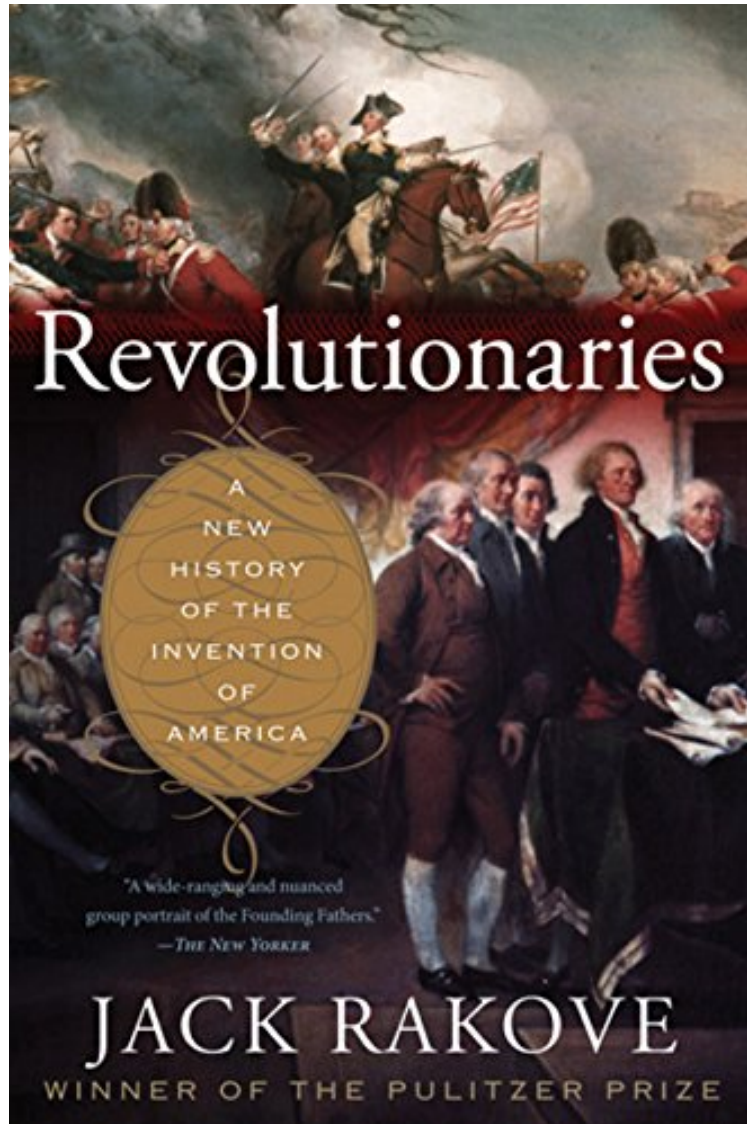


[Read download] Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America

Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America

Jack Rakove

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#228795 in Books 2011-06-02 2011-06-02Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x .86 x 5.311, .87 #File Name: 0547521871512 pages | File size: 73.Mb

Jack Rakove : Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The founding generation in their time and placeBy Mark PaulFor the better part of a century, Americans have alternated between idolizing the nation's revolutionary generation and muckraking it. One moment the revolutionaries are portrayed as demi-gods, the instruments of Divine Providence; the

next moment, they are reactionaries, fighting to protect property and slavery. In *Revolutionaries*, Jack Rakove's beautifully written group portrait of the founding generations, they are placed where they belong: in their own time and their own place. Rakove shows how two generations of American provincials got swept up by history and came to make history of their own. And through their stories he delivers a smart and readable account of the revolutionary crisis, the war itself, the chaos of the 1780s, the making of the Constitution, and the first years of the early Republic. Each of the major players, from John Adams to Alexander Hamilton, come vividly to life in his account, with all their strengths and flaws. (And for those who have imbibed the John Adams worship of the last decade, Rakove's more nuanced account will be a particularly useful elixir.) If you've always wanted to know something more about the revolutionary generation and its challenges than the cartoon versions offered by our politics and popular culture, Rakove's *Revolutionaries* is the perfect place to start.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A different view of those involved with our journey to independence. By Richard H. Landry A somewhat different explication of our journey to independence than what is traditionally taught in school highlighting those Founding Fathers whose political agenda was somewhat more conservative, e.g. John Jay, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, Robert Livingston, James Madison then those of the more liberal persuasion, e.g. John Adams, Samuel Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and so many others whose impact is not fully recognized.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. not an ordinary scholar's tome; it's a page turner for anyone who loves Early American History. By sandytiger This author's previous works are heavily academic. This book, though clearly the result of a scholar's research and discipline, is very readable. The insights into what our Founding Fathers brought to the debate about independence, the form of government and the rights of all men in the new America are fascinating. Rakove so recreates collective and individual thinking of the times that one sees the magnitude of the political and economic revolutions as I never viewed them before. The portraits of the individual actors on this stage show their strengths, flaws and interpersonal rivalries. ENJOY!!!

