

**THE LIFE OF
GEORGE
WASHINGTON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649578627

The Life of George Washington by Edward Everett

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SAN FRANCISCO:

A. ROMAN, BOOKSELLER AND PUBLISHER.

NEW YORK: SHELDON AND COMPANY.

1860.

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Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1890, by
SHIELDS AND COMPANY,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

RIVERSIDE, CAMBRIDGE:
STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY
H. G. HOUGHTON AND COMPANY.

PREFACE.

THE enterprising proprietors of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" requested the late Lord MAUCAULAY to prepare the article on "Washington," for the new Edition of that Work now in course of publication. His other engagements prevented his complying with their request, and thinking also that it would, on some accounts, be desirable that the memoir of Washington should be written by a countryman, he advised the Messrs. BLACK to apply to me. This they did in the month of March, 1859, expressing the wish that the article should be furnished to them in Edinburgh, in the month of October last. Though much occupied with previous

engagements, and otherwise not favorably situated for cheerful mental effort, I thought it my duty to comply with the request of the Messrs. BLACK, regretting, however, that the time allowed me — besides constant interruptions — was too short to admit of careful research among the original materials for a life of Washington.

In fact, I feel that some apology is due to the public, for attempting to compress into the narrow compass of a volume like this a career like that of Washington, which has been so fully treated in the great national works of MARSHALL, SPARKS, and IRVING. It will, however, I think, be generally felt to have been desirable, that a comprehensive memoir of our illustrious Countryman should be prepared by an American writer, for a work like the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and a republication in this

country follows as a matter of course. The purpose for which the memoir was written will, I trust, sufficiently account for the necessary condensation of the narrative; for the omission of many facts of importance, and for the superficial statement of others; as also for the occasional mention of what is familiar to every American, but which may need explanation to the European reader.

The historical materials of the following pages have been mainly derived from the standard works already alluded to, in which is contained everything of importance authentically known of the life and career of Washington. Diligent search among official papers and private letters will no doubt throw further light on matters of detail, especially as far as his domestic life is concerned; but it is hardly to be expected that anything will be added to our

knowledge of important events. To Mr. SPARKS I am under especial obligations. No one can have occasion to write or to speak on the life of Washington, however compendiously, without finding constant occasion to repeat the acknowledgment of Mr. IRVING, who justly places him "among the greatest benefactors of our national literature."

I regret that the valuable work of Mr. BENSON J. LOSSING, entitled "Mount Vernon and its Associations," was not published till the following memoir was nearly completed, and it was consequently not in my power to make as much use as I could have wished of the stores of information contained in it. The same remark applies to the "Recollections and Memoirs of Washington," by the late Mr. G. W. PARKE CUSTIS, of which the excellent edition by Mr. LOSSING appeared too late to