DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 720 SO 026 032

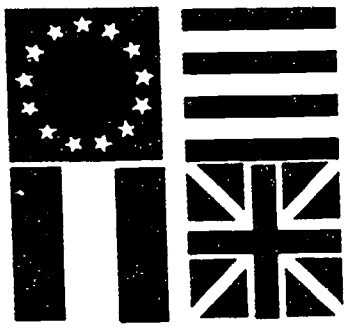
| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE | Yorktown Victory Center Museum Teacher Resource Packet. |
| INSTITUTION | Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Williamsburg, VA. Education Dept. |
| PUB DATE | [86] |
| NOTE | 25p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Education Department, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, P.O. Drawer JF, Williamsburg, VA 23185. |
| PUB TYPE | Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Colonial History (United States); Elementary Secondary Education; *Heritage Education; Local History; *Revolutionary War (United States); Social Studies; *State History; United States History |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Virginia (Yorktown) |

ABSTRACT

This resource packet provides information and activities for teaching abut the historical significance of Yorktown, Virginia in the American Revolution. Teachers' materials include brief background essays on: (1) "Summary of the American Revolution in Virginia"; (2) "Life in the Army"; (3) "Life in Revolutionary Virginia"; (4) "African-Americans in Early Virginia"; and (5) "The Town of York." Classroom activities include colonial games, food preparation, vocabulary study, writing suggestions, and music study. Contains a suggested reading list. (EH)

# YORKTOWN VICTORY CENTER MUSEUM

# TEACHER RESOURCE PACKET





EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
JAMESTOWN-YORKTOWN FOUNDATION
P.O. DRAWER JF
WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA 23185
804 253-4939

## SUMMARY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN VIRGINIA

England's first permanent American colony was established at Jamestown in 1607. Throughout the 17th and early 18th century as the colonists ventured out and new settlements were established, the English government was busy with affairs in Europe and paid little serious attention to its American outposts. The settlers naturally became accustomed to being self sufficient and to solving their own problems. Communication was so slow that they could not always wait for the English government to give them advice or to fill their immediate needs.

When England's war with France (known as the Seven Years War or the French and Indian War) ended in 1763, her treasury was in debt. England looked to her colonies as a potential source of revenue. In addition to existing laws regulating trade, the British government began to pass laws to further control the colonies. Because the colonists had no elected representatives in the English Parliament, they felt that the government had no right to tax them. They considered themselves English citizens and expected to have the same rights that were guaranteed to English men and women at home. The more determined the British government became to get money from the colonies, the more strongly the colonists opposed English policies. Some of the measures devised to raise money from the colonies were the Sugar Act (1764), the Stamp Act (1765), and the Townsend Acts (1767). As England tried to enforce these acts, resentment grew. Instead of bringing the troops who had fought in the war against France home, England sent more regular troops to the colonies and tension increased. Quartering acts were issued, which required colonists to pay for or provide "quarters" or lodging to British soldiers. Clashes occurred between citizens and soldiers. The most famous of these occurred in March 1770 and was known as "the Boston Massacre." A mob of angry citizens taunted British soldiers until shots were fired. At a Boston town meeting in November 1772, a Committee of Correspondence was appointed to help communicate with the rest of the colonies. Other colonies followed Boston's example. These colonial committees became the first effective communication system between colonies and encouraged cooperation and unified opposition to British policy.

One way the colonists showed opposition to British actions was to boycott English goods, refusing to buy supplies from England and also refusing to sell their products to English companies. The famous "Boston Tea Party" in December 1773 was an incident in which colonists boarded an English ship in Boston Harbor and dumped East Indian tea overboard. They opposed both the English monopoly of the tea trade in American as well as the small tax on the tea. Parliament retaliated with the Intolerable Acts, which included closing Boston's harbor. The Committees of Correspondence quickly spread the word of Boston's troubles to the colonies to the south.

Virginia's representative body, the House of Burgesses, was meeting in Williamsburg. Expressing sympathy for the people in Massachusetts, they declared the day that Boston's port closed, June 1, 1774, as a day of fasting and prayer. When the Royal Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, learned of this he dissolved the Burgesses, hoping to avoid further action by the colonists. However, the determined representatives simply moved down the street to continue their meeting at the Raleigh Tavern. They resolved to form a colonial association or "general congress" with the other colonies and to boycott English goods. The Virginia Committee of

Correspondence carried this information to other colonies. As a result of the resolution of the House of Burgesses, the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia on September 5, 1774. Representatives from Virginia included George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, Edmund Pendleton and Peyton Randolph, who was elected President of the Congress. There they adopted a Declaration of Rights which they said Parliament had already violated. They agreed not to sell to England or to buy English goods after December 1774 unless England repealed its Intolerable Acts.

At the second meeting of the Virginia Convention (the first was in August of 1774) in March 1775, emotions ran high. Virginia declared itself to be in a defensive posture with a militia to be made ready in case of warfare. It was here that Patrick Henry made his memorable speech, "... Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"

In April, fighting at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts began the long war known as the American Revolution. In Virginia, Lord Dunmore ordered troops to seize the gunpowder of the Virginia Militia, which was stored in Williamsburg. In response, angry citizens eventually drove Lord Dunmore to seek safety aboard ship in Hampton Roads where he threatened to free the slaves and burn the town of Williamsburg. In May the Second Continental Congress chose Virginian, George Washington, to build and lead an American army and go to the aid of Boston.

Though many colonists wished to remain faithful British subjects, the more radical members of colonial governments were determined to push for independence. One by one the states ordered their delegates to support it. On May 15, 1776, the Virginia Convention voted to instruct its delegates to the Continental Congress to work for a separation from Britain and to draft a constitution for a new state government.

On June 7, 1776, according to his instructions from the Virginia Convention, Richard Henry Lee offered a motion "that these United Colonies are and of right ought to be, free and independent states," and on July 2, 1776, Congress passed the resolution. Two days later, the delegates at Philadelphia adopted a Declaration of Independence, drafted in large part by Thomas Jefferson with minor changes by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams.

Meanwhile, the colonies were establishing their own governments. Early in June 1776 the Virginia Convention approved the Declaration of Rights (a document which later served as a model for the first ten amendments to the Constitution of the United States) and adopted a state constitution. The Declaration was written by Representative George Mason of Gunston Hall in northern Virginia. One of the last acts of the Convention was to choose Patrick Henry as the Commonwealth of Virginia's first chief executive. He served three, one-year terms and was succeeded by Thomas Jefferson. In 1780 the seat of Virginia's government was moved from Williamsburg to Richmond.

