

The Myth of the Citizen-Soldier: Black Patriots and the  
American Revolution

by

Patrick F. Moriarty  
Class of 2014

A thesis submitted to the  
faculty of Wesleyan University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
with Departmental Honors in History

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	3
Preface	4
Introduction: Unity in War	13
1. The Symbolism of Service	20
2. Temporary War, Temporary Citizenship	51
3. From Citizen-Soldier to Denizen-Veteran	72
Conclusion: Naturalized Nationals	98
Bibliography	111

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would be remiss not to mention the three men who have shaped my historical studies at Wesleyan. To my thesis advisor, Demetrius Eudell, I want to let you know it was a complete pleasure getting to know you this year. Your brilliance as a teacher motivated me to request your tutelage when constructing a thesis. I can say unequivocally I made the right choice. I cannot imagine where I'd be if it were not for your subtle, though poignant, tips and suggestions along the way. My project has taken many forms during the process; you motivated me and kept me steady when the currents seemed too rough to handle. Most important, you let me learn the trade of history on my own. For that I am proud. Aware of my own personal shortcomings, I simply hope my efforts made you proud.

To Ronald Schatz, your advice and guidance these past three years have been second to none. Your History of Middletown course made me realize I went to Wesleyan to challenge myself and work hard academically. You are the largest reason my love for history has grown during my undergraduate years.

To Gary Shaw, your decision to take on a wide-eyed, innocuous, hard-working, and oftentimes giggling red-head as a research assistant gave me confidence in my own voice, and in my own decisions. You exposed me to one way of writing history, and made me truly believe I was capable of producing something of worth.

To my four roommates, especially my fellow soldier at war Max Bigman, thanks for keeping things light and in perspective when we habitually congregate for the festivities and hilarity we've come to love about our friendship.

To Laura Munsil, your ability to Gchat and tolerate my inane questions concerning all things history thesis have not gone unnoticed. Living in Butt B has a few silver linings after all.

To my best friend Zoe, you're the cat's meow. You are also the reason I have stayed sane this year, the reason I am excited about my future, and the reason Wesleyan will always be remembered fondly.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge my family. Everything I've done at Wesleyan has been to make you proud. Mum and Dad, your love and guidance are the only reason I am here today. Kate, your example has allowed me to make my goals a reality. Ben, you are—and always will be—my one and only hero. I love the four of you more than anything.

## PREFACE

### HISTORIOGRAPHY OF BLACK MILITARY SERVICE IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

“The Revolution flattered to deceive; it promised more than it achieved. The historian is faced with the sad paradox that the first great onslaught on slavery in America was impelled by egalitarianism and by a belief in universal and natural rights: but it helped to produce a positive racism and an explicit denial of those rights.”<sup>1</sup>

Duncan MacLeod’s critique at the conclusion of his seminal *Slavery, Race, and the American Revolution* becomes an important point of departure for any exploration of the American Revolution. Four decades ago, MacLeod’s perspective offered an alternative way to view a nation’s foundational moment. The colonies turned into states, and the colonists became citizens; however, many Blacks’ democratic dream of entering into the body politic could not be imagined. A paradox arose between a revolution whose roots grew in the soil of egalitarianism and a society that thrived largely because of a repressive economy centered on human bondage.

For centuries, historians have attributed grander meaning to the American Revolution, with the experience taking on mythic proportions because of its supposed exceptional nature. Similarly, others depict the Revolution as part of a larger wind swirling across the ocean, one that fluctuated in strength but uttered one simple promise: Liberty. Published in 2012, Alan Gilbert’s *Black Patriots and Black Loyalists* delivers a tale of Blacks fighting for emancipation, enumerating the historical agency of freedom fighters on both sides of the conflict. Gilbert traces their stories after the war up north to Nova Scotia, and east across the ocean to the West

---

<sup>1</sup> Duncan J. MacLeod, *Slavery, Race, and the American Revolution* (London: Cambridge UP, 1974), 184.

African colony of Sierra Leone, where some Black Loyalist soldiers sought better lives.

Varying perspectives surrounding the American Revolution show the events leading up to, during, and immediately following the war embody the United States' founding narrative. An area worthy of further exploration is the connection between military service and citizenship. During the war, recruitment problems on the American side thrust the question of Black enlistment to the forefront of political discussion. However, in a revolution whose beginning saw the universal service model of the militia idealized, and the patriotic defense of liberty championed, military service carried deep symbolic meaning. Black American military service offers the most pertinent and meaningful way to explore the connection between service and citizenship. In the process of constructing a consciously racialized nation, the sight of Black soldiers on the battlefield forced many Americans to grapple with fundamental understandings of citizenship.

The historiography of Blacks in the Revolutionary War began in 1850 with William Nell's chronicle of Black Patriots. Harriet Beecher Stowe argued in her introduction to Nell's *Colored Patriots of the American Revolution*, the work possessed the potential to “give new self-respect and confidence to the race...And their white brothers in reading may remember, that generosity, disinterested courage and bravery, are of no particular race and complexion, and that the image of the Heavenly Father may be reflected alike by all.”<sup>2</sup> Stowe's introduction reveals that the influential writer understood Black veterans as people worthy of the same treatment

---

<sup>2</sup> William C. Nell and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution with Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons; to Which Is Added a Brief Survey of the Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans* (Boston: R.F. Wallcut, 1855), 6.

bestowed upon white veterans of war. The reminder that generosity, disinterested courage, and bravery are human traits connected to no particular color implies many racially qualified these positive traits, especially within the confines of military service. Stowe hoped Nell's history possessed the capacity to remind Americans that noble service was a human quality rather than simply a white quality. Predictably, the time of Nell's publication left little room to rework a national historic memory surrounding the American Revolution and Black service.

In 1961, Benjamin Quarles' *The Negro in the American Revolution* introduced slavery and a desire for freedom as the paramount aspect of the American Revolution for Blacks. The institutional elements of slavery, Quarles affirmed, conflicted with the ideas of Patriots. Both works attempted to shed light on the muddled role Black soldiers played during the American Revolution. Adopting a perspective of vindication, Nell emphasized the presence of Blacks in the military, and stressed their service should be remembered. In a nation that placed social value on participating in state-authorized violence, Nell's work was an assertion of being American at a time when so many were intent on restricting the title. Quarles' history refocuses the American Revolution as an archetypal way to understand "the extent to which changes occurred in the status of Negroes."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps more important—and illustrated in almost all of Quarles' writings—is the notion that throughout American history Blacks served as both a participant and a symbol.<sup>4</sup> MacLeod's *Slavery, Race, and the American Revolution* concentrated on the balance between revolutionary ideals and

---

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture (Williamsburg, VA: University of North Carolina, 1961), x.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Quarles, *Black Mosaic: Essays in Afro-American History and Historiography* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1988), 10.

the implementation of the slave system. He maintained the newly formed American Republic was the construction of a consciously racist society.

Alan Gilbert's contemporary history *Black Patriots and Loyalists* focuses on Black soldiers as something greater than cogs in the revolutionary struggle. He portrays Blacks as a transnational culture and emphasizes the international desire for freedom as the operative commonality amongst Blacks. The idea accepts Quarles' attribution of the Black soldier as a participant and symbol, and assigns specific value to freedom fighters. However, Gilbert's work fails to explain what Black soldiers meant within the confines of a newly invented nation. Similarly, though Quarles' work introduces the American Revolution as a fundamental moment of change for Blacks, he does not explain the connection between American service and American identity. Meanwhile, MacLeod views the Revolution through the lens of slavery, offering little interpretation on the symbolic meaning behind Black service when constructing an American identity. While admitting all previous works of historiography have their merits, this project hopes to explore Black Patriots in the context of a supposedly exceptional nation.

Charles Royster's *A Revolutionary People at War* (1979) offers "a scholarly story of ideas and attitudes"<sup>5</sup> connected to the Continental Army during the American Revolution. The main question ultimately becomes what is the relationship between the ideals of the revolution and the actions of Americans. While similar to MacLeod's work in that Royster uses the revolutionary ideology for comparison, the historian emphasizes the connection many Americans felt with those serving.

---

<sup>5</sup> Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina, 1979), xi.

Douglas Bradburn's *Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804* (2009) dedicates particular attention to the role of Black citizenship in the American Union, though situated mainly within the scope of the Constitution rather than military service. Moreover, Bradburn's declaration that a historians' tendency "to stress 'forgotten' narratives: microhistories, the history of the exploited, and the peculiar experiences of some exceptional figures...can weaken the clarity of the more typical experiences and ultimately the stakes"<sup>6</sup> seems oblivious to the fact that such histories promote the dialogic aspect of narrative rather than a fixed understanding of a national past. Offering another way to consider citizenship, Jennifer R. Mercieca's *Founding Fictions* (2010) explores the narrative forms present when constructing and understanding citizenship in the early United States; however, she fails to explore the role Blacks played throughout these shifting narratives. Additionally, Mercieca's investigation completely ignores the almost eight years of war and their influence on developing fictions pertaining to citizenship.

Related to a discussion of narrative form and citizenship, two popular literary productions from the time of the Revolution require examination. John Leacock's *The Fall of British Tyranny* (1776) highlights an early American affinity for the military and offers one of the first public depictions of Black military service. Joseph Addison's *Cato* (1713) recalls the last days of Marcus Porcius Cato and his resistance to the tyrannical Julius Caesar. Both plays were popular, and influential, during the time of the American Revolution. They also provide unique perspective on the connection between Black service and the formation of an American identity.

---

<sup>6</sup> Douglas Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2009), 15.



Stemming from the symbolic meaning of military service, the American North represents an apt environment to explore American citizenship in the context of Black service. In New England, close adherence to muster and training days elevated the social gatherings to a status of “essentially a local institution.” These communal meetings shaped local identity, and offer insight into military service’s role when understanding one’s political affiliation.<sup>7</sup> In the North, Blacks were more likely to serve in state regiments. In the South, some plantation colonies allowed a small amount of free Blacks to enlist, and Maryland even allowed the enlistment of slaves toward the end of the American Revolution. However, Georgia and South Carolina never yielded to enlisting Blacks throughout the armed conflict. Additionally, the number of troops sent from the South pale in comparison to the North. The Hon. Lorenzo Sabine, in his historical essay of the American Loyalist, revealed of the 231,959 men enlisted into the Continental service, 67,907 were from Massachusetts. In comparison, every state south of Pennsylvania provided 59,493 in total—or 8,414 less than the single state. Even more, New England equipped more than half of the soldiers of the American Revolution—118,350—and more died in service than the South sent in total.<sup>8</sup>

The Continental Navy openly accepted recruits, especially free Black sailors from New England. Additionally, most Black enlistees in the South joined the British side—and were rarely used in battle.<sup>9</sup> Some Blacks in the colonial North previously fought in militias during the French and Indian War—allowing them connection to

---

<sup>7</sup> H. Telfer Mook, "Training Day in New England," *The New England Quarterly* 11.4 (1938): 678.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North*. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967), 164-165.

<sup>9</sup> Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 198.

past military service. Since the initial campaigns of the American Revolution took place throughout the North, many Northern colonies were forced to make immediate decisions about integrating military regiments. The majority of free Blacks in the colonies resided in the North. Perhaps for this reason, it was the region where notable Black communities and traditions developed following the war. New England colonies lent themselves to Blacks service in the Continental Army more easily than any other region.<sup>10</sup> Because of all this, the most enduring implications of Black military service are tied to the American North.

Cognizant of the shortcomings in past historiography, particularly a lack of attention paid to Black Patriots and their relation to American citizenship, the project hopes to assign new meaning to Black military service. While piecing together a composite of Black soldiers from the American North, I accept Benjamin Quarles' attribution of the Black soldier as a participant and symbol. This project argues Blacks' military service embodied one construction of American citizenship. Black military service shaped one classification of *American* because the militia system was a fundamental way to define citizenship in the North. The treatment and organization of Blacks throughout the Revolution, as well as increased communication among soldiers, helped define the social structure of the American North after the war. Rather than relating Black military service to other causes, the project places emphasis on the implications of service within a newly invented nation. Furthermore, the project elevates Black military service to something more than a cultural attempt at seeking freedom or improving social circumstances. Instead, Black soldiers

---

<sup>10</sup> Charles Patrick Neimeyer, *America Goes to War: A Social History of the Continental Army* (New York: New York UP, 1996), 74.

underscore a tendency to assign Americans with separate labels based on their relationship to state-authorized violence.

During Chapter 1, public representations of military service are analyzed, with emphasis placed on the symbolic meaning of organized communal violence. Where Blacks situate themselves within the context of military service also merits close discussion. In Chapter 2, investigation turns to the temporary citizenship of Black soldiers and the steps taken throughout the Revolution to separate Blacks within the confines of service. I assert the debate and subsequent legislation surrounding integrated service set the precedent for how Blacks would be treated within the legal confines of a new nation. In Chapter 3, the project focuses on Black veterans as residents of a new national public. I explore the shifts in local traditions dealing with military service and the Northern Black community in general. My conclusion introduces the idea that diversifying the term *American* only sees legitimate progress surrounding times of armed conflict or within the confines of the American military. I explore United States certificates of citizenship and local publications when connecting communal violence to citizenship. I conclude with commentary on the realities Black military service helped reveal about the American citizen.

Throughout the project, sources are utilized to accentuate the active formation of an American identity. The style combines individual memories of service, state and federal legislation, and public representations of the military to produce a composite sketch of Black soldiers and their relation to American citizenship. The sources emphasize the shifting public climate during the Revolution, and Black military service's connection to such change. The letters of General Charles Lee and John

Leacock's *The Fall of British Tyranny* confirm early American sympathies formed around the militia. Pension applications filed for past service give Black military service personal context during the American Revolution. The records specifically explain the terms of enlistment for Black soldiers and intimate some individuals' acceptance of the American ideology. Potentially just as valuable, these pension records illustrate the circumstances Black veterans found themselves in decades following war. Additionally, Joseph Addison's *Cato* offers a unique lens through which Black military service may be explored. Finally, attention has been paid to postwar legislation involving free Blacks and the institution of slavery.

Supplementing the evidentiary base are newspaper accounts and early American descriptions of the Revolution. Accumulating sources from a variety of locations produces the composite narrative for which this project strives. In the process, the military service of Black men during the American Revolution takes on new meaning. Namely, Black soldiers personified one form of American citizenship and ensured the symbol of an active American remained racialized.

## INTRODUCTION

### UNITY IN WAR

In the context of Black American military service, the difference between the American Revolution and the United States Civil War provides an interesting framework for discussion. Since the issue of slavery appeared explicitly in political conflict for decades before war, the relationship between slavery and the Civil War appears more seamless. The American Civil War and the institution of slavery go hand in hand in United States historiography. Conversely, rebellious colonists claimed the American Revolution concerned the quest for liberty and natural human rights. While almost 200,000 Black men served in the Union Army by Civil War's end, only about 5,000 Black men served for the Patriot side during the American Revolution. Black American military service has a tendency to simply vanish from the popular understanding of the Revolution, forgotten as the tale of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution merit most attention.

Four score and seven years separated two distinct periods—a time when Black men could fight alongside Americans and see little reward versus a time when the United States felt compelled to act upon the inconsistencies of its charter. The story of Black American military service implies a notable level of distinction from the Founding onward. These men served in earnest and came from different backgrounds, only to be ushered quietly back to a place of social marginalization at the Revolution's conclusion. Following the Civil War, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment made all persons born or naturalized in the United States citizens; citizens' privileges could not be impaired without the due process of law. In 1870, the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment granted Black men the right to vote. For the purpose of this project, these moments highlight

different stages of the United States' development. The intertwining of Black American culture and the Civil War has an indelible presence in the American narrative. On the other hand, interpretation of the American Revolution glosses over the presence of Black military service besides a few oft-repeated buzzwords such as Crispus Attucks, John Laurens, or the First Rhode Island Regiment. Instead, the Revolution's violence is personified by faithful white minutemen at Lexington and Concord, or the military intellect of George Washington. Attucks, Laurens, and the First Rhode Island Regiment are worthy topics of discussion. However, they do little to capture the experience of an emerging and developing Black American culture—a culture cast into the symbolic role of soldier during the Revolution.

The study of history reveals, among countless other things, the power of myth, the power of community, and the influence ideals have on communities. In Western society, the celebrated myths and narratives of monotheistic religions mobilized humans for centuries. These narratives introduced people to the power of community, among other things; they also created a force that completely overshadowed and relinquished the power of the individual. Centuries later, the Enlightenment challenged societal norms and traditions rooted in religious faith. A reworking of John Locke and Enlightenment philosophy to emphasize the natural rights of colonists, an assertion of English freedom granted during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the values of Protestantism represent the origins and ideals of the United States. A revolution against the British Empire retained an inherent claim to freedom, but under the auspices of an entirely new nation. The intertwining of these three sentiments—clinging to authority granted from Britain, the ideal of natural human rights from the

Enlightenment, and divine permission from religion—account for much of the American story. The imperial expansion of the United States based on these principles, the desire to fight for these principles around the globe, and the ability to accept varying cultures into this nation all drive the American myth.

Recalling the American Revolution, many simplify the event to a shifting personality in the colonies with an extended period of violence mixed in. John Adams famously clarified the meaning of *the American Revolution* when he maintained “The Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments. Of their duties and obligations... This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people was the real American Revolution.”<sup>11</sup> Adams’ perspective embodied this shifting colonial identity. However, the claim glosses over an undeniable fact: revolutions do not carry on through ideas alone. Actions are needed to establish, nurture, and confirm newfound identity.

T.H. Breen’s *American Insurgents, American Patriots* (2010) recognized “The sine qua non of our Revolution—indeed, of any successful revolution—was the willingness of a sufficient number of people to take up arms against an elected imperial government that no longer served the common good.”<sup>12</sup> Early in the war countless colonists heeded the call to enlist. After the initial surge subsided, colonies faced difficulty reaching recruitment quotas. Witnessing these troubles during the Revolution, George Washington, the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army,

---

<sup>11</sup> Richard R. Beeman, *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 276.

<sup>12</sup> T. H. Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 10.

matter-of-factly acknowledged a lack of soldiers meant “there is an end to the Contest, and opposition becomes vain.”<sup>13</sup> Though Adams’ recollection sounds beautiful, the reality remains genuine violence on the battlefield secured the transformation from colonist to American.

Like any revolution, the powers that be impelled inhabitants to fight. Colonists shared a common identity as British subjects; however, that identity “existed in symbiosis with another identity that was locationally and socially based, historically grounded, explained, and justified, culturally transmitted from one generation to the next, and prescriptive.”<sup>14</sup> Though the colonists may have all been *Britons*; there were many subcategories to the grouping. Vis-à-vis the historically grounded aspect of colonial identity, Charles Royster’s *A Revolutionary People at War* asserts “The revolutionaries admired their ancestors’ service in this cause when a hostile continent had threatened. British taxation, imperial administration, and the ministerial army’s aggression had brought corrupt power to America, and freedom called this generation to fight.”<sup>15</sup>

Unified violence arose as one of the only ways colonists could truly come together. Common suffering translated into common defense. Two decades prior, Benjamin Franklin attempted to mobilize colonists in support of state-authorized violence against France and certain Indian tribes. The effort provided the

---

<sup>13</sup> Charles S. Hall, *Life and Letters of Samuel Holden Parsons Major-general in the Continental Army and Chief Judge of the Northwestern Territory, 1737-1789* (Binghamton, NY: Otsenigo Pub., 1905), 91.

<sup>14</sup> Jack P. Greene et al., *Creating the British Atlantic. Essays on Transplantation, Adaptation, and Continuity* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2013), 343.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina, 1979), 4-5.



*Pennsylvania Gazette* with one of the first illustrative depictions of colonial unity.

The message: Join or Die.

Before the Revolution, colonies had different governments, different majority religions, different ethnic compositions, different connections to slavery, and therefore different economic systems. Collective violence against a common enemy offered the simplest and most expansive form of colonial unity. The fact introduces another important reality—public depictions of service represented the overarching American ideal. In 1776, Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* asked the remaining British sympathists, “Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined wretched survivor?” If a colonist could experience these things and still remain loyal to Britain, Paine confessed, “then, you are unworthy of the name of husband, father, friend, or lover, and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward.”<sup>16</sup> Americans were plenty of things; afraid to fight did not make the list.

The earliest American myth portrayed colonists as tough, resilient, and fearless. For this reason, and though colonial distinctions existed throughout the war, public portrayals or opinions of armed service took on grander meaning. They united colonists toward one cause, and exemplified the principles and standards of the community. Colonists transformed into Americans because of violence; the violence meant something. “If Americans had been offered the chance to be only as strong as any European people, they might not have bothered to try. But if they could prove

---

<sup>16</sup> Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots*, 11.

themselves stronger than any other people, stronger than even ancient heroes, they would have a cause worthy of their ardor.”<sup>17</sup>

As the transformation from colonist to American occurred, thousands of Black soldiers partook in the violence—violence contemporaries often trivialize. Black men represented one of many racial groups comprising the Patriot fighting force. The fact serves as a reminder that colonists were not simply Britons fighting to become Americans. Soldiers were men of many backgrounds, uniting in violence and aspiring to earn the title of American. During the almost eight years of armed conflict, serving for the American side took on different meaning. The universal defense of liberty soon became something less revered; a subordinate group of men served in the stead of all colonists. Not all colonists felt compelled to serve. It serves as no coincidence, then, that as the reverence toward the American soldier diminished, the tendency to accept Blacks into the armed service increased.

The tale of Black military service reveals many things. Americans learned Blacks fought for their freedom from the Founding onward. They learned Black service eventually made the institution of slavery obsolete in certain areas, while other soon-to-be states ensured Black service would not destroy the important economic institution. Military service was the agent for the development of the free Black community, and urged Black Americans to identify as a common race. Americans are reminded many Blacks flocked to the British side, viewing the first opportunity for freedom as the best one. A close examination also reveals those who fought for the American side did so for better lives. These Black soldiers took the American values of *freedom, liberty, and all men are created equal* for their word.

