

# The *A*merican Republic

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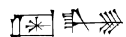
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# THE *American Republic*

PRIMARY SOURCES

Edited by Bruce Frohnen



Liberty Fund

INDIANAPOLIS

This book is published by Liberty Fund, Inc., a foundation established to encourage study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals.



The cuneiform inscription that serves as our logo and as the design motif for our endpapers is the earliest-known written appearance of the word “freedom” (*amagi*), or “liberty.” It is taken from a clay document written about 2300 B.C. in the Sumerian city-state of Lagash.

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Printed in the United States of America

C 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

P 10 9 8 7 6 5

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The American Republic: primary sources/edited  
by Bruce Frohnen.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-86597-332-6 (alk. paper)—ISBN 0-86597-333-4 (pbk.:  
alk. paper)

1. United States—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600–  
1775—Sources. 2. United States—History—Revolution,  
1775–1783—Sources. 3. United States—History—1783–  
1865—Sources. I. Frohnen, Bruce.

EI73.A7535 2002

973—dc21

2001038925

Liberty Fund, Inc.

8335 Allison Pointe Trail, Suite 300

Indianapolis, Indiana 46250-1684

# Contents

Alphabetical Table of Contents	<i>xi</i>
Alphabetical List of Authors	<i>xiii</i>
List of Illustrations	<i>xv</i>
Introduction	<i>xvii</i>
Note on the Texts	<i>xxi</i>

## I Colonial Settlements and Societies

Virginia Articles, Laws, and Orders, 1610–11	4
The Mayflower Compact, 1620	11
Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, 1639	12
The Massachusetts Body of Liberties, 1641	15
Charter of Liberties and Frame of Government of the Province of Pennsylvania in America, 1682	23
Dorchester Agreement, 1633	31
Maryland Act for Swearing Allegiance, 1638; Plymouth Oath of Allegiance and Fidelity, 1625	32
“Little Speech on Liberty,” JOHN WINTHROP, 1645	34
“Copy of a Letter from Mr. Cotton to Lord Say and Seal,” JOHN COTTON, 1636	36

## 2 Religious Society and Religious Liberty in Early America

“The Bloody Tenent, of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience,” ROGER WILLIAMS, 1644	42
“A Platform of Church Discipline,” JOHN COTTON, RICHARD MATHER, and RALPH PARTRIDGE, 1649	48
Providence Agreement, 1637; Maryland Act for Church Liberties, 1638; Pennsylvania Act for Freedom of Conscience, 1682	64
<i>Worcestriensis</i> , 1776	66
“Thanksgiving Proclamation” and Letters to Religious Associations, GEORGE WASHINGTON; 1789, 1790	69

“Farewell Address,” GEORGE WASHINGTON, 1796	72
“The Rights of Conscience Inalienable,” JOHN LELAND, 1791	79
“Letter to the Danbury Baptist Association,” THOMAS JEFFERSON, 1802	88

## 3 Defending the Charters

Magna Charta, 1215	92
Petition of Right, 1628	98
“An Account of the Late Revolution in New England” and “Boston Declaration of Grievances,” NATHANAEL BYFIELD, 1689	101
The English Bill of Rights, 1689	106
The Stamp Act, 1765	110
“Braintree Instructions,” JOHN ADAMS, 1765	115
Resolutions of the Virginia House of Burgesses, 1765; Declarations of the Stamp Act Congress, 1765	117
“The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved,” JAMES OTIS, 1763	119
The Act Repealing the Stamp Act, 1766; The Declaratory Act, 1766	135

## 4 The War for Independence

“A Discourse at the Dedication of the Tree of Liberty,” “A SON OF LIBERTY” [SILAS DOWNER], 1768	140
“Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania,” Letters V and IX, JOHN DICKINSON, 1767–68	146
Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress, 1774	154
Virginia Bill of Rights, 1776	157
“On Civil Liberty, Passive Obedience, and Non-resistance,” JONATHAN BOUCHER, 1775	159
<i>Common Sense</i> , THOMAS PAINE, 1776	179
The Declaration of Independence, 1776	189

