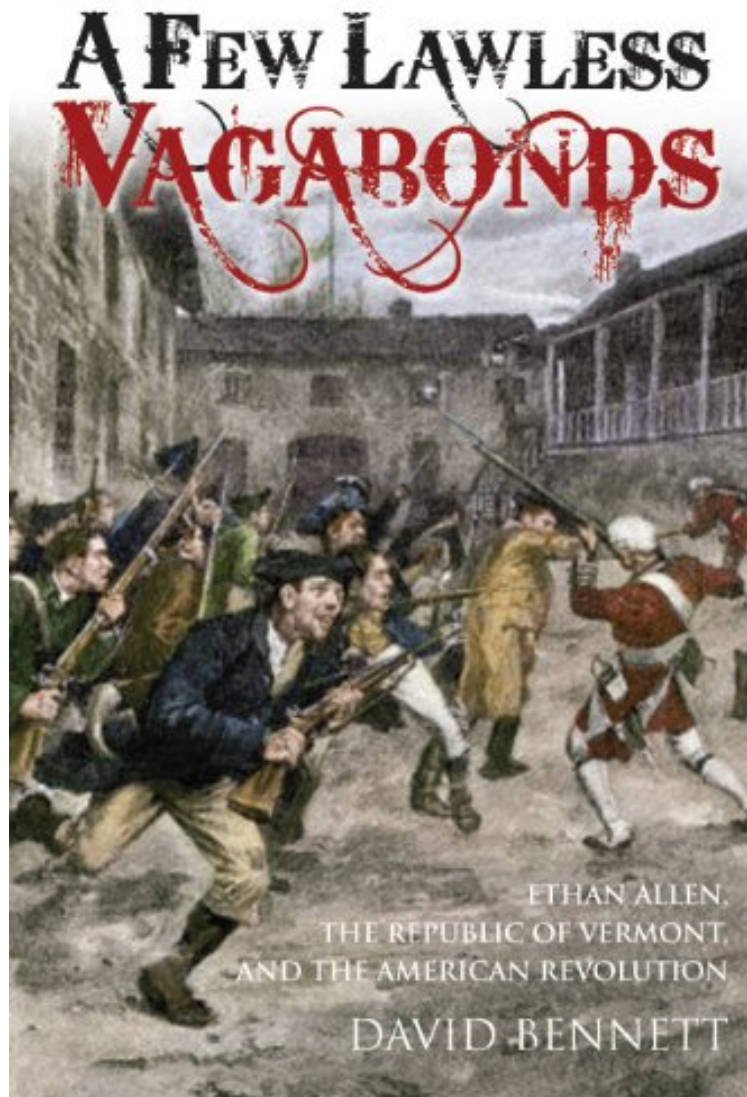


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A Few Lawless Vagabonds: Ethan Allen, the Republic of Vermont, and the American Revolution

David Bennett

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David Bennett : A Few Lawless Vagabonds: Ethan Allen, the Republic of Vermont, and the American Revolution before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Few Lawless Vagabonds: Ethan Allen, the Republic of Vermont, and the American Revolution:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. How Vermont Almost Became a Province of CanadaBy Grey

