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AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION honoring the unsung efforts of New Jerseyans in the American Revolution.

Honors unsung efforts of New Jerseyans in American Revolution.

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AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION honoring the unsung efforts of New Jerseyans in the American Revolution.

WHEREAS, Although popular accounts of the Revolutionary War in New Jersey focus on the famous set-piece battles in New Jersey, such as the Battles of Trenton, Princeton, and Monmouth, and the actions of military commanders and signers of the Declaration of Independence from New Jersey, many lesser-known New Jerseyans also contributed in significant ways to the American Revolution; and

WHEREAS, One such person was Samuel Sutphin, an enslaved person from Readington Township who enlisted in place of his enslaver in exchange for the promise of freedom and served illustriously in the Continental Army, including in the Battle of Long Island; and

WHEREAS, When Sutphin's enslaver reneged on the deal and the federal government denied him a pension, Sutphin purchased his own freedom and petitioned the Governor and the State Legislature for a State pension, which was granted in 1836; and

WHEREAS, Another enslaved person, known to history only as Prime, escaped from his enslaver Absalom Bainbridge, a prominent Princeton loyalist, and came under the charge of Jacob Bergen, a commissioner for Somerset County who advised Prime to join the Continental Army as a path toward freedom; and

WHEREAS, Prime served as a Wagoneer in the Continental Army for five years and, following his service, petitioned the State Legislature for his emancipation, which he officially received in 1786; and

WHEREAS, Oliver Cromwell from Burlington County was a free Black man who enlisted in the Second New Jersey Continental Regiment, crossed the Delaware River with General Washington, and fought in the battles of Trenton, Brandywine, Princeton, Monmouth, and Yorktown; and

WHEREAS, Cromwell was awarded the Badge of Merit for six years of honorable service and proudly proclaimed that he held the occupation of a "drummer in the Revolution" until his death; and

WHEREAS, Hannah Caldwell of Elizabethtown, now Elizabeth, is widely recognized as the first woman to die in the Revolutionary War in New Jersey, having been shot by a British soldier while she and two of her young children hid out, keeping guard of their home during the Battles of Springfield and Connecticut Farms; and

WHEREAS, As news of Caldwell's murder spread, outrage grew and the Patriot cause in New Jersey was energized; and

WHEREAS, Caldwell has since been immortalized as the scene of her death is portrayed in the seal of Union County, honoring her service to the cause and her sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, Mary Ludwig Hays, who was born just a few miles from Trenton, became the main inspiration for the legend of "Molly Pitcher" after she carried a wounded soldier to safety and took over her husband's cannon when he became wounded, continuing to fire at the enemy in the face of their advance at the Battle of Monmouth; and

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WHEREAS, These acts were recognized by the regiment, who began to call her "Sergeant Molly," and it is said that General Washington himself issued her a warrant as a noncommissioned officer out of respect for her service; and

WHEREAS, Patience Lovell Wright, who was one of the most celebrated wax sculptors of her time, used her talents to collect sensitive information from the British military and political figures that commissioned her sculptures and passed that information on to Revolutionary leaders, including Benjamin Franklin; and

WHEREAS, Hannah White Arnett of Elizabethtown, also exhibited courage and moral fortitude in the face of the enemy when British General Charles Cornwallis captured Elizabeth after the Battle of Fort Lee; and

WHEREAS, Arnett convinced a group of prominent citizens to refuse Cornwallis' demand that all residents of the town declare loyalty to the British crown, going so far as to threaten to leave her husband if he did not maintain his support for the American Revolution; and

WHEREAS, When Arnett was subsequently denied recognition by the Sons of the American Revolution, a group of Arnett's supporters decided to found a new organization, the Daughters of the American Revolution, which continues to recognize the efforts of patriotic women to this day; and

WHEREAS, At Arnett's final resting place at the First Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, an inscription reads: "Near here rests Hannah White Arnett... Her patriotic words, uttered in the dark days of 1776, summoned discouraged men to keep Elizabethtown loyal to the cause of American Independence"; and

WHEREAS, It is thus fitting and proper for this House to honor the efforts of these, and other, lesser-known New Jerseyans who demonstrated the utmost courage, honor, and selflessness in support of the American Revolution; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The General Assembly honors the efforts made by lesser-known New Jerseyans in support of the American Revolution and encourages the citizens of New Jersey to use the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence to learn more about their local historical figures.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the New Jersey State Society Daughters of the American Revolution, the New Jersey Historical Society, the New Jersey Historical Commission, and the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Society Museum.

