The Role of the Lower Sort in the American Revolution

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America's independence from Britain and its progression into a sovereign and evolving nation was an accomplishment of not only the characters idealized in American commemoration, but also of those who were regarded as less significant in their society. The proletariat architects of Revolutionary America include those marginalized on the bases of social class, economic status, gender, race, cultural identification, and religious position, yet in a time of national insurgence and reformation, they proved themselves capable, influential, and effective in amplifying the ideals of autonomy, if not the actuality of it. In truth, the reality of the new America fell far short of the hope of the revolution for most of its populace. The radically egalitarian Robert Coram maintained that "Society should...furnish the people with [the] means of subsistence, and those means should be an inherent quality in the nature of the government, universal, permanent, and uniform, because their natural means were so."[1] Although so many never attained this idea of liberty, members of the lower sort transcended their manufactured limitations and filled roles that must not be overlooked in the study of the coming of the American Revolution, the war for independence, and the postwar development of the nation.

Prior to the declaration and the war, the existing infrastructure of Colonial America created an atmosphere in which the proletariat, motivated by basic human reactions, could act collectively through both aggression and organization to reshape their society. Some of the underlying framework of the American colonies generated the environment in which members of the lower sort were able to rally and alter their circumstances. Mob activity was a common occurrence before it was used as a means to thwart British authority. Acting *en masse* gave power to the poor, and, in that society, mob action operated as a legal and political entity in itself. The ability to form mobs helped turn the deference of the lower class into confidence, and

[1] Seth Cotlar, "'Every Man Should Have Property': Robert Coram and the American Revolution's Legacy of Economic Populism," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 347.

it gave them a feeling of independence within their own society. The rituals of Boston's annual Pope's Day ceremony were carried out by throngs of the lower class and the young celebrating a temporary class and generational reversal. It was a "comic mocking of authority" that challenged traditions of order and governance.[2] Groups of children of all classes would solicit money door-to-door, using threats of violence to "[exact] tribute from the better sort."[3] Companies of all ages were involved in the spectacles of anti-popery acted out on mobile stages, and the older boys and men of the lower class would partake in the violent skirmishes and bonfires that concluded the ceremony. The customary intemperance of Pope's Day could not be controlled by Boston's authorities, and the power, therefore, lay with the people.[4] This power would prove instrumental in the upheaval against British imperial authority.

While mobs were part of the infrastructure of the cities, rural elements also created a foundation that fostered the capacity of the lower sort to alter their state. Local affairs were settled in semi-regular town meetings held among the majority of the public. Committees of correspondence were responsible for communicating information among and within the colonies, and helped organize militia companies that would be "thoroughly democratic [armies] of citizens."[5] Political caucuses, such as the radical American Political Society, could act independently to strategize and mobilize the people. In addition to these more formal conventions, unofficial meetings occurred every day in spaces such as taverns, shops, and

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[2] Alfred F. Young, "Ebenezer Mackintosh: Boston's Captain General of the Liberty Tree," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 21.

[3] Alfred F. Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1981): 578.

[4] Young, "Ebenezer Mackintosh," 20-22.

[5] Ray Raphael, "Blacksmith Timothy Bigelow and the Massachusetts Revolution of 1774," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 46.

homes.[6] In Philadelphia, rural and urban citizens connected on the points of reform ideas and formed a radical political caucus in the city. They, too, met informally in public spaces and in homes to "channel ideas bubbling up from the streets, taverns, and docks."[7] Believing in "the worth of ordinary people," Philadelphia's informal caucus organized mass meetings to select men who could compose "quasi-governmental committees that ruled the street."[8] Within these components of Colonial American infrastructure, popular causes could take form and be driven forth.

The decision to declare independence from Great Britain was a drastic and unprecedented one for the American colonies. While the reasons for the ultimate choice to officially break away were vast and intricate, they can be organized and understood within the scope of basic human reactions. The news of the impending Stamp Act caused fear of material loss and anger directed toward the suppression that affected all colonial classes. John Adams accused that the act would "strip multitudes of the poorer people of their property and Reduce them to absolute beggary."[9] The instinctive feelings caused by this prospective outcome spurred the lower classes to react with destruction of property and threats to persons. New York Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Colden complained that he witnessed the "grossest ribaldry from the mob" that attacked the symbols of his wealth.[10] Robert Morris feared that "[t]he mob begin to think and reason" and he warned that disputes with Great Britain would put them "under the domination of a riotous mob."[11] Nathan Fiske, a contemporary Massachusetts minister, spoke of the anger and

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[6] Ibid., 45-47.

[7] Gary B. Nash, "Philadelphia's Radical Caucus That Propelled Pennsylvania to Independence and Democracy," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 68.

[8] Nash, "Philadelphia's Radical Caucus," 67-68,71.

[9] Young, "Ebenezer Mackintosh," 22.

[10] Cynthia A. Kierner, ed., *Revolutionary America 1750-1815, Sources and Interpretation* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 74-75.

[11] Ibid., 102-103.

resentment felt as a result of the injustice, injury, and dishonor shown by the British in the Port of Boston.[12] T. H. Breen related the insurgent passions of anger, vengeance, and betrayal common among all revolutions.[13]

As these sentiments helped to shape the atmosphere of revolution, anxiety and fear were the final catalysts for many Americans. The bombing of defenseless Falmouth in October 1775—an act of British retaliation intended to defeat the spirit of American rebellion—further provoked popular resistance to imperial rule through fear, distrust, and abhorrence.[14] In April 1775, "most of Philadelphia's able-bodied men" formed into thirty-one militia companies in response to news of the battles at Concord and Lexington.[15] From this came the Committee of Privates that joined with the city's radical caucus to address Pennsylvania's lack of legislatively-supported militia.[16] Similarly, the burning of Norfolk in January 1776 pushed the Pennsylvania legislature to expand suffrage.[17]

The ideas of Universalism, put forth by the itinerate ministers of the Great Awakening, promoted the concept of ultimate equality and generated the self-assurance that added to an overall sense of secular autonomy. Universalists, therefore, did not adhere to the ideas of class deference. Governor Francis Bernard was correct to fear that the lower sort wanted to achieve "general leveling & taking away the distinction of rich and poor."[18] The proletarian experiences of sailors, slaves, and mobs created an energy that upset the civil and social balance from below. Samuel Adams was influenced by the sailors in the Knowles Riot to use the natural rights of man

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[12] Breen, "Samuel Thompson's War," 54-55.
[13] T. H. Breen, "Samuel Thompson's War: The Career of an American Insurgent," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 54.
[14] Ibid., 63-64.
[15] Nash, "Philadelphia's Radical Caucus," 71-72.
[16] Ibid., 72.
[17] Nash, "Philadelphia's Radical Caucus," 74-75.
[18] Young, "Ebenezer Mackintosh," 25.

to justify the violence of mob activity against oppression.[19] Tacky's Rebellion led J. Philmore to write against the institution and the essence of slavery. He asserted that all humans had the right to "deliver themselves" from bondage.[20] His idea of liberty concluded that a person owns himself and can neither own nor be owned by another. The multiracial mobs that rioted in the Atlantic sphere fought against another idea of slavery—that of people being oppressed by the military. The inmates on British prison ships banded together because of the equality among them. Without the aid of any superiors, they practiced democracy, honored the rights of man, and governed themselves. Seaport groups opposed imperialism because they believed that "moral conscience stood above the civil law of the state."[21]

For many rebels of the lower sort, the motivation for American independence was personal. To George Robert Twelves Hewes, the standing army of British soldiers in Boston was a constant reminder of the problems with imperialism. Even before the murder of Christopher Seider, Hewes resented the occupation of civilian buildings, the enforcement of colonial curfew, the taking of civilian jobs, and the displays of malice among the British troops.[22] He felt it "only natural that he should turn out in defense of fellow townsmen" against these soldiers.[23] The Massacre was certainly a motivation for countless colonists, in Boston and beyond, to become fervent for the cause of independence. As the lower sort joined the cause, they developed within themselves a "sense of citizenship and personal worth" that helped them to shed the class deference that had kept them static for generations.[24]

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[19] Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 216.
[20] Ibid., 223.
[21] Ibid., 232-235.
[22] Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes," 585-587.
[23] Ibid., 587.
[24] Ibid., 599.

