



Becoming Americans

Our Struggle to Be Both Free and Equal

The African American Legacy



A Choosing Revolution Resource

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The African American Legacy

Before, During, & After

the American Revolution

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CHOOSING REVOLUTION: The African American Legacy

On the eve of the Revolution, there were two-and-one-half million Americans in the rebellious colonies. Of these, half a million were black, a few free, the rest slaves. It has been estimated that during the seven years of war some 5,000 blacks served on the patriot side. The black soldier was, in fact, eager to fight on two fronts -- for his own freedom as well as for the freedom of his country. Therefore, when white governors and generals, running short of manpower in the army and navy, or white masters wary of risking their necks on the battlefield, promised the slave his freedom if he joined the ranks, he was more than willing to shoulder a musket in behalf of his own and American independence.

It was not easy for slave owners, worried by the threat of sabotage and revolt, to arm their chattels, and two southern states resisted the idea to the end. As Lorenzo J. Greene once pointed out, the half-million blacks in the country might have been assessed by both Patriots and Tories as crucial in the balance of military power. But in July of 1775, when Washington arrived in Massachusetts to take command of the American forces, one of his earliest orders barred "Negroes" and "vagabonds" from being recruited into the army. Many months passed before the general and Congress saw the light. Three years later, Adjutant General Alexander Scannell reported the names of over 750 black soldiers on the rolls of fourteen brigades of the Continental Army. During the summer of 1781, the Baron Ludwig Von Closen, viewing the army at White Plains, noted in his journal: "A quarter of them were Negroes, merry, confident, and sturdy."

There were, of course, many blacks who fought with the Tories. The British, always short of men in spite of their 30,000 German mercenaries, saw clearly from the start the role that black power might play in the struggle ahead. When slaves abandoned their Patriot masters in response to the blandishments of Lord Dunmore and Sir Henry Clinton, the decision to join the British was for them, as for their brothers on the opposite side, a blow struck against American slavery and for their own independence. It is possible that tens of thousands of slaves in South Carolina and Georgia went over to the British. Some blacks fled into the swamps and the forests or conspired to fight their own battle for freedom. By the war's end, 14,000 black men, women, and children, some still bound to fleeing Tory masters, some now free and ready to begin new lives in new places, had been evacuated by the British from Savannah, Charleston, and New York, and transported to Florida, Nova Scotia, Jamaica, and later, to Africa.

The black soldier and sailor of the Revolution, whether he fought for Congress or king, served in a variety of ways -- as infantryman, artilleryman, scout, guide, spy, guard, courier, wagoner, orderly, cook, waiter, able seaman, privateersman, and military laborer of all sorts. In a few cases, blacks formed their own units.

How many were killed or wounded, we can only guess. Some were heroes. Not long after they had fallen most of them were forgotten. The white memory of events recorded in print and paint usually left them out.¹

¹ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1700-1800, p. 32.

CHRONOLOGY 1760-1770

1760

- **Economic Conditions Overview:** More than 8,000 slaves were sent to the southern colonies annually by private traders. The Royal African Company alone imported as many as 2,500 slaves annually (although its monopoly ended in 1697). In all, it is estimated that there were as many as 386,000 slaves in the colonies; 299,000 were concentrated in the south. Georgia, which had resisted slavery during early stages of its settlement, had acquired a slave population amounting to about one-third of its total residents. Slaves produced the major staples: tobacco, rice, and indigo. Although it is clear that the South was heavily dependent on slave labor, the North was dependent as well. The principal markets and the major sources of revenue for the northern manufacturers were the large slaveholding colonies in the South and in the West Indies.²

1764

- **Massachusetts: James Otis** published a pamphlet entitled, Rights of British Colonies. He affirmed the Negro's right to freedom, and advocated the right of Negroes to rebel against their masters.

1765

- **South Carolina:** White citizens held a protest against the Stamp Act. During the demonstration the citizens chanted, "*liberty, liberty.*" Later, a group of Negro slaves also publicly chanted "*liberty, liberty.*"

1769

- **John Swain** was sued by his Negro slave named Boston. Boston won the case and was freed.

1769

- **Virginia: Thomas Jefferson**, a new member of the House of Burgess, introduced a bill that would make it easier for slavesholders to manumit their slaves. It was soundly rejected.

1770

- **The Chesapeake: The Tobacco Plantation Economy**
Perhaps one of the most prevailing aspects of life in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina was the dependence on tobacco. The crop was grown on small farms as well as on large plantations, and almost everywhere its cultivation demanded slaves, ranging from a few on the farms to hundreds on the plantations. The plantations greatly influenced the economy of the Chesapeake.

The slave population increased without regard to the instability of tobacco prices. For example, there were only about 16,000 Blacks in Virginia in 1700; but by 1770, because of

² Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), p. 41.

CHRONOLOGY 1770-1772

natural increases and heavy importation, the Black population had reached over 170,000, about 42 percent of Virginia's total population.

The Revolutionary War revealed just how dependent this part of the country was on slaves. Prior to the Revolution, tobacco from the Chesapeake region accounted for nearly half of Britain's trade with the colonies. During the war, however, at least 20,000 slaves were lost to British "invaders" who promised them freedom if they enlisted on their side. The postwar decrease in slave labor contributed significantly to a major slump in tobacco exports. One renowned historian noted that this "drastic decline of tobacco exports to Britain marked the most sweeping change in American commerce that occurred immediately after the war." The postwar slave labor shortage took its toll on almost every staple crop in the South.³

1770-March

- **Boston: Crispus Attucks**, an escaped slave, was the first to die during the Boston Massacre. "The thirst for freedom was universal among the people of New England. With them liberty was not circumscribed by condition and now, since the slave Attucks had struck the first blow for America's independence, thereby electrifying the colonies and putting quite a different phase upon their grievances, the people were called upon to witness a real slave struggling with his oppressors for his freedom. It touched the people of the colonies as they had never been touched before, and they arrayed themselves for true freedom." (An oration by Daniel Webster)⁴

1772

- **England: The Somerset Case**
James Somerset, a Negro slave, was brought to London by his Boston master. Somerset tried to escape, but he was captured. He was sentenced to be sold and deported to Jamaica. Granville Sharp, a Quaker and abolitionist, acted as Somerset's counsel. The attorneys argued that "the air of England was too free for a slave to breathe in." June 22, Chief Justice Mansfield ruled that "the black must be discharged." His decision in the Somerset case stated that "by the Common Law no man could have property in another man and that as soon as a Negro came to England he is free; one may be villein in England but not a slave." Nevertheless some slaves upon hearing of the decision ran away from their owners and attempted to get passage to England.⁵

³ Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), pp. 42-43.

