



Rev War  
Forensic Institute  
*of* HISTORIC CAMDEN FOUNDATION

# THE FOURTEEN

*Six Months Report: Preliminary profiles of two  
Battle of Camden fallen*

4 July 2025





# THE FOURTEEN

Revolutionary War Battle of Camden patriots were discovered in endangered shallow battlefield burials in 2022.

After a 2023 military funeral, extraction of DNA samples yielded the world's oldest John Doe profiles. We are now using genetic genealogy to learn more about each hero.

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# Making the 'myth' of the American Revolution real



© Sarah Nell Blackwell

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*It's almost like a mythology, the Revolution; like a story we all agree happened, but may not feel that it was real. These gravesites made it real.*

- James Legg, SCIAA  
RWFI Board of Advisors







# Groundbreaking historic significance

- \*Oldest autosomal DNA profiles uploaded to public genealogy databases
- \*Oldest unidentified combatant investigations for American military veterans

\*That could be found in the current public record



# In other words...

The attempt to identify unknown subjects with forensic investigative genetic genealogy (F/IGG) on 244 year old remains has never been done before.

How did we do it?





# Paleogenomics

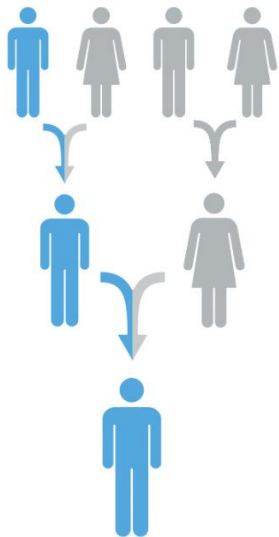
Making the impossible...  
***possible*** with Ancient DNA

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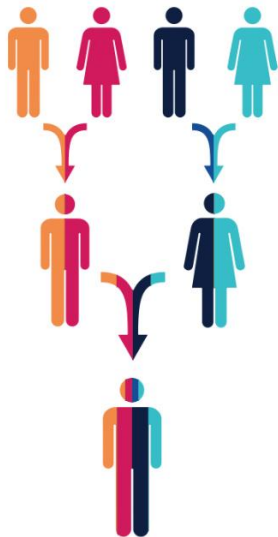


# Three Kinds of DNA Analysis

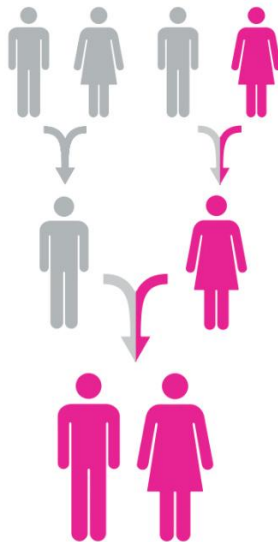
yDNA



aDNA



mtDNA



- yDNA (Paternal)
- aDNA ("Cousin")
- mtDNA (Maternal)



# Meet Our Heroes

Preliminary profiles of the first two combatants after 6 months of genetic genealogy research

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*These were not amateurs. These were men who had been through a lot already. They were hard core veterans.*

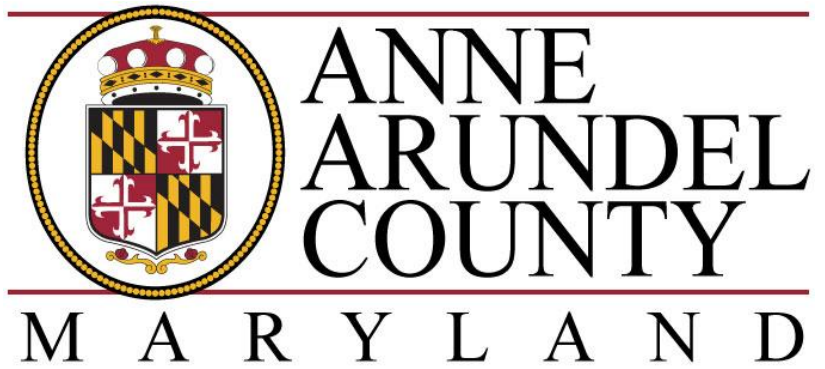
- Dr. Steven Smith, SCIAA  
RWF Board of Advisors