With these motivations, the proletariat used several methods to change their society. Threats of physical harm were among their chief means. As previously mentioned, mob activity was part of the culture and governance of Colonial America. Following the structure of the Pope's Day rituals, Ebenezer Mackintosh, a Boston shoemaker, led ceremonies throughout 1765 that targeted men who were seen as agents of imperial regulation. Very direct threats were made to their persons, their personal homes and establishments were ransacked, and their symbols of wealth were destroyed or dispersed. High-level British officials "had no force to oppose it" and those that tried were put in too much danger.[25] Lieutenant Governor Hutchinson likened the mob that attacked his home to a "hellish crew" with the "rage of devils," that caused "constant distress and anxiety of mind."[26] This psychological aspect of mob violence proved to the affluent leaders that the rabble could be used to provoke societal change. Mackintosh's relationship with and leadership of the rabble guided John Adams, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock to understand, organize, and sponsor the lower sort in their collective endeavor for liberty.[27]

Outside of Boston, the county of Worcester achieved sovereignty from imperial rule in 1774.[28] In the absence of a constitution, blacksmith Timothy Bigelow turned his shop into an armaments factory to arm the militiamen over whom he was elected captain.[29] Forcing Tory officials to resign and closing the county courts were the principal objectives. This goal was met through a group of 1,500 to 3,000 men who intimidated individual provincial councilors with

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[25] James A. Henretta, David Brody, Lynn Dumenil, eds. *Documents to Accompany America's History*, 6th Edition, vol. 1 (Boston: Bedford Press, 2008), 107.
[26] Kierner, *Revolutionary America*, 70-71.
[27] Young, "Ebenezer Mackintosh," 31.
[28] Raphael, "Blacksmith Timothy Bigelow," 35.
[29] Ibid., 39.

threats of violence and ultimately seized control of the courts.[30] Bigelow also formed a trade convention for blacksmiths and encouraged other tradesmen to do the same. These associations offered "leading roles to ordinary folks who worked with their hands."[31] To the "artisans at every level," Poor Richard explained that independence and prosperity were directly linked to "competency" in their trade.[32] These actions repeated throughout the shire towns of Massachusetts, and the imperial governments of each crumbled, leaving only Boston under the traditional rule.[33] These country folk—by far the majority of the Massachusetts citizenry—were moving well before and well beyond the men that many current Americans consider the fathers of the Revolution.

Samuel Thompson and his gang of backwoods farmers showed "the raw, violent side of popular resistance to the British Empire" in 1775.[34] Outraged by those that did not adhere to the boycotts set forth by the Solemn League and Covenant, Thompson garnered the attention of British commanders. He and his small army captured the captain of the warship sent to monitor them and tried to use him as a bargaining chip to remove the threat of the warship. Thompson threatened to dismember Lieutenant Henry Mowat if the warship fired upon the town. This threat of violence, while it initially terrified and stifled the people of Falmouth, led to the British retaliation that turned the popular opinion to Thompson's way of thinking.[35]

The violence, or threats thereof, of colonial mobs had made an impact on the upper class citizenry. The perception of commoners had been transformed. In Worcester and Boston, a feared "sett of cussed venal worthless rascals" became even more frightening to the established

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[30] Ibid., 41-44.
[31] Ibid., 47.
[32] Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes," 583.
[33] Raphael, "Blacksmith Timothy Bigelow," 49.
[34] Breen, "Samuel Thompson's War," 55.
[35] Ibid., 60-64.

elite when they founded the American Political Society.[36] The elite Tory victims of its controlled mobs counselled Massachusetts governor and military commander, General Thomas Gage, not to raise arms against the "power and fury of the people," and, when threatened with tens of thousands of Massachusetts patriots marching toward Boston, he not only yielded to the threat but in turn warned Royal Secretary of State Lord Dartmouth that "The flames of sedition…spread universally throughout the country beyond conception."[37]

Reform ideas were flourishing in Philadelphia, and the radical caucus of 1775-1776 "regarded the people at large as the ultimate source of political authority."[38] With class distinctions becoming less prevalent, longstanding boycotts began to replace mob violence as the major method by which the lower sort could transform their world. The Committee of Observation and Inspection enforced the boycotts of British goods and forged bonds between citizens of different classes, religions, ethnicities, and locations.[39] In July of 1776, "bonfires, ringing bells, with other great demonstrations"—traditionally mobbish elements—were being used as a celebration of the reading of the Declaration of Independence.[40]

The new Pennsylvania constitution that resulted from this orderliness promoted radical democracy. Instead of a two-house legislature that put the elite representatives in an upper house and representatives of the common people in a lower house, the elected writers chose one-house rule. This unicameralism gave a constitutionally equal voice to the lower sort and consistently redistributed legislative representation based upon census returns. Similarly, instead of an independent executive branch that could amend and veto the unicameralist legislation, the writers chose a diluted executive branch that could only carry out the laws and appoint

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[36] Raphael, "Blacksmith Timothy Bigelow," 37-38.
[37] Ibid., 43.
[38] Nash, "Philadelphia's Radical Caucus," 68.
[39] Ibid., 69-74.
[40] Ibid., 79.

legislative officers. Furthermore, instead of limiting suffrage to those who owned property, political rights were expanded to all citizens who were required to pay taxes. To further check the concentration of wealth and political power and to promote a democratic society, the new constitution endorsed public education, ended the use of debtors' prisons, terminated salaries and limited the length of political terms for officials, and required the popular election of a "Council of Censors" to monitor the integrity of the constitution.[41] While many modern citizens see these components as the beginning of the American Revolution, they were products of the infrastructure, motivations, methods, and results of the lower sort of the Colonial American populace.

As Colonial America converted into a unit that had officially declared independence from its mother country, neutrality was nearly impossible to maintain, and in 1776 and beyond, each interested person in America was met with choices that would place him or her on a path to either Patriotism or Loyalism, often in pursuit of personal freedom. Motivated largely by personal beliefs and reactions, marginalized peoples were able to shape their own opinions, and in many cases, act upon them to shape the opinions and actions of others. Although they were personally active in their own opinions and decisions, they could not control the effects of them, and many did not find the egalitarianism and freedoms envisaged within the concept of "liberty."

