



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Talk and Exhibit Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of Washington's Command of the Continental Army and the History of Black Soldiers During and After the Revolutionary War

Trenton, NJ (For immediate release)— On Sunday, July 6, 2025, the Trent House Association will host a free talk presented by Paul Soltis, "George Washington Takes Command: The Journey Through Jersey, 1775," commemorating the 250th anniversary of Washington's appointment as the Continental Army's Commander in Chief. Accompanying the talk will be display of the traveling exhibit "Oh Freedom! Blacks on the Battlefield and in the Aftermath of the Revolutionary War in New Jersey." The talk and exhibit will be at the William Trent House Museum at 15 Market Street in Trenton, across from the Hughes Justic Complex. Free parking and the museum entrance are at the rear of the property off William Trent Place.

George Washington was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army on June 15, 1775, by the Continental Congress. He formally accepted the position on June 16 and took command on July 3, 1775. Washington was selected for several reasons. He had prior military experience while still being young enough to exercise active leadership in the field. As a Virginian, his appointment made the Revolution a continental effort, rather than one centered in the northeast colonies. And, while a Patriot, he was moderate in political stance.

Black New Jerseyans joined the ranks of both Loyalists and Patriots, depending on which side seemed to offer the best chance for freedom and were present in all key battles in New Jersey. After the War, some left the new nation to gain their freedom, some continued their lives as free men, some were freed as a reward for their service, while others lived out the rest of their lives enslaved.

Paul Soltis is with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and serves as historian for Wallace House & Old Dutch Parsonage State Historic Sites in Somerville. In his talk he will give special attention to the three days in June 1775 when General Washington crossed New Jersey on his way from the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia to the Continental Army headquarters at Cambridge, Mass. He will also describe the role of William Lee, George Washington's enslaved valet from Mount Vernon, in this march through New Jersey in 1775, as well as Black service in the Continental Army, something that Washington initially was reluctant to allow.

The William Trent House Museum is a National Historic Landmark in the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area and on the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail and on the New Jersey Black Heritage Trail. The Museum is dedicated to sharing the authentic history of the house, property, and people with our communities, connecting the past with today and tomorrow. Owned by the City of Trenton, it is operated by the Trent House Association, which is supported by the generosity of its donors; by grants from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, the New Jersey Cultural Trust, the New Jersey Historic Trust, the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission with funding from the New Jersey Historical Commission, and the Bunbury Fund and the New Jersey Arts & Culture Renewal Fund of the Princeton Area Community Foundation; and by contributions from NJM Insurance Group and Orion General Contractors. For more information, visit www.williamtrenthouse.org.