## 5 A New Constitution

- “Thoughts on Government,” JOHN ADAMS, 1776 196  
Articles of Confederation, 1778 200  
The Essex Result, 1778 205  
Northwest Ordinance, 1787 225  
Albany Plan of Union, 1754 229  
Virginia and New Jersey Plans, 1787 231  
The Constitution of the United States of America,  
1787 234  
*The Federalist*, Papers 1, 9, 10, 39, 47–51, 78; ALEXANDER  
HAMILTON, JAMES MADISON, and JOHN JAY;  
1787 241  
“Address of the Minority of the Pennsylvania  
Convention,” 1787 268  
“An Examination of the Leading Principles of the Federal  
Constitution,” NOAH WEBSTER, 1787 281

## 6 The Bill of Rights

- The Federalist*, Papers 84 and 85; ALEXANDER  
HAMILTON, JAMES MADISON, and JOHN JAY;  
1787 300  
“Letter I,” “CENTINEL,” 1787 309  
“Essay I,” “BRUTUS,” 1787 314  
“Letter III,” “THE FEDERAL FARMER,” 1787 320  
“Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious  
Assessments,” JAMES MADISON, 1785; “Virginia Bill  
for Establishing Religious Freedom,” THOMAS  
JEFFERSON, 1786 327  
“Speech Introducing Proposed Constitutional  
Amendments,” JAMES MADISON, 1789; Debate over  
First Amendment Language, 1789; The First Ten  
Amendments to the Constitution, or the Bill of  
Rights, 1789 332  
*Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States*,  
JOSEPH STORY, 1833 351  
*The People v. Ruggles*, JAMES KENT, 1811 363  
*Marbury v. Madison*, JOHN MARSHALL, 1803 366  
*Barron v. the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore*, JOHN  
MARSHALL, 1833 375

## 7 State versus Federal Authority

- “Essay V,” “BRUTUS,” 1787 382  
*Chisholm v. Georgia*, JAMES WILSON, 1793; U.S.  
Constitution, Eleventh Amendment, 1787 386  
The Alien and Sedition Acts, 1798; Virginia Resolutions,  
1798; Kentucky Resolutions, 1798; Counter-resolutions  
of Other States, 1799; Report of Virginia House of  
Delegates, 1799 396  
“The Duty of Americans, at the Present Crisis,”  
TIMOTHY DWIGHT, 1798 433  
Report of the Hartford Convention, 1815 447  
JOSEPH STORY: *Commentaries on the Constitution of  
the United States*, 1833; *A Familiar Exposition of the  
Constitution of the United States*, 1840 458

## 8 Forging a Nation

- “Opinion against the Constitutionality of a National  
Bank,” THOMAS JEFFERSON, 1791; “Opinion as to  
the Constitutionality of the Bank of the United  
States,” ALEXANDER HAMILTON, 1791 474  
“Veto Message,” ANDREW JACKSON, 1832 491  
“Veto Message,” JAMES MADISON, 1817 501  
*Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States*,  
JOSEPH STORY, 1833 503  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN: “Address to the Young Men’s  
Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois,” 1838; “Address to the  
Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Milwaukee,  
Wisconsin,” 1859 518  
WILLIAM LEGGETT: Newspaper Editorials on “Direct  
Taxation,” 1834; “Chief Justice Marshall,” 1835;  
“The Despotism of the Majority,” 1837; “Morals  
of Legislation,” 1837; and “The Morals of Politics,”  
1837 528  
“Speech on Electioneering,” DAVY CROCKETT, 1848  
536  
“Speech before the U.S. Senate,” DANIEL WEBSTER,  
1830; “Speech before the U.S. Senate,” ROBERT Y.  
HAYNE, 1830 538  
“Fort Hill Address,” JOHN C. CALHOUN, 1831 565

## 9 Prelude to War

Laws Regulating Servants and Slaves, 1630–1852 582

“Slavery” and “Agriculture and the Militia,” JOHN  
TAYLOR OF CAROLINE, 1818 589

The Missouri Compromise, 1820–21 594

WILLIAM LEGGETT: Newspaper Editorials on  
“Governor McDuffie’s Message,” 1835; “The  
Question of Slavery Narrowed to a Point,” 1837;  
and “Abolition Insolence,” 1837 595

