American Revolution – Assignment 5

Your Name

21 February 2012

Colorado Technical University

Bailyn, Bernard (1967). *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* Cambridge:

 Harvard University Press.

Bernard Bailyn is a professor of history at Harvard University. This is an outstanding resource for the understanding of the American Revolution. As the title makes clear the focus is on the ideology of the era with background explaining how the Founding Fathers decided to break from Britain. Dr. Bailyn explains how the founders wanted to reform the political system and thoughts they had as to how to accomplish these reforms. Additionally, the background and understanding of Greek and Roman history by the founders is explained making it clear how they came to their decision to declare independence. This should be used as a source by anyone serious student of the era.

Brown, Richard D. (2000). *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791: Documents and Essays.* Boston: Wadsworth Cengage.

Richard D. Brown is a history professor at the University of Connecticut. *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution* is a compilation of primary source documents with essays written by historians on that topic. The concentration of the book is on social, economic, and cultural topics with an emphasis of political theory, explaining how the Americans decided on separation from Britain. There is a portion of the book dedicated to gender and race relations which is helpful in understanding the time period. This is a good resource for the study of the period of the American Revolution.

Buel, Joy Day and Richard Buel Jr. (1984). *The Way of Duty: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America.* New York: Norton & Company.

Richard Buel is a history professor at Wesleyan University and his wife was a freelance writer. *The Way of Duty* is based on the life, drawn from her diaries, of Mary Fish Silliman a resident of Connecticut. Mary Silliman had an eventful life beginning with her father’s experiences as a pastor during the Great Awakening and continuing past the War of 1812. This book, which is a very easy read, is a very good resource to understanding how a fairly common, middle-upper class woman experienced the revolutionary period. The only issue with this book would be sometimes it can be dry but overall it is a very compelling story of a very interesting person.

Davies, N. (1996). *Europe: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norman Davies is a professor at the University of London. *Europe: A History* is a one volume history of Europe making it very long, which is understandable considering the enormity of the topic. This book has an extensive portion devoted to the interaction of the European powers during the period of the American Revolution. This is a useful source of information concerning the development of hostility between the British Empire and the colonists of America and how the American rebellion developed into a war across Europe.

Ferling, John (2003). A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic.

 Oxford: Oxford University Press.

John Ferling is a leading historian of the American Revolution. *A Leap in the Dark* begins its narrative in 1765 with the Stamp Act and ends in 1801 with the election of Thomas Jefferson as President. This is an outstanding one volume history of the American Revolution with a focus on the political process around the Declaration of Independence including study of how events effected the political actions of individuals. Ferling shows how the battle for independence could have easily had a different outcome if individuals had behaved in slightly different ways. Ferling devotes an in depth study of each of the founders including a discussion as to how the Founding Fathers had a belief in their ideology but shows how, as is normal, people’s ideology is consistent with their self-interest. This is a very useful source for study of the American Revolution and how the desire for separation from Great Britain developed.

James, Lawrence (1996) *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire.* New York: Saint Martin’s Press.

Lawrence James is an academic who has written extensively about the British Empire. *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* is a survey of the period from 1600 to the end of the 20th century focusing on individuals who had an impact on the British Empire with an emphasis on political and economic events. This book is not designed as a textbook but rather as an overview of the British and their impact on the rest of the world. This book is valuable in the study of the American Revolution because it develops the split between Britain and the American colonists. This is a good source of information about the American Revolution.

Kennedy, Paul (1987). *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. New York: Random House.

Paul Kennedy is a British professor emeritus in International Studies at Yale University. *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* begins its study in 1500 just after Christopher Columbus discovered the New World attempting to understand the reasons why powerful nations collapse. This book has an emphasis in the study of how the relationship between economics, technological innovation, and military strength impact the interaction, including through diplomacy, with other nations. The most basic premise of Professor Kennedy’s book is the basis of all power, military and diplomatic comes from a strong economic base, with the reduction of economic power comes the decline of a nation. This book is important to the study of the American Revolution due to its emphasis on economics giving the student of the era an understanding of how the war affected both sides economically. It also explains the economic reasons why the French and Spanish would want to go to war on behalf of the Americans.

Library of America (2001). *The American Revolution*. New York: Literary Classics.

This compilation of letters, newspaper articles, and diaries has over 120 different chapters from over 75 people. While there are many accounts from the famous individuals on the revolutionary period there are also pieces from the obscure individuals who made up colonial life. There are also pieces from those loyal to the British Crown giving a unique perspective of the losing side. Since these are all first person accounts of what happened during the revolutionary period none are filtered leaving the reader with a clear understanding of the feelings, beliefs and thoughts of the participants. This is an outstanding source to use for research of the period for it’s over 800 pages of primary source documents.

Middlekauff, Robert (1982). *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789*. New York: Oxford Press.

