

Part III: The War of Independence—1776-1783

The renewal of fighting in the spring of 1776 contributed to the widening gulf between the colonies and Britain. The Continental Army under George Washington, using cannons captured at Fort Ticonderoga, forced the British and their loyalist supporters to evacuate Boston in March. The victory meant that Boston, Philadelphia, New York City, and Charleston, South Carolina, were under patriot control.

The Second Continental Congress voted to open colonial ports to trade with European countries. Meanwhile, the British navy prevented supplies from reaching the patriots. To overcome this blockade, the colonists began secret negotiations with the French.

Ideas of Independence

Beginning in 1776, opinion within the colonies steadily shifted toward independence. One of the key events that influenced the public mood was the publication in January 1776 of a slim pamphlet entitled *Common Sense*.

“In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense... every thing that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, ‘TIS TIME TO PART.’”

—Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

Unlike earlier patriot pamphlets, *Common Sense* avoided legal arguments about the British constitution and acts of Parliament. Instead, Thomas Paine, the pamphlet’s author, wrote in everyday English to convince colonists that separation from Britain was, as he put it, a matter of “common sense.” Paine dismissed King George III as the “Royal Brute” and urged immediate separation.

Part III Definitions

Patriot—A patriot is a person who strongly supports and defends their country. During the American Revolution, those who fought for independence from Britain were known as patriots, rebels, or Whigs.

Loyalist—A loyalist is someone who supports the government that already exists. During the American Revolution, those who fought for Britain against the patriots were known as loyalists or Tories.

The War of Independence—The armed conflict between Britain and American rebels over whether the colonies should be their own country is known as the American War of Independence, the American Revolution, or the Revolutionary War.

Who promoted the idea of independence?

The Virginia delegation to the Continental Congress took the lead in pressing for a complete break with Britain. On June 7, Richard Henry Lee, a statesman from Virginia, proposed that the united colonies “ought to be free and independent states.” A committee was formed three days later to draft a “Declaration of Independence.” The membership of the committee—Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, and Robert Livingston of New York—reflected the efforts of the colonial representatives to bring the colonies together in a united front. The committee chose Thomas Jefferson to write the first draft of the Declaration “for the elegance of his pen.”

Jefferson drew on the ideas of the British philosopher John Locke. He echoed Locke’s political philosophy in the opening words of his declaration.

“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 abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

—Preamble to the Declaration of Independence, July 1776. In the late eighteenth century, “happiness” referred to physical well-being, not an emotional or psychological state.

By June 1776, the patriots considered King George III the final tie between colonial self-government and British decision making. In line with Locke’s reasoning, the Declaration held that the king had broken the contract between himself and the colonists by threatening their life, liberty, and property.

After the public reading of the Declaration on July 9, 1776, patriots in New York pulled down a statue of King George III.

“The king’s [coat of] arms were taken down from the State House...and burnt in King Street.”

—Abigail Adams, recounting the events in Boston, July 1776 in a letter to John Adams

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for ^{one} people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to ~~assume~~ ^{assume} among the powers of the earth the ~~separate and equal~~ ^{separate and equal} station to which the laws of nature & of nature’s god entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to ~~the~~ ^{the} separation.

We hold these truths to be ^{self-evident}, that all men are created equal & independent; that ^{they are endowed by their creator with certain} unalienable rights; that ^{among these are} life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these ^{rights}, go.

An early draft of the Declaration of Independence, in Thomas Jefferson’s handwriting.

Did the Declaration of Independence extend freedom to all Americans?

Before the Declaration of Independence was made public, the Continental Congress eliminated a passage that criticized King George III for not allowing the states to abolish the slave trade.

“[King George III] has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither.”

—Draft of Declaration of Independence, June 1776

South Carolina and Georgia, in particular, objected to this passage, because their economies and social structures were particularly dependent on slavery. Some northern delegates, wary of including any mention of slavery in the Declaration, worried that a debate about slavery would get in the way of coming to a unified call for independence. Instead, Congress condemned King George for “exciting domestic insurrections,” referring to

the British war-time policy that freed enslaved people in exchange for military service in the British army.

