

Native Americans in the Revolution

Document 1: “The Disturbances in America give great trouble to all our Nations”: Mohawk Joseph Brant Comes to London to See the King, 1776

by Joseph Brant

Source: E. B. O’Callaghan, ed. *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* 15 vols. (Albany, 1853–87): 8:670–71.

Joseph Brant or Thayendanegea was a Mohawk war chief, interpreter, statesman, and British military leader. He studied at Eleazer Wheelock’s Indian Charity School in Connecticut and became an ally of Sir William Johnson, superintendent for Indian Affairs; Johnson married Joseph’s sister, Molly. With the onset of the Revolutionary crisis, Native Americans, like other residents of North America, had to choose the loyalist or patriot cause—or try to maintain a neutral stance. The Iroquois Confederacy divided but Brant and his sister led the Mohawks and most Iroquois nations into an alliance with the British. When Brant joined the new Indian Superintendent Guy Johnson in London in 1776; he became a celebrity, had his portrait painted, and met the King and Queen. But Brant had serious business too. He made clear his allegiance to the Crown but also indicated that Native Americans had distinctive issues all their own in trying to hold on to their homelands as Brant indicates in this letter to Secretary of State Lord George Germain. A decade later he would return to seek British support against encroachments on Iroquois lands by the victorious Americans.

Brother Gorah, We have cross’d the great Lake and come to this kingdom with our Superintendent, Col. Johnson, from our Confederacy the Six Nations and their allies, that we might see our Father, the Great King, and joyn in informing him, his Councillors and wise men, of the good intentions of the Indians our brethren, and of their attachment to His Majesty and his Government. Brother. The Disturbances in America give great trouble to all our Nations, as many strange stories have been told to us by the people of that country. The Six Nations who always loved the king, sent a number of their Chiefs and Warriors with their Superintendent to Canada last summer, where they engaged their allies to joyn with them in the defense of that country, and when it was invaded by the New England people they alone defeated them. Brother. In that engagement we had several of our best Warriors killed and wounded, and the Indians think it very hard they should have been so deceived by the White people in that country, the enemy returning in great numbers, and no White people supporting the Indians, they were obliged to return to their villages and sit still. We now Brother hope to see these bad children chastised, and that we may be enabled to tell the Indians who have always been faithfull and ready to assist the King, what his Majesty intends. Brother. The Mohocks [Mohawks] our particular nation, have on all occasions shewn their zeal and loyalty to the Great King; yet they have been very badly treated by the people in that country, the City of Albany laying an unjust claim to the lands on which our Lower Castle is built, as one Klock, and others do to those of Conijoharrie our Upper Village. We have often been assured by our late great friend Sr William Johnson who never deceived us, and we know he was told so that the King and wise men here would do us justice; but this notwithstanding all our applications has never been done, and it makes us very uneasie. We also feel for the distress in which our Brethren on the Susquehanna are likely to be involved by a mistake made in the Boundary we settled in 1768. This also our Superintendent has laid before the King, and we beg it may be remembered. And also concerning Religion and the want of Ministers of the Church of England, he knows the designs of those bad people and informs us he has laid the same before the King. We have only therefore to request that his Majesty will attend to this matter: it troubles our Nation & they can not sleep easie in their beds. Indeed it is very hard when we have let the Kings subjects have so much land for so little value, they should want to cheat us in this manner of the small spots we have left for our women and children to live on. We are tired out in making complaints & getting no redress. We therefore hope that the Assurances now given us by the Superintendent may take place, and that he may have it in his power to procure us justice. Brother. We shall truly report all that we hear from you, to the Six Nations on our return. We are well informed there have been many Indians in this Country who came without any authority, from their own, and gave us much trouble. We desire Brother to tell you this is not our case. We are warriors known to all the Nations, and are now here by approbation of many of them,

whose sentiments we speak. Brother. We hope these things will be considered and that the King or his great men will give us such an answer as will make our hearts light and glad before we go, and strengthen our hands, so that we may joyn our Superintendent, Col. Johnson in giving satisfaction to all our Nations, when we report to them on our return, on our return; for which purpose we hope soon to be accommodated with a passage. Dictated by the Indians and taken down by Jo. Chew. Secretary

Document 2: Map of Native American Tribes, 1783



Document 3: Treaty with the Delawares

Articles of agreement and confederation, made and, entered; into by, Andrew and Thomas Lewis, Esquires, Commissioners for, and in Behalf of the United States of North-America of the one Part, and Capt. White Eyes, Capt. John Kill Buck, Junior, and Capt. Pipe, Deputies and Chief Men of the Delaware Nation of the other Part.

