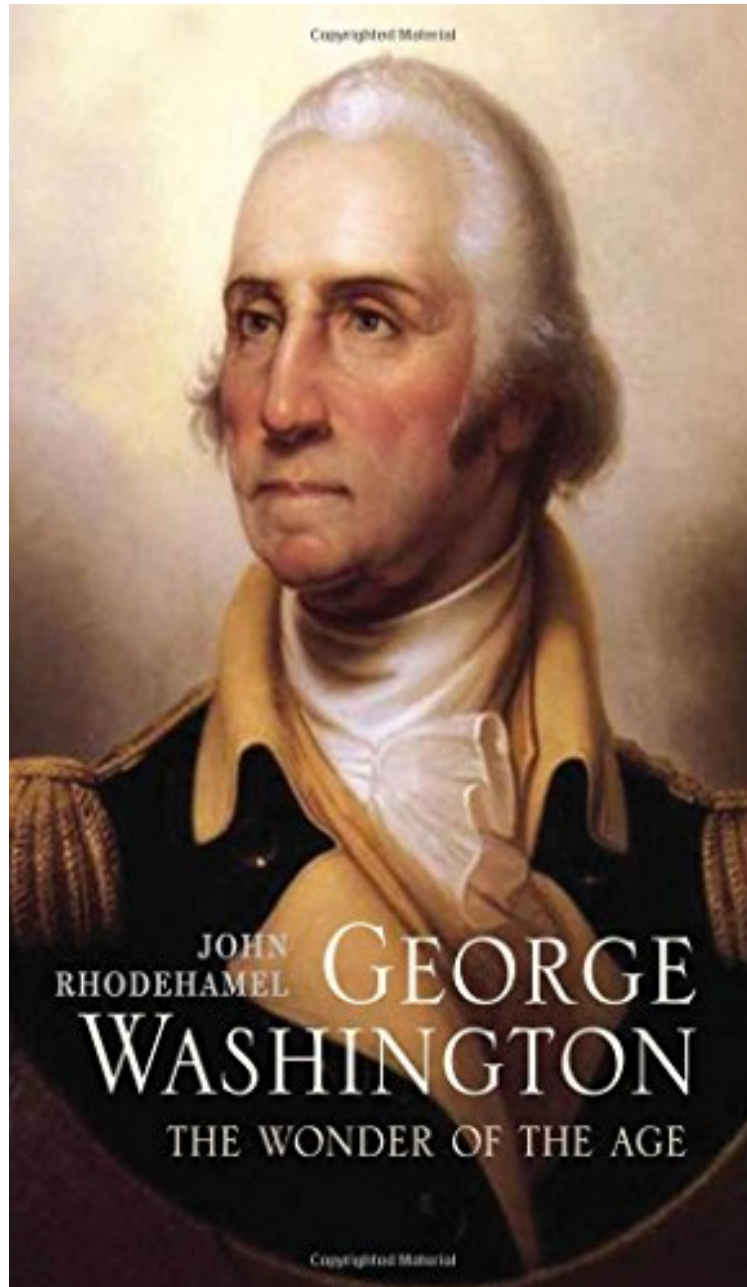


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George Washington: The Wonder of the Age

John Rhodehamel

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John Rhodehamel : George Washington: The Wonder of the Age before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised George Washington: The Wonder of the Age:

