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The Founding Fathers (The American Presidents)



Synopsis

The Founding Fathers series includes: George Washington by James MacGregor Burns and Susan Dunn In this thoughtful and incisive biography, Burns and Dunn dissect the strengths and weaknesses of Washington's presidential leadership, from his lasting foreign and economic policies to his polarizing denunciation of political parties and his public silence about slavery. John Adams by John Patrick Diggins Perhaps no U.S. president was less suited for the practice of politics than John Adams. A gifted philosopher who helped lead the movement for American independence from its inception, Adams was unprepared for the realities of party politics that had already begun to dominate the new country before Washington left office. But in this program historian John Patrick Diggins reveals a John Adams whose reputation for snobbery and failure are wholly undeserved, and whose prescient modernism still holds valuable lessons for us as we strive to fulfill the Founding Fathers' vision of a fair republic and just society. He is, in Diggins's view, the president who comes closest to Plato's ideal of a philosopher-king. Thomas Jefferson by Joyce Appleby Few presidents embody the American spirit as fully as Thomas Jefferson. His vision and unrivaled political imagination account for the almost utopian zeal of his two administrations. However, contradictions in his populism make Jefferson the most controversial of presidents: he spoke of inalienable human rights, but he taught his daughters that women were created for men's pleasure, and he believed that whites and blacks could never coexist peacefully in freedom. Jefferson described his election to the presidency as a second American Revolution. For the first time, historian Joyce Appleby rigorously explores this claim. She argues that our third president did, in fact, radically transform the political landscape of the United States by limiting the power of the government and eradicating the elitist practices inherited from the colonial era. James Madison by Gary Wills The eternal conundrum about James Madison—a key framer of the U.S. Constitution, a formidable political figure, and a man of tremendous intellect and foresight—is why, when he became chief executive, did he steer the ship of state with such an unsteady hand? Why was this man so lackluster and ineffectual in his tenure as president? Renowned historian Garry Wills outlines the confluence of unfortunate circumstance, misplaced temperament, and outright poor judgment that bogged down Madison's presidency.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Richard Rohan treats the narration dramatically, with voices for George Washington and John Adams, while Ira Claffey takes a more professorial tone for Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Both read with clarity and make the material compelling. • AudioFile • A publishing milestone...Schlesinger, a master craftsman, is imposing his high standards on these books. Hail to the chief. It's a wonderful series. • Chicago Sun Times

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., is arguably the preeminent political historian of our time. For more than half a century, he has been a cornerstone figure in the intellectual life of the nation and a fixture on the political scene. He served as special assistant to John F. Kennedy; won two Pulitzer Prizes for *The Age of Jackson* (1946) and *A Thousand Days* (1966); and in 1998 received the National Humanities Medal. Richard Rohan has been a stage, film, and voiceover actor for the past twenty years. He has narrated hundreds of audiobooks, in every genre, and was awarded the 2003 Audie Award winner for Nonfiction and the 2008 Best Voice in Science Fiction & Fantasy by AudioFile magazine. He directed and performed on the acclaimed *Space Fantasy* audio drama series *Deathstalker*. Rohan can also be heard on Macmillan Audio's historical series, *The American Presidents*.

Informative and revealing. I learned that our founding fathers had the same weaknesses as the rest of us.

GREAT!

Great

This is a terrific set of CD's on our Founding Fathers. The reader is very good with one blatant exception. Whenever he is reading a direct quote from one of their writings, he goes into some phony, forced "Bahstonian" accent. It's distracting and very annoying. I can't imagine why anyone thought that was a good idea. Just read it the way it is written. I am intelligent enough to tell when you are quoting someone. Furthermore, even if the accent were a good one, which it is NOT, all these gentlemen are not Bostonians!

I am a huge fan of this American Presidents Series. The late Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. was the brains behind the project. The books have not been coming out in any particular order, I just read the biography of Harry S. Truman by Robert Dallek. Before that, I read the Nixon bio. Up next, I plan to read the Abe Lincoln written by George McGovern. That's right, that George McGovern who lost in the Nixon landslide of 1972. The beauty of this series is the economy of the volumes. None of these books runs over 200 pages. They are all written by very interesting, smart people. Someone who knows how much I love American history gave me this set of audiobooks covering our first four presidents, Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, and James Madison. I love it! There are 20 CDs, 20 hours worth, and this is great stuff to share with the family. Kids don't learn history the way we used to in my day. They don't know enough about our Founding Fathers. This series can remedy that gap in their knowledge. My personal favorite is the James Madison because I knew the least about him and his bio was written by the eminent scholar Gary Wills. This collection made a wonderful gift. I'm delighted with it!

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