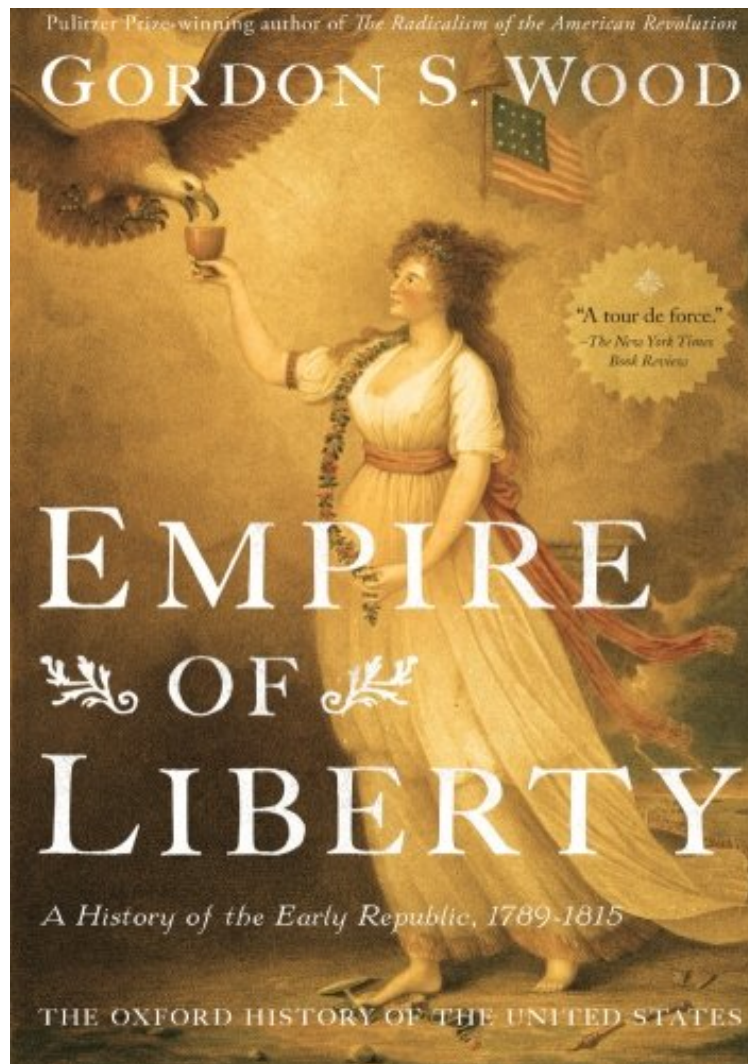


(Free and download) Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815 (Oxford History of the United States)

Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815 (Oxford History of the United States)

Gordon S. Wood

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#70960 in Books Gordon S Wood 2011-10-01 2011-10-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 6.10 x 2.30 x 9.20l, 2.36 #File Name: 0199832463800 pagesEmpire of Liberty A History of the Early Republic 1789 1815 | File size: 16.Mb

Gordon S. Wood : Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815 (Oxford History of the United States) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815 (Oxford History of the United States):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It is extremely well written and offers a great quality and quantity of

information on the period. By Loren White would give it a 4.5 if it was an option. It is extremely well written and offers a great quality and quantity of information on the period. My one complaint, and it reflects more my personal preference than any short coming with the book, is that he structures the book into a series of topics that make up the various chapters, rather than a more rigidly chronological layout. As such, the book often feels much more topic driven than event driven. Thus, it lacks the chronological narrative that covers the unfolding of events in a way that gives you a stronger temporal awareness of the various currents and events that were simultaneously unfolding. Again this is just a personal preference and despite the above comments I still found it very enjoyable and would recommend it to others. On a side note, while the author never suggests it, it seems hard to walk away from reading this book without seeing huge parallels between the period this book covers and today, especially relating to the state of the media and the partisan political environment. It would be interesting to hear Mr. Wood's thoughts on these perceived similarities.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A magnificent analysis of early democratic institutions and society.

