



**Washington's Crossing of the Delaware and More**  
**Guest: Mike Church**  
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**[Mike Church](#) is the host of the *Mike Church Show* on Sirius/XM (Patriot channel, #125).**

**WOODS:** Let's talk about *Times That Try Men's Souls*, your new CD set on Washington's Crossing. First of all, is it narrated, or is it dramatically acted out? What are people going to hear on this CD?

**CHURCH:** Well, *Times That Try Men's Souls* is a 2-CD set, and it is more dramatically acted than it is narrated, but there is narration, and I do most of the narration, or I do about two-thirds of it. My 17-year-old daughter, Madison, lends a helping hand, and she does the other one third by asking questions that she probably knows the answers to, but she humors me and reads the script as she's supposed to.

This aired for the first time on Sirius/XM on Christmas Day, which is the day that Washington crossed in 1776. So it starts as basically me describing the famous Emanuel Leutze painting of Washington's crossing, and it's really dramatic: how he crossed the Delaware and the sun was peeking through the clouds, and he was standing up in a giant rowboat and all this stuff, and my daughter said, "That's a great story, Dad," and I said, "There's only one problem. It never happened," and then the story kicks in from there to explore exactly what did happen, and more importantly, the events that led to Washington's being on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, which to my knowledge no one has dramatized yet. So it's a dramatic re-enactment of what happened after the triumph of the colonials, or the continentals chasing Admiral Howe out of Boston, and the port of Boston was seized and the Brits occupied it and installed many of the things which we revolted against and then tried to guard against in our Constitution, and then to the campaign in New York, which most people don't know an awful lot about, and it's just really—the best way I can describe it, as Washington described it, as the only way that he and that army survived that summer, fall, and early winter is through Divine Providence, and that's what it's the story of: just what they went through and just how miraculous it was that the Brits—I mean, they had them cornered time after time after time and just miraculously could not catch him, and that's what the story is about.

**WOODS:** Mike, in your press packet it says that you originally conceived of this as a 30-minute special for Christmas Eve 2013, but as you got working on it, it just ballooned into this much larger project, the more you looked into the story and saw how interesting it was. What were the sorts of things that as you were researching you said, well, I've got to include this, and I've got to include that, so that it became something grander than you conceived of in the beginning?

**CHURCH:** Well, I suppose that the main thing that I found was that I started reading, looking for source material like historians are supposed to and trying to go to the first source, and all the stories that were written or most of the stories that were contemporary that were written around the time of the conclusion of the Revolution or shortly thereafter were short stories. They would appear in the little pamphlets that were the early precursors to the big magazines that we have today, and just looking for a more fleshed-out version of the story—it was hard to find, so I just assumed when I started that this will be a quick read. I can just take one of these little short stories, do a little research on it, and nail some of the important dates and names down, and put it together and bammo! So then I picked up my old copy of David Hackett Fischer's Pulitzer Prize winner, *Washington's Crossing*, and if you start thumbing through that 400-page dissertation, I would probably have to make a mini-series out of it. And then for some reason, Tom, and I still don't know why, I guess the Lord just kind of guided me here, I found a copy, and I started reading Washington Irving, the great author, his *Life of Washington* bio, and as I started reading it I said, "Why don't you forward to the chapters that he has on the campaign of '76?" And as soon as I started reading that, and I finished it all in about a day, it just occurred to me that Irving, because he wrote such great stories—I mean, he was such a great writer, *Sleepy Hollow* and all those little novelettes that he wrote—and Irving's tale, unlike Hackett Fischer's—no knock on Hackett Fischer—but Irving's tale was exciting. It was thrilling to read, and it had a lot of drama in it, and there was just intrigue going on with these guys trying to mutiny against Washington and conspiring to get him fired so they could take his command, and then the miraculous escapes and all that, and I just took the way he wove the tale, and I kind of used that as my guide, and I give him full faith and credit in all the printed materials and then use that as the basis, and there was no way you could tell that in 20 minutes. So I was able to get it down to about two hours, just a little over two hours, and that's how the expansion of it happened. So we can thank *Sleepy Hollow*, Washington Irving—who was actually named for George Washington—for that.

**WOODS:** How about that? Now the crossing of the Delaware on Christmas Day that everybody knows about was actually the eighth crossing Washington's Army executed in 1776. What can you tell us about the previous crossings—not quite as glorious?

