

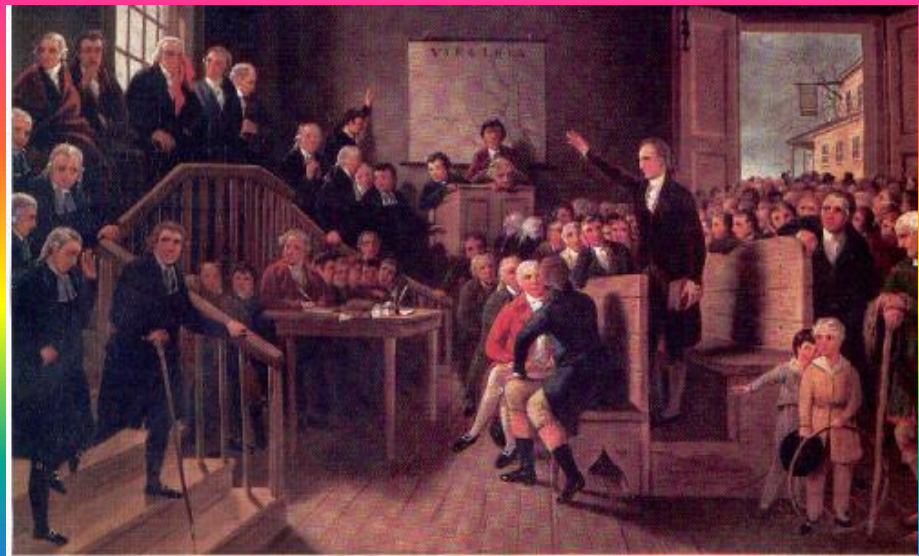
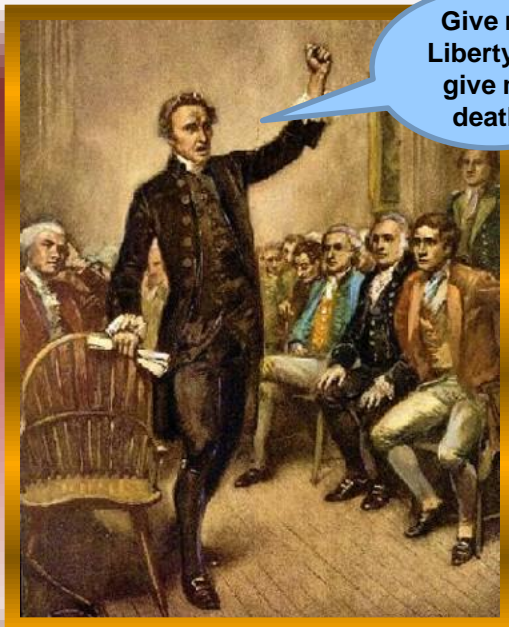
The American Revolution

(1775-1783)



Patrick Henry's words echoed through the St. John's church in Richmond, Virginia in Henry said:

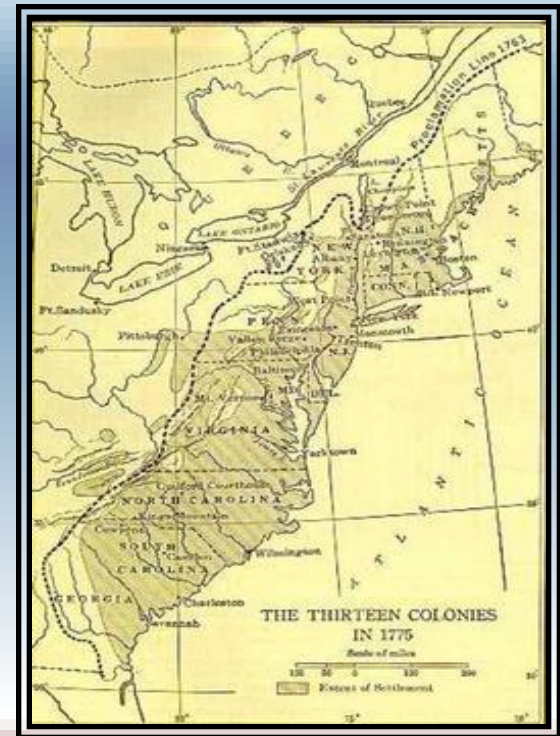
“Gentlemen may cry, ‘Peace! Peace!’ But there is no peace. The war has actually begun! Why do we stand here so still? Life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”



Patrick Henry and the Parson's Cause, 1763



We want
Freedom!



By March 1775, the thirteen colonies stood on the brink of war. Delegates across Virginia met at the church to debate what action to take. Some wanted to give Great Britain another chance. Others, like Henry, were ready to fight to protect their rights. Colonists across the land had to vote for a new nation. If they voted for a new nation this would mean a long hard war against the British.

1. Early Battles

As darkness fell, the redcoats (or British soldiers) sneaked into Boston from Lexington and Concord in April 1775. Along their route, the rebels (or colonists) fired their muskets at them. That night, the redcoats watched the rebels set up campfires around Boston. As the weeks and months passed there was a clear sign of the quarrel between Britain and the colonies would blaze into war!



The Green Mountain Boys

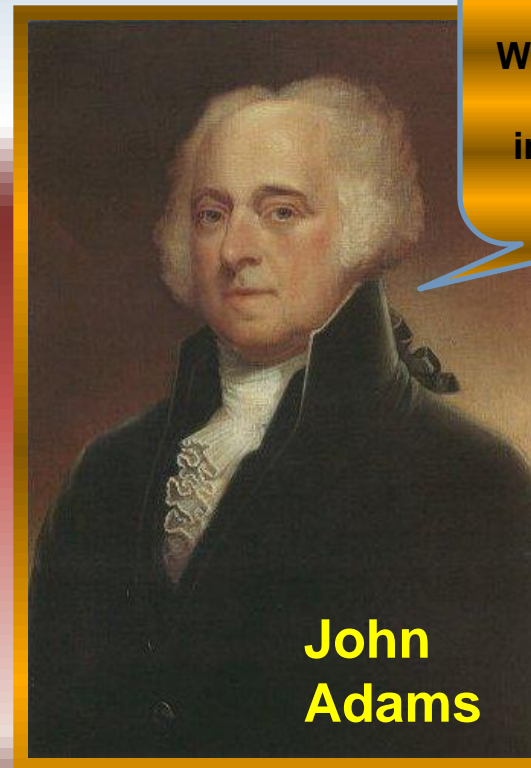
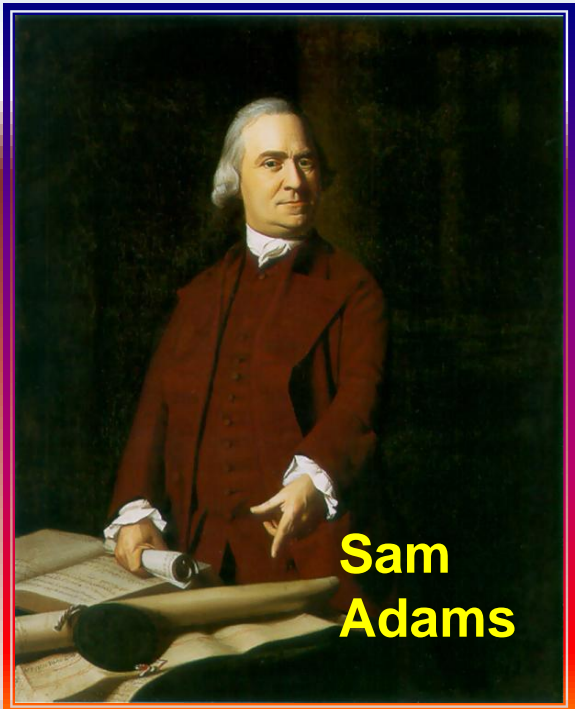
I am
Ethan
Allen



In 1775, the colonies did not have an army or even a united government. In each colony, rebels took daring actions. Ethan Allen, A Vermont blacksmith known for his temper, led a band of “Vermonters” in an attack. His rebels were called the Green Mountain Boys. In a surprise attack, Ethan Allen overpowered the redcoats at Fort Ticonderoga. Allen knew the fort had many cannons that the rebels badly needed. The rebels also gained a valuable supply of gunpowder. The commander surrendered to the rebels. This victory gave the Americans control of a key route into the Americas.

