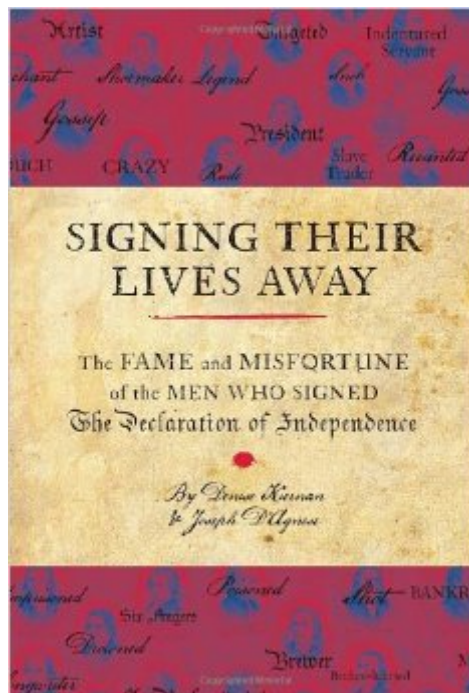


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Signing Their Lives Away: The Fame And Misfortune Of The Men Who Signed The Declaration Of Independence



Synopsis

In the summer of 1776, fifty-six men risked their lives and livelihood to defy King George III and sign the Declaration of Independence--yet how many of them do we actually remember? *Signing Their Lives Away* introduces readers to the eclectic group of statesmen, soldiers, slaveholders, and scoundrels who signed this historic document--and the many strange fates that awaited them. Some prospered and rose to the highest levels of United States government, while others had their homes and farms seized by British soldiers. Signer George Wythe was poisoned by his nephew; Button Gwinnett was killed in a duel; Robert Morris went to prison; Thomas Lynch was lost at sea; and of course Sam Adams achieved fame as a patriot/brewer. Complete with portraits of the signers as well as a facsimile of the Declaration of Independence, *Signing Their Lives Away* provides an entertaining and enlightening narrative for history buffs of all ages. From the Hardcover edition.

Is the U.S. Constitution important to you? Then you'll want to see the second book in this series, also by the authors: *Signing Their RIGHTS Away: The Fame & Misfortune of the Men Who Signed the U.S. Constitution* "An extraordinarily fascinating study of America's lesser-known founding fathers alongside the more well-known ones, *Signing Their Rights Today* is a welcome and enthusiastically recommended contribution to public and college library shelves." -- *Midwest Book Review* (Reviewer's Choice) "[The authors]...maintain a refreshing reverence for the Constitution itself. Rather than ask readers to believe that an 'assembly of demigods' (Jefferson's words) wrote the Constitution, Ms. Kiernan and Mr. D'Agnese challenge the notion that the group that crafted this document of enduring genius was uniquely brilliant or visionary. If this raises the question of how exactly the miracle was accomplished, it should at least give readers some hope for our own seemingly uninspired political era." -- *The Wall Street Journal*

Book Information

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Age Range: 11 - 17 years

Grade Level: 6 - 12

Customer Reviews

I bought this book because it seemed a good digest of our country's Founders. It mixes humor and sometimes a little irreverence in telling the story of the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence. That said, though, it has limited usefulness. First, it should be noted that the authors -- a husband and wife team -- are not historians. That's important, because you should not assume that they did any original research or carefully checked their facts. This is not a work of historical scholarship. The authors are both journalists and writers of various genres. A big drawback to the book is that it lacks any footnotes or endnotes. They do have a bibliography at the end, but this serves no other purpose than being a potential reading list. Thus, the book makes many claims without any citation, so readers should proceed carefully. A rather serious case of this is in the chapter on John Hancock. The book reads: "Hancock reportedly announced that he signed his name in large letters so that King George could read his signature without spectacles." A little research reveals that this is really the stuff of legend. For starters, the signed Declaration of Independence was never intended to be read by King George III, or to ever even leave the country. It was to be the official Declaration of Independence for the new country. It was not even addressed to King George. This was the only signed copy by the 56 delegates in the Continental Congress. It was an announcement to the country and the world that the colonies had declared independence from Britain and the reasons for this. In fact, the Continental Congress went to great lengths throughout the Revolutionary War to keep the Declaration OUT of the hands of the British.

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