

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood

The Radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood: A Deep Dive into America's Transformative Past

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood is more than just a historical account; it's a compelling exploration of how the American Revolution not only altered the political landscape but fundamentally reshaped American society. Gordon S. Wood, a renowned historian, offers an insightful perspective that challenges conventional views of the Revolution as merely a colonial revolt against British rule. Instead, Wood presents it as a profound social upheaval that transformed the very fabric of American life.

Understanding the Core Thesis of The Radicalism of the American Revolution

At the heart of Wood's analysis is the idea that the American Revolution was "radical" not just because it overthrew British authority, but because it dismantled old hierarchical structures and introduced a new egalitarian ethos. Unlike traditional revolutions that replaced one ruling elite with another, the American Revolution questioned the fundamental bases of society, including class distinctions, political power, and social privilege.

Wood argues that the Revolution's real impact was the creation of a democratic society in place of a rigid, aristocratic one. This transformation touched every aspect of life—from governance and economic opportunity to social relations and cultural values.

The Shift from Monarchical to Republican Ideals

One of the most important elements Wood highlights is how the Revolution replaced monarchy and aristocracy with republicanism. This wasn't a simple change of rulers; it was a deep shift in political philosophy. The idea that government should derive its power from the people, rather than divine right or hereditary privilege, was revolutionary in itself.

Republicanism promoted civic virtue, public participation, and equality before the law. Wood illustrates how these concepts moved from abstract Enlightenment ideals to practical realities that shaped American institutions.

Key Themes Explored in The Radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood

Social Equality and the Decline of Aristocracy

One of the most striking aspects of Wood's work is his focus on the social changes brought about by the Revolution. The colonial period was marked by rigid class divisions, with a landed gentry dominating political and economic life. The Revolution challenged these divisions by promoting the idea that all men were created equal, an idea that gradually eroded aristocratic privileges.

This shift had profound implications:

- Land ownership became more accessible to a broader segment of society.
- Political offices opened up to individuals outside the traditional elite.
- Social customs began to reflect democratic ideals, emphasizing merit over birthright.

Wood's analysis shows how these changes laid the groundwork for a society where social mobility was possible, even if imperfectly realized.

The Role of Republican Virtue and Civic Participation

Another critical dimension Wood explores is the emphasis placed on republican virtue. This concept underscored the idea that citizens should be actively involved in governance and prioritize the common good over personal interests. The Revolution created a new political culture that valued participation, debate, and accountability.

Wood points out that this cultural shift was essential in sustaining the new republic. It wasn't enough to establish democratic institutions; the success of the Revolution depended on cultivating citizens who embraced their responsibilities in the political process.

Why The Radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood Remains Relevant Today

In today's political climate, where debates about democracy, equality, and civic engagement are as heated as ever, Wood's work offers valuable lessons. Understanding the radical roots of the American Revolution helps contextualize current discussions about what it means to be a democratic society.

Insights for Modern Readers

For those interested in American history or political philosophy, Wood's book is a reminder that democracy is not static. It requires continuous effort and vigilance. Here are some key takeaways that remain applicable:

- **Democratic ideals are transformative:** They challenge existing power structures and demand social adaptation.
- **Civic virtue matters:** A healthy democracy depends on engaged and informed citizens.
- **Equality is a process:** The Revolution began a journey toward equality that continues today.

How Wood's Perspective Challenges Traditional Narratives

Many traditional history textbooks focus narrowly on battles, leaders, and political declarations. Wood's approach broadens the lens to include social and cultural dimensions, emphasizing that the American Revolution was a radical transformation of all aspects of life.

This perspective encourages readers to think beyond the familiar story of independence and consider the Revolution's lasting impact on American identity and values.

The Radicalism of the American Revolution: A Closer Look at Key Historical Figures

Wood's narrative also delves into the roles played by pivotal figures who

embodied or propelled the Revolution's radicalism. From Thomas Jefferson's articulation of equality to the grassroots activism of ordinary citizens, the Revolution was shaped by diverse actors who embraced its transformative potential.

Thomas Paine and the Power of Revolutionary Ideas

One cannot overlook the influence of pamphleteers like Thomas Paine, whose writings galvanized public support for independence and republicanism. Paine's call for natural rights and the rejection of monarchy resonated deeply with the revolutionary spirit that Wood emphasizes.