Last Efforts for Peace

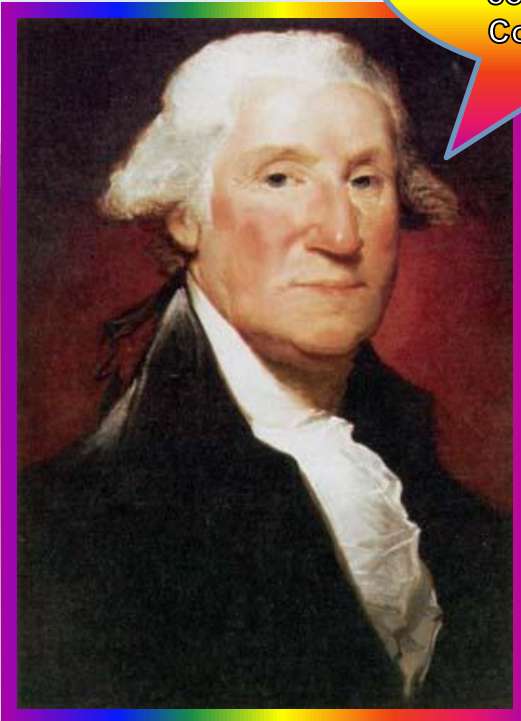
While the Green Mountain Boys celebrated their victory, delegates from the colonies met at the Second Continental Congress. Although fighting had begun, many Delegates did not want to break off from Great Britain. A few, including Sam Adams and John Adams secretly wanted the colonies to declare their independence.



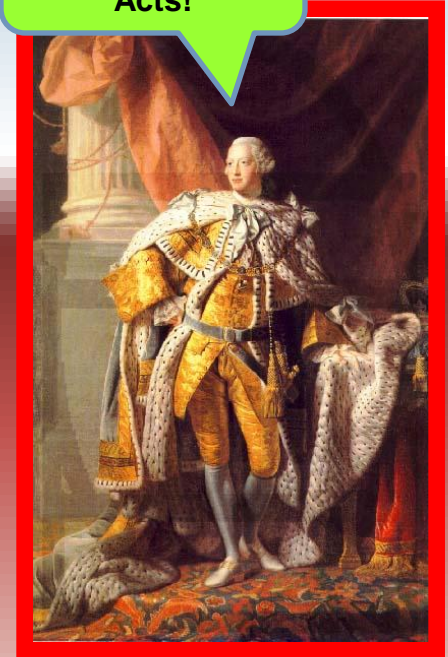
We must declare
our
independence!

The delegates got together and sent King George III a petition called the Olive Branch Petition. This petition declared their loyalty to the king and asked him to repeal the Intolerable Acts. At the same time the Congress took a bold step. They set up the Continental Army. John Adams proposed George Washington as the commander. The delegates voted Washington as the commander of the Continental Army.

I, George Washington, accept the position as the commander of the Continental Army!



I will not repeal the Intolerable Acts!



Strengths and Weaknesses



Washington had a difficult task ahead of him. He had to train the Continental Army. Washington was a brilliant leader. He won all the respect from his troops. They had few cannons, little gunpowder, and no navy.

The British, on the other hand, had highly trained, experienced troops. Britain's navy was the most powerful in the world. Britain's only problem was traveling and communication to their homeland 3,000 miles away.

Taking a Stand at Bunker Hill

While Washington was riding towards Boston the rebels tightened their circle around the city. The Americans wanted to keep the British from marching into the city. At sunset on June 16, 1775, Colonel William Prescott led 1,200 minutemen to take a position on Bunker Hill in Charleston, across the river from Boston.



Prescott ordered his men to dig trenches and be ready to fight at dawn. At sunrise, British General William Howe, spotted the Americans and ferried across the harbor with 2,400 redcoats. The soldiers moved slowly because they carried 125 pounds of equipment and because it was very hot. Soon the British soldiers approached the trenches. Because the Americans had very little gunpowder, they shouted, “Do not shoot until you see the whites of their eyes!”

Do not shoot
until you see
the whites of
their eyes!



Two times the British soldiers approached Bunker Hill and had to retreat. On the third day the British overtook the hill. The redcoats took charge of Bunker Hill and force the Americans to flee. It all, more than 1,000 redcoats lost their lives.



I am a monument in honor of the 1,000 soldiers that died in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The Battle of Bunker Hill was the first major battle of the American Revolution.



It proved that Americans could fight bravely. It also showed that the British would not be easy to defeat.

Redcoats Leave Boston

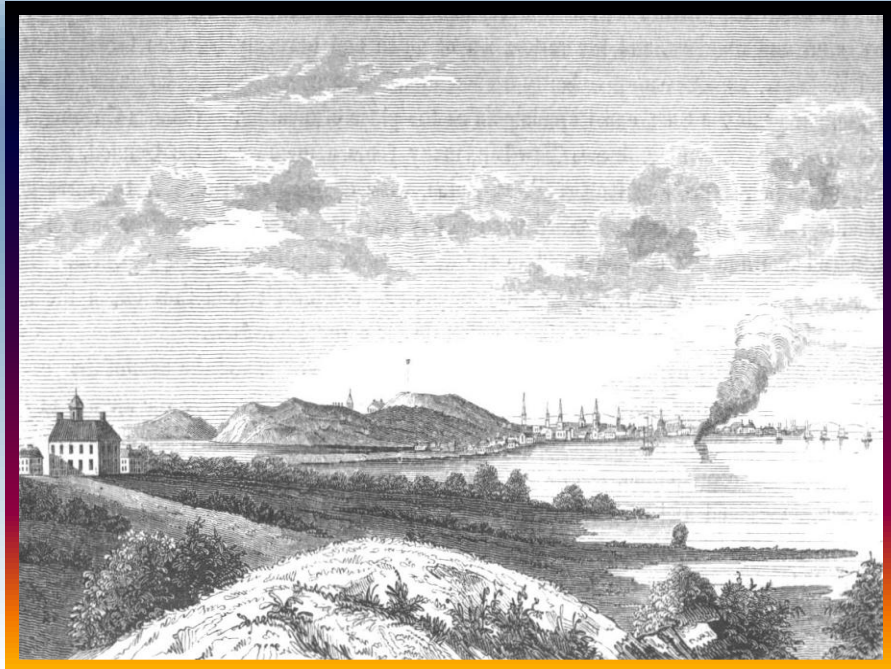
Washington finally reached Boston in midsummer. There he found about 1,600 troops camped in huts and tents. Washington quickly began to turn raw recruits into a trained army. His job was difficult because soldiers from different colonies did not trust one another. Slowly, Washington won the loyalty of all the troops.

Why is Washington loved by his troops?



We are fighting to take over the North Bridge

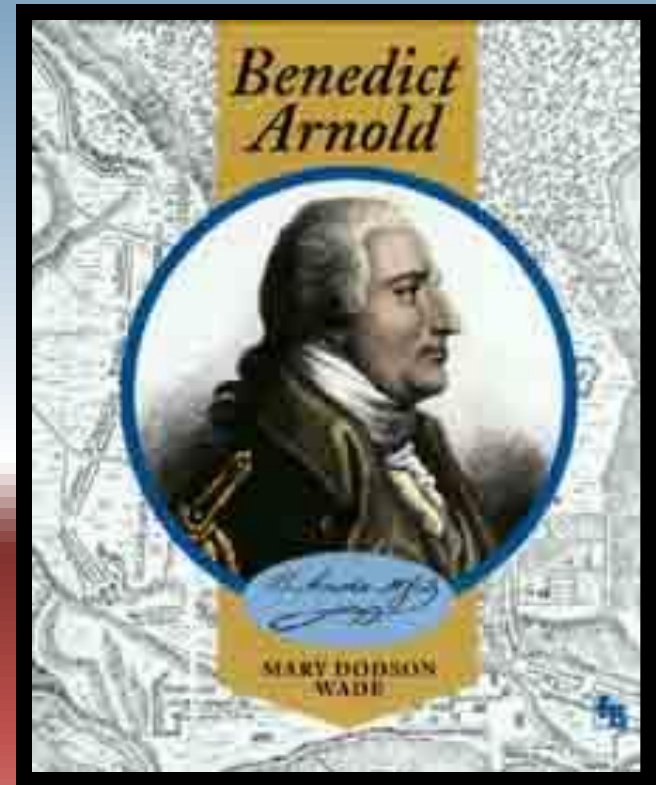




On January 1776, the Continental Army had a firm grip around Boston. Washington had cannons placed on Dorchester Heights overlooking Boston and its harbor. General Howe realized he could not overpower the Americans so they sailed to Boston and Halifax, Canada. Although the British troops left Boston, King George III ordered a blockade of all colonial ports. A blockade is a shutting down of a port to keep people or supplies from moving in or out.

