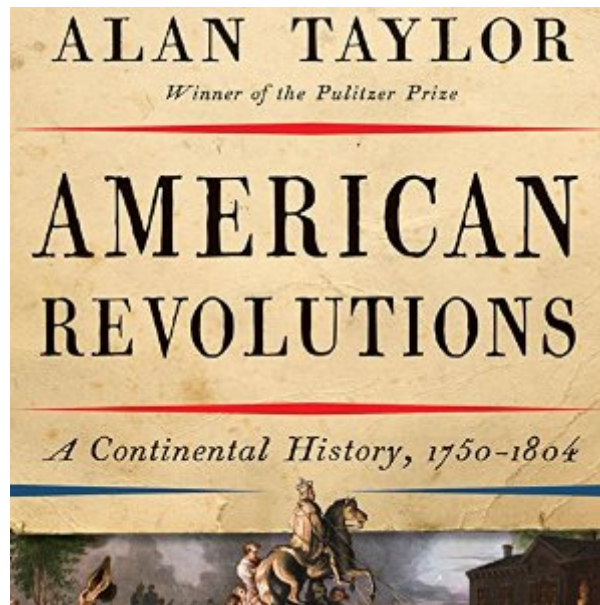


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American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804



Synopsis

The American Revolution is often portrayed as a high-minded, orderly event whose capstone, the Constitution, provided the ideal framework for a democratic, prosperous nation. Alan Taylor, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, gives us a different creation story in this magisterial history of the nation's founding. Rising out of the continental rivalries of European empires and their native allies, Taylor's Revolution builds like a ground fire overspreading Britain's mainland colonies, fueled by local conditions, destructive, hard to quell. Conflict ignited on the frontier, where settlers clamored to push west into Indian lands against British restrictions, and in the seaboard cities, where commercial elites mobilized riots and boycotts to resist British tax policies. When war erupted, patriot crowds harassed loyalists and nonpartisans into compliance with their cause. Brutal guerrilla violence flared all along the frontier, from New York to the Carolinas, fed by internal divisions as well as the clash with Britain. Taylor skillfully draws France, Spain, and native powers into a comprehensive narrative of the war that delivers the major battles, generals, and common soldiers with insight and power. With discord smoldering in the fragile new nation through the 1780s, nationalist leaders such as James Madison and Alexander Hamilton sought to restrain unruly state democracies and consolidate power in a federal Constitution. Assuming the mantle of "we the people", the advocates of national power ratified the new frame of government. But their opponents prevailed in the presidency of Thomas Jefferson, whose vision of a Western "empire of liberty" aligned with the long-standing, expansive ambitions of frontier settlers. White settlement and black slavery spread west, setting the stage for a civil war that nearly destroyed the union created by the founders.

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Customer Reviews

I just finished this excellent read. Mr Taylor has laid out known and not so known histories in a thought provoking manner. The parallels of today are quite interesting. Seriously. The same cast of characters as today. You will understand more why things fell as they did in the birth of America. Our founding fathers were after all, well, human. This book will be on my mind for a while and is guaranteed to send me off looking for more stories. I will be purchasing a few of these for Christmas presents. Thanks again Alan Taylor.

People will see the name of two time Pulitzer Prize winning historian Alan Taylor and assume this is another excellent work. Yet this is merely a rehash of other books. He immediately starts leaning on predecessors like Gordon Wood, Robert Middlekauff, Bernard Bailyn and so on, over and over, and the bibliography shows Taylor uses fourteen of his own books and articles as sources. This is not research. In 2015 Kathleen Duval's fine work, *Independence Lost*, cited Taylor's work eight times, and Taylor wrote a glowing review for the book jacket; Now, one year later, Taylor cites Duval's work repeatedly. It appears like Dr. Taylor had a contest with himself to see how fast he could paste together other people's work into a "new" interpretation that is one-hundredth of a degree different from other books. I give it two stars instead of one, in memory of a time when Taylor was still trying.

Another diatribe knocking the founding of the greatest country in the history of civilization. No thanks.

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