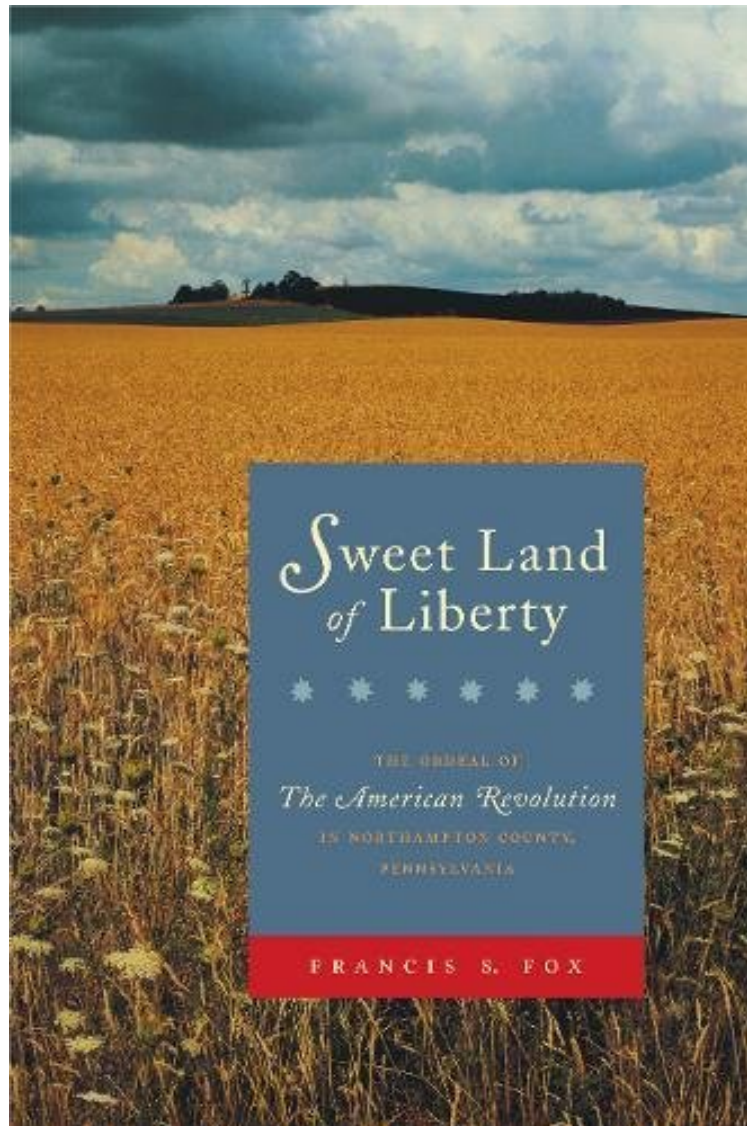


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Sweet Land of Liberty: The Ordeal of the American Revolution in Northampton County, Pennsylvania

Francis S. Fox

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Francis S. Fox : Sweet Land of Liberty: The Ordeal of the American Revolution in Northampton County, Pennsylvania before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sweet Land of Liberty: The Ordeal of the American Revolution in Northampton County, Pennsylvania:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not Your Grade School Textbook on the American RevolutionBy

Theodore R. Spickler I bought this book as a genealogy tool since one of the leading "characters" is in my direct family tree. I ended up fascinated by the many unexpected insights gained about the revolution in general. The author has an impressive and detailed set of footnotes that suggest he must have lived in libraries for years to accumulate so many arcane bits of historical knowledge. The organization of the book is unusual in that each chapter focuses on a different person or persons. This has the effect of repeating many episodes in the history of the county but from varying view points. My grade school education set me up to regard any Tory as a reprehensible piece of British garbage but now I see a broader perspective in that some of the inhabitants had a reasonable desire to protect their means of livelihood. I only wished for a few more historical maps to help me judge the locations referenced in more detail. This is so much more than just a specific history of one county and offers the reader many surprising ways to look at the motivations and actions of everyone from the simplest farmer to framers of the new Pennsylvania state government. It's hard not to be changed through the perspectives gained from this book. the author writes in an entertaining and informed manner. Highly recommended! 10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. easily read and highly insightful By L. Alderson Superbly presented first-person accounts, easily read and highly insightful. Everything you want in a history. I happened to be reading this at the same time I was reading Washington's Spies, whose events occurred nearly at the same time. They expanded my narrow view of those times greatly. Thanks to Francis Fox for sharing what our forefathers and foremothers actually thought whilst they were being asked to risk all on an invention called democracy. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Context and Perspective By Bob Smalser While the book is a treasury of the small details of frontier life not found elsewhere, its reliance on the perspective of individual, first-person correspondence ignores other archived accounts that may provide a more accurate picture of the events portrayed. For example, in Chapter 4 Henri Geiger accuses militia Captain Jacob Wetterholt of murdering a Moravian Indian family in a letter to the local magistrate, and author Fox accepts Geiger's version at face value. A small amount of additional research will find two other, more-detailed accounts of this incident, and (more importantly) its context, from less biased sources reaching entirely different conclusions. The result is the Fox narrative is extremely distorted, with Jacob Wetterholt confused with his brother Nicholas Wetterholt, the assignment of a theft motive omitted from the two other accounts entirely, and the omission of more probable villains in the form of Nicholas Wetterholt's lieutenant and an unscrupulous innkeeper. Hence if Fox got this much wrong about an incident I'm familiar with, how much else is wrong with his accounts of the incidents I'm not?

