

THE GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

Inside the Vault : Highlights from the Gilder Lehrman Collection

October 29, 2020

The session will start shortly. Please note:

- Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
- You can participate through the Q&A function.
- If you have technical difficulties, please email firstfriday@gilderlehrman.org so we can assist you.

Gilder Lehrman Staff

Presenters

- Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
- Meecah Meecah - Principal Standby in the Philip Touring Company of *Hamilton*
- Mandel Holland - History Teacher at Woodlands Middle High School in Hartsdale, NY
- Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator

During the Session



- If you would like to ask a question, you can **use the Q&A feature**, which is at the bottom of your screen.
- **Viewing in full screen** is recommended to see the presenters and the presentation at the same time.

For Security and Privacy

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

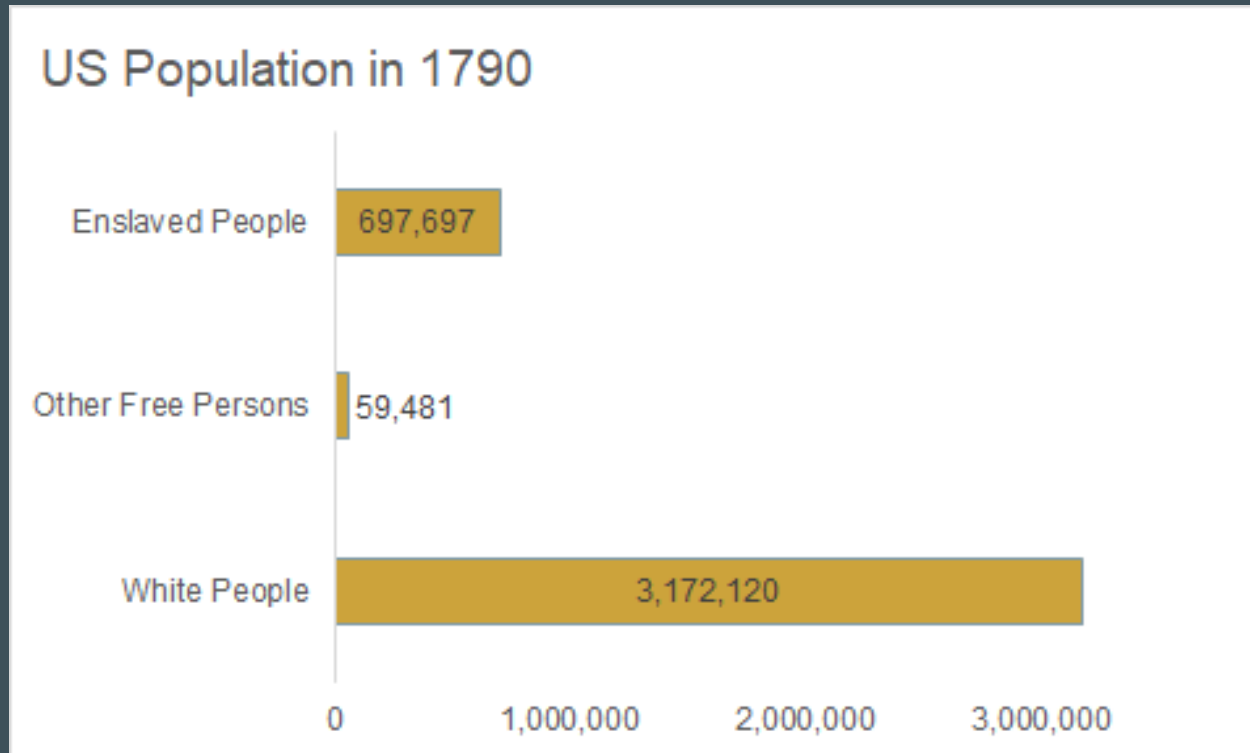
Today's Documents

In honor of Veterans Day, we are discussing Black men who served in Continental Army during the American Revolution.

- Romeo Smith
- Cuffee Saunders
- Peter Kiteredge
- Quaco

Enslaved population at the time of the American Revolution

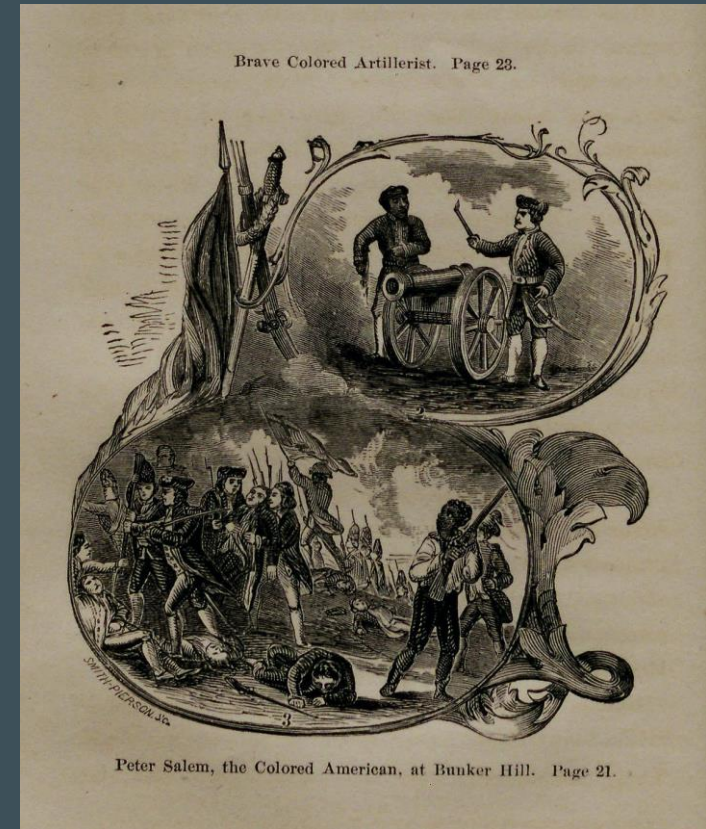
- When the American Revolution began, approximately 450,000 people were enslaved in the thirteen colonies.
- It is estimated that 80,000 to 100,000 enslaved people escaped to the British lines.



