

It's July 4th, and I'm feeling reflective about what patriotism means to me. I'm discussing my Patriot ancestors, the 29 (or so) men who participated in, or supported, the American Revolution.

What I've found is that patriotism isn't as simple as it seems. Please join me.



Hey everybody, and welcome to episode 406 of From Paper To People. My name is Carolynn ni Lochlainn, and I am your hostess with the mostest. I have a quick episode for you today. First, I'd like to thank James Michael Reilly for joining my Patreon at the Roots level. You know I appreciate you, Jim.

It's July 4th, Independence Day in the United States, and as such, my thoughts have turned to my family ties to the Revolutionary War. Yes, Aaron Burr is my 1st cousin 7 times removed (his grandfather Daniel Burr is my 7th great-grandfather), but that's not the kind of contemplation I mean. I'm thinking about the realities of this country, both now and then, and how slavery is part of the story of my own participating ancestors' lives.

I'm a member of the DAR, or Daughters of the American Revolution. It's a hereditary society in the United States and abroad, and the only way to gain entry is by proving direct, lineal descent from someone who fought for the Colonial Army, in a Colonial militia, or who provided supplies or services to the Colonial cause. In the past, it has been a racially exclusive organization. That is changing, but its reputation in my experience as an inappropriately political society is well-earned. It all depends on where you join, and with whom you choose to associate, like any other organization.

I have 29 qualifying or possibly qualifying Patriots, men (no women, yet) who either supplied, supported, or fought with the revolutionary armies to win independence from King George

and all of the offenses of monarchy. Yes, UK friends, I do find the British monarchy offensive! I hope you won't love me any less.

The variety of types of service that are now considered patriotic are really interesting. These are my patriots' names and what I know about how they rendered patriotic service:

William Jesse Burton of Virginia was a soldier who also furnished supplies to the militia.

John H Pace of Virginia furnished supplies to the militia.

Adam Stultz of the Netherlands immigrated to Virginia, and in 1777, he took the Oath of Allegiance and furnished supplies to the revolutionary army.

George P Penn of Virginia, served in the militia, as a juror, and supplied the colonial military.

William Hendry Blocker of North Carolina has an incomplete service record per the DAR, so I'm going to need to investigate him further.

Isaac Bowers of Massachusetts was a fence viewer in the civil service. That means he was appointed to local government to deal with problems between neighbors involving property boundaries and roaming livestock.

William Connett of New Jersey was a soldier in the militia.

Richard Chenoweth of Virginia served as a soldier. After the war, he contracted with the Commonwealth of Virginia to build the fort that became Louisville, Kentucky.

Private Joseph Collins of Virginia served in the infantry.

Private Elijah Bartley of Pennsylvania served in the militia.

Joseph Rutherford Walker of County Down, Ireland is just a maybe right now – there are a few possible matches per the DAR.

Major John Hays of Virginia requires more proof per the DAR, so he's another challenge for me to take up.

Private Abram Hendrickszen Schutt of New York served in the militia. I recently found evidence of his service, and no one else has proven it, so he will be completely new to the DAR's records.

Nathaniel Hull of Connecticut signed the Association Test in 1775. The Association was a boycott created by the Continental Congress in 1774, so his signature meant that he agreed with the boycott against the Crown and its products. Nathaniel's son Ezekiel Hull of Connecticut was a soldier in the New York militia.

Jacob DeHaven Sr of Pennsylvania provided 12 days' service of collecting beef for the revolutionary armies.

John Corning of Massachusetts also signed the Association Test, in 1776.

Nathaniel Abbott Pettingill Sr of Massachusetts and his son Phineas Swan Pettingill of Massachusetts both served at the Lexington Alarm. When Paul Revere sounded the call, they answered.

Private Pieter Jacobszen Clute of New York, served as a soldier and rendered service by assisting in building boats used in The Clinton-Sullivan Expedition. This expedition was intended to destroy the Six Nations Confederation's ability to fight for the Crown. That included taking hostages and destroying food sources. The Six Nations were the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora peoples.

Major Abraham Jacobse Swits Sr of New York served in the militia. His son, Lieutenant Walter

Swits of New York, served as a Ranger.

