



The Creation of the Presidency, 1775-1789: A Study in Constitutional History

Charles C Jr Thach

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Fresh from a battle against monarchy, the American Founders were wary of a strong executive, but they were equally conscious that unchecked legislative power risked all the excesses of democracy. Creating an effective executive who did not dominate the legislative body posed a significant challenge. In *The Creation of the Presidency, 1775–1789*, Charles Thach’s lucid analysis reveals how these conflicting concerns shaped the writing of the Constitution and the early clarification of executive powers.

Thach sets the stage by analyzing the political tendencies during the war and under the Articles of Confederation, showing that experience with rash state legislatures and an ineffectual national Congress contributed to the desire for a strong executive. He presents clearly the scattered deliberations on the executive during the Philadelphia Convention and gives due attention to the important decisions on presidential power made by the First Congress.

Originally published in 1923, this book has influenced decades of scholars. In 2003 Raymond Tatalovich and Thomas Engeman referred to it as “the definitive statement of original intent” with respect to the establishment of the presidency. Herbert Storing, in his introduction to the 1969 edition, described it as “so useful and so sound as to be indispensable.” Now available in this Liberty Fund edition, Thach’s pioneering study can again benefit readers interested in the formation of the U.S. Constitution and the creation of the presidency. This volume addresses the practical issue of liberty and constitutional government: namely, how to design an executive power that will be strong enough to keep order yet remain compatible with individual liberty.

Charles C. Thach, Jr., (1894–1966) was educated at Johns Hopkins University and received his Ph.D. in 1922. Specializing in political theory, he taught at the University of Minnesota and Johns Hopkins. He later became a Professor of Government at New York University, where he taught for over thirty years.

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