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11 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Theory + Biography = A Fascinating Read!
By CPRI
I have to start by saying I was a history major in college, so I've had my fair share of academic reading. But, my emphasis was not in early American History, so I had very little in-depth knowledge beyond textbook summarization. This book reads like one part historical theory one part contemporary biography. There's a straight forward notion that key moments in Washington's life shaped his views on being a Virginian with freedom to prosper. That liberty that existed in the colonials was beyond that of simple British gentry. Eventually these beliefs, paired with how British officers treated Washington as an inferior during his earliest military experience, made Washington into who he would become. This building of the self-made man, then being stripped of importance, is of profound consequence. The first half of the book is staged here with fascinating side notes to the historical landscape unfolding around. The second half is mostly the suggestion that the notion of Washington the meaning of being "American" were hand in hand. Washington embodied the earliest ideals that shaped the nation. This being said, the author points out all of the obstacles that present themselves to the early transition of self-governance as well as Washington's own notion of accepting his place in that new found system. I have read only brief surveys of Washington before this work. And I can say, this was an eye-opening account of many things I was way too uninformed of. Washington is a man a myth in our modern word. This book points out dozens of times the so called "myth" is more real than the greater public knows. And further, the set-in-stone-facts are way more gray than we learned as kids. If you are looking for insight into what made Washington who he is today, then this is a fantastic read. The reading can be daunting at times, especially if you haven't read academia before. But, stick with it. The side-tracking of some non-chronological details quotes can be distracting. But, the overall organizational style is still chronological. I truly enjoyed this book cover to cover. I'm not sure casual readers of history would find this as fascinating, but the narrative is quite a read nonetheless. If you have any desire to learn about Washington in depth, this a great choice. I would give this 4.5 out 5 stars, rounded to 5.3
3 people found the following review helpful. A man of means by all means
By R. DelParto
John Rhodehamel has written a concise biography of one of the most legendary and monumental figures in history George Washington: The Wonder of the Age. A revolutionary figure for a quarter of a century that continued to lead when his tenure closed so did the end of the reign and government-by-birth. Despite that fact, a new one was on the rise, Washington as the myth, god-like and king-like that began as his election as general of the Continental Army of 1775. Rhodehamel suggests this was the beginning of an age where it was possible that the common man may emerge with the ability to rule. Based on his experience editing the Library of America collection of and overseeing the original papers and writings of George Washington, Rhodehamel revisits the periods that gave rise to who would become the first president of the United States. The Wonder of the Age provides readers a good perspective of George Washington as a man that experienced adversity during times of victory but also in times of defeat that never ceased his leadership. It was in times of defeat or pitfalls where Washington gained the skills and training that he and his soldiers of men acquired during the American Revolution; as a colonel he became aware and recognized the differences with how the government and military operated, especially during the French and Indian War where he enhanced his leadership. Gradually, Washington developed as a soldier to a statesman who honed his skills in the fields. First as a surveyor within the frontier and wilderness and later on the front lines, and at times allied with British officials that trusted him. Although it may sound cliché, Washington followed the age old adage of leading by example, in demeanor with every person he encountered at all level of rank, and by attire when he became General of the American Army in 1775 he adopted the distinct uniform that adorned the colors of buff and blue. And so gave birth to the symbolic figure that would be displayed in narratives and portraits. After reading these well known traits, having read a tremendous array of historical figures Washington did indeed stand out and would become that model to many to close cohorts in his age and leaders that rose centuries after, especially in wars fought in the 20th century. There is no doubt, the battles that Washington fought and led from the 1750s to the 1770s that are mentioned in each chapter that Rhodehamel chronologically narrates are legendary in their own respect as well, but of course leading each one from Williamsburg to crossings along the Delaware and Hudson rivers and Valley Forge to Monmouth would forever change the face of America of how it would be governed. After reading the book, comparisons to other parts of history and leaders that may have long passed, but may continue to ring true are the legacies they left. Each one are constant historical reminders and George Washington became the first during a time of monarchical rule and gained prominence as the leader of the land.

The only Washington biography you need.
Wall Street Journal
As editor of the award-winning Library of America collection of George Washington's writings and a curator of the great man's original papers, John Rhodehamel has established himself as an authority of our nation's preeminent founding father. In this crisply written, admirably concise, and never superficial biography (Fergus M. Bordewich, Wall Street Journal) Rhodehamel examines George Washington as a public figure, arguing that the man who first achieved fame in his early twenties is inextricably bound to his mythic status. Solidly grounded in Washington's papers and exemplary in its brevity, this approachable biography is a superb introduction to the leader whose name has become synonymous with America.

"The only Washington biography you need. . . . [Rhodehamels] sympathetic, though not uncritical, account of the first presidents journey from minor Tidewater gentry to mythic statesman is crisply written, admirably concise, and never superficial. As a brief account of Washingtons life, it is unlikely to be surpassed for many years."Wall Street Journal