



The Men Who Made the Nation: The Architects of the Young Republic 1782-1802

John Dos Passos

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For this history, Dos Passos returns to the American colonial period and early nationhood, exploring the personalities who won the nation's independence from England: Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Adams, and George Washington.

Originally called *The World Turned Upside Down*, *The Men Who Made the Nation* covers the period from 1781 to Hamilton's death in 1804. The work crystallizes the author's fascination with the psychology of the colonial freedom fighter and presents lessons for current American policymakers.

The Men Who Made the Nation: The Architects of the Young Republic 1782-1802 Details

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Erik Graff says

It surprised me to discover that the person who wrote what was, in my opinion, the "great American novel", i.e. The U.S.A. Trilogy, also could write credible straight history. But Dos Passos did, this book covering the United States of America from the victory at Yorktown in 1781 until Jefferson's first term as president.

It is not, however, a general history. Like some of Garry Wills' work, this is thematically focused. The protagonists, most generally speaking, are the Federalists--disposed towards England and aristocracy, primarily identified with Hamilton--as opposed to the Republicans--disposed towards France and democracy, primarily identified with Jefferson. Of course a host of others are introduced along this twenty-year way, brief biographies being given, interactions being sketched out, but the theme through it all is the fragility of the new democracy in the face of foreign and domestic economic interests of the old order.

Unsurprisingly, Dos Passos writes well, albeit with a peculiar style convention all his own. For instance, he conflates where others hyphenate. Thus "twenty-two" becomes "twentytwo", "son-in-law" "soninlaw" and so on.
