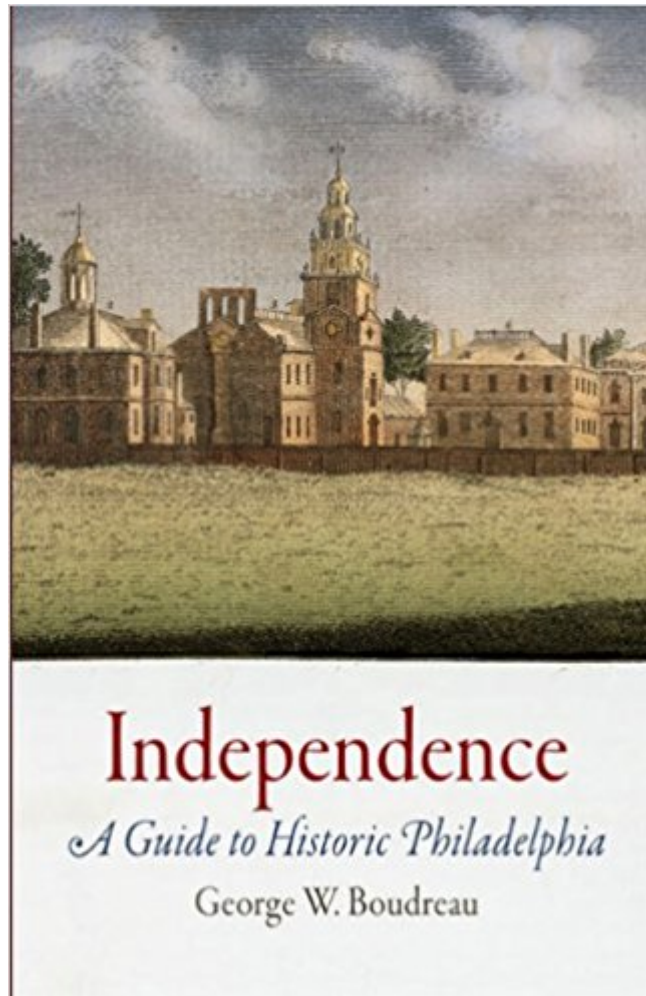




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Independence: A Guide To Historic Philadelphia



Synopsis

An Intimate Illustrated Tour of America's Most Iconic Colonial City From its beginning as a haven for English Quakers in the colony William Penn founded in 1681, the city of Philadelphia prospered, becoming a leading port in the English Atlantic World and a center of American culture and politics. Grounded in enlightenment ideals, Philadelphia attracted diverse settlers from the Old and New Worlds. By the 1760s, a cash-strapped England set its sights on taxing the American colonies to pay its debts. Philadelphia assumed roles as a center of revolutionary protests, a meeting place for colonial delegates to decide on independence and a new form of government, and, finally, the first capital of the United States of America. Richly illustrated with both new photography and an amazing array of early American art drawn from the collections of some of America's leading museums and archives, *Independence: A Guide to Historic Philadelphia* reveals the stories of the persons who experienced the early years of the new nation in America's first capital. Based on meticulous research, *Independence* walks its readers through the lives of the residents and visitors of the revolutionary city, and through the streets and buildings that they knew. Famous names are here: Franklin, Jefferson, Adams, Washington. But *Independence* also focuses on the fascinating stories of less famous American founders. Enslaved and free, women and men, rich and poor, patriot and Tory, shaped Philadelphia's and America's experience in the revolutionary era, and all have their say here. In addition, this guide tells the stories of the iconic buildings and streets where America was founded. The book explores the dozens of buildings that make up Independence National Historical Park and connects these with neighboring sites that are also intimately associated with the story of America's birth. *Independence* will enrich the experience of those who travel to these historic sites, as well as offer a vivid and fascinating story for the general reader. Â

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This guide book provides both Philadelphians and visitors with an accessible narrative of the latest research on what is often called 'the most historic square miles in America.'" - Roger W. Moss

GEORGE W. BOUDREAU is a cultural historian of eighteenth-century America, specializing in the history of early Pennsylvania, the life of Benjamin Franklin, and material culture. An active public historian, he has worked with numerous historic sites in the Philadelphia region and was the founding editor of *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. He teaches history at Penn State Capital College and lives in Philadelphia.

