

Crispus Attucks

The first man to give his life for our independence from Great Britain. A freed slave who had become a whaler for the merchant marines. His ship had been docked at the Boston port while in port, he heard an alarm go off on his ship. Now when you're on a ship and an alarm goes off, that usually means there's a fire. Fire, wood ship, bad news, so Crispus Attucks ran up-deck to put out the fire, only to find out that there was no fire, but that his own government had picked up arms against his own people. Crispus Attucks ran back below deck got fifty-five of his shipmates came out and gave his life so we could be free! This event in history would be known as the Boston Massacre.

“Honor to Crispus Attucks who was leader and voice that day,
 The first to defy the first to die with Maverick Par and Gray,
 Call it Riot or revolution,
 His hand first clenched at the crown,
 His feet were the first in perilous place to pull the king's flag down,
 His breast was the first one rent apart so that liberty's stream might flow,
 For our freedom now and forever, his head was first laid low,
 Call it Riot, or Revolution, or mob, or crowd as you may,
 Such deaths has been the seed of nations, such lives shall be honored for aye.

George Middleton

Freed slave, a member of the colonial militia called the Bucks of America. The Bucks of America were battalions of freed slaves the believed in the vision of Liberty for all and knew that freedom from Great Britain was the only way that could be achieved. They knew that many of the American colonies were continually attempting to outlaw slavery, but the government of Great Britain was obstructing every effort. The king and parliament would threaten the colonies attempting to end slavery with financial sanctions and military force. Col. George Mason expressed his frustration during our constitution’s ratification debates:

“This infernal traffic originated in the avarice of British Merchants. The British Govt. constantly checked the attempts of Virginia to put a stop to it.”

Once our independence was declared, the newly formed States created a policy, that any slave who wanted to help fight for independence, would be a free man, forever.

Roger Sherman, a delegate from Connecticut to the Federal Convention (22 Aug. 1787) observed “that the abolition of slavery seemed to be going on in the U.S. & that the good sense of the several States would probably by degrees compleat (sic) it.” Oliver Elsworth, also a representative from Connecticut very confidently stated, “Slavery in time will not be a speck on our country. Provision is already made in Connecticut for abolishing it. And the abolition has already taken place in Massachusetts.”

After the war George Middleton - a citizen of the State of Massachusetts, a free man, started the African benevolence society of 1796, to help take care of the widows and the orphans of those who had been lost in battle.

Peter Salem

Peter Salem joined the continental army as a free man, he fought in the battle of Bunker Hill. Peter Salem even received a metal of honor from George Washington because Peter Salem, in the battle of Bunker Hill, is the one who is given the credit for killing British Major General Pitcairn. Washington said, if it had not been for the bravery of Peter Salem, that battle may have completely turned around in favor of the British. Because of Peter Salem, a freed slave, the American Colonists obtained a very pivotal and essential victory in the battle for Liberty and Independence.

Ned Hector

Ned Hector, another freed slave, fought in the battles of Brandy-wine, and German-town, your history books will tell you those battles did not go the way we wanted them to go, and when Ned Hector's unit was given the order to retreat, he personally refused. You see, for our statesmen battling for their freedom, provisions were very, very hard to come by. Those who witnessed Ned Hector's bravery said Hector cried out, "The enemy shall not have my team, I will save the horses or perish myself." Ned Hector ended up saving the horses and the carts that he pulled with them, loaded with arms and ammunition, and received his honor as a soldier in these battles.

James Fortinen

James Fortinen, He was the grandson of a slave, but a son of free blacks, was just 14 years old when he entered into the battle for Liberty. James actually stood in Philadelphia, and heard, the Declaration of Independence read aloud for the first time. At fourteen, James Fortinen joined the royal ship, *Louis*, with Captain Stephen Decatur. In 1781, that ship was taken over by British troops. Fortinen was taken prisoner along with others from that ship. The Captain of the conquering British ship took James Fortinen on his own ship and he grew fond of the little boy Fortinen. He offered to take James Fortinen home with him to Great Britain. I will make you a companion to my son, and you will have provisions you've never dreamed of, he offered to James. Fortinen, this 14 year old boy, refused the Captain's offer. He said: "I have been taken prisoner for the liberties of my country, and never will prove a traitor to her interests." Fortinen would be held captive for seven months until he was released in a prisoner exchange.

