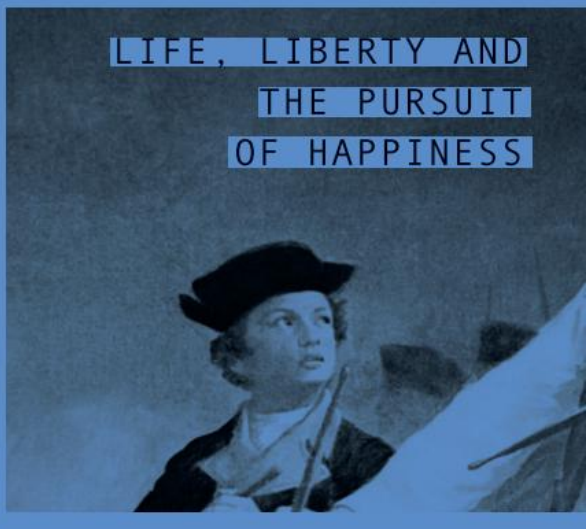
FORGING AMERICA

THE REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE



LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

REVISED BY LAUREN PERFECT
DEBORAH ERIKSON

HTAV SENIOR HISTORY

FORGING AMERICA

THE REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE

2ND EDITION

REVISED BY
LAUREN PERFECT
DEBORAH ERIKSON

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CONTENTS

A REPEAL WITH CONDITIONS
PAGE 83

B

DECIDING ON A MODEL
PAGE 219

USING THIS SERIES

Textbooks in HTAV's Senior History Series include supplementary Web Resources (via history*ed*) which enhance students' knowledge and understanding through further activities and audio-visual materials. The Web Resources, which have been created by the authors and HTAV, will be added to over time.

To access Web Resources for this title, go to *http://historyed.com.au/course/view.php?id=11.*

In each chapter of this book you will see the following icons appearing in the margins. Follow the instructions at the URL above to access these resources.

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Activity sheets

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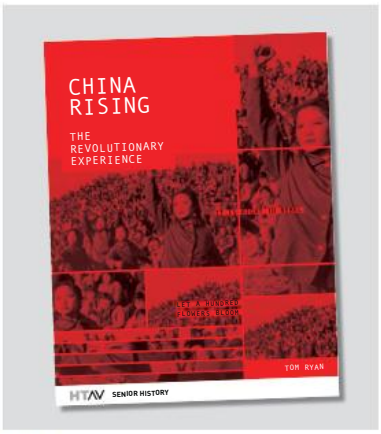
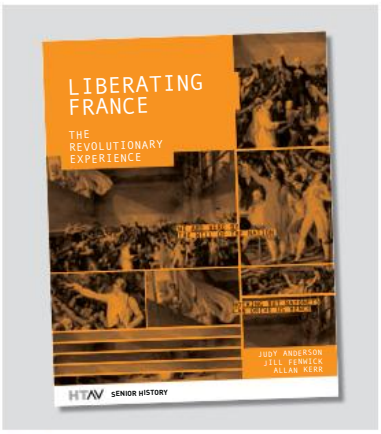
The Revolutions series comprises four titles: *China Rising*, *Liberating France*, *Reinventing Russia* and *Forging America*. The series is available in print only, eBook or print/eBook bundle.

The textbooks, written by expert teachers and featuring innovative design elements, comprise a stand-alone resource for students of senior Revolutions.

The Revolutions series meaningfully incorporates historical thinking methodologies into chapter-review and other activities. See the discussion of historical thinking on p. x and in the supplementary Web Resources for this title.

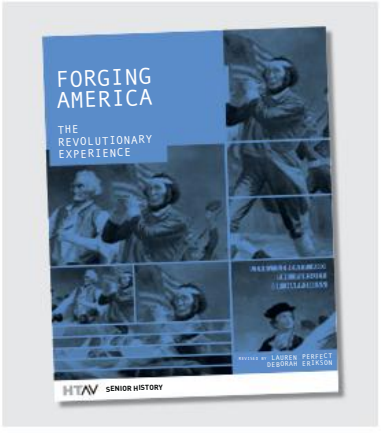


1 China Rising: The Revolutionary Experience



2 Liberating France: The Revolutionary Experience

3 Reinventing Russia: The Revolutionary Experience



4 Forging America: The Revolutionary Experience

FOREWORD

Americans love to tell the story of their nation's birth. And why not? A relatively small population of colonists, perceiving themselves to be oppressed by imperial abuse, declared themselves free and independent, then fought and defeated the most powerful empire on earth at the time – classic 'David and Goliath.' After that, American patriots created a republican form of government that has lasted to this day.

Best of all, the entire tale occurs within the time-span of a single generation. This is somewhat rare. The story of Britain's founding would have to cover centuries and include the Norman invasion (1066), the Magna Carta (1215), the Glorious Revolution (1688) and the Act of Union (1707). China's nationhood would take in the rise of ancient dynasties, the Nationalist Revolution in 1911 and the Communist Revolution in 1949. Arguably Mexico has only two founding moments – independence in 1821 and revolution in the early twentieth century – but these were separated by ninety years. Australia and Canada eased into nationhood gradually and without large-scale conflict.

The birth of the United States, in contrast, has all the ingredients of a good story – high drama, a manageable chronology and a handful of stars affectionately known as The Founders, who, luckily, were prolific writers. The edited papers of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and Alexander Hamilton currently amount to 216 volumes – and those have yet to include 108 years of their collective lives, including several of their presidencies. These sources can be mined and re-mined, generation after generation, by historians and popular writers who wish to tell the story again and perhaps shed new light on it.

All of this is fine for Americans – but what about people from other countries? The task faced by serious students of American history, wherever they live, is to separate the myths from what actually happened. To do that effectively we need to rebuild the story from scratch, disregarding creative nineteenth-century narratives that continue to show up in current texts; in particular we need to focus on primary sources, such as the records of on-the-spot participants and observers. Letters, diaries, newspaper accounts, political tracts, military records, minutes and journals of revolutionary organisations, as well as British government sources, all lead us back to day-to-day life in revolutionary America. Once there, we can try to fathom the real dynamics, politics, personalities, struggles and ideas that made this era so exhilarating and momentous.

In *Forging America* you will find many such primary sources. The book revolves around original documents and images that can be examined and discussed. While the connecting narrative can help provide context and perspectives on what occurred, no secondary account can offer the direct access to history that primary sources provide. Each document you encounter provides an entry point into the past – a small one, perhaps, but an entry point nonetheless. Once you have entered therein, if your interest is aroused, perhaps you will choose to go deeper yet. What was the context for the words you are reading? Who was saying them, and to what purpose? In each case *Forging America* will help you begin your inquiry – after that it is up to you and your companions in your search to discuss and debate the meaning of ideas, the accuracy of accounts, the impact of events, and their implications for the times and for us today. The study of history is a collaborative enterprise, much as the making of history is, by definition, based on human interrelationships.

This is no idle pastime. The American Revolution had a profound impact on world history. At the time it represented a progressive force, a real-life laboratory in which republican ideals of the European Enlightenment were placed in the context of human passions, foibles and the never-ending quest for power. The revolutionaries proclaimed that government is ultimately grounded on the will of those being governed. We might take such a notion for granted today but how did it play out in eighteenth century America?

All American revolutionaries had to embrace popular sovereignty; if they didn't they were denied a seat at the political table. But beyond that, how did different groups and individuals define rule by the people? The American Revolution, as Carl Becker observed almost a century ago, was not just about 'home rule' but also 'who should rule at home'. If the new government was to be grounded in 'the people', who exactly did that include? The 'body of the people' – exemplified by the boisterous crowds of the pre-war years – or merely property-owning white males?

There were so many concurrent issues, all interrelated. How could republican principles be adapted to deal with the pressing demands of war? Was that even possible? What form should home rule take, both at the state and confederate levels? How should state and confederate governments interact? Was confederation sufficient, or would the independent states need to form a more binding union? And if they did, could they? Would individual states ever allow their local interests to be subsumed within a national government? Finally, most perplexing, how would self-proclaimed patriots deal with the institution of chattel slavery, so clearly in opposition to their noble fight for 'liberty'?

Although these issues were in some respects peculiar to their time and circumstances, all revolutions must deal with similar

concerns: how to adapt grand ideals to the dirty grit of politics and sometimes war; how a revolutionary struggle promotes both unity and discord; what kinds of internal alliances are formed during the transformative times, and how these fare in the years to follow; who gets to run the show under the new order, and how those with power accommodate or suppress those without it; and the extent to which the ideals that underpinned the revolution are implemented once peace and some kind of equilibrium are achieved.

The American Revolution occupies vital ground in the study of history, precisely because it was the first in a wave of revolutions (the 'revolutionary era', some historians call it, though revolutions have continued to occur at various intervals since then). In 1789 the people of France, a former ally of the fledgling United States, initiated a purely internal revolution – not a war of national independence. Two years later slaves in Haiti, much to the shock of many slave-owning 'revolutionaries' in the United States, rose up against their French masters and, within a few years, established their own nation. In the early nineteenth century revolutionary wars of liberation spread throughout South America and in the mid-1800s revolutionaries in Europe adapted themes pioneered in the Americas to more industrialised settings. A century later, after World War II, emerging nations in Africa and Asia cast off colonial rule with rhetoric similar to that used in 1770s America. Some of these modern patriots even utilised the exact wording of the 1776 Declaration of Independence.

To this day, the notions that defined and drove the American Revolution – liberty and popular sovereignty – affect political discourse everywhere. Much of the world has not only accepted but internalised these ideals. To some extent the United States still enjoys its vanguard status, and some measure of its international power and prestige comes from its image as a nation founded upon noble principles. Ironically, though, while American revolutionaries at the time promoted the decentralisation of power – political, military and economic – today's United States itself constitutes one of the most concentrated centes of power in the world, perhaps even in history. This apparent contradiction provides fertile ground for students who wish to examine the intersection between ideals and realities.

And that is where history so often resides. People have great ideas but they are guided by their own interests as well. How do these coexist, the rational and the rationalisations? And how do some people's ideas and interests play out against those of others? These issues are pivotal in any study of history – and to any investigation of present society as well. With the American Revolution these questions are writ large. The characters are large too, as are the events. Some people at the time sensed this and they played to a stage. They wondered how they would appear to history. Would they be seen as paving the way for a better world,

as their better selves hoped? Or would they be exposed for acting in their own interests, same as it ever was?

Their actions, of course, were a soupy mix, but a fascinating one – and highly significant, in their own time and beyond. The drama is still compelling. To appreciate it, though – to learn its lessons, such as they are – we must come to know the characters, see them in action and, as much as possible, experience their world on their own terms. Only then can we understand the choices they made and begin to understand what actually happened, never totally free of hindsight, but not totally dependent on it either.

RAY RAPHAEL is a prominent American historian. His 2001 text A

People's History of the American Revolution *delved into an under-explored field: the role ordinary people played in the birth of their nation.* The First American Revolution *(2002) provided new insights into popular uprisings in rural Massachusetts, well before Lexington-Concord.* Founders *(2009) explores the course of the revolution through seven of its participants. More recently Ray has published* The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Founding Fathers and the Birth of Our Nation *(2011),* Mr. President: How and Why the Founders Created a Chief Executive *(2012) and* Constitutional Myths: What We Get Wrong and How to Get It Right *(2013).*

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Although the term 'American Revolution' is sometimes used interchangeably with 'American Revolutionary War' or 'War of Independence', in this book we consider the revolutionary era to have begun in the final stages of the French and Indian War and to have ended soon after George Washington was inaugurated as the first president of the United States. While the term 'America' was not used to refer to the whole country throughout the entire period covered, we use it, where appropriate, for simplicity's sake.

HISTORICAL THINKING

The study of Revolutions at the senior level is guided by historical thinking concepts developed by Seixas, van Drie and van Boxtel, Levesque and others.

Historical knowledge comprises both **substantive knowledge**, which refers to historical content or subject matter (i.e. what happened in the past?) and **procedural knowledge**, which refers to the process or skills involved in understanding that subject matter (i.e. what do the sources of evidence say and what should I conclude from them?). Together, substantive and procedural knowledge give students the depth of understanding required to excel in history.

Historical inquiry begins with **historical questions**. Students ask and are asked substantial questions about people and events from the past, including their **significance** and contribution to what came later. Students assess **continuity and change** and the different types of change that occurred. They examine the relationship between **cause and consequence** and consider the **ethical dimensions** of history. As they do this, students should be aware that they bring a twenty-first-century perspective to their studies and that their values and beliefs are not necessarily the same as those who lived in the past.

The key part of historical thinking and practice is **analysing sources** – primary and secondary – to reach conclusions and **construct arguments**. Generally speaking, primary sources indicate the **historical perspectives** or viewpoints of people at the time, while secondary sources indicate the **historical interpretations** of historians or commentators who are looking back at past events.

Historical perspectives are a reminder that people rarely share the same experience or opinions at a given point in history, while historical interpretations show how historians have different views on the importance or meaning of past events. Understanding these contrasting experiences and viewpoints is an important part of appreciating the complexity and contestability of history – one should approach the evidence with an open mind and 'listen' to what a source is communicating before forming a conclusion.

In this book we have included many activities designed to develop and enhance students' substantive and procedural knowledge in history. But above all, we hope students will get swept up by the story of the American Revolution, as it is story-telling that lies at the heart of history.

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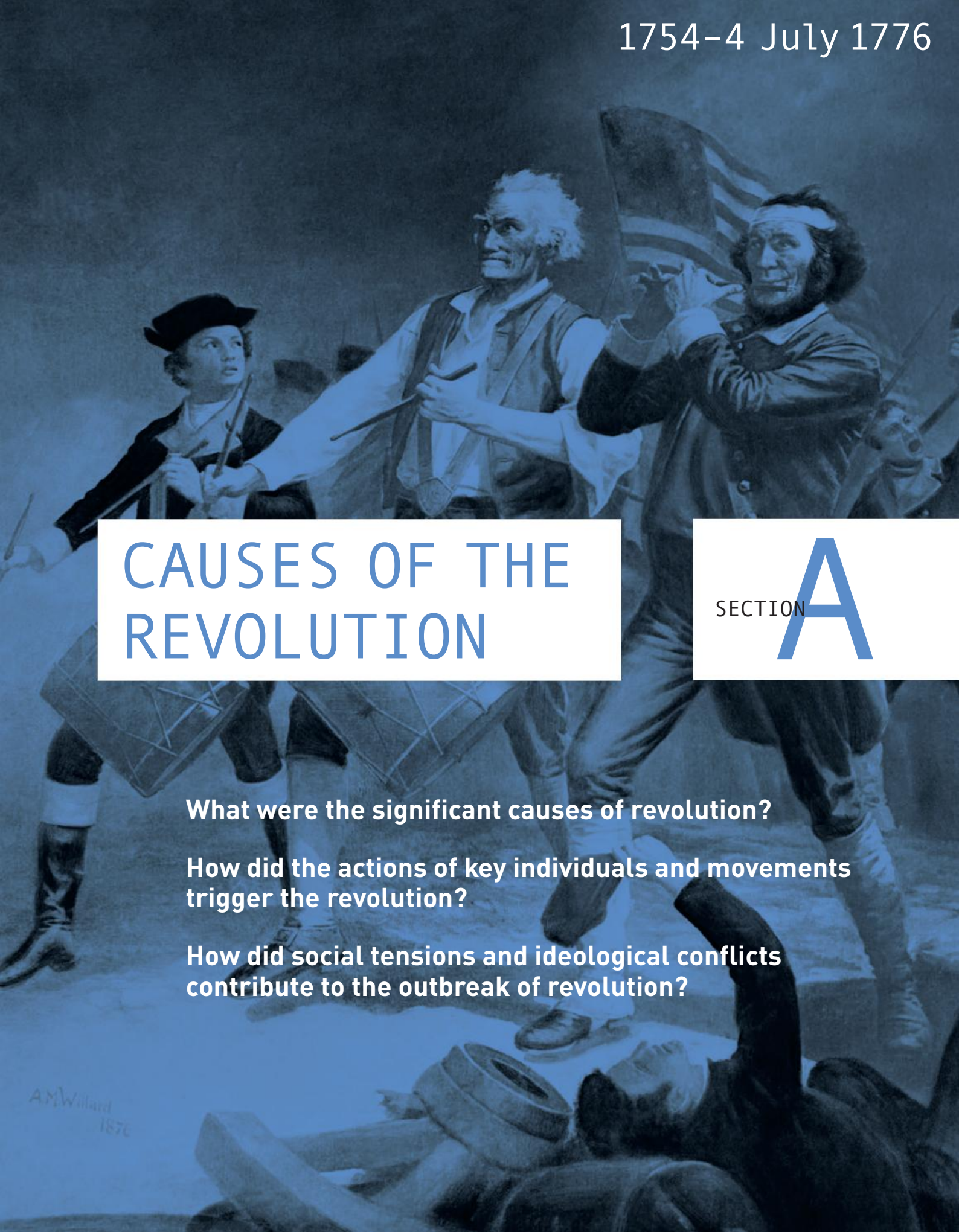


CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

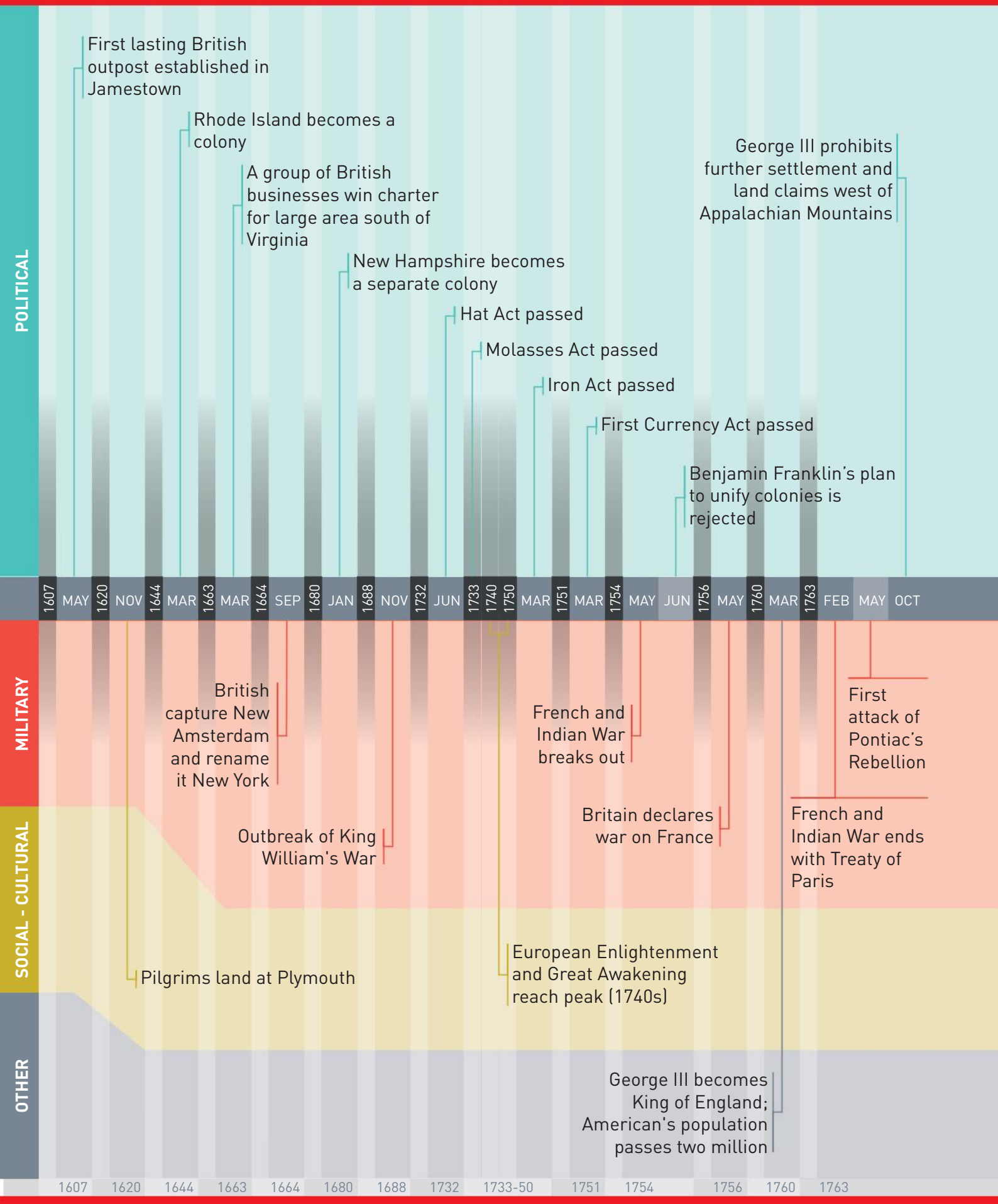
SECTION A

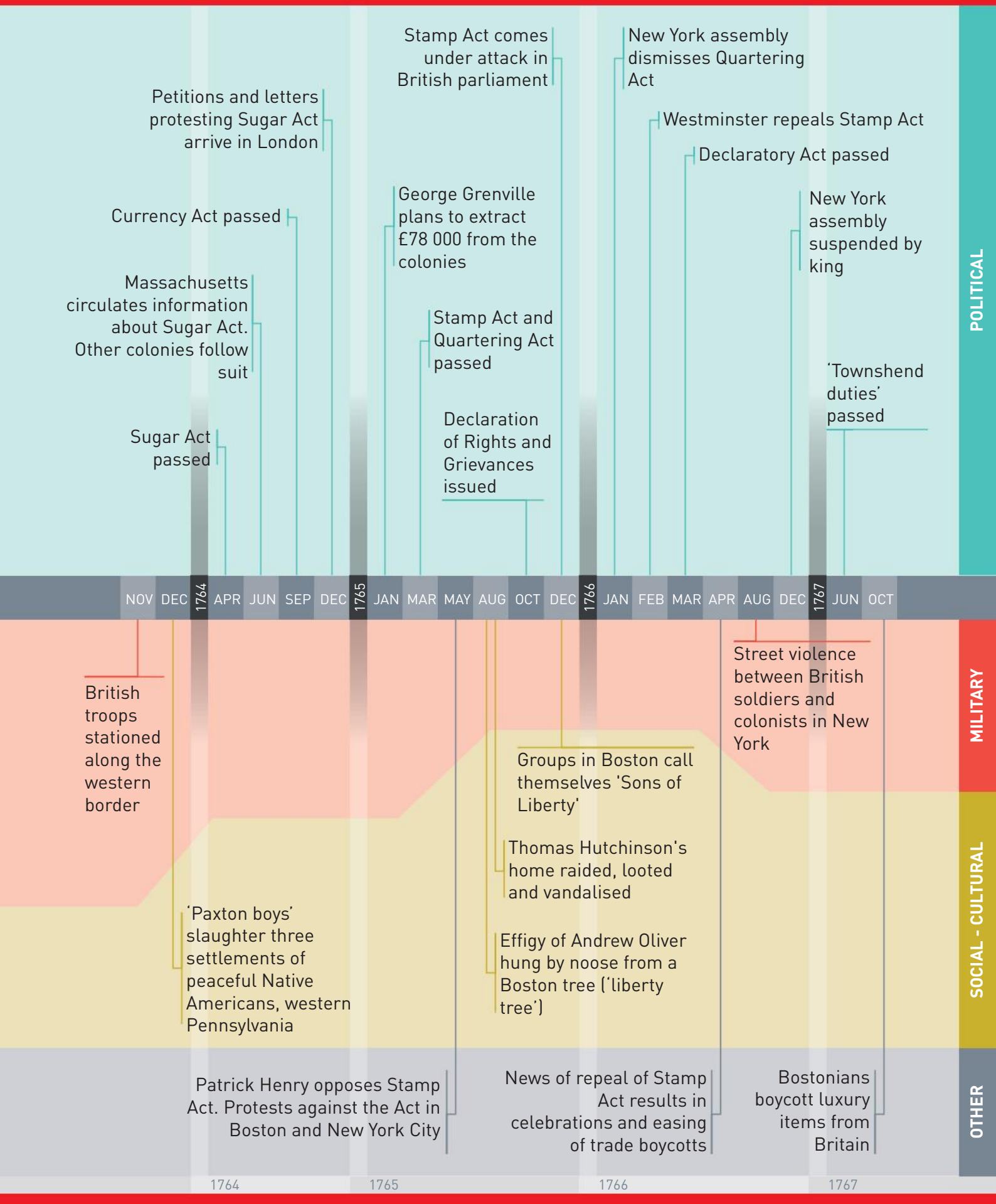
What were the significant causes of revolution?

How did the actions of key individuals and movements trigger the revolution?

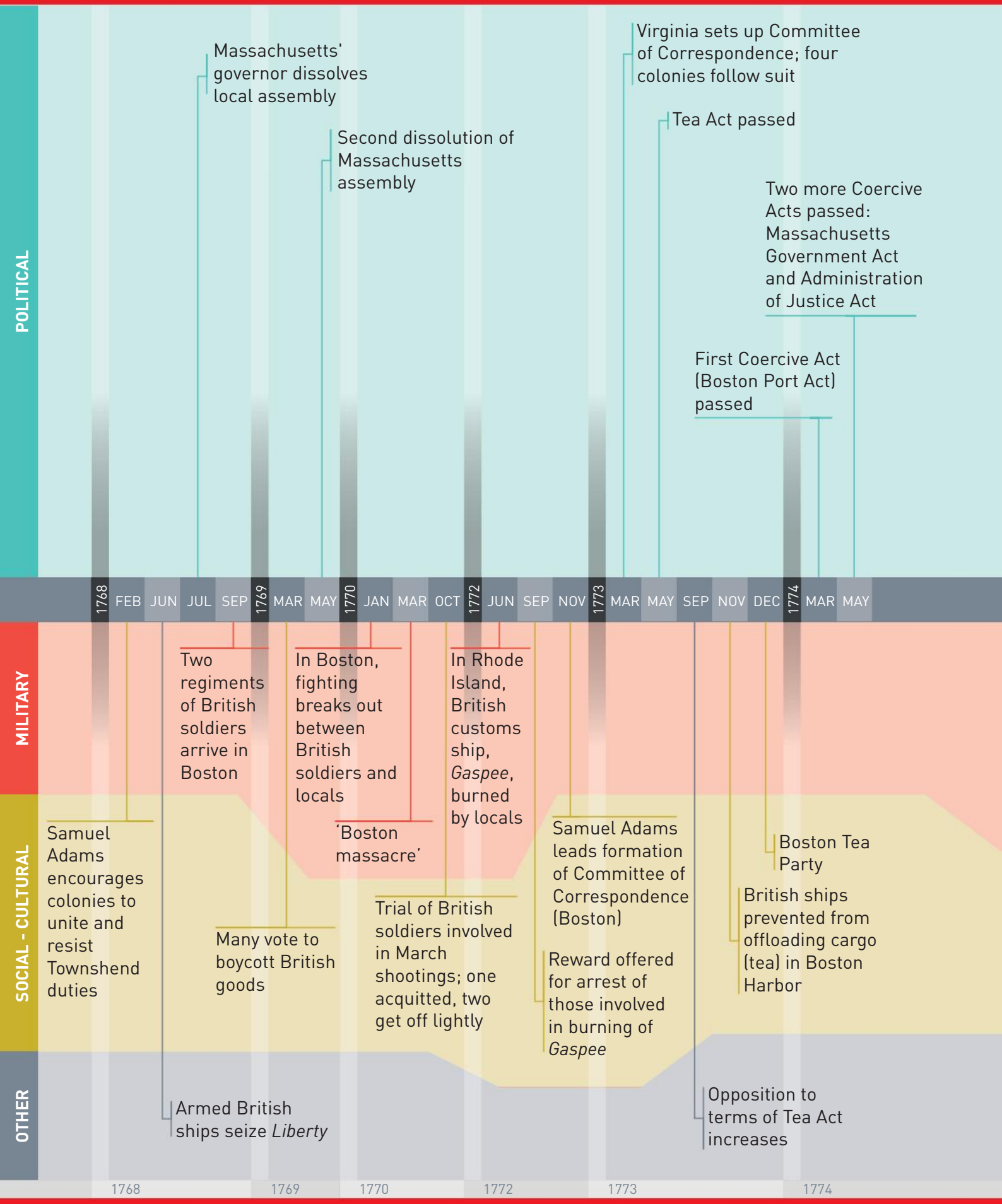
How did social tensions and ideological conflicts contribute to the outbreak of revolution?

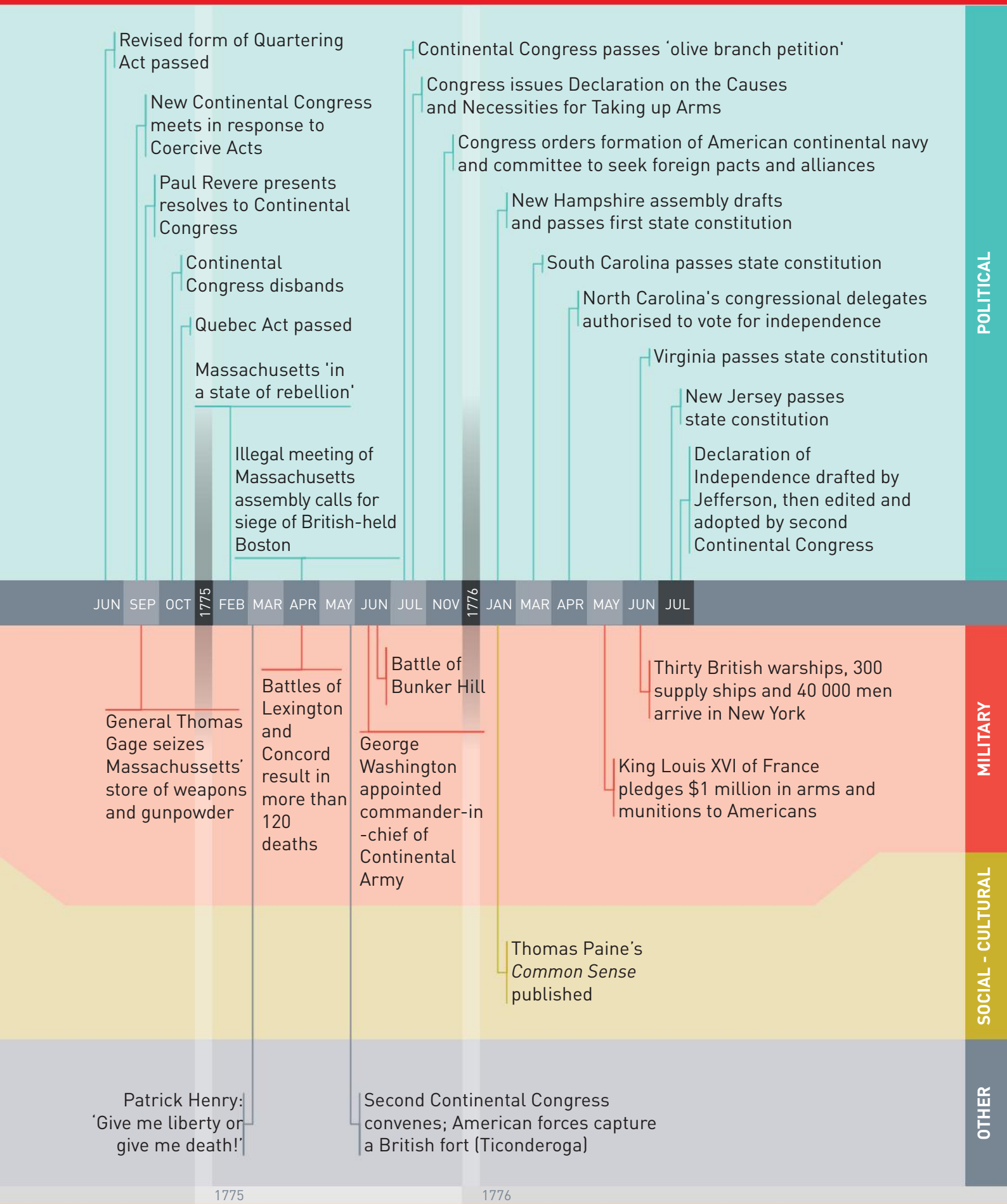
SECTION A TIMELINE




POLITICAL
MILITARY
SOCIAL - CULTURAL
OTHER
NOV
DEC
1764
APR
JUN
SEP
DEC
1765
JAN
MAR
MAY
AUG
OCT
DEC
1766
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
AUG
DEC
1767
JUN
OCT
Petitions and letters protesting Sugar Act arrive in London
Currency Act passed
Massachusetts circulates information about Sugar Act. Other colonies follow suit
Sugar Act passed
George Grenville plans to extract £78 000 from the colonies
Stamp Act and Quartering Act passed
Declaration of Rights and Grievances issued
Stamp Act comes under attack in British parliament
New York assembly dismisses Quartering Act
Westminster repeals Stamp Act
Declaratory Act passed
New York assembly suspended by king
'Townshend duties' passed
British troops stationed along the western border
'Paxton boys' slaughter three settlements of peaceful Native Americans, western Pennsylvania
Groups in Boston call themselves 'Sons of Liberty'
Thomas Hutchinson's home raided, looted and vandalised
Effigy of Andrew Oliver hung by noose from a Boston tree ('liberty tree')
Street violence between British soldiers and colonists in New York
Patrick Henry opposes Stamp Act. Protests against the Act in Boston and New York City
News of repeal of Stamp Act results in celebrations and easing of trade boycotts
Bostonians boycott luxury items from Britain
1764
1765
1766
1767

SECTION A TIMELINE cont.