George Washington and the Transition to Republican Leadership

While Washington is often celebrated as a military hero, Wood also highlights his role in navigating the transition from monarchy to republican leadership. Washington's acceptance of limitations on power and his embodiment of civic virtue were vital in legitimizing the new political order.

Exploring the Social Impact Beyond Politics

The radicalism of the American Revolution extended beyond political institutions to challenge social norms and everyday life. Wood discusses how the Revolution influenced family structures, education, and religious life, fostering a culture that valued individual rights and community responsibility.

Education and the Promotion of Republican Citizenship

Education became a tool for cultivating informed citizens capable of participating in democracy. The Revolution inspired efforts to expand education and promote literacy, reflecting the belief that knowledge was essential for self-governance.

Religion and the Separation of Church and State

The Revolution also spurred debates about religious authority and freedom. Wood explores how the new republic began to disentangle church influence from

government, paving the way for religious pluralism and freedom of conscience.

Final Thoughts on the Enduring Legacy of the American Revolution's Radicalism

Gordon S. Wood's *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* invites us to see the Revolution not just as a historical event but as a foundational moment that reshaped American society in deeply profound ways. Its insights encourage a richer understanding of how ideas about equality, democracy, and social change emerged and continue to evolve.

By examining the Revolution through Wood's lens, readers gain a clearer picture of why this period remains so pivotal—not only in American history but in the broader narrative of human striving for liberty and justice. The radicalism that Wood describes is a reminder that revolutions are not just about changing governments; they are about transforming societies and redefining what it means to live together as equals.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main argument of Gordon S. Wood in 'The Radicalism of the American Revolution'?

Gordon S. Wood argues that the American Revolution was not just a political event but a radical social transformation that fundamentally changed American society, politics, and culture.

How does Wood define the 'radicalism' in the American Revolution?

Wood defines 'radicalism' as the profound change in American social structures, including the breakdown of traditional hierarchies and the emergence of egalitarian ideals.

In what ways did the American Revolution change social hierarchies, according to Wood?

According to Wood, the Revolution dismantled the colonial aristocracy, reduced the power of inherited privilege, and promoted greater social equality among white men.

Does Gordon S. Wood discuss the role of ordinary people in the American Revolution?

Yes, Wood emphasizes the active participation of ordinary colonists and how the Revolution empowered them politically and socially.

How does Wood's interpretation differ from traditional views of the American Revolution?

Unlike traditional views that focus mainly on political independence, Wood highlights the Revolution's social and cultural radicalism, including changes in class, gender roles, and identity.

What impact did the American Revolution have on the concept of republicanism, according to Wood?

Wood explains that the Revolution popularized republicanism, emphasizing civic virtue and the rejection of monarchy and aristocracy in favor of a government based on the consent of the governed.

How does Wood address the issue of slavery in 'The Radicalism of the American Revolution'?

Wood acknowledges that while the Revolution promoted liberty and equality ideals, these principles were inconsistently applied, and slavery persisted as a major contradiction.

What role did religion play in the radicalism of the American Revolution, based on Wood's analysis?

Wood describes how the Revolution fostered religious freedom and challenged established churches, contributing to a more pluralistic and democratic society.

According to Wood, how did the Revolution affect women's roles in American society?

Wood argues that while women did not gain formal political rights, the Revolution raised new ideas about women's roles, particularly in education and republican motherhood.

Why is 'The Radicalism of the American Revolution' considered an important work in American history scholarship?

It is important because Wood provides a nuanced understanding of the

Revolution as a transformative social event, influencing subsequent interpretations of American identity and democracy.

Additional Resources

The Radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood: An Analytical Review

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood stands as a seminal work in the study of American history, offering an incisive exploration of the profound transformations that the United States underwent during its founding era. This book moves beyond a simple recounting of the political events surrounding the Revolution, delving deeply into the social, economic, and ideological upheavals that redefined the American identity. Gordon S. Wood, a distinguished historian, challenges conventional narratives by asserting that the American Revolution was not merely a colonial rebellion but a radical restructuring of American society that reshaped notions of authority, class, and individual rights.

Understanding the Core Thesis of The Radicalism of the American Revolution

At the heart of Wood's argument is the idea that the American Revolution was revolutionary in the truest sense—it fundamentally altered the social fabric and political order of the colonies. Unlike other revolutions that often replaced one elite ruling class with another, the American Revolution dismantled the old hierarchical structures rooted in monarchy and aristocracy. Wood emphasizes how the revolution fostered a shift from a society dominated by inherited privilege to one grounded in egalitarian ideals and meritocracy.

