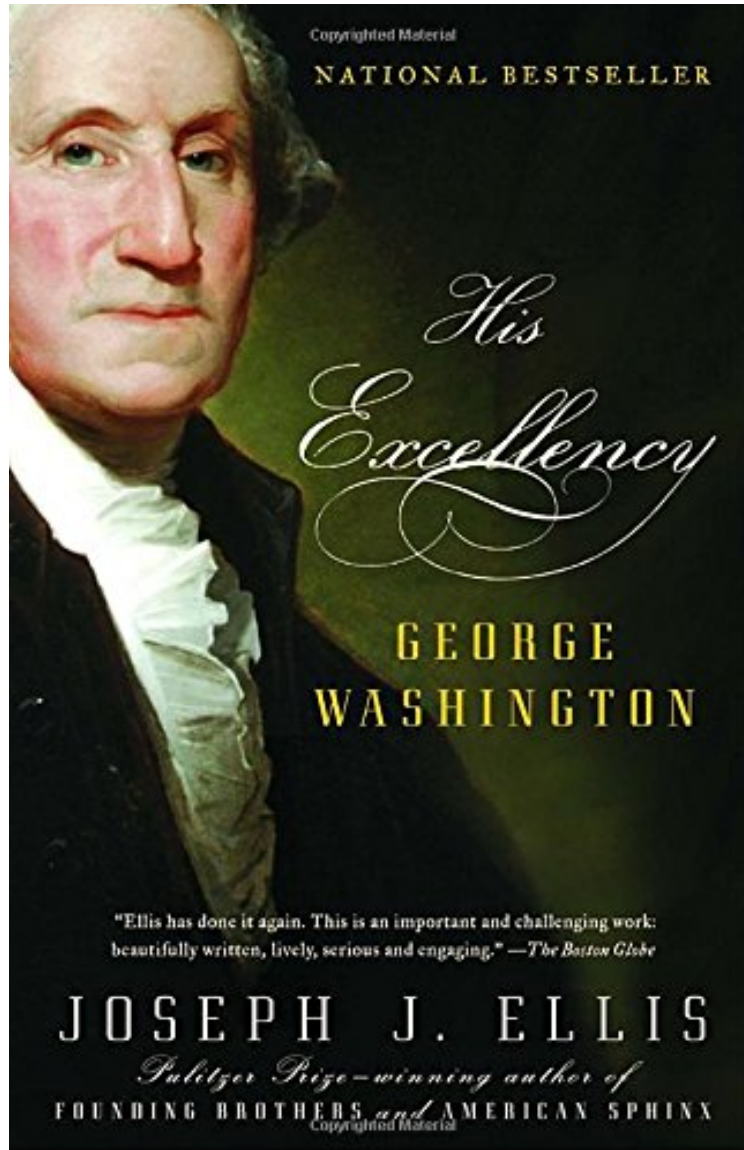


(Free pdf) His Excellency: George Washington

His Excellency: George Washington

Joseph J. Ellis

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Joseph J. Ellis : His Excellency: George Washington before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised His Excellency: George Washington:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Comments on audio CD version.By Paul F. BrooksThe following comments are for the unabridged CD audio book version of His Excellency George Washington by Joseph Ellis and narrated by Nelson Runger.The audio book consists of 13 CD's and runs about 15 hours. Each CD is indexed into numbered tracks of 3 to 4 minuet lengths. The audio quality is uniformly excellent as had been my experiences with

"Recorded Books" audio CD's. This listener found the narrator, Mr. Runger, an excellent speaker who clears pronunciation and moderate pacing a pleasure to listen too. Mr. Runger assumes a distinctive "voice" when reading direct quotes from Washington and other key players. I found these "voices" complemented the listening experience; although a less skilled narrator employing that technique could be very distracting. I have recently completed my 2nd listening of this audio book. After my first listening session was completed I was motivated to seek out other books detailing certain aspects of Washington's life particularly his experiences in the French and Indian War. Concerning the story told by Mr. Ellis I can only say it is a masterful rendering of the life of Washington and highly recommended. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. From symbol to man By Robert J.

