



"War of Outposts at New Bridge"

Image Courtesy of: Bergen County Historical Society and the artist Jeff Trexler

## Tavern Talks presents: The Raid on Hackensack and Paramus, 1780

Hosted by:



78 Johnson Avenue  
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601

## What's brewing in New Jersey?

A revolution, of course- and beer! Join RevolutionNJ in the age old tradition of exploring ideas in bars with friends. Tavern Talks is an interactive event that takes you back in time, featuring history that happened right on your doorstep. Reenactors will immerse participants in the past using questions and prompts to help you explore not only the past, but also issues you and your communities face today.



**RevolutionNJ**

1776 • 2026 | ENGAGE THE PAST. SHAPE THE FUTURE.

Tell us about your experience today!



# TODAY'S TAVERN TALK

## March 23, 1780 Raids on Hackensack and Paramus

It was the "worst winter in human memory", and tensions were high around New York City. Separated from the main army that was off laying siege to Charleston, a depleted British garrison attempted to throw Washington's forces off balance. One such night, a raid was plotted against a Hackensack militia post and a 250-man Continental outpost in Paramus. 300 British soldiers approached from the north and 300 British and German soldiers flanked from the south.

The destruction began at 4:00AM. The Hackensack Crown force from the south burned the local courthouse and left many houses plundered before moving north to rendezvous with the remaining British soldiers. A detachment left at New Bridge who would ensure safe retreat over the Hackensack River once the damage had been done. The pursuing militia and Continentals harassed their retreat on the Bridge, but the British ultimately evaded attack by throwing the planks into the river after they crossed. As destructive as this raid would be, this clandestine attack laid the foundation for a much more costly raid on Ho-Ho-Kus three weeks later.

During the course of the raid 65 Americans were taken prisoner. Half of them were Continental soldiers, and 22 others were a militia guard including enslaved persons who were protecting the courthouse and the Harrington Township tax receipts, which were just collected. The British, too, sustained losses. During the near thirty-mile march, about 30 men were lost to the elements.

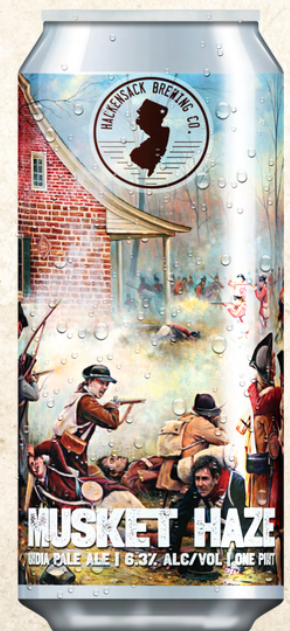
**That is what the history books tell us ... but what really happened? How did it get to this?  
Can you find out?**



An accurate plan of the country between New York and Philadelphia : with the dispositions of the forces.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress:

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2002620227/>



Fun Fact: The can art for Musket Haze is based off the artwork of Jeff Trexler depicting the raid from tonight's event!



## What to Expect!

- 1) Arrive early and get comfortable. Grab a drink and don't be afraid to sit with someone new and start a conversation.
- 2) Make sure to take a look around and engage with the various things at your table and hanging on the wall. Give a game of Whist a try (see the rules on pg. 17 in this booklet!)
- 3) Reenactors will be walking and sitting throughout the tavern, feel free to engage them at any time. Don't be shy! Ask them questions about the characters they are portraying, reenacting in general, or who they are themselves.
- 4) After introductions, we will go into the first half of the event. Your role in this first half is to try and piece together what exactly happened and how the different people present at the historic event experienced it. Try and figure out which character the reenactors are portraying by asking them the questions listed in this guide. Think of yourself as a time traveling historical detective!

