

BROADSIDE

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

June 2024

APRIL SPEAKER:

BOSTON TOUR GUIDE TELLS THE STORY OF JOHN HANCOCK

Seventeen Round Tablers joined Dr. Brooke Barbier for a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, April 2. Dr. Barbier, a historian and tour operator in Boston, spoke on the life of one of Beantown's greatest sons, John Hancock, and on her October 2023 book, KING HANCOCK: THE RADICAL INFLUENCE OF A MODERATE REVOLUTIONARY. Brooke's offering was published by Harvard University Press.



Dr. Barbier, who leads tours along Boston's Freedom Trail, spoke to our group in 2018 on her book BOSTON IN THE AMERICAN

REVOLUTION. Her title for last night's talk was HUZDAH! DRINKING WITH JOHN HANCOCK AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARIES.

Our speaker emphasized Hancock's role as a moderate who nevertheless not only worked with radicals, but led them. Before Lexington,

Hancock was already the "Uncrowned king of Massachusetts." He took a long time to come around to openly supporting independence, and twenty years later, he likewise took a long time to come around to openly supporting the Constitution. How, then, did he get so popular with even the radical elements in the Bay State, like Samuel Adams?

For one thing, he was rich, and like Washington, his getting involved with a radical reform movement at all showed Americans that not all rich men are conservatives and unquestioning of the Crown and Parliament. When rich and influential men start joining a movement, people of all income levels get on the bandwagon and the movement starts to cook. Secondly, his wealth was obtained partly through breaking the same unjust laws his poorer neighbors suffered under.

Once in Congress, in Philadelphia, Hancock's wealth recommended him to the conservatives, while his popularity among the Mass. masses recommended him to the radicals.

A large part of Brooke's talk dealt with John Hancock's John Hancock on the Declaration of Independence. Your editor has to humbly admit that he learned a new word from Brooke's talk: the flourish after a signature is called a PARAPH, from the Latin *paraphus*, meaning a paragraph. Anyone of that time seeing Hancock's signature could tell that this was an

educated man. He had studied calligraphy as a boy, and it shows. The signature also suggests a man of means, who is signing business documents all day. It is a practiced signature. Hancock's signature is ten times the size of the smallest signatures on the DOI. But the story about Hancock saying he wrote so large "so Fat George in London can read it without his spectacles" circulated only after 1818, when, for the first time, the public saw a copy of the DOI with all the signatures on it. King George himself may never have seen Hancock's signature.

Few know about the role Hancock played in Massachusetts's Constitutional Ratification Convention in Boston. Hancock refused to vote for the Constitution until it had some amendments that would protect individual and states' rights. He was, then, one of those, like George Mason, behind the push for the Bill of Rights.

Fans of musical comedy will note that a line in the musical *1776* that the writers gave to Colonel McKean of Delaware, to needle his hated colleague George Reed, was actually said by Benjamin Harrison of Virginia to Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts: I am heavy and you are slight, so if the British hang us as traitors, I will die quickly, while you will dance in the air for an hour, or words to that effect. And Gerry pronounced his name with a hard G, like Gary, Indiana.

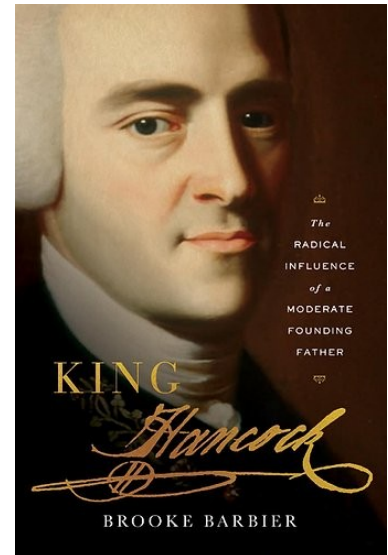
In the Q and A, Dr. Barbier was asked where the delegates to the Continental Congress lived in Philadelphia. "Taverns!" she replied, *forte con gusto*. Taverns figure prominently in her Boston walking tours. Hancock was the only delegate to bring his wife to Philly, and they lived in a private home.

