Chapter 6

The War for Independence
1774-1783
The War for Independence
1774-1783

- From Rebellion to War
- The Continental Congress Becomes a National Government
- The Combatants
- The War in the North, 1776–1777
- The War Widens, 1778–1781
- The War and Society, 1775–1783
- The American Victory, 1782–1783
- Conclusion
Learning Objectives

• Why did tensions between the colonies and Britain escalate so rapidly between 1774 and 1776?
• What were the key differences between the British and American forces?
• How did the American forces survive the military setbacks of 1776?
• Why did the French enter the war on the American side?
• What was the social impact of the War for Independence?
• What were the key factors in the American victory in the Revolutionary War?
From Rebellion to War
Contradictory British Policies

- In an effort to manage brewing colonial tensions, Lord North and the British parliament took alternating hard line and conciliatory positions on taxation and trade.
Contradictory British Policies (cont'd)

- **Conciliatory Proposition**
  - Plan proposed by Lord North and adopted by the House of Commons in February 1775 whereby Parliament would “forbear” taxation of Americans in colonies whose assemblies imposed taxes considered satisfactory by the British government. The Continental Congress rejected this plan on July 31, 1775.
Mounting Tensions in America

• While the British were fortifying Boston and dissolving the Massachusetts legislature, the colonists were assembling their own revolutionary government, gathering arms and ammunition, and organizing militia volunteers.
Mounting Tensions in America (cont'd)

- Committee of Safety
  - Any of the extralegal committees that directed the Revolutionary movement and carried on the functions of government at the local level in the period between the breakdown of royal authority and the establishment of regular governments under the new state constitutions. Some Committees of Safety continued to function throughout the Revolutionary War.
Mounting Tensions in America (cont'd)

- **Minute Men**
  - Special companies of militia formed in Massachusetts and elsewhere beginning in late 1744. These units were composed of men who were to be ready to assemble with their arms at a minute’s notice.
The Battles of Lexington and Concord

- The British attempt to seize weapons and capture Adams and Hancock triggered a series of events that led to the first military engagements of the Revolution.
The Battles of Lexington and Concord (cont’d)

• The shots fired on the morning of April 19, 1775 signaled the start of the American Revolution.
  ▪ Battles of Lexington and Concord
    - The first two battles of the American Revolution which resulted in a total of 273 British soldiers dead, wounded, and missing and nearly 100 Americans dead, wounded, and missing.
MAP 6

The Battles of Lexington and Concord, April 19, 1775

- American attack
  - North Bridge
- British advance
  - Lincoln
  - Watertown
  - Waltham
  - Weston
- Menotomy (Arlington)
  - Newton
  - Brookline
- Charles River
  - Cambridge
  - Medford
  - Boston Harbor
- Bunker Hill
- Breed's Hill

- British victories
- American victories
- British troop movements
- American troop movements
The Continental Congress Becomes a National Government
The Second Continental Congress Convenes

- With an enormous task at hand, the Second Continental Congress took leadership of the rebellion and became, in effect, a national government.
The Second Continental Congress Convenes (cont'd)

- One of its most momentous decisions was choosing George Washington to lead the Continental Army.
  - **Second Continental Congress**
    - An assemblage of delegates from all the colonies that convened in May 1775 after the outbreak of fighting in Massachusetts between British and American forces. It became the national government that eventually declared independence and conducted the Revolutionary War.
The Second Continental Congress Convenes (cont'd)

- **Continental Army**
  - The regular or professional army authorized by the Second Continental Congress and commanded by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War. Better training and longer service distinguished its soldiers from the state militiamen.
The Second Continental Congress Convenes (cont'd)

- **Olive Branch Petition**
  - Petition, written largely by John Dickinson and adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 5, 1775, as a last effort of peace that avowed America’s loyalty to George III and requested that he protect it from further aggressions. Congress continued military preparations, and the king never responded to the petition.
The Second Continental Congress Convenes (cont'd)

- **Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms**
  - Document, written mainly by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania and adopted on July 6, 1775, by which the Second Continental Congress justified its armed resistance against British measures.
MAP 6

Early Fighting, 1775–1776

- British victories
- American victories
- Montgomery's route, 1775
- Arnold's route, 1775
- Proclamation Line of 1763
This fine portrait of George Washington appears in multiple versions depicting the victorious general against different backgrounds, including the battles of Princeton and Yorktown.
Early Fighting: Massachusetts, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Canada

- Early American military successes in New England and the South were offset by failures in Canada.
Independence

- The American forces’ early successes bolstered their confidence, while the British continued to lose colonial support.
- Independence from Britain—not reconciliation—was increasingly seen as the necessary outcome of American efforts.
Independence (cont’d)

