OUR STORY
Journal of the New Jersey Council for History Education
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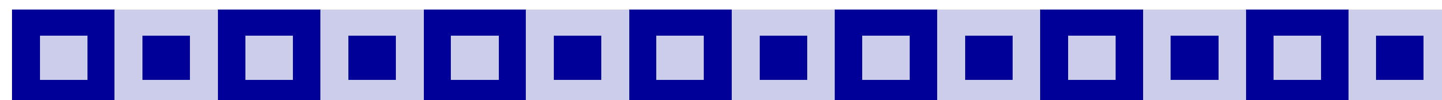

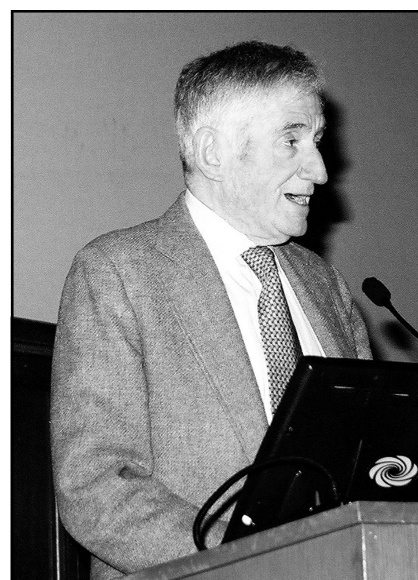

Theodore Rabb at the NJCHE 2005 Conference at Princeton University

Save the Date!

NJCHE 2006 Conference
Princeton University
December 1, 2006

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Journal of the New Jersey Council for History Education

Volume 10, No. 1 **Spring 2006**

Sergei Khrushchev (left) and Stephen Kotkin (right) share a joke during their panel at the NJCHE 2005 Conference at Princeton University.

In This Issue

From the War for American Independence to the Cold War and beyond! Carol Berkin and Thomas Fleming have graciously provided their remarks from the NJCHE 2005 Conference, Keith Wheelock has several recommendations for using documentaries in the classroom, and Rebecca Weiner introduces a new website which can help your students understand globalization both in the past and the present.

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OURSTORY is the journal of the New Jersey Council for History Education and is designed to provide our members an opportunity to share their research and as a forum for reflection on the teaching and study of history. We welcome articles dealing with all periods of history, and encourage the submission of practical articles on such topics as curriculum development, lesson plans, new or improved instructional strategies, as well as book/media reviews.

Guidelines for Manuscript Preparation

Manuscripts should be typewritten and double-spaced, on single-sided, 8.5 x 11 inch white bond paper with margins of at least one inch all around. They should be between three and ten pages in length (approximately 750 to 3,000 words), although the editors may consider longer manuscripts in particular cases. Quoted material and references should be fully documented using the guidelines explained in ***A Manual of Style*** (14th ed., University of Chicago, 1993).

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Connecting Students to Global History

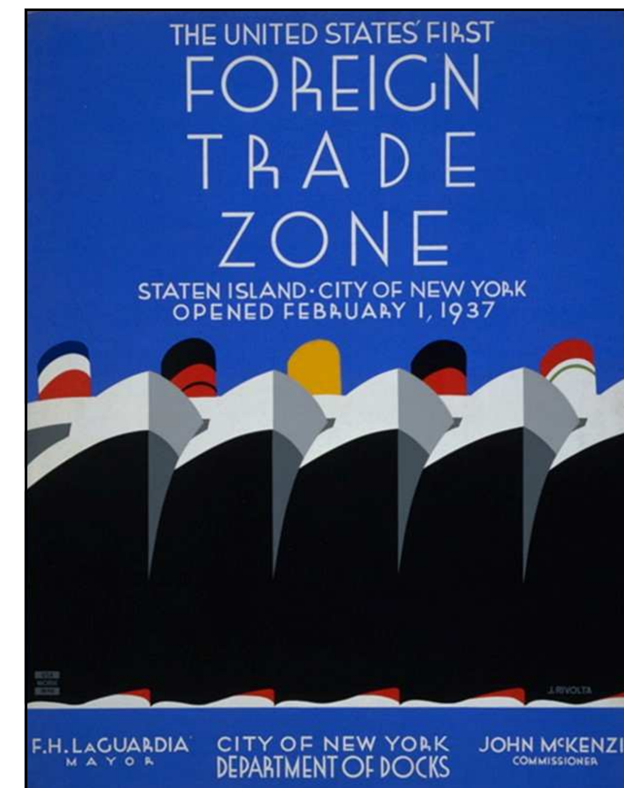
Rebecca Weiner

Rebecca Weiner is a marketing associate for Globalization101.org, a project of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The website is intended to serve as a "student-guide" to globalization.

Many students believe that the study of global events lacks relevance to their lives, yet globalization is perhaps the most pervasive and profound phenomenon of our time. Globalization101.org, developed by scholars at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a free resource for history teachers seeking to challenge their students to understand the inherent dilemmas and tradeoffs associated with globalization. The resources on the site will help make history come alive when your students use them to debate topics and make connections to the ways past and present events effect them.

The process and issues of globalization are not new, and one of the key features of the site is a selection of *Issue Briefs* on subjects ranging from the environmental impact of globalization to migration, trade and technology, and the World Bank. The briefs provide a historical context for globalization, and offer many possible starting points for classroom discussion.

For example, the Issue Brief on international trade and investment covers the development of trade from the Industrial Revolution to the present. The fundamental principles of trade are explained — why nations import and export goods; currency and exchange rates; and comparative advantage. The Issue Brief highlights the changing role of government involvement in regulating trade, from tariff debates during the early nineteenth century to the liberalization of international trade after World War II. Multilateral trade negotiation rounds, such as the Uruguay Round and the Doha Development Rounds are discussed, as well as possible public concerns related to environmental and labor standards as countries open up to foreign investment. Trade is a vital, yet contentious, aspect of globalization, and this topic should lead to much discussion and debate in your classroom.



Primary sources such as this WPA poster can help to provide additional context for your students as they study the history and economics of globalization.

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, WPA Poster Collection, [cph 3g06899]

Because the twelve Issue Brief areas are subject to new developments on a constant basis, the second section of the site consists of *News Analyses* on recent events. All the News Analyses have extensive links to other relevant websites and primary documents available on the Internet so that readers can pursue issues in greater depth.

A third section of the site consists of various resources *For Teachers*, including classroom-tested lesson plans related to all of the Issue Briefs. For example, three lesson plans were created to accompany the trade issue brief: one on comparative advantage, a second on the U.S. trade deficit and a third on why nations trade. All of the lesson plans strive to provide students with multiple perspectives on the issues without inserting value judgments or advancing any particular agenda.

The last section of the site is *Ask The Expert*, where students can watch video interviews with a range of policy experts, including: William Brock, Former Senator and U.S. Trade Representative; Stephen Morris, Director of the CSIS Africa Program; Dr. Papademetriou, President of the Migration Policy Institute; and Laurence Meyer, former governor of the Federal Reserve Bank. New expert video interviews are conducted twice a semester: students can participate in upcoming interviews by emailing questions to the site in advance.

