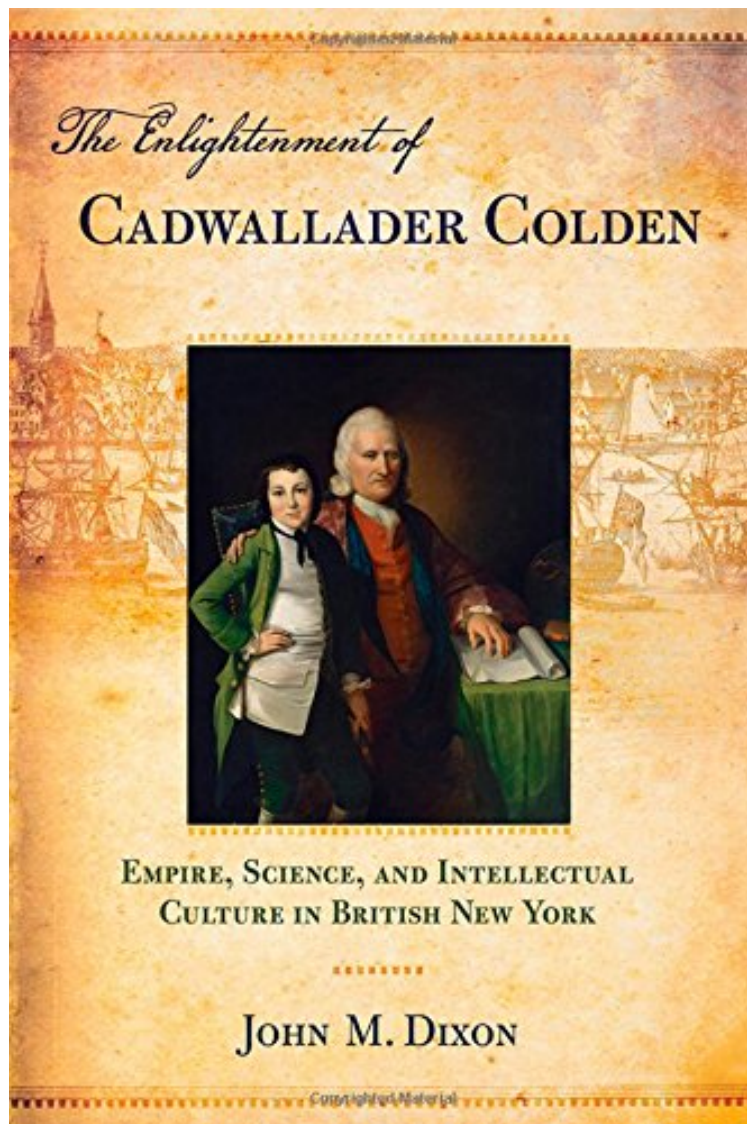


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John M. Dixon

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#736740 in Books Dixon John M 2016-04-12 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 1.25 x 6.251, .0 #File Name: 0801448034264 pages The Enlightenment of Cadwallader Colden Empire Science and Intellectual Culture in British New York | File size: 61.Mb