Phillis Wheatley

Phillis Wheatley was born in Sengal West Africa and was sold into slavery at the age of 7, but her family took her in as a family member, taught her how to read and write, and by the age of fourteen, Phillis Wheatley was publishing poems in the local paper. She wrote a very famous poem about George Washington called *To His Excellency George Washington*.

“Auspicious heaven shall fill with favoring Gales,
Where ere Columbia spreads her swelling sails
To every realm her peace, her charms display
And heavenly freedom spread her golden ray.”

Bernardo de Galvez

Bernardo de Galvez was the governor of Louisiana when it was owned by Spain. Governor de Galvez assisted the American forces, years before his country of Spain would agree to aid America. He secretly assisted the American forces in our battle for independence. He smuggled to our battles, arms, and ammunition, and other provisions. Col. Bernardo de Gálvez would lead one of the most culturally diverse forces of that day. The unit included recruits from Mexico, free blacks, experienced Spanish soldiers in the Louisiana Regiment, volunteers from the American colonies and from Louisiana’s German and Acadian communities, and American Indians.

In 1779, Spain officially declared war with Great Britain in defense of the American forces. Over the following 2 years, Gálvez would lead thousands of Spanish soldiers and scores of ships against the British in what would prove to be the last combat theater of the Revolution. Enduring hurricanes, disease, and difficult, swampy terrain, he and his soldiers forced the British to divert scarce resources and played a little-known but crucial role in pressuring Great Britain to negotiate for peace after seven grueling years of war. If it had not been for Bernardo de Galvez, driving British forces out of the territory known as West Florida, thus securing control of the mouth of the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico who knows if America would be free from British rule today.

Reverend John Witherspoon

Reverend John Witherspoon is an example of such a patriot. John Witherspoon was not just a patriot, but an equipper of patriots. Witherspoon taught his students not only as a Presbyterian minister but the president of the college of New Jersey. He taught them,

if your cause is just, if your principles are pure, and if your conduct is prudent, you need not fear the multitude of opposing hosts.

Wither-spoon was one of our driving forces for the establishment of religious liberty in America. He said:

“There's not a single instance in history which civil liberty was lost and religious liberty preserved entirely.”

He lost his son in the revolutionary war, he became a representative of New Jersey in the continental congress, and as the president of the college of New Jersey, he taught nine future cabinet members, twenty-one senators, thirty-nine congressmen, three supreme court justices, twelve governors, a vice president, and a president by the name of James Madison, under this philosophy.

Betty Zane

Betty Zane was only seventeen when she and her family had taken refuge in an American fort. Their fort had grown slim on provisions, most importantly, gun powder. Betty Zane was walking through her town one day, came past a fort that was being occupied by some two hundred fifty Native Americans recruited by the British government and forty British soldiers. History tells us that Betty Zane had an idea. She thought, I'm just a girl, I'm just a seventeen year old girl, I wonder if anybody would take any notice of me if I walked right into this fort? So she did just that. She walked right into the enemy fort, filled up her apron with canisters of powder, and left. Can you imagine the boldness of this seventeen year old girl, walking into an enemy fort, an enemy, which had proven, would shoot her dead if she was discovered? She walked right in through the fort gate, she walked right into the powder house, she filled her apron with canisters of powder, and ran out the gate. The historical account says, that these two hundred and fifty Indians and forty British soldiers watched in shock as this bold and courageous young woman fled with their supplies of gun powder! The History says that the Indians stood above the walls and yelled: “Squaw, Squaw!” There's also a poem about Betty Zane.

“Upon those half cleared rolling lands,
 A crowded city proudly stands,
 But of the many who reside,
 By green Ohio's rushing tide,
 Not one has the lineage prouder than, be he poor or rich,
 The man who boasts that in his spotless strain,
 Mingles the blood of Betty Zane!”

Molly Pitcher

Mary Ludwig Hays. Mary earned the nickname Molly Pitcher because of her tireless service to the patriots on the battlefield. Mary's mission was to carry water to the soldiers on the front lines, and in June, it was very hot, so her service was very necessary. The soldiers she served, did not know her name, but they would see her coming their way and say: "oh hey look, there comes Molly with her pitcher!" Exhausted and overheated these men were overjoyed to see Mary. She encouraged these men in their fight, by just bringing them a drink of water! That was not Mary's only service to the independence of America. Mary's husband was a soldier in the field. It was his job to arm one of their unit's cannons. When Mary's husband fell in battle, she picked up her husband's rammer staff and manned the canon the whole rest of the day. History tells us that an enemy canon shot passed directly between her legs without doing any other damage than carrying away the lower part of her petticoat. Mary didn't flee, she didn't abandon her post, she kept on fighting in the battle the entire day. Does this sound like the tale of a woman who is weak and frightened? The day after Mary's service in this amazing battle, George Washington gave her appointment as a noncommissioned officer.