ARTICLE I.

That all offences or acts of hostilities by one, or either of the contracting parties against the other, be mutually forgiven, and buried in the depth of oblivion, never more to be had in remembrance.

ARTICLE II.

That a perpetual peace and friendship shall from henceforth take place, and subsist between the contracting parties aforesaid, through all succeeding generations: and if either of the parties are engaged in a just and necessary war with any other nation or nations, that then each shall assist the other in due proportion to their abilities, till their enemies are brought to reasonable terms of accommodation: and that if either of them shall discover any hostile designs forming against the other, they shall give the earliest notice thereof that timeous measures may be taken to prevent their ill effect.

ARTICLE III

And whereas the United States are engaged in a just and necessary war, in defense and support of life, liberty and independence, against the King of England and his adherents, and as said King is yet possessed of several posts and forts on the lakes and other places, the reduction of which is of great importance to the peace and security of the contracting parties, and as the most practicable way for the troops of the United States to some of the posts and forts is by passing through the country of the Delaware nation, the aforesaid deputies, on behalf of themselves and their nation, do hereby stipulate and agree to give a free passage through their country to the troops aforesaid, and the same to conduct by the nearest and best ways to the posts, forts or towns of the enemies of the United States, affording to said troops such supplies of corn, meat, horses, or whatever may be in their power for the accommodation of such troops, on the commanding officer's, &c. paying, or engaging to pay, the full value of whatever they can supply them with. And the said deputies, on the behalf of their nation, engage to join the troops of the United States aforesaid, with such a number of their best and most expert warriors as they can spare, consistent with their own safety, and act in concert with them; and for the better security of the old men, women and children of the aforesaid nation, whilst their warriors are engaged against the common enemy, it is agreed on the part of the United States, that a fort of sufficient strength and capacity be built at the expense of the said States, with such assistance as it may be in the power of the said Delaware Nation to give, in the most convenient place, and advantageous situation, as shall be agreed on by the commanding officer of the troops aforesaid, with the advice and concurrence of the deputies of the aforesaid Delaware Nation, which fort shall be garrisoned by such a number of the troops of the United States, as the commanding officer can spare for the present, and hereafter by such numbers, as the wise men of the United States in council, shall think most conducive to the common good.

ARTICLE IV.

For the better security of the peace and friendship now entered into by the contracting parties, against all infractions of the same by the citizens of either party, to the prejudice of the other, neither party shall proceed to the infliction of punishments on the citizens of the other, otherwise than by securing the offender or offenders by imprisonment, or any other competent means, till a fair and impartial trial can be had by judges or juries of both parties, as near as can be to the laws, customs and usages of the contracting parties and natural justice. The mode of such trials to be hereafter fixed by the wise men of the United States in Congress assembled, with the assistance of such deputies of the Delaware nation, as may be appointed to act in concert with them in adjusting this matter to their mutual liking. And it is further agreed between the parties aforesaid, that neither shall entertain or give countenance to the enemies of the other, or protect in their respective states, criminal fugitives, servants or slaves, but the same to apprehend, and secure and deliver to the State or States, to which such enemies, criminals, servants or slaves respectively belong.

ARTICLE V.