In the early 1770s, the men who invented America were living quiet, provincial lives in the rustic backwaters of the New World, devoted primarily to family, craft, and the private pursuit of wealth and happiness. None set out to become "revolutionary" by ambition, but when events in Boston escalated, they found themselves thrust into a crisis that moved, in a matter of months, from protest to war. In this remarkable book, the historian Jack Rakove shows how the private lives of these men were suddenly transformed into public careers—how Washington became a strategist, Franklin a pioneering cultural diplomat, Madison a sophisticated constitutional thinker, and Hamilton a brilliant policymaker. Rakove shakes off accepted notions of these men as godlike visionaries, focusing instead on the evolution of their ideas and the crystallizing of their purpose. In *Revolutionaries*, we see the founders before they were fully formed leaders, as individuals whose lives were radically altered by the explosive events of the mid-1770s. They were ordinary men who became extraordinary—a transformation that finally has the literary treatment it deserves. Spanning the two crucial decades of the country's birth, from 1773 to 1792, *Revolutionaries* uses little-known stories of these famous (and not so famous) men to capture—in a way no single biography ever could—the intensely creative period of the republic's founding. From the Boston Tea Party to the First Continental Congress, from Trenton to Valley Forge, from the ratification of the Constitution to the disputes that led to our two-party system, Rakove explores the competing views of politics, war, diplomacy, and society that shaped our nation. Thoughtful, clear-minded, and persuasive, *Revolutionaries* is a majestic blend of narrative and intellectual history, one of those rare books that makes us think afresh about how the country came to be, and why the idea of America endures.

.com Product Description In the early 1770s, the men who invented America were living quiet, provincial lives in the rustic backwaters of the New World, devoted primarily to family, craft, and the private pursuit of wealth and happiness. None set out to become "revolutionary" by ambition, but when events in Boston escalated, they found themselves thrust into a crisis that moved, in a matter of months, from protest to war. In this remarkable book, the historian Jack Rakove shows how the private lives of these men were suddenly transformed into public careers—how Washington became a strategist, Franklin a pioneering cultural diplomat, Madison a sophisticated constitutional thinker, and Hamilton a brilliant policymaker. Rakove shakes off accepted notions of these men as godlike visionaries, focusing instead on the evolution of their ideas and the crystallizing of their purpose. In *Revolutionaries*, we see the founders before they were fully formed leaders, as individuals whose lives were radically altered by the explosive events of the mid-1770s. They were ordinary men who became extraordinary—a transformation that finally has the literary treatment it deserves. Spanning the two crucial decades of the country's birth, from 1773 to 1792, *Revolutionaries* uses little-known stories of these famous (and not so famous) men to capture—in a way no single biography ever could—the intensely creative period of the republic's founding. From the Boston Tea Party to the First Continental Congress, from Trenton to Valley Forge, from the ratification of the Constitution to the disputes that led to our two-party system, Rakove explores the competing views of politics, war, diplomacy, and society that shaped our nation. Thoughtful, clear-minded, and persuasive, *Revolutionaries* is a majestic blend of narrative and intellectual history, one of those rare books that makes us think afresh about how the country came to be, and why the idea of

