

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INSTITUTE

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

today

May 1, 2023

[Calendar of Events](#)

Our Featured Story - An Intriguing New Acquisition: Lafayette on the Organization of the French Society



As we mark the 240th anniversary of the founding of the Society of the Cincinnati this month, we are excited to announce our recent acquisition of a previously unknown letter of the marquis de Lafayette discussing the early organization of the French branch of the Society. Purchased at auction this past January, the letter (which is written in English) is addressed only to “My Dear Sir,” and dated simply “Paris, tuesday morning.” Our subsequent research has enabled us to pinpoint its date to sometime on or around January 20, 1784, and to identify a most probable candidate as its recipient—Benjamin Franklin! In the letter Lafayette reports that the Society’s Eagle insignia had been delivered to those eligible officers of the French forces as well as to the Europeans commissioned in the Continental Army, whose membership Lafayette was organizing. He mentions a few

candidates by name, including one who had previously written personally to Franklin about procedures to join the Society. Lafayette also refers to a letter from Charles-Alexandre de Calonne, the French controller general of finance, about whom he and Franklin were frequently in touch in discussions over free ports and American trade.

To read the text of the letter and our case for the attribution of Franklin as the probable recipient, see our newest feature on Recent Acquisitions.

[Learn more about the letter](#)

This Month in Revolutionary History - The Battle of Jumonville Glen, George Washington, and Global War

On May 28, 1754, in a remote corner of western Pennsylvania fifty-two miles southeast of the French-held Fort Duquesne (future site of the city of Pittsburgh), the first shots of the French and Indian War



were fired—the North American theatre of what would develop into the larger Seven Years' War had begun. The conflict stemmed from French and British designs on the Ohio Valley, an area key for trade to the North American interior.

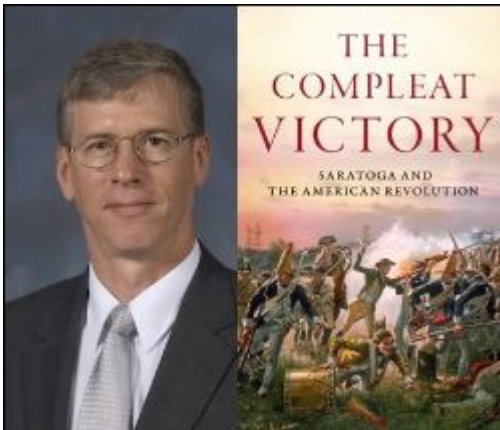
On April 2, 1754, having been ordered by Virginia Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie to defend British interests, Lt. Col. George Washington and 160 men of the newly formed Virginia Regiment marched from Alexandria, Virginia, to the contested region of the Ohio. Members of the Ohio Iroquois informed Washington that French forces would be aggressive and on May 27, he learned they were being tracked by a French party under the command of Ensign Joseph Coulon de Villiers de Jumonville. Washington, with forty-seven of his men and several Iroquois warriors, sought out the French camp and,

though accounts differ, it seems probable that the Virginians struck first, with the possibility that Washington fired the first shot. The fight lasted just fifteen minutes. Though not mentioned in Washington's own account of the action, other accounts indicate what followed was a massacre, several French prisoners including Jumonville being killed in cold blood. Though triumphant, the Virginians feared a French counterattack and retraced their steps to the hastily built Fort Necessity. The feared attack came, and Washington's men were soundly beaten into surrender.

The battle now known as Jumonville Glen, and the subsequent surrender at Fort Necessity, brought alarm to London. To counter French designs for North America, the British ministry enacted plans for offensive operations. France, getting wind of this, began reinforcing its possessions in North America. A state of war effectively began, and by 1756, owing to alliances and perceived opportunities, this Anglo-French fight for empire ignited a general European war.

EVENTS

The 2022 Society of the Cincinnati Book Prize Lecture



Join us on Friday, May 5 at 6:00 p.m. for a special virtual lecture featuring Col. Kevin Weddle discussing his award-winning book, *The Compleat Victory: Saratoga and the American Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2021). Colonel Weddle's deeply researched examination of the Saratoga campaign of 1777 provides a comprehensive analysis of the American and British military strategies that resulted in the American victory, which in turn captured the attention of the world and changed the course of the war. For this book, Colonel Weddle was awarded the [2022 Society of the Cincinnati Prize](#), established in 1989 to recognize authors of outstanding books that advance understanding of the American Revolution and its legacy.

