

The American Revolution

I. Second Continental Congress -- May 10, 1775

- A. All 13 colonies present -- delegates still not interested in independence but rather redressing of grievances (conservative position).
- B. Most significant act of Congress: Decided to go to war; elected George Washington to head of the Continental Army.
 - Selection largely political – Northerners wanted to bring Virginia into the war.
- C. *Declaration of the Causes & Necessity of Taking Up Arms* (written by Jefferson & Dickinson)
 - 1. Drafted 2nd set of appeals to the king and British people for redress of American grievances.
 - 2. Seen as intermediate step towards the Declaration of Independence
 - (Declaration & Resolves from 1st Continental Congress was earlier step.)
 - 3. Set plan to raise money and to create an army and a navy.
- D. **Olive Branch Petition** (written largely by John Dickinson)
 - 1. Last ditch effort by moderates in the Continental Congress to prevent an all-out war.
 - 2. Again, pledged loyalty to the crown; sought to restore peace
 - 3. Appealed to George III to convince Parliament to reconsider the “Intolerable Acts”
 - 4. King refused to recognize Congress; the war raged on

II. Early Battles

- A. Ticonderoga and Crown Point -- May 1775
 - 1. Tiny forces under **Ethan Allen** and his Green Mountain Boys of Vermont & **Benedict Arnold** of Connecticut surprised & captured British garrisons.
- B. **Bunker Hill** – June 17, 1775
 - 1. Colonials seized Breed's Hill -- commanded a strong position overlooking Boston.
 - 2. Over 1,000 oncoming Redcoats in ill-conceived frontal assault were mowed down by 1,500 American riflemen.
 - Americans had 140 killed and 441 wounded.
 - 3. Americans ran out of gunpowder and were forced to abandon the hill in disorder.
 - 4. Viewed as American victory due to Britain’s heavy losses
 - 5. Bloodiest battle of the War for Independence
 - 6. British Army left Boston to conduct the war from New York.

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- C. Following Bunker Hill, King proclaimed the colonies in rebellion (Aug. 23, 1775).
1. This was tantamount to a declaration of war against the colonies..
 2. 18,000 Hessians (German mercenary soldiers) hired by King to support British forces
-- Americans shocked that king would hire soldiers reputed for their brutality; Colonials saw the war as a family conflict.
- D. Americans failed to successfully invade Canada in Oct. 1775
-- Yet, invasion postponed large British offensive which eventually contributed to the American victory at Saratoga.

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IV. Declaration of Independence

- A. Most Americans did not desire independence; proud to be British citizens
- B. Reasons for shift of loyalty
1. Hiring of Hessians
 2. Burning of Falmouth & Norfolk by the British
 3. Governor of Virginia promised freedom to slaves who would fight for Britain.
-- Impact: persuaded many southern elite to join New England in the war effort.
- C. **Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*** (published early 1776)
1. Became an instant best-seller in the colonies; effective propaganda
 2. Main ideas:
 - a. Britain's colonial policies were inconsistent; independence was the only course
 - b. Nowhere in the physical universe did a smaller heavenly body control a larger one. Why should tiny England control huge North America?
 - c. King was nothing more than the "Royal Brute of Great Britain."
 - d. America had a sacred mission; moral obligation to the world to set up an independent, democratic republic, untainted by association with corrupt monarchical Britain.
 3. Persuaded Congress to go all the way for independence
 - a. Could not hope for aid from France unless they declared independence
 - b. France not interested in colonial reconstruction under Britain
- D. June 7, 1776, Philadelphia Congress, **Richard Henry Lee** proposed independence.
1. "These United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states..."
 2. Motion was adopted on July 2, 1776

3. Yet, formal explanation was needed to rally resistance at home and invite foreign nations to aid the American cause, especially France.

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E. Congress appointed Committee on Independence to prepare an Appropriate statement shortly after Lee's speech.