# A tale of two paths...

- One patriot whose family tree is made up of people that stayed in Maryland for generations
- One patriot whose family tree is made up of people that moved around extensively between the new states



# A Founding Anne Arundel Family

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# Camden 9B

## Burial:

Shallow battlefield burial with four other subjects

## Age-at-death estimate:

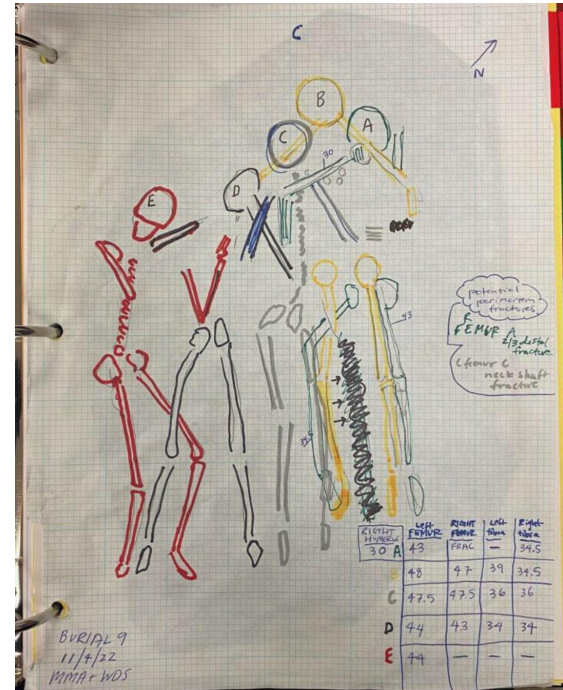
14 -18 years old

## Stature estimate:

5'7"-5'9"

## Affiliation:

Maryland Regiments



Field notes on group burial of 5 combatants



# Camden 9B

## Ethnogeography:

94% English/Welsh/Scottish, 6% Scandinavian

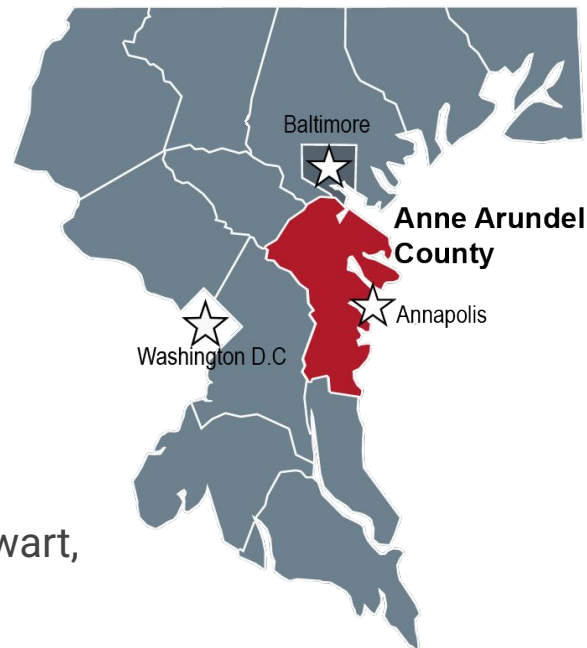
Exclusively Anne Arundel County ancestral ties, many of his matches still live there today

## Surnames:

Beall, Browne, Cheney, Davidge, Griffith, Pumphrey, Ridgley, Stewart, Wade, Warfield, Welsh, and Westall

## Benefits/Challenges:

Intermarriage of several families in the same community makes distinctions in relatedness difficult, but gives us very high matches due to repetitive inheritance of shared DNA



# Camden 9B - Current Research

## **Matches:**

11,663 autosomal matches in two databases

15 X Chromosome matches (these relate to the maternal line)

Highest match of 189 cM

## **His family tree:**

7,000+ people

## **Common Ancestor Couples:**

Ten, all in Anne Arundel County, Maryland; identified by the convergence of the 113 matches that we've traced

## **Latest:**

Strong leads on his maternal lineage



Roll of Capt. Anderson's Comp<sup>y</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Maryland  
 Commanded by Col. John Gunby White Plains 9.

