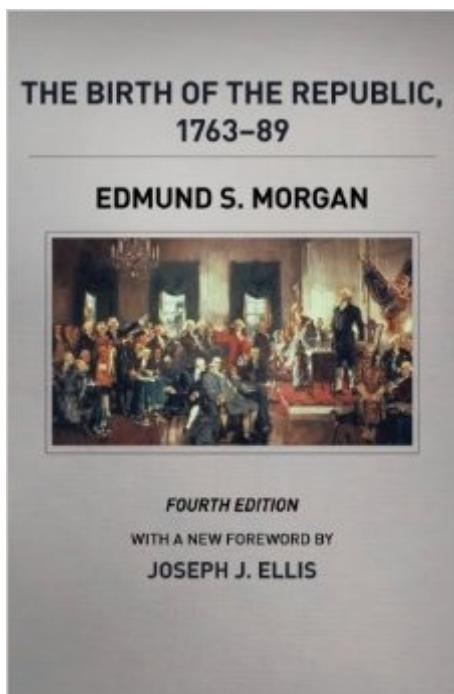


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The Birth Of The Republic, 1763-89, Fourth Edition (The Chicago History Of American Civilization)



Synopsis

In *The Birth of the Republic*, 1763-89, Edmund S. Morgan shows how the challenge of British taxation started Americans on a search for constitutional principles to protect their freedom, and eventually led to the Revolution. By demonstrating that the founding fathers' political philosophy was not grounded in theory, but rather grew out of their own immediate needs, Morgan paints a vivid portrait of how the founders' own experiences shaped their passionate convictions, and these in turn were incorporated into the Constitution and other governmental documents. The *Birth of the Republic* is the classic account of the beginnings of the American government, and in this fourth edition the original text is supplemented with a new foreword by Joseph J. Ellis and a historiographic essay by Rosemarie Zagari.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Originally published in 1956 and revised in 1977, this book is probably familiar to a couple of generations of college students. This may well be the most accessible overview of the formative history of America. As an overview, of course, it does not go into great detail about the myriad of topics debated by historians still today, but it does hit most of the predominant features of the Revolutionary story. Morgan builds his work around the premise that the Founding Fathers did indeed operate on principle in building a new nation and that the struggle eventually framed itself as a pursuit of equality among all men. He admits that many of the decisions made by the leaders of the Revolution did equate to economic or property gains for themselves, but he argues that this is

not contradictory at all with a commitment to liberty because liberty in the 18th century essentially hinged on land ownership. He also rationalizes the contradiction of slavery's continued existence being incorporated into the Constitution by arguing that the convention delegates acted out of urgent concern for the future of a government in its death throes at the hands of a powerless Congress as set up by the Articles of Confederation--without such compromise, the important new Constitution could not have been ratified by a sufficient number of states before the young nation collapsed at the feet of the British and Spanish. Morgan first examines the increasingly rocky relationship between the English Parliament and the colonies--specifically, the debate over taxation and infringement of liberties that led up to the declaration of independence. He devotes a few pages to the war but does not delve very deeply into military matters.

Morgan's book, *The Birth of the Republic*, is a well-written book of a very interesting time in American History. His book uses great detail to describe this unrevealed part of history. Morgan does not just describe what was going on in these times but he tells why these events occurred. We get not only the story, but also the meaning behind the story. Through the use of Morgan's words and my own imagination I now have the understanding of why "Revolution" occurred. Morgan's book taught us about the times of the revolutionary period in American history. Morgan discussed the taxation and legislation from Parliament and the Americans' loyalty to them. Morgan's book shows the challenge of British taxation and why the Americans fought to protect their freedom. He discussed the constitution and to what degree it controlled and helped heal the American society. The book illustrated a division of Americans, turning against each other and becoming an unconstrained nation to fight for the rights of individuals. I enjoyed Morgan's book because he described the thought and reasoning of the Americans better than I had ever perceived. He used thought rather than facts to discuss the why of the revolutionary period. He supported his why with the reality of what had occurred. Morgan used great judgment in concluding what this period of American history represented. He used clearly cut issues to put meaning behind the acts of the people of this time. Morgan only had a few flaws in my opinion. He reflected back too much on some of the past experiences. He used too many references that related to what was happening. Morgan also tended to repeat himself in making many points. All of this was not necessary in order to get his point across.

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