1. Task given to a committee that chose Thomas Jefferson.
 - Other members: B. Franklin, J. Adams, Roger Sherman, & Robert Livingston
2. Some debate and amendment had preceded its adoption especially an anti-slavery clause which was heavily modified with some portions being removed.
 - a. Jefferson had blamed England for continuing the slave trade despite colonial wishes (and despite his owning slaves).
 - b. Yet, southerners in particular still favored slavery and dismissed the clause.
3. Declaration not addressed to England; U.S. didn't expect a response from the king.
4. Declaration of Independence formally approved on July 4, 1776

F. Declaration of Independence had three major parts:

1. Preamble (heavily influenced by John Locke)
 - a. Stated the rights of colonists to break away if natural rights were violated: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (property)
 - b. Stated "all men are created equal"
2. List of 27 grievances of the colonies (seen by Congress as most important part)
 - a. Underwent the most changes from the original draft (24)
 - b. Charged King with imposing taxes without colonials' consent, eliminating trial by jury, military dictatorship, maintaining standing armies in peacetime, cutting off trade, burning towns, hiring mercenaries, & inciting Amerindian violence.
3. Formal declaration of independence
 - a. Officially broke ties with England
 - b. "United States" officially an independent country

G. Result: Foreign aid could now be successfully solicited

V. Patriots & Loyalists

- A. John Adams claimed that 1/3 of colonists were Patriots, 1/3 were Loyalists and 1/3 were neutral. (This number is difficult to verify but is useful anyway).
- B. **Loyalists** ("Tories") = about 20% of the American people
 1. Colonists who fought for return to colonial rule; loyal to king.
 2. Conservative: educated and wealthy; fearful of "mob rule."
 3. Included the older generation; younger generation was more revolutionary
 4. Included king's officers and other beneficiaries of the crown

5. Included the Anglican clergy and a large portion of their followers; most numerous of the loyalists (except in Virginia)
6. Influential in aristocratic NY, Charleston, PA, and NJ.
7. Least numerous in New England
8. Ineffective at gaining allegiance of neutral colonists

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C. Patriots

1. Sometimes called "whigs" (named after British opposition party)
2. American rebels who fought both British soldiers and loyalists
3. Most numerous in New England
4. Constituted a minority movement
5. More adept at gaining support from colonials
6. Financing: Robert Morris, "the financier of the Revolution" helped Congress finance the war.

D. About 80,000 Loyalists fled the colonies.

1. Loyalists regarded by Patriots as traitors.
2. Their estates were confiscated and sold; these funds helped finance the war
3. 50,000 fought for the British

VIII. The War in 1776-1777: Britain changed its focus to the mid-Atlantic states

A. Battle of Long Island (Summer & Fall 1776)

1. Washington's army escaped from Long Island to Manhattan and then NJ.
2. British lost a great opportunity to crush the Americans early.

B. **Battle of Trenton** (Dec. 1776)

1. Washington crossed the icy Delaware River on Dec. 26, 1776
2. At Trenton, surprised and captured about 1,000 Hessians who were sleeping off their Christmas party.

C. Battle of Princeton (Jan. 1777)

1. One week later, Washington defeated a smaller British force at Princeton
2. British forced to pull his outposts back to New York
3. Trenton and Princeton was a gamble by Washington to achieve quick victories to revive the disintegrating Continental Army.

D. **Battle of Saratoga** (most important battle of the American Revolution).

1. British sought to capture New York and sever New England from the U.S.
2. Benedict Arnold saved New England by slowing down British invasion of New York
3. General Burgoyne surrendered entire command at Saratoga on Oct. 17, 1777 to American General Horatio Gates.

4. Saratoga one of history's most decisive battles
 - a. Made possible French aid which ultimately ensured American independence.
 - b. Spanish & Dutch eventually entered war; England faced with world war.
 - c. Saratoga revived the faltering colonial cause

- E. Washington retired to **Valley Forge** for winter of 1777-78
 1. Supplies were scarce: food, clothing
 2. Army whipped into shape by the Prussian drillmaster **Baron von Steuben.**
 3. Demonstrated American resolve despite horrible conditions.

