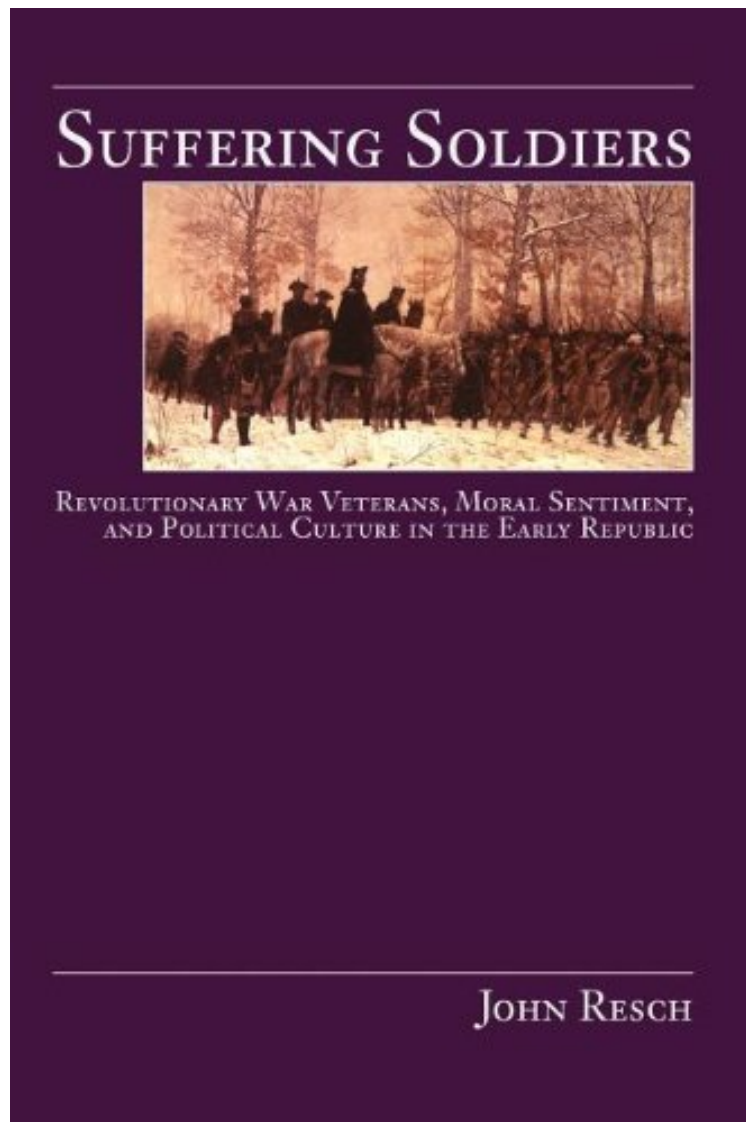


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## **Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic**

*John Resch*

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This book examines how the moral sentiment of gratitude, as expressed in the image of the suffering soldier, transformed the memory of the Revolutionary War, political culture, and public policy in the early American republic. This popular depiction removed the stigma of vice and treason from the Continental Army, legitimized the army as a republican institution, and credited it with securing independence. By glorifying the now aged, impoverished, and infirm Continental soldiers as republican warriors, the image also accentuated the nation's guilt for its ingratitude toward the veterans. Using Peterborough, New Hampshire, as a case study, John P. Resch shows that the power of the suffering soldier image lay partly in its reflection of reality. The citizen-soldiers from Peterborough who fought in the Continental Army did indeed represent a cross-section of the town, and they experienced greater postwar deprivation and alienation than their peers who had not gone to war. Personal and political sympathy toward the veterans eventually led to the passage of the Revolutionary War Pension Act in 1818. The War Department further validated the soldiers' claims and public gratitude through its liberal administration of the pension program, which attracted more than 20,000 applications.

"This is a striking book on a much neglected subject: what happened to the veterans of the American Revolution? It is the first systematic analysis of the veterans based on a large sample of their pension applications. And it is the only study of the history of the struggle to pass the country's first general pension law. The book has the potential to reach scholars in a number of fields: the American Revolution, the military history of the war, social history, and New England. . . . Finally, it has many modern overtones, including post-traumatic stress disorder and welfare entitlements." Alfred F. Young, author of *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* "Resch has delved deeply into the source material. I am impressed with the sheer quantity of sources consulted: pension records, orations, newspaper articles, and local records. . . . This book provides a solid perspective on a neglected yet important subject." Robert E. Cray, Montclair State College  
About the Author John P. Resch is professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, Manchester.