

why
war?

The American Revolution

Was the American Revolution truly a Revolution or merely a war for independence? Just how important is the American Revolution in World History?

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The Story Thus Far

- European nations were competing with each other for:
 - World resources
 - Military strength
 - Political superiority
 - Geopolitical Struggle!
- Some nations were upsetting the balance of power, which led to European conflict in a Great Power struggle, the Seven Years War, 1756-63.



Overview

- Also called War for American Independence
- Only 1/3 supported independence! War was led by wealthy elites from the cities who were involved with trade.
- War started in April 1775 in Lexington and Concord Massachusetts
- Caused American colonies to separate from Great Britain and become the United States
- War fought with French assistance, ends with Battle of Yorktown in 1781, an American Victory!
- Ended in 1783 with the Treaty of Paris, ending hostilities and recognizing a new nation, the United States of America!



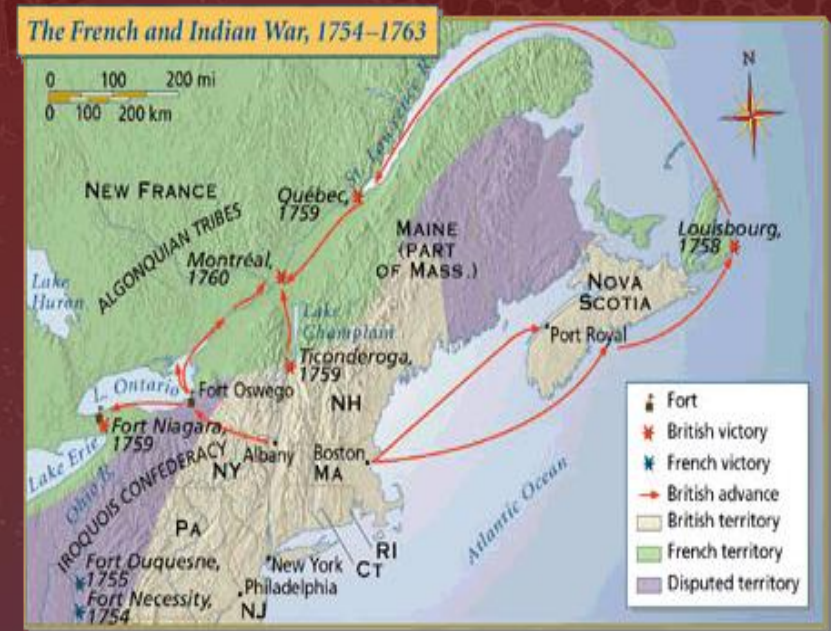
The French and Indian War—1754

- Rivalry between the French and British in a geopolitical struggle for supremacy
- Who will control North America? French had the interior and Canada, British had the coast to the Appalachians
- British, colonists, and Native American allies fought French and Native American allies in a bloody war that ended with British victory and the expulsion of the French from North America.



The French and Indian War—1754

- Great Britain's national debt nearly doubled during the war
- British expected Americans to help pay for protection



- The war lasted seven years, ending in 1763. The British won and the French were expelled from North America.

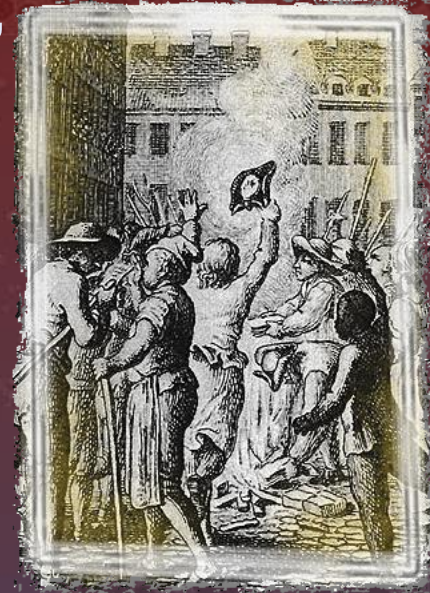
The Sugar Act - 1764

- First attempt to raise income from the Colonies
- Duty on sugar and molasses not obtained from Britain
- Smuggling cases tried in Great Britain
- It did not work well, led to smuggling, widespread circumvention of the law.
- Colonists echoed John Locke “No taxation without representation”!



