

Primary Source:

Phillipsburg Proclamation, 1779

- How did African Americans participate in the Revolutionary War?
- How did their actions reflect a desire to enjoy their natural rights?

- I can connect actions taken by African Americans during the Revolutionary War to an understanding of natural rights of equality and justice.
- I can summarize the main ideas of historical text.
- I can create an argument supported by evidence from primary sources.

Building Context

General Sir Henry Clinton, the supreme commander of the British Army fighting in the colonies, issued the following proclamation from his headquarters in New York. Clinton was not as desperate for recruits as Lord Dunmore, but still saw the value of undermining the economy and war effort of American Patriots.

Phillipsburg Proclamation, 1779

Link: (pg 219)

https://books.google.com/books?id=u_hJAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA219#v=onepage&q&f=false

“By his excellency Sir HENRY CLINTON, K.B. General and Commander-in-Chief of all his Majesty’s Forces within the Colonies laying on the Atlantic Ocean, from Nova Scotia to West Florida, inclusive, &c., &c., &c.

PROCLAMATION

Whereas the enemy have adopted a practice of enrolling NEGROES among their Troops, I do hereby give notice That all NEGROES taken in

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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 (Patriot fighting the British), who may take Refuge with any part of this Army; And I do promise to every NEGROE who shall desert the Rebel Standard (Patriot flag or side of the fight), full security to follow within these Lines, any Occupation he shall think proper...

Given under my Hand, at Head-quarters, Phillipsburgh, the 30th of June, 1779.

H. CLINTON

Comprehension and Analysis Questions

1. According to this document, what had the Patriot Army allowed by 1779?

2. What will happen to an African American serving in the Patriot (Rebel) Army, if captured? What does this proclamation promise to African Americans? What evidence does this document provide about the role of African Americans in the Revolutionary War?

3. Does this document provide any evidence of an understanding of natural rights by the author or its intended audience? Explain.