



The Making of John Ledyard: Empire and Ambition in the Life of an Early American Traveler

Edward G. Gray

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During the course of his short but extraordinary life, John Ledyard (1751–1789) came in contact with some of the most remarkable figures of his era: the British explorer Captain James Cook, American financier Robert Morris, Revolutionary naval commander John Paul Jones, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and others. Ledyard lived and traveled in remarkable places as well, journeying from the New England backcountry to Tahiti, Hawaii, the American Northwest coast, Alaska, and the Russian Far East. In this engaging biography, the historian Edward Gray offers not only a full account of Ledyard's eventful life but also an illuminating view of the late eighteenth-century world in which he lived.

Ledyard was both a product of empire and an agent in its creation, Gray shows, and through this adventurer's life it is possible to discern the many ways empire shaped the lives of nations, peoples, and individuals in the era of the American Revolution, the world's first modern revolt against empire.

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