

# George Washington Failures



## **George Washington's Failures: A Deeper Look at the Father of Our Nation**

The image of George Washington is often one of unwavering strength, unwavering leadership, and unparalleled success – the father of our nation, the victor of the Revolutionary War, the first President of the United States. But even the most revered figures have faced setbacks and failures. This post delves beyond the iconic portrait to explore the less-celebrated aspects of Washington's life, revealing his vulnerabilities, missteps, and the crucial lessons we can learn from his failures. We'll examine specific instances of his shortcomings, providing a more nuanced and historically accurate understanding of this pivotal figure in American history. Prepare to see a more human, and ultimately more relatable, George Washington.

### **Early Military Setbacks and Strategic Errors**

While Washington ultimately led the Continental Army to victory, his early years as commander-in-chief were fraught with challenges. His military experience prior to the Revolution was limited, and this lack of extensive training initially hampered his strategic decision-making. The disastrous early campaigns, marked by heavy losses and retreats, weren't solely due to his leadership; resource limitations and inexperienced troops played a significant role. However, Washington's strategic errors, including poorly timed attacks and underestimated enemy strength, contributed to these setbacks. These early failures, rather than demoralizing him, seemed to fuel his determination and lead to a crucial reevaluation of his strategies and a focus on developing stronger leadership capabilities. He learned from his mistakes, adapting his tactics and building a more effective fighting force.

## **The Importance of Adaptability in Leadership**

Washington's ability to adapt and learn from his mistakes is a testament to his strength of character. He didn't shy away from acknowledging his errors, instead viewing them as opportunities for growth. This adaptability is a key takeaway for aspiring leaders today. Recognizing flaws, analyzing the causes, and implementing corrective measures are crucial components of effective leadership.

## **Economic Miscalculations and Financial Troubles**

Despite his prominence, Washington faced significant economic challenges throughout his life. His Mount Vernon plantation, while impressive, was not always financially successful. His reliance on enslaved labor, while a prevalent practice of the time, ultimately proved to be an economically inefficient system in the long run. Poor management of resources and investments further contributed to his financial instability. This highlights the fact that even individuals of considerable influence can experience substantial financial setbacks, emphasizing the importance of careful financial planning and management.

## **The Complexities of Plantation Economics**

Washington's economic struggles provide a stark reminder of the complexities and inherent contradictions of the plantation economy. While it offered significant social standing, it was fraught with risks and ultimately unsustainable for many landowners. This aspect of his life offers a valuable lens through which to understand the economic realities of the 18th century.

## **The Limitations of Presidential Power**

As the first President, Washington faced the unprecedented task of establishing a new nation and defining the role of the presidency. This was a position with limited precedent, and he made some missteps in navigating the complexities of the new government. His handling of certain political controversies, such as the Whiskey Rebellion, was met with criticism from various factions. He often had to tread a delicate line, balancing the needs of the nation with the limitations of his power and the constraints of a fledgling democracy. This period reveals the inherent challenges of leadership during times of profound societal and political change.

## **Navigating Uncharted Political Waters**

Washington's presidency was a constant balancing act. He had to establish norms and precedents while navigating a complex political landscape shaped by powerful factions and differing ideologies.

His experiences illustrate the enormous pressure and responsibility associated with leading a new nation.

## **The Issue of Slavery**

Perhaps Washington's most enduring and controversial failing is his ownership of enslaved people. While he expressed some misgivings about the institution of slavery later in his life, he never publicly denounced it or took decisive action to abolish it on his own plantation. This inconsistency remains a stain on his legacy, highlighting the pervasive nature of slavery in 18th-century America and the moral compromises made by even the most celebrated figures of the era. Understanding this aspect of Washington's life is crucial for a complete and honest assessment of his historical significance.

### **Facing the Legacy of Slavery**

The complexities of Washington's relationship with slavery force us to confront the uncomfortable truths about the past. It necessitates a critical examination of historical figures, recognizing both their contributions and their shortcomings in the context of their time.

## **Conclusion**

George Washington's life, while undeniably impactful, was not without its failures. Examining these failures, however, provides a more complete and nuanced understanding of his character and his historical context. His ability to learn from adversity, his persistence despite setbacks, and his unwavering dedication to the cause of American independence ultimately shaped him into the leader we remember today. Understanding his imperfections allows us to appreciate the remarkable accomplishments of this complex figure, and to draw valuable lessons from both his triumphs and his tribulations.

## **FAQs**

1. Did George Washington ever apologize for owning slaves? No, George Washington never publicly apologized for owning enslaved people. While he expressed some personal reservations about the institution in later years, he did not take concrete steps to dismantle it during his lifetime.
2. What was the biggest military defeat George Washington faced? While there wasn't one singular, overwhelmingly catastrophic defeat, the early campaigns of the Revolutionary War, marked by

numerous retreats and significant losses, represent a period of significant military setbacks.