Crawford Washington has always seemed somehow inaccessible to me, like an Olympian who rules from the mountain rather than a rough and tumble pol. We Americans have been brought up on so many ridiculous myths, such as the chopped-cherrie-tree-cannot-tell-a-lie story to the neutral presider over the innumerable factions of bickering revolutionaries. While I had read bios of virtually all of his founder contemporaries, I never felt I could penetrate the cloud around him. Then I discovered this masterful book. Not only does it follow his career, but it informs the reader as to Washington's motivations, emotional life, and methods - he was passionate, ambitious, coldly shrewd, and stringently self-disciplined. (In contrast to his popular image, he had a fiery temper that he learned to keep in check with great difficulty.) In each step of his life, he learned certain lessons from experience rather than books, shaping his attitudes in his own way. Though born to a plantation family, he was relatively underprivileged (i.e. not the prime heir) and so had to make his way more or less on his own; he had little formal education. First, he found a military career under the British. While he learned a great deal about how to fight on American soil - with different requirements than European theatres - he came to despise aristocratic privilege, which all too often reserved position and advantage to the mediocre and undeserving. Second, after a tumultuous career beginning - he oversaw a massacre by Indian allies that led indirectly to the Seven Years War and was a key player in many significant defeats - he benefitted from his reputation to make a crucially important marriage to the widow Martha, enabling himself to become a gentleman farmer for 16 years, at the pinnacle of Virginia gentry. However, while maintaining a properly pseudo-aristocratic life style with extremely expensive European goods, he proved to be an innovative business man, with real estate deals and experiments in the management of his estates; because he came to distrust faraway officials dispensing favors and merchants who enmeshed his neighbors in inescapable debt, he moved away from mono-crops such as tobacco whose markets were unpredictable towards self sustainability. This created a streak of fierce independence and self-reliance within him and, alone among the founding fathers, he died a very rich man with minimal debt. When the time came for the revolution, he was ready to risk everything to preserve his political and economic autonomy. Third, he took over the motley and poorly funded American rebel forces and led them to victory in spite of his early catastrophic defeat in New York, where he concluded that he would have to harass the British to gradually wear them down rather than confront them directly in the field. This long conflict forced him to contend with the incompetent confederation government, which convinced him of the need for a strong executive that had the power to tax and act effectively. As such, this explains very clearly why he sided with the Federalists later. Once again, this was counterintuitive to conventional wisdom: the colonies had revolted against the British monarchies policies and taxation. Fourth, we see the politician emerge at the start of the Constitutional Convention. Washington retired with unsurpassed prestige, so his participation might ruin his reputation as the country's liberator. He waited a long time to commit himself, weighing his options and getting up to speed on the political vocabulary through tutorials with Madison - while he had some idea of what he wanted to do from his experience as a leader and executive, he relied on his more learned colleagues for the right way to describe and sell it. Fifth, as president, Washington not only established many of the norms of executive power and practice that have survived intact to the present day, but also attempted to manipulate the political forces to prevent the country from fragmenting into competing adversarial powers. Of course, in hindsight, we know that he failed to forge a durable union by the middle of the 19C, that the issue of slavery (and the economic system it supported) had to be reckoned with later, though the delay of a few generations may have been enough to keep the union from immediate and permanent disintegration. Nonetheless, Washington essentially created the federal system of government, with its ability to raise funds, maintain an army, take precedence over states' prerogatives, and serve as a decisive economic actor (all of which is still controversial). Here, Hamilton was his indispensable instrument of action - but it was Washington who was the real mastermind. To paraphrase, he attempted to make the United States a singular noun rather than plural. Ellis convincingly portrays the immensity of this undertaking, as the first republic to rule over such a huge and socially disparate country. Ellis' book is quite brief, so I feared it would be superficial, such as Anthony Everitt's mediocre treatments of Roman pols. Fortunately, Ellis pulls it off with wonderful depth: the book has a density that can only come from a master historian and writer. I implicitly trusted his analyses at every turn and never found his statements glib or tendentious. He is critical of Washington, never makes excuses for his faults, but respectful. Warmly recommended. This is a great introduction to an extremely complex man. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Loved it! By J. Henson Couldn't put it down. Such a vivid account makes one feel he is living next to the man. Loved it!

