

that water was the best deterrent against disease-breathing filth, temperance leaders hailed it as the salutary alternative to demon alcohol, and water-cure practitioners declared that it could remedy almost any ailment,” explains Smith (161). The author masterfully makes real the connections felt by nineteenth-century reformers between the individual natural human body and the collective human-made body of the city.

While environmental historians such as Donald Pisani, Ted Steinberg, and Richard White arguably remain the go-to scholars for water history, Carl Smith has undoubtedly added a useful and unique study. His ability to draw on local sources makes his monograph strong and his ability to link those sources to a thoughtful interpretation of the intellectual history of three developing American cities makes Smith’s project truly distinctive.

NATALIE SCHUSTER

Frostburg State University

Patrick Griffin. *America’s Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). Pp. xviii, 342. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$39.95.

Patrick Griffin presents a masterful synthesis of the revolutionary era in *America’s Revolution*. Emphasizing the Revolution as a process, based on a triptych model that includes a beginning, middle, and end, Griffin provides a new interpretation that helps to connect the revolutionary era and beyond. In this comprehensive yet concise narrative, Griffin compellingly argues that throughout the revolutionary process, the idea of sovereignty informed and shaped much of the way that individuals interpreted and acted during the years encompassing the American Revolution.

In part 1 of the book, “The Beginning,” Griffin establishes a firm foundation for understanding the revolutionary era by tracing the history of the British colonies back to their founding during the seventeenth century. He first presents an overview of the different regions of the colonies, while examining the process of becoming “British.” He details the regional variation in this process, yet also acknowledges how this common identity bound the colonists together through their political institutions and, more significantly, their familiarity with the idea of dividing sovereignty. He moves into the eighteenth century and focuses on how the Seven Years’ War affected the relationship between the colonies and the Crown, arguing that “cultural realities and political expectations fractured

British authority" (xiv). Griffin reinvigorates the familiar story of the origins of the Revolution by demonstrating the persistent concerns over sovereignty and authority that colonists expressed in response to the Sugar Act and the Stamp Act, as well as the proliferation of agrarian unrest that crystallized in two places in the form of Regulation, albeit with different visions and goals. In doing so, Griffin demonstrates how the collapse of imperial sovereignty occurred concurrently to rising domestic tensions and turmoil.

Griffin presents part 2 as "The Middle," the years during which the actual fighting of the American Revolution took place. Throughout this section, he strives to provide a balanced view of the Revolution by examining the conflict not only through the eyes of illustrious figures like George Washington and Sam Adams but also through various perspectives including white women, African Americans, Native Americans, and poorer and middling white men. According to Griffin, these men and women utilized the vacuum of authority as an opportunity to assert their own agency as they sought to translate their vision of American society into reality. Stressing how competing notions of authority resulted in much chaos, Griffin reminds us of the violence that erupted among colonists. Moreover, he exposes "the American paradox" detailing how common men and women were becoming self-sovereign actors at the same time that they were preventing other individuals from doing so, namely those of other races.

The final section of the book, "The End," provides a fresh and compelling interpretation of the culmination of the American Revolution. Griffin rejects other historians' claim that the Constitution served as a fulfillment of the years of conflict and instead posits a different view. He argues that the Constitution was only one part of the broader settlement of the Revolution. With much nuance and careful attention to events following the end of war, Griffin illustrates the ways in which individuals continuously struggled to define the meaning of the conflict for themselves and others, exemplifying his model of understanding the Revolution as a process. In doing so, Griffin complicates more simplistic narratives of the era, exposing the contradictions rife in memory and myths of the American Revolution. For Griffin, the years following the end of the Revolution featured a variety of debates, including not only those of the ratification of the Constitution but also the future of the West, the meaning of citizenship, as well as ideas about gender and race. He connects these public discussions to the process of establishing sovereignty and authority and, more significantly, the process of making sovereignty meaningful through a plan and practice of government. Griffin emphasizes the ways in which the culmination of the Revolution represented

a compromise of divergent interests, a true settlement rather than a mythic story of triumph.

Throughout the book, Griffin provides a rich and commanding narrative of the revolutionary period that will be engaging and useful within the classroom. Griffin's incorporation of widely known stories from the American Revolution, including those of Molly Pitcher, Deborah Sampson, and Thomas Jefferson, among many others, makes this book appealing and accessible to use with undergraduate students. His effort to provide a comprehensive view of the era will also help to facilitate discussion about the broader framework of the English Atlantic World. In placing the conflict within the context of the Atlantic World, Griffin enriches our view and effectively links Ireland, Scotland, the Caribbean, and Canada to the process of the American Revolution. However, there is still room for other historians to extend his arguments within the larger scope of the British empire to include places such as India and the role of the British East India Company in the process and development of the Revolution and the broader challenges of authority the Crown faced throughout this period.

In line with other recent work on this period, such as T. H. Breen's *American Insurgents, American Patriots*, Griffin advances discussions of the American Revolution beyond the confines of schools of thought contending that the questions that historians have once asked have become outdated. In fact, he suggests that the seminal question of whether the American Revolution was about home rule or who should rule at home is "the wrong question" arguing instead that the persistent issue revolved around authority (120). In doing so, Griffin effectively bridges the ideological gap between neo-Progressives and neo-Whigs and presents a model to demonstrate how scholars can work to advance our knowledge of the American Revolution, while still acknowledging the fruitful debates generated by such schools of thought. Griffin's work also reflects recent trends in the scholarship of this era, highlighting several themes that were also featured at the prodigious American Revolution Reborn Conference in 2013, including the American Revolution as civil war, global perspectives of the conflict, and violence. Overall, Griffin's work illustrates the new directions of the field and will likely shape several of the debates unfolding in the years to come.

RACHEL ENGL TAGGART
Lehigh University