



Liberty Tree: Ordinary People and the American Revolution

By Alfred F. Young

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Liberty Tree: Ordinary People and the American Revolution By Alfred F. Young

With the publication of **Liberty Tree**, acclaimed historian Alfred F. Young presents a selection of his seminal writing as well as two provocative, never-before-published essays. Together, they take the reader on a journey through the American Revolution, exploring the role played by ordinary women and men (called, at the time, people out of doors) in shaping events during and after the Revolution, their impact on the Founding generation of the new American nation, and finally how this populist side of the Revolution has fared in public memory.

Drawing on a wide range of sources, which include not only written documents but also material items like powder horns, and public rituals like parades and tarring and featherings, Young places ordinary Americans at the center of the Revolution. For example, in one essay he views the Constitution of 1787 as the result of an intentional accommodation by elites with non-elites, while another piece explores the process of ongoing negotiations would-be rulers conducted with the middling sort; women, enslaved African Americans, and Native Americans. Moreover, questions of history and modern memory are engaged by a compelling examination of icons of the Revolution, such as the pamphleteer Thomas Paine and Boston's Freedom Trail.

For over forty years, history lovers, students, and scholars alike have been able to hear the voices and see the actions of ordinary people during the Revolutionary Era, thanks to Young's path-breaking work, which seamlessly blends sophisticated analysis with compelling and accessible prose. From his award-winning work on mechanics, or artisans, in the seaboard cities of the Northeast to the all but forgotten liberty tree, a major popular icon of the Revolution explored in depth for the first time, Young continues to astound readers as he forges new directions in the history of the American Revolution.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. This fascinating collection of essays by Young (*The American Revolution and Beyond the American Revolution*) makes a gripping display of the American historian's efforts to construct a more inclusive, nuanced vision of the Revolutionary War era. Drawing from his work since 1980, the essays cover a wide range of topics (such as the growth of laborer class consciousness, the women of Boston and the Revolution, Oliver Cromwell as a revolutionary symbol, and recommendations for improving Boston's Freedom Trail) that showcase Young's skills in direct historical analysis as well as in deconstructing the methods and assumptions of historians and historical exhibitions. A social historian committed to rounding out our cultural memory, Young includes traditionally marginalized groups (women, the poor, the working class, African Americans and Native Americans), but is interested neither in adding token representations nor in replacing the founding fathers. Rather, Young seeks to re-imagine the Revolutionary War era holistically, and what emerges is not only a first look at key but forgotten Revolutionary players, but also a fresh look at figures like Hamilton, Revere and Adams, portrayed here with a richness and humanity lacking in more celebratory treatments. Although these are serious academic essays, Young's prose is clear and concise, and he judiciously relegates the more technical, scholarly matters to end notes. The result is a work that will be of equal interest to professional scholars and amateur historians.

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Review

“Drawing on his unsurpassed knowledge of the American Revolution, and his powerful commitment to the idea of 'history from below,' Alfred Young gives us a stirring reminder of the role of 'the people' in the Revolution. He challenges the orthodox emphasis on the 'great men' of that time, and with vivid specificity provides an analysis which is subtle, complex, and bold.”

-Howard Zinn, Professor Emeritus, Boston University and author, *A People's History of the United States*

“To read these eloquent essays by one of the wisest historians of our time is to be drawn into a remarkable conversation: practical, eloquent, decent, and shrewd. Behind Alfred Young's mesmerizing prose lies dazzling detective work that finds courageous people in all the fullness of their lives, who made a revolution as surely as did more famous leaders. Within the lively stories he tells is also a sharp skepticism of the ways that, over the years, tales of the Revolution have been spun to serve selfish political needs. And throughout Al Young's interpretations there sings a humane vision for our future, as readers of history, as tourists, and as citizens.”

-Linda K. Kerber, author of *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship*

“Young assists the construction of a fuller historical picture of the Revolutionary American era by focusing on the common people to gain a more complete understanding of the interplay between the political and social elite and these groups. Highly recommended.”

-Choice

“This fascinating collection of essays makes a gripping display of the American historian's efforts to construct a more inclusive, nuanced vision of the Revolutionary War era. . . . A social historian committed to rounding out our cultural memory, Young includes traditionally marginalized groups (women, the poor, the working class, African Americans and Native Americans), but is interested neither in adding token representations nor in replacing the founding fathers. Rather, Young seeks to re-imagine the Revolutionary War era holistically, and what emerges is not only a first look at key but forgotten Revolutionary players, but also a fresh look at figures like Hamilton, Revere and Adams, portrayed here with a richness and humanity lacking in more celebratory treatments. Although these are serious academic essays, Young's prose is clear and concise, and he judiciously relegates the more technical, scholarly matters to end notes. The result is a work that will be of equal interest to professional scholars and amateur historians.”

-*Publishers Weekly*

“The key point that shines through all these essays is how dependent our hallowed Founding heroes were on the shifting political alliances they had to form with citizens of lower economic status in order to provide the leadership we honor them for today.”

-*Washington Times*

About the Author

Alfred F. Young is Alfred Young is Emeritus Professor of History, Northern Illinois University. His numerous books include *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* and *Liberty Tree: Ordinary People and the American Revolution* (NYU Press).

Users Review

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Jackson Ponce:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love *Liberty Tree: Ordinary People and the American Revolution*, you could enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout guys. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its called reading friends.

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John Oliver:

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