

The Shaping of America: Foundations of American Government

Series 1-3: 1663-1819

Nearly every printed work about local and federal government in early America



Quick Facts

Examines the foundations of early American government, including its organization, legislative procedures, and abuses of power

Over 11,000 primary source documents facilitate exploration of government's role at national, state, and local levels

Encourages in-depth study of America's principles of limited government and their impact on our present democracy

Overview

A thorough examination of early America reveals the formative stages of nearly 250 years of democracy. Challenged by cycles of social conflict and war, the foundations of American democracy and government took shape during the Colonial and Early Republic periods.

The Shaping of America: Foundations of American Government documents every aspect of early American government from 1663 to 1819. More than 11,000 primary source documents—including speeches, legislative proceedings, committee reports, letters, and more—reflect a general distrust of centralized governance as the colonies transitioned from British rule to a new republic. The voices of politicians, preachers, and philosophers reveal the turbulence of public debate about government's proper function and source of power.

Comprehensive coverage of precedents and procedures

American democracy emerged in fluid stages beginning in the early seventeenth century. Over the next two hundred years, national government was intentionally structured to allow Americans a significant degree of self-governance at state and local levels. *Foundations of American Government* provides comprehensive and definitive content documenting every dimension of this journey. At the heart of the collection is coverage of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights—foundations of American democracy that continue to stir discussion and debate today. Coverage is especially strong of early compacts (including state constitutions in numerous drafts), armed conflicts from earliest times through the War of 1812, the emergence of public offices and services (for example, law enforcement, health and sanitation, city planning, and municipal leadership), and legislative assemblies of every American state and at the federal level. This collection also includes extensive content covering foreign affairs, the slave trade, treaties, and relations with indigenous peoples. One of the collection's greatest strengths is the richness of local content at the state, city, and town levels, where matters of government were debated fiercely.

Historical perspectives influence contemporary issues

Every component of American government today has its roots in the primary sources available in *Foundations of American Government*. The collection is, therefore, a must-have resource for any institution that supports debate about the American experience and why it matters: who Americans are, what they believe, how they govern themselves, and how the fascinating experiment that is American democracy continues to thrive and evolve. To facilitate use by students and faculty, the collection contains hundreds of suggested search paths; text-analysis tools; and author biographies.



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