



America's Black Founders: Revolutionary Heroes & Early Leaders with 21 Activities (For Kids series)

By Nancy I. Sanders

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History books are replete with heroic stories of Washington, Jefferson, and Adams, but what of Allen, Russwurm, and Hawley? *America's Black Founders* celebrates the lesser known but significant lives and contributions of our nation's early African American leaders. Many know that the Revolutionary War's first martyr, Crispus Attucks, a dockworker of African descent, was killed at the Boston Massacre. But far fewer know that the final conflict of the war, the Battle of Yorktown, was hastened to a conclusion by James Armistead Lafayette, a slave and spy who reported the battle plans of General Cornwallis to George Washington.

Author Nancy Sanders weaves the histories of dozens of men and women—soldiers, sailors, ministers, poets, merchants, doctors, and other community leaders—who have earned proper recognition among the founders of the United States of America. To get a better sense of what these individuals accomplished and the times in which they lived, readers will celebrate Constitution Day, cook colonial foods, publish a newspaper, petition their government, and more. This valuable resource also includes a time line of significant events, a list of historic sites to visit or explore online, and Web resources for further study.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 5–8—This activity-based guide reveals how African Americans played crucial roles in helping the United States gain its independence. Sanders includes well-known figures such as Phillis Wheatley, Crispus Attucks, and James Forten in her narrative, but also enriches traditional accounts of the period by explaining the contributions of lesser-known patriots. For example, she talks about black troops who fought at Bunker Hill and Valley Forge. She also tells the story of James Armistead Lafayette, a black soldier who spied on Benedict Arnold and Lord Cornwallis. Most of the activities help make this period real to young people. The "Explore Your Family Tree" project gives print and online resources that can help readers discover the roles their own ancestors may have played in the American Revolution. This book also includes information about how African Americans created social and political networks to support one another during the earliest days of the Republic. Sanders makes excellent use of primary sources, providing the original texts of documents and petitions that demanded equal rights and the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. She then explains these documents in language contemporary children will understand. A solid resource for teachers and librarians who wish to engage children in this formative period of American history.—*Mary Landrum, Lexington Public Library, KY*

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From Booklist

Except for the stories of a few legendary figures, the essential role of blacks in America's early history has been largely underrepresented in standard accounts. This lively, illustrated volume fills in that gap. The browsable format includes archival prints and documents, screened biographies, and well-chosen quotes. The double standard about the meaning of "freedom" is a dominant theme in the accessible narrative, which points out that the debates about the rights of man were carried out by people who held slaves. Never simplistic, Sanders' text includes complicated views, such as that of African Americans Richard Allen and James Forten, who opposed the back-to-Africa movement because freed blacks in the U.S. were the strongest fighters for the abolition of slavery. The activities that accompany each chapter are pretty routine, with suggestions to students to pen a patriotic poem, weave a basket, or draw a political cartoon. It is the biographies, including a chapter on the Founding Mothers, that will inspire readers. The appended bibliography of books and Web sites will aid researchers. Grades 6-10. --Hazel Rochman

About the Author

Nancy I. Sanders

is the author of many books, including *A Kid's Guide to African American History* and *Old Testament Days*.

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Debra Sims:

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