

John Jay
and
George Washington



John Jay was born in 1745 to a New York merchant family and became a lawyer after graduating from King's College, now Columbia University. Jay was instrumental in shaping America before, during, and after the American Revolution. He was part of the team that negotiated and signed the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolution; he was Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the First Chief Justice of the United States, and was twice elected Governor of New York. He held more elected offices than any other Founding Fathers. After retiring at the age of 56, John and his family moved to Bedford in 1801.

*His Excellency JOHN JAY President of Congress
& Minister Plenipotentiary from Congress at Madrid.*

Pub.^d May 15th 1783, by R. Wilkinson N^o 58, Cornhill, London.

George Washington was born in 1732 on his family's farm in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He was a colonel in the British militia during the French and Indian War, Commander in Chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolution and was elected to be the first President of the United States in 1789. After holding two-terms as president, he resigned in 1797, retiring to his farm, Mount Vernon.





The two men met in 1774 when they were both serving in the First Continental Congress. At the time Washington was 41 and Jay was 28.

It was not until five years later in 1779, when Jay was president of the congress and Washington was the leader of the Continental Army, that the men worked closely together and formed a friendship.

Despite the difference in their ages and backgrounds, the two men had instantaneous respect for each other and would remain friends for the rest of their lives.

Before becoming president, General Washington was a distinguished military leader, known for his successes in the French and Indian War. George had retired from the Army in 1759, with plans to become a tobacco farmer on his Mount Vernon estate. However, his retirement would be short lived.

In 1775, the Continental Congress created the Continental Army and appointed Washington its Commander in Chief.



3 e	t	---	3	q	g
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7 i	x	---	7	d	u
8 j	y	---	8	e	v
9 k	z	---	9	f	w
10 l	+	---	10	g	x
11 m	a	---	11	h	y
12 n	b	---	12	i	z
13 o	c	---	13	j	+
14 p	d	---	14	k	a
15 q	e	---	15	l	b
16 r	f	---	16	m	c
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21 w	k	---	21	r	h
22 x	l	---	22	s	i
23 y	m	---	23	t	j
24 z	n	---	24	u	k
25 +	a	---	25	v	l
26 a	p	---	26	w	m
27 b	q	---	27	x	n

3-0	c	r
4-0	r	c
5-7	c	o
6-7	o	c

1	c	o	r
2	d	p	s
3	e	q	t
4	f	r	w
5	g	s	v
6	h	t	w
7	i	u	x
8	j	v	y
9	k	w	z
10	l	x	+
11	m	y	a
12	n	z	b
13	o	+	c
14	p	a	d
15	q	b	e
16	r	c	f
17	s	d	g
18	t	e	h
19	u	f	i
20	v	g	j
21	w	h	k
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John Jay never joined the army but was heavily involved in the independence effort as a policymaker and diplomat. As head of the Committee for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies, he recruited spies, deciphered codes, and conducted trials of suspected British spies.

During this time, we can assume he would have been informing Washington of intelligence he received through the spy networks he oversaw in New York.

“This will be delivered by my Brother, who will communicate & explain to your Excellency a mode of Correspondence, which may be of use, provided proper agents can be obtained. I have experienced its Efficacy by a three Years Trial. We shall remain absolutely silent on the Subject.” John Jay, November 19, 1778



In 1779, John and Sarah Jay were about to embark on a diplomatic mission abroad. John had been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain, in hopes that the Spanish government would support the Americans during the revolution. Prior to departing, Washington gave a lock of his hair as a remembrance to his friends.

Lock of George Washington's hair from the collection at Mount Vernon

The General expressed to Mrs. Jay his:

“pleasure in presenting the enclosed [lock of hair], with thanks for so polite a testimony of her approbation and esteem.” And that he wished “that prosperous gales an unruffled Sea & every Thing pleasing & desirable, may smooth the path she is about to walk in.”



Following Washington's victory at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781, Britain began to discuss peace. Jay had been serving as a diplomat in Europe since 1780 and was part of a team that was tasked with negotiating a peace agreement between the two countries.

In 1782, Jay was the chief negotiator of the Treaty of Paris. The document officially ends the American Revolution and establishes the United States as its own country.