It was to take five years of war before Independence was won. The poorly trained and equipped army and navy of the United States struggled to function under the leadership of a loosely formed and inexperienced government for the survival of a new idea. At the same time the

professional, but frustrated and tired army and navy of the British struggled far from home to win the objectives of their government. The history of those five years is filled with names of battles and their heroes from Lexington, Saratoga, Ticonderoga, Brandywine, Valley Forge, Vincennes, Camden, Kings Mountain and Cowpens: Horatio Gates, Nathaniel Greene, Light Horse Henry Lee, George Washington, George Rogers Clark, Daniel Morgan, Francis Marion to name a few.

British commanders General Thomas Gage, Sir William Howe, General Sir Henry Clinton and Admiral Lord Richard Howe were not able to bring the determined colonials to their knees. General John Burgoyne and General Lord Cornwallis were no more successful. With the help of sympathetic European experts such as von Steuben of Prussia, Kosciuzko and Pulaski of Poland, DeKalb, Rochambeau and De Grasse of France, and wealthy free spirits like Lafayette, Washington was able to field and lead a force which could withstand the British. The final stage of the war began after long negotiations by Benjamin Franklin in France provided an alliance that would help to end the war.

Late in 1780, Virginia came under direct enemy attack. Hopes for victory seemed dim as a British army swept through the eastern part of the state in the spring of 1871. Colonel Banestre Tarleton's forces struck inland as far west as Charlottesville. Coastal supply depots were destroyed and Virginia's navy was burned and sunk.

General Lord Cornwallis marched north from the Carolinas after a costly victory over American General Nathaniel Greene. Sir Henry Clinton, the British Commander in New York, ordered Cornwallis not to drive on into the interior of Virginia, but rather, to set up a base at a protected harbor for the British fleet near the coast. Cornwallis, obeying orders, withdrew to the coast, harassed as he went by the troops of the Marquis de Lafayette. At Yorktown, Virginia, Cornwallis took up a defensive position. Meanwhile, a French fleet was sent under the command of Count Admiral De Grasse toward the Chesapeake. To take advantage of this allied support, Washington and the French Count de Rochambeau hurried from New York to the south. General Clinton was fooled into expecting an attack on New York City. Finally realizing that New York was not Washington's objective, Clinton sent a British fleet to the support of Cornwallis. On September 5, 1781, the French and the smaller British fleet met in "the Battle of the Capes," resulting in the withdrawal of the British fleet to New York. Washington and Rochambeau arrived in Yorktown by the end of the month. Besieged by the allied army on land and by the French fleet at the mouth of the Bay, Cornwallis was forced to surrender on October 19, 1781. Although there were some additional engagements after this date, the surrender at Yorktown marked the victory of the colonies. It was two years before the final Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783.

## LIFE IN THE ARMY

By July of 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was adopted, the Revolutionary War had been raging for over a year. American colonists, tired of Great Britain's attempts to raise taxes and control their lives, had answered the call to arms to defend their freedom.

To the sound of fife and drums, thousands of men joined the Continental Army under the command of General George Washington. Most of these men, from the middle and lower classes, enlisted in the army as privates. Included in the ranks of the enlisted were black soldiers. By the end of the war, only two states -- Georgia and South Carolina -- refused to allow African-Americans to serve in the military despite wide-spread concern that once armed, the slaves would revolt.

All of these men joined the army for certain reasons. For some, the army provided a steady job and income which would help support the family. For others, the army provided adventure and excitement. Patriotism was what brought still other men into the Continental ranks. For the black soldiers, the promise of freedom drew them to whichever side seemed most likely to deliver them from a life of slavery. Also important in bringing soldiers into the army was the promise of free land after the war was over.

Officers were usually wealthier men selected from the upper class. Honor and pride stirred them to support the cause of rebellion by helping to organize and equip units of soldiers. Very few officers earned their positions by rising from the enlisted ranks. The men who joined the Continental Army, either officers or enlisted, usually made a commitment to stay in for at least one year, and often, after 1779, they joined to serve until the war was over.

Most men who joined the army served as privates. In the Continental Army each soldier was supposed to receive a food ration, clothing, and at the beginning of the war, a payment of $6.67 per month. By 1777, the pay was increased by about 30%. A typical daily ration was to include bread or flour, meat (beef, fish or pork,) peas or beans, some rum or whiskey and occasionally rice, milk, or vegetables. First-hand accounts indicate that soldiers often received less than their allotment and sometimes nothing.

All of these promises were made to soldiers by the Continental Congress, which supervised the army. Unfortunately, the Congress had many problems such as a poorly organized supply system, inadequate transportation and lack of money, all making it difficult to supply the army. Congress tried to solve its problems by borrowing money from France and Holland, printing more paper money, confiscating farm crops and even allowing soldiers to forage for food. Nevertheless, supplies were very short. Often the situation was so terrible that soldiers reported not eating for days and then resorted to stealing food to keep themselves alive.

Although it may have been necessary for survival, stealing was still a crime. Like other offenses, it often brought severe punishments. Punishment was supposed to maintain the discipline of the army, and most punishments were physical. An offending soldier would be made to feel pain as well as to know humiliation in front of his fellow soldiers.

Whether injured by warfare or punishment, or sick because diseases were so widespread due to the poor conditions, soldiers turned to the camp surgeon for medical treatment. While some Revolutionary War surgeons were well-trained by 18th-century standards, others took advantage of the shortage of trained medical practitioners to secure jobs for which they were not qualified. Even the best of surgeons, however, did not have sufficient medicine or supplies throughout the war to give the proper treatment. Nine out of every ten deaths in the army resulted from disease and sickness, not from wounds received in battle.

Continental soldiers were not the only men fighting for the colonial cause. Colonial militia units were called up by Congress to help the regular army in time of emergency. These units were run by their colony's governor. All healthy men between the ages of sixteen and sixty were required by law to serve in the militia. This meant that their attendance was required at muster (training) days and that they had to serve when the unit was called to the battlefield, which was usually for two or three months at a time. The men received the same pay, rations and general treatment as the regular soldiers.

Women also made up part of the American forces. Officer's wives, including Martha Washington, sometimes stayed with their husbands during winter encampments. Most of the women who traveled with the army, however, were enlisted men's wives who chose to face the hardships of army life for many reasons. Events of the war may have left them without homes or a means of earning money for food. While with the army, these women provided essential support services including nursing, supporting artillery units in battle (by carrying water for swabbing cannons,) and helping to maintain the clothing of the troops. They were promised pay and half of the rations provided for the men. Like the men, they often did not receive what they were promised. They had to travel behind the supply wagons and find shelter where they could.

