

# John Laurens: Revolutionary War Hero Stands Up Against Slavery

## Annotated Bibliography

Ali Brugh, Aleksandra Dunjic, Ella Mathewson

Senior Division

Group Website

## Primary Sources

### Books & E-Books

Laurens, Henry. *The Papers of Henry Laurens: November 1, 1777-March 15, 1778*. Ed. David R. Chesnutt and C. James Taylor. Vol. 12. Columbia: U of South Carolina, 1990.

E-Book.

This primary source is a compilation of letters from John Laurens's father, Henry Laurens. Many of them were written to John, making the relationship between father and son clear. Although the duo relied on the other's opinions often, the relationship was strained at times, like when Henry initially rejected John's plan for a black regiment. He believed that it was impossible to accomplish. However, they still loved and supported each other in the end. This source also gives in-depth information about Henry and his own career, as these correspondences were written while he was the President of the Continental Congress (he served as president from November 1, 1777 to December 9, 1778).

Washington, George, and Jared Sparks. *The Writings of George Washington, Pt. III: Private Letters from the Time Washington Resigned His Commission as Commander-in-Chief of the Army to That of His Inauguration as President of the United States: December, 1783-April, 1789*. Ed. Jared Sparks. Vol. 9. Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Metclaf, and Hilliard, Gray, 1835. E-Book.

Edited by Jared Sparks, this compilation gives insight into George Washington's life through the letters he wrote between 1783 and 1789. They detail his daily

affairs and demonstrate how he acted in his personal life. His private correspondences also describe how he felt about the Revolutionary War and the people he met through it. In one letter from 1785, he writes about the death of Laurens and compliments him for his extreme integrity, going so far as to say that the late lieutenant colonel possessed no character flaws. They met each other because Laurens had served as one of Washington's aides-de-camp during the revolution.

## Images

*Advertisement for Sale of Slaves.* 1760, photographic print, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

This picture is from a 1760 newspaper, advertising slaves that have arrived from Africa and will soon be sold. The Austin, Laurens, & Appleby firm, the largest slave-trading house in North America, commissioned the announcement.

Laurens's father Henry helped run this institution; despite the actions of his father and growing up surrounded by racism, Laurens took a stand for what he believed in and followed his own anti-slavery ideas.

*Blue Jay.* Ca. 1765-1775, watercolor, Pope Brown Collection, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Thought to be painted by Laurens himself, this image is a depiction of a blue jay sitting on the branch of a crab tree. It contains colorful and vibrant detail.

Although it has never been confirmed that Laurens created this, many think that he did because he enjoyed the subject of biology and had previously painted works that portrayed natural life.

Carpenter, Francis Bicknell. *First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation Before the Cabinet*. Ca. 1864, lithograph, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Carpenter's depiction of President Abraham Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed all slaves, shows what Laurens would have liked to see in his own lifetime. He did not support slavery and wanted slaves to be treated as equals. Laurens tried to help them by giving them more independence and direct involvement with their country, but he was unfortunately unsuccessful, as his plan for a black regiment in South Carolina was never implemented.

Coffin, Charles C. *Weeding Rice Field*. Digital image. *The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record*. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities; University of Virginia Library, 31 Mar. 2017. Web. 2 Apr. 2017.

An inhumane occurrence normalized, this picture of slaves during the 1800s is reminiscent of a daily sight Laurens would have seen growing up in South Carolina. His family, as well as a great deal of the South, owned and used slaves for demanding manual labor. Indeed, his father was a partner of a large slave-trading business and owned hundreds of slaves. Considering how involved

his family was with the slave market, Laurens's adherence to abolitionism is remarkable.

Copley, John Singleton. *The Death of Major Peirson*. 1782, oil on canvas, The British Museum, London.

This is a depiction of the 1781 Battle of Jersey, in which Major Francis Peirson died. In the painting, a black loyalist is depicted fighting for the British. Even loyalists, like the writers of the *South Carolina Royal Gazette*, applauded Laurens for his bravery and honor while in battle despite their opposing viewpoints, signaling that Laurens's courage and reputation were universally admired.

Copley, John Singleton. *Henry Laurens*. 1782, oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

This is a sitting portrait of Henry Laurens that was painted in 1782 by John Singleton Copley, now held in the Smithsonian. Copley is known for his portraits of historical figures like this one. Henry was a wealthy man who was part of the slave-trading business. Even though Henry was religious and expressed qualms about slavery to his son, he kept his slaves and never acted upon his beliefs. He was also the South Carolina delegate to the Second Continental Congress and later became the President of the Congress from 1777-1778. Although he was initially cautious and skeptical about John's black regiment plan, he eventually

supported the idea and discussed it in Congress while South Carolina was under attack by British forces.

D'Andrea, Domenick. *The Delaware Regiment at the Battle of Long Island*. Digital image. *Getty Images*. Getty Images, 2017. Web. 7 Apr. 2017.

