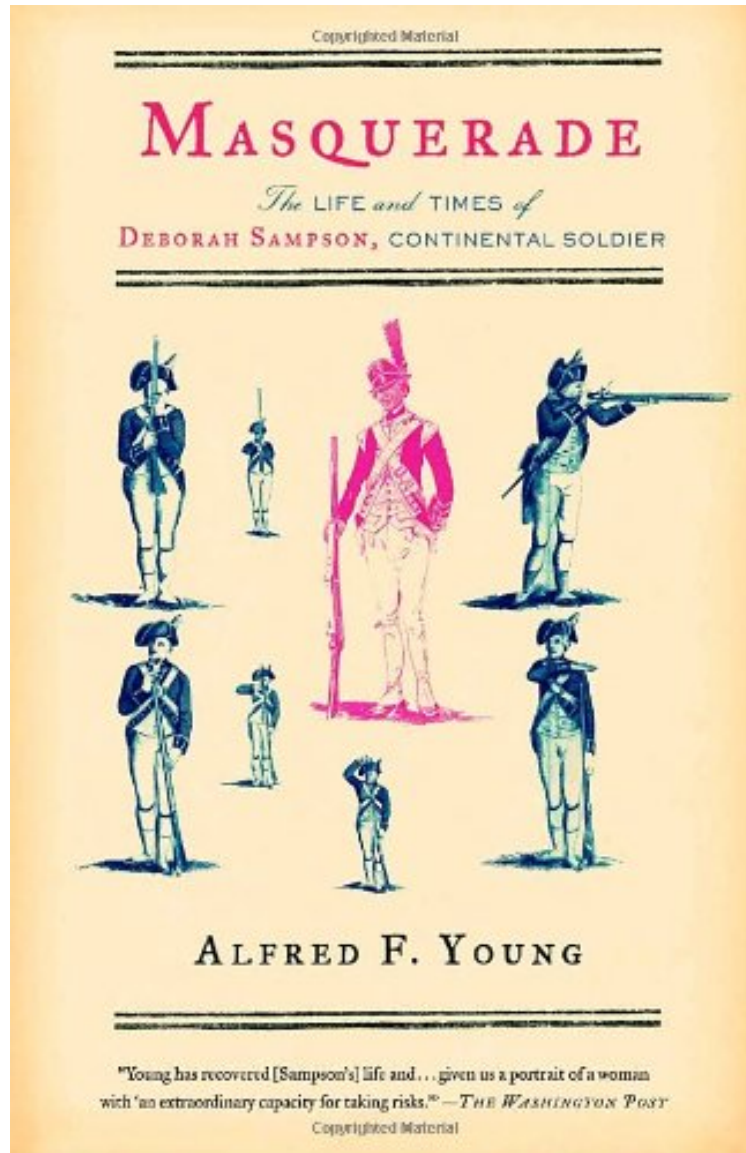


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# Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier

Alfred F. Young

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Alfred F. Young : **Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Deborah Samson book! By Jane WWell written information

about Deborah Sampson, a Revolutionary War heroine. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Quite good! By Eric Quite good. A bit ruffled with use, but otherwise good. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This book is well researched given the difficulties of getting ... By Sandy W This book is well researched given the difficulties of getting accurate information from the past about someone who was not well known. It apparently inspired Alex Myers to write the book about Deborah Sampson, "Revolutionary" which is a fictional story about her, very well done.

In *Masquerade*, Alfred F. Young scrapes through layers of fiction and myth to uncover the story of Deborah Sampson, a Massachusetts woman who passed as a man and fought as a soldier for seventeen months toward the end of the American Revolution. Deborah Sampson was not the only woman to pose as a male and fight in the war, but she was certainly one of the most successful and celebrated. She managed to fight in combat and earn the respect of her officers and peers, and in later years she toured the country lecturing about her experiences and was partially successful in obtaining veterans benefits. Her full story, however, was buried underneath exaggeration and myth (some of which she may have created herself), becoming another sort of masquerade. Young takes the reader with him through his painstaking efforts to reveal the real Deborah Sampson in a work of history that is as spellbinding as the best detective fiction.

From *Publishers Weekly* This meticulous biography presents one of the classic examples of a woman in disguise serving in the nascent U.S. armed forces. A particularly prolific and gifted editor and scholar of the American Revolution, Young (*The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*) follows his subject as closely as possible given scanty evidence, beginning with Sampson's birth in 1760 on a small farm in Massachusetts. Sampson was virtually orphaned as a child, but after turning 18 supported herself as a weaver, before serving from 1782 to 1783 in the light infantry company of a Massachusetts regiment, seeing combat and being wounded. Discharged after her gender was revealed, she married, had three children, received a bonus and lobbied for a pension with the help of such notables as Paul Revere. She also made the first-ever speaking tour by an American woman, both lecturing on her experiences and sometimes appearing in uniform to demonstrate the use of arms. Never well-off, Sampson died in 1827. She has been viewed in many different lights in American historiography and even in the chronicles of her own family ever since. Young, a senior research fellow at the Newberry Library in Chicago, set out to check every previously recorded "fact" about Sampson and questions most of them, discussing his research at considerable length. The result is two threads in one book: a biographical narrative and a detailed discourse on the methodology of researching the lives of people for whom sources are few. The author achieves success with both threads at some cost in readability, but it is a loss suffered in a good cause, particularly for serious students of history. 31 illus., 3 maps. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From *Booklist* Historian Young meticulously reconstructs the life of a woman who, disguised as a man, fought in the American Revolution. Virtually orphaned as a child, Deborah Sampson supported herself as a weaver and served in the light infantry company of a Massachusetts regiment in 1782-83, seeing combat and being wounded. Discharged when her disguise was penetrated, she afterwards married, had children, and lobbied for a pension with the help of such notables as Paul Revere. She was the first American woman to tour as a lecturer, recounting her experiences, and she cooperated with a biographer whose final product was as accurate as Parson Weems on Washington but is still the primary source on her life. Young discusses in great detail his fact-checking about Sampson and his rationale for discounting much of what was supposedly known about her. An authority on the Revolutionary period, he puts her life into a well-realized context as he well exemplifies the methodology of researching the lives of subjects for whom sources are scanty, dubious, or both. Frieda Murray Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Young has recovered [Sampson's] life and given us a portrait of a woman with 'an extraordinary capacity for taking risks.'" *The Washington Post* "An excellent narrative. . . . Young is especially adept at explaining how Sampson pulled off her masquerade." --*San Francisco Chronicle* Young's most daring book. . . . Young finds in [Sampson's] sensational story an illumination of the norms that she struggled against by making herself extraordinary. *The New Republic* "Engaging...it is a delight to follow Young's unraveling of Sampson's masquerade." *The Boston Globe*