Course Learning Outcomes for Unit III

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

2. Identify the rifts that developed between the European powers and their American colonies.
   2.1 Describe the events that led to the War for Independence.

4. Summarize the impact foreign and local governments had on the evolution of American government.
   4.1 Discuss the growing rift with Britain in the 1700s.

Course/Unit Learning Outcomes	Learning Activity
2.1	Unit III Lesson *U.S. History* reading passages Unit III Reflection Paper
4.1	Unit III Lesson *U.S. History* reading passages Unit III Reflection Paper

Reading Assignment

Throughout this course, you will be provided with sections of text from the online resource *U.S. History*. You may be tested on your knowledge and understanding of the material listed below as well as the information presented in the unit lesson. Click on the link(s) below to access your material.

Click here to access this unit's reading from *U.S. History*. The chapter/section titles are also provided below.

Section 4.4: Great Awakening and Enlightenment

Section 4.5: Wars for Empire

Chapter 5 (Sections 5.1-5.5): Imperial Reforms and Colonial Protests, 1763-1774

Chapter 6 (Sections 6.1-6.4): America's War for Independence, 1775-1783

Unit Lesson

Under the dominant British leadership, Colonial America, in what could be called its second attempt, successfully and quickly built a sturdy population of busy cities and thriving farms. Though Britain retained its enforcement of the government within and throughout colonial society, its population was no longer the dominant source of immigrants to this New World. America was already becoming a melting pot that would inspire songs and teachings of unity and nationalism even centuries later.

Family prosperity and the need for labor would ensure that the rooted families would grow, especially in regions such as the Chesapeake and lower South, while the perceived opportunity would ramp up increased migration from Europe, Africa (mostly involuntary), and even some Asian influences. From the advent of the 18th Century until the years directly before the War for Independence, English America would expand into 13 total colonies across multiple geographic and climatic regions along the Atlantic shore.

The majority of the population disproportionately grew in the northern cities from nations that held no loyalty to the original British colonizers, and soon this would become a powder keg that would explode with future events that will be discussed later on in this lesson. England did not care to understand what loose borders and great distance without representation was doing to divide the American citizenry. The unstable confederation of territories with diverse and growing populations started to fracture, even within towns and counties. This situation, mixed with increasing pressure from a government trying to reacquire its influence from an ocean away, at first only generated a series of small skirmishes and native chaos, but finally this powder keg would ignite a rain of gunfire that would be heard throughout the world.

Cultural Background

As a reminder from the previous unit, from the earliest settlements, the Atlantic colonies were divided by multiple cultural and geographic factors, such as climate, ancestry, urban development, and religion. Within these populations was also a very common association with Native Americans, and with a labor force that had drastically evolved from heavily European servants to almost universally West African transplants.

These changes spurred many additional distinctions in terms of cultural expectation, neighborhood makeup, and a general understanding of what was meant by the “American experience.” The distinctions between the individual colonies would amplify as populations continued to flood into the prosperous colonies from Europe. With this population also came fresh ideas that challenged the old guard and once again renewed the spirit of freedom of opportunity and enterprise. Religion would be one of the largest targets; just as previous generations had moved in rebellion to religious oversight, now the structure of organized religion itself was caught in the crosshairs of philosophy: the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment, originally a French movement inspired by human potential and manifested in the ideas of vacating (or even rebelling against) political oversight and religious tradition, quickly moved into the Americas. And whereas Europe had centuries of tradition to help slow the effects of this philosophy, America was largely a blank canvas for new ideas and worked like a sponge to soak up the potential for innovation. In tandem with the strengthening of communities and increased literacy among multigenerational families, the ideas of free thinkers would quickly spread from the elite to the lower classes through public displays and intentional attempts to rouse a response among the most common denominator. These free thinkers included John Locke, John Smith, Thomas Paine, Francois-Marie Arouet (Voltaire), Denis Diderot, and eventually American leaders such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

The outward antagonism against tradition and religion that often came with the Enlightenment would eventually release its grip on these colonies; in the next century, the ideas of free will and civil justice would become instrumental to the founding of the first truly democratic nation. An argument could be made that the American colonies became a utopia for those rebelling against the ideas of Machiavellianism (a term referring to Niccolo Machiavelli’s masterwork, *The Prince,* which blatantly defends a ruler’s right to use any and all methods to ensure his rule is respected), which had been used to shape European society and was a common theme among many Enlightenment leaders. As an example of how powerful the Enlightenment was, the challenge to change American culture would be instrumental to the Great Awakening discussed in the previous unit as well as eventually to the development of what was a uniquely American cultural religious perspective: revivalism.

Colonies Fight for the Crown

To protect itself from the growing populations and new ideas, the crown knew that the Navigation Acts of the previous century required updating. These laws had ensured that British interests were kept in the foreground. They had provided a successful monopoly for many decades, but as the population of these colonies was often no longer dominantly loyal to the British crown, the attitudes and respect of the law were called into question.

For this to work, the mercantilist laws had to remain intact, America’s interests had to remain with shipping and the ports, and the crown had to be viewed as the absolute final authority as represented by its royal appointed governors. By the mid-1700s, with many families having generations of roots in America, this control was beginning to waiver, and colonial assemblies were starting to usurp power from the governor and English Parliament, which were distant and often deaf to uniquely American needs and concerns. This loyalty

would soon be tested when a full-scale frontier conflict evolved into the first world conflict to be fought on American soil: the Seven Years' War (a.k.a. the French and Indian War).

