Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson
Women and the Revolutionary War

“The Sentiments of an American Woman” (1780)

Esther Reed

We know there is a distance from the theatre of war, if we enjoy any tranquility, it is in the fruit of your watchings, your labours, your dangers. If I live happy in the midst of my family, if my husband ennobles his field, and reaps his harvest in peace; if, surrounded with my children, I may mould the youngest, and pred at my lodge, without being afraid of feeling myself separated from you by a hereditary enemy, if the house in which we dwell, if our home, our scenes be safe at the present time from the hands of those incendiaries, it is to you that we owe all. And shall we hesitate to verify to you our gratitude? Shall we hesitate to wear a Trevillion Union firm, forgetful of tears, forgetful of dangers, when at the price of this final privation, when you have lost your husbands, that the infant dependents of American virtue shall be able to draw some advantage from the money which you have laid out in the war, that you shall be revered from the rigours of the soldiery, that after their painful toils, they will receive some extraordinary and unexpected relief, that these presents will perhaps be valued by you as a greater prize, when they will have it in their power to say, as the effect of the Ladies. The time is arrived to display the same sentiments which animates us to the beginning of the Revolutionary, when we renounced the ude of arms, however venerable to our safety, rather than receive them from our protectors; when we made it appear to them that we signed former accords in the rank of republicans, when our liberty was intrepidly and where our republicans and labours hands freely she, prepared the line of defense for the sake of our soldiers, when we saw and forget the courage all the evils which were the consquences of war. Let us not a moment be engaged to offer the sighs of our gratitude at the altar of military valour, and you, our brave deliverers, while mercenary flames combat to cause you to share with them, the aims which are devoted, receive with a free hand our offerings, the pure which can be presented to your virtues, by a and the American Woman.
The American Spinning Wheel (1782)

Elizabeth Fergusson
The American Spinning Wheel (1782)

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson

No 22 A Song written during the Time of the War 1782, written to be sung at a Spinning Frolic, where it is the Custom in the Country for a number of young Women to Collect together And Spin a Web of Linen: And Have a little Hope in the Evening.

1 Since Fate has assigned us these rural abodes,
   Remote both from fortune and honor’s high roads;
   Let us cheerfully pass through life’s innocent dale,
   Nor look up to the mountain since fix’d in the vale.
   When storms rage the fiercest, and mighty trees fall;
   The low shrub is sheltered which clings to the wall.
   Let our wheels and our reels go merrily round,
   While health, peace, and virtue amongst us are found.

2 Though the great deem us little, and do us despise;
   Let them know it is wise to make little suffice.
   In this we will teach them, though ever so great;
   It is always true wisdom to yield to your fate.
   For though King or Congress stand to carry the day;
   We farmers and spinners at last must obey.
   Let our wheels and our reels go merrily round,
   While health, peace, and virtue amongst us are found.

3 Our flax has it’s beauties, an elegant green;
   When it shoots from the earth it enamels the scene.
   When moistened and broken in filaments fine,
   Our maidens they draw out the flexible line;
   Some fine as a cobweb, while others more coarse,
   To wear but on work days for substance and force.
   Then the wheels and our reels go merrily round,
   While health, peace, and virtue amongst us are found.

4 Since all here assembled to card and spin;
   Come girls, lets be nimble and quickly begin,
   To help neighbor Friendly, and when we have done,
   The boys they shall join us at close of the sun.
   Perhaps our brisk partners may lead us through life,
   And the dance of the night end in husband and wife.
   Let our wheels and our reels go merrily round,
   While health, peace, and virtue amongst us are found.

Graeme Park, 1782
“An Elegy” (1775)

Anna Young Smith

[Handwritten text]
Excerpt from: An Elegy to the Memory of the American Volunteers who fell in the engagement between the Massachusetts Bay militia, and the British troops, April 19, 1775

Written by Sylvia (Anna Young at the age of nineteen)

Let joy be dumb, let mirth’s gay carol cease—
See plaintive sorrow comes bedew’d with tears,
With mournful steps retires the cherub Peace,
And horrid War with all his train appears.

He comes, and crimson slaughter marks his way,
Stern famine follows in his vengeful tread,
Before him pleasure, hope, and love decay,
And meek-eyed mercy hangs her drooping head.

Fled like a dream are those delightful hours,
When here with innocence and peace we roved,
Secure and happy in our native bowers,
Bless’d with the presence of the youths we loved.

The blow is struck, which through each future age
Shall call from Pity’s eye the frequent tear;
Which gives the brother to the brother’s rage,
And dyes with British blood the British spear.

Where’er the barbarous story shall be told,
The British cheek shall glow with conscious shame,
This deed, in bloody characters enroll’d,
Shall stain the lustre of their former name.

But you, ye brave defenders of our cause,
The first in this dire contest call’d to bleed,
Your names hereafter, crown’d with just applause,
Each manly breast with joy-mixt woe shall read.

Your memories dear to every freeborn mind,
Shall need no monument your fame to raise,
Forever in our grateful hearts enshrined;
And bless’d by your united country’s praise.