Black Soldiers in the Continental Army

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- July 10, 1775 - Instructions for recruitment prohibited the enlistment of Black men.
 - Exception was made for those who had already enlisted.
- 1778 - Shortages in enlistments prompted states to recruit both free and enslaved Black men.
- February 14 - Rhode Island's Assembly authorizes the recruitment of Black soldiers.



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Black Patriots



World Digital Library

- Enslaved men were promised their freedom for their service.
- More than 5,000 Black men served in the Continental Army, mainly in integrated regiments.
- 1781 - Black soldiers comprised one-fourth of the Continental Army at Yorktown.
- Historians believe that 10-15% of the Army was made up of Black soldiers at any given time.

Romeo Smith, Windham, Maine

January 9th 1784 516^{XVI} 57⁻¹⁷¹

This is to certify that the bearer hereof Romeo Smith is a freeman, and has served three years in the Army of the United States of America. Any person going to attempting to circumvent or betray him as a slave will incur the severe punishment of the Law and the indignation of Heaven.

Given at West Point
This 9th January 1784
Wm M General.

- From New Marblehead (Windham), Maine
- Enslaved by Parson Peter Thatcher Smith
- Enlisted with three other Black men:
 - Lonnon Rhode
 - Peter Smith
 - Flanders Smith
- Served in the 7th Massachusetts

Certifying Romeo Smith's Freedom, 1784

“This is to certify that the bearer hereof Romeo Smith is a free man, and has served three years in the Army of the United States of America. Any person [struck: going a] attempting to circumvent or trepan him as a slave will [struck: deserve] [inserted: incur] the severest [struck: punishment] [inserted: penalty] of the Law and the indignation of Heaven.”

- Written by Major General Henry Knox
- What can we learn from the word choice?
 - “will deserve the severest punishment”
 - “will incur the severest penalty”
- Why was it created?
- What does it tell us about life after the war for Black veterans?

Researching Romeo Smith

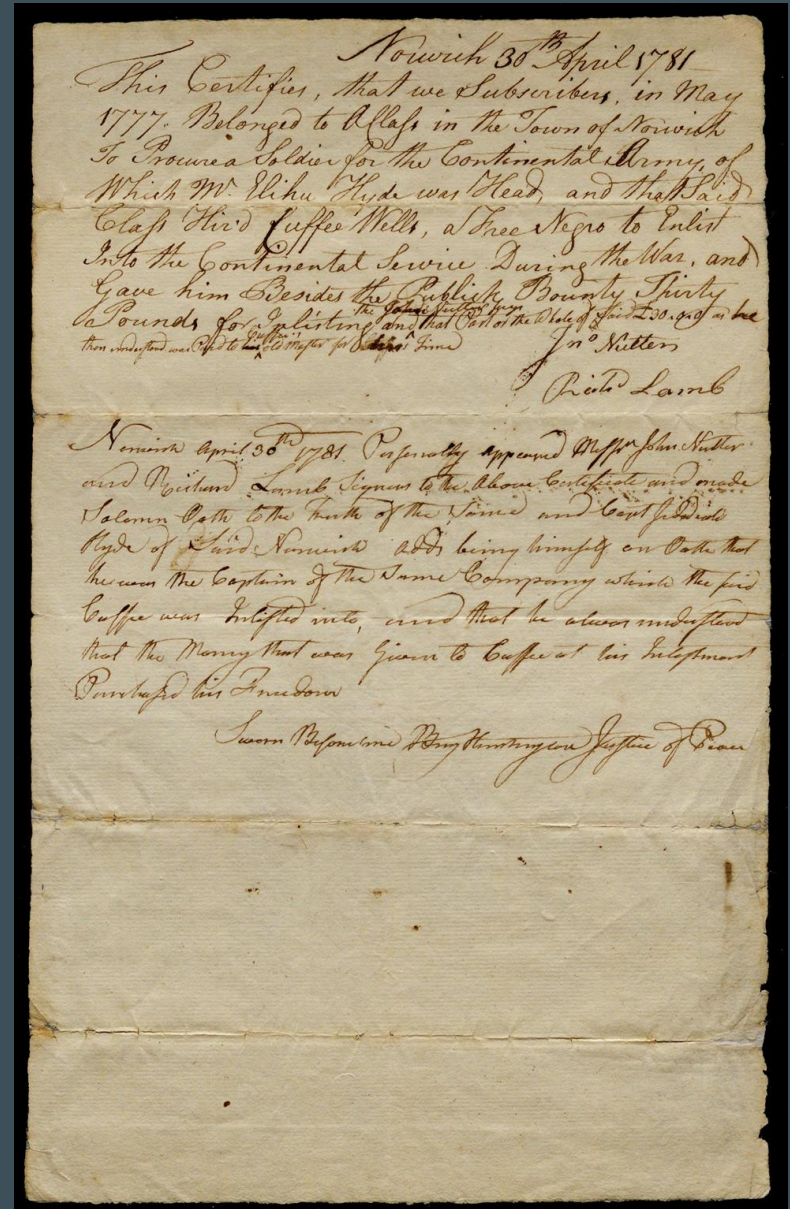
Several references to Romeo Smith in the records

- National Archives records his name as both “Romeo” and “Rominah Smith”
- *Windham, Maine in the War of the Revolution, 1775-1783* doesn’t believe he really served.
- A DAR report speculated that Peter and Romeo were the same person.