What began as a 1754 skirmish between colonists and Native American tribes of the Mid-Atlantic, soon blossomed into an international conflict between colonizing nations and eventually between colonizing empires. The French, whose numbers remained small in America, stayed focused on the fur trade near the Mississippi River. This region, dubbed "New France," engaged in only rare interaction with the British, who under mercantilist laws had stayed primarily on the Eastern coast. The quest for land was once again the aggressive instigator of physical reaction as the hunt for new lands for farming, hunting, minerals, and timber caught the attention of entrepreneurs from Virginia and Pennsylvania. Also, their unimpeded venture into New France would lead to a military response in the form of secured trade routes and military garrisons manned by the French. At this time, many English colonies had not determined western borders as expansion was neither allowed nor supported by crown authority until the financial prospects of Virginia Governor Dinwiddie, which supported the new land claims, challenged the supposed French border.

A young George Washington inspecting his troops
(Trumbull, 1797)

In 1754, a British officer named George Washington, a young native Virginian with a wide knowledge of the terrain and European battle tactics, led a small expedition into the disputed territory that eventually led to the first open gunfire of this frontier fray. The first British stronghold, Fort Necessity, was constructed and soon attacked with great success by the combined western force.

The French had shown their alliance with the Mingo, Shawnee, and Delaware tribes, and the British felt they too needed support. British brashness presupposed that once-honored alliances with Mohawk and Iroquois leaders would immediately necessitate support. However, in 1754 that alliance was demanded at a meeting in Albany, where in turn, the Native American tribes refused their support, citing poor preparation and limited support. In response, political figures Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Hutchinson supported a temporary union of all British, Iroquois, and Mohawk forces, to which there was absolutely no support, including from the crown.

It was clear how divided the colonies and tribes had become and how little the English Parliament cared about American matters that were not directly tied to mercantilist policies. Parliament resolved only to appoint two new governors, whose roles were to coordinate all negotiations with Native American tribes. Only the Mohawk pledged support to the British, and such a weak force would not challenge the growing French resistance.

Over the next two years, the British would continually engage the French with less than satisfactory resources and numbers. For the French, this was a major conflict, but for the British, it was but a skirmish that did not (yet) threaten the fertile shipping lanes. With the assignment of William Pitt in 1757, the colonial resistance was finally granted enough support to reclaim British lands and push the French back, but the outcome of this was a widening of the conflict to the world stage, exactly the full-scale conflict the British Parliament and crown did not want.

In the aftermath, the British might was more than adequate to halt French imperialistic goals, and new English lands in America were captured from both of England's traditional rivals, France and Spain. These included modern Canada, Cuba, and territory to the Mississippi River, of which the Spanish took control. The French were, for all political purposes, removed from the Americas and no longer posed any northern or western threat to Britain's American empire. The colonists believed that this was their victory, and to they who had fed, quartered, and fought alongside their British cousins, belonged the spoils of war. To the rest of the empire, this was a military solution to a colonial mess—an expensive mess.

Paying for "America's" Protection

Fallout from the Seven Years' War, like the attitude of the imperial leadership, was slanted against the colonists. In 1763, once again in an attempt to spread into new lands for farming and opportunity, renewed skirmishes with the still-fuming Native American tribes caused renewed conflicts, such as Pontiac's Rebellion and the attack on Fort Detroit. In an attempt to halt any escalation of this conflict, and with the goal of retaining the still-profitable mercantilist system on the coast, the crown and native tribes agreed to what became known as the Royal Proclamation of 1763. This, in simplest terms, was a promise that any Native American tribes who were positioned on what was once disputed French territory between the Appalachian Mountains and Mississippi River did not have to worry about colonial interference or encroachment. The Native Americans were promised compensation and careful review prior to any lands being taken by the crowd or colonies. The language of the contract was for the English government to very carefully remain distant, yet respectful, to the tribes affected and overtly superior to the colonists.

For many "English subjects" living in America, this was a direct insult. Many of them lost properties, livelihoods, and prospects due to these limitations, and colonists who had fought these same tribes felt betrayed and humiliated by their government. Aided by the contract's vague identification and the less-than-fortified border, the colonists in the West largely ignored the proclamation. Much of the formerly disputed land was soon purchased from those tribes, which also provided some sense of the western borders for many of the colonies.

The proclamation would soon be seen as only the first rash action taken by the English government against her colonies. A new king, George III, and Prime Minister George Grenville, were now in power. In addition to the standing Parliament, the first goal was to reclaim the monies lost in the Seven Years' War, the bill for which, according to the new administration, obviously belonged to the instigator, the colonies. The repayment would come from the creation of two drastically apparent new taxes: the Sugar (Revenue) and Stamp Acts.

The first act, the Sugar (Revenue) Act of 1764, lowered the price of molasses (used like common sugar today) but greatly increased the tariff for the non-British product. This meant that any item with molasses, such as rum, desserts, or preserves, would increase in cost. For the traditional customer, who would purchase only those quantities normal for self or family, these first two acts were not completely outlandish. However, for distributors who had made up their losses caused by the mercantilist laws from under-the-table deals, this was a serious threat to business.

Perhaps more undermining to the American marketer and consumer than the price was the increased monitoring of tariff policy and collection by royally appointed accountants. The second tax, the Stamp Act of 1765, was a tax on any formal piece of paper, which ranged from documents to playing cards. The "stamp," a designed crest in ink, would have a much wider impact on the common citizen, as all professions would require multiple daily documents to have a stamp, and the collection amount quickly added up to a large sum.

The colonists were outraged by these new taxes, and their refusal to adhere to them, especially the Stamp Act, would lead to its quick repeal (1766), but the damage was done. The "English citizens" in America saw how unfairly they were being treated, compared to other citizens around the world, and took offense that this taxation, monitoring, and subjugation was claimed as penance for a war that had escalated due to imperial ambition of the mother country.

THE
PENNSYLVANIA JOURNAL;
AND
WEEKLY ADVERTISER.

EXPIRING: In Hopes of a Reſurrection to LIFE again.