When Washington was elected President, he offered Jay his choice of office in the new government, with Jay deciding between Secretary of State and Chief Justice. Jay chose to become the first Chief Justice of the United States.

While there were other long-tenured judges who were actively seeking the position, Washington felt that Jay's experience with international issues would make him an invaluable asset to the judicial branch.

“In nominating you for the important Station, which you will now fill, I not only acted in conformity to my best judgment, but I trust I did a grateful thing to the good citizens of these United States; and I have full Confidence that the love which you bear to our country, and a desire to promote the general happiness, will not suffer you to hesitate a moment to bring into action the talents, knowledge, and integrity which are so necessary to be exercised at the head of that department which must be considered as the keystone of our political fabric.”

-George Washington to John Jay, October 5, 1789

The Washingtons and Jays were at the center of New York society when the new federal government resided there in 1789. As members of the same social circle, the Jays and Washingtons frequently spent time together, attending the same dinners and theater productions, affording them the opportunity to develop deeper personal relationships.

22 ^d Sep ^r Mr. Jones - 1	Parker - 1	8 th Oct ^r invited	(22 ^d invited)
for the 23 ^d Duane - 1	Mathews - 1	after Portland - 1	Mr. Gilman - 1
Gov ^r Rutledge - 1	S. Pinkney - 1	Marston D ^o - 1	Mr. Irvine - 1
Duer - 1	Huger - 1	Star	Mr. Madison - 1
Hamilton - 1	5	8 th Oct ^r invited	Mr. Carrington - 1
Bingham - 1	Mr. & Mrs. Gerry - 2	Mr. & Mrs. D ^o - 2	Mr. H. Lee - 1
aloop - 1	Mr. & Mrs. Thompson - 2	Mr. & Mrs. D ^o - 2	Mr. Keen - 1
Thom - 1	Miss D ^o - 1	Miss Cortlandt - 1	Mr. Huger - 1
Matthews - 1	Mr. Barclay - 1	Mr. & Mrs. V. Horne - 2	Mr. Jones - 1
for 26 th Sep ^r	Mr. & Mrs. Provost - 2	Miss D ^o - 1	Mr. Duer - 1
Gov ^r Rutledge - 1	Mr. Cadwallader - 1	Albion D ^o - 1	Mr. Hamilton &
Bingham - 1	Mr. Bingham - 1	Mr. & Mrs. Jay - 2	Chevalier Jones &
Curtis Jones - 1	Mr. & Mrs. Mansel - 2	Mr. & Mrs. Clark - 2	Mr. Harrison - 1
Gardner - 1	Dr. Johnson - 1	Miss DeHay - 1	Chief Justice - 1
Dane - 1	Mrs. Richetto - 1	Mr. & Mrs. Turnbull - 2	
Gerry - 1	Gen ^l & Mrs. Knox - 2	David V. Horne - 1	
Gorham - 1	Gov ^r Morris - 1		
Thom - 1	The Chancellor - 1		
Pierce - 1	18	15 th Oct ^r invited	
Blount - 1	invited Dr. Witherspoon - 1	Mr. & Mrs. Jay - 2	
Carrington - 1	Dr. Rodgers - 1	Mr. & Mrs. Platt - 2	
President - 1	Mr. Linn - 1	Mr. Bromson - 1	
Holton - 1	Dr. Livingston - 1	Mr. Barclay - 1	
22	25	Augustus Cortlandt - 1	
		29	