For more information, visit Globalization101.org, or email g101@csis.org.

Teaching the Cold War Using Documentaries
Keith Wheelock

Keith Wheelock is professor of history at Raritan Valley Community College and a contributing editor to the *Film and History Guide To Documentary Films*.

To access additional reviews of documentary films in more than fifteen categories, or for guidelines on submitting a review of your own, please visit www.FilmandHistory.org

When studying the Cold War, we are fortunate to have a wealth of audio-visual sources to share with our students. The following documentaries are brief enough to share within a class period or two, and offer additional opportunities for discussions on how such films may both preserve and interpret history.

Air America: The CIA's Secret Airline **(2000)**
This is a revealing account of how the CIA, created in 1947, linked up with the remnants of the flying tigers and the Nationalist Chinese in Taiwan to create a "secret" airline that acted as a covert arm of U.S. policy in Asia. The CIA was operating C-119 Flying Box Cars to supply Dienbienphu up to its surrender; thus, the U.S. involvement with the French in the 1953-54 war was a semi-combatant.

Cold War **(1998)**
Extraordinary Ted Turner-supported CNN/BBC2 effort to encapsulate the Cold War in 24 episodes. Overall, extremely effective and valuable history. Perhaps most important was the decision to eschew third-party commentators and use only persons directly associated with the events presented.

Heavy Metal: Mig 15: Russian Stealth **(2002)**
This is an extraordinary A&E documentary that sheds new light on Soviet involvement in the Korean War. From communications intelligence, the U.S. was aware that Soviets were flying combat missions in Korea. The Soviets, anxious not to create a diplomatic incident, instructed their pilots not to fly over enemy territory and, in event of a crash, to kill themselves. This story is told through interviews with Korean War-era Soviet and American pilots.

George Marshall and the American Century **(1993)**
Absolutely superb on the quintessential role of Marshall before and during WWII as Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and as the only general to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Marshall's futile early 1947 meeting with Stalin, followed by his return trip through ravaged Western Europe, prompted him to advocate the escalation of the Cold War with the Marshall Plan.

The Edward R. Murrow Television Collection **(1992)**
Ed Murrow is a legend in radio/TV news journalism. *The McCarthy Years*, with an introduction by Walter Cronkite, is a "must see" for every thoughtful American. The McCarthy and Lt. Radulovich broadcasts are accurately replicated in the Academy-Award nominated *Good Night and Good Luck.*

Vietnam **(1987)**
Hosted by CBS's Walter Cronkite, this is a thoughtful 5-video survey of the diverse dimensions of Vietnam. The futility of high-casualty grunt patrols highlights this tragic story. Includes a Cronkite-Kennedy interview, a portion of which could be interpreted to suggest that JFK was planning withdrawal from Vietnam, although later portions of the interview contradict that impression. ↜

The Film and History League invites proposals for their conference titled, "The Documentary Tradition," to be held November 8-12, 2006. See www.FilmandHistory.org for details.

Proposals are due by August 7, 2006.

"It Was I Who Did It": Women in the American Revolution
Carol Berkin

Carol Berkin is professor of history at Baruch College and deputy chair of the department of history at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her publications include *First Generations: Women in Colonial America* and *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence*.

In the 1770s, King George III was convinced that all the problems with his colonies could be laid at the feet of "that brace of Adamses" and the rebellious mobs of Massachusetts men. As it turned out, he was wrong—not only about the widespread nature of American discontent and desire for independence, but about the gender of many of his Massachusetts opponents. Abigail as much as John Adams supported an American revolution and rebellious crowds of Massachusetts women picketed the shops of merchants who broke the boycott, staged mass spinning bees to show their solidarity with American resistance to British taxation, and cheered from the dock as Boston "Mohawks" dumped tea into the harbor.

Unfortunately, George III is not the only man to make the mistake of painting a purely masculine canvas to depict the American Revolution. Let me take up my paint brush today, therefore, and rework that canvas--- making the picture that emerges not only more complex, but truer to the story of our struggle to create an independent nation.

Any account of the revolution must begin in the 1760s, when the great debts amassed during the French and Indian War drove the British government to revamp its colonial policy. New England was the first and hardest hit region; with an economy built largely on commerce with the West Indies, the new, tighter regulations on trade with non-English Caribbean islands threatened not only large shipping magnates like John Hancock, but the local dockworkers, sailors, lumberjacks, shipbuilders, and distillers whose livelihood depended on the traditional smuggling operations of the triangular trade. Within a year, the middle colonies of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, as well as the southern colonies, had all begun to feel the sting of the Mother Country's determination to raise much needed revenues from them. By the time the Stamp Act, a direct tax on the colonists, appeared in 1765 it was clear that the longstanding policy of "salutary neglect" was over – and not only trade regulation but outright revenue raising was the new order of the day.

The Stamp Act led to a flurry of petitions from colonial legislatures, appeals from colonial agents in London, and some fairly incendiary oratory from colonial legislators from Boston to Virginia. But British legislators and bureaucrats were not likely to be moved by either rhetorical threats or legal complaints. The truth was, demands of the British treasury weighed more heavily on their minds than the grumblings of unhappy provincial politicians.

What did move Parliament, however, was the threat to the economic stability of what we would call today their private sector. Irate British textile manufacturers, anxious luxury good producers – not a few of them members of Parliament themselves – responded quickly and firmly to the precipitous decline in sales and profits when Americans signed, and enforced, nonconsumption and nonimportation agreements that boycotted English manufactured goods until the demand for repeal was met. It was this boycott of British manufactured goods that brought the English government to its knees, and forced the repeal of the Stamp Act and later taxation in the 1760s and 70s.

Now, it may have been "the brace of Adamses" who proposed these boycotts —but it was their wives who determined their effectiveness. They, after all, were the consumers and purchasers of cloth and tea. When the call went out to shun British textiles, teas, and the merchants who dared to continue to sell them, women's buying habits became politicized and they became active participants in an unfamiliar political sphere. New England women proved more than ready for the challenges of their new role. Newspapers carried accounts of women picketing the shops of merchants who refused to honor the boycott and ran stories of 'spinning bees' at which women and girls gathered to produce the "homespun" that would replace British made cloth. These all day spinning sessions (sometimes drawing a hundred young women) were, as Mary Beth Norton has put it, "ideological showcases" of colonial resistance to British policy. Every colonial matron and her daughters understood the sacrifice involved in these boycotts, for spinning was the most tedious of household chores and colonial women had gleefully abandoned it once imported cloth was readily available. Now, spinning wheels were brought down from attics and dusted off; in most instances, lessons

had to be offered in order for the patriotic spinners to produce their share of the rough fabric they called 'liberty cloth.' Women understood the political import of their work: "Clothes of your own make and spinning" became a badge of honor and a visible political statement as overnight, housewives became "daughters of liberty."

