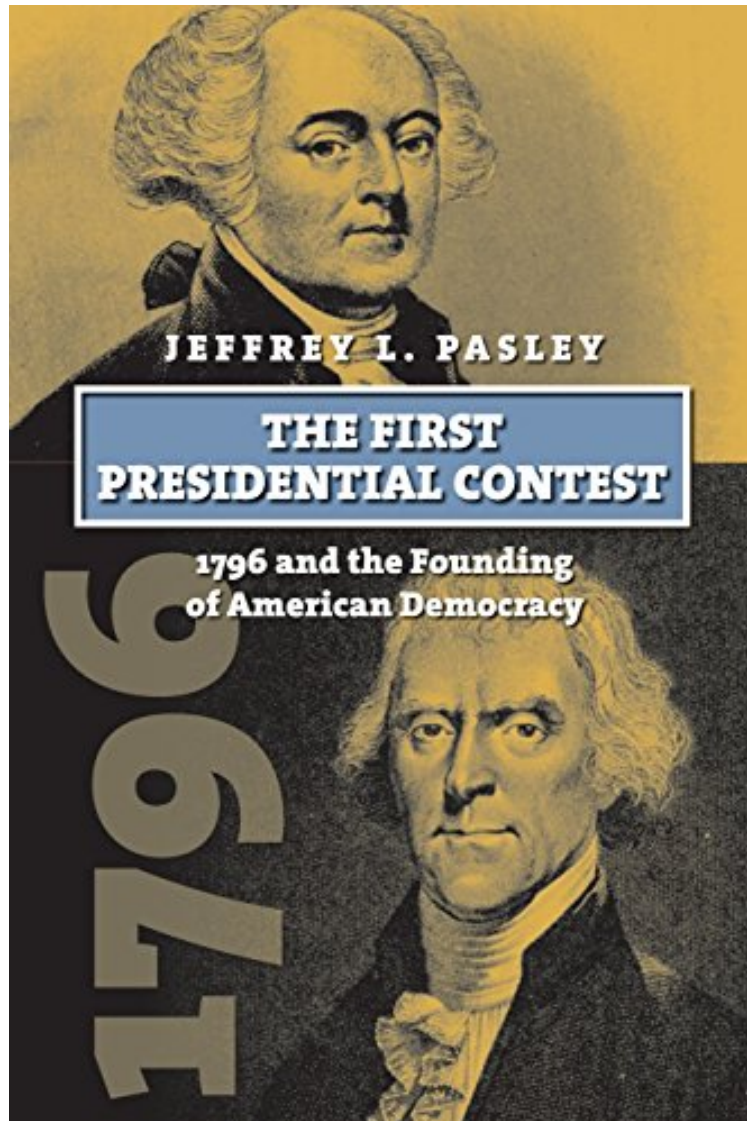


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## The First Presidential Contest: 1796 and the Founding of American Democracy (American Presidential Elections)

*Jeffrey L. Pasley*

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#1123044 in Books Jeffrey L Pasley 2016-12-12 2016-12-20Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.02 x 1.07 x 5.98l, .0 #File Name: 0700623515528 pagesThe First Presidential Contest 1796 and the Founding of American Democracy | File size: 59.Mb

**Jeffrey L. Pasley : The First Presidential Contest: 1796 and the Founding of American Democracy (American Presidential Elections)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The First Presidential Contest: 1796 and the Founding of American Democracy (American Presidential Elections):

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Informative, if deeply flawed  
By Penguinracer546 Those of us who have read extensively on this period of time, have grown somewhat accustomed to the often shrill political partisanship that was not only a hallmark of the era, but frequently bleeds into the opinions of those who write about it. This is a meticulously researched effort, but is greatly disserved by the pervasive bias of the author. I have no problem with a "display them, warts and all" mentality, but when one side is consistently extended the benefit of the doubt, while the other is consistently vilified throughout 400 pages of text, to say that it grows tiresome would be an understatement. I find this more problematic, because there will likely be many who will read this as part of the Presidential Election series, and thus will lack the prior awareness to take this blatant and egregious bias, with the proverbial grain of salt. The author clearly has "picked a side". Not only are the motives of all those affiliated with the Federalists disparaged constantly, but the Democratic-Republicans are somehow always provided with an excuse for any action that may not sit well with the reader, no matter how great a circumnavigation of logic is required. This extends to all elected officials, journalists, nations and even the language selected. Something may be "said" by Madison, whereas the author frequently uses inherently more negative substitute words such as "sniffed" or "decreed", when attributing statements to Federalists. There are even occasions where the author skips over significant periods of time and pins particular political sins on certain modern day politicians, while ignoring the lengthy periods when the same behavior was attributed to the opposition party. On certain topics, bias is all but unavoidable. Authors are humans. I have no problem with this, as long as it is not cloaked behind a veil of assumptive neutrality, which the other attempts to utilize on a few occasions, despite the blatant absurdity of such a claim. If you are steeped in awareness of the political situation of the 1790's, this is a good read, if you know how to filter it. Anyone without enough prior era specific knowledge to recognize the towering level of hard slant on display here, should proceed with caution.