Although the Declaration of Independence spoke of the “unalienable rights” of men, its authors and other colonial elites did not believe these rights applied to all. For example, Congress’s decision not to include an end to slavery in the ideals expressed by the Declaration cemented slavery as a national institution for the next eighty-nine years.

But over the years, Americans came to use the words of the Declaration of Independence to champion the ideals of equality and liberty and claimed that the Declaration’s promises were for all people. Women, native people, poor people, and enslaved people later demanded that the government honor the principles of equality and liberty set forth in the Declaration.

What were the Articles of Confederation?

As the colonial rebellion of 1775 grew into the War of Independence, the responsibilities of government were suddenly thrust upon the Continental Congress. In addition to creating the Continental Army and issuing the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, the delegates understood the need to link the thirteen colonies within a formal political structure.

The task of developing a political plan fell to a committee of thirteen delegates, chaired by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania. On July 12, 1776, the committee submitted a draft proposal for loosely uniting the colonies in a confederation of independent states. Nearly sixteen months passed before the Continental Congress presented the Articles of Confederation to the states for approval.



Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs, LC-DIG-pga-02158.

After hearing a public reading of the Declaration of Independence, George Washington’s army destroyed the statue of King George III in New York City.

During the war years, the Articles of Confederation served as the guiding tenets for the new nation. In March 1781, when every colony had formally agreed to these principles, the first Constitution of what would be called the “United States of America” officially took effect. The Articles of Confederation allowed the confederation of states to wage war, claim western land for the new country, mediate conflicts between states, and negotiate treaties.

Even though the Articles of Confederation united the colonies in a “league of friendship,” each colony still retained its “sovereignty, freedom, and independence.” The colonists worried that a strong central government would become as tyrannical as King George III.

On the Battlefield: Patriots and Loyalists

From the shot fired at Lexington and Concord in 1775 to the final Treaty of Paris in 1783, America’s War of Independence was a contest of military might, will, strategy, money, and alliances. Britain boasted a well-trained professional army and the largest navy in the world. George Washington, on the other hand, assembled amateur officers in a Continental Army of less than five thousand troops supplemented by militia units of varying sizes.

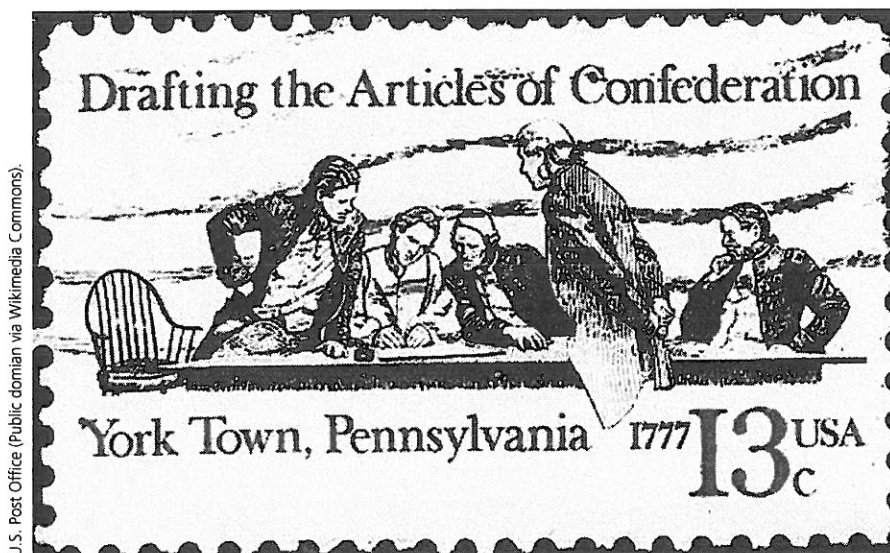
The War of Independence left the lives of few colonists untouched. Even areas far from major battle sites were not spared from bloodshed. Both sides committed atrocities against civilians. While the regular troops of the British forces and the Continental Army usually took measures to avoid civilian casualties and limit property damage, unorganized “irregular” forces behaved differently. These forces, from both sides, abused civilians.