POLITICAL
Revised form of Quartering Act passed
New Continental Congress meets in response to Coercive Acts
Paul Revere presents resolves to Continental Congress
Continental Congress disbands
Quebec Act passed
Massachusetts 'in a state of rebellion'
Illegal meeting of Massachusetts assembly calls for siege of British-held Boston
Continental Congress passes 'olive branch petition'
Congress issues Declaration on the Causes and Necessities for Taking up Arms
Congress orders formation of American continental navy and committee to seek foreign pacts and alliances
New Hampshire assembly drafts and passes first state constitution
South Carolina passes state constitution
North Carolina's congressional delegates authorised to vote for independence
Virginia passes state constitution
New Jersey passes state constitution
Declaration of Independence drafted by Jefferson, then edited and adopted by second Continental Congress
JUN SEP OCT 1775 FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL NOV 1776 JAN MAR APR MAY JUN JUL
MILITARY
General Thomas Gage seizes Massachussetts' store of weapons and gunpowder
Battles of Lexington and Concord result in more than 120 deaths
Battle of Bunker Hill
George Washington appointed commander-in-chief of Continental Army
Thirty British warships, 300 supply ships and 40 000 men arrive in New York
King Louis XVI of France pledges $1 million in arms and munitions to Americans
SOCIAL - CULTURAL
Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* published
OTHER
Patrick Henry: 'Give me liberty or give me death!'
Second Continental Congress convenes; American forces capture a British fort (Ticonderoga)
1775
1776

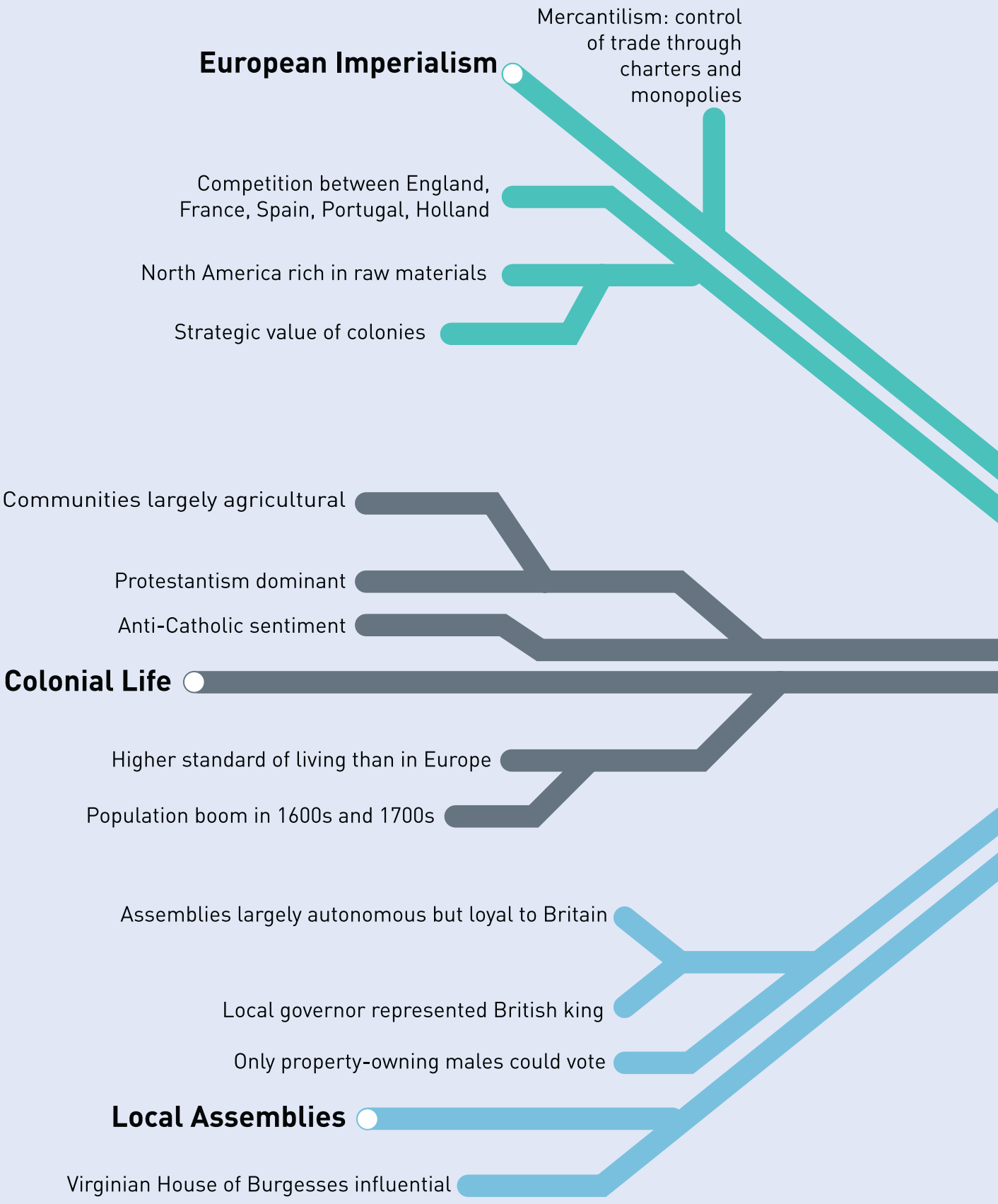
CHAPTER

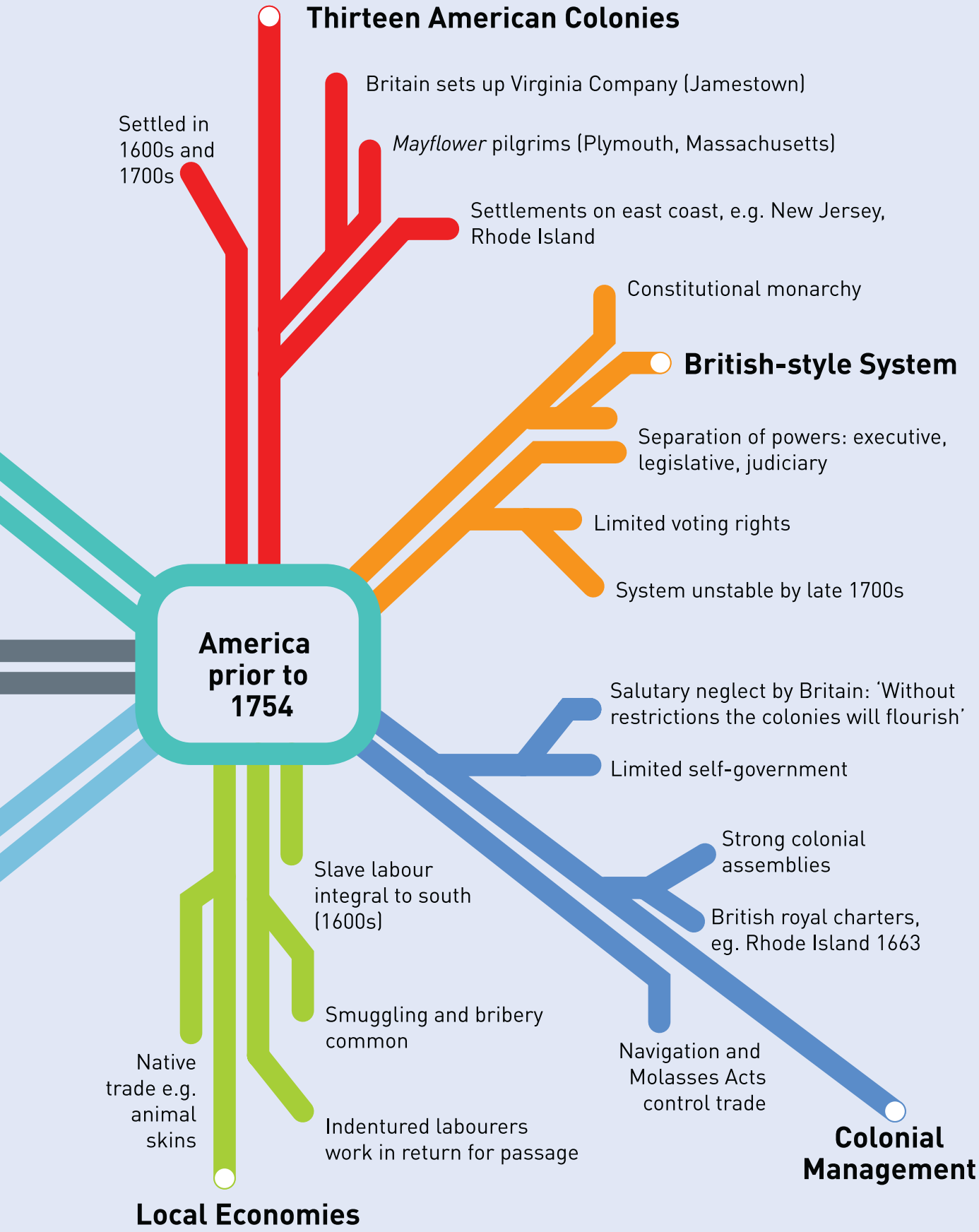
1

INTRODUCING AMERICA

(PRE-1754)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW




Thirteen American Colonies
Britain sets up Virginia Company (Jamestown)
Settled in 1600s and 1700s
Mayflower pilgrims (Plymouth, Massachusetts)
Settlements on east coast, e.g. New Jersey, Rhode Island
Constitutional monarchy
British-style System
Separation of powers: executive, legislative, judiciary
Limited voting rights
System unstable by late 1700s
America prior to 1754
Salutary neglect by Britain: 'Without restrictions the colonies will flourish'
Limited self-government
Strong colonial assemblies
British royal charters, eg. Rhode Island 1663
Slave labour integral to south (1600s)
Smuggling and bribery common
Native trade e.g. animal skins
Indentured labourers work in return for passage
Navigation and Molasses Acts control trade
Colonial Management
Local Economies

African American slave being sold.

INTRODUCTION

The story of the United States began in Europe, with competition among imperial powers to settle the great landmass of North America. From the 1500s onwards the wealthy but land-strapped kingdoms of Europe – England, France, Spain, Holland and Portugal – became aware of the economic and strategic potential of this bountiful new continent across the Atlantic. Explorers, settlers, conquistadors,[1] captains, merchants and speculators braved perilous sea voyages into the unknown to plant their flag in a land they knew little about. By the late 1600s, several European powers had claimed their own piece of North America, leading to territorial competition and nationalist tensions. For a time it seemed as if this 'new world' might develop as a mirror of the old, divided Europe.

Arguably the strongest of these imperial powers was Great Britain. Britain's military strength, naval dominance and mastery of trade gave it the edge in matters of empire; this was reflected in the claim that 'Britons … never will be slaves!'[2] in the popular anthem *Rule, Britannia!* The true purpose of British imperialism, however, was not to conquer or rule but to make money. London maintained the colonies as a valuable source of raw materials and a market for manufactured products. Most imperial legislation was therefore concerned with the regulation of trade. By the mid-1760s, British America had evolved into a remarkably independent colonial system. Under a broad policy of 'salutary neglect', each of the thirteen colonies had become used to a significant degree of self-government. Distance and distraction, loose imperial policy, ineffective governors, local assemblies left to their own devices and independent-minded colonials saw the American colonies come to be governed by Americans, for the most part.

A questionable representation of Columbus 'discovering' America.

The sowing ground of revolution was American colonial society, often stereotyped and simplified, but in reality diverse and divided. Not all colonial Americans hailed from Britain. Not all of them came voluntarily. Some had come for religious freedom but they did not all belong to the same religion. Most colonists lived comfortably and happily in small agricultural communities, yet this made them inclined to be suspicious of outsiders. They pledged loyalty to Britain but only on their terms. They tended to distrust central authority, evidenced by the small but regular frontier rebellions against their own colonial governments. At the apex of this society were the landed gentry[3] and wealthy merchants; these colonial elites imitated the aristocrats of Britain, whom they thought of as equals (though those in Britain thought otherwise). As landlords and legislators, the elites considered themselves masters of their own domain, yet the events of the 1760s would challenge their confidence and disrupt the equilibrium between Britain and her American colonies.

1 Spanish explorers/conquerors of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.
2 Britons: the British.
3 Land-owning upper class.

THE UNCHARTED WORLD

The North American continent is a vast landmass with enormous diversity of terrain, climate, natural resources, flora and fauna. Bordered by the Atlantic Ocean in the east, the Pacific to the west, the Gulf of Mexico in the south and the Arctic Ocean to the north, it is the third-largest continent on Earth after Asia and Africa and spans almost 25 000 000 square kilometres. Today it is dominated by two countries, the United States and Canada; however there are at least forty other North American independent states, including Greenland, numerous island nations in the Caribbean and several Central American countries. These countries are today home to more than 528 000 000 people.

The modern-day United States began in the easternmost third of the continent, between the Atlantic coast and the Mississippi River. The topography of this area varies widely, from broad flat plains, rolling hills and temperate forests in the north to coastal swamps and flatlands in the south. A long mountain range, the Appalachians, runs for 2400 kilometres in a north-east direction, several hundred miles inland from the Atlantic coast. West of the Appalachians are the Mississippi and Ohio rivers and, along their valleys, large swathes of fertile land suitable for farming. The region's climate changes appreciably from north to south: the north is temperate and mild but prone to bitterly cold winters and heavy snowfalls, while southern regions enjoy warm, sub-tropical weather punctuated by intense humidity, storms and hurricanes.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Mississippi is the second-longest river in North America, after its tributary, the Missouri. Its name is derived from the Algonquin 'Misi-ziibi', meaning 'great river'.

The eastern sector of the continent was rich with natural resources, making it attractive to colonisers. It was scattered with forests containing tall stands of timber, almost ready-made for construction and shipbuilding. There were no significant deposits of high-value metals like gold and silver but some areas were rich with iron ore and coal; these minerals would be exploited by later generations. The Atlantic coastline was brimming with fish, as were inland lakes, rivers and waterways. Bison, bear, deer, rabbit and possum were all abundant and would later be hunted extensively for their meat and skins. Beaver and mink were prized for their fur which commanded good prices on the European market. The most precious commodity in North America, however, was the land itself. Despite its inhabitation by hundreds of native tribal groups, Europeans considered the continent a vacant land ripe for seizure, settlement and colonisation.

DID YOU KNOW?

A forest-dwelling species of bison was abundant in wooded areas of north-east America at the time of English settlement. By the end of the revolution this species had been hunted to extinction.

The Mississippi River.

ACTIVITY

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE – ANNOTATED MAP

Investigate the settlement of one of the thirteen British colonies and consider how landscape, climate and natural resources shaped its economic development. Show your findings on an annotated map or infographic.

THE FIRST EUROPEANS

DID YOU KNOW?

The Californian cities Los Angeles ('the angels') and San Francisco ('Saint Francis') were named by the Spanish. Louisiana and New Orleans were named for the French king and a port city in France respectively.

Britain was not the first European power to lay claim to North America, neither was it the most dominant when the revolution began to unfold in the mid-1700s. Almost the entire western half of the continent – and most of Florida – was occupied by Spain. French-speaking settlers occupied the fertile areas immediately to the north and the west of the British colonies. These possessions, referred to as New France, stretched from the Appalachian Mountains in the east to the Mississippi River in the west; from Quebec (in present-day Canada) in the north to New Orleans in the south. British colonial settlements were small in comparison, confined to a relatively narrow strip of thirteen colonies, drawn out along the eastern seaboard.

DID YOU KNOW?

Spain constituted the largest global empire at the time of the American Revolution. Today more than 500 million people speak Spanish – a legacy of this imperial dominance

The first British settlers in America arrived mainly in pursuit of gold. Their hopes were based on exaggerated stories and myths like that of the fabled El Dorado and rumours of Spanish conquistadors finding fabulous golden cities in South America. Between 1585 and 1587 there were several attempts to establish English settlements in present-day Virginia and North Carolina, the most notable of these instigated by Sir Walter Raleigh, an explorer and courtier of Queen Elizabeth I. These early efforts at colonisation failed miserably – the settlements were either abandoned or they vanished without trace. More than a hundred men, women and children disappeared mysteriously from Raleigh's settlement at Roanoke Island, North Carolina; it is speculated that they assimilated into local tribes, perished at sea on their return voyage to England, or were wiped out by disease or starvation,

DID YOU KNOW?

The Lost Colony DNA Project is an ongoing scientific and historical research program, seeking to locate DNA strands of the Roanoke Island settlers among surviving members of the area's native tribes.

ACTIVITY

BRAINSTORM

On the board, list dangers and difficulties faced by early British colonists in North America.

JAMESTOWN: THE TROUBLED COLONY

A lasting British foothold in North America did not eventuate until 1607, when three ships commissioned by the Virginia Company left London to establish a colony. They landed at the mouth of the James River, Virginia, and selected a site on a thin strip of marshy land between river and coastline. They chose this position, named Jamestown, specifically for its defensive capacity and the absence of 'hostile natives' – though in time, the terrain and climate would contribute more to their near-destruction than any aggressive tribe. The heat and humidity of the area was thick and oppressive, the river water was brackish, and the

JAMESTOWN INTERACTIVE

A replica of the *Susan Constant* sailing ship that brought English settlers to Jamestown, Virginia in 1607.

surrounding swamps were a breeding ground for mosquitos which plagued them in summer, spreading ague (fever) and malaria.

The most pressing problem for the Jamestown colonists was food. The soil in the area, dank and clay-ridden, was unsuitable for growing anything other than weeds. It did not help that the settlers themselves were both poorly equipped for and unskilled in farming. As a result, most of their crops either failed or returned disappointing harvests. The woods near Jamestown abounded with wildlife and edible native vegetation, but the settlers were not adept at hunting and were reluctant to try unfamiliar food. The native tribes were initially peaceful and offered help; this help was occasionally accepted but often ignored.[4] Between its establishment in 1607 and the early 1620s Jamestown was almost wiped out several times by famine and disease. During the 'starving time', a period of crop failure and food shortage during the winter of 1609, barely ten per cent of Jamestown's 500 settlers survived. George Percy, Jamestown's governor, recalled the hardships of this period in a report back to England:

DOCUMENT

GEORGE PERCY, JAMESTOWN GOVERNOR, 1609

> Now all of us … [are] beginning to feel that sharp prick of hunger, which no man truly describes but he who hath tasted the bitterness thereof. A world of miseries ensued … so much that some, to satisfy their hunger, have robbed the store, for which I caused them to be executed. Then having fed upon horses and other beasts as long as they lasted, we were glad to make do with [such] vermin as dogs, cats, rats and mice … to satisfy cruel hunger [and] eat boots, shoes or any other leather … and to do those things which seem incredible, as to dig up dead corpses out of graves and to eat them … and some have licked up the blood which hath fallen from their weak fellows.[5]

ACTIVITY

DIVERSE EXPERIENCES

As a class, discuss the hardships of the 'starving time' in Jamestown for a range of people, suggesting reasons why food was scarce for the colonists.

Captain John Smith is rescued by Pocahontas.

No natives inhabited the Jamestown isthmus,[6] however several tribal villages of Powhatan – a sub-group of the Algonquin nation – lived close by. Initial contact with the Powhatan, instigated by English soldier Christopher Newport, was convivial and established friendly relations. Other Jamestown expeditionaries, like Captain John Smith, were less diplomatic and their actions sparked tensions between the groups. Smith was captured by the Powhatan in December 1607

DID YOU KNOW?

Today Jamestown is an important site for historians and archaeologists; over one-million artefacts have been found there. The site also features a historical recreation of the early Jamestown settlement, which is popular with tourists.

FOUNDING OF JAMESTOWN

DID YOU KNOW?

Pocahontas was later captured by British settlers, held prisoner for some time and eventually taught both English and Christianity. She eventually married John Rolfe and emigrated to London, where she enjoyed brief celebrity until her early death in 1617.

4 Frank Grizzard and D. Boyd Smith, *JamestownColony: a Political, Social and Cultural History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 46.

5 Cited in Robert Appelbaum, *Envisioning an English Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 215.

6 Narrow strip of land connecting two larger areas of land.

and, according to legend, was only saved from execution by Pocahontas, the daughter of a tribal chief. Smith later attempted to build forts in native territory and drove Powhatan families from land he coveted for farming. This led to further friction, conflict and open warfare between Jamestown and its indigenous neighbours. A speech reportedly given by the Powhatan chief in 1609 shows remarkable insight into the situation confronting his people:

7 Cited in David Price, *Love and Hate in Jamestown* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 102.

DOCUMENT

POWHATAN'S SPEECH TO JOHN SMITH, 1609

> Captain Smith, you may understand that I, having seen the death of all my people thrice, and not any one living of these three generations but my self; I know the difference of Peace and War better than any in my Country … you [have] come to destroy my Country, so much frighten all my people as they dare not visit you. What will it avail you to take by force you may quickly have by love, or to destroy them that provide you food? What can you get by war, when we can hide our provisions and fly to the woods, whereby you must famish by wronging us, your friends? Think you I am so simple, not to know it is better to eat good meat, lay well and sleep quietly with my women and children, laugh and be merry with you, have copper, hatchets or what I want, being your friend, than be forced to fly from all, to lie cold in the woods, feed upon accords, roots and such trash; and be so hunted by you that I can neither rest, eat nor sleep; but my tired men must watch and if a twig but break, every one cryeth there comes Captain Smith: then must I fly. Let this therefore assure you of our love, and every year our friendly trade shall furnish you with corn; and now also, if you would come in friendly manner to see us, and not thus with your guns and swords as to invade your foes.[7]

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read Powhatan's speech to John Smith and complete the table below.

ACCORDING TO CHIEF POWHATAN …	
How have the Powhatan suffered?	
How might the English continue to harm the Powhatan?	
How might the Powhatan harm the English?	
What are the benefits of cooperation for: a) The Powhatan? b) The English?	

MAYFLOWER AND THE PILGRIMS

DID YOU KNOW?

The Pilgrims hired a second ship, the *Speedwell*, to assist their emigration to the New World – however its crew, fearing months stranded in an unknown land, sabotaged the ship and forced it to return to England.

A second but perhaps better known settlement was initiated by the 'pilgrims' in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Originating in the northern counties of England, the Pilgrims were a branch of the Puritan movement: religious separatists unable to reconcile with the state-linked Anglican religion and many of its practices. They broke away from the Church of England and began conducting their own worship, a practice that led to criticism, isolation and persecution. Between 1607 and 1609 small groups of Pilgrims fled England for Amsterdam and Leiden in Holland, where they survived and prospered. By the mid-1610s the Pilgrim leadership believed the riches and culture of Holland might lure away their members and fatally weaken their movement. They began searching for a corner of the New World where they could establish a community free from the spiritual, social and economic influences of other religions.

Mayflower II replica in Plymouth.

In September 1620 fifty Pilgrim settlers and fifty-two other passengers and crew departed for America aboard the *Mayflower*, a converted cargo ship. Initially destined for Virginia, the *Mayflower* was forced further north by stormy weather, eventually dropping anchor in a natural harbour in modern-day Massachusetts. They found the area agreeable: the land was flat, fertile and full of useable timber, while the seas were full of codfish (hence the name this place bears today: Cape Cod). One of their first acts was to draft the Mayflower Compact, a written agreement to form a local council for self-government. On landing, the settlers located and pillaged several empty native villages they found nearby, digging up graves and looting winter stores of corn. This would prove an ominous sign for the Nauset and Wampanoag peoples, who had lived in the area for centuries. By Christmas 1620 the settlers had located a suitable site for a permanent settlement, naming it Plymouth after the English port from which they had embarked.

DID YOU KNOW?

The American holiday Thanksgiving, held on the fourth Thursday each November, was first observed by the settlers in both Jamestown and Plymouth as a celebration of their survival in the New World.

Landing of the pilgrims at Plymouth, 11 December 1620.

DOCUMENT

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT, 1620

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread [awesome] Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the First Colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid. And by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11th of November. Anno Domini 1620.[8]

8 1620 AD.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the Mayflower Compact and complete the tasks below.

1. What does the opening paragraph reveal about the signers of the compact?
2. According to the compact, what were the Pilgrims' reasons for settling in North America?
3. What do you think is meant by the term 'civil body politic'? Why would this be important for settlers in the New World?

'The Pilgrims signing the compact, on board the *Mayflower*, 11 November 1620.'

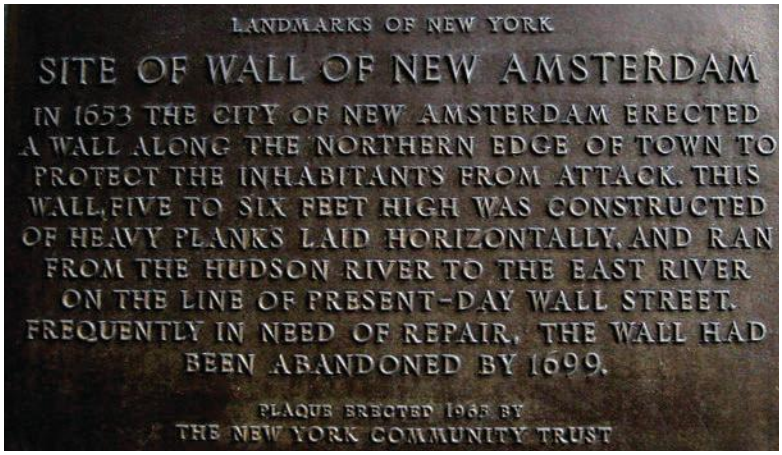
THE BRITISH PRESENCE EXPANDS

DID YOU KNOW?

Another contributing factor to American settlement was the European law of primogeniture – the eldest son's right to inherit the entire family estate, leaving younger children landless. Many settlers in the southern colonies were the younger sons of English aristocrats dispossessed by this legal convention.

The consolidation of the colonies at Jamestown (Virginia) and Plymouth (Massachusetts) provided encouragement for further settlement, as did a number of other factors. Shipbuilding techniques and the seaworthiness of vessels improved throughout the 1600s, as did mapping and navigation methods. This made journeys across the Atlantic faster and, in relative terms, safer and more reliable. Charter and joint stock companies in England set up enticing schemes to recruit settlers and colonise slabs of the New World in the hope of turning a profit. The disruption and violence of the English Civil War (1641–51) prompted many royalists to evacuate and take refuge in Virginia. Britain's growing population and shortage of land made resettlement in America an attractive option, for the industrious poor, the intrepid middle class and the younger sons of the aristocracy.

Over the next century another eleven colonies were settled or acquired by British interests. In some cases land was taken by force or coercion from colonists of other European powers. New York, for instance, was a Dutch possession called New Netherland before the English captured it in 1667. The area later known as Pennsylvania was given by King Charles II to William Penn for the repayment of a debt. New Hampshire was settled by British fishermen, while the tiny colony of Rhode Island was settled and claimed by Roger Williams, a religious radical who had been expelled from Massachusetts. The southernmost colonies of Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina were settled, in part, to provide a buffer against French and Spanish colonies to the south and south-west.



A plaque marking the site of the wall built by the Dutch in New Amsterdam (New York), on what became known as Wall Street.

By 1733 thirteen separate colonial entities – later to become the first states in the newly-formed United States – had been established as British possessions. They were loosely considered to exist in three regions: New England (Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island), the Middle Colonies (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware) and the Southern Colonies (Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas and Georgia). These groupings had no political structure or administration; the colonies within were governed independently of the others.

DID YOU KNOW?

Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, was ahead of his time in many respects. As well as preaching religious tolerance (particularly in regard to Quakers and Jews), he argued that government should be independent from the Church.

ACTIVITY

RESEARCH

Find out more about one of the thirteen British colonies prior to 1754. Identify the colony's geography, natural resources, population and political system. Consider the relationships your colony might have had with its neighbours. Present your findings to the class.

Thirteen British colonies (in order of founding):

Virginia
Founded: 1607, by London Company
Charter: 1606 (corporate) 1624 (royal)
Population (1750): 231 000
Economy: Plantation farming, tobacco, wheat, corn, cotton.

Massachusetts
Founded: 1620, by English Puritans
Charter: 1629 (corporate) 1691 (royal)
Population: (1750): 188 000
Economy: Fishing, corn, livestock, timber, shipbuilding, shipping.

New Hampshire
Founded: 1631, by English fishermen
Charter: 1679 (royal)
Population (1750): 27 500
Economy: Fishing, potatoes, textiles, shipbuilding.

Maryland
Founded: 1634, by English settlers
Charter: 1632 (proprietorial)
Population (1750): 141 100
Economy: Farming, indigo, shipbuilding, ironworks.

Connecticut
Founded: 1636, by religious dissidents
Charter: 1662 (royal)
Population (1750): 111 300
Economy: Wheat, corn, fishing.

Rhode Island
Founded: 1638, settled by religious dissidents
Charter: 1663 (royal)
Population (1750): 33 200
Economy: Livestock, dairy production, fishing, timber.

New Jersey
Founded: 1664, seized from the Dutch
Charter: 1664 (proprietorial) 1702 (royal)
Population (1750): 71 400
Economy: Timber, ironworks.

New York
Founded: 1664, seized from the Dutch
Charter: 1685 (royal)
Population (1750): 76 700
Economy: Farming, indigo, shipbuilding, ironworks.

South Carolina
Founded: 1670, by English settlers from Barbados
Charter: 1729 (royal)
Population (1750): 64 000
Economy: Plantation farming, indigo, rice, tobacco, cotton.

Pennsylvania
Founded: 1681, by William Penn
Charter: 1681 (royal)
Population (1750): 119 700
Economy: Farming, textiles, papermaking, timber, shipbuilding.

Delaware
Founded: 1682, seized from the Dutch
Charter: 1701 (proprietorial)
Population (1750): 28 700
Economy: Fishing, timber.

North Carolina
Founded: 1710, after separation from South Carolina
Charter: 1729 (royal)
Population (1750): 73 000
Economy: Plantation farming, indigo, rice, tobacco, cotton.

Georgia
Founded: 1732, by a London expedition
Charter: 1752 (royal)
Population (1750): 5200
Economy: Plantation farming: indigo, rice, sugar, cotton.

DID YOU KNOW?

Population growth was much faster in the British colonies during the 1700s than in New France and the Spanish empire, mainly because English companies advertised the benefits and advantages of emigration to the colonies.

