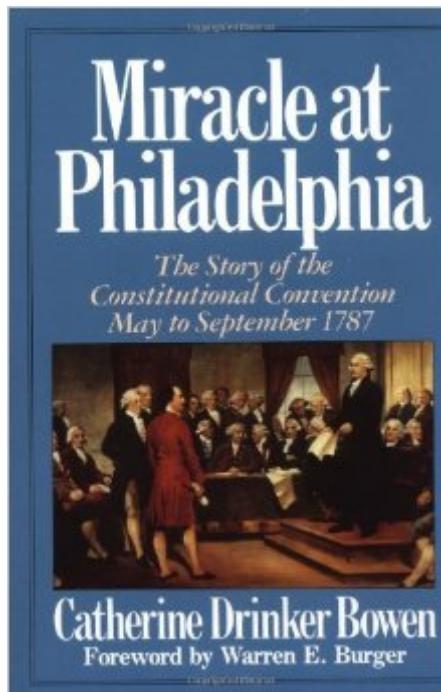


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Miracle At Philadelphia: The Story Of The Constitutional Convention May - September 1787



Synopsis

This book is a history of the Federal Convention in Philadelphia that resulted in the Constitution of the United States.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After reading this book, not only do I have a greater respect for our Founding Fathers, but I also understand why Ms. Bowen used the word "Miracle" in her title. It's remarkable to think that our Constitution, which has proven durable over the past two centuries in spite of its flaws, arose out of those intense debates in Philadelphia's sweltering summer. This book is particularly valuable for its perspective. Learning about the delegates' personalities and backgrounds was fascinating, and seeing the Convention in the context of the social and political conditions of early America was especially insightful. I also enjoyed seeing the early colonies through the eyes of foreign visitors. If you're interested in the history of the U.S. Constitution, this book is a must (my condolences to the disgruntled high school students of previous reviews).

This is the story of the formation of our constitutional government. Catherine Drinker Bowen's book is a classic that tells how America's founding fathers debated, compromised and struggled to create a permanent system of republican government in a world ruled by monarchs and absolutists. The debates are here, as well as the personalities. The story of how various elements of our governing structure were arrived at is fascinating as well as illuminating to any serious student of the American

system. Important debates regarding the nature of the presidency, small state versus large state interests (how we got our Senate), the desirability of direct democracy versus state interests (part of how we got the Electoral College), the finessing of the slave issue -- it's all here. I read this book and was filled with a profound sense of pride and amazement at the story of how the "gentlemen of Philadelphia" were able to navigate such complex issues and arrive at the masterpiece that is our Constitution. In Bowen's hands, this moving and patriotic story is well told and thoroughly explored. I imagine many of you reading this review have this book on a political science syllabus, but it should be read by any with an interest in our Constitution or our government's history.

I purchased this book over ten years ago and for various reasons, I did not get to read it until last summer. A pleasant surprise! The book places the Constitutional Convention within the context of the times, political and social climate and the beliefs and personalities of those responsible for its creation. Reading this, I developed a flavor for the circumstances which brought about the Constitution. One develops a true appreciation for the ultimate collective wisdom of the founding fathers. The book has been in print for many, many years. If you read it, you'll find out why.

I first read this book several years ago for my high school American History class, and I just recently read it again. This book is excellent no matter what your age or understanding of U.S. History. One of its greatest advantages is that its narrative style makes the story of the Constitution so accessible. It is clear and easy to read; however, it does give a complete and thorough treatment of why the document was needed; the ideas and compromises that went into the document, and the debates that shaped the Constitution. Finally, the book is clearly, excellently based upon James Madison's notes from the Convention itself. All in all, an outstanding book for high school and college students, and anyone else interested.

This book is honest, intriguing, well written history. Bowen does an excellent job of mixing patriotism with honest history. This book tells the story and lets the reader/student make decisions about how to regard the subject(s). There is no comparison to this book on the Miracle at Philadelphia!

The Constitution was a collaborative effort of disparate interests and at the constitutional convention, it often seemed as though these interests could not possibly be reconciled. Alexander Hamilton, for example proposed an elected monarch elected for life. Others feared any executive power vested in one person. There were so many issues that were settled by compromise.

Nonetheless, there were influential people who opposed the ratification of the Constitution in their state conventions. For example, in Virginia, Patrick Henry was concerned with the vesting of power in the people as opposed to the states and vigorously opposed ratification. The debates were fascinating and this book enjoyably chronicals them. Additionally, this book gives an interesting social history of this period of American history through the eyes of foreign visitors.

I read this as a book club member and so was not too thrilled at the prospect of plowing through what I thought would be singularly boring stuff. However, one of the reasons I joined a book club was to step out of my normal comfort zone. Happily, with this book I was pleasantly surprised. The first quarter of the book I did find somewhat pedantic but I stuck with it and, to my surprise, I became really interested. By the end, I was awestruck at the way in which the men who attended the convention managed to pull together, in spite of many, many differences, and create the document known as the Constitution of the United States of America. I only wish those who represent the U.S. now could be so farsighted and as willing to set aside their own personal/political agendas and do what is the best for the country in the future. Perhaps it should be set reading for all those in Congress now, if they have not read it before.

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