

knocking them down" (xi).

In four lively and readable chapters, Bernstein presents the founding from various angles. He sets the scene with a brief discussion of modern associations with the founders and how words and images of them are used in public discourse today. Moving from our context to theirs, Bernstein next surveys the founders' geographical, intellectual, and political contexts. The last two chapters are the heart of the book, as they give an overview of the founders' challenges, achievements, and legacies. He ends with one of the most controversial topics of our day—whether and how the founders should be used to interpret the Constitution and the union made more perfect.

In little more than 150 pages, he manages to draw out some of the most interesting and pivotal moments of the founding, describe them in ways that will make them accessible to students, and then show how the ideas they represented are still relevant today. The breadth of scholarly and mainstream topics and ideas Bernstein invokes to illustrate his points is truly impressive, from Jack Greene's "periphery and center," Dred Scott, originalism, and HBO to Charles Beard, Web surfing, separation of church and state, and Obama.

For all these reasons, this book is perfect for classroom use. But there is one relatively minor concern. In dispelling some myths, it is in danger of perpetuating others. Although students will come away with a new appreciation of the founders, they will also be left with the same mythological impression that a small handful of men largely acted alone. The appendix, with a partial list of other figures, does not right this imbalance. But because this book can be easily paired with other materials and its message extended to other figures, it should nonetheless be required, rather than recommended, reading.

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The Papers of Benjamin Franklin. Vol. 39, *January 21 through May 15, 1783*. Edited by ELLEN R. COHN. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009. 752 pp. Illustrations, index. \$95.)

Benjamin Franklin had few lulls in his diplomatic career, but the period covered in volume 39 of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* comes the closest. This volume begins with the cease-fire between Great Britain and France on January 20, 1783, effectively ending hostilities in the American Revolution. The collapse of the Shelburne ministry and the delay in forming the Portland ministry prevented any movement on a definitive treaty. Yet diplomacy continued on a number of fronts, and the editors argue that "Franklin's skills as a diplomat continued to be vital" (lvi). Indeed, Franklin was the center of the American diplomatic universe. French and British writers bombarded him with both congratulations and

requests for jobs. "There is not a Port in France, and few in Europe, from which I have not received several Applications of Persons desiring to be appointed Consuls for America," Franklin wrote on April 15, 1783 (471). The editors wisely chose to bundle most of those letters—many of which are in French—in an editorial note. The editors provide a brief explanatory note to each letter, but not a condensed translation as in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. They have assumed that users of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* are literate in French, and they clean up or explain the poor spelling of Franklin's francophone correspondents.

Two events reveal Franklin's skill as a diplomat. In February 1783, Franklin negotiated a trade treaty with the Swedish ambassador to France, the Comte de Creutz. To accommodate Creutz's instructions, which barred him from signing a treaty before publication of a general peace treaty, Franklin agreed to a treaty with a blank date. The second event was the commissioning of a medal to celebrate victories at Saratoga and Yorktown and the French alliance. Franklin left France with the impression that Congress authorized the medal as "an official expression of gratitude to France," when, in reality, Congress gave no such permission (552).

Franklin was no stickler for forms. He could not, however, move Great Britain. "Let us now forgive and forget," Franklin wrote the Bishop of St. Asaph (349). But he could not follow his own advice in regard to the Loyalists. "The Society owes him nothing but Punishment," Franklin believed (231). He could not concede any purity of motive to the Loyalists. "Very few if any of these Pretenders had any such Principle, or any Principle but that of taking care of themselves by securing Safety with a Chance of Emolument & Plunder" (358).

In January 1783, Benjamin Vaughan implored Franklin to publish his autobiography. "Your history is so remarkable, that if you do not give it, somebody else will certainly give it; and perhaps so nearly to do as much harm, as your own management of the thing might do good" (112). Vaughan's fears were unfounded. The editors of this volume of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, as in the previous volumes, have made the most complex of the founders accessible to scholars. They have given enough annotation to ensure clarity without interfering with Franklin or his correspondents. This volume, as well as the series as a whole, is a model of documentary editing.

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The Overflowing of Friendship: Love between Men and the Creation of the American Republic. By RICHARD GODBEER. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. xii, 254 pp. Notes, index. \$35.)

In a puzzling departure from his earlier work, which included such groundbreaking explorations as "The Cry of Sodom" (1995; a study of homoeroticism in