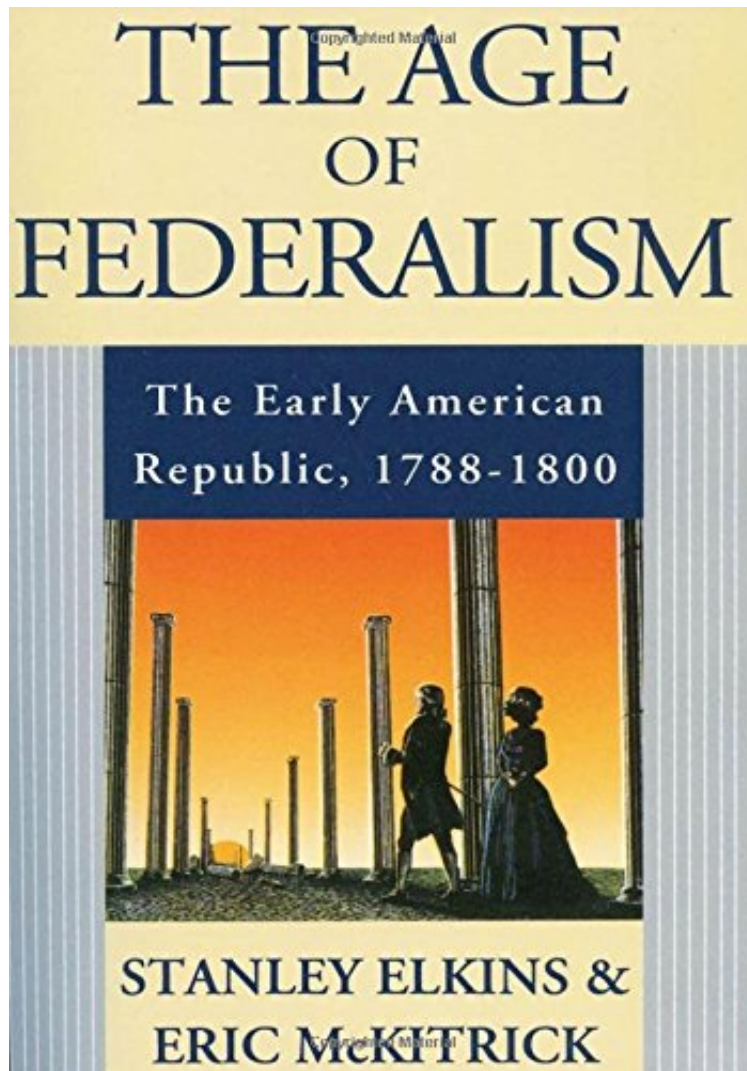


The Age of Federalism

Stanley Elkins, Eric McKittrick
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#671067 in Books Stanley Elkins Eric McKittrick 1995-02-23Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 6.25 x 1.60 x 9.311, 2.83 #File Name: 019509381X944 pagesThe Age of federalism | File size: 68.Mb

Stanley Elkins, Eric McKittrick : The Age of Federalism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Age of Federalism:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Deeply analytical view of the dawn of American politics. But not for the fainthearted.By Igor FaynshteynThis is not a typical popular history book. It is not merely a historical narrative, reciting major events, dates and historical figures in chronological order. Rather, it is a deep, penetrating, interpretive and scholarly political history of the first 12 years after the ratification of the US Constitution in 1788. I found it impossible to read this book without finding myself constantly thinking, re-reading passages and really focusing in on details. To say that this book is different from 99% of other popular history books on the store shelves is an

