

American Revolution Persuaders

Many events helped cause the American Revolution. It was a terrible war between the colonies of America and the country of England. The three most important events that led up to, and caused it, were the Boston Massacre, The Boston Tea Party, and The Stamp Act.

The Boston Massacre was an encounter on March 5, 1770, that was five years before the American Revolution between British troops and a group of citizens of Boston that were then in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. British troops were quartered in the city to discourage demonstrations against American Revolution between British troops the Townshend Acts, a tax on imports to the colonies. As a result of constant harassment by the citizens, a squad of British soldiers that had been struck by snow and ice balls with rocks inside thrown during a demonstration, fired into the crowd, killing five men. The eight soldiers and their commanding officer were tried for murder and were defended by John Adams, later president of the United States, and Josiah Quincy. Two of the soldiers were declared guilty of manslaughter, and the others, including the officer, were acquitted. The incident was skillfully exploited by the American patriot Samuel Adams to create anti-British sentiment in the colonies. After the incident the patriots of Massachusetts Bay were more and more agitated by the soldiers. They weren't going to take much more.

The, so-called, Boston Tea Party was an event that took place December 16, 1773, by a group of Boston citizens to protest the British tax on tea imported to the colonies. Although most provisions of the Townshend Acts were repealed by Parliament, the duty on tea was retained to demonstrate the power of Parliament to tax the colonies. The citizens of Boston would not permit the unloading of three British ships that arrived in Boston in November 1773 with 342 chests of tea. The royal governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, however, would not allow the tea ships to return to England until the duty had been paid. On the evening of December 16, a group of Bostonians, instigated by the American patriot Samuel Adams and disguised as Indians, boarded the vessels and emptied the tea into Boston Harbor. When the government of Boston refused to pay for the tea, the British closed the port. The acts by the British with the tea provoked Bostonians. Because of this they were pushed too far. After what happened with the Boston Massacre, the Patriots wanted something that could push them over the edge to start the Revolution and with the taxes this moved them a few steps closer. This should have taught the British a lesson, but it didn't.

The Stamp Act was an act introduced by the British prime minister George Grenville and passed by the British Parliament in 1765 as a means of raising revenue in the American colonies. It required all legal documents, licenses, commercial contracts, newspapers, pamphlets, and playing cards to carry a tax stamp. The act extended to the colonies the system of stamp duties then employed in Great Britain and was intended to raise money to lower the cost of maintaining the military defenses of the colonies. Passed without debate, it aroused widespread opposition among the colonists, who argued that because they were not represented in Parliament, they could not legally be taxed without their consent. The Stamp Act was the last straw. It was the one that pushed the colonies over the edge.

Although The Boston Massacre, Boston Tea Party, and Stamp Act were only three events that helped cause The American Revolution, they were major. Without them there might not have been a Revolution. Let's hope nothing like The American Revolution never happens again, and no country puts stupid taxes on any other country.

Chapter 4

Prelude to Revolution

The Boston Massacre

In the few years preceding the American Revolution, the city of Boston was a powder keg just waiting to explode. It was the hotbed of anti-British sentiment, but it was also the garrison of several thousand British troops—a sure recipe for conflict. In March of 1770, some of these troops responded to a snowball attack by local young men by firing back, killing five colonists. John Hancock, speaking several years later on the anniversary of what was remembered as the Boston Massacre, recalled why this event should be the rallying cry to rid America of the British. In his Boston Massacre Oration Adams calls upon the honor of his listeners to avenge this massacre. Paul Revere, a Boston engraver, made an engraving of the event *The Bloody Massacre* that was widely printed and sold in the colonies as a piece of propaganda to keep anti-British sentiments alive.

Chapter 5

The American Revolution

The Fight For Independence

Background:

In the beginning of the war with England, the colonies were under-prepared and disadvantaged. England had the largest navy in the world, one of the best trained armies in the world and wealth that the newly declared country, the United States of America, could only imagine. After some initial skirmishes, the war settled into a protracted guerrilla conflict. All segments of society contributed to the war effort. Free blacks and slaves volunteered to fight, and women filled jobs that had been held by soldiers. Though England tried, the former colonists would not fold. The British still had the advantage when the Americans completed an important diplomatic victory and enlisted the French on their side. In addition, England had severely underestimated the revolutionary fervor of the colonists. Though the war had caused hardship and suffering throughout the thirteen colonies, the dream of independence continued to inspire the Americans. This commitment, and several timely military victories, forced the British to the negotiating table. The Americans were also faced with developing a form of government which gave them enough flexibility to fight the war. While they relied heavily on state governments during the early years of the war, they also settled on a confederation form of government which, although it placed most power with state governments, was still strong enough to win the war.