WolffeDuring the Revolutionary War, what became the State of Vermont, was in a position of ambiguity. Originally called the New Hampshire Grants, it was the land west of the Connecticut River, north of the Massachusetts border. One problem was that under the original royal grants, what is now Vermont (or parts of it) was claimed by four other colonies. Connecticut's original charter, gave it all the land west of the Connecticut River up to the Canadian border. Massachusetts claimed all of the land west of the Connecticut River north of the Connecticut border. New York claimed all of the land west of the Connecticut River and twenty miles east of the Hudson River. New Hampshire claimed all of the land between its borders and New York up to the Hudson River. These multiple claims created a problem when people from Connecticut were recruited to settle the land with Grants issued by New Hampshire (hence the name). This wasn't a problem until New York began giving grants of land, many of which were forty or fifty miles east of the Hudson. Ethan Allen, he friends and neighbors (who became the Green Mountain Boys, and then Rangers), didn't care who was supposed to own the Grants, they just knew it was their land and they weren't going to give it up what they had built without a fight. This is the story of how Vermont became a pawn between the claimant States both during and after the Revolutionary War. There were only the major battles around Bennington and Fort Ticonderoga, but there were also many forays both into Canada and from Canada during the war. Ethan Allen who was a controversial personality, with his brothers, was never officially a member of the Continental Army and his capture and later release by the British just compounded the problem. Because so much was not recorded or was lost, it's difficult to find the truth. Much of Bennett's information comes from diary entries and letters, which can be biased towards or against Allen. Allen's diary can be read as written by a man who had a lot to explain and did so where he came out in the best light. Other people had just the opposite plan. The information presented by Bennett can be at a nauseam for most people and even tedious for an historian, so be forewarned. Zeb Kantrowitz
zworstblog.blogspot.com 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Ethan Allen and Revolutionary Vermont By A. A. Nofi
A summary of the review on StrategyPage.Com: 'In A Few Lawless Vagabonds Bennett weaves several little told but quite interesting stories to give us an informative and revealing look at a curious corner of in the Revolutionary War, the self-proclaimed Republic of Vermont. The tale revolves around the life of Allen, an iconic hero of the war who, Bennett reminds us, like many heroes has had his exploits embroidered, occasionally by himself (a Deist invoking the Great Jehovah to demand the surrender of Ft. Ticonderoga?) . But it touches upon English colonial policy, disputed land claims, state rivalries, contemporary religious thought, local loyalties, woodland warfare, frontier democracy, Patriot, Royal, and Vermont policy and strategy, and more. Allen seems less an American patriot than a Vermont patriot, as well as a successful businessman and self-promoter. An very interesting book.' For the full review, see StrategyPage.Com 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Ethan Allen and the Formation of the Republic of Vermont By Ron Titus
In A Few Lawless Vagabonds, David Bennett provides plenty of background and details regarding Ethan Allen and his cronies involvement in the formation of the Republic of Vermont before, during and after the American Revolution. My earliest impression of this time and place was from the book I Was There With Ethan Allen And The Green Mountain Boys which glossed over the details to tell a decent story. And the details are what makes A Few Lawless Vagabonds such an interesting read. David Bennett opens with a reconstruction of the problems facing the New Hampshire Grants settlers in relation to New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. The British Crown only confused matters. Ethan Allen became involved in opposing the enforcement of New York claims in the region, raising the Green Mountain Boys as a militia. That same militia was used at the beginning of the American Revolution to seize Ticonderoga, Crown Point and the invasion of Canada in 1775. After Ethan Allen was captured in 1775, the focus of the book switches to Ira Allen and others involved in the forming of Vermont as a separate state/colony/republic. Bennett carefully documents the involvement of the state in the destruction of Burgoyne during the Saratoga campaign. He also documents the cease fire and neutrality practiced by Vermont's government and the case that can be made that Allen and his cronies would have been willing to rejoin Britain to gain their independence from New York. In the end, after a few years as a independent republic, Vermont became the fourteenth state of the United States. Ethan Allen and his cronies did succeed to that extent. David Bennett provides a readable, yet scholarly look at the background and formation of Vermont as an independent entity while providing an in-depth look at the characters and events that made this possible.

A Few Lawless Vagabonds is an account of the three-way relationship between Ethan Allen, the Republic of Vermont (1777-1791) and the British in Canada during the American Revolution, a work of political and military history. Ethan Allen was a prime mover in the establishment of the Republic (though he was a captive of the British, 1775-1778), then led the fight to maintain its independence from the predatory states of New Hampshire, New York and Massachusetts; from the American Continental Congress; and from British attacks on the new state. In order to defend Vermont's independence, Ethan Allen engaged in secret, unlawful negotiations with the British in Canada, aimed at turning Vermont into a separate Government under the Crown. The attempts of the Allen family to maintain Vermont's independence from its neighbors were successful: Vermont became the 14th State in 1791. A Few Lawless Vagabonds is the first systematic attempt, using archival sources, to show that the Allens were utterly serious in their aim to turn Vermont into a Crown colony, a project which came close to becoming an open, public issue late in 1781. The Ethan

Allen that emerges is not as a warrior hero of the American Revolution but as a successful Vermont nationalist who is justly celebrated as the principal founder of the State of Vermont, a rare combination of patriot and betrayer of the public trust. The British leaders who were Ethan's opposite numbers emerge in turn as thoroughly capable military officers and diplomatic negotiators: Sir Henry Clinton, Sir Guy Carleton and Sir Frederick Haldimand.