I am ſorry to be obliged to acquaint my readers that as the Stamp Act is feared to be obligatory upon us after the *firſt of November* enſuing (The Fatal To-morrow), The publiſher of this paper, unable to bear the Burthen, has thought it expedient to ſtop awhile, in order to deliberate, whether any methods can be found to elude the chains forged for us, and eſcape the inſupportable ſlavery, which it is hoped, from the laſt repreſentation now made againſt that act, may be effected. Mean while I muſt earneſtly Requeſt every individual of my Subſcribers, many of whom have been long behind Hand, that they would immediately diſcharge their reſpective Arrears, that I may be able, not only to ſupport myſelf during the Interval, but be better prepared to proceed again with this Paper whenever an opening for that purpoſe appears, which I hope will be ſoon.
WILLIAM BRADFORD.

Stamps, such as that in the upper right hand corner, became required for paper products ranging from papers to playing cards.
(Bradford, 1765)

The response to these acts came from unification, a "Patriotism" towards those living in the Americas and separate from England. Political orators and leaders, such as Patrick Henry, would emerge in fits of rage against the cold English policy, remarking that the only authority to tax Virginia was Virginians, i.e., the House of Burgesses, Virginia's assembly in Williamsburg. The original intention was not to separate from English authority as a whole, especially as Britain retained the world's strongest military and had diplomatic connections throughout the world, but only to establish the ability and right to self-govern issues which only affect Virginians. Henry's reactions, collectively known as the Virginia Resolves, would be printed and published throughout the colonies, where it quickly became a rally cry against the Stamp Act and inspired the term "no taxation without representation!" Henry's ideas are an example of another major tool that would encourage American support for Patriot support: propaganda. What was started in Williamsburg would quickly spread to Boston, a second hotbed for revolutionary ideas that soon was the site that put the propaganda machine into high gear.

Patrick Henry ca. 1770s
(Patrick Henry, n.d.)

Before going further, there is a matter of terminology to clarify. Though their titles are often interchanged, for this lesson the terms *American Revolution* and *the War for Independence* refer to two different series of events. The American Revolution ("revolt") was from 1763-1775, when the colonists were performing actions that were in direct revolt on Great Britain. The fight for independence commenced when the Declaration of Independence was written and sent to King George. Britain was not about to just give up the colonies, so the War for Independence—where the colonists were fighting to gain their independence from Britain—began in 1776. Fighting concluded in 1781 with the Battle of Yorktown, but the war officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

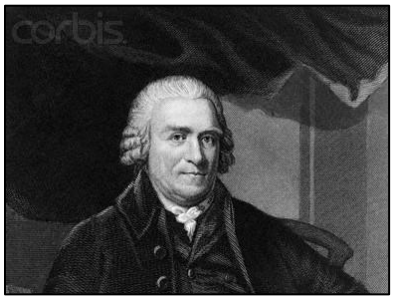
Just as had been the case in Virginia, the northern colonies were dealing with the dilemma of what to do about the new taxes being imposed by the crown. Like Patrick Henry in Virginia, there was a class of world-caliber politicians emerging in the Massachusetts legislature. For many in Boston, though, the true political body was proven to be found not in the capital, but in the pub—most notably the Green Dragon Tavern.

There, future President John Adams, his cousin Samuel Adams, and John Hancock, among others, would form one of America's first true political action committees: the Sons of Liberty. The general mob had proven already to be enough of a voice to expel specific dignitaries and appointments from their office using tactics such as tarring and feathering or outright destruction and violence. However, there was doubt if such actions actually made it back to London, or if anyone of power cared. The outright refusal and destruction in the name of the Stamp Act would force its removal, but not without an immediate statement back to the colonial leadership in the form of a new act, the Declaratory Act of 1766, which stated that the English Parliament was the sole final authority and had the right to legislate over any British colony, for any reason, without exception.

This was a slap in the face to those who challenged British authority. The government in London, in effect, removed any and all influence or power that local government had in the eyes of the crown and placed the imperial legislators in charge–a collection of voices that did not directly include colonial representation.

The next act came soon after, and this would be the final straw for many, especially those who depended on the success of shipping channels along the Atlantic coast. The Townshend Acts (Duties) of 1767 were, in simplest terms, a tax on the importation of many common household goods, ranging from tea to teapots. The tax was to be enforced on the importer. However, like the Sugar Act before, that meant that prices for any affected items would also rise significantly, so the tax would affect anyone in English society. In addition, this also caused some previously taxed items, such as paper, to include yet another fee, which now meant that it also cost more, for even unofficial use.

Once again, the printing press would become the sharpest tool in the Patriot arsenal. An editorial titled *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* would be penned and published across the colonies. This article described the troubling conditions that the new taxation had levied on a poor Mid Atlantic farmer and his family. The prose compared the farmer's experience to that of a slave and reinforced Henry's message of no representation. Although this painted an inspiring picture, the editorial was not written by a farmer but by a noted lawyer, John Dickinson. However, the ruse was effective enough to inspire and expedite a widespread boycott of those items identified on the Townshend list. The intention of the letter was basic: while the English government deliberately and indiscriminately painted the colonists into an economic corner, it still relied on colonial support for taxes, as well as the greater mercantilist policy, in order to function. A successful boycott could bring down the entire system, and such an impact to the royal coffers would not be ignored.



Sam Adams, widely known as one of the key instigators against the crown's authority and leader of the Sons of Liberty
(Graham, 1797)

Samuel Adams, now officially an elected member of the regional assembly, also echoed Henry's demand for representation. Its eventual refusal came with an order to dissolve the assembly by order of the Declaratory Act in case of argument or threat, which was overwhelming. Protest was expected, but not from women, who were most directly impacted on a day-to-day basis by this boycott. With the word of refusal from London, Patriot spirit consumed entire households, and the Daughters of Liberty, a women-only commission of resistance, was born. This redoubled boycott efforts and strengthened local communities to support one another by buying local and working together to avoid the British subjugation. Patriotism was growing, as was anti-British sentiment; with the continued rowdiness and increased hostilities, the royal authorities called in military support—the box of tinder was now about to be paired with a match.

