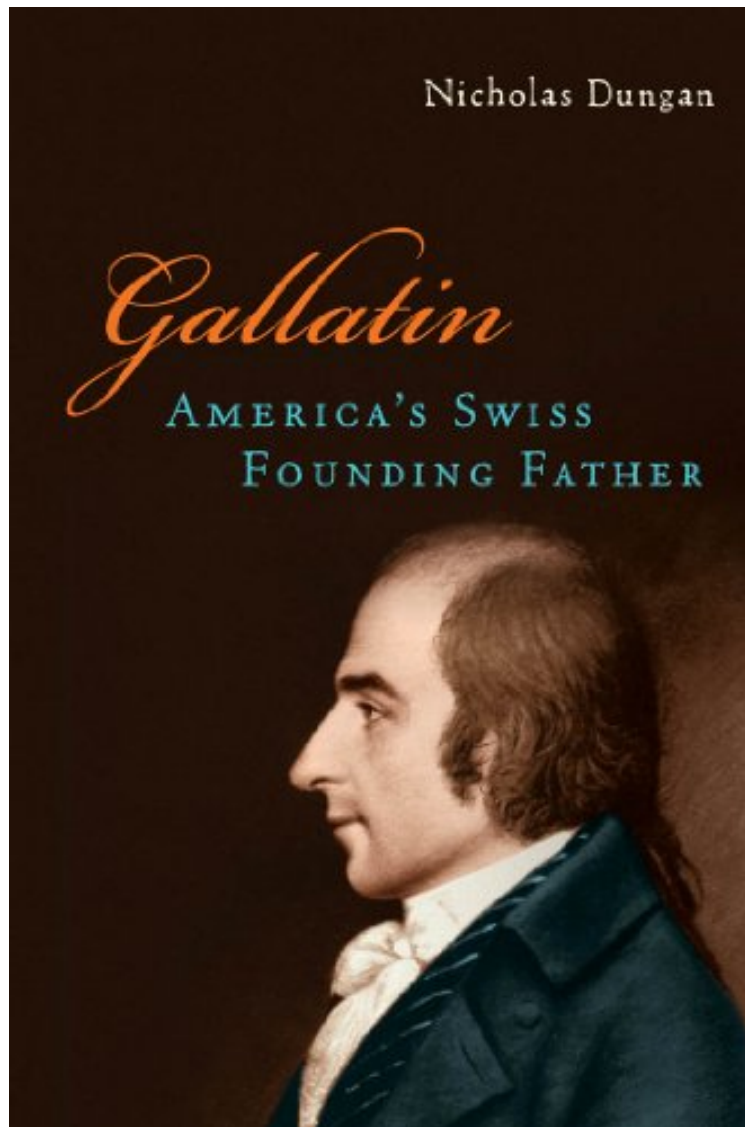


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## Gallatin: Americas Swiss Founding Father

*Nicholas Dungan*

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**Nicholas Dungan : Gallatin: Americas Swiss Founding Father** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gallatin: Americas Swiss Founding Father:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Founder in two worlds By Daniel Putman This short biography of Albert Gallatin has two things to recommend it. First, Dungan is a good writer. Dungan had to work with somewhat limited information on Gallatin and Gallatins role in the countrys founding is marginal but critically marginal. Finances rarely get much historical press. Dungan does a nice job of presenting Gallatins work as Secretary of the

Treasury under Jefferson and Madison and his other contributions in working on the country's earliest financial struggles. Dungan never gets bogged down in too many financial details but at the same time he shows Gallatin's contributions with clarity and fairness to his subject. Dungan's writing is organized with excellent transitions and he does a fine job of filling in the reader on what the other players in government were doing when Gallatin was involved. It is a well-written book. Second, this book throws light on a person who had a foot in two worlds: Switzerland and the United States. Gallatin's life in Geneva and, throughout his life, his concern about his native city and his desire off and on to return there are brought out well in the book. I found the development of Geneva's political situation before, during and after the French Revolution interesting and Gallatin's response to those events gives a good sense of who Gallatin was as an individual. He was at home in both worlds and overcoming the prejudice in the U.S. against a brilliant intensely hard-working immigrant with a French accent is a tribute to Gallatin's courage and dedication to his new home. Gallatin was what we might call today a laid back person and this character trait helped him enormously in dealing with those who hated him either for his Swiss background or for his ideas which were almost always well-developed. Gallatin was intensely devoted to Jefferson and Jeffersonian ideas but he was always a pragmatist and walked political lines many others could not handle. This is an informative and well-written book. I highly recommend it for an appreciation of this little known but highly important figure who helped to shape early American financial policy.