America endures. A QA with Jack N. Rakove, Author of *Revolutionaries* Q: What surprised you most about our "founding fathers?" A: When all is said and done, when we grant this generation its fair share of shortcomings, the basic fact remains that the enterprise of completing the Revolution summoned a pretty remarkable group of men into positions of leadership. No one set out to become a revolutionary by ambition, but all found themselves thrust into events by a situation that moved rapidly from protest to war within a matter of months. Here they were, living these quietly provincial lives in the rustic backwaters of North America. Yet when a crisis escalated beyond anyone's expectations they discovered a remarkable array of talents that each individual applied to his own particular tasks and duties. Whether it involves making sense of Washington's sense of strategy, Hamilton's brilliant grasp of public policy, Jefferson's deep though not untroubled commitment to equality, Madison's sophisticated constitutional thinking, Franklin's pioneering ideas of cultural diplomacy, or the slavery dilemma that vexed the Laurenses, it is impossible to come away from reconstructing the course of American history after 1774 without being impressed by the quality of their responses. Q: You give us a glimpse of many of the founders before they did the work that made them famous. From your vantage point, who was most transformed by the Revolution? A: This is a tough one, since in one sense, they were all transformed and there's no handy scale of measurement. One could knock out some of the older characters and say that Mason, Laurens, and Franklin simply moved into new roles that became available to them. There's a strong case for Washington as the dominant political figure for the whole generation, someone who has put his youthful military interests behind him and becomes the commander of both the Army and eventually the Republic. Jefferson would have been happy as an occasional public servant and master of his plantation; instead he becomes a legislative draftsman, then a diplomat, and finally, and I still think somewhat surprisingly, the leader of a whole political movement. And there's something to be said for the younger generation. It wasn't clear where Madison was going with his life at all in the early 1770s, yet ultimately he becomes the leading modern constitutionalist. Hamilton, in the absence of the Revolution, would;probably have stayed in New York and become a legal giant; instead he becomes a leading architect of public policy, and in his way, probably more ambitious than any of his contemporaries. Since I'm a well-known Madisonian, I suppose I have a bit of sympathy there, but it is a tough question and readers might want to think about it themselves. Q: You write about a man named Jack Laurens, who might be unfamiliar to readers. What about his story compelled you, and why is he a worthy subject? A: Jack Laurens is an attractive figure in so many ways, not least because he did have a sort of militarized death wish that led to his meaningless death in a minor skirmish at a moment when there were no consequences worth risking. It speaks volumes for his sensitivity to the brutality of American slavery that he was willing to go as far as he did, particularly coming from a society in South Carolina that was destined to play a depressing role in later events. Yet his attitude toward slavery, and the pragmatic doubts his father cast upon it, also suggest something of the limitations within which he was working. Slavery was unjust, a condition imposed on captives who were hardly responsible for their fate; yet freedom from its grasp was something they had to earn, at great risk, and not merely something they deserved. Yet at the same time, one has to wonder whether Laurens might have embodied the kind of leadership class the South might have had but failed to develop. Q: Have you ever speculated as to what might have happened had these crises been avoided and the Revolution averted? A: More than many of my colleagues, I happen to think that the whole Revolution was easily avoidable--which is why I really wanted to put the little passage on Edmund Burke's analysis of the errors of British policymaking at the end of the first chapter. There were, it is true, some deep considerations in Britain that made the desire to use Parliament to buttress imperial authority in North America an attractive, if badly considered, option, so that perhaps, on some other occasion, the same conflict might have erupted. But I also think that the specific, decisive crisis of 1774 really did rest on the very peculiar circumstances in Massachusetts, on Governor Hutchinson's decision to stand on the law where officials elsewhere figured out ways to avoid it, and on considerations in London that a more thoughtful government could easily have avoided. No Tea Party, no crisis in 1774, no raft of parliamentary legislation, no need for Congress...and so it goes. Q: Of the various legacies you discuss, from the Constitution to our relationship with the outside world, which has been the most important/lasting? A: As a constitutional scholar, it would be extremely difficult for me to suggest that there could be anything other than the Constitution that would fit this bill--it's just the inner Madison in me, I suppose. But perhaps that begs the question somewhat. American nationality is not something we should take for granted: it was very much the product of the Revolution, and the Constitution was in some ways a seal upon something that had already been decided, though also essential to its very preservation. Q: What's the one message you'd most like readers to take away from *Revolutionaries*? A: To think what it was like to have been pursuing the kinds of lives these men led, caring about public affairs yet primarily devoted to the pursuit of private visions of happiness, and then to be sucked into a political vortex in 1774 and given the opportunity to join in the formation of an independent national republic. (Photo Linda A. Cicero/Stanford News Service) From Publishers WeeklyStarred . This superb book is about a few of the menrevolutionaries despite themselveswho helped birth the U.S. and give it political and moral dimension. In keeping with its subtitle, it's new in being a distinctive, fresh retelling of this epochal tale. Rakove, a Pulitzer Prize winner for *Original Meanings*, doesn't linger over the war for independence. That's because his eye is on the strands of thought, experience, and vision that led through the Declaration of Independence, diplomacy, state constitutions, and the Constitution of 1787 to the remarkable

breakthroughs in thought and intention that marked the nation's youth. The result is a sparkling, authoritative work whose principal defect is lack of attention to those not among the elite. Men like John Dickinson, George Mason, and Henry and John Laurens, rarely leading characters in similar works, put in strong appearances here. But the focus is on the big five: Washington, Franklin, John Adams, Jefferson, and Hamilton. Everyone interested in the founding of the U.S. will want to read this book. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist

Highlighting leaders of great events is the perennially popular approach to history that Rakove adopts for this account of the American Revolution. Including Samuel Adams, John Adams, Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and others representing the generation that declared independence, Rakove also discourses on the slightly younger cohort that fought the war or devised the state and federal constitutions that achieved it. Emphasizing individual biographies somewhat disrupts narrative unity; on the other hand, Rakove's method cultivates the burgeoning awareness of possibilities, both personally and for the new U.S., by his subjects. Rakove's audience may be acquainted with John Adams' arc of ambition but perhaps not with that of John Laurens. Rakove's chapter about the young Continental army officer and his advocacy of ending slavery reflects the personal and political choices open to American revolutionaries, choices that Rakove elaborates in his chapters about Madison's constitutional ideas or Hamilton's formative policies to begin the federal government. Distilling an academic career's worth of understanding about the Revolution, Rakove vibrantly restores it as the lived experience of those who led it. --Gilbert Taylor