3. How did Washington's financial difficulties impact his presidency? Washington's personal financial challenges did not significantly impact his official duties as President. However, his experiences highlighted the complexities of managing both personal finances and the responsibilities of high office.

4. What were some of the criticisms Washington faced during his presidency? Washington faced criticism from various factions regarding his handling of the Whiskey Rebellion, his neutrality policy in the early years of the French Revolution, and the perceived consolidation of power within the executive branch.

5. How has the historical understanding of George Washington evolved over time? The historical understanding of George Washington has evolved significantly. While he was once portrayed as an almost flawless figure, modern historical interpretations acknowledge his flaws, particularly his ownership of slaves and the limitations of his leadership during specific moments. This more nuanced perspective provides a richer understanding of his life and his legacy.

**george washington failures: George Washington and Native Americans** Richard Harless, 2019-02-19 George Washington had contact with Native Americans throughout most of his life. His first encounter as a teenager left him with the impression that they were nothing more than an ignorant people. As a young man he fought both alongside and against Native Americans during the French and Indian War and gained a grudging respect for their fighting abilities. During the American Revolution, Washington made it clear that he welcomed Indian allies as friends but would do his utmost to crush Indian enemies. As president, he sought to implement a program to civilize Native Americans by teaching them methods of agriculture and providing the implements of husbandry that would enable them to become proficient farmers--the only way, he believed, Native Americans would survive in a white-dominated society. Yet he discovered that his government could not protect Indian lands as guaranteed in countless treaties, and the hunger for Indian land by white settlers was so rapacious that it could not be controlled by an inadequate federal military establishment. While Washington appeared to admit the failure of the program, this book--a unique and necessary exploration of Washington's experience with and thoughts on Native Americans--contends he deserves credit for his continued efforts to implement a policy based on the just treatment of America's indigenous peoples. Distributed for George Mason University Press

**george washington failures: *The Ascent of George Washington*** John Ferling, 2009-07-01 Perhaps the most revered American of all, George Washington has long been considered a stoic leader who held himself above the fray of political infighting. What has gone unnoticed about the much-researched life of Washington is that he was in fact a consummate politician, as historian John Ferling shows in this revealing and provocative new book. As leader of the Continental Army, Washington's keen political savvy enabled him not only to outwit superior British forces, but--even more challenging--to manage the fractious and intrusive Continental Congress. Despite dire setbacks early in the war, Washington deftly outmaneuvered rival generals and defused dissent from officers below him, ending the war with the status of a national icon. His carefully burnished reputation allowed Washington, as president, to lead the country under the guise of non-partisanship for almost all of his eight years in office. Washington, Ferling argues, was not only one of America's most adroit politicians, he was easily the most successful of all time--so successful, in fact, that he is no longer thought of as having been political.

**george washington failures: *George Washington and American Constitutionalism*** Glenn A. Phelps, 1993 Known as the Father of His Country, George Washington is sometimes viewed as a demi-god for what he was and did, rather than for what he thought. In addition to being a popular

icon for the forces of American nationalism, he served as commander-in-chief of the victorious Continental Army. That he played a key role in securing the adoption of the Constitution is well known, but few credit him with a political philosophy that actively shaped the constitutional tradition.

**george washington failures: *The Return of George Washington*** Edward J. Larson, 2014-10-07 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER An elegantly written account of leadership at the most pivotal moment in American history (Philadelphia Inquirer): Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Edward J. Larson reveals how George Washington saved the United States by coming out of retirement to lead the Constitutional Convention and serve as our first president. After leading the Continental Army to victory in the Revolutionary War, George Washington shocked the world: he retired. In December 1783, General Washington, the most powerful man in the country, stepped down as Commander in Chief and returned to private life at Mount Vernon. Yet as Washington contentedly grew his estate, the fledgling American experiment floundered. Under the Articles of Confederation, the weak central government was unable to raise revenue to pay its debts or reach a consensus on national policy. The states bickered and grew apart. When a Constitutional Convention was established to address these problems, its chances of success were slim. Jefferson, Madison, and the other Founding Fathers realized that only one man could unite the fractious states: George Washington. Reluctant, but duty-bound, Washington rode to Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 to preside over the Convention. Although Washington is often overlooked in most accounts of the period, this masterful new history from Pulitzer Prize-winner Edward J. Larson brilliantly uncovers Washington's vital role in shaping the Convention—and shows how it was only with Washington's support and his willingness to serve as President that the states were brought together and ratified the Constitution, thereby saving the country.

**george washington failures: *His Excellency*** Joseph J. Ellis, 2004-10-26 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.