By Robert J. Crawford This is one of those books that you can read about a period you think you know well, only to discover a thousand subtleties and surprises, completely and forever changing your perception of the period. I was fascinated by something on every single page of this book, an intimate journey with a true master historian who is writing for a popular, if knowledgeable audience. I did not always agree with his perspective, which made the dialogue all the more stimulating. At the start, after the constitution was ratified, the Federalists were triumphant (Washington, Hamilton, Adams). Wood defines them as would-be British aristocrats, attempting to set up a social hierarchy similar to the monarchy that the US had just thrown off. To establish their regime, they set up elaborate systems of patronage with the privileged, who were landowners and big businessmen. Their goals, Wood continues, were to create a modern, centralized state - with a banking sector to finance a continental-scale commercial economy, an organized military under the control of the federal government, and a legal apparatus to set national priorities, including taxes. They deeply feared the partisan wrangling that would come if parties formed. By background, they admired the British, entertained Enlightenment ideas about rational discussion, and tended to be "deists" who believed that God had created a mechanistic universe that operated according to discernable rules rather than regular intervention with intent. Opposition developed, led first by Jefferson and later by Madison, from their fear of centralized power. Rather than the British, they preferred the French Enlightenment, particularly when revolutionaries threw off the yoke of their monarchy, but also by intellectual preference and lifestyle emulation. Unlike the Federalists seeking to create state power, they wanted the US to remain principally agricultural, a republic of thrifty yeomen, a kind of salt of the earth in their minds. Part of Jefferson's political genius was that he synched with the rising populism of the time, which by enabling more men to participate in politics was anti-aristocratic. This ushered in electoral politics and spawned partisan groupings, known at the time as Jeffersonian Republicans. In my opinion, the book is not clear enough regarding what exactly each grouping represented. Though the Federalists were pro-business and wanted to set up a national administrative infrastructure to support them, it alienated smaller entrepreneurs and artisans, who saw the Republicans as more supportive of their ambitions. This seemed to me paradoxical, but they voted for Jefferson en masse, permanently eclipsing the Federalists. Wood appears to clearly prefer the Jeffersonians over the Federalists, i.e. a little too accepting of their rhetorical positions at face value. Wood could, I believe, have been far more critical of Jefferson - the guy thought a lot of strange things up and was a ridiculous hypocrite. His embargo policies against the British, applied with extraordinary ideological zeal, devastated local men of commerce. Clearly, these groupings were not direct ancestors to our modern political parties, as their ideological convictions were re-shuffled in subsequent generations. Beyond these political wrangles, the social and economic changes underway were legion and fundamental. First, given the rhetoric of liberty, Southern planters developed a racist ideology to explain their need to own slaves (they were inferior human beings incapable of taking care of themselves). This is the fissure that inevitably led to the civil war and underlies the race problem of today. Second, with the decline of state-supported churches, an unprecedented flourishing of protestant sects began, lasting to the present day - they were democratic (i.e., less authoritarian), offered personal salvation in new ways, and had characters that were genuinely homespun. Some (including Jefferson) believed that the Indians may have been "the lost tribes of Israel", a central tenet of the Mormonism that was established in the next generation. Third, Americans shifted their attention westward, arguing that they were uniquely distinguished from Europeans and would develop their own culture and mores. This meant not only that they stopped their attempts to copy European cultural accomplishments, but also became self-absorbed and convinced they were somehow special - after the rise of Napoleon they represented the only experiment in republican government, but they also became willfully ignorant of many developments elsewhere, even myopic. Finally, with industrialization, a commercial culture dominated the economy, to the extent that even Jefferson admitted his agrarian utopia was unworkable. I should mention what this book is not. It is not a narrative history with mini-biographies and vivid stories. Instead, it is highly analytic, looking at trends beneath the surface and explaining what they mean. Furthermore, it is not an introductory text that goes over the basics, but assumes knowledge of the main events and important personalities. That makes it an advanced text, say, for undergraduate history majors. It is the perfect stepping off point for interested students who have just suffered through a general text book. This book is a great intellectual adventure. I came away from it with very clear ideas about long-

term trends that originated within the conditions that existed at the time, as American institutions were set in motion in practical ways and the society established its own, uniquely American identity. Though I think he is too hard on the Federalists, Wood never indulges in a triumphalist tone or an overly proud celebration of American uniqueness. Warmly recommended as one of the best of the Oxford series. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. great leadership makes the difference

