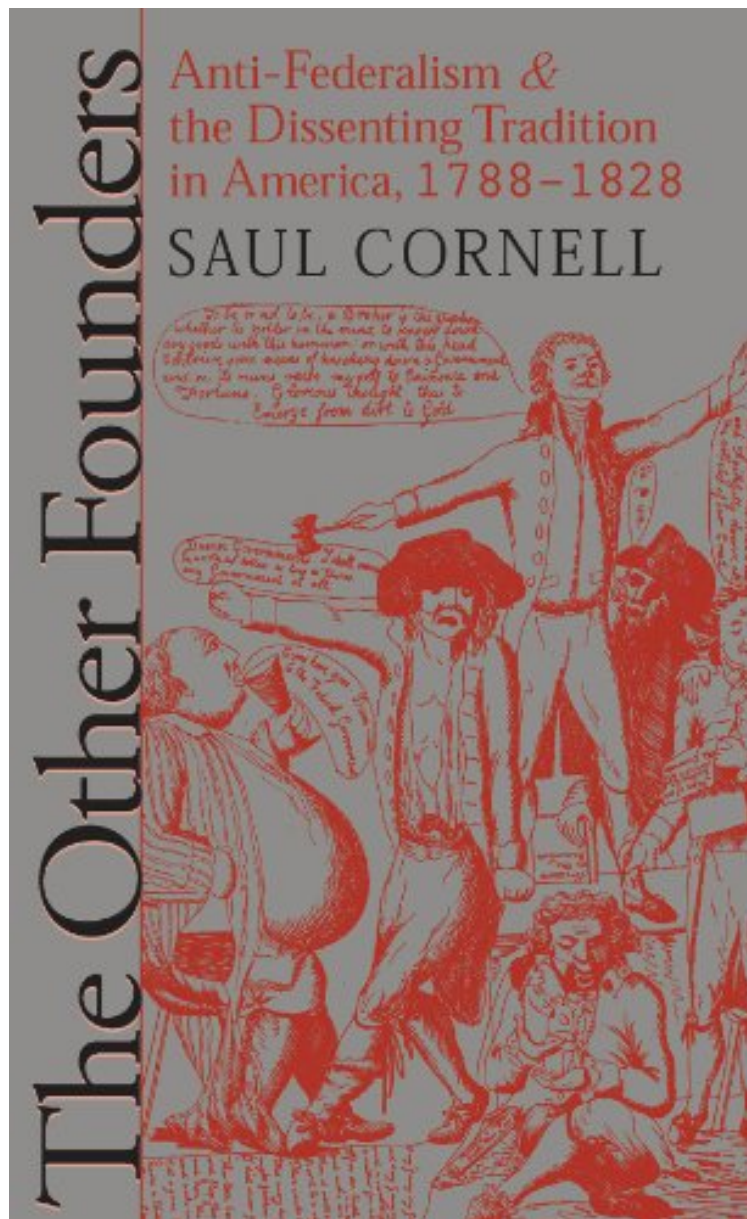


(Mobile book) The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828  
(Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History ... and the University of North Carolina Press)

# The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828 (Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History ... and the University of North Carolina Press)

Saul Cornell

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**Saul Cornell : The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828 (Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History ... and the University of North Carolina Press)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828* (Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History ... and the University of North Carolina Press):

