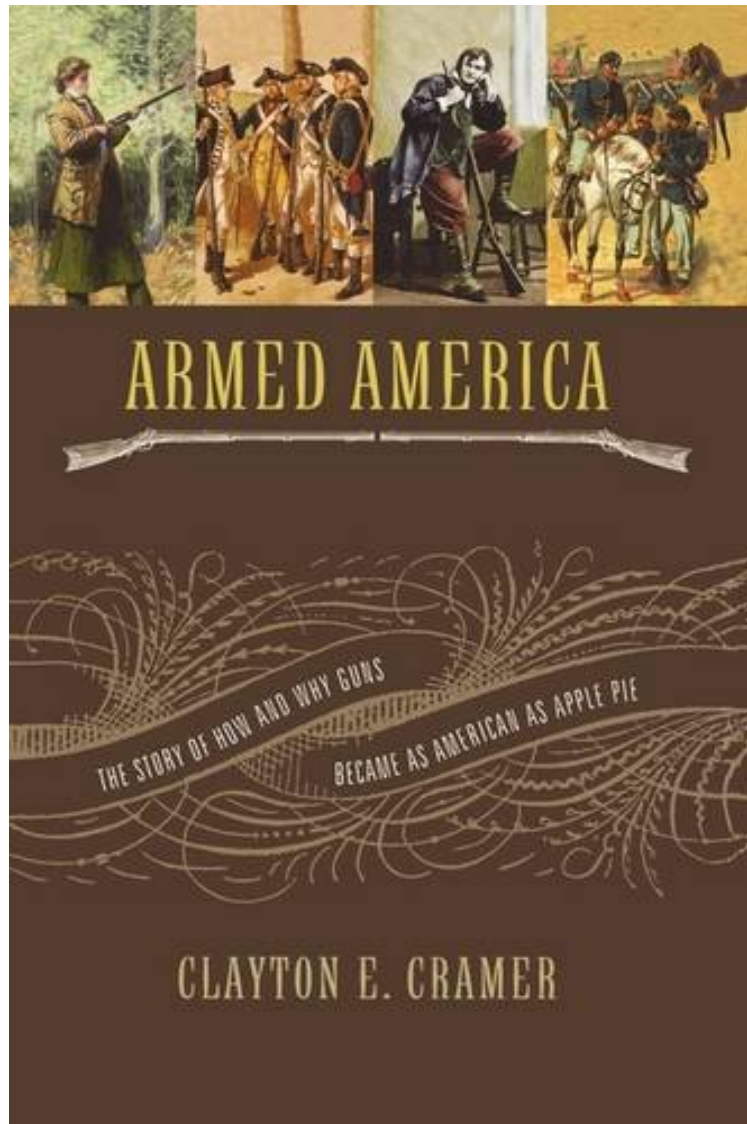


Armed America: The Remarkable Story of How and Why Guns Became as American as Apple Pie

Clayton E. Cramer

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Clayton E. Cramer : Armed America: The Remarkable Story of How and Why Guns Became as American as Apple Pie before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Armed America: The Remarkable Story of How and Why Guns Became as American as Apple Pie:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Six years later, this book stands on its own. By Anthony This book was a necessary response to fraudster Michael Bellesiles' tendentious "Arming America", where Bellesiles deliberately

misinterpreted historical data to claim that guns weren't common in early America. Clayton Cramer was one of the historians who uncovered Bellesiles' fraud, and wrote this book to set the record straight. However, this book isn't just a refutation of Bellesiles. It's also an entertaining slice of early American history in its own right. Just like other books which focus on foods, this book is a "vertical history" (though shorter than many) focusing on guns over a 200-plus year slice of American history. To show that guns were common throughout the period, Cramer covers a wide variety of conflicts, from Indian wars to slave revolts to political conflict within the colonies to interpersonal conflicts between the colonists. This results in a rather broad coverage of social and political history of a period that normally gets glossed over - most school history skips from 1622 (when the Indians bailed out the Plymouth colonists) to 1756 (when the French and Indian Wars started) with just a paragraph or two reciting who established each colony and why. Due to the focus of this book, it doesn't provide broad coverage of the history of that time, but it does a lot more than most. The book also continues into the Revolutionary War, where one gets a better sense of the logistics of the war (for the battle buff, the period is otherwise well-covered, of course) as Cramer tracks down how the Continental Army and its supporting militias armed themselves. The last part of the book tracks guns through the Early Republic period, and doesn't shy away from noticing that much use of the militia away from the frontier was in chasing down escaped and rebelling slaves, but shows that militias, and guns, had far more uses than those. Given the circumstances surrounding the writing of this book, it's understandable that it refers back to Bellesiles' book (and earlier paper) to specifically contradict the claims made. However, this would be a stronger book if all the material referring to Bellesiles and "Arming America" were tucked away in a foreword or afterword, leaving the history to stand on its own, and allowing those who are interested in the controversy to look it all up in one place without interrupting the narrative flow of this fascinating history.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Now I understand the Bellesiles scandal

