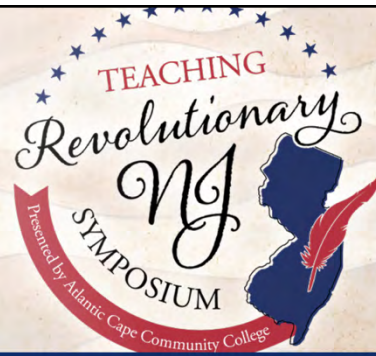


Teaching Revolutionary NJ Symposium



Proceedings of the Teaching Revolutionary NJ Symposium, held at Atlantic Cape Community College, May 23, 2025.

Foreword, "Teaching Revolutionary NJ Symposium," Denise-Marie Coulter

"Teaching 10th Graders New Jersey's role in the American Revolution with Project Based Learning," Zachary T. Baer

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"SAY OUR NAMES FOR AMERICA 250: Excavating & Remembering Hidden Histories of 944 Named & Unnamed African Americans, from Historic Woodbury and Deptford between 1770–1830," Sue Kozel

"ADDENDUM TO SAY OUR NAMES," Sue Kozel

"'At Home or Abroad We Are Never Sure': New Jersey Women's Revolutionary Experiences," Lucia McMahon

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"Connecting the Crossroads: The Lenni-Lenape, West Jersey, the Revolutionary War & Ideas for Engaging Students in Early New Jersey History, Adam E. Zielinski

"What America Sounds Like: Exploring 250 Years of American History Through Music," Melissa Ziobro

Teaching Revolutionary NJ Symposium

Semiquincentennial. That is a mouthful, a big word, meaning one-half of five hundred years. Though that multisyllabic term will challenge most minds and mouth muscles, it is the moniker of the country's latest anniversary. Forget for a moment, the fancy name—two-hundred and fifty years is not really a long time. To some children and teenagers, though, our country likely seems very old, its history boring, and all of the signs of anniversary celebration confusing or irrelevant. What can we do today as educators and public historians to bridge the gap, to help New Jersey children and teenagers understand and appreciate the Semiquincentennial?

To find an answer, I reflected about my own experience from the last time we marked an anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. I was in grade school, and compared to my short life, the country seemed quite ancient. The air swirled with patriotism. Nearly everything bore the symbols of the Bicentennial celebration, from Dennis the Menace comic books to sewing patterns to 7 Up cans. The parades, the commemorative booster plates for cars, the fireworks, the display of tall ships in the New York Harbor on the Fourth of July, all of this signaled something special was happening, but it took my parents, teachers and Girl Scout leaders to put it into context and to help me see how the country's early history mattered and was rooted in my home state of New Jersey, the Crossroads of the Revolution.

I realize the key to assisting young people in recognizing the relevance of the Semiquincentennial is to situate the conversation about history close to home and to display the humanity that was involved. Help them see history occurred on the land where they reside, attend school, run and play. Guide them in recognizing the fight for our freedom was sometimes populated by people like the ones in their lives today—parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends! It is equally important to acknowledge the complicated strands of history, those that involved marginalization and mistreatment of some populations. Look for opportunities to restore the missing voices and perspectives in the narrative. Communication about the time period should be authentic and inclusive.

The contents of this volume should be helpful in accomplishing this. Intending to equip educators and public historians with the tools to teach Revolutionary New Jersey, a group of scholars and educators gathered in May of 2025 for a symposium at Atlantic Cape Community College. The research, ideas and suggestions of the presenters are contained in this collection of papers. We hope there is something in each paper that will open up a pathway of interest and knowledge for learners, no matter their age, to make them sit up a little straighter and to listen a little closer. Perhaps it will be wonderment at a teenage Hessian soldier who, after traveling across the ocean to fight on the side of the British, sadly ended up in an early grave at Red Bank Battlefield. Maybe it will come from the prospect of investigating Revolutionary Era music at the Bruce Springsteen Archives & Center for American Music. It could be the promise and excitement felt in learning about archeological digs that located rare artifacts from the era. It might even come from something as simple as a student feeling kinship with George Washington because they learn his youthful hair color was red, just like theirs.

This publication, and the symposium that preceded it, would not have been possible without the vision, hard work and tireless dedication of Mark “Paulie” Wenger, Adjunct Instructor of History, Sociology and Geography at Atlantic Cape. Mr. Wenger worked along with me in a small and mighty planning committee that included Dr. Augustine Nigro, Chair of Arts & Humanities, and Chris Weisbecker, Assistant Professor of History. Their wisdom and efforts in organizing the symposium and assembling this book are greatly appreciated.

We are also grateful to Dr. Josette Katz, Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, who championed and supported this project from its inception. We also thank our sponsors—The Atlantic Cape Community College Foundation, the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, Revolution NJ and the Stockton University South Jersey Culture & History Center. Most of all, we are indebted to the authors of this collection of papers for their love of history and their willingness to share their knowledge with others. This publication would not be possible without their combined efforts. We hope you find this volume helpful as you prepare to consider the Semiquincentennial with the learners in your life.

Dr. Denise-Marie Coulter
Senior Dean of Liberal Studies and Culinary Arts

Teaching 10th Graders New Jersey's role in the American Revolution with Project Based Learning

Zachary T. Baer

Introduction

Every day, I have the privilege of working with incredibly talented, creative, and passionate 10th-grade students in my United States History I class. One of the first topics we cover is the American Revolution – a subject that is familiar to most of my students. They often recall key events like the Boston Massacre or Lexington and Concord, recognize terms like the Sons of Liberty, and the Stamp Act, and name key figures like Thomas Paine and John Adams. And yes, many will enthusiastically sing lyrics from the Broadway musical, *Hamilton*.

Despite this prior knowledge, there is an elephant in the room that all educators must confront: student distraction. Many teachers would agree that it often feels like students' attention is on anything *but* the lesson. Academic research supports this concern, showing that excessive use of social media and the internet negatively impacts student focus and learning outcomes.¹ In my classroom, this distraction can manifest as a weak connection to the past and a lack of historical empathy.

To confront student distraction and help students make connections with the past, I developed a Project-Based Learning (PBL) assignment tailored to my 10th-grade U.S. history students. PBL is a teaching technique in which students research and complete a real world task based on a particular theme. As students complete the task, they are driven by various inquiries to solve a multitude of questions.² The following paragraphs outline my experience using PBL to teach the American Revolution, arguing that it is an effective teaching strategy to increase student engagement, motivation, and historical empathy while building critical thinking skills.

The Power of Project Based Learning and Local History

Project-Based Learning is especially powerful because it allows students to engage with content in ways that align with their individual learning style. PBL's theoretical framework is not new; John Dewey, writing in the early 1900s, argued that students retain information most when

¹"Untitled," accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psychology-teacher-network/introductory-psychology/classroom-distractions>.

² Lu Zhang and Yan Ma, "A Study of the Impact of Project-Based Learning on Student Learning Effects: A Meta-Analysis Study," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (July 17, 2023): 1202728, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1202728>.

they are actively engaged in the learning process.³ More recently, Stanford University professor Sam Winburg has emphasized the importance of inquiry in helping students attain historical thinking skills as they critically analyze the past.

To give my students an experiential learning experience, I created a PBL assignment to honor the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. The performance task read:

“You have been hired by America250 and the National Park Service to create a historical marker that educates the public about New Jersey’s role in the American Revolution.”

Each student selected a topic related to South Jersey—such as the Battle of Turtle Gut Inlet, the Batsto Iron Works, or Patience Lovell Wright—and conducted independent research to write and design a historical marker. I chose topics related to South Jersey because I felt it was the best way to help students make a personal connection to the topics they were researching.

On the first day of my unit on the American Revolution, I administered a pre-assessment to gauge students’ prior knowledge. Then, I introduced the project, allowed students to pick their topics and partners, and began guiding their research. I established clear, rigorous expectations for the assignment, which included using reputable sources for research, a works cited page, and no artificial intelligence for original content creation. I provided one full class period for research and met with each group to review sources and address questions. Students had a week and a half to complete their project outside of class.

This planning strategy comes from educational scholar Grant Wiggins, considered the father of “universal backward design,” or UBD, which emphasizes creating learning objects students will know at the end of a unit, and working backward to design assessments and lessons that allow students to demonstrate their learning.⁴ Wiggins’ approach is useful for public school teachers who must balance the amount of days each unit takes with following a curriculum based on state standards.⁵ My class must also incorporate College Board’s Advanced Placement United States History curriculum, which includes specific content and historical thinking skills – making time management critical.

Conclusions

At the end of our unit, students presented their work in small groups of 10-12 students. The results were overwhelmingly positive. Most students met or exceeded my expectations and enjoyed the creative process of creating their own historical markers. A few students even visited the historic sites they researched and took photos of where they would place their markers.

³ “Introduction to Experiential Learning,” Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research, June 25, 2018, <https://learning.northeastern.edu/introduction-to-experiential-learning/>.

⁴ “Backward Design | Center for the Advancement of Teaching Excellence | University of Illinois Chicago,” accessed July 8, 2025, <https://teaching.uic.edu/cate-teaching-guides/syllabus-course-design/backward-design/>.

⁵ “New Jersey State Social Studies Standards,” n.d., https://www.nj.gov/education/standards/socst/docs/2020NJSLS-SS_by_Standard.pdf.

I displayed the completed markers outside my classroom door. My students loved this, and were proud to showcase their work. The display sparked interest among others at school. One of the most meaningful compliments came from a school maintenance employee who told me he stopped to read a new marker each day and learned something new about South Jersey's role during the Revolutionary War.

Creating historic markers through Project-Based Learning comes with challenges. Some students lacked motivation, while others leaned heavily on artificial intelligence. Although many showed enthusiasm for exploring local history, a few lost focus during the unit and procrastinated until the final days. In several cases, students still used inaccurate information generated by AI. I don't claim to have a perfect solution, but I've found that setting clear guidelines, requiring a works cited page, and dedicating two in-class workdays significantly improves outcomes. Moving forward, I plan to emphasize revisions and multiple drafts. Asking students to revise their work based on feedback will simulate real-world collaboration and help them develop a more authentic understanding of the historical research process.

This positive response encapsulated what I believe history education should be: real world relevant and engaged with the community. While every classroom is different, I believe that inquiry-based learning is a versatile and effective teaching strategy that can be adapted to nearly any learning environment. Moreover, regardless of the grade level or historical topic, incorporating local history helps make history tangible and meaningful to students. By making learning relevant and rooted in students' communities, and by aligning instruction with long-term learning goals, we can increase student motivation and foster historical empathy—skills that are essential in today's fast-paced, digital world.

Note: If you would like to attain a copy of the Project Based Learning assignment, please email me at Zbaer@lrhsd.org for a free digital copy.

Thomas Paine during the American Revolution in New Jersey

Gary Berton,
President of the Thomas Paine Historical Association
and founder of the Institute for Thomas Paine Studies at Iona University

“Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past” G. Orwell

“Study the historian before you begin to study the facts.” E. H. Carr

The historiography of Paine’s life, writings, political philosophy, and political organizing is grossly inadequate, and often incorrect. Paine operated underground in England in the 1760s, he moved to America to help organize the Revolution along with Franklin, then founding the Whig Society in Philadelphia and participating in the Social Cercle in Paris - the first two modern revolutionary political parties. These facts are unknown to many historians, or at least they put it aside. The richness of the history around us is being neglected.

Only half of Paine’s writings have been published in modern times, and several supposed works are not his. That will be corrected in 2026 when the six-volume set of writings through Princeton University Press, after twelve years of research by six leading Paine scholars – four in Europe and two in America. Until then, I will need to only hint at the whole story of Paine, long discarded by historians based on political and religious prejudice, and their failure to anoint him as the Father of the American Revolution, and founder of the liberating modern democracy movement in the world. All total, the Paine corpus will be doubled - that will go a long way to clarifying his pre-eminent status as founding father. As the future President of the American Historians Association, Dr. Eric Foner, testified before Congress in the early nineties, “Thomas Paine was the pre-eminent founder of the United States.”¹

New Jersey played a key role as the base for Paine in his work. Friendships were forged there, key moments in the Revolution occurred there, and he was comfortable with the people, reveling in the comradeships.

In general terms, Paine wasn’t poor and a failure in England. He started his writing and political work in the 1750s, socializing with notable scientists, philosophers, and other writers. He

¹ In October 1992, the legislation was signed into law PL102-407 and PL102-459 by President George H. W. Bush authorizing the construction of the statue. I disagree with Foner because Paine did not accept the result of the founding constitution. Paine opposed the new ruling oligarchy.

formed political writing groups in support of Pitt the Elder against Lord Bute, the Favorite of the King.² He led the formation of writing strings using pseudonyms that continued for over a decade. His appointment in Lewes as an Excise Officer with a nod from the Whig politicians enabled him to keep writing.

Paine did NOT first meet Franklin in 1774 – he collaborated with Franklin in writing at least a dozen articles over fourteen years, most of which involved the emerging American Revolution, before leaving for America.³ These distorted outlines of Paine’s life and politics in almost all of the Paine biographies have robbed scholars of useful facts, that were hidden by a flood of distortions and lies, as too many historians were guided by their ideology. All nations create a myth of their founding; these myths of Paine would sideline the possibility of real democracy, by plan or ignorance. The plutocracy ran the Convention in 1787, and proceeded to mimic the English constitution. Their propaganda only mimicked a democratic structure, sold in the Federalist Papers. After English newspapers in the 1790s saw what was happening, they began to refer to The Federalist Party as the “Monarch Party” or the “English Party” (partly because of the Jay’s Treaty). Historians bent the knee to propaganda. Paine was eliminated from educational vehicles, and the propaganda against him, as his democratic ideology threatened profits, was relentless for two centuries and still continues. History should not be based on fact-less propaganda.

Our Association is available to all educators and authors for consultation, fact analysis, fact contexts, and discussions to answer questions and contexts. We have held presentations in schools at all levels and the general public to great acclaim. Lesson plans are available online but will change as the new material is released in 2026. Go to thomaspaine.org and get more information.

New Jersey

Paine’s first exposure to New Jersey was when he enlisted in the Philadelphia militia and marched to Perth Amboy. He had a reputation which preceded him as the author of *Common Sense*. He was also known as a comrade of Ben Franklin. He may have journeyed to Burlington County to see Timothy Matlack,⁴ a close friend and eventually a member of Paine’s Whig Society, but no proof exists.

As soon as the Declaration of Independence was enacted,⁵ Paine’s work in Philadelphia ended for a time, and he marched as a foot soldier. He wrote an article on the way across Jersey about the militia being exempt from taxes. As he arrived in Perth Amboy he joined Gen. Nathaneal Greene as his officer, and moved on together to join Washington at Fort Mifflin, on the cliff where he awaited. Paine became a member of the officers, first to Greene then Washington. Their position was precarious: the fort was on a cliff on the west side above the Hudson, looking over to New York City. Two battalions of the British were moving from the north and from the

² William Pitt (1708-78) Whig statesman and Prime Minister 1766-68; he supported the American cause, supported a more democratic structure and shielded Paine’s identity. Lord Bute was John Stuart(1713-92), Favorite to George the 3rd, and supported absolute rule by the monarch.

³ Benjamin Franklin (1706-90) was agent for colonies to Britain. Paine met up with him in the late 1750s.

⁴

⁵ Paine had a significant role in crafting the Declaration. See “The Sherman Copy” at thomaspaine.org.

southwest. Paine and Greene won the argument to move quickly towards the Delaware River and safety in Pennsylvania before they were trapped.

The retreat across New Jersey was a pivotal event: if they were caught the main force of the Continental Army would have been destroyed. They fought battles and skirmishes throughout the march, much of it in snow with scant protection. They went through Hackensack, Newark, Brunswick, Princeton, and the north of Trenton, crossing the Delaware there. Throughout the journey Paine was composing the American Crisis I, "These are the times that try men's souls...". A myth formed that he wrote on a drum next to the fire at night. That probably is not exactly true, but it does sum up the situation. The statue of Paine in Morristown captures the moment.

Different myths surround the reading of Crisis 1 before the crossing to Trenton. When Paine landed on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware, he must have taken a horse to Philadelphia to print the pamphlet. The army crossed into Delaware on December 8 and 9, and the pamphlet was read to the troops by officers on December 19, so Paine had about 10 days to deliver it. There is no evidence that he went back with the printed pamphlets, and it is doubtful. There was no evidence in his writing that he crossed with the army to attack Trenton. And he printed Crisis #2 two weeks after the battle, and no specific information of the battle was included.

Bordentown

Paine's main base in New Jersey was Bordentown in Burlington County, just south of Trenton. He moved there as a half-way location between New York and Philadelphia, eventually purchasing land and a house, the only place where he ever purchased property (other land was given to him in New York for his services to the Revolution). Bordentown was a busy hub, as the town was halfway in between the two major cities. As a port for ferrying up the river, and then taking a carriage to New York.

However, he never lived in that house in Bordentown: Paine had a habit of boarding with close friends. In Bordentown, it was with Col. Joseph Kirkbride⁶. Kirkbride led a regiment against the British in his county in Pennsylvania across the Delaware River from Bordentown. His estate was burnt to the ground by the enemy, and he fled to Bordentown in 1778. Kirkbride had to build a new house, which became, after his death in 1804, the first Female College in America. Paine stayed in this house all the time that he was in town, between trips to Philadelphia. He stayed there on and off when not in Philadelphia, or spying for Washington, or staying briefly on stays in Valley Forge, between 1778 and 1787.

The house that Paine purchased still stands, but it has been moved. Originally it was on the southwest corner of Farnsworth and Church. In the 1870s it was moved onto Church behind the original lot, now facing east. He provided housing free of charge to the widow of a friend, a sea captain. Paine also purchased land across a creek just west of Bordentown where storehouses receive cargo from ships unloading, for goods to be moved toward New York City by land. The house was sold by Paine in 1808, a year before his death.

⁶ Joseph Kirkbride (1731-1803), ran for Governor of NJ a year before he died. Paine wrote a pamphlet in support of Kirkbride, and against the Federalist candidate.

Bordentown embraced Paine. He was observed daily taking his walks, holding his hat behind his back with both hands, talking with people on their porches, stopping by the pub a block away from the house he boarded at the end of Farnsworth where he kept his horse Button. He was given Button by Lewis Morris of Morrisania (now the Bronx), as a present for Paine for convincing Morris to vote for independence against his family. The area where Button grazed is now the location where the statue of Paine stands, named “The Father of the American Revolution”. It overlooks down towards the river where the battle in 1778 that was lost to overmanned and over-armed British regulars. Paine was not yet settled there at the time. The British lobbed cannon balls damaging many homes and stormed the town causing many casualties. There were three major British incursions in the Bordentown area in 1778.

Bordentown and the surrounding area were key for the British. They wanted to march on central Jersey to cut the state in half, and coming from Philadelphia, they could come to Bordentown by boat and land from Trenton. On May 8, 1778, the British attacked and occupied Bordentown, after landing in boats armed with small cannons. The river where the boats landed were well below the town, but nevertheless they defeated the small American force in the town. The spot where the battle was fought is the site of the statue of Paine today.

The Battle of Crosswicks Creek, which ran north to south emptying into the Delaware River at Bordentown. A series of long, drawn out skirmishes ensued.⁷

The Battle of the Kegs was another skirmish originating in Bordentown, but was unsuccessful. They created barrels full of gunpowder and iron balls to float down the Delaware to Philadelphia harbor where the British ships were moored, and they rigged them to explode on impact. But nothing came of it as the barrels were easily avoided. Francis Hopkinson, a friend of Paine and a Bordentown resident, wrote a poem about the incident.⁸

The Trenton Incident

A non-event that exhibits how history is created. Kirkbride drove Paine to Trenton to catch the coach to New York. This was 1803. A crowd suddenly appeared and started harassing Paine on religious grounds, and threatening him, throwing objects, and other threats. Paine and Kirkbride safely got out, on their way to New York.

Almost every Paine biography recounts it, that Paine was hated for his religious tenets. However, a reporter from the *Trenton True American* was present at the event.⁹ He recounts the real story, revealing that there was no religious content whatsoever, and that the Federalist operatives in the town paid pub residents to harass and denounce Paine for atheism. The reporter then recounts a Federalist leader coming to town, a known Deist and non-Christian, and no fuss was made at all. The shaping of a false narrative concerning Paine was continuous and too many

⁷ See the detailed article here: <https://allthingsliberty.com/2022/08/the-battle-of-crosswicks-prelude-to-monmouth>.

⁸ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Battle_of_the_Kegs

⁹ See March 19, 1803 article in the *Trenton True American*.

historians swallowed the swill. The Federalist newspapers provided the fairy tale of the Trenton Incident to discredit Paine's reputation.

Invention of the Single Span Iron Bridge

As the war wound down, Paine returned to Bordentown after his trip to France, accompanying John Laurens in 1781, to acquire the money and supplies from France to end the war. He hired John Hall, a carpenter, in 1783 to create a model of the bridge, and then a larger version that eventually went with Paine to France and England in 1787. Paine spent the time in Bordentown between 1783 and early 1787. He knew the democratic trend was to be barred from the Convention – he had cooperated with the future Federalist faction in writing the series of articles on founding a national bank, since the mechanics supported the bank. He left for Europe before the Convention started.

The Last Meeting with Washington

Paine took a break from bridge-designing to accept an invitation from George Washington to visit him in Rocky Hill, near Princeton. It was Washington's chance to thank Paine for the many aspects of his crucial contributions. It would be the last time they met. As the future leader of the Federalist oligarchy abandoned Paine in France, in Paine's opinion he exposed Washington as an incompetent leader.¹⁰

But Paine's visit at that time was very cordial. They performed experiments on swamp gas to explain how fire could flare up from the water around them in a boat.¹¹ And Washington promised to reward Paine for his services, which occurred the next year when he was granted a 300-acre farm in New Rochelle.

Summary

Thomas Paine was the father of the American Revolution: a) *Common Sense* reversed public opinion, from reconciliation to separation, including a large percentage of oligarchs; b) he closed 1776 with *Crisis I*, becoming the analyst/cheerleader that held the most people together to fight; c) the leaders of mutineers late in the Revolution, who threatened to leave, met with Paine, and Paine persuaded almost all of them to stand fast and finish the fight; d) Paine organized the political fight for independence against the reconcilers (like Benjamin Rush and John Dickinson) in Congress, and he was behind the Declaration of Independence: the content mostly came from *Common Sense*, and he replaced an ill Franklin to oversee the writing. (See *The Sherman Copy* at www.thomaspaine.org).

There was a reason Paine's works were banned in the 1940s and 50s under McCarthyism. A few historians fought back to now get back to reality, and it looks like we have to fight again.

¹⁰ See *American Arouse*, Richard Rosenfeld, using over 1500 primary sources about the Revolution and the oligarch aftermath.

¹¹ <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/rocky-hill-experiment>

SAY OUR NAMES FOR AMERICA 250: Excavating & Remembering Hidden Histories of 944 Named & Unnamed African Americans, from Historic Woodbury and Deptford between 1770-1830

Sue Kozel

Public Historian, Retired College History Adjunct Professor

What's in a name?

Everything.

All of us want to be known and remembered for who we are and for others to know and use our names: their spellings, pronunciation, and understanding their origins, historical roots, and meanings. Yet, during the late colonial period and the American Revolution era in New Jersey, many African Americans were recorded as nameless in local and regional documents. For the 944 African Americans, enslaved and free, and named and unnamed, their existence is recorded in a comprehensive list from many sources discussed in this chapter. An **Addendum to this chapter** includes the list for your review so students can “discover” the history facts and react to the recording of Black lives in Woodbury and Deptford.

Therefore, in *Say Our Names: Early African American Life in Historic Woodbury, Part of Deptford Township, 1770-1830*, we asked several key questions to guide our research intentions, research, and publication of findings. How do we evaluate and discuss the lives of African Americans in New Jersey during the time leading up to the Revolutionary War and afterward? How do we “excavate” these stories and place them in the 250th presentations about New Jersey lives? How do we partner effectively to share stories that transform our understanding of the complex, diverse, and hidden histories of New Jersey history? How does the absence of many African American names teach us about privilege, power, citizenship, and equality before, during, and after the American Revolution.

These questions will help lead your students to conclusions based on evidence and addressing: what are the meanings of value, citizenship, enslavement, political power, natural rights, and more topics as presented in local written histories to illuminate how African American people lived, worked, fought in the American Revolution, self-emancipated themselves, and secured freedom or remained enslaved in this period as recorded in documents. Think of these questions as helping high school teachers to map out their teaching strategies to engage student research and collaboration. Additionally, please consider this chapter as a guide for how to access sources to help teach diverse history for America 250 and RevolutionaryNJ.

These questions I posed while teaching college students focused our class discussions and research: Who is an American? What is an American? How did these ideas change over time?

For our purposes, my talk and this chapter acknowledged that there are three key revolutions simultaneously occurring during what we think of the American Revolution era in “Vast Early America,” an idea articulated by Scholar Karin Wulf¹:

1. The traditional representation of the American Revolution of white colonists, men and women, struggling against tyranny of the British usurping their natural rights, to create and fight for what we describe as the American Revolution. My idea includes Loyalist opposition to independence advocated in the American Revolution.
2. A revolution against enslavement waged by enslaved people, their Quaker allies, and others to work toward the abolition of slavery. There were differences between the allies as to the best approach to ending enslavement. The important actions of runaway enslaved or self-emancipated slaves, and manumission and abolitionist activities are included here.
3. The revolution led by Native peoples to protect their homelands from European and Euro-American colonization, fought on multiple levels, including geographies, alliances, and strategies to protect indigenous life and the tyrannies associated with loss of land, attacking non-European cultures and people, and expansionist military practices by Europeans and Euro-Americans leading to Native American displacement including relocation and deaths.

Because Black Lives Matter in all time periods, this chapter will focus on the “2nd revolution” to end enslavement and how the changing viewpoints on enslavement had an impact on the life of African Americans in Woodbury, a part of Deptford Township during the late colonial, American Revolutionary and Early American Republic periods.²

The findings are clear.

People matter, with and without recorded names. Roughly seventy percent of the African American enslaved and free people compiled as part of the 944 individuals listed in the updated project, *Say Our Names: Early African American Life in Historic Woodbury, Part of Deptford Township, 1770-1830*, are without full names.³ Often, most names are not recorded, and sometimes only a first name, as recorded as numbers in ledgers or tax records. Our key research goal was to excavate and honor the memory of as many people as possible who were erased due to their race from most traditional histories and records. This short-term project identified sources and examples of African American lives. What I did not expect was finding over 615 African American people with the initial review. Then two subsequent investigations expanded the number of documented African Americans to 944, a number I still believe to be smaller than the total population over time. Every number used to count an enslaved person was entered in the recently updated running list of African American people. By examining local history sources, New Jersey students have an opportunity to reconsider a myriad of issues regarding African American life and how they have changed over time. Even if a class is in Cape May County, Hudson County, or another county, you can use these strategies for Gloucester County local research to help build new relationships with government and non-profit local partners to

support your students and classroom research. Most importantly, students will be able to write their own questions, pursue historical documentation, and change the way we think about New Jersey and the Revolutionary War period.⁴

In order to honor the memory of those enslaved African Americans who were not listed by name in any recorded accounts, these human beings have been included in the running count list as “no name listed” as part of our Chapter Addendum. History is complicated, and sometimes a simplistic narrative does not fit the reality of what happened in a community like Woodbury, a part of Deptford during the studied time period. It’s not easy to find records if you focus on searching for Woodbury, given its inclusion under Deptford Township. Consequently, research strategies must be adjusted while engaging in research. Students will be able to learn the need to be flexible, be open to unexpected findings and strategies, and follow the research evidence. The unnamed African American enslaved people in records did have names and identities, but the tax assessor records and documentation for enslaved people did not record the names.

This incubator grant-funded project by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities will help teachers and students understand the importance of telling complicated stories of “hidden histories” as America 250 approaches by provided clues of where histories might be hidden so students can be rediscovering and telling the story of African American lives.⁵ As the Semiquincentennial for the American Revolution approaches, high school students have many ways to engage in engaging public memory and make the telling of New Jersey’s Revolutionary history in a more diverse and inclusive manner unlike what was done in 1976 as part of the Bicentennial storytelling.⁶ No project is an one-person operation. Gigi Naglak, the Director of Programs for the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, attended the “Teaching Revolutionary NJ Symposium. This Council was instrumental in provided incubation funding for the “Say Our Names” project. Naglack described the non-profit’s profound commitment to public humanities and her support of scholarship like that of the “Say Our Names” findings:

“And I wanted it to also say that your email (and your work in general) shows exactly why NJCH exists and why we are so proud to support this kind of scholarship – one that looks at historical events from multiple angles and perspectives, and seeks always to expand entrenched narratives, even when those narratives are important and good ones, like the Underground Railroad.

At the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, we explore, cultivate, and champion the public humanities in order to strengthen New Jersey’s diverse community. Since 1972, NJCH has partnered with statewide and community organizations to bring meaningful public humanities programming to the local level. Together, we explore what makes us human and celebrate the lives, places, and histories that knit us together as New Jerseyans.”⁷

In addition to the partnership with the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, Barb Price of the Gloucester County Historical Society and Sara Borden, Rowan University Archivist, were instrumental in working to ensure that resources were made publicly available and permissions

were granted for publication permissions. Finally, Dr. Timothy Hack, creator of the West Jersey History Project, provided generous access to his work on Gloucester County enslavement and opportunities to collaborate. Look for colleagues, librarians, genealogists, local officials, university and college faculty, and all people who have an interest in history throughout this process of finding resources. Always ask for help early in your process because people are ready to assist and learn with and from your research and interests. Within the endnotes are detailed resources you can consult to help your quest.⁸

When People are Missing from Records

Historical Memory

Who is missing? We know there is likely an undercounting of enslaved people in most records because sometimes women, children, and elderly African Americans were not counted in documents such as Tax Ratables. We do not know all the people who might have been living in free Black households. Most often we know the male head of household, with maybe a name. But we do not know the total number of men, women, and children for these households. So, our total still is underrepresenting the total African American community.

1830 Federal Census for Deptford

This significant emergence of a free black community as published in the 1830 Federal Census records for Deptford include 42 named free Blacks and 147 unnamed relatives living in their households underscored the movement from slavery to freedom. One slave is listed on page 86, as owned by Jos. L. Pedrick, but not added in an enslaved total. If we compare Pedrick's record in the latest available tax ratables for 1802, there is a "Joseph Paddrick" listed, with other Paddrick relatives, but no category exists for counting slaves.⁹ Sometimes names that appear different might represent the same person. In this case we do not know for sure if Joseph L. Pedrick is Joseph Paddrick. Students can compare the census conducted by the Quakers, in 1798-1799 with the later federal records to document changes in names and numbers of Free African Americans. Quakers were members of a Protestant religious sect with a strong presence in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and South Jersey, and were divided as to whether to comply or not with a mandatory directive to manumit and free their enslaved. From examining records at Rowan University's special collections and archives, we see some Woodbury and Gloucester County Quakers refused to free their enslaved.

Who else might be missing? Why look at an 1830 document if you are studying the American Revolution. First the record exists and can help students understand the change in the free African American population over time. We have unnamed African Americans listed as "colored" in the 1830 Federal Census for Deptford living within white households. For example,

on page 76 we have three unnamed “Free Colored People” living with Jos. Clement. On page 77, William Cooper has one free Black woman in his household. There are forty-five people listed as living in white households as free Blacks. However, at the very end of the Deptford listing, there are forty names of African American men and women listed as “Free Colored Persons”.

Additionally, there are another 146 African American people living in the households with the forty free African American-headed households. This information shows that when freed, many enslaved people created their own communities in the area.

These African Americans for Deptford are:

1. Jonathan Aggins, 1830 Federal Census, Deptford
2. Abm Anderson, 1830 FC
3. Grace Ashmore, 1830 FC
4. John Bulion, 1830 FC
5. Ely Bowers, 1830 FC
6. Johns Cooper, 1830 FC
7. Francis Collins, 1830 FC
8. Thoms Defimies (?,) 1830 FC
9. Alan Denby, 1830 FC
10. Sampson Ewell, 1830 FC
11. John Freeman, 1830 FC
12. John Fisher, 1830 FC
13. Chas Gold, 1830 FC
14. Henry Harris, 1830 FC
15. Simon Harris, 1830 FC
16. Nathaniel Hage, 1830 FC
17. Jance Johnson, 1830 FC
18. Adam Justice, 1830 FC
19. David Johnson, 1830 FC
20. Richard Miller, 1830 FC
21. Dave Morgan, 1830 FC
22. Mary Morris, 1830 FC
23. Benj Peterson, 1830 FC
24. Jos Purnell, 1830 FC
25. Peter Ricko, 1830 FC
26. James Risley, 1830 FC
27. John Saunders, 1830 FC
28. John Smith, 1830 FC
29. Jeremiah Still, 1830 FC
30. David Thompson, 1830 FC
31. Charles Thompson, 1830 FC
32. James Thomas, 1830 FC

33. Amos Wamsley, 1830 FC
34. Henry Williams, 1830 FC
35. Cupid Waterford, 1830 FC
36. George Wright, 1830 FC
37. Benj Wilson, 1830 FC
38. Mary Watson, 1830 FC
39. John William, extra text, 1830 FC
40. Joseph Williams, extra text, 1830 FC

Historical Memory – How We Choose to Remember the Past

How do we remember the past if we are unable to document all the people living in a community? The role historical memory plays cannot be underscored enough during preservation efforts. Intertwined with how an event is presented in public history displays, historical memory “colors” how we commemorate the public value of a land, an event, people, and the telling of the history. So, as we think about commemorations of the American Revolution, is the usage of overwhelmingly white images and narratives appropriate in communities that had an African American population presence?