Senate Speeches on the Compromise of 1850, JOHN C.  
CALHOUN and DANIEL WEBSTER, 1850 600

Second Fugitive Slave Law, 1850; *Ableman v. Booth*,  
ROGER TANEY, 1858 633

*Scott v. Sandford*, ROGER TANEY, 1856 646

“The Relative Position and Treatment of the Negroes”  
and “The Abolitionists—Consistency of Their  
Labors,” GEORGE S. SAWYER, 1858 665

“What Is Slavery?” and “Slavery Is Despotism,” HARRIET  
BEECHER STOWE, 1853 690

Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1856; Fifth Lincoln-Douglas  
Debate, 1858 702

Bibliography 723

Index 725

# Alphabetical Table of Contents

- Ableman v. Booth*, ROGER TANEY 636  
“Abolition Insolence,” WILLIAM LEGGETT 598  
“Abolitionists—Consistency of Their Labors, The,”  
GEORGE S. SAWYER 680  
“Account of the Late Revolution in New England, An,”  
NATHANAEL BYFIELD 101  
Act Repealing the Stamp Act, The 135  
“Address of the Minority of the Pennsylvania  
Convention” 268  
“Address to the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin,” ABRAHAM LINCOLN 522  
“Address to the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield,  
Illinois,” ABRAHAM LINCOLN 518  
“Agriculture and the Militia,” JOHN TAYLOR OF  
CAROLINE 592  
Alabama Slave Code 584  
Albany Plan of Union 229  
Alien and Sedition Acts, The 396  
Articles of Confederation 200  
*Barron v. Baltimore*, JOHN MARSHALL 375  
“Bloody Tenent, of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience,  
The,” ROGER WILLIAMS 42  
“Boston Declaration of Grievances” 102  
“Braintree Instructions,” JOHN ADAMS 115  
Charter of Liberties and Frame of Government of the  
Province of Pennsylvania in America 23  
“Chief Justice Marshall,” WILLIAM LEGGETT 530  
*Chisholm v. Georgia*, JAMES WILSON 386  
*Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States*,  
JOSEPH STORY 351, 458, 503  
*Common Sense*, THOMAS PAINE 179  
Connecticut Law Regarding Escape of Negroes and  
Servants 583  
“Constitution and the Union, The,” DANIEL WEBSTER  
613  
Constitution of the United States of America, The 234  
“Copy of a Letter from Mr. Cotton to Lord Say and  
Seal,” JOHN COTTON 36  
Debate over First Amendment Language 348  
Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental  
Congress 154  
Declaration of Independence, The 189  
Declarations of the Stamp Act Congress 117  
Declaratory Act, The 135  
“Despotism of the Majority, The,” WILLIAM  
LEGGETT 530  
“Direct Taxation,” WILLIAM LEGGETT 528  
“Discourse at the Dedication of the Tree of Liberty,  
A,” “A SON OF LIBERTY” [SILAS DOWNER] 140  
Dorchester Agreement 31  
“Duty of Americans, at the Present Crisis, The,”  
TIMOTHY DWIGHT 433  
English Bill of Rights, The 106  
“Essay I,” “BRUTUS” 314  
“Essay V,” “BRUTUS” 382  
Essex Result, The 205  
“Examination of the Leading Principles of the Federal  
Constitution, An,” NOAH WEBSTER 281  
*Familiar Exposition of the Constitution of the United  
States, A*, JOSEPH STORY 461  
“Farewell Address,” GEORGE WASHINGTON 72  
*Federalist, The*, Papers 1, 9, 10, 39, 47–51, 78;  
ALEXANDER HAMILTON, JAMES MADISON,  
JOHN JAY 241  
*Federalist, The*, Papers 84–85; ALEXANDER HAMILTON,  
JAMES MADISON, JOHN JAY 300  
Fifth Lincoln-Douglas Debate, 1858 702  
First Fugitive Slave Law, 1852 583  
First Ten Amendments to the Constitution, The 349  
“Fort Hill Address,” JOHN C. CALHOUN 565  
Fundamental Orders of Connecticut 12  
“Governor McDuffie’s Message,” WILLIAM  
LEGGETT 595  
Kansas-Nebraska Act 702  
Kentucky Resolutions 399  
“Letter I,” “CENTINEL” 309  
“Letter III,” “THE FEDERAL FARMER” 320  
“Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania,” Letters V and  
IX, JOHN DICKINSON 146  
“Letter to the Danbury Baptist Association,” THOMAS  
JEFFERSON 88