Unable to locate postwar information about him

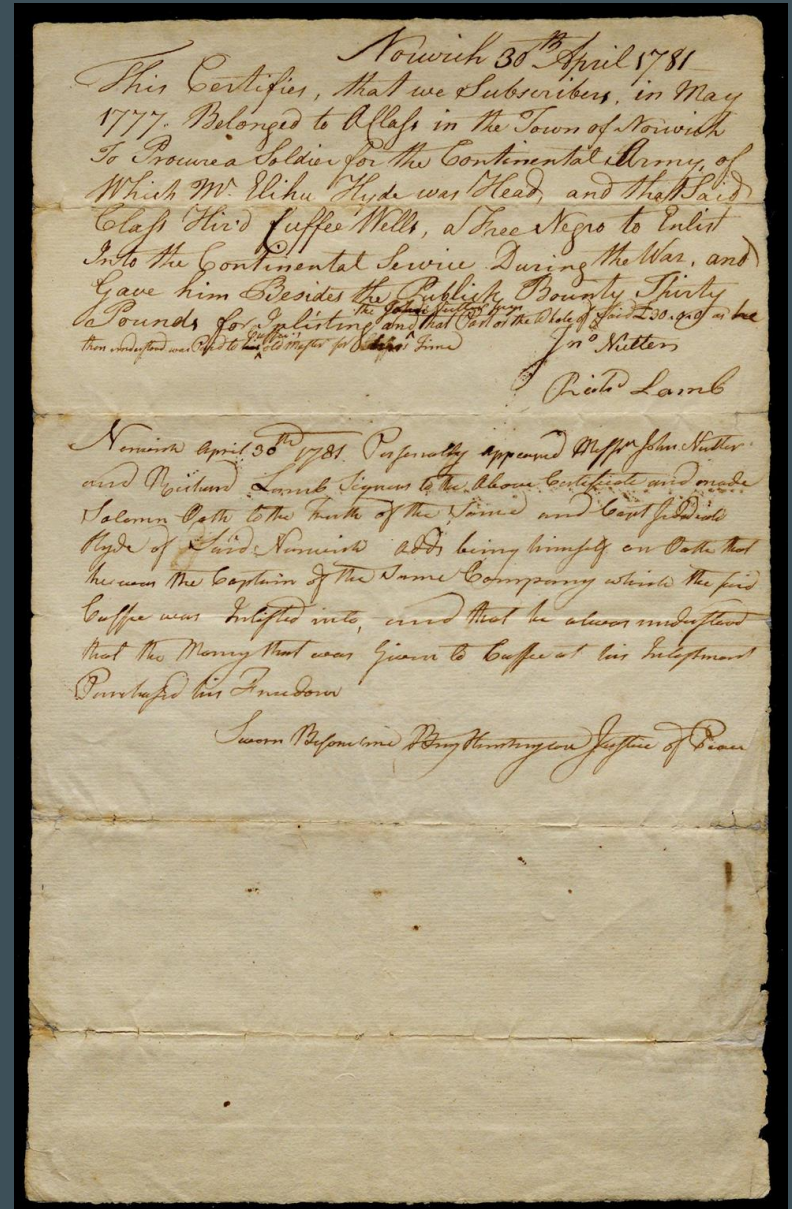
Cuffee Saunders, Connecticut

- He was born in Guiana and brought to Connecticut.
- He had at least two enslavers:
 - A Hartford-area doctor and apothecary
 - Deacon Israel Wells of Colchester
- After the war, he dropped the name Wells and took the name Saunders.



Cuffee Saunders, Connecticut

- Served as an assistant to Dr. Philip Turner, surgeon general of the hospital of the Northern Division of the Army
- Assisted with medical procedures at the hospital in Danbury
- Prepared pharmaceuticals at the apothecary store
- Became known as “Doctor Cuffee.”



Cuffee Saunders, Connecticut



National Park Service

- June through September of 1778 - listed on the muster rolls at Valley Forge as “tending the sick.”
- Returned to the hospital in Danbury and served the remainder of the war

Cuffee Saunders, Connecticut

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Nowwich 30th April 1781
This Certifies, that we Subscribers, in May
1777. Belonged to a Class in the Town of Norwich
To Procure a Soldier for the Continental Army, of
Which M^r. Elihu Hyde was Head, and that Said
Class Hired Cuffee Wells, a Free Negro to Enlist
Into the Continental Service During the War, and
Gave him Besides the Publick Bounty Thirty
Pounds for Enlisting ^{the Soldier} and that Part of the Whole of Said £30.0.0 as we
then understood was Paid to ^{Cuffee's} old Master for his Time
Jⁿ^s Nutter
Rich^d Lamb

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“Cuffee Wells, a Free Negro to Enlist Into the Continental Service During the War, and Gave him Besides the Publick Bounty Thirty Pounds for Inlisting and ... that Part of the Whole of Said £30.0.0 as we then understood was Paid to Cuffee’s old Master for his Time”

Cuffee Saunders, Connecticut

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Norwich April 30th 1781. Personally appeared Messrs John Nutter
and Richard Lamb Signers to the Above Certificate and made
Solemn Oath to the Truth of the Same and Capt Jedediah
Hyde of Said Norwich adds being himself on Oath that
he was the Captain of the Same Company which the said
Cuffee was Inlisted into, and that he always understood
that the Money that was given to Cuffee at his Inlistment
Purchased his Freedom