This thesis contrasts with traditional histories that focus primarily on the political independence from Britain or the military conflicts involved. Wood reframes the revolution as an event that democratized American society, promoting the rise of a middle class and the empowerment of common citizens. His analysis draws on extensive primary sources, including letters, pamphlets, and political documents, to illustrate how revolutionary rhetoric translated into real societal change.

Radical Changes in Social Structure

One of the most compelling aspects of Wood's work is his exploration of the radical social changes brought about by the revolution. Before independence, colonial America was characterized by a rigid social hierarchy reminiscent of European aristocratic models. The revolution disrupted this order by

undermining the legitimacy of inherited status and promoting the idea that leadership and social standing should be based on virtue and talent rather than birthright.

Wood details how the collapse of royal authority and the decline of the Anglican Church's influence opened avenues for new social mobility. For example, the revolution catalyzed the rise of new political leaders from humble beginnings, signaling a break from the past elitism. This democratization extended to other areas of life, including education, religious practice, and economic opportunity, which collectively fostered a more inclusive and participatory society.

Political Ideology and the Birth of Republicanism

Central to Wood's analysis is the emergence of republican ideology as the defining political philosophy of the new nation. The radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood highlights how the colonists rejected monarchy and aristocracy in favor of a government based on popular sovereignty and civic virtue. This ideological shift was not merely about rejecting British rule but about constructing an entirely new vision of governance.

Wood traces the intellectual roots of republicanism to Enlightenment thinkers and classical political theory, showing how American revolutionaries adapted these ideas to their context. The emphasis on liberty, equality before the law, and the public good laid the groundwork for the Constitution and shaped the early republic's political culture. Additionally, Wood explores the tensions inherent in republicanism, such as balancing individual freedoms with the needs of the community and the challenges of defining citizenship in a diverse society.

Comparative Perspectives: How Wood's Interpretation Stands Out

The radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood distinguishes itself through its comprehensive approach and nuanced interpretation. Compared to other historians who focus narrowly on political or military aspects, Wood integrates social, economic, and ideological dimensions to present a holistic picture. His work invites readers to reconsider the revolution not as a single event but as a complex process that unfolded over decades.

Moreover, Wood's thesis aligns with but also diverges from other seminal works in revolutionary studies. For instance, while historians like Bernard Bailyn emphasize ideological origins and the role of ideas in motivating rebellion, Wood extends the analysis to tangible social consequences. This

integration enriches the discourse and provides a clearer understanding of the revolution's lasting impact on American society.

The Role of Class and Economic Factors

Economic transformations during and after the revolution form a critical part of Wood's argument. The radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood highlights how the demise of colonial mercantilism and aristocratic landholding patterns facilitated the growth of capitalism and entrepreneurialism. The redistribution of property, weakening of old economic elites, and expansion of market opportunities contributed to a more dynamic and less stratified economy.

Wood also considers the limitations and contradictions of these changes. While the revolution promoted greater equality among white men, it did not extend these rights to women, Native Americans, or enslaved Africans. This paradox underscores the complex nature of the revolution's radicalism—progressive in some respects but constrained by the social norms and prejudices of the time.

Key Features and Themes of The Radicalism of the American Revolution

- **Transformative Social Change:** The book details how the revolution dismantled aristocratic social structures, promoting a more egalitarian society.
- **Republican Ideology:** Wood explores the emergence of republicanism as a political philosophy emphasizing liberty, civic virtue, and popular sovereignty.
- **Economic Shifts:** The transition from colonial mercantilism to capitalist enterprise is examined as a driver of social mobility and class realignment.
- **Continuity and Contradiction:** The work acknowledges the limitations of revolutionary ideals, particularly concerning race and gender inequalities.
- **Intellectual Foundations:** Enlightenment thought and classical republicanism are traced as key influences on revolutionary leaders and documents.

Pros and Cons of Wood's Interpretation

While many scholars praise Wood's comprehensive and insightful analysis, his work is not without criticism. On the positive side, the radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood offers a refreshing departure from purely political histories and enriches understanding of the revolution's broader implications. His emphasis on social history and ideology provides a multidimensional perspective often missing in earlier accounts.

