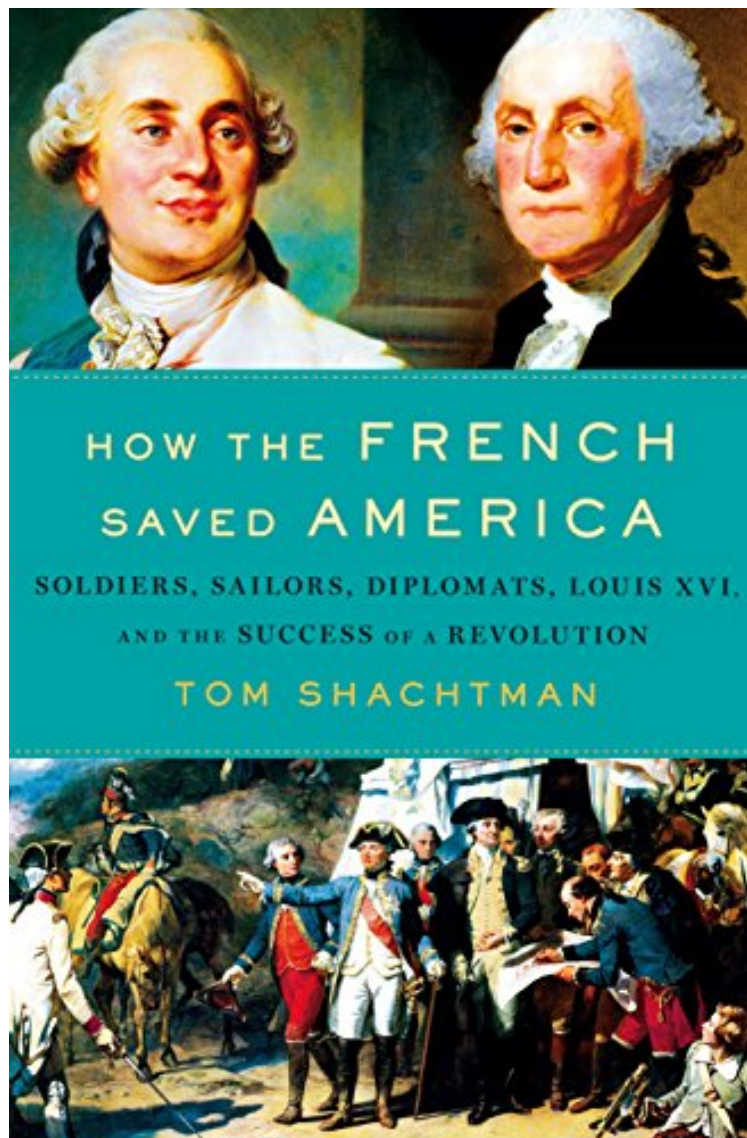


(Download free ebook) How the French Saved America: Soldiers, Sailors, Diplomats, Louis XVI, and the Success of a Revolution

How the French Saved America: Soldiers, Sailors, Diplomats, Louis XVI, and the Success of a Revolution

Tom Shachtman

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Tom Shachtman : How the French Saved America: Soldiers, Sailors, Diplomats, Louis XVI, and the Success of a Revolution before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How the French Saved America: Soldiers, Sailors, Diplomats, Louis XVI, and the Success of a Revolution:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A European Look at The American Revolution By Andy in

Washington I have read quite a bit about the American Revolution, it is one of my favorite periods of history. But this book filled in quite a few gaps, as I had never really understood the Revolution from a more Eurocentric view. Tom Shachtman does an excellent job of presenting the view from the French viewpoint, and examines the actions and consequences of their involvement.==== The Good Stuff ====* The book highlights some of the aspects of the French participation in the Revolution that I had been unaware of. For example, I had never considered the motivations of French military officers serving in America, but as the author pointed out, it was viewed as a prestigious assignment. That attracted the best and the brightest officers, such as Lafayette and de Grasse, but also a group of less than stellar officers who saw a chance at quick glory and fame. This put the Americans, the junior partner in the relationship, in the position of having to turn down offered officers.* There is a nice mix of diplomacy, military strategy and tactics, and European politics. We see the French using the Revolution as an opportunity to weaken their traditional enemy of Great Britain, but also the Spanish seeking advantage for its trade and military position. Although Shachtman leaves the question unanswered, you can't help but wonder how much of the seeds of the French Revolution came from America. The French revolution cost Louis XVI his head, and may have been a direct result of his generosity to the Americans.* One of the more interesting parts of the book concentrated on the relations between senior American and French commanders. The French respected Washington, but were somewhat reserved at first about his abilities as a commander. At Lafayette's insistence, the King Louis XVI issued an edict that French commanders were to be under the direct authority of American commanders. Only the dedication and personalities of the men involved allowed this to be a workable situation.* There are a few marvelous little anecdotes and cool stories. Near the end of the book, we find the American and French armies getting a tremendous boost because the smell of French Bread baking distracted the British. On such trivia, countries are founded!==== The Not-So-Good Stuff ====* While Shachtman mentions one instance of Benjamin Franklin playing good cop/bad cop with his French counterparts, for the most part the author doesn't give the reader a lot of guidance in interpreting the actions of the senior American diplomats. My own view is that Franklin and his colleagues were perfectly capable of being backed into the exact corner they wanted to be in, but it is tough to sift that out from the narrative.* The book is a little short. I would have liked to see a few more chapters at the end, dealing with how the French/Spanish/American alliance progressed, and the allies' support as America became a country, and a challenger to its allies.==== Summary ====I enjoyed the book, and read it in a day or two. It was an easy to read book, and it filled in a lot of blank spots in my knowledge about one of my favorite periods of history. The book seems very well referenced, although it was a bit tough to check very many of them, since I was reading a galley copy where the references weren't completely marked. I would recommend the book to any fan of this period of history, although it won't stand alone for anyone not familiar with the Revolutionary War.==== Disclaimer ====I was able to read an advance copy through the courtesy of NetGalley and the publisher.

