

**How Propaganda and Intersectionality
Influenced the American Revolution**

A Thesis

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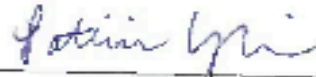
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Abstract

The overall research question for this thesis is how both propaganda and intersectionality play their respective roles within the American Revolution era in the American colonies. Many historians have brought forward different aspects of this era, ranging from 1763 through 1783, and give others a more well-rounded perspective of this time. Other historians have also discussed some of the propaganda, while others have focused on bringing forward the discussion of the biographies of those involved, specifically Abigail Adams, Phillis Wheatley and Molly Brant.

There was the possibility of not finding the information regarding propaganda and intersectionality playing roles within the American Revolution, and if that had been the case, this would be an entirely different thesis. The research shows that both propaganda and intersectionality played different roles within this era, as primary and secondary sources show the usage of both persuasion through propaganda and the roles that Adams, Wheatley, and Brant found themselves in throughout this time.

Both propaganda and intersectionality played roles in decisions that were made as the years continued towards and through the American Revolution. This research is important as it expands the overall knowledge and understanding of the American Revolution era, and how other factors played a role in the outcome of the war.

Introduction

In 1769, the women of Virginia attended a ball held in the capitol Richmond, and what they were wearing became the talk of the town. More than 100 women had spun their own gowns, and their actions encouraged other women to follow suit. They were promoting the idea of spinning their own clothes in a way to boycott the British taxation that was placed on imported goods.¹ Many of these boycotts started with women, as they had the purchasing power for their homes, so them taking on this stance of creating their own clothing and gaining media attention through newspapers allowed for their stance to be spread throughout the colonies. Women's roles are just one part of this research.

Within this thesis, I look at how propaganda and intersectionality played their respective roles within the American Revolution Era, ranging from the 1760's through the 1780's. The thesis of this research is discussing how propaganda influenced colonists into going against the British government, leading to a war and ultimately the creation of a brand-new nation, and how intersectionality of women influenced movements prior to and during the war. I look at how we can better discuss the topics of propaganda and intersectionality in the classroom at levels students can understand in hopes of increasing their critical thinking skills.

Propaganda has always played a role in the world. Many have and continue to use it to get their point across, often in a satirical way, some will use it to express their emotions, while others will offer differing perspectives in the hope of persuading others to their side. This technique is used in many different situations, but especially in war. When trying to gain traction for a side, propaganda becomes an important piece of literature to be consumed by the masses—the colonial era of the United States is no different. As the French and Indian War ended, the

¹ Jennifer González, "The Hands That Spun the Revolution," The Library of Congress, October 25, 2022, <https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2022/10/the-hands-that-spun-the-revolution/>.

British Parliament needed to recoup the millions of pounds of debt. As such, members of Parliament looked to taxes. This became an issue because the taxes placed on the colonists would ultimately be one sided, though would not cost as much as they did back in England. The colonists preferred their taxes be more like tariffs on imported goods than direct taxes. Over the course of the twelve years between the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 and the start of the American Revolution in 1775, the colonists fought back against the taxes placed on them. In looking at these taxes, it is safe to assume two different reasons led to the fight against these taxes. First being that the colonists had no one speaking on their behalf in Parliament, leading to the slogan “No Taxation Without Representation” and that they were placing direct taxes and not relying on tariffs. Looking at the percentage difference though, it is hard to fully back the colonial reactions. British citizens were expected to pay more taxes to pay off the French and Indian War, their taxes being upwards of 26 shillings each year, while the colonists only had to pay 1 shilling.² While it is understandable that they would want representation, as well as no direct taxation, it seems to be that the colonists, taxation wise, had it better than the British citizens across the Atlantic.

Within the propaganda, we see not only how the colonists were feeling during this era when they were pushed back against the taxes and ultimately during the war, but we are also able to see the propaganda that started coming out during the Revolution in Great Britain and how they were feeling regarding yet another war. By the end of the Revolution, Great Britain would have spent seventeen years at war in a twenty-nine-year period, and that does not include other wars that the country may have been involved in. These are only the years that they dealt with wars on the American continent. About halfway through the Revolution, even some of the British citizens became furious with the government and the need to draw this war out instead of

² Jen Deaderick, “What We Get Wrong about Taxes and the American Revolution,” PBS, December 26, 2016.

allowing the colonies to have their independence. Ultimately, they were the ones that were going to have to pay for them dragging it out. Propaganda would not be only on one side of the war that played on citizens emotions.

Women during this time did not sit idly by, as they watched the men take care of the battles. Many found ways that they could assist in the manner that they were best at. Some would stay home and care for their homes and land, as we see in Abigail Adams, but also be outspoken in what they see as necessary changes. While we cannot call Abigail Adams a feminist, as the term did not come around until almost the 20th century, she did show some of these ideals in that women should be considered more equal to their male counterparts. Some women made clothing for the soldiers, some made food, and some were on the front lines helping the men where they could by bringing food, water or helping the wounded. They also would run communities behind the scenes as well, as we see with Molly Brant, and how their impact played in outcomes of not only the political side of the communities, but also how it affected their lives. There is also literature that comes from those who were not thought to have been of the race that could be educated. That is seen with Phillis Wheatley. She showed colonists that anyone can be educated, and what they could do with that education. She put her education into words. Wheatley wrote for those who had loved one's past, she wrote to King George III and put her thoughts on the political climate into poetry.

Propaganda played a massive role in persuading the colonists to join against the British government. Without the use of this type of media, there is no telling how or even if the Revolution would have occurred or if it would have been as successful for the colonies as it was. I break down many of the propaganda pieces that were published during the lead up and active war that were used to persuade colonists to join boycotts and the revolution. While propaganda is

not a new topic within the scope of persuasion and war, going past the Boston Tea Party lets the discussion become broader as this research not only includes colonial propaganda, but also will include the eventual publication of British propaganda as the war drug on.

The discussion of intersectionality is a relatively newer topic in the overall span of historical research, but it is an important one that should not be overlooked. Intersectionality was a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 and discusses how more than just our gender plays a role within our lives. Race, nationality, sexuality, disability and many others dictate what kind of oppression one may come across. In Crenshaw's article titled *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics*, she looks at the experience of a Black woman, as she can speak from her personal experience. Within her writing, she explains that "for feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse to embrace the experiences and concerns of Black women, the entire framework that has been used as a basis for translating 'women's experience' or 'the Black experience' into concrete policy demands must be rethought and recast."³ She also goes on to explain using court cases how Black women either had to pick that they were being racially profiled or that the actions taken against them were sexist. These court cases would use White women and Black men to go against both racist and sexist claims made by these women. This is a movement that still has a way to go to make sure that a person is not treated differently due to their gender, race, sexual orientation, or any other situation that a person cannot control.

Abigail Adams, Phillis Wheatley and Molly Brant were not just women, but women in different spheres that allowed their contributions to be so incredibly different, yet impactful. This thesis will break down how the different spheres these women were in impacted the battle for

³ Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989 (1989): 140.

independence. Women's roles, while discussed, are not discussed as in depth as their male counterparts. With this research, more of that discussion will be added to the over topic of the American Revolution. Breaking down how a colonial woman, an indigenous woman and an enslaved woman all had their individual impacts brings a more in-depth conversation forward as they are being recognized for more than being women, but how their roles within the colonies impacted decisions that were made by the men in their lives.

Bringing forward the topics of propaganda and intersectionality allows for discussion to expand to include more events and figures from this era, creating a deeper understanding and a more varied scope of how the United States was able to gain its independence while using the tools of propaganda within the media, and women's impact on the war from the home side.

Education is a key tool in sharing not only what is regularly discussed, but also showing how everyday citizens could have an impact in the political climate. Lessons and creative activities allow students to take on the role of these citizens, putting themselves in others' shoes while gaining empathy for historical issues and those affected by them. Taking events from the past, explaining them, and allowing students to be creative through activities such as propaganda posters gives them such a perspective. While there is an importance to stay within the standards created by one's state, it is also useful to bring in other situations that may not be within those standards to help give a fuller perspective of the historical event that is being discussed. Staying within the lines of what a state has deemed important within their educational standards is incredibly important, but that does not mean that additional information cannot be brought forward in a class to expand on the knowledge that students are receiving. Doing small analysis assignments allows for that information to be shared, critical thinking to be built, all without pulling away from the standards that have been created by a committee of our peers for us to

follow within the classroom. If we were to follow them and not expand on additional information, it would be at a great disservice to our students. Giving short analysis assignments lets us create this environment of learning additional information without taking away from learning other events within our history.

There is an importance of making sure that there is a full discussion of historical events, as it lends to a better understanding of why boycotts occurred and, ultimately, the breaking up of a colony with their mother country. This will bring forward information regarding how propaganda was used during the colonial era through the American Revolution to persuade colonists to join in the Patriot movement against the British, the way intersectionality played a role with three different women and how they were able to help from their respective spheres without having stepped onto the battlefield themselves, and how to incorporate these topics within the classroom in order to give our students a more well-rounded education and building on the critical thinking that is necessary for their futures. The discussion of how propaganda and intersectionality impacted the American Revolution is one that will occur through this thesis.

Chapter 1

Historiography of Propaganda and Intersectionality during the American Revolution

The study of the American Revolution has been around for over two hundred years, with the study of the events starting shortly after the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783. Shortly after the war, historians started looking into what caused it, the literature that came from it, as well as the propaganda and images that would come from this era in United States history. In this research, I will add to the educational curriculum concerning the American Revolution by looking at the roles that propaganda and intersectionality played within the Revolution and how colonists were persuaded to join in the fight, as well as how women were impacting the war from the domestic sphere. While there is a focus on the events that led up to the Revolution, propaganda does not seem to take center stage, but the focus is the physical reactions that occur due to passed laws. I also add to the discussion of women and the intersectionality that they brought to the Revolution era. Often women are looked at as side characters within the overall discussion, and this research will add to those who have come before me to bring women to the forefront of discussions pertaining to Colonial America and the American Revolution. This thesis examines the role propaganda had preceding and during the American Revolution, examining how it shaped public opinion and fueled the revolution, while also highlighting the intersectionality of three different women and their experiences during this time. Using this information, along with the current Oklahoma Academic Social Studies Standards⁴ set by the Oklahoma Department of Education, I offer different lessons that can be used in a middle school classroom, expanding on analysis and creativity of students to help them understand these topics at their appropriate ages.

⁴<https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/osde/documents/services/standards-learning/social-studies/Oklahoma-Academic-Standards-for-Social-Studies.pdf>

When it comes to the discussion of the propaganda discussed with the American Revolution, we see the same few pieces passed through education, such as Paul Revere's piece entitled *The Bloody Massacre in King-Street*. The image depicts the Boston Massacre, though only showing the British as the aggressors, and the colonists only being attacked. There is also the written aspect, like Thomas Paine's "Common Sense", which was published to gain support for a democratic nation and pull away from the British monarch. While there is already such limited time to discuss the Revolution and the events that led up to it, including different propaganda pieces within a quick primary source analysis will allow for us as educators to increase the understanding of how propaganda works within a society and how they use it to persuade communities. There are several national and state organizations with resources that help educators give fuller lessons like the American Historical Association⁵, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History⁶ and the Oklahoma Council for History Education⁷ just to name a few.

Within the research of American History, one of the historians that has made a large impact within the American Revolution discussion is Gordon Wood, a Pulitzer Award Winning American Historian. He has written multiple books on this era such as *Representation in the American Revolution* in 1969, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* in 1991, *Revolutionary Characters* in 2006, *The Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States* in 2011, along with compiling primary sources from the American Revolution in two volumes. He argues in his research that the founding fathers were fighting back due to their deeply held belief in republican ideals, self-governance and the idea of popular sovereignty. In use of *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate* volumes, he states in

⁵ <https://www.historians.org/teaching-learning/k-12-education/>

⁶ <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/>

⁷ <https://www.okche.org/>

volume one that “Pamphlets concerned with the American controversy from both sides of the Atlantic number well over a thousand, and they cover all of the significant issues of politics,”⁸ as pamphlets were the easiest and cheapest way to pass along information for discussion and debate. One of the most famous pamphlets being from Thomas Paine with *Common Sense*. Wood takes the time prior to the pamphlet to summarize, giving his own voice to these documents. He also adds in the history leading up to each document, giving readers a time and place mentally of where and why these pamphlets were written. Breaking down the different pamphlets prior to reading them also lets readers understand what the document is trying to convey. With the way that language was used in the 18th century, it can be difficult for some to grasp what the overall topic of the pamphlet is, where others may be more obvious, and Wood does a wonderful job breaking down propaganda pieces into a brief one-page explanation for each piece he includes.⁹

Bernard Bailyn is a Pulitzer Prize winning historian that focuses on Colonial America and the American Revolution. He has written several books such as *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* in 1967, *The Origins of American Politics* in 1768, *The Great Republic: A History of the American People* in 1977 and *Faces of Revolution: Personalities & Themes in the Struggle for American Independence* in 1990. A common argument that he has made in his research is that the colonists were basing their Revolution on the need for liberty and self-governance, while using propaganda in an almost amateur way, to bring these ideals to fruition in the colonies. According to the New York Times, “Bernard Bailyn, a Harvard scholar whose award-winning books on early American history reshaped the study of the origins of the

⁸ Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1764-1772*, Vol. 1, (New York, The Library of America, 2015), xiii.

⁹ Some work done by Gordon Wood in relation to the American Revolution, Propaganda and Representation. Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (London: Phoenix, 2005); Gordon S. Wood, *Representation in the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008); Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991)

American Revolution.”¹⁰ In his book, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967), he breaks down the colonists lacking experience in creating propaganda and how it stems from emotion and being amateurs in the realm of propaganda creation. Within the text, Bailyn talks about both Patriot and Loyalist pamphlets, the defamation that took place against those who are Founding Fathers, as well as others whose names are lesser known. He does give pamphleteers credit for not being ones to spread fear or blind emotions. He also has a book titled *Pamphlets of the American Revolution* (1967), and in it he discusses how the colonists used the knowledge they had to create pamphlets surrounding the issues of the time, explaining how they could vary in length, but that they were usually small enough to carry around. Using his expertise, he brings to the study of the Revolutionary War knowledge and research surrounding both propaganda and pamphlets. Within this text, Bailyn gives a comprehensive understanding of propaganda that was rampant throughout the colonies.¹¹

Within this thesis, I look at Abigail Adams, Phillis Wheatley and Molly Brant, and how these women made their own impacts within the lead up to the war, as well as decisions and meetings that took place allowing them to have a small hand in the war. Abigail Adams, being on the Patriot side of the war, took control of every aspect of the Adams household while John Adams was away. In her letters, she was able to use influence to try and garner rights for women. Molly Brant was one of the leaders of the Mohawk Nation, along with her brother Joseph Brant. While he was away fighting alongside the British, Molly Brant was back with the nation, making decisions for the tribe as well as their soldiers. Her choices, as well as their alignment with the

¹⁰ Renwick McLean and Jennifer Schuessler, “Bernard Bailyn, Eminent Historian of Early America, Dies at 97,” *The New York Times*, August 7, 2020.

¹¹ Some work done by Bernard Bailyn include: Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Bernard Bailyn, *Origins of American Politics* (New York: Vintage, 1968); Bernard Bailyn, Robert Dallek, and David Davis, *The Great Republic: A History of the American People* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 1977); Bernard Bailyn, *Faces of Revolution: Personalities & Themes in the Struggle for American Independence* (New York: Knopf, 1990).

British led to the Mohawk removal from the American colonies and forced them into Canada. Phillis Wheatley, raised in a loyalist household, held loyalist ideologies, though she was less likely to act on them than her counterparts in this thesis. She was able to meet many upper-class British citizens, as well as having correspondence with King George III and George Washington. Her education allowed for there to be an insight into slavery within the colonies and the slave trade across the Atlantic Ocean.

Women's history is still a relatively newer area of scholarship, as it didn't come to fruition until the 1960's. Carol Berkin is a historian that focuses on women's role within the American Revolution. Having written many books on different aspects of the impact that women have, she is one that should be considered a leader in the field of women's history during Colonial America. Some of these books are *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* in 1996, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* in 2005, as well as creating books for students like *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution* in 2003, with this book being aimed at grades 9 and up. According to the City of New York University's website, she has been studying this area for over forty years, allowing for the research to evolve as we learn and discover more from the colonial and American Revolution era. She has written a book titled *Clio in the Classroom: A Guide for Teaching U.S. Women's History*, giving advice on how to introduce these women and more into the classroom, allowing for educators to learn ways to incorporate women, who are often overlooked when it comes to the discussion of history in the classroom. She doesn't focus on just one woman, but instead focuses her research on most of the women during Colonial America. In Berkin's writing, she

makes us aware that there is not as much literature on women as there is on men, leading to gaps in information.¹²

Women's history took off when it became an area of focus in the 1960's. Mary Beth Norton is a historian who focuses on colonial history, becoming well known for her research into Women's history and the Salem witch trials. In her book entitled *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800*, released in 1990, she explains how the roles of women had changed through this era, also going into detail about how women of every social class knew nothing about the family's finances, as it was the man's job. While women were expected to run the household and have purchasing power, the amount of money their family had was not something that was commonly known.¹³

Another historian who has brought forth women's stories and voices is Edith Gelles, a senior scholar at the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford. Many of her publications focus on Adams, allowing her to be seen as a leader in knowledge over Abigail Adams. She also edited a publication of Adams' letters, allowing historians the opportunity to easily find their letters and read through what the two were going through in their very different lives during the American Revolution, as well as writing a book on the two of them and their relationship. Though two sources I pulled for Gelles writing were from articles, it cannot be overlooked how she was able to put together the story of John and Abigail Adams without overshadowing one. In her article "Bonds of Friendship: The Correspondence of Abigail Adams

¹² Some of Carol Berkin's research: Carol Berkin, Margaret Crocco, and Barbara Winslow, *Clio in the Classroom: A Guide for Teaching U.S. Women's History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Carol Berkin, *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997); Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005); Carol Berkin, *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2003).

¹³ Some of Mary Beth Norton's research: Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1997); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

and Mercy Otis Warren”, Gelles writes about both women, explaining how important letter writing was at the time. These women were always writing, if not to each other, to their husbands and others in their lives. The article goes on to explain how writing impacted their lives, and how they were able to communicate with loved ones far away, especially in a time of war. This is a theme that continues through Gelles’ other writings over Abigail Adams. In her article titled “Abigail Adams Domesticity and The American Revolution”, Gelles goes on to explain how important the role of mother and wife were to Abigail Adams. She shined in this sphere, though she never really adjusted to parenting and running the household alone. Within the article, she explains how Abigail Adams pivoted in the domestic sphere during the ten-year span of the Revolution, showing that the war affected everyone, not just the men on the battlefield.¹⁴

Phillis Wheatley is an enslaved woman that I look at in this thesis. With her being educated, it has allowed for historians to get some small insight into enslavement during the colonial era. In looking at who is leading the research on Africans during the colonial period, Vincent Carretta is one of them. He focuses on African American History and African Diaspora, with several books published focusing on African figures such as Olaudah Equiano and one of the focuses of this research, Phillis Wheatley. He brings to light some lesser-known information surrounding Wheatley, allowing for current and future historians to get a better understanding of who Phillis Wheatley was exactly, and allowing for us to expand on the information he has presented. In the text used in this research, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage*, published in 2011, he has written the first published biography surrounding Phillis Wheatley. Prior to this book, there had not been a biography surrounding her or her life. We had her poems,

¹⁴ Some of Edith Gelles research: Edith Gelles, *Abigail and John: Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009); Edith Gelles, *Portia: The World of Abigail Adams* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Edith Gelles, *First Thoughts: Life and Letters of Abigail Adams* (New York: Twayne Publishers; Prentice Hall International, 1998); Edith Gelles, *Abigail Adams: A Writing Life* (London: Routledge, 2014).

and those can be deciphered in different ways depending on the reader, but his book gives Wheatley her story and gives other historians a foundation to help expand on her story. Carretta has brought Phillis Wheatley to the forefront for a part of history that disregarded people of color and women. For Phillis Wheatley to be both an enslaved African and a woman, she had even more to prove to society than her white counterparts. That is what I hope to have accomplished with the section that focuses on Phillis Wheatley, to continue to add to her story.¹⁵ Another historian who has written on Phillis Wheatley is David Waldstreicher, having written *The Odyssey of Phillis Wheatley: A Poet's Journeys Through American Slavery and Independence* in 2023. He uses her writings to create a story about her life, her connections and correcting any misunderstandings surrounding her.

Molly Brant, a Mohawk native, brings to this thesis a different view of how being on the loyalist side of the war can impact not only the person making decisions, but for the community. While there are few historians who have a focus on Molly Brant, often finding historians who focus on her brother Joseph, Helen Robinson and Peggy Leavey have written books on Molly Brant, both being Canadian women, though Leavey is a former librarian, but I was only able to find that Robinson writes about Canadian history and natural history. Most text focuses on the Nation as a whole, giving little to Molly Brant's story. I am hoping that with my research on her, more will look deeper into who she was. Robinson wrote *Mistress Molly, the Brown Lady: A Portrait of Molly Brant*. She breaks down Molly Brant's life from childhood through her rise through the Mohawk ranks, her role within the tribe during the Revolutionary War, and the forced removal of the loyalist tribes. While Molly Brant was a controversial person within the

¹⁵ Some of Vincent Carretta's research: Vincent Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2011); Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2005); Vincent Carretta, *George III and the Satirists from Hogarth to Byron*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

tribe in the years after the war, upon her passing, she was still looked at as someone who was incredibly influential within the tribe. Leavey also covers Brant's life, though she took *Molly Brant: Mohawk Loyalist and Diplomat* in a more political take. While she also covered a lot of the same parts of her life that Robinson did, she looked at her life from the perspective of a woman being in power, shedding a different light on Molly Brant.¹⁶¹⁷

In my research, which I plan on expanding on as I continue my education, the focus with these topics is with the hopes to add more to the discussion around not only propaganda, but also the important roles that women play in history, even if it is behind the scenes so to speak. With propaganda, especially in education, very few pieces end up in the overall discussion. The main one being Paul Revere's piece on the Boston Massacre. That is possibly the most popular piece to come out of the Revolution. Looking back on my own K-12 education, and even in my American history courses while completing my undergraduate, any propaganda images from the British side were not shown or discussed. Very little discussion of how the British citizens started to feel as the war dragged on. While yes, it is American History, it is important to include more than just the one side with historical events. Being able to include more than just one version of an event allows for the study of history to be more well-rounded, this includes bringing in propaganda used by the Loyalists and the British during a time where the Patriots are typically the focus. There are many sites that allow for there to be an expansion in our lessons within the classroom as we navigate the newer generations that come through our classrooms.¹⁸

¹⁶ Some of Helen Robinson's research: Helen Caister Robinson, *Mistress Molly, the Brown Lady: A Portrait of Molly Brant* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1980); Helen Caister Robinson, *Joseph Brant: A Man for His People* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1986).