### *Hints on how to find this information:*

- *Try to answer as many of the questions and prompts located on each of the historical figure pages. Also check the Appendix in the back of this booklet for more information and sources!*
  - *Talk with each other and cross examine the different reenactors to get different viewpoints and information about the event. Use the notes section at the back to help keep track of your information.*
  - *Use what you found out to come up with your own historical understanding of the raid.*
- 5) For the second half of the event, we will be taking everything we learned from the past into the present. Using the three prompts, we urge you to make connections between the complexity of the past with the complexity of your present. Turn to your neighbors and start the conversation using our contemporary discussion questions and discussion guide. The goal is to walk away with a different understanding of your neighbor than the one you came in with.
  - 6) Take pictures and tag us @revolutionnj and @hackensackbrewing with the hashtag #taverntalks



# Tavern Talks Discussion Guide/ Tips

Adapted from a guide by Deonté Griffin-Quick  
(RevolutionNJ Civic and Community Engagement Working Group Co-Chair)

## **Be present. Step up/Step back**

If you don't normally speak up, make your voice heard. If you find yourself doing a lot of talking, step back and practice listening. Allow for silence, let the group process the question asked and allow space to hear different voices. As much as possible, eliminate distractions such as texting or email. Don't check-out even if you are uncomfortable.

## **Get comfortable with being uncomfortable**

We may address some hard topics and change is uncomfortable. Allow yourself to sit with discomfort in order to analyze what makes you uncomfortable. Don't make your discomfort someone else's problem.

## **Listen for understanding**

Rather than to debate, Acknowledge there may be communication differences. Allow for pause in order for others to digest statements or questions. In this room, everyone has an equal seat at the table and everyone's point of view is worthy of respect and attention.

## **Lead with "I" statements**

Do not generalize or speak for others in the room. We each can only speak for ourselves and our lived experience.

## **Assume good intentions**

We are creating a space for shared learning and growth. Remember that even good intentions do not displace the impact your words may have on others.

## **Address conflict directly**

Practice "Ouch" and "Oops". Acknowledge if you said something hurtful or insensitive to someone. Take feedback as an opportunity to learn and do better rather than a personal attack.

## **Take care of yourself and each other**

Take care of your needs when we are gathering. Let organizers know what accommodations you require to have your needs fully met.

# Questions and Prompts: British Officer

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1) Why did you conduct a raid? What were you hoping to achieve with it?

2) What is your opinion of the Revolutionaries? What do you think about their Declaration for Independence? How do folks back home feel about it?

3) How are your soldiers holding up with the winter? What is their moral like concerning the current war effort?



*Historical Tidbit:*

*Did you know that there were competing recruitment efforts for Americans to join both sides? Check out the recruitment broadsides hanging on the walls. What would you have chosen?*

# Questions and Prompts: Militiamen

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1) Why was the courthouse raided? What were you doing there? How many of you were captured? How were you treated as a prisoners?

2) Why did you join the militia over the Continental Army? What is the difference between the two?

3) Are there tensions between you and your neighbors since becoming part of the militia? How do you navigate disagreements?



### *Historical Tidbit:*

*Notice a code at the top of your notes page? Can you find out what the code says? Revolutionary spies used a series of numbers and letters to pass coded messages to each other. New Jersey was part of a larger spy network called the Mersereau Ring throughout New Brunswick and the greater New York area.*

# Questions and Prompts: Loyalist

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1) How do you feel about your neighbors being badgered by British Soldiers?

2) Why did you choose to remain loyal to the crown? What influenced your decision?

3) Was your home confiscated by Revolutionaries? How difficult will it be to go back home and continue living among your neighbors?



*Historical Tidbit:*

*Bergen County had the largest loyalist population in New Jersey. With such stark political views, do you think it was possible for Patriots and Loyalists to live with these differences?*

# Questions and Prompts: Homemaker

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1) What shaped your political views? Do they match with the members of your family?

2) What is the effect of the raid/ war on the home life? How are you getting by? Who is helping you? Was your house plundered?

3) How did you take part in the war? Did you do any London Trading (clandestine trading with British troops that involved selling them produce and other goods) or serve as a spy?



*Historical Tidbit:*

*Most Americans did not actively participate in battle. The homefront is a major part of the American Revolution. Both armies ordered their soldiers to confiscate food, livestock, or goods during desperate times. How do you think the war was experienced at the homefront?*



# Questions and Prompts: Enslaved Soldier

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1) What does the Revolution mean to you?

2) Why did you choose the side you did? Did Dunmore's Proclamation influence your decision?

3) How do you navigate the social spaces, relationships, and situations when held in captivity? Did the Philipsburg Proclamation influence you?



