



Eisenhower

Geoffrey Perret

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From the acclaimed author of *Old Soldiers Never Die* comes an in-depth biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower that offers fresh perspectives not only on World War II and the Korean War, but also on the Cold War, the civil rights movement, and Vietnam.

Eisenhower Details

Date : Published January 1st 1997 by Adams Media

ISBN : 9781580624312

Author : Geoffrey Perret

Format : Paperback 688 pages

Genre : Biography, History, Politics, Presidents, Nonfiction, War, World War II, North American Hi..., American History, Biography Memoir, Us Presidents

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Chris says

This is a good narrative about Dwight D. Eisenhower's life. Considering the subject matter (WWII and Ike's presidency), it's fairly short at 608 pages. I liked the way the author touched on things and gave his point of view on Ike's notes. Many of these points were insightful, because the author was sure to list both the mistakes and accomplishments that he saw.

On page 412, I found the note about the Republican party of the 1950s quite interesting, given the points made about the UN, Social Security, and income tax.

Overall, this was a good read, and I found the coverage of his presidency interesting as well.

Dulcie says

Coming to Eisenhower relatively neutral I carry no can for either supporters or detractors.

The only lesson I take from this book is that the author ran out of interest in his subject well before the final curtain.

Based on what I have just read Eisenhower was neither principled nor ethical. Pure laissez - faire to get through any problem no matter what it is. Admirable in a soldier & an enterprise manager, absolutely deplorable in a politician.

Chad Foster says

A fantastic biography that stands up well among the extensive literature on Eisenhower. The author attempts to keep the narrative a personal one, capturing the essence of what made Eisenhower who he was. Ike's ambition and the insecurities that, in part, drove that ambition are at the forefront of this enthralling tale of a simple boy from Abeline, Kansas who became the leader of the free world.

William J. says

This is an excellent book! The author doesn't get bogged down with unnecessary details. He reports on General Eisenhower's life and experience in the Army but he doesn't present a history of WWI or WWII or the interim years but he provides enough information to understand how and why General Eisenhower developed and succeeded. He continues the same process for the Presidency. Geoffrey Parret points out President Eisenhower's successes and failures in legislation as President. The author explains why President Eisenhower both developed American nuclear yet tried to stimulate nuclear disarmament with the Soviet Union. President Eisenhower remained very popular throughout his two terms and afterwards. He was a far more active and involved President than he appeared. His style was relaxed and confident but to some very lazy yet the President was a curious individual who worked hard to understand issues. He was far more liberal socially than many of today's Republicans. This is a great read!

Amy says

A decent bio, I was really enjoying it till I got the presidency. The authors started to shift the book from a strict timeline to each chapter being about a different event in the Eisenhower presidency.

Steve says

<https://bestpresidentialbios.com/2017...>

“Eisenhower” by Geoffrey Perret was published in 1999, two years after the publication of his biography of Ulysses S. Grant. Perret is an author and historian and served for three years in the U.S. Army. Among his dozen published books are biographies of JFK, Lincoln and Douglas MacArthur.

Perret’s biography was the first comprehensive review of Eisenhower following the publication of Stephen Ambrose’s two-volume series in the early 1980s. With 608 pages of text it provides substantial, but not exhaustive, coverage of the thirty-fourth president.

“Eisenhower” proves an easy, fluid read that lacks the weighty feel of more academically-oriented biographies. As a result, readers new to Eisenhower will find this an efficient and often engaging introduction to a man whose public career does not naturally lend itself to a lively, buoyant narrative.

The author’s military background (and predilection) is frequently evident and underpins some of the book’s most interesting features. Among these is Perret’s analysis of the difference in British versus American styles of military command and fascinating discussions relating to the logistics of war and the use of advanced technology by the Allies.