Americans today have a love/hate relationship with France, but in *How the French Saved America* Tom Shachtman shows that without France, there might not be a United States of America. To the rebelling colonies, French assistance made the difference between looming defeat and eventual triumph. Even before the Declaration of Independence was issued, King Louis XVI and French foreign minister Vergennes were aiding the rebels. After the Declaration, that assistance broadened to include wages for our troops; guns, cannon, and ammunition; engineering expertise that enabled victories and prevented defeats; diplomatic recognition; safe havens for privateers; battlefield leadership by veteran officers; and the army and fleet that made possible the Franco-American victory at Yorktown. Nearly ten percent of those who fought and died for the American cause were French. Those who fought and survived, in addition to the well-known Lafayette and Rochambeau, include François de Fleury, who won a Congressional Medal for valor, Louis Duportail, who founded the Army Corps of Engineers, and Admiral de Grasse, whose sea victory sealed the fate of Yorktown. This illuminating narrative history vividly captures the outsize characters of our European brothers, their battlefield and diplomatic bonds and clashes with Americans, and the monumental role they played in America's fight for independence and democracy.

"The author makes a convincing case that, without France, the United States may never have gained independence." Kirkus
At last a full and compelling accounting of the crucial role that France and the French played in the American Revolutionary War! Shachtman skillfully shatters the myth that Americans secured their independence from Great Britain alone and by themselves. Through meticulous research, he tells the fascinating story of how the American revolutionaries slowly and at times fitfully negotiated their country's first international alliance, ultimately leading to military victory and the creation of the United States. This book deserves a place on the bookshelf of every American history buff. Jeswald W. Salacuse, Distinguished Professor and former Dean, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, and author of *Real Leaders Negotiate!*
Tom Shachtman casts a fresh overview on America's complex struggle for independence from England in his intricately nuanced *When the French Saved America*. His engrossing portraits of the various players on every side, from George Washington to Louis XVI, his ministers, and their English rivals, are rendered with insight and vividly brought to life. He depicts the torturous efforts to win the support of France, the cradle of the Enlightenment, for the desperately needed funds, ammunitions, troops,

and military officers, and, once the alliance with France was forged, the two countries all-out, merciless war with England. Charles Ruas, literary critic, translator of Foucault When General John Pershing landed in France exactly a century ago at the head of American forces, he exclaimed, 'Lafayette, nous sommes ici!' (Lafayette, we are here!). With clarity and verve, Tom Shachtman explains exactly what 'Black Jack' Pershing meant. Without the incalculable contributions of the French, the United States could not have survived its revolutionary break away from the mighty British empire. In *How the French Saved America*, Shachtman brings back to life an exciting cast of characters: soldiers and sailors, engineers, armorers and diplomats. Willard Sterne Randall, author of *Unshackling America: How the War of 1812 Truly Ended the American Revolution* A terrific read, incredibly researched, vivid, persuasive, wonderful details and analysis everything you want history to be. Constance Rosenblum, author of *Gold Digger: The Outrageous Life and Times of Peggy Hopkins Joyce*, and a former editor at the *New York Times* "With verve and style, Tom Shachtman brings a fresh new look to the critical role played by the French in the American Revolution. The fast paced narrative focuses on the military side of the events that led from the first tentative discussion in Philadelphia by French emissaries in 1775 to the Battle of Yorktown in 1781. All the well-known characters crowd the mythic stage but many of the French figures that have been largely forgotten are also brought to life with context and animated quotes from the historical record. William Howard Adams Author of *The Paris Years of Thomas Jefferson*, and of *On Luxury: A Cautionary Tale* About the Author TOM SHACHTMAN has written or co-authored more than thirty books, as well as documentaries for ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, and BBC, and has taught at New York University and lectured at Harvard and Stanford. He is a former chairman of The Writers Room in Manhattan, a trustee of the Connecticut Humanities Council, a founding director of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, and is currently a consultant to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's science and technology initiatives. Tom is the author of *Gentleman Scientists and Revolutionaries*.