Whereas the confederation entered into by the Delaware nation and the United States, renders the first dependent on the latter for all the articles of clothing, utensils and implements of war, and it is judged not only reasonable, but

indispensably necessary, that the aforesaid Nation be supplied with such articles from time to time, as far as the United States may have it in their power, by a well-regulated trade, under the conduct of an intelligent, candid agent, with an adequate salary, one more influenced by the love of his country, and a constant attention to the duties of his department by promoting the common interest, than the sinister purposes of converting and binding all the duties of his office to his private emolument: Convinced of the necessity of such measures, the Commissioners of the United States, at the earnest solicitation of the deputies aforesaid, have engaged in behalf of the United States, that such a trade shall be afforded said nation conducted on such principles of mutual interest as the wisdom of the United States in Congress assembled shall think most conducive to adopt for their mutual convenience.

ARTICLE VI.

Whereas the enemies of the United States have endeavored, by every artifice in their power, to possess the Indians in general with an opinion, that it is the design of the States aforesaid, to extirpate the Indians and take possession of their country to obviate such false suggestion, the United States do engage to guarantee to the aforesaid nation of Delawares, and their heirs, all their territorial rights in the fullest and most ample manner, as it bath been bounded by former treaties, as long as they the said Delaware nation shall abide by, and hold fast the chain of friendship now entered into. And it is further agreed on between the contracting parties should it for the future be found conducive for the mutual interest of both parties to invite any other tribes who have been friends to the interest of the United States, to join the present confederation, and to form a state whereof the Delaware nation shall be the head, and have a representation in Congress: Provided, nothing contained in this article to be considered as conclusive until it meets with the approbation of Congress. And it is also the intent and meaning of this article, that no protection or countenance shall be afforded to any who are at present our enemies, by which they might escape the punishment they deserve.

In witness whereof, the parties have hereunto interchangeably set their hands and seals, at Fort Pitt, September seventeenth, anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight.

Andrew Lewis, [L. S.]
Thomas Lewis, [L. S.]
White Eyes, his x mark, [L. S.]
The Pipe, his x mark, [L. S.]
John Kill Buck, his x mark, [L. S.]

In presence of-

Lach'n McIntosh, brigadier-general, commander the Western Department.
Daniel Brodhead, colonel Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment,
W. Crawford, collonel,
John Campbell,
John Stephenson,
John Gibson, colonel Thirteenth Virginia Regiment,
A. Graham, brigade major,
Lach. McIntosh, jr., major brigade,
Benjamin Mills,
Joseph L. Finley, captain Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment,
John Finley, captain Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment.

Women in the Revolution

Document 1: Abigail Adams to John Adams, March 31 1776

I wish you would ever write me a Letter half as long as I write you; and tell me if you may where your Fleet are gone? What sort of Defence Virginia can make against our common Enemy? Whether it is so situated as to make an able Defence? Are not the Gentry Lords and the common people vassals, are they not like the uncivilized Natives Brittain represents us to be? I hope their Riffel Men who have shewen themselves very savage and even Blood thirsty; are not a specimen of the Generality of the people.

I am willing to allow the Colony great meritt for having produced a Washington but they have been shamefully duped by a Dunmore.

I have sometimes been ready to think that the passion for Liberty cannot be Eaquelly Strong in the Breasts of those who have been accustomed to deprive their fellow Creatures of theirs. Of this I am certain that it is not founded upon that generous and christian principal of doing to others as we would that others should do unto us. . . .

I long to hear that you have declared an independancy and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If perticular care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.

That your Sex are Naturally Tyrannical is a Truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute, but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of Master for the more tender and endearing one of Friend. Why then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the Lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity. Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex. Regard us then as Beings placed by providence under your protection and in imitation of the Supream Being make use of that power only for our happiness.

April 5

Not having an opportunity of sending this I shall add a few lines more; tho not with a heart so gay. I have been attending the sick chamber of our Neighbour Trot whose affliction I most sensibly feel but cannot discribe, striped of two lovely children in one week. Gorge the Eldest died on wednesday and Billy the youngest on fryday, with the Canker fever, a terrible disorder so much like the thr[o]at distemper, that it differs but little from it. Betsy Cranch has been very bad, but upon the recovery. Becky Peck they do not expect will live out the day. Many grown person[s] are now sick with it, in this [street?] 5. It rages much in other Towns. The Mumps too are very frequent. Isaac is now confined with it. Our own little flock are yet well. My Heart trembles with anxiety for them. God preserve them.