March on Canada

Some Americans wanted to attack the British in Canada. They hoped to win support from the French Canadians who were unhappy with the British rule. In the fall of 1775, two American armies moved north into Canada. Richard Montgomery led one army from Fort Ticonderoga to Montreal. Montgomery seized the city in 1775 and moved towards Quebec. Benedict Arnold led the second army north through Maine. He was to join with the forces in Quebec. Arnold had a difficult time reaching Quebec. They had no food or supplies. The weather was also freezing. When he reached Quebec he was disappointed that the French would not support his army.



In a blinding snowstorm on December 31, 1775, the Americans attacked Quebec. Montgomery was killed, and Arnold was wounded. The Americans failed to take the city. They stayed outside the city until May 1776. Weakened by disease, the Americans withdrew from Canada, leaving the land for the British.



I was killed in the Battle of Quebec



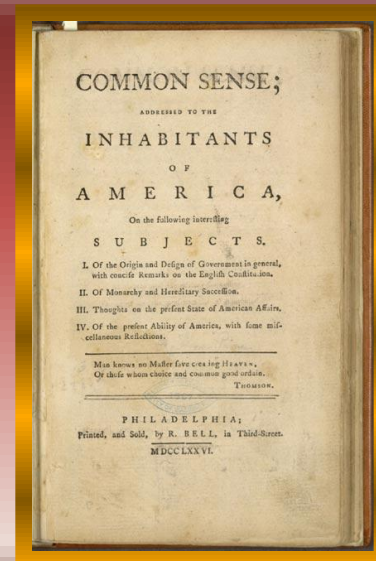
2. The Colonies Declare Independence

Many colonists spoke openly against King George III and Britain as of November 1775.

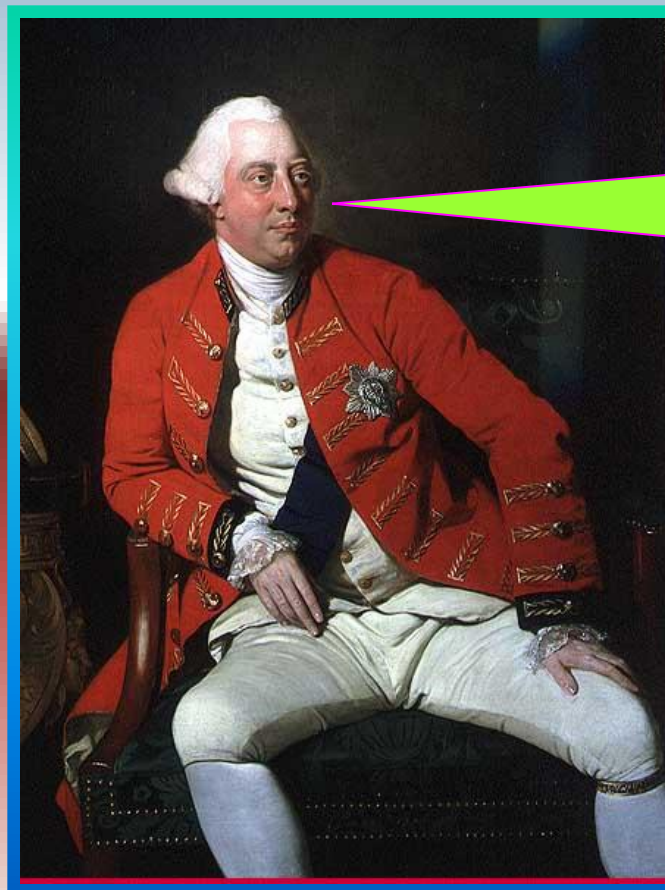
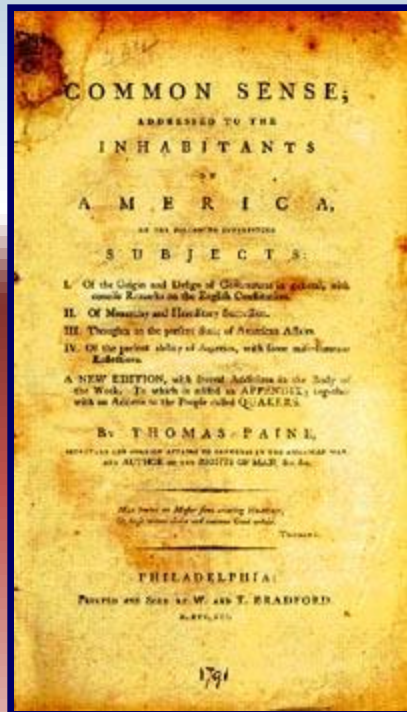
Common Sense

In January 1776, a pamphlet appeared on the streets of Philadelphia. In the pamphlet entitled “Common Sense,” Thomas Paine wrote of his arguments against the British King George III. Paine boldly urged the colonists to declare their independence.

I wrote
“Common
Sense”



He pointed out that there was nothing to gain if the colonists remained under British rule. Paine also pointed out that there is no need to have kings and queens as rulers. Since the King was treating the colonists poorly. In six months more than 500,000 copies of Common Sense were sold.



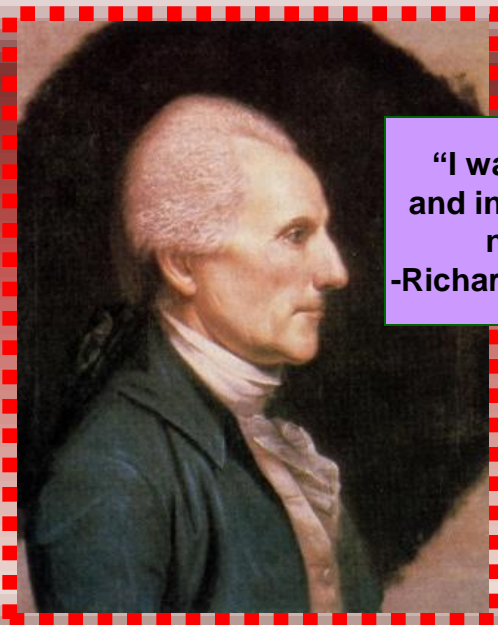
“I disagree with Common Sense”
-King George III

Click on the picture to learn more about King George III.

The Fateful Step

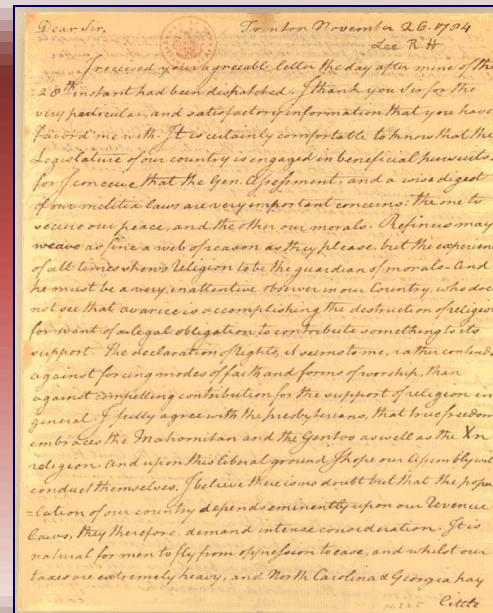
Many members of the Continental Congress were affected by Thomas Paine's pamphlet. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia offered a solution saying that *“these United Colonies are, and right ought to be free and independent States.”*

Delegates faced a difficult decision. If they declared independence, they would be hung as traitors. A traitor is a person who betrays his or her country.



“I want a free and independent nation”
-Richard Henry Lee

Click on the picture to learn more about Richard Henry Lee.



The delegates decided to take a step and declare their independence. John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Roger Sherman led The Continental Congress Committee. Their job was to tell the world the colonies were breaking away from Britain. John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress signed the declaration first. He signed it boldly saying, “There...I guess King George will be able to read that.”

