



*An American Tour:*  
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## Virginia's *Mount Vernon*

Lawrence (*George's half-brother*) died in 1752. His will provided that his widow should own a life estate in Mount Vernon, with the remainder interest falling to George. George was already living at Mount Vernon and probably managing the plantation. Lawrence's widow, Anne Fairfax, promptly remarried and moved out. Upon the death of Anne and Lawrence's only surviving child in 1754, George later bought his sister-in-law's life estate and became sole owner of the property. In 1757, George began the first of two major additions and improvements to the home. On those occasions he entirely rebuilt the main house atop the original foundations, doubling its size each time. The great majority of the work was performed by slaves and artisans. While he twice rebuilt the home, George never changed its patriotic British name.

Though no architect is known to have designed Mount Vernon, some attribute the design to John Ariss (1725–1799). From 1759 until the Revolutionary War, Washington, who at the time aspired to become a prominent agriculturist, operated the estate as five separate farms. Following his service in the war, Washington returned to Mount Vernon and in 1785-1786 spent a great deal of effort improving the landscaping of the estate. Washington selectively bred sheep and grew various types of crops on the plantation, including flax, hemp, cotton and silk. One of his most successful ventures was the establishment of a distillery in 1797; he briefly became one of the new nation's largest distillers of whiskey.

The remains of George and Martha Washington, as well as other family members, are entombed on the grounds. [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\\_Vernon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Vernon)]

