

BROADSIDE

The Newsletter of the
American Revolution Round Table
<http://www.arrrt-ny.org>

October 2023

JUNE SPEAKER:

IT'S "LOYALIST," NOT "TORY"

Dr. Christopher F. Minty spoke by Zoom to the Round Table on his book, just out in May,



UNFRIENDLY TO LIBERTY: LOYALIST NETWORKS AND THE COMING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN NEW YORK CITY. The publisher is Cornell University Press. This company's website proudly proclaims it to be the oldest university press in the United States. It was founded in 1869.

The key word here is "network." Most business, most politics, and most everything in colonial America took place in taverns. Men with similar political opinions gravitated toward the same taverns. Dr. Minty finds that it was not social class, or religion, or other factors that would predict a man's stand on independence. It was

which tavern he frequented. And that, in turn, depended on whom he knew. But it was a time of such fluidity in opinions that rich merchants who knew and intermarried with other rich merchants would tend to have the same opinions, but when they went to meetings in taverns, they made the acquaintance of other men of dissimilar backgrounds. But most everyone in that tavern, rich or poor, would all be pro-, or all anti-independence.

Dr. Minty said the main point of his book was that no one in the Stamp Act crisis of 1765 – the opening act of the Revolution – was predetermined to be for or against independence ten years later, in 1775. The Loyalists were mainly Whigs, not Tories; not members of the Conservative Party – and they were all gung-ho for reform and criticism of the King and his Parliament. But when the Continental Congress was formed in 1774, and independence started



being talked about – that's when many of these men stopped short. They would criticize the King, but not fight against him. They began

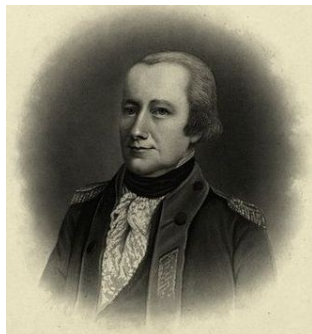
calling themselves “Loyal Whigs,” but never “Tories.” They were all Americans, after all.

Dr. Minty has spent a lot of time in libraries and scrolling through databases and microfilm readers. Some of the reproduction is under par and causes more difficulty reading than bad handwriting or 18th century spelling (like “Congrefs,” for instance). He found ten thousand names on Loyalist Associations – papers that were circulated in the taverns for men to sign, professing their loyalty to the King. That is where you can see who networked with whom. Who was buying whom a drink in the tavern, to get him to sign an Association, Loyalist or Patriot? For that, you look for the receipts. Dr. Minty says that receipts are an underutilized resource. More historians should be digging into those receipts.

The Loyalists did not all disappear from New York City or State after 1783. Many stayed, despite reprisals. Young Alexander Hamilton defended their land claims in court. And they *still* have not disappeared. The names Delancey, Laight, and Rhinelander can still be found in the names of streets and buildings. Dr. Minty ran into a real, live Rhinelander recently! The family is still here.

Dr. Minty, like most professors these days, knows how to do a slideshow on Zoom, so the talk went smoothly. There were several questions posed on Zoom’s Chat feature. How did New York City’s Battle of Golden Hill affect the Loyalist? Not much. The fracas was overshadowed by the annual commemoration of the repeal of the Stamp Act, which was celebrated by radical and moderate alike.

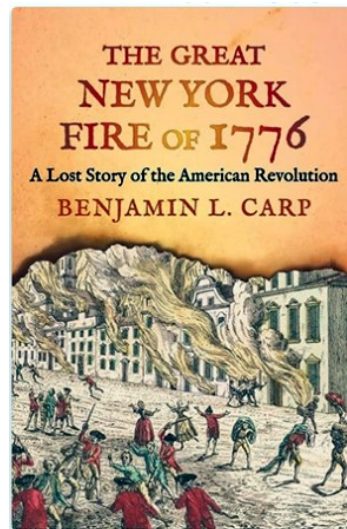
Dr. Minty finds Alexander MacDougall, a leader of the Sons of Liberty, to be a neglected early



revolutionary leader. He was not a member of the Continental Congress, but he traveled to Philadelphia anyhow, to influence his friends John and Samuel Adams, whom he had befriended and showed around New York as they rode in coaches from Boston to Philadelphia.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

At the June Round Table, Dr. Joanne Grasso read her review of Benjamin L. Carp’s *THE GREAT NEW YORK FIRE OF 1776: A LOST STORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*.



Dr. Carp’s book was published by Yale University Press early this year.

Dr. Carp has been studying and writing about this fire for many years. Dr. Grasso finds his account “lively. New York in 1776 was a strategic, volatile and deadly place to be.”

It was a place of “soldiers, spies, rebels, and civilian merchants.” Carp describes in detail the way of life for these early New Yorkers. He outlines their “religions, houses of worship, their education and economics, the acts of the British Parliament” they lived under, their “political counsels, their division between Whigs and Tories, their demographics,” and the gathering revolutionary turbulence.

