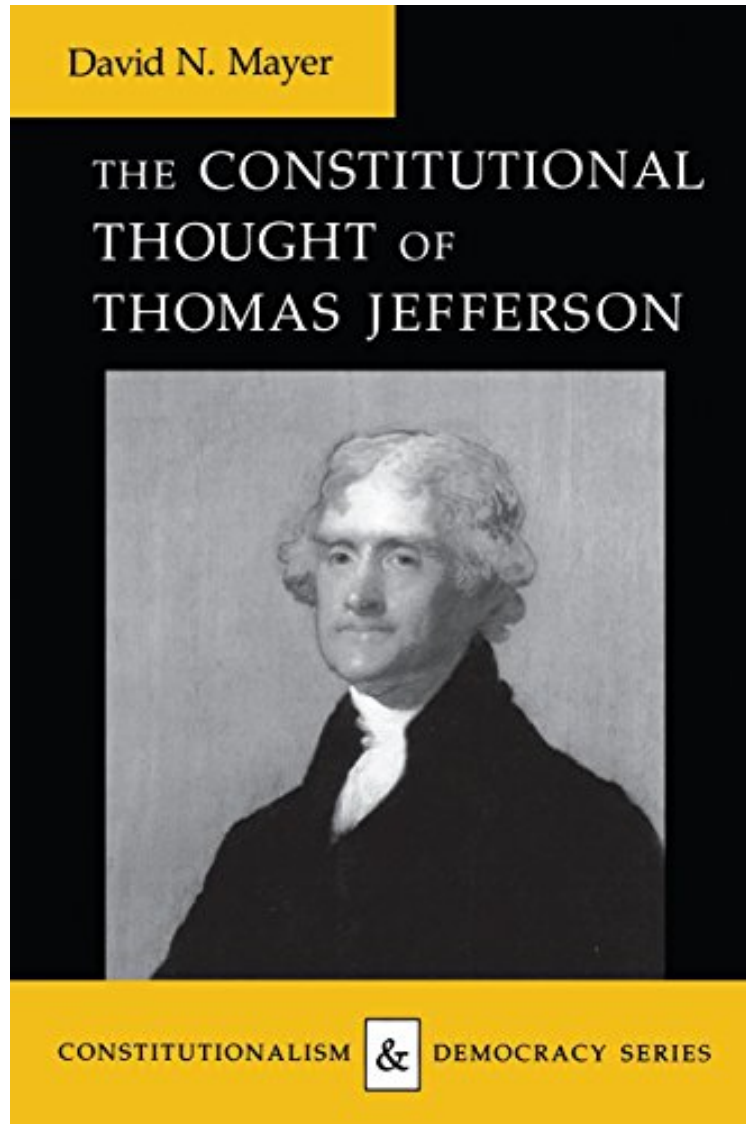


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## The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson (Constitutionalism and Democracy)

*David N. Mayer*

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**David N. Mayer : The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson (Constitutionalism and Democracy)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson (Constitutionalism and Democracy):

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In this comprehensive account of Thomas Jefferson's constitutional thought, David N. Mayer offers a fresh perspective on Jefferson's philosophy of government. Eschewing the "liberalism versus civic republicanism" debate that has so dominated early American scholarship in recent years, Mayer examines Jefferson's thought in Jefferson's own terms - as "whig," "federal," and "republican." In the interrelationships and tensions among these three essential aspects of Jefferson's theory, Mayer explains Jefferson's response to the particular constitutional issues and problems of his time. In contrast to other studies that view Jefferson as a champion of democracy, Mayer's book emphasizes Jefferson's commitment to liberty and his distrust of government.

From the Back Cover In this comprehensive account of Jefferson's constitutional thought, David N. Mayer offers a fresh perspective on Jefferson's philosophy of government. Eschewing the "liberalism versus civic republicanism" debate that has so dominated early American scholarship in recent years, Mayer examines Jefferson's thought on Jefferson's own terms - as "whig", "federal", and "republican". In the interrelationships and tensions among these three essential aspects of Jefferson's theory, Mayer explains Jefferson's response to the particular constitutional issues and problems of his time. In contrast to other studies that view Jefferson as a champion of democracy, Mayer's book emphasizes Jefferson's commitment to liberty. Jefferson's distinctiveness, Mayer argues, was the degree to which he advocated that government should leave individuals alone, free to govern themselves. Believing that "the natural process of things is for liberty to yield, and government to gain ground", Jefferson stressed the importance of written constitutions, scrupulously adhered to, as well as popular participation and vigilance over government, to keep its power from being abused. Drawing together Jefferson's scattered writings on the subject, Mayer traces the development of his constitutional theory from its beginnings through all the significant periods of Jefferson's life - his early education, the American Revolution, the constitutional debates of the 1780s, the Federalist-Republican political party struggles of the 1790s, his two presidential terms, and his retirement years. The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson provides a comprehensive explanation of Jefferson's constitutional theory and philosophy of government, including rights theories (particularly First Amendment freedoms), federalism, constitutional interpretation, separation of powers (including presidential powers), and constitutional change. This is an indispensable guide for anyone interested in Jefferson's ideas about law and government. About the Author David N. Mayer is Professor of Law and History at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. He has published numerous articles in law and history journals.