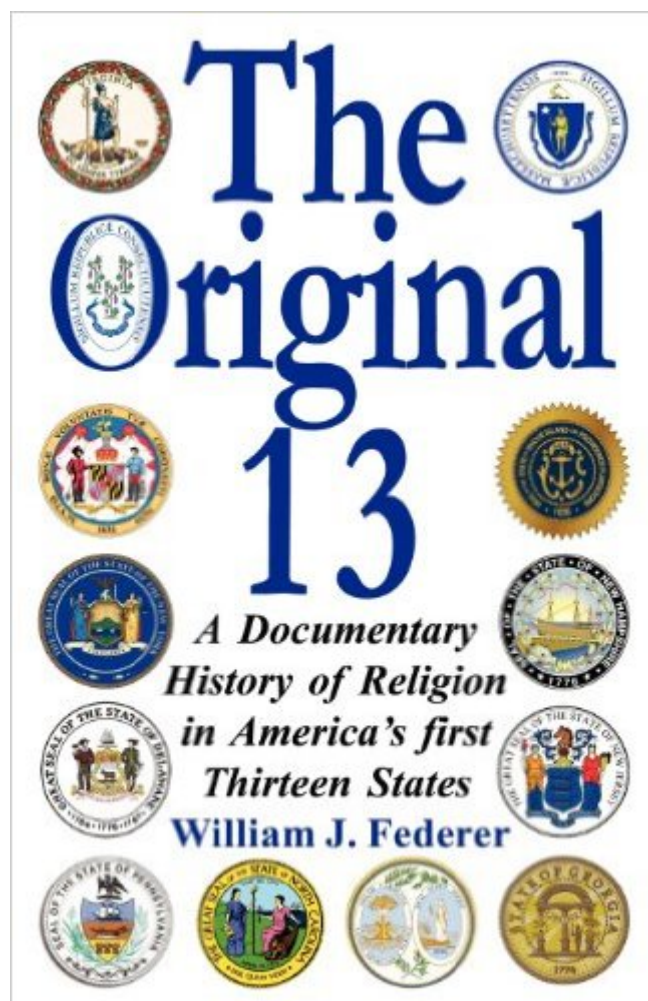


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The Original 13: A Documentary History Of Religion In America's First Thirteen States



Synopsis

"The whole power over the subject of religion is left exclusively to the State governments, to be acted upon according to their justice and the State Constitutions," wrote Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story in his Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States, 1833. Who was Joseph Story? He was the founder of Harvard Law School and appointed to the Supreme Court by President James Madison - the same James Madison who introduced the First Amendment in the first session of Congress. To understand the progression of religious freedom in America, it is necessary to review the Constitutions of the original thirteen States, together with the Colonial Charters that preceded them, i.e.: VIRGINIA CHARTER OF KING JAMES I, 1606 "...propagating of Christian Religion to such People as yet live in Darkness..." DELAWARE CHARTER OF KING ADOLPHUS, 1626 "...further propagation of the Holy Gospel..." MASSACHUSETTS CONSTITUTION, 1780, Part 1, Article 3 "Every denomination of Christians...shall be equally under the protection of the law and no subordination of any one sect or denomination to another shall ever be established..." PENNSYLVANIA CONSTITUTION, 1791, Article 1, Section 3 "All men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences..." NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION, 1776, Article 11, Section 4 "Beneficent provision for the poor, the unfortunate, and the orphan is one of the first duties of a civilized and a Christian state..." Examining Charters, Constitutions, Court Decisions and Correspondence, this overview of history is intended as a study help for those interested in discovering the role religion played in America's original thirteen States. The process of how the Federal Courts removed religion from States' jurisdiction, most notably in the 1947 Everson v. Board of Education case, and subsequently evolved it into its present interpretation is the subject of another book.

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Customer Reviews

This well written book tells the full history of our founding fathers and their faith that motivated their lives and actions. It is truly a shame that misguided 'Political Correctness' has removed this information from our history books, that would help us understand more fully these important figures in history.

This is a very good book and interesting. I recommend it as well as all of his books that I have read and hope to own all of his books one day.

William Federer is one of my favorite authors. His knowledge of our country's history is unsurpassed. It is obvious that his research regarding our nation's founding, and the lives of those proud men, and the sorrows they bore to help establish what we now call America is both touching and sad. I would recommend this fine book and all the others that this very erudite man has written. Bravo, Mr. Federer!

It's unlikely Madison would have approved of Story's interpretation, given that Madison's original proposal for the religious freedom clause read: "The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, nor shall any national religion be established, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience be in any manner, or on any pretence, infringed." Annals of Congress 434 (June 8, 1789). For a more accurate understanding of this topic, try One Nation Under God by Kevin M. Kruse, an actual historian.

I loved this book, Bill Federer is a great author, he really knows his subjects. I learned so much from him about the original colonies constitutions. It's too bad that they started to relax their standards in PA, RI and SC.

I needed the religious history in the book and it served its purpose to know how the various traditional religions struggled to survive in the states.

Though I have great respect for the majority of William Federer's writings, I was disappointed in the part of this book that presents quotes from PEW Forum's US Religious Landscape Survey. For example, on Page 205, Mr. Federer divides Rhode Island's religious stats between Christians and apparently what he considers non-Christians such as Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses, listing them along with Muslims, Buddhists, and others. So far as I can tell, the PEW research from which he quotes, does not do this. (<http://www.pewforum.org/2008/02/01/u-s-religious-landscape-survey-religious-affiliation/>) I am neither a Mormon nor a Jehovah Witness, but must take issue with the author's listing Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses as separate from the Christian denominations. Both organizations profess to follow Jesus Christ; the Mormons even include the name Jesus Christ in their church name. So far as judging whether the denominations Mr. Federer lists as "Christian," are in reality "Christian," is concerned, is that really our place to do so? If others of us were to make such judgments "based on the degree to which the various denominations incorporate the Holy Scriptures in their particular doctrines/practices" doctrines that are sometimes diametrically opposed to that of other allegedly Christian denominations" as well as the modern-day applications of their faiths to the social issues of the day, I think many people might question whether Mr. Federer has rightly judged which denominations are "Christian" and which are not. Better, methinks, that we stay out of the judging business "leave that to God" and that we make our personal choices as to which church to join based on a thorough study of the New Testament Church that Jesus, Himself, built.

This book reflects the history of our country written before the revisionists got busy. If you are interested in the founding of merica, read it.

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