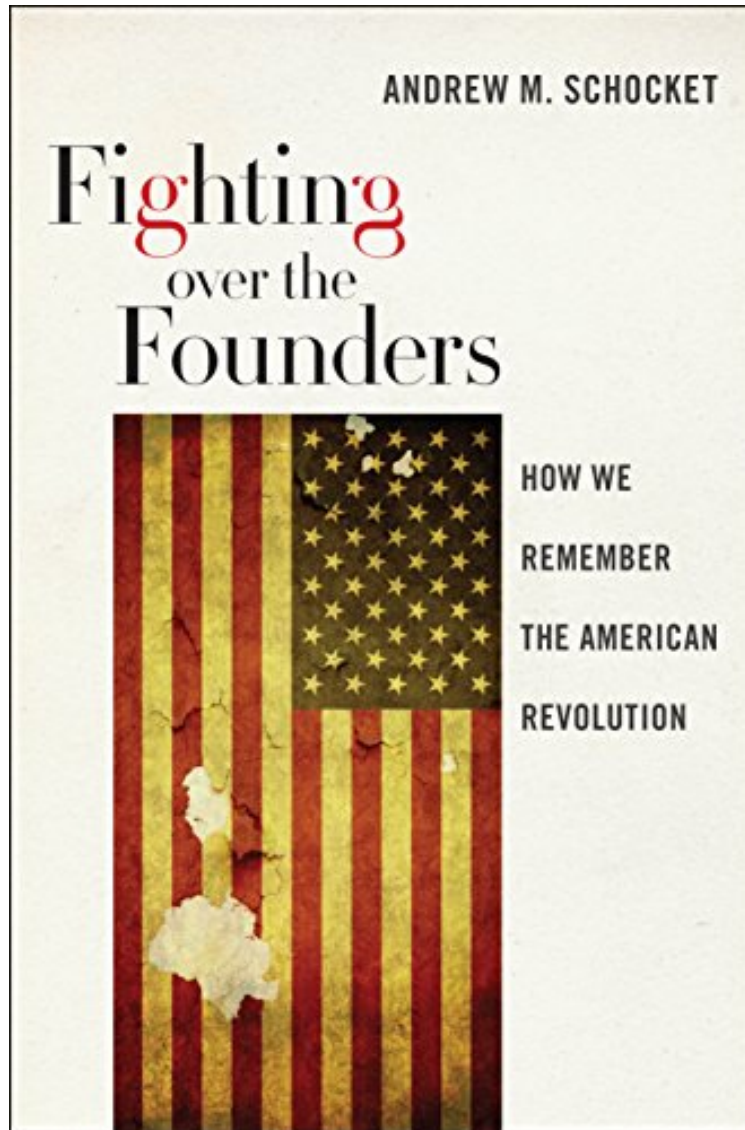


(Download) Fighting over the Founders: How We Remember the American Revolution

# Fighting over the Founders: How We Remember the American Revolution

*Andrew M. Schocket*

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**Andrew M. Schocket : Fighting over the Founders: How We Remember the American Revolution** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fighting over the Founders: How We Remember the American Revolution:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An intense bookBy sullyThis book is a very intensely written

overview of how the biographies of the founders and the history of the Revolution are used and abused by politicians, historians, movie makers, cable TV ideologues, historic sites, groups like the Tea Party and civil rights groups. A lot is crammed into this book as the author writes long sentences with many commas and moves quickly from idea to idea. The chapters are defined overall but within the chapters you are in for a fast paced ride. This is not necessarily a negative comment for a book of this type but you are in for a ride when you read this book. The author establishes a dualistic view of how the founders are interpreted which are either "essentialist" or "organicist" and these categories are used when viewing all aspects of how all the various contemporary groups or writers deal with the founders or the Revolution for their own aims. The best example of this is when a politician references a founding father in a political speech. The essentialist view involves the bare historical facts about the founder and is presented as appealing to a conservative viewpoint. The organicist looks at the changing or evolving interpretations of a founder and appeals to a more liberal viewpoint. This dualism is a constant throughout the book. I feel that he takes this dual view too far in excessively aligning essentialism with conservatives and organicism with liberalism. One aspect of this book which I found amusing is how he grinds an axe about non academic writers who have written best selling biographies of the founders. Three non academic writers, David McCullough, Jon Meacham and Ron Chernow are given some grief for some of their interpretations of Adams, Jefferson and Hamilton in their best selling books. Though the author's criticisms make sense and do fit in with his dualistic overview, I just couldn't overlook sensing resentment from an academic historian at journalists who make the big bucks with founder biographies while hundreds of academics don't. He does make a valid point about historians are not being honest by acting like they are above being political in their writing. They all have a perspective and it comes out in their writing. Ultimately, the author is more in favor of the organicist side of his dualistic viewpoint of how the founders are interpreted. Yet, I have to credit him with making a sincere effort to be balanced overall. For example, he clearly is not in favor of the Tea Party movement, but his analysis of them and their ideas within his overall perspective of the book was very even and insightful. His critique of the movie "The Patriot" was nuanced as he showed an understanding of the ways the movie industry uses history to tell a story even though historians or others can have big disagreements about what is shown in the movie. He correctly complains about the bland non offensive way history is portrayed at actual historic sites, but admits it has to be that way in contemporary America. The author comes at his subject from a self admitted liberal perspective but to his credit he is mostly open minded and critical. It is refreshing in today's black and white style of argumentation to see a thought provoking book like this one.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Matthew B. Grippi  
Timely apropos.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Gini  
Excellent!

Explores how politicians, screenwriters, activists, biographers, jurists, museum professionals, and reenactors portray the American Revolution.

"Fighting over the Founders, thankfully, turns the page away from the crass exploitation of the framers' legacies, toward a new understanding."--Alex Cacioppo, Public Books  
About the Author  
Andrew M. Schocket is Director of American Culture Studies and Associate Professor of History and American Culture Studies at Bowling Green State University (OH). He is the author of *Founding Corporate Power in Early National Philadelphia*.