¹⁷ Due to Peggy Leavey's position as a librarian, this is the only book that is relevant to this research: Peggy Dymond Leavey, *Molly Brant: Mohawk Loyalist and Diplomat* (Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn Press, 2015).

¹⁸ These are just some of the sites that are helpful when it comes to teaching the American Revolution in the classroom: americanrevolutioninstitute.org/teaching-the-revolution-today/the-american-revolution-in-our-schools/ ; files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED606970.pdf ; teachingamericanhistory.org ; <https://www.sar.org/> ; <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jahc/3310410.0004.307/--teaching-the-american-revolution-and-founding?rgn=main%3Bview>

Including British propaganda allows for us to see that even they got to the point where they wanted the war to be over, and to give the colonies their independence. The country was already drowning in debt from the French and Indian War twenty years prior, and the taxes they were seeing were higher than the colonists were seeing. While education tends to focus on the colonists being wronged, there is little discussion of the British citizens being wronged as well, they just looked different than the colonists. In bringing forward not only propaganda that is already well known, but also other images that are lesser known, I hope to show that the propaganda didn't stop when the war started. They still had a split of Patriots and Loyalists, and the more they could get on their side, the better. While there is not as much loyalist propaganda, we can't dismiss the thought that it was possibly around in their pamphlets and newspapers as well. I was unable to find any up to this point, but that doesn't mean that it's not out there, and I hope that with my continued research that I can uncover propaganda from the Loyalists to see how they tried to persuade colonists to remain loyal to their home country.

There are two different ways that propaganda is typically looked at. Neutralism allows for historians to look at propaganda in a way that allows us to look at it without a lens of persuasion. There is also the moralism view on propaganda, and how it can be used to persuade the population into thinking one way or the other, taking a bit of a person's autonomy away to change their thoughts. I fall into neutralism when it comes to looking at the propaganda of the American Revolution era, looking at how people used propaganda to persuade their audience into going against the British government. It was a strong tool at the time, as information was not easily accessible as it is today. While I understand the thinking behind the moralist viewpoint, it is important to remember when looking back at certain events we must look at it less with distrust of those who created it but look at the bigger picture as to why these pieces were created

in the first place. This lends itself to the neutrality of looking into historical propaganda and allows for current propaganda to be looked at with some speculation of what thought, or ideology is trying to be pushed into the narrative and why. Neither is better than the other, just allows for different interpretations of how propaganda is and was used within human history.

The role that women have played throughout history is one that is undeniable, and as the field of history has expanded, women are being brought to the narrative where they have always belonged. Once Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the idea of intersectionality, it gave historians a new way to look at historical figures. Not only are we looking at the obstacles they may have faced just due to the time, but also how did their race or gender create further obstacles for them to overcome. We can see this with the three women that are at the focus of this research. They all had their own struggles with being women, and bringing in Molly Brant and Phillis Wheatley's race gives us additional context as to what barriers they had to push through by not being of European descent. With this starting point for my research, I hope to not only expand on these women, but include other women and some obstacles that they had to push through to get to where they ended up in life, and the impacts that they made.¹⁹

History, having already made leaps and bounds in focusing on more of the complete story, still has a long way to go in making sure that proper research and focus is given in areas that fell to the wayside until more recently. There are centuries to make up for, for example the field of women's history did not really become mainstream until the 1960's, and while this area has made important discoveries, there is still more to uncover to change the narrative

¹⁹ Some research on Intersectionality: Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," University of Chicago Legal Forum 1989 (1989); Tanja Bastia, Kavita Datta, Katja Hujo, Nicola Piper, and Matthew Walsham, "Reflections on Intersectionality: A Journey through the Worlds of Migration Research, Policy and Advocacy", *Gender, Place & Culture* 30 (3): 460–83, 2022, doi:10.1080/0966369X.2022.2126826.; Shelby Billups et al., "On Intersectionality: Visualizing the Invisibility of Black Women," Springer Open, November 26, 2022, <https://cognitiveresearchjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41235-022-00450-1>.

surrounding the work that women did.²⁰ Without women, many movements may not have been established, or as successful as they ended up being. A great example of this is the women during Colonial America using boycotts and creating their own materials that were typically purchased. This helped the overall movement against the British. If women had not been able to step up in the domestic sphere, it may not have been successful in the way of boycotting.

In the sources that have been pulled, they were able to help make my argument about the usefulness of propaganda, as well as the way in which the three women discussed were able to contribute to society and ultimately the war in the different ways that their lives allowed. Being women is where a lot of their similarities stop. Minorities were not thought to be of the same level as Europeans, not as much was left in the way of writings when it came to their experiences. The 1960's was a time when minorities were starting to become more studied within the world of history. Women's movements, Indigenous movements and the Black movements started to change the landscape for not only American history, but history of the world. "Women's history assumes that ignoring women and women's contributions leaves out important parts of the full story. Without looking at the women and their contributions, history is not complete. Writing women back into history means gaining a fuller understanding."²¹ This is the overall thought behind women's history, and I hope that within my research that it helps put women back into the historical narrative.

Women, like men, have different parts of their lives that impact what they do or how they are viewed. When Kimberle Crenshaw introduced intersectionality to explain the oppression of Black Women, history was able to expand on that thought, looking at how not only the gender but the race and background of an individual plays a role in their lives. It is shown in how

²⁰ Susan Ware, "Research Guides: American Women: Topical Essays: American Women: An Overview," Research Guides at Library of Congress, 2019.

²¹ Jone Johnson Lewis, "What Is Women's History? - A Short Overview," ThoughtCo, March 11, 2019.

different Abigail Adams, Molly Brant and Phillis Wheatley were viewed in their respective spheres, and how their impact may have been seen differently due to the circumstances that they found themselves in purely based on how they were born.

Digging into these topics has allowed for my ability to cover both propaganda and women during this time to become more well-rounded, as well as the other areas we cover with our students. While there is still some work to be done, starting these conversations with students at a middle school age, when they are starting to look at things differently, helps them to look at current events with a more objective lens, creating their own opinions as to what is going on, and seeing that propaganda is not a new thing within American history, or World history. It has been around for centuries and will continue to be around. Giving students this safe place to ask questions and analyze historical documents lets them further expand their knowledge in how both propaganda and women played their important roles within history. While this research focuses on the American Revolution, there are many ways to take the lessons taught and turn them into something that can be used across history classes, further expanding on knowledge in all areas of history and current events, not just what is taught in a classroom.

As this research is expanded on in my own future, I hope that it can help expand the knowledge within the areas of propaganda and intersectionality, as they both play such important roles within human history. By bringing in different propaganda that is not typically seen by most, especially in the education system, allows for us to see that this practice continued into the war, and even allows for us to look at the other side's propaganda. In discussing this form of media, it allows for us to see a bigger picture of what people were possibly thinking in this era as we break down the images and the purpose that they served in persuading the masses. Adding in the British propaganda allows for more to the story to be told in how as the war progressed, the

British citizens were done with the war. It was costing them even more money that they did not have, as they were still paying off the war twenty-years before the American Revolution. They were given higher taxes than the colonies, so watching as their debt increased with this war only upset them more and called for the war to come to an end.

By focusing on just a few women who made impacts within the American Revolution era, I hope to be able to bring forward more women as my research continues. These women, while not on the battlefield, endured hardships in their own ways, and show us that we as women can overcome anything put before us. We are stronger than history has led many to believe, and as women start to become the focus of more research, it will allow for us to use their guidance for our future generations. Putting a focus on women, and how their differences impacted their lives shows just how truly diverse we are as a nation, and how important that is for us to succeed in our present and future endeavors as a country. All people, no matter their race or gender, allow for countries to succeed, and seeing how Abigail Adams, Molly Brant and Phillis Wheatley were able to thrive in a world that did not look at women, especially women of color, as influential figures show just how far we have come, but also how far we still must go. From leading a home, to leading a Nation, to writing and publishing when many thought it was impossible shows the true characteristics of women and how they can persevere through anything. These women are not the only ones who made a lasting impact on our nation's history, in fact there were hundreds, giving these women a voice will lend itself to giving more historical women their voices back as we continue to put them back into the narrative of our history.

We are 60 years away from the movements that led to more equality within our lives for minorities, and the shift to including minorities within the narrative of history. While to groups, like my students, that seems so long ago, it's important to remember that it was not that long ago

and that the research into women and minorities is still relatively new to the discipline of history. For centuries these groups of people have been largely ignored, or only briefly mentioned to progress the story of man, it is up to us to bring these stories to light. There is the issue of lack of sources when it comes to women and minorities, as many were kept uneducated or just educated enough to give their children a basic education until they were able to go to school. In the sense of my research, I was fortunate enough to have women who were educated enough to create their own writings and give insight to who they were in a time when the colonies were fighting for their freedom and creating their own nation. It is up to us to dig into stories, letters, newspapers and the like to help put more women and minorities back into their historical places.

In my research, I explain how propaganda played such an important role in the creation of our nation, and why the topic of propaganda remains an important topic to share with students today. It is used as a tool to persuade people, for good or for bad, but an important tool, nonetheless. These are important primary sources that are often used within the classroom setting, and being in the education system, I have been able to include more propaganda pieces than in years past as I have come across images that I had not seen prior to researching the usage of this tool during the Revolutionary Era. Students find these pieces interesting, especially with the usage of animals within pieces.

Including women is something that I have always been passionate about, as we have been excluded from the narrative for centuries. Being involved in education, I also see a lack of marginalized representation, leading to my interest in including women of color within my research. It has allowed me to really focus on just a few, knowing there are hundreds more who played their own important roles, but digging deeper into these three women has also bled into the classroom during our Revolution unit. My students from all backgrounds can find someone

to connect to as they are being represented more within the field of history. It is something that I hope that myself, other historians, and even students can find ways to further expand on creating this sense of belonging when we include more women and minorities into the narrative.

In conclusion, my research lends itself to breaking more walls down for the discussion of propaganda and intersectionality, and their importance within the overall history of humanity. No one person's story is more important than another's, as we all have our roles to play. The usage of propaganda is not an old concept, nor is it a new one. It has been around for centuries and will continue to be in our lives if there are people who want to push their own narrative. It is important that we look at propaganda and intersectionality with a lens of sharing a full understanding of our past, in the hopes that we can progress towards a better future.

Chapter Two

Propaganda that Ignited a Revolution

Following the end of the French and Indian War in 1768, British colonies in North America faced countless tax acts that were passed to lower the debt. However, this led to unrest in the colonists. The spread of inflammatory information, such as biased propaganda, was pushed to help the Patriot cause against the British. Propaganda is both a potent tool for war and a way to promote an idea regarding another country. The lead up to the American Revolution thirteen years later in 1783, was no different.

Discussing different propaganda pieces used during this era allows for us to create a better understanding of how not only the colonists, but also British citizens, were using this kind of media to garner attention to the cause. Though the British would not publish their own until later in the war, it is apparent that letting the colonies go was a better option to British citizens than what the government was willing to do. The scholarship on propaganda discusses how, while it is disinformation, it is a valuable tool though “this is not the primary way in which journalism or media messaging has been understood in many journalism schools or mainstream communications departments.”²² While propaganda can be seen as misinformation or ‘fake news’, as is common terminology now, governments and militaries don’t take it lightly.

A discussion that needs to be had prior to digging deeper into the propaganda, is the idea of masculinity. Most of these pieces have to do with men and masculinity with the idea of going to war. Within society, there are social constructs, and the idea of masculinity falls under the social constructs. “Despite the evident belief of many that masculinity and femininity are unchanging and inevitable properties of male and female bodies, respectively, these attributes are

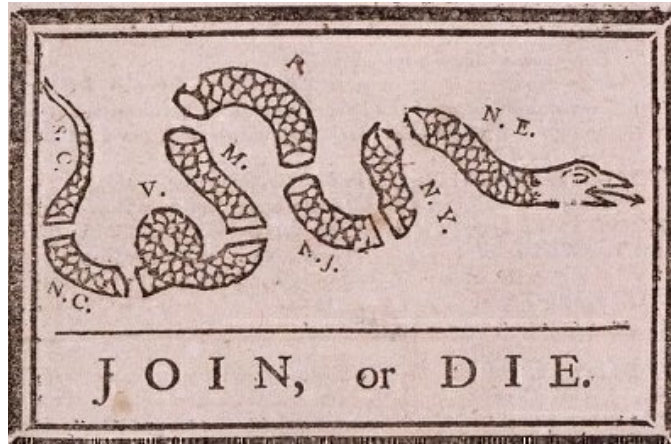
²² C. W. Anderson, “Propaganda, Misinformation, and Histories of Media Techniques: HKS Misinformation Review,” Harvard Kennedy School, July 10, 2023.

in fact culturally specific and historically conditioned. If this were not so, men and women could be expected to behave identically everywhere, in all cultures and at all times.”²³ The idea of masculinity and femininity change over time, as society changes. Men are expected to be tough, rugged, show no emotions, and run everything outside of the home. Within the propaganda seen from the American Revolution era, we see how they play on this idea of masculinity. War is also seen as masculine, so tying the two together allows for the creators of the propaganda pieces to play on the masculine emotions of the men. “Whereas sex is given...gender is behavior and social conditioning and learned ways of being that we can unlearn, unmake, undo.”²⁴ It is important to remember that gender and sex are different, as gender is based on constructs. History does not change the original social constructs of a society, but knowing how these are constructed, it allows for us to better understand why certain pieces or decisions were made.

During the French and Indian War, or the Seven Years' War in Europe, 1754 through 1763, one of the first propaganda pieces that we really see regarding the colonies uniting as one unit is one that Benjamin Franklin created at the beginning of the war in 1754, the “Join or Die” cartoon to unite the colonies into one instead of continuing as thirteen different entities. While it did not help unite the colonies during the French and Indian War, it did come back into popularity in the twenty years between the publishing of the image and the start of the American Revolutionary War. The image depicts a snake broken into multiple pieces, each piece representing a colony.

²³ David Buchbinder, *Studying Men and Masculinities*, Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012, 4.

²⁴ Kathryn Stockton, “Gender Has a Story and It’s More Recent than You May Realize,” *The MIT Press Reader*, June 29, 2022.



Benjamin Franklin, *Join or Die*, Photograph, Library of Congress, May 9, 1754, Library of Congress.

Franklin would publish the “Join or Die” piece in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, where he was a publisher. Within the article, he writes of a small military defeat against the French, as George Washington reported it. While this was not Franklin’s first propaganda piece, there is an image of “a severed snake image, in two pieces, had first appeared in a 1685 book in France accompanied by the words “se rejoindre ou mourir” (will join or die),”²⁵ so it is quite possible that he pulled inspiration from the French image and created a one to represent the colonies. He also wrote within the article that “the Confidence of the French in this Undertaking seems well-grounded on the present disunited State of the British Colonies, and the extreme difficulty of bringing so many different Governments and Assemblies to agree in any speedy and effectual Measures for our common Defense and Security,”²⁶ brought to print the idea that the French could play on the fact that the colonies are not united as one, and give them a massive weakness against the French Army. “Join or Die” went along with the push for the English colonies to come together. This image comes back around the Boston Tea Party, to unite the colonies against Great Britain. The end of this war, and the ultimate removal of one of England’s biggest enemies,

²⁵ NCC Staff, “The Story behind the Join or Die Snake Cartoon,” National Constitution Center, May 9, 2024.

²⁶ NCC Staff, “The Story behind the Join or Die Snake Cartoon.”

France, being removed from the North American continent, “left many American colonists feeling more British, prouder of their membership in the great Protestant empire.”²⁷

When the French and Indian War, and subsequently, the Seven Years War, ended, the British debt had increased an almost staggering 54%, going “from £73,000,000 to £137,000,000.”²⁸ in just eight years. In the hopes of dwindling that number, the British Parliament changed the original Molasses Act from 1733, which was initially a trade barrier in the hopes of the colonies purchasing British sugar and not foreign sugar.²⁹ The Molasses Act was changed and signed as the Sugar Act, which placed duties on sugar and molasses imported into the colonies, as an attempt to repay the debts that occurred. Boycotts, protests, and smuggling were the colonists' reactions, though no propaganda images existed for the Stamp Act. This act of Parliament reduced the cost of the sugar tax from six pence down to one pence through two different price reductions, which would see a reduction in smuggling sugar and molasses in the colonies.

The passage of the Sugar Act was incredibly unpopular within the colonies and became that first domino in the lead up to the push for independence. In a letter from Thomas Cushing, Boston's Representative, to Jasper Mauduit, Parliamentary Agent for Massachusetts, Thomas stated that “The House of Representatives was clearly for making an ample & full declaration of the exclusive Right of the People of the Colonies to tax themselves & that they ought not [to] be deprived of a right they had so long enjoyed & which they held by Birth & by Charter...”³⁰

During the year of the Sugar Act, colonists began to use the slogan *No Taxation Without Representation*, due to “the first 150 years of their existence, they had been left to tax themselves

²⁷ Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1764-1772*, Vol. 1, (New York: The Library of America), 2015, xv.

²⁸ Allen S. Johnson, “The Passage of the Sugar Act,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1959): 507.

²⁹ “1733: 6 George 2 c.13: The Molasses Act,” The Statutes Project, April 19, 2017.

³⁰ Thomas Cushing, Letter to Jasper Mauduit, “Letter from Thomas Cushing to Jasper Mauduit, 17 November 1764,” November 17, 1764.

and in their way.”³¹ This slogan continued on as a protest against the British with any tax that was passed on the colonies. Daniel Dulany wrote in his pamphlet, “But who are the Representatives of the Colonies? To whom shall THEY send their Instructions...Instructions to all the Members who compose the House of Commons would not be proper.”³² The want or need to address the government was now in question, as they would normally go through their representatives back in England, and the colonists did not have this luxury, as they had no representation. Davidson words the usage of propaganda perfectly, stating “from the Whig propagandists came the ideas which rationalized the economic, political, and social interests of those who opposed British legislation, and from them came the popularization of those ideas.”³³ There was an increase in pamphlet writing and printing with the passage of the Stamp Act. Pamphlets were common, as they could vary in page number, but were also small enough to be convenient to have on hand. “The Stamp Act touched off a heavy flurry of pamphleteering in which basic American positions in constitutional theory were staked out; its repeal was celebrated by the publication of at least eleven thanksgiving sermons, all of them crowded with political theory.”³⁴

In a second attempt to clamp down on control over the colonies, the Currency Act passed at the same time as the Sugar Act. The Currency Act was put in place to keep the colonies from producing their own paper money, as Parliament wanted to keep currency as the coin they were already using.³⁵ This upset colonists as they were using paper money to pay their debts, though

³¹ David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution*, (Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, Incorporated, 1990), 47.

³² Daniel Dulany, “Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies, For the Purpose of Raising a Revenue, by Act of Parliament,” in *The American Revolution Writings from the Pamphlet Debate, 1764-1772*, ed. Gordon Wood (New York: The Library of America, 2015), 1:245.

³³ Philip Grant Davidson, *Propaganda and the American Revolution 1763-1783*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 3.

³⁴ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 4.

³⁵ “Great Britain: Parliament - The Sugar Act: 1764,” The Avalon Project Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy.

each colony either ignored the act or followed along, leaving no cohesiveness in the colonies. Neither of these acts resulted in much propaganda, but it is essential to mention these acts as they were the steppingstones that led to reaction from the colonists with protests and propaganda with the future passing of taxes and acts.

When the colonists realized that the British Parliament was not going to stop with the Sugar and Currency Acts, they knew that they needed to take steps against the passage of these acts. The first piece of propaganda, after the French and Indian War, that was published against an act was the Stamp Act. The act required a stamp to be purchased and added to items such as paper, newspapers, legal documents, degrees, and even playing cards as a source of revenue. Parliament kept British soldiers in the colonies, and it cost about £60,000 per year.³⁶ The cost per item varied depending on what needed a stamp. According to the wording of the Stamp Act, the price can range from a half penny up to six pounds.³⁷ Propaganda started almost immediately upon the passage of the Stamp Act. Viewers can see several events unfolding in the Library of Congress image. Two men are reading what can be assumed to be the Act itself, and there is a young African boy, who is shoeless, looking on as other colonists hold up pitchforks around a fire, burning a proclamation for the tax, while one man is seen at the base of the flames. Others are looking out the windows of their homes, watching the crowd below protest the newest tax. The original image was written in German, giving the perception that a German newspaper published this image in the colonies. It stated along with the image “Die Americaner widersetzen sich der Stempel-Acte, und verbrennen das aus England nach America gesandte Stempel-Papier zu Boston, im August 1764”³⁸, and with the help from Google Translate, it

³⁶ Rice University, and OpenStax College, “The Stamp Act and the Sons and Daughters of Liberty,” US History.

³⁷ “Great Britain: Parliament - The Stamp Act, March 22, 1765,” The Avalon Project Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy.

³⁸ Daniel Chodowiecki, Artist, *Die Americaner widersetzen sich der Stempel-Acte, und verbrennen das aus England nach America gesandte Stempel-Papier zu Boston, im August/ D. Chodowiecki del. et sculp*, United States, Boston Massachusetts, 1764, [Germany: s.n] Photograph.

roughly translates to “The Americans defied the Stamp Act and burned the stamp paper sent from England to America at Boston, August 1764.”

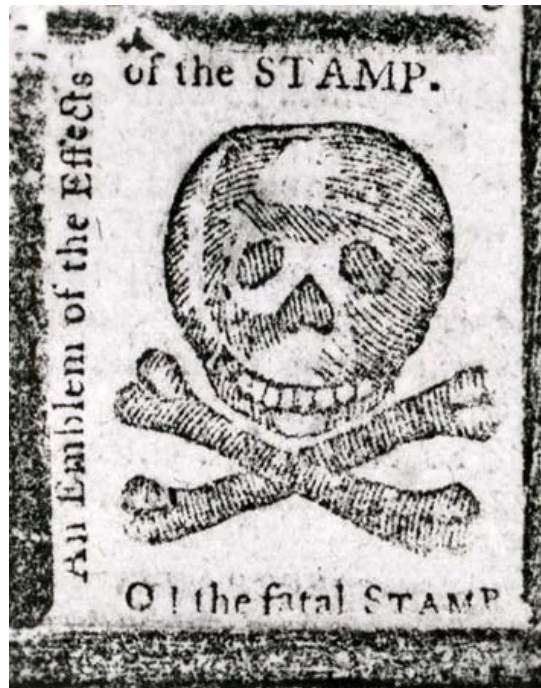


Daniel Chodowiecki, Artist, *Die Americaner widersetzen sich der Stempel-Acte, und verbrennen das aus England nach America gesandte Stempel-Papier zu Boston, im August/ D. Chodowiecki del. et sculp,*
United States, Boston Massachusetts, 1764, [Germany: s.n] Photograph.