understatement. To read this book is to immerse oneself in an intellectually satisfying experience. However, due to its enormous length (it's quite a tome), interpretive and analytical writing style, and its plethora of details, it is not for everyone. Certainly, it's not a summer reading material (though I read it for pleasure, beginning in the summer of 2013 and finished it in January, 2014). Although I am not a history buff (I took only one college history course), I thoroughly enjoyed this book and it's surely one of my fave non-fiction books of all time. The book is more or less chronologically organized, but at various points it tends to be organized by subject rather than by strict chronology. Each chapter feels like a scholarly summary of several Ph D dissertations about a given subject matter. The content tends to be interpretive, and analytical, and therefore very interesting and intellectually stimulating. But the writing style is not the most fluid one, and can feel loaded and heavy at times. But what the book may lack in narrative fluidity, it more than makes up for it in its penetrating and deeply scholarly analysis of the period. This magnificent work of scholarship examines the dawn of American politics after the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Specifically, it examines the beginning of the formation of political factions. Although these early political factions resembled in some ways the modern political parties, they nevertheless could not be called modern in any sense of the word. The political ideologies were in their infancy stages; professional party machinery was virtually absent; and there was still an intense anti-party animus ingrained in the American political culture. Nonetheless, the 12 years from 1788-1800 witnessed the gradual progression and maturation of political factions, which paved the way to more professional and sophisticated political parties in the coming decades. This is a magnum opus for the co-authors, both of whom were professors of American history. Ironically, while they made their names as graduate students and scholars in the field of slavery, this book has zero to say on the issue. In fact, while the book is deep and scholarly, its coverage range is rather narrow. It focuses almost exclusively on politics, both domestic and international. It has nothing about social history, culture, economics (except as it relates to politics), or slavery. Its focus remains steadfastly and exclusively on politics throughout the book. In examining the 12 years of political history, the authors provide very detailed and analytical narratives of major events and biographies of relevant political actors. The mini biographies rarely exceed several pages, and they are relevant to explaining the historical context. The authors also do an excellent job in constructing and meticulously explaining the vast political context, which includes explanations of structural and impersonal forces at work, such as economics, political culture, westward expansion, and etc. The book also contains surprisingly much about treaties and the French Revolution. However, the context for covering treaties, their detailed negotiations, and the French Revolution is still domestic politics. Since it is the authors' contention that treaties, and more generally foreign relations, played an active role in determining the split between the Federalists (who were anglophiles and Francophobes, led largely by Hamilton and Ames) and the Republicans (who were anglophones and Francophiles, led mainly by Jefferson and Madison), foreign relations get almost as much coverage as domestic politics. The book also does not contain many anecdotes, and has nothing about the Hamilton-Burr duel, or the tumultuous Jefferson-Adams election of 1800. However, there is extensive coverage of the Jay treaty and its accompanying negotiations; commercial and other treaties between US and France/Great Britain/Spain; XYZ affair; Whiskey Rebellion in PA; and some coverage of the Sedition and Naturalization Acts. Particularly, there is a broad and detailed coverage of the establishment of Hamilton's financial system and the rift it caused with Jefferson and Madison, which was the one event, more so than any other, that triggered the formation of political factions. As magnificent as this book is, however, it is not for the faint hearted. The paperback edition contains 754 reading pages (excluding bibliography). The font is small, dense and single spaced. And given that the narrative is not the most fluid one, it will take quite an effort to get through it. It took me over half a year to finish it. By contrast, I usually finish 700-800 pg. books in about a month or less. The book is largely without a strong bias. If any bias may be detected it is the bias of realism. Both authors were graduate students of Richard Hofstadter, who was considered a liberal leaning academic at Columbia University. However, it seems that McKittrick and Elkins were not much influenced by his liberal views. In fact, they tend to be more conservative than either Hofstadter or his other famous disciples (i.e. Foner). In sum, this is a book well worth reading, but only for those interested in serious and contextual political history, and who are committed to a sustained and probably long effort. This is without a doubt one of my top 3 fave history books and I recommend it highly. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Political History that Holds up well after Two Decades By gloine36 This tome is a political history covering the years 1789-1801 which were the Federalist Era in the history of the United States. As a political history, the authors do an excellent job of placing the events that place in the context surrounding them. Their use of sources to support their work is well done. Stanley Elkins, Sydenham Clark Parsons Professor Emeritus of history at Smith College, and Eric McKittrick, Professor Emeritus at Columbia University earned the 1994 Bancroft Prize for this highly acclaimed work. Over the past two decades the book has aged well within the context of a political history. There are some drawbacks to the book when it is examined from the perspective of a 21st century historian. It is a pure political history and as such contains almost no references to gender, class, and race as many recent histories probably would. This in itself is not a bad thing though as the focus stays on the political aspects of the period covered and does not deviate down other avenues. Anyone doing research into this period will want to have this book as a resource. It is rather nice to have the twelve year period's political climate rolled into one book. The undertaking was ambitious and the two professors were very