- “Letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport,”  
GEORGE WASHINGTON 71
- “Letter to the Roman Catholics in the United States of  
America,” GEORGE WASHINGTON 70
- “Letter to the United Baptist Churches in Virginia,”  
GEORGE WASHINGTON 70
- “Little Speech on Liberty,” JOHN WINTHROP 34
- Magna Charta 92
- Marbury v. Madison*, JOHN MARSHALL 366
- Maryland Act for Church Liberties 64
- Maryland Act for Swearing Allegiance 32
- Maryland Law Deeming Runaway Apprentices to  
Be Felons 582
- Maryland Resolutions Protesting against Pennsylvanians  
584
- Massachusetts Body of Liberties, The 15
- Massachusetts Law on Capture and Protection of  
Servants 582
- Mayflower Compact, The 11
- “Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious  
Assessments,” JAMES MADISON 327
- Missouri Compromise, The 594
- “Morals of Legislation,” WILLIAM LEGGETT 532
- “Morals of Politics, The,” WILLIAM LEGGETT 533
- New Jersey Plan 232
- North Carolina Law against Entertaining Runaways 583
- Northwest Ordinance 225
- “On Civil Liberty, Passive Obedience, and  
Non-resistance,” JONATHAN BOUCHER 159
- “Opinion against the Constitutionality of a National  
Bank,” THOMAS JEFFERSON 474
- “Opinion as to the Constitutionality of the Bank of the  
United States,” ALEXANDER HAMILTON 477
- Pennsylvania Act for Freedom of Conscience 64
- People v. Ruggles, The*, JAMES KENT 363
- Petition of Right 98
- “Platform of Church Discipline, A” 48
- Plymouth Oath of Allegiance and Fidelity 33
- Providence Agreement 64
- “Question of Slavery Narrowed to a Point, The,”  
WILLIAM LEGGETT 596
- “Relative Position and Treatment of the Negroes, The,”  
GEORGE S. SAWYER 665
- Report of the Hartford Convention 447
- Report of Virginia House of Delegates 408
- Resolutions of the Virginia House of Burgesses 117
- Responses to the Virginia Resolutions, Kentucky, 1798;  
All Others, 1799 402
- “Rights of Conscience Inalienable, The,” JOHN  
LELAND 79
- “Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved,  
The,” JAMES OTIS 119
- Scott v. Sandford*, ROGER TANEY 646
- Second Fugitive Slave Law, 1850 633
- Sedition Act 397
- Senate Speeches on the Compromise of 1850, JOHN C.  
CALHOUN and DANIEL WEBSTER 600
- “Slavery,” JOHN TAYLOR OF CAROLINE 589
- “Slavery Is Despotism,” HARRIET BEECHER  
STOWE 698
- “Speech before the U.S. Senate,” DANIEL WEBSTER 538
- “Speech before the U.S. Senate,” ROBERT Y. HAYNE 548
- “Speech Introducing Proposed Constitutional  
Amendments,” JAMES MADISON 332
- “Speech on Electioneering,” DAVY CROCKETT 536
- “Speech on the Slavery Question,” JOHN C. CALHOUN  
600
- Stamp Act, The 110
- “Thanksgiving Proclamation,” GEORGE  
WASHINGTON 69
- “Thoughts on Government,” JOHN ADAMS 196
- U.S. Constitution, Eleventh Amendment 395
- “Veto Message,” ANDREW JACKSON 491
- “Veto Message,” JAMES MADISON 501
- Virginia and New Jersey Plans 231, 232
- Virginia Articles, Laws, and Orders 4
- “Virginia Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom,”  
THOMAS JEFFERSON 330
- Virginia Bill of Rights 157
- Virginia Plan 231
- Virginia Resolutions 398
- “What Is Slavery?” HARRIET BEECHER STOWE 690
- Worcestriensis*, Number IV 66