Sworn Before me By My Hand and Seal Justice of Peace

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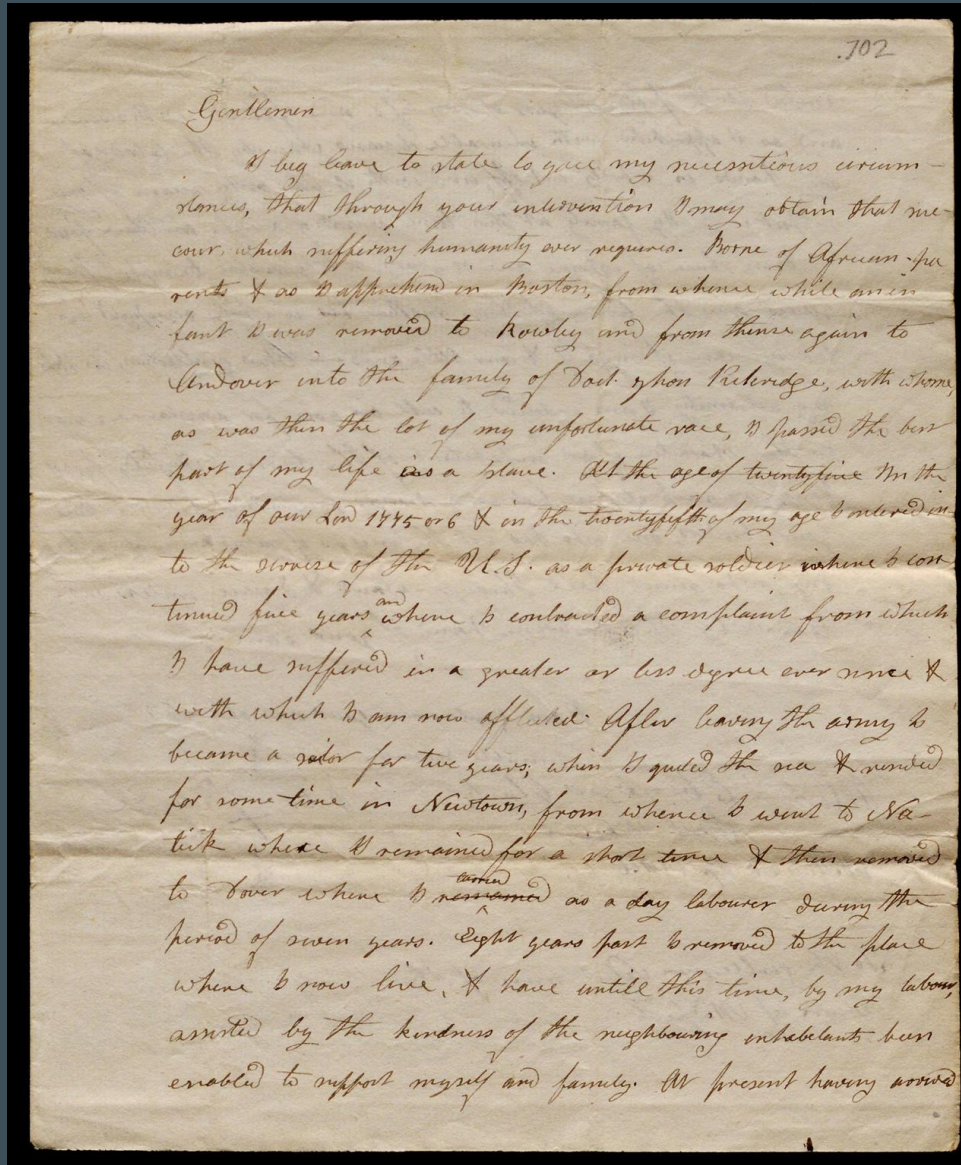
“Capt Jedediah Hyde of Said Norwich adds ... that he was the Captain of the Same Company which the said Cuffee was Inlisted into, and that he always understood that the Money that was Given to Cuffee at his Inlistment Purchased his Freedom.”

Cuffee Saunders after the War

- Purchased three acres of land in Lebanon, Connecticut
- Continued to practice medicine
- Died of influenza in December 1788
- 1837 - Widow, Phyllis, applied for his Revolutionary War pension
- Not granted until 1843
- Son, Prince Saunders, attended Dartmouth College, became an educator, served as Haiti's attorney general, and became an exponent of colonization

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Jⁿ Nitter
Rich^d Lamb
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Sworn before me My Brother and Justice of Peace

