

Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Dr. Jessica Roney

JVN [00:00:02] Welcome to "Getting Curious". I'm Jonathan Van Ness, and every week I sit down for a 40 minute conversation with a brilliant expert to learn all about something that I'm v curious about. On today's episode, I'm joined by Dr. Jessica Roney, Associate Professor of History at Temple University. I'm trying to figure out how did we come to be the United States of America? What was life like in Philadelphia? What was going on in Boston, in the Revolutionary War and leading up to it? Welcome to "Getting Curious". This is Jonathan Van Ness, and this week I'm so excited to welcome Dr. Jessica Roney. I nailed your last name, right?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:00:38] You did, you said it right.

JVN [00:00:38] Yay. So you are an associate professor of history at Temple College of Liberal Arts, but you have studied lots of really important things, interesting things. Your expertise is got a lot of commas. Lay your commas of expertise on us.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:00:57] Well, I mean, the general, the general over, umbrella over it all is that I am an expert in early America. So that could be kind of 1600 to 1820 and pretty large geography because early America is pretty vast.

JVN [00:01:11] Right. So basically you're an expert in early America. And in my theme for today's episode is and I want to make this until a new genre of "Getting Curious" episode, you guys. So get excited. It's like, what was it like to live in Philadelphia in the, in the turn of the, like when America became America? Which really the Revolutionary War was from 1776. 1? 2?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:01:38] You know, you could say 5, which is when the Battle of Lexington is, or 76, which is when the Declaration is.

JVN [00:01:44] Started in '76. Yes, yes. Of course. For some reason I feel like it was '71- '76. I don't know why do that.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:01:48] Well, '72 is when the Boston Tea Party was.

JVN [00:01:51] Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:01:51] So maybe you're thinking of like the protests.

JVN [00:01:53] OK. OK. Yeah. So rewinding. So we had, you know, the people had come and everything was going down and the there was unrest prior to the revolution obviously because there was a whole like no taxation without representation. And there were 13 colonies.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:02:11] There were 26 colonies.

JVN [00:02:13] What?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:02:13] What. Yeah.

JVN [00:02:15] In 1772 there was 26 colonies?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:02:18] Yeah. This is the thing is that the way American history is taught is we're only taught about the 13 that became the states, but there were 26. Canada was part of the British Empire. Nova Scotia was a separate colony. Bermuda, which is still a British colony, the Bahamas, all, all throughout the Caribbean. And then Florida was actually two different British

colonies, East and West Florida. So there were 26 colonies. And the question of why the 13 that rebelled did and why the 13 that didn't didn't is a really interesting question. Like Georgia was not on board at the beginning. In '74, which is the first time that they had a continental Congress and everyone came together. Georgia could have easily said, you know what? Like no, like there, there, it's a slave economy. It's dangerous to have upheaval, whatever. Florida did not decide to go, either one of them. So, you know-

JVN [00:03:07] So Florida in both cases decided not to go.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:03:09] Yeah. I mean, Florida was a really new English colony. They had only gotten it in the last war. The Seven Years War which was from 1754-17-

JVN [00:03:17] Florida. Honey. So she, so Florida was around. There was people, there were settlers in Florida?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:03:22] Florida is the first European permanent settlement. It was Spanish, not, not English, but it's the first permanent European settlement sort of on the eastern seaboard. '55.

JVN [00:03:30] Really?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:03:31] Yeah. St. Augustine. Oldest, oldest on the seaboard of European. There are much older settlements, of course, of Native Americans, including cities. So.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:03:40] Oh, there were. Oh, OK. Because that's actually like a whole other. Well that's like a whole other thing too, because it's like I was thinking, you know, things are going down. It's like the oppression and like the removal of indigenous, like the oppression and removal of Native Americans was going on like before the revolution.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:03:55] Yeah.

JVN [00:03:55] Like ever since people arrived.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:03:57] Yeah.

JVN [00:03:57] And was it ever nice? Like, were they ever nice, were we ever nice to each other?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:04:03] Yeah. No. I mean it's, it's a complicated-

JVN [00:04:04] Which is not from a Native American perspective? Like from us. Like I'm assuming that we were the dicks.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:04:09] No. No. I mean. Well, yeah.

JVN [00:04:11] Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:04:11] But the-

JVN [00:04:13] Just to be clear, we were the dicks. Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:04:15] There's so many layers to the question. Like Native American is not a group. Native American is an umbrella term. There are lots of different groups within that. And they fought each other too. So when Europeans came, it's, it becomes at least a triangular

conflict or, you know, dodecahedron. I don't even know. All these different sides of people who are fighting for their own cause, like the Iroquois, do not feel any kind of common cause with the Shawnee, for example. Like there's, there's not, there's no sense we're Native American, we should ally together against Europeans. In the same way Europeans are fighting each other. So the initial colonies, there's Dutch, there's French, there's English, they're Spanish, they're kind of fighting each other. They're all fighting the Native Americans. Native Americans are all fighting the Europeans and each other. So it's just this very, very messy conflict. That's not to take away that the Europeans were, in fact, trying to displace, you know, in a way that is different from the conflicts that were happening among Native Americans. They are trying to displace. They're trying to say, well, you're not farming the land and so you don't have a right to it. And so we get to take it. And this is-

JVN [00:05:15] Is that, was that the legal? Was-

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:05:18] Part of it. Yeah. If you don't improve the land, that's their word, "improve", then you have a natural right to it. But it's not as good as my right to come in and put a fence around it and farm it. And you don't really get to.

JVN [00:05:28] So in 1700s, your, your ability to create agriculture in a classic European sense is what gave you the rights, the, quote, "rights" to-. Because we actually, I just did an episode of "Getting Curious" about the way that the United States displaced food sources in Native American cultures and how that, and how those repercussions are going on to, like going on now. But that was what they were doing, was like you, their, their way of thinking of farming or using natural resources is just not how, you know, European. It's not like-

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:06:06] Well, there's another component to it, which is that the people doing the farming in most Native American communities are women. And so that's not how Europeans do farming. Men do most of the farming. Women might garden. They might help. But men are in charge of this sort of plowing and the majority of the farming. So they come in and they see. Well, there's no, the men are just not farming. So there must not be farming like they just ignore the women. And it's ironic because they actually do know that the women farm. But they just-

JVN [00:06:33] But they don't mass produce stuff the way that like we, I'm guessing they would. 'Cause it's like they follow the land, they pick the gorg-, whatever we need to. I don't need to. Whatever. Getting away from that.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:06:42] OK.