**george washington failures: *The Life of George Washington*** John Marshall, 1805

**george washington failures: *Blood of Tyrants*** Logan Beirne, 2014-12-02 *Blood of Tyrants* reveals the surprising details of our Founding Fathers' approach to government and this history's impact on today. Delving into forgotten—and often lurid—facts of the Revolutionary War, Logan Beirne focuses on the nation's first commander in chief, George Washington, as he shaped the very meaning of the United States Constitution in the heat of battle. Key episodes of the Revolution illustrate how the Founders dealt with thorny wartime issues: How do we protect citizens' rights when the nation is struggling to defend itself? Who decides war strategy? When should we use military tribunals instead of civilian trials? Should we inflict harsh treatment on enemy captives if it means saving American lives? Beirne finds evidence in previously unexplored documents such as General Washington's letters debating the use of torture, an eyewitness account of the military tribunal that executed a British prisoner, Founders' letters warning against government debt, and communications pointing to a power struggle between Washington and the Continental Congress. Vivid stories from the Revolution set the stage for Washington's pivotal role in the drafting of the Constitution. The Founders saw the first American commander in chief as the template for all future presidents: a leader who would fiercely defend Americans' rights and liberties against all forms of

aggression. Pulling the reader directly into dramatic scenes from history, *Blood of Tyrants* fills a void in our understanding of the presidency and our ingenious Founders' pragmatic approach to issues we still face today.

**george washington failures: Washington's Farewell Address** George Washington, 1907

**george washington failures: *Founding Father*** Richard Brookhiser, 1997-02-22 Revisits the spectacular career of George Washington, at once our most familiar and enigmatic president. Challenging the modern perceptions of Washington as either a political figurehead of little actual importance or a folk legend rather than a real man, Brookhiser traces the president's amazing accomplishments as a statesman, soldier, and founder of a great nation in a quarter century of activity that remains unmatched by any modern leader. Brookhiser goes on to examine Washington's education, ideals, and intellectual curiosity, illuminating how Washington's character and values shaped the beginnings of American politics.--Page 4 of cover.

**george washington failures: *George Washington*** George Washington, 1988 Based almost entirely on materials reproduced from: The writings of George Washington from the original manuscript sources, 1745-1799 / John C. Fitzpatrick, editor. Includes indexes.

**george washington failures: *George Washington On Leadership*** Richard Brookhiser, 2009-04-14 FIRST IN WAR, FIRST IN PEACE, FIRST IN LEADERSHIP. Richard Brookhiser's revolutionary biography, *Founding Father*, took George Washington off the dollar bill and made him live. Now, with his trademark wit and precision, Brookhiser expertly examines the details of Washington's life that fullscale biographies sweep over, to instruct us in true leadership. *George Washington on Leadership* is a textbook look at Washington's three spectacularly successful careers as an executive: general, president, and tycoon. Brookhiser explains how Washington maximized his strengths and overcame his flaws, and inspires us to do likewise. It shows how one man's struggles and successes 200 years ago can be a model for leaders today. Washington oversaw two startups-the army and the presidency. He chaired the most important meeting in American history-the Constitutional Convention. Washington rose from being a third son who was a major in the militia, to one of the most famous men in the world. At every stage in his career, he had to deal with changing circumstances, from tobacco prices to geopolitics, and with wildly different classes of men, from frontiersmen to aristocrats. Washington's example is so crucial because of the many firsts he is responsible for.

**george washington failures: *Why Presidents Fail And How They Can Succeed Again*** Elaine C. Kamarck, 2016-07-26 Failure should not be an option in the presidency, but for too long it has been the norm. From the botched attempt to rescue the U.S. diplomats held hostage by Iran in 1980 under President Jimmy Carter and the missed intelligence on Al Qaeda before 9-11 under George W. Bush to, most recently, the computer meltdown that marked the arrival of health care reform under Barack Obama, the American presidency has been a profile in failure. In *Why Presidents Fail and How They Can Succeed Again*, Elaine Kamarck surveys these and other recent presidential failures to understand why Americans have lost faith in their leaders—and how they can get it back. Kamarck argues that presidents today spend too much time talking and not enough time governing, and that they have allowed themselves to become more and more distant from the federal bureaucracy that is supposed to implement policy. After decades of imperial and rhetorical presidencies, we are in need of a managerial president. This White House insider and former Harvard academic explains the difficulties of governing in our modern political landscape, and offers examples and recommendations of how our next president can not only recreate faith in leadership but also run a competent, successful administration.

