



# Young Patriots: The Remarkable Story of Two Men, Their Impossible Plan, and the Revolution That Created the Constitution

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## **Young Patriots: The Remarkable Story of Two Men, Their Impossible Plan, and the Revolution That Created the Constitution** Charles A. Cerami

From New York Times bestselling author Cerami comes the great underdog story of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, who envisioned a plan that no one else thought could happen--a truly United States.

## **Young Patriots: The Remarkable Story of Two Men, Their Impossible Plan, and the Revolution That Created the Constitution Details**

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## From Reader Review Young Patriots: The Remarkable Story of Two Men, Their Impossible Plan, and the Revolution That Created the Constitution for online ebook

### Holly says

What an excellent book!! A very thorough account of the birth of the Constitution, outlining key players, their attitudes to the overthrowing of the Confederation and policies that were included in the final draft and those that were not, which adds an interesting angle to the history.

It would've been nice to see more on the breakdown of the relationship between Madison and Hamilton, as this was a key shift in the politics of America, and it seems to have been overlooked and rushed in places. Passages from letters sent by each individual concerning their attitude toward the other, or maybe from other members of the Convention on their thoughts would have been much appreciated, but still, the narrative included sums up their relationship and how it affected America's future satisfactorily until this point.

Overall, an excellent book. Possibly best recommended to those interested in the American Constitution and its birth. One for students looking for an easy read and well balanced arguments about a variety of issues surrounding this period in American history.

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### Aaron Reese says

So far, this book isn't too compelling. The pacing grinds my nerves. It took a hundred pages to get to the Philadelphia Convention (you know, the subject of the book). I know a lot about the revolutionary era, but not everything and I've learned nothing so far. More disappointingly, the author doesn't say the common facts in an interesting way. He uses the word "seriously" like a valley girl or surfer-- an anachronistic and annoying habit when trying to take a book seriously serious.

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### Kelsey says

This is a really good book, if you feel like you want to know a little bit more about the world, and how our country works. I really enjoyed learning how our founding fathers didn't always agree with each other, and how an idea, could re-define the world \*union\*. Give this book a chance, you'll find it amusing and in great detail to those of the past.

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### Bob says

This book would best be read with some skepticism.

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Mr. Cerami makes some assumptions and statements that are not validated or justified. One example is his statement that Alexander Hamilton, "(apparently to guard against an accusation of monarchism)"..."did not favor a permanent president, but suggested an executive who would rule for no more than three years."

This is exactly the opposite of what Hamilton proposed. He favored an executive to serve for "good behavior," which meant for life, unless removed from office. The author says one thing, when reality was the opposite. I found this most frequently happened regarding Hamilton, leading me to believe the author wanted to put across a certain perspective about the man.

There are other places in which a blanket statement is made that isn't necessarily true, or at least subject to question. This account of the Convention relies on speculation and inferences. Some assertions are made based on what the author perceived the speaker's tone of voice and inflection were. How could this approach be more accurate than simply believing what the actual words were?

This is an ok book, but the reader can't assume it is completely accurate and should not solely rely on it as a source of information on the Convention.

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### **Rob says**

A disappointing book about the Constitutional convention. A great story by nature of the events - the people, decisions, and compromises involved in forming an entirely new and innovative form of government, that has lasted more than 200 years, are fascinating. But the story telling leaves much to be desired. It's disjointed and the off topic rants distracts from the main story line.

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### **Derek says**

A fine, lively account of the Constitutional Convention. A popular rather than scholarly history, Cerami makes the case the Constitution was primarily the result of dynamic young thinkers as opposed to the thoughtful greybeards. The point is well made; while patriarchs such as Franklin and Washington supported the ideas embodied in the Constitution, it was younger men who put the ideas together and were a driving force behind the Convention. The lives of the participants are examined, particularly those of Madison and Hamilton. An excellent book for a casual reading of the origin of this critical document.

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### **Sharon says**

Interesting information but very dry slow read.

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### **Ai Miller says**

A fairly basic pop history depiction of the Constitutional Convention. Frankly you might be better off reading the Federalist papers themselves. Cerami pulls no punches when it comes to Hamilton (who doesn't need to be punched anymore, as he ruined his own political career all on his own) and the sheer amount of praise he lavishes Madison with makes "the remarkable story of two men" more like a "drool over Madison"

fest. The parts about the debates over the Constitution were interesting to an extent, but in many places they felt unnecessarily drawn out.