Does our contemporary politics influence your writing? No. Eighteenth century politics was too different.

How did you do your research? During covid, she spent her time at home reading the minutes of the Continental Congress, and letters from the delegates. These items have been put online only recently. There is much historical data online today that was not available electronically even five years ago.

Was Hancock vain, as we read in accounts of how miffed he was that Adams nominated Washington and not Hancock for Commander in Chief? No. If he had been that vain, he would not have become so popular among the people of Massachusetts.

He was no showboat. He was businesslike. Hancock was tireless. He served longer than any other president of the Continental Congress. He was proud of putting together the Articles of Confederation.



LYNNE SAGINAW, 1950-2024



Our old friend and Book Review Editor, Lynne Saginaw, died April 30, 2024 after a brief illness. Lynne goes back longer than your editor does in the Round Table, and that is over twenty years. Jon Carriel and I remember Lynne's chatty and informative news items at our dinners. Lynne contributed greatly to this Broadside. I used to call her my Lois Lane – my star reporter.

Lynne's sister Susan Jacobson tells us:

Lynne was born in Brooklyn in 1950. She majored in English at Hunter College. She worked at the Research Institute of America doing document research. She worked at ABC New York in production, as an office manager, and at Liberty Travel as an agent.

She loved travel and history. She especially loved reading English history. She did charity work and volunteered in the Brooklyn Public Library.

The American Revolution Round Table was very important to her and she spoke of the meetings and the discussion topics often to me and to our family.

She was also a hockey and baseball fan. We did a lot of activities together and I will miss her.

Publishers sent Lynne copies for review of many newly-published books on the Rev. Lynne would farm these out to Round Table members so they could read each book and review it orally at the next meeting. Now, someone else will have to perform Lynne's important post for the Round Table.



BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

At the April Zoom, Speaker Getter Dr. Joanne Grasso reviewed *THE REVOLUTIONARY SAMUEL ADAMS*:

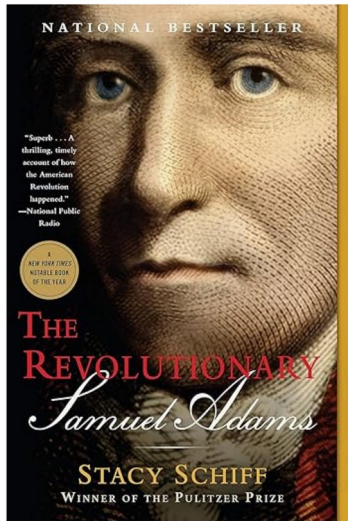
If this book review could be relegated to one word, it would be "WOW!" Stacy Schiff, the author of many well-known and awarded books has once again written an outstanding book, this time about an historic figure, Samuel Adams.

Samuel Adams has been relegated to second place behind his prominent cousin and second President of the United States, John Adams, who left an indelible mark in history with his continual attitude of moving ahead no matter the opposition.

Stacy Schiff calls Samuel Adams, and that's "Samuel", not "Sam,", "a political genius" and writes about him in an intense,

inspirational, and principled way. He was not a man who sought after glory, yet his personality and secret actions contributed to a widespread knowledge of him.

Samuel Adams, according to the author, “consigned history to others with predictable results,” hence the lack of notoriety in history in comparison to his cousin John. And yet she also calls Samuel, according to Thomas Jefferson, “the patriarch of liberty.” A title well deserved as a signer of the Declaration of Independence from Massachusetts.



...

Samuel Adams is portrayed as intelligent and learned with a “lofty education in the classics” and knowledge of the economic class system in Boston.

...

The real substance of “The Revolutionary Samuel Adams” was trying to answer the question of who he was. Ms. Schiff has written an outstanding book that deserves to have the award of the Pulitzer Prize. The details in the book are worthy of a finely-written biography. Adams is explained in the Revolutionary period of his life as not seeking the attention of a hero yet being at the forefront of most every political battle. Through this book Samuel Adams deserves a second, third, and fourth look at his life and character at that period of history. So, read the book. And re-read it. Absorb it and commit to memory the

substance of the many chapters of an amazing revolutionary.

