

The Judith Lines story is embedded in the *Forgotten Voices of the Revolutionary War* StoryMap: <https://forgottenvoicesrevwar.org/storymaps/> These were created and written by students in Kathy Hermes graduate public history class during the Spring Semester.

Among the forgotten voices this project has uncovered are those of camp followers. As many of us learned in our social studies and American History classes, the colonial and revolutionary war militias consisted of average citizens with limited military training. These militias existed for local defense purposes. Because modern military support infrastructures weren't in place during the period of the Redding encampment, women often followed their soldier husbands, tending to the washing, cooking, mending clothes, and providing medical help. Single and widowed women as well as those made destitute by the war were also part of this support system. Because they "followed" the army wherever it camped, they were known as "camp followers."

JUDITH LINES

Judith Lines was a camp follower late in the war for her second husband John Lines. Based on the documentary evidence, it is unlikely that she was present at the Redding encampment. Records from the era identify her either by Judith Lines, by Judith Phillips, her maiden name, Phillips, or by her first husband's surname name, Jeffords.

She was born in 1756 in Windham, Connecticut to Mary, a free Black woman, and Samuel Phillips, a Native American man, whose tribe or nation is unknown at this time. According to the terminology of the time period in which she lived; Judith was described as a "mulatto" woman. Based on her free status, we can confidently assume that her mother Mary was free because under laws of enslavement at this time a children born to enslaved women were enslaved.

In 1773, Judith married James Jeffords and had three children. James died in 1777. Four years after James' death, Judith remarried. Her new husband, John Lines, had initially enlisted in 1776. Records show that he was at the Redding encampment in the winter of 1779 serving a waiter for several line officers in Colonel Meigs' Regiment of the Connecticut Line. While documentation indicates that he was discharged in 1779, his pension application states that he reenlisted the following year. It is unclear when and how John and Judith met.

Judith's application for a widow's pension reveals some information on her whereabouts from her marriage in 1781 to the end of the war. According to her pension affidavit, John and Judith married in Colchester, CT. At some point, John wrote to her asking her to join him. An affidavit in the file from a Vermont neighbor whose father served with John Lines states that Judith did laundry for Colonel Sherman during her time with the army. At some point Judith contracted smallpox while the army was camped in the Hudson "Highlands" in New York. She was bedridden for approximately three to four months during her illness, but fortunately survived the disease. She does not mention her treatment or any events during these months.

After the war, Judith, John, and her children remained in Windham, Connecticut. The family lived on a piece of property her father sold to them. Her youngest child, Benjamin Lines, was born in 1792 and died in battle in 1814 during the War of 1812.

Eventually, they sold this property and moved to Brookfield, Vermont following many of their Windham neighbors. In 1820, John applied for a federal pension at age 66. The application lists their property holdings, including real estate with a value of \$630 and household furniture and a variety of animals including oxen, cows, sheep, a horse, hogs, and pigs for a total value of \$784.50. This quite substantial for any family at the time regardless of race.

James died in 1828 and Judith applied for a widow's pension in 1836. She received a lump sum of \$480 retroactive to March 1834 and then \$40 every six months until her death in July 1838. According to Judith's will, her estate of real estate and personal property was divided evenly between her two surviving sons and daughters-in-law.

Sources:

John Lines, "Compiled Service Records of Soldiers who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War," Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publication M881, 295 rolls; War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93, 221. [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com). Accessed 5/3/22.

Judith Lines, "Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files," Washington, D.C. National Archives Microfilm Publication M804, 2670 Rolls; Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15, 799-801. [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com). Accessed 5/3/22.

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Judith Lines, "Vermont, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1749-1999," Vermont County, District and Probate Courts, Folder 49, 459-471. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com). Accessed 5/3/22.

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