John M. Dixon : The Enlightenment of Cadwallader Colden: Empire, Science, and Intellectual Culture in British New York before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Enlightenment of Cadwallader Colden: Empire, Science, and Intellectual Culture in British New York:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "Empire, Science, and Intellectual Culture in British New York" By Ronald H. Clark This turned out to be an interesting biography of Cadwallader Colden (1688-1776), a Scottish physician who after practice in London gravitated eventually to colonial New York. What makes his story informative is the author's concentration upon Colden's role in developing scientific research and the general intellectual culture in early 18th century New York, as well as his involvement in the turbulent politics of the period. Most studies of this period concentrate upon Boston, Philadelphia or Virginia, as the colonies develop prior to the break with Britain. It is good to know what New York was also engaged in developing scientific expertise, promoting transatlantic intellectual culture, and implementing freedom of the press as well. The author's Introduction lays out the general profile of what is to come. The initial chapters are primarily about the enlightened early 18th century. The importance of the Scottish Enlightenment in shaping American thought during this period again becomes evident. In fact, the author sketches how a vigorous transatlantic culture, involving London and Scotland as well as America, flourished. Colden participated in several dimensions of this process, as a scientist (much as Franklin), historian (particularly of Indian culture), surveyor of new territories, and politician (serving as Lieutenant Governor). The crucial role of the expanding print culture in New York in stimulating transatlantic intellectual exchanges, as important Enlightenment essays and books authored by colonials such as Colden were printed and circulated in London as well as New York, is emphasized. Another unusual topic we generally hear little about was the role of slavery during this period in New York. The author places reliance upon Colden's involvement in so many intellectual activities to structure his analysis of these diverse cultural developments. Even when Colden, toward the end of his life, gets caught up in the preliminary elements of the eventual break with Britain, as intense political partisanship (e.g. the Stamp Act) assails his role as Lieutenant Governor, we nonetheless learn much from Colden's travails. The press starts to become an important political weapon; propaganda is increasingly relied upon; Colden and others attack the legal profession and even judges; and tensions continue to build with London. Just as the British army invades New York in 1776 chasing Washington's army, Colden passes from the scene, bringing an end to a productive and busy intellectual life. So, much of the virtue of this book centers on developments transpiring around Colden, rather than Colden himself. His involvement in so many spheres of activity affords the reader easy insights into each topic the author addresses. My only problem arose in connection with the author's discussion of Colden's theory of active matter, which he developed to counter George Berkeley's attack upon physical matter. I see now why this was one of Colden's contributions that few found worthy of study. Other than this aspect, the author writes with clarity and insight. His thorough research is evidenced in the extensive notes. This book is really an intellectual biography of colonial New York as much as of Colden--and that is what makes it so useful.

Was there a conservative Enlightenment? Could a self-proclaimed man of learning and progressive science also have been an agent of monarchy and reaction? Cadwallader Colden (1688-1776), an educated Scottish emigrant and powerful colonial politician, was at the forefront of American intellectual culture in the mid-eighteenth century. While living in rural New York, he recruited family, friends, servants, and slaves into multiple scientific ventures and built a transatlantic network of contacts and correspondents that included Benjamin Franklin and Carl Linnaeus. Over several decades, Colden pioneered colonial botany, produced new theories of animal and human physiology, authored an influential history of the Iroquois, and developed bold new principles of physics and an engaging explanation of the cause of gravity. The Enlightenment of Cadwallader Colden traces the life and ideas of this fascinating and controversial "gentleman-scholar." John M. Dixon's lively and accessible account explores the overlapping ideological, social, and political worlds of this earliest of New York intellectuals. Colden and other learned colonials used intellectual practices to assert their gentility and establish their social and political superiority, but their elitist claims to cultural authority remained flimsy and open to widespread local derision. Although Colden, who governed New York as an unpopular Crown loyalist during the imperial crises of the 1760s and 1770s, was brutally lampooned by the New York press, his scientific work, which was published in Europe, raised the international profile of American intellectualism.

"The Enlightenment of Cadwallader Colden is shrewd, full of insight, and in addressing the relationship of politics to science opens up an area of inquiry to which early Americanists have paid scant attention. The book offers a keen analysis of a prominent but underappreciated figure and a vivid portrait of the New York intellectual world of which he was a part." Ned Landsman, Stony Brook University, author of *From Colonials to Provincials: American Thought and Culture, 1680-1760* "The Enlightenment of Cadwallader Colden restores royal government to a more balanced and legitimate place in the colonial narrative. John M. Dixon portrays Colden as a hard-working, loyal servant of the crown and empire who, inevitably given his intellect and strong character, ruffled the feathers of disgruntled locals when implementing his instructions from Whitehall. This pathbreaking book opens new horizons on the political and cultural life of colonial America." Patricia U. Bonomi, New York University, author of *A Factious People: Politics and Society in Colonial New York* "In his vivid and engaging book, John M. Dixon recovers an example of the Enlightenment as a lived life, a fundamental personal orientation that exemplified a major cultural characteristic of the

eighteenth century. Dixon's deep understanding of Cadwallader Coldens intellectual self allows for an exceptionally clear account of New York political life between 1720 and 1776." Sara S. Gronim, Long Island University, author of *Everyday Nature: Knowledge of the Natural World in Colonial New York* About the Author John M. Dixon is Assistant Professor of History at the College of Staten Island/CUNY. He is the author of *The Enlightenment of Cadwallader Colden: Empire, Science, and Intellectual Culture in British New York*.