, America was born as an artificial series of states, woven together with the threads of precariously negotiated compacts and agreements, charters, and covenants. The country did not arise naturally, as in Europe, Asia, or China, but was created out of the guns of a Revolutionary War, ink, and paper, crafted by lawyers and statesmen. Even the Declaration of Independence in 1776—the "birth certificate" of America—did not make it a nation. The very word "nation" was purposely dropped from the draft, and all references were made to separate states. Thus, the heading of the final version of the Declaration of Independence described the document as, "The unanimous resolution introduced in the Continental Congress on June 7, 1776, by Richard Henry Lee and seconded by John Adams, declared: 'That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States.'" As historian Daniel Boorstin noted, "Independence had not created one nation but thirteen."

[Jay Winik, *The Great Upheaval: America and The Birth of the Modern World*, Harper Collins Publisher, 2007]

## A Cook

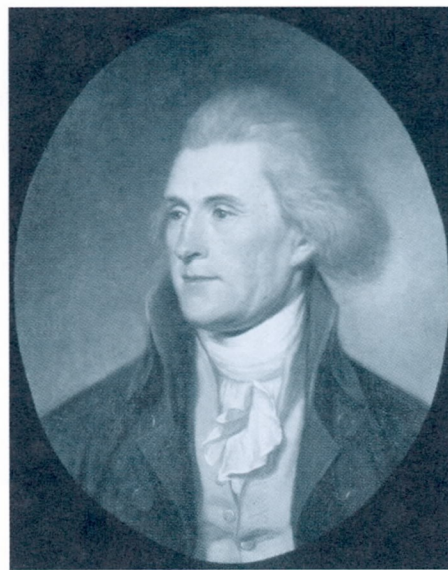
Is wanted for the family of the President of the United States. No one need apply who is not perfect in the business, and can bring indubitable testimonial of sobriety, honesty, and attention to the duties of the station.

All the President's Men:  
Washington's First Cabinet

Alexander Hamilton: 1792 by John Turnbull, 1756–1843, *The Carnegie Arts Collection of the United States*

In becoming the first president of the United States under the constitution of 1789, George Washington faced the monumental challenge of turning the theoretical government of a paper document into a functioning apparatus. His decisions in this regard would set the tone for the future of the country. Washington's own character and instincts never impacted the process more crucially than when he made his initial selection of men to fill hundreds of appointive federal offices, including his own cabinet. Washington deserves great credit for attracting the best candidates and putting them in the right positions.

Our first president's ability to bring together the greatest talents for the public good manifested itself in the appointments of political adversaries Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton to serve in the cabinet. Back from his stint as minister to France, Jefferson was a natural to become secretary of state. Though he would eventually lead the anti-Federalist "Republican" opposition party, Jefferson strongly endorsed the



Thomas Jefferson: 1791 by Charles Willson Peale, 1741–1827, *The Image Gallery University of California, San Diego*

election of Washington, who, he believed, would never allow the unstable fledgling country to veer toward monarchy. Washington's brilliant secretary of the treasury, Alexander Hamilton, overshadowed in historical memory by his fellow cabinet members, played an invaluable role in bringing the young nation to its economic feet. Hamilton helped stabilize currency, established international credit, and encouraged industry and commerce in the new nation.

Another Virginia statesman and lawyer, Edmund Randolph, served as the nation's first attorney general. Randolph had been Washington's aide-de-camp in the Revolution, a delegate to the Continental Congress, and governor of Virginia. Although he was Thomas Jefferson's second cousin, Randolph remained neutral in the feud between Jefferson and Hamilton. When Jefferson resigned as secretary of state in 1793, Randolph succeeded him.

The Continental Congress appointed Gen. Henry Knox, the Revolutionary hero who had managed Washington's crossing of



The Washington Family, 1798 by Edward Savage, 1761–1817, *Historical Society of Pennsylvania*



The United States of America laid down from the best Authorities Agreeable to the Peace of 1783

## CABINET

the Delaware, as secretary of war in 1785, and he continued in that office during five years of the Washington presidency. Under Washington, Knox oversaw the creation of a regular navy, developed Indian policy and a plan for a national militia, and built coastal fortifications.

