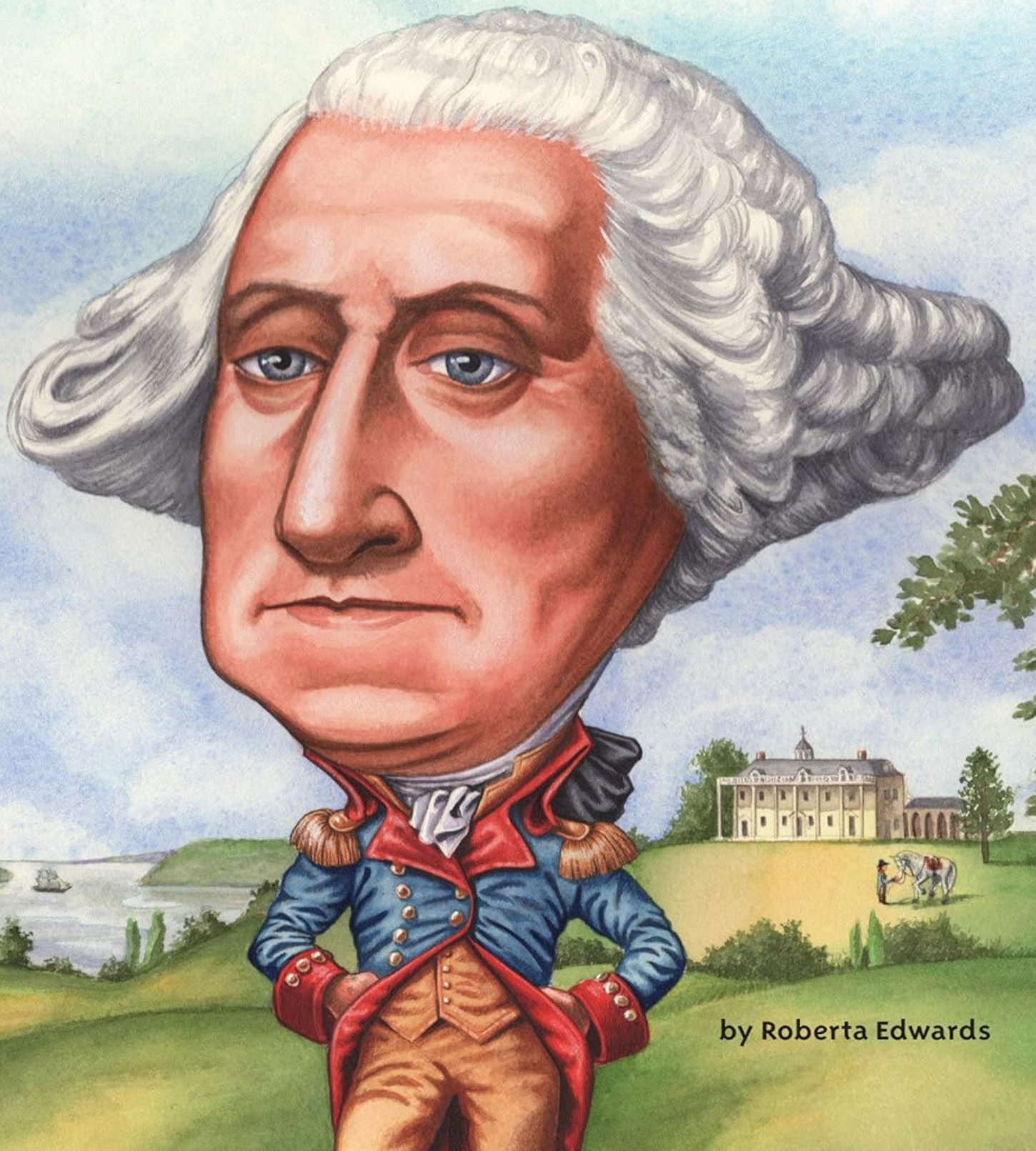


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# Who Was George Washington?



by Roberta Edwards

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Illustrated by True Kelley

Grosset & Dunlap

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GROSSET & DUNLAP

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto,  
Ontario M4P 2Y3, Canada (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)

Penguin Books Ltd., 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Group Ireland, 25 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland  
(a division of Penguin Books Ltd.)

Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia  
(a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty. Ltd.)

Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park,  
New Delhi—110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, North Shore 0632, New Zealand  
(a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd.)

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty.) Ltd., 24 Sturdee Avenue,  
Rosebank, Johannesburg 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

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a division of Penguin Young Readers Group,  
345 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014.  
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.S.A.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008022377

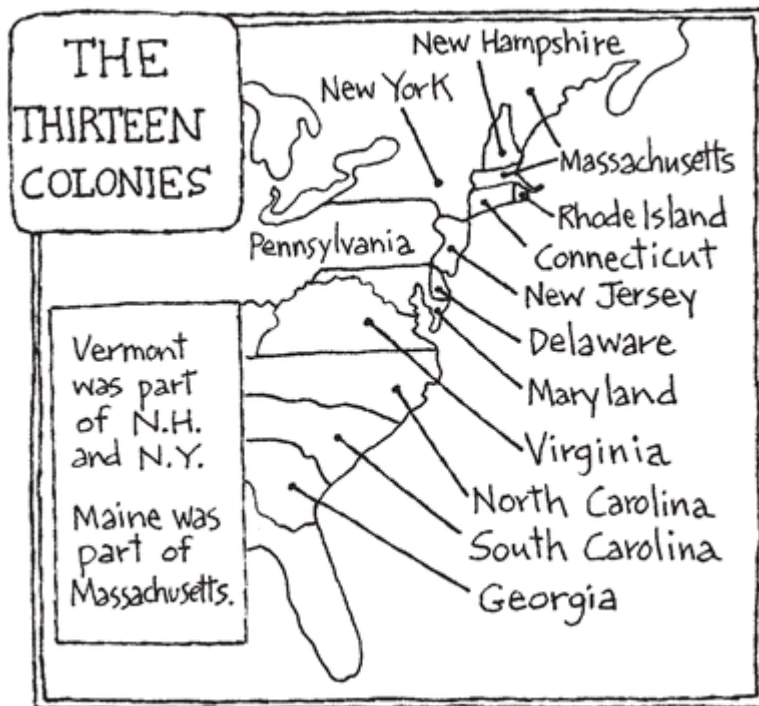
eISBN : 978-1-101-01482-0

<http://us.penguin.com>

## Who Was George Washington?

1783

After seven long years of fighting, the war was finally over. American soldiers had beaten the mighty British army. The thirteen colonies were independent now.



Ships full of British soldiers sailed back to England. From here on in, nobody in America had to obey King George. There was going to be a brand-new country with thirteen united states.

And in 1789 when it came time to elect the first president, who was the number-one choice?  
George Washington, of course.

George Washington had been the top general throughout the war. He was not the kind of general who just gave orders and then watched soldiers do the fighting; he was often in the thick of battle. Yet Washington was never wounded, not once! Besides being brave, he was also smart, loyal, honest, and fair—everything a leader should be. Would the war have been won without him? Many people didn't think so.

It was no surprise that he won the first election for president. But when he learned the news, he was not happy. Oh, no. He wasn't happy at all. He loved being back in Virginia, at Mount Vernon, his beautiful home. He was fifty-seven years old and hoped to spend the rest of his life there with his wife, Martha, and her two youngest grand-children.



THE MOUNT VERNON HOUSE

As the very first president, so much would be expected of him. And strange as it may seem to us, George Washington worried that he wasn't up to the job.



No, the job of president was not at all to his liking.

But many people said they would only support the new government if George Washington were president. And more than anything, he wanted the new government to work.

So he said yes and started off for New York, where he would take the oath of office.



A PARTY IN TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

At every stop along the way, there were parties and parades for him. Just what George didn't want.

Today politicians may spend years planning to run for president. Millions of dollars are spent on campaigns. Yet the man who is known as "the father of our country" felt like "a criminal going off to his execution." All he wanted was to stay home and go fox hunting!