- F. **Benedict Arnold** becomes a traitor, 1780 -- tremendous blow to American morale
 1. Arnold frustrated with his treatment by his superiors despite his heroic service
 2. Persuaded Washington to make him head of West Point
 3. Plotted with the British to sell out the key stronghold of West Point commanding the Hudson River
 4. Plot failed after it was accidentally discovered by Washington

- IX. **Articles of Confederation** adopted in 1777 (Drafted by John Dickinson)
 - A. Set up by 2nd Continental Congress in order to create a lasting government.
 - B. Did not go into effect until 1781.
 - C. First constitution in U.S. history; lasted until 1789 when the Constitution was adopted
 - D. Congress had power to: conduct war, handle foreign relations & secure loans, borrow money.
 - E. No power to: regulate trade, conscript troops, levy taxes.

- X. France Becomes an Ally of the U.S.
 - A. French eager to exact revenge on the British for the French & Indian War.
 1. Saw Revolutionary war as an opportunity.
 2. British America was England's most valuable colonies.
 - B. Secret supply to the Americans
 1. France initially worried that open aid to America might provoke British attacks on French interests..
 2. Americans **Silas Deane** and **Benjamin Franklin** arranged for significant amounts of munitions and military supplies to be shipped to America.
-- Helped forge the Franco-American Alliance.

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3. **Marquis de Lafayette** significant in helping U.S. get financial aid from France.

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- C. Declaration of Independence was a turning point for French aid
1. Showed Americans meant business
 2. Victory at Saratoga showed U.S. had excellent chance for defeating England

- D. **Franco-American Alliance, 1778:** France offers U.S. a treaty of alliance.

1. Promised Americans recognition of independence.
2. Both sides bound themselves to wage war until the US won its freedom or until both agreed to terms with Britain.
3. Many Americans reluctantly accepted the treaty.
 - a. France a strong Roman Catholic country
 - b. Hitherto a traditional enemy of Britain for centuries.

- E. The Revolution turned into a world war that stretched Britain's resources.

1. Spain and Holland entered in 1779.
2. Catherine the Great of Russia organized the League of Armed Neutrality
 - Lined up almost all remaining European neutrals in an attitude of passive hostility toward England as a result of England disturbing Baltic shipping.
3. War raged in Europe, North America, South America, the Caribbean, and Asia.

XI. Land Frontier & Sea Frontier

- A. War raged throughout most of the war

1. Amerindian allies of Britain attacked American frontier positions
2. 1777 known as "the Bloody Year" on the frontier
3. **Joseph Brant** ("Monster Brant"), Mohawk Chief, and leader of the Iroquois Six Nations, led Amerindian raids in western PA and NY.
 - Forced to sign Treaty of Ft. Stanwix -- 1st treaty bet. U.S. & Amerindians.
 - Iroquois lost most of their lands.

- B. Illinois country taken from the British

1. **George Rogers Clark**, a frontiersman, seized several British ports along the Ohio River: Kaskaskia, Cahokia (St. Louis), and Vincennes, Indiana.
2. Helped quiet Indian involvement

3. His supporters credit him for forcing the British to cede the whole Ohio region in the peace treaty of Paris after the war. (This is still a debate.)

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D. The American Navy

1. John Paul Jones most famous U.S. naval leader (Scottish born)
2. Chief contribution was destroying British merchant shipping and carrying war into the waters around the British Isles.
3. Did not affect Britain's navy

E. American Privateers were more effective than the American navy

1. Privately owned ships authorized by Congress to attack enemy ships.
2. 600 British ships captured; British captured as many American merchantmen & privateers.
3. Brought in gold, harassed the British, and increased American morale by providing American victories.

F. Major naval battles between British, French, & other European powers

1. Mostly in the West Indies
2. British overcome by French, Spanish and Dutch involvement
-- War ended in 1785 when Britain won last battle near India.