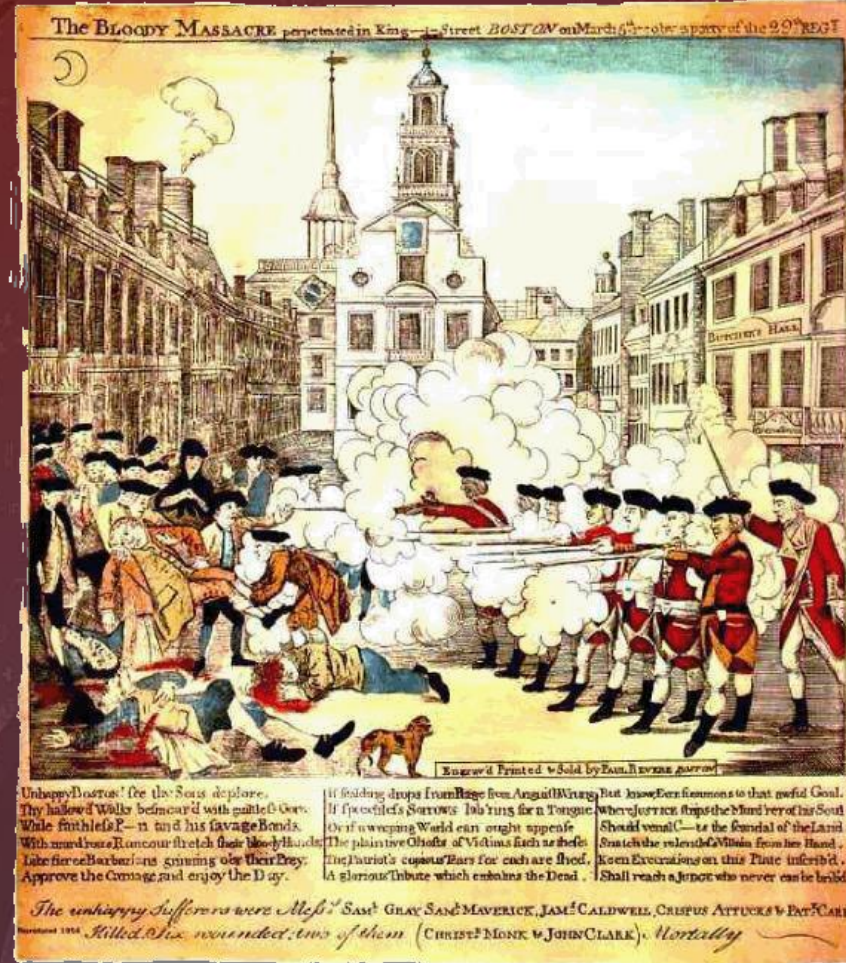
The Stamp Act—1765

- Official government stamp required for newspapers, magazines, legal documents, dice, any paper product.
- First internal tax paying for British protection
- Stamp Agents were harassed, intimidated and physically assaulted; most revenue was not collected and there was no hope of success.
- Stamps were widely confiscated and burned.
- Stamp Act was a complete failure!
- The Declaratory Act was passed after the Stamp Act was repealed
 - Face-saving measure that declared the right of Parliament to levy taxes on colonies and pass laws for the colonies
 - Colonists disputed it! No taxation without representation!



More Major Causes

- The Townshend Acts
- Boston Massacre
- Boston Tea Party
- The Intolerable Acts
 - Series of acts passed by Parliament to punish Boston for the rebelliousness
 - Rallied all the colonies behind Massachusetts against the British!



The Townshend Acts—1767

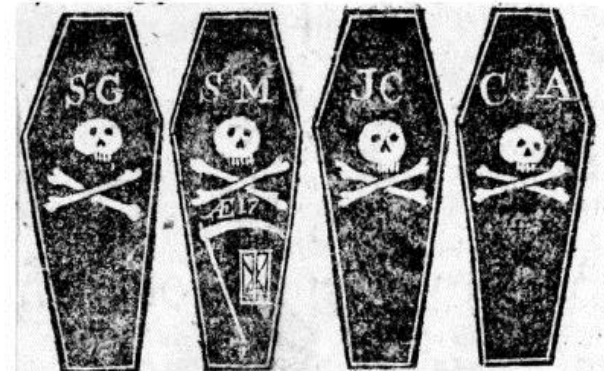
- Import duties on tea, lead, glass, and paint colors
- Money used to pay royal governors
- “No taxation without representation” was the rallying cry against it. Colonists disputed Parliament’s right to impose this tax, echoing John Locke!



Townshend

Boston Massacre—1770

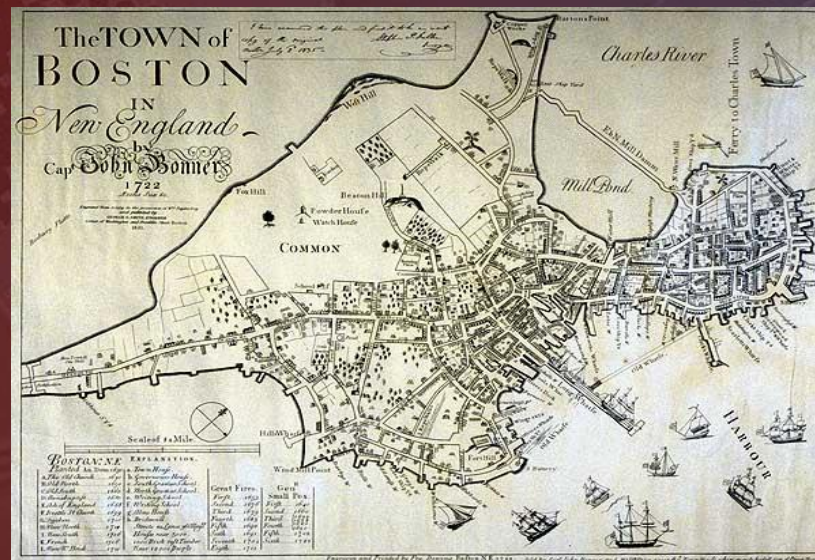
- March 5, 1770: Crowd of colonists threaten British soldiers
- British open fire killing five Americans
- First person killed was Crispus Attucks, a man of African descent
- British soldiers tried and acquitted—future president John Adams was their defense lawyer!
- Parliament canceled the Townshend duties



Boston Tea Party—1773

- British sold tea even more cheaply than smuggled tea
- Colonists dressed up as Mohawks

- Colonists boarded tea ships
- Tea was dumped overboard



The Intolerable Acts—1774

- **Six Acts of Parliament passed to punish Boston!**
- **Closed the Port of Boston**
- **American town meetings banned**
- **British officials in trouble sent to Great Britain for trial—out of reach of colonial courts, virtual immunity from prosecution for British officials!**
- **Infuriated all the colonies, who saw the Intolerable Acts as an example of British Tyranny!**



