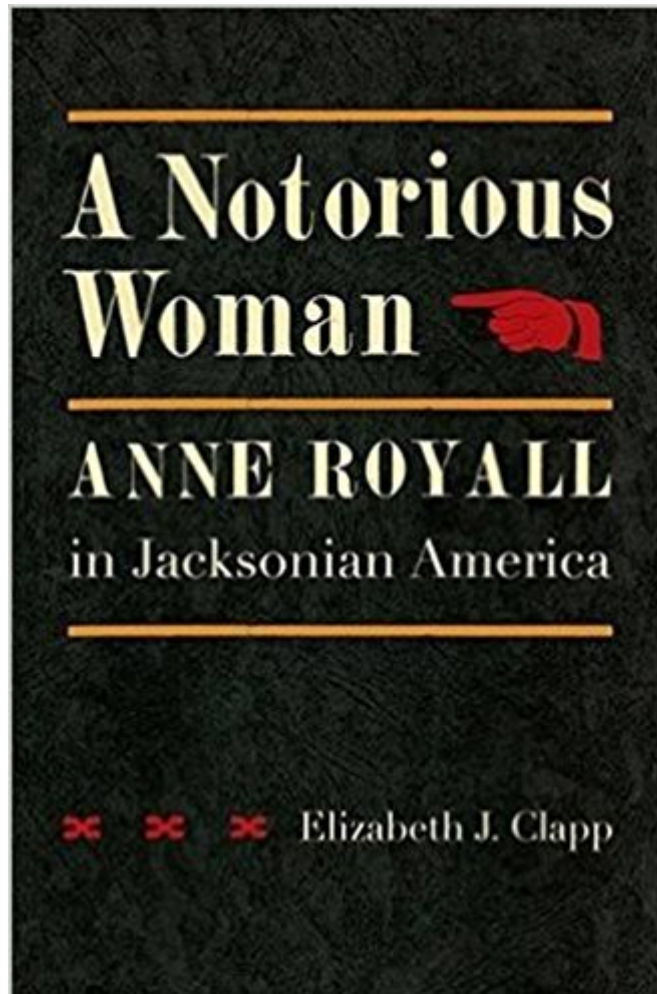




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# A Notorious Woman: Anne Royall In Jacksonian America



## Synopsis

During her long career as a public figure in Jacksonian America, Anne Royall was called everything from an "enemy of religion" to a "Jackson man" to a "common scold." In her search for the source of such strong reactions, Elizabeth Clapp has uncovered the story of a widely read woman of letters who asserted her right to a political voice without regard to her gender. Widowed and in need of a livelihood following a disastrous lawsuit over her husband's will, Royall decided to earn her living through writing--first as a travel writer, journeying through America to research and sell her books, and later as a journalist and editor. Her language and forcefully expressed opinions provoked people at least as much as did her inflammatory behavior and aggressive marketing tactics. An ardent defender of American liberties, she attacked the agents of evangelical revivals, the Bank of the United States, and corruption in government. Her positions were frequently extreme, directly challenging the would-be shapers of the early republic's religious and political culture. She made many enemies, but because she also attracted many supporters, she was not easily silenced. The definitive account of a passionate voice when America was inventing itself, *A Notorious Woman* re-creates a fascinating stage on which women's roles, evangelical hegemony, and political involvement were all contested.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am always looking for evidence to challenge my students' assumptions that America was from the start a united, pure, religious nation. A few minutes with Anne Royall and the realization of

how strongly supported she was in the larger culture will dispel such notions. This excellent book is the first scholarly consideration of Royall's life, a cradle-to-grave biography and one we shouldn't take for granted: just telling the life of a woman, through words and action, is still the number one mission of women's history. (Catherine Allgor, the Huntington Library, author of *A Perfect Union: Dolley Madison and the Creation of the American Nation*) Deeply researched, convincingly argued, and appealingly written, *A Notorious Woman* makes a notable contribution to the history of nineteenth-century U.S. politics and print culture, and women's place within those arenas. As the first serious recent biographer of Anne Royall, Elizabeth Clapp dispenses once and for all with nineteenth-century caricatures of her subject and presents Royall as a complete and comprehensible human being who forged a visible publishing career within the brash, roiling print culture of her times. Historians and literary scholars, along with scholars of politics, gender, and women's rights, will find this book illuminating. (Anne M. Boylan, University of Delaware, author of *Women's Rights in the United States: A History in Documents*) Clapp's argument here is well executed if not surprising given the growing body of scholarship on gender in nineteenth-century America. Yet her subject adds nuances to our understanding of the era. In the absence of subscription numbers notoriously elusive for early publications Clapp has provided an insightful and thought-provoking analysis of an important literary figure in Jacksonian America and of key issues of contemporary political culture. (Amanda Mushal, *The Citadel The Journal of Southern History*)

Elizabeth J. Clapp is Senior Lecturer in American History at the University of Leicester and the author of *Mothers of All Children: Women Reformers and the Rise of Juvenile Courts in Progressive Era America*.

Anne Royal married (as the book tells) Major William Royal of the American Revolution, who was a member of our family. When I found that connection in doing my family history, I did a great deal of research on this remarkable woman, but because this was an off-shoot line, I did not dig as deep as the author of this book has done. The story of Anne Newport Royal is fascinating history. I have always thought what a wonderful film this story would be. Now, with this book, which is such a well-researched, fine telling of this amazing life story, I long to see it on the screen. This is made to order for the fine actress Sally Field, which would make it an award-winning film. If anyone reading this review might have any way of bringing this book to her attention, they would be doing her a great favor. It would be amazingly timely, and a tribute to a strong, feisty woman whose story needs

to be told -- and in doing so, provide a great actress a powerful vehicle at this stage of her career.

Elizabeth Clapp brilliantly captures the important life of Anne Royall. A must read for everyone interested in women's history, American history, biography, or any combination thereof.

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