JVN [00:06:42] So, but basically so there's 26 colonies. And so Florida has East and West Florida. And it was mostly like Spanish and English colonies within that?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:06:52] Yeah. So it's-

JVN [00:06:53] By the time the revolution happened?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:06:54] It's part of the reason it didn't rebel is that it's only about 13 years that it's been in British control at that point. So there is a British population there, but there's a much larger, there still is, a Spanish population and a much larger indigenous population. So Florida decides not to be part-, they were invited. So was Canada. Like everybody was invited to be-

JVN [00:07:12] Oh, they were?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:07:13] Oh, yeah.

JVN [00:07:14] So to the first Continental Congress, can't all of the, all those places were invited? Even the Bermuda ones?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:07:19] Yeah. No, they would like, they would have liked them all to be part of it. And when they were thinking about-

JVN [00:07:23] And we could have all maybe been a country together.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:07:25] This is what they were thinking. John Adams, you like, drew up a plan of what the new United States was going to look like. They weren't calling it that yet. They were figuring out a name still. But for him, it was gonna be everything. All British possessions in the Western Hemisphere would be part of this new thing. And when they wrote their first constitution called the Articles of Confederation, it actually has a sort of pre certification for Canada. Anybody else who wants to come in sort of has to go through a process. But Canada, they're like, you're already in. Just all you have to do is like sign on the line. You're good.

JVN [00:07:54] But that isn't still up? For-

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:07:56] No, no, no.

JVN [00:07:57] They discontinued that offer.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:07:57] We have a new constitution that replaced that one, but.

JVN [00:08:00] Oh, so that-

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:08:01] And Canada was like, no, thank you.

JVN [00:08:03] So they never wanted to, they were never trying to to play.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:08:06] No. They were not into it at all.

JVN [00:08:08] Got it. So that was all kind of happening, that the 26 colonies and then we had our first con-, or our first Continental Congress was?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:08:17] '74 here in Philly.

JVN [00:08:19] It was? So '74 in Philly. But the Boston Tea Party was in '72?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:08:24] Right.

JVN [00:08:24] So there's kind of like a general sense of like, ew Britain, like, why don't we like, like-. So basically we were kind of like in like a Puerto Rico relationship with them then. Like we had a representative in Congress, but we didn't get a vote or something?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:08:39] You talking about with-? Like they?

JVN [00:08:41] Yeah.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:08:41] No. So this is part of the issue. When, when the colonists came, they sort of had various agreements with the king, never with parliament, with the king. And they set up their own governments and they said, okay, our government relates directly to the king, not parliament. Parliament can't make laws that affect us. So when parliament made laws, it said, OK, you're gonna tax you directly. That's when the colonies said, no, that's not, that's not part of our deal. So they pass a law putting a tax on all these things and the colonists say we're not going to buy those things. And so this is the first, Americans actually invented the boycott. Boycott is a, an American invention. The idea that you will not buy things to pressure a political system in a particular way.

JVN [00:09:20] So just to rewind. We had an agreement with that boy from "Ham-", the king from "Hamilton", that whiny king. King-

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:09:27] George.

JVN [00:09:28] George.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:09:28] The Third.

JVN [00:09:29] Yeah, King George. And King George the Third. And so he, we had a thing where your parliament, we report to you directly. So we'll still be your subjects or whatever, but your parliament doesn't make laws for us. But then the parliament was like, well, we're going to tax you. And we're like, well, you can't because we don't report to you.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:09:43] Right. And so they-

JVN [00:09:44] But then the king sided with the parliament?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:09:45] Exactly. They actually sent something called the Olive Branch Petition directly to King George. It was like these people, our Parliament is messing with us and that's not the deal. We're supposed to be directly with you. And George the Third did two things that really pissed off the colonies. One, he ignored the petition, he's like, no, parliament's right. And second, his family's from Germany, originally, he's the third generation of that family to be king, but they were from Germany. Anyway he, he hired a bunch of German mercenaries. And the moment the colonists heard that he had gone out and hired foreigners, Germans, mercenaries, that he was going to send to the colonies to subdue them, that was that.

JVN [00:10:20] What would they subdue? What do you mean?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:10:22] Well, like that he was gonna send soldiers to come in, you know, fight his own people. That he was taking, he's supposed to be my king. It's like. It's hard to get how deep, emotionally deep this relationship was. Like this is supposed to be your father figure for the whole country. Your father figure, and your father figure has just gone out and hired mercenaries from a foreign country to come and shoot at you if you don't do what you're supposed to do. So people who have been like, I don't know, I don't like the taxation, but I don't think these rebels have it right. You know, maybe we can be more moderate. The moment that he brings in mercenaries.

JVN [00:10:55] So they actually arrived?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:10:57] Oh, yeah. Yeah. The Hessians. You might have heard of the Hessians.

JVN [00:10:59] No, I've never heard of the Hessians.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:11:01] They have fancy hats.

JVN [00:11:02] No, I've never heard of the Hessians. So at '72, we have the Tea Party over-, so at that point, is that when the Hessians come?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:11:09] So '72, it's, it's the very end of '72. It's December is when the Boston Tea Party happens.

JVN [00:11:14] So it's cold as shit.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:11:15] It's cold as shit. It's actually impressive they were able to get the tea in the water because, you know, up there, the water does freeze. So I guess it was early enough in the winter. But anyway, they pitch the tea overboard, we're not going to pay the tax on this tea and they pitch it overboard. And-.

JVN [00:11:28] Can you take me into that day? Like what? Like it's December and they're like, and they get all this tea. So what would hap-? Because everyone loves like a high noon tea, honey, it's Britain still at this time.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:11:38] So what has happened is, so Britain had had taxed all these goods. The Americans said we're not having any of them. And then Britain passed a special tea act to lower the price of tea. And they did this. They weren't trying to trick the colonists. They're trying to help their colonies in India. But anyway, the colonists saw this as a trap, like they're going to lower the price of the tea, but the tax still remains. So if we buy the tea, were agreeing to the tax. They're trying to trick us.

JVN [00:12:01] Yeah.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:12:02] So they send the, the shipments of tea, they come to all the ports, not just Boston. And every single port, Philadelphia, Charleston, they send it away. They say you cannot dock, you cannot unload your tea. You must go back. The governor in Massachusetts, he is bound and determined. They're going to, they're going to load that damn tea and they're going to make sure that this gets sold and that-.

JVN [00:12:22] 'Cause he wanted to be loyal to the king?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:12:24] Yeah. And he's an interesting guy. He's one of the few American born governors. Most of them are Englishmen who've been sent here. He's an American born. And he's like, no, we're gonna do this. So against the will of the people he brings, the ship had come, but he says we're going to let them unload the tea. Before they had a chance, that's when a number of people, the Sons of Liberty, were sort of the leaders. What they decided that they were going to go on-.

JVN [00:12:48] Standby. OK, we're gonna be, oh my god. I'm, I don't know about you all, but I am enthralled right now. We're going to take a really quick break. We'll be right back with more Dr. Jessica Roney right after the break. Welcome back to "Getting Curious". It's Jonathan Van Ness. So it's early December.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:13:08] OK.