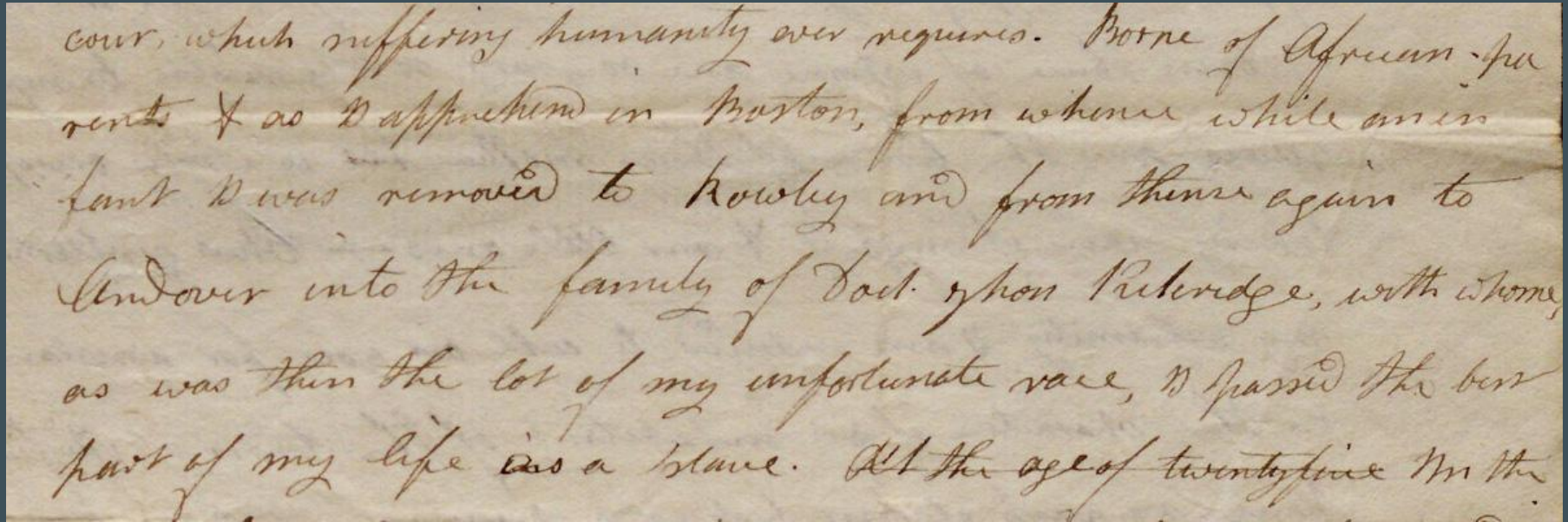
Peter Kitteridge, Andover, MA



- Peter enlisted in 1775 or 1776 at the age of 25.
- His enslaver, Thomas Kitteridge, served as the regimental surgeon for Colonel Frye's Regiment in June-August of 1775.
- Peter served in Captain William Hudson Ballard's Company, Colonel James Frye's Regiment from 1775 to 1780.

Peter Kiteridge to the Selectmen of Medfield, 1806

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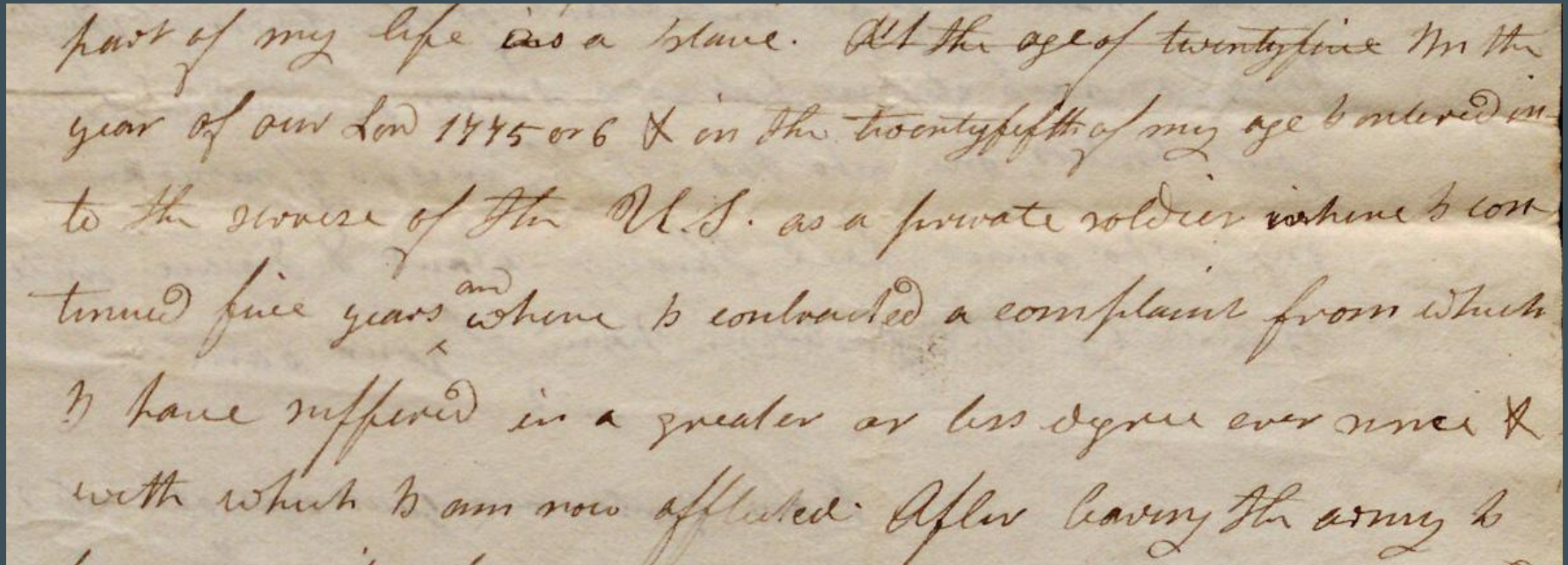
A photograph of a handwritten manuscript snippet on aged, yellowed paper. The text is written in a cursive script in dark ink. The visible portion of the text reads: "cour, which suffering humanity ever requires. Borne of African parents & as I apprehend in Boston, from whence while an infant I was removed to Rowley and from thence again to Andover into the family of Doct. Thom Kiteridge, with whom, as was then the lot of my unfortunate race, I passed the best part of my life as a slave. At the age of twentyfive in the". The paper shows signs of wear and discoloration.

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Peter Kiteridge to the Selectmen of Medfield, 1806

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A photograph of a handwritten letter on aged, slightly discolored paper. The handwriting is in a cursive script, typical of the late 18th or early 19th century. The text is written in dark ink and is somewhat faded in places. The letter is addressed to the Selectmen of Medfield. The visible text reads: "part of my life was a slave. At the age of twentyfive In the year of our Lord 1775 or 6 & in the twentyfifth of my age I entered in to the service of the U.S. as a private soldier where I continued five years and where I contracted a complaint from which I have suffered in a greater or less degree ever since & with which I am now afflicted. After leaving the army I".