Civil War historian and historical interpreter of battlefields, including the Battle of Franklin, Rick Conlon interpreted the meaning of public history in a broad context. “Public history can be seen as a bridge between academic studies and the general public’s broader understanding of history. Public historians are communicators, storytellers, and supporters of broader historical enlightenment through tangible and intangible interactions.”¹⁰

Colton’s comments tap into public memory by noting how the general public’s interpretation of the “broader understanding of history” can be influenced, and therefore, together we can now present added information that can influence a new interpretation or remembering of a historical narrative, and how we remember the legacies of the American Revolution.

In 1985, while a graduate student enrolled in some of the earliest Public History courses at New York University, I struggled with additional questions addressing the purpose of public history, such as: who has the right or responsibility to tell the history? How do we balance the idea of storytelling with solid historic evidence without exaggeration or embellishment? One of the most important questions addressed an incomplete historical presentation: what happens when a segment of the population is omitted from historical storytelling? This last question can be used to frame powerful and meaningful conversations that frame historical research.

Common Sources, Uncommonly Known

Combing Various Documents and Images with and without Dead Ends

Let us explore some of the common sources that might be available in your communities. One example is Tax Ratables are documents that include names of all taxpayers. For Woodbury, a part of Deptford Township in the colonial, Revolutionary War Era, and the Early American Republic, white men and women who owned property, including enslavement African

Americans, were listed. Sometimes, free Black men with first names are listed under a list of “negroes” or “colored people.” The following resources represents a sampling of text, documents, and images that bring to life African American lives in Historic Woodbury and Deptford.

Your Checklist Options: 25 Helpful Suggestions

Begin a checklist of possible sources. You might search and consult these types of sources if available, as were reviewed for the “Say Our Names” project. This list can be expanded and altered to suit the needs of your teaching. High School faculty have so many responsibilities. Therefore, be realistic and tackle one or two of the ideas below to target for specific research and classroom discussions that will engage your students in better understanding the commemoration of Revolutionary NJ and America 250.

1. Create as the first top three numbers empty spaces where students can write phrases, words, or topics that they would like to explore. Let them ‘buy in.’
2. Continue introductory comments inviting students they share questions want to answer, and design sources around those interests. This project is all about the students.
3. Discuss the absence of full names for African Americans so the students do not believe they are failing the project when lists are not found.
4. Remind students that every human being, whether listed as a number or a named person is important to honor.
5. If available, diaries of enslaved, free Blacks, and enslavers for names and insights about daily life. Whether you agree or not with the statements, the goal is to comb these sources for important information.
6. If available, diaries or signed notes by free Blacks or enslaved African Americans;
7. Tax Ratable Duplicate or Original lists held by County Archives,
8. Historical Archives, and/or the New Jersey State Archives as repositories of digitized resources.
9. Manumission Books or individual records in Quaker Archives, the New Jersey State Archives, historical libraries, university or college library collections and archives, or privately held;
10. Local and regional Abolitionist organizations;
11. Political debates in the region on enslavement;
12. Quaker records held at special collections, privately, or in county government or historical society archives;
13. Newspaper reports on topics including but not limited to runaway slave ads, slave sales, court proceedings, manumission discussions at newspaper.com or ancestry.com records;
14. Coffin Books;
15. The Federal Census of 1830;
16. NJ Slavery-related laws available on law school sites;
17. Quaker recordkeeping creating local census records and meeting minutes that describe actions taken by local meetings to address Quakers holding slaves;

18. AME/African Methodist Episcopal Church records;
19. Records recording violence against African Americans including but not limited to lynchings.
20. Oral Histories of People in today's local community who have deep roots who might want to participate in an oral history of what they were told happened in the community. While they were not themselves living in these eras, they can share what was or was not passed down, and the questions they may have.
21. Think about how the visuals or key facts can be best used by your students. For example, do you want students to create their own images and representations of free Black families – draw, design, or describe this change? Do you want students to evaluate examples “freedom papers,” another phrase that describes manumissions that are documents freeing African Americans from Enslavement?
22. Inspire students with African American Poets, including Phillis Wheatley. This resource, written from the perspective of poets, could be helpful. Maybe students might write poems describing how impactful learning about these African Americans lives were on their understanding about rights or history?
23. Or maybe students could write new stanzas of musical lyrics to historical songs or new music including Rap. See this great resource for New Jersey teachers, <https://teachingsocialstudies.org/2019/01/11/teaching-with-tunes-an-educators-guide-to-utilizing-hamilton-in-the-classroom/>. Here is an example of the changing lyrics for “Yankee Doodle Dandy.” <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/media-and-interactives/media/music/story-behind-the-song/the-story-behind-the-song/yankee-doodle/#:~:text=Over%20time%2C%20new%20verses%20of,a%20feather%20in%20his%20cap.>
24. Consider assigning a short, weekly journal writing that has student include at least two new “findings” about African American history, and their reaction to that information? Music, poetry, newspaper article, new research questions, a summary of findings exciting to the students, drawings, a reconfigured American flag based on the students’ design. I have done all these activities on a college level, but with footnotes, and longer in length.
- 25. Whatever approach you take, the more enthusiastic you are, the students will match your energy and become more engaged.**

The Greater Woodbury Story – Part of Deptford Township

Tax Ratables

Let us begin our brief review of select documents with tax ratables in Deptford Township. There were six enslaved males whose owners were taxed, and there were thirty-three enslaved people listed in the 1784 Slave Census. Deptford Township included historic Woodbury in part of what was then known as Gloucester County, in South Jersey. This year is important because it is just after the signing of the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783, when Britain finally acknowledged that the American colonies were independent and now part of a sovereign nation.

The new national government and its states are looking for ways to pay off war-related debt, and taxing the owners of enslaved men and boys of certain ages provided a vehicle for raising money. The Continental Congress, following the Articles of Confederation, struggled with mounting debt and the balance of power with the need for taxation to generate funds for the new government. While the enslaved people were considered “financially valuable” as commodities and possessions who generated wealth for their owners and the new country, they were denied full human rights by their owners and society. Simultaneously, there are efforts led by Quakers and their Allies to advocate for the gradual ending of slavery, with Pennsylvania leading during the Revolution in 1780, followed in the mid-1780s –1799 by New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New York. New Jersey enacts its gradual abolition law in 1804.¹¹

For example, in the Deptford Tax Ratables, Charles Weft owned two African Americans in the 1784 Ratables. He owned African Americans who were other than males of the ages between sixteen and 65. How do we know this fact? This tax list does not tell us explicitly in the headline or text the gender or the age of the enslaved people. But we can tell much from the two columns for enslaved people. The one on the left circled in red highlighted the “Male Slave between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five years” where the owner is taxed up to ten shillings for each enslaved person. In 1783, a census was enacted for implementation in 1784 and approved tax assessments for all enslaved, including men, women, children, elderly, and unable to work, and those totals are represented in the column with the red circle on the far right. Note that no names of the enslaved are included; the enslaved are listed as numbers. This reality, when discussed, often elicits a visceral reaction, and is upsetting. But history is upsetting at times. Paul Axel-Lute compiled an excellent bibliography of New Jersey’s slave laws and this resource will help your students identify when and why laws were passed to assess owners for enslaved people and details are included in the footnotes..¹² The people owned by Weft are listed in the second column.

1

A List of the Ratables of the several Inhabitants in the Township of Deptford in the County of Gloucester and State of New Jersey taken in the Month of July 1784 with the Assessment made thereon

	Value of Land	Value of Houses	Value of Mills	Value of Farms	Value of Orchards	Value of Vineyards	Value of Pastures	Value of Meadows	Value of Woods	Value of Other Ratables	Total	Assessment	Free Black	White	Indians	Others
William Tatum	263 15	235 4									56 13			2 9	6 10	
Christopher Tomlinson											7 5			2 8	3	
Uriah Tanjren	800 5										46 8			2 0	3 6	
John Turner	120 14										37 11			1 4	2 11	
Joseph Turner		20 2									3 8			7	10	4
Richard Thron		50 3									2 10			3 6	5 9	9
Henry Tredaway	190 37										84 11			3 13	18 4	
Nathan Tredaway	47 35										19 14			6	1 1	5
Robert Taylor	104 20										14 10			2 7	6 3	4 5 1
John Tatum	108 20	368 4									64 12			2 16	8 8	1
James Williams	112 22	94 3									45 5			1 19	4 10	
Thomas Wilson	56 20	60 12									80 5			3 10	0 11	
Richard Wetherby											4 10			8	11 10	2
Moses Ward	79 28										38 17			1 13	11 4	
Benjamin Whitall	512 46										159 15			2	8 19	8 9
Benjamin Whitacor											2 5			8 6	10 6	15
Job Whitall	196 80										203 6			8 17	10 17	
John Wight											1 1			8	9	3
Charles Wight	119 21										125 19			4 5	0 5 7 7 5 2	
Joseph Ward	89 20										23 5			10	15 6	50 9 11 4

FIGURE 1 – Deptford Township Tax Ratables Book 651, July 1784, Page 18, New Jersey State Archives, Record Group: New Jersey General Assembly Series, Tax Ratables. [Duplicates].

Free Black, meaning not enslaved African Americans, are listed in this same 1784 ratables book, as “Negroes” with only their first names.

John Broadway .15. 1.	James News .15. 1.	John Gifford .15. 1.	Isaiah Ward .15. 1.
Letthru Broadway .15. 1.	Gabriel Davis .15. 1.	Theodrick Kinsey .15. 1.	Richard Wood .15. 1.
John News .15. 1.	Jephtha Olsen .15. 1.	Ammeriah Pierce .15. 1.	Jacob Wood .15. 1.
Samuel Howell .15. 1.	Daniel Mahoon .15. 1.	John Mequeen .15. 1.	John Mahoon .15. 1.
Negroes 17 0 12 3	Negroes 12 15 17	15 10 15	13 10 15
Ben 15. 18	Joseph 6. 6		
Jant 15. 1.	Pedrow 6. 6		

FIGURE 2 – Free Black Taxpayers, Deptford Township Tax Ratables Book 651, July 1784, Page 21, New Jersey State Archives, Record Group: New Jersey General Assembly Series, Tax Ratables. [Duplicates].

One point that will most likely be obvious to students keys in on why are white and black people segregated? This question represents a very important historical theme of the treatment of free whites, enslaved blacks, and free blacks as separate and unequal. For Ben, Jant, Joseph, and Pedrow, free Black men who paid taxes, but are not valued by the tax assessor as equal because their surnames were omitted.¹³ Images communicate much. Teachers have an opportunity to allow students to engage in a discussion of the change of rights, over time in the United States. It is upsetting to some students to see human beings represented as numbers or without surnames. But, we have an obligation to tell the truth about the past based on evidence, and these documents are evidence for how we evaluate a person's importance. Was equality important? What were natural rights, and how do we evaluate why some people had more rights than others? How does this issue of rights change over time?

In the 1802 Ratables, two years before New Jersey enacts the gradual abolition of slavery, twenty-two free Black African American men are listed who own property and paid taxes. These names show the emergence of a growing free Black community, and the names included are: Peter Ashmore, Benjamin Banister, Thomas Chester, John Grenage, James Hose, Primus Still, Thomas Man, Perry Baul (Paul?), Lewis Shelly, Abraham Ho, Elijah Howard, Isaac Smothers, Cesar Murry, James Janaly, John Read, William Litchfield, Peter Ewel, John Stephenson, Cato Toney, Samuel Leonard, Samuel Read, and Thomas Quan.¹⁴ Your students will witness, first-hand, the growth in numbers of the free Black population.

Emergence of White Allies and Gradual Freedom for African Americans

Complicated meetings of Quakers on the topic of slavery were held before and during the American Revolution. The examples of John Woolman, a South Jersey itinerant preacher who refused to buy and sell slave-made products, and Anothony Benezet, a French Quaker who joined with Woolman to pen the argument to end slavery, speak to how passionate the voices for change were. Woolman did not represent the majority view when he first began advocating against enslavement. His writings were bold and passionate, including his “A Plea for the Poor,” which was published posthumously, and his “Journal.”¹⁵ Students might want to read parts of Woolman’s protest about slavery, in *Some considerations on the keeping of Negroes : recommended to the professors of Christianity of every denomination*, published in 1754.¹⁶ This thirty-one page essay can be downloaded, and students can find the quote on page two that “That when we remember that all Nations are of one blood...” and wonder why this white Christian saw Africans, as he called Black people, are just like white people. Or consider why Woolman challenged the idea that only one Nation or people only has “God’s Love,” students confront a radical viewpoint that was not the majority position of English settlers in the British colonies or English citizens across the Atlantic. He also described that Africans, prior to slavery, had a natural right to liberty, which still resonated within them when enslaved by Quakers and others. “If I purchafe a Man who hath never forfeited his Liberty, the natural Right of Freedom is in him; shall I keep him and his Pofterity in servitude and ignorance?”¹⁷ This reading is powerful, accessible, and will introduce students to the unique language of the late colonial person. See, <https://digitalcollections.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/object/hc135391>. Additionally, the Woolman text presents a useful tool to counter, “Well everybody owned slaves,” and other untrue comments born out of myths of historical member.

A Brief Introduction: Manumissions and Quakers

<https://manumissions.haverford.edu/>

Some Quakers began their freedom process for enslaved people during the late colonial period, during the American Revolution, and afterward. Between 1765 – 1790, a total of 339 manumissions were issued, mostly in Philadelphia. They were recorded and available in this collection. However, students will be able to read these resources and see how other humans had to give enslaved people permission to be freed. The website advises the reader to remember, the manumission papers are written from the perspective of the enslaver and should be read in that matter. To quote the site, “The very existence of these manumissions contradicts the common story told about Quakers and slavery, which tells us that Quakers were always anti-slavery and were not enslavers. The existence of these documents shows the reality of Quaker slaveholders and Black enslaved Quakers.”¹⁸ This website has a clear and simple definition for ‘manumission’ that will be useful to teachers and their students: “In the context of American Chattel Slavery, Manumission refers to both the act of enslavers freeing the people they enslaved and the legal document that records this freeing.”¹⁹ An excellent essay that explains the contents of Quaker

Manumissions is, “What’s in a Manumission?” part of the contextual essays within this important and free collection. The text can be found at, <https://manumissions.haverford.edu/essays>.

Gloucester County Manumission Book with a Cover & Manumission Book without a Cover

Thirty one African Americans, nine from Woodbury and twenty-two from Deptford were recorded in Gloucester County Manumission records held by the Gloucester County Historical Society (GCHS) Library in Woodbury.²⁰ The original Gloucester County Manumission Book, with records from 1791-1844, is in a fragile state and has two parts, the original with a cover that includes an index and twenty-nine pages of manumissions, and one book without a cover with another fifty pages. The GCHS also maintains a folder of loose manumissions and other papers.

Woodbury enslaver Amy Hunter owned “her negro George” and in 1791 freed him saying he was of “sound” mind. Abolitionist leader and Woodbury Native Franklin Davenport witnessed the manumission along with slave holder Woodbury resident John Sparks.²¹ Andrew Hunter owned one male slave in 1789, as listed on the Deptford Tax Ratables.²² According to Frank H. Stewart’s reading of “Old Gloucester” documents, Amy may be the aunt of Andrew.²³

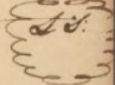
To all to whom this present Writing shall Come
Know ye that I Amy Hunter of Woodbury,
in the County of Gloucester and State of New Jersey, Do hereby
Certify that I am the Owner and possessor of a certain Negro
Slave Named George, that the said Slave is sound in mind
and Under no bodily incapacity of Obtaining a support, And
that he is not under twenty one years of Age nor above thirty
five.
And I the said Amy Hunter do hereby freely and Voluntarily
for and in Consideration of the Services heretofore rendered unto
me by the above Named Negro George, as also for other good
Causes me thereunto moving, Absolutely and fully manumit
and set free the said Negro George, And I do hereby dis-
charge him from all servitude or demands of servitude by
me or my Heirs now or at any time hereafter. In Witness
whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and seal this sixth
Day of January in the Year of Our Lord One thousand seven
Hundred and Ninety one.
Amy Hunter 
Sealed and Delivered
in the presence of — }
"January" wrote in an Erasure.
Fred Davenport
John Sparks.

Figure 3 – Manumission of George, from his enslaver Woodbury resident Amy Hunter on **George**, and freed sixth day of January 1791, in the Manumission Book without a Cover, Pages 5-6. Manumission Book of Monmouth County New Jersey 1791-1844. Permission to publish given to Sue Kozel by GCHS.

The West Jersey History Project often listed transcriptions of manumitted people from Gloucester County. Looking at the original documents provides students with an emotional experience because they can read the original text and experience the “power” of language granting freedom. Many children were included among the manumitted enslaved, and the list as part of the “Say Our Names” report lists all those who were freed:

Name of Enslaved Person Freed through Manumission or a register of Child Born:

1. Aaron – Deptford, 1791
2. Catherine – Deptford, 1821
3. Marinda Holland (Rin) – Deptford, Administration over ownership started 1800, resolved 1815
4. Henry Steward, Mulatto – Deptford, 1822
5. Rose – Deptford, 1803
6. Joseph, Mulatto – Deptford,
7. Phillis – Woodbury, no date, record missing
8. Samuel – Deptford, 1803
9. Aaron – Deptford, 1789
10. James Still, servant – Deptford, 1789
11. Edward Bellwood, Mulatto, son of Phoebe, Woodbury, 1808
12. Phebe, Woodbury, 1808, listed as mother of Edward Bellwood
13. Emaline S. Johnson, child of Phebe Johnson, Woodbury, 1821
14. Phebe Johnson, Woodbury, 1820
15. Dianna Johnson child of Sill, Woodbury, birth record, 1819
16. Sill Johnston, Woodbury, Mother of Joseph, freed from slavery 1820, servant until July 4, 1829
17. Phebe Johnston, Deptford, 1820
18. Joseph Johnston, Woodbury, Son of Sill, freed from slavery 1820, servant until July 4, 1829
19. James Freeman, Deptford, 1801
20. Tenir Freeman, Deptford, 1800
21. Diana Turner, Woodbury, 1819
22. Judith Freeman, Deptford, 1800
23. Rachel Freeman, 1800
24. Mina, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”
25. Joseph, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”
26. Hannah, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”
27. Esther, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”
28. Aaron, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”
29. Catherine, Deptford, 1774, mother of Mina, Joseph, Hannah, Ester, Aaron
30. Roger/Rodger, Deptford, 1789
31. George Huggins Mitchfield, Deptford

List of Other Towns Counting only the First Reference to the African American Person Freed from Enslavement, and Murder Case in Waterford.

Camden 6
Egg Harbor 2
Gloucester City 16
Gloucester County No Town 6
Greenwich Twp. 8
Haddonfield 1
Hamilton Twp. 2
Newton 20
No Town or Listing 1
Swedesboro 1
Waterford 11
Woolrich 9
Southwark, Philly 1
Burlington County 1
Delaware 3
Maryland 7
Virginia 2
TOTAL 96

Plus, Deptford and Woodbury 31

126 African American Men, Women, Children Manumitted from all towns²⁴

As a reminder, the Works Progress Administration published a map as part of a 1940 study of enslavement in Gloucester County, New Jersey, and made available from the University of Michigan which published the study as an eBook on HathiTrust. New Jersey Historical Records Survey Project. *Transcriptions of Early County Records of New Jersey*. Newark, N.J.: The Historical records survey, 1940. Accessed February 15, 2022.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015041902670&view=1up&seq=25&skin=2021>. The West Jersey Project includes an image for the WPA map at <https://www.westjerseyhistory.org/docs/gloucesterrecs/slavery/>.

The West Jersey History Project reproduced the entire book, excluding the names index. However, the WPA text leaves out numerous manumissions filed, and therefore using the GCHS records are the best sources of detailed and accurate information.

Dr. Timothy Hack granted permission to quote his writing on the West Jersey History website. He is Chairman of the Social Sciences Department at Middlesex County College in New Jersey. In particular, the transcribed documents, while without images, will allow students to do searches. See this example of the Gloucester County Society for Promoting the Abolition of

Slavery as included on the important West Jersey Project site,
<https://www.westjerseyhistory.org/docs/timhack/index.shtml>.

New-Jersey Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery

An image of a circa 1793 membership certificate for the New-Jersey Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, includes the image of a paternalistic Quaker holding the teaching of Isaiah as a nearly naked African American slave is kneeled, receiving his teaching and freedom. The text in the block reads, "Isaiah, LXI.I. He came to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them who are bound."²⁵.

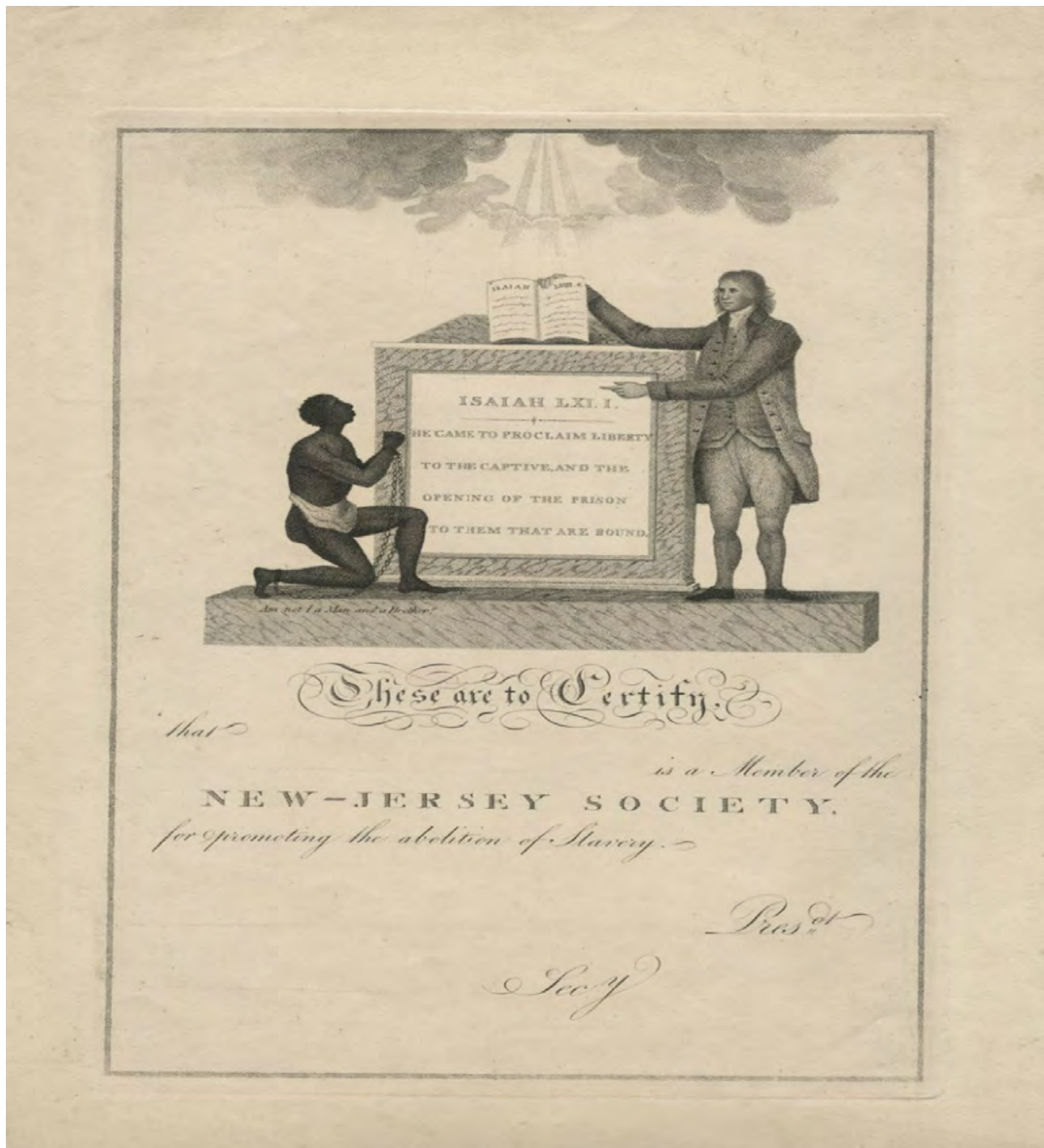


Figure 4 – Membership Certificate – New Jersey- Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, Membership Certificate, Digital Collection, Quakers and Slavery, Allison Family Papers, Haverford Quaker & Special Collections.

<https://digitalcollections.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/object/hc136540>

As the New-Jersey Society formed with the new national government structure in place, and included Quakers and non-Quakers, as well as five members from Gloucester County served in

leadership, including Franklin Davenport. There are several resources for other than Woodbury in South Jersey and embedded in other NJ publications in the Digital Collection, Quakers and Slavery, New Jersey Society Promoting the Abolition for Slavery, Membership Certificates, and other Quaker files. <https://digitalcollections.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/object/hc135539>

https://digitalcollections.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/solr-search/content?field_member_of=199647&search_api_fulltext=new+Jersey&sort_by=search_api_relevance&sort_order=DESC&items_per_page=50

of the Society, when the following persons were elected.

President
Joseph Bloomfield.

Vice Presidents
William Parrot
Richard Hartshorne.

Treasurer
William Coxe jun^r

Secretary
Robert Smith Jun^r

Acting Committees

<u>Burlington County</u>	<u>Cumberland Co^y</u>
Peter Shiras	John Sheppard
Thomas Newbold	John Reeves
Burgis Allison	Eli Elmer
John Hoskins	Elnathan Davids
Robert Pearson	Eli Budd
<u>Gloucester Co^y</u>	<u>Hunterdon County</u>
Thomas Stokes	James Ewing
Joseph Sloan	Moore Furman
Franklin Davenport	Peter Gordon
John Kelly	John Potts
Thomas Carpenter	George Bullock
<u>Middlesex Co^y</u>	<u>Salem County.</u>
Ambrose Copeland	John Wistar
Joseph Shotwell	Klaus Congleton
John Bayard	Edward Burroughs
Hugh Davids	Clement Hall
Elijah Pound	Isaiah Shinn.

Figure 5 - Minutes of the Proceedings of the New Jersey Society for the Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, 1793-1809, Haverford College Quaker and Special Collections, Page 3.

<https://digitalcollections.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/object/hc135539>. See the five men listed representing Gloucester County, including Woodbury's Franklin Davenport.

Franklin Davenport, who moved to Woodbury in 1781, was Benjamin Franklin's nephew. He served in the United State Senate and was a major Federalist leader in Gloucester County. A significant abolitionist leader, Davenport was elected as President of the New-Jersey Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in 1802.²⁶ He owned no enslaved people in 1784. In 1789, the future President of the Gloucester County Abolition Society, Davenport, was elected an Assemblyman. Like his Uncle Benjamin Franklin, Davenport owned an enslaved person when he was listed as a slave owner in July 1786 tax ratables for Deptford Township, in which the village of Woodbury was included.²⁷ In 1798, Quaker records on recording black populations in Gloucester County towns indicated that Davenport had an African American woman and two children in his home. There was no explanation as to whether he was in the process of manumitting enslaved people, sheltering them, owning them, or helping free Blacks.²⁸ The number of free Blacks in Deptford is listed as seventy-nine, with eleven additional individuals recorded as enslaved. For the latest two tax ratables records available, and closest to the 1798 Quaker documentation of free blacks and slaves in Deptford, Davenport did not own any enslaved in 1797. In 1802, as previously mentioned, the category of slaves was eliminated from the township tax ratables list in the 1802 record, with one unnamed enslaved person enter in a column without a heading.

While difficult to condense resources from a two hundred and five-page report into a few pages, this chapter highlighted the important documents and images that are accessible for creating provocative and meaningful memories in the classroom as students explore ways in which to reintroduce important African American stories and communities back into historical narratives for America 250 and RevolutionaryNJ. We are only limited by our own imagination, something that Dr. Eddie Glaude wrote as an inscription when I purchased his text on Black life in America. Join me, and imagine, research, dream, and remember history that honors all.

¹ Karin Wulf, "Vast Early America," *The National Endowment for the Humanities*, HUMANITIES 40, no. 1 (Winter 2019): n.p. <https://www.neh.gov/article/vast-early-america>. Wulf is credited with conceptualizing the term "vast early America." To quote from this article, Wulf wrote, "American history courses usually begin with the peopling of the Americas, then move on to European colonization and the crisis of the British colonies. Tethered to the East Coast, historical attention turns west again as the United States expands its territorial claims in the nineteenth century. But a more expansive view of early America—what I and other scholars have taken to calling 'vast early America'—would help us better understand the colonial and early national periods as well as the full sweep of American history." This layperson's representation of changing how to better understand American history with the broader "Atlantic World" realities of enslavement, migration of European populations taking Native Peoples land with settlement, and the ethnic and religious identities and sometimes ensuing conflicts in this landscape.

² See Maurice Jackson and Sue Kozel, eds. *Quakers and their Allies in the Abolitionist Cause, 1754-1808* (New York: Routledge, 2015). The essays focus on greater Philadelphia and provide a rich tapestry of controversies within the Quaker Community in the Atlantic World and the before, during, and immediately after the American Revolution.

³ Note to the reader. Sometimes the same person might be listed at least twice on the list due to differences in spelling, or that an unnamed person was recorded in diaries, Quaker minutes, tax ratables, the 1830 federal census. I accept this caveat because for my purposes, it was more important to document the existence of the records because corroboration might not be possible. Secondly, there is an absence of

people missing from ratables, enslaved people who are not “counted” for tax purposes paid by their respective owners due to their gender, race, and age based on New Jersey and federal tax laws during and after the American Revolution. There is no easy answer, and the absence of an easy solution should not deter researchers, including high school teachers and students from digging into the hidden African American local histories.

⁴ Sue Kozel, “Say our Names:” *Early African American Life in Historic Woodbury, Part of Deptford Township, 1770-1830.* A grant-funded report by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities as part of a grant to the Woodbury Public Library, April 22, 2022. The report was updated from the original identification of 615 names and listings to 711 named and unnamed African Americans when she prepared her talk for the May 23, 2025 “Teaching Revolutionary NJ Symposium” at Atlantic-Cape Community College. The Gloucester County Historical Library entry for this 205-page report is: 974.981, Say Our Names, Genealogy, Kozel, Sue, 31-Oct-22. The update in June brought the total of African Americans listed to 944.

⁵ For discussions of “Hidden Histories,” meaning history not part of the mainstream or often omitted previously from traditional historical narratives and scholarship, please see, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (London, UK: Verso: 2001), 352. Rediker’s book about a pesky abolitionist in the greater Philadelphia area also describes the hidden history of Benjamin Lay as a controversial Quaker who alienated his fellow Quakers with confrontational opposition to enslavement. Marcus Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay: The Quaker Dwarf who became the First Revolutionary Abolitionist* (Beacon Press: 2017). For definitions, see, Kelly Schrum, Nate Sleeter, Anthony Pellegrino, and Celeste Tường Vy Sharpe, “Teaching Hidden History: Student Outcomes from a Distributed, Collaborative, Hybrid History Course,” *The History Teacher* 51, no. 4 (2018): 573–96. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26646455>. This last piece provided ways for faculty to assess successful learning outcomes. For high school specific strategies, please see Abeer Ramadan-Shinnawi, Med, “Unearthing Hidden Stories: The Importance of Teaching Missing Narratives in History,” *Illinois Digital Educators Alliance* February 14, 2024, <https://www.ideallinois.org/unearthinghiddenstoriesblog#:~:text=This%20can%20help%20students%20see,we%20encourage%20empathy%20and%20compassion.>

⁶ “What is America 250?,” *Official website of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission*, accessed June 7, 2025. <https://america250.org/#:~:text=What%20is%20America250?.the%20next%20generation%20and%20beyond.> See these resources for Revolutionary NJ, “250 Anniversary/Revolutionary News,” *Crossroads of the American Revolution* <https://revolutionarynj.org/category/250-anniversaryrevolutionary-news/>. “New Jersey’s Commemoration of America’s 250th,” RevolutionNJ, <https://www.revny.org>. The RevolutionNJ Handbook can also be found and downloaded at this site with its excellent resources for classroom topics, <https://www.revny.org/resources>.

