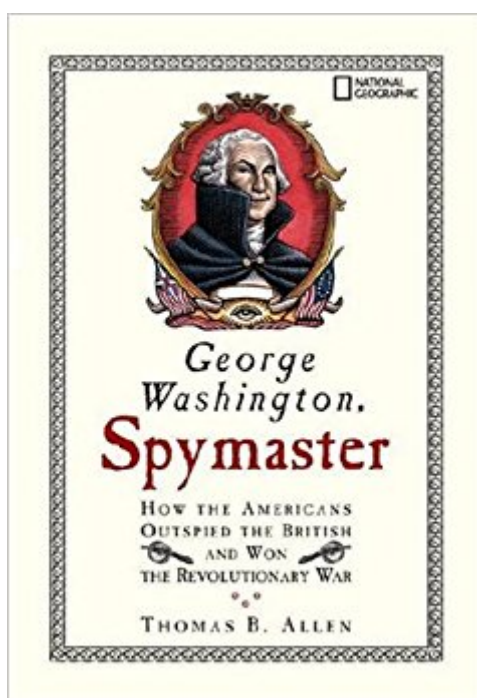


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# George Washington, Spymaster: How The Americans Outspied The British And Won The Revolutionary War



## Synopsis

Now in paperback— the award-winning National Geographic book that presents the untold story of the invisible war behind the American Revolution. A riveting tale of intrigue, spies, counterspies and secret agents, *George Washington, Spymaster* is a unique and entertaining account of one of the most important chapters in our nation's history. The compelling narrative reveals the surprising role played by the first commander-in-chief, General George Washington in the War of Independence. Follow the action as 1775 dawns, and Washington finds himself in serious trouble. At war with Britain, the world's most powerful empire, his ragtag army possesses only a few muskets, some cannons, and no money. The Americans' only hope is to wage an invisible war—a war of spies, intelligence networks, and deception. Enter the shadowy world of double agents, covert operations, codes and ciphers—a world so secret that America's spymaster himself doesn't know the identities of some of his agents. Meet members of the elusive Culper Ring, uncover a "mole" in the Sons of Liberty, and see how invisible ink and even a clothesline are used to send secret messages. You can even use Washington's own secret codebook, published here for the first time. Experience at close quarters the successes and failures of the Americans as they strive to outwit the British. Meet the chief of covert operations, one Benjamin Franklin, and several other surprising players in America's secret war. Author Thomas B. Allen has sifted through dozens of historical documents and coded letters to uncover the facts about a time shrouded in secrets. Archival art, coupled with lively pen-and-ink sketches by children's illustrator Cheryl Harness, detail all the action and adventure of this momentous tale. Like the highly acclaimed hardback, this little paperback is sure to have a big impact on the imagination of readers everywhere. National Geographic supports K-12 educators with ELA Common Core Resources. Visit [www.natgeoed.org/commoncore](http://www.natgeoed.org/commoncore) for more information.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 6-9-Codes and ciphers, invisible ink and secret messages, spies and counterspies! Covert operations win the Revolutionary War under mastermind Washington in this intriguing take on early American history. Allen presents the facts with a gleeful edge, clearly enjoying his subject and writing with vigor. The author relates the main events of the Revolution chronologically, consistently revealing the shadowy role of intelligence and counterintelligence. Members of the Culper Ring, the "mole" in the Sons of Liberty, and daring women worked as spies, fighting on the secret front where Patriots and Tories looked and sounded alike. Washington's role as spymaster adds a fascinating and fresh perspective on the life of this revered founding father who did far more than cross the Delaware. This small-format book looks like a publication from the 1700s. Set in an antique typeface, it is well illustrated with black-and-white reproductions of archival art and Harness's charming pen-and-ink sketches. Messages written in the Talmadge code (1783) appear throughout, with a key in the appendix. Even the chapter titles are historically appropriate, such as "Franklin's French Friends. IN WHICH a wise man from Philadelphia goes to Paris and outfoxes spies of two nations." This is well-documented, appealing history. It's a good companion to Shannon Zemlicka's *Nathan Hale, Patriot Spy* (Carolrhoda, 2002), which offers similar coverage on a famous Patriot whose work as a spy cost him his life. Joyce Adams Burner, Hillcrest Library, Prairie Village, KS  
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**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 6-8. Allen, the author of *Remember Pearl Harbor* (2001) and books of military history, discusses espionage during the Revolutionary War in this small, distinctive-looking volume. The concise narrative traces Washington's use of spies and makes a convincing case for the pivotal role that espionage played in defeating the British. Laced with details about invisible ink, codes, and double agents, the discussion sometimes draws parallels between eighteenth-century deceptions