By JSR Thoroughly debunks Michael Bellesiles' theory that guns were uncommon in colonial, revolutionary, and early America. He uses some of the very works that Bellesiles cites to show that guns were common. No wonder Bellesiles was in such hot water.

42 of 43 people found the following review helpful.

Revisionists' Bane, Or How The Standard Version Was Right All Along

By RKV Cramer writes a focused work, detailing the presence and use of firearms in the colonial, revolutionary and early Republic periods of American history. He compiles a wealth of specific examples based on primary sources like wills, newspapers, legislation, travel books, etc. He demonstrates a deep knowledge of the topic and the sources, showing the range and breadth of early American experience with firearms for use in personal defense and in a military context. Some of the material can be dry, and this book is not one for those looking for a rollicking story - it's a history, of the kind useful for professionals or amateurs with a specific, rather than a general interest in the topic. Occasionally Cramer restates the obvious - of course, given the inability of some of our countries "best" historical scholars on the Bancroft Committee to pick up on the obvious inconsistencies between Bellesiles' writing in *Arming America* and the original records, he should be forgiven. *Armed America* should be seen as a refutation of Bellesiles and his ilk - as the academic frauds that they have been demonstrated to be. After reading *Armed America* you will be convinced that Cramer had the right of it.

4 stars - it's a solid work, and well executed.

"For many Americans, guns seem to be a fundamental part of the American experience?and always have been." Grand in scope, rigorous in research, and elegant in presenting the formative years of our country, *Armed America* traces the winding historical trail of United States citizens' passion for firearms. Author and historian Clayton E. Cramer goes back to the source, unearthing first-hand accounts from the colonial times, through the Revolutionary War period, and into the early years of the American Republic. In *Armed America*, Cramer depicts a budding nation dependent on its firearms not only for food and protection, but also for recreation and enjoyment. Through newspaper clippings, official documents, and personal diaries, he shows that recent grandiose theories claiming that guns were scarce in early America are shaky at best, and downright false at worst. Above all, Cramer allows readers a priceless glimpse of a country literally fighting for its identity. For those who think that our citizens' attraction to firearms is a recent phenomenon, it's time to think again. *Armed America* proves that the right to bear arms is as American as apple pie.

From Publishers Weekly Cramer, an adjunct lecturer in history at Boise State University and George Fox University, took on Michael Bellesiles even before his book *Arming America* was discredited, and now goes further to prove wrong Bellesiles's claim that guns were uncommon in early America. Cramer finds that guns "were the norm" in that period, people relied on guns to hunt, and gun ownership was key to the success of colonial militias. His most intriguing argument is that, as they became "tied to defending political rights," guns also became a symbol of citizenship. Cramer draws on many primary sources, from newspaper accounts to probate records, and compiles impressive data supporting his case. Still, he misses many opportunities for analysis and interpretation. For example, he finds that it was "not terribly unusual" for free women to own guns, but offers no nuanced discussion of what said gun ownership tells us about gender roles. His attack on academia—which, in Cramer's view, has been blinded by ideology and excludes political conservatives—distracts from his central theme and will only alienate pro-gun-control readers, leaving him with an equally narrow, if opposite, readership. (Feb. 6) Copyright © Reed Business Information,

a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Clayton E. Cramer has an MA in History from Sonoma State University, and has taught history at Boise State University and George Fox University (Boise branch). A writer whose work has been published in the San Jose Mercury News, National , and the American Rifleman, he has published several academic books on history and firearms, including For the Defense of Themselves and the State and Black Demographic Data, 1790-1860. He writes a monthly column for Shotgun News (circ. 95,000).