⁷ Email to Sue Kozel from Gigi Naglak, New Jersey Council for the Humanities, April 28, 2025, 10:38 a.m.

⁸ Messages from Gloucester County Historical Society and Rowan University Archives welcoming high school teachers and students to use their resources:

The Gloucester County Historical Society has been in existence since 1903. During that time, we have amassed a large collection of original photographs, Bible records, genealogy papers and newspapers (some of which have not been digitized) as well as standard reference works and many volumes of South Jersey genealogy and history.

Our special collections are unique to our Society. They include survey maps, plats and original unrecorded deeds. These documents are truly one-of-a-kind that are not found elsewhere.

Our library enjoys the distinction of being the official repository for the original documents generated by the County of Gloucester back to 1686. They consist of court records, slavery manumissions, tavern petitions and much more.

Visitors are welcome year-round on Tuesday evenings 6pm-9pm, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons 12pm-4pm and the third weekend of each month, both Saturday and Sunday, 12pm-4pm. No appointment is necessary. For more information, email library@gchsnj.org. We are always glad to help!

Sincerely,

Barbara Price

Library Staff

Gloucester County Historical Society

Rowan University Archives & Special Collections (RUASC) is an incredible resource for researchers of all ages. RUASC's strengths are in the numerous early American documents, mostly focused on the mid-Atlantic region, in the Frank H. Stewart Collection, among other collections. RUASC is also a rich resource for genealogical research, student papers at all levels, and other types of inquiry. The collections cover the history of a variety of aspects of the southern New Jersey region, including the history of Rowan University itself, the history of ethnic peoples, business history, the history of academia and education, geography, local government, manufacturing, civil rights efforts, and much more. At the moment, the building that houses RUASC, Campbell Library, is undergoing renovations and both Campbell Library and RUASC are closed. The closure is expected to last through fall of 2026. On-site research is currently unavailable, but remote requests are being fielded. The friendly staff of RUASC are always happy to answer any questions, whether the collections are relevant to the matter at hand or not. They can be contacted at archives@rowan.edu or (856) 256-4945.

⁹ Deptford Township Tax Ratables Book 664, July- August 1802, Pages 13, 14. The only person listed as owning a slave, with "1 slave" included in the margins is Robert Pearson, Page 23, under the category "Single Men with Horses."

¹⁰ Rick Condon, "What is Public History," *The Civil War Monitor*, April 29, 2024, <https://www.civilwarmonitor.com/what-is-public-history/>. See also, "How Do We Define Public History?" National Council on Public History, <https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/>.

¹¹ Jeanette Patrick, "Gradual Emancipation Laws, 1780-1804," *Slavery in the United States. George Washington's Mount Vernon*, n.d. <https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/slavery-in-the-united-states>. A great source for looking at taxation, direct tax, and the role of taxing the enslaved, see, "The Three-Fifths Compromise, 1787," *Digital History*, Gilder Lehrman Institute, Digital History ID 163, n.d.

https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=163#:~:text=But%20because%20the%20Articles%20of,which%20took%20office%20in%201790.

¹² Deptford Township Tax Ratables Book 651, July 1784, Page 18, New Jersey State Archives, Record Group: New Jersey General Assembly Series, Tax Ratables. [Duplicates] 1768-1846. Series #SAS00001. Source for Laws, Paul Axel-Lute, "The Law of Slavery in New Jersey: An Annotated Bibliography." *Rutgers University Law School*, last revised April 2013. <https://njlaw.rutgers.edu/collections/slavery/bibliog.php>. As included within the Axel-Lute text, he listed: **A67.3** "An Act to procure an Estimate of the Number of Inhabitants in the State of New Jersey," Dec. 24, 1783, Chap. CCCCVII, §1 *Wilson* 387-388. Number of slaves to be entered in separate column in accounts. **A112** "An Act to raise the sum of Ninety Thousand Nine Hundred and Thirty Pounds, in the State of New-Jersey, for the Exigencies of the Year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty-Three ..." June 9, 1783, *Acts* 7th G.A. 2nd sitting, Chap. XIX, p.32-33. Slaves aged 16 to 55 years, maximum 15 shillings. **A113** "An Act for raising a Revenue of Thirty-one Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty-nine Pounds Five Shillings per Annum, for the Term of twenty-five Years, for the Purpose of paying the Interest and Principal of Debts due from the United States . . ." Dec.20, 1783, *Acts* 8th G.A. 1st sitting, Chap. XXI, p.46 *Wilson* Chap. CCCXCVIII, §2, 363, 365. Assessment: "Every Male Slave between the Ages of sixteen and sixty-five Years, any Sum not exceeding Ten Shillings. PROVIDED ALWAYS, That no Slave shall be taxed who is unable to work, or that may appear to the Assessor to be no Profit to his Master or Mistress." See also James Amemasor, Ph.D., "Bibliographic

Resources Related to Experiences of People of African Descent, Native Americans, and Women in the Revolutionary Era New Jersey.” *Bibliographic Resources, New Jersey Historical Commission*, August 23, 2024, <https://storymaps.com/stories/9342ca98ca8b4ba582ce6c4dcbf01974>. Please note that this document has a link for a printable PDF downloaded directly on your computer.

¹³ Deptford Township Tax Ratables Book 651, July 1784, Page 21.

¹⁴ Deptford Township Tax Ratables Book 664, July- August 1802, Pages 22-23, New Jersey State Archives, Record Group: New Jersey General Assembly Series, Tax Ratables. [Duplicates] 1768-1846. Series #SAS00001.

¹⁵ Jean Soderlund, “John Woolman’s Intersecting Testimonies against Enslavement, Colonialism and the Rum Trade”, *Quaker Studies* 28 2 (2023): 137–152. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3828/quaker.2023.28.2.3>.

¹⁶ John Woolman, *Some considerations on the keeping of Negroes: recommended to the professors of Christianity of every denomination* (Philadelphia: James Chastin, 1754), 2-6. Haverford College Quaker and Special Collections, <https://digitalcollections.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/object/hc135391>

¹⁷ John Woolman, *Some considerations on the keeping of Negroes: recommended to the professors of Christianity of every denomination*, 11.

¹⁸ “Manumitted: The People Enslaved by the Quakers,” <https://manumissions.haverford.edu/>.

¹⁹ “Manumission,” *A Glossary of Terms*, <https://manumissions.haverford.edu/glossary>.

²⁰ Sue Kozel, Part C- Section 1, “Gloucester County Official Manumission Records, with Birth and Criminal Proceedings for African Americans Filed with Gloucester County Historical Society, 1, “*Say our Names: Early African American Life in Historic Woodbury, Part of Deptford Township, 1770-1830*. A grant-funded report by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities as part of a grant to the Woodbury Public Library, April 22, 2022.

²¹ Manumission of George by Amy Hunter, sixth day of January 1791, Box 35, Pages 5-6. *Manumission Book without a Cover*, Manumission Book of Monmouth County New Jersey 1791-1844. Gloucester County Historical Society Library.

²² Deptford Township Tax Ratables Book 655, June – August 1789, Page 9, New Jersey State Archives, Record Group: New Jersey General Assembly Series, Tax Ratables. [Duplicates] 1768-1846. Series #SAS00001.

²³ Frank H. Stewart, ed., *Notes on Old Gloucester, New Jersey, Vol I.*, (Camden: Sinnickson Chew & Sons Company, 1917), 165. Digitized by Google, accessed June 8, 2025. https://www.rowandsc.org/books/01/the-glassboro-story-1779-1964/media/Notes_on_Old_Gloucester_County_New_Jersey.pdf

²⁴ Sue Kozel, Part C- Section 1, “Gloucester County Official Manumission Records, with Birth and Criminal Proceedings for African Americans Filed with Gloucester County Historical Society, 2-3. See for comparison with original manumission records at the Gloucester County Historical Society see, The “Certificates of Manumissions and Affidavits of Owners,” Gloucester County Slavery Records, Drawn from New Jersey Historical Records Survey Project. *Transcriptions of Early County Records of New Jersey*. Newark, N.J.: The Historical records survey, 1940. West Jersey History Project, <https://www.westjerseyhistory.org/docs/gloucesterrecs/slavery/manumissions.shtml>. Thank you again to Dr. Timothy Hack for his work in the early 2000s to compile these important resources.

²⁵ Membership Certificate, *New-Jersey Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery*, n.d. Digital Collection Quakers and Slavery, Allison Family Papers, Haverford Quaker & Special Collections, <https://digitalcollections.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/object/hc136540>. I believe this document is circa 1793 with the formation of the organization.

²⁶ “Davenport, Franklin, 1755-1832,” *Biographical Director of the United States Senate*, n.d. <https://bioguide.congress.gov/search/bio/D000069>

²⁷ Deptford Township Tax Ratables Book 653, July 1786, Page 18, New Jersey State Archives, Record Group: New Jersey General Assembly Series, Tax Ratables. [Duplicates] 1768-1846. Series #SAS00001.

²⁸ A List of Negroes in the Township of Deptford, undated, Box 8, Folder 25, No. 7, Item 2 of 2. New Jersey Abolition Society Papers. Frank H. Stewart Collection, Rowan University Special Collections and Archives. The back-page has a very faint listing of "Davenport." After consulting with Dr. Timothy Hack who worked on the West Jersey Project and transcribed the original documents, and her review of the originals held at Rowan University, she agreed the date must be 1798.

ADDENDUM TO KOZEL CHAPTER
SAY OUR NAMES: Black Lives Matter in the Past and Present in Woodbury
Running List of From Originally 615 African Americans to 944 African Americans, named and unnamed, in various available records

By Sue Kozel
 April 27, 2022
 Updated May 14, 2025

For the 615 African Americans originally named and unnamed on this list, their identity is important for descendants and residents of the greater Woodbury area. Entitling this section, “Say Our Names: Black Lives Matter in the Past and Present in Woodbury,” the project remembers people who were erased due to their race from most traditional histories. Thanks to the “Teaching Revolutionary NJ” Symposium at Atlantic-Cape Community College and co-sponsored by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, I was able to spend more time and excavate another 333 African Americans, including free Blacks in the 1830 United States Federal Census. And I believe when the next scholar jumps in, and digs deeper, he and she will uncover well over 1,100 individuals who lived in Deptford Township, which included Woodbury, from 1770-1830.

This list represents the culmination of the research and a celebration of acknowledging African American people who were enslaved and free. These residents lived in, worked in, died in, or met in Woodbury or Deptford Township. As previously stated, until 1854, Woodbury was part of Deptford Township, and the official records often breaks down individuals for census and tax purposes, for example, as having lived in Deptford Township. Sometimes Quaker Records indicate individuals living in Woodbury or assigned to the Woodbury Meeting, the Quaker religious meeting place. I also used a Frank H. Stewart voting list from 1789 to compare slave owners to voters listed. It is unclear to me whether all registered men in Gloucester County voted in the Court House or if just Woodbury/Deptford Township. According to Stewart’s list, 99 men voted, and it appears they are all white men. *Of course, we cannot celebrate enslavement. Instead, we commemorate the lives of African Americans by documenting their lives, counting them as people, and “saying” their names when uncovered.*

In 1786, the future President of the Gloucester County Abolition Society, Franklin Davenport, voted and won the election as an Assemblyman. He also owned a slave in July 1786 tax ratables for Deptford Township, in which the village of Woodbury was included.

The white men who voted in 1789 and also owned slaves included John Sparks, Rev. Andrew Hunter, and Daniel Smith. Members of the Whithal/Whithall and Wood families owned slaves but were not listed as voting. The 1789 list was previously mentioned in this report. Source: Stewart Collection, Rowan University Special Collections, Box 35, Folder 4, Woodbury Elections in 1789, undated.

Please note that in several tax ratable years for Deptford Township, there could be as many as two or three tax ratable reports. It is possible African American free blacks and enslaved people are counted multiply. But this list represents the raw running number of individuals counted in various lists.

In reviewing the names, please note in the right column is the source for the names as listed in sections of this working final report. All details on the historical sources are included in the respective chapters.

Finally, as we look at names, we will start to find patterns where the same or similar name is listed in more than one source. This evidence will help us see the movement of African American people with relationships with Quakers, for example, or employers when African Americans are free people. Sometimes a person may have been listed more than once, or the same person may have different surname spellings. This is a point that is noted for the purpose of investigating the records.

In order to honor the memory of those enslaved African Americans who were not listed by name, I have included in the count the individuals listed as “no name listed.” These unnamed African American enslaved people did have names and identities, but the tax assessor records and documentation for enslaved people did not list the names. The full “Say Our Names” report is available, non-digitized, at the Gloucester County Historical Society Library, as a bound book and a genealogical resource. Best wishes in your searching.

African American Name

Source

Report Part C, Sec. 1

1. Aaron – Deptford, 1791
2. Catherine – Deptford, 1821
3. Marinda Holland (Rin) – Deptford, resolved 1815
4. Henry Steward, Mulatto – Deptford, 1822
5. Rose – Deptford, 1803
6. Joseph, Mulatto – Deptford,
7. Phillis – Woodbury, no date, record missing
8. Samuel – Deptford, 1803
9. Aaron – Deptford, 1789
10. James Still, servant – Deptford, 1789
11. Edward Bellwood, Mulatto, son of Phoebe, Woodbury, 1808
12. Phebe, Woodbury, 1808, listed as mother of Edward Bellwood
13. Emaline S. Johnson, child of Phebe Johnson, Woodbury, 1821
14. Phebe Johnson, Woodbury, 1820
15. Dianna Johnson child of Sill, Woodbury, birth record, 1819, sometimes listed as Diana
16. Sill Johnston, Woodbury, Mother of Joseph, freed from slavery 1820, servant until July 4, 1829, sometimes listed as Johnson
17. Phebe Johnston, Deptford, 1820
18. Joseph Johnston, Woodbury, Son of Sill, freed from slavery 1820, servant until July 4, 1829
19. James Freeman, Deptford, 1801
20. Tenir Freeman, Deptford, 1800
21. Diana Turner, Woodbury, 1819
22. Judith Freeman, Deptford, 1800
23. Rachel Freeman, 1800
24. Mina, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”
25. Joseph, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”
26. Hannah, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”

27. Esther, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”
28. Aaron, Deptford, to be freed when “comes of age.”
29. Catherine, Deptford, 1774, mother of Mina, Joseph, Hannah, Ester, Aaron
30. Roger/Rodger, Deptford, 1789
31. George Huggins Mitchfield, Deptford
32. Negro Mingo, age 24 **Report Part C, Sec. 3**
33. “Negro woman” Jane
34. John Gooby, public hanging, Woodbury, 1821 **Report Part I**
35. George Tiller, murdered by John Gooby, 1821
36. Andrew Johnstone, hanging, Woodbury, 1797
37. Thomas Read, murdered by Andrew Johnstone, 1797
38. William, Andrew Hunter’s black man, 1793
39. Unnamed Person, early era Slave or Servant, whose skeleton hung **Report Part I**
in Woodbury High School, 1942
40. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1777 **Report Part D, Sec. 1**
41. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1777 Ratables for Deptford Twp.
42. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1777 1777 – File 639- Sept.
43. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1777
44. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779 1779 - File 641 – Feb.
45. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
46. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
47. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
48. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
49. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
50. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
51. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779 1779 – File 642 – Nov.
52. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
53. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
54. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
55. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
56. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable 1779
57. Unnamed Servant, Tax Ratable 1779
58. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780 1780 – File 643 – Feb.
59. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
60. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
61. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
62. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
63. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
64. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
65. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
66. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
67. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
68. Unnamed Servant, Tax Ratable, 1780 1780 – File 644 – May
69. Unnamed Servant, Tax Ratable, 1780
70. Black Pedro, 1780

71. Black Silas, 1780
72. Black Winn, 1780
73. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
74. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
75. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
76. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
77. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
78. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
79. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
80. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
81. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1780
82. Unnamed Servant, Tax Ratable, 1780
83. Negro Pedro, 1781 1781 – File 645 - January
84. Negro Joe, 1781
85. Negro Silas, 1781
86. Negro Winn, 1781
87. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
88. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
89. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
90. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
91. Negro Jonathan, 1781 1781 – File 646 – July
92. Negro Benjamin, 1781
93. Jonathan, 1781
94. Mollata Jodin or Fadin, 1781
95. Pedroro or Pedrno, 1781
96. Isaac, 1781
97. Benjamin, 1781
98. Illegible name, 1781
99. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
100. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
101. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
102. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
103. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
104. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1781
105. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782 1782 – File 647 – February
106. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782
107. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782
108. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782
109. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782
110. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782
111. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782 1782-File 648 – April
112. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782
113. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782
114. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782
115. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782 1782- File 649 – August

116.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782	
117.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782	
118.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782	
119.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782	
120.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782	
121.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782	
122.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1782	
123.	Negro Ben, 1783	1783 – File 650 – July
124.	Negro Jonathan 1783	
125.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1783	
126.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1783	
127.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1783	
128.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1783	
129.	Jant, 1784	1784 – File 651 – July
130.	Ben, 1784, owns 1 acre	
131.	Joseph, 1784	
132.	Pedron, 1784	
133.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784	
134.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784	
135.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784	
136.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784	
137.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784	
138.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784	
139.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1785	1785 – File 652 – July
140.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1785	
141.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1785	
142.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1785	
143.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1785	
144.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1785	
145.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1785	
146.	Benjamin Fisher, 2 Cows, 1786	1786- File 653 – July
147.	Pedrow, 1786	
148.	Harry, 1786	
149.	Joseph, 1786	
150.	Pncis Tom, 1786	
151.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1786	
152.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1786	
153.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1786	
154.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1786	
155.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1786	
156.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1786	
157.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1786	
158.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1786	
159.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1786	
160.	Negro Primas, 1787	1787-File 654-August

161.	Negro Sillis, 1787	
162.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1789	1789-File 655- June – August
163.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1789	
164.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1789	
165.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1789	
166.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1789	
167.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1789	
168.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1789	
169.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1789	
170.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1790	1790-File 656 – June-August
171.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1790	
172.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1790	
173.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1790	
174.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1790	
175.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1790	
176.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1791	1791-File 657- June-August
177.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1791	
178.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1791	
179.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1791	
180.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1791	
181.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1792	1792-File 658-July
182.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1792	
183.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1792	
184.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1792	
185.	Samuel Leonard, 1793, not identified as Black; his name appears as a black man in later years	
		1793-File 659-June-August
186.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1793	
187.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1793	
188.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1793	
189.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1794	1794-File 660-July-August
190.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1794	
191.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1794	
192.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1795	1795-File 661-June-August
193.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1795	
194.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1795	
195.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1795	
196.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1796	1796-File 662-June-August
197.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1796	
198.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1797	1797-File 663-August
199.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1797	
200.	Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1802	1802-File 664 -June-August
201.	Peter Ashmore, 1802	
202.	Benjamin Banister, 1802	
203.	Thomas Chester, 1802	

204. John Grenage, 1802
205. James Hose, 1802
206. Primus Still, 1802
207. Thomas Man, 1802
208. Perry Baul? Paul?, 1802
209. Lewis Shelly, 1802
210. Abraham Ho, 1802
211. Elijah Howard, 1802
212. Isaac Smothers, 1802
213. Cesar Murry, 1802
214. James Janaly, 1802
215. John Read, 1802
216. William Litchfield, 1802
217. Peter Ewel, 1802
218. John Stephenson, 1802
219. Cato Toney, 1802
220. Samuel Leonard, 1802
221. Samuel Read, 1802
222. Thomas Quan, 1802
223. Primus Still
224. His wife unnamed
225. James Hopey
226. His wife unnamed
227. His first of two children
228. His second of two children
229. Benn Fisher
230. His first of three children
231. His second of three children
232. His third of three children
233. George Grenage
234. John Brown
235. Benn Bannister
236. His wife unnamed
237. Henry Smith
238. Saml. Leonard
239. Thos. Hopkins
240. Levin Hasmon
241. Peter Ashmore
242. Thos. Chester
243. His wife unnamed
244. His first of two children
245. His second of two children
246. Thos. Mann
247. His wife unnamed
248. His first of six children

Part D – Sec. 2

249. His second of six children
250. His third of six children
251. His fourth of six children
252. His fifth of six children
253. His sixth of six children
254. Richard Stanton
255. Jonathan Abel
256. Daniel Johnson
257. Anthony at Morgans
258. John Fortune at Do (Ditto)
259. John at Roes
260. Benn at Jn. Tatum, Jr.
261. Nobel H. Gongo
262. His wife unnamed
263. His first of four children
264. His second of four children
265. His third of four children
266. His fourth of four children
267. Benn Farmer
268. His wife unnamed
269. His first of three children
270. His second of three children
271. His third of three children
272. Cesar
273. His wife unnamed
274. Mingo
275. Cato Isaac
276. Marmad. Wood, it appears he is listed with three individuals living in his house
unnamed
277. Second of three individuals living in his house unnamed
278. Third of three individuals living in his house unnamed
279. Jas. Cooper, it appears he is listed with two individuals living in his house
unnamed
280. Second of two individuals living in his house unnamed
281. Amos Cooper, it appears he is listed with two individuals living in his house
unnamed
282. Second of two individuals living in his house unnamed
283. John Wood, it appears he is listed with two individuals living in his house
unnamed
284. Second of two individuals living in his house unnamed
285. John Whitall, it appears he is listed with one individual living in his house
unnamed
286. At J. Coopers 2
287. At A. Coopers 1

288. Davenport, it appears he has a woman unnamed and her two unnamed children in his house
289. First of the unnamed children
290. Second of the unnamed children
291. John Lawrence, it appears he has one individual living in his house unnamed
292. Jas. B. Caldwell, it appears he has one individual living in his house unnamed
293. Joe
294. His unnamed wife, listed as a housekeeper
295. John Sparks, it appears has a woman named Friday living in his house
296. Friday's unnamed child
297. Henry Wood, it appears he has one boy living in his house unnamed
298. Win
299. His wife unnamed
300. His son unnamed
301. Joshua Howell, unclear if he is African American or has an African American in his house
302. His daughter unnamed
303. Sambo at Saml. Inskeep
304. Wife unnamed
305. Ruth Hopper, Servant Boy, 1808
306. William Bodly, colored
307. For his unnamed child
308. For his unnamed wife, 1809
309. James Covell, servant 1811
310. Joshua L. Howell, servant maid, 1811
311. John Tatum, servant maid, 1811
312. Joshua L. Howell, servant, 1812
313. George Cozens, servant maid, 1813
314. Sam Whital, servant maid, 1813
315. Samuel Chase, blackman, 1814
316. James Hopkins for black boy, 1814
317. William Dilks, for apprentice boy, 1815
318. John Downs, apprentice boy, 1815
319. James B. Colwell, servant, 1815
320. Primus Still for colored woman, 1815
321. For the colored woman above, 1815
322. Thomas Carpenter, blackman, 1816
323. Thomas Smith, colored, child, 1817
324. For his son, 1817
325. Betty Reeves, a black man's child, 1819
326. Simon Harwood, a black man burned to death, Ordered by Jacob Glover, 1819
327. Samuel Webster, servant maid, 1819
328. Thomas Clark, black man's child, 1819
329. For his son, 1819
330. James Gisipis, servant, 1819

Part E – Coffin Book

John Simmermon made coffins
in his Woodbury shop

331. Henry Black, blackman, child, 1821
332. For his child, 1821
333. John Dunham for burying an unnamed black child in Stranger's Graveyard, 1821
334. Betty Reeves buried a black man's son, 1821
335. For his son 1821
336. Jonathan Gobster, blackman, son, 1821
337. For his son, 1821
338. Samuel Reeves buried a black man from the shore by order of Jacob Glover, 1822
339. Henery Tomes, a black man buried from David Whitalls, 1822
340. Joseph Newbole, servant boy, 1822
341. Jacob Still, 1823
342. George Wright, blackman, child, 1823
343. His child listed here to be counted, 1823
344. Thomas Mann, colored, buried in Strangers Yard, 1825
345. Also Mann's son, 1825
346. Benjamin Patterson, colored, 1826
347. Patience, a black woman buried from Francis Collins, Strangers Graveyard, 1826
348. Francis Collins, blackman, 1826
349. His child, 1826
350. James Thomas, blackman, 1826
351. For his child, 1826
352. Mary Harrison, for her black woman servant, 1826
353. David Lobel, black man, 1826
354. Mrs. Harrison for her servant black woman, 1827
355. Jonathan Gobson, black man, 1827
356. For his child, 1827
357. Thomas Carpenter, his black boy, 1827
358. Simon Harrold, blackman, 1829
359. William Johnson, blackman, 1829
360. For his child, 1829
361. Jacob Manly, blackman, Strangers, 1829
362. For his wife, 1829
363. Henry Williams, blackman 1831
364. For his son, 1831, Strangers
365. Judith Morris, black woman, 1832
366. Joseph Stephens, black man, 1832
367. For his son, 1832
368. Charles Rocko, A Blackman, Stranger Yard, 1832
369. David Thompson, a blackman, Strangers Yard, 1832 in William Cooper's House
370. James Thomas, Blackman, from Josiah Tatem's house, Strangers Yard, 1833
371. Cupid Waterford, a colored man, Hurley's yard, Deptford, 1833
372. James Smith, a colored man, Stranger's Yard, 1833
373. James Thomas, a Blackman, Strangers, 1833
374. For his wife, 1833
375. Jacob Manley, a Blackman, Strangers, 1833

376. His child, 1833
377. Philip White, a colored man, Strangers, 1833
378. For his wife's mother, 1833
379. Francis Collins, colored man, 1834
380. His child, 1834
381. Benjamin Peterson, a colored man, 1834
382. For his child, 1834
383. Peter Ricko, a Blackman, Strangers, 1834
384. John Dawson, The estate of Black man, 1835
385. John Wilson, a black man, in Josiah Tatem's house, Stranger's, 1835
386. For his child, 1835
387. Francis Collins, 1835
388. For his child, 1835
389. William Tonkin, "for his black boy," 1835
390. Solomon Wilson, A Blackman, Strangers, 1836
391. William Saringo, Blackman, Strangers, 1836
392. For his wife, 1836
393. John White, a colored man, Strangers, 1837
394. For his child, 1837
395. Simon Harrad, Blackman, 1837
396. For his daughter, 1837
397. Smith a Blackman, 1837
398. Isaac Anderson, "in the colored people's ground," 1839 Reference to
Red Ave. Cemetery deeded by John Tatum in 1832.
399. James Smith, a Black Man, 1839
400. For his wife, 1839
401. David Right, a Blackman, 1839
402. For his child, 1839
403. Thomas Conway, a Black Man, 1841
404. For his deceased child, 1841
405. David Wright, a Black Man, 1841
406. For his child.
407. Jacob Reed, a Coloured Man, 1842
408. For his child, 1842
409. David Wright, a Coloured Man, 1842
410. For his deceased granddaughter, 1842
411. George Wright, a Blackman, 1843
412. Ishmeal Smart, 1843
413. For his child, 1843
414. Ebenezer Man, 1844
415. Pays for his daughter, 1844
416. Samuel Thomas, a Blackman, 1845
417. For his wife, 1845
418. Joseph Wright, Coloured man, 1845
419. For his child, 1845

- 420. Jeremiah Rayman, a Colored man, 1845
- 421. For his child, 1845
- 422. "A colored man Abraham Brown promised to pay" for Jacob Allen, 1845
- 423. Charles Baxter, a colored man, 1845
- 424. For his wife 145
- 425. Lewis Collins, a colored man, 1846
- 426. For his child, 1846
- 427. Edward groves, a colored man, 1847
- 428. For his deceased mother, 1847
- 429. Mary Fisher, a colored woman deceased, 1847
- 430. Joseph Wright, the estate of Joseph Wright, a colored man, 1847
- 431. Fisher's child, Strangers Yard, 1847 – I believe this is Mary Fisher who died earlier
in the year
- 432. For her child, 1847
- 433. Richard Stevenson for his servant boy, 1851
- 434. Pg. 2 "9th mo., 1788. "No negroes held in bondage amongst us,
and we believe those generally used well who are set free,
and there are some who are careful as to their education,
thou' not so generally as could be desired."

Part K – FHS Quakers who owned Slaves

- 435. Pg. 12 "11th mo. 1761. Isaac Burrough sold a negro and bought one."
- 436. Pg. 12 "11th mo. 1761. Robert Stiles and Isaac Ellis bought a negro."
- 437. Pg. 13 "4th mo., 1763. Benj. Thackeray offered to set his slaves free."
- 438. Pg. 17-18 7th mo., 1767 Abner Woolman appeared and said his wife's father, at his
decease, had several negroes and one of them was given to his wife. A committee was
appointed to appraise the negroes. He proposed to give his proportion for the use of said
negroes.
- 439. Still regarding Abner Woolman paying to support the three African Americans he
will free. Pg. 18 "8th mo., 1767. The labor of the three negroes was appraised at 56
pounds. He agreed in writing to give to said negroes his one-third, as per letter filed with
meeting."
- 440. Second of Abner Woolman's African American enslaved men.
- 441. Third of Abner Woolman's African American enslaved men.
- 442. Pg. 21 "6th mon., 1773... Constantine Wilkins, who bought a slave for charitable
reasons manumitted him 8th 7th mo., 1773. Spread on minutes of meeting."
- 443. Pg. 23 "5th mo., 1775. "William Kaies manumitted a slave, and same was recorded
on minutes."
- 444. Pg. 26 "12th month 1776. A book was ordered to record slave manumissions at the
expense of the meeting."
- 445. Pg. 28 "6th mo., 1777. "Samuel Tonkin manumitted four slaves in order to
conform with Friends' principles. He was then received into membership."
- 446. "7th mo., 1777. The committee on slaves reported that they had secured the
manumission of 18 slaves."
- 447. This is the 2nd enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
- 448. This is the 3rd enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.

449. This is the 4th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 450. This is the 5th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 451. This is the 6th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 452. This is the 7th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 453. This is the 8th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 454. This is the 9th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 455. This is the 10th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 456. This is the 11th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 457. This is the 12th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 458. This is the 13th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 459. This is the 14th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 460. This is the 15th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 461. This is the 16th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 462. This is the 17th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 463. This is the 18th enslaved person receiving freedom in 1777.
 “8th mo., 1777. 28 slaves in compass of Haddonfield meeting freed, but Jacob Jennings, Samuel Clement, William Cooper, Isaac Horner, Joseph Morgan, John Barton, Hannah Ladd, Elisa Est. Mickel not yet complied, but appear uneasy on account of the slavery of their negroes. Richard Matlack, Jacob Stokes, Marmaduke Cooper, Joseph Nicholson, and Elizabeth Iredell seem not disposed to set their’s free.”
 464. Jacob Jennings uneasy to free his slave.
 465. Samuel Clement uneasy to free his slave.
 466. William Cooper uneasy to his slave.
 467. Isaac Horner uneasy to free his slave.
 468. Joseph Morgan would not free his slave.
 469. John Barton uneasy to free his slave.
 470. Hannah Ladd uneasy to free her slave.
 471. Elisa Est. Mickel uneasy to free her slave.
 472. Richard Matlack will not free slave.
 473. Jacob Stokes will not free slave.
 474. Joseph Nicholson will not free slave.
 475. Elizabeth Iredell will not free slave.
 476. Marmaduke Cooper will not free slave.
 477. This is 1st of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 478. This is 2nd of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 479. This is 3rd of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 480. This is 4th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 481. This is 5th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 482. This is 6th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 483. This is 7th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 484. This is 8th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 485. This is 9th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 486. This is 10th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 487. This is 11th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 488. This is 12th of 28 enslaved people being freed.

