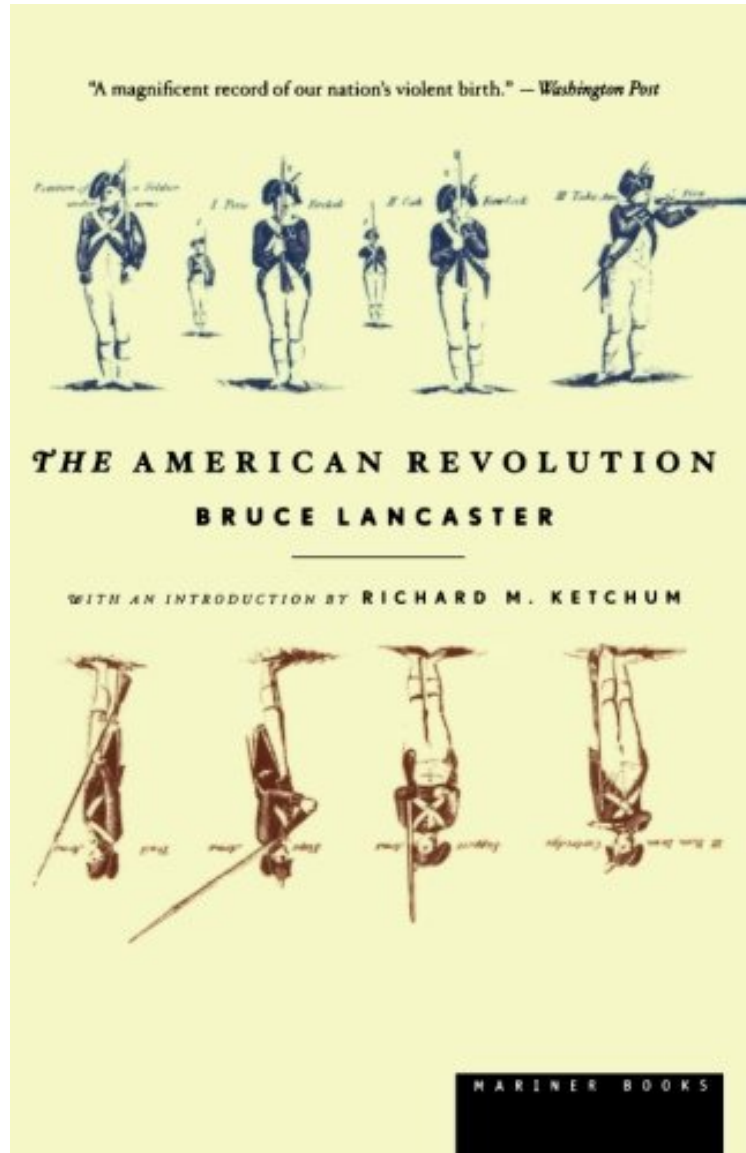


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The American Revolution

Bruce Lancaster

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Bruce Lancaster : The American Revolution before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The American Revolution:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Solid history of the American Revolution By Steven Peterson This is a solid history of the American Revolution, written by Bruce Lancaster. The narrative begins with the background to

Revolution. And, step by step, battle by battles, event by event, takes us through the time period. From the first conflicts to "The world turned upside down" at Yorktown, the literate history unfolds. An example of the detail here. Chapter XII, focusing on Yorktown, begins with the French General Rochambeau's appearance in Rhode Island--with no one there to greet him on this stunningly important occasion. A large number of French troops, ready to march under George Washington's leadership, sitting around with little to do! We see the Marquis de Lafayette with a force in Virginia trying to contain English forces, at various times under the leadership of Benedict Arnold and Lord Cornwallis. The normally active Cornwallis turned rather indolent, confident of his ability to maintain himself and his forces with English control of the seas. The debate between Rochambeau and Washington over where to deploy the troops. The great news that a large French fleet was on the way with transports filled with more French regular troops. With that news, the march by the allied forces to trap Cornwallis began. The tale of the battle, once joined, is well told. The same with the description of the battle at Saratoga. And other clashes as well. This book is well written and accessible to the general reader.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. How the world was turned upside down...By ewomack

The war that created the United States of America neither started nor ended with a bang. Only gradually, and very reluctantly, did the British Colonies embrace independence. Likewise, no one single battle decisively ended fighting. True, Yorktown did represent a major defeat for the British in 1781, but it did not bring the conflict to a sudden and dramatic close. Skirmishes continued and only petered out following the 1783 Treaty of Paris. As such, the American Revolution didn't really have a Waterloo or an Agincourt. This may explain why it inspires relatively few novels or motion pictures. Despite the lack of a Hollywood ending, the American Revolution remains one of the world's most vital conflicts. Not only did it lead to the creation of a major superpower, but it also heralded the final diluted stage of monarchy in the western world - in the words of Schoolhouse Rock, "No more King!" "The American Revolution" provides a good standard narrative of this David and Goliath struggle that ultimately turned the world upside down.

