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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ GENERAL FICTION

George Washington's Smallest Army

Dennis Middlemist
F. Jodie Stinnett, illustrator
AuthorHouse
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> *And then all at once, like a big bolt of lightning, it struck George that the owl had talked to him!…The owl sounded exactly like a frog, and anyone passing by would think so too.*

George grew up at Miller's Pond. From his tadpole days in the pond to his frog life on land, he impressed everyone with his brains and bravery. He even saved a beautiful white mouse from the clutches of a big black crow. Melinda, the wise owl, knew that he was the one critter who could help her civilize their home.

While Melinda teaches George the language of other critters, George Washington leads the Continental Army in the new country's fight for independence.

After George quickly learns the languages of all the critters around the pond, Melinda takes him to an old barn where he learns human language from the family that lives on the farm. The second winter they visit the barn, they bring Melissa, the white mouse that George had saved. The first thing they notice is that the man, John Tobin, is gone.

Meanwhile, George Washington's army moves closer to Miller's Pond, as he is forced out of New York by the British Redcoats. He heads south across New Jersey with his army of 2,000 men.

Back at the farm, George, Melinda and Melissa continue their lessons.

> *Then late one afternoon, just as life was getting a little boring for them, excitement came in the form of two men who came riding horses hurriedly up to the farm. One of the men was John Tobin, who looked very tired and weary. The other man sat regally in his saddle and looked very important…*

George Washington needs to rest and plan. The war is going badly with one defeat after another. Morale is low. His troops need to win a battle. He decides to sleep in the barn, in the hayloft where George, Melinda, and Melissa have made their winter home.

Author "Grandpa Dennis" Middlemist creates a delightful fantasy world at Miller's Pond. Through it, he relates historically accurate accounts of the Revolutionary War. His charming tale both teaches American history and introduces facts about the animal world. The likeable and believable characters remain true to their basic nature.

A retired college professor and author of several college textbooks, Middlemist enjoys entertaining his grandchildren with stories and songs. Writing as Grandpa Dennis, he weaves a seamless story that brings together the human and animal world.

George Washington's Smallest Army is a book that can be read to young children. It fits equally well for the adult who enjoys creative fantasy that turns history into a fun experience.

PAT AVERY (April 1, 2011)

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