489. This is 13th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 490. This is 14th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 491. This is 15th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 492. This is 16th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 493. This is 17th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 494. This is 18th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 495. This is 19th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 496. This is 20th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 497. This is 21st of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 498. This is 22nd of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 499. This is 23rd of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 500. This is 24th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 501. This is 25th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 502. This is 26th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 503. This is 27th of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 504. This is 27 of 28 enslaved people being freed.
 505. Pg. 33 "1st mo., 1779. A committee was appointed to give assistance to negroes set at liberty."
 506.
 507. "2nd mo., 1779. A large number of the negroes from most parts within the limits of this meeting attended, -- a solid and favored meeting, and one affording encouragement for Friends to continue and extend their further care and regard for that people."
 508. "2nd mo., 1779. The year meeting recommendation for the opening of schools was considered. [Probably for whites.] A committee was appointed to consider what was necessary and useful for schooling of free negroes."
 509. Pg. 34. "2nd mo., 1779. The committee recommended a subscription of 100 pounds for the schooling of negro children, buying books, etc. This was agreed upon 3d mon., 1779."
 510. Pg. 36 "12th mo., 1779. "Jacob Stokes, Isaac Horner, Joseph Nicholson and Marmaduke Cooper have not manumitted their slaves." This line counts for Jacob Stokes who will not free his slaves.
 511. This line counts for Isaac Horner who will not free his slaves.
 512. This line counts for Joseph Nicholson who will not free his slaves.
 513. This line counts for Marmaduke Cooper who will not free his slaves.
 514. "3d mo., 1780. "Edward Gibbs manumitted his negroes."
 515. "9th mo., 1780. "Marmaduke Cooper and Isaac Horner were disowned for not freeing slaves."
 516. This line represents Isaac Horner being disowned for not freeing slaves.
 517. Pg. 38 "10th mo., 1781. There was a negro meeting at Woodbury, also one at Haddonfield for one day only."
 518. Page 42 "5th mo., 1786. A meeting was held for negroes at Newton Meeting House (one time.) Considerable number attended.
 519. Pg. 43 "6th mo., 1788. A subscription was taken up for the schooling of the children of free negroes."

520. Pg. 45 "7th mo., 1790. A meeting for black people was held at Newton."

521. Alexander Cook

Part G- Black

Masons in Woodbury

522. Henry Hern

523. William Calvary

524. John Q. Adams

525. Henry Sharp

526. Ebenezer Mann

527. John Fisher

528. George Northesen

529. Jacob Burton

530. James Mann

531. Samuel Trusty

532. Frank Kersey

533. George Matthews

534. Charles Hoy

535. William E. Brown

536. Scott Holden

537. George Frisbey

538. John Frisbey

539. Morris Huffington

540. Frank M. Kersey

541. Alexander Bailey

542. Riley Davis

543. George Davis

544. Theodore Holden

545. Charles Wilson

546. Jacob Burton

547. Oscar Jones

548. Street Williams

549. Frank Tull

550. Joseph Sutton

551. Herman Williams

552. James Mann

553. William Champ

554. Henry Sharp

555. James Washington

556. Louanna A. Allen

Part F- Red Bank Ave. Burials with

Relatives Names

557. Jno. Andrews

558. Robert R. Andrews

559. Son of Joseph Andrews

560. Son of Anna Andrews

561. Alexander Bailey

562. H.B.

563. A.C.
564. Alex Cook
565. Jno. Coy
566. Mary Coy
567. Sarah M. Craig
568. Wife of Eno. Craig
569. Rev. W.F. Dickerson
570. Bessie Fisher
571. John B. Fisher
572. J.B.F.
573. A.M.G.
574. Charles Gibson
575. Joseph Gibson
576. Annie M. Gould
577. Daniel H. Grattan
578. Son of William H. Grattan
579. Son of Priscilla Grattan
580. Priscilla Grattan
581. Annie Groves
582. John H. Handy
583. H. M. Harris
584. John Harris
585. Sarah Eliza Harris
586. Daughter of William F. Harris
587. Daughter of M. Harris
588. Hannah H. Hern
589. Henry Hern
590. L. O. Hill/I. U. Hill on Monumet
591. Mary Hoffman
592. E. J. J.
593. Samuel Thomas Jenkins
594. William T. Jenkins
595. Eliza J. Jones
596. Wife of Lewis E. Jones
597. J.L.
598. John Lewis
599. S.A.M.
600. Sarah Anna Mann
601. Wife of Ebenezer Mann
602. James McCollins
603. Eben Money
604. M.A.R.
605. Hester Ricco
606. Wife of ____ Ricco
607. Mary Ann Reilly

608. Rachel Robinson
609. A.B.W.
610. Isaac Watson
611. Isaac Anderson is not list on the monument but he is listed in the Coffin Book as interred at the "colored people's ground."
612. Rice, Granddaughter of Peter From Eileen Shanahan's research on Coffin Books - verify
613. John Pedrick Please refer back to the Coffin Book section for challenges names
614. Tom Runaway Slave Ad posted by Sparks and Hunter, 12/12/1794
615. Jack
616. John Cooper, "Black Man in Woodbury" His Vendue Book, 1829, GCHS Society,
Black History, Gloucester

ADDITIONAL NAMES ADDED 5/14/2025

617. A minimum of 58 African American Soldiers fighting in the Battle of Red Bank on Oct. 22, 1777.

Accounts note that the 1st and 2nd Rhode Island Regiments included between 58-80 African American soldiers. First African American soldier.

618. African American Soldier
619. African American Soldier
620. African American Soldier
621. African American Soldier
622. African American Soldier
623. African American Soldier
624. African American Soldier
625. African American Soldier
626. African American Soldier
627. African American Soldier
628. African American Soldier
629. African American Soldier
630. African American Soldier
631. African American Soldier
632. African American Soldier
633. African American Soldier
634. African American Soldier
635. African American Soldier
636. African American Soldier
637. African American Soldier
638. African American Soldier
639. African American Soldier
640. African American Soldier

- 641. African American Soldier
- 642. African American Soldier
- 643. African American Soldier
- 644. African American Soldier
- 645. African American Soldier
- 646. African American Soldier
- 647. African American Soldier
- 648. African American Soldier
- 649. African American Soldier
- 650. African American Soldier
- 651. African American Soldier
- 652. African American Soldier
- 653. African American Soldier
- 654. African American Soldier
- 655. African American Soldier
- 656. African American Soldier
- 657. African American Soldier
- 658. African American Soldier
- 659. African American Soldier
- 660. African American Soldier
- 661. African American Soldier
- 662. African American Soldier
- 663. African American Soldier
- 664. African American Soldier
- 665. African American Soldier
- 666. African American Soldier
- 667. African American Soldier
- 668. African American Soldier
- 669. African American Soldier
- 670. African American Soldier
- 671. African American Soldier
- 672. African American Soldier
- 673. African American Soldier
- 674. African American Soldier
- 675. African American Soldier
- 676. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable,
1784 Census
Total – 33 Enslaved People unnamed total first person
- 677. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed, Untaxed Slave
- 678. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 679. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 680. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 681. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 682. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 683. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave

- 684. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 685. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 686. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 687. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 688. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 689. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 690. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 691. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 692. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 693. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 694. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 695. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 696. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 697. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 698. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 699. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 700. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 701. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 702. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 703. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 704. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 705. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 706. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 707. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 708. Unnamed Slave, Tax Ratable, 1784 Census Total Unnamed Untaxed Slave
- 709. Peter Burdins, colored, purchased coffin for his daughter
- 710. William Tonkin's "Black Boy." Connected to number 388.
- 711. John Williams "(A Blackman man)" listed in Josiah Tatum's house
- 712. Jonathan Aggins, 1830 Federal Census, Deptford
- 713. Abm Anderson, 1830 FC
- 714. Grace Ashmore, 1830 FC
- 715. John Bulion, 1830 FC
- 716. Ely Bowers, 1830 FC
- 717. Johns Cooper, 1830 FC
- 718. Francis Collins, 1830 FC
- 719. Thoms Defimies (?,) 1830 FC
- 720. Alan Denby, 1830 FC
- 721. Sampson Ewell, 1830 FC
- 722. John Freeman, 1830 FC
- 723. John Fisher, 1830 FC
- 724. Chas Gold, 1830 FC
- 725. Henry Harris, 1830 FC
- 726. Simon Harris, 1830 FC
- 727. Nathaniel Hage, 1830 FC
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- 729. Adam Justice, 1830 FC
- 730. David Johnson, 1830 FC
- 731. Richard Miller, 1830 FC
- 732. Dave Morgan, 1830 FC
- 733. Mary Morris, 1830 FC
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- 735. Jos Purnell, 1830 FC
- 736. Peter Ricko, 1830 FC
- 737. James Risley, 1830 FC
- 738. John Saunders, 1830 FC
- 739. John Smith, 1830 FC
- 740. Jeremiah Still, 1830 FC
- 741. David Thompson, 1830 FC
- 742. Charles Thompson, 1830 FC
- 743. James Thomas, 1830 FC
- 744. Amos Wamsley, 1830 FC
- 745. Henry Williams, 1830 FC
- 746. Cupid Waterford, 1830 FC
- 747. George Wright, 1830 FC
- 748. Benj Wilson, 1830 FC
- 749. Mary Watson, 1830 FC
- 750. John William, extra text, 1830 FC
- 751. Joseph Williams, extra text, 1830 FC
- 752. Unnamed free Black living in white household, 1830 FC
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**“At Home Or Abroad We Are Never Sure”:
New Jersey Women’s Revolutionary Experiences**

Lucia McMahon

Observing local “Training Day” activities held in April 1775, New Jersey resident Jemina Condict wondered how soon the recruits would “be called forth to the field of war,” as it seemed that “All hopes of Conciliation between Britain and her colonies are at an end.” Just over a year later, after hearing news about casualties “from our army,” Condict reflected on the costs and uncertainties of war: “When we are home we think ourselves secure. But at home or abroad we are never sure. When or what our end is to Be.”¹ As Jemina Condict’s comments remind us, frequent military engagements brought the stark realities of war not only to soldiers on the battlefields, but also to women and their families along the “home front.”²

*My contribution to this *Teaching Revolutionary NJ Symposium* builds upon earlier research efforts that I conducted for Dey Mansion that were compiled in a 2022 interpretative plan commissioned with support by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. See Lucia McMahon, “Women in Revolutionary New Jersey: A Research Report for the ‘Expanding the Narrative’ Series to Support Women’s History Events and Programming at Dey Mansion-Washington’s Headquarters.” I am grateful to Kelly Ruffel and the staff at the Passaic County Department of Cultural and Historic Affairs for their support.

¹ Jemina Condict, April 1775 and September 1776, Diary Entries, in Elizabeth Evans, ed., *Weathering the Storm: Women of the American Revolution* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 42-46. Condict’s original diary manuscript is held at the New Jersey Historical Society. Her grandfather was one of the first settlers of the Pleasantdale section in West Orange and her father served in the American Revolution. The diary was kept by the family before being donated to the New Jersey Historical Society. See “Guide to the Jemina Condict Diary,” New Jersey Historical Society, online at: <https://jerseyhistory.org/guide-to-the-jemima-condict-diary1772-1779mg-123/>.

² For important scholarly accounts of the American Revolution in New Jersey that address the effects of wartime on local residents, see James J. Gigantino III, ed., *The American Revolution in New Jersey: Where the Battlefield Meets the Home Front* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015); and Maxine Lurie, *Taking Sides in Revolutionary New Jersey: Caught in the Crossfire* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2022).

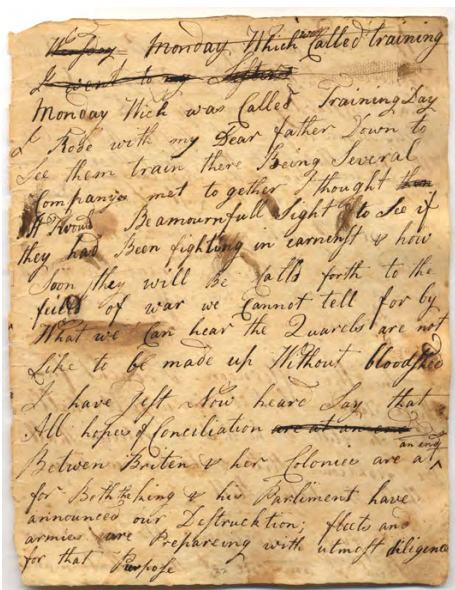


Figure 1: April 1775 page from Jemima Condict's Diary, from original held at the New Jersey Historical Society, online at the New Jersey Women's History Project:
<https://njwomenshistory.org/discover/biographies/jemima-condict/>

Jemima Condict's diary offers compelling accounts of how wartime created disruptions and losses across New Jersey. Unfortunately, the historical record contains relatively few diaries written by New Jersey women during this crucial time period in our history. Most surviving documents tend to feature white women affiliated with men of political and military prominence, as their historical papers were most likely to have been saved and archived.³ To gain additional insights into women's experiences, scholars have relied on a variety of sources, including pamphlets, newspaper articles, visual materials, legal documents, and military records. Such research efforts have enabled historians to "Remember the Ladies," as Abigail Adams famously wrote to her husband in 1776.⁴

³ I regret that this essay does not cover the experiences of enslaved and Indigenous women, due to space and time constraints. I recommend the important scholarship of Sue Kozel and Christopher Slaby included in this collection.

⁴ Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March - 5 April 1776, Adams Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society: <https://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=L17760331aa>. For scholarly overviews of women's experiences during the American Revolution that have informed my research, see Karen Cook Bell, *Running from Bondage: Enslaved Women and Their Remarkable Fight for Freedom in Revolutionary America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for American Independence* (New York: Knopf, 2005); Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Holly A. Mayer, ed., *Women Waging War in the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2022); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1980); and Barbara Oberg, ed., *Women in the American Revolution: Gender, Politics, and the Domestic World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019).

The tools and techniques of material culture and historic preservation also help to uncover compelling aspects of women's history. Historic homes and museums can offer engaging settings to consider the perspectives of New Jersey women and their families during the American Revolution. As educators plan 250th commemorations across the state, we can encourage field trips and visits to various "home front" sites, such as Dey Mansion in Wayne or the Ford Mansion in Morristown, both of which served as Washington's military headquarters during the war.⁵ Even when in person visits are not possible, material culture analysis of eighteenth-century homes, objects, and consumer goods enable us to explore important aspects of women's roles and experiences during the era of the American Revolution.

Pre-Revolutionary Homes

In 1774, Jemina Condict noted: "It seems we have troublesome times a coming, for there is a great disturbance abroad in the earth and they say it is tea that caused it."⁶ Of course, the causes of the American Revolution were more complex than disputes over tea, yet Condict's remarks aptly underscore the key roles that consumer goods played in colonial protest movements. The study of material culture and domestic spaces helps us to appreciate how seemingly private and personal objects and activities could be infused with distinctly patriotic and political meanings.

The layout, functionality, and décor of eighteenth-century homes offer important insights into women's roles and experiences in the years leading up to the American Revolution. Much of a family's everyday comfort and material well-being in colonial America depended upon women's household labors, as well as their consumer choices and social practices. When visiting historic homes such as Dey Mansion, visitors can easily identify the kitchen, as the hearth, table, earthenware, and other objects reveal the room's functionality. Such items also suggest the extensive labor and time required for meal preparation in an era lacking refrigeration, indoor plumbing, electrical appliances, and other modern conveniences. Fruits and vegetables had to be grown, cultivated, harvested, and preserved. Eggs, dairy, and poultry products had to be procured from the family farm, or purchased or bartered for in local markets. Frequent trips to gardens, cellars, or storehouses were required to gather various provisions. Water had to be drawn from outdoor wells and carried in buckets in order to fill kettles and basins. Meal preparation required careful watching of hearths and brick ovens to assure proper cooking of breads, stews, and other dishes.

⁵ For those unable to travel, Dey Mansion created a series of Virtual Field Trips during the pandemic that are still available for public viewing. See: <https://seepassaiccounty.org/dey-mansion-virtual-field-trip/>.

⁶ Jemina Condict, October 1, 1774, Diary Entry, in Evans, ed. *Weathering the Storm*, 36.



Figure 2: *Dey Mansion Kitchen and Hearth* (courtesy of Dey Mansion)

Domestic work traditionally done by women, such as meal preparation, childcare, cloth production, laundry, tending to fires, and countless other tasks, all took considerable skill and time. Although an increasing amount of goods could be purchased in local shops, women also regularly helped to produce essential household items such as candles, soaps, and linens. Affluent families in New Jersey and other colonies typically depended on enslaved individuals or employed domestic servants to assist with the time-consuming, labor intensive tasks associated with running eighteenth-century homes and farms. Even when she relied on and benefited from enslaved or hired labor, an elite woman was expected to be actively involved in the management of her household.

Beyond the time-consuming, everyday tasks involved in household production and domestic labor, colonial women were expected to provide hospitable, welcoming spaces to their families and guests. A house served as the family's residence, as well as a means of showcasing their socio-economic status to the community. In the eighteenth-century British Atlantic world, families conveyed "their status through cultural practices and sociable routines."⁷ Hosting tea

⁷ Stephen Hague, "Building Status in the British Atlantic World," in Daniel Maudlin and Bernard L. Herman, eds., *Building the British Atlantic World: Spaces, Places, and Material Culture, 1600-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 234. For other influential works on material culture, see George W. Boudreau and Margaretta Markle Lovell, eds., *A Material World: Culture, Society, and the Life of Things in Early Anglo-America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019); Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); Catherine E. Kelly, *Republic of Taste: Arts, Politics, and Everyday Life in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); John Styles and Amanda Vickery, eds., *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2006); and Jennifer Van Horn, *The Power of Objects in Eighteenth-Century British America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

parties, dinners, and dances were important social rituals that were part of women's household duties. Such activities required careful planning, along with attention to consumer trends. Everything in an eighteenth-century home, including its furniture, dishes, decorations, and other material objects, helped to convey a family's affluence, gentility, and good taste.



Figure 3: Dey Mansion Parlor (courtesy of Dey Mansion)

American colonists were firmly embedded within transatlantic trade and commercial networks.⁸ By the mid-eighteenth century, an expanding array of stoneware, porcelain, and glassware, along with fabrics, furnishings, and decorative accessories, were available for sale in colonial America. Shops regularly advertised “a neat assortment of China, Glass, Stone, and Delph Wares, of all Kinds,” much of it imported from England.⁹ A 1778 notice from Elizabeth-Town, New Jersey provides a representative look at the types of consumer and decorative items that could be found in many eighteenth-century family homes. Among the goods available for sale were “tea-tables, China Bowls, looking-glasses, pictures; a large copper kettle, brass andirons, shovels and tangs, a jack, pewter plates and dishes, &c.”¹⁰

⁸ See T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Paul G. E. Clemens, “The Consumer Culture of the Middle Atlantic, 1760-1820,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (October 2005): 577-624.

⁹ Advertisement by George Ball, *New-York Journal*, August 1, 1771, 404.

¹⁰ “To Be Sold,” *New-Jersey Gazette* (Trenton), May 13, 1778, 3.

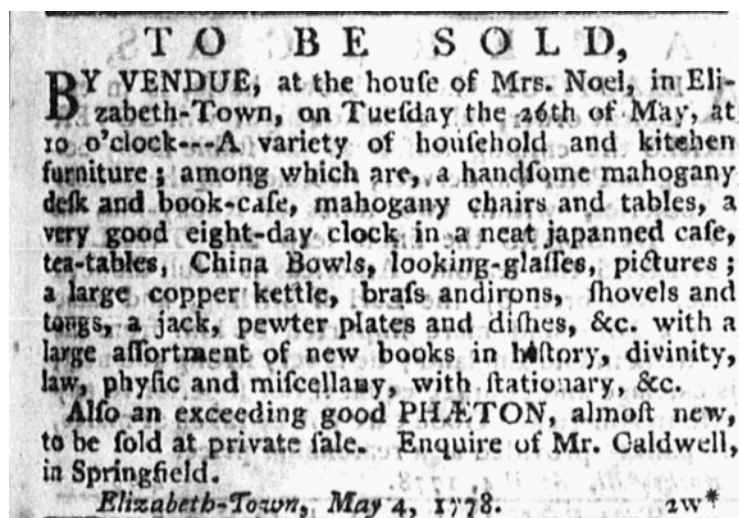


Figure 4: Advertisement showing the variety of eighteenth-century household items for sale (*New-Jersey Gazette*, May 13, 1778)

Shopping is often devalued as a frivolous or trivial activity, rather than recognized as a form of household labor, or appreciated for its role in maintaining a family's socio-economic standing.¹¹ Decisions about what kind of tea set or dinnerware to purchase, for example, were determined in part by financial considerations, but also required discernment to determine the quality and appropriate uses of various goods. Stoneware tended to be more practical, durable, and affordable than porcelain, which was more delicate and featured decorative flourishes designed to impress.

In the years leading up to the American Revolution, women's domestic labor, consumer choices, and social rituals took on new meanings. Beginning in the 1760s, patriots protested British taxation and other policies by engaging in a series of "non-importation" actions, which included the boycotting of imported goods such as tea, cloth, and porcelain. As American women were key consumers of these household items, their support for and participation in these movements was essential. In the process, colonial women often found themselves in the midst of political tempests.

"True Female Patriots"

In the years leading up to the American Revolution, consumer items and choices could also reflect political allegiances. A compelling artifact from the eighteenth century is a teapot created in the 1760s that was imprinted with the phrase "No Stamp Act" on one side, and "America: Liberty Restored" on the other. The passage of the Stamp Act in 1765, which placed a tax on paper goods used in the colonies, including newspapers, legal documents, stationary, and playing cards, sparked early waves of protests and calls for boycotts of British goods. Its repeal in 1766

¹¹ See Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

was celebrated widely, inspiring this “No Stamp Act” tea pot to be produced in England for sale in America.



Figures 5 and 6: “No Stamp Act Tea Pot” (circa 1766-1770), online at the National Museum of American History: https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1320066

Picture an eighteenth-century woman politely pouring tea for her guests in her parlor with a tea pot that read “No Stamp Act.” Without saying a word, she would have clearly conveyed a political stance. Today, t-shirts, hats, coffee mugs, stickers, and other items can indicate our personal or political preferences. In the context of colonial boycotts and protests, women’s consumer choices often served as purposeful actions layered with added political and patriotic significance.

Attention to the “politics of fashion” helps to further underscore women’s central contributions to pre-Revolutionary protest movements.¹² Throughout the 1760s and 1770s, patriot leaders appealed to American women to produce and wear “homespun” clothing to help support the growing colonial resistance against England. Women’s key roles in making clothing, linens, and other textiles for their families were ubiquitous and common tasks in colonial

¹² See Kate Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

households.¹³ In the years leading up to the American Revolution, these textile productions took on new connotations and consequences. Producing and wearing homespun cloth instead of buying imported fabrics became a deliberate patriotic action designed to reduce reliance on British goods. Newspaper accounts publicly celebrated women who produced and wore homespun as “true female patriots.” An article from 1769 urged men to “endeavour to imitate the worthy example” of American women who wore homespun and refused to drink British tea.¹⁴

The ladies were all decently clad in homespun, the manufacture of their own town; who, like true female patriots, shewed by their conduct, that they despised to dress with the manufactures of a country, that is endeavouring to enslave us.

If also appeared, that a female patriotism was predominant in their conduct, when the tea table was introduced; for instead of making use of any foreign tea, (which is become more nauseous since loaded with an unconstitutional tax,) they substituted a tea, the growth of that town, called Ever Green, which for its pleasant flavour, and many excellent qualities, is preferred by many to the best green tea.

Would the gentlemen but endeavour to imitate the worthy example, these ladies have set them of industry; what happy effects might we expect it would be productive of? As this country never call'd louder for industry than at present.—Rouse, then ye idle drones! Who saunter away your lives in idleness and inactivity! And ye tavern haunters, who are continually doating over your cups, throw by your bottle and glass, and distinguish yourselves by some act of industry, or expect no more favour or countenance will ever be given you by the ladies.

Figure 7: Newspaper article celebrating “true female patriots” (*New-York Gazette*, April 10, 1769)

Some women organized group spinning events to publicly and collectively show their support of colonial protest movements. The activities of these “daughters of liberty” were published in various newspaper accounts. In April 1766, the *Newport Mercury* in Rhode Island reported that “Twenty of the Daughters of Liberty” met together “and exhibited a most noble Pattern of Industry . . . spinning 74 2/3 Skeins of good Linen Yard.” Another “Spinning Match” held in 1770 featured “between 50 and 60 Daughters of Liberty engaged in that laudable Employment.”¹⁵

¹³ For women’s textile productions, see Marla R. Miller, *The Needle’s Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: Knopf, 2001); and Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage, 1991).

¹⁴ “Huntington, April 1, 1769,” *New York Gazette*, April 10, 1769, 2.

¹⁵ “Bristol, April 10, 1766,” *Newport Mercury* (Newport, RI), April 14, 1766, 3; *Boston Evening-Post*, June 11, 1770, 3.

Through such activities and experiences, American women developed a growing sense of their civic duty. Women understood that the personal choices they made, from spinning cloth to serving tea, could also have important political and patriotic significance. As war drew near, a front-page newspaper article in 1775 addressed “To the Ladies” called upon American women for assistance in “promoting every measure that is, or may be, recommended by the representatives of these colonies, for the preservation and establishment of our liberties.”¹⁶

At the Crossroads

Once the war began, women experienced a variety of economic, personal, and political displacements, as they dealt with absences from loved ones, wartime shortages, unexpected relocations, and thwarted plans, not to mention grief and sorrow due to the loss of family members from military conflicts and disease. Concerned about the welfare of their homes, families, and communities, women navigated wartimes challenges and assumed new roles and responsibilities. Some women took over the management of family farms, businesses, and financial accounts, while others served as camp followers, providing direct assistance to troops. The wartime fundraising activities of the “Ladies of Trenton” illustrate how women expanded their sense of civic engagement. Through such “public displays of patriotism,” as scholar Catherine Hudak notes, women across the state raised over \$15,000 used to provide soldiers from New Jersey troops with “three hundred and eighty pair of Stockings.”¹⁷ Once again, textile productions were central to women’s revolutionary roles.

The American Revolution was, as historian Carol Berkin notes, “a home-front war,” with significant wartime activities taking place beyond the battlefields.¹⁸ Throughout the war, New Jersey women contended with military movements, encampments, and actions that often took place in close proximity to their homes. For many residents, discerning rumors from accurate reports about military activities could be stressful and challenging. As Burlington resident Margaret Hill Morris reflected: “The accounts hourly coming in are so contradictory and various that we know not which to give credit to.”¹⁹ Writing from Philadelphia in early December 1776, Sarah Logan Fisher recorded hearing “that Howe’s army had possession of Woodbridge [New Jersey]” and were approaching Philadelphia. Two days later, she “heard the account of Howe

¹⁶ “To the Ladies, My Fair Countrywomen,” *Maryland Journal* (Baltimore), April 5, 1775, 1.

¹⁷ Catherine Hudak, “The Ladies of Trenton: Women’s Political and Public Activism in Revolutionary New Jersey,” *New Jersey Studies* 1, no. 1 (Summer 2015), especially 47-67; also see Emily J. Arendt, “‘Ladies Going about for Money’: Female Voluntary Associations and Civic Consciousness in the American Revolution,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 157-186.

¹⁸ Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers*, 27.

¹⁹ Margaret Hill Morris, January 4, 1777, Journal Entry, excerpted in, “What Sad Havoc Will This Dreadful War Make in Our Land,” *America in Class*, National Humanities Center: <https://americainclass.org/sources/makingrevolution/war/text7/margaretmorrisnj.pdf>.

contradicted.”²⁰ Multiple and conflicting reports about troop movements created distress and confusion for women, especially if they were deciding whether to leave their homes and seek safety elsewhere.

As reports that British troops were approaching reached Burlington in early December 1776, many families “were going in haste into the country” to escape confrontation. When Hessian troops arrived in Burlington, followed soon after by American troops, residents who remained in town endured having their houses searched while hearing the sounds of nearby cannon fire. Troop movements in and around Burlington continued during the weeks leading up to the Battles of Trenton and Princeton. After the Battle of Trenton, a group of American troops “marched into town with artillery, baggage, &c., and are quartered on the inhabitants.” In the days that followed, Burlington residents were “much straightened for bread to supply the soldiers and firewood to keep them warm. This seems to be only one of the many calamities of war,” resident Margaret Hill Morris reflected.²¹

With so much troop movement happening across the state, New Jersey families were often called upon to supply nearby troops with food, supplies, and housing. Both American and British troops engaged in foraging and plundering to meet their needs for key supplies, including food, clothing, lumber, and livestock. An army’s techniques for procuring goods could depend on the perceived loyalties of local residents. Sarah Logan Fisher heard reports that when “Howe’s army were in many parts of the Jersies,” British troops “plundered those that they looked upon as rebels, but were civil and kind to them that were friends to government, & paid for what they took from them.”²²

While both armies often promised to reimburse citizens for provisions, at times supplies were more forcefully seized. In August 1780, George Washington ordered Major General Nathanael Greene to send troops to “forage” in Bergen county “up to the English neighborhood.” The army was in critical need of supplies, including “hay and grain as well as Cattle hogs and sheep fit for slaughter; and horses fit for the use of the Army. All the articles taken are to be receipted for by the respective departments to which they belong.”²³ While the army sought to keep proper records and reimburse patriotic families for provisions, officers could not always control the individual actions of soldiers, especially in contested spaces marked by divided loyalties. During this foraging campaign in New Jersey, Greene reported instances of the “most

²⁰ Sarah Logan Fisher, December 1, December 3, and December 8, 1776, Diary Entries, in Nicholas B. Wainwright, “‘A Diary of Trifling Occurrences,’ Philadelphia 1776-1778,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 82, no. 4 (October 1958), 414-415.

²¹ Margaret Hill Morris, December 6, December 27, and December 29, 1776, Journal Entries, in “What Sad Havoc Will This Dreadful War Make in Our Land,” *America in Class*, National Humanities Center: <https://americainclass.org/sources/makingrevolution/war/text7/margaretmorrisnj.pdf>.

²² Sarah Logan Fisher, December 21, 1776, Diary Entry, in Wainwright, “A Diary of Trifling Occurrences,” 417-418.

²³ From George Washington to Major General Nathanael Greene, 24 August 1780,” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-27-02-0565>.

horrid acts of plunder by some of the Pennsylvania line.” Greene sharply condemned these soldiers’ “impudence,” including a group who “plundered a house yesterday” despite the presence of “a number of officers.”²⁴ Such actions remind us that family homes could be sites of conflict, contestation, and violence.

Those in close proximity to troops also worried about sickness and disease, particularly with so many cases of smallpox prevalent. Upon hearing “melancholy accounts of the distresses of the sick soldiers,” Sarah Logan Fisher noted that “the doctors seem very apprehensive of the disorder spreading among the inhabitants.”²⁵ Deaths from disease brought grief to many families already experiencing wartime disruptions. Shortly after being compelled to relocate her family to Flemington, New Jersey, Esther de Berdt Reed’s young daughter died of smallpox.²⁶ Throughout the war, Jemina Condict reported numerous accounts of illness and death among family, friends, and residents, including small children. “What a time is this!,” she lamented. “A sickly time and a very dying time, the people fleeing before their enemies.”²⁷

For New Jersey women living at the crossroads, wartime was often full of uncertainty, danger, and loss. In *Taking Sides in Revolutionary New Jersey: Caught in the Crossfire*, scholar Maxine Lurie highlights the long, protracted nature of the war, describing how many patriots and loyalists “paid a heavy price in the destruction wrought by the war throughout the state.”²⁸ When troops passed through local areas or set up encampments, the boundaries between military and private lives overlapped considerably.

Home as Headquarters

Throughout the American Revolution, officers and soldiers often “occupied” family residences, directly bringing the war to women and their families. Patriots who allowed their homes to be used as military headquarters provided valuable service and space to the war effort. In 1780, the home of Theunis Dey, a colonel in the Bergen County militia, was identified as an advantageous spot for General Washington’s temporary headquarters. Writing to Washington in June 1780, Major Henry Lee, Jr. reported “a position most convenient for an army on the road by Captain Marsailles to Col. Dey’s.” The area was chosen for its proximity to the Paterson Great Falls and main transportation routes: “From this position are three routes of retreat . . . One days march will bring the army to Morris town or to Ramepaugh.” The location also provided

²⁴ To George Washington from Major General Nathanael Greene, 26 August 1780,” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-27-02-0582>.

²⁵ Sarah Logan Fisher, January 14, 1777, Diary Entry, in Wainwright, “A Diary of Trifling Occurrences,” 422.

²⁶ Owen S. Ireland, *Sentiments of a British-American Woman: Esther de Berdt Reed and the American Revolution* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017), 266.

²⁷ Jemina Condict, January 20, 1777, Diary Entry, in Evans, ed., *Weathering the Storm*, 47.

²⁸ Lurie, *Taking Sides in Revolutionary New Jersey*, 58.

convenient access to supplies needed to maintain the army: “The country is very well supplied with green forage.”²⁹ A map of northern New Jersey from 1781 identified the home of “Tunis Dey,” along with other strategic locations in the region.



Figure 8: Section of 1781 map, “A Sketch of the Northern Parts of New Jersey,” showing the home of “Tunis Dey” above Little Falls, online at the Library of Congress:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3810.ar125100>

Transforming a private home into a military headquarters could be a disrupting experience for all involved. The previous winter, Theodosia Ford, a war widow living in Morristown, gave General Washington the use of her home as his headquarters. Washington and his men “occupied two rooms below all the upper floor, Kitchen, Cellar & Stable.”³⁰ The cramped quarters at Ford’s Morristown home created strains and inconveniences. As Washington noted in January 1780: “Eighteen belonging to my family, & all Mrs. Fords are crowded together in her Kitchen, & hardly one of them able to speak for the colds they have caught.”³¹ Eventually, Washington had renovations made to the Ford home to make his winter encampment stay more tolerable.