Prudence Cummings Wright

Prudence was the captain of her local militia. Think about this fact in light of the revision of history that America suffers today. Not only was Prudence a strong and courageous woman, she was the leader of the local organized militia.

Prudence organized thirty to forty women to become the militia of their local community while their husbands were off at war. In April of 1775, these women were guarding Jewitt's Bridge, armed with muskets, and pitch forks, and any other weapon that they could find. Prudence's order of that day was, "No foe to freedom foreign or domestic shall pass this bridge."

Two British soldiers had the ill fate of coming upon that bridge one day, one of them happened to be Prudence's brother, his name Samuel Cummings. Samuel heard the women talking and he shouted out to his partner, "I know that voice! That is my sister, she will shoot us before she will ever let us pass." And the history says, Samuel Cummings, Prudence's brother, turned around and fled the area. A lady by the name of Anne Cuthbertson of the lineage of Prudence wrote this poem a few decades later. Her poem describes Samuel's alarm at hearing his sister's voice.

*'Not one further step I ride!
One who rode with Whiting cried
'Tis my sister Prue! Alas,
She would never let me pass
Save when her dead body fell!
I turn back from Pepperell*

The man with him was Captain Whiting and the history says that being a military man he was not so impressed by the voices of the women and rode on into the midst of their guard. Before he could realize the nature of the force he was facing, he was taken into custody by this militia of women, Prudence leading the way. These women searched him, and seized from his boots some treasonous papers, and he was handed over to the committees of correspondence.

Deborah Simpson

Late in the war, she decided she had to contribute to the war effort, but not in the normal manner available to women of her day. She sewed a man's suit of clothes, left her farm and walked thirty miles to Middleborough, Massachusetts, where she enlisted in Captain George Webb's Light Infantry Company, Fourth Regiment, Massachusetts Continental Line under the assumed name of Robert Shurtleff, a name she made up. In one battle she was hit in the thigh by a musket ball. To prevent the surgeon from discovering her true biology, she showed the surgeon lesser wound to her head, and he released her. She then tried to dig the musket ball out of her thigh with her pen knife! Failing that, she nursed the wound as best she could. But, having left the ball in the leg was to cause her trouble for the rest of her life.

In a later battle, Deborah fell ill with a severe fever, rendering her unconscious. She was taken to the hospital, where Doctor Barnabas Binney discovered that Robert Shurtleff was really Deborah Sampson. The good doctor decided to cooperate with the gallant lady soldier and conceal his findings. Unfortunately, as Robert was being nursed back to health, the Doctor's niece fell in love with him/her. Nothing could be done at this point but to admit to the deception.

When advised of the situation, General Patterson notified General Henry Knox, who, in turn, advised General George Washington. He ordered Robert Shurtleff/Deborah Sampson to be honorably discharged. General Knox signed the document on October 25th, 1783, and letters of testimony to her gallantry in combat were presented for her by General William Shepard, Colonel Henry Jackson and General Patterson. She had served for a year and a half. And, finally, wearing the dress given her by General Patterson's wife, she and the General stood on the steps of his headquarters and the entire Fourth Regiment passed in review to honor her service.

Sybil Ludington

Sybil Ludington, was another brave young lady, only 16 years old when she put her life in danger for the cause of Liberty. On the night of April 26, 1777, Colonel Henry Ludington received a message that the British had entered Danbury and found some American military stores, stolen some, destroyed others and drank the whiskey. Drunk, they began ransacking the town, burning and looting. Sybil bravely volunteered and around 9 p.m., she set off in the rain to warn the men.

Sybil completed her mission around daybreak, covering nearly 40 miles—more than twice the distance of Paul Revere's ride—raising 400 men, and even fighting off a highway man with her father's musket. The militia caught up with the retreating British and beat them back, too late to stop the attack, but not too late to make them pay dearly.

Alexander Hamilton wrote Col. Ludington: "I congratulate you on the Danbury expedition. The stores destroyed have been purchased at a pretty high price to the enemy."

Sybil received personal thanks from both Gen. George Washington and Gen. Rochambeau, the French commander fighting with the Americans.

