

A Revolution, Indeed

The Shawnee chief Blackfish named his new captive Sheltowee, or Big Turtle, and adopted him as his son. In February 1778, Blackfish's warriors had caught the lone hunter, Daniel Boone, who then persuaded his fellow frontiersmen to surrender to the Shawnees (British allies). Boone had moved his family from North Carolina to Kentucky three years before as the Revolutionary War began. His contemporaries and some historians have questioned Boone's allegiances during the Revolution. His encounter with the Shawnees highlights ambiguities of revolutionary-era loyalties.

The Shawnees sought captives to cover the death of their chief, Cornstalk, killed months earlier while a prisoner of American militiamen in the Ohio country. Half of the twenty-six men taken were adopted into Shawnee families; those less willing to conform to Indian ways were dispatched as prisoners to the British fort at Detroit. Boone, who assured Blackfish that in the spring he would negotiate the surrender of women and children remaining at his Boonesborough settlement, watched and waited. In June 1778 he escaped, hurrying home to warn the Kentuckians of an impending attack.

When Shawnees and their British allies appeared outside the Boonesborough stockade in mid-September, Boone agreed to negotiate. Although the settlers refused to move back across the mountains, fragmentary evidence suggests that they promised allegiance to the British to avert a battle. But discussions dissolved into a melee, with Indians futilely besieging the fort for a week before withdrawing. That threat gone, Boone was charged with treason and court-martialed by the Kentucky militia. Although he was cleared, questions about the incident and its aftermath haunted him for the rest of his life.

Where did Daniel Boone's loyalties lie? To the British, the Americans, or other Kentuckians? His actions made all three seem possible. Had he betrayed the settlers to Shawnees, seeking to establish British authority in Kentucky? Had he—as he later claimed—twice deceived the Shawnees? Or was the survival of the

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LEGACY FOR A PEOPLE AND A NATION *Revolutionary Origins*

SUMMARY

fragile settlements his highest priority? Kentucky was a borderland where British, Indians, and American settlers vied for control. Boone and other Appalachian backcountry residents did not always face clear-cut choices as they struggled under precarious circumstances.

The American Revolution uprooted thousands of families, disrupted the economy, reshaped society by forcing many colonists into permanent exile, and created a nation from thirteen separate colonies. The struggle for independence required revolutionary leaders to accomplish three separate but related tasks. First, they had to transform a consensus favoring loyal resistance into a coalition supporting independence. They pursued various measures (from persuasion to coercion) to enlist European-Americans in the patriot cause, while seeking neutrality from Indians and slaves.

Second, to win independence, patriot leaders needed international recognition and aid, particularly from France. Thus they dispatched to Paris the most experienced American diplomat, Benjamin Franklin, who skillfully negotiated the Franco-American alliance of 1778, crucial to winning independence.

Only the third task directly involved the British. George Washington, commander-in-chief of the American army, soon recognized that his goal should be not to win battles, but to survive to fight another day. The British concentrated on winning and did not consider the difficulties of their main goal, retaining the colonies' allegiance. Americans' triumph owed less to their military powers than to endurance and Britain's mistakes.

As you read this chapter, keep the following questions in mind:

- * **What choices of allegiance confronted residents of North America after 1774? Why did people of various descriptions make the choices they did?**
- * **What military strategies did the British and American forces adopt?**
- * **How did the new nation win independence?**

Government by Congress and Committee

Where did backcountry Indians' loyalties lie at the onset of the Revolution?

Continental Congress: Group of representatives appointed by conventions in most of the North American colonies of Great Britain.

When the fifty-five delegates to the First **Continental Congress** convened in Philadelphia in September 1774, they knew that any measures they adopted would likely enjoy widespread support. That summer, participants at well-publicized open meetings throughout the colonies promised (like some North Carolina men) to "strictly adhere to, and abide by, such Regulations and Restrictions as the Members of the said General Congress shall agree to." Most congressional delegates were selected by extralegal provincial conventions whose members were chosen at local gatherings, because governors had forbidden regular assemblies to conduct formal elections. By designating delegates to Congress, Americans openly defied British authority.

First Continental Congress

The colonies' leading political figures—mostly lawyers, merchants, and planters representing every colony but Georgia—attended the Philadelphia Congress. The

Chronology

1774	First Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia, adopts Declaration of Rights and Grievances Continental Association implements economic boycott of Britain; committees of observation established to oversee boycott	British evacuate Boston Declaration of Independence adopted New York City falls to British
1774–75	Provincial conventions replace collapsing colonial governments	1777 British take Philadelphia Burgoyne surrenders at Saratoga
1775	Battles of Lexington and Concord; first shots of war fired Second Continental Congress begins Washington named commander-in-chief Dunmore's proclamation offers freedom to patriots' slaves who join British forces	1778 French alliance brings vital assistance to America British evacuate Philadelphia
1776	Paine publishes <i>Common Sense</i> , advocating independence	1779 Sullivan expedition destroys Iroquois villages 1780 British take Charleston 1781 Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown 1782 Peace negotiations begin 1783 Treaty of Paris signed, granting independence to the United States

Massachusetts delegation included Samuel Adams, the Boston resistance organizer, and his younger cousin John, an ambitious lawyer. New York sent John Jay, a talented young attorney. Virginia elected Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry, and George Washington. These men became the chief architects of the new nation.

Congressmen faced three tasks when they convened at Carpenters' Hall on September 5: defining American grievances, developing a resistance plan, and articulating their constitutional relationship with Great Britain. Radical congressmen, like Lee of Virginia, argued that colonists owed allegiance only to George III and that Parliament had no legitimate authority over them. Conservatives, like Pennsylvania's Joseph Galloway and his allies, proposed a union requiring Parliament and a new American legislature to consent jointly to all laws affecting the colonies. Delegates narrowly rejected Galloway's proposal, but they did not embrace the radicals' position either.

Finally, they accepted wording proposed by John Adams. The crucial clauses in the Congress's Declaration of Rights and Grievances declared that Americans would obey Parliament, but only voluntarily, and would resist all taxes in disguise, like the Townshend duties. Remarkably, this position—which would have seemed radical years earlier—represented a compromise in the fall of 1774.



Link to excerpts from Joseph Galloway's plan of union.

Continental Association The delegates agreed on the laws they wanted repealed (notably the Coercive Acts) and implemented an economic boycott while petitioning the king for relief. They adopted the Continental Association, which called for nonimportation of British goods, effective December 1, 1774; nonconsumption of British products, effective March 1, 1775; and nonexportation of American goods to Britain and the British West Indies, effective September 10, 1775.

More comprehensive than previous economic measures, the Association's provisions appealed to different groups and regions. The nonimportation agreement banned commerce in slaves and manufactures, which accorded with the

Virginia gentry's desire to halt or slow the arrival of enslaved Africans. (Leading Virginians believed slave importations discouraged free Europeans with useful skills from immigrating.) Delaying nonconsumption until three months after implementing nonimportation allowed northern urban merchants time to sell items they acquired before December 1. In 1773, many Virginians had vowed to stop exporting tobacco, to raise prices in a then-glutted market. So they enthusiastically welcomed an Association that banned exportation while permitting them to profit from higher prices for their 1774 crop. It also benefited northern exporters of wood and foodstuffs to the Caribbean with a final selling season before the embargo.

Committees of Observation

To enforce the Continental Association, Congress recommended the election of committees of observation and inspection in every American locality. By specifying that committee members be chosen by all men qualified to vote, Congress guaranteed them a broad popular base. The seven to eight thousand committeemen became local leaders of American resistance.

Initially charged with overseeing implementation of the boycott, within six months these committees became *de facto* governments. They examined merchants' records, publicizing those who continued to import British goods. They promoted home manufactures, encouraging simple modes of dress and behavior that symbolized Americans' commitment to liberty. Because expensive leisure-time activities were believed to reflect vice and corruption, Congress urged Americans to forgo dancing, gambling, horseracing, and cardplaying.

