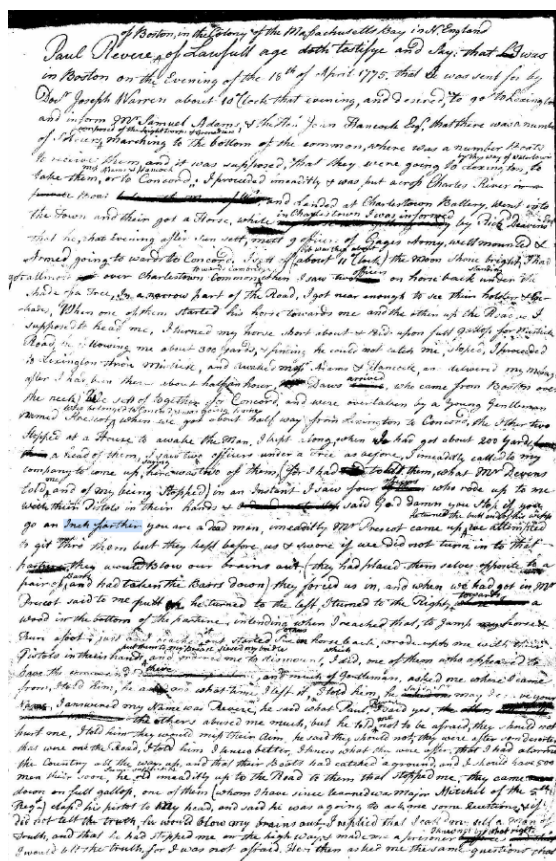


America at 250

Resource Guide for Teaching the American Revolution through Primary Sources and Scholarly Context

America at 250 Resource Guide supports the nation's Semiquincentennial by bringing together a selection of primary and secondary sources that document how the American Revolution unfolded, how it was debated in print, formalized through government action, and later interpreted by participants and historians.

1775 Archival Document Spotlight



[Paul Revere's sworn deposition \(handwritten testimony\) describing the night of April 18-19, 1775](#)

Paul Revere's sworn deposition is a handwritten, first-person account describing the night of April 18-19, 1775, when he rode from Boston to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock that British troops were marching toward Lexington and Concord. Given to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, the testimony documents events as they unfolded and reflects the colonies' early efforts to record and preserve evidence during the Revolutionary crisis.

For teaching and research, scholars can examine how firsthand testimony differs from later narratives, and compare the deposition with newspaper reports, militia records, or later commemorations of the ride. The handwritten format also invites discussion of transcription, spelling variation, and the challenges of working with original manuscripts.

Found in the Revere Family Papers, 1746-1964; Digitized from Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

Included in ProQuest History Vault, ProQuest One History, and ProQuest Digital Collections.

1775 Archival Document Spotlight



[John Hancock letter to Joseph Warren about the appointment of George Washington as commander in chief and other military measures taken by Congress](#)

His signature is best known from the Declaration of Independence, but this carefully handwritten letter records actions taken by the Continental Congress in June 1775, including the appointment of George Washington as commander in chief of the Continental Army and additional measures to organize and supply the forces near Boston.

Written while Congress was actively managing the war effort, the letter communicates decisions already made, outlines the emerging chain of command.

For teaching and research, the letter supports analysis of how authority was asserted and communicated during the early stages of the Revolution. Students can examine how congressional correspondence differs from eyewitness testimony, trace the transition from local militia action to centralized command, and compare the letter with commissions, orderly books, or later legislative records to understand how military governance developed in real time.

Found in the Hancock Family Papers, 1728-1830; Digitized from Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

Included in ProQuest History Vault, ProQuest One History, and ProQuest Digital Collections.

1776 Historical Newspapers Spotlight

The Hartford Courant – 1776 selections

Words from the oldest continuously published newspaper in the U.S. first published in 1764.

For teaching and research, these show how political argument revolutionary persuasion, and military authority circulated together in print on the eve of independence.