For all of the people involved in the conflict—men, women, enslaved people, native people—decisions about who to support were based on a series of calculations about which side could offer the best chance at achieving their respective goals. The stakes were high for all parties, but exactly what these stakes were differed for each group. For example, native groups hoped to preserve their land and culture from the threat of colonial expansion. These concerns dictated their varied responses to the conflict. At the same time, enslaved people and free black people often based their decision on who would most likely provide them with a pathway to freedom and rights.

Who supported the British?

The colonists were far from unified during the eight years of war, and the British had the loyalty of many. Thousands of white colonial loyalists supported the British. They were motivated by loyalty to the mother country, fear of being governed by lower-class and uneducated colonists, and suspicion of elite patriot leaders. Male loyalist colonists fought in battles for the British, while loyalist women worked to both maintain colonial life away from the battlefield or, in other cases, accompanied their husbands to battle.

When the war broke out, like white colonists, black people living in the colonies faced a difficult



This commemorative stamp was created in 1977 to recognize the 200th anniversary of the drafting of the Articles of Confederation.



Metropolitan Museum of Art (Public domain via Wikimedia Commons).

This painting by Emanuel Leutze, 1851, shows George Washington and his army crossing the Delaware River in December, 1776. Although the painting is famous today, it is an idealized portrayal with a number of historical inaccuracies. For example, the boat in the painting is far smaller than those actually used to make the crossing and would have capsized in the icy water. Also, the flag depicted in the painting features a design that had not been adopted at this time.

choice. Should they join the British army or fight for American independence? For the most part, black people based their decisions on which side was more likely to provide a pathway to freedom and other rights. Several factors motivated those who joined the British. Rather than partner with white colonists, who enslaved black people and were distracted by their own insurrection, many black men and women saw joining the British as an opportunity to gain freedom. Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, issued a proclamation on November 7, 1775 that promised freedom to enslaved people in exchange for military service, a way to bolster Britain's forces while also challenging the patriots' economy.

Despite white owners' resistance, a few hundred enslaved people living in Virginia managed to reach Lord Dunmore and enlist in the "Royal Ethiopian Regiment." In 1779, King George's military commander, Sir Henry

Clinton, also issued a proclamation that encouraged more enslaved men and women in search of freedom to support the British. As a result, when the war ended, thousands of black men and women who were able to do so fled to British-controlled territories.

The majority of native groups also supported the British because they mistrusted the Patriots even more than the British (even though the British had also failed to protect their land). For example, the Six Nations Confederacy of Iroquois tribes debated whether to remain neutral, support the British, or join the rebels. Ultimately, the Mohawk, Seneca, Onondaga, and Cayuga tribes joined England's effort to quell the rebellion, believing that the rebels would not protect native peoples' claims to land. Iroquois leader James Logan chose to support the British army because colonists had murdered his family and community members during the French and Indian War.

“During the course of the last long and bloody war [the French and Indian War] Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace...I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Colonel Cresap, the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not even sparing my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge.”

—“Logan’s Lament,” recorded in Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 1781

In addition to white colonial loyalists, black loyalists, and native loyalists, the British also relied on foreign troops. They hired thirty thousand soldiers from Germany, called Hessians, who fought for money rather than loyalty to England.

On December 25, 1776, Washington’s army crossed the icy Delaware River, defeating the British at Trenton and capturing between nine hundred and one thousand Hessians. This rebel victory, and another at Princeton on January 3, 1777, motivated rebel troops to continue fighting.

Who supported the patriots?

While many people in the colonies chose to support Britain in the war, many others sided with the patriots. Colonists who felt that Britain had treated them unfairly and inhibited the growth of the colonial economy supported the patriot cause.

Like their loyalist counterparts, some patriot women accompanied their husbands into battle. They served as cooks, nurses, laborers, and laundresses. Perhaps most significant was the medical care that women provided. Disease probably caused at least as many deaths in the Continental Army as battlefield injuries, and even minor wounds could lead to fatal infections. Other colonial women worked to maintain farms, businesses, and households while their husbands fought in the war. They

also collected money and supplies for Washington’s struggling army. For example, Esther De Berdt Reed founded the Ladies Association of Philadelphia, a group that collected 1,600 donations. Sarah Franklin Bache also worked with the organization and helped secure thousands of shirts for Continental soldiers.

