



# REVOLUTIONARY IDEALS



HISTORY

OF

PHILIP'S W

COMMONLY

THE GREAT IN

# Founding Mothers: Women and the Spread of Revolutionary Ideas

## GUIDING QUESTION:

To what extent did female publishers spread revolutionary rhetoric and ideas, and how did this both contradict and corroborate existing gender stereotypes?

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## ► OVERVIEW

While an uncommon occurrence, some women in colonial America operated print shops. Often these women were widows, who took over the business after their husbands died. Female publishers increasingly disseminated rhetoric and spread political ideas in the 1760s and 1770s. In this lesson, students will examine primary sources to draw conclusions about the role of women during the Revolutionary period and explore how their roles both contradicted and supported traditional gender roles.

## ► OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to:

- › Draw conclusions about the role of women in the press;
- › Examine gender stereotypes and expectations for women in the eighteenth century; and
- › Evaluate the extent to which female publishers can be considered “Founding Mothers.”

## ► STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

### CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- › CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

### CONNECTIONS TO C3 FRAMEWORK

- › D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.
- › D3.1.9-12. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

## ► DOCUMENTS USED

### PRIMARY SOURCES

Declaration of Independence, 1777  
Maryland State Papers, Archives of Maryland <http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/stagser/s1259/153/html/0044/womenhist/mkgdecl.pdf>

Petition, Ann Franklyn, Petition to the General Assembly, Vol.3 #82, 1736  
Rhode Island State Archives  
[https://sosri.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/IO\\_1fcd6fba-8d24-463f-bfa4-c2b12256b1c4/](https://sosri.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/IO_1fcd6fba-8d24-463f-bfa4-c2b12256b1c4/)

Print, Philip Dawe, *A society of patriotic ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina*, 1775  
Library of Congress (96511606)  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96511606/>

### SECONDARY SOURCES

Article, Lyndsey Claro, “Women in the Gentleman’s Career of Publishing,” March 6, 2020  
Princeton University Press  
<https://press.princeton.edu/ideas/women-in-the-gentlemans-career-of-publishing>

Article, Erik Trickey, “Mary Katherine Goddard, the Woman who Signed the Declaration of Independence,” November 14, 2018  
*Smithsonian Magazine*  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/mary-katharine-goddard-woman-who-signed-declaration-independence-180970816/>

## ► TEACHER-CREATED MATERIALS

- › Primary Source Activity Sheet

## ► ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- › Make one copy of the print, *A society of patriotic ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina*, and the Primary Source Activity Sheet for each student.
- › Print one copy of the other two primary sources for each group of four to five students.
- › Organize students into groups of four or five students each.
- › Arrange the classroom for group work.
- › Provide links so students can access the two secondary source articles.

**Students interested in this topic might be interested in researching the following for an NHD project:**

- › **Lowell Factory “Turn Outs” by “Mill Girls” (1834–1836)**
- › **The Seneca Falls Convention (1848)**
- › **Nellie Bly and Investigative Journalism (1887)**
- › **The Battle for the Nineteenth Amendment (1920)**
- › **National Women’s Conference (1977)**

## ► PROCEDURE

### ACTIVITY ONE (15 MINUTES)

- › Distribute one copy of the print, *A society of patriotic ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina*, to each student.
- › Project the print for the class.
- › Give students several minutes to examine the cartoon, labeling and annotating what they see and what they think about the image, reminding them to consider context and audience.
- › Ask students to share what they see and what they think is happening in the image. Annotate student’s ideas on the board to model visual analysis strategies.
- › Explain to students that this cartoon is attributed to a London cartoonist in response to political participation by women in North Carolina in 1775, where 51 women signed a pledge to boycott British goods. Ask students:
  - › *What is the artist’s opinion on these women’s political participation?*
  - › *What gender stereotypes or ideas are present in the cartoon?*
  - › *What role did women play in colonial America? We have heard about the Founding Fathers, but what about Founding Mothers?*

