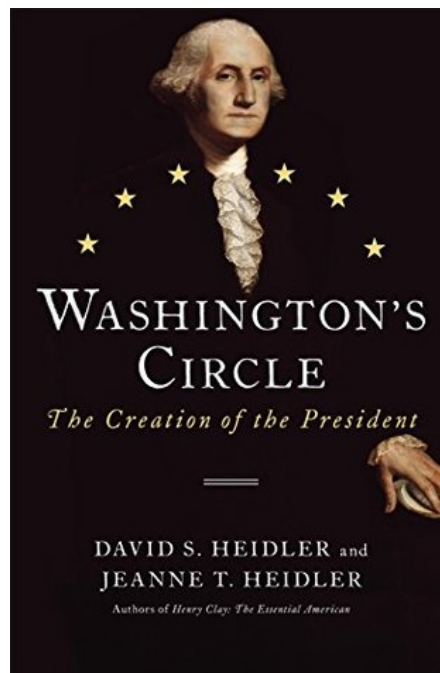




Washington's Circle: The Creation of the President

David S. Heidler , Jeanne T. Heidler

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History enthusiasts and admirers of *Team of Rivals* will rejoice in this magisterial account of the extraordinary Americans who served the nation's first chief executive: Together, they created the presidency for a country disgusted by crowns and the people who would wear them.

In 1789, as George Washington became the first president of the United States, the world was all but certain that the American experiment in liberty and representative government would founder. More than a few Americans feared that the world was right. In *Washington's Circle*, we see how Washington and his trusted advisers, close friends, and devoted family defied the doomsayers to lay the foundation for an enduring constitutional republic. This is a fresh look at an aloof man whose service in the Revolutionary War had already earned him the acclaim of fellow citizens. Washington was easy to revere, if difficult to know.

David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler reveal Washington's character through his relationship with his inner circle, showing how this unlikely group created the office of the presidency. Here is a story of cooperation, confrontation, triumph, and disappointment, as the president, Congress, and the courts sorted out the limits of executive power, quarreled over funding the government, coped with domestic strife, and faced a world at war while trying to keep their country at peace.

Even more, it is a story of remarkable people striving for extraordinary achievements. Many of these characters are familiar as historic icons, but in these pages they act and speak as living individuals: the often irked and frequently irksome John Adams, in the vice presidency; the mercurial Alexander Hamilton, leading the Treasury Department; the brilliant, deceptively cunning Thomas Jefferson, as secretary of state; James Madison, who was Washington's advocate—and his eyes and ears—in Congress; and Washington's old friend and former brother-in-arms Henry Knox, at the administration's beleaguered War Department. Their stories mingle with those of Edmund Randolph, John Jay, Gouverneur Morris, and the others who stood with a self-educated Virginia farmer to forge the presidency into an institution protective of its privileges but respectful of congressional prerogatives.

Written with energy, wit, and an eye for vivid detail, *Washington's Circle* is the fascinating account of the people who met the most formidable challenges of the government's earliest hours with pluck, ability, and enviable resourcefulness. When the world said they would fail, they rolled up their sleeves. This is their story.

Praise for *Washington's Circle*

"A fine, readable history of the first presidency . . . [David and Jeanne Heidler] provide not only a lively history but a group portrait of Washington and the various figures vying to influence him."—***The Wall Street Journal***

"*Washington's Circle* positively glows with narrative exuberance. This is a book that will make even the most jaded student of the American Revolution bark little laughs of pure delight while reading."—***Open Letters Monthly***

"Traditional accounts portray Washington as a solitary actor in the drama of American nationhood, as chilly and featureless as the marble shaft that dominates his namesake capitol. In fact, he was the intensely human lead in one of history's most colorful, and contentious, ensembles. David S.

Washington's Circle: The Creation of the President Details

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From Reader Review Washington's Circle: The Creation of the President for online ebook

Steve says

An excellent book of George Washington as our nation's first president and how the office of the president began. There were those involved in setting up the government of the United States when it first began and won its freedom and independence from Britain and the end of the American Revolution. John Adams was the vice president, Alexander Hamilton became head of the Treasury, Thomas Jefferson became secretary of state, James Madison who led Congress, and Henry Knox who was the head of the War Department. All had a major role in heading up the government of the United States in the beginning.

Stuart says

Quite the insight of our first president. Washington was quite instrumental in shaping some of the early policies that we still have in place today but don't think much about being part of our everyday life. Just like every administration, Washington relied on others to help with his decisions, sometimes not sure which decision would be the best. Interesting to read how he intertwined his personal life with the presidency and attempted that balance that probably all presidents seek. The authors did a thorough research of the material.