Lynne announced at the Zoom that she had three books to offer to anyone who would review them for the June Round Table. The first is by our October speaker, Robert P. Watson, *GEORGE WASHINGTON’S FINAL BATTLE: THE EPIC STRUGGLE TO BUILD A CAPITAL CITY AND A NATION* (2021). The second is *WASHINGTON’S MARINES; THE ORIGINS OF THE CORPS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, 1775-1777*, by Major General Jason Q. Bohm USMC (2023). The third is *EUROPEAN FRIENDS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (THE REVOLUTIONARY AGE)*, edited by Dr. Andrew J. O’Shaughnessy PhD and John A. Ragosta (2023).

The Round Table now needs a new Book Review Editor. Anyone who would like to receive new books from publishers and farm them out to members to review should email the editor, fcookinham@juno.com. And anyone wishing to review one of the above books for the October Round Table, ditto. The member who reviews a book orally at the meeting gets to keep the book!

IN THE NEWS

April 16: NYT reports that the head of Philadelphia’s Museum of the American Revolution, on a visit to NYC, discovered a print hanging on someone’s wall. It turned out to be the earliest known drawing of women on a wagon, bringing food to a camp of the Continental Army.

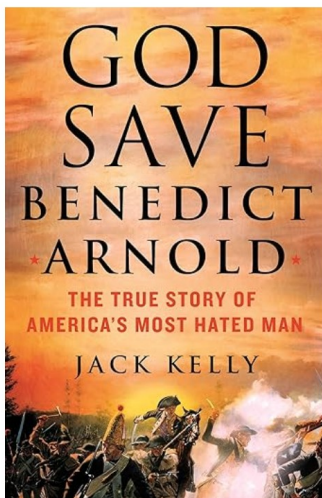
Lynne Saginaw reported that Michael Douglas is starring in a new Apple TV+ mini-series, *FRANKLIN*. It premiered April 12. It is based on *A GREAT IMPROVISATION: FRANKLIN*,

FRANCE, AND THE BIRTH OF AMERICA (2005), by Stacy Schiff. The *Washington Post* says Douglas gives us a Founding Father “with a dash of Gordon Gekko swagger.”

The CBS Sunday Morning Show of May 5 featured a writer named A. J. Jacobs being interviewed in the ballroom of the Morris-Jumel Mansion. He was dressed in a Continental Army uniform and is currently active with a New Jersey re-enactors group. He has written a book, published May 7 by Crown, called THE YEAR OF LIVING CONSTITUTIONALLY: ONE MAN’S HUMBLE QUEST TO FOLLOW THE CONSTITUTION’S ORIGINAL MEANING. Jacobs says we should not only read the Constitution, but talk about it, especially to people we disagree with.

JUNE SPEAKER

At the June 4th zoom meeting, our featured speaker will be Jack Kelly, author of the brand-new book GOD SAVE BENEDICT ARNOLD: THE TRUE STORY OF AMERICA’S MOST HATED MAN. St. Martin’s Publishing Group released the book on December 5, 2023.



readers into the brutal action with vigorous prose and sentences that are often short and pugnacious – much like Arnold himself.” Jack

Jack Kelly is an award-winning historian and novelist. His books about the Revolution include BAND OF GIANTS and VALCOUR. The *Wall Street Journal* said his latest book, GOD SAVE BENEDICT ARNOLD, “propels

has received the DAR History Medal and is a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow in Nonfiction Literature. He lives and works in New York’s Hudson Valley.

DEADLINE

Midnight, Tuesday, September 3 will be the deadline for submissions to the October Broadside. Please send any news item related to the American Revolution. Send us news of books or articles being published, someone finding Benedict Arnold’s boot in a well, and, especially, any example of a principle of the Revolution making a real, practical difference in someone’s life. The abolition of the medieval laws of primogeniture and entail, for example.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Our June Zoom will convene at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, June 4, 2024. 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

THE BROADSIDE is published five times a year to members of the American Revolution Route Table of New York. Editor: [Frederick Cookinham](#). Electronic Publisher: [Jonathan Carriel](#). Past issues are available on our website: www.arrrt-ny.org.