*Historical Tidbit:*

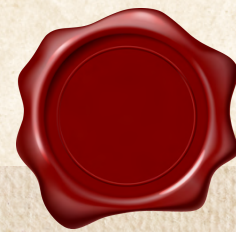
*Bergen County was consistently one of the largest slave holding counties in New Jersey until the abolition of slavery in the state in 1865. How did slavery shape the fabric of social life then? How did it affect the present?*

# CONTEMPORARY DISCUSSIONS



## QUESTION 1

As tonight showed, there are many different threads to a story. Yet, often it's easier to simplify complex situations and make assumptions. What are the dangers of telling a single story? How can understanding the complexity of situations help you push against your own biases surrounding people, places, and events? Why is this important to do?



## QUESTION 2

The historical figures from tonight were all very different people with various experiences and viewpoints. This has always been the case. We are humans after all and still live with and navigate differences every day. However, sometimes we get caught up in our own worlds. What are some barriers and obstacles that make it difficult to be a neighbor today? What can you do to re-stitch the fabric of your communities? What are the consequences of "keeping to yourself" and not living with differences?



## QUESTION 3

Debates in the past were fierce and polarizing with many folks trying to influence public sentiment for their own gain. While the medium may have changed, things like news articles, videos, and images are used to the same effect. How do you know when a particular story or sentiment is being manipulated? How do you know if the source you are engaging with is being fair and thorough or reflecting back your own viewpoints? What can you do to break today's echo chambers?



# Appendix A- Black Soliders in the Revolutionary War

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"In November of 1775, Lord Dunmore's Declaration was issued; it promised freedom to any enslaved person who left his American owner and joined the British forces. One consequence of this act by the royal governor of Virginia was the decision by several thousand Black people to cast their lot with the British. One of the most notable was a fugitive enslaved person from Shrewsbury (Monmouth County), Titus Cornelius, later known as Colonel Tye. After participating in the Battle of Monmouth (1778), he led several successful raids on the farms of Americans in Monmouth County before being killed in 1780. A second result of Dunmore's declaration was the reversal of the American policy of excluding Black people from military service. As of December 31, 1775, free Black people could enlist, and one who did was Oliver Cromwell. Born free in Columbus (Burlington County) in 1752, he enlisted in a company attached to the Second New Jersey Regiment, an enlistment later reinforced with the passage in 1777 of the New Jersey Militia Act. Along with several Black soldiers, including Prince Whipple, he crossed the Delaware with Washington on December 24, 1776. He later saw action at Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, and Yorktown. His honorable discharge was signed by General George Washington on June 5, 1783. By the end of the war, he had become one of about five thousand Black soldiers of the total of three hundred thousand who fought on the American side.

Black people were present at all the major battles in New Jersey, such as Trenton (1776), Princeton (1777), Fort Mercer (1777), Monmouth (1778), and Springfield (1780), as well as those elsewhere, such as Saratoga (1777), Savannah (1779), and Yorktown (1781). Most Black soldiers were free and from the northern colonies, but some were enslaved like Samuel Sutphen of Somerset County, a participant in battles in New York and New Jersey between 1776 and 1780. Some bondsmen were freed for their war service, often for substituting for their owners. And three enslaved people from New Jersey, all the confiscated property of Loyalists, were even manumitted by acts of the state legislature after petitioning that body: Peter Williams of Woodbridge (1784); Prime of Somerset County (1787); and Cato of Woodbridge (1789). In fact, as early as 1774, Black people revealed a degree of acculturation reflected in the works of such early Black writers as Lucy Terry and Phillis Wheatley and a willingness to use the libertarian rhetoric of the patriots to further their own interests, had begun petitioning legislative bodies for their freedom."

*Courtesy of the New Jersey State Library*

*([https://www.njstatelib.org/research\\_library/new\\_jersey\\_resources/highlights/african\\_american\\_history\\_curriculum/unit\\_4\\_revolutionary\\_era\\_blacks/](https://www.njstatelib.org/research_library/new_jersey_resources/highlights/african_american_history_curriculum/unit_4_revolutionary_era_blacks/))*

# Appendix B- Dunmore's Proclamation

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DECEMBER 6, 1775. NUMB. 1722.

