

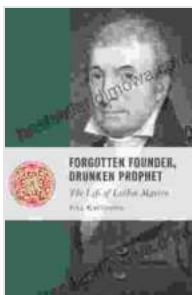
# Forgotten Founder: The Drunken Prophet Who Shaped the American Revolution

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In the annals of American history, the names of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin loom large as the iconic heroes of the Revolution. Yet, amidst this pantheon of well-known figures, lies a forgotten founder whose contributions were no less significant: James Wilson.

Wilson, a brilliant lawyer, orator, and statesman, was a driving force behind the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the United States Constitution. He is credited with crafting some of the most eloquent and enduring phrases in American history, including "We the People" and "E pluribus unum" (Out of many, one).

Despite his profound influence, Wilson's legacy has been overshadowed by his contemporaries. This article aims to shed light on this enigmatic figure, known as the "Drunken Prophet," and explore his extraordinary life and contributions to the shaping of the United States.



## Forgotten Founder, Drunken Prophet: The Life of Martin Luther (Lives of the Founders) by Bill Kauffman

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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**Early Life and Education** James Wilson was born in Largo, Scotland, on September 14, 1742. As a young man, he exhibited an insatiable thirst for knowledge, studying Classics, Philosophy, and Law at the University of Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh. His keen intellect and eloquence quickly became apparent, and he was known as a prodigious orator even as a student.

**Emigration to America** In 1765, Wilson, driven by a desire for adventure and opportunity, emigrated to America, landing in Philadelphia. He established a successful law practice, quickly gaining a reputation for his brilliance and courtroom skills. His clients included prominent figures such as John Adams and Robert Morris.

**Political Activism** Wilson's legal acumen and oratorical prowess soon propelled him into the political arena. He became an outspoken advocate for American independence, penning numerous essays and speeches that rallied support for the cause. In 1775, he was elected as a delegate to the Continental Congress, where he would play a central role in shaping the nation's destiny.

**Declaration of Independence** Wilson served on the committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence, along with such luminaries as Thomas

Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin. He is credited with writing several key passages, including the declaration that "all men are created equal." His eloquent words inspired and galvanized the American people, giving them a powerful rallying cry for freedom and self-determination.

**Articles of Confederation** After the Declaration of Independence, Wilson played a significant role in crafting the Articles of Confederation, the first constitution of the United States. He advocated for a strong central government, believing that it was essential to maintaining the unity and prosperity of the newly formed nation. However, his efforts were met with resistance from those who feared an overbearing federal power.

**Constitutional Convention** In 1787, Wilson was elected as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Here, he played a pivotal role in shaping the United States Constitution, the blueprint for the American government that has endured for over two centuries. He advocated for a strong executive branch, an independent judiciary, and a system of checks and balances to prevent tyranny.

**Supreme Court Justice** In 1789, George Washington appointed Wilson as one of the first Supreme Court Justices. He served with distinction on the Court for six years, writing numerous influential opinions that helped to shape American jurisprudence. His most famous decision was in *Chisholm v. Georgia* (1793), in which he ruled that states could be sued in federal court.

**"Drunken Prophet"** Throughout his life, Wilson struggled with alcoholism. His excessive drinking earned him the nickname "Drunken Prophet." Despite his personal struggles, he remained a brilliant and influential figure.

However, his addiction ultimately took its toll on his health and reputation. Wilson died prematurely at the age of 56 in 1798.

**Legacy** Despite being largely forgotten by history, James Wilson's legacy is profound. As a Founding Father, he helped to establish the principles and institutions that have shaped the United States for generations. His eloquent words continue to resonate in the halls of government and the hearts of Americans.

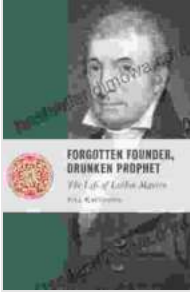
**Rediscovering Wilson** In recent years, there has been a growing interest in rediscovering Wilson's life and contributions. Historians and biographers have written books and articles exploring his remarkable story. His writings and speeches are being studied and celebrated anew.

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James Wilson, the "Forgotten Founder," was a brilliant and enigmatic figure who played a pivotal role in shaping the United States. From his eloquent pen came some of the most enduring phrases in American history. Despite his personal struggles, his legacy as a Founding Father and a champion of liberty deserves to be remembered and celebrated.

### **Alt Attributes for Images:**

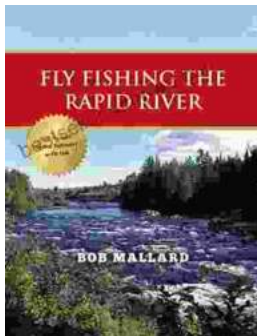
- **James Wilson portrait:** James Wilson, Forgotten Founder and Drunken Prophet
- **Declaration of Independence draft:** Declaration of Independence, crafted with the help of James Wilson



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