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## THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INSTITUTE

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

# today

November 1, 2023

[Calendar of Events](#)

### *This Month in Revolutionary History - Dunmore's Proclamation*

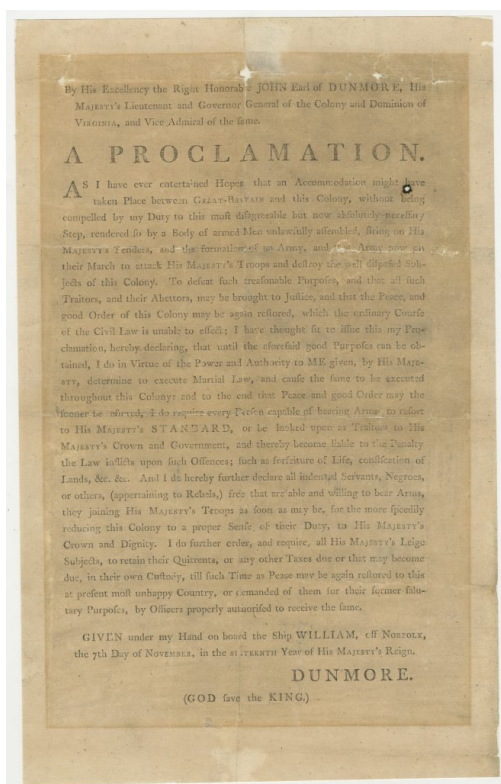
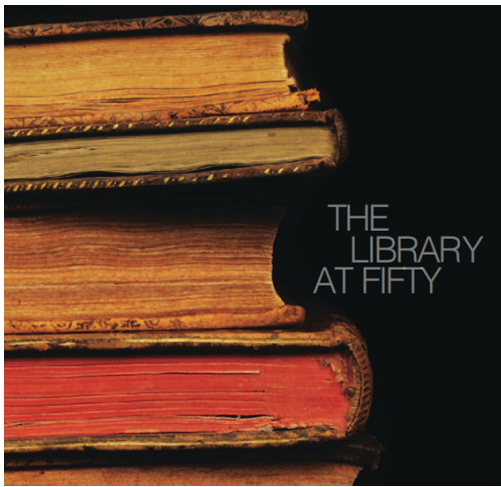


Image: *By his Excellency the Right Honorable John Earl of Dunmore . . . A Proclamation, 1775*, Broadside 1775 .V852 FF, Special Collections, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

On November 27, 1775, Edmund Pendleton, a delegate to the Virginia House of Burgesses, wrote to his fellow delegate Richard Henry Lee that "letters mention that slaves flock to him [Lord Dunmore] in abundance, but I hope it is magnified." This fear of an exodus of enslaved individuals to the British army was prompted by the publication earlier that month of a document known today as Dunmore's Proclamation. On November 7, while aboard the British naval vessel *William*, Virginia's royal governor, John Murray, Lord Dunmore, drafted a proclamation in which he, among other things, declared martial law and demanded that all able-bodied men take up arms and fight for the Crown. But what marks the document as remarkable is that Dunmore also "declare[d] all *indentured servants, Negroes, or others* (appertaining to rebels) free, that are able and willing to bear arms, they *joining his Majesty's troops*." Though his motives don't appear to have been based on a moral conscience, Lord Dunmore's words were earth-shattering especially for the enslaved population and their enslavers in the thirteen American colonies. Enslaved individuals (if in the captivity of a rebel) were given a new option. Flee your enslaver, reach British lines, and, in exchange for military service, earn your freedom.

### *Our Featured Story - Celebrating our Library at Fifty!*

Fifty years ago, on November 30, 1973, the Society of the Cincinnati's archives, including the original parchment Society Institution signed by George Washington, were brought to Anderson House from



their holding place at the Library of Congress, effectively establishing our library.

The return of the archives inspired the Society to build a comprehensive reference collection. In 1988 [the Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection](#) was established to specialize in early printed and manuscript works that illuminate the theory and practice of warfare in the age of the American Revolution, providing context for understanding the achievements of the American and French military forces in securing the independence of the United States.

Today, the Institute's library is regarded as one of the most important resources in the United States for advanced study on the Revolution and the art of war in the eighteenth century, housing more than fifty thousand rare books, manuscripts, prints, broadsides, maps, and modern reference sources. The library helps to host the Master Teacher Seminar and other historical programs, and has an ever-growing [fellowship program](#), established in 2007, that hosts scholars of the Revolutionary era to use the collections for their research.

To commemorate fifty years we are planning a series of events, beginning on November 30 with a panel discussion on the significance, evolution, and collections of our library and the scholarship that has taken place in the reading room. Held fifty years to the day after the establishment of our library, this panel features Executive Director Andy Morse, former Library Director Ellen McCallister Clark, and our 2007 Tyree-Lamb Fellow, John Maass, the first among our long list of fellows. Registration is requested.

