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# **An American history**

**Muzzey David Saville**

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**Title: An American history**

**Author: Muzzey David Saville**

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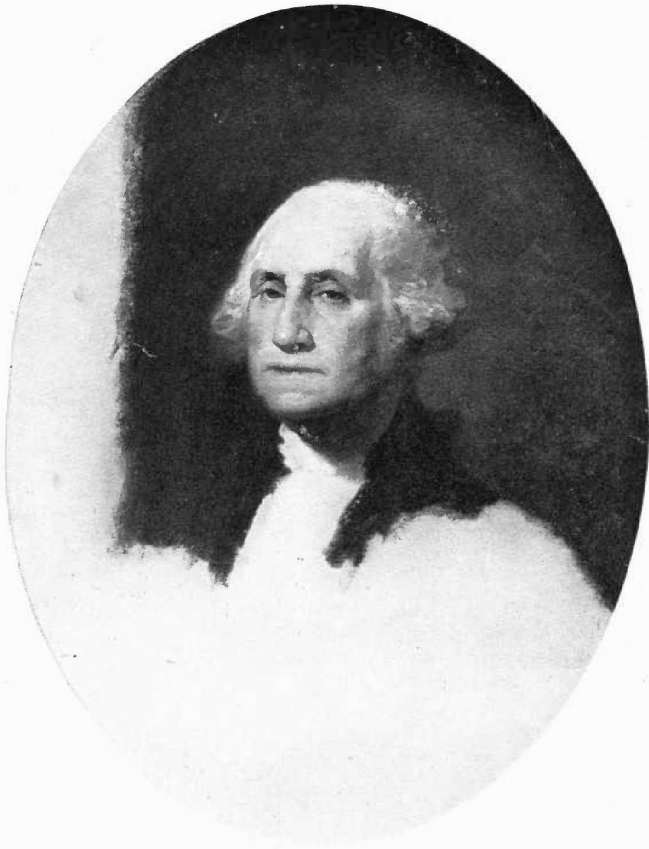
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George Washington

AN  
AMERICAN HISTORY

BY

DAVID SAVILLE MUZZEY, PH.D.

BARNARD COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK

*... rerum cognoscere causas*

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## EDITORIAL PREFACE

The present volume represents the newer tendencies in historical writing. Its aim is not to tell over once more the old story in the old way, but to give the emphasis to those factors in our national development which appeal to us as most vital from the standpoint of to-day. However various may be the advantages of historical study, one of them, and perhaps the most unmistakable, is to explain prevailing conditions and institutions by showing how they have come about. This is our best way of understanding the present and of placing ourselves in a position to participate intelligently in the solution of the great problems of social and political betterment which it is the duty of all of us to face. Dr. Muzzey has not, therefore, tabulated a series of historical occurrences under successive presidential administrations, but has carefully selected the great phases in the development of our country and treated them in a coherent fashion. He has exhibited great skill in so ordering them that they form a continuous narrative which will secure and retain the interest of the student. There is no question at any point of the importance of the topics selected and their relation to our whole complex development. All minor, uncorrelated matters, such as the circumstances attending each colonial plantation, the tactics and casualties of military campaigns, the careers of men of slight influence in high office, are boldly omitted on the ground that they make no permanent impression on the student's mind and serve only to confuse and blur the larger issues.

Some special features of the book are its full discussion of the federal power in connection with the Constitution, its emphasis on the westward-moving frontier as the most constant

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and potent force in our history, and its recognition of the influence of economic factors on our sectional rivalries and political theories. It will be noted that from one fourth to one fifth of the volume deals with the history of our country since the Civil War and Reconstruction. Hitherto there has been a reluctance on the part of those who have prepared textbooks on our history to undertake the responsibility of treating those recent phases of our social, political, and industrial history which are really of chief concern to us. Dr. Muzzey has undertaken the arduous task of giving the great problems and preoccupations of to-day their indispensable historic setting. This I deem the very special merit of his work, and am confident that it will meet with eager approbation from many who have long been dissatisfied with the conventional textbook, which leaves a great gap between the past and the present.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON

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