



Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation

By Joseph J. Ellis

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In this landmark work of history, the National Book Award—winning author of *American Sphinx* explores how a group of greatly gifted but deeply flawed individuals—Hamilton, Burr, Jefferson, Franklin, Washington, Adams, and Madison—confronted the overwhelming challenges before them to set the course for our nation.

The United States was more a fragile hope than a reality in 1790. During the decade that followed, the Founding Fathers—re-examined here as Founding Brothers—combined the ideals of the Declaration of Independence with the content of the Constitution to create the practical workings of our government. Through an analysis of six fascinating episodes—Hamilton and Burr’s deadly duel, Washington’s precedent-setting Farewell Address, Adams’ administration and political partnership with his wife, the debate about where to place the capital, Franklin’s attempt to force Congress to confront the issue of slavery and Madison’s attempts to block him, and Jefferson and Adams’ famous correspondence—**Founding Brothers** brings to life the vital issues and personalities from the most important decade in our nation’s history.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In retrospect, it seems as if the American Revolution was inevitable. But was it? In *Founding Brothers*, Joseph J. Ellis reveals that many of those truths we hold to be self-evident were actually fiercely contested in the early days of the republic.

Ellis focuses on six crucial moments in the life of the new nation, including a secret dinner at which the seat of the nation's capital was determined--in exchange for support of Hamilton's financial plan; Washington's precedent-setting Farewell Address; and the Hamilton and Burr duel. Most interesting, perhaps, is the debate (still dividing scholars today) over the *meaning* of the Revolution. In a fascinating chapter on the renewed friendship between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson at the end of their lives, Ellis points out the fundamental differences between the Republicans, who saw the Revolution as a liberating act and hold the Declaration of Independence most sacred, and the Federalists, who saw the revolution as a step in the building of American nationhood and hold the Constitution most dear. Throughout the text, Ellis explains the personal, face-to-face nature of early American politics--and notes that the members of the revolutionary generation were conscious of the fact that they were establishing precedents on which future generations would rely.

In *Founding Brothers*, Ellis (whose *American Sphinx* won the National Book Award for nonfiction in 1997) has written an elegant and engaging narrative, sure to become a classic. Highly recommended. --*Sunny Delaney*

From Library Journal

Having considered Thomas Jefferson in his National Book Award winner, *American Sphinx*, Ellis expands his horizons to include Jefferson's "brothers," e.g., Washington, Madison, and Burr.
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From [Booklist](#)

An outstanding biographer of Jefferson (*American Sphinx*, 1997), Ellis takes up new lines in this exploration of the "gestative" 1790s. He tailors six stories about political episodes that highlight a founder's character, convictions, and actions. Ellis' purpose in this storytelling is to underscore how vulnerable to dissolution the founders felt their creation to be, thereby explaining the controversies (such as the compromises with slavery) that to this day excite not just scholarly but general debate about what the Declaration and Constitution achieved. For example, Ben Franklin's last public act, signing a ban-the-slave-trade petition to the First Congress in 1790, provoked a floor argument so fierce about abolition it raised the spectre of disunion; Washington expressed relief with Congress' resolution to do nothing and debate no more about the matter. Ellis recounts equally fluidly and astutely such episodes as Hamilton's death; the bargain that sited the capital on the Potomac; Washington's Farewell Address; and the germination of parties. Palpably steeped in a career's worth of immersion in the early republic, Ellis' essays are angled, fascinating, and perfect for general-interest readers. *Gilbert Taylor*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ralph Garibay:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Guide is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each book has different aim or even goal; it means that reserve has different type. Some people sense enjoy to spend their the perfect time to read a book. They are reading whatever they take because their hobby will be reading a book. Why not the person who don't like examining a book? Sometime, man or woman feel need book once they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you will want this Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation.

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