- ["To the Patriotic Sons of America" – January 29, 1776](#) – This persuasive essay urged colonial readers to sustain resistance through civic responsibility and collective sacrifice and illustrates how newspapers were used to mobilize public commitment to the Revolutionary cause before independence was formally declared.
- ["Common Sense: Addressed to the Inhabitants of America" – February 26, 1776](#) – This newspaper printing of Thomas Paine's influential argument against monarchy and in favor of independence, demonstrating how radical political ideas moved rapidly from pamphlet form into regional newspapers.
- ["General and commander in Chief of the Forces of the Thirteen United Colonies", by George Washington, April 8, 1776](#) – A newspaper reprint of an official military address issued by Washington as General and Commander in Chief of the Forces of the Thirteen United Colonies, demonstrating how the colonial press disseminated Continental Army authority and public messaging on the eve of independence.

Included in ProQuest Historical Newspapers: U.S. Metro Collection, ProQuest Historical Newspapers Collection: Global, ProQuest One History, and ProQuest Digital Collections.

1776 Historical Government Archival Records Spotlight

[The Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776](#)

– Adopted by the Continental Congress in July 1776, the Declaration of Independence formally articulated the colonies' break from British rule and laid out the political principles used to justify that action, including natural rights, popular sovereignty, and the legitimacy of resistance to tyranny.

For teaching and research, the Declaration supports close reading of political language, comparison across manuscript and printed versions, and analysis of how revolutionary ideas were framed for both domestic and international audiences.

THE
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.
—
IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.
THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE THIRTEEN
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that governments long established, should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance

July 4, 1776.

Included in ProQuest U.S. Congressional Collection.

1789 Historical Government Archival Records Spotlight

[July 6, 1789 Annals of Congress: Debates of the First Legislators](#) – The Annals of Congress record the earliest debates of the United States Congress as lawmakers worked to transform independence into a functioning constitutional government. In the July 6, 1789, session, Congress ordered that a correct copy of the Constitution be prefixed to the published acts of the session.

For teaching and research, the Annals of Congress support close analysis of how constitutional authority was defined through debate and lawmaking rather than declared fully formed.

Included in ProQuest U.S. Congressional Collection.

1820's Archival Document Spotlight

[Timothy Pickering notebooks relating to the American Revolution](#)

Timothy Pickering, a senior Revolutionary War officer who served directly under George Washington and held multiple top federal posts, including Secretary of State, Secretary of War, and U.S. Senator, offers a sober reassessment of the Revolution's aftermath, arguing that independence exposed enduring divisions over leadership, governance, and political character. While affirming Washington's moral authority, he sharply criticizes the rise of popular political figures, especially Thomas Jefferson, whom he believed replaced principled governance with public sentiment.

For teaching and research, Pickering's notebooks support analysis of Revolutionary memory and interpretation, allowing students to compare retrospective judgment with wartime documents.

"The Truth of History demands an exhibition of facts. These will sometimes be unfavourable to the reputation of public men... but to correct such errors is an important object of history."

Found in the Timothy Pickering Papers, 1758-1829; Digitized from Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts; Included in ProQuest History Vault, ProQuest One History, and ProQuest Digital Collections.

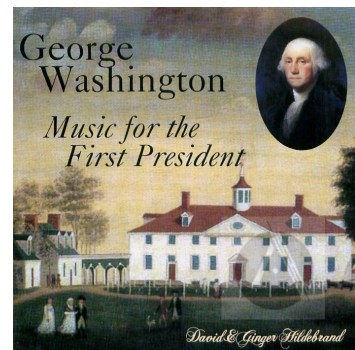
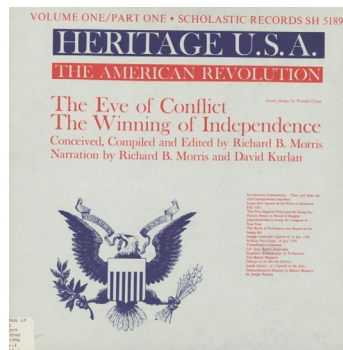
MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES – Audio Playlist Spotlight

[Music and History of the American Revolution Playlist](#)

This playlist brings together songs, ballads, spoken-word recordings, and narrated performances related to the American Revolution, offering a complementary perspective on how Revolutionary ideas circulated beyond official documents and formal debate.

Drawn largely from Smithsonian Folkways-affiliated releases and other historically oriented labels, the recordings reflect music and sound as forms of political expression, persuasion, and memory during and after the Revolutionary era.

