



Renegade Revolutionary: The Life of General Charles Lee

Phillip Papas

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Honorable Mention for the 2015 Fraunces Tavern Museum Book Award

In November 1774, a pamphlet to the "People of America" was published in Philadelphia and London. It forcefully articulated American rights and liberties and argued that the Americans needed to declare their independence from Britain. The author of this pamphlet was Charles Lee, a former British army officer turned revolutionary, who was one of the earliest advocates for American independence. Lee fought on and off the battlefield for expanded democracy, freedom of conscience, individual liberties, human rights, and for the formal education of women.

Renegade Revolutionary: The Life of General Charles Lee is a vivid new portrait of one of the most complex and controversial of the American revolutionaries. Lee's erratic behavior and comportment, his capture and more than one year imprisonment by the British, and his court martial after the battle of Monmouth in 1778 have dominated his place in the historiography of the American Revolution. This book retells the story of a man who had been dismissed by contemporaries and by history. Few American revolutionaries shared his radical political outlook, his cross-cultural experiences, his cosmopolitanism, and his confidence that the American Revolution could be won primarily by the militia (or irregulars) rather than a centralized regular army. By studying Lee's life, his political and military ideas, and his style of leadership, we gain new insights into the way the American revolutionaries fought and won their independence from Britain.



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