

Fall 2010

Book Review: Portrait of a Patriot: The Major Political and Legal Papers of Josiah Quincy Junior

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Recommended Citation

Faix, Allison (2010) "Book Review: Portrait of a Patriot: The Major Political and Legal Papers of Josiah Quincy Junior," *The Southeastern Librarian*: Vol. 58 : Iss. 3 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln/vol58/iss3/7>

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Portrait of a Patriot: the Major Political and Legal Papers of Josiah Quincy Junior. Coquillette, Daniel R. and Neil Longley York, eds. Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2010 (distributed by the University of Virginia Press). Volume Four, the Law Reports, Part One (1761-1765). ISBN 978-0-9794662-4-3. \$40.00. Volume Five, the Law Reports, Part Two (1765-1772). ISBN 978-0-9794662-6-7. \$40.00.

The five volume series *Portrait of A Patriot* reprints, with meticulously researched and exhaustive annotations, the writings of Josiah Quincy Jr. (1744-1775), an important figure in Colonial American history. Volumes Four and Five, released together in April 2010, represent the final two volumes in the series and contain Quincy's Law Reports.

Quincy was a highly informed observer of the proceedings of the Superior Court of Judicature of the Province of Massachusetts Bay from the years 1761 through 1772, troubled years leading up to the American Revolution. He was a visionary who wanted the colonial courts to have their own law reports just as the English courts did. His law reports, although not published until after his death, arguably represent the very first American Law reports written, and provide extensive insight into both the legal and social history of colonial America.

These two volumes reproduce the text of the edition edited by Quincy's grandson, Samuel Quincy Jr., which was published in 1865. Samuel Quincy Jr. transcribed the volumes while simultaneously commanding troops during the American Civil War, and noted in his introduction that he regretted being unable to provide much in the way of background information or annotation to his transcriptions because of the pressures of war. This omission is impressively amended in the modern edition by editors Daniel R. Coquillette and Neil Longley York.

The two volumes provide introductions and copious notes, citations, and other documentation that helps to illuminate the reports and highlight their importance to Colonial American History and American Legal History. The cases themselves are often either historical landmarks influencing later legislation, or cases that help provide a clear picture of the many issues and complexities life in colonial times.

Many southeastern libraries may have already purchased volume three of the series, Josiah Quincy Junior's journal of the journey he took through the South beginning in 1773, with his vivid descriptions of Southern culture and society. Libraries with collections in early American history or American legal history will want to consider also purchasing the final two volumes of this set.

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