

BROADSIDE

The Newsletter of the
American Revolution Round Table

<http://www.arrrt-ny.org>

June 2022

APRIL SPEAKER:

A SURGEON'S VIEW OF REVOLUTIONARY DOCTORS

Dr. Per-Olof Hasselgren, MD, a Boston surgeon from Sweden by way of Cincinnati, gave us an oral version of his book, *REVOLUTIONARY SURGEONS: PATRIOTS AND LOYALISTS ON THE CUTTING EDGE*.



Cutting is right! Dr. Hasselgren showed pictures of the knives doctors used to use for amputations. The surgeon sometimes accidentally cut off a finger of an assistant who was holding the incision open with his bare hands. The doc had to work fast, to minimize the loss of blood and the suffering of the patient, and accidents will happen. Their only anesthetic, and antiseptic, was spiritous liquor, often in the form of laudanum, a concoction of opium and alcohol.

One question for the good doctor was: why was there an upsurge in the number of dissections in the 18th century? He believes it was the influence of the

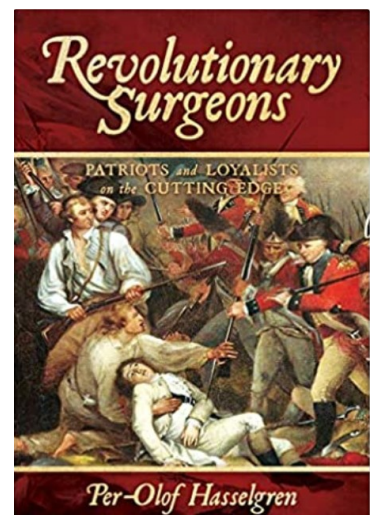
Enlightenment: religion no longer had the power to stop doctors from dissecting corpses. Dissections, usually carried out on the corpses of executed criminals, attracted so many curious spectators that the canny medical schools started charging admission.

The author's book focuses on his three famous revolutionary, and fellow Bostonian, surgeons: Joseph Warren, his younger brother John, and Dr. Benjamin Church. Joseph Warren was killed at Bunker Hill. General Howe saw him as seditious Enemy Number One. The Redcoats not only shot him, they performed an impromptu head-ectomy and threw him into a common grave with other corpses. He was found a year later. If not for his untimely death, Warren may have been a revolutionary leader for years to come. He might have become President. Foggy Bottom might have become "Warren, DC."

Brother John went on to found Harvard Medical School.

As for Dr. Benjamin Church, he turned traitor. A Boston Benedict Arnold. He may have turned as early as 1771, even as he acted the part of a revolutionary leader. When his treason was discovered, he was

tried and banished from the United States. He was put on board a ship to Martinique and was never heard from again. The ship may have been wrecked,



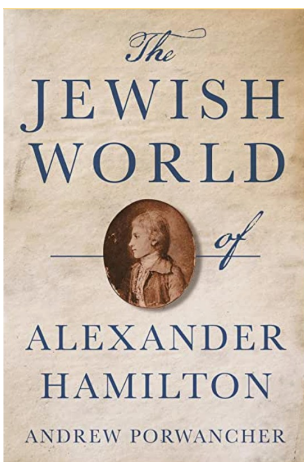
or maybe the crew, learning his identity, made him walk the plank.

Fifteen attended the zoom meeting, including one guest and one enthusiastic new member.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

Book review Editor Lynne Saginaw offered three books for review. One was HERO OF TWO WORLDS, a life of Lafayette. Lynne said she was offering this book for the third and final time. If nobody wants to review it, *c'est la guerre!* The others were THE LAST KING OF AMERICA: THE MISUNDERSTOOD REIGN OF GEORGE III, and OUR FIRST CIVIL WAR.

Stephen Weiner reviewed THE JEWISH WORLD OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON, by Andrew R. Porwancher (Princeton, 2021), at our April zoom meeting. Porwancher will be our October speaker. He teaches at the University of Oklahoma.



