



The General and Mrs. Washington: The Untold Story of a Marriage & a Revolution

Bruce Chadwick

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This biography of George and Martha Washington establishes their place in history, captures their personalities and the deep love they had for each other.

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From Reader Review The General and Mrs. Washington: The Untold Story of a Marriage & a Revolution for online ebook

Bekah Porter-Sandy says

Things I learned about George Washington via this book:

1. He LOVED to dance.
2. He LOVED to buy snazzy clothes.
3. He LOVED, LOVED, LOVED to dance.
4. EVERYTHING he EVER did was AWESOME beyond all belief.
5. He LOVED to ride his horse EVERY DAY.

Seriously, this book made me understand why the publishing industry is straggling along on life support. Why, oh why, oh why didn't an editor step in at some point and say, "Listen, Mr. Author, I know you're a brilliant historian, and I know that there's not a ton of actual documentation about the relationship George had with his wife Martha, but you can't make sweeping generalizations on every single page, and you can't keep rehashing the same information page after page?"

Truth: I have never read the words "always," "everyone," "worst," "best," "never," etc., more.

For example, when Martha Washington visited the soldiers EVERY winter, ALL OF THEM adored her, and she improved the spirits of EVERYONE. Throughout the ENTIRE war, Martha NEVER complained.

George Washington was one of the BEST dressed men in ALL of America. George was the BEST horseman in the region. And, my favorite, George was the BEST dancer in Virginia, if not ALL OF AMERICA.

Sheesh! This author made claim after sweeping claim, all without citation or perspective, and it grew increasingly frustrating with each page.

And while I understand that this book was intended to depict the Washington's relationship as a couple rather than list all of George's accomplishments, it would've been nice if we could've not been forced to read things like, "George loved to dance," "George loved to have a hand in decorating his home," and "George loved to buy fancy clothes," over and over and over and OVER!

I kid you not when I say that such vitally important crises in Washington's presidential career (like the John Jay treaty and the Whiskey Rebellion and Hamilton's National Bank plan) each only received a paragraph of mention. Just one paragraph each. That's it. Where I kid you not, his dancing prowess was mentioned in length, and at least once a chapter.

When I read books like these, I only end up furious that someone was paid to write this crap.

Chris Jarvis says

Simply outstanding! Such good writing here that I immersed myself into the 1700s and the lives of the Washingtons.

LeAnne says

An interesting look at Washington as a young, unmarried man and a look at Martha's life as a young, unmarried lady, later a young widow, and the problems she encounters at that time in her life. We learn some small details about George...he was very detail oriented and kept good records of everything pertaining to his

Mount Vernon farm. He loved to dance and was quite good at it. Dancing was a very popular social event and he often could outlast the best of them on the dance floor.

Their marriage like many of the day was partly one of convenience and circumstance; they were initially attracted to each other when they first met. Martha was a young widow with two children, one of whom was chronically ill. The two of them together accumulated significant wealth and prestige. Their devotion to each other grew over the years as they coped with family and societal problems. I was particularly impressed by Martha's steadfastness during the war years when Washington and his troops were living through some very severe winters.

There are many, many books about Washington, many of which concentrate on his efforts as a general and as president; but this book shows us more about their personal lives as a couple and how much they complemented each other.

Louise says

Chadwick increases our admiration for George Washington, and gives us a glimpse into how exceptional Martha and his marriage to her were.

Chadwick tells of their lives up to their meeting and what the marriage may have meant for each. For Martha it was a chance to enjoy family life with a man of her own generation. For George it seemed to be companionship, maybe a rebound and access to the upper reaches Virginia society.

While I knew GW freed his slaves, I was unaware of his lifelong objection to slavery, and his attempts (however feeble) to do something about it. He did not really get a windfall fortune through his marriage as I thought, he got a challenge. It is not clear what he did to free Martha from her wastrel father-in-law's legal and debt burdens, but he did. I didn't know that Martha stayed with him in Valley Forge and Morristown when she could have luxuriated at Mount Vernon

When the time came, GW's military, administrative and physical skills were exactly what the colonies needed. Once a new country was formed this first couple, started things right with honesty and dedication. The revolution could have turned sour, many of them do, and GW, with Martha at his side were a main component of starting out on the right foot.

Chadwick assembles all this and more, with enlightening descriptions of life in colonial Virginia.
Comment

Loraine says

SUMMARY: Here is the story of the fateful marriage of the richest woman in Virginia and the man who could have been king. In telling their story, Chadwick explains not only their remarkable devotion to each other, but why the wealthiest couple in Virginia became revolutionaries who risked the loss of their vast estates and their very lives.

