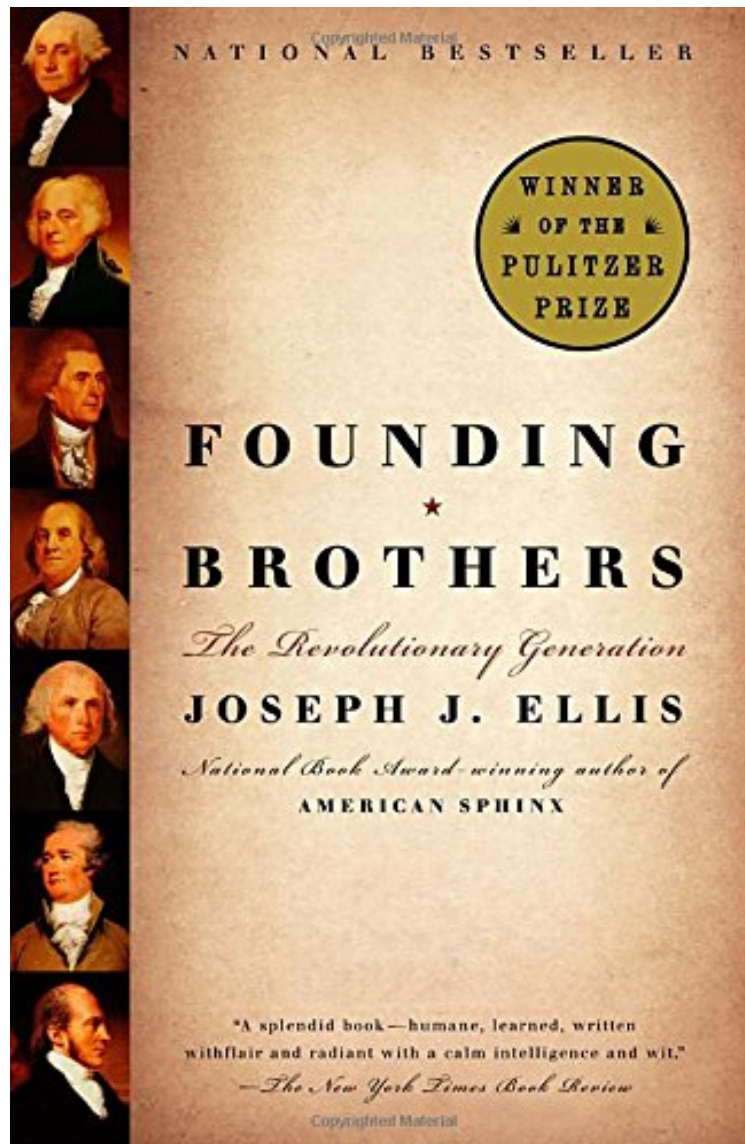


(Download ebook) Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation

Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation

Joseph J. Ellis

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Joseph J. Ellis : Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Political Leadership Exemplified! By O. Halabieh Below are key excerpts from the book that I found particularly insightful: 1- "In the long run, the evolution of an independent American nation, gradually developing its political and economic strength over the nineteenth century within the protective constraints of the British Empire, was probably inevitable. This was Paine's point. But that was not the way

history happened. The creation of a separate American nation occurred suddenly rather than gradually, in revolutionary rather than evolutionary fashion, the decisive events that shaped the political ideas and institutions of the emerging state all taking place with dynamic intensity during the quarter of the eighteenth century. No one present at the start knew how it would turn out in the end. What in retrospect has the look of a foreordained unfolding of God's will was in reality an improvisational affair in which sheer chance, pure luck both good and bad and specific decisions made in the crucible of specific military and political crises determined the outcome. At the dawn of a new century, indeed a new millennium, the United States is now the oldest enduring republic in world history, with a set of political institutions and traditions that have stood the test of time. The basic framework for all these institutions and traditions was built in a sudden spasm of enforced inspiration and makeshift construction during the final decades of the eighteenth century."

