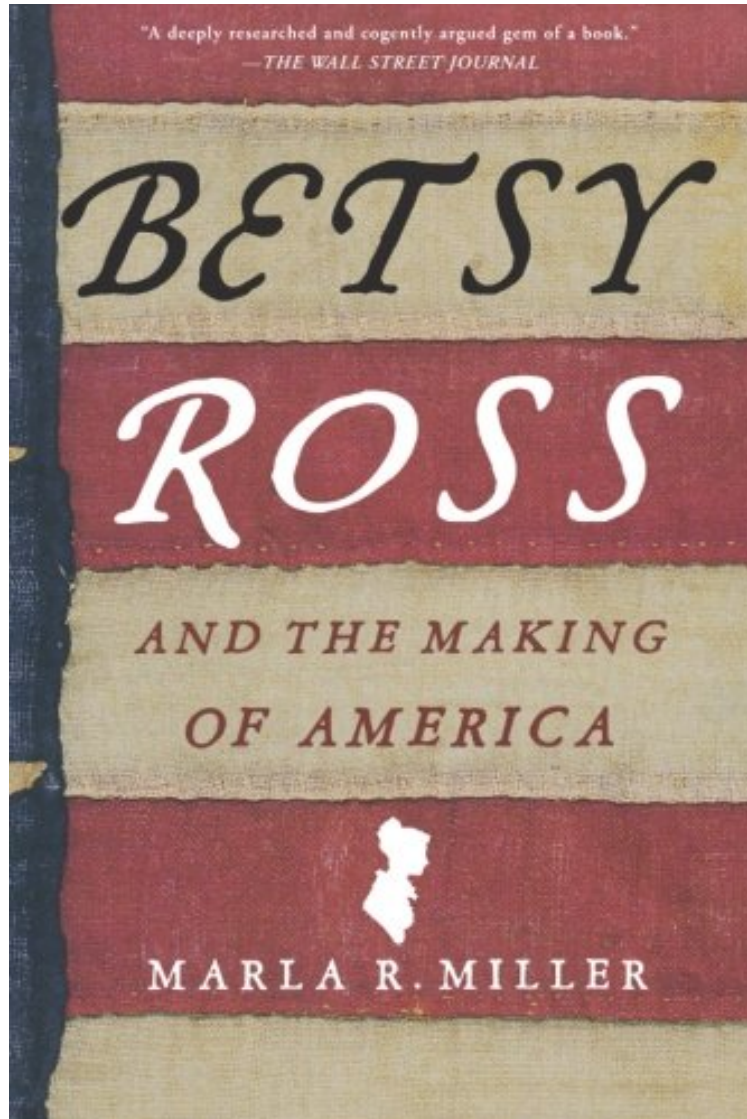


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## Betsy Ross and the Making of America

Marla R. Miller

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#1276789 in Books Marla R Miller 2011-06-07 2011-06-07Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .4 x 5.50l, .93 #File Name: 0312576226496 pagesBetsy Ross and the Making of America | File size: 31.Mb

**Marla R. Miller : Betsy Ross and the Making of America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Betsy Ross and the Making of America:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Astoundingly fine research!By nmsscottThis is an amazing book and a fine read. Betsy Ross, as Miller states is, after Abigail Adams, the best known woman of the American Revolution, but there are very few primary sources about her extant (no voluminous correspondence, as with the Adamses), Miller has done painstaking research to be able to reconstruct her life in 18th c. Philadelphia, earning a living as a skilled needlewoman and upholsterer. She is not an aristocrat, but a middle-class working woman, of the kind who

