

PRIMARY SOURCES FOR CLOTHING THE CONTINENTAL ARMY

DYEING CAPTURED UNIFORMS

Please read carefully, as some of these records predate Valley Forge

“It was now proposed to the Consideration of the Members what will be the best Method of providing Cloathing for the T roops which are to compose the new Army.

Agreed that the Cloathing be provided by the Continent and paid for by Stoppages out of the Soldiers Wages at 10s. per Month, that as much as possible of the Cloth for this Purpose be dyed brown and the Distinctions of Regiments made in the Facings.

Also that a Man who brings a good new Blanket into the Camp should be allowed two Dollars therefor and take it away with him at the End of the Campaign.”¹

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“From George Washington to James Mease, 9 May 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-09-02-0364>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 9, 28 March 1777–10 June 1777, ed. Philander D. Chase. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999, p. 372.]

“Being more and more convinced, of the impolicy of any part of our T roops being Clothed in Red and that many injurious and fatal consequences are to be apprehended from it, I think it necessary to repeat my request, mentioned in my last, that you will have all the Clothes in your hands, of that Colour, dyed of some other, as soon as you can. Yesterday an Escort to money from Colo. Moylan’s Regiment dressed in that Uniform, alarmed the Country, and had they passed where the Enemy’s Horse could possibly have been, they certainly would have suffered. Unless the matter is immediately remedied, by changing the Colour, our people will be destroying themselves.”³

“To George Washington from James Mease, 18 May 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-09-02-0457>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 9, 28 March 1777–10 June 1777, ed. Philander D. Chase. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999, pp. 462–464.]

¹ “Minutes of the Conference between a Committee of Congress, Washington, and Representatives of the New England Colonies, 18[–24] October 1775,” Founders Online, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-22-02-0142>. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 22, March 23, 1775, through October 27, 1776, ed. William B. Willcox. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982, pp. 224–241.]

² “II. Minutes of the Conference, 18–24 October 1775,” Founders Online, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-02-02-0175-0003>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 2, 16 September 1775–31 December 1775, ed. Philander D. Chase. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1987, pp. 190–205.]

³ “From George Washington to James Mease, 12 May 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-09-02-0394>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 9, 28 March 1777–10 June 1777, ed. Philander D. Chase. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999, p. 399.]

"I am informed, that Colo. Moylan has provided Frocks for his men, with which they can cover their Red Coats occasionally, if so, it takes off the objection which I had to their Uniform. But this cannot be done by the Foot, as they cannot carry a coat and Frock, you must therefore contrive to have their Coats dyed, as quick as possible. Colo: Mason's Regiment must have the Brown and Buff Clothing. I imagine the Troops from North Carolina will want every kind of necessary, you will therefore be making preparation for them. I am informed there are about two thousand of them. I beg you will, every now and then, call upon the secret Committee and know what accounts they have from abroad: if they are not frequently put in mind of our wants, they will perhaps forget or ever look at them."⁴

"To George Washington from James Mease, 6 June 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-09-02-0624>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 9, 28 March 1777 – 10 June 1777, ed. Philander D. Chase. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999, pp. 624–626.]

"<January 31, 1778, in French: We are determined to emigrate to the colonies, either as a teacher or director of dyeing or as a master dyer, provided that we can find support on arrival. That is what we hoped to put to you yesterday at your hotel, but your absence deprived us of the pleasure. Please reply.>"⁵

REGIMENTAL TAILORS

Please read carefully, as some correspondence concerns clothing the Northern Army

"To George Washington from a Board of General Officers, 7 August 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-10-02-0542>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 10, 11 June 1777 – 18 August 1777, ed. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000, pp. 543–545.]

"The Cloathier General is ordered to send spare shoes, shirts &c. to camp, to furnish such men as are destitute—The commanding officers therefore of corps are to delay no time, in supplying the absolute wants of their men."⁶

"To George Washington from Major General William Heath, 17 December 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-12-02-0570>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 12, 26 October 1777 – 25 December 1777, ed. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr. and David R. Hoth. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002, pp. 624–625.]

"From George Washington to Henry Laurens, 23 December 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-12-02-0628>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 12, 26 October 1777 – 25 December 1777, ed. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr. and David R. Hoth. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002, pp. 683–687.]

⁴ "From George Washington to James Mease, 20 May 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-09-02-0481>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 9, 28 March 1777 – 10 June 1777, ed. Philander D. Chase. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999, p. 488.]

⁵ "To Benjamin Franklin from ——— Quemizet, 31 January 1778: résumé," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed September 29, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-25-02-0445>. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 25, October 1, 1777, through February 28, 1778, ed. William B. Willcox. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986, p. 555.]

⁶ "General Orders, 13 September 1777," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-11-02-0203>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 11, 19 August 1777 – 25 October 1777, ed. Philander D. Chase and Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001, pp. 211–213.]

“From George Washington to Major Samuel Blackden, 30 December 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0055>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 58–59.]

“Noncommissioned Officers have not Sufficient respect shewn them, and their Authority over the Privates is not supported as it ought to be—Their Cloathing ought to be far Superiour in Quality to the Privates, and should have sufficient to enable them always, to appear clean before the Men. And as they are the active Officers, they ought, (especially the deserving among them) to be Carest. All Officers sent on Publick Business, ought to be allowed Forage for their Horses, & reasonable Expences.

[...]

The Cloathing of the Army being generally too small, I apprehend it would be best to have the Patterns cut larger, and leave it to the Regimental Taylors (of whom there is commonly a sufficient number) to fit the Cloathing to the Men.

Colonels of Regiments, ought to be permitted to employ Agents, at such Towns or Places as they might Judge Proper, to Provide Cloathing for their own Regiments, especially as it appears that the Cloathier Genl & his Deputies fall greatly Short of Supplying the Army: and that Department, on the present Plan, has too great a Monopoly of Publick Contract for a few individuals, daily complained of, to Retain.”⁷

“From George Washington to Captain David Hopkins, 2 January 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0097>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 115–116.]

“General Orders, 1 January 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0082>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, p. 94.]

“From George Washington to Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh, 5 January 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0120>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, p. 149.]

“From George Washington to James Mease, 21 January 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0265>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 305–307.]

“From George Washington to Major General Israel Putnam, 22 January 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0275>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 316–317.]

“From George Washington to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., 24 January 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0297>. [Original source: The

⁷ “Colonel Daniel Brodhead to Lieutenant Colonel Tench Tilghman, 30 December 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0057>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 59–63.]

Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 337–338.]

“From George Washington to a Continental Congress Camp Committee, 29 January 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0335>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 376–409.]

“From George Washington to Major General Horatio Gates, 10 February 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0414>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 496–497.]

“From George Washington to Thomas Wharton, Jr., 10 February 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0423>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 506–508.]

“From George Washington to Brigadier General Casimir Pulaski, 14 February 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0453>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, p. 539.]

“From George Washington to James Mease, 19 February 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0509>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 599–600.]

“From George Washington to George Read, 22 February 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0548>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 644–645.]

“From George Washington to Major General Israel Putnam, 26 February 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0571>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 674–675.]

“From George Washington to Major General John Sullivan, 26 February 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0574>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 676–677.]

“Instructions to Officers Superintending Hospitals, 28 February 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0595>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 696–697.]