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## **Watergate and the Resignation of Richard Nixon: Impact of a Constitutional Crisis (Book Review)**

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**Watergate and the Resignation of Richard Nixon: Impact of a Constitutional Crisis.** Harry P. Jeffrey and Thomas Maxwell-Long (Editors). Washington, D. C.: CQ Press, 2004. xviii, 346 pp. \$105 (cloth). ISBN 1-56802-910-1.

As we continue to probe the inner workings of our federal government, as well as debate the extent of presidential powers, the phenomenon known as Watergate provides perspective for constitutional scholars and other researchers. There is much to be gleaned from examining current events and presidencies through our historical prisms. With more than 30 years elapsing since the break-in at the Watergate office complex and the subsequent collapse of Richard Nixon's presidency, the impact of the events associated with Watergate on our legal, political, and social heritage remains substantial.

Today, Watergate can still make a headline as with the revelation by W. Mark Felt in 2005 that he was the enigmatic confidential source, "Deep Throat," used by reporters Woodward and Bernstein in investigating the unfolding scandal for the *Washington Post*. Even with the occasional media burst of previously undisclosed information, not to mention the many books written on the subject, there are new generations who may be unfamiliar with the Watergate saga and its lasting effects. Those needing an introductory, yet comprehensive, resource examining Watergate's legacy should look to *Watergate and the Resignation of Richard Nixon: Impact of a Constitutional Crisis* published by CQ Press in 2004.

Useful to researchers of all backgrounds, this one-volume work contains a complete overview of the Watergate scandal and the political career of Richard Nixon. As with other works in the *Landmark Events in U.S. History* series, this book features short chapters, essentially single essays, which explore constitutional, political, or other issues. Editors Harry P. Jeffrey and Thomas Maxwell-Long have selected noted constitutional and historical scholars, who each examine a single issue associated with the Watergate scandal and provide critical insight into the impacts of the Nixon presidency and Watergate on that particular subject. The introduction is by former Nixon aide John Dean, who adds his perspective on the lasting effects of Watergate.

Each chapter serves as an introductory treatment of a topic or issue with a concluding reference list and notes as opportunities for additional research. Chapters examining specific constitutional issues include: Separation of Powers, Special Prosecutors and Independent Counsels, Executive Privilege: Secrecy versus Accountability, and Nixon and Impeachment. There are also several chapters which deal in more general terms with Nixon's life, presidency, and post-presidential years, which provide necessary background and context for the more specific political/legal issues. Additional chapters also explore emerging cultural themes from the Nixon era, such as the rise in combative relations between the executive branch and the media and the increasing use of crisis management in White House operations.

The essays do a nice job of capsulizing the issues in a concise and straightforward way. For example, the chapter examining executive privilege is divided into sections dealing with the definition and application of executive privilege, executive privilege among modern presidents, executive privilege and Watergate, and finally, executive privilege after Watergate. Subtitles

clearly divide the essay into these sections making the material easy to peruse. Readers quickly receive an introduction to the topic of executive privilege, but most importantly also receive commentary and analysis on the impact of Watergate on executive privilege and its use by subsequent presidents.

In addition, like other CQ Press titles, the chapters are presented in a light, easy-to-read style which presents the material in an engaging manner for diverse audiences. Students and novice researchers will enjoy this easy presentation of complex subject matter.

A major asset of this book is the inclusion of a large amount of primary source material in an appendix. Serving as supplemental research material, the documents are compiled into four sections entitled: Richard Nixon and American Politics, Constitutional and Political Issues, Responses to the Movement for Impeachment, and Postresignation Analysis. Here can be found documents, such as Nixon's early political "Checkers" speech, a transcript of the "Cancer on the Presidency" taped conversation between Nixon and John Dean, and the remarks of President Gerald Ford upon granting the Nixon pardon. References in the essays direct researchers to the pertinent documents.

For example, in support of the chapter on Nixon and Impeachment, the appendix includes the actual Articles of Impeachment against Richard Nixon, as well as the articles used against presidents Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton. One can also find the record of House Judiciary Committee votes on each of the three articles of impeachment against Nixon, as well as a transcript of the passionate speech given by Rep. Barbara Jordan in support of the proceedings. Sections from the Federalist Papers provide perspective on how the early framers of the Constitution viewed separation of powers and impeachment. Librarians and other educators will applaud this use of primary source material.

As a ready reference tool, the book also contains a "cast of characters" containing the names and a brief synopsis of many of the leading players in the Watergate drama. Published in 2004, before the "Deep Throat" revelation, the list does not include W. Mark Felt, who was an Assistant Director of the FBI during the Watergate events. Although considered by some to be a possibility for "Deep Throat," it was generally thought that he did not play a major role in Watergate. Future editions of this work, as well as other books, will undoubtedly move him further downstage.

A few drawbacks should also be mentioned. While a list of the primary source documents does provide some context as to the span of time, the inclusion of a timeline or listing of significant events would serve as an additional and necessary ready reference tool. Further, some of the primary source documents are heavily excerpted which while succeeding in highlighting the pertinent material can also prove distracting to the researcher. Finally, a photo caption misidentifies Nixon son-in-law, Edward Cox, as his other son-in-law, David Eisenhower, which is unfortunate. However, these flaws are minor considering the overall effectiveness of this resource.

This book is highly recommended for libraries of all types especially for academic libraries serving students who may be called upon to write legal or political issue papers on topics associated with Watergate and the resignation of Richard Nixon.

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