In 1768, Boston was overrun by thousands of armed, uniformed troops. With no barracks, these troops required—and demanded—food and quarter from private citizens. With the troops facing limited financial compensation, some demanded jobs or money. By 1770, violence escalated first with what was an accidental shot. However, it was a week later that became the real attention-getter.

Paul Revere's famous woodcut – a prime example of early propaganda
(Revere, 1770)

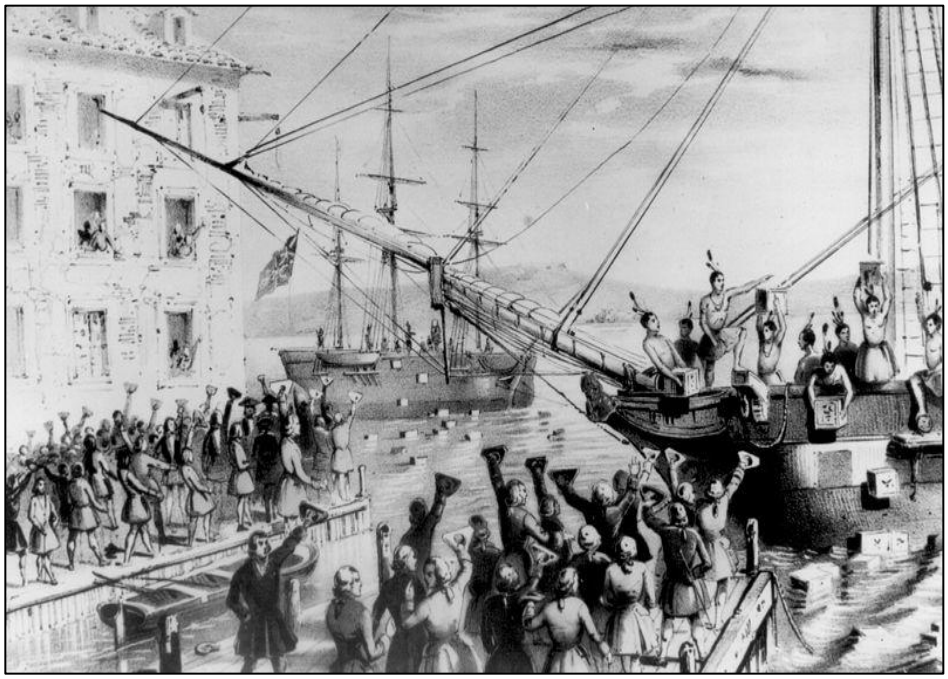
In the Boston streets, eight British Regulars, taunted by an increasingly belligerent crowd, opened fire amidst the chaotic scene—11 were shot, and five died from wounds received, including Crispus Attucks, an African American dockworker who shared the Patriotic spirit. Once again, propaganda would become the greatest weapon of the Patriot cause. The scene, which was in reality a chaotic mess of lower-class Bostonians and British guards, was recorded for posterity as a regal firing squad executing upper-class white citizens under strict orders. The engraving, ironically produced by Paul Revere (shown below), would circulate throughout the colonies and reinforce the already restless frenzy.

A trial would exonerate the soldiers with only minor penalties. In a show of unity, they were even given representation by John Adams, the same man who helped lead the Sons of Liberty. But the damage was already done. In this chaos, the English Parliament removed the Townshend Acts, with the exception of tea, which successfully encouraged an end to the boycott.

Over the next four years, the feeling throughout the colonies was generally calm, with few incidents of increased tension. Finally, though, with increased lines of communication developed in terms of Committees of Correspondence, there was another spark.

Though sales had improved since the boycott was lifted in 1770, smuggled Dutch tea (which also originated from the same locations in India) was clearly eating into British profits. To counter this issue, the final part of the Townshend Act, the tax on imported tea, was lifted to try and beat the price on the suppliers of the Dutch imports. This declaration, known as the Tea Act of 1773, was to no avail, as colonists did not trust the ploy. What occurred then would once again inspire the propaganda machine and the Patriot support; one of the most recognizable and flamboyant displays of resistance in America, the Boston Tea Party.

Put in most basic terms, the Tea Party was an intentional public display of resistance against the attempted regulation of smuggled Dutch tea into the colonies. When the initial plan of pressuring assigned couriers into not delivering the English goods started, members of the Sons of Liberty in Boston came up with the public spectacle. On December 16, 1773, with encouragement from friends and disregard to the empire's new act, three ships in Boston's harbor would be the stage for the act of public disobedience. Wearing garb more fitting for Native Americans, 150+ anti-British supporters boarded the ships and tossed the tea from India into Boston Harbor. One of the myths of this event was secrecy, as this was intentionally done to coincide with an audience. The restrictive taxes had drawn a town meeting that same night into the port area, and those who left through the port witnessed the blatant act, ensuring that it would be the talk of the town for days and reach audiences well outside of Boston.



A more "civil" illustration of the Tea Party rebellion
(Sarony & Major, 1846)

Finally, the last hammer would fall. What began shortly after the Proclamation of 1763 with the Sugar Act, reached its pinnacle in response to the Tea Party. The governor of Massachusetts—a royalist, yet often reasonable viceroy—took swift and determined action. With the support of Parliament, he issued in 1774 the Coercive (Intolerable) Acts, which directly punished the Boston population.