Both men and women endured many hardships during the Revolutionary War. Yet, their desire for independence was strong enough to keep them fighting until the British surrendered at Yorktown. Few of the black soldiers who fought for freedom received the promises of the Revolution. Their freedom would not come for another century. Some soldiers receiving land grants moved west while others sold their grants to speculators. The soldiers went home where they could once again help the new nation to grow and develop.

# LIFE IN REVOLUTIONARY VIRGINIA

In 1775, about two million people lived in the thirteen American colonies and about 500,000 of them lived in Virginia, the largest and most populous colony. Many of these people were farmers or planters who lived and worked on small farms of less then two hundred acres. A relatively small number of Virginians were wealthy planters or merchants, and only about two percent of the population lived in Virginia's few small towns or cities like York, Norfolk, Richmond, Williamsburg or Fredericksburg. About 200,000 of the people living in Virginia were African-American slaves, most of whom worked in tobacco fields for white masters.

A small farmer living in Virginia about the time of the American Revolution was probably concerned mainly with surviving and trying to improve the lives of himself and his family. Whether he was a recent immigrant from England, Scotland, Ireland or Germany or a native Virginian, he probably hoped to improve his life by earning enough money to secure more land and nicer possessions.

To do this planters grew some type of cash crop that could be sold for money to buy needed tools, livestock, and household goods which could not be produced on the farm. Before the Revolution, tobacco was the crop that most Virginians grew and sold to English and Scottish merchants. Toward the end of the 18th century, however, many farmers began growing grains like wheat, rye, oats and corn. These crops took fewer workers to grow, did not deplete the nutrients in the soil the way tobacco did, and were in great demand in Europe and the West Indies. Although many Virginians began growing these grains, tobacco continued to be Virginia's largest export crop, and still is today!

Tobacco planters usually relied on indentured servants or slaves to help work the fields. Each additional worker could cultivate about three acres of tobacco, but workers were expensive. Planters had to balance the cost of buying a slave or hiring a servant against the profit they expected to gain from selling their crops at the end of the year. Small planters usually had fewer than ten slaves and many had only one or two slaves. Large plantations had many.

In addition to growing a primary cash crop farmers also grew a variety of other things. Virginia farmers raised vegetables like corn, beans, peas, carrots and cabbage to eat. Corn was an important crop because it provided food for humans -- eaten fresh or ground for corn meal -- food for farm animals; and the husks could be used to make mats or to stuff in mattresses.

Animals served many uses on Virginia farms. Oxen and horses were strong work animals that could be used to pull carts and wagons, plow the fields and carry tobacco from the farm to the tobacco inspection warehouse. Farmers also raised pigs, cows, goats and chickens for food. Pigs were slaughtered for meat, lard, soap and candles for the farm. Sheep were raised for wool which could be spun into yarn and then knit or woven into cloth. Beef from cattle was a popular food on Virginia farms, and both cows and goats produced milk for butter and cheese. Chickens, geese and turkeys provided eggs, meat and feathers. Deer, fowl and other game were hunted to supplement the family diet.

Unlike the wealthy planters who lived in great houses on large plantations, the average Virginia

farmer had a small house, with one or two other wooden buildings on his plot of land. A typical farm family, consisting of a mother and father and four to six children, lived in a one or two-room wooden house that was often no larger than 16 by 20 feet, or about the size of a garage today. These houses usually had a chimney and fireplace with space for storage or sleeping in an upstairs loft. Some had wooden floors, but many simply had dirt floors. If the farmer had carpentry skills he might have built his home himself, but if not, he would hire a carpenter to do the work for him, often in exchange for farm products or return labor. The kitchen, smokehouse and storage buildings were usually separate from the main house. If the farmer owned slaves, they may have lived in one of these outbuildings or in a cabin nearby.

The planter's main job was to raise the cash crop, but those who lived on small farms performed many other jobs as well. Depending on their skills, men built and repaired buildings, fences and simple furniture for the household. Hunting, to feed the family and to keep pests away from crops and livestock, was another important part of most farmers' work. Items not produced on the farm were purchased from local merchants or imported from England. Sometimes the planter paid cash for these goods, but he usually bought on credit and paid off his account when he sold his next crop of tobacco or wheat. Virginia planters who were land owners had civic duties as well, such as paying taxes, voting and participating in county courts as jurors. Men between the ages of 16 and 60 were also required to serve in the county militia. They were required to muster several times each year and had to provide their own guns and ammunition. Militia units were used to keep the peace, fight Indians and put down slave rebellions, if necessary. Muster days also served as good opportunities for men to gather with their friends and neighbors.

Work on the small farm or plantation was determined by the season, and certain jobs were performed at the same time each year. For tobacco planters, seeds were planted in flats in January, fields prepared in the early spring, and seedlings transplanted around May. The summer was spent worming, weeding and topping the tobacco plants to ensure good quality tobacco would be harvested by September. During the fall the tobacco was hung in tobacco barns and cured or dried, then packed or prized into wooden barrels called hogsheads to be taken to the inspection warehouse down by the river. The process of growing and selling tobacco took a great deal of time and lasted until the following spring when the hogsheads were loaded onto ships and sent to England for sale. Growing grains like wheat and oats took less time, and the growing season was much shorter. Wheat and oats required little attention between planting in early spring and harvesting in June and July. The slack times throughout the year were good times to repair tools, fences and buildings, cut timber, shuck and grind corn, manure the fields, and ship the last season's grain to market.

The busy life of women on Virginia farms fit into the seasonal cycles and the growing season of the cash crop as well. In the winter and spring the spinning was done. In the late summer and fall, women dried and stored fruits and vegetables for winter meals. Hogs were butchered in the fall and the meat made into sausage or salted and smoked for preservation. Tallow candles and lye soap were made with leftover fat from the slaughter. Planters' wives often grew herbs such as spearmint, peppermint, lavender, rosemary and parsley which were used to season foods and make home health care remedies. Another common crop on Virginia farms was flax. The long, tough fibers inside the flax plant could be spun on a spinning wheel to make linen

thread which was later woven into linen cloth for clothing and bedding. Throughout the year women cooked, knit and sewed clothing, tended the livestock and raised the children. On some small farms women worked in the fields, helping to grow crops, but most women spent their time running the household.