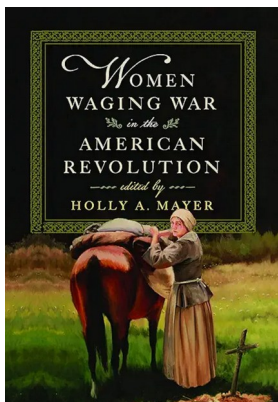
Carp takes us through the early stages of revolution, and then addresses the question of how the fire started. He shows us eyewitness accounts. The fire started about midnight, so few were awake and fewer still could see much in the dark, except for the growing fire glow. There are reports from seamen on ships at the

waterfront. There were two investigations by the British, but they ascertained little.

Carp explains General Washington's "bad options." Should we burn the city, to deny the British its use? Or should we leave it, hopeful that we will soon recapture it?

Carp is convinced, as were the British at the time, that American incendiaries set fires in several places. But no one, even years after the war, announced that he set the fire. Those who did were very likely among those murdered by British and Hessian soldiers on the spot.

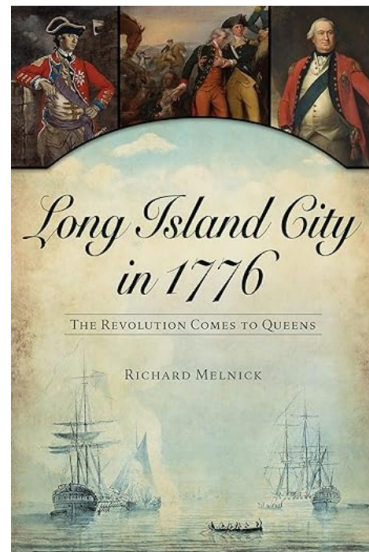
Carp ends with a chapter on how the fire was forgotten. It faded from memory, among Americans, because it did little to influence the long war to come, and the wearing down of the British will to fight. The thing that keeps the fire's memory alive is the lingering doubt: Was the fire set deliberately? Did General Washington order someone to set the fires, but carefully leave no paper trail proving he did so? Was the fire just an accident after all? Everything in those days was made of wood, there was hay and straw everywhere, the only light and heat came from open flames, fires were always starting everywhere anyway, the wind was high, the firemen had mostly gone off to join the Continental Army, the church bells that normally warned of fire had been hidden from the advancing Redcoats or melted down for cannon, and so on. Carp and his colleagues still argue these points today.



Maria Dering will be reviewing for us a new book on Thomas Jefferson by Thomas Kidd. Andrea Meyer will do the same for a 2022 book of essays from the University of Virginia Press called *WOMEN WAGING WAR IN THE AMERICAN REVO-*

LUTION, by Holly A. Mayer. And Lynne Saginaw will review a new book by Jack Kelly about Benedict Arnold. This last one will have to wait till February, though, because the book will not come out till December.

Member Richard Melnick has published his book *LONG ISLAND CITY IN 1776: THE REVOLUTION COMES TO QUEENS*. Mr.



Melnick will be our February speaker, and we hope to have, finally, an actual, live dinner for the occasion.

Researching the Revolutionary role of what are now Long Island City, Astoria, Sunnyside and Woodside, Queens is no easy task, since no major battle or other Revolutionary event took place there, in these sparsely populated farm areas. What Mr. Melnick has found are mainly the marching through, and encampments, of the Redcoats, and Revolutionaries chasing Loyalists before the British victory at Brooklyn, and Loyalists and Redcoats chasing Revolutionaries after.

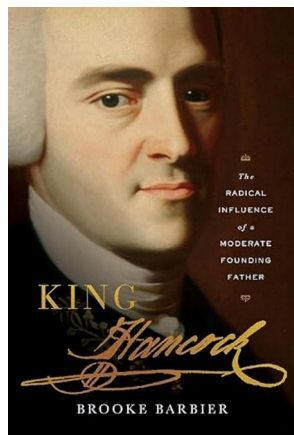
One reviewer, in the *Journal of the American Revolution*, thinks the book's title anachronistic and confusing, since in 1776 there was no such thing yet as Long Island City. But that is the very first thing the author explains, to the local reader, and I think they can figure that out anyway. The book may be of interest mainly to those interested in Queens local history, but it gives a vivid picture of what it was like to live through a revolution and occupation, and that is of interest to anyone anywhere.

The book is 202 pages long. It has plenty of bibliographical entries, end notes, photos and maps. It reflects a ton of research.

The book was published by The History Press, Charleston SC. To purchase a copy directly from the author, contact Richard Melnick at rmelnick99@earthlink.net.

WASHINGTON'S MARINES: THE ORIGINS OF THE CORPS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, 1775-1777, by Major General Jason Q. Bohm, USMC, was published in May by Savas Beatie.