First Continental Congress



- 56 Delegates
- Included George Washington, Patrick Henry and Sam Adams
- Direct response to Intolerable Acts
- Met in Philadelphia – 1774

Colonists Agreed To:

- **Boycott British goods**
- **Arm themselves and form militias**
- **Appeal to the king**



King George III Refused To:

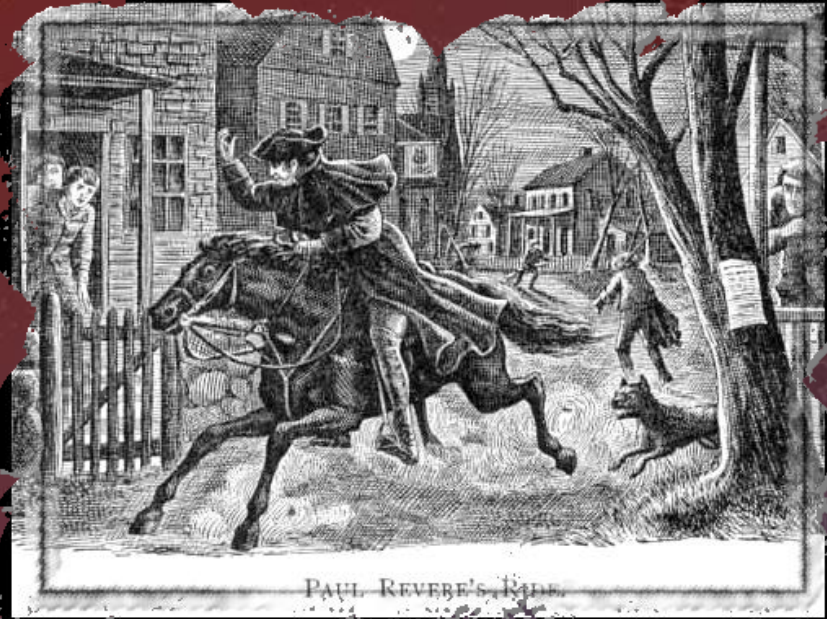
- Allow American colonist representation in Parliament
- No respond to colonists' complaints and official grievances



King George III

“The Shot Heard Round the World”

- American colonists stockpiled weapons in Concord, Massachusetts
- 800 British troops marched through Lexington on the way to Concord, April 1775.
- Paul Revere: “The British are coming!” (Revere was captured & never completed his ride!
- Dr. Samuel Prescott made it to Lexington and Concord to warn the patriots!