Children's chores and education varied, depending on whether they were boys or girls. Very young children were under their mother's care. Public schools were not available in early Virginia, so children often learned everything they needed to know at home. Formal education was usually only considered for boys because they were expected to learn how to run the farm, how to make purchases and how to deal with finances. If his parents were literate, a young boy might be taught reading, writing and arithmetic at home. Most young girls learned to cook, spin and sew from their mothers, and might have learned to write their names and read the Bible. Few Virginians could afford to own many books; many owned only a Bible. Children's books, which were available to the wealthy, often had a moral lesson. Aesop's Fables were among the most popular children's stories. Some older boys (and a few girls) worked for a master craftsman as apprentices. While serving their five to seven-year apprenticeships, they not only helped their masters do important work, but also learned the skills of the trades and received an education as well.

Farm families did all of this work to keep themselves alive and healthy and to try to improve their lives from year to year. Many white families in Virginia actually did improve their lives by a modest amount during the years before the Revolution. Although very few Virginia families became a great deal wealthier, these modest gains made many farmers were content with their lifestyle. As the thirteen colonies began to move toward war with England, many small planters faced difficult decisions. Some would support the patriots' cause; some maintained their loyalty to the King. Others remained neutral, toiling at their daily struggle for survival and hoping that the outcome of the war would not take away the little that they were able to gain.

# AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN EARLY VIRGINIA

Virginia was not the first colony in America to allow slavery. In 1501, shortly after Christopher Columbus discovered America, Spanish colonists began shipping African slaves to South America to work on their plantations. In the 1600's English colonists in Virginia began buying Africans to help grow tobacco.

The first Africans who arrived in Jamestown in 1619 were probably treated as indentured servants, set free after working for a set number of years. By the 1700's the Virginia Assembly had passed a set of Black Codes, or slave laws, which said that slaves were to be slaves for life, and that masters were not allowed to free their slaves unless they first took them out of Virginia.

Slaves in Virginia faced a life of great hardship. Those on smaller farms often lived in a kitchen or other outbuilding or in crude cabins near the farmer's house. On large tobacco plantations the field slaves usually lived in cabins grouped together in the slave quarter, which was farther away from the master's house but under the watchful eye of an overseer. Living on a small farm often made it hard for black men and women to find wives or husbands to start families. Sometimes white masters split up families and sent parents or children to different places to live and work which also made it difficult to raise a family. As a general rule slaves worked from sunrise to sunset, usually in the tobacco fields. On large plantations some slaves learned trades and worked as blacksmiths, carpenters and coopers or served as cooks and house servants.

AT the end of the workday and on Sundays and Christmas, most slaves had a few hours to tend to personal needs. They often spent this time doing their own household chores or working in their won gardens. Many masters allowed their slaves to raise chickens, vegetables and tobacco during their spare time, and sometimes they were allowed to sell these things to earn a small amount of money. When they could, slaves spent their evenings and limited free time visiting friends or family who might live nearby; telling stories, ore singing and dancing. Many of these activities combined familiar African traditions with white customs learned in the New World. The banjo, made out of a hollow gourd, and the drum were two instruments that slaves made and used to create music.

In Virginia, by custom and law, teaching slaves to read and write was forbidden. Some learned secretly, but for those living on small farms where the master's family was not well-educated, there was little opportunity. Black Virginians kept some parts of their African religions as well. The life of a slave was hard and often cruel, and their religion was an important way to remind them that their lives had meaning and dignity.

Most slaves found ways to fight against their masters and resist the hardships of slavery. Some ran away to find family in other parts of the country or escaped to the wilderness to begin a new life. Those who could not escape might attempt to destroy their master's buildings and crops or steal food to feed their families. Such actions were usually met with harsh punishment or death, so many slaves found more subtle ways to resist authority. Prolonging their work, breaking or hiding tools or pretending to be sick, were safe and effective ways to protest their condition.

Not all black Virginians were slaves. From Virginia's early history, a few black people were free. By 1782 there may have been as many as 2,000 free black people living and working in Virginia. Free blacks often worked as farmers and as craftsmen, and some owned property including slaves of their own.

When the American Revolution began black Virginians were faced with difficult choices as well as opportunities. The patriots' talk of freedom and liberty excited many black people with the chance of ending their slavery. Many slaves enlisted to fight on both sides of the Revolutionary War with the hope of gaining their freedom. Virginia's Royal Governor, Lord Dunmore, offered freedom to any slave owned by a patriot who would run away to fight for the British Army. Nobody knows exactly how many hundreds of Virginia slave men and women escaped to join the British during the war but most of them never secured permanent freedom. Many died of smallpox, others were returned to their masters or were left behind when the British retreated. Many fewer blacks fought on the American side than for England. At the beginning of the war the Continental Army, and most of the thirteen states, would not let black men serve in their units. By the end of the eight year-war though, many blacks were finally allowed to join and fight for the patriotic cause. Other blacks served as drummers, fifers, cooks, wagon drivers and river pilots, many hoping that their service would lead to freedom from slavery.

By the time the American Revolution ended, slaves all over Virginia had come to realize that the patriots' talk of liberty and freedom only meant liberty and freedom for white men. A few who fought for the British were taken to free colonies in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone. Some of the black men who fought on the American side, primarily those from the northern colonies, were rewarded with their freedom. For most black Virginians through, the hard life of slavery continued just as before the American Revolution. African-Americans found out that Thomas Jefferson's famous statement in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal" did not include black men. It was not until after the American Civil War that all black Virginians gained the freedom promised by the American Revolution.

## THE TOWN OF YORK

The Town of York is located not far from Williamsburg on the banks of the York River. The land was once inhabited by a small group of Powhatan Indians, the Chiskiaks. Later the area was occupied by a French Protestant tobacco planter.

In 1691, Virginia's General Assembly, hoping to diversify the agricultural character of the colony, passed an act for the establishment of ports and towns. The Assembly chose this land for one of its ports because of its proximity to a deep water channel in the river. The development of Yorktown began quickly, but slowed when officials in England objected to its growth. They feared that the development of commercial centers in the colony would create serious competition for industry in England. When the General Assembly reworded the act to the satisfaction of the English, the town again began to grow.