However, some critics argue that Wood may overstate the degree of radicalism, especially given the persistence of slavery and exclusionary practices. Others suggest that his focus on republicanism downplays the diversity of revolutionary experiences in different colonies and among marginalized groups. Nonetheless, these debates highlight the book's importance in stimulating ongoing scholarly discussion.

The Enduring Impact of Wood's Work on Revolutionary Scholarship

More than three decades after its publication, the radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood remains a foundational text in American historiography. Its influence extends beyond academic circles, informing public understanding and education about the nation's origins. By portraying the revolution as a transformative social upheaval rather than merely a political rupture, Wood's work encourages readers to appreciate the complexities and enduring legacies of America's founding moment.

The book has also inspired subsequent research into the social dimensions of revolutions globally, demonstrating the value of interdisciplinary approaches that blend political theory, economic history, and cultural analysis. In doing so, Wood has set a high standard for historical scholarship that balances narrative richness with analytical rigor.

In sum, the radicalism of the American Revolution by Gordon S. Wood offers a compelling and thorough interpretation of one of history's most significant events. Its detailed examination of social transformation, republican ideology, and economic change provides crucial insights into how the American Revolution reshaped society in ways that continue to resonate today.

[The Radicalism Of The American Revolution By Gordon S Wood](#)

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: The Radicalism of the American Revolution Gordon S. Wood, 2011-08-24 In a grand and immensely readable synthesis

of historical, political, cultural, and economic analysis, a prize-winning historian describes the events that made the American Revolution. Gordon S. Wood depicts a revolution that was about much more than a break from England, rather it transformed an almost feudal society into a democratic one, whose emerging realities sometimes baffled and disappointed its founding fathers.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* Gordon S. Wood, 2011-08-24 In a grand and immensely readable synthesis of historical, political, cultural, and economic analysis, a prize-winning historian describes the events that made the American Revolution. Gordon S. Wood depicts a revolution that was about much more than a break from England, rather it transformed an almost feudal society into a democratic one, whose emerging realities sometimes baffled and disappointed its founding fathers.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1764-1776 Various, 2015-07-28 For the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution, acclaimed historian Gordon S. Wood presents a landmark collection of British and American pamphlets from the political debate that divided an empire and created a nation: In 1764, in the wake of its triumph in the Seven Years War, Great Britain possessed the largest and most powerful empire the world had seen since the fall of Rome and its North American colonists were justly proud of their vital place within this global colossus. Just twelve short years later the empire was in tatters, and the thirteen colonies proclaimed themselves the free and independent United States of America. Now, for the 250th anniversary of the Stamp Act Crisis, the momentous upheaval that marked the beginning of the American Revolution, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Gordon S. Wood presents a landmark two-volume edition of the political debate that led to the Declaration of Independence. This unprecedented collection gathers in two authoritative Library of America volumes the complete texts of thirty-nine of the most fascinating and influential British and American pamphlets of the period: inexpensive, widely circulated works that were the instant media of their day, ideal for the rapid exchange of ideas. In the first volume a controversy about the origin and function of colonies quickly becomes a deeper dispute over the nature of political liberty itself, in which Massachusetts lawyer James Otis boldly asserts the colonists' natural rights; Benjamin Franklin gives dramatic testimony against the Stamp Act before the House of Commons; John Dickinson calls for collective action in the famous Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania; and the so-called Boston Pamphlet, written by Samuel Adams and others, turns the focus of debate to the question of sovereignty, setting the stage for the final crisis to come. In the second volume Thomas Jefferson advances a vision of a radically new kind of empire in the work that first made him famous; Joseph Galloway presents an ingenious but ill-fated plan for preserving union with Great Britain; Samuel Johnson gives vent to his deep animus for the Americans and their pretensions to liberty; Edmund Burke makes an eloquent case for reconciliation before it's too late; and Thomas Paine, in the truly revolutionary Common Sense, proclaims that the birthday of a new world is at hand. Prepared by the nation's leading historian of the American Revolution, each volume includes an introduction, headnotes, biographical notes about the writers, a chronology charting the rise and fall of the first British empire, a textual essay describing the production, reception, and influence of each work, and detailed explanatory notes. As a special feature, the set also features typographic reproductions of the pamphlets' original title pages. LIBRARY OF AMERICA is an independent nonprofit cultural organization founded in 1979 to preserve our nation's literary heritage by publishing, and keeping permanently in print, America's best and most significant writing. The Library of America series includes more than 300 volumes to date, authoritative editions that average 1,000 pages in length, feature cloth covers, sewn bindings, and ribbon markers, and are printed on premium acid-free paper that will last for centuries.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: The American Revolution Gordon S. Wood, 2002 In *The American Revolution*, Gordon S. Wood makes new the story of how and why the American colonies grew apart from and broke with their mother country, establishing a fundamentally new experiment in government. Writing with great elegance and authority, he awakens us to the drama and contingency of those long-ago events and teases out, magnificently,

the process of mutation that led to the formation of America's distinctive and astonishingly resilient national character. The compact between the American government and its people is unique to history, and in telling the story of its birth in a single commanding narrative, Gordon S. Wood has done a service of timeless value.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: The Idea of America

