



American Creation: Triumphs and Tragedies in the Founding of the Republic

By Joseph J. Ellis

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National Bestseller

Acclaimed historian Joseph J. Ellis brings his unparalleled talents to this riveting account of the early years of the Republic.

The last quarter of the eighteenth century remains the most politically creative era in American history, when a dedicated group of men undertook a bold experiment in political ideals. It was a time of both triumphs and tragedies—all of which contributed to the shaping of our burgeoning nation. Ellis casts an incisive eye on the gradual pace of the American Revolution and the contributions of such luminaries as Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, and brilliantly analyzes the failures of the founders to adequately solve the problems of slavery and the treatment of Native Americans. With accessible prose and stunning eloquence, Ellis delineates in **American Creation** an era of flawed greatness, at a time when understanding our origins is more important than ever.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. This subtle, brilliant examination of the period between the War of Independence and the Louisiana Purchase puts Pulitzer-winner Ellis (*Founding Brothers*) among the finest of America's narrative historians. Six stories, each centering on a significant creative achievement or failure, combine to portray often flawed men and their efforts to lay the republic's foundation. Set against the extraordinary establishment of the most liberal nation-state in the history of Western Civilization... in the most extensive and richly endowed plot of ground on the planet are the terrible costs of victory, including the perpetuation of slavery and the cruel oppression of Native Americans. Ellis blames the founders' failures on their decision to opt for an evolutionary revolution, not a risky severance with tradition (as would happen, murderously, in France, which necessitated compromises, like retaining slavery). Despite the injustices and brutalities that resulted, Ellis argues, this deferral strategy was a profound insight rooted in a realistic appraisal of how enduring social change best happens. Ellis's lucid, illuminating and ironic prose will make this a holiday season hit. (Nov. 5)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Reviewers embraced *American Creation* for the same reason they enjoyed Ellis's previous books: his treatment of the Founding Fathers is neither idolatrous nor iconoclastic. He portrays them as the fascinating, complex, and human characters they really were. Some historians disagreed with details of Ellis's interpretation, but they tended to emphasize that, like the founders themselves, Ellis has created a useful framework in which the ideas of the Revolutionary period can be discussed. Ellis's prose, on the other hand, did not inspire any comparisons with Thomas Jefferson's; in fact, several reviewers suggested another round of editing. But all critics agreed that the author's masterful handling of the material checked and balanced the occasional tyrannical sentence.

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In a structure similar to his *Founding Brothers* (2000), which examined leading American revolutionaries at critical episodes, Ellis selects "certain propitious moments" from the American Revolution and early republic, dramatizes them, and analyzes their crucial ramifications for America's future. Those Ellis discusses, such as a sense of nationalism or the Founders' failure to constrain slavery, emerge as contingent developments. What Ellis emphasizes in this set of incisive narratives is the possibility that history could have taken some very different directions and that what occurred is unjustifiably endowed with inevitability. Subjects include the debate preceding the Declaration of Independence; the ordeal of Valley Forge; the beginning of the party system in the 1790s; and the Louisiana Purchase. Collectively they illuminate, argues Ellis, the Founders' anxieties about the constitutional nature, territorial extent, and permanence of the republic they were constructing. All the Founders had reservations about the nation-state that resulted. Their maneuvers to alter it, such as an effort by Washington's secretary of war to change Indian policy from dispossession to accommodation, crystallize in Ellis' outstanding acuity about the successes and failures of the Founders. A history bound for phenomenal popularity. Taylor, Gilbert

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Eric Overbay:

Do you have favorite book? If you have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or even goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people truly feel enjoy to spend their time and energy to read a book. They are really reading whatever they acquire because their hobby will be reading a book. Think about the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, person feel need book once they found difficult problem or exercise. Well, probably you'll have this American Creation: Triumphs and Tragedies in the Founding of the Republic.

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