---

<sup>17</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 5.

However, Black military service was an outgrowth of an often overlooked American reality—some inherited the status of American, others turned their bodies into weapons at the disposal of the state in order to gain the title. Therefore, from the invented nation's origins, there never existed one type of citizen.

For later Americans, the liminal phase of traveling to the United States and earning citizenship captures a myth of acceptance and variety within American culture. During the United States' founding struggle, the American title could be earned on the battlefield. For Blacks in the thirteen defiant colonies, the first fight for freedom occurred when the term *American* sought definition. The Continental Army and the construction of a national defense served as the first example of an American population. The Continental Congresses convened, and in the process united colonies politically. However, the creation of the Continental Army existed as the United States' first connection between members of a national sovereignty. The traditions surrounding, and decisions regarding, military service during this formative period helped define what it meant to be American, and how one would function within the society of a newly invented nation.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE SYMBOLISM OF SERVICE

“It would be impossible to overstate the militia’s centrality to the lives of American colonists.”<sup>18</sup>

-Saul Cornell, *A Well Regulated Militia* (2006)

In reality, military obligation applied only to white, male citizens who came from property-owning, tax-paying families. Exemptions based on occupation and age further adjusted the category of those compelled to serve. The militia system was designed for training, not active service. Often the militia functioned as an accessible recruiting base, though the wartime forces formed in colonies rarely coincided with the groups that congregated for training.<sup>19</sup>

In symbol, the colonial militia established the principle of universal military obligation and citizen-based defense. “Empirical evidence had little to do with [colonists’] insistence on principle.”<sup>20</sup> For Americans living on the outskirts of colonial civilization, the militia served as a valuable tool for local defense against Indians or European foes. In an age without police forces, the militia maintained public order. The militia provided an important social role in the colonies as well. The only real obligation of the colonial militia entailed reporting during allotted times so that a captain could inspect equipment and arms. These communal exercises—called training days and muster days—allowed people of all ages to congregate and celebrate while observing the drill. “Before the development of the modern political parties, the militia was one of the central means for organizing citizens. When

---

<sup>18</sup> Saul Cornell, *A Well-Regulated Militia: The Founding Fathers and the Origins of Gun Control in America* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), 13.

<sup>19</sup> Richard H. Kohn, *The United States Military under the Constitution of the United States: 1789-1989* (New York U.a.: New York Univ., 1991), 98-99.

<sup>20</sup> Kohn, *The United States Military under the Constitution of the United States*, 99.

American colonists spoke about the importance of a well-regulated militia, they were not simply reciting a tired political cliché lifted from the pages of an esteemed political treatise; they defended an institution that was central to their way of life.”<sup>21</sup>

The rituals of all colonial militias were rooted in British military traditions. It is safe to assume, H. Telfer Mook noted in *Training Day in New England* (1938), “that both the Virginia and New England custom [of regular military exercises] stemmed from the same source.”<sup>22</sup> However, in New England militia training drills helped constitute the very fabric of society. Some of this was the result of Massachusetts’ Puritan roots, which instilled a tendency in colonists to defend their inheritance almost religiously. “Training was...an expression of the fundamental Puritan quality of self-reliance and self-discipline.”<sup>23</sup> Rather than their ability to legitimately train the populace, the significance of these training days rested in their ability to arouse solidarity and patriotic feelings among colonists. It was not uncommon to see three generations of one family lined up in unison, proudly exhibiting the learned traits of masculinity in the colonial North. Descriptions of the training days point to their decreased military significance and increased social significance by 1769. However, the expectation of impending war soon transformed these demonstrations into earnest preparations for conflict.<sup>24</sup>

While white colonists participated in local training and muster days, Black colonists looked on with women and children. Prior to the American Revolution, the only Blacks allowed in these militia drills were drummers, a position traditionally

---

<sup>21</sup> Cornell, *A Well-Regulated Militia*, 13.

<sup>22</sup> Mook, “Training Day in New England,” 677.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 678.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 691.

assigned to children. After the American Revolution, records show Negro Training Days emerged in Connecticut and potentially other New England colonies. Though remaining segregated and connoting different meaning, Negro Training Days were a concession for Blacks' loyal participation during the American Revolution.

As revolutionary fever spread, and the threat of violence appeared inevitable, many imagined militias uniting in a form of mass resistance. General Charles Lee of Massachusetts perpetuated these feelings, writing often about the potential military prowess colonial militias offered. In his personal memoirs, a note titled *A Sketch of a Plan for the Formation of a Military Colony* expounded upon the political implications tied to militia service. "As the colony is military, (as every colony ought to be, if they intend to be free) a constant exercised militia shall be kept up." General Lee later added, "No member of the community, unless he comes into the world deformed, or too weak to undergo the manly labours, shall be suffered to exercise sedentary trades, such as taylors, barbers, shoemakers, weavers, & &." <sup>25</sup> Lee's idealized community supports the universal service model, and makes clear any men fit to serve ought to. He also references training days and muster days as requirements for a colony if it intends to remain free.

Ostensibly, where Blacks situate themselves in Lee's discussion remains unclear. General Lee's use of "no member of the community" may imply the legitimate universality of service. However, despite Lee's universalistic language, the

---

<sup>25</sup> Charles Lee and Edward Langworthy, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late Charles Lee, Esq. Lieutenant-Colonel of the Forty-Fourth Regiment ; Colonel in the Portuguese Service ; Major-General and Aid De Camp to the King of Poland, and Second in Command in the Service of the United States of America During the Revolution. : To Which Are Added, His Political and Military Essays: Also, Letters to and from Many Distinguished Characters, Both in Europe and America*, (New-York: Printed by T. Allen, Bookseller and stationer, no. 12, Queen-Street, 1793), 74-75.

reference subject remained a white male of a certain social status. “In reality, the militia system in the colonies, as in England, was meant not only to allow some portions of the population to arm to support governmental authorities, but also to disarm the most discontented members of society, principally black slaves and freedmen.”<sup>26</sup> Those who idealized the militia’s universality did not wish to see a reversal of colonial structure. Instead, Lee’s call urged white colonists to patriotically unite over the violent defense and preservation of their rights.

In response to a political tract from the Loyalist Myles Cooper, Lee further detailed his vision of a flourishing colonial militia. After downplaying the qualifications of British regulars, Lee surmised “It is equally certain, that a militia, by confining themselves to essentials, by a simplification of necessary maneuvers, may become, in a very few months, a most formidable infantry.”<sup>27</sup> While inflating the militia system’s potential, Lee revealed a colonial distaste for the standing army. The colonial militia symbolized actively defending one’s liberties; the standing army symbolized serving as vassals of a distant tyrannical government. In a 1774 letter addressed to The Duke of --, Lee admitted “I have conversed with all orders of men from the first estated gentlemen to the poorest planters, and cannot express my astonishment at the good sense and general knowledge, which pervades the whole; but their elevated principles, their enthusiasm in the cause of freedom and their country, is still more admirable.”<sup>28</sup> With his letter to the unnamed Duke, Lee intended to erase past negative implications tied to colonial militia service. Mainly, that a

---

<sup>26</sup> Kohn, *The United States Military under the Constitution of the United States*, 98.

<sup>27</sup> Lee and Langworthy, *Memoirs*, 149-150.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 320. Explaining the Duke’s mysterious lack of title, General Lee’s memoirs simply categorize the message as “Letters from General Lee to His Grace the Duke of ---”

militia failed to legitimately represent all members of colonial society, that colonists were not embedded enough with the cause of freedom, or that citizenship no longer meant participating in military service.

During the early stages of conflict between the Crown and her rebellious colonies, idealized literary portrayals of the Patriot defender of liberty were widespread. After the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the playwright John Leacock's *The Fall of British Tyranny: or, American Liberty Triumphant* utilized sympathies for the colonial militia to create a famous work of patriotic propaganda. In the process, Leacock produced one of the first public representations of Black military service. Leacock was a Philadelphian, connected to Benjamin Franklin by marriage, and a goldsmith by trade. He was a member of Philadelphia's Sons of Liberty society, which took on a new American name as war approached—the Society of the Sons of St. Tammany of Philadelphia.<sup>29</sup> There, Leacock found himself mixed among gentlemen who remained loyal to the Crown. He identified as a Whig, likely providing motivation to pen *The Fall of British Tyranny*. Leacock continued his political involvement two years later when appointed to a committee responsible for the official authorization of Pennsylvania currency. It has been noted, "For all the evidence, John Leacock was not a man of special literary talents, but one who possessed the ability to put into words the feeling and behavior of his time."<sup>30</sup>

The play assigned itself the genre of tragic-comedy and was written under the pseudonym Dick Rifle. The name left little doubt the author had an affinity for violently defending liberty. *The Fall of British Tyranny* gained notoriety after two

---

<sup>29</sup> Francis James Dallet Jr., "John Leacock and the Fall of British Tyranny," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 78, No. 4, (1954): 463

<sup>30</sup> Dallet Jr., "John Leacock and the Fall of British Tyranny," 463.



publishers happened upon Leacock's production and appreciated its humor and commentary. Soon after the publication in Philadelphia, editions were printed in Boston and Providence. The production of the play situates itself somewhere between January, 1776 and March 17, 1776—between the publishing of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* and news of the evacuation of Boston. Although the writing warrants contemporary interpretation due to its publication, "a prologue and epilogue, with the names of the speakers, indicate that it was acted before it was printed, and from the note, printed *post*, it was certainly acted more than once."<sup>31</sup>

Recent scholarship—portraying the development of an American ideology before, during, and after the Revolution—commonly depicts the national identity as one constructed through language and meaning. For instance, the theorist Christopher Looby's *Voicing America* maintains "nations are not born, but made. And they are made, ineluctably, in language."<sup>32</sup> Developing the American identity entails the balance of two important linguistic aspects. Namely, consumption through printed culture and, as Looby emphasizes, an identity "self-consciously enacted through the more public discourse of the spoken word."<sup>33</sup> The production of John Leacock's *The Fall of British Tyranny* captures both printed and spoken word. While meeting the two identity-forming requirements, Leacock's play placed particular emphasis on military service.

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 467, 474.

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Looby, *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Randall Fuller, "Theaters of the American Revolution: The Valley Forge "Cato" and the Meschianza in Their Transcultural Contexts." *Early American Literature* 34.2 (1999): 129. *JSTOR*. Web. 08 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/25057158?ref=search-gateway:873d7efa4f0e3bb9e44d104520d2c3>>.

Randall Fuller's "Theaters of the American Revolution" explains the importance of the theatrical performance when shaping an American identity. Fuller affirms theatrical performances embedded in a specific social occasion provide a foundation for community. This is mainly because they serve as a necessary precondition for national identity. Fuller also emphasizes the importance of an active theater attendee, rather than a passive consumer of literature. Regarding the time of Leacock's play, Fuller explains:

"Both before and during hostilities between Britain and the colonies, revolutionary Americans employed pamphlet plays – even as they prohibited theatrical performance – to imagine new political formations. 'As the nation was formed,' writes Ginger Strand... 'American authors rewrote the theatrical itself as a 'republican' phenomenon, proposing an active audience whose members inhabit their traditionally passive role actively. The active audience becomes a model of the active citizen, enabling theatrically to figure a political ideal central to the nation's earliest self-conceptions'. Through theater, in other words, an audience acquired a voice that, ideally at least, was unified collective utterance."<sup>34</sup>

In other words, Leacock combined an active theater audience with a plot centered on the active patriot defender of liberty. This fact meant *The Fall* possessed the extraordinary ability to shape colonists' self-conception, and therefore shape American values.

The play started after the Battles of Lexington and Concord and imagined the evacuation of Boston, promising to continue with further installments as the war progressed. This marked the first American chronicle play and the first representation of Washington; also featured amongst the excitement was the first "introduction into American drama of the Negro as a comic character."<sup>35</sup> The play indicates the Revolution resulted from divisions in the British Parliament, with those scheming

---

<sup>34</sup> Fuller, "Theaters of the American Revolution," 129-130.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 468. Also see: Ennis Duling, "Ethan Allen and *The Fall of British Tyranny*: A Question of What Came First," *Vermont History Journal* (2007): 136.

squaring off against plain-speaking Patriot sympathists. The characters were assigned existent equivalents, such as *Lord Boston* representing Governor Thomas Gage of Massachusetts or *Lord Patriot* and *Bold Irishman* in lieu of John Wilkes and Edmund Burke of the British Parliament. Leacock's play features the usual discord between Whig and Tory ideologies, as well as a detailed description of the Battles of Lexington and Concord. It concludes with an introduction to Washington, the majestic figure meant to embody the new Patriot hero of the times. Just fourteen years earlier, students earning Bachelor's degrees at the College of New Jersey performed a play titled *The Military Glory of Britain*. Leacock's tragic-comedy took the military glory of Britain and crowned it upon the invented group of Americans.<sup>36</sup>

It is important to note that *The Fall* used the patriot hero ideal to mobilize colonists against Britain and motivate many to serve. Additionally, the play attempted to denigrate Black military service from the British side. The latter realized two important tasks. First, Blacks were portrayed as incapable of empathizing with a cause. Instead, Black soldiers focused on self-interests and were susceptible to manipulation. Second, *The Fall of British Tyranny* allusively pledged Blacks would not fight for the same liberty white Patriots fought to protect.

In Act III, Scene IV, Lord Boston receives intelligence from an officer and messenger regarding the regulars' circumstances in Lexington. Lord Boston is implored to send a brigade to support the British troops. He then asks, "Did the Rebels dare to fire on the king's troops? Had they the courage?" The messenger replies, "They're like lions; they have killed many of our bravest officers and men;

---

<sup>36</sup> John William Wallace, *An Old Philadelphian, Colonel William Bradford: The Patriot Printer of 1776. Sketches of His Life* (Philadelphia: Sherman &, Printers, 1884), 360.

and if not checked instantly, will totally surround them, and make the whole prisoners.”<sup>37</sup> The instance serves as one of many throughout the play attaching courage and competence to the behavior of colonial militias. Similar to General Lee, Leacock’s play used the militia model as evidence for colonial superiority over the standing army of Great Britain.

Shortly thereafter, the drama moves to Norfolk, Virginia on board the ship of one *Lord Kidnapper*. The character stood for John Murray, the Governor of Virginia commonly known as Lord Dunmore. After noticing a large group boarding Lord Kidnapper’s ship, the opening scene sees a sailor approaching Mr. Boatswain. “Damn my eyes, Mr. Boatswain,” remarks the Sailor, “but here’s a black flag of truce coming on board.” When Mr. Boatswain responds to the sailor asking, “Sure enough—where are they from?” the Sailor angrily answers “From hell, I suppose—for they’re as black as so many devils” and adds “We shall be all of a colour by and by—damn me—.” The exchange between Mr. Boatswain and the Sailor clearly demonstrates the apparent disdain British soldiers felt toward Black enlistees. Throughout *The Fall of British Tyranny* regulars’ dialogue highlights a reluctance to serve alongside Blacks, something men on the Patriot side declared often during the first months of war.

Two scenes following, Mr. Boatswain’s discussion of Black enlistees continues with two sailors. The first sailor remarks, “Damn my eyes, but I suppose, messmate, we must bundle out of our hammocks in this cold weather, to make room for these black regulars.” The second sailor responds, “Blast ‘em, if they come within

---

<sup>37</sup> John Leacock, *The Fall of British Tyranny, or, American Liberty Triumphant, the First Campaign A Tragi-Comedy of Five Acts As Lately Planned at the Royal Theatrum Pandemonium at St. James’s, the Principal Place of Action in America* (Providence: Printed by J. Douglass McDougall, 1776) Project Gutenberg. Web. 4 Feb 2014. See: Act III, Scene IV et al.

a cable's length of my hammock, I'll kick 'em to hell through one of the gun ports.” Hearing all this, Mr. Boatswain reminds the sailors “Come, come, brothers, don't be angry, I suppose we shall soon be in a warmer latitude... I'll put [Lord Kidnapper] in the humour of sending part of the fleet this winter to the coast of Guinea, and beat up for volunteers, there he'll get recruits enough for a hogshead or two of New-England rum, and a few owld pipe-shanks.” Again British sailors express their distaste for Black service. In this scene, the sailors reference the inconvenience caused by accommodating more sailors and a general lack of tolerance for Blacks. Mr. Boatswain's comment regarding “a hogshead or two of New-England rum” makes reference to the New England slave trade. Unlike a typical understanding of the triangular trade which featured commodities such as sugar or bills that were payable in Britain, the New England trade featured mainly three components—rum, slaves, and molasses.<sup>38</sup> Rum came from ports such as Boston, New York, Newport, or Salem and went to the western shores of Africa in exchange for Black men and women.

*The Fall of British Tyranny's* Epilogue, spoken by Mr. Freeman, concludes:

Adopt the language of sound COMMON SENSE,  
And with one voice proclaim INDEPENDENCE.  
Convince your foes you will defend your right,  
That blows and knocks is all they will get by 't.  
Let tyrants see that you are well prepar'd,  
By proclamations, sword, nor speeches scar'd;  
That liberty freeborn breathe in each soul!  
One god-like union animate the whole!

The guidance inserted into *The Fall's* Epilogue makes direct reference to colonists' preparedness, their defense of rights, an ability to issue physical harm, and a unified feeling of liberty throughout the continent. Without doubt, these sentiments all coincide with the recent ideals tied to colonial militia service. The image of the

---

<sup>38</sup> Foner, *History of Black Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1975), 112.

heroic Patriot defender of liberty supplanted the image of the loyal British subject by 1776.

Potentially most important, Act IV, Scene IV features the only moment with a Black character adding to the dialogue. In one advertisement for the play, the scene's description read "A very black scene between Lord Kidnapper and Major Cudjo." Cudjo was a typical Caribbean slave name, often with derogatory connotations. After Lord Kidnapper hears Cudjo's master was a colonel, the character receives an elevation of status to Major so his rank is higher than that of Colonel. Lord Kidnapper then asks Cudjo if he has been christened, to which Cudjo replies "No massa, me no crissen." The portrayal of Cudjo as an unintelligent man with a strong dialect supposedly characterized all Blacks contemplating enlistment for the British—and enlistment in general. Cudjo's ignorance represented the mindset of those serving for a tyrannical power, but also helped demonstrate colonial opinions of Blacks in general. After Cudjo answers, Lord Kidnapper replies "Well, then I'll christen you—you shall be called Major Cudjo Thompson, and if you behave well, I'll soon make you a greater man than your master, and if I find the rest of you behave well, I'll make you all officers...you shall have money in your pockets, good clothes on your backs, and be as free as them white men there." Lord Kidnapper's promise touched on a common American fear. Many white colonists worried Black enlistment presented an achievable way of elevating status, or worse, a possible reversal of social structure.

Shortly after the exchange, Lord Kidnapper asks Cudjo whether he would shoot his master upon sight. Cudjo tells Lord Kidnapper "Eas, massa, me try." However, the Lord Kidnapper still possesses doubt about the loyalty of Blacks. In an

aside, the Lord remarks, “Set a guard over them every night, and take their arms from them, for who knows but they may cut our throats.”

Lord Kidnapper’s reluctance to arm Blacks served as Leacock’s admission that Americans felt the same way. For generations, colonial militia laws regulated those trustworthy enough to bear arms; and for generations Blacks remained unarmed. By the time of the American Revolution, Black “rebellions occurred in Bermuda (1761), Dutch Guyana (1762, 1763, and 1772), Jamaica (1765, 1766, and 1776), British Honduras (1765, 1768, and 1773), Grenada (1765), Montserrat (1768), St. Vincent (1769-73), Tobago (1770, 1771, and 1774), and St. Croix and St. Thomas (1770 and after).”<sup>39</sup> Before these instances, a notable rebellion occurred in South Carolina (1739) as well as a purported slave conspiracy in New York (1741). The moments further instilled a colonial fear of Black uprising. Seemingly ignoring Black soldiers’ admirable service early in the Revolution, some colonists feared armed Blacks’ initial action would be destroying the white establishment.

Whether a desire to control armed rebellion, protect private property, or eliminate access to the colonial military identity, colonists saw arming Blacks as a dangerous liability. In 1774, “the colored people of [Connecticut] entered fully into the Spirit of Independence of their masters. They made preparations to form themselves into companies, but feeling that they might go further and use their show of patriotism to free themselves, it was deemed advisable to discourage them.”<sup>40</sup> With revolutionary currents making the futures of white colonists and Blacks unsure, one

---

<sup>39</sup> Gilbert, *Black Patriots*, 4-5.

<sup>40</sup> Frederick W. Seymour, *Connecticut’s Black Patriots, 1641-1781*, African-American Manuscripts, Connecticut Historical Society, 2-3.

conclusion remained certain: placing arms in the hands of Blacks was a fear throughout the colonies.

Two scenes later in *The Fall of British Tyranny*, describing his policy of Black enlistment and the promise of emancipation, Lord Kidnapper gushes, supposing “this is making dog eat dog—thief catch thief—the servant against his master—rebel against rebel.” Based on Leacock’s portrayal, the British held white colonists in the same regard as Black regulars. The fact seemed to incite many colonists, and offered an accessible way to encourage hostility towards Great Britain. If the Crown saw no distinction between white colonists and Black slaves, there remained no choice but to fight.

Leacock’s popular work clarifies the relationship between the military and Blacks during the beginning of the American Revolution. The racist cant attributed to Cudjo shows colonists valued Blacks as a way of asserting white superiority. Moreover, the illustration of an unintelligent Black enlistee implies only white colonists were capable of genuinely empathizing with a cause. The decision from Lord Kidnapper to disarm Blacks at night reminded white colonists that armed Blacks were a sight not to be trusted. Throughout the play, moments arise overtly intimating white colonial authority could be replaced by Blacks, or Blacks may receive equal status. The dialogue demonstrates a common fear among white colonists. Mainly, that Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation introduced the possibility of a complete reversal of the colonial power structure. The newly anointed Patriot soldiers felt compelled to enlist, and compelled to retain the social structure of the colonies.