**george washington failures: *George Washington's Liberty Key*** William J. Bahr, 2016 This book is about the most interesting key ever made, which now hangs in the central passageway of George Washington's Mount Vernon mansion, helping to greet over a million visitors a year. The main key to the Bastille prison in Paris, it was given in 1790 to Washington, the patriarch of liberty, by his missionary, the Marquis de Lafayette, who took the sacred fire of liberty he discovered in America and tried to fan its flames in France. Become a history detective and find out how this

unique key was made, how the man who made it helped kill a king, and how it made its way to Mount Vernon. Along the way, learn about the interesting and unexpected twists and turns made in unlocking the doors hiding the truth about the key, which some (incorrectly) argue is a counterfeit. Then learn what Washington and Lafayette each believed was the key to establishing and maintaining liberty, and what went right and wrong in their respective revolutions. Finally, learn how the key continues to inspire a world-wide devotion to freedom.--

**george washington failures: Zero Fail** Carol Leonnig, 2021-05-27 'This is one of those books that will go down as the seminal work — the determinative work — in this field ... Terrifying.' —Rachel Maddow The first definitive account of the rise and fall of the Secret Service, from the Kennedy assassination to the alarming mismanagement of the Obama and Trump years, right up to the insurrection at the Capitol on 6 January 2021 — by the Pulitzer Prize winner and #1 New York Times bestselling co-author of *A Very Stable Genius* Carol Leonnig has been reporting on the Secret Service for The Washington Post for most of the last decade, bringing to light the secrets, scandals, and shortcomings that plague the agency today — from a toxic work culture to dangerously outdated equipment to the deep resentment within the ranks at key agency leaders, who put protecting the agency's once-hallowed image before fixing its flaws. But the Secret Service wasn't always so troubled. The Secret Service was born in 1865, in the wake of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, but its story begins in earnest in 1963, with the death of John F. Kennedy. Shocked into reform by its failure to protect the president on that fateful day in Dallas, this once-sleepy agency was radically transformed into an elite, highly trained unit that would redeem itself several times, most famously in 1981 by thwarting an assassination attempt against Ronald Reagan. But this reputation for courage and excellence would not last forever. By Barack Obama's presidency, the once-proud Secret Service was running on fumes and beset by mistakes and alarming lapses in judgement: break-ins at the White House, an armed gunman firing into the windows of the residence while confused agents stood by, and a massive prostitution scandal among agents in Cartagena, to name just a few. With Donald Trump's arrival, a series of promised reforms were cast aside, as a president disdainful of public service instead abused the Secret Service to rack up political and personal gains. To explore these problems in the ranks, Leonnig interviewed dozens of current and former agents, government officials, and whistleblowers who put their jobs on the line to speak out about a hobbled agency that's in desperate need of reform. 'I will be forever grateful to them for risking their careers,' she writes, 'not because they wanted to share tantalising gossip about presidents and their families, but because they know that the Service is broken and needs fixing. By telling their story, they hope to revive the Service they love.'

**george washington failures: Failures of the Presidents** Thomas J. Craughwell, M. William Phelps, 2008-09-01 Take a humbling journey through America's proud history with this engaging and informative look at the nation's most epic presidential blunders. *Failures of the Presidents* recounts twenty of the worst bad calls to come out of the executive office, ranging from the nation's birth to the start of the twenty-first century. Author Thomas Craughwell begins with George Washington, who tried to pay for the Revolutionary War with a tax on whiskey—a choice that sparked the newly formed country's first bloody rebellion. Centuries later, another George—the second President Bush—was convinced that Iraq was hiding weapons of mass destruction. His invasion of the country resulted in a protracted, deadly, and costly war that gave a serious blow to American credibility around the world. Between these episodes, there were many other regrettable, embarrassing, or downright disastrous mistakes made by residents of the White House—the worst of which are explored in this book.

**george washington failures: Not-So-Great Presidents: Commanders in Chief** Erik Slader, Ben Thompson, 2019-01-15 From heroic George Washington to the dastardly Richard Nixon, the oval office has been occupied by larger-than-life personalities since 1789. The position comes with enormous power and responsibility, and every American president thus far has managed to achieve great things. However, the President of the United States is only human—and oftentimes far from perfect. While some men suffered through only minor mishaps during their time in office, others are

famously remembered for leaving behind much bigger messes. In the third installment of the Epic Fails series, authors Erik Slader and Ben Thompson, and artist Tim Foley, take readers on another hilarious ride, exploring the lives, legacies, and failures of some of America's commanders in chief.

**george washington failures: The Indian World of George Washington** Colin Gordon Calloway, 2018 The Indian World of George Washington offers a fresh portrait of the most revered American and the Native Americans whose story has been only partially told.