Divisions of social class and economic standing created unstable conditions. Patriot James Cleveland and other Virginia tenant farmers were not only fighting for American independence; they were fighting a separate battle against the injustices of the patriot leadership in Virginia. They were exasperated by the hardships imposed upon them through unequal military service conscription laws, outlandish pay discrepancies between the elite officers and

[41] Ibid., 79-81.

the rank and file soldiers, uniform poll taxes, and their unwavering responsibility to pay rent even while away from their farms in the service of the cause.[42]

Revolutionary War soldier Joseph Plumb Martin did not want to join the military in 1774 because he was afraid and because he saw no reason to go fight. As he wrote his memoir decades later, he wrote that "I felt myself to be a real coward, however, by April 1775, the appeal of one dollar had given him "seeds of courage" to join the army.[43] Although his grandsire was a relatively wealthy farmer, he, like many New Englanders, had a large family and could not offer his younger children and grandchildren a promising inheritance.[44] In addition to the pay, his other motivators for enlisting were pride, peer pressure, and a desire for adventure. The pride he felt was both in himself to earn the title of "soldier"—especially once the enlistment periods were reduced to six months—and in his country to succeed in the Revolution—he believed that "the Americans were invincible."[45] The initial peer pressure that he felt was from the men and boys who had already enlisted and were awaiting their assignments at his grandsire's home.[46] When he thought that he would not go back after his first stint, he was coerced by his friend who was "harassing [him] with temptations to engage in the service again" and by a relative who reassured his grandparents of Martin's necessity and relative safety in the Continental Army.[47]

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[42] Michael A. McDonnell, "'The Spirit of Levelling': James Cleveland, Edward Wright, and the Militiamen's Struggle for Equality in Revolutionary Virginia," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 135-139.

[43] Joseph Plumb Martin, *Ordinary Courage: The Revolutionary War Adventures of Joseph Plumb Martin*, ed. James Kirby Martin, 4th ed. (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 5-6.

[44] Philip Mead, "'Adventures, Dangers and Sufferings': The Betrayals of Private Joseph Plumb Martin, Continental Soldier," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 119.

[45] Martin, *Ordinary Courage*, 12-13.

[46] Ibid., 6-7.

[47] Ibid., 37-41.

He was further convinced to go by another offer of money—this time for going as a substitute for a propertied squad.[48]

Although his time in the service was filled with his most miserable experiences, he and countless others stayed in the service of their country because their only alternative was deserting their cause. Martin explained that "dispersion…was not thought of….We had engaged in the defense of our injured country and were…determined to persevere as long as such hardships were not altogether intolerable."[49] When a friend tried to coax him into deserting in the last months of the war, he replied "I would not go off like a scoundrel, get a bad name, and subject myself to suspicion and danger."[50] Certainly, a combination of resolution, pride, and fear caused many miserable men to endure the continued hardships of army life.

Benjamin Rush explained that among those who wanted America to remain as a British colony were those attached to "power and office," "British commerce," and "kingly government."[51] Scottish merchant James Parker came to the Virginia colony from Scotland in 1747.[52] He had originally rallied behind the patriot cause, but his fondness for these things and his personal beliefs set him upon the opposite course.[53] Keith Mason attributed Parker's loyalist inclinations to not only his economic interests as a Scottish merchant in Virginia with extensive commercial ties to Britain, but also to his ethnic background as a Lowland Scot immigrant in a "potentially intolerant Anglo-American majority."[54] Mason linked Parker's minority's tendency to feel "threatened" by the assumed small-mindedness of the Chesapeake residents, and its

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[48] Ibid., 40-41.
[49] Ibid., 67.
[50] Ibid., 173.
[51] Benjamin Rush, "Benjamin Rush Contrasts Loyalists and Patriots, 1777," in *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791*, ed. Richard D. Brown (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 236-237.
[52] Keith Mason, "A Loyalist's Journey: James Parker's Response to the Revolutionary Crisis," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 102, no. 2 (1994): 143.
[53] Ibid., 144-148.
[54] Ibid., 145.

predisposition to feel "distrust" and "wariness" toward another culture, to its long-established beliefs and reactions to Anglo dominance.[55] Mason's reference to the Scots' "obvious clannishness" reveals their feelings of insecurity when surrounded by others, but it also seems to suggest a sense of traditional pride and self-inflicted seclusion.[56] However, personal individuality also placed James Parker somewhat apart from his own minority. He seemed inclined to stay in Norfolk instead of returning to Scotland after acquiring his wealth. He involved himself in Virginia politics, married a Virginian, and fostered "extensive local kin ties."[57] His original inclinations toward Patriotism furthered his later zeal for Loyalism because it set him up for disappointment and cynicism when he became the victim of mob violence and judicial discrimination.[58] Parker was obviously frightened by the violent reaction of native Virginians to his and other Scotsmen's decision to take the smallpox inoculation. In the summer of 1768, his fellow Scotsmen were forced into pesthouses while their properties were destroyed. The following May, the mob violence turned directly to him, and he had to evacuate his family and protect himself and his home from a mob that was attacking his Norfolk townhouse and threatening to do the same to his person. The crowd's hostility had surpassed the medical issue, and its extremist actions reflected ethnic tensions and made Parker feel like "a besieged 'foreigner' in his adopted home."[59] He was let down by the Virginia gentry that had "revealed its members as rabble rousers" and by the established elite whose interests were now the same as those of "the new American mob."[60]

[55] Ibid., 145.
[56] Ibid., 145.
[57] Ibid., 148.
[58] Ibid., 139, 152-156.
[59] Ibid., 139, 151-153.
[60] Ibid., 156.

Backcountry loyalism was also motivated by basic human reactions. Like the Scotsmen's clannishness, frontiersmen—like those in Virginia's New River Valley—were inclined to unify in small communities. The geography of the backcountry caused neighbors to remain in the compact clusters that had formed only a generation before the Revolution.[61] As outside elements, such as British frontier land policies, large land speculators, and government subsidies for hemp farming and lead mining, began to influence frontier life, localist opinions became more decisive.[62] Limited contact with and information from both county courts and Eastern Virginia administrations paired with "ethnic frictions," "economic grievances," and strong-minded changes to Virginia law to set the conditions for "a substantial and organized loyalist movement…along the New River" by 1779.[63] The ethnically diverse population of the New River Valley was predominantly composed of Scots-Irish, English, German, and Welsh—respectively. German and Welsh settlers were more active in the Tory movement than were the two larger ethnic groups, and patriot leaders focused upon these minorities, adding to the social discord.[64] Virginia law changed in 1777 to disarm and disenfranchise "all free white males over sixteen years old" who failed to swear an oath of allegiance to the patriot cause.[65] These offenders were also financially persecuted in that they lost the right to sue for debt or buy land, and they were "liable for double their normal tax assessment."[66] Although they differed from Norfolk's James Parker in their geographical, cultural, economic, and social distinctions, Virginia's backcountry loyalists shared with him the motives of fear, clannish insecurity, and judicial discrimination.

[61] Albert H. Tillson, Jr., "The Localist Roots of Backcountry Loyalism: An Examination of Popular Political Culture in Virginia's New River Valley," *The Journal of Southern History* 54, no. 3 (1988): 389.
[62] Ibid., 389-390.
[63] Ibid., 392, 394, 396.
[64] Ibid., 392-393.
[65] Ibid., 393.
[66] Ibid.

While social, economic, and cultural differences created divisions among America's white men, gender and race were perhaps the most pervasive qualities in determining one's position within society. Although these were uncontrollable attributes, they were used to compartmentalize individuals. Women, African Americans, and Native Americans composed three substantial groups of those marginalized peoples in 18th Century America. While these groups were objectified, they were not powerless. Motivated by personal values and interests, they shaped their own opinions and made choices that directed their paths towards a limited measure of equality among their contemporaries.