D'Andrea's painting depicts the Delaware Regiment during the 1776 Battle of Long Island, which is also known as the Battle of Brooklyn. This fight happened early in the American Revolution, before Laurens was able to join the war. These troops were known as the best uniformed and best equipped regiment of the military, and their uniforms later become the standard for all of the soldiers of the Continental Army.

DeVerger, Jean-Baptiste-Antoine. *American Foot Soldiers, Yorktown Campaign*. Digital image. *PBS: Africans in America*. PBS, 2017. Web. 12 Jan. 2017.

Created in 1781, this watercolor is a portrayal of four foot soldiers present at the Battle of Yorktown. It demonstrates the diversity of the different armies and alliances fighting in this campaign. One soldier is black and from the First Rhode Island Regiment, which recruited slaves to help fight in the Revolutionary War. Regiments like this one helped inspire Laurens to form his own plan for a black regiment in South Carolina.

Dubois, Jean. *Geneva in the Early 19th Century*. 1830, gouache, Pictet Art Collection, Geneva.

Dubois's painting depicts Geneva, Switzerland, about 60 years after Laurens had studied there. Laurens went overseas for his studies because he desired a higher level of education, one that no school in his home state could give him. He also studied at the Middle Temple in London, England, which is where he spent most of his time in Europe.

Duplessis, Joseph Siffred. *Portrait of the Marquis De Lafayette*. Ca. 1790s, pastel, Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, MA.

This is a drawing of the Marquis de Lafayette, created during the 18th century. Major General Lafayette met Laurens in the Revolutionary War; Laurens, along with Alexander Hamilton, knew French and frequently translated for Lafayette. They first fought together in the Battle of Brandywine and quickly became friends. Lafayette often praised Laurens for his intense courage and brave, but reckless, behavior. Furthermore, Lafayette was also an abolitionist and supported his friend in his anti-slavery endeavors.

Fraser, Charles. *Christopher Gadsden*. 1805, watercolor on ivory, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

This is a miniature portrait of Christopher Gadsden, a politician from South Carolina. He was particularly opposed to Laurens's plan to create black regiments in South Carolina, as he was a slave owner and slave trader himself. If Laurens's plan had been implemented, not only would Gadsden have lost his slaves, but he

also believed that arming African Americans was dangerous and would backfire tremendously against the whites, leading to a revolt.

*Horrid Massacre in Virginia.* 1831, woodcut, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

In this image, the violence of Nat Turner's Rebellion, a slave insurrection in Virginia, is depicted. The wood engraving was created in 1831, but the artist is unknown. During this rebellion, black slaves held an uprising and killed approximately 60 people. In their fear and anger, the people in this area executed more than 100 slaves, even slaves that had not participated in the insurrection. Southern states, including Laurens's home state, were unwilling to arm slaves in the Revolutionary War in fear of a revolt like this one happening. Although black regiments would enhance and augment the Continental Army, many whites were protective of their property and afraid that the slaves would rebel.

John Laurens's Gravestone. Digital image. *Find A Grave*. N.p., 15 Nov. 2003. Web. 10 Feb. 2017.

Located in South Carolina at the Laurens Family Cemetery, this image shows Laurens's headstone. The inscription reads "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori," which means "Sweet and fitting it is to die for one's Country." Since Laurens died during the Revolutionary War and fought courageously in all of his battles, this description fits him perfectly. He was never afraid to fight and stand up for the causes that were closest to his heart.



The Laurens Family Cemetery. Digital image. *Find a Grave*. N.p., 11 May 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2017.

This photo shows the entrance to the Laurens Family Cemetery. The cemetery is housed in the Mepkin Gardens in Berkeley County, South Carolina. Laurens, along with many of his family members, is buried here.

Paine, Thomas. Photo of *Common Sense*. Digital image. *American History Documents*. Indiana University Bloomington, 2017. Web. 13 Mar. 2017.

This is a picture of the cover of *Common Sense*, which urged the American people to break away from Britain and become their own independent country. It criticized the British system and advocated for a new government in America. Laurens read this while studying in Europe, which made him more anxious to return to America and join the Revolutionary War. He was eager to prove both the honor of him and the honor of his country.

Peale, Charles Willson. *George Washington*. 1782, oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Painted around 1782 by Charles Willson Peale, this portrait depicts General Washington as a commanding officer in the American Revolution. This illustration is meant to celebrate his victory at the Battle of Yorktown.

Washington was closely affiliated with Laurens, as Laurens was one of his most

prominent aides-de-camp. Laurens even tried to convince Washington to join his campaign for a black regiment, but Washington was reluctant to support the plan because he knew it would be an unpopular idea among southern slave owners.

Peale, Charles Willson. Miniature portrait of John Laurens. Digital image. *Wikimedia Commons*. MediaWiki, 10 Dec. 2016. Web. 15 Jan. 2017.

Peale's portrait of Laurens is one of the few that exist of him. It was painted in 1780, only two years before his death. It is speculated that Laurens had this miniature made as a present for his wife, Martha Manning. After the war, the miniature was copied and given to one of Laurens's friends, Major William Jackson, as a reminder of their joint service during the American Revolution. It is now privately owned.

