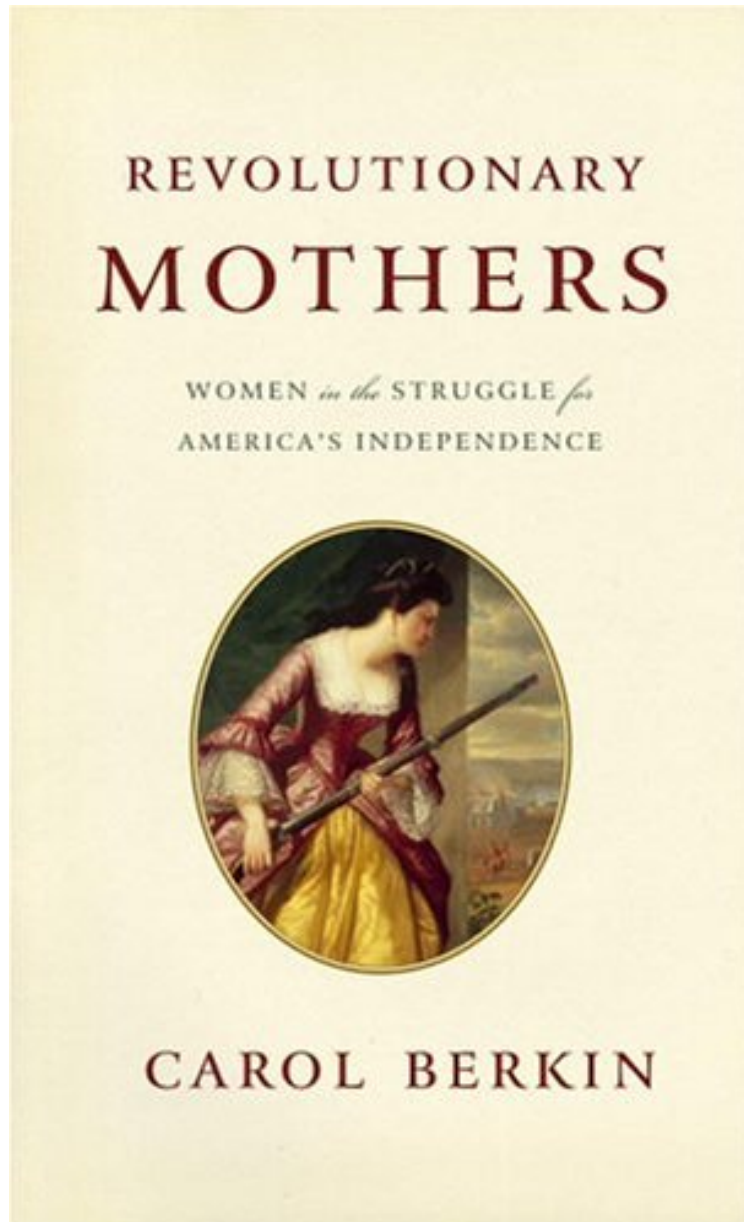


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Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence

Carol Berkin

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Carol Berkin : Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Should be a part of every American History education
By PJacobs
This book wonderfully explained what exactly women were doing before, just after, and during the revolutionary war. It's engaging, not only enlightening the reader as to the roles and expectations of women during the period, but also including stories of individual women to support these summaries. It does a great job of telling the tales of both patriot and loyalist women, women at home left to defend themselves and their houses, camp followers, women who fought, women who spied, and black and native american women banking on being on the right side of the war. A very refreshing perspective on the time period. In case it may be triggering for anyone, I should mention rape is discussed in a small section of the book.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Little Known Heroines
By gary c. lupa
Wonderful collection of back stories about the supporting role played by contemporary women from all walks of life in aid of the Crown, loyalists, and patriots. The author deftly used primary source material (i.e contemporary correspondence) to tell heretofore unknown stories of ordinary people stepping out of their gender roles in response to the extraordinary circumstances brought upon by the American Revolution. Also, an excellent analysis of why the American Revolution, although a transformative event vis a vis colonial times, did not result in a significant improvement in women's economic or political status despite their extraordinary contributions to the cause of "liberty".
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Well Done and Helpful
By Nick and Lauren
As I've been gathering and reading books on Women in the American Revolution, Berkin's work (this book and others) consistently show up in the bibliographies. I had to read it. I'm very glad I did. Berkin clearly knows her history and how to impart the information. Each chapter centers on a different group of women - including First Nations and African-American. Berkin gives an excellent overview of the many different roles women played in this war - some good, some bad, some for Britain, so for the USA. I highly recommend this work as a starting point for more in depth research or reading about Women in the Revolution. I'm also eager to get my hands on more books by Berkin. She has several I mostly eagerly want to read.

