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News from the American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati



[CALENDAR OF EVENTS](#)

Featured Story



Explore *Revolutionary Beginnings* From Home

If you can't visit our exhibition *Revolutionary Beginnings* in person, or want to dive more into what you saw in the show, go to our website to explore a variety of resources on the battles and collections covered in our latest exhibition. Marking the 250th anniversary of the start of the Revolutionary War, the exhibition looks at three critical battles of the first year of the war—at Bunker Hill, Massachusetts; Quebec, Canada; and Sullivan's Island, South Carolina—and demonstrates how widespread the rebellion was leading up to the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

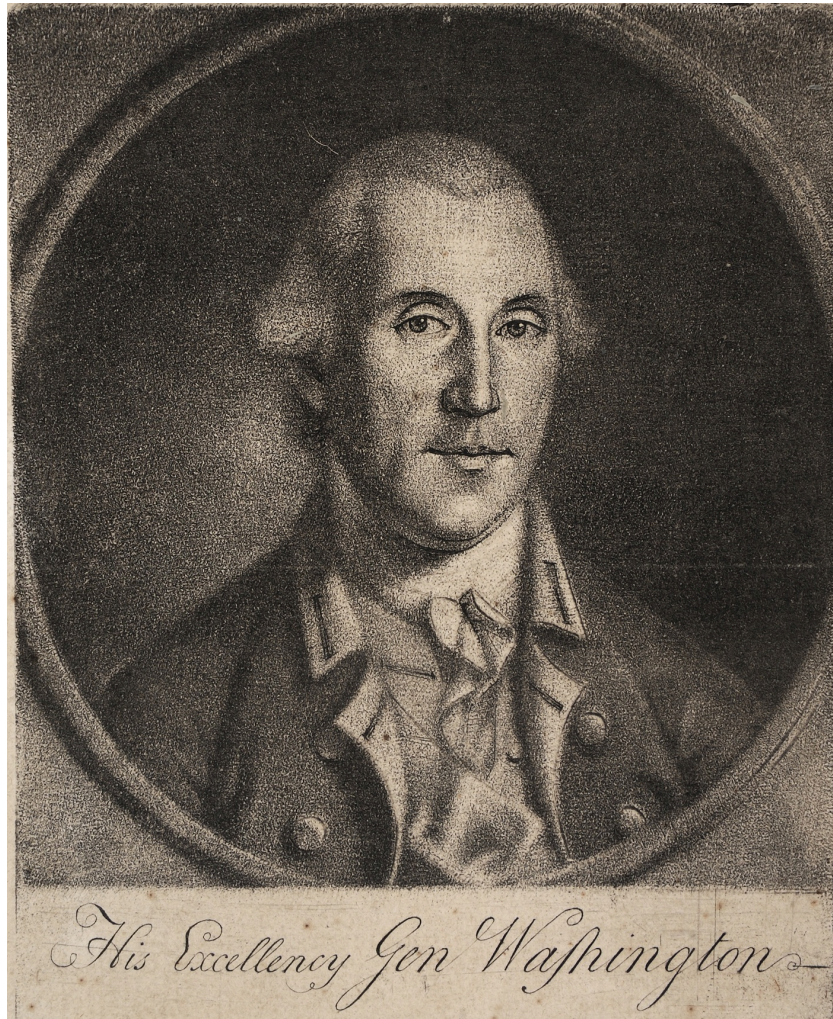
The online resources include:

- a five-minute video tour of the exhibition;
- a digital interactive of Milton Bradley's Historiscope toy of revolutionary America;

- a calendar and videos of related programs;
- a downloadable catalog of the exhibition; and
- lesson plans and other classroom resources.

Explore the exhibition

This Month in Revolutionary History



George Washington Takes Command

After being commissioned to lead the Continental forces by Congress in June 1775, George Washington left for Cambridge, Massachusetts, and arrived 250 years ago on July 3, 1775, to take command of the newly formed Continental Army during the Siege of Boston. On July 4, a day after Washington arrived, his first general orders were released from “Head Quarters, Cambridge.” These orders acknowledged that “They are now the Troops of the United Provinces of North America; and it is hoped that all Distinctions of Colonies will be laid aside; so that one and the same spirit may animate the whole.” The soldiers were to relinquish their colonial differences for that of common purpose in “defence of the Liberties of America.” However, these stirring words were saved for the fourth paragraph.