JOHN HANCOCK: THE RADICAL INFLUENCE OF A MODERATE FOUNDING FATHER, by Brooke Barbier, will be published on October 10 by Harvard University Press.



FROM THE BATTLEFIELD TO THE STAGE: THE MANY LIVES OF GENERAL JOHN BURGOYNE, by Norman S. Poser, was published in January by McGill-Queens University Press.

IN THE NEWS

Lynne Saginaw reminds us that there will be a talk at the New-York Historical Society on Tuesday, November 28 by Stacy Schiff, author of THE REVOLUTIONARY SAMUEL ADAMS. The talk will be moderated by David Rubinstein. Ms. Schiff admonishes us not to call him "Sam." No one in his lifetime called him Sam. "Sam Adams" is just a beer. Also, remember to put a hyphen in "New-York" when you mean the Historical Society. They are the last ones to still put that hyphen in. For tickets call 212-485-9268 from 9 to 5.

Maria Dering is our Facebook Page Manager. Maria says our Facebook fan numbers continue to climb. 1,373 people follow us now. Two hundred fifty of them click on our page each month.

Peter Feinman, of the Institute of History, Archeology and Education, advises us that we should be making plans not only for the 250th anniversary of American independence in 2026, but also for the bicentennial of Lafayette's visit to the US in 1824. That will be August 22 of next year.

Professor Heather Ball, of St. John's University in Queens, will be taking her class on another two Rev tours, as she has for the past three years. One tour will start at Fraunces Tavern and the other at the Morris-Jumel Mansion. Both will focus on Alexander Hamilton and will be conducted by your editor.

July Fourth saw the now well-established annual parade of the Lower Manhattan Historical Society, celebrating Independence Day. James Kaplan founded the Society and the parade in 2015. The Veteran Corps of Artillery, founded by Alexander Hamilton, fired their usual 13-gun salute at the Battery, to start the day off with a bang. The paraders marched from Castle Clinton in Battery Park to the South Street Seaport.

Richard Melnick, our Round Table's latest author, was there, and Ambrose Richardson, of the Sons of the Revolution. Councilmember Gail Brewer, former Manhattan Borough President, was there. After the parade finished, your editor walked to Fraunces Tavern with Wellington Z. Chen, Executive Director of the Chinatown Partnership. He was very interested and knowledgeable in Rev history. There was a long program of speakers in the Flag Room. I met a retired Marine Colonel, Brian M. O'Leary, who is writing a biography of Hercules Mulligan, from the Irish immigrant angle.

The Center for Brooklyn History announced in September that, after extensive renovation, it is once again open to the public in Brooklyn Heights.

OCTOBER SPEAKER

On Tuesday, October 3, Florida historian George Kotlik will tell us about a forgotten chapter in Revolutionary history (those forgotten chapters just keep coming, don't they?). In January of this year, NewSouth Books, an imprint of the University of Georgia Press, published his book **EAST FLORIDA IN THE**



REVOLUTIONARY ERA, 1763-1785. It turns out there was a fierce border war in 1775 between this newly-organized British colony and Georgia. Two major battles were later fought here during the Revolutionary War proper, and the United States failed in three invasions to bring this colony aboard the Revolution.

Mr. Kotlik studied British North American colonial history at Oxford. He has an MA in Political Science from Sul Ross State University in Alpine Texas. He lives in Florida.

DEADLINE

Please send Rev news to the Broadside! Know of any upcoming conferences on the subject? Heard about someone digging up a cannonball somewhere? What REALLY went on in Betsy Ross's sewing circles? Get these tidbits to the editor (fcookinham@juno.com) by midnight,

Tuesday, November 14th for inclusion in the December Broadside. Thanks!

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

We still need an Assistant Treasurer, as there are certain tasks that our Treasurer, Jon Carriel, cannot perform, living as he does in Panama City. The duties of this post are light, and any help would be appreciated.

The Civil War Round Table of New York has tried to return to live dinners, and they find it difficult to get people to attend. There are two main reasons for this: restaurant prices have gone up, and many new Zoom attendees are located far from New York. It now looks as though our American Revolution Round Table will be unable to return to regular live dinners for the same reasons. So, we are going to try a compromise solution: We will meet by Zoom four times a year, and will try to meet for a live dinner only once per year. We will have a live dinner for the February meeting, when our speaker will be our own Richard Melnick, who has just published **LONG ISLAND CITY IN 1776: THE REVOLUTION COMES TO QUEENS.**

We still need to find a midtown restaurant that is not prohibitively expensive. Another option is to locate one with a private room that could accommodate a meeting *after* dinner. Members would be encouraged to patronize the establishment for their meals beforehand.

Our next Zoom meeting will be on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at 7:30 pm. The Zoom link is in the email you got from Jon Carriel that also contains the link to this Broadside.

Yr most obdt svt,
Dr. David W. Jacobs