

book review notes

David M. Rubenstein The American Story

Jack Warren on George Washington

page 6he was modest

he told those who chose him that he was not equal to the task

however, he had his uniforms with him

letter to "Patsy" ...he tried to escape service....he told her that but he had his uniforms with him / he surely did not realize that this command would keep him from Mt. Vernon for 8 years with only one night in all those 8 years

6'2" ...a great horseman, fine dancer, and a gifted athlete "a stud" in the vernacular

battle of Long Island / summer to November, worst defeat for Colonists and possibly could have meant defeat

General Howe for whatever reason did not pursue Washington as he retreated to Valley Forge to train and in need of victory he got 2...one at Princeton and one at Trenton

Howe / Mrs. Loring

Sir William he

snug as a flea

Lay all this time a snoring

Nor dreamed of harm

as he lay war

in bed with Mrs. Loring / written by an angry loyalist and questionable as to veracity

after the war back home to Mt. Vernon / ... Madison...little guy ...told Washington that if he did not chair the Constitutional Convention that the republic would fail and Washington would be forgotten

as president / oversaw the building of the capitol, emancipated his slaves after his death, Henry Lee said upon his death, First in War, First in Peace and First in the hearts of his countrymen

Jack Warden asked if after all his research did he think more or less of Washington...

greatest privilege to study Washington

he learned from his mistakes and rarely made the same one twice

and....he thought in the long term

the question of slavery

John Adams / this book by David McCullough started out to be about Adams and Jefferson but as he began to study Adams writing he found him fascinating and Jefferson had closed off his private life by destroying all his letters to his wife and all of her letters to friends or between the two of them.....so he just wrote about what he could get the information and that was Adams....

Adams was a small ugly man who served as president between two amazing looking giants in American History.....sort of like Truman between FDR and Eisenhower....however, like Truman he made decisions that made our country stronger and better

the only president who did the right thing knowing it would cost him reelection. He would not go to war with France because he knew we would lose.

dinner / McCullough would ask what can we do to increase the love of learning? what can we do to bring back the attitude toward reading and books and knowledge and thinking

THOMAS JEFFERSON and Adams became friends again and actually died on the same day ? Anyone know the day? July 4, 1826 - 50 years after the signing of the declaration

Adams last words were "Jefferson lives" although he had died earlier in the day

page 54 lineage / Jefferson had five children with Sally Hemings....she was his wife's half sister...his wife was dead / the age of consent in Virginia in 1800 was 12 page 55

Paris....." I will go back with you if any children we have are freed at the age of their majority/ the relationship lasted forty years until Jefferson's death

T.J. was not a great speaker/ as president he gave 1 speech in 8 years

Jefferson revered the Gentleman Farmer

from 1801 to 1840 either TJ or a self-described Jeffersonian was President.....this has never been done since.....40 years of power

He did not claim to be the author of the Declaration for 9 years....tombstone page 48

when he wrote all men are created equal he meant all white men

Jefferson on slavery page 53

jefferson thought that his foot bowl helped him live a long life....he and Franklin both

put their bare feet in cold water that had been brought there for him....he would plunge his feet into the cold water and keep them in there for a few minutes

Ron Chernow on Alexander Hamilton

Jefferson vs. HamiltonWashington did not like their yelling in the office so he sent them bass fishing and they could yell all day

I highly recommend the play Hamilton and if you can't see the play at least get the CD or listen on youtube

The Federalist Papers / Madison, Hamilton and John Jay under pseudonym Publius persuaded New York to ratify the Constitution

Pay the debt at Parr

Jefferson saw America where the gentleman farmer was at the top

Hamilton wanted gentleman farmers and stock exchanges, banks, factories and corporations

Jefferson weak central government strict construction of constitution / Hamilton strong central government loose constructionist

page 84

page 86 / election of 1800Jefferson vs Adams / Jefferson and Burr on ticket / Jefferson

defeats Adams but ties with Burr. Hamilton deplores Burr tells Federalists to support Jefferson and this starts the feud between Hamilton and Burr

"It's better to have Jefferson, who has the wrong principles, than to have Burr who has no principles"

the duel page 88

Cokie Roberts / Founding Mothers

letters page 121 quote

letters that founding fathers wrote were mostly like bronze and marble/ they knew that their letters would be published and gone over closely.....

because they knew they were going to be part of history / when they wrote their wives they really opened up because they did not expect these to be read by anyone else / and the women believed that their letters would only be read by their husbands....

Adams letters to Abigail.....page 122 123

she is home in New England with four small children and he writes to her from France about how wonderful the French ladies are.....she writes back that if American women had the opportunity for education that French women did they would be fabulous also

DKG on Abraham Lincoln

Team of Rivals / Leadership in Turbulent Times and No Ordinary Time.....all faves of mine except that Team of Rivals is difficult to read.....lots of great info just not as fun to read as the others

TR the smartest and FDR not so smart, but he was a problem solver and isn't that intelligent

the lincoln douglas debates in 1858 introduced lincoln as a national figure.../ he was a moderate and reached out to the folks who he had defeated for the nomination to get their help against the democrats

the caning of Charles Sumner by Preston Brooks

page 149 the hiring of Edwin Stanton as secretary of war

151 first battle of bull run

McClellana bad case of the slows / his men loved him / he never felt ready / loved to drill

McClellan was popular among the troops and fancies himself irreplaceablelincoln goes to see him at his home and he just ignores him and goes to bed....John Hay, lincoln's secretary was with him and says how insolent McClellan is.....Lincoln replies he would hold his horse if he wins a battle. That's all that matters

Emancipation Proclamation / page 153

Never sent / never signed.....letter to Meade after Gettysburg....he called them hot letters

Jay Winik on FDR

Yalta / 2 ideas

Stalin to help finish the Japanese

create a United Nations

Hitler / Beer Hall Putsch

jail / great treatment and he wrote Mein Kampf

Appeasement 1938 / chamberlain

battle of britain / dunkirk /

American response / we were worn out from ww1

China / Japanit's a hell of a thing to think you are leading a nation and turn around and no one is there

Lindbergh / America First

LBJ / robert caro

LBJ's father lost his business and the Johnson's were poor for the rest of LBJ's youth

even as a young boy he loved campaigning and how politics worked

1937 he gets elected to congress....LBJ had an instinct for power....Sam Rayburn
Lyndon invites Mr. Sam to his home for dinner using his father working with him as an excuse
sam rayburn would go to dinner once but never again...however he felt sorry for lady bird...she
made his favorite foods and he started coming on sundays

FDR ??? he was a political genius and he recognized johnson as a political genius

Senate 1948 / page 281

the johnson treatment

The Kennedy Election and Johnson as Vice President