I want to hear much oftener from you than I do. March 8 was the last date of any that I have yet had. You inquire of whether I am making Salt peter. I have not yet attempted it, but after Soap making believe I shall make the experiment. I find as much as I can do to manufacture cloathing for my family which would else be Naked. I know of but one person in this part of the Town who has made any, that is Mr. Tertias Bass as he is calld who has got very near an hundred weight which has been found to be very good. I have heard of some

others in the other parishes. Mr. Reed of Weymouth has been applied to, to go to Andover to the mills which are now at work, and has gone. I have lately seen a small Manuscrip de[s]cribing the proportions for the various sorts of powder, fit for cannon, small arms and pistols. If it would be of any Service your way I will get it transcribed and send it to you. Every one of your Friend[s] send their Regards, and all the little ones. Your Brothers youngest child lies bad with convulsion fitts. Adieu. I need not say how much I am Your ever faithfull Friend.

Document 2: Sentiments of the American Woman

By Esther Reed, 1780

Esther Reed launched the creation of the Ladies' Association of Philadelphia with the publication of a broadside "Sentiments of an American Woman." Keenly aware of the limited scope of earlier women's efforts and referring to women as "brave Americans," Reed urged women to "render themselves more really useful" to the public good.

ON the commencement of actual war, the Women of America manifested a firm resolution to contribute as much as could depend on them, to the deliverance of their country. Animated by the purest patriotism, they are sensible of sorrow at this day, in not offering more than barren wishes for the success of so glorious a Revolution. They aspire to render themselves more really useful; and this sentiment is universal from the north to the south of the Thirteen United States. Our ambition is kindled by the same of those heroines of antiquity, who have rendered their sex illustrious, and have proved to the universe, that, if the weakness of our Constitution, if opinion and manners did not forbid us to march to glory by the same paths as the Men, we should at least equal, and sometimes surpass them in our love for the public good. I glory in all that which my sex has done great and commendable. I call to mind with enthusiasm and with admiration, all those acts of courage, of constancy and patriotism, which history has transmitted to us: The people favoured by Heaven, preserved from destruction by the virtues, the zeal and the resolution of Deborah, of Judith, of Esther! The fortitude of the mother of the Massachabees, in giving up her sons to die before her eyes: Rome saved from the fury of a victorious enemy by the efforts of Volumnia, and other Roman Ladies: So many famous sieges where the Women have been seen forgetting the weakness of their sex, building new walls, digging trenches with their feeble hands, furnishing arms to their defenders, they themselves darting the missile weapons on the enemy, resigning the ornaments of their apparel, and their fortune, to fill the public treasury, and to hasten the deliverance of their country; burying themselves under its ruins, throwing themselves into the flames rather than submit to the disgrace of humiliation before a proud enemy.

Born for liberty, disdaining to bear the irons of a tyrannic Government, we associate ourselves to the grandeur of those Sovereigns, cherished and revered, who have held with so much splendour the scepter of the greatest States, The Batildas, the Elizabeths, the Maries, the Catharines, who have extended the empire of liberty, and contented to reign by sweetness and justice, have broken the chains of slavery, forged by tyrants in the times of ignorance and barbarity. The Spanish Women, do they not make, at this moment, the most patriotic sacrifices, to encrease the means of victory in the hands of their Sovereign. He is a friend to the French Nation. They are our allies. We call to mind, doubly interested, that it was a French Maid who kindled up amongst her fellow-citizens, the flame of patriotism buried under long misfortunes: It was the Maid of Orleans who drove from the kingdom of France the ancestors of those same British, whose odious yoke we have just shaken off; and whom it is necessary that we drive from this Continent.

But I must limit myself to the recollection of this small number of achievements. Who knows if persons disposed to censure, and sometimes too severely with regard to us, may not disapprove our appearing acquainted even with the actions of which our sex boasts? We are at least certain, that he cannot be a good citizen who will not applaud our efforts for the relief of the armies which defend our lives, our possessions, our liberty? The situation of our soldiery has been represented to me; the evils inseparable from war, and the firm

and generous spirit which has enabled them to support these. But it has been said, that they may apprehend, that, in the course of a long war, the view of their distresses may be lost, and their services be forgotten. Forgotten! never; I can answer in the name of all my sex. Brave Americans, your disinterestedness, your courage, and your constancy will always be dear to America, as long as she shall preserve her virtue.