The four Intolerable Acts were:

1. Boston Port Act: This was the closing of the Boston Port until the tea was paid for, which punished not only shippers, but merchants who depended on shipments, buyers for the boats, repair, and any other associated costs.
2. Massachusetts Government Act: This reinforced the earlier Declaratory Act, with the added provision of complete supremacy over the Massachusetts colony. This included the removal of Hutchinson as governor and limitation of the office's power. The position was now to be appointed, and that appointed official would appoint all other state officials, taking any elector rights away from the people. No assemblies were legal unless approved by the governor, including approval of any agenda items. In practice, Massachusetts became a military state with increased military presence and limited concern about colonist needs/rights.
3. Impartial Administration of Justice Act: This simply stated that any appointed royal official who is accused of a capital offense (such as the Boston Massacre) must be transported to England for trial, thus removing any chance for tampering or public pressure on the accused.
4. Quartering Act: This opened any and all beds, including private residences, to soldiers. With the increase in regiments from the government act, this was not only going to put more pressure on the private citizens, who may no longer have a place to sleep in their own homes, but also removed any "safe houses" for leaders or meetings for any kind of resistance.

Lastly, a fifth act, called the Quebec Act, was more geared toward the entire colonial refusal and anti-British sentiment. The British lands (modern Canada) that had previously been French territories before being claimed by the American colonies after the Seven Years' War, were now officially part of Quebec. Now under the direct jurisdiction of the British Empire, the American colonies no longer held any influence in these Quebec lands.

In response to the hearing of these acts, several other colonies took preventive measures, such as the removal of potentially dangerous assemblies, and feared their communities were liable for the same treatment if more lines were crossed. These were the actions of the appointed authorities, for those in support of the Patriot cause, such as the Committees of Correspondence which were established a few years earlier, would

meet again, and officially unite in September 1774 in Philadelphia at a convention now known as the First Continental Congress.

Only Georgia lacked at least some kind of representation in Philadelphia. Regional concerns and needs were clearly identified, but overall it was clear that some united message, a declaration of rights, must be sent to London in an attempt to relieve the military state that the Intolerable Acts had created, and also to once again demand representation in Parliament. The only weapon remaining was another boycott, though they proposed limits to the previous refusals. The London representatives, upon receipt of these demands, ignored them. Britain did not recognize any colonial assemblies and would not react to threats or demands from any such institution.

Scheduled to meet again in May 1775 to discuss impact and outcome of the demands, the Second Continental Congress did not come soon enough to stop war from erupting. The first shots would be heard in the Boston suburbs of Lexington and Concord in 1774. Localized militia men, some of whom had little to no experience in combat, would thrust themselves into the battle as the first line of defense. Dubbed as "minutemen" for their resolve to bear arms at a moment's notice, it was clear there was no peaceful end to the brewing conflict with the regiments now stationed in and around Boston.

Shots Fired

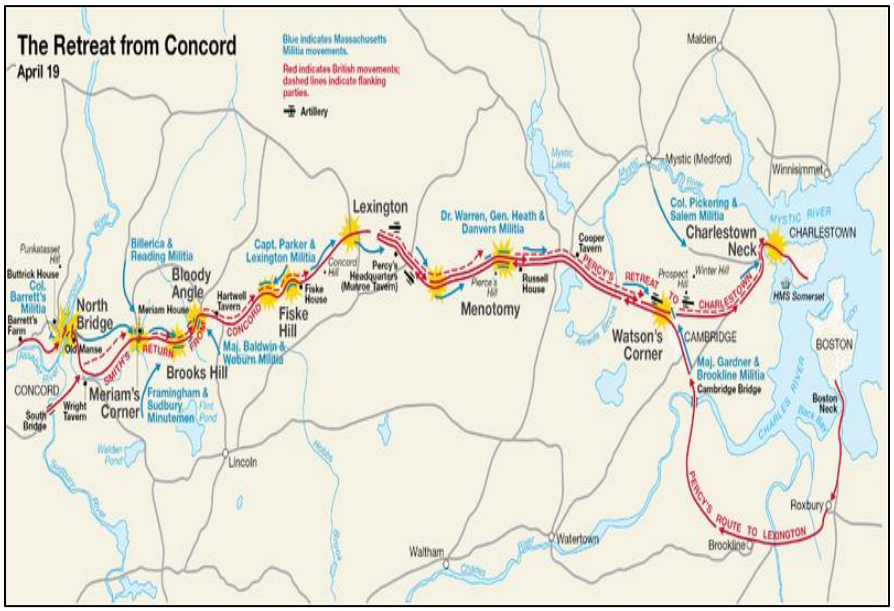
On April 19, 1775, on high alert, two Boston businessmen, Paul Revere Jr. and William Dawes, were waiting to sound the alarm concerning any potential threats from the stationed British Regulars. The ride was for all intents and purposes successful; the stores of ammunition and weapons were not found by the British, and the planned assault backfired as the Regulars attempted to return to Boston. In all, 273 British Regulars were injured or dead, along with 93 minutemen. In the aftermath of this bloody exchange, there would soon be bouts of promises and oratory from all sides to anyone who would listen about "freedom," "rights," and "liberty," but for all immediate purposes, the talking was over.

Depiction of Paul Revere on his infamous ride
(Emmet, n.d.)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow would capture this fateful ride, and its most noted participant, with his poem, "Paul Revere's Ride." Though not entirely accurate in its description, the tone and tenor of the poem is an excellent example of the nationalism and propaganda that would inspire many to join the Patriot cause, just as this same Paul Revere had done with his engraving of the Boston Massacre years earlier. Finally, the resounding shots had been fired, and there was no turning back. The colonists of Massachusetts, without any formal assembly, declared war on the mightiest military on Earth. The War for Independence, which would shock the world, began with a volley of gunfire from a dedicated militia.

Thus, on April 19, 1775, two fateful rides and a barrage of gunfire in the outskirts of Boston became the first of many skirmishes in a regional conflict whose impact would inspire a series of revolts throughout the world. The British Empire, a kingdom that had influence or settlements in every major culture, and the most powerful military on Earth, was challenged for its corrupt institutional control.

