



Remembering the Revolution: Memory, History, and Nation Making from Independence to the Civil War (Public History in Historical Perspective)

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In today's United States, the legacy of the American Revolution looms large. From presidential speeches to bestselling biographies, from conservative politics to school pageants, everybody knows something about the Revolution. Yet what was a messy, protracted, divisive, and destructive war has calcified into a glorified founding moment of the American nation. Disparate events with equally diverse participants have been reduced to a few key scenes and characters, presided over by well-meaning and wise old men.

Recollections of the Revolution did not always take today's form. In this lively collection of essays, historians and literary scholars consider how the first three generations of American citizens interpreted their nation's origins. The volume introduces readers to a host of individuals and groups both well known and obscure, from Molly Pitcher and "forgotten father" John Dickinson to African American Baptists in Georgia and antebellum pacifists. They show how the memory of the Revolution became politicized early in the nation's history, as different interests sought to harness its meaning for their own ends. No single faction succeeded, and at the outbreak of the Civil War the American people remained divided over how to remember the Revolution.

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