resulting conflict should be seen as “as much a civil war between two rival ideologies,” authoritarian reform and radical Whiggery, “as it was a battle between Britain and its colonies” (237). Thus, he argues, we should see American colonists’ victory as a triumph that resulted in a “radical Whig imperium”—the United States (245). That, however, is an older story—albeit one given new life here.

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Long after they had parted ways, the loyalist Jonathan Sewall declared the patriot John Adams had “a heart formed for friendship.” Sewall’s insight provides a theme for Gordon S. Wood’s learned and insightful exploration of the extraordinary relationship between the early republic’s intellectual titans. Wood explains how in 1812 Adams, led by his heart and his ego, joined the more rational Jefferson in restoring a friendship launched nearly forty years earlier in the second Continental Congress. Their friendship flourished in the mid-1780s when their families shared experiences as Americans in Paris. Ironically, though the two became close in France, Wood explains how the French Revolution set them on diverging trajectories. From 1790 until after Jefferson left the White House, their profoundly different views of humankind and government made them adversaries. Only after Benjamin Rush, their friend from the Continental Congress, masterminded their reconciliation did they begin the famous correspondence that lasted until their deaths in 1826.

knowledge of their lives and the people with whom they lived and worked, enable him to reveal the dynamics of the unfolding fifty-year relationship of these two very different men. Wood’s *Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (2001) and *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (2006), together with his immersion in the papers of Adams, Jefferson, and their contemporaries—his cumulative learning—gives exceptional depth and persuasiveness to his analysis.

Wood’s twelve chapters and epilogue follow a mostly chronological path. After drawing contrasts between them before they met in Philadelphia, Wood follows their collaborations in government and diplomacy before explaining their emerging ideological differences. Even before the French Revolution, Wood’s analyses of Adams’s *Defense of the Constitution* and *Discourses on Davila* illustrate their conflicting understanding of social and political realities. Though both were college graduates who amassed great libraries, Wood shows how their origins and temperaments led them along different paths. Adams, a Calvinist farmer and selectman’s son, valued New England’s popular government but knew it too well to romanticize it. Jefferson, by contrast, was born to wealth. His father married into the prestigious Randolph family and left his heirs over 7500 acres and more than sixty slaves. Whereas Adams and his father knew manual labor, Jefferson came from the world of refined courtesy. Even as a law clerk, Wood reports the young man joined dinners and played in string quartets at the Governor’s Palace. Jefferson’s temperament suited agreeable gentility and polite evasions. Adams personified the blunt frankness of the Yankee countryside.

Wood admires Adams’s candor more than Jefferson’s strategic duplicity; but he also approves Benjamin Franklin’s oft-quoted 1783 observation that Adams “means well for his Country, is always an honest Man, often a Wise One, but sometimes and in some things, absolutely out of his Senses” (155). Franklin referred to Franco-American diplomacy; but Wood notes that Adams often “had very little political sense” (313). Unlike Jefferson, who embraced the optimistic view of “the people” that has made him a national icon, Adams mistrusted everyone—“the people” and “the rich and well-born” (190). Adams believed that American aristocrats might seem less arrogant than Europeans because they manipulated common folk by pretending to be like them. Adams’s antidote was structural: an upper house to quarantine the wealthy and wellborn. Simultaneously, Adams advocated formal titles to assure deference and respect for government.
The breadth of Adams’s mistrust—so different from Jefferson’s optimism—was evident in Davila where he actually praised hereditary succession in preference to elections. Writing to Rush, Adams exclaimed that aristocracy and hereditary monarchy would ultimately rule the United States.

Jefferson rejected Adams’s ideas in Davila. And whereas Adams admired Edmund Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790), Jefferson disparaged Burke. Jefferson applauded Thomas Paine’s rejoinder, Rights of Man (1791)—which Adams detested. Jefferson was too polite or too prudent to criticize Adams publicly, but when his private aversion to Adams’s views became public, Wood reports Jefferson’s embarrassment. As the French Revolution unfolded, with regicide, terror, and dictatorship, Adams saw his warnings vindicated; Jefferson remained attached to their sister republic. When parties emerged, Jefferson became the champion of the French party, with Adams a Federalist stalwart. Jefferson’s rejection of Adams’s overtures to become his vice president illustrated the New Englander’s lack of “political sense.” And while Jefferson’s victory in 1800 had many causes—notably Hamilton’s vigorous and underhanded opposition to Adams and the slave states’ overrepresentation in the Electoral College—Wood also points to Adams’s political ineptitude in the “Robbins affair.” Here the President advised a US judge to surrender Robbins, a mutinous sailor, to British authorities, though he claimed US citizenship. Republicans excoriated Adams for complying with British impressment. Later it turned out Robbins had falsely asserted citizenship; but the political damage was done. Jefferson made no such blunders.

After Jefferson retired as president, Rush’s initiative led to the correspondence lasting from 1812 to 1826. Why, we may wonder, did these longtime political adversaries—who had often condemned the other’s ideas and actions—choose to awaken their lapsed friendship? Though Wood does not mention it, Adams and Jefferson shared the genteel culture that prescribed friendship as a moral and social good whose ramifications are discussed in the works of Richard Godbeer (Overflowing Friendship: Love Between Men and the Creation of the American Republic [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009]) and Cassandra A. Good (Founding Friendships: Friendships between Men and Women in the Early American Republic [New York: Oxford University Press, 2015]). Wood’s view, widely shared by scholars, is that both recognized their historic importance as “founders,” and rightly believed their relationship mattered for posterity. Yet
Friends Divided also makes clear that the need to explain, to argue, to ventilate, was far more powerful for Adams, who wrote nearly seventy percent (109 of 158) of the letters, than for the cool, detached Virginian. Jefferson was confident of a distinguished place in history, whereas Adams feared that in death, as in life, he would be underappreciated. At the Continental Congress, Adams, who chaired the Declaration’s drafting committee, had been happy to assign the task to the gifted author of A Summary View of the Rights of British America. Years later, Wood shows how jealous he became of Jefferson’s fame as the document’s self-proclaimed “author.” Friends Divided, written in the accessible style of a widely-read author, brims with sophisticated insights into people, politics, and American political culture.


Wendy Warren’s new history of slavery in seventeenth-century New England fits right in with a growing body of scholarship that seeks to complicate the early history of slavery by emphasizing that it was neither a distinctly “southern” phenomenon nor a condition endured solely by people of African descent. Scholars often make this point by highlighting the underappreciated importance of Indian slavery. While Warren addresses this phenomenon, she is arguably more interested in describing how New England was both a slave-holding society and a constituent part of the transatlantic slave plantation complex rooted in the exploitation of Africans.

This well-written, thoughtful, and compelling book is primarily concerned with the period between about 1630 and 1700. The book builds slowly, starting with a perfunctory opening chapter entitled “Beginning” that sets the stage for what follows without going into great depth about either the local indigenous context or the