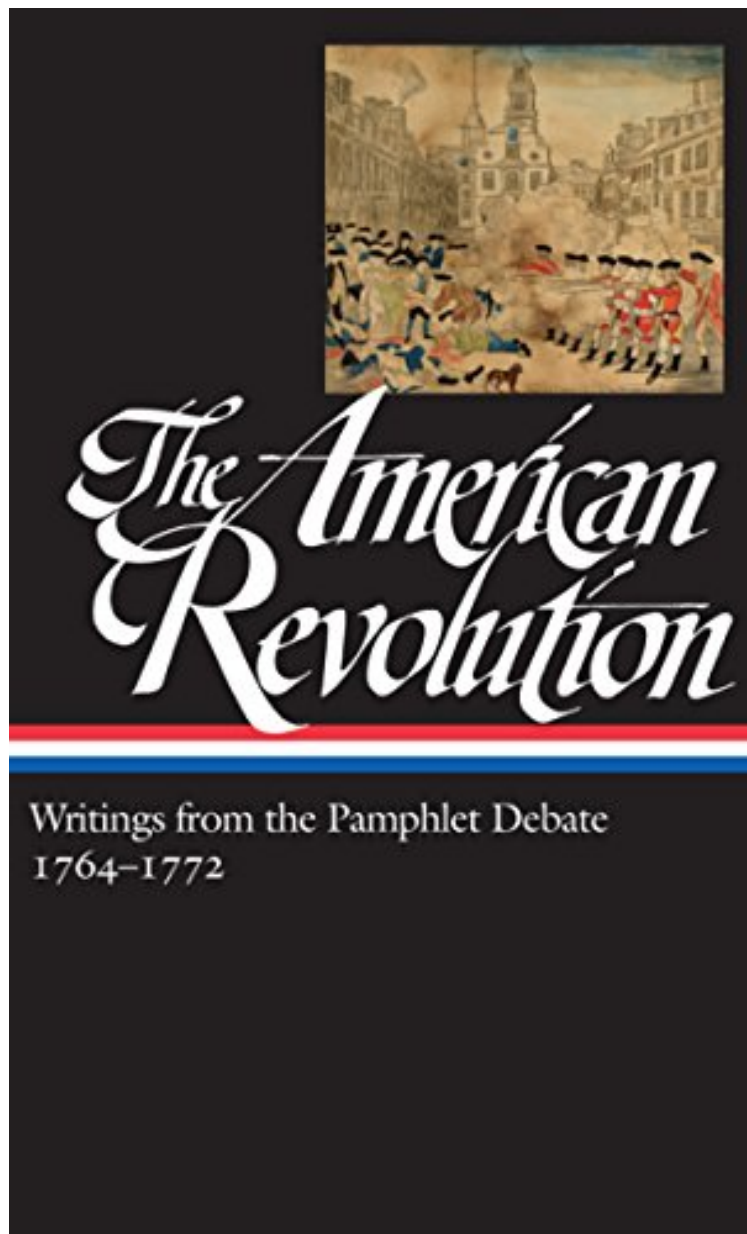


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0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Happy to say I have them all as of this ...By John Burns Everything from the Library of America interesting to read. Happy to say I have them all as of this date. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Fundamental building blocks of the American revolution By Ronald H. Clark Long before clashing political viewpoints were exchanged in published articles, pamphlets served as the primary mechanism for circulating arguments and for responding. This was certainly the case during the revolutionary period, as evidenced by this fine Library of America collection (the first of two volumes; the second covers 1773-1776) edited by Gordon S. Wood. Covering the period 1764-1772, there is nobody (with the exception of Bernard Bailyn) as well versed in the materials of this period as is Wood who has done his usual exemplary job here. For a long time in revolutionary studies, pamphlets were not recognized for the rich contribution they could make to understanding the arguments asserted for American independence or at least more "salutary neglect" which for so long had been the cornerstone of British policy toward the colonies. Then in 1965 another dean of American revolutionary studies, Bernard Bailyn, published his pathbreaking "Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776" (Harvard University Press). Here in nearly 800 pages, Bailyn presented the fruits of his review of 400 pamphlets of the period. For Bailyn the pamphlets traced "the transforming radicalism of the American Revolution," as he explained in an extensive introduction. While Wood's introduction is much shorter than Bailyn's, his selectivity in choosing pamphlets to include is as judicious. Of course this first volume commences in 1764, as contrasted with Bailyn's 1750, so the two books are not identical in terms of scope. The good news is that while several of the authors appear in both volumes, there is hardly any overlap and duplication. So we now have two rich volumes covering the pamphlets of the revolutionary period. Among the more notable items are pamphlets by Richard Bland (whose importance during the revolutionary period in Virginia I just recently discovered), James Otis (of course), Edward Bancroft and Joseph Warren. All told, there are 19 pamphlets included in some 900 pages of text. Since it is a LOA volume, it includes important additional features including a Chronology (which I always find immensely helpful), some Biographical Notes, and some extensive endnotes. All together, a very nice and useful package in the comfortable LOA format and size. A valuable addition to the literature for those interested in this period, thankfully made easily and widely available. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The American Revolution Pamphlet Debate -- 1 By Robin Friedman The distinguished historian of the American Revolution Gordon Wood prepared this new book as the first of a two-volume Library of America box set of source materials on "The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate, 1764 -- 1776". The two volumes cover the increasing disagreements between Great Britain and the American colonies about the nature of their relationship. The ultimate result was the American Revolutionary War and American independence. The two volumes gain a great deal from being read together, and I have reviewed the box set here on . The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1764-1776 I thought it would be valuable to review the individual volumes as well. The two volumes include 39 pamphlets written from a variety of perspectives on the deteriorating relationship between Great Britain and America. The first volume, which I am reviewing here, includes 19 pamphlets written between 1764 -- 1772 while the successor volume includes 20 pamphlets written between 1773 -- 1776. Especially in this first volume, understanding the debate in these pamphlets requires a degree of historical knowledge. The debate began after the British-American success in the Seven Years War with Britain's acquisition of a large colonial empire. The opening pamphlet in this volume, written by "Cato" expresses skepticism about Britain's ability to manage her new far-flung territory. After the war, Britain attempted to tax the colonies to pay for the great expenses of the struggle, and the trouble between the colonies and the mother country began. The colonies objected strongly to Britain's power to tax when the colonies were not and could not be represented in parliament. In this volume, the pamphlet debate is less focused than in the successor volume and is tied to changing policies. Some supporters of Britain argued that the colonies had "virtual" representation in parliament while supporters of the colonies denied this. Other British writers denied that the colonists' lack of representation made no difference to the power to tax. Then too, some colonists argued that parliament could not tax them but that it could impose duties on products imported from Britain. Other pamphlet writers, both those who supported America and those who supported Britain, found this a distinction without a difference. Matters would come to a head with a discussion of sovereignty -- essentially whether Britain and the United States, with the passage of time and 3000 miles of ocean separating them, constituted one people or instead had become two. The pamphlets in this volume allow the reader to see the progress of the debate through these varied positions. The pamphlets also turn on various enactments of Parliament, including the Stamp Act, the Declaratory Act stating that parliament had the right to legislate for the colonies "in all cases whatsoever" and the Townshend Acts which purported to impose "duties" on imports (most infamously on tea) rather than taxes. Gordon Wood's ancillary material do a great deal to help the reader through the pamphlet debate. Wood offers a brief introduction to each pamphlet which describes the issues at stake together with an overview introduction to the entire debate. The book also includes a valuable chronology of the course of the First British Empire, biographies of the authors of the pamphlets, and notes on the publication history of the pamphlets and on difficult points in their contents. This material helps clarify what remains dense and heavy but highly rewarding reading. Many

