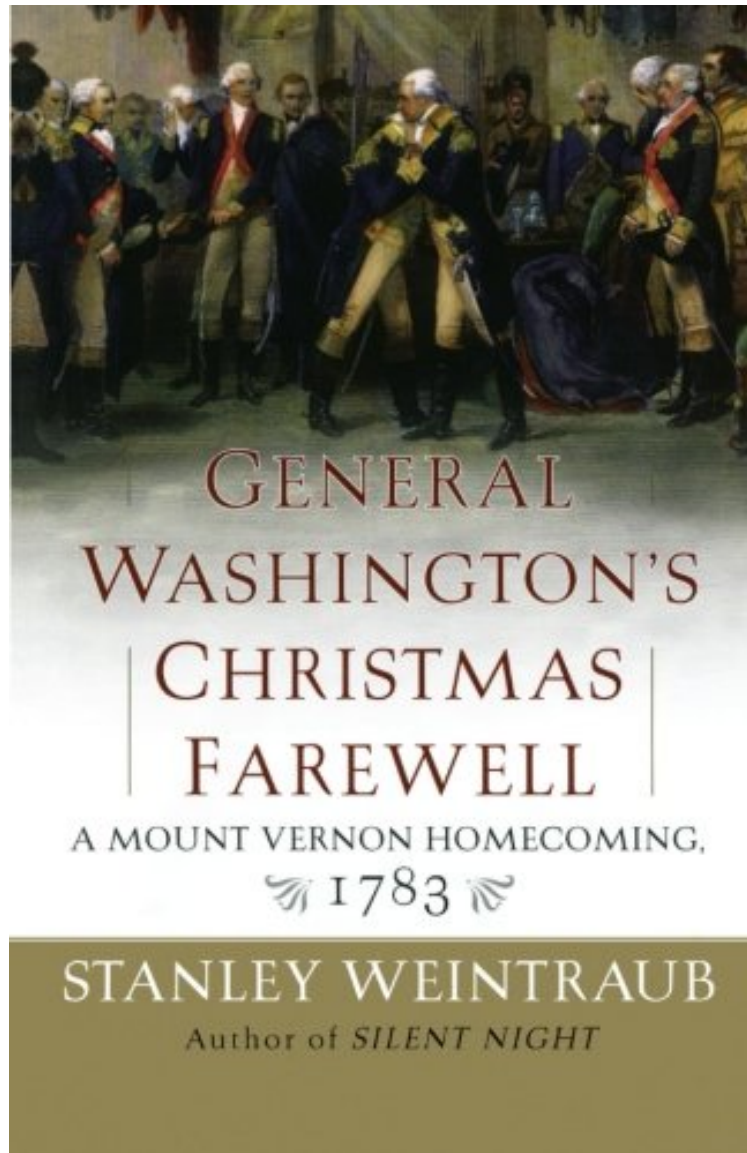


(Free download) General Washington's Christmas Farewell: A Mount Vernon Homecoming, 1783

## General Washington's Christmas Farewell: A Mount Vernon Homecoming, 1783

Stanley Weintraub

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Stanley Weintraub : General Washington's Christmas Farewell: A Mount Vernon Homecoming, 1783 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised General Washington's Christmas Farewell: A Mount Vernon Homecoming, 1783:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The long road homeBy R. DelPartoThe year 1776 tends to be lodged