²⁹ To George Washington from Major Henry Lee, Jr., 30 June 1780,” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-26-02-0463>.

³⁰ “Varick transcript” note, “General Orders, 21 July 1780,” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-27-02-0180>.

³¹ “From George Washington to Major General Nathanael Greene, 22 January 1780,” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-24-02-0178>. Also see “Ford Mansion – Washington’s Headquarters”: <https://www.nps.gov/morr/learn/historyculture/ford-mansion-washington-s-headquarters.htm>.

Fortunately, the Dey home seemed to offer more hospitable lodgings. On July 6, 1780, Alexander Hamilton wrote to his future wife Elizabeth Schuyler from the Dey family residence: “Here we are my love in a house of great hospitality—in a country of plenty.”³² Jane Varick, a cousin of the Dey family, recorded a visit she made “to Col. Deys” during General Washington’s stay, noting that she “was surrounded by my Head Quarters Acquaintances.”³³ Such descriptions suggests that Theunis Dey’s wife Hester succeeded in providing a warm and welcoming environment for General Washington and his entourage.

At the same time, it’s important to consider that the Dey family had to learn new ways of living and navigating in their own “house of great hospitality.” Washington typically traveled with a large group of officers, aides, and staff. Imagine the continual activity and chaos that would be part of Washington’s stay, with numerous staff and visitors constantly coming in and out of the house. Such arrangements must have required a great deal of patience and fortitude for any hosting family. When family homes were repurposed as military headquarters, women’s everyday routines and spaces were disrupted.

On the grounds outside of the headquarters, women were living and working as camp followers, providing laundry, meals, and other services for the Continental army. Camp followers were vital to the war effort, but their experiences were vastly different from the women who lived inside homes repurposed for military headquarters.³⁴ Many of us are familiar with “legendary” figure of Molly Pitcher, often said to be inspired by Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley’s actions at the Battle of Monmouth. Molly Pitcher is perhaps best understood as a composite figure representing the thousands of women who served as camp followers throughout the war. As scholar Cassandra Good reminds us, “Americans don’t need to rely on legends to tell the stories of women in the Revolution,” when the lived experiences of women are so compelling.³⁵

Camp followers went wherever the army did, delivering essential forms of support while enduring the sometimes harsh discomforts of encampment life. Some women may have traveled out of a wish to remain in physical proximity to their husbands, but for others, economic necessity was a deciding factor. George Washington acknowledged that in certain regiments, particularly where families experienced displacements due to British occupations, women camp

³² “From Alexander Hamilton to Elizabeth Schuyler, 6 July [1780],” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-02-02-0751>.

³³ Letter to Richard Varick from Miss J. Varick, October 29, 1780, Richard Varick Papers, New-York Historical Society.

³⁴ See Taylor Mellaci, “Camp Followers,” Mount Vernon: <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/camp-followers/#:~:text=Still%2C%20Washington%20was%20irritated%20with,treat%20camp%20followers%20differently%20than.>

³⁵ Cassandra Good, “Molly Pitcher, the Most Famous American Hero Who Never Existed,” *Smithsonian Magazine* (March 17, 2021): <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/molly-pitcher-most-famous-american-hero-who-never-existed-180977229/>.

followers often “have no other means of subsistence.”³⁶ Camp followers received rations from the Continental army and were often given payment from soldiers for various tasks. At first, some officers resented the presence of women camp followers. General military orders issued in August 1777 complained how “the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement.”³⁷ Officers were instructed to account for and justify the presence of women camp followers and “earnestly called upon to permit no more than are absolutely necessary, and such as are actually useful, to follow the army.”³⁸ By the end of the war, George Washington came to recognize the essential roles that women camp followers played, both in terms of labor provided and for troop morale. “I was obliged to give Provisions to the extra women in these Regiments,” Washington noted, “or loose by Desertion—perhaps to the Enemy—some of the oldest and best Soldiers in the Service.”³⁹

A 1782 watercolor by French artist Pierre Charles L’Enfant of an encampment near West Point provides a rare first-hand visual depiction of women camp followers. Their shadowy presence in this drawing reminds us that women were often “hidden in plain sight” at military encampments and battlefields throughout the war.

³⁶ From George Washington to Robert Morris, 29 January 1783,” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99-01-02-10529>.

³⁷ “General Orders, 4 August 1777,” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-10-02-0508>.

³⁸ “General Orders, 27 August 1777,” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-11-02-0067>.

³⁹ From George Washington to Robert Morris, 29 January 1783,” *Founders Online*, National Archives: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99-01-02-10529>.



Figure 9: A 1782 watercolor by Pierre Charles L'Enfant depicting women camp followers at American encampments along the Hudson River, online at the Museum of the American Revolution: <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/picturing-washington-s-army/pages/campfollowers>

Living in close proximity to battlefields and military encampments, women expressed support and encouragement for war efforts, as well as frustration and fear over uncertain circumstances and outcomes. Attention to women's experiences brings to light the complex, contested, and prolonged nature of the American Revolution. For many women, the home front and military spaces remained inextricably connected throughout the war.

Conclusion

When a "celebration of peace" was held in New Jersey to commemorate the official end of the war in 1783, "a splendid assembly of ladies, attended on the joyful occasion." At ceremonies held in New Brunswick the following year, a toast was made to "the patriot *Ladies* of America—May their domestic felicity be never again interrupted by the alarms and distresses of war."⁴⁰ New Jersey women looked forward to more peaceful times, free from the "alarms and distresses" of wartime disruptions and displacements.

⁴⁰ "Trenton, May 14," *New-Jersey Gazette* (Trenton), May 14, 1783, 3; "New-Brunswick, July 6," *Political Intelligencer* (New Brunswick) July 6, 1784, 3. See Lucia McMahon, "A Splendid Assembly of Ladies," *Revolution NJ* (March 29, 2023): <https://www.revny.org/blog/splendid-assembly-of-ladies>.

While this essay has focused primarily on women's experiences along the home front, for a brief time, some New Jersey women could vote and directly participate in the formal political process. The 1776 New Jersey state constitution declared that "all inhabitants" who met property and residency requirements "shall be entitled to vote." While some assumed this language represented an accidental oversight, research by Jan Ellen Lewis and other scholars uncovered that state legislation from 1790 and 1797 used the phrase "he or she" to refer to voters. Women's ability to vote in New Jersey was removed in 1807, when the state explicitly restricted the right to vote in the state to "free, white, male citizens."⁴¹

Despite losing the right to suffrage, New Jersey women continued to explore and expand their place in the new nation, inspired by revolutionary ideas about the rights of citizenship, freedom, and equality. The legacy of the American Revolution for women was multi-faceted, reflecting the complex opportunities and challenges facing the new nation. Visits to historic sites and attention to material culture help to bring their stories to life, and remind us of how important it is to look beyond the battlefields to the home front in order to gain more expansive views of this critical moment in history.

⁴¹ Jan Ellen Lewis, "Rethinking Women's Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776-1807," *Rutgers Law Review* 63, no. 3 (2011): 1017-1035; and the online exhibit, "When Women Lost the Vote: A Revolutionary Story, 1776-1807," The Museum of the American Revolution: <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story>.

Governor William Livingston and Slavery: The Personal and Public

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“Respecting the Slavery of the Negroes . . . I am determined, as far as my influence extends, to push the matter [of manumission] till it is effected: being convinced that the practice is utterly inconsistent, both with the principles of Christianity & Humanity; & in Americans who have almost idolized liberty, particularly odious & disgraceful.”¹ This excerpt from a 1778 letter by William Livingston to Anti-slavery Quaker Samuel Allinson highlights Livingston’s public and personal sentiments on slavery and emancipation. Written while leading New Jersey through the War for Independence as its governor, Livingston would continue to struggle over and grapple with the institution of slavery for the rest of his life. Livingston was never successful at getting the New Jersey Legislature to pass an act for gradual emancipation. The Garden State would be the last northern state to pass such a law, which did not happen until 1804. At the national level, Livingston did advocate for several anti-slavery policies that would be included in the United States Constitution. Livingston’s record with regard to slavery in his personal life and estate would be similarly mixed. While he would become a member of the New York Anti-Slavery Society and seemingly manumitted all of those persons over whom he claimed ownership, he and even more so his family, would continue to benefit from enslaved labor for the rest of his life and well into the 19th Century.

While Livingston’s personal and professional papers are not especially well-organized, they are numerous and available.² These rich archival resources enable us to go beyond a traditional history of a ‘Founding Father’ and to access all of the men and women, white and black, who inhabited [William Livingston’s World](https://sites.google.com/kean.edu/williamlivingstonsworld). Examined in this way, Livingston’s World grows to include the full Livingston family, one of the most powerful and prominent in New York and New Jersey. It also encompasses the Kean family, namesake of my employer. And many more families, primarily in the Mid-Atlantic but also in Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Georgia. By examining Livingston’s public and private writings on race and slavery, as well as his vast network of correspondents both public and personal, we can use a ‘Founding Father’ to access deeper ideas and practices around the concept of liberty and slavery in America’s revolutionary era.

William Livingston would have considered himself a man of the Enlightenment. Hailing from a prominent New York family, educated at Yale, and having established himself as a political leader, theorist, and propagandist, Livingston deserves to be placed in the

¹ Livingston, William to Allinson, Samuel. *The Papers of William Livingston*. Edited by Carl E. Prince. 2. Vol. 2:399-404. Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1980.

² A full bibliography of Livingston’s works can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/kean.edu/williamlivingstonsworld/about-livingston/william-livingstons-bibliography>

A five volume collection of his writings were published as: *The Papers of William Livingston*. Edited by Carl E. Prince.

Enlightenment tradition.³ Of course, the term ‘Enlightenment’ is rightfully challenged given its considerable limitations in the eighteenth century, particularly with regard to slavery. Livingston used classical and contemporary references to display his intellect, impress his readers, and highlight his erudition. Whether it was writing poetry or propaganda tracts supporting the cause of American independence, Livingston arguably better embodied the Enlightenment ideals of applying reason to improve humanity than better-known founders such as Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Jefferson. He was proud of his book collection.⁴ Livingston name-dropped many prominent theorists of his age in his work, especially John Locke, demonstrating engagement with their ideas on the application of reason. In evaluating how he gathered and applied these concepts, we can use a ‘Founding Father’ to look at the application of enlightenment ideas in both theory and practice, particularly with regard to slavery and the enslaved.

Although William Livingston was not himself directly involved in the slave trade, the money that paid for his education and provided him the connections to have a successful law practice were rooted in the proceeds of slavery. The Columbia University and Slavery Project makes clear the personal and financial connections to slavery by the Livingston family.⁵

Livingston claimed ownership of enslaved persons for much of his life before manumitting several persons enslaved to him in the 1780s.⁶ While he privately supported a law for gradual emancipation in New Jersey, he was unable to get such a law passed in his lifetime. He used slave rhetoric in his anti-British propaganda without acknowledging his own culpability. Livingston referred to his home in Elizabethtown, NJ as ‘Liberty Hall,’ even while he benefitted from the labor of enslaved persons in that home. While it would not be appropriate to call Liberty Hall a slave plantation – as it was not producing goods made from the labor of enslaved people for markets – enslaved persons lived and worked there until at least 1829.⁷ As a number of documents make clear, such as receipts for purchasing and mending shoes⁸, there were people enslaved to William Livingston living and working at the house throughout the era of the American Revolution. More work remains to be done on the history and legacies of enslaved

³ For more on Livingston as an Enlightenment thinker, see the essay by Dr. Elizabeth Hyde in this volume.

⁴ Kean students have embarked on a major project to recreate his library (which we have as a 24 page document in his hand) and to compare it with those of other Founding Fathers.

<https://sites.google.com/kean.edu/williamlivingstonworld/home?authuser=0>

⁵ See especially: Foner, Eric. “Columbia and Slavery: A Preliminary Report.” Pp.9-12.

<https://columbiaandslavery.columbia.edu/content/dam/cuandslavery/about/Eric-Foner-Preliminary-Report.pdf>

⁶ Livingston, William. “Bill of Manumission for His Slaves.” October 1787. *The Papers of William Livingston*. Edited by Carl E. Prince. 5. Vol. 5:302. New Brunswick, NJ: For the New Jersey Historical Commission, Rutgers University Press, 1988.

⁷ We are still trying to determine the numbers of servants vs enslaved persons in the Livingston household.

⁸ Receipts from Livingston Papers. Retrieved from William Livingston’s World,

<https://sites.google.com/kean.edu/williamlivingstonworld/history-lab-teaching-with-livingston/teaching-the-history-of-slavery-and-enslaved-persons/primary-sources-slavery/finding-the-enslaved-in-the-sources#h.76w2oziiyb5k>

people owned by the Livingstons. The Livingston family and Liberty Hall from the period of 1772-1790, however, provides a good example of slavery in the north and the impact and limits of revolutionary ideas and rhetoric with regard to the institution of slavery.

Livingston also had to grapple with the institution of slavery in his public life, as the first popularly elected Governor of New Jersey and as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. In his official correspondence and public pronouncements, Governor Livingston clearly outlined the divisions over the institution of slavery within the state. As we have already read, writing to a Quaker ally, Samuel Allinson, in 1778, Livingston showed that his personal sentiments were turning against the institution. While many patriot leaders did not see the irony of a revolution in the name of liberty being led by slave owners, Livingston could recognize that slavery was "particularly odious and disgraceful" among Americans who had idolized liberty. Many New Jersey political and business leaders, however, were unwilling to embrace manumission and Livingston was repeatedly forced to compromise and postpone a general manumission law.

Personally, Livingston also appears to have been conflicted about slavery. His letter asking to join the New York Manumission Society and his Writ of Manumission freeing "A certain Negro woman slave named Bell and her child" in 1786 and 1787 show that he was taking actions to towards abolition. In this, he may have been influenced by his son-in-law, John Jay, one of the founders of the New York Manumission Society. Jay's record and evolving attitudes on slavery appear in many ways to be similar to Livingston's.⁹

In writing to the New York Anti-Slavery society to request membership, Livingston wrote: "I can safely promise them that neither my tongue, nor my pen, nor my purse shall be wanting to promote the abolition of what to me appears so inconsistent with humanity and Christianity, and so inevitably perpetuating of an indelible blot, with all the nations of Europe, upon the character of those who have so strongly asserted the unalienable rights of mankind, and whose conflict in the defence of those rights it has pleased Providence to crown with such signal (and to all human appearance unexpected) triumphant success."¹⁰ Here again we can see the convergence of the personal and political in Livingston's writings and sentiments on slavery. He makes the connection to the War for Independence explicit in this letter while at the same time is clearly aware of the inconsistencies of a so-called war for liberty fought by slave owners.

The following year, Livingston would legally manumit two persons enslaved to him. These seemingly are the last people over which he claimed ownership. Livingston submitted the following: "Know all Men by these presents that I William Livingston of the Borough of Elizabeth in the County of Essex & State of New Jersey, in consideration of my regard for the natural liberties of mankind, & in order to set the example as far as my voluntary manumission of Slaves may have any influence on others have manumitted emancipated and set at Liberty & Do by these presents manumit emancipate & set at Liberty a certain Negro woman slave called Bell and

⁹ For John Jay and slavery, see Foner, "Columbia and Slavery," 22-23.

¹⁰ Livingston, William to New York Manumission Society. 2 June 1786. *The Papers of William Livingston*. Edited by Carl E. Prince. 5. Vol. 5:255-56. New Brunswick, NJ: For the New Jersey Historical Commission, Rutgers University Press, 1988.

her child [Lambert] from any services to me or my representatives as fully & effectually to the extent & purposes whatsoever as if they had been born first free. In witness thereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal this day of [] October in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred & eighty seven.”¹¹

Yet, two years later, when his recently widowed daughter Kitty Livingston Ridley wrote to him from Baltimore to ask if she could return to live at Liberty Hall and bring with her several enslaved persons, Livingston said yes without hesitation. He added how he had struggled to find good servants to labor at Liberty Hall.¹² While Livingston would only live a few months more, it seems that there were enslaved persons in his home and household when he passed away.

Brockholst Livingston, William’s son, owned four enslaved persons in 1790, when his father died, and one in 1800, according to census records.¹³ To give another example, Peter Jay, John Jay’s father, ‘gave’ the choice of which of his sons, Zilpha and Mary, two persons enslaved to him, preferred as their master. This is consistent with elite families throughout the Mid-Atlantic. As historian Graham Russel Hodges notes, 83 percent of recorded wills in New York and New Jersey from 1775-1783 bequeathed enslaved persons to heirs or ordered them to be sold in order to pay off debts.¹⁴

One way in which Livingston’s conflicted and complicated stance on slavery is apparent is with regard to confiscation sales in New Jersey during the War for Independence. Furthering the notion that in New Jersey the Revolutionary War was a Civil War¹⁵, William Livingston supported and sought harsh penalties for loyalists who were convicted of treason, notably the confiscation and sale of their property. That enslaved persons were included in these sales demonstrates that they were clearly seen as property and plainly challenges the argument that the war was about freedom. Following the end of hostilities, Livingston again pressed the legislature for gradual abolition in 1784-1785. The legislature refused to pass such a law, claiming that manumission would further harm the state’s floundering economy. Nor, however, was Livingston able to use the arguments of the New York Manumission Society, of which he was a member, to convince the New Jersey legislature to follow the example of their neighbor to the north. Here again it seems that the combination of pragmatism, perceived need to hold a strong line against loyalists, and a lack of support in the legislature prevented Livingston from being able

¹¹ Livingston, William. "Bill of Manumission for His Slaves." October 1787. *The Papers of William Livingston*. Edited by Carl E. Prince. 5. Vol. 5:302. New Brunswick, NJ: For the New Jersey Historical Commission, Rutgers University Press, 1988.

¹² Livingston, Catherine "Kitty" to Livingston, William. *The Papers of William Livingston*. Edited by Carl E. Prince. 5. Vol. 5:413-15. New Brunswick, NJ: For the New Jersey Historical Commission, Rutgers University Press, 1988. Livingston, William to Livingston, Catherine "Kitty." *The Papers of William Livingston*. Edited by Carl E. Prince. 5. Vol. 5:419-20. New Brunswick, NJ: For the New Jersey Historical Commission, Rutgers University Press, 1988.

¹³ Foner, "Columbia and Slavery," 11.

¹⁴ Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 143.

¹⁵ This argument is espoused particularly in: Lurie, Maxine. *Taking Sides in Revolutionary New Jersey: Caught in the Crossfire*. Rutgers University Press, 2022; Mercantini, Jonathan. "New Jersey in Flux: Governor William Livingston in 1777." *New Jersey Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 130-148.

to advance manumission, however much he may have supported it personally. The New Jersey legislature only freed three men in similar circumstances and they had all actively fought for the patriot cause. To Livingston, state sanctioned sales of enslaved property “gave greater sanction to legitimate the abominable practice.”¹⁶ As Jim Gigantino states, when the War for Independence was used to support a gradual abolition act, which finally passed in 1804, it would be a false memory of that war, not the reality of the war as a means of freedom for the enslaved.¹⁷

Frustrated by the inaction of the legislature, Livingston did succeed in pushing through a ban on the importation of enslaved persons from Africa and the West Indies in 1786.¹⁸ Two years later, that law would be further amended to try and bar masters from selling their enslaved property out of state. Still, however, a full act of gradual emancipation was beyond Livingston’s powers of persuasion.¹⁹ As his letter to James Pemberton, a Quaker Abolitionist makes clear, Livingston felt constrained by New Jersey politics. In 1788, he wrote:

In this State, we have made some [move?] towards the emancipation of slaves. It was my wish to have gone farther. But however desirous the western part of New Jersey [South Jersey] may be, & I verily believe from real principle, to make short of the work there are some of the northern counties whom too rapid a progress in the business would furnish with an excuse to oppose it altogether. And whatever may be a man’s own personal wish, experience in business, & especially in political affairs, will teach every one this piece of instruction; it is then prudence not to insist upon it; but to get what we can; & which obtained, paves the way for procuring the rest.

This letter encapsulates Livingston’s pragmatism, as well as his general opposition to slavery. But it also highlights, however, the larger resistance to emancipation in New Jersey. While Livingston can be credited with advancing the cause of gradual abolition in New Jersey, he was never able to get a full emancipation act passed by the legislature.

Having convinced the New Jersey Legislature to ban the importation of enslaved persons from Africa, Livingston would do the same, with arguably greater effect, at the national level. Although Livingston was not one of the five men initially nominated to represent New Jersey at the Constitutional Convention, he was pressed into service after others declined to attend. Livingston was reacquainted with many of his Continental Congress colleagues again in

¹⁶ Livingston, William to Pemberton, James. *The Papers of William Livingston*. Edited by Carl E. Prince. 5. Vol. 5:357-59. New Brunswick, NJ: For the New Jersey Historical Commission, Rutgers University Press, 1988. Gigantino, James. *The Ragged Road to Abolition*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015, 67.

¹⁷ Gigantino, James. *The Ragged Road to Abolition: Slavery and Freedom in New Jersey*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015, 61-63.

¹⁸ Gigantino, *Ragged Road*, 73.

¹⁹ Hodges, *Root and Branch*, 169.

Philadelphia.²⁰ According to James Madison and others, Livingston made little impression in the Convention's oral debates. This is not especially surprising as Livingston was considered a poor speaker by his peers and, seemingly, by himself. Upon first encountering him in 1774, John Adams on two occasions pointed to Livingston's lack of oratory ability noting that he was "a bad speaker, though a good writer," and that he was "no public speaker." Another delegate said about Livingston that he was 'a man who never did, who never will, and who never can speak in any public assembly.' On the other hand, Livingston was widely acknowledged for his skill as a writer. Acknowledged as one of the best and most accomplished propagandists of the American Revolution, he was known for both the intellectual force of his arguments and for his ready wit. John Adams rated him, "very sensible and learned and a ready writer." Similarly, William Pierce a Georgian delegate at the Federal Convention of 1787, noted of Livingston, "His writings teem with satyr and a neatness of style. But he is no Orator."²¹

Widely recognized for his leadership qualities, he was given the difficult task of chairing two important committees at the Convention: the assumption of state debts and slavery. Both of these issues were – after the famed Connecticut Compromise of a bicameral Legislature – among the most contested and divisive of those considered by the Convention.

By this time, Livingston's personal opposition to slavery seems clear. He had manumitted all of those people enslaved to him by 1787. As chair of the committee considering slavery, Livingston brokered a compromise allowing the continuation of slave imports until at least 1800. Interestingly Livingston had been able to secure a better deal in his committee than was the full Convention after delegates from South Carolina and Georgia demanded additional years in exchange for their support. Thus, imports of enslaved persons were permitted to continue until 1808, at which time Congress could pass a law barring any further imports. Many states, notably Virginia, supported such a ban because it would increase the value of their slaves by sharply reducing the supply. Livingston did recognize this possibility and he had sought, unsuccessfully to also ban the export of enslaved persons from New Jersey.²² Livingston, recognized, as did the vast majority of Mid-Atlantic and Northern delegates to both the Convention and to the state ratification conventions, that this compromise with the southern delegates was necessary to secure the many benefits they believed the new Constitution would convey.²³

²⁰ Here I am drawing on the Senior Honors thesis of a Kean University student, Caleb Dagnall. His deeply researched thesis – awarded the Stellhorn Prize as the most outstanding undergraduate research paper on NJ History -- explores William Livingston and his connections to Federalist ideas around the Constitutional Convention and Ratification. Dagnall, Caleb. "Statehood and Sovereignty: A Case Study of William Livingston from Philosopher to Federalist". *New Jersey Studies*. Vol. 5, No. 1 (Winter 2019), 190-227. <https://njs.libraries.rutgers.edu/index.php/njs/article/view/153>.

²¹ Quoted in Dagnall, "Statehood and Sovereignty," 214-215.

²² Fehrenbacher, Don E. *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery*. Oxford University Press, 2001, 34-36.

²³ Mercantini, Jonathan. "Most contemptible in the Union: South Carolina, Slavery, and the Constitution," in David T. Gleeson and Simon Lewis, eds., *Ambiguous Anniversary: The Bicentennial of the International Slave Trade Bans*, University of South Carolina Press, 2012, 40.

Historians have largely concluded that NJ was willing to adopt the Constitution swiftly because it would stop paying additional duties on goods imported through New York or Philadelphia. Without a major port to collect import duties and without Western lands to sell to raise revenue, New Jersey would most benefit by having duties and Western lands controlled by a national government rather than the state administration. Pauline Maier, in her lengthy study of Ratification, spends very little time discussing New Jersey's ratification process, largely because of the state's early and unanimous ratification as well as the lack of sources for reviewing the ratification debates and questions.²⁴

William Livingston, as Governor, was not at the state Ratification Convention, but he paid close attention to the ratification process. Following the state legislature's unanimous approval of calling a convention to consider the new Constitution, Livingston wrote to Jedidiah Morse, "I can inform you of one fact which gives me great pleasure. It is that both the branches of our Legislature were unanimous in laying before the people the constitution planned by the late Convention;" Livingston found "great pleasure" in reporting to Morse that the New Jersey Legislature was acting expediently and in unanimity to proceed in the ratification process. He further commented on the ratification process in two of New Jersey's neighboring states: Connecticut and New York. Livingston wrote, "I hope & doubt not that the citizens of Connecticut will be as ready to adopt [the Constitution], as I have reason to think we shall: & then I think we shall soon make my native Country, New York, a little sickish of their opposition to it." The benefits of the new form of government for New Jersey were obvious to Livingston, and to the state's elected leaders as well. Livingston could be proud of his role in creating that document and in establishing the foundation for its ratification in New Jersey.²⁵

In an official sense, however, Livingston was far more reserved in voicing his position on the issue of Federalism and the adoption of the Constitution. Remaining virtually silent on the process of New Jersey's state ratification convention, Livingston did not address the Legislature prior to, during, or immediately following the state ratification convention. In fact, it was not until the following August that Livingston addressed the Legislature regarding their ratification of the Constitution. Despite the delayed response, at this point the Constitution had achieved ratification in enough states -- officially nine, but also by Virginia and Livingston's native New York, necessary to put the document into effect, Livingston's address to the New Jersey Legislature provides valuable insight into his view on the adoption of the Constitution and the prospect of a national government. Livingston wrote, "I heartily congratulate you on the adoption of the constitution proposed for the government of the United States by the federal Convention, and it affords me great pleasure that New Jersey has the honour of so early and so unanimously agreeing to that form of national Government..."

While New Jersey had voted to ratify the Constitution, it was a constitution that enshrined the institution of slavery. And the state legislature, despite Livingston's prodding, had made little

²⁴ Maier, Pauline. *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787-1788*. Simon and Schuster, 2011, 122-123.

²⁵ Dagnall, "Statehood and Sovereignty," 222-224.

effort and no progress toward manumission or emancipation in the state. It would take another 14 years after Livingston's death in 1790 before New Jersey would pass a law for the gradual abolition of slavery, making New Jersey the last northern state to do so.

Studying the institution of slavery through Livingston's World provides a lens by which we can see more than the traditional hagiography of the founding generation. We can begin to explore more deeply the contradictions of these men and their times. The self-reflection of Livingston shows that he and the men with which he associated were not unaware of their contradictory behaviors. While other scholars have tried to understand how men could preach about liberty but claim ownership over black men and women, for William Livingston while Enlightenment was not incompatible wholly incompatible with slavery, his ideas and even his own propaganda forced him to move towards manumission if not abolition.

Teaching Revolutionary New Jersey Symposium eBook Text

Christopher J. Slaby

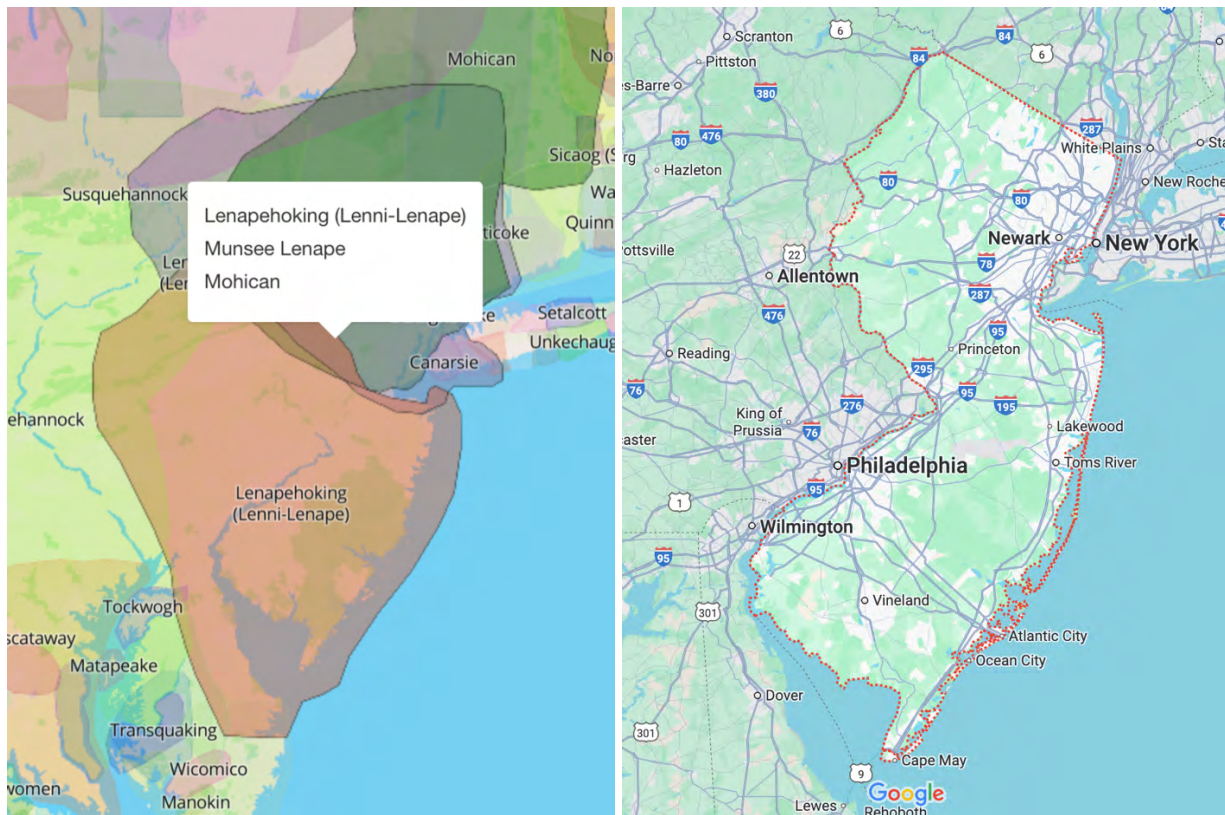
Native Americans and the American Revolution in Lenapehoking/New Jersey

“As a free & independent People (Which the Delaware Nation have ever declared themselves to be) they claim as their sole Property, all the Lands they have long inhabited & hunted on.”¹

–“Address from the Delaware Nation”

“The revolution, like the whole of American history, is not a simple morality play; it is a complicated and often ironic story that needs to be explained and understood, not celebrated or condemned.”²

–Gordon Wood (historian)



Figures 1 and 2. Screenshots from native-land.ca (left) and Google Maps (right).

