

Researching American Revolutionary War Patriots

Class 2: No Battlefield Service Required: Researching Patriotic Ancestors

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What is meant by “Patriotic Service”?

- An act or series of actions that demonstrate loyalty to the American cause, such as:
 - Signing oaths of fidelity to the new government
 - Rendering aid to wounded (nurses and doctors)
 - Furnishing supplies
 - Lending money or munitions.
- These acts cannot be self-serving and had to be rendered towards the patriots only
- The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) accepts the following examples of patriotic service: <https://www.dar.org/national-society/accepted-revolutionary-war-service>
- The Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) accepts the following examples of patriotic service: <https://www.sar.org/how-to-apply/>

Revolutionary War Taxes

- Congress had no authority to levy taxes; money and supplies were requested from the states
- Taxes went toward:
 - Raising supplies
 - Paying troops
 - Building ships
 - Providing clothing
 - Raising bounty money
 - Providing relief for families of soldiers in service
- The laws that were passed to levy taxes must state in the statute that they were addressing a request of the Continental Congress and/or to support the war or achieve independence.
- Each state has different tax assessments that were levied; if applying to a lineage society (such as DAR or SAR) under an ancestor who performed a patriotic service, consult their guides on which taxes are eligible.

How Did Women Show Patriotic Service?

- Making homespun cloths
- Boycotting British goods
- Paying taxes
- Fundraising money for supplies for soldiers

Home Spun Cloth

- Wool Act of 1699 forbade colonists from selling wool or wool cloth outside of the colony it was produced; it also increased taxes for import/export.
- Daughters of Liberty founded in 1765 - boycotted British goods and made their own cloth
- Spinning bees were very popular and were a way to get communities together. Many got competitive and published in the newspapers how much yarn they produced during these gatherings.

Boycotts

- Foreign tea was not allowed in social gatherings
- “Liberty teas” were created from herbs and fruits
- Edenton Tea Party (October 25, 1774) - 51 women gathered to sign a statement of protest to give up tea and boycott other British products

Taxes

- Beef and supply taxes passed by the colonial government to support the cause
- Tip: Look for the widows in the town records

Fundraising

- Funds were needed to support the Continental Army
- Philadelphia Ladies Association canvassed the city of Philadelphia to ask for money from each woman
- Donation amounts reported in the *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed, Military Secretary of Washington*

Locating Records

Town records

- FamilySearch Catalogue (Search by Place>Name of Town>Town Records)
- Ancestry.com (ex. Massachusetts U.S. Town and Vital Records database)
- For those that aren't available online, consult your town clerk on their collections that may be stored in their Vault
- Published resources – *see bibliography below*

Newspapers

- Early American Newspapers, Series I (1690-1876)
 - Available from American Ancestors:
<https://www.americanancestors.org/Search/External-Databases>
- Key repositories:
 - Allen County Public Library – Fort Wayne, IN
 - American Ancestors Research Center – Boston, MA
 - State Archives
 - DAR Library – Washington, D.C.
 - FamilySearch Library – Salt Lake City, UT
 - SAR Genealogical Research Library – Louisville, KY
 - National Archives – Washington, D.C.

Bibliography

Published Resources

Bettie S. Carothers, *Maryland Oaths of Fidelity* (Westminster, MD: Family Line Publications, 1995)

Charles Eugene Claghorn, *Women Patriots of the American Revolution: A Biographical Dictionary* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1991).

Emily J. Arendt, “Ladies Going about for Money” *Journal of the Early Republic* (Summer 2014, Vol. 34, No. 2). Available on JSTOR at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24486686>

Eric Grundset, *America’s Women in the Revolutionary Era: A History Through Bibliography* (Washington, D.C.: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, 2011)

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Eric Grundset, *Virginia in the American Revolution; A Source Guide for Genealogists and Historians* (Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, 2015)

Jack Darrell Crowder, *Women Patriots in the American Revolution: Stories of Bravery, Daring, and Compassion* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co, 2018).

Jolene Roberts Mullen, *Connecticut Town Meeting Records During the American Revolution* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2011)

William Bradford Reed, *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed, Military Secretary of Washington*, at Cambridge (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1847). Available on archive.org at <https://archive.org/details/lifeandcorrespo02reedgoog>

Online Resources

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Genealogical Research System (GRS) - <https://www.dar.org/grs>

Reports of the Subcommittee on Revolutionary Taxes, National Society SAR Genealogy Committee, 2013 <https://www.sar.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Revolutionary-War-Tax-Law-Records-Multiple-States.pdf> [A state-by-state breakdown on which county and local taxes count for patriotic service]

Revolutionary Taxes as Evidence of Patriotic Service - <https://www.sar.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Revolutionary-Taxes-as-Evidence-of-Patriotic-Service.pdf>

Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) Patriot Research System (PRS) – <https://www.sar.org/patriot-research-system/>

[Virginia] Revolutionary War Public Service Claims Index - <https://lva-virginia.libguides.com/public-service>

Websites

American Ancestors – <https://www.americanancestors.org>

ArchiveGrid – <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid>

FamilySearch – <https://www.familysearch.org>

Revolutionary War Service - <http://www.learnwebskills.com/patriot/revservice.htm>