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STATEMENT

This Assembly resolution honors the efforts made by lesser-known New Jerseyans in support of the American Revolution and encourages the citizens of New Jersey to use the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence to learn more about their local historical figures.

Although popular accounts of the Revolutionary War in New Jersey focus on the famous set-piece battles in New Jersey, such as the Battles of Trenton, Princeton, and Monmouth, and the actions of military commanders and signers of the Declaration of Independence from New Jersey, many less famous New Jerseyans also contributed in significant ways to the American Revolution.

On such person was Samuel Sutphin, an enslaved person from Readington Township who enlisted in place of his enslaver in exchange for the promise of freedom and served illustriously in the Continental Army, including in the Battle of Long Island. When Sutphin's enslaver reneged on the deal and the federal government denied him a pension, Sutphin purchased his own freedom and petitioned the Governor and the State Legislature for a State pension, which was granted in 1836.

Another enslaved person, known to history only as Prime, escaped from his enslaver Absalom Bainbridge, a prominent Princeton loyalist, and came under the charge of Jacob Bergen, a commissioner for Somerset County who advised Prime to join the Continental Army as a path toward freedom. Prime served as a Wagoneer in the Continental Army for five years and, following his service, petitioned the State Legislature for his emancipation, which he officially received in 1786.

Oliver Cromwell, from Burlington County, was a free Black man who enlisted in the Second New Jersey Continental Regiment, crossed the Delaware River with General Washington, and fought in the battles of Trenton, Brandywine, Princeton, Monmouth, and Yorktown. Cromwell was awarded the Badge of Merit for six years of honorable service and proudly proclaimed that he held the occupation of a "drummer in the Revolution" until his death.

Hannah Caldwell of Elizabethtown, now Elizabeth, is widely recognized as the first woman to die in the Revolutionary War in New Jersey, having been shot by a British soldier while she and two of her young children hid out, keeping guard of their home during the Battles of Springfield and Connecticut Farms. As news of Caldwell's murder spread, outrage grew and the Patriot cause in New Jersey was energized. Caldwell has since been immortalized as the scene of her death is portrayed in the seal of Union County, honoring her service to the cause and her sacrifice.

Mary Ludwig Hays, who was born just a few miles from Trenton, became the main inspiration for the legend of "Molly Pitcher" after she carried a wounded soldier to safety and took over her husband's cannon when he became wounded, continuing to fire at the enemy in

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the face of their advance at the Battle of Monmouth. These acts were recognized by the regiment, who began to call her "Sergeant Molly," and it is said that General Washington himself issued her a warrant as a noncommissioned officer out of respect for her service.

Patience Lovell Wright, who was one of the most celebrated wax sculptors of her time, used her talents to collect sensitive information from the British military and political figures that commissioned her sculptures and passed that information on to Revolutionary leaders, including Benjamin Franklin.

Hannah White Arnett of Elizabethtown also exhibited courage and moral fortitude in the face of the enemy when British General Charles Cornwallis captured Elizabeth after the Battle of Fort Lee. Arnett convinced a group of prominent citizens to refuse Cornwallis' demand that all residents of the town declare loyalty to the British crown, going so far as to threaten to leave her husband if he did not maintain his support for the American Revolution. When Arnett was subsequently denied recognition by the Sons of the American Revolution, a group of Arnett's supporters decided to found a new organization, the Daughters of the American Revolution, which continues to recognize the efforts of patriotic women to this day. At Arnett's final resting place at the First Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, an inscription reads: "Near here rests Hannah White Arnett... Her patriotic words, uttered in the dark days of 1776, summoned discouraged men to keep Elizabethtown loyal to the cause of American independence."

Honors unsung efforts of New Jerseyans in American Revolution.

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