JVN [00:13:08] All the tea, all other ships have been sent away, but this Massachusetts governor is like, no, honey, the tea stays. It's gonna be sold. And then all the who people?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:13:17] The Sons of Liberty, they get together, they go on board and they take hatchets. They're sort of dressed, they're sort-, they, they put soot on their faces. They pretend they're looking like Indians. They don't look like Indians. But anyway-

JVN [00:13:28] Oof. Casual racism all the way into our very beginning.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:13:30] But also dressing up, you know.

JVN [00:13:32] But, but that is interesting that like that's sort of, the thought of, you know, darkening your face to dress up like someone else. And like that's a kind of like in the fabric of things that our country has done. That's just interesting to note. But anyway, so then what happens?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:13:45] So they take hatches to the casks of tea and then they dump them in the harbor so that it-

JVN [00:13:50] Just the loose tea leaf?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:13:51] Yeah. These would've been loose tea leaves. And it's funny, it wasn't called the Tea Party until generations later. Which kind of the term Tea Party makes it seem a little bit more girly and like not so threatening, not so rebellious. It's incredibly rebellious. It's incredibly like-

JVN [00:14:06] 'Cause they couldn't even save their pri-, their their stock like they, they didn't get paid for it. Like no one got paid, just all that was for nothing.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:14:13] That's an assault. It's an assault on property. And that's one of the sort of foundations of English and subsequently, American life is, is property. So, so when, when they finally get news back to England, which takes a long time because it's winter, the king decides to punish Boston. And what he does is he closes the harbor, which is going to cripple the economy. He takes away their constitution, he revokes it.

JVN [00:14:33] He. And he closes the Boston Harbor. Closes it from '72-?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:14:39] It's now '73.

JVN [00:14:40] Yeah.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:14:40] He closes it and he takes away their charter. This would be like someone coming into the National Archives, taking our Constitution and ripping it in half. There is no government. The court system that no longer has a basis. Nothing has a basis like you can't. How do you function? Like money doesn't work. That suits like whatever, it doesn't work. And then there are a few other acts, but those are some of the major ones.

JVN [00:15:01] So what? After that they just had to report, or Massachusetts had to report straight back to the king theoretically, or?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:15:06] It was technically going to be directly ruled by the governor and they were gonna have no say at all. It's going to be completely autocratic.

JVN [00:15:12] Oh, that guy who had wanted to be loyal, who had the ship dock, it was gonna be loyal for him.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:15:16] Yeah.

JVN [00:15:16] Got it.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:15:17] He's going to be like dictator of Massachusetts.

JVN [00:15:19] Right.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:15:19] So at that point, the other colonies are like, wait a minute, you know, this is not OK. You know, I think I've been giving you all the wrong years. The Tea Party's fall of, or winter of '73. This is all happening in '74. The other colonies are saying no, like we think, we think Boston went too far in destroying the tea, but, but now when we see the king doing this, that, he could do that to us. He could take away our Constitution. He could take away our gov-.

JVN [00:15:43] So Tea Party '73.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:15:45] Yes.

JVN [00:15:45] Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:15:46] Now were decided, it's '73.

JVN [00:15:47] Yes. And then. So then he closes it by '74. And then in response to all of that, that's why the Continental Congress was called. When did the German Hessian people come in?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:15:57] '76.

JVN [00:15:58] Oh, so that didn't happen for a while.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:15:59] So what happens next? They have a Continental Congress in '74. They say, OK, we're going to we are going to boycott everything. We're going to not have any exports at all and, or sorry, imports at all. And if this goes on for another year, we will stop exporting too. Tobacco, sugar. Well, there's not too much sugar, but rice, everything. We're not going to, we're not going to send it. Before that can happen, the general in Boston is sent out to find the weapons in Lexington and Concord, and that's when the fighting starts. So in '75 is when the fighting starts. That's why the Hessians were coming in '76.

JVN [00:16:30] Oh, so the Bos-, wait. Who from Boston, again?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:16:33] It's the, there's a general post in Boston. Boston's under military rule. And his idea is that he's, he's supposed to go out to Lexington and Concord and these other little-.

JVN [00:16:41] What's Lexington and-? Oh, those are just little towns?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:16:42] Little Massachusetts villages.

JVN [00:16:44] And find the German people?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:16:45] And find the weapons that they're using there to defend against the British.

JVN [00:16:50] Oh. Which is really the German people the, the mercenary people? No.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:16:54] You're putting them in too early.

JVN [00:16:56] Oh.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:16:56] This is, this is pre-all of them. What happens is first there's fighting between the British and the Americans in Massachusetts.

JVN [00:17:02] Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:17:02] And then the news of that, remember, it takes a six weeks.

JVN [00:17:05] Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:17:06] On a good trip. It takes six weeks to get back to England and then six weeks to get back. So he's got the news and that by the summer of '75 that this is happening, he gets the Olive Branch Petition saying, okay, let's try and cool off here. You're our king. We're loyal to you. We're not loyal to Parliament. And then by the spring of '76, they're getting the news, A, that he has rejected the Olive Branch Petition and B, that he's getting Hessian troops that he's going to send in addition to the British troops.

JVN [00:17:33] Because basically he's saying, like, you guys don't get to disagree with what I've been to do in Massachusetts and I will do this to you. And in fact, I'm going to bring in these Germans just to make sure that you don't get any other ideas.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:17:41] Yeah. I mean, he's to the point of, like, this is, this is how it's gonna be. And we are absolutely gonna use full force to make sure that you do what you're supposed to do.

JVN [00:17:48] And so at that point, they're like no.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:17:50] Yeah.

JVN [00:17:51] So how does, so how does it start?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:17:53] How does what start?

JVN [00:17:53] The war?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:17:55] Well, it's, that, that's the fighting in Concord and-

JVN [00:17:57] But how did we declare it? Like did we declare, like we're we like fuck it?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:18:04] Well, it's, it, no one expected there to be bloodshed. On that day in April in Massachusetts and as soon as everyone else hears about it, they're like, no. And they're sending troops. They're they're rallying. The Second Continental Congress is actually already meeting here in Philadelphia. They choose this random colonel from Virginia named George Washington to go up and be in charge of what they're calling a Continental Army.

JVN [00:18:25] Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. So '76, it's our second Con-

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:18:34] '75, it's the Second Continental Congress.

JVN [00:18:35] Got it, 'cause '74 was the first one. In Philly. Second is '75. And it's-, the second constitutional Congress, we pick, or Continental Congress, we pick George Washington, a relative unknown.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:18:46] Right.