Although Perret’s review of Eisenhower’s cabinet appointments seems perfunctory, his discussions of the earliest days of Ike’s presidency and leadership style and the dynamics of his cabinet are quite compelling. In addition, Perret’s introduction to Secretary of State Dulles, his assessment of Earl Warren (and the Supreme Court’s legacy during that era) and his review of the Cold War prove interesting and robust.

But for all its strengths, Perret’s biography of Dwight Eisenhower possesses several notable shortcomings. Most significant among these is the fact the book promises an original, provocative portrait of Eisenhower...yet it is entirely unclear this promise is ever fulfilled. If fresh perspectives of Eisenhower are revealed in these pages they are well-camouflaged.

In addition, Perret’s review of Eisenhower’s youth and early military career is competent but far too brisk; Ike is nearly fifty years old after just one-fourth of the book has elapsed. The pace slows substantially when Eisenhower is selected to lead the Allied invasion of North Africa in 1942, but by then numerous opportunities to more fully flesh-out his character and personality have been missed.

If one of the book’s notable strengths is the ease with which readers can absorb Eisenhower’s life, one of its key weaknesses is that it often lacks the feeling of serious, probative history. While this biography is filled with soft observations on Eisenhower’s explosive temper and daily routine there is ultimately a dearth of penetrating, insightful facts and observations to explain his successes and failures as Supreme Commander – and president.

The reader sees much of the chain-smoking, carefully guarded and loyal Eisenhower in the book's forty-five chapters...but never really gets inside his head or understands what truly makes him tick. His personal life is never seriously examined and his family often seems an after-thought (which, in fairness, it may have seemed to Eisenhower as well). And while his post-presidency is relatively well-covered in the mere eight pages it receives, there is very little concluding discussion of his legacy or lasting impact.

Overall, Geoffrey Perret's "Eisenhower" is good in numerous ways, but excellent in virtually none. While providing comprehensive coverage of this soldier-president in an easy-to-digest and often interesting manner, it lacks the rigorous examination and analysis that is embedded within the best presidential biographies.

Overall rating: 3½ stars

John says

I had always thought of President Eisenhower as very easy going, not having any ambition and things just falling into his lap. This biography relieved me of that misconception.

He worked hard in school, very much wanted to get ahead. When he graduated from West Point he made it known he wanted to marry a rich woman and he did. And so on...

Another misconception of mine is that Mamie went to school here in Denver. Her dad was a very successful business man in Iowa, retired when he was 45 and moved the family to Denver, but it was too cold here in the winter so they moved to San Antonio, where she eventually met Ike when he was stationed there, and they spent summers in Denver.

I really enjoyed the book.

Greg Holdsworth says

The best overall biography of Eisenhower I have read. Terrific descriptions of his dealings with large ego generals and politicians, modestly and wisely managing these men. I didn't expect to like this as well as I did, as I didn't care so much for Perret's biography of U.S. Grant so maybe I will have to reread that.

Brian says

It is very difficult to write a one volume biography of Eisenhower but this comes as close as one can get to being a thorough and accurate account of his life. The biography is a fair treatment of Eisenhower and looks at many of the myths that have come up about his life and dispels them. Starting with his early years and time growing up in Abeline to the days in the white house the reader can clearly see the evolution of Eisenhower. It covers not only his personal evolution but really looks at the situations he was in and addresses how he changed the situation of the army and the structures of command in Europe. Perret is a

specialist in the military biography and his treatment of Eisenhower's war years is among the most thorough ever written on the man. The book is plainly written and easy to read making it a fast 600 pages that leave the reader well informed and with the right amount of information on their subject. If you are really looking for the complete history of Eisenhower though you should consider some of the multivolume works that have been done but for a thorough one volume account this cannot be beat and will leave you saying "I Like Ike"

Paulcary says

Eisenhower was a great military leader but as the author illustrates a competent though not great president. From his humble midwest beginnings to the seat of power in Washington Eisenhower's fascinating life is thoroughly explored by the author. Well worth reading.
