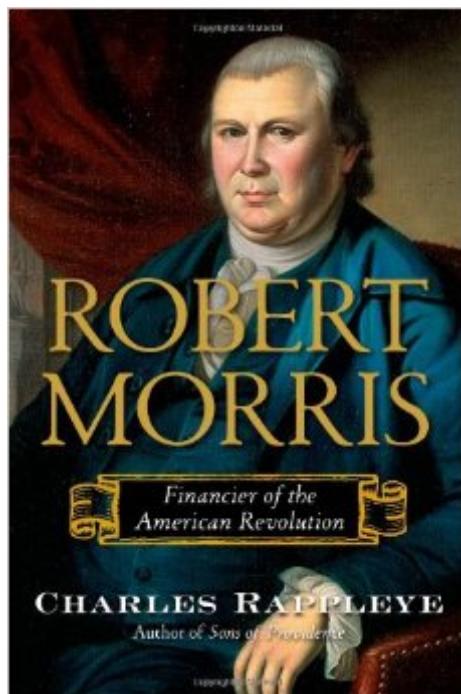


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Robert Morris: Financier Of The American Revolution



Synopsis

In this biography, the acclaimed author of Sons of Providence, winner of the 2007 George Washington Book Prize, recovers an immensely important part of the founding drama of the country in the story of Robert Morris, the man who financed Washington's armies and the American Revolution. Morris started life in the colonies as an apprentice in a counting house. By the time of the Revolution he was a rich man, a commercial and social leader in Philadelphia. He organized a clandestine trading network to arm the American rebels, joined the Second Continental Congress, and financed George Washington's two crucial victories—Valley Forge and the culminating battle at Yorktown that defeated Cornwallis and ended the war. The leader of a faction that included Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and Washington, Morris ran the executive branches of the revolutionary government for years. He was a man of prodigious energy and adroit management skills and was the most successful businessman on the continent. He laid the foundation for public credit and free capital markets that helped make America a global economic leader. But he incurred powerful enemies who considered his wealth and influence a danger to public "virtue" in a democratic society. After public service, he gambled on land speculations that went bad, and landed in debtors prison, where George Washington, his loyal friend, visited him. This once wealthy and powerful man ended his life in modest circumstances, but Rappleye restores his place as a patriot and an immensely important founding father. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Hardcover: 640 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster; First Edition edition (November 2, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416570918

ISBN-13: 978-1416570912

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.7 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars—See all reviews (41 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #421,075 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #367 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > United States > American Revolution #1038 in Books > History > Americas > United States > Revolution & Founding #2430 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Political

Customer Reviews

Robert Morris is mentioned in most histories of the American Revolution, but generally only in passing. This book rectifies this lack of attention. It discusses all of his life (and that of his father), from his early business successes, his importance as a founding father (a signer of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution), his importance in the funding of the Revolutionary War, his association with the great men of America (most importantly with George Washington), and finally his great land speculation failure which landed him in debtors prison. Rappleya also introduces us to Revolutionary War figures such as Silas Deane and Arthur Lee (both of whom were Continental Congress envoys to France) who are even less well known than Morris. I also found that this book corrected many false ideas that I previously held, for instance that Robert and Gouverneur Morris were related (they were not). The book is divided into three sections; the first titled "Revolutions" details Morris's actions as a merchant arranging for supplies for the American army and his actions as a member of the government of Pennsylvania and the Continental Congress, the second titled "The Financier" deals with his actions as a financier during the war, and the third titled "The New Republic" discusses Morris's post war personal finances and his actions as a US Senator from Pennsylvania. I found the first section most illuminating, as this aspect of Morris's life is generally not covered in most US history books. This section delves into the complex political aspects of the war, the Continental Congress and Pennsylvania state government.

The story of any founding father is an interesting one, however I didn't find this author's writing style to be interesting at all. As a very avid reader and a big fan of American history, I expected to really enjoy this book. Instead, I found myself wishing it was over. I've read much longer books that held my interest--this one, unfortunately, just didn't do it for me. I give it three stars because it does appear to be a well researched work, and contains a lot of information. I mention poor editing for a couple reasons: first, I was shocked at the number of typos in the book--sentences will read something like: "the people at gathered at the yard...". I found so many instances where I had to reread a sentence because of strange repetitions like that. Secondly, and much more confusing, is the way dates are mentioned, and this also happens frequently. The author will describe events taking place over several years, and then begin the following paragraph: "In February...". In one particular instance, the author discusses Revolutionary events that actually span five years (over the course of two paragraphs), and then proceeds to say: "That March...". What March? You just covered FIVE years discussing several points--would it be so hard to start the next paragraph with the year? I found this a problem over and over, and had to backtrack to get my bearings again. This

seems to pervade the whole book; instead of dealing with things in a much more sequential fashion, the events are constantly jumbled. I understand the need to occasionally add an anecdote out of place, but this book continually skips back and forth and it really breaks up the flow of the story. Another instance describes the death of a foreign dignitary...

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