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THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INSTITUTE

News, Events, and Commentary
from the American Revolution Institute
of the Society of the Cincinnati

today
December 1, 2024

[Calendar of Events](#)

Our Featured Story: Help Us Commemorate the Nation's Founding!



THIS
GIVING
TUESDAY,
SUPPORT *the*
AMERICAN
REVOLUTION
INSTITUTE



This December, we are excited to share how you can help the American Revolution Institute commemorate the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding. Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, we secured a \$20,000 donation to help bring our 2025 exhibition, [Revolutionary Beginnings: War and Remembrance in the First Year of America's Fight for Independence](#), to life. **Now, we need your help to match it!**

The War for American Independence began on April 19, 1775—250 years ago this spring—with the Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. But the fighting during the first year of the Revolution did not just take place in Massachusetts. From April 1775 to

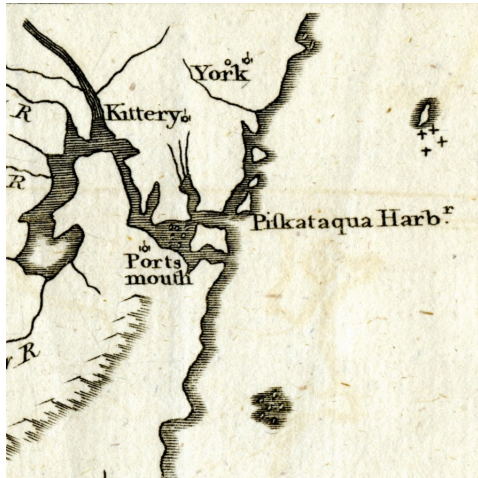
June 1776, Patriot, Loyalist, and British forces clashed in most of the thirteen American colonies, as well as Canada and the Caribbean.

Our 2025 exhibition explores three of those conflicts—the Battle of Bunker Hill, the Siege of Quebec, and the Battle of Sullivan's Island, which took place just days before the Declaration of Independence was adopted. Through this exhibition, we will reveal the importance of these lesser-known battles and the vast extent of the rebellion across the American colonies in its first year, as well as examine how these three battles have been remembered and commemorated, both in the immediate aftermath as well as generations later.

With your support, we can double this generous donation and ensure that the momentous beginnings of the Revolutionary War will be understood in new ways. Your donation, no matter the size, will be doubled and will directly fund the research, design, and development of this exhibition.

[Give today](#)

This Month in Revolutionary History: The Portsmouth Powder Alarm



December 14, 1774, marks the 250th anniversary of the first shots of the American Revolutionary War. Well, not quite...the first shot of the Revolutionary War took place at the Battle of Lexington on April 19, 1775, ushering in the eight-year-long war. The first shots fired by Americans at British soldiers as part of the wider American Revolution, however, took place five months prior at a British fort near New Castle, New Hampshire, and offer a precursor for the succeeding war's intensity.

In 1774, Fort William and Mary (renamed Fort Constitution in 1808)—the sole British military site in New Hampshire—was situated on the geographically important neck of land at the northeastern-most point of Great Island, jutting into the Piscataqua River estuary. With tensions rising in the thirteen

British North American colonies over the Coercive Acts and reports that British regular soldiers were on their way to retrieve the colony's gunpowder, the Patriots of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, formulated a plan to "take the King's fort."

After several failed attempts to peacefully gain entry to the fort, the Patriots rushed in on December 14. Capt. John Cochran, the fort's commander, recorded that the munitions fired at the attackers were seen "whistling thro the party [and] cover'd some with the Earth where they struck." But "Before we could be ready to fire again," Cochran stated, "we were stormed on all quarters . . ." After close-quarter fighting, Cochran was captured by "the Multitude," closely followed by the men under his command. Approximately one hundred barrels of gunpowder were seized and a British flag hauled down. To add insult to injury to the Loyalists, a second party of Whigs under John Sullivan (a future major general in the Continental Army) raided the fort the following night and removed the arms, stores, and numerous cannon.

Though the Portsmouth Powder Alarm of 1774 did not result in the open conflict that the next year would bring, it continued the growing ill-feeling in New Hampshire and added cracks to the dam that the events at Lexington would ultimately rupture.

MUSEUM

Fete Lafayette Exhibition Closes December 31

FETE

A French Hero's Tour of the American Republic

LAFAYETTE

ON EXHIBIT MARCH 2 - DECEMBER 31

In December 1824, the marquis de Lafayette visited Washington, D.C. Two hundred years later, you should too! There's just one more month to see our current exhibition, *Fete Lafayette: A French Hero's Tour of the American Republic*, before it closes on December 31.

Fete Lafayette marks the two hundredth anniversary of Lafayette's farewell tour of the United States in 1824 and 1825. The thirteen-month tour took the Frenchman to all twenty-four states of the union and the federal city of Washington. He was celebrated in each city and town, and the routes along the way, with processions, banquets and receptions, worship services, and visits to important sites—along with a flood of souvenirs that met the intense demand for a memento of the French hero. Through more than fifty objects, our exhibition

explores Lafayette's farewell tour, how it highlighted the Frenchman's contributions to the American nation's creation and the vision for its future, and the tour's role in highlighting the country's revolutionary ideals for a new era.