Not everyone approved of this sudden explosion of women onto the public scene. Massachusetts merchant and conservative Peter Oliver, described them as dupes of the radical clergy. "The dissenting clergy," he wrote, "were…set to Work, to preach up Manufactures instead of Gospel…They preached about it…until the Women & Children, both within Doors & without, set their Spinning Wheels a whirling in Defiance of Great Britain." But neither dismissal nor disapproval deterred these daughters of liberty. When, for example, critics attacked the propriety of the women who attended the spinning bees, three Boston matrons fired back their reply to the "little wits and foplings" who had published their views in the Boston newspapers. Accused of being the inferior sex, the women retorted: "Inferior in abusive sarcasm, in personal invective, in low wit, we glory to be" but "inferior in veracity, honesty, sincerity, love of virtue, of liberty and our country, we would not willing be to any."

Public statements in support of the boycotts as well as public acts became a vital part of the political repertoire of colonial women. In 1765, a determined group of New York City brides to be announced in the local newspapers that they would refuse to marry any fiancé who intended to seal their marriage certificate with one of the hated stamps. When the Townshend Acts of 1767 prompted a new round of boycotts, women were quick to make their commitments public. As the *Boston Evening Post* gleefully reported in 1770, "upwards of 300 Mistresses of Families, in which number the Ladies of highest Rank and Influence" had signed an agreement to abstain from drinking tea. Soon afterward, almost a hundred women of lower "Rank and Influence" produced their own document, pledging 'of their own free will and accord' to boycott British goods. And, after the Tea Act of 1773 was passed, a group of Edentown, N.C. women sign a pledge to refrain from tea and other English products. Calling themselves the Edenton Ladies' Patriotic Guild they joined the boycott not simply as the wives of patriot men, but as patriots in their own right. Such radicalism shocked more conservative American men. One wrote with a sneer: "Is there a female congress in Edenton as well?"

The years of protest before independence helped some women find their exceptional political voice. Mercy Otis Warren, for example, lived in the shadow of her fiery brother, James Otis and her radical husband, James Warren. Yet, as the protest against British policies intensified, it was Mercy Warren who became the propagandist par excellence of the Massachusetts resistance. In a series of plays published in the Boston newspapers, Warren effectively advanced the patriot cause. The cast of characters in her biting satires bore names that condemned or praised familiar local figures: Lt. Governor Thomas Hutchinson appeared as Rapatio, greedy for power and office at any price; his servile brother-in-law, Andrew Oliver, became known throughout Massachusetts as Mr. Limpet while the patriots were ennobled as Brutus and Rusticus, names that conjured up the farmer-generals of the glorious Roman Republic. Although Warren published her plays anonymously, her authorship was well known within the colony's radical inner circles. Later, after the revolution, it was Mercy Otis Warren who wrote the first history of the struggle for independence, a three volume work that proudly bore her name on the title page.

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Not all women flocked to the patriot side, of course – any more than all men supported calls for resistance to Parliament and its authority. Wives of more conservative men were far slower to become politicized. More often, they became victims of the rising antagonisms and violence between radicals and those loyal to the Crown. Esther Sewall of Cambridge, was one of those women whose life was tragically transformed by the coming revolution. Esther's life began well enough – she was born to a notable Massachusetts family, the Quincys, and she was courted by both Jonathan Sewall and his bosom friend, John Adams. Sewall surely seemed the wiser choice, for he was ambitious, witty, and charming, while Adams was self-absorbed, anxious, and filled with self-doubt. Jonathan and Esther married in 1763 and, soon after, his career began to flourish. He won plum appointments as solicitor-general, and then attorney general, of the province; by the end of the decade he had captured one of the prize royal appointments to a judgeship in the newly created Vice-Admiralty courts. But by 1774, his outspoken support of Crown policy had made him a hated man. It was not Jonathan, however, but Esther, alone in their Cambridge home with her young sons, who faced the wrath of local radicals. An angry mob surrounded her home, threatening to burn it down – and murder everyone in it—if Sewall were not turned over to them at once. Esther kept her cool; she went to

struggled to reassure them.

Meanwhile, Lafayette had ridden off to York to confer with Generals Gates and Mifflin about the expedition to Canada. Washington was by no means certain these persuasive gentlemen would not make an irresistible appeal to the twenty year old marquis' hunger for fame and glory. The presumably hostile committee from Congress was pondering the report on the army's problems, with no assurance that they would agree with it – or do anything about it.

In the midst of such a waking nightmare, could this deeply troubled soldier, alone in Valley Forge's wintry woods, have sunk to his knees – or one knee, as some artists imagine? Seen in this context, Washington's prayer seems far less improbable. In fact, it seems to me more than likely that Washington would try to regain his shaken faith in God's support.

At the battle of Monmouth, fought less than two weeks after Washington and his men marched out of Valley Forge, there is startling – and far more definite – evidence of the role faith was playing in Washington's life at this point in the Revolutionary struggle.

By this time, France had entered the war on the American side, transforming the rebels' faltering hopes into a renewed confidence in victory. The British evacuated Philadelphia and began retreating to New York. Washington pursued their army across New Jersey, hoping to win a major battle that might end the war.

Washington still had opponents inside the army. They were led by the second in command, mercurial, British-born General Charles Lee. He had been captured in late 1776 and exchanged for a British general only a few weeks before the Americans left Valley Forge. In a council of war, the acerbic Lee derided Washington's desire to attack the British, claiming the Americans could never withstand them in the open field. Yet Lee's egotism and jealousy led him to insist on commanding the 4,500 men Washington committed to the attack on the rear guard of the enemy army in its camp near Monmouth Court House.

When the British counterattacked in force, Lee's lack of confidence in the American soldier led him to retreat without firing more than a few random shots -- and without bothering to inform Washington, who was approaching the battlefield with the rest of the Continental Army.

In murderous June heat, General Washington met Lee's exhausted men stumbling to the rear with bewilderment and fear on their faces. The British were in fierce pursuit, only 15 minutes away. For a moment, Washington sat on his horse, stunned and appalled. It looked as if he was about to preside over a rout that would ruin his reputation as a general forever.

A moment later Washington experienced what might be called a military epiphany. In a letter to his younger brother John Augustine Washington written a few days later, the general told how he had suddenly sensed "that bountiful Providence which has never failed us in the hour of distress" had arranged for him to encounter the British at this place. It was all but perfect for defense.

Washington began giving orders. He put Colonel Henry Beekman Livingston's New York regiment behind a hedgerow and added other regiments as quickly as they materialized.

He positioned two cannon to cover the road. He ordered two of the retreating regiments to occupy the fringe of the hilly woods on the left and told their colonels that they must assault the enemy and check their advance, even if it cost them every man on their muster rolls.

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By the time the British attacked, Washington was in command of the situation. The enemy assault was beaten back with heavy casualties and the king's men were glad to creep away under cover of darkness and continue their humiliating retreat to New York and the shelter of the royal navy's guns. The battle of Monmouth not only confirmed Washington as the army's commander in chief -- it was an unforgettable example of the role religious faith played in his leadership.