in the minds of those who have studied American history. But does anyone remember what happened in 1783? With relation to the revolutionary war, GENERAL WASHINGTON'S CHRISTMAS FAREWELL chronicles George Washington's concluding tenure as one of the most distinguishable military leader, which covers the last few months of 1783. Historian Stanley Weintraub paints a picture of America's first president as a compassionate and unselfish man who wholeheartedly was concerned about preserving life and liberty for his country and the people he led; he bridges the gap between Washington as the larger than life founding father to the Virginia farmer who longed to return home. The book begins with Weintraub's story about his visit to his grandsons' first grade class at Thomas Jefferson School where he was surprised to hear how much these young and inquisitive minds knew about the American Revolution and its key figures. But the most fascinating aspect about this story is that the Washington family's Christmas was not documented, but with the culmination of sources that derived from Washington's letters and addresses and a series of publications, Weintraub weaves a unique narrative that reflects upon the hardships of 1776, but the success thereafter with the ratification of the Peace Treaty of Paris. The last two chapters are quite moving because Washington's farewell address, which was written by Thomas Jefferson, is included within the passages, and provides accounts from Thomas Mifflin and James McHenry who had attended the ceremony; the scene was emotional, and depicted a man approaching the twilight of his life. GENERAL WASHINGTON'S CHRISTMAS FAREWELL does not revel with new material about George Washington. However, Weintraub acknowledges a moment in history that commemorates the end of a monumental career of one of history's unforgettable leaders, and shows how he was influential and instrumental with regard to the founding and birth of the United States of America. Indeed, this is another piece of history worth reading. 40 of 41 people found the following review helpful. Goin' South.....By Bruce Loveitt Don't be put-off by the cheesy title of this book. Yes...it's obviously a marketing ploy meant to tie in to the holiday season. In any case, Mr. Weintraub has crafted an interesting book. We follow Washington from West Point to Mount Vernon, as he tries to get home for Christmas. Most notably, he stops in New York City, Philadelphia, and Annapolis. In NYC he says farewell to his officers. He also puzzles his subordinates by going to visit a bookseller who is a known Tory sympathizer. (Unknown to Washington's underlings, the man was part of the commander-in-chief's network of spies who kept Washington informed of the goings-on in British occupied NYC.) In Philadelphia, amongst other things, Washington orders some new spectacles from the noted scientist David Rittenhouse. In Annapolis, Washington returns his commission to Congress, thus making formal his resignation from public service and return to private life. The book is only about 175 pages and can easily be read in a day or two. However, Mr. Weintraub manages to provide a lot of information. Some of it is interesting on a "serious" level - for example, we see Washington at the start of the journey insisting that his departure from public life will be permanent. He made several speeches on the way home, and he constantly stressed that Congress needed strong legislative powers so that it could hold the bickering colonies together. By the time he reached Annapolis, Washington had come to the conclusion that it was going to be an extremely difficult process to turn a loose confederation, which no longer had the "glue" of battling a common enemy, into a true nation. Washington was not being an egomaniac, just realistic, when he came to understand that he was the only person who could be a unifying force. Therefore, when he gave the speech in Annapolis in which he resigned his commission as commander-in-chief he changed the language so as to leave the door open for a later return to public service, if such a thing proved to be necessary...which it did. Washington was remarkably unambitious for someone who was held in such awe. He was, indeed, the man who could have been king. (In his own day, everyone wanted to touch him, as though he were holy. Many years later, people had relics - as though he were a saint. Lincoln had a splinter of Washington's coffin contained in a gold ring he wore. McKinley had several strands of Washington's hair.) We owe Washington an eternal debt that he turned his back on dictatorship. On the lighter side, we see Washington the man, warts and all. We see him losing his temper, we see his pride in his dancing ability, his love of fine wine, etc. We also get to hear about his expense account, where it seems as though he put down every possible item, down to the last pound, shilling, and pence. (He even included tips he had given out to people who had waited on him.) I especially enjoyed the little personal touches that Mr. Weintraub included - such as letting us know that the 6'4" Washington slept in a 6'6" bed. The author also tells us about the time that Washington fired a Mount Vernon gardener for getting drunk. Then, when the man expressed remorse and wanted his job back, Washington agreed....but he made the man sign a contract specifying that he could only get looped at certain times of the year. For example, he was allowed 4 days of drunkenness around Christmas! The book, on rare occasions, becomes tedious when Mr. Weintraub gives us excerpts from speeches delivered during the various "farewell" dinners. But, for the most part, this book will hold your interest with its nice balance between the public and the private Washington. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed the book By Victors I enjoyed the book. If the reader has little knowledge of Washington this is a fine book. I could have done without all the filler material about his career and details about the war since I've read many book about Washington and the Revolution. I was interested in the details of his journey home and his journey back to the life of a gentleman farmer. The book covered his journeys very well.