⁴ Wilson, Joseph T., Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 31.

⁵ Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), p. 45.

CHRONOLOGY 1772-1773

1772

- **Boston: Reverend Isaac Skillman** published, *Oration Upon the Beauties of Liberty*. He demanded the immediate abolition of slavery.

1773-January 6

- **Boston: Petition** - Governor Hutchinson received a petition for freedom, from Negro slaves of Boston.

On January 6, 1773, to Governor Hutchinson and the general court came "the humble Petition of many Slaves, living in the Town of Boston, and other Townes in the Province...who have had every Day of their Lives imbittered with this most intollerable Reflection, That, let their Behaviour be what it will, nor their Children to all Generations, shall ever be able to do, or to possess and enjoy any Thing, no not ever *Life itself*, but in a Manner as the *Beasts that perish*. We have no Property! We have no Wives! No Children! We have no City! No Country!..." The signature, ironically, is "Felix."⁶

1773-April

- **Boston: Petition** - Negroes of Boston circulated a leaflet which petitioned for their freedom and requested that they be relocated to Africa.

"— in behalf of our fellow slaves in this province. And by order of their Committee" The letter begins with a taunt: "We expect great things from men who have made such a noble stand against the designs of their *fellow-men* to enslave them" and continues with a suggestion: now, at least, allow the "Africans...one day in a week to work for themselves, to enable them to earn money" so that they can buy their freedom. Even so, there is no future in America: we will "leave the province...as soon as we can, from our joint labours procure money to transport ourselves to some part of the Coast of *Africa* where we propose a settlement."⁷

1773-June

- **Boston: Petition** - Negroes of Boston submit another petition for freedom. In June, another petition was sent to Hutchinson and the general court,

"in behalf all thous who by divine Permission are held in a state of slavery, within the bowels of a free Country. Your Petitioners apprehend they have

⁶ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1700-1800, p. 11.

⁷ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1700-1800, p. 11.

CHRONOLOGY 1773-1774

in comon with other men a naturel right to be free and without molestation to injoy such property as they may acquire by their industry, or by any other means not detrimental to their fellow men..."⁸

1773

- **Massachusetts: Law Suit** - Caesar Hendrick, a Negro slave, was awarded damages and freed. "Suits for service" was a slow process and expensive. Slaves pooled their funds together to pay the plaintiff's court and legal fees.

1773

- **South Carolina: Black Baptist Church** - A Black Baptist church was organized at Silver Bluff, South Carolina. This was probably the first Black Baptist church under Black leadership established in the colonies, although there is some disagreement about this.

1774-May 25

- **Boston: Petition** - Negroes submit a petition to Governor Gage. They claim their "natural right to freedom..."

A year later, May 25, 1774, there came still another petition to the new Governor Thomas Gage and the general court from "a Grate Number of Blackes of the Province...held in a state of Slavery within a free and christian Country." This document cannot be greatly shortened without damage; here is most of it verbatim:

"Your Petitioners apprehind we have in common with all other men a naturel right to our freedoms without Being depriv'd of them by our fellow men as we are a freeborn Pepel and have never forfeited this Blessing by aney compact or agreement whatever. But we were unjustly dragged by the cruel hand of power from our dearest frinds and sum of us stolen from the bosoms of our tender Parents and from a Populous Pleasant and plentiful country and Brought hither to be made slaves for Life in a Christian land. Thus we are deprived of every thing that hath a tendency to make life even tolerable, the endearing ties of husband and wife we are strangers to...Our children are also taken from us by force and sent maney miles from us...Thus our Lives are imbittered. ...There is a great number of us sencear...members of the Church of Christ how can the master and the slave be said to fulfil that command Live in love let Brotherly Love condoner and abound Beare yea onenothers Bordenes. How can the master be said to Beare my Borden when he Beares me down which the. . . chanes of slavery. . .Nither can we reap an equal benefet from the laws of the Land which doth not justifi but condemns Slavery or if there had bin aney Law to hold us in Bondage. . .ther never was aney to inslave our children for life when Born in a

⁸ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1700-1800, p. 13.

CHRONOLOGY 1774

free Countrey. We therefore Bage your Excellency and Honors will . . . cause an act of the legislative to be pessed that we may obtain our Natural right our freedoms and our children be set at lebety at the yeare of twenty one. . .”⁹

1774-June

- **Boston-Petition:** In June the same petition was submitted once more, this time with a significant addition:

“give and grant to us some part of the unimproved land, belonging to the province, for a settlement, that each of us may there quietly sit down under his own fig tree” and enjoy “the fruits of his labour.” Once more, the court voted to let the question “subside.”¹⁰

1774-September

- **Massachusetts:** John Adams’ wife, Abigail, wrote him a letter which expressed her concerns about the restless black population.

“There has been in town a conspiracy of the negroes. At present it is kept pretty private, and was discovered by one who endeavored to dissuade them from it . . . They conducted in this way . . . to draw up a petition to the Governor, telling him they would fight for him provided he would arm them, and engage to liberate them if he conquered. . . I wish most sincerely, there was not a slave in the province; it always appeared a most iniquitous scheme to me to fight ourselves for what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we have.”¹¹

1774-October

- **Philadelphia: The Association** - The Continental Congress resolved, to end the foreign slave trade into the colonies.