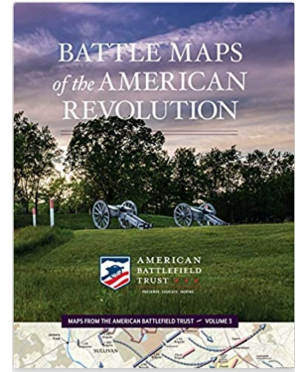
Porwancher advances the thesis that Alexander Hamilton was raised Jewish. But he admits that this is a long shot. He figures that if Alex's mother was Jewish, then Alex was Jewish. He guesses that Rachel Faucette Levine Hamilton converted when she married a Jewish settler on St. Croix, Johan Levine.

But there is no proof of Rachel converting, and no proof that she raised Alex Jewish.

Still, Stephen says that the book is worth reading, for some good general background on Jews in the Caribbean and in the thirteen colonies. The British colonies in the New World were hardly a "Jewish World." The thirteen colonies had about 2,000 Jews, 250 in New York City. Nevis had 70, and St. Croix had six – not even enough for a minyan. (Stephen asks "What would be the meaning of a conversion on an island without a Jewish community?") Most

of the Jews in the thirteen colonies supported independence. "I think Professor Porwancher gives too little credit to President George Washington's enormous and history-making contribution to Jewish civil equality, and he is too critical of founders Thomas Jefferson and James Madison."

Dr. Joanne Grasso recommends a new book called BATTLE MAPS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, published by the American Battlefield Trust in 2021. Joanne calls it "excellent," but Lynne is more effusive: "Wow. I ordered it from my B & N account, and is it ever gorgeous! All my geography classes from college (well, maybe most of them) came back to me. Everybody should have a copy. Great find, Joanne!"



Lynne advises us of two more books of note. May 31 will see the publication of REBELS AT SEA: PRIVATEERING IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, by Eric Jay Dolin. Apropos our June topic.

IN THE FOUNDERS' FOOTSTEPS: LANDMARKS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, by Adam Van Doren, preface by Nathaniel Philbrick, was published in April. "It is a travel guide to Revolutionary sites, from the famous to the obscure," says Lynne. Your editor happens to know something about Van Doren's project. Adam is a member of the famous Van Doren intellectual family (see the movie "Quiz Show"), and teaches painting. He took several of my Revolutionary walking tours three years ago, looking for battle sites and other Revolutionary locations to paint. He wanted to publish a collection of paintings of those spots as they look today. And he has! The paintings show surviving Revolution-era buildings surrounded by whatever surrounds them today. The book won the 2022 Distinguished Book Award of the Society of Colonial Wars.

IN THE NEWS

Lynne Saginaw has a great idea! And not for the first time. As we conclude our 2021-2022 season in June, why don't we all consider summer travels to Revolutionary locales, and there take pix and make notes and send reports to the Broadside, as member Christopher Thuilot has been doing of late. Lynne herself is planning a trip to Bennington, Vermont. Send your tales to fcookinham@juno.com.

Peter Feinman, of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Education, posted an important essay in the January 30 issue of his blog "The State of American History." The title of the essay is "History Scholars Versus David McCullough: The American Revolution." It seems that some uncouth barbarian at a scholarly conference had broken a taboo: He had asked the panel to come down flat-footed on one side or the other of the question: Was the American Revolution a good thing or a bad thing?" Feinman does not identify the questioner. Maybe it was Glinda, the Witch of the North. You are not supposed to ask historians questions that can be answered in less than 50,000 words.

This is the question, though, that makes American History so exciting at this time. Is the American nation and its Revolution to be hailed as the "last, best hope of mankind," or dismissed as mere White imperialism to be overthrown as soon as possible? Go to feinmanp@ihare.org.

Member Richard Melnick suggested putting a database on our website listing links to any books, articles, publications of any kind written by our members. We have our first taker! Member Keith Muchowski has sent us links to Rev outlets that he writes for. In due course we will add the database to our website, so in the meantime, Keith's articles can be found at: <https://allthingsliberty.com/author/keith-muchowski/>.

That's the *Journal of the American Revolution*. Keith also writes for: <http://morristownnhpmuseum.blogspot.com>. That's the blogspot of the Morristown, NJ National Historic Park Museum.