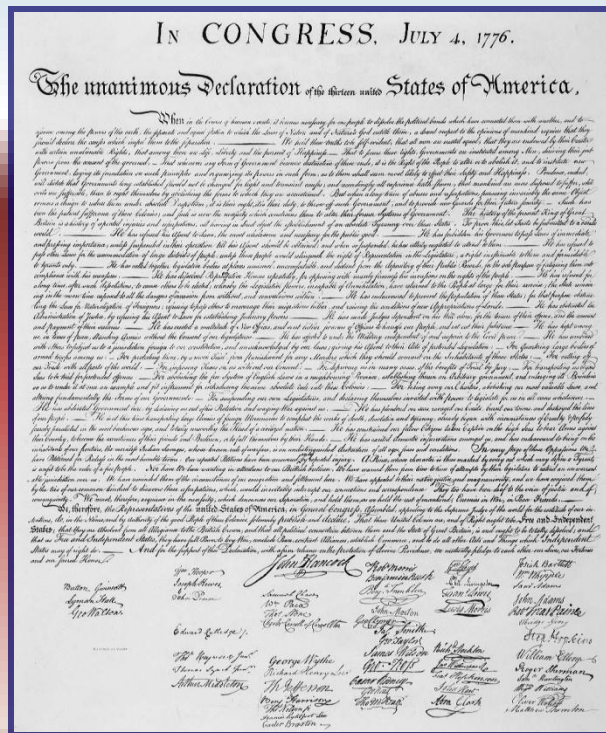
In late June, Jefferson completed writing the Declaration of Independence . It was then read to the Congress. On July 2, the Continental Congress voted that the 13 colonies “*were free and independent states.*”

Two days later, on **July 4, 1776**, the delegates accepted the Declaration of Independence. Since then Americans have celebrated July 4th as Independence Day.



The Declaration of Independence

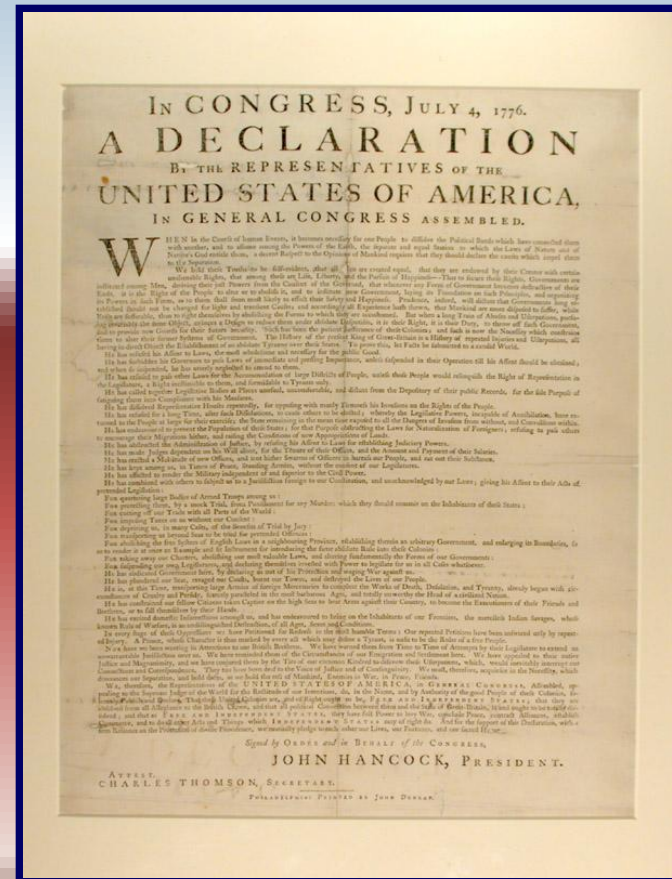
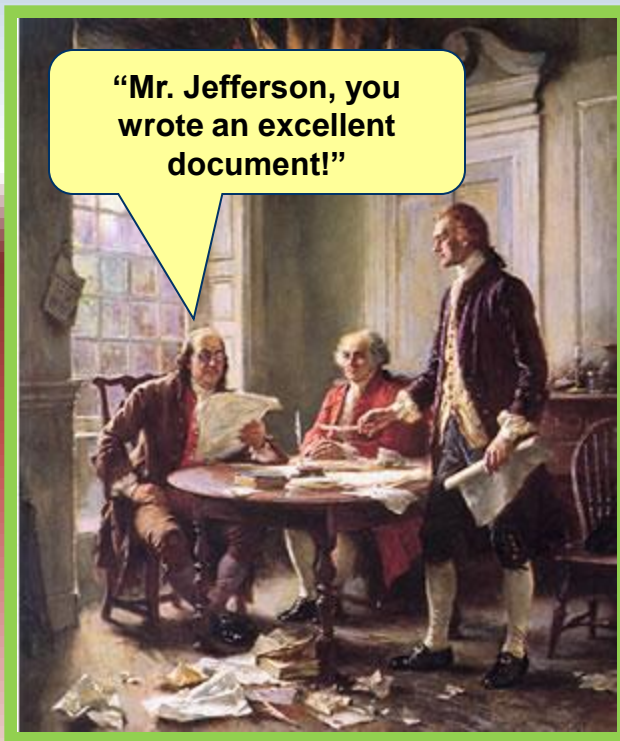
Across the colonies, people read the Declaration of Independence. The document has three main parts. The parts were titled **Basic Rights**, **British Wrongs** and **An Independent Nation**. Here are the three parts:

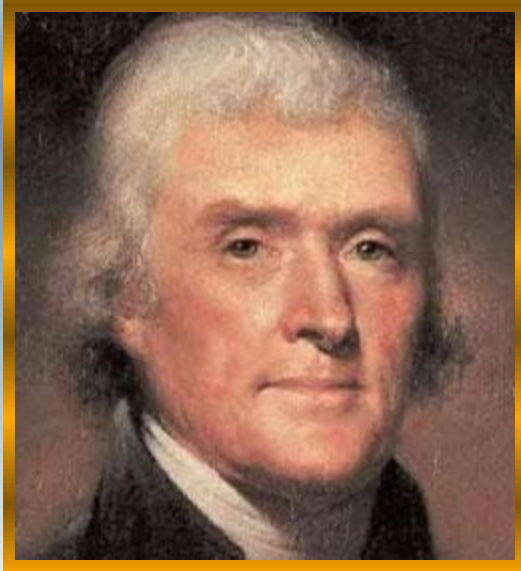


Click on the picture to learn more about the Declaration of Independence.

Part 1

Basic Rights: The first part describes the basic rights on which the nation was founded. In bold, Jefferson wrote, “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.”





Click on the pictures.



Part 2

British Wrongs: The second part of the Declaration lists the wrong doings committed by Britain. Jefferson showed how King George III had abused his power. He condemned the king for sending troops to the colonies.

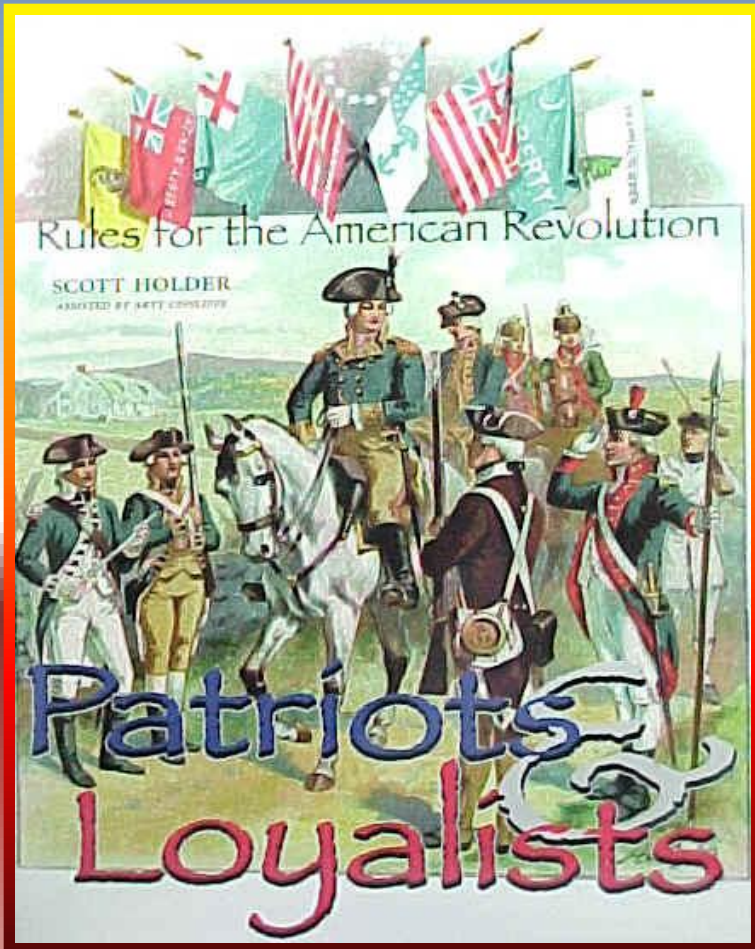
We are now
the United
States of
America



Part 3

An Independent Nation: The last part of the Declaration announced that the colonies became the “*United States of America.*” Ties with Britain were cut. The U.S.A. could now make friends with other nations.