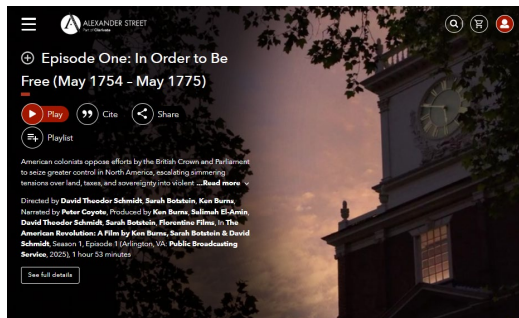
Access: <https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/playlist/546576>



Included in Music Online: Listening, ProQuest One Performing Arts, and ProQuest Digital Collections.

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES – Video Spotlight

[The American Revolution: A Film by Ken Burns, Sarah Botstein & David Schmidt](#)



This six-part documentary series by Ken Burns, Sarah Botstein, and David Schmidt examines the American Revolution through multiple perspectives, tracing the conflict from the colonial crisis through independence and the war's aftermath, and highlighting how Revolutionary ideals, contradictions, and lived experiences shaped the creation of a new nation.

Also Check out:

- [Landmarks of the American Revolution](#), Ford Educational Library, 1920
- [10 Things You Don't Know About The American Revolution](#), A&E, 2014

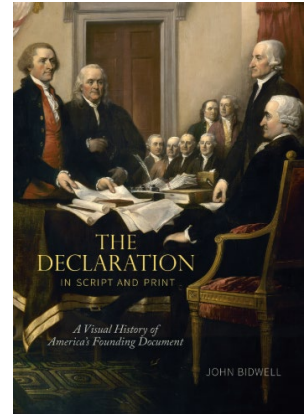
Videos on notable Revolutionary Figures:

- [Paul Revere: The Midnight Rider](#)
- [James Lafayette: Revolutionary Spy](#)
- [Julia Stockton Rush: Love and Family Amid War](#)
- [Peggy Shippen; Philly IT Girl Who Spied for the British](#)
- [Dishonor: Benedict Arnold](#)

Included in Academic Video Online and ProQuest One Academic Premium.

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES – Ebooks Spotlight

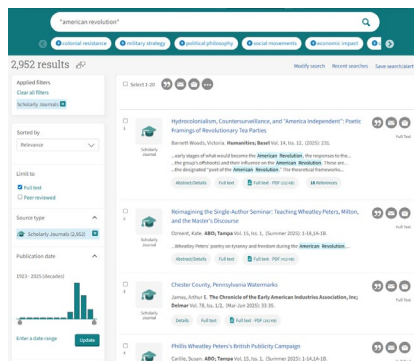
- [**Liberty Tree : Ordinary People and the American Revolution**](#), by Alfred F. Young – Details how artisans, laborers, women, enslaved people, and other non-elites shaped Revolutionary politics through everyday action, and how elites were forced to negotiate with them.
- [**The Declaration in Script and Print : A Visual History of America's Founding Document**](#), by John Bidwell – Follows how new printing technologies turned the Declaration into everything from ornate art objects to cheap popular prints, sparking rivalry among publishers over authenticity, patriotism, and profit. By following competing reproductions, the book shows how Americans used the Declaration to shape national identity and popular memory long after the Revolution ended.
- [**The Writing and Ratification of the U. S. Constitution : Practical Virtue in Action**](#), by John R. Vile – Traces debates at the Constitutional Convention, the arguments made during state ratifying conventions, and the compromises that led to adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.



Included in ProQuest Ebooks.

MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES – Journal Spotlight

Our journal content give libraries authoritative scholarship and long-range historical context essential for teaching and researching the United States at its 250th anniversary. Highlights for American Studies include:



- [**Journal of American Studies**](#) – A core interdisciplinary journal supporting research on U.S. history, culture, and politics within American Studies.
- [**American Quarterly**](#) – The flagship journal of the American Studies Association, important to scholarship on U.S. culture, history, and identity.

Included in Proquest Central Premium, Proquest One Academic Premium, ProQuest One Visual Arts & Design, and ProQuest Digital Collections.

Explore the full [ProQuest Content Solutions](#) portfolio to see how ProQuest collections support teaching and research for America’s Semiquincentennial across primary sources, multimedia, and scholarly interpretation.