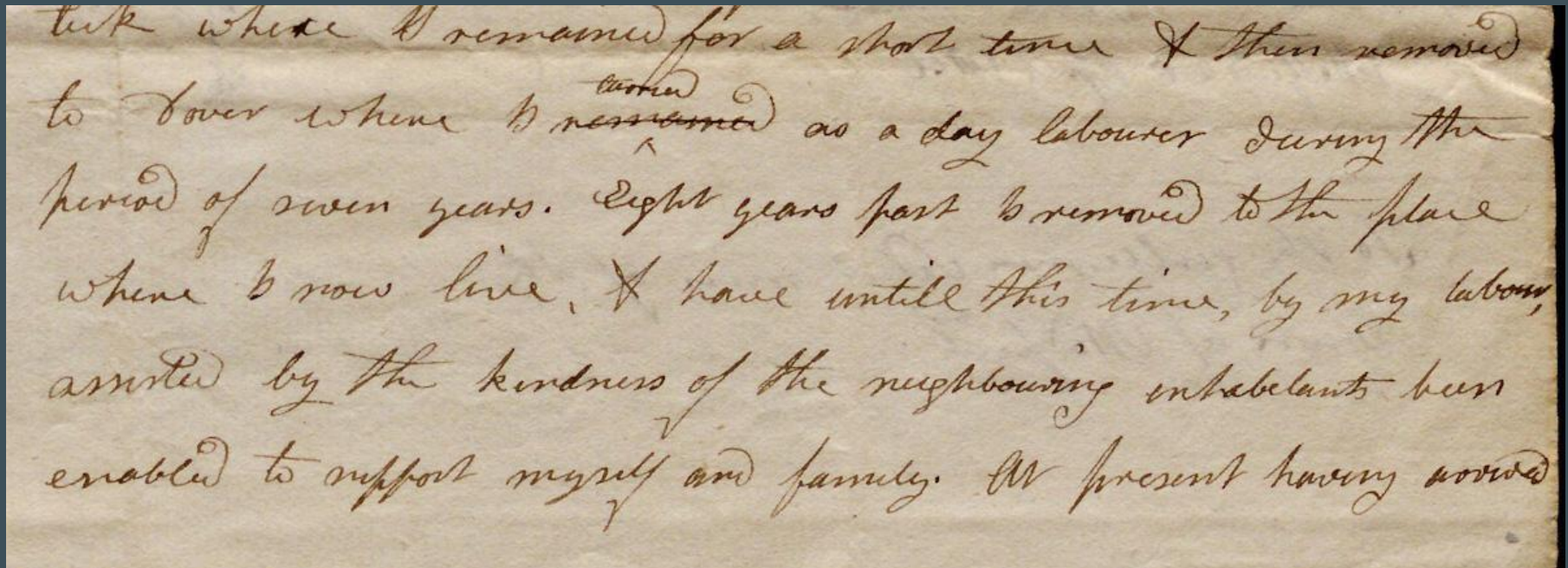
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the place where I remained for a short time & then removed
to Dover where I ^{continued} resided as a day labourer during the
period of seven years. Eight years past I removed to the place
where I now live, & have untill this time, by my labour,
assisted by the kindness of the neighbouring inhabitants been
enabled to support myself and family. At present having arrived

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“[I] have untill this time, by my labour, ... been enabled to support myself and family. At present having arrived at the fifty eight year of my life and afflicted with severe and as I apprehend with incurable diseases whereby the labour of my hands is wholly cut off, and with it the only means of my support.”

Peter Kiteridge, Andover, MA

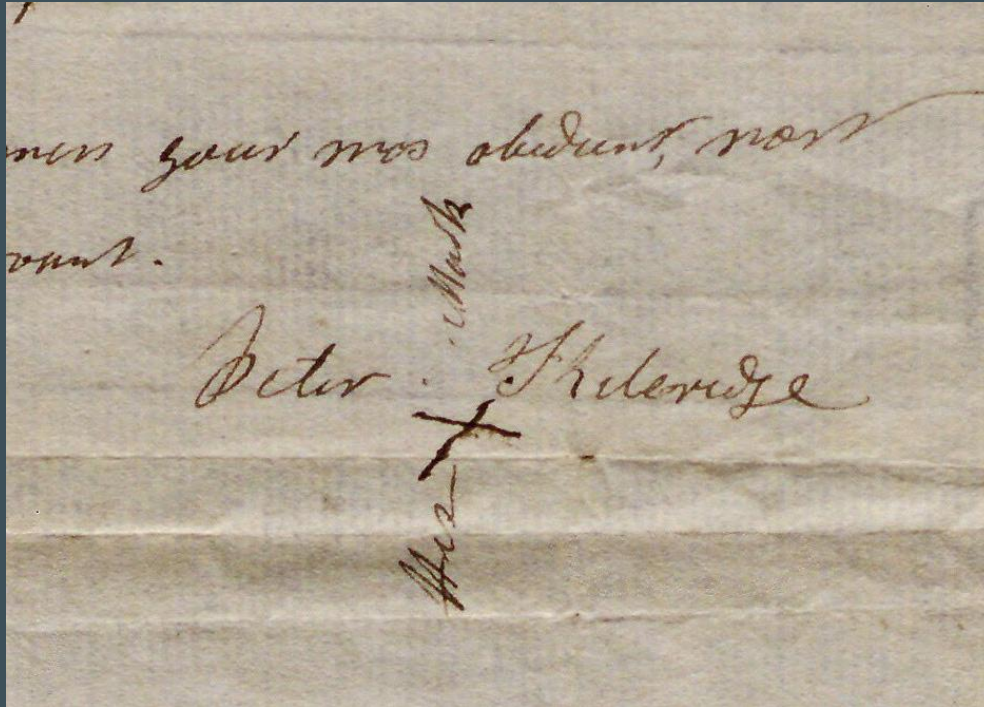
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Gentlemen

I beg leave to state to you my necessitous circumstances, that through your intervention I may obtain that redress, which suffering humanity ever requires. Born of African parents & as I apprehend in Boston, from whence while an infant I was removed to Roxbury and from thence again to Andover into the family of David upon Kiteridge, with whom, as was then the lot of my unfortunate race, I passed the best part of my life as a slave. At the age of twentyfive in the year of our Lord 1795 or 6 & in the twentyfifth of my age I entered into the service of the U.S. as a private soldier in which I continued five years, when I contracted a complaint from which I have suffered in a greater or less degree ever since & with which I am now afflicted. After leaving the army I became a sailor for five years, when I quitted the sea & resided for some time in Newtown, from whence I went to Natick where I remained for a short time & then removed to Dover where I ^{continued} resided as a day labourer during the period of seven years. Eight years past I removed to the place where I now live, & have until this time, by my labours, assisted by the kindness of the neighbouring inhabitants been enabled to support myself and family. At present having arrived