A different angle on the history of Ethan Allen has come out this year, and it will surprise those who look on Ethan as an untarnished hero. (The Rutland Herald)"an outstanding work, a major contribution to early Vermont history and a must read for anyone seriously interested in the latest research on Ethan Allen and his associates" (Walloomsack)"lays out a three way relationship between Allen, the British in Canada during the ARW and the Republic of Vermont delves into archival sources to reveal how Ethan and other members of the Allen family were very serious about turning Vermont into a crown colony. Their efforts came close to becoming an open and public issue in late 1781...The Ethan Allen who emerges from this 276 page hardcover book still ranks as an opportunistic war hero. But he was a unique combination of patriot and betrayer of the public trust. His Fight was for Vermont's autonomy, not the independence of the American Colonies as a whole. The businessman, farmer, land speculator, philosopher, writer and politician's greatest success was as an ardent Vermont separatist. Allen is justly celebrated as the principal founder of the Green Mountain State. (Toy Soldier and Model Figure Magazine)...a very scholarly book...the history is covered closely and well, it is easy to be swept up in the fervor of the times. I recommend this book to those who want to know much more about a little known but interesting facet of our early nation. (San Francisco Book)"...may be the best American Revolutionary War era book to come out in years... exhaustive research challenges many previous researchers... Historians and biographers alike will be impressed with the author's depiction of Allen and his efforts to ensure Vermont's sovereignty ...a must read for all those with an interest in the period of American Revolutionary." (Military)"presents close readings of early documents as well as secondary sources on Vermont and Allen. .. Insightful, viewing Vermont's history with fresh eyes and offering original analysis reveals continuing power of Ethan Allen on the imagination, even in the face of criticism. (Vermont History)weaves together several little told but quite interesting stories to give us an informative and revealing look at one of the heroes of the American Revolution and that curious corner of in the Revolutionary War, the self-proclaimed Republic of Vermont. Bennett's account does not stop with the capture of Ticonderoga, where most accounts of Allen's life more or less end. He carries the story of Allen and the Republic of Vermont through the Revolutionary War, during which there were British campaigns and raids against the mountaineers, as well as efforts by both New York and New Hampshire to claim the territory, and battles not only in the field but also in Congress, and even gives a thoughtful little essay on The Political Philosophy of Ethan Allen. In the process he touches upon English colonial policy, disputed land claims, state rivalries, contemporary religious thought, local loyalties, woodland warfare, frontier democracy, Patriot, Royal, Vermont policy and strategy, and more. From Bennett's account, Allen emerges less as an American patriot than as a Vermont patriot, as well as a successful businessman and self-promoter. An very interesting book. (NYMAS)A Few Lawless Vagabonds has much to praise. Bennett's command of the primary-source material from archives in Ontario and Vermont is impressive. His methodology of extracting goals from actions rather than assuming Allen's place as a hallowed Paul Revere-like figure is also laudable. Military historians will take an interest in his chapters on the seizure of Fort Ticonderoga and of John Burgoyne's southerly thrust in 1777, which Bennett calls sheer folly (p. 13). His analysis of the Haldimand Negotiations is the most exhaustive and compelling to date... Bennett does an excellent job highlighting the fierce competition between colonies and states for land and resources. The author reminds us that British North America and the Confederation-era United States were composed of mini-settler empires that were frequently at odds with each other. His book illuminates the strength of David C. Hendrickson's argument in Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding (2003) that the Constitution of 1787 was a peace pact between rival states on the verge of civil war. By focusing on Ethan Allen, his brothers, and their allies, enemies, and potential friends, Bennett resurrects a Revolutionary-era world fraught with myriad hopes, aspirations, political philosophies, and intriguing possibilities. (Michael Verney. of Bennett, David, A Few Lawless Vagabonds: Ethan Allen, the Republic of Vermont, and the American Revolution. H-War, H-Net s. November, 2015.)About the Author DAVID BENNETT was educated at Christ's Hospital School and Sidney Sussex College Cambridge, where he took history and philosophy. He holds a Ph.D in philosophy from McGill University. He spent much of his working life in the labor movement, ending his career in 2006 as National Director of Health, Safety and Environment at the Canadian Labour Congress. He is widely published in the areas of workplace health and environmental protection and has published several articles, op-ed pieces and reviews on the Second World War.