Colonists also passed around the image of a warning, resembling a stamp, but was accompanied by a skull and crossbones with the words “An emblem of the effects of the STAMP” and was placed in the upper right-hand corner of the Pennsylvania Journal. Though the act was passed in March of 1765, it would not go into effect until November. By the following March, it had been repealed. There are a few factors that went into the repealing of the act. One of those was colonial resistance, and another was merchants and traders protesting the act.³⁹ During the Stamp Act protests, the Sons of Liberty would take out newspaper articles to

³⁹ Helen Henry Hodge, “The Repeal of the Stamp Act,” *Political Science Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1904): 252.

campaign “Liberty and no Stamp-Act” and lead a mob to rob Andrew Oliver, who had been given an order to be a stamp distributor and was invited to meet the Sons of Liberty to push for his resignation.⁴⁰



William Bradford, Publisher. *The Pennsylvania journal and weekly advertiser - expiring: in hopes of a resurrection to life again* / William Bradford. Pennsylvania Philadelphia United States, 1765.

The colonists were not out of the woods regarding acts being passed against them without any input from a colonial representative. In 1766, colonists were hit with the Declaratory Act. This act was passed at the same time as the repeal of the Stamp Act, which was passed to inform the colonists that Britain could tax them, and that Parliament had superiority over colonial governments. While most colonists were unphased by this act, the Declaratory Act led to more acts and taxes being passed.⁴¹ There does not seem to be any propaganda against the Declaratory Act. Still, the repealing of the Stamp Act, which co-occurred, led to an image of what can be

⁴⁰ “The Formation of the Sons of Liberty,” Massachusetts’s Historical Society.

⁴¹ Ryan Ervin, “The Declaratory Act as Portrayed in Colonial American Newspapers,” The Keep, 2004.

assumed to replicate a funeral procession. In the image, created by Benjamin Wilson, a British artist, he depicts eleven men walking down the street near the River Thames. Two skulls can be seen atop a hill resembling a tomb, where the procession is headed. There are multiple prominent British figures dressed in black, saying their symbolic goodbyes to the Stamp Act.⁴²

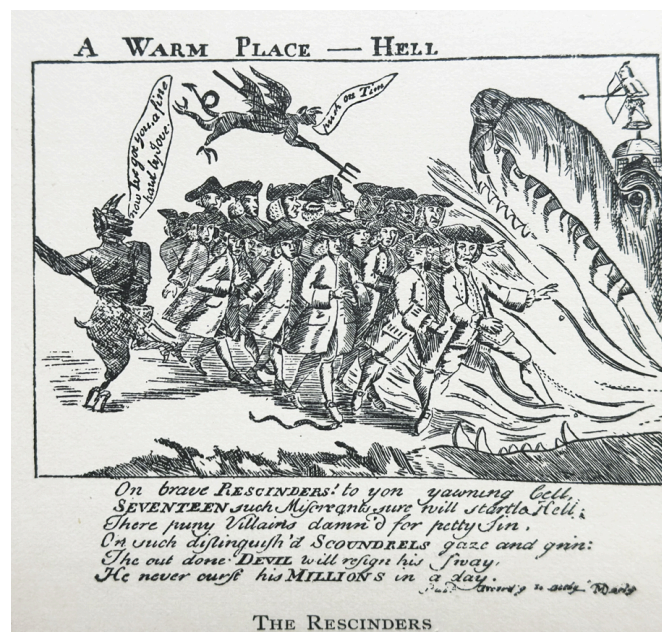


The repeal, or the funeral procession of Miss Americ-Stamp, England, United States, 1766, [England: Publisher not named, or later] Photograph.

The Townshend Act, named after its author Charles Townshend, was the first to be passed after the Declaratory Act and was passed in 1767, which placed taxes on imports of glass, paper, paint, lead, and tea. These duties were passed to increase revenue for the British government and to pay for officials in the colonies to keep the colonial government on their side. The colonists' not having a say would lead the secret group, the Sons of Liberty, to increase their presence and influence on the public beyond their originating in 1765 against the Stamp Act. One such piece was created by Paul Revere, titled “A Warm Place – Hell,” which is an image of seventeen men walking into the mouth of a dog-looking creature, with flames that represented

⁴² Benjamin Wilson, *The Repeal*, Photograph, British Museum, London: BMP, London, 1870-1954, 1766, London.

them entering Hell and two demon creatures escorting them. One of the demons' states, "Now I've got you a fine hawl by Jove" and the other states, "Push on Tim." These men represented those who had voted to rescind a letter from the Massachusetts circular that was against the taxes that had been passed under the Townshend Act.⁴³ A claim about Paul Revere taking another's image and editing it to fit his narrative cannot be proven. Upon looking at *The Scots Scourge, being a Compleat Supplement of the British Antidote to Caledonian Poison*, the source in question, the type of artwork is very similar, though there are no images that resemble this particular piece of Revere's work.⁴⁴



Paul Revere, *A Warm Place - Hell*, Granger Historical Picture Archive, Granger, 1768.

Letters were a common tactic used by the Sons of Liberty to spread their ideals to other cities within the colonies. They started to organize protests after the passage of the Stamp Act, but with the passage of the Townshend Acts, they began to create sanctions in response.⁴⁵ The Sons of Liberty were seen as the “first clandestine cells of Colonial patriots fighting taxation and

⁴³ Paul Revere, *A Warm Place - Hell*, Granger Historical Picture Archive, Granger, 1768.

⁴⁴ “A Warm Place - Hell,” Encyclopedia Virginia.

⁴⁵ Catherine Treesh, “The Virginia Committee of Correspondence,” Encyclopedia Virginia.

tyranny by the British government.”⁴⁶ The movement against the British was not the only one that young men were being raised in. “Yet Whigs also felt responsible for bringing up sons to value traditional freedoms. Those men, too, saw themselves as British patriots, supporting their constitution and king against corrupt government ministers.”⁴⁷ Some of the most prominent leaders of the secret group were Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, and John Hancock. However, some were lesser known in the overall history of the Sons of Liberty. These men were Dr. Joseph Warren, Dr. Benjamin Rush, Dr. Stephen Vigneron, Dr. Usher Parsons, Dr. Levi Weaton, and Dr. Solomon Drowne, just to name a few. They would step in during instances like the Boston Massacre, or even during the war, to assist medically where they were needed.⁴⁸ During the Stamp Act protests, the Sons of Liberty would take out newspaper articles to campaign “Liberty and no Stamp-Act” and led a mob to rob Andrew Oliver, who had been given an order to be a stamp distributor and was invited to meet the Sons of Liberty to push for his resignation.⁴⁹

The Daughters of Liberty, the counterpart of the Sons of Liberty, were the leaders who had women boycott British goods. This group was created the same time as the Sons of Liberty and gave women an outlet of where they can spread their information and boycotts. While there was mention of spinning bees in 1766, which allowed women to make their clothes, it wouldn’t be until the passage of the Townshend Acts that the Daughters of Liberty would officially emerge.⁵⁰ Their role was not as prominent in the discussion as their male counterparts, but these women led the charge when it came to boycotts and took up the roles of creating some of the items they would no longer purchase. Most women had no political voice during this era, but

⁴⁶ Mary Korr, “‘Sons of Liberty’: Physicians Fought for Independence on Bunker Hill and the High Seas,” *Rhode Island Medical Journal*, July 2023, 105.

⁴⁷ James Marten, ed. *Children in Colonial America* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 325.

⁴⁸ Korr, “‘Sons of Liberty’: Physicians Fought for Independence on Bunker Hill and the High Seas,” 105-107.

⁴⁹ “The Formation of the Sons of Liberty,” Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁵⁰ Rebecca Beatrice Brooks, “The Daughters of Liberty: Who Were They and What Did They Do?” History of Massachusetts, December 9, 2015.

many had a political male figure in their homes. Some of these women included Abigail Adams, Martha Washington, and Mercy Otis Warren. Not only could these women express their opinions to their husbands, fathers, or brothers, but they were also able to express them to their husbands' friends, so while they were excluded from the political stage, their voices were not completely ignored by the masses.⁵¹ A few of the other women whose names are not as commonly known are Sarah Bradlee Fulton, who has been given some credit for her part in the Boston Tea Party; Deborah Sampson, who disguised herself as a man to fight; Molly Ludwig Hayes, who assisted in the battlefield, and one of the youngest was a nine-year-old by the name of Susan Boudinot, who refused to drink British tea to the point when William Franklin offered her some, she threw it out the window.⁵² These are just a few examples of women and girls who threw their support behind the Patriot cause and were able to be a part of the political discourse without being in power.

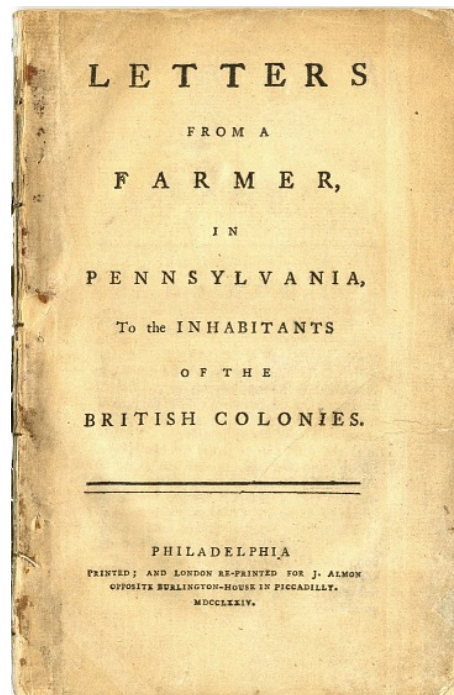
Another piece of propaganda that stemmed from the passage of the Townshend Acts was a series of letters written anonymously under the name 'A Farmer,' but was later found out to be written by a man named John Dickinson. John was an attorney and politician who called these acts illegal in his letters. He had written other letters regarding earlier acts, but he penned eleven letters to his fellow colonists regarding the Townshend Acts. Within his second letter, Dickinson states that while he had looked over the statutes of the colonies, the acts leading up to the Townshend Acts had mutual benefit among Britain's colonies, "and thus to promote the general welfare."⁵³ Also, within the second letter, he continues with the idea that Parliament passed these

⁵¹ Kimberly Trenner, "Daughters of Liberty: The Women Who Fought in the American Revolution," *Saber and Scroll Journal* (October 8, 2016), 78.

⁵² Brooks, "The Daughters of Liberty: Who Were They and What Did They Do?"

⁵³ John Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, Philadelphia, PA, 1767.

taxes “for the single purpose of levying money upon us.”⁵⁴ These letters were being shared with other colonists in the hopes of opening their eyes to the dealings of the British government.



John Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, Philadelphia, PA, 1767.

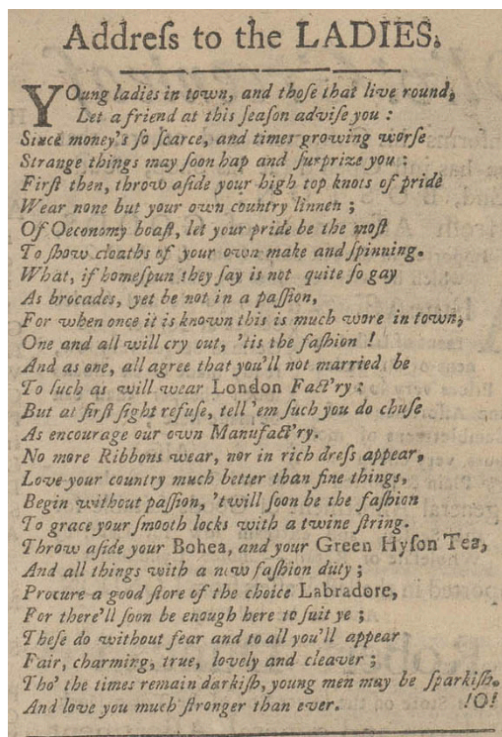
An article was taken out in the *Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, later known as the Boston Gazette, that addressed the women of Boston. The anonymous author stated “Since money's so scarce, and times [are] growing worse. Strange things may soon hap and surprize you”⁵⁵ and called for women to no longer drink British tea and wear local clothing to support their fellow countrymen. It also states to “love your country much better than fine things”⁵⁶ in response to no longer wearing items made in London, which insinuated that the colonies are their country, not Great Britain. The Daughters of Liberty were the ones that pushed boycotts, and the language within this article is that they were pushing the boycotting of British goods and clothes, leading

⁵⁴ Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*.

⁵⁵ “Address to the Ladies,” *The Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, November 16, 1767.

⁵⁶ “Address to the Ladies.”

one to believe that this article was written by an educated woman who was a member of the Daughters of Liberty as well.



“Address to the Ladies” *The Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser*, 16 November 1767.

Charles Townshend had an American policy that dated back to 1753 but was unable to attempt passing anything due to him being a junior member of the government. This changed later as he moved further up in the government in the years that followed. He planned on using the taxes gained from the Townshend Acts to pay other government officials, but his intentions were more sinister than he led on. According to historian P. D. G. Thomas, concerning the American Colonies, the “political opinion was overwhelmingly hostile to the colonists, and little controversy arose because of the lack of any sustained defense of American views and behaviour,” though there were not the same sentiments towards colonies such as India.⁵⁷ This

⁵⁷ P. D. G. Thomas, “Charles Townshend and American Taxation in 1767,” *The English Historical Review* 83, no. 326 (1968): 34.

gives a poor view of the British government and their actions towards the American colonists when allowing for taxes such as the Townshend Act to be passed.

The Townshend Acts showed colonists that the repeal of the Stamp Act truly meant nothing in the grand scheme of things. “Petitioners and memorialists against the Townshend Acts made no distinction between internal and external taxation. In common, they assumed that an excise duty laid on imports was only another internal tax.”⁵⁸ If it had been just as they assumed, it would not have garnered as much attention as it did. The passage of this act would lead some colonists to no longer import or export to Great Britain. According to the agreement in Boston on August 1, 1768, they would no longer accept the trade from Great Britain from January 1, 1769, through the following January 1, 1770. There would be some exceptions like “salt, coals, fishhooks and lines, hemp, duck, bar lead and shot, wool-cards, and card-wire.”⁵⁹ They would also, starting on the same date, no longer import any of the items taxed by the Townshend Acts until the act was repealed. They also would not accept any new orders from Great Britain and would only send out the items ordered before the Non-Importation Agreement. Boston was the largest port for the colonies, which was the cause of this agreement taking place in Boston and not elsewhere.⁶⁰

Silas Downer, a “Harvard graduate and one of the few highly educated men in the colony”⁶¹, was one of the men who attended the dedication of the Liberty Tree in Providence, Rhode Island, a “corporate colony without a royal governor [that] was too small and insignificant to capture the attention of officials three thousand miles away.”⁶² Downer had written a pamphlet

⁵⁸ Glenn Curtis Smith, “An Era of Non-Importation Associations, 1768-73,” *The William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* 20, no. 1 (1940), 85.

⁵⁹ “Boston Non-Importation Agreement, August 1, 1768,” Avalon Project.

⁶⁰ “Boston Non-Importation Agreement, August 1, 1768.”

⁶¹ Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1764-1772*, Vol. 1 (New York: The Library of America, 2015), 521.

⁶² Wood, *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1764-1772*, 521.

that gathered traction but wrote it under the pseudonym of a Sons of Liberty member. This pamphlet was entitled *A Discourse Delivered in Providence, in the Colony of Rhode Island*, and Downer starts the pamphlet off with the dedication, and that they were there to “cheerfully recognize our allegiance to our sovereign Lord, George the third, King of Great-Britain, and supreme Lord of these dominions,”⁶³ yet they depend on no other. Within his pamphlet, which ends up gaining traction within the colonies, he goes into the discussion of how things have changed since the English arrived. He explains that the English were first, then other Europeans started to settle the lands. Downer also goes into detail regarding the governing that people have agreed upon, stating “it is the very essence of the British constitution, that the people shall not be governed by laws, in the making of which they had no hand, or have their monies taken away without their consent. It is a natural right which no creature can give or hath a right to take away.”⁶⁴ With this statement, he brought to the discussion the idea of popular sovereignty or the consent to be governed. People agree to be governed, provided the government does what is necessary for the people, an idea originally brought forward by John Locke. The colonists would continue to hold onto this idea that they should be involved in the decision-making when it came to the laws and taxes that were passed on the colonies.

In mid-January 1770, the first physical incident occurred between Colonists and British soldiers. During an instance where soldiers were removing what was referred to as the Liberty Pole, which was a wooden pole that had been erected in New York because of the repeal of the Stamp Act, had become a symbol for Colonists as something that proved to them that if they boycott enough, the taxes being placed on them could be repealed. The presence of the troops

⁶³ Silas Downer, “A Discourse, Delivered at the Dedication of the Tree of Liberty, in Providence,” in *The American Revolution Writings from the Pamphlet Debate, 1764-1772*, ed. Gordon Wood (New York: The Library of America, 2015), 1:525.

⁶⁴ Downer, “A Discourse, Delivered at the Dedication of the Tree of Liberty, in Providence,” 527.

within cities only increased the distrust of the British from Colonists, as their placement was being funded through the taxes placed on them by Parliament. The low pay of the soldiers also created more competition in the job market as they had to take additional jobs to earn enough money. There was an ongoing conflict between the Colonists and the British soldiers in that they would remove parts of the Liberty Pole, only for the Colonists to replace it. This would go back and forth four different times, removing and replacing the Pole. In a letter published and circulated on the streets, the author, naming himself Brutus, makes the claims that the soldiers, who are paid for by their taxes, are there to enslave the New Yorkers and keep them impoverished. The soldier's response was to claim that the Sons of Liberty were slandering the troops and referred to the Liberty Pole as just a “piece of wood”⁶⁵.

The back and forth-between the two groups at the Liberty Pole would lead to an armed clash on January 19, 1770. Though there were no deaths, there were injuries. Isaac Sears and Walter Quackenbush attempted to stop the British soldiers from posting their rebuttal to Brutus' letter on Golden Hill, present-day John Street. They led to the soldiers joining the situation, drawing their bayonets on the civilians. The soldiers were ordered away, but the colonial crowd followed them. Amongst the wounded were civilians who the British soldiers had stabbed, but some civilians who were not involved were also injured. In their attempts to show the soldiers that the colonists would not stand down, Isaac Sears had purchased some land close to the soldiers' barracks and erected a pole that stood 46 feet high, with twelve feet in the ground. It would stay there until the British occupied New York during the American Revolution in 1776.⁶⁶

The increase in British soldiers in the Colonies, especially within Boston, continued to raise tensions between the soldiers and the colonists. In mid-February, a small group of boys

⁶⁵ Mariam Touba, “The Battle of Golden Hill: New York’s Opening Act of Revolutionary Bloodshed,” New-York Historical Society Museum and Library, January 16, 2020.

⁶⁶ Touba, “The Battle of Golden Hill: New York’s Opening Act of Revolutionary Bloodshed.”

harassed a fellow colonist named Ebenezer Richardson, a customs official, while he was attempting to take down signs from a business encouraging demonstrations. During this, the boys threw stones at him to stop him from taking the signs down. Richardson fled, going back home, bringing out his gun and firing into the crowd that had followed him. Richardson would ultimately shoot a young ten-and-a-half-year-old boy by the name of Christopher Seider, killing him. In a letter to Samuel Hood, 1st Viscount Hood, an Admiral of the Royal Navy, Thomas Hutcherson, Colonial Administrator, described the scene as Richardson being harassed, pointing his musket out of his window and threatening to shoot if the crowd did not disburse. When they continued to throw rocks and sticks at his house and through his window, he fired his weapon into the crowd, and another was shot in the thigh.⁶⁷

Shortly after the death of young Seider, on March 5, 1770, another clash between Colonists and British soldiers broke out. Bostonians were still angry about the loss of the young child and thus gathered in a group to call out the soldiers. Private White was stationed outside the Customs House when the colonists arrived, shouting and throwing snowballs, rocks, and sticks at the soldier. Seven soldiers would join White's side, and though there is no record of who yelled fire, the British soldiers did just that, killing three instantly, with two more being shot, succumbing to their wounds soon after. Crispus Attucks, an African and Native dock worker, was the first killed in the skirmish, thus creating a martyrdom out of his death. The soldiers were arrested and put on trial, but the propaganda that came from this event caused more anger. The Boston Gazette issued an initial article, including an image they used only showing four deaths, covering the massacre. Patrick Carr, the fifth victim, was not included in the image, as the article was written and published on March 12, 1770, and Carr did not succumb to his injuries until nine

⁶⁷ Thomas Hutcherson to Samuel Hood, "Volume 94: The Correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson, Volume 3: 1770 (January–October)" (Cambridge, MA, February 23, 1770).

days after the massacre, on March 14, two days after the article. As Carr was slowly dying of his wound, having been shot through the abdomen, he “refused to lay the blame for his death upon the soldiers.” In his testimony, he knew that the soldiers had mistakenly killed colonists. He was from Ireland, and “had [seen] mobs and soldiers called out to quell them, but ‘he had never in his life seen them bear half so much before they fired’. And he had malice toward no one.”⁶⁸



The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal, March 12, 1770

In the most famous image of the Boston Massacre, Paul Revere's engraving, titled *Bloody Massacre in King-Street*, depicts a scene that does not provide audiences the whole truth. It was meant to anger colonists and persuade those who were neutral or loyal to the crown to join the Patriots in their cause against the British. According to The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, “Revere based his engraving on that of artist Henry Pelham, who created the first illustration of the episode—and who was neither paid nor credited for his work.”⁶⁹ The two images are almost identical, with Pelham’s work only having the British soldiers in color and Revere’s showing both parties in color. This image has become synonymous with the Boston

⁶⁸ “Patrick Carr – One Who Did Not Blame the Soldiers.” Boston Massacre Historical Society.

⁶⁹ Paul Revere, *The Bloody Massacre*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1770.

Massacre. However, the image had been exaggerated to portray the British as the sole aggressors when that was not the case, including showing Captain Preston giving orders to fire. Still, there are no sources to back up the claim.



1) Henry Pelham, *Fruits of Arbitrary Power, or the Bloody Massacre Perpetrated in King Street Boston, on March 5th, 1770*, photograph (Worcester, 1770), Worcester. 2) Paul Revere, Engraver. *The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th by a party of the 29th Regt. Boston Massachusetts, 1770*. Boston: Engrav'd Printed & Sold by Paul Revere. Photograph.

Other images would come in the following years, showing a fight between the two groups. While we may not know the exact details of the entire event, the images later give us insight into the fighting that could have occurred during one of the most important events that led to the American Revolution. In a letter written by Gregory Townsend to his brother Jonathan, he wrote of the events that had occurred on King Street, stating, “Poor Preston will stand a very bad chance if his trial comes on speedily before the Passions of people are a little Subsided, he is a man of very Excellent character & from various circumstances I am at present of opinion that he

did not give orders for firing.”⁷⁰ In this, it shows that Gregory believed that Captain Preston was innocent of the murder charges he faced. Little did the Colonists know at the time the Boston Massacre occurred, Parliament had moved to repeal the Townshend Acts except the Tea Act, and ultimately putting an end to the Non-Importation Act.

