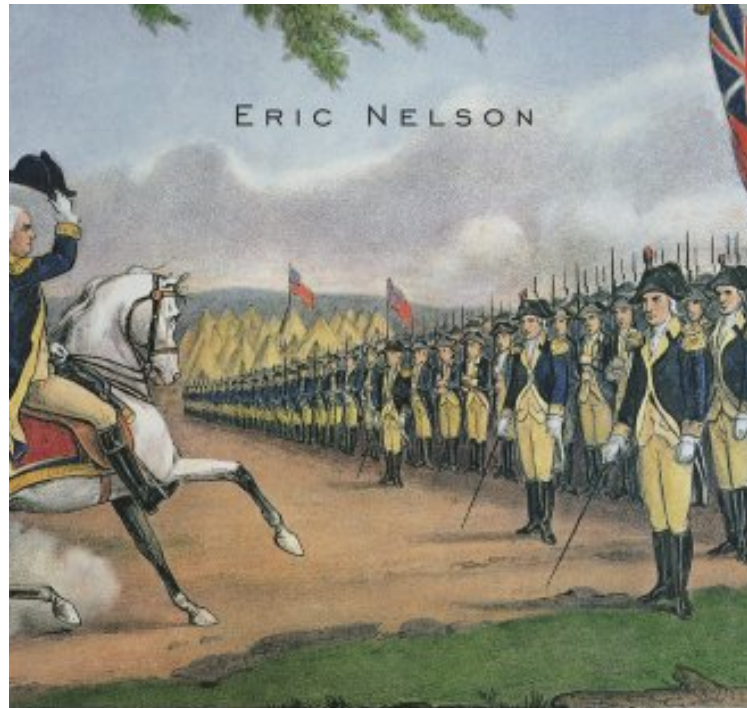


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Eric Nelson

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THE ROYALIST REVOLUTION

MONARCHY AND THE AMERICAN FOUNDING

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Eric Nelson : The Royalist Revolution: Monarchy and the American Founding before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Royalist Revolution: Monarchy and the American Founding:

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Deep Understanding of the US ConstitutionBy Brien HallettNelson has written a brilliant book on political philosophy disguised as a history of the pamphlet wars of the 17th and 18th centuries. With deep research, he sets the stage by outlining the 17th century constitutional battles

between the royalist and the parliamentarians during the English Civil War. Is a king with an absolute negative over parliamentary enactments a tyrant, as the parliamentarians held? Or, is such a king a true representative of the people, protecting them from the tyranny of a parliamentary majority, as Charles I said? In England, Charles lost not only the argument but also his head. The colonists were good Whig defenders of Parliament against a tyrannous king, until the Stamp Act and the imperial crisis of the 1760-1770s. With the Stamp Act and what followed, the colonial elite reversed their opinions, adopted, most unexpectedly, the royalist philosophy of Charles I, and called upon King George to protect the colonies from what was seen as parliamentary tyranny. When George III refused, the Revolutionary War ensued. Long story short, this royalist turn of the 1760-1770s by the colonial elite became the philosophical foundations for the Federal Constitution of 1789. When the weak collective executive of the Article of Confederation proved that the Whig theory was impractical, the Federal Convention met and wrote a very royalist constitution with a strong executive. The Anti-Federalist remained true to their Whig theories and objected strongly, but, as we all know, the royalist constitution was ratified. But ratification did not end the philosophical debate. The Tea Party is the most recent manifestation of this 400-year-old battle. Yet, to understand both the roots of the disagreement and why Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, Washington, and many others rejected the Whig/Anti-Federalist/Tea Party theories, one needs to read Nelson's excellent book.

0 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Roy T. Sakai I am a history buff and enjoyed this book.
0 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Customer Excellent

Generations of students have been taught that the American Revolution was a revolt against royal tyranny. In this revisionist account, Eric Nelson argues that a great many of our founding fathers saw themselves as rebels against the British Parliament, not the Crown. The Royalist Revolution interprets the patriot campaign of the 1770s as an insurrection in favor of royal power driven by the conviction that the Lords and Commons had usurped the just prerogatives of the monarch. Leading patriots believed that the colonies were the king's own to govern, and they urged George III to defy Parliament and rule directly. These theorists were proposing to turn back the clock on the English constitution, rejecting the Whig settlement that had secured the supremacy of Parliament after the Glorious Revolution. Instead, they embraced the political theory of those who had waged the last great campaign against Parliament's usurpations: the reviled Stuart monarchs of the seventeenth century. When it came time to design the state and federal constitutions, the very same figures who had defended this expansive conception of royal authority—John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, James Wilson, and their allies—returned to the fray as champions of a single executive vested with sweeping prerogatives. As a result of their labors, the Constitution of 1787 would assign its new president far more power than any British monarch had wielded for almost a hundred years. On one side of the Atlantic, Nelson concludes, there would be kings without monarchy; on the other, monarchy without kings.

