

The Idea Of America Reflections On The Birth Of The United States

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The Idea of America is a compendium of essays that reflects historian Grant Wood's life's work to understand American history, particularly the ideologies that motivated American history at the country's inception. The beauty of the work is Wood's ability to trace paths that the United States followed and diverged from at its birth.

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In The Idea of America, Wood again stresses that the Revolution brought a radical social transformation. For him, colonial society was "hierarchical and patriarchal, a society generally organized vertically, not horizontally, and tied together by kinship and patron-client relationships."

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With his erudition, even-handedness, and thoughtfulness, Gordon Wood is among the best of American historians. Wood's most recent book, "The Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States" (2011) collects eleven essays written and revisited over a period of nearly 50 years.

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The American Revolutionaries exploited all of these classical ideas in their creation of the United States. Many of them saw the new country as a rebirth of the ancient Roman republic. They established mixed constitutions in emulation of ancient Rome and re-created the Roman conception of citizenship open to everyone in the world.

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