

The Change of the Historical Thought of Richard Hofstadter

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Abstract

Richard Hofstadter was one of the most important American historians of the post-WWII generation. He has also been a controversial scholar. Historians of American Historiography have argued over whether he should be classified as a Progressive or Consensus historian. The author of this paper, after careful analysis of his *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (1944) and *The American Political Tradition* (1948) and his own confessions, comes to the conclusion that the controversy probably arises from the fact that Hofstadter's historical thought underwent a profound change from Progressivism to Consensus during the 1940's.