**george washington failures: General George Washington** Edward G. Lengel, 2005-06-07 Much has been written in the past two centuries about George Washington the statesman and "father of his country." Less often discussed is Washington's military career, including his exploits as a young officer and his performance as the Revolutionary War commander in chief. Now, in a revealing work of historical biography, Edward Lengel has written the definitive account of George Washington the soldier. Based largely on Washington's personal papers, this engrossing book paints a vivid, factual portrait of a man to whom lore and legend so tenaciously cling. To Lengel, Washington was the imperfect commander. Washington possessed no great tactical ingenuity, and his acknowledged "brilliance in retreat" only demonstrates the role luck plays in the fortunes of all great men. He was not an enlisted man's leader; he made a point of never mingling with his troops. He was not an especially creative military thinker; he fought largely by the book. He was not a professional, but a citizen soldier, who, at a time when warfare demanded that armies maneuver efficiently in precise formation, had little practical training handling men in combat. Yet despite his flaws, Washington was a remarkable figure, a true man of the moment, a leader who possessed a clear strategic, national, and continental vision, and who inspired complete loyalty from his fellow revolutionaries, officers, and enlisted men. America could never have won freedom without him. A trained surveyor, Washington mastered topography and used his superior knowledge of battlegrounds to maximum effect. He appreciated the importance of good allies in times of crisis, and understood well the benefits of coordination of ground and naval forces. Like the American nation itself, he was a whole that was greater than the sum of its parts—a remarkable everyman whose acts determined the course of history. Lengel argues that Washington's excellence was in his completeness, in how he united the military, political, and personal skills necessary to lead a nation in war and peace. At once informative and engaging, and filled with some eye-opening revelations about Washington, the war for American independence, and the very nature of military command, General George Washington is a book that reintroduces readers to a figure many think they already know.

**george washington failures: To the Immortal Name and Memory of George Washington** Louis Torres, 2010-09-01 The Washington Monument is one of the most easily recognized structures in America, if not the world, yet the long and tortuous history of its construction is much less well known. Beginning with its sponsorship by the Washington National Monument Society and the grudging support of a largely indifferent Congress, the Monument's 1848 groundbreaking led only to a truncated obelisk, beset by attacks by the Know Nothing Party and lack of secured funding and, from the mid-1850s, to a twenty-year interregnum. It was only in 1876 that a Joint Commission of Congress revived the Monument and entrusted its completion to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In To the Immortal Name and Memory of George Washington: The United States Corps of Engineers and the Construction of the Washington Monument, historian Louis Torres tells the fascinating story of the Monument, with a particular focus on the efforts of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Lincoln Casey, Captain George W. Davis, and civilian Corps employee Bernard Richardson Green and the details of how they completed the construction of this great American landmark. The book also includes a discussion and images of the various designs, some of them incredibly elaborate compared to the austere simplicity of the original, and an account of Corps stewardship of the Monument up to its takeover by the National Park Service in 1933. First published in 1985. 148 pages, ill.

**george washington failures: The Hardest Job in the World** John Dickerson, 2020-06-16 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • From the veteran political journalist and 60 Minutes



correspondent, a deep dive into the history, evolution, and current state of the American presidency, and how we can make the job less impossible and more productive—featuring a new post-2020-election epilogue “This is a great gift to our sense of the actual presidency, a primer on leadership.”—Ken Burns Imagine you have just been elected president. You are now commander-in-chief, chief executive, chief diplomat, chief legislator, chief of party, chief voice of the people, first responder, chief priest, and world leader. You’re expected to fulfill your campaign promises, but you’re also expected to solve the urgent crises of the day. What’s on your to-do list? Where would you even start? What shocks aren’t you thinking about? The American presidency is in trouble. It has become overburdened, misunderstood, almost impossible to do. “The problems in the job unfolded before Donald Trump was elected, and the challenges of governing today will confront his successors,” writes John Dickerson. After all, the founders never intended for our system of checks and balances to have one superior Chief Magistrate, with Congress demoted to “the little brother who can’t keep up.” In this eye-opening book, John Dickerson writes about presidents in history such as Washington, Lincoln, FDR, and Eisenhower, and in contemporary times, from LBJ and Reagan and Bush, Obama, and Trump, to show how a complex job has been done, and why we need to reevaluate how we view the presidency, how we choose our presidents, and what we expect from them once they are in office. Think of the presidential campaign as a job interview. Are we asking the right questions? Are we looking for good campaigners, or good presidents? Once a candidate gets the job, what can they do to thrive? Drawing on research and interviews with current and former White House staffers, Dickerson defines what the job of president actually entails, identifies the things that only the president can do, and analyzes how presidents in history have managed the burden. What qualities make for a good president? Who did it well? Why did Bill Clinton call the White House “the crown jewel in the American penal system”? The presidency is a job of surprises with high stakes, requiring vision, management skill, and an even temperament. Ultimately, in order to evaluate candidates properly for the job, we need to adjust our expectations, and be more realistic about the goals, the requirements, and the limitations of the office. As Dickerson writes, “Americans need their president to succeed, but the presidency is set up for failure. It doesn’t have to be.”