Gordon S. Wood, 2011-05-12 The preeminent historian of the American Revolution explains why it remains the most significant event in our history. More than almost any other nation in the world, the United States began as an idea. For this reason, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Gordon S. Wood believes that the American Revolution is the most important event in our history, bar none. Since American identity is so fluid and not based on any universally shared heritage, we have had to continually return to our nation's founding to understand who we are. In *The Idea of America*, Wood reflects on the birth of American nationhood and explains why the revolution remains so essential. In a series of elegant and illuminating essays, Wood explores the ideological origins of the revolution—from ancient Rome to the European Enlightenment—and the founders' attempts to forge an American democracy. As Wood reveals, while the founders hoped to create a virtuous republic of yeoman farmers and uninterested leaders, they instead gave birth to a sprawling, licentious, and materialistic popular democracy. Wood also traces the origins of American exceptionalism to this period, revealing how the revolutionary generation, despite living in a distant, sparsely populated country, believed itself to be the most enlightened people on earth. The revolution gave Americans their messianic sense of purpose—and perhaps our continued propensity to promote democracy around the world—because the founders believed their colonial rebellion had universal significance for oppressed peoples everywhere. Yet what may seem like audacity in retrospect reflected the fact that in the eighteenth century republicanism was a truly radical ideology—as radical as Marxism would be in the nineteenth—and one that indeed inspired revolutionaries the world over. Today there exists what Wood calls a terrifying gap between us and the founders, such that it requires almost an act of imagination to fully recapture their era. Because we now take our democracy for granted, it is nearly impossible for us to appreciate how deeply the founders feared their grand experiment in liberty could evolve into monarchy or dissolve into licentiousness. Gracefully written and filled with insight, *The Idea of America* helps us to recapture the fears and hopes of the revolutionary generation and its attempts to translate those ideals into a working democracy. Lin-Manuel Miranda's smash Broadway musical *Hamilton* has sparked new interest in the Revolutionary War and the Founding Fathers. In addition to Alexander Hamilton, the production also features George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Aaron Burr, Lafayette, and many more. Look for Gordon's new book, *Friends Divided*.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: The American Revolution

Edward Countryman, 2003-01-08 Previously published: New York: Hill and Wang, c1985.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: The Purpose of the Past

Gordon S. Wood, 2008 Wood examines how the historian's craft has changed radically over the past 40 years. This work offers insight into what great historians do, how they can stumble, and what strains of thought have dominated the marketplace of ideas in historical scholarship.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: New Jersey in the American

Revolution Barbara J. Mitnick, 2007-03-12 This remarkably comprehensive anthology brings new life to the rich and turbulent late 18th-century period in New Jersey. Originally conceived for the state's 225th Anniversary of the Revolution Celebration Commission.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: The American Revolution

Frances H. Kennedy, 2014-05-13 In 1996, Congress commissioned the National Park Service to compile a list of sites and landmarks connected with the American Revolution that it deemed vital to preserve for future generations. Some of these sites are well known—Bunker Hill, Valley Forge, Fort Ticonderoga—and in no danger of being lost; others less so—Blackstock's Plantation in South Carolina or Bryan's Station in Kentucky—and more vulnerable. But all are central to the story of our nation's fight for independence. From battlefields to encampments, meeting houses to museums,