Choosing Sides



Copies of the *Declaration of Independence* were printed on July 4, 1776 and distributed to the colonists. People's opinions were divided on the issue of the Declaration. Some people were Patriots, people who supported independence. Others were Loyalists, people that remained loyal to Britain. Many conflicts arose between the Loyalists and patriots in the colonies. Many of these conflicts became violent.

3. Struggles in the Middle Colonies

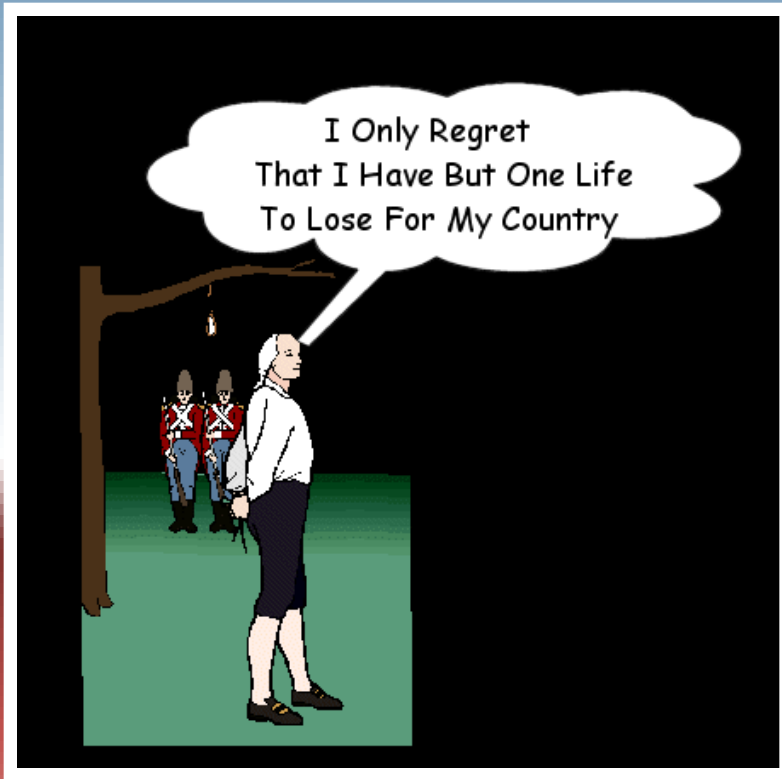
One morning in late June 1776, a British fleet of ships anchored offshore in New York Harbor. General Howe and his redcoats arrived in force. This was the start of a new stage in the war against Britain. These battles became known as the American Revolution.





Campaign in New York

The British had 44,000 troops including sailors. General George Washington only had 20,000 poorly trained troops. He also had no navy. Washington sent some troops to Long Island and others to Manhattan. In August, General Howe battled the American troops in The Battle of Long Island. In this battle more than 1,400 Americans were killed wounded or captured. The rest of the troops retreated to Manhattan. Through out the month of August, Washington's troops fought Howe's troops in a number of battles. The Americans retreated across the Delaware River to Pennsylvania.



In order to beat the British, Nathan Hale, a young Connecticut officer, slipped behind the British lines and returned with valuable information on general Howe's troops. He was captured and sentenced to death. At the moment of his death he said, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

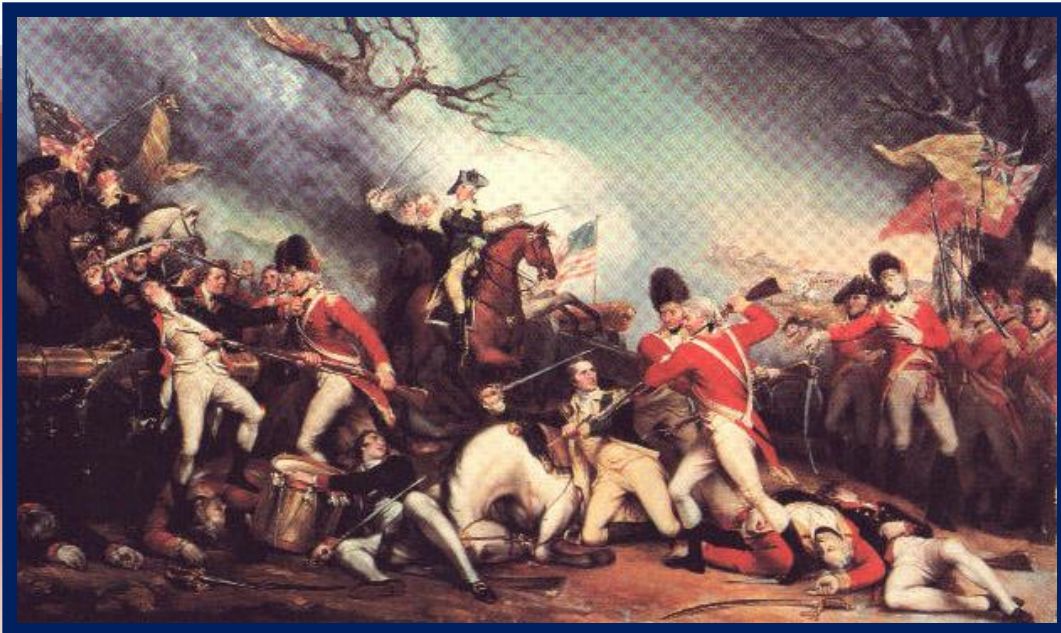
Months of fighting took a toll on the Continental Army. By December 1776, Washington described his troops as sick, dirty and poorly equipped. As a last resort, General Washington tried a surprise attack on Trenton. On Christmas night he sailed his troops across the icy Delaware River. The troops were frozen from the cold water and snow. Early on December 26, the Americans attacked the troops guarding Trenton. This battle became known as The Battle of Trenton. Washington took most of the troops guarding Trenton as prisoner. Washington conquered the city. He was cheered by his victory by his soldiers.



We are off to
attack Trenton! We
will win.



British General Charles Cornwallis set out to retake Trenton and capture Washington. Late on January 2, 1777, he saw Washington's campfires nearby and was ready to attack. Washington fooled Cornwallis by leaving the fires burning and slipping behind the British lines to attack Boston. In Princeton, Washington attacked the British and won another victory. These victories gave Americans new hope. Washington then moved to Morristown to rest for the winter.



A New British Strategy

In London, British officials were dismayed with the news that the British have not crushed the rebel American soldiers. King George III had a general. General John Burgoyne had a plan. His plan was to cut off the New England from the other colonies and win the war. He planed to attack the Americans in New York by marching through Albany.



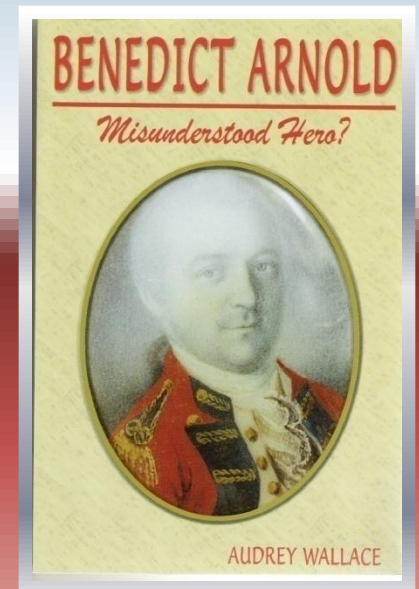
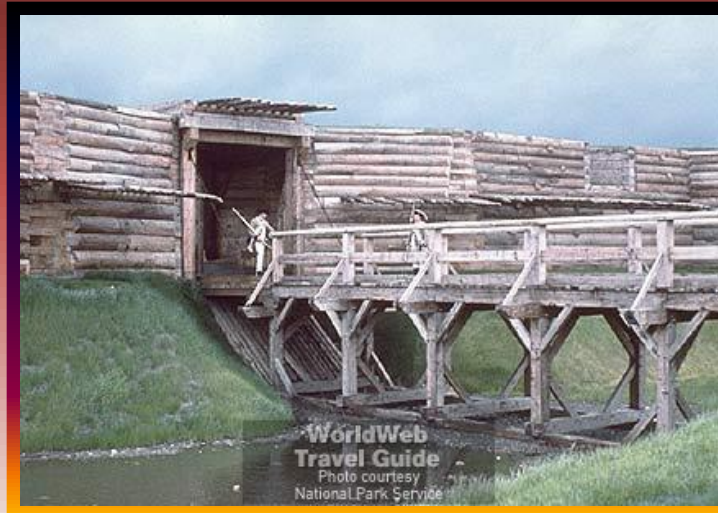
We will march through Albany to New York City!



