

A stylized illustration of a tree with a thick brown trunk and a large green canopy. The canopy is filled with simple line drawings of leaves and small red berries. A white rectangular text box is positioned in the upper right portion of the tree's canopy. The background is a plain, light beige color. At the bottom of the tree, an axe with a silver head and a brown handle lies on the ground. A few green leaves are scattered around the base of the tree and the axe.

*George Washington's
Boyhood Home at*
Ferry Farm

*George
Washington
Young
Adventurer*

Walking Tour Map

Walk the same ground that young George Washington did. Here, he learned to play, to work, and to seek out adventure on his way to becoming an American Hero.



George Washington's Boyhood Home at Ferry Farm

Welcome to the world of young George Washington, his family, and the labor community who shared this landscape.

George Washington lived at Ferry Farm from age six until his early 20s with his parents, brothers, and sisters.



The story of the cherry tree and the young boy who could not tell a lie, lives on in the imaginations of American children everywhere.

George's early life was full of adventure and adversity. When he was 11, his father, Augustine, died leaving the family in an economic crisis. George's older, half-brothers took their inheritance, thereby reducing the rest of the family's income. Colonial widows typically remarried quickly to restore financial security to their families, but Mary Ball Washington chose not to remarry, changing George's life forever. He was not able to attend college, nor did he benefit from any real formal schooling, depending instead on private teachers.

His father's death left George with no male role model at home, complicating his entry into society. When faced with adversity, George did all he could to overcome these obstacles. He found new patrons like his half-brother Lawrence to introduce him to the life of a gentleman. George paid for his own dancing and fencing

lessons, studied *The Rules of Civility*, and modeled his behavior on these guidelines for the rest of his life. He also taught himself how to survey and became a professional as a way to earn a living at age 16. His first surveying trip took him into the wilds of the Virginia frontier.

Conserving this special place, its wildlife, and the river are part of everyday life today at Ferry Farm but preservation is only the beginning. Plans have been made to rebuild the plantation where George Washington grew to manhood and developed the remarkable traits that helped him lead the Continental Army, become the first U.S. president, and guide a fledgling nation to its place in history.

Your support is needed to preserve the legacy of the Father of Our Country and his family, and tell the story of his early life through educational programs for all ages. You can help by sending a tax-deductible contribution to:

**The George Washington Foundation
1201 Washington Avenue
Fredericksburg, VA 22401**

www.ferryfarm.org

Cherry Tree Legend

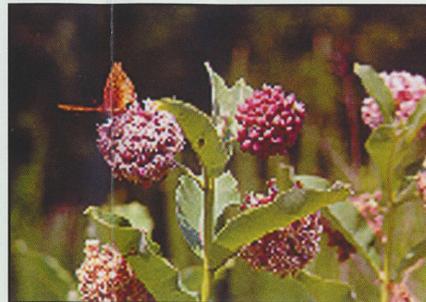
"Upon finding a once-beautiful cherry tree whose bark was badly stripped, young Washington's father asked him who had done it. The boy replied 'I cannot tell a lie, Pa. I did cut it with my hatchet.' Instead of being angry with his son, Augustine Washington embraced his courage and honesty."

from *The Life of Gen. Washington, With Curious Anecdotes* by Parson Mason L. Weems, 1810



"...he was a boy of an uncommonly warm and noble heart..."

Mason L. Weems, Washington biographer



1 The Visitor Center

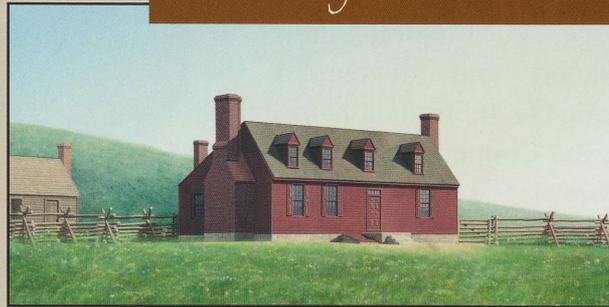
The Visitor Center showcases three distinct exhibits highlighting history and archaeology. *George Washington: Boy Before Legend* explores what is known about Washington's boyhood years from historical documents. *Dig to Discover, Analyze to Recover* examines how the archaeology lab works, using the Civil War at Ferry Farm as a case study. *Shared Landscapes, Separate Realities* looks at the life of the Washington family and their slaves during the anxious years following Augustine's death in 1743.

Exit the Visitor Center through the rear doors and proceed to:

2 The Demonstration Garden

In addition to growing tobacco, corn, and wheat as sources of income, the Washingtons grew a wide variety of plants to feed themselves, their slaves, and their livestock. The Demonstration Garden includes colonial-era plants and modern flower species.

Washingtons' House



historians establish the look of the structure. The house measured 53 feet by 28 feet. It was a wood-frame structure built on a stone foundation. The house featured five rooms downstairs and up to three rooms upstairs.