Robert Melnyk says

Very good book about the history of George Washington, and his becoming the first president of the United States. Very interesting accounts of his relationships with some of the well known men of his time, and also some of the lesser known. Since I have read quite a bit about this history, I already knew much of what was in the book, but there was also quite a bit of new information that I learned. My only problem is...can I remember it all? :-). If you are into American History, you will enjoy this book.

Barry says

Terrific, insightful, puts you right there with all the strong personalities. I enjoy the Heidlers' style very much.

T B says

This was excellent. I've read other biographies of Washington but this was more like a history book of 1789-1799. It concentrates on the people surrounding Washington during his Presidential years, the issues they faced and fits those issues into a context of world events. I was unaware of all the major issues our country faced in those early years and how he dealt with them. Although it's full of facts and is a kind of dense book, it reads very easily. There are about 30 pages of detailed references and listings of all the characters that move through the events. I highly recommend it if you enjoy American history.

Brandy says

This is a really well-done history book, lively and pertinent.

What the Constitution laid out for the office of President didn't really get down to all the details of how exactly the office would work, nor did it lay out specifics on all the different roles that the executive branch he heads would need to cover. Those details were left to George Washington, our first President, and his advisers and heads of administration that would eventually be known as his cabinet. This book details his interactions with each of these extremely-influential men throughout his two terms as President of the United States, and also covers other influential men outside the cabinet (James Madison in particular) during the years of his presidency.

Along the way, it paints a vivid picture of Washington's life on the whole, and becomes a window into the decade of the 1790s where his influence was highest, his stature grandest, and his character held singularly in confidence as the only man capable of the balancing act the Presidency called for. In giving so much detail on each of the incidents that naturally came up in the politics of the age of American infancy, it shows Washington's careful attention not just to the choice at hand, but to the historical precedents he and Congress would be setting. He asked his cabinet about everything, getting answers in writing and considering them in detail before making decisions. He also had trouble with their disagreements, which truly came to a head when Thomas Jefferson (his Secretary of State) and Alexander Hamilton (his Secretary of Treasury) ultimately landed on opposite sides of almost every issue for years and conducted a civil war against each other's thoughts and character through the press.

Humanity and its flaws -- shown even in a man held almost infallible for most of his own age and in modern times -- can eventually wear down even the most noble of men. Washington was a man in the end whose sensitivities did not allow him to accept criticism easily, and as America slowly slid into party politics in his final term, the bristling away from those who spoke their mind when disagreeable eventually cloistered him away from any and all people who weren't 100% in agreement with his policy choices. In that 2nd cabinet, this led him to surround himself with people who were not nearly as skilled or experienced as his 1st cabinet, and the country suffered a bit for the dynamics this produced in various incidents.

This is a long read, but it managed an anecdotal tone that made it an enjoyable one. The audio book is also acceptable, though the length of the book makes it a tremendously long hearing of the same voice.

Even our founding fathers were human and flawed, but we were fortunate enough that they were men of noble character, and with enough trust of one another to make use of men more skilled and intelligent than themselves in various categories.

Steven Peterson says

An interesting book. . . . The focus is on George Washington's inner circle after becoming president. Those people who helped him create precedents and a working government. Most of these people were men whom Washington knew well; they were involved in the work leading up to a United States; they were people with whom he had worked as a private figure, a plantation owner, and in public service.

The people upon whom he depended include a lot of familiar names: Alexander Hamilton Secretary of the

Treasury; Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State; Henry Know, Secretary of War; Edmund Randolph, Attorney General and Jefferson's successor as Secretary of State; James Madison, a trusted counselor and speech writer who later fell away from Washington (allied with his colleague Thomas Jefferson in opposition to the party of Washington); Gouverneur Morris and John Jay, among others.

The book explores how Washington and his circle strove to create a working and workable government. Among the subjects considered are the strains among those in the circle. Jefferson and Hamilton were often in opposition to one another, for instance.

In the end, this team did its job well and despite the challenges and interpersonal differences, a functioning country emerged. . . .

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Jamie says

First, I must pay homage to Goodreads for me winning this First Reads giveaway. Next, I've got to say that this is an awesome history book. I'm most impressed with its readability. If you've read *Founding Brothers*, I would say it is very much along those same lines. More of a story than listing dry facts.