The PENNSYLVANIA JOURNAL; and the WEEKLY ADVERTISER  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1775.

...Mr. Purdie,

Here you have a Proclamation that will at once show the baseness of Lord Dunmore's heart, his malice and treachery against the people who were once under his government, and his officious violation of all law, justice and humanity; not to mention his arrogating to himself a power which neither he can assume, nor any power upon earth invest him with.

— — — — Not in the legions

Of horrid Hell, can come a devil more damn'd

In evils, to top D\*\*\*\*e.

By his EXCELLENCY, &c.

## A PROCLAMATION.

As I have ever entertained hopes that an accommodation might have taken place between Great-Britain and this colony, without being compelled, by my duty, to this most disagreeable, but now absolutely necessary step, rendered so by a body of armed men, unlawfully assembled, firing on his Majesty's tenders, and the formation of an army, and that army now on their march to attack his Majesty's troops, and destroy the well disposed subjects of this colony: To defeat such treasonable purposes, and that all such traitors, and their abettors, may be brought to justice, and that the peace and good order of this colony may be again restored, which the ordinary course of the civil law is unable to effect, I have thought fit to issue this my proclamation, hereby declaring, that until the aforesaid good purposes can be obtained, I do, in virtue of the power and authority to me given, by his Majesty, determine to execute martial law, and cause the same to be executed throughout this colony; and to the end that peace and good order may the sooner be restored, I do require every person capable of bearing arms to resort to his Majesty's STANDARD, or be looked upon as traitors to his Majesty's crown and government, and thereby become liable to the penalty the law inflicts upon such offences, such as forfeiture of life, confiscation of lands, &c. &c. And I do hereby farther declare all indented servants, Negroes, or others (appertaining to rebels) free, that are able and willing to bear arms, they joining his Majesty's troops, as soon as may be, for the more speedily reducing this Colony to a proper sense of their duty, to his Majesty's crown and dignity. I do father order, and require all his Majesty's liege subjects to retain their quitrents, or any other taxes due, or that may become due, in their own custody, till such time as peace may be again restored to this at present most unhappy country, or demanded of them for their former salutary purposes, by officers properly authorized to receive the same.

Given on board the ship William, off Norfolk, the 7th of Nov.

# Appendix C- Philipsburg Proclamation

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## Philipsburg Proclamation

Whereas the enemy have adopted a practice of enrolling NEGROES among their Troops, I do hereby give notice That all NEGROES taken in arms, or upon any military Duty, shall be purchased for the public service at a stated Price; the money to be paid to the Captors.

But I do most strictly forbid any Person to sell or claim Right over any NEGROE, the property of a Rebel, who may take Refuge with any part of this Army: And I do promise to every NEGROE who shall desert the Rebel Standard, full security to follow within these Lines, any Occupation which he shall think proper.

Given under my Hand, at Head Quarters, PHILIPSBURGH the 30th day of June, 1779.

H CLINTON

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## OVERVIEW

**The Philipsburg Proclamation is a historical document issued by British Army General Sir Henry Clinton on 30 June 1779, intended to encourage slaves to run away and enlist in the Royal Forces.**

### Background

The proclamation extended the scope of Dunmore's Proclamation, issued four years earlier by Virginia's last Royal governor, Lord Dunmore, granting freedom to enslaved people in Virginia willing to serve the Royal forces. The new document, issued from Clinton's temporary headquarters at the Philipsburg Manor House in Westchester County, New York, proclaimed all enslaved people in the newly-established United States belonging to American Patriots free, regardless of their willingness to fight for the British Crown. It further promised protection, freedom, and land to any enslaved people who left their masters.