As early as 1774, all the colonies had agreed to, and their representatives to the congress had signed, the articles of the Continental Association, by which it was agreed, “that we will neither import nor purchase any slave imported after the first day of December next, (1774), after which we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactories to those who are concerned in it.”¹²

⁹ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1700-1800, p. 13.

¹⁰ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1700-1800, p. 13.

¹¹ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution. 1700-1800, p. 14.

¹² Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 23.

CHRONOLOGY 1774-1775

1774-November

- **Virginia:** James Madison wrote, in a personal letter, "If America and Britain come to an hostile rupture I am afraid an Insurrection among the slaves may and will be promoted."

1774-December

- **Georgia: Slave revolt** - Four whites were killed, and slaves who allegedly participated in the revolt were publicly burned to death.

1775-March 8

- Thomas Paine wrote an article entitled, "African Slavery in America." He denounced slavery and demanded that Negroes be given land.

1775

- **England: The House of Commons voted on the issue of emancipation of slavery.** Early in January 1775, news reached the southern colonies that an extraordinary proposal had been recently introduced into the House of Commons. Aimed at "humbling the high aristocratic spirit of Virginia and the southern colonies," it called for the general emancipation of slaves. The measure failed to win the necessary support in the Commons, but the idea of recruiting slaves as a disruptive tactic gained support as war with the colonies became imminent.¹³

1775-April

- William Pittman is found guilty of murdering his young slave boy. He is sentenced to death. The event was reported in the *Virginia Gazette*.

1775-April 14

- **Pennsylvania:** Dr. Benjamin Rush and Benjamin Franklin organized the Abolition Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage.

Benjamin Rush published *An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements in America, Upon Slavekeeping*. Rush presented the case that the Black was intellectually and morally equal to the white, and that any "vices which are charged upon the negroes in the southern colonies and West Indies . . . are the genuine offspring of slavery, and serve as an argument to prove they were not intended by Providence for it." In response to the argument that slaves were necessary to the economic development of the south, Rush countered, "Liberty and property form the basis of abundance, and good agriculture: I never observed it to flourish where those rights of mankind were not firmly established." In rejecting the argument that slavery was a Christian institution and was not condemned by the Bible, Rush commented, "Christianity will never be propagated by any other methods than those employed by Christ and his Apostles. Slavery is an engine as little fitted for that purpose as Fire or the Sword. A Christian slave is a contradiction in terms."¹⁴

¹³ Frey, Sylvia. *Water from the Rock*, pp. 54-55.

¹⁴ Christian, Charles M. *Black Saga: The African American Experience*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), p. 51.

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1775-April 15

- **Virginia:** A slave is convicted of plotting an insurrection in Prince Edward, Virginia.

1775-April 19

- **Massachusetts:** Free Blacks fought in the battle of Lexington and Concord.

1775-April 20

- **Virginia:** Royal Governor Dunmore followed the orders of the British Prime Minister, Lord North. The orders required that the gunpowder be removed from the Williamsburg magazine. After the gunpowder was removed, the citizens became alarmed. They wanted an explanation. Dunmore stated that he removed the gunpowder because he feared a slave uprising in Surry County.

1775-April 21

- **Virginia:** In Norfolk County, two slaves were sentenced to death for plotting an insurrection. It was reported in the newspaper, April 29.

1775-April 21

- **Virginia:** Edmund Pendleton, in a letter to George Washington, indicated that some unspecified disturbance by Williamsburg slaves had occurred.

1775-April 22

- **Virginia:** Williamsburg citizens protested the removal of the powder from the Magazine. In response to their anger, Governor Dunmore threatened that he would "emancipate the slaves and reduce Williamsburg to ashes."

1775-May

- Virginia's slaves, who were captured in their attempt to reach British lines, were detained in the Williamsburg goal.

1775-June

- **Virginia:** Dunmore felt his safety was threatened in Williamsburg. He fled to the Chesapeake Bay. Some of his slaves fled to his home in Porto Bello. Other slaves ran away as far as Canada.

1775-June

- **Massachusetts: Battle of Bunker Hill: An account of Peter Salem's actions.**

"Among those who mounted the works was the gallant Major Pitcairn, who exultingly cried out, 'The day is ours!' when a black soldier, named Salem, shot him through and he fell. His agonized son received him in his arms, and tenderly bore him to the boats. A contribution was made in the army for the colored soldier, and he was presented to Washington as having performed this feat."¹⁵

¹⁵ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 34.

CHRONOLOGY 1775

1775-June 17

- **Massachusetts:** Free blacks and slaves participated in the battle of Bunker Hill. Peter Salem, a Negro slave was recognized for his actions in battle.

Peter Salem was the colored man who particularly distinguished himself in the revolutionary war by shooting down Major Pitcairn at the battle of Bunker Hill, as he was mounting a redoubt and shouting, "The day is ours!" this being the time when Pitcairn fell back into the arms of his son. Peter Salem served faithfully in the war for seven years in the companies of minute men under the command of Capt. John Nixon and Capt. Simon Edgell of Framingham, and came out of it unharmed. He was a slave, and was owned, originally, by Capt. Jeremiah Belknap of Framingham, being sold by him to Major Lawson Buckminster of that town, he becoming a free man when he joined the army.¹⁶

1775-July 3

- **Massachusetts:** General Washington assumes command of the Continental Army. He ordered officers to stop recruiting Blacks, although those already in the service were allowed to continue.

1775-July 29

- Edward Rutledge, a Congressional delegate of South Carolina, requested that "all negroes be discharged" from military service.

As might be expected, his proposition was strongly supported by the Southern delegates, but the Northern delegates being so much stronger, voted it down. The negroes were crowding so rapidly into the army, and the Northern colonists finding their southern comrades so strongly opposing this element of strength, submitted the question of their enlistment to a conference committee in October.¹⁷

1775-August

- **Charleston, S.C.:** Jerry, a free black, is hanged and burned for inciting an armed rebellion amongst slaves.

1775

- **Savannah, GA:** Black Christians were accused of subversive preaching. They suggested that slaves should make alliance with the British. Whippings and imprisonment was the punishment for their actions.