It is often said that the American Revolution was a conservative revolution, but in many parts of the British colonies the Revolution was anything but conservative. This book follows the Revolution in Pennsylvanias backcountry through the experiences of eighteen men and women who lived in Northampton County during these years of turmoil. Foxs account will startle many readers for whom the Revolution symbolizes the high-minded pursuit of liberty. In 1774, Northampton County was the second largest of Pennsylvanias eleven counties, comprising more than 2,500 square miles, three towns (Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton), and some 15,000 people. When the Revolution broke out, militias took control. Frontier justice replaced the rule of law as zealous patriots preoccupied themselves not with fighting the British but with seizing local political power and persecuting their pacifist neighbors. Sweet Land of Liberty reawakens the Revolution in Northampton County with sketches of men and women caught up in it. Seldom is this story told from the vantage point of common folks, let alone those in the backcountry. In Foxs hands, we see in these individuals an altogether more disturbing Revolution than we have ever reckoned with before.

A one-of-a-kind book, a miracle to be grateful for and to treasure. Fox gives us a new and altogether more disturbing Revolution than we have been accustomed to reckon with. Sweet Land of Liberty may forever change the way we think of our national origins. Michael Zuckerman, University of Pennsylvania To come once again at the question of the morality of the American Revolution but from [the] unfamiliar perspective . . . of the Northampton residents, whose story Francis Fox opens up for the first time in his path-breaking book is to be reminded of the moral complexities that extraordinary times brought to the lives of ordinary people. Mark Noll, Books and Culture: A Christian For their beliefs, Moravians and Mennonites forfeited the right to vote, suffered harassment and beatings from neighbors and militiamen, faced draconian fines for their religious objections, and finally, watched as the judicial system confiscated their property and sold it at auction. In relating these moments, Fox artfully captures the pain and hypocrisy that existed on the darker side of libertys war. Terry Bouton, William and Mary Quarterly The American Revolution in back country Pennsylvania comes alive and is personified in this history of the American Revolution as real men and women lived it. Using biographies of 18 obscure men and women, Fox has given voice to the previously unheard. . . . It is good history and a good read with vivid word pictures drawn by Foxs use of language. G.W. Franz, Choice Sweet Land of Liberty brings together biographical sketches of thirteen men and five women whose diverse experiences have been reconstructed on the basis of impressive archival research. Charles G. Steffen, Journal of American History The book helps us, nevertheless, to understand the extraordinarily factionalized nature of Pennsylvanias Revolution outside of Philadelphia and allows us to see that those conflicts were as often about petty grudges and self-interest as about the Revolutions formally stated aims; Sweet Land of Liberty recalls that all too human dimension with compassion. Liam

Riordan, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography Francis Fox writes an engaging and highly personalized account of the American Revolution in the Pennsylvania interior. And as his work makes clear, the Revolution was first and foremost a war not about ideas but about people, their personalities and ambitions, as well as their fears, resentments, and even hatreds. Judith Ridner, Pennsylvania History From the Publisher A unique approach to the American Revolution viewing it through the eyes of 18 men and women who lived in one frontier county of Pennsylvania. About the Author Francis S. Fox is an independent researcher and writer who for many years worked in textbook publishing. He lives in Newtown, Pennsylvania.