We know that at a distance from the theatre of war, if we enjoy any tranquility, it is the fruit of your watchings, your labours, your dangers. If I live happy in the midst of my family; if my husband cultivates his field, and reaps his harvest in peace; if, surrounded with my children, I myself nourish the youngest, and press it to my bosom, without being affraid of feeling myself separated from it, by a ferocious enemy; if the house in which we dwell; if our barns, our orchards are safe at the present time from the hands of those incendiaries, it is to you that we owe it. And shall we hesitate to evidence to you our gratitude? Shall we hesitate to wear a cloathing more simple; hair dressed less elegant, while at the price of this small privation, we shall deserve your benedictions. Who, amongst us, will not renounce with the highest pleasure, those vain ornaments, when she shall consider that the valiant defenders of America will be able to draw some advantage from the money which she may have laid out in these; that they will be better defended from the rigours of the seasons, that after their painful toils, they will receive some extraordinary and unexpected relief; that these presents will perhaps be valued by them at a greater price, when they will have it in their power to say: This is the offering of the Ladies. The time is arrived to display the same sentiments which animated us at the beginning of the Revolution, when we renounced the use of teas, however agreeable to our taste, rather than receive them from our persecutors; when we made it appear to them that we placed former necessities in the rank of superfluities, when our liberty was interested; when our republican and laborious hands spun the flax, prepared the linen intended for the use of our soldiers; when exiles and fugitives we supported with courage all the evils which are the concomitants of war. Let us not lose a moment; let us be engaged to offer the homage of our gratitude at the altar of military valour, and you, our brave deliverers, while mercenary slaves combat to cause you to share with them, the irons with which they are loaded, receive with a free hand our offering, the purest which can be presented to your virtue,

By An AMERICAN WOMAN

African Americans in the Revolution

Document 1: To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth, BY PHILLIS WHEATLEY, 1773

Hail, happy day, when, smiling like the morn,
Fair Freedom rose New-England to adorn:
The northern clime beneath her genial ray,
Dartmouth, congratulates thy blissful sway:
Elate with hope her race no longer mourns,
Each soul expands, each grateful bosom burns,
While in thine hand with pleasure we behold
The silken reins, and Freedom's charms unfold.
Long lost to realms beneath the northern skies

She shines supreme, while hated faction dies:
Soon as appear'd the Goddess long desir'd,
Sick at the view, she languish'd and expir'd;
Thus from the splendors of the morning light
The owl in sadness seeks the caves of night.
No more, America, in mournful strain
Of wrongs, and grievance unredress'd complain,
No longer shalt thou dread the iron chain,
Which wanton Tyranny with lawless hand
Had made, and with it meant t' enslave the land.

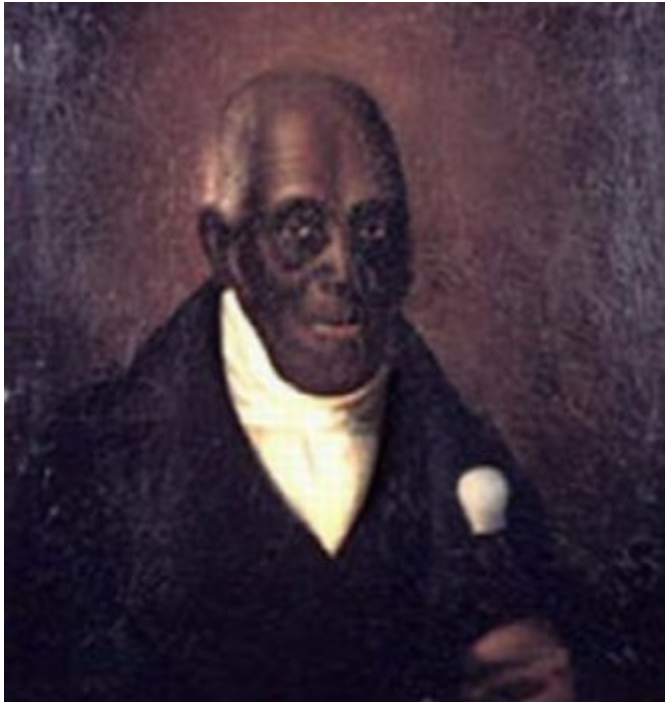
Should you, my lord, while you peruse my song,
Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,
Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
By feeling hearts alone best understood,
I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch'd from Afric's fancy'd happy seat:
What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?
Steel'd was that soul and by no misery mov'd
That from a father seiz'd his babe belov'd:
Such, such my case. And can I then but pray
Others may never feel tyrannic sway?