The committees gradually extended their authority. They attempted to identify opponents of American resistance, developing elaborate spy networks, circulating copies of the Continental Association for signatures, and investigating questionable remarks and activities. Suspected dissenters were urged to support the colonial cause publicly; if they refused, the committees had them watched, restricted their movements, or tried to force them into exile. People engaging in casual political exchanges one day could find themselves charged with "treasonable conversation" the next.

Provincial Conventions

Meanwhile, during the winter and early spring of 1775, colonial governments were collapsing. Only a few legislatures met without challenges to their authority. In most colonies, popularly elected provincial conventions took over the government, sometimes replacing the legislatures or holding concurrent sessions. In late 1774 and early 1775, these conventions approved the Continental Association, elected delegates to the Second Continental Congress (scheduled for May), organized militias, and gathered arms.

Royal officials suffered continuous humiliation. Courts were prevented from meeting; taxes were paid to the conventions' agents rather than to provincial tax collectors; and militiamen would muster only when committees ordered. During the six months preceding the battles at Lexington and Concord, independence was being won at the local level. Still, most Americans proclaimed loyalty to Great Britain.

Contest in the Backcountry

While the committees of observation consolidated their authority in the East, some colonists headed west. Ignoring the Proclamation of 1763, pronouncements by colonial governors, and the threat of Indian attacks, land-hungry folk—many of them recent immigrants from Ireland and soldiers who demobilized in North America after the Seven Years War—swarmed onto lands along the Ohio River and its tributaries after the mid-1760s. Sometimes they purchased property from opportunists with grants of dubious origin; often, they claimed land as squatters. Britain's 1771 decision to abandon (and raze) Fort Pitt removed final restraints on settlement there and rendered the Proclamation of 1763 unenforceable. By late 1775, thousands of new homesteads dotted the backcountry from western Pennsylvania south through Virginia and eastern Kentucky into western North Carolina.

Distrust and Warfare Few of the backcountry folk viewed the region's native peoples positively. Frontier dwellers had little interest in the small-scale trade that had sustained an uneasy peace; they wanted land for crops and livestock.

In 1774 Virginia, headed by a new governor, **Lord Dunmore**, asserted its title to the developing backcountry. During spring and early summer, tensions mounted as Virginians surveyed Kentucky land on the south side of the Ohio River—territory claimed by the Shawnees. "**Lord Dunmore's War**" consisted of one large-scale confrontation between Virginia militia and some Shawnee warriors. Neither side won, but in the immediate aftermath thousands of settlers—including Boone and his associates—flooded across the mountains.

When war began, the loyalties of Indians and settlers in the backcountry remained, like Boone's, fluid. Hostile to each other, the side each would take in the struggle might depend on which could better serve their interests. Understanding that, the Continental Congress moved to reoccupy Fort Pitt and establish other garrisons in the Ohio country. With this protection, up to twenty thousand settlers poured into Kentucky and western Pennsylvania by 1780.

Native Americans' grievances against European American newcomers predisposed many to ally with Great Britain. Yet some chiefs urged caution: the British abandonment of Fort Pitt (and them) suggested that Britain might not protect them in the future. Furthermore, Britain hesitated to use its potential native allies and initially sought from Indians only neutrality.

Patriots also wanted Indians' neutrality. In 1775, the Second Continental Congress sent a message to Indian communities, describing the war as "a family quarrel between us and Old England" and requesting that they "not join on either side." The Iroquois pledged neutrality. But some Cherokees led by Chief Dragging Canoe hoped to use the "family quarrel" to regain land. In summer 1776, they attacked western Virginia and Carolina settlements. After a militia campaign destroyed many Cherokee towns, Dragging Canoe and his followers fled west, establishing new villages. Other Cherokees agreed to a treaty that ceded more of their land.

Frontier Hostilities Shawnees and Cherokees continued to attack backcountry settlements, but dissent within their ranks crippled their efforts. The British victory over France in 1763 had destroyed the Indians'

Lord Dunmore: Royal governor of Virginia who promised freedom to slaves who fought to restore royal authority.

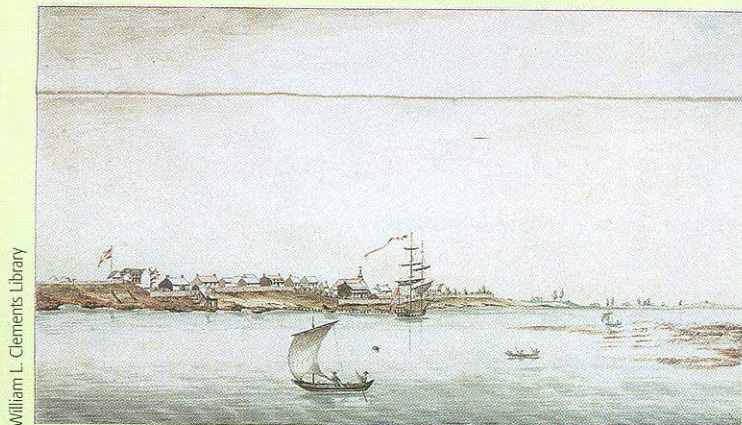
Lord Dunmore's War: Confrontation between Virginians and the Shawnee Indians in 1774. During the peace conference that followed, Virginia gained uncontested rights to lands south of the Ohio country in exchange for its claims on the northern side.

Visualizing the Past

Frontier Refugees

As a result of its victory in the Seven Years' War, Great Britain in 1763 took command of Fort Detroit, located on the river that connected Lakes Huron and Erie, shown here in an eighteenth-century watercolor. The strategic site controlled water access to the three western-most Great Lakes; such water travel was crucial in an era with few and poor frontier roads. The American revolutionaries tried twice to capture Detroit, from which Indian raiding parties attacked frontier settlements, but both times the colonial forces were defeated by Britain's Native allies. Thus throughout the war Detroit served as a magnet for loyalist refugees, among them Marie-Therese Berthelet Lasselle, who fled with her family to the fort in 1780 from their trading post at what is now Fort Wayne,

Indiana. Depicted here is her self-portrait in watercolor on silk, with additional silk embroidery. What can we learn about frontier female refugees from such sources? What does this tell us about her priorities, as well as her skills?



William L. Clements Library

The artist who painted this watercolor of early Detroit is unknown. The view shows both the village and the fort that protected the residents.



Monroe County Historical Commissions, Monroe, Michigan

Only genteel women learned to produce such works as these, combining embroidery and watercolor. Great artistic skill contributed to this remarkable self-portrait by Marie-Therese Lasselle.

ability to maintain their independence: playing European powers against one another. Only a few communities (the Stockbridge Indians of New England and the Oneidas in New York) unwaveringly supported the American revolt; most others either remained neutral or sporadically aligned with the British. In 1778 and early 1779, a frontier militia force under George Rogers Clark captured British posts in modern Illinois (Kaskaskia) and Indiana (Vincennes). Still, the revolutionaries could never overtake the redcoats' stronghold at Detroit.

Backcountry warfare between settlers and Indians persisted long after the Revolution ended. Indeed, the Revolutionary War constituted a brief chapter in the ongoing struggle for control of the region west of the Appalachians, which began in 1763 and continued into the next century.

Choosing Sides

How did colonists choose sides in the conflict with England?

In 1765, Stamp Act protests were supported by most colonists in the Caribbean, Nova Scotia, and the future United States. Demonstrations occurred in Halifax, Nova Scotia, St. Christopher, and Nevis, as well as in Boston, New York, Charleston, and other mainland towns. When the Stamp Act took effect, though, Caribbean islanders loyally paid the duties. In Nova Scotia and the Caribbean, many colonists came to question the aims and tactics of the resistance movement.

Nova Scotia and The Caribbean

Despite the British victory in the Seven Years War, northern mainland and southern island colonies felt vulnerable to French counterattack. Additionally, sugar planters—on some islands outnumbered by their bondpeople twenty-five to one—feared potential slave revolts. Neither region had a large population of European descent or strong local political structures. Fewer people lived in Halifax in 1775 than in the late 1750s, and with successful men heading to England, the sugar islands had only a few resident planters to provide leadership.

