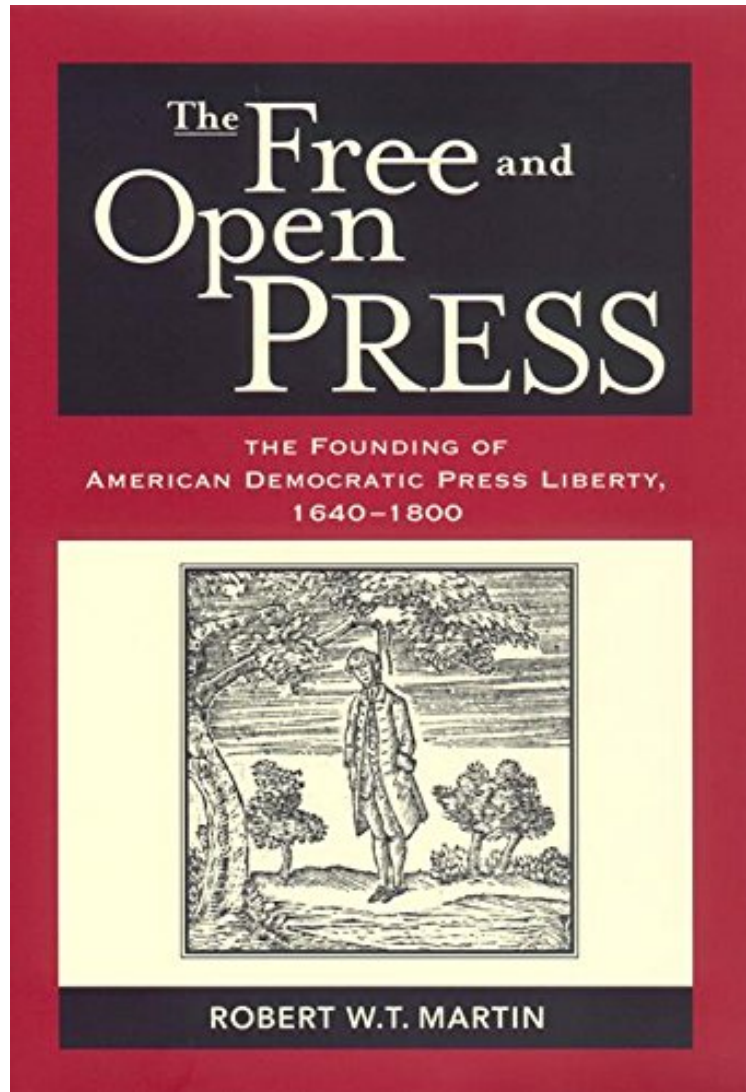


(Library ebook) The Free and Open Press: The Founding of American Democratic Press Liberty, 1640-1800

The Free and Open Press: The Founding of American Democratic Press Liberty, 1640-1800

Robert W. T. Martin

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The current, heated debates over hate speech and pornography were preceded by the equally contentious debates over

the "free and open press" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus far little scholarly attention has been focused on the development of the concept of political press freedom even though it is a form of civil liberty that was pioneered in the United States. But the establishment of press liberty had implications that reached far beyond mere free speech. In this groundbreaking work, Robert Martin demonstrates that the history of the "free and open press" is in many ways the story of the emergence and first real expansions of the early American public sphere and civil society itself. Through a careful analysis of early libel law, the state and federal constitutions, and the Sedition Act crisis Martin shows how the development of constitutionalism and civil liberties were bound up in the discussion of the "free and open press." Finally, this book is a study of early American political thought and democratic theory, as seen through the revealing window provided by press liberty discourse. It speaks to broad audiences concerned with the public square, the history of the book, free press history, contemporary free expression controversies, legal history, and conceptual history.

"Robert Martin has thrown a brilliant spotlight on the field of press liberty and lit up vast areas of democratic theory and practice once obscured. Looking at the century and a half leading up to the American Revolutionary era, he reminds us how decisively it shaped the vast domain of modern liberty."-Joyce Appleby,author of *Inheriting the Revolution: the First Generation of Americans*"The Free and Open Press ought to be required reading whenever anyone questions the meaning of the Founding Fathers, the framers of the Constitution, or other early American icons of liberty."-*Journalism History*"Martin uses a number of fresh quotations and a helpful arranging and packaging of many ideas on a momentous topic."-*American Historical* "Robert W. T. Martin revitalizes a debate over the status of press rights in eighteenth-century America that had grown tiresome over the past 20 years...all scholars of American political thought and constitutional development should read this book."-*American Political Science* "Robert Martin's *The Free and Open Press* is conceptual history at its most illuminating. Recognizing that human beings live via ideas that can seem to work together in one context and to be in contradiction in others, Martin shows that many early Americans believed in both a press that would help republican government work and one in which all views could be heard. The lesson they learned that those goals were often in profound tension is, soberingly, one that remains true today. If that tension is to be eased, the answers must be found not only in the quantity of our rights but in the quality of our citizens."-Rogers M. Smith,Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania>About the AuthorRobert W. T. Martin is associate professor of government at Hamilton College and author of *The Free and Open Press* (NYU Press, 2001).