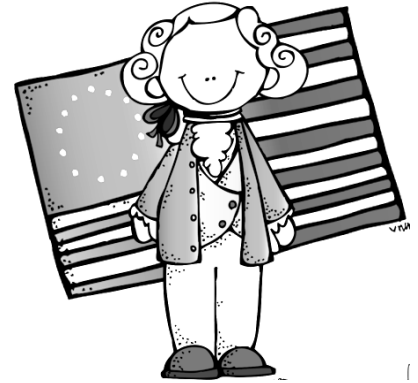


An Interview with George Washington



Reporter: Today, I am interviewing George Washington the first President of the United States. Welcome, Mr. President.

President: Thank you. I am glad to be here.

Reporter: Can you tell us a little about America when you were young?

President: Back then, America was ruled by England. The people who lived in America were called colonists. Virginia was a colony, not a state.

Reporter: When and where were you born?

President: I was born in Virginia on February 22, 1732. My family owned a large plantation. I enjoyed farm work when I was young.

Reporter: Did you go to school?

President: I didn't spend much time in school; I was taught at home. I liked to learn, and I enjoyed studying; my favorite subject was math. I became an expert woodsman, surveyor and mapmaker.

Reporter: Didn't your father die while you were still quite young?

President: Yes, my father died when I was 11 years old. I went to live with my brother Lawrence on his plantation, Mount Vernon. Lawrence oversaw my education.

Reporter: When you were twenty years old you joined the Virginia militia.

President: Correct. My first job was to deliver a note to an officer of French army more than three hundred miles away.

Reporter: The note demanded that the French stop settling on land that was claimed by the British.

President: That's right, and the result was a battle in which my men and I were badly beaten by the French. This was the beginning of the French and Indian War. During the war, I fought on the side of the British. The war went on for nine long years, but eventually our side won.

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Reporter: After Britain won the war, you left the military and got married.

President: I married Martha Custis in 1759. Then I worked as a politician.

Reporter: Around this time the British government began to tax the tea and paper that it sold to the American colonies.

President: The French and Indian war was expensive, and the British thought that the colonies should help cover the cost. This angered many colonists. They had no voice in the British parliament. They wanted to make their own laws, to be free from British rule, and to govern themselves.

Reporter: So, you went back to being a soldier.

President: Yes, I did. There was a war between England and the American colonies; it was called the Revolutionary War. I was asked to lead the colonial army during this war. My soldiers had almost no military training or equipment, and we were up against the best army in the world.

Reporter: But you were a good leader. Somehow, you managed to hold the army together and to win the war. America became an independent country, and you were a hero.

President: That's what people said. Anyway, I was chosen to be the new country's first president.

Reporter: Did you want to become president?

President: No, I did not. I wanted to go back to Mount Vernon and be a farmer.

Reporter: Well, you turned out to make an excellent president.

President: Thank you. It was not an easy job being the president of a new country. Fortunately, I had smart and honest people to work with.

Reporter: Can you tell us about some of the things you accomplished as President?

President: The new country did not have its own money, so we passed a law that let the government make some.

Reporter: The Bill of Rights was also adopted.

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President: Yes, we added the first 10 Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. They're known as Bill of Rights and guarantee the individual rights and freedoms of the American people.

Reporter: You served two terms as President.

President: That's right. I served two terms—eight years altogether. The people wanted me to serve another third term. But I refused. I was afraid that a president might become too powerful if he stayed in office too long.

Reporter: So, after your second term, you went back to Virginia.

President: Yes, I went back home to farm and spend time with my family.

Reporter: It's said that you wore false teeth, is this true?

President: Yes, when I was young, I was sick, and the medicine they gave to me caused my teeth to go bad. By the time I became president, all my teeth were gone. I wore a set of ivory teeth made from hippopotamus and elephant tusks.

Reporter: Tell me about your hobbies. I understand that you loved dogs.

President: I am glad you mentioned my dogs. Dogs were a passion of mine. I went hunting with my dogs two or three times a week. I even developed a new breed of dog called the American Foxhound.

Reporter: You are certainly a remarkable person, Mr. President. Thank you for the interview.

President: Thank you. I enjoyed it.

Epilogue

George Washington was home at Mount Vernon for three years before he died of pneumonia on December 14, 1799. He was 67 years old.