Nova Scotians and West Indians had economic reasons for supporting the mother country. In the mid-1770s, the northerners finally broke into the Caribbean market with their dried, salted fish. They reduced New England's domination of the northern coastal trade, and they benefited from Britain's wartime retaliatory measures against the rebels' commerce. British sugar producers relied on their trade monopoly within the empire, for more efficient French planters could sell their sugar for one-third less. Further, the British planters' lobbyists in London won the islands' exclusion from some of the Townshend Act provisions.

Patriots

Many residents of the thirteen colonies supported resistance, then independence. Active revolutionaries accounted for about two-fifths of the European American population and included small and middling farmers, members of dominant Protestant sects, Chesapeake gentry, merchants, city artisans, elected officeholders, and people of English descent. Wives usually, but not always, adopted their husbands' political stance. Although patriots supported the Revolution, they pursued divergent goals within the broader coalition. Some sought limited political reform; others, extensive political change; and still others, social and economic reforms. (The ways their concerns interacted are discussed in Chapter 7.)

Loyalists

About one-fifth of the European American population remained loyal to Great Britain, firmly rejecting independence. Most **loyalists** had long opposed the men who became patriot leaders for varying reasons. British-appointed government officials; Anglican clergy and lay Anglicans in the North; tenant farmers; members of persecuted religious sects; back-country southerners who had rebelled against eastern rule in the late 1760s and early 1770s; and non-English ethnic minorities, especially Scots—all feared the power of those who controlled the colonial assemblies and who had previously shown little concern for their welfare. Joined by merchants whose trade depended on imperial connections and by former British military men who had settled in America after 1763, they formed a loyalist core.

loyalists: Colonists who retained a profound reverence for the British crown and believed that if they failed to defend their king, they would sacrifice their personal honor.

During the war, loyalists congregated in cities held by the British army. When those posts were evacuated at war's end, loyalists scattered throughout the British Empire—Britain, the Bahamas, and especially Canada. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Ontario, roughly seventy thousand former Americans laid the foundations of British Canada.

Neutrals

Between patriots and loyalists, there remained in the middle perhaps two-fifths of the European American population. Some, like the Quakers, were sincere pacifists. Others opportunistically shifted their allegiance to whatever side happened to be winning. Still others cared little about politics and obeyed whoever was in power. Such colonists resisted British and Americans alike when their demands seemed too heavy—when taxes became too high or when calls for militia service came too often. They made up a large proportion of the backcountry population (including Boone's Kentucky), where Scots-Irish settlers had little love for either the patriot gentry or the English authorities.

To patriots, apathy or neutrality was as heinous as loyalism. By winter 1775–1776, the Second Continental Congress recommended that “disaffected” persons be disarmed and arrested. State legislatures passed laws prescribing severe penalties for suspected loyalists or neutrals. Many began to require voters (or, in some cases, all free adult men) to take oaths of allegiance; refusal usually meant banishment to England or extra taxes. After 1777, many states confiscated the property of banished persons, using it to fund the war. The patriots' policies ensured that their scattered and persecuted opponents could not band together against the revolutionary cause.

African Americans

In New England, with few resident bondspeople, revolutionary fervor was widespread, and free African Americans enlisted in patriot militias. The middle colonies, where bondspeople constituted a small but substantial proportion of the population, were more divided but largely revolutionary. In Virginia and Maryland, where free people constituted a slender majority, the potential for slave revolts raised occasional but not disabling fears. By contrast, South Carolina and Georgia, where slaves composed more than half of the population, were less enthusiastic about resistance. Georgia sent no delegates to the First Continental Congress and reminded its representatives at the second to consider its circumstances, “with our blacks and tories [loyalists] within us,” when voting on independence.

Bondspeople faced a dilemma during the Revolution. Their goal was *personal* independence, but how best could they escape from slavery? To most slaves, supporting the British held promise. In late 1774 and early 1775, bondsmen offered to assist the British army in return for freedom.

Slaveowners' worst fears were realized in November 1775, when Virginia's royal governor, Lord Dunmore, offered to free any slaves and indentured servants willing to join the British forces. About one thousand African Americans rallied to the British; although many perished in a smallpox epidemic, three hundred reached occupied New York City under British protection. Because other commanders renewed Dunmore's proclamation, tens of thousands of runaways eventually joined the British. At war's end, at least nine thousand left with the redcoats.



Links to the World

New Nations

The American Revolution created the United States and led to the formation of three other nations: English-dominated Canada, Sierra Leone, and Australia.

In modern Canada before the Revolution, only Nova Scotia had many English-speaking settlers. Largely New Englanders, they were recruited after 1758 to repopulate the region forcibly taken from the exiled Acadians. During and after the Revolution, loyalist families moved to the region that is now Canada, which remained under British rule. Some exiles settled in Quebec as well. In a few years, the loyalist refugees transformed the former French colony, laying the foundation of the modern bilingual (but majority English-speaking) Canadian nation.

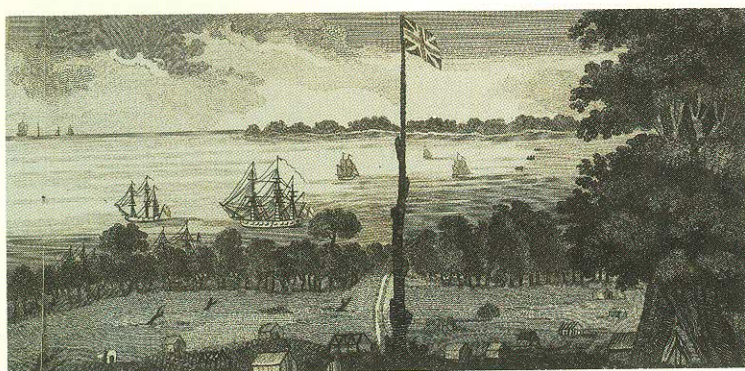
Sierra Leone, too, was founded by colonial exiles—African Americans who had fled to the British army during the war, many of whom ended up in London. Seeing the refugees' poverty, charitable merchants—calling themselves the Committee for Relief of the Black Poor—developed a plan to resettle the African Americans elsewhere. The refugees rejected the Bahamas, fearing reenslavement there. They accepted a return to their ancestors' homeland. In early 1787, vessels carrying about four hundred settlers reached Sierra Leone in West Africa, where representatives of the Black Poor Committee acquired land. The first years were difficult, and many died of disease and deprivation. But in 1792, they were joined by several thousand other

loyalist African Americans who had originally moved to Nova Scotia. The influx ensured the colony's survival; it remained a part of the British Empire until its independence in 1961.

At the Paris peace negotiations in 1782, American diplomats rejected British suggestions that the United States continue to serve as a dumping ground for convicts. Britain thus needed another destination for people sentenced for crimes such as theft, assault, and manslaughter. It sent them to Australia, claimed for Britain in 1770. Britain continued this practice until 1868, but voluntary migrants also came. The modern nation was created from a federation of separate colonial governments on January 1, 1901.

Thus, the founding event in the history of the United States links the nation to the formation of its northern neighbor and to new nations in West Africa and the Asian Pacific.

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden



An early view of the settlement of black loyalists in West Africa, the foundation of the modern nation of Sierra Leone.



National Library of Australia

Thomas Rowlandson, an English artist, sketched the boatloads of male and female convicts as they were being ferried to the ships that would take them to their new lives in the prison colony of Australia. Note the gibbet on the shore with two hanging bodies—symbolizing the fate these people were escaping.

Although bondspeople did not pose a serious threat early on, patriots turned rumors of slave uprisings to their advantage. In South Carolina, resistance leaders argued that the Continental Association would protect masters from their slaves. Undoubtedly, many wavering Carolinians were drawn into the revolutionary camp by fear that divisiveness among free people would encourage rebellion by bondspeople.

