

Founding fathers

[Government](#), [Army](#)



When you think of the Founding Fathers, the common names George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin often come to mind. What many people don't realize, is there were many more significant people besides them that helped make America free and independent. Even more than this, there were many women and minorities that contributed to this change. The women and minorities males that I am going to talk about in this paper show true drive, determination, and passion. These people prove that it doesn't matter what your gender or race is for you to make a difference and have extraordinary triumphs. There were countless women throughout history whose actions and sacrifices helped to establish our independence. The first story of these brave women is about Molly Pitcher in the Revolutionary War. From a young age, Mary Ludwig, nicknamed Molly, had wanted to be a soldier. This goal was looked down upon in girls, and would have been expected from a man or boy. She grew up on a farm, and in any weather condition, would be found outside working hard. This sense of determination gave Molly strength, and the ability to do whatever she attempted quickly and efficiently. Wanting to utilize this quality usefully, she went to live with a family friend, assisting her in household work. Molly then learned how to use her hand for anything, but her need for helping was not yet fulfilled. Molly eventually married a comrade, John Hayes, who joined the Continental army when the battle of Lexington began. Proudly, Molly stood by her husband excited that he was able to serve his country. On January 3, 1777, the Continental army fought the British at Trenton, loosing thirty men, and then retreating to Morristown, New Jersey. When she was aware of this, she went to the fields to make sure there were no hurt men. Unfortunately,

she found a wounded soldier, but was able to nurse him back to health. When June occurred, temperatures began to rise, scorching the fighters. Because of the heat and long hours of fighting on June 28, 1778, many of the man's tongues became swollen, and their bodies became exhausted. Molly decided to spend her time through the blistering heat going back and forth carrying water to the soldiers. " Molly Pitcher! " was a frequent exclamation they would say, thankful to see the water. The heat did get to her husband, causing him to pass out, but Molly was right by his side to help him in any way possible. Since her husband was not able to use the cannon, Molly took his place, loading and firing the gunner. The courageous acts displayed by Molly played an important part of the soldiers' victory. General Washington praised her, and even awarded her " one of his gallant men". Sticking by her husband's side, fighting for him when he couldn't, and even bringing water for the thirsty soldiers were valiant acts Molly portrayed. Molly was a prominent part in this battle and earned a spot in American history. One year later another brave female helped gain America its independence, Penelope Barker. Back in their time, women were expected to stay home, cook, clean, and take care of their family. Penelope lived with her husband in North Carolina. Unlike how female were supposed to act, Penelope had a mind of her own and was interested and engaged in politics. Even though her husband was an agent of the English crown, Penelope believed that England had gone too far with the Tea Act of 1773. Once she learned about the Boston Tea Party, Penelope decided to have her own. Door to door Penelope went speaking with and convincing other women to boycott all British tea and clothing. Penelope was able to convince fifty other women to attend a

meeting he held on October 25, 1774. By the end of the meeting, they wrote a letter proclaiming about their boycott, signed it, and published it in a London newspaper. The better known Boston Tea Party was conducted by men, wearing costumes to protect their identity, yet she rejected the notion of hiding and instead made it public. Penelope Barker went on to say, “ Maybe it has only been men who have protested the king up to now. That only means we women have taken too long to let our voices be heard. We are signing our names to a document, not hiding ourselves behind costumes like the men in Boston did at their tea party. The British will know who we are. ” This turned into the first women’s political activity in colonial American History. She took a stand in what she believed in and did something about it. Once this reached the newspaper in London, it received a lot of negative feedback. The crown did not take the women colonists seriously, and many citizens laughed at their attempts. Because women's views on matters politic were not considered worthy of consideration, the British laughed and their cartoonist's had a fun day being able to make fun of them. Others called the women bad mothers or “ loose" women. This shortly stopped though, when other women in the colonies started to boycott the goods and listening to what these ladies had to say. More and more people started to join and boycott which eventually got the crown’ attention. Although this movement may not seem like a huge deal, we have Penelope Barker to thank for advancing the cause of women’s rights to engage in politics, and gaining more independence. Stepping out of the norm, and doing what you believe is right is the most courageous act. By making a petition and boycott, Penelope was able to bring attention to something that wasn’t right with America.

Sybil Ludington is the next American female hero on the list. It was 1777 and America was fighting with England to claim our independence. As she was lying in bed, she was wishing there was something she could do to help the cause. She already used spun wool instead of England's fabric, and refused to drink the English tea. Sybil felt as if that was all women were doing, and she wanted to do more. From outside she heard someone yelling, " Colonel Ludington! Colonel Ludington! The British are burning Danbury, Sir! You must gather your men and march against the British! " Sybil's father then said that their supplies were in Danbury, so all their weapons would be destroyed and they would need to muster the men. Sybil already knew that the men in her father's militia lived in farms scattered all over the country, being released from their duty to spring plant. They needed to be called out to form their fighting unit. Sybil offered to help and to go get the men since she knew the roads but her father said that it would be far too dangerous, that she could be attacked. As she pleaded that she really wanted to help, that there was no one else to do it her father saw the determination and strength in her and let her go. As Sybil started to leave on her horse, Star, the sky was bright red, meaning the British were currently burning Danbury. Her father gave her detailed instructions right before she left to take a stick and knock on the men's farmhouse doors with it. He also told her to go as far south as Mahopac Falls and then north to Stromyville. Finally she was off, and started at Alder place charging up to the farmhouses, yelling that the British were burning Danbury and where to meet. As Sybil went from farmhouse to farmhouse it was also continuously raining, resulting in her getting drenched. Also at one point she had to fight off a " highway man".