*Punchpau of East Florida*. Ca. 1765-1775, watercolor, Pope Brown Collection, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

This is another anonymous painting that is suspected to have been created by Laurens. In this image, a beautiful pink flower is delineated. The Pope Brown Collection features several works like this that all have the same art style and were most likely painted by Laurens.

Rose, John. *The Old Plantation*. Ca. 1785, watercolor, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Art Museum, Colonial Williamsburg, VA.

Created between 1785 and 1790, this painting shows slaves on a plantation in South Carolina. Rose, the artist, owned slaves himself; the slaves and landscape in this portrait are most likely images from his own plantation. Although this was painted after Laurens's death, this is an example of the slaves he wanted to recruit for the Revolutionary War. He aimed to have black men fight in exchange for their freedom, but his attempts ultimately failed.

*Sweet Scented Shrub*. Ca. 1765-1775, watercolor, Pope Brown Collection, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Detailing a type of shrub often found in the South, this watercolor is one thought to have been painted by Laurens. The paintings found in this collection are the earliest surviving representations of the various plants and animals in Laurens's home state of South Carolina. They are vivid images and are informational, lending to the history of South Carolina.

Trumbull, John. *Alexander Hamilton*. Ca. 1806, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

This is one of the many famous portraits of Alexander Hamilton, painted around 1806. As another one of Washington's aides-de-camp, he worked alongside Laurens during the American Revolution. He was a close friend of and confidant to Laurens, and he eagerly supported Laurens's hopeful plan for a regiment made

solely of slaves. Hamilton took every opportunity he had to help Laurens advance his plan, even though the idea faced severe opposition.

Wright, Joseph. *Thomas Day*. 1770, oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery, London.

This is a painting of European abolitionist Thomas Day. It was commissioned by one of Day's close friends, who complimented him for his virtue. While studying abroad, Laurens became friends with Day, and his ideas influenced Laurens.

When he returned to America, he held passionate anti-slavery views and tried to further abolitionism in the colonies.

### **Letters and Periodicals**

Chase, Philander D. "The Papers of Henry Laurens, vol 13, March 16, 1778-July 6, 1778." *The Mississippi Quarterly* 47.2 (1994): 335. *U.S. History in Context*. Web. 13 Jan. 2017.

In this source, the author discusses the relationship between Henry and John Laurens. It uses the writings of Henry to provide context to the situations that the two faced during the Revolutionary War, particularly Henry. The source details the events he went through and the actions he performed during his time as President of the Continental Congress from 1777-1778.

Hamilton, Alexander. "From Alexander Hamilton to John Jay, [14 March 1779]." Letter to John

Jay. 14 Mar. 1779. *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*. Vol. 2. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961. 17-19. *Founders Online*. National Archives, 28 Dec. 2016. Web. 5 Jan. 2017.

In this correspondence, Hamilton explains Laurens's plan for a black regiment to John Jay, the President of the Congress at that time. He also states that he supports this plan, explaining that they need the advantage of extra soldiers, and praises Laurens for his brave and courageous stand. Hamilton goes on to say that black slaves may even be better soldiers than their white ones, as they are already accustomed to subordination and will have no problem fitting into the strict military lifestyle.

Hamilton, Alexander. "From Alexander Hamilton to Major General Nathanael Greene, [12 October 1782]." Letter to Nathanael Greene. 12 Oct. 1782. *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*. Vol. 3. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962. 183-84. *Founders Online*. National Archives, 28 Dec. 2016. Web. 30 Dec. 2016.

Hamilton tells Major General Nathanael Greene of his recent appointment to Congress and expresses his grief at the death of Laurens in this short letter. Since he was so close to Laurens, Hamilton felt the loss on a deep level. He lamented that a man of such talent and integrity died at an early age.

"Letters from John Laurens to His Father, Hon. Henry Laurens, 1774-1776." *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 1 Oct. 1904. 197-208. *Internet Archive*, 20 Mar.

2013. Web. 16 Dec. 2016.

This source shows a large number of the letters that Laurens wrote to his father between the years of 1774 and 1776 while he was studying in Europe. Although they did not always agree, these letters demonstrate the affectionate relationship between the two, as well as their discussion and criticism of slavery. These letters give insight into Laurens's idea for a black regiment, including how he convinced his father to eventually support his plan.

“Sketch of the Character of Col. John Laurens, who fell gloriously in the Defence [sic] of his Country, August 27, 1782.” N.p., n.d. Web. 8 Jan. 2017.

This is a detailed obituary from the *Virginia Gazette*, published in December of 1782. This passage describes Laurens's victories in battle, as well as his spirit and loyalty to the American cause. It especially highlights his enthusiastic yet dangerous strategies in various battles of the Revolutionary War. The article is signed -A; although the identity of the author is unknown, it is theorized that his friend and speculated lover, Hamilton, wrote the obituary.

