

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INSTITUTE

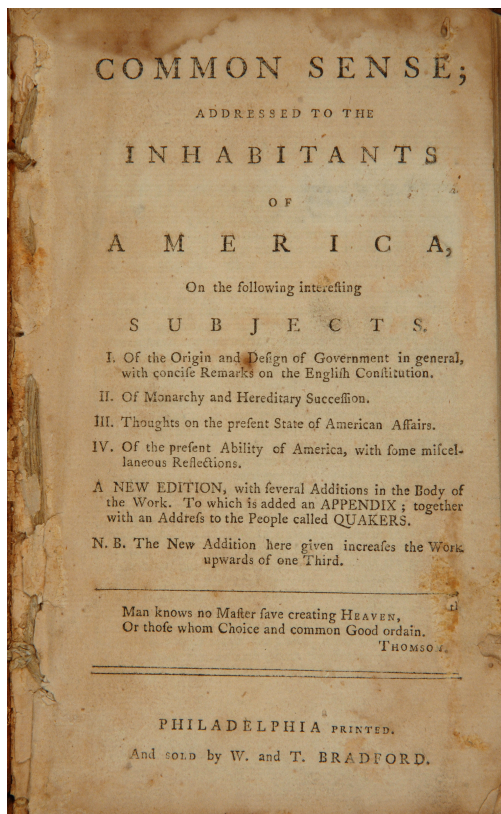
News, Events, and Commentary
from the American Revolution Institute
of the Society of the Cincinnati

today

January 1, 2023

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This Month in Revolutionary History - Thomas Paine's Common Sense



On January 10, 1776, Thomas Paine started a revolution. Thirteen months earlier, he had just moved to Philadelphia from his native England. The publication of *Common Sense* came after the events of Lexington and Concord—perhaps an inkling to Paine that revolution and independence were the only avenues to achieve colonists' demands. *Common Sense* was originally published anonymously, although it went on to secure Paine as a leading thinker of the American Revolution as he urged colonists to immediately declare independence from Great Britain and establish a democratic government with a constitution. Paine outlined the problems and solutions through the four sections of the pamphlet: "The Origin and Design of Government in General, with Concise Remarks on the English Constitution;" "Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession;" "Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs;" and "Of the Present Ability of America, with Some Miscellaneous Reflections."

The introduction states plainly that "Perhaps the Sentiments contained in the following Pages, are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general Favour; a long Habit of not thinking a Thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises as first a formidable Outcry in defence of Custom. But the Tumult soon subsides. Time makes more Converts than Reason...The Cause of America is in a great Measure the Cause of all Mankind."

Upon first publication the pamphlet sold out, and so a second and third edition were produced by February 1776. The pamphlet was reproduced by small presses and excerpts were published in newspapers. The image here is our library's February 1776 edition, printed and sold by W. and T. Bradford in Philadelphia. The Bradford edition of the pamphlet came after a dispute with the original Philadelphia publisher, Robert Bell. This edition of the pamphlet also contains Paine's addition of "An

Address to the People Called Quakers,” which attacked the Quakers whom he thought were aligning themselves with Great Britain.

Our Featured Story - Congratulations to Ellen Clark!



At the end of January, our long-time library director, Ellen McCallister Clark, will be retiring. Ellen has been at the Society of the Cincinnati since 1996, and has served as the library director since 2002! Before joining the Society’s staff, Ellen served as librarian at Mount Vernon for ten years. As library director, Ellen championed the Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection, which focuses on works relating to the art of war in the eighteenth century and was established in 1988 in honor of Lt. Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson, a young Society of the Cincinnati member who died of wounds sustained in Vietnam. Ellen has added over 10,500 acquisitions in her time as library director—over 4,000 of those having joined the Fergusson Collection.

Besides collections development, Ellen oversees the management, public services, and care of the Institute’s library, which has grown to a 50,000-item rare book, manuscript, map, and reference collection focused on the era of the American Revolution, the art of war in the eighteenth century, and the history of the Society of the Cincinnati. Her deep knowledge of and enthusiasm for these subjects have

helped to make our library one of the most important special collections libraries on the American Revolution in the country.

