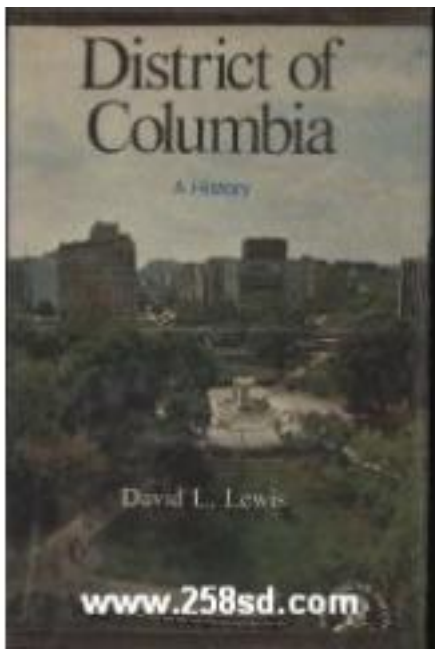


District of Columbia: A Bicentennial History



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IN 1807¼¢ fornler President John Adams argued that a complete
history of the American Revolution could not be written until
the history of change in each state was known¼¢ because the prin-
ciples of the Revoluti()n w:ere as various as the states that went
through it Two hundred ..¼¢i¼¢s
¼¢¼¢..¼¢.¼¢¼¢. after the Declaration ol: Indepen
dence¼¢ the American nation has spread over a continent and
beyond. The states have grown in number lrom thirteen to fitty.
And democratic principles have been interpreted differently in
every one of them.
We therefore invite you to consider that the history of your
state may have more to do with the bicentennial review ot the
American Revolution than does the story of Bunker Hill or
1~
Valley Forge. The Revolution has continued as Americans ex-
tended liberty and democracy

over a vast territory. John Adams was right: the states are part of that story and the story is incomplete without an account of their diversity. The Declaration of Independence stressed life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness: accordingly it shattered the notion of holding new territories in the subordinate status of colonies. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 set forth a procedure for new states to enter the Union on an equal footing with the old. The Federal Constitution shortly confirmed this novel means of building a nation out of equal states. The step-by-step process through which territories have achieved self-government and national representation is among the most important of the Founding Fathers' legacies. The method of state-making reconciled the ancient conflict between liberty and empire, resulting in what Thomas Jefferson called an empire for liberty. The system has worked and remains unaltered despite enormous changes that have taken

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