JVN [00:18:46] From Washington. Or from Virginia.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:18:49] This is the thing, like these colonies are not in a whole lot of contact with each other. Like, they don't necessarily know, if you're in Philadelphia, you don't know people in Virginia necessarily. So it was actually really important to choose a Virginian to lead it because it's, it's, they didn't want it to be a New England fight. They didn't want to pick and New England guy. They wanted to pick someone else. Because the whole point is it's a continental problem, not a Massachusetts problem. So they choose this guy. He's got some military experience. He's, he shows up actually at, he's a delegate to the Continental Congress and he shows up in full military dress like he's ready for it. And, and they think he is too. And so they, they make him the the general. And he did pretty well.

JVN [00:19:24] And so General meant that he was the leading the army. He was leading the rebellion against the British soldier. So he was going to be, and because wasn't like, we were all militias at that point or something, right?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:19:33] Yeah, we were. And that didn't work very well. Like one of the first things Washington wanted to do is get a regular army. He was like, this is, militia men don't pay good attention, like they're not good at discipline. They kind of do what they want to do. Their enlistments are short. So they'll leave. They'll go home and help their families with the farm. Like they've got, you know, these are family men, like they've got stuff to do. He's like, we need a professional army. We need people who are going to be here for, for the duration of the war, who are promising to stay. And like he basically, it's funny because we have this whole myth of like the minute man and how great that is. And it's a beautiful story. But Washington himself is saying like, no.

JVN [00:20:06] What's the minute man?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:20:08] The minute man was the idea, that they use militia men, the idea was that they'll be ready in a minute.

JVN [00:20:12] Oh.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:20:13] That's where that comes from. There are other meanings that have, you know, come on later. But minute man in this context means like within a minute's notice, he would be ready to go and defend his community.

JVN [00:20:23] So to bring it back to like Philly specifically, it's like so 1775, 4, is our first one. And we're really like, people are not loving England at this point.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:20:37] Yeah. They're really conflicted. Like they, it's, it's, it's easy to look backward and say they're going to declare independence because two years later they will. But in '74, they're really conflicted. There are some radicals who are saying we're done, this is, this is

over. And then other people are saying, like it's like a bad breakup. You know, like there's, there's the part of you that's like we can make it work. And then there's the part that's like, screw it. So all of those people are there. And there's some people who remain loyal, like there are people who never, including who were at the Continental Congress, who never fully broke with England and who sided with England.

JVN [00:21:07] Oh, that's interesting. So. But the first one. Yeah. So what was the first one like in Philly? In 19-, or in 1774?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:21:14] Well, the first one was, remember, they're scared out of their minds about the fact that the king has revoked the Constitution of Massachusetts. So they're afraid this could happen to them.

JVN [00:21:22] And each one had their own constitution.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:21:23] Yeah. I mean, they call them charters.

JVN [00:21:25] Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:21:26] Yeah. So so they're, they're trying to figure out how can we punish him for that and make sure he doesn't ever do it again. And so that's where they come up with this total non importation boycott. They're not going to take any English goods. And this will put pressure on the economy. And this will mean that he'll come to reason. Then there's bloodshed in April. So just, just to like, they met in the fall of '74, that spring now there's bloodshed.

JVN [00:21:49] Because he in '75 sent-

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:21:51] The troops out to find weapons in Lexington and Concord and confiscate them.

JVN [00:21:55] Oh, because, because to confiscate their weapons from the American settler people. But how did they know that they were getting weapons?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:22:03] Well, by this point, the tensions are so high that, that they have been arming. They have been practicing with their militias like they're ready for a fight, especially in Massachusetts, to defend their rights.

JVN [00:22:13] Right.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:22:13] So the English know this and they send orders to the general who's in Boston. They're like, go out there and take their damn weapons away. And the general's like, this is a bad idea. This is going to start a war. And they're like, we don't care. That's what we think should happen. You go do it. And he does. And it's a bloodbath for his men. It's terrible.

JVN [00:22:32] Is that part of where the Second Amendment comes from? Like this militia, and like right to bear arms and the government can't come take it from you and stuff?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:22:38] That's a super complicated question, because the, the, the Second Amendment, it says the right to bear arms. I'm not going to remember the language per se, but it's like the, you'll look it up and we'll, we'll talk about it. But it is tied very much to militia service. And so the debate today is whether it's an individual right, like do I individually have a

right to own a gun just for whatever reason? Or is the amendment written in such a way that it says for the community good, I have the right. Do you have it?

JVN [00:23:08] It's pulling up extremely slow. Second Amendment. The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution reads, "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. Such language has created considerable debate regarding the amendments intended scope."

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:23:28] Right. So when they came up with the amendments, there are 10 amendments that they put in the Constitution, right away. And we call this the Bill of Rights. They actually proposed like 20 and they only in the end use 10 of them. So there actually we have the congressional debates around them, and some of them are really long. Like how, like they're really thinking about the language. They didn't have a lot of debate about the Second Amendment, like it was clear to them. It's not clear to us what they meant. One of the few things that they debated when they were talking about the Second Amendment, one guy said, we should prohibit there ever being a standing army, they ignore that, that was a bad idea. They also said, well, what about pacifists? Pacifists should never have to serve if it's against their conscience. So that's one of the few things they said in the debate, which many historians interpret to mean they were thinking about the right to bear arms in relation to the duty to bear arms. A right and a duty are two sides of the same coin. So you don't have rights without also having duties. Like as a citizen, you have all these rights, but you also have duties to defend your community, to vote, to pay your taxes, you know, do the things that you do to be a good part of a community. So that's the, I read it as a right and a duty tied together. But some people just want to see it is like a right. Individual, totally unmoored from-

JVN [00:24:49] They only take like the right about bear arms shall not be infringed upon. They take that sentence out of context and don't apply it to-

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:24:55] The well regulated militia part which comes before it.

JVN [00:24:57] Right. Because it's like I think that the way that the Constitution was written and just like, that was part of what I wanted to do this episode is like, what was the day in and day out, you know, cultural, political landscape of early, you know, early America. And I think that's really interesting. So, like, you know, as they're congregating for the Second Continental Congress and they elect George Washington to lead the Army because there was bloodshed when the general or when the guy in Massachusetts goes out to get the guns, there is bloodshed. As a response to that, is that when the second continental contre-, Congress comes?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:25:33] Yeah. So that, they were actually already going to meet. When they met in the first one, they said we're gonna reconvene in the spring of '75, which means when the news of Lexington comes, born by somebody named Paul Revere, you may have heard of him.

JVN [00:25:45] Oh yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:25:45] He's the message bearer. He shows up on his horse and says, this has happened. There's, there's been fighting. Like they were actually already in session. So they didn't have to figure it out and come together. They were already there.

