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THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INSTITUTE

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

today

October 1, 2023

[Calendar of Events](#)

***Our Featured Story -
Our New Book on the American Revolution is Coming Soon!***



On October 3, *Freedom: The Enduring Importance of the American Revolution* will be published under the auspices of the American Revolution Institute. This narrative history of the American War for Independence tells the pivotal story of the courageous men and women who risked their lives to create a new nation based on the idea that government should serve people and protect their freedom. The book argues that the American Revolution is the central event in our history—the turning point between our colonial origins and our national experience. Written by Jack D. Warren, Jr., former executive director of the Institute, *Freedom* is meant for anyone wishing to understand our national origins and is also appropriate for teachers and secondary classrooms.

Freedom has been praised by some of the most influential historians and preservationists of our time. David Rubenstein, bestselling author of *The American Story: Conversations with Master Historians* and host of *History with David Rubenstein*, considers the book “a must-read for any student of American history. *Freedom* will soon become the classic account of the Revolution’s importance and modern relevance.” Douglas Bradburn, president and CEO of George Washington’s Mount Vernon, asserts that *Freedom* “should be required reading for all those seeking to understand the sacrifices made by the Revolutionary generation to help launch a nation devoted to freedom. This book is a great antidote to the cynicism of our present historical discourse.” And James Kirby Martin, author of *Insurrection: The American Revolution and Its Meaning*, declares, “this beautifully written book is both monumental in scope and sweeping in content.... The text is worth much more than the price of admission, as is the treasure trove of illustrations.”

[Learn more and pre-order](#)

This Month in Revolutionary History - The Siege of Yorktown



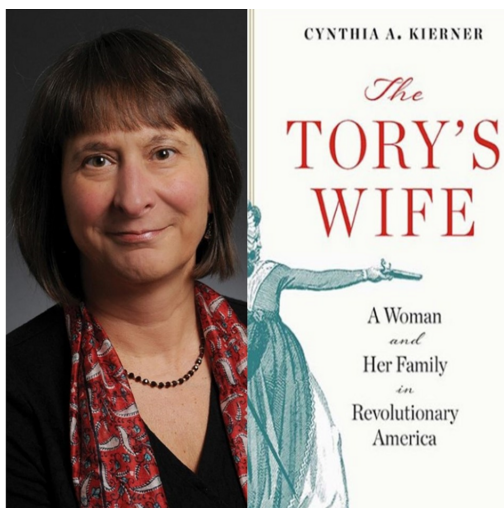
"I am fully convinced," wrote Gen. Benjamin Lincoln to his wife on October 12, 1781, "that the Siege will not last more than 12 days more and that Cornwallis & his troops must in our time be ours." As it turned out, the siege of Yorktown would end in just five days, and Lincoln himself would be presented with the sword of surrender from his British counterpart. (Lincoln, in turn, gave it to his commanding officer, Gen. George Washington.) After six years and 183 days, with the surrender of Lord Cornwallis's force at Yorktown the last major battle of the Revolutionary War in North America was over. With the loss of a British army in the field (the second time in the war), the British public and political classes had had enough of the fight waged against their former American colonies. Peace talks began in earnest, and on November 30, 1782, preliminary articles were agreed upon. Nearly a year

later, on September 3, 1783, the formal Treaty of Paris was signed.

The siege has been an intrinsic element of warfare stretching back to antiquity. By the late eighteenth century, it had become formalized to such an extent that its proponents carried out its various stages according to prescribed practice. At Yorktown on October 9, 1781, the first parallel (or trench) was dug by allied soldiers to provide a place from where artillery and soldiers could fire upon the British defenses from relatively safety. On the 11th, the allies dug a second parallel, bringing their guns to within four hundred yards of the British lines. On the 14th, the allies took British redoubts 9 and 10, enabling them to extend the second parallel's width to better envelope the defenses of the enemy. On the night of October 16-17, the British attempted a breakout to the adjacent cape of Gloucester Point. Their attempt was for nought, however. Foul winds and rain disrupted Cornwallis's plan and by the following morning, the escape attempt was cancelled. On the afternoon of October 19, after several days of negotiations, the British soldiers and their German auxiliaries marched out of their devastated defenses. The troops marched to a field south of the Yorktown siege lines and, with American and French soldiers looking on, laid down their arms before being filed away into captivity.

EVENTS

The Tory's Wife



Join us on Tuesday, October 17 at 6:30 p.m. for an author's talk featuring Dr. Cynthia Kierner, professor of history at George Mason University, discussing her new book *The Tory's Wife: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America*, published by the University of Virginia Press.

The Spurgin family of North Carolina experienced the cataclysm of the American Revolution in the most dramatic ways—and from different sides. Jane Welborn Spurgin was a patriot who welcomed Gen. Nathanael Greene to her home and aided the Continental forces. Her husband was a loyalist and an officer fighting for King George III in the local Tory militia. Drawing from her new book, Dr. Kierner focuses on the wife of a middling backcountry farmer to show how the Revolution not only toppled long-established political hierarchies, but also

strained family ties and drew women into the public sphere to claim both citizenship and rights.