• Movement toward formal separation from the British culminated in the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.
Independence (cont’d)

- Declaration of Independence
  - The document by which the Second Continental Congress announced and justified its decision (reached July 2, 1776) to renounce the colonies’ allegiance to the British government. Drafted mainly by Thomas Jefferson and adopted by Congress on July 4, the declaration’s indictment of the king provides a remarkably full catalog of the colonists’ grievances, and Jefferson’s eloquent and inspiring statement of the contract theory of government makes the document one of the world’s great state papers.
Independence (cont’d)

- **Contract theory of government**
  
  The belief that government is established by human beings to protect certain rights—such as life, liberty, and property—that are theirs by natural, divinely sanctioned law and that when government protects these rights, people are obligated to obey it. But when government violates its part of the bargain (or contract) between the rulers and the ruled, the people are no longer required to obey it and may establish a new government that will do a better job of protecting them.
Independence (cont’d)

- Contract theory of government (cont’d)
  - Elements of this theory date back to the ancient Greeks; John Locke used it in his Second Treatise on Government (1682), and Thomas Jefferson gave it memorable expression in the Declaration of Independence, where it provides the rationale for renouncing allegiance to King George III.
The Loyalists

• The Declaration of Independence made the position of Tories—those who professed loyalty to Britain—untenable, as they suddenly became enemies of the American people.

• An estimated 20 percent of the free population sided with Britain, and many either fought with the British or became refugees.
The Combatants
Professional Soldiers

- Washington worked to develop a professional, disciplined army that could defeat British soldiers in large engagements.
- Many foreign soldiers of fortune and idealists offered their services to the United States. The British hired German mercenaries.
Professional Soldiers (cont'd)

- Living a tough life under harsh conditions, the Continental Army felt they were outcasts from an uncaring society and formed their community. At times, the soldiers let their dissatisfaction get out of hand. Distinguished General Benedict Arnold became a traitor and at Newburgh, New York in 1783, some officers threatened an armed uprising.
TO ALL BRAVE, HEALTHY, ABLE BODIED, AND WELL DISPOSED YOUNG MEN,
IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHO HAVE ANY INCLINATION TO JOIN THE TROOPS,
NOW RAISING UNDER
GENERAL WASHINGTON,
FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE
LIBERTIES AND INDEPENDENCE
OF THE UNITED STATES,
Against the hostile designs of foreign enemies,

TAKE NOTICE,

WITH his Majesty's recruiting party of
corporals of the 11th regiment of infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Adam Ogilby, for the purpose of receiving the enrollment of
such youths of spirit, as may be willing to enter into this honourable service.

The ENCOURAGEMENT at this time, is truly liberal and generous, namely, a bounty of TWELVE
dollars, an annual and full supply of victuals and clothing, a daily allowance of a large and ample ration of provvisions, together with sixty dollars a year in cash,
and silver money on account of pay, the whole of which the enlistee may lay up for himself and friends, as all articles proper for his subsistence and
comfort are provided by law, without any expense to him.

Those who may favour this recruiting party with their attendance as above, will have the opportunity of hearing and seeing in a more particular
manner, the great advantages which those brave men will have, who shall embrace this opportunity of spending a few happy years in viewing the
different parts of this beautiful continent, in the honourable and truly respectable character of a soldier, after which, he may, if he pleases return
home to his friends, with his pockets full of money and his head covered with laurels.

GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES.

The above recruiting poster of the Revolution, representing Annapolis soldiers going through their drill, is a facsimile of the only copy known to have been preserved, which is now in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. - Remote.
Women in the Contending Armies

- Women accompanied military forces on both sides performing important services.
African-American Participation in the War

- Both sides employed African Americans. Approximately 5000 fought against the British.
Native Americans and the War

• Both sides sought Native American allies, but more groups backed the British. The war promoted greater unity among Native Americans.
The War in the North
1776–1777
Britain Hesitates: Crucial Battles in New York and New Jersey

• With the British army and navy headquartered in New York, Washington moved his troops there in spring 1776 but was defeated by the British in a series of battles. The Americans retreated to Pennsylvania.