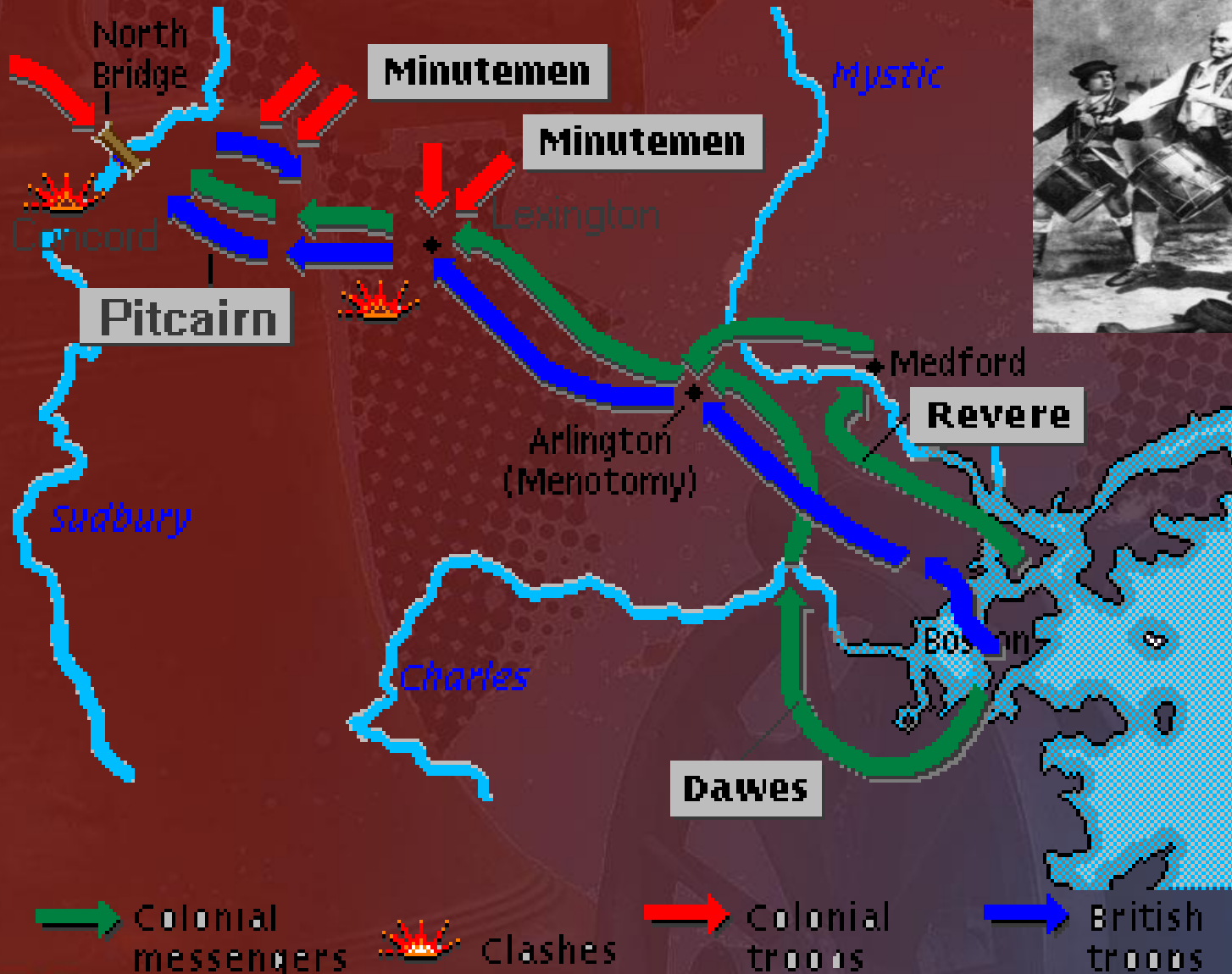


The Armed Militia

- Patriot militiamen were known as “Minutemen”
- 70 Minutemen on the Village Green
- Known as the Battle of Lexington and Concord
- Uncertain which side fired first.
- 50 Americans killed and 45 wounded or missing
- 65 British killed and 208 wounded or missing

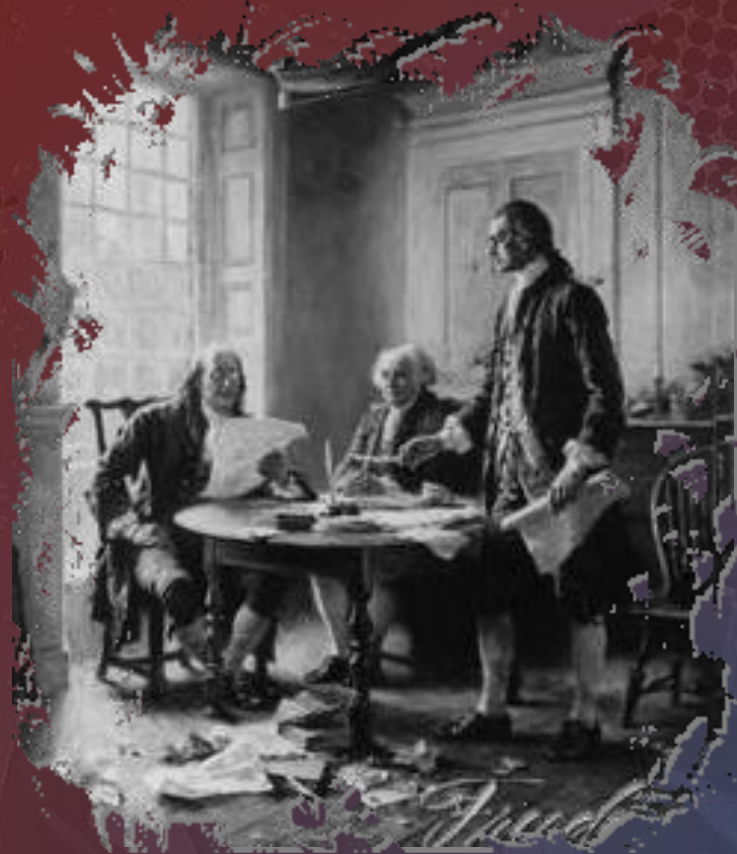


Lexington and Concord

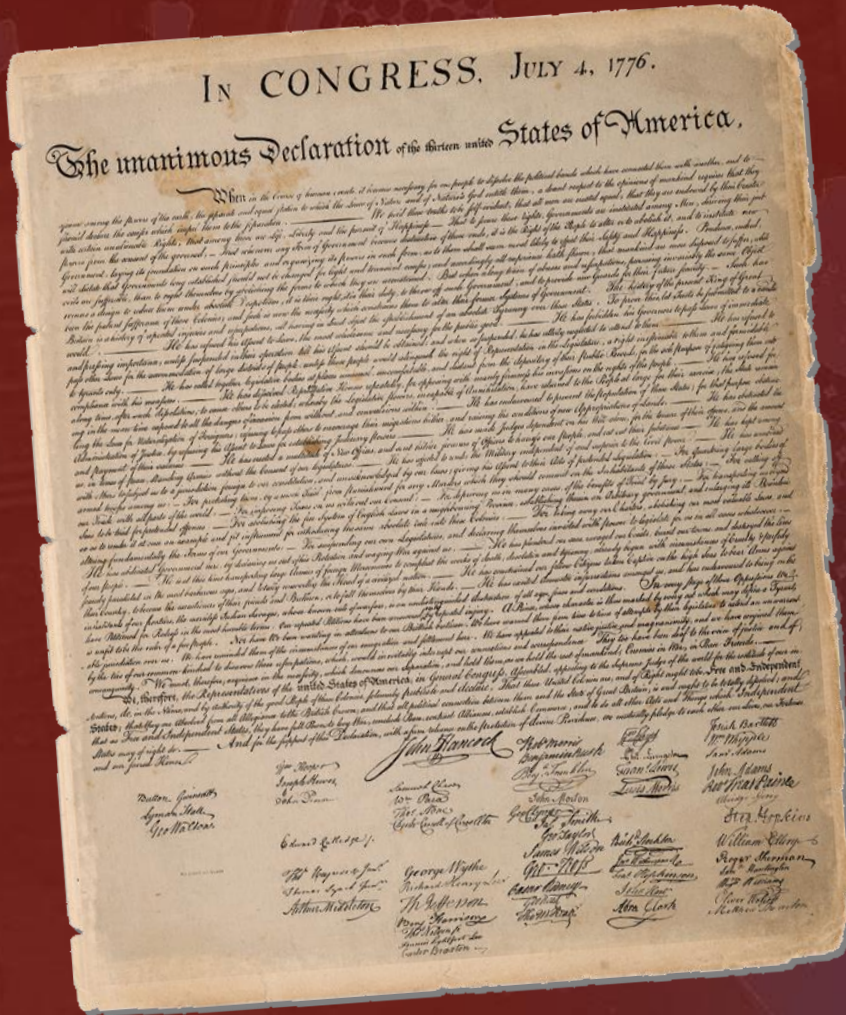


Second Continental Congress

- Decided to officially separate from Britain
- Committee selected to draft the reasons for separation
- Thomas Jefferson selected to write document
- Met in Philadelphia



