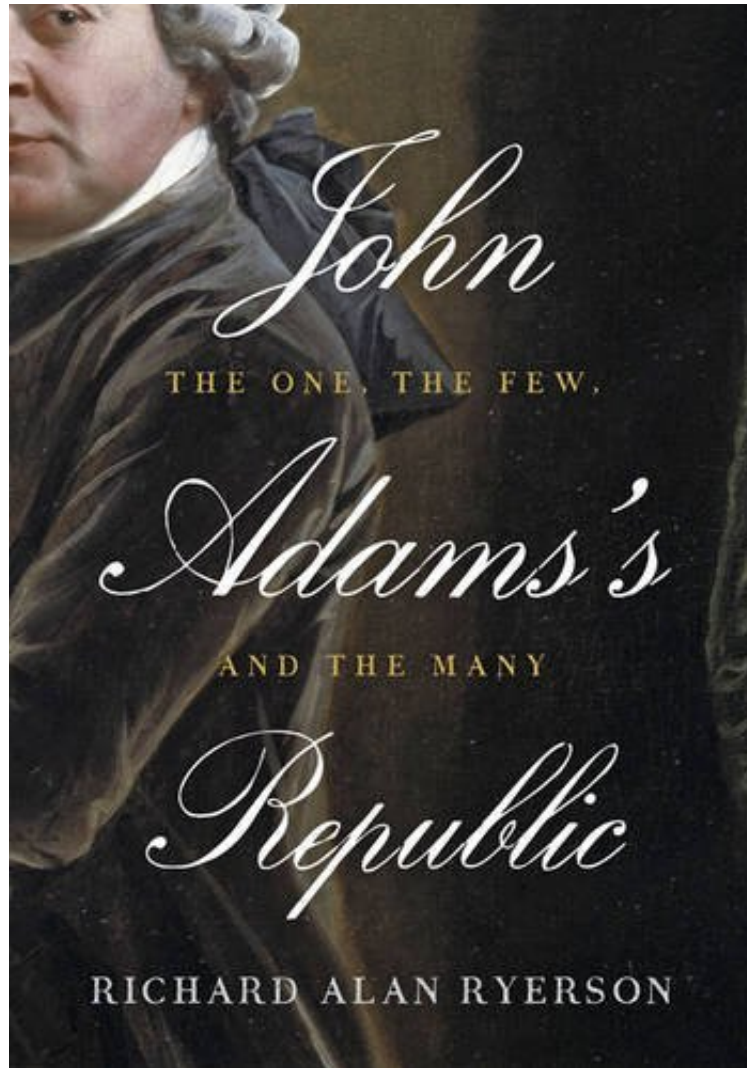


[Download pdf ebook] John Adams's Republic: The One, the Few, and the Many

John Adams's Republic: The One, the Few, and the Many

Richard Alan Ryerson

*ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub | DOC | audiobook*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#819307 in Books Ryerson Richard Alan 2016-07-26 Original language: English PDF # 1 10.00 x 1.72 x 7.00l, 2.50 #File Name: 142141922X576 pages John Adams s Republic The One the Few and the Many | File size: 55.Mb

Richard Alan Ryerson : John Adams's Republic: The One, the Few, and the Many before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised John Adams's Republic: The One, the Few, and the Many:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Study of John Adams's Political Thought By Robin Friedman Richard Ryerson's "John Adams's Republic: The One, The Few, and the Many" studies the intellectual development of John Adams and the nature of his political thought. Ryerson was the editor-in-chief of the Adams Papers from 1983 to 2001 and the former academic director and historian of the David Library of the American