of the pamphlets in this volume have not been reprinted before and will be unfamiliar to all but specialist readers. Broadly speaking, the first eight pamphlets offer a variety of perspectives on the Stamp Act and on other early attempts by Britain to legislate for the colonies. The ninth pamphlet consists of Benjamin Franklin's testimony before an "August Assembly" explaining the nature of the Americans' objections to the Stamp Act. Franklin as always was careful and equivocal. Britain repealed the Stamp Act while insisting on its power to legislate. The tenth pamphlet comments astutely on the incongruity of this position. The most famous pamphlet in this volume is no. 11, John Dickinson's "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania" written in 1768. It is an erudite call for the colonies to unite and to oppose British duties, however styled, which threaten American liberty. It is valuable to have this important series of twelve letters readily accessible to readers in this volume. Pamphlets 12 -15 offer a variety of perspectives on the Townshend Duties. The controversy escalates in the paired pamphlets of William Knox and Edward Bancroft which focus the issue on sovereignty. The issue becomes all-or-nothing on both sides. The 18th pamphlet is a rousing speech by Joseph Warren commemorating the Boston Massacre while the final pamphlet in this volume is known as the "Boston pamphlet". It is the work of a committee, and it states the nature of America's grievances with Great Britain. The writing in these pamphlets ranges from the details of daily life in Britain and America, to intricate issues of taxation, to broad-ranging history beginning with the Magna Charta, to questions of politics and philosophy. The volume begins with a brief quotation from John Adams writing in 1815 to Thomas Jefferson. Adams wrote: "What do we mean by the Revolution? The War? That was no part of the Revolution. It was only an Effect and Consequence of it. The Revolution was in the Minds of the People, and this was effected, from 1760 -- 1775, in the course of fifteen Years before a drop of blood was drawn at Lexington. The Records of thirteen Legislatures, the Pamphlets, Newspapers in all the Colonies ought to be consulted, during that Period, to ascertain the Steps by which the public Opinion was enlightened and informed concerning the Authority of Parliament over the Colonies." This book and its companion offer the reader an outstanding introduction to the importance of the ideas at issue in the American Revolution and to the continued unfolding and significance of these ideas. The books offer great materials for reflection on the origins of the American experience. The Library of America kindly provided me with a review copy of the two-volume box set. Robin Friedman

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. In between, there occurred an extraordinary contest of words between American and Britons, and among Americans themselves, which addressed all of the most fundamental issues of politics: the nature of power, liberty, representation, rights and constitutions, and sovereignty. This debate was carried on largely in pamphlets and from the more than a thousand published on both sides of the Atlantic during the period Gordon S. Wood has selected thirty-nine of the most interesting and important to reveal as never before how this momentous revolution unfolded. This first of two volumes traces the debate from its first crisis Parliament's passage of the Stamp Act, which in the summer of 1765 triggered riots in American ports from Charleston, South Carolina, to Portsmouth, New Hampshire to its crucial turning point in 1772, when the Boston Town Meeting produces a pamphlet that announces their defiance to the world and changes everything. Here in its entirety is John Dickinson's justly famous Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, considered the most significant political tract in America prior to Thomas Paine's Common Sense. Here too is the dramatic transcript of Benjamin Franklin's testimony before Parliament as it debated repeal of the Stamp Act, among other fascinating works. The volume includes an introduction, headnotes, a chronology of events, biographical notes about the writers, and detailed explanatory notes, all prepared by our leading expert on the American Revolution. As a special feature, each pamphlet is preceded by a typographic reproduction of its original title page.

This collection of pamphlets from the American Revolution is timely, important, and judiciously selected, which is no surprise given that Gordon S. Wood is the most insightful and accomplished scholar of the intellectual origins and consequences of the Revolution. These volumes are a great and fitting addition to the Library of America series. Alan Taylor, winner of the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for History for *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia* Gordon S. Wood's grasp of the dynamics of the Imperial debate that culminated in American independence is unsurpassed. By including all sides of the controversy Wood has created the most discriminating and revealing collection of sources we have on the emerging ideology of the Revolution. Richard D. Brown, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History, Emeritus, at the University of Connecticut These volumes make a valuable contribution to the learning and teaching of American history. The men who wrote the script for national independence were strong, daring thinkers and skilled writers, with their lives at stake and their conscience in their pens. Their great gift to us lives on in this splendid collection. Michael McGiffert, Editor Emeritus, *The William and Mary Quarterly* About the Author GORDON

S. WOOD is Alva O. Way Professor of History Emeritus at Brown University. His books include the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, the Bancroft Prize-winning *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Uses of History*, and *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*, for the *Oxford History of the United States*. He writes frequently for *The New York Times*, among other publications. In 2011 Wood was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Barack Obama.