



John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic

Jeffry H. Morrison

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Jeffry H. Morrison offers readers the first comprehensive look at the political thought and career of John Witherspoon—a Scottish Presbyterian minister and one of America’s most influential and overlooked founding fathers. Witherspoon was an active member of the Continental Congress and was the only clergyman both to sign the Declaration of Independence and to ratify the federal Constitution. During his tenure as president of the College of New Jersey at Princeton, Witherspoon became a mentor to James Madison and influenced many leaders and thinkers of the founding period. He was uniquely positioned at the crossroads of politics, religion, and education during the crucial first decades of the new republic.

Morrison locates Witherspoon in the context of early American political thought and charts the various influences on his thinking. This impressive work of scholarship offers a broad treatment of Witherspoon’s constitutionalism, including his contributions to the mediating institutions of religion and education, and to political institutions from the colonial through the early federal periods. This book will be appreciated by anyone with an interest in American political history and thought and in the relation of religion to American politics.

“I have been waiting a long time for such a book on John Witherspoon. This book is not only well-researched, but well-written. The story Morrison tells is quite wonderful.” —**Michael Novak, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research**

"Dr. John Witherspoon is at once an exceptionally influential figure in Early American history, and a sadly neglected one. Professor Morrison's book fills this gap in American political history brilliantly. It is especially revealing of 18th century views on the interrelationships between education, religion, and society. Morrison presents new insights into the Early American understanding of balancing faith, government, and society. It will change our conceptions of this period and provide fresh perspectives on contemporary problems. Everyone interested in the American Founding era is indebted to Morrison for this illuminating book." —**Garrett Ward Sheldon, University of Virginia's College at Wise**

"At last we have a full and learned account, as the title states, of *JOHN WITHERSPOON AND THE FOUNDING OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC*. Including discussion of Witherspoon's direct role in the crucial events of 1775-1790 as an advocate of Independence and friend of the Constitution, as a contributor to early American religious and political thought, and most important, as a mentor to James Madison and other Princeton revolutionaries and nation-builders, Morrison reveals Witherspoon's high standing in American religious, educational, and political history. Madison remembered Witherspoon's injunction to his students to 'Lead useful Lives;' he provided an excellent role model." —**Ralph Ketcham, Syracuse University**

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