Over the last century, millions of Americans have visited Valley Forge National Historical Park. They have found in the soldiers' reconstructed huts and Isaac Potts' modest stone house inspiration that deepened their pride in America's Revolutionary heritage. During our 1976 bicentennial, President Gerald Ford called the encampment "a shrine of quiet valor."

It's rather remarkable, the way this unassuming unelected president found a phrase that sums up both Washington's secret struggle and the stubborn dedication of the silent majority of the officers and soldiers who didn't resign or desert in spite of hunger and cold and seeming neglect by their government.

Perhaps we can add to this heritage of valor the renewed faith in God's support that a troubled George Washington found in the wintry woods during those days of personal and national crisis. I think it, too, should become part of the no longer hidden history of Valley Forge. ☙

the commissary department, the army was soon eating well.

Before the year 1778 ended, Dr. Benjamin Rush was whining that George Washington had more influence over the Continental Congress than George III had over the British parliament.

How did this political transformation take place? The general applied to politics some lessons he had already learned about fighting a war. He seized the initiative and threw his enemies on the defensive. He gave allies like Laurens and Dana the ammunition they needed to be his spokesmen in Congress.

Perhaps most important, Washington challenged the true Whig version of patriotism. In letters and conversations, the general dismissed their theory that patriotism should be completely disinterested. It was based on a false understanding of human nature. "Men may speculate as they will," Washington wrote. "They may talk of patriotism – they may draw a few examples from ancient story of great achievements performed by its influence. But whoever builds upon it as a sufficient basis for conducting a long and bloody war, will find themselves deceived in the end."

Washington added that he did not mean "to exclude altogether the idea of patriotism. I know it exists, and I know it has done much in the present contest. But...it must be aided by a prospect of interest or some reward...."

Washington was not merely theorizing here. He had talked to more than a few of the dozens of officers who had already resigned their commissions and knew what they were thinking. Many protested that they were still patriots. But they did not see why patriotism required them to stay in the army while their wives and children were living in poverty at home and most men their age were making money from the war.

This was why Washington made it clear to the congressional committee that a promise to the officers of a postwar pension – half pay for life – was crucial to the army's survival. With the help of Chairman Dana and the other members of the committee that came to the winter camp, he got this proposal through Congress before the army left Valley Forge.

Early in the book, I confessed my surprise at the emergence of this skillful politician at Valley Forge. I was even more surprised by another discovery. I found strong evidence that Washington's political struggle had a spiritual component.

One day in early February, 1778, Isaac Potts, the owner of the small stone house Washington was renting as his headquarters, visited the winter camp. A heavy snowfall had left the fields and roads covered with drifts. As he passed his former home, Potts saw General Washington emerge and walk into some nearby woods.

A curious Potts followed him at a discreet distance and saw Washington on his knees on the snow. Potts later told a friend that the sight had changed his mind about the war for independence. As a Quaker, he had been opposed to its violence and bloodshed. From that day Potts claimed he became a revolutionary.

Thus was born one of the most debated legends of Valley Forge. It has been perpetuated in statues and paintings. But not everyone has believed it. Many historians have attacked Potts' story because it did not surface until almost a century after the Quaker supposedly saw the moment of prayer. I was one of these skeptics. We argued that Washington did not believe in a God who responded to prayer. Instead he apparently saw God as an impersonal engineer, presiding over a world where everything was foreordained. Many intelligent men in the 18th Century, influenced by the discoveries of Isaac Newton and other scientists, accepted this idea.

But recent research has revealed an unsuspected personal depth to Washington's faith in the divinity he usually called "Provedence." During the French and Indian War, he apparently had what scholars of religion call "a faith experience."

Four times, Washington barely survived ferocious forest combats with the French and their Indian allies. His closest call was the time he and his men came under friendly fire in a twilight skirmish. Writing in the third person, Washington remarked that the flying bullets "involved the life of G.W. in as much jeopardy as it had ever been before or since."

How deeply this experience affected Washington's faith in the God he called Provedence can be seen in letters he wrote during the Revolution. As he was preparing to fight the British army in New York in the summer of 1776, he wrote to his French and Indian War comrade, Adam Stephen, who was now a Continental Army general. Referring to two of the battles in which they had narrowly escaped death, Washington said he could not let their anniversaries go unmentioned. "The same Provedence which protected us on these occasions will, I hope, continue his mercies."

Note the personal pronoun. For Washington, this God was a being who had the capacity to dispense "mercies." This is language that comes close to the Christian and Jewish idea of God.

From this viewpoint, the timing of Washington's moment of prayer in Valley Forge's wintry woods is significant. February 1778 was the worst month of George Washington's life. The heavy snowfall had all but paralyzed the encampment and made the roads impassable. The army ran out of food and for a few days mutiny and collapse seemed a certainty. Men repeatedly showed up at headquarters to tell their commander in chief they had nothing to eat. Anguished aides saw Washington's eyes fill with tears as he

the door and addressed the mob, explaining that her husband was in Boston. Then, keeping her wits about her, she invited the crowd, many of them recognizable neighbors, to sample her husband's wine cellar. Alcohol proved to be an acceptable substitute for a loyalist's blood and a drunken mob at last departed, leaving Esther, her family, and her home in tact.

Esther's trials were far from over. By 1775, the Sewalls were living in exile in London. The revolution that soon followed introduced Esther to poverty in England and to austerity later on when the family moved to Canada. But most importantly, it destroyed Esther's marriage – for in London her husband suffered what we would call a nervous breakdown. Locked in his room for months, he developed the irrational idea that his wife was responsible for the war—and he doggedly maintained this notion for the rest of his life. Until his death, Jonathan Sewall raved against his wife, hoping, he wrote, that she would be 'tied to the tail of a comet' and carried into space. Ironically, in the same year that the Sewalls fled Boston, Esther's younger sister, Dorothy, made what she, too, believed was a good marriage. As Mrs. John Hancock, Dorothy enjoyed life as the wife of one of the new nation's most successful political leaders—and one of its richest citizens.

As the likelihood of war grew, violent outbreaks such as the attack on Esther Sewall's home grew more frequent. Often enough, women were part of the crowds who hurled stones at the windows of known Loyalists' houses. One Massachusetts loyalist described these patriot women as caught up in an "epidemical phrenzy" that rivaled the intensity of their male compatriots. Peter Oliver was appalled at the presence of women in the mobs that tarred and feathered supporters of the Crown. All feminine restraint and delicacy, he lamented, had been abandoned – a radical change as drastic as the political revolution itself. "When a Woman throws aside her Modesty," he declared, "Virtue drops a tear." But if Oliver was horrified by women's active role in the streets, patriots like Ezra Stiles applauded the actions of women who, he boasted, "surpassed the men for Eagerness & Spirit in the Defence of Liberty by Arms." To Stiles, Virtue was not crying, but smiling broadly on the women of New England.