Enslaved people also played an important role in supporting the patriot forces. Far fewer enslaved people joined Washington’s army than King George’s. But, those who did hoped to destroy the institution of slavery from within the emerging republic. For instance, Peter Salem, a freed man, fought alongside the colonial troops at the Battle of Bunker Hill. George Washington, unlike the British, initially refused to accept enslaved people into the Continental Army. But, in 1777, upon realizing that he needed as many troops as possible, he reversed his orders. Enslaved and free black women who supported the patriots also worked to dismantle the institution of slavery. For instance, although Phillis Wheatley, an enslaved woman, did side with the patriots, she also challenged the colonists’ hypocrisy in her poetry.

**“I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch’d from Afric[a]’s fancy’d
happy seat...
...And can I then but pray
Others may never feel tyrannic
sway”**

—Phillis Wheatley, “To the Right and Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth,” *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, 1773

In addition to white colonists and enslaved people, a few native groups, hoping to preserve their economic and diplomatic relationships with the colonists, also supported the patriots. The Oneidas of western New York, for example, sent supplies to George Washington’s army during the harsh winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge.

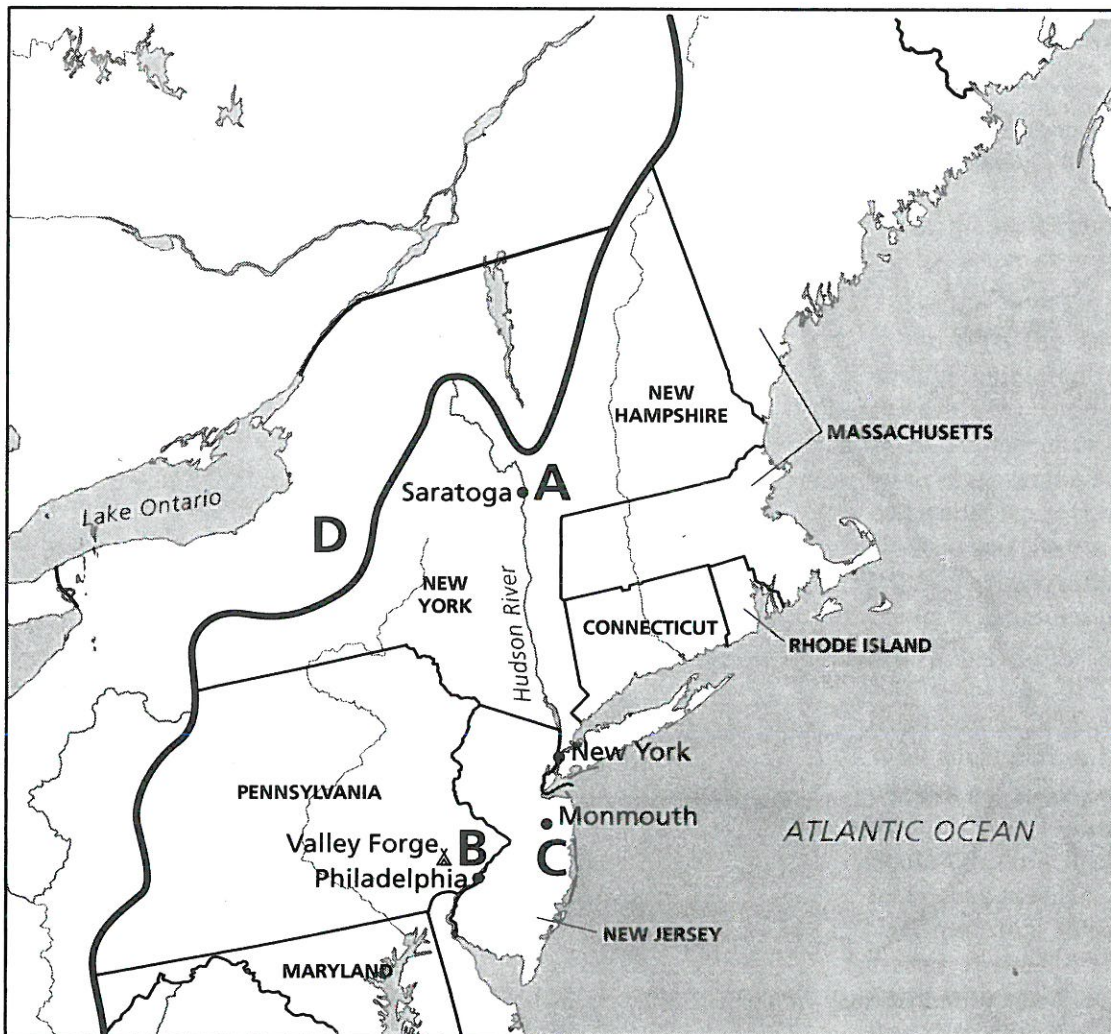
The Northern Campaigns

