

Name:

Date:

Slaves in the American Revolution Web-Guide

Do Now:

Get out your American History textbook and turn to the chapter(s) that are about the American Revolution. Identify and summarize any text and pictures that discuss the role of slaves in the war.

- Answer will vary depending on history text
- Brinkley, 10th Edition
 - Brief mention of African Americans in the Revolutionary War. No mention of competing reasons for enlistment or that slaves fought for both sides during the war. Does not address the paradox of slaves fighting for someone else's freedom
 - Picture of a black infantryman with no context or caption

What do you notice about how your textbook covers the role of slaves in the American Revolution? Why do you think this is so? Do you think any changes should be made?

- Answers will vary depending on history text
- The role of slaves in the American Revolution is minimized by the text or not covered at all. Major lack of detail
- Editors may be unwilling/unable to address the topic at length due to space restrictions. Editors may hope to minimize the attention given to the hypocrisy of fighting for freedom while owning slaves.

1. Read the three quotes by Samuel Johnson, Abigail Adams, and Prince Whipple on the first page. What paradox do the three speakers reference?

The paradox referenced by the three speakers is that of colonists fighting the British for freedom from the crown while simultaneously keeping African Americans in slavery.

2. Video Questions:

- a. What is the "Great American Contradiction" Horton references?

The contradiction is the same as the paradox—fighting for freedom while continuing to enslave African Americans. The Declaration of Independence claimed that "all men are created equal" –the actions of the colonists/slave holders is not in accordance with this idea.
American ideals vs. American Actions

- b. How many slaves were freed as a result of the American Revolution?

Tens of thousands of slaves – more slaves freed in the aftermath than in any other event until the Civil War

Document Analysis	Lord Dunmore's Proclamation	Resolution passed by the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, May 1775	Excerpts from an Act of the Rhode Island legislature, February 1778
Author of Document	John Earl of Dunmore, Royal Governor of VA	MA Committee of Safety	Rhode Island Legislature
Date	November 7, 1775	May 1775	February, 1778
Intended Audience?	• Patriot slaves • Patriots – send a message about intended tactics	• Army recruiters	• Rhode Island army recruiters • Slaves in Rhode Island
List 3 things the author says that you think are important	• Slaves will be freed for service • Believes this will help him survive • This will create panic amongst colonists	• The war is about freedom of the colonists • Admitting those who are not free is against the principles of the war • No slaves will be admitted to fight	• George Washington has asked for the admittance of slaves • Slaves may enlist and receive benefits for service • Every slave enlisting will be made free at end of service
Why was this written?	• Dunmore was in danger – he had a severe shortage of manpower	• To provide clarification on who was eligible to serve in the Patriot Army	• This was written to clarify the position of the RI army
Write a question to the author	• Did this have the impact you intended? • Were you opposed to slavery, or did you do this to gain an upper hand over the rebellious colonists?	• What concerns did you have about allowing slaves to enlist for your side? • Were you certain that the British would not allow slaves to fight? • How would you make up the difference in manpower?	• Should other state legislatures adopt this kind of statute? • Is this a response to Dunmore's Proclamation? • Why did it take so long to adopt this policy?

Individual Analysis

Name of Individual	William Flora
Why did your individual enlist?	• Free African American • Joined out of spirit of Patriotism • Land-owner in the colonies; feeling same sentiments of British abuse as white colonists.
What was your individual's enlistment experience like?	• Joined Patriot Army • Hero of Patriot army • Fought at Battle of Great Bridge; credited with halting the British attack and killing a number of British soldiers
What happened to your individual after the Revolutionary War?	• Granted 100 acres of land • Offered to fight against the British again after initial service • Lived free in VA where he eventually died

Name of Individual	Colonel Tye
Why did your individual enlist?	• Escaped a brutal Quaker slave owner who did not follow custom and release Tye • Dunmore's Proclamation provided incentive to flee
What was your individual's enlistment experience like?	• Joined Loyalist/British forces • Leader of Ethiopian Regiment and later the Black brigade • Guerrilla warrior who plundered goods from Patriots (often former masters)
What happened to your individual after the Revolutionary War?	• Tye was shot in the wrist during a battle and died of lockjaw

Name of Individual	James Armistead Lafayette
Why did your individual enlist?	• Armistead was allowed to enlist by his master
What was your individual's enlistment experience like?	• Joined Patriot cause working for Marquis de Lafayette (commander of French forces) • Worked as a spy – infiltrated British side • Aided General Washington with details of Cornwallis' movements.
What happened to your individual after the Revolutionary War?	• After the war Armistead returned to be a slave—wasn't eligible for emancipation because he was a spy, not a soldier • Armistead was able to document his service to the Patriot cause and was granted freedom by the VA General Assembly • Eventually bought 40 acres of land to farm and was given \$40/year by VA legislature as a pension

Directions:

In the space below, write a letter to your history textbook editor advocating for the inclusion of information about the African American individual you studied.

Dear Editor,

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.