Washington, George. “From George Washington to John Hancock, 23 April 1776.” Letter to John Hancock. 23 Apr. 1776. *The Papers of George Washington*. Vol. 4. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1991. 112-13. Revolutionary War Series. *Founders Online*. National Archives, 28 Dec. 2016. Web. 5 Jan. 2017.

In this letter from Washington to John Hancock, Washington discusses the role of his aides-de-camp in the Revolutionary War, explaining that they deserve more compensation. His aides, including Laurens, help him throughout the day and are even members of his close “military family.” He says that they are hard-working and have little free time, and that they deserve more pay for the significant job they do.

Webber, Mabel L. “Death Notices from the South Carolina and American General Gazette, and Its Continuation the Royal Gazette: May 1766-June 1782.” *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 7 July 1915. 129-133. *Internet Archive*, 20 Mar. 2013. Web. 14 Jan. 2017.

In this obituary, the author gives an analysis of Laurens's personality and outlook on life. It praises the life of Laurens and his excellent moral qualities. Although this periodical was a loyalist newspaper and regarded Laurens as an enemy since he was against the British monarchy, the author still wanted to pay tribute to his death because of his integrity and honorable reputation. With even enemies respecting Laurens, this speaks volumes about his respectable conduct and charming personality.

### **Microfiches**

Laurens, John, William Gilmore Simms, David Moltke-Hansen, and Jeffery J. Rogers. *The Army*

*Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, 2016. Microfiche.

This is a primary source of the letters that Laurens wrote during the Revolutionary War, accessed as a microfiche in the Cleveland Public Library. Through these letters, it is possible to learn about who Laurens was as a person: his personality, his desire for fame and glory, his ardent belief in honor, and his altruism and ambition. It is also clear to see how passionate his anti-slavery stance was, and how he was extremely critical of both slavery and southern society. In addition, this source provides Laurens's discussion of his black regiment plan with his father, as well as with other historical figures and friends.

Wallace, David Duncan. *The Life of Henry Laurens: With a Sketch of the Life of*

*Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915. Microfiche.

This microfiche, also accessed in the Cleveland Public Library, focuses on the life of John's father, but also includes details about John's early life and his experiences in the American Revolution. Wallace discusses how John married his wife out of pity and how eager he was to fight for what he believed in during the American Revolution. It also details his goal of emancipation and how engrossed he was with his plan to create a black regiment in the war. He was devoted to his idea and refused to stop believing in it.

## **Secondary Sources**



## Academic Journals

Haw, James. "John Laurens and the American Revolution. (Book Reviews)." *Journal of Southern History* 67.4 (2001): 832. *U.S. History In Context*. Web. 24 Jan. 2017.

This source is a critique of Gregory Massey's biography, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*. Initially, the review summarizes the basics of Laurens's life. It then discusses how unusual it is for Laurens to be an abolitionist considering his place and time, and also how Laurens exemplified the 18th century ideal of a heroic figure through his brave actions and romantic beliefs.

Lesinski, Jeanne M. "The Economic Impact of Slavery in the South." *Gale Library of Daily Life: Slavery in America*. Ed. Orville Vernon Burton. Vol. 1. Detroit: Gale, 2008. 28-32. *U.S. History in Context*. Web. 13 Mar. 2017.

In this resource, the author discusses the economic reasons for the South continuing to take advantage of slavery. Landowners and business-owners preferred to use slaves for their labor because it was less expensive and less risky. White employees were more expensive and may act out, but slaves were more easily controlled. Slaves themselves were used for financial gains; if they were unneeded, their master often chose to sell or lease them for extra profit. Although today the idea of slavery is horrific, it was commonplace in the antebellum and revolutionary time periods, as slaves were thought of only as property.

Lustig, Mary Lou. "John Laurens and the American Revolution." *The Mississippi Quarterly* 54.3

(2001): 439. *U.S. History in Context*. Web. 24 Jan. 2017.

Another review of Gregory Massey's biography, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, this source is critical of Laurens. It sheds light on his flaws, such as his lack of compassion for his wife and daughter. It also discusses how he is a "glory hunter," and how he puts not only himself in unnecessary danger, but also others in his pursuit of honor. However, despite his flaws, Laurens can still be praised today for his abolitionist attempts.

Massey, Gregory D. "The limits of antislavery thought in the revolutionary lower South: John Laurens and Henry Laurens." *Journal of Southern History* 63.3 (1997): 495. *U.S. History in Context*. Web. 23 Jan. 2017.

This journal explores the motivation behind Henry and John Laurens's anti-slavery sentiments. Both men led extremely different courses throughout their lives regarding the issue. While John was persistent with his beliefs, especially concerning his black regiment plan, Henry continued his involvement with Austin, Laurens, & Appleby, the largest slave-trading house in North America, which speaks volumes of the amount of dedication John had for abolitionism.

Wolf, Eva Sheppard. "Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America." *Journal of Southern History* 78.1 (2012): 154. *U.S. History in Context*. Web. 30 Jan. 2017.