**george washington failures: First and Always** Peter R. Henriques, 2020-09-15 George Washington may be the most famous American who ever lived, and certainly is one of the most admired. While surrounded by myths, it is no myth that the man who led Americans’ fight for independence and whose two terms in office largely defined the presidency was the most highly respected individual among a generation of formidable personalities. This record hints at an enigmatic perfection; however, Washington was a flesh-and-blood man. In *First and Always*, celebrated historian Peter Henriques illuminates Washington’s life, more fully explicating his character and his achievements. Arranged thematically, the book’s chapters focus on important and controversial issues, achieving a depth not possible in a traditional biography. *First and Always* examines factors that coalesced to make Washington such a remarkable and admirable leader, while also chronicling how Washington mistreated some of his enslaved workers, engaged in extreme partisanship, and responded with excessive sensitivity to criticism. Henriques portrays a Washington deeply ambitious and always hungry for public adoration, even as he disclaimed such desires. In its account of an amazing life, *First and Always* shows how, despite profound flaws, George Washington nevertheless deserves to rank as the nation’s most consequential leader, without whom the American experiment in republican government would have died in infancy.

**george washington failures: The Whiskey Rebellion** Thomas P. Slaughter, 1988-01-14 When President George Washington ordered an army of 13,000 men to march west in 1794 to crush a tax rebellion among frontier farmers, he established a range of precedents that continues to define federal authority over localities today. The Whiskey Rebellion marked the first large-scale resistance to a law of the U.S. government under the Constitution. This classic confrontation between champions of liberty and defenders of order was long considered the most significant event in the first quarter-century of the new nation. Thomas P. Slaughter recaptures the historical drama and

significance of this violent episode in which frontier West and cosmopolitan East battled over the meaning of the American Revolution. The book not only offers the broadest and most comprehensive account of the Whiskey Rebellion ever written, taking into account the political, social and intellectual contexts of the time, but also challenges conventional understandings of the Revolutionary era.

**george washington failures: Robert Morris's Folly** Ryan K. Smith, 2014-09-23 In 1798 Robert Morris—"financier of the American Revolution," confidant of George Washington, former U.S. senator—plunged from the peaks of wealth and prestige into debtors' prison and public contempt. How could one of the richest men in the United States, one of only two founders who signed the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution, suffer such a downfall? This book examines for the first time the extravagant Philadelphia town house Robert Morris built and its role in bringing about his ruin. Part biography, part architectural history, the book recounts Morris's wild successes as a merchant, his recklessness as a land speculator, and his unrestrained passion in building his palatial, doomed mansion, once hailed as the most expensive private building in the United States but later known as "Morris's Folly." Setting Morris's tale in the context of the nation's founding, this volume refocuses attention on an essential yet nearly forgotten American figure while also illuminating the origins of America's ongoing, ambivalent attitudes toward the superwealthy and their sensational excesses.

**george washington failures: Senseless Secrets** Michael Lee Lanning, 1998 In war, the difference between life and death often hinges on the accuracy of gathered information. Pearl Harbor and Vietnam are notorious examples of what has been the rule rather than the exception: from Bunker Hill to Mogadishu, U.S. military intelligence has placed troops in peril with faulty prognoses and erroneous data. In *Senseless Secrets*, Michael Lee Lanning, a decorated U.S. Army veteran, holds military intelligence accountable for errors in every major conflict from the Revolutionary War to Operation Desert Storm.

**george washington failures: Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation** George Washington, 2007-06-01

**george washington failures: Washington's Crossing** David Hackett Fischer, 2006-02-01 Six months after the Declaration of Independence, the American Revolution was all but lost. A powerful British force had routed the Americans at New York, occupied three colonies, and advanced within sight of Philadelphia. Yet, as David Hackett Fischer recounts in this riveting history, George Washington—and many other Americans—refused to let the Revolution die. On Christmas night, as a howling nor'easter struck the Delaware Valley, he led his men across the river and attacked the exhausted Hessian garrison at Trenton, killing or capturing nearly a thousand men. A second battle of Trenton followed within days. The Americans held off a counterattack by Lord Cornwallis's best troops, then were almost trapped by the British force. Under cover of night, Washington's men stole behind the enemy and struck them again, defeating a brigade at Princeton. The British were badly shaken. In twelve weeks of winter fighting, their army suffered severe damage, their hold on New Jersey was broken, and their strategy was ruined. Fischer's richly textured narrative reveals the crucial role of contingency in these events. We see how the campaign unfolded in a sequence of difficult choices by many actors, from generals to civilians, on both sides. While British and German forces remained rigid and hierarchical, Americans evolved an open and flexible system that was fundamental to their success. The startling success of Washington and his compatriots not only saved the faltering American Revolution, but helped to give it new meaning.

