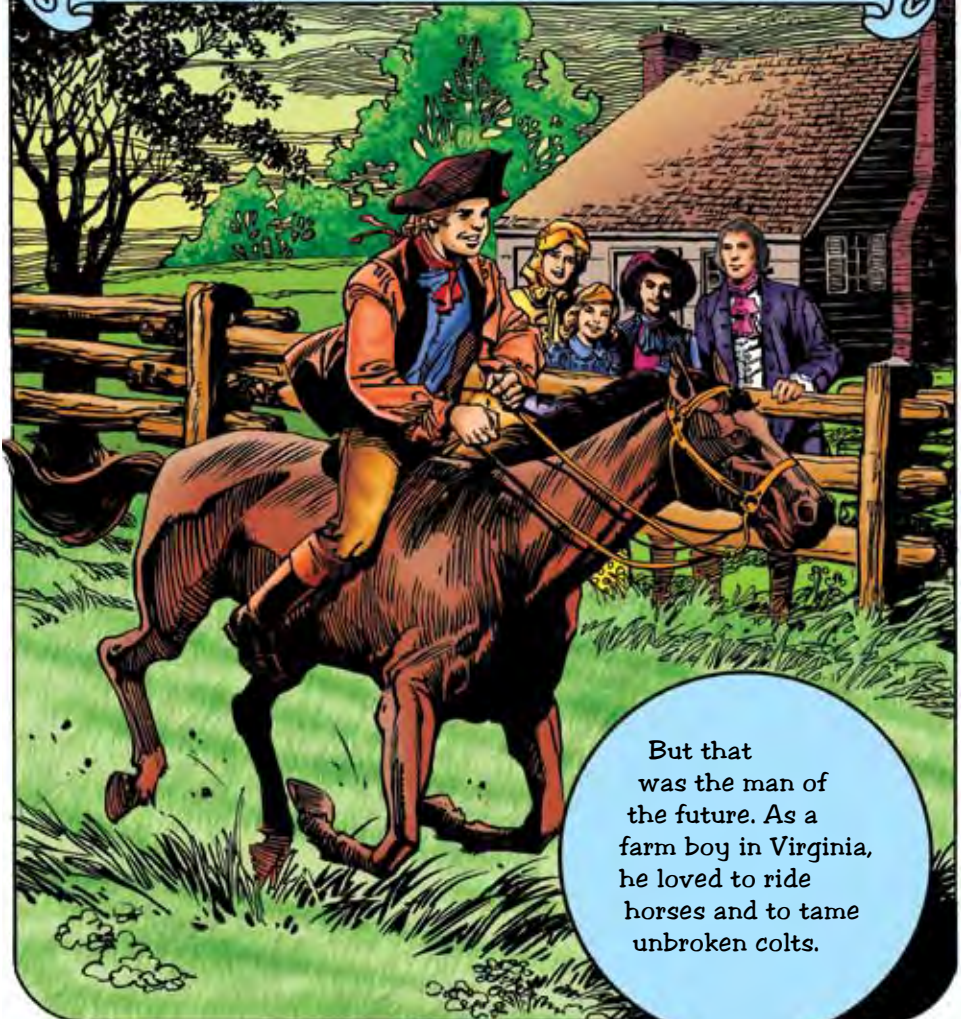




When George Washington was born in 1732, there was no United States. The American colonies belonged to England. He led the army that fought for and won our freedom. He helped to form our government. He became our first president.



But that was the man of the future. As a farm boy in Virginia, he loved to ride horses and to tame unbroken colts.

Sometimes he was thrown off.



Let go, George. You'll be hurt!



He would climb back on again until he had mastered the horse.



Go, George! You're really riding him!

His mother fussed at his foolishness.

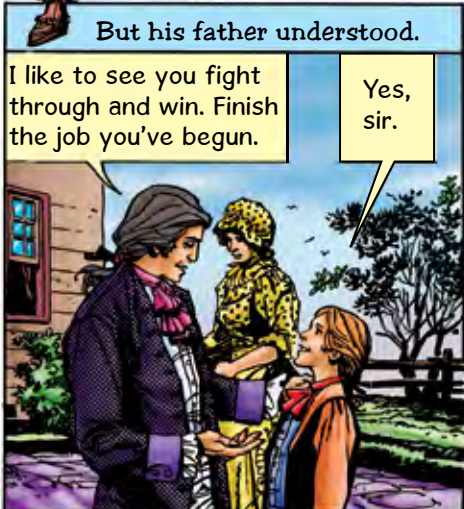
Look at you. You might have been killed.



But his father understood.