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. This book is extremely well written and researched. By Daniel Duncan I can't say enough about how much I love this book! I am a direct descendant of Jean Badollet, Gallatin's life long friend and confidant. I have many copies of their correspondences and family letters. Being a genealogist I know the importance of researching close ties to other families and individuals. So, my knowledge of Albert Gallatin is extensive to say the least. I have made pilgrimages to his grave and former home in PA. Read every book written on the man. Yet, Mr. Dungan has found information from primary source material that I have not. He has written a companion to "The Life of Albert Gallatin" by Henry Adams that does not just copy what we already know, but goes deeper into what made the man and why such a prolific man has remained unknown to our history books. Dungan is the type of author who knows non-fiction historical figures can only stay interesting if written in readable prose and researched extensively. This book is a mere 168 pages. Mr. Dungan, I can't thank you enough for doing the work for me, and for letting the world know the place Albert Gallatin deserves in our American History landscape.

Cheers! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An Exceptionally Influential Treasury Secretary. By Leonard J. Wilson Gallatin, America's Swiss Founding Father, by Nicholas Dungan, is a biography of Albert Gallatin, Swiss immigrant to the US in 1780, Republican leader in the House of Representatives in the late 1790s, the longest serving Secretary of the Treasury, 1801-13, US Representative to negotiation of the Treaty of Ghent which ended the War of 1812, US Minister to France and Great Britain, founder of NYU and first President of its Council. That's a pretty impressive resume. Gallatin was an interesting and complex man. Although a leading Republican and Secretary of the Treasury throughout Thomas Jefferson's presidency, he differed with Jefferson on the establishment of the Bank of the United States. This was not a minor point. In George Washington's first cabinet, Jefferson was Secretary of State and Alexander Hamilton Secretary of the Treasury. These two held strongly opposing views on the proper role of the new federal government. The creation of the Bank of the United States was symbolic of their differences. Hamilton favored a strong federal government and tended to view the "necessary and proper" clause in the Constitution as sufficient justification for any federal action not explicitly prohibited elsewhere in the document. Jefferson feared an overly powerful central government and opposed any federal power not explicitly authorized by the Constitution. After Washington repeatedly supported Hamilton's views, Jefferson resigned. This split resulted in the formation of the Federalist (Hamiltonian) and Republican (Jeffersonian) parties. While Jefferson's opposition to the Bank was typically expressed in constitutional terms, I suspect he also had an emotional opposition to banks in general as a result of his chronic indebtedness. He also may have felt it was politically prudent to play to the opinions of the multitude of indebted southern planters that were the core of his supporters. At any rate, after opposing the creation of the Bank, Jefferson, as president, took no action to abolish it. Gallatin, as Treasury Secretary, not only had the courage to suggest that his president and party leader abandon one of the key articles of faith on which the Republican Party was founded, but was also successful in convincing the president that the Bank was both essential and at least somewhat compatible with the Constitution. Gallatin played a similar role in the Louisiana Purchase. Jefferson hesitated to approve the purchase since the Constitution did not explicitly authorize the action and suggested a constitutional amendment should be sought to provide the necessary authority. Gallatin was instrumental in convincing Jefferson that Napoleon was seeking a quick sale and would not accept the delay necessary to amend the Constitution. Again, Jefferson accepted Gallatin's argument, purchased Louisiana, and thereby kept the lands west of the Mississippi River from potentially falling into the hands of a hostile foreign power. Gallatin, America's Swiss Founding Father is well written and researched. It does not delve deeply into Gallatin's ideas and the reasoning that led him to take positions contrary to Jefferson's. However, as a short biography (168 pages) focused on events and chronology, it deserves five stars.