Commissions } Capt. Rich<sup>d</sup>. Anderson  
 & Lieut. Lloyd Beall

No.	Names	Time engaged to serve		Present the roll	on Command	Sick present	Sick in Hospital
		Wks	3 years 9 Months				
1.	George Pullam (Sgt.)	1.	1.	1.			
2.	Jacob Hanley (Sgt.)	1.	1.	1.			
3.	Richard Appleton (Sgt.)	1.	1.	1.			
1.	Dan <sup>l</sup> Griffith Capt.	1.					1.
2.	William Harrell	1.			1.		
1.	John Mortimer Drummer	1.	1.	1.			
2.	Joseph Hall Sifer	1.	1.	1.			
1.	William Gaskins	1.	1.	1.			
2.	John Barney	1.	1.	1.			
3.	John Clark	1.	1.	1.			
1.	John M'Loughlin	1.	1.	1.			
5.	Barney McManus	1.	1.	1.			
6.	Robert Price	1.	1.	1.			

Current candidates  
 for 9B's identity



## Names on a 200 year old piece of paper....

Daniel Griffith and John Pumphrey appear together on a muster roll for Capt. Richard Anderson's Company of the 7th Maryland Regiment Commanded by Col. John Gunby

9 Sept. 1778  
White Plains, New York

Both are later listed as missing or killed at Camden.

*Roll of Capt. Anderson's Comp<sup>y</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> Maryland Reg<sup>t</sup>  
Commanded by Col. John Gunby White Plains 9. Sep. 1778.*

*Commissions } Capt. Rich<sup>d</sup>. Anderson  
                              } Lt. Lloyd Beall*

No.	Names	Time engaged to serve		Present on the 11 <sup>th</sup>	Present on the 11 <sup>th</sup>	Present on the 11 <sup>th</sup>	Present on the 11 <sup>th</sup>	Present on the 11 <sup>th</sup>
		Mo	Year					
1.	George Sullivan (Sgt.)	1	1	1				
2.	Jacob Hanley (Sgt.)	1	1	1				
3.	Richard Hapleton (Sgt.)	1	1	1				
4.	Dan <sup>l</sup> Griffith Capt.	1	1	1				1
5.	William Harrell	1	1	1				
6.	John Mortimer Drummer	1	1	1				
7.	Joseph Hall Fifer	1	1	1				
8.	William Gaskins	1	1	1				
9.	Thomas Barney	1	1	1				
10.	John Clark	1	1	1				
11.	John McLaughlin	1	1	1				
12.	Barney McManus	1	1	1				
13.	Robert Price	1	1	1				
14.	John Pumphrey	1	1	1				
15.	William Tammell	1	1	1				
16.	Paul Appman	1	1	1				
17.	Bartholomew	1	1	1				
18.	Patrick Loy	1	1	1				

# Seventh Maryland \*Candidates

## John Pumphrey

- 5 Jan 1777, Enlisted
- 9 Sep 1778, Served White Plains, NY
- 25 Feb 1779, Re-enlisted for the war
- Missing or Killed at Camden

*\*Neither soldier left any record behind placing him in a specific family of origin. Both may have served too long to be our fallen teen. If 9B is not one of these 2 young men, both are surely his relatives.*

## Daniel Griffith

- 1777, Enlisted
- 9 Sep 1778, Served White Plains, NY (Sick in Hospital)
- 25 Feb 1779, Re-enlisted for the war
- 15 Mar 1779, Promoted to Corporal
- 1 June 1779, Promoted to Sergeant
- Missing or Killed at Camden



# A Family of Pioneers & Adventurers

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# Camden 11A

**Burial:**

Shallow battlefield burial with one other subject

**Age-at-death estimate:**

Adult male over 20 years of age

**Stature estimate:**

5'7"-5'10"

**Affiliation:**

Strong potential for member of a Virginia Regiment fighting with Maryland



Military funeral, April 2023



# Camden 11A

## Ethnogeography:

46% English/Welsh/Scottish, 50% Irish, 2% African, 2% Native American

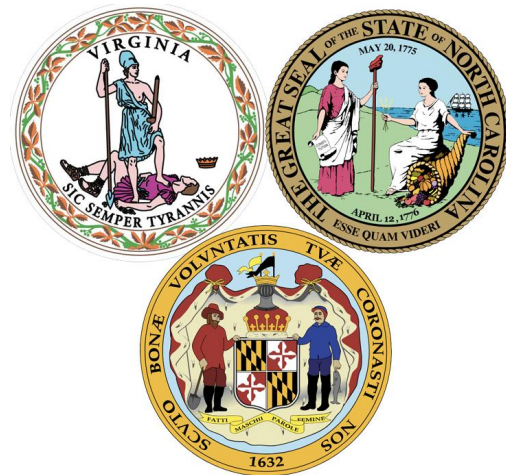
Current hypothesis is that one of his parents is of early Jamestown Colony descent and one is an 18th century Irish or Scots Irish immigrant