XII. In 1778, Britain again changed its strategy: focused on former Southern Colonies

- A. Savannah, Georgia taken in late 1778-early 1779
- B. Charleston, SC, fell in 1780 (4th largest city in America)
 1. Devastating loss to American war-effort
 2. Heavier loss to the Americans than Saratoga was to the British
- C. Nathanael Greene succeeded in clearing Georgia and S.C. of most British troops
-- Cornwallis forced to abandon the Southern strategy; fell back to Chesapeake Bay at Yorktown

D. **Battle of Yorktown:** last major battle of the war

1. French Admiral de Grasse, head of powerful fleet in Caribbean, blockaded Chesapeake Bay; British ships unable to enter.
2. Washington made 300-mile+ march to Chesapeake Bay from NY.
3. Accompanied by Rochambeau's French army, Washington attacked British by land while de Grasse blockaded them by sea..
4. Oct. 19, 1781, General Cornwallis surrendered entire force of 7,000 men
5. War continued one more year (especially in the South)

XIII. Peace at Paris

A. British ready to come to terms after losses in India, West Indies, & Mediterranean

1. Lord North's ministry collapsed in 1782; George III lost influence in Parliament
2. New Whig ministry (more sympathetic to Americans) replaced the Tory regime.

B. French attempted to create a weak U.S.

1. U.S. diplomats Ben Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay sent by Congress to make no separate peace without consulting the French.
 - a. They ignored these orders as they were highly suspicious of France & Spain.
 - b. John Jay believed France wanted to keep US border east of the Allegheny mountains and give western territories to its ally, Spain, for its help in the war.
2. U.S. turned to Great Britain
 - a. Britain eager to separate U.S. from the Franco-American Alliance.
 - b. Preliminary Treaty signed in 1782

C. **Treaty of Paris of 1783:** Britain formally recognized US independence

1. Granted US huge boundaries stretching to the Mississippi River in the west, the Great Lakes in the north, and to Spanish Florida in the south
 - a. Americans allowed to retain a share in the valuable Newfoundland fisheries.
 - b. British promised troops would not take slaves from America.
2. American concessions:
 - a. Loyalists could not be further persecuted
 - b. Congress was to recommend to state legislatures that confiscated Loyalist property be restored
 - c. American states were bound to pay back debts to British creditors.
 - d. U.S. did not comply with many of these concessions and it later became a partial cause of the War of 1812 against Britain.
3. France approved the British-American terms (officially, no separate Franco-American peace)
4. America alone gained from the war
 - a. Britain lost colonies and other territories
 - b. France became bankrupt; led in part to the French Revolution.
 - c. Spain gained little

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XIV. American society during the war

- A. Over 250,000 American soldiers fought
-- 10% who fought died; largest % of any American war in history
- B. British occupied most major cities, e.g. Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.
- C. War Economy: all of society became involved in the war.
1. State and national governments created.
 2. Men with military experience volunteered for positions in the army.
 3. Some merchants loaned money to the army and to Congress. Others made fortunes from wartime contracts.
 4. Most of the fighting was done by the poorest Americans
-- Young city laborers, farm boys, indentured servants, and sometimes slaves.
 5. African Americans fought on both sides.
-- 5,000 in the Continental army and nearly 30,000 in the British army in return for promises of freedom.
 6. Native Americans also fought with the British since they hoped to keep land-hungry Americans out of their territories.
-- Bitter feelings remained long after the war ended.
- D. Women in the War
1. Women managed farms and businesses while men served in the army
 2. Other women traveled with the Army as cooks and nurses.
 3. Women more politically active and expressed thoughts more freely.

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Memory Aid for Events Leading up to the Revolution:

<u>P</u> retty	Proclamation of 1763
<u>S</u> illy	Stamp Act, 1765
<u>T</u> ammy	Townshend Acts, 1767
<u>B</u> aked	Boston Massacre, 1770
<u>T</u> ea	Tea Act, 1773
<u>C</u> ookies	Committees of Correspondence
<u>I</u> nside	“Intolerable Acts,” 1774
<u>F</u> reshly	First Continental Congress
<u>L</u> ayered	Lexington and Concord
<u>S</u> picy	Second Continental Congress
<u>D</u> ough	Declaration of Independence

Essay Questions for Review: (Both 2.1 and 2.2)

1. Analyze the impact of “salutary neglect” in the development in democratic ideals. To what extent did “salutary neglect” lead to the American Revolution?
2. To what extent was Great Britain successful in maintaining its mercantilist system in the colonies prior to the American Revolution?
3. Analyze major events and factors that led to the American Revolution.
4. To what extent had the American colonists developed an “American character” in the years preceding the American Revolution.
5. To what extent were Americans unified in the cause for independence during the Revolutionary War?

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