Women, African Americans, and Native Americans were motivated by both tangible and intangible values. Women valued the physical aspects of home and family as well as economic advantages. They also valued the concepts of future, peace, and respect. Mary Willing Byrd was born into prominence in Philadelphia, and she married into prominence in Virginia. She placed great value upon her dead husband's estate for her children's future.[67] Abigail Adams valued what she considered to be her property, and she deliberated upon the futures of her children and several of her female family members when she wrote her famous will.[68] Catherine Van Cortlandt pined for her "once peaceful mansion" and constantly fretted to her husband over their "dear children" that he had left.[69] When Virginian women's homes were threatened by troop movements, enforced housing of military personnel and prisoners, British raids, and questions of loyalty, many women were displaced, but many others chose to stay because of the value that they placed on "home."[70] Similarly, African American women had the choice to flee.

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[67] Gunderson, "We Bear the Yoke," 266.
[68] Holton, "The Battle Against Patriarchy," 285-286.
[69] Catherine Van Cortlandt, "Secret Correspondence of a Loyalist Wife," in *America Firsthand: Readings from Settlement to Reconstruction*, 5th Edition, eds. Robert D. Marcus and David Burner (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2001), 119-123.
[70] Gunderson, "We Bear the Yoke," 264-274.

Some "rejected leaving" because they believed that the benefits of staying where they were settled, even though as slaves, outweighed the risks of attempting escape to an unfamiliar place.[71] Many women, however, did forsake their homes to become camp followers during the war. Some women stayed with the regiments because of "ties of affection" while some sought "adventure or financial advantage."[72]

Peace was important to women who understood the causes and effects of warfare. Mary Silliman was very concerned with the peace in her town. She was troubled by the animosity among her neighbors, and she feared that her husband's role in the community both deepened the rift and made her family vulnerable to condemnation and violence.[73] Many Cherokee women valued the peace of neutrality so much so that they defied their own tribe "by aiding the American militias when the Americans...invaded the Cherokee homeland."[74]

Abigail Adams also knew the value of peace, and she used its value to threaten her husband and his peers when she replied to his mockery in May 1776. She boldly declared that women "have it in our power not only to free ourselves but to subdue our Masters, and without violence throw both your natural and legal authority at your feet."[75] After this threat, she instantly reverted to the traditional domestic docility. Perhaps this was not her submitting to her husband, but rather her showing that women *chose* to fill this role, and that they could so effortlessly choose to vacate it.

Adams also esteemed respect among her compatriots. Even as she realized that women would not gain equality in her lifetime, she asked for recognition of women's "patriotick

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[71] Ibid., 276.
[72] Mayer, "Wives, Concubines, and Community," 237.
[73] *Mary Silliman's War*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Heritage Films), DVD.
[74] Gunderson, "We Bear the Yoke," 267.
[75] Abigail Adams, "Abigail Adams to John Adams, Braintree, May 7 1776," in *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791*, ed. Richard D. Brown (Lexington: D. C. Heath and Co., 1992), 303.

virtue."[76] Van Cortlandt also valued respect. She was so bothered by the "insulting looks and behavior" of her peers that she felt that "[t]o describe the scene…is more than I dare attempt."[77] Sarah Benjamin, a Pennsylvania widow of a Revolutionary War soldier, remembered sixty years later that she had demanded a measure of respect from General Washington when they met near Yorktown during the war. He questioned her bravery in the line of cannonballs, and she replied that "It would not do for the men to fight and starve too."[78] In this, she was suggesting that her role was too important for fate to remove her from it.

African Americans also placed a high value upon respect. As Shay's Rebellion played out in 1786, Prince Hall and black Masons of Boston wanted to "prove their courage and loyalty to the city, the state, and the nation."[79] Although Governor Bowdoin denied them, this was at least partly an attempt to alter their reputation in the presence of their white neighbors. In Philadelphia, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones attempted to revise the reputations of African Americans who volunteered to help in the yellow fever crisis of the 1790s.[80] Prince Hall also advocated for respect from within African American society when he "reminded his brethren that they were descendants of a noble ancestry, for Africa…had been the cradle of civilization."[81] Richard Allen was motivated by Psalm 68 of the Christian bible which states that "Princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall stretch forth its hands to God."[82]

In addition to respect, African Americans valued intangibles like religion, education, and a sense of community. Like women, they valued physical families and homes, but many of them

[76] Holton, "The Battle Against Patriarchy," 275.
[77] Cortlandt, "Secret Correspondence of a Loyalist Wife," 122.
[78] Sarah Osborn, "A Follower's Remembrance of Yorktown (1837)," in *For the Record, A Documentary History of America*, eds. David E. Shi and Holly A. Mayer (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999), 170.
[79] Richard S. Newman, "Prince Hall, Richard Allen, and Daniel Coker: Revolutionary Black Founders, Revolutionary Black Communities," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 309.
[80] Ibid., 315.
[81] Ibid., 310.
[82] Ibid., 311.

placed a higher value on the ethereal family and home that they believed awaited them beyond this life. The African American Methodists who escaped Virginia slavery believed that they were participants "in a divinely ordained project to leave their Egyptian bondage, travel through the wilderness, and enter the promised land of Canaan."[83] This radicalism was truly revolutionary for these people, even if secular equality was never realized. Mary Perth, Prince Hall, Richard Allen, and Daniel Coker all pushed for quality education for African American children. Hall put their educational plight most clearly when he addressed the Boston Legislature by questioning the omission of children of color in common education. He asked how their parents could be expected to "see them in ignorance in a land of gospel light…and for no other reason…[than] they are black."[84]

The significance placed upon a sense of community was dominant among the values of African Americans. Behind the British lines in New York, the Virginia slave refugees were "bound together by the shared experience of work, exile, and hope for the future."[85] Prince Hall founded the first African Masonic lodge in the world.[86] Richard Allen led the African Methodist Episcopal Church which "became an emblem of racial and ancestral pride nationally."[87] In Baltimore, Daniel Coker was the "leading advocate of independent black churches" and briefly the bishop of the American Methodist Episcopalians.[88] These three organizations were among the "earliest and most successful communal institutions in free black society" in America.[89]

Just beyond the frontier, Natives also chose which side to take in the conflict. In the years preceding the war, the Cherokee people were losing their lands, cultures, and lives to

[83] Pybus, "Mary Perth, Harry Washington, and Moses Wilkinson," 164.
[84] Newman, "Prince Hall, Richard Allen, and Daniel Coker," 309.
[85] Pybus, "Mary Perth, Harry Washington, and Moses Wilkinson," 160.
[86] Newman, "Prince Hall, Richard Allen, and Daniel Coker," 307.
[87] Ibid., 312.
[88] Ibid., 316-317.
[89] Ibid., 320.

American settlers. Dragging Canoe, a head Cherokee warrior and son of a chief, resented the older tribesmen for surrendering land upon which he and his generation relied for hunting and proving their self-worth as Cherokee men.[90] He was disgusted when they signed the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals and claimed that they had been duped into the agreement.[91] His instinctual reaction was to engage in warfare against the American settlers, which he proceeded to do for the rest of his life. Like the loyalists analyzed above, Dragging Canoe chose to impede American sovereignty because he felt that he and his peers had been treated unjustly.

