



John Jay: Founding Father

Walter Stahr

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John Jay was a central figure in the early history of the American Republic. A New York lawyer, born in 1745, Jay served his country with the greatest distinction, and was one of the most influential of its Founding Fathers. In this first full-length biography of John Jay in almost 70 years, Walter Stahr brings Jay vividly to life, setting his astonishing career against the background of the American Revolution.

Drawing on substantial new material, Walter Stahr has written a full and highly readable portrait of both the public and private man. It is the story not only of John Jay himself, the most prominent native-born New Yorker of the eighteenth century, but also of his engaging and intelligent wife, Sarah, who accompanied her husband on his wartime diplomatic missions. This lively and compelling biography presents Jay in the light he deserves: as a major Founding Father, a true national hero, and a leading architect of America's future.

Praise for the print edition of JOHN JAY:

“Walter Stahr’s even-handed account, the first big biography of Jay in decades, is riveting on the matter of negotiating tactics, as practiced by Adams, Jay and Franklin.”

— The Economist

“Walter Stahr writes with great insight, and this wonderful book should restore Jay’s place in the pantheon of our great Founding Fathers.”

—Walter Isaacson, author of Benjamin Franklin: An American Life and Steve Jobs

“Stahr’s Jay is a welcome and worthy biography.”

— The Sunday Times (London)

“Walter Stahr, an independent scholar, has written a fascinating, learned and beautifully written biography of a major figure of the American Revolution, one who has been too long overlooked. Mr. Stahr deserves consideration for the Pulitzer Prize for biography.”

— Washington Times

“Mr. Stahr is a superlative biographer, reporting the criticisms made of his subject and then showing why, in most cases, Jay knew better than his contemporary critics or later historians.”

— New York Sun

“Until Walter Stahr’s splendid new biography appeared, the most recent biography of Jay was Frank Monaghan’s John Jay: Defender of Liberty against Kings and Peoples (1935), published some seven decades ago.”

— Journal of American History

“Walter Stahr’s excellent new biography should re-establish Jay’s standing as one of America’s great statesmen. It portrays Jay’s life with a balance and command of the material worthy of the subject.”

— Weekly Standard

“Stahr . . . captures both his subject’s seriousness and his thoughtful, affectionate side as son, husband, father

and friend. In humanizing Jay, Stahr makes him an appealing figure accessible to a large readership and places Jay once again in the company of America's greatest statesmen, where he unquestionably belongs.”
— Publishers Weekly

“Stahr has succeeded splendidly in his aim of recovering the reputation of John Jay as a major founder. His biography is a reliable and clearly written account [and] makes a persuasive case for including Jay among the first rank of Revolutionary leaders.”

— Gordon S. Wood in The New York Review of Books

“Walter Stahr has not only given us a meticulous study of the life of John Jay, but one very much written in the spirit of the man. It is thorough, fair, consistently intelligent, and presented with the most scrupulous accuracy.”

— Ron Chernow, author of Alexander Hamilton

AUTHOR BIO:

Walter Stahr was born in Massachusetts, grew up in Southern California, and attended the Phillips Exeter Academy, Stanford University and Harvard Law School. After a twenty-five year career as a lawyer he returned to his first love, American history, to research and write a biography of John Jay. Stahr lives, with his wife Masami and two children, in Exeter, New Hampshire, and Newport Beach, California. His website is walterstahr.com.

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