By 1710, Yorktown was an important center of trade in the Chesapeake region. From 1710 to 1733, between 72% and 80% of slaves arriving in the area come through the Port of York. Its proximity to rich coastal tobacco plantations made it an excellent location for the exportation of a large portion of this important commodity. Along with tobacco, such products as wood and timber products, iron, and animal skins were sent out, mostly to England. Goods returning from England were items difficult to obtain in the colonies such as European wines and liquors and manufactured goods. Trade was also conducted with British colonies in the West Indies, especially the islands of Barbados and Bermuda where the slave trade was important before 1750 or so. Grain, timber and foodstuffs were among the most common items exchanged in return for rum, molasses, sugar, and salt. Trade also occurred between Virginia and other colonies along the Atlantic coast.

By the 1740's the shipping industry at Yorktown had made its mark on the development of the town as a port. The area along the waterfront continued to grow with the addition of warehouses, taverns and ordinaries patronized by the hundreds of sailors stationed at Yorktown. At times, the population grew to as many as 1,800 persons including craftsmen, merchants, and shopkeepers associated with the shipping industry. Most of Yorktown's wealthier inhabitants occupied the areas on the hill near Main Street. This area along Main Street was also home to many of the town's public buildings such as the customhouse, the church, the courthouse, and the prison.

Beginning in the 1750's, the wave of growth in Yorktown slowed. The town obtained an increasingly smaller share of the trade running through Virginia's waters. As the center of tobacco production shifted westward, the percentage of Virginia's tobacco crop exported from Yorktown declined. The eruption of the Seven Years War (French and Indian War) in the 1750's and its concurrent interruption of the international trade, made a significant impact on Yorktown's growth. Yorktown was never to recover from these decreases in the shipping industry.

Yorktown's last moment in the spotlight was at the close of the American Revolution. In 1781, General Cornwallis, who had barricaded his troops in the town, endured a siege by a combined French and American Army which finally forced him to surrender in October of that year. The

cost to Yorktown was heavy in the loss of structures as well as the flight of citizens. The town would never regain its role as a leading center of trade, but would accept its position as a small Tidewater town with a colorful history.

## SUGGESTED READING

For Teachers:

American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia. Edmund S. Morgan. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 1975

Everyday Life in Early America. David Freeman Hawke. New York: Harper Row. 1988.

Home Life in Colonial Days. Alice Morse Earle. Stockbridge, MA: The Berkshire Traveller Press. 1974.

The Negro in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg. Thad W. Tate. Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. 1965.

The Negro in the American Revolution. Quarles, Benjamin. 1965.

Private Yankee Doodle. Martin, Joseph P. Eastern Acorn Press. 1962.

Tobacco and Slaves. Allan Kulikoff. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1986.

The Revolution Remembered: Eyewitness Accounts of the War for Independence. John C. Dann, ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1980.

For Students:

Black Heroes of the American Revolution. Burke Davis. New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich. 1976

Colonial American Craftsmen. Leonard Fisher. Boston: David R. Godine, Publisher, Inc. 1960.

Colonial Craftsmen and Colonial Living. Edwin Tunis. Cleveland: World Publishing Co. 1957.

If You Lived In Colonial Times. Ann McGovern. New York: Scholastic Inc. 1964.

To Be A Slave. Julius Lester. New York: Dial Press. 1968.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Have students learn to play a colonial game such as Fox & Geese (directions follow.)

2. Prepare Soldiers' Bread or Bean Soup using the recipes included elsewhere in this packet.

3. Have students create a "Who Am I?" list using names and facts they have learned from their study of this era.

4. Many kitchen gardens in Colonial America contained herbs to be used in the household for different purposes. Have students make a list of some herbs and find out their uses.

5. Ask students to keep a list of words with their definitions which they have learned during their studies of the revolutionary period. The list might include boycott, House of Burgesses, Committee of Correspondence, constitution, delegate, indentured servant, loyalist, militia, muster, patriot, repeal and slave.

6. Have students imagine a night around the fire in an army encampment during the Revolution. What is the weather like? In what activities are the people engaged? (Cooking, repairing clothes, cleaning or sharpening weapons, playing games, singing, etc.) If he could write, what would a soldier write home?

7. Have students complete "Fighting For Freedom" enclosed in this packet.

8. Have students find and learn a folk song or songs that date from the Revolutionary period including songs which may have originated in the slave community.

9. Have students choose a personal role from the colonial period. Have them keep a journal of the activities in which they might have taken part for one day in that role.

10. Have students locate towns or counties in their state or schools, streets and other public buildings in their town which have been named for Revolutionary War figures or events.

## FOX AND GEESE

This board game is said to have been brought to America during the Revolutionary War either by Hessian mercenary troops or by French troops under Lafayette and has been played here ever since.

The game is for two players and is somewhat like checkers. The playing grid may be simply ruled on a piece of cardboard or paper with coins for markers, or it may be a finished hardwood board
with marble markers.

One of the players is the fox and the other represents the geese. The fox and the geese try to outsmart each other as the game progresses. If a second game is played, the players exchange roles.

Materials:

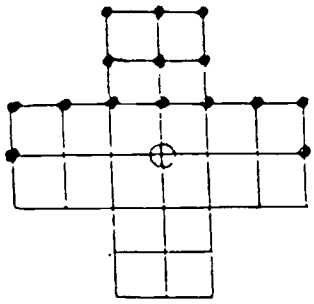
1 board
1 colored marker
15 white markers

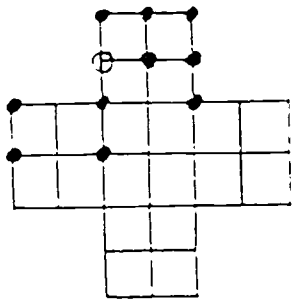
Rules:

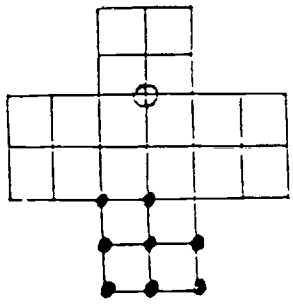
There are two players: the fox with one colored marker and the geese with fifteen white markers. The fox starts at the center of the board while the geese are huddled at one end of the board.