Patriots could never completely ignore the threats posed by loyalists, neutrals, slaves, and Indians. Occasionally backcountry militiamen refused to turn out for duty on the seacoast because they feared Indian attacks in their absence. Sometimes southern troops refused to serve in the North because they would not leave their regions unprotected against a slave insurrection. But the impossibility of a large-scale slave revolt, coupled with dissension in Indian communities and the patriots' successful campaign to disarm and neutralize loyalists, ensured that the revolutionaries control the countryside.

War and Independence

How did Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* help reshape the war's purpose?

On January 27, 1775, Lord Dartmouth, secretary of state for America, wrote to General Thomas Gage in Boston, urging decisive action. Opposition could not be "very formidable," Dartmouth wrote.

Battles of Lexington and Concord

In response, on April 14 Gage sent an expedition to confiscate colonial military stockpiles at Concord. Bostonians dispatched two messengers, William Dawes and Paul Revere (later joined by Dr. Samuel Prescott), to rouse the countryside. When the British vanguard of several hundred men approached Lexington at dawn on April 19, they found just seventy militiamen—about half of the town's adult male population—mustered on the common. Realizing they could not halt the redcoats' advance, the Americans' commander ordered his men to withdraw. But as they dispersed, a shot rang out; British soldiers then fired. When they stopped, eight Americans lay dead, and another ten wounded. The British moved on to nearby Concord.

There, the militia contingents were larger. At the North Bridge, three British men were killed and nine wounded. Thousands fired from houses and from behind trees as British forces retreated to Boston. By day's end, the redcoats had suffered 272 casualties, including 70 deaths. The arrival of reinforcements and the American militia's lack of coordination prevented heavier British losses. The patriots suffered just 93 casualties.

First Year of War

By the evening of April 20, thousands of American militiamen had gathered around Boston, summoned by local committees. Many stayed only until spring planting, but those who remained were organized into formal units. Officers under the command of General Artemas Ward of the Massachusetts militia ordered that latrines be dug, water supply protected, supplies purchased, military discipline enforced, and defensive fortifications constructed.

For nearly a year, the two armies sat and stared at each other across siege lines. The redcoats attacked only once, on June 17, when they drove the Americans from trenches atop Breed's Hill in Charlestown. In that misnamed Battle of Bunker Hill,



Concord Museum, Concord, MA www.concordmuseum.org.

In 1775, an unknown artist painted the redcoats entering Concord. The fighting at North Bridge, which occurred just a few hours after this triumphal entry, signaled the start of open warfare between Britain and the colonies.

the British incurred their greatest wartime losses: over 800 wounded and 228 killed. The Americans lost less than half that number.

During the same eleven-month period, patriots captured the British Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain, acquiring much-needed cannon. Trying to bring Canada into the war, patriots also mounted a northern campaign that ended in disaster at Quebec in early 1776 when troops were ravaged by smallpox. But the long lull in fighting between the main armies at Boston during the war's first year gave both sides time to regroup and strategize.

British Strategy

Lord North and his new American secretary, Lord George Germain, made three central assumptions about the war.

First, they concluded that patriot forces could not withstand the assaults by trained British regulars. Convinced that the 1776 campaign would decide the war, they dispatched Great Britain's largest force ever: 370 transport ships carrying 32,000 troops and tons of supplies, accompanied by 73 naval vessels and 13,000 sailors. Among them were thousands of professional German soldiers, who had been hired out to Britain.

Second, British officials and army officers adopted a conventional strategy of capturing major American cities and defeating the rebel army with minimal casualties. Third, they assumed that military victory would achieve the colonies' allegiance.

All three assumptions proved false. London officials also missed the significance of the American population's dispersal over an area 1,500 miles long and more than 100 miles wide. Although Britain would control each of America's largest ports at some time during the war, less than 5 percent of the population lived in those cities. Furthermore, with a vast coastline, commerce was easily rerouted. Hence, the loss of cities did little to damage the American cause.

Most of all, London officials did not initially understand that military triumph would not necessarily bring political victory. Securing the colonies would require Americans to return to their original allegiance. After 1778, the ministry strategized to achieve that through the expanded use of loyalist forces and the restoration of civilian authority in occupied areas. But the policy came too late.

Second Continental Congress

Britain had a bureaucracy to supervise the war; Americans had only the Second Continental Congress. The delegates who convened in Philadelphia on May 10, 1775, had to assume the mantle of intercolonial government. As the summer passed, Congress organized the colonies for war. It authorized the printing of money, established a committee to supervise foreign relations, strengthened the militia, and ordered that thirteen frigates be built for a new Continental Navy (eventually, it comprised forty-seven vessels). Most important, it created the Continental Army.

Until Congress met, the Massachusetts provincial congress supervised Ward and the militiamen encamped at Boston. But that army, composed of men from all over New England, heavily drained local resources. Consequently, Massachusetts asked the Continental Congress to direct the army. Initially, Congress had to choose a commander-in-chief. John Adams proposed the appointment of a Virginian "whose Skill and Experience as an Officer, whose independent fortune, great Talents and excellent universal Character, would command the Approbation of all America":

George Washington. The Congress unanimously concurred.

George Washington: American military leader and the first President of the United States (1789–1797).

George Washington

Washington had not participated prominently in the prerevolutionary agitation. Devoted to the American cause, he was dignified, conservative, and a man of integrity. The younger son of a Virginia planter, Washington did not expect to inherit substantial property and planned to work as a surveyor. But the early death of his older brother and his marriage to the wealthy widow Martha Custis made George Washington one of Virginia's largest slaveholders. After his mistakes early in the Seven Years War, he had repaired his reputation by rallying the troops and maintaining calm during Braddock's defeat in 1755.

Washington had remarkable stamina and leadership ability. More than six feet tall when most men were five inches shorter, he displayed a commanding presence. Even a loyalist admitted that Washington could "atone for many demerits by the extraordinary coolness and caution which distinguish his character."

British Evacuate Boston

Washington took command of the army surrounding Boston in July 1775. By March 1776, when the arrival of cannon from Ticonderoga enabled him to pressure the redcoats, the army was prepared. Yet an assault on Boston proved unnecessary. Sir William Howe, the new

commander, wanted to transfer his men to New York City. The patriots' cannon decided the matter. On March 17, the British and many loyalist allies abandoned Boston forever.

At war for months, American leaders denied seeking a break with Great Britain until a pamphlet published in January 1776 advocated that move.

Common Sense

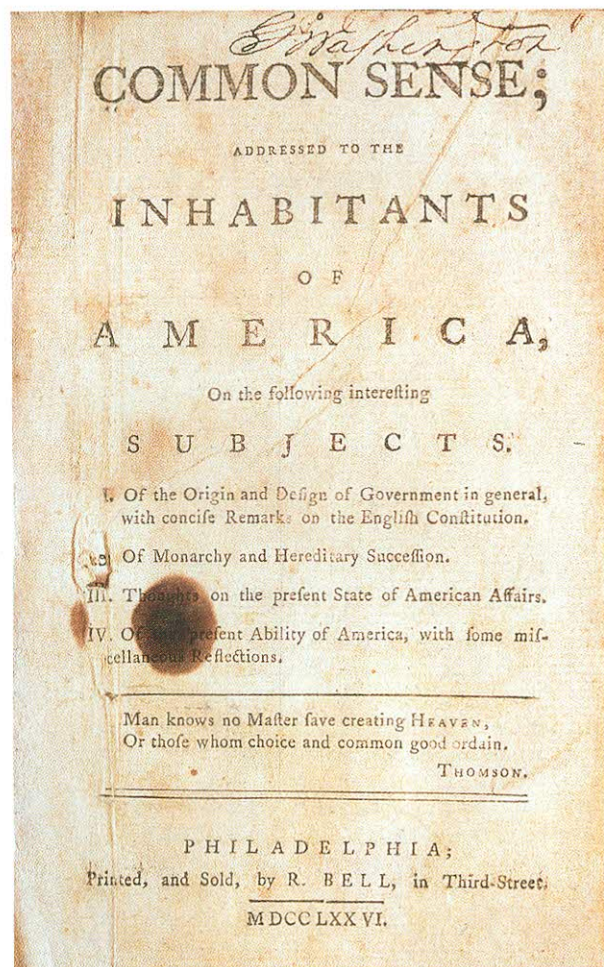
Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* immediately sold tens of thousands of copies. The author, a radical English printer who had lived in America only since 1774, called for independence and challenged many common American assumptions about government and the colonies' relationship to Britain. He advocated the establishment of a republic, a government by the people with no king or nobility. Paine insisted that Britain had exploited the colonies. And for the frequent assertion that an independent America would be weak and divided, he substituted an unlimited confidence in America's strength once freed from European control.

