

The Founders: Portrait of an American Elite

Lecture notes

Thesis: Founders wrote Constitution that promoted their own interests.
But they were able to get their blueprint accepted because it addressed other problems.

What the Founders Wanted (the sweeteners)

- Broader Tax Powers
 - To pay back bonds (bondholders)
 - To block foreign imports (merchants)
 - To fund internal improvements (speculators)
 - To pay military pensions (Cincinnati)
- Centralized Policy Making
 - To prevent states from coining money (money lenders and bondholders)
 - To negotiate international trade (merchants and planters)
 - To prevent internal tariffs (merchants and planters)
 - To promote “national” leadership like them
- A National Military
 - To run off the Native Americans (speculators)
 - To suppress farmer insurrections (money lenders)
 - To protect against slave revolts (planters)
 - To foil pirates (merchants)
 - To provide career opportunities (Cincinnati)
- Protection for Contracts & Wealth
 - Contracts guaranteed to protect land claims (speculators) and loans (money lenders)
 - Federal court system allowed to enforce such protections
 - Ban on income taxes (merchants, etc.)
 - Slavery safeguards (planters)
 - Voting qualifications (just about everyone)