**CHURCH:** (laughs) Well, maybe not quite as glorious but certainly as miraculous. For example, the most famous of all is—so Washington mobilizes the Continental Army. He's got about 15,000, 14,000 or so men, and they are from various parts of New York. They arrive. Some of them get to Long Island by leaving the mainland of New York up near New Rochelle and that

part of New York City or New York area. Others have been stationed at Manhattan island to hold the fort down until Washington can get there, and they cross from there, and Washington himself at the route that he takes. So what we have here is, all of July and early August we have about 14,000 Continentals digging ditches and making ramparts and fortifying what is today Brooklyn, basically for the assault that they think is coming from the British. What they don't know and they find out that the Brits have twice as many men as they thought they would bring, and they brought 10,000 Prussians or Hessian mercenaries with them, and when this battle begins, it's just one blunder after another. When the Battle of Long Island begins, Washington, much to his chagrin, finds out that all of his intelligence is fake. He's been duped. He also finds out that his men have failed to secure an entire half-mile-wide passage on their left flank, and of course Admiral Howe finds out about this, and as soon as the Battle of Long Island begins it's just about over. On the first day after the battle, Washington meets with his war council, or what's left of it, and they decide, look, we've got to try to retreat. How are they going to do that? These guys are surrounded. They have got 30,000 of them all around us, and about that time the most amazing and miraculous storm comes off the Atlantic Ocean there, and it starts raining, and becomes very misty—impossible to hear the horses and cannon moving, and they also have the cover of darkness in the rain. So they get 9,000 of their men back across the river, the East River that day, and then day breaks, and they still have about 2 or 3,000 left to go, and of course, we're thinking that okay, the British see us now. They are going to realize that we tried to retreat. They have ships nearby. They are going to move in. They are going to surround us on Manhattan island, and we're cooked. Well, about that time in the middle of August a fog arrives, and it's right off the Hudson River. You never get a fog in New York in August.

A fog arises so thick that men couldn't see each other three yards away, and that covered the remaining troops so that they could get across the East River and seal the retreat. Later on that day, as soon as the fog lifted, the British went to go finish the conquest to find that Washington and his entire army had escaped back across the river. That's the most amazing of them. And from there he crosses Long Island to what we call White Plains, New York today. They had to cross the Harlem River. Then he has to cross the Hudson. Then he has to cross the Passaic. Then he has to cross the Hackensack. Just a series of retreats. He almost gets caught. Christmas Day, 1776 almost never happens, Tom. And we dramatize this in *The Times That Try Men's Souls*. After he crosses the last river, before he gets to the Passaic, before he gets to the Delaware, they stop, and he thinks that his other general, General Lee, is going to meet him. So he's waiting for Lee for reinforcements, and while he's waiting he finds out that Lee has double-crossed him. He's not going to meet him, but Cornwallis is going to meet him, you know, Cornwallis. So he gathers all the men that he came and as speedily as he can they try to get across the Delaware River on the 12th of December or so, and as they are in the middle of the river, the British Army shows up and Washington is just looking back and Cornwallis is just shaking his head, going, "Missed it by that much, again." So at each turn or at each one of these crossings of those rivers in New Jersey, Lord Cornwallis almost caught George Washington, and

the only reason he didn't catch him that day is because for once Washington's intelligence was good and he knew that they were coming after him.

**WOODS:** Mike, before we move on to another topic, tell people how they can get a copy of *The Times That Try Men's Souls*.

**CHURCH:** Well, you can get a copy of *The Times That Try Men's Souls* at MikeChurch.com, in my Founder's Trading Post, or at FoundingFatherFilms.com which is a lot easier to remember, and it's right there on the front page, and of course, at Amazon all my movies are at Amazon.com, along with *The Spirit of '76* and all the other docudramas and documentary movies and audio series that we have produced.

**WOODS:** Mike, I want you to tell us now about Mike Church project number 8,717, and that is the resurrection of some of the writings of John Taylor of Caroline. Before we go into that, I want you to tell people who he was and why we should care about him.

**CHURCH:** Well, John Taylor of Caroline County was one of those members of the generation of men that we call the Founding Fathers, and not many people know about Taylor of Caroline, and that's because he rarely held an elective office, and that's because he never sought any, and he was more of a, he was a more of a behind the scenes kind of guy: I will provide you with all the intellectual firepower you need to combat the fake Federalists John Adams and Alexander Hamilton and what have you, but I really have no desire to do any of the heavy lifting myself. He was one of the wealthier Virginians. His father-in-law had bequeathed to him or had granted to him upon marriage a very large expanse of property. He was probably the first agrarian writer of the North American, I don't want to say colonies because they were states then, but he was the first agrarian writer that actually sat down and said, okay, how can we make better crops? How can I grow better crops? How can I grow more? How can I utilize the land? How can I fertilize it better? He wrote a book about this, and he was one of the first to market with that, and while he was doing all this, he was busy arguing Supreme Court cases. For example, he argued a case against this thing called a carriage tax, and he was very, very good friends with Thomas Jefferson, very good friends with James Madison—although he never trusted Madison—but he was really lifelong friends with James Monroe, and until the day he died he and Monroe were the best of friends, although when Monroe was president, Taylor kind of had the attitude that some of us have towards people that we know that get elected. Okay, man, that was great, I am glad you got elected. Now, my turn to play watchdog. Don't think you're going to get a pass just because I know you. That's just a little bit of the background on Taylor.