1775

- **Rhode Island:** Rev. Dr. Hopkins, of Newport RI, wrote a "Dialogue Concerning the slavery of the Africans." Here is an extract from a note in the Dialogue:

¹⁶ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 38.

¹⁷ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 39.

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“God is so ordering it in his providence, that it seems absolutely necessary something should speedily be done with respect to the slaves among us, in order to our safety, and to prevent their turning against us in our present struggle, in order to get their liberty. Our oppressors have planned to gain the blacks, and induce them to take up arms against us, by promising them liberty on this condition; and this plan they are prosecuting to the utmost of their power, by which means they have persuaded numbers to join them. And should we attempt to restrain them by force and severity, keeping a strict guard over them, and punishing them severely who shall be detected in attempting to join our oppressors, this will only be making bad worse, and serve to render our inconsistency, oppression, and cruelty more criminal, perspicuous, and shocking, and bring down the righteous vengeance of Heaven on our heads. The only way pointed out to prevent this threatening evil is to set the blacks at liberty ourselves by some public acts and laws, and then give them proper encouragement to labor, or take arms in the defence of the American cause, as they shall choose. This would at once be doing them some degree of justice, and defeating our enemies in the scheme that they are prosecuting.”¹⁸

1775-November 12

- **Philadelphia:** The actuality of black insurrection in Virginia, however, gave southern delegates second thoughts and on November 12, 1775, the Continental Congress formally declared all blacks, slave or free, ineligible for military service. Similar policies were subsequently approved by the other northern states.¹⁹

1775-November 16

- **Virginia: Dunmore's Proclamation:** Lord Dunmore carried his threat into execution. Having established his headquarters at Norfolk, he proclaimed freedom to all the slaves who would repair to his standard and bear arms for the King. The summons was readily obeyed by the most of the negroes who had the means of escape to him. He, at the same time, issued a proclamation, declaring martial law throughout the colony of Virginia; and he collected a number of armed vessels, which cut off the coasting trade, made many prizes, and greatly distressed an important part of that Province. If he could have opened a road to slaves in the interior of the Province, his measures would have been very fatal to the planters.²⁰

¹⁸ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 42.

¹⁹ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: the African American Soldier, p. 78.

²⁰ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 44.

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Lord Dunmore to the Secretary of State.

"Your Lordship will observe by my letter, No. 34, that I have been endeavoring to raise two regiments here-one of white people, the other of black. The former goes on very slowly, but the latter very well, and would have been in great forwardness, had not a fever crept in amongst them, which carried off a great many very fine fellows."

1775-November 23

- **Virginia:** The *Virginia Gazette* printed an article that warned slaves not to join the British forces.

1775-November/December

- **Virginia:** The local committee of Northampton and Warwick counties reported a "wholesale exodus" of the slave population.

1775-December 8

- **Virginia:** In response to "the slaves flocking to the British", the Virginia Convention passed laws to address the problem. The following are a few examples:
 - * Captured slaves, who tried to reach British lines, were either returned, imprisoned, or relocated into the interior of Virginia.
 - * Captured slaves could also face banishment, execution or they could be sold.
 - * Captured Tory slaves were sent to the lead mines. They were forced to produce lead cartridges and salt peter.

1775-December 9

- **Virginia:** Lord Dunmore formed a regiment of runaway slaves (Black loyalists). They were known as the **Ethiopian Regiment**, and they fought in the battle of Great Bridge. The troops wore a banner across their chest that stated, "Liberty to the Slaves". The British lost the battle and retreated into the Bay.

Recruitment facts:

- * Dunmore forced unfit slaves to return to their masters.
 - * An estimated 800 slaves reached Dunmore's forces.
 - * There are many written accounts of slaves flocking to the British.
- *General Washington revealed his concern about Dunmore's actions*

"If the Virginians are wise, that arch-traitor to the rights of humanity, Lord Dunmore, should be instantly crushed, if it takes the whole army to do it; otherwise, like a snowball in rolling, his army will get size, some through

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fear, some through promises, and some through inclination, joining his standard; but that which renders the measure indispensable is the negroes; for, if he gets formidable, numbers of them will be tempted to join, who will be afraid to do it without."²¹

1775-December 30

- **Massachusetts:** Free black veterans, who fought at Lexington and Concord, meet with General Washington to question the ban on Negro reenlistment.

1775-December 31

Washington publicly advocated the recruitment of blacks into the Continental Army, otherwise "they may seek employ in the ministerial army."²²

1776-January 16

- **Philadelphia:** The Congressional Committee declared that free blacks that had served in military action could reenlist.

1776-March

- **Virginia:** Four captured slaves, who attempted to reach British lines, were hanged, as an example to other slaves.

1776-April 10

- **Virginia:** The Committee of Safety ordered all slaves above thirteen years of age (from the eastern counties of Norfolk and Princess Ann) be relocated inland away from British forces.

1776-April

- **Philadelphia:** Continental Congress resolved that the slave trade should discontinue.

1776-May

- **Virginia:** Lord Dunmore and forces take refuge at St. George Island.

1776-May

- **North Carolina:** Officials, ordered slave holders to relocate adult male slaves south of the Cape Fear River. They were relocated further inland "into the country, remote from the sea."

1776-June 12

- **Virginia:** 5th Virginia Convention Assembly passed the first state Bill of Rights. It was drafted by George Madison, as part of the Virginia Constitution.

²¹ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 46.

²² Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 78.

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1776-June

- **Philadelphia:** Thomas Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence.

The final version of the Declaration of Independence signed in Philadelphia omitted the attack on slavery that Thomas Jefferson had written in his draft version. The following is an extract from Jefferson's original draft:

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the person of a distant people who never offended him; captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of Infidel Powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce.