By late spring, independence had become inevitable. On May 10, the Second Continental Congress recommended that individual colonies form new governments, replacing colonial charters with state constitutions. On June 7, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, seconded by John Adams, introduced the crucial resolution: "that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States ... that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." Congress did not immediately adopt Lee's resolution, postponing a vote until early July. Meanwhile, a five-man committee—including Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin—was directed to draft a declaration of independence.

Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence

The committee assigned primary responsibility for writing the declaration to thirty-four-year-old Thomas Jefferson, who was known for his eloquence. A Virginia lawyer and member of the House of Burgesses, Jefferson was educated at the College of William and Mary and in the law offices of a prominent attorney. His knowledge of history and political theory was evident in the declaration and his draft of the Virginia state constitution. While Jefferson wrote and debated in Philadelphia, his beloved wife Martha suffered a miscarriage at their home, Monticello. Not until after her 1782 death from complications following the birth of their sixth (but only third surviving) child, did Jefferson fully commit himself to public service.

Common Sense: A pamphlet written by Thomas Paine that advocated freedom from British rule.



Boston Athenaeum

That America's patriot leaders read Thomas Paine's inflammatory *Common Sense* soon after it was published in early 1776 is indicated by this first edition, owned by George Washington himself.

Declaration of

Independence: Proposed by the Second Continental Congress, this document proclaimed independence of the Thirteen Colonies from British rule.

The draft of the declaration reached Congress on June 28, 1776. The delegates voted for independence four days later, then debated the wording of the declaration for two more days, adopting it with changes on July 4. The **Declaration of Independence** (see Appendix) concentrated on George III, accusing the king of attempting to destroy representative government in the colonies and of oppressing Americans.

The declaration's chief long-term importance lay in the statements of principle that have since as the American ideal: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government."

When the delegates in Philadelphia voted to accept the Declaration of Independence, they were committing treason. Therefore, when they concluded with the assertion that they "mutually pledge[d] to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor," they spoke the truth.

The Struggle in the North

What was France's role in the American Revolution?

In late June 1776, the first ships carrying Sir William Howe's troops from Halifax appeared off the New York coast (see Map 6.1). On July 2, redcoats landed on Staten Island, but Howe waited for more troops from England before attacking, giving Washington time to march his army of seventeen thousand from Boston to defend Manhattan.

New York and New Jersey

Still inexperienced, Washington and his men made major mistakes, losing battles at Brooklyn Heights and on Manhattan Island. The city fell to the British, who captured nearly three thousand American soldiers. Washington retreated into Pennsylvania, and British forces took most of New Jersey. Occupying troops met little opposition; the revolutionary cause appeared in disarray. "These are the times that try men's souls," wrote Thomas Paine in his pamphlet *The Crisis*.

The British then forfeited their advantage as redcoats in New Jersey went on a rampage of rape and plunder. In retaliation, Washington crossed the Delaware River at night to attack a Hessian encampment at **Trenton** early on December 26. The patriots captured more than nine hundred Hessians and killed another thirty; only three Americans were wounded. Days later, Washington attacked at Princeton. Having gained command of the field, Washington set up winter quarters at Morristown, New Jersey.

Trenton: New Jersey battle where Washington took almost a thousand Hessian prisoners on December 26. It significantly boosted the flailing morale of Washington's troops to fight on.

Campaign of 1777

British strategy for 1777 aimed to isolate New England from the other colonies. General John Burgoyne would lead redcoat and Indian invaders down the Hudson River from Canada to rendezvous near Albany with a similar force moving east. The combined forces would then link up with Howe's troops in New York City. But Howe was planning to capture Philadelphia. In 1777, this independent operation of British armies in America ultimately resulted in disaster.

Howe took Philadelphia, but he delayed before beginning the campaign, took six weeks to transport his troops by sea, and ended up only 40 miles closer to Philadelphia than when he started. This gave Washington time to prepare a defense. At Brandywine Creek and Germantown, the two armies clashed. Although the British won both engagements, the Americans handled themselves well. The redcoats captured Philadelphia in late September, but to little effect. The campaign season was nearly over; the revolutionary army had gained confidence in itself and its leaders; and, far north, Burgoyne was being defeated.

MAP 6.1

The War in the North, 1775–1778

The early phase of the Revolutionary War was dominated by British troop movements in the Boston area, the redcoats' evacuation to Nova Scotia in the spring of 1776, and the subsequent British invasion of New York and New Jersey.

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Saratoga: A turning point in the American Revolution. The American victory in this battle convinced France that Americans could win the war, leading France to ally with the colonists.

Mary and Joseph

Brant: Mohawk leaders who supported the British.

Burgoyne and his men had set out from Montreal in mid-June. An easy triumph at Fort Ticonderoga in July was followed in August by two setbacks—the redcoats and Indians marching east along the Mohawk River turned back after a battle at Oriskany, New York; and in a clash near Bennington, Vermont, American militiamen nearly wiped out eight hundred of Burgoyne's German mercenaries. After several skirmishes, Burgoyne was surrounded near **Saratoga**, New York. On October 17, 1777, he surrendered his force of more than six thousand men.

Iroquois Confederacy Splinters

Mary and Joseph Brant, believed the Iroquois should ally with the British to protect their territory from land-hungry colonists. The Brants won over the Senecas, Cayugas, and Mohawks, but the Oneidas preferred the American side and brought the Tuscaroras with them. The Onondagas split into three factions, one on each side and one supporting neutrality. At Oriskany, some Oneidas and Tuscaroras joined patriot militiamen in fighting their Iroquois brethren, shattering three hundred years of friendship.

The collapse of Iroquois unity had significant consequences. In 1778, British-allied warriors raided frontier villages in Pennsylvania and New York. The Americans the following summer dispatched an expedition to burn Iroquois crops and settlements. The devastation led many bands to seek food and shelter north of the Great Lakes during the winter of 1779–1780. Many Iroquois settled permanently in Canada.

Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga overjoyed patriots and discouraged loyalists and Britons. Most important, the American victory at Saratoga drew France into the conflict. The American Revolution gave the French an opportunity to avenge their defeat in the Seven Years' War. Even before Benjamin Franklin arrived in Paris in late 1776, France covertly supplied the revolutionaries with military necessities. Indeed, 90 percent of the gunpowder Americans used during the war's first two years came from France, transported via the French Caribbean island of Martinique.

Franco-American Alliance of 1778

Benjamin Franklin worked tirelessly to strengthen ties between the two nations. Adopting a plain style of dress, Franklin played on the French image of Americans as virtuous farmers. In 1778, the countries signed two treaties. In the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, France recognized American independence and established trade ties. In the Treaty of Alliance, France and the United States promised—assuming that France would declare war on Britain, which it soon did—that neither would negotiate peace without consulting the other. France also abandoned claims to Canada and to North American territory east of the Mississippi River. The most visible symbol of Franco-American cooperation was the Marquis de Lafayette, a young nobleman who volunteered for service with George Washington in 1777 and fought with American forces.

With the alliance, France aided Americans openly, sending troops, naval vessels, arms, ammunition, clothing, and blankets. Second, Britain now had to fight France

in the Caribbean and elsewhere. Spain's entry into the war in 1779 as an ally of France (but not of the United States) transformed the Revolution into a global war. The French aided the Americans throughout the conflict, but in its last years that assistance proved vital.