# Alphabetical List of Authors

Adams, John  
Boucher, Jonathan  
“Brutus” [Robert Yates?]  
Bryan, Robert  
Byfield, Nathanael  
Calhoun, John C.  
“Centinel” [Samuel Bryan?]  
Cotton, John  
Crockett, Davy  
Dickinson, John  
Dwight, Timothy  
“Federal Farmer, The” [Melancton Smith]  
Hamilton, Alexander  
Hayne, Robert Y.  
Jackson, Andrew  
Jay, John  
Jefferson, Thomas  
Kent, James  
Leggett, William  
Leland, John  
Lincoln, Abraham  
Madison, James  
Marshall, John  
Mather, Richard  
Otis, James  
Paine, Thomas  
Partridge, Ralph  
Sawyer, George S.  
“Son of Liberty, A” [Silas Downer]  
Story, Joseph  
Stowe, Harriet Beecher  
Taney, Roger  
Taylor, John, of Caroline  
Washington, George  
Webster, Daniel  
Webster, Noah  
Williams, John  
Williams, Roger  
Wilson, James  
Winthrop, John

# Illustrations

- Title page of Colonial Constitution of Pennsylvania 2
- Portrait of George Washington by John Trumbull 40
- Portrait of John Adams, colonial leader and second president of the United States 90
- The original Declaration of Independence 138
- Fourth U.S. president and *Federalist* author, James Madison, by Gilbert Stuart 194
- John Jay, first chief justice and *Federalist* author; head-and-shoulders engraving by Hall 194
- Painting of Alexander Hamilton, American statesman and *Federalist* author 194
- Engraving of Joseph Story by J. Cheney, from a crayon drawing by W. W. Story 298
- The Issue of Sovereignty; lithograph by O. E. Woods 380
- Daniel Webster, senator from Massachusetts 472
- Robert Y. Hayne, senator from South Carolina 472
- Election poster for Andrew Jackson's presidential campaign 472
- Engraving of Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth president of the United States 580

# Introduction

In the latter decades of the twentieth century scholars working in various subfields of American history brought a great deal of formerly neglected material to light. This material concerns issues ranging from the role of religious arguments and leaders in public life, to the breadth of historical understanding characterizing public debate, to the specifically British memories and sensibilities of Americans, to the importance of early constitutional documents and Americans' constitutional sophistication. In each of these areas the new material has made it possible for scholars to reexamine and reevaluate existing theories regarding the development of American politics. These new discoveries have opened vast new areas for fruitful research concerning the influences and concerns motivating those who have helped shape the character of American politics and the American people. Unfortunately, very little of this material is available in a form suitable for classroom use. This has left teachers to seek out half-measures—summarizing on their own or assigning works they know will not be read—in attempting to present American history in some-thing approaching its true diversity and depth.

Collections by Belz; Hall, Leder, and Kammen; Hyneman and Lutz; Lutz; McDonald; Morgan; Sandoz; and White,<sup>1</sup> among others; have allowed scholars increased access to constitutional documents, declarations, sermons, and other public writings showing the factors that shaped public life in America, both before and after the War for Independence. Without diminishing the role accorded specifically ideological concerns and philosophical writings, these new materials have helped scholars better evaluate the sources and meanings of public acts ranging from co-

lonial settlement to the War for Independence, to the Constitution, and to the Civil War.

No single course, whether in high school, college, or even graduate school, could deal adequately with all the important materials unearthed in recent decades. However, by bringing together, in one manageable volume, key original documents and other writings that throw light on the cultural, religious, and historical concerns that have been raised, this volume aims to provide the means by which students and teachers may begin examining the diversity of issues and influences that characterize American history.