The talk will be held in-person at Anderson House and last approximately 45 minutes. Options for

watching virtually are also available.

[Learn more and register](#)

EDUCATION

Meet one of our Master Teachers



Georgette Hackman is a social studies teacher and department chair at Cocalico Middle School in Denver, Pennsylvania. She attended our Master Teachers Seminar in 2013 and, since that time, has been a supporter of our traveling trunk program and served as a presenter to our newest classes of Master Teachers. Georgette sits on the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Council for the Social Studies (president-elect), the Middle States Council for the Social Studies, and the National Council for the Social Studies.

What is unique about the Institute’s Master Teachers Seminar?

Without a doubt, the immersive research component of the seminar. Many providers rely heavily upon historical sites and landmarks to frame their seminars. What makes the ARI’s program unique is the focus upon research and the utilization of the extensive archives and artifacts to create classroom lessons. Many teachers don’t have the opportunity to delve into archival holdings. Being given unrestricted access to this treasure trove of materials is a dream come true for history teachers. Having those resources to share with our students makes that experience even more rewarding.

How have the Institute’s digital and print resources supported your classroom teaching?

I use the materials that I created in my classroom each year. In addition, I try to incorporate the materials shared in the emails and social media posts that are shared by the Institute. I am always looking for new and exciting resources to share with my students and the Institute plays a vital role in that pursuit.

Why is it important for students to understand the achievements of the American Revolution?

Active and engaged citizens need to know and appreciate the achievements of the American Revolution in order to fully understand the legacy of those events and to comprehend exactly how they helped to create our nation—all things that are unique to our American experiment.

[View Georgette’s lesson, “How to Think Like a Historian: Who Was James Wolfe”](#)

[Learn more and apply to become a Master Teacher](#)

COLLECTIONS

A Spooky Revolutionary War Painting

A body lies on the ground. The spirit of a French officer confronts the figure of death, which hovers in a dark cloud holding a scythe. Death—the all-too-familiar character wouldn’t be called the Grim Reaper until the mid-nineteenth century—has come for the wounded sailors behind the officer. Catholic priests perform last rites to save their souls. Thousands of French soldiers and sailors would die in the fight for



American independence. This painting—created in 1783, the year the Americans officially won the Revolutionary War—honors the sacrifice made by one of them.

Thomas François Lenormand de Victot, a *lieutenant de vaisseau* in the French navy, had already served in the American Revolutionary War for four years when, in 1782, his journey took him to the Caribbean aboard the *Magnifique* in Admiral de Grasse's fleet. That April, de Grasse's fleet gathered at Fort Royal on Martinique—the ships and fort depicted in the painting—preparing to attack the British island of Jamaica. A British fleet intercepted de Grasse's force off a group of small islands between Guadeloupe and Dominica, soundly defeating the French in the Battle of the Saintes, the last naval battle of the American Revolution. But Lenormand de Victot was ill and

was left behind on Martinique, where he died of disease on April 10, 1782—one day after the fleet set sail. His spirit stands at the center of the painting—while his body lies in the foreground—fully dressed in his French naval uniform and wearing the insignia of the Order of Saint Louis. A plaque inscribed on the original frame—probably composed by Lenormand de Victot's family, who commissioned the painting—proclaims that his sacrifice “for his Dying Brothers ... is worthy of envy.”

[See the painting in detail](#)

EVENTS

Now Online: The 2023 Society of the Cincinnati Prize Lecture



On Friday, September 8 the 2023 Society of the Cincinnati Prize was presented to Dr. Friederike Baer and her book *Hessians: German Soldiers in the American Revolutionary War* (Oxford University Press, 2022) at our headquarters, Anderson House.

This special event commenced with welcoming remarks from the president general of the Society of the Cincinnati, Frank K. Turner, Jr., before the Society of the Cincinnati Prize Committee chairman, Clifford B. Lewis, presented Dr. Baer with her award. Following the presentation, Dr. Baer offered a brief history of the German auxiliaries who supported Great Britain's war against American independence, before discussing the research behind her ground-breaking book. Dr. Baer highlighted several key sources that supported her study

of the German participants, including a big surprise for all those in attendance: a Society of the Cincinnati diploma belonging to a Hessian-turned-American engineer, Christian Senf. Senf, who joined the Society in 1785, was captured at Saratoga, accepted employment from American general Horatio Gates in Albany, and became a colonel in the American corps of Engineers. His diploma, signed by both Gen. George Washington and Gen. Henry Knox, is part of our library collections.

Congratulations, Dr. Baer, and thank you for your important contribution to Revolutionary War scholarship! Huzzah!

[Watch the recording of the event](#)



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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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