



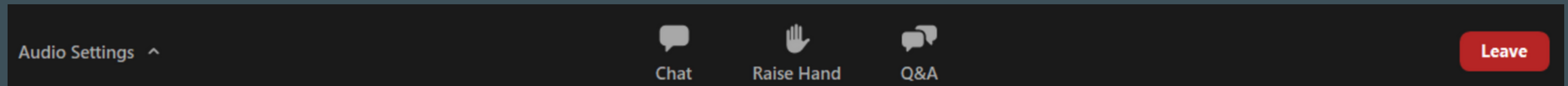
INSIDE THE VAULT

Margaret Corbin
with Dr. Holly Mayer

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2023



How to Participate



- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature.
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.
- The views expressed here are those of the historian.

For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.



Holly Mayer



Holly A. Mayer, professor emerita of history at Duquesne University, was also the 2021-2022 Charles Boal Ewing Chair in Military History at the United States Military Academy, West Point, and the Harold K. Johnson Chair at the US Army War College in 2016-2017. Her interests include the social, cultural, and military attributes of eighteenth-century North America, which appear in her books *Congress's Own: A Canadian Regiment, the Continental Army, and American Union* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2021), *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution* (University of South Carolina Press, 1996), and, as editor, *Women Waging War in the American Revolution* (University of Virginia Press, 2022). Mayer also co-edited (with David E. Shi) *For the Record: A Documentary History of America* (W.W. Norton, multiple editions).



Today's Documents



3208 IX-149
Head Quarters 9th Sept 1782

Dear Sir

I would ever wish to pay proper attention to the business of Ladies, but without I am acquainted with the Rank of the 6th July 1779 in favor of Mrs Corbin, I cannot tell what it is she wants - We have not the Rank of that date with us -

I am
Yours sincerely
Tilghman

Tench Tilghman to Samuel Shaw,
September 9, 1782.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of
American History,
GLC02437.01591)

IX-154 4328
West Point 10th Sept 1782

Dr. Sir,

(2090) It is not in my power to transmit you the resolve of Congress of the 6th July 1779, respecting Mrs Corbin. Her case is a peculiar one. Her husband and son killed and herself wounded in the Service, were misfortune, of so aggravated a nature as fully rendered her ~~woman~~ ^{woman} ~~of a~~ ^{of a} ~~condition~~ ^{condition}. I saw Mr Nicola just now, who told me that the resolve of Congress referred to gave her, in consequence of the distress she was involved in, a complete ration per day and half pay for life - and ~~that was~~ ^{that was} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~subsequent~~ ^{subsequent} ~~resolution~~ ^{resolution} which I have already sent you. Both the ~~acts~~ ^{acts} ~~of Congress~~ ^{of Congress} were ~~in consequence~~ ^{in consequence} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Mr Nicola's~~ ^{Mr Nicola's} ~~application~~ ^{application} in the ~~favor~~ ^{favor} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~her~~ ^{her} ~~case~~ ^{case} but however benevolent the intention the poor woman has derived very little advantage from it; she has received only, her ration, and a few articles of clothing, by no means adequate to one full grown woman. Her present application is in consequence

Samuel Shaw to Tench Tilghman,
September 10, 1782.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American
History, GLC02437.01595)

IX-1564331
Head Quarters 11th Sept 1782

Dear Sir

It appears clearly to me that the order forbidding the issue of Rations to Women does not extend to Mrs Corbin - Granting provision at all, to Women who are followers of the Army, is altogether matter of courtesy - and therefore the commanding General may allow them just a Ration as he thinks proper - But Mrs Corbin is a pensioner of Congress, and therefore, upon producing the Rank made in her favor - Genl Knap, as Commandant, may direct the Commissary to contribute her Rationed Rations of liquor - perhaps it would not be prudent to give them to her all in liquor - So much - sincerely and respectfully
Now Sir and Samuel - has come it - that a Woman with an old decrepid Husband should be so advanced in pregnancy -