Two years after the Boston Massacre, the Committees of Correspondence came together as an official group. Though “after the French and Indian War, the tirade discomfort caused by the so-called Sugar and Navigation Acts of the British Parliament led to the formation of committees of merchants in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York.”⁷¹ The forming a committee to correspond with other colonies was not new, but this specific committee was. Virginia called for a colonial-wide committee to intercept legitimate British intelligence that would affect the colonies. By February 1774, all colonies had responded to the call and made their committees, with Pennsylvania being the only one not to join.⁷²

While most propaganda makers were men, some propaganda came from women like Mercy Otis Warren. She is well known for writing pamphlets and plays against the passage of the laws. Like many, “her attitude changed with the passing of the Sugar Act (1764), Stamp Act (1765), Townshend Duties Act (1767), and especially with the arrival of British troops in Boston...which Warren believed marked the end of any prospects for reconciliation.”⁷³ She never let her life as a mother take away from being well aware of what was going on within the colonies. Due to her familial ties, and her marriage to James Warren, “the Warren’s home flourished into a revolutionary hot-spot, hosting patriots like the Sons of Liberty and facilitating

⁷⁰ Gregory Townsend to Jonathan Townsend, “Letter from Gregory Townsend to Jonathan Townsend, 15 March 1770” (Boston, MA, March 15, 1770).

⁷¹ John C Fitzpatrick, *The Spirit of The Revolution: New Light from Some of the Original Sources of American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), 101.

⁷² Fitzpatrick, *The Spirit of The Revolution: New Light from Some of the Original Sources of American History*, 105.

⁷³ Patricia Mikell, “Mercy Otis Warren (1728-1814),” George Washington’s Mount Vernon.

the creation of the Committees of Correspondence,”⁷⁴ and this lent itself to Warren continuing to be informed of the ongoing.

In 1772, Warren wrote *The Adulater*, a play in which she calls out the offenses committed by the British during the Boston Massacre. She brings in Brutus and Cassius, known from the Roman era, having a discussion between the two in an almost foreshadowing of the war to come, stating through Brutus, “I sprang from men, who fought, who bled for freedom: For men, who in conflict laugh’d at danger: Struggl’d like patriots, and through seas of blood, Waded to conquest.”⁷⁵ She continued on in 1773, writing *The Defeat*. In this political play, Warren criticized Thomas Hutchinson’s handling of the Boston Massacre, as he was the Massachusetts Governor. She uses plays as a way to bring to life her writings, allowing anyone who wants to hear the message to hear it, as not all colonists were literate, and anything written would be unreachable for them. In 1775, she wrote *The Group* to criticize King George III for removing the Massachusetts Colonial Charter, and in 1776, wrote *The Blockheads* in response to the Fortification at Dorchester Hill. In one of her final political satires, Warren wrote *The Motley Assembly* in 1779, criticizing Great Britain’s policies and the idea that there was corruption occurring within the government.

Boycotts did not stop due to the Townshend Acts being repealed, as the British government left the tax on tea in place, though the cost was lowered. Colonists did not want a monopoly on tea for the British East India Company, which financially strained colonial merchants. Starting in Boston, they decided they would no longer drink British tea, and surrounding cities followed suit. However, several “American merchants, at this time in London, were very eager to obtain the privilege of furnishing vessels to carry this obnoxious cargo. These

⁷⁴ Gabrielle Mollin, “Mercy Otis Warren,” Fraunces Tavern Museum.

⁷⁵ “The Adulater. A Tragedy, as it is Now Acted in Upper Servia.: [Six lines from Cato],” In the digital collection Evans Early American Imprint Collection, University of Michigan Library Digital Collections.

facts became known in Boston in early October 1773, and meetings were held in various parts of the town to prevent the landing of it.” The decision was to send back any tea that had made its way to the ports. The group of men meeting up had decided to return later in the afternoon, only to be informed that the governor would not approve their permit unless the tea were cleared to dock in Boston Harbor. There were around sixty men dressed in Native attire, as “Mr. Samuel Adams cried out that it was a trick of the enemy to disperse the meeting and requested the people to keep their places.”⁷⁶ In just under two hours, the men rushed the cargo ship anyway and dumped about three hundred and forty-two chests of tea into the Boston harbor. No one was injured, and no one stopped the dumping. “This affair took place almost under the guns of the Castle, and in the presence of several ships of war, at that time floating in the harbor.” This shows the colonists were not worried about the British surrounding them in the harbor. It was never made public who the members of this group were.⁷⁷

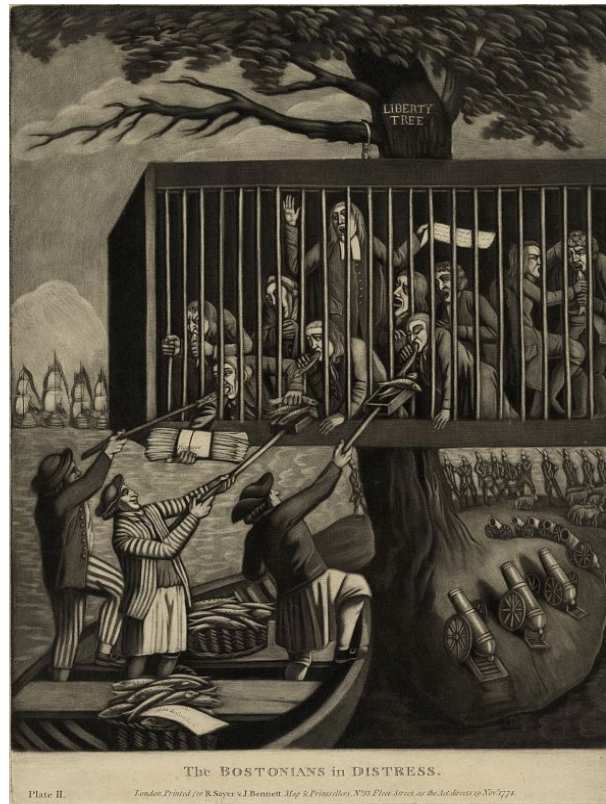
According to the Library of Congress, some of the propaganda surrounding this event was mainly from Great Britain until more recently. One of the images, titled *Bostonians in Distress*⁷⁸ The library depicts Bostonians locked in a cage hanging from the Liberty Tree, with what can be assumed were British officials giving the men raw fish. Long tongues characterize the Americans, and others are screaming into the void. The image's background shows cannons facing the cage, with British officers and animals behind them. In the ocean, four visible ships indicate that they would still be sending in their imports regardless of what the colonists had to say about it. According to the Library of Congress description of the image, it “shows a starving city surrounded by the British Army and Navy and depicts a few rough British sailors offering

⁷⁶ Robin Carver, *History of Boston*, (Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman, and Holden, 1834), 84-85.

⁷⁷ Carver, *History of Boston*, 85.

⁷⁸Robert Sayer and John Bennett, Publisher, *The Bostonians in Distress*, Boston Massachusetts United States, 1774, London: Printed for R. Sayer and J. Bennett, Map & Printsellers, No. 53 Fleet Street, as the Act directs, Nov. 19. Photograph.

fish and kindling in exchange for ‘Promises’ from the colonists. The cartoonist quotes Psalm 107, further giving the British god-like power over the transgressions of Massachusetts.”⁷⁹



Robert Sayer and John Bennett, Publisher, *The Bostonians in Distress*, Boston Massachusetts United States, 1774, London: Printed for R. Sayer and J. Bennett, Map & Print sellers, No. 53 Fleet Street, as the Act directs, Nov. 19. Photograph.

Due to the Boston Tea Party, Great Britain punished the Massachusetts colony for the financial damage done to the tea. The Coercive Acts, or the Intolerable Acts as the colonists called them, were five different laws put into place in 1774. First, Boston was to pay back Great Britain for the tea, and Boston Harbor would be closed until it was completely paid off. Massachusetts also lost the ability to self-govern their colonial charter, and they could hold town meetings only with the Governor's approval. King George III put Thomas Gage in the position of

⁷⁹ Melissa Lindberg, "In the Aftermath of the Boston Tea Party: British and American Perspectives: Picture This," The Library of Congress, December 13, 2019.

Governor, thus creating loyalty within the Massachusetts government. A new Quartering Act was put in place, requiring Massachusetts residents to house soldiers. Some lump the Quebec Act in as well, which would be the fifth law, and it gave part of Massachusetts to Quebec. One of the more popular propaganda pieces to come from the Coercive Acts was *The Able Doctor, or, America Swallowing the Bitter Draught*.⁸⁰ Draught was the British spelling for Draft. This image shows British officials holding down a half-naked Native woman, representing the colonies, while forcing her to drink tea as one man, Lord Sandwich, who was a “a notorious womanizer, restrains her feet and peeks up her skirt”⁸¹, and the Boston Port Bill hanging out of one man's pocket, and the man holding her down are meant to be Lord Mansfield. The image was published in the London Magazine.



The Able Doctor, or, America Swallowing the Bitter Draught. Massachusetts Boston United States, 1774.

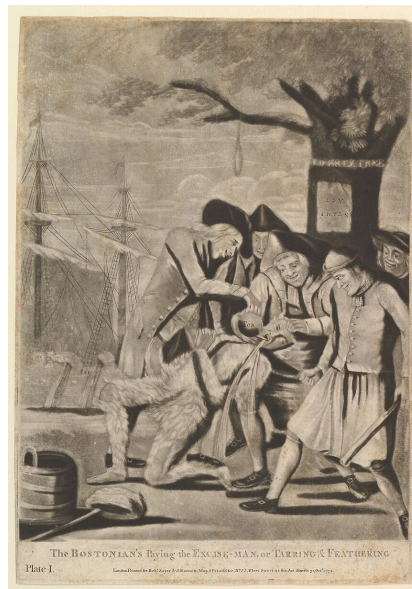
[London: May 1] Photograph.

Another piece of propaganda used to gain traction during 1774 was *The Bostonians Paying the Excise-Man, or Tarring & Feathering*. Within the image, it shows men, assumed to

⁸⁰ Paul Revere, *The Able Doctor, or, America Swallowing the Bitter Draught*, Photograph, Washington D.C., May 1, 1774, Library of Congress.

⁸¹ Revere, *The Able Doctor, or, America Swallowing the Bitter Draught*.

be representative of the Sons of Liberty, having tarred and feathered a tax collector, pouring a liquid down his throat. One can assume that it would be tea, as this tax and monopoly is one that upset the colonists the most. Within the image, the viewer can also see the Liberty Tree in the background with an upside-down Stamp Act and a noose hanging from the tree limb. On the ship in the image, one can see colonists aboard the ship as they dump tea overboard. The dumping of the tea shown in the image pre-dates the Boston Tea Party, so this is an interesting addition. The image is attributed to Philip Dawe, who was a British man, and published it with Robert Sayer and John Bennett, both of whom were publishers. With this being created and published in London, it would persuade the British citizens to see the colonists as these horrible people who attack anyone who is just doing their job. This would help give the government public support once the war started.



Philip Dawe, “The Bostonians Paying the Excise-Man, or Tarring & Feathering,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 31, 1774.

Due to the actions against Massachusetts, colonists came together for the First Continental Congress in September 1774. All colonies sent representatives except Georgia, as

they were “facing a war with neighboring Native American tribes, the colony did not want to jeopardize British assistance.”⁸² A month later, they would issue the Articles of Association, telling Parliament to repeal the Coercive Acts by the following September, or the colonies would completely boycott British goods. They also drafted a list of grievances towards King George III in the hopes of de-escalating growing issues between the King and the colonies, though they did not do the same for Parliament as they saw them as the aggressors. They hoped that a full-blown war would not occur in Massachusetts, so they agreed to return in May of 1775.⁸³

Another piece of propaganda to come out of London prior to the start of the war is *The Political Cartoon for the Year 1775* and was published in London in the *Westminster Magazine*. This image depicts King George III and Lord Mansfield, who was the Lord Chief Justice of England from 1756 to 1788.⁸⁴ The two men are led by two horses with the labels “Obstinacy” and “Pride”. These horses are taking the two men, who are sitting in a carriage, into a pit, representing the war they were fighting against the Colonies. They are surrounded by men, women and children. The horse-drawn carriage is shown to be running over the Constitution and the Magna Carta, while King George holds a document stating, “I glory in the name of Englishmen.” On the back of the carriage is a man holding papers saying “Places,” “Pensions,” and “Reversions” while in the background, there is a city on fire titled America with a demon carrying a money bag titled “National Credit.” This image is criticizing the King for his overreach in the colonies. While the American Colonists were fighting against the British, not everyone in Great Britain sided with the British in the war. They may not have necessarily sided with the Colonists, but many did see the problems that were occurring. The trampling of the

⁸² Katherine Horan, “First Continental Congress,” George Washington’s Mount Vernon.

⁸³ “Continental Congress, 1774–1781,” U.S. Department of State.

⁸⁴ “William Murray, Lord Mansfield.” Westminster Abbey.

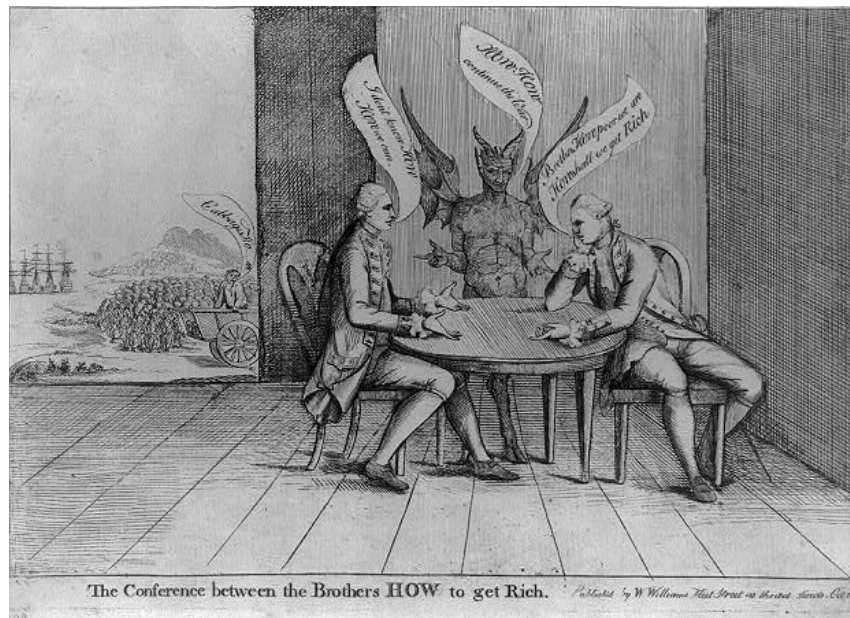
documents signifies that King George III was disregarding government documents created to set limits on the King's power.



The Political Cartoon for the Year, United States, May 1, 1775, Photograph.

General Howe could not escape being the subject of propaganda himself. In a piece published by W. Williams Fleet Street, General William Howe and his brother Admiral Richard Howe are shown talking at a table, discussing how they might be able to profit from the ongoing war in the colonies. In the speech bubbles, Admiral Howe asks “Brother How poor we are How shall we get Rich” with General Howe replying, “I don’t know How How we can,” with a devil standing between them by the table seemingly answering the brothers with “How How Continue the War.” In the background, there are four ships, seemingly anchored in, with a man in a cart calling for “Cabbages Ho...w” in front of a field of cabbages. This image gives the impression that the Howe brothers were involved in the war purely to become wealthy. With the devil suggesting the continuation of the war, it would lead one to believe that maybe the brothers played a role in how long the war raged on for. This image was also produced in London, again

pointing to the fact that not everyone in London approved of this war, or the laws that had been enforced on the colonies.



The Conference Between the Brothers How to Get Rich, United States, October 10, 1777, London:

Published by W. Williams Fleet Street, as the Act directs, Photograph.

Another, which I find to be interesting, is *The Horse America, Throwing His Master*, created in 1779. Created almost two years after the Battle of Saratoga, Bemis Heights, it depicts America as the horse, bucking King George III off the horse's back. The Battle of Saratoga took place in October of 1777, but this victory for the colonists allowed them to get the foreign help that they truly needed from two enemies of the British: France and Spain. This battle was a turning point for the Americans, as morale soared, and they started to believe that they could win the war, especially once they had received additional help. This image not only has the horse bucking King George off, but it has a soldier in the background. In King George's hand, there is a whip with swords, knives, and a hatchet, representing the cruelty that the artist believed King George had committed against the colonies in the years after the French and Indian War. With

this image being published in Westminster, it is showing that even the British citizens are also realizing the possible, and eventual, outcome of the war. America is getting rid of the Monarchy.



The Horse America, Throwing His Master, United States, Westminster: Published by Wm. White, August 1, 1779, Photograph.

London was full of propaganda against what the Government and King George III were doing in the colonies, especially after the start of the war. In *The British Lion Engaging Four Powers*, we see a spaniel, a fighting cock, a rattlesnake, and a pug all going up against a lion. Spaniel represents Spain, fighting cock represents France, rattlesnake represents America and the pug represents Holland, with the lion representing Great Britain and a fox representing Charles Fox, a British Whig politician. In 1782, when this image was published, these three countries had already aligned themselves with the Americans in their fight for freedom from Great Britain, and was published after the last major battle had taken place. The lion is stating "You shall all have an old English drubbing to make you quiet" and the fox replies with "I counsel Your Majesty to give Monsieur the first gripe." The countries, represented by animals, each have their own replies. The pug states, "I will be Jack of all sides as I have always been," the rattlesnake states,

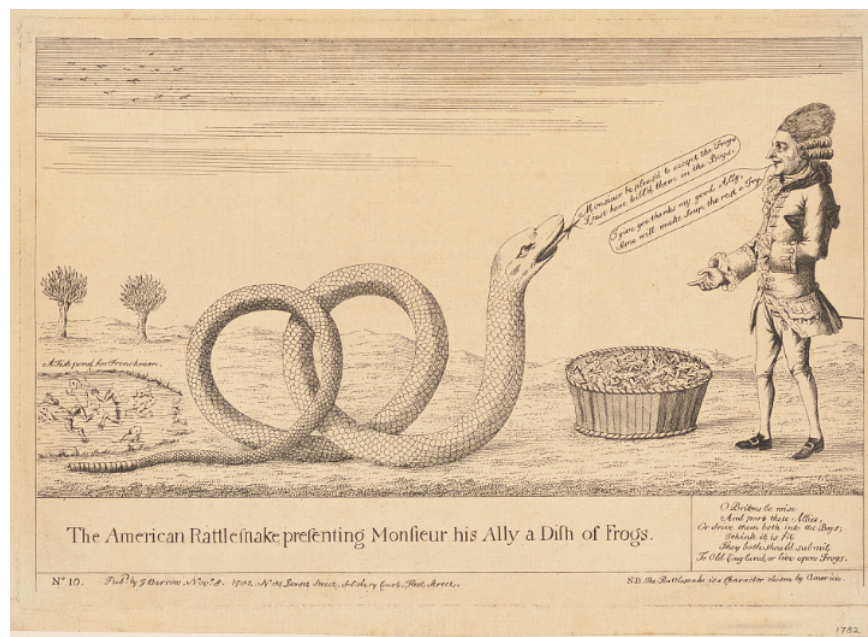
“I will have America and be Independent,” the fighting cock adds “I will have my Title from you and be call’d King of France,” and finally the spaniel replying with “I will have Gibraltar that I may be King of all Spain.” These responses allude to the allied countries not wanting to bow down to the British, as they are their own independent countries with their own monarchs. While there were technically no more major battles taking place, the peace talks did not end until 1783. The tension between the five nations was still high, and they were not going to let Great Britain be in charge.



The British Lion Engaging Four Powers, Great Britain United States Netherlands France Spain, 1782,
London: Published by J. Barrow: Sold by Richardson Print Seller, N. 68 High Holborn, Photograph.

J. Barrow published a second image a few months later entitled *The American Rattlesnake Presenting Monsieur His Ally a Dish of Frogs*. Within the image, Barrow includes a brief message “O Britons be wise and part these Allies, Or drive them both into the Bogs; I think it is fit They both should submit To Old England, or live upon Frogs.” America, represented as the rattlesnake, states “Monsieur be pleas’d to accept the frogs I just have killed them in the Bogs,” and the Monsieur, representing France, replies with “I give you thanks my good Ally,

Some will make Soup the rest a Fry.”⁸⁵ Frogs have a long history of being a dish in France, leading to this being why the frogs were offered to the Monsieur. This idea of the rattlesnake reverts to the “Join or Die” image from Benjamin Franklin, and “Franklin was calling the serpent ‘a strong picture of the temper and conduct of America.’”⁸⁶ Rattlesnakes are only native to the Americas, so using this reptile to represent America fits, as well as knowing not to deal with the snake or they will attack.



The American rattlesnake presenting Monsieur his ally a dish of frogs. United States Great Britain France, 1782. [London: Pub by J. Barrow, N. 84 Dorset Street, Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, Nov. 8] Photograph.

British citizens were sympathetic to the American cause during the Revolution. While the overall feelings fluctuated, as is normal to see within a society. During the early years of the war, there was pamphlets published for the American cause, and “only in Loyalist newspapers like Rivington’s *New York Gazetteer* or Mills and Hicks’ *Massachusetts Gazette* might the reader find

⁸⁵ *The American Rattlesnake Presenting Monsieur His Ally a Dish of Frogs*. France Great Britain United States. London: Published by J. Barrow, N. 84 Dorset Street, Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, Nov. 8, 1782. Photograph.

⁸⁶ Matthew Wills, “The Serpents of Liberty,” JSTOR Daily, August 30, 2021.

