Poseidon’s Curse

*British Naval Impressment and Atlantic Origins of the American Revolution*

*Poseidon’s Curse* interprets the American Revolution from the vantage point of the Atlantic Ocean. Christopher P. Magra traces how British naval impressment played a leading role in the rise of Great Britain’s seaborne empire, yet ultimately contributed significantly to its decline. Long reliant on appropriating free laborers to man the warships that defended British colonies and maritime commerce, the British severely jeopardized mariners’ earning potential and occupational mobility, which led to deep resentment toward the British Empire. Magra explains how anger about impressment translated into revolutionary ideology, with impressment eventually occupying a major role in the Declaration of Independence as one of the foremost grievances Americans had with the British government.

Christopher P. Magra is a prize-winning Early American historian, specializing in the Atlantic dimensions of the American Revolution. He is an associate professor in the Department of History at the University of Tennessee.
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CHRISTOPHER P. MAGRA

*University of Tennessee*
To Elizabeth Magra,
for supporting me.
To Maryann Magra,
for raising me.
To Ryan Magra,
for pushing me.
To Colette Magra,
for inspiring me.
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Abbreviations

Archives

JDPL The James Duncan Phillips Library, Salem, Massachusetts
LOC The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
MHS Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA
BBD Benjamin Bangs Diary, 1742–65.
CDP Caleb Davis Papers, 1684–1826.
SGJ Samuel Graves Journal, 1774–76.
WPP2 William Pepperrell Papers, 1664–1782.
NMM The National Maritime Museum, Caird Library, Greenwich, England
ELL Elliot Family Papers.
HAR Hartwell Papers.
TRN Transcripts.
SOTCL The Society of the Cincinnati Library, Washington, DC.
TNA The National Archives, Kew, England
HCA High Court of Admiralty Papers.
PC Privy Council.
SP Records assembled by the State Paper Office, including papers of the secretaries of state up to 1782.
T Records created and inherited by the Treasury Board.
ADM Records of the Navy Board and the Board of Admiralty.
List of Abbreviations


Eighteenth-Century Newspapers

AWM  The American Weekly Mercury, Philadelphia, PA
BC  The Boston Chronicle, Boston, MA
BEP  Boston Evening Post, Boston, MA
BG  The Boston Gazette, Boston, MA
BWN  The Boston Weekly Newsletter, Boston, MA
BPP  Boston Post Boy, Boston, MA
CC  Connecticut Courant, Hartford, CT
CG  Connecticut Gazette, New London, CT
CJ  Connecticut Journal, New Haven, CT
CnJ  Continental Journal, Boston, MA
EG  Essex Gazette, Salem, MA
FJ  Freeman’s Journal, Portsmouth, NH
LC  The London Chronicle
LG  The London Gazette
MS  Massachusetts Spy, Boston MA
NEC  New England Chronicle, Boston, MA
NEWJ  New England Weekly Journal, Boston, MA
NHG  The New Hampshire Gazette, Portsmouth, NH
NM  The Newport Mercury, Newport, RI
NP  Norwich Packet, Norwich CT
NYG  The New York Gazette, New York, NY
NYJ  The New York Journal, New York, NY
NYEP  The New York Evening Post, New York, NY
NYM  The New York Mercury, New York, NY
NYWJ  The New York Weekly Journal, New York, NY
NYJ  The New York Journal
PC  The Pennsylvania Chronicle, Philadelphia, PA
PEP  Pennsylvania Evening Post, Philadelphia, PA
PG  The Pennsylvania Gazette, Philadelphia, PA
PP  Pennsylvania Packet, Philadelphia, PA
PRG  The Providence Gazette, Providence, RI
VG  Colonial Virginian newspaper, the Virginia Gazette
WR  The Weekly Rehearsal, Boston, MA
List of Abbreviations

Mariners’ Diaries, Journals, and Memoirs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Author/Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JD</td>
<td>James Durand, <em>The Life and Adventures of James R. Durand, From the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and One, Until the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixteen. Written by Himself. His First Leaving His Parents: How He Was Cast Away, and the Hardships He Underwent; His Entering the American Service; Together With the Particulars of His Impressment and Service On Board a British Man of War, Seven Years and 1 Month, Until 1816</em> (Bridgeport, CT: Printed by Stiles Nichols &amp; Son, 1817).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td>Memoirs of John Stradley. NMM TRN/38.</td>
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List of Abbreviations

Online Databases

BFP The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, http://franklinpapers.org/franklin/
BHO British History Online, www.british-history.ac.uk/Default.aspx
CHOP Calendar of Home Office Papers.
CSP Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies.
CSPD Calendar of State Papers Domestic.
CTB Calendar of Treasury Books.
HLJ House of Lords Journal.
JBT Journals of the Board of Trade.
EAI Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639–1800
EAI2 Early American Imprints, Series II: Shaw-Shoemaker, 1801–19
ECCO Eighteenth-Century Collections Online
EEBO Early English Books Online
SA Sabin Americana, 1500–1926.
SPD The Diary of Samuel Pepys. www.pepysdiary.com/archive/

Published Manuscript Material