We now have access to crucial materials attesting to the importance of the context in which Americans spoke of practices such as liberty and religious freedom. A hitherto neglected literature now can enable scholars and students to discuss the American drive for liberty, not merely as a political concept, but as a religious idea, a historical practice, and a constitutional concern to be guaranteed and given substance through both national institutions and local customs.

The readings selected here represent opposite sides of important debates concerning, for example, American independence, religious establishment, and slavery. Conclusions regarding America's nature and development as a nation and as a people will vary, not least because American history is one of religious, ideological, and cultural conflict. Such conflicts have pitted the drive for community against the drive for individual autonomy, the call of God against the call of a wild nature to be confronted in near isolation, the desire for wealth against the desire to be held virtuous, and the demand for equality against respect for established authority. But exposure to the principal public acts and arguments engaged in these conflicts will provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of their nature and sources—and of their influence on American history.

America's history has been characterized by both continuity and change. Even before the Civil War, at which point this volume leaves off, American traditions, with their roots deep in the histories of Great Britain, Rome, Greece,

1. Belz, *The Webster-Hayne Debate on the Nature of the Union*; Hall, Leder, and Kammen, *The Glorious Revolution in America*; Hyneman and Lutz, *American Political Writing during the Founding Era: 1760–1805*; Lutz, *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*; McDonald, *Empire and Nation*; Edmund Sears Morgan, ed., *Prologue to Revolution: Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis, 1764–1766* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959); Sandoz, *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era: 1730–1805*; and White, *Democratick Editorials*.

and Israel, had been markedly transformed by changes in circumstances and public understanding.<sup>2</sup> But even traditions that have been transformed or weakened over time continue to influence public conduct, and with it the shape of both nations and peoples. By presenting readings from the perspectives of America's varied traditions, this volume seeks to help students learn how they might judge the strengths and weaknesses of the conflicting visions that have shaped American history.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK

This work is in nine sections, each composed of selections of public writings intended to illustrate the major philosophical, cultural, and policy positions at issue during crucial eras of American political and cultural development.

The first section, "Colonial Settlements and Societies," will provide documentary evidence of the purposes behind European settlement and the nature of settlements in practice. The second section, "Religious Society and Religious Liberty in Early America," will provide materials showing the pervasive public role of religion in early American public life as well as arguments concerning the importance of religious conscience and the limits that conscience should place on government support for religious orthodoxy. The third section, "Defending the Charters," will provide materials showing the American response to English acts—ranging from James II's revocation of colonial charters during the 1680s to parliamentary taxation during the 1750s—which Americans interpreted as attacks on their chartered, English liberties. The fourth section, "The War for Independence," will provide materials from all perspectives in the debate over independence—those centered on the chartered rights of Englishmen, those focusing on universal human rights, and those emphasizing loyalty and duty to Great Britain. The fifth section, "A New Constitution," will provide materials showing the roots of American constitutionalism in earlier English and colonial codes and charters, as well as the Articles of Confederation. In addition, it will provide important selections dealing with various "plans" or proposed constitutions, debates in the Constitutional Convention, and subsequent debates over ratification. The sixth section, "The Bill of Rights," will include Federalist and Anti-Federalist arguments concerning

the need to protect common law rights as well as the Anti-Federalist insistence that structural changes were needed in the proposed Constitution. The seventh section, "State versus Federal Authority," will present materials from both sides of issues related to the question of whether the states or the federal government held final authority in determining the course of public policy in America. The eighth section, "Forging a Nation," will provide materials regarding the debate over internal improvements and other federal measures aimed at binding the nation more closely together, particularly in the area of commerce. The final section, "Prelude to War," will focus on the political, cultural, and legal issues underlying the sectional differences that led to the Civil War. Debates concerning the morality and necessity of slavery, as well as attempts to secure political compromise regarding the status of "the peculiar institution," will be highlighted; their character and relative importance will be further illuminated by selections focusing on the relative power and position of various regions within the United States.

The volume ends with the prelude to the Civil War, stopping at that point for three interconnected reasons: (1) the need to produce a volume that does not reach an ungainly length, (2) the prevalence of courses on American history that split that history into the pre-Civil War era and the era commencing with the Civil War, and (3) recognition of the revolutionary changes wrought by the Civil War, making that event the natural stopping point for courses and this volume.