Mr. Jefferson also provided Minutes of Debates in 1776 on the Declaration of Independence:

The clause, too, reprobating the enslaving of the inhabitants of Africa was struck out, in compliance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who, on the contrary, still wish to continue it. Our northern brethren, also, I believe, felt a little tender under those censures; for, though their people have very few slaves themselves, yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others.²³

1776-June 26

- Dunmore's letter:

"I am extremely sorry to inform your Lordship, that that fever of which I informed you in my letter No. 1 has proved a very malignant one, and has carried off an incredible number of our people, especially the blacks. Had it not been for this horrid disorder, I am satisfied I should have had no doubt of penetrating into the heart of this colony."²⁴

1776-July

- **Virginia:** The *Virginia Gazette* reported Lord Dunmore's presence at Gwyn Island.

1776-September

- **Philadelphia:** Congress resolved that the words "United States", replace "United Colonies."

²³ Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience, (Boston: Houston Mifflin, 1995), p. 52.

²⁴ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 45.

CHRONOLOGY 1776

1776

- **Exile:** Some Virginian loyalists migrate to East Florida. Ironically, East Florida was also a runaway haven for slaves.

1776

- **Virginia** sold captured slaves to the West Indies.

1776

- **Thomas Jefferson** estimated the number of escaped slaves who fled to British lines at 30,000.

1776

- **New York:** British forces raised Negro troops in Long Island.

1776

- **Jamaica:** A major slave insurrection erupted on the British Island.

1776

- **Rhode Island's** busy slave port in Newport, was captured during the British blockade. The state also had a shortage of white male recruits.

1776

- **Thomas Peters** was born in Africa. He fled from his master and joined Dunmore's forces. During the war, he served as a sergeant in a Black arms bearing pioneer company. He was wounded twice in battle. At the end of the war he settled in Nova Scotia with his wife. After experiencing dissatisfaction with the land granted by England, Peters sought redress with the King's ministers. As a result of Peters' protest, he and many others were relocated to Sierra Leone, West Africa. There, Thomas Peters became a founding member of the free Black settlement.

1776

- **Virginia:** The Virginia Act for organizing a militia stated that "The free mulattoes in the said companies batallion shall be employed as drummers and fifers, or pioneers."

1777-January

- **Boston:** Eight Negroes of Boston submit a petition for freedom, six months after the Declaration of Independence.

"A Great Number of Blacks detained in a State of Slavery in the Bowels of a free & Christian Country" asserted their "Natural and Unaliable Right to that freedom which the Great Parent of the Unavers hath Bestowed equalley on all menkind" and admonished the general court:

The Lawdable Example of the Good People of these States your petitiononers have Long and Patiently waited the Evnt of petition after petition . . . they Cannot but express their Astonishment that It have Never Bin Considered that Every Principle from which America has Acted in the Cours of their Unhappy Dificultes with Great Briton Pleads Stronger than A thousand arguments . . . [that] they may be Restored to the Enjoyments of that which

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is the Naturel Right of all men . . .”²⁵

1777-February

- **Virginia/Maryland:** British forces arrived in the Chesapeake Bay. Negroes flocked to the bay to join the British. Behind the British ships were privateers, who captured and sold the Negro slaves in the West Indies.

Those slaves who reached the British fleet safely were, to the dismay of Maryland planters, welcomed aboard with promises of “fine cloaths and other inducements.” These slaves were probably taken to Philadelphia where they were formed into a company of pioneers. Dressed in white shirts and trousers, with sailor jackets and great coats, they were assigned to “attend the Scavengers,” and “to assist in clearing the Streets and Removing all Newsiences [sic] being thrown into the Streets.”²⁶

1777-February

- British ships took aboard an estimated three hundred slaves from North Cumberland, Gloucester, and Lancaster counties.

1777-May 6

- **Virginia:** General Assembly resolved that a Negro or mulatto must prove they are free in order to enlist. This suggest that runaway slaves disguised themselves as free, in order to enlist.

1777-July 9

- **Newport, Rhode Island:** During a surprise attack, British General Prescott is captured by a Negro slave named Tack Sisson.

1777-July

- **Vermont:** State constitution abolishes slavery.

1777

- **African American Enlistment:** By the end of 1777, free blacks and slaves are serving in mixed regiments, mostly in northern states.

1777

- **Continental Navy:** Frequently naval vessels suffered from manpower shortages, and since many Blacks had naval experience in previous wars or by serving on coastal vessels, they were welcomed by the navy.

A recruiting poster of this year, found in Newport, called for “ye able backed sailors, men white or black, to volunteer for naval service in ye interst of freedom.” About two

²⁵ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution p. 22.

²⁶ Fry, Sylvia. Water from the Rock, p. 148.

CHRONOLOGY 1777

thousand Blacks served in the Continental Navy during the Revolution.²⁷

1777

- **Slaves Participate in the Revolution:**

Even though laws and orders specifically restricted the involvement of slaves in the war, they participated in a number of ways. Some slaves in Virginia substituted for their masters in the army. The New England and Middle colonies also enlisted slaves to fight and gave each enlistee his freedom. In New York, slave owners were given land for each slave they committed to serve in the army, and their slaves received their freedom.

1777

- **African Americans in the Continental Army:**

The Continental Army enlisted Blacks for three-year terms. Most of those who served came from the New England states. Black soldiers and white soldiers served in integrated units. By July, each brigade of General Washington's army averaged forty-two Black soldiers. Eventually, all-Black units emerged; for example, a battalion from Rhode Island, a company from Connecticut referred to as "the Colonials," and a company from Boston called "the Bucks of America," which was created from slave volunteers and commanded by a Black.

Black soldiers, including Prince Whipple and Oliver Cromwell, were members of the regiment that crossed the Delaware River with George Washington to attack the British in New Jersey. In 1777, Pompey Lamb's spying efforts assisted General Anthony Wayne's troops in capturing a British fort at Stony Point, New York. Other Black troops also served heroically.

By the end of the Revolutionary War, as many as three hundred thousand persons had fought to protect their liberty and freedom. Among these were five thousand Black soldiers and two thousand Black sailors, many of whom had fought bravely and received high praise from their commanders. Since the overwhelming number of Blacks served as army privates or as navy seamen, they were frequently involved in heavy combat.²⁸

1777

- **Inspector General Alexander Inner** was determined to eliminate all black recruits from service.

