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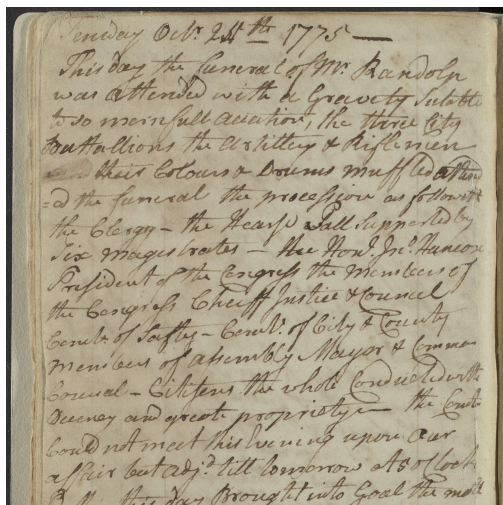
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INSTITUTE

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

today
May 1, 2024

[Calendar of Events](#)

Our Featured Story - William Judd Returns



After being away for conservation and digitization for over a year, William Judd's diary is home in our library! The unpublished diary was gifted to the library collections in 2010 by Captain Judd's great-great-great-grandson, William Hard Judd III, and his four sisters—Diana Judd Stevens, Martha Judd Estroff, Margaret Ann Judd, and Rebecca Judd. A little over a decade after the initial gift, the Order of Three Crusades 1096-1192 learned of the diary, which was in a fragile state, and provided a generous grant to give the Judd diary new life, allowing us to send it to the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia for treatment, a new archival box, and digitization. We are so grateful to the Judd family and the Order of Three Crusades 1096-1192 for their generosity and dedication to the preservation of Revolutionary War history.

The diary, which William Judd kept from August 1775 to February 1776, is especially significant in its documentation of his role in the conflict between Connecticut and Pennsylvania over possession of the upper Susquehanna frontier—a conflict that threatened to undermine the colonial union in the fight for American independence. Judd was a proprietor of the Susquehanna Company, which was formed in the mid-eighteenth century to acquire land under Connecticut title in what is now northeastern Pennsylvania. Judd also included references to the Revolutionary War and Congress, as well as descriptions of the funeral of Peyton Randolph—the first president of the Continental Congress in 1774 and 1775—and the conflicting reports regarding the capture of New York.

Capt. William Judd was born in Farmington, Connecticut, in 1743, graduated from Yale College, and was admitted to the Connecticut bar in 1765, the same year as the Stamp Act Crisis. In 1777 Judd was appointed a captain of the Third Regiment, Connecticut Line under the command of Col. Samuel Wyllys and served a total of four years before his retirement in 1781.

The digitized diary is available on our Digital Library for all to read and learn from.

This Month in Revolutionary History - The Wethersfield Conference



On May 19, 1781, Gen. George Washington, accompanied by Henry Knox, arrived in Wethersfield, Connecticut, ahead of a meeting with French leaders the comte de Rochambeau, marquis de Chastellux, and chevalier de La Luzerne. The conference two days later resulted in the plan that ultimately led to the Siege of Yorktown and victory for the United States and France over Great Britain.

The conference plan was not an example of definitive action; rather it was deliberately left open to contingency. The allies were still unsure of the intentions of the French Caribbean fleet under the comte de Grasse. Washington, who argued for an assault on the British stronghold of New York City over what he saw as a costly march to the south, agreed that “the force thus combined may either proceed in the operation against New York, or may be directed against the enemy in some other quarter, as circumstances shall dictate.” After the Wethersfield meeting, news of de Grasse’s fleet sailing north to the Eastern Seaboard influenced the allied armies’ decision to move south, targeting a combined offensive on the enemy in Virginia.

The Wethersfield Conference is a case study of the importance of flexibility in planning. When Washington and Rochambeau met, they understood that they did not know the whole picture, as the resulting plan reflected. This ability for the allies to adapt as the situation dictated led to the march to Virginia and the victory at Yorktown.

Image: Detail of *Washington et Rochambeau donnant les derniers ordres pour l'attaque d'Yorck-Town*, engraved by Felix Massard after Louis-Charles-Auguste Couder. [Paris], ca. 1840. The Society of the Cincinnati.

EVENTS

Beat the Heat with our Summer Historical Programs!



