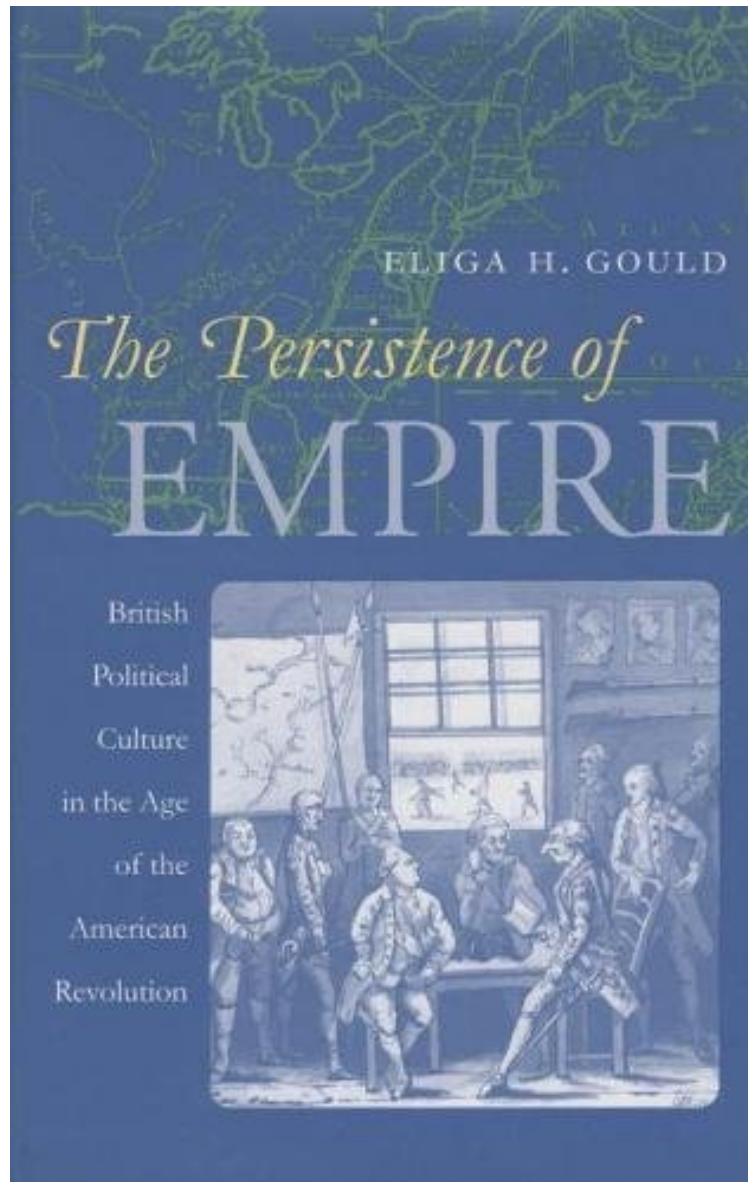


[Library ebook] The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution  
(Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American ... and the University of North Carolina Press)

# The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution (Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American ... and the University of North Carolina Press)

*Eliga H. Gould*

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American ... and the University of North Carolina Press):

12 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Read this with *The Power of Commerce* by Nancy Kohen. By Hugh Claffey Gould describes the origin and changing self concepts of the first British empire. He describes the benign neglect of the North American colonies under the reign of George I and II - despite the fact that a large amount of the victories of the Seven Years War occurred in North America - the colonies were seen, by the Hanoverian world view, as little more than distractions, pawns in the struggle for dominance of the European landmass. The colonies interests were menaced by the threat of French invasion from Quebec and thus their loyalty for the protection of their liberty and religion, emphasised their Britishness. Great Britain's policy (envisioned by Bolinbroke, but embodied by Pitt Snr.) increasingly saw the domination of colonial trade, and the protection of trade routes as a method of increasing wealth and power in the world. With the accession of the nationalist George III this 'blue water' strategy marked a British distaste for continental alliances and a new emphasis on transatlantic values of liberty, Protestantism and profits. Gould makes very clear that the increasing London-based emphasis on the Britishness of the colonies brought with it a metropolitan belief that the colonies should contribute more than trade taxes, at about the same time as the French threat from Quebec had removed the colonies major anxieties for their security. Indeed it was to pay for the debts run up in the Seven Years War that the taxation question became urgent. Gould is very good at illustrating how the metropolitan foreign policy called for a powerful Navy and a standing army in the American colonies to deter French rearmament, whereas the colonial view saw the standing army as a threat to their liberty, much as the Whigs had resisted a standing army in English soil after the Restoration. A strength of the book is illustrating the progress of this mutual incomprehension from refined argument to confrontation and, eventually, Revolution. If this area interests you, also worth a read is *The Power of Commerce* by Nancy Kohen, which is much clearer on the policy divisions within the British parliament on the question of how to pay for the Government debt run up by the war. There were many voices (including Pitt Snr) who backed the theoretical right of Parliament to impose colonial taxes, but opposed each new measure in turn, relying instead on the increasing value of commercial taxes (and perhaps inflation) to deal with the debt. The governing faction, however, stared into the jaws of fiscal default and saw debt reduction as the major task of their time in office. Gould agrees that the failure of the first 'one-nation' British empire, set the philosophy for the second multi-cultural (some might say racist) imperialism that pervaded the 19th Century. Having failed with the North Atlantic, trading based 'cousins', the empire defaulted to one set on the exploitation exemplified by the East India Company. However it is possible to argue that the emergence of the anti-Slavery movement, among others, gives the lie to this view. This is a welcome addition to those seeking knowledge of the guiding philosophies and strategies of the first British Empire, and the affect which its collapse had on subsequent British Imperial thinking.