General orders were the method for an army's commanding officer to issue instruction to the men under his command. The first point of attention in the July 4 orders was to establish the extent of the stores of ordnance of the force under his command and later turned attention to matters of the order and discipline of the men and their cleanliness, offering that "exact discipline be observed, and due Subordination prevail thro' the whole Army, as a Failure in these most essential points must necessarily produce extreme Hazard, Disorder and Confusion."

Prior to taking command, Washington purchased a half dozen military books in Philadelphia that he would continue to collect, study, and travel with during his tenure as commander in chief. This study of military tactics and discipline—the art of war—would be referenced often in Washington's correspondence and general orders to his officers. One such book was Roger Stevenson's *Military Instructions for Officers Detached in the Field*. First published in 1770 in London, it became a British standard for instruction. An American edition was published in 1775 and became a bestseller for Philadelphia printer Robert Aitken. This 1775 book was also the first to be dedicated to General George Washington:

To the Honourable George Washington, Esq; General and Commander in Chief of all the Forces of the United American Colonies...the Publisher has only, in the plain and artless stile of a well-meaning citizen, to add his wishes and prayers, for your happiness and prosperity, public and domestic—for the safety and success of the brave Americans you command, till the arrival of that joyful day, when peace or conquest shall honourably terminate the dispute.

Library

Research in Progress: An Interview with Professor Sandra Moats



Sandra Moats is a 2025 library research fellow at the Institute studying the role of U.S. consuls in the development of American diplomacy. Professor Moats answered a few questions we had about her project and her many days spent in our research library. Read the interview below:

What is your research on?

The fellowship at the American Revolution Institute supported my research for a book project entitled: "U.S. Consuls and the Development of American Diplomacy." Since the nation's founding, consuls have played a crucial role supporting the needs of Americans overseas, particularly those in the maritime trades. However, the U.S. Consular Service's revolutionary origins has received less attention.

Who was responsible for negotiating the treaties with France and other nations?

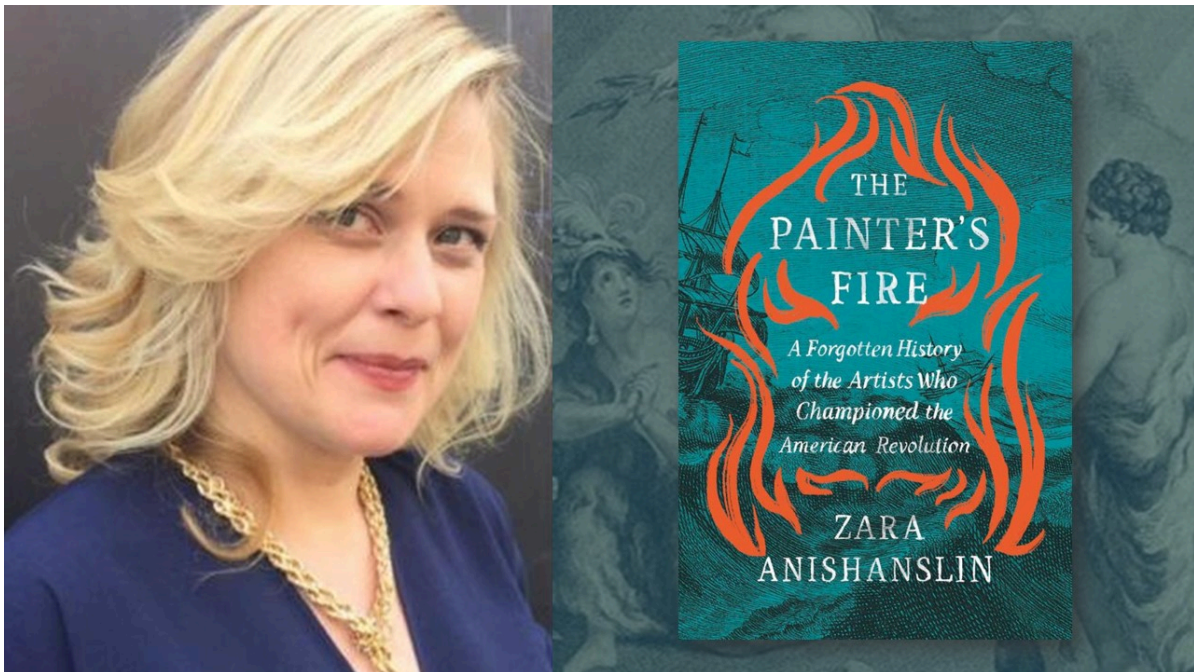
Many in the Second Continental Congress, particularly Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, believed access to America's free trade would provide enough incentive to attract European

