



## Forging a Nation: The American History Collection at Gilcrease Museum

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On a humid morning in Philadelphia in 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, severing forever all ties with Great Britain. With the stroke of a pen, a new republic was formed, the United States of America. As colonists-turned-citizens took to the streets in celebration, few had any real sense of the new nation's immediate future or could foresee the great struggles that lay before it in the centuries to come.

*Forging a Nation: The American History Collection at Gilcrease Museum* explores that struggle—the history of the United States—as told through art, artifacts, and archival materials that illuminate some three hundred years of a shared cultural experience. Drawn entirely from the diverse and noted collections of the Gilcrease Museum, this volume examines the foundations of the American republic from colonial times through the Early National period.

With essays focused on some of the finest artworks, artifacts, and documents in the Gilcrease Museum collection, *Forging a Nation* offers a unique examination of early American life. The catalog of artists includes such essential American painters as Charles Willson Peale, John Singleton Copley, Robert Feke, Benjamin West, George Catlin, Alfred Jacob Miller, Emanuel Leutze, John Vanderlyn, William Tylee Ranney, and John Wesley Jarvis. Also included are rare sculptures by Jean Antoine Houdon, Hiram Powers, and Augustus Saint-Gaudens and an extensive array of American archival treasures, including a handwritten transcription of the Declaration of Independence itself.

*Forging a Nation* examines the national self across time—through the triumphs and tragedies of the Civil War and the violence and inequities involved in the ensuing settlement of the American West. This essential retrospective ends with the closing of the frontier, when the nation was poised at the center of the world stage, its frontiers about to become those of industry, science, technology, and social justice.

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