This is a review of Jack Rakove's *Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention*

*of America*. The source details how Laurens viewed the Revolutionary War as a chance to make himself known for bravery, as well as a chance to open up a new world with no slavery. Unfortunately, Laurens was not successful in his plans for abolitionism, as his southern contemporaries were incredibly resistant to his ideas.

### Articles and Websites

Bellesiles, Michael. "Combahee Ferry, South Carolina." *Encyclopedia of the American*

*Revolution: Library of Military History*. Ed. Harold E. Selesky. Vol. 1. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006. 240. *U.S. History in Context*. Web. 12 Jan. 2017.

In this source, the events that occurred during the Battle of the Combahee River are detailed. It explains that Laurens was ordered to march quickly to Chehaw Point with his infantry, and also tells how the British learned of the plan and ambushed the soldiers. Laurens fell into the dangerous trap; twenty of his men were wounded, and he lost his life before he could see the colonies obtain freedom.

Fleming, Thomas. "It Is Sweet and Fitting to Die for One's Country." *Military History* 24.9

(2007): 62-67. *History Net*. World History Group, 16 Nov. 2007. Web. 7 Apr. 2017.

This article details Laurens's patriotism. Laurens fought passionately in the war, often putting himself in harm's way because he believed that was honorable. Laurens's abolitionist plans are discussed in detail, as well as the reactions of

those around him. Many southerners greatly disliked Laurens's plan and were petrified of a slave insurrection occurring.

Fitzpatrick, Siobhan. "John Laurens." *The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*. The George Washington Presidential Library, 2016. Web. 11 Dec. 2016.

Laurens's relationship to Washington during the Revolutionary War is examined in this article, as it describes how he became a member of Washington's "military family" and tried to influence Washington to free his slaves. It gives a detailed description of Washington's reaction to his ideas, which were deemed radical at the time, as well as the reactions of his friends Lafayette and Hamilton. The article then chronologically depicts the actions Laurens took to propose his black regiment idea to the Continental Congress, as well as the responses to his brave plan.

"John Laurens." *Dictionary of American Biography*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936. *U.S. History in Context*. Web. 12 Jan. 2017.

The most significant aspects of Laurens's life are briefly discussed in this article. It includes details about Laurens's education in the Middle Temple in London, as well as his significance in the American Revolution. It also explains how Laurens helped negotiate terms of capitulation with Viscount de Noailles after the Battle of Yorktown, as well as how Laurens became a prisoner of war after the fall of Charleston.

“Lt Colonel John Laurens.” *National Parks Service*. U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d. Web. 9 Feb. 2017.

This site gives a detailed overview of Laurens's life from his childhood to his death. It also contains several primary quotes from Laurens and his contemporaries in the form of written letters. These contemporaries include Washington, Major General Greene, Lafayette, and Hamilton. All of these men spoke about the character of Laurens and attested to his loyalty and bravery, despite the fact that not all of them believed in his ideas about the emancipation of slaves.

Lynah, Mary-Elizabeth. "John Laurens: Carolina's Romantic Contribution to the Revolutionary Ranks." *Americana Illustrated* 30.2 (1936): 340-68. *Archive*. Internet Archive, 4 Mar. 2014. Web. 8 Apr. 2017.

This article discusses Laurens as a romantic figure of the American Revolutionary War. Laurens greatly loved his country and dedicated his life to its formation. Likewise, he also adored abolitionism, and he attempted to implement his black regiment plan with the same amount of dedication and persistence.

Massey, Gregory D. "The Political Education of John Laurens." *Caralogue* 17.1 (2001): 7-12. *South Carolina Historical Society*. The South Carolina Historical Society, 6 Apr. 2015. Web. 4 Apr. 2017.

In this article, Massey explains in detail Laurens's experience in politics with his black regiment plan. Laurens had an incredibly difficult time attempting to convince his fellow South Carolinians to support his plan, as they were resistant to the idea. The South Carolina government rejected the plan a total of four different times. Through this experience, Laurens slowly learned that politics was complicated and often involved a lot of compromising.

Massey, Gregory D. "Slavery and Liberty in the American Revolution: John Laurens's Black Regiment Proposal." *Slavery and Liberty in the American Revolution*. Archiving Early America, 2017. Web. 16 Jan. 2017.

Written by the same author as *John Laurens and the American Revolution*, this article thoroughly details Laurens's plans of how he attempted to create a black regiment during the American Revolution. It goes into extensive detail about Laurens's proposals for his plan, specifically to the Continental Congress. Despite the government disregarding Laurens's plans and his stance on emancipation, he continued to stand up for equality and the rights of the enslaved. Eventually, a black regiment plan was approved for the country, but the Congress of South Carolina, the government of his home state, continued to reject his plan.

Petrey, Whitney. "Slaves in Revolutionary America: Plantation Slaves in Virginia and the Charleston Slave Trade." *Academia*. Academia, Dec. 2009. Web. 10 Apr. 2017.