Investigation:

One of the untold stories of the revolution is the story of the thousands of colonists who did not join the revolutionaries but remained loyal to England. The British encouraged these supporters to organize, and often formed regiments of loyalists. Loyalist James Chalmers wrote *Plain Truth* and defended the British position as eloquently as Thomas Paine. The story of Maryland loyalists shows that these supporters of England faced difficult times. They experienced criticism and attacks from their neighbors who supported the American goals; and they were treated as second-class soldiers by the British, often given the difficult or unpleasant assignments, like defending an insignificant fort in smallpox-infested Florida. After the war, many had their land confiscated and suffered continued harassment by their Patriot neighbors. Many fled to Canada or England. One interesting group that settled in Canada were more than a thousand black loyalists. These black loyalists fought with the British during the war and received their freedom as part of their pay. The soldiers and their families believed that they would have a better chance at equality under the British flag than in the new United States.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why would so many wish to remain loyal to England as a colony, when so many other colonists were pushing for independence?

2. Why did England treat the loyalists with suspicion?
3. Why did the colonists treat the loyalists, their own neighbors in some cases, with violence and suspicion?
4. Can you predict how the colonial loyalists might have fared when they fled to England?

Chapter 5

The American Revolution

The Unknown Revolutionaries

As mentioned, all groups in society contributed to the Revolutionary War. One interesting story is that of women who fought in the war. Deborah Sampson enlisted as a man, served out her whole term though wounded twice, and was only discovered when she came down with a fever. Evidence suggests that there were numerous women who actually were combat troops during the war.

African Americans, free and slave, also served. Crispus Atticus was one of the first Americans killed in the war effort when he was shot in Boston during the Boston Massacre in 1773. Cyrus Bustill and Oliver Cromwell were two African American soldiers from New Jersey who fought with distinction.

Chapter 6

Forming the Young Republic

Making a New Nation

Background:

Once victorious, the new nation set out to organize itself around the republican ideals that it had discussed and fought for. Differences in ideology and issues of self-interest, especially between the states, were quickly discovered. After their experiences with England, one overriding fear was of a too-powerful central government. The Articles of Confederation addressed this by placing most of the power with state governments. This severely limited the effectiveness of the new nation's federal government, especially with monetary issues. The federal government, for example, could not levy any taxes without all thirteen colonies agreeing to the tax—a near impossibility—making it difficult to pay the huge war debts. By the mid-1780s, many realized that the Articles of Confederation needed to be modified. A constitutional convention was called, and the result was not a modified document but a whole new constitution. This new plan of government was more complex, but also more flexible. It placed more power in the federal government, but provided a set of checks and balances to prevent tyranny, one of America's greatest concerns. Ratifying the constitution required compromises, not the least of which was the Bill of Rights, a document which guarantees Americans many of our basic freedoms.

United States War of Independence

also called AMERICAN REVOLUTION, OR AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR (1775–83), insurrection by which 13 of Great Britain's North American colonies won political independence and went on to form the United States of America.

After the successful conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763, the British government decided to make its North American colonies pay more of the costs of governing and defending them. Over the next 12 years Britain imposed a series of new taxes and other revenue-raising measures on the colonies that aroused

heated opposition. The American colonists resented the trade regulations by which Britain utilized American economic resources to its own advantage, and they likewise resented their lack of representation in the British Parliament. British intransigence to these grievances spurred a growing desire for independence on the Americans' part. Open fighting broke out between the British and Americans in 1775, and the next year the American colonies declared their independence from Britain.

The conflict thus began as a civil war within the British Empire over colonial affairs, but, with America being joined by France in 1778, Spain in 1779, and the Netherlands in 1780, it became an international war. On land the Americans assembled both state militias and the Continental (national) Army, with approximately 20,000 men, mostly farmers, fighting at any given time. By contrast, the British army was composed of reliable and well-trained professionals, numbering about 42,000 regulars, supplemented by about 30,000 German mercenaries.

The war began when the British general Thomas Gage sent a force from Boston to destroy American rebel military stores at Concord, Mass. After fighting broke out at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, rebel forces began a siege of Boston that ended when the American general Henry Knox arrived with artillery captured from Fort Ticonderoga, forcing General William Howe, Gage's replacement, to evacuate Boston on March 17, 1776. An American force under General Richard Montgomery invaded Canada in the fall of 1775, captured Montreal, and launched an unsuccessful attack on Quebec, in which Montgomery was killed. The Americans maintained a siege on the city until the arrival of British reinforcements in the spring and then retreated to Fort Ticonderoga.

The British government sent General Howe's brother, Richard, Admiral Lord Howe, with a large fleet to join his brother in New York, authorizing them to treat with the Americans and assure them pardon should they submit. When the Americans, who declared themselves independent on July 4, 1776, refused this offer of peace, General Howe landed on Long Island and on August 27 defeated the army of General George Washington, the commander in chief of the American forces. When Washington retreated into Manhattan, Howe drew him north, defeated his army at Chatterton Hill near White Plains on October 28, and then stormed the garrison Washington had left behind on Manhattan, seizing prisoners and supplies. Lord Cornwallis, having taken Washington's other garrison at Fort Lee, drove the American army across New Jersey to the western bank of the Delaware River and then quartered his troops for the winter at outposts in New Jersey. On Christmas night, Washington crossed the Delaware and attacked Cornwallis' garrison at Trenton, taking nearly 1,000 prisoners. Though Cornwallis soon recaptured Trenton, Washington escaped and went on to defeat British reinforcements at Princeton. Washington's Trenton-Princeton campaign roused the country and kept the struggle for independence alive.