I had the opportunity to participate in a tour led by George after reading his book. His book is written in a style that makes it difficult to put down. George knows Philly!

if you live in Philadelphia or you are going to stop by, this book has all you'll ever need to know about Old City. It is by far the best I ever read.

George goes into historic detail telling stories of the places.

great book to have when site seeing in Ole Philly.

I am eating up this book. There is so much information in this book. It is presented in an easy to read, flowing style with side bars about the topic the author is discussing, whether the people or buildings or time frame. You can read a grand amount at one time, or like me, a short 4 pages to wind down before lights out. This book is absolutely PACKED with historical, interesting information about the city from time of the first settlers in the 1600's and leading forward.

Purchased for \$.50 at a garage sale in Glen Rock New Jersey last year. I dusted off this very interesting history of Philadelphia a few minutes ago, because the Smithsonian indicates that East

London's Whitechapel Bell Foundry Ltd., a company nearly five centuries old, cast many of these colonial voices, including the 12 bells stashed during the Revolutionary War. In a statement released on December 1, the Foundry announced that within the next six months, it would stop its operations on Whitechapel Road, its home since 1738. Owner Alan Hughes, whose family has owned the foundry for more than a century, has sold the property and is considering the future direction, ownership, and location of the company.

Boudreau, of course, discusses the importance of bells in that era of American history. "A bell was a pre-modern communication device. Bells were the way the community expressed itself, its political urgency, its faith. The company sent at least 27 bells to the colonies during the 1700s alone. A document at Christ Church, Philadelphia, where Benjamin Franklin and other forefathers worshiped, lists a 1702 bell made for the church as the earliest. Fifty years later, the Liberty Bell (first called the State House Bell) arrived, and then, in 1754, a peal of eight bells for Christ Church. Other bells made their way to churches in Williamsburg, Virginia, Charleston, South Carolina, and New York City. In 1751, Pennsylvania statesman Isaac Norris II commissioned Whitechapel's most famous American bell to hang from the State House (now Independence Hall). Upon arrival from London, the "State House Bell," as it was then called, cracked during a sound test, so Philadelphia bell founders Pass and Stowe melted and recast it. Though it's not entirely certain how the bell became damaged, the foundry suspects its brittle metal may have cracked when rung while in contact with its frame or fittings. Regardless of the reason, the Liberty Bell has not tolled for over 100 years. When we visited the factory a few years ago, I was fascinated by a letter the company sent to the President in 1776 offering to accept a return of the Liberty Bell, and replace it for free. The President rejected the kind offer.

Boudreau also writes that a few blocks away from the Liberty Bell, what some call its "sister bell" regularly rings in the Christ Church steeple. It is called "the tenor" because it is the largest in the peal cast by Whitechapel for the church in 1754. At slightly over 2,000 lbs, it shares the same specifications as the Liberty Bell. When this bell cracked during the winter of 1834, the church sent it back to London for recasting. According to Bruce Gill, a Christ Church vestryman and local historian, this bell's ring "is the closest we'll ever get to what the Liberty Bell sounds like. In the 18th century, the Liberty Bell and the Christ Church bells rang together, most notably on July 8, 1776, when their toll announced the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. The Liberty Bell and its history is only one of several fascinating topics covered in this excellent guide to Philadelphia.

Robert C.

George Boudreau "is" Philadelphia history. His love for the city, and his deep knowledge of it, shine in this wonderful new guide to the "cradle of liberty." In the interest of full disclosure, one of the things that pleases me about this book is his liberal use of Judith Sargent Murray's letters describing Philadelphia in 1790 (I transcribed and published these letters several years ago!). Judith was visiting Philadelphia from Massachusetts, and she was a professional essayist and keen observer who described "everything" in letters written to her parents back home (including Franklin's library, Peale's museum, July 4 celebration...). Her letters are a new eyewitness account of American history at a most pivotal time, and Boudreau is the first Philadelphia historian to include the letters in a book about Philadelphia. So... Boudreau's wonderfully illustrated book is chock full of information you didn't know about Philadelphia, but you really should because, well, it's Philadelphia!!!! You want this book! And you can learn more about Judith Sargent Murray in *Mingling Souls Upon Paper: An Eighteenth-Century Love Story*.

Great book -- almost like having TV news coverage during the early days of our nation's history. Also, a wonderful book to have on hand while doing a walking tour of historic Philadelphia.

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