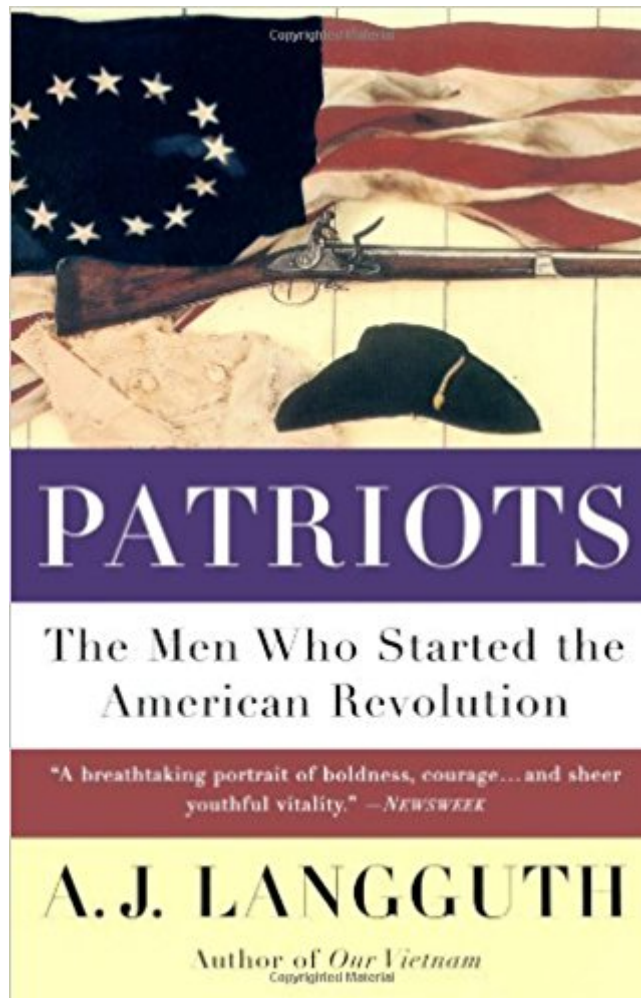




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# Patriots: The Men Who Started The American Revolution



## Synopsis

With meticulous research and page-turning suspense, *Patriots* brings to life the American Revolution—the battles, the treacheries, and the dynamic personalities of the men who forged our freedom. George Washington, John Adams, Samuel Adams, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry—these heroes were men of intellect, passion, and ambition. From the secret meetings of the Sons of Liberty to the final victory at Yorktown and the new Congress, *Patriots* vividly re-creates one of history's great eras.

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## Customer Reviews

Working with contemporary letters and public statements, Langguth, who heads the journalism department at the University of Southern California, produces a closely knit and continuously interesting drama of the American Revolution by following the principal and secondary actors, from Prime Minister George Grenville and his plan to raise revenues by a stamp tax in the colonies to General Washington's farewell to his officers at Fraunces Tavern. Figures whose names are familiar but whose deeds are vaguely known are brought into sharp focus. We know, for instance, that Benedict Arnold is our most infamous traitor, but not necessarily what drove him to do whatever it was he did, precisely. Washington definitely crossed the Delaware, but what did he do when he reached the other side? Read this rousing history and find out. Illustrations. BOMC main selection. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Langguth, a journalism professional and a former Vietnam correspondent, offers a narrative history of the American Revolution (1761-1783). Writing in a dramatic style, he focuses on major political figures, e.g., Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, the Adamses, and on such notable events as the Boston Tea Party, the meetings of the Sons of Liberty, battles in the Continental Congress, and the final victory at Yorktown. Though well written, the book deals with characters, military battles, and political machinations that have been described in detail by countless authors. It adds little to an understanding of the impetus behind the American Revolution. David Szatmary, Univ. of Washington, Seattle Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a well written book that held my interest throughout. Like a good novel, it tells a story that kept me turning to the next pages to find out "what happened." The story, in this case, involves the events that led up to the American Revolution, starting with James Otis's opposition to the writs of assistance in 1761 and ending with George Washington's farewell to his troops in 1783. In between, A. J. Langguth (a professor of journalism, who wrote *Our Vietnam*) generally does a masterful job of telling us about the dynamic, brave, sometimes vain, and often brilliant leaders (most notably, Samuel and John Adams, John Hancock, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Joseph Warren, and Benjamin Franklin), who rebelled against the mother country. And there are also the not so great, who made terrible mistakes on the battlefield (Charles Lee) or switched to the other side (Benedict Arnold). Langguth also does a very good job in describing the key battles of the war, and the strategy of both sides. The details provided are excellent: The Minute Men and their duck-hunting rifles, picking off British troops withdrawing from Concord; John Stark's men hiding behind hay and stones to stop William Howe's flanking maneuver at Breed's Hill; Washington's nine-hour crossing of the Delaware River, ending at 3 AM and his defeat of the Hessians at Trenton when the enemy commander did not bother to read a note of warning from a loyalist; Horatio Gates's victory at Saratoga, when British forces led by John Burgoyne were trapped and attacked from three sides; von Steuben ordering the American soldiers to place kitchens and latrines at opposite sides of their camps; Washington begging his troops to stay for six more weeks for ten dollars in hard money in the winter of 1776; sentries at Valley Forge standing barefoot inside their hats in December 1777. This book not only fascinated me by providing such details, but also answered a lot of the questions I had about the war for independence, and what led up to it: What was the Stamp Act? How did groups of farmers and tradesmen defeat the British Empire? What