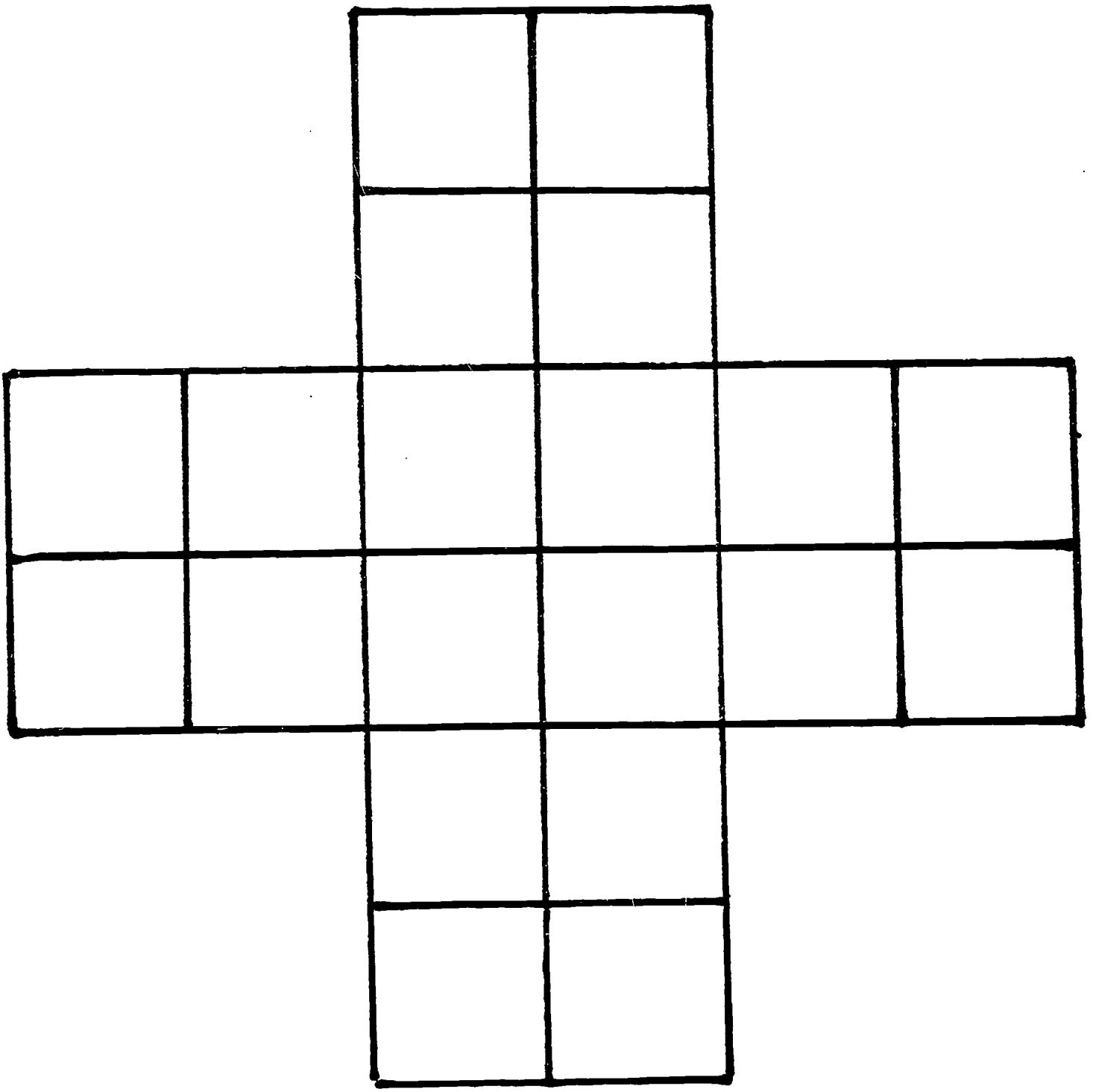
The fox can move in any direction as long as he follows the paths (lines), but must jump if insisted upon by the geese. The geese can move in any direction forward or sideways but never backward or diagonally backward.

The fox wins the game if he catches (jumps over) eight of the geese. The geese win the game if they corner the fox anywhere so that he cannot jump, or if they get eight geese to the other side of the board without getting caught.









## A SOLDIER'S RATIONS

SOLDIER'S BREAD

Before refrigerators and preservatives, soldiers had to take foods with them on their journeys that would not spoil. One common food, known by soldiers as far back as Roman days, was simply hard bread. Made out of flour, water, and salt, the bread could be soaked in a soldier's drink or broth before he ate it.

Follow the directions below and make your own batch of soldier's bread.

**Ingredients:**
1 Cup Flour
1/3 Cup Water
1 Tablespoon Salt

Mix flour and salt in a large mixing bowl.
Add water and stir until thoroughly mixed.
Knead mixture lightly by hand. Roll mixture onto cookie sheet until about 1/4 inch thick. Cut into 3 inch squares. Poke each square one time with a fork. Bake at 350 degrees for twenty minutes. Let cool. Serve with beverage or soup.

BEAN SOUP

**Ingredients:**
1 Cup dried beans or peas (any variety)
1 Tablespoon whole grain rice
1 pound of salt pork
1 small onion chopped
1 Tablespoon cider vinegar
Pepper to taste

Soak beans overnight. Slice through salt pork to core making 3-4 slashes. Put pork and onion into pot and cook to soften onion. Add beans, rice, and vinegar to pot and cover with water. Cook until beans are tender -- several hours. Serve over soldier's bread.

DID YOU KNOW?

Revolutionary War soldiers had limited amounts of food and were given a "ration" of food each week. Their ration was supposed to include 1/4 lb. salted or dried meat, dried beans or peas, one pound of dried flour, and 1/2 gill of rum. Because they did not have refrigerators, they carried dried foods that would not spoil. Whenever they could, soldiers would gather fresh vegetables and berries to help make their meals more enjoyable.

The typical soldier today has a similar system of getting food during combat. Dried, freeze dried, and canned foods make up the typical combat rations. Like soldiers of the Revolutionary War, today's soldiers get fresh vegetables when they can in order to make their meals a little tastier.

## HISTORICAL USES OF HERBS

Basil - Used as tea to calm nervous tension; juice used for dimness of eyes. Antibacterial.

Birch (Sweet or Black) - Bark is aromatic and contains methyl salicylate, which explains its usefulness as a pain reliever. Sap used to make birch beer as a tonic. Oil of wintergreen is distilled from inner bark; used to alleviate sore muscles. Native to North America.

Catnip - Used to ease toothache, intestinal cramps, infant's colic, and as a mild sedative. Possesses herbicidal properties.

Chickweed - Gathered fresh, used as antiscorbutic (prevents scurvy) when prepared as a green. The water, boiled, used as a wash for injuries. When dried, the leaves used to treat congestion, or to reduce fever.