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### **Lindsay says**

This book was really not my favorite. If you've read about the Constitution and the Founding Fathers there are some interesting tidbits, but there was no flow or overarching theme and certainly no driving point. I really had a hard time finishing this book because I didn't feel compelled to read what the author had to say or prove.

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### **Brian Daniel says**

I really liked it. With all the talk about what is "constitutional" and what isn't I wanted to read something that helped me understand the origins of the Constitution, the intention of the framers, and the America of the 1780s. This book did all of that. I would caution in the same way another reviewer did in that the author does take opportunities to share his own conclusions. I actually love an author that will make contributions beyond scholarship. A reader must, however, make a distinction in these cases and realize the differences between commentary, historical record, and when the author is sharing his own conclusions—not as fact but as an invitation to the dialog. Additionally, while I was a little worried about the depth of this read at the onset, the way Cerami broke his subject matter into manageable, well-organized pieces (eg "chapters") made this one a much easier read than what it could have been. The author also indulges some sidebar-like topics toward the end that I really enjoyed as well. If you're interested in this kind of thing *Young Patriots* is a fascinating read.

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### **Emily W says**

“*Young Patriots: The Remarkable Story of Two Men, Their Impossible Plan and the Revolution That Created the Constitution*”. Those words, printed on the front cover, truly sums up the entire book in one sentence. Charles Cerami tells the reader the story of the writing of the constitution by following James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. He uses letters, diaries, notes, speeches, and other articles to piece together the puzzle of the constitution’s birth.

When the book begins, America is booming – with a rapid immigration rate, the population is growing. Comforts and luxuries are becoming prevalent. America had won their Independence from England, and favor with France. Yet, the colonies are in disarray. The Articles of Confederation gives the states too much freedom – they are demonizing each other instead of being united. There is no common currency throughout the colonies. Violence is on the rise. Something needed to change, but that change was hard to bring about. Enter Madison and Hamilton – 2 young men with brilliant minds. Both were around 30 years of age, and they both had brilliant, if sometimes differing, ideas for America. Beginning with a summary of their lives up to this point, Cerami gives the reader a view into events that shaped each man before we see the remarkable impact they had on the Constitution.

After outlining the events leading up to the Constitutional Convention, we are given a look at the pre-talks, led by Madison, which influenced the future of the nation. We see how these talks allowed Madison to advance his ideas and goals by persuading men of higher regard than he to present and defend his viewpoint. Cerami then leads us through a step by step, compromise by compromise walk through the writing of the Constitution. Using Madison’s notes (not released until around 1840), letters, notes, diaries, etc., Cerami

breaks into the secrecy of the convention. We look at Madison's sly advancement, Hamilton's struggles with his fellow New York delegates, as well as bits about the other delegates and supporters – George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Governor Morris, just to name a few. From the debates about bicameral/unicameral congress to the slavery issue to representation, each issue is laid out in a very detailed but easy to understand format. We see the discord between those who were against a new way of government and those who were passionate about these changes.

The story is continued as Cerami informs the reader about the struggle for ratification. The reader is walked through the debates between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. Cerami also writes about each states journey through the ratification process.

Next, the reader learns about the election of George Washington, including Hamilton's unnecessary maneuvering of votes. From there, we are launched into Washington's presidency, starting with Madison's hand in selecting Washington's cabinet, Hamilton's financial reports.

Continuing on, the reader looks at the events which kept Rhode Island from ratification – the crisis brought by paper money and irresponsible leadership – to May 29, 1790: the day Rhode Island ratified the constitution.

Next, Cerami shows us the background behind the Bill of Rights. The reader, starting with the opinions behind the necessity of a Bill of Rights, learns about the writing and ratification of what is now the most cited portion of the Constitution.

Nearing the end of this long journey, the reader then learns about Hamilton's wish for a National bank. Cerami also shows the changes that have taken place in just a short time. Division has come between the two men that, only 3 years beforehand, were working together to overthrow the Articles of Confederation, write the Constitution, and ratify it throughout the states. The country is also in the process of change – within 3 decades, railroads will be assisting in the settlement of the west.

Cerami concludes the story of the writing of the constitution by how Madison's research of ancient governments and constitutions, such as those of Greece and Rome, influenced his thoughts and ideas. Cerami also compares Madison and Hamilton to inventors, performing a major experiment without being able to test any of their hypothesizes beforehand.