## ACTIVITY TWO (45 MINUTES)

- › Organize students into groups of four or five students each.
  - › Give each group access to the two secondary-source articles. Have students read the articles and discuss the content in their small groups.
- › Give each group a copy of Ann Franklyn's Petition to the General Assembly and the Declaration of Independence printed by Mary Katherine Goddard.
- › Distribute the Primary Source Activity Sheet and assist students in applying their knowledge from the secondary sources to help analyze the primary sources and complete the chart. Encourage students to work together to discuss the documents and questions to facilitate their understanding of the document and how other students might view the same document.
- › Facilitate a whole-class discussion of the sources and the topics. Ask students what their group discovered about each document and how it gave them insight into women in politics and publishing during the colonial period. Ask students:
  - › *What circumstances or factors caused or allowed women to become printers? What does this tell us about gender expectations and women's roles? Does that make these particular women exceptional?*
  - › *How important do you think the press was to the American Revolution?*
  - › *Does this participation in the press make these women active participants in the Revolution? Why or why not?*
  - › *How do these documents corroborate or contradict the ideas in the cartoon? What does that tell us?*

## ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

- › Ask students to respond to the guiding question: *To what extent did female publishers spread revolutionary rhetoric and ideas, and how did this both contradict and corroborate existing gender stereotypes?*
- › Ask students to respond to the question: *Should these female publishers be considered "Founding Mothers"?*

To access a PDF containing all of the sources and materials to complete this lesson plan, go to: [nhd.org/RevIdeals](http://nhd.org/RevIdeals).

## A society of patriotic ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina, 1775

Print, Philip Dawe, A society of patriotic ladies, at Edenton in North Carolina, 1775  
Library of Congress (96511606)

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96511606/>



# Ann Franklyn, Petition to the General Assembly (1736)

Petition, Ann Franklyn, Petition to the General Assembly, Vol.3 #82, 1736  
Rhode Island State Archives

[https://sosri.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/IO\\_1fcd6fba-8d24-463f-bfa4-c2b12256b1c4/](https://sosri.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/IO_1fcd6fba-8d24-463f-bfa4-c2b12256b1c4/)

**Historical Context:** In 1736, Ann Franklyn, the sister-in-law of Benjamin Franklin, petitioned the General Assembly for the commission to print the records of state government. (Spelling was not consistent in the eighteenth century, even among family members.) Franklyn would go on to become the first female newspaper editor in America.