successful in their finished product. Unfortunately, this book is also written from the perspective of two academics who were writing for an academic crowd. Not only that crowd, but a narrower slice of historians within it which means this is not an easy flowing narrative. This does not detract from the scholarly value of the book in any way, but potential readers should be aware this is a scholarly read. The chapters are arranged chronologically and are broken down into smaller topical sections which definitely helps keep things organized as to who did what and when. Historians of the Early Republic already understand the need to do so as it is very easy to get bogged down in the minutiae of the period. The opening chapter of the book explains the purpose behind it as well as explaining the key differences which underlay the politics of the period. The country party versus court party is a simplistic, but highly accurate depiction of some of the forces involved. In addition, the authors press home how the leaders of the factions were divided by their feelings for Great Britain and France. The French Revolution and wars of the period drove much of the political strife as well and are explained in detail. All historians must understand that these points were major issues in the period and had tremendous impacts on the reasons for the actions many men took. I do wish the authors had gone a bit further into the mindsets of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and James Madison. These three men along with Alexander Hamilton were pivotal in the political strife that emerged early in George Washington's first term as president. They did an admirable job; however recent scholarship into the lives of these four men could be incorporated into a revised edition should that come to pass. The shifting politics of James Madison in particular could have used a greater focus as it is felt that his changing attitudes illustrate a great deal of how later generations would continually change their politics over time. This political evolution is what we now know to be a normal political process, but in the 1790s it was not supposed to be that way necessarily. I did detect a hint that the last year covered was abbreviated beyond the successful French mission. The abrupt change and fall from power of the Federalists from their successes in the elections of 1798 to their loss of power in 1800 was astounding and worthy of a book of its own. This just illustrates what a good job Elkins and McKittrick did in capturing the essence of the political strife of the Federalist Era in what could easily have been a few hundred pages longer. They do point out where future generations got some of their inspiration in the actions of this time such as the compact theory and secessionism from the Kentucky Resolutions. All in all, the book is still a great book which has held up well over time. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A master work about the early founders of the United states written by two internationally known historians By Sara This is a book that the dedicated authors spent more then 20 years on the historical research. The late. Stanley Elkins was my dad and the late Eric Mckitrick was his co-author and best friend. Even though they worked in different states this book was their lifes work together. Putting out an authentic and historically accurate and interesting new work was their long term goal and they achieved that and won awards for this book. consider giving this book a try if you really want to know more about the important leaders that shaped the United States in its early years.

When Thomas Jefferson took the oath of office for the presidency in 1801, America had just passed through twelve critical years, years dominated by some of the towering figures of our history and by the challenge of having to do everything for the first time. Washington, Hamilton, Madison, Adams, and Jefferson himself each had a share in shaping that remarkable era--an era that is brilliantly captured in *The Age of Federalism*. Written by esteemed historians Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism* gives us a reflective, deeply informed analytical survey of this extraordinary period. Ranging over the widest variety of concerns--political, cultural, economic, diplomatic, and military--the authors provide a sweeping historical account, keeping always in view not only the problems the new nation faced but also the particular individuals who tried to solve them. As they move through the Federalist era, they draw subtly perceptive character sketches not only of the great figures--Washington and Jefferson, Talleyrand and Napoleon Bonaparte--but also of lesser ones, such as George Hammond, Britain's frustrated minister to the United States, James McHenry, Adams's hapless Secretary of War, the pre-Chief Justice version of John Marshall, and others. They weave these lively profiles into an analysis of the central controversies of the day, turning such intricate issues as the public debt into fascinating depictions of opposing political strategies and contending economic philosophies. Each dispute bears in some way on the broader story of the emerging nation. The authors show, for instance, the consequences the fight over Hamilton's financial system had for the locating of the nation's permanent capital, and how it widened an ideological gulf between Hamilton and the Virginians, Madison and Jefferson, that became unbridgeable. The statesmen of the founding generation, the authors believe, did "a surprising number of things right." But Elkins and McKittrick also describe some things that went resoundingly wrong: the hopelessly underfinanced effort to construct a capital city on the Potomac (New York, they argue, would have been a far more logical choice than Washington), and prosecutions under the Alien and Sedition Acts which turned into a comic nightmare. No detail is left out, or left uninteresting, as their account continues through the Adams presidency, the XYZ affair, the naval Quasi-War with France, and the desperate Federalist maneuvers in 1800, first to prevent the reelection of Adams and then to nullify the election of Jefferson. *The Age of Federalism* is the fruit of many years of discussion and thought, in which deep scholarship is matched only by the lucid distinction of its prose. With it, Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick have produced the definitive study, long awaited by historians, of the early national era.

