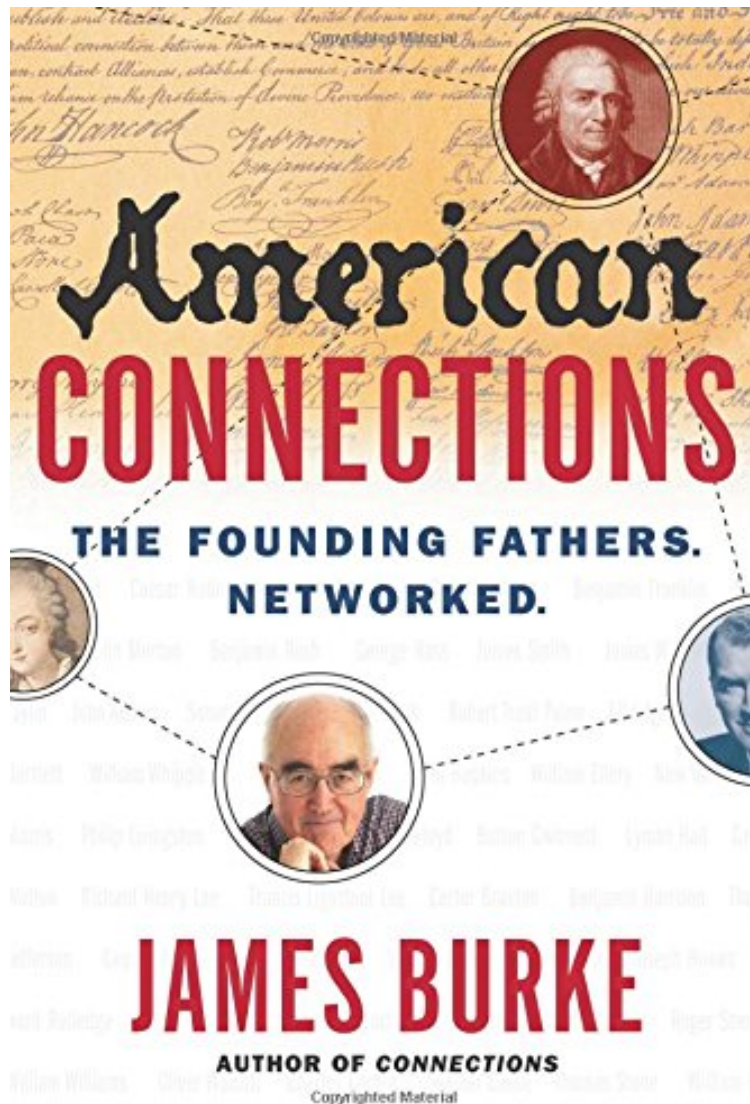


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American Connections: The Founding Fathers. Networked.

James Burke

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James Burke : American Connections: The Founding Fathers. Networked. before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Connections: The Founding Fathers. Networked.:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Amazing...By Dr. Researchconnections among the Found Fathers, and people still living today. It's a great book to read a story at a time, but, once I started, I couldn't put it down. Mr.

Burke's "Connections" work has changed the way I observe the world, for the better. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoy the way James Burke gives his twist on historical ...By RandeeI enjoy the way James Burke gives his twist on historical facts and gives us the dirt behind the scenes! He brings history to life and fleshes out the people from history so we get to know them as real people and not just a name. Very interesting and enjoyable to read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. but otherwise it's a great book. I wish history textbooks were written like ...By SpeedlearnerIt contains material about some people I've never heard of, but otherwise it's a great book. I wish history textbooks were written like this.

Using the unique approach that he has employed in his previous books, author, columnist, and television commentator James Burke shows us our connections to the fifty-six men who signed the Declaration of Independence. Over the two hundred-plus years that separate us, these connections are often surprising and always fascinating. Burke turns the signers from historical icons into flesh-and-blood people: Some were shady financial manipulators, most were masterful political operators, a few were good human beings, and some were great men. The network that links them to us is also peopled by all sorts, from spies and assassins to lovers and adulterers, inventors and artists. The ties may be more direct for some of us than others, but we are all linked in some way to these founders of our nation. If you enjoyed Martin Sheen as the president on television's *The West Wing*, then you're connected to founder Josiah Bartlett. The connection from signer Bartlett to Sheen includes John Paul Jones; Judge William Cooper, father of James Fenimore; Sir Thomas Brisbane, governor of New South Wales; an incestuous astronomer; an itinerant math teacher; early inventors of television; and pioneering TV personality Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, the inspiration for Ramon Estevez's screen name, Martin Sheen.

From Publishers WeeklyIn his latest, columnist and author Burke (*Twin Tracks*) looks at the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence through his history-as-networking perspective, "an approach I've been using for thirty years... that's recently become known as 'six degrees of separation.'" Spraying historical tidbits like buckshot, Burke looks for the hidden links behind (seemingly) everything; in chapter three, for example, Burke begins with unremarkable signatory William Whipple, considers his part in the Battle of Saratoga, pursues the defeated British general "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne back to his playwriting debut, penned in celebration of the earl of Derby's marriage, for whom a new annual horse race would be named in 1780; from there, Burke is indeed off to the races: the next four pages cover, among other topics, the first strip cartoon, Napoleon's favorite surgeon, the Order of Saint Margaret, the invention of the Geiger counter and the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association which, in 2002, named as its president a man named, yes, William Whipple. The effect is less like connecting the dots than surfing the Web at breakneck speed: an impressively dizzying reading experience with little depth. Readers looking for analysis, or even a sustained narrative, will be disappointed in these overstuffed micro-lessons, but they're perfect for trivia buffs (or those who just wish books were more like the internet). Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From BooklistThe latest in Burke's Connections brand (*Twin Tracks*, 2003) links every signer of the Declaration of Independence with a contemporary namesake. Burke's irreverent, caffeinated prose is again on display as he reduces the pledgers of "our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor" into pithy summaries of their crasser concerns, such as smuggling. Then off Burke goes in pursuit of their modern counterparts. Perhaps Google easily yielded commoner names such as Roger Sherman, who as of 1996 was a church organist, but where does one find a modern Button Gwinnett, especially since the original, killed in a 1777 duel, left Burke scant leads to trace? Leave it to Burke's encyclopedic mind to meet that challenge, and suffice it to say that entertainer Danny Kaye ties up Burke's Gwinnett problem. Loosely chronological, Burke's matchmaking strings together names from 230 years of literary, scientific, and political history, continually springing the unexpected on the reader, sometimes at the cost of a groan but never at the expense of entertainment. Taylor, GilbertAbout the AuthorJames Burke is the author of several bestselling books, including *Circles*, *American Connections*, and *The Knowledge Web*. He is a monthly columnist at *Scientific American* and also serves as director, writer, and host of the television series *Connections 3* on The Learning Channel. He is the founder of the James Burke Institute for Innovation in Education, whose flagship project, the Knowledge Web, an interactive website, was recently launched. He lives in London.