Dandelion - Flowers make a yellow dye. A tea from the leaves used as a tonic and to promote bowel regularity. Juice used to relieve stiff joints. The flower is a native to Greece but is found throughout North America.

Dill - Dill water, made from oil of dill eased infant colic and children's upset stomach. Pickling and flavoring spice.

Dogwood - The bark was widely used to reduce fever and as a substitute for quinine (from Peruvian Bark); twigs used as chewing sticks (forerunner of toothbrushes). Native American.

Evening Primrose - This plant was one of the earlier plants to cross the Atlantic to Europe as a medicinal. Used fresh as a poultice. Boiled and eaten, good for scurvy. Native Americans used root tea for obesity and bowel pain. More complex preparation by an apothecary produced treatment for coughs and whooping cough. Native to Americas.

Holly - The leaves were used for colds and flu; drops for sore eyes; wash for sores and rashes. Berries poisonous. Native American.

Lavender - Flowers are used as sedative and fragrance. Believed to cure 43 ills of the flesh and spirit.

Lemon Balm - An infusion of lemon balm is drunk to relieve the pain of a toothache; also for headaches, fevers, and asthma. Leaves used to make tea; oil used in perfumes and in salves for healing wounds.

Magnolia - The bark has been used as a substitute for Peruvian Bark to reduce fever. Bark used as bitter tonic. Native to North America.

Mallow - Roots are sticky so can be dried and grated to a powder that is a useful base for pills or confectioneries. Used also for coughs, bronchitis, and stomach aches. Native to Europe.

Mandrake - Common name: May Apple. Active cathartic; used to relieve constipation, worms, fever. Native Americans used as a poison (small amounts of leaves and roots are poisonous). Scientists today are utilizing the plant in cancer research. Native to North America.

Marigold - An aromatic. Dried flowers or fresh leaves boiled in lard make a salve.

Mountain Ash - Fruit is used to prepare astringent; native Americans used to treat scurvy, worms, colds, boils and diarrhea.

Oak - The bark was used dried and powdered to treat dysentery, cholera, gangrene, and as an eye wash. Mixed with alcohol, the powder was used as a poultice for arthritis. Powdered acorn mixed with water was a treatment for diarrhea.

Oregano - Used in hot bags as an application for rheumatic swelling; good for stomach aches.

Parsley - Seeds are used to reduce gas pains. The leaves, bruised, are helpful when applied to wounds.

Peach Tree - Leaves and kernels are used in preparing a sedative, bitter, aromatic, and laxative.

Peppermint - Used to relieve gas, nausea, diarrhea, colic, nervous headache, heartburn, and as a flavoring.

Poison Ivy - Contains a powerful, nonvolatile oil that penetrates the skin causing an itchy rash. Native Americans recommended a wash made from Jewel Weed (Wild Touch-me-not) to relieve the discomfort of poison ivy rashes.

Poplar - Bark and leaves used for soothing qualities as an external wash for minor wounds. The buds are commonly called Balm Gilead.

Queen Anne's Lace - Seeds dispel intestinal gas and worms. The root is rich in vitamin A.

Rosemary - Used for digestion, to stimulate circulation, and as a disinfectant. The oil is used in perfumes, ointments and liniments.

Sage - Used for treating headaches and fever. Leaves were once used to strengthen gums and whiten teeth. Sage tea reduces gas pains.

Sassafras - Root was used to make tonic (Root Beer). It is considered unsafe - it may cause cancer - today. Native to North America, its early appeal as a curative caused it to be a major colonial export item to Europe.

Spearmint - Used to aid digestion and to relieve stomach ache. Believed to cure a headache when rubbed on the temples. Used as flavoring in confections, sodas, and dental preparations.

Sweet Gum - Bark used as a remedy for coughs. It is also useful as an ointment and flavoring.

Sycamore - Bark used as an astringent and to relieve rheumatism and scurvy.

Thyme - Used to relieve spasms and coughing. A warm infusion is useful to reduce gas and colic. Thymal is a powerful antiseptic. Ointment is good for spots, pimples, and lice.

Tulip Tree - Bark is used as a stimulant and for fevers; as a wash on fractured limbs, wounds, boils, and snake bites.

## FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

On November 7, 1775, on board His Majesty King George's ship **William**, Lord Dunmore, Governor of the rebellious colony of Virginia, declared martial law. Colonists who continued to oppose the laws of the King would be traitors. It was Dunmore's desire to raise an army of those loyal to the King so that right order could be restored to the King's colony. He thereby issued the following order:

> "...I do hereby further declare all indented servants, Negroes, or others, ...free, that are able to and willing to bear arms, they joining His Majesty's Troops, as soon as may be, for the more speedily reducing the Colony to a proper sense of their duty, to His Majesty's crown and dignity."

Put yourself back in Yorktown on November 15, 1775, when Lord Dunmore's order was made public. How would you feel or how might you act if you were. . . .

A "rebellious" colonist?_____

_____

_____

A slave of that rebellious colonist?_____

_____

_____

A loyalist?_____

_____

_____

A slave of that loyalist?_____

_____

_____

What do you think actually happened as a result of the Governor's proclamation?