As chief executive, Washington notably sought the advice of his cabinet members on all important issues and presided over their differences with respect and forbearance, carefully considering all sides before reaching a decision.

## Washington's Cabinet

Secretary of State

Thomas Jefferson (1789–1793)  
Edmund Randolph (1794–1795)  
Timothy Pickering (1795–1797)

Secretary of the Treasury

Alexander Hamilton (1789–1795)  
Oliver Wolcott Jr. (1795–1797)

Secretary of War

Henry Knox (1789–1794)  
Timothy Pickering (1795)  
James McHenry (1796–1797)

Attorney General

Edmund Randolph (1789–1794)  
William Bradford (1794–1795)  
Charles Lee (1795–1797)

[Submitted by Bob Doares]

**Inaugural Address** *Continued from page 1*

policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity; since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained; and since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps, as deeply, as finally, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.

Besides the ordinary objects submitted to your care, it will remain with your judgment to decide how far an exercise of the occasional power delegated by the fifth article of the Constitution is rendered expedient. . . . I shall again give way to my entire confidence in your discernment and pursuit of the public good; for I assure myself that whilst you carefully avoid every alteration which might endanger the benefits of an united and effective government, or which ought to await the future lessons of experience, a reverence for the characteristic rights of freemen and a regard for the public harmony will sufficiently influence your deliberations on the question how far the former can be impregably fortified or the latter be safely and advantageously promoted.

To the foregoing observations I have one to add. . . . When I was first honored with a call into the service of my country, then on the eve of an arduous struggle for its liberties. . . . I contemplated my duty required that I should renounce every pecuniary compensation. . . . and being still under the impressions which produced it, I must decline as inapplicable to myself any share in the personal emoluments. . . . I accordingly pray that the pecuniary estimates for the station in which I am placed may during my continuance in it be limited to such actual expenditures as the public good may be thought to require.

Having thus imparted to you my sentiments as they have been awakened by the occasion which brings us together, I shall take my present leave; but not without resorting once more to the benign Parent of the Human Race in humble supplication that, since He has been pleased to favor the American people with opportunities for deliberating in perfect tranquillity, and dispositions for deciding with unparalleled unanimity on a form of government for the security of their union and the advancement of their happiness, so His divine blessing may be equally conspicuous in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations, and the wise measures on which the success of this Government must depend.

## INTERPRETATION

### A New Resource for Education for Citizenship

iCitizenForum is a website recently created by Colonial Williamsburg to "promote understanding of the balance between rights and responsibilities in a historical context." This is a great resource for sharing information and fostering discussion about "the founding ideas and ideals of the American experiment in democracy and in the contributions of newer democracies."

#### What is on the site?

President Colin Campbell is featured in a short video encouraging us to develop a fuller understanding of our obligation as citizens within a participatory democracy. The concept that rights and responsibilities go hand in hand is of central importance to the understanding of civic involvement. iCitizenForum will explore the civic responsibilities pertinent to the success of the "American Experiment" in the context of global citizenry through online participatory resources.

The site offers three types of resources: living documents, a glossary and a citizenship time line. The living documents include many of the documents you would expect to find such as The Declaration of Independence, Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Magna Carta, the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom. It also includes some not so common like Montesquieu's "Spirit of the Law," "Give me Liberty or Give me Death," "The Ride of Paul Revere," and George Mason's "Remarks on Independent Elections."

The glossary is a basic list of terms associated with citizenship and governance, while the citizenship time line is interactive. The timeline provides a drag feature that allows you to examine three basic features of citizenship through the ages from January 13, 508, to May 18, 2073, for a more in-depth examination of the evolution of the idea or concept of citizenship. The "big bucket" concepts of government, ideas, and society allow you to examine specific events in the development of citizenship through the ages. For example: December 28, 533, is the introduction of the Justinian Codes, which serve as the basis for a number of systems of law throughout the world. This is a great interactive feature!