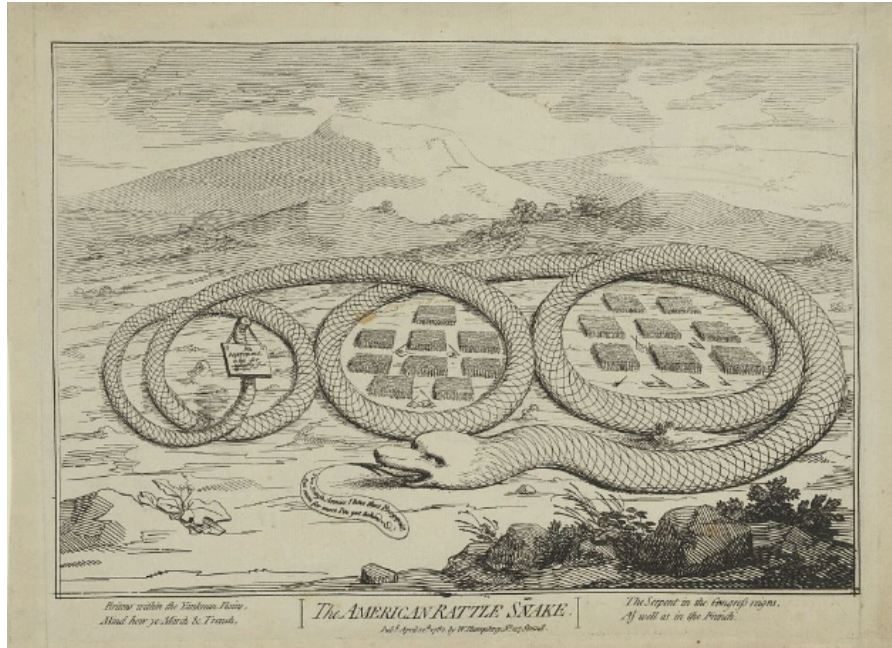
excerpts of letters that suggested how little support there really was in England”⁸⁷ Yet there are plenty of pamphlets to indicate that many British did side with the American colonists, many being reprinted in the colonies. “Baron Rokeby’s *Considerations of the Measure Carrying on with Respect to the British Colonies*, Granville Sharp’s *Declaration of a People’s Natural Rights to Share in the Legislature*, and John Cartwright’s *American Independence the Interest and Glory of Great Britain*. Here the colonists were assured of the soundness of their resistance to Parliamentary taxation.”⁸⁸

In 1782, James Gillray published *The American Rattle Snake*, an image depicting a rattlesnake with “two of [the] three coils around units of British soldiers, commanded by Burgoyne and Cornwallis at the time of their surrender...reflects the widespread sympathy in England for the American cause.”⁸⁹ Within the image, the snake is coiled up three times, and has a sign hanging from its tail stating “An Apartment to Let for Military Gentlemen.” The text coming from the mouth of the snake states “Two British Armies I have thus Burgoyne’d. And room for more I’ve got behind.” This image is an example of how Americans fought until the very end, when the British finally surrendered at the Battle of Yorktown. The rattlesnake is a common image used to portray America, as the stars and stripes were not yet the main image used to represent the states. Creating propaganda was not just a colonist thing during the Revolutionary era but was also used in London to show either their support for the American cause or to show their disdain for the actions of the Americans against the British government. Using images, like these propaganda pieces, allows for citizens to critique the side that they feel is in the wrong without having to outright say what is going on within their society.

⁸⁷ Benjamin W. Labaree, “The Idea of American Independence: The British View, 1774-1776,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 82 (1970), 6.

⁸⁸ Labaree, “The Idea of American Independence: The British View, 1774-1776,” 5.

⁸⁹ James Gillray, Artist, *The American Rattle Snake*. Virginia, United States, Yorktown, London: Published by W. Humphrey, No. 227 Strand, Photograph, 1782.



James Gillray, Artist, *The American Rattle Snake*. Virginia, United States, Yorktown, London: Published by W. Humphrey, No. 227 Strand, Photograph, 1782.

One last propaganda piece that will be discussed is *The Savages Let Loose, or The Cruel Fate of the Loyalists* by William Humphrey. This image depicts Indigenous people hanging four British Loyalists, with two others begging and fighting for their lives. One Native man states “I’ll scalp him” as he holds the hair of a loyalist, knife in his other hand. The loyalist begging for his life states “O Cruel Fate! Is this the Return for Our Loyalty.” with another Native man holding a tomahawk, ready to swing on the man, even stating “I’ll tomahawk the Dog.” The third Native man is pulling the rope, hanging four loyalists, stating “I have them all in a String.” Above the four men, it states “Recommended to Congress by Lord S—C.” The depiction of the Natives shows how the British described them as savages from the beginning, even using this within the title of the piece. The Indigenous communities were the ones who lost the most at the end of the American Revolution. Four of the six Iroquois Nations either fled to Canada at the end of the war or were forced onto reservations in the outer regions of New York, though this would

not be the last time that European-Americans would force Indigenous peoples to move locations or be forced onto a reservation.



William Humphrey, *The Savages Let Loose, or The Cruel Fate of the Loyalists*, United States, London:

Sold by W. Humphrey No. 227 Strand, March 1783, Photograph.

The use of propaganda was, and is still, meant to play on the emotions and feelings of the person taking in the image. During the Colonial and American Revolution era, it was not always one-sided propaganda used but can be seen from both Patriots and Loyalists as they try to gather more support for their side against the opposition. The war would eventually bring in Indigenous communities, though they were urged at the beginning to stay out of the war, and European countries on the Colonists' sides like France, Spain, Holland and some from Prussia, famously Baron Friedrich von Steuben. This war went from a spat against the government to a full out revolution that would end with America gaining its independence from Great Britain. Indigenous communities would lose their land with this war and continue to lose their land as Americans moved west, something that had been blocked by the British Government. Propaganda played a

large role within the Revolution era, and these pieces show how both sides tried to gain supporters.

Within the few short years after the French and Indian War, and ultimately the Seven Years War conclusion, colonists saw tax after tax, law after law, placed on them after spending over a hundred years being used to self-governance, or salutary neglect. They saw this as an invasion of their way of life and used a mixture of boycotts, propaganda, and protests to fight against the acts being placed on them. They would see one act get repealed, only to receive a new law against them. Colonists did not feel it was their duty to pay for the British debt that had occurred during the war, nor did they think they needed to pay for the soldiers stationed within the colonies against their will. They wanted to develop their government, making the way of governance they used official. This would lead to the colonists creating the Declaration of Independence as their formal announcement that they were leaving the British empire.

Chapter 3

Intersectionality during the Revolution

Before the discussion of intersectionality, things like gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or physical abilities, only one of these would be used to explain a person's life or situations they found themselves in. When we look back on different eras in history, there is generally no discussion of the intersectionality of a person and how their lived experiences would affect them and the situation in which they are being discussed. There will be three women in this chapter we're looking at: Abigail Adams, Molly Brant, and Phillis Wheatley. Additionally, we will examine how the intersectionality of their lives impacted the decisions they made. All three subjects have gender in common, but their race and identities would provide different outcomes to the situations they found themselves in.

The impact of these women, as well as the intersectionality that is found within their lives, allowed for decisions to be made both at home and on the battlefields. Abigail Adams was a wealthy, educated white woman who was able to not only run the family farm and home, but was also able to be an influence and advisor to her husband John Adams during his time within the government as they formed it, and during his presidency. Phillis Wheatley, an educated enslaved woman, was able to take the education she had received from the Wheatley family to not only help to disprove the idea that those enslaved were less than human, and could not be educated, nor could they hold any influence. She had corresponded with several prominent figures, even though many tried to disprove that she had written her own work. Molly Brant, a high ranking Mohawk native, was able to rise through the government within their nation to become influential in the decisions being made. She worked with her brother, Joseph Brant, as they and their tribe were loyalists within the feud between the colonists and Great Britain. This

led to her being the one to carry the blame when they were forced from their land, and though she worked hard to protect her tribe, she took the fall for the actions forced upon the Mohawk nation.



Abigail Adams, 1800⁹⁰

Known by many, Abigail Adams was the wife of the second President and mother of the sixth President of the United States. Well-educated for a woman during the mid to late 18th century, Abigail Smith, Smith being her maiden name, always wrote to John Adam while he was away for business. She often gave him advice, for example, reminding him not to forget women as he worked with the Continental Congress. However, in discussing Adams, she's either discussed as John's wife or her role as a mother and wife. Abigail Adams was much more than that. Abigail Adams contributed to the founding of America through her acts as a wife, mother, and colonial woman.

Abigail Adams, born Abigail Smith, was a force to be reckoned with. Adams was born November 11, 1744, to Reverend William Smith and Elizabeth Smith. As was common during

⁹⁰ Gilbert Stuart, "Abigail Adams," Oil on canvas, Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1800, National Gallery of Art.

this era, “Abigail had no formal education, but she availed herself of the family’s library to master subjects most women never considered.”⁹¹ She was often sick growing up, keeping her from formal schooling. Her mother taught her and her sisters at home, using their father's extensive library. She was told that her illnesses as a child were what kept her from formal education, but she “became more and more convinced that her lack of schooling was primarily a result of sex discrimination,”⁹²

While living with her family, Abigail Smith met John Adams, and they were wed by October 1764. Though John was a lawyer, her family was still skeptical of him marrying Abigail Smith.⁹³ This marriage would lead to her playing an important role during the American Revolution and the early years of America. Though we can speculate whether she would have still played a role, her marriage to John Adams solidified that. Abigail Adams was a woman who believed in the role of women, one husband, being obedient to her husband, running the household, and raising the children. Due to John being away for diplomatic reasons, Abigail Adams never faltered, learning to adjust to what we now call a ‘single-parent home.’ She did what she needed, never bringing attention to the fact that her reality was different than what she had planned for. Even amid John’s absence, and an eventual war for independence overtaking the colonies, she would learn to farm in John’s absence. She would manage the family money so accurately that they did not see debt, and while she would curse her situation, she did what was necessary to make sure her family was thriving.⁹⁴

Adams took her newfound role of farmerette seriously. John would often remind her that those who were working for them needed to be doing their part. She did not complain to him

⁹¹ Debra Michals, “Biography: Abigail Smith Adams,” National Women’s History Museum, 2015.

⁹² Woody Holton, *Abigail Adams*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 7.

⁹³ Janet Whitney, *Abigail Adams*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947), 22-23.

⁹⁴ Edith B. Gelles, "Abigail Adams: Domesticity and the American Revolution", *The New England Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (1979), 500-501.

when things went poorly, she relied on her best friend Mercy Otis Warren for this. The two were close, both educated women who would find themselves involved in writing events. For Mercy, she wrote against the government's actions and the events of the American Revolution. When Abigail Adams would inform John Adams of issues, it was due to their extreme nature. This would allow him to be kept in the loop of things going on at his farm while he was away for diplomatic work. She wrote to John in June of 1775 stating "I have met with some abuse and very ill treatment. I was you for my protector and justifier...I feel too angry to make this about anything further than a Letter of Business,"⁹⁵ She explained a situation with Mr. Hayden. She wrote to him of events of abuse and poor treatment: she would write to John when a worker was asked to vacate where he was living on the Adams' farm for a Bostonian family who needed assistance. When he refused, he claimed that John would never ask this of him, and she worked hard to control her temper.⁹⁶ The role of both husband and wife fell upon Abigail Adams while John Adams was away with his diplomatic work, her loyalty never faltered. Being the sole person to run a household is hard work, especially when it's a woman.

During the American Revolutionary War, she struggled to find helping hands for the farm. John was away, and those who had been there went to fight and those left were few, with the main farmhand falling ill to dysentery. Though she grew to dislike farm work, the farm never failed. This was going on during the war but Adams would push through to make sure their home and farm were well taken care of to the best of her ability, even when she found herself short on help, be it from John or those employed to help.⁹⁷ "Girls and young women served as spies and couriers for American generals, risking capture as they rode through enemy-held territory to

⁹⁵ Adams, Butterfield, L., Garrett, W. and Sprague, M., *Adams Family Correspondence*, 1st Volume. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963.

⁹⁶ Adams, Butterfield, L., Garrett, W. and Sprague, M., *Adams Family Correspondence*, 1st Volume. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963.

⁹⁷ Gelles, "Abigail Adams: Domesticity and the American Revolution".

carry messages or give warnings of enemy-troop movements.”⁹⁸ Adams was not the only one who did what she could to help in the war effort.

Abigail Adams was relatively close to where some battles took place, often helping those whom she could, knowing they had few supplies and even less food. She and her children were able to watch the militia men leave Boston, heading out for another battle. This would be the start of Bunker Hill. She had written about the cannon fire, being an amazing roar, and how it would keep her awake at night. During the battle, she would end up getting very little sleep during the two nights that it persisted, as she could hear the cannons inside her home. One Sunday evening, she would take her children to look out the window at the cannon fire that continued. Even as the British would eventually leave with fewer soldiers than they came with to Bunker Hill, and would go on to comment that she knew this was not the end, that this was not victory. Whitney states it well, “It is a hard thing to be on the wrong side of any war, but worst of all to be on the wrong side of a revolution.”⁹⁹

Adams, while being a home-bound wife, did not let her intelligence go to waste, her writing is almost like poetry. She can be seen as a few different types of a person: a mother, a wife, a political activist, an intellect, and a hard-working woman. Her witnessing pre- and post-Revolutionary America gave her a different view of the world and allowed her to adjust her views to match the ever-changing world she was living in. Being a spouse has its challenges, but John being away more than he was home during the early part of their marriage and through his presidency added to those challenges. Being married to John was helpful to such an intelligent woman. During this era, women were not as educated as their male counterparts, so having a man beside her who encouraged her in her education allowed Adams to be expressive of what

⁹⁸ Carol Berkin, “It was I Who Did It”: Women's Role in the Founding of the Nation,” *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* 86, no. 3 (Summer, 2006): 15-18.

⁹⁹ Whitney, *Abigail Adams*, 121-123.

she thought, and what she was going through, and this shows in the letters between the couple. Mieder even mentions that “John Adams...accepting [Abigail] as his intellectual equal, a stance that put him far above most men of his time.”¹⁰⁰

Abigail Adams was John Adams’ trusted advisor. Though she did not publish books or pamphlets, as her friend Mercy Otis Warren had done, nor had she given public speeches, she was there to give John her ideas of how women should be included in this process. As John was in and out of the home on political work, she would express her feelings and ideas to him in both person and letters. Even when John asked that she keep their letters safe, she never felt that her writing would become as important as it has. She may or may not be considered one of the first feminists in the United States, depending on which Historian you look at, as the term was not around during the colonial era, but it is apparent that she believed that women should be given more protection and freedoms than they had during this era. Being a woman in a male-dominated society, she thrived in the domestic sphere, but she also made sure that her intelligence did not go to waste.¹⁰¹

It was often that those who worked around John Adams assumed that his wife was influencing him on any decisions he made or put forward. She was raised to be a mother and wife, and it was a job that she excelled at. In many letters exchanged between spouses, she would often remind John Adams that men should be careful, not to give too much power as any man could end up being a tyrant. An infamous quote from Adams was in a letter on March 31, 1776, where she reminded him to “Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands.

¹⁰⁰ Wolfgang Mieder, ““God Helps Them Who Help Themselves”: Proverbial Resolve in the Letters of Abigail Adams”, *Proverbs are the Best Policy: Folk Wisdom and American Politics*, (Logan: University Press of Colorado, 2005), 60.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 60.

Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could.”¹⁰² During an interview with the History Channel, Carol Berkin, Ph.D., is adamant that Adams was not a feminist and that this quote from Abigail Adams’ letter is often misinterpreted. In a return letter from John Adams, he informed her “As to your extraordinary Code of Laws, I cannot but laugh. We have been told that our Struggle has loosened the bands of Government every where... Depend upon it, We know better than to repeal our Masculine systems. Altho they are in full Force, you know they are little more than Theory. We dare not exert our Power in its full Latitude”¹⁰³, giving off this idea that he is aware of the need, but that he does not think there should be any changes at that point in time.

Another author, Louisa Thomas adds that Adams did not fight for women to have many rights, just to have legal protections within a marriage, not to be treated as property. Berkin brings up the mention that everything that a woman owned, would belong to her husband upon being married. It is believed that Adams was asking for a little freedom for women as well.¹⁰⁴ Within this same letter from 1776, she had asked that the women be remembered, as she knew that it would be the men, specifically white men, who were setting up this new government, and hoped that women would find themselves in a better position than they were in before the new government. “Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex. Regard us then as Beings placed by providence under your protection”¹⁰⁵

Traveling during this time for women was vastly different than it was from their male counterparts. Many did not travel as much, as it led them vulnerable to unwanted sexual situations, and always traveled with family. During the war, many women were forced to move

¹⁰² Adams, Butterfield, L., Garrett, W. and Sprague, M., *Adams Family Correspondence*, 1st Volume, 149.

¹⁰³ “John Adams to Abigail Adams, 14 April 1776,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-01-02-0248>. [Original source: *The Adams Papers*, Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 1, *December 1761–May 1776*, ed. Lyman H. Butterfield. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963, pp. 381–383.]

¹⁰⁴ Carol Berkin, and Louisa Thomas, “Abigail Adams | Mrs. President”, *History Channel*, YouTube, 5 Mar. 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Adams, Butterfield, L., Garrett, W. and Sprague, M., *Adams Family Correspondence*, 1st Volume, 150.

and become part of the migration. Inheritance would end up being affected by migration, as the colonies and later America, would have different inheritance patterns than they did in Great Britain. Women would end up with less power than they originally had as well. Though there was not much for women in Great Britain, it would end up being more than what was allowed or normalized in American society. Gendered roles had different expectations as well, making the transition difficult for women as they learned the new way of life after the migration. When it came to migration from Europe to the American colonies, men often found an easier route to become indentured servants and therefore worked off their debt quickly. Women on the other hand were starting to come over as servants to the point that ship captains were trying to turn them away. Due to the common age of being later in their teen years, many of the women would take trips to town in groups. They were also able to negotiate shorter contracts than men could. Indentured servitude, though not supposed to break up couples, would break up some couples, leading to women running away from the house they served. These women were typically pregnant and in search of their husbands. Indentured servants were not to marry while under contract, but that did not stop couples from becoming servants to gain access to the colonies.¹⁰⁶

Saving her home and family was not something that Adams took lightly. She wrote to John, saying that she and an army of women would defend their homes against Howe, a British General, and his army. Adams would put up a tough front when writing to her husband, but she knew what the terror and devastation of war could do to someone. The crops and lives lost were on her mind. She would later write, after being evacuated from Boston, of the loss that was brought on by the Revolution. Being an eloquent writer, she would often write what she was experiencing and what those around her were experiencing; the loss of loved ones and the

¹⁰⁶ Joan R. Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 20-22.

devastation that was left behind. After Boston, Adams and her family noticed that some furniture and other home items were washing ashore.

One of her closest friends, and another woman who is often identified with the American Revolution Era was Mercy Otis Warren. Warren and Adams constantly wrote back and forth, not letting their correspondence interfere with their role as mothers and wives. Though their personalities differed, the two were close until Mercy passed away. Adams was content with being at home, not one for the public eye, while Mercy was quite the opposite. While waiting for letters back Mercy would find herself impatient, she ended up writing what she would later become more well-known for. Mercy would write pamphlets, and plays, and correspond with other family members. She was outspoken against the British Monarchy and was able to publish her thoughts about separating from Great Britain. While the two women were close, they were just like most friends throughout time. They would be close and estranged, agree on some thoughts and disagree on others. It is important to bring Mercy Otis Warren into a part of Abigail Adams' history as the two are often tied together. Both were intelligent women in a time where education was not the focus for girls or women and they were witnessing history as the colonies fought for their freedom and ultimately became their nation, as well as the trial and errors that would occur after gaining independence from Great Britain.¹⁰⁷

For women to be more politically active, and to have more rights, Adams had to be careful how she approached these topics with her political husband as she couldn't risk alienating herself from her husband or her community, so she would learn to have these discussions in her letters in a more cryptic way, rather than stating what she believed outright. "She connected

¹⁰⁷ Edith B. Gelles, "Bonds of Friendship: The Correspondence of Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 108 (1996): 35-71.

political philosophy to women's rights."¹⁰⁸ Aligning philosophy with rights for women shows how she truly believed that women should have more rights than they were granted during this era.

Abigail Adams' father pushed for her and her siblings to have an education, by having a large library that allowed for the children in the Smith family to have access to. Her education would continue once she married John, a future lawyer who also had an incredible library. The authors she read varied throughout her life due to her early exposure to literature. She went from authors like Shakespeare at home to social critics and Oliver Goldsmith and James Thomson, who was a British playwright. These authors started to open her mind more as she looked at the society the authors were referring to and saw the similarities during pre-revolution America. It's safe to say that reading authors like this led to the different ideals that she would later bring to John Adams' attention in her letters.¹⁰⁹

Additional work is required when looking into women from this era to find out how they lived, what their impacts were and how their lives changed after the war. The challenges women faced during the Revolutionary era also changed the organization of labor and the economic standings for women. Literature shows the example of how vast knowledge and changes were, as it would allow some women to create pamphlets or write articles as a way for their voices to be heard. Women were encouraged to learn the finances of the family in case they suddenly became widowed. Leading up to and during the war, money depreciated, trading ties were cut, and it became harder, as well as more expensive, for families to stay fed. Adams often complained of having to pay increasing prices, and it became more difficult to plan. If they were not having to pay increased food prices, Americans were paying higher taxes. This would put financial strains

¹⁰⁸ Elaine Forman Crane, "Political Dialogue and the Spring of Abigail's Discontent," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (1999): 745.

¹⁰⁹ Crane, "Political Dialogue and the Spring of Abigail's Discontent," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 4.

on families. While this change in life is not subject to just Abigail Adams, it is important to mention as it shows how the world was changing for women.¹¹⁰

During and after the war, John and Abigail Adams would communicate with one another through letters, keeping their relationship from falling apart during his constant absence. He tells her of men he works with, and when they fell ill, as shown in a letter in November of 1779, “Mr. Dana has been very sick, but now is pretty well. We are now out of all danger of the *Romulus* and *Virginia*, and I hope have little fear from the enemy.”¹¹¹ He carefully writes to her about what he is seeing, and what he is going through during the boat trip, even mentioning that “I write on my Knees, and the ship rolls so that I write worse than common.”¹¹² She responds kindly and lovingly, though some letters do show her frustration with the job she took on while he was away. Adams makes sure to remind him that her faith and spirits had dropped by the time his letter had arrived, but receiving it raised them once more. “I had a faith and reliance that supported me before, but now my heart so misgives me that I can not find that confidence which I wish for. Your letter from Cape Ann arrived and cheered my drooping spirits.”¹¹³ The love between them is often expressed in their communication.

Towards the end of her life, Adams had the opportunity to visit a room that would be known as the Drawing Room. In a letter she wrote to Mr. Niles, she openly thanked him for her time there and informed him that there must have been some miscommunication. “Your correspondent must have been misinformed when he states that there was any distinction of party made at the drawing room while I had the honor to preside there; any gentleman or lady, of either

¹¹⁰ Sara T. Damiano, "Writing Women's History Through the Revolution: Family Finances, Letter Writing, and Conceptions of Marriage," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 4, 2017: 697-728.

¹¹¹ Adams, Butterfield, L., Garrett, W. and Sprague, M. 1963. *Adams Family Correspondence*. 2nd Volume. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 368-369.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 369.

¹¹³ Adams, Butterfield, L., Garrett, W. and Sprague, M. 1963. *Adams Family Correspondence*. 2nd Volume. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 369.

party, who chose to visit there, were received with equal civility.”¹¹⁴ Adams made sure to clear up any confusion about who was and was not welcomed to the drawing room and continued with “The gentlemen of both houses of congress received and accepted the invitations of the president to dine with him and but one of the whole number ever so far forgot the character of a gentleman, as to send an uncivil refusal.”¹¹⁵ Interestingly, she would take the time to write to this man about his business, setting records straight and making sure things were properly taken care of. This seems to have been somewhere that she grew as a person once more. Adams was more of a woman to care for her family and take care of their business. She seems to be more involved in the public eye, due to her husband’s career, she extended that aspect into making sure those who were involved in any way were also taken care of, clearing up any miscommunication that can easily occur during a letter.