A recent declaration from Virginia's Governor—the motivation for Lord Kidnapper's character—and the uncertain length of war complicated matters. Questions surrounding Black military service remained contentious. On November 7, 1775, the Lord Dunmore, while exiled on the British warship *William*, declared “all indentured servants, Negroes, or others, appertaining to rebels,” willing to fight for the British side, “FREE.”<sup>41</sup> More than simply mobilizing Blacks in the Southern colonies, Dunmore's promise of freedom in exchange for service shifted the landscape of war. Even in the North, slaves were synonymous with property. In the South, where plantation slavery existed as a staple of society, Dunmore's Proclamation indicated a lack of respect for the colonists and their practices. The Royal Governor, by invoking the notion of liberty for all, simultaneously appropriated property from countless colonists and mocked the Patriot cause. To Blacks and other opponents of slavery, Dunmore's status elevated him to the level of Great Emancipator. However, for the majority of colonists, Dunmore's Proclamation cemented his place as the epitome of British tyranny in the colonies.

Lord Dunmore's Proclamation completely altered the direction and scope of the American Revolution. Though the British failed to properly mobilize Blacks within the military stratum, Dunmore thrust Blacks into the political sphere at a time when they seemed to be exiting it. With the Continental Army recently prohibiting further Black enlistment, and colonial legislatures seeing disconnect between the ideal of liberty and Black service, the Revolution easily could have turned into a conflict between the British Crown and her white colonists. Dunmore's Proclamation

---

<sup>41</sup> Alan Rogers and R. Alan Lawson, *From Revolution to Republic: A Documentary Reader* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Pub., 1976), 88.

brought Black colonists to the fore of political debate, ensuring the ideological Revolution's scope of influence remained unsettled.

By the time Britain evacuated Boston in March of 1776, the Patriotic identity emerged from, and centered on, military service. Inflated representations of the militia, such as General Charles Lee's writings or John Leacock's *The Fall of British Tyranny*, reinforced the self-conception. As a way of uniting colonists and limiting the fight for liberty's impact, Blacks remained outside the normative conception of American identity. At the war's early stages, many colonists were hesitant to enlist alongside Blacks. Belittling and restricting Black service affirmed white superiority. It also ensured the accurate use of *American* referred only to white colonists.

\*\*\*

Two events during the early stages of the American Revolution ensured military service as a Patriot became synonymous with military service as an American. The first occurred on June 15, 1775 when the Continental Congress assumed control over forces surrounding Boston. Prior to this decision, many filled with the Patriot spirit continued to categorize themselves as loyal British colonists—or simply inhabitants of a particular colony. Dating back centuries, the decision to take up arms against a force impeding upon liberty and property was a basic duty of all Britons. With the creation of a Continental Army, signs suddenly pointed to a direct and extended conflict between Britain and her rebel colonies. The legitimate armed conflict fueled patriotic sentiments in the North, and colonists ran to enlist.

On January 24, 1776, around the time *The Fall of the British Tyranny* was originally published, General Charles Lee wrote to George Washington from

Connecticut with the goal of enlisting troops. “I find the people through this Province more alert and zealous than my most sanguine expectation,” Lee noted. He added, “I believe I might have collected ten thousand volunteers... These Connecticutians are, if possible, more eager to go out of their country than they are to return home.”<sup>42</sup>

General Lee formed four regiments and took those troops to New York upon the request of Washington. In March, New York resolved and ordered “That all male inhabitants... be immediately employed on the Fortifications of this City, and as well all the Negro men in the City and County of *New-York*”. The same order required “Negro men in their respective districts turned out, provided in the same manner [as whites]” and informed officers “for the time being... [Officers] may receive an able-bodied hired man... or any servant or slave in the place of his master.”<sup>43</sup> The military campaigns and immediate need for manpower compelled New York to enact Black labor, not necessarily enlistment.

The second event of great consequence occurred on July 4, 1776 when the Continental Congress issued its Declaration of Independence on behalf of thirteen former British colonies. Moving forward, the Continental Army became the nation’s operative tool when securing its sovereignty. As a result, the Continental Army created connection between the colonies in a manner other than legislation, promoting nationalism in the process. The Continental Army represented all defiant colonies; this fact largely accounted for its continued segregation. A substantial amount of the

---

<sup>42</sup> “Letter from General Lee to General Washington...,” *General Charles Lee. American Archives Series 4, Volume 4*, pg. 839, <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/contextualize.pl?p.11109.amarch.2665.2673>.

<sup>43</sup> “Requisition of Lord Stirling for Troops from New-Jersey,” *New-York, Congress. American Archives Series 4, Volume 5*, pg. 381, <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.13530:1.amarch>.

populace adamantly renounced Black military service, and until otherwise obligated, the Congress honored these citizens' beliefs. The development of a continental battalion also guaranteed the possibility of foreign aid. The Declaration of Independence meant a legitimate sovereignty was being defended rather than simply a collection of violent British dissidents. Most important, a national standing army strayed away from the patriot hero model and introduced a new model of citizen-soldier.

Even before the transition from patriot hero to citizen-soldier, Blacks participated in the armed violence. The Massachusetts Major General William Heath wrote to John Adams in October of 1775 describing the composition of the colonial regiments. "There are in the Massachusetts Regiments some Negroes," Heath noted. "Such is also the case with the Regiments from the Other Colonies, Rhode Island has a number of negroes and Indians, Connecticut has fewer negroes, but a number of Indians. The New Hampshire regiments have less of both."<sup>44</sup> An example of Black military service even appears in the Virginia colony during 1775.

The pension application of Cuff Whittemore reveals a Black soldier present for the Congressional establishment of the Continental Army. Whittemore's testimony professed the veteran enlisted "in the year seventeen hundred and seventy five in the month of May and served...until the end of war." Whittemore's enlistment situates the soldier in Boston one month before the colonial militia transformed into the Continental Army.

---

<sup>44</sup> William Heath to John Adams, Oct. 23, 1775, John Adams Papers, Mass. Hist. Society. Quoted in Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*, 12.

The pension record of one James Paine Freeman, a Black soldier from Barnstable, Massachusetts, positioned him as a witness to the first reading of the Declaration of Independence. Freeman's testimony declared, as "a resident citizen of the United States aged seventy one years set forth and declare on oath, that I was a soldier in the war of the Revolution." Additionally, Freeman's daughter acknowledged in another pension application that her father "served a considerable portion of the time as a fifer," and "that he was present and heard the first reading of the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia and continued his service except when imprisoned, till peace took place."<sup>45</sup>

Many aspects of Freeman's pension attract attention. To start, the soldier's name "Paine Freeman" reveals many Black soldiers used their enlistment name to reveal larger aspects of existence. Assuming Freeman added the name "Paine" as homage to the famed propagandist Thomas Paine may be a stretch. However, it is worth noting the soldier's pension records confirm he "enlisted into the first year's service near Boston, MA in January 1776." Paine's *Common Sense* was first published January 10, 1776—making the assumption of tribute much more plausible. In any case, the soldier's surname highlights the power and message attached to a name. Additionally, Freeman's self-assessment of "resident citizen" reveals during times of peace Blacks were downgraded to the mere status of denizen. His role as a fifer demonstrates Black soldiers sometimes were forced to fulfill typically boyish duties during war. Potentially most important, Freeman's presence for the first

---

<sup>45</sup> HeritageQuest Online, *Search Revolutionary War*, Pension of Cuff Whittemore (S33896, 1818), Series M805, Roll 865. James Paine Freeman (W14749, 1818), Series M805, Roll 338. Accessed via <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/revwar>. All pensions cited in the future come from same source.

reading of the Declaration reveals some Black soldiers took the egalitarian American ideology to heart.

While the patriot hero represented a male willing to fight for his freedom and personal liberty, a citizen-soldier implied a certain level of obedience. A main requirement imposed on the Continental Army was its perpetual subordinate status to the Continental Congress. In early 1776, Washington's adherence to Congress concerning the enlistment of free Blacks exemplifies a tendency to defer to legislators. Toward the end of the war, Washington confirmed the subordinate status of the Continental Army when he delivered his Newburgh Address. The Army's obedience to Congress meant certain citizens fought for their liberties—despite losing some during service. While the patriot hero embodied a citizen willing to heed the call to arms, a citizen-soldier represented someone willingly submitting to authority for the betterment of the community. Charles Royster's *A Revolutionary People at War* helps explain the dynamics present in colonial society at the time:

“The revolutionaries relied strongly on the idea of the citizen-soldier...all could agree that the American soldier would return to civil society after defeating the British. They could also agree that while in the service he would become a soldier yet would not serve the army before all others by issuing or obeying orders that violated civil authority...Since he fought to preserve his standing as a citizen against those who would make him a slave, his pride in civil society would help to make him stronger than his opponents in combat...Thus, although the American soldier had once been only a citizen, would again be only a citizen, and fought to remain a citizen, he could not, while he was a soldier, always conduct himself as civilian citizens might.”<sup>46</sup>

The standing army and citizen-soldier altered Americans' relationship with the military. In the process, the relationship between Blacks and military service changed as well. During the early stages of revolution, the patriot hero provided citizens an ideal to strive for while defending liberty. After Lord Dunmore's

---

<sup>46</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 38-39.

Proclamation, Blacks were seen as either potential replacements or political tools used to determine the outcome of war. In many ways, Black military service became a symbol for other causes. Blacks served early on in the conflict, offering distinguished duty at times. Despite this reality, colonists often portrayed Blacks as either unintelligent, prone to escape, or strictly concerned with liberation and lacking loyalty. Although at this time abolition normally meant ending the slave trade, some abolitionists utilized these portrayals when they called for an end to the institution of slavery. Simultaneously, those concerned with separating military identities by race clung to similar portrayals. Regardless, a noticeable separation developed between the patriot hero and the Black soldier.

Shortly after Congress seized command over militias and state regiments, some colonies enacted laws prohibiting Blacks from further enlistment. Though a notable number of Blacks—such as Cuff Whittemore—remained enlisted from the outset of violence until its final shots, prohibitive legislation explicitly divided soldiers' identities by race. On January 22, 1776 a Massachusetts militia act excluded Blacks, Indians, and mulattoes from service. Later in the year, Massachusetts made its policy of racial exclusion stricter when raising recruits for the Continental Army. The law completely eliminated the substitution system, declaring whites could not “procure any person to do it in their room.” Evidently the development of the Continental Army was not enough to persuade Massachusetts to relinquish the universal service ideal.

On April 12, 1776 New Hampshire required all able-bodied men aged twenty-one and above to sign a declaration pledging hostilities against the British, with the

exception of lunatics, idiots, and Blacks. Six months later, New Hampshire excluded Blacks and Indians from its state regiments. In the lower North, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware all issued legislation prohibiting or actively denouncing Black military service.<sup>47</sup> Entering service seemed to establish the opportunity for Blacks to identify as patriot heroes. Nonetheless, prohibitive legislation and the public belittling of Black service indicated a harsher reality. Race separated the meaning of military service. Simple measures such as listing *Negro* next to a soldier's name on muster rolls provide some evidence. As the war continued, more obvious steps were taken to separate soldiers by race.

Part of the soldier's subordinate status came from the substitution system used to fulfill recruitment quotas. In many states, two men could hire one soldier to replace both for a three year term, providing the replacement continued active duty throughout the three years. Similarly, sensing volunteers were reluctant to continue service for long periods of time, Congress offered land and monetary bounties to entice enlistees. As early as 1776, Congress began shifting enlistment requirements from one year to three years, and later for the duration of the war.<sup>48</sup> The goal of forming an army made of experienced, organized soldiers fueled the shift in length. On January 13, 1777, George Washington advised officers to "inlist none but Freemen above the Age of Seventeen,"<sup>49</sup> effectively opening the door for free Black enlistment in the Continental Army. Three months later, Washington recognized states' frequent failure to meet recruitment quotas. He insisted "the government must

---

<sup>47</sup> Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*, 16-17.

<sup>48</sup> Allan Reed Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: Free, 1984), 56.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Patrick Neimeyer, *The Revolutionary War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007), 61.



have recourse to coercive measures, for if the quotas required of each State cannot be had by voluntary enlistment, *in time*, and if the Powers of Government are not adequate to *drafting*, there is an end to the Contest, and opposition becomes vain.”<sup>50</sup> Cognizant of such difficulties, most states continued the substitution system and allowed for free Black enlistments.

With the standing army and Declaration of Independence facilitating the development of the citizen-soldier, the identity tied to citizenship took multiple forms. By the Seven Years’ War, the colonial militia no longer represented every section of social class. Draft riots and slave substitution highlight the reality that military service was no longer the obligation of all. Though enlistments were high early on, manpower became scarce as the war went along. When the Continental Army needed more troops, the army’s makeup went largely unchanged from the militias of the late colonial era. Published in the waning moments of 1776, Thomas Paine’s *The Crisis* began by acknowledging the allure of military service was declining. “THESE are the times that try men's souls,” started Paine. “The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”<sup>51</sup> In John M’Culloch’s *Introduction to the History of America* (1787) the historian noted “the American army suffered by desertion, and more by sickness, which was epidemic and very mortal...At the close of this year [1776], the American army was dwindled to a handful of men; and General Lee was taken prisoner in New

---

<sup>50</sup> Hall, *Life and Letters of Samuel Holden Parsons Major-general in the Continental Army and Chief Judge of the Northwestern Territory*, 91.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Paine and Gordon S. Wood, *Common Sense and Other Writings* (New York: Modern Library, 2003), 83.

Jersey. Far from being discouraged at these losses, Congress took measures to raise and establish an army.” David Ramsay’s *The History of the American Revolution* (1789) added “Novelty and the first impulse of passion had led them to camp; but the approaching cold season, together with the fatigues and dangers incident to war, induced a general wish to relinquish the service”.<sup>52</sup>

The common reluctance to continue military service meant manpower became scarce in certain regions of the North. In May of 1776, John Adams wrote to a Boston minister claiming “We must all be soldiers.” Seven weeks later, when a student in Adams’ law office hoped to enlist, Adams informed the young man “We cannot all be soldiers.”<sup>53</sup> The symbolic soldier applied to all Patriotic colonists, while the actual soldier emerged from a lower class of colonists. Adams’ comments point to the initial development and duality of an American citizenship connected to military service. Some men *must* become soldiers in order to earn the status of American, while others simply were not fit for the lowly status of military service. Adams’ thoughts parallel republican discourse as well: while some men were fit to rule, others were fit to be ruled. When military service came to characterize a lower class of American, the strict regulations against Black enlistment declined. Though the fear of Black equality

---

<sup>52</sup> M’Culloch, John, and Henry D. Pursell, *Introduction to the History of America ... Designed to Instruct American Youth in the Elements of the History of Their Own Country.: With a Correct Map of the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Printed and Sold by Young and M’Culloch, at the Corner of Second and Chesnut-Streets., 1787), Accessed 26 February 2014, 59. See Also: David Ramsay and Lester H. Cohen, *The History of the American Revolution* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1990), Accessed 26 February 2014, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/wesleyan/docDetail.action?docID=10613368>, 217-218.

<sup>53</sup> John Adams to Samuel Cooper, May 30, 1776, Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States: With a Life of the Author, Notes and Illustrations, by His Grandson Charles Francis Adams* (Boston, 1850-1856), IX, 382; John Adams to Jonathan Mason, July 18, 1776, 423. Quoted in Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 39.

persisted, the need for soldiers and the degraded status of service made enlisting men of a different race tolerable.

Part of the shifting regard for the military, and the general reluctance to serve, came from an increased emphasis on discipline. Most early American military traditions were inherited from the British, namely the propensity for militia organization and the distaste for a standing army. A noteworthy exception involves disciplinary tactics, introduced by the Prussian-born Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben as the Continental Army grew. Militia organization, of trained civilians prepared to defend inhabited land from foreign invaders, dates back to the Anglo-Saxon *fyrð*—an imposition from the seventh century on all able-bodied free men to defend land when needed. In this sense, an American tendency to partake in militia activity expressed political commitment to the sovereignty. Fear of the standing army traces its roots to the reign of King James II before The Glorious Revolution. King James II amassed a peacetime army of nearly thirty thousand, using it to infringe upon English freedom and threaten religious and military tyranny. England's Glorious Revolution from 1688-1689 removed James II from power and gave authority to William III and Mary II. In the process, a Bill of Rights affirmed that Protestant subjects could be armed for their defenses, and all forms of peacetime standing armaments need approval from Parliament.<sup>54</sup> For colonists fighting for liberty from a tyrannical power, voluntarily submitting to disciplinary tactics was not to most intuitive move.

Regardless, soon after inhabitants such as General Charles Lee romanticized the image of a continental militia, the grave realities of war became evident. Put

---

<sup>54</sup> David R. Segal, *Recruiting for Uncle Sam: Citizenship and Military Manpower Policy* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, 1989), 18.

simply, not all militia volunteers were fit for service. Aware of this unfortunate reality, Lee's tune drastically changed. After recruiting regiments in Connecticut, General Lee wrote from New York to John Hancock, the President of the Continental Congress, with a much harsher view of colonial militias. "As to the Minute-Men, no account ought to be made of them," admitted Lee. "Had I been as much acquainted with them when they were summoned as I am at present, I should have exerted myself to prevent their coming...I cannot help expressing my wishes, that the Congress will find means of establishing one great Continental regular army, adequate to all the purposes of defence."<sup>55</sup> Lee provides a very telling example, mostly because of his dramatic shift in outlook for the militia.

Many other generals instructed in the tradition of the British military felt a regular army with well-trained soldiers was necessary. George Washington, the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, wrote to the Continental Congress on September 24, 1776 stressing, "To place any dependence on Militia, is, assuredly resting upon a broken staff. Men just dragged from the tender scenes of domestick life; unaccustomed to the din of Arms...makes them timid, and ready to fly from their own shadows."<sup>56</sup> General Nathanael Greene wrote after the Battle of Long Island that "people coming from home...are not sufficiently fortified with natural courage to stand the shock scenes of war."<sup>57</sup> Charles Royster perhaps summarizes it best when

---

<sup>55</sup> "General Lee to President of Congress," *General Charles Lee. American Archives Series 4, Volume 4*, pg. 1475, <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/amarch/getdoc.pl?/var/lib/philologic/databases/amarch/.12179>.

<sup>56</sup> "Letter from General Washington to the President of Congress," *General George Washington. American Archives Series 5, Volume 2*, pg. 495, <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.23340:1.amarch>.

<sup>57</sup> Greene, George Washington, *Nathanael Greene. An Examination of Some Statements concerning Major-General Greene, in the Ninth Volume of Bancroft's History of the United States* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), 20.

saying “Almost all revolutionaries agreed that a standing army—no matter how suspect and unwelcome—was necessary. Every state supported the idea that a Continental Army should bear the main fighting; every state tried to recruit and supply it; every state preferred to be defended by it.”<sup>58</sup>

The newfound weight placed on discipline coincided nicely with soldiers’ lower class categorization. David Ramsay’s early Revolutionary history acknowledged many officers and soldiers, “having never seen any service, were ignorant of their duty, and but feebly impressed with the military ideas of union, subordination and discipline.”<sup>59</sup> Ever since serving as an officer in the Seven Years’ War, Washington clung to the ideal of discipline. As conflict continued, the Prussian Major General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben perfected American discipline. Von Steuben’s *Regulations for the order and troops of the United States* was circulated within the Continental Army by 1779. The Major General entered Valley Forge in 1777 as a volunteer training officer, and soon was known for his disciplinary tactics practiced throughout the Continental Army. Mainly, von Steuben insisted soldiers should enlist—take the spirit of the cause—and obey—fear their officers to the point of submission.<sup>60</sup> By 1777, the Continental Army took its enduring form for the remainder of the American Revolution. Soldiers were recruited from a lower class of colonists, or substituted as privileged colonists saw fit. John Wood Sweet’s *Bodies Politic* clarifies, explaining “Increasingly, the men sent to the Continental Army—and, it seems, the state militias as well—were those with the least stake in civilian

---

<sup>58</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 37.

<sup>59</sup> Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution*, 217. See Also: John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003), 201.

<sup>60</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 213-217. See Also: Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 2.

life: single men, those without property or a trade, servants, Indians, slaves and free blacks.”<sup>61</sup> Citizenship no longer required military service. Instead, soldiers were recruited to defend an invented community and were treated like subordinates in the process.

A dire need for manpower meant many Blacks came to enlist in 1777. For instance, a year after passing exclusionary legislation, Massachusetts reversed its stance in 1777 and explicitly only exempted Quakers from service.<sup>62</sup> Caleb Negro was a Black soldier whose service personified both the substitution system and free Black enlistment. In Negro’s pension application to the state of New Hampshire, he revealed “his first connection with the army was as a substitute for Benjamin Gillman for two months.” Negro either served as a free man or earned his freedom for the brief substitution. Regardless, Negro “then enlisted for one year and after the completion of that enlisted again for three years.” Negro’s decision to continue service reveals Black soldiers viewed military service as an avenue through which better lives may be achieved. Continuing the colonial trend, engaging in state-authorized violence offered one of the only legitimate means for self-improvement.<sup>63</sup>

Many Black soldiers only received the incentives of manumission or bounty after meeting their required lengths of service. However, some Black soldiers were forced to endure former slaveholders’ attempts to reclaim their supposed property. One 1783 letter from General Washington to Brigadier-General Rufus Putnam details a certain “Mr. Hobby having claimed as his property a negro man now serving in the Massachusetts Regiment.” As the war neared its conclusion, slaveholders became

---

<sup>61</sup> Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 202.