tactics did Washington and his generals employ to defeat tens of thousands of British and Hessian troops? What role did the French play? What exactly did Sam Adams and others do to move us towards independence? How many people were loyalists and what part did they play in the events? This book answered all of these questions, and more. The only real problem I had with the book was that the fighting in the South was not covered adequately, I believe, along with leaders like Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter. The heroes are heroic (especially Washington), and deservedly so, but we also read about their less-than-admirable qualities. There is also the factor of the mistakes made by opponents. The author does not devote much attention to social, economic, racial, and legal trends and effects. That is not his purpose. A good, little book to read on these matters is *The American Revolution: A History* by Gordon S. Wood. *Patriots* by A. J. Langguth is an excellent, journalistic account (mainly chronological) of this period in American history. I am recommending it because it brings the leaders and events that founded our country to life, in a clear and interesting way.

Excellent read for those interested in the behind the scene personalities of the Patriots who got this nation going.

This book is the best I have ever read about the making of America. Reads like a good novel. So good that I bought another for a friend. It illuminates many facts that I never knew about the beginning of our country. Read it. You will love it.

\*\* "Who will write of our Revolution? Who "can" write of it?" (John Adams to Thomas Jefferson)\*\*  
(Thomas Jefferson reply to John Adams) "No one. Nothing will truly be known of the Revolution for posterity - merely the External Facts...." I confess I harbor an obsession for "those External Facts" regarding early America and the Revolution in particular. The Revolution was one thing, but the catalyst for it was quite another and began to form well over a decade earlier. This book starts with focus on the men of "Pre-Revolution", rather than starting off with the event itself, and progresses on through to the unbelievable, against all odds - victory at Yorktown. These are the Patriots who first inspired the men who made the eventual movement happen; those "first forefathers" that put their necks squarely within range of the noose and told the devil to take the hindmost. It is an excellent accounting, and the first heading deals with the contribution of James Otis, and rightly so - the Boston British Attorney in about-face - who gave the four hour blistering condemnation of the "writs of assistance" at Faneuil Hall simultaneously coining the phrase "A man's home is his Castle"

