

*Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution*. Kathleen Du Val. New York: Random House, 2015. ISBN: 9781400068951

Scholars focusing on the colonial and revolutionary eras of American history have recently turned their attention in a new direction: the Gulf South. With her latest entry, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution*, Kathleen Du Val has crafted one of the field's most fascinating studies. The Gulf South is particularly important because despite the rebel victory, the region did not join the United States after the war. Study of the region is crucial, Du Val argues, because it reveals two truths: that most people "chose sides for reasons besides genuine revolutionary or loyalist fervor and that non-British colonists exercised a great deal of influence over the war's outcome" (xv). To illustrate this, she laces her 351 pages of text with the interconnected stories of eight of the region's residents, each of whom had their own visions of a post-revolutionary world.

Part I introduces the players and the land they inhabited. The Gulf South stretched from Spanish Louisiana east to West Florida, encompassing the port towns of Mobile and Pensacola, and north to present-day northern Mississippi, upper Alabama and western Georgia. Anglo-Creek leader Alexander McGillivray wanted to strike at the American rebels who threatened his parents' land while also solidifying his position as the leader of a newly centralized Creek Confederacy. Former Chickasaw war chief turned diplomat Payamataha chose inaction as his position, hoping that a native version of isolationism might be the ticket to continued Chickasaw autonomy. Cajun Amand Broussard hoped to humiliate the British to avenge his family's forced exodus from Canada during the French and Indian War, while Scots James Bruce and Isabella Chrystie feared that Spanish conquest of Pensacola would result in an exodus of their own. Slave Petit Jean was a cattle master who greeted the Revolution as an opportunity to secure

independence for his family. Meanwhile, Irishman Oliver Pollock and his wife, Margaret, gambled that supporting the rebellion would pay handsomely.

In Part II, Du Val examines the questions facing her eight subjects as North America braced for war. As European empires closed in around them, Indians felt the strain and worked to maintain and secure their own sovereignty. Being the child of a Creek woman and British father meant that Alexander McGillivray was a member of both cultures, which allowed him to rise quickly within the loosely-knit Creek power structure. But his frustrations with coordinating an alliance with the British during the American Revolution caused him to believe a unified Creek nation was the best chance for his mother's people to remain as independent as the rebelling colonies hoped to be (90). The Chickasaw diplomat Payamataha, however, charted a different path. His nation lacked the strength and numbers of the Creeks. He promised the British assistance but had no intentions of endangering his small nation. Ultimately, passive assistance was all King George received from his long-time allies, as that was all they could give.

West Florida found itself in a precarious position. With few residents and fewer regular army stationed in the colony, it was subject to French or Spanish attack. But instead of joining militias, most locals chose to focus on their own day-to-day needs. Du Val relays the amusing story of Spanish workers hired to build British defenses—despite the fact that fear of Spanish attack was a primary cause of the construction (114-115). Along the Gulf Coast, people weighed their options. Were the English more likely to win the war, and therefore did it make more sense to join with them? Or were the Spanish? Oliver Pollock cast his lot with Louisiana Governor Bernardo de Gálvez, who eagerly hoped to undermine the British. But James Bruce felt that staying loyal to his mother country would be the best way to guarantee his family's independence.

Part III moves on to the war itself, where Britain's southern strategy of galvanizing a joint force of Indians and loyalists never materialized. Instead, British commanders watched as Spanish troops, enabled by men like Oliver Pollock and Petit Jean, successfully took Mobile and Pensacola. Du Val acknowledges traditional historical interpretations that the British would have fared better had they better supplied their native allies, though she feels this may be overemphasized. Southeastern Indians were far too independent for the British to have ever assumed their full allegiance. Further, "their failure to come showed that they did not think British control over Pensacola mattered much" (218). The siege and fall of Pensacola has not been given credit for its historical significance, laments Du Val, but it was important. For it was this loss that pushed the British to cutting their losses after Yorktown. It also demonstrated that Europe's oldest empire was once again on the rise. More importantly for the people in the Gulf Coast, it forced them to confront "the paradox of independence" (218-219).

With the American victory establishing Thomas Jefferson's "empire of liberty," coastal residents asked themselves how they might shape their own liberties. Would they join in with the new republic or would they ally themselves with Spain or Britain? Part IV examines the choices they made. McGillivray suggested that Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Shawnees in Creek territory give up a portion of their autonomy in order to form a grand Southern Confederacy that might protect the independence of all Southern nations. Doing so required help from the Spanish, who promised to supply the coalition with weapons and to negotiate on their behalf during European accords. At the same time, Spain worked to counter the growing power of the United States by inviting disaffected Americans to form their own republics of Kentucky, Franklin, and Cumberland. Neither McGillivray nor Spain was ultimately successful.

Du Val's series of interconnected stories reveal fates as different as the people themselves. Alexander McGillivray never saw his dream of a grand Southern Confederacy that could stave off the United States. He died from complications of pneumonia and gout in 1793; by 1834 most Creeks were west of the Mississippi. Payamataha also lost. His dreams of peace were shattered as the Chickasaws went to war against both the Creeks and Cherokees. Believing that it was a mistake to contest the United States, many young warriors assisted the young republic as scouts beginning in the 1790s. But they, too, moved west shortly after the Creeks. Petit Jean escaped the horrors of slavery, but the spread of plantation agriculture after the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 made exodus from servitude far more unlikely for his peers. Amand Broussard became a successful planter in the 1780s and saw the American republic's burgeoning Cotton Kingdom as a way to increase his fortune, though his success was built upon men and women like Petit Jean. Women's fortunes faded with the rise of the United States. As Du Val notes, instead of ending coverture, the Revolution spread the practice into former European colonies (348). Amand Broussard's wife, Anne Benoît, enjoyed the success of her husband, but her gender prevented her from becoming a citizen of their new country. Margaret Pollock struggled alongside her husband after the war, while Isabella Bruce fled to Europe.

Ultimately, *Independence Lost* is the chronicle of people and people and places who "were written out of the story of the American Revolution," but were central to the history of the growing republic (350). With this book Du Val has demonstrated the multiple ways in which Gulf Coast people were connected and how each confronted their own notions of liberty in the midst of the rebellion. It successfully illustrates the importance of the region to the era's historiography, and Du Val's fluid and compelling prose will appeal to non-historians while

providing a bevy of thoughts for junior and advanced scholars. Historians of the American Revolution, empire, Atlantic World, and indigenous studies would be wise to consider it.

Jason Herbert is a Ph.D. student in the Department of History at the University of Minnesota