<sup>62</sup> Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 202.

<sup>63</sup> Pension of Caleb Negro (W20876, 1818), Series M805, Roll 187.

worried their former property was lost forever; many attempted to re-enslave men they willingly sent to earn their liberty. Virginia acknowledged such a trend in 1783 and enacted a law attempting to prevent any further incidents of the sort.<sup>64</sup>

Although some served in state militias for shorter terms, most Black soldiers enlisted for a three year period, or for the duration of war. Part of the wave of Black enlistments in 1777, the private Samuel Bush served from “the month of April 1777” until the end of the war on “the 10<sup>th</sup> day of June 1783 when he received the announced discharge.” Cato Negro was another Black soldier to enlist in 1777 and serve until war’s end. Negro enlisted in “August 1777 in the state of Connecticut” and “served until the end of the war in June of 1783.” Negro also acknowledged he “was in the Battle of Germantown.” Other Black soldiers received manumission or land bounties for only three years of service. When applying for federal pension years later, Cato Abbott of Massachusetts recalled “he did duty, his whole three years.” Edward Carter enlisted “according to his best recollection in the spring of the year 1777” and served for three years. The system of substitutions in the North provided an effective way to utilize free Black labor during the war. In the process, the increased number of Black soldiers further instilled a colonial belief that the Continental Army represented a lower status of American.<sup>65</sup>

On February 26, 1778 Congress enacted the Federal Conscription Act which required states to fulfill their quotas with draftees whose term would last nine months.

---

<sup>64</sup> George Livermore, *An Historical Research Respecting the Opinions of the Founders of the Republic on Negroes As Slaves, As Citizens, and As Soldiers Read Before the Massachusetts Historical Society, August 14, 1862*, (Boston: A. Williams, 1863), 194-195.

<sup>65</sup> Pensions of Samuel Bush (S36450, 1818), Series M805, Roll 148, Cato Negro (W26169, 1820), Series M805, Roll 493, Cato Abbott (S32625, 1818), Series M805, Roll 1, and Edward Carter (S36955, 1818), Series M805, Roll 166.

Though states initially were hostile to federal legislation compelling their citizens to enlist, most wrote corresponding state legislation during the war.<sup>66</sup> In states allowing substitution, often these drafts featured lower classes immediately enlisting; those who could find substitutes looked for replacements. In Pennsylvania's Lancaster and Northampton Counties, where a large number of exemptions arose because of Quaker population, "38 and 54 percent respectively of those serving were substitutes, while 20 to 40 percent of the New Jersey Line in the Continental Army were draft substitutes."<sup>67</sup>

The Federal Conscription Act compelled states to enact draft measures in order to meet recruitment quotas. The law from Congress suggested every citizen held some civic obligation during a time of violent crisis. In actual fact, due to the substitution system, often the draft merely pinpointed those who should begin searching for alternates. The new draft laws helped unify the soldiers' social class as that of a lowly citizen. The universal ideals tied to the colonial militia were no more.

With the divide of citizen-soldier and civilian looming, the Continental Army occasionally personified a group serving entirely separate motivations. The increased separation between military life and civilian life formed concrete public opinions about soldiers. On October 2, 1778 a group of officers presenting a memorial to the General Assembly expressed fear that soldiers were viewed as "a people with

---

<sup>66</sup> Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, "The American Militia and the Origin of Conscription: A Reassessment," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* Volume 15, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 34-38.

<sup>67</sup> Hummel, "The American Militia and the Origin of Conscription: A Reassessment," 39. See Also: Arthur J. Alexander, "Service by Substitute in the Militia of Lancaster and Northampton Counties (Pennsylvania) during the War of the Revolution," *Military Affairs* 9 (Fall 1945), 278-82; and Mark Edward Lender, "The Social Structure of the New Jersey Brigade: The Continental Line as an American Standing Army," in *The Military in America*, ed. Karsten, 33.



separate and clashing interests.”<sup>68</sup> For clergy and other religious citizens, the length of the war pointed to God’s punishment for past sin. The language used at military campsites or the specific behavior of officers provided reason for civilian antimilitarism. In Connecticut, multiple civilian complaints to various General Assemblies concerned the behavior of military officers. One Greenwich complaint said “Roger Enos, commander of a state regiment, had sanctioned the destruction of local property, beaten a town representative to the General Assembly, and conducted an illicit relationship with a woman of dubious loyalty.” Another complaint from sixteen citizens of Torrington in 1779 described the newly elected militia captain as a “corrupt, profane, lewd man...who would corrupt the young.”<sup>69</sup> Indeed, George Washington’s General Orders from November 6, 1780 read: “It is with infinite regret the General is obliged once more to take notice of the disorderly conduct of the Soldiers arising in a great measure from the abuse of Passes: the whole country is overspread with straggling Soldiers with the most frivolous of pretenses, under which they commit every species of robbery and plunder.”<sup>70</sup>

The time when a Patriot soldier mobilized and motivated colonists was a distant memory. In fact, a marked shift occurred. The universal militia model offered a racialized ideal for what it meant to be a citizen. As reverence toward service declined, and men returned home after experiencing the hardships of war, exceptions were made in the form of sanctioned Black enlistment. Legislation permitting Blacks

---

<sup>68</sup> Richard Buel, *Dear Liberty: Connecticut's Mobilization for the Revolutionary War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1980), 179.

<sup>69</sup> Buel, *Dear Liberty: Connecticut's Mobilization for the Revolutionary War*, 211-212.

<sup>70</sup> “George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 3g Varick Transcripts,” *George Washington, November 6, 1780, General Orders*. Accessed via <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mgw3&fileName=mgw3g/gwpage005.db&recNum=216>.

to serve alongside soldiers of another race accomplished another important task. The legally integrated military ensured soldiers operated within the framework of a lower class. Publicly soldiers were portrayed as a group whose morals and ambitions disagreed with most citizens. Soldiers were of an inferior constitution, designated to defend the United States and continue the revolution. Black soldiers were incorporated into the class of citizen, while simultaneously being removed and excluded from it.

## CHAPTER 2

### TEMPORARY WAR, TEMPORARY CITIZENSHIP

By 1778, the Articles of Confederation represented the de facto Law of the Land. The first American charter granted loyal free Blacks the same rights and privileges of citizenship given to white colonists. Article 4 read, “The free inhabitants of each of these States—paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice excepted—shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of free citizens in the several States.”<sup>71</sup> The term *free* applied to Black inhabitants only after New Jersey objected to Congress, stating:

“As it is of indispensable necessity, in every war, that a part of the inhabitants be employed for the uses of husbandry and otherwise at home, while others are called into the field, there must be the same propriety that owners of a different color, who are employed for this purpose in one State, while *whites* are employed for the same purpose in another, be reckoned in the account of the inhabitants in the present instance.”<sup>72</sup>

Under the Articles of Confederation, military service earned Blacks the privileges of citizenship. As Black soldiers fulfilled their duties in war, they were recognized as legitimate inhabitants of the continent. The decision promoted the model of weaponizing one’s self in order to see improved living conditions. In this case, military service earned the title of American for Blacks. Though the Articles’ imperfections necessitated a new charter, the laws served their purpose during the Revolution. Similarly, the citizenship of free Blacks served its purpose throughout the Revolution. Nonetheless, the management of Blacks within military ranks predicted these privileges were merely temporary.

Some men entered as free volunteers, others as free substitutes searching for adventure or financial gain, other slaves substituted for masters, while some were

---

<sup>71</sup> Livermore, *Research*, 33.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

hired as replacements when hoping for emancipation. Despite the various methods of enlistment, citizens seemed focused on compacting Black soldiers into one racial category and separating them from soldiers identified as a different race. In January 1778, George Washington forwarded a message to Rhode Island's Governor Nicholas Cooke about organizing a Black regiment in the state. The letter began, "Sir— Enclosed you will receive a copy of a letter from General Varnum to me, upon the means which might be adopted for completing the Rhode-Island troops to their full proportion in the Continental Army." The message from General Varnum confessed, "It is imagined that a battalion of Negroes can easily be raised [in Rhode Island.]"<sup>73</sup>

In a February Session, the Rhode Island legislature resolved "That every able-bodied *Negro*, mulatto, or *Indian* man slave, in this State, may enlist into either of the said two battalions to serve." The act continued, stipulating "every slave so enlisting shall, upon his passing muster before Col. Christopher Greene, be immediately discharged from the service of his master or mistress, and be absolutely FREE, as though he had never been incumbered with any kind of servitude or slavery."<sup>74</sup> Slave-owners were compensated up to 120 pounds for their lost property. The proposal and subsequent legislation in Rhode Island marked the first in a sequence of proposals calling for segregated units. Eventually, deaths from battle meant the battalions in Rhode Island would become racially mixed. However, the decision and motivation to initially separate Blacks resonated throughout the states.

In total, Rhode Island assembled nearly 250 Black soldiers who were outfitted with lavish uniforms. Most of the enlistees eventually formed the First Rhode Island

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 151.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 153.

Regiment of free Blacks and indigenous natives.<sup>75</sup> One soldier of the 1<sup>st</sup> Rhode Island was Cato Greene, a man “native of Africa and brought to this country and sold as a slave,” who “served to obtain his freedom... [And] received [his] discharge signed by George Washington.” Another soldier in Rhode Island’s First Regiment, Jack Watson, “enlisted as a soldier in the country of the United States in March 1778... [And] served in Col. Greene’s Regiment in a company commanded by Captain Elijah Lewis...he served till the close of the American War, and was honorably discharged from the service – the whole time he served in the Continental Establishment was five years and three months.” Despite earning their freedom, both men found themselves in dire circumstances when applying for pension. Cato Greene admitted he was “unable to work and must depend on charity,” while Jack Watson acknowledged “he is now poor and without any means of support whatever.” The veterans’ circumstances were common, not simply for soldiers of the First Rhode Island Regiment, but for Black veterans in general.<sup>76</sup>

The regiment distinguished itself at the Battles of Rhode Island and Yorktown. In Samuel Arnold’s *History of Rhode Island*, the historian states “the newly raised black regiment, under Col. Greene, distinguished itself by deeds of desperate valor. Posted behind a thicket in the valley, they three times drove back the Hessians, who charged repeatedly down the hill to dislodge them.” In the Battle of Yorktown, the First Rhode Island Regiment “marched off to take two strategic British

---

<sup>75</sup> Neimeyer, *The Revolutionary War*, 75.

<sup>76</sup> Pensions of Cato Greene (S38753, 1818), Series M805, Roll 376, and Jack Watson (S36366, 1818), Series M805, Roll 843.

redoubts.” Rhode Island’s group of Black soldiers played a pivotal role in the United States’ decisive victory.<sup>77</sup>

The First Rhode Island Regiment epitomized commendable Black military service. Nonetheless, from the Revolution’s very beginning, the quality of Black service never arose as a problem. A letter from General John Thomas to John Adams in 1775 offered an accurate glimpse of the army from someone competent to depict it. “We have some negroes,” the General observed, “but I look on them, in general, equally serviceable with other men for fatigue; and, in action, many of them have proved themselves brave.”<sup>78</sup> One particular instance of exemplary Black service was made public after the Battle of Bunker Hill. While the Massachusetts House of Representatives convened in council, “*Charles Chauncy*, Esquire, brought down a paper, signed by Colonel Brewer and other Officers of the Army, testifying the bravery of *Salem Poor*, a negro man in Colonel *Frye’s* Regiment, at the late battle at *Charlestown*.”<sup>79</sup> In a revolution for liberty, many remained intent Blacks received little to no improvement in social status. Previous colonial service established a precedent of weaponizing one’s self in order to improve living conditions. In a war meant to end Britain’s enslavement of the colonies, many feared Black military service offered grander intentions than the Revolution truly desired.

The abovementioned Jack Watson’s pension mentioned serving under Colonel Christopher Greene, the original commander of the First Rhode Island Regiment who

---

<sup>77</sup> Livermore, Research, 158. See Also: Gilbert, *Black Patriots*, 175.

<sup>78</sup> George Livermore, *An Historical Research Respecting the Opinions of the Founders of the Republic on Negroes As Slaves, As Citizens, and As Soldiers Read Before the Massachusetts Historical Society, August 14, 1862*, (Boston: A. Williams, 1863), 132.

<sup>79</sup> “December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1775,” *Massachusetts, House of Representatives*. Accessed online via *American Archives Series 4, Volume 4*, pg. 1349, <http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.12070:1.amarch>.

died near Points Bridge, New York on May 14, 1781. Many of Greene's "colored soldiers heroically defended him till they were cut to pieces, and the enemy reached him over the dead bodies of his faithful Negroes."<sup>80</sup> The same year Black soldiers from Connecticut provided another display of unending loyalty to their superiors. "Jordan Freeman and Lambro Latham were slaughtered with Colonel Ledyard at Fort Griswold in 1781, when Major Montgomery the British Commander was lifted upon the walls of the fort by his soldiers, Jordan Freeman attacked him with a pike and pinned him dead to the earth." The British regulars quickly responded, and "the heroic black soldier was pierced with 33 bayonet thrusts."<sup>81</sup> The examples display many Black soldiers were imbued with a cause greater than individual freedom. The soldiers fought for American liberty as much as their peers of different races.

In the archives of Revolutionary pensioners, the names of four Black soldiers attract attention because of the profundity they carry. Cuff Liberty, James Liberty, Pomp Liberty, and Sharp Liberty all survived the Revolution long enough to petition their country for economic relief.<sup>82</sup> Much like James Paine Freeman hearing the first public utterance of the Declaration of Independence personally, the common surname chosen by these four men suggests numerous Black soldiers took the American ideology to heart. In addition to the four pensioners, David White's *Connecticut Black Soldiers 1775-1783* reveals another soldier from Connecticut named Jeffery Liberty. Though the five men all hailed from Connecticut, none of the five were

---

<sup>80</sup> Livermore, Research, 159.

<sup>81</sup> Seymour, *Connecticut's Black Patriots, 1641-1781*, 3.

<sup>82</sup> HeritageQuest Online, *Search Revolutionary War*, Bounty Land Warrant Record Card of Cuff Liberty, 6110, September 15, 1789, Series M805, Roll 527, Bounty Land Warrant Record Card of James Liberty, 6125, April 19, 1796, Series M805, Roll 527, Pension of Pomp Liberty (BLWT1761-100, 1831), Series M805, Roll 527, and Sharp Liberty (R7286, 1832, 1842), Series M805, Roll 527.

residents of the same town. Additionally, Jeffery Liberty enlisted in 1781, while the other four veterans enlisted in 1777. The discrepancies suggest the decision to attach the word Liberty to one's existence for life was made individually.<sup>83</sup>

The connection between Black soldiers and the cause of Liberty extended beyond the confines of Connecticut. Early on in the Revolution, the General John Sullivan of New Hampshire informed his slave they were going to join in the Patriot fight for liberty. Hearing his master's declaration, the slave responded "that it would be a great satisfaction to know that he was indeed going to fight for *his* liberty." Sullivan, compelled by the slave's argument, freed his slave on the spot. The incident suggests the American cause of Liberty served as more than a mantra; for some Black soldiers it was the motivating force behind service.<sup>84</sup>

Similarly, pension records reveal five surviving Black veterans who enlisted with the last name *Freedom*. Cato Freedom, Dick Freedom, Jack Freedom, Joseph Freedom, and Ned Freedom all recalled their military service to the U.S. government. Ned Freedom served as a member of the all Black 2<sup>nd</sup> company, 4<sup>th</sup> regiment of the Connecticut Line, commanded by David Humphreys.<sup>85</sup> Additionally, the surname "Freeman" appeared 173 times in the Revolutionary pension records. Clearly some Black soldiers felt the name used to enlist carried grander meaning than the names of their slaveholders or other Britons. The use of *Liberty* and *Freedom* hints Black

---

<sup>83</sup> David Oliver White, *Connecticut's Black Soldiers, 1775-1783* (Chester, CT: Pequot, 1973), 59. For mention of Black soldiers choosing the surname Liberty when initially enlisting, see: Quarles, *Black Mosaic*, 55-56. Quoted saying, "It is striking, for example that of the 289 identifiable blacks in the Connecticut army, five reported 'Liberty' as their surname when they signed on."

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Robin D. G. Kelley and Earl Lewis, *To Make Our World Anew: A History of African Americans* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 113-114.

<sup>85</sup> Scott Winslow, "Black Soldiers in the American Revolution," *An Extraordinary Offering of Pay Certificates for African American Soldiers Who Fought In The Revolutionary War*. Accessed via [http://www.scottwinslow.com/images/file/catalogs/Black\\_Soldiers.pdf](http://www.scottwinslow.com/images/file/catalogs/Black_Soldiers.pdf).



soldiers were imbued with the American cause as much as any of their white counterparts.<sup>86</sup>

During the violent conflict, a group of Blacks from Massachusetts protested their requirement to pay taxes when not considered freemen of the state. The men used Black military service as the evidentiary basis for supporting a common cause. The plaintiffs' complaint also used the rhetoric of revolutionary philosophy, offering further proof Black Americans accepted the revolution's teachings as much as white colonists. They confessed to the legislature "while we are not allowed the privilege of freemen of the state, having no vote or influence in the election with those that tax us, yet many of our own color, as is well known, have cheerfully entered the field of battle in defence of the common cause, and that we conceive against a similar exertion of power in regard to taxation."<sup>87</sup> The men standing before the court took the motto "No taxation without representation" and reassigned emphasis. In the process, the suit revealed Blacks were imbued with the American spirit so long as it offered improved living conditions.

Other reasons for employing all Black regiments arose that questioned this affirmation of American loyalty. In 1778, an artillery officer named Thomas Kench spoke to the Massachusetts General Court at Castle Island hoping to form a Black regiment of two to three hundred troops. Kench's explanation highlighted the motivational benefits segregated military service would achieve. "We have divers of them in our service, mixed with white men," Kench observed. He went on, admitting

---

<sup>86</sup> Pensions of Cato Freedom (S44849, 1818) Series M805, Roll 337, Dick Freedom (BLWT590-100, 1832) Series M805, Roll 337, Joseph Freedom (S39548, 1818) Series M805, Roll 338. Bounty Land Warrant Record Card of Jack Freedom, 5795, September 15, 1790, Series M805, Roll337, and Bounty Land Warrant Record Card of Ned Freedom, 5766, July 12, 1792, Series M805, Roll 337.

<sup>87</sup> Kelley and Lewis, *To Make Our World Anew: A History of African Americans*, 109.

“I think it would be more proper to raise a body by themselves, than to have them intermixed with white men; and their ambition would entirely be to outdo the white men in every measure that the fortune of war calls a soldier to endure.”<sup>88</sup>

Rather than heed Kench’s advice, Massachusetts continued its practice of enlisting Blacks as individuals. One unit in Massachusetts known as the “Bucks of America” was said to be all Black, though no service records exist besides a battle flag presented to the unit by John Hancock.<sup>89</sup> Regardless, Kench’s assertion that a segregated company would “be more proper” demonstrates colonial unease persisted when observing racially mixed units. Additionally, arguing Blacks would rally against whites for added motivation implied Black soldiers were not capable of the loyal service white colonists provided. For many, Black military service remained a difficult sight to see—and to understand. After viewing integrated Massachusetts companies on a military campaign in upstate New York, the sentiment was perhaps best captured by the Patriot General Philip Schuyler. “Is it consistent with the Sons of Liberty,” Schuyler asked in 1777, “to trust their all be defended by slaves?”<sup>90</sup>

When fighting moved South over the course of the Revolution, enlistment problems continued. John Laurens, the Congressman from South Carolina and son of Henry Laurens, proposed enlisting Southern Blacks. Specifically, Laurens planned to enlist slaves from crowded plantations. When Laurens presented his plan to Congress, Blacks were expected to “be formed into separate corps as battalions, according to the arrangements adopted for the main army, to be commanded by white commissioned

---

<sup>88</sup> Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 206.

<sup>89</sup> Neimeyer, *The Revolutionary War*, 76.

<sup>90</sup> Daniel C. Littlefield, *Revolutionary Citizens: African Americans, 1776-1804* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), 34.

and non commissioned officers.”<sup>91</sup> According to the proposal, after a successful completion of duty, slaves were to receive emancipation and fifty dollars. To Laurens, the war’s extreme circumstances—primarily a genuine inability to meet recruitment quotas—indicated racial exception in the South was needed. However, Blacks were to remain segregated as well. Refusing to relax a stronghold on the plantation system, the state legislatures of South Carolina and Georgia rejected John Laurens’ proposal on three separate occasions.

Following the proposal’s third defeat, General Washington wrote to John Laurens revealing his view of the American personality. Washington explained, “That spirit of freedom, which at the commencement of this contest would have gladly sacrificed everything to the attainment of its object, has long since subsided.” The Commander-in-chief seemed disillusioned with his countrymen when he told Laurens “every selfish passion has taken its place. It is not the public, but private interest, which influences the generality of mankind, nor can the Americans any longer boast an exception.”<sup>92</sup> As the war progressed, American interest shifted from communal to individual. Though Laurens’ proposal failed, the precedent of segregation set by Rhode Island and Massachusetts continued to serve the self-interest. In 1781, the New York legislature passed an act promising “any person who shall deliver one or more of his or her ablebodied slaves to any one in office...to serve in either of said regiments,” was entitled to compensation from the state. The “said regiments” were

---

<sup>91</sup> Carter Godwin Woodson, *The Journal of Negro History* (United Kingdom: Dodo, 2008), 124.

<sup>92</sup> “George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington, vol. X (1782-1785) [1892]*,” *To Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens*. Accessed via <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/washington-the-writings-of-george-washington-vol-x-1782-1785>.

two separate regiments of Blacks from New York.<sup>93</sup> As noted earlier, Connecticut also formed an all Black regiment from 1780 until 1782. From the Continental Army to the state militia, men serving were doing so out of obligation rather than communal interests. However, while the army represented a lower-class group, producing segregated units ensured Blacks would not receive any implicit benefits tied to service.

