

## THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INSTITUTE

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

# today

November 1, 2021

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### *The Road Ahead*

We never really closed, even during the height of the pandemic, though our work was mostly done offsite and much of it was done online. It turned out to be a tremendously productive period, but we're glad to be back in our headquarters, welcoming library researchers and preparing for resuming in-person teacher workshops on the Revolution. On October 22 we hosted our first live program since March 2020. It was, appropriately enough, one of our most important—the annual George Rogers Clark Lecture. This year our speaker was Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Rick Atkinson, who is working his way through the second volume of his projected trilogy on the American army in the Revolutionary War.

We are looking forward to a full winter season of historical lectures and other programs. They'll be online at first, but by late winter we expect to be hosting more on-site programs. We'll offer those online as well, taking advantage of the skills we've learned over the last eighteen months. We're looking forward to an exciting and innovative year. Despite the controversies and difficulties through which we've all passed, more people are awake to the constructive importance of the American Revolution than ever before. Our audience has grown and is growing. We're confident we can reach more people because of the support so many of you have offered the Institute over the last eighteen months, when we were forced to turn inward and were only able to connect with you over the internet. Thank you!



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### *The Origins of American Neutrality*

On November 16 join Professor Sandra Moats of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside for an online discussion of George Washington, the Society of the Cincinnati, and the origins of American neutrality. George Washington issued the Neutrality Proclamation in 1793 to shield the United States from the European war touched off by the French Revolution. The proclamation was shaped by the experience of the American Revolution, the military experience of the president and his advisors, and by the close ties between President Washington and French members of the Society of the Cincinnati, most of whom were hostile to the French Revolution and many of whom were victims of its most violent excesses. Reports from France of chaos and upheaval convinced President Washington of the necessity of remaining impartial when France and Britain went to war in 1792. Based on her new book, *Navigating Neutrality: Early American Governance in the Turbulent Atlantic*, Professor Moats' talk will particularly focus on the lesser known but highly influential role of the Society of the Cincinnati in inspiring Washington to proclaim American neutrality.

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## ***The Mysterious Hero's Return***

The Institute library holds a rich and growing array of popular prints from the Revolutionary era. They include portraits, satirical cartoons, and battle scenes that helped contemporaries imagine the Revolution. Among our most recent acquisitions is an extraordinarily rare and even more curious print of a couple titled *The Hero returned from Boston*, published in London in 1776. Purchased this fall with the support of a private foundation, the print was overlooked and misunderstood until we went to work to unravel its mysteries. Read our online essay about the hero and his none-too-modest companion.

[Read the Essay](#)



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## ***The Master Teachers Seminar Returns, Too***

The Institute is pleased to reopen its doors for our week-long residential Master Teachers Seminar in Washington, D.C., on July 10-17, 2022. Online applications will be accepted November 1, 2021, through February 22, 2022. Participants discuss best practices, hear expert lectures, and conduct research in our world-class library to develop lessons for their classrooms and

for peers across the country. We believe that understanding the foundations of our independence, our republic, our national identity, and our highest ideals begins with understanding the creativity and sacrifices of the Revolutionary generation. Liberty, equality, civic responsibility, and natural and civil rights all flow from our Revolution. It's vital that young Americans understand this. As de Tocqueville wrote in *Democracy in America*, "When the past no longer illuminates the future, the spirit walks in darkness."

Support the Institute by pointing a talented teacher toward our online application. If you're a teacher, apply now!

[Learn More and Apply](#)



## Meet Kate!

Kate Clarke, lieutenant colonel in the United States Army and a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Edinburgh, is the 2021 recipient of the Tyree-Lamb Research Fellowship, named in honor of two members of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia, Lewis Tyree, Jr., and John K. Lamb. Kate recently spent a week in the Institute's library studying orderly books and personal letters documenting the careers and views of Scotsmen among the leading officers in the Continental Army and Navy. Kate answered a few questions about her time in the reading room.

### Who is your research on and how did you come to this topic?

My research is focused on five of Washington's generals who have been under-appreciated by history: Major General Arthur St. Clair; Major General William Alexander, Lord Stirling; Major General Alexander McDougall; Brigadier General Hugh Mercer; and Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh; in addition to Continental Navy Captain John Paul Jones. I decided to pursue this subject after realizing that Scots were a large demographic among Washington's generals.

### What has your experience in the library been like?

I had an incredibly interesting time in the library; it is small in stature but mighty in information. I was overwhelmed with the wealth of knowledge available within the collections and from the librarians themselves. My visit has breathed new life into aspects of my study and helped provide a strong foundation for moving forward.

### What is the most compelling item you found in the library?





The most impactful item I viewed was an entry in the [Orderly Book from Lord Stirling's Division](#) detailing Benedict Arnold's treason. The obvious anger and passion apparent in the handwriting and in the sentiments expressed really bring to the fore the powerful emotions involved in the Revolution.

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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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