**WOODS:** Another reason Taylor might not be referred to a whole lot is that his views on the nature of the Union are a little bit unfashionable today, and I assume that's what you're highlighting in some of the works that you're bringing back for us.

**CHURCH:** Well, some of those views, now, they may not conform with what moderate conservatives think how the Union ought to be constituted, but I think that his view at the time was as accurate as anyone's could possibly be.

**WOODS:** Oh, I agree completely, and I think his view at the time was obviously far more mainstream than it would be considered today, and it's quite valuable, and he's a very penetrating thinker, and you can hardly go wrong reading him. What kinds of things are you in fact working on bringing back, and when is this project coming to fruition?

**CHURCH:** Okay, well, we've already restored one of the lost treasures from Taylor, and that is his argument respecting the constitutionality of the carriage tax. In that pamphlet, now, so what this is, Tom, is in 1794 the Congress gets together, and they want to see how far they can push their power to tax. Of course, the Federalists, Hamilton and Rufus King and that northeastern lot, they thought that their power to tax was pretty much bottomless, they could tax almost anything provided that it met with Article I, Section 8, apportionment clauses. So they decided to try it out. They decided they were going to tax carriages. A big mistake for them at the time, because carriages were principally made in two states known as Pennsylvania and Virginia, and a guy that made carriages in Virginia whose name was Hilton decided that he was not going to pay the tax, and he decided he wasn't going to pay the tax because Taylor and Jefferson and others advised him, dude, don't pay the tax, let's take it to court and let's contest this taxing power. So who did they hire, and then of course, the federal government sued. The Washington Administration sued, so who did they hire, who did hire to represent him in this famous Supreme Court case? John Taylor of Caroline County. Taylor's argument against the carriage tax is just the most complete, the most thorough, and I think, the most stinging rebuke to Congress's universal power to tax. Taylor demonstrates in that argument that if the Framers had wanted to give you a ubiquitous, universal power, then they wouldn't have put all these conditions on it, and then he lists all the conditions, and it's just a fascinating read. The thing about it is that Taylor sold copies it for \$1. Imagine that. This was a pretty thick book back then that costs \$1 after he argued that he had had somebody transcribe it or write it down in the Supreme Court. Other than those copies, which were printed in 1794, I believe, there's never been a modern revival or printing of that copy. The only place that you can find a copy of that document is in the records of the Supreme Court, which were not officially kept there at that time. So I happen to stumble upon—I got a copy of the original that's just been photocopied. So it's almost impossible to read, and we restored this thing from scratch, basically with me dictating the words, then having a transcriptionist write out what I had dictated, and that's the first in a series of pamphlets of Taylor's that have just disappeared into the mist of time.

**WOODS:** How can people get their hands on these?

**CHURCH:** Well, they are at the same place, Founder's Trading Post at [MikeChurch.com](http://MikeChurch.com), and at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) as well, and we even have the Kindle version of the carriage tax argument at [Amazon](http://Amazon.com), so if you want to download it for your Kindle and read it digitally, you know, you can

get the digital copy of it as well, and there's a, there's two other pamphlets of Taylor's that we're going to republish. One of them, I think, is the one that will interest people the most, is around the time that John Marshall was inventing the ubiquitous power of the federal government to review the laws of the states, which we're currently possessed of and stuck with in this *McCulloch vs. Maryland* case, Taylor was sniffing out that that's what Marshall was trying to do before he did it. Taylor wrote a pamphlet about it, and he wrote his thoughts down to say, okay, let's—before you think you can just use the Supreme Court as the supreme council of all of mankind and invalidate the laws of Greece, New York, for example, let's look at what your power actually is and what it's supposed to be, and that will be the next one in the Taylor pamphlet that we'll publish. That will be coming out here in the next couple of weeks, actually. Most of the work on that one is already done.