Petrey's article discusses slaves in Virginia and South Carolina. It includes maps and pictures of several key locations, like plantations or places where slaves were sold. Petrey also goes in-depth on Henry Laurens's role in the slave trade. The Austin, Laurens, & Appleby slave-trading firm, established in 1749, was the largest slave-trading company in North America. They bought and sold slaves very quickly in order to make the most amount of profit. Although Henry was involved in this business and owned hundreds of slaves himself, his son, John, was very different from him and did not condone the practice of slavery.

Stockdale, Eric. "The Middle Templar at Washington's Side." *Carologue* 19.1 (2003):

20-26. *South Carolina Historical Society*. The South Carolina Historical Society, 15 Apr. 2015. Web. 3 Apr. 2017.

This article describes Laurens's education while in Europe and his role as Washington's aide-de-camp. Laurens studied law at the Middle Temple in London, but did not complete his studies since he left to fight in the war. While in the war, Laurens was a determined and trustworthy soldier, fighting fiercely and helping Washington with his duties.

Ward, Harry M. "Laurens, John." *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution: Library of Military History*. Ed. Harold E. Selesky. Vol. 1. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006. 606. *U.S. History in Context*. Web. 5 Apr. 2017. 21 Jan. 2017.

This article offers a quick overview of Laurens's military history. Laurens fought

in battles such as Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth, in which he was shot at and wounded multiple times. Despite this, he was still eager to continue his military career. The article also discusses his role as an envoy to France along with Benjamin Franklin, as well as a duel he participated in against Charles Lee, a general in the American Revolution.

Weir, Robert M. "Portrait Of A Hero." *American Heritage* 27.3 (1976): 16-19, 86-88. *American Heritage*. American Heritage Publishing, 17 Aug. 2011. Web. 7 Apr. 2017.

In this resource, Weir discusses the significance of Laurens's life. Through his brave actions, Laurens reflects the image of a hero, especially the 18th century version of one. However, in his pursuit of glory, Laurens also tended to put himself in unnecessary harm and seemed to seek death. This source describes Laurens's image as a hero in detail, as well as his flaws, especially regarding his attempts to harm himself and his dealings in politics.

### **Books and E-Books**

Chadwick, Bruce. *George Washington's War: The Forging of a Revolutionary Leader and the American Presidency*. Naperville: Source, 2015. Print.

This book explains Washington's important role in the American Revolution. It also briefly discusses Laurens's relation with Washington and how Washington came to hire him as an aide. Furthermore, it gives insight into how Laurens used his ability to speak French while in the Continental Army: he helped translate not



only for the Marquis de Lafayette, but also for the Baron von Steuben, who is now credited as one of the fathers of the American military.

Chernow, Ron. *Alexander Hamilton*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Print.

Hamilton's and Laurens's close relationship is examined in detail in this biography, as some historians speculate it to be romantic in nature. They became close friends during the Revolutionary War, where they both worked as aides-de-camp to Washington, writing letters and translating French. The two also believed in abolitionism, although Laurens felt much more strongly about the topic and pushed for equality throughout his life. Hamilton was helpful in his support of Laurens's black regiment idea, even writing to Jay about the plan in order to influence Congress to accept the proposal.

Fehrenbacher, Don E., and Ward McAfee. *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

E-Book.

This book examines how the United States government dealt with the institution of slavery, both before and after the Civil War. It explains how slavery is regarded in the Constitution (the authors argue that the Constitution is neutral on the topic), as well as how it is regarded by the American populace. Since the account also discusses the negative reaction of southerners to plans incorporating slaves in the

American Revolution, the authors detail Laurens's plan for a black regiment and his eventual defeat in South Carolina.

Ferling, John. *The Ascent of George Washington: The Hidden Political Genius of an American Icon*. 1st ed. New York: Bloomsbury, 2009. Print.

Washington's life and career as a soldier and politician is discussed in this novel. Since he worked alongside Laurens in the Revolutionary War, it goes in-depth on how Laurens aided the war effort and how he was inspired to create a regiment comprised only of slaves. Ferling explains how Laurens came up with this plan, as well as how it was received by his contemporaries. For example, Washington was hesitant towards the idea, as he was a slave owner and believed the southern colonies would resist such a plan.

Hamilton, John Church. *The Life of Alexander Hamilton*. New York: D. Appleton, 1840. Print.

This is a biography on Hamilton written by his son, John Church Hamilton. Although the source focuses on Hamilton, it also discusses Hamilton's relationship with Laurens and Laurens's personality and legacy overall. John Church Hamilton spoke glowing words about Laurens and the respect Laurens had from many of his contemporaries, but unfortunately, Laurens has been largely forgotten by history.

Heidler, David Stephen, and Jeanne T. Heidler. *Washington's Circle: The Creation of the*

*President*. New York: Random House, 2015. Print.