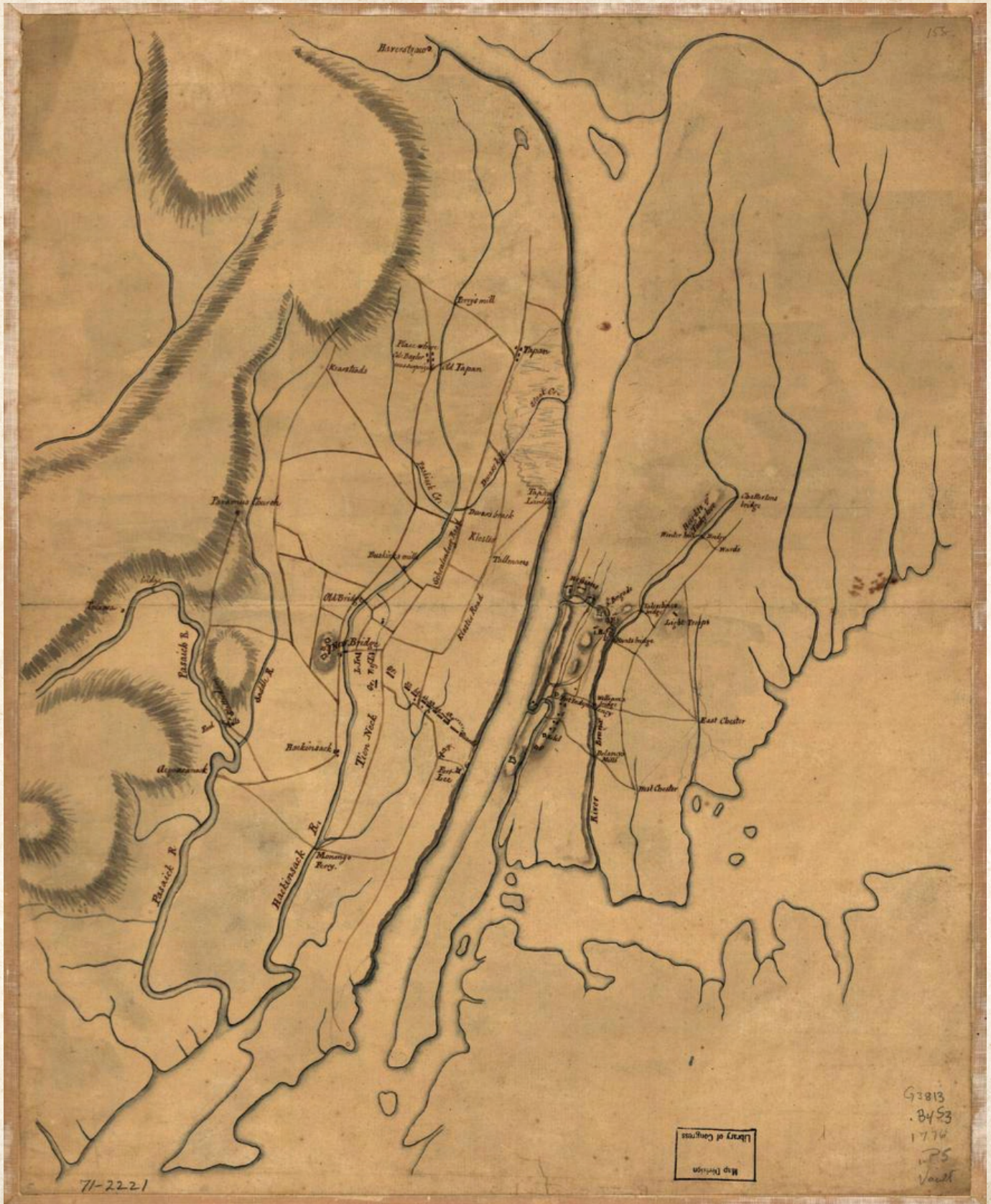
The move was one of desperation on the part of the British, who realized that the Revolution was not going in their favor. In some ways, it was too 'successful' once so many enslaved people escaped (over 5,000 from Georgia alone) that Clinton ordered many to return to their masters.

### Aftermath

The Treaty of Paris (1783) provided that all property including enslaved people would be returned to their rebel masters. However, the British commanders refused, and compensation was paid instead.

About 3,000 formerly enslaved were relocated to Nova Scotia, where they were known as Black Loyalists. Many continued on to Sierra Leone, where they established Freetown, its capital.