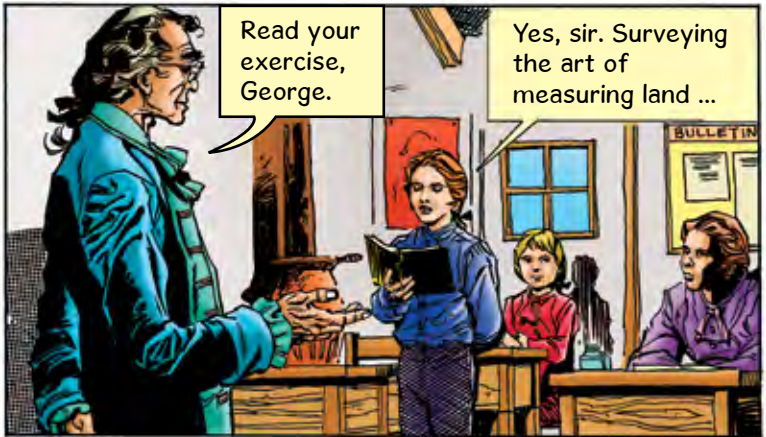
I like to see you fight through and win. Finish the job you've begun.

Yes, sir.





He loved outdoor things—hunting, fishing, swimming, boating. He did not like school as much, but he worked at his lessons.



Read your exercise, George.

Yes, sir. Surveying the art of measuring land ...

Your spelling is very bad. But you are ahead of the class in arithmetic.

I like figuring.



When he was eleven, his father died. His half-brother, Lawrence, became like a father to him.

I am afraid there isn't enough money now to send you to England to school.

I can study alone. And I learn from listening to you and your friends.



Later, he found out how to combine his gift for figuring and his love for the outdoors.

Could I learn to be a surveyor?



That would be good work for you! Thousands of miles of country need to be measured and mapped.

At fifteen he became a surveyor's helper to learn the job.



I'll have this map finished in an hour.

Good.



His hard work paid off with a great opportunity.

Lord Fairfax is sending a party over the mountains to survey his great tract of land. You may go if you wish.

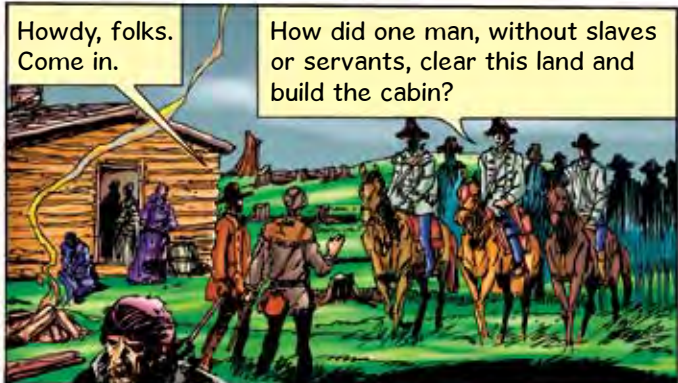


If I wish? It's too good to be true!

He was well paid, but he would have gone for nothing for the chance to explore the wilderness—to learn to live in it—and to meet the pioneer settlers.

Howdy, folks. Come in.

How did one man, without slaves or servants, clear this land and build the cabin?





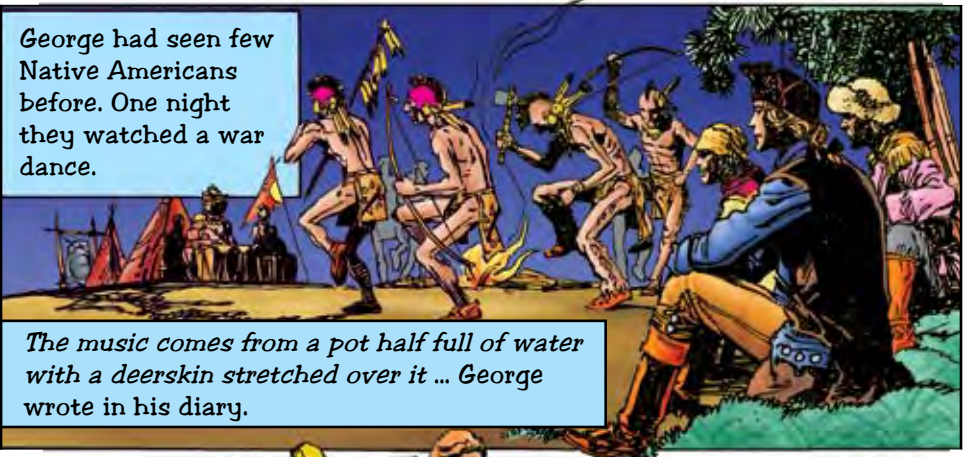
They shot game for food.



They camped in the wilderness.



George had seen few Native Americans before. One night they watched a war dance.



*The music comes from a pot half full of water with a deerskin stretched over it ... George wrote in his diary.*

When he was seventeen, he passed a test and became a licensed surveyor. But he did not spend all of his time working.



He learned to dance and enjoyed it all of his life.

You dance well, sir.