

Joseph j. ellis.
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[History](#), [Revolution](#)



Joseph J. Ellis. *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. New York: Vintage Books, 2000. *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* is a book about the American revolutionary generation, but as Ellis puts it a more modern way so that everyone can understand. This book includes information about our founding fathers and stories that some had no idea about; it also gives you some details about the politics going on during the time period but still indicates specific people in history. Ellis has the time frame of this book from right around when America declares independence right up Hamilton dies. Joseph J. Ellis is an extremely talented author who has written several incredible books in his time. Some of those books include *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*, *Passionate Sage: The Character and Legacy of John Adam*, *School for Soldiers: West Point and the Profession of Arms*, and finally *The New England Mind in Transition*. The reason why Ellis is qualified to write such a book like this is because he went to schools like William and Mary plus Yale University. Not only did Ellis attend prestige schools but one of his books won the National Book Award in 1997. After reading Ellis's acknowledgments it was clear as to why he wanted to write this book. He wanted to be able to write a book that told everyone about the American revolutionary generation without being like everyone else who's tried it before. He said that he wanted to write a modest-sized account of a massive historical subject. Although Ellis never formally addresses the attended audience through his acknowledgments it was evident that he wanted anyone who wanted to learn more about the time period and our founding fathers to be able to read his book. Ellis organizes this book into six different chapters, but each chapter is completely different

from the previous ones. After reading the whole book the reader realizes that Ellis had put this information in reverse order. The first section discusses about the duel between Hamilton and Burr. Ellis goes into great detail about the battle; he even got both sides of the story so that the reader could decide which story they prefer. The duel was between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, it was unclear as to who took the first shot but Hamilton purposely missed his first shot but Burr shot Hamilton in the side which caused him to die later that day. Hamilton and Burr had never seen eye to eye on political issues, that's why the duel started because Hamilton said that Burr wasn't good enough for the position as Governor of New York and Burr took offense to that and asked for a duel. By Burr killing Hamilton is ruined his political reputation extremely which caused him to leave the state of New York. The next section of the book was the dinner that Thomas Jefferson held where Hamilton and Madison were trying to make a deal to save the union. Hamilton proposed during this dinner that the federal government should assume all states debts from the revolutionary war which would then strengthen the national government and making a new fiscal policy. When Hamilton used the word assume he meant the Assumption Plan which was basically instead of 13 colonies, it would be one nation and that new nation would have a new fiscal policy and would be coherent scenes of financial obligations. Before the Assumption Plan could be passes each state had to pay for war debt, the only state to struggle with this was Virginia. Madison felt that a strong national government would be going against the principles of the revolution and therefore Madison was against the Assumption Plan. Hamilton and Madison had to make a compromise and the

two decided that as long as the national capital was built on the Potomac River then Madison would go along with the Assumption Plan. Ellis then describes a section entitled the silence. The whole section is about slavery and how most everyone knew that slavery was wrong but if our new nation were to abolish slavery all it would do is tear our nation apart. Congress stayed quite on this situation until 1808 when it was clear that the civil war was about to start. Even though the North was in disgust with the institution they seemed indifferent to the plight of slaves themselves that convinced them that silence on this issue for the time being was extremely important. George Washington's farewell was the next section covered in this book. Everyone seemed to make Washington's retirement to the extreme, even though he had been giving hints that he was going to retire for a while. The main idea behind his farewell address was to give advice to the people as to what they should do since he will no longer be President. Ellis puts in his next section that Adams and Jefferson were the collaborators. These two were good friends even though they had different political views; they were both strong political leaders so the battle for Presidency was hard fought. Adams had been elected the nation's first vice president and soon after barely beat Jefferson for Presidency. The last section of this book discusses the friendship that Adams and Jefferson really had. Although they seemed to be great friends there were things going on behind the scenes that showed that they were going to blow up on each other eventually. At the very end of the novel it states that Jefferson and Adams both die on the same day just hours apart. Ellis uses all different types of sources in this book; he uses journals, letters, books and other forms of published writings. There are several conclusions

that Ellis could have made but some of the most obvious ones would be the fact that even though there are important dates in facts in history being able to understand the true meaning of the revolutionary generation was important. Also Ellis concludes that it isn't always about politics but more often than not it is. Ellis does an excellent job at making this book understandable for anyone to read. People trying to understand American history could read this book and understand what he is talking about. Although at times the book did get rather boring and seemed to drag on, Ellis was able to give important facts and details for the reader to understand just how powerful this period was.