Life in the Army and on the Home Front

Only in the first months of the war was the revolutionaries' army manned primarily by the semi-mythical "citizen-soldier," who exchanged his plow for a gun. After a few months, early arrivals went home. They reenlisted only briefly when the contending armies neared their farms and towns. In such militia units, elected officers and the soldiers who chose them reflected social hierarchies in their regions of origin, yet also retained a flexibility absent from the Continental Army, composed of men in statewide units led by appointed officers.

How was the Continental Army staffed?

Continental Army

Continental soldiers, unlike militiamen, were primarily young, single, or propertyless men who enlisted for long periods or for the war's duration, partly for monetary bonuses or land. They saw in military service an opportunity to assert their masculinity and claim postwar citizenship and property-owning rights. As the fighting dragged on, bonuses grew larger. To meet their quotas, towns and states recruited, including recent immigrants; about 45 percent of Pennsylvania soldiers were of Irish origin, and about 13 percent were German.

Dunmore's proclamation led Congress in January 1776 to modify an earlier policy prohibiting African Americans in the regular army. Recruiters in northern states turned increasingly to bondsmen, who were often promised freedom after the war. Southern states initially resisted, but later all except Georgia and South Carolina enlisted black soldiers. Approximately five thousand African Americans served in the Continental Army, typically in racially integrated units where they were assigned tasks that others shunned, such as burying the dead or foraging for food. Overall, they composed about 10 percent of the regular army, but they seldom served in militia units.

American wives and widows of poor soldiers came to the army with their menfolk because they were too impoverished to survive alone. Such camp followers—roughly 3 percent of the total number of troops—worked as cooks, nurses, and launderers for rations and low wages. The women, along with civilian commissaries and militiamen who floated in and out at irregular intervals, were difficult to manage, especially because they were not subject to military discipline.

Officer Corps

The officers of the Continental Army developed intense pride and commitment to the revolutionary cause. The realities of warfare were often dirty and corrupt, but officers drew strength from a developing image of themselves as professionals who sacrificed for the nation. When Benedict Arnold, an officer who fought heroically for the patriot cause early in the war, defected to the British, they made his name a metaphor for villainy.

Unlike poor women, officers' wives did not travel with the army but made extended visits while the troops were in camp (usually during the winters). They



Courtesy of Mae Theresa Bonitto

Barzillai Lew, a free African American born in Groton, Massachusetts, in 1743, served in the Seven Years' War before enlisting with patriot troops in the American Revolution. An accomplished fifer, Lew fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Like other freemen in the north, he cast his lot with the revolutionaries, in contrast to southern bondspeople, who tended to favor the British.

Lord Cornwallis: British general whose surrender at Yorktown in 1781 effectively ended the Revolutionary War.



Link to excerpts from the journal of J. P. Martin, a revolutionary soldier.

brought food, clothing, and household furnishings to make their stay more comfortable, and they entertained each other and their menfolk at teas, dinners, and dances. Socializing created friendships later renewed when some of their husbands became the new nation's leaders.

Hardship and Disease Ordinary soldiers endured more hardships than officers. Wages were low, and often the army could not meet the payroll. Rations (a daily standard allotment of bread, meat, vegetables, milk, and beer) did not always appear, and men had to forage for food. Clothing and shoes were often of poor quality. When conditions deteriorated, troops threatened mutiny (though only a few followed through) or, more often, deserted. Punishments for desertion or offenses such as theft and assault were harsh; convicted soldiers were sentenced to hundreds of lashes, whereas officers were publicly humiliated, deprived of their commission, and discharged in disgrace.

Endemic disease in the camps—dysentery, fevers, and, early in the war, smallpox—made matters worse. Most native-born colonists had neither been exposed to smallpox nor inoculated and were vulnerable when smallpox spread through the northern countryside in early 1774. The disease ravaged Bostonians during the British occupation, troops attacking Quebec in 1775–1776, and the African Americans who fled to join Lord Dunmore (1775) or **Lord Cornwallis** (1781). Most British sol-

diers had already survived smallpox (which was endemic in Europe), so it posed little threat to redcoats.

Recognizing smallpox's potential to decimate the revolutionaries' ranks, Washington ordered that the regular army be inoculated in 1777. Some would die from the risky procedure and survivors would be incapacitated for weeks. Yet inoculation, coupled with the increasing numbers of foreign-born (and mostly immune) enlistees, helped to protect Continental soldiers later in the war, contributing significantly to the eventual American victory.

American soldiers and sailors captured by the British endured great suffering, especially those held in makeshift prisons or on prison ships near Manhattan. Because Britain refused to recognize the legitimacy of the American government, Redcoat officers regarded the patriots as rebellious traitors rather than as prisoners of war with a right to decent treatment. The meager rations and crowded, unsanitary conditions meant that half to two-thirds of the prisoners fell victim to disease, especially dysentery. Particularly notorious was the hulk *Jersey*; survivors reported fighting over scraps of disgusting food, being covered with "bloody

and loathesome filth,” and each day having to remove the bodies of five to ten of their dead comrades.

Home Front

Men who enlisted in the army, served in Congress, or were captured were absent for long periods of time. Their womenfolk, who previously had handled only the “indoor affairs” of the household, thus shouldered the “outdoor affairs” as well. John and Abigail Adams took great pride in Abigail’s developing skills as a “farmeress.” She stopped calling the farm “yours” in letters to her husband and began referring to it as “ours.” Most women, like Abigail, did not work in the fields but supervised field workers and managed their families’ finances.

Wartime disruptions affected all Americans. People suffered from shortages of necessities like salt, soap, and flour. Severe inflation added to the country’s woes. Soldiers on both sides plundered farms and houses, looking for food or salable items; they burned fence rails and took horses and oxen to transport their wagons. Moreover, they carried smallpox and other diseases wherever they went. Women had to decide whether to deliberately risk their children’s lives by inoculating them with smallpox or to chance youngsters’ contracting the disease “in the natural way.” Many, including Abigail Adams, chose the former were relieved when their children survived.