Abigail Adams’ life influenced others while she was alive. It is shown in her friendship with Mercy Otis Warren. Her influence doesn’t stop there, as is shown by her husband John Adams, and while those decisions had not been made official, her actions are long-lasting. She influenced those in her life, and while she did not get legislation passed to give women more freedom in their marriages, I find it safe to say that she was a feminist before the term even existed. The idea of feminism, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is the belief in and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. Adams had pushed for women to be more equal to men when it came to the law, especially when she wrote a letter to her husband that as “the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation. That your Sex is Naturally Tyrannical.”¹¹⁶ Though she was not asking for complete freedom like her male

¹¹⁴ Abigail Adams & Niles, H. (1818, Jan 31). "The drawing rooms.", *Niles' Weekly Register (1814-1837)*, 13, 365.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 365.

¹¹⁶ Abigail Adams to John Adams (Braintree, Massachusetts, March 31, 1776).

counterparts, just the idea of wanting to be better than the generation before hers, it shows she was much more progressive than most during this era. Adams played into the role that she was raised for, mother and wife, but she did so much more than that by being married to a man who is considered a founding father and was away frequently. She kept her family from debt, she ran the family farm, and she raised her children. Abigail Adams is more than just the mother and wife of two presidents. She was strong and persevered through everything that life threw at her.



Molly Brant¹¹⁷

Before the arrival of European settlers into the American colonies, there were hundreds of Indigenous Nations. One of those Nations is the Kanyen'kehà:ka, meaning People of the Flint Place, or Mohawk to those not part of the Nation. Their ancestral land resides near Mohawk River Valley in eastern New York, and they would hunt into the Adirondack Mountains to the south and as far east as the Susquehanna River. They were also broken up into three clans, Turtles, Bears, and Wolves, with each having a chieftainship. The Nation would receive the name Mohawk from the Dutch and the English, meaning man-eaters,¹¹⁸ showing how European settlers

¹¹⁷ Sara Tyson, *Molly Brant Stamp*, 1986, Photograph.

¹¹⁸ Pamela Koenig, "Mohawk," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*.

saw the Indigenous Nation. The Mohawk Nation is matrilineal, the following of the mother's bloodline, and matrilocal, the family settles with the wife's family or community.

During the French and Indian War, the Iroquois Nation aligned themselves with the British, though the French did try to win their alliance. It was due to Sir William Johnson that led to this partnership during the war. Through the years that this war took place, 1754 through 1763, the Indigenous communities of the Iroquois Nation helped to provide safe areas and even helped with the building of Fort Stanwix, which was built on traditional Oneida land. Their assistance in leading expeditions against the French ultimately helped the British win this war. While the British had created the Proclamation line of 1763, limiting colonial movement west, the colonists ignored the proclamation and moved where they wished west of the Appalachian Mountains. Though the Nation was allied with the British, they did their best to stay out of the arising issues between the colonies.¹¹⁹

While many Indigenous women played their roles within the colonial era of the United States, there is one who can be argued to be one of the most influential women of the American Revolution. Mary, or more commonly Molly, Brant was born to Margaret, also known as Sahetagearat Onagsakearat or Owandah, and an unknown father. Records do not show who her father truly was as the Mohawk Nation is a matrilineal society, so knowing who her mother was is where her lineage would be most important. Margaret was married to a man named Peter, or Tehowaghwengaraghkwin, and he was the father of Molly Brant's younger brother Joseph, or Thayendanegea. Tehowaghwengaraghkwin being Joseph Brant's father allows for the assumption that he is also Molly Brant's. "At birth, a Mohawk child was given a baby name, one that was not already in use by the clan to which it belonged. Later, the child might take an available adult

¹¹⁹ "The Six Nations Confederacy during the American Revolution (U.S. National Park Service)," National Parks Service, October 10, 2024.

name, and the baby's name would be returned to the clan to be used again."¹²⁰ Indigenous peoples have more than one name throughout their lives, which leads to there being multiple different references to what her name could have been at different parts of her life. According to the Canadian Museum of History, Brant's Mohawk name was Koñwatsi?Tsiaiéñni¹²¹, but can also be spelled Gonwatsijayenni. She has also been referenced as Dagonwadonti.¹²² Brant was not the surname of Molly or Joseph's father, but their stepfathers. Kanagaradunka Brant treated them well and helped them to rise in ranks within the Iroquois society; both children would take on his surname as their own. It would also be Kanagaradunka's connection with Europeans that would lead the siblings to have more European influences within their lives than before the marriage.¹²³

Traditionally, women were forbidden from hunting for food, and while it was the job of both the men and women to clear fields, growing crops was a part of the women's domain, along with raising children and caring for the home. Men were the warriors and oversaw hunting. Infants would be strapped to a board to be worn on the mother's back while she tended to the crops, and as children got older, they were given their jobs to help maintain the home and help the family.¹²⁴ The Mohawk Nation was just one group within the larger Iroquois Confederacy. Within the Confederacy, there would be a total of fifty peace chiefs and fifty clan mothers, and "neither the fifty chiefs nor the fifty clan mothers of the confederacy would make the decisions; that power would rest with the people."¹²⁵ It would expand from five Nations to six when the Tuscarora were added in 1722. The capital of the confederacy was within the Onondaga Nation, and "each nation sent a fixed number of chiefs to the Great Council held in Onondaga. They

¹²⁰Peggy Dymond Leavey, *Molly Brant: Mohawk Loyalist and Diplomat*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2015), 17.

¹²¹ "Birth of Mary Brant," Canadian Museum of History, April 3, 2017.

¹²² Leavey, *Molly Brant: Mohawk Loyalist and Diplomat*, 17.

¹²³ Ibid, 23.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 22.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 27.

were chosen by the women from the leading families.”¹²⁶ Allowing women roles such as clan mother, or the choosing of chiefs to represent their Nation, gives them high-level roles to signify their importance to the Nation.

The Mohawk Nation bordered the English colonies, allowing for Molly Brant to grow up with European influence. In her youth, due to her stepfather’s connections to the European settlers, Brant would “receive a European education”.¹²⁷ She was sent to a girl's school with colonial students. This transition was hard for the young Molly Brant, as she was an outsider compared to her classmates, and though she knew English relatively well, until “she discovered that she was unable to utter a word in reply to the friendly overtures of the other girls”.¹²⁸ Brant was an intelligent young woman, having excelled in her native school. Once she was moved to the girls' school, it took her time to adjust to the changes that she was unaccustomed to, but once she accepted these new ways, she became interested in learning once more, and she learned quickly. During her schooling, she learned the European ways that a young lady was to conduct herself with manners and grace, but she also “learned to do fine needlework and embroidery [and] improved her English vocabulary.”¹²⁹ She would also take a serious interest in reading, allowing her to further expand her knowledge.

In 1754 or 1755, Brant, aged 18, would join the congregation of Mohawk delegates in their travels to Philadelphia in preparation for her becoming a clan mother when she reached age. This trip was “a chance for Molly to learn how business was conducted, although her role was likely of an observer only...The women might be tasked with remembering what was said, what

¹²⁶ Ibid, 28.

¹²⁷ Lynne E. Ford, *Encyclopedia of Women and American Politics*, Facts on File Library of American History, (New York: Facts on File, Inc. 2008), 74.

¹²⁸ Helen Caister Robinson, *Mistress Molly, the Brown Lady: Portrait of Molly Brant*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1980), 13.

¹²⁹ Robinson, *Mistress Molly, the Brown Lady: Portrait of Molly Brant*, 14.

promises made.”¹³⁰ Though men made the laws and decisions of whether to go to war or remain at peace, women had a large impact on their decisions. Women were also the ones who decided whether a captive was kept alive or killed. The role of women within the Nation differed, yet still had some similarities with their European counterparts. “Gender roles were different, but complementary.”¹³¹

When she was not in school, she would continue tasks that were required of women within the Mohawk Nation. It is believed that both Molly Brant and William Johnson would have met during his diplomatic missions to Canajoharie, within the Mohawk Nation. “During his stay with the family in April 1759 Johnson probably caught his first glimpse of Molly. That same year she took up residence in his home.”¹³² Johnson saw that if he garnered more respect in the community, taking Brant as a wife would help him greatly. She was given a dress by Johnson as “it was customary for a Mohawk maiden who was sought in marriage to receive such a present from the man who wished to have her to wife!”¹³³ Brant had to send a gift in return as acceptance. It is estimated that the two were wed in a Mohawk ceremony in 1759, leading Molly Brant to be roughly twenty-three. These are estimates as there are no documents to support these years. Since Johnson, who was given the Mohawk name of “Warragheyagey”¹³⁴, and Brant were wed in a longhouse, a traditional home for Mohawk Natives, the Church of England did not recognize the marriage between the two, so in the eyes of the Church, they were never legally married.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Leavey, *Molly Brant: Mohawk Loyalist and Diplomat*, 35.

¹³¹ Nancy L. Rhoden and Ian K. Steele, *The Human Tradition in the American Revolution*, (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc, 2000), 189.

¹³² Theda Perdue, *Shifters: Native American Women's Lives*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 51.

¹³³ Robinson, *Mistress Molly, the Brown Lady: Portrait of Molly Brant*, 20.

¹³⁴ Phyllis R. Blakeley, and John N. Grant, *Eleven Exiles: Accounts of Loyalists of the American Revolution*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009), 118.

¹³⁵ “Molly Brant,” Stones Kingston.

Around the time that Brant and Johnson welcomed their first child, he had been sent off to war. During the French and Indian War, the North American theater of the Seven Years' War, the British relied on Johnson to gain Native soldiers to account for the lack of British numbers. He was promoted to major-general and "led an army of British Colonials and Mohawk allies under the aged King Hendrick (Theyanoguen) to try to drive the French from the region."¹³⁶ Theyanoguen, a Mohawk leader, was killed by bayonet, and Johnson was wounded with a musket ball lodged into his hip. "After the battle, the Mohawk wanted to return to their homes, as was their custom, in order to grieve the loss of Theyanoguen, and so many other brave warriors."¹³⁷ For Johnson to heal, he could no longer continue in the war and was kept home with few visitors, allowing Brant to spend time with her husband and learn more about the man she was married to. Once he was better, she became a hostess to many visitors, especially after "William was designated a baronet by King George II, with the title, Sir William Johnson."¹³⁸ Being his wife, Brant would also inadvertently receive a title as well being referred to as Lady Molly. She "was emphatic in her wish to be addressed as Mistress Molly."¹³⁹ The women would either refer to her as Molly or The Brown Lady Johnson.

Brant ran the household, as was common for European women. She took on multiple responsibilities in running the Johnson manor, taking on more tasks when Johnson was away for war. She got along with their servants, kept her account books, and ordered materials for clothes for the kids and staff. "The boycott strategy politicized women's domestic sphere,"¹⁴⁰ and as many women in the colonies were starting to boycott, Molly Brant was more concerned with making sure she and those around her had what they needed. When her order came in with the

¹³⁶ Leavey, *Molly Brant: Mohawk Loyalist and Diplomat*, 36.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 37.

¹³⁸ Robinson, *Mistress Molly, the Brown Lady: A Portrait of Molly Brant*, 35.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 35.

¹⁴⁰ Berkin, "'It was I Who Did It': Women's Role in the Founding of the Nation."

silks and velvets, she diligently checked to ensure everything had arrived as it had been ordered. Though she was a strong woman who was capable of many things, such as running a home, tending to gardens, and caring for children, she was still careful not to fully voice her thoughts with her husband. The couple would move to a new home, and she “was reluctant to leave the Fort Johnson manor, [the] house that had been her home for ten years.”¹⁴¹ She was also worried that her family may not visit her in their new home at Johnson Hall, as it could have been seen as a “pretentious house.”¹⁴²

Leading up to the start of the American Revolution, and due to her connection to the British through her husband and stepfather, Brant found herself on the side of the loyalists during a time when the colonists were either fighting to break away from England or choosing to remain loyal to the King. “During his lifetime Sir William was an ardent Loyalist, and she knew that had he lived he would have counselled her people to support the King, and his politics became hers. It was her duty, she believed to urge her people to remain loyal.”¹⁴³ She became a widow in 1774, and in his will “William Johnson called Molly his ‘prudent & faithful Housekeeper’ and the mother of eight of his children.”¹⁴⁴ During her time with him, she was able to grow her diplomacy between the two worlds she straddled. Brant had entertained many British officials, as well as high-ranking Natives, giving her word influence amongst both groups. Daniel Claus even noted to the British Governor of Quebec that “one word from her is more taken notice of by the Five Nations than a thousand from any white Man without exception.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Robinson, *Mistress Molly, the Brown Lady: A Portrait of Molly Brant*, 41.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 41.

¹⁴³ Phyllis R. Blakeley, and John N. Grant, *Eleven Exiles: Accounts of Loyalists of the American Revolution*, 118-119.

¹⁴⁴ Maeve E. Kane, *Shirts Powdered Red: Haudenosaunee Gender, Trade, and Exchange Across Three Centuries*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023), 173.

¹⁴⁵ Conn, Heather. “Mary Brant (Konwatsi’tsiaiénni).” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, January 30, 2008.

As tensions built in the Colonies, colonists and natives started to become more suspicious of one another. Brant was no exception to this. She continued to run her store but was also paying close attention to conversations that took place, knowing that she was also being watched in her actions. “She was suspected of hiding Loyalists who were trying to escape the bands of Patriot vigilantes, of providing the Loyalists with food and shelter, and even of sending arms and ammunition to those fighting on the side of the British.”¹⁴⁶ Brant and her brother, Joseph Brant, used their connection to William Johnson to align themselves with the British. While Joseph Brant was away, Molly Brant worked on gaining intel from home, passing it along to the British military as she gathered the information. “In one case, she relayed to the high command information that rebel forces were moving on nearby Fort Stanwix. Her warning enabled the British to marshal a small force that ambushed the American column at Oriskany on 6 October 1777. After the victory, Loyalist Indians ransacked the homes of American Oneidas, burning houses, destroying crops, and killing livestock. The Oneidas recognized Brant’s role in the attack and signed her out for revenge.”¹⁴⁷ The Indigenous Nations were split between siding with the British and siding with the Colonists, hoping that the side they chose would allow them to keep their land at war's end.

The Mohawks were aligned with the British, which led to them being targets of attacks from Colonists who were seeking independence. In Canajoharie, the Continental Committee of Safety raided their homes. “Like many other Loyalists, Molly Brant and other Mohawk women who fled their Canajoharie homes in the wake of the 1777 raid lost property, livestock, and personal effects...the thefts were both personal and political.”¹⁴⁸ Being a loyalist, whether Native

¹⁴⁶ Leavey, *Molly Brant: Mohawk Loyalist and Diplomat*, 77-78.

¹⁴⁷ James Taylor Carson, “Molly Brant: From Clan Mother to Loyalist Chief,” in *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 53-54.

¹⁴⁸ Kane, *Shirts Powdered Red: Haudenosaunee Gender, Trade, and Exchange Across Three Centuries*, 174.

or European, put a target on the backs of those who did not support the cause to break from Great Britain. Even after being forced to move due to the attacks, Brant continued to pass along any useful information she gathered. She also worked to keep her brother safe as he led a group of Mohawks and colonists who had remained loyal to the crown. Brant was so worried about him to the point she tried to intervene in his plans where she “tried to block his ambitious plan to take his men and link up with the English army of New York.”¹⁴⁹ She also informed her fellow loyalists of the actions of Benedict Arnold, the visitation of a French commander, and General Horatio Gates’ movements.

Molly Brant was eventually seen as someone who was the reason for the Mohawks losing their territory at the war's end within her tribe. James Taylor Carson summarized her life well. “Had she accepted the possibilities and limitations of her gender and of her culture, her life would have differed little from the lives of other prominent Iroquois women of the eighteenth century.”¹⁵⁰ Brant took chances and kept her loyalty to the British after building a relationship with them during her marriage to William Johnson, and it ultimately ended up costing her her reputation within her community.

¹⁴⁹Carson, “Molly Brant: From Clan Mother to Loyalist Chief,” in *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives*, 54.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 58.



Phillis Wheatley¹⁵¹

While the previous two women discussed were born and raised in North America, Phillis Wheatley Peters was not. She would gain acknowledgment throughout her life due to her education and she was the first African American to ever publish her work and was one of the first women to publish. This accomplishment is not one that was available for others who were enslaved like she was, so for her to have been noticed for her intelligence proves just how incredibly smart she was, even from a young age. She is well remembered for her literary skills, writing not only poems about her life, but also her communication with men who were later considered the founding fathers, and creating poems for families who were grieving the loss of a family member.

Enslavement had been in the colonies in Virginia in 1619, after the first shipment of Africans had been brought to the colonies. The thought of Africans as being lesser than Europeans can be dated back to Aristotle, who “concocted a climate theory to justify Greek superiority, saying that extremely hot or cold climates produced intellectually, physically, and morally inferior people...Aristotle labeled Africans ‘burnt faces’-- the original meaning in Greek

¹⁵¹ Scipio Moorhead, *Phillis Wheatley*, 1773, Photograph.

of ‘Ethiopian’ -- and viewed the ‘ugly’ extremes of pal or dark skins.”¹⁵² The expansion into the Americas also brought with it enslavement. Enslavement found its way into Christianity’s roots, with some claiming the curse theory over the climate theory of Aristotle. The curse theory comes from Noah’s Ark, where Noah had told his sons to refrain from sex with their wives while they were on the Ark, but a “hypersexual Ham has sex on the Ark, God wills that Ham’s descendants shall be ‘so blacke and loathsome...that it might remain a spectacle of disobedience to the all the worlde.”¹⁵³ Enslavement would be part of the founding of the colonies, leading to the enslavement of Phillis Wheatley and millions of other Africans that had been brought to the colonies.

It is believed that Phillis Wheatley was born in the Gambia River region of Gambia of Africa in 1753.¹⁵⁴ The year is a rough estimate, as there are no official records of her birth, nor do we know her birth name. Senegal has also claimed Wheatley as a native, even commemorating her with a stamp that was issued in the country in 1971.¹⁵⁵ She was taken from her home and brought to the American Colonies in 1761, where she was sold as an enslaved person to John Wheatley.¹⁵⁶ No one is sure if Susanna Wheatley heard of the arrival of the ship by word of mouth or if she read it in a newspaper ad, but with her two surviving children growing older, Susanna wanted to have someone to care for her as she got older. “She wanted ‘a domestic’, one she would train herself ‘by gentle usage’ to take care of her in her old age. Something about the frail one ‘crouched down upon the ships deck’ got her attention, ‘enlisted her sympathies.... made

¹⁵² Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Bold Type Books, 2017), 17.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 32.

¹⁵⁴ Debra Michals, and Rebecca Ljungren, eds., “Biography: Phillis Wheatley,” National Women’s History Museum, 2023.

¹⁵⁵ Vincent Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2014), 9.

¹⁵⁶ Phillis Wheatley, George Moses Horton, and Margaretta Matilda Odell, *Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley: A Native African and a Slave; Poems by a Slave*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838), 11.

Phillis special despite her dubious physical condition.”¹⁵⁷ She would get her name from two different situations in her life. Phillis, from the name of the ship she was transported on, and Wheatley, from the family that purchased her. The ship that brought her from Africa to America was one of three during 1761, as the Seven Years' War raged in Europe and the American Colonies.¹⁵⁸

There are no known accounts of her time on the Middle Passage, but “we can be quite sure that as a prepubescent girl, she was allowed to roam the vessel much more freely than older enslaved Africans, who might pose a physical threat to the crew.”¹⁵⁹ Her young age could have also prevented any sexual assault against her aboard the ship, while older women did not have the same luxury. The set up on the ships were usually keeping men chained up, while allowing women and girls to remain unchained but separate from the men, and women and girls were not “considered likely to seize weapons and attack crewmen.”¹⁶⁰ When the Wheatley’s purchased the young girl, “they had observed the ninth anniversary of the death of their daughter Sarah...ages 7 years/ 9 months/ & 18 days.”¹⁶¹ Phillis Wheatley would have looked to be about the same age as Sarah when she passed, so they could have purchased the child with the intention of her being another young child in their home, almost a surrogate child, though Wheatley’s life looked different than Sarah’s would have, had she survived. This also could have been what led the Wheatley’s to educate Phillis Wheatley in the way that they had. The Wheatley’s wanted a young, enslaved person who would be able to attend to and care for Susannah, John’s wife. At the time of her purchase, she was “rather frail and was dressed in scant clothing, and these

¹⁵⁷ David Waldstreicher, *The Odyssey of Phillis Wheatley: A Poet's Journeys Through American Slavery and Independence* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2023), 28.

¹⁵⁸ Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage*, 6.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 10.

¹⁶⁰ Waldstreicher, *The Odyssey of Phillis Wheatley: A Poet's Journeys Through American Slavery and Independence*, 25.

¹⁶¹ Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage*, 14.

conditions tended to make her a pitiful sight.”¹⁶² She was not purchased to be a laborer, but to be more of an asset, a “luxury good rather than a practical investment, meant to enhance a rich family’s domestic life in their Boston mansion.”¹⁶³

Once the young girl was healthy, and with the help of Wheatley's daughter, Mary, it was discovered that Phillis Wheatley was a bright child.¹⁶⁴ It was with this discovery that the Wheatley’s decided to teach her how to read and write. “Her ambition was stimulated: she became acquainted with grammar, history, ancient and modern geography, and astronomy, and studied Latin to read Horace with such ease and enjoyment...the best libraries were open to her; she had opportunities for conversation with the most accomplished and distinguished persons in the city.”¹⁶⁵ Phillis Wheatley was unlike any other enslaved person of this time. She was allowed to learn and to let that education guide her into a life much different than others who were in a similar position of being the property of a White family. “Under the tutelage of Susannah Wheatley and her daughter, Mary, Phillis became a literary prodigy.”¹⁶⁶ It is possible that the Wheatley’s saw potential in her, as they allowed her to write as she pleased and even reduced her household duties to more minor tasks, but “with permission and encouragement to ignore even these duties when she felt poetically inclined.”¹⁶⁷ She was with the Wheatley’s for about five years before she tried her hand at poetry, and it is quite possible that her first poem ever written was “On Being Brought from Africa to America”, though we cannot be sure. However, it is her earliest poem to have survived.

¹⁶² Phillis Wheatley, *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley*, Edited by Julian D Mason. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), xii.

¹⁶³ Mark A. Peterson, *The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 295.

¹⁶⁴ Wheatley, *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley*, xii.

¹⁶⁵ Rufus Wilmot Griswold, *The Female Poets of America*, Second Ed, Philadelphia, PA: Parry & McMillan, 1859, pg. 30.

¹⁶⁶ Peterson, *The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 295.

¹⁶⁷ Wheatley, *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley*, xiv.