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. The Other Founders of the United States By Ashtar Command "The Other Founders" by history professor Saul Cornell is a book about the Anti-Federalists, the "radical" wing of the American Revolution. The Anti-Federalists opposed the ratification of the US constitution, believing that it would grant too much power to the federal authorities. While not necessarily opposed to some sort of federation, the Anti-Federalists wanted most power to be vested in the states, or even further down, at county level. After the US constitution had been ratified, Anti-Federalists usually joined the emerging Democratic-Republican movement of Thomas Jefferson, becoming a kind of "loyal opposition" within the federal structures they had previously opposed. Saul Cornell believes that Anti-Federalist ideas and attitudes remained an important part of the political landscape even after the US constitution had been ratified. Although Anti-Federalists were, in one sense, on the losing side, they didn't simply collapse or go away. After all, they were right: the United States \*did\* become more centralized and (perhaps) less democratic after the constitution had been adopted. As several other reviewers have pointed out, much opposition to the modern federal government sounds Anti-Federalist. (Strangely, many of these dissidents claim to uphold the constitution and the Federalist Papers.) "The Other Founders" point out that Anti-Federalism wasn't a homogenous movement. Rather, it was a coalition of several different currents, held together mostly by their shared opposition to the centralization proposed by the Federalists. Cornell distinguishes between elite, middling and plebeian Anti-Federalists. The "middling" (middle class) group consisted of state politicians in New York and elsewhere who had risen to prominence after the revolution, due to the democratization of public life. They resented the traditional elite groups, but were equally suspicious of "the lower sort" and their "mobocracy". Charting a moderate middle course, the middling Anti-Federalists believed that the states should have most of the power. They were equally opposed to both localism and federal centralism. I got the impression that the middling group wanted to turn their respective states into a kind of nation-states, but go no further than that. They were also generally pro-commerce, "pro-capitalist", while opposing Hamilton, who was seen as the friend of speculators and corrupt politicians. An interesting fact pointed to by Cornell is that both the elite Anti-Federalists and the plebeian faction were strongly localist. They were opposed to centralized federal power, and felt uneasy towards power on the state level as well. The elite group, apparently some kind of traditionalist Southern landowners, believed that the old elite could uphold its values (and control) only in a small-sized, rural setting. Only at the local level was it possible for the Southern gentlemen to influence the common people, in face-to-face contact and according to strict codes of honor and deference. The elite Anti-Federalists were also suspicious of the emerging public sphere of newspapers, with their anonymous political articles and mass readership. This new public sphere, which was state-wide, nation-wide and "democratic", threatened the privileged positions of the landed gentry. The elitists were used to policy-making by personal contact between prominent people, or by the exchange of letters for strictly private consumption among a select few. The new era of popular appeals through mass media were not for them. The most radical Anti-Federalists, the plebeians, were also localist. In their case, because direct democracy could function only at the local level. To the plebeians, the town meeting, local juries and (of course) the local militia were instruments of such direct democracy. They also had an "anti-capitalist" view of the economy, opposing debt repayments and claiming that the economy should be based on moral principles. National banking, big-time commerce and speculation were seen as equally immoral. Another highly interesting fact pointed out by Professor Cornell is that both elite and plebeian Anti-Federalists were anti-pluralists. Their conception of democracy differed markedly from the liberal one (which was more espoused by the middling camp). To elitists and plebeians alike, the community should be homogenous, and individuals could be censored by it. When plebeians in Carlisle rioted against a Federalist celebration, they invoked the idea of such a homogenous community. The Federalists should, in their opinion, have deferred to the local Anti-Federalist majority, and cancelled their meetings. Plebeians also supported test acts and loyalty oaths, which excluded non-Protestants (and even some Protestants) from full citizenship and public office. (In Pennsylvania, these laws targeted Quakers and Mennonites but also former Tories.) The book points out that the Anti-Federalist coalition split when the plebeians resorted to violence. The Carlisle riots and their violent aftermath, although a local success for the plebeians, alienated the middling and elite groups within the coalition, making them more prone to compromise with the Federalists. When Anti-Federalists of all sorts joined the Democratic-Republican societies (and hence found themselves in alliance with Jeffersonites), the same thing occurred in the aftermath of the Whiskey Rebellion. The plebeians supported the rebellion, even calling on the rebels to secede from the United States, while the middling