Robert Middlekauff is a professor of early American history at University of California, Berkeley. This is a very good overview of the revolutionary period giving the reader insight into the roots of the conflict between Britain and the colonists. Middlekauff gives everyone involved their due from George Washington to common soldiers. *The Glorious Cause* has very good overall synopsis of the battles of the revolution and how they each were fought. The main problem with the book is its emphasis on the military aspect of the war and sometimes does not have as much information as would be desired in the political aspect of the war.

Millett, Allen and Peter Maslowski (1984). *For the Common Defense*. New York: Free Press.

The authors are professors of history at the University of New Orleans and the University of Nebraska. *For the Common Defense* while a study of the military history of the United States begins in 1500 long before the founding of the United States. This survey of the military history of North America is very useful because it studies the development of the United States Army with the relationship between military and political leaders during the revolution. This book gives the reader and the student of the era an explanation as to how the Continental Army, a military which was small with little resources could defeat the preeminent military power in the world.

Roberts, Cokie (2008). *Ladies of Liberty: The Woman Who Shaped Our Nation*. New York: Harper Collins.

Cokie Roberts is a political commentator and journalist. Her book *Ladies of* Liberty is an interesting book focusing on the woman of the early period of America. Most of the women who are profiled are from the revolutionary period although some of them are from earlier periods such as Sacagawea. This is a very interesting book which is of use for the study of the period because the woman’s perspective is sometimes missed. The main complaint with the book is that it could use a good editor. There are occasions in which Ms. Roberts introduces her personal thoughts which places 20th century thought into people of the 18th century.

Roberts, Cokie (2004). *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation.* NewYork: Harper Collins.

Cokie Roberts is a political commentator and journalist. This is interesting book about the important women, mainly spouses, of the colonial period. In *Founding Mothers* Ms. Roberts discusses the way in which woman who were left behind were forced to run the businesses and farms, while offering political advice and raising children, while their husbands left to fight in the Revolutionary War or to join the Continental Congress. These women’s actions allowed the men to focus on their endeavors without having to worry about their families at home. Additionally, some like Abigail Adams, were important to the history of the era in the way in which they supported their husbands with their advice. This is a useful source although this book could have also used a good editor because of sometimes difficult to follow thoughts.

Schlesinger, Arthur M. (1968). *The Birth of the Nation: A Portrait of the American People on the Eve of Independence.*  New York: Knopf.

Arthur Schlesinger was a historian at Harvard University. His book *The Birth of the Nation* was finished after his death by his son, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who was also a noted historian. This is a very short one volume history of the American Revolution. It is very easy to read and gives the reader an overview of the time with an emphasis on the people. He explores some of the more famous Founding Fathers but also some of the people of the time. This is a good book to give someone an understanding of the time.

Sims, Brendan (2007). *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire*. New York: Basic Books.

Brendan Simms is a professor of the History of International Relations at the University of Cambridge. *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire* is a bit of a revisionist history considering the question of whether Britain is a European country or an island separate from Europe. Dr. Simms believes Britain is a European country and explains how the period of 1701 to 1781 saw a gain in the territory of Britain making it a world power based on its possession of Hanover in the center of Europe in western Germany. This small Germanic country, which produced the George I, II, and III, was a prized possession of the British crown and required a great deal of diplomacy to retain due to its location near France. The one defeat of the period, the American War of Independence was because of the lack of allies in Europe because of British arrogance in believing they only needed sea power and could treat any potential allies with disregard and distain. This is a very useful source of information about military and political decisions which were made during the revolution and how each of the players came to make their decisions.

Smith, Page (1970). *Daughters of the Promised Land, Woman in American History.* Boston: Little Brown.

Page Smith was a history professor at William and Mary and UCLA. He wrote several general histories of the United States and of John Adams. *Daughters of the Promised* Land is a study of women in America from the Mayflower to 1970. This is an interesting book but the portion which is devoted to the revolutionary period does not have much information which cannot be found in other, more recent, sources.

Tebbel, John (1993). *Turning the World Upside Down: Inside the American Revolution.*

 NewYork: Orion Books.

John Tebbel was a journalism professor who wrote history books. *The World Turned Upside* Down is an easily read book which makes no attempt to be scholarly but rather an overview of the average people that made up the revolution. Generally taking his information from source documents Mr. Tebbel makes goes into detail about some of the people who made up the revolution in an interesting and easy to read fashion. This is a source which can be used for background in the study of the American Revolution and for some specific events.

Wood, Gordon S. (1968). *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787*. Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press.

Gordon S. Wood is a history professor at Brown University. *The Creation of the American* Republic further develops the concepts developed by Bernard Bailyn, whom Wood studied under, in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution.* Dr. Wood uses primary sources for to develop a political history with the intellectual origins of the ancient Greeks and Romans providing the foundation of the American Revolution. The Founding Fathers beliefs of government and the need for revolution are explained through their understanding of how government should function. This is an outstanding resource for the study of the American Revolution while at the same time a fascinating book to read.