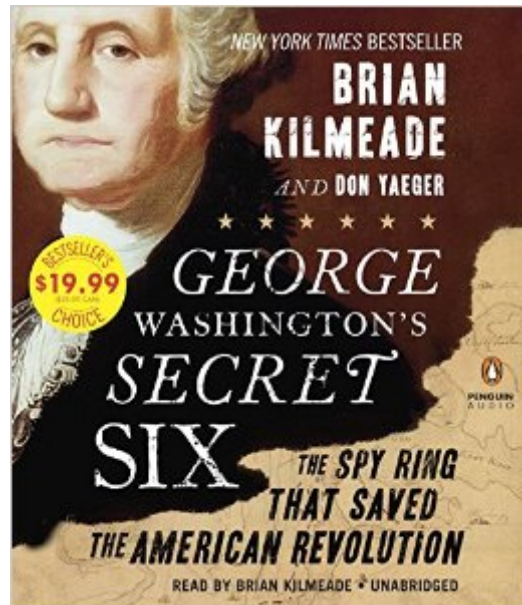


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# George Washington's Secret Six: The Spy Ring That Saved America



## Synopsis

As a Long Islander endlessly fascinated by events that happened in a place I call home, I hope with this book to give the secret six the credit they didn't get in life. The Culper spies represent all the patriotic Americans who give so much for their country but, because of the nature of their work, will not or cannot take a bow or even talk about their missions. "Brian Kilmeade

When General George Washington beat a hasty retreat from New York City in August 1776, many thought the American Revolution might soon be over. Instead, Washington rallied thanks in large part to a little-known, top-secret group called the Culper Spy Ring. Washington realized that he couldn't beat the British with military might, so he recruited a sophisticated and deeply secretive intelligence network to infiltrate New York. So carefully guarded were the members' identities that one spy's name was not uncovered until the twentieth century, and one remains unknown today. But by now, historians have discovered enough information about the ring's activities to piece together evidence that these six individuals turned the tide of the war. Drawing on extensive research, Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger have painted compelling portraits of George Washington's secret six: Robert Townsend, the reserved Quaker merchant and reporter who headed the Culper Ring, keeping his identity secret even from Washington; Austin Roe, the tavern keeper who risked his employment and his life in order to protect the mission; Caleb Brewster, the brash young longshoreman who loved baiting the British and agreed to ferry messages between Connecticut and New York; Abraham Woodhull, the curmudgeonly (and surprisingly nervous) Long Island bachelor with business and family excuses for traveling to Manhattan; James Rivington, the owner of a posh coffeehouse and print shop where high-ranking British officers gossiped about secret operations; Agent 355, a woman whose identity remains unknown but who seems to have used her wit and charm to coax officers to share vital secrets. In *George Washington's Secret Six*, Townsend and his fellow spies finally receive their due, taking their place among the pantheon of heroes of the American Revolution.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First I would like to say that I started reading this book Saturday morning and finished it Sunday night. It was really fun to read. The reason I give it only a three star review is that is not exactly a scholarly work (no footnotes, for example) so I was left with a sense of wondering about the veracity of everything in the book. I imagine there are other books about the Washington spies and this book has made me curious enough to read another account. I have to chuckle at all the 1 star reviews. Virtually all of them protest to the book because of the author, Brian Kilmeade. I did not know the author was a commentator for Fox News until I read those reviews. Impugning a history book simply because of the political views of the author is inane. George Washington's Secret Six is not a book espousing a political agenda of some sort, as these reviewers would have one believe. Another reason for the 3 star is that it was a rather bit over-priced given content. In any event, if you know little about the spy ring, this is as good a place to start as any.

All I can say is - wow. Kilmeade has taken disparate chunks of history and woven them into an intriguing historical narrative. To call this book historical fiction is to underrate it. It is historical fact told as a story. And what, after all, is history? It is the story of humanity's triumphs and failures; the story of good and evil; the story of those who are complacent and those who risk it all. Kilmeade's story gives honor to these anonymous heroes, the silent few, who dared to act greatly and did not seek recognition for it. This is more than a good read; it is a testament to the goodness of honest men. I plan to assign it to my American History 101 class this spring.

With all the mystery of an Agatha Christie novel, the intrigue of a Sherlock Holmes adventure, and the plot twist of Mission Impossible, Mr. Kilmeade has written a mini novel that finally pays homage to six revolutionaries who forfeited their personal comfort and safety to aid and abet the birth of a fledgling nation struggling for independence. Brian has taken a slice of American history and thru

historical detail, personal correspondence, and the addition of crisp dialogue made the secret six come to life in a way that makes for compelling reading. This book belongs in your library and should be wrapped with paper and ribbon for Christmas but the first thing to do is get a cup of coffee and turn to chapter one! Nice work, Mr. K!

I first heard about the Culper Ring while watching "Brad Meltzer's Decoded". It was something that intrigued me and caught my attention. When I saw this book when it was released, I knew I wanted to read it. I knew it may be a little dry, as historical nonfiction can sometimes be, but I still thought the interest facet alone would hold my attention. As predicted, it did. The book seemed well-researched and I liked the short anecdotal parts in each chapters. Though the chapters could get a little long at times, these short parts helped pace the book better than most historical pieces. I wanted to learn so much about the "Secret Six" and this did not disappoint. I was also fascinated by the parts written about Major Andre and Benedict Arnold. Though I knew their fates already, it was still great to get an inside look. The people mentioned definitely felt more alive through the writing and stories. It was also the perfect length. Any longer and it would have been too much, and any less and it wouldn't have explained enough. I was pleased from start to finish.

The book is absolutely wonderful. Informative and full of information I did not know, and I am a student of history. While informative it is also entertaining and I read it in one sitting all day long. It was that interesting.

Brian's enthusiasm for the historical background of this book is obvious, as is his knowledge of the persons and events. His passion for this topic goes back 15 years. His children are lucky to have a such an enthusiastic historian in the family! Story is very readable and the reader quickly discovers who the real heroes of the Revolutionary War were.

This is an fascinating account of an aspect of the Revolutionary War that has been overlooked in history. Espionage occurs in every conflict, but my school book knowledge of spying during the Revolution was limited to Nathan Hale's "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country" quote. Kilmeade's book tells the story of the Culper spy ring that operated in Long Island and New York and the British's counter-espionage efforts in a lively and entertaining manner. His account of the discovery of Benedict Arnold's plot to turn over West Point to the British and the capture, imprisonment and execution of Major John Andre', the head of British counter-intelligence in New

York was very interesting and much better than the one or two lines that history textbooks devote to them. I particularly enjoyed the details about how the spy ring was formed, how it operated, and how it transmitted its intelligence directly to General Washington. Kilmeade takes some liberties with dialog in this book but discloses that fact in the introduction. This editorial license is common in historical accounts these days and, if anything, improves the reader's understanding of the essence of the story.

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