

Good evening, I am Charles Jameson, member of the Culpeper Museum board, member and 2nd vice president with the Culpeper Minutemen, chapter Sons of the American Revolution and 1st vice president and museum development director with GWCRHSAA, Inc. Growing up here in historic Culpeper, I guess maybe I didn't have time for history. These groups have spurred my interest and then to find all this history that passed through Culpeper is truly amazing. Maybe as you age, history becomes more relevant and meaningful.

Most of this talk was extracted from the National Society Daughters American Revolution, " Forgotten Patriots ". All of the books read, lead very closely to the same conclusions as the DAR found. Whether fighting for the British cause or for the American cause, African Americans were fighting for freedom. It was a freedom struggle.

This was indeed the case, and all observations summarize the entire situation as a fight for freedom, not only for American Colonists but for African Americans and American Indians as well. There were many varying sides in the conflict, which for all intents and purposes was a civil war that pitted relatives, neighbors and communities

against one another. All, in their own way, were fighting for freedom and their own well being.

While the exact numbers remain in dispute, a very large number of African Americans fled to the British lines to escape slavery. Running away from slavery or “stealing oneself”, as slave owners called it at the time, was the ultimate act of a person seeking freedom. The general story and specific stories of many individuals have been told in the many publications that are included in these books bibliographies. The people who fled to the British lines during the Revolutionary War left widely varying histories behind them and created innumerable futures. Many went to Canada, and some eventually settled in west Africa to found the colony of Sierra Leone. Their efforts and stories did not contribute to the independence of the United States and so are not included in these Forgotten Patriots.

For many American Indians, such as the Cherokee, Shawnee, and Creek as well as most of the Iroquois, fighting on the British side was the lesser of two evils. Their motivation was to stem the flow of coastal settlers, any further into the interior of the continent, and they felt that allegiance to the British Crown was the most likely way to achieve this goal. Other groups did their best to

remain neutral. It was a freedom struggle for all of them as well, albeit an unsuccessful one in most cases.

Of course not all African Americans and American Indians held the Loyalist sympathies. Thousands participated in the Revolutionary War on the American side. But Why? This is a question that goes back to the freedom struggle. Every individual judged their own circumstances and made decisions based on those and what they hoped for in life. Their reasons for participating are probably as varied as the individuals themselves, but we are able to draw some conclusions from reading the records of their actions and activities.

At the beginning of the war, most states expressly prohibited the enlistment of free blacks and slaves. The idea of giving weapons to men, who might well be tempted to use them against their oppressors, was frightening to the establishment. As time progressed, however, and the need for soldiers became more desperate, state after state set place systems by which slaves could earn their freedom by serving in the military and whereby free men could enlist themselves. Some could serve as substitutes in place of their owner, or someone else, with the promise of emancipation at the end of the war. Many took advantage of this as soon as the opportunity arose in their state of residence or in another state nearby. Crossing

state lines was particularly common and not all that difficult in terms of distances in the northeast. The majority of actions resulting in manumission or freedom of an enslaved man as a result of his military service occurred in the northern states. This is not to say that the practice did not happen in the middle and southern states, but the documentation is much slighter south of New England. Some individuals who did indeed fight in the American forces were denied their freedom after the war, and several lawsuits resulted from this. Many others probably disappeared back into slavery with no legal or financial means to protest such action. So, while the hope or dream of personal freedom happened for many who fought for the American cause not all were as fortunate.

Naturally, most hoped for better lives in some way and felt identifying with the American cause might bring them greater success, freedom from slavery, contacts with others, income and bounty or land. Many, too, were inspired by the rhetoric of the period and held high that the concept of "all men are created equal" would extend to them when the conflict was over. Their patriotic efforts during the conflict were a step in that direction, but most were, however, terribly disappointed by reality after the war.

American Indians were all born on the North American continent, of course, and the same sentiments and situations were part of their experience as well. This is illustrated by ---the following statement--- made (perhaps with American assistance) in 1778 by the leaders of the Saint Johns Indians in Maine.

The Chiefs, Sachems and young men belonging to the River St. Johns have duly considered the nature of this Great War between America and Old England. They are unanimous that America is right and old England is wrong. The River on which you are with your soldiers belongs from the most ancient times to our ancestors, consequently is ours now, and which we are bound to keep for our posterity. You know we are Americans; that is our native country; you know the King of England with his evil councilors has been trying to take away the lands and liberties of our country, but God the King of the Heaven, Our King, fights for us and says America shall be Free. It is so now in spite of all Old England and his comrades can do.

Those American Indians who did fight for the Americans were mostly from either surviving groups in the East or from other areas near the frontier. Some were individuals probably who hoped for better lives for their families and communities based on the messages delivered by the

American cause and their own personal beliefs and objectives.