5 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Politics is Politics??  
By avidreader Imagine no real party structure in the election. Each man for himself. No Elections commission to oversee the electios. You can say anything and you can do anything and the only punishment is that you might be challenged to a duel. Worse yet, your top opponent will end up being Vice President. This book will hold your attention if you are a politics junkie, a history junkie or especially if you are an early American history junkie. This is fascinating reading and will get your blood flowing.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Recommended!  
By frrobinson Jeffrey Pasley's book on the first presidential contest is a first rate account of the event and the historical characters who took part. This book is more than about the part Thomas Jefferson and John Adams played in it, in fact they are minor characters in Pasley's narrative. The book methodically develops the theme of how the American political system started to develop, especially nationally, with forming of the two party system. Pasley starts the story in the second term of the Washington Administration and shows how two different political philosophies developed (Federalist vs Democratic=Republican). The two founders who drove this division were Alexander Hamilton and James Madison. But Pasley also discusses other historical characters and their contribution to the split into the two parties, most of whom are not names often read in history text books. Although the founders did not intend for political parties to develop and took measures in the Constitution to try to prevent it (electoral college), it happened anyway and now seems it was inevitable. Once you read Pasley's account, you can understand where today's Presidential campaigns originated from, especially concerning the media, politicians, and professional campaign politicians. This book is recommended for those interested in the early republic or political science buffs. The casual history reader may find Pasley's book a little dense.

This is the first study in half a century to focus on the election of 1796. At first glance, the first presidential contest looks unfamiliar: parties were frowned upon, there was no national vote, and the candidates did not even participate (the political mores of the day forbade it). Yet for all that, Jeffrey L. Pasley contends, the election of 1796 was absolutely seminal, setting the stage for all of American politics to follow. Challenging much of the conventional understanding of this election, Pasley argues that Federalist and Democratic-Republican were deeply meaningful categories for politicians and citizens of the 1790s, even if the names could be inconsistent and the institutional presence lacking. He treats the 1796 election as a rough draft of the democratic presidential campaigns that came later rather than as the personal squabble depicted by other historians. It set the geographic pattern of New England competing with the South at the two extremes of American politics, and it established the basic ideological dynamic of a liberal, rights-spreading American left arrayed against a conservative, society-protecting right, each with its own competing model of leadership. Rather than the inner thoughts and personal lives of the Founders, covered in so many other volumes, Pasley focuses on images of Adams and Jefferson created by supporters-and detractors-through the press, capturing the way that ordinary citizens in 1796 would have actually experienced candidates they never heard speak. Newspaper editors, minor officials, now forgotten congressman, and individual elector candidates all take a leading role in the story to show how politics of the day actually worked. Pasley's cogent study rescues the election of 1796 from the shadow of 1800 and invites us to rethink how we view that campaign and the origins of American politics.

"Carefully researched and engagingly written, Pasley's volume is the definitive work on this underappreciated

election." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* "A superb, important book. Likely to become the definitive study of the 1796 election." *Journal of American History* "Presents a compelling and forward-moving narrative." *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* "The Presidential election of 1796, memorialized in history tomes for the bitter divisions the campaign mirrored among citizens in the fledgling Republic, receives innovative and refreshing analytical consideration in this eminently readable and clever account of the Adams-Jefferson contest." *Political Science Quarterly* Vivid and precise, compelling and even funny, this is political history as it needs to be written, as its best practitioners are writing it today. The election year narrative may never be the same just better for Pasleys patient unpacking of where it all began. Neither students nor fans of the presidency, of democracy, or of the founding should miss it. David Waldstreicher, author of *Slaverys Constitution: From Revolution to Ratification and Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery, and the American Revolution* Rich in lively characters, fiery rhetoric, dark intrigue, and cunning spin, the presidential election of 1796 helped to create American partisan politics on a national scale. With wry humor and a keen sense of political reality, both past and present, Pasley offers the closest and best examination of our Founders as politicians who slyly practiced what they piously preached against. Alan Taylor, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *William Coopers Town* Few historians tell a good political story better than Jeffrey Pasley. Here he provides a wonderful account of the presidential election of 1796, which finally gets the full attention it deserves. Pasley shows how much political innovation was already occurring across the country, and how quickly politics became an active concern of citizens and their outspoken press. This first contested presidential election was no mere prequel to the dramatic contest of 1800. It was instead the critical experiment upon which Federalists and Republicans built four years later. Jack Rakove, author of *Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America* Jeffrey Pasley, one of Americas premier students of popular politics, has written a superb study of a crucial but oft-neglected election. Filled with imaginative research and brilliant vignettes involving the great and not-so-great, *The First Presidential Contest*, is a major study of one of the landmarks in the early history of democracy in the United States. Sean Wilentz, author of *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* Thoroughly researched, vividly written, and persuasively argued, Pasleys book explores critically how the framers fantasy of Patriot Kings mysteriously rising to the presidency quickly transformed into local notables attempting to control presidential elections in their separate states. Anyone interested in understanding the inevitable genesis of political parties, the rise of public opinion as a check on government, and the first stirrings of the slow transformation from a Republic to a Democracy will find this book enormously helpful. Richard K. Matthews, author of *The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson* About the Author Jeffrey L. Pasley is associate professor of history at the University of Missouri. He is the author of "The Tyranny of Printers": Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic and coeditor of *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic*.