Wheatley was also allowed to become educated in the Christian Religion. Different sects of the Christian religion in the colonies typically did not allow Africans to be baptized in their church. One of the exceptions was the Protestants, who insisted that there be instruction and conversion before they would baptize an African in their church. The Anglican church was against converting the enslaved population, and a lot of that stemmed from “the opposition and hostility of powerful planters in the colonies.”¹⁶⁸ Due to how the Wheatley’s raised her, using the Christian bible among many other texts, religion started to bleed into her poems. She wrote “On Being Brought to America”, and it is in “this poem that it appears that Wheatley is embracing her Calvinistic perspective regarding her lived experiences and the experiences of the enslaved.”¹⁶⁹ It would not be until the next century that enslaved people would be allowed to convert to Christianity, showing how her masters believed in Phillis Wheatley’s intelligence. While she still completed some things around the Wheatley mansion, her talents allowed for her to be treated “as something closer to an adoptive daughter than a servant.”¹⁷⁰

As a teen, Phillis Wheatley would witness the outcomes of the acts that passed due to where the Wheatley mansion was located. When the British troops arrived in Boston to enforce the Townshend Acts in 1768, she saw “the troops marching up Long Wharf and King Street past the Wheatley’s family home to take possession of the city and quell the violence against Crown customs officers.”¹⁷¹ She would continue to see how the soldiers occupied the city and two blocks from the Wheatley home, the Boston Massacre in 1770 would occur, which killed five men. After the massacre, Wheatley wrote and published a poem in the Boston Evening Post, though she did not sign her name to it, it would come out later that it was hers. She wrote about

¹⁶⁸ “Religion and Slavery.” Slavery and Remembrance.

¹⁶⁹ Barnes-Holiday, Kristen. “Phillis Wheatley: A Female Theological Pioneer.” *The Michigan Chronicle*, March 13, 2024.

¹⁷⁰ Peterson, *The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865*, 303.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 297.

what she may have witnessed, as she lived close to the scene. In her poem, she states, “From Pity’s Eye, disdain in your honour’d Bier; Lost to their View, surviving Friends may mourn, Yet on thy Pile shall Flames celestial burn:...While to the World, the letter’d Stone shall tell, How Caldwell, Attucks, Gray and Mav’rick fell.”¹⁷² She knew of the four men who had passed, unintentionally leaving out the fifth death, as he would not pass until several days after the event due to his injuries. Though the soldiers lessened their occupation post-Massacre, she would see the soldiers come back into Boston in full force after the destruction of hundreds of tea chests, known as the Boston Tea Party, and then the enforcement of the Coercive Acts. These events would take place before Wheatley saw her twentieth birthday. She would be granted full membership to Old South Church in 1771, and with her connections to the clergy of the church, through the Wheatley’s, “she encountered literary, political, and mercantile leaders of town. As her reputation grew, Susannah took Phillis on rounds of visits to other genteel families.”¹⁷³ These families were usually highly respected and from the higher social classes of Boston. Wheatley had also been trusted to write an elegy for the Lieutenant Governor, Andrew Oliver after his wife passed.

In her book, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, published in 1771, Wheatley has multiple poems on the death of different individuals. She had been requested to write these poems for the passing of family by friends of the Wheatley family. She also wrote to Cambridge University, as well as to the King of England, King George III. In her poem to Cambridge, she states “When the whole human race by sin had fall’n, He deign’d to die that they might rise again, and share with him in the sublimest skies...Improve your privileges while they stay, Ye pupils, and each hour redeem, that bears Or good or bad report of you to heav’n.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Antonio T. Bly, “Wheatley’s on the Affray in King Street,” *The Explicator* 56 (4): 177–80, 1998.

¹⁷³ Peterson, *The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865*, 304.

¹⁷⁴ Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, (London: A. Bell, 1773), pg. 26.

Religion played a large role in her life, and she explains to Cambridge that the students should turn to God, and redeem themselves, so that they may have a good report in their afterlife. In her first surviving poem that we know about, *On Being Brought from Africa to America*, writing about how she was brought from a pagan land, but that all deserve to be given the option to know God. “Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain, May be refin’d, and join th’ angelic train”¹⁷⁵ shows how important she thinks that all should be given the chance to correct their lives and follow Christianity. During the different acts being passed by the British Parliament, and the stress this brought to the colonies, Wheatley felt moved to write a poem to King George III when the Stamp Act had been repealed. She praised him for the repeal, and stated “May George, beloved by all the nations round, Live with heav’n’s choicest constant blessings crown’d...A monarch’s smile can set his subjects free!”¹⁷⁶ Phillis Wheatley seemingly saw the good in people, based on her writings.

Enslavement, in all its horrors, had itself embedded in religion as well as society and the economy in the Southern colonies. To say that Wheatley was lucky with her Master is a bit of a contradiction, she was still stolen from her homeland, she was still put before the community in very little clothing and was ultimately purchased. Where one could say she was in a more fortunate situation due to Wheatley’s seeing her potential and fostering it instead of squashing it. Those deep in the religious community found themselves at odds with how they thought about enslavement. There are individuals, such as Joseph Sewall, Harrison Gray, and Andrew Eliot, who thought that enslavement was wrong, refused to own enslaved persons, and even spoke out against it. Many things that would fall under the abolitionist scope. Then there were people like John Wheatley and John Moorhead who looked at it differently. “Others...saw no contradiction

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 29.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 28.

between owning slaves and treating them humanely as Christians, just as they would servants in less permanent forms of bondage.”¹⁷⁷ This is just one example of how Christians justified owning other humans. Many looked at it as a type of missionary work, as they were able to introduce Africans to Christianity, the Wheatley’s being one of those families. Phillis Wheatley would be questioned by eighteen examiners in the early 1770s, and while there are no written questions of what was asked of her, they would ultimately come out and state “We whose Names are under-written, do assure the World, that the Poems specified in the following Page, were (as we verily believe) written by Phillis, a young Negro Girl...She has been examined by some of the best Judges, and is thought qualified to write them.”¹⁷⁸ It took eighteen, assuming, white men to judge the young woman as the rightful author of the poetry that she wrote.

Due to the connections that had been made, Wheatley was becoming a larger-than-life figure for someone in her position. She had become close with a preacher, George Whitefield, who she learned from in the pews of the Old South Church, though he had only visited this church a few times. “Moved by his preaching and sudden demise, Wheatley wrote a funeral elegy, noting Whitefield’s prominence in bringing Christian instruction to African Americans.”¹⁷⁹ This elegy would put her in connection with Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon. It was after the judgment that Susanna Wheatley would look to her English friends for assistance, as the English were more accepting of Black authors.

Wheatley did not have the best of health growing up. At the recommendation of a family physician that she needed salt air, this would be her ticket to travel to England with Wheatley’s son Nathaniel, and the trip across the Atlantic was set for May 1773. She had gained a positive

¹⁷⁷ Peterson, *The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865*, 307.

¹⁷⁸ Henry Louis Gates, *The Trials of Phillis Wheatley: America’s First Black Poet and Her Encounters with the Founding Fathers*, (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2009), 29-30.

¹⁷⁹ Peterson, *The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865*, 307.

relationship with the Countess of Huntingdon, due to her elegy of Whitefield, and she was set up to meet many prominent English members of society upon her arrival to London. Wheatley had been well received in London, and her poems were published “under the patronage of the Countess of Huntingdon, with a letter from her master.”¹⁸⁰ The Countess worked to bring religion to those who may not have had that introduction prior, usually those who were poor. She also helped to sponsor Phillis Wheatley when she visited London, “and assisted in publishing Wheatley’s volume of poetry in London. Wheatley dedicated the book to her.”¹⁸¹ Due to the law regarding taking enslaved people from England and transporting them elsewhere, Phillis Wheatley would gain her freedom in 1773 after receiving a “promise of Nathaniel Wheatley that he would grant her freedom, which he did one month after she returned”¹⁸² to America.

Many men that we consider founding fathers would either write to or about Wheatley. One of those was George Washington, at the time the Commander of the Continental Army, and the future first president of the United States. She had written Washington in October of 1775, praising his appointment as the “Generalissimo of the armies of North America.”¹⁸³ Within this letter, she had sent him a poem, hoping to encourage this leader of what was soon to be America. She brings into the poem references to a “Celestial choir! enthron’d in realms of light, Columbia’s scenes of glorious toils,”¹⁸⁴ bringing Washington, and future readers, into this thought of America being the chosen side, with this celestial choir, or heavenly choir, bringing in this light to the scenes of war. She praises Washington in his fight for the freedom of the colonies, mentioning that Washington should “proceed...with virtue on thy side,”¹⁸⁵ saying that

¹⁸⁰ Griswold, *The Female Poets of America*, 30.

¹⁸¹ Peterson, *The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865*, 307.

¹⁸² Nicholas Mosvick, “Forgotten Founders: Phillis Wheatley, African American Poet of the Revolution,” National Constitution Center – constitutioncenter.org, February 17, 2022.

¹⁸³ Phillis Wheatley, Letter to George Washington, “To George Washington from Phillis Wheatley, 26 October 1775,” Providence, October 26, 1775.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

God was on America's side in this war and that they would be prosperous. In his letter back to Wheatley, Washington explains that he did not receive her October letter until December, though the letter is dated February. This delay is attributed to the ongoing war and that Washington did not have to respond, even though he recognized this in the letter. "A variety of important occurrences, continually interposing to distract the mind and withdraw the attention, I hope will apologize for the delay."¹⁸⁶ He also stated, in response to her poem, that he wanted to publish it to give "the World this new instance of your genius"¹⁸⁷, though he thought it would make him look vain, so he decided not to.

The Wheatley's were loyalists, and as the American Revolution raged on, Wheatley started to express her patriotic views in her writings. "Her patriotism is clearly underscored in her two most famous Revolutionary War poems."¹⁸⁸ These two poems were "To His Excellency General Washington" written in 1775 and "Liberty and Peace" written in 1784. In 1777, Wheatley received a poem from John Paul Jones, who would become known for his fights against the British out on the ocean, and the infamous quote "I have not yet begun to fight." He had his Captain, Hector McNeill, deliver the poem to Wheatley, stating in his letter to McNeill "praybe so good as [to] put the Inclosed into the hands of the Celebrated Phillis, the African Favorite of the Nine and of Apollo,"¹⁸⁹ also mentioning that he hoped McNeill would be the one to bring a response back from Wheatley. There is no record of her ever having replied to John Paul Jones though, despite his reaching out to her. Another individual who would reach out to Wheatley was François-Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire, who "remarked in a personal

¹⁸⁶ George Washington, Letter to Phillis Wheatley, "From George Washington to Phillis Wheatley, 28 February 1776," Cambridge, February 28, 1776.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ John C. Shields, "Wheatley, Phillis," In *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*, 2nd ed., edited by Colin A. Palmer, 2286-2288, Vol. 5. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2006), 2287.

¹⁸⁹ Daniel J. Ennis, "Poetry and American Revolutionary Identity: The Case of Phillis Wheatley and John Paul Jones," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 31 (2002): 85.

letter to a friend that Phillis' published work was proof that Africans were equally capable of the poetic arts as others."¹⁹⁰

Having lost both John and Susanna, Phillis Wheatley needed some stability back in her life, as well as funds. Susanna had passed in March 1774 and John would pass in 1778. She would marry her husband, John Peters, on Thanksgiving Day in 1778. Peters was "a free Black man who owned a Boston grocery."¹⁹¹ Though newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic were publishing her work, there was a bit of controversy occurring in American newspapers.

"Newspapers that carried praise for the genius of a young Black poet from Africa also publicized the sale of enslaved Africans and carried advertisements offering rewards for the capture of self-emancipated freedom seekers."¹⁹²

Many discounted Wheatley's ability to write and produce poetry on her own, and in her quest to prove that she was doing the work on her own, "essentially, she was auditioning for the humanity of the entire African people."¹⁹³ There was a debate of whether Africans were of the same people as Europeans, or if they were this sub-species descended from apes. Seeing how Wheatley was able to learn not only English, but also Latin, and learning to read and write poetically, would feed into the notion that Africans are humans just like Europeans. However, this could lead to issues when it comes to their reasons for enslaving the African population and would give Abolitionists a better argument against the enslavement of people. Thomas Jefferson is one founding father who believed that Phillis Wheatley was not the author of the works that had her name attached to them. In his Note on the State of Virginia, he states "misery is often the beret of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows,

¹⁹⁰ Nicholas J. Dilley, "'Honoring Accomplishments' Series – African Americans in Literature," National Archives and Records Administration, February 8, 2023.

¹⁹¹ Elizabeth Winkler, "How Phillis Wheatley Was Recovered Through History," The New Yorker, July 30, 2020.

¹⁹² Jay Moschella, "Tracing the Life of Phillis Wheatley Peters," Boston Public Library, September 21, 2023.

¹⁹³ Gates, *The Trials of Phillis Wheatley: America's First Black Poet and Her Encounters with the Founding Fathers*, 27.

but no poetry...Religion indeed has produced a Phyllis Wheatley; but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism.”¹⁹⁴ He did not believe that her writing was written well enough to criticize and believed that this was the best that an African could do, that they could not produce things that he and other European descendants could. While he did not take away her writing from her in the sense of saying she did not write it, he did not believe that she was up to par with other poets. He used this to continue to discredit Africans' abilities to create.

Phillis Wheatley used her knowledge to create some of the first Black Literature, as she was the first African to publish her writings. Her ability to showcase that Black individuals are just as capable of great things, just like their White counterparts, was able to be a part of the movement to having more Black authors and creating spaces for education. She would have three children, none surviving childhood, and would pass away after giving birth to her last child at the young age of 31. She developed pneumonia after giving birth to her third child, and both would pass. In a short time, Wheatley was able to help start the change in the minds of those who looked at Africans as lesser, as not quite human. As a young girl, being shipped to America against her will, she took her genius and turned it into something great. While she did not live in fame and fortune, she is remembered for her brilliance in poetry.

These three women all came from different worlds, while living in the same world. This is where intersectionality comes into play. While Abigail Adams, Molly Brant, and Phillis Wheatley are all connected to the Colonial and Revolutionary eras, their experiences are incredibly different. Adams influenced her husband, who was considered one of the founding fathers, and even told him not to forget the women, as their ancestors had. Molly Brant stepped into the role of leading the Mohawks, along with her brother, but was more of a leader in the

¹⁹⁴ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Boston, MA: Lilly and Wait, 1832, 147.

Nation while Joseph Brant was on the battlefield. Phillis Wheatley was purchased as an enslaved person, but when her intelligence was discovered, she was able to be educated by the Wheatley women and used her education to write in response to events and for those who had lost loved ones. Looking at how these different women used their places in society and were able to make a difference, truly shows how different their lives are, yet they are similar in the sense that they could make a difference in their respective spheres.

Chapter Four

Propaganda and Intersectionality in a History Lesson Plan

American history in Oklahoma is covered through fifth grade, picks up in eighth grade, and concludes in eleventh grade. American Government is a class that students take in twelfth grade to wrap up their education in social studies. Colonial America and the American Revolution are covered in detail with eighth graders in the Oklahoma Academic Standards. Unfortunately, being able to spend a lot of time learning about women and their roles is not possible. Going into a proper depth for students is not something that time allows for. Typically, education standards are lengthy, preventing teachers from spending too much additional time exploring different aspects of history. It is up to the teacher to find ways to incorporate deeper dives into how propaganda plays a role in the historical setting and their current everyday lives.

Oklahoma standards only mention the writings of Mercy Otis Warren and Phillis Wheatley. Still, there is no mention of any other girl or woman who may have impacted the American Revolution or other parts of American history. Teachers are finding ways to incorporate the three women who were the focus of a chapter and many other women, allowing students to have a broader perspective of who was involved in the decisions made when declaring independence from Great Britain. Teaching the American Revolution era comes with some difficulty in making sure that we, as educators, are not trying to teach it as a peace-making event or criticizing war. McCorkle makes a wonderful point when it comes to teaching the Revolution, as we often are on a time crunch, he reminds us that “part of the U.S. myth is that the majority of the American people were strongly in support of the revolution and breaking away from Great Britain, however, the reality is much more complicated.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ William McCorkle, “Applying a Critical and Peace Education Lens to the American Revolution in the Social Studies Classroom,” *The Social Studies* 111, no. 3 (January 11, 2020): 144.

Reminding students that the American Revolution is a more complicated era, we allow for creative expression in propaganda. There are different ways to present propaganda to students, for eighth graders in Oklahoma, we re-introduce propaganda, as it is something they are taught about in seventh grade in World Geography. When teaching, I discuss the way to look at how propaganda can be impactful in the situation that we are discussing. With the American Revolution, we often discuss the acts placed on the colonies by the British Parliament and King George III after the French and Indian War to pay off their debts. When I ask my students what a war does to a country, I always get two answers: the cost of life and the financial cost. War is incredibly expensive, so having students understand that the money must come from somewhere, and for the French and Indian War (1754-1763) to be funded, it had to come from an increase in taxes. For students to understand why colonists were upset during the twelve years between the end of the French and Indian War and the start of the American Revolution, educators must inform students that the taxes that were being passed were not only being placed on the colonists, but they also had no one in Parliament to speak on their behalf. The slogan “No taxation without representation” is something that I have seen my students cling to easily, as it's simple and states the obvious issue.

During the years leading up to the Revolutionary War, students are introduced to several propaganda pieces. Starting with the “Join or Die” slogan and flag introduced by Benjamin Franklin during the French and Indian War, to pieces from the Stamp Act, Townshend Acts, Tea Act, and the Coercive Acts. One that we focus on the most is images of the Boston Massacre and how those propaganda pieces played a role in the Patriot's movement against the British, as well as trying to persuade other colonists to join their side. Allowing students different ways to analyze primary sources creates a better understanding of what the colonists were trying to do.

Using primary sources is incredibly important within the field of social studies, as lectures and textbooks don't truly allow a student to fully comprehend the subject at hand, and using primary sources allows for "active learning, [that is] engaging students in the "authentic" tasks of the historian."¹⁹⁶

A lesson that we like to do with our students is letting them create a propaganda piece of their own based on one of the Acts placed against the colonists, then moving into analyzing the importance of pieces like Paul Revere's "The Bloody Massacre Perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th, 1770, by a Party of the 29th Regt." This piece is one of the most infamous pieces of propaganda to come out of the American Revolution era. The following is a lesson plan based on lessons done in my classroom. These activities allow for students to be their own investigators into sources.

Propaganda Lesson Plan - The duration will take two days.

-Key vocabulary students will need to know before the lesson: Propaganda; Parliament; Massacre; Committees of Correspondence; Stamp Act of 1765; Townshend Acts; Boston Massacre; Tea Act; Intolerable Acts; Tyranny; Martyr.

-Instructional Material needed for this lesson: Students will need blank copy paper, a pencil, coloring utensils, a ruler, and a piece of notebook paper.

-Key idea that students will learn during this lesson: Students will be able to identify the injustices the colonists faced, as well as the portrayal of the colonists being victims of tyranny using propaganda.

¹⁹⁶ Robert B. Bain, "Into the Breach: Using Research and Theory to Shape History Instruction," *Journal of Education* 189, no. 1-2 (January 2009): 160.

-Enduring Understanding; Big Idea of the Unit: The big takeaway from this unit is that students will be able to understand how the colonies went from getting along with the British Parliament and King George III to pushing for independence and eventually gaining that independence from their homeland.

-Learning Objective for this Lesson: Students will be able to identify, analyze, and summarize the use of propaganda within the colonies with the use of Primary Sources.

Oklahoma Academic Standard for Social Studies: **8.1** The student will analyze the foundations of the United States by examining the causes, events, and ideologies that led to the American Revolution. **8.1.3 A-K**; Summarize British attempts to regulate the colonies and colonial responses including Sugar Act; Stamp Act Congress Resolves; Committees of Correspondence; the legal principle of taxation and political representation; Townshend Act and boycotts of British goods; Quartering Act; Boston Massacre; Tea Act and Boston Tea Party; Coercive Acts (Intolerable Acts); First Continental Congress; British raids on Lexington and Concord.

Background: Before the lesson, students need to be introduced to the topics of the French and Indian War, taxation against the colonies, and propaganda. I use notes at the beginning to introduce the topics and then introduce the activity.

-Suggested Procedure: Students will be given a piece of paper and allowed to pick an act against the colonies that they would like to create their propaganda piece for. Examples, such as actual pieces of propaganda from the pre-Revolution, will be presented to the students to help give them an idea of what to create for their propaganda piece. Once they have drawn out their propaganda, students will need to color their propaganda with either crayons, colored pencils, or markers. This is up to the student and their preferred coloring utensil. This should only take one 50-minute class period. During the second day, students will be split into four groups. They will

need their notebook paper and something to write with. Four different propaganda pieces from the Boston Massacre will be laid out at four different stations. Three questions will also be posted with each image for the students to use to help them analyze the piece before them. Students should take no more than 10 to 15 minutes at each station. This time will depend on the students one has in their classroom. Once they have completed all twelve questions, students will turn in their answers.

-Evaluation: Evaluation of the propaganda poster students create should be based on a 1-4 scale.

Scale	4 - Exemplary	3 - Accomplished	2 - Developing	1 - Beginning
Neatness	The student created a propaganda piece that has been drawn and colored neatly	The student has created a propaganda piece that has been fully colored and drawn	The student has created a propaganda piece that has some colors and has been drawn out	The student has created a propaganda piece that has been drawn
Information	The student has excelled at sharing information regarding their act and protests against it	The student has shared accurate information regarding their act and protests against it	The student shared some information regarding their act and the protests against it	The student did not share information regarding their act or the protests against it
Creativity	The student has shown excellent creativity in intertwining their act, slogan, and protest	The student has shown creativity in intertwining their act, slogan, and protest	The student has shown partial creativity in intertwining their act, slogan, and protest	The student showed no creativity in intertwining their act, slogan, and protest

The evaluation of the analysis of the images from the Boston Massacre will be graded on whether the students have grasped the concept of the question presented and explained their answers. Answers will vary by student but should also show their understanding.

-Extensions: Students may be given additional time to complete the assignments provided they have completed most of the assignments. If there are seemingly multiple who do not understand

the acts or Boston Massacre, additional information may be needed to help the students gain knowledge and succeed.

-Resources: Images and possible questions for the Boston Massacre-

Image number one:



"Boston Massacre, March 5th, 1770" by John H. Bufford based on a drawing by William L. Champney, ca.1856

1. What do you see? (**Describe any images, symbols, colors, and words you think might be important**)
2. What significant events were happening between the colonists and the British before the Boston Massacre?
3. What **point of view** do you think this artist has? **Why**? (Think about if the image is showing a possible Colonial View or a British View)

Image Number 2:



"The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5, 1770, by a part of the 29th REGT."

