



This is NewsLetter Issue No. Two ~ For the year 2021

The 1619 Project

Most of our Frontier Patriots Chapter members have probably heard of *The 1619 Project*. But that is probably the extent of it. Despite having heard about it on TV or seeing it mentioned in print, it is probable that the majority of those who have heard the project's name have not actually taken the time to find out what it is all about.

On 14 August 2019 the New York Times published a 100-page magazine titled *The 1619 Project*. The lead author was Nikole Hanna-Jones, a journalist devoted to articles on civil rights. The magazine included articles by nine authors in addition to the main article by Ms. Hanna-Jones, a photo essay and a collection of poems and fictional stories by sixteen additional writers. The main article and apparent reason for the project was based on a thesis by Ms. Hanna-Jones that the United States of America was founded on slavery and the American Revolutionary War was fought to preserve that slavery. Ms. Hanna-Jones' article was titled *America Wasn't a Democracy Until Black Americans Made It One*. The other articles dealt in one way or another with the experience of Americans of African descent and how those experiences have influenced American society.

Nikole Hanna-Jones demanded that absolutely no 'white' journalist be permitted to participate in *The 1619 Project*, and made the claim that America was not, as stated by Abraham Lincoln in his *Gettysburg*

Address, "a new nation conceived in Liberty" but instead a white racist state born in the original sin of slavery and the enslavement of one-fifth of its population.

The basic gist of *The 1619 Project* was that in the year 1619 a Dutch ship, the *White Lion*, arrived at Point Comfort (present-day Hampton, Virginia) from the Kingdom of Ndongo (in present-day Angola, Africa). According to Ms. Hanna-Jones' article:

In August of 1619, John Rolfe, widower of Pocahontas, was at Point Comfort on this fateful day and he wrote in his diary "About the latter end of August, an English ship flying a Dutch flag of the burden of 160 tons arrived at Point Comfort, the Commanders name was Capt. Colyn Jope. He brought not anything but 20 and odd Negars."

Ms. Hanna-Jones was not averse to stretching the facts a bit. The actual quotation, as transcribed in the *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith* was:

"About the last of August came in a dutch man of warre that sold vs twenty Negars."

Misquoting documents was just a small part of Nikole Hanna-Jones' attempt to rewrite history. The reason for the date, 1619, is that it was in that year that the twenty Africans arrived at the Jamestown Colony.

Completely ignoring the fact that the Jamestown Colony was established in 1607 by 'white' Europeans, Hanna-Jones made the claim that the history of the Jamestown Colony began only in 1619 with the arrival of the Africans. She went on to claim that the twenty Africans embodied the start of slavery in the New World. It has been acknowledged by other historians that the 'black' Africans who arrived on the ship, *White Lion* were treated the same as the 'white' Europeans who arrived as indentured servants: they were granted their freedom after only a few years.

There exists no evidence that the twenty Africans who arrived in 1619 were forced to remain as slaves for the rest of their lives. Granted, the 'systemic' institution of slavery would eventually develop in the English colonies of the New World ~ but, it did not, as Nikole Hanna-Jones would have you believe, start with the arrival of the *White Lion* in 1619. The *1619 Project's* thesis that the Jamestown Colony was instigated specifically to spread slavery throughout the New World is simply an absurd notion. Ms. Hanna-Jones apparently ignored the fact that the Jamestown Colony, for over a decade before the arrival of the *White Lion*, was involved exclusively in the search for gold and other treasures that might facilitate trading opportunities for its shareholders.

Another bending of the truth in *The 1619 Project* by Ms. Hanna-Jones is found in her claim that the enslavement of the twenty Africans was a unique situation. Her assertion is that the Dutch master of the ship, *White Lion*, stole the twenty or so 'black' free men from a Portuguese ship. They had, according to Hanna-Jones, been forcibly captured by those Portuguese and enslaved for sale. Anyone who engages in an honest study of African slavery knows that it was 'black' Africans who took other free, 'black' Africans captive and sold them to the Portuguese traders. The Portuguese, at this time period, were allied to the Imbangala, a fierce African tribe. The Imbangala apparently felt no qualms about enslaving their fellow Africans. One of the neighboring tribes of the Imbangala was the Ndongo. It was the Imbangala, and not the Portuguese or the Dutch who captured the twenty or so Ngondo men, ripping them from their families and forcing them into slavery. And while noting the impressment of Ngondo men into slavery in 1619, it should be noted that slavery existed in Africa long before the Portuguese and Dutch got the idea that it would be a good business venture. African society was

based on the caste system. The lowest rung of that system were slaves, and slavery constituted a rather large portion of many of the tribes in the Seventeenth Century. One example is found in the Akan meta-ethnic group occupying a large region on the west coast of Africa. The Akan is believed to have been comprised of two-third free and one-third slaves when the Portuguese began to trade with the Imbangala.