For favours past, great Sir, our thanks are due,
And thee we ask thy favours to renew,
Since in thy pow'r, as in thy will before,
To sooth the griefs, which thou did'st once deplore.
May heav'nly grace the sacred sanction give
To all thy works, and thou for ever live
Not only on the wings of fleeting Fame,
Though praise immortal crowns the patriot's name,
But to conduct to heav'ns refulgent fane,

May fiery coursers sweep th' ethereal plain,
And bear thee upwards to that blest abode,
Where, like the prophet, thou shalt find thy God.

Document 2: AGRIPPA HULL: REVOLUTIONARY PATRIOT, Contributed by: Gary Nash, [Blackpast.org](https://blackpast.org)

In the following excerpted article, University of California at Los Angeles historian Gary B. Nash describes a little-known Revolutionary War soldier who was asked by General George Washington to serve with Polish military engineer Tadeuz Kosciuszko. This account is part of a larger history of three individuals, Thomas Jefferson, Tadeuz Kosciuszko, and Agrippa Hull, who shaped the revolutionary struggle even as their own lives were transformed by it.



Agrippa Hull was one of the most remarkable and unnoticed African Americans of the revolutionary era. He served for six years and two months in Washington's Continental Army, which earned him a badge of honor for this extended service. But Hull's influence on shaping the abolitionist thought of Tadeusz Kosciuszko, the Polish military engineer for whom he served as an orderly for the last 50 months of the war, is the hidden importance of the young black patriot.

Said to be the son of an African prince, Agrippa Hull was born free in Northampton, Massachusetts on March 7, 1759. Little is known of his father, who died when Hull was an infant; but his parents were members of the Congregational Church where Jonathan Edwards occupied the pulpit. When economic stress overcame Bathsheba Hull, Agrippa's mother, she sent the boy to Stockbridge in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts, to live with a free black farming family. It was here that Agrippa grew up in the mission town largely composed of Stockbridge Indians.

Shortly after his eighteenth birthday, Agrippa enlisted in the Continental Army, where he was assigned as an orderly to General John Paterson of the Massachusetts Line. At Paterson's side, Hull witnessed the surrender of British General John Burgoyne at Saratoga, New York, endured the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania and was part of the battle at Monmouth Courthouse, New Jersey in June 1778. In May 1779, Hull was reassigned to Kosciuszko, who had come in 1776 to offer his services as a military engineer to the Continental Congress and was designing the fortifications at West Point. This launched a long comradeship. In a day without Christmas leaves and periodic furloughs, Hull was at Kosciuszko's side for 50 months, serving as attendant and messenger. After Kosciuszko was sent south to serve as the chief military engineer of Washington's Continental Army, Hull was thrust into the bloodiest and most intense phase of the war. Reaching North Carolina in October 1780, Kosciuszko and Hull confronted the pitiful condition of Washington's army. General Nathanael Greene, the southern commander, peppered General Washington with pleas to clothe and boot his small army: "The miserable situation of the troops for want of clothing," wrote Greene on one occasion, "has rendered the march the most painful imaginable, several hundreds of the soldiers tracking the ground with their bloody feet."