Ellen has been a pillar of the Society and its American Revolution Institute for over twenty-five years, lending her expertise to on- and off-site scholars, planning and mounting exhibitions with library materials, and promoting the library and its collections through articles, lectures, bibliographies, special programming through the Institute, and much more.

Please join us in wishing Ellen a hearty congratulations!

COLLECTIONS

Saving a Pair of French Portraits



Conservation work was recently completed on a pair of pastel portraits of Philippe-Jacques-François Aupépin de Lamothe, an officer in the French army during the American Revolution, and his wife, Anne-Marie. The portraits were painted by Charles Thévenin in Paris in 1786—not long after Captain Aupépin de Lamothe returned from six years at war in America. His portrait shows him wearing the uniform of the Auxerrois Regiment with the insignias of the Society of the Cincinnati and the Order of Saint Louis. The Institute acquired the portraits in 2021 after they had been in private collections in France for more than two hundred years. The pastels showed signs of damage from water, insects, and other sources, and their gilt wood frames had splits and missing decorative elements. A team of conservators, working in consultation with our collections staff, labored for nearly a year

to treat this damage and to create proper housings for the paintings. Along the way, they uncovered new

information about the history of the portraits, which were originally rectangular paintings that were later cut into octagonal shapes to fit into the existing oval frames. Their efforts have helped to save these artworks for future generations and are the subject of our newest online article on conservation of our collections.

EVENTS

Our spring calendar of historical programs kicks off on January 10! Highlights of our upcoming programs include a lecture by Professor David Hsiung of Juniata College discussing the environmental impact of the Revolutionary War; an author's talk by historian George Kotlik on his new book, *East Florida in the Revolutionary Era, 1763-1785*; a Lunch Bite object talk featuring the Institute's deputy director and curator, Emily Parsons, discussing a captured British light dragoon carbine; and the triumphant return of Art in Bloom DC, a special program that interprets the exquisite art and architecture of Anderson House through floral displays designed by some of the top florists in our nation's capital.

COLLECTIONS

With winter settling in, and the inevitable post-holidays blues, why not try out a new game with friends and family? Our library recently acquired *The New Game of the American Revolution*, an 1844 folded playing board intended as an educational tool for young adults, with landing spots representing events, themes, or scenes of the American Revolution. The game begins with the 1765 Stamp Act, features several battles, and ends with Washington resigning his commission in December 1783. Between the battle and event milestones are a number of “picture” spaces depicting scenes such as “Playing Soldier,” “Generosity,” “Military Execution,” “Hope,” “The Disabled Soldier,” and “Pension Offices.”

EVENTS

Tis the Season for a Battlefield Tour!



On December 2-3, the Institute held its latest segment of its new battlefield tour series exploring the battles of Kings Mountain and Cowpens in South Carolina. Originally scheduled for September 30-October 1 but postponed due to Hurricane Ian, the battlefield tour brought Society of the Cincinnati members, Institute Associates, and public military historians and enthusiasts together for an enriching two-day experience.

On Friday, December 2, attendees were treated to a delicious dinner and informative lecture at the 1881 Event Hall in Spartanburg, S.C. The lecture featured Dr. Melissa Walker, emeritus professor of history at Converse College, discussing the political and social history of the South Carolina backcountry during the Revolutionary War, setting the stage for the day-long guided tours the following day.

On Saturday, December 3, our group was met in the morning by an extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic interpretive ranger from the National Park Service who remained with us the entire day. After boarding the bus, our first stop was Kings Mountain National Military Park, where we learned about the important American victory that involved various militia units from South Carolina opposing Maj. Patrick Ferguson's loyalist militia. After examining the terrain and tactics, reflecting at Ferguson's gravestone, and perusing the park's visitor center and museum, we reboarded the bus and headed off to Cowpens National Battlefield to wrap up the day. Once there, we were guided to the beautifully preserved and restored battle grounds and walked the battle routes of the British forces under Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton to gain a better understanding of how Brig. Gen. Daniel Morgan's and Col. William Washington's forces masterfully defeated their enemies. The immersive experience was enlightening for all in attendance and the entire outing was a rousing success!

If you couldn't join us for this battlefield tour, there are plenty more to follow as we are looking forward to exploring the Siege of Yorktown this summer and the Battle of Saratoga in early fall. To ensure you receive the latest information about these tours, make sure you are subscribed to our mailing list!

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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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