



## 2004 Shaping the World: Conversation on Democracy The Presidential Debate of 1804

### George Clinton

1739-1812

One of the most popular politicians in early America, Clinton was known as The Old Incumbent -- a reference to his seemingly unending hold on the New York governor's office.

Born on July 26, 1739, Clinton earned a place in politics by fighting in the French and Indian War, serving as a member of the New York Assembly under British rule, and serving as a member of the Continental Congress.

When the Revolution began in 1775, Clinton accepted a post of brigadier general in the Continental Army. From 1777-1795 and again from 1801-1804, Clinton held the New York governor's post. In the election of 1792, Clinton tried to tilt the vote count his way by disallowing the votes of two entire counties. The results were challenged, but Senator Aaron Burr, who was one of two men chosen to adjudicate the dispute, took the Old Incumbent's part. It was barefaced theft, but Clinton retained his seat,

Clinton, a staunch Republican, was one of the main opponents to ratification of the Constitution, which earned him the enmity of Hamilton. The Old Incumbent helped Aaron Burr advance his political career as well, by working to swing New York to Jefferson and Burr in the election of 1800. In the election of 1804, Thomas Jefferson chose George Clinton as his vice presidential running mate.

Clinton served one term as Jefferson's vice president and another as James Madison's. He died in 1812, shortly before the expiration of his term.

**Biographical information adapted from [AmericanRevolution.Com](http://AmericanRevolution.Com)**