I am Yours affectly
Tilghman

Tench Tilghman to Samuel Shaw,
September 11, 1782.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of
American History, GLC02437.01597)

IX-170
Head Quarters 14th Sept 1782

This is to certify that Mrs Margaret Corbin (wife of the late Corbin a Soldier in the Army of the United States) has not drawn any Ration since the 6th July 1779 - I have on a high

These are the reasons why I have in favor of the above ranked Mrs Corbin, she being a widow and her husband and son killed in the Service of the Army. She is allowed a full ration per day, and half pay for life - and a complete ration, as per the resolution of Congress, which I have already sent you. Both the acts of Congress were in consequence of Mr Nicola's application in the favor of her case but however benevolent the intention the poor woman has derived very little advantage from it; she has received only, her ration, and a few articles of clothing, by no means adequate to one full grown woman. Her present application is in consequence

I am Yours affectly
Tilghman

Order to the Commissary for the arrearage of provisions due to Mrs. Corbin of the Invalids,
September 14, 1782.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American
History, GLC02437.01611)

The Women of '76

1856

- “Molly” was a nickname
- “Molly Pitcher” vs Captain Molly
- Generalizations vs specifics



THE WOMEN OF '76.

"MOLLY PITCHER" THE HEROINE OF MONMOUTH.

*Her husband falls—she sheds no ill-timed tear,
But firm resolved—she fills his fatal post.* | *The foe press on—she checks their mad career,
Who can avenge like her a husband's ghost?.*

Currier & Ives, *The Women of '76: "Molly Pitcher" The Heroine of Monmouth*, New York, 1856.

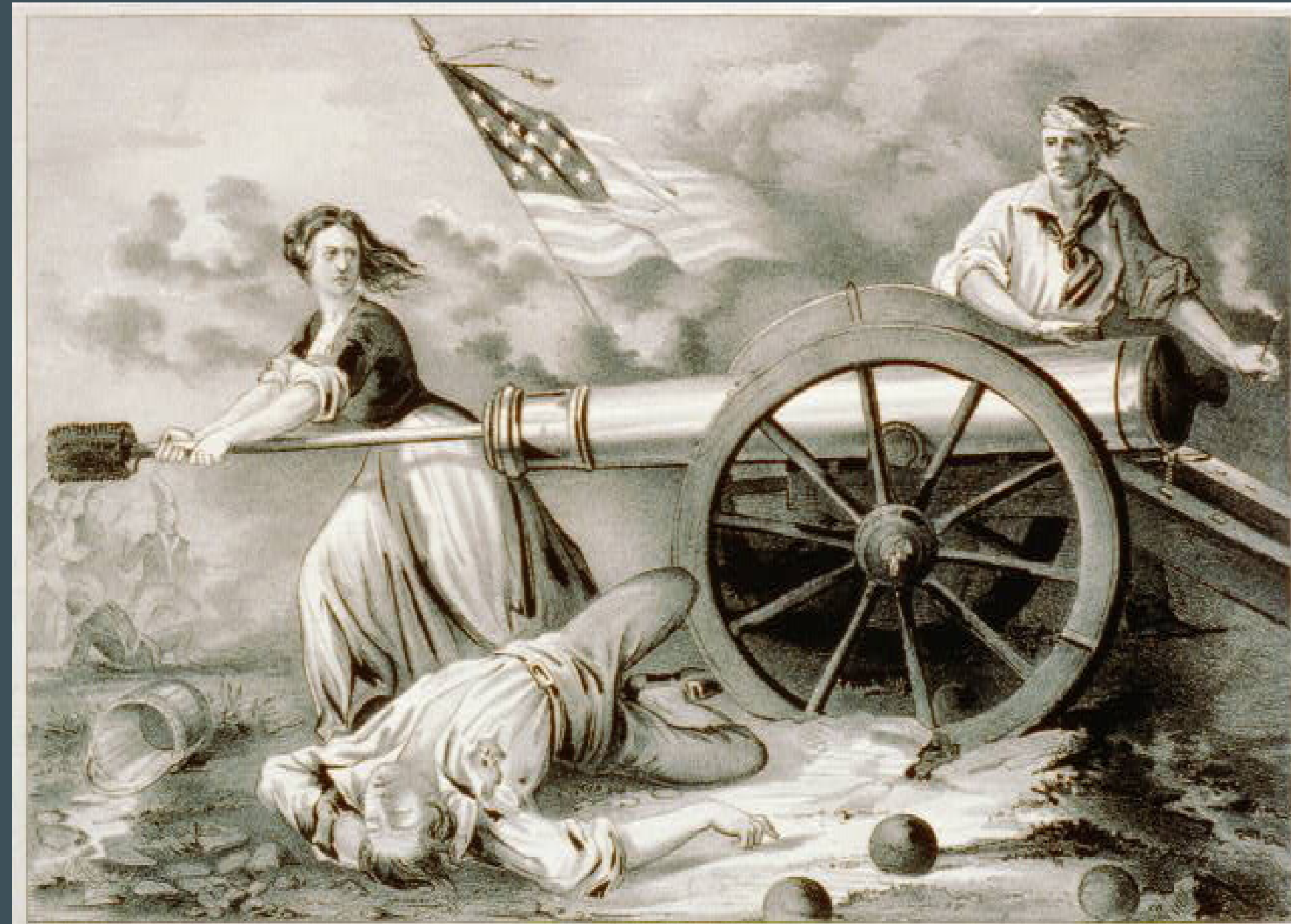
(Library of Congress)