## Surnames:

Alexander, Beam, Birchfield, Boone, Bray, Cannady/Kennedy, Coleman, Embry, Hitchcock, Kash, McComb, Nickell, Owen, Poage, Scott, Soward/Seward, Taulbee/Tolbey, Waters, and Wilson

## Benefits/Challenges:

Genetic ties to Virginia, North and South Carolina, Delaware, and Maryland make his hometown and regimental affiliation currently less than clear at this time



# Camden 11A - Current Research

## **Matches:**

11,032 autosomal matches in two databases

5 X Chromosome matches (related to the maternal line)

Highest match of 60 cM

## **His family tree:**


10,000+ people

## **Common \*Descendant or Ancestor Couples:**

Twenty, in Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland, identified by the convergence of the 181 matches that we've traced

## **Latest:**

\*Archival research underway on some branches to push his common descendants' lineages back 2-3 generations to the era of the subject's ancestors

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several overlapping red triangles and rectangles in various shades of red, creating a modern, abstract design.

EXECUTED AT C

ANDREWS	SAMUEL PVT	SC MILIT
GAYLE	JOSIAH PVT	SC MILIT
MILES	JOHN CAPT	SC MILIT
SMITH	ELEAZER PVT	SC MILIT
TUCKER	RICHARD PVT	SC MILIT

KILLED IN ACTION/DIED

BEATTY, JR	WILLIAM CAPT	1 MD CO
BLAIR	JOHN CAPT	1 CONTI
BOOTH	THOMAS PVT	DEL CON
COLEMAN	SAMUEL 1ST LIEUT	1 VA CO
DONOVAN	RICHARD LIEUT	6 MD CO
DUVAL	EDWARD CAPT	2 MD CO
FORD	BENJAMIN LT COL	5 MD CO
HARDMAN	JOHN CAPT	2 MD CO
MASON	CALEB ENS	2 MD CO
NOLAND	PATRICK PVT	4 MD CO
PORTERFIELD	CHARLES LT COL	VA CON
SHOEMAKER	JACOB LIEUT	4 MD CO
WILLIAMS	NATHAN CAPT	7 MD CO

CAMDEN PA

Current candidates  
for 11A's identity

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# Samuel Coleman of 1st Continental Artillery

Our first possible candidate, 1st Lt Samuel Coleman was listed in Virginia's database of Military Dead, as well as on a Camden, South Carolina battle monument as KIA. It was soon determined that he was taken as a POW and, in fact, lived. This ruled him out as our fallen.

Lt. Coleman's 1st Continental Artillery Regiment was merged with Maryland's artillery regiments about 90 days before the Battle of Camden.

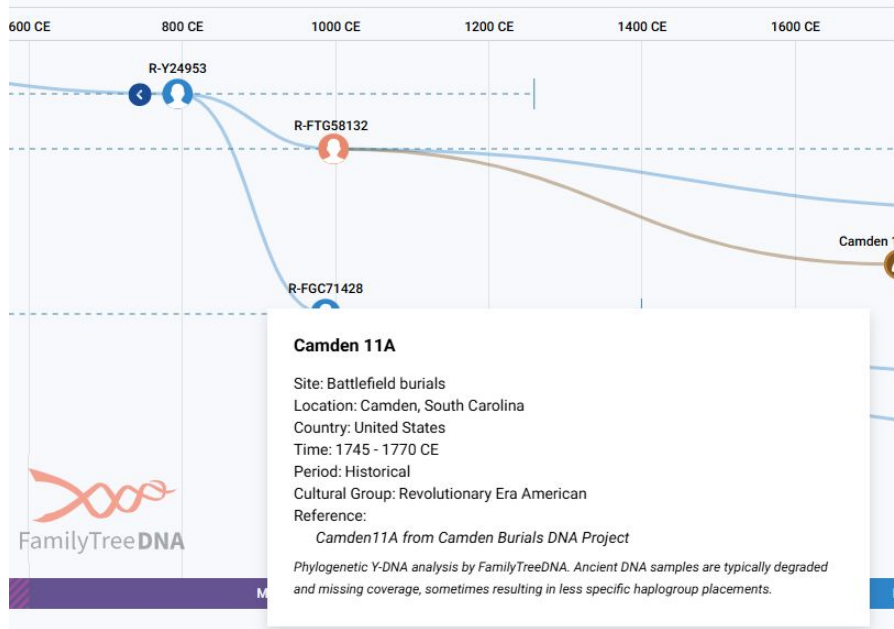
He went on to write letters to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe as late as 1805 in his official role with the State of Virginia.

