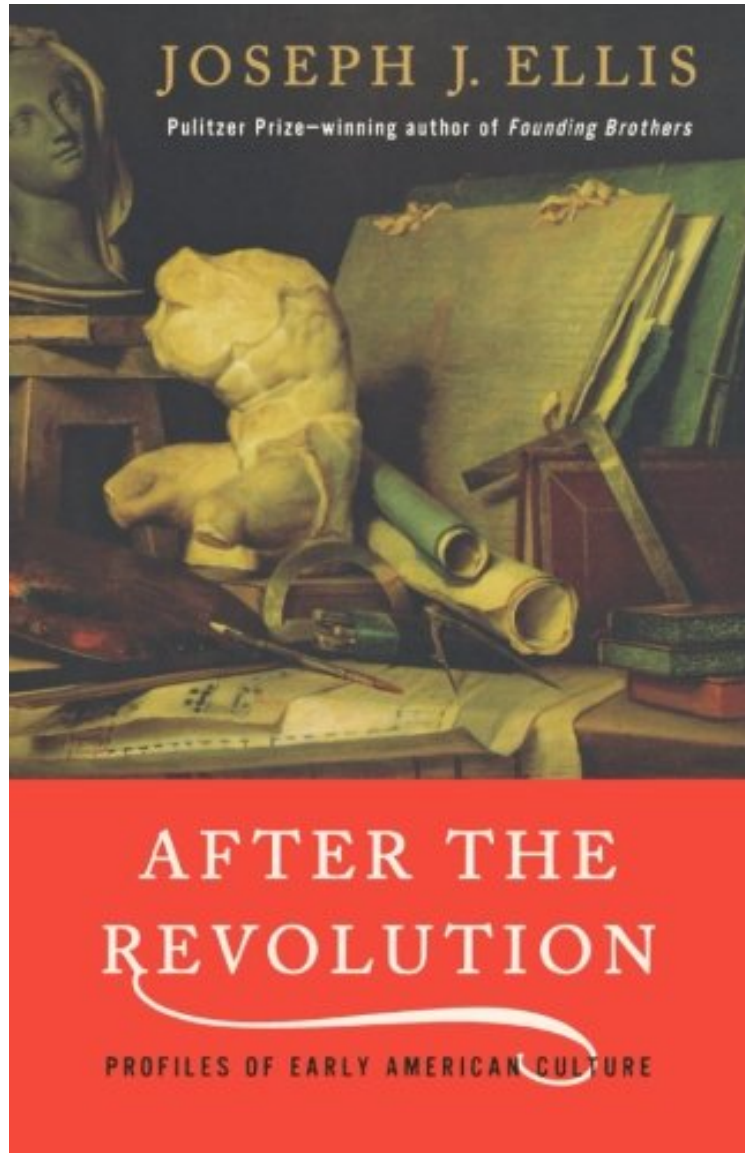


[PDF] After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture

After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture

Joseph J. Ellis Ph.D.