The Heroine of Monmouth

1876

- History & heritage
- How should this and previous images be interpreted?



THE HEROINE OF MONMOUTH.

MOLLY PITCHER, The wife of a Gunner in the American Army, who when her husband was killed, took his place at the gun, and served throughout the battle. (June 28th 1778)

Currier & Ives, *The Heroine of Monmouth*, 1876.
(Library of Congress)

Map of Fort Washington

November 16, 1776



William Faden, *A topographical map of the North[er]n part of New York Island, Exhibiting the Plan of Fort Washington...*, March 1, 1777. (, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC03237)

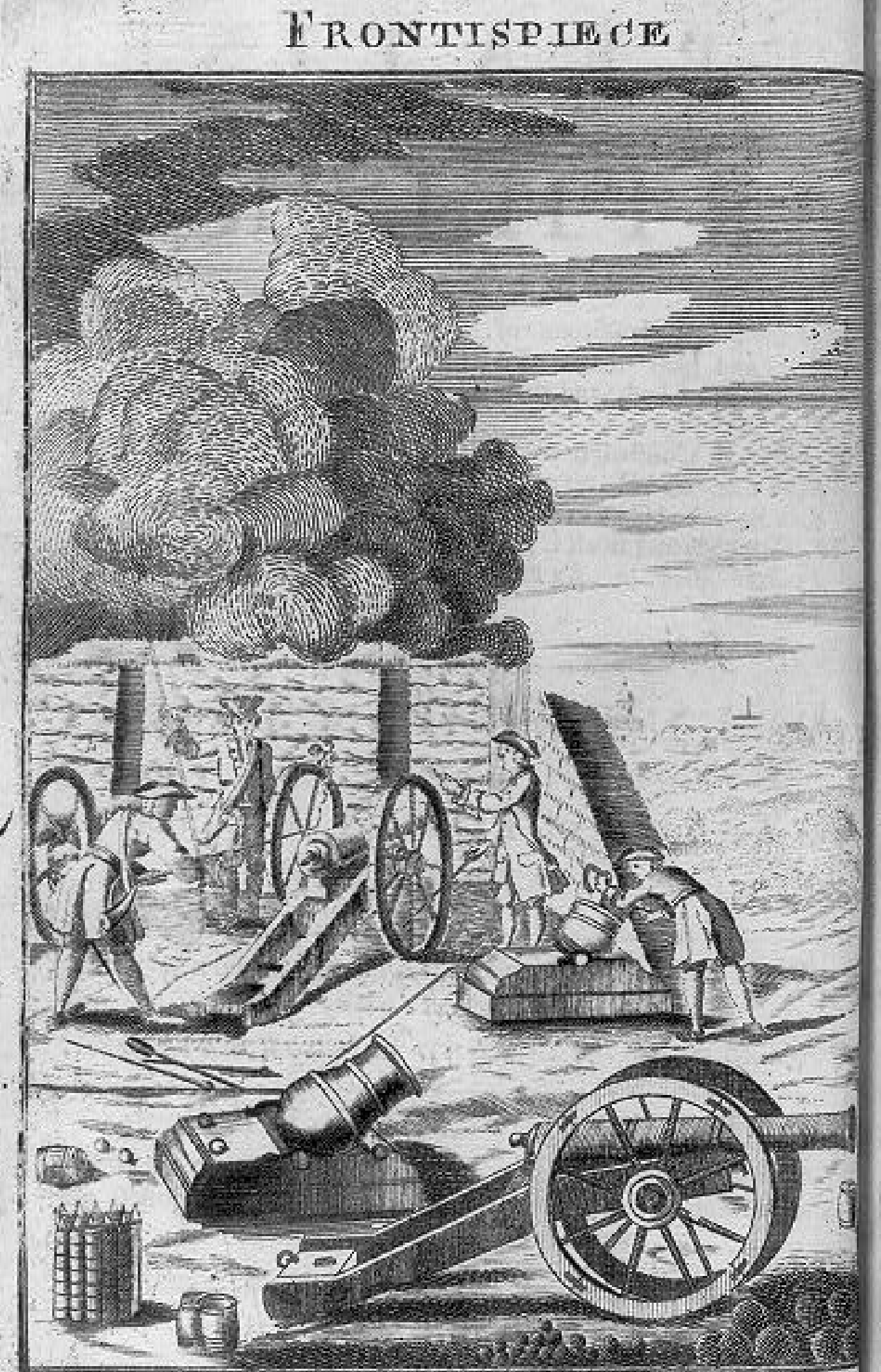


Revolutionary War Artillery

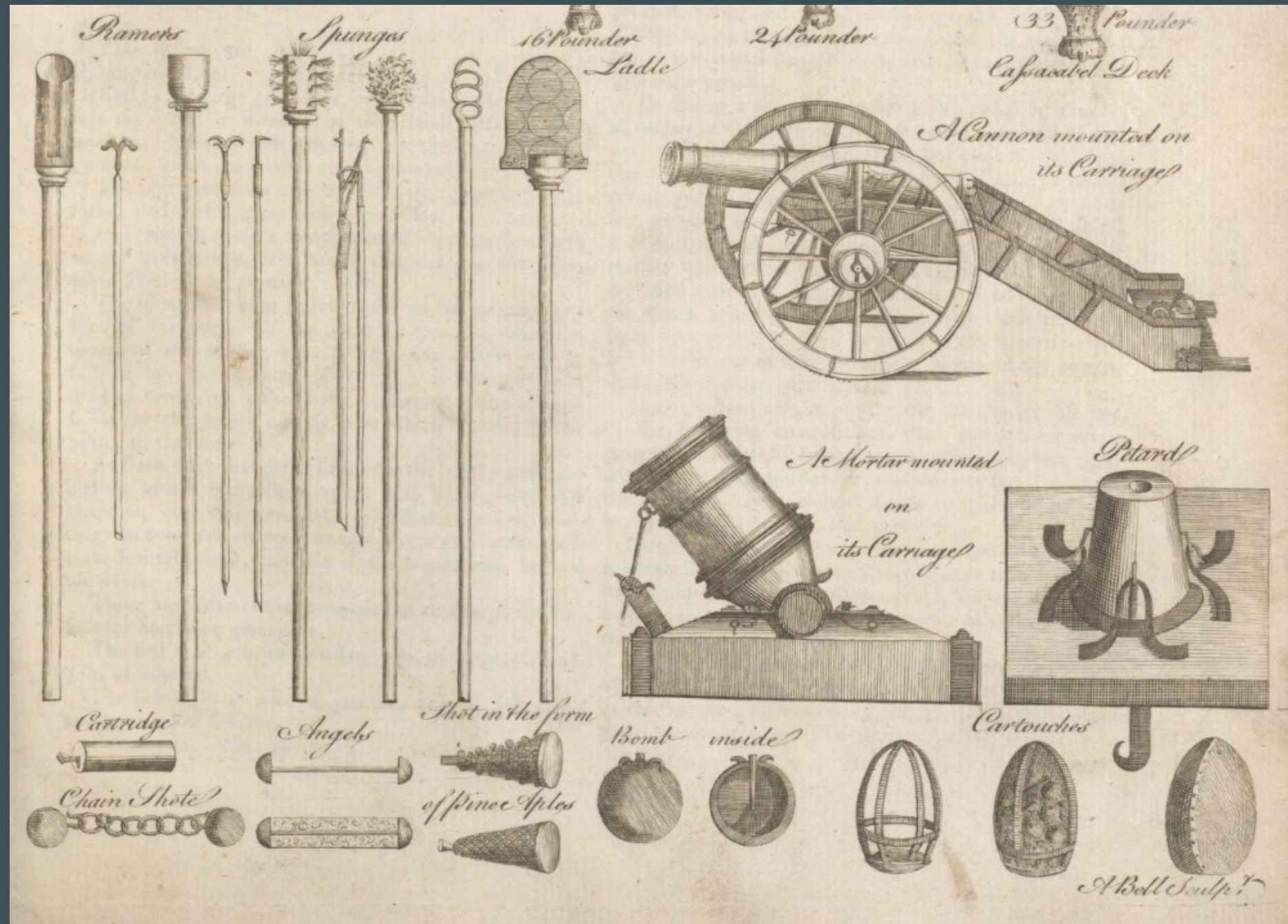
- Were cannons difficult to handle?
 - placement
 - targeting
 - firing
- Followers' ability to step in as gunners?