Sketches of General Burgoyne at Saratoga, New York, October 1754, 1777
John Trumbull, 12' x 10'
Painted May 1, 1822

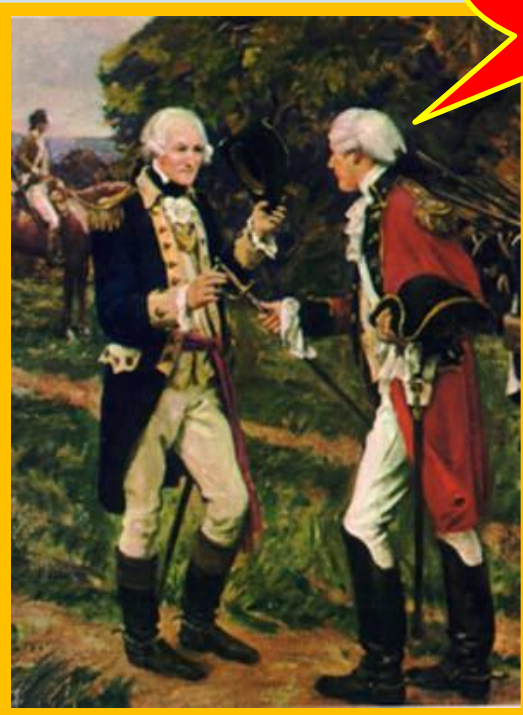
On July 1777, British General Howe sailed from New York to Chesapeake Bay. Despite Washington's effort to stop him, he captured Philadelphia. Then he went on to beat the Americans in Brandywine and Germantown. Washington and his troops retreated to Valley Forge for the winter where he set up a makeshift camp. Meanwhile the British tried to capture Fort Stanwix in Albany. Benedict Arnold drove him back with a strong American Army.

I will
become a
traitor
very soon!



General John Burgoyne and his troops tried to capture Albany for a second time. Burgoyne took **Fort Ticonderoga**. He then sent troops to find food and horses in **Vermont**. Soon the Green Mountain boys hurried to New York to help the American forces. At the village of **Saratoga**, the Americans surrounded the British. The British were forced to surrender on October 17, 1777.

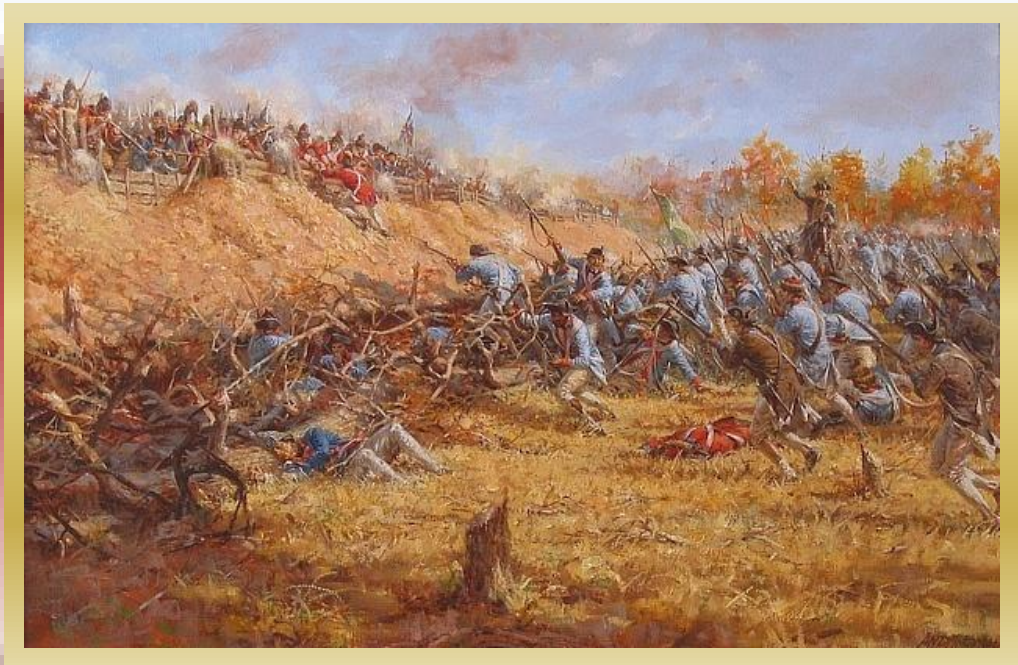
I surrender



Fort Ticonderoga

A Powerful Ally

The American victory at the *Battle of Saratoga* was the turning point of the war. It ended with the British threat to New England. It boosted American spirits at a time when Washington's troops were suffering defeats. Most important, it convinced France to become an ally of the United States.



In 1776, the Continental Congress had sent Benjamin Franklin to Paris. His job was to persuade the French king, Louis XVI to help the Americans with weapons and badly needed supplies. The French were still angry about their defeat by the British in the French and Indian War. In February 1778, France became the first nation to sign a treaty with the United States. In it Louis XVI recognized the new nation and agreed to provide military aid.

The French
will help the
patriots!



Click on the pictures to
learn more



A Cold Winter at Valley Forge

French aid arrived too late to help Washington's army at Valley Forge. During the long, cold winter of 1777-1778, the Continental Army suffered many hardships in Pennsylvania. The American soldiers shivered in damp drafty huts and slept on ice frozen ground. They had little or no warm clothing. Many had no shoes. As the winter dragged on, many soldiers suffered from disease and frostbite. When Americans found about the conditions at Valley Forge they sent food, medicine, warm clothes and ammunition for the army. Throughout the war many European volunteers joined the American cause. Many French, Polish, Spanish and Prussian (German) volunteers helped the Americans fight against the British.

Freezing!

at Valley Forge



4. Fighting for Liberty on Many Fronts

The British soldiers met with the Native American Indians and tried to win their support in fighting the American soldiers. Most Native American Indians did not become involved in the war between the British and Americans.



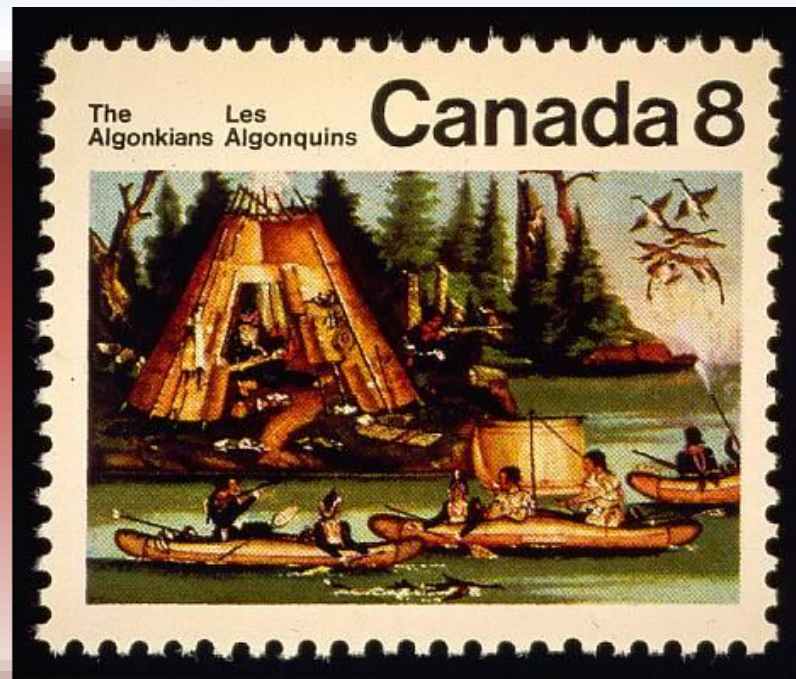
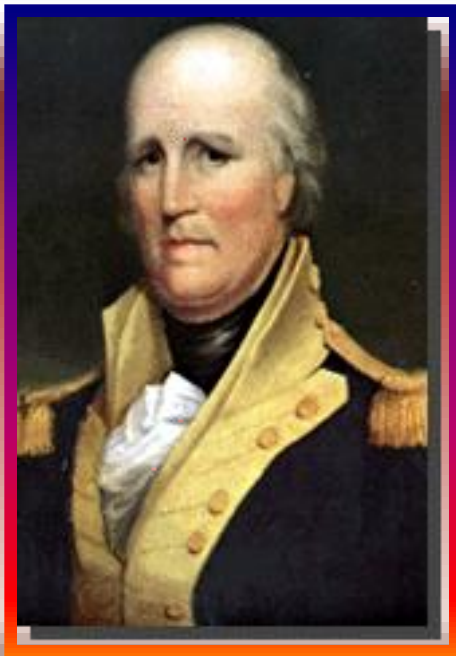
Let them
fight their
own war!