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Joseph J. Ellis Ph.D. : After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. though The Quartet were great American poets
By Chayo Frank
The essence of this book far exceeds the time period of its focus. The timeless issue that is illustrated is the difference between the individuality of the artistic persona versus the conformity / capitalistic interests of the masses. In so doing, the book also illustrates the different perception of the concept of Democracy. Besides the art of the four men focused on in this book, and their dismay and disillusionment at how America was actually developing, the statements of Ralph Waldo Emerson, as Ellis discusses in the Epilogue, are very important because they accurately delineate the mind-set of the true artist. In particular:- Each individual need to liberate himself from material and monetary enslavement and cultivate private obedience to his mind.- Each prospective man of letters in America must become a sovereign, self-reliant individual wholly unconcerned with the opinions of others.- Serious American artists must abandon all sense of social responsibility and allow themselves to be seized by what he called the highest Instinct.- Artists and writers must begin to conceive of themselves as refugees from the American mainstream. After The Revolution there was little, if any, unique American self-expression, though The Quartet were great American poets. But in the late nineteenth century a great American Aesthetic did evolve. It was in architecture and in Chicago. Maybe influenced by Emerson's ideas, first Louis Sullivan and then Frank Lloyd Wright created an American Architectural Aesthetic not copied from Europe or anything from the past. Evolving from the belief that man is a part of nature, and that nature grows from within outward, from the seed to the flowering - Sullivan applied this Organic principle to architectural design. By using the unique aspects of each architectural project to resolve the design, Sullivan created a wholly American aesthetic for a new type of building - the skyscraper and its verticality. Soon after, Wright, who also held the same belief in the Organic concept, created an entirely American aesthetic for the home, by responding to the horizontal quality of the landscape and creating the Prairie Style. Both men went on to create an American Architecture of numerous buildings of unique originality and creativity and great beauty. Louis Sullivan also wrote a book called - Democracy A Man Search. This is not the democracy of Majority Rules, which, unfortunately, means that the limited perceptions of the many call the shots - where being alike and liking only the same is the norm. The democracy of Sullivan's book is a completely different conception. This democracy is of the unique and independent persona. This is the organic development of each person from within, being a natural outgrowth from his unique hereditary and environmental factors, and becoming a unique self-expression, whether a personal self-expression and/or an artistic one. As Emerson stated, this is the man who cultivates a private obedience to his mind - a sovereign, self-reliant individual wholly unconcerned with the opinions of others; seized by his highest Instinct; and a refugee from the American mainstream. This is everyman's potential the highest potential of the Human race. Everyone free to be himself and accepted as such. Now the difference of Unique Individuality is the norm and another's difference is not only expected, but appreciated. Comprehending this Organic Ideal to the fullest, in the mid-forties, Bruce Goff, a great architect, painter, and educator, in his own right, as well as, a good friend of Wright, applied this to the instruction of architecture when he became the director of the University of Oklahoma School of Architecture. Each student was encouraged to find, develop, and then express his unique aesthetic proclivities, rather than being taught what to do. The originality and the creativity the beauty of the projects done by so many different students are like nothing ever seen before or since. A virtual explosion of American Art LIKE WHAT WAS HOPED FOR AFTER THE REVOLUTION!
13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Well Written and Researched but Incomplete
By David Kopec
Contrary to a previous reviewer, I do feel the preface and early chapters have value. Ellis is attempting to tell a unified story regarding the expectations for American cultural greatness, the roots of these expectations, and the reasons for their lack of flourishing immediately following the revolution. The early chapters and preface provide a context for that story, which plays itself out through the lives of the four individuals recounted in the latter part of the book. These short biographies do complementarily tell this grand story well, but Ellis falls short by not wrapping up the volume with an examination of the common and uncommon characteristics of the four personalities that are detailed. Ellis's superb command of the English language is nearly as present here as it is in his later much lauded works. I did at times feel I was missing important information from the life stories that shaped the ideas of the four studied individuals but this is a reflection of the structure that Ellis chose. It is impossible to get too into the details of any one individual's life in a volume that is using these individuals as supporting evidence for a grander narrative without boring the reader or straying far from the central subject matter. All in all this is a valuable read - especially for those well acquainted with the triumphs of the founding generation, but not as much its failures and the more minor characters behind the scenes.
1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I have a great respect for all Ellis' work
By Stan Beckman
I have a great respect for all Ellis' work. I also enjoy his talks on video as well. He is articulate and witty. Looking forward to his next effort.

Through portraits of four figures Charles Willson Peale, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, William Dunlap, and Noah Webster Joseph Ellis provides a unique perspective on the role of culture in post-Revolutionary America, both its high expectations and its frustrations. Each life is fascinating in its own right, and each is used to brightly illuminate the historical context.

About the Author Joseph J. Ellis is Ford Foundation Professor of History at Mount Holyoke College and author of the National Book Award-winning *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Founding Brothers*, and *Passionate Sage*.