• The British commanders, Sir William and Richard Howe attempted to negotiate peace terms with Congress but failed.
Britain Hesitates: Crucial Battles in New York and New Jersey (cont'd)

• The American war effort seemed lost after several setbacks. Washington launched a bold attack at Trenton, New Jersey and then followed up that victory with another at Princeton, New Jersey boosting morale and saving the American cause.
MAP 6–3 The War in the North, 1776–1777

- British victories
- American victories
- American victories, contested
- Forts
- British troop movements, 1776
- American troop movements, 1776
- British troop movements, 1777
- American troop movements, 1777
- British troop movements, 1778
- American troop movements, 1778

- **British victories**
- **American victories**
- **American victories, contested**
- **Forts**
- **British troop movements, 1776**
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- **British troop movements, 1777**
- **American troop movements, 1777**
- **British troop movements, 1778**
- **American troop movements, 1778**
The Year of the Hangman: Victory at Saratoga and Winter at Valley Forge

• In 1777, the British mounted an effort to end the rebellion by sending a force south from Canada to join the Howes in New York, separating New England from the rest of the states. The effort failed when American forces defeated the British at Saratoga, New York.
The Year of the Hangman: Victory at Saratoga and Winter at Valley Forge (cont’d)

- The defeat at Saratoga made foreign observers raise their opinions of the United States, especially in France.
- General Howe moved toward Philadelphia hoping to defeat Washington’s army. The American defeat at Brandywine Creek led to Howe’s capture of Philadelphia.
The Year of the Hangman: Victory at Saratoga and Winter at Valley Forge (cont’d)

- The Continental Army suffered through a harsh winter at Valley Forge yet emerged as a disciplined professional army.
The War in the North, 1776–1777 (cont'd)

- **Valley Forge**
  - Area of Pennsylvania approximately twenty miles northwest of Philadelphia where General George Washington’s continental troops were quartered from December 1777 to June 1778 while British forces occupied Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War. Approximately 2,500 men, about a quarter of those encamped there, died of hardship and disease.
The War Widens
1778–1781
The United States Gains an Ally

• The French had been providing secret aid to the United States but after the American victory at Saratoga and defeat at Brandywine Creek, the French signed a commercial treaty and a military alliance with United States.
The United States Gains an Ally (cont'd)

- Other European nations also combined to hamper British efforts. Spain declared war on Britain. A league of European nations formed a League of Armed Neutrality to protect their trade with the United States and other warring nations against British interference.
The United States Gains an Ally (cont'd)

• Britain changed commanders and an inconclusive battle at Monmouth proved to be the last major engagement in the North.
Fighting on the Frontier and at Sea

• The British post at Detroit was the headquarters for coordinating attacks on American frontier settlements in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and upstate New York.

• American responses included capturing three key British settlements in the Mississippi Valley and an expedition against the Iroquois.
Fighting on the Frontier and at Sea (cont'd)

- Facing a much stronger British navy, American naval officers engaged in a guerilla war at sea. The United State Navy was supplemented by the commissioning of privateers.
The Land War Moves South

• In 1778, the British sought to mobilize what they considered to be strong loyalist support in the South and capture the territory from Virginia to Georgia.

• The worst American defeat of the war took place at Charleston in 1780.
The Land War Moves South (cont'd)

- Having won several victories, the British prepared to sweep through the South but British atrocities inflamed anti-British feelings.
MAP 6 – The War in the South, 1778–1781

[Map showing military movements and key events during the war in the South, including battles and troop movements.]
American Counterattacks

- An American defeat led to Nathanael Greene assuming command of American force. Greene’s strategy was to fight, retreat if pressed by the British and then advance when the British withdrew. Patriot guerilla forces aided the American cause.
- The British hold on the South weakened.
American Counterattacks (cont’d)

• General Cornwallis moved north to Virginia and encamped at Yorktown. Washington moved his army, supported by French troops to encircle Cornwallis. A French naval force left Cornwallis surrounded. The British army surrendered ending the war.
The surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown on October 19, 1781, led to the British decision to withdraw from the war.
War and Society
1775–1783
The Women’s War

- Women assumed new private and public roles during the war. They had greater financial and other responsibilities at home. Women nursed the wounded, wove cloth for uniforms, and formed organizations to raise money.
Effect of the War on African Americans