In this cockpit of war, Kosciuszko and Hull had many opportunities to witness the operation of plantation slavery in the South, even as its fabric was shredding. Above all, they learned on a daily basis that southern

slaves were willing to pledge their lives for the British cause in exchange for freedom. Wherever they went, in whatever the battle, they found that plantation slaves fled in shoals to the British army whenever it was within reach, responding to the November 1775 proclamation of Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, that offered freedom to any escaping slave. To witness this massive slave rebellion must have deeply impressed Hull and Kosciuszko. Indeed, it shaped Kosciuszko's attitude toward slavery and inspired him to think about how America might be transformed in the crucible of war.

By the time the southern phase of the war ended in May 1783, Hull had participated in almost every major battle of the bushwhacking campaign—at Cowpens, Eutaw Springs, Ninety-Six, Guilford Courthouse, and the Siege of Charleston, which finally brought the British to their knees. Sailing first from Charleston to Philadelphia with Kosciuszko, Hull refused the Polish general's invitation to return with him to Poland. Then the war-hardened veteran made his way back to Stockbridge after mustering out at West Point in July 1783 with his discharge signed by Washington himself. In the seven-year scrum of war, Hull had discovered himself, and for the remainder of his long life he replayed his revolutionary experiences with relish. Stockbridge's first historian, Electa Jones, described how the war veteran, back in the Berkshires, had "no cringing servility, and certainly never thought meanly of himself" and yet "was perfectly free from all airs and show of consequence." The patriot soldier who served a longer term in the war than a vast majority of the "sunshine patriots," could well afford to see himself in this light.

Returning to Stockbridge, Hull found a place in the household of Theodore Sedgwick, a well-born and successful young lawyer who had just won a landmark slavery case before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court that gained the freedom of Elizabeth Freeman, soon known as Mum Bett. Hull would serve Sedgwick's family for almost two decades, working alongside Mum Bett, who virtually mothered the brood of Sedgwick children.

In July 1785, Hull purchased a half-acre lot just across the Housatonic River from Stockbridge. For generations, acquiring freehold property was treasured in New England as the foundation of independence. But many white veterans, returning from the war, were unable to gather the means to purchase even a small plot of land. From this small start, Hull added to his land holdings for many years, becoming Stockbridge's largest black landowner. Hull's land purchase in 1785 coincided with his marriage to Jane Darby, a young black woman from nearby Lenox who had fled an abusive master, taken refuge in Stockbridge, and appealed to Theodore Sedgwick for help in gaining her freedom after her owner came to seize her. A religious woman, Darby was known as a woman of excellent character and made a profession of her faith in Christ. Before long, Hull's wife brought four children into the world.

By the early 1800s, now in his forties, Agrippa Hull lived out Jefferson's ideal of a self-disciplined, civic-minded, and self-sustaining yeoman farmer—the model of what Jefferson imagined was the future of America. When the tax assessor made the rounds for levying the state and town minister taxes, Hull's assessment put him much below the town's well-circumstanced lawyers, farmers, artisans, and shopkeepers but ahead of 40 percent of the white householders and first among the 14 taxable black families. All around him landlessness was becoming the unwelcome situation for an increasing percentage of white Massachusetts householders. But Hull carefully saved and enlarged his small farm, raising sheep, maintaining a horse and milk cows, and cultivating an apple orchard. To Hull's delight, Elizabeth Freeman became his immediate neighbor along what was called Negro Pond after she purchased land there in 1803, 1809 and 1811. By the early nineteenth century, Grippy, as he was called, had endeared himself to almost everyone in Stockbridge. "His presence at weddings seemed almost a necessity," wrote the town's historian. At weddings, he "wedged himself and his 'good cheer' into every crowded corner, his impromptu rhymes and his courteous jokes . . . always welcome."

Self-effacing to his last breath, the man who served as a private in the Continental Army for six years and two months lived out his life on his own terms. He followed his own moral compass, shaping his life around the values that Jefferson believed constituted the best hope for sustaining the American republic. He died on May 21, 1848, Stockbridge's last surviving veteran of the American Revolution. His wife Peggy lived for another 22 years. Hull and his two wives are buried in the Stockbridge Congregational Church cemetery.