A common bond of hardship and marginalization empowered soldiers during particularly dire circumstances. Important to note, the shared subordination fell short of creating a common culture. Segregated Black companies reveal distinct separation between American soldiers. One Black Massachusetts veteran recalled being switched into a “black company,” further exposing a tendency among officers to reorganize Black troops into more segregated companies.<sup>94</sup> In Benjamin Quarles’ *The Negro in the American Revolution*, the historian describes Black soldiers as the man “behind the man behind the gun.” The British side poorly utilized Black soldiers on the battlefield, instead keeping them enlisted to serve menial tasks or public departments. In fact, some British officers ranked servants after horses when taking roll for their companies.<sup>95</sup>

On the American side, Blacks frequently were hired for labor in the South. Those hired were usually runaway slaves—simultaneously receiving punishment from the state and increasing the state’s labor—or captured from the British. In the North, hired Black labor proved much less common. New York’s March 1776 legislation requiring Blacks to help build defense fortifications marks another way

---

<sup>93</sup> Garrison, Moore, and Wilkes. *The Negro Soldier*, 39-40.

<sup>94</sup> Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 206.

<sup>95</sup> Gilbert, *Black Patriots*, 174.

Northern states utilized Black labor. Additionally, the pension record of James Paine Freeman reveals some Black soldiers were ushered into inconsequential roles such as fifer or drummer upon enlistment. In August 1777, Virginia bought slaves to work the lead mines at Chiswells, presumably aiding in the production of munitions. Black soldiers familiar with the local terrain also served as competent spies at certain moments of the Revolution. Overall, the American North utilized Black soldiers more effectively on the battlefield than any other region or interest. Yet the racial notations on musters and the proposals for segregated units warranted enough discrimination to preserve racial hierarchies.<sup>96</sup>

Throughout the war, Blacks served their states and country in different ways. An avenue with fewer restrictions tied to enlistment was the Continental Navy. The entrance of Blacks into the ranks of seafaring soldiers “was easily accepted,” Quarles affirmed, “because there was nothing novel about it.” The water was a place Blacks could experience some of the most legitimate examples of egalitarianism in the newly formed states. A ship requires the entire crew working in unison, relying on one another for tasks big and small in order to see success. Additionally, free Blacks often were employed as sailors prior to the Revolution, providing valuable experience when serving among many untested sailors. The Continental Navy did not exist before the Revolution; ships were either converted from merchant vessels or seized British ships. Even more, there was no symbolic meaning tied to service on the seas like there was attached to the colonial militia. With its “chronic shortage of sailors, the

---

<sup>96</sup> Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 94-99.

half a hundred ships of the Continental Navy made use of whatever [Blacks] they could get”—slave or free.<sup>97</sup>

The pension applications of two Navy veterans reveal altogether separate experiences for the Black seamen. John Browne of Pennsylvania served aboard a frigate called the *Boston* and held the rank of “1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Marines.” Browne, however, saw early discharge after being “wounded in his hip, and the small of his back by a large chest giving way out of the wardroom.” Browne’s status as a Marine aboard a military vessel emerges as relatively rare. According to one history of Blacks in the Marine Corps, “there were at least three Blacks in the ranks of the Continental Marines and ten others who served as Marines on ships of the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, navies.”<sup>98</sup> Another Navy veteran, Joseph Ranger of Virginia, served as a “private or seaman in the Navy of said state” and while aboard the *Dragon* was “blown up by the enemy at a place called Oshonn on James River...[and] was rightly turned over to the boat *Patriot* about 5 or 6 months before the Siege of York.”<sup>99</sup>

Some soldiers served strictly within the confines of their home state. For example, the pension records of Gideon Quas—another soldier who served in the First Rhode Island Regiment—reveal despite his extended service he never stepped foot outside state lines. Other soldiers who served in the Continental Army or active state regiments crossed state lines and gained valuable experience throughout the new

---

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 83-84.

<sup>98</sup> Henry I. Shaw and Ralph W. Donnelly, “Blacks in the Marine Corps”. Accessed via <http://www.montfordpointmarines.com/BLACKS%20IN%20THE%20MARINE%20CORPS/BLACKS%20IN%20THE%20MARINE%20CORPS.pdf>.

<sup>99</sup> Pensions of John Browne (X107, NA), Series M805, Roll 129 and Joseph Ranger (S7352, 1834), Series M805, Roll 675.

nation. Fortune Freeman originally enlisted in “1776 in Boston until spring of 1780” and again in “spring of the year 1780...and was honorably discharged the twenty first day of December 1783.” Freeman was “wounded in the thigh by a musket back at the Battle of Brandy Wine” in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. He also “was at the capture of General Burgoyne’s Army in Saratoga, at the Battles of Brandywine and Monmouth and finally during the campaign in which Lord Cornwallis was captured.”<sup>100</sup> Freeman was discharged in New York and eventually took residence and applied for federal pension in the state. Freeman’s recount of service reveals many Blacks were given the opportunity to travel and increase interaction among men of color. That fact, coupled with an increased number of freemen, likely impelled Black veterans to congregate in free Black communities when the Revolution concluded. Similarly, Cato Negro served from August 1777 until the war’s end, and though he enlisted in Connecticut found himself “at or near West Point” by the Revolution’s conclusion.

As war came to a close, Black soldiers exited service in a variety of ways. Peter Lewis of Connecticut was deemed “unfit for any further duty either in field or garrison, and having applied for a discharge...is entitled to the pension of Congress on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1782.” Years later in Lewis’ application for federal pension, evidence revealed the terms of his discharge were penned by George Washington. Cato Negro’s reference to a discharge near West Point marked service until the very end of the war. Cato Freedom and Samuel Bush of Connecticut, as well as Cuff

---

<sup>100</sup> Pensions of Gideon Quas (R8539, 1818), Series M805, Roll 672, and Fortune Freeman (S43572, 1818), Series M805, Roll 338. The battle that Fortune Freeman refers to “in which Lord Cornwallis was captured” may be the Battle of the Chesapeake rather than the Battle of Yorktown. In the Battle of the Chesapeake Cornwallis was blockaded at Yorktown, Virginia—effectively ending the Revolution.

Whitemore of Massachusetts also mark some of the other Black soldiers serving “until the end of the war”. Of course, countless Black soldiers lost their lives during service, something impossible to account for when examining the pensions of generally disadvantaged veterans of war.<sup>101</sup>

\*\*\*

While Americans strove to create a republican government which maximized individual liberties, the reality was no existing republican models were available for guidance. The origins of American political theory ranged from the Bible, to Locke and Montesquieu, to Adam Smith and David Hume. However, all these sources possessed certain limitations. “By default, that left the history of the ancient Roman republic, and all educated Americans were familiar with that history,” as a source of much guidance.<sup>102</sup>

For unlearned citizens, the history of Rome grew to be familiar and accessible because of Joseph Addison’s tremendously popular play *Cato*. The play was first published in London in 1713, but possessed a longevity that made it noteworthy throughout the Revolution. The annals of American history reveal *Cato*’s ubiquity and tremendous influence on a founding generation. As an aspiring writer, Benjamin Franklin committed long passages to memory and wrote them out hoping Addison’s writing style would rub off on the young Philadelphian. Mercy Otis Warren based her play “The Sack of Rome” directly on *Cato*. Patrick Henry’s famous 1775 “Give me liberty, or give me death!” provocation was influenced by a line in *Cato* (Cato: “It is

---

<sup>101</sup> Pensions of Cato Negro (W26169, 1820), Series M805, Roll 493, Peter Lewis (W17463, 1834), Series M805, Roll 526, Cato Freedom (S44849, 1818), Series M805, Roll 337, Samuel Bush (S36450, 1818), Series M805, Roll 148, and Cuff Whitemore (S33896, 1818), Series M805, Roll 865.

<sup>102</sup> Joseph Addison, Christine Dunn Henderson, and Mark E. Yellin, *Cato: A Tragedy, and Selected Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004), vii.



not now a time to talk of aught / But chains or conquest, liberty or death”). The famous last utterance of the Patriot soldier Nathan Hale, “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country,” resonates with another remark from *Cato* (Cato: “What a pity it is that we can die but once to save our country”). Potentially most important, the play was a favorite of the General George Washington. In 1783 when his officers threatened mutiny—like Cato’s troops in the play—Washington delivered his famed Newburgh Address paraphrasing words from *Cato*.<sup>103</sup>

After news of France’s military alliance reached Valley Forge, and despite Congressional orders prohibiting the performance of plays, Washington organized a rendition of *Cato* for his troops. A letter from William Bradford Jr. to his sister Rachel recalled the performance, saying “Last Monday *Cato* was performed before a very numerous & splendid audience.”<sup>104</sup> For *Cato*’s author Joseph Addison, the protagonist promoted the ideals of patriotism and service to country while serving as “an exemplar of republican virtue and opposition to tyranny.”<sup>105</sup> The recently referenced pension records of Cato Negro and Cato Freedom confirm the first name

---

<sup>103</sup> Addison, Henderson, and Yellin, *Cato: A Tragedy, and Selected Essays*, viii, 44, 48.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Mark Evans Bryan, ““Slideing into Monarchical Extravagance”: Cato at Valley Forge and the Testimony of William Bradford Jr.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67.1 (2010): 124. Bryan’s article on *Cato*’s production argues against overwhelming prior scholarly understanding. The historian claims the line from Bradford has fallen victim to frequent misinterpretation. Bryan maintains the production was intended for the officers as “an emblem of gentility and a deeply attractive indulgence for the burgeoning and contested aristocracy of the Continental army.” In other words, Bryan envisions a smaller production of the play than Bradford’s description of ‘very numerous’ seemed to suggest. He also ignores the celebratory feeling most likely rippling through the camp only five days after France’s announcement of alliance. Bryan believes *Cato* was more a reflection of class tensions during the Revolution. For traditional interpretation of the play, see: Jason Shaffer, *Performing Patriotism: National Identity in the Colonial and Revolutionary American Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2007), 60-61. See also: Addison, Henderson, and Yellin, *Cato: A Tragedy, and Selected Essays*, viii. See also: Fuller, “Theaters of the American Revolution: The Valley Forge “Cato” and the Meschianza in Their Transcultural Contexts.”, 128.

<sup>105</sup> Rob Hardy, “Cato,” *George Washington’s Mount Vernon*. Accessed via <http://www.mountvernon.org/educational-resources/encyclopedia/cato>.

was prevalent among Black men during the Revolution. Throughout the British colonies, a tendency existed among slave owners to assign slaves with names from Greek or Roman history. Names such as Caesar, Cato, Diana, or Daphne were common for Black men and women.<sup>106</sup> At Valley Forge, the republican exemplar Cato came to parallel the General Washington. In fact, later in the same year the poet Jonathan Mitchell Sewall's "New Epilogue to Cato" equated Washington to Cato, King George III to Caesar, and Marquis de Lafayette with Cato's ally Juba.<sup>107</sup>

The reality that an archetype of republican virtue carried the same name as many Black soldiers was certainly not lost on all at Valley Forge. For Black soldiers such as John Cato of New Jersey, Cato Dawes, Cato Gray, Cato Inches, or Cato Freeman of Massachusetts, Cato Fagan of Delaware, Cato Greene, Cato Varnum, or Cato Namum of Rhode Island, Cato Jack of Connecticut, and Cato Johnson of New York—all of whom the muster rolls at Valley Forge suggest were at camp during the performance—the fact was, for obvious reason, unmistakable.<sup>108</sup> Though the play ends with Cato committing suicide off stage and the republic eventually falling, "both classical and modern theorists of republics held that [the subplots of *Cato's*] actuating principle was public virtue—virtue in the sense of selfless, full-time, manly devotion to the public weal."<sup>109</sup>

For some—if not most—Blacks at Valley Forge, the production of *Cato* on May 11, 1778 likely served as an introduction to Addison's play. For others, the

---

<sup>106</sup> Kelley and Lewis, *To Make Our World Anew: A History of African Americans*, 155.

<sup>107</sup> Bryan, "'Slideing into Monarchical Extravagance': Cato at Valley Forge and the Testimony of William Bradford Jr.," 125.

<sup>108</sup> "Valley Forge Legacy," *The Muster Roll Project*. Names accessed via <http://valleyforgemusterroll.org/muster.asp>. The source provides a complete list of the muster rolls at Valley Forge.

<sup>109</sup> Addison, Henderson, and Yellin, *Cato: A Tragedy, and Selected Essays*, ix.

performance may have revealed the significance behind a name attached to their existence. Recalling theater's ability to shape identity and form an active audience, Randall Fuller's "Theaters of the American Revolution" asserts, "the theatrical performance of *Cato* at Valley Forge suggests yet another way in which this ideology was both self-consciously and performatively enacted during a crucial period of Anglo-American hostilities."<sup>110</sup> Though the performance certainly generated distinct emotions in each audience member, it seems difficult to underestimate the intense emotions *Cato* invoked in Black soldiers. When searching the pension applications of Black veterans, the name Cato appeared on twenty-eight occasions. The heroic figure, whose undertaking paralleled those instilled with the American ideology, carried a Black man's title.

A name possesses the ability to identify an individual, while also tying a person's membership to a larger social group. For that reason, the prevalence of the name Cato during the Revolution appears telling. Sometimes a name's commonness coincides with a loss in its uniqueness. However, other times, "the origins and continued usage of those names reveal more about that society as a whole than any single name reveals about an individual within it. A name becomes, according to sociologist Nathan Miller, 'the symbol of the *social* personality – that is, the personality as recognized by the group and as fashioned by the current folkways of that group.'<sup>111</sup> For Blacks with the name Cato, the influential play offered entrance into the performance and philosophy of the Revolution.

---

<sup>110</sup> Fuller, "Theaters of the American Revolution," 129.

<sup>111</sup> John C. Inscoe, "Carolina Slave Names: An Index to Acculturation." *The Journal of Southern History* 49.4 (1983): 527. *JSTOR*. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2208675?ref=search-gateway:abb362f79f6c6e31f1a123da82f1ee1>>.

Even if not witnesses to the play, the mere mention around camp of a play named *Cato* whose purpose was to motivate soldiers was certainly empowering. Surnames such as Liberty or Freedom reveal an identity previously in coexistence with the American cause. With Washington's decision to organize an impromptu performance of his favorite play, another name was added to the list of those with the American ideology attached to it. Rather than ideals such as *liberty* or *freedom*, the newest name was an explicitly Black name. Nothing could change that.

\*\*\*

Throughout the Revolution, Black soldiers provided military service that was instrumental in the success of the American cause. When Rhode Island experienced a dire shortage of manpower, the construction of an all-Black regiment offered much needed relief. Despite this, shortly after Rhode Island enacted legislation to amass an infantry of Black soldiers, white reaction forced the General Assembly to redefine the measure as simply temporary.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, in 1780 Connecticut formed a company of Blacks under the command of white officers. Shortly thereafter, the state reversed its position on integrated military service. In May of 1782, *An Act for forming, regulating, and conducting the Military Force of this State* read “all Male persons from sixteen Years of Age to forty five shall constitute the Military Force of this State except Members of the Council, of the House of Representatives...and Indians, Negroes, and Molattoes.”<sup>113</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Neimeyer, *The Revolutionary War*, 75.

<sup>113</sup> Forrest Morgan, Leonard Woods Labaree, and Charles J. Hoadly, *The Public Records of the State of Connecticut ...: With the Journal of the Council of Safety ... and an Appendix* (Hartford: Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard, 1894), 138.

The conflicting stances on Black enlistment reveal a tendency to admit the out-group when in desperate need of manpower. When quotas were reached, legislation ensured Blacks remained an out-group at war's end. Soldiers' mixed racial designations and the development of the standing army altered implications tied to service. Regardless, the future configuration of the military remained uncertain. With this in mind, states refused to permanently allow Blacks the privileges of citizenship tied to service.

In January of 1781, the Colonel Jeremiah Olney announced he was seeking recruits in Rhode Island. Olney, who assumed control over Rhode Island's Black regiment following Colonel Christopher Greene's death, announced plainly: *Negroes will not be received*. A year later, Olney described why, in his experience, Blacks made poor soldiers. "It has been found from long and fatal experience that Indians, negroes and mulattoes do not (and from a total want of Perseverance and Fortitude to bear the various Fatigues incident an army cannot) answer the public service, they will not therefore on any account be received." Olney mentioned "Experience also confirms how little reliance we can place on Foreigners," seemingly equating the two groups of soldiers.<sup>114</sup> The scathing critique of Black military service was not found in Olney's personal journal—that would suggest Olney truly believed the baseless accusations. Rather, the respected Rhode Island commander's opinion was published in the *Providence Gazette* for all to see. Americans struggled to comprehend the meaning of Black military service. As a result, anything to disparage Black soldiers appeared open for interpretation.

---

<sup>114</sup> *Providence Gazette*, 10 Jan 1781, 19 May 1781, 9 Mar. 1782. Quoted in Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 209.

Olney's critique of Black service touched on multiple grievances. Olney maintained Black soldiers did not "answer the public service," even though Blacks enlisted from the very beginning of war onward. The Colonel claimed Blacks were not capable of handling the fatigues of service, forgetting countless soldiers served for the entirety of war. Even more, Olney's mention of foreigners questioned Black soldiers' loyalty to the American ideology. Though Blacks were not foreigners, Olney's comparison implied they lacked loyalty in the same way men from another country may. He seemingly ignored countless Black soldiers' heroic behavior during the death of his superior Colonel Christopher Greene in 1781. In doing so, Olney underestimated a Black soldier's motivation to serve, in many ways delegitimizing the American ideology. Similarly, despite the admirable service of the First Rhode Island Regiment, many Rhode Island residents remained opposed to Black enlistment. In a letter penned January 1782 to General Washington, Gen. Nathanael Greene acknowledged "I have recommended to this State to raise some black regiments...Some are for it; but the far greater part of the people are opposed to it."<sup>115</sup> Again, Americans underestimated Black soldiers' motivation to serve and feared the potential repercussions resulting from service. For those who considered themselves oppressed, the Declaration of Independence's principles provided the greatest inspiration of all. For those in the ruling class, an inspiring ideology was acceptable, a realistic one was not.

After the Articles of Confederation granted every loyal and free person privileges of citizenship, the United States represented an ideology of equality Blacks aspired to achieve. Thus, weaponizing one's body represented the only obstacle

---

<sup>115</sup> Livermore, *Research*, 190.

between Blacks and the status of American. When in need of recruits, New York and Maryland opened enlistment to Blacks in 1781. Nevertheless, closing Blacks off from service in New England developed an exclusionary pattern toward a specific race in the new republic. The irregular conclusions reveal military service implied more than simply bravery; service was a means of being American. Blacks saw increased rights during the war, especially in the form of reduced slavery, increased suffrage, and temporary citizenship. Once the war ended, Blacks saw their American status carried fewer rights than during a time of war. Though racial exclusion was gradual, conscious choices were made to limit opportunity for Blacks. In doing so, states determined the extent to which Revolutionary ideology affected a new nation. The service of Black veterans was belittled, questioned, segregated, and often forgotten.

Following the war it became clear the American army reinforced the social structure of an invented nation. Many clung to the prewar militia as a means of producing a racialized society. Despite the standing army's necessity during the Revolution, the self-conception of the American soldier carried an important qualifier—he must be a white soldier.

### **C HAPTER 3**

#### **FROM CITIZEN-SOLDIER TO DENIZEN-VETERAN**

Toward the end of the American Revolution, John Adams reflected on the traditions of Massachusetts with particular fondness. “For several years, I have, in conversation and in writing, enumerated the towns, militia, schools, and churches as the four causes of the growth and defence of New England.” Adams went on, affirming from these four institutions “The virtues and the talents of the people are there formed.”<sup>116</sup> Training and muster days, which occurred around three times a year toward the end of the colonial era, marked important social and political events. Training days happened when one company assembled for drill; muster days took place when all companies of a regiment gathered for drill. Men, women, and children of all ages congregated during these special occasions, excited for a break from the ennui of everyday life. During the Age of Revolution, a main grievance that the Whigs levied toward the British Empire concerned the Crown’s standing army. British soldiers, occupying homes and inflicting the will of the Crown upon colonists, existed as vassals of tyranny. Colonial militias marked a way to maintain their self-reliance and therefore liberty. Without doubt, militia service represented a fundamental element of citizenship in New England.

All four pillars constructing Adams’ temple of talent and virtue involve community and active participation. The townships of Massachusetts were governed by the locality, while schools and churches fundamentally require consistent attendance to demonstrate one’s dedication to the cause. Previously noted, local

---

<sup>116</sup> Mook, “Training Day in New England,” 675.



militias obligated regular muster and training days; the days eventually elevated in status to that of a small local festival, equating citizenship with service. While theater performances required an active audience when forming a collective voice, the inherently active nature of training and muster days cultivated an identity tied to service.