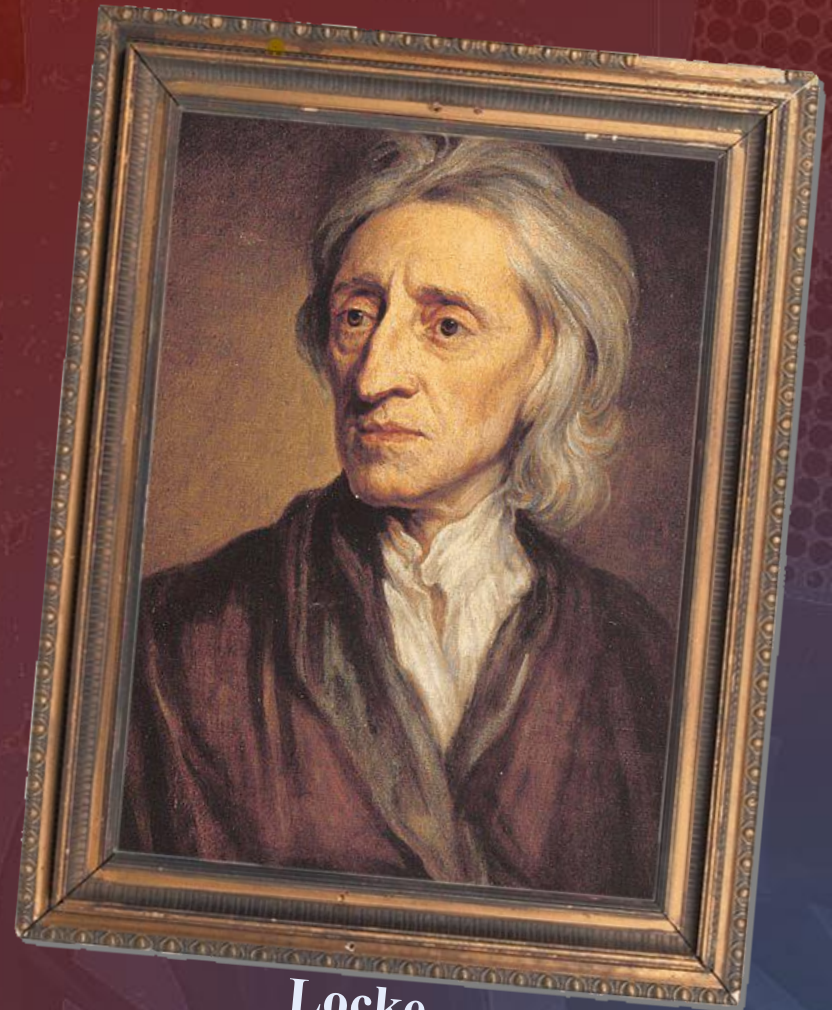
The Declaration of Independence



- Written by Thomas Jefferson, inspired by John Locke
- It is the “Birth Certificate of the United States”
- Document listed rights and grievances against King George III
- 4 parts
 1. Preamble
 2. Declaration of rights
 3. List of Grievances
 4. Resolution—Independence!

Key Quotes in the Declaration

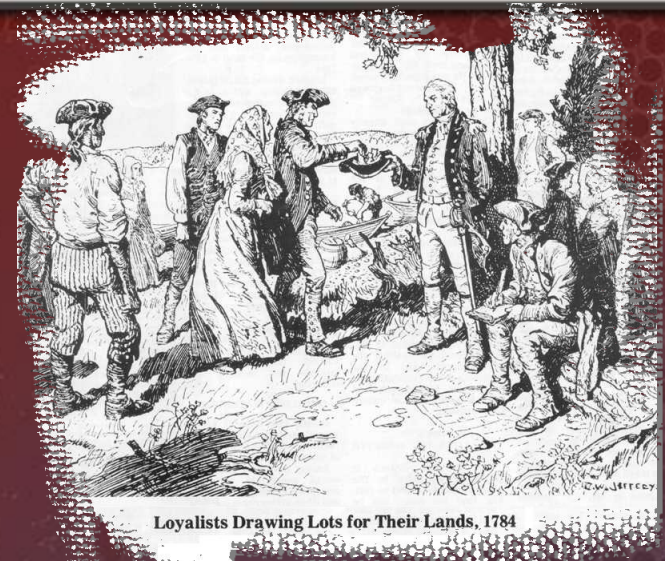
- “We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal”
- “That they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights”
- “That among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”



Locke

Choosing Sides

- Patriots – Supported the Revolution—1/3 of population



Loyalists Drawing Lots for Their Lands, 1784

- Loyalists – Americans who supported the King—1/3 of population
- Red Coats/ Lobsterbacks – British Army—regular troops
- 1/3 of Population didn't care!