John Norman, "A Variety of Artillery Pieces and Other Ordnance,"
in John Muller, *A Treatise on Artillery . . .*, Philadelphia, 1779.
(Library of Congress)



Revolutionary War Artillery



Encyclopaedia Britannica; or, A dictionary of arts and sciences, compiled upon a new plan ..., 1771. (National Library of Scotland)



C.Y. Turner, *Molly Pitcher*, n.d..
(National Park Service)



Battle of Fort Washington

November 16, 1776



Davies, Thomas, *A View of the Attack against Fort Washington and Rebel Redouts near New York on the 16 of November 1776 by the British and Hessian Brigades.* ca. 1776-1812. (New York Public Library)



What happened next?

- Captivity & release
- Administrative recognition of Corbin in 1779 & 1780
- Rations, clothing, & payments
- Placement: where did she belong?



John Hills, *This Plan of the City of Philadelphia and Its Environs (Showing the Improved Parts) . . .*, 1797.
(Library of Congress)

Invalid Corps

- Created April 21, 1777
- Led by Colonel Lewis Nicola
- Comprised of soldiers who were wounded but continued to serve
- Soldiers received full military pay while they were serving
- Corbin was with the Invalid Corps by summer 1780 (likely earlier)



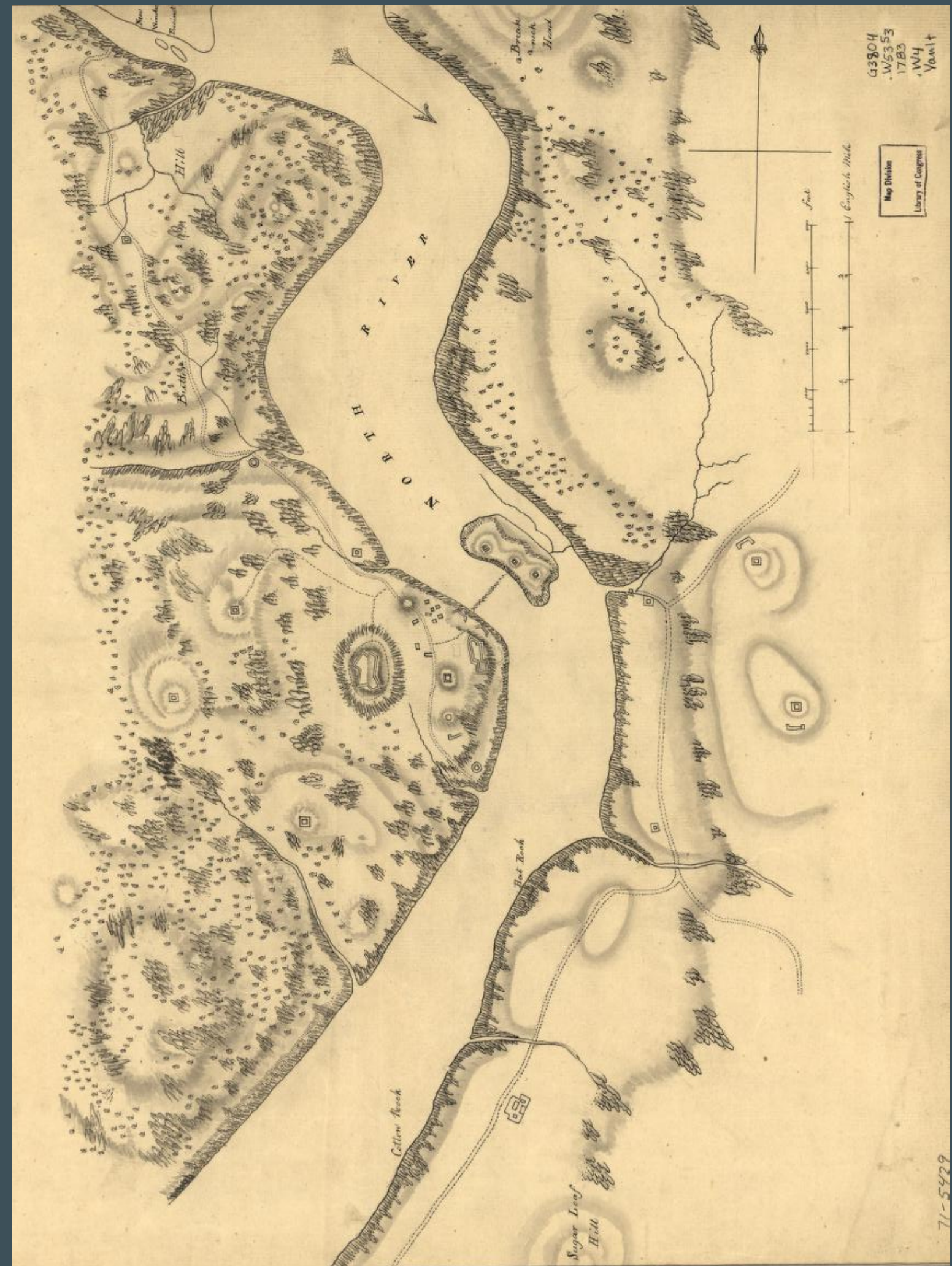
Archibald M. Willard, *The Spirit of '76*, 1875.

(The Diplomatic Reception Rooms, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.)

West Point

- Invalid Corps posted to West Point, 1781
- Part of corps remained after army discharged in 1783

West Point, 1783.
(Library of Congress)



Tench Tilghman to Samuel Shaw

September 9, 1782

“I would ever wish to pay proper attention to the business of Ladies, but without I am acquainted with the Resolve of the 6 July 1779 in favr of Mrs. [Margaret] Corbin, I cannot tell what it is she wants - We have not the Resolves of that date with us.”