Even before independence was declared, the war had begun in Massachusetts. In the wake of Lexington and Concord, women were the first to see the bloodshed and tragedy that would accompany the birth of an independent nation. And they were the first to experience the danger and anxiety of a war waged in their own towns. Suddenly, as Hannah Adams learned, no one was safe; for British soldiers forced their way into her Cambridge home, put a bayonet to her breast and threatened to kill her. The romance, or as one New England women who witnessed the battle of Bunker Hill put it, "the pomp and circumstance of war," faded quickly here, and everywhere the armies went.

Over the next eight years, these women – like women across the country – would confront the perilous demands of this home front war. Vital supplies quickly dried up, prompting women to use all their ingenuity to replace preservatives, medicines, and even alcoholic drinks. Walnut ash replaced salt in food preservation; recipes for homemade soap circulated widely in newspapers, including this one that instructed: "take eight quarts of common family soap and put to it about half a pint of common sea salt; boil this for a few minutes, then set it by and let it cool." The result, wrote the women who contributed the recipe, would be almost as good as the British soap no longer available. When marching American soldiers lamented the lack of traditional rum rations, women produced a substitute, brewing corn liquor which they ladled out from barrels placed alongside the road. But making-do soon proved more difficult. Inflation quickly ate up meager savings – prompting many women from every region to write desperate letters to their husbands, telling of starvation and fears of freezing due to a lack of winter firewood. Both British and American armies increased their anxiety, for they took livestock and harvests from farms – leaving women with no meat for the winter and no grain for bread. Invading forces on both sides ransacked homes, raped their residents, and stole the very buckles off women's shoes.

War songs and poems might urge husbands to "leave their loving wives/and sprightly youths attend/ Leave their sweethearts and risk their lives/Their country to defend." But when men responded to the call of duty, their wives were left behind to keep farms and shops operating. The responsibility these women shouldered was great, for if they failed, there would be nothing to come home to in victory or defeat. For most women, the experience of taking over traditionally male work roles was a nightmare, since these tasks were added to their own household and child care tasks. Much depended upon the financial resources and support from neighbors and extended families available to these women.

But for some, the experience of crossing gender work roles meant acquiring new areas of confidence and a new sense of accomplishment. There is no better example of this growing confidence in one's abilities than the exchange, now famous among historians of women in the revolutionary era, between a Massachusetts Loyalist and his wife. He had fled to safety in England; she remained behind to protect their claim to the farm. Overwhelmed at first, she slowly found the mysteries of the male related world revealed to her. "Your farm is doing well," she wrote in the early

months; "our farm is doing well," she assured him later; and finally, in a shift that marked more than pronouns, she wrote "my farm is doing well."

Whether they struggled to survive or reveled in new- found skills, wives worried about their husbands and sons – and often commented on the loneliness of their wartime lives. Their plight was captured in a verse of a popular song: "Here I sit on Buttermilk Hill/ Who can blame me, cry my fill?/ And every tear would turn a mill,/ Since Johnny has gone for a soldier." One has only to look at the exchanges, sometimes melancholy, between Abigail and John Adams to realize that the pain of separation, the anxiety that accompanied the potential dangers of war, the personal dimensions of the revolution must be integrated into any account we claim is a 'true and complete history' of the revolution. In the course of writing *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence,* I read many poignant letters between husbands and wives. Even the feistiest of women, like Lucy Flucker Knox, wife of General Henry Knox, succumbed to depression and despair.

Lucy was more alone than most, for her Loyalist parents had gone into exile in England and her husband, General Henry Knox had gone to war. "I return home," she wrote to her dear "Harry," "to find myself entirely alone, to reflect that the only friend I have in the world is such an immense distance from me…My poor heart is ready to burst." Like poorer women, Lucy Knox found relief from her loneliness by picking herself up and traveling to join General Knox at each winter encampment. Lucy relished her times with the army – and with the other generals' wives – so much that she resented any attempt by her husband to discourage her arrival. While winters at Valley Forge or Monmouth might seem to us a dismal prospect, they were a welcome relief for Lucy, who felt her life was otherwise "barren of adventure and replete with repetition."

When Lucy Knox took up residence at Valley Forge or Monmouth, the best available accommodations were found for her. Like Martha Washington and Caty Greene, Lucy set up housekeeping in a comfortable civilian home and enlisted men were assigned to serve at table and assist with any social event. But there were other women who flocked to winter camps by the thousands – poor women whose husbands, fathers or sons were common soldiers – and remained, even when the army was once again on the move each spring. They came seeking food and shelter for themselves and their children, but they worked for what they received. In fact, these women provided vital services to both the British and the American armies: cooking, cleaning, washing, gathering wood for fires, mending clothing, and nursing the sick and wounded. Every commanding officer realized how essential their services were and appreciated that the presence of camp followers kept desertions down.

Life for these camp followers was spartan and exhausting. After months trailing behind the army, their children in tow, babes in their arms, their clothing worn or in tatters, their hair uncombed and dirty, their appearance frightened respectable matrons who saw them trudging by. In 1777, Hannah Winthrop watched in sympathetic horror as camp followers accompanying Burgoyne's captured troops passed through Boston. There were "great numbers of women," Winthrop wrote, "who seemed to be the beasts of burthen, having a bushel basket on their back, by which they were been double." In these baskets, Winthrop realized, the women carried "Pots and Kettles, various sorts of Furniture, children peeping through…and other utensils."

"I never had the least idea," she confessed, "that the Creation produced such a sordid set of creatures in human Figure."

The women Winthrop observed were the enemy, but camp followers of the American army were equally distressing to observe. The cruelest comments on these women came from officers whose more refined tastes led them to declare them that "the furies who inhabit the infernal Regions can never be painted half so hideous as these women." Even ordinary American soldiers like Massachusetts private Joseph Plumb Martin sometimes mocked the women who washed their filthy clothing and cooked their meager meals. Martin wrote that "a caravan of wild beasts could bear no comparison" to the women followers of a Pennsylvania regiment. And yet, even Martin acknowledged the capacity for bravery among these "rag tag and bob tail" women. Observing a woman assisting her husband at the cannon, he wrote admiringly that she stood her ground, unshaken, when a cannon ball fell directly between her spread feet. Her only comment, Martin recalled with obvious delight, was that it was fortunate it didn't pass a little higher, for in that case "it might have carried away something else." Private Martin's admiration increased when he noted that she continued calmly with her artillery tasks.

The close call experienced by this witty woman was not uncommon. Often, especially in the forts, camp followers became soldiers – for when husbands fell beside the cannons that they manned, wounded or killed by the enemy, wives took up their posts, loading and firing over the fortress walls. The men called these women "Molly Pitchers", a nickname based on their job carrying pitchers of water to cool down the cannons after a firing. Not a few of these Molly Pitchers became casualties of war, wounded and sometimes crippled in the line of duty.

it beneath his dignity to answer this barrage of slander and contempt. If the criticism became a clamorous torrent as General Mifflin predicted, they expected a humiliated Washington to resign his commission and go home to Mount Vernon.