In summary, *Young Patriots* uses 316 documents – from letters to diaries – along with his own words to follow James Madison and Alexander Hamilton during their journey to write, ratify, and preserve the Constitution of the United States of America.

I loved this book for 3 main reasons – thoroughness, readability, and appreciation. *Young Patriots* is a very deep read; it gives details behind nearly every aspect of the constitution. Yet, despite this deepness, it's very easy to read. It's written in an easy to follow format, and, although it talks about nearly everything anyone could ever possibly want to know about the Constitutional Convention, it never gets bogged down or dry. The final reason I enjoyed *Young Patriots* was the true appreciation that Charles Cerami gave to the topic. Just by reading his words, you can sense the thoughtfulness and passion he has for history. He makes you want to read more, just because you can tell that he truly enjoys writing about history. Even the ten pages of source notes gives reference to the thought he put behind his writing. Between the apparent appreciation, thoroughness, and readability, reading this book was enjoyable yet educational.

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## **Paul says**

While the subtitle refers to two men, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, this book about the Constitutional Convention covers far more than simply those two men. A fun read for those interested in the creation of the Constitution, this book can be subdivided into three main parts.

The first third of the book sets forth the conditions of America under the Articles of Confederation -- some successes, but many failures -- and also introduces us to the main characters who will form this group of

"Young Patriots," particularly Madison and Hamilton. The middle hundred pages focus on the Constitutional Convention itself, though the author focuses just as much on personalities as he does on the actual events and compromises that went into writing the Constitution. The last third give us a picture of the aftermath of the convention as well as a short chapter on why the Constitution has worked so well and lasted for so long.

The author's style is very readable, and this book is not difficult to get through at all. Those looking for a more in-depth, detail-oriented look at the issues tackled during the Constitutional Convention might be a bit disappointed, but for popular history, this is an excellent read.

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### **Cris Wiy says**

Interesting read, but the author likes to take rabbit trails. I enjoyed the unusual factoids and the attention to historical detail. I was a bit disappointed by the use of a quote that included rough language. Up to the end of the book, such language was only alluded to, yet at last it was quoted.

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### **Elisa says**

I think the genesis of the United States is one of the few examples in history of how a nation came to be without bloodshed and virtually through the power of words that came out of the mouths of truly remarkable men with their minds and hearts set in a future that they were wise and open-minded enough to see.

Now that Hamilton is in vogue, Madison should be as well. Together, these two brilliant men (not without their faults, of course, but none of their failings were big enough to thwart the ultimate national good they were forging through sheer force of will and common sense) churned out a document that has been the foundation of one of the greatest nations the world has seen.

Cerami paints a detailed and vivid, almost dramatic, picture of something that might seem boring as hell: a bunch of white dudes sitting in a stifling room with the windows blocked, trying to figure what type of government was best for the 13 states that had become independent a little over a decade before. What's fascinating is how passions did run high (especially over the issue that would later erupt in a civil war between northern and southern states) but cool heads prevailed. I have nothing but admiration for these men and what they accomplished, regardless of the obvious evils that theories must inevitably turn in to when humans put them in practice. The very genius lies in the freedom that the Constitution gives, not spelling every single little thing out for generations to come.

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### **Lauren (84Lauren) says**

I had actually read this book a few years back, but was a little ashamed to realize I remembered almost nothing. While this book was extremely interesting, it gave me very little insight into Madison's actual presidency, as the entire focus is on his role in the Constitutional Convention. This in itself was fascinating though - Madison's original draft proposal is surprisingly close to what ultimately was adopted, and seeing his passion and commitment to it was really interesting. There were so many leaders at the time that were seemingly content to float along on the Articles of Confederation, and Madison had to work so hard just to "get the party started" on moving forward as a single nation instead of a loose confederation.

The book was billed as about Hamilton AND Madison, but the focus was definitely on Madison. There were also lots of tidbits about the other major players, especially George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, though there was often a tieback to these characters' relationships with Madison. The only complaint I have is that many of these "tidbits" seemed a bit random - it was like if the author discovered an amusing little anecdote about a historical figure's life, he would just throw it in there for fun, and it was sometimes a little distracting.

We never have any idea how things might have changed if certain decisions were made differently in the past, but I think it's safe to say that without James Madison, the U.S. government as we know it would not exist. :)

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