Revolution. His work on editing the Adams papers steeped Ryerson in Adams' thought and times. With the conclusion of his editorial responsibilities, Ryerson found the time to study and write about Adams's thinking in detail. The result of Ryerson's work is a comprehensive, erudite, and sympathetic study of Adams's political thought. Ryerson agrees with the conclusion reached by many students of Adams that his thought diverged markedly from the thinking of many Americans in the Revolutionary Era and thereafter. He disagrees with the conclusion of some of Adams's contemporaries and later scholars that Adams's thought became sympathetic to monarchy following his decade of diplomatic service in France, the Netherlands, and Britain. Through a careful examination of Adams's writings, Ryerson argues that Adams's thought exhibited its distinctive, republican character from its early stages. He explores the broad outlines of Adams's thinking together with its detailed expressions and changes over Adams's long career. Broadly speaking, Americans in the Revolutionary Era developed a politics and government in which sovereignty resided in "we, the people". Adams disagreed and developed his thought based on earlier visions of classical republicanism. For Adams, sovereignty was divided between three bodies: the "one" the "few" and the "many" as indicated in the subtitle of Ryerson's book. The "one" consists of a strong executive with veto power over the acts of the legislature. The "few" consists of the aristocracy. Adams's views of the nature and composition of the aristocracy changed with time; In his developed thought, he came to fear its undue influence. The "many" consists of the people who were not in the aristocracy and who had no special distinction of birth, wealth, or talent. Even with the "many", Adams restricted their participation by property qualifications more than did other political thinkers of his time. Ryerson shows Adams's broad reading and learning and how his thought gradually came to include thinkers from the Greeks and Romans through Machiavelli, Locke, Harrington, and several others. The thought of Adams's predecessors and their influences on Adams are explored throughout the book. Ryerson also integrates his history of Adams's intellectual development with Adams's personal life and ambitions and with his activity as a rising young lawyer, a writer of political pamphlets, supporter of independence, participant in the Continental Congresses, diplomat, vice-president, and president. The book explores Adams' voluminous writings including his Diary, letters and published works. It is in two broad parts with the first covering Adams's thought through the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the second covering Adams's thinking through his presidency and long retirement up to his death in 1826. The writing is clear but dense. Ryerson helps the reader understand the progression of the book through extended introductory and concluding sections for each period of Adams's life and through frequent repetition and cross-referencing tying together the detailed discussions in the text. The heart of the book lies in its detailed expositions and analysis of Adams's works, probably the closest study the body of Adams's political writings has ever received. Ryerson covers Adams' thought from beginning to end with thorough treatments of works such as the "Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law" (1765) and the Reply Adams wrote for the Massachusetts House of Representatives to Governor Hutchinson in 1773. Ryerson offers an extensive discussion of the "Novanglus" essays Adams wrote in 1774-75 which developed his theory of government and independence in detail. Another early work of great importance is Adams' short pamphlet, "Thoughts on Government" of April, 1776 which became an important landmark in American constitutionalism. Ryerson examines in detail Adams's draft of the 1780 Massachusetts constitution which remains the world's oldest functioning constitutional document. He describes the Massachusetts constitution as Adams's greatest intellectual and moral accomplishment. He devotes a great deal of attention to Adams's longest work the three-volume "Defense of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America (1787 --88) written in Europe before the Constitutional Convention. The book discusses the "Discourses on Davila" which Adams wrote during the first term of his vice-presidency and which was criticized by Jefferson and others for its monarchical tendencies. Ryerson spends a great deal of time on the letters to Rush and Jefferson which Adams wrote during his long retirement. In these letters, Adams further refined his own political thinking free of the pressures of public office and came to a degree of peace with the movement of American politics in a different direction. In the course of the book, Ryerson offers many summations of Adams's thought. Here is part of one such summary from late in the work. "It is commonplace among most historians and political scientists, no matter how highly they regard John Adams, to label him as a conservative. ... And indeed he was a conservative, at least from 1779 to the end of his life, under almost any definition of that word. Yet there is an evident desire among many scholars who greatly admire Adams (of whom the present writer is decidedly one) to portray him as a more democratic thinker than he was. Perhaps this temptation owes to the democratic dogma that is so nearly universal in modern American culture. But a clear-sighted view of John Adams, while it reveals a staunch republican and a firm defender of political liberty, does not reveal a democrat." (p. 415) I have read the three volume Library of America set of the writings of John Adams edited by Gordon Wood. These volumes include many of the works, or excerpts, that Ryerson discusses. Ryerson's study greatly enhanced my understanding and appreciation of Adams' thinking. John Adams received increased public appreciation through David McCollough's 2001 Pulitzer-Prize winning biography. McCollough's excellent book explored Adams's personal life and political career much more than the political writings that Ryerson considers in detail in this book. It is valuable that many Americans are showing an increased interest in the Founders, as evidenced by McCollough's book and by the success of the musical, "Hamilton". Readers with a strong passion for John Adams, the most passionate of the Founders, and an interest in his political philosophy and in the political philosophy of the