National Bestseller To this landmark biography of our first president, Joseph J. Ellis brings the exacting scholarship, shrewd analysis, and lyric prose that have made him one of the premier historians of the Revolutionary era. Training his lens on a figure who sometimes seems as remote as his effigy on Mount Rushmore, Ellis assesses George Washington as a military and political leader and a man whose statue-like solidity concealed volcanic energies and emotions. Here is the impetuous young officer whose miraculous survival in combat half-convinced him that he could not be killed. Here is the free-spending landowner whose debts to English merchants instilled him with a prickly resentment of imperial power. We see the general who lost more battles than he won and the reluctant president who tried to float above the partisan feuding of his cabinet. His Excellency is a magnificent work, indispensable to an understanding not only of its subject but also of the nation he brought into being.

.com As commander of the Continental army, George Washington united the American colonies, defeated the British army, and became the world's most famous man. But how much do Americans really know about their first president? Today, as Pulitzer Prize-winner Joseph J. Ellis says in this crackling biography, Americans see their first president on dollar bills, quarters, and Mount Rushmore, but only as "an icon--distant, cold, intimidating." In truth, Washington was a deeply emotional man, but one who prized and practiced self-control (an attribute reinforced during his years on the battlefield). Washington first gained recognition as a 21-year-old emissary for the governor of Virginia, braving savage conditions to confront encroaching French forces. As the de facto leader of the American Revolution, he not only won the country's independence, but helped shape its political personality and "topple the monarchical and aristocratic dynasties of the Old World." When the Congress unanimously elected him president, Washington accepted reluctantly, driven by his belief that the union's very viability depended on a powerful central government. In fact, keeping the country together in the face of regional allegiances and the rise of political parties may be his greatest presidential achievement. Based on Washington's personal letters and papers, His Excellency is smart and accessible--not to mention relatively brief, in comparison to other encyclopedic presidential tomes. Ellis's short, succinct sentences speak volumes, allowing readers to glimpse the man behind the myth. --Andy Boynton .com Exclusive Content Curious about George? .com reveals a few facts about the legendary first president of the United States. Washington bust by Jean Antoine Houdon. Courtesy of the Mt. Vernon Ladies' Assoc. 1. The famous tale about Washington chopping down the cherry tree ("Father, I cannot tell a lie") is a complete fabrication. 2. George Washington never threw a silver dollar across the Potomac River--in fact, to do so from the shore of his Mount Vernon home would have been physically impossible. 3. George Washington did not wear wooden teeth. His poorly fitting false teeth were in fact made of cow's teeth, human teeth, and elephant ivory set in a lead base. 4. Early in his life, Washington was himself a slave owner. His opinions changed after he commanded a multiracial army in the Revolutionary War. He eventually came to recognize slavery as "a massive American anomaly." 5. In 1759, having resigned as Virginia's military commander to become a planter, Washington married Martha Dandridge Custis. Washington's marriage to the colony's wealthiest widow dramatically changed his life, catapulting him into Virginia aristocracy. 6. Scholars have discredited suggestions that Washington's marriage to Martha lacked passion, as well as the provocative implications of the well-worn phrase "George Washington slept here." 7. Washington held his first public office when he was 17 years old, as surveyor of Culpeper County, Virginia. 8. At age 20, despite no prior military experience, Washington was appointed an adjutant in the Virginia militia, in which he oversaw several militia companies, and was assigned the rank of major. 9. As a Virginia aristocrat, Washington ordered all his coats, shirts, pants, and shoes from London. However, most likely due to the misleading instructions he gave his tailor, the suits almost never fit. Perhaps this is why he appears in an old military uniform in his 1772 portrait. 10. In 1751, during a trip to Barbados with his half-brother Lawrence, Washington was stricken with smallpox and permanently scarred. Fortunately, this early exposure made him immune to the disease that would wipe out colonial troops during the Revolutionary War. Timeline Important dates in George Washington's life. Engraving of Mount Vernon, 1804. Courtesy of the Mt. Vernon Ladies' Assoc. 1732: George Washington is born at his father's estate in Westmoreland County, Virginia. 1743: George's father, Augustine Washington, dies. 1752: At age 20, despite the fact that he has never served in the military, Washington is appointed adjutant in the Virginia militia, with the rank of major. 1753: As an emissary to Virginia Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie, he travels to the Ohio River Valley to confront French forces--the first of a series of encounters that would lead to the French and Indian War. 1755: Washington is appointed commander-in-chief of Virginia's militia. 1759: He marries wealthy widow Martha Dandridge Custis. 1774: Washington is elected to the First Continental Congress. 1775: He is unanimously elected by the Continental Congress as its army's commander-in-chief. Start of the American Revolution. 1776: On Christmas Day, Washington leads his army across the Delaware River and launches a successful attack against Hessian troops in Trenton, New Jersey. 1781: With the French, he defeats British troops in Yorktown, Virginia, precipitating the end of the war. 1783: The Revolutionary War officially ends. 1788: The Constitution is ratified. 1789: Washington is elected president. 1797: He fulfills his last term as president. 1799: Washington dies on December 14, sparking a period of national mourning. From Publishers Weekly In this follow-up to his bestselling *Founding Brothers*, Ellis offers a magisterial account of the life and times of George Washington, celebrating the heroic image of the president whom peers like Jefferson and Madison recognized as "their