Instead, Washington stunned his opponents by fighting back. This was not an easy task. He could not go public with his counterattack. Dissension in the American ranks was exactly what the watchful British in Philadelphia would delight in hearing – and exploiting. He could not deny the canard that he had twice as many men as the British –a lie that Dr. Rush, among many others, industriously spread. If Washington admitted his army had shrunk to 7,000 men, the British might have decided an all out assault could end the war.

That is why Washington conducted this personal war secretly. When one of his generals reported an especially insulting comment on Washington's leadership that General Conway bragged he had mailed to General Gates, Washington sent Conway a blunt inquiry, asking if it were true. A panicky Conway told Mifflin someone was reading Gates' mail. A flustered Mifflin warned Gates to be more careful. Their reactions suggest Washington was a lot more formidable than they were ready to admit.

Next, the commander in chief formed a political alliance with Henry Laurens, the president of Congress, who had sided with the critics at first. Laurens' son, John, the general's aide, played a crucial role in this power shift. Instead of reading the smear letter left on the stairs to Congress's chamber, or handing it to a committee, as Laurens was technically required to do, the president gave the expectant members a cool smile and stuffed it into his pocket. He said the fireplace was the best place to deposit such anonymous documents. He then sent it to Washington with a warning letter.

Another political asset Washington used masterfully was the Marquis de Lafayette. Washington kept him in the loop about his critics' game plan. He may have showed him a letter from Dr. James Craik, one of Washington's oldest friends, spelling out their tactics and goal – the general's resignation.

When Gates and Mifflin tried to lure Lafayette into their circle by offering him command of a winter invasion of Canada, Washington advised the Marquis to go to York and talk it over with them.

Lafayette was invited to dinner at Gates' quarters. At the end of the meal, toasts were offered to Congress, France, General Gates and others, conspicuously omitting Washington. Lafayette raised his glass and toasted the commander in chief, forcing the others to join him.

Then the Marquis said he would accept command of the Canadian expedition – but would consider himself under Washington's authority and would report to him, not Gates and the Board of War. If this was not agreeable, he might go back to Paris and tell them about the dissension in the American army, a move that might sink the long hoped for alliance with France. The flabbergasted schemers could only mutter their assent, making them look – and feel – like idiots.

When the five man committee arrived at Valley Forge to rap Washington's knuckles, instead of the whines and complaints they expected, the general presented them with a stunning 16,000 word analysis of the army's problems. Among other things, it nailed General Mifflin's mismanagement of the quartermaster department as one of the chief causes of the soldiers' woes.

Washington invited the committee chairman, Francis Dana, to dinner at headquarters. They discussed the war and the grave possibility that America might lose it. Toward the end of the evening, Washington suddenly said: "Mr. Dana – Congress doesn't trust me. I cannot go on thus."

The congressman, his anti-Washington bias already shaken by the 16,000 word report, assured the general that he was wrong. Most of Congress trusted him – and Dana emphatically included himself in that number. By the time they left Valley Forge, the entire committee had become Washington's allies.

In little more than two months, General Washington had his critics on the run. Anti-Washington congressmen rushed to deny to their friends and constituents that they had ever harbored a negative thought about that great and good man, George Washington. One of them lamely claimed that if they had ever nominated one of his enemies to a post, it was "by accident."

James Lovell dismissed the insults and smears as "bickerings" and blamed them on General Conway, who was soon on his way back to France. General Gates wrote Washington a hypocritical letter, claiming he had always been "averse to controversy." He gave up his post on the Board of War and persuaded Congress to make him military commander of Boston, where nothing controversial was likely to happen for the rest of the war.

Not long after Gates' collapse, President Henry Laurens called for an investigation into General Mifflin's conduct as quartermaster general. Laurens accused him of stealing millions of dollars and being responsible for the deaths of thousands of soldiers at Valley Forge. Mifflin was forced to resign from the army and devote most of his time to denying these charges.

For a final touch, Washington persuaded Congress to appoint General Nathanael Greene as Mifflin's successor to run the vital quartermaster department. With the help of new leadership that Greene chose for

that many people were unhappy with the "weak conduct of General Washington." Marshall described the 12,000 man British army in Philadelphia as a "handful of banditti" and lamented that they were pillaging and raping in full view of the American generals and their army, who were more interested in "consulting where they shall go to spend the winter in jollity, gaming and carousing." Marshall closed this diatribe with a cry: "O Washington, where is your courage?"

Another vocal Washington critic was Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a devoted follower of John and Samuel Adams. In a letter to John, Rush compared Washington to General Horatio Gates, the victor in the 1777 battle of Saratoga: "I have heard several officers who have served under General Gates compare his army to a well-regulated family. The same gentlemen have compared General Washington's imitation of an army to an unformed mob."

After Gates, Rush's favorite soldier was Brigadier General Thomas Conway, an Irish-born French colonel who never stopped tearing down Washington and the American army. Rush dismissed the hostility that the condescending Conway was generating among his fellow officers. "Some people blame him for calling some of our generals fools, cowards and drunkards in public company," Rush wrote. The doctor insisted these remarks were "proofs of his integrity and should raise him in the opinion of every friend of America."

As further proof of his integrity, Conway was reported to have stood at the bar of a local tavern and called General Washington "an old woman."

Congressman James Lovell of Massachusetts told Samuel Adams in December that he had little to say about our *grand* army: "Tis a subject very sickening to even a strong stomach." Sam did not disagree or otherwise comment on this denigration.

In his diary, John Adams cried: "Oh heaven! Grant us one great soul! One leading mind that would extricate the best cause from that ruin which seems to await it."

Obviously, General Washington was not this great soul.

It was soon apparent that both Adamses and many other members of the Continental Congress shared Dr. Rush's low opinion of the American commander in chief. In his diary John Adams cried: "Oh heaven! Grant us one great soul! One leading mind that would extricate the best cause from that ruin which seems to await it." Obviously, General Washington was not this great soul.

Skillfully orchestrating this negative chorus behind the scenes was a handsome and wealthy Philadelphian, former Quartermaster General Thomas Mifflin. He had quit his job in disgust when the British captured his city. Mifflin never bothered to inform Washington of his departure and thus, the quartermaster department, whose wagons were vital to transporting food for the army, careened into confusion.

In a letter to General Gates, Mifflin told the Saratoga victor that he had "saved our Northern hemisphere." Then he went to work on Washington. Mifflin blamed the army's poor performance on the loss of good officers who "would not pay an undeserved tribute of praise and flattery" to "the Great Man" -- Washington. Their reward was "repeated slights and unjustifiable arrogance" that drove them from the army. Another problem was Washington's slavish dependence on the advice of General Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island. Mifflin claimed Greene was a numbskull and possibly a traitor.