group, now in alliance with Jefferson and Madison, got cold feet. The elite group, ironically, could avert a whiskey rebellion in Kentucky by sabotaging the federal persecutions of tax-evaders. In that Southern state, some of the gentry were distillers, and they naturally packed the court system to insure that nobody (not even plebeian tax-evaders) were persecuted. "The Other Founders" isn't a book for the general public. It presupposes a high degree of foreknowledge about the American Revolution on the part of the reader. Many key terms such as "Old Whig", "republicanism" or "originalism" are never defined. Also, the style is tedious, boring and frequently repetitive. A large part of the book analyzes the strategy of the different factions in the public sphere (the press). In other words, the book is a typical scholarly tome! Did I mind? Well, a more lively styled could have helped. Also, I would have appreciated more emphasis on the class conflicts and less on the newspapers. Still, I found the book interesting and informative, especially the first section on pre-ratification Anti-Federalism and the section dealing with the Whiskey Rebellion. Recommended for serious students of the American Revolution and political science in general.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Vital Information  
By Alan Pyeatt  
This is, simply put, an excellent book that helps fill the void of an appallingly neglected part of American history. Cornell's book is well researched, well written, and well documented. I have recommended it to many of my friends, and referred to it in an article I wrote for OpEd News. I also quoted excerpts several times on a weekly web radio show I used to do. Unfortunately, most high school (and even college) history courses give students the impression that there was little opposition to ratifying the U.S. Constitution. Fortunately, we have Ralph Ketcham's collection of primary sources, "The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates." But Cornell's book provides a systematic analysis of the political philosophy behind those documents, and provides a context for interpreting them based on contemporary newspaper articles, diary entries, letters, etc. No one who truly wants to understand the weaknesses of the U.S. Constitution and the ratification debate will regret reading this book.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Just as flawed as every other history book I have ever read, but...  
By Adam Selen  
I bought the Kindle edition of this book hoping to read what the anti-federalists wrote. This was not the book I was looking for. It turns out that there was such a strenuous debate over the Constitution that a collection of everything written by the anti-federalists runs to seven volumes and costs just under \$500.00 here on . They are compiled by a man named Herbert J. Storing. If you can afford them, it would help save you a great deal of time and effort to buy them. The quantity and length of writing by people who were against adopting the Constitution came as a shock for me because I had not been taught anything about the anti-federalists in high school. What I was taught about the Constitution was that it was the key to my freedom and that of every other American. Then we went over the sundry amendments, especially the first ten, the so-called "Bill of Rights," and that was about all I remember being taught. Which says some very bad things about having our schools run by our government. The government run education system only teaches your children what the government wants them to know. I am in my sixties and I just now heard anything at all about the "anti-federalists." I bring this up because it just recently dawned on me that the Constitution and its authors gave Congress an impossible task. Said task can be found in Article 1 Section 8 Clause 5 which, reads as follows: "To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures." There are several glaring problems with this clause. The very first of which is that Congress does not order any coins made to speak of. Congress does not even actually print all the money in circulation. Nearly all the dollars in circulation are mere bookkeeping entries on computers owned and operated by our Dear Bankers. Were we to print enough hundred dollar bills to cover all the digital do-do stored in the computers owned and operated by our Dear Bankers, we would rapidly run up huge prices for flax, cotton, specialized and expensive inks to print money, along with skyrocketing salaries for highly skilled engravers needed to make the plates. We might even drive the price of tractors up. Doubt my claims? Take a look at how much space you would need to pile up a trillion dollars in one hundred dollar bills. There are graphics out there on the web to be found. My estimation of this situation is that we do not raise enough flax or cotton to meet that potential demand. Worse, flax and cotton are both heavy feeders and they consume the nutrients in the soil so rapidly that ton upon ton of fertilizer is required to rear them. This is bad enough, but the next part of Article 1 Section 8 Clause 5 reads: "...regulate the value thereof...". Unless we allow Congress to control the price of everything, and I do mean everything, "regulating the value thereof" is an utterly impossible task for our Dear Leaders in the House and Senate. If you are laughing at me, you do not understand anything about money. Money is only worth what it will buy. You cannot eat money and with our money, you cannot even use it to clean up after going to the bathroom because it is worse than the very cheapest of all toilet papers you have ever had the misfortune of attempting to use, and it will clog your toilet if you do try. You might be able to use it as insulation by stuffing it into your clothes or you could start a fire with it, but other than that, it is just so much paper with an elaborately printed pattern of ink on it. Even gold and silver, the two "precious" metals are only good for what you can get in exchange for them. How on Earth does anyone expect a gang of ne'er-do-well politicians to control that? They cannot and never will. Having discovered this flaw and having finally learned about these so-called "ant-federalists," I thought I would give the Constitution a thorough going over just to see what else might be wrong with it. I did not find such criticisms in this book, Saul Cornell did, however, lead me to an embarrassment of riches online. Nearly everything you want to know about this period in history is available on the web and this book told me who and what to look for and if you are as serious about learning the Constitution and the

ideas it was founded on as I am, you could do worse than starting with this sharply skewed book. Do be aware that Mister Cornell is fond of his own opinions and makes no distinctions or gives any warning when he passes them on to you as simple fact. He may or may not be right. I shall necessarily leave that up for you to judge, just be advised that this book is flawed, just as every book on history is, and read it with an active mind. My advise is to buy the Kindle version and read it on your Kindle in front of your computer so that you can run searches on the web. An alternative approach is to download the free Kindle app for your operating system from and read it in one browser tab while searching for the things the book mentions in another browser tab. In any case, it will provide you with hour after hour of fascinating food for thought and research.

Fear of centralized authority is deeply rooted in American history. The struggle over the U.S. Constitution in 1788 pitted the Federalists, supporters of a stronger central government, against the Anti-Federalists, the champions of a more localist vision of politics. But, argues Saul Cornell, while the Federalists may have won the battle over ratification, it is the ideas of the Anti-Federalists that continue to define the soul of American politics. While no Anti-Federalist party emerged after ratification, Anti-Federalism continued to help define the limits of legitimate dissent within the American constitutional tradition for decades. Anti-Federalist ideas also exerted an important influence on Jeffersonianism and Jacksonianism. Exploring the full range of Anti-Federalist thought, Cornell illustrates its continuing relevance in the politics of the early Republic. A new look at the Anti-Federalists is particularly timely given the recent revival of interest in this once neglected group, notes Cornell. Now widely reprinted, Anti-Federalist writings are increasingly quoted by legal scholars and cited in Supreme Court decisions--clear proof that their authors are now counted among the ranks of America's founders.