Other features of the site include:

- Discussion topics where you can participate in online exchanges centered on the topics of fundamental rights, social responsibility and the modern state, rights and the "War on Terror," citizens in a global society, and iCitizen updates.
- A list of recent posts directing you to additional topics introduced by other web users.

#### And There's More . . .

Through this site you can access the PBS special "By the People: Citizenship in the 21st Century" and "The World Forum on the Future of Democracy." The PBS documentary "By the People: Citizenship in the 21st Century," anchored by Jim Lehrer of *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, featured a national conversation held at the Williamsburg Lodge on "Dialogues in Democracy: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." Emerging leaders and influential Americans met in November 2007 to explore 21st-century citizens' rights, responsibilities, and expectations.

Highlights from "The World Forum on the Future of Democracy" are also accessible. The forum was the culminating event in the commemoration of America's 400th Anniversary. You can watch the conference video of this event that brought together national and international scholars on democracy. Hear thoughtful remarks from leading government officials, political practitioners, advocates, and commentators who have played a role in the advance of democracy.

#### How to Find It . . .

The web address is [www.icitizenforum.com](http://www.icitizenforum.com). Avid web users can also access the site through YouTube, MySpace, Facebook and iTunes allowing access to the concept of Education for Citizenship to people of all ages across a broad spectrum of internet users.

[Submitted by Rose McAphee]



Revolutionary City® photo

## INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE WASHINGTON AFTER HIS ELECTION

We interviewed Ron Carnegie for this article to see how he responds to our guests' questions about Washington's election.

**Question:** What is your first reaction to the news that you are elected the first president of the United States of America?

I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity, and with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York.

I have been long accustomed to entertain so great a respect for the opinion of my fellow citizens, that the knowledge of their unanimous suffrages having been given in my favor, scarcely leaves me the alternative for an option. Whatever have been my private feelings and sentiments, I believe I cannot give a greater evidence of my sensibility for the honor they have done me, than by accepting the appointment.

**Question:** What are your hopes for the new nation?

The Citizens of America are placed in the most enviable position, as the sole Lords and Proprietors of a vast tract of continent, comprehending all the soils and climates of the world, and abounding with all the necessaries and conveniences of life, are now acknowledged to be possessed of absolute freedom and Independency; They are from this period, to be considered as Actors on a most conspicuous Theatre, which seems to be peculiarly designated by Providence for the Display of Human greatness and Felicity.

**Question:** What great concern do you have for the future of the new nation?

The withering effects of faction, be it geographic or political, is always a threat to free Government. Thirteen separate States, all of them tugging against one another, and all pulling against the Federal Head, will certainly lead to our destruction. This is as clear to me as was ever the ABC. Whereas our strong but liberal Constitution gives us every reason to suppose that we will obtain that level of respect we had every promise of achieving. We must put behind us our local pursuits, protracted policies and absurd petty jealousies of one another, that a State may need forgoe some small advantage over the other, for the benefit of the community.

**Question:** What experiences have you had in the past that will best prepare you for assuming the awesome responsibilities of this new office of president?

If what small talents I might possess have been called in to effect by great events, and if these events terminate in a manner favorable to our country, the thanks for this belongs not to myself, but rather to the gracious interposition of an interposing Providence.

I am aware of the arduous task which is conferred on me, and feel my inability to perform it. All I can promise is that which can be accomplished by honest zeal.

**Question:** How does this great honor shape your thoughts of service to the new nation and its people?

Recognition, for service to one's country, by ones neighbours and virtuous citizens is the greatest of honours that might bestowed upon an individual. I am very sensible of the great honour that has been placed upon me, and of the continuing support that I have received from them. I only wish that my abilities were equal to the trust placed upon me.