You won't find his portrait on our currency anymore and his signature isn't penned on the Constitution, but former

statesman Albert Gallatin (1761-1849) contributed immeasurably to the formation of America. Gallatin was the first president of the council of New York University and his name lives on at NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, so it is with pride that New York University Press and the Swiss Confederation publish this new biography of Gallatin. Gallatin's story is the opposite of the classic American immigrant tale. Born in Geneva, the product of an old and noble family and highly educated in the European tradition, Gallatin made contributions to America throughout his career that far outweighed any benefit he procured for himself. He got his first taste of politics as a Pennsylvania state representative and went on to serve in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Gallatin became the Secretary of Treasury in Jefferson's administration and, despite being of the opposite political party to Alexander Hamilton, Gallatin fully respected his predecessor's fiscal politics. Gallatin undertook a special diplomatic mission for President Madison, which ended the War of 1812 with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent and gave the United States its genuine independence. Gallatin continued in diplomacy as minister to France and to Great Britain, where he skillfully combined his American experience and European background. In the early 1830s, at the age of seventy, he retired from politics and commenced a new career in New York City as a banker, public figure, and intellectual. He helped establish New York University and the American Ethnological Society, became an expert in Native American ethnology and linguistics, and served as president of the New-York Historical Society. Gallatin died at age 88 and is buried in Trinity churchyard at Broadway and Wall Street. In our own day, as we look at reforming our financial system and seek to enhance America's global image, it is well worth resurrecting Albert Gallatin's timeless contributions to the United States, at home and abroad. Nicholas Dungan's compelling biography reinserts this forgotten Founding Father into the historical canon and reveals the transatlantic dimensions of early American history. Co-published with the Swiss Confederation, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

From Booklist: Albert Gallatin was a significant political figure in the early republic, most prominently as Jefferson's and Madison's treasury secretary, and his name graces a river, a national forest, towns, and counties but not any recent general-interest biography: extant titles are decades or, in the case of one by Henry Adams, more than a century old. Aably filling the gap, Dungan opens with Gallatin's Swiss genealogy and the excellent education he received. However, Gallatin's native Geneva was not to be the scope for his talents. In 1780, at the age of 19, he decamped for the new U.S. Settling in Pennsylvania, Gallatin speculated in land and was elected to the state and national legislatures, where he acquired a reputation as the Jeffersonian Republicans' public-finance expert. To illustrate Gallatin's head for numbers, Dungan describes his administration of problems such as paying for the Louisiana Purchase or the War of 1812; then Dungan segues to Gallatin's ensuing assignments as diplomatic troubleshooter and ambassador to France. Displaying Gallatin in his public and private dimensions, Dungan ably reacquaints history readers with the official who carried out Jefferson's policies. --Gilbert Taylor Dungan's book retraces in detail Gallatin's family history in Geneva as well as his subsequent career in the United States, using his private correspondence to highlight his shifting perspectives on ongoing events. Published on the 250th anniversary of Gallatin's birth, his biography is clearly designed as a belated official tribute, providing a useful ground for any further scholarly research on the subject; it does moreover offer an interesting example of how modern representative regimes took shape from the constant confrontation of the different national traditions. --Biancamaria Fontana, *Times Literary Supplement* Many U.S. envoys to France have had distinguished careers in public service and the private sector, but none excelled Albert Gallatin in the breadth of his experience or the scope of his contribution to the United States. Nicholas Dungan gives Gallatin's role as an outstanding diplomat its well-deserved emphasis in this fast-paced, in-depth biography of a great European-American. --Walter J. P. Curley, *United States Ambassador to France (1989-1993) and to Ireland (1975-1978)*, Honorary Chairman of the French-American Foundation At the close of his biography Gallatin, America's Swiss Founding Father, Nicholas Dungan asks the rhetorical question: 'Was Gallatin a Great Man?' To which, anyone having read the book, would have to answer with an unequivocal and resounding Yes!... Dungan's biography of Gallatin should not be missed."