A DIVERSE SOCIETY

The trans-Atlantic migration of Europeans to the American colonies was a remarkable demographic event. In 1650 there were barely 50 000 settlers living in the English colonies, yet in just a century this number had increased to almost 1.2 million. This massive population boom continued apace through the eighteenth century – even as the revolution raged and a smallpox epidemic killed people in their thousands. Numbers doubled roughly every generation and not only from the mass influx of immigrants. By the late 1700s American birth rates were higher and child mortality rates markedly lower than in Europe; more than twenty per cent of children in Britain perished compared to just fourteen per cent in Massachusetts. There was better public hygiene, fresher food supplies and fewer fatal pandemics. Though childbirth remained problematic and a frequent cause of death, American families still had, on average, seven or eight surviving children.

American colonists, on average, enjoyed greater wealth, sustenance and standards of living than their counterparts in Europe. A significant factor in this was the availability of land, a commodity virtually monopolised by European elites (the economist Joseph Massie, writing in the mid-1700s, speculated that most British land was possessed by 310 'great families' who owned between 100 000 and

DOCUMENT

COLONY POPULATIONS 1650–1770

POPULATION (THOUSANDS)	1650	1700	1740	1750	1770
Massachusetts	15.6	55.9	151.6	188.0	235.3
New York	4.1	19.1	63.7	76.7	162.9
Pennsylvania	0	18.0	85.6	119.7	240.1
Virginia	18.7	58.6	180.4	231.0	447.0
South Carolina	0	5.7	45.0	64.0	124.2
Georgia	0	0	2.0	5.2	23.4
All colonies	50.4	250.9	905.6	1170.8	2148.1

Source: Bureau of the Census, 'Demography of the American Colonies' (US Department of Commerce, 1998).

ACTIVITY CONTINUITY AND CHANGE – DATA ANALYSIS

Look carefully at the population figures for the colonies and complete the tasks below.

1. Which were the fastest-growing colonies in terms of population? Investigate and note down possible explanations for this.
2. Suggest reasons why growth rates were comparatively slow in South Carolina and Georgia.
3. Find out the current population of Australia. If our population was to grow over the next twenty years at the same rate the American colonies did between 1750 and 1770, what would our population be? What problems and pressures might this create?

200 000 acres each).[9] Around forty per cent of Americans were independent or 'yeoman' farmers, with freehold ownership over small plots of land – a contrast with Europe, where most were tenanted farmers paying high land rental. Kulikoff notes that in Essex County, Massachusetts in the late 1600s, 'half the men owned land before they were 30, as did 95 per cent of the men over [the age of] 36.' He also suggests that land ownership in Pennsylvania was 'nearly universal' and that six-sevenths of the men in Connecticut were also landowners.[10]

Land was far from a limitless commodity, however, and by the early 1700s there were clear signs that the supply of cheap farmland was drying up. Land speculation by wealthier American colonists, natural population increases and the flood of immigrants all added to demand, forcing up the prices of available land. This bred new tensions and created pressure to open up the 'unsettled' territory that lay west of the Appalachian Mountains.

THE POWERFUL COLONIAL ELITES

American colonial society, like that of Europe, was based upon structures, hierarchies and conventions. Expectations and affectations[11] shaped the way people lived, worked, dressed, behaved and responded to each other. There was a clear distinction between 'gentlemen' (those with wealth, particularly inherited wealth) and 'commoners' (those who worked for a living), particularly in rural areas. The gentry owned large tracts of the best land, wore the finest imported clothing and occupied the best pews in the local church. They participated in government both at town level – as aldermen or selectmen – and in many cases, in the legislative assembly of their colony. Politics was primarily the domain of wealthy men, who considered themselves the only class with the intelligence, civility and moderation for political thought and discourse. Members of the gentry also expected – and usually received – acknowledgement and deference from commoners, who addressed them as 'sire', 'mister' or other terms of respect.

While the American colonist of the lower ranks might be of English, Scottish, Scotch-Irish or German extraction, the majority of the colonial elite were of English heritage. They viewed themselves as Britons, loyal subjects of His Majesty and citizens of England. They revelled both in British culture and the glory of the British Empire. Their homes were filled with the same trappings and adornments one might find in a London home: furniture by Chippendale and Hepplewhite; pottery by Wedgwood or Royal Worcester, books written by notable British authors and poets. They ordered the finest fabrics and garments from the mills of Manchester and Birmingham and the tailors of London. If wealthy and intrepid enough they visited the mother country regularly, while many sent their children for education at great British schools like Rugby and Eton.

DID YOU KNOW?

Doffing (raising) one's cap was a common mark of respect shown to both the British and colonial aristocracy. If the gentleman was of noble birth it would be done with an even greater flourish.

Chippendale chair.

THE AMERICAN FARMER

Agriculture was the dominant business in British America so the majority of colonists were farmers or farm labourers. Most lived in small villages of between 100 and 500 people, though there were a few larger towns. Bad weather, muddy tracks, unreliable livestock and equipment made transport slow, difficult and

9 Corrfield, 'Class by Name and Number in Eighteenth Century Britain,' in *History* (December 2007), 40.
10 Allan Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 113.
11 Affectation: behaviour meant to impress others.

'Life of George Washington – the farmer'. Painted by Stearns.

dangerous, so it was rare for the average American farmer to venture far from his hometown. Other than in border regions, few ever left their own colony. Although this helped to build stable and strong communities, it tended to foster inward-looking views and cautious attitudes to outsiders. There were few schools and most education was completed at home; despite this colonial Americans were generally more literate than their European counterparts (Kenneth Lockridge's research into literacy rates in New England concluded that 85–90 per cent of white adult males in the late 1700s could read).[12]

America's rural idyll began to decline in the mid-1700s when the availability of land in many colonies began to dry up. Land prices began to rise and yeoman farming became more expensive to pursue. Many rural economies began to transform, as those unable to acquire farmland either moved west in search of new land or took on waged occupations. Daniel Vickers' *Farmers & Fishermen: Work in Essex County* recounts this transformation in a small area of eastern Massachusetts, suggesting that by the late 1700s the colonial economies of New England were ripe for industrialisation and manufacturing growth. Other historians contend that the coming revolution – or more precisely, the mobilisation required to win the Revolutionary War – was a more important stimulus for establishing a manufacturing economy.

DID YOU KNOW?

Both land prices and urban rents rose significantly in Massachusetts after about 1750. There was an increase in tenement and bunkhouse accommodation in Boston to house the working classes who could not afford to rent.

ACTIVITY

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

As a class, discuss how high literacy rates in the American colonies might have contributed to the calls for political representation.

THE INVISIBLE SEX?

DID YOU KNOW?

Prior to the 1700s, the average marrying age for females in Virginia was fifteen. By the late 1700s it had risen to twenty-five.

While perceptions of colonial women are fraught with generalisations, for the most part their work was concentrated in the domestic sphere. Women generally supported their husbands, raised children and ran households. They enjoyed few rights and were not considered equal to men. There were few opportunities for formal education, other than some privately-run academies and finishing schools – in the larger cities – specialising in deportment, elocution, household management and the fine arts. The prevailing view – based largely upon religious conceptions of gender – was that women were the weaker sex, incapable of will power or reasoning, more easily tempted and prone to sin. The Salem witch trials of 1692–93, where fourteen women were hanged for exhibiting strange behaviour, were the most extreme manifestation of this view.

12 Kenneth Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England* (New York: Norton, 1974), 12.

Because of the financial burdens single women incurred for their families, women of all classes were under considerable pressure to marry: 'All of them are understood, either marry or bee married' wrote an anonymous lawyer in 1632.[13] The daughters of farming families were compelled to marry by their late teens; even widows were expected to remarry, particularly if they owned property (which by law would then pass to their new husband). Most unions were marriages of arrangement or convenience rather than love, and in some places approval from the bride's father was a legal requirement. Once married, a woman became, legally speaking, little more than an extension of her husband. She carried his name and was bound to abide by his will; she surrendered her property to his ownership and could not instigate divorce action. Women could not sign contracts or testify in court; they were not permitted to enter taverns, other public buildings and most town meetings; and they certainly had no right to vote.

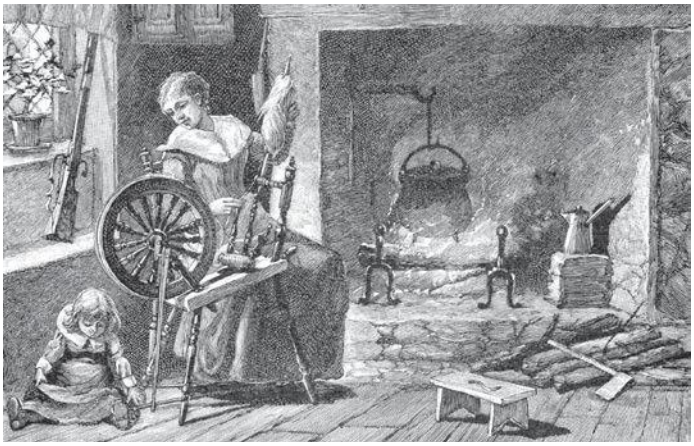
DID YOU KNOW?

Between ninety and ninety-five per cent of all colonial women who reached adult age would bear children at some stage in their lives.

In parts of colonial America, marriages often hinged on the bride supplying a suitable dowry: a collection of valuable goods such as money, land or household items.

Colonial America was a deeply religious society that cherished 'family' as the basis of social stability. Motherhood was consequently celebrated as an honourable and sacred vocation. It was also a dangerous one, with childbirth frequently claiming mother or child or both. One revolutionary-era grave in modern-day Vermont contains the bodies of a forty-year-old mother and her thirteen infants.

It was possible for independent-minded single women to take up paid employment. The most common jobs were in domestic service, cooking, seamstressing, teaching and the like – however it was not out of the question for women to run hospitals, orphanages, boarding houses and stores. Some historians have unearthed examples of colonial women managing businesses, running taverns, even printing and publishing newspapers.[14] The slow shift from an agrarian society to a wage-based economy in the latter half of the 1700s created opportunities for capable women, just as it did for men.



Colonial kitchen with woman spinning.

The story of Sybilla Masters of Pennsylvania is evidence that individual colonial women could prosper, albeit within the limitations of their male-dominated world. In the early 1700s Masters had watched native women hand-grinding maize to produce grits, a thick corn-based porridge that was widely eaten in the colonies. Eager to find a less labour-intensive method, Masters drew up plans for a hammer-driven mill that could grind large amounts of cornmeal. She also invented a new technique for hat-weaving using straw and palmetto leaves. In 1712 Masters travelled to London alone and spent three years there trying to obtain patents for her inventions. They were eventually granted – not to Sybilla but to her husband, Thomas, since women were not permitted to obtain patents.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1750 nineteen-year-old Martha Dandridge married Daniel Custis, a wealthy Virginia planter. After Custis died in 1757, Martha married another Virginian, George Washington, who then inherited Custis' entire estate.

ACTIVITY

DIVERSE EXPERIENCES

Construct a fact file on the different social groups in North America prior to 1754, including women, Native Americans, indentured workers and slaves. Speculate on what a typical day might have looked like for each group.

13 Cited in Carla Pestana, ed., *Inequality in Early America* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), 25.

14 Berenice A. Carroll, *Liberating Women's History* (Chicago: Illini Books, 1976), 29.

RELIGION: THE COLONIAL LIFEBLOOD

DID YOU KNOW?

John Winthrop's 'city on a hill' sermon is often cited today as an example of American exceptionalism: the belief that the United States exists as a role model for democracy, diversity and religious tolerance.

In 1768 noted revolutionary Samuel Adams said, 'I did verily believe, as I do still, that much more is to be dreaded from the growth of popery [Catholicism] in America, than from the Stamp Act.'

Religion was a powerful element in colonial society. Many of the European settlers who crossed the Atlantic did so in search of religious freedom as much as economic prosperity, so religious values and structures loomed large in the New World. Several colonies, including Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Maryland, were settled explicitly as 'plantations of religion'. The more pious settlers saw America both as a haven for religious liberty and an opportunity to create a new society in God's image, free of the corruption and immorality of Europe. In a sermon given to Pilgrims crossing to Massachusetts in 1630, John Winthrop described their new home as 'a city upon a hill' and told them that 'the eyes of all people are upon us'.[15]

Almost all Americans were Protestant Christians. American Protestantism had been shaped and re-energised by the Great Awakening, a wave of religious reform beginning in the 1730s. It led to archaic rituals and ceremonies being discarded in favour of new forms of worship. Preaching in American churches, once dull and foreboding, began to transform: a new wave of preachers delivered emphatic, passionate and charismatic sermons. Worshippers were no longer quiet and passive followers; they were encouraged to participate in their faith by discussing and debating, studying the Bible and other texts, actively worshipping and praying at home. This energetic, independent and questioning spirit may well have contributed to the revolutionary sentiment that began to unfold in the 1760s.

Pilgrims going to church.

The grand ideal of religious tolerance was often preached but not always practised. The existence of many different churches with conflicting views made it a difficult principle to uphold. American Protestantism included a multiplicity of churches: Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Lutherans, French Huguenots, the Dutch Reformed churches, the Mennonite Amish and various Brethren groups. The Quakers (Society of Friends) had sprung from English Puritanism but lacked its dogmatic fundamentalism; they established a foothold in America through William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. The Anglican Church (Church of England) was large and influential, particularly in New York and New England, and maintained close links with both the Church and state in Britain. Documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth century reveal tensions, bickering and conflict between these Protestant churches as they competed for parishioners and ascendancy in settled areas. It was not at all uncommon for one church to launch a rhetorical attack on the leadership, religious doctrine and practices of another.

15 Cited in Francis J. Bremer, *John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 179.

If Protestant Americans were suspicious of each other then they were downright fearful of Catholicism, often to the extent of hatred (the prominent historian Arthur Schlesinger called it 'the deepest-held bias in the history of the American people').[16] Anti-Catholic sentiment and the marginalisation of Catholics were commonplace. Charters and laws in most colonies banned Catholics from holding public office, even from voting, while Catholic services, religious texts and regalia were outlawed in some areas. The colonial press routinely ridiculed and castigated Catholics as 'Papists' under the control of a Roman dictator. In contrast there was more tolerance shown to America's small Jewish population (the first national census in 1790 counted just 3000 Jews). Though sometimes shunned and disregarded, they generally enjoyed better treatment than Jews in Europe. Colonies such as Rhode Island and New York allowed them to settle, build synagogues and participate both in commercial life and local government.

Poster promoting Pennsylvania, showing an Amish family.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 200 000 Amish still live in the north-eastern United States, mainly in Pennsylvania. They live in a similar manner to their ancestors in the 1700s, shunning electricity, telephones and motor vehicles.

DID YOU KNOW?

John F. Kennedy (1917–1963) was the first and so far only Catholic president of the United States. His Catholicism was targeted by some opponents and satirists.

DOCUMENT

JON BUTLER, *NEW WORLD FAITHS*

> Before the revolution, religion reinforced popular arguments about the need for virtue and morality in society and politics. In politics this was called Whiggism, because it overlapped the rhetoric of England's eighteenth-century Whig political party. Several important political tracts distributed in the colonies supported this view … A wide variety of colonial clergymen reinforced Whig political ideas. Throughout the eighteenth century, the public discussion of virtue and morality came most often from the clergymen. Laymen and clergymen alike assumed that political liberty depended on having a virtuous public. The ministers emphasised virtue, responsibility and the importance of moral choices. In doing so, they created important standards that colonists used to criticise English actions in the 1760s and 1770s.[17]

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the extract from Jon Butler and complete the tasks below.

1. In your own words, explain Butler's view of the connections between religion and politics.
2. According to Butler, what did many American clergymen do that contributed to the coming revolution?
3. What is meant by 'Whig political ideas'? Find out about the Whigs in Britain and explain why they were relevant to the American Revolution.

RELIGION IN COLONIAL AMERICA

16 Cited in David Gibson, *The Coming Catholic Church* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 11.

17 Jon Butler, *New World Faiths: Religion in Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 135.

DOCUMENT

THOMAS FLEMING, *LIBERTY! THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*

Recent research into American ethnic origins have led historians to revise the conventional picture of the colonists as English. Only 60.9% of colonial Americans came from England. Another 14.3% were Scots and Scotch-Irish from Northern Ireland, 8.7% were German, 5.8% were Dutch, 3.7% were southern Irish, and 6.6% miscellaneous.

Religion was also more diverse than is usually thought. America boasted thousands of churches: 749 were Congregational churches, 485 Presbyterian, 457 Baptist, 406 Anglican, 328 Dutch or German Reformed, 240 Lutheran and 56 Catholic. There were also 200 Quaker meetinghouses and five synagogues. Hostility between religious denominations was common. Catholics were tolerated only in Maryland and Pennsylvania; Quakers were not welcome in most of New England; Presbyterians regarded Anglicans as a threat to their religious freedom because they feared the importation of English bishops and a push towards a central state religion.

The impression that on the eve of the revolution most Americans were poor is incorrect. Each of the thirteen colonies had a highly stratified, class-conscious society but it lacked the impoverished lower levels of Europe. In the northern colonies the richest ten per cent of free colonists owned 45 per cent of the wealth; in the southern colonies it was 75 per cent. Yet around 40 per cent of American colonists were yeoman (independent) farmers; while the cities and larger towns had a thriving middle class of artisans, shopkeepers, tavern owners and merchants who earned in excess of 300 pounds a year. A skilled worker might have made between 45 and 90 pounds per year; schoolteachers received a paltry 30 pounds per year.

Americans as a whole enjoyed the highest per capita income and one of the best standards of living in the Western world. They were also lightly taxed, paying less than half the taxes due in England.[18]

ACTIVITY

DATA ANALYSIS

Read the extract from Thomas Fleming and complete the tasks below in a small group.

1. Present the statistics on the ethnic and religious make-up of American colonial society in a graph, table or infographic.
2. Discuss possible reasons for the significant difference in the distribution of wealth in the northern and southern colonies.
3. Identify three aspects of colonial American society that contributed to revolutionary sentiment against Britain, as suggested by the data.

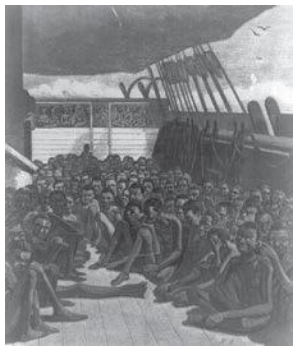
FORCED LABOUR: SLAVES AND INDENTURED SERVANTS

The European slave trade emerged in the mid-1400s when Portuguese ships were searching western Africa in search of gold and spices. They failed to find these commodities but quickly learned from Arab slave-traders of the equally lucrative demand for human labour. African slaves trickled into the American colonies not long after European settlement. Within a half-century the institution of slavery had become an integral part of American socio-economics, particularly in the southern colonies. Slaves became the chattels (property) of their 'owners' after Virginia legally endorsed the practice in the early 1600s.

The experience of slavery was horrendous and demeaning. Most transported slaves were acquired from the west coast of Africa, either purchased *en masse* from African or Arab slave-traders or, less often, netted and herded onto ships by

18 Thomas Fleming, *Liberty! The American Revolution* (Viking, 1997).

Photograph showing an army guard and other men in front of a building designated Price, Birch & Co., dealers in slaves.



African slaves crowded onto a boat.

Europeans. Captives then endured the infamous Middle Passage, the maritime route across the Atlantic Ocean. With passengers crammed below deck, chained together leg-to-leg and with scarcely enough room to lie down, the voyage could take between six weeks and six months, depending on the weather and the skill of the captain. On arrival in the Americas they were herded onto auction platforms where they were bought and sold like cattle. Once sold they could be worked and whipped, maintained and moved, married and bred as their 'owners' saw fit.

SLAVERY IN COLONIAL AMERICA

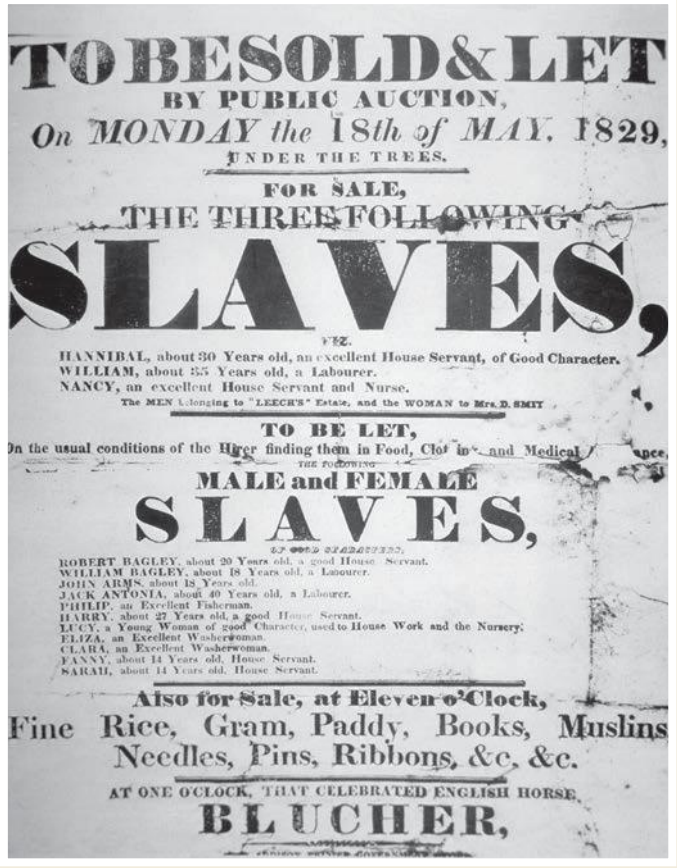
The economic demand for slaves emerged chiefly because sowing and cultivating certain crops – particularly cotton and tobacco – was extremely labour-intensive. The colonies of the south, remote and with a difficult climate, found it hard to attract free settlers, so plantation owners came to rely on slavery and indentured labour. The continuation of the trade and procreation among slaves led to rapid increases in the slave population. Slavery had a profound impact on the social structure and culture of the southern colonies; among whites (Anglo-Saxon Americans) in the area, for instance, the fear of a slave uprising was ever-present.

A lesser-known form of colonial servitude was indentured labour or 'debt bondage', a term of unpaid labour imposed upon free whites unable to pay outstanding debts. Defaulting debtors would be arrested, detained and 'sold' to companies, which drew up an indenture (contract) containing a minimum amount of labour. They worked for this set period, usually several years, after which they were released. Bonded workers received no salary, only food, clothing and shelter. Indenture contracts and the people bound by them could be bought and sold as property; their masters could treat them as brutally as they treated African slaves. Hofstadter suggests more than half the white immigrants to the British colonies in America in the 1600s and 1700s arrived under some form of indenture.[19] Also transported to America by the British between 1610 and 1763 were more than 50 000 convicts – some felons, some political prisoners or captured rebels from Scotland and Ireland.

19 Richard Hofstadter, *White Servitude,* www.laurahenderson.com/genealogy/corder/ecsmemoriallibrary/articles/1750_WhiteServitude.pdf.

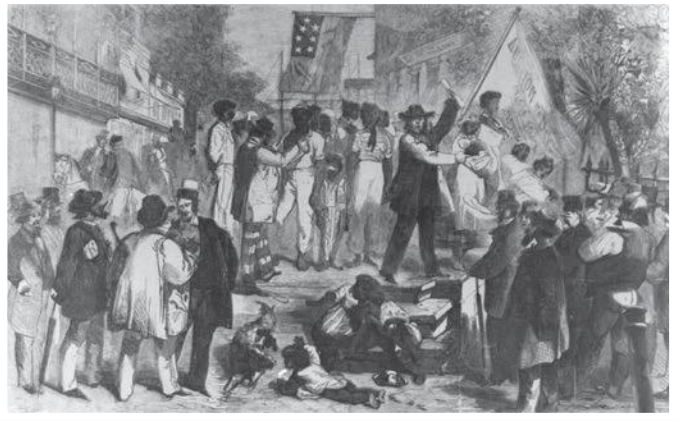
FEATURE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SLAVERY IN AMERICA: TIMELINE



TO BE SOLD & LET
BY PUBLIC AUCTION,
On MONDAY the 18th of MAY, 1829,
UNDER THE TREES.
FOR SALE,
THE THREE FOLLOWING
SLAVES,
VIZ.
HANNIBAL, about 30 Years old, an excellent House Servant, of Good Character.
WILLIAM, about 35 Years old, a Labourer.
NANCY, an excellent House Servant and Nurse.
The MEN belonging to "LEECH'S" Estate, and the WOMAN to Mrs. D. SMIT
TO BE LET,
On the usual conditions of the Hirer finding them in Food, Clot in and Medical
THE FOLLOWING
MALE and FEMALE
SLAVES,
ROBERT BAGLEY, about 20 Years old, a good House Servant.
WILLIAM BAGLEY, about 18 Years old, a Labourer.
JOHN ARMS, about 18 Years old.
JACK ANTONIA, about 40 Years old, a Labourer.
PHILIP, an Excellent Fisherman.
HARRY, about 27 Years old, a good House Servant.
LUCY, a Young Woman of good Character, used to House Work and the Nursery.
ELIZA, an Excellent Washerwoman.
CLARA, an Excellent Washerwoman.
FANNY, about 14 Years old, House Servant.
SARAH, about 14 Years old, House Servant.
Also for Sale, at Eleven o'Clock,
Fine Rice, Gram, Paddy, Books, Muslins
Needles, Pins, Ribbons, &c. &c.
AT ONE O'CLOCK, THAT CELEBRATED ENGLISH HORSE,
BLUCHER,

Poster for a slave auction, 1829.



African American men, women and children being auctioned.

1619

Twenty African slaves are landed and sold in Jamestown, Virginia.

1641

Massachusetts legalises slavery, the first of the thirteen colonies to do so. Other colonies follow suit over the next three decades, including Connecticut, Maryland, New York and New Jersey.

1703

Rhode Island decrees that Native or African Americans cannot walk about after dusk without a pass.

1705

The Virginia Slave Code restricts the rights and movements of slaves. The code determines that slaves are property and that masters who kill slaves during corporal punishment are exempt from trial.

1712

New York forbids free African Americans and mulattos (people of mixed race) from owning property or real estate.

1715

Maryland declares that any slave entering the colony must remain a slave for life.

1733

Elihu Coleman, a Quaker minister, publishes an essay describing slavery as an 'anti-Christian practice'.

1740

Following a significant slave uprising, South Carolina passes the harshest slave laws of the 1700s, decreeing that slaves are not to be permitted to learn to read and write English, to earn money or to assemble in groups.

NATIVE AMERICANS

Indigenous Americans were descendants of Asian tribes that crossed the land bridge between Russia and Alaska around 14 000 years ago, before sweeping south and populating the continent. By the mid-1700s there were hundreds of language groups scattered across the North American continent, each containing disparate numbers of tribes, sub-tribes and settlements. Many lived in the east, in or near British-settled areas. The powerful Iroquois nation, for example, was resident in the area east of the Great Lakes, in close proximity to the colony of New York. Other notable tribes near the English colonies included the Delaware, Powhatan, Mohawk, Cherokee, Shawnee, Miami and the Chickasaw. Further north, along and beyond the Canadian border, were the Algonquin, Huron and Ottawa nations.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to legend, Native Americans were labelled 'Indians' by Christopher Columbus because he believed he had landed somewhere in the Indian Ocean. The terms 'Indian' and 'Red Indian' are generally not used today.

Misleading representations of Native Americans in colonial times abound, thanks to popular writers, artists and Hollywood. While not true of every native group, points of similarity have emerged, such as: the practice of electing a *sachem* (chief); decision-making by a council of *sachem* or elders; communal obligations to the sick, the weak and the elderly; and environment-based spiritual beliefs similar to those of indigenous Australians. Most native tribes were hunter-gatherers, the men responsible for hunting meat and trading while women gathered other foods and prepared meals. Most tribes in or near the thirteen colonies were not naturally nomadic, although contact with and pressure from white settlers saw many relocate west or break into smaller groups. Relationships between natives and settlers were variable – much depended on the attitudes of individual leaders on both sides. In many areas European settlers traded with, and were assisted by, native tribes, though suspicion and language barriers saw social contact kept to a minimum.

A Native American chieftan.

Some conflict between settlers and native tribes was inevitable. Many Europeans, such as Jamestown's John Smith, had no regard for native land claims; the 'Indians' were to be driven from arable land. Some tribal groups chose to retaliate against frontier colonists. In July 1764 four Delaware warriors entered a school in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, where they murdered and scalped the teacher and ten children. This brought on a brutal campaign against all native tribes in the region, not only the Delaware. The Pennsylvania assembly inflamed the situation by introducing a cash bounty for every dead native over the age of ten. Scalping – the removal of the hair and top of the head using a tomahawk, as a trophy of war – is commonly associated with Native Americans, though not all tribes practised it. Scalping was also adopted by the settlers, who used it against the natives in retaliatory attacks. The warring French and British encouraged the practice by offering their natives bounties for the scalps of enemy soldiers.

'The Murder of Miss Jane McCrea', propagandist art intended to portray Native Americans as savages.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT: AN OVERVIEW

Because disputes over politics and political philosophy are a key theme in the American Revolution, an understanding is needed of eighteenth century British government and its relationship with the American colonies. Britain itself was a constitutional monarchy: its head of state was a king or queen but the monarch's

DID YOU KNOW?

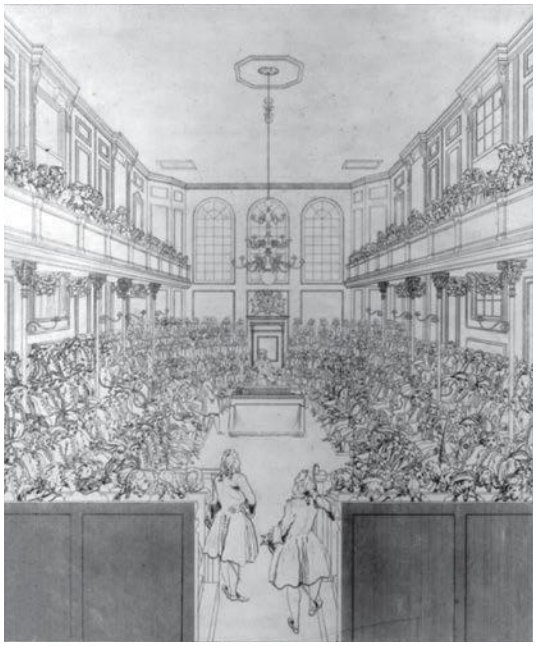
In 1755 the Massachusetts assembly, tired of skirmishes with the Penobscot natives, promised: 'For every scalp of a male Indian brought in: forty pounds. For every scalp of a female Indian or male Indian under the age of twelve: twenty pounds.

power was constrained by a parliament of two chambers. There was, theoretically, separation of powers, so that the monarch, the aristocratic House of Lords and the elected House of Commons were largely unable to act without each other's approval, minimising the potential for tyranny. The British prime minister, appointed by the king from within the parliament, selected other MPs to form a cabinet of ministers. The House of Commons was dissolved and reformed at general elections, held on average every six years. The British system had representation, rule of law and democracy, so Britons lauded it as one of the freest and most democratic on the globe.

ACTIVITY

BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

With your class, offer reasons why members of the British middle class in the mid-1700s might have taken pride in Britain and her empire.



The House of Commons.

Yet the system was not perfect, nor was it democratic by modern standards. The composition of the House of Commons was certainly decided by general election, however the right to participate in general elections was enjoyed by a small minority of Britons. In rural counties a resident was required to own land worth at least forty shillings before he could vote; a similar property qualification existed in the city boroughs. People of colour, Catholics, indentured servants, customs and taxation officials were all excluded from voting, regardless of their wealth. Olsen suggests that as little as seven per cent of adult males and three per cent of adult women had the right to vote in eighteenth century Britain.[20] It was not until the Reform Act of 1832 that suffrage increased dramatically – but even after this, only 700 000 men out of a population of 14 000 000 people were eligible to vote, while women were prohibited from voting altogether.