1. What do you see? (Describe any images, symbols, colors, and words you think might be important)
2. Why do you think the artist chose this title for this image (it's at the top)?
3. Who was the intended audience for this engraving? Why do you believe this? (Think colonial or British)

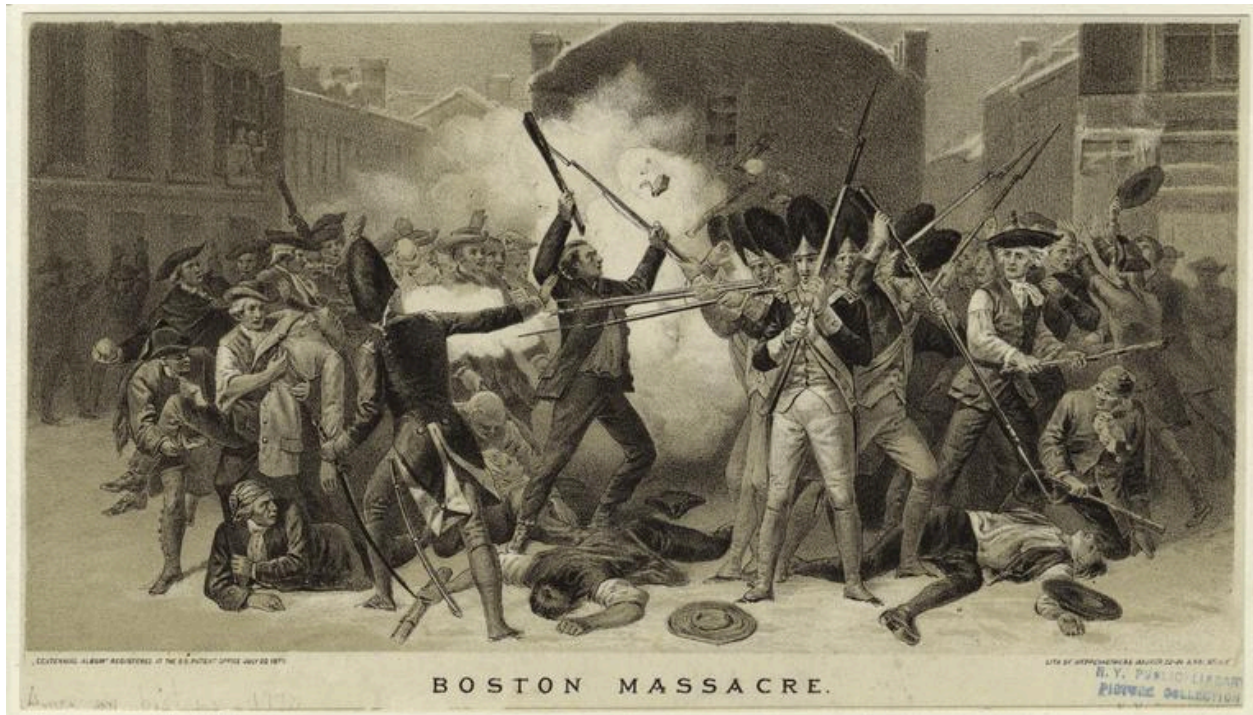
Image Number 3:



An illustrated page from “Colored Patriots of the American Revolution,” William Nell, 1855.

1. What do you see? (**Describe any images, symbols, colors, and words you think might be important**)
2. Who was Crispus Attucks, and why is he called a “martyr”?
3. What **point of view** do you think this artist has? **Why**? (Think about if the image is showing a possible Colonial View or a British View)

Image Number 4:

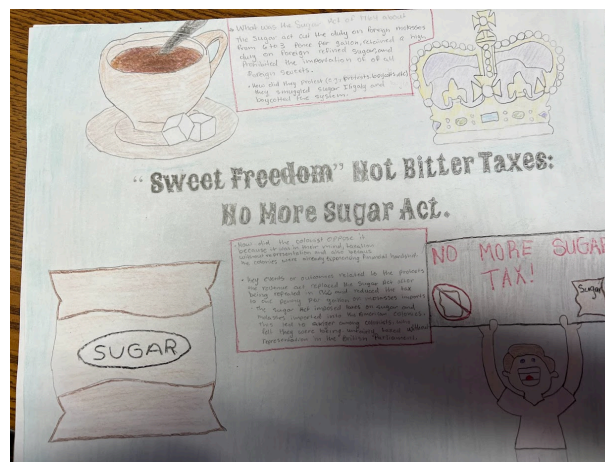
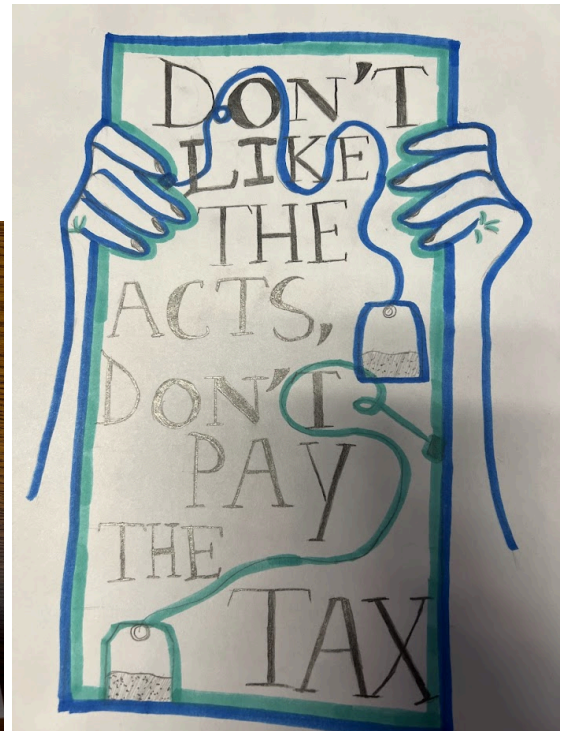
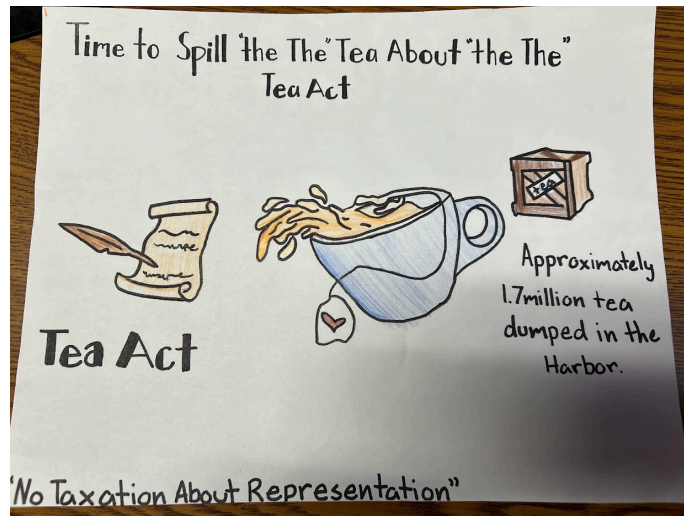


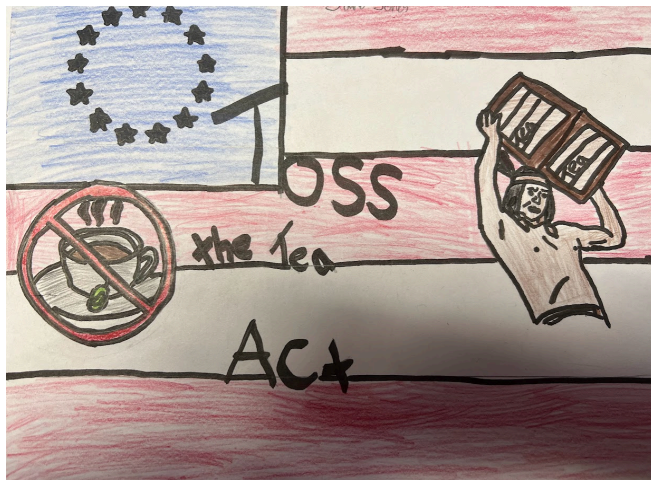
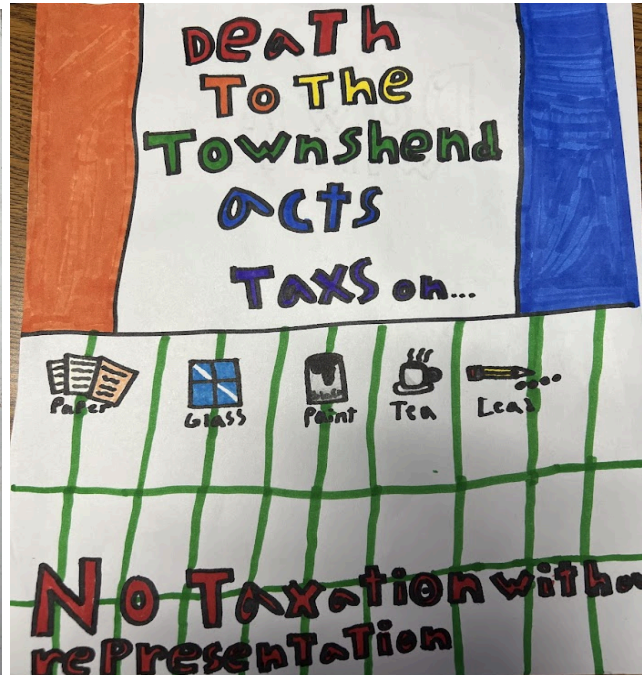
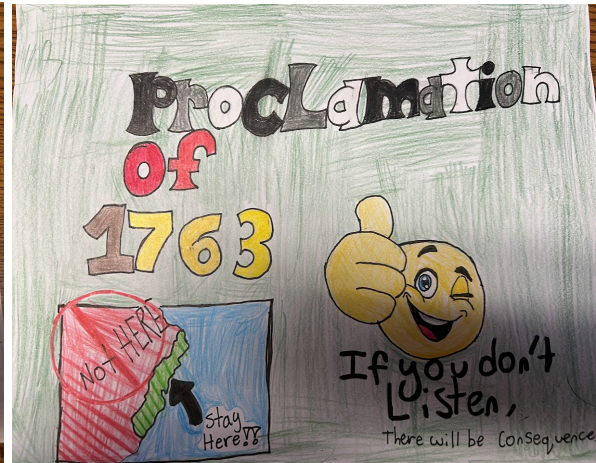
Engraving of the Boston Massacre by Alonzo Chappel in 1873.

1. What do you see? (**Describe any images, symbols, colors, and words you think might be important**)
2. This engraving was made in 1868 – does that affect its accuracy? **How or why?**
3. According to this artist, who is responsible for this event?

Students should travel between the four stations to answer each question for each image. For absent students, the questions and pictures can be added to a Google Doc for them to complete.

Examples of the student propaganda project are shown below. Students will be given the rubric, so they know what is expected of them for this project.





In other assignments within the American Revolution, we have access to many primary sources for students to analyze. As the study of history has progressed in public school, students can sink into history in ways that were not normally done before. In every history class I had growing up, it was notes from bell to bell, every day. We never had assignments to analyze deeper into primary sources, and never discussed the differences between primary and secondary. Students now can still take notes, but it is not the only thing they can do within the history class. There are always different ways to introduce activities within a class, hitting different learning styles with different assignments. The propaganda assignment lets our creative students shine, while also allowing our not-so-creative students to find their way to express themselves through drawing and coloring.

Critical thinking has become a large part of history classes as well. Students are given guidelines, rubrics, and assistance where it is needed to learn how to critically think to come to their conclusions. One of my favorite things to give students is retyped news articles. We do this to avoid any miscommunication, as many times letters can look different than what students would be used to. At the middle school level, it is more about teaching them how to read primary sources and analyze them, than it is worrying them about what a word may say. The letter *s* is a common one that is seen as looking different, sometimes looking more like an *f*, so to avoid this confusion and have them check out mentally if they can't figure a word out, we have them retyped for better comprehension. Unfortunately, something we are seeing more since the COVID lockdown within education is lower reading comprehension skills, so if we can curb something that would be confusing, then we make those changes without changing any of the wording of the text.

Students are often using assignments with acronyms to guide their analysis. We've used H.I.P.P.O., standing for Historical Context, Intended Audience, Purpose, Point of View, and Outside Information, which is great when analyzing propaganda pieces, as there is always an intended audience and a purpose. It is up to the students to use their prior historical knowledge to fill in the other sections of this acronym, and with guidance, they can eventually do it on their own. S.O.A.P.S. is another great one that is often used within historical analysis with middle school students. This acronym stands for Subject, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, and Speaker. This one is a good one to use when it comes to looking over newspaper articles or letters.

While we still do notes with students, we have changed how notes are done within our team, which is that we have students do fill-in-the-blank notes. This allows them to worry less about getting every single detail down but also falls back on the research of physical writing being beneficial for students. It also allows students to ask engaging questions and for additional teaching to take place when they ask questions about something that confuses them or gets them curious. I have had multiple conversations with students during note sessions that expand on what the standards have required of us. When given the opportunity, students can bring a lot to a discussion just with their natural curiosity, and it is always fun to see what piques the interest of a middle school student.

Another item we have used for analysis within the classroom is Patrick Henry's speech that he gave, giving us the quote of a generation "Give me liberty or give me death." The kids enjoy clinging to short sayings such as this, and it serves as a good way to remember what is going on in the era. Using speeches lets students read the words of these historical figures for themselves, letting them make their connections and understanding of how people were feeling due to decisions that were made without the consent of the people.

When students come to us in the eighth grade, they have already had the colonial lessons, so we do not focus too heavily on teaching before the French and Indian War. We touch briefly on the political climate in the British colonies before the French and Indian War including the policy of salutary neglect, mercantilism through the Navigation Acts, and colonial reaction through the Albany Plan of Union; compare the Iroquois Confederacy to early attempts to unite the colonies, as state in our state standards. This war is where students can start digging deeper into tensions leading up to the American Revolution with students. Having a basic understanding of what occurs lets students come to conclusions about if the steps taken were the best options, or if they could think of a different way to get a point across.

One of my favorite things to do with students is reading aloud primary sources. Hearing someone read it lets them hear some words they tend to struggle with, as the language is a little different than what they are used to hearing. We take a moment after reading to underline important information and people, and then we circle unknown terms. Once students have worked through the source doing these two things, they will look up the terms, and write a synonym for what the word means, allowing them to expand their vocabulary.

In Oklahoma, our standards with the American Revolution are detailed yet still miss many things that are important to the study of an era. There is very little for the Native Tribes, women, or enslaved people during this time. The standards state, in 8.1.1, the need to compare the Iroquois Confederacy to early attempts to unite the colonies. This does not allow us as educators to do any deep digging into the Iroquois Confederacy and to see how they came together under the Confederacy, only to compare them to the colonists. Standard 8.1.5 B, mentions analyzing the writings of Phillis Wheatley and Mercy Otis Warren. Both women had a lot to write, yet due to time constraints and the other five sub-standards with these women, we

are only able to briefly look at one item from both women. In 8.2.2, it states that, among many other things, to look at women and their political status as to why they would choose to be a loyalist or a patriot. 8.2.3 mentions the recruitment of enslaved men by the British. These are the only standards that we are given to work with in Oklahoma, and while they are vague enough to give us some freedom to look at different figures, the number of topics we are to discuss for the lead-up and during the war does not give us as educators much time to properly discuss these marginalized groups. It is up to us to find ways to bring them into the conversation with students.

Some ways that I have done this is by bringing in a ‘fun fact’ while we are going through notes, and sometimes these can get brought in as well with assignments. One fun fact I share every year with students has to do with the sixteen-year-old Sybil Ludington. Since I teach 8th graders, these students being just a couple years younger than her, bringing in Sybil during our discussions over the Midnight Ride lets students realize that though they may be young, they too can make a difference. She is nowhere in our standards or text, but I have seen students who have had their computers open during notes do a quick Google search on her after I mentioned her and the small but important role that she played just before the start of the war. When we get into the discussion of the Committee of Five for the Declaration of Independence, we bring in the letter that Abigail Adams wrote to John with her infamous quote “Remember the ladies” and that resonates with the students, especially our young girls. The idea of women pushing for rights being something that has been a part of our history shows our students that this is not a new concept, but that it has been around as long the United States has been a country.

For the standard that references Phillis Wheatley, we provide the students with her poem entitled “On Being Brought from Africa to America” and have the students use their H.I.P.P.O. analysis to break down the short poem written by an educated enslaved woman, something that

they are not often introduced to. In breaking down her words, we can bring to the conversation how being forced from one's homeland can cause trauma within the person, but also how Phillis Wheatley seemed to take it and make the best of her situation. She was able to leave us her own words about how she was feeling and the things she was going through so that there was no misinterpretation from others writing her story for her. She has written, through her poetry, her own story.

When it comes to finding ways to create interesting lessons for students, knowing one's students is a major factor, so creating relationships is one of the best ways to know what is going to work for students and what may not. Due to my school being one of the largest middle schools in the state of Oklahoma, I always have creative students so projects like the propaganda posters are phenomenal, but I also have students who love a good challenge, so analysis of primary sources is great for them and a wonderful way to teach their classmates how to expand their knowledge. These are some sites that are marvelous resources: PBS¹⁹⁷, as you can break it down to where you are located, the grade you are teaching, and the area of history you are focusing on. We've used multiple lessons through PBS, and it creates interactive online lessons for students. Another option within Oklahoma is the ability to request something called a Traveling Trunk, and we can request these through the Oklahoma Historical Society.¹⁹⁸ These trunks allow us to bring in replicas of artifacts that could be found during any point in our history. There are several different organizations around the country that have similar things that teachers can borrow for their students. Other organizations that teachers can look at to help supplement their lessons are

¹⁹⁷ PBS Lessons for educators over the American Revolution:

https://oeta.pbslearningmedia.org/subjects/social-studies/us-history/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwkZm_BhDrARIsAAEbX1G9oI-igOCrQ92jjaQO0bZBYjNg7NmtJl9MqJ2S2_v4iZ_YZv6JbkaAnWkEALw_wcB&rank_by=recency&selected_facet=grades:6-8

¹⁹⁸ Oklahoma Historical Society Traveling Trunks:

<https://www.okhistory.org/historycenter/trunks#:~:text=The%20Oklahoma%20History%20Center%20Museum,for%20the%20students%20to%20handle.>

the Museum of the American Revolution, George Washington's Mount Vernon, The American Revolution Institute and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

While Oklahoma is in the process of revising the Oklahoma Academic Standards, these lessons can cross over during standards changing. This is especially true with these being relatively short assignments that get students thinking about not only how propaganda was used, but how it can still be used to influence the public's perception of the events of the day. It also allows for students to dig a little deeper into lesser known or discussed women and their impact. These assignments can be modified to fit any propaganda that is being studied or any person that is being discussed in the classroom. Using analysis allows for flexibility in a lesson, as it can be adapted to fit the lesson of the day. Finding ways to allow students to grow their knowledge is where history will prosper within the classroom.

Conclusion

Looking back at how propaganda and intersectionality played their roles within the greater story of the American Revolution era, this research brings other stories to the forefront. These stories come from the letters written, the literature scribed, and even the propaganda created in reaction to a particular event. Allowing for creativity in space that may not normally call for it will enable people to express how a situation is making them feel and even put forth plans to make a change. The focus of this research has been looking at how both propaganda and intersectionality played different roles within the American Revolution era.

While propaganda has always been around, changing how it looks to fit the times that it fits into, it has always been a persuasive tactic that is used by all sides to try and get others on their side. The Colonial Era and American Revolution are no different. This research has looked at many different examples of propaganda used in the colonies and incorporated the British propaganda as it came into play during the later years of the war. While American propaganda is often the focus during this area of study, it is important to also have the British voice as many were coming around to the idea that the American colonies needed to have their independence as the war continued to drag on, costing them more and more money every year it went on. Their perspective also shows that in the beginning of the war, most normal British citizens, meaning those who were not actively involved, did not think about the war too much, as it did not impact their lives until the war continued to drag out over several years.

This research does not investigate the overall situation of all women within the colonies, it focuses on three different women, all of whom had different experiences during the Revolution era. It lends to the discussion of more than just the basics of what women were expected to do during this time frame. Many, like Abigail Adams, were expected to take over the entirety of the

house. Some would have to also deal with the employment of those working on farms that were owned by the husband, while also running every single aspect of the lives of their families. The war added additional stressors to women, and while it would look different depending on a person's socioeconomic status, it is safe to conclude that their responsibilities would drastically increase while their husbands and fathers were out fighting the war. We also see how some Native tribes were affected, especially those who aligned themselves with the British. Assuming their success, Natives were hopeful that many things would not change after the war concluded, only to find themselves being removed from the colonial areas, now states, and forced into Canada. Molly Brant gives us insight to how those who were loyalists ultimately were treated by the winning side. She worked side by side with her brother and while he was out fighting for the British, she was taking care of the Mohawk Nation, and ultimately due to decisions that were made, she is the one who ended up taking the blame for the Nation being forced off their land. Phillis Wheatley, originally being enslaved, was given the chance to show that Africans were very capable of learning, writing and publishing. She took advantage of the knowledge she was given and wrote about her experience while enslaved, and being kidnapped from her home in Africa. This has given many insights into what the slave trade did to the people who were enslaved, as she shares her personal experiences. It also led to her gaining the ability to travel to England, sharing her story and even gaining an audience with King George III.

American education lacks time, finances, overcrowding and as we see the teacher shortage becoming worse over the years prevents many of us time to properly cover these experiences in class with students. Within this writing, I have provided different activities for students to be able to investigate propaganda, as well as Abigail Adams, Molly Brant, and Phillis Wheatley, in small assignments. The great thing about these assignments that my team and I

have used over the years is that we are able to remove one piece of propaganda or one person and place another into that assignment to fit the era that is being discussed, and as we use analysis more throughout the school year, allows for them to learn ways to better analyze and ultimately leads to their analysis' becoming more throughout and thorough. Being able to analyze is such an important skill, that even if the students don't remember what we taught about history, they are able to use those skills in their daily lives in their jobs or when consuming information about our nation.

Using the Oklahoma Academic Standards, under review and revision, there are many ways that educators can include intersectionality in our lessons, but due to the number of topics we must teach, it leaves us with very little time. Using assignments like the H.I.P.P.O.S. students take a little time to analyze propaganda, letters, poems, speeches and other primary sources. These assignments allow us to put the historical figures' voices into the lesson and allows for students the opportunity to understand what the piece of media is trying to do, whether it be persuasion, informative, or inspirational, they can put their voices into history with a better understanding.

My research is just a small part of the overall discussion of propaganda and intersectionality, but this is to allow not only myself, but also for future generations the ability to expand on it. Expanding on the history of the American Revolution era allows for more stories to come forward and allows for us to have a better understanding of our history, and those who played their respective roles within the war. It will take time, but there have been many stepping up and including more than the known Founding Fathers, and that is truly a great place to take our history. We are more than just George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, we are Abigail Adams, Molly Brant and Phillis Wheatley also, and allowing for our students to expand their

knowledge on the different people involved on both sides of this war helps to nurture the natural curiosity of students.

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