Now, however, Mifflin thought indignation over Washington's performance was beginning to rise. Soon it would swell into a "mighty torrent of public clamor & public vengeance."

Mifflin soon persuaded General Gates to come to York and become president of the Board of War. Mifflin became the second ranking general on the board. According to its revised charter from Congress, the board had the power to appoint generals, launch campaigns and reorganize the army, with no need to consult George Washington, the supposed commander in chief. One of the Board's first moves was the appointment of General Conway as the army's inspector general.

Simultaneously, Congress dispatched a five man investigating committee to Valley Forge where James Lovell assured Sam Adams that they would "rap a demigod over the knuckles." The committee's chairman, Francis Dana, had been Lovell's Harvard roommate.

Dr. Benjamin Rush, meanwhile, was busy writing anonymous smear letters to powerful politicians, such as Patrick Henry, the governor of Virginia. The doctor told Henry that the American army could only be rescued if the governor demanded Washington's immediate resignation.

The devious doctor, who pretended to be Washington's friend and admirer, was also probably involved in a second anonymous smear letter. This item was left on the stairs of the York County Court House, where Congress met each day. Rush obviously hoped President Henry Laurens would be forced to read it aloud to the members, who could then orate on its long list of denunciations of Washington.

Washington's abusers assumed he would consider

If camp followers were accidental soldiers, there were other women who intentionally sought combat. Historians can not tally the number of women and girls who disguised themselves as men and enlisted in the military for, if they were successful, they passed unnoticed; if they failed, many officers did not record their names or their punishments. Still, we know that women who were 'discovered' in their disguises were often treated harshly. An imposter could be led out of camp behind a wagon, hands tied and back bleeding from the lash, and the drum and fifers playing a tune they called "the whore's march."

Perhaps the most celebrated of these female soldiers came from Massachusetts. Her name was Deborah Sampson, but her fellow soldiers knew her as Private Robert Shirtliffe. Deborah's motives tell us much about the status of women in 18th century New England. Poor and without a dowry, she spent her years before the war working for small wages as a domestic servant. When she learned that recruiting agents were offering a generous bounty to able bodied men who agreed to wear a uniform, Deborah made up her mind. Tall and strong, she donned men's trousers and shirt, and enlisted in the army. As Private Robert Shirtliffe she served honorably for three years, seeing battle and being wounded twice. Her masquerade, as historian Alfred Young aptly called it, ended when a camp fever led a doctor to closely examine the young private. Sampson's military superiors were so impressed by her years of service that they refused to dishonorably discharge her; she left, honorably, and was awarded a veterans pension.

For several years, Deborah continued to present herself as a man, aware that field hands earned more than domestic helpers. Then, as she tells us in her autobiography, one spring morning she awoke to birds singing and flowers in bloom, put on her apron and bonnet, and eventually married and raised a family. The story does not end there; when Deborah Sampson Gannett died, her husband sued for a widow's pension – and got it.

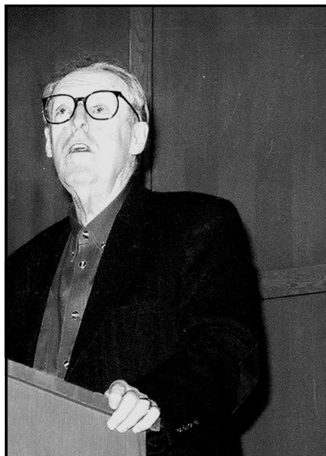
While the Deborah Sampsons and Molly Pitchers chose the patriot struggle for independence, we should not forget that for many women, "liberty and freedom" meant quite different choices. For Indian women, fighting against American independence was the best hope to preserve their culture and their tribal lands; the colonists were, as the Iroquois and Cherokee knew, 'land grabbers' and their victory would mean a crushing defeat and inevitable exile from homelands for Native Americans. Molly Brant, the Mohawks' recognized leader in diplomacy, threw her support to the British—and most of the Iroquois Confederacy followed her lead. For African American women, Patrick Henry's impassioned "give me liberty or give me death" had a meaning Henry himself would have violently opposed. During the war, thousands of enslaved women risked recapture, punishment and even death to escape plantations and seek freedom in the British army camps. Most died of starvation or disease in those camps; those who survived joined the exodus of white loyalists to a new life in Canada.

Americans won their independence in 1781 and recognition as a new nation in 1783. What rewards were reaped by the women who had been vital participants in the struggle for independence? That women did not gain political rights, that their legal death in marriage remained unchanged, and that their sphere remained domestic can come as no surprise to you. The great accomplishments of the war – the creation of a new, independent nation and the establishment of a republican government – seemed to have exhausted the reform energies of the American people. Like Americans after World War I and II, 18th century women and men craved a return to "normalcy," a chance to erase the pain and loss of 8 years of destruction and death and deprivation and pick up their lives where they had left them. Few wives had time to consider a reform of gender ideology as they helped rebuild the farm or plantation or shop. And yet a significant, if often overlooked change in gender ideology did come. The Republic could not survive, its leaders believed, unless patriotism was instilled in the next generation of citizens. They called upon women to achieve this critical task. Mothers were urged to school their sons in patriotism, to bring up defenders of the republic, to instill public virtue in the next generation of men; and in this manner, women's domestic sphere suddenly acquired a civic component. The new ideology, known as "Republican Motherhood," acknowledged women's intelligence and their ability to make political commitments. With it came a call for better education for women so that they could, in turn, educate their sons. The resulting rise in women's formal education was the first step toward the demand for equality voiced at Seneca Falls in 1848.

Protesters, propagandists, boycotters, fundraisers, spinners….surrogate farmers and shopkeepers… Nurses and washerwomen, spies and couriers, Molly Pitchers and soldiers….bold slaves and astute diplomats…the canvas of the revolution is filled with female figures, patriots and loyalists, participants and acute observers of the political and military and diplomatic history being made not simply around them, but by them. As the British army evacuated New York, a soldier was heard to comment that, even if the King's soldiers defeated America's men, they could never conquer American women. Perhaps King George ought to have paid closer attention to these Daughters of Liberty and co-founders of a new nation.

The No Longer Hidden History of Valley Forge

Thomas Fleming



Thomas Fleming is the author of more than a dozen books on the American Revolution, including *Liberty! The American Revolution* and *Washington's Secret War: The Hidden History of Valley Forge.*

In his memoirs of Washington, the general's step-grandson George Washington Parke Custis described a touching scene on the December 19, 1777 march to Valley Forge. When Washington and his mounted escort rode to the head of the plodding column on the Gulph Road, the colonel of the leading regiment ordered his men to halt and present arms to salute the general.

As Washington rode slowly past them returning the salute, he beckoned the colonel to join him. "How comes it, sir," he asked, "that I have tracked the march of your troops by the bloodstains of their feet upon the frozen ground? Were there no shoes in the commissary stores, that this sad spectacle is to be seen along the public highways?"

The officer replied: "Your Excellency may rest assured that this sight is as painful to my feelings as it is to yours; but when the shoes were issued, the stores became exhausted before we could obtain even the smallest supply!"