Although this novel focuses more on Washington, Laurens is mentioned many times, specifically in regards to his duties to Washington while serving as an aide and his relationship with Hamilton. Laurens and Hamilton had radically different backgrounds. For instance, Hamilton was raised as a poor boy in the West Indies, while Laurens was raised by wealthy parents in South Carolina. However, this did not make a difference in the closeness of their relationship. As assistants to Washington, the two became friends quickly and discovered a common belief in abolitionism.

Knott, Stephen F., and Tony Williams. *Washington and Hamilton: The Alliance That Forged America*. Naperville, IL: Source, 2015. Print.

This source thoroughly explains Washington and Hamilton's relationship, discussing the abolitionist ideas of Hamilton, Lafayette, and Laurens. The three urged Washington to arm slaves in exchange for their freedom, but uncomfortable by the idea, Washington rejected their plans. He believed slave owners would be discontent with such an idea and it would create trouble for the war.

Massey, Gregory D. *John Laurens and the American Revolution*. Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2000. Print.

This comprehensive book is one of the only biographies available on Laurens. It explains Laurens's life from his birth to death. Although the source mainly

focuses on Laurens's involvement in the American Revolution, there is a great deal of information on Laurens's early life and influences, including his time spent studying in Switzerland and England. These years of his life impacted Laurens significantly, strengthening his abolitionist views and his stance on the American Revolution. In addition, Massey describes Laurens's complicated relationship with his father. The two were very close, but Henry was manipulative of his son at times, causing him to forgo certain ideas, such as a career in medicine and, temporarily, his plan for a black regiment. Laurens's role in the military and his plans for a black regiment are explained, as well as his death in the Battle of the Combahee River.

Murray, Aaron R. *American Revolution Battles and Leaders*. New York: DK Pub., 2004. Print.

This source provides basic details on important figures and battles during the American Revolutionary War. It discusses Laurens's involvement in the war, including his action in many battles, his trip to France as an envoy, and his negotiation in Cornwallis's surrender. It also talks about how Laurens was one of the last casualties of the war, dying by the Combahee River in a skirmish with British loyalists.

Wienczek, Henry. *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves, and the Creation of America*. Maine: Thorndike, 2004. Print.

In this book, Washington's relationship with slavery is studied thoroughly. Laurens's plan for a black regiment is also discussed, as well as his angry reaction to the final rejection of his plan. Wiencek also analyzes why southerners were resistant to Laurens's plan. It was predicted that if Laurens's plan came to fruition, a general emancipation would occur after the war, which would lead to mixing and intermarrying between blacks and whites. Many southerners were terrified of such a thing happening, which accounts for the reason why they were so against Laurens's plan.

## Images

Chappel, Alonzo. *First Meeting of George Washington and Alexander Hamilton*. Digital image.

*American Experiences: Alexander Hamilton*. PBS, 8 May 2007. Web. 9 Feb. 2017.

This painting was created in 1857 and depicts the first time Washington and Hamilton met, which was most likely around 1777, when Washington appointed him to be his aide-de-camp. Although the two were never extremely close, they often helped each other with political endeavors. Hamilton was even the Secretary of Treasury under Washington's presidency.

Chappel, Alonzo. *Siege of Charleston*. Ca. 1862, engraving, Anne S.K. Brown Military

Collection, Brown University Library, Providence, RI.

Chappel's painting depicts the Siege of Charleston by the British during the Revolutionary War. The fall of Charleston is considered one of the worst losses of

the American Revolution. When given the opportunity to implement Laurens's idea for black regiments, soldiers that were desperately needed in the state, South Carolinian politicians overwhelmingly rejected the plans. Southern aristocrats were so against using slaves in the war that they would rather surrender to the British. This greatly reflects not only the slave owners' greed and concern for their own financial well-being, but their fear of black uprisings, abolitionism, and a multiracial society.

The Combat Studies Institute. *The Charleston Campaign, 1 February to 12 May 1780*. Digital image. *Department of History -- American Revolution*. West Point, 2017. Web. 5 Apr. 2017.

This is a picture of the British army's strategy to invade the city of Charleston. Their heavy presence in the South, starting in 1778, caused Laurens to leave his position as an aide to Washington. He returned to South Carolina, ready to defend his home state. Although he had stopped pushing for his black regiment idea in order to placate his father Henry, his plan regained momentum after he fought in these battles. He realized once again how beneficial the extra soldiers could be for their cause. After the 1780 Charleston Campaign, Laurens finally received support from his father and continued to appeal to the Continental Congress.

Fraser, Charles. *Colonel John Laurens*. 1805, oil on canvas, The Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC.

Created in the early 1800s, this portrait of Laurens was later used on the cover of *Carologue*, a magazine from the South Carolina Historical Society. The magazine discusses different topics from the state's past; this particular issue discussed the Revolutionary War and important figures who partook in it, including Laurens and Washington. One article discusses Laurens's role in the war, detailing how anxious he was to fight in the American Revolution and describing the battles that he fought in.

Fraser, Charles. *John Laurens*. Ca. 1802, watercolor, The Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC.