Finally, she reached all of her destinations, a distance of 40 miles and gathered all 400 men to her father. At the time Sybil Ludington was only 16 years old. Her sense of stability, audacity, and determination was enough to get 400 of her father's men to fight in the war. If it wasn't for her, there would be no men, and America would have lost the war. Sybil significantly impacted the result of that war, which is what caused us to become free. The last female who helped participate in the Revolutionary War and earn America independence was Deborah Sampson. From a young age, she learned to work hard because her father died, and her mother sent her away to work on a farm. Deborah was best known for her eagerness to learn, begging her new family to teach her anything the boys knew. One of her passions was to help the men in the Revolutionary War, although this seemed impossible because girls were not allowed to fight. Disregarding that rule, Deborah dressed up like a man called " Robert" and became a soldier at the age of 19. Her dedication, braveness, and willingness to sign up for dangerous missions, made the other soldiers proud of her, and landed her a spot to be an aide for the general. When Deborah was sent to West Point, New York, she got wounded in the leg. She didn't tell anyone and tended the wounds herself so no one would find out her secret. After serving another eighteen months and a few battles at West Point, she was wounded again, and her identity was discovered by the doctor. On October 25, 1783, Deborah was " honorably discharged" from the army. Although this was discouraging, she received a letter from Paul Revere , granting her a pension. On January 20, 1792, Massachusetts General Court recognized Deborah as a hero. They decided that she did " perform the duty of a soldier"

and exhibited extraordinary heroism. It didn't matter what gender, Deborah Sampson was a faithful, gallant soldier that impacted America in a huge way. Besides just women who helped in making America independent and free, there were minorities. The actions of black men for our nation's founding have often been ignored. There were many slaves who joined the army to gain their freedom, but there were thousands of other African Americans who served America just because it was the right thing to do and we as a nation needed it. These hero's deeds are no less important than any white man's deeds. They have also fought and died, held office, wrote in support of independence, and led their communities. There were many black men, about 12, 00- 15, 00 that became soldiers in the American Revolution. They fought in an integrated army. By 1779, fifteen percent of the Continental Army was black, getting to fight in the first Battle of Lexington and Concord, and the last battle at Yorktown. Besides integrated units, there were three all black units: Rhode Island First regiment, the Black Bucks of America, and Volunteer Chasseurs. Caesar Augustus was enlisted in the Continental Army at the age of 14. He was of mixed race and from Dorchester, Massachusetts. Augustus was able to serve the entire length of the war. For the first two years he spent in the service of an officer but then he reenlisted to be able to fight. Although Augustus didn't do anything extraordinary, he was an African American who fought in the war, and eventually died fighting for our country. Another African American was Cyrus Bustill. He was born in 1732, with his father being a lawyer but his mother being a slave. Since the child takes the mother's job, he had to be a slave. Cyrus was trained how to bake and once he got his freedom at the age of 36, he helped out by making bread for the

solider. It was something that the soldiers during the American Revolution needed. George Washington even gave him a silver piece and commended him for his service. Cyrus also became a member of the Free African Society. Next was Prince Hall. He was the slave of William Hall, a Boston Family. A month after the Boston Massacre, he was freed by his master and worked as a peddler, caterer and leather dresser. He eventually served in the Battle of Bunker Hill. Hall was able to supply leather drum heads to the Continental Army. Before the war even began he joined the British Army Lodge of Masons, and once the British retreated they took over. It was the first African America Lodge, and was named after Hall. He became one of Boston's most prominent citizens and a leader in the black community. Prince Hall was able to speak out against slavery and the rights of blacks. Because of the lack of schools for black children, he set one up in his own home. He also in 1797 spoke out against violence. " How, at such times, are we shamefully abused, and that to such a degree, that we may truly be said to carry our lives in our hands, and the arrows of death are flying about our heads...tis not for want of courage in you, for they know that they dare not face you man for man, but in a mob, which we despise..." During a harsh winter at Valley Forge, there was a new regiment created, the Rhode Island First. This was made up of all African Americans, 125 men, some were free and some were enslaved. Their first fight was at the Battle of Newport in 1778, resulting in the Continental Army forcing to retreat. The regiment put itself between the retreating Americans and the British and were able to hold the line when the British attacked, causing the British to have many casualties. These men's bravery helped save many lives not only there, but in other battles like the

Battle of Croton River. Eventually, there was a statue in honor of the Black soldiers. It read, “ â€ŽWhen the Constitution of the United States was framed, colored men voted in a majority of these States; they voted in the State of New York, in Pennsylvania, in Massachusetts, in Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware and North Carolina; and long after the adoption of the Constitution, they continued to vote in North Carolina and Tennessee also. The Constitution of the United States makes no distinction of color. ”

These men that I have mentioned above risked their own lives to help make America free. Sometimes when we hear the big named, popular people, we tend to forget about everyone else that was involved. Top of Form