For many native born African Americans or enslaved men in Africa, the sea was a logical way to escape their role in life on the American seacoast or areas just into the interior. Maritime traditions ancient to African coastal areas, of course and they remained strong on the other side of the Atlantic as well. Not many whites wanted to be away from home and on the water for a 6 month or 1 year enlistment. The African American signed up for the entire war hoping to better his life if he was free and to gain his freedom for his enlistment. The African American was noted for his abilities to know the waters and the back waters and were noted as excellent pilots. The fact that a ship is dependent on its entire crew doing their part was an appeal that brought many men to serve on privateers, merchant ships and naval vessels. There were also American Indian men from coastal areas, particularly in New England, who were involved in these same activities. Naval or maritime participation was a significant contribution to the war effort as well as a search for freedom within the broader context of supporting the American struggle for Independence.

This procedure typified an attitude toward the African American enlistment that would prevail in America's future

wars. From Colonial times until the 20th century, the African American would be bypassed in the early stages of conflict. But as the struggle grew arduous, civilian authorities and military commanders would turn to the one great remaining manpower pool, and the African American would emerge from his status of rejection and inferiority to become a comrade in arms. When speaking of Comrade in arms most black soldiers were scattered throughout the Continental army. Several all black units commanded by white officers also were formed due to lack of white enlistments and substitutions and saw action against the British. Rhode Island's Black Battalion was established in 1778 when that state was unable to meet its quota for the Continental Army. The legislature agreed to set free slaves who volunteered for the duration of the war and compensated their owners for their value. Therefore, African American participation was usually for the duration of the war whereas whites enlisted for 6 months to 1 year terms. This Rhode Island Regiment performed bravely throughout the war and was present at Yorktown where an observer noted it was "the most neatly dressed, the best under arms and the most precise in its maneuvers"

Check on these noted African Americans from the Revolutionary War, 1Crispus **Attucks** was an American

Stevedore of African and Native American descent, widely regarded as the 1st person killed in the Boston Massacre and thus the 1st killed in the American Revolution.

2 William Flora a free man from Portsmouth, Va. who was one of the heroes who fought alongside the Culpeper Minutemen at Great Bridge, **3 Salem Poor**, a free man, for his valor and intrepidity at Bunker Hill who had a petition submitted by 14 officers who had been on the Field that day suggesting the Continental Congress itself bestow "the reward due to so great and distinguished character." Later from this Battle at Charlestown Massachusetts it was reported that Salem Poor behaved like a well experienced officer, as well as an excellent soldier. Salem Poor is a brave and gallant soldier. There is no record of reward.

4 James Armistead Lafayette spy and friend to French General Lafayette

5 William Lee servant and friend to Gen. Washington. When asking Gen. Washington if he could bring his wife a free woman of Philadelphia to Mount Vernon, Washington reluctantly agreed. I cannot refuse his request as he has lived with me so long and followed my fortunes through the war with Fidelity.

6 Prince Whipple, bodyguard to Gen. Whipple who was aide to General Washington, appeared in the 2 paintings of Washington crossing the Delaware.

From the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution research of 2008 6,600 forgotten patriots had been located and documented. I am now hearing over 8,000 have been documented. From former Public Affairs Officer to General Norman Schwarzkopf Lt. Colonel Michael Lee Lanning's documentation from his African Americans in the Revolutionary War, also reveals that the African American responded well to the military and were noted as being well drilled and more apt to military service and following orders. Makes sense to me.

I hope you have enjoyed hearing a little of our forgotten history, but I'll leave you with this question that was raised to the Founding Fathers and their courage to make all men equal. One of the most interesting and thought provoking books that I read is by Historian Gary Nash from his Harvard Lectures creating "The Forgotten Fifth" sketching a complex and gripping tale of a "Road not Taken" by our founding fathers toward true equality at the time of our nation's founding. Could our founding fathers have addressed this racial inequality and possibly avoided the conflicts and deaths that would arise in future years?.

I would like to Thank the Culpeper Minutemen Chapter SAR for awakening me to these long hidden and forgotten stories. Also Thanks to the National DAR for their research and contribution for their acknowledgement of these forgotten Patriots. Thanks to the Culpeper Museum for being the great asset to the community that they are, and for allowing us to talk about our history.

Also at our VASSAR annual meeting in Richmond, a couple weeks ago, I met quite a few of our compatriots and wives from all over the state. I already considered the SAR a very inclusive group with our initiatives. We also met our new compatriots from the Nansemond Indian tribe here in Va.. The Forgotten Patriots are proud of their ancestors contribution in America 's Freedom and wish all history to be told. If there are any question, Hopefully they can be answered, but we do have quite a few resources right here.