and the methods and vocabulary of modern espionage. The black-and-white illustrations include maps, ink drawings, and reproductions of period paintings, prints, and documents. Though the small size of the pictures detracts from their effectiveness, in other respects the book's design is excellent. Period features include Caslon Antique typeface, pages with uneven side cuts, and a jacket with slightly indented type, recalling the imprints made by eighteenth-century presses. Beneath the jacket is a slightly worn, embossed cover with two secret messages written in tiny letters of code on its top and bottom edges. The extensive, informative back matter includes a time line of the war, a glossary, a substitution code used during the Revolution, notes expanding on the text, source notes for quotes, and an annotated list of recommended books and Internet sites. Handsome, unusual, intriguing. Carolyn Phelan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I took a chance on this little book because it sounded interesting. And it was! For some reason I didn't realize it was for young adults until it arrived. I read it before giving it to my ten-year-old grandson (After all, what is Christmas without a good book?). When I finished, I had enjoyed it so much that I shared some of what I had learned with my husband and daughter. They were so impressed that they want us to borrow the book back when my grandson finishes it. Thomas Allen moves chronologically through the war, explaining how Washington set up, executed, and benefitted from the spying. On certain occasions, his disinformation that he fed to the British was the only thing standing between the exhausted, malnourished patriots and the failure of the war. Allen also explains spying terminology and methods. He includes some delightful anecdotes that bring out the chuckles. Sometimes historical accounts are written in a dry manner. This is not. It includes humor, fascinating information, anecdotes that illustrate his point, and explanations. It's well written, informative, and entertaining. I recommend it.

What fun! I bought this book primarily for my youngest son to read--his teachers love how much he reads but have recommended he expands a bit into more history and non-fiction and this is right up his alley. He gets stubborn if he thinks I'm recommending something 'good for him' so I do have to sneak the good stuff in once in awhile--and this one is great for that!! I do think it is a little off-putting at first-- the old-fashioned font (Caslon Antique), while setting a period-realistic tone, also does something to the modern eye that initially made me think dry/dull/dusty/old fashioned. Something about preconceived notions and judging by appearances--the appearance was old, so my initial 'reaction' was this would be a dull, old read with difficult language. Fortunately, not so however and

the content really showed through in a combination of story telling, period appropriate illustrations, and yes indeed, playing around with the codes. In any case, this is a great approach to a well known historical figure, and the way it is done certainly lends itself to the active mind that likes more than just a linear history lesson. The book's "Lexile" score is 1100 so it does have a nice degree of challenge (even though it doesn't appear all that 'dense') and for those children (like my son...) who is looking for books to read that he can do the Reading Counts test on, this one gives 8 points. Highly Recommended!JTG

I really enjoyed this book. I never knew that until his brother died and left him all his land and Mount Vernon, that young George was penniless and took jobs as a surveyor until he went into the military. Being a spy for George Washington was very risky, many who were caught died and of course no one would admit to knowing you if you were caught, but still there was no shortage of volunteers. How very valuable they were. Some were even double spies who worked both side of the street, very confusing. Paul Revere was locked up and his wife sent his bail money and a letter by way of a trusted confidant. The letter arrived but the money lost it's way somehow. Now who could do that to poor old Paul? Lots of newsy tidbits are in the book but you will have to read it for yourself to learn the rest.

This little book was a gem to enjoy. Who knew that America's first president was a shrewd military leader who used information from his spy ring to win the American Revolution. This book discussed the various spies who were both men and women, educated and farming folk. Time after time his ruses worked, and the British were misled into defeat. Washington also encountered double spies who very nearly brought the meager American resources and recruits to failure. This book showed how Washington's spies brought and delivered crucial information to set up the winning battles and to detour the British troops from attacking at a perilous time.

The first president, a spy master, who knew? Plainly Washington knew how to keep a secret. He also learned from his mistakes. After the tragic death of Nathan Hale, Washington developed a sophisticated spy network where information was passed, identities were hidden and codes were used to disguise vital information. Not even he knew the identities of all his spies. Washington used his information to misdirect the enemy many times. His network also eventually revealed the heartbreaking treachery of one of his friends, Benedict Arnold. I had never realized how Washington used and valued spies. This book contained fascinating details about how our colonial

intelligence network worked.

It's a good book and I'm enjoying it but I purchased this as a supplement to my 10 year old's history curriculum and it's kind of over his head. I just shelved it until the next time around.

It is very dense in its historical account. Reads like a textbook rather than a fun book.

Good read information and did not know

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