From Publishers Weekly This magisterial, detailed history of the early American republic through 1800 reminds us that the "Founding Fathers" were revolutionaries, full of volatile passions that cemented or shattered friendships and shaped their cultural orientations. Alexander Hamilton's Federalist program calling for a sizable funded debt, a strong national bank, subsidized manufactures and a standing army aroused the deep enmity of Thomas Jefferson, who, the authors maintain, pursued his rival agrarian, egalitarian vision with a "self-deceiving obstinacy" that often matched Hamilton's imperiousness. They probe the deep anglophobia of Jefferson, Madison and the Virginia elite, whose decision to place the capital on a stretch of uninhabited wasteland on the Potomac contributed to the young republic's fragmented, provincial culture, according to Elkins (Slavery), a Smith history professor, and McKittrick (Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction), a Columbia professor emeritus. Full of vibrant portraits of the Federalists and their opponents, this outstanding, provocative chronicle sheds much new light on the emergence of American partisan politics. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Two renowned historians apply their talents to the history of the United States during the administrations of George Washington and John Adams. It's all here--Hamilton's financial plans, the capital fight, the Jay crisis, the Quasi-War. But this book is much more than a mere chronicle of the parties and politics of the period 1789-1801. The authors thoroughly embed their account in the political culture of the time. They explore America's dominant republican ideology more fully here than in any other source, making the book this generation's standard interpretive study. A volume in the "Oxford History of the United States" series, it will reward even seasoned professionals with its insights, coverage, and reflections.- Harry W. Fritz, Univ. of Montana, Missoula Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Thorough and well written account of this important time period in our nation's history."--Stephen S. Katz, Community College of Philadelphia "Their fine book should long stand as a standard work on the 1790s and will be essential reading for all interested in early US politics.... They provide a clear and powerful analysis of the Federalists in government, and how they managed o do themselves in.... They provide a lively commentary on individuals and events. Their account of the XYZ Affair is highly entertaining.... We must be grateful to Elkins and McKittrick for exercising their skill and wit so effectively on some of US historu's most prominent and important political losers."--Times Higher Education Supplement (London) "A massive synthesis of the recent literature in traditional American history, The Age of Federalism will probably replace John C. Miller's The Federalist Era as the definitive work on the 1790s."--International Journal of the Classical Tradition "This book is a delight to read and provides an elaborate and valuable account of high politics in the era of Federalism.... A valuable and highly readable treatment of high politics in the Early Republic. The book is essential reading for anyone interested in the national politics of that era."--The American Journal of Legal History "The writing is very engaging.... It is simply a great book."--Southern Partisan "An impressive achievement. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick have produced an original, scholarly and sparkling account of this nation's first crucial decade under the Constitution. The book combines meticulous historical analysis with a sweeping narrative in which the founding fathers emerge as believable people--at crucial moments wise, vain, petty, ambitious, confused, imaginative, courageous, self-righteous, passionate and stubborn."--Los Angeles Times Book "Excellent treatment of the period 1788-1800. Well written and documented."--David H. Wicks, Mississippi Valey State University "Clearly the most thorough one-volume treatment of the period in print. It's a delight to read and the notes are a bibliographical gold mine."--Reverand Jas. Connelly, University of Portland "A 'user friendly' journey through a crucially important and often misinterpreted period."--Dr. Paul Doutrich, York College of Pennsylvania "This is an exceptional book -- one of the finest studies of the period produced in the past quarter century."--John M. Belohlavek, University of South Florida