REVIEW: This book was a strange combination of boring chapters that read like laundry lists and

fascinating chapters that included lots of interesting tidbits and looks into the life of Martha and George Washington. There were also a few editing errors as well. Martha was a fascinating, behind-the-husband wife. She had to have been a very strong woman to have lost to death all of her 4 children by her first husband. But she and George had so much love to give both their newly born country and their grandchildren and nieces and nephews. Enjoyed finding out that George was a true lover of dancing and would dance the night away. He would have been a perfect candidate today for Dancing with the Stars! It was nice to hear of the strength of their marriage and what a true love story it was considering that so many marriages of that time period were arranged.

Sharon says

The General and Mrs. Washington: The Untold Story of a Marriage and a Revolution tells of the relationship George and Martha Washington experienced over a long marriage. Martha was an extremely wealthy widow when George met her and they seemed meant for each other. George met her in early March, visited her home in late March, and again in May at which time, he proposed marriage to her. She accepted his proposal and they were married in the following January.

Her money allowed George to repair and restore his own home of Mount Vernon where he took Martha and her two young children to live soon after they married. He managed her properties, her business dealings, and her money and she managed the household at Mount Vernon. As was common during that time, they were both quite comfortable with the arrangements. Over the years, they became indispensable to each other - Martha only lived two years after George passed and during that time she was despondent and ill much of the time due to grief.

As a history buff, this book gave an insight (that other books had not) into George Washington, the man, during the Revolutionary War and his need for his wife to be with him during the winter months. Martha was his confidante, his nurse, and his strength during those long winter months at the winter camps of the Revolutionary Army. She made it her business to visit sick soldiers, form sewing circles to repair soldier's uniforms or make new ones, organized dinners for the officer's and their wives, and numerous other duties she felt needed to be done. The soldiers respected her as no other woman and looked forward to her arrival in winter camp every year.

Because Martha was so loved and respected, she was called Lady Washington, she received warm welcomes wherever she went. As First Lady, a name not used until much later, she was adored by the masses. In the President's Mansions, both in New York and in Philadelphia, she ran the household just as she did in Mount Vernon; organized dinners, luncheons, and was the President's confidante. He could tell her of his frustrations and insecurities which the people around him never saw because the face George Washington gave to the world was a man who was stoic, always in command, quiet and reserved, quick to anger but compassionate. No one else saw the man who worried or vented to his wife.

George Washington was done with being president after 8 years and just wanted to return to his home. Just as after the Revolutionary War, he found his home and lands in sorry condition due to his absence for 8 years and he had to rebuild all over again. Washington died just a few years after returning to Mount Vernon. He was buried on his property and Martha Washington rests beside him.

The example that the Washingtons set for our fledgling country was not lost on the populace and they were adored. Unfortunately, Martha's role in George's successes is not as well known even though the people of the times seemed to be very aware of the true partnership they enjoyed.

I recommend this book.

Rachel says

Did not finish because I found it unreadable.

It felt like a HS or undergrad research paper, poorly strung together with pointless minutiae that, instead of adding to the depth of the story, jarred me back to the fact that this was REALLY POORLY WRITTEN.

I first highlighted on page 3... and then also page 4, where the author describes George Washington as 6'3", 200 pounds, and gigantic/giant. We see these stats TWICE within these two pages. Where was the editor? This was my first red flag.

Then we follow up with more errors, and a lot of contradicting. I already returned my Kindle copy and didn't copy the passages, so paraphrasing here, but stuff like "They communicated frequently" followed on the next line with "nobody knows what they said because only two letters survived".

It seemed like a lot of suppositions--but not even scintillating ones. The author was coming to really boring conclusions. So, DNF and no desire to in the future. I prefer the writing style of Erik Larson.

Kelly Korby says

I'm surprised there has been so many negative things said about this book,even without having a particularly low rating.This book is absolutely fantastic!

There is so much little-known knowledge in here about Martha Washington that probably deserves it's own book.The sheer effort she gave to the cause of the Revolution and the sacrifices she and her husband made are the things of legend.She was responsible for knitting various articles of clothing during the stay at Valley Forge,entertaining troops and wives,and maintenance of Mount Vernon during George's prolonged absences.She was a soundboard during the war as she listened patiently to George vent about the lack of supplies,or just being vexed at setbacks that were occurring.

Both of them were talented at micromanaging and imparting the ideas that they wanted to express.They both lead by example in whatever circumstances arose,and remained stoic regardless of the outcome.George had learned to control his famous temper (for the most part),and both had a level of perseverance rarely found in humanity,especially by leaders today.

Reading this book,I have newly-found respect for Martha Washington to couple that with the unbelievably high level I already had for Mr.Washington.

I highly recommend this book for anyone looking for a different perspective on our greatest Founding Father,and the family dynamic that made them the closest thing to royalty we have ever had in America.

