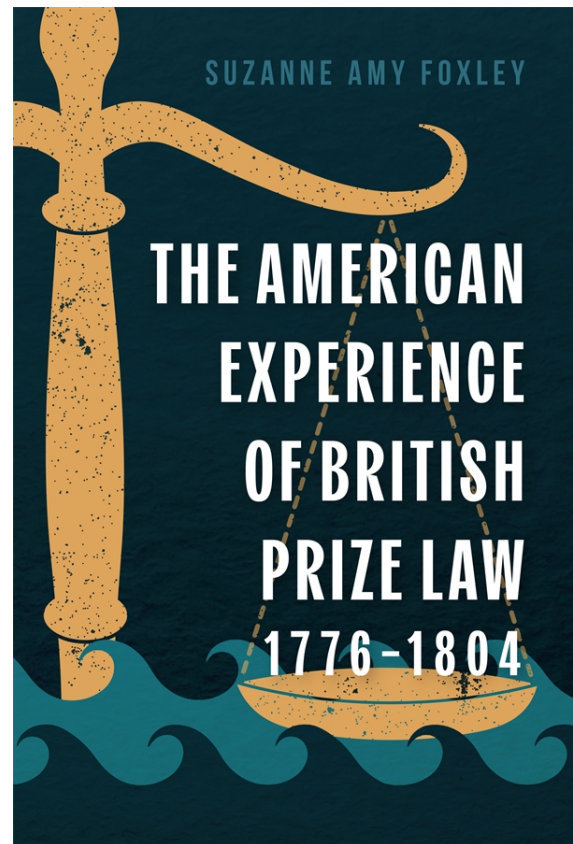


The American Experience of British Prize Law, 1776-1804

By: Suzanne Amy Foxley

A detailed examination of one of the key issues for British-American relations, for international trade and for international law.

The taking of prizes, that is the capture of enemy vessels either by the Royal Navy or by private individuals licensed as privateers, was a crucial component of British naval strategy in the eighteenth century. The legality of prize-taking depended on the determination of the nationality or neutrality of both vessel and cargo - a major point of contention between Britain and other powers, including the United States. This book examines the American experience of British prize law from 1776 to 1804, with additional insights up until the 1820s, examining how this branch of international law changed and perpetuated in the wake of the Revolution and the Jay Treaty. It traces the lives of Robert Bayard, a loyalist and New York Vice-Admiralty Judge, Samuel Bayard, US agent for British prize cases in London in the 1790s, and William Bayard Jr., an American economic lobbyist, politician and merchant. Setting these lives in the wider context, it analyses court records held in previously unexplored archival collections, including about 1,600 court actions and 1,150 appeals cases. The book draws new conclusions on an individual, national and international scale and alters our outlook on the impact of prize law on American and British foreign policy, on the lives of maritime and mercantile communities and on the development of American maritime law.



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