The Royalist Revolution is a thought-provoking book, and Nelson is to be commended for reviving discussion of the complex ideology of the American Revolution. He reminds us that there was a spectrum of opinion even among the most ardent patriots and a deep British influence on the political institutions of the new country. (Andrew O'Shaughnessy Wall Street Journal 2014-10-23) A scrupulous archaeology of American revolutionary thought. (Thomas Meaney The Nation 2015-03-23) [Nelson's] argument will alternately surprise, shock, distress, and outrage many scholars, but it will also help to reshape a debate about the origins of the presidency, a topic that gravely matters as we agonize over the role of the post-9/11 executive in our impassioned and impasse-ridden politics. Eric Nelson's real genius is to force us to rethink both the origins and substance of critical political ideas. We will be wrestling with the implications of its argument for some time. (Jack N. Rakove Weekly Standard 2014-11-03) Eric Nelson's new book advances the royalist reinterpretation of 18th-century America a crucial stage further. The Royalist Revolution provides a powerful double-barrelled challenge to historiographical orthodoxy. Nelson argues persuasively that the Revolution at least in the beginning was not a revolt against the supposed tyrant George III, but a rebellion against the claims of the British Parliament. (Colin Kidd London of Books 2014-12-12) For anyone interested in the founding of the American Republic it is indispensable reading. (Jeremy Jennings Standpoint 2015-01-01) Brilliantly argued. The Royalist Revolution is surely one of the most important works on Revolutionary era political thought to appear in many years. (John W. Compton American Political Thought 2015-05-01) Nelson has given us a text of monumental importance. It is clear that historians will not be able to ignore this significant contribution. The Royalist Revolution will make many of us think very hard about what we thought we knew. (Matthew Dziennik Canadian Journal of History 2015-06-01) Eric Nelson's provocative new work, The Royalist Revolution: Monarchy and the American Founding, represents an important contribution to our understanding of the framing of the Article II powers of the Presidency. Nelson is to be congratulated for his elegant and illuminating treatment of this important body of patriot revolutionary thought. He provides a persuasive rebuttal to the conventional wisdom. Nelson's discussion of the debate over the executive at Philadelphia will be of inestimable value to scholars of constitutional law and history. For it is here that he maps with great depth and subtlety the way that royal authority informed the Framers' understanding of America's chief magistracy. And as scholars and statesmen alike continue to debate the

scope of the Presidents discretionary authority, the ideas that helped shape the powers of the executive in 1787 become all the more relevant today. (Tara Helfman Harvard Law 2015-06-01) Nelson eloquently underlines the significance of his reinterpretation for American historians. The Royalist Revolution challenges readers to rethink the conventional narrative about the revolt against tyranny, the republicanism of the Founding Fathers, and the surprising extension of executive power in 1787. (Hannah Weiss Muller Journal of British Studies 2015-07-01) Sure to fire up an old debate, Nelsons book constitutes an important contribution to the literature on early American constitutionalism. (Publishers Weekly 2014-07-28) The Royalist Revolution is the most challenging and original account of the constitutional history of the American Revolution in generations. With admirable lucidity and impeccable scholarship, Eric Nelson traces the ideological origins of colonial revolt and the prerogatives of a powerful Presidency back to their roots in seventeenth-century British arguments against Parliament. In light of his findings, the Founding Era will never look quite the same again. (David Armitage, author of The Declaration of Independence: A Global History) The unseen author of American independence, it turns out, was King George III, who chose to remain a parliamentary monarch, and declined (if he ever understood) the American invitation to become an emperor ruling through several independent parliaments. He obliged Americans to pursue a democratic empire and rethink the role of monarchy in their republic. Eric Nelsons brilliant revision displays both American and British history in their exceptionalisms. (J.G.A. Pocock) The Royalist Revolution is a provocative and important contribution to our never-ending interest in the invention of American constitutionalism. It dares the reader to rethink basic premises of American constitutional history. Carefully researched, ingeniously argued, this book will have a significant and controversial impact on scholarship. (Jack Rakove, Stanford University) By the 1760s, parliament was imposing taxes on the colonists without their consent. Patriot leaders like John Adams expressed longing for George III to restrain the legislative tyranny of parliament. Generations of historians have largely regarded such statements as insincere rhetorical ploys--as arguments of convenience lodged and then quickly forgotten. Nelson makes a convincing case that in so doing, historians have overlooked an important part of the political philosophy that impelled the American Revolution. (Yoni Appelbaum The Atlantic 2015-10-01) [A] brilliant and provocative analysis of the American Revolution [Nelson] departs radically from his predecessors, arguing that it was admiration for royal prerogative power and belief in the virtues of a strong executive, both derived from seventeenth-century precedents, that fostered the rebellion against Britain and shaped the Constitution of the new American republic. His Revolution comes out of a royalist, not a parliamentarian, tradition. The Royalist Revolution is a book of great intellectual power: it is not just challenging but erudite (many of its abundant footnotes are brilliant short essays in their own right), and, though densely argued, is written with admirable clarity and fairness. (John Brewer New York of Books 2015-10-22) About the Author Eric Nelson is Robert M. Beren Professor of Government at Harvard University.