An additional point should be made when considering *The 1619 Project's* claim that slavery was brought to the New World by 'white' Europeans. The Aztecs of Mesoamerica were taking captives as slaves from neighboring tribes since at least the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. They needed a large stock of slaves to sacrifice to their gods. Farther north, the Amerindian tribe of the Westos, who the Europeans encountered along the Atlantic Coastal region, is known to have taken into slavery the neighboring tribes of the Yuchis, Guales and Cherokees among others. The Creeks are known to have raided the Cherokee and Choctaw to obtain slaves. The Chickasaw would attack the Choctaw and the Illinois for slaves. Slavery in the North, Central and South American continents was not new in 1619, nor was it an uniquely 'white European' activity.

The most shocking allegation made by *The 1619 Project* was that the causes of the American Revolutionary War espoused by historians have been totally inaccurate all along. According to Nikole Hanna-Jones, the Revolution did not take place because of 'taxation without representation' or any of the twenty-six other grievances outlined in the Declaration of Independence, but rather because the Colonists found out that the British Parliament, under the direction of King George III, was planning on abolishing slavery throughout the North American Colonies. In order to maintain the status quo and preserve slavery, the Colonists chose to fight a war with Great Britain rather than lose the 'peculiar institution' of slavery. In Ms. Hanna-Jones' own words:

Conveniently left out of our founding mythology is the fact that one of the primary reasons the colonists decided to declare their independence from Britain was because they wanted to protect the institution of slavery. By 1776, Britain had grown deeply conflicted over its role in the barbaric institution that had reshaped the Western Hemisphere. In London, there were growing calls to abolish the slave trade. This

would have upended the economy of the colonies, in both the North and the South. The wealth and prominence that allowed Jefferson, at just 33, and the other founding fathers to believe they could successfully break off from one of the mightiest empires in the world came from the dizzying profits generated by chattel slavery. In other words, we may never have revolted against Britain if the founders had not understood that slavery empowered them to do so; nor if they had not believed that independence was required in order to ensure that slavery would continue. It is not incidental that 10 of this nation's first 12 presidents were enslavers, and some might argue that this nation was founded not as a democracy but as a slavocracy.

The 1619 Project has been refuted by historians and journalists who have seen through the web of lies promulgated by Ms. Hanna-Jones. The American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati posted on their website, on July 16, 2020: “*The New York Times asks Americans to reject the Revolution and claims that the men and women who sacrificed, struggled and died for American independence are unworthy of our respect.*” The article continued: “*The American Revolution was not conducted to defend slavery. The Revolution secured our independence, established our republic, created our national identity and committed our nation to ideals of liberty, equality, natural and civil rights, and responsible citizenship. It articulated ideals fundamentally at odds with slavery, and set that abhorrent practice on the path to extinction. Principled opposition to slavery was barely expressed prior to the American Revolution. The Revolution threw slavery on the defensive. Its commitment to universal natural rights inspired the growth of abolitionism across the Atlantic world. In fact, the British abolitionist movement took off after the American Revolution, drawing inspiration from the principles of the American Revolution and the abolition of slavery in the northern states.*”

Leslie Harris, an historian at Northwestern University, also disputed the ‘fact’ proposed by Hanna-Jones that the American Revolutionary War was fought to preserve slavery in the Colonies. She noted: “*Far from being fought to preserve slavery, the Revolutionary War became a primary disrupter of*

