

H. W. BRANDS

HISTORIAN | BIOGRAPHER | STORYTELLER OF AMERICA
AUTHOR OF OUR FIRST CIVIL WAR

Patriots and Loyalists in the American Revolution

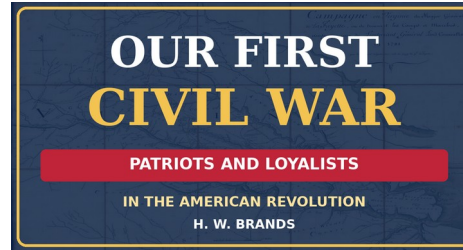


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American history told through the choices and conflicts of real people.

AT A GLANCE

- **Full name:** Henry William Brands Jr.
- **Born:** August 7, 1953, in Portland, Oregon.
- **Profession:** Historian, professor, biographer, and author of more than 30 books.
- **Current chair:** Jack S. Blanton Sr. Chair in History, University of Texas at Austin.

ROOTS, FAMILY & EARLY LIFE

- **Oregon roots:** Grew up near Portland; attended Jesuit High School.
- **Early work:** Worked in his family's cutlery business before teaching math.
- **Family:** A 2002 profile reported marriage to Ginger Savely and a blended family of five children.
- **Historian son:** Hal Brands teaches foreign-policy history at Johns Hopkins.

EDUCATION

- **Stanford:** A.B. in history, 1975.
- **Reed College:** M.A. in liberal studies, 1978.
- **Portland State:** M.S. in mathematics, 1981.
- **UT Austin:** Ph.D. in history, 1985.

MATH + HISTORY An unusual foundation for an American historian.

ACADEMIC CAREER

- **1981-1986:** Austin Community College instructor.
- **1986-1987:** Visiting assistant professor, Vanderbilt University.
- **1987-2004:** Texas A&M historian; became Distinguished Professor and held the Glasscock Chair.
- **2005-present:** University of Texas at Austin; holds the Blanton Chair from 2013.

PULITZER PRIZE RECOGNITION

- **2001 finalist:** The First American, a biography of Benjamin Franklin.
- **2009 finalist:** Traitor to His Class, a biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION Twice a finalist; not a Pulitzer Prize winner.

OTHER MAJOR HONORS

- **2008:** Daughters of the American Revolution History Medal.
- **2010:** Texas Book Festival Texas Writer Award.
- **2013:** William Henry Seward Award for The Man Who Saved the Union.
- **2016:** Texas Exes Texas Ten outstanding-faculty recognition.
- **2024:** Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award.

MILITARY SERVICE

- **Official record:** No U.S. military service appears in Brands's University of Texas curriculum vitae.
- **Documented career:** His professional record centers on teaching, research, and historical writing.

SELECTED BOOKS

- **The First American:** Benjamin Franklin.
- **Andrew Jackson:** Jackson's life and presidency.
- **Traitor to His Class:** Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- **The Man Who Saved the Union:** Ulysses S. Grant.
- **Reagan: The Life:** Ronald Reagan.
- **The General vs. the President:** MacArthur and Truman.
- **The Zealot and the Emancipator:** John Brown and Abraham Lincoln.
- **Our First Civil War:** Patriots and Loyalists in the American Revolution.
- **The Last Campaign:** Sherman, Geronimo, and the struggle for the American West.
- **America First:** Roosevelt, Lindbergh, and the approach of World War II.
- **American Patriarch:** George Washington; published in 2026.

WHY THIS AUTHOR MATTERS

- **Narrative approach:** Brands explains major events through decisions made by recognizable historical figures.
- **Special preparation:** His Pulitzer-finalist Franklin biography gave him extensive grounding in Revolutionary America.
- **Recurring question:** How do people decide what loyalty, duty, and patriotism require?

BRANDS & OUR FIRST CIVIL WAR

- **Central argument:** The American Revolution was also a conflict among Americans themselves.
- **Patriots:** Supported independence from the British Empire.
- **Loyalists:** Remained committed to the Crown and existing political order.
- **Human consequences:** Families fractured, property was seized, neighbors fought, and many Loyalists went into exile.

A FAMILY DIVIDED

- **Benjamin Franklin:** Became a prominent supporter of American independence.
- **William Franklin:** Benjamin's son and New Jersey's royal governor remained loyal to Britain.
- **Why it matters:** Their rupture captures the book's larger conflict between family affection and political conviction.

BOOK-CLUB QUESTION Can people on opposing sides of the same conflict both sincerely believe they are acting as patriots?

SOURCES & IMAGE CREDIT

UT Austin faculty profile and degrees
 UT Austin official curriculum vitae
 Pulitzer finalists: 2001 and 2009
 2024 Helmerich Distinguished Author Award
 Family background: Austin Chronicle profile
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