**WOODS:** Well, I think anybody listening to this program who enjoys history will appreciate all of these projects, certainly. *Times That Try Men's Souls* is great for the whole family, and this other work by John Taylor—again, anyone who is interested in U.S. history will appreciate the significance of what you are doing here. To me it's wonderful to read contemporaries who were critical of John Marshall, and indeed in this case, even someone who anticipated some of the evils of John Marshall before he could perpetrate those evils. That makes some good and interesting reading, and it also goes to show that these critiques are not things that you and I thought up 200 years later but that astute people at the time, who did believe in keeping the federal government at bay, were well aware of the full nature, of the true nature of the tenure of John Marshall as Chief Justice. It's just fantastic. I wonder if you're like me, and you've got a list of projects that you say, well, sometime between now and the end of the world I am going to get to these. If you've got such a list, can you give us a special sneak preview that you haven't even shared in your own listening audience? Is that asking too much?

**CHURCH:** No. Well, I will tell you that the title of the pamphlet—the one we're talking about—Taylor and Marshall, and it's not just Marshall that he goes after. He sees the writing on the wall with this committee that they are putting together to basically try and figure out okay, how can we tariff the imports of the South and relieve the exports of the North? The title of the pamphlet is *The Spirit of '76*, and he meant it as the spirit of '76 which was, okay, this is the spirit of the American Revolution, guys, and this is where you are going wrong, and this is what's wrong with that. So the pamphlet you were just referring to. I had talked earlier about those *The Life of Washington* books by Washington Irving, and there has been a couple of attempts in the last 100 years to republish *The Life of Washington* series, and Irving wrote it. And he wrote the last page of the last volume two days before he died. When Irving wrote that he wrote it as seven volumes, and it could take you a year to read, so about 20 years later one of his, I don't remember if it was his son or a nephew, but they went through and they edited it down, and they put it into what's called *The Life of Washington: The Student's Edition*, and it's only two volumes, and we're about two-thirds of the way through that, of republishing the two volume set of Washington Irving's amazing story of George Washington and *The Life of Washington* in two volumes. So that one is coming. There's an actual book that was written by

a bio of John Taylor written by a historian named Henry Simms, and Simms copyright expired about two years ago, meaning that work is actually part of the public domain now to be published. We're going to republish that. I would like to do the bio of the story of John Randolph of Roanoke. Several people have republished that one, but they quit publishing it in the early part of the twentieth century. There's a book that I actually found thanks to you, Edward Payson Powell's *Nullification and Secession in the United States* which Payson Powell wrote in the 1890s.

**WOODS:** Right. Now he was not a sympathizer, but he's got good information.

**CHURCH:** No, he wasn't a sympathizer, and I think that that's what makes his work great, because his writings say that okay, I can't disprove—he concludes in that work secession was warranted and nullification and interposition were also warranted. Just one more that we're working on as a historian/author friend of mine, Stephen Klugewicz, who is now working at *The Imaginative Conservative* website. Stephen and I for about the last year have been putting together snippets and paragraphs at a time, and then a page, and then a chapter, of a contemporary guide for young men on becoming young gentlemen, because there's no guide like it. It's kind of a how-to book on if you want to learn how to become a gentleman or a chivalrous knight as they were called in the day, this is a nice little guidebook to that. And we walk you through the history of who the first gentlemen were, who the first knights were, and what about manners, and where did the manners come from, and why were the manners always tilted toward women, and there's really a great history behind that. We don't have a lot of great books these days, or great guides, for young men on how they ought to conduct their affairs or how their forefathers used to conduct their affairs, especially when it comes to the fairer sex or the fairer gender, and we're working hard on that book. That book will come out later this summer.

**WOODS:** Well, it all sounds great, and I know I have a great many history buffs who listen in to this program, and I urge them not only to check out the Founder's Trading Post at [MikeChurch.com](http://MikeChurch.com) where they can get all these interesting things, but also of course, your program on the Patriot Channel or Sirius/XM, 6-9 a.m., Monday-Friday; that's Sirius/XM channel 125, if I am not mistaken.

**CHURCH:** It is. Monday-Friday, 6-9 a.m. Eastern, 5-8, unfortunately, for me, Central Time.

**WOODS:** Yeah, and me too.

**CHURCH:** But I have to do it.

**WOODS:** It means I generally listen in when I have an early flight. I switch it on. I listen to Mike Church, and I say I am going to listen to the master at work, a guy who can sit there with a three-hour show, have full hour with no guests at all, and fill that hour effortlessly, whereas when I host the Peter Schiff Show, people think it's effortless, but I am concentrating every ounce of my energy on thinking of stuff to say during every dead moment of that show. So I

appreciate the model you are for me, and what I have been able to learn from you over the years. That's all great, and best of luck with all these projects and thanks for your time today.

**CHURCH:** Tom, thanks for having me, and I appreciate the kudos, and right back at you in the way that you have handled your exploration of history and liberty and all that stuff. You're a model for the rest of us out here, too, brother. Thank you.