Wylmsman Head Quarters 9th Septemb: 1782
3208 IX-149
Dear Shaw
I would ever wish to pay proper
(2084)
attention to the business of Ladies, but without
I am acquainted with the Resolve of the 6th
July 1779 in favr of Mrs Corbin, I cannot
tell what it is she wants - We have not the
Resolves of that date with us —
I am
Yours sincerely
T. Tilghman



Samuel Shaw to Tench Tilghman

September 10, 1782

Dr. Sir,

West Point, TX-154 4328
10 Sept. 1782

(2090) It is not in my power to transmit you the resolve of Congress of the 6th July 1779, respecting Mrs. [?]. Her case is a peculiar one. Her husband and son killed and herself wounded in the service, were misfortunate, & so aggravated as naturally as fully rendered her ~~unhappy~~ ^{wretched} ~~of a nation~~. I saw Col. Nichols just now, who told me that the resolve of Congress referred to save her, in consequence of the distress she was involved in, a complete ration per day, and half pay for life - and ~~afterwards~~ ^{not long} after the subsequent resolution which I have already sent you. Both the ^{resolves} ~~acts~~ of Congress were ^{made} ~~made~~ in consequence of Col. Nichols's application in ~~the~~ ^{his} ~~poor~~ ~~woman's~~ ~~behalf~~, but however benevolent the intention, the poor woman has derived very little advantage from it, she had received only, her rations, and a few articles of clothing, by no means adequate to one's just demands. Her present application is in consequence

Samuel Shaw to Tench Tilghman, September 10, 1782.

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC02437.01595)



Tench Tilghman to Samuel Shaw

September 11, 1782

18-1564331
Head Quarters 11th Sep: 1782

Dear Shaw

It appears clearly to me that the order forbidding the sale of Rum to Women does not extend to Mrs. Carter - Granting provisions at all, to Women who are followers of the Army, is altogether a matter of courtesy - and therefore the commanding General may allow them such a Ration as he thinks proper - But Mrs. Carter is a pensioner of Congress, and therefore, upon producing the Receipt made in her favor - Genl. Kneip, as Commandant, may direct the Contractor to commute her Rationed Rations of liquor - perhaps it would not be prudent to give them to her all in liquor - So much - sincerely and affectionately
Now Friend Samuel - how comes it - that a Woman with an old decrepid Husband should be so advanced in pregnancy?

I am Yours affly
T. Tilghman

Tench Tilghman to Samuel Shaw, September 11, 1782.

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC02437.01597)



Order to the Commissary for the arrearage of provisions due to Mrs. Corbin of the Invalids

September 14, 1782



*Order to the Commissary for the arrearage of provisions due to Mrs. Corbin of
the Invalids, September 14, 1782.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC02437.01611)*

This is to certify that Mrs.
(2105) Margaret Corbin (wife of John
Corbin a Soldier in the Army of
the United States) has not drawn any
pay since the 1st of
1782 - for her husband
John Corbin

Sir
These are the reasons why
in favor of the above named
Mrs. Corbin, she having had
a husband and son killed in
the service, she being wounded at
Mifflin's battle in 1777. She
is allowed a full ration
per day, half pay for life and
a suit of clothes annually.
You will therefore give her
a due bill for two hundred
and fifty seven jills of liquor
being the quantity retained
from 1st of January to this
day inclusive - and in
future give to her a
complete ration, as per
the regulations of the
Army for which this
shall be your receipt and
voucher. -
Wm. M. Smith
Commissary

Upcoming Programs

INSIDE THE VAULT: December 7 at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT)

- We will be joined by Dr. Barbara Perry (University of Virginia) to discuss materials related to Harry Truman and the rise of Joseph McCarthy in 1950.

BOOK BREAKS: November 5 at 2 p.m. ET (11 a.m. PT)

- Edward L. Ayers will discuss his book, *American Visions: The United States, 1800–1860*.

MILITARY HISTORY PRIZE LIVESTREAM December 4 at 6:30 p.m. ET (3:30 p.m. PT)

- Awarded to Bruce Henderson for his book, *Bridge to the Sun: The Secret Role of the Japanese Americans Who Fought in the Pacific in WWII*.
- View the livestream of the award ceremony featuring a conversation between Craig L. Symonds, chair of the 2022 prize committee, and Bruce Henderson.