2- "My own answers to these questions are contained in the stories that follow, which attempt to recover the sense of urgency and improvisation, what it looked and felt like, for the eight most prominent political leaders in the early republic. They are, in alphabetical order. Abigail and John Adams, Aaron Burr, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington. While each episode is a self-contained narrative designed to illuminate one propitious moment with as much storytelling skill as I can muster, taken together they feature several common themes. First, the achievement of the revolutionary generation was a collective enterprise that succeeded because of the diversity of personalities and ideologies present in the mix...Second, they all knew one another personally, meaning that they broke bread together, sat together at countless meetings, corresponded with one another about private as well as public matters...Third, they managed to take the most threatening; and divisive issue off the political agenda...Fourth, the faces that look down upon us with such classical dignity in those portraits by John Trumbull, Gilbert Stuart, and Charles Willson Peale, the voices that speak to us across the ages in such lyrical cadences, seem so mythically heroic, at least in part, because they knew we would be looking and listening. All the vanguard members of the revolutionary generation developed a keen sense of their historical significance even while they were still making the history on which their reputations would rest."

3- "In the wake of other national movements the French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions, as well as the multiple movements for national independence in Africa, Asia, and Latin America the leadership class of the successful revolution proceeded to decimate itself in bloody reprisals that frequently assumed genocidal proportions. But the conflict within the American revolutionary generation remained a passionate yet bloodless affair in which the energies released by national independence did not devour its own children. The Burr-Hamilton duel represented the singular exception to this rule."

4- "By selecting the Potomac location, the Congress had implicitly decided to separate the political and financial capitals of the United States. All the major European capitals Berlin, London, Paris, Rome, Vienna were metropolitan centers that gathered together the political, economic, and cultural energies of their respective populations in one place. The United States was almost inadvertently deciding to segregate them. The exciting synergy of institutional life in an all-purpose national metropolis was deemed less important than the dangerous corruptions likely to afflict a nexus of politicians and financier."

5- "For the next seventy years, until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, the essence of political wisdom in the emergent American republic was to insist that such choices did not have to be made. But the recognition that these were the competing options, the contested versions, if you will, of what the core legacy of the American Revolution truly meant, first became visible in the summer of 1790. The Constitution did not resolve these questions; it only provided an orderly framework within which the arguments could continue. Nor would it be historically correct to regard the issues at stake as exclusively or even primarily constitutional. Legalistic debates over federal versus state sovereignty were just the most accessible handles to grab, the safest and most politically suitable ways to talk about alternative national visions. The Compromise of 1790 is most famous for averting a political crisis that many statesmen of the time considered a threat to the survival of the infant republic. But it also exposed the incompatible expectations concerning America's future that animated these same statesmen. In a sense, it is a very old story which has been rendered even more familiar by the violent dissolution of revolutionary regimes; in modern day emergent nations: Bound together in solidarity against the imperialistic enemy, the leadership fragments when the common enemy disappears and the different agenda for the new nation must confront its differences. Securing a revolution has proven to be a much more daunting assignment than winning one. The accommodation that culminated in the agreement reached over Jefferson's dinner table provides a momentary exposure of the sharp differences dividing the leadership of the revolutionary generation: sectional versus national allegiance; agrarian versus commercial economic priorities; diffusion versus consolidation as social ideals; an impotent versus a potent federal government. The compromise reached did not resolve these conflicts so much as prevent them from exploding when the newly created government was so vulnerable; it bought time during which the debate could continue."

6- "The main themes of the Farewell Address are just as easy to state succinctly as they are difficult to appreciate fully. After declaring his irreversible intention to retire, Washington devoted several paragraphs to the need for national unity. He denounced excessive partisanship, most especially when it took the form of political parties pursuing a vested ideological agenda or sectional interest groups oblivious to the advantages of cooperation. The rest of the Farewell Address was then devoted to foreign policy, calling for strict American neutrality and diplomatic independence from the tangled affairs of Europe..."

