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### Phillis Wheatley and Judith Sargent Murray: Revolutionary Founders in Women's Political Activism and Women's American Literary Tradition

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#### Abstract

During the Revolutionary War the dominant belief, held by men and women alike, was that women did not possess the mental capacity or intelligence for politics. Many perceived that women were strictly domestic beings, and therefore could not participate nor contribute to the inherently political war effort. Nonetheless, a few brave women such as Phillis Wheatley and Judith Sargent Murray insisted on participating in the political dialogue of their new nation through their poetry.

Through the respective lenses of gender and race, Murray and Wheatley used their literary skills and intellectual abilities to engage with the themes of patriotism, freedom and religion within their poetry. Ultimately, they shaped the nation's broader political dialogue, pushed gender boundaries, and aided in strengthening the foundation and growth of women's American literary tradition.

Thanks to the rise of the study of women's history in the 1970s, there is no scarcity of secondary scholarship on politically active women in New England during the Revolutionary War. Although I engage with these broader historical dialogues, for the purpose of this research paper, I primarily focus on primary sources as they pertain to Judith Sargent Murray and Phillis Wheatley, such as their published works, birth and death certificates.

Relative to their politically active and revolutionary peers, Murray and Wheatley stand out as two women who took advantage of the opportunities they received and shared similar achievements in life despite their different backgrounds. Both led extraordinary lives and expanded the arena of possibility for women during the Revolution.

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Poet Phillis Wheatley was brought to Boston, Massachusetts, on an enslaved person ship in 1761 and was purchased by John Wheatley as a personal servant to his wife. The Wheatleys educated Phillis and she soon mastered Latin and Greek, going on to write highly acclaimed poetry. A pioneering African American poet, Wheatley was born in Senegal/Gambia around 1753.

At the age of eight, she was kidnapped and brought to Boston on an enslaved person ship. Wheatley did continue to write, but the growing tensions with the British and, ultimately, the Revolutionary War, weakened enthusiasm for her poems. While she contacted various publishers, she was unsuccessful in finding support for a second volume of poetry. Death. American Revolution For Dummies capitalizes on the recent resurgence of interest in the Revolutionary War period--one of the most important in the history of the United States. From the founding fathers to the Declaration of Independence, and everything that encapsulates this extraordinary period in American history, American Revolution For Dummies is your one-stop guide to the birth of the United States of America. This tension is revealed through the dramatic story of Phillis Wheatley, an African-American poet who refused to marry a man she had never met and return with him to Africa as a missionary. She was enslaved in Africa as a child and transported to Boston, where she was sold to an evangelical family. The conditions of women in America during the colonial period and the 19th century have been the centre of interest for many critics. 4 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who resisted to gendered injustices and rebelled against the patriarchal constraints of the nineteenth century, drafted the grievances in the ". employment as well as of political rights among women. 7 Before the 19th century, women were not involved in movements for their emancipation. Therefore, they were more concerned with their domestic tasks and accomplishments. Discussion. Women during the colonial period in Judith Sargent Murray's 'On the Equality of Sexes'. 9 During the colonial period in America, both men and women were forced to work in order.