The American Revolution was a home-front war that brought scarcity, bloodshed, and danger into the life of every American, and Carol Berkin shows us that women played a vital role throughout the struggle. Berkin takes us into the ordinary moments of extraordinary lives. We see women boycotting British goods in the years before independence, writing propaganda that radicalized their neighbors, raising funds for the army, and helping finance the fledgling government. We see how they managed farms, plantations, and businesses while their men went into battle, and how they served as nurses and cooks in the army camps, risked their lives seeking personal freedom from slavery, and served as spies, saboteurs, and warriors. She introduces us to sixteen-year-old Sybil Ludington, who sped through the night to rouse the militiamen needed to defend Danbury, Connecticut; to Phillis Wheatley, literary prodigy and Boston slave, who voiced the hopes of African Americans in poems; to Margaret Corbin, crippled for life when she took her husband's place beside a cannon at Fort Monmouth; to the women who gathered firewood, cooked, cleaned for the troops, nursed the wounded, and risked their lives carrying intelligence and participating in reconnaissance missions. Here, too, are Abigail Adams, Deborah Franklin, Lucy Knox, and Martha Washington, who lived with the daily knowledge that their husbands would be hanged as traitors if the revolution did not succeed. A recapturing of the experiences of ordinary women who lived in extraordinary times, and a fascinating addition to our understanding of the birth of our nation.

From Publishers Weekly
Confronting "the gender amnesia that surrounds the American Revolution," historian Berkin (*A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution*) offers a lively account of women's various roles in the long, bloody conflict. Early forms of resistance included boycotting British cloth--and thus dusting off retired spinning wheels--and tea as women used "their purchasing power as a political weapon." As the conflict became a war in city streets and the neighboring countryside, houses became war zones; ordinary women often served as spies, saboteurs and couriers. Camp followers (often soldiers' wives) provided logistical support (cooking, washing, sewing, nursing, finding supplies) and occasionally even fought; prostitutes kept up soldiers' sexual (and social) morale. Generals' wives, "admired while the ordinary camp followers were often scorned," accompanied their husbands in different style; they boosted morale with dinner parties and dancing. Berkin reaches beyond white "American" women to chart the experiences of Loyalist women ("targets of Revolutionary governments eager to confiscate the property of... traitors"), Native American women (for whom "an American victory would have... tragic consequences") and African-American women (whose "loyalties were to their own future, not to Congress or to king"). First-person accounts lend immediacy and freshness to a lucidly written, well-researched account that is neither a romantic version of "a quaint and harmless war" nor "an effort to stand traditional history on its head." Agent, Dan Green. (Feb.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
Historian Berkin begins with the premise that American women's participation in the struggle for independence was not restricted to such celebrated figures as Abigail Adams, Martha Washington, Betsy Ross, and the apocryphal Molly Pitcher. Although conventional histories have traditionally been limited to chronicling the heroic exploits of a handful of women as opposed to masses of men, in truth the creation of a new nation required the active involvement of countless numbers of females. The

author has subdivided these many stories into chapters recounting the experiences of women who protested against English policy, women who toiled on the homefront, women who followed the army, generals' wives, Loyalist women, Native American women, and African American women. What eventually emerges is a splendid overview of the remarkable contributions made by a cultural cross section of women during the course of the American Revolution. Margaret Flanagan Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Carol Berkin has merged the craft of the skilled historian and the sensitivity of a master storyteller with her sensibilities as a pioneering scholar of women to produce the best narrative of how women of diverse backgrounds experienced the American Revolution." --Edith Gelles, author of *Portia: The World of Abigail Adams* Revolutionary Mothers is an accessible, lively blend of great story-telling and recent scholarship, the most comprehensive study yet published of women in the American Revolution. Readers of all descriptions will enjoy and learn from it.--Mary Beth Norton, author of *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* Revolutionary Mothers is vintage Carol Berkin, incisive, thoughtful and spiced with vivid anecdotes that add another dimension to the narrative. Don't miss it.--Thomas Fleming, author of *Liberty! The American Revolution* "Revolutionary Mothers is a treat to read. Not only is Carol Berkin a skillful writer, but she has placed women squarely at the center of the independence movement. By showing the different roles women played, she moves the battlefield to wherever women were forced to make choices and employ their talents. Elite, poor, Euro, Native, and African American women collide in Berkin's book, as do the rebels and loyalists who were once friends and neighbors. A valuable and readable book."--Elaine Crane, author of *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports, and Social Change, 1630-1800*