Revolutionary Era will learn a great deal from Ryerson's study. Robin Friedman, 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. And no historian is better qualified to guide the reader through that journey than ...By Howard M. No individuals intellectual journey is more important for understanding the constitutional origins of the American Republic than that of John Adams of Massachusetts. And no historian is better qualified to guide the reader through that journey than Richard Alan Ryerson. No Founding Father thought longer and harder about power in society and its proper allocation among the one, the few and the many than Adams. That thinking led him to adopt ideas and take positions in the Imperial Crisis, the War for Independence, and the adoption of state constitutions and then the federal Constitution that quickly took Adams to the center of American political life but then, to the great and sometimes bitter disappointment of many other Founders, led him to defend positions that eventually found him on the periphery of American politics. In an analysis that is equally at home in rural New England, the largest cities of the English colonies, as well as the courts of Europe, Ryerson culminates a life-long career of studying the papers of Americas first first family in a gracefully written analysis of John Adams seminal constitutional writings. The crux of his argument is that John Adams, unlike almost all of the other Founders, feared that the American experiment in representative government was threatened primarily not by either a tyrannical executive [the one] or an easily swayed and potentially rebellious electorate [the many], but by societys self-interested elite [the few], which always has the will and resources with which to seek their own interest at the expense of the common good of the political whole. For that reason, Ryersons analysis, which will enlighten both the specialist in early American history as well as any citizen interested in the complex origins of our political culture, appears at a particularly propitious moment in the history of the American experiment in republican government. Howard Miller 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Very Readable Review of Adams's Writings For Both Academics and Amateur Historians By RBR If you want to get into John Adamss mind during the founding and early years of our republic, Richard Ryersons John Adamss Republic is a must read. In a very engaging, interesting, and comprehensive text, Ryerson delves into Adamss extensive writing over six decades and weaves together an insightful and scholarly narrative of Adamss political thoughts and philosophy. Ryerson, a former editor-in-chief of the Adams Papers, provides a very readable review of Adamss writings that both academics and amateur historians alike will find fascinating and illuminating as Ryerson recounts in detail the evolution of Adamss political thought from 1760 through his presidency and into his final days. Ryerson especially focuses on Adamss views on how a strong executive could counter the wealthy elites that could control our republica question that still is relevant today and makes Ryersons book especially timely.

Scholars have examined John Adamss writings and beliefs for generations, but no one has brought such impressive credentials to the task as Richard Alan Ryerson in John Adamss Republic. The editor-in-chief of the Massachusetts Historical Societys Adams Papers project for nearly two decades, Ryerson offers readers of this magisterial book a fresh, firmly grounded account of Adamss political thought and its development. Of all the founding fathers, Ryerson argues, John Adams may have worried the most about the problem of social jealousy and political conflict in the new republic. Ryerson explains how these concerns, coupled with Adamss concept of executive authority and his fear of aristocracy, deeply influenced his political mindset. He weaves together a close analysis of Adamss public writings, a comprehensive chronological narrative beginning in the 1760s, and an exploration of the second presidents private diary, manuscript autobiography, and personal and family letters, revealing Adamss most intimate political thoughts across six decades. How, Adams asked, could a self-governing country counter the natural power and influence of wealthy elites and their friends in government? Ryerson argues that he came to believe a strong executive could hold at bay the aristocratic forces that posed the most serious dangers to a republican society. The first study ever published to closely examine all of Adamss political writings, from his youth to his long retirement, John Adamss Republic should appeal to everyone who seeks to know more about Americas first major political theorist.

"No scholar is more qualified to capture the 'whole' Adams. Richard Ryerson has mastered the biographical details of Adams's public and private life, as well as the trajectory of his thought. More than a study of one man, this book is an insightful narrative of the founding of the nation." (Barbara B. Oberg, Princeton University, coeditor of *Federalists Reconsidered*) "This is a serious, detailed, and convincing account with few unexplored avenues... Recommended. All academic levels/libraries." (Choice) "... very excellent and elegantly written..." (Chronicles) About the Author Richard Alan Ryerson, the former academic director and historian of the David Library of the American Revolution, was the editor-in-chief of the Adams Papers from 1983 to 2001.