ARLIS/NA Endorsement of the AHA Statement Condemning the 1776 Report

ARLIS/NA joins 46 other organizations in signing onto a statement by the American Historical Association (AHA) condemning the report from “The President's Advisory 1776 Commission.” The January 2021 report focuses on founding documents of the United States in an apparent attempt to reject efforts to understand the multiple ways the institution of slavery shaped United States history. The "1776 Report" claims that common understanding of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution can unify all Americans in the love of country.

“Written hastily in one month after two desultory and tendentious ‘hearings,’” the AHA writes, “without any consultation with professional historians of the United States, the report fails to engage a rich and vibrant body of scholarship that has evolved over the last seven decades.” The AHA notes that the document’s authors “call for a form of government indoctrination of American students, and in the process elevate ignorance about the past to a civic virtue.” This report runs counter to the ARLIS/NA core tenet that “diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the profession strengthens the practice of art librarianship.” Our society believes that the "1776 Report," a dangerous rejection of historical scholarship and a weapon against U.S. cultural heritage, must be vigorously discredited.