

“Voices from East of the Aquehung (Bronx) River during the American Revolution”

By

Rich Forliano

Eastchester Town Historian

Introduction for a Performance of the Eastchester Historical Society to be scheduled when restrictions from the pandemic are lifted.

“I assemble what pieces there are, contrast and compare, and try to remain in their presence till I can begin to see and hear and love what living men and women once saw and loved, till from these scraps and fragments living men and women begin to emerge and live again.”

Thomas Cahill *Sailing the Wine Glass Sea*

Preface

In a way the American Revolution has never fully ended. Our revolution was a promise of freedom and that promise has only been partially fulfilled with the end of hostilities in 1783. The passions, divisions, and internal strife that arose almost two and a half centuries ago has resurfaced numerous times throughout this nation’s history.

As you watch the performance, please reflect on five fundamental questions:

1. Why did the American Revolution, unlike other modern revolutions, prove successful?
2. At what point was it necessary for free citizens to stand up to unjust authority?
3. To what extent can basic human rights be protected when individuals with no respect for the rule of law, both in and out of the government, threaten its stability?

4. How can we protect freedom of speech and press when disinformation distorts reality?
5. In what ways will our experiment in establishing a government based on the will of the people survive?

Certain guidelines will be followed. In giving voice to those men and women who lived in lower Westchester east of the Bronx River during that tumultuous decade starting in 1774.

Contemporary perceptions and values will, as much as possible, be put aside. The world shaking events of the American Revolution will be looked at through the eyes of late 18<sup>th</sup> century people. The audience will gain a much clearer understanding of representative people from divergent groups who lived, quarreled, and in many cases fought at this time.

Recently uncovered primary sources about the men and women from historic Eastchester at the time of the American Revolution will be the foundation of giving voice to those people who lived long ago. In the end, the programs developed will help the audience arrive at a clearer understanding of why the American Revolution, unlike other modern revolutions, proved successful.