Introduction

Let's begin with what is perhaps the key word of the title of this essay: Lenapehoking (Figure 1). Lenapehoking is the Lenape name for their homelands. Lenapes are the original people of what is now most often called New Jersey (Figure 2). Any understanding of the past, present, or future of the state must begin with the recognition of the original (and on-going) Indigenous conception of this place. As can be seen from the maps above, the colony and then state of New Jersey is contained within Lenapehoking, but not extensive of it. Lenapehoking stretches beyond these colonial borders and boundaries. It includes parts of the current-day states of Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. That last fact is not incidental. After their initial encounters, Europeans began to refer to Lenapes as "the Delaware." This name stuck: Lanepewhituk under the Dutch became the South River, but with the English was transformed once again into the Delaware River. And of course there is the colony and later state of the same name.³

One of the goals of this essay is to introduce a degree of complexity into what people know and think about the past. In this case, recognition of the past and present reality of Lenapehoking means that "New Jersey" is not simply New Jersey. It was and is a political entity that coexists, not always easily, with a (pre-existing) Indigenous place. Of course colonial borders have always been contested. The residents of New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut probably do not need to be reminded of the various disagreements, to be euphemistic, over the boundaries and borders of their colonies and, later, states. Paying attention to the existence of Lenape homelands challenges what might seem to be the stability of New Jersey. The boundaries between the states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania or New Jersey and New York dissolve when recognizing this place as Lenapehoking. New Jersey is thus both bigger and smaller than we traditionally think of it.⁴

Perhaps people are becoming more aware of the geographical, socio-cultural, and political designation of Lenapehoking. But to the extent that it is still less well known or less frequently used, that is because of, among other reasons, the forced removals of Lenapes from their homelands. This is a key part of both the history and on-going nature of colonialism in the United States: the separation—both physical as well as cultural, ideological, juridical, and political—of Indigenous peoples from their homelands. Over a course of decades and centuries, from the 1600s to the 1800s, Lenapes were forcibly displaced from Lenapehoking, primarily moving west and south. This process overlaps somewhat with the American Revolution, but it is something that began before that and continues to have ramifications into the present day. This is yet another example of complexity. Lenapehoking is still Lenapehoking today, and Lenapes continue to exist in relationship to this place, but both physically and politically, many Lenapes today are not in Lenapehoking. Thinking about New Jersey therefore means keeping in mind places that are sometimes decently far away.⁵

After the primary period of removal ended, Lenapes settled permanently in what are today Canada, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma. In the United States there are three federally recognized Lenape nations: the Delaware Nation in Anadarko, Oklahoma, the Delaware Tribe of Indians in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nation in Bowler, Wisconsin. Of course, federal recognition by the United States is not determinative of Indigenous existence; Indigenous peoples are in charge of themselves. There are also, for example, a number of state-recognized Lenape nations.⁶

The big questions of this eBook are actually, on the face of it, pretty simple: What was the American Revolution about, and what role did New Jersey play in that?⁷ There are so many ways to answer these questions, and of course there is no one, single answer. But when focusing on Lenapes and Indigenous history more generally, there is a fairly logical and direct way to think about this.⁸ And thankfully, there is a great primary source that helps, too. What was the American Revolution fought for? In one of the key ideological documents of this event, some of the leaders of the Revolution were kind enough to tell us. As many know, in addition to being a grand and sometimes lofty (and indeed, revolutionary) document of philosophy and political theory, the Declaration of Independence was also a list of complaints, directed toward the British leader, King George III. This grand document, so important in human history, is mostly a list of grievances. Twenty-seven, to be exact. And it is in the final grievance that we gain a clear sense of Indigenous peoples and the Revolution. It reads: “He [King George III] has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.” The Indigenous inhabitants of this continent, as the former British subjects saw them, were a threat—a violent, uncivilized (“savage”) one—and one stirred up by the British government against the former British colonists who were trying to create a new country. It should nearly go without saying, but Indigenous peoples were here first (it wasn’t simply about the “frontiers”) and it was the addition of European newcomers that created these conflicts, over co-existence, land use, and many other things.⁹

Some Key Concepts and Things to Keep in Mind

To provide a more specific, Lenape and Lenapehoking-centric perspective of the American Revolution in New Jersey, this essay consists of three parts: 1) a reconceptualization of the story of the American Revolution in (and around) New Jersey—by thinking about New Jersey as coextensive with Lenapehoking; 2) a handful of specific examples of the historical relationship between Lenapes and Euro-American settlers; and 3) thinking about and looking at history, culture, and historical memory or popular history, and how to possibly teach this material. Four key concepts are at play here: these are **geography**, or how we conceive of, represent, and use land, space/place, and environment; **ecology**, or the relationships between humans and their environments (as well as ideas about nature); **sovereignty**, or how humans conceive of, relate to, and use power in relation to each other and to groups in the formation of political entities (states), and **history**, which is our collective (and often diverse and sometimes combative or contradictory) attempts to understand and make meaning in relationship to the past. This is a somewhat standard definition of the useful distinction between the past and history. The past is simply everything that has ever happened up until now (though this does not presume there is one single, let alone one single unified, story). History, however, is about us; it is something that is done. History is about engagement, understanding, and meaning. History is a practice, and is always in process. Keep these key concepts in mind when thinking about Lenapes, Lenapehoking, and the American Revolution.

It is important, also, to begin by briefly talking about how to talk about this material. I need to break through the traditional scholarly authorial boundary of hiding behind my writing—as I have just done by using the usually forbidden first-person singular—by saying at the outset a

few more things about myself as the author of what you are currently reading. I am a trained scholar working in Native American history, but I am not Lenape (and though I currently live in Massachusetts, I am indeed a proud son of New Jersey; I have in fact written this essay primarily from Lenapehoking/New Jersey). I am also not Native/Indigenous at all. I come to the study of this material as mostly an outsider. Acknowledging this (my identity) is about the ethics of this work. My wordy academic self-identification is that I am a historian and art historian who works primarily at the intersection of Native American and Indigenous Studies (commonly abbreviated as NAIS) and the environmental humanities. What's contained in all of that verbiage is the fact that I come out of some fairly traditional training and fields—history and art history—but that as someone working on Native American history, my thinking and work is highly informed by the interdisciplinary nature of Native American and Indigenous Studies. To make a potentially long historiographical digression short, history in the modern west, including in the United States, rests on a foundation of stories about societies, states, and elites that use written sources that survive from the past in order to explain the origins, rise, success, and dominance of western civilization. The current-day practice of history has grown quite a lot since its earlier professional years in the nineteenth century, but for many Native peoples, especially many Native scholars, it wasn't quite changing fast enough, or moving in the right directions. Native American and Indigenous Studies was founded as an interdisciplinary field for the thoughtful, ethical study of Indigenous peoples: it involves many different fields and disciplines, and addresses all sorts of topics and questions relating to Indigenous peoples. Its key interventions are 1) centering Indigenous peoples, ideas, events, voices, and 2) expanding *how* we know what we think we know. Two other key aspects to NAIS: it takes the political nature (and stakes) of the work for granted, as with many other fields of study that grew out of political movements for the expansion of rights in the 1960s and 1970s; and it lays out and includes as central to its practice the idea of ethics—that each scholar has a relevant identity (positionality), that our work exists in the world and has effects, and that we all therefore have (different) ethical responsibilities in terms of how we carry out our scholarship and its role in the larger world.¹⁰

First and foremost, as much as possible, you should always talk about specific people. And talk about specific people (and peoples) on their own terms; so begin, of course, with the names of individuals. Most individual Indigenous people also often identify themselves with their tribal nation, their citizenship—this is a political (as well as cultural) designation; so you should note their tribal citizenship. Again, use the terms that whoever you're talking about use; in English, many Native nations have historically been referred to by offensive exonyms (names given to them by outsiders, often Indigenous or Euro-American enemies); you should always use the version of the name of the tribal nation that an individual uses (which is usually the endonym, the name that a nation/group of people have given themselves.) Finally, the most common question: is it “Indian,” “Native American,” “Indigenous,” or some other term? These are catchall terms, often meant to encompass all of the first (to use the the term common in Canada) peoples of the United States, North America, the world. Some people (Indigenous and otherwise) view the label “Indian” as offensive: its origin was a misnomer. When early modern Europeans first encountered the Americas in a sustained way, they were attempting to find a faster, more efficient, more direct sea-based trade route with Asia, including and especially places like India. When the Genoan sailor Christopher Columbus and his crew landed in the Caribbean, they believed and claimed that they had reached India. In Spanish (and following that, other European languages) the peoples of this (broadly conceived) place became known to Europeans

as “Indios” or, in English, “Indians.” There is no such long ago person as “an Indian”—a single, unified culture of first people from this place. That’s one problem with the term “Indian.” But as a problem, it applies to all three terms. The other issue is also not uncommon: use of the term “Indian” as a pejorative, even if in some ways it is apparently meant to be merely neutral or descriptive. Think of the twentieth century game of “cowboys and Indians,” which carries the implication that the cowboys are the good guys and the Indians the bad guys. Between the 1960s and 1980s, a new term was born and gained currency: Native American. Since then, the term “Indigenous” has also become more common, as a way to move beyond colonial boundaries. There is no single, clear right or wrong term to use. Some people use Native American and Indigenous relatively interchangeably, for example; there is both a history and a sociology to the language use here. The takeaway is that you should always be as specific as possible and use the names, tribal citizenship, and terms that the specific people you’re talking about use.¹¹

In talking about the history of Native Americans and the American Revolution in New Jersey it is logical to center the reality of Lenapehoking, and thus the Lenape story. Lenapes were the primary original inhabitants of the area and New Jersey is right in the middle (and fully encapsulated by) Lenapehoking. But of course one lesson of Indigenous geography is that Indigenous borders and boundaries are not always as hard-edged as colonial ones, especially as hard-edged as colonial borders and boundaries appear on Euro-American maps. The edges of Lenapehoking overlap with the homelands of other Native peoples; in talking about the history of Indigenous peoples and the American Revolution in New Jersey, we could just as easily be talking about a number of other Native nations. There is no one Indigenous story of “New Jersey” and the American Revolution. While this essay will continue to focus specifically on Lenapes and Lenapehoking, it’s always important to keep in mind the multiplicity of Indigenous peoples involved, both then and now.¹²

A Brief History of Lenapes, Lenapehoking, and Early Colonization

Lenapes were the primary stewards of the lands of Lenapehoking when Europeans began to settle the region. First, in the early seventeenth century, it was the Swedish and Dutch, and then, after 1664, the English were the main European presence in the area. In 1682, the story goes, the founder of the Pennsylvania colony William Penn entered into a diplomatic agreement with Tanemond, the leader of the Lenapes, over the European settlement of the region and peaceful coexistence with Lenapes. The **Treaty of Shackamaxon**, as the place where they met was known to Lenapes (later Philadelphia), supposedly established rules and practices, and recognized the Lenape relationship to Lenapehoking.¹³

European settlement in the Americas is of course a geographical story, but it is also largely an ecological story. It is about a change in ecological relationships between people and the environment. Certainly, it was about the beginning of a change to the scale of the human impact on the environment; and in some ways most importantly, it was an ideological shift in terms of how people thought about and conceptualized the environment. Lenapes and other Indigenous people tended to see themselves as existing within ecosystems, environments, and habitats, rather than outside of them, as early modern Euro-Americans thought of it. Lenapes and other Indigenous peoples did not believe in private ownership, or ownership at all, of land, of the environment. Without reproducing what’s often called the myth of the ecological Indian, it is

certainly true that Lenapes and other Indigenous peoples existed in less violent, harmful, or extractive ways in relationship to their environments than Euro-Americans. These changes didn't happen all at once, and again, many early interactions between Indigenous peoples and Europeans were not necessarily violent or hostile, to people or the environment. This was certainly at least somewhat true in the case of Lenapes with the Treaty of Shackamaxon. But after Penn's death, his sons changed course and became more aggressive in their interactions with Lenapes and other Indigenous peoples. This began Lenape displacement and removal. The main basis for which was simply increased and expanded European settlement in, on, and around Lenapehoking. Europeans wanted—needed, as they saw it—more land, and in their minds they were perfectly in the right to take it.¹⁴

Successful, positive coexistence between Lenapes and European settlers continued its decline with the **1737 Walking Purchase**, when colonists took control of more of Lenapehoking. While William Penn was apt to work with Lenapes toward successful coexistence, his sons, John and Thomas, were more interested in simply securing more land for colonists (this was both to meet the increased demand from a growing local and immigrant colonial population and to help pay off debts). In August of 1737, they met with Lenape leaders Nutimus, Manawkyhickson, Lapowinzo, and Tishcohan to hash out a plan that would allow more Euro-American settlement and ownership of Lenapehoking. The Penns told these Lenape leaders that their people had already agreed to provide more of the lands in eastern Pennsylvania, the distance a man could walk west in a day and a half from Wrightstown. In fact, the Penns and others had already begun to sell some of these lands. The Lenape leaders essentially accepted what the Penns told them and agreed to their terms, based on the idea of honoring a previous treaty. What they did not know at the time was that the geographical information shared with them was not accurate, the reality of a possible previous treaty already agreeing to such terms was on shaky ground at best, and that scouts had gone ahead to clear a path for as fast a passage as possible. Once the agreement was made, some of the fastest runners, rather than regular walkers, traversed the distance, going almost sixty miles, leading to the loss of almost half of a million acres of Lenapehoking. Lenapes were not pleased by this deceit, but they held to their agreement, leaving them with less of Lenapehoking and moving further west.¹⁵

Some Euro-Americans did continue to recognize both the existence of Lenapes and their belonging to their homelands. **Indian Mills** (also called **Brotherton**) was founded as the first Native American reservation for Lenapes in southern New Jersey in 1757. According to a 1759 letter from the colonial governor of New Jersey, Francis Bernard, to the Lords of Trade:

I went to Burlington County to lay out the Indian Town there. I have before informed your Lordships that by agreement with the Indians south of Raritan They released all their claims in the province, in consideration of a tract of 3000 Acres to be purchased for their use. This purchase was made & the Indians are removed to the place: It is a tract of Land Very suitable for this purpose, having soil good enough, a larger hunting country and a passage by water to the Sea for fishing. It is out of the way of communication with the Wild Indians; & has a saw mill upon it which serves to provide them with timber for their own use & to raise a little money for other purposes. To this place I went with 3 of the Commissioners for Indian affairs, where we laid out the plan of a town, to which I gave the Name of Brotherton & saw an house erected being one of ten that were ready prepared; & afterwards ordered lots of land to be laid

for the Indians to clear & till, the land already cleared being to remain in common till they have acquired themselves separate property, by their own industry. We also made an appointment of an house & lands for a Minister, I having engaged Mr Brainerd a Scotch presbyterian for that purpose, for which he is most peculiarly suited. The next day I had a conference with the chiefs, at which they expressed great satisfaction at what had been done for them, & I assured them that the same care of them should be continued & exhorted them to order, sobriety & industry. The whole Number of them at present does not amount to 200, & when We have gathered together all in the province they will not be 300. If I can but keep them from being supplied with rum, for which there are laws strict enough, I shall hope to make them orderly & useful Subjects.

The Indians in the Northern parts of the province have entirely quitted it & are gone to the Susquehannah, where they live in peace with the English. There has not been the least disorder committed near our frontier since the Treaty of Easton: I have disbanded the frontier guard, & the Country is in great tranquility. I have lately constituted a township there by the Name of Mountagu, between the Parqualin Mountains & the Delaware, & from the Lower Minissink Island to Cushytunk point; a Country, that a year ago no one would Venture to live in.¹⁶

While some of this must be taken with a grain of salt, as Bernard is clearly trying to boast of his successes to his superiors, this is also a clear statement of recognition by British officials in New Jersey of both the Lenape population and their right to continue to exist in their homelands, or at least part of them. Some of this also had to do with Christianity. Quakers (at least some, like William Penn) and other Euro-American Christians were involved in missionizing since the early days of colonization. Some Euro-Americans thought that if Indigenous peoples converted to (usually Protestant) Christianity, they might better be able to co-exist (or, rather, be allowed to continue to exist). Euro-American Quakers, Moravians, and Presbyterians in Lenapehoking were among the most supportive of the continued presence of Lenapes (though ideally Christian ones) in Lenapehoking.¹⁷

The eighteenth century in North America was a politically volatile time. Before the American Revolution, the British and the French fought a war all over the globe. The Seven Years' War, known in North America as the French and Indian War, was fought from 1754-1763, and included fighting between the two colonial powers in North America. Some Indigenous peoples caught in the crosshairs attempted neutrality, others took sides, and yet others played both sides against each other. Not all members of a given Indigenous nation took the same position. Likewise, positions on the war and alliances could change with circumstances. For many Indigenous peoples, this fighting between Europeans was simply another opportunity to assert their own authority and sovereignty, and to benefit as much as they could from the conflict. On behalf of Lenapes, Teedyuscung (along with leaders of other Native nations) signed the **1758 Treaty of Easton** (Pennsylvania), expressing their qualified support for the British (against the French) in exchange for the protection of their lands. This was not so much an agreement to join forces with the British; rather, it was a statement of alliance, with the expectation that the British would protect Lenape lands. It should be noted that many Lenapes were by this time living on the western edge, if not even beyond, Lenapehoking. Some were in

current-day Pennsylvania or Ohio; the goal, nevertheless, was to be allowed to remain where they were at that time, and to have the British support that. Not all Lenapes agreed to an alliance with the British, though. Some believed alliances with the French (or their Indigenous allies) were a better path forward. Once the British won the war, leaders in Britain attempted to shore up support for a limited Indigenous sovereignty by establishing the **Proclamation Line of 1763**. This boundary was intended to prevent British colonists from settling any further, west of the Appalachian Mountains. The British understood that settlement and encroachment on Native lands would lead to more violence. The war had been very expensive, hence the tax increases in the colonies that played a part in the lead up to the American Revolution. It is important to stress that the British were not really interested in Indigenous sovereignty, they simply recognized that further incursions by colonists into Indigenous lands would lead to more conflict, which was costly in all sorts of ways. Of course, the British would go on to lose that battle.¹⁸

Lenapes, Lenapehoking/New Jersey, and the American Revolution

Whatever else the American Revolution was about, it was about taking Indigenous land. Of their complaints against the British government, Patriots were clear that conflict with Indigenous peoples was one of their concerns. They laid the blame at the feet of the empire, but in reality, the root of that was indeed the people on the ground. Many founders were in fact themselves land surveyors or otherwise directly participated in (or tried to participate in) acquiring more land. That land was (and still is) Indigenous land. Lenapes and other Indigenous peoples were seen as the enemy. New Jersey was founded on Indigenous land, and by participating in the Revolution and calling for independence, what the state was fighting for was continued occupation and claim of ownership of Lenapehoking.¹⁹

The Lenape relationship to the American Revolution is complex. As with the French and Indian War, many Indigenous peoples and nations largely tried to remain neutral at the outset of the Revolution. This certainly included Lenapes. Some Lenapes aligned with other Indigenous peoples who were allies of the British. Some Lenapes went to fight with the Patriots. Under the Lenape leader at the time, Koquethagechton (White Eyes), Lenapes were the first to recognize the U.S. nation-state via the **1778 Fort Pitt Treaty**. This was yet another attempt by Lenapes to make a diplomatic agreement that would, supposedly, protect what land claims of theirs were still respected by Euro-Americans. Many Lenapes were on the western edges of Lenapehoking or beyond at this time, living in the lands of current-day Pennsylvania and Ohio. In 1778, the Continental Army wanted to cross those lands in order to attack the British at Fort Detroit. Making a treaty with the Americans was a strategic move on the part of Lenapes, an alliance of sorts, but one made not primarily out of loyalty to the cause of the United States, but, rather, to the greatest preservation of Lenapehoking (or remaining in as close proximity to Lenapehoking) as possible. Their actions were about self-preservation, not American independence. Koquethagechton, Gelemend (John Killbuck Jr.) and Konieschquanoheel (Captain Pipe) met with American diplomats, decided the terms of the agreement, and signed the treaty on September 17, 1778. The treaty says “that a perpetual peace and Friendship shall from henceforth take place and, subsist between the contracting parties.” Lenapes agreed to allow U.S. passage through the lands where they then lived, help the Americans on their journey, and join in fighting with them. In exchange, the United States acknowledged “the Country of the Delaware

Nation” and noted that “the United States do engage to guarantee to the aforesaid nation of Delawares and their Heirs all their Territorial Rights in the fullest and most ample manner, as it hath been bounded by former treaties.” The U.S. also agreed to build a fort for Lenapes, offered them protection, and even suggested the possibility of joining the United States as the fourteenth state (“to join the present confederation and to form a state whereof the Delaware nation shall be the head”). There would be no fourteenth, Indigenous state. There was no fort. There was no real respect for Lenapehoking or the continued presence of Lenapes near to their homelands. The Americans did not keep their promises. In addition, shortly after the negotiations, Koquethagechton was killed, seemingly by American forces. As the Delaware Nation has recently put it, “the 1778 Fort Pitt Treaty was both the first U.S treaty signed with *and* broken with a Native Nation.”²⁰

While Lenapes continued to be divided over the war, a May 10, 1779 statement they provided to the United States sheds some light on where things stood. They began by stating that Lenapes “have preserved inviolate” their friendship with the United States, “observing a strict Neutrality between the United States & Brittain, agreeable to the repeated recommendations of Congress by their Commissioners & Agents.” Though they also note that this friendship from Lenapes persisted “notwithstanding the unprovoked Injuries they have repeatedly received, which they have been willing to attribute to ill designing ignorant Men & not to any evil Intentions of the United States, or any of them, or their Officers.” Their statement then gets to some key points: calling out the United States for not providing supplies that they had promised, strongly reasserting their neutrality in the American Revolution, asking for three Lenape youth to be educated in a colonial school (current-day Princeton University), questioning the legitimacy of the Fort Pitt Treaty, and, finally, reasserting claims to land. They said, “As a free & independent People (Which the Delaware Nation have ever declared themselves to be) they claim as their sole Property, all the Lands they have long inhabited & hunted on” (by which they meant the western part of Lenapehoking, and even further west beyond that). On May 12, 1779, George Washington responded with an “Address to the Delaware Nation,” as a delegation of Lenapes had come to see him in Lenapehoking/New Jersey. Washington told that that “We love our Friends—and will be faithful to them—as long as they will be faithful to us.” He then went on to threaten this Lenape envoy by telling them that “The other day, a handful of our young men destroyed the settlement of the Onondagas.” He did not spare the details. “They burnt down all their Houses—destroyed their grain and Horses and Cattle—took their Arms away—killed several of their Warriors and brought off many prisoners and obliged the rest to fly into the woods.” To make things crystal clear, Washington ended this point by saying: “This is but the beginning of the troubles which those Nations, who have taken up the Hatchet against us, will feel.” He did not address Lenape claims of neutrality or land and ultimately passed most of the buck to Congress. This is a remarkable document that reveals the brutality of Washington—Why Haudenosaunees refer to him as Hanödaga:yas, or town destroyer— but also the general attitude of the United States to the Lenapes at the time.²¹

Meanwhile, Lenapes continued to live on Lenapehoking at the Brotherton reservation. Some of them even worked at the Atsion Iron Works, which, as Lorraine E. Williams notes, “supplied the Continental army and navy with shot and other military products.” Official statements of neutrality coexisted with various forms of Lenape participation in the Revolution. Whatever the actual feelings of Brotherton Lenapes about the war, they nevertheless made clear their views on their homelands. In 1780, they issued what has been called a “Statement Opposing

White Settlement on Indian Land in Brotherton, New Jersey.” In the statement, they make clear their feelings of white settlement on their land: “it is a thing which ought not to be.” They then added that it is “a thing that will not be allowed by us.” They conclude by saying that “We are exceeding glad when we see we are like to live in Quietness among one another without giving any offense to one another,” which they link to a lack of white settlement: “keeping white people from among us will be a great step towards it, & for this reason we intend to stand by or rather stand Hand in hand against any coming on the Indians Lands without we all agree as one to let him come.” Without the full support and approval of the Lenape community in Brotherton, they would not allow white settlement. While this resistance proved unsuccessful in the long term, it was nevertheless a clear statement of the wishes of Lenapes when it came to their homelands.²²

In 1782, Lenapes heard loud and clear a message about what the United States thought of them, or at least some of them. This was not the first event that reinforced a Euro-American idea of Indigenous peoples as “savages” deserving of state violence, but the **Gnadenhutten Massacre** has left its mark. On March 6, 1782, militiamen from Virginia and Philadelphia came upon a Moravian Christian Indigenous settlement in the Ohio Country. The town was named Gnadenhütten, meaning tents of grace. It had recently been abandoned, as the largely pacifist Indigenous Christians had been taken captive and moved. When some of them returned, they encountered the Americans, who viewed them with great suspicion and concern. Eventually the group of militiamen decided to murder all of these Indigenous people (who were primarily a mix of Lenapes and Mohicans), which they did two days later. As the Delaware Nation has recently put it, “these were Christianized Moravian Lenape known for their neutrality and pacifism, murdered in cold blood.” In total, upwards of one hundred innocent and unarmed Indigenous peoples were killed. While some Americans considered the massacre an aberration, an accident, or simply a case of a violent minority, many Native peoples, including Lenapes, have understood such wanton violence to be indicative of their place in and treatment at the hands of the new United States.²³

It had become clear that despite numerous treaties, the United States had no intention of respecting Lenape lands or even, at times, Lenape lives. When the United States eventually won the war, the 1783 Treaty of Paris set the terms. The British would recognize the claims of the United States to all of the land below Canada and north of Spanish Florida, from the east coast to the Mississippi; there was no mention of Indigenous peoples nor their homelands. According to Lorraine E. Williams, “The enmity engendered outlasted the end of the Revolution. The western Delawares continued to war with the United States until they were finally defeated in 1794.” To say that Lenapes (along with many other Indigenous peoples) got the short end of the stick would be an understatement. The Proclamation Line was gone, and with it any hint of white resistance to westward settlement. The Ohio Country became the Northwest Territory. One of the first acts of the new nation was to begin to systematize settlement. White people encroached on Indigenous peoples and their homelands more than ever. Lenapes, having already been largely forced off of Lenapehoking, were caught up in this sweep of colonization. By the early nineteenth century, New Jersey had purchased the lands of the Brotherton reservation and more Lenapes joined with other Indigenous peoples to live elsewhere. While the legacy of the American Revolution for Lenapes is indeed complex, one of the most clear outcomes was the separation of Lenapes from Lenapehoking. Lenapes are still around today. Some of them even continue to live on their homelands. But for all of them, despite the outcome of the Revolution, New Jersey still remains Lenapehoking.²⁴

There is a conceptual term that helps us make sense of all this. The United States is what is called a settler colonial nation. Via the Revolution, it is a country built on and continuing to carry out **settler colonialism**. Settler colonialism differs from “traditional” colonialism in terms of its purposes and practices. When Great Britain claimed control of India, it did so from far away. The goal was never to have the Indian population of the South Asian subcontinent replaced with English people; it was simply to assert control over and benefit from the local population. Settler colonialism, by contrast, operates on the principle of replacement. An external, colonial force comes into and occupies a place that is new to the occupiers, asserts control *and then* aims to displace the already existing population. This usually follows some form of the pattern: recognize, erase, replace. The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are all examples of settler colonial states, countries that were founded on the taking of Indigenous land and displacement of Indigenous people. Recognizing the reality of this concept helps give voice to what has happened (and is often continuing to happen) to Indigenous peoples. The founding of the United States is sometimes described as an anti-colonial rebellion, but that is an inaccurate description. The Patriots were not fighting against colonialism or colonization itself, they were fighting against their position as subjects of a colonial power (likewise, they did little to free subjects back in Great Britain from their similar subject positions). Once the United States was founded, the country became a colonial power, itself, being built on Indigenous land and seeking more of it. Despite the suggestion of Lenape statehood, what actually happened was that the United States recognized Indigenous political power outside of the states, but ultimately subordinate to federal power. The United States Supreme Court has famously described a limited Native sovereignty as “domestic, dependent nations,” a legal concept that the United States continues to propagate to this day. Many early English settlers initially recognized Indigenous belonging (including the relationship of Lenapes to Lenapehoking), but with the success of the American Revolution, recognition gave way to erasure and replacement. According to themselves, the European newcomers became the legitimate subjects of the new state, and Lenapes and other Indigenous peoples were, literally, pushed to the side.²⁵

Teaching these Stories

This is quite a heady story. The information above is nowhere near a complete recounting of Indigenous peoples and the American Revolution in Lenapehoking/New Jersey, but it is likely more than would fit into even multiple lessons. Questions abound. How to teach this material to students? What to focus on? It’s important to stress two things. The first comes from the quotation from the historian Gordon Wood in the second epigraph to this essay. Wood, himself no stranger to the intensity of historical debate, makes clear that the primary point of history is not for us to celebrate or condemn. It is good for us as people to have reactions and feelings; part of the very human process of learning about the past is reacting, and engaging with those reactions. But the primary work of historians, and history students, is understanding. The history of the founding of any state or nation is a tricky business, as political entities feel they have a stake in the stories told. Our job as conscientious people engaging with the past is, first and foremost, honesty. The goal of a history teacher in New Jersey is not to convince their students of either the greatness or evil of the state, or the country of which it is a part. The goal ought to be as full and thoughtful engagement as possible.

When it comes to Indigenous history, of course, the story is markedly stark. There seem to be good guys and bad guys. The United States—and New Jersey with it—was founded to take the lands of Indigenous peoples. How are we to remain neutral when it comes to such basic facts? Well, neutrality is not the goal. Again, the goal is understanding. What happened, and why? For the purposes of this essay, the goal is to help students (and teachers) think about what the American Revolution in New Jersey might look like from the perspectives of Lenapes and Lenapehoking. These are a key part of the much larger story. As the first epigraph to this essay argues, any understanding of U.S. history, especially around the founding, must wrestle with the relationships between Indigenous peoples and their homelands. For the history of the state of New Jersey, that means understanding that more than anything else, this place has been (and continues to be) Lenapehoking.

Getting back to the basics, you can take any written primary source discussed or cited above and delve into it to better understand Indigenous experiences of the Revolution. Have students ask the basic questions: What does the document say? Who wrote the document? Why did they write it? What were they trying to accomplish by writing what they wrote? What was the broader context for this document? Of course, have students think about the point of view of the document's authors. Students should also think about different Lenape perspectives. Why might some Lenapes have sided with or against the Patriots? Put documents and events into conversation with each other. Ultimately, this leads to a less clear, more messy story, which is great because that's as close to accurately capturing the complexities of what happened here as possible.

Zooming out, one thing to have students consider is how history generally comes about. Given that most history, at least in the western academic tradition, has been produced based on extant written primary sources, what does that mean when trying to talk about a people whose language was not originally written down? Most people for most of human history did not read nor write. How does this shape what we think we know? While we do have some surviving written sources from Lenapes, the balance of the written record from this time is heavily skewed. How does that affect our understanding of the past? Putting all of the primary sources and events together, what's the larger narrative? What assumptions does the story make? Usually, in the United States, the story of the American Revolution is told from the perspective of the Patriots. That is, we now often tell the story as the (successful, positive, triumphant) origin of the United States. Of course British Loyalists would not have seen it that way. Enslaved African Americans would probably have had mixed feelings, at best. People of different genders, sexualities, and classes, too. Likewise, what was the meaning of the Revolution for Lenapes?



Figure 3. Emanuel Leutze, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851. Oil on canvas, 149 x 255 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Open Access/Public Domain.

A related thing to consider is memory and popular culture. The American Revolution was neither just a war nor a movement confined to the eighteenth century. It has lived on in how various people have understood it. Some of this is contained in both academic and popular history. But the American Revolution has long been a subject for broader cultural engagement. Students can look at and think about, for example, how the Revolution has been represented in art and how that might relate to Lenapes and Lenapehoking. Figure 3, Emanuel Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851), is a grand painting depicting an exciting event from the war. Washington stands tall, heroically leading a diverse, multicultural group in his boat. They are about to fight and win a decisive battle, we know (the 1776 Battle of Trenton), so this painting expresses the excitement and anticipation of the moment. There is even a figure in the stern wearing frontier-style clothing that suggests he might be Indigenous. But what's often overlooked is the fact that the setting for this scene is Lenapewhihittuk, a major river (most often called the Delaware today) that is part of Lenapehoking. What sort of story does a painting like this tell about the Revolution, and what does that say (and not say) about Lenapes? This painting was also made long after the events depicted, and by a German-American painter, at that. Why was this painting made when it was? What about this story resonated with this particular artist at that moment in time? Lenapehoking (New Jersey and nearby states) is also filled with historic sites related to the Revolution. Take any of those as an example and have students describe the story of the Revolution that that site tells. What does the site say (and not say) about Lenapes and Lenapehoking? The possibilities are endless.

Telling honest stories and having honest conversations about Lenapes and other Indigenous peoples in the history of the American Revolution is not always easy. Doing this is not necessarily going to result in stories to celebrate. But the point is complex understanding, rather than simple celebration. As we come to the nation's 250th year, there is no one way to mark the occasion. As far as the history classroom is concerned, the more multi-layered and

diverse our understanding of this event, its many meanings, and its implications up to the present day, the better.

¹ “Address from the Delaware Nation,” May 10, 1779, Founders Online, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-20-02-0361>

² Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2003), xxv.

³ “History,” Delaware Nation, <https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/history/>; “About the Delaware Tribe of Indians,” Delaware Tribe of Indians, <https://delawaretribe.org/home-page/about-the-tribe/>. Sometimes the term Lenni is used before the name Lenape. William C. Reichel, *Names Which the Lenni Lennape or Delaware Indians Gave to Rivers, Streams and Localities, Within the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia* (Bethlehem, PA: H. T. Clauder, 1872); for the Library of Congress’s copy, see <https://www.loc.gov/item/02010874/>.

Munsees are considered part of the larger Lenape people. See Robert S. Grumet, *The Munsee Indians: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009); Paul Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter in America: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Hudson Valley* (Oxford, NY: Berghahn, 2006).