unquestioned superior" while acknowledging his all-too-human qualities. Ellis recreates the cultural and political context into which Washington strode to provide leadership to the incipient American republic. But more importantly, the letters and other documents Ellis draws on bring the aloof legend alive as a young soldier who sought to rise through the ranks of the British army during the French and Indian War, convinced he knew the wilderness terrain better than his commanding officers; as a Virginia plantation owner (thanks to his marriage) who watched over his accounts with a ruthless eye; as the commander of an outmatched rebel army who, after losing many of his major battles, still managed to catch the British in an indefensible position. Following Washington from the battlefield to the presidency, Ellis elegantly points out how he steered a group of bickering states toward national unity; Ellis also elaborates on Washington's complex stances on issues like slavery and expansion into Native American territory. The Washington who emerges from these pages is similar to the one portrayed in a biographical study by James MacGregor Burns and Susan Dunn published earlier this year, but Ellis's richer version leaves readers with a deeper sense of the man's humanity. 16 pages of photos not seen by PW. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From School Library Journal Adult/High School As Ellis indicates in his well-documented acknowledgments and endnotes, this book relies heavily on the "Papers of George Washington" series, which provides access to the president's correspondence. Since no new documentary evidence is available, the attraction is Ellis's assessment of Washington's character and impeccable judgment. He keeps Washington on his pedestal while pointing out just a few flaws in the president's personality: ambition from an early age (yet how American!), slaveholding (although he came to regret this, and ordered in his will that upon Martha's death the slaves were to be freed), and no great military talent. These defects were vastly outweighed by his character and practical wisdom. Ellis notes that, even among that group of brilliant men known as our Founding Fathers, Washington was recognized by every one of them as "the Foundingest Father of them all." This book does offer new insights regarding Washington's disposition of his wealth and property in his will. Ellis does an excellent job of infusing a sometimes remote national icon with breath and life, so that readers are able to see the human Washington operating in his tumultuous period of history while towering above it no mean authorial feat. Edward Redmond, Library of Congress, Washington, DC