

# **BLACK PATRIOTS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR, 1775 -1784**

**OUR HEROES AND FOUNDERS**



# BOSTON MASSACRE MARCH 5, 1770

- ▶ Crispus Attucks, member of Sons of Liberty
- ▶ Led Boston citizens to resist tyranny
- ▶ British troops fired on group of fifty
- ▶ Attucks 1<sup>st</sup> patriot to die by British troops
- ▶ “The shot heard around the world”
- ▶ Total of 5 killed & six severely wounded
- ▶ Crispus Attucks is representative of thousands of blacks that fought in the war





# BATTLE OF LEXINGTON & CONCORD APRIL 19, 1775

- ▶ These battles were the first military engagements of the American Revolution.
- ▶ Free blacks and slaves served with whites in an integrated army.
- ▶ The Battle of Lexington was won by the British.
- ▶ In the Battle of Concord, the Americans introduced guerrilla warfare to the British.
- ▶ The contributions made by black men such as Prince Estabrook, Caesar Augustus, Lemuel Hayes, and Peter Salem were invaluable to the outcome of the American Revolution.







Marksman, Peter Salem is in the lower right-hand corner of the painting.

## **BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL JUNE 17, 1775**



# PETER SALEM

- ▶ Salem was declared a freed slave when he joined the Massachusetts Minutemen.
- ▶ He was a celebrated marksman who played a vital role in the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775.
- ▶ The colonists ran out of ammunition and the British Major John Pitcairn asked for their surrender.
- ▶ Salem raised his musket and shot Major Pitcairn.
- ▶ The colonists lost the battle but introduced guerilla warfare to the British and proved to be a formidable opponent.
- ▶ Other blacks, Salem Poor, Prince Hall, and Phillip Abbott also distinguished themselves in the Battle of Bunker Hill.







## **WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE, DECEMBER 25, 1776**

Oliver Cromwell is depicted as the highest figure at the bow of the boat.



# OLIVER CROMWELL

- Oliver Cromwell (May 24, 1752 – January 1853) was an African-American soldier, who served in the American Revolutionary War. He was light skinned and born a free black, raised by the John Hutchin family to be a farmer.
- Private Cromwell served in the 2nd New Jersey Regiment under Captain Lowery and Colonel Israel Shreve. Between 1777 and 1783, he saw action at the battles of Trenton (1776), Princeton (1777), Brandywine (1777), Monmouth (1778), and at the final siege of Yorktown (1781).
- He made the famous crossing of the Delaware on December 25, 1776 with George Washington.
- After Yorktown, Cromwell left the army. Commander-in-Chief George Washington personally signed Cromwell's discharge papers.
- Washington also designed a medal which was presented to Cromwell for his service.







## THE BATTLE OF TRENTON, DECEMBER 26, 1776

After crossing the Delaware, the night before, Oliver Cromwell is at the Battle of Trenton with George Washington.





# PRINCE WHIPPLE

- Prince Whipple was a member of a royal African Family
- Family sent him to America to get an education
- Sold into slavery in Baltimore
- Bought by William Whipple of New Hampshire, signer of Declaration of Independence
- When William Whipple joined the revolution, Prince joined him
- Prince fought in the Battle of Saratoga in 1777, and the Battle of Rhode Island in 1778
- Prince Whipple was given his freedom by General William Whipple





## **BATTLE OF BRANDYWINE, SEPTEMBER 11, 1777**

Two richly merited black soldiers, Oliver Cromwell & Henry Hill, both served at the Battle of Brandywine, the Battle of Lexington, the Battle of Monmouth, the Battle of Princeton, and the Battle of Yorktown.





# BATTLE OF MONMOUTH JUNE 28, 1778

- ▶ The following slaves and free blacks served in this battle; Salem Poor, Henry Hill, Oliver Cromwell, Samuel Charlton and Peter Salem.
- ▶ Salem Poor was later honored with a petition from the Massachusetts legislature.
- ▶ Henry Hill was later buried with honors.
- ▶ Oliver Cromwell received a military pension & medal from General Washington.
- ▶ Samuel Charlton received General Washington's commendation for his courage and devotion to the cause of liberty.
- ▶ Peter Salem received honors for his service from General Washington.





# SALEM POOR

- ▶ He purchased his freedom in 1769, for 27 pounds.
- ▶ Married a free black woman and they had a son.
- ▶ Left his family behind to serve the Patriot cause.
- ▶ Fought at Bunker Hill in Colonel Frye's Regiment.
- ▶ Credited with shooting British Lt. Col. Abercrombie.
- ▶ Colonel William Prescott & 14 officers petitioned the legislature of Massachusetts to declare Salem a gallant soldier and leader.
- ▶ His acts of bravery were too numerous to lay out.
- ▶ A Revolutionary War Bicentennial Series, 1975 stamp, "Contributors to the Cause" in Salem Poor's honor.







## THE BATTLE OF YORKTOWN

**SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER  
19, 1781**

This was the last battle of the American Revolution.

Washington commanded 20,000 Franco-American forces to defeat the British at Yorktown.

The British were defeated because of six days of cannon bombardment and a night attack on the fort.

British General Lord Cornwallis was forced to surrender on October 19, 1781.

January 14, 1784, Congress ratified The Treaty of Paris.

A key figure in the defeat of the British at Yorktown was James Armistead, a slave, who was a double agent spy.

Other important black patriots who fought at this battle were Henry Hill and Oliver Cromwell.

On September 3, 1783, The Treaty of Paris is signed, officially ending the War for Independence.





# JAMES ARMISTEAD

## DECEMBER 1760 – AUGUST 1830

- ▶ James Armistead, a slave, was a double-agent spy.
- ▶ He joined the Continental Army in 1781.
- ▶ Armistead was assigned to French General Marquis de Lafayette, commander of the allied French forces.
- ▶ As a spy, Armistead provided Lafayette with British troop movements, and strategic information.
- ▶ His espionage efforts helped give the continental army a decisive victory at the Battle of Yorktown and an end to the war.
- ▶ The British surrendered on October 19, 1781.
- ▶ January 14, 1784, Congress ratified The Treaty of Paris.





# SUMMARY

- It is estimated between 9,000 to 15,000 blacks served in the Revolutionary War.
- By 1779, fifteen percent of blacks served in integrated army units.
- Blacks fought in every battle from Lexington & Concord to Yorktown.
- Three all-black units served with bravery and devotion: the Rhode Island First Regiment; the Black Bucks of America; and the Volunteer Chasseurs.
- Many blacks received recognition for their bravery and leadership.
- Some blacks who were promised freedom for their service, were returned to slavery.