alliances. France, however, wanted a more conventional military agreement. These competing demands produced two Franco-American treaties in 1778: one establishing a military alliance and the second dealing with trading relations, known as the Treaty of Amity and Commerce. Among its numerous provisions, the latter treaty established a consular relationship between France and United States. This provision would eventually spur the establishment of a consular service under the newly constituted U.S. government. Tasked with assisting America's maritime citizens across the globe, consuls far outnumbered political diplomats prior to the 20th century.

How have library collections been helpful to your research?

With the consular service's roots in revolutionary diplomacy and the nation's founding, the American Revolution Institute's holdings have been invaluable in my research. These sources include a detailed directory of the American consuls posted globally from 1776 to 1865. The library also possesses the memoirs of Samuel Shaw, an early consul, who helped to build economic ties between the United States and China from his posting in Canton [modern day Guangzhou]. Shaw was also a founder of the Society of Cincinnati. Larz Anderson's materials from his time as a diplomat in the late 19th and early 20th centuries have offered unexpected insights into the consular service's activities in its later decades. Lastly, the secondary literature on early American diplomacy has proved valuable in contextualizing the consular service's parameters and its activities. Revolutionary diplomacy not only laid the foundation for American foreign policy, it also led to the establishment of the U.S. Foreign Service, consisting of diplomats and consuls, to support these endeavors.

Events



Artists Who Championed the Revolution

Join us on Wednesday, July 9 at 6:30 p.m. for an author's talk featuring historian Zara Anishanslin, Ph.D., associate professor of history and art history at the University of Delaware, discussing her new book, *The Painter's Fire: A Forgotten History of the Artists Who Championed the American Revolution*.

The American Revolution was not only fought in the colonies with muskets and bayonets. On both sides of the Atlantic, artists armed with paint, canvas, and wax played an integral role in forging revolutionary ideals. Drawing from her new book, Dr. Anishanslin charts the intertwined lives of three such figures who dared to defy the British monarchy—Robert Edge Pine, Prince Demah, and Patience Wright—and who boldly risked their reputations and their lives to declare independence.

[Learn more and register](#)

Collections



A Signer's Watch

On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted a resolution declaring independence from Great Britain, and two days later, they approved the text of a declaration to announce the revolutionary decision. George Clymer, a prosperous Philadelphia merchant, was one of Pennsylvania's nine delegates to Congress that July. He could have taken with him to the State House the elegant pocket watch that is now preserved in our museum collections. An indication of wealth and status, the silver watch was made by Dutch craftsman Johannes Pieter Kroese of Amsterdam about 1770.

Clymer became active in Philadelphia politics in 1769 and quickly came to advocate for American independence. During the Revolution he served on Pennsylvania's committee of safety, attended the state's constitutional convention, and was a delegate to the Continental Congress. After the war Clymer signed the U.S. Constitution in 1787 and served a term in the first U.S. House of Representatives. He later served as the president of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and a trustee of the University of Pennsylvania.

View the watch in our online collections database

Historical Programs This Month

All programs are held in-person at Anderson House unless otherwise specified. Virtual options are available. Admission is free unless otherwise specified and registration is requested. Click the images below to learn more and register, or [click here to view our full calendar of upcoming programs.](#)



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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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