1777-September 9-11

- Black soldiers from Virginia fought in the Battle of Brandywine.

1777-October

- In a letter written by Hessian officer, Schlozer, he stated that "no regiment (among the

²⁷ Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), p. 48.

²⁸ Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), p. 54.

CHRONOLOGY 1778

Americans) is to be seen which there are not Negroes in abundance, and among them are able-bodied, strong and brave fellows."²⁹

1778-February

- **Rhode Island:** The General Assembly authorized the formation of a battalion of Negroes free/enslaved. The state purchased the slaves' freedom and enlisted them.

*"It is Voted and Resolved, That every able-bodied negro, mulatto, or Indian man slave in this State, may enlist into either of the said two battalions to serve during the continuance of the present war with Great Britain; that every slave so enlisted shall be entitled to receive all the bounties, wages, encouragements allowed by the Continental Congress to any soldier enlisted into their service."*³⁰

- **General Washington's thoughts on arming slaves in the south:** First of all, he was afraid that if Americans began arming the slaves the British would intensify their efforts to do so, and they had more arms available for the purpose than the states. Secondly, he feared that if some slaves were made into soldiers those remaining in slavery would become more restless and troublesome.

1778-March 11

- **Albany, New York:** A plot to destroy the city is discovered. Slaves and a few whites were accused of organizing the revolt.

1778-May

- **The Rhode Island regiment** began the recruitment of ex-slaves for military service. Colonel Christopher Greene commanded the regiment, which consisted of 95 ex-slaves and 30 free blacks. They also fought in the defense of Rhode Island.

1778-May 8

- General Clinton replaces General Howe as the overall commander of British forces in America.

1778-June 27-28

- The Battle of Monmouth was fought.

1778

- **New York:** The Unadilla settlement, of the Mohawk Indians of Oswego County New York, was a refuge for runaway slaves.

²⁹ Aptheker, Herbert. The Negro in the American Revolution, p. 34.

³⁰ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 52.

CHRONOLOGY 1778-1779

1778

- **War Strategy:** The British shift the brunt of the war campaign to the south. The large population of loyalists and slaves was a major factor.

1778-December 29

- The British began the southern campaign with the capture of Savannah, GA, from General Howe.

1778

- **Siege of Savannah:** Quamins Dolly, a Negro spy led part of the British troops to a rear entrance of Savannah. As a result, Commander Campbell ordered a frontal and rear assault on the rebels with great success.

1778

- **North Carolina** passed a law which permitted the hunting, capturing and sale of fugitives. They stated that "many Negroes are now going at large to the terror of the good People of the State."

1779-January 29

- **Georgia:** British forces capture Augusta.

1779-March 25

- A Congressional Committee authorized a recommendation to raise 3,000 Negro recruits in Georgia and South Carolina. The proposal required separate battalions with white officers. John Lauren was sent south to gain local support. He was unsuccessful.

1779-May 4

- **Connecticut:** Slaves present a petition for freedom.

1779-June

- **Virginia:** Mr. Tazwell, a resident of Williamsburg, reported that five hundred slaves escaped from Norfolk County.

1779-June 30

- British General Clinton issued the **Philipsbury Proclamation**.

"But I do most strictly forbid any *Person* to sell or claim *Right* over any Negro, the property of a Rebel, who may take refuge in any part of this *Army*: And I do promise to every negro who shall desert the *Rebel Standard*, full security to follow within these *Lines*, any Occupation which he shall think proper."³¹

³¹ Wilson, Joseph T. Black Phalanx: The African American Soldier, p. 62.

CHRONOLOGY 1779

1779-July

- **New York:** Pompey, property of American Captain Lamb, acted as a spy. He provided valuable information for the successful assault on Stoney Point, New York.

1779-September

- **The Battle of Savannah:** General Lincoln led a Franco American force into Savannah.

1779

- **The Fontages Legion** were among the Franco American force. They were an auxiliary of 600 to 800 volunteer free black men from St. Dominique. The Legion prevented the annihilation of the allied forces as they retreated from the British defense. Amongst the group were future leaders of the Haitian Revolution.

Whether or not they derived their revolutionary vitality directly from that experience, on their return many members of the black Saint Dominique legion, including **Andre Rigaud, Jean-Baptiste Villatte, Louis-Jacques Beauvais, Christophe and Martial Besse, and Jean Savary**, became involved in the struggle for political liberty in Saint Dominique. Beauvais, who served in Europe with the French army, returned to fight in the revolution and in 1791 became captain general. Rigaud and Villatte, who became generals under the convention, and **Henri Christophe**, the future king of Haiti, who was wounded during the siege of Savannah, were all leaders of the revolution that culminated in the defeat of France and *made Haiti the second republic, after the United States, in the Americas.*³²

1779

- The British used two companies of armed blacks to defend Savannah. The event was reported in the *Virginia Gazette*.

1779

- **South Carolina:** 250 slaves were employed as a corps of pioneers. Another 500 slaves were used to build fortification at Savannah.

1779-November

- **New Hampshire: Petition** - Twenty Negroes petitioned the New Hampshire legislature for freedom. They argued that "the god of nature gave them life and freedom upon the terms of most perfect equality with other men; that freedom is an inherent right of the human species, not to be surrendered but by consent."³³

1779

- Thousands of slaves escaped as they joined General Provost's march through South Carolina.

³² Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, p. 192.

³³ Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience, p. 54.

CHRONOLOGY 1779

1779

- **The Black Carolina Corps** was raised amongst the slaves of loyalist and free blacks. After the war the Corps was sent to serve in the British Islands.

1780-May

- General Clinton sent a 2,000 men expedition into Virginia from New York. The troops were commanded by Admiral Sir George Collier and General Mathews. They entered Portsmouth and began to pillage and capture hundreds of slaves.

1780-May 4

- Virginia opened the borders for southern slave holders in flight from British invasion in South Carolina and Georgia. The slave holder would "run their Negroes" as they sought safety.

1780-May 12

- General Lincoln surrenders Charleston to the British in a major American defeat.

1780-September 8

- Cornwallis began the invasion of North Carolina.