The principles of universal service and citizen-based defense were impressive, but simply not accurate. Although Americans idealized the volunteer militia, steps were taken throughout the colonial period seeming to contradict such sentiments. During the formative colonial years, threats from indigenous natives were common if not expected. The Pequot War of 1637, King Philip's War from 1675-1678, and King George's War from 1744-1748 provide just a few examples of colonial conflict with natives in and around New England. As a result, many Northern colonies enacted law requiring Blacks to serve alongside white colonists during early conflicts against natives. However, even before the threat of foreign violence diminished, the notion of universal obligation crumbled. The Massachusetts Militia Act of 1647 excused church elders, deacons, those affiliated with Harvard College, and physicians, among many others, from service. The legislation set a precedent of exemption for the privileged class of colonial society.<sup>117</sup>

When the volunteer militia failed to reach expected quotas, drafting from the common militia ensued. This did little to quell inconsistencies in the social composition of those serving, sometimes even leading to draft riots.<sup>118</sup> The obligatory

---

<sup>117</sup> Segal, *Recruiting for Uncle Sam*, 18-19.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

nature of the colonial militia deteriorated. Militias consisted only of those willing to provide, or other times conscribed into, service.<sup>119</sup>

In 1680, Massachusetts Governor Simon Bradstreet wrote to his English supervisors, maintaining the universal and nonselective nature of the state militia. Bradstreet recognized one exception—“Negroes and slaves whom wee arme not.” Almost eight decades later, the same promise could not be made. The Seven Years’ War—or simply the French and Indian War—marked a time when Black soldiers were utilized in both Northern and Southern colonies. Additionally, a system of draft substitutions meant the colonial militias no longer represented all sections of colonial society. The conflict marks an important point of departure for multiple reasons. Like the American Revolution, after an initial wave of enlistments, Blacks served during the French and Indian War because of recruitment shortages and the militia’s lower class status. Unlike the Revolution, with the French and Indian War pitting Great Britain against her enemies, no redefinition of colonial identity was needed. Returning Blacks to a subordinate status was easier than after the Revolution; no new legislation was needed.

In the North, the New York campaigns impelled many colonies to circumvent preexisting legislature and enlist Blacks.<sup>120</sup> Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and New York all sought Blacks for militia service during the New York campaigns.<sup>121</sup> The colony of New Jersey enacted specific quotas for Black enlistment during the Seven Years’ War—a temporary sign of deficient

---

<sup>119</sup> Meyer Kestnbaum, "Citizenship and Compulsory Military Service: The Revolutionary Origins of Conscription in the United States." *Armed Forces & Society* 27.1 (2000), 14-15

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 27. For mention of Black service circumventing preexisting legislature, 34.

<sup>121</sup> Scott A. Padeni, "The Role of Blacks in New York’s Northern Campaigns of the Seven Years’ War," *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* (1999), Volume XVI, 156.

manpower rather than an indication of a symbolic shift. Black slaves served in their masters' stead during the Seven Years' War, while other free Blacks viewed the compensation from military service as the best opportunity for financial progress within the colonies. Black soldiers served on the land as soldiers, rangers, scribes, and other non-combatative duties; others served on vessels and warships.

The result of military service in the French and Indian War varied for Blacks. Black soldiers were more apt to reenlist compared to their white counterparts. This was mainly because consistent payments served as the most reliable form of income many could procure. Many were able to purchase clothes, houses, or property—something otherwise unimaginable without the financial benefits from service. Other soldiers injured during the seven year conflict received pensions from colonial legislatures. However, more often than not these pensions—either for injury or captivity—were taken by slaves' owners. Other veterans injured during battle were ignored completely, left to rehabilitate and integrate themselves back into society on their own volition. The circumstances Blacks experienced after the French and Indian War foretold their experiences after the Revolution.

Many who served alongside their masters returned to slavery when war concluded. Naturally, numerous Black soldiers died during the violence. Jeremy Belknap noted his belief that the slave population in Massachusetts declined by 1763 “because in the two preceding wars, many [Blacks] were enlisted either into the army or on board vessels of war, with a view to procure their freedom.”<sup>122</sup> The conjecture implies a certain amount of slaves received manumission, though the death toll also played a large role in Belknap's observation. Throughout the North, manumissions

---

<sup>122</sup> Quarles, *Black Mosaic*, 34.

for service occurred; however, they were not commonplace.<sup>123</sup> When enlisting voluntarily, free Blacks saw militia service as the most viable option for personal improvement within the colonies. Many others sought freedom—in the form of manumission—for time served. Militia service arose from a desire to improve one's present circumstances, not a natural affinity for the British colonies.

In order to value Black military service during the American Revolution, understanding the connection between Blacks and Northern colonial militias is essential. The universal militia model was not a reality in the Northern colonies. Lower class colonists came to serve, while most all of the privileged ruling class continued on with their normal routine. Additionally, the racialized militia model was not infallible. Black service occurred despite preventative and exclusionary legislation in the colonies. The only reality tied to exclusionary legislation was that men of a certain race were rejected from the symbolic military identity. Most important, colonial wars set an important precedent for Blacks: converting one's body into a weapon at the disposal of the state offered the most realistic option for improving living conditions.

In the Northern colonies, free Blacks were regarded more as slaves than white colonists. Whether difficulty finding jobs, laws preventing land ownership, a fear of capture and forced slavery, or social norms segregating Blacks from white colonists, many signs pointed to a similar fact—Blacks were outsiders in the eyes of a white ruling class. The social status of Blacks meant militia service offered an opportunity to earn freedom or improve living conditions.

---

<sup>123</sup> Padeni, "The Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns of the Seven Years' War," 160.

Before the Revolution, enlistment laws signified a reluctance to admit Blacks into the fraternity of minutemen. Colonists feared arming Blacks. However, colonists allowed Blacks to serve in most—if not all—colonial wars before the Revolution. Colonists valued property rights. However, colonies also passed laws excluding free Blacks from militia service. Prohibitive legislation prevented Blacks from literally defining their political loyalty. Meanwhile, the exclusion from training and muster days prevented Blacks from symbolically defining their political affinity. Blacks needed to remain outside the imagined community. The difference between policy and practice ensured Blacks were not to inherit the title of *citizen-soldier*.

\*\*\*

During the Revolution, the construction of a standing army was necessary in order to produce experienced, competent, and enduring soldiers. Early violence revealed, to Generals Charles Lee, Nathanael Greene, and George Washington among others, the trust of a nation could not be placed in the hands of untrained minutemen. After the Revolution, the civilian Alexander Hamilton wrote in *Federalist No. 25* “[Those in the American militia] know that the liberty of their country could not have been established by their efforts alone, however great and valuable they were. War, like most other things, is a science to be acquired and perfected by diligence, by perseverance, by time, and by practice.”<sup>124</sup>

Although civilians and veterans appeared mindful the militia system carried its shortcomings on the battlefield, the ideals tied to the militia were too powerful to overlook. In 1781, Article 6 Section 4 of the Articles of Confederation read “every

---

<sup>124</sup> Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay, and Ian Shapiro, *The Federalist Papers: Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 2009), 127.

State shall always keep up a well-regulated and disciplined militia.”<sup>125</sup> After war, Article I Section 8 of the ratified Constitution declared Congress shall have power “to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions.” Congress also controlled the “organizing, arming, and disciplining [of] the militia...as may be employed in the service of the United States.”<sup>126</sup>

Following the Treaty of Paris, George Washington suggested Congress arrange a small standing army “to awe the Indians, protect our Trade, prevent the encroachment of our Neighbors of Canada and the Floridas, and guard us at least from surprises; also for security of our magazines.”<sup>127</sup> The combination of economic costs, fear of the standing army, and sectional division all lead Congress to rely on militia regiments—with the exception of eighty troops assigned to protect military stores at West Point and Fort Pitt.<sup>128</sup> With Congress seemingly ignoring the necessity of the Continental Army for victory, the militia system survived the war.

When the Constitution was ratified in 1787, the question of race in the future armed forces remained unaddressed. However, the Militia Act of 1792 quelled fears of an integrated national force, requiring “each and every free able-bodied white male citizen of the respective States, resident therein, who is or shall be of age of eighteen

---

<sup>125</sup> “The Articles of Confederation,” A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875. Accessed via <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=001/llsl001.db&recNum=128>.

<sup>126</sup> United States Constitution, quoted in Alan Rogers and R. Alan Lawson, *From Revolution to Republic: A Documentary Reader* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Pub., 1976), 239.

<sup>127</sup> Richard W. Stewart, *American Military History*, (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2005), 108.

<sup>128</sup> Stewart, *American Military History*, 109.

years, and under the age of forty-five years (except as is herein after excepted) shall severally and respectively be enrolled in the militia.”<sup>129</sup>

The Militia Act of 1792 accomplished two important tasks. First, Congress reiterated its stance against the construction of a standing army. Instead, times of distress required militias to defend the place of danger or quell social turbulence. The decision implied communal identity remained strongly connected to the Euro-American military tradition. Second, the legislation asserted only a white man was fit to serve in the militia. Reasons for racial qualification carried over from the colonial era and the Revolutionary War. The existence of slavery in many states forced the federal government to respect property foremost. However, adding the term *free* before *white* would remedy such issue. Fearing complicity in slave rebellion, the reluctance to arm extended into the category of free Blacks as well as slaves. Most important, the law demonstrates a national inclination for the militia ideal remained. Including Blacks, the antimilitarism tied to lower class civilians in the Continental Army perhaps affirmed the militia model. In many ways, the soldiers of the Revolution failed to embody the American ideal. The Militia Act of 1792 reestablished the defense against foreign invaders as a fundamental aspect of citizenship. Though systems of substitution would remain, the decision to specify *white men* meant Blacks were not part of the constructed violent national identity. The violent citizen ideal was always a racialized conception.

Following the war, local training days persisted in New England due to their patriotic undertones and celebratory atmosphere. The days acquired a social framework

---

<sup>129</sup> “Militia Act of 1792,” *Second Congress, Session I. Chapter XXVIII*. Accessed via [http://www.constitution.org/mil/mil\\_act\\_1792.htm](http://www.constitution.org/mil/mil_act_1792.htm).

of jubilation and nationalism rather than legitimate preparation.<sup>130</sup> Although legislation during the war temporarily permitted Black enlistment and service, the generally festive military trainings remained segregated. A sign of an increased free Black population as well as an identity shaped through military service, Negro Training Days emerged for the first time after the American Revolution.<sup>131</sup> Slaves were also among the many reporting to these training days, as Connecticut only gradually emancipated slaves following war.

One of the few recorded Negro Training Days took place in the town of Windsor, Connecticut “subsequent to the Revolution” at a place called Pickett’s Tavern. For White Americans, the congregation of Blacks in military arrangement elicited more amusement than camaraderie. Weapons and outfits adorned during these moments of spectacle occasionally came from slaveholders, while other free Blacks sported any outfit they could manage. The leader of this particular training day was a man named General Ti, the slave of the former Revolutionary Captain Oliver Ellsworth. Captain Ellsworth “furnished [Ti] with his own uniform, accoutrements, and watch, to the chain of which he added several huge seals, and set him upon his war-steed.”<sup>132</sup>

After Black soldiers’ distinguished service during the Revolution, the public Negro Training Days ostensibly emerge as an example of reverence and appreciation from white Americans. However, the acts themselves reinforced stereotypes attributed to Blacks and trivialized their place within an established community. The

---

<sup>130</sup> Mook, H. Telfer. "Training Day in New England," 681, 691.

<sup>131</sup> Pierson, *Black Yankees*, 136.

<sup>132</sup> Henry R. Stiles, *The History of Ancient Windsor: A Facsimile of the 1892 Edition* (Somersworth, NH: New Hampshire Pub., 1976), 492-493.



original description of the Windsor training noted, “Such exhibitions were a source of no little amusement to the whites, who often visited them to witness the evolutions and performances of their sable competitors.” In a moment of derision, one townsman asked the Captain Ti for the time. This amused many in the crowd, “who happened to know the general could not tell the time himself.” The account continues describing the difficulty Captain Ti had organizing the Black soldiers, which ended with Ti begrudgingly noting “A nigga allus will be a nigga, don’t know nuthin, and allus did.”<sup>133</sup>

The absolute veracity of the account requires speculation, namely the portrayal of Captain Ti as an unintelligent and relatively angry orchestrator of the training. Much like John Leacock’s *The Fall of British Tyranny*, dialogue attributed to the Black soldier focuses on portrayal as a lesser person, unschooled in the traditions of military. Also clear from the account, public regard for the Black soldier was something of a comic character. The Negro Training Days provided communal moments for Blacks in the newly formed nation. However, the trainings offered opportunity for White Americans to belittle Black leadership, service, and existence in general. Negro Training Days marked an occasion to acknowledge lives lost during the Revolutionary War, or simply service in general. Instead, the public displays emerged as another chance to separate society by race. The tendency to ridicule rather than laud also highlights a hesitancy to accept Blacks into the Euro-American military tradition. In a perverse way, directly demeaning preceding Black military service added to the amusement of it all.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> Stiles, *The History of Ancient Windsor*, 493.

<sup>134</sup> Piersen, *Black Yankees*, 137.

\*\*\*

“Their sense of self-identity, forged in the colonial period and honed by the Revolutionary War, now gave way to a sense of community, of cooperative effort in a cause that was no less true-blue American simply because its advocates were dark-skinned... They were brought together not so much by a blood knot or a common Old World heritage as by a shared experience, particularly during the war, and by a shared pursuit of the goals articulated by Jefferson in 1776.”<sup>135</sup>

-Benjamin Quarles, *Black Mosaic*

During war, privileges of citizenship extended as far as the battlefield. Blacks were given the chance to defend their country in exchange for freedom, bounty, or both. Enlistment laws during the American Revolution suggested Blacks were to remain a social out-group even if uniting over common causes. As the United States entered peacetime, measures were enacted to remove wartime privileges. National citizenship standards deferred to state definitions. Free Blacks were restricted from immigrating to some states, while other states were infatuated by the idea of Black men interacting sexually with white women.<sup>136</sup> If not carrying proper identification, Blacks could be abducted and sold into slavery in every state. Freedom and citizenship were earned on the battlefield; though the definition of these words meant something wholly different depending on one's race.

As their white countrymen took solace in a war concluded and a national sovereignty created, Black Americans focused attention on actualizing the ideology of a new nation. Military service granted thousands of former slaves their freedom. However, intent on uniting the divergent interests of thirteen states, the United States'

---

<sup>135</sup> Quarles, *Black Mosaic*, 57.

<sup>136</sup> See: Joseph Mountain and David Daggett, *Sketches of the Life of Joseph Mountain a Negro, Who Was Executed at New-Haven, on the 20th Day of October, 1790, for a Rape, Committed on the 26th Day of May Last.: (The Writer of This History Has Directed That the Money Arising from the Sales Thereof, after Deducting the Expence of Printing, &c. Be given to the Unhappy Girl, Whose Life Is Rendered Wretched by the Crime of the Malefactor.)* (Hartford: Printed and Sold by Nathaniel Patten., 1790). See also: Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution*, 264. Bradbury mentions Mountain's execution was published at least four times in the North during the 1790s.

Constitution did little to end the institution itself. The international slave trade would not be altered until 1808. When apportioning taxes and the Electoral College, the decision to ration a slave as three-fifths of all other persons seemed to implicitly sanction human bondage. As long as slavery persisted, and free Blacks questioned the security of their freedom due to inconsistent legislation or the transgressions of slave hunters, unification was necessary.

In New England, the institution of slavery was contested throughout the Revolutionary War. While some states debated whether Blacks should enlist in the military, Vermont's Constitution of 1777 explicitly outlawed slavery. Shortly after the war concluded, Rhode Island and Connecticut adopted measures of gradual emancipation. Massachusetts and New Hampshire ended slavery through a combination of bills of rights and judicial interpretation. By the 1790 Federal Census, Massachusetts reported it no longer had slaves. In New Hampshire, court cases slowly eliminated instances of slavery. By 1792, there were roughly 150 slaves in the state. Thus, the 1790 Census reported 3,763 slaves of the 16,882 Blacks in New England. Pennsylvania adopted gradual emancipation measures similar to those of Rhode Island and Connecticut. Despite this, many Pennsylvania slaveholders petitioned courts hoping to reenslave unregistered Blacks. In New York and New Jersey, no steps were taken to eradicate slavery. Both states featured a large population of rural planters who relied on slavery for subsistence.<sup>137</sup>

Black military service during the Revolution compelled states to reevaluate the institution of slavery. However, the relative consensus to eradicate slavery in the North did not result from shifting opinions. Blacks continued to constitute a social

---

<sup>137</sup> Zilversmit, *First Emancipation*, 112-124, 137.

out-group throughout the war, and their loyalty was often called into question. Instead, military service drastically changed the institution itself. The substitution system markedly reduced the amount of slaves throughout the North, meaning the institution no longer represented a dominant social system—and simply was not needed in some areas. New York and New Jersey revealed slavery remained necessary in other places, and abolition was simply disregarded. By the year 1790, of the 26,000 Blacks in New York, only around 5,000 were free. Meanwhile, of the 11,000 Blacks residing in New Jersey, only around 2,200 were free.<sup>138</sup>

After the Constitution's ratification, ten states—Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont—granted free Blacks suffrage. As black communities continued to grow throughout the Middle States, legislation restricted the earlier privilege. Delaware restricted voting to white men in 1792, Maryland followed suit in 1809, and North Carolina corrected the indiscretion in its 1835 constitution.

In almost all states, free Blacks consistently endured discriminating legislation. In 1786, Massachusetts passed a law restricting miscegenation, fining ministers fifty pounds for marrying a “white person with any Negro, Indian, or mulatto.”<sup>139</sup> The next year, Delaware passed a law preventing slaves from being sold again. Of the legal stipulations, the act noted “Manumitted slaves shall not vote, nor hold office, nor give evidence against whites, nor enjoy any other rights of a freeman

---

<sup>138</sup> Foner, *History of Black Americans*, 238, 372. On page 372 Foner writes that “the number of free blacks in New Jersey listed in the 1790 census made up only 20 percent of the Negro population—220 free blacks amid a population of 11,000 slaves.” Here, I assume Foner meant to write 2200 free blacks, amid a population of 11,000—this would total 20 percent. However, he wrote 220 and said there were 11,000 slaves, presumably describing all Blacks as slaves.

<sup>139</sup> Douglas Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2009), 264.

other than hold property and to obtain redress in law and equity for any injury to his or her person or property.” No slaveholding state allowed Blacks to testify against whites, and many even allowed slaves to testify against free Blacks without oath. Douglas Bradburn’s *Citizenship Revolution* explains the difficulty this caused free Blacks “in Virginia, Maryland, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, because in each of these states free blacks could be sold into slavery as punishment for certain crimes.”<sup>140</sup>

In 1788, Virginia outlawed free Blacks from travelling into Massachusetts for longer than two months. In 1806, Maryland made it illegal for free Blacks to immigrate into the state, and Delaware enacted the same measure in 1807. Even in Vermont, the state whose 1777 constitution merits consideration for the title of most racially tolerant, free Blacks needed to travel with proper documentation or else run the risk of being kidnapped into slavery. For free Blacks throughout the country, the threat of being seized and sold into slavery proved constant.<sup>141</sup>

When early Congressional debate touched on the twenty year political freeze of the slave trade, limited federal power became the consensus for inaction. Similarly, Congress used its limited federal power as grounds for not protecting free Blacks in the states. When Delaware sought federal help eliminating the kidnapping of free Blacks, the House maintained it was “not expedient for this House to interfere with any existing law of the States on this subject.” The Constitution’s Eleventh Amendment, passed on March 4, 1794, assigned similar reasoning for the courts’ inability to protect Blacks’ rights. The Amendment affirmed states’ immunity from

---

<sup>140</sup> Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution*, 263.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 268-271.

federal suit by individual citizens, in effect limiting Blacks' rights to the state they resided in.<sup>142</sup>

By the 1790s, Blacks “increasingly viewed one another as sharing a racial identity” based upon skin color and African descent.<sup>143</sup> Military service helped increase and expand the population of free Blacks in the United States. Additionally, military service promoted personal exchange between Northern Blacks in a manner not previously possible. In fact, freed Blacks often tended to free other Blacks when the opportunity to earn wages was presented.<sup>144</sup> As a result, the size of free Black communities continued to increase into the nineteenth century. Bradburn's

*Citizenship Revolution* explains:

In Boston, for instance, a black community consisting of nearly eight hundred slaves and a handful of free blacks before the Revolution, grew from natural increase and migration into a free black community of almost fifteen hundred by 1810. Similar trends occurred in New York, Newport, Norfolk, and Baltimore. In Baltimore, in 1800, the free black population reached 10 percent of the total population. In Philadelphia, the free black community grew from two hundred in 1776, to over six thousand at the turn of the eighteenth century. In New York, a free black community of one thousand in 1790 reached nearly thirty-five hundred in 1800, and over seven thousand in 1810.<sup>145</sup>

As free Black communities grew in size, demonstrations of newfound Americanization continued to take place. Negro Election Days, whose origins traced to the mid-eighteenth century, continued throughout New England following the war. The Pinkster festival, originally a Dutch celebration for the Christian holiday Pentecost, was known as a Black tradition in New York and New Jersey by the turn of the century. These events provide sharp contrast to Negro Training Days, an event that assimilated Blacks into the military traditions of Euro-America while

---

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 254-255.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, pg. 244. See Also: James Sidbury, *Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1997), 38

<sup>144</sup> Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution*, 243.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 243-244.

simultaneously mocking and belittling their culture and past service. The election of Black governors or royalty occurred throughout the Americas. The glamour, performance, and subsequent celebrations surrounding these elections represented an intertwining of African and European culture.<sup>146</sup> Meanwhile, the Pinkster festival soon became an Atlantic Creole festival in the Dutch-American context.<sup>147</sup>

Similar to their white equivalents, Black soldiers took solace in religion during the Revolution. Writing to the clergyman and historian Jeremy Belknap, the soldier Cato Baker remarked, “Sir j am wall in good health and j thank God for it.” Baker conveyed the faithful belief that from “[God’s] good will he hath been my Gard in all those Beatle j have bein in and j had the small pox in Vally forg last march 24d but now j am of Good health.”<sup>148</sup> Although providing only one example, Baker’s literacy and letter to Jeremy Belknap reveals the religious life some Black soldiers clung to during war.