⁴ See, for example, Sabine Klein, “‘They Have Invaded the Whole River’: Boundary Negotiations in Anglo-Dutch Colonial Discourse,” *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 9, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 324-347. A number of cases have even made their way to the Supreme Court; see, for example: *New York v. Connecticut* (1799), *New Jersey v. New York* (1998), and *New Jersey v. Delaware* (2008). On the complexity of borders from an Indigenous perspective, see the Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson’s *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014). New Jersey itself was divided early in its colonial history into West Jersey and East Jersey from 1674-1702; though established by the so-called Quintipartite Deed, the exact location of that boundary was at the time disputed.

⁵ The history of Lenapes, especially after the primary period of removal from their homelands, has been quite well documented. As is discussed later in this essay, it is crucial to recognize Lenapes as the foremost scholars of the Lenape past. Much of this historical work is done primarily for the community, rather than the broader public. Nevertheless, all three federally recognized Lenape nations include short histories on their official websites. See “History,” Delaware Nation, <https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/history/>; “About the Delaware Tribe of Indians,” Delaware Tribe of Indians, <https://delawaretribe.org/home-page/about-the-tribe/>; “Department of Cultural Affairs” Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nation, <https://mohican.com/cultural-affairs-new/>. On Indigenous history work, see Rose Miron, *Indigenous Archival Activism: Mohican Interventions in Public History and Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2024).

Some of the key historical scholarship done by non-Lenapes includes: C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990 [1972]); Weslager, *The Delawares: A Critical Bibliography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978); Amy C. Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Andrew Newman, *On Records: Delaware Indians, Colonists, and the Media of History and Memory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012); Dawn G. Marsh, *A Lenape among the Quakers: The Life of Hannah Freeman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014); Jean R. Soderlund, *Lenape Country: Delaware Valley Society Before William Penn* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Richard S. Grimes, *The Western Delaware Indian Nation, 1730-1795: Warriors and Diplomats* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2017); Camilla Townsend et al., “‘I am Old and Weak...and You Are Young and Strong,’” in *Scarlet and Black: Slavery and Dispossession in Rutgers History*, ed. by Marisa J. Fuentes and Deborah Gray White (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 6-42; Kaisha Esty, “Rutgers: A Land-Grant College in Native American History,” in *Scarlet and Black*, 150-159; there is an open access eBook version available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1k3s9r0> (see also Rutgers’s website for the larger initiative: <https://scarletandblack.rutgers.edu/>); Soderlund, *Separate Paths: Lenapes and Colonists in West New Jersey* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2022). The ways that Lenapes and Lenapehoking expand our thinking about and understanding of New Jersey are clear from the extent to which studies that focus primarily on Pennsylvania, in their discussions of Lenapes, show that peoples, Indigenous and European, often transcended

the borders of Euro-American states; some of these studies include, Daniel K. Richter, “The Indian in Pennsylvania” in *A Guide to the History of Pennsylvania*, ed. by Dennis B. Downey and Frances J. Bremer (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1993), 3-55; James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2000); Patrick Spero, *Frontier Country: The Politics of War in Early Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). This list could take the frontier theme even further and look at studies of what is now Ohio and even further west.

For Lenape oral histories from the past two hundred years, see Camilla Townsend and Nicky Kay Michael, eds., *On the Turtle’s Back: Stories the Lenape Told Their Grandchildren* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2023). For a somewhat more theoretical take on land, see the Lenape scholar Joanne Barker’s article, “Territory as Analytic: The Dispossession of Lenapehoking and the Subprime Crisis,” *Social Text* 135, no. 2 (June 2018): 19-39.

⁶ The Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican nation is, as their name suggests, a multicultural tribal community; the coming together of different Indigenous peoples (primarily Mohicans and Munsee Lenapes) occurred more than once, but as their time in Stockbridge, Massachusetts was significant to their political and cultural formation, the name stuck.

Relevant to this essay is the fact that there are multiple federally-recognized Lenape nations in Canada today, most of whom made the move to Canada during (and because of) the American Revolution.

For a general history of the forced removals of Indigenous peoples from their homelands, see Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2020).

For a rejection of the settler state as arbiter of Indigenous sovereignty, see Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Sean Coulthard’s *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

⁷ Unsurprisingly, the scholarship on the American Revolution is vast. In addition to Wood’s *American Revolution*, Robert Middlekauff provides a general overview in his *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). For an overview of the historiography, see Michael D. Hattem, *The Memory of ‘76: The Revolution in American History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2024) and Hattem, “The Historiography of the American Revolution: A Timeline,” bit.ly/AmRevHistTL; see also the recent forum in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 78, no. 2 (April 2021) on the American Revolution. A good recent collection of scholarly essays is Edward G. Gray and Jane Kemensky, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). Two studies that have largely set the stage for both scholarly debate and public understanding are Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968) and Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991). Some of the diverse scholarship that has built on, and at times challenged, the framing, story, and conclusions of Bailyn-Wood includes: Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Williamsburg, VA and Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 1961); Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the American of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Williamsburg, VA and Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America’s Independence* (New York: Knopf, 2005); Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2015); Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016); Nicholas Guyatt, *Bind Us Apart: How Enlightened Americans Invented Racial Segregation* (New York: Basic Books, 2016); Robert G. Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (Williamsburg, VA and Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks: How Race United the Colonies and Made the Declaration of Independence* (Williamsburg, VA and Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2021); Holton, *Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2021); T. H. Breen, *The Will of the People: The Revolutionary Birth of America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021).

For New Jersey, see Barbara J. Mitnick, ed., *New Jersey in the American Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005); Jon Fea, "Revolution and Confederation Period: New Jersey at the Crossroads," in *New Jersey: A History of the Garden State* ed. By Maxine N. Lurie and Richard F. Veit (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 64-89; Liam Riordan, *Many Identities, One Nation: The Revolution and Its Legacy in the Mid-Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

⁸ For a Lenape/New Jersey-specific take, see Lorraine E. Williams, "Caught in the Middle: New Jersey's Indians and the American Revolution," in *New Jersey in the American Revolution*, ed. by Mitnick, 101-112. For a more general Indigenous history of the Revolution, see Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁹ "Declaration of Independence: A Transcription," National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>; Jeffrey Ostler, "The Shameful Final Grievance of the Declaration of Independence," *The Atlantic*, February 8, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/02/americas-twofold-original-sin/606163/>; Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997); David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); John Bidwell, *The Declaration in Script and Print: A Visual History of America's Founding Document* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2024); Emily Sneff, *When the Declaration of Independence Was News* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2026).

¹⁰ For an introduction to Native American and Indigenous Studies, see Alyssa Mt. Pleasant, Caroline Wigginton, and Kelly Wisecup, "Materials and Methods in Native American and Indigenous Studies: Completing the Turn," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 75, no. 2 (April 2018): 207-236; Chris Andersen and Jean M. O'Brien, eds., *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

On colonialism and the study of Indigenous peoples, see Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 3rd ed. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022); Ned Blackhawk and Isaiah Lorado Wilner, eds., *Indigenous Visions: Rediscovering the World of Franz Boas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); Margaret M. Bruchac, *Savage Kin: Indigenous Informants and American Anthropologists* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018). See also Susan A. Miller and James Riding In, eds., *Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011); Georgios Varouxakis, *The West: The History of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2025).

Native American history is itself a very large field with decades of quality work to speak for itself. Good overviews include Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds., *A Companion to American Indian History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002); Colin G. Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of Native American History*, 7th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2023); Michael Leroy Oberg and Peter Jakob Olsen-Harbich, *Native America: A History*, 3rd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2022); Susan Sleeper-Smith, et al., eds., *Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019); David Treuer, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2019); Ned Blackhawk, *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2023); Kathleen DuVal, *Native Nations: A Millennium in North America* (New York: Random House, 2024).

¹¹ See, for example, "The Impact of Words and Tips for Using Appropriate Terminology: Am I Using the Right Word?" National Museum of the American Indian, <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/impact-words-tips>; Devon Abbott Mihesuah, *So You Want to Write About American Indians? A Guide for Writers, Students, and Scholars*.

¹² The other main Indigenous peoples whose homelands and relations overlap with the borders of Lenapehoking include Mohicans, Nanticokes, Piscataways, Susquehannocks, and others. As Lenapes moved out of Lenapehoking, they came into contact with many other Native peoples, too, such as Shawnees and Cherokees. On Indigenous

diaspora, see Gregory D. Smithers, *The Cherokee Diaspora: An Indigenous History of Migration, Resettlement, and Identity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

¹³ There are no surviving written versions, so what comes down to us today is usually considered a tradition, rather than a set of clear specific information. The treaty is variously referred to as the Treaty of Shackamaxon, Penn's Treaty, or the Great Treaty. For a short overview, see the relevant section in "History," Delaware Nation, <https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/history/>; Andrew Newman, "Treaty of Shackamaxon," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/treaty-of-shackamaxon-2/>. Newman is not alone in suggesting that this did not happen in 1682; he offers 1683 as a possible date. Newman's encyclopedia entry also includes a short bibliography; see that, as well as Newman's own book cited above, for more on this topic.

As discussed later in this essay, art and popular culture play a crucial role in the history of the American Revolution, especially how "we" collectively understand it. This is certainly true when it comes to Lenapes and Lenapehoking. One of the most famous paintings of "U.S." and Lenape history is Benjamin West's *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (1771-1772), now owned by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, <https://www.pafa.org/museum/collection/item/penns-treaty-indians>. For discussions of this work, see Chapter Two of Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Michael D. Mackintosh, "Ink and Paper, Clamshells and Leather: Power, Environmental Perception, and Materiality in the Lenape-European Encounter at Philadelphia," in *A Greene Country Towne: Philadelphia's Ecology in the Cultural Imagination*, ed. by Alan C. Braddock and Laura Turner Igoe, (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2016), 19-33. For contemporary Lenape art, see Joe Baker and Laura Turner Igoe, eds., *Never Broken: Visualizing Lenape Histories* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2024).

¹⁴ On Indigenous environmental history and thought, see Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Press, 2013); Joy Porter, *Native American Environmentalism: Land, Spirit, and the Idea of Wilderness* (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2014); Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2019); Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (New York: Verso, 2023); Raechel Lutz, ed., *New Jersey's Natures: Environmental Histories of the Garden State* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2026).

On concepts of land, see Daniel Heath Justice and Jean M. O'Brien, eds., *Allotment Stories: Indigenous Land Relations under Settler Siege* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022); Allan Greer, *Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires, and Land in Early Modern North America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018). On the colonial acquisitiveness for land, see Michael John Witgen, *Seeing Red: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political Economy of Plunder in North America* (Williamsburg, VA and Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2022); Michael A. Blaakman, *Speculation Nation: Land Mania in the Revolutionary American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023).

¹⁵ "The Walking Purchase, August 25, 1737," Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, <https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/documents/1681-1776/walking-purchase.html>; "The Walking Purchase," Delaware Tribe of Indians, June 27, 2013, <https://delawaretribe.org/blog/2013/06/27/the-walking-purchase/>; "History," Delaware Nation, <https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/history/>; Francis Jennings, "The Scandalous Indian Policy of William Penn's Sons: Deeds and Documents of the Walking Purchase," *Pennsylvania History* 30, no. 1 (1970): 19-39; Steven Craig Harper, *Promised Land: Penn's Holy Experiment, The Walking Purchase, and the Dispossession of Delawares, 1600-1763* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2006); Tim Hayburn, "Walking Purchase," *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/walking-purchase/>. Nearly all of the general sources for Lenape history above also discuss the Walking Purchase. It should also be noted that in 2004, the Delaware Nation sued the state of Pennsylvania over the Walking Purchase. The courts consistently ruled against the Lenapes. When the Supreme Court of the United States declined to hear the case, that confirmed and cemented the lower court ruling against their claims.

¹⁶ In *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey* (Archives of the State of New Jersey), 1st ser., 9:174-176; see the Library of Congress's copy, <https://www.loc.gov/item/02027145/>.

¹⁷ On Indigenous peoples and Christianity, see Marsh, *A Lenape among the Quakers*; Linford D. Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America*; Joel W. Martin and Mark A. Nicholas, eds., *Native Americas, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). The pacifism of some of these Protestant denominations would not help Lenapes in the wake of the American Revolution and the establishment of the United States.

¹⁸ See *Minutes of Conferences, Held at Easton, In October, 1758, With the Chief Sachems and Warriors of the Mohawks, Oneidoes, Onondagoes, Cayugas, Senecas, Tuscaroras, Tuteloes, Skaniadaradigronos, consisting of the Naticokes and Conoys, who now make one Nation; Chugnuts, Delawares, Unamies, Mahickanders, or Mohickons; Minisinks, and Wapingers, or Pumptions* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1758); see, for example, the copy available from the University of Pittsburgh Library System Digital Collections website, <https://digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt:31735054857598>.

On the French and Indian War, see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000). When he served in the war, George Washington (and other British emissaries) traveled west to persuade Indigenous peoples, including Lenapes, to join the British against the French. They were unsuccessful. See Williams, "Caught in the Middle," 109; Calloway, *Indian World*.

¹⁹ Calloway, *Indian World*; Blaakman, *Speculation Nation*.

²⁰ "Treaty of Fort Pitt," National Archives, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/176316991?objectPanel=transcription>; "History," Delaware Nation, <https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/history/>; emphasis in the original; Williams, "Caught in the Middle," 109; "1778 Treaty of Fort Pitt: U.S. Treaty-Making with the Lenape Nation," July 29, 2022, National Museum of American Diplomacy, <https://diplomacy.state.gov/stories/treaty-of-fort-pitt/>.

For a treatment of treaties between the United States and Native nations, see the National Museum of the American Indian exhibition, *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations*, <https://americanindian.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/item?id=934>; see also the exhibition catalogue: Suzan Shown Harjo, ed., *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations* (Washington, D.C.: NMAI/Smithsonian Books, 2014).

Ostler cites an early example of sixty Lenapes joining other Indigenous supporters of the British; *Surviving Genocide*, 61.

²¹ "Address from the Delaware Nation," May 10, 1779, Founders Online, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-20-02-0361>; Address to the Delaware Nation," May 12, 1779, Founders Online, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-20-02-0388>.

²² Williams, "Caught in the Middle," 111, citing Arthur Pierce, *Iron in the Pines: The Story of New Jersey's Ghost Towns and Bog Iron* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 34.

"The Brotherton Indians of New Jersey, 1780," The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/brotherton-indians-new-jersey-1780>.

²³ Delaware Nation, <https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/history/>. See also Calloway, *Indian World*, 274-275; Ostler, *Surviving Genocide*, 65-69; Rob Harper, "Looking the Other Way: The Gnadenhütten Massacre and the Contextual Interpretation of Violence," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 64, no. 3 (July 2007): 621-644.

²⁴ Williams, "Caught in the Middle," 110-112 ("The enmity engendered," 110); "History," Delaware Nation, <https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/history/>. "Treaty of Paris (1783)," National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/treaty-of-paris#transcript>.

²⁵ Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409; Walter L. Hixon, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Adam Dahl, *Empire of the People: Settler Colonialism and the Foundations of Modern Democratic Thought* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018); see also the forum in the *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 76, no. 3 (July 2019). The 1831 case *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* is when the Supreme Court first articulated the specific wording of "domestic, dependent nations."

Connecting the Crossroads: The Lenni-Lenape, West Jersey, the Revolutionary War & Ideas for Engaging Students in Early New Jersey History

By: Adam E. Zielinski

Author's Note

This overview will likely be familiar to historians and scholars of the Revolutionary period. It is meant to be a guide for how educators can tap into both existing and emerging content to help enhance teaching materials in the classroom. The author does not intend this to be a summarization of lessons on specific topics, e.g., don't expect a complete picture of the Revolutionary War in New Jersey, sociology or cultural perspectives for examples used in this piece.

New friggin' Jersey. The state with attitude. And opinions. Lots of them. No matter which part of the state you hail from, there's a sure bet you've got a strong sense of what constitutes the *real* New Jersey. North Jersey. South Jersey. Central Jersey? I guess it's a thing. Taylor ham. Pork roll. Rangers. Devils. Flyers. Springsteen. Tony Soprano. Ok, you get the point. But maybe what's missing from this context is it wasn't European-Americans who created these dividing lines. It was the area's First People, the Lenni-Lenape, who had three distinct subcultures in the Delaware and Lower Hudson River valleys. Viewing a map showing this makeup of Lenapehoking, one can be forgiven for thinking a modern student drew lines separating the "three Jerseys."

Lenni-Lenape

As a kid growing up in Burlington County, I had the privilege of attending many programs at the old Rankokus-Powhatan Indian Reservation site in Westampton Township. Unfortunately, once the proprietor passed away, the site became defunct and is now part of the Rancocas State Nature Center. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the site held regular large programming showcasing Lenape culture to the public. Critically, it was this visibility and their willingness to interact with a largely, non-indigenous population that served to educate outsiders, thus creating pathways for greater acceptance and understanding of this pre-European history. Today, several museums and historical societies affiliated with the Lenni-Lenape remain in the area, and hold regular educational programming. For some classroom instructors, field trips may be an option. For others, online resources and materials are available from the Nanticoke and Lenape Confederation. And the amount of books available on Lenapehoking, its people, and the natural environment of both East and West Jersey are plentiful.

One aspect of the Lenape that still exists in southern New Jersey are the roadways that follow once established hunting trails. Similarly, the Library of Congress features in its online repository early maps showing Lenape villages in southern New Jersey. Dutch cartographer Joan Vinckeboons captured these observations in his ca. 1639 map of the Delaware River. Similarly, teachers can use the 1756 meeting minutes from the Treaty of Crosswicks to show how disputes over property and land continued well into the eighteenth century. Threats of violence, sometimes justified, brought both parties to the negotiating table. With access to these primary sources, students can see what was at stake for the indigenous population and ultimately what was lost.

By beginning early New Jersey history with the Lenni-Lenape, students will be given a foundational understanding to not only the indigenous peoples and cultures present in the region, but also a greater education on both the geographical and environmental aspects of southern New Jersey that make it unique. One example I like is the use of oyster shells to construct shelters out of tabby. With this lesson in place, instructors can then be confident teaching students about how important the oyster ecosystem once was to both salt and fresh water ecosystems in New Jersey, and how citizens enjoyed a healthy appetite for the dish through the nineteenth century.

A Revolution Comes to Town

Before diving into the American Revolution, it's critical students understand that New Jersey was divided into two influential spheres: East (North) and West (South). Much like today, New York City and Philadelphia defined and pulled the local cultures. Students may not understand (or want to understand) the nuts and bolts of eighteenth century politicking, but they surely will understand these strong regional differences that continue today. Why are we passionate about our sports teams and despise everyone else's? A version of *extreme localism*, a concept that broadly but accurately defines colonial American life.¹ Prior to the Revolution, the idea of identifying as an American was not widespread and took time to be adopted by citizens. They considered themselves first members of their town, then colony/state before any leap toward a national identity. How might students today connect with this type of thinking, and what responsibilities come with an identity based on where one lives?

This thinking can then unlock many of the answers to questions of why things persisted the way they did in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. Were the two Jerseys hotly engaged in protests like other colonies? The answer is no. Unlike New York or Pennsylvania, New Jersey did not hold claim to vast amounts of western lands, and was not a power broker unless it supported initiatives by the two surrounding colonies/states. This "small state" mindset would rear its head with a vengeance in 1787 at the Constitutional Convention, where the New Jersey Plan was put forth to pointedly reduce the power of larger states. Where protests did occur fell among the coastal waterways where small ports and loading docks were

¹ extreme localism is a term to describe citizen identity, that despite various outside influences including religion and culture, shapes individuals to identify with their local community.

being affected by British taxation efforts. On the one year anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, the merchant village of Greenwich celebrated its own tea party. Many of its participants would go on to serve in various militia and Continental Army regiments.

Of course, New Jersey saw tremendous change in 1776. Its royal governor, William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin, was arrested and ousted from power. The new-Patriot aligned government then passed the New Jersey Constitution on July 2, 1776. While the constitution was revolutionary for its timing, it also left many questions in the coming decades. For instance, an undefined stipulation for voting had to be clarified in 1790. This was updated to state “he or she” with £50 or its equivalent in land were eligible to vote. That’s right. Women were voting in state elections. And women of color were too, so long as they met the criteria. This continued until 1807 when an Elizabeth, New Jersey politician successfully erased the updated wording referencing women. He had lost the previous election, according to him, because “women had corrupted the vote.” Nevertheless, this early example of women’s suffrage, perhaps accidental, is a testament to the vast impact the ideals of the Revolution had on New Jersey.

The state then went on to be the seat of war beginning in November 1776 and remained engaged until the fall of 1783. Dozens of battles populated the state, many in southern New Jersey. The only time General George Washington unsheathed his sword in the entire war (that we know of) occurred on January 2, 1777 at Trenton. The Forage War of 1777, between January-June, saw no less than fifty skirmishes and the Battle of Short Hills on June 26 in northern New Jersey. During the Philadelphia Campaign, British and American forces regularly clashed in West Jersey. The Battle of Red Bank was the only American victory of the campaign. This was followed by months of jockeying for position in Gloucester, Camden and Burlington counties. Beginning June 17, 1778, the entire British Army evacuated Philadelphia and spent the next ten days marching through interior New Jersey. Though the Battle of Monmouth on June 28 rightfully gets its due, American snipers made the march to Monmouth hell for the British. Journals, diaries and letters attest to their misery. In June 1780, engagements at Connecticut Farms and Springfield failed to establish a British foothold in the state. Other raids on Staten Island, Batsto Furnace, Bordentown, Toms River and Quinton’s Bridge showed a persistence in keeping citizens of New Jersey under constant distress. And this distress can be measured through testimonies and letters collected beginning in December 1776, showing British and Hessian troops raping women in Hunterdon County. Citizens were not spared their homes, property or their loved ones from the ravages of war. Even signing oaths of allegiance to the Crown did not guarantee safety from looting and the trauma that very much affected citizens in New Jersey.

It’s no wonder New Jersey is referred to as the crossroads of the Revolution, though most don’t understand the actuality in that nickname. It wasn’t because so many things happened here. It’s literally because the wagon roads between Elizabeth and Trenton were so well-developed and used throughout the war. It was the most traversed roadway in North America at the time. It doesn’t hurt that George Washington, *allegedly*, slept in every house, tavern and barn along the way.

Where to Look

For the Revolutionary War, resources can be difficult to parse through. *The Journal of the American Revolution*, an online repository of published content on all aspects of the era, is a great starting point for broad content, specialized subjects, and biographical profiles of peoples, battles, events, and political/social analysis through the use of primary sources. Similarly, the American Battlefield Trust offers a wide range of content on their website. Originally the Civil War Trust and focused on land preservation, the organization rebranded itself in 2018 and has since developed an impressive online portfolio of Revolutionary War content. To couple with their written content, their YouTube page features nearly one hundred animated short videos summarizing key battles and people from the Revolutionary War era that I helped develop. Purposely done to be short, concise, and accessible to high school students, the videos introduce stories both new and important that help expand existing curriculum. Other reliable forums for content including Emerging Revolutionary War, a site written by historians; RevWar75, an immense repository of primary sources including Continental Army orderly books and soldiers' journals. For locating battle sites and places of interest relating to the war, the website revolutionarywarnewjersey.com offers a nice breakdown by county, making it helpful for identifying local sites that could become field trips for school districts. Other sites, such as tencrucialdays.org focus on specific battles and campaigns. For a reliable calendar and rundown of Revolutionary War events throughout the state, revolutionarynj.org run by Crossroads of the American Revolution remains the preferable choice.

Other options include contacting the New Jersey Sons of the American Revolution; the lineage organization has chapters throughout the state and regularly meet to coordinate on assisting in educational programming, including awarding grants for writing and JROTC. But if you're an educator looking to bring the war into your classroom, consider hiring a soldier for the afternoon. New Jersey is home to over a dozen period reenactment groups or their affiliations. These individuals are among the most versed in expertise when it comes to the Revolutionary War; from military tactics and equipment to civilian lifestyles and social consequences, they are to be considered historians of value for educators. Of course, each regiment has a few willing to be the lecturers. Teachers should check with groups that are part of the Continental Line to ensure they are vetted and carry insurance. Contacting reenacting groups is best left to reaching out to battlefields such as Princeton, Monmouth or Red Bank who can help connect teachers with soldiers. That being said, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd New Jersey Regiments are all reenacting groups, as are the 2nd PA/43rd Regiment of Foot. Consider what a Continental, British or Hessian soldier, or a camp follower may bring into your classroom. Are they there to teach students about a specific battle, how equipment or clothing worked, or to answer general questions about the time period? The answer is they can do all of these things.

Due to the proximity of Philadelphia to southern New Jersey, it's inescapable of the city's influence on the region and its history. One of the best online search engines for content is the Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia. Here can be found numerous published articles by historians and professionals dividing into various subject matter of the eighteenth century. And

if instructors are looking for resources for other time periods, the encyclopedia offers content on the city's history through the present day.

The 1780s presents a challenge for some educators as this is the period between where the war ends and the federal government becomes official under the Constitution. However, as we know, the decade was plagued with uncertainty. Beginning with how the war ravaged the economy, both statewide and continental, the currency situation failed to improve by 1786. For educators, Richard McCormick's *Experiment in Independence* is solid footing for brief but thorough analysis of how New Jersey grappled with the effects of the Revolution. In his work, McCormick spends time explaining the monetary situation; how the war affected both East and West Jersey; how the two Jerseys came together to ratify the Constitution, and how the 1776 state constitution presented radical departures in voting for both white men with limited property, and women, white and of color, with a means to vote in state elections.

Beyond local resources, archive.org is an invaluable database housing thousands of scanned eighteenth and nineteenth century books, newspapers and magazines. Original diaries and journals of dozens of Revolutionary War soldiers, from American, British and Hessian, can all be found here for free. The same can be said for founders.archives.org, the Library of Congress's free online archive of many of the Founders' correspondence. The William Clements Library at the University of Michigan has a great repository of Revolutionary War sources, as do the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New York Historical Society, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, to name but a few.

Other resources are continuing to be made in real time. Whether it be online videos or learning materials from professional historians, there is a cottage industry of original sources that prove to be fairly accurate to very accurate. No longer does a teacher need to break out old VHS tapes of the History Channel from 1995. Of my own contributions, my focus on original cartography depicting eighteenth century towns, roads, and battles in New Jersey are welcome additions for teachers. That's not my opinion, but the opinion of numerous educators I've had the privilege to meet, many of whom have asked for copies to use in their classrooms. What this demonstrates is the need for new materials, particularly among modern innovators with a passion for history.

Making It Relatable

One theme I advocate for is making whatever lesson plan you're adopting relatable in some way to students. Yes, I'm a firm believer in memorization, and sorry, knowing dates does matter. Yet this does not have to be everything, nor should it. One important lesson I learned early on is you never know what students will take away from your planning.

Take for example George Washington. There's plenty about the man to teach. Plenty to admire and plenty to criticize. I often say, "*it's not my job as a historian to tell you to like him or hate him. That's your business. But here's why I believe he's important to know.*" For me, his greatest achievement was resigning his commission at the end of the war. It is the single greatest

act in American history because it set the precedent for everything that followed. For my students? It was the fact that he had chestnut/red hair. Go figure.

The other thing I remember about teaching Washington to eighth graders was how impactful it was discussing his upbringing, specifically the fact his father died when he was eleven. He was then raised by his half brother Lawrence whom the teenage George looked upon as a father figure. When Lawrence died in 1752, Washington was twenty and never forgot the bond he had with his brother. George and Martha Washington did not have any children of their own. Instead, George became stepfather to Martha's four young children from her first marriage. They suffered tragedy in 1772 when her daughter Martha died from an epileptic seizure. Tragedy struck again in 1781 when her only son, John "Jacky" Custis, died of camp fever. The couple then became doting grandparents to Jacky's four children. Washington, the grandfather, tried his best to rear young George Washington "Washy" Parke Custis, whom turned out to be a terrible student. The retired general lamented his grandson was idle, incapable of learning, and feared he was doomed as an adult. Likewise, Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette, shared an uncommon father/son bond. Lafayette, too, had lost his father at a very young age, and at age 19, came to America to fight for the Continental Army. He immediately took to Washington, and by war's end, they were affectionately referring to each other in terms of father and son. The takeaway here is students might roll their eyes at the battles, the dates, and the powdered wigs, but many were very much engaged when Washington, the fatherless teenager, and later the childless father, had to deal with real life struggles. What's more, explaining that mixed families (due to premature death) were far more common in the eighteenth century helped students with mixed families (due to divorce) relate today.

Simulating a Revolution

For many teachers, the distance between a student who learns from dictation and one who learns in group participatory activity can be leagues apart. One simulation that showed promising results was employed in an eight grade Social Studies class. While I was a special education instructor, I was granted time to help design new materials for a class in Burlington County. Among them was a simulated exercise involving the entire class and two teachers. Students were in the midst of learning about the events leading up to the American Revolution, and an idea developed about using the Boston Massacre as a catalyst for recreating an 'escalating situation' that students would participate in. The two teachers explained to everyone that the two adults were in charge at all times, and students had to obey sudden commands, no matter what. Five students were chosen to represent the British soldiers. They stood at the front of the room and were given yardsticks to rest at their sides to represent muskets. They consented to being pelted with crumbled balls of paper. One adult would accompany them at all times. This instructor told the five students the front of the room was their safe space and that they were to protect it at all costs. If anyone approached and got within close proximity, they were told the teacher closest to them would order them to raise the yardstick out from their body at a straight angle. Otherwise, they could not react.

The rest of the students, about twenty, were taken into the hallway by the other teacher. This second instructor served as the catalyst. They gave instructions on the scenario: the hallway students were told the five classroom students were holding something valuable and would not admit to having it or give it up. Students in the hallway would be tasked with trying to coerce the five students to hand over the valuable object, and follow the instructor's directions from there. They were not allowed to cross a tape line on the floor that kept distance between the five classroom students and the rest of the class. Students in the hallway were divided into small groups of five and awaited the hallway teacher's provocation from the doorway. Serving as the de facto 'rabble rouser,' the hallway teacher shouted a few words towards the five classroom students before signaling to the first group of hallway students to reenter the classroom. The hallway students stopped at the tape line and exchanged words with the five "soldiers." Not satisfied, the hallway teacher called in another five students. More words were exchanged. Then the next five from the hallway came in, only this time they'd been handed balled-up pieces of paper.

The classroom teacher, acting as the British captain, directed the five students and continued to tell them to stand at attention while denouncing the actions of the "crowd." Each instructor gradually raised their voice, hinting at an escalating provocation, while the hallway instructor signaled the last five students to come in and join 'the mob.' As they did, the teacher handed them balled-up pieces of paper and whispered, "wait for my command." Within a few moments, the hallway was empty and the majority of the class had surrounded the five students, being egged on by the hallway instructor while the other instructor insisted the five students show restraint. Then, the hallway instructor yelled for his students to pelt the five students with "snowballs." At first, the last five who'd been given specific instructions threw their paper balls. But upon seeing their classmates doing it, the others joined in spontaneously. The hallway instructor then stepped forward into the safe space. When they did, the classroom teacher signaled the five students to raise their yardsticks.

At this point, the two instructors called time out. Students were told to get a drink of water, use the bathroom quickly, and decompress for five minutes before being ready to discuss the simulation. What surprised the instructors was how eager students were to discuss how they felt, how the escalation of words, and the number of people gradually filling the room, gave them urgency they had not expected. We then discussed how a mob mentality had taken over the students, and where those emotions may have led if pushed further. Students were then tasked with writing a short paragraph explaining their role, how and why they obeyed the commands from their instructors, what surprised them about their feelings, and how the experience related to the primary source materials they'd read about the Boston Massacre.

Slavery in a Modern Context

Perhaps no issue in American history remains ever popular, necessary and controversial to discuss than slavery. While one would be hard pressed, thankfully, to find a classroom today not

teaching this aspect of American history, students remain at the forefront of debates over how to teach slavery's many complexities. In this respect, New Jersey is no different.

East and West Jersey both had chattel slavery in the eighteenth century, as did every other British colony in North America. But that does not mean the Jerseys were the same in its practice. Much like slavery in Virginia differed from that in South Carolina, so too were its implications on both the white economies and the enslaved populations in East and West Jersey. For starters, the large plantations of East Jersey tended to mirror those from the Deep South and the Caribbean. This shouldn't be surprising given that a large influx of British transplants had relocated from the Caribbean to East Jersey by 1770. Escaping the tropical climate and the malaria it brought were large drivers for emigrating north; as they did, they brought with them their mode of enslavement. In comparison, the Swedish and Quaker influences on West Jersey tended to impress enslaved people in more domestic roles rather than manual labor ones found on plantations and large farms. This is not to claim one mode was exclusive in this region or that one form was more dignified over the other, but rather showing how even among slavery, the Jerseys were territorially different from one another.