contributed behind the scenes the "the making of America." Betsy married three times (she was widowed twice), raised numerous children and lived into her eighties, all the while earning a living, as did many women like her. Thank God for feminist historians like Marla Miller and also Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, author of "The Midwife's Tale," who bring into the open the heretofore ignored or deprecated contributions of ordinary women of the Revolutionary and early national periods of US history.<sup>2</sup> of 2 people found the following review helpful. An important work! By Professor KA After teaching American Women's History for 15 years, I thought I knew most of what could be known about Betsy's story. I was always careful to distinguish her legend from her actual story, and to discuss the sociocultural influences that created/perpetuated the legend but distorted/ultimately erased her history from the memory of most Americans. The general outlines of that history were known (or at least available) to historians, but not the details. So, as one who has always found the details more fascinating than the generalities, I was frustrated and left with a personal curiosity that secondary sources were unable to satisfy. Until now! Professor Miller's work is a major boon for other historians, and for all persons who have wanted to know more about Betsy Ross. With imaginative methods and exhaustive research, she has artfully sorted fact from fiction, uncovered a great deal of new information, and presented her findings in a narrative that is both clear and engaging. This is an important book that enables us to ask new questions, develop new insights, and better understand the many ways that Betsy, and other tradeswomen of her time, made significant (if heretofore overlooked) contributions to the making of America.<sup>0</sup> of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Great Read.... By John Paul Sassone A great book about not only Betsy Ross but about Philadelphia and by extension, the country at the time of the Revolutionary War. As a history buff, and one especially interested in the RW, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Written as a story and not just a list of facts and dates, the characters and settings truly come alive. After reading this I went to the Betsy Ross house in Philly just to see it and connect it to the book. A

Beyond the legend of the creation of the American flag, we know very little about the facts of Betsy Ross' life. Perhaps with one snip of her scissors she convinced the nation's future first president that five-pointed stars suited better than six. Perhaps not. Miller recovers for the first time the full story of Betsy Ross, sharing the woman as she truly was. Miller pieces together the fascinating life of this little-known and much beloved figure, showing that she is important to our history not just because she made a flag, but because she embraced the resistance movement with vigor, reveled in its triumphs, and suffered its consequences.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Many Americans accept as true the story of Betsy Ross's role in creating the first American flag. Many modern historians believe the tale is apocryphal. But Miller, an associate professor of history at UMass-Amherst, says the story perpetuated by Ross's family is neither altogether right nor altogether wrong. There is no doubt, Miller says, that the skilled needlewoman was one of Philadelphia's most important flag makers from the Revolution through the War of 1812, and that Ross is important because she offers a unique lens on Philadelphia in that era. Ross's uncles were deeply involved in the Stamp Act protests; a Quaker who left her church to marry her first husband, herself a supporter of the colonies' rebellion, Ross was twice widowed by the Revolution and was married again to a war veteran. The lives of her family members were claimed by the yellow fever epidemic brought by refugees from revolutionary Haiti who flooded Philadelphia in 1793; her artisanal family's prosperity was sacrificed to war and political upheaval. This first-rate biography of Ross (1752-1836) is authoritative and engrossing and goes a long way toward recovering the history of early American women and work. 8 pages of bw photos. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Historian Miller moves well beyond the realm of popular biography, reinvigorating a timeworn American icon by placing her firmly into historical and social context. Though most Americans are familiar with the myth of Betsy Ross and the first flag, few are aware of the intimate details of her life or realize how and why her life was both shaped by and reflective of the Revolutionary era. According to the author, the American Revolution was forged by working men and women: artisans, craftspersons, and farmers formed the nucleus of a new nation, and by examining their lives a portrait of a colonial culture precariously teetering on the brink of independence emerges. By turning a keen biographical eye on Betsy Ross, she illuminates the significant role that ordinary citizens—especially women—played in the birth of the new nation. Readers who imagine Ross frozen in one particular time, place, and role will also be fascinated by the details of her life outside and beyond the scope of the Revolution. --Margaret Flanagan "What a fascinating book! Marla Miller looks closely at Betsy Ross and places her in the context of her Philadelphia. We learn of the contributions of the artisans and tradespeople to the Revolution and beyond as we witness them surviving the British occupation, rejoicing in American victory, suffering through yellow fever epidemics, reveling in their status as the capital city. And we can't help but marvel at the woman at the center of the story--Betsy Griscom Ross Ashburn Claypoole --as she runs her business, buries three husbands, raises her own large family plus those of her sisters, and provides flags for the new nation." --Cokie Roberts, author of *Founding Mothers and Ladies of Liberty* "Marla Miller's *Betsy Ross and the Making of America* is a stupendous literary achievement. It's not easy to accurately write about a real folk legend. Miller does so with historical accuracy, vivid descriptive language, and an encyclopedic knowledge of her subject. The

