



The Declaration of Independence and Other Great Documents of American History 1775-1865

John Grafton (Editor) , Thomas Jefferson , James Madison , George Washington , Abraham Lincoln

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The great documents in this important collection helped form the foundation of American democratic government. Compelling, influential, and often inspirational, they range from Patrick Henry's dramatic "Give me liberty or give me death" speech at the start of the American Revolution to Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, issued in the closing weeks of the Civil War. Also included are the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson's classic rationale for rejecting allegiance to the government of King George III; the Monroe Doctrine, the cornerstone of American foreign policy; and these other landmark statements:

The Constitution of the United States

James Madison: *The Federalist*, No. 10

George Washington: First Inaugural Address

George Washington: Farewell Address

Thomas Jefferson: First Inaugural Address

William Lloyd Garrison: Prospectus for *The Liberator*

Andrew Jackson: Veto of the Bank Bill

Abraham Lincoln: First Inaugural Address

Abraham Lincoln: Emancipation Proclamation

Abraham Lincoln: Gettysburg Address

An introductory note precedes the text of each document, providing fascinating background history and information about the author. An indispensable reference for students, this handy compendium will also serve as an invaluable introduction for general readers to American political writing.

The Declaration of Independence and Other Great Documents of American History 1775-1865 Details

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From Reader Review The Declaration of Independence and Other Great Documents of American History 1775-1865 for online ebook

Jeff Dawson says

Excellent refresher from the most influential men of the 18th and 19th Century: Washington, Madison, Jefferson, Lincoln and others. This short work is one I will go back to, to refresh my memory and attempt to understand what they were saying. Why? The English back then is not what it is today. It is much more flowery and flowing. Getting to the point wasn't the name of the game back then. I kept trying to condense their words in an attempt to get the meat of the issue. It was a futile effort. You have to immerse yourself into the time frame and let the words soak in.

Five Stars

Catherine says

The rating is more for this edition than for the actual texts, since I would not presume to give the foundational documents of a country a starred review. The editors of this book have provided a good amount of context for each of the documents presented here, which made it easier for me, as someone with only general knowledge of American history, to grasp the significance of their meaning.

Red says

Friends who've caught me reading this have cocked their heads to the side and posed "Why?" or just declared "That's strange." So, to explain: reason 1, Dover Thrift editions of books are a great way to pad out those last few dollars to make an Amazon order have free shipping. Reason 2, the reason I chose this one and not *Enchiridion* or *Candide* (tho I'll get there), is that the only time I read these formative American documents was when I was younger and didn't know entirely what to do with them. These were written by adults for adults, after all, and it would probably be useful for me to revisit them. Or at least interesting.

You should definitely re-read the Declaration, it kinda changed the world and was one of the great examples of people setting out on a quest to create a government for themselves rather than have one imposed on them.

Read the Constitution - specifically Art. I, Secs. 8-10, plus the amendments. The former bit lays out Congressional powers, and for perspective there's very little talk of Executive powers elsewhere here because that wasn't a thing until way later on. The latter because the editor, Mr. Grafton, has kindly laid out the dates each amendment was added, giving the reader a rather bracing launch into the future to see what modifications happened when and how they differ in tone and intent from the original work.

Read Jackson's veto of the Bank Bill, and feel weird post-2008 crash feels.

The rest is a mixed, if important, bag. Not that the selection was poor, but the meaning is so inextricably wound up in their time period it's hard to find parallels with it sitting in 2015. With the Declaration, you see

outlined how far America had to be pushed before it snapped. With the Constitution, you get the body of law we are still wrangling with to this day. But Washington's farewell address is about...sectionalism, a now outmoded flavor of the idea of regional interests over national ones, that ultimately led to the Civil War. And while the divide of states versus their nation is still alive and well, it isn't in the way he talks about it, which is done via a ponderous, rambling, uptight writing style that bores to the point of inducing feelings of homicide.

Lincoln's first inaugural address is basically "Hey, let's not Civil War why don't we?" The Monroe Doctrine is "America does her own thing, yo." Jefferson is "Wheeeeeee I'm finally president but uhh don't worry we're all in this together, America the beautiful, woot woot." There's just not enough meat to chew on, which isn't to say that there's none. Washington's belief that a nation must be "moral," and that that morality must come from religion, is a fascinating facet to his character, especially since he's the founding father remembered more for his military victories and his icon status than what it is he actually felt and wanted politically. Madison's piece for the Federalist seems to suggest that factional party politics and infighting is a necessary and inevitable path to consensus, that rights itself given time and communication. And Lincoln's use of the expression "the last full measure" still saddens and haunts.