During the Revolutionary War, it's unknown how many black New Jersey citizens, free (as little of the population as they were) and enslaved served in the Continental Army. Some, like Oliver Cromwell, have gained recent recognition and can help students identify soldiers of color in the American army. What is presumed is that few did, given that West Jersey's black population was much smaller than East Jersey's, and the majority of capable black men chose to serve in British and Loyalist units when given the opportunity. It's no surprise, given the geographic closeness to New York City — the British military's headquarters — and the promise of freedom many British generals offered black men for their service. However, except for a few cases, these individuals were not permitted to serve in the British army. Some, like Colonel Tye, were given paramilitary positions to disrupt and terrorize Patriot-aligned instigators and townships in East Jersey at the behest of ousted governor William Franklin. Attractive as these raiders may have been to some, it must be reminded that the British had not become sudden abolitionists. They were simply exploiting the economic and civic disruption that freeing large amounts of enslaved people brought to the American countryside. And there's plenty of evidence that when confronted with hundreds and thousands of refugees, the British were often quick to exploit these people further for their own uses.

West Jersey's black population saw its share of the war, particularly along the coast and along the Delaware River. In December 1776, an enslaved man was taken from a Mount Holly resident to serve as a waiter for a Hessian officer. In fact, the practice of employing black men as drummers and waiters was quite common in the German armies of Europe. This allowed able-bodied white men to exclusively serve in the infantry. Nevertheless, it brought opportunities of escaping immediate surroundings for enslaved men. This was not lost on the young men who chose this form of emancipation.

For various reasons, none sufficient to the modern eye, New Jersey did not officially abolish slavery until 1804. At the dawn of the Civil War, there remained black citizens in the state still held in bondage due to old age.

One idea for teaching slavery in the modern sense to a student body that have no living context for what slavery actually was is to consider the following headline. It's a safe bet that nearly all students in the classroom have smart phones and use devices that have lithium-ion batteries. The same goes for teachers, professors, and parents. In short, *all of us*. Lithium batteries require the mining of cobalt, a rare earth mineral found in remote places in the world. One such place it is currently being mined is in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At least 50% of the world's cobalt comes from mines in the Congo.² And the people being tasked with doing the mining, by recent evidence explored in Siddharth Kara's *Cobalt Red*, are women and children at times. Yes, Amnesty International estimates 40,000 children make up the miners.³ These people are forced to do manual labor in deplorable conditions, and are paid very little for daily work. Extreme and overworked conditions have caused the deaths of untold numbers of these workers. Many have equated it to modern day slavery. Now that you know, consider how we might use this example in the classroom.

Staying in Revolutionary New Jersey (but also looking at the broader United States), the majority of the white population did not own slaves. They did, however, benefit from an economy that was largely driven by slave labor in some capacity. Yet, most enslavers themselves were not involved in the kidnapping and transporting of African people across the Atlantic Ocean. This created a plausible, and unsettling emotional detachment from the realities of what chattel slavery actually was from what white perceptions created to justify it later on. Out of sight, out of mind.

How might students reconsider the rise of the smart device, its daily usage in modern society, and what constitutes ignorance in the face of exploitation? Much like the sweatshops overseas that make the bulk of clothing sold in American markets, how does the out of sight, out of mind nature within us partially explain the inability of colonial Americans to fully tackle abolitionism, especially once the Declaration of Independence made it clear what the new country was seeking to stand for? In this instance, using the smart device example, students should be challenged to consider modern perceptions of consumerism, why things are made the way they are, what limitations for change are reinforced by individualism vs collectivism and a societal reliance on the thing needing changing, and what type of change is feasibly possible in the near future given our reliance on this type of technology, much like colonial America's reliance on chattel slavery?

Big questions with not so simple answers, now as they were then.

Having Fun

Take a breath. Have a laugh. Though these topics often carry an air of seriousness because people's lives were affected, we cannot lose perspective that both teachers and students risk

² <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2023/02/01/1152893248/red-cobalt-congo-drc-mining-siddharth-kara>

³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/06/drc-cobalt-child-labour/>

burnout. This can be especially true if overloaded with history and materials they have little interest in. So it's important to remember to have fun when you can.

Take a day and do something unrelated to the content, that way students feel they're getting a break. But ensure what you have them do is not just free time. Give them a task that relates to a theme they're learning about. I realize this sounds obvious, and many no doubt already do this in some form. But it never hurts to remind the rest of us to do it. It's OK to have fun once in a while. I learned this my first day of both my first and second years of graduate school at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. My first year, we built canoes strictly out of cardboard and duct tape for our instructors to race each other on the Delaware River with. My second year, we blindfolded a willing candidate wearing a hard hat topped with thumb tacks while the rest of us used two way radios to navigate the individual through an obstacle course of hanging water balloons. Each time I was put with students I had never met, and likely would never have said hello to on a given day. But we quickly found ways to laugh while forging a way to work together as a team. Both exercises were about team building, critical thinking, working together, the risk of failing (miserably in the case of our canoe), and of course, having fun.

If these scenarios seem far fetched, consider the work of instructor Mark Haug from Central Regional High School in Bayville, NJ. Mr. Haug was recently covered in an [NJ.com](#) article discussing his two classes on outdoor survival and team building. Lamenting that these types of classes were no longer taught, and how our society increasingly has gotten away from how he grew up in the 1980s, Haug decided to create a new class that taught students survival skills. Broken down into two tiers, the first class ends with students building an outdoor shelter. The second class continues and ends with a competition among the students over who can build the best outdoor fire from scratch. According to Haug, students are learning map reading skills, working as a team, how to identify wild plants in the environment, and are seemingly more interested in fields of history and archaeology than they were prior to taking the classes.

This example, while not realistic for some districts, shows a way to get students engaged by giving them access to history without throwing all of it at them in the conventional, classroom way. For some students, discovering history is their calling may not come from books and lecture, but hands-on work adjacent to it. In this case, despite Indiana Jones famously saying most archaeology is done in the library, perhaps giving a student a pair of binoculars, a compass, and a few good yarns about Hessians pillaging the area is all they need to opening their imaginations to what comes next.

Who to Ask

It's no secret that you're likely not a specialist in the Revolutionary War. I've got news for you, teachers and educators are among the most overworked, understaffed, and under appreciated people out there. You work long hours, often putting out multiple classroom "fires" every day, come home to your personal lives, and still have to grade papers and reports in the evening. You simply don't have time to become experts unless it's of personal interest. Perhaps the biggest challenge then for teachers and educators is putting your trust in outside resources.

My intention is to offer a few examples of what I use professionally, what I would recommend as touchstones in the classroom, and where to push contemporary conversations that tie directly to topics from the Revolutionary period. By no means should teachers and educators be confined to outdated or poorly researched materials. For my own work in the field, I've relied on a vast number of resources, some mentioned here. I've used [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) to access Revolutionary War Pension Records, and have read thousands claims (my poor eyes) that offer a wide range of viewpoints. Again, you might not have time or you find that incredibly boring. I get it. But I find it very rewarding, and would like to help educators where I can.

I'm hopeful professionals in the state of New Jersey will continue meeting and collaborating to bring resource materials together for teachers and students. Networking is one thing, but following up with real changes that benefit the people who really need it should be our goal. I continue to evolve myself as a professional historian. As someone who spends way too much time looking at old things, I can say it's all worth it *only* when I see a student or an adult give that unmistakable look. A look of someone who just made a deep connection between the past and their present. And hopefully, with the 250th anniversary of our beloved independence, Americans in need of making these connections will find that every crossroad offers a path forward.

“What America Sounds Like: Exploring 250 Years of American History Through Music”

Melissa Ziobro

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Introduction

The semiquincentennial provides an opportunity for a renewed interest in not just the study of the American Revolution specifically, but of American history more broadly. History educators at all levels know, however, that students often hold preconceived notions about history being “boring,” or irrelevant to their lives. While educators know this could not be further from the truth, they must constantly endeavor to find ways to make the teaching of history engaging and accessible.

The bulk of this brief essay provides a series of vignettes in music history, arranged chronologically over the course of the past 250 years, to help history / social studies educators brainstorm how they might work engaging music history moments, and music itself, into their teaching across various courses. This discussion is not intended to be comprehensive, of course, given space constraints. Special emphasis is given to Thomas Edison, Paul Robeson, James P. Johnson, Frank Sinatra, Whitney Houston, Paul Simon, Bruce Springsteen, Queen Latifah, Bon Jovi, and others from New Jersey who have contributed so much to the American music landscape. The essay concludes with an introduction to TeachRock, a non-profit that has provided free, standards-aligned resources to help teachers, students, and families succeed for more than a decade – and stands perfectly poised to help readers incorporate music history moments like those discussed earlier in the essay into their praxis.

The 17th Century

When the British began to establish their North American colonies, they brought with them instruments from home, along with traditional religious hymns, centuries-old folk songs, and for some among the upper classes in particular, a cultured appreciation of classical music and even, in some cases, of opera.

Religious music, however, would have been the most prevalent in the colonies as they were founded. One of the most important books in all of colonial America was the *Ainsworth Psalter*, a 1612 English psalm book compiled by Separatist clergyman Henry Ainsworth. It featured metrical translations of the Psalms alongside prose versions and was designed for congregational singing. The Pilgrims brought it to America aboard the *Mayflower*.

The first book printed in North America was the *Bay Psalm Book*, published in 1640 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is a metrical translation of the Book of Psalms into English verse for

congregational singing. Created by Puritan ministers, it reflected their desire for a faithful, literal translation of scripture.

Musically, what the colonists found on these shores already when they arrived were the songs and chants of Native Americans. Europeans of the period never really appreciated the complex Native American music traditions and rituals, as they were so different from the structured religious hymns they were used to.

Colonists also looked askance at the music of enslaved Africans, who from 1619 forward were forcibly brought to the British North American colonies with little but the musical heritage that lived in their heads and their hearts. These African musical traditions were intensely rhythmic and, to many close-minded colonists, seemed uncivilized and perhaps threatening. As discussed later in this essay, these African musical traditions would form the basis of the first truly American musical forms.

But that was still a way off. As cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston grew and prospered in the 17th century, there were additional opportunities for music outside of religious settings. Folk music played on fiddles and flutes was popular in taverns with the general public, while wealthy colonists would import professional musicians, usually from Britain, to entertain their guests. It was all very much European music, not yet distinctly American.¹

The 18th Century

The first truly American music developed as the 1600s gave way to the 1700s. Beginning around the 1730s, some evangelists sought to convert enslaved African Americans to Christianity as part of the religious revival called “The Great Awakening.” The enslaved were taught traditional European hymns, but the structured, stiff religious songs were entirely at odds with the musical rituals familiar to and generally preferred by the enslaved (to include the “call-and-response,” and improvisation).

Gradually, from the merging of these two styles came what was known as the “Negro spiritual,” which featured lyrics of salvation and redemption. Spirituals became one of the first distinctly American musical forms and laid the groundwork for numerous genres that followed, including gospel, blues, jazz, rock, and eventually hip-hop.²

But those styles of music were a long way off. Colonists in the 18th century remained deeply invested in European musical traditions, like opera. *Flora* is believed to be the first opera performed

¹ John Ogasapien, *Music of the Colonial and Revolutionary Era* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004); Michael C. Gabriele, *New Jersey Folk Revival Music: History & Tradition* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2016); Melissa Ziobro interviewing Michael C. Gabriele on *New Jersey Folk Revival Music: History & Tradition*, “Conversations with Our Curator,” YouTube video, posted May 14, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtJNrissFck>.

² James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, *The Books of the American Negro Spirituals* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2002); Melissa Ziobro interviewing Dr. LaToya Lain on “The History and Performance Practices of the Negro Spiritual,” YouTube video, posted May 8, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8KH5R4BmRQ&list=PLhqiOgrIs6Azu9huwM-ecHthbACK_KftY.

in North America (in Charleston, South Carolina in 1735). Opera originated in Italy at the end of the 16th century and spread across Europe before being imported to the British North American colonies. Often seen as an art form for the elite, the opera was a place to see and be seen as much as it was to listen to music.³

As the Revolutionary War brewed, another early American music form evolved organically: what we would today identify as protest music. Patriots often took British songs that mocked the colonists and made them their own. Perhaps the most famous example of this is the song “Yankee Doodle.”⁴

The 19th Century

As America gained its independence against all odds and increasingly found its own way of doing things, secular (versus sacred) music continued to increase in popularity in the newly formed United States of America. One of its most popular forms, unfortunately, were the blatantly racist minstrel shows that began in the 1830s. Rudely mocking black plantation culture, music, and language, the minstrel show was an undeniable stain on an emerging American music tradition. Still, when properly scaffolded, an analysis of these minstrel shows can help students to understand how music acts as a window into the time period in which it was created.

America’s first widely known popular songwriter, Stephen Foster, wrote for minstrel shows before transitioning to the more genteel fare that he is famous for, to include songs like “Beautiful Dreamer.” Foster was born in Pennsylvania and spent much of his life there, but he lived in Hoboken, New Jersey for a period.⁵

A more positive development in American music history in the 1830s came out of Boston, where Lowell Mason first helped to popularize music education in public schools. Music was seen as supporting moral, physical, and intellectual growth in pupils. In 1860 Mason retired to his estate in Orange, New Jersey, where he helped found Valley Congregational Church (renamed Highland Avenue Congregational Church in 1916). He is buried in Orange’s Rosedale Cemetery.⁶

As the wrenching Civil War enveloped the nation to preserve the Union and to stamp out slavery, more than 3 million soldiers would join the Union and Confederate armies. For them, as for generations of soldiers in earlier conflicts, music provided a backdrop for their daily activities, lifted their spirits ahead of challenging battles, and kept up much-needed morale as the war dragged on. For those at home, music provided a source of comfort and motivation in unprecedented and often heartbreaking times.

³ Elisa Kirk, *American Opera* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

⁴ Frank Moore, editor, *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution* (New York: New York Times, 1885).

⁵ Tim Brooks, *The Blackface Minstrel Show in Mass Media: 20th Century Performances on Radio, Records, Film and Television* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2020).

⁶ Arthur Lowndes Rich, *Lowell Mason: The Father of Singing among the Children* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1946).

The Civil War drove a boom in American songwriting: Historian Christian McWhirter estimates that between 9,000 - 10,000 songs were published as sheet music during the war, including some 2,000 in the first year of the conflict alone.⁷

The war freed some 4 million slaves – but we find the legacy of slavery in the development of early blues in the latter 1800s, inspired by work songs previously sung by enslaved African Americans in the fields. Ragtime, another uniquely American music form, came out of bars, brothels, and gentlemen's clubs before taking the country by storm in the late 1890s.

Scott Joplin was an African American composer and pianist, known as the “King of Ragtime.” His most famous works, including “The Entertainer” and “Maple Leaf Rag,” defined the ragtime genre. Joplin elevated Black music and laid some of the groundwork for jazz, leaving a lasting influence on American musical history.⁸

But there was still a place for classical music - only post-Civil War, classical composers, for decades trained to look to Europe for inspiration, began to look inward, thanks in large part to the 1885 founding of the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York City. American composers began writing classical works with true American roots.⁹

Just as the type of music Americans created and listened to began to shift in the 1800s, so, too, did how they consumed it, when Thomas Edison, with his laboratory here in New Jersey, developed the means to record and play back music in 1877. This made music more widely accessible to Americans everywhere, on demand. The importance of this cannot be overstated.

Several inventors were attempting to capture and re-play sound in the latter decades of the 19th century when Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877. In his first version of the technology, what was essentially tinfoil was wrapped around a cylinder. One needle carved vibrations from a voice onto the tinfoil. Another needle played them back. After just a few plays, the tinfoil fell apart. The idea needed work, for sure, but it was groundbreaking. Edison - and others - gradually perfected the concept. Later phonographs played wax cylinders. Again, the way people experienced music was forever changed.

In the 1890s, Emile Berliner initiated the transition from these phonograph cylinders to flat discs with a spiral groove running from the periphery to near the center, coining the term *gramophone* for disc record players. Berliner ultimately passed his patent rights to a man named Eldridge R. Johnson, who in 1900 formed the entirely new Consolidated Talking Machine Company in Philadelphia. Shortly afterwards Johnson changed the company name to “Manufactured by Eldridge R. Johnson,” and then in 1901 to the Victor Talking Machine Company. Johnson built a large plant in his native Camden, New Jersey, and the Victor, a direct descendant of

⁷ Christian McWhirter, *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

⁸ Stephen Costanza, *King of Ragtime: The Story of Scott Joplin* (New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2021).

⁹ Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall* (New York: W.W. Norton., 2005).

the Berliner Gramophone Company, became the largest and best-known record company in the world. (The Radio Corporation of America would later purchase the Victor Talking Machine Company, in 1929.)¹⁰

One of America's most original and important music forms, jazz, took shape in New Orleans in the early 1900s. Evolving out of the city's many marching bands, early blues, ragtime, and even spirituals and work songs, jazz was an amalgam of everything good about American music. Not much is known about Buddy Bolden, but the New Orleans cornet player is generally considered the first great jazz player based on testimonials from first generation jazzmen. Bolden's relatively low profile provides an interesting case study in who history remembers, and why.¹¹

The 20th Century

American musical stylings continued to morph and grow into the 20th century. In 1903, Memphis-based composer and bandleader W.C. Handy first heard the blues while in the Mississippi Delta and formalized the roughhewn African American roots music by writing and publishing "Memphis Blues" in 1912. Handy would eventually become known as the "Father of the Blues," though he didn't necessarily have a hand in *creating* it, as much as popularizing and capitalizing on it. This is but one example of the many interesting conversations that can be had about the business of music, historically.¹²

Speaking of the business of music - sales of phonographs soared in the early part of the 20th century, as did player pianos, popular in nickelodeons and in the homes of well-to-do Americans. The music publishing industry was booming, too. Begun around 1885 but truly becoming a force in the early 1900s was Tin Pan Alley, and the songs that came from it. Located on W. 28th Street, between 5th and 6th avenues in Manhattan, the street was filled with music publishers who employed professional songwriters and song "pluggers" to write and promote hits of the day. Tin Pan Alley played a major role in the development of the modern music industry.¹³

When the Great War broke out in Europe in 1914, popular American songs that dealt directly or indirectly with the war debuted quickly, and they trace the developing attitudes towards the war amongst Americans. Many songs advocated for neutrality, the position initially adopted by the United States' government. When the Americans did enter the war in 1917, pro-war songs quickly proliferated. George M. Cohan's "Over There" was the most popular and enduring American song of the era, but other titles worth exploring abound and include "Goodbye Broadway, Hello France,"

¹⁰ Randall E. Stross, *The Wizard of Menlo Park: How Thomas Alva Edison Invented the Modern World* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2007).

¹¹ Ted Gioia, *The History of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹² Francis Davis, *The History of the Blues* (New York: Hyperion, 1995).

¹³ Philip Furia and Michael Lasser, *America's Songs: The Stories behind the Songs of Broadway, Hollywood, and Tin Pan Alley* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

“We’ll Do Our Share (While You’re Over There),” and “When I Come Back to You (We’ll Have a Yankee-Doodle Wedding).”¹⁴

Following the Allied victory in World War I, the 1920s was one of America’s most productive and exciting music decades. Novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald rightfully called the decade “the Jazz Age” and for many, life was one big party as they celebrated the end of what people incorrectly hoped would be the war to end all wars. New Jersey’s James Johnson was (in addition to Buddy Bolden) one of the key figures in the evolution of ragtime into what was eventually called jazz. Johnson was a major influence on names that you might recognize more readily, like Count Basie – also from New Jersey – as well as Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, and Fats Waller. Johnson composed many hit songs, including the unofficial anthem of the Roaring Twenties, “The Charleston.”

But jazz wasn’t for everyone. In 1927, in Bristol, Tennessee Jimmie Rodgers emerged and would later be called the Father of Country Music. That same year the Nashville-based radio show, the WSM Barn Dance, became known as the Grand Ole Opry, which spread country music far and wide.

That same year, in New York City, Oscar Hammerstein II and Jerome Kern premiered *Show Boat* on Broadway, a production that launched a golden age of musicals, on stage and film. And speaking of *Show Boat* – New Jersey’s Paul Robeson was a huge hit in its 1929 London premier. This all too often overlooked concert artist, stage and film actor, professional football player, and activist recorded and released close to 300 songs between 1925 and 1961. His recorded repertoire spanned many styles, including Americana, popular standards, classical music, European folk songs, political songs, poetry and spoken excerpts from plays.

Clearly, there was a diverse, robust, music scene in the early decades of the 20th century. But as the nation came into the 1930s, the Great Depression dramatically affected American music, as it did nearly everything else in American life. The growing music industry of the 1920s barely survived in the 1930s, seen in the dramatic reduction of recordings and the absence of new pop music forms. Oklahoma folksinger Woody Guthrie wrote about those hard times perhaps better than anyone else. His many songs captured the desperate condition of the working man and looked at America’s underbelly with raw honesty and compassion.

The Great Depression ended when the United States entered World War II in 1941, which had been raging in Europe since 1939. The V-Disc program is perhaps the most interesting and little-known music history story of the World War II era. From August 1, 1942 to November 11, 1944, the largest union in the world representing professional musicians, the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), organized a strike. Their main grievance concerned how royalties were paid. Recording of new music for commercial use ground to a virtual halt during this period, which just so happened to coincide largely with World War II. Some major artists recorded music exclusively

¹⁴ William Brooks, Christina Bashford, and Gayle Sherwood Magee, editors, *Over Here, Over There: Transatlantic Conversations on the Music of World War I* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2019).

for the free use of the US military in what was called the “V-Disc” program. New Jersey artists like Count Basie and big band leader Tommy Tucker participated in this program.¹⁵

After World War II, musical experimentation surged. This included rhythm & blues, a more stripped-down dance music that paved the path for rock & roll. More adventurous jazz musicians like Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk experimented with bebop, with its wild improvisation and complex rhythms.

At the same time, Hank Williams brought honky tonk to country music, while from the hills and hollers of Appalachia came the fresh, frenetic sounds of bluegrass, courtesy of Bill Monroe and his Blue Mountain Boys.¹⁶

The technology continued to evolve, too; and the advent of the long-playing disc, or lp, revolutionized the listening experience, while the invention of the transistor gave young music fans freedom from the family radio in the living room. This greatly contributed to new youth markets for artists, and the development of a much stronger youth culture.¹⁷

The rise of rock & roll was the main music story of the 1950s. In 1954 a young Elvis Presley made his first recordings at Sun Studios in Memphis. While Elvis would eventually be known as “The King,” rock & roll had a long list of pioneers, Black and white, including Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bo Diddley and Buddy Holly.

An artist didn’t **have** to rock to be popular in the ‘50s, though. Hoboken’s Frank Sinatra was more crooner than rocker. Sinatra began his musical career in the swing era and was greatly influenced by the easy-listening vocal style of crooner Bing Crosby. Sinatra signed with Columbia Records in 1943 and found success as a solo artist, becoming a teen idol. He would grow with his audience, and his career would span decades. Some call him “the greatest singer of the 20th century.”¹⁸

America’s most turbulent decade, the 1960s, was also its most musically rich. Rock dominated the decade, but there were also active soul, Motown, and folk movements. Music was used almost solely to protest, rather than support, the Vietnam War, a distinct difference from past conflicts where music often provided a patriotic boost to the nation’s morale. New Jersey-born Paul Simon began performing with his school friend Art Garfunkel in 1956. The duo came to prominence in

¹⁵ Melissa Ziobro, “Springsteen Archives Receives Rare WWII Troop Recordings by Count Basie and Other Music Legends,” *Two River Times*, published January 11, 2024 (accessed June 8, 2025), <https://tworivertimes.com/springsteen-archives-receives-rare-wwii-troop-recordings-by-count-basie-and-other-music-legends/>.

¹⁶ James A. Cosby, *Devil’s Music, Holy Rollers and Hillbillies: How America Gave Birth to Rock and Roll* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2016).

¹⁷ Susan Schmidt Horning, *Chasing Sound: Technology, Culture, and the Art of Studio Recording from Edison to the LP* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).

¹⁸ Jay Sweet, *A History of American Music 1750-1950: An Origin Story* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendal Hunt Publishing, 2021).

the '60s as Simon & Garfunkel. Their blend of folk and rock, in hits such as “The Sound of Silence” and “Mrs. Robinson” served as a soundtrack to the decade’s counterculture movement.¹⁹

Rock’s creative explosion in the 1960s continued unabated in the 1970s as new genres surfaced throughout the decade. Singer-songwriters, from James Taylor to Joni Mitchell, added a quieter, more introspective sound to rock in the early '70s. Bands like the Eagles would come to define the West Coast, while, down south, the Allman Brothers Band and Lynyrd Skynyrd created southern rock, a mesh of blues, country, R&B, and hard rock. New Jersey produced the gritty streetwise sound of Bruce Springsteen.

Quite different from the rock scene was the briefly popular disco era of the latter '70s. The 1977 movie *Saturday Night Fever* brought the dance music out of the urban underground and onto dance floors throughout America. The film’s lead actor, John Travolta, was born and raised in Englewood, New Jersey, while Gloria Gaynor, best known for the disco era hit “I Will Survive,” was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1943.

MTV premiered in 1981, again changing the way Americans experienced pop music. For a time, the music video became the dominant manner by which new music was introduced to fans. New Jersey rock band Bon Jovi, formed in 1983, would quickly embrace the platform and leverage it to skyrocket to success.

Rap, or hip-hop, became an increasingly popular music form in the '80s. Led by artists such as Run DMC, LL Cool J, and the group, Public Enemy, hip-hop began in the African American community and spread to white listeners, thus broadening the commercial viability of the genre.²⁰

The 1980s also saw the rise of the superstar artist. Michael Jackson, Prince, and Madonna sold millions of albums, as did New Jersey’s Whitney Houston. Christened “the Voice,” she is another New Jerseyan who is among the best-selling musicians of all time.

The late '80s also saw grunge emerge in Seattle with bands like Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and Alice in Chains. Blending elements of punk with heavy metal, grunge has been called rock’s last great movement.

Female musicians in the 1990s were notably different from those in earlier decades in terms of their creative control, visibility, diversity of genres, and cultural influence. They wrote their own songs, played instruments, and took control of their image and production: Alanis Morissette, for example, wrote emotionally raw, autobiographical music on *Jagged Little Pill*. Lauryn Hill combined rapping, singing, and songwriting on *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*. Unlike many female pop stars of earlier eras who were managed and marketed largely by men, 1990s women increasingly dictated their artistic direction.²¹

¹⁹ Jon Meacham and Tim McGraw, *Songs of America: Patriotism, Protest, and the Music That Made a Nation* (New York: Delacorte Press, 2019).

²⁰ Jonathan P. D. Abrams, Anna Kochman, and Chris Allen, *The Come Up: An Oral History of the Rise of Hip-Hop* (New York: Crown, an imprint of Random House, 2022).

²¹ Alison Fensterstock, editor, *How Women Made Music: A Revolutionary History from NPR Music* (New York, NY: HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, 2024).

But the 1990s would be dominated by hip-hop as it took center stage with young listeners, moving rock to the wings. Dr. Dre's *The Chronic* and *Illmatic* by Nas were landmark hip-hop albums that blazed new paths in pop. New Jersey's Dana Owens, better known by the stage name Queen Latifah, became the first hip-hop artist to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2006.

The 21st Century

Music in the 21st century has been defined by rapid technological change, genre blending, and global influence. The rise of digital platforms like iTunes, Spotify, and YouTube revolutionized how music is distributed and consumed, giving artists direct access to global audiences and shifting power away from traditional record labels. This democratization of music helped independent artists gain visibility alongside mainstream acts.

Musically, the 21st century has seen the blurring of genre boundaries. Artists like Beyoncé, Billie Eilish, and Lil Nas X have mixed pop, R&B, hip-hop, electronic, and even country elements to create innovative sounds. Hip-hop emerged as the dominant global genre, influencing fashion, language, and politics. Meanwhile, Latin pop, K-pop, and Afrobeats brought international music into the mainstream, showing the world's increasing appetite for cross-cultural sounds.

The century has also seen music take on a more personal and political voice. Social media has allowed artists to speak directly to fans, while songs increasingly address issues like mental health, racial justice, and gender identity. As artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and global streaming continue to evolve, the music of the 21st century remains a dynamic and ever-changing reflection of contemporary life and technology.²²

Deploying Music History in the Classroom

Those intrigued at the prospect of working music history moments, and music, into their classes, but unsure where to start, should explore the myriad free resources offered by TeachRock. TeachRock is a free, innovative educational platform created by the Rock and Soul Forever Foundation, founded by musician and activist Steven Van Zandt. Designed to engage students and support educators across all grade levels and subjects, TeachRock uses the universal power of music to enrich traditional academic instruction. Its mission is to transform the way education is delivered by integrating music, history, technology, and culture into classroom lessons. Whether the subject is social studies, science, language arts, or math, TeachRock offers more than 300 standards-aligned, interdisciplinary lesson plans that bring core content to life through the lens of music.

At its core, TeachRock believes that music can be a powerful entry point into deeper academic understanding. Its lessons don't simply teach about music—they use music as a tool to explore major topics. For example, students might examine the Civil Rights Movement through protest

²² Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (California: University of California Press, 2010).

songs, study the science of sound waves through audio production, or understand immigration patterns by tracing the origins of musical genres. These lessons provide students with real-world connections to academic concepts, increasing both engagement and retention.

One of the key reasons teachers should use TeachRock is its proven ability to boost student motivation and participation. In classrooms where students may struggle with attention or interest in traditional learning formats, the integration of popular music—artists they recognize and stories that resonate—makes learning more relevant and exciting. Teachers report that students are more enthusiastic and willing to engage in discussions, research, and projects when music is at the center of the lesson.

TeachRock also supports social-emotional learning (SEL), helping students build empathy, identity, and a sense of community. Lessons that explore the cultural origins of music or personal narratives of artists encourage students to reflect on their own experiences and develop a broader understanding of the world. The platform includes resources like the Harmony Project, which focuses on student wellness and relationship-building through music-based activities and reflection.

Moreover, TeachRock equips educators with high-quality, easy-to-use materials. Lessons include clear instructions, video content, interactive tools, and assessment suggestions, allowing teachers to implement them with minimal preparation. For those looking for professional development, TeachRock also offers free workshops, webinars, and resources that support effective use of the materials in diverse classrooms.

Importantly, TeachRock is inclusive and adaptable. Its lessons are designed to serve a wide range of learners, including those in underserved communities. The platform promotes culturally responsive teaching by highlighting diverse voices, histories, and music traditions, ensuring that all students see themselves represented in the curriculum.

TeachRock is more than a collection of music lessons—it's a comprehensive, engaging, and transformative educational resource. By using music to illuminate complex ideas, it helps students connect with academic content on a personal level. For teachers seeking to increase student engagement, enhance interdisciplinary learning, and build inclusive classroom communities, TeachRock is an invaluable—and completely free—tool that brings learning to life.²³

Conclusion

The semiquincentennial presents a unique opportunity to spark renewed interest not only in the American Revolution, but in American history as a whole. To meet the challenge of engaging students who may view history as “boring,” educators must seek out creative and relevant approaches to teaching. Incorporating music history, and music itself, into lessons is one way to do this. This essay has offered a series of music history vignettes, arranged chronologically across the past 250 years, to help history and social studies educators brainstorm how to weave meaningful musical moments, and music, into their instruction. While not exhaustive, the essay highlights

²³ **TeachRock**, accessed June 2, 2025, <https://teachrock.org/>.

influential events and figures that have shaped the American music landscape. Those intrigued at the prospect of working music history moments, and music, into their classes, but unsure where to start, should know that TeachRock stands ready to provide free, standards-aligned educational resources — helping to make history more engaging, accessible, and impactful for today's learners.

Melissa Ziobro began her career as a historian, archivist, and curator for the US Army at Fort Monmouth in 2004 prior to returning to her alma mater, Monmouth University, to teach full-time when the base closed. She has taught over a dozen different courses, including Intro to Public History; Oral History; Museums and Archives Management Basics; and New Jersey History. In August of 2023, she became curator of the University's Bruce Springsteen Archives & Center for American Music, after having worked with the Center for many years in her faculty role (to include curating the Center's first traveling exhibit, Springsteen: His Hometown, with the Monmouth County Historical Association in 2019). The BSACAM's current traveling exhibit, titled Music America: Iconic Objects from America's Music History, forms the basis for this article. The exhibit has thus far been installed at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and Museum in Austin Texas; the GRAMMY Museum in Cleveland, Mississippi; and the George HW Bush Library and Museum in College Station, Texas. Her most recent books include Fort Monmouth: The US Army's House of Magic (2024) and The Battlin' Bastards of Bravo: Bravo Company, 1/506th, 101st Airborne, in Vietnam and Beyond (2025).



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