1780-October

- The Virginia legislature voted in the October session that white male recruits who would enlist until the war's end were offered 300 acres of land and a choice of either a sound healthy Negro between the age of 10 – 30, or \$60 in gold or silver. These slaves were to come from "Negro holders" of twenty or more, who would be paid within an eight year span.³⁴

1780

- **South Carolina** passed the Slave Bonus Law, which granted slaves as bounty to white males who volunteered for enlistment.

1780-October

- **Maryland** passed a law that allowed slaves and free blacks to be recruited into the armed forces. Maryland was the only southern state to officially enlist slaves from ages 16 to 40 years of age.

1780-October 7

- Cornwallis gave up the invasion of North Carolina after a loyalist defeat at King's Mountain.

1780-October 14

- General Nathaniel Greene replaced General Gates as the commander of southern patriot forces.

³⁴ Quarles, Benjamin. The Negro in the American Revolution, p. 108.

CHRONOLOGY 1780-1781

1780-October 20

- **Virginia:** General Leslie landed a force of 3,000 men in Portsmouth. They pillaged provisions but refused to accept slaves.

1780-December 2

- General Clinton sent a 1,600 man force to harass Virginians. Under the leadership of Commander Arnold, the troops burned supply stores to cut off provisions that supplied North Carolina rebel troops. Commander Arnold proceeded up the James River destroying communities as far as Richmond. The region lost large numbers of slaves from flight and seizure.

1780

- **South Carolina and Georgia** used slaves as war money to pay the salaries of public officials.

1780

- **Georgia:** Governor Wright passed the Impressment Bill, which collected 400 Tory slaves to work on Savannah fortification. The British preferred to hire Tory slaves rather than impressment.

1780

- **Massachusetts:** Paul Cuffe and six other free Blacks of Dartmouth, Massachusetts petitioned against taxation without representation and refused to pay their taxes on the grounds that they were denied the right to vote. The court agreed with Cuffe's argument and granted him full legal rights. He was thus the first Black man to be given civil equality in Massachusetts.

1780

- **Pennsylvania** passed a gradual emancipation law.

1780

- **Transatlantic Slave Trade:** 1780 was the peak year of the trade of enslaved Africans.

1781-January 5

- **Rhode Island Regiment.**

"At the ferry-crossing I met with a detachment of the Rhode Island regiment...The majority of the enlisted men are Negroes or mulattoes; but they are strong, robust men, and those I saw made a very good appearance."³⁵

1781-March

- **Virginia:** Commander Arnolds' troops are reenforced by 2,500 men under General Phillips. They combined forces and advance up the James River. Some slave holders fled to the mountains and there was a heavy loss of slaves in the area.

³⁵ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1700-1800, pp. 56-57.

CHRONOLOGY 1781

1781-March

- **Virginia:** Negro slave, **James Armistead** of New Kent County, served as a spy for Major General Lafayette. James made a number of trips to Portsmouth, where he delivered letters to other American spies and hovered around the British camp.

1781-March 18

- **North Carolina:** Cornwallis retreated from Wilmington and awaited reinforcements from General Clinton.

1781-March 20

- **New York:** The state of New York raised two regiments of slaves. They were promised freedom in exchange for faithful service.

1781-April 25

- **Virginia:** Cornwallis began the British occupation of Virginia.

1781-May

- **Virginia:** The British employed a Black Corps of 500 people to construct dams, trenches, and fortification in Portsmouth and Yorktown.

1781

- **Jefferson publishes *Notes on Virginia*:**

In this publication in opposition to slavery, Thomas Jefferson asked the following question: "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever."³⁶

1781

- **Jefferson's Elk Hill:** Thirty enslaved blacks escape the plantation to join the British.

1781

- **Accounts of slaves flocking to the enemy:**

At about the same time a British warship landed at Robert "Councillor" Carter's Cole's Point plantation in Westmoreland County on the Virginia side of the Potomac; despite Carter's personal appeal to his slaves, thirty deserted to the British vessel. On April 18, the British sloop of war *Savage*, commanded by Captain Richard Graves, visited George Washington's estate, Mount Vernon, and took "a very valuable Boat" and seventeen slaves, most of them young, skilled artisans, and house servants.³⁷

³⁶ Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995) pp. 55-56.

³⁷ Frey, Sylvia. Water from the Rock, p. 162.

CHRONOLOGY 1781

1781-July

- **Virginia:** When the victorious American army passed in review at Yorktown during the following July, Baron Von Clozen, an aide-de-camp to General Rochambeau remarked that "Three-quarters of the Rhode Island regiment consists of Negroes, and that regiment is the most neatly dressed, the best under arms, and the most precise in its maneuvers."³⁸

1781

- **Virginia** loyalist Negroes and mulattoes corps sailed on the James River seeking recruits and seizing slaves. They were also involved in harassment parties.

1781

- **Revolution:** Many Virginia slave holders relocated from the Tidewater area to the Piedmont. An estimated 75,000 slaves were relocated across the Allegheny mountain between 1780 to 1810.

1781

- **Disease:** Smallpox epidemic broke out in Portsmouth and Richmond during Cornwallis' occupation. The black population suffered disproportionately more infections than the white population.

1781

- **Virginia:** The Fredericksburg gun factory hired slaves.

1781

- **Draft:** A Maryland law stated that "all free men although black or mulattoe" are subject to the draft.

1781-August 1

- **Virginia:** Cornwallis arrived in Yorktown to set up his base operations. During his march to Yorktown, Cornwallis used also slaves as foragers to capture livestock and raid rebel storage cellars. An estimated 4,000 to 5,000 slaves followed Cornwallis to Yorktown.

1781-August 31

- **Virginia:** French troops joined Lafayette's American troops to intercept Cornwallis.

1781-September 28

- **Virginia:** American and French allies began the siege of Yorktown.

1781

- **Rhode Island Regiment:** They fought in the battle of Yorktown.

³⁸ Kaplin, Sidney. The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1700-1800, p. 57.

