

## Politics in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

The 18<sup>th</sup> century was a tumultuous period in America's history and the political life of the period reflects this disorder. Early in the period, the thirteen colonies struggled to govern themselves while simultaneously being ruled by a sovereign thousands of miles across the Atlantic. In the middle of the century, colonists and British soldiers fought alongside each other in the French and Indian War. Following the war, King George III sought to reassert his authority over the colonies and instituted new laws and taxes on the colonists. The colonists rebuffed King George III's efforts and, following a series of escalating conflicts, dissolved into full scale war. Throughout the war, the colonists gradually began to talk of independence, culminating in the writing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Americans officially won independence in 1783 with the Treaty of Paris; they then had to establish a new nation with a new form of government. The founders began by writing the Articles of Confederation, a document which soon proved ineffective. In 1787, delegates came together in Philadelphia to revise the Articles which they ultimately threw out and drafted the U.S. Constitution. The Bill of Rights soon followed and America began its life as a free and independent nation.

This guide is designed to help researchers using the Library at Gunston Hall research politics in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is divided into seven sections: General Information, the Road to Revolution, the American Revolution, the Post-War Period, the Making of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Virginia Politics in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

### General Information

**Bradford, M.E. *Founding Fathers: Brief Lives of the Framers of the United States Constitution*. Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1981.**

Bradford offers short two to ten page biographies of the framers of the Constitution.

**E203.5. B74 1994**

**Hendrickson, David C. *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding*. Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003.**

Twenty-nine chapters explaining a broad period of history. Hedrickson begins with the influence of ancient societies on the founders and ends with the ratification of the Constitution. He focuses on the development of American national identity during the Revolutionary War.

**JK 116. H45 2003**

**Hynman, Charles S. and Donald S Lutz, ed. *American Political Writing during the Founding Era, 1760-1805, Volumes 1-2*. Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1983.**

In this two volume set, the editors selected numerous primary source documents concerning the formation of America. They include a wide variety of sources such as letters, speeches, books, pamphlets, and newspapers in their attempt to compile an easily assessable volume of relevant source material.

**JK 113 .A716 1983 vols. 1-2**

**Tansill, Charles C, ed. *Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the American States*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1927.**

This book contains more than 30 primary source documents about the making of America. It begins with the Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress in 1774 and includes numerous documents presented at the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

**JK11 1927**

## **The Road to Revolution**

**Carr, J. Revell. *Seeds of Discontent: The Deep Roots of the American Revolution 1650-1750*. New York: Walker & Company, 2008.**

Carr contradicts conventional views of causes of the American Revolution by arguing that the Revolution was a culmination of events which began in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.

**E210. C367 2008**

**Maier, Pauline. *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776*. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1991.**

In this classic text on the American Revolution, Maier explains the development of the Revolutionary War. She describes the reasons Americans went to war with Britain and the journey American took from opposition to independence.

**E210.M27 1972**

**Miller, Lillian B. *"The Dye is Now Cast: The Road to American Independence, 1774-1776*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975.**

Miller overviews how the colonists began their fight for independence. She begins with the First Continental Congress and ends with the Declaration of Independence. This book contains numerous portraits and pictures.

**E302.5.N38 1975**

**Sheppard, Ruth, ed. *Empires Collide: The French and Indian War, 1754-1763*. Great Britain: Osprey Publishing, 2006.**

Sheppard summarizes the causes, course of, and ending to the French and Indian War. She includes numerous full color illustrations and maps as well as a chronology of the war.

**E199.E46 2006**

**Zuckert, Michael P. *The Natural Rights Republic*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996.**

Zuckert explains the philosophy behind the Declaration of Independence in this book. He focuses on the concept of natural rights and way the founders combined the political theories of the Whigs, Protestants, and classical philosophers to define American rights.

**JC 571.Z833 1996**

## **The American Revolution**

**Breen, T.H. *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.**

In this new interpretation of the American Revolution, Breen asserts that the colonists' common experience as consumers allowed them to form a common identity. He argues that their consumerism was essential in their revolt against Britain and emphasizes the boycott as a revolutionary political and social event.

**E209.B77 2004**

**Kurtz, Stephen G. and James H. Hutson, ed. *Essays on the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973.**

This collection of eight essays examine a variety of issues relating to the Revolution including causes of the war, military aspects, the role of religion, the impact of the yeoman farmer, and the Continental Congress.

**E208.E83 1973**

**Kruman, Marc W. *State Constitution Making in Revolutionary America*. Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997.**

This book focuses on the formation of individual state constitutions. Kruman explains the ideas and theories behind the state constitutions and the ways in which states established and distributed power.

**JK 2484. K78 1997**

**Maier, Pauline. *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.**

Maier combats traditional views of the Declaration of Independence. She traces the way Americans have treated the Declaration as a sacred document. Maier explains the meanings behind key phrases as well as outlines the process of writing and revising the Declaration of Independence.

**E221.M24 1997**

**Wood, Gordon S. *The American Revolution: A History*. New York: The Modern Library, 2002.**

In this short book, Wood succulently overviews the American Revolution. Wood begins with the origin of the war, continues through the Revolution, and ends with the ratifying of the Constitution. He includes a chronology of the war as well as multiple maps.

**E208. W85 2002**

**Wood, Gordon S. *Representation in the American Revolution*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008**

In this revised edition, Wood expands on his previous book written in 1969. He explains how government was created in America and how American citizens were represented within the new framework.

**JK54. W66 2008**

**Vertical File:**

Includes articles and newspaper clippings.