Visit our website to learn more about the exhibition, watch a video tour of the gallery, download the catalog, view recordings of lectures and other programs that have explored the exhibition's themes, and explore related lesson plans for students.

[Learn more](#)

EVENTS

Indigenous Resilience and Colonial Rivalries During the American Revolution



Join us on Wednesday, December 4 at 6:30 p.m. ET for our next author's talk featuring Christopher Pearl, associate professor of history and chair of the History Department at Lycoming College, discussing his new book, *Declarations of Independence: Indigenous Resilience, Colonial Rivalries, and the Cost of Revolution*.

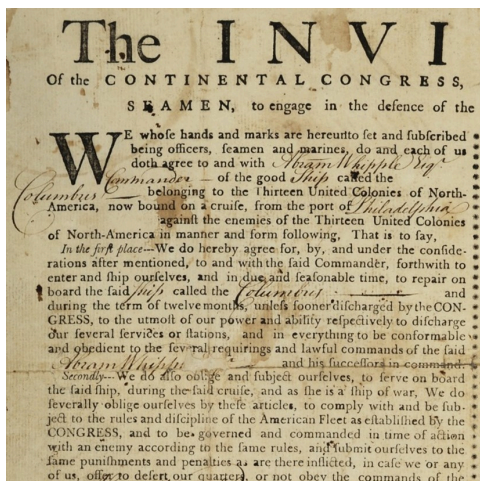
On July 4, 1776, two hundred miles northwest of Philadelphia, on Indigenous land along the west branch of the Susquehanna River, a group of colonial squatters declared their independence. Drawing from his book, Dr. Pearl reveals how conflicts within and between Indigenous Americans, rebellious colonial squatters, opportunistic land speculators, and imperial government agents set the terms and ultimately shaped the meaning of the American Revolution.

This author's talk will be held in-person at Anderson House and last approximately 45 minutes. Registration is requested and virtual options are available.

[Learn more and register](#)

COLLECTIONS

“The Invitation of the Continental Congress”



This remarkable 1775 broadside in our library collection lays out the terms and benefits of enlistment in the Continental Navy, and most of the text sets forth the conditions of employment for the sailors who signed below the printed text. This version of the broadside includes the signatures of those signing on for service on the Continental Navy ship *Columbus* under the command of Abraham Whipple of Rhode Island—whose name first appears in handwriting at the beginning of the text. The roster includes twenty-one officers and midshipmen; ninety-two seamen, landsmen, craftsmen, and gunners; and a boy named Scipio Rathbun, whose occupation is given as “negro boy.” Each name is accompanied by a date of enlistment (most of which are December 1775 to January 1776), rank, and rate of pay.

The *Columbus* had its first engagement on March 3, 1776, at the Battle of Nassau in the Bahamas, noteworthy as the first amphibious landing of the Continental Marines.

[View the broadside with signatures on our Digital Library](#)

EVENTS

Now Online: The 2024 George Rogers Clark Lecture



On Friday, October 25, the American Revolution Institute held its annual George Rogers Clark Lecture that was delivered by historian Laura Auricchio, Ph.D., author of *The Marquis: Lafayette Reconsidered*.

Drawing mainly from objects featured in our current exhibition, [Fete Lafayette: A French Hero's Tour of the American Republic](#), Dr. Auricchio explored how the marquis de Lafayette and his farewell tour, along with Alexander Hamilton and the Society of the Cincinnati, helped foster American manufacturing and global trade. Presented annually since 1975, the Society of the Cincinnati's George Rogers Clark Lecture recognizes the scholarship of leading historians of the American Revolution. Recent Clark Lecturers include Gen. David Petraeus, Andrew Roberts, Nick Bunker, Rick Atkinson, Kathleen DuVal, and Andrew O'Shaughnessy.

If you missed this year's lecture or would like to rewatch it, a recording is now available on our website.

[Watch the 2024 George Rogers Clark Lecture](#)

Festive Charm Meets Gilded Age Splendor



This holiday season visit Anderson House and enjoy a guided tour of the historic former winter residence of Isabel and Larz Anderson with the added touch of decorations for an extra jolly day out!

The museum at Anderson House is open six days a week, and admission is free. Holiday decorations will be on view through January 5.

[Visit Anderson House](#)

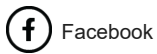


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The American Revolution secured our independence, created our republic, established our national identity, and expressed ideals of liberty, equality, natural and civil rights, and responsible citizenship that have defined our history and will define our future. The American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati promotes knowledge and appreciation of those achievements, fulfilling the aim of the Continental Army officers who founded the Society of the Cincinnati in 1783 to perpetuate the memory of that vast event. The Institute supports advanced study, presents exhibitions and other public programs, advocates effective classroom instruction, and provides resources to teachers and students to enrich understanding of the American Revolution and the principles of the men and women who secured the liberty of the American people.



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