these places offer us a chance to rediscover the remarkable men and women who founded this nation and to recognize the relevance of not just what they did, but where they did it. The American Revolution: A Historical Guidebook takes readers to nearly 150 of these sites, providing an overview of the Revolution through an exploration of the places where American independence was articulated, fought for, and eventually secured. Beginning with the Boston Common, first occupied by British troops in 1768, and closing with Fraunces Tavern in New York, where George Washington bid farewell to his officers on December 4, 1783, Kennedy takes readers on a tour of the most significant places of Revolutionary history. Accompanied by illuminating excerpts and essays from some of the foremost scholars in the field, including David McCullough, Barbara Tuchman, David Hackett Fischer, Eric Foner, and John Ferling, the entries move in a roughly chronological order from the pre-Revolutionary years up through 1787. Taken together, the combination of site, essay, and excerpt provides rich context and overview, giving a sense of the major figures and events as well as the course of the Revolution, and cover topics ranging from the Boston Tea Party to the frontier wars. The guide is encyclopedic in scope and covers a wide geographical sweep. Accompanied by historical maps, as well as a number of illuminating primary documents including the Declaration of Independence and letters from John Adams and George Washington, it offers a comprehensive picture of how the Revolutionary War unfolded on American soil, and also points readers to the best writing on the subject in the last fifty years. The American Revolution: A Historical Guidebook is an essential companion for anyone interested in the story and history of our nation's founding.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: *Revolutionary Characters* Gordon S. Wood, 2006 A historical analysis of America's founding leaders identifies the character qualities that enabled them to make their pivotal contributions to the country's formation, discussing what their examples can teach modern readers and how their shared vision of a national meritocracy was shaped by period beliefs about character and leadership. 75,000 first printing.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing* Kelly Boyd, 2019-10-09 The Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing contains over 800 entries ranging from Lord Acton and Anna Comnena to Howard Zinn and from Herodotus to Simon Schama. Over 300 contributors from around the world have composed critical assessments of historians from the beginning of historical writing to the present day, including individuals from related disciplines like Jürgen Habermas and Clifford Geertz, whose theoretical contributions have informed historical debate. Additionally, the Encyclopedia includes some 200 essays treating the development of national, regional and topical historiographies, from the Ancient Near East to the history of sexuality. In addition to the Western tradition, it includes substantial assessments of African, Asian, and Latin American historians and debates on gender and subaltern studies.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: *A Concise History of the United States of America* Susan-Mary Grant, 2012-03-05 Born out of violence and the aspirations of its early settlers, the United States of America has become one of the world's most powerful nations. The book begins in colonial America as the first Europeans arrived, lured by the promise of financial profit, driven by religious piety and accompanied by diseases which would ravage the native populations. It explores the tensions inherent in a country built on slave labour in the name of liberty, one forced to assert its unity and reassess its ideals in the face of secession and civil war, and one that struggled to establish moral supremacy, military security and economic stability during the financial crises and global conflicts of the twentieth century. Woven through this richly crafted study of America's shifting social and political landscapes are the multiple voices of the nation's history: slaves and slave owners, revolutionaries and reformers, soldiers and statesmen, immigrants and refugees. These voices help define the United States at the dawn of a new century.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: *Many Identities, One Nation* Liam Riordan, 2010-11-24 The richly diverse population of the mid-Atlantic region distinguished it from the homogeneity of Puritan New England and the stark differences of the plantation South that

still dominate our understanding of early America. In *Many Identities, One Nation*, Liam Riordan explores how the American Revolution politicized religious, racial, and ethnic identities among the diverse inhabitants of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey. Attending to individual experiences through a close comparative analysis, Riordan explains the transformation from British subjects to U.S. citizens in a region that included Quakers, African Americans, and Pennsylvania Germans. In the face of a gradually emerging sense of nationalism, varied forms of personal and group identities took on heightened public significance in the Revolutionary Delaware Valley. While Quakers in Burlington, New Jersey, remained suspect after the war because of their pacifism, newly freed slaves in New Castle, Delaware, demanded full inclusion, and bilingual Pennsylvania Germans in Easton, Pennsylvania, successfully struggled to create a central place for themselves in the new nation. By placing the public contest over the proper expression of group distinctiveness in the context of local life, Riordan offers a new understanding of how cultural identity structured the early Jacksonian society of the 1820s as a culmination of the American Revolution in this region. This compelling story brings to life the popular culture of the Revolutionary Delaware Valley through analysis of wide-ranging evidence, from architecture, folk art, clothing, and music to personal papers, newspapers, and local church, tax, and census records. The study's multilayered local perspective allows us to see how the Revolutionary upheaval of the colonial status quo penetrated everyday life and stimulated new understandings of the importance of cultural diversity in the Revolutionary nation.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: A Short History of the American Revolutionary War Stephen Conway, 2013-04-12 The American war against British imperial rule (1775-1783) was the world's first great popular revolution. Ideologically defined by the colonists' formal Declaration of Independence in 1776, the struggle has taken on something of a mythic character. From the Boston Tea Party to Paul Revere's ride to raise the countryside of New England against the march of the Redcoats; and from the American travails of Bunker Hill (1775) to the final humiliation of the British at Yorktown (1781), the entire contest is now emblematic of American national identity. Stephen Conway shows that, beyond mythology, this was more than just a local conflict: rather a titanic struggle between France and Britain. The Thirteen Colonies were merely one frontline of an extended theatre of operations, with each superpower aiming to deliver the knockout blow. This bold new history recognizes the war as the Revolution but situates it on the wider, global canvas of European warfare.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: Sensibility and the American Revolution Sarah Knott, 2009 In the wake of American independence, it was clear that the new United States required novel political forms. Less obvious but no less revolutionary was the idea that the American people needed a new understanding of the self. Sensibility was a cultural m