Oneida Natives Han Yerry and Tyona Doxtader also saw injustice, yet they chose the opposite side in the Revolution. Also similar to Dragging Canoe, they fought to keep their traditional homeland.[92] The basic difference was that they felt betrayed by the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the North, Sir William Johnson.[93] They believed that he "had simply stolen valued territory" by "browbeat[ing] Oneida delegates" into ceding land in the Fort Stanwix Treaty of 1768.[94] While they were disappointed in their delegates, they were disgusted by the hypocrisy of their fellow Iroquois who "engaged in bloody raids against Europeans American settlers" under the guise of alleged neutrality.[95] Motivated by these actions, the Doxtaders believed it most honorable to oppose their fellow Iroquois and the British. Along with their basic human reactions of distrusting the British officials, feeling betrayed by their kinsmen, and desiring honor, the Doxtaders were motivated to fight with the patriots by

[90] Colin G. Calloway, "Declaring Independence and Rebuilding a Nation: Dragging Canoe and the Chickamauga Revolution" in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 185-186.
[91] Ibid., 188.
[92] James Kirby Martin, "Forgotten Heroes of the Revolution: Han Yerry and Tyona Doxtader of the Oneida Indian Nation," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 203.
[92] Ibid., 201.
[93] Calloway, "Declaring Independence," 187; Martin, "Forgotten Heroes," 201.
[94] Martin, "Forgotten Heroes," 201.
[95] Ibid., 203.

personal affection for the Presbyterian missionary Samuel Kirkland, respect for their ancestors, and "revel[ing] in the recognition they received for their pro-rebel actions."[96]

As these Native Americans' lives were greatly affected by the white men with whom they associated or fought, women and African Americans were legally controlled by them and therefore susceptible to consequences of beliefs and actions that were not necessarily their own. A husband's allegiance dictated how a wife would be treated by her neighbors and by the authorities. Patriot leaders like General Charles Lee suspected Ann Roberts of acting as a British spy because her "husband...had moved his goods on board ship."[97] Many women, such as Mary Ellegood, became refugees because their husbands were captured and their property seized.[98] When Reverend John Agnew became a loyalist chaplain for Lord Dunmore, his wife spent three years hiding in the swamps of Virginia.[99] Some women were targeted because of the titles that their husbands held. Martha Wayles Jefferson, wife of Thomas, was a specific objective for the British because her husband was the governor and a prominent patriot.[100] Abigail Adams was averse to joining the "numerous female shopkeepers in eastern Massachusetts" because of her husband's prestigious position.[101] Although she could have operated a more streamlined business, "it would have been undignified for the wife of a congressman to open a store," and so she had to turn to male relatives to handle her merchandise and conduct her business.[102] Continental Army Captain George Fleming requested to keep the widows of two particularly

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[96] Ibid., 201-207.
[97] Joan A. Gunderson, "We Bear the Yoke with a Reluctant Impatience: The War for Independence and Virginia's Displaced Women," in *War and Society in the American Revolution: Mobilization and Home Front*, ed. John Resch and Walter Sargent (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007) 272.
[98] Ibid., 273.
[99] Ibid., 271.
[100] Ibid., 278.
[101] Woody Holton, "The Battle Against Patriarchy That Abigail Adams Won," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 276.
[102] Holton, "The Battle Against Patriarchy," 276.

excellent soldiers on as washerwomen as "just compensation for [their] service" and for the "justice in helping a good soldier support his wife."[103]

Just as a husband's allegiance affected his wife's treatment, a slave master's allegiance dictated the conditions of his slaves. A blatant example of this lies in Lord Dunmore's proclamation to Virginia slaves in 1775. He offered prospective freedom to only the slaves of *patriots*, and he threatened that if any were "capable of bearing arms" and failed to "resort to His Majesty's standard," the Crown would deem them as traitors "liable to...such [penalties] as forfeiture of life."[104] So, this offer of freedom, and this threat of imprisonment or death, was dependent upon the political beliefs of their white masters. Harry Washington, slave of George, and two indentured servants were particular trophies for the captain of the HMS *Roebuck* when they escaped the estate of the most notorious patriot.[105] Conversely, the Virginia Committee of Safety ordered the Virginia militia to take suspected loyalist John Willoughby's slaves because of his refusal to relocate further inland.[106] As with the two washerwomen in Flemings's camp, the white man's allegiance was also helpful to these subjects in that they were able to find refuge at Dunmore's camp near Portsmouth.[107]

In addition to the motives of Tories and Whigs, Benjamin Rush dissected their methods, as well. He explained that "furious Tories" resorted to violence, others "circulat[ed] intelligence" through speaking, writing, and distributing, while "Peaceable and conscientious

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[103] Holly A. Mayer, "Wives, Concubines, and Community: Following the Army," in *War and Society in the American Revolution: Mobilization and Home Front*, ed. John Resch and Walter Sargent (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007) 238.
[104] Cynthia A. Kierner, ed., *Revolutionary America 1750-1815, Sources and Interpretation* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 126.
[105] Cassandra Pybus, "Mary Perth, Harry Washington, and Moses Wilkinson: Black Methodists Who Escaped from Slavery and Founded a Nation," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 160.
[106] Ibid., 159.
[107] Ibid.

Tories" simply "submitted to the measures of the governing powers."[108] While James Parker held to his loyalist beliefs until he died, when he realized that Britain would not hold its American colonies, his process for dealing with the reality was exiling himself to London.[109] The methods of the backcountry loyalists of Virginia's New River Valley included refusing to take the "oath of allegiance," conspiring to destroy the lucrative lead mines, and threatening mob violence against those who opposed or wavered on their localist views.[110] Captain John Cox declared that he had no confidant among his neighbors, and he was threatened and constantly watched by the Tory insurgents.[111] In 1779, a Tory party took him prisoner for several days and coerced him to "Swear he would not lift arms against them or their Party, or disclose any of their Secrets which he might have discovered."[112] Generally, the New River Valley Tories threatened the persons and property—including slaves, livestock, and houses—of regional leaders.[113]

James Cleveland and other Virginia tenant farmers gathered together to overtake militia musters and close courts between 1776 and 1780.[114] Their ability to do so caused wealthy Virginians to realize the potential of the lower class. Their methods made the landowners anxious about leaving their properties unguarded.[115] The results of their actions stretched into the Virginia Constitution and to New England where John Adams acknowledged the democratic impact the lower sort had made.[116]

Martin's long list of duties during the war and his relative lack of combat experiences shows that the nature of war for his, and doubtless many other Continental Army units, was not

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[108] Rush, "Benjamin Rush Contrasts," 237.
[109] Mason, "A Loyalist's Journey," 140, 166.
[110] Tillson, "The Localist Roots," 393-394.
[111] Ibid., 397.
[112] Ibid., 398.
[113] Ibid., 399-400.
[114] McDonnell, "'The Spirit of Levelling,'" 135.
[115] Ibid., 140.
[116] Ibid., 143-144.

focused upon fighting, but instead upon maintenance. He directly mentions his role as a light infantryman, but his far more common roles were on fatigue parties, guard duties, and searches for deserters.[117] His first assignment was on a fatigue party in New York.[118] While in Bedford in 1778, part of his regiment was sent to capture enemy refugees who had ransacked the militia stores of a militia colonel.[119] His several guard duties included being a camp guard, guarding horses of his detachment, taking charge of the quarter guard, and serving as a slaughterhouse guard in the final days of the war.[120] On two occasions, he was sent to retrieve other soldiers – once for two troops that had stayed too long on furlough, and much later for three deserters who were suspected of hiding in the "English Neighborhoods."[121] Perhaps his most personally beneficial task was foraging for the harsh winter at Valley Forge.[122] He worked on construction units twice on Constitution Island. First, he worked with a unit that constructed fortifications.[123] Years later, he returned to the island and worked blasting rocks for works repairs and then building new barracks.[124] His highest rank was as a non-commissioned officer when he entered the engineer's department and joined a group called the "Sappers and Miners."[125] Among his tasks as a Miner were reconnaissance and "proving and packing off shells, shot and other military stores."[126] Although he was at the famous Battle of Yorktown, Martin's role was still not combat. His group was ordered to cut a path for the troops with axes.[127] After the pivotal confrontation at Yorktown, Martin and several others stayed in the Chesapeake Bay area. His