The placement of specific selections within this volume is intended to answer two pedagogical needs: that of chronological consistency and that of issue focus, so that students may see particular topics of importance in sufficient depth to give them serious examination. Consequently, while the sections into which the volume is divided generally follow a chronological order, materials within them at times overlap. For example, most writings presenting the Anti-Federalist critique of the Constitution are found in the section on the Bill of Rights rather than that on the Constitution. This has been done because the strongest Anti-Federalist arguments took the form of calls for revisions to the Constitution—revisions taken up under the rubric of amendments intended to protect the rights of the people. Not all Anti-Federalist concerns were addressed by the first Congress as it considered these

2. The classic work dealing with America's cultural inheritance is Russell Kirk, *The Roots of American Order* (Washington, 1991).

amendments. A key question in American history, however, concerns whether Anti-Federalist fears were addressed at all in that Congress or by those amendments we now call the Bill of Rights. Lincoln's relatively late "Address to the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society" also might be seen as coming at an "unchronological" place in the volume—in this case in the section on "Forging a Nation," before that on the "Prelude to War." Again, the reasoning is thematic. In this address Lincoln lays out his vision of America and the cultural as well as the economic promise of industrialization. Such issues are closely tied to debates over internal improvements and other concerns

separating American regions. These concerns helped polarize the nation, but only after the slavery issue came to the forefront and exacerbated regional polarizations did they help to precipitate the Civil War.

Thanks are owed to the members of this volume's advisory board. I also thank James McClellan for important suggestions during the early development of this volume and Donald Livingston, Clyde Wilson, and Robert Waters for helpful suggestions. Any mistakes in judgment, selection, or performance are mine alone. Finally, I owe a special debt of gratitude to my wife, Antonia, for her patience and support.

## Note on the Texts

The editor has sought to make only a bare minimum of changes to the texts included in this volume, so as to convey the flavor as well as content of the writings. Changes are limited to the following: The use of asterisks to mark deleted text has been replaced with the use of ellipses. Asterisks inserted without clear meaning or intent have been deleted, as have marginalia, extraneous quotation marks, and page numbers from previous editions that had been inserted in various texts. The letters “f” and “s” have been properly distinguished. Some of the longer titles have been shortened in accordance with modern usage. Headings in which the original text used anachronistic fonts or, for example, all capital letters, have been modernized and standardized.

The work of preceding editors in modernizing punctuation and spelling has not been tampered with. The editors of these previous volumes all expressed a desire to maintain strict fidelity to the original text and thereby incorporated only such minor modernizations in spelling, grammar, and punctuation as were absolutely necessary to promote read-

ability and consistency. Those readers seeking specifics on such issues may find them in the relevant source volumes in the bibliography.

The principal issue of concern to the lay reader will be the inclusion of material in brackets. Such brackets denote material filled in by the editor, material questionable as to its true authorship, or in some instances text missing from the original.

Only those footnotes deemed necessary for understanding of the text have been reproduced here. However, in some instances (e.g., selections from Dickinson, Boucher, Noah Webster, and Story) footnotes are integral to the text, and in others explanatory notes are necessary. Footnotes of earlier editors are marked “Ed.” and those few footnotes added by the current editor are marked “B. F.”

In reproducing the fifth Lincoln-Douglas debate it was necessary to standardize fonts and to eliminate headings and subheadings inserted by the previous editors.





# The *A*merican Republic



PART ONE Colonial Settlements and Societies

The FRAME of the  
**GOVERNMENT**  
OF THE  
*Province of Pennsylvania*  
IN  
**A M E R I C A :**  
Together with certain  
**L A W S**  
Agreed upon in England  
BY THE  
**GOVERNOUR**  
AND  
Divers **FREE - MEN** of the aforefaid  
**PROVINCE.**

To be further Explained and Confirmed there by the first  
*Provincial Council and General Assembly* that shall  
be held, if they see meet.

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Printed in the Year **MDC LXXXII.**

FAC-SIMILE OF TITLE PAGE OF PENN'S "FRAME OF GOVERNMENT, 1682."