In addition to the limited franchise there was no secret ballot in Britain until 1872. Voting was done in public with a show of hands; consequently, voters were subject to influence and intimidation. Powerful aristocrats, landlords or employers could bribe or coerce their employees or tenants to cast a particular vote. Some seats in parliament were referred to as 'pocket boroughs' or 'rotten boroughs', because they were elected by very small numbers of voters who were corruptly controlled by the landowner. There were at least two members of the House of Commons who were elected to parliament by fewer than ten votes. William Pitt the Younger, a future prime minister, first entered the Commons as the representative for Old Sarum, which had just seven electors. In contrast, Manchester – a fast-growing industrial city with a population of 60 000 – was not allocated a representative in parliament until the mid-1800s.

In the modern-day Westminster system, most parliamentarians belong to a well organised political party. The party with a lower-house majority forms the government. The English parliament of the eighteenth century did not have organised parties and therefore lacked discipline and stability. Members were

20 Kirstin Olsen, *Daily Life in 18th Century England* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 6.

inclined to act, speak and behave independently. With no parties or obvious majority it was left to the king to select a suitable MP and 'invite' him to become prime minister and form a cabinet (a council of ministers). British policies were formulated by this cabinet and tendered to the king, who gave his assent. The success of any prime minister and cabinet was largely dependent on how much support they enjoyed within the parliament. Unfortunately for the young King George III, British government in the latter half of the 1700s was beset with division and instability. This led to uncertainty, bickering, disruption and frequent changes of ministry.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the twenty years between the end of the French and Indian War (1763) and the end of the American Revolutionary War (1783), Britain had nine different prime ministers. The longest-serving was the Tory Lord North (1770–82).

COLONIAL DECISION-MAKING

In America, each of the thirteen colonies had its own provincial government, modelled to some degree on the British political system. Each had its own charter – a document signed by the monarch authorising it to form a local government in the king's name – providing both political legitimacy and instructions.
The highest internal authority was the royal governor, who was charged with representing the king, upholding his laws and implementing his policies. Each colony had a local legislature or assembly, responsible for formulating and passing internal acts and overseeing revenue and expenditure. The members of these legislatures were elected by property-owning residents in each colony, usually on an annual basis. The governor, as the king's representative, possessed the authority to override the colonial assembly; this occasionally led to tension, dispute or stalemate. The colonial assemblies, however, generally managed to wield influence over the governor, largely because they had control of revenue.

21 Alvin Rabushka, 'The Colonial Roots of American Taxation, 1607–1700,' in *Policy Review* (August–September, 2002).

DOCUMENT

ALVIN RABUSHKA, 'THE COLONIAL ROOTS OF AMERICAN TAXATION'

> During most of the 17th century, the [Virginia] governor's salary and expenses depended on annual votes of the legislature. Seeking a source of revenue independent of the legislature, in 1680 the governor threatened to increase quitrents [land taxes] and enforce their collection. In exchange for withdrawing his threat, the legislature granted him a permanent export duty of two shillings per hogshead of tobacco, in place of the previous annual allowances. While this duty was largely evaded by tobacco exporters, it provided enough revenue for his annual salary and executive expenses. Other colonial legislatures, such as Massachusetts and New York, never accorded their governors permanent sources of revenue, giving their taxpayers greater control over their executives. In most cases, colonial governors had more in common with their subjects and their growing prosperity than with a distant English government. Many 17th century colonial governors were already more American than English.[21]

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Read about colonial decision-making and complete the tasks below.

1. Why did colonial governors tend to be compliant with the wishes of the local assembly?
2. How did the Virginia assembly manage to avoid paying its governor a regular salary?
3. Why might the legislatures of Massachusetts and New York have refused to provide a permanent source of revenue for their governors?
4. Elected legislatures are still responsible for managing revenue and determining governmental salaries in the United States and Australia. What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a system?

DID YOU KNOW?

The town meeting was an important political institution in colonial America. New England towns held several meetings a year and they were open to all free whites. Women could usually attend but were generally discouraged from speaking and voting.

Within each colony there were several counties: units of local government modelled on those of England. By the 1760s Massachusetts had fourteen counties, including Suffolk County, which contained the city of Boston. Each had its own county seat: a large town containing a meeting hall, a county court and some form of organised militia. Moderate-sized towns had regular meetings and elected a board of selectmen or aldermen (in effect, a town council). It was not uncommon for these men to sit also in the colonial legislature – many leading revolutionaries were involved at both levels of government. One of the striking features about the American Revolution would be that town meetings and county boards met, discussed the issues of the day and drafted resolves or affirmations of their rights. Histories such as Pauline Maier's *American Scripture* have located, interpreted and pieced together these local resolutions, identifying the growth of revolutionary sentiment as a more decentralised phenomenon than was previously thought.

MANAGING THE EMPIRE

CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION: MERCANTILISM

Colonies, by definition, are ruled by their 'mother country'. In British America this was true in theory – the thirteen colonies were under the nominal control of the king and a colonial governor – but things differed considerably in practice. Britain's imperial policy of 'salutary neglect' to the mid-1700s did not interfere excessively in the management of the American colonies, allowing them to exercise a significant degree of self-government. The arrangement was articulated by Sir Robert Walpole, a long-serving British prime minister, who declared that 'if no restrictions were placed on the colonies they would flourish'. Parliament's decision to rein in this colonial autonomy and enforce firmer colonial policy would strongly contribute to revolution in America.

Another emerging problem between Britain and her colonies was their changing perception of each other. The prevailing British economic theory was mercantilism, which held that the more trade, resources and gold reserves an empire possessed, the more powerful it was. In line with mercantilist theory, colonies benefited and enriched the mother country by supplying natural resources and materials, and by providing a market for manufactured goods. America, rich in forests and farmland, supplied the raw materials needed by England's growing industrial economy – cotton for its textile mills, iron for its forges, timber for its furniture makers and shipbuilding yards. The end products were then sold back to the colonies. This arrangement provided the British with ample raw materials and the Americans with a stable market for whatever they grew, gathered or harvested.

For mercantilism to work, however, economic development in the colonies had to be kept in check. Local manufacturing must be constrained so that colonials would continue to import finished goods – furniture, clothing, iron goods and so on – from England, rather than producing their own. From the late 1600s the British parliament passed legislation banning or limiting the manufacture of certain items in the American colonies. The Iron Act of 1750 encouraged America's production of pig (raw) iron but prohibited the internal manufacture of iron tools, farming equipment or tinplate. Excessive production of certain types of clothing, such as woollen garments, was also restricted. American development

was stunted by this prohibitive legislation – even after almost two centuries of settlement, agriculture was still the lifeblood of the colonies, while industrial and manufacturing existed only on a small scale.

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

What were the aims of Britain's Navigation Act of 1660? What rules did it impose and how was it received? Devise a further question of your own.

Britain also sought to prevent the American colonies from trading with the French, Spanish and Dutch, all of whom had commercial operations in North America and the Caribbean. A series of laws called the Navigation Acts, dating back to the mid-1600s, banned the trade of certain commodities, called enumerated goods, with non-British entities. Some items could be traded with foreigners but only if American merchants paid an additional customs fee. The Molasses Act (1733) required Americans to pay a sizeable duty on sugar or molasses (sugar syrup) purchased in the French West Indies. These regulations were intended to protect English companies and shipowners; however they were not always heeded by colonial merchants and shipping companies.

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the more unusual mercantilist laws was the Hat Act of 1732, which placed restrictions on the number of hats that colonials could produce, sell and export. Most people had to buy expensive imported hats from Britain.

DOCUMENT

ALVIN RABUSHKA, *TAXATION IN COLONIAL AMERICA*

> A fundamental mercantilist principle was that colonies should supply useful commodities to strengthen the mother country. In order of importance were precious metals, commodities that could not be produced in England, naval stores, and products that could be profitably traded in international markets. Mercantilism provided the ideas that governed colonial economic relations … that colonial interests were subordinate to the mother country; that trade with its colonies should be restricted to English subjects; that the trade and resources of a colony should be sent to the mother country; and that the trade and resources of a colony should be kept out of the hands of rivals. Colonies were to provide a captive market for English manufactured goods. Monopolised trade with its colonies could stimulate domestic employment and industry, thereby reducing industrial unrest, poverty and idleness. In political terms, colonies were regarded as possessions, not an integral component of the English state. Even though colonists were granted the political rights of Englishmen, colonies were to be administered for the economic and military benefit of the mother country.[22]

ACTIVITIES

KEY IDEAS – MERCANTILISM

FLOW CHART

Create a chart showing the flow of raw materials and manufactured goods between Britain and America under mercantilism.

LIST

List the advantages and disadvantages of the mercantilist system for both Britain and the American colonies.

DID YOU KNOW?

Molasses was highly valued because it was used in the production of rum, the most popular alcoholic beverage in colonial America. Historians suggest that colonial Americans consumed almost fourteen litres of rum per person per year.

A barrel of rum.

22 Alvin Rabushka, *Taxation in Colonial America* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 95–6.

TRADERS AND SMUGGLERS

DID YOU KNOW?

John Hancock later became famous as the first signatory of the Declaration of Independence. His signature is also by far the largest on the document. In the United States today, a 'John Hancock' is colloquial for a signature.

Despite the restrictions and regulations imposed by mercantilism, some American colonists had become very wealthy through trade. The economy of Britain boomed through much of the 1700s and the Navigation Acts virtually guaranteed colonial exporters a market for their goods. Meanwhile, the fast-growing colonial population, with its thirst for all things British and few local industries to draw upon, saw imports flourish. Most merchants lived in the great colonial port cities – Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charlestown (later Charleston) and others – where they often played a role in local government. Most merchants were of the affluent middle classes but a few did so well, through inheritance, talent and economic circumstance, that they became the wealthiest people in America. Their number included men like John Hancock of Massachusetts, Henry Laurens of South Carolina, Robert Morris and Edward Shippen of Pennsylvania.

Many American merchants increased their profits by circumventing trade regulations. Smuggling – illegal shipping, the evasion of customs duties and the bribing of customs officers – was a common practice in colonial trade, dating back to the 1600s. America's expansive coastline, its great distance from England and the lack of any concerted naval presence made evading goods checks or customs inspectors relatively easy. The willingness of poorly-paid customs inspectors to accept bribes also helped, so much so that some were virtually on John Hancock's payroll. Most of this illicit trade was conducted with the other European powers: France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Italy and the German states. By far the most commonly smuggled commodities were molasses and sugar, spirited into America from the French colonies in the West Indies.

DID YOU KNOW?

While some colonial Americans (particularly the wealthy) saw smugglers as criminals, others portrayed them as daring, romantic heroes undermining the loathsome Navigation Acts.

It is difficult to gauge the extent of smuggling in colonial America, since the merchants obviously kept no records of it and arrests were rare; however it is so frequently mentioned in letters, newspaper articles, governors' diaries and other incidental documents that it must have become common practice. American captains and sailors tended to be blasé about smuggling; some even viewed it with a sense of romance. The British were not unaware of the problem, having agents in European and Caribbean port cities – an American ship loading contraband goods would have been quite conspicuous. The more conscientious officials reported suspected smugglers to their governors, some of whom reported them to London. The question was not whether it was happening but what action, if any, should be taken to stop it.

DOCUMENT

BOSTON EVENING POST, 1763

> There is no error so full of mischief as making acts and regulations oppressive to trade without enforcing them. This opens a door to corruption. This introduces a looseness in morals. This destroys the reverence and regard for oaths, on which government so much depends. This occasions a disregard to those acts of trade which are calculated for its real benefit. This entirely destroys the distinction, which ought be preserved in all trading communities, between 'merchant' and 'smuggler'.[23]

23 *Boston Evening Post*, 21 November 1763.

SOCIAL TENSIONS

Despite its apparent order and hierarchy, colonial American society had its share of tensions: churches against other churches, colonies against neighbouring colonies, colonists against colonial politicians, northerners against southerners, rich against poor, rural areas against cities. The latter was particularly true for those who lived on the western frontier, the very edge of the British Empire. The dangers of the frontier and their distance and disconnection from colonial cities meant that these Americans made their own decisions in their own interests. They developed an independent spirit and, in many cases, a pointed disregard for their colonial government, which they perceived as doing little other than regulating land claims and collecting taxes. Occasionally this anti-government sentiment boiled over into uprising and rebellion, evidence that some parts of colonial America nursed a restive and independent spirit long before the revolution.

FEATURE

COLONIAL REBELLIONS

Bacon's Rebellion (1676)

Nathaniel Bacon led a 500-strong mob against the Virginian governor, looted his home and burned the colonial capital, Jamestown, to the ground. The governor's 'offences' were his peaceful and tolerant policies regarding Native Americans, particularly his refusal to grant Bacon permission to drive neighbouring tribes off farmable land.

The Maryland Restoration (1689)

Maryland was the only British colony in which Catholicism was tolerated and Catholics held most positions of power – a situation that outraged the growing Protestant population. The restoration of a Protestant king in England prompted John Coode to lead an army of 700, overthrow the colonial government and burn Maryland's Catholic churches.

The Stono River Rebellion (1739)

A group of eighty slaves raged through South Carolina, murdering twenty whites, burning seven plantations and seeking to march to Spanish Florida where they would be free. A white militia met with the mob near the Stono River. Half the slaves were killed in the ensuing battle and the other half were decapitated; their heads were displayed as a warning to other slaves.

The New York Fire Plot (1741)

A series of fires broke out in New York City during March and April 1741, including a severe blaze in the governor's residence. It was discovered that a number of slaves and indentured whites, angered by a winter of food and fuel shortages, had conspired to destroy the city by arson. A number of the alleged conspirators were captured and executed.

The 'Paxton Boys' (1763–64)

In the wake of the French and Indian War, a group of vigilante settlers in central Pennsylvania despaired that the colonial government was incapable of defending them from further attacks by natives. They formed a militia and embarked on a killing spree, slaughtering several members of the peaceful Conestoga tribe.

The Pennsylvania 'Black Boys' (1763–69)

A small group of Pennsylvania farmers conducted a series of raids on British and colonial supply wagons. The Black Boys – so called because they carried out their attacks with blackened faces – were angered by the restoration of trade with native tribes they had fought against during the French and Indian War.

The 'Regulators' (1764–71)

In North Carolina, public fury over corrupt sheriffs and tax collectors led to calls for government accountability and the fair distribution of revenue. Residents calling themselves the Regulators harassed officials, closed courts and ruled isolated areas, before their defeat at Alamance in 1771.

ACTIVITY

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE – PRESENTATION

In a small group, research a colonial rebellion or slave uprising that occurred in the American colonies between the early 1600s and mid-1700s. Identify the causes and context of the rebellion (e.g. who was involved, what were their grievances, what sparked the rebellion?) and its consequences. Share your findings in a presentation or dramatic re-enactment.

DID YOU KNOW?

The term 'Yankee' originally referred to any American colonist. It was used mainly by British officers stationed in America. It was later used by southerners to describe residents of northern colonies or states.

IN SEARCH OF UNITY

Travel between the American colonies was rare. Most people described themselves as British subjects, or as Virginians, Carolinians, New Yorkers and so on. Few used the term 'American', which referred to something from the continent, not a people or a national mindset. Few colonists knew much about other colonies or the people in them, other than rumour, suspicion and stereotype. Southerners considered New Englanders to be crafty business people but stiff, conservative and weighed down by Puritanism. Conversely, those of the south were thought of as poorly educated, decadent and made idle by an abundance of slaves. Attitudes to foreigners – particularly the French – were even worse, fed by anti-Catholic sentiment, jingoism and lampoonery in the British press.

There was an attempt in the mid-1700s to foster unity between the thirteen provinces. In 1754 delegates from seven colonies attended the Albany Congress in New York, mainly to discuss defence measures in the event of conflict with France. There Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania tabled a plan for a quasi-national government, consisting of colonial delegates overseen by a representative of the king (see Chapter 2). The congress passed the Albany Plan, a modified version of Franklin's proposal, however it was later rejected by all seven of the colonial assemblies and never made it to England for endorsement. The quest for unity would instead become a challenge for Americans of the next generation.

FEATURE

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

More than two centuries of historians have researched British North America with a wide range of themes in mind: for example, settlement, demography, gender, class, politics and the environment. Daniel Vickers notes that 'the colonial period is at once the most disparate and collective field of study in America's past. Colonial history contains thousands of strands, stories, perspectives and interpretations; while this renders it diverse, complex and fascinating, it also makes the job of drawing conclusions a challenging one.

The first histories of the American colonies painted colonial America as the sowing ground for liberty, democracy and enlightenment. These historians focused mainly on frontier settlements and their struggles. They emphasised the uniqueness of the American experience and drew distinctions with the 'old world' of Britain and Europe. Early settlements such as Jamestown and Plymouth formed the basis of a type of narrative in which the historical actors were heroic and brave. Native Americans also featured in the story, either as

warriors (the ever-present threat) or as savages (in contrast to the 'civilised' colonials). Slaves were considered as units of labour and women's roles were conceived as revolving around the household.

In the early-mid twentieth century, in the context of experiencing two world wars, historians shifted their focus somewhat. They acknowledged the tensions that formed the backdrop to colonial American society, such as social inequalities, class conflict and exploitation. Concepts of expansion, development and political evolution were redefined and reinterpreted. These early-twentieth-century historians considered competition and self-interest to be the defining drivers of action.

In the 1960s, the focus of historians changed once again. Bernard Bailyn rediscovered the documents of revolutionary leaders and examined their themes and rhetoric. Gordon S. Wood and Edward Countryman wrote a form of social history while Joan Hoff-Wilson and Pauline Maier examined colonial women and the role they played in shaping society.

DOCUMENT

GORDON S. WOOD, *THE RADICALISM OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*

> In our enthusiasm to contrast the 'traditional' society of the mother country with the 'modernity' of the colonies, we have often overlooked how dominantly British and traditional the colonists' culture was; indeed, in some respects colonial society was more traditional than that of the mother country. Most colonial leaders in the mid-eighteenth century thought of themselves not as Americans but as Britons. They read much of the same literature, the same law books, the same history, as their brethren at home, and they drew most of their conceptions of society and their values from their reading. Whatever sense of unity the disparate colonies of North America possessed, it came from their common tie to the British crown and their membership of the British empire. Most colonists knew more about events in London than they did about occurrences in neighbouring colonies. They were provincials living on the edges of the pan-British world, and all the more British for that. Their little colonial capitals resembled, as one touring British officer remarked of Williamsburg, nothing so much as 'a good Country Town in England.' Philadelphia seemed only a smaller version of Bristol. Most English visitors in fact tended to describe the colonists simply as country cousins – more boorish, more populist, more egalitarian perhaps, with too much … religious nonconformity – but still Englishmen, not essentially different from the inhabitants of Yorkshire or Norwich or the rest of rural and small-town provincial England.[24]

ACTIVITY

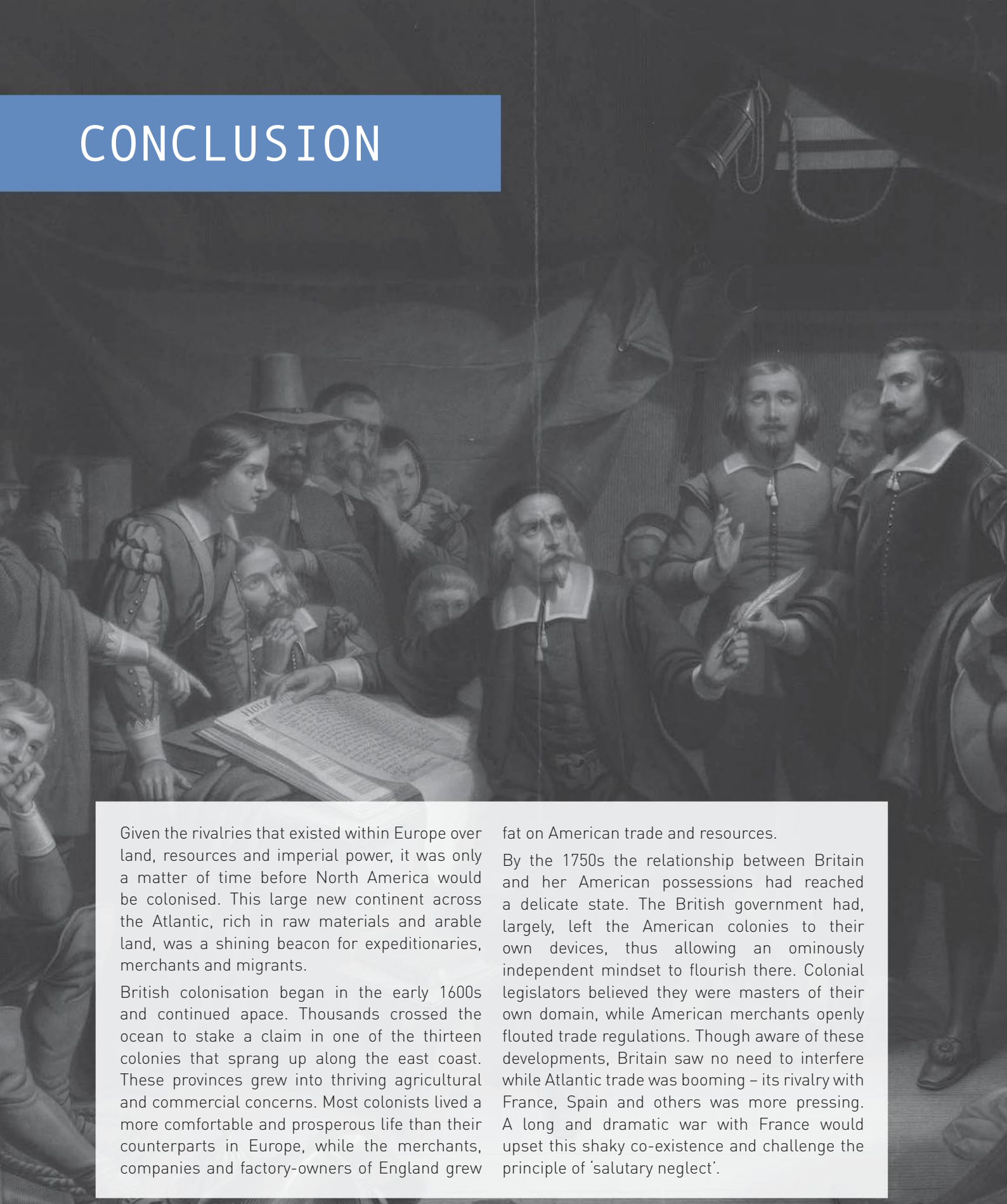
HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Read the extract from Gordon S. Wood and complete the tasks below.

1. How does Wood suggest that British culture and values were dominant in the American colonies?
2. To what extent do you agree with Wood that the American colonies were 'British'? Find evidence from two or more other historians to support your case.
3. Find out more about Wood's view of colonial America. What evidence can you find about his view of the revolution and whether or not he believes in American exceptionalism (the notion that America was unique and groundbreaking)?

24 Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 12.

CONCLUSION



Given the rivalries that existed within Europe over land, resources and imperial power, it was only a matter of time before North America would be colonised. This large new continent across the Atlantic, rich in raw materials and arable land, was a shining beacon for expeditionaries, merchants and migrants.

British colonisation began in the early 1600s and continued apace. Thousands crossed the ocean to stake a claim in one of the thirteen colonies that sprang up along the east coast. These provinces grew into thriving agricultural and commercial concerns. Most colonists lived a more comfortable and prosperous life than their counterparts in Europe, while the merchants, companies and factory-owners of England grew fat on American trade and resources.

By the 1750s the relationship between Britain and her American possessions had reached a delicate state. The British government had, largely, left the American colonies to their own devices, thus allowing an ominously independent mindset to flourish there. Colonial legislators believed they were masters of their own domain, while American merchants openly flouted trade regulations. Though aware of these developments, Britain saw no need to interfere while Atlantic trade was booming – its rivalry with France, Spain and others was more pressing. A long and dramatic war with France would upset this shaky co-existence and challenge the principle of 'salutary neglect'.

TEST YOUR LEARNING

CHAPTER REVIEW

ANNOTATED MAP

Construct an A2 or A3-size annotated map of the thirteen American colonies in c. 1754. For three of the colonies, identify the following:

- date of colonisation
- name of local Native American tribes
- key towns
- local industries
- population
- system of government.

INTERACTIVE MAP

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – ESSAY

Write an essay of approximately 800 words on one of the topics below. Your essay should include an introduction, paragraphs supported by evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations, a conclusion and a bibliography.

Topics:

- To what extent were the thirteen colonies still 'British' by the mid-1750s? In what ways were they becoming 'American'? Refer to one or more colonies in depth.
- How did the American colonies change between colonisation and the mid-1750s? Referring to one or more colonies in depth, consider different types of change and a range of experiences. (See Section A timeline for an example of types of change.)

DIVERSE EXPERIENCES – DISCUSSION

Find out more about the Native American experience of colonisation. For example, read about Powhatan in this chapter and in the Who's Who, and about Native American society on the eve of British colonisation at *www.ushistory.org/us/1.asp*. In general, how might the Native American experience of colonisation have differed from that of European pioneers? To what extent did this vary according to location?

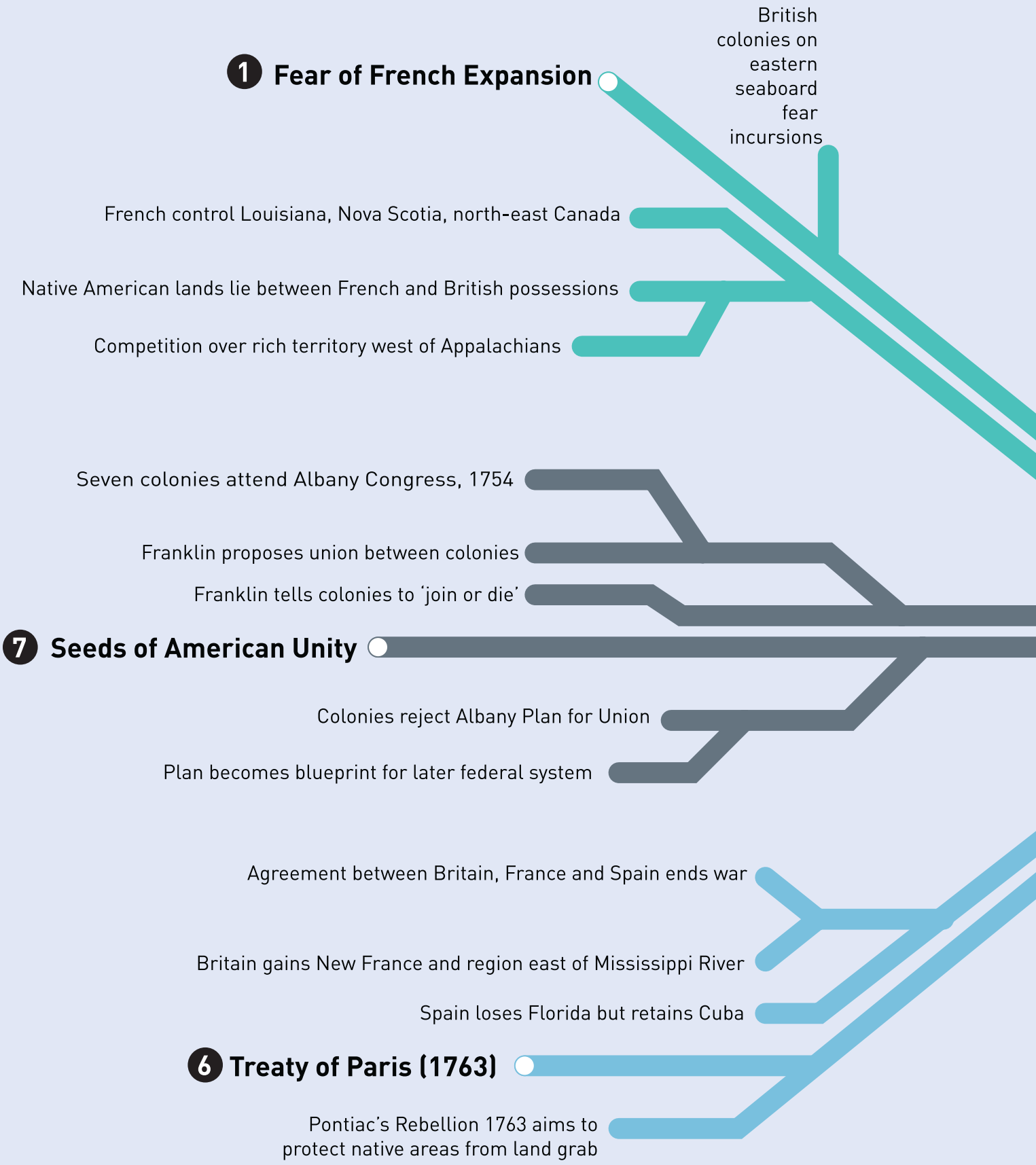
CHAPTER

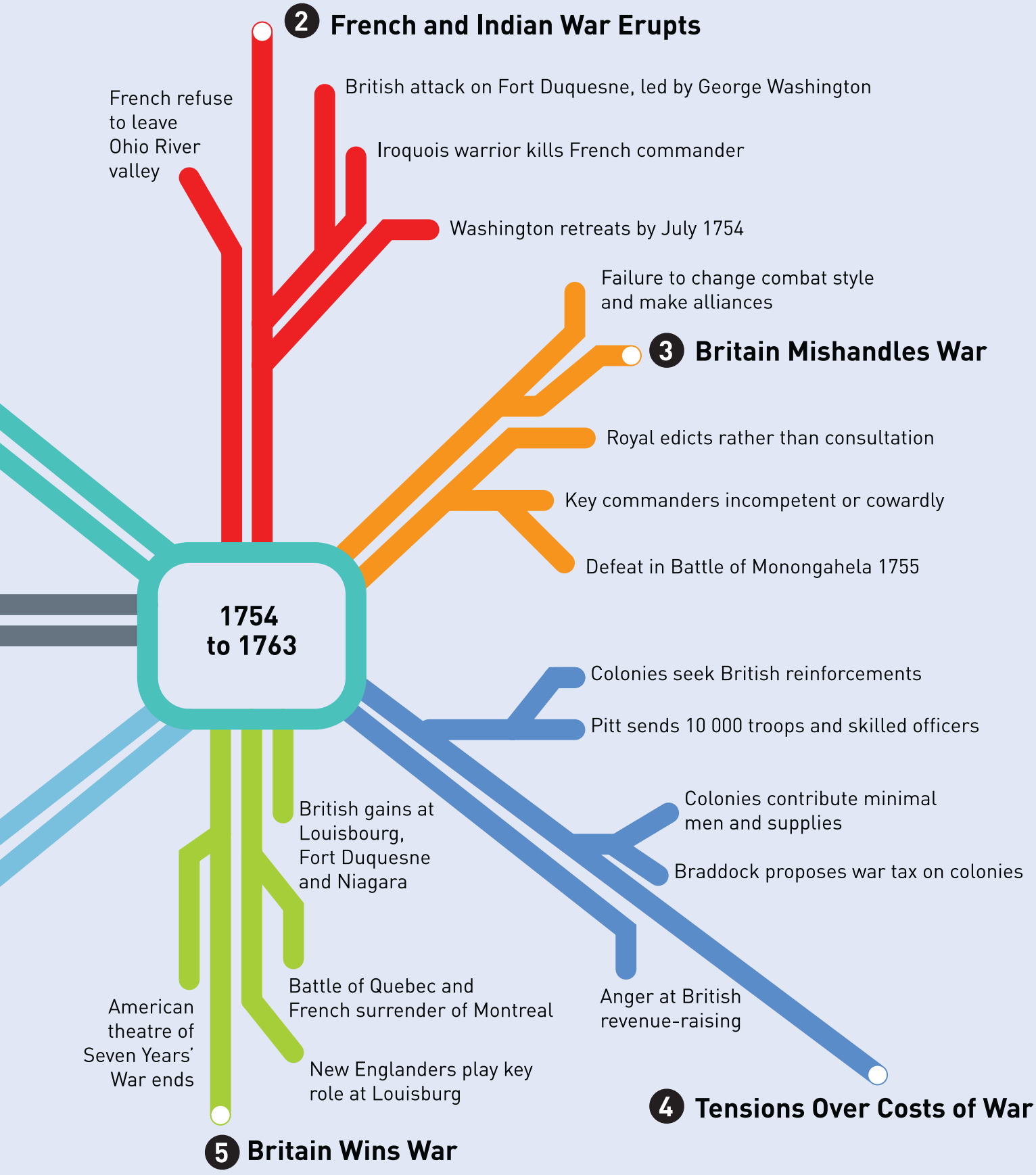
2

THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

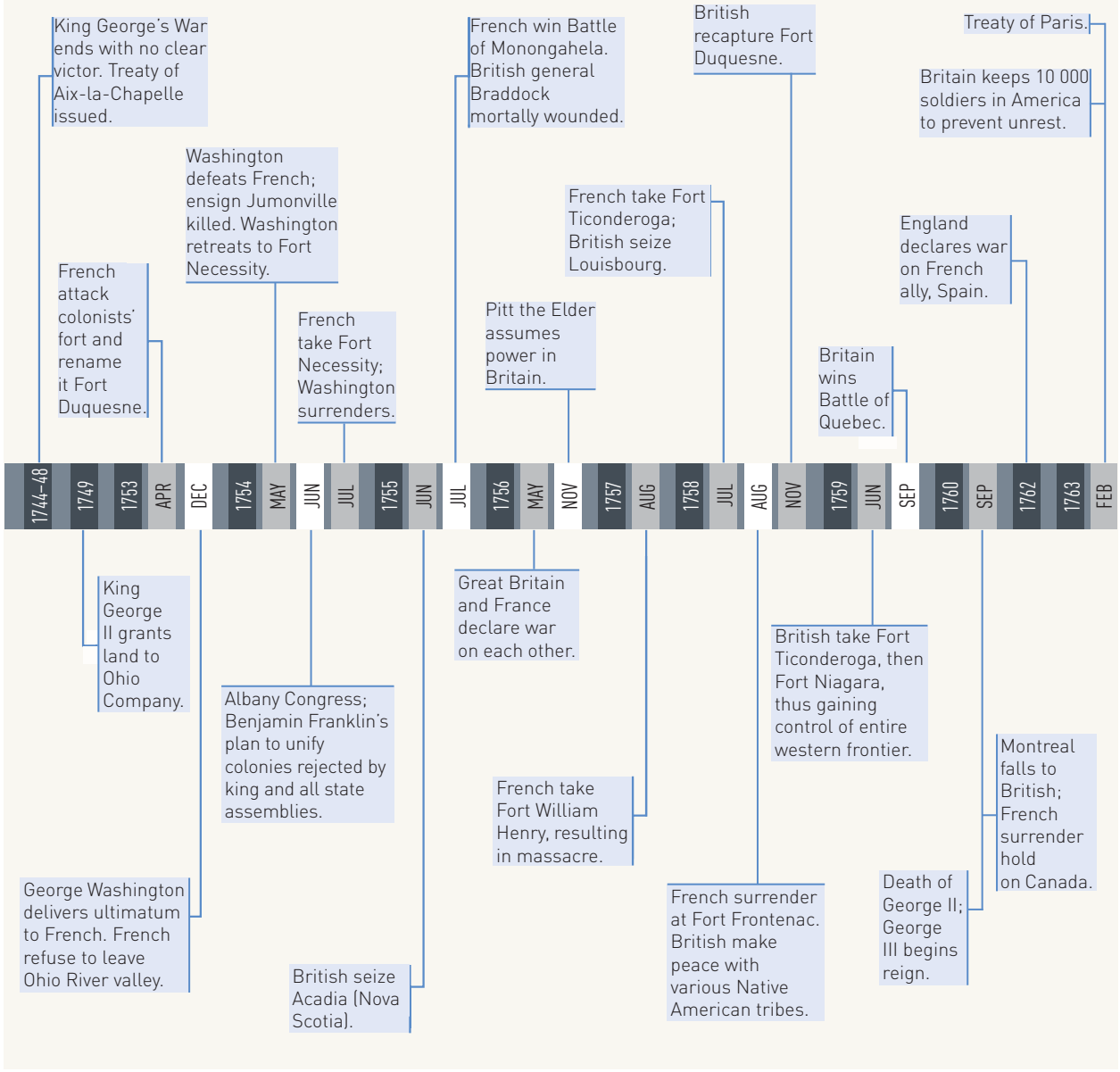
(1754–1763)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW




1754 to 1763
2 French and Indian War Erupts
French refuse to leave Ohio River valley
British attack on Fort Duquesne, led by George Washington
Iroquois warrior kills French commander
Washington retreats by July 1754
3 Britain Mishandles War
Failure to change combat style and make alliances
Royal edicts rather than consultation
Key commanders incompetent or cowardly
Defeat in Battle of Monongahela 1755
4 Tensions Over Costs of War
Colonies seek British reinforcements
Pitt sends 10 000 troops and skilled officers
Colonies contribute minimal men and supplies
Braddock proposes war tax on colonies
Anger at British revenue-raising
5 Britain Wins War
British gains at Louisbourg, Fort Duquesne and Niagara
Battle of Quebec and French surrender of Montreal
New Englanders play key role at Louisburg
American theatre of Seven Years' War ends

TIMELINE OF WAR



INTRODUCTION

The French and Indian War erupted in 1754, sparked by tensions between British and French settlers as they competed for territory and resources in the colonies. The two empires had long competed for the rich territory west and north-west of the Appalachians, a land filled with waterways, fisheries, abundant game and beaver runs. Each constructed forts and claimed tracts of land – sometimes without the approval of their own governments and often in conflict with previous land claims. Having the French at their border was a source of tension and paranoia for residents of the British colonies.

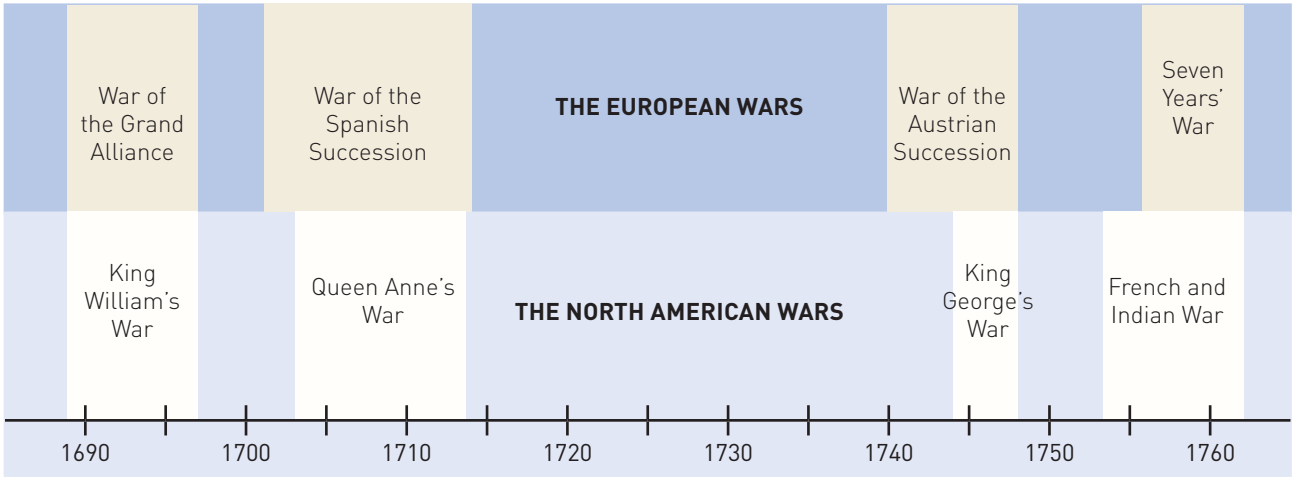
In 1754, George Washington, then a twenty-two-year-old lieutenant-colonel in the Virginia militia, was ordered into western Pennsylvania to expel the French and construct a fort. Exceeding his rules of engagement, Washington's contingent successfully ambushed a small French platoon before being bogged down by a larger French force at Fort Necessity. Surrounded and heavily outnumbered, Washington surrendered and was forced to return to Virginia. This incident prompted the English and French to boost their troop numbers and begin manoeuvres to occupy territory, capture enemy forts and strengthen their own positions.

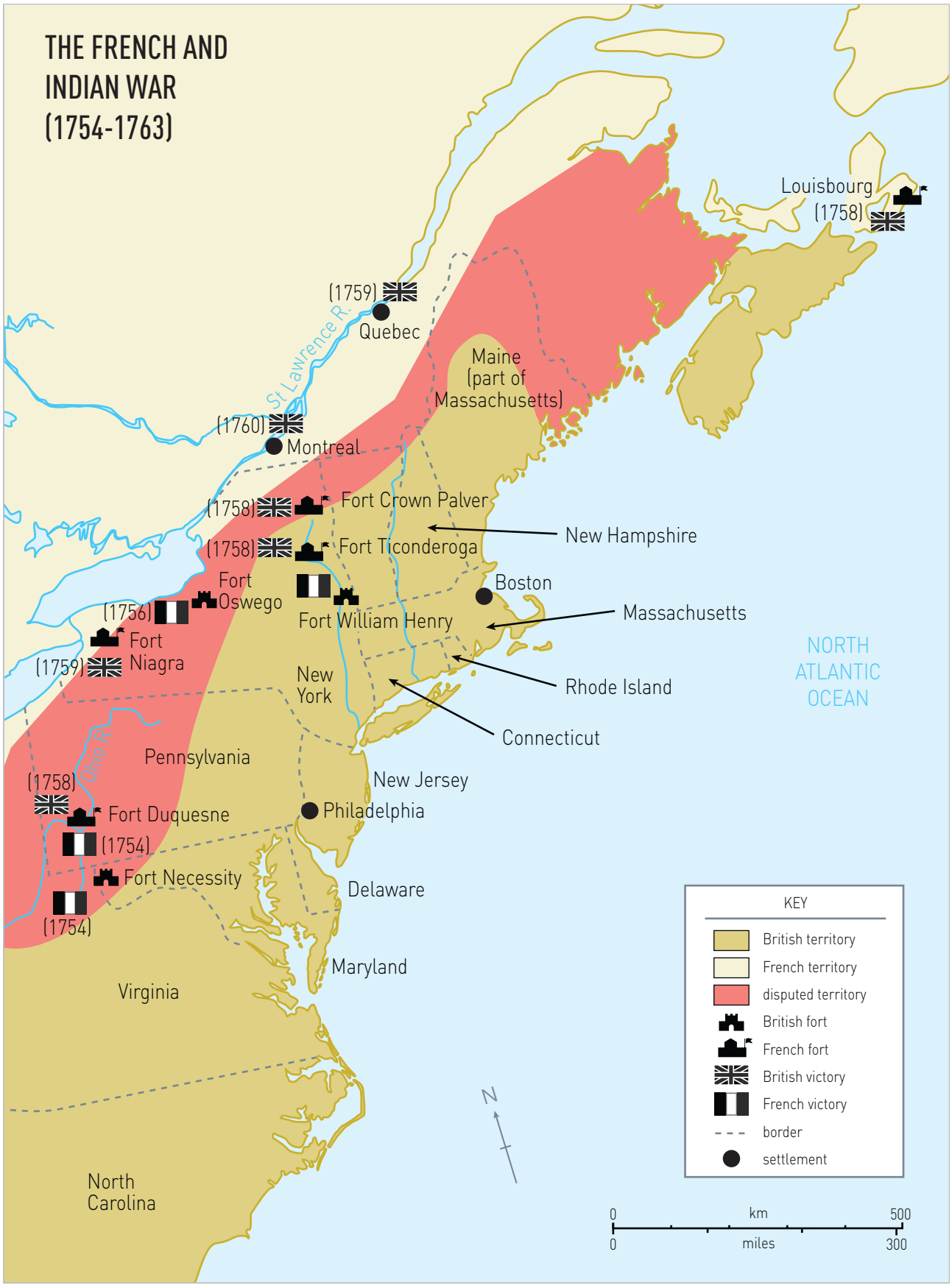
Britain shipped more than 10 000 regular soldiers to America. London was, however, also anticipating contributions of manpower and resources from the colonies, since they would be the main beneficiaries of a French defeat. These contributions were sporadic; a 1755 meeting between General Braddock, commander-in-chief of the British forces, and the governors of the five richest colonies (Maryland, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York and Virginia) saw the governors commit some men and supplies, but they refused Braddock's request for funds, declaring that financial responsibility for the war lay with the imperial treasury. In a letter to an English official, Braddock commented on 'the necessity of laying a tax upon all his Majesty's dominions in America … for reimbursing the great sums that must be advanced for the service and interest of the colonies.'

INTERACTIVE TIMELINE

Early in the war, the colonists began to consider the advantages of political union. At the Albany Congress of 1754, which was also attended by the Iroquois Confederacy, colonial representatives drafted an initial plan for a common government.

The French and Indian War, elsewhere known as the Seven Years' War, concluded with a sound victory for the British. The 1763 Treaty of Paris handed the territories of New France – all land east of the Mississippi River as well as the eastern half of modern-day Canada – over to England. France no longer had political authority in the region, even though thousands of French settlers and French-allied natives remained there. The treaty brought excitement and expectation to the thirteen British colonies. Not only were fears of a French attack alleviated but it seemed that land in the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys would be opened up for future exploration and settlement.




THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR (1754-1763)
Louisbourg (1758)
(1759)
Quebec
St Lawrence R.
Maine (part of Massachusetts)
(1760)
Montreal
(1758)
Fort Crown Palver
New Hampshire
(1758)
Fort Ticonderoga
Fort Oswego
(1756)
Fort William Henry
Boston
Massachusetts
Fort Niagra
(1759)
New York
Rhode Island
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
Connecticut
Ohio R.
Pennsylvania
(1758)
New Jersey
Fort Duquesne
Philadelphia
(1754)
Fort Necessity
(1754)
Delaware
Maryland
Virginia
North Carolina
KEY
British territory
French territory
disputed territory
British fort
French fort
British victory
French victory
border
settlement
N
0
km
500
0
miles
300

INCREASING INTEREST IN THE WESTERN LANDS

In the early eighteenth century, various Native American nations claimed the area west of the Appalachian Divide but France and Britain also saw the intrinsic value of the land. Prior to the outbreak of the French and Indian War, Britain controlled the thirteen colonies along the eastern seaboard. To the west lay New France, a large, sparsely settled colony stretching from Louisiana through the Mississippi Valley and Great Lakes to Canada. French presence in the Americas, predating that of Britain, was based primarily on trade. In the area of Quebec and Montreal, the French fur trade was a flourishing enterprise while fishing was also profitable. Trade in these two commodities caused the French to venture further into North America, but this did not equate with established settlements; rather, they constructed a series of trade outposts and forts.

American colonists eyed the land to the west of the Appalachians greedily. In 1751, Benjamin Franklin penned his 'Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind.' In this paper, circulated among his friends in the American Philosophical Society, he noted that the colonial population was doubling every two decades, the product of immigration and natural increase. In 1700 the population of the colonies numbered 250 000 but by 1750 it had increased to 1 250 000. Franklin calculated that the American population would soon outstrip metropolitan Britain and, when that happened, 'the greatest number of Englishmen will be at this side of the water.'[1] In fact, population increase forced poorer, land-hungry settlers in the western reaches of the colonies to push further west where they squatted in the 'back country.' Entrepreneurs and speculators seized on this opportunity for profit, forming land companies and then demanding rent or a purchase price from settlers. Some settlers succumbed but others moved on and the process of western expansion was repeated, taking the colonists further into contested territory.

In the 1740s, British traders entered the Ohio River valley, where they competed with established French traders for business with the Native Americans. In 1745, the Virginia House of Burgesses began granting western lands to Virginia-based land companies. One such company, the Ohio Company of Virginia, boasted members of prominent families such as the Lees, Mercers and Masons as well as Lawrence Washington (half-brother to George). In 1749, the Ohio Company successfully petitioned the English Crown for lands in the Ohio region with the intention of building a permanent settlement. Consequently, in 1751, a small outpost was built in the Ohio River valley at the confluence of the Monongahela and Allengheny rivers. However, the French also held claims in the Ohio River valley; in order to prevent further British encroachment on what was considered French territory, they rushed to construct forts in the Ohio valley.

DID YOU KNOW?

Britain also went to war with Spain several times in the century before the American Revolution. One of these, the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739–48) was sparked by an assault on a British ship's captain, who had his ear cut off by an officer of the Spanish coast guard.

KEY PEOPLE: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

ACTION IN THE OHIO

The British and French were no strangers to conflict: they had been to war three times between 1689 and 1748. In each case the causes of the war were largely unrelated to America, although the wars themselves had theatres in

1 Cited in Edward Countryman, *The American Revolution* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1985), 32.

North America and involved small-scale fighting between the British and French colonists. Unlike previous conflicts, the French and Indian War was started by events in America, not in Europe. As with most events in the colonies in the second half of the eighteenth century, British politicians were behind the scenes, pulling strings. In the lead up to the war, Tory (conservative) members of parliament in England were in favour of intervention, while their opposition, the Whig (progressive) ministers, were arguing for restraint. The Whigs, led by the duke of Newcastle, Lord Pelham, wanted to avoid war in the interest of economy but it would only be a matter of time before even the smallest of incidents would give their opponents justification for military action. That incident happened in the Ohio River valley in 1754 and would go on to ignite the Seven Years' War.

In the Ohio River valley, colonists were increasingly fearful of the French fortifications and presence in the west, and worried that their land claims were under threat. Robert Dinwiddie, governor of Virginia, petitioned the House of Burgesses for funds to defend the area. He held shares in the Ohio Company and stood to gain a considerable sum of money when the land was sold. When the House of Burgesses denied his request he decided instead to send an emissary to demand the French vacate the area. The man chosen to present the letter was George Washington, aged twenty-one and a Virginia militia major. Accompanied by a small group, Washington was directed to deliver the message to the commandant of Fort Le Boeuf, Captain Jacques Legardeur de Saint Pierre.

Portrait of Robert Dinwiddie, governor of Virginia, c. 1760–1765. Unknown artist.

DOCUMENT

DINWIDDIE'S LETTER TO THE FRENCH COMMANDER, 1753

The lands upon the River Ohio, in the western parts of the colony of Virginia, are so notoriously known to be the property of the Crown of Great Britain; that it is a matter of equal concern and surprise to me, to hear that a body of French forces are erecting fortresses, and making settlements upon that river, with his Majesty's Dominions.

The many and repeated complaints I have received of these acts of hostility, lay me under the necessity, of sending, in the name of the king my master, the bearer hereof, George Washington, Esq: on the Adjutants General of the forces of this dominion; to complain to you of the encroachments thus made, and of the injuries done to the subjects of Great Britain, in the open violation of the law of nations, and the treaties now subsisting between the two crowns.

If these facts are true, and you shall think fit to justify your proceedings, I must desire you to acquaint me, by whose authority and instructions you have lately marched from Canada, with an armed force; and invaded the King of Great Britain's territories, in the manner complained of? That according to the purport and resolution of your answer, I may act agreeably to the commission I am honoured with, from the King my master.

However, Sir, in obedience to my instructions, it becomes my duty to require your peaceable departure; and that you would forebear prosecuting purpose so interruptive of the harmony and good understanding, which his majesty is desirous to continue and cultivate with the most Christian king.

I persuade myself you will receive and entertain Major Washington with the candour and politeness natural to your nation; and it will give me the greatest satisfaction, if you return him with an answer suitable to my wishes for a very long and lasting peace between us. I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant

Robert Dinwiddie[2]

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read Dinwiddie's letter to the French commander and complete the tasks below.

1. According to Dinwiddie, to whom did the lands upon the Ohio River belong?
2. What action did Dinwiddie demand of the French?
3. Select two statements from the letter that suggest Dinwiddie saw the French as aggressors.
4. Identify language from the letter that conveys a respectful and diplomatic tone.

It was early December 1753 when Washington arrived at Fort Le Boeuf and, after dining cordially, he gave Governor Dinwiddie's 'cease and desist' message to the French officers building the forts. Politely but firmly, Commandant Saint Pierre replied 'we will not.'[3] Having received his answer, Washington made a reconnaissance to assess the extent of the fortifications and prepared a detailed report. When he was informed of the French rebuff, Dinwiddie dispatched Washington's report to England and ordered the erection of a British fort at the 'forks of the Ohio, the junction of the Ohio, Monongahela and Allengheny rivers, a site considered the gateway to the western frontier.'[4]

Dinwiddie now had the backing of the Privy Council in Britain to stop the perceived French incursion into the Ohio River valley. British instructions were to protect English claims and Dinwiddie gained approval not from the Virginia

2 Cited in Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, vol. 1. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1914), 134.
3 Cited in Ray Raphael, *Founders: The people who brought you a nation* (New York: The New York Press, 2009), 3.
4 Cited in Alan Axelrod, *The Real History of the American Revolution* (New York: Sterling, 2008), 35.

House of Burgesses but from the Privy Council for military action. However, when Washington was sent back west with a few hundred men to reinforce the fort in the Ohio River valley he discovered the French had captured it and now called it Fort Duquesne.

Washington, recently elevated to lieutenant-colonel and increasingly confident, recorded that his recruits lacked the calibre he would have desired: 'you may with equal success, attempt to raise the dead to life again, as to raise the force of this country.'[5] Displeased with the range of enlistees, Washington went on a recruiting drive but found it difficult to attract 'desirable' recruits. As the pay was low, most enlistees were poor and without adequate clothing, shoes and the mandated gun. To avoid being drafted themselves, some local officials offered Washington men who were straight from jail.[6] More suitable recruits were eventually lured with promises of land; however, they were not well provisioned and did not have uniforms. Washington complained again, noting that he was having trouble managing a 'number of self-will'd ungovernable people.'[7] There were also problems with food, wagons and horses.

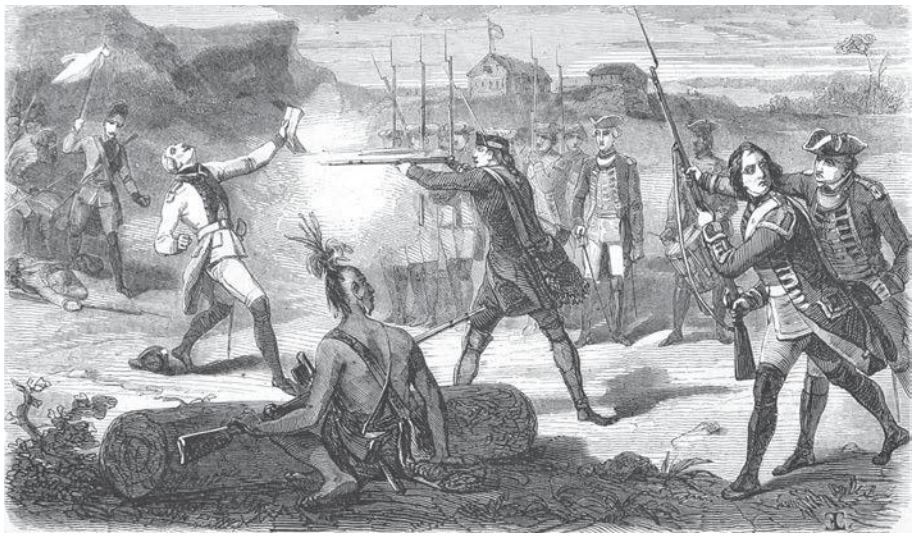
DID YOU KNOW?

Tanacharison is said to have reported that if he had not intervened, the British would have killed all of the French in the battle.

With his ragged contingent, Washington headed west and met up with Tanacharison, an Iroquois warrior known as Half-King, who had information that a French party was nearby. The French commander at Fort Duquesne, aware of the presence of the English, sent a small force headed by Sieur de Jumonville to report on their actions. In the early hours of 28 May 1754, Tanacharsion and Washington led their combined forces to the French camp, situated in a small glen. As with many battles, there were conflicting accounts about who fired the first shot, whether entreaties of surrender were ignored and whether the force of the aggressors was justified. However, the result was indisputable. After a skirmish lasting little more than fifteen minutes, Sieur de Jumonville was dead, as well as several members of his company. One account of Jumonville's death stated that:

> Tanacharsion decided to take matters into his own hands. He stepped up to where Jumonville lay, in French declared, 'Thou art not yet dead, my father', then sank his hatchet into Jumonville's head, split his skull in half, pulled out his brain, and washed his hands in the mixture of blood and tissue. His warriors fell upon the wounded French soldiers, scalped them all, and decapitated one and put his head on a stake. All this happened under the eyes of the shocked and hapless commanding officer, Lieutenant-colonel Washington.[8]

5 Papers of George Washington.
6 Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America 1754–1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 50.
7 Cited in Raphael, *Founders*, 4.
8 Anderson, cited in Raphael, *Founders*, 5.



Artist's version of the incident at Jumonville Glen. Forces under the command of George Washington are depicted as murdering the defenceless French commander Jumonville. Contemporary accounts of the incident reported Jumonville was tomahawked by the Indian leader Tanacharison while Washington watched without intervening.

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Discuss the account of Jumonville's death (opposite page) and how it might have affected Governor Dinwiddie. Then find an alternative account of the incident.

After the events at Jumonville Glen (as the area became known), Washington quickly retreated, convinced that the French would retaliate in force. He cobbled together a makeshift stockade at Great Meadows in Pennsylvania, named it Fort Necessity and dug in, hoping to hold off an attack until reinforcements arrived. The attack came soon enough. Surrounded and heavily outnumbered, Washington surrendered on 4 July and was forced to return to Virginia. The terms of the surrender were written in French and the interpreter accompanying Washington had poor English skills. Although the terms at first seemed generous, it was not until the surrender document was more accurately translated that it was revealed Washington had admitted to 'assassinating an ambassador on a mission of peace.'[9] Reflecting on these events, Horace Walpole, the famous English statesman, remarked, 'A volley fired by a young Virginian in the backwoods of America set the world on fire.'[10]

9 Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 64.
10 Cited in John Ferling, *Setting the World Ablaze: Washington, Adams, Jefferson and the American Revolution*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 24.

FEATURE

THE ALBANY CONGRESS, 1754

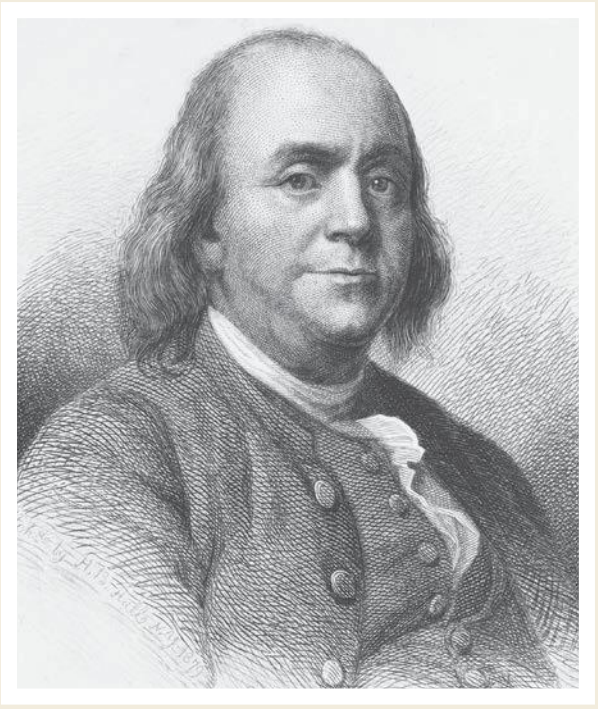
Concurrent with the early stages of the French and Indian War were plans for a union of the colonies. Tentative plans for centralising the colonial governments of North America had been formulated and published in the past, but in 1754 a number of important circumstances coincided (such as the weakening relationship between the Iroquois Confederacy and the colonial governments, and the French threat on the western frontier) necessitating intercolonial debate. Thus, in 1754, delegates from seven colonies attended the Albany Congress in New York.

The first business of the delegates ('commissioners') was the renewal of friendship and the alliance between the colonies and the Six Nations (the Iroquois Confederacy). This was particularly important given the alliances the French were making with other groups of Native Americans, and there was a fear that the Iroquois could also be lured into a partnership with the French. Isaac Norris, a Pennsylvanian commissioner, drafted a speech to the Iroquois representatives at the congress. In the course of their reply to the speech, the Iroquois complained that violations of their tribal lands had been imposed by Virginia, Pennsylvania and the French. Specifically, they complained that Pennsylvanian authorities had made paths through Native American lands and built houses without permission.[11] Some timely diplomacy was called for; by 9 July the representatives of the Iroquois Confederacy had reaffirmed their good relations with the colonies, presenting them with two belts and, in turn, receiving many gifts, including £500 from the Pennsylvanians, before finally departing Albany.

The second task of the commissioners was to prepare a representation (account) of the present state of the colonies. This took the form of a twelve-part document drawn up by a committee that

included Benjamin Franklin and Governor Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts. The document was intended for submission to the British government and was addressed to the king. The representation outlined the threat facing the colonies and suggested they be unified in some fashion. Hutchinson later outlined the importance of the document:

> '...The representation of the imminent danger to the American colonies from the French encroachments probably accelerated those measures in England which brought on the war with France...'[12]



Benjamin Franklin.

The third and most significant task, although unauthorised, involved the formation of the Albany Plan of Union. Franklin had come to the congress with 'hints towards a scheme of union,' which he circulated for discussion amongst his colleagues. His plan was for a quasi-national government, consisting of colonial delegates, overseen by a representative of the king. The Union Committee of the congress considered other plans of union, including one presented by another Pennsylvanian, Richard Peters, which would have had the colonies divided into four regions for defensive purposes. The committee settled on a modified version of Franklin's plan, proposing the union of all colonies except Georgia and Delaware. The colonial governments were to select members of the Grand Council while the British government would appoint a president-general. Together, these two branches of the unified government would regulate colonial–Native American relations and resolve territorial disputes between the colonies. The delegates decided the plan would require the approval of parliament, thereby recognising parliamentary authority over the colonies.

Despite some support from colonial leaders, the Albany Plan was rejected by all seven of the colonial assemblies and never made it to England for endorsement. Some colonial governments were concerned that it would curb their own authority while others believed preparing for impending war should be the priority. Somewhat surprisingly, Pennsylvania, whose commissioners had done so much work in committee, voted overwhelmingly against the plan. Franklin, reflecting on the failed Albany Plan in February 1789, said:

> '[I]t now seems probable, that if the ... plan or something like it had been adopted and carried into execution the subsequent separation of the colonies from the mother country might not so soon have happened, nor the mischief suffered on both sides occurred in another century...'[13]

Despite the decision not to unite, the work done by the commissioners of the Albany Congress cannot be dismissed. They had renewed cordial relations with members of the Iroquois Confederacy and negotiated a large land purchase. The representation on the state of the colonies was dispatched with haste to Britain and may have influenced British parliament to take action, for within the year Edward Braddock had been appointed commander-in-chief in America and two secretaries were appointed to administer Native American affairs in some regions. Furthermore, the Albany Plan would later provide a blueprint for federalism after the colonies declared their independence in 1776.

11 Roger Trask, 'Pennsylvania and the Albany Congress 1754,' in *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies 27*, no. 3 (July, 1960): 281.
12 Hutchinson cited in Trask, 'Pennsylvania and the Albany Congress 1754,' 284.
13 Franklin cited in Trask, 'Pennsylvania and the Albany Congress 1754,' 290.