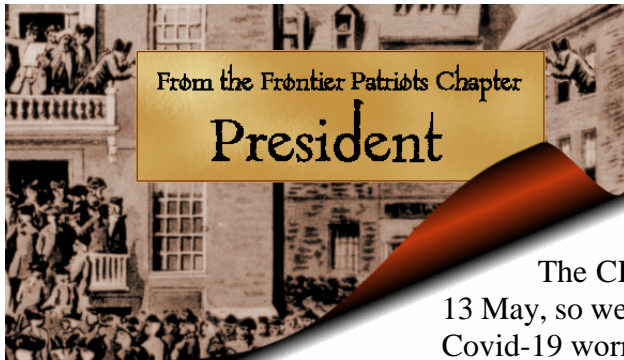
slavery in the North American Colonies. Lord Dunmore's Proclamation, a British military strategy designed to unsettle the Southern Colonies by inviting enslaved people to flee to British lines, propelled hundreds of enslaved people off plantations and turned some Southerners to the patriot side. It also led most of the 13 Colonies to arm and employ free and enslaved black people, with the promise of freedom to those who served in their armies. While neither side fully kept its promises, thousands of enslaved people were freed as a result of these policies....”

The National Association of Scholars president, Peter W. Wood has written his own book titled *1620 A Critical Response to the 1619 Project*. As Jonathan Leaf of the *City Journal* pointed out: “*Wood's 1620 is an extraordinary book. Readers looking for a polemic should be forewarned: it is a learned and thoughtful investigation of the topic, and Wood goes to considerable lengths to give a hearing to Hannah-Jones's assertions. In doing so, he systematically demolishes all but one of them.*” [That ‘one of them’ refers to President Abraham Lincoln’s sincerity toward the emancipation of slaves.]

Despite the studied and critical responses leveled against *The 1619 Project*, the *New York Times* refused to admit any errors and made no retractions.

The unfortunate thing regarding *The 1619 Project* is that it was intended to be presented in the public school system to indoctrinate children into believing that the United States of America is inherently a racist nation. Critical Race Theory [which advocates that the nation’s legal and economic systems are inherently racist and that political, economic and social benefits are reserved for ‘whites’ and that ‘people of color’ have always been and continue to be oppressed], has been around for quite a while, but it gained a boost in popularity with the publication of *The 1619 Project*.

My personal opinion is that slavery at any time and in any society is repugnant and an abhorrent practice. It is sad and regretful that it happened in our nation, but changing the details of history to fit one’s narrative is equally repugnant. As an historian, I believe in changing a story if newly uncovered evidence suggests an alternative to the previously accepted ‘facts’ but to fabricate your own ‘facts’ to suit your personal narrative of what history should be is simply intolerable.



The next meeting of the Frontier Patriots Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution will be held at The Dream Restaurant at 1500 Allegheny St, Hollidaysburg on Saturday, 12 June 2021 starting at 12 Noon.

The CDC lifted all restrictions for fully vaccinated people on 13 May, so we can meet without anyone who is vaccinated or has had Covid-19 worrying about wearing masks and 'social distancing'. In its announcement, the CDC asked that anyone who is either not vaccinated or feels at risk should consider continuing to wearing a mask and keeping at a distance from others. The choice is yours, but no matter what you choose, please consider joining us at our upcoming meetings.



The Engagement of Frankstown Monument

By the time that you read this newsletter, the erection of the Engagement of Frankstown monument should have been started. I met with Michael Stiffler of Stiffler Masonry and Landon Focht, Maintenance Supervisor of Imler's Poultry on 7 May. We identified the actual spot on the Imler's Poultry property on which the monument would stand. Michael assured me that he would be able to start the monument in the upcoming two weeks. The project would involve digging and pouring a cement base. As soon as that would be set up, and firm enough to be built upon, he would construct the monument, taking less than a week to complete.

This newsletter will hopefully reach you in time for you to consider attending the dedication ceremony to be held on Thursday, 3 June 2021. Beginning at 11:00am, the ceremony will not last too long. I will be presenting a brief history of the engagement and one of the Blair County Commissioners will speak. I have not

heard from the Blair County Historical Society, but some representative from that group might also offer remarks. The Adam Holliday Chapter, DAR has declined my offer to participate in the dedication. The Blair County Genealogical Society has also declined to participate. Although Gary Wiser, the PASSAR District Deputy covering this region, will not be able to attend, he told me that he would pass the information along to other PASSAR officers. I have not heard from anyone in that group.

Please consider attending this event. It would be great if a large number of the Compatriot members of the Frontier Patriots Chapter would show up to support the dedication of this monument. The Engagement of Frankstown was the only incident of the American Revolutionary War to take place within the bounds of present-day Blair County.

Frontier Patriots Chapter website: <http://www.motherbedford.com/FrontierPatriots.htm>

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