In 1777 a British army under General John Burgoyne moved south from Canada with Albany in New York as its goal. Burgoyne captured Fort Ticonderoga on July 5, but as he approached Albany he was twice defeated by an American force led by Generals Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold, and on Oct. 17, 1777, at Saratoga, he was forced to surrender his army. Earlier that fall, Howe had sailed from New York to Chesapeake Bay, and once ashore he had defeated Washington's forces at Brandywine Creek on September 11 and occupied the American capital of Philadelphia on September 25.

After a mildly successful attack at Germantown on October 4, Washington quartered his 11,000 troops for the winter at Valley Forge. Though the conditions at Valley Forge were bleak and food was scarce, a Prussian officer, Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, was able to give the American troops valuable training in maneuvers and in the more efficient use of their weapons. Von Steuben's aid contributed greatly to Washington's success at Monmouth (now Freehold), N.J., on June 28, 1778. After that battle British forces in the north remained chiefly in and around the city of New York.

While the French had been secretly furnishing financial and material aid to the Americans since 1776, in 1778 they began to prepare fleets and armies and in June finally declared war on Britain. With action in the north

largely a stalemate, their primary contribution was in the south, where they participated in such undertakings as the siege of British-held Savannah and the decisive siege of Yorktown. Cornwallis destroyed an army under Gates at Camden, S.C., on Aug. 16, 1780, but suffered heavy setbacks at Kings Mountain on October 7 and at Cowpens on Jan. 17, 1781. After Cornwallis won a costly victory at Guilford Court House, N.C., on March 15, 1781, he entered Virginia to join other British forces there, setting up a base at Yorktown. Washington's army and a force under the French Count de Rochambeau placed Yorktown under siege, and Cornwallis surrendered his army of more than 7,000 men on Oct. 19, 1781.

Thereafter, land action in America died out, though war continued on the high seas. Although a Continental Navy was created in 1775, the American sea effort lapsed largely into privateering, and after 1780 the war at sea was fought chiefly among Britain and America's European allies. American privateers swarmed around the British Isles, and by the end of the war they had captured 1,500 British merchant ships and 12,000 sailors. After 1780 Spain and the Netherlands were able to control much of the water around the British Isles, thus keeping the bulk of British naval forces tied down in Europe.

The Treaty of Paris (Sept. 3, 1783) ended the U.S. War of Independence. Great Britain recognized the independence of the United States (with western boundaries to the Mississippi River) and ceded Florida to Spain. Other provisions called for payment of U.S. private debts to British citizens, U.S. use of the Newfoundland fisheries, and fair treatment for American colonials loyal to Britain.

In explaining the outcome of the war, scholars point out that Britain seemed never to have an overall strategy for winning and often displayed a lack of understanding and cooperation among their armies. The Americans, on the other hand, were by no means inept even before von Steuben's training at Valley Forge, and the state militias performed admirably alongside the Continental Army in crises. French supplies and funds from 1776 to 1778, and direct military and naval support after 1778, enabled the American forces to take advantage of British disorganization, to defeat entire British armies at Saratoga and Yorktown, and to secure the independence of the 13 American states.

The American Revolution: First Phase

The American Revolution came about, fundamentally, because by 1763 the English-speaking communities on the far side of the Atlantic had matured to an extent that their interests and goals were distinct from those of the ruling classes in the mother country. British statesmen failed to understand or adjust to the situation. Ironically enough, British victory in the Seven Years' War set the stage for the revolt, for it freed the colonists from the need for British protection against a French threat on their frontiers and gave free play to the forces working for separation.

In 1763 the British Government, reasonably from its point of view, moved to tighten the system of imperial control and to force the colonists to contribute to imperial defense, proposing to station 10,000 soldiers along the American frontiers and to have the Americans pay part of the bill. This imperial defense plan touched off the long controversy about Parliament's right to tax that started with the Stamp and Sugar Acts and ended in December 1773, when a group of Bostonians unceremoniously dumped a cargo of British tea into the city harbor in protest against the latest reminder of the British effort to tax. In this 10-year controversy the several British ministries failed to act either firmly enough to enforce British regulations or wisely enough to develop a more viable form of imperial union, which the colonial leaders, at least until 1776, insisted that they sought. In response to the Boston Tea Party, the king and his ministers blindly pushed through Parliament a series of measures collectively known in America as the Intolerable Acts, closing the port of Boston, placing Massachusetts under the military rule of Maj. Gen. Sir Thomas Gage, and otherwise infringing on what the colonists deemed to be their rights and interests.

Since 1763 the colonial leaders, in holding that only their own popular assemblies, not the British Parliament, had a right to levy taxes on Americans, had raised the specter of an arbitrary British Government collecting

taxes in America to support red-coated Regulars who might be used not to protect the frontiers but to suppress American liberties. Placing Massachusetts under military rule gave that specter some substance and led directly to armed revolt.