John DiNuzzo alerts us of this news from the Northern Department:

ARRT-NY member John DiNuzzo, President of the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance, the non-profit friends group supporting the Battlefield Park, is pleased to confirm the opening of the new Visitor Center at the site. After a ceremonial ribbon-cutting on May 25, the Battlefield Park Visitor Center will be open Friday to Sunday (plus Memorial Day) through June and then expand to five days per week throughout the peak of the summer tourist season. Artifacts from both the American Revolution and the French and Indian War are displayed, along with commissioned paintings and models of forts and the radeau *Land Tortoise*. Visit the Alliance's website www.lakegeorgebattlefield.org or contact John (jpgdinuzzo@gmail.com) for more information. (Ed. Note: I had to look up the French word "radeau." It means "raft." The only known, surviving radeau is the one John refers to. It sank in Lake George and is considered the oldest known intact warship in North America. It can be visited, if you are a diver with advanced diving skills. It rests two miles north of Lake George Beach and 105 feet straight down.)

NEW YORK STATE Department of Environmental Conservation

LAKE GEORGE BATTLEFIELD PARK ALLIANCE

LAKE GEORGE BATTLEFIELD PARK VISITOR CENTER

French and Indian War • American Revolution
Artifacts and Exhibits
~ Free Admission ~
FORT GEORGE ROAD
LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK

BEACH ROAD To Village of Lake George
LAKES GEORGE
BATTLEFIELD PARK
VISITOR CENTER
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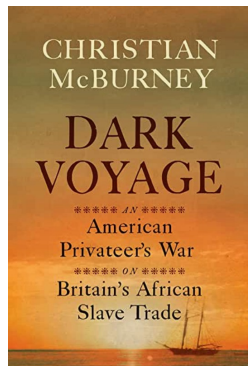
LAKE GEORGE BATTLEFIELD PARK ALLIANCE

This brochure was funded by the New York State Park and Trail Partnership Grants and New York's Environmental Protection Fund, administered by Parks & Trails New York in partnership with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

Another note from Peter Feinman of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Education: The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, headquartered in Long Island, is funding a student fellowship program through the Geneseo Center for Local and Municipal History at SUNY Geneseo, under the leadership of Professor Michael Oberg. The goal of the program is to cultivate community discussions and promote interest in local histories in the state related to the American Revolution and its legacy. The program will partner fifty undergraduate fellows and faculty mentors with local historians to produce exhibitions, websites, and a book documenting the project.

JUNE SPEAKER

Christian McBurney will speak on June 7 about his latest book, **DARK VOYAGE: AN AMERICAN PRIVATEER'S WAR ON BRITAIN'S AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE**. It is published by Westholme Publishing. This book is hot off the press. In fact, it is not officially off the press yet. It will become available around the beginning of July. It tells a story never before told. It is timely, and it has a twist ending.



Westholme Publishing is located in Yardley, Pennsylvania, on the Delaware River between Philadelphia and Trenton. It publishes non-fiction, mostly history, and a lot of its output has been on the Revolution. It was founded in 2003. Westholme also publishes the *Journal of the American Revolution*.

Christian McBurney is appearing with us for the fifth time. He practices law in Washington, and is the President of the Washington American Revolution Round Table. This is his sixth book.

DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the October Broadside will be midnight, Tuesday, September 20. Books you recommend, what you did, Rev-wise, on your summer vacation, books or articles you have yourself written and published, news of a Revolutionary cannonball being dug up in your neighborhood, stuff like that.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Keeping our fingers crossed, we are hoping that the June meeting will be the last Zoom meeting. We are planning an in-person dinner in October – October 11, since the 4th conflicts with Yom Kippur. But where? There is no longer a Coffee House Club. But the Civil War Round Table has found a new midtown location, at 3 West 51st Street, and perhaps we will give it a try.

But on Tuesday, June 7, click on the link provided in the same emailing containing the link to this Broadside, and Zoom along with the Round Table. 7:30 p.m., as usual.

Yr most obdt svt,
Dr. David W. Jacobs