JVN [00:25:56] Interesting.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:25:57] So and then they appoint in June, they appointed Washington. He goes up and they besiege Boston. The British are holed up in Boston and the whole militia

and the Continental Army with units streaming in from the colonies, the United Colonies, as they are now called, are coming in. And so for about a year, they're in, they're in limbo. Are they rebels? And rebels, by the way, in military law, have no right. Like if you catch a rebel, you can kill him right away. There's no-

JVN [00:26:25] Right.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:26:25] You get no rights as a rebel. Or are they an independent nation? Are they something different? And, and so that is why the Declaration of Independence was so important. Part of it was making a decision amongst the peo-

JVN [00:26:39] Oh, really quick. We're going to take a really quick break. We'll be right back with more "Getting Curious" after this. We're figuring this out together, honey, how did we get in this whole situation? Welcome back to "Getting Curious". This is Jonathan Van Ness, and we are here with Dr. Jessica Roney, Associate Professor of History at Temple College of Liberal Arts. So we, we have Washington in spring of '75. In June, we start besieging Boston in June of '75.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:27:04] Yeah.

JVN [00:27:05] So we start besieging Boston and all the independent people, all the independent-, and at that point, do we know that there's going to be 13 co-, no. So we still don't know who the United Colonies are going to be.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:27:16] Right.

JVN [00:27:16] So at that point, we're like maybe Canada is going to join, maybe Bermuda is going to be like, hey, we want to leave, too. Or maybe Florida's is going to sign on. But that's why, you know, this point it's so dangerous for the fighting and in Boston, because like any of these rebels that are captured by the British, so there, there are a lot of active fighting in Boston at this time?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:27:30] It's mainly, so there's the battle of Bunker Hill, which was on June 17th. I know this, it's my birthday. So I remember that one, in, and it's a loss for the Americans. But it shows that they can stand up to regular troops. The British troops are the best in the world. I mean, literally like they are, they're incredible. And so the very fact that these militiamen were able to hold up to them at all is important, but-

JVN [00:27:54] And that's at Washington command, is commanding them through the summer of '75.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:27:57] Right. He hadn't made it up there for Bunker Hill, but he's, he's soon after he gets there. And this is why, a year later, though, because they don't have guns. They don't have materials like they have to get that from somewhere. And that means getting other countries to give them loans or to give them military aid. So in-

JVN [00:28:15] So that's France?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:28:16] In order to be able to go to the court of France and say, help us, they have to be their own country. So that's the Declaration of Independence. It's, it's funny because the Fourth of July we celebrated as these incredibly important rule words for us. They weren't written for us. They were written for the king of France. They were written to say, we're our own country. Please give us aid. This is part of, like what-

JVN [00:28:36] So Fourth of July, 1776.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:28:39] Actually, they declared independence on July 2nd.

JVN [00:28:43] Oh.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:28:43] I know.

JVN [00:28:44] So July 2nd, 1776, we declare independence from England to the king of France.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:28:50] Yep. It's on the 4th that they adopt the Declaration of Independence. So it's funny because John Adams writes home to his wife. He's like July 2nd will be celebrated throughout American history. There'll be bonfires and fireworks and all kinds of stuff. It's like, yes, but it'll be July 4th.

JVN [00:29:04] Why?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:29:05] Well, that was the day the vote was taken to do it. And then the fourth was just adopting the language. So he was thinking like the action was the important thing, not the language.

JVN [00:29:13] So they, they voted to do it the second. But then like on the fourth, they're like, OK. And we're putting it in effect.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:29:18] Oh, no. The fourth, they're like, this is the, this is the list of reasons. This is the document that explain.

JVN [00:29:23] Oh, and they hashed all that out on the fourth alone?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:29:24] If you if you read, no, there is a committee they've been working on it. So the day that they adopted the, what the committee had come up with. And the committee is basically Thomas Jefferson, like there are other people on the committee. But he wrote it and the rest of the committee members kind of-

JVN [00:29:37] And those are the bill of?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:29:38] The Bill of Rights is much later, that will come after the Constitution.

JVN [00:29:41] Got it. So this was just like in 1776, July 2nd. They were just like saying like, we are an independent nation. We're going to call ourselves the United States?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:29:49] Yeah.

JVN [00:29:50] Is that when we knew officially that there gonna be 13?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:29:52] There were 13 there, at that point, they had actually sent a mission of, an embassy to Canada to direct Canada to participate as well. And they're like, no, we're not.

JVN [00:30:02] There just not doing it. They're not into it.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:30:03] We're not doing it. They were Catholic. They were afraid that the United States, which was kind of rabidly anti-Catholic at the time, they're like, that's not a good, that's not a good partnership.

JVN [00:30:10] Got it. So we declare independence on July 2nd. We adopt the language on July 4th of the stuff that Thomas Jefferson had said. But what was that called like? What did they adopt on the July 4th?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:30:20] Well, it's called the Declaration of Independence.

JVN [00:30:22] Oh, yeah. Jesus. Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:30:23] Yeah. Right. So it, it's funny, you know. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator. I'm gonna get the language-

JVN [00:30:31] Yeah.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:30:32] But that's, that's the part that everyone knows. The documents like this long. You know, that's that's a couple sentences and it's actually quite a long document. And what all of those parts are, are a laundry list of all the reasons that King George has failed as a king and that this is, this is the political philosophy of the American Revolution, is that there is a social contract between the people and their governor. And what they're saying is the governor has broken the contract. He has failed to protect us. He has done all of these things wrong. He has sent mercenaries among us. He's incited Indians against us. There are all these things they're saying, this is what he's done wrong. And this is why we are declaring independence. We're not just crazy. We're not just rebels. We are a political people making our own decisions. And he broke the contract first. It's not our fault. We're standing up for our rights.

JVN [00:31:17] Right. So that happens in July 4th? And then what happens?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:31:23] Then they have a long road ahead of them.

JVN [00:31:25] In Philly, what happens?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:31:26] In Philly? So they have about a year. They've about 15 months where they're kind of hanging out in Philadelphia before the British show up and the British kicked the butt of the American army.

JVN [00:31:35] So that ha-

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:31:36] Has to flee.

JVN [00:31:37] So in Philly they have the-? Or. Because the battles, the battles' going on in Massachusetts and Boston 'cause that's where all this stuff was going down. So but then like after, is Bunker Hill just ongoing all through '75 into the winter and stuff?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:31:49] So the British actually left Boston, it wasn't a particularly well held city for them or very important. Instead, they take New York and they take New Jersey and then they decide they're going to take Philadelphia, which is not a really strong military target, but it's like a devastating blow. And it means that Congress has to flee. And George Washington is at Valley Forge, this like camp.

