



Founding Fathers in Fiction

Celebrate Independence Day with one of these novels about our American forefathers.

Byrd, Max. **Jackson: a Novel** (1997)

Byrd presents the life of “Old Hickory” through the eyes of writer David Chase, who’s commissioned to write a book exposing his flaws. The flaws are there—Jackson was hot-tempered and easily provoked, and politically radical. Even so, the young writer falls under the spell of his subject. Byrd has authored two other presidential novels: **Jefferson** (1993) and **Grant** (2000).

Chase-Riboud, Barbara. **Sally Hemings** (2000)

For thirty-eight years, Thomas Jefferson lived with slave Sally Hemings. Their story, fictionalized but based on documents from the time, spans sixty years, seven presidencies, and two continents. Originally released in 1979 and dismissed as bunk, this novel got a new life when a 1998 study of DNA evidence showed that Jefferson did indeed father at least one child with Hemings.

Cameron, Christian. **Washington and Caesar** (2004)

This novel dramatizes the American Revolution from the viewpoints of George Washington and Washington’s slave, Caesar. Caesar escapes Mount Vernon to become a soldier in the Loyal Ethiopians, a unit of runaway slaves who fought alongside the British in exchange for their freedom.

Carter, Jimmy. **The Hornet’s Nest: a novel of the Revolutionary War** (2004)

Former president Carter sets his Revolutionary War saga in the deep south, reminding us how much of the struggle took place in that region. Both sides seek the support of Native American tribes, even as they press them farther and farther inland. Some characters are based on Carter’s own ancestors.

Clark, Mary Higgins. **Mount Vernon Love Story** (2002)

Originally published in 1969 under the title “Aspire to Heaven”, this historical romance recounts the relationship of George and Martha Washington.

Fast, Howard. **Citizen Tom Paine** (1983)

Fast’s Paine isn’t quite the noble thinker you’d expect—he’s a rough-mannered drunkard with a chip on his shoulder. Yet he clings to the idea of liberty, and becomes a sort of prophet for the common man. Secondary characters include Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, Burke, Blake, Marat, Robespierre, and Bonaparte, among others.

Fast, Howard. **Seven Days in June** (1994)

A fictional account of the Revolutionary War experiences of British commanders, loyalists, and a American revolutionaries, and the events that led to the bloody Battle of Bunker Hill.

Grives, Roberta. **My Thomas** (1993)

Written as if taken from the pages of Martha Jefferson, this novel chronicles their courtship and marriage, as well as Martha's observations on the day's most important men—George Washington, Patrick Henry, and Benedict Arnold, to name a few.

Kilian, Michael. **Major Washington** (1998)

Focusing on three pivotal years in the life of George Washington (1753-1755), Kilian explores how he grew from a young, awkward major in the fledgling militia to a powerful player in the politics of the French and Indian War.

Lehrer, Jim. **The Franklin Affair: a Novel** (2005)

Benjamin Franklin scholar R. Taylor sits on a committee investigating plagiarism charges against another historian. That historian in turn threatens to expose some of the committee members' own sloppy research. In addition, the authorship of Franklin's own major work is in question, and Taylor has received a package of documents that seem to incriminate Franklin of a murder. Scholarly sleuthing ensues in this rumination on plagiarism and hero worship.

Martin, William. **Citizen Washington** (1999)

This unflinching account of Washington's life is told from the points of view of his wife, his slave, and his physician, among others. The president has just died when his nemesis Hesperus Draper, a political publisher, is tipped off that the great man had a secret in his past. He and his nephew investigate, talking to those Washington knew and getting a less-than glowing account of the man's life.

Nevin, David. **The American Story Series**

Nevin fictionalizes the American experience and it's players in this epic series. Major characters include Andrew Jackson, James and Dolley Madison, Aaron Burr, and Lewis and Clark.

Dream West (1983)

Treason (2001)

1812 (1996)

Merriwether (2004)

Eagle's Cry (2000)

Safire, William. **Scandalmonger** (2000)

Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Safire brings to life the scandals threatening the presidential campaigns of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. An ambitious journalist has the goods on both, and threatens to reveal all about the private lives and romances of each.

Settle, Mary Lee. **I, Roger Williams** (2001)

In 1630, Roger Williams and his wife set sail for New England. Finding the Puritan church of Massachusetts Bay Colony as corrupt as the Church of England, Williams founds his own colony in what would become Providence, Rhode Island. He is eventually banished by his fellow colonists for his free-thinking ways, and spends years living among the Narragansett Indians.