- Lived in Andover, Newtown, Natick, Dover, and Medfield after the war
- Married Susanna Fuda in Medfield, Massachusetts, on September 15, 1791

Peter Kiteridge, Andover, MA



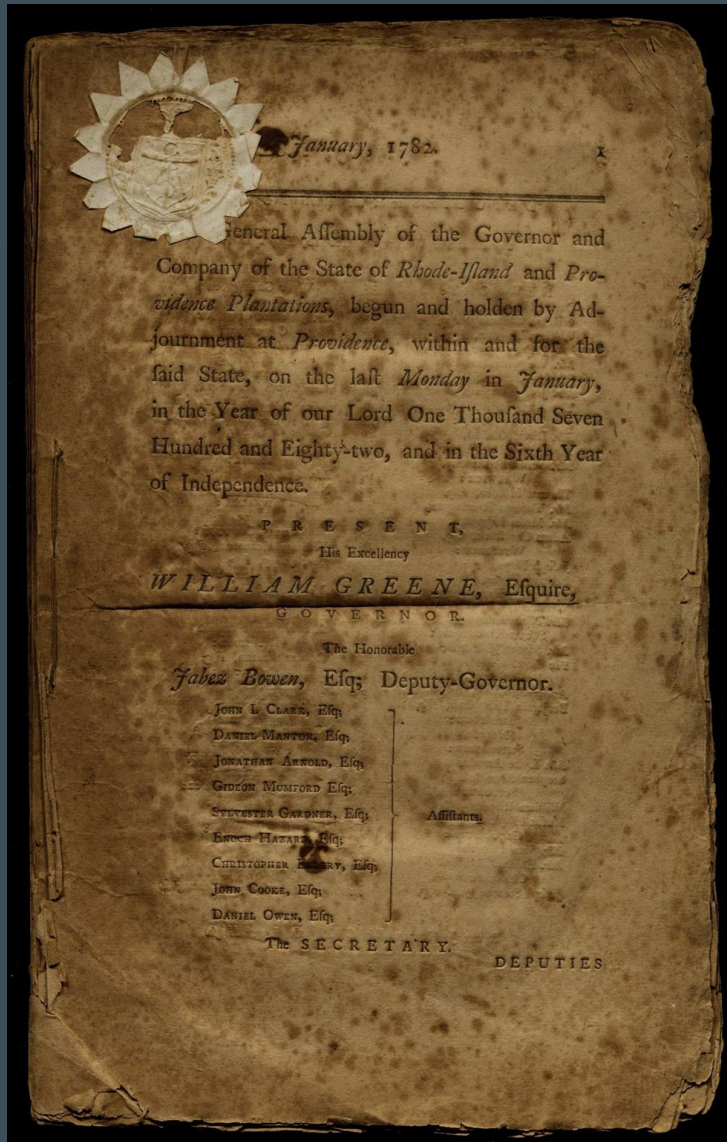
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Variations on the spelling of Kiteredge:

- Kitridge
- Kitteredge
- Kitteridge
- Kiterige
- Kitteraige
- Kittredge
- Kiteredge

Quaco Honeyman, Rhode Island

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- One of the first Black spies for the Americans
- Enslaved by John Honeyman of Newport, Rhode Island
- Summer 1777
 - Hired out to Mr. Overing on Aquidneck Island
 - Escaped to the mainland
 - Provided the Americans with intelligence that led to the capture of British General Richard Prescott in his bed

Quaco Honeyman, 1782

Quaco, a Negro Man, freed. WHEREAS *Quaco*, a black Man, formerly a Person whom *James Honeyman, Esq;* late of *Newport*, in the County of *Newport*, deceased, held in the Bonds of Slavery, did, during the Time that the *British* Troops were in Possession of said *Newport*, and at the Time that said *Honeyman* was living, leave said Island, and flee from the said *British* Troops,

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- After the war, John Honeyman's heirs tried to re-enslave him.
- Quaco petitioned the Rhode Island government for his freedom and it was granted.
- This act, printed by Rhode Island's General Assembly, granted Quaco manumission after his service as a spy for the Americans.

Quaco Honeyman, 1782

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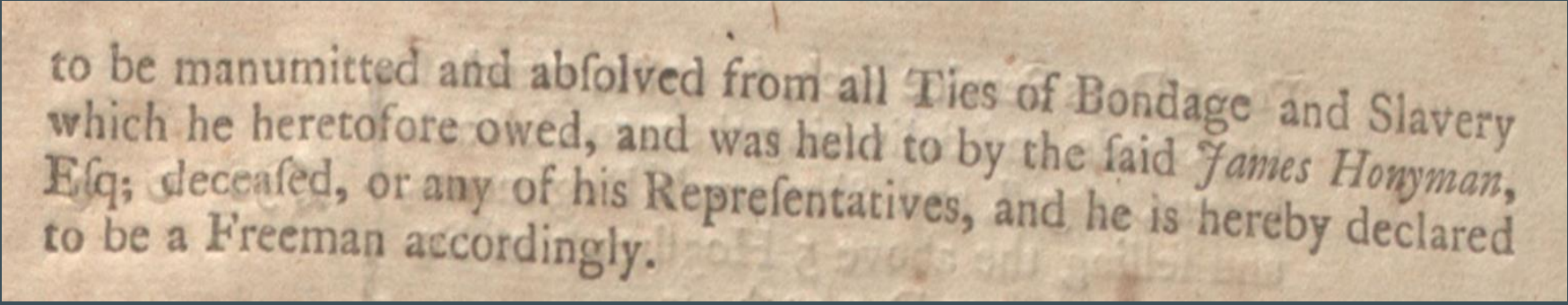
Quaco, a Negro Man, freed. WHEREAS *Quaco*, a black Man, formerly a Person whom *James Honeyman, Esq;* late of *Newport*, in the County of *Newport*, deceased, held in the Bonds of Slavery, did, during the Time that the *British* Troops were in Possession of said *Newport*, and at the Time that said *Honyman* was living, leave said Island, and flee from the said *British* Troops, and place himself under the Protection of this Government; and did, by the Information he then gave, render great and essential Service to this State, and the Public in general; and the Council of War having given unto the said *Quaco* a Permit to pass and repass freely, without Molestation, and thereby the said *Quaco* did consider himself as a Freeman; but that since the Death of the said *Honyman*, and the Evacuation of *Rhode-Island*, some of the Representatives of the said *Honyman* have laid Claim unto the said *Quaco* as a Slave: Whereupon the said *Quaco* begs this Assembly to take the Matter into Consideration, and make such Order thereon as they may see fit: Wherefore *It is Voted and Resolved*, That the said *Quaco* be and he is hereby declared
to