**American Revolution**

## **The Post War Period**

**Elkins, Stanley and Erick McKittrick. *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.**

In this detailed book, the authors provide an in-depth account of the period following the Revolutionary War. They address numerous facets of the post war period including politics, the economy, culture, and the military.

**E 310.E45. 1993**

**Jensen, Merrill. *The Articles of Confederation: An interpretation of the social-constitutional history of the American Revolution 1774-1781*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1940.**

Though this book is nearly seventy years old, Merrill provides a succinct, clear interpretation of the Articles of Confederation. He explains the impact of the American Revolution on the articles, the problems the articles sought to resolve, and the eventual issues which resulted from the document.

**JK 131.J40 1949**

## **The Making of the Constitution**

**Bernstein, Richard B. and Kym S. Rice. *Are We to Be a Nation? The Making of the Constitution*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1987.**

Bernstein and Rice combine words and pictures to detail the Philadelphia Convention as well as the ratification process.

**KF 4520. B47 1987**

**Rutland, Robert Allen. *The Ordeal of the Constitution: The Antifederalists and the Ratification Struggle of 1787-1788*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966.**

Rutland traces the ratification process of the Constitution in this book. He focuses on the Antifederalists and their personal motivations and aspirations in the ratification process.

**KF4541. R8 1996**

**Siemers, David J. *Ratifying the Republic: Antifederalists and Federalists in Constitutional Time*. California: Stanford University Press, 2002.**

In this book, Siemers explains the Constitution from its inception to its implementation as a form a government. Siemers argues that the workable Constitution resulted from the differences between the Antifederalists and Federalists; he focuses on the fear and uncertainty that came about at the end of the American Revolution and the ways those influenced the drafting of the Constitution.

**JK 116. S54 2002**

**Stewart, David O. *The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007.**

In this book, Stewart depicts the Philadelphia Convention that resulted in the Constitution. Stewart presents the balancing act which went into the writing of the Constitution as well as the influence of specific personalities, such as James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and Benjamin Franklin.

**KF 4510. S74 2007**

**Storing, Herbert J, ed. *The Complete Anti-Federalist, Volumes 1-7*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.**

Storing presents these seven volumes as a companion to the *Federalist Papers*. In these books, Storing compiled a number of primary source documents from a wide range of sources, written by the Anti-Federalists in opposition to the Constitution.

**JK 155 .C65 1981 vols. 1-7**

## **The Bill of Rights**

**Davidow, Robert P., ed. *Natural Rights and Natural Law: The Legacy of George Mason*. The George Mason University Press, 1986.**

This book contains a series of four lectures given at the Third Annual George Mason Lectures in 1984. The lectures addressed the founder's views on natural rights and natural law in both the historical and contemporary periods.  
**KF 4749.N38 1986 C.2**

**Levy, Leonard W. *Origins of the Bill of Rights*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999.**

Levy details the causes of the Bill of Rights and the how of the document was drafted and passed in this book. He explains the politics behind the first ten amendments and how they were eventually ratified.  
**KF 4749. L488 1999**

**Rakove, Jack N. *Declaring Rights: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston and New York: Bedford Books, 1998.**

This short book provides a quick overview to the Bill of Rights The author briefly outlines the background behind the Bill of Rights and includes multiple primary source documents pertaining to the amendments.  
**KF 4749. R35 1998**

**Rutland, Robert Allen. *The Birth of the Bill of Rights, 1776-1791*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995.**

Rutland explains the way the Bill of Rights came into being. He succulently details the English origins of the Bill of Rights and includes the influence of men such as George Mason, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson.  
**JK 168. R8**

**Veit, Helen E., Kenneth R. Bowling and Charlene Bangs Bickford, ed. *Creating the Bill of Rights: The Documentary Record from the First Federal Congress*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.**

The editors compiled numerous primary source documents relating to the Bill of Rights. The first part of the book concerns the legislative history and the second part contains excerpts of letters to and from members of Congress about the Bill of Rights.  
**KF 4749. C74 1991**

### **Vertical Files:**

Includes articles and newspaper files.  
**Bill of Rights, Newspaper Articles**

## **Virginia Politics in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

**Cecere, Michael. *Great Things are to be Expected from the Virginians: Virginia in the American Revolution*. Maryland: Heritage Books, 2008.**

Cecere examines a variety of sources to explain Virginia's role in the American Revolution. He focuses on famous Virginians including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and George Mason, and Daniel Morgan.  
**E263.V8 C4225 2008**

**Risjord, Norman K. *Chesapeake Politics: 1781-1800*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.**

Though this book may be dated, it provides a useful illumination of the evolution of political parties in Virginia as well as Maryland and North Carolina. Risjord includes numerous charts and graphs to aid in his explanation of the various factors which influenced politics in the Chesapeake.

**JK2295. M32R57 1978**

**Holton, Woody. *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.**

In this four part book, Wood details the numerous, competing factors which led to Virginia's involvement in the American Revolution. Wood's social history argues that Virginia's leaders were forced into the war by a number of competing groups, including slaves, Indians, and tobacco farmers.

**E210.H695 1999**

**McDonnell, Michael A. *The Politics of War: Race, Class, & Conflict in Revolutionary America*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press: North Carolina, 2007.**

McDonnell outlines the struggles and protests which occurred in Virginia during the Revolutionary War in this four part book. He attributes the internal conflict to class and race differences and argues that the war led to a political mobilized populace in Virginia.

**E263.V8 M39 2007**

### **Vertical Files:**

Includes articles and newspaper clippings.

**Government, Colony of Virginia**