Nancy Hendrickson says

One of my favorite books about the Washingtons. Lots of little-known details - like Martha probably saving George's life at Valley Forge when he was seriously ill.

J M Padoc says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. While I also noticed some mistakes and inaccuracies and repetitions, as other reviewers have noted, I did not find that those issues lessened my enjoyment of the narrative. I found that I learned a great deal about the person of George Washington and how he was as a family man--things that we don't get to learn in the course of our classes in U. S. history. I gained a deeper respect for the man beyond just the legendary warrior. I also developed a respect for Mrs. Washington as the woman who helped shape the role of all future First Ladies. While it's true that she planned a lot of parties and was not, perhaps, a very competent mother (she spoiled her son and grandson rotten and played favorites), she did set a fantastic example for future First Ladies by leading sewing and knitting circles for soldiers, avoiding a lavish lifestyle in her own personal dress and comportment, and acting as the Morale Booster in Chief for troops in the field.

Tay Mueller says

I haven't actually finished this biography yet, and the more I read, the less likely that is to occur. The author likes to repeat himself. In the first chapter, I learned that George was tall. I learned it 4 or 5 times. sometimes within a paragraph of the last time.

I have been reading this at the same time as another bio of Martha, and so far the most interesting thing is how much the two books contradict each other.

Lyndsay says

I enjoyed reading about the lives of George and Martha Washington. This book provides a fascinating look at their personal lives and marriage.

Christine says

After a couple years of wanting to reread this book, I finally am. This is still after a couple of years and a lot of books, one of my favorite books, written by my favorite author. I love Bruce Chadwick's writing style because it's fairly simplistic and easy to follow. I think that history authors can tend to delve too much into the technical aspect of historical events and figures. I think that Bruce Chadwick accomplishes very well what people want most out of history, something to connect to. What's the point of reading about one's own history if one can't even feel a connection to the people or events of the past? Chadwick does a great job of describing colonial and revolutionary America, and George and Martha Washington as real places and real people as opposed to just figures of myth as they can become in high school history classes.

George Washington is my favorite historical character from any country's history. Of course his actions directly apply to my own country's history and it greatly appeals to my patriotic sense to read about him and his exploits, but I see in George Washington a greatness that exists in very few people, especially nowadays. Part of the reason that I am so drawn to this book is that it doesn't solely revolve around the great General Washington, or President Washington, but as George Washington, the plantation master, husband, and stepfather. It's so easy to get lost in the (like I said) almost mythical stories about George Washington as a great leader, but I'm more interested in his character in everyday life. I think how a man acts in the privacy of his own home says more about him than how he acts in the spotlight.

This book offers me a chance to look at the George Washington that deftly handled many vast plantations, was a kind and loving husband, and that held a dying step-child in his arms until the end. To me George Washington is an IRL Batman, capable of learning and accomplishing anything, managing a large fortune, respected by everyone, and at a moment's notice able to lead an army or a country with expertise. Because this book lets me see the quieter, less publicized side of George Washington, it is my favorite Washington biography (for lack of a better word), and it made Bruce Chadwick my favorite author.

No, this book is not a comprehensive look at either George or Martha Washington's life, nor is it a manual to General Washington's military tactics, or President Washington's foundation laying presidency, but a look at the intimate relationship between husband and wife.

Eileen says

We know so much about George Washington but precious little about Martha and their life together. The marriage began as a union of property and privilege. George was in love with the wife of a friend. Martha, the richest widow in Virginia, needed a father for her children. Together they became beloved to a nation and each other.

In this book I learned more about Martha and her incredible work to help her husband throughout the Revolution. She kept Mount Vernon running in the planting and harvest seasons. She joined General Washington every winter in his camp. She sewed clothes for the troops and started sewing clubs around the country.

She was an accomplished hostess who made every visitor feel the center of attention. An over indulgent parent, she raised her two surviving children until their tragically young deaths. She then raised her son's children as well.

She didn't want to be the first lady but again rose to the challenge and set the tone that wives of the presidents follow today. And yes, George was in the book too!

Becky says

This is not a comprehensive biography of either George or Martha Washington. It does not delve deeply into

George's political philosophies or his military decision making, and hardly touches on his interactions with the other founding fathers. Instead, the author focuses on Washington's personality, his love of farming and his Mount Vernon home, his indulgent attention to his stepchildren and grandchildren, and his relationship with his adoring public. The chapters focusing on Martha describe the lifestyle of an upperclass woman of the 18th century, and also show her dedication to her husband in traveling to be with him at his winter camps during the Revolutionary War, and the importance of her inspirational popularity with the public. Because Martha burned most of the letters that she and George exchanged before she died, there is not much evidence of their relationship as husband and wife, but the author does a good job of describing their devotion to each other based on their actions throughout their long marriage.