Though Christian proselytizing proved a noble endeavor, the irony was that a number of Blacks remained outside the white church. A large reason dealt with common instances of physical and spiritual separation within congregations. Sermons delivered to Blacks regularly focused on obedience toward the slave and master relationship. Additionally, the requirements for baptism were often more strict than those for whites.<sup>149</sup> For Black veterans, difficulty finding job opportunities paralleled

---

<sup>146</sup> Piersen, *Black Yankees*, 128.

<sup>147</sup> Jeroen Dewulf, “Pinkster: An Atlantic Creole Festival in a Dutch-American Context,” *The Journal of American Folklore* (2013).

<sup>148</sup> Jeremy Belknap, *Life of Jeremy Belknap, D.D. The Historian of New Hampshire with Selections from his Correspondence and Other Writings. Collected and Arranged by His Grand-Daughter*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1847), 164.

<sup>149</sup> Donald R. Wright, *African Americans in the Colonial Era: From African Origins through the American Revolution*. (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2010), 145.

other veterans' circumstances. Yet unlike other veterans, Blacks found themselves excluded from almost all other forms of social interaction, including the church. In Philadelphia, Black Americans scattered among various Christian denominations after the war. The greatest numbers were found among the Methodist Church, particularly at St. George's Church, where Black Americans formed a sizeable portion of membership. According to the minister Richard Allen, "[t]he reason that the Methodist is so successful in the awakening and conversion of the colored people, is the plain doctrine and having a good discipline."<sup>150</sup>

Even at St. George's, the large proportion of Black members did little to quell instances of racism in the Christian practice. After a white trustee ordered Allen and two other black members to show themselves to the gallery, Richard Allen led a group of protestors from St. George's Church and soon formed his own African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1794. Carol V.R. George's *Segregated Sabbaths* explains the A.M.E. Church's significance "was not so much that [Allen] introduced a radically new concept to black worship, but rather that he was able to manipulate the winds of social change that whirled about him to achieve a relatively safe and theologically satisfying spiritual home for black people."

Other Black churches cropped up around the same time as Richard Allen's A.M.E. Church, including the African Church of St. Thomas and the A.M.E Zionists in New York. While these institutions separated Blacks by denominational lines, other organizations united on a more overarching level. In the same year Richard Allen founded the A.M.E. Church he also founded the non-denominational Free

---

<sup>150</sup> Milton C. Sernett, *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*. (Durham: Duke UP, 1999), 149.



African Society in Philadelphia. Other secular Black societies included the Friendly Society of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, the African Societies of Boston and Providence, and the African Union Society of Newport, Rhode Island, founded during the Revolutionary War in 1780. The Black veteran Prince Hall even founded a Mason lodge in Boston. After repeated denials from local whites, Hall received a charter from British authorities and formed African Lodge Number 459. Soon after, satellite lodges emerged in Providence and Philadelphia.<sup>151</sup>

Military service afforded free Black communities the opportunity to emerge and develop throughout the North. At the same time, the postwar climate demonstrated Blacks could not simply integrate into European traditions of citizenship—or even anticipate respect for their behavior. Utilizing past traditions, Blacks maintained a unique cultural identity. When it came to the free Black community, Benjamin Franklin’s rousing words from 1754 rung true: Join or Die. In the process, a new type of American formed—one repressed, while actively pursuing an ideology and inclusion into the nation’s conceptual identity.

The Naturalization Act of 1790 outlined the qualifications necessary to obtain the American identity during peacetime. On March 26, 1790 Congress enacted legislation stating “That any Alien being a free white person...may be admitted to become a citizen thereof on application to any common law Court of record in any one of the States.”<sup>152</sup> Like the Militia Act two years afterward, qualification for citizenship explicitly extended to white males of moral character. The Militia Act of

---

<sup>151</sup> Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution*, 244.

<sup>152</sup> “United States Congress, “An act to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization” (March 26, 1790)”. Accessed via <http://www.indiana.edu/~kdhist/H105-documents-web/week08/naturalization1790.html>.

1792 symbolized a return to colonial traditions of military service, excluding Blacks for fear of arming or entering into the traditions of citizenship. Meanwhile, the Naturalization Act of 1790 ensured the construction of a racialized polity. Requiring all future candidates for citizenship be white explicitly constructed the American identity by color. The Articles of Confederation granted loyal free Blacks citizenship during the war mainly for their contributions on the battlefield as soldiers. Ignoring this fact, slaves and free Blacks were ushered to a place of social marginalization when war concluded.

In 1790 Oliver Wolcott Sr. echoed the exclusionary sentiment when reducing debates about the international slave trade to a matter of color. Wolcott was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation, a Major General in the Connecticut militia, as well as the Governor of Connecticut in 1796. “I wish myself that Congress would prefer the white people of this country to the black,” the decorated American admitted. “After they have taken care of the former, they may amuse themselves with the other people.” Wolcott went on, explaining “The African slave trade is a scandalous one; but let us take care of *ourselves* first.”<sup>153</sup> From the very outset, the United States was an imagined community. Despite their role in establishing the nation, Blacks simply were not part of the American image.

The patriot hero ideal temporarily compelled most colonial men to take up arms and defend their claim to liberty and natural rights. Shortly thereafter, the construction of the standing army and the prevailing substitution system doomed a select group of disadvantaged men to defend these claims for all. As the war

---

<sup>153</sup> Oliver Wolcott Sr. to Oliver Wolcott Jr., April 23, 179, Quoted in Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution*, 260.

progressed and opinions of American soldiers formed, two distinct representations of citizenship—or being *American*—formed. For those who avoided service, the privileges of citizenship were earned by others and essentially given. Jennifer R. Mercieca's *Founding Fictions* describes the American republican citizen around the time of the Constitution as a tragic victim. "The tragic view of citizenship argued that citizens could not be depended upon to fight corruption actively; nor would they actively defend liberty, critique the government, or work for the common good. Tragic citizenship thus gave citizens very little to actually *do* within the new national government."<sup>154</sup> In reality, the idle citizen Mercieca describes originated during the war itself. Though the American Revolution marked a transition from British monarchy to American republicanism, the privileges granted to many remained unbothered.

Black soldiers embodied the counter conception of citizenship formed during the American Revolution. Instead of idle, these Americans were active in their attempts to actualize an American ideology of equality and natural rights. Rather than observing which form of government granted rights of the citizen, these Americans risked their lives in pursuit of American privileges. Indeed, Black soldiers not only affirmed the hollowness of the United States' egalitarian ideology, they sought to make it a reality. The two representations of American citizenship elaborated separate ways of life—on the one hand antagonistic, on the other complimentary. In the process, military service became the archetypal manner to achieve the privileges of citizenship.

---

<sup>154</sup> Mercieca, *Founding Fictions*, 118.

Long after the Revolution concluded, Black veterans' pursuit for a better life continued. In 1818, Congress enacted legislation granting pensions to veterans of the United States Navy or Continental Line in need of monetary relief. Fourteen years later, Congress extended the benefits of this legislation to all men in the Continental Line, state regiments or militias, as well as the Navy or Marines. In 1836 the benefits extended even further, to widows of deceased veterans who were married during active service and who remained unmarried.<sup>155</sup> Decades after helping the United States form and maintain its sovereignty, the pension applications reveal the dire circumstances countless Black veterans faced. Additionally, the laws granting pensions demonstrate the United States continued to proudly reward its inhabitants for participating in organized violence.

Many veterans battled physical limitations from service and old age. Cuff Smith's pension claimed the veteran was "unable to work by cases of the bodily injury," while Robin Starr admitted he had "been intently unable to labor for the last ten years." Other veterans like Cato Negro simply could "no longer earn [their] daily bread." One Navy veteran named Abraham Edwards, "on account of his insanity," was denied full pension because "he [could not] make the declaration required by the law." However, "the evidence of his service and circumstances [were] considered sufficient to entitle him to a reward."<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Will Graves, "Pension Acts: An Overview of Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Legislation and the Southern Campaign Pension Transcription Project". Accessed via <http://revwarapps.org/revwar-pension-acts.htm>.

<sup>156</sup> Pensions of Cuff Smith (S36321, 1818), Series M805, Roll 746, Robin Starr (S36810, 1818), Series M805, Roll 767, Cato Negro (W26169, 1820), Series M805, Roll 493, and Abraham Edwards (S34800, 1818), Series M805, Roll 297.

When it came to occupations, the options were limited for many Black veterans in the North. Peter Freeman by occupation was a laborer, but admitted in his pension application he was “unable to support [himself] by labor more than half the time.” Freeman also added, “[I] have been very sick with a fever the past winter by which I am much weakened.” The aforementioned Cuff Smith revealed “I have no occupation but a basket maker and laborer,” while Cato Abbott of Massachusetts admitted he was “altogether destitute of property and stands in need of assistance from his country for support.”<sup>157</sup>

Many pensions echoed the sentiments of Abbott, revealing dire circumstances and calling on the veterans’ country for support. The applications are ironic if not illuminating—despite the United States explicitly denouncing Black membership because of skin color, veterans called upon *their country* for help. On November 2, 1795, the veteran Cuff Whittemore received a 100 acreage bounty for military service, and claimed the bounty of Joseph Fosdick, presumably another soldier recently deceased. Despite this, in 1818 Whittemore’s pension application revealed “[I am] now seventy years of age without any property or any of the common comforts of life.” With occupations limited, selling land proved one of the few reasonable means of receiving money. Other veterans such as Cato Freedom of Connecticut, “a man of color of Africa by birth...never received his bounty land.”<sup>158</sup>

Prince Freeman, who served in the Connecticut Line but pensioned years later in Vermont, carried the occupation of farmer, signifying—unlike Cato Abbott or Cato

---

<sup>157</sup> Pensions of Peter Freeman (S36516, 1818), Series M805, Roll 338, Cuff Smith (S36321, 1818), Series M805, Roll 746, and Cato Abbott (S32625, 1818), Series M805, Roll 1.

<sup>158</sup> Pensions of Cuff Whittemore (S33896, 1818), Series M805, Roll 865, and Cato Freedom (S44849, 1818), Series M805, Roll 337.

Freedom—the ownership of land. However, similar to Abbott, Freeman’s pension application explained “I have a wife and two children, one of them fourteen years old, and the other twelve years old, and that they are all dependent upon me for support – and that I am...unable to labor much.”<sup>159</sup>

Some Black veterans served as breadwinners for a large group of people. The veteran Jack Green’s pension acknowledged “that he [had] a family...to support and [had] nothing but friends of his daily labor to support.” Also worth noting, an edit in Jack Green’s pension potentially displays the inherent separation between Black and white veterans. While every Black pensioner warranted a large star next to their name to signify “Colored,” Green’s pension had the amendment of “state of New York” before the term “citizen of the United States,” possibly signifying one judge’s innate separation between state and national identity.<sup>160</sup>

The widows of Black veterans in need of assistance also applied for pensions. Lucy Poor, the widow of Samuel Poor, disclosed “[Samuel] has often told her of his services as a soldier, [and] said she has heard him speak of those who served with him, and she remembered of hearing him speak of a man by the name of Hale.” If nothing else, Lucy Poor’s recollection draws attention to the fact that Black veterans took pride in their service and shared the experience as a defining aspect of identity.<sup>161</sup>

The widow Diva Freeman’s pension disclosed to the court that she “lives in the family of Mr. Rose of North Branford” for support. Freeman also revealed “her nearest neighbor is Gad Asher the signer of the annexed certificate of identity.” Gad Asher was another Black soldier who served during the American Revolution. The

---

<sup>159</sup> Pension of Prince Freeman (S39549, 1818), Series M805, Roll 338.

<sup>160</sup> Pension of Jack Green (S43631, 1818), Series M805, Roll 374.

<sup>161</sup> Pension of Samuel Poor (W21984, 1834), Series M805, Roll 659.

Connecticut Reverend Jeremiah Asher, grandson of the Revolutionary veteran Gad Asher, echoed Lucy Poor's sentiment years later in his autobiography. The Rev. Asher remembered: "I was so accustomed to hear these men talk, until I almost fancied to myself that I had more rights than any white man in the town. Such were the lessons taught me by the old black soldiers of the American Revolution."<sup>162</sup> Clearly Black veterans took pride in their service, and used their experiences on the battlefield to shape and exalt the Black American identity.<sup>163</sup>

The widow of Prince Ames, Eunice Ames, told the court that she was married "on the twenty fourth day of November in the year of our Lord seventeen hundred and eighty four." The clarification was needed because Congress stipulated widows could only receive pension if married before specific dates. The requisite dates for marriage changed over time, from the time of enlistment, to 1794, and then 1800. Eventually no limitations were needed, as the number of survivors continued to dwindle.<sup>164</sup> Clear from all this, the lives affected by Black military service extended far beyond the battlefield.

Ultimately, Black military service during the American Revolution holds significance for a variety of reasons. Preexisting historiography tends to highlight the individual pursuit for freedom regardless of loyalty, the subsequent first wave of emancipation in the American North, or the connection between service and the international winds of freedom blowing throughout the hemisphere. However, the integrated battlefield produced more than simply freedom fighters. Black American

---

<sup>162</sup> David Oliver White, *Connecticut's Black Soldiers, 1775-1783* (Chester, CT: Pequot, 1973), 7.

<sup>163</sup> Pension of Pomp Liberty (BLWT1761-100, 1831), Series M805, Roll 527.

<sup>164</sup> Pension of Prince Ames (W23439/BLWT13320-160-55, 1838), Series M805, Roll 17. See also: Graves, "Pension Acts: An Overview of Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Legislation". Via <http://revwarapps.org/revwar-pension-acts.htm>.

culture grabbed hold to a shared experience outside of the bondage system and forever affirmed its legitimate place in the United States. Black military service also reveals two distinct understandings of American citizenship developed during the Revolution. While adhering to the same ideology, one type of American received political privileges almost inherently; another type of American was compelled to fulfill political obligations in order to stake claim in the American Republic. By accepting political outsiders onto the battlefield, the newly formed nation, much like the Roman republic, placed a specific amount of value on civic duties of the violent variety.

Loyal free Blacks were granted citizenship during the war because of their valued service. Strangely enough, Blacks throughout the continent undoubtedly enjoyed more rights during the war than by the year 1800. The fact highlights the title of *American* was earned and expanded during moments of unity. From the very origins of the United States, these moments of unity meant engaging in state authorized violence. Violence no longer expressed citizenship; it simply served as a requirement for others to earn the same status. Even more, Black military service corrected the imprudent notion that these violent moments of unity helped to create one homogenous culture. Military service united Americans during the war while simultaneously excluding others. Blacks entered service as a social out-group, remained segregated frequently throughout the war, and entered the invented nation as mere denizens.

Above all, Black military service demonstrates the invention of *American* did not entail passively relying on an ideology or government to preserve political rights.



In fact, many Blacks lost rights, and privileges of citizenship, at the conclusion of the Revolution. *American* also implied actively pursuing an ideology while fulfilling communal obligations. For some, the United States formed and the title of American was presented essentially as a gift. For others, the ideology was something to cling to, to cultivate, and to earn through violence.

## CONCLUSION

### NATURALIZED NATIONALS

“Never since the battle of Lexington have I seen this country in such a state of exasperation as at present, and even that did not produce such unanimity.”<sup>165</sup>

-Thomas Jefferson, July 1807

In Thomas Jefferson’s estimation, prior to July 1807, the United States’ classic moment of solidarity transpired at the very outset of the American Revolution. The Battle of Lexington saw the patriot hero ideal embodied, with colonists eager to bear arms for the cause of liberty. Three decades later, another violent incident united the hearts of America. On June 22, an episode three leagues west of the Chesapeake Bay rallied emotions against the British Crown. The occasion, commonly known as the Chesapeake Affair, pitted the American warship *Chesapeake* against the British warship *Leopard*. After the *Chesapeake*’s Captain prohibited a British search for deserters, the *Leopard* fired upon the American boat. Eighteen were wounded, three died, and four were taken prisoner aboard the British vessel.<sup>166</sup>

Public outcry ensued. A headline from the July 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Connecticut Courant* read “Interesting Particulars of the Late Disgraceful Outrage Extracted”. A headline from the *Albany Register* on July 7<sup>th</sup> simply read “WAR”. Reports from Norfolk, VA described a citizens meeting held at the town hall two days after the incident. The townspeople admitted a national propensity for peace; however, they acknowledged “when we behold our fellow-citizens impressed, and forced by a tyrannical and arbitrary power, to fight against their own country...such inclinations give reasonable cause to expect, to discipline ourselves and be ready to take up arms

---

<sup>165</sup> Foley, John P, *The Jefferson Cyclopedia: A Comprehensive Collection of the Views of Thomas Jefferson Classified and Arranged in Alphabetical Order under Nine Thousand Titles Relating to Government, Politics, Law, Education, Political Economy, Finance, Science, Art, Literature, Religious Freedom, Morals, Etc.* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), 137.

<sup>166</sup> Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution*, 235.

in our defense.” A letter from Washington D.C. to the editor of the *NY Mercantile Advertiser* offered a glimpse into the events that occurred on the *Chesapeake*. The Commander of the *Leopard* demanded three men accused of being deserters. However, Captain Barron of the *Chesapeake* “answered, that he had no British subjects on board, that the men in question were American citizens, and under the protection of the American flag.”<sup>167</sup>

The race of the men in question remained conveniently absent from these recollections. Two of the American citizens—William Ware and Daniel Martin—were Black sailors, and therefore only citizens on international waters. Emphasizing national unity, the *Connecticut Courant* reprinted a *Norfolk Ledger* article which maintained “It is impossible that on such an occasion, there can be but one sentiment in the heart of every American...we trust that there will be but one heart and one hand in supporting the just rights, and the honour of our country.” Indeed, a week later, the *Courant* offered its own interpretation when admitting, “We have never, on any occasion, witnessed the spirit of the people excited to so great a degree of indignation, or such a thirst for revenge, as on hearing of the late unexampled outrage upon the Chesapeake.”<sup>168</sup>

The words from Thomas Jefferson and countless newspapers all reveal a similar fact. Wars and violence almost invariably serve as a unifying mechanism for Americans. When aligned against a universal foe, Black sailors were described as

---

<sup>167</sup> “War,” *Albany Register*, July 7, 1807. “Interesting Particulars of the Late Disgraceful Outrage Extracted,” *Connecticut Courant*, July 8, 1807. “A Letter from Baltimore to the Editor of the NY Mercantile Advertiser, contains some further particulars respecting the above singular transaction,” *Salem Register*, July 2, 1807.

<sup>168</sup> “Interesting Particulars of the Late Disgraceful Outrage Extracted From the Norfolk Ledger of June 24, Received At This Office,” *Connecticut Courant*, July 8, 1807. *Connecticut Courant*, July 15, 1807, pg. 2.

citizens. Furthermore, moments of violence present an opportunity to expand the classification of American. Hoping to prevent future incidents such as the one on the *Chesapeake*, states began providing documents of citizenship to sailors. In Connecticut, one document of American citizenship read:

I [*illegible*] of the District of New Haven, do hereby certify that [Ham Primus] an American seaman, aged [twenty three] years, or thereabouts, of the height of [five feet eight inches and half, being a man of color born at Branford in the county of New Haven in the State of Connecticut] has this day produced to me proof, in the manner directed in the act intituled ‘An Act for the relief and protection of American seamen,’ and pursuant to the said act, I do hereby certify that the said [Ham Primus] is a citizen of the United States of America.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and Seal of Office, this [6<sup>th</sup>] day of [June] 18[10].<sup>169</sup>

The legal document from Connecticut exposes a reality hardly ever acknowledged in the United States. During peacetime, a man of color such a Ham Primus could never receive the classification of American citizen, nor be naturalized as an American citizen. In 1810, a time of impending violence, Ham Primus’ certification of American citizenship discloses a time of war could *naturalize* Blacks. The ability to naturalize men of a specific race meant Jeremiah Olney’s equation of Blacks to foreigners during the Revolution was not far off. The naturalizing of Ham Primus implied Blacks were perceived as foreigners attempting to earn citizenship through service. The fact reveals much about the title of American, and even more about the possibilities extant for Blacks seeking inclusion as members of a newly formed nation. Even though they lived as resident citizens of the United States, Blacks were forced to be naturalized by the same measures obligated of foreigners.

During the Founding, one understanding of citizenship signified inheriting the legacy of British freedom. However, Black military service reveals citizenship also

---

<sup>169</sup> United States Collector of Revenue of the District of New Haven. Certificate of American Citizenship, 6 June 1810. DS, 1 page.

implied making one's self a weapon at the disposal of the state—often in pursuit of actualizing the American ideology. From the very origins of United States history, rights of citizenship were bound to military service. Expanding the definition of citizenship following—or because of—war reveals the invention of *citizen* regularly attached itself to the construction of a larger armed entity.

Approaching the Revolution, draft laws and the substitution system created a subordinate class of colonists obligated to protect and defend the privileges of all. Despite the class distinction, the colonial militia represented an almost universal means of shaping identity. Multiple days a year, colonists in New England actively formed and cultivated a common character relating to armed defense. Training and muster days marked social occasions for all colonists to congregate and express their political allegiance. Throughout these training days, Blacks remained onlookers. The segregation tacitly excluded men of a certain color from obtaining a common personality—despite their participation in nearly every colonial military conflict.

In the Revolution's opening stages, the universal patriot ideal perpetuated and forged communal white unity. Countless men were willing to defend and fight for rights of liberty, offering a notable contrast to the standing army of Britain. However, sentiments waned shortly after a wave of patriotism washed upon the colonial North. Once the pleasure of adventure was satisfied, or the realities of war realized, the initial thrill attached to service diminished. With soldiers returning home, the military's composition reverted to colonial form. A crop of lower-class men took up arms to defend and protect the privileges of all.

