



George Washington inherited property on the Potomac River, called Mount Vernon, from his half-brother Lawrence (who died in 1752). In addition, he took Lawrence's place in the Virginia militia, receiving a major's commission.

After the French and Indian War, he returned to Mt Vernon as a 27-year-old veteran - "the most experienced native military officer in Virginia." He married Martha Dandridge Custis, a young widow whose first husband had been one of the wealthiest men in the colony, in 1759.

Adding to his home along the river, Washington likely thought his future career would be devoted to farming his plantation. But when the colonies fought for independence, Washington became the commander-in-chief, spending much time in camps (with his troops) instead of being home (with his family). Even during the war, however, the General received people (such as Lafayette) at Mt. Vernon.

In the summer of 1780, a very fortunate development was greatly aiding the patriots' cause.

America had formed an Alliance with France, and Washington welcomed French generals, such as Comte de Rochambeau, to his Potomac mansion. By October of the following year, Washington accepted Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown, Virginia.

In later years, as before, Washington worked to improve Mount Vernon:

He worked constantly to improve and expand the mansion house and its surrounding plantation. He established himself as an innovative farmer, who switched from tobacco to wheat as his main cash crop in the 1760's.

In an effort to improve his farming operation, he diligently experimented with new crops, fertilizers, crop rotation, tools, and livestock breeding. He also expanded the work of the plantation to include flour milling and commercial fishing in an effort to make Mount Vernon a more profitable estate.

By the time of his death in 1799, he had expanded the plantation from 2,000 to 8,000 acres consisting of five farms, with more than 3,000 acres under cultivation.

Both George and Martha Washington are buried at Mount Vernon.

Click on the image for a more detailed view.

Credits:

George Washington receiving French generals at Mount Vernon. U.S. Archives image 19-N-1587.

Linked above: Building Mount Vernon. Information, quotes and linked image from George Washington's Mount Vernon web site.

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