Click on pictures

Fighting on the Frontier

When the Revolution began, most Indians tried to stay neutral (not choosing sides.) As the war spread, some Indians did take sides. The Six Nations of the Iroquois was divided, although most helped the British. In Massachusetts, the Algonquins supported the Patriots. In the West, many Indians joined the British to protect their land from American soldiers. In 1778, George Rogers Clark led Virginia against the British in the Ohio Valley. With the help from the Indians, Clark captured two British forts.



Victory at Sea

The Americans could do little against the powerful British navy. British ships blocked American ports. From time to time the Americans would capture a British ship. John Paul Jones, an American captain captured many British ships. On September 1779, Jones commanded the *Bonhomme Richard*. He was sailing in the North Sea when he spotted 39 enemy merchant ships. A single war ship, the *Serapis*, guarded them. Jones attacked the *Serapis* even though the ship was much larger than his ship. Cannon balls ripped the *Bonhomme Richard* apart but Jones did not surrender. Instead he shouted, “I have not yet begun to fight!” Jones sailed his ship next to the British ship. The Americans boarded the British ship and battled in hand-to-hand combat. Jones and his men defeated the British ship. Jones earned a hero’s welcome on his return home.

“I have not yet begun to fight!”



African Americans in the Battle for Freedom



Click on picture to learn more.

At the start of the Revolution, more than half a million African Americans lived in the colonies. At first the Continental Army refused to let African Americans whether free or enslaved, join the army. The British, however, offered freedom to any male slave who served the king. As a response, Washington changed his policy and allowed free African Americans to enlist.

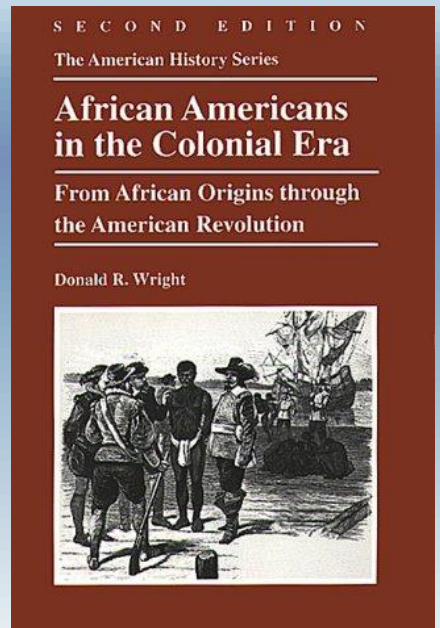
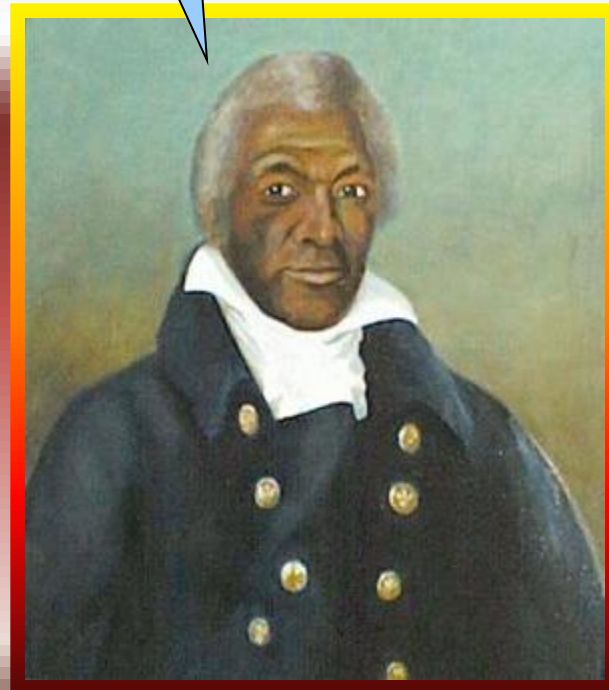
Some African Americans, both free and slave, joined the American army right at the beginning of the conflict. However, George Washington put an end to new enlistments by African Americans after he took command of the Continental Army in the summer of 1775. Late in 1775, free blacks were allowed to enlist. Over the next several years, as recruiting for the army became difficult and states resorted to drafts to fill their army quotas, many slaves also began appearing in the ranks of the Continental Army and the state militias, enlisting on their own or as substitutes for their owners in exchange for promises of freedom, promises which were not always kept. African Americans mostly served in integrated units, but there were a few segregated units, most notably the First Rhode Island Regiment. **By the end of the war, at least 5,000 African Americans, many of them slaves, had served in the Continental Army and hundreds more in the Continental Navy.**



Click on picture to learn more.

About 5,000 African Americans fought against the British. At least nine black minutemen saw action in Lexington and Concord. Some African Americans formed special regiments. Others served in white regiments as drummers, fifers, spies, and guides. Thousands of black sailors also served on American ships. Black Patriots hoped that the Revolution would bring an end to slavery. After all, the Declaration of Independence proclaimed, “all men are created equal.”

I am James Armistead. I served the Patriot cause as a spy.



During the American Revolutionary War, African Americans fought on Pennsylvania soil at Brandywine and served at Valley Forge. Among those who crossed the Delaware River with George Washington in December 1776 were Isaac Jones, Billy Lee, and Prince Whipple. Many African Americans won their freedom fighting either for the British or the Americans in that war. In 1780, Pennsylvania formally ended slavery by passing a gradual emancipation law. The law stipulated that no African American born after 1780 in Pennsylvania would be enslaved past the age of twenty-eight.

I was
with
Washington





I am
Betsy
Ross

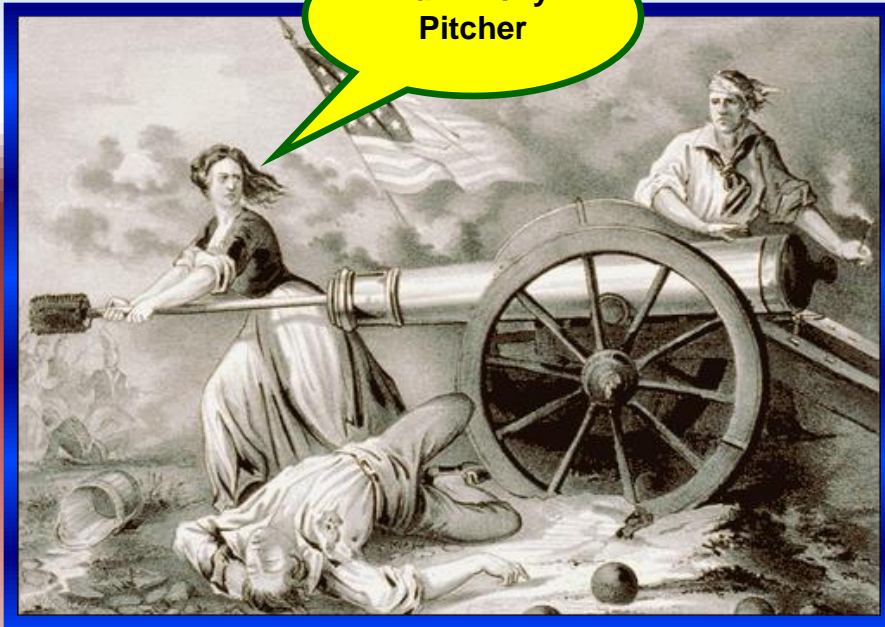


Women in War

Women also helped the struggle for independence. When men went off to war, women took on added work. They planted harvested the crops that fed the Continental Army. They made guns and other weapons. Women made shoes and wove cloth for blankets and uniforms. Many women joined the soldiers at the front. They washed clothes, cooked and cared for the wounded. Betsy Ross of Philadelphia sewed flags for Washington's Army. Legend claims that Washington asked her to make the first American flag of Stars and Stripes, but this story could not be proven.