JVN [00:32:09] OK, so take me into this. Take me into the fleeing, because I read this thing about like when we won the revolution, like George Washington went to New York City, like to leave, to get rid of the last troops and he had this, like, apple pie or something. And I was just like, oh, how interesting. I didn't realize like, like weird. So basically. So Bunker Hill is all popping off and we lose there, but we showed that we could stand up to them and then like that kind of made everyone take notice.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:32:32] We lost the battle, but we won the siege.

JVN [00:32:34] Right. We won the siege. And then at '76, we regroup in the summer and we're like, we got to declare independence because they can just take us at will. And, and we haven't really declared war yet. And we need to organize a war and we've got to go to France and we can't do that unless we're our own country. So they do that July 4th, 1776, with the king of France, and then he sends us a bunch of ships and troops and stuff?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:32:53] Well, you've got to think about it from the King of France's perspective. He's got colonies too. He doesn't want his colonists looking at this and saying, oh, that's a neat idea. And of course, they are going to do that in a very short amount of time. But so he's, he's kind of got two competing sides of them. One is I hate England.

JVN [00:33:10] Yeah.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:33:10] Like I really would love to stick it to England, so I would love to help the colonists. On the other hand, I'm broke. I've just lost a war against England. And I don't want to encourage my colonists with these crazy ideas of, like, you can get rid of your king. That's not anything he wants to support. So he's kind of like laying back to see what happens. And what happens is the Americans are just getting their butts kicked. Like what Washington is very good at, though, is never allowing the British to catch him and force him into an all out battle. Every time they think they've got him cornered, he gets away. Every time.

JVN [00:33:42] So he knew he had to stay free of British capture because out of spelled out like the end.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:33:47] Yeah. So there's just sort of like the British have to defeat, and the Americans just kind of have to survive. And that's, those are two very different.

JVN [00:33:53] Yeah.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:33:54] Levels of objectives. So they survive long enough, they finally get a good victory in Saratoga in '78. And that-

JVN [00:34:01] So basically from the time we declare independence through '78, we're just getting our ass kicked.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:34:05] Yeah.

JVN [00:34:06] So and when we send word to France that we are going to declare independence in '76, it takes until, when do the British come and they take New York City and they take all of New Jersey?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:34:17] '76 is when they send these flotillas with tens of thousands of British soldiers. And it's like, you were referencing "Hamilton" earlier, they talk about that the sight of it, of the harbor, New York Harbor, just filled with these ships.

JVN [00:34:30] So New York City where we see like what is present day, like like downtown Manhattan, like, like the, like the base, like the base of Manhattan. Like there were just, that's like where the Port of New York City is. And there was just tons of British ships just coming.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:34:45] Just imagine nothing but sails. And you know that-.

JVN [00:34:47] Do we know what day that was?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:34:49] It was-.

JVN [00:34:50] Or what time of year-ish?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:34:51] It's the summer.

JVN [00:34:51] Summer of '76. So right after we declared independence, maybe six weeks later, like mid-August, August or something, because that's how long it takes or whatever you had said. Like six weeks on a good journey.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:34:58] Well no, because he's, he's already sending the troops before the Declaration of Independence. I do not remember off the top my head when they get there, but it's, you know.

JVN [00:35:04] So but they just clear out New York City and they're like, if you're a rebel, they kill you. Right? Or if you're part of the American army, they're capt-, because we already were our country by then. So maybe we had some rights, like if they captured-?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:35:13] The British don't recognize it. You know, just because the United States says it's an independent nation.

JVN [00:35:17] So they were still capturing them as rebels or whatever.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:35:19] Yeah. This is the thing about declaring yourself a country. Other people have to recognize it. Like Puerto Rico, you said before, like Puerto Rico could say, we're our own country. But unless other people recognize it and treat it like an independent nation, it's not.

JVN [00:35:31] So. But they take New York City and Washington and everyone is like, shit, they're coming. There's really lot of people. And they take New Jersey. We're like, shit, there's a lot of people. And then in 70-. Oh, and then, but Washington is just escaping. Escaping. Escaping. Oh yeah. I want to go to Philadelphia.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:35:45] Yeah.

JVN [00:35:46] So then in '76, they take New York, they take New Jersey and then Philadelphia. We're all minding our own business. That was our first capital. Like that's like our capital. Even in '76, it is?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:35:54] Yeah.

JVN [00:35:54] 'Cause that was where our cont-. So what happens? Like we all wake up on the morning of like something?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:35:59] So in the fall of '77, the British have decided they're going to march over land, they're going to send some troops up-

JVN [00:36:04] And they've already taken New York City.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:36:05] And they're going to take Philadelphia, and again, it's not a strong military.

JVN [00:36:08] And they already took New York City and New Jersey at this point.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:36:10] And they hold New York the whole war.

JVN [00:36:12] Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:36:12] New York, the, the whole war. It's, it's under British control. They send these troops to Philadelphia and, and they, we lose the battle of Germantown, we lose the battle of Brandywine and, and, you know, that's when the Congress has to flee.

JVN [00:36:26] So Congress had to flee. All the representatives that were here had to flee.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:36:29] Everyone has to flee. The British-

JVN [00:36:30] And did they burned the house, did they burn everything down?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:36:32] They didn't. The British come. They take over the houses. They take over independent, what we call Independence Hall. It was called the Pennsylvania State House. Then they, they they trashed the place like they're there for the better part of a year, but nine months probably. And they, when they left because again, it's not a military strategy, like strategically important place. They just give it up because it's not helping them. They trashed the place. I mean, they're just like shit, literally excrement everywhere. They used Independence Hall as a hospital. You know, they're just, they're, they're desecrating churches. They're doing all kinds of things. But one of the things it's funny that they do there. The general was recalled and back to England because he wasn't the war wasn't going well before he left, his officers organized for him probably the biggest party Philadelphia ever saw. It's in what's today is sort of a Passyunk area. They organized this like whole day long medieval joust where they've got, they have two teams. There's like the White Knights and the Black Knights. And they, they, they literally are jousting. They have this extravagant party. All of the, the elites of Philadelphia who haven't fled are invited. They dance. They dine.

JVN [00:37:39] To the general back to England, but they were all loyalists to the, England?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:37:43] These are all loyalists.

JVN [00:37:44] And all the reps for the 13 colonies that were like fighting like with Washington had to flee in the middle of the night like guns blazing and stuff?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:37:50] Yeah. So they're-

JVN [00:37:51] Do they kill any of the representatives? Did any of the Congress, people get killed or anything or did they all get away?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:37:55] No, they all got away.

JVN [00:37:56] So the British kind of sucked like for like being the best in the world. Like, I think we were really, like, getting away a lot.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:38:00] Well, you got, again, you got to think from the British perspective.

JVN [00:38:02] Fuck you. King George.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:38:04] On the one hand, like, the more they kill Americans, the less Americans want to be loyal to them.

