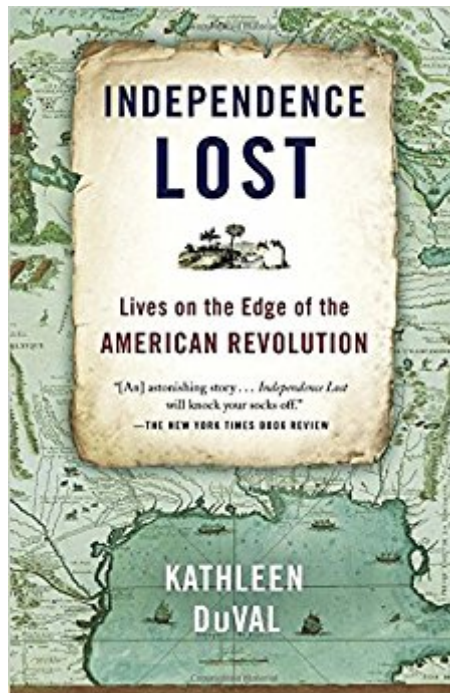




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# Independence Lost: Lives On The Edge Of The American Revolution



## Synopsis

A rising-star historian offers a significant new global perspective on the Revolutionary War with the story of the conflict as seen through the eyes of the outsiders of colonial society. Winner of the Journal of the American Revolution Book of the Year Award, Winner of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Jersey History Prize, and Finalist for the George Washington Book Prize. Over the last decade, award-winning historian Kathleen DuVal has revitalized the study of early America's marginalized voices. Now, in *Independence Lost*, she recounts an untold story as rich and significant as that of the Founding Fathers: the history of the Revolutionary Era as experienced by slaves, American Indians, women, and British loyalists living on Florida's Gulf Coast. While citizens of the thirteen rebelling colonies came to blows with the British Empire over tariffs and parliamentary representation, the situation on the rest of the continent was even more fraught. In the Gulf of Mexico, Spanish forces clashed with Britain's strained army to carve up the Gulf Coast, as both sides competed for allegiances with the powerful Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek nations who inhabited the region. Meanwhile, African American slaves had little control over their own lives, but some individuals found opportunities to expand their freedoms during the war. *Independence Lost* reveals that individual motives counted as much as the ideals of liberty and freedom the Founders espoused: Independence had a personal as well as national meaning, and the choices made by people living outside the colonies were of critical importance to the war's outcome. DuVal introduces us to the Mobile slave Petit Jean, who organized militias to fight the British at sea; the Chickasaw diplomat Payamataha, who worked to keep his people out of war; New Orleans merchant Oliver Pollock and his wife, Margaret O'Brien Pollock, who risked their own wealth to organize funds and garner Spanish support for the American Revolution; the half-Scottish-Creek leader Alexander McGillivray, who fought to protect indigenous interests from European imperial encroachment; the Cajun refugee Amand Broussard, who spent a lifetime in conflict with the British; and Scottish loyalists James and Isabella Bruce, whose work on behalf of the British Empire placed them in grave danger. Their lives illuminate the fateful events that took place along the Gulf of Mexico and, in the process, changed the history of North America itself. Adding new depth and moral complexity, Kathleen DuVal reinvigorates the story of the American Revolution. *Independence Lost* is a bold work that fully establishes the reputation of a historian who is already regarded as one of her generation's best. Praise for *Independence Lost*: "[An] astonishing story . . . *Independence Lost* will knock your socks off. To read [this book] is to see that the task of recovering the entire American Revolution has barely begun." •The New York Times Book Review

richly documented and compelling account. *The Wall Street Journal* "A remarkable, necessary and entirely new book about the American Revolution. *The Daily Beast* "A completely new take on the American Revolution, rife with pathos, double-dealing, and intrigue. *Elizabeth A. Fenn*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Encounters at the Heart of the World* From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[An] astonishing story . . . Paint yourself a mental picture of the American War of Independence. If all you see are British redcoats battling minutemen and Continentals, Kathleen DuVal's *Independence Lost* will knock your socks off. . . . To read [this book] is to see the task of recovering the entire American Revolution has barely begun. *The New York Times Book Review* "[DuVal] has produced a richly documented and compelling account . . . to form a layered history of connected, sometimes shared, experiences. *The Wall Street Journal* "A remarkable, necessary and entirely new book about the American Revolution. DuVal's history reminds us that if we celebrate a more inclusive vision of the United States this Fourth of July, one that seems ascendant these days, it is not the one the founding generation had in mind. *The Daily Beast* "Declaring that the American Revolution was fought in the name of empire almost seems blasphemous. However, DuVal excellently details how the

event was actually a war for empire along the Gulf Coast of the United States. . . . Highly recommended for students and scholars of the revolution, American South, borderlands, and forgotten theaters of war; along with those looking for a solid read in history.

•Library Journal (starred review) “With deep research and lively writing, Kathleen DuVal musters a compelling cast to recover the dramatic story of the American Revolution in borderlands uneasily shared by rival empires, enslaved people, and defiant natives. She deftly reveals powerful but long-hidden dimensions of a revolution rich with many possible alternatives to the triumph of the United States.”

•Alan Taylor, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Internal Enemy* “In a completely new take on the American Revolution and a riveting contribution to history, Kathleen DuVal explains how an unexpected cast of Gulf Coast characters fought for their own version of self-determination. The story is gripping, rife with pathos, double-dealing, and intrigue. The outcome is compelling, reverberating through American history to the present.”

•Elizabeth A. Fenn, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Encounters at the Heart of the World* “Independence Lost is an extraordinary achievement. Rooting compelling personal stories in deep original research, Kathleen DuVal brings to life a war for American independence that will be utterly new to most readers.”