Revolutionary Armies – The British

- British Army most powerful in world
- Also well-equipped with weapons
- Highly trained and disciplined for war on land or high seas



Revolutionary Armies

- Americans shot more accurately
- British carried three days provisions
- British gear weighed about 100 pounds



Revolutionary Armies – The Americans



- Revolutionary Army knew lay of the land
- Used weapons appropriate for landscape
- Wore pieces of different uniforms
- Brown army clothing

British Advantages

- Well-equipped
- Disciplined
- Strongest navy



American Advantages

- Accuracy of the rifle
- Knowledge of the land
- Guerilla warfare tactics
- Superb command



Military Leaders—American

- George Washington: Commander of Americans Forces
- Nathanael Greene: Top Strategist
- Henry Knox: Artillery Expert
- Benedict Arnold: Commander under Washington



British Leaders

- General Charles Cornwallis
- General John Burgoyne
- Benedict Arnold (was a great American general, defected to the British, his name is a synonym for traitor).
- William Howe
- All considered America one of the worst places to serve



Other Key Players

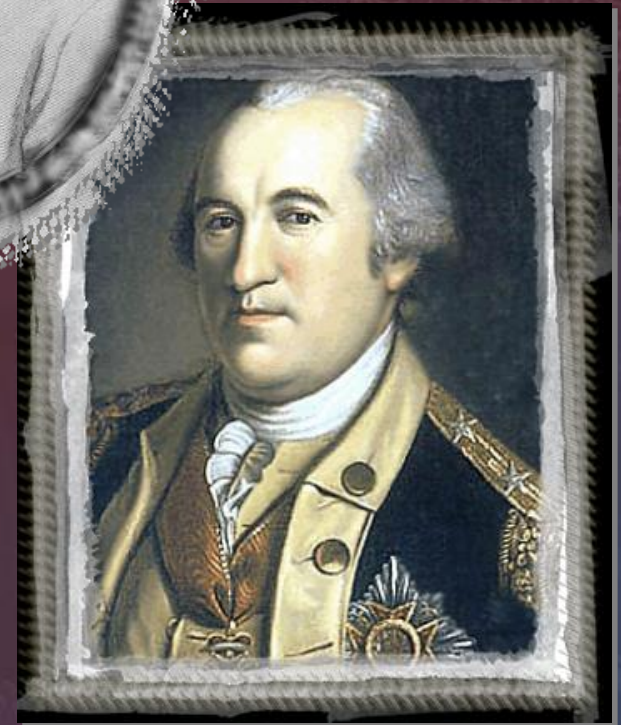
- France, Spain, Germany and Poland
- Hessian mercenaries from Germany
- The Marquis de Lafayette: Frenchman who supported American cause
- Huge percentage of American gunpowder came from France



Marquis de Lafayette

Other Key Players

- **Bernardo De Galvez:** Spanish lord in Mexico
- **Baron Friedrich von Steuben:** German military commander who helped train American troops
- **Nathan Hale:** American Spy “ I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”



The War at Sea

- Approximately 3,000 men enlisted—America made 13 Frigates
- Most, if not all, were destroyed or captured
- Colonial Navy authorized by Continental Congress October 13, 1775



Major Battles

- Battle of Long Island
- Fort Ticonderoga
- Bunker Hill
- Trenton
- Saratoga
- Yorktown



Fort Ticonderoga—1775

- Key strategic location in New York
- Ethan Allen and about 125 Green Mountain boys attacked fort



Ticonderoga

- The Fort was taken without firing a shot
- British officers and women and children were captured
- Cannons were taken from Ticonderoga to Boston
- Henry Knox:
American Army top
artillery commander
- Major hero of
American Revolution



Battle of Bunker Hill - 1775

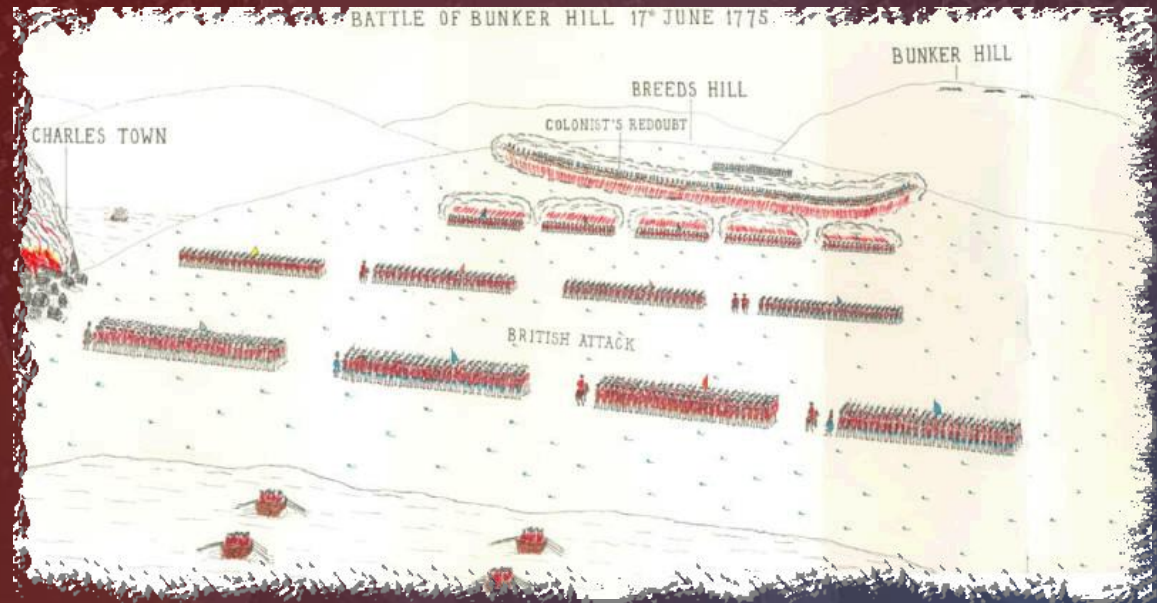
- Bunker Hill located near Boston



- Red Coats victorious in third charge
- Americans ran out of ammunition
- Moral victory for American Army