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. What happened to letters following f in the text? By David B. An interesting counterpoint to many histories of the American revolution but the dropped letters following the letter f in the text are annoying and distracting.

2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. *Successful Dissection of A Political History* By curious historian Gould writes just as he teaches at the University Of New Hampshire; in a clear and concise manner. His enthusiasm on the subject of British political culture during the American Revolutionary period is evident, and his knowledge on the subject is vast. As a former student of his, I can honestly say (with no bias) that the work will most definitely help in the study of the events leading up to, and concluding, the American Revolution. Also helpful is Jack Green's works containing various significant documents during the period.

The American Revolution was the longest colonial war in modern British history and Britain's most humiliating defeat as an imperial power. In this lively, concise book, Eliga Gould examines an important yet surprisingly understudied aspect of the conflict: the British public's predominantly loyal response to its government's actions in North America. Gould attributes British support for George III's American policies to a combination of factors, including growing isolationism in regard to the European continent and a burgeoning sense of the colonies as integral parts of a greater British nation. Most important, he argues, the British public accepted such ill-conceived projects as the Stamp Act because theirs was a sedentary, "armchair" patriotism based on paying others to fight their battles for them. This system of military finance made Parliament's attempt to tax the American colonists look unexceptional to most Britons and left the metropolitan public free to embrace imperial projects of all sorts--including those that ultimately drove the colonists to rebel. Drawing on nearly one thousand political pamphlets as well as on broadsides, private memoirs, and popular cartoons, Gould offers revealing insights into eighteenth-century British political culture and a refreshing account of what the Revolution meant to people on both sides of the Atlantic.

This is a thought-provoking book, its argument consistently developed in sophisticated and engaging terms and presented with lucidity and grace." s in American History" A well-researched, closely argued account of the impact of the American Revolution on British political culture."International History " A nicely written and articulate

study."Historian" "This is a thought-provoking book, its argument consistently developed in sophisticated and engaging terms and presented with lucidity and grace." s in American History"" Gould has made a substantial contribution not only to imperial and Atlantic histories but also to the study of Britishness."Journal of American History" "A well-researched, closely argued account of the impact of the American Revolution on British political culture."International History "" An impressively well-documented analysis of the empire from an English perspective. "William and Mary Quarterly" [A] nicely written and articulate study."Historian" An impressively well-documented analysis of the empire from an English perspective.--William and Mary QuarterlyHow did Britain turn its greatest modern defeat into imperial success? Gould's succinct and lucid account reevaluates the American Revolution as a defining moment in British history. Its discerning analysis uncovers themes in British political culture and concepts of citizenship . . . illuminates the direction and enduring domestic popularity of London's policies, as well as the more heterodox empire that sprang from defeat. American historians seeking to understand their own republican empire should read this book.--Richard Johnson, University of WashingtonGould has made a substantial contribution not only to imperial and Atlantic histories but also to the study of Britishness.--Journal of American HistoryGould's strikingly illustrated study revisits British attitudes to the American Revolution from an end-of-the-twentieth-century perspective. In his account, Britons' pragmatic quest for national advantage was offset by disinclination to bear the human and financial costs of conflict. . . . Emphasis on the wider European and global setting, meanwhile, helps him to account for the war's surprisingly small impact on the British psyche; there was, after all, a lot of empire left.--Joanna Innes, Somerville College, Oxford UniversityThis is a wide-ranging and highly intelligent exploration of why the American policies adopted by George III and his ministers were able to command wide support in Britain. Gould works from a profound knowledge of the pamphlet literature of the period, setting out arguments that historians of the American Revolution and of British imperialism will need to address. A wonderfully professional debut!--Linda Colley, European Institute, London School of EconomicsA fresh and valuable look at British ideas about the empire in the late eighteenth century. . . . Gould introduces an array of subjects central to changes in British political culture during and after the Revolution . . . patriotism, militia service, war, Parliamentary sovereignty, diplomacy, race.--Robert Middlekauff, University of California at BerkeleyAt the heart of this compelling study of political culture in Britain during the eighteenth century is the proposition that the British public did not, as traditionalists argued, reject their government's war against the American colonies, but, on the contrary, put significant support behind it. . . . [A] nicely written and articulate study.--HistorianA thoroughly researched, first-rate piece of work. The author is comfortable with the era and its people. What is even more important, he communicates his understanding in well-organized, marvelously readable prose that flows in a style all too few historians are willing or able to produce.--ChoiceA well-researched, closely argued account of the impact of the American Revolution on British political culture. . . . A first-class book which connects a number of issues and strands of British thought that are not often studied with reference to popular political and intellectual currents in the age of the American Revolution.--International History This is a thought-provoking book, its argument consistently developed in sophisticated and engaging terms and presented with lucidity and grace.-- s in American HistoryFrom the Inside FlapExamines the British public's predominantly loyal response to its government's handling of the American Revolution. Their support came from a burgeoning desire to be free of entangling alliances in Europe, a trans-Atlantic sense of national unity, and the "armchair" patriotism that was based on paying others to fight their battles for them.