Rebekah Motte

One hundred seventy-five troops had seized her home to use as a command headquarters. On May 12, 1781, Rebekah Motte, gladly watched her home burn to the ground so the British could not use her home as a tool against the battle for Liberty and Independence. She said she was gratified with the opportunity.

She said, “I am gratified with the opportunity of contributing to the good of my country, and should view the approaching scene with delight.”

Nanyehi (Nancy) Ward

Nanyehi was also known as “Beloved Woman” of the Southeastern Cherokee. She was a respected warrior and leader who acted as a go-between with white settlers. Nancy was born into the prestigious Wolf clan in the sacred Chota region the Cherokee Nation.

When Most Cherokees sided with the British during the Revolution, regarding colonists as invaders who took Cherokee lands, Ward took the opposite stance. In 1780, Nanyehi advocated for peace, again advising colonists of planned Cherokee attacks to prevent retaliations against her people. She was known to actively free American prisoners captured by hostile forces. History tells that she even sent food to the starving militia.

In 1781, Nanyehi and her family were spared from becoming prisoners when their village was captured by British loyal Cherokee. In July of 1781, she became an ambassador and participated in negotiations for a peace treaty between the Cherokee and settlers and helped negotiate the 1785 Treaty of Hopewell between the Cherokee and the new United States.

Esther De Berdt Reed

Late May of 1780, Esther De Berdt Reed, first lady of Pennsylvania, was suffering from smallpox. Upon her recovery, she came up with an idea to help the suffering Continental soldiers. Esther began the Ladies Association of Philadelphia to raise funds for the Continental army.

Esther cleverly made sure that the wives of influential men were asked to be part of the effort. These included Benjamin Franklin’s daughter, Sarah Franklin Bache. Since the organization’s leaders included the most influential ladies of the patriot cause, publicity also became instrumental in spreading the word. On June 10, 1780, Esther published a broadside – *Sentiments of an American Woman* – explaining why women should help the army, and stressing that women were the equals of men in patriotism. In mid-June, the broadside was distributed by a group of thirty-nine women as they went about door to door contacting every household in Philadelphia.

The women, disregarding prevailing rules of polite behavior, asked for money from all classes of people. The efforts were so successful that in her July 4, 1780, letter to Washington, Esther Reed could report that the women had raised more than \$300,000 continental dollars.

When converted to metal coin, it amounted to approximately \$7500, a large amount for the times.

On July 14, 1780, George Washington responded to Esther,

“If I am happy in having the concurrence of the Ladies,
I would propose the purchasing of course Linnen, to be made into Shirts,
with the whole amount of their subscription.
A Shirt extraordinary to the Soldier will be of more service,
and do more to preserve his health than any other thing that could be procured him.
This appears to me, to be the best mode for its application,
and provided it is approved of by the Ladies.”

After a series of letters between Esther and Washington,
Esther used the funds to purchase linen,
and the Ladies began sewing shirts for the soldiers.
To personalize the gift,
she had each volunteer seamstress sew her name into the clothing she made
. But Esther would never see the completion of her efforts.
Esther Reed died on September 18, 1780,
her body and heroic spirit were already over stressed
, and in the early part of September,
she was stricken with acute dysentery
– an epidemic that spread quickly through Philadelphia.

All of Philadelphia mourned her early death
and a moving obituary was written praising her patriotism,
and stating that her death might have occurred because
she had “imposed on herself too great a part of the task” of the Ladies Association.



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Mercy Otis Warren

Mercy Otis Warren was the daughter of an attorney and a judge.

Her brother was James Otis Junior. You will remember James Otis, Jr from several of our LFU courses.

The founders of our Constitutional Republic refer to James Otis Junior as the midwife to liberty. Mercy was bestowed with no less boldness.

Mercy was the first American woman playwright.

She wrote Shakespearean style plays

in the form of satire that were put on at the local play houses to poke fun at the British government and to encourage the liberty movement.

You can read Mercy's plays today.

One of her plays, "The Ladies of Castile"

is full of brilliant humor and satire,

and has been highly recommend over the centuries.

Mercy is the first American woman historian.

She wrote a three volume history

called *The Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*.

Mercy didn't spare any harshness of the truth in her recollection of events.

She truly wrote the history as she saw it,

much to the displeasure of some of the men of that day.

History tells us that after reading John Adams read her volumes of history, he was so put off by her candor, that he wrote Mercy a scathing letter.

That did not discourage Mercy one bit as she was dedicated to truth.

She said: "I have to write this history because I lived it."

Not only was Mercy a brilliant author, she was an adviser, a confidant to many of the men who were the designers of our Constitutional Republic.

