

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910973987803321
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Titolo	American sovereigns : the people and America's Constitutional tradition before the Civil War / / Christian G. Fritz
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Oxford [England] ; ; New York, : Cambridge University Press, c2008
ISBN	9786612001246 9780511474811 0511474814 9781107185166 1107185165 9781282001244 1282001248 9780511479588 0511479581 9780511480386 0511480385 9780511477171 0511477171 9780511475733 051147573X 9780511800580 0511800584 9780511478697 0511478690
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xi, 427 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Collana	Cambridge studies on the American Constitution
Disciplina	342.7302/9
Soggetti	Constituent power - United States - History People (Constitutional law) - United States - History States' rights (American politics) - History Federal government - United States - History Constitutional history - United States
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015).

Nota di bibliografia

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Nota di contenuto

Prologue -- The people's sovereignty in the states -- Revolutionary constitutionalism -- Grassroots self-government : America's early determinist movements -- Revolutionary tensions : "friends of government" confront "the Regulators" in Massachusetts -- The sovereign behind the Federal Constitution -- The Federal Constitution and the effort to constrain the people -- Testing the constitutionalism of 1787 : the whiskey "rebellion" in Pennsylvania -- Federal sovereignty : competing views of the Federal Constitution -- The struggle over a constitutional middle ground -- The collective sovereign persists : the people's constitution in Rhode Island -- Epilogue.

Sommario/riassunto

American Sovereigns: The People and America's Constitutional Tradition Before the Civil War challenges traditional American constitutional history, theory and jurisprudence that sees today's constitutionalism as linked by an unbroken chain to the 1787 Federal constitutional convention. American Sovereigns examines the idea that after the American Revolution, a collectivity - the people - would rule as the sovereign. Heated political controversies within the states and at the national level over what it meant that the people were the sovereign and how that collective sovereign could express its will were not resolved in 1776, in 1787, or prior to the Civil War. The idea of the people as the sovereign both unified and divided Americans in thinking about government and the basis of the Union. Today's constitutionalism is not a natural inheritance, but the product of choices Americans made between shifting understandings about themselves as a collective sovereign.