The need for manpower provided opportunity for Blacks to enlist. Substitution systems offered the potential for freedom, while shifting legislation no longer explicitly excluded Blacks from service. As the patriot hero ideal perpetuated, Blacks were to remain outside the conception of American identity. When the military began resembling the caste system of the colonial period, Blacks were—albeit begrudgingly for some—accepted into the American army. The development of the standing army did little to ameliorate the divide between civilians and soldiers. The soldier no longer represented the universal American; instead, those serving in the military simply represented a *type* of American, if they were even American.

Measures throughout the war permitted Blacks to elevate in status—mainly from slaves to freemen. Also revealed throughout the war, Blacks never became an accepted equal within the lower class of soldiers. Within a group of subordinated men, Blacks were dissimilar. On muster rolls, simple designations of *Colored* or *Negro* reveal this fact. After the Battles of Lexington and Concord, a black-bordered broadside listed the names of sixty-one men from twenty-three towns. One name—Prince Esterbrook—stood out from the rest. Esterbrook was not designated with the title “Mr.” alongside his name; instead the words read “a Negro Man”. As lives were lost in battle, Black companies such as the First Rhode Island Regiment eventually were integrated. Despite the success integrated units saw, suggestions to segregate Blacks continued throughout the war.<sup>170</sup>

In six colonies—Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Georgia, and South Carolina—proposals were made to organize segregated units. Rhode Island and Connecticut eventually formed segregated units, while evidence

---

<sup>170</sup> Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 198.

surrounding one unit in Massachusetts known as the “Bucks of America” suggests another existed there. Segregated companies arose as a means of separating Black soldiers from the rest of the military. At the same time, these moments of separation meant color separated the meaning of military service. The Revolution *was* an integrated attempt at forming the United States; however, constant and recurring attempts to distinguish soldiers by color meant other social dynamics were at play on the battlefield. A uniform culture failed to form, and racism seemed to overpower any example of solidarity. When Jeremiah Olney recruited soldiers in 1781, the colonel simply acknowledged “Negroes will not be received.” The stance was taken after commanding Rhode Island’s First Regiment, witnessing the heroic behavior of Blacks during Christopher Greene’s death, and leading Black soldiers in the Battle of Yorktown. No matter what the realities of war, the motivated reasoning of many prevented a shift in opinion.

In April of 1781, on a seemingly normal night in Rhode Island, two men approached a barracks house and began slandering the Black soldiers inside. Eventually the two broke down the barracks door, prompting soldiers inside to defend their livelihood. As the two men ran away, a Black soldier named Prince Greene loaded his musket and fired. The shot connected, killing one of the young men who just minutes earlier “assault[ed] the dignity and legitimacy of black soldiers.” A monument of the deceased man read “In Memory of Mr. Edward, Son of Mr. Edward and Mrs. Elizabeth Allen who by Misfortune was shot by a Negroe Soldier April the 10<sup>th</sup> 1781 in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Year of his age.”<sup>171</sup> Neither a soldier, nor a Negro, the monument implied a special status for Black soldiers. Soldiers were Americans, while Blacks a

---

<sup>171</sup> Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 223.

decided inferior. The existence of Black soldiers meant many were forced to struggle over the fundamental meaning of American citizenship.

Framers of the Articles of Confederation struggled with similar issues. In 1778, the Law of the Land determined free inhabitants were to inherit the “privileges and immunities of free citizens in the several States.” Many Blacks received freedom for their military service. The decision of the Article of Confederation to grant Blacks the rights of citizenship was based on the “present instance,” meaning Black military service warranted the status of citizen while the war continued. The Black soldier actively sought an egalitarian ideology. Despite the lofty goals, many reduced the soldier to something trivial. Alexander Hamilton once acknowledged, “Let the officers be men of sense and sentiment, and the nearer the soldiers approach to machines perhaps the better.”<sup>172</sup> This was the Black soldier. An unappreciated, undervalued inhabitant of the colonies forced to weaponize their bodies in hopes of improving living conditions. At war’s conclusion, the Black soldier was chalked up as an anomaly; something explained away or simply ignored, so as to preserve racial social structure. Little attention was paid to Blacks’ military service, and consequently their entrance into the most basic form of citizenship. The idea of an American developed two meanings. One type of American inherited the British claim to freedom; the other weaponized their body in hopes of experiencing the egalitarian ideology.

Following the war, Black military service produced a myriad of freemen capable of migrating to free Black communities emerging in the North. Additionally, military service called for increased interaction between Blacks of the North. The

---

<sup>172</sup> Neimeyer, *The Revolutionary War*, 2.



combination created a newfound understanding of a common race. The dire circumstances of the Black veteran also presented a common struggle to unite around in order to survive. The Black Independent Church arose, countless free Black societies were created, and in the process almost every state enacted legislation ensuring free Blacks were still members of a social out-group. Perhaps embodying the sentiment most, the emergence of the Negro Training Day after the Revolution mocked past Black military service while simultaneously asserting white superiority. The citizen-soldier ideal did not vanish, Blacks simply failed to receive the privileges that corresponded with the archetype.

After the Revolution, expanding the definition of American remained tied to state-authorized violence. When instances of British impressments increased, the United States offered Blacks tangible proof of American citizenship. Toward the end of the War of 1812, the Major General Andrew Jackson promised Blacks “the major general commanding will select officers for your government from your white fellow-citizens.” Jackson also promised Blacks “you will not, by being associated with white men in the same corps, be exposed to improper comparisons of unjust sarcasm. As a distinct battalion or regiment, pursuing the path of glory, you will undivided receive the applause and gratitude of your countrymen.”<sup>173</sup>

Jackson intimated Blacks serving were citizens (“your white fellow-citizens”), worthy of respect (“you will not...be exposed to improper comparisons of unjust sarcasm”), pursuing the American ideology (“pursuing the path of glory”), and deserved the classification of *countrymen* (“receive the applause and gratitude of your countrymen”). At the same time, a distinct battalion of Blacks was to be formed. The

---

<sup>173</sup> Garrison, Moore, and Wilkes, *The Negro Soldier*, 77.

balance between legitimate equality and perceived inequality never vanished. Even more, the opportunity to improve social standing again attached itself to state-authorized violence.

Before fighting in the War of 1812, the Black veteran James Roberts heard a similar speech from Jackson. Roberts confessed, “This sort of speech seemed to us like divine revelation, and it filled our souls with buoyant expectations.” Despite the elevated expectations, Roberts concluded the tale of his service recalling, “The overseer then took my [uniform] from me, and clothed me, who had just saved the country from destruction, in a breech-clout, and sent me into the field to work.”<sup>174</sup> Military service represented one of the few ways Blacks could become Americans. However, Roberts’ recollection affirms the military model exposed during the Revolution: Blacks inherited the status of American only during war; after war they were ushered to a place of continued marginalization.

In 1820, William Eustis, a surgeon during the Revolutionary War and later the Governor of Massachusetts, delivered a speech to the U.S. House of Representatives explaining why Blacks deserved the same rights Whites secured during battle. He explained that Blacks served their duties during the Revolution, in the Continental Army and Navy, with zeal and fidelity. Eustis confessed:

“The war over, and peace restored, these men returned to their respective State; and who could have said to them, on their return to civil life, after having shed their blood in common with the whites in the defence of the liberties of the country, ‘You are not to participate in the rights secured by the struggle, or in the liberty for which you have been fighting’? Certainly no white man in Massachusetts.”<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>174</sup> J. David, and E. Crane, *The Black Soldier: From the American Revolution to Vietnam* (New York: William Morrow and, 1971), 20, 30.

<sup>175</sup> Livermore, *Research*, 198-199.

For some, Blacks' connection to, and participation in, state-authorized violence warranted the rights of an American. Once more, the only plausible defense for increasing Black privileges was a reference to military service.

During the United States Civil War, Frederick Douglas urged Blacks to enlist in order to fulfill and protect their rights as American citizens. Douglas viewed military service and the possession of arms as “ennobling,” the origin of budding manhood, and “the means of securing, protecting, and defending your own liberty.”<sup>176</sup> Explicitly enumerating the merits of service, Douglas remarked, “Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship.”<sup>177</sup> Regardless of Douglas' belief, at least one earthly power was strong enough to deny Blacks all rights of citizenship. Blacks fought in the Civil War and received citizenship; however it was only within the confines of a racialized Jim Crow America.

Even presently, the United States greatly expedites the process of naturalization when serving in the military. Naturalization requires one year of service during peacetime and any active duty during a time of war.<sup>178</sup> The comparison proves relevant because Blacks were not part of the constructed racialized polity, and therefore foreigners in the sense of obtaining citizenship.

---

<sup>176</sup> Waldo E. Martin, *The Mind of Frederick Douglas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 62.

<sup>177</sup> Frederic May Holland, *Frederick Douglass the Colored Orator* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1891), 301.

<sup>178</sup> “Naturalization Process For The Military,” *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*. Accessed via <http://www.uscis.gov/archive/archive-news/naturalization-process-military>.

Americans take pleasure in almost involuntarily professing the romanticized exhortations of “democracy” and “equality”. However, being a citizen of a republic implies a certain amount of subordination—a reality often forgotten in the rhetoric of American citizenship. In some ways, compulsory military service surpasses the general franchise as the most legitimate vehicle of democracy.<sup>179</sup> However, the inequity present when constructing the Continental Army reveals military service was never compulsory for all. The simple fact unearths a fundamental flaw in the *democracy* and *equality* ideals. Black military service possesses the potential to remind Americans the concept of citizen is an invented one. The citizen promotes state interests as much as it warrants and secures natural rights.

If Americans claim the nation’s ideology remains “Democracy” and “All Men Are Created Equal,” they must also admit these are not realities. For all time, these terms have elevated to the status of civil religion. The civil religion implies a belief in these higher concepts, but also a desire to act upon them. Therefore, in an industrialized nation with material comfort and the franchise widely accessible, Black soldiers of the Revolution provide a behavioral model for Americans. At the same time, Black soldiers’ fundamental motivation to serve offers the most important lesson of all. Exemplifying and embodying the rhetorical ideals of the time, in the name of the communal interest, exists as true citizenship.

The connection between citizenship and military service reveals American interests often involve imperialism and exceptionalism. The connection also reveals the title of *American* entails a citizen serving violent interests as much as benefiting from liberty. An important question remains. Namely, why do many Americans

---

<sup>179</sup> Segal, *Recruiting for Uncle Sam*, 10.

continue to equate military service with citizenship when the very first example in our nation's history proves its fiction? The United States allowed Blacks to serve in its ranks during the Revolution—as temporary citizens—yet actively produced a model of the racialized militia immediately following war. For that reason alone, military service fails to represent any form of citizenship besides that of a subordinate and exploited body.

The American myth of honorable service equates citizenship with the desire to fight. Original Americans united over an aversion for the standing army. Despite this, the myth of honorable service valorizes the same state-authorized violence Americans originally died to resist. In other words, the myth remains a flawed one. Current Americans seem transfixed on the active nature of service, and the constructed form of unity national violence creates. However, military service fails to create a universal culture, fails to promote positive interests, and fails to progress toward a deeper understanding of American citizenship. Instead, persistently placing civic value on military service ensures citizenship will be a stagnant designation, limiting the options for what a nation supposedly based on collectivism can achieve.

During the United States' beginnings, Black soldiers demonstrated military service was not synonymous with permanent citizenship. Indeed, service was never synonymous with increased and sustained rights. Military service was a means of protecting the sovereignty; anyone offering their body for support was worth the temporary title of American. The Black American soldier of the Revolution proves the symbolism tied to service was racialized, and therefore empty. Yet Americans

continue to cling to this empty model of citizenship believing the ability to die represents to ability to accept an egalitarian ideology.

A tendency to recognize the dialogic aspect of a national narrative accomplishes many tasks. Rather than clinging to a fixed national understanding, citizens who carry on continuing dialogue promote solidarity, increased liberty, and increased citizenship. These results characterize everything the United States pretends to embody, and are only achieved when attaching political obligation to fulfilling ideals—not interests. Each American generation is obligated to reevaluate and redefine these ideals; else we will continue to misconstrue our role as American citizens.

\*\*\*

“Of all the enemies to public liberty, war is perhaps the most to be dreaded because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies. From these proceed debts and taxes. And armies and debts and taxes are known instruments of bringing the many under the domination of the few...No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.”<sup>180</sup>

-James Madison

---

<sup>180</sup> Donald M. Hassler and Clyde Wilcox, *New Boundaries in Political Science Fiction* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2008), 120.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources:

#### Applications for Pension:

Cuff Whittemore, Pension Application S33896, 1818.  
James Paine Freeman, Pension Application W14749, 1818.  
Caleb Negro, Pension Application W20876, 1831.  
Cato Negro, Pension Application W26169, 1820.  
Cato Abbott, Pension Application S32625, 1818.  
Edward Carter, Pension Application S36955, 1818.  
Cato Greene, Pension Application S38753, 1818.  
Jack Watson, Pension Application S36366, 1818.  
Pomp Liberty, Pension Application BLWT1761-100, 1831.  
Sharp Liberty, Pension Application R7286, 1832, 1842.  
Cato Freedom, Pension Application S44849, 1818.  
Dick Freedom, Pension Application BLWT590-100, 1832.  
Joseph Freedom, Pension Application S39548, 1818.  
John Browne, Pension Application X107, NA.  
Joseph Ranger, Pension Application S7352, 1834.  
Gideon Quas, Pension Application R8539, 1818.  
Fortune Freeman, Pension Application S43572, 1818.  
Samuel Bush, Pension Application S36450, 1818.  
Cuff Smith, Pension Application S36321, 1818.  
Robin Starr, Pension Application S36810, 1818.  
Abraham Edwards, Pension Application S34800, 1818.  
Prince Ames, Pension Application W23439/BLWT13320-160-55, 1838.  
Peter Freeman, Pension Application S36516, 1818.  
Prince Freeman, Pension Application S39549, 1818.  
Jack Green, Pension Application S43631, 1818.  
Samuel Poor, Pension Application W21984, 1834.  
Peter Lewis, Pension Application W17463, 1834.

#### Bounty Land Warrants:

Cuff Liberty, Bounty Land Warrant Record Card, 6110, September 15, 1789.  
James Liberty, Bounty Land Warrant Record Card, 6125, April 19, 1796.  
Jack Freedom, Bounty Land Warrant Record Card, 5795, September 15, 1790.  
Ned Freedom, Bounty Land Warrant Record Card, 5766, July 12, 1792.

#### Manuscripts and Archival Sources:

Seymour, Frederick W. *Connecticut's Black Patriots, 1641-1781*, African-American Manuscripts, Connecticut Historical Society.  
United States Collector of Revenue of the District of New Haven. Certificate of American Citizenship, 6 June 1810. DS, 1 page. (Ms 78188). Connecticut Historical Society.

#### Newspapers:

*The Albany Register*  
*The Connecticut Courant*  
*The Salem Register*

#### Original Sources:

Addison, Joseph, and Alexander Pope. *Cato a Tragedy*. London: Printed for J. Tonson, 1713.  
Leacock, John. *The Fall of British Tyranny, Or, American Liberty Triumphant, the First Campaign a Tragi-comedy of Five Acts as Lately Planned at the Royal Theatrum Pandemonium at St. James's, the Principal Place of Action in America*. Providence: Printed by J. Douglass McDougall, 1776.

#### Online Archives:

*American Archives: Documents of the American Revolution, 1774-1776*. Accessed via <http://dig.lib.niu.edu/amarch/>.

#### Secondary Sources:

Addison, Joseph, Christine Dunn Henderson, and Mark E. Yellin. *Cato: A Tragedy, and Selected Essays*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004.  
Beeman, Richard R. *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-century America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004.  
Belknap, Jeremy. *Life of Jeremy Belknap, D.D. The Historian of New Hampshire with Selections from his Correspondence and Other Writings. Collected and Arranged by His Grand-Daughter*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1847.  
Bradburn, Douglas. *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2009.  
Breen, T. H. *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010.  
Bryan, Mark Evans. "“Slideing into Monarchical Extravagance”: Cato at Valley Forge and the Testimony of William Bradford Jr." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67.1 (2010): 123-44. *JSTOR*. Web. 04 Apr. 2014.





- Holland, Frederic May. *Frederick Douglass the Colored Orator*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1891.
- Hopkins, Samuel. *A Dialogue concerning the Slavery of the Africans Shewing It to Be the Duty and Interest of the American States to Emancipate All Their African Slaves*. New York: Re-printed for R. Hodge, 1785.
- Hummel, Jeffrey Rogers. "The American Militia and the Origin of Conscription: A Reassessment." *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 15.4 (2001): 29-77.  
<[http://mises.org/journals/jls/15\\_4/15\\_4\\_2.pdf](http://mises.org/journals/jls/15_4/15_4_2.pdf)>
- Inscoc, John C. "Carolina Slave Names: An Index to Acculturation." *The Journal of Southern History* 49.4 (1983): 527-54. JSTOR. Web. 06 Apr. 2014.  
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2208675?ref=search-gateway:abb362f79fefc6e31f1a123da82f1ee1>>.
- Jameson, J. Franklin. *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement*. Boston: Beacon, 1956.
- Jordan, Winthrop D. *White over Black: American Attitudes towards the Negro, 1550-1812*. Baltimore: Penguin, 1969.
- Kelley, Robin D. G., and Earl Lewis. *To Make Our World Anew: A History of African Americans*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Kestnbaum, M. "Citizenship and Compulsory Military Service: The Revolutionary Origins of Conscription in the United States." *Armed Forces & Society* 27.1 (2000): 7-36.
- Kohn, Richard H. *The United States Military under the Constitution of the United States: 1789-1989*. New York U.a.: New York Univ., 1991.
- Littlefield, Daniel C. *Revolutionary Citizens: African Americans, 1776-1804*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.
- Livermore, George. *An Historical Research Respecting the Opinions of the Founders of the Republic on Negroes as Slaves*. Boston: Printed by J. Wilson and Son, 1862.
- Lee, Charles, and Edward Langworthy. *Memoirs of the Life of the Late Charles Lee ... To Which Are Added, His Political and Military Essays: Also, Letters to and from Many Distinguished Characters, Both in Europe and America*. New-York: Printed by T. Allen, 1793.
- Looby, Christopher. *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origins of the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996.
- MacLeod, Duncan J. *Slavery, Race, and the American Revolution*. London: Cambridge UP, 1974.
- Martin, Waldo E. *The Mind of Frederick Douglass*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984.
- M'Culloch, John, and Henry D. Pursell. *Introduction to the History of America ... Designed to Instruct American Youth in the Elements of the History of Their Own Country.: With a Correct Map of the United States of America*. Philadelphia: Printed and Sold by Young and M'Culloch, at the Corner of Second and Chesnut-Streets., 1787.
- Mercieca, Jennifer R. *Founding Fictions*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 2010.
- Millett, Allan Reed., and Peter Maslowski. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*. New York: Free, 1984.

- Mook, H. Telfer. "Training Day in New England." *The New England Quarterly* 11.4 (1938): 675.
- Morgan, Forrest, Leonard Woods Labaree, and Charles J. Hoadly. *The Public Records of the State of Connecticut ...: With the Journal of the Council of Safety ... and an Appendix*. Hartford: Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard, 1894.
- Mountain, Joseph, and David Daggett. *Sketches of the Life of Joseph Mountain a Negro, Who Was Executed at New-Haven, on the 20th Day of October, 1790, for a Rape, Committed on the 26th Day of May Last.: (The Writer of This History Has Directed That the Money Arising from the Sales Thereof, after Deducting the Expence of Printing, &c. Be given to the Unhappy Girl, Whose Life Is Rendered Wretched by the Crime of the Malefactor.)*. Hartford: Printed and Sold by Nathaniel Patten., 1790.
- Neimeyer, Charles Patrick. *America Goes to War: A Social History of the Continental Army*. New York: New York UP, 1996.
- Neimeyer, Charles Patrick. *The Revolutionary War*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007.
- Nell, William C., and Harriet Beecher Stowe. *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution with Sketches of Several Distinguished Colored Persons; to Which Is Added a Brief Survey of the Condition and Prospects of Colored Americans*. Boston: R.F. Wallcut, 1855.
- Padeni, Scott A., "The Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns of the Seven Years' War." *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* XVI (1999): 153-169.
- Paine, Thomas, and Gordon S. Wood. *Common Sense and Other Writings*. New York: Modern Library, 2003.
- Piersen, William Dillon. *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth-century New England*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1988.
- Quarles, Benjamin. *Black Mosaic: Essays in Afro-American History and Historiography*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1988.
- Quarles, Benjamin. *The Negro in the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by University of North Carolina, 1961.
- Ramsay, David, and Lester H. Cohen. *The History of the American Revolution*. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1990.
- Rogers, Alan, and R. Alan Lawson. *From Revolution to Republic: A Documentary Reader*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Pub., 1976.
- Royster, Charles. *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina, 1979.
- Segal, David R. *Recruiting for Uncle Sam: Citizenship and Military Manpower Policy*. Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas, 1989.
- Sernett, Milton C. *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*. Durham: Duke UP, 1999.

- Shaffer, Jason. *Performing Patriotism: National Identity in the Colonial and Revolutionary American Theater*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2007.
- Sidbury, James. *Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1997.
- Stewart, Richard W. *American Military History*. Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2005.
- Stiles, Henry R. *The History of Ancient Windsor: A Facsimile of the 1892 Edition*. Somersworth, NH: New Hampshire Pub., 1976.
- Sweet, John Wood. *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003.
- Wallace, John William. *An Old Philadelphian, Colonel William Bradford: The Patriot Printer of 1776. Sketches of His Life*. Philadelphia: Sherman & Printers, 1884.
- White, David Oliver. *Connecticut's Black Soldiers, 1775-1783*. Chester, CT: Pequot, 1973.
- Woodson, Carter Godwin. *The Journal of Negro History*. United Kingdom: Dodo, 2008.
- Wright, Donald R. *African Americans in the Colonial Era: From African Origins through the American Revolution*. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2010.
- Zilversmit, Arthur. *The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967.