CHRONOLOGY 1781-1782

1781-October

- **Virginia:** A smallpox epidemic broke out in Yorktown. The British released several hundred infected blacks from the Yorktown encampment into the surrounding area.

1781-October 19

- **Virginia:** General Cornwallis surrendered his entire force to mark the end of the British hopes of victory.

1781-December

- **Williamsburg:** Slaves set the city on fire; they burned several buildings including a government building.

1781-December 31

- Dunmore and Cruden planned to recruit 10,000 slaves as a last effort to continue the war. It was a failed attempt.

1782-January 6

- British forces withdrew from American territory which they had occupied during the war.

1782

- **Virginia** passed a **Manumission Bill**, which encouraged private manumission and took steps to protect free blacks. In 1787, the assembly decreed death to anyone who knowingly sold a free person into slavery.

1782

- **Marronage activities** increased in the Dismal Swamp and other southern regions throughout the war years. A group of runaway Blacks, led by a person trained in military tactics by the British, continued to harass and alarm residents of Savannah. The runaways still referred to themselves as the "King of England's soldiers." They were viewed by many as "the most dangerous and best disciplined bands of marauders which ever infested its borders."

1783-September

- Dispute between American and British officials arose over the issue of returning slaves to the American slave holder. British policy was formulated by Guy Carleton. It stated that "Negroes who were with the British prior to the signing of the provisional treaty on November 30, 1782, were freed; those acquired after that date were to be given up."

1783

- **Evacuation:** It is estimated that twenty thousand Blacks, four times the number that served with the American army, left with the British troops after the American Revolutionary War. The majority of blacks evacuees were settled in the British Caribbean islands, Canada, and England. Thousands were taken temporarily to East Florida. Some blacks in Canada and England were relocated to Sierra Leone, West Africa.

CHRONOLOGY 1782-1783

Benjamin Quarles' Evacuation numbers:	New York	4,000
	Savannah	4,000
	Charleston	6,000

Not including those who left with the French.
Plus thousands (5,000) British carried away prior to Yorktown.

POST-WAR EVENTS

Post War Events

The slave exodus engendered by the British invasion and occupation created a severe labor shortage that destroyed the basis of the South's productive economy and weakened the wealth and the power of its richest families. Feeling threatened by impending economic collapse and the breakdown of the traditional labor system upon which their hopes for economic recovery depended, the planter-merchant elite struggled to resurrect the weakened plantation system: by resorting to the massive importation of slaves to rebuild the collapsed economies; by enacting repressive slave codes, which testify to the tension and coercion in the relationship between masters and slaves in the postwar era; by formulating a patriarchal ideology, which drew upon scriptural sanctions and revolutionary ideology, and proclaimed for the first time that the characteristics of the social order were authorized, if not decreed, by God, nature, and reason. In the process, they created a racial community bound into a common religious and cultural framework.

The extreme scarcity drove prices up from an average of £40. For a "seasoned Negro" in 1776, to 300 guineas in 1782. High prices did not, however, dull the planters' voracious appetite for slaves.³⁹

- **Virginia:** Black veterans who served after the 1780s were entitled to land grants from the United States and Virginia government.
- **Military Service:** The British experience of using armed black troops Caroline Corps in America led to the use of black troops in defense of the British Islands.
- **Virginia** legislature granted freedom to all Negroes who served in the war.
- The **Rhode Island Regiment** disbanded without pay for their service. The Regiment fought in Red Bank, Points Bridge, Fort Oswego, Rhode Island and Yorktown.
- **Abolitionist Activity:** After the war, many abolitionist societies emerged. Religious denominations became more active in the antislavery struggle. The Baptists licensed black preachers, both free and enslaved. Methodists preached to mixed congregations.
- **Marquis de Lafayette** supported the abolitionist movement in the French colonies. He personified the international scope of the antislavery movement. He encouraged Washington to free his slaves. In a letter to John Adams, he stated,

"I would never have drawn my sword in this cause of America,
could I have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of Slavery.

³⁹ Frey, Sylvia. Water from the Rock, pp. 211-212.

POST-WAR EVENTS

In the cause of my black brethern, I feel myself warmly interested, and most decidedly side, so far as respects them, against the white part of mankind. Whatever be the complexion of the enslaved, it does not, in my opinion, alter the complexion of the crime which the enslaver commits -- a crime much blacker than any African face. It is to me a matter of great anxiety and concern, to find that this trade is sometimes perpetrated under the flag of liberty, our dear and noble stripes, to which virtue and glory have been constant standard-bearers."⁴⁰

- **Importation of Slaves:** During the war many colonies limited their slave trade except for Georgia and South Carolina.
- **Estimated number of escaped African Americans:** An estimated 100,000 slaves escaped from 1775 to 1783 which amounted to one in every five blacks. An estimated 65,000 to 73,000 slaves were sent to Kingston, Jamaica between 1775-1785.

Slave owners were right to feel threatened. Blacks constituted half or more of the population in the planting counties south of the Rappahannock. Mobilized they formed a highly potent force. The presence of the British inevitably raised their expectations, intensified their hopes for freedom, and dispelled the hesitancy many of them felt about challenging the slave regime. When, however, they set about the task of turning their expectations into actuality, they were inevitably confronted with the pervasiveness of white power on the one hand and the ambivalence of their British liberators on the other. Never at ease with their black bondmen, white Virginians kept a patient and unending vigil over them, patrolling the porous coast, securing canoes and small craft, watching the few crossing places on the numerous watercourses, guarding the deadly weapons slaves needed to challenge white authority directly. Never committed to emancipation, the British army extended an unsteady hand, sometimes welcoming black fugitives with handsome uniforms and promises of freedom, sometimes turning them away or returning them to vengeful owners, sometimes perpetrating slavery's worst evils by kidnapping and selling them to new masters in strange lands. When these and other vital factors such as geographic location and food supply were taken into account, it became clear to all but the most reckless that armed revolt was both futile and self-destructive.⁴¹

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⁴⁰ Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), p. 59.

⁴¹ Frey, Sylvia. Water from the Rock, pp. 155-156.