# Appendix D- New Jersey Map (c. 1776)



Plan of the country at and in the vicinity of Forts Lee and Independence, showing the position of the British Army  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3813b.ar126500/?r=-0.545,0.061,2.09,1.023,0>

# Appendix E- Boston Massacre



"The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt."  
(By: Paul Revere)

Courtesy of the Library of Congress  
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/pgs.12360/>

# Appendix F- Repeal of the Stamp Act



The repeal, or the funeral of Miss Ame-Stamp

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/pgs.12360/>

The print shows a popular satire commenting on the Stamp Act. The supporters of the act gather at a dock to carry a small coffin containing the remains of the bill toward an open vault. Leading the procession and preparing to deliver the funeral eulogy is the Reverend W. Scott, who is followed by Grenville (carrying the coffin), Bute, Bedford, and Temple, who were among those responsible for passing the act. Quantities of unshipped cargoes destined for America have accumulated on the dock during the time that the act was in force.



# Appendix G- Rules for Whist

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## THE GAME OF WHIST

Whist is a trick-based card game similar to Euchre and Hearts. "WHIST" comes from an English word meaning silent and attentive. Originally developed in eighteenth-century English social circles, it quickly became one of the most popular games in the American colonies and early United States.

Whist is played with 4 people split into 2 teams.

## HOW TO PLAY:

### Set-up:

1. Shuffle the cards and cut the deck. Each player draws a card. The player who draws the high card is the dealer! Note: Aces are high. Twos are low.
2. The dealer deals each player 13 cards starting with the person to their left, moving clockwise. The last card dealt (to the dealer) is dealt face up, indicating the trump suit. Return that card to the dealers hand.

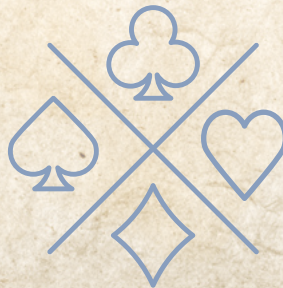
### Gameplay:

3. The player to the dealer's left leads the first "trick" with any card they choose. Moving clockwise, each player plays a card on that trick.
  - If they can, players must follow the suit of the card led or they may play a trump card.
  - Players with no card of that suit can play any card, including a trump card.
4. The player with the highest card of the led suit or the highest trump card wins the trick and places the 4 cards to their side. The winning player leads the next trick.

### End of the Round/ Scoring:

When all of the cards have been played, for a total of 12 tricks, each pair earns 1 point for every trick they won in excess of 6. For example, a player who wins 8 tricks would earn 2 points.

*The first team to earn 5 points wins the game. Several rounds may be needed!*



# Join Us in the 250th!

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## RevolutionNJ

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### COMMUNITY

The 250th Anniversary of the United States is coming in 2026! This once-in-a-generation opportunity allows New Jerseyans across the state to create a lasting legacy. We are asking counties and municipalities to join us in commemorating the 250th by facilitating new partnerships, programs, and events that will engage local businesses, non-profits, artists, scholars, schools, universities, and colleges, libraries, civic organizations, historic sites, community members, and visitors from all over. Pass a resolution to become an official RevolutionNJ Community today.

For more information and a draft of the resolution, visit:

[www.revnj.org/communities](http://www.revnj.org/communities)

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### PROUD PARTNER

As New Jersey plans to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America, we aim to create a statewide experience that invites participation from everyone.

We invite all organizations to join us in this endeavor by submitting an application to become a RevolutionNJ Partner. Please reference our [Partner Brand Guidelines](#) for more details.

[www.revnj.org/revnjpartners](http://www.revnj.org/revnjpartners)

# NOTES:

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*"How do you get people to want to live in time, to have a sense of the importance of time for growth, development, of the need for ups-and-downs, of non-homogenized development? [...] A revolution in the U.S. is only going to be led and made by people with some sense of the thickness of time, of time as duration, of time as heterogeneous, of development through contradiction, not in a straight line."*

— James Boggs, *Conversations in Maine: Exploring Our Nation's Future*



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**For more information about  
RevolutionNJ visit:  
[www.RevNJ.org](http://www.RevNJ.org)**



**Follow us on Instagram for  
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**RevolutionNJ**

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RevolutionNJ is a partnership between the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC), a division of the New Jersey Department of State, and the nonprofit Crossroads of the American Revolution Association to plan the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in New Jersey.