Washington was not claiming to offer novel prescriptions based on his original reading

of philosophical treatises or books; quite the opposite, he was reminding his countrymen of the venerable principles he had acquired from personal experience, principles so obvious and elemental that they were at risk of being overlooked by his contemporaries; and so thoroughly grounded in the American Revolution that they are virtually invisible to a more distant posterity."7- "Finally, Adams apprised Jefferson: "Your distinction between natural and artificial Aristocracy does not appear to me well founded." One might be able to separate wealth from talent in theory, but in practice, and in all societies, they were inextricably connected: "The five Pillars of Aristocracy," he argued, "are Beauty, Wealth, Birth, Genius and Virtues. Any one of the three first, can at any time, over bear any one or both of the two last." But it would never come to that anyway, because the qualities Jefferson regarded as artificial and those he regarded as natural were all mixed together inside human nature, then mixed together again within society, in blended patterns that defied Jefferson's neat dissections."8- "They both (Adams and Jefferson) did anticipate, albeit from decidedly different perspectives,, the looming sectional crisis between North and South that their partnership stretched across. "I fear there will be greater difficulties to preserve our Union," Adams warned, "than You and I, our Fathers Brothers Disciples and Sons have had to form it." Jefferson concurred, though the subject touched the most explosive issue of allnamely, the unmentionable fact of slavery. Even the ever-candid Adams recognized that this was the forbidden topic, the one piece of ground declared off-limits by mutual consent. With one notable exception, the dialogue between Adams and Jefferson, so revealing in its engagement of the conflicting ideas and impulses that shaped the American Revolution, also symbolized the unofficial policy of silence within the revolutionary generation on the most glaring disagreement of all."9- "One would like to believe, and there is some basis for the belief, that each man (Adams and Jefferson) came to recognize in the other the intellectual and temperamental qualities lacking in himself; that they, in effect, completed each other; that only when joined could the pieces of the story of the American Revolution come together to make a whole. But the more mundane truth is that they never faced and therefore never fully resolved all their political differences; they simply outlived them."10- "He conceded (Adams) that the era of the American Revolution had been "a memorable epoch in the annals of the human race," but the jury was still out on its significance. He doubted whether the republican principles planted by the founding generation would grow in foreign soil. Neither Europe nor Latin America were ready for them. Even within the United States, the fate of those principles was still problematic. He warned that America was "destined in future history to form the brightest or blackest page, according to the use or the abuse of those political institutions by which they shall in time to come be shaped by the human mind!" Asked to pose for posterity, he chose to go out hurling it a challenge."0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting.By Saul NathansonA good collection of vignettes about the various founding fathers who developed a brotherhood having experienced a shared bonding "coming of age" with the country even they were many divisive battles amongst the "brothers". I wish Prof. Ellis had done more to tie them together into a unifying these better.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Ellis definitely earned his Pulitzer with this oneBy William F.B. VodreyA concise, witty, very interesting account of the Framers in the context of their relationships with each other - friends, allies, partners and sometimes rivals and even bitter enemies. Ellis definitely earned his Pulitzer with this one. Highly recommended.

In this landmark work of history, the National Book Awardwinning author of *American Sphinx* explores how a group of greatly gifted but deeply flawed individualsHamilton, Burr, Jefferson, Franklin, Washington, Adams, and Madisonconfronted 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 Fathersre-examined here as Founding Brotherscombined 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 episodesHamilton and Burrs deadly duel, Washingtons precedent-setting Farewell Address, Adams administration and political partnership with his wife, the debate about where to place the capital, Franklins attempt to force Congress to confront the issue of slavery and Madisons attempts to block him, and Jefferson and Adams famous correspondenceFounding Brothers brings to life the vital issues and personalities from the most important decade in our nations history.