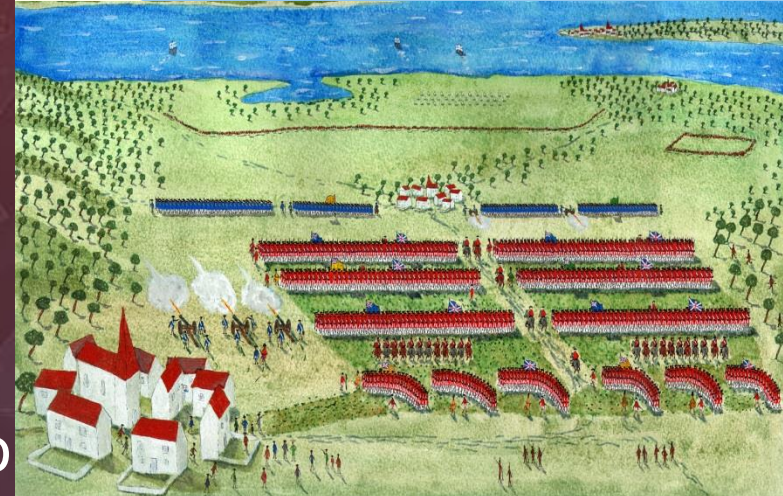
Bunker Hill

- Costliest battle for British during whole war
- British casualties 1,054
- American casualties 441
- British began to get nervous
- Washington took command of the army two weeks after this battle



Battle of Long Island (August 27-29, 1776)

- AKA as Battle of Brooklyn, Battle of Brooklyn Heights. US Defeat!
- 1st major battle to occur after the Declaration of Independence and the biggest battle of the war.
- 32,000 British troops invaded Long Island, chased Continental Army to Manhattan, then defeated the Americans and took over New York City for the duration of war.
- British Naval fleet of 130 ships key to victory—supplies, firepower, men
- British numerical superiority and superior firepower was decisive!



Battle of Trenton—1776



- Surprise attack the day after Christmas
- Washington crossed the Delaware
- Approximately 1000 German soldiers fighting for the British captured
- Saved the US from total defeat in the war!

Trenton & Princeton

- American casualties were four
- German leader, Colonel Rall mortally wounded
- Washington cleared British from central New Jersey
- Continental soldiers re-enlisted, saving the army
- Rallied the morale of the nation!



More Significant Battles



- Saratoga (1777)—American victory in upstate NY over “Gentleman Johnny” Burgoyne. Cleared British out of northern New York.
- Valley Forge (1777-78) Prussian Baron von Steuben trained the Continental Army & professionalized it during the winter of 1777-78. 2,000 soldiers died of starvation and disease —American national identity born here!

- Yorktown-last battle (1781), US victory! British band plays “World turned upside down during surrender”
- British general Cornwallis surrendered to Washington
- War was a blend of successes and failures for American Army; Americans ultimately victorious!(w/French help)



Battle of Saratoga – 1777

- The turning point of the war
- The biggest American victory at the time
- Approximately 5,000 British surrendered to Generals Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold.
- Proved Americans could fight bravely & well, able to defeat a professional British force.
- Convinced the French to join the Americans because they could win!



Battle of Saratoga – 1777

- After the American victory France changed its policies.
- Feb. 1778 France and American formed an alliance
- France declared war on Britain the next month
- Spain declared war in 1779
- Bernardo de Galvez chased British troops out of Louisiana and Florida.



Valley Forge – 1777-1778



WASHINGTON AND HIS ARMY AT VALLEY FORGE.

- American Army out of food and clothing
- Valley Forge briefly a refuge
- Supplies ran out and many died
- Washington appealed to Congress for help
- Low point for American Army morale
- Any deserters are shot

Valley Forge – 1777-1778

- Marquis de Lafayette joined Washington as an aide
- Friedrich von Steuben drilled the troops teaching them military discipline
- Continental Army became professional during stay at Valley Forge
- 2,000 men died of starvation and disease in difficult circumstances.
- The army that emerged was on par with any British force