DOCUMENT

THE ALBANY PLAN, 1754

It is proposed that humble application be made for an act of Parliament of Great Britain [that] one general government may be formed in America, including all the said colonies, within and under which government each colony may retain its present constitution …

That the said general government be administered by a President-General, to be appointed and supported by the crown; and a Grand Council, to be chosen by the representatives of the people of the several Colonies meeting in their respective assemblies.

That within months after the passing of such an act, the House of Representatives that happen to be sitting within that time, or that shall especially for that purpose convened, may and shall choose members for the Grand Council, in the following proportion, that is to say,

Massachusetts Bay 7

New Hampshire 2

Connecticut 5

Rhode Island 2

New York 4

New Jersey 3

Pennsylvania 6

Maryland 4

Virginia 7

North Carolina 4

South Carolina 4

They shall meet for the first time at the city of Philadelphia, being called by the President-General as soon as conveniently may be after his appointment.

There shall be a new election of the members of the Grand Council every three years; and, on the death or resignation of any member, his place should be supplied by a new choice at the next sitting of the Assembly of the Colony he represented.[14]

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the Albany Plan and complete the tasks below.

1. What did this plan hope to accomplish?
2. Who was to select the executive leadership of this government?
3. On what basis was membership of the Grand Council decided?
4. This plan was primarily the work of Benjamin Franklin (Pennsylvania) and Thomas Hutchinson (Massachusetts). How might their states benefit from the proposal?
5. Why do you think the Albany Plan was rejected by the colonial legislatures?

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the Albany Plan's keenest supporters was Thomas Hutchinson, a Massachusetts judge. Hutchinson, who was appointed governor of his colony in 1769, would later find himself embroiled in events that plunged Massachusetts into war with England.

DID YOU KNOW?

Governor Hutchinson was in favour of uniting the colonies, and worked with Franklin on the drafting committee.

THE ALBANY PLAN

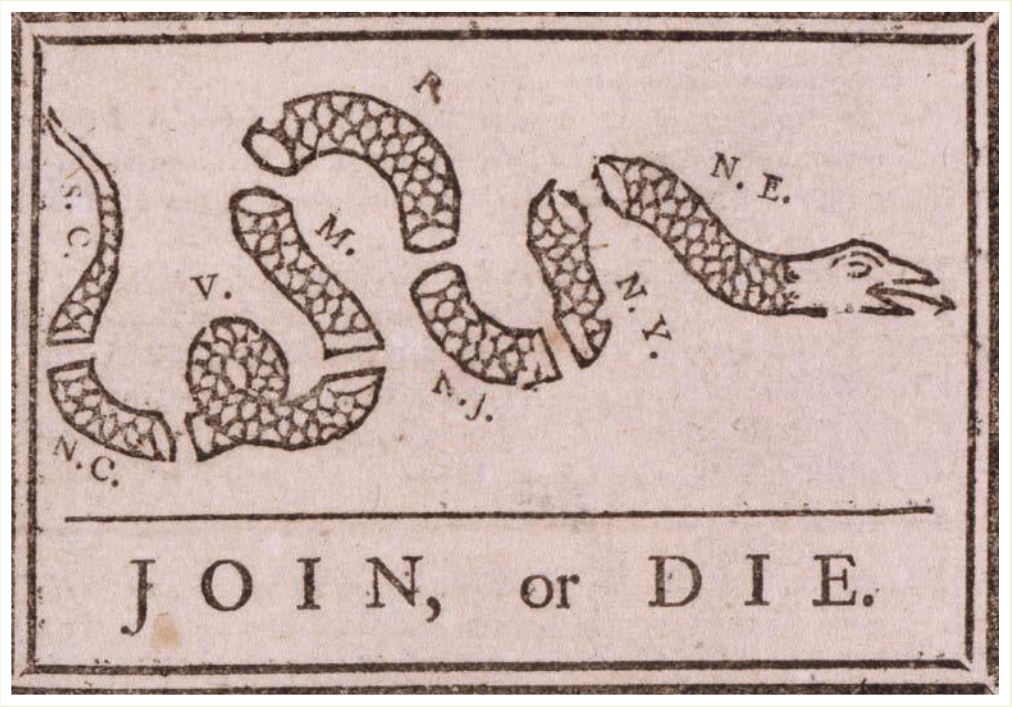
14 'Albany Plan of Union (1754),' Constitution Society, http://www.constitution.org/bcp/albany.htm.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at 'Join, or Die' and complete the tasks below.

1. Explain what the initials on the snake refer to.
2. Why do you think 'N.E.' appears at the head of the snake?
3. Snakes are a common symbol in American revolutionary propaganda. Why do you think this might be? What qualities are suggested by this symbol?
4. From your broader knowledge, explain the arguments for and against the formation of a national American government.



Benjamin Franklin's warning to the British colonies in America, 'join, or die,' exhorting them to unite against the French and the Natives. It shows a segmented snake with the initials 'S.C., N.C., V., M., P., N.J., N.Y., [and] N.E.'

Section from a mural panel in the corridors on the first floor of the US Capitol's House wing, depicting the Albany Congress.

THE WAR FOR NORTH AMERICA

Within days of hearing of Washington's defeat, Governor Dinwiddie had written letters and dispatched them to England for the Duke of Newcastle, the secretary of the war and the president of the Board of Trade. He also requested neighbouring colonies send aid and ordered more troops be raised, allocating a £20 000 military grant.[15] In England, the Tories seized upon the news of the events in the Ohio River valley, wanting to force the issue with France and escalate to a full-scale war. At this time, the Whigs were still pleading for restraint, hoping that local militia action in the colonies could contain the French. The heated debates in London were echoed in Versailles where French militarists were also urging action. The French intention was to adopt a policy of ringing Britain's mainland colonies with forts and garrisons.[16] In Britain and France the militants finally won and additional forces were dispatched by each country to fight in America; however, Britain and France did not officially declare war against each other until May 1756.

DID YOU KNOW?

Upon his return Washington resigned his Virginia commission in protest against the British underpayment of colonial officers and the policy of making them subordinate to British officers, regardless of rank. He returned to private life, temporarily concentrating on his farm.

The British sent Brigadier General Edward Braddock as commander-in-chief of the British forces to Virginia, as well as shipping 10 000 regular soldiers to America. London was also, however, anticipating contributions of manpower and resources from the colonies, since they would be the main beneficiaries of a French defeat. These contributions were sporadic; a meeting between General Braddock and the governors of the five richest colonies (Maryland, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York and Virginia) in 1755 resulted in the commitment of some men and supplies. However, the governors refused Braddock's request for funds, declaring that financial responsibility for the war lay with the imperial treasury. In a letter to an English official, Braddock commented on 'the necessity of laying a tax upon all his Majesty's dominions in America... for reimbursing the great sums that must be advanced for the service and interest of the colonies.'[17]

15 Christian Fearer, *Setting the World on Fire: Washington, Those he led and Virginia on the Threshold of World War 1753–1754*, (Virginia: West Virginia University, 2007), 175.

16 Francis Jennings, *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 55.

17 Cited in William Kingsfor, *The History of Canada* (Toronto; Roswell & Hutchinson, 1887), 468.

18 Axelrod, *The Real History of the American Revolution*, 36.

The early years of the French and Indian War did not go well for the British despite their greater strength. One of the worst defeats of the early phase came in July 1755 when Edward Braddock led approximately 2500 men, mostly British regular troops, to retake Fort Duquesne. Washington, newly returned to service, was part of the advance guard. When the French made a pre-emptive surprise attack, panic ensued. It was said that many British redcoats huddled together, sheeplike, awaiting the blow of a hatchet.[18] Braddock's refusal to adapt European combat tactics to conditions in the wilderness meant that he and up to 1000 soldiers were killed. Following defeat in what would be called the Battle of Monongahela, Washington led the survivors back to a safe camp where they met up with British forces led by Colonel Dunbar.

Braddock's defeat in the French and Indian War.

DOCUMENT

LETTER FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON TO HIS MOTHER, MARY, 18 JULY 1755

Honoured Madam:

As I doubt not but you have heard of our defeat [in the Battle of Monongahela], and perhaps have it represented in a worse light (if possible) than it deserves; I have taken this earliest opportunity to give you some account of the Engagement, as it happened within seven miles of the French Fort, on Wednesday the 9th [July].

We marched on to that place without any considerable loss, having only now and then a straggler picked up by the [Native American] scouts. When we came there, we were attacked by a body of French and Indians. whose number, (I am certain) did not exceed 300 men; our's consisted of about 1 300 well armed troops; chiefly of the English soldiers, who were struck with such a panick, that they behaved with more cowardice than it is possible to conceive; The officers behaved gallantly in order to encourage their Men, for which they suffered greatly; there being near 60 killed and wounded; a large proportion out of the number we had! The Virginia Troops showed a good deal of bravery, and were near all killed; for I believe out of 3 Companies that were there, there is scarce 30 men left alive; Capt. Peyrouny and all his officers down to a corporal was killed; Capt. Polson shared near as hard a Fate; for only one of his was left. In short the dastardly behaviour of those they call regulars exposed all others that were inclined to do their duty to almost certain death; and at last, in [spite] of all the efforts of the officers to the contrary, they broke and ran as sheep pursued by dogs; and it was impossible to rally them.

The General [Baddock] was wounded; of which he died three days after; Sir Peter Halket was killed in the field where died many other brave officers; I luckily escaped without a wound, tho' I had four bullets through my Coat, and two Horses shot under me; Captains Orme and Morris two of the General's Aids de Camp, were wounded early in the engagement which rendered the duty hard upon me, as I was the only person then left to distribute the General's Orders which I was scarcely able to do, as I was not half recovered from a violent illness, that confined me to my Bed, and a Wagon, for above ten Days; I am still in a weak and Feeble condition; which induces me to halt here, two or three days in hopes of recovering a little strength, to enable me to proceed homewards; from whence, I fear I shall not be able to stir till towards Sept., so that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you till then, unless it be in Fairfax…

I am, Honoured Madam Yr. most dutiful Son[19]

19 'George Washington to Mary Ball Washington, July 18, 1755,' Library of Congress, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw010114)).

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read Washington's letter to his mother and complete the tasks below.

1. What kind of language does Washington use to suggest that the English soldiers and their officers were unimpressive?
2. What assessment does Washington make of the Virginian troops?
3. Where does Washington lay the blame for the defeat?
4. Reflecting on this letter and the earlier account of the skirmish at Jumonville Glen, in what ways could Washington be considered to have experienced 'good fortune' in his early days in the war?

DID YOU KNOW?

Edward Braddock's dying words were, 'who should have thought it? We shall do better next time.'

Following the death of Braddock, the governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, was appointed as commander. However, when Shirley proved incompetent he was replaced by another 'political general,' John Campbell, fourth earl of Loudoun. Assessments of Loudoun's command were generally negative, except for those published in London where he was credited with changing the course of the war. Throughout 1755–56 the situation in North America worsened, as more territory was taken by the French. British military historians have highlighted two key reasons for the poor British performance: inept leadership and adherence to outdated military tactics. As the colonies' borders contracted and settlers

abandoned their farms on the frontier in fear of attack by Native Americans, there was a sense of desperation and isolation.

The situation changed in 1757 after William Pitt (the Elder) became Britain's secretary of state for the Southern Department. Pitt's first action was to increase British commitment to the North America war, which had merged into what was known as the Seven Years' War, a conflict that engulfed most of Europe and European colonies as far away as India.[20] The American colonies were now allocated more skillful British officers and a larger contingent of troops. Still, there were initial defeats at Lake George in 1758 as well as Fort Ticonderoga, while the French victory at Fort William Henry was accorded notoriety when the captured British soldiers were massacred by Native Americans allied with the French. However, an increased injection of resources and a willingness to collaborate with, rather than command, the colonial militia turned the tide.

PLOT OF 'LAST OF THE MOHICANS'

In July 1758, the British won their first great victory in the French and Indian War at Louisbourg on the Gulf of St Lawrence. The New Englanders would take great pride in this victory, claiming they 'virtually fought on their own.'[21] A month later, the British took Fort Frontenac. Focus then shifted to the north with Fort Niagara falling to the British in 1759 and, in September, the British moving towards Quebec (in present-day Canada). It was in Quebec that two great commanders faced off against each other – Britain's James Wolfe and France's Marquis de Montcalm. Both lost their lives in a battle that was recorded as a British victory. After Montreal was taken in 1760, the war in the colonies was finally at an end. The American chapter of the Seven Years' War was over, although fighting would continue in Europe. In the closing throes of the Seven Years' War, England declared war on France's ally Spain and successfully attacked Spanish outposts in the Caribbean and Cuba. The conflict concluded in 1763.

20 Axelrod, *The Real History of the American Revolution*, 36.
21 Countryman, *The American Revolution*, 32.

FEATURE

PERSPECTIVES: *THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS*

James Fenimore Cooper's popular 1826 book, *The Last of the Mohicans*, has been portrayed on film several times, most recently in 1992. Set in the French and Indian War, the book loosely recalls the battle for Fort William Henry in the wilderness of western New York. Most of its characters – Mohican tribesman Chingachgook, his son Uncas, his white companion Nathaniel, the Huron warrior Magua and the Monroe daughters – are fictional. However, the film's three military commanders – Colonel Munroe, General Webb and the General Marquis de Montcalm – are based on real characters. The slaughter of the British garrison by native warriors after the surrender of the fort also occurred, generating outrage from both the British and French.

Michael Mann's 1992 film *The Last of the Mohicans* (Twentieth Century Fox) occasionally highlights tensions and differences between Britons and American settlers, as well as the difficulties English officials and generals faced in governing America. In one scene a British officer visits a rural village in western New York to recruit for a colonial militia. He finds a mixture of support and resistance: 'You call yourselves loyal subjects to the Crown?' he asks, when some men refuse to fight. One frontiersman responds that he does not consider himself 'subject to much at all'. A British major, newly arrived from England, is also surprised to find the powerful General Webb negotiating with American farmers about their service in the colonial militia. 'You've got to reason with these colonials,' Webb explains. 'Tiresome, but that's the lay of the land.'

ACTIVITY

KEY EVENTS – TABLE

Create a table like the one below and fill it in.

KEY BATTLES IN THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR (1754–63)

	DATE(S)	REGION/COLONY	COMBATANTS	OUTCOME
Monongahela				
Fort William and Henry				
Louisbourg				
Quebec				

FEATURE

WASHINGTON AFTER THE WAR

Ironically, Washington's final action in the French and Indian War ended in the Ohio River valley, the site of his initial embarrassment. Following a change in war policy in 1755, Washington and his Virginia regiment were assigned to General John Forbes; in 1758, Forbes' expedition headed the attack on Fort Duquesne; this time the campaign to take back the fort was successful.

Washington returned to Williamsburg and permanently resigned his commission from the Virginian forces. He successfully stood for election to the House of Burgesses and looked forward to his impending marriage to Martha Dandridge Custis.

The war was a defining experience for Washington. He gained valuable military and command experience. He had hoped for a regular commission and recognition but, with great disappointment, came to understand that Britain did not bestow these honours on colonials. Yet his time serving under British commanders taught Washington

valuable lessons in politics; it was during this period that his perceptions of the relationship between the colonials and the British were forged.

ACTIVITY

KEY PEOPLE – GEORGE WASHINGTON

TIMELINE

Create a timeline for George Washington, from his birth in 1732 to 1758, when he resigned his commission from the Virginia forces.

SUMMARY

Read about Washington in the Who's Who section and summarise his main challenges and achievements.

THE TREATY OF PARIS

The French and Indian War ended with the Treaty of Paris, which also signalled a conclusion to the Seven Years' War. The treaty handed the territories of New France – all land east of the Mississippi River as well as the eastern half of modern-day Canada – over to England. France no longer had political authority in the region, even though thousands of French settlers and French-allied Native Americans remained there. The British government promised to allow French Canadians to freely practise Catholicism and provided France with fishing rights off Newfoundland. Britain's King George III and his ministers were in favour of the terms and it was ratified in parliament by a majority of 319 to sixty-four. The treaty came into effect on 10 February 1763, bringing excitement and expectation to the thirteen British colonies. Not only were fears of French attack alleviated but also it seemed that land in the Mississippi and Ohio valleys would be opened up for future exploration and settlement. In London, the overriding question was how to organise, secure and govern vast space, inhabited only by 'foreigners' and Native Americans.

DID YOU KNOW?

Of Canada's current population of thirty-five-million, almost one-third speak French as their first language – a legacy of France's colonisation of the region in the 1700s.

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE – CONCEPT MAP

Create a concept map that summarises the outcome and significance of the Treaty of Paris for each of the following: Native Americans, the British government, the American colonists and the French government.

LESSONS FROM THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

The French and Indian War provided a number of salient lessons for the colonists. The first was that Britain's interest in the colonies was primarily financial. Britain's key motivation for entering the war was to protect 'British' territory from the French. Prior to the war, many colonists had believed parliament was sympathetic to the plight of settlers living in isolation on the frontier. The colonists were dismayed, therefore, to discover that parliament's priority was the defence of its own interests. It was clear, therefore, that imperial interests did not necessarily equate with colonial interests. Furthermore, both Braddock and Loudoun had conducted their role as commander-in-chief with an attitude of superiority. Both had bullied members of the colonial militia, even threatening them personally. Francis Jennings claims that the colonists and troops regarded each other as aliens, adding that, after the war, the colonists still professed loyalty but had lost respect.[22]

A second lesson from the war was the reliance of the British forces on traditional military strategies. In the early stages of the war, the British were defeated because they insisted on marching against their foe before engaging them. The colonists knew, as did the French, that victory was more likely when the terrain was used to advantage and guerrilla tactics were adopted. In short, the colonists concluded that the crown's troops could not defend them and they could better defend

22 Jennings, *Creation of America: through Revolution to Empire*, 56.

themselves. Benjamin Franklin made reference to this understanding: '...this whole transaction gave us Americans the first suspicion that our exalted ideas of the progress of British regulars had not been well-founded.'[23]

A final lesson centred on who would be responsible for the cost of the war. From the beginning, Britain signalled that defence did not come cheaply. One of Braddock's first actions before heading out to battle was to summon the colonial governors to a meeting to discuss the raising of funds. At this meeting, the governors confessed that they would not be able to deliver these funds because their elected assemblies would most likely resist. The assemblies were not heedless of their responsibilities but when the funds were allocated it was not of the size expected by parliament. When the issue of raising additional money through taxation was raised, the provincial assemblies were not in favour. After the war, parliament was confronted with a national debt of almost £130 million, carrying an interest charge of over £4 million per annum.[24] Britain did not intend to shoulder this burden alone.

23 Cited in Jennings, *Creation of America: through Revolution to Empire*, 57.

24 Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA* (New York: Penguin Publishing, 1999), 86.

FEATURE

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

Francis Jennings' 2000 book *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire* contends that the British held a superior attitude in their dealings with the colonies and often pulled rank, claiming royal prerogative (right or privilege). For Jennings, this was evident in the British justification for the decision to intervene after the events in the Ohio River valley in 1754:

> The ensuing conflict [the French and Indian War] has been presented as intended to protect Americans from French expansion, but this is nonsensical. The French were entirely on the defensive and had no resources to overpower British colonials who outmanned them twenty to one. The aggressive, expanding party of Britain, and its objective, according to Secretary Thomas Robinson in 1754, was 'the defence of His Majesty's just rights and dominions in these parts.' Robinson said nothing in this message to the governors about protecting His Majesty's loyal colonial subjects.[25]

Jennings argues that Britain's use of 'royal prerogative' is evident in the attitude and behaviour of the commanders-in-chief of the British forces, Major General Edward Braddock and his successor, John Campbell, fourth earl of Loudoun. Neither man had knowledge of the colonies, they refused the practice of forming allegiances with Native Americans and insisted on strategies better suited to European conflicts. Jennings claims both men treated the colonials with contempt:

> The armies' commanders made no effort to win the hearts and minds of the people among whom they lived. General Braddock and his successor, Lord Loudoun, bullied and raged against colonial resistance to rule by deputized royal prerogative, and they compounded fault by incompetence that verged in Loudoun on rank cowardice. Who could respect arrogance in such losers?[26]

Royal prerogative was further exercised in the demand for colonists to support the British

forces by raising funds and providing quarters for the soldiers. Loudoun even sent a dragnet around New York City to seize and impress men into his fleet to embargo colonial ports. The embargo placed commercial pressure on the merchants operating out of these ports.

The policy of royal prerogative was 'postponed' when William Pitt decided that collaboration was required to win the war.

25 Jennings, *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire*, 55.
26 Jennings, *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire*, 56.

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Read about the different experiences of the French and Indian War below. Then complete the tasks that follow.

HENRY LAURENS, MERCHANT

Henry Laurens was a merchant in South Carolina during the French and Indian War. He bought deerskins from the local Native American people, the Cherokee, and sold the skins at market for a good profit. Because of this arrangement, Laurens had no reason to alienate the Cherokee; however, when the war broke out, he believed that his duty to his country came before his own financial interests, so he accepted a commission as a lieutenant-colonel with the South Carolina Provincials; he therefore went to war with his trading partners.[27]

TIMOTHY BIGELOW, BLACKSMITH

Timothy Bigelow was a twenty-one-year-old with a comfortable life as a blacksmith. When the French and Indian War broke out, although Thomas could have continued life as normal, he chose to train conscientiously with the militia in case he should be called upon to serve; he also attended town meetings and contributed to civic life in his community throughout the war.[28]

PONTIAC, NATIVE AMERICAN LEADER

In 1759, the leader of the Ottawa people, Pontiac, encountered an English Ranger group in Michigan. Pontiac asked for an explanation for the trespass and the Americans in the party told him they were only there to remove the French. Pontiac reportedly agreed to be a subordinate of the English Crown, but he said that if the king should neglect him, he would shut down all routes to the interior.[29]

1. To what extent did the French and Indian War disrupt daily life?
2. Find a primary source depicting an ordinary person's experience of the war. Compare and contrast it with the three descriptions above.
3. Why is it important to avoid generalisations about the experiences of different sorts of people in history?

27 Ray Raphael, *Founders: The People who Brought you a Nation* (New York: The New York Press, 2009).
28 Raphael, *Founders*.
29 Ojibwa, 'The French and Indian War,' 2011, *http://nativeamericannetroots.net/diary/987*.

QUIZ ON FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

CONCLUSION

The French and Indian War was the product of an imperial struggle between the French and British over valuable territory in America. Before 1753, the English had far less territory than the French, whose claims in North America, although sparsely populated, covered a vast area. French policy was to keep the British pinned between the Appalachian Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean; however, this area was rapidly being populated. With British victory the situation changed: Britain gained massive amounts of land and French political and cultural influence in North America effectively ended.

The Anglo-American victory was but one aspect of the Seven Years' War that saw Britain emerge as the pre-eminent global power. For the colonists, this was a source of pride, however there were more subtle results of the conflict. Defence had long been a principal reason for loyalty to Britain, but it was clear in the early stages of the war that British regulars could be beaten. Many believed that victory was ultimately due to the superiority of the quick-witted American farmer-soldier rather than the British regular. In the end, although the British and colonials secured victory against the French, the memories of British defeats, humiliations and arrogance would lie dormant in the minds of the colonists.

The war also raised the question of colonial unity. The colonies devised a plan at the Albany Congress for future federation. It was hoped that peace would bring prosperity but Britain had amassed a crippling debt and was not prepared to shoulder the burden alone. To refill the coffers after the French and Indian War the chancellor of the Exchequer would look to the colonies for a contribution.

TEST YOUR LEARNING

CHAPTER REVIEW

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – ESSAY

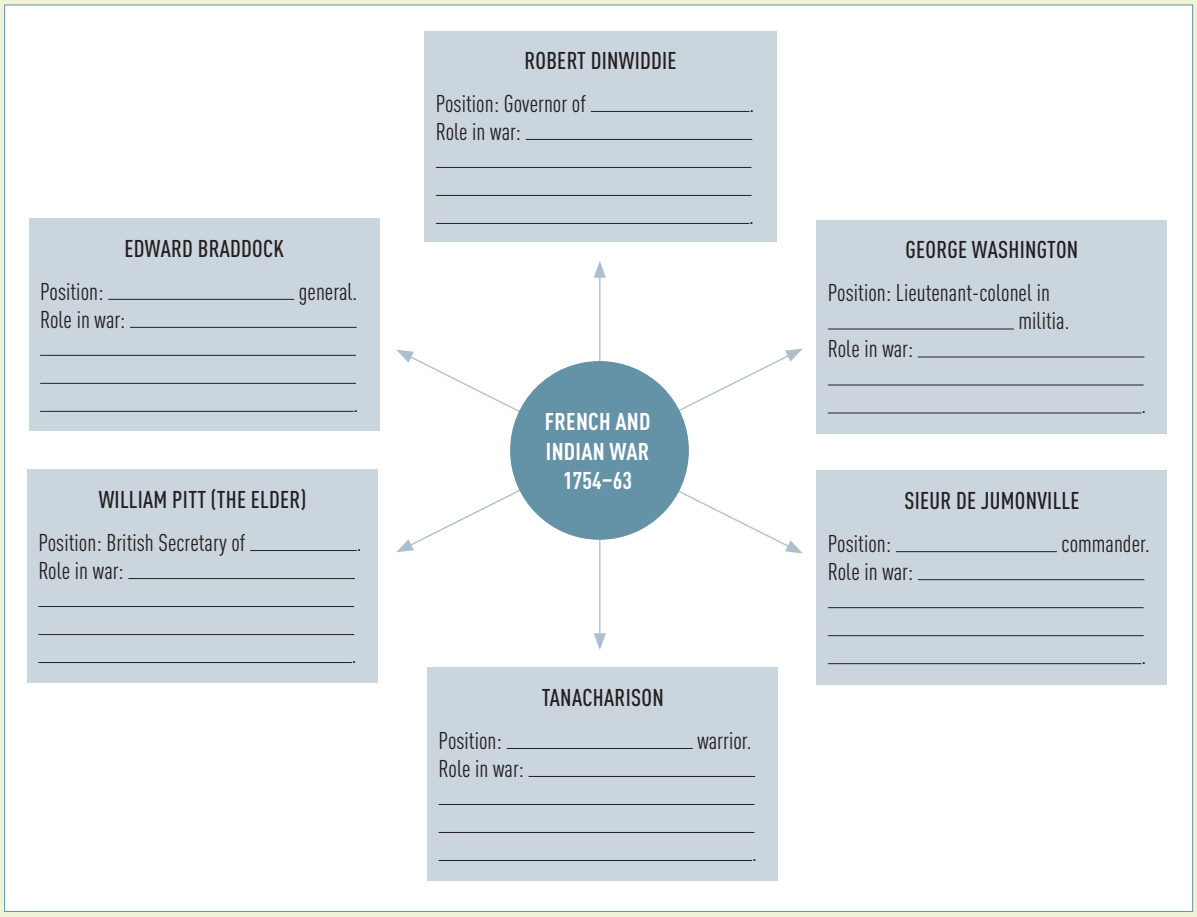
Write a 600–800 word essay on one of the topics below. Your essay should include an introduction, paragraphs supported by evidence, a conclusion and a bibliography.

Topics:

1. What were the causes of the French and Indian War and its consequences for the American colonies?
2. To what extent did the French and Indian War raise and resolve questions about the need for colonial unity?
3. What was the nature and significance of Native American involvement in the French and Indian War?

KEY PEOPLE – FILL IN THE BLANKS

Fill in the blanks in the diagram below.



DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES – ANTHOLOGY

Find out more about the Native American perspective on the French and Indian War. Compile an anthology of primary and secondary sources showing a range of experiences in different parts of America.

