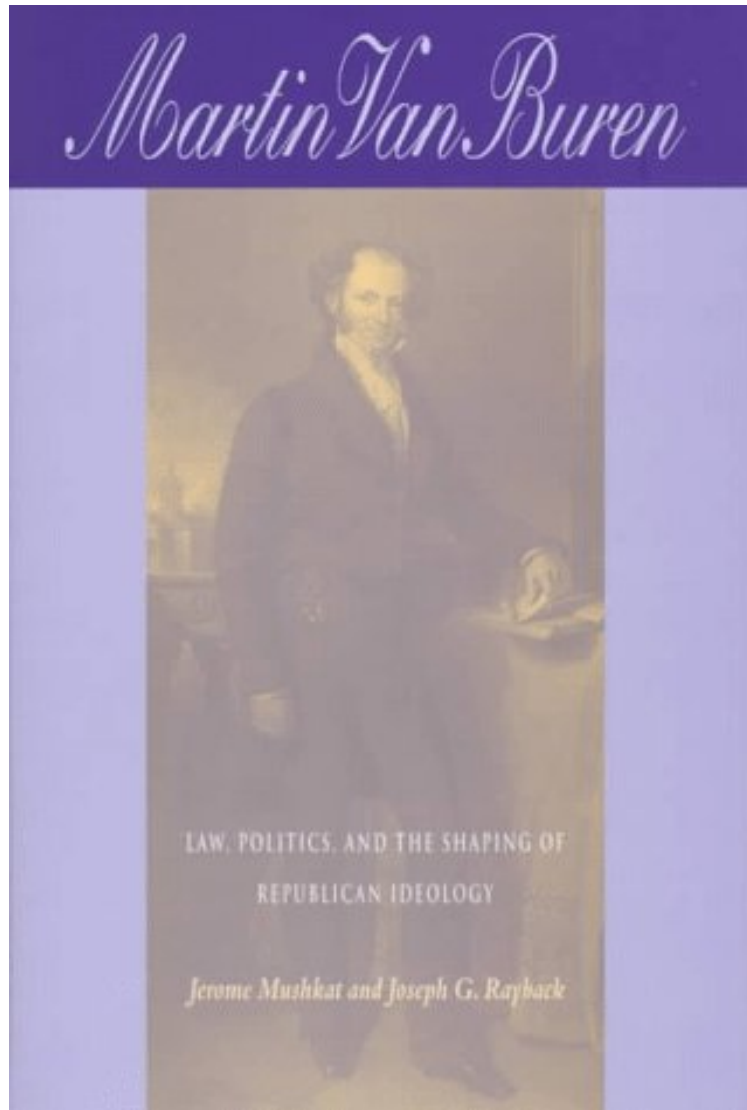


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Martin Van Buren: Law, Politics, and the Shaping of Republican Ideology

Jerome Mushkat, Joseph G. Rayback
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Jerome Mushkat, Joseph G. Rayback : Martin Van Buren: Law, Politics, and the Shaping of Republican Ideology before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Martin Van Buren: Law, Politics, and the Shaping of Republican Ideology:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Old Kinderhook: Beyond the Political BossBy Kevin M. DerbyThis account of the political thought of Martin Van Buren is odd to say the least. Old Kinderhook is usually remembered for the Albany Regency and the birth of a distinctly American political operation. However, in this dry study of Van

Buren's legal background and how it shaped his thinking, Jerome Mushkat and Joseph Rayback argue that he had a more coherent set of political beliefs than he is usually given credit for. It's an interesting argument and an interesting counter to MVB's image as a slick master wirepuller whose political magic failed him when he ended up in the White House. It certainly explains his political career in the 1840s and even the odd political odyssey of his son John. Still, Mushkat and Rayback did not really touch on MVB'S presidency or the aftermath. This book has a limited appeal but it does make some interesting arguments and makes me see MVB in a little bit of a different light. 15 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Stops too short
By Archer@visi.net (Adam Gortowski) I felt that this book was very well researched, informative and interesting. It, however, left me wanting more. The book stops short of not only Van Buren's presidency, but his vice presidency under Andrew Jackson as well. Furthermore, Van Buren's ex-presidency was long, eventful and unfortunately also neglected by this book. 12 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Only for attorneys
By A Customer This is history at its most dry. This book does what it says it will do, discuss Van Buren's background as an attorney and its influence on him. Unfortunately, I think only an attorney would find this interesting, as it reads like I would expect a law book would read. Not for the average reader hoping to learn about this president.

In 1828, Martin Van Buren discontinued his profession as a lawyer to become a full-time politician, yet his formative years as an attorney provided the critical ideological basis for his presidency. Mushkat and Rayback offer the first historical investigation of the nature, scope, and significance of Van Buren's legal practice as they trace the development of his republican ideology. Rather than a static set of immutable values and imperatives, Van Buren's ideology was a malleable body of thought. Dynamic and evolving, it exemplified the complexities of republicanism itself. As a teenager, Van Buren absorbed Jefferson and Madison's eighteenth-century classical republicanism. Later, the principles of classical republicanism provided guides during his first years as a practicing lawyer. As his legal and political careers developed, Van Buren adapted his ideas to new conditions, accepting key components of liberal republicanism. Van Buren's rise to prominence mirrors the relevance of law to politics. As a New York attorney, Van Buren worked with legal issues in the nation's most important state during the early nineteenth century. His key contributions were Americanization of the common law and modernization of contract law. His experience also helped shape his perspectives on such matters as the allocation and use of power, judicial activism and legislative supremacy, and property and gender rights. Consulting a wide range of original legal sources not previously used by historians, Mushkat and Rayback offer a fresh and intriguing biographical approach to an American president that challenges traditional perceptions and adds new insight into Van Buren's place in American political and legal history.

"Fills a long-standing gap." *Choice* "An imaginative, sophisticated, clearly written study that contributes greatly to our understanding of Van Buren, the law, and the role of republicanism." *Journal of the Early Republic* "One of the best studies of the relationship of law and politics in early nineteenth-century New York." *New York History*