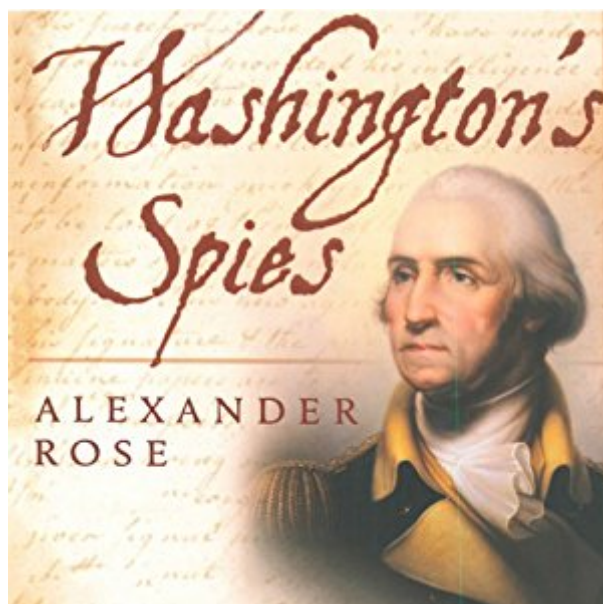


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Washington's Spies: The Story Of America's First Spy Ring



Synopsis

Based on remarkable new research, acclaimed historian Alexander Rose brings to life the true story of the spy ring that helped America win the Revolutionary War. For the first time, Rose takes us beyond the battlefield and deep into the shadowy underworld of double agents and triple crosses, covert operations and code breaking, and unmask the courageous, flawed men who inhabited this wilderness of mirrors-including the spymaster at the heart of it all. In the summer of 1778, with the war poised to turn in his favor, General George Washington desperately needed to know where the British would strike next. To that end, he unleashed his secret weapon: an unlikely ring of spies in New York charged with discovering the enemy's battle plans and military strategy. Washington's small band included a young Quaker torn between political principle and family loyalty, a swashbuckling sailor addicted to the perils of espionage, a hard-drinking barkeep, a Yale-educated cavalryman and friend of the doomed Nathan Hale, and a peaceful, sickly farmer who begged Washington to let him retire but who always came through in the end. Personally guiding these imperfect everyday heroes was Washington himself. In an era when officers were gentlemen, and gentlemen didn't spy, he possessed an extraordinary talent for deception-and proved an adept spymaster. The men he mentored were dubbed the Culper Ring. The British secret service tried to hunt them down, but they escaped by the closest of shaves thanks to their ciphers, dead drops, and invisible ink. Rose's thrilling narrative tells the unknown story of the Revolution-the murderous intelligence war, gunrunning and kidnapping, defectors and executioners-that has never appeared in the history books. But Washington's Spies is also a spirited, touching account of friendship and trust, fear and betrayal, amid the dark and silent world of the spy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I live on Long Island, near Setauket, the scene of much of the action in this book. A local historian wrote a review of this book for our hometown newspaper in which she compared "Washington's Spies" to the currently popular "George Washington's Secret Six" by Brian Kilmeade and Don Yeager. Here is some of what she had to say: "Kilmeade and Yeager have spun more than one story here. This non-fiction book hovers dangerously close to the side of fiction" [whereas] "Historians can refer with confidence to Alexander Rose's book." The reviewer provides this side-by-side comparison of Rose's book with Kilmeade's and Yeager's: "Washington's Spies" •Bibliography: 16 pages, including 4 pages of primary sources alone. Notes: 60 pages, documenting every quotation and inference. "Secret Six" •Bibliography: 6 pages, with 3 primary sources listed. Notes: None. I will add this: Not only is "Washington's Spies" the better history, it is well-written history that will keep you reading from cover to cover. It's not just about the Culper Spy Ring; it's also an interesting look at life in New York City and on Long Island during the Revolutionary War. You will gain added insight as to why the British lost that war and their American colonies by indulging in neglect, greed, corruption, and brutality that ultimately hardened the resolve of Patriots and lost the allegiance of many disheartened Loyalists. I give 5-stars to "Washington's Spies: The Story of America's First Spy Ring."

As the title above indicates, I'm a collector of books set in Revolutionary America as well as the author of a frontier novel. I usually take my time reading a book because I like to savor it as I read. However, much to my wife's surprise, I finished the book in only a few days. I enjoyed the book so much that I wanted to keep on reading when I usually would have paused. The book reads like a novel and Mr. Rose has a unique talent for being able to transport the reader to the time of the revolution and put an entire conflict into perspective. He did a terrific job of capturing the pace of life, which can be a difficult thing to do with the written word. I have literally read over a thousand books on the revolution, and this book is in my top 5. Best of all the book can be trusted to be true to history and is not an attempt at revisionism. You won't go wrong by ordering this book.

Rose obviously did an incredible amount of work on this book. I finished it last night. All I can say is Wow, the pages just flew by.. I have whole bookshelves loaded down with volumes on the

Revolution, so it's not often I'm surprised by anything I read about it but I was this time! I recommend Washington's Spies to anyone with even a passing interest in military history, George Washington, espionage, or just great history writing.

The Culper Ring was a secret spy network run by General George Washington during the War of Independence which operated in New York City. It had five members: Abraham Woodhull, Robert Townsend, Caleb Brewster, Austin Roe and Benjamin Tallmadge (who was Nathan Hale's best friend at Yale University). Together they (as Rose says) "spied the daylights out of the British." The author does more than tell their story, but goes deeper and examines the whole "secret world" of the Revolution, the one you don't read about in the history books. Including smuggling, gun-running, kidnapping, piracy, and even the British attempt to destroy the Continental dollar by flooding us with counterfeits. I wish I had this back in college. A fascinating eye-opener and wonderfully written.

Being a devoted history buff with special interest in 18th century American history, I consider myself pretty well versed in that area. I didn't really think there was much I hadn't read yet about the Revolutionary War. But then I picked up WASHINGTON'S SPIES: THE STORY OF AMERICA'S FIRST SPY RING by Alexander Rose and discovered a whole portion of the fight for independence that I knew very little about. I was originally drawn to this book wanting to research more on the life of Capt. Nathan Hale, which is certainly an integral part of Rose's work, but it goes much farther than that. What I discovered was a most enlightening look at a world within the mechanisms of war in the field of intelligence and espionage. I had never really considered the importance of the role played by these characters. Rose's finished product is gruelingly meticulous in presenting us a valuable look into the inner workings of America's first spy ring. It is well written, flows well and presents the war effort from a perspective largely overlooked in the annals of American history. The note section is unbelievably comprehensive composing 80 of the 360 pages of this book. If you're seeking a look into the Revolutionary War from a new angle, you will not want to miss reading this one. It's probably not for everyone. If you don't already have a pretty sound understanding of the war's events, this book may drag on a bit for you, but I believe it would be well worth the effort and will certainly render insight into the war from a largely untapped venue. Monty Rainey[...]

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