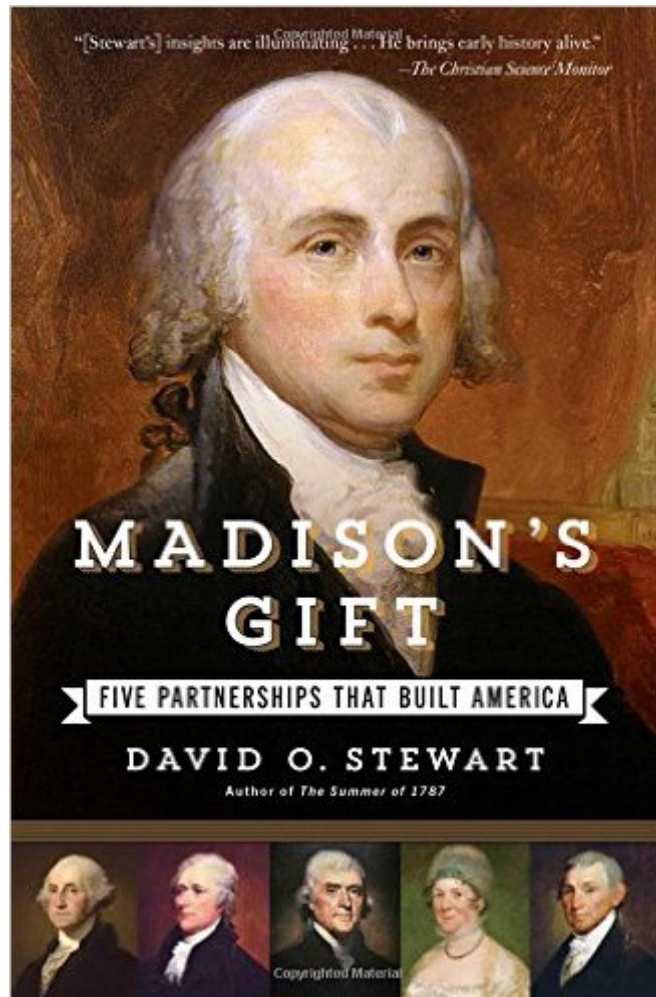


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Madison's Gift: Five Partnerships That Built America



Synopsis

Historian David O. Stewart restores James Madison to his proper place as the most significant Founding Father and framer of the new nation: "A fascinating look at how one unlikely figure managed to help guide a precarious confederation of reluctant states to a self-governing republic that has prospered for more than two centuries" • (Richmond Times-Dispatch). Short, plain, balding, neither soldier nor orator, low on charisma and high on intelligence, James Madison cared more about achieving results than taking the credit. Forming key partnerships with Washington, Jefferson, Monroe, and his wife Dolley, Madison achieved his lifelong goal of a self-governing constitutional republic. It was Madison who led the drive for the Constitutional Convention and pressed for an effective new government as his patron George Washington lent the effort legitimacy; Madison who wrote the Federalist Papers with Alexander Hamilton to secure the Constitution's ratification; Madison who joined Thomas Jefferson to found the nation's first political party and move the nation toward broad democratic principles; Madison, with James Monroe, who guided the new nation through its first war in 1812, and who handed the reins of government to the last of the Founders. But it was his final partnership that allowed Madison to escape his natural shyness and reach the greatest heights. Dolley was the woman he married in middle age and who presided over both him and an enlivened White House. This partnership was a love story, a unique one that sustained Madison through his political rise, his presidency, and a fruitful retirement. In Madison's Gift, David O. Stewart's "insights are illuminating". He weaves vivid, sometimes poignant details throughout the grand sweep of historical events. He brings early history alive in a way that offers today's readers perspective" • (Christian Science Monitor).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Madison's Gift looks at Madison's working relationships with President George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, President Thomas Jefferson, President James Monroe and his wife Dolley. Although the reader receives a basic understanding of Madison's biography it is really a 'political biography', similar to Doris Kearns Goodwin's "Team of Rivals" which considered Lincoln and his cabinet which was made up of political rivals for the presidency. Madison's service to his country included championing the 1787 Constitutional Convention and the Bill of Rights; the creation of the first political party in alliance with Thomas Jefferson; service as the first 'war president' during the War of 1812; the revision of The Articles of Confederation to insure the government rested on a more solid base; fine tuning the election process; support for a national tax to fund a standing army and pay debt; working on the amendment to guarantee free speech, the right to bear arms, due process of law, the freedom of the press and other rights we take for granted today. Madison had a systematic and deep intelligence. He was small and frail in body, but was a giant intellectually. His public persona was not easy and warm, although his good humor shone in his family life. His friendships and partnerships perfectly balanced his weaknesses. Jefferson and Monroe forged deep friendships with Madison, with Jefferson encouraging Madison to become a neighbor, while the Monroes in Europe purchased and shipped furnishings for the Madison's first home. Dolley was a beautiful and well off young widow when Madison fell in love with her from afar.

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