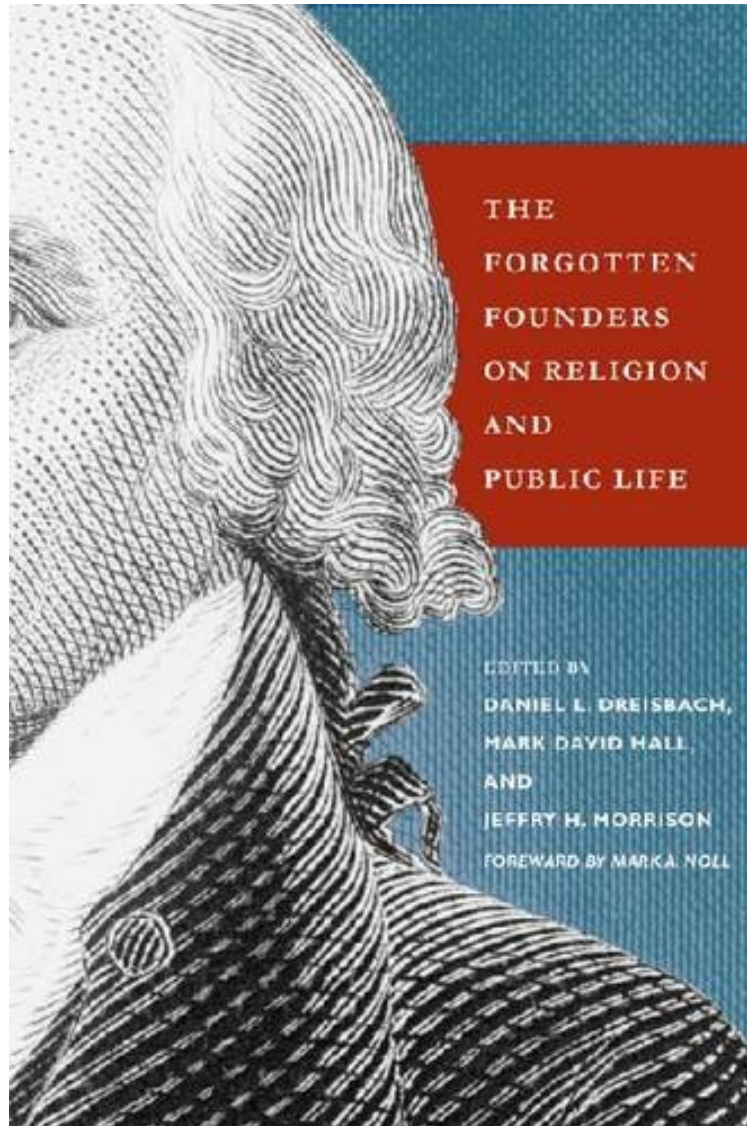


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The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A surprisingly cosmopolitan meshing of differing views
By Midwest Book Review
The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life is an anthology of writings by learned authors seeking to bring full insight into the views of religion and the public space among a diversity of America's founders - not just the few that popular culture tends to focus on (due to a paucity of historical records or even the founder's individual efforts of self-promotion). Individual writings include "The Way of Duty: Abigail Adams and Religion", "John Jay and the 'Great Plan of Providence'", "Benjamin Rush and Revolutionary Christian Reform", "Mercy Otis Warren on Church and State", and many more. A surprisingly cosmopolitan meshing of differing views (including contrasting opinions on just how much of a role religion should have in the public domain) evolves, in this excellent effort to assemble a depth and breadth of thought to reveal precisely how America's founders viewed the church and the state. Highly recommended, especially for public and college library American History shelves.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant...
By trenchantDreisbach is a historian's historian. His attention to historical detail and deep understanding of events makes him an expert in this field. We can clearly see that the superficial advocates who maintain that America was founded by rationalists, deists, etc. are rooted in mid-air, i.e., they have presuppositions unsupported by the factual evidence.

This interdisciplinary volume brings together essays on eleven of the founders of the American republic--Abigail Adams, Samuel Adams, Oliver Ellsworth, Alexander Hamilton, Patrick Henry, John Jay, Thomas Paine, Edmund Randolph, Benjamin Rush, Roger Sherman, and Mercy Otis Warren--many of whom are either little recognized today or little appreciated for their contributions. The essays focus on the thinking of these men and women on the proper role of religion in public life, including but not limited to the question of the separation of church and state. Their views represent a wide range of opinions, from complete isolation of church and state to tax-supported clergy. These essays present a textured and nuanced view of the society that came to a consensus on how religion would fit in the public life of the new nation. They reveal that religion was more important in the lives and thinking of many of the founders than is often portrayed and that it took the interplay of disparate and contrasting views to frame the constitutional outline that eventually emerged. "For more than a decade these three editors, separately and together, have led us to a more nuanced view of the central place of religion in the American founding era. Not only were the political views of famous founders like Adams, Jefferson, and Madison more dependent on religion than their modern secular caricature allows. But many other figures, from varying religious traditions, proved equally critical to forging the original American understanding of constitutional order, democratic liberty, and rule of law. This well-crafted volume introduces a dozen such founding figures and the sterling political accomplishments that they offered the young nation on the strength of their religious convictions." --John Witte, Jr., Emory University "This excellent collection explores the rich diversity of the American mind at the Founding by attending to the spiritual, political, and intellectual convictions of a dozen men and women prominent in the events of that seminal period but relatively neglected by the historians. It fills a major gap left in the literature with its conventional fixation on the life and work of a handful of luminaries. In doing so, it takes seriously the role of religion in grounding devotion to Whig liberty and common law constitutionalism to form a popular consensus that has endured from 1776 until today. Highly readable and thoroughly sourced, this is a book for anyone interested in American history and politics." --Ellis Sandoz, Moyse Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Louisiana State University "This collection of well-crafted essays probes the "religion and the founding" question from a fresh angle. Its concentration on the second rank of founders pays rich dividends, since this focus uncovers more variety on religious issues than appear when looking only at the "Big Six" of Washington-Franklin-John Adams-Madison-Hamilton-Jefferson. The pay off is to show not only how deep but also how various were the founders' religious commitments. Historians, but also those concerned about religion in contemporary American politics, should take note--the editors have done a very fine job." --Mark Noll, University of Notre Dame "There is no book comparable to *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life*. It is a collection of eleven essays on the many neglected figures or, in some cases, the neglected church-state views of duly appreciated figures. The book's appeal goes beyond the realm of constitutional doctrine. In addition to constitutional lawyers, constitutional historians, historians of religion in America, and those who study American political thought will all welcome and value the book." --Gerard V. Bradley, University of Notre Dame Law School

"Following *The Founders on God and Government*, these essays focus on important Revolutionary generation

individuals' little-known views on religion and society. . . . Articles feature a brief biography, description of subjects' religious beliefs, and analysis of ideas about churches' value in public life. . . . All essays are well researched and worthwhile. Most valuable is William Casto's on Ellsworth, which demonstrates that Senate and House conferees on the First Amendment did not agree and so finessed rather than clarified the major issues." --Choice