



INHERITING THE REVOLUTION (First Generation of Americans)

Joyce Oldham Appleby

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Born after the Revolution, the first generation of Americans inherited a truly new world--and, with it, the task of working out the terms of Independence. Anyone who started a business, marketed a new invention, ran for office, formed an association, or wrote for publication was helping to fashion the world's first liberal society. These are the people we encounter in *Inheriting the Revolution*, a vibrant tapestry of the lives, callings, decisions, desires, and reflections of those Americans who turned the new abstractions of democracy, the nation, and free enterprise into contested realities.

Through data gathered on thousands of people, as well as hundreds of memoirs and autobiographies, Joyce Appleby tells myriad intersecting stories of how Americans born between 1776 and 1830 reinvented themselves and their society in politics, economics, reform, religion, and culture. They also had to grapple with the new distinction of free and slave labor, with all its divisive social entailments; the rout of Enlightenment rationality by the warm passions of religious awakening; the explosion of small business opportunities for young people eager to break out of their parents' colonial cocoon. Few in the nation escaped the transforming intrusiveness of these changes. Working these experiences into a vivid picture of American cultural renovation, Appleby crafts an extraordinary--and deeply affecting--account of how the first generation established its own culture, its own nation, its own identity.

The passage of social responsibility from one generation to another is always a fascinating interplay of the inherited and the novel; this book shows how, in the early nineteenth century, the very idea of generations resonated with new meaning in the United States.

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Responding to a Revolutionary Tradition
3. Enterprise
4. Careers
5. Distinctions
6. Intimate Relations
7. Reform
8. A New National Identity

Notes

Index

Reviews of this book:

Joyce Appleby deals with two themes in this book: the historical experience of the generation after the American Revolution and conflicts within American identity. The result is Whitmanesque, both in its complex but coherent vision and in its elegant expression.

--Edward Countryman, New York Times Book Review

Reviews of this book:

[A] fascinating study of how citizens of the newly constituted form of government seized the opportunities their break with the Old World offered them.

--Ralph Hollenbeck, King Features Syndicate

Reviews of this book:

[Appleby] examines in exhaustive (but not exhausting) detail how "the first generation of Americans" reshaped virtually every aspect of American society. Commerce, religion, domestic life, personal behavior. They left nothing untouched, operating under the assumption that their "Revolutionary heritage" was nothing less than "a call to innovation, enterprise, reform and progress"

--Michael D. Schaffer, Philadelphia Enquirer

Reviews of this book:

[Appleby] gives us an extended meditation on what happened to American society during the generation that grew up in the aftermath of the Revolution...Her fine, well-informed intelligence plays across this vast sea of biographical information and recreates the world her subjects inhabited...Everything is made fresh in these pages. The combination of out-of-the-way stories unearthed from the autobiographies and Appleby's own ingenuity and insight puts the familiar in a new light.

--Richard Lyman Bushman, H-Net Book Reviews

Reviews of this book:

In her rich new book...[Appleby] argues that the first generation of Americans...experienced a degree of political and social change unrivalled before or since...This first generation reached a kind of closure about the meaning of democracy that has made it difficult for succeeding...

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