A. At Saratoga, New York, by October 1777, the Americans defeated the army of General John Burgoyne, who surrendered nearly six thousand troops.

B. In the fall of 1777, British forces captured Philadelphia, driving the Continental Congress out of the capital. In the winter of 1777-1778, Washington and his army camped at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Washington's army had run desperately short of supplies and was greatly affected by illness.

C. The British force occupying Philadelphia evacuated the city in June 1778 and marched back to New York. Along the way, they clashed with Washington's army in a bloody but indecisive battle at Monmouth, New Jersey. The encounter proved to be the last major battle of the war north of Virginia.

D. In 1779, General John Sullivan and General James Clinton led the Continental Army on a campaign against the members of the Six Nations Confederacy who lived in present-day upstate New York and supported the British. The Americans sought to weaken these native groups and reduce their ability to fight for Britain.



“You have kept fast hold of the ancient covenant-chain, and preserved it free from rust and decay, and bright as silver. Like brave men, for glory you despised danger; you stood forth, in the cause of your friends, and ventured your lives in our battles... As our trusty friends, we shall protect

you; and shall at all times consider your welfare as our own.”

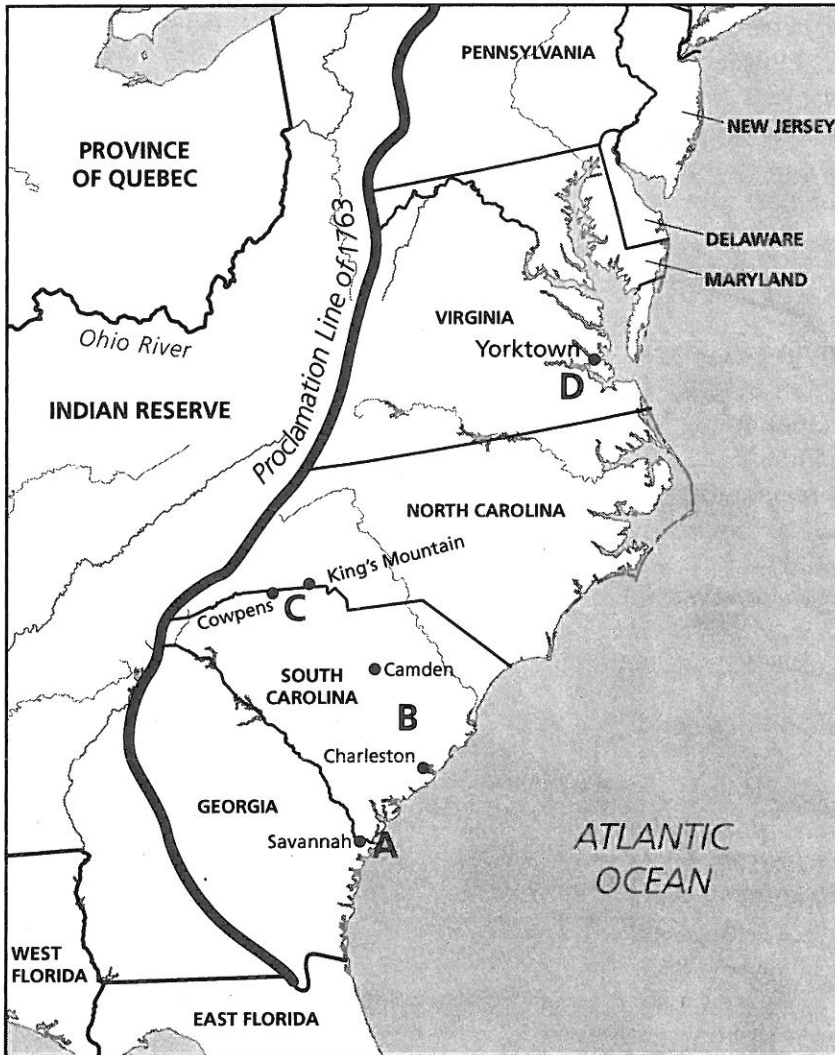
—From the Continental Congress Address to the Six Nations, 1777