Revolutionary War era comes alive in these fine pages!" --Douglas Brinkley, author of *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Making of America*"Marla Miller's incandescent biography of Betsy Ross is a joy to read. She brings alive an ordinary Philadelphia woman who is far more interesting than the mythical seamstress of the first American flag. Through prodigious research and elegant writing, Miller chronicles the life of a thrice-married woman so vividly that the entire world of women and work, family and church, and war and politics in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Philadelphia comes alive. Surprise after surprise tumble from the pages of this beautifully stitched account, where the importance of everyday women and men in the birth of the nation becomes abundantly evident."--Gary B. Nash, author of *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America*"Some might think that Betsy Ross is merely Americas most famous seamstress. Marla Miller brings her to life in all her glory and in the rich context of Revolutionary America. Moreover, she does so in a prose style that is accessible, compelling, at times even lyrical."--Joseph J. Ellis, author of the forthcoming *First Family: Abigail and John Adams*"In an engaging biography, Miller shows that even though the flag story is riddled with improbabilities, the life of the woman who came to be known as Betsy Ross is worth recovering . . . Through skillful use of small details, Miller sustains her repeated assertion that the future Betsy Ross was often 'only a handshake away' from the men who made the Revolution . . . Miller's admiring biography will warm the hearts of those who love the Betsy Ross legend. It may also convince skeptics (Miller refers to them as 'naysayers') that there is something in the flag stories worth considering."--Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The New York Times*"A detailed portrait of the woman credited with the creation of the Stars and StripesWith copious notes and an extensive bibliography, Miller provides an exhaustive picture of the life of a craftswoman in colonial times."--Kirkus s"Through wide-ranging research and a skillfully crafted narrative, Miller has not only broadened our understanding of Elizabeth Griscom Ross Ashburn Claypoole but also the men and women of revolutionary America who 'went to work every day and took pride in a job well done.' Recounted are rich scenes from the City of Brotherly Love ranging from revolutionary upheaval to the yellow fever epidemic of 1793. With this distinct and persuasive biography, Miller weaves Ross into the fabric of the rich revolutionary tapestry. Fans of Woody Holton's *Abigail Adams* and Mary Beth Norton's *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* will be drawn to Miller's compelling account."--Brian Odom, *Library Journal*"Miller has written a deeply researched and cogently argued gem of a book that gives us Betsy Ross as a complete person, not just a colonial character with a one-sentence claim on our attention."--Marc Leepson, *The Wall Street Journal*"This first-rate biography of Ross (1752-1836) is authoritative and engrossing and goes a long way toward recovering the history of early American women and work."--Publishers Weekly"In this admiring biography, a historian shows that the life of the real woman behind the flag legend is well worth recovering"--The *New York Times* Book "Affectionate, meticulously researchedThe Ross that emerges in Marla Millers biographyis more authentically American than any character a storybook writer could dream up."--Ruth Graham, *Slate Magazine*"The excitement of this book derives from Millers expert ability to sort fact from fiction, drawing on a wide range of documentary sources to show how Ross and other colonial women contributed to the nations culture and economy at the dawn of the republic."--Jonathan Lopez, *The Associated Press*"A rich biography of the woman behind the myth, [Miller] ably demonstrates why Ross merits study in her own right."--Michael Kenney, *The Boston Globe*"With this book, Miller reveals a refreshing new model of a colonial woman one that encompasses business, politics, education, and war, as well as religion and family. Was Betsy Ross a central figure to the story of the American Revolution? No, but Marla Millers book demonstrates that she was an essential figure in the making of this new nation flag or no flag."--Sioban Conaty, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*"In this first scholarly biography of Ross, Miller uses what we do know to build a compelling portrait of a community and a nation..How much of Ross' story is fact and how much is fiction doesn't matter in this richly detailed biography. It's all fascinating."--Carol Memmott, *USA TODAY*