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[117] Martin, *Ordinary Courage*, 88.
[118] Ibid., 15.
[119] Ibid., 92.
[120] Ibid., 42, 78, 137, 168.
[121] Ibid., 132-133, 164-165.
[122] Ibid., 68-69.
[123] Ibid., 124-125.
[124] Ibid., 166-167.
[125] Ibid., 125.
[126] Ibid., 138, 141.
[127] Ibid., 149.

task was onboard a schooner dividing twenty tons of beef among the troops that stayed.[128] His final assignment for the Continental Army followed the same maintenance theme—after returning to West Point, his last task before being honorably discharged was to "cut two cords of wood" for firewood.[129] Martin's few encounters with the enemy were most often spontaneous and brief. As opposed to large regimental skirmishes, he experienced small units fighting in towns or in the backcountry at creeks and in the woods and cornfields.[130]

Some Native Americans, such as the Doxtader family, served the patriot cause through scouting, military advisement, hand-to-hand combat, and enemy harassment through the façade of Native savagery.[131] In a 1775 report on relations with Natives, John Adams referred to them as "warlike," as "Savages" and "blood Hounds," and he declared that they "conduct their Wars...entirely without Faith and Humanity."[132] Dragging Canoe and the Chickamaugas were violently opposed to the American settlers and "vowed to make the ceded lands 'dark and bloody.'"[133] Instead of surrendering to the colonial pressures as their fathers had done, they built an independent Cherokee nation "based on militant defense of their land and sovereignty."[134]

Despite the oppression of women and African Americans during this era, the upheaval of the Revolution set the stage for reconfigured parameters. These subjugated peoples were able to make choices and be effective participants in their own lives and societies. Members of both groups filled some of the roles within their own societies that white men had filled on the broad scale. African American men—such as Hall, Allen, and Coker—initiated and expanded

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[128] Ibid., 154.
[129] Ibid., 173-174.
[130] Ibid., 19.
[131] Martin, "Forgotten Heroes," 205-209.
[132] John Adams, "John Adams Reports on Congress's Strategy Toward the Native Americans, 1775," in *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791*, ed. Richard D. Brown (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 226-227.
[133] Calloway, "Declaring Independence," 188.
[134] Ibid., 191.

communal institutions specific to their race that mirrored those that white men had established for theirs. While women did not operate in the institutional sphere as leaders, they did fill other roles of white men during the war. Necessity and opportunity placed women as temporary heads of households. Mary Silliman supervised the farm and managed the finances while her husband was held captive.[135] They also protected their homes and families in the absence of their husbands. By choosing to stay when the British came to Westover, Mary Byrd was able to protect the estate that she valued just by her presence.[136] In Norfolk, Sarah Smith stored, distributed, and haggled over goods that American officers had confiscated.[137] At Yorktown, an American officer considered Sarah Benjamin (Osborn) to be "soldier enough" to understand the signals of British surrender because she had been with the men during the fighting and maintenance of the army.[138] Article 23, Section XIII, in the 1776 American Articles of War integrated camp followers into the army, and they were responsible for adhering to the Continental Army's rules.[139] Indeed, the women that joined regiments as camp followers were regulated as strictly as the soldiers. Washerwomen who were officially registered could receive provisions and could be "prohibited from drawing rations and turned out of their regiments" if they did not adhere to the restrictions.[140] The Continental Army ensured that their followers were not prostitutes by "checking their reputations and connections to the soldiers at various times."[141] To be eligible to receive rations and to stay within the regiments, women had to prove "a legitimate family connection and an acceptable reason for being with the army."[142] Even

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[135] *Mary Silliman's War*, DVD.
[136] Gunderson, "We Bear the Yoke," 266.
[137] Ibid., 270.
[138] Osborn, "A Follower's Remembrance of Yorktown (1837)," 171.
[139] Mayer, "Wives, Concubines, and Community," 241-242.
[140] Ibid., 238-239.
[141] Ibid., 240.
[142] Ibid.

women who were not part of the encampments were subject to regulation. "Colonel Alexander McDougall...tried to limit, if not eliminate" prostitution within the encampments "by ordering that "No Woman of Ill Fame Shall be permitted to Come into the Barricks on pain of Being well Watred under a pump."[143]

Because of their new sense of self-worth, some women saw an opportunity in the creation of new state and national governments. They gained political awareness through the Revolution, and although they could not vote, they could petition. African Americans also used petitions to eke out measures of sameness among their white neighbors in areas such as education and institutions. Writing was a primary method of both women and African Americans. In addition to petitions, they wrote pamphlets, poems, eulogies, and wills. Phillis Wheatley used her poems to "publicly [link] religion, politics, antislavery, and antiracism."[144] In so doing, she embarrassed the patriots that claimed to want liberty at the same moment as they held people as slaves. She was so effective in this that a mere meeting with Benjamin Franklin could be seen as his endorsement or spurning of American slavery.[145] As a teenaged slave in Boston, she was able to transcend both gender and race and gain "the admiration and appreciation" of both women and men through her writings.[146] She also threatened Thomas Jefferson in that she was capable of "[p]raising and shaming America into becoming a true agent of '*Heavenly Freedom*'."[147]

Adams was also one of the most prominent of these actors that utilized writing. Her letters to and from her husband not only debated women's rights in her own time, but they

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[143] Ibid.
[144] David Waldstreicher, "Phillis Wheatley: The Poet Who Challenged the American Revolutionaries," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 98.
[145] Ibid., 106.
[146] Ibid., 100.
[147] Ibid., 110-111.

survived to illustrate the sequence of social and political events throughout the revolutionary years. Historians and activists use them over two centuries later to further her philosophies. By the writing of her will, she was successful in "driving [coverture] from her own household" even though she was not able to see its ultimate removal from her nation as whole.[148]

Women and African Americans also utilized the shared method of escaping to survive the dangers that white men imposed upon them. Women refugees fled their homes and communities in Norfolk before and after the city was fired upon by British ships and burned by both Loyalist and Patriot forces.[149] African Americans often reached beyond America to seek refuge away from white American supremacy. Phillis Wheatley found more equality in London than she had in America. It was there that her *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* was published. The African American Methodists that fled from Virginia to New York found more freedom, though not equality, when they migrated to Nova Scotia and eventually to Sierra Leone.[150] Hall, Allen, and Coker all considered leaving this nation that failed to feel like a home to them.