**george washington failures: Young Washington** Peter Stark, 2018-05-01 FINALIST FOR THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BOOK PRIZE A new, brash, and unexpected view of the president we thought we knew, from the bestselling author of *Astoria* Two decades before he led America to independence, George Washington was a flailing young soldier serving the British Empire in the vast wilderness of the Ohio Valley. Naïve and self-absorbed, the twenty-two-year-old officer accidentally ignited the French and Indian War—a conflict that opened colonists to the possibility of an American Revolution. With powerful narrative drive and vivid writing, *Young Washington* recounts the

wilderness trials, controversial battles, and emotional entanglements that transformed Washington from a temperamental striver into a mature leader. Enduring terrifying summer storms and subzero winters imparted resilience and self-reliance, helping prepare him for what he would one day face at Valley Forge. Leading the Virginia troops into battle taught him to set aside his own relentless ambitions and stand in solidarity with those who looked to him for leadership. Negotiating military strategy with British and colonial allies honed his diplomatic skills. And thwarted in his obsessive, youthful love for one woman, he grew to cultivate deeper, enduring relationships. By weaving together Washington's harrowing wilderness adventures and a broader historical context, Young Washington offers new insights into the dramatic years that shaped the man who shaped a nation.

**george washington failures: *Assessing War*** Leo J. Blanken, Hy Rothstein, Jason J. Lepore, 2015-12-15 Today's protracted asymmetrical conflicts confuse efforts to measure progress, often inviting politics and wishful thinking to replace objective evaluation. In *Assessing War*, military historians, social scientists, and military officers explore how observers have analyzed the trajectory of war in American conflicts from the Seven Years' War through the war in Afghanistan. Drawing on decades of acquired expertise, the contributors examine wartime assessment in both theory and practice and, through alternative dimensions of assessment such as justice and proportionality, the war of ideas and economics. This group of distinguished authors grapples with both conventional and irregular wars and emerging aspects of conflict—such as cyberwar and nation building—that add to the complexities of the modern threat environment. The volume ends with recommendations for practitioners on best approaches while offering sobering conclusions about the challenges of assessing war without politicization or self-delusion. Covering conflicts from the eighteenth century to today, *Assessing War* blends focused advice and a uniquely broad set of case studies to ponder vital questions about warfare's past—and its future. The book includes a foreword by Gen. George W. Casey Jr. (USA, Ret.), former chief of staff of the US Army and former commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq.

**george washington failures: *George Washington*** Paul Johnson, 2005-05-31 Washington is seen as one of the most important authors of the Constitution, in addition to his pivotal leadership of the Revolutionary War and a magisterial executive in the formative years of the new United States. He was a moderate man of few words, but when he spoke, he was worth hearing.

**george washington failures: *The Trials of Harry S. Truman*** Jeffrey Frank, 2023-03-14 Jeffrey Frank, author of the bestselling *Ike and Dick*, returns with the "beguiling" (The New York Times) first full account of the Truman presidency in nearly thirty years, recounting how a seemingly ordinary man met the extraordinary challenge of leading America through the pivotal years of the mid-20th century. The nearly eight years of Harry Truman's presidency—among the most turbulent in American history—were marked by victory in the wars against Germany and Japan; the first use of an atomic bomb and the development of far deadlier weapons; the start of the Cold War and the creation of the NATO alliance; the Marshall Plan to rebuild the wreckage of postwar Europe; the Red Scare; and the fateful decision to commit troops to fight a costly "limited war" in Korea. Historians have tended to portray Truman as stolid and decisive, with a homespun manner, but the man who emerges in *The Trials of Harry S. Truman* is complex and surprising. He believed that the point of public service was to improve the lives of one's fellow citizens and fought for a national health insurance plan. While he was disturbed by the brutal treatment of African Americans and came to support stronger civil rights laws, he never relinquished the deep-rooted outlook of someone with Confederate ancestry reared in rural Missouri. He was often carried along by the rush of events and guided by men who succeeded in refining his fixed and facile view of the postwar world. And while he prided himself on his Midwestern rationality, he could act out of instinct and combativeness, as when he asserted a president's untested power to seize the nation's steel mills. The Truman who emerges in these pages is a man with generous impulses, loyal to friends and family, and blessed with keen political instincts, but insecure, quick to anger, and prone to hasty decisions. Archival discoveries, and research that led from Missouri to Washington, Berlin and Korea, have contributed to an indelible and "intimate" (The Washington Post) portrait of a man, born in the 19th century,

who set the nation on a course that reverberates in the 21st century, a leader who never lost a schoolboy's love for his country and its Constitution.

