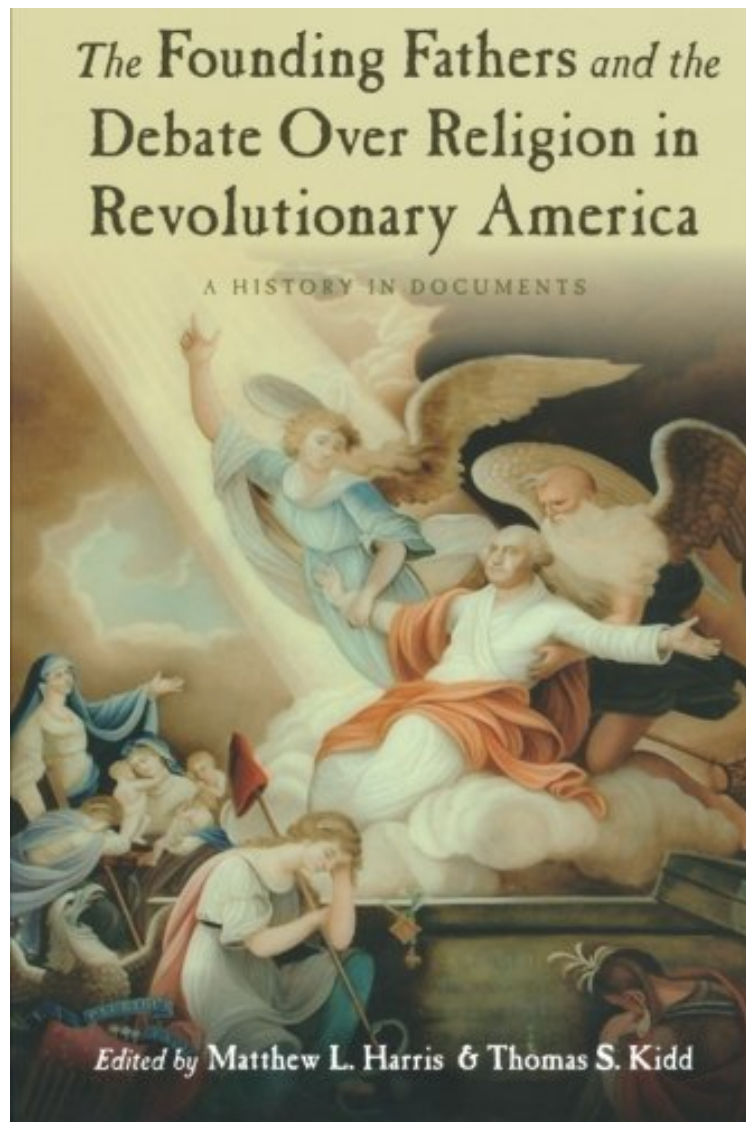


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The Founding Fathers and the Debate over Religion in Revolutionary America: A History in Documents

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By Joseph Valencial bought this book to help me with my Senior research thesis, which examined the role of religion in the founding of America. I found it to be quite useful in exploring the different attitudes the founding fathers held regarding religion and the role it ought to play in government. The usual founders-Jefferson, Washington, Adams, Franklin et al are found. Harris and Kidd do a good job of including lesser known, but still relevant, figures from the period. This is a good collection, accompanied by brief yet informative narratives from the editors.
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Five Stars
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Very nice. Good historical evidence and use of sources.
3 of 7 people found the following review helpful. great tool
By intrigued
This was an excellent purchase. This book bounces back and forth between two scholars and the evidence each has to make their argument on the book's title: Were the Founding Fathers religious, and did they want America to be? For anyone interested in this topic or who is studying it, he/she will find plenty of evidence to support a side.

Whether America was founded as a Christian nation or as a secular republic is one of the most fiercely debated questions in American history. Historians Matthew Harris and Thomas Kidd offer an authoritative examination of the essential documents needed to understand this debate. The texts included in this volume - writings and speeches from both well-known and obscure early American thinkers - show that religion played a prominent yet fractious role in the era of the American Revolution. In their personal beliefs, the Founders ranged from profound skeptics like Thomas Paine to traditional Christians like Patrick Henry. Nevertheless, most of the Founding Fathers rallied around certain crucial religious principles, including the idea that people were "created" equal, the belief that religious freedom required the disestablishment of state-backed denominations, the necessity of virtue in a republic, and the role of Providence in guiding the affairs of nations. Harris and Kidd show that through the struggles of war and the framing of the Constitution, Americans sought to reconcile their dedication to religious vitality with their commitment to religious freedom.

"Matthew L. Harris and Thomas S. Kidd have assembled a fine collection of primary documents that will serve as a useful guide for scholars, teachers, and students interested in the Christian America debate."---John Fea, author of *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?: A Historical Introduction* "Harris and Kidd have crafted a work that is at once readable and informative. Indeed, even non-specialists who read their book will be able to comprehend the key questions about the place of religion in American life without feeling overwhelmed." --*Renewing Minds* "[T]his brief treatment illustrates complexities with which the US and its leaders continue to struggle."--CHOICE
About the Author
Matthew L. Harris is Associate Professor of History and Director of the Graduate Program in History at Colorado State University-Pueblo. Thomas S. Kidd is Associate Professor of History at Baylor University and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Studies of Religion. He is the author of *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution* (2010) and other books.