A few women took part in battle. During the Battle of Monmouth in 1778, Mary Ludwig Hays carried water to her husband and other soldiers. The soldiers called her “Molly the pitcher” or Molly Pitcher. When her husband was wounded she took his place. And fired the cannon. Deborah Sampson dressed as a man and fought in several battles. Later, she wrote about her life in the army.

I am Molly Pitcher



Molly Pitcher

5. The World Turned Upside Down

Thomas Young was only 16 years old when he fought in a battle to capture King's Mountain in South Carolina. The Patriots captured *King's Mountain* on October 7, 1780. The victory boosted morale after a string of Patriot defeats in the South. Slowly the tide moved in the Americans favor.



King's
Mountain

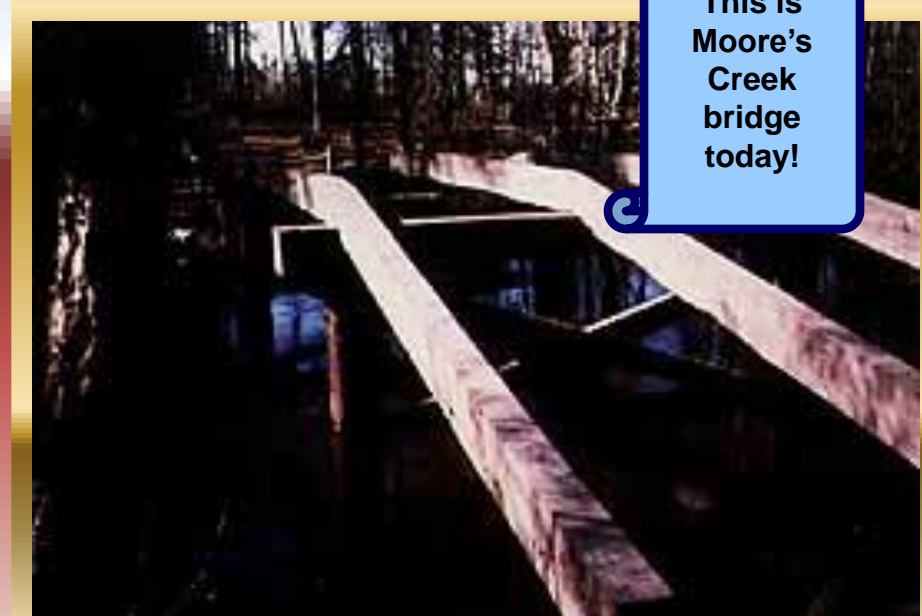
War in the South

Scattered fighting had taken place in the South from the start of the Revolution. In February 1776, North Carolina Patriots defeated the Loyalist army at the **Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge**.

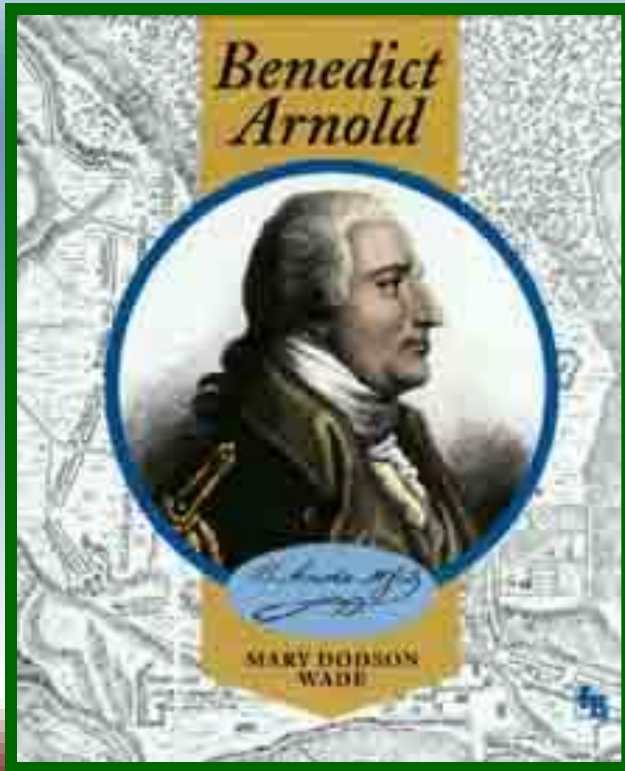
After France entered the war, the British focused their efforts on the South. They counted on the support of the Loyalists there. Greatly outnumbered, the patriots suffered many setbacks. In December 1778, the British seized Savannah, Georgia.



Moore's Creek Bridge



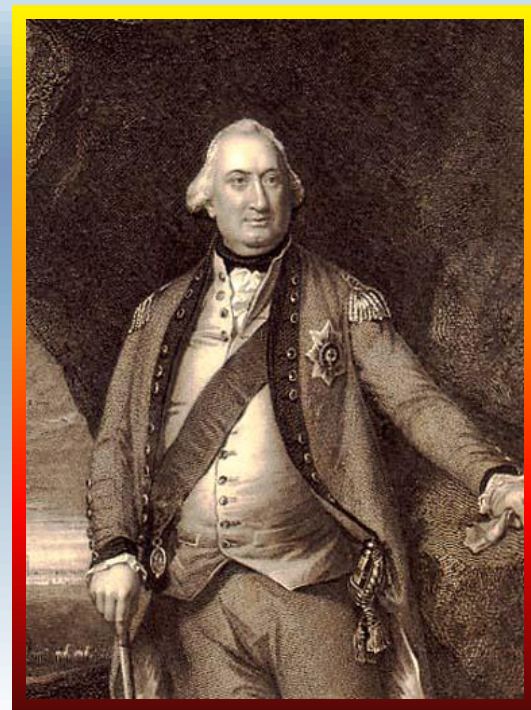
This is
Moore's
Creek
bridge
today!



In September 1780, Washington received more bad news. Benedict Arnold, one of his best generals had joined the British. Arnold was angry because he did not receive the credit he felt he deserved for the battles he won. Washington put Arnold in charge of the fort at West Point. Arnold secretly planned to turn the fort over to the British. His plan was foiled when his message was intercepted. Arnold then fled to join the British.

Victory at Last

Washington planned to trap the British general, Cornwallis at Yorktown, near the Chesapeake Bay. While a French fleet was sailing toward Chesapeake, Washington prepared to march his troops to New York. In Virginia, General Washington met some French troops and combined their forces into one army. Meanwhile, French Admiral de Grasse Admiral de Grasse of the French navy cut off Cornwallis by not allowing any British ships to bring supplies to him. Cornwallis could not get any food or supplies. And he could not escape by sea. Cornwallis held out for three weeks before he surrendered his army, on October 17, 1781. Two days later, the British turned over their weapons over to the Americans. A British Army band played, “The World Turned Upside Down.”



Cornwallis



Admiral de Grasse

Making Peace

Americans rejoiced when they heard the news from Yorktown. In London, however, the defeat shocked the British. "It was all over," cried the British Prime Minister. The British agreed to peace talks.

The talks began in Paris in 1782.

Congress sent Benjamin Franklin and John Adams to work out a treaty.

Because Britain was eager to end the war the Americans got most of what they wanted. Under the Treaty of Paris, the British recognized the United States as an independent nation. The borders of the new nation extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. The South border stopped at Florida, which was returned to Spain.



We will
make a
fair
treaty!



We
wrote
the
Treaty
of Paris

On the other part, the Americans agreed to ask state legislatures to pay loyalists for the property lost in the war. In the end, however, most states ignored the loyalist's claims.

On April 15, 1783, Congress ratified, or approved, the Treaty of Paris. It was almost eight years to the day since the first battles of the war that the treaty was approved.



We started a new country!



Washington's Farewell

The revolution was a long and hard struggle for the Americans. The Americans fought a more powerful army and won the war. In the end, money, arms, and soldiers from France helped America win the war. But the strength and courage of leaders like Washington played a major role in the American victory. In December 1783, General Washington bid farewell to his officers at Fraunces' Tavern in New York City. All along Washington's route home to Mount Vernon, Virginia. Crowds cheered the hero of independence. The new nation faced difficult time ahead. Before long, Americans would again call on Washington to lead them.



The End