The American Patriots' success would be the first of many examples of rebellion, which essentially ended the European colonial period. However, a successful republic cannot be built overnight. The Founding Fathers, a collection of political socialites, spoke for the American resistance by openly committing treason against the monarchy. The fervor of revolution would successfully lead to independence in 1776, but zeal alone can only unite for so long before chaos ensues. With discussion of high points of the war, it is important to observe how a wartime government was able to rally a union, but not successfully lead a state. With the war's end, a fragile confederation of independent states would need greater leadership and order. It would appear that the pen, not the sword, would forge a republic for the people, by the people.



As shown here, the earliest action of the war was focused around today's greater Boston area.
(Concord Retreat, 2000)

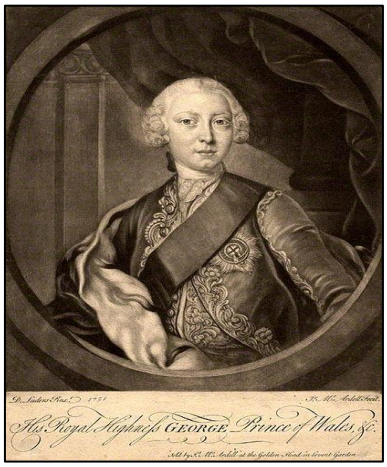
The militia of Lexington and Concord lost less than 100 minutemen on the first chaotic night, a victory in every sense, as the highly trained regulars stationed in and around Boston had almost three times as many casualties. For so many Americans, this was above and beyond any tax on tea or paper goods—it was a demand to be heard and respected by an elitist government an ocean away.

For most who would take up arms against the crown, this was a response by several generations of American-born English citizens who had again and again failed to be treated as equal to their social peers in England or to be represented. This, too, was a reason to cry for “Liberty!,” an oddly ironic sentiment. The war, and the post-war government, would become the stage for a second liberation movement. Upwards of 20,000 liberated or fled slaves would enlist with England against their native America, in hopes of gaining the freedoms promised to them by British command.

The final business of the First Continental Congress was to decide on a setting and intent for the next gathering. Expecting to pick up discussion on the successes and failures of the boycott on English goods when the Second Continental Congress met in May 1775, they suddenly found themselves now the only collection of authority to assess the needs of a nation. Through the life of the war, this congress would establish the basic frameworks of a wartime government with a clear precedent to avoid the corruptive influences of their former nation, especially the idea of a strong federal core that did not account for individual needs. These administrators would need to establish an army and printed (though greatly unstable) currency to fund it, and also lay the foundations for a government once the war was over.

Only weeks into the fighting, and with wavering support among some of the colonies, there was still the expectation that reconciliation was inevitable—this rebellion was thought to be but a footprint in the monarchy, with the intent to ensure better treatment and representation. However, by the time the congress disbanded this second time, reconciliation was no longer a viable option.

A "Nation" Prepares for War



A very dignified painting of George III; at this time, he was still rather young and not yet showing the ravages of war, age, and madness.

The Patriot leaders had committed treason, and not all leaders were completely comfortable with the split which, even if the war went well, would have unexpected impacts on security and economics. The American colonies were now an enemy of the crown, and the only detectable reunion would come with total surrender to King George III. Still, led by the voices of those delegates whose colonies had seen the worst of the atrocities, the congress put in the necessary effort and enacted steps to defend their lands. From Massachusetts, Samuel and John Adams continued the rhetoric which gave their neighbors reason to pick up a rifle–tales of bloodshed and oppression that others had only read about resounded in the hall. To lead the American forces, a former officer of the British Army, George Washington, took the challenge to create and lead a continental army. Washington, a native Virginian and veteran of the Seven Years' War, had seen firsthand the discrimination towards the colonies, and knew the strengths, tactics, and resolve of their opponent.

To rally support with the American people, masters of rhetoric, including Thomas Jefferson and John Dickinson, published pamphlets highlighting the needs and causes of the troubles. They worked to spread the call for support and fuel the anti-British sentiment that was so prevalent in New England. With only the most basic federal government system in place, the union of colonies was still weak, but driven together by a common bond of frustration and oppression. A government structure was in place, a small but determined defense was assembled, a united currency was printed, and America was past the point of no return.

The British Army had no shortage of leaders. Its successes against Spain and France, as well as its continuous skirmishes with Native Americans and the Dutch within its colonies, provided plenty of opportunity for tutorial and advancement along its ranks.

Among the first wave into the colonies was a focused assault intent on stomping out the areas of greatest perceived threat to break the Americans' spirit. Generals Thomas Gage, William Howe, John Burgoyne, and Henry Clinton arrived in Boston Harbor in June of 1775 with regiments enough to challenge a fitted army. They had more than enough force, or so it was thought, to scare away a militia consisting of farmers with pitchforks. The British tactics were uniform and brutal. In formed ranks, and without visible concern or panic, volley after volley of musket fire was projected at the outmatched continental army. The Americans, having knowledge of the geography, successfully took a toll on the regiment's size, but as one redcoat fell, another simply stepped up into his place.

Despite marching uphill, the Battle of Bunker Hill was a decided British victory. Even with the lopsided casualties, the Americans never had a chance, and Gage marched his troops into Boston, where a smallpox scare caused a need to stop for treatment, which halted progression. What proved to be the determining factor in this battle was neither the leadership nor numbers, though; it was preparedness and supply. The British Regular literally "out-gunned" the continental soldier as a lack of ammunition broke Patriot lines and opened holes for British advances.

Bunker Hill was an inevitable call for action. The British were a serious threat, and the colonies needed to decide either to fight or reconcile. From moderates, appeals, such as the Olive Branch Petition, continued a tradition from the pre-war years. Demands for representation and equal citizenship were hurdles; with each plea, even with these appeals, the colonies' representatives reaffirmed their loyalty to George III, who simply disregarded each, on a par with parole opportunities from traitors.