JVN [00:38:08] Oooh.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:38:09] So if your, if your point is to say you belong as part of the British Empire, you want, you want them to come to your side voluntarily. So it sort of limits your ability to have a military campaign. So they're doing both. Like, actually, if the British had really brought it, if they had said, like, fuck you, America, we're just going to bring it to you. You know, like, they could have done far worse than they did, but because they're always fighting with one hand behind their back because they're trying to say, you really belong with us, come back.

JVN [00:38:36] Because there was a lot of loyalists the whole time within American-?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:38:39] You know, that we don't know specifically or exactly, but we think that, that a significant percentage was, was ton of neutral, like about half were about neutral. About a quarter was loyalist and about a quarter was really pro.

JVN [00:38:53] So when they come to Philadelphia and they take over the houses in '77. So it's '77 that they arrive here, 'cause they already had other ones. Like that mean that the British, weren't soldiers like using homes like they like, hey, you have to provide beds or whatever.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:39:05] Yep.

JVN [00:39:05] And if you said no, would they just kill you or something? Or put you in jail or?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:39:08] No, they didn't need to kill you, but they would just do it anyway, like they have the military force and the people who are in Philadelphia don't really have arms, it's not like they're going to stand at their door all day and shoot anyone who comes in. So yeah.

JVN [00:39:18] So okay. So the 13 colonies and we, I'm just, I'm, I'm having a fork in my road of if I want to go towards what happened in the Revolutionary War or if I want to talk about like what Philly and more like the cultural political politics of like the time. I'm also, but I'm also like, we're not going anywhere. It's like, I can always have you back for like, maybe you can be like, my early American expert.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:39:37] I would love it.

JVN [00:39:39] So like, who, of the 50 percent that were neutral and the ones that were more fiery because like I saw "John Adams" on HBO, like years ago, such a good mini-series, oh my god. So who were like the most fiery geographically? And then who was like the most like conservative and the more like mid-, like what was like the Midwest of the colonies?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:39:59] Pennsylvania.

JVN [00:40:00] So Pennsylvania was like the Midwest, like no, we we really should be more coat, like, more loyal?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:40:05] They're, I mean, so Massachusetts is like super radical, most of them. Then there are these hot heads in Virginia, like Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson. Pennsylvania is really on the fence about it. Like they're, the one guy who's probably the most politically, strong political actor going up to the revolution. He remained a loyalist. And so he's got his finger on the thumb of Pennsylvania government right up to the end when they finally oust him. But his name is Joseph Galloway and he is not-.

JVN [00:40:34] Oh, and he was the guy who got recalled?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:40:36] No, this is, this is in Pennsylvania. Your thinking-.

JVN [00:40:39] Oh, got it. Sorry. Yes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:40:40] The general. But this is, yeah, this is the Pennsylvania guy, and he's just not for it. The other thing about Pennsylvania, of course, Quakers. And the Quakers are not, they don't really like what King George the Third is doing, but they also don't really, they, Pennsylvania's a very special place. They had their own special charter that gave them religious protection, which they had not had in England. And they're afraid, what if we have a revolution? We tear up our governing document, they make a new one. How, can you guarantee me that my rights are going to be as protected under the new government as they are under this one?

JVN [00:41:12] But they ended up being freedom of religion was like a part of it, wasn't it?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:41:15] Well, yes, but. But how do you know that in 1775?

JVN [00:41:19] Right.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:41:19] Like, if I came to you today and I was like, Jonathan, we're gonna tear up the Dec-.

JVN [00:41:22] We'll do it in a year though, don't worry.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:41:24] We're gonna, we're gonna tear up the declaration. We're gonna tear up the Constitution. I promise you, the new government will be just as good. Like, how would you feel about that?

JVN [00:41:30] Right. What about like South Carolina, North Carolina, and like Georgia?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:41:33] Georgia and all of the southern states, South Carolina, especially, and Virginia, like they have very large enslaved populations, which means they have an insurgent population right there. And the British know this. The British actually promise freedom to any black man. They don't really want the women or children, who will come and join them and fight with them. So-.

JVN [00:41:53] Oh, they did?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:41:54] Oh, yeah. Yeah. And so the planters are just like losing their minds over this. This is actually if you read the Declaration of Independence, is one of the things they say, that he has incited domestic insurrection among us. But that doesn't say the word slave, but that's what they mean.

JVN [00:42:10] Ooh.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:42:10] Domestic internal insurrection.

JVN [00:42:11] Because it was there, because wasn't there? Was there abolitionists in the Revolutionary War?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:42:17] Not, they're just starting to get started and it's actually in Pennsylvania with the Quakers that they are getting started. So in '75, independent of all the rest of this, the Pennsylvania Abolition Society was founded here in Philadelphia. It's like tiny. It's Quaker. Most people think they're nuts. But, but there's been a voice of abolitionism going back 75 years in Pennsylvania at that point. So it's been a strain usually ignored. But getting stronger in Pennsylvania from all that time. But it's not a big part of the American Revolution, like the revolution is not, whatever other hierarchies they want to disrupt. Slavery is not really one of them.

JVN [00:42:52] So. Wow. So I think I just want to, like, zoom through the end of the Revolutionary War and then, but then I'm gonna have to have you back to talk about like what daily life. Like how did you get water? What was like, what, you know, what was like, like what did the streets look like? Like, I want to talk about all that stuff. But then I got distracted with the revolutionary God damn war. We'll have to have you back twice.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:43:15] I'm going to tell you the water one, which is that you drink beer. That's how you get your water.

JVN [00:43:19] Interest. OK, OK. So but Saratoga in '78, we win. An important battle.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:43:25] And that is enough for us the French-.

JVN [00:43:27] Saratoga is in New York, right?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:43:28] It is, yeah. That is enough for the French king to say, you know what, I'm going to do it. I'm going to come in on your side. We sign-.

JVN [00:43:34] We had done it all on our own up until then.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:43:36] And it's proved that they're serious. Like he doesn't want to come in on the side of people who are not really going to uphold their end of the bargain and they're just gonna fold. They've shown that they're not going to fold. They've actually won a battle. He really would love to stick it to the English. So he comes in on their side. He signs a treaty with them and he starts sending troops. This changes everything for the British because now the French, unlike the Americans, the French have a Navy, which means suddenly Britain has to defend Britain. It has to defend the Caribbean. It has to defend India. It has to defend Africa. It has all these different colonial possessions all over the world. Suddenly, the American Revolution becomes a global war. Then Spain comes in. Spain never sides with the Americans, for long reasons, but it allies with France. So it's like the friend of our friend. Now, Spain is, is fighting. Spain actually invades Florida and gets it back. This is one of the interesting things about the American Revolution. The British lost 15 colonies in the American Revolution, 13 go to the United States, 2 go back to the Spanish Empire.

JVN [00:44:34] Which was Florida and?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:44:36] East and West Florida, its two colonies.