All of the people in the colonies carefully considered their options before declaring their support for either side in the conflict.

The Southern Campaigns

A. In December 1778, the British captured Savannah, Georgia and quickly extended their control over the entire Georgia colony. A joint American-French attempt to dislodge the British from Savannah failed disastrously in 1779.

B. In May 1780, the British captured 5,500 American troops while taking Charleston. Then, in August 1780, the British defeated the Americans once more at Camden, South Carolina.



C. In October 1780, American troops overran a loyalists outpost in King's Mountain. In January 1781, the Americans achieved another victory at Cowpens, South Carolina.

D. Later that year, General Washington saw an opportunity to set a trap for Cornwallis. He and a French general, the Comte de Rochambeau, joined forces to gain control of the land approaches to Yorktown. At the same time, a French fleet sailing north toward the Chesapeake Bay from the Caribbean defeated British warships sent from New York to aid Cornwallis. The British army had no escape route. After a month-long siege, Cornwallis surrendered his army of eight thousand men in October 1781.

Even so, not every group of people achieved their desired outcome. For example, although enslaved people risked their lives in the American Revolution, their service did not result in the abolition of slavery when the war ended. Likewise, even though different native groups fought on both sides of the American Revolution, neither the Continental Congress nor the British Parliament honored the promises they made or the treaties they signed when the war ended. Native groups would continue to fight for their land as Americans pushed westward with little regard for their rights or cultures.

Where were the battles of the American Revolution fought in North America?

The battles of the American Revolution were spread throughout the colonial territories. During the eight years of fighting, both the northern and southern colonies experienced the effects of uninterrupted warfare.

In the early years of the war, most battles took place in the northern colonies. In 1777, even though the British planned to cut off the New England colonies by seizing control of the Hudson River in New York, they unwittingly played to the strengths of the patriots. As they

Cornwallis TAKEN!

B O S T O N, (Friday) October 26, 1781.

This Morning an Exprefs arrived from Providence to HIS EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR, with the following IMPORTANT INTELLIGENCE, viz.—

PROVIDENCE, Oct. 25, 1781. Three o'Clock, P. M.

This Moment an Exprefs arrived at his Honor the Deputy-Governor's; from Col. Christopher Oiney, Commandant on Rhode-Island, announcing the important Intelligence of the Surrender of Lord CORNWALLIS and his Army; an Account of which was Printed this Morning at Newport, and is as follows, viz.—

NEWPORT, October 25, 1781.

YESTERDAY Afternoon arrived in this Harbour Capt. Lovett, of the Schooner Adventure, from York River, in Chelapeak Bay, (which he left the 20th instant,) and brought us the glorious News of the Surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his Army Prisoners of War to the allied Army, under the Command of our illustrious General; and the French Fleet, under the Command of His Excellency the Count de Grasse.

An article from the *Boston Gazette* announcing Britain's surrender.

marched toward the river, the long columns of British troops exposed themselves to repeated hit-and-run attacks.

In 1778, the British shifted their attention to the southern colonies. British strategists expected to draw on the strength of loyalist support in Georgia and the Carolinas to isolate the northern colonies. Britain's southern strategy proved successful until the tide began to turn in October 1780 when patriot troops overran a loyalist outpost in King's Mountain, South Carolina. Under increasing pressure in the Carolinas from patriot armies, General Charles Cornwallis marched his British troops toward Virginia, where the combined forces of the French and



An engraving by Alonzo Chappel, depicting Molly Pitcher loading a cannon at the Battle of Monmouth. In reality, this story is a legend. But, one woman, Margaret Corbin, actually did take her husband's place in battle.