Some of the best bits are from Mr. Grafton, who prefaces each bit with a briefer on historical context, a lubricant to ease the expanse of years separating us from these words. Did you know the original Declaration had an indictment of slavery that was ultimately removed? Or that William Lloyd Garrison, who was basically one of America's first great social justice warriors (he called slave ship owners "murderers"! That was huuuuuge back then!), not only railed tirelessly on behalf of the anti-slavery movement, but also for women's rights, the humane treatment of animals, and temperance? I want an American history book just full of all these important little tidbits that had to be skimmed over in public school.

Neat book, and un-rate-able because I'm not gonna fucking rate America, if you actually think you'll read it then it makes a nice little addition to your Amazon cart and your life. But you can also get all of it for free on the internet, it's just that you're less likely to read it than if you have a copy lying around on your shelf.

Matthew says

This book should be required reading for every citizen, every voter, and, while unlikely, every human being (LOL). Fascinating and significant, these documents brought me to great reverence for both our founding fathers and their beautiful, audacious optimism at establishing a radical, unheard of experiment that became America.

The Monroe Doctrine in particular moved me deeply: contrasting America's Cold War record in Latin America with Monroe's insistence that we would defend the Americas against future European colonialism. How I feel our nation strayed from that noble document, and how hopeful I am that we tread more carefully in the future.

John Yelverton says

This is a wonderful book that looks at not only the founding document of the United States of America, but other great works that contributed to the shaping of the country.

Abraham Ray says

nice book about early american governmental documents!

JOSEPH C MCADAMS says**Excellent a great book**

Excellent a great book for experiencing some of our greatest guiding doctoring that has guided our great country from it's start.

Mike says

What can I say, it is required reading for anyone interested in The United States. The book is 96 pages long, but to get the most of it you will have to study it. Be prepared to read things several times.

Elizabeth says

Can be read in 2 - 10 minutes. One of the simplest most inspiring and important documents I've ever read.

Karrie Bunting says

Everyone should have a copy of this book, AND READ IT. Interesting stuff, this is. No opinions (unless you count Washington and Lincoln's famous speeches as opinions). Just documents. Madison, Henry, Lincoln, Washington, The Constitution, etc.

Abby says

Josh, Tessa, and I read the Declaration of Independence, The Emancipation Proclamation, and the Gettysburg Address tonight. This book gives a synopsis of the history proceeding the drafting of the documents. This was good to read to Tessa, a good overview of our Nation's time in history. We love the writing of the Declaration of Independence. It seems like some of the things mentioned in the document, we still have strife about, like emigration reform. Josh found it interesting that all the people here were being abused by the government at the time, even the British soldiers that had come here to govern. They did not have a say either. There was no good means of communication. The country needed support right away and was not getting it. Josh stated that when we give our oaths now, we do not give the oath to one person like the president. We give the oath to the people. We serve the people and the ideal.

When we read the Emancipation Proclamation, we noted that slavery is discussed in the Declaration of Independence but then is not abolished until nearly 100 years later. Josh noted that Lincoln must have felt pretty confident that the North would win the war since he freed the Southern slaves when the fighting was still taking place. I find the manner of the passing of the thirteenth amendment fascinating. All the discussions back and forth between the senators and the negotiations are intriguing to me.

We found the explanation about the Gettysburg address very interesting. Lincoln was dedicating the burial ground along with Edward Everett, former president of Harvard. Everett was a well known orator of the day and he spoke for two hours. Then the president got up and gave his very pointed three paragraph speech. No one remembers Everett's speech, but we all know what proceeds when we hear, "Four score and seven years ago..." The power and magnitude of succinct speech.

Louis W says

Great book. Hope it stays in print for the next four years.

Lindstromsteph says

Each document or speech is well described before reading it. Reading the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, each Amendment makes me more thankful for our country. No other society has risen up against a monarchy and established such a remarkable form of government.
This book should be required reading for each American - especially our elected officials from local towns through our current Federal government.

Nancy says

It was interesting to read several of these documents. We get taught about them when we are too young to even understand their importance. How many of us think the Emancipation Proclamation freed all the slaves? I certainly did. But it did not do that. It only freed people from the states and counties in open rebellion against the government. It was the actual amendment, two years later, that freed all slaves. I have also heard the Monroe Doctrine thrown around in modern politics and they are mis-representing what it actually says to the American public. Overall, it was a good refresher and makes you mindful of our duty to be part of the process of government. Something that was taken far more seriously for the public good 200 years ago.

Victor Orozco says

Proud to have read this little book.

Nice collection of documents that have become more than just a passing fancy for those who read them, especially if you are an American. The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution with the Bill of Rights and all the Amendments as well as some of the great speeches of the earliest Presidents from Washington,

Jefferson and Madison. I got to admit it feels a little out of place adding The Liberator announcement, but followed with the Emancipation Proclamation and Lincoln's speeches are truly wonderful.

I love American History and truly hold pride for the country's institutions. Good thing to read around the Presidential Election. Slightly a dry read at times but important to have read.

C+