I will perform these tasks to the best of my limited abilities and hope that what

mistakes I might make, for I am certain there will be many, will be looked upon by posterity kindly, secure on the knowledge that they were the result not of malignancy, but rather of talents unequalled by my zeal.

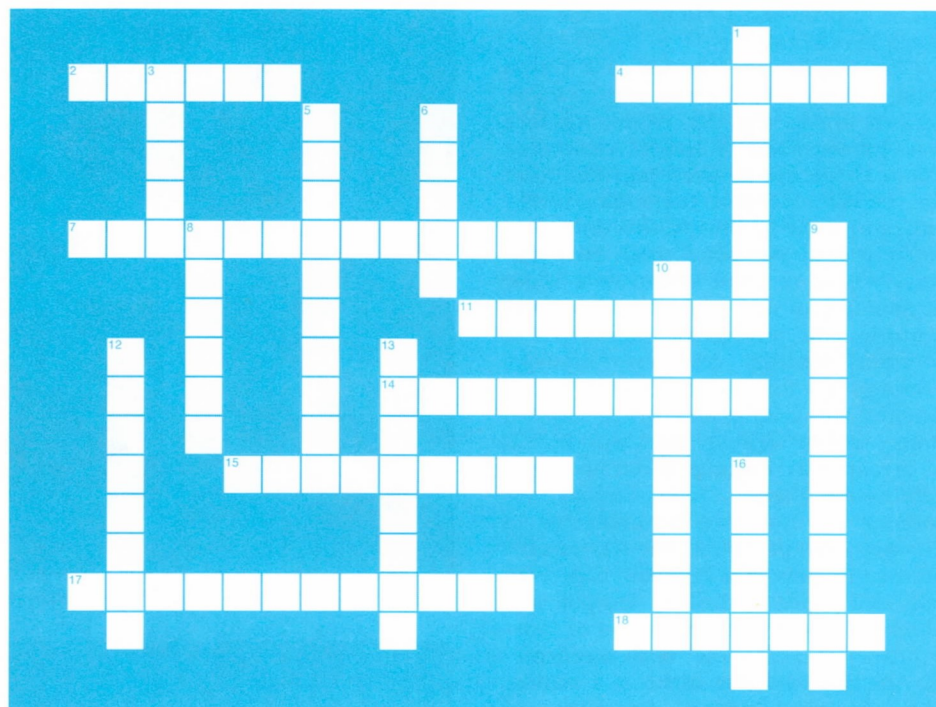
**Question:** How will your separation from Mount Vernon affect the management of your land and slaves especially after your absence for six years during the Revolution?

My estate will be in the management of my nephew George Augustine Washington. He has been left instructions, and we will be, I am certain, in constant communication regarding my private concerns.

**Question:** How difficult will it be for your wife to leave Mount Vernon for New York?

My Dear Wife has never had a great fondness for travel, nor public life. I am certain that she would have been far happier had I been allowed to remain with her in a peaceable retirement. I have been summonsed by my nation, however, and we are both, therefore resigned to satisfy the desire of the nation. I fear that she will, however, feel very much the prisoner in New York.

[Submitted by Ron Carnegie]



[Submitted by Bob Doares]

#### ACROSS

- Choice of electoral college "electors" left to these.
- Could not vote in national elections until 1924.
- Washington takes command of army in this colony.
- First major American victory of Revolution.
- French general.
- Washington surrendered his military command here in 1783.
- What presidents preserve, protect, defend.
- Victory after Delaware crossing.

#### DOWN

- Most populous state in 1790.
- First vice president.
- Only president ever to receive 100 percent of electoral college votes.
- Adams feared this group would demand vote.
- Three-Fifths Clause pertained to these.
- First of these on April 23, 1789.
- Can't be president of U.S.
- Elected office in colonial Connecticut and Rhode Island.
- Early requirement for voting.
- Pursued by Cornwallis in the South.

## INTERPRETATION

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