Watch the livestream on Friday, May 5

EDUCATION

Spanish-American Diplomacy and Partnership in the Time of the Revolution

On Tuesday, April 18, the American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati, the Queen Sofia Spanish Institute, and the Embassy of Spain in the United States hosted a celebration of Spanish-



American friendship at Anderson House to commemorate the signing of the Treaty of Aranjuez on April 12, 1779, a document that marked Spain's formal pledge of support to France in its war with Great Britain in an alliance that contributed decisively to American independence. Over seventy-five invited guests including the Society's president general, Frank Turner, and Spanish Defense Attaché Major General Pedro Garcia were welcomed by ARI Executive Director Andy Morse and QSSI Executive Director Begonia Santos, then treated to an address from the Spanish ambassador, His Excellency Santiago Cabanas, before enjoying an evening of learning. Guest lecturers Dr. Larrie D. Ferreiro and Dr. Richard L. Kagan gave talks on Spain's role in the American Revolution and relationship with the early American republic, and attendees explored the classroom resources from both institutes and

several items from our library and museum collections, including a Spanish Model 1757 flintlock musket and a 1779 decree authorizing subjects of the Spanish Crown in its colonies to attack British trade issued soon after Charles III had secretly signed the Treaty of Aranjuez.

LIBRARY

Meet Our New Director of the Library



Please join us in welcoming the new Director of the Library, Joseph F. Stoltz III, Ph.D.! Joe holds a master's degree in public history from the University of New Orleans and completed his doctorate in military history in 2013 at Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth.

As an accomplished historian, Joe's first book, *A Bloodless Victory: The Battle of New Orleans in History and Memory*, was published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 2017. Additionally, Joe has authored numerous talks, papers, and book reviews, and has taught and lectured academically. He brings to the library a knowledge and love for the art of war, a topic our library prides itself on collecting and promoting, and has experience in the digital humanities—including helping to build Mount Vernon's digital library.

We are very excited for Joe Stoltz to lead our library as it prepares to soar into its second fifty years!

EVENTS

Announcing our Summer Historical Programs!

Our summer calendar of historical programs kicks off on May 5! Highlights from our programs include a lecture by James Vaughn of the University of Chicago discussing the British East India Company and the American Revolution to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the passage of the Tea Act in May 1773; an author's talk by Maj. Gen. Jason Bohm (USMC) discussing his new book, *Washington's Marines: The Origins of the Corps and the American Revolution, 1775-1777*; a Lunch Bite object talk featuring the Institute's historical programs manager, Andrew Outten, discussing a blunderbuss of the period of the American Revolution from our museum collections; and a battlefield tour exploring the Siege of Yorktown on June 9-10 in Yorktown, Va.

Most programs are held in-person at Anderson House, but virtual options are available unless otherwise



specified. To view our summer calendar of historical programs in its entirety, visit the events page of our website.

[Explore our summer programs](#)

A Somber Occasion: The Fourteen Soldiers of Camden



Last month, fourteen Revolutionary War soldiers were honored with a funeral service and burial, 243 years after they fell in the Battle of Camden in 1780. Organized by the Historic Camden Foundation and the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust, the multi-day event featured a procession from Columbia to Camden, the soldiers lying in repose, a funeral cortege and service, and a burial ceremony with military honors. The Society of the Cincinnati's president general, Frank Turner, and executive director, Andy Morse, along with other members, were humbled to be present for the special occasion. The remains of twelve Continental Army soldiers (from Maryland or Delaware), one British army soldier (a Scottish Highlander), and one Loyalist militiaman (probably an American Indian) were discovered in shallow graves on the battlefield grounds last year by archaeologists,

who carefully excavated and studied the remains. Some of the soldiers were teenagers. The oldest is estimated to have been in his forties. Different causes brought them to Camden, but we honor each of their lives and hope to learn more about their stories and, in turn, the battle and our revolution.

[Visit the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust for videos of this historic day](#)

Consider a Gift Towards our Mission

The work of the American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati is vital to achieving broad popular and scholarly understanding and appreciation of the American Revolution and its legacy. Our goals are as important as they are ambitious:

- to reform history education, ensuring that the story of our Revolution, the constructive accomplishments of the revolutionaries, and the legacy of the Revolution are widely recognized;
- to protect our Revolutionary heritage, including the books, manuscripts, art, and artifacts of the Revolution, as well as the remaining battlefields of our War for Independence, encouraging the study, exhibition, interpretation, and enjoyment of these treasures as means to inspire millions of Americans about our national origins;

- and to advocate for the memory, ideals, and legacy of the American Revolution.

We need your support in order to reach these goals. Your donations generate the resources we need to grow and innovate, year after year. Gifts of any size make an impact and are deeply appreciated.

[Choose your gift](#)



[Read Past Issues](#)

[Calendar of Events](#)

[Subscribe to Our Mailing List](#)



Facebook



Twitter



Instagram



YouTube



AmericanRevolutionInstitute.org

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.



Share



Tweet



Forward

Copyright © 2023 The American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati, Inc., All rights reserved.

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)