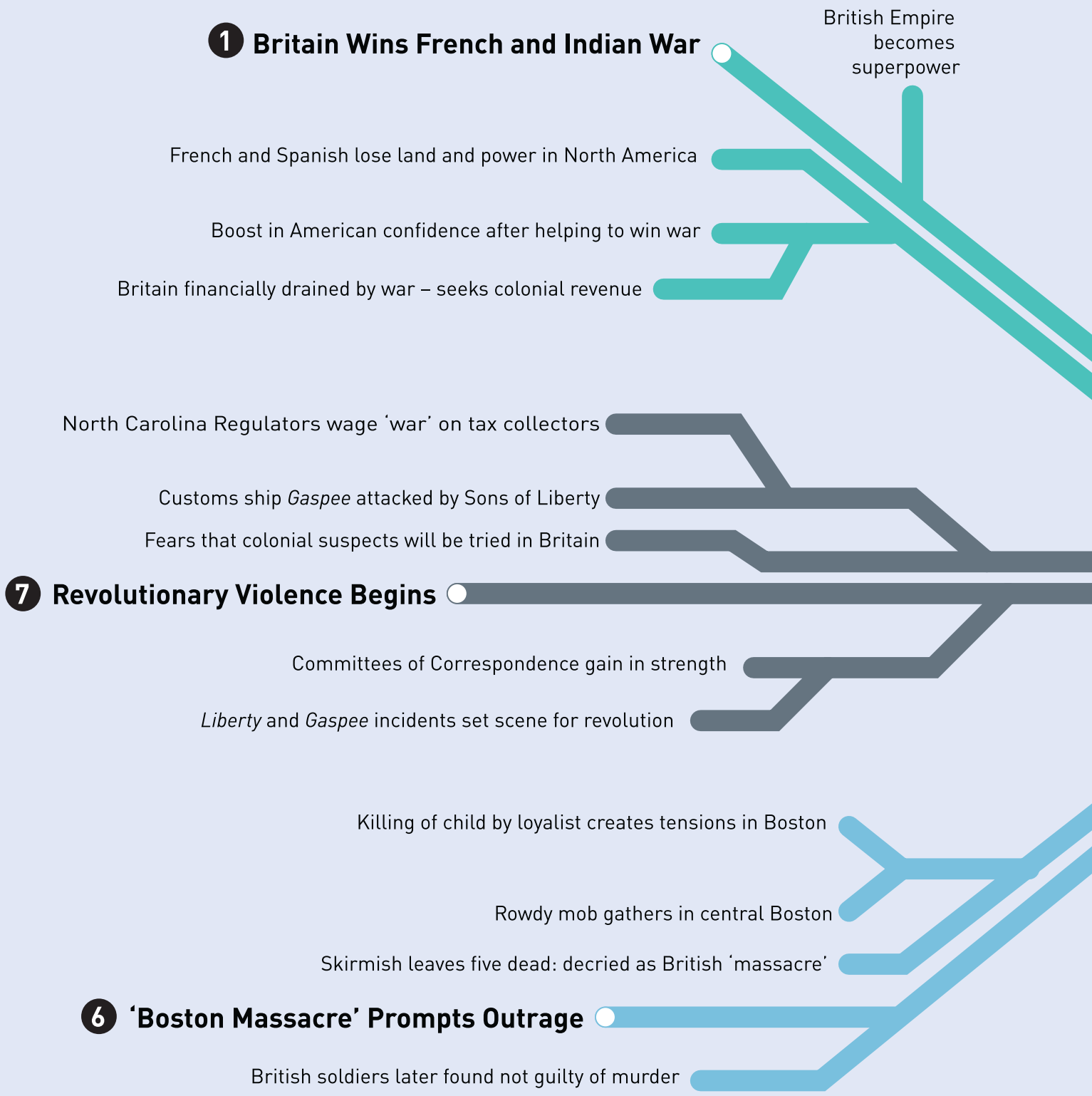
CHAPTER

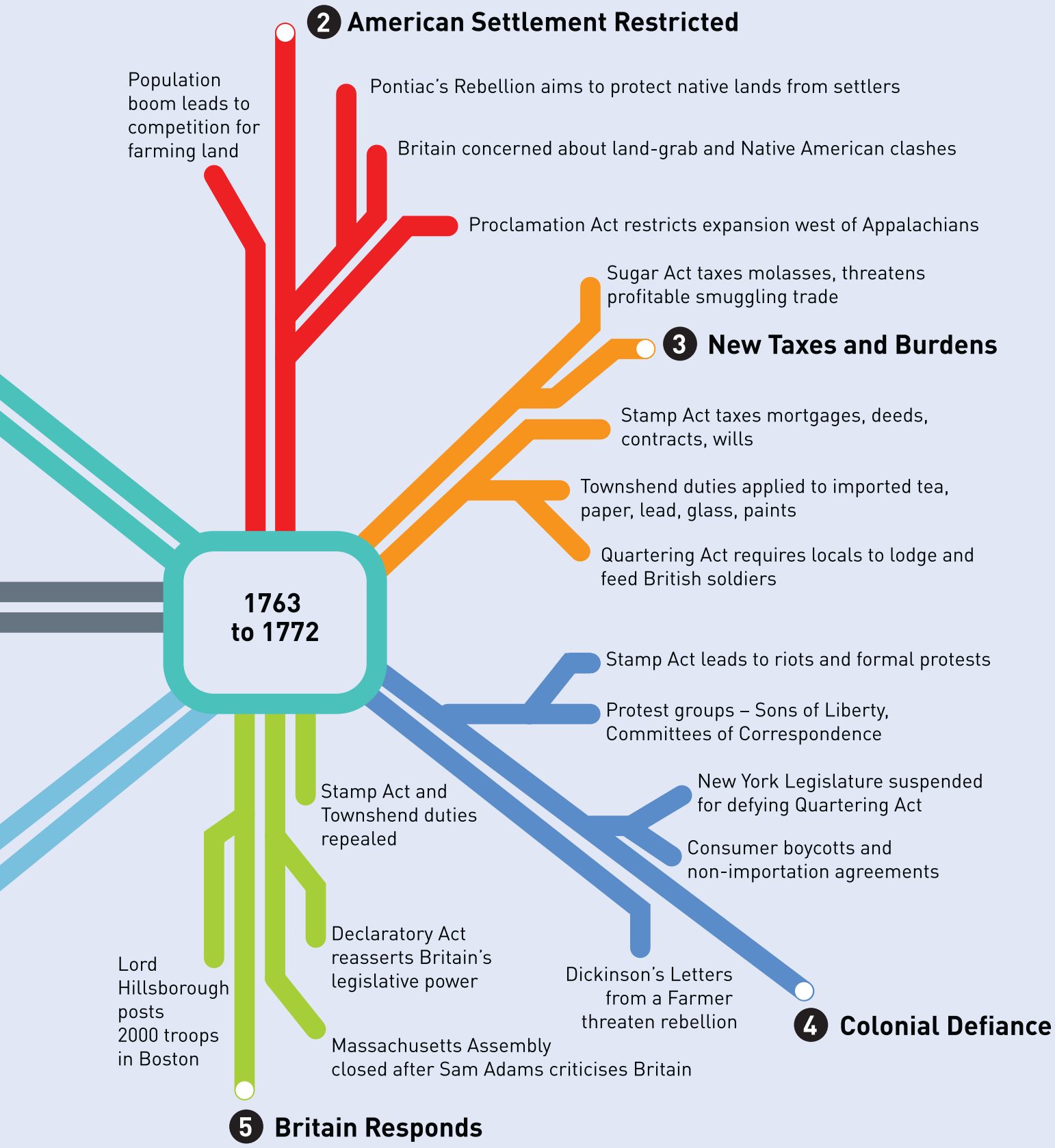
3

STIRRINGS OF REBELLION

(1763–1772)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW




1763
to 1772
2 American Settlement Restricted
Population boom leads to competition for farming land
Pontiac's Rebellion aims to protect native lands from settlers
Britain concerned about land-grab and Native American clashes
Proclamation Act restricts expansion west of Appalachians
3 New Taxes and Burdens
Sugar Act taxes molasses, threatens profitable smuggling trade
Stamp Act taxes mortgages, deeds, contracts, wills
Townshend duties applied to imported tea, paper, lead, glass, paints
Quartering Act requires locals to lodge and feed British soldiers
4 Colonial Defiance
Stamp Act leads to riots and formal protests
Protest groups – Sons of Liberty, Committees of Correspondence
New York Legislature suspended for defying Quartering Act
Consumer boycotts and non-importation agreements
Dickinson's Letters from a Farmer threaten rebellion
5 Britain Responds
Stamp Act and Townshend duties repealed
Declaratory Act reasserts Britain's legislative power
Massachusetts Assembly closed after Sam Adams criticises Britain
Lord Hillsborough posts 2000 troops in Boston

INTRODUCTION

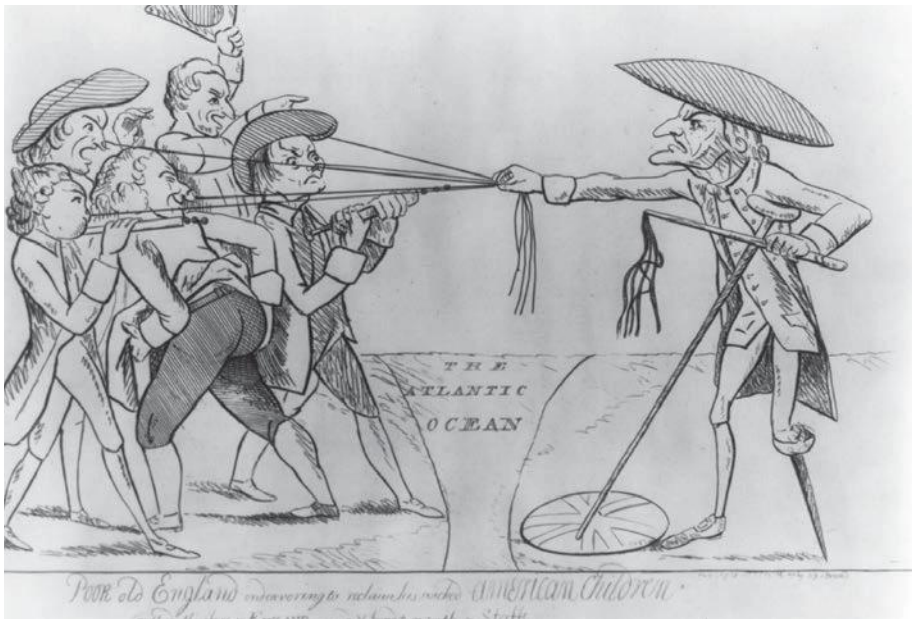
KEY PEOPLE: KING GEORGE III

After 1763 the relationship between England and her thirteen American colonies began to change. The reasons for this are complex but at the heart of the matter were changes in the British government, a revision of imperial policy and the political and financial effects of the French and Indian War (1754–63). From 1763 the British government decided to manage better the American colonies, which for generations had been left to their own devices. London passed a series of acts and regulations pertaining to the colonies, with the aims of restricting settlement, exerting control over trade and generating revenue to meet the cost of colonial defence. When these policies were vociferously opposed and defiantly resisted in the colonies, the parliament responded with an increased military presence and by closing dissident colonial legislatures.

INTERACTIVE TIMELINE

The colonial elites opposed British policy on several levels; they were vocal in their condemnation of measures like the Stamp Act, with Patrick Henry and others condemning the law on behalf of their legislatures. Others disagreed with the policies but did not extend their action beyond verbal or written protests. Town meetings in the cities and rural communities discussed the British measures, pledging loyalty to the king but objecting to British attempts to raise revenue from those who were unrepresented in parliament. In Boston and New York, mobs took stronger action, threatening royal officials and soldiers, committing acts of vandalism and engaging in petty violence.

During this phase, revolutionary consciousness was stoked by colonial writers. Samuel Adams, John Dickinson, Thomas Jefferson and Richard Bland all wrote detailed objections to taxation and trade duties. Orators stirred up angry sentiment in colonial assemblies, town meetings, taverns and streets. Cartoonists and propagandists churned out satirical representations of British actions and politicians. A chain of unpopular policies and the emergence of a resistant culture began to open a rift between Britain and her thirteen colonies.



'Poor old England endeavoring to reclaim his wicked American children.'

A ROYAL PROCLAMATION

The removal of French authority and the opening of the west filled the British colonies with optimism. Rapid population increases through the 1700s had seen farming land become scarce and expensive, so landless farmers and frontiersmen saw great opportunities in resettling further west. The colonial elites also fancied the situation, laying claim to vast swathes of the western territory for subdivision, sale and profit later on. Both George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were avid speculators and drew up claims on the new territories. Ministers in London now considered two dilemmas thrown up by this acquisition: how to organise, settle and manage such a large area, and how to prevent skirmishes and a possible war with hostile Native Americans, as colonial explorers and settlers pushed west.

In May 1763 the second scenario came to pass when Pontiac, an Ottawa chieftan, launched the first in a string of native attacks against British frontier settlements. Having been allied with France during the recent war, Pontiac was unhappy with the British victory and believed that driving English settlers from the west might inspire France to reclaim its former territories. The astonishing thing about these attacks was that they came to involve almost every western tribe – Ottawa, Huron, Ojibwa, Miami, Kickapoo, Delaware, Shawnee, Mingo and others – from the Great Lakes in the north to the lower Mississippi in the south. Large numbers of native people launched surprise attacks on British forts, wiping out garrisons and plundering unprotected settlements.

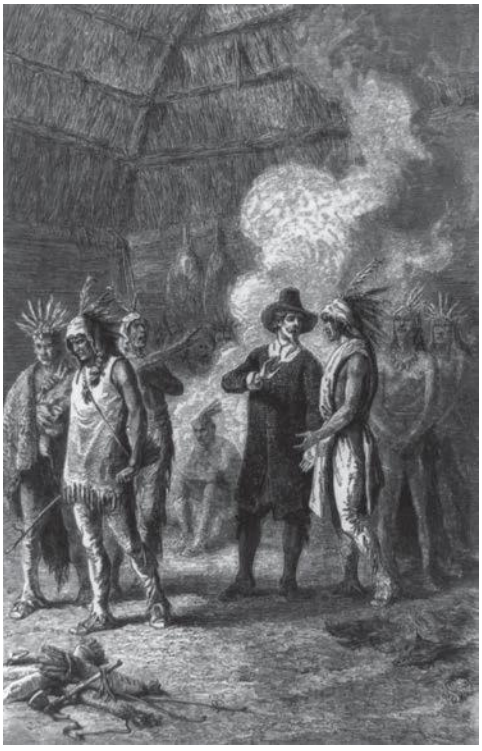
Pontiac was originally thought to have single-handedly unified and co-ordinated these attacks (they are sometimes referred to as 'Pontiac's conspiracy'). Most historians now reject this view and consider the attacks a sign of widespread discontent among Native Americans, as well as an attempt to prevent settlers from moving further west. Pontiac's bold raids probably began a chain reaction, as news of them spread southwards to other tribes along the frontier. Whatever their origins the attacks were mostly successful, with eight of twelve British forts falling, hundreds of soldiers, militiamen and civilians dying and dozens of settlements devastated. The British army responded strongly where it could but it lacked an extensive military presence along the western frontier. Royal officials were instead forced to negotiate a difficult peace with belligerent tribes.

Pontiac's uprising saw the British cabinet rush through a measure it had been considering since the end of the war. Released in October 1763, this royal proclamation drew a confinement line along the western fringe of the Appalachian mountains and blocked all settlement west of the line. Current land claims or purchases of land from native tribes were invalidated and new ones prohibited. Hunting and fishing rights negotiated with some tribes in the wake of the Pontiac uprising were included and formalised in the proclamation. In hindsight it seems to have been a common-sense policy, intended to pacify native groups, avert further conflict and prevent unchecked settlement of the western territory. For the colonists eyeing off land in the west, the proclamation was either a temporary annoyance or something to be disregarded altogether.

DID YOU KNOW?

Pontiac's role in the uprising has been exaggerated but his skill as a warrior is not in question. In 1926 General Motors began using his name on their automobiles; it was also adopted by a city in Michigan and a province in Quebec, Canada.

'Major Campbell arguing with Pontiac.'




PROCLAMATION OF 1763
Montagnais
Ojibwe
Algonquin
Ottawa
Quebec
Quebec City
Maine (part of Massachusetts)
Lake Superior
Montreal
Lake Huron
Fort Stanwix
New Hampshire
Boston
Plymouth
Massachusetts
Rhode Island
Connecticut
Sauk
Fox
Kickapoo
Lake Michigan
Huron
L. Ontario
Iroquois
Albany
Fort Niagra
New York
Potawatomi
Lake Erie
Delaware
Pennsylvania
New York City
Philadelphia
New Jersey
Illinois
Miami
Shawnee
Fort Pitt
Annapolis
Delaware
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
Virginia
Maryland
Jamestown
The Appalachian Mountains
North Carolina
Cherokee
South Carolina
Chicksaw
Creek
Georgia
Charlestown
Savannah
Choctaw
West Florida
St Augustine
Pensacola
East Florida
KEY
Proclamation line (1763)
13 British Colonies
Native American reservation
Spanish Louisiana
unclaimed territory
city
border
N
0 km 500
0 miles 300

DOCUMENT

MERRILL JENSEN, *THE FOUNDING OF A NATION*

> There were settlers beyond the boundary line and more and more joined them, defying troops, speculators and governors' proclamations to stop them. But the Virginia speculators with pre-war claims, and with new ones they hoped to establish, were interested in tens of thousands of acres, not mere clearings in the wilderness. Such men could not believe the boundary line would be permanent, protested against it, and made plans to go beyond it. George Washington, for instance, proposed surveys beyond the line so as to be ready to secure title the moment it was abandoned. He instructed his agent to search out good land, but above all to keep his plans a 'profound secret' because he did not want to be censured for open opposition to the Proclamation – or to have his speculating rivals adopt his methods.[1]

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Read about the royal proclamation of 1763 and complete the tasks below.

1. What was 'Pontiac's conspiracy'? Was it really a conspiracy?
2. Summarise the role played by George Washington in land acquisition in the western regions.
3. What evidence is there that colonials defied the royal proclamation of 1763?

DID YOU KNOW?

The 1763 proclamation also declared land grants to British regular soldiers who had served in the war against France. Colonial governors and assemblies were ordered to provide captains with 3000 acres, sergeants with 200 acres and privates with fifty acres each.

MUCH ADO ABOUT MOLASSES

The Sugar Act – officially the American Revenue Act – was passed by parliament in April 1764. Its purpose was to generate increased commercial competition with the French West Indies and to better regulate American colonial trade. London had long been aware that American merchants were trading sugar and molasses with these French colonies and avoiding most of the incumbent duties. The Sugar Act was an attempt to short-circuit their smuggling by reducing the duty (tax) on foreign molasses, from sixpence to threepence per gallon. This would make the British product a cheaper option for American traders, undercutting the appeal of French molasses.

There was more to the Sugar Act, however, than mere incentive. The legislation also expanded the list of goods that were subject to a duty, including raw sugar, a range of wines, coffee, spices and certain types of cloth. It also tightened up on the collection of these duties by endorsing 'writs of assistance' – general search warrants with no expiry date, allowing customs officials to enter any property they believed might contain smuggled goods. These writs had been around since 1760 and, though rarely used, they were grossly unpopular. In 1761 Boston lawyer James Otis challenged the legality of writs of assistance in the Massachusetts Supreme Court, acting on behalf of sixty-three merchants. In his four-hour closing speech, Otis argued that the writs were 'against the fundamental principles of law' and breached English rights, which had been

DID YOU KNOW?

Today molasses is fermented for use in ethanol-based fuels.

1 Merrill Jensen, *The Founding of a Nation* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1968), 387.

established as far back as the Magna Carta (1215). Despite Otis' compelling rhetoric, the case was eventually lost and the writs continued to be issued against suspected smugglers.

Colonial outrage over writs of assistance reached its apex during the 'Malcom affair' of 1766. Described by historian William Cuddihy as 'the most famous search in colonial America,' it involved the ransacking of the home of Boston merchant Daniel Malcom by customs officials, based on a tip that Malcom had smuggled brandy and other liquors into his cellar. He co-operated at first but eventually refused requests to open a locked cellar; tensions flared and Malcom produced two pistols, threatening to blow out the brains of any customs officer who broke a lock or a door. During this stand-off a mob of some 300 people gathered outside Malcom's house, forcing the customs officials to retreat. Malcom was possibly following the instructions of James Otis, his lawyer, as a means of instigating a further legal challenge to the writs.[2]

The Sugar Act aroused plenty of resentment, especially in Boston. Although anger was initially confined to merchants, shipping companies and shop-owners, these groups enjoyed influence in the press and at town meetings. The merchants and their propagandists painted the Sugar Act as a British attempt to impose new taxes and collect them using strong-arm methods. The Massachusetts assembly joined the chorus of criticism, noting to the governor that 'the civil rights of the colonies are affected by it, by their being deprived, in all cases of seizures, of that inestimable privilege and characteristic of English liberty – a trial by jury.' Historians Findling and Thackery consider the Sugar Act as 'the point when British colonial policy regarding the North American colonies altered … Parliament deliberately taxed the colonies to raise revenue for the empire – an action not previously undertaken.'[3]

DID YOU KNOW?

The Magna Carta, signed by King John in 1215, was an example of landed nobility resisting the autocratic power of the crown. It was referred to frequently in American revolutionary propaganda.

The Malcom case contributed to some of the legal protections we enjoy today, such as the strict conditions placed on search warrants.

DID YOU KNOW?

James Otis died in 1783 after being struck by lightning while standing in a doorway.

Print showing James Otis, bust portrait, flanked by Hercules crushing a snake with his foot and Minerva holding a staff topped with a liberty cap.

2 Otis Stephens, *Unreasonable Searches and Seizures* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 40.

3 John Findling and Frank Thackery, *Events that Changed America in the Eighteenth Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 67.

DOCUMENT

BOSTON TOWN MEETING, STATEMENT TO MASSACHUSETTS ASSEMBLY, 1764

> As you represent a town which lives by its trade, we expect in a very particular manner that you make it the object of your attention to support our commerce in all its just rights, to vindicate it from all unreasonable impositions, and promote its prosperity. Our trade has for a long time laboured under great discouragements; and it is with the deepest concern that we see such further difficulties coming upon it, as will reduce it to the lowest ebb if not totally obstruct and ruin it. We cannot help expressing our surprise of the intentions of the ministry to burden us with new taxes.
>
> It is the trade of the Colonies that renders them beneficial to the mother country … But if our trade is to be curtailed in its most profitable branches … we shall be so far from being able to take the manufactures of Great Britain that it will be scarce[ly] possible for us to earn our bread.[4]

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the Boston statement to the Massachusetts assembly and complete the tasks below.

1. What do the authors of the statement mean when they say 'our trade is to be curtailed in its most profitable branches'?
2. Why might they have said that 'it is the trade of the Colonies that renders them beneficial to the mother country'?
3. What do the authors suggest might happen if Britain continues to pass laws regulating trade and imposing customs duties?
4. From your broader knowledge, assess the strength of the Bostonians' argument.

THE GOLD DRAIN AND PAPER CHASE

In addition to protecting trade, the imperial government aimed to increase its gold reserves. An important element of mercantilist theory was *bullionism*: the belief that a nation's wealth was determined by the amount of gold, silver and foreign coin stored in its treasury. It was vital that more precious metals and 'hard money' flowed into England than out of it. By 1762, however, the British economy was struggling, in part because of massive spending on the war with France. Exports dropped and internal production began to slow; the amount of specie (gold and silver coin) coming into England decreased dramatically. The economic slump had a moderate impact across the Atlantic as British trading companies called in the debts of several colonial businesses.

The colonies, for the most part, avoided the downturn, sparking curiosity and some anger in London. Residing in England as an agent of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin was called upon by the Bank of England to explain why the colonies enjoyed such prosperity. 'That is simple,' Franklin reportedly said. 'In the colonies we make our own money. It is called colonial scrip. We issue it in proper proportion to the demands of trade and industry, to make the products pass easily from the producers to the consumers. In this manner, creating for ourselves our own paper money, we control its purchasing power and have no interest to pay

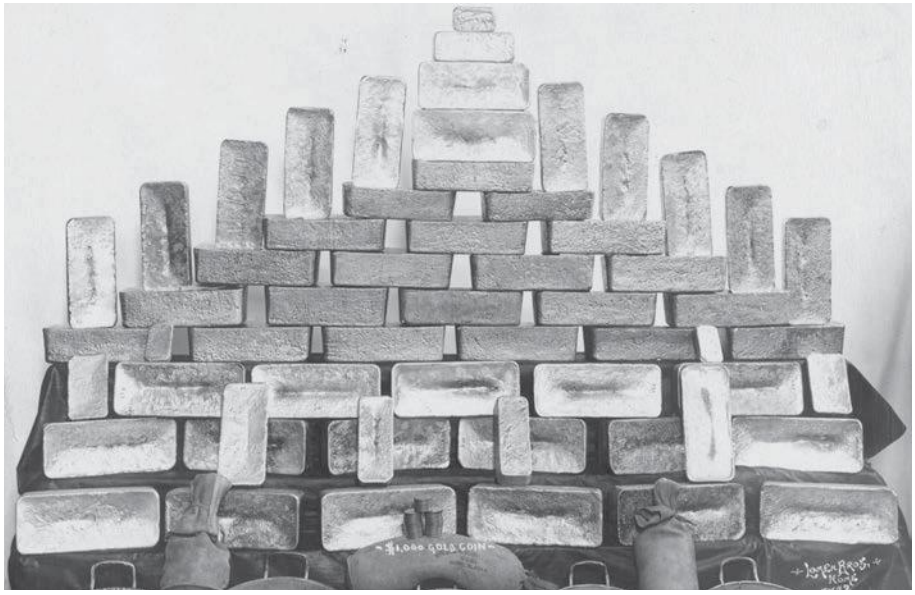
DID YOU KNOW?

Spanish dollars and Portuguese reals were the most common foreign coins circulating in America. Local banknotes were issued in pounds, shillings and pence, though these were of less value than British currency.

4 Cited in *Massachusetts Gazette* and *Boston News-Letter,* 31 May 1764.

DID YOU KNOW?

Pennsylvania had the strongest bankruptcy laws in the colonies. Its 1785 Bankruptcy Act required a 'convicted' bankrupt to be flogged after having his ear nailed to a wooden frame.



Gold bullion.

to no-one.'[5] Annoyed at this development of a separate currency system in the colonies, England's bankers pressured the parliament to take action. In September 1764, just five months after the sugar legislation, parliament passed the Currency Act.

THE CURRENCY ACT

The provisions of this new bill were relatively simple: it banned further printing of colonial paper money and prohibited the use of existing paper money to pay private debts. A similar measure had been implemented in 1751, though this was confined to New England and only limited the *production* of banknotes, not their use. The new act ordered royal governors not to sign any new paper currency or to give assent to its printing. This reform was problematic for American colonists employed in commerce and finance. They had long endured a shortage of gold and silver; they had no natural supply of these metals nor were they permitted to acquire them by trading with France, Spain or other nations. The colonial scrip referred to by Franklin had become a workable substitute but now this too would be restricted.

The new act had consequences for American merchants and importers, who now had to find gold or foreign coin to settle their accounts with British companies. As the number of banknotes in circulation declined, Americans found internal trade more difficult, while it was near impossible to pay foreign debts. Bankruptcy – then greatly feared, since it was a crime punishable by imprisonment – increased steadily in the late 1760s. Many claimed that the sugar and currency legislation had decimated the American economy, though this was only partly true. Egnal and Ernst suggest that the revolution began here, with a move towards economic independence, desirous of an American economy free of the fist of British bankers:

> While modern analysts may debate the wisdom of the varying colonial monetary practices and proposals, there is no doubt that Britain's constant and jealous supervision of the colonists' currency systems seriously weakened the Americans' ability to control their own economy. The reaction to the Currency Act … reflected a new and extreme phase of a long struggle of this aspect of economic sovereignty. Control over currency and banking was for some … the 'sovereign remedy.'[6]

5 Cited in Robert McCann Rice, *Money and Men* (New York: Baird-Ward Press, 1941), 22.

6 Marc Egnal and Joseph A. Ernst, 'An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution' in *Historical Perspectives on the American Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 56.

THE RED-COATED MENACE

While financial legislation caused concern amongst America's commercial classes, the lower classes were aggravated by a more obvious problem. The end of the French and Indian War should have seen the English military presence decline in America, but the number of British soldiers remained high long after the 1763 Treaty of Paris. Early in 1763 more than 10 000 British regulars were still garrisoned in the colonies, mostly in the cities and along the frontier. For the British ministry this was an expensive, though necessary, measure. Maintaining a few thousand troops in distant colonies, coming on top of a £138 million war debt and troubled economic times, was a financial burden. A view circulating in Westminster was that the colonies should be contributing to the cost of soldiers who protected them.

In March 1765 the parliament completed its annual update of the Mutiny Act, a perpetual law to secure and improve discipline in the British military. Within its 1765 amendment, however, was a provision requiring colonial assemblies to provide quartering (accommodation), foodstuffs and other equipment for British soldiers. Shelter was to be offered in barracks, public buildings or halls, which were to be organised and provided by colonial authorities. If there were insufficient buildings of this type available, colonial governors and assemblies were to instead rent suitable inns, tenements, barns or vacant houses. The colonies were also responsible for providing soldiers with firewood, candles, beer or rum, blankets and cooking utensils.

This measure, coming as it did after three other troublesome pieces of legislation, provoked an angry response. Through misunderstanding, misrepresentation and propaganda, the updated Mutiny Act was portrayed as an obscene attempt to force free citizens to host unruly British soldiers in their private homes. Colonial stirrers began referring to it as the 'Quartering Act' – though this was never its title – and protesting that it ignored the fundamental rights of Englishmen. In reality the act said nothing about housing soldiers in inhabited homes, while it provided compensation at reasonable set rates for the owners of inns, barns and vacant houses.

In some colonies there was little fuss and the assemblies complied with the act. Pennsylvania, for example, willingly gave British soldiers accommodation up to 1774. Other provinces objected to the obligations placed upon them, arguing that the order to provide rented accommodation, food and necessities was simply an alternative form of taxation. In New York, which contained the largest contingent of soldiers at the time the act was passed, rioting by locals led the assembly to refuse to enforce any of the quartering requirements. This drew an angry response from London, which later passed the New York Restraining Act, suspending the New York assembly for its non-compliance.

DID YOU KNOW?

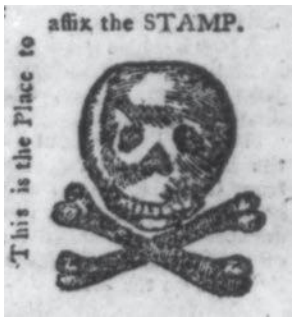
The military presence in Boston prompted Samuel Adams to publish a 'Journal of Events' that recorded 'incidents' of drunkenness, assault and rape by British soldiers. It later emerged that many of these stories were fabricated or grossly exaggerated.

DID YOU KNOW?

The daily rate of pay for a private in the British army was 8–10 pence, before deductions for food and lodging. At the time a loaf of bread cost one penny, a pound of cheese four pence and a pound of tea one shilling (twelve pence).

A STIR ABOUT STAMPS

The fifth, and most notorious, British policy of the colonial era was the Stamp Act. This was passed in March 1765, the same month as the so-called Quartering Act. No decision prompted more revolutionary fervour than the Stamp Act: from



Print showing a skull and crossbones representation of the official stamp required by the Stamp Act of 1765.

the colonial elite to common artisans and sailors, from the cities to the remote villages, ordinary people and their leaders spoke against the new tax. The crisis spawned one of the most famous revolutionary slogans in history, 'no taxation without representation,' a phrase (dating from 1750) adopted by James Otis, Richard Bland, Patrick Henry and others.

Yet despite the tumult it caused in America, parliament's introduction of a stamp tax was not unusual. Stamp duties had been applied in Britain since 1689, copied from the Dutch, largely as an emergency measure to fund wars. Bills of sale, deeds, titles, mortgages, indentures, contracts, wills, insurance policies and sundry other items were legally void until they bore evidence that the appropriate duty had been paid. There were protests when stamp taxes were first introduced in England but over time they were grudgingly accepted. They became an important source of revenue: when the government required funds it simply added to the list of items on which taxes were payable.

Imposing a stamp tax in America was, therefore, considered a minor reform by those who passed it. They forecast the collection of £60 000, a rather humble sum, to be passed to British officials in the colonies for 'procurement of supplies for the troops stationed there.'[7] A common misconception is that the Stamp Act arrived in America by surprise and caught the colonies unawares, but this was not the case. The parliament actually floated the idea in the colonies in mid-1764. It signalled its intent to raise revenue in America, proposed a stamp duty as a means of doing so and invited colonial legislatures to suggest alternatives. Most colonial legislatures registered opposition to any stamp tax but could suggest no other option, so the parliament began work on the bill.

Benjamin Franklin, America's most prominent figure in Europe, was in London when the Stamp Act went before parliament. Acting on instructions from Pennsylvania, Franklin attempted to short-circuit the bill by petitioning the king and lobbying leading parliamentarians. This failed and the Stamp Act passed into law, prompting Franklin to transform, almost overnight, from colonial rights advocate to self-interested entrepreneur.[8] Thinking the tax a *fait accompli*, Franklin snapped up large quantities of embossed stamp paper for export to America. He also recommended a friend for the lucrative position of stamp distributor in Philadelphia. When word of this filtered back to Philadelphia an angry mob declared Franklin a traitor and besieged his home, trapping his wife Deborah for several hours.

DID YOU KNOW?

When you buy a house in Australia you are required to pay a sizeable stamp duty to your state government.

DID YOU KNOW?

Under the provisions of the Stamp Act a pack of cards was liable for a one shilling tax stamp; a set of dice incurred a tax of ten shillings. Landlords were outraged by the tax on liquor licences: four pounds, a year's wages for some.

DISORDER IN BOSTON

News of the Stamp Act reached the colonies in April 1765, with the tax scheduled to come into effect on the first day of November. The response was broader and more intense than even the pessimists in England had predicted. This was largely due to timing – the political climate in the colonies, particularly with regard to matters of British policy, was sceptical and paranoid. The very nature of the Stamp Act was also problematic: imposed on a wide variety of official and semi-official documents – such as contracts, bills of sale, wills, property titles, broadsheets and periodicals – it affected a wide range of people. Fifteen different categories of legal document were taxed, raising the hackles of colonial lawyers. Bonds, contracts

7 Edmund S. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (New York: Collier Books, 1965), 96–7.

8 Entrepreneur: someone who invests in innovative or high-risk enterprises.

and bills of sale were taxed, aggravating merchants and retailers. Newspapers and pamphlets were taxed by the page, outraging publishers, journalists and essayists. Gambling paraphernalia like dice and playing cards also required stamps, affecting common labourers, dockhands and sailors.

Over the next seven months there was a firestorm of debate, rhetoric, protest and petitioning across the thirteen colonies. Colonial assemblymen were furious at London's disregard of their views. Merchants, still griping about trade regulations and the Sugar Act, joined in the chorus of protest. Speaker after speaker railed against Britain, from political theorists arguing for better representation to tavern tub-thumpers predicting new taxes that would bleed the colonies dry. If the right to tax was conceded once, argued some, then it was conceded forever and might go on *ad infinitum*.

'Burning of the Stamp Act, Boston.'

DID YOU KNOW?

Andrew Oliver was not completely discouraged by the burning of his effigy. He became lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts in 1771.

A consensus emerged that if the new tax stamps were boycotted, i.e. not purchased, then the act could not be enforced. A campaign of non-compliance was initiated and seems to have been effective, with only a few tax stamps sold in the colony of Georgia. Other colonies went further, deciding that the best propaganda, in the words of Patricia Bradley, 'was a combination of the related word and representative deed.'[9] Ideas and words were supported by harassment, intimidation and violence directed at royal officials. Two of the preferred victims were Andrew Oliver and Thomas Hutchinson. Oliver was the man appointed by parliament to oversee the implementation of the Stamp Act in Massachusetts. On 14 August 1765, his effigy was hanged and burned from the Liberty Tree, a huge elm tree near Boston Common. An angry mob left the scene and marched on Oliver's house, burglarising it and making off with supplies of the hated stamp paper. The assault on property and the implied threat were too much for the 'king's stamp man' and he resigned his position.