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: Apostles of Revolution John Ferling, 2018-05-15 From acclaimed historian John Ferling, the story of Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, and James Monroe's involvement in the American and French Revolutions and their quest for sweeping change in both America and Europe. Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, and James Monroe hazarded all in quest of revolutions. As founding fathers, they risked their lives and their liberty for American independence, and as reformers, each rejoiced at the opportunity to be part of the French Revolution, praying that it in turn would inspire others to sweep away Europe's monarchies and titled nobilities. For these three men, real revolution would lead to substantive political and social alterations and an escape from royal and aristocratic rule. But as the eighteenth century unfolded, these three separated onto different routes to revolution-two became soldiers, two became writers, and two became statesmen-and their united cause but divided means reshaped their country and the Western world. *Apostles of Revolution* spans a crucial time in Western Civilization. The era ranged from the American insurgency against Great Britain to the Declaration of Independence, from desperate engagements on American battlefields to the bloody Terror in France. It culminates with the tumultuous election of 1800, the outcome of which - according to Jefferson - saved the American Revolution. Written as a sweeping narrative of a turbulent and pivotal era, *Apostles of the*

Revolution captures the spirit of our founding fathers and the history of America and Europe's great turning point.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: Becoming America Jon Butler, 2001-12-28 In his view of Britain's mainland American colonies after 1680, Butler reveals a strikingly "modern" character belying the quaintness fixed in history. Multinational, profit-driven, materialistic, politically self-conscious, power-hungry, religiously plural—the colonies became a "new order of the ages" anticipating the American Revolution.

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: *United States History - Part A*

the radicalism of the american revolution by gordon s wood: William Henry Drayton Keith T. Krawczynski, 2001-07-01 In this exhaustive biography, Keith Krawczynski details the political and social career of William Henry Drayton (1742-1779), an ambitious, wealthy lowcountry planter and zealous patriot leader who was at the center of Revolutionary activity in South Carolina from 1774 until his death five years later. Considered the most effective Whig polemicist in the lower South, Drayton served on all his state's important Revolutionary governing bodies, commanded a frigate of war, was elected chief justice in 1776, co-authored South Carolina's 1778 constitution, and represented the state in the Continental Congress from 1778 until his demise. Although Drayton was a leading radical and the central figure of the American Revolution in South Carolina, historians have largely ignored his contributions. With William Henry Drayton, Krawczynski removes this fascinating man from the shadows of history. Drayton was an improbable rebel. After receiving his formal education in England, the South Carolina-born Drayton returned to his birthplace as a planter and continued to espouse Royalist ideals. During a later visit to Britain, he was hailed as a champion of British sovereignty. In fact, South Carolina harbored few early revolutionaries, as low-country planters and merchants remained entrenched in the imperial system of trade, backcountry residents strongly identified with the king, and whites feared showing division lest their slaves launch a rebellion. Yet, disgruntled with the king's increasing infringement on American liberties, Drayton embraced the rebel cause with the zealotry of a recent convert and eventually did more to resist British rule than any other resident of the Palmetto State. Because he entered the Revolution as a supporter of the Crown, Drayton's life sheds light on why the planter-mercantile gentry rebelled against the mother country on which it relied for its economic status. His energetic attempts to preserve the provincial hierarchy and keep the reins of government firmly in the hands of the local aristocracy also help to explain why South Carolina's rebellion was more politically conservative than that of other states. By raising the profile of this South Carolina patriot, William Henry Drayton brings new depth to our understanding of the American Revolution.

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