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“did, by the Information he then gave, render great and essential Service to this State, and the Public in general; and the Council of War having given unto the said *Quaco* a Permit to pass and repass freely, without Molestation, and thereby the said *Quaco* did consider himself as a Freeman; but since the Death of the said *Honyman*, and the Evacuation of *Rhode-Island*, some of the Representatives of the said *Honyman* have laid Claim unto the said *Quaco* as a Slave: Whereupon the said *Quaco* begs this Assembly to take the Matter into Consideration”

Quaco Honeyman, 1782

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to be manumitted and absolved from all Ties of Bondage and Slavery which he heretofore owed, and was held to by the said *James Honeyman*, Esq; deceased, or any of his Representatives, and he is hereby declared to be a Freeman accordingly.

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“It is voted and resolved that the said Quaco be and he is hereby declared to be manumitted and absolved from all Ties of Bondage and Slavery which he heretofore owed, and was held to by the said *James Honeyman*, Esq. deceased, or any of his Representatives, and he is hereby declared to be a Freeman accordingly.”

Honoring Black Soldiers on Veterans Day

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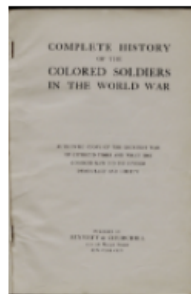
African Americans in the US Military: From the Revolution to the World Wars



Why Black Men Fought in World War I, 1919

A Spotlight on a Primary Source by J.A. Jamieson

View this item in the collection



During World War I, approximately 370,000 black men in the US military served in segregated regiments and were often relegated to support duties such as digging trenches, transporting supplies, cleaning latrines, and burying the dead. One notable exception is the "Harlem Hellfighters," organized in 1916 as the 15th Infantry Regiment of the New York National Guard. Their nickname came from the 200 Harlem residents who comprised the core of the regiment, and the German view of them as "Hellfighters."

On April 6, 1917, the same day that the United States declared war on Germany, the 15th New York Regiment was federalized and became part of the US Army. In May 1918, it was redesignated the 369th Infantry Regiment. They joined the 93rd Division and were "loaned" to the French army, becoming the only American division to serve exclusively under the French. The men spent 191 days in combat, more than any other American unit. Henry

J.A. Jamieson, et al., Complete History of the Colored Soldiers in the World War, New York, 1919. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC06129, title page)

African American Soldiers

FALL 2016

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From the Editor

By Carol Berkin

Every war produces its heroes, but the heroic African American men and women who helped carry America to victories have too often been forgotten. In this issue of *History Now* scholars and journalists join together to add black Americans to the narratives of the American Revolution, World War I, World War II, and the war in Iraq. In the pages that follow, you will be introduced to men like Carl Whittemore, who fought at the battle of Bunker and Breed Hill; to Neadson Roberts, who repelled a German raiding party in war-torn France in WWI; to Private Henry Johnson of the Harlem Hellfighters in WWI; to Vernon Baker of the 888th Central Postal Directory in WWII; to Waverly Woodson, the medic who saved the lives of perhaps 300 soldiers during the Omaha Beach landing; to Charity Adams Earley of the Women's Army Corps in WWII; and to Maurice Deane, who shares with us his insights into his years in the Marine Corps and his service in Iraq. You will also meet the home-front heroines, the women who contributed to the war effort even though racial discrimination consigned them to menial, often dangerous, and always low-paying work, and the women like Maria Coles Lawton who fought the home-front battle to end that discrimination. Learning about these women and men, and the thousands of other African Americans who fought for our country—and within our country for equality—will bring new depth to our reading of America in war time.

In "African Americans in the Revolutionary War," Michael Lee Lanning reminds us how resistant slaveholding military leaders like George Washington were to recruiting black soldiers in the struggle for independence. Only dire necessity drove the General to allow free black men to wear the uniform. Naval commanders proved far more liberal and French regiments, allies in the war, also welcomed black troops. The British not only allowed African Americans to join their armies; they recruited the enslaved to fight on their side. Nevertheless, British commanders usually relegated black recruits to back-breaking physical labor or to service jobs as wagon masters or cooks. At war's end, black veterans on both sides were given their freedom and several northern states abolished slavery.

In his essay "Hellfighters: A Black American Regiment of the New York National Guard in

Q&A

Upcoming Programs

- *Book Breaks*, November 1 at 12 pm ET (9 am PT)
 - Lonnie G. Bunch III, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and Founding Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, discusses his book *A Fool's Errand*.
- *Inside the Vault*, Thursday, November 12 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)
 - We will explore speeches and letters by Abraham Lincoln including a courtship letter, the Gettysburg Address, and his speech on slavery and the American Dream.
- Visit gilderlehrman.org for free resources for students, teachers, families, and history enthusiasts of all ages.