Victory in the South

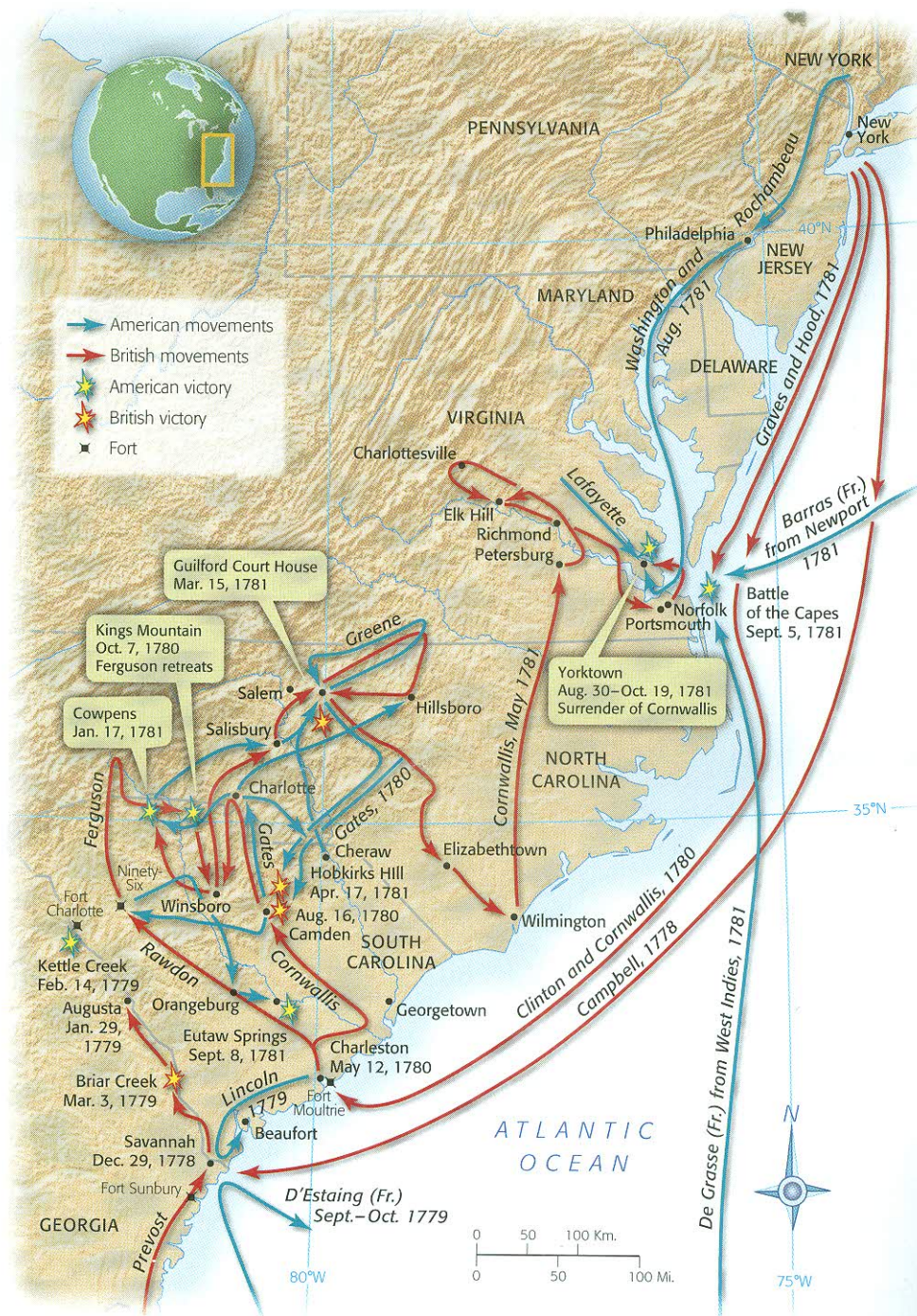
In early 1778, in the wake of the Saratoga disaster, British military leaders reassessed their strategy. Loyalist exiles in London persuaded them to shift the field of battle southward, contending that loyal southerners would welcome the redcoat army as liberators. Southern colonies that had returned to friendly civilian control could serve as bases for attacking the middle and northern states.

What risky—but ultimately wise—move did American diplomats make in negotiating peace with England after the American Revolution?

South Carolina and the Caribbean

Sir Henry Clinton, who replaced Howe, oversaw the regrouping of British forces. He ordered the evacuation of Philadelphia in June 1778 and sent a convoy that captured the French Caribbean island of St. Lucia, thereafter a key British base. He also dispatched a small expedition to Georgia. When Savannah and then Augusta fell into British hands, Clinton became convinced that a southern strategy would succeed. In late 1779, he sailed from New York to besiege Charleston, the most important Southern city (see Map 6.2). Although afflicted by smallpox, Americans trapped there held out for months. On May 12, 1780, General Benjamin Lincoln surrendered the entire southern army—fifty-five thousand men. The redcoats then spread through South Carolina, establishing garrisons at key points. Hundreds of South Carolinians proclaimed renewed loyalty to the Crown.

Success of the southern campaign depended on controlling the seas, for the British armies were widely dispersed and travel by land was difficult. The Royal Navy safely dominated the American coastline, but French naval power posed a threat. American privateers infested Caribbean waters, seizing cargoes to and from the British islands. Furthermore, after late 1778 France picked off those islands one by

**MAP 6.2****The War in the South**

The southern war—after the British invasion of Georgia in late 1778—was characterized by a series of British thrusts into the interior, leading to battles with American defenders in both North and South Carolina. Finally, after promising beginnings, Cornwallis's foray into Virginia ended with disaster at Yorktown in October 1781.

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one, including Grenada—second only to Jamaica in sugar production. In early 1781, the British captured St. Eustatius (the Dutch island that was the main conduit for moving military supplies from Europe to America). But the victory might have cost them the war, for Admiral Sir George Rodney failed to pursue the French fleet under Admiral François de Grasse when it sailed from the Caribbean to Virginia, where it played a major role in the **battle at Yorktown**.

The redcoats never established control of the areas they seized in South Carolina or Georgia. Patriot bands operated freely, and the fall of Charleston spurred them to greater exertions. Patriot women in four states formed the Ladies Association, raising money to buy shirts for needy soldiers. Recruiting efforts were stepped up.

Nevertheless, the war in South Carolina went badly for the patriots throughout 1780. At Camden in August, forces under Lord Cornwallis, the new British commander, defeated a reorganized southern army led by Horatio Gates. Thousands of enslaved African Americans joined the redcoats. Running away from their patriot masters individually and as families, they disrupted farming in the Carolinas and Georgia in 1780 and 1781. Tens of thousands of slaves were lost to their owners. Not all of them joined the British or won their freedom. Many served the redcoats as scouts or laborers in camps or occupied cities like New York.

Greene and the Southern Campaign

After the Camden defeat, Washington (who had to remain in the North to contain the British army occupying New York) appointed General Nathanael Greene to command

the southern campaign. Greene was appalled by conditions in South Carolina. His troops needed clothing, blankets, and food. He told a friend that incessant guerrilla warfare had “so corrupted the principles of the people that they think of nothing but plundering one another.”

Greene moved cautiously. He adopted a conciliatory policy toward the many Americans who had switched sides, an advantageous move in a region where people changed their allegiance up to seven times in less than two years. He ordered his troops to treat captives fairly and not loot loyalist property. He helped the shattered provincial congresses of Georgia and South Carolina reestablish civilian authority in the interior—a goal the British were never able to accomplish. With only sixteen hundred regulars, Greene could not afford to have frontier militia companies occupied in defending their homes from Indian attack. He accordingly pursued diplomacy to keep Indians out of the war. Although royal officials initially won some Indian allies, by war’s end only the Creeks remained allied with Great Britain.

Even before Greene took command of the southern army in December 1780, the tide was turning. In October, at King’s Mountain, a backcountry force defeated redcoats and loyalists. Then in January 1781, Greene’s aide Daniel Morgan routed the British regiment Tarleton’s Legion at Cowpens. Greene confronted British troops under Lord Cornwallis at Guilford Court House, North Carolina, in March. Although Cornwallis controlled the field at day’s end, most of his army was destroyed. Greene returned to South Carolina, where he forced the redcoats to retire to Charleston.

Surrender at Yorktown

Cornwallis headed north into Virginia, where he joined forces with redcoats commanded by the American traitor Benedict Arnold. He then withdrew to the peninsula between the York and James Rivers, where he fortified Yorktown. Washington moved more than seven

battle of Yorktown: The battle at Yorktown, Virginia, which resulted in the defeat of British military leader Lord Cornwallis and his surrender to George Washington.



Legacy for a People and a Nation

Revolutionary Origins

Many historians today would contend that the American Revolution was not truly “revolutionary,” if revolution means overturning an earlier power structure. The nation won its independence and established a republic, both radical events in the eighteenth century, but essentially the same men who led the colonies also led the new country (with the exception of British officials and appointees). In contrast, the nearly contemporary French Revolution witnessed the execution of the monarch and many aristocrats and a significant redistribution of authority. So the legacy of the American Revolution appears at once radical and conservative.

Throughout the more than two hundred years since the “Revolution,” varying groups have claimed to represent the spirit of the Revolution. People protesting discriminatory policies against women and minorities (usually “liberals”) invoke the “created equal” language of the Declaration of Independence. Left-wing organizations

rail against concentrations of wealth and power. Those protesting higher taxes (usually “conservatives” wanting a reduced role for government) often adopt the symbolism of the Boston Tea Party, as in the “tea-party” movement opposing Obama administration policies. Right-wing militias arm themselves, preparing to defend their homes and families against a malevolent government, just as they believe the minutemen did in 1775. Indeed, so-called minutemen have formed vigilante groups to guard the United States–Mexico border against illegal aliens. The message of the Revolution can be invoked to support extralegal demonstrations of any description, from invasions of military bases by antiwar protesters to demonstrations outside abortion clinics. But the Revolution can also be invoked to oppose such street protests, because—some would argue—in a republic, change should come peacefully, via the ballot box.

