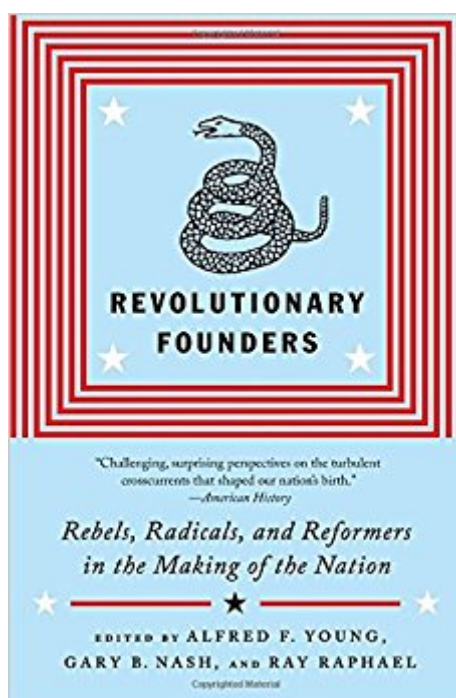


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# Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, And Reformers In The Making Of The Nation



## Synopsis

In twenty-two original essays, leading historians reveal the radical impulses at the founding of the American Republic. Here is a fresh, new reading of the American Revolution that gives voice and recognition to a generation of radical thinkers and doers whose revolutionary ideals outstripped those of the "Founding Fathers." While the Founding Fathers advocated a break from Britain and espoused ideals of republican government, none proposed significant changes to the fabric of colonial society. Yet during this "revolutionary" period some people did believe that "liberty" meant "liberty for all" and that "equality" should be applied to political, economic, and religious spheres. Here are the stories of individuals and groups who exemplified the radical ideals of the American Revolution more in keeping with our own values today. This volume helps us to understand the social conflicts unleashed by the struggle for independence, the Revolution's achievements, and the unfinished agenda it left to future generations to confront.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The best essays are small gems of exposition, providing both the context and detail necessary to enable readers to recognize the important contributions of these previously unappreciated and largely unknown individuals. . . . In short, *Revolutionary Founders* is one step, but only one, toward a comprehensive account of the nation's origins." —Mary Beth Norton, *The New York Times Book Review* "In these 22 provocative essays, leading historians highlight

Revolutionary-era people and movements that textbooks and standard accounts skip. . . . Revolutionary Founders aims to test the parameters of what we think we know with new and reinterpreted data and fresh theories. . . . [T]hey offer challenging, surprising perspectives on the turbulent crosscurrents that shaped our nation's birth. . . . [A] uniformly strong collection, [by] an impressive array of historians . . . among them, T.H. Breen, Eric Foner, Jill Lepore and Alan Taylor. . . . Editors Young, Nash, and Raphael have solicited wisely, with each contributor adding an important dimension to the controlling theme: "We cannot have too much liberty." . . . Adds immeasurably to our understanding of the Revolution's full meaning." . . . Kirkus Reviews "Fast-paced and readable, this remarkable book captures an American Revolution that has long been hiding in plain sight. . . . I emerged with a new set of heroes, a fresh appreciation for complex stories, and a new sense of our own connection to a revolutionary past." . . . Linda K. Kerber, author of No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship "Revolutionary Founders brilliantly restores the struggle for social equality to the central place in the history of American Revolution, and explains how the . . . spirit of leveling . . . shaped the making of the new American Republic. For anyone interested in the sources of popular democracy in the United States, Revolutionary Founders is required reading." . . . Ira Berlin, author of The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations "Revolutions free the imagination, making many things seem possible that once were deemed wild visions. Revolutionary Founders introduces into the pantheon of the American Revolution those rebels, radicals, and reformers who passionately committed themselves to act on the conviction that . . . all men are created equal." . . . Joyce Appleby, author of The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism

Alfred F. Young was professor emeritus of history at Northern Illinois University and was a senior research fellow at the Newberry Library in Chicago. He lives in Durham, North Carolina. He passed away in 2012. Gary B. Nash is professor of history emeritus and director of the National Center for History in the Schools at UCLA. He lives in Pacific Palisades, California. Ray Raphael is the author of A People's History of the American Revolution, Founding Myths, and several other books on the nation's founding. He lives in northern California.