Our summer historical programs begin on May 16! Highlights from our upcoming program calendar include an author’s talk by historian and biographer Richard Brookhiser discussing his forthcoming book, *Glorious Lessons: John Trumbull, Painter of the American Revolution*, on June 4; a concert featuring David and Ginger Hildebrand of the Colonial Music Institute performing music from the marquis de Lafayette’s life and farewell tour on June 11; a lecture by historian Glenn Williams, Ph.D., commemorating the 250th anniversary of Lord Dunmore’s War on July 17; a Lunch Bite given by the Institute’s deputy director and curator, Emily Parsons, examining a portrait miniature of Lafayette wearing the Society of the Cincinnati Eagle Insignia during his farewell tour; and a panel discussion moderated by historian Don Hagist discussing how the American, British, French, and

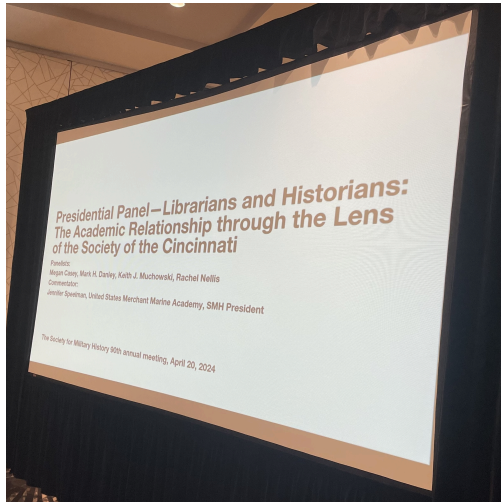
German armies waged war during the American Revolution on August 1.

Most programs are held in-person at Anderson House, but virtual options are available unless otherwise specified. To view and register for our summer historical programs visit the [events page](#) of our website.

[Explore our summer programs](#)

NEWS

The Institute's Library Shines at SMH



We were honored to participate in the Society for Military History’s annual meeting as sponsors of the presidential panel titled “Librarians and Historians: The Academic Relationship through the lens of the Society of the Cincinnati” on April 20. The panel presentations were focused on cataloging eighteenth-century materials, information literacy and digital surrogates, a former fellow’s visit to the library to study Richard Varick, and a presentation on making the most of your time in the library through the reference interview and understanding our online catalog.

The panel was made up of four librarians—two of whom are also historians and former Institute fellows. The panel was chaired by Keith Muchowski of New York City College of Technology and a 2022 Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati Fellow. Fellow panelists were Mark Danley, independent scholar and 2007 Society of the Cincinnati Scholars’ Grant recipient; Megan Casey, from the National Defense University Library; and Rachel Nellis, research services librarian at the American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati. The panel also included commentary by Jennifer Speelman, president of the Society for Military History and professor at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, and remarks by Andy Morse, executive director of the Institute.

We are looking forward to more opportunities to work with the Society for Military History in the future.

[Learn more about our library and its collections](#)

EVENTS

A Hero of Two Worlds



Join us on Thursday, May 16 at 6:30 p.m. ET for a lecture featuring historian and best-selling author Mike Duncan discussing the remarkable life of the marquis de Lafayette and the thrilling story of his lifelong quest to defend the principles of liberty and equality.

For more than fifty years, Lafayette fought courageously on both sides of the Atlantic as a soldier, statesman, idealist, philanthropist, and abolitionist. As a teenager, he ran away from France to join the American Revolution. Returning home a national hero, he helped launch the French Revolution, eventually spending five years locked in an Austrian prison. After his release, Lafayette sparred with Napoleon, joined an underground conspiracy to overthrow King Louis XVIII, and became an international symbol of liberty.

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

[Learn more and register](#)

Who We Are, What We Do



Please join us in welcoming the Institute's new director of development, Brigid Leavy!

Brigid is a graduate of Kenyon College and has a Master's degree in museum studies from New York University. Before joining the Institute, she spent much of her career at the American Battlefield Trust, where she was a member of both the fundraising and land preservation teams. Most of her work at the Trust focused on preserving and interpreting Revolutionary War battlefields, particularly in South Carolina. Prior to that, she was a curator at a small history museum outside Chicago, where she led an effort to revitalize their permanent exhibition. Brigid is especially interested in sharing the under-told stories of the American Revolution and is looking forward to helping the Institute grow its historical and

educational programs.

We are looking forward to the great work Brigid will do helping to expand the reach and impact of all of the Institute's growing programs!

Benjamin Franklin, the Turkey, and the Society of the Cincinnati



This month, the Society of the Cincinnati celebrates its 241st birthday. Its mission was (and remains) purely patriotic, to promote the ideals and memory of the American Revolution, maintain the fraternal bonds between the officers, and support members and their families in need. But soon after its founding, some accused the hereditary organization, with members drawn exclusively from the officer corps, of attempting to create an American aristocracy that might undermine the new republic. In January 1784, Benjamin Franklin, then U.S. minister to France, drafted a critique of the Society disguised as a letter to his daughter, Sarah Bache. Now famous for Franklin's assessment of the turkey as a better symbol of America than the bald eagle, this letter was an attack on the pretensions of Europe's hereditary aristocracy—merely using the Society's hereditary principle, which Franklin

thought was benign, as an opportunity to ridicule the idea of aristocratic privilege in Europe.

[Read more about Franklin's letter](#)



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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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