

George Washington's Views on Slavery

Background Information

George Washington owned slaves from the time he was 11. At the time of his death he owned, rented, or managed over 300 enslaved individuals and in his will he gave direct instructions on how his family should free many of them after his death. During his life he created a number of written documents, including his will, that reflected his ideas and actions related to slavery. Both policy decisions (as commander in chief and president) and private correspondence make up these documents available to people today.

NOTE: Scholars do not agree on Washington's views on slavery. This lesson is designed to make you draw conclusions from the evidence presented; there is no correct answer.