I took a Atlantic Revolutions class with one of the authors of this book. A interesting little gem that tells stories of history from a alternative perspective. I learned a lot about how I was taught a very "fairytale" version of the American Revolutions in public school. A must read for History buffs!

Most Americans have a general idea of what the American Revolution was regardless of whether or not they understand the fine details of how it began and what followed afterwards. Few Americans know the men and women they will encounter in reading this collection of twenty-two essays penned by many of the leading historians of this period. In many ways these individuals had just as great a role in the founding of the US as the men who most consider to be Founders such as John Adams, George Washington, and Benjamin Franklin. Although they are hardly known to the people of today, these individuals were the ones who helped start the Revolution, sustain it during the long years of combat, and determine the future direction of the new nation. The late Alfred F. Young, esteemed historian from Northern Illinois University begins the book with an essay on Ebenezer Mackintosh, the leader of the mobs that resisted the Stamp Act in 1765 in the streets of Boston. The tone of the book is set by this essay as Young explores the role of the common people in the Revolution. Without the support of the people there would have been no Revolution and no United States created in 1776. Yet, the people were not united in their actions nor were the men who are remembered as Founders on the national and state levels. In many cases the actions of the people led those men into supporting the Revolution. Unfortunately the common men would be forgotten or marginalized by the more well known men who took over the reins of the revolutionary effort. Men like Ebenezer Mackintosh, Timothy Bigelow, and Joseph Plumb Martin along with black men and women both free and enslaved played prominent roles in their part of the Revolution along with Native Americans. All levels of colonial society was affected by the events that took place and despite the attempts by many to prevent change on a large scale, social, political, economic, cultural, and even religious change occurred on a massive level as the Revolution set the former British colonies on a different tangent than the home country. In reading these essays the reader can begin to develop an inkling of why historians like Gordon Wood think the period of the greatest change in the US came after the Revolution during the years of the Early Republic era. These are certainly not all of the legions of forgotten patriots who put everything on the line during these years. If there is a drawback to this book it is that it doesn't weave the essays into a grand narrative of US history although after each essay there is a section for further reading detailing additional sources to explore regarding the events and people brought up in that particular essay. What is interesting is that each historian has their own input on what was going on concerning the subject their essay was about so that the reader will begin to understand there are still many differing opinions on what exactly was going on in that time and how the individuals portrayed in that essay were both reacting to and participating in it. For readers more familiar with

the short topic form of literature the length of the essays here will fit them perfectly. They average 15 to 20 pages each and are compact enough to provide useful readings for both high school and college courses in addition to local historical society meetings. Even social organizations would find something to like in these essays. The essay by Richard S. Newman covers Prince Hall and the founding of Prince Hall Freemasonry in the United States which just naturally impels the reader to look up more information on that subject. The essays that deal with events following the Revolution are poignant in that they cover subjects which have been debated throughout our nation's history such as taxation, the unequal distribution of wealth, religion, the relationship between federal and state government, and the role of the people within both the state and federal governments. The reader should begin to understand that these essays deal with a time that is lost to the modern world and was experiencing massive upheavals in every aspect of life from top to bottom as the people began the world over again as Thomas Paine said. The men and women in these essays were the ones that helped bring that event about as well as determining the shape of things to come for their posterity.

This is great social history of the war. Anyone who really wants to understand how the Revolution played out need to read this alongside the classic narratives. It really brings to life the experiences of the ordinary, forgotten people who lived and died during this period.

Ok

I've found this book to be well written and provides me a much information about the regular people who were the beginning movers and shakers of our revolution. There was quite a bit of intimidation, skulduggery and forthright occurrences before the Continental Congress.

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read the first chapter, interesting read

excellent

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