By David H. MacCallum

The broad story of America's early days is familiar to most of us. But only rarely is this story told with such understanding and skill that the importance of what is familiar becomes even more apparent and the relevance of what is far less familiar becomes more obviously important. This, the third in Professor Wood's telling of the early days of the nation, is a hugely important book in educating Americans in what happened in the country's infancy, childhood and early adulthood. The difference between America in 1775 and America only 40 years later was remarkable. America in 1775 still had the revolution ahead of it, the amalgamation of thirteen widely diverse colonies into one determined nation, the emergence of group of absolutely incredibly talented men as the country's leaders, and the huge expansion of the borders of the country. There are two big stories in this book. First and most important is the emergence, after the Revolution, of a group of remarkable leaders. We needed great leaders with the widest field of vision and the highest degree of tenacity and determination possible in order to win the military battle with the world's greatest military power. Subsequently, we needed men of the highest intelligence and reasoning skills to produce a document under which we would be governed. We are still governed by this brief and durable document, only 8,000 words long. This is a great story and it is very well told by Professor Wood. Three men stand out in this struggle. Washington emerges first, with his incredible military skills and then, after the Revolution's close in 1783, his superb sense of what the country needs in a chief executive. Remember, not one shred of precedent had existed prior to Washington's election, twice unanimously, to the Presidency. Then, Jefferson, who so aptly described by Richard Hofstadter as "the aristocrat as democrat", the author of the Declaration of Independence, moves back to center stage in the contested election of 1800 as a two-term president. He believed, like no other man in the country, in the nation as the "world's best hope" for democracy. Finally, Madison, who wrote most of the Constitution becomes President twenty years after this magnificent effort, struggles to resolve innumerable differences between the landed gentry and the agricultural communities, between slave owners and abolitionists, between the merchant class and laborers, and between strong central government advocates and those who more deeply trusted the people. The second big story is the growth in America's self-assurance. Only with the break with Britain in the War of 1812 did the country become a fully confident, capable nation. The differences with Great Britain, still rather slight even after the Revolution, grew starker and more pronounced. Only an historian of Professor Wood's scope has told this story so well.

The Oxford History of the United States is by far the most respected multi-volume history of our nation. The series includes three Pulitzer Prize winners, two New York Times bestsellers, and winners of the Bancroft and Parkman Prizes. Now, in the newest volume in the series, one of America's most esteemed historians, Gordon S. Wood, offers a brilliant account of the early American Republic, ranging from 1789 and the beginning of the national government to the end of the War of 1812. As Wood reveals, the period was marked by tumultuous change in all aspects of American life--in politics, society, economy, and culture. The men who founded the new government had high hopes for the future, but few of their hopes and dreams worked out quite as they expected. They hated political parties but parties nonetheless emerged. Some wanted the United States to become a great fiscal-military state like those of Britain and France; others wanted the country to remain a rural agricultural state very different from the European states. Instead, by 1815 the United States became something neither group anticipated. Many leaders expected American culture to flourish and surpass that of Europe; instead it became popularized and vulgarized. The leaders also hope to see the end of slavery; instead, despite the release of many slaves and the end of slavery in the North, slavery was stronger in 1815 than it had been in 1789. Many wanted to avoid entanglements with Europe, but instead the country became involved in Europe's wars and ended up waging another war with the former mother country. Still, with a new generation emerging by 1815, most Americans were confident and optimistic about the future of their country. Named a New York Times Notable Book, *Empire of Liberty* offers a marvelous account of this pivotal era when America took its first unsteady steps as a new and rapidly expanding nation.

.com Take a Look Inside the Empire of Liberty [Click on Images to Enlarge] George Washington (1732-1799): This portrait painted by Gilbert Stuart in 1797 was the one rescued by Dolley Madison in 1814 when the British burned the White House. (Library of Congress)