One of America's greatest Christmas stories and also one of its very first -- from the period between the end of the

Revolutionary War and the ratification of the Constitution -- was a creation of none other than George Washington. The story isn't just about Washington coming home for Christmas for the first time since the war began, but about the character of our most important Founding Father and about the precedent he set for democratic leadership. It is the story of a loving husband, a beloved military leader, and above all, a humble and great man. In late November 1783 when Washington finally received formal notice of the signing of a peace treaty with England he had little more than a month to accept the transfer of power from British troops in New York; to bid farewell to his troops; and to resign his commission to Congress if he hoped to make it to Mount Vernon for Christmas. He could have remained in charge of the army and become a virtual king to the Americans who loved him. Control of the newly forming government was his to take -- yet he chose to resign. It was that decision, coupled with his later decision to step down from the presidency after two terms, that rendered him "the greatest character of the age" (according to none other than King George III). Washington's homeward journey is one of the most moving and inspiring stories from his great and eventful life. When he bade farewell to his troops at Fraunces Tavern in New York City there were no dry eyes. When he reached Congress and gave a retirement speech, it cemented his greatness more fully than had his victory over the British. When he made it to Mount Vernon, finally, on Christmas Eve, it could not have been a happier homecoming. General Washington's Christmas Farewell is a deeply moving Christmas story as well as a great American story.

From Publishers Weekly Lord Byron once called George Washington the "Cincinnatus of the West," and Weintraub's compelling account also compares the modern general to the ancient military leader who longed to return to his plow. Washington, weary after eight years of leadership on the battlefield, yearned to return to the life of a farmer at his beloved Mount Vernon, 1,800 acres of land alongside the Potomac River on which his plantation stood, but since he had accepted his commission in 1775, he had returned there only once. By the fall of 1783, after orchestrating the reoccupation of New York--his final act in a distinguished military career--Washington began his long journey back to his wife and home, anxious to arrive in time for Christmas. Drawing on Washington's letters and private papers, Weintraub, who had so much success with another Christmas break in *Silent Night: The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce*, recreates the general's four-week journey home. Along the way, Washington bid farewell to numerous colleagues, was feted in grand style in Philadelphia and Annapolis, and oversaw the transfer of power from the British monarchy to a former colony's republican government. In spite of weather-related delays, Washington arrived at his plantation on Christmas Eve. The general and his wife celebrated the holiday together with numerous guests by burning a Yule log, firing guns and eating heartily. Weintraub's graceful narration brings to life a distant time and place in America, capturing intimately Washington's loyal patriotism and his deep commitment to family. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist In *Silent Night* (2001), Weintraub chronicled the legendary World War I Christmas truce of 1914, and he now turns his attention to another historically significant Christmas story. Re-creating General George Washington's journey home to Mount Vernon after eight years of exemplary military service and leadership, the author shows a new side of Washington: the family man and eager, would-be homebody. Though desperate to return to hearth and kin in the late fall of 1783, Washington graciously accepted the hospitality of patriots eager to express their gratitude to the new nation's first genuine hero. After stays in New York, Philadelphia, Princeton, Baltimore, and Annapolis, and arriving home in dramatic fashion on Christmas Eve, Washington contentedly rejoined his wife, Martha, anxious to settle into his old life as a gentleman farmer and private citizen. Drawing on a wealth of primary sources, Weintraub has artfully reconstructed Washington's heartwarming--albeit short-lived--farewell to his troops, his fellow citizens, and public service. Margaret Flanagan Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Jay Winik author of "April 1865: The Month that Saved America" Stanley Weintraub's "General Washington's Christmas Farewell" is an engaging rendition of a few fleeting weeks that would come to speak volumes about the young American republic. This slim book is fresh, fascinating, and delightful. Thomas Fleming author of "Liberty!: The American Revolution" This is a different George Washington from the stick figure on the dollar bill -- a man who was not only admired but loved by his fellow Americans. Mr. Weintraub has brought to vivid life a deeply meaningful and profoundly moving chapter from our past.