JVN [00:44:39] So they. And then when did Florida leave Spain and join us?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:44:43] That happens in 1819.

JVN [00:44:46] Wow, that wasn't for a long ass time.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:44:49] Yeah, it's a long time.

JVN [00:44:49] So Florida was part of Spain until 1819.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:44:52] Yeah.

JVN [00:44:52] That's like 40 more years. So we win Saratoga and then France comes in. And then we made a treaty that was basically, we're going to be allies. And then we ended up winning the Revolutionary War in?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:45:04] '81. The Battle of Yorktown is the last one. And it's this incredible coming together of the American army, the French navy, they're all pinning the British in. At the time, it wasn't actually a decisive defeat. Like at the time, it wasn't clear that that was going to be the last battle. But the British had just lost Pensacola, Florida, to the Spanish. They're afraid they're gonna lose Jamaica because the Spanish are kind of eyeing the Caribbean. And however much the British don't want to lose the 13 colonies they lost. Jamaica is their most important colony. It is the wealthiest colony of all of them. And they cannot afford to lose Jamaica. And they're like, you know what we're calling it? We're just gonna cut our losses. This country's never gonna work any way. They're gonna fight among themselves. They're gonna fall apart. And we'll just have them back. Like it'll be like a couple years of nonsense and then they'll be part of the British Empire again, because this is just not. It's stupid. It's not gonna work.

JVN [00:45:56] So that was what their thinking was.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:45:57] Yeah.

JVN [00:45:58] That's crazy. So-, well, interesting. So '78, we won Saratoga, the tides start to change. But so then when we win in Yorktown, that wasn't totally clear. But then the king decides that like he didn't wanna fight anymore.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:46:08] Yeah. It take two more years to sign the the, the Treaty of Paris. So it's always hard to say. What are the years of the American Revolution? The fighting is '75 to '81. The declaration is '76. The Treaty of Paris which ended it, is 1783. So-.

JVN [00:46:23] Oh, so it didn't aff-, because wasn't there still like some random battles like in Georgia and like other places that were like they couldn't get like the word to that, like Yorktown was over and stuff.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:46:32] Well yeah, there's still fighting. And the thing is like it depends on where you're standing. The American Revolution, if you're Cherokee, the American Revolution lasted until the 1790s. You know, that, that conflict that starts in, in the 1770s in, say, Tennessee or Ohio, that same conflict went on for like 40 years. [CROSSTALK] I mean, like a big part of that war. Like we've focused on the eastern side of it and how they're they're fighting the British. They're also fighting Indians. And that war doesn't end in 1783.

JVN [00:47:04] Because is Britain still claiming like Ten-, like the land that is currently Ohio and?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:47:08] No, they give that up in the treaty of Paris. But the Shawnee people and the Delaware people and the Miamis and all these different groups who are there and they're like, it's not Britain's to cede, guys, this is our land. It's not your land. And it's not Britain's land, it's Shawnee land.

JVN [00:47:20] So then the U.S. government and the Shawnee started making treaties in like-?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:47:25] No, they're fighting.

JVN [00:47:26] But they fought until till like-.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:47:29] Till the War of 1812.

JVN [00:47:32] Oooh.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:47:32] Yeah. This is what I'm saying is like how you define the beginning and end of a war depends on where you're standing.

JVN [00:47:36] So the war of 1812 was between?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:47:40] The War of 1812 is once again between the United States and Britain. In most textbooks. But if you're standing in Ohio, the war started in 1754 and it didn't end until 1815.

JVN [00:47:50] So is that when Britain was like, OK, it's been there for 40 years of craziness. We're gonna take them back now.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:47:55] No, it's the British, the British are mainly like the, the reason for that war is that the Americans are sick of the British trying to control their navy, their merchant shipping. But it means that the British who are in Canada are suddenly like, they're supplying Native Americans who are in Ohio. And the Americans are trying to take those Indians' land. And this is all, anyway all I'm trying to say is that the American Revolution has a tidy end if you're a white person, it does not have a tidy end for Indigenous people who are fighting to preserve their homelands and the American Revolution just opens up conflict for them. It doesn't end it, their war for independence is ongoing.

JVN [00:48:31] It's like a whole, it's like a whole other podcast. It's so, I'm. My mind is so blown right now. It's so multilayered. Just really quickly. George Washington goes to New York City at the end. What was that whole thing of him like taking like a horse down Broadway and like, I feel like I read something about him having, like, some apple cake or some apple pie, some apple thing. Have you ever heard this story?

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:48:52] I haven't heard that story, but I hope it's true.

JVN [00:48:54] Yeah, it made me like research like apple, like early apple cake in like New York City. OK, well, you're definitely going to have to come back and tell us more stuff.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:49:02] I would love it.

JVN [00:49:02] But there is, so, but basically. So Yorktown, Young, Yorktown was the last official battle with British troops as we know them and like American troops as we knew it in the Revolutionary War. There wasn't any other official ones after that. But maybe little skirmishes.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:49:14] That's the last big one. Yeah. And again, if you seen "Hamilton", they sing the song about Yorktown. It's called "The World Turned Upside Down". That is the title, I love, like Miranda, he, he got all these facts and he, he slips them in. So that is the song that they played. It's called "The World Turned Upside Down" that they played when the British surrendered. And so they leave Virginia. The reason that George Washington goes to New York City is that that's the last place the British hold on to. And they're there until, I guess, the fall of 1783, it might be 1784, anyway, when they finally evacuate. It's called Evacuation Day. They, they negotiated with them. It'll be on this day we will finally be gone. And so, like, they leave and Washington comes in and it's this huge, important celebration.

JVN [00:49:59] And that wasn't until '83.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:50:01] Mmhmm.

JVN [00:50:01] So we're gonna do other episodes, like what was Evacuation Day like? What happened with 1812? What was the like, like a day in the life of Philadelphia in, you know, 1776. We have so many more episodes, this is really just our introduction.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:50:14] I feel like you're giving me a whole semester of classes to teach. This is awesome.

JVN [00:50:17] Dr. Jessica Roney, thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it so much. Thank you.

DR. JESSICA RONEY [00:50:21] It's been wonderful to talk to you.

JVN [00:50:25] You've been listening to "Getting Curious" with me, Jonathan Van Ness. My guest this week was Dr. Jessica Roney. You'll find links to Dr. Roney and Temple University socials in the episode discussion of whatever you're listening to the show on. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter @CuriousWithJVN. Our theme music is "Freak" by Quiñ. Thank you so much to her for letting us use it. If you enjoyed our show, introduce a friend. Show them how to subscribe, honey. "Getting Curious" is produced by Emily Bossak, Julie Carrillo, Rae Ellis, Harry Nelson and Colin Anderson.