



George Washington Written Upon the Land: Nature, Memory, Myth, and Landscape

Philip Levy

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George Washington's childhood is famously the most elusive part of his life story. For centuries biographers have struggled with a lack of period documentation and an absence of late-in-life reflection in trying to imagine Washington's formative years.

In *George Washington Written upon the Land*, Philip Levy explores this most famous of American childhoods through its relationship to the Virginia farm where much of it took place. Using approaches from biography, archaeology, folklore, and studies of landscape and material culture, Levy focuses on how different ideas about Washington's childhood functioned—what sorts of lessons they sought to teach and how different epochs and writers understood the man and the past itself.

In a suggestive and far-reaching final chapter, Levy argues that Washington was present at the onset of the Anthropocene—the geologic era when human activity began to have a significant impact on world ecosystems. Interpreting Washington's childhood farm through the lens of “big” history, he encourages scholars to break down boundaries between science and social science and between human and nonhuman.

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