

Synopsis

With their book *Signing Their Lives Away*, Denise Kiernan and Joseph D'Agnese introduced listeners to the 56 statesmen (and occasional scoundrels!) who signed the Declaration of Independence. Now they've turned their attention to the 39 men who met in the summer of 1787 and put their names to the U.S. Constitution. *Signing Their Rights Away* chronicles a moment in American history when our elected officials knew how to compromise - and put aside personal gain for the greater good of the nation. These men were just as quirky and flawed as the elected officials we have today: Hugh Williamson believed in aliens, Robert Morris went to prison, Jonathan Dayton stole \$18,000 from Congress, and Thomas Mifflin was ruined by alcohol. Yet somehow these imperfect men managed to craft the world's most perfect Constitution. With 39 mini-biographies *Signing Their Rights Away* offers an entertaining and enlightening narrative for history buffs of all ages.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Signing Their Rights Away reviews the lives of many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States. This is a fine glimpse at our founding fathers. Kiernan and D'Agnese write in a pleasant colorful style that reads easy and occasionally delights. The authors clearly illustrate that the Founding Fathers of the United States were normal human men of their time. Among the founding fathers were two who died in duels, one who was ruined by drink, and another who became a fugitive. Among the fathers, was one international

celebrity, another a famous poet, and a third who was considered an expert in political theory and philosophy. This is a group of imperfect men who managed to design the United States Constitution. The mini biographies are often delightful. We learn that John Dickinson was a patriot admired by Thomas Jefferson despite Dickinson's refusing to sign the Declaration of Independence. Further we discover that Dickinson rose from private to general in the continental army and eventually served as Governor of both Delaware and Pennsylvania (simultaneously for several months). George Washington lived with a poor family when he was young, but when he worked he saved money and purchased land. During the Constitutional Convention (where he served as President) instead of arguing issues during sessions, he gently persuaded members at social functions and dinners. In that sense, he established lessons in politics, despite claiming he was unacquainted with political science. One of the forefathers detailed was William Blount, a scoundrel. William was basically a criminal. He was accused of stealing the payroll when he was paymaster (he claimed someone misplaced the 300,000 pounds) .

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