Sarah Jay's supper invitation list

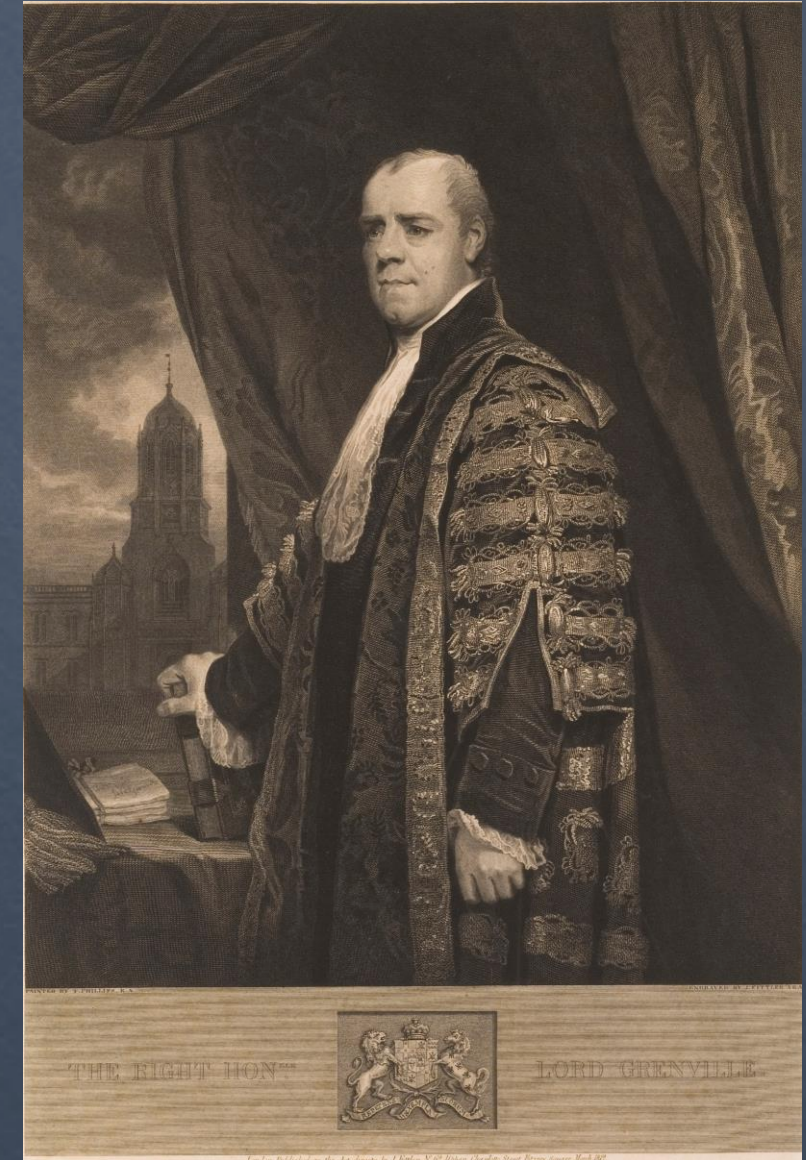


In 1794, tensions between England and America were once again heightening, and many thought another war was inevitable. The British were not allowing American ships into their ports, interfering with Americans ability to trade with Europe. The continued occupation of British military outposts in America's Old Northwest Territory (area northwest of Ohio River) and the lack of American payments on debts owed to English creditors were also contentious issues.

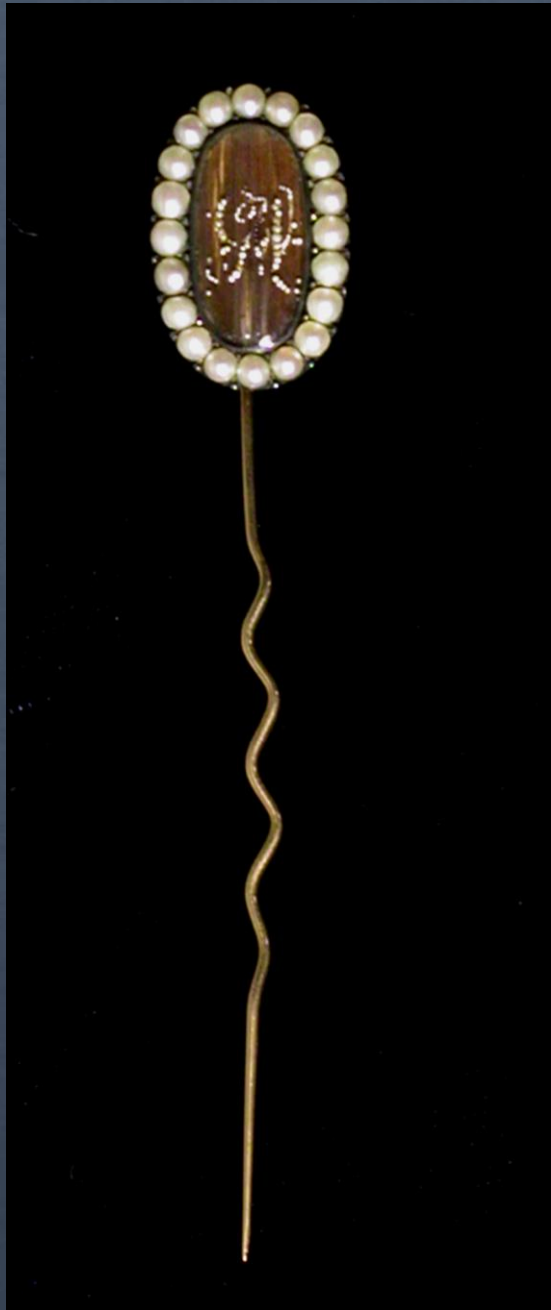
Washington asked Jay, whose character was internationally reputable by this time, to undertake a mission to England to try and prevent another war.

