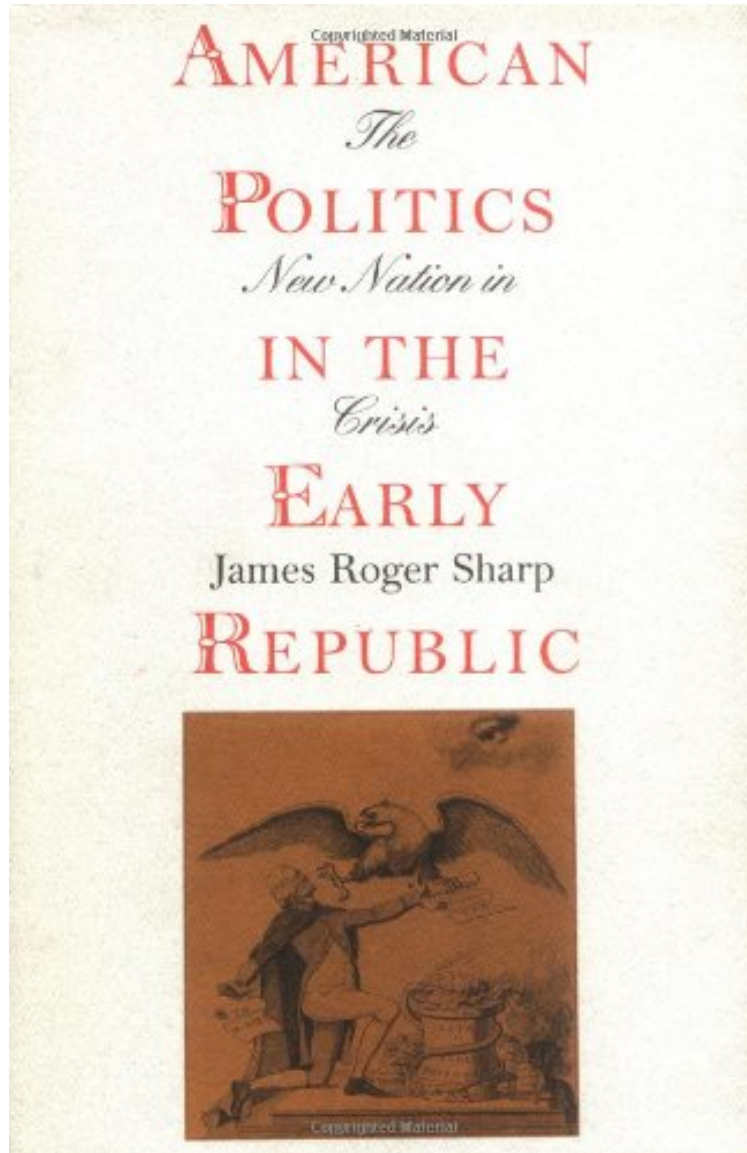


## American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis

James Roger Sharp

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**James Roger Sharp : American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well ResearchedBy Roger BrooksA well researched scholarly monograph. A little dated, but very interesting in light of current affairs.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well Written and Much EnjoyedBy Kirby AmmonsFor those of you who truly like early national America,

this book does a good job of breaking down that early history and the seller had it in good condition. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Solid Analysis of Early American Politics By C. Baker Sharp offers several themes and interpretations in his analysis of politics in the decade following the adoption of the constitution. Sharp rightly argues that the antagonisms and political schisms of the years 1789-1801 were a crucial test of the ability of our new nation to survive sharply different conceptions of where political sovereignty would ultimately lie in the new nation. Sharp details the creation of "proto-parties" -- the Federalist led by Hamilton who favored a strong central government and executive power versus the Jefferson led Republicans who favored more state and local control of politics and a stricter construction of the federal government's powers under the constitution. The schism was also clearly and primarily sectional -- North versus South. While both of these comments are an oversimplification they were two of the obvious divisive issues splitting the two camps. Sharp maintains that the election of Jefferson in 1801 and the peaceful transfer of power from one faction to another -- the first such transfer of power in our nation's history (Adam's being generally seen as a proponent of the Federalists' position) -- was one of the two most crucial tests for the viability of the constitution (the other being the Civil War). Sharp details the political machinations of both camps through Jefferson's election and clearly shows that civil war and disunion were indeed viable outcomes and the continuation of the union in limbo. Overall this is a solid effort to dispel the myth that political parties, as we know them today, were not created or even perpetuated by the "proto-parties" that formed during this period, although they can be seen as precursors of modern political parties. He also dispels the myth that the perpetuation of the nation was inevitable. Instead that the United States survived this period intact was incredible. My main quibble is that sometimes Sharp sometimes leaves out some key points. Nor do I think enough attention is paid to Adam's ability to straddle the two factions and steer a more neutral course -- for example advocating a strong national defense (building a navy), pursuing peace with France, and thwarting Hamilton's attempt to maintain a standing army in peacetime. Had he been unsuccessful in doing so the story of our Republic may have been quite different.

During the years from 1789 to 1801, the republican political institutions forged by the American Constitution were put to the test. A new nation born in revolution, divided over the nature of republicanism, undermined by deep-seated sectional allegiances, and mired in foreign policy entanglements faced the challenge of creating a stable, enduring national authority and union. In this engagingly written book, James Roger Sharp offers a penetrating new assessment disputing the conventional wisdom that the birth of the country was a relatively painless and unexceptional one. Instead, he tells the dramatic story of how the euphoria surrounding the inauguration of George Washington as the country's first president quickly soured. Soon, the Federalist defenders of the administration and their Republican critics regarded each other as bitter political enemies. The intense partisanship prevented the acceptance of the idea that an opposition could both oppose and be loyal to the government. As a result, the nation teetered on the brink of disintegration as fear, insurrection, and threats of secession abounded. Many even envisioned armed civil conflict as a possible outcome. Despite the polarization, the nation did manage to survive its first trial. The election of Thomas Jefferson in 1801 and the nonviolent transfer of power from one political group to another ended the immediate crisis. But sectionally based politics continued to plague the nation and eventually led to the Civil War.

About the Author James Roger Sharp is professor of history at Syracuse University.