- while pointedly taking aim at the safety of the abode of the Monarchy; speaking out against the Sugar and Stamp Act while coining another oft-repeated rebel phrase, "Taxation without Representation is tyranny". The involvement and brilliance of this man is a story twofold; one of triumph and tragedy - suffering from a form of progressive mental illness which undoubtedly could be mastered today with modern medical treatment, thus making his iconoclastic stance even more noteworthy. Before he succumbed, he managed to overwhelm the adversaries of Colonial freedom with his commitment, articulate wit and pen-flow of radical ideas. His four hour courtroom drama in Faneuil Hall that day roused the interest of John Adams, who was in the audience and remarked later that "The Child of Liberty was Born that Day" - and that birth soon became "the brainchild" of the best and brightest minds in America, miraculously all gathered together in the same time frame. It takes reading of many different historians to gather all of the enormity of what actually happened through each of them. Otis and Sam Adams became a formidable force to reckon with, and I can only imagine the headaches they caused poor Governor Thomas Hutchinson as he tried to manage them from within his own job description. Hutchinson, the British Colonial Governor, found himself in a no-win situation and probably suspected it early on (he wasn't a fan of the taxation attempted upon the colonists) but with nowhere to go unless he too wanted to join the revolutionists, and it appears he didn't have the courage to do that, although that is my own private opinion. Andrew Oliver, his brother-in-law-in-nepotism, the tax master with the unenviable job of collecting that Stamp Tax, did have a remarkably well-stocked wine cellar, though, that the Sons of Liberty partook of rather heavily when they trashed his house in mob violence, during the outrage over the Stamp Act, when feelings were running too high to be controlled. Which of course, may not be one of the most admirable ways to show displeasure with the powers that be, but those were turbulent times, with no sympathetic ear from the Mother Country regarding the tax upon tax assessed on the people. This was something that John Adams, T. Jefferson et al wished to correct with a newly written slate of proper, amended protective Laws of the Land, assuring freedom and justice for all. Mob violence was the "grapes of wrath" to use another coined expression, of a people long dominated by unbending monarchy over their beliefs, religions, homes and businesses. However, admirable or not, it was certainly not much different from what the British proposed to subject the colonists to with their nefarious "writs of assistance" search and seizure warrants that were so broad based they needed no subject, nor expiration date to be official. Once issued, they were "standing orders" to be used with or without discretion. John Hancock, the bright young orphan taken in by kin who made his fortune not only on the surface as a sea merchant, but in the dark as a smuggler, preferring "a la Rhett Butler" to make it swiftly rather than spend his life doing it; Paul Revere and

many more, both patriot and British Loyalists - this outstanding accounting delves deep into it, personalities and all, reminding me once again that reading a new book with a fresh take about a beloved subject absorbed before many times - can still add important meaning and insight from another historian's perspective. Patrick Henry is profiled from his inauspicious start as a scholar, past the place where his genius took him where he wanted to go, bereft benefit of the perks of a grand legal education that the others had. The Constitution, he felt, standing alone, could be torn asunder by successive power mongers, but the Bill of Rights Amendments added later, supports and spells out individual rights, and we can be thankful for the likes of Patrick Henry, who "smelled a rat", and whose vocal opposition to it's ratification without a bill of rights amendments attached, probably saved us all, at least into this century. And on page 458 is a painting by William b.t. Trego, of George Washington, mounted and ministering to his men at Valley Forge in winter; one of the most moving and beautiful I have seen - in my view even more inspiring than the one depicting the crossing of the Delaware, because of its stark realism. If one picture is worth a thousand words, this one is ten fold so. Other American History titles I found excellent in the quest for up-dating and renewing my knowledge of nation:\*\* "Miracle at Philadelphia" by Catherine Drinker Bowen\*\* "Three men of Boston" by John r. galvin\*\* "The Adams-Jefferson Letters"\*\*\* "Paul Revere's Ride" by David Hackett Fischer\*\* "Jefferson" by Thomas Jefferson (Library of America)\*\* "American Colonies" by Alan Taylor\*\* "The First American" (Franklin) by H.W. Brands (Library of America)\*\* "1776" by David McCullough\*\* "John Adams" by David McCullough\*\* "Defiance of the Patriots - the Boston Tea Party" - Benjamin L. Carp\*\* "American Speeches" Political Oratory (Library of America) Nothing boring between these pages - the bravest and brightest intellects of our nation were available and hard at work speaking the minds of the rest of us - so that we might understand ourselves.

I've read this three times. A great book for all true Americans who want to understand the events leading up to the Revolution.

Recommended as an excellent book on the events surrounding the Revolutionary War. Appears to be very thorough.

Fills in the knowledge gap of the Revolutionary War not taught in schools, I would encourage all Patriots to enjoy this fine book

Excellent for adults and students alike.

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