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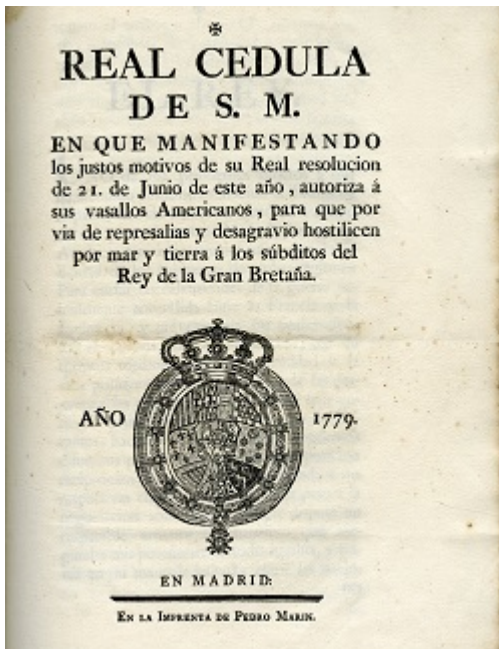
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INSTITUTE

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

today
April 1, 2023

[Calendar of Events](#)

This Month in Revolutionary History - The Franco-Spanish Alliance

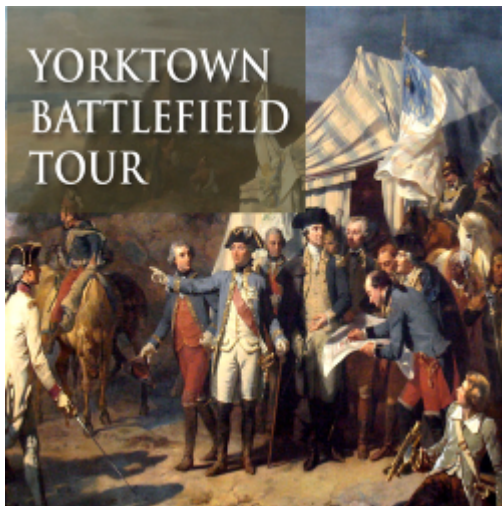


On April 12, 1779, France and Spain signed the Treaty of Aranjuez, a treaty of mutual military support between both nations. Spain's King Carlos III had kept his nation neutral for the almost four years that the American Revolutionary War had raged, concerned there were no clear advantages to entering the conflict. As the war dragged on, Spanish leaders, with encouragement from their French counterparts, increasingly felt an independent United States—and its free markets—would be to their benefit. Even before the 1779 treaty, Spain had secretly aided the American rebels with money and weapons sent covertly through French channels. With a formal alliance, Spain and France hoped that the combined power of their navies would challenge Britain's presence on the American coast, in the Caribbean, and elsewhere around the world.

Spain agreed to the treaty of military alliance on the condition that France would support their endeavors to seize the British territories of Gibraltar and Minorca. Two months later, on June 21, Spain declared war against Great Britain. Within days, Spain began isolating Gibraltar, ushering in a siege that would last until February 2, 1783. Spanish forces would be deployed to counter the British in the Mississippi Valley and both West and East Florida, with notable success. In addition to direct military involvement, the Spanish went on to provide financial assistance to both France and the United States. It was Spanish specie expeditiously dispatched to Franco-America troops in the summer of 1781 that supported the allied army that would besiege the British forces at Yorktown.

Our Featured Story - Announcing Our Next Battlefield Tour!

Join us June 9-10 as we explore one of the most important sieges in military history: the Siege of Yorktown. This experience begins with a Friday evening dinner at the American Revolution Museum at



Yorktown featuring a lecture by J. Britt McCarley, Ph.D., chief historian and director of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Military History and Heritage Program, on the 1780-1781 Virginia campaign and the events that led to the Siege of Yorktown. On Saturday, Dr. McCarley will lead a day-long bus tour to closely examine the events that transpired during the siege and explore key locations in and around Yorktown.

[Learn more and register for the battlefield tour](#)

COLLECTIONS

A Witness to the Start of Revolution



The Revolutionary War began two hundred and forty-three years ago this month, when British regulars and Massachusetts militiamen clashed at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775. This outbreak of hostilities at Lexington triggered an alarm spread by the Committee of Safety networks in Massachusetts and surrounding colonies, to alert “all the Friends of American Liberty” to the battle and to call for aid. These alarm letters reached western Massachusetts later in the day on April 19, Connecticut beginning the following day, New York City by April 23, and Philadelphia on April 24.

