

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
THE AGE OF ATLANTIC
REVOLUTIONS

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VOLUME I

The Enlightenment and the British Colonies

Volume I offers an introduction to the Enlightenment, which served as the shared background for virtually all revolutionary turmoil, and the American Revolution, which inaugurated the Age of Revolutions. Beginning with a thorough introduction, the volume covers international rivalry, the importance of slavery, and the reformist mindset that prevailed on the eve of the revolutionary era. It addresses the traditional argument on whether the Enlightenment truly caused revolutions, concluding that the reverse is more apt: revolutions helped to create the Enlightenment as a body of thought. The volume continues with a regional and thematic assessment of the American Revolution, revealing how numerous groups in British America – including Black and Indigenous people – pursued their own agendas and faced interests at odds with the principles of the revolution.

WIM KLOOSTER is Professor and the Robert H. and Virginia N. Scotland Endowed Chair in History and International Relations at Clark University. He is the (co-)author and (co-)editor of twelve books. His monograph *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World* won the Biennial Book Award of the Forum on Early-Modern Empires and Global Interactions and the Hendricks Award of the New Netherland Institute.

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
THE AGE OF ATLANTIC REVOLUTIONSEdited by
WIM KLOOSTER

In three volumes, *The Cambridge History of the Age of Atlantic Revolutions* brings together experts on all corners of the Atlantic World who reveal the age in all its complexity. The Age of Atlantic Revolutions formed the transition from an era marked by monarchical rule, privileges, and colonialism to an age that stood out for republican rule, legal equality, and the sovereignty of American nations. The seventy-one chapters included reflect the latest trends and discussions on this transformative part of history, not only highlighting the causes, key events, and consequences of the revolutions, but also stressing political experimentation, contingency, and the survival of colonial institutions. The volumes also examine the attempts of enslaved and indigenous people, and free people of color, to change their plight, offering a much-needed revision to R. R. Palmer's first synthesis of this era sixty years ago.

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VOLUME I

The Enlightenment and the British Colonies

WIM KLOOSTER

Clark University, Massachusetts



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Wim Klooster

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Contributors to Volume 1

Holly Brewer
Trevor Burnard
Colin G. Calloway
Jessica Choppin Roney
Stephen Conway
Max M. Edling
Patrick Griffin
Brian R. Hamnett
Johnson Kent Wright
Wim Klooster
Lloyd Kramer
Wayne E. Lee
Anthony McFarlane
Nathan Perl-Rosenthal
Mark Peterson
Ami Pflugrad-Jackisch
Gonzalo M. Quintero Saravia
Liam Riordan
James Sidbury
Caroline Winterer

Preface

I thank Debbie Gershenowitz and Cecelia Cancellaro at Cambridge University Press for the smooth and pleasant collaboration. I would also like to express my gratitude to the three scholars who made up an advisory board that assisted me in choosing the contributors: Rafe Blaufarb, Ben Weider Eminent Scholar in Napoleonic Studies at Florida State University, Patrick Griffin, Madden-Hennebry Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame, and Gabriel Paquette, Professor of History at the Johns Hopkins University. All three have also written a chapter in this book.

About a dozen of the chapters were first presented at the workshop “Black Men and Women in the Age of Revolutions” in January 2020. I thank Yale University for providing an excellent venue for the workshop and Mark Peterson for making arrangements.

Some contributors contracted Covid-19, whereas others were affected by lockdowns. I thank them all for their perseverance. Although a number of invited authors reneged on their contractual promise to write a chapter far into the project, I am confident that the age of Atlantic revolutions has been covered sufficiently in the pages that follow.

Wim Klooster