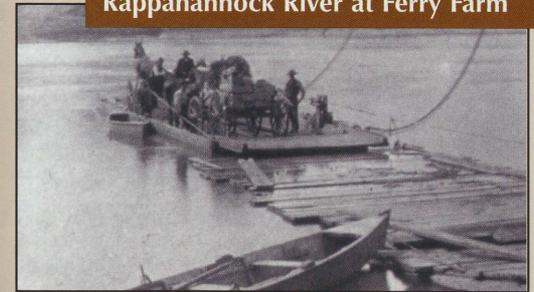
Continue to the sites of the farm outbuildings:

5 The Washington Kitchen

The remains of the Washington kitchen were situated beneath an early 1900s farmhouse. The only surviving element of the kitchen is a stone-lined cellar. The cellar shows signs of burning sometime after 1740 and contained ceramics that were used for food preparation and dining.

8 The Ferry Landing

The Ferry in 1860, crossing the Rappahannock River at Ferry Farm



Ahead, on the banks of the river, is the site of the ferry landing that gave the farm its present name. Ferries operated from several points along the shore in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Washington family never operated the ferry nor profited from it.

Proceed southeast along the riverbank to the:

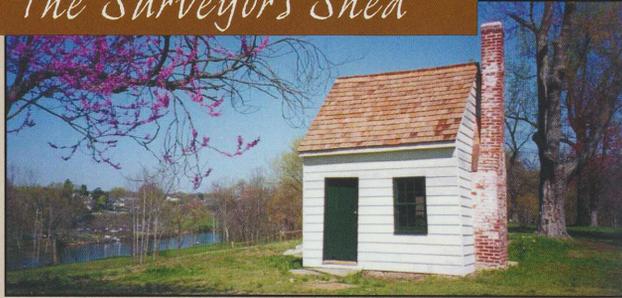
9 The Rappahannock River

The river is brackish and still tidal at Ferry Farm. In the 18th century, it was possible for

Lower species.
Leave the garden by the gate at the right and proceed to the archaeology excavation site:

3 The Surveyor's Shed

The Surveyor's Shed



Starting in the early 1900s, a story began to be told that this small, wood-frame building with a brick chimney was where George Washington learned surveying. A study of post-Civil War photographs demonstrates that this structure dates to the 1870s. However, Washington did learn to survey during his years at Ferry Farm and practiced in the fields and pastures.

4 The Washington House

In 2008, The George Washington Foundation archaeologists announced the discovery of the remains of the Washingtons' house. Two stone-lined cellars, stone-foundation walls, and two root cellars determined the position of the house. Historical documents and artifacts found on site provided the proof archaeologists needed to confirm this as the definitive location of the Washington home and helped architectural

were used for food preparation and dining.

6 The Slave Quarter

The Washington family shared the landscape with up to 20 enslaved men, women, and children. Archaeologists have uncovered one slave dwelling on this spot. The only surviving architectural remnant is a root cellar – a large hole in the dirt floor that was used to store perishable foods. The dwelling probably measured 10 feet square and contained a sleeping loft.

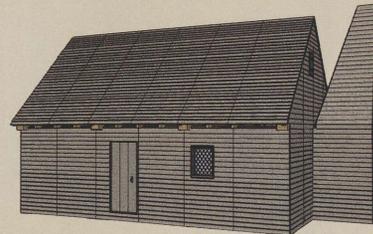


Proceed to the site of the first house on the property:

7 The English Arrive at Ferry Farm

Archaeologists also excavated the remains of the plantation's first colonial dwelling. Erected around 1700, it stood until about 1725. This all-wood structure used posts to anchor into the ground. The house measured 20 feet by 30 feet and included a large, unlined cellar, two root cellars and a mud-and-stick chimney.

Proceed to the steps leading to the river



(moderately difficult terrain), stop at:

goods to be loaded onto a boat in England and be delivered directly to Ferry Farm, giving the residents of Ferry Farm access to the latest fashions from England. Evidence uncovered by archaeologists suggests that the first colonists living at Ferry Farm used fire to clear the flood plain of trees and shrubs. Watch for bluebirds, wild turkeys, foxes, deer, and other wildlife as you walk through this woodland setting. Animal footprints are also evident along the path.

The Stone Throw

There are numerous accounts of George Washington's throwing prowess. Here, on the riverbank, he was said to have thrown a stone across the river. In his day, the river would have been much wider than it is today.

Return to the stairs or follow the path to the Wild Meadow and the Visitor Center:

10 Wild Meadow

The trails around and through the Wild Meadow offer more opportunities to see wildlife. The depression in the center of the meadow was once a gravel mine and has become a habitat for many species of birds. The meadow is also home to native grasses and wildflowers. The boulders at the edge of the meadow are Aquia sandstone, a favorite construction material of home builders in 18th-century Fredericksburg. These are remnants from the restoration of the exterior steps at Historic Kenmore.