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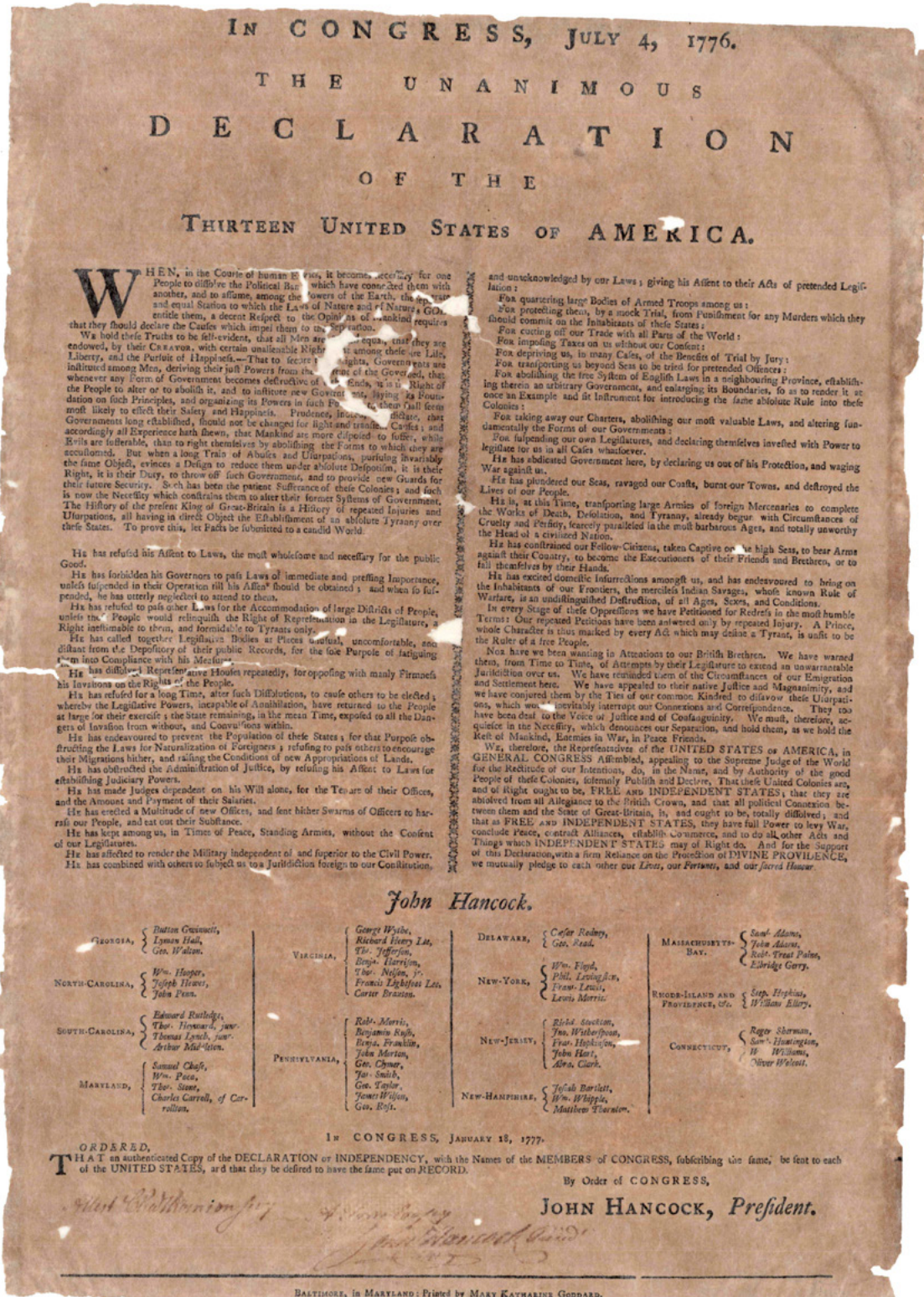
To the Honorable General Assembly Convened at Providence in his Majesties Colony of Rhode Island the last Wednesday of October AD 1736 Petition of Ann Franklyn, the widow of James Franklyn late of Newport aforesaid Printer Deceased, Humbly showeth whereas your Petitioner being left with Several Small Children which is a great Charge to her, & having not Sufficient Business Printing Trade, Humbly Prays your Honours will grant her favour to Print the Acts of the Colony & what other things that shall be Lawful and Necessary to be printed in order for your Petitioners Support & Maintenance of her family having no other way to Support her Self then thereby, Your Honour Petitioner Shall Ever Pray

Ann Franklyn

# Declaration of Independence, 1777

Declaration of Independence, 1777 (Printed by Mary Katherine Goddard)  
Maryland State Papers, Archives of Maryland

<http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/stagser/s1259/153/html/0044/womenhist/mkgdecl.pdf>



# Primary Source Activity Sheet

Ann Franklyn, Petition to the General Assembly, 1736

Declaration of Independence, 1777

## WHO?

**From the perspective of its publisher:**

*Who wrote this document? What is the style or tone?*

**From the perspective of its intended audience:**

*For whom is the document intended? Does the intended audience affect the text's style or tone?*

## WHAT?

What type of document is this?

What facts are revealed? Are the facts trustworthy? What does it unintentionally reveal?

Is there any information on the publisher?



## Primary Source Activity Sheet (Con't)

Ann Franklyn, Petition to the General Assembly, 1736

Declaration of Independence, 1777

### WITH WHOSE HELP?

Is the published document written with the weight or authority of others behind it?

Does it represent the voice of a single individual or a group?

Was it published under duress or threat of violence?

Is its authority corroborated by witnesses named in the document or officials who lend it legal weight?

### WHERE?

Where was the document published?

# Primary Source Activity Sheet (Con't)

Ann Franklyn, Petition to the General Assembly, 1736

Declaration of Independence, 1777

## WHEN?

When was the document published?

What happened immediately before the document was published?

What happened immediately after it was published?

## WHY?

Does the document explain why it was published or is the meaning inferred?