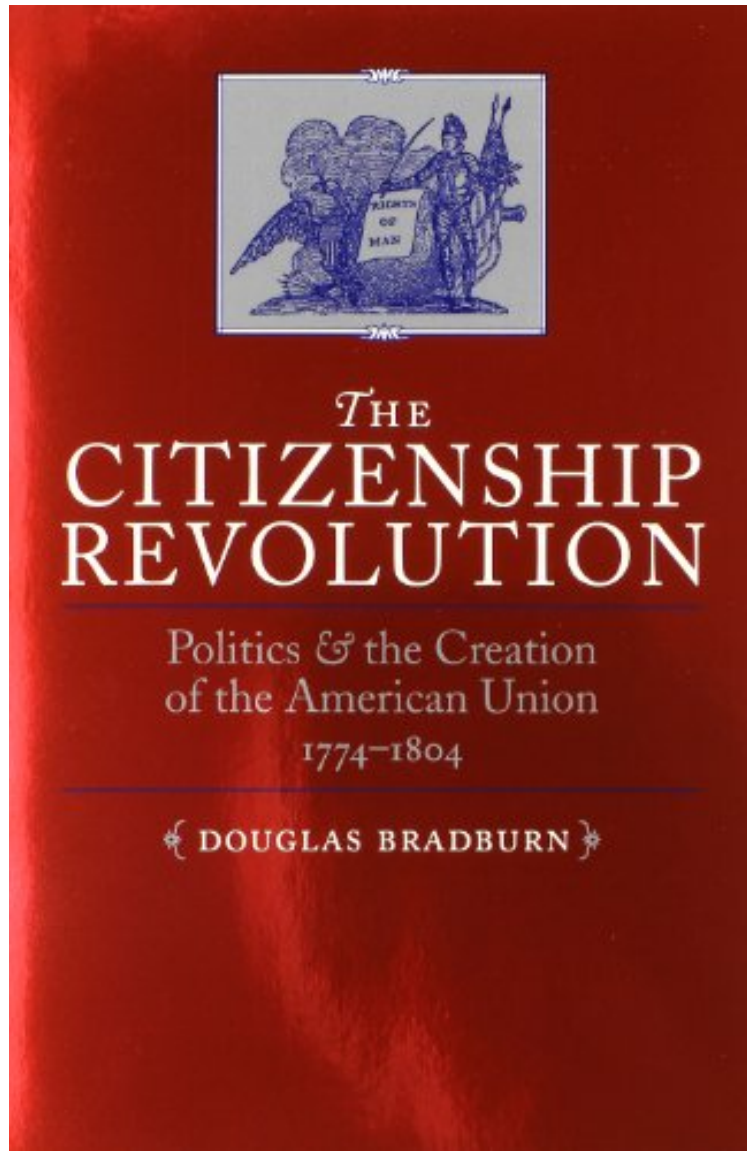


[Download] The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804 (Jeffersonian America)

## The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804 (Jeffersonian America)

*Douglas Bradburn*

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**Douglas Bradburn : The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804 (Jeffersonian America)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804 (Jeffersonian

America):

Most Americans believe that the ratification of the Constitution in 1788 marked the settlement of post-Revolutionary disputes over the meanings of rights, democracy, and sovereignty in the new nation. In *The Citizenship Revolution*, Douglas Bradburn undercuts this view by showing that the Union, not the Nation, was the most important product of independence. In 1774, everyone in British North America was a subject of King George and Parliament. In 1776 a number of newly independent "states," composed of "American citizens" began cobbling together a Union to fight their former fellow countrymen. But who was an American? What did it mean to be a "citizen" and not a "subject"? And why did it matter? Bradburn's stunning reinterpretation requires us to rethink the traditional chronologies and stories of the American Revolutionary experience. He places battles over the meaning of "citizenship" in law and in politics at the center of the narrative. He shows that the new political community ultimately discovered that it was not really a "Nation," but a "Union of States" and that it was the states that set the boundaries of belonging and the very character of rights, for citizens and everyone else. To those inclined to believe that the ratification of the Constitution assured the importance of national authority and law in the lives of American people, the emphasis on the significance and power of the states as the arbiter of American rights and the character of nationhood may seem strange. But, as Bradburn argues, state control of the ultimate meaning of American citizenship represented the first stable outcome of the crisis of authority, allegiance, and identity that had exploded in the American Revolutionary political settlement delicately reached in the first years of the nineteenth century. So ended the first great phase of the American citizenship revolution: a continuing struggle to reconcile the promise of revolutionary equality with the pressing and sometimes competing demands of law, order, and the pursuit of happiness.

This excellent and enjoyable book provides a far richer historical account of the political contestation over citizenship in the early Republic than any we have. It is a major contribution. (Rogers Smith, Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania, author of *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History*) Douglas Bradburn has taken on a difficult and important subject, the development of American citizenship. Without being present-minded, he raises historical issues, including race, due process, and civil liberties, that remain very much alive. What he adds to a very powerful historical and civic discussion commands attention. (Edward Countryman, Southern Methodist University, author of the Bancroft Prize-winning *A People in Revolution*) About the Author Douglas Bradburn, Director of the Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon, is the author of *Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion* (Virginia).