Almost six months after arriving in England, Jay signed the treaty that bears his name. During the negotiations with Lord Grenville, the English representative, Jay was constantly writing to Washington to keep him apprised of the developments. When Washington received the official terms of the treaty, he decided to withhold them from the public and present them in secret to the Senate.

By late June 1795, the Senate ratified the treaty terms with very little alterations. Once the terms of the treaty were public, many protested, feeling Jay made too many concessions and unfairly favored the British.



Lord Grenville



In 1794, Sarah Jay gave the lock of Washington's hair she had received years earlier to her son Peter Augustus, who was accompanying his father to England for the negotiation of the Jay Treaty.

Peter Augustus, at his mother's request, took the lock of hair to a London jeweler and had it set under glass in this stickpin.

55 Cedar St

MINUTES
OF THE
MANUMISSION SOCIETY
OF
NEW-YORK.
VOL. I.

John Jay grew up in a slave-owning household and owned slaves himself. Like many other men in his generation, Jay was conflicted about the institution of slavery. He believed in manumission, or the gradual freeing of slaves over time.

Jay went on to become a founding member of the New York Manumission Society, established in 1785, which promoted the end of slavery, and included members like Alexander Hamilton.

Following the southern agricultural model, George Washington owned slaves since childhood, and held approximately 123 people in bondage when he died in 1799. Washington was also conflicted about slavery. On one hand, he was a farmer, economically supported by the institution. On the other, he disdained the practice of enslaving and found it hard to resolve it alongside his revolutionary ideals. Washington never spoke about this publicly and was dependent on the income his slaves produced throughout his life.



George Washington and William Lee, Washington's enslaved personal servant.

John Jay attempted to end slavery in the state of New York while he was drafting the state constitution in 1777, but the resolution did not pass.

As governor of New York, he helped to pass a gradual emancipation law in 1799 that was an early step to outlawing slavery in the state.

However, while working towards passing antislavery legislation, John Jay continued to be an enslaver.

Jay freed his last slave in 1817, ten years before it was outlawed in New York.



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Washington requested in his will that his slaves be set free after the death of his wife, Martha.

However, Martha freed the 123 Washington slave on January 1, 1801. She feared that since the freedom of these individuals was reliant upon her death that she might meet an untimely end.



