

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910809331103321
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Titolo	An age of infidels : the politics of religious controversy in the early United States // Eric R. Schlereth
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Philadelphia, : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013
ISBN	0-8122-2415-9 0-8122-0825-0
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (302 p.)
Collana	Early American studies
Disciplina	322/.1097309034
Soggetti	Christianity and politics - United States - History Christianity and culture - United States - History Christianity and other religions - United States Church and state - United States - History Deism - United States - History United States Politics and government 1783-1865
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Based on the author's thesis from Brandeis Univ., 2008.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Introduction. Remaking Religion -- Chapter 1. Boundaries -- Chapter 2. America's Deist Future -- Chapter 3. Citizen Deists -- Chapter 4. Partisan Religious Truths -- Chapter 5. America's Deist Past -- Chapter 6. Free Enquiry -- Chapter 7. Political Religion, Political Irreligion -- Epilogue. The Origins of American Cultural Politics -- Notes -- Index -- Acknowledgments
Sommario/riassunto	Historian Eric R. Schlereth places religious conflict at the center of early American political culture. He shows ordinary Americans—both faithful believers and Christianity's staunchest critics—struggling with questions about the meaning of tolerance and the limits of religious freedom. In doing so, he casts new light on the ways Americans reconciled their varied religious beliefs with political change at a formative moment in the nation's cultural life. After the American Revolution, citizens of the new nation felt no guarantee that they would avoid the mire of religious and political conflict that had gripped much of Europe for three centuries. Debates thus erupted in the new United States about how or even if long-standing religious beliefs, institutions,

and traditions could be accommodated within a new republican political order that encouraged suspicion of inherited traditions. Public life in the period included contentious arguments over the best way to ensure a compatible relationship between diverse religious beliefs and the nation's recent political developments. In the process, religion and politics in the early United States were remade to fit each other. From the 1770's onward, Americans created a political rather than legal boundary between acceptable and unacceptable religious expression, one defined in reference to infidelity. Conflicts occurred most commonly between deists and their opponents who perceived deists' anti-Christian opinions as increasingly influential in American culture and politics. Exploring these controversies, Schlereth explains how Americans navigated questions of religious truth and difference in an age of emerging religious liberty.

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