You can read the correspondences between Mercy and John Adams,

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and several others.

These men looked to her for wisdom and guidance.

In one of these letters, Mercy says:

"America stands armed with resolution and virtue, but she still recoils at the idea of drawing the sword against the nation from which she derived her origin yet threatened like an unnatural parent, ready to plunge her dagger into the bosom of her affectionate offspring, but may we yet hope for more lenient measures."

Up to the Declaration of Independence and even beyond it, many of those dedicated to Liberty, were still praying for a peaceful reconciliation with Great Britain. They did not want this civil war. Feel the pain in her hearts, referring to Great Britain as a parent.

Abigail Adams

Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams, gives us a story about the Boston tea party.

“The tea that baneful weed is arrived, great, and I hope, a factual opposition has been made to the landing of it. To the public papers, I must refer you for particulars. You will there find that the proceedings of our citizens have been united. Spirited and firm! The flame is kindled and like lightening, it carries from soul to soul!”

Hannah Winthrop

Hannah Winthrop, the wife of Doctor Winthrop watched her husband and many of her children march off into battle. Hannah wrote a letter to Mercy expressing her dismay at the people who are in opposition to the efforts of Liberty.

She says:

“How often do we see people blind to their own interests, precipitately maddening on to their own destruction.”

Hannah Winthrop in yet another letter, describes what she saw as she witnessed the efforts of the Sons of Liberty during the protest of the government’s mandated purchases, we know the event as the Boston Tea Party.

She said: “Yonder, the destruction of the detestable weed, made so by cruel exaction, engages our attention. The virtuous and noble resolution of America’s sons, in defiance of threatened desolation and misery from arbitrary despots, demands our highest regard.

May they yet be endowed with all that firmness necessary to-carry them through all their difficulties, till they come off conquerors...”

Penelope Barker

Organized a tea-party protest in the home of Elizabeth King in Edonton North Carolina.

Penelope’s unified the ladies with this battle cry:

“Maybe it has only been the men who have protested the king up to now, that only means we women have taken too long to let our voices be heard.”

In protest and unity, these ladies took a pledge and signed their name to a document saying:

“We will not purchase any English made goods until the laws that have enslaved our people are repealed.”

These ladies boldly sent that pledge to Parliament and the king...they were attacked, they were scorned, publicly and privately.

Elizabeth Adams

Elizabeth Adams the wife of Samuel Adams probably one of the most neglected founding mothers, said Samuel Adams was so dedicated to the fight she would be lucky to see him once a year and again never a word of regret, never a word chastising.

In a letter that she wrote to Samuel, we can feel the troubles of her time.

She says,

“I beg you would not give yourself any pain on us being so near to the camp, the place I am in is so situated that if the regulars should ever take prospect hill, which God forbid, I should be able to make an escape as I am within a few stones cast of a back road which leads to the most retired part of Newton.”

She says:

“I beg you to excuse the very poor writing as my paper is bad and my pen is made with scissors.”

Mary Bartlett, the wife of Doctor Bartlett, watched her home burn to the ground and as it laid in ruins, they fled for their security and their freedom. Mary without her husband, had to take her large brood of children and establish a whole new way of life, to a little family farm never once did she regret or ask for pity for her own situation.



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Mercy Otis Warren wrote in a letter to John Adams.

“I have my fears yet notwithstanding the complicated difficulties that rise before us, there is no receding!”

Hannah Winthrop once wrote:

“And be it known unto Britain, even American daughters are politicians and patriots and will aid the good work with their female efforts!”

There's an account in history of a British soldier giving a report to British General Cornwallis. A battle had just been recently won by the British troops and there was a sense of victory and celebration amongst the British soldiers and their command. In a bold declaration of sober truth, this British soldier said to General Cornwallis: “Sir we may destroy all the men in America and we shall still have all we can do to defeat the women!”

Mercy Otis Warren:

“May nothing ever check that glorious spirit of freedom which inspires the patriot in the cabinet and the hero in the field with the courage to maintain their righteous cause and to endeavor to transmit that claim to posterity, even if they must seal the rich conveyance to their children with their blood.”

“Though we are daily threatened with deprivations of Britain, yet each city stands ready to sacrifice their devoted lives to preserve in violet and to convey to their children their inherit rights of men. Conferred on all by the God of nature, and the privileges of Englishmen claimed by Americans from the sacred sanctions of compacts.”

“We will stand against tyranny today or our children will bow tomorrow.”

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