_____

_____

_____

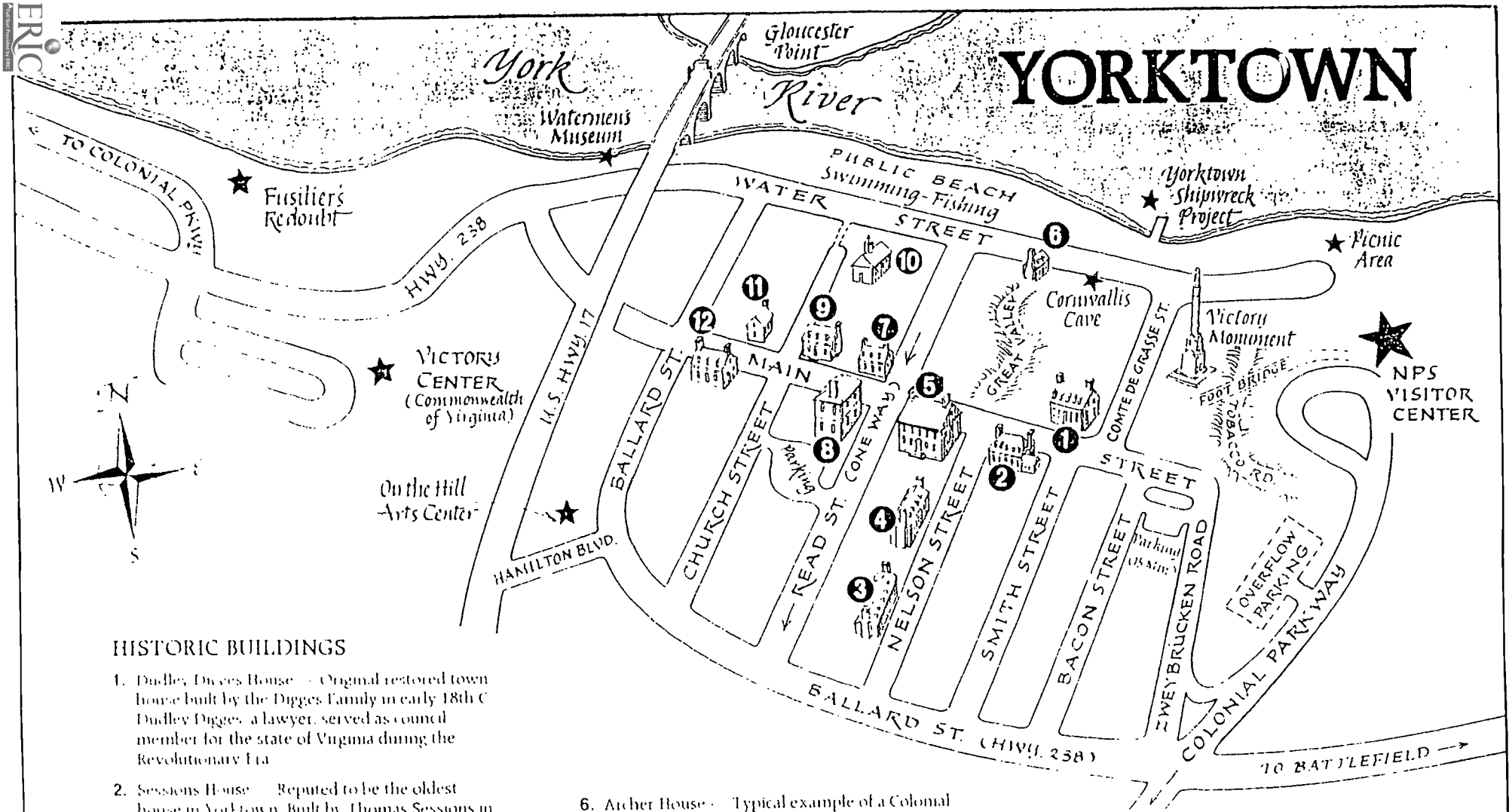
## FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM: WHAT HAPPENED?

The Response of the Rebels: The Continental Congress recommended that Virginia resist Dunmore; it was advised that warships be sent to destroy the Governor's fleet. Local Virginians wrote letters to the Virginia Gazette that slaves should be warned that Dunmore would only take the fit, male slaves; others would be returned to their masters. Also, the English by their policies had contributed more than anyone to the slave policies and should not be trusted. Patrols were set up to catch escaping slaves so that they could be returned.

The Response of the Loyalists: The Loyalists encouraged slaves of rebels to leave. They were content in the knowledge that a British victory would ensure that their "property" would be safe. Slaves of Loyalists who sought freedom with Dunmore, were returned to their masters.

The Response of Slaves: Numbers are difficult to verify. At the Battle of Great Bridge, Dunmore reportedly had 600 soldiers, half of whom were black. He reportedly armed and outfitted the soldiers as quickly as they came to his attention. He named his recruits "Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment" and had the slogan "Liberty to Slaves" stitched across their uniforms. After accepting defeat at Great Bridge (where blacks fought on both sides), Dunmore retreated to his ships and continued to train his new recruits.

What happened? Dunmore's call for slave-colonists to fight for the King was one of the most successful attempts to get Americans fighting for the British cause. His successes caused fear among the rebels. The long, hot Virginia summer may have been his undoing. On board the crowded ships, small pox arrived. Dunmore's attempts to separate the sick and the well did not stop the spread of the fever. By the time, Dunmore retreated in the spring of 1776, the corps may have dwindled to as few as 150. However, Dunmore became a hero among black slaves dreaming of freedom -- they even named their children after him. A few of the blacks who fought for the British were actually taken to free colonies in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone. Some of the black men who fought on the American side were rewarded with their freedom as well. But, by the time the American Revolution ended, slaves all over Virginia had come to realize that the talk of liberty and freedom applied only to the white men.




## HISTORIC BUILDINGS

1. Dudley Digges House — Original restored town house built by the Digges family in early 18th C. Dudley Digges, a lawyer, served as council member for the state of Virginia during the Revolutionary Era.

2. Sessions House — Reputed to be the oldest house in Yorktown. Built by Thomas Sessions in 1692. Survived the siege of 1781.

3. Ballard House — Original restored home of Captain John Ballard, merchant and sea captain from 1727-1744.

4. Edmund Smith House — Original restored home named for builder who willed home to his daughter Mildred, wife of David Jamerson. In 1781 Lt. Governor Jamerson lived beside war time Governor Thomas Nelson.

5. Nelson House — Original restored mansion built by "Scotch Tom" Nelson in early 18th C. This impressive example of Georgian architecture was the home of his grandson — Thomas Nelson, Jr., a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Home is periodically opened by the Park Service.

6. Archer House — Typical example of a Colonial waterfront dwelling. Home was used as residence and store by Archer family for over a century.

7. Pate House — Original home named for first owner, Thomas Pate. Built at turn of 18th C., later home was sold to Digges family.

8. Customhouse — Reputed to have been built in 1721 as Richard Ambler's "large brick storehouse" and used as his office while he served as collector of customs in Yorktown. Owned by the Comte de Grasse chapter, DAR.

9. Somerwell House — Original restored brick home of Mungo Somerwell, one of Yorktown's ferrymen. Surviving the siege of 1781, it became a hotel around the Civil War period.

10. Grace Church — Erected circa 1697, the church was known as York-Hampton church in Colonial times. Although damaged several times by fire, it was later rebuilt using its original walls. It continues today in active use for the community.

11. Medical Shop — Reconstructed example of an 18th C. medical shop.

12. Swan Tavern Group — Reconstructed tavern and dependencies built on original sites. This popular tavern was built in 1722 by "Scotch Tom" Nelson and Joseph Walker. Surviving the siege of 1781, it was later wrecked during the Civil War. Now operated as an antique shop by a concessionaire.