One of the minute men who answered the Lexington Alarm was James Taylor of Pelham, seventy-five miles west of Lexington. An ensign in Capt. David Cowden’s company, Taylor marched east as part of Col. Benjamin Ruggles

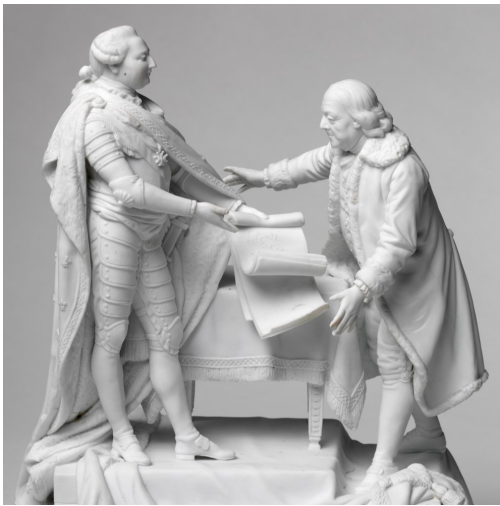
Woodbridge’s regiment and joined the American troops gathering at Cambridge. Two months later, they fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill. Taylor probably carried with him the hanger, or short sword, now preserved in the Institute’s collections. This hanger—a secondary weapon to supplement an infantryman’s musket in close combat—witnessed the first months of the Revolution, from Pelham to Lexington, Cambridge, and Bunker Hill, then home again.

[Learn more about the sword](#)

EDUCATION

New Lesson Plan: Affairs of State and the Art of Diplomacy in the American Republic

In his 2014 State of the Union Address, President Barack Obama reminded Americans that: “In a world of complex threats, our security and leadership depends on all elements of our power—including strong and principled diplomacy.” Our new lesson plan—inspired by our current exhibition at our headquarters, *Affairs of State: 118 Years of Diplomacy and Entertaining at Anderson House*—investigates the evolution of American diplomacy. From Benjamin Franklin’s diplomatic work in France during the



American Revolution to the essential diplomatic business of the present day, the lesson plan asks students to research an individual who served a local, state, regional, or national cause as a diplomatic ambassador, and then consider how they, too, might engage as a civic ambassador for a cause dear to their community.

[View the lesson plan](#)

EVENTS

Mapping Empire in the Era of the American Revolution



Join us on Thursday, April 13 at 6:30 p.m. for a lecture featuring Dr. Max Edelson, professor of history at the University of Virginia, discussing the expansion and transformation of British cartography in North America throughout the late eighteenth century.

Prior to the outbreak of war in 1775, British surveyors came to North America and the West Indies in unprecedented numbers. Their images of coastlines, forts, and frontiers helped win the French and Indian War and pictured a triumphant British Atlantic world. The American Revolution shattered this vision of peace, commerce, and settlement. Once tasked to promote an expansive American empire, wartime mapmakers applied their knowledge to make war on American colonists. Dr. Edelson will describe the importance of survey

knowledge in maps from empire to independence.

This lecture will be held in-person at Anderson House and last approximately 45 minutes. Registration is requested. Virtual options are available.

[Learn more and register](#)

COLLECTIONS

Now on Display: Winter at Valley Forge by N.C. Wyeth

Painted between 1934 and 1936, N.C. Wyeth's *Winter at Valley Forge* was commissioned by the Home Insurance Company of New York. Wyeth's idealized view of this iconic event of the Revolution depicts a group of soldiers gathered around a campfire in open song during the Continental Army's 1777-1778 winter encampment at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. A blanket-wrapped General George Washington stands to the left of the group, appearing engrossed in thought—the weight of the American cause on his



shoulders.

Newell Convers Wyeth (1882-1945) (more commonly known as N.C. Wyeth) is most renowned today for his colorful illustration work, especially that which graced books such as *Treasure Island*, *White Company*, and *The Last of the Mohicans*. But the people and events of American history were also a favorite subject of Wyeth's. For more than forty years, the American illustrator worked in Wilmington, Delaware, then Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, on works depicting American history and landscape, as well as illustrations for novels and other publications, allegorical

scenes, and government and commercial advertisements.

Winter at Valley Forge is kindly on loan from the collection of Ambassador Trevor Dow Traina, a member of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Hampshire, and on prominent display in the Great Stair Hall of Anderson House.

Introducing our Video Library



Videos have a new home on our website! In our new video library, you can now find all our videos in one place, from recorded lectures and videos designed for the classroom to collections features and exhibition tours. Watch authors discuss their new books, scholars dive into groundbreaking research, and our staff explore the Institute's rich collections. Our videos cover the full scope of the Revolution, including the battles and campaigns of the war; biographies of its major figures; involvement of the French, Spanish, German, and other world powers; participation by women, African Americans, American Indians, and loyalists; political, cultural, and financial events; and archaeology and other modern efforts to uncover new evidence of the struggle for American independence. With videos ranging from just a few minutes to over an hour, there's something for everyone who's interested

in the history of the American 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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