The book begins with an introductory chapter by J.H. Plumb. This provides some background information on the times leading up to the Revolution. Plumb discusses King George III, the Versailles Court, Rousseau, French salons, French vs. English tastes, and some general observations on the implications of the successful rebellion. The chapter stands on its own and doesn't really flow into the succeeding narrative by Bruce Lancaster. "Introduction" would have made a better title than "Chapter I." Nonetheless, the essay effectively sets the stage. Lancaster's narrative, comprising Chapter two onward, begins in 1759 and runs to the war's end. First, the French get defeated at Quebec. This made North America almost exclusively British, and would have drastic consequences for the Thirteen Colonies. In an attempt to boost revenue, warfare had depleted England's coffers, Parliament passed numerous Acts that progressively stung the colonies into a furor. These included the Sugar Act, the Stamp Act, the Townsend Acts, and the "Intolerable" Acts. Frustration swelled from 1765 onwards, culminating in the 1770 "Boston Massacre." The Boston Tea Party then directly challenged the East India Company's legal monopoly in 1773. To quell unrest, in 1774 Britain essentially took over the rebellious state of Massachusetts by appointing a Crown friendly government. This simply infuriated the Colonists, who called the First Continental Congress and began reluctantly experimenting with that dangerous word "independence." When American militas fired upon British troops at Lexington in 1775, there was no turning back. The war had begun. Lancaster provides a page-turning exposition of these famously dramatic events leading up to war. All of the big names appear: Sam Adams, Paul Revere, John Hancock, George Washington, John Adams, and countless others, including some lesser known but important names such as Israel Bissel. The remainder of the book follows the ensuing war. Lancaster also scatters the workings of Congress throughout, including the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation. But the main focus remains on the war itself. That war had enough ups and downs to inspire nausea. Victories at Breed's Hill and Fort Ticonderoga in 1775 raised morale but did not slow the ferocious onslaught of British troops. Then the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief, George Washington, quickly lost New York City. Following this huge disappointment, Lancaster inserts the opinions of the day concerning Washington's military abilities. Some people were not impressed. Throughout the book, Lancaster also indicates where the armies went wrong. He singles out the loss of New York in 1776 as one of the General's greatest blunders. But the British also had their share. Ultimately, Washington may have saved his command by decisive actions and victories at Trenton and Princeton. At this point the Americas start looking for help abroad. France seemed the likeliest candidate, and they began sending aid discreetly under the "Hortalez et Cie" company. Benjamin Franklin would later pull off a diplomatic masterpiece by securing an Alliance with France. Before the victory at Saratoga, though, the French weren't convinced that the Americans represented a good investment. That big break finally came in 1777 when British General Horatio Gates surrendered to American General John Burgoyne. Inbetween laid the dread of Valley Forge and the battle of Brandywine. 1778 closed with the last battle between the main armies at the battle of Monmouth (which also led to General Charles Lee's court-martial based on a possibly treacherous retreat). As Lancaster states, "For the rest of the war, all the fighting would be carried out by subordinate armies or by detachments from them." This statement turns out accurate, as skirmish after skirmish rattled on while the main armies continued to dodge and miss one another. Then, around 1780, the war moved to the south. Daniel Morgan met the British at the Battle of Cowpens in 1781, and Nathaniel Greene lost battles but won a campaign to significantly divide the British holdings in the Carolinas. The remainder of the year

led up to the climax at Yorktown. No longer distracted by battles in the West Indies, the French redoubled their support for the Americans. By sending troops under Rochambeau and gaining control of the sea from the British, which Lancaster calls "the one decisive engagement of the war" though no Americans were involved, the French made the defeat at Yorktown possible. Regardless, as already mentioned, fighting continued until 1783. Without the American-French alliance, one wonders how the war may have ended. Lancaster believes that French involvement was vital. Lancaster reiterates an important point throughout the book: the American Revolution took place within the context of a World War. The British and French were fervent enemies at the time, and this likely accounts for France's entry more than sympathy for the American cause. They did deliver a mighty blow to the British empire, after all. Spain and Holland also joined in the fray. Regardless, this World War distracted the British and probably helped the rebels defeat the mightiest army in the world. "The American Revolution" tells the standard story of the War of Independence. The common people and their culture rarely receive mention. Nor do the biographies, nuances, and details of the figures who loomed large in the struggle. In the end, the book provides an accessible high-level survey, and, as such, remains a great introduction to the origins of the United States. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Good Survey of the Revolution By James Gallen Many Americans know the American Revolution only as a war in which George Washington defeated the British and, thereby, won American Independence. The true story, which we read in this book, is much more than that. The "American Revolution" provides an interesting survey of the military aspects of our War for Independence. The background political factors which lead to the Declaration of Independence, both American and British, are presented, but once the Continental Army is established the book tends to focus primarily on military matters. One of the things I like about this book is that it gives thorough coverage to American, British and French personalities and initiatives in the war. Another thing which I like about this work is its ability to impart an understanding of the outline of the War, both chronologically and geographically. The main events and characters are revealed both in their successes as well as in their flaws. While illustrating his greatness, errors committed by Washington are not overlooked. This book places the pieces of the story which we have often heard into their proper places in the puzzle. All of it, from the early British evacuation of Boston through the Northern campaigns to the shift of action to the Southern theatres to the final evacuation of New York, now seems to make sense. The campaign of George Rogers Clark which won the West (now Midwest) for the new republic is also given fair coverage. This book makes clear that, notwithstanding the immense sacrifice of the Americans, victory was possible only because of the intervention of the French army and fleet. We are repeatedly reminded that American sentiment was not totally in support of the war. military actions by Tories in support of the Crown, although largely ineffective, are given adequate attention throughout the narrative. All in all, I enjoyed this interesting introduction to this crucial, but all too little known war.

From Lexington to Yorktown, Bruce Lancaster's classic, *THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*, covers the story of America's fight for independence in vivid detail. Here Lancaster examines both the historical facts of the Revolution and the sacrifice and bravery of the American people during the eighteenth century and brings the dilemmas faced by these early Americans into sharp focus. Newly introduced by the critically acclaimed author Richard M. Ketchum, *THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION* is a highly readable and engaging volume, and "as a book for the general reader it could scarcely be bettered" (Christian Science Monitor).

About the Author **BRUCE LANCASTER** (1896-1963) was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, and graduated from Harvard College. He is best known for his many historical novels.