**george washington failures:** *War and the Rogue Presidency* Ivan Eland, 2018-12-01 The Office of the President of the U.S. isn't what it used to be—it has morphed into an overgrown beast. So says presidential scholar Ivan Eland in his landmark new book *War and the Rogue Presidency: Restoring the Republic after Congressional Failure*. The presidency no longer simply enforces the laws passed by Congress but literally dominates American political life. Its vast bureaucracy is flush with cash and wields powers never authorized by the Framers. But who do we have to thank for this distortion of the Constitution? Congress. The presidency, says Eland, isn't inherently imperial. It's contingently imperial. Particularly when wars loom and Congress refuses to forestall our engagement in them—with inevitable consequences. But wars also lead to massive domestic government interference. In sum, liberals, conservatives, independents—anybody concerned for personal liberties and good governance—should read this pathbreaking book and grapple with its implications.

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**george washington failures:** *You Never Forget Your First* Alexis Coe, 2020-02-04 AN INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER AN NPR CONCIERGE BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR “In her form-shattering and myth-crushing book....Coe examines myths with mirth, and writes history with humor... [You Never Forget Your First] is an accessible look at a president who always finishes in the first ranks of our leaders.” —Boston Globe Alexis Coe takes a closer look at our first--and finds he is not quite the man we remember Young George Washington was raised by a struggling single mother, demanded military promotions, caused an international incident, and never backed down--even when his dysentery got so bad he had to ride with a cushion on his saddle. But after he married Martha, everything changed. Washington became the kind of man who named his dog Sweetlips and hated to leave home. He took up arms against the British only when there was no other way, though he lost more battles than he won. After an unlikely victory in the Revolutionary War cast him as the nation's hero, he was desperate to retire, but the founders pressured him into the presidency--twice. When he retired years later, no one talked him out of it. He left the highest office heartbroken over the partisan nightmare his backstabbing cabinet had created. Back on his plantation, the man who fought for liberty must confront his greatest hypocrisy--what to do with the men, women, and children he owns--before he succumbs to death. With irresistible style and warm humor, *You Never Forget Your First* combines rigorous research and lively storytelling that will have readers--including those who thought presidential biographies were just for dads--inhaling every page.

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fall of the American presidency, from the limited role envisaged by the Founding Fathers to its current status as the most powerful job in the world. He argues that the presidency is a victim of its own success--the vastness of the job makes it almost impossible to fulfill the expectations placed upon it. As managers of the world's largest economy and military, contemporary presidents must react to a truly globalized world in a twenty-four-hour news cycle. There is little room left for bold vision. Suri traces America's disenchantment with our recent presidents to the inevitable mismatch between presidential promises and the structural limitations of the office. A masterful reassessment of presidential history, this book is essential reading for anyone trying to understand America's fraught political climate.

**george washington failures: Braddock's Defeat** David Lee Preston, 2015 On July 9, 1755, British and colonial troops under the command of General Edward Braddock suffered a crushing defeat to French and Native American enemy forces in Ohio Country. Known as the Battle of the Monongahela, the loss altered the trajectory of the Seven Years' War in America, escalating the fighting and shifting the balance of power. An unprecedented rout of a modern and powerful British army by a predominantly Indian force, Monongahela shocked the colonial world--and also planted the first seeds of an independent American consciousness. The culmination of a failed attempt to capture Fort Duquesne from the French, Braddock's Defeat was a pivotal moment in American and world history. While the defeat is often blamed on blundering and arrogance on the part of General Braddock--who was wounded in battle and died the next day--David Preston's gripping new work argues that such a claim diminishes the victory that Indian and French forces won by their superior discipline and leadership. In fact, the French Canadian officer Captain Beaujeu had greater tactical skill, reconnaissance, and execution, and his Indian allies were the most effective and disciplined troops on the field. Preston also explores the long shadow cast by Braddock's Defeat over the 18th century and the American Revolution two decades later. The campaign had been an awakening to empire for many British Americans, spawning ideas of American identity and anticipating many of the political and social divisions that would erupt with the outbreak of the Revolution. Braddock's Defeat was the defining generational experience for many British and American officers, including Thomas Gage, Horatio Gates, and perhaps most significantly, George Washington. A rich battle history driven by a gripping narrative and an abundance of new evidence, Braddock's Defeat presents the fullest account yet of this defining moment in early American history.

**george washington failures: George Washington, Spymaster** Thomas B. Allen, 2007 A biography of Revolutionary War general and first President of the United States, George Washington, focusing on his use of spies to gather intelligence that helped the colonies win the war.

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