



The Meaning of Independence: John Adams, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson (Richard Lectures)

Edmund S. Morgan

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Americans did not at first cherish the idea of political severance from their mother country. In just a few years, however, they came to desire independence above all else. What brought about this change of feeling and how did it affect the lives of their citizens? To answer these questions, Edmund S. Morgan looks at three men who may fairly be called the "architects of independence," the first presidents of the United States. Anecdotes from their letters and diaries recapture the sense of close identity many early Americans felt with their country's political struggles. Through this perspective, Morgan examines the growth of independence from its initial declaration and discovers something of its meaning, for three men who responded to its challenge and for the nation that they helped create.

The Meaning of Independence, first published in 1976, has become one of the standard short works on the first three presidents of the United States: George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. When the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association and the Organization of American Historians asked 1,500 historians to name the ten best books about George Washington, this book was one of those selected. In this updated edition, the author provides a new preface to address a few remaining concerns he has pondered in the quarter century since first publication.

Tag: A classic work on the founding by the author of the bestselling Benjamin Franklin

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