• The war helped end slavery in the North but ultimately strengthened the institution in the South.
## Important Battles of the Revolutionary War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battle</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Fighting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts</td>
<td>April 19, 1775</td>
<td>Contested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Ticonderoga, New York</td>
<td>May 10, 1775</td>
<td>American victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breed's Hill (“Bunker Hill”), Boston, Mass.</td>
<td>June 17, 1775</td>
<td>Contested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Bridge, Virginia</td>
<td>December 9, 1775</td>
<td>American victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec, Canada</td>
<td>December 31, 1775</td>
<td>British repulsed American assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moore's Creek Bridge, North Carolina</td>
<td>February 27, 1776</td>
<td>American victory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brooklyn Heights, New York</td>
<td>August 27, 1776</td>
<td>British victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Plains, New York</td>
<td>October 28, 1776</td>
<td>British victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trenton, New Jersey</td>
<td>December 26, 1776</td>
<td>American victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton, New Jersey</td>
<td>January 3, 1777</td>
<td>American victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandywine Creek, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>September 11, 1777</td>
<td>British victory (opened way for British to take Philadelphia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saratoga, New York</td>
<td>September 19 and October 17, 1777</td>
<td>American victory (helped persuade France to form an alliance with United States)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monmouth Court House, New Jersey</td>
<td>June 28, 1778</td>
<td>Contested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The War on the Frontier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>June and July 1778</td>
<td>British victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaskaskia and Cahokia, Illinois; Vincennes, Indiana</td>
<td>July 4, 1778–February 23, 1779</td>
<td>American victories strengthen claims to Mississippi Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Valley, New York</td>
<td>November 11, 1778</td>
<td>British victory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Savannah, Georgia</td>
<td>December 29, 1778</td>
<td>British victory (took control of Georgia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettle Creek, Georgia</td>
<td>February 14, 1779</td>
<td>American victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah, Georgia</td>
<td>September 3–October 28, 1779</td>
<td>British victory (opened way for British to take Charleston)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleston, South Carolina</td>
<td>February 11–May 12, 1780</td>
<td>British victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camden, South Carolina</td>
<td>August 16, 1780</td>
<td>British victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Mountain, South Carolina</td>
<td>October 7, 1780</td>
<td>American victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowpens, South Carolina</td>
<td>January 17, 1781</td>
<td>American victory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilford Court House, North Carolina</td>
<td>March 15, 1781</td>
<td>Contested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorktown, Virginia</td>
<td>August 30–October 19, 1781</td>
<td>American victory (persuaded Britain to end war)</td>
</tr>
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The War’s Impact on Native Americans

- The war was disastrous for most Native Americans, who suffered heavy casualties and faced an onslaught of white settlers encroaching on their land.
Economic Disruption

- The war demand for supplies on both sides disrupted the normal distribution of goods and raised real prices drastically. As paper currency depreciated in value, severe inflation occurred.
- The economic conditions proved demoralizing and divisive, stimulating speculation and unscrupulous profiteering.
The American Victory
1782–1783
The Peace of Paris

- The United States peace negotiators ignored instruction from Congress and worked out an arrangement with the British.
In the Peace of Paris, the British acknowledged United States independence, extended United States territory to the Mississippi and established the northern borders with Canada. British forces were to leave American property, including slaves, behind when they left. American fishermen gained access to waters off eastern Canada.
The Peace of Paris (cont'd)

• Spain received the British provinces of East and West Florida. But the United States was not provided with access to the Gulf of Mexico.
The Peace of Paris (cont'd)

- Peace of Paris
  - Treaties signed in 1783 by Great Britain, the United States, France, Spain, and the Netherlands that ended the Revolutionary War. First in a preliminary agreement and then in the final treaty with the United States, Britain recognized the independence of the United States, agreed that the Mississippi River would be its western boundary, and permitted it to fish in some Canadian waters.
The Peace of Paris (cont'd)

- Prewar debts owed by the inhabitants of one country to those of the other were to remain collectible, and Congress was to urge the states to return property confiscated from Loyalists. British troops were to evacuate United States territory without removing slaves or other property. In a separate agreement, Britain relinquished its claim to East and West Florida to Spain.
MAP 6

North America after the Peace of Paris, 1783

- Disputed by Russia, Spain, and Britain

- Russian
- British North America
- Spanish Louisiana
- United States
- Spanish North America
- Pacific Ocean
- Atlantic Ocean

Scale: 0 500 Miles 0 500 Kilometers
The Components of Success

- Washington’s leadership was just one of the reasons the Americans won the Revolutionary War. French assistance played a crucial role, and the British contributed heavily to their own downfall.
Conclusion
Conclusion

• The American Revolution had tremendous repercussions.
• It sowed the seeds for future revolutions. France suffered a severe financial crisis in the 1780s that created a political crisis culminating in the French Revolution.
• The North American continent became the site of a grand experiment in republicanism.
Republicanism

- A complex, changing body of ideas, values, and assumptions, closely related to country ideology, that influenced American political behavior during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Derived from the political ideas of classical antiquity, Renaissance Europe, and early modern England, republicanism held that self-government by the citizens of a country, or their representatives, provided a more reliable foundation for the good society and individual freedom than rule by kings.
Republicanism (cont’d)

- The benefits of monarchy depended on the variable abilities of monarchs; the character of republican government depended on the virtue of the people. Republicanism therefore helped give the American Revolution a moral dimension. But the nature of republican virtue and the conditions favorable to it became sources of debate that influenced the writing of the state and federal constitutions as well as the development of political parties.