

Gordon S. Wood, 1933-2026: Leading historian of the American Revolution

8 June 2026

Gordon S. Wood, 92, a leading historian of the American Revolution, died Sunday after being struck by a car. His career spanned more than half a century, most of it at Brown University, where he trained generations of early Americanists and helped shape modern interpretation of the Revolutionary era. He received his doctorate at Harvard under Bernard Bailyn and was awarded both the Pulitzer Prize and the Bancroft Prize.

Wood was the author of a series of influential works that helped define the study of the founding period, including *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (1969), *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (1992), and *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815* (2009). His scholarship emphasized the far-reaching social and political transformations unleashed by the break with monarchy and the emergence of democratic and egalitarian tendencies within the early republic. His works became essential points of reference for historians and students of eighteenth-century America.

The *World Socialist Web Site* will publish a full obituary in the coming days. Historian Tom Mackaman interviewed Wood in 2019, addressing the historical issues raised by the *New York Times*' 1619 Project. In those discussions, Wood, along with other prominent historians including James M. McPherson, challenged the project's reinterpretation of the Revolution and slavery. While the *Times* publicly dismissed these criticisms, it subsequently revised key claims central to the project.



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