Library of Congress Eighteenth-Century American Newspapers LCCN: Microfilm 2895.

National Archives 532935.

the Americans defeated them at the battle of Yorktown in October 1781.

In 1782, although the British remained in control of New York, Savannah, and Charleston, the defeat at Yorktown signaled to Parliament that continued fighting in the former colonies would be costly and would not likely bring the British many benefits. When British Prime Minister Lord Frederick North received word of Cornwallis' surrender, he declared, "It is all over!" and resigned from office. In reality, violent civil war continued between patriots and loyalists. For example, a loyalist in Charleston was stripped naked, covered with hot tar, feathered, stoned, and thrown into a river by a rebel crowd that then burned his house to the ground. White loyalist women were not spared from violence. For instance, an elderly loyalist widow in Massachusetts saw her house ransacked and burned by rebels. At the same time, loyalist bands were guilty of brutalizing patriot settlements on several occasions.

Fighting also continued in other parts of the world among European powers who were defending other parts of their global empires.

What other European nations were involved in the war?

The war between Britain and the American colonies was a global struggle involving many of the leading powers of Europe. After a rebel victory at Saratoga, the French committed to a French Alliance, in which neither the rebels nor the French would enter into a peace agreement with Britain unless Britain offered the colonists independence. France considered the war an opportunity to advance its own imperial economic interests.

The eagerness of France, and later Spain, to press their advantage forced the British to concentrate much of their navy in the Caribbean, a long-standing focus of European rivalry and colonization. The prevailing winds made the Caribbean easier to reach from Europe than the American colonies. This meant that it served as a center for trade. In addition, the crops cultivated by enslaved Africans on the

plantations in Cuba, Jamaica, Guadeloupe, and other islands greatly enriched the European countries that ruled them.

The coast of the Gulf of Mexico served as another front of the war. In the later years of the fighting, Bernardo de Gálvez—the Spanish governor of the vast territory of Louisiana—captured British posts and cities, further weakening the British. De Gálvez's assistance enabled the rebels to capture a string of British forts along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers.

The French and the Spanish briefly threatened the British Isles themselves in late 1779. But, faulty communications sank the plan for a joint invasion of the southeastern coast of Britain by the French and Spanish fleets.

Political sympathizers and soldiers from other European countries also assisted the revolution. For example, Polish engineer Thaddeus Kosciuszko supervised the rebel fortifications at Saratoga, and Prussian Baron von Steuben became drillmaster to Washington's Army.

Involving other European powers and affecting all corners of the British Empire, the war had truly taken on global dimensions. Even after the war in America came to an end, sea battles were fought off the coast of Africa over domination of slave trading outposts and key ports that supplied ships traveling to Asia. On the Indian subcontinent, fighting involving Britain, France, and local Indian rulers also continued.

The Final Peace Treaty

The global dimension of America's War of Independence complicated efforts to reach a peace settlement. In February 1782, British Parliament voted to formally stop military operations in the former American colonies. (British forces had, in reality, ended their offensive military campaign after the fall of Yorktown in October 1781.) Nonetheless, the war between Britain and its European rivals continued. Finally, American diplomats John Jay, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Henry Laurens negotiated a peace agreement with

Britain in Paris, an agreement to which they later convinced their French allies to agree.

A final treaty was not signed until September 1783, nearly a year after the British and Americans had agreed on the basic terms of the settlement. Under the Peace of Paris of 1783, Britain recognized the independence of the thirteen colonies and gave up its claims to all territory south of the Great Lakes and east of the Mississippi River.

How did the treaty affect the people in the United States?

While the Peace of Paris had a positive outcome for the white patriots who had realized their goal of gaining independence from Britain, other people in the colonies, whether they had sided with the British or the patriots, did not benefit from the treaty in the end.

The Peace of Paris had negative consequences for all native peoples. Disregarding their alliances, Britain agreed in the treaty to give huge amounts of native land to the United States.

“In endeavouring to assist you, it seems we have wrought our own ruin.”