Johann Nicholas Garst of Germany rendered a patriotic service by paying a supply tax in 1783 to fund the Pennsylvania militias, and his son, Private Frederick Garst Sr of Pennsylvania, served in the Pennsylvania militia.

John Rauch of Pennsylvania also rendered patriotic service by paying a supply tax to fund the Pennsylvania militias.

Private Philip J Schoff of Pennsylvania rendered patriotic service, then was killed in battle in 1778. The service of his son Philip Schoff Jr of Pennsylvania, is currently in question per the DAR.

2nd Lieutenant William Curry Sr of Pennsylvania served in the militia.

Ensign William Ramsay of Pennsylvania needs better proof of service per the DAR.

I also descend from one confirmed Loyalist, Johann Jacob Pechtel, aka John Pickell. He served with Rogers' Rangers, and went to Canada after the war where he was given a land bounty. There's another ancestor whose loyalty is in question: Captain Benjamin J Wilson Jr of Massachusetts. He's on the DAR books, but he needs proof of service after 1779 because he moved to Canada after the War. Such a move was usually due to a land grant from the Crown for loyal service to England.

Please understand that none of this makes me cool, smooth or groovy in my own eyes. I did nothing to be able to claim this heritage. I've never understood the phrase "proud to be an American." For me, being American is an accident of birth, albeit a happy one. I definitely feel fortunate to be an American - there are a lot of dangerous places to live on this planet, dangerous for women or for the disabled. I think the Great American Experiment is moving in the right direction, but in America I have the fairly unique right to challenge and dispute the

validity of social and political movements and norms. That certainly makes me a lucky woman.

So, what is MY patriotism? Today and every day, it's a process of thought and action. It's not about bumper stickers, t-shirts, or Facebook posts, though I indulge myself with all three.

I read.

I discuss.

I vote.

I listen to the experiences of Americans with any different heritage from my own, and I am willing to be wrong and revisit everything, even if my ego doesn't always like the process.

I'm even willing to let myself be bad at that on some days.

I teach what I know to be true, because teaching truth is disappearing from the formalized education system and is becoming, or has become, more of a cottage industry. As the saying goes, "each one, teach one."

I do not fly an American flag because I've never woken up, looked outside, and thought "what country do I live in again?" I leave all brands of jingoism to others.

In terms of the complexities of my ancestors and their actions, I acknowledge that Frederick Gharst was known as "Indian" Gharst because he famously killed 6 native people where he colonized in Virginia. It's apocryphal, but it's on his tombstone.

I recognize that Ezekiel Hull, Joseph Collins, Richard Chenoweth, George P Penn, William Jesse Burton and their spouses ALL enslaved humans even as they fought for a White, property-owning man's "American freedom." Some of their enslaved labor force were dower slaves, so

I do not forget those wives for bringing wealth in the form of enslaved labor into their marriages. Some of those enslaving patriots also willed enslaved persons to their children, creating generational wealth in the form of human suffering and the property that such suffering could grow.

For those Patriots who did not enslave, I understand that they did benefit from an economy built on the enslavement of other human beings. If they wore cotton, ate sugar, or consumed other goods that they bought on the open market, they benefited from slavery.

I comprehend that it is possible for one person to be many things - a loving parent, a good spouse, a loyal neighbor, and a racist who tortures the minds, bodies and souls of other humans because he or she can under the law. Life is lived in the grey zones of weakness and convenience and personal comfort. This is the source of cognitive dissonance.

These men, and their wives, were that. Did that. Lived that.

We are not free until we are ALL free, so I've made a life choice to leave the flag-waving brand of Americanism to others. This weekend, I'll appreciate that I don't have to pronounce "aluminum" as "aluminium," and that I have a lot of work to do on true liberation. That starts with educating myself, continues with taking action, and then the process repeats.

I thank my ancestors for their work, and I see their imperfections. It doesn't hurt anyone to be honest about these things unless we are so fragile that truth will blow us apart. I don't know about you, but I'm stronger than that. Time for me to improve this Great American Experiment.

With that, I wish all who celebrate a Happy 4th of July. Do your research, don't be a Jeffrey, teach and learn truth, and remember - Expect Surprises.




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