



A Great and Good Man: George Washington in the Eyes of His Contemporaries

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A Great and Good Man presents a lively collection of contemporary letters, poems, addresses, and newspaper reports that demonstrate the remarkable esteem in which Washington was held. Washington would become, after his death, a true symbol of the American republic. This selection of materials, many reprinted for the first time since the eighteenth century, shows that in his life Washington had already become the Father of his country and was acclaimed for his sense of honor, his heroism, and his wisdom.

Dating from his farewell orders to the Continental Army in 1783 to his retirement from the executive office of the United States of America, the selections in this book illuminate the role that Washington played in the public imagination. His willing relinquishment of military authority in 1783 shocked the world, and set him on a path toward greater political glory as he presided over the Constitutional Convention and then became the first President of the country. Here we see Washington as he stood before and was addressed by the nation—praised by politicians, advised by foreigners, and lionized by citizens. In Washington's own letters and addresses we also glimpse the canny side of Washington, a man who was careful with his public image and was a shrewd gamesman in the political arena. By the time he took presidential office in 1789 few questioned his political acumen and national leaders were dependent on his leadership.

The editors of *A Great and Good Man* have set the context for their carefully selected documents with insightful introductions; and their thorough index greatly enhances the accessibility of the material presented.

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