



# Setting the World Ablaze: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and the American Revolution

*John Ferling*

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**Setting the World Ablaze: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and the American Revolution** John Ferling  
Setting the World Ablaze is the story of the three men who, perhaps more than any others, helped bring the United States into being: George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. Braiding three strands into one rich narrative, John Ferling brings these American icons down from their pedestals to show them as men of flesh and blood, and gives us a new understanding of the passion and uncertainty of the struggle to form a new nation.

A leading historian of the Revolutionary era, Ferling draws on an unsurpassed command of the primary sources and a talent for swiftly moving narrative to give us intimate views of each of these men. More than any scholar before him, Ferling shows us both the overarching historical picture of the era and a gripping sense of how these men encountered the challenges that faced them. At close quarters, we see Washington, containing a profound anger at British injustice within an austere demeanor; Adams, far from home, struggling with severe illness and French duplicity in his crucial negotiations in Paris; and Jefferson, distracted and indecisive, confronting uncertainties about his future in politics. John Adams, in particular, emerges from the narrative as the most underappreciated hero of the Revolution, while Jefferson is revealed as the most overrated of the Founders, although the most eloquent.

Setting the World Ablaze shows in dramatic detail how these conservative men--successful members of the colonial elite--were transformed into radical revolutionaries, and in doing so, it illuminates not just the special genius of these three leaders, but the remarkable transformation of His Majesty's colonies into the United States.

## Setting the World Ablaze: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and the American Revolution Details

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# **From Reader Review Setting the World Ablaze: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and the American Revolution for online ebook**

## **Mom says**

I enjoyed the Book. It follows Washington, Adams and Jefferson through the process of declaring independence, winning the revolution and setting up a new government. I didn't agree with it all but I do agree that Washington and Adams were greater men than Jefferson.

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## **Charro says**

Starts out good then I kind had to fight my way through the middle but I liked it over all.

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## **Wendy Rabe says**

John brought me this book from Philadelphia, and it renewed my interest in this era. The book is a very thorough account of the War for Independence and gave me some great insight into the Founding Fathers. Of particular interest to me at the time I read it were the struggles that Washington and Jefferson had later in life, after the war was won, over the issue of slavery. Jefferson as governor of Virginia did make the importing slaves illegal, a good solution to slowly kill out the trade. Washington wrestled over plans to give his slaves wages and rent out his plantation, but never followed through. Also it seems that Washington originally did seem to see his slaves as inferior. But when he was forced to rely on them to fight in the Revolutionary War, and saw what they were capable of, and he began to understand that this was not so.

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## **Jack Laschenski says**

A good historian's look at the parallel lives of the 2 men.

Where were they each at each stage of their young lives, and at each stage of the revolution.

Jefferson comes off quite poorly - after drafting the Declaration, he retired to home and played little role in helping the revolution - true even after he became governor of Virginia.

Adams is the hero - hard working and self-sacrificing.

Adams suggested Washington as General, and for several months he was essentially the secretary of war for the continental congress.

A good insight.

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## **George says**

A fascinating portrait of Washington, John Adams, and Jefferson and their parts in the American Revolution. Includes an in depth look at their childhoods and youth. The psychological portraits are intriguing and generally believable, at least to me. I came away more attracted to Adams with all his faults, more puzzled by Jefferson, and with GW still on a pedestal.

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## **Karen Floyd says**

This book gave me a much better picture of Washington and Jefferson and their activities during the Revolution than I'd had before. Washington's abilities were much wider and greater than I had realized. Jefferson did not come off well at all. He co-authored the Declaration then went home to Monticello for 5 or 6 years and devoted himself to building his house and ignoring the war. Most importantly, I am glad to see John Adams finally getting the recognition he deserves. No man worked harder for our fledgling country.

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## **Glenn Robinson says**

I was impressed with this one. A very good book on the analysis of Washington, Adams and Jefferson and their dealings with each other and so many of the others from this era. He was fairly unbiased towards any of the 3 leaders, so it was refreshing to see the warts and blemishes revealed, explained and given proper treatment. The victories, as well, were discussed and shared, but not in an overly manner of hero worship. Worth the read.

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## **Peter says**

A good retelling of the march to independence and beyond, focusing on the men who became our first three presidents. Ferling's account of Washington's leadership of the continental army told me many things I did not know. The author depicts the Adams-Jefferson feud somewhat differently from McCullough's "John Adams," and TJ comes off poorly.

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## **Urey Patrick says**

Superb history! If you are interested in the American Revolution and the lives, influences and affects of Washington, Adams and Jefferson, this book is a must read. The author is objective - Jefferson's inexplicable "disappearance" from affairs during the course of the war is laid out. The predominant influence of Washington, and Adams, is documented. The early lives and developments that led to the break with England - and the evolution of thinking that led to the actions and decisions of these men are explained. This is just a great read and a perceptive and comprehensively fair history of the events and men of this critical period.

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### **Sheena says**

This was assigned as a textbook, and is definitely informational. John Ferling presents the three lives of George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson in parallel until they intersect with the American Revolution. Ferling provides the childhood, education, and early adulthood of these three prominent men in a way that keeps things going.

My only real discontent with this book is the lack of "down time" -- "Setting the World Ablaze" is very densely written. Ferling has taken on the task of including three major players in a huge event, and does so well within the limit of one book. He avoids "fluff" -- there are no pages of speculation, nor an excess of anecdotes -- this is history. But, as is my concern with many specifically academic books, "Setting the World Ablaze" is definitely written from an academic's perspective and with an academic approach. The focus on primarily history is a good way to keep a book focused, but it often affects the overall readability.

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### **Maria says**

Very balanced view of the strengths and weaknesses of these three men, though perhaps a bit harsh on Jefferson. Looked only at their participation in the American Revolution, not their presidencies.

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### **Schuyler Lystad says**

Excellent book! I knew so little about the real achievements of the three men that I picked it up. I was ready for idolatry, and in the beginning, I thought I saw it, but the author very clearly deals with why the three men did what they did, their faults, and their strengths. This is especially shown in his discussion of Jefferson, whom I initially picked up the book for, but ended up disliking (I also never knew Adams was responsible for so much). It also contains facts and dates alongside personal stories and many very good quotes lifted from letters and speeches. I wish it extended to cover their presidencies, but it ends with the Revolutionary War. If you're interested in any of the three men, worth reading.

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### **JJ says**

A nice treatment of these three great men, who together had a tremendous impact on this new nation. With Adams and Jefferson in Europe during the drafting of the Constitution, the necessary compromise between their two views was probably made more obtainable.

Three strong characters with three distinct roles in the birth of our nation. I've read books on each of these fathers, but appreciated having their combined influence pulled together in one good read.

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### **David says**

A great book about the intertwining of the lives of the 3 most well respected men of the American Revolution. Well worth the time to read!

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### **Aaron Fields says**

Very well researched and written book. I was looking for something to read to learn more about the Revolutionary War Era. While this book focused mainly on Washington, Jefferson, and Adams, it also followed the timeline of the war and its events sufficiently. While the author eloquently paints verbal portraits of the three men and intricately weaves them together more than history has, the book is very detailed and at times feels like a text book. I would recommend it to someone who is very interested in these three men and their contributions to American independence but I would not recommend it for light reading.

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