[Learn more and register for the panel, "A Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Library"](#)

[Discover the Institute's vast collections](#)

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## EDUCATION

### ***2024 Master Teachers Seminar Applications Accepted Beginning November 22***



The application period for our 2024 residential Master Teachers Seminar opens on November 22! Each summer we invite a distinguished group of educators to stay at our Anderson House headquarters in Washington, D.C., to participate in lectures with our team of fellows, scholars, and in-house experts, and conduct research with our collections to create lessons for our website about our independence, our republic, our national identity, and our highest ideals. We are proud to feature the work of over one hundred alumni of this program in fulfilling our mission to increase the understanding and appreciation of the American Revolution and its legacy. This year's seminar will be held from July 7-13, 2024. Online applications will be accepted through February 22, 2024.

[Learn more and apply](#)

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## COLLECTIONS

### *America's First Veterans*



Although Veterans Day wasn't formally established in the United States until 1954, our nation's commitment to honor and care for those who have served in the U.S. military is a legacy of the American Revolution and the hundreds of thousands of Americans who fought in the war that won our nation's independence. Those who survived the Revolutionary War became America's first veterans, but most of them returned home with nothing more than the personal satisfaction of duty faithfully performed. In the first decades after the Revolution, its veterans were rarely honored aside from a small number of high-ranking officers whose names became more widely known.

In the nineteenth century, the nation gradually realized the debt it owed to all the veterans of the Revolutionary War.

Those who lived to be old men came to be recognized by their communities and government as honored veterans of a revolution that had created the first great republic of modern times. In 1832 Congress finally voted to award pensions to nearly all the surviving soldiers and sailors of the Revolution. These were the first pensions paid to veterans without regard to rank, financial distress, or physical disability. They reflected the gratitude of a free people for the brave Americans who secured their freedom and established the foundation for recognition of American veterans in the generations since.

Learn more about the veterans of the Revolution and their experiences after the war in our online exhibition *America's First Veterans*.

[Explore the exhibition](#)

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## EVENTS

### *Diplomacy and the American Revolution*



Join us on Tuesday, November 14 at 6:30 p.m. ET for a lecture featuring Robert Smith, professor of history at Worcester University, discussing the politics surrounding American diplomacy during the American Revolution.

During the Revolution, American policymakers were divided into two factions—radicals and moderates. Radicals saw the United States as a great power, equal to France and worthy of alliances with as many foreign powers as possible. Moderates, however, doubted American military power and were content to rely on military assistance from France alone. In each case, battlefield results determined who held the upper hand when it came to diplomacy. Radicals prevailed when the war went well, but power quickly shifted in favor of the moderates when it went poorly. In this lecture, Professor Smith discusses the

turbulence surrounding American diplomacy during the Revolution and how the Treaty of Paris was the final diplomatic triumph for the radicals. This program accompanies our current exhibition, [Affairs of State: 118 Years of Diplomacy and Entertaining at Anderson House](#), on view through December 31.



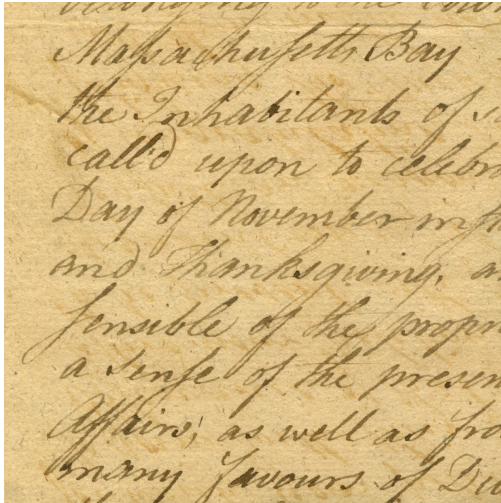
The lecture will be held in-person at Anderson House and last approximately 45 minutes. Options for watching virtually are also available.

[Learn more and register](#)

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## COLLECTIONS

### “a Day of public prayer and Thanksgiving”



In November 1778, Jackson’s Additional Continental Regiment was stationed at Pawtuxet, Rhode Island, after participating in the Battle of Rhode Island three months earlier. On November 20, ten non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the regiment petitioned their commanding officer, Col. Henry Jackson, for a day of leave to return to their hometown of Dighton, Massachusetts, for the “Day of public prayer and Thanksgiving” that had been mandated by the state of Massachusetts. With Dighton just twenty miles away, it seems to have been a fair request.

The petition states:

“Your petitioners are sincerely desirous to join with their Countrymen in the religious observance of that Day; and

whereas it wou’d afford your petitioners the highest satisfaction to be present with their Relations, Friends, and Acquaintance,/at their native places upon so joyfull an occasion, as thereby they will have opportunity of congratulating them upon the close of a very fatiguing tho’ successful campaign, and uniting with them in the agreeable services of the Day.”

[Read the full petition on our Digital Library](#)

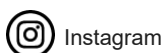


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*The American Revolution secured our independence, created our republic, established our national identity, and expressed ideals of liberty, equality, natural and civil rights, and responsible citizenship that have defined our history and will define 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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