The 18th century was a time of tremendous change within America’s religious history. As Americans struggled to define themselves as a people and a nation, their religious beliefs transformed with them. In the 1730s and 1740s, many Americans rejected the more austere forms of Christianity for the evangelical denominations created as a result of the Great Awakening. The Great Awakening made Christianity more democratic and open while simultaneously reinforcing traditional gender and racial stereotypes. African Americans were brought to America with their own religious beliefs which many maintained, even in slavery. Some African Americans merged their own beliefs with Christianity creating new amalgamations of both faiths. The rise of Deism among many prominent Americans signaled a shift towards the secular and influenced the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. In spite of this, religious belief remained high and religion played a vital role in the call and fight for independence. Numerous Americans saw the American Revolution as a religious war and saw themselves as a people covenanted with God. When writing the Constitution, the founders struggled to reconcile these ideas while maintaining the separation of church and state, an issue which has been a continued problem throughout America’s history.

This guide is designed to help researchers using the Library at Gunston Hall research religion in the 18th century. It is divided into three sections: Religion in Revolutionary America, Religion and the Founders, and Religion in Virginia.

**Religion in Revolutionary America**


BX 8236 .A53 2000


KF4783 .D385 2000


JC 153 .L87 D86 1990

This collection of eleven essays examines two themes: the role of religion in the Revolution and the role of religion in defining America's form of government. The essays study a variety of issues including the faith of women and African Americans, the rise of evangelicals, and the notion of American exceptionalism.

BR 520 .R45 1994


In this short book, the authors trace the religious origins of the American Revolution, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. They argue that some founders viewed the Constitution and Bill of Rights as a religious covenant with God.

JK 4 .L88 1987


This collection of essays dissects the role of women and religion in the 17th and 18th centuries. The essays include a brief synopsis of the topic and end with excerpts from primary source material. Chapters 5-9 deal directly with the 18th century.

BR 515 .W648 1981

Vertical Files:
- Includes articles and newspaper clippings
- Religion, Anglican
- Religion, Roman Catholic
- Religion, General

**Religion and the Founders**


In this short book, Holmes succulently explains the faith of the founding fathers. He begins by giving an overview of religious beliefs of the time, specifically explains the beliefs of Deists, and then explains the faith of specific founders.

BL 2747.4 .H63 2006


This book presents the primary source extracts which Thomas Jefferson took from the Bible entitled *The Philosophy of Jesus* and *The Life and Morals of Jesus*. Both texts include lengthy introductions which overview the religious beliefs of Jefferson.

BS2549 .J5J43 1983
Religion in Virginia


Buckley studies the conflicts which took place in Virginia over the issue of religion in the Revolutionary period. He examines the rise of religious legislature, the interaction of the major churches, and the development of the evangelical church.

BR555 .V8B8 1977


Nelson details the life and influence of Anglicans in Virginia from the end of the 17th century to the beginning of the American Revolution. He explains the key role the Anglican Church played in the government of Virginia and the rituals and rites practiced by Anglicans in Virginia.

BX 5917 .V8 N399 2001


In this primary source, Robert Rose, a Scottish parson who came to Virginia in the 18th century, outlines his daily life in the colony. This provides a first hand account of daily life and religion in Virginia during the mid-1700's.

BX5995 .R65 A33 1977


Ferguson emphasizes the role of race in the evangelical movement in Virginia. He focuses on Nat Turner and the increase of African American involvement in Baptist congregations during the 18th century.

BX6248 .V8 S38 2008