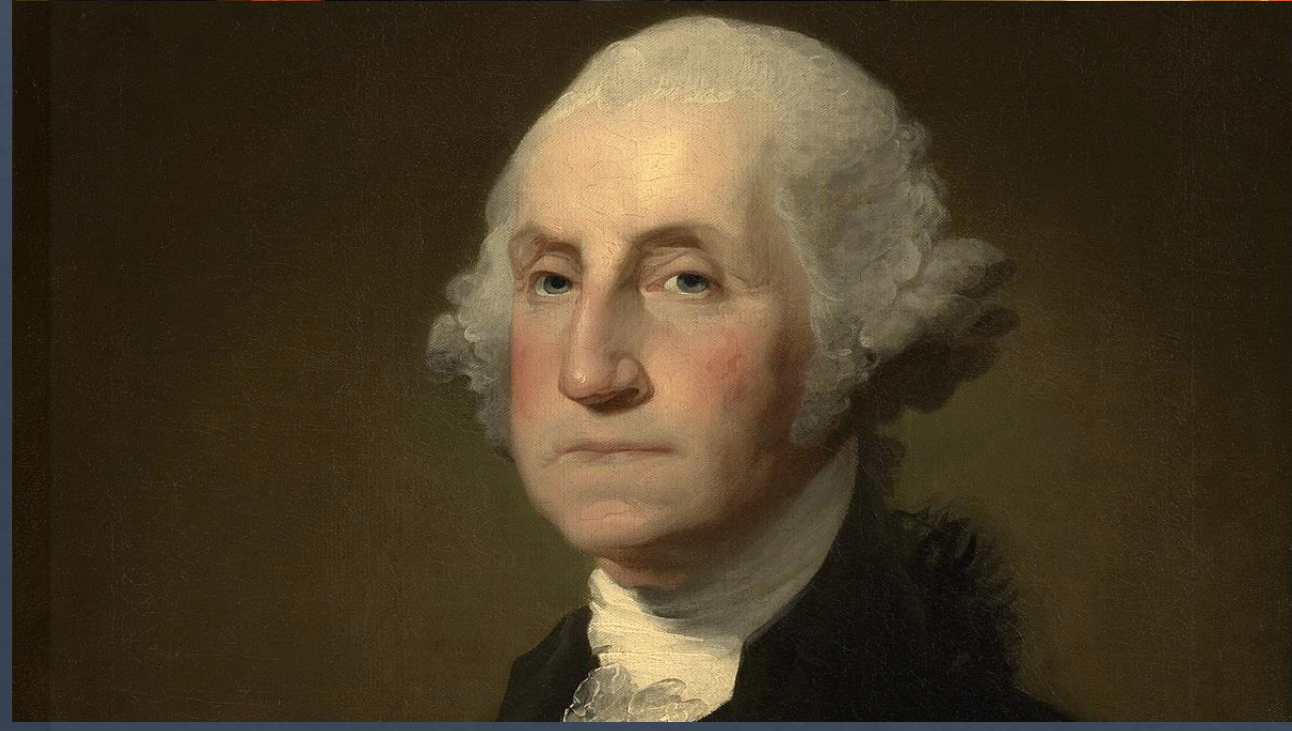
“In the state in which they were left by the General, to be free at her death, she did not feel as tho her Life was safe in their Hands, many of whom would be told that it was [in] there interest to get rid of her.”

-Abigail Adams to Mary Adams, December 21, 1800

George Washington and John Jay were friends as well as colleagues.

Both were gentlemen farmers, so seed propagation, animal husbandry, and general farming were some of the topics they discussed when they were not expressing their political opinions.

However, the majority of their correspondence almost always centered on politics. They both were Federalists and wanted to see the national government grow and strengthen. The candidness between them and their constant referral to their friendship in letters, indicates a bond existed between the two that exceeded the professional.



“You judged very right when in your letter of the 18th... you observed I ‘can have very little time for private letters.’ But if my friends will put up with the hasty and indigested ones I can write, under such circumstances, there are a few of them (among whom allow me the gratification to place you) with whom I should feel very happy to [correspond]: and while I hold my present Office, to learn their sentiments upon any of the important measures which come before the Executive of the United States.”

-George Washington to John Jay, 1796

“ If anything in the judiciary line, if anything of a more general nature, proper for me to communicate to that body at the opening of the session, has occurred to you, you would oblige me by submitting them with the freedom and frankness of friendship.”

-George Washington to John Jay, November 19, 1790

As displayed in their writing, Jay and Washington were so committed to improving American governance that their friendship was heavily intertwined with their political relationship.



When Washington died on December 14, 1799, the whole nation mourned. As the news began to spread many people hoped that it was false.

John Jay heard the news was official from a letter written on December 23rd.

On the 28th he responded:

“I perfectly concur in the sentiment that we should transmit to our posterity the most honourable proofs of the veneration in which we hold the memory of that singularly virtuous and great man whose death we lament.”