Cornell provides us with crucial insights. "American Quarterly" An extremely well-researched and well-written work. "Journal of American Studies" Cornell . . . heightens our understanding of Anti-Federalism by placing it in social and intellectual context. "Law and History" "This highly readable, comprehensive, and original work deserves to be placed alongside "The Federalist Papers" on Americans' bookshelves." "Historian" "This highly readable, comprehensive, and original work deserves to be placed alongside "The Federalist Papers" on Americans' bookshelves." "Historian" A rich guide. "The Historian" Cogently demonstrates the significance of Anti-Federalism to early Republican political thought. This book will become a standard work on the Anti-Federalists and greatly enhances understanding of state's rights thought in the period.--Choice With his insistence on the salience of the problem of the public sphere as a defining issue for antifederalism, Cornell provides us with crucial insights into a particular discursive tradition, a set of political events, and the evolution of democratic politics and culture in the early United States.--American Quarterly The story is by no means simple, but Cornell tells it well in clear and straightforward prose. . . . Perhaps most impressive is Cornell's ability to bring to bear on the topic a broad range of secondary sources, both historical and theoretical, and he is particularly able at applying perspectives from contemporary political thought, including recent work on liberalism and republicanism as well as critical theory, reader response theory, and post-structuralist ideas of intertextuality. The result is rewarding: a book that is both good history and good theory, and a treatment of Anti-Federalist thought that is more historically nuanced and more theoretically sophisticated than any we have had before.--William and Mary Quarterly The Other Founders provides a rich guide through the complexities of the original anti-federalist coalition and clearly establishes the foundations and the limits of legitimate dissent in American politics.--The Historian [A] careful and subtle analysis. . . . [with] a provocative epilogue.--Journal of the Early Republic A magisterial work. . . . Anyone wishing to understand the meaning and significance of Anti-Federalist writings will have to consult The Other Founders.--Rhetoric Public Affairs The Anti-Federalists played an important role at a critical stage in nation building. We have not before had as comprehensive a reconstruction of the whole body of their thought and its immediate impact as Cornell gives us in The Other Founders.--Joyce O. Appleby, University of California at Los Angeles This book is profound, persuasive, and a much-needed taxonomy of Anti-Federalism. . . . The Other Founders notably succeeds in clarifying the importance of dissenting texts in American political culture. This highly readable, comprehensive, and original work deserves to be placed alongside The Federalist Papers on Americans' bookshelves.--Historian Saul Cornell's The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828 is a brilliant and unique book. Its special contribution lies in its explication of the connections between the institutional structures under which late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Americans lived and the political arguments they made in response to efforts to create and then empower the federal government. . . . Given the context that he so carefully paints, Cornell brings to life in a way no previous historian has done the rhetoric of Anti-Federalists and early nineteenth-century dissenters warning of the destruction of liberty.--William E. Nelson, New York University An extremely well-researched and well-written work.--Journal of American Studies Most novel and important in Cornell's book is what it shows about the Anti-Federalist contribution to the mainstream of American political thought and practice. . . . The work [Cornell] has done . . . is extraordinary and exhausting. All historians of the early republic are in his debt, and they will henceforth turn to The Other Founders as the essential starting point for work on the specific ideas of those who opposed the

federal Constitution.--Journal of Southern History[A] tightly argued volume. . . . Anybody interested in early and modern American politics will enjoy reading this well-written and nuanced study.--Virginia Quarterly A fine piece of work. Cornell's research is prodigious, his analysis is judicious, and his thesis is persuasive.--American Historical Cornell offers an important reminder that published texts and formal legal treaties are not the only ways to recover constitutional ideals. . . . Cornell also heightens our understanding of Anti-Federalism by placing it in social and intellectual context.--Law and History All scholarly communities concerned with the Constitution's origins--historians, political scientists, and legal scholars--will find much to ponder in this fine book. Moreover, Cornell's analysis of the role of print culture in the creation of a national public sphere and the shaping of the ratification controversy is a model of interdisciplinary scholarship. Finally, written with grace and verve, *The Other Founders* is a pleasure to read.--Journal of American History

From the Inside Flap

Reconsiders the role that Anti-Federalists played during the debate over ratification of the Constitution and traces their political legacy in the half-century that followed.