Notwithstanding the ability to choose their paths, the results for most of these groups of marginalized people were not as they had hoped. Despite fighting until 1794, the Chickamaugas were defeated at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the subsequent Treaty of Tellico Blockhouse and the Treaty of Greenville resulted in substantial loss of land for the Natives.[151] After the war, the outcome of the Doxtaders's efforts included "grandly worded pronouncements," broken unity of the Six Nations, loss of land, and feelings of betrayal and humiliation at their own ignorance

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[148] Holton, "The Battle Against Patriarchy," 275, 286.
[149] Gunderson, "We Bear the Yoke," 267-269.
[150] Pybus, "Mary Perth, Harry Washington, and Moses Wilkinson," 164-168.
[151] Calloway, "Declaring Independence," 196.

in trusting their "white brothers."[152] In July 1783, Chickasaw Natives wrote that they also struggled to identify to whom they should talk and listen. They declared that a representative of the colonies "would rescue [them] from the darkness and confusion [they were] in" and that only through this communication could they avoid more bloodshed.[153]

The results for women were relatively diminutive. Despite the new level of respect that women had earned during the war, the social issue of masculine dominance over women was not revolutionized. They had gained a new sense of importance through their roles as temporary heads of household, camp followers, and boycotters. Some women saw the creation of a new government as their chance to balance the scales, but it brought neither new rights nor true equality for them. In addition, women's vulnerability was showcased by the physical dangers that war and soldiers presented. Their only strength acknowledged on a large scale was their superior morality. After the war, there was an increased interest in virtue and, even as Benjamin Rush declared that women should be educated, he reinforced that their role should be subservient to that of men. In order to be "agreeable companion[s] for…sensible [men]," women needed to be literate, to write clearly and with proper grammar, to handle bookkeeping, to be fluid in singing and dancing, and to entertain men through conversations about history and geography.[154] With their new education came the expectation that they would devote themselves to producing the next generation of competent men for the new Republic. His first of "several circumstances" states that women's education must be "contract[ed] and confine[d]…chiefly to the more useful branches of literature" so as to not interfere with their early marriages and childrearing.[155] This

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[152] Martin, "Forgotten Heroes," 210-211.

[153] "Chickasaw Indians Seek Help, July 1783" in *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791*, ed. Richard D. Brown (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 227-228.

[154] Benjamin Rush, "Thoughts upon Female Education," in *Early American Women, A Documentary History 1600-1900*, 3rd Edition, ed. Nancy Wolock (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2014), 135.

[155] Ibid., 134.

"Republican Motherhood" was necessary to create an educated and virtuous citizenry. This concept was the only real change for women that resulted from the Revolution, but it actually reinforced masculine dominance. While Rush conceded that "the elevation of the female mind…is considered by some men as unfriendly to the domestic character of a woman" and that adherence to this belief exposed the "prejudice of little minds," he proposed that women's education be promoted to make "the government of them…easy and agreeable."[156] By stating that one of the chief purposes of women's education was to help men to govern them, he was furthering the narrow mindset that one's gender should dictate his or her role in a household and in society.

Like the social issue of gender inequality, the issue of racial inequality also continued. Location dictated the degree to which racial injustice was addressed. In the Deep South, slave owners saw the power that slaves had during the war—both in fighting and in being familiar with the rhetoric of liberty—and so they became more stringent out of fear. They believed that, if all men were created equal, men of color must not be seen as fully human. Although African Americans in the North were gradually freed based upon state laws, they remained unequal to their white neighbors. As they were forced to create a new identity, and indeed a brand new culture, they struggled to get the psychological and emotional autonomy that was required to be truly free. Even organizations that were designed to assist them in more progressive cities could be detrimental in that they prolonged the attitude of dependence upon another race.

The outcomes for the soldiers were also injurious. The most pervasive element in Martin's narrative is a near complete lack of the basic elements of survival. Hunger was his most recurring memory of his time in Washington's Continental Army. Starvation was so often

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[156] Ibid., 136-137.

an occurrence that it had "become quite a secondary matter" by 1776.[157] While Martin did mention times when some form of food was given to them – most notably the Thanksgiving dinner of rice and vinegar – the soldiers were mainly left to themselves to forage, hunt, scavenge, barter, beg, and steal.[158] His other primary sufferings were exhaustion and overexposure to the natural environment. They "lost all [their] clothing in the Kip's Bay affair" in September 1776.[159] They seldom had blankets and had only thin clothing. A quarter of the men marching from Valley Forge and at the Battle of Monmouth had only "their ragged shirt flaps to cover their nakedness."[160] In November 1777 they had no shoes or stockings and their feet bled upon the frozen ground as they walked.[161] Similarly, the army doctors had little supplies with which to mend or heal the soldiers.[162] Martin remembered that when a lieutenant colonel overheard a soldier say he was hungry, he gave him some burnt-black corn from his pocket and told him to "eat this and learn to be a soldier."[163] Perhaps this was the general sentiment of the American people. Martin and his comrades lacked food, rest, shelter, ample clothing, and money to procure these things during most of the war, and he remembered few times in which the American civilians went out of their way to provide any of them.

These deprived conditions led the destitute soldiers to protest. The results, however, were often brief, sometimes lasting only a few hours or a few days of "faring a little better" with more promises of better management.[164] A multi-regiment parade of soldiers from different regions formed to protest their deprivation, and it eventually brought the attention of Colonel

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[157] Martin, *Ordinary Courage*, 32.
[158] Ibid., 34, 36, 50, 66, 123.
[159] Ibid., 32.
[160] Ibid., 175.
[161] Ibid., 56-57, 67.
[162] Ibid., 163.
[163] Ibid., 30.
[164] Ibid., 98-101.

Stewart who agreed to speak with their officers, and their complaints were answered satisfactorily for some time.[165] These men had suffered extensively and—whether out of inability or unwillingness—their officers had not attended to their grievances. Whereas Colonel Stewart spoke plainly with them and took action to help them, others were callous and discounted the soldiers. In addition to the lieutenant colonel who showed such little compassion for the hungry soldier, another disparaging authority was a sentinel that exclaimed that Martin's sick friend may as well die if he was no longer of use to the cause.[166] Not all officers acted so hardened; however, in a comparison with General Steuben, Martin stated that, overall, "our officers…cared but little if anything at all about us."[167]

Looking back as he wrote, Martin seemed resentful toward the country for which he suffered and by which he felt he was cheated.[168] The soldiers did not receive the hundred acres of land that had been promised to each of them. They only received a small fraction of the clothing promised for their service. He was, however, paid in settlement certificates, part of which he sold for "decent clothing."[169] As was well-documented throughout the memoir, the troops did not receive the food or the wages that were agreed upon when they registered their service.[170] Martin measured the concern that a New England farmer felt for his cattle as greater than the concern shown to the soldiers by their country.[171] At the time Martin wrote his memoir, he believed that he had never failed in his duty to his country, even though, as he said, "she failed in fulfilling hers with me."[172]

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[165] Ibid., 118-122.
[166] Ibid., 26-27.
[167] Ibid., 125.
[168] Ibid., 177.
[169] Ibid., 173-174.
[170] Ibid., 174-177.
[171] Ibid., 175.
[172] Ibid., 127.