Just as Americans in the eighteenth century disagreed over the meaning of their struggle, so the legacy of revolution remains contested early in the twenty-first century both for the nation.

thousand French and American troops south from New York City. When De Grasse’s fleet arrived in time to defeat the Royal Navy vessels sent to relieve Cornwallis, the British general was trapped (see Map 6.2). On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered.

When news of the defeat reached London, Parliament voted to cease offensive operations in America, authorizing peace negotiations. Washington returned with the main army to the environs of New York, where in March 1783, his underpaid—and, they thought, underappreciated—officers threatened to mutiny unless Congress guaranteed them adequate compensation. Washington, warned in advance of the so-called Newburgh Conspiracy, defused the crisis with a well-reasoned and patriotic speech. At the end of the year, he resigned as commander-in-chief. Still, Washington established an enduring precedent: civilian control of the American military.

The war had been won, but at terrible cost. More than thirty-five thousand American men died, about one-quarter of them from battle and one-half while prisoners of the British. In the South, years of guerrilla warfare and the loss of thousands of runaway slaves shattered the economy. Indebtedness soared, and local governments were crippled, as few people could pay taxes. Some formerly wealthy planters descended into insolvency.

Chapter Review

Government by Congress and Committee

How did the first Continental Congress redefine America's relationship to England?

Congressmen meeting at the First Continental Congress in September 1774 were not ready for a complete break from England, but they did outline America's grievances, develop a resistance plan, and define America's relationship to Great Britain. Debate covered the spectrum of opinion from the radical call to obey only the king and not Parliament to the more conservative view that would have Parliament and a new American legislature jointly enacting colonial laws. In the end, the group compromised and agreed in the Declaration of Rights and Grievances to obey Parliament on a voluntary basis (rather than as subjects) and resist all taxes.

Contest in the Backcountry

Where did backcountry Indians' loyalties lie at the onset of the Revolution?

Initially, Indians were inclined to ally with Great Britain, given the hostility they experienced from European American settlers in the backcountry. But other chiefs had their doubts: England had abandoned them in vacating Fort Pitt years earlier. Both the Americans and the British sought a pledge of neutrality, and while some, such as the Iroquois, agreed, others, such as the Cherokees and Shawnees, attacked backcountry settlements in western Virginia and the Carolinas, hoping to use the conflict to regain lost land. A few Indian communities supported the Americans, but most others remained neutral or sporadically sided with the British.

Choosing Sides

How did colonists choose sides in the conflict with England?

Not everyone supported independence from Great Britain. In fact, only two-fifths of the European American population of the thirteen colonies were Patriots seeking to separate from England—among them small and middling farmers, Chesapeake gentry, merchants, city artisans, elected officeholders—and even then, their specific goals varied. Loyalists who opposed the break with England represented one-fifth of the population and included Anglican clergy; parishioners in the

North; tenant farmers; members of persecuted religious sects; backcountry southerners; ethnic minorities, especially Scots; and merchants who relied on British trade. Two-fifths of the population remained neutral, including pacifist groups such as the Quakers. Finally, free blacks in the North in the middle colonies took the Patriots' side, while southern bondpeople thought they'd have a better chance at personal freedom by allying with the British, who made such promises to runaway slaves.

War and Independence

How did Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* help reshape the war's purpose?

While Americans had been at war with Great Britain for months, most leaders denied seeking a complete break from England and focused on achieving some autonomy and a redress for various grievances. In January 1776, Paine's widely popular pamphlet called for independence and the establishment of a republic (a government by the people with no king or nobility). He argued that once America broke from European control, it would become strong and prosperous. Within months of its publication, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution that the colonies should be free and all ties to Great Britain dissolved and charged five men, among them Thomas Jefferson, to write a Declaration of Independence.

The Struggle in the North

What was France's role in the American Revolution?

Initially, France secretly sent military supplies to the Americans and regarded the revolution as a chance to avenge its defeat to Britain in the Seven Years' War. Once Americans won the Battle of Saratoga, the French openly supported them, sending naval vessels, ammunition, and troops. France's assistance proved vital to American victory in the final years of the war. Americans and the French signed two treaties in 1778, the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, which recognized American independence and set up trade relations; and the Treaty of Alliance, which promised neither side would negotiate peace (in conflicts with Britain) without consulting the other. France also abandoned claims to Canada and to North American territory east of the Mississippi River.

Treaty of Paris

Yet Americans rejoiced when they learned of the signing of the preliminary peace **treaty of Paris** in November 1782. American diplomats—Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams—ignored their instructions from Congress to be guided by France and negotiated directly with Great Britain. Their instincts were sound: the French government was more an enemy to Britain than a friend to the United States. French ministers worked secretly to prevent the establishment of a strong, unified government in America. Spain's desire to lay claim to the region between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River further complicated the negotiations. But the American delegates proved adept at power politics, achieving their main goal: independence as a united nation. Weary of war, the new British ministry made so many concessions that Parliament ousted it shortly after peace terms were approved.

The treaty, signed on September 3, 1783, granted independence to a nation named “the United States of America.” Generous boundaries delineated that new nation: to the north, approximately the present-day boundary with Canada; to the south, the 31st parallel (about the modern northern border of Florida); to the west, the Mississippi River. Florida, which Britain had acquired in 1763, reverted to Spain (see Map 7.2). The Americans also gained unlimited fishing rights off Newfoundland. In ceding so much land, Britain ignored the territorial rights of its Indian allies. British diplomats also poorly served loyalists and British merchants. The treaty's ambiguously worded clauses regarding prewar debts and the postwar treatment of loyalists proved impossible to enforce.

treaty of Paris: A treaty signed in 1783 when the British recognized American independence and agreed to withdraw all royal troops from the colonies.



Link to the petition of Connecticut slaves for freedom.

Summary

Having unified the disparate mainland colonies, the victorious Americans had claimed their place in the family of nations and forged a successful alliance with France. With an inexperienced army, they had defeated the world's greatest military power. They won only a few actual victories—most notably, at Trenton, Saratoga, and Yorktown—but their army survived to fight again. Ultimately, the Americans wore their enemy down.

In winning the war, the Americans abandoned their British identity, excluding from their new nation loyalist neighbors unwilling to break with the mother country. They established republican governments at state and national levels and created new national loyalties. They also claimed most of the territory east of the Mississippi River and south of the Great Lakes, thereby greatly expanding land open to settlement and threatening traditional Indian dominance of the interior.

In the future, Americans would face new challenges: ensuring the survival of their republic in a world dominated by the bitter rivalries among Britain, France, and Spain.

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Life in the Army and on the Home Front

How was the Continental Army staffed?

Only in the war's earliest months were battlefields filled by militia men, who left their fields to fight. After that, American leaders organized an army comprising young, single, often propertyless men who enlisted for a period of time for money or land. Towns were required to send their quota of soldiers and did so by enlisting everyone, including recent immigrants. Initially, African Americans were banned from the army, but by 1776, that prohibition was lifted, as northern recruiters promised slaves their freedom after the war. About five thousand enlisted, composing 10 percent of the army, though they were typically in segregated units and often given tasks others rejected, such as burying the dead. Wives and widows of poor soldiers often followed the camps, too, working as cooks, nurses, and launderers for rations or low wages.

Victory in the South

What risky—but ultimately wise—move did American diplomats make in negotiating peace with England after the American Revolution?

During the signing of a preliminary peace treaty in Paris in 1782 ending the American Revolution, diplomats Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams ignored Congress's instructions to let Paris lead the way.

Congress wanted them to follow the terms of the 1778 Treaty of Alliance, in which Americans promised not to make peace with England without consulting France first (and vice versa). Instead, the diplomats trusted their instincts and negotiated on their own. Turns out they were right: French ministers had secretly tried to prevent a strong government from taking hold in America. War-weary Britain not only gave America its independence, but also ceded vast tracts of land and unlimited fishing rights off Newfoundland.

Suggestions for Further Reading

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