Read more about this interesting development in [our blog post](#).

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# Thanks to our collaboration with FamilyTreeDNA....



Recently discovered FTDNA database genetic matches appear to connect a cluster of Taulbee-Kennedy descendants to both the Nickell and Wilson families.

Research is ongoing to interpret the meaning of these new genetic connections, and their overall potential for helping us identify Subject 11A.

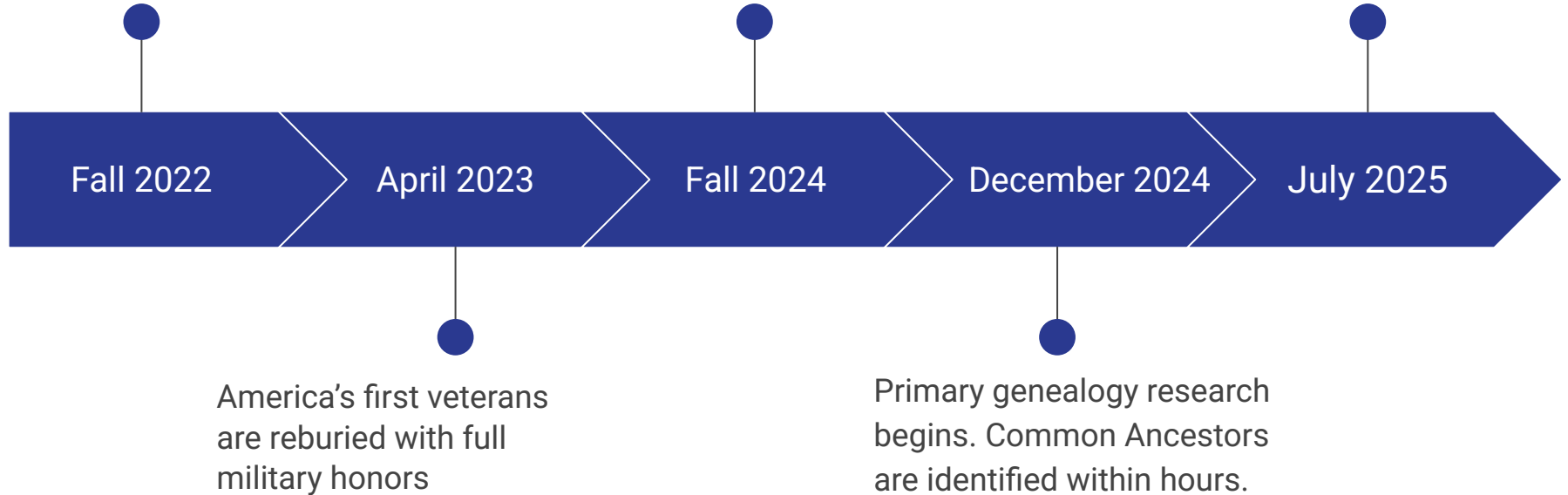
Q: When will  
you have their  
names?



Archaeologists set out to rescue 2 sets of battlefield remains and find 14.

Complete genetic profiles for the first two subjects are evaluated by FHD and found to be viable.

Finding their names will depend on how long it takes us to unearth maiden names for 17th and 18th century wives!



