



George Washington's Gristmill is a tangible reminder of a time when the American colonies and the nascent United States were developing from a colonial market to a nationalized economy. In the 1760s George Washington was just starting to move his plantation towards self-sufficiency and had started to switch from mass plantings of tobacco to wheat cultivation. While the switch, along with the construction of a large, merchant gristmill in 1770-71, was meant to make the Mount Vernon Plantation more self-sufficient, it was also developed by Washington in hopes of selling flour directly to local and export markets. With the completion of a larger distillery in 1797, which produced whiskey made almost completely for the trade market, the plantation's change from being dependent on English sources for capital to an independent entity capable of exchanging its own products for cash was complete.

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