



The Founding Fathers' degrees of faith differed widely one from another. What they shared more universally was a deep belief in Enlightenment "natural philosophy" and the scientific method. For them the establishment of the United States of America was "an experiment," in the full scientific sense of that phrase.

This aspect of American history is largely unknown to the public. While we have heard of Benjamin Franklin's electricity experiments, we have no idea who and what made the experiments possible; nor do we know much about Franklin's then-better-known co-founder

of the scientific society of the colonies, botanist John Bartram. We know that young George Washington was a surveyor, but not that he was later lauded in Europe as a daring experimental farmer, or of his intense interest in altering the Potomac River by locks, canals and steam vessels, or that during the Revolutionary War -- and over the objections of the Continental Congress -- he used an experimental vaccination technique to prevent his troops from being decimated by smallpox, which ensured the republic's survival. These and similar little-known stories are the subject of an eagerly-awaited book.

Tom Shachtman, a writer in residence in the Library's Wertheim Study, has written more than thirty books, and many television documentaries. His prior science history, *ABSOLUTE ZERO AND THE CONQUEST OF COLD*, was the basis for the BBC/Nova documentaries of the same name, for which he won a major science-writing prize. He has also written articles for *The New York Times*, *Newsday*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, the *Hoover Digest*, *Huffington Post*, and *History News Network*. His highly-regarded, occasional column for *THE LAKEVILLE JOURNAL* (CT), "The Long View," helped win the paper a recent New England Newspaper Association prize for op-ed pages.

Research for the book, *THE SCIENCE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS*, to be published by Palgrave Macmillan, is being partially underwritten by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan.

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The Wertheim Study
presents

Tom Shachtman

The Science of the Founding Fathers



Thursday, October 25 at 1:15 pm
in the South Court Auditorium