Washington was "observed to be deeply affected" by this report, Custis wrote. He turned away and "with a voice tremulous yet kindly," exclaimed "Poor fellows" and rode on. It was, Custis concluded, a glimpse of Washington's "native goodness of heart."

This encounter never happened. The story is typical of the way numerous writers have attempted to dramatize Valley Forge as a place of pathetic misery for the enlisted men – while making General Washington little more than a sympathetic observer of their pain.

By December 19, 1777, Washington knew that far more than one unlucky regiment in his army lacked shoes. He had been receiving cries of distress about disintegrating footwear – and uniforms – for months. On December 1, 1777, Brigadier General George Weedon of Virginia told Washington his men lacked shoes, as well as warm clothing and blankets. On the same day, Major General John Sullivan of New Hampshire reported a third of his men were "without shoes, stockings or breeches." Private Joseph Plumb Martin of Connecticut confirmed these cries of alarm in his memoir of the war. "The greatest part" of the army," he wrote, "were...shirtless and barefoot."

As for the army distributing shoes to barefoot regiments, on December 3, 1777 (sixteen days before the march to Valley Forge), clothier general James Mease sent General Washington a report of the army's warehouses in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. There was a smattering of coats (200), breeches (30), hats (50), and a grand total of 90 pairs of shoes.

Was America incapable of producing shoes for its soldiers? By no means. The image of the primitive frontier confuses our view of the American Revolution. By 1776, America had been settled for 150 years and a surprisingly mature economy had long since evolved. In fact, on October 19, 1777 (two months before the Americans marched to Valley Forge), Elias Boudinot, a wealthy New Jerseyan, told General Washington he had three friends who had been trying for months to persuade Congress to let them erect a large tannery in a secure place and manufacture thousands of pairs of shoes for the army.

Why did the politicians pay no attention to this offer? The answer was the wrongheaded ideas and overall disorganization that permeated the Continental Congress. They insisted on trying to manage all aspects of running the war – without the knowledge or skills to do the job. Congress' reaction to every problem was to give it to a committee. In 1777 they created 114 of these creatures and in 1778 the number was 253. Before the war ended, the total hit 3,249. Most were three man affairs, whose members were chosen with little or no reference to their expertise or abilities. That meant they were usually incapable of getting much done.

This was why Congress appointed second or third raters like James Mease to clothe and feed the army and never bothered to find out if they were doing their jobs. Worsening matters was Congress' fixed belief that no one should make money out of the war, that patriotism should be the only motivation for everyone from businessmen to army privates. In mid-1777, Congress decided the army's commissaries should no longer receive a small percentage of the money they spent – the standard custom of the era. Instead, they were put on low salaries and warned that they were all suspected of being crooks. The head of the department quit on the spot and so did a large number of his assistants.

Two days after the army's arrival in Valley Forge, only a few brigades received salt pork. The rest got only flour. The next day, there was no meat for anyone. One regiment after another began chanting "NO MEAT! NO SOLDIER!" Other regiments began giving very good imitations of screeching owls and cawing crows, suggesting that they were thinking of flying their coops and heading for their home states. Desperate efforts by the commissaries restored a meat ration and a semblance of calm was regained. Yet in February, the meat ration again vanished and another mutiny loomed, headed off only by even more desperate efforts.

Congress' appalling ignorance of the army's needs was demonstrated during the February near-mutiny. It coincided with a congressional committee's visit to the camp. The politicians hauled the commissaries before them, prepared to denounce and possibly punish these underpaid civilians for failing to feed the troops.

Instead, the congressmen sat wide-eyed as the commissaries explained that the soldiers consumed a million pounds of meat a month. Their appetite for bread was equally immense.

Tradition has it that the failure to feed the army was the fault of a poor harvest. In fact, the 1777 harvest was one of the best on record. Nor was weather the villain. Again contrary to legend, the winter of 1777 - 78 was relatively mild. The temperature was well above freezing most of the time – I found one diarist who heard bluebirds chirping in the trees in January.

A large factor in the army's food shortages was the congressional decision to buy cattle and wheat at rock bottom prices. The politicians ignored the way the Continental dollars they spewed from their printing presses were depreciating. The soon-to-be-worthless money was supposed to give farmers a chance to demonstrate their patriotism. Instead, farmers hid their grain and cattle and refused to sell at "patriotic" prices. A letter from Ephraim Blaine, the head commissary for Valley Forge, made vivid this grim fact. Blaine told of the resistance he was encountering "purchasing and seizing cattle and whiskey" near Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

> ***Today Valley Forge is a national shrine. In 1777-1778, it looked more like a black hole into which the American Revolution was about to disappear.***

The emphasis was clearly on seizing. Blaine frequently had to "break open stable doors and windows." The locals regularly stole the cattle he found within twenty-four hours and Blaine was forced to import Continental soldiers from Lancaster to guard his four-legged captives.

Congress' chronic mismanagement had already been noted by many people. Philadelphia merchant Robert Morris summed it up bluntly in a 1776 letter to Benjamin Franklin in Paris: "As long as [Congress] persist[s] in the attempt to execute as well as deliberate on their business, it will never be done as it ought...this has been urged many a time by myself and others, but some of them do not like to part with power...."

These unlovely truths were the reasons for the secret war that erupted between Washington and Congress at Valley Forge. Only six of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776 were still in Congress when Washington and his men reached their winter camp. The rest had never seen Washington and knew little about him. They were more than receptive to the swell of disillusion that spread through their ranks when the commander in chief lost three battles and the British captured Philadelphia in late September of 1777.

Soon Washington was being battered by slanderous and abusive comments from all quarters, including the upper ranks of his army. The title of my opening chapter [in *Washington's Secret War*] sums up this side of the story: "GEORGE WASHINGTON: LOSER.

Today Valley Forge is a national shrine. In 1777-1778, it looked more like a black hole into which the American Revolution was about to disappear. Officers were resigning in droves and as many as fifty men deserted in a single day. Five thousand soldiers clung to life in the army's badly run hospitals and scarcely a night passed without sick men dying silently in their huts.

Meanwhile, the British army was enjoying warm beds and plentiful rations in Philadelphia – America's largest, wealthiest city. According to numerous critics, the mess was all General Washington's fault.

From the temporary capital of York (the raw frontier town to which the politicians had fled when the British captured Philadelphia), the president of Congress, Henry Laurens of South Carolina, wrote his twenty-two year old son John, who was serving as one of the commander-in-chief's aides:

> I am writing in Congress & in the midst of much talk...buz! (sic) says one: "I would if I had been commander of that army with such powers have procured all necessities which are said to be wanted without such whining complaints." "I would," says 2nd, "have prevented the amazing desertions which have happened, it only takes proper attention at fountain head." In short our army is under no regulation nor discipline &c &c &c.

Adding to this negative chorus were members of the revolutionary government of Pennsylvania. One of their leaders, Christopher Marshall, informed his diary