And there's no doubt that there was plenty of research was done. My wife didn't believe me when I said I was done. Probably due to the following one hundred pages of citations, notes, and index. I was pleased to learn a few things along the way, though not necessarily pleased with the things I'd learned. Some bits about Alexander Hamilton were a bit discouraging. And, perhaps to be expected, the end was a bit depressing. With only a few years separating the end of Washington's presidency and the end of his life, it necessarily included his death, but there were several sad endings for his acquaintances that I had not know about.

Nevertheless, the joy is in the journey, and a sad ending does not detract from the other 400 pages. I am very happy to own this book.

Jay Schutt says

This laboriously researched and well put together book covers George Washington's ascent to the Presidency of a new nation. He was the only person in America who could have provided the stability needed to guide the country for its first eight years.

His friends, enemies, family colleagues and administration are all chronicled through those rough political times. With what became the start of the two party system of government came the international intrigue, backroom deals and journalistic sniping. I sometimes felt that I was watching today's news on TV. Nothing has changed in that regard in over 200 years. Washington's closest circle helped guide him at our nations most precarious and vulnerable time to make the right decisions.

This book provides a very good picture of what those times were like. I highly recommend it.

Melissa says

Enlightening biography that focused on the presidency of George Washington. Washington's story is told through his interaction with the men in his cabinet, his friends and his family.

The colonial men and women that played a part in this history are some of the greatest men and women in our country's history - but none compare to the greatness of Washington. His humanness is exposed though, particularly as he suffers through failures and petty attacks during his second administration.

I did find it interesting that even a great leader like Washington dealt with some of the same problems that later Presidents had during the lame duck session of their second terms.

Overall a very interesting and enjoyable read.

John Daly says

Book 8 of 40

When the Constitution was written Article 2 just provides how to he gets elected, that he's commander and chief, he runs foreign policy, provide Congress with information of the State of the Union and can be impeached. Then they turned to George Washington and said go.

Washington's Circle is the story of how the Presidency started. It's also the story of the ego's and the beginnings of party politics.

When Washington took office there were only 11 states, North Carolina and Rhode Island were still holding out. As Congress began to create departments we see Hamilton at Treasury, Jefferson at State, Henry Knox at War, Randolph as Attorney General, and John Adams discovering how useless the office of the Vice Presidency is.

The authors do a great job of looking at Washington's relationship with each of these men and how they affected his governance. He looked to all five for advice including matters not directly related to their individual departments. Washington also depended on James Madison who was serving in the House of Representatives.

The book dose an excellent job of showing Washington attempting to stay in the middle as Jefferson on the Anti-federalist side and Hamilton on the Federalist side were beginning to create parties and opposing policies.

It's a good read take it for a spin if you want to see how we started on the partisan path.

Katie says

This book is a fascinating look into Washington's two terms as President. While Washington was unanimously elected and loved by the people, that doesn't mean his time in office was always smooth sailing. The Heidlers tell a great story that reads easily, and explains the different motivations and points of view that led to our partisan system of government. While the story is presented chronologically, each member of Washington's cabinet, various Congressmen and other public figures, are featured in turn. This left me with a better understanding of Washington the man rather than Washington the statue-like hero. I was graciously provided with a copy of this book through the First Reads program.

Jason Cecil says

Loved this book! It definitely shows the human side of our founders especially as they established the presidency. It's NOT as today's teabaggers pretend it was. The arguments over the role of government were the same then as they are now.

Brian Eshleman says

The link in the book promotion to Team of Rivals is appropriate. In the introduction to that book, Doris Kearns Goodwin says we learn the most about a person in relation to other people. The same is true of Washington as David S. Heidler considers what the relationships closest to him show.

I was especially impressed with the amount of time he must have spent reading what these real-life characters wrote. Thus, he is able to comment with authority on a given interaction because he knows each person's emotional baseline so well. As in, this person is maintaining politeness, but their tone is more icy than usual. Intriguing.

Debra Jeakins says

BRAVO! WASHINGTON'S CIRCLE deserve more than 5 stars in my book! The Heidlers took George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James(Jemmy) Adams and made them come to life for me. The facts are footnoted throughout with a convenient section at the end of the book with chapter by chapter references and an index at the end. There is information in the book even I (who devours history) didnt know. For example, early on Washington developed an infection so bad there was major concern he was going to die. Along with getting to know George and Martha Washington I got to know Jefferson, Adams and Madison and many many others.

Excellentlly written and smooth flowing I highly recommend WASHINGTONS CIRCLE to anyone who appreciates not only our American history but the birth of this country and the trials and tribulations along the way.

I received this book from goodreads in exchange for a review.