On the other side of the British isle, the call for action was headlined by the work of an English national whose time in America allowed him the perception of the differences. Thomas Paine would publish *Common Sense*, a short, yet poignant, look at the reality of "divine right," when the common good requires hearing the voice of the people. Paine's words, coupled with quickly mounting pressures and news of potential international interference in this civil war by German mercenaries (Hessians), caused the majority of colonies to seek formal separation.

On July 2, 1776, by a vote of 12-for, 0-against, and 1-abstaining, the thirteen original British colonies voted for independence from English protection and laws. Thomas Jefferson and a select few penned the now-famous preamble and justifications, explaining the reason and rationale for independence from George III.

> 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 among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and 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 separation.
> – Preamble to the Declaration of Independence

A very nationalistic image of the colonies' leadership jointly signing the document for independence; records from inside tend to show a more chaotic atmosphere *(Trumbell, n.d.-b)*

After two days of revision and debate, the penned resolution was adopted on July 4th. The Declaration of Independence would be signed by thirty-three delegates, several of whom did so reluctantly; four outright refused. Those signatures, including that of the ostentatious John Hancock, would be left off of the original printing sent throughout the colonies, the reason being not to avoid exposing the treasonous few who signed, but also likely providing greater unity than might have been gained by highlighting who did not. Soon after, the leaders of the new colonies, with some exception, would pen America's first (temporary) government, the Articles of Confederation, which will be discussed in further detail in the next unit.

The Faces of War

Often overlooked in the formality and fanfare of the declaration and opening year of the war are several influences which, on paper, were not even eligible for enlistment in the fray. Women, such as Abigail Adams and Mary Otis Warren, would be fervent workers behind the political scenes. Abigail Adams, the most trusted counselor to her husband John, was also quite perceptive of the inequality of the "independence" that was to be sought and fought over when only males of a certain status, race, and age were truly granted all qualities of citizenship. Most women, however, would serve to either protect the home while the men were away, or to follow the camps, making a living working odd jobs either with family or the army as needed.

The next group would be Americans of African descent, or as would be any generation born in the colonies, "African Americans." At this time they were, with rare exception, judged solely by the color of skin and not their inalienable rights. African-American men would eventually be granted an opportunity to fight, first for the British, then the colonials, but not without great anxiety or even choice. There was a clear sense of distrust between the White and African-American soldiers, especially with the slaves who became enlisted. The duties of these different races would reflect this difference.

Most of the African Americans who enlisted with the continentals, who totaled around 5,000, would serve as labor or as unarmed assistants (flag bearers, musicians, "go-fors") for the British. However, there was a greater need: many of these enlisted servants knew the region as well as, if not better than, the White

soldiers–they could navigate, blaze trails, and work as informants, and any liberated slaves took money directly out of the pockets of the rebels.

Native Americans, too, were greatly affected by this war. At first, many tribes saw the war as potentially a win-win: no matter who won, one group would be gone, and the other wounded. Many tribes counted on this becoming a high-casualty war that would halt the spread any further to the west. Soon, though, it would become apparent that if sides were not taken, neither would hold back, and most tribes inevitably chose the British. The British promise, as was previously stated in 1763, was to respect their lands, which helped ensure mercantilism on the coast. As the war turned, however, the tribes who sided against the colonies would ultimately lose much more than was gained. A few tribes would side with the Patriots, but this was not enough to end western expansion.

An unexpected hindrance would be Loyalists, or Tories, who comprised almost 20% of the colonial population. These were colonists who did not agree with the Patriot cause, or who depended on British protections and decided to enlist with the Regulars and fight.

Like the African Americans, a major benefit to these enlistments was their familiarity with the land, and some even had battle experience. The negative, though, was their lack of training and conviction toward the cause. In general, Loyalist companies were less than stellar, and most would move out of the colonies after the war instead of returning home to the neighbors they abandoned, or go into the anti-crown government. By 1777, these Loyalists were officially considered traitors and were liable to public humiliation, economic hardship, or harm if seen as a hindrance to the Patriot cause.

During the war, around 40% of the colonists remained loyal to the crown or were simply anti-war and would not fight against their neighbors. This was often due to a religious obligation or to a lack of obligation to either side, which was the situation with new migrants.

The last influence, disease, had arguably the most significant impact on the war. This was especially true during the winters and as new recruits or territories would expose both armies to conditions for which they were ill-prepared. This started with smallpox threats along the Atlantic coast, which would claim the lives of 130,000 and require armies to halt for inoculation, and ended with outbreaks of “camp-born” diseases such as Syphilis, which spread quickly from a lack of sterility and antiseptic.

Major Points of Emphasis

The early years of the war primarily affected the North. This was the home of the majority of the American population, site of some of the most noteworthy discrepancies, and nearest to the British strongholds in what is now Canada. Several battles took place in close proximity to one another. The adage “an army marches on its stomach” is very true in this instance; anywhere the soldiers went, so too did the camp, so movements had to be strategic. The army generally could not move more than a few miles in one day.

On October 17, 1777, the Battle of Saratoga took place between British General Burgoyne, who had unexpected losses from his previous encounters, and American General Horatio Gates. The site was Saratoga, New York, where one of the British lines was completely decimated. The aftermath included 600 dead, munitions destroyed or taken, and a wild two-sided story about the ill treatment of a pure woman rallied both local and continental support. The greatest victory from this, though, was the interest and promise from a new ally: the French, who were longtime British rivals. The French promised funds, soldiers, formal training, and a Navy to challenge the British–a force that the Americans had never had, the lack of which had stymied provisions and funding for the Patriot force.

It was the Battle of Saratoga that ultimately changed the tide of war, but that was not yet evident. Washington, weary from months at war, potentially about to lose most of his experienced soldiers due to enlistments ending, and enduring harsh conditions and waning American support, traveled to Valley Forge. It was here that he and his army settled for the winter months. At this point, the experienced British General Howe had captured Philadelphia, the nation’s early capitol city, and knew that the French interference could quickly change the pattern of the war. Howe offered a cease fire, but not independence; his offer was quickly rejected, and the war waged on. Small skirmishes would take place over the winter, especially with local tribes, but formal battle was at a standstill.