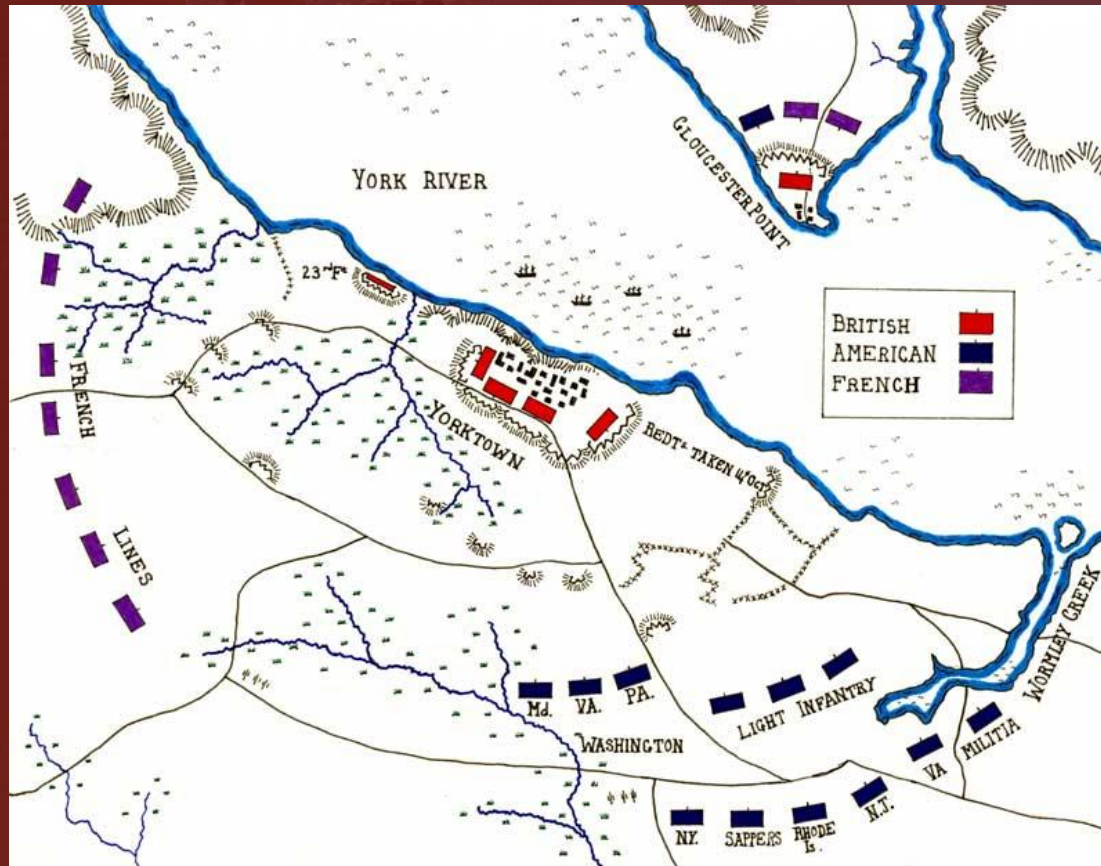


Battle of Yorktown—1781

- French naval blockade aided this final battle
- Escape for the British was impossible
- British General Cornwallis faced American forces approximately twice his size



Yorktown



Yorktown

- Approximately 8,700 British troops surrendered
- Pinned in by American and French Naval fleets
- General Benjamin Lincoln accepted the surrender sword
- British bands played “The World has Turned Upside Down”



The Treaty of Paris—1783



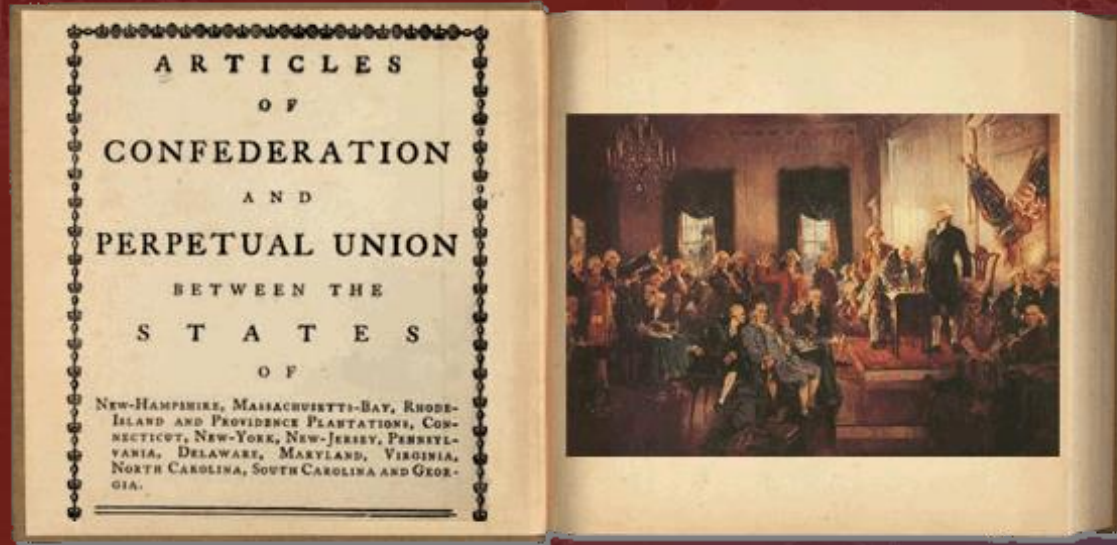
- Officially ended the American Revolution
- Set many geographic borders, including U.S. and Canada
- Florida was returned to Spain
- British merchants must be paid for lost items
- Loyalists must be paid for lost property

The Aftermath:

- Penalties inflicted on Loyalists
- Some Loyalists were “tarred and feathered” and put on ships bound for Canada or Great Britain



The Articles of Confederation



- Written by John Dickson in 1777
- Ratified in 1781
- Governed Americans in 1781-1787
- Paved way for new Constitution

Strengths

- Wage war
- Issue money
- Sign treaties (make peace)
- Set up post offices
- Appoint ambassadors
- Settle conflicts between states

Weaknesses

- NO President (Executive)
- NO Armey
- NO Courts (Judicial)
- NO Taxing Power (monetary problems)
- No power to enforce laws (regulate trade)
- States were sovereign
- One vote per state regardless of population
- 9/13 states to pass a law
- 13/13 states to amend (make changes)

Concluding Thoughts



- Eight years duration, asymmetrical warfare, won with French support
- Little impact on world history; it was a conservative revolution
- War fought by the minority and led by the elites!
- Nothing much changed, British aristocratic elites were exchanged for American elites
- Maker of American heroes & narrative!