•Daniel K. Richter, Pulitzer Prize finalist and author of *Before the Revolution* “Kathleen DuVal has found an exciting and accessible way to convey this history without sacrificing the richness and intricacy of a part of North America where multiple Indian nations—as well as Britain, France, Spain, and the emerging United States—competed with one another for power.”

•Andrés Reséndez, author of *A Land So Strange* “A superb example of how the familiar becomes unfamiliar when viewed from a fresh angle, *Independence Lost* is a work of stunning scholarship with which anyone interested in the origins of the United States will have to contend.”

•Andrew Cayton, co-author of *The Dominion of War* “With stirring prose and through inventive, indefatigable research, Kathleen DuVal recovers a place in time and a cast of compelling characters that seldom feature in our accounts of the wars that created the United States. The result is an important, original, and entirely unforgettable book.”

•Jane Kamensky, author of *The Exchange Artist* From the Hardcover edition.

Kathleen DuVal teaches Early American history and American Indian history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her previous books include *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent*, winner of the J. G. Ragsdale Book Award from the Arkansas Historical

Association. She is also co-editor of *Interpreting a Continent: Voices from Colonial America*. From the Hardcover edition.

A very well researched and compellingly written account of the complex and subtle interdependencies and tensions between the British and Spanish Empires, Native American Nations, and rapidly growing American States in the Gulf Coast region in the mid to late 18th century. An often overlooked dimension of the American Revolution is the military struggle between Spain and Britain for control of the Mississippi and trade routes across Louisiana, West and East Florida and out to the West Indies. This book not only shows the different hopes and aspirations of contemporaries through the eyes of Spanish and British officials, Loyalists and American Patriots, displaced Acadians, Slaves and free men and women of colour, as well as the Creek, Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations but reminds us that the outcome of the American Revolution was never a given. A subtle and nuanced study of the diplomatic strategies, political controversies and military engagements which led to the defeat of the British, initial triumph of the Spanish, aspirations of American entrepreneurs and settlers, and complex attempts of the Native American Nations to defend their traditional lands. The eventual outcome was never preordained but the attempt to negotiate and maintain a range of different interdependencies was to end in disappointment and failure for many with the loss of independence and landholdings even as the formal Independence of the new Republic was formulated and developed. This is a very stimulating and thought provoking book as well as being an exciting read. An innovative and valuable contribution to studies of the American Revolution, colonialism and slavery, and the geopolitics of the Gulf Region. Highly Recommended!

Yes, I loved this book, just as much as I loved Anne Hyde's *Empires, Nations, and Families: A History of the North American West, 1800-1860*. As a history major in college, long ago, I was given the task of trying to unravel Frederick Jackson Turner's study, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" in which he argued that the American frontier shaped American democracy and important aspects of the "American character", such as self-reliance and rugged individualism. I didn't believe that at the time, having been heavily influenced by Charles Beard's, *An Economic Interpretation of the US Constitution* and various New Left revisionists, such as William Appleman Williams, Gabriel Kolko, and James Weinstein and others who were emphasizing the role of corporate capitalism in shaping American life and politics. But how could I reconcile the two? I couldn't do it. Now, along comes Anne Hyde (*Empires, Nations,*

and Families: A History of the North American West, 1800-1860) and Kathleen DuVal and they have found the solution to my dilemma. A country-full of restless people for whom anything was possible, but nothing certain, the world De Tocqueville characterized so well, did exist on the frontier in the shape of various entrepreneurs who attempted, as Duval and Hyde see it, to build trading empires in difficult cultural, social and political circumstances. But the entrepreneurs they describe did not do this acting as "atoms of self-interest", but rather by developing social and kinship networks with Native Americans, their tribes and empires and Spanish colonists and their empires that helped to adapt their economic endeavors to difficult circumstances. It reminded me, in some ways, of the situation in Helmand Province in Afghanistan, where as Mike Martin Describes it in his book, *An Intimate War, An Oral History of the Helmand Conflict*, tribal connections and economic competition for land, roads, water and drugs, had more to do with how key Afghan figures behaved during the western occupations than jihadist rhetoric. All of the three places and times about which these three authors write were, to say the least, difficult. But those who survived best, for a while at least, made the best of difficult circumstances by playing off different political and economic sides against each other. However, in Duval's and Hyde's work at least, very few of them were able to adjust to the westward movement of Americans and the US government that protected them and were simply overwhelmed. I don't know how the key figures in Martin's book are doing these days. So, the American frontier, it turns out, did help to develop what De Toqueville wrote about the American character, but not by means of rugged individualism and self-reliance. Entrepreneurial capitalism was the driver, adjusting to the situation on the ground, socially and culturally, not self-reliance was the means...and it mostly ended in disappointment, overtaken by railroad kings and land tycoons...just as I had always believed. This is a great book.

An impressive accomplishment; well written and richly replete with human stories. As with any book, there are some typos and small mistakes in the text, an inevitable occurrence in any 120,000 word plus book. Don't let these complaints put you off, for DuVal has a great story to tell. The American struggle for independence looks very different viewed from this fascinating and most complex of American frontiers. As a historian familiar with this region of the U.S., I assure you that many of the original sources she used required a great deal of digging and familiarity with several languages. The difficulty of the sources is one reason that this region and time is so poorly understood. A reviewer probably saw "political correctness" in one of the best aspects of the book: DuVal's inclusion of women in the stories. In particular, she believes the protagonists are as much families as the more traditional men, and thus it is important to know about these men's wives, and

sometimes their children, to understand fully what is going on. If you are interested in American independence, Indians, or the Deep South I would put this on your reading list.

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