The normal European style of battle consisted of two armies lining up parallel to one another, then marching at each other while alternating fire until in charging range–this was "civilized" combat, and the British had perfected it. The Americans, however, had survived to this point with a much less traditional style, which was similar to modern guerilla tactics. Because of this, the war shifted to the outskirts of the field of battle where the outmanned and outgunned Patriots could use full advantage of their knowledge of the terrain and trails. As most of these skirmishes were small in scale, even a poor result would not wipe away a regiment of American men, as was commonly the case in a "civilized" war. This also essentially took away much of the advantage of the British cavalry and artillery, as the individual American soldiers had greater and less predictable movement.

Image of the style of war waged between the European commanders; it would take a drastic change in strategy for the colonies to push out the British.
(Trumbull, n.d.-a)

As winter passed, the French and Americans officially joined an alliance. This gave the U.S. its official sovereignty as an independent nation and ensured that the French support would begin moving across the Atlantic. For the French, this was simply another battlefield, one away from their lands, in which to attack the hated British. It was also potentially a way to recapture some colonial areas back from Britain in a peace treaty. However, the French first had to get to America. It was not as simple for the French as simply loading a standing army on a boat—they had to commission soldiers, officers, boats, munitions, and supplies. They had to train, clothe, and respond to the national needs first before any alliance. As days passed without any sign of their arrival, the Patriots became more war weary.

Ironically, the British successes in the early years of the war had done harm to their own cause as well. More territory to protect meant less to attack with, and the addition of a major European power, along with only minor victories from the militia style of combat, did not bode well for the classically trained Regulars. To counter this, the British had a new plan: move to the south.

Traditionally less of a hotbed of support for the war, due largely to the low White population and limited direct influence from the troubles in Massachusetts and Virginia, these agricultural communities were quickly addressed and moved through. To lead these forces, the British would move General Clinton, who had replaced Howe in command, and introduce another legendary leader: Lord Cornwallis, a recognized tactical genius.

These two together quickly moved north, entering Virginia in the early 1780s. Their overconfidence, however, would be part of their downfall in the South. The Patriots, too, found the key to Southern victory in stronger leadership. One of Washington's most trusted strategists, General Nathanael Greene, was sent to the South to replace the less-than-successful General Gates. Greene, along with some other noteworthy leaders—Andrew Pickens, Francis Marion, Daniel Morgan, and Thomas Sumter—helped to rally support in the Loyalist-heavy region. Successes in the South would eventually lead to the surrender by Cornwallis in 1781, after French support and a typhus outbreak penned his forces at Yorktown.

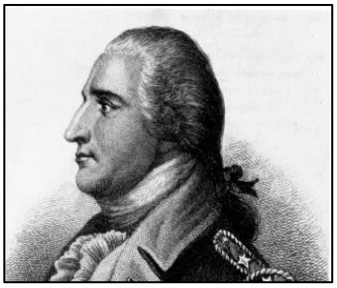
War's End—A Scenario Fit for Film

Do not be surprised if this setting may seem more familiar than either the North or West. The blockbuster 2000 film, *The Patriot*, focuses on this Southern campaign, from the delayed debate of South Carolina's entry into the war, to the British surrender at Yorktown. The protagonist of the film (Mel Gibson's character) is actually based on a fusion of the four Patriots (Pickens, Marion, Morgan, and Sumter) from the South Carolina

region. As is often required with Hollywood, be careful not to confuse history with legend–even considering the combined impact of four distinct men; the “Rambo-like” qualities and impact of the fictional Benjamin Martin is still overly exaggerated. However, this does provide the audience with some sense of the type of guerilla warfare and tactics used in the latter stages of the war. Ironically, Hollywood is not alone in making myth out of fact; many historical images are just as guilty, such as the depiction below of Washington crossing the Delaware, which simply is not a realistic rendering considering the climate, geography, and situation.

Majestic depiction of Washington crossing the Delaware. The painter, however, took liberties, including some faults, such as an inaccurate image of the winter climate’s effects on this particular river.
(Leutze, 1851)

After Yorktown, with the exception of small frays in the frontier, the war was over. For England, it was no longer economically sound to attack the American colonies. Britain continued to lose support for the war as it waged on, and in that sense there was not enough of a force to counter the French reinforcements. With the surrender at Yorktown, the armies of Washington and Greene had successfully wrapped up the two major fronts. With the Treaty of Paris signing in 1783, King George III officially recognized the former colonies as an independent American nation. The success of these soldiers and politicians would become the base of nationalist teachings in America; treason became patriotism, and taxation became oppression. This would also help to inspire others to revolt in the coming decades, most notably the French people in the mid-1780s.



Once beloved second only to Washington, jealousy and family pressures led to the fall for Benedict Arnold; for Americans, his crime was on a par with those of Judas and Brutus.
(Hall, 1879)

The end of the war, however, was not without great disappointment for the American cause. One of the heroes of the northern campaign and a trusted friend of Washington’s, General Benedict Arnold, was caught selling secrets to the British. Arnold felt overlooked through most of the war for his dangerous, yet successful, campaigns. At the time when he received the commission he desired, command at Fort Arnold (today known as West Point, a.k.a. the United States Military Academy), he was in too deep and was caught attempting to surrender the fort, which sits on a pivotal bend on the Hudson River, to the British. This ugly situation, however, did not come to fruition and only increased the fighting spirit of those loyal to the separation cause. The treaty, though, did mean freedom for many enlisted men who were formerly slaves; those who served with the British would generally leave the U.S., heading to Canada or Africa. This liberated around 10,000 former servants from the plantations. The Native Americans were not as lucky; for those tribes that supported the British, or who lived nearest to the now

independent states, the end of the war began the first migrations into the Midwest.

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