This is a portrait of Laurens's profile from around the year 1802, painted by Charles Fraser. It includes the caption "pro patria non timidus mori," which translates to "not afraid to die for his country." Since the painting was designed after Laurens's death, it is most likely a copy of an earlier work. Fraser had a special interest in Revolutionary War-era figures and created several portraits in his lifetime. These included depictions of Laurens's contemporaries and more of Laurens himself.

Haas, Philip. *Valley Forge, 1777*. Ca. 1843, lithograph, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

In this image, General Washington and Major General Lafayette are seen visiting the forces at Valley Forge. It shows soldiers in despair; its caption says "Gen. Washington & Lafayette visiting the suffering Part of the Army." Due to a lack of

supplies and the cold winter, many troops at Valley Forge were dying and morale was falling. This situation helped inspire Laurens to promote black regiments, as he knew the war needed more soldiers in order to win the fight against the British.

Leutze, Emanuel Gottlieb. *George Washington Crossing the Delaware*. 1851, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.

This famous photo depicts General Washington crossing the Delaware River in 1776, before the Battle of Trenton. Although the journey was dangerous, since it occurred on a cold winter night, Washington completed it in order to surprise a regiment of Hessian troops. Additionally, even though a spy informed the Hessians that Washington's troops were planning an attack, the Americans were successful in this battle, which boosted the morale of the Continental Army.

Ogden, Henry Alexander. *Commander in Chief, Aide De Camp, Line Officers, Etc.* Ca. 1885, lithograph, Art and Picture Collection, The New York Public Library, New York, NY.

Painted in the late 19th century, this picture shows the Commander-in-Chief, President Washington, with an unidentified aide-de-camp during the war. Aides-de-camp were pivotal to the American Revolution, helping manage Washington's plans and strategies. They were also necessary for writing letters of correspondence, especially to the Continental Congress.



Pyle, Howard. *The Death of Colonel John Laurens*. Ca. 1800s, oil on board, American Illustrators Gallery, New York, NY.

This is a depiction of Laurens's death on the battlefield, created and published in McClure's Magazine around the late 1800s or early 1900s. Laurens died at the Battle of the Combahee River, near the end of the American Revolution; he was one of the last casualties of the war. Although it is unfortunate that he died at the early age of 27, it is fitting that he perished in the war -- he fought with passion and ferocity and was prepared from the beginning to die for the cause of the revolution.

Reeves, Rick. *The Old Flag Never Touched the Ground*. Digital image. *History in the Headlines*. A&E Television Networks, LLC, 18 July 2013. Web. 7 Apr. 2017.

Reeves's painting, created in 1999, shows the 54th Massachusetts Regiment in the Civil War fighting during the Second Battle of Fort Wagner. This regiment was one of the first black units during the Civil War; they were instrumental in the fight and helped to ultimately end slavery. Although this unit appeared after Laurens's time, this is exactly the type of regiment that he was hoping would be incorporated into the war effort.

Tenney, Ulysses D., and John Trumbull. Portrait of William Whipple. Digital image. *New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources*. State of New Hampshire, 2007. Web. 2 Apr. 2017.

This is a side portrait of William Whipple, originally painted by John Trumbull and copied by Ulysses D. Tenney around the 1890s. He was a Continental Congress delegate from New Hampshire and supported Laurens's plan. Whipple truly believed that all men were equal and was eager for slavery to be entirely abolished in America. Laurens was lucky to have this important man on his side during his fight to implement a black regiment in South Carolina.

Troiani, Don. *Lt. Colonel John Laurens*. Digital image. *Skinner Auctioneers*. Skinner, Inc., 21 Apr. 2016. Web. 10 Feb. 2017.

Painted around 2002, this more recent image depicts Laurens at the Battle of Yorktown, as he was necessary to the success of the Americans during this melee. After the conflict, he helped negotiate the terms of surrender with the British army. This artist focuses on paintings and portraits of historical figures from the Revolutionary War, and he has painted several of Laurens's contemporaries, including Washington and Lafayette.

Trumbull, John. *Surrender of Lord Cornwallis*. 1820, oil on canvas, United States Capitol, Washington, DC.

This is an 1820 painting of Lord Cornwallis's surrender at the Battle of Yorktown. It shows a multitude of the soldiers present at the surrender, including Laurens, Washington, Lafayette, Hamilton, and Jonathan Trumbull, the brother of the artist. Laurens was instrumental in this fight: he and the Frenchman Viscount

de Noaille were responsible for negotiating Cornwallis's surrender. He stands off to the right, next to Hamilton.

Yohn, Frederick Coffay. *Battle of the Brandywine*. 1898, drawing, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

In this image, the artist depicts American soldiers fighting during the Battle of Brandywine. This was the first battle that Laurens fought in during the Revolutionary War. Although this battle lasted only a day, the Americans suffered a great defeat. The American forces, led by Washington, were outnumbered and forced to retreat after attempting to fight against the British. They even endured almost twice the amount of casualties that the British side, led by General Sir William Howe and General Cornwallis, experienced.