



Benjamin Franklin and the American Revolution

Jonathan R. Dull

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The inventor, the ladies' man, the affable diplomat, and the purveyor of pithy homespun wisdom: we all know the charming, resourceful Benjamin Franklin. What is less appreciated is the importance of Franklin's part in the American Revolution: except for Washington he was its most irreplaceable leader. Although aged and in ill health, Franklin served the cause with unsurpassed zeal and dedication. Jonathan R. Dull, whose decades of work on *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* have given him rare insight into his subject, explains Franklin's role in the Revolution, what prepared him for that role, and what motivated him.

The Franklin presented here, a man immersed in the violence, danger, and suffering of the Revolution, is a tougher person than the Franklin of legend. Dull's portrait captures Franklin's confidence and self-righteousness about himself and the American cause. It shows his fanatical zeal, his hatred of King George III and George's American supporters (particularly Franklin's own son), and his disdain for hardship and danger. It also shows a side of Franklin that he tried to hide: his vanity, pride, and ambition. Though not as lovable and avuncular as the person of legend, this Franklin is more interesting, more complex, and in many ways more impressive.

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