# Our Greatest Challenges

- Reconstructing 17th and 18th century families
- Sourcing maiden names for 17th and 18th century wives
- Identifying families of origin for simple names on a muster roll
- Genetic distance between subjects and living descendants





# Genetic Distance by the Numbers

- Camden Subject's Genetic Match
- 2nd generation: Parents (2)
- 3rd generation: Grandparents (4)
- 4th generation: Great-grandparents (8)
- 5th generation: 2nd Great-grandparents (16)
- 6th generation: 3rd Great-grandparents (32)
- 7th generation: 4th Great-grandparents (64)
- 8th generation: 5th Great-grandparents (128)
- 9th generation: 6th Great-grandparents (256)
- 10th generation: 7th Great-grandparents (512)
- 11th generation: 8th Great-grandparents (1,024)



Most of our matches fall into this range, meaning we may have to trace 64 to 256 grandparents for each match to find the connection.

# What that means

- Modern John Doe cases generate about 2000 matches. Our Rev War Camden subjects have about 11,000 matches each.
- The amount of data to analyze is higher in a case with 244 year old remains. More years, more generations, and exponentially more test subjects exist between the soldier and his living relatives.
- After data uploads, we can solve a typical modern case involving European-descended subjects somewhere between a few hours and a couple of weeks, depending on caseload, the nature of the matches, and the level of endogamy.
- Our team has three open investigations for minority Unknown Subjects, one a 100-year old drowning case, that are at the 9-18 months stage and showing slow, but steady success. Each could take up to two years.

Our Camden cases far surpass these in complexity.

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several overlapping red triangles and squares of varying shades, creating a modern, abstract design.

*It is our belief that the genetic distance between these men and their living descendants has never been attempted before in a John Doe genealogy investigation.*

- Allison Peacock, FHD Forensics  
RWFI Executive Director

# Join the Project!



[FHDForensics.com/Camden-Burials-Identifications](https://FHDForensics.com/Camden-Burials-Identifications)



# We need your spit!

## Y-DNA Tests

### **Surnames we need:**

Seeking men with the surnames of Griffith, McCombe, Pumphrey, Nickell, Ridgley, Seward/Soward, Taulbee, and Warfield.

## Consumer DNA Test

### **Colonial Maryland or Virginia Ancestry?**

We would love to send you a consumer DNA test and to add you to our project.

## Data Uploads

### **Already tested?**

Please upload your raw DNA data to FTDNA and join our group project.

Please upload to GEDmatch.com and email your kit number to [DNA@fhdforensics.com](mailto:DNA@fhdforensics.com)

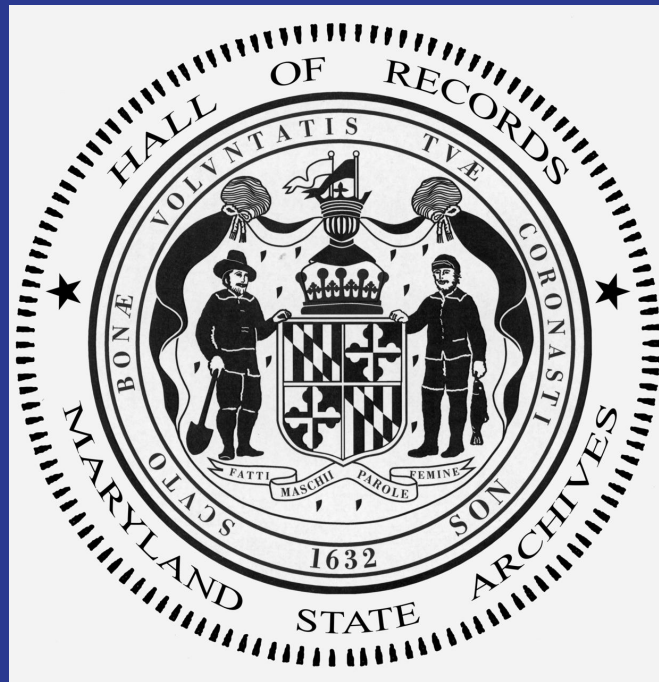
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*Other Revolutionary War sites have no surviving graves, which makes the work being done on these Camden soldiers even more remarkable--and even more important. [These subjects] must stand in for so many other soldiers.*

*It could have been 200 years since anyone thought about this person. Even if the research leads to a dead end, I think there's something important in remembering them and bearing witness to their lives.*

- Owen Lourie, Maryland State Archives  
RWF Board of Advisors

## Special Thanks





AMERICAN  
BATTLEFIELD  
TRUST ★ ★ ★



RevWar  
Forensic Institute  
*of* HISTORIC CAMDEN FOUNDATION

Thank you to our  
collaborators!

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