

# *George Clinton becomes 1st governor of New York, July 30, 1777*

On this day in history, July 30, 1777, George Clinton becomes 1st governor of New York. Clinton would be the longest serving governor in American history, including throughout the time period of the American Revolution and the adoption of the US Constitution. Clinton also served as a general in the Continental Army and became vice-president under both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

George Clinton was born in 1739 to a father who was a member of the New York colonial assembly. He fought in the French and Indian War as a teenager and later studied law. In 1759, Clinton began a life in politics when he became the County Clerk for Ulster County, New York. He served in this position for the next 52 years! Clinton began serving as a representative from Ulster County in the Provincial Assembly in 1768 and continued in this position until New York declared its independence in 1776.

When the American Revolution began, Clinton was squarely on the side of the patriots. He became a brigadier general in the Continental Army in 1777, but shortly afterwards was elected governor of the fledgling New York government. Clinton took office on July 30, 1777 and would be re-elected 5 times until 1792. He would serve again as governor from 1801-1804, making him the longest serving governor in American history.

In his role as governor of New York, Clinton played a central role in many aspects of the Revolution, from the detaining of Loyalists and confiscating their property, to negotiating the British evacuation of New York with George Washington and British General, Sir Guy Carleton.

Clinton was a strong opponent of the US Constitution at first, believing it did not adequately protect individual rights. He withdrew his opposition, however, when Federalists agreed to add a Bill of Rights

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to the document. When George Washington took office as the first president, Clinton welcomed him to the city of New York (then the capital), accompanied Washington to his inauguration and later put on the first inaugural celebration.

Clinton was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1800. He was then re-elected governor in 1801, but stepped down when he was chosen to replace the disgraced Aaron Burr as Thomas Jefferson's running mate in 1804. Clinton served through Jefferson's second term and then was elected as vice-president again under James Madison, where he served until his death in 1812.

George Clinton is a little known Founding Father to modern Americans, but he played a pivotal role in shepherding one of the largest states through the American Revolution. Clinton was the first elected official to die in the White House and was one of only two people to serve as vice-president under two different presidents, the second being John C. Calhoun. Clinton died of a heart attack on April 20, 1812 and was buried in Washington DC. His body was reinterred in Kingston, New York in 1908.