

The American Revolution in New Jersey: Where the Battlefield Meets the Home Front**James G. Gigantino II, editor****New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015****222 pages****\$29.95****ISBN: 9780813571911****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v3i1.74>**

Despite the state's famed role as a battleground of the War of Independence, highlighted in Leonard Lundin's 1940 work *Cockpit of the Revolution*, academic treatments of revolutionary New Jersey remain relatively few in number compared to New England, Virginia, and the Garden State's larger neighbors. Edited volumes compiling shorter works by several scholars, such as 2005's *New Jersey in the American Revolution*, edited by Barbara J. Mitnick, have helped to fill some of this historiographic void. A decade later, *The American Revolution in New Jersey: Where the Battlefield Meets the Home Front*, edited by James J. Gigantino II, continues in this tradition. Gigantino brings together the works of nine scholars covering a range of topics in the state's Revolutionary experience. By broadening the geographical and topical coverage of revolutionary New Jersey, this volume makes a substantial contribution to the field with chapters that should prove informative to general readers, students, and academic specialists.

Gigantino divides the book into two parts: "A Revolutionary Experience," featuring five chapters devoted to aspects of the military conflict; and "The Impact of the Revolutionary Experience," which explores the war's effect on the state's diverse and disparate society. Part One begins with William L. Kidder's chapter on the mobilization of the state's militia, revealing how the conflict's duration eroded support for the patriot cause; militiamen could not turn-out in force while preoccupied with providing for their families in a war-torn region. Similarly, Gregory F. Walsh's study of the "London Trade" between New Jersey civilians and British-held New York finds that rather than starve as the war dragged on, civilians instead turned to trading

with the enemy regardless of their professed loyalties. Eleanor H. McConnell also covers economic hardship in tracing entrepreneurs' unsuccessful wartime efforts to produce iron and salt, while Todd W. Braisted reconstructs the little-known 1781 battle of Fort Lee between patriot and loyalist forces, demonstrating how the 1775-1783 conflict comprised both a struggle for independence and a civil war. Finally, Robert A. Selig's chapter on the passage of Rochambeau's French expeditionary force through New Jersey adds an international dimension to the coverage of New Jersey's wartime experience.

Part Two of the volume looks beyond the military conflict to explore the impact of the Revolution on New Jersey society. Michael S. Adelberg finds that despite the violence and turmoil witnessed in divided Monmouth County, most residents enjoyed economic stability throughout the war. Bruce A. Bendler's chapter provides welcomed regional and topical diversity through his examination of the Quakers' role in the abolition of slavery in Salem County, while James J. Gigantino II contrasts the success of abolition in the state's unscathed, Quaker-dominated south and west with the persistence of slavery in the diverse and battle-scarred north and east. Donald Sherblom's chapter concludes the volume with a study of a woman-led loyalist homestead in Lebanon Township, illustrating the plight of loyalists through the prism of one family's experience.

The American Revolution in New Jersey may leave some readers questioning its organization. Although the two-part division serves to organize the nine essays, the distinction between "The Revolutionary Experience," and its impact seems blurred, especially in the cases of McConnell's and Walsh's chapters. Additionally, while no work will represent all topics or methodologies, greater attention to women's history beyond Sherblom's entry would have been beneficial, given the compilation's subtitle. Finally, different audiences may find varying levels

of interest and engagement with the volume's chapters. Braisted's lively account of the Fort Lee skirmish carries appeal for readers more accustomed to popular military history, while McConnell's business-history approach may find greater favor amongst academics.

These are minor critiques. This book has achieved particular success in covering a broad geographical range, moving beyond the seat of war of central and northeastern New Jersey that has dominated narratives of the state's revolutionary past. Bendler's and Sherblom's entries cover the southwest and northwest, respectively, while McConnell's study includes the often neglected Pine Barrens. Beyond geographic coverage, this volume also contributes new arguments in line with current historiographical trends. Bendler's and Gigantino's studies of slavery prove particularly on-point, considering the growing emphasis on slavery as a crucial and national, rather than peculiarly regional, institution. Given its broad coverage, *The American Revolution in New Jersey* should provide useful readings for undergraduate courses on New Jersey history; instructors seeking to add local color to general survey courses on early American history or the Revolution will also find ample material in this volume. Future compilations may expand on even the broad coverage provided here, by incorporating such topics as the war's environmental impact and postwar memory and commemoration. Overall, the works assembled here indicate that New Jersey's revolutionary experience remains fertile ground for new inquiries.

Steven Elliott