In the formation and continuing evolution of the new nation, Martin and his fellow veterans were treated dishonorably. As postwar Massachusetts added and increased taxes upon its citizens and refused to accept any currency except the new specie, the rural citizens blamed "their urban, more commercial counterparts of various vices, including political indifference and personal 'luxury.'"[173] They believed that "the legal system was stacked in the interests of creditors" and that it remained "inaccessible to all but the wealthiest citizens."[174] Veterans appealed to "the Honourable Senate and the House of Representatives in General Court" with reasonable requests to relieve some of their economic burdens and the political disparities in the commonwealth.[175] To ease the financial weight upon themselves, the farmers asked for more available currency, reduced taxes, less oppressive lawyers suing for debt, and the sale of their land and certificates at real value. For an overall solution to the commonwealth's debt, they further suggested minimized government spending and the sale of land in the east. For political balance, the rural citizens requested the transfer of the state legislature and capital from Boston to a more central location.[176] While these requests were practical to both the lower sort and the commonwealth, the Legislature rejected their appeals, and the lowly mass of farmers remained oppressed. Claiming that its responsibility was "to undeceive those, who are misguided," the General Court pointed a patronizing finger at those whom it felt simply needed to adhere to "the

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[173] Gregory Nobles, "'Satan, Smith, Shattuck, and Shays': The People's Leaders in the Massachusetts Regulation of 1786," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, eds. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 218-219.
[174] Cotlar, "'Every Man Should Have Property'," 348.
[175] "Hampshire County, Massachusetts, Farmers Call for Help, 1786: Petition from the Town of Greenwich, Massachusetts, 16 January 1786," in *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791*, ed. Richard D. Brown (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 357.
[176] Ibid., 357-358; "Regulators Call for Popular Support, 1786: To the Printer of the Hampshire Herald" in *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791*, ed. Richard D. Brown (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 358-359.

principles of integrity and public spirit, and the practice of industry, sobriety, economy, and fidelity in contracts" in order to keep the new nation from "crumbl[ing] to pieces."[177]

As they did in the coming of the Revolution, the American proletariat reacted collectively though without centralization. Modeling the prewar patterns of protest and adding both the orderliness learned through military experience and the electoral processes of democracy, armies of the people rallied themselves throughout Massachusetts and elected leaders. They interrupted the "most immediate source of legal authority, the county courts," to prevent the abuse against "debtors and other victims of the system."[178] The Massachusetts Legislature warned that the insurgents were compromising "the life, liberty and property of every member of the community" and that "the vengeance of an injured community must one day pursue and overtake them."[179]

Indeed, the government responded by reassembling its militia, and rather peaceable protests turned bloody. The famous and ill-fated attempt to seize the federal arsenal in Springfield in January 1787 left four commoners dead and the elected leaders of the people "indicted for treason and condemned to hang."[180] The commonwealth had argued that "resorting to irregular, or violent measures, to obtain redress of grievances" was unwarranted in the newly democratic society.[181] Samuel Adams took it further by declaring that "the man who dares to rebel against the laws of a republic ought to suffer death."[182]

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[177] "The Massachusetts Legislature Advises Thrift, Virtue, and Patience, 1786: An Address from the General Court, to the People of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," in *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791*, ed. Richard D. Brown (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 359, 362.
[178] Nobles, "'Satan, Smith, Shattuck, and Shays'," 219.
[179] "The Massachusetts Legislature Advises," 363.
[180] Nobles, "'Satan, Smith, Shattuck, and Shays',", 227-228.
[181] "The Massachusetts Legislature Advises,", 361.
[182] Nobles, "'Satan, Smith, Shattuck, and Shays'," 228.

Four months later, the civil unrest was a source of fear for the framers of the Constitution. The "tempers of the people" acting collectively had caused "constant distress and anxiety of mind" for those with political power just as they had for Lieutenant Governor Hutchinson twenty years earlier.[183] The results for these dissenters were far less than revolutionary, however. The Constitutional Convention ensured the dominance of the federal government by including its authority "to provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections, and repel Invasions" within the first Article of the Constitution.[184] In a sense, the same fear of endangered authority that led slave owners in the Deep South to buckle down on their subjects led the American political leaders to do the same against threats of mob violence that would destabilize the administration.

While these social and political dissenters remained as subjugated as they had before the rebellions, Virginia's religious nonconformists had a much different outcome. Baptists and Presbyterians challenged the "governmental repression of religious activity" and won on a constitutional scale.[185] These religious campaigners were legally disparaged while the Church of England was venerated, and they were prominent in changing federal policy to incorporate the commitment that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof."[186] The levelling beliefs of the Virginia Baptists, much like the Universalism of the Great Awakening, appealed to the lower sort and drew an enormous following. They were a mass that believed truly in no secular authority and that was not deterred by political, social, or even physical abuse. To answer the question of why this group of radicals

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[183] Nobles, "'Satan, Smith, Shattuck, and Shays'," 229; Kierner, *Revolutionary America*, 70-71.
[184] Nobles, "'Satan, Smith, Shattuck, and Shays'," 229.
[185] Jon Butler, "James Ireland, John Leland, John 'Swearing Jack' Waller, and the Baptist Campaign for Religious Freedom in Revolutionary Virginia," in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 172.
[186] Ibid., 182-183.

attained liberty while so many others did not, one must consider the circumstances, the motives, and the methods in this unusual case. Firstly, they were victims of policy, but unlike women and non-whites, there was not an immediate assumption of inferiority—they were men, they were white, and they could vote.

Unlike the postwar insurgents in Massachusetts, they did not require aid, just a lack of interference in their operations that "in no wise affect the State."[187] Unlike the white men in mobs who threatened those that had the liberties they desired, and unlike the women and African Americans who appealed to those that had the rights they desired, they were not threatening or appealing to the established church. Instead, they forewent threatening altogether and appealed to those with the power to give them what they wanted—the political and legislative framers. They petitioned to the "Members of the honourable Convention of Virginia" in June 1776 to end government regulation, simply asking that "[they] be allowed to worship God in [their] own way,...be permitted to maintain [their] own ministers," and "be married, buried, and the like, without paying the parsons of any other denomination."[188] A decade later, the *Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty* granted that to "[assume] dominion over the faith of others" was to infringe upon their "natural right."[189] It declared that "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical" and that beliefs shall not affect one's "civil capacities."[190] In the republic, armed resistance failed where aggressive but nonviolent appeals succeeded. Before independence, hostility could work to

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[187] Ibid., 176.
[188] "Virginia Baptists Oppose Religious Privilege," in *Revolutionary America 1750-1815, Sources and Interpretation*, ed. Cynthia A. Kierner (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 212.
[189] "An Act for establishing Religious Freedom," 16 January 1786, in *For the Record, A Documentary History of America*, eds. David E. Shi and Holly A. Mayer (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999), 178-179.
[190] Ibid.

physically repel the British from the colonies and make imperial dominance no longer worth the consequences, but now the political authority and military were domestic entities.

Ultimately, those who wanted radical change were disappointed. For those peoples marginalized due to social class, economic status, gender, race, and cultural identification oppression from without converted into oppression from within. The pre-independence Samuel Adams who saw a new "ideology of resistance" in the Knowles Riot "in which the natural rights of man were used for the first time in the province to justify mob activity" was now the Samuel Adams who denounced those who opposed "the laws of a republic" as worthy of death.[191] His sentiments were echoed throughout the early decades of the new nation. The ever-idealist Robert Coram believed that "democratically organized governments would produce economically just societies."[192] According to over two centuries of American democracy, he was wrong. Yet his definition of democracy, like that of America's innumerable revolutionary founders, was far more radical than that of the political framers. He deeply believed that the "equality of conditions, manners, and privileges" that he observed among the Native Americans created "a pure and truly patriotic spirit which tends to the general good of...society."[193] On this matter, his accuracy cannot be determined because the nation has yet to exhibit that equality.

Despite the truth that nearly all of these groups continued to be marginalized in American society after the Revolution, they were not passive beings that tagged along for the revolutionary ride. They surpassed their societally-contrived economic, sexual, racial, cultural, and religious constraints to actively alter their own lives and the American culture of the eighteenth century and beyond. They chose what values they wanted to pursue and promote, and they envisioned their future generations being prosperous where they could not.

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[191] Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 216; Nobles, "'Satan, Smith, Shattuck, and Shays'," 228.
[192] Cotlar, "'Every Man Should Have Property'," 347.
[193] Ibid., 345.

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