—A leader of the Wea tribe, 1783

Like the British, the Americans also abandoned native peoples, failing to repay or protect those who had supported them. The new American Congress referred to native groups as foreign nations and refused to offer land or compensation in peace agreements with various tribes.

The Peace of Paris also bore dramatic consequences for thousands of enslaved Africans in North America, regardless of their British or American loyalties.

“His Majesty shall with all convenient speed, and without causing any destruction, or carrying away any Negroes or other property of the American inhabitants, withdraw all his armies...from the United States.”

—The Peace of Paris, 1783

Despite its policy of exchanging freedom for enlistment, in the Peace of Paris, Britain confirmed enslaved people’s status as property and abandoned the majority of the soldiers who had fought for them. At the end of the war, Britain did transport around twenty thousand black people to different parts of the British Empire, but the majority of these people remained enslaved. The British freed about three thousand enslaved people at the end of the war. Seeking land and economic opportunity, most of these people settled in Nova Scotia, where Birchtown became the largest free black community in North America. Others later went to Sierra Leone, a British colony in West Africa. Although freed blacks in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone were given land, they faced many hardships at the hands of the British government.



This etching, by British artist Thomas Colley in 1782, shows an embrace between a native woman, representing America, and a white woman, representing Britain, whom the native woman calls “Mama.”

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division LC-USZ62-1532.

Thomas Peters

In July 1775, the British commander of Fort Johnston in North Carolina gave “Encouragement to Negroes to Elope from their Masters” and offered protection to those who escaped. The word spread among plantation owners and enslaved people that the British had promised “every Negro that would murder his Master and family that he should have his Master’s plantation.” One enslaved man, named Thomas Peters, chose to support the loyalists in exchange for his freedom. Peters joined a Black regiment and wore the words “Liberty to Slaves” on his uniform in 1776.

Peters achieved his freedom and, after the war, the British evacuated him and his family to Nova Scotia, in British-ruled Canada. The British government had promised Peters and other formerly enslaved loyalists land in Canada. Despite Britain’s many promises, they never treated the black settlers as true British citizens. The formerly enslaved settlers never received the land they were promised, and many suffered from devastating poverty, starvation, and exposure in the cold winters. In 1791, Peters went to England to petition the government and demand that their promises be upheld.

In 1792, Peters organized for himself and more than one thousand other formerly enslaved people to move to Sierra Leone, in West Africa. Once again, the British colonial government failed to give the formerly enslaved loyalists the land they had been promised.

The patriots also betrayed the enslaved people who had fought on their side. At the end of the war, many enslaved patriot soldiers were immediately re-enslaved and ill-treated. For example, in 1832, Jehu Grant, a black Continental veteran, approached a federal commissioner and asked to receive a pension for his service. When he told the commissioner of his escape from a loyalist master and enlistment in Washington’s Army, the commissioner refused his pension because Grant

had been an “escaped slave” at the time of his service.

By 1800, due to a series of laws aiming to phase out slavery, there was no legal enslavement of people in New England. Governments of states between the Ohio River and Great Lakes banned slavery. The international slave trade ended in 1808. Yet the true end of the institution of slavery in the United States would lead to the Civil War and the deaths of

620,000. The consequences of slavery continue to be relevant today.

Conclusion

While the American Revolution was a triumph in gaining independence from Britain, it also resulted in the loss of many lives and a great deal of uncertainty. The War of Independence left behind political and economic questions. Many of America's main cities, ports, and roads had been seriously damaged. Both sides had spent many times more money fighting than the sum of the taxes they had once disputed. What began as a struggle for the rights of representation, self-government, and property resulted in the creation of a new, independent country made up of the thirteen former colonies (now states). Suddenly, the responsibilities of government were thrust upon the Continental Congress. Soon after the signing of the Peace of Paris, the Continental Congress began the painstaking work

of crafting a new government and a national constitution for the newly formed country. The Continental Congress faced huge questions about the future of the young country:

- How much power should each of the thirteen states have?
- What should be the role of a national government in independent North America?
- What does it mean to be "American" and who should be included in the citizenry?
- Should each citizen be able to influence the government? How much democracy should be allowed?
- How will the government pay for its needs and the needs of its people?

The creation of the United States we know today had only just begun.