OPPOSITION TO THE STAMP ACT

Another attack followed a fortnight later, this time on the home of Thomas Hutchinson. Then the lieutenant-governor, Hutchinson was a forthright and officious figure who was widely disliked. He was particularly despised by Samuel Adams, who rarely failed to mention and condemn Hutchinson in his written tirades. Hutchinson actually considered the Stamp Act to be a flawed policy but as a royal official he was committed to its implementation. On 26 August 1765, a large mob gathered outside Hutchinson's stately home. When the crowd smashed windows, Hutchinson and his family fled for their lives, the mob entering, raiding his wine cellar, stealing £900 in cash, ransacking the building and destroying his priceless collection of books. Other less prominent officials also suffered threats, intimidation, vandalism, arson and beatings throughout the second half of 1765.

9 Patricia Bradley, *Slavery, Propaganda and the American Revolution* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 56.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at 'Bostonians Paying the Excise-man' and complete the tasks below.

1. Examine how the Bostonians are represented in this drawing. How are they dressed? What group or class do you think they belong to?
2. Who is the 'Excise-man'? What is happening to him and why?
3. Why do you think the Stamp Act has been hung upside down on the Liberty Tree?
4. Do you think the artist had a sympathetic perspective on the actions depicted? Explain your answer.
5. Using your broader knowledge, discuss what the source adds to an understanding of pre-revolutionary America. What other perspectives were there on the Stamp Act at the time?

Bostonians Paying the Excise-man, or 'tarring and feathering.'

ACTIVITY

CAUSES OF REVOLUTION – BRITISH REVENUE ACTS

After reading about the acts and proclamations imposed on the American colonies up to 1765, draw up a table like the one below and fill it in.

BRITISH LAW	YEAR IMPOSED	PROVISIONS OF ACT	COLONIAL RESPONSES TO ACT
Royal Proclamation			
Sugar Act			
Currency Act			
Quartering Act			
Stamp Act			

THE DISSENT SPREADS

Considerable opposition to the Stamp Act erupted in other colonies. In Virginia a young Williamsburg lawyer, Patrick Henry, sought election to the colonial assembly specifically to challenge the Stamp Act (see Who's Who for more on Patrick Henry). After just a week in the chamber Henry introduced a series of five resolves (resolutions) that rejected any British authority to tax the colonies. He spoke in favour of these resolves in the strongest possible terms, criticising the king and making a thinly-veiled comparison between George III and two assassinated leaders: Julius Caesar and Charles I. This prompted cries of 'treason!' in the chamber and folklore has it that Henry responded with, 'If this be treason, make the most of it.' (The record suggests that Henry later apologised to the house for his 'intemperate remarks' and reaffirmed his loyalty to His Majesty.)

DID YOU KNOW?

The Virginia Stamp Act Resolves passed by just one vote (20–19). Had Patrick Henry not deliberately waited until several conservative members were absent from the assembly, it is unlikely they would have passed at all.

DOCUMENT

THE VIRGINIA STAMP ACT RESOLVES, 1765

Resolved, that the first adventurers and settlers of His Majesty's colony and dominion of Virginia brought with them … all the liberties, privileges, franchises, and immunities … held, enjoyed, and possessed by the people of Great Britain.

Resolved, that … the colonists aforesaid are declared entitled to all liberties, privileges, and immunities … as if they had been abiding and born within the realm of England.

Resolved, that the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear … is the only security against a burdensome taxation, and the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom …

Resolved, that His Majesty's people of this his most ancient and loyal colony have without interruption enjoyed the inestimable right of being governed by such laws, respecting their internal policy and taxation, as are derived from their own consent, with the approval of their sovereign, or his substitute; and that the same has never been forfeited …

Resolved, that the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and exclusive right and power to lay taxes … upon the inhabitants of this Colony, and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons … has a manifest tendency to destroy British as well as American freedom.[10]

10 John Pendleton Kennedy, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1761-1765* (Richmond: The Colonial Press,1907).

ACTIVITY

GROUP WORK

In a small group, read through the Virginia Stamp Act Resolves and discuss their meaning and implications. How would they have affected the day-to-day administration of the American colonies?

KEY PEOPLE: PATRICK HENRY (1736-1799)

POLITICAL ROLE

Elected to Virginia assembly (House of Burgesses) in 1769.

Henry became the first state governor of Virginia in 1776-79 and 1784-86.

Helped to get the Stamp Act Resolutions through the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1765, with his 'If this be treason, make the most of it' speech.

BACKGROUND

Born into a middle-class Virginian family; Henry was a college-educated lawyer.

He retained close ties to Virginia throughout his life.

KEY IDEAS

A radical opponent of British policy in the early 1760s. Henry believed strongly in individual liberties.

'I am not a Virginian, but an American.'

'United we stand, divided we fall. Let us not split into factions which must destroy our union.'

'An appeal to arms and the God of hosts is all that is left to us. But we shall not fight our battle alone.'

A speech given in March 1775 ended with the famous line, 'Give me liberty or give me death!'

VIEWS ON SLAVERY

Opposed slavery but admitted: 'I am the master of slaves by my own purchase ... I am drawn along by the general inconvenience of living without them.'

DID YOU KNOW?

Despite his opposition to the Stamp Act, Daniel Dulany remained loyal to Britain throughout the revolution. In 1781 the government of Maryland confiscated most of his property, as often occurred with loyalists.

Objections to the Stamp Act continued to emerge elsewhere. Maryland's Daniel Dulany criticised it as an illegal act in his essay *Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies*. Richard Bland penned an eloquent examination of the crisis from a political viewpoint in *An Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies*. These and other pamphlets and polemics were discussed by a host of town meetings, many of which drafted resolutions condemning the Stamp Act. Boycotts of British goods were organised in some cities. At least seven colonial assemblies put anti-Stamp Act petitions on ships to London, while British MPs such as Edmund Burke and William Pitt spoke against the act in the House of Commons, accusing the ministry of legislating beyond its authority. Street protests and vandalism broke out in New York, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and the Carolinas. Gangs promised retaliation against anyone seen buying a tax stamp, let alone those who dared sell them. By the end of 1765 fourteen stamp agents had been forced to resign.

KEY PEOPLE: PATRICK HENRY

Critics of the stamp tax now began to argue for some form of unified colonial response. In October 1765, twenty-eight delegates from nine colonies gathered in New York for what later became known as the Stamp Act Congress. They produced a manifesto called the Declaration of Rights and Grievances which pledged affection and loyalty to the king but argued that George III and his parliament had usurped colonial rights. It contended that since the colonists could only vote for their local assemblies, only those bodies held the authority

to tax them. It also asserted the right to trial by jury and complained about the shortage of specie (gold and silver coin) because of British policy. It was not the first expression of colonial rights but it was the first made by a body purporting to represent a majority of the American colonies.

ACTIVITY

LIST

1. List the four colonies that did not send representatives to the Stamp Act Congress.
2. List the arguments for and against the Stamp Act. Which groups were advantaged and disadvantaged by the act?

'THESE SONS OF LIBERTY'

The Sons of Liberty were, in broad terms, local groups who organised or engaged in protest against the Stamp Act (see Glossary for more on the Sons of Liberty). Defining precisely what these groups did and how they operated is difficult. There was no single Sons of Liberty group; a range of groups emerged in different areas, each with its own leadership and membership base. The term became a catch-all phrase to include anyone engaged in anti-British activity. It was first used in the British parliament by Isaac Barré, a veteran of the French and Indian War, who praised 'these sons of liberty' who were standing up for American rights.

In Boston, Massachusetts the Sons of Liberty sprung from a small group calling itself the Loyal Nine. Little is known about this body except that it was composed of nine Bostonian men who began meeting in May or June 1765 to organise opposition to the Stamp Act. Its members (Bass, Chase, Crafts, Edes, Smith, Avery, Cleverly, Trott and Welles) were small-scale merchants, artisans and shopkeepers who organised in secret and kept no records; perhaps because of this they are less well-known than other revolutionary activists. Samuel Adams and Paul Revere were not members of the group, nor were they directly linked to it, but they are likely to have been aware of, and possibly influenced by, the Loyal Nine. The group is believed to have instigated the intimidation of Andrew Oliver in August 1765, an incident generally considered to be the starting point for the Sons of Liberty in Boston.

Once established in Massachusetts, Sons of Liberty groups emerged in other colonies. New York had its own chapter (group) by November, while towns in New Hampshire, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina had comparable organisations by the end of 1765. These gangs either adopted the Sons of Liberty name or had it bestowed upon them by excited journalists and pamphleteers. Others adopted a moniker of their own choosing, such as Rhode Island's Respectable Populace. In most cases the Sons of Liberty groups rejected secrecy and conspiracy, instead offering up their views in the press (they counted many printers among their number) and portraying themselves as the protectors of colonial rights and the public good. Some attempted to form links with chapters in other colonies through correspondence; the Boston and New York Sons of Liberty, for instance, were in regular contact from January 1766.

DID YOU KNOW?

Isaac Barré was an Irish-born member of parliament who lost his left eye during the French and Indian War. He was one of the very few MPs with a close knowledge of America and he maintained friendships with many colonial merchants.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Charlestown Fire Company of South Carolina was thought to be an unofficial arm of the Sons of Liberty. It was said the company lit more political fires than it extinguished real ones.

KEY MOVEMENTS: SONS OF LIBERTY

ACTIVITIES

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In a paragraph of 200–300 words, explain the significance of the Stamp Act as a prompt to revolutionary activity in the American colonies.

RESEARCH

Find out how the Loyal Nine came together and what motivated the group. Share your findings with a partner.

SLAVES AND THE STAMP ACT

DID YOU KNOW?

Newly arrived or African-born slaves were known as 'Guinea-men.' Because of their 'untamed' and 'difficult' nature they were often put in the control of specialist 'slave-breakers.'

Though the Stamp Act had no direct implications for African slaves, they could not have helped noticing the colonial rhetoric about representation and natural rights. It may have influenced some deterioration in the conduct of slaves and even some small uprisings, as noted by social historians Gary B. Nash and Robert Olwell. This was of particular concern to Anglo-Americans in southern colonies where, in some areas, slaves outnumbered them three to one. The grand jury in Charlestown noted just before the Stamp Act that 'slaves … are not under a good regulation and that they at all times in the night go about streets rioting.' Exacerbating such fears, 25 000 new slaves from the Guinea coast arrived in 1765 (newly arrived slaves being generally more 'troublesome' than established ones).[11]

DOCUMENT

ROBERT OLWELL, *MASTERS, SLAVES AND SUBJECTS*

> In the winter of 1765 … a group of Charles Town slaves, in imitation or inversion of the public demonstrations that Charles Town's 'Sons of Liberty' had held against the Stamp Act, paraded through the city's streets crying out 'Liberty'. Shouted from the mouths of black slaves the words took on a meaning quite different from their original intention. Masters responded to this parade with an outburst of fear and violence. The result was the most serious slave conspiracy scare in the colony in sixteen years. Given the slave population's ability to perceive and respond to political divisions among whites, it is perhaps not surprising that Henry Laurens thought 'domestic broils … more awful & distressing than Fire, Pestilence or Foreign Wars'.[12]

ACTIVITY

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

To what extent was the abolitionist (anti-slavery) movement in America influenced by the revolutionary quest for 'liberty' in the 1700s? Key abolitionists were William Wilberforce, William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Frederick Douglass. Collect two–three pieces of evidence to support your view.

11 Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution* (London: Viking Penguin, 2005), 60–1.
12 Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves and Subjects* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), 225.

BOYCOTTS BY WOMEN

Colonial women were present at many of the gatherings and protests of 1765. They also played a significant role in thwarting the Stamp Act by other means. As household managers responsible for purchasing food, clothing and other items, women were ideally placed to organise anti-Stamp Act boycotts. Some economic historians suggest that this empowered colonial women and brought them into the political sphere, if only indirectly. T. H. Breen points out that, 'The wife [found herself] in a strategic position, located … at the intersection of the household's three functions: reproduction, production and consumption.'[13] Though the phenomenon was confined mainly to the middle classes, groups of women began organising meetings to discuss ways of furthering non-importation and combating the stamp tax.

One woman in Newport, Rhode Island took self-sacrifice to a higher level: she declared herself unavailable for marriage until the Stamp Act was repealed. Since glory boxes (bridal chests) were usually filled with purchases from England, she felt she could not accept such gifts in good faith. A New York journal said of the woman, 'In the bloom of youth and sufficient to excite the most pleasing expectations of happiness, [she] has declared that she should choose rather to be an Old Maid than that the operation of the illegal Stamp Act should commence in these colonies.'[14] In general, coverage of this story was comical and condescending, evidence that the contributions of women were not always taken seriously by their male contemporaries.

ELIZABETH MURRAY AND BOYCOTTS

A REPEAL WITH CONDITIONS

The Stamp Act proved problematic in England as well as America. Several notable members of the House of Commons, such as Edmund Burke and William Beckford, had spoken against the bill during parliamentary debate. There had also been criticism of the measure in the English press. In July 1765, the king dismissed Grenville as prime minister in favour of Lord Rockingham; the Stamp Act therefore lost its creator and strongest defender. Worrying reports about violence and intimidation in the colonies began to reach London in October. They were preceded and followed by complaints from British exporters who were losing American contracts and income because of colonial boycotts.

Parliament spent nine days in January 1766 sifting through anti-Stamp Act petitions, many from America but most from English business interests. A bill for repeal was raised, drawing a hostile response from some in the parliament. Lord Lyttleton produced an essay condemning the repeal and launching a stinging attack on the Americans. It was countersigned by thirty-three peers from the House of Lords (sixty-three Lords had earlier voted for military action against the colonies if they refused to comply with the tax). A moderate pragmatism ruled in the end: the House of Commons moved to repeal the act (276 votes to 168), as did the House of Lords (105 to 71).

DID YOU KNOW?

Rockingham was an influential figure in British politics but his two terms as prime minister were brief: eleven months in 1765–66 and three months in 1782. He died in office.

13 T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 230.
14 T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*, 232.

A representation of a monument built in Boston to celebrate the repeal of the Stamp Act. Amongst the figures honoured were George III, Isaac Barré, William Pitt and Charles Townshend.

In some colonies, the death of the Stamp Act prompted toasts to the health of the king, the wisdom of his parliament and the glory of the British political system. In Boston a young slave girl, Phillis Wheatley, was alert to these high spirits. Born in Gambia, Wheatley had been kidnapped and transported to Massachusetts when she was just seven years old. She was purchased for domestic service by a wealthy merchant, John Wheatley. His family treated Phillis kindly: she received a good education and, by the age of twelve, was composing her own poetry. Phillis was later manumitted (given freedom) by Wheatley, although she chose to stay voluntarily until his death in 1778. At the time of the repeal Phillis was barely in her teens, yet she composed a short poem.

Phillis Wheatley.

DOCUMENT

PHILLIS WHEATLEY, POEM, 1768

To the King's most Excellent Majesty on the Repealing of the Stamp Act

Your subjects hope
The crown upon your head may flourish long
And in great wars your royal arms be strong.
May your sceptre many nations sway
Resent it on them that dislike obey
But how shall we exalt the British king.[15]

15 Phillis Wheatley, *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press, 1898), 126.

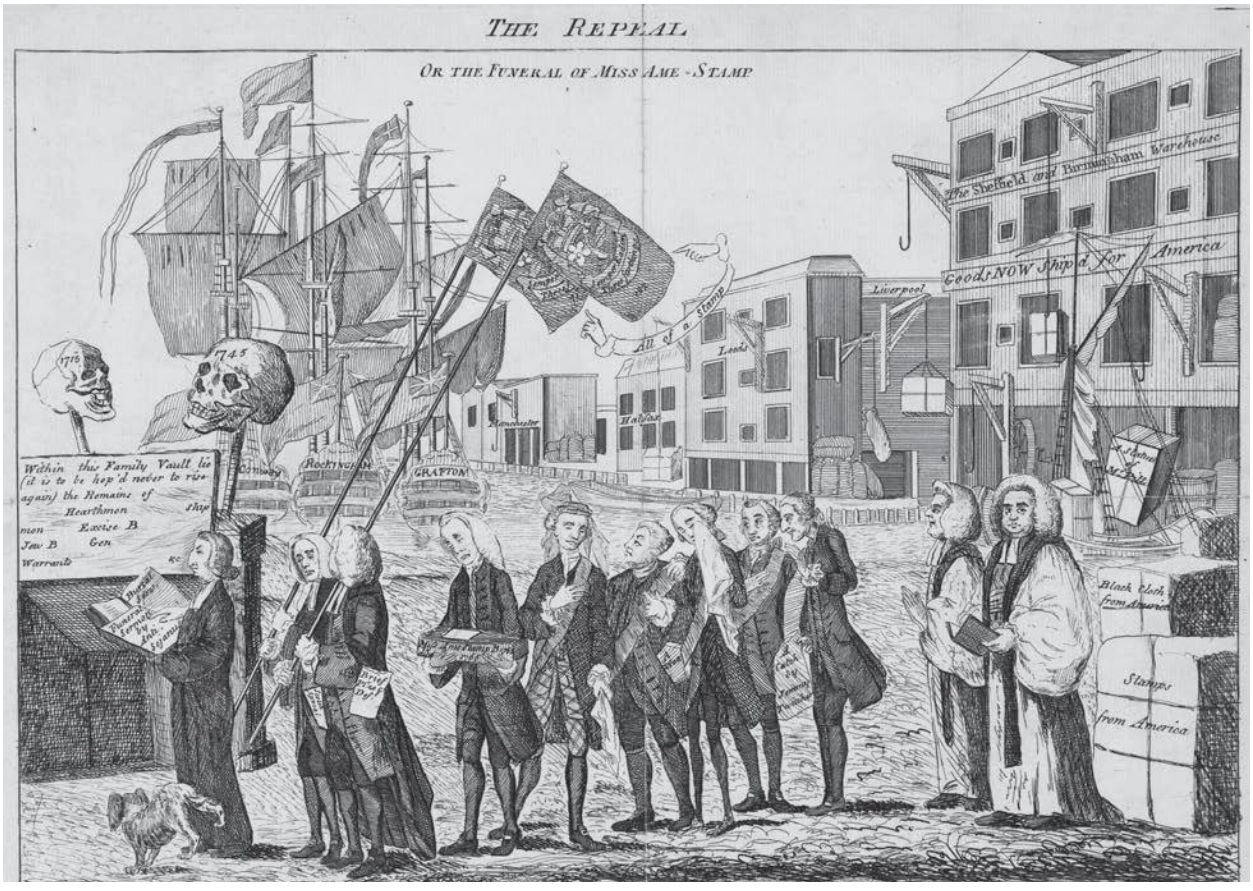
Cartoonists in London were less forgiving of George III's government. One biting engraving, *The Death of Miss Americ-Stamp*, lampooned the pro-stamp tax ministers by showing them at a mock funeral for their failed legislation. A ceramics maker near Derby, hoping to capture an American contract, produced celebratory goods emblazoned with 'Stamp Act Repeal'd' (amongst these items was a teapot, ironic given future events in America). In a climate where there was near-constant criticism of political decision-making and matters of empire, the failure of yet another element of economic policy brought the government severe embarrassment.

This may have been why the hardliners in the British parliament refused to let the issue of colonial management rest. Rockingham's ministry only accepted repeal on the condition that it be accompanied by an assertion of parliamentary sovereignty (authority) over the American colonies. Without such a provision the further governance and regulation of America might prove impossible, while good order in other English colonies could be undermined. So, on the same day that the Stamp Act was annulled, it was followed by a new piece of legislation, the Declaratory Act, which boomed across the Atlantic that, 'the said colonies and plantations in America have been, are, and of right ought to be, subordinate unto, and dependent upon the imperial crown and Parliament of Great Britain.' Furthermore, the Act declared that the king and parliament 'had, hath, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes ... to bind the colonies and people of America in all cases whatsoever.'

DID YOU KNOW?

For some time it seemed the House of Lords might vote to reject the repeal of the Stamp Act – however, pressure from the king saw many of the Lords rethink their voting.

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES: PHILLIS WHEATLEY



An English satirical cartoon commenting on the repeal of the Stamp Act. The act's supporters are shown carrying the tax to its grave, while unshipped exports line the harbour, the result of American trade boycotts. The warehouses in the background bear the names of England's great manufacturing cities: Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester, etc.

DID YOU KNOW?

Zubly was a Swiss-born pastor who emigrated to Georgia in 1745. He became a prolific pamphlet writer on political theory and, later, a delegate to the second Continental Congress.

The Declaratory Act did not raise many eyebrows in America. Most were swept up in celebrating the repeal of the Stamp Act; they saw the Declaratory Act as simply an attempt at parliamentary face-saving. Yet for the radicals, the last passage of the act read as dramatic prophecy – a parliament expressing its right and its intentions to pass laws over the colonies as it saw fit. There was some precedent in the similarly-worded Dependency of Ireland Act of 1719, which had been used to subjugate the independent Irish judiciary. Although the Declaratory Act had no practical implications, many historians consider it the point when the revolution transformed from an anti-taxation protest into something deeper. Randall Miller, interpreting the impact of revolutionary pamphleteer John Joachim Zubly, wrote:

> The Declaratory Act ... among other events, combined to persuade many Americans that the English ministry regarded the colonies with contempt ... American political and constitutional thinkers began to take a closer look at the implications of the Declaratory Act ... Such a naked assertion of parliamentary power aroused American fears of legislative tyranny, and the unlucky and ill-considered British policies fuelled such apprehensions. From 1766 to 1770 Americans matured rapidly in their constitutional theory. They began to question Parliament's role to legislate for the empire at all and to posit a theory of divided sovereignty.[16]

THE TOWNSHEND DUTIES

TOWNSHEND DUTIES 

Disquiet continued in the British parliament over the unwillingness of the American colonies to contribute to the cost of their own defence. Charles Townshend, appointed treasurer (Chancellor of the Exchequer) in 1766, held this view. He devised a solution that involved extracting revenue through import duties rather than direct taxation. Goods shipped to America from Britain or by British merchants would have a duty added – not just for the regulation of trade but for the express purpose of raising revenue. This duty would be collected when the goods were unloaded in American ports; the revenue would be used to pay salaries of royal governors and other British colonial officials. To police Townshend's new duties, the acts also established three new admiralty courts and granted further writs of assistance (search warrants). The duties were expected to raise a modest £40 000 per annum, though once established Townshend anticipated this amount would grow.

DID YOU KNOW?

Townshend, as a member of the Board of Trade, was considered an expert in imperial commercial affairs. The Board of Trade was a ministerial committee that oversaw mercantilist policies such as the Navigation Acts.

The Revenue Acts – their formal title – angered not only the merchants and traders but the colonial population at large. The colonists recognised that the duties were an underhand attempt to raise money for Britain. They also feared the expansion of the admiralty court system and the re-imposition of writs of assistance. The move to pay colonial governors from this revenue also threatened American sovereignty. Since the assemblies could no longer wield influence by withholding governors' salaries, these governors and their officials may well come to act independently of the legislatures and more in line with the wishes of London.

The Townshend duties themselves were levied on important but commonplace items like paper, paint, oil, glass, tea and lead. Colonial agitators determined that they would not be paid; the best way to achieve this was to cripple British importation by reducing demand. A trade boycott would be applied to English goods and local alternatives would be arranged. Various Sons of Liberty chapters and local communities began signing non-importation agreements, pledging

16 Randall Miller, ed., *Zubly: A Warm and Zealous Spirit* (Atlanta: Mercer University Press, 1982), 51.

not to buy British goods and to boycott traders who sold them. Many colonial assemblies endorsed the non-importation pacts and agreed to resist the duties when and where they could.

'LETTERS FROM A FARMER'

In 1767 the first in a series of twelve letters from a Pennsylvania farmer began to circulate around the thirteen colonies. It was common knowledge that they were the handiwork of Philadelphia lawyer and politician John Dickinson; however, like many revolutionary essays and pamphlets of the time they were published anonymously to protect the author from possible repercussions. Dickinson's 'Letters from a Farmer' became one of the more widely-read and influential revolutionary tracts, earning him considerable acclaim and, eventually, a place in the Continental Congress. The thrust of Dickinson's letters was that Britain had authority to regulate external matters such as trade but its ministers had no right or power to interfere in colonial politics or to raise taxes in the colonies; such matters were the sole domain of the thirteen assemblies.
One letter said:

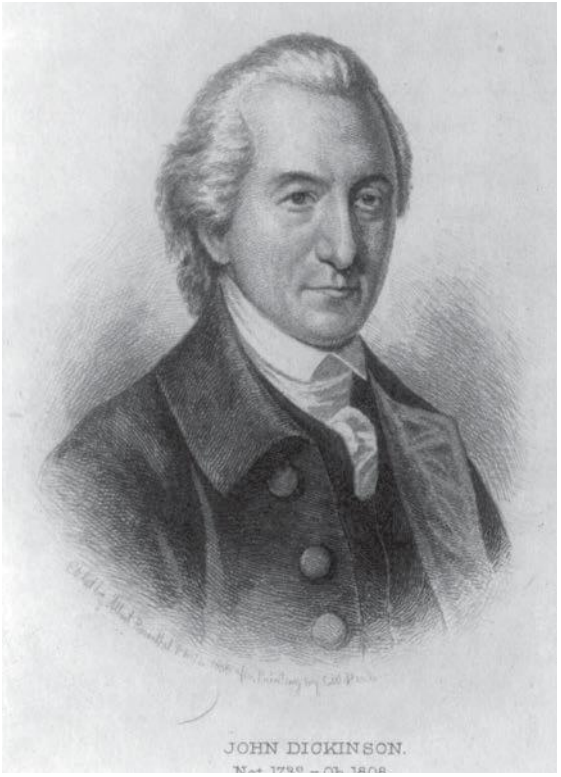
> If the British parliament has legal authority to issue an order that we shall furnish a single article for the troops here, and to compel obedience to *that* order, they have the same right to issue an order for us to supply those troops with arms, clothes, and every necessary; and to compel obedience … in short, to lay any burdens they please upon us. What is this but taxing us at a certain sum, and leaving to us only the manner of raising it? How is this mode more tolerable than the Stamp Act? An act of parliament, commanding us to do a certain thing, if it has any validity, is a tax upon us for the expense that accrues in complying with it ….[17]

The Letters from a Farmer occasionally express hostility towards the British ministry and suggest that future conflict might be inevitable if the Americans continue to be put upon by the parliament: 'if it becomes undoubted that … a resolution is formed to annihilate the liberties of the governed, the English history affords frequent examples of resistance by force.' For the most part, however, Dickinson adopts a reasoned and moderate tone. He encourages his fellow colonials not to be led to rash actions by radicals, reminding them that loyalty to the king is as virtuous as opposing taxation:

> I hope my dear countrymen that you will, in every colony, be upon your guard against those who may at any time endeavour to stir you up, under pretences of patriotism, to [be] disrespectful to our Sovereign, and our mother country. Hot, rash, disorderly proceedings injure the reputation of the people as to wisdom, valour, and virtue, without [bringing] them the least benefit. I pray God that he may be pleased to inspire you … with a spirit that shall so guide you that it will be impossible to determine whether an American's character is more distinguishable for his loyalty to his Sovereign, his duty to his mother country, his love of freedom, or his affection for his native soil.[18]

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1753 John Dickinson's father, Samuel, sent him to London to study law. It was a brave venture since three of Samuel's other sons had died while making the same journey.



John Dickinson.

17 John Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer* (Letter I), Library of Congress online: www.loc.gov.
18 Dickinson, *Letters from a Farmer* (Letter III), Library of Congress online.

ACTIVITY

BRAINSTORM

Identify four or more taxes or duties currently imposed in Australia to regulate trade.

Print showing two American revolutionaries tarring and feathering the tax collector. Gallows appear in the background.

TARRING AND FEATHERING

The Townshend legislation did not incite the same level of disorder as the Stamp Act, however intimidation of, and violent attacks on, royal officials and suspected 'Tories' were occasionally recorded. A preferred means of dealing with those loyal to Britain (loyalists) was tarring-and-feathering, where the victim was stripped, smothered with molten tar and covered in feathers before being paraded through town. Though rarely fatal, the practice left many victims with permanent scarring. There were at least five instances of tarring-and-feathering in 1769 and a similar number the following year. It occurred mainly in New England but sometimes appeared in rural areas and along the frontier. When New York doctor Abner Beebe suffered this fate in 1775, the crowd 'carried [Beebe] to a pig sty and rubbed [him] over with hog's dung. They threw the hog's dung in his face and rammed some of it down his throat.'[19]

DID YOU KNOW?

The instigator of the non-importation movement in Virginia was George Washington. In May 1769 he organised a successful boycott of British slave-trading companies that cost them around £300 000.

DAUGHTERS OF LIBERTY

The more typical response to the Townshend acts was the boycotting of British goods. This was not just an attempt to evade the duties but also to kill off the policy (as had been achieved with the Stamp Act) by sabotaging the profits of British companies. At the heart of this movement were the colonial merchants, who formed associations and signed non-importation agreements. They urged shipping companies to cease importing goods from Britain and pressured stores to remove British items from their shelves. Propaganda, meanwhile, encouraged citizens to ignore retailers who continued to sell British goods in defiance of the boycott. These shopkeepers were sometimes singled out for public ridicule, petty vandalism and even the odd beating.

As they had during the Stamp Act campaign, women contributed to the non-importation agreements as consumers and producers. They boycotted shops that sold imported goods and helped develop cottage industries to produce homemade alternatives. Groups of women, usually of the middle and upper classes, met to determine how they might help. Calling themselves the Daughters of Liberty they formed 'spinning clubs,' repairing and recycling old clothing or producing new homespun garments. Some dealt with the boycott of tea, a widely popular beverage, by creating substitutes using rosehip, raspberry leaf, sassafras, chicory and other herbal mixes.

One of the better-known women's groups was formed in Edenton, North Carolina in October 1774. Convened at the home of Penelope Barker and attended by fifty other prominent North Carolinian women, the Edenton Ladies' Tea Party (as it was later described) drafted a petition pledging support for a continental boycott of British merchandise. Reports of the petition crossed the Atlantic and featured

19 Douglass Adair and John Shutz, eds., *Peter Oliver's Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 157.

in several publications in Britain, where it both amused and appalled English readers. The news that American colonials were involving women in political events was considered farcical. The Edenton group provided little more than a patriotic gesture, however a group of women signing a political petition was an unprecedented event in colonial society.

DID YOU KNOW?

The search for alternatives to tea led Americans to another beverage crop from the Caribbean and South America: coffee. The tea boycotts of 1767–74 reduced Americans' attachment to tea and began the coffee culture that is seen in America today.

SEIZURE OF THE *LIBERTY*

Although Britain released no major colonial policies in the five years following 1768, a string of small but disruptive events kept British America on edge. In June 1768 the cargo ship *Liberty*, owned by Boston merchant and suspected smuggler John Hancock, was involved in a dramatic event in Boston Harbor. Arriving with a cargo of Madeira wine, the *Liberty* laid anchor and was visited by a customs inspector. The usual method before the tightening of policy was for inspectors to ask the captain how much of his cargo was liable for a customs duty. Corrupt captains usually declared only a fraction of the cargo before unloading the rest duty-free. Merchants saved a tidy sum on duty, the customs inspectors avoided conflict (and often received a bribe), and the ship's captain was usually

KEY PEOPLE: JOHN HANCOCK

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at the cartoon depicting society ladies and complete the tasks below.

1. Describe what you can see in the cartoon and identify its likely message.
2. Identify four aspects of the cartoon which suggest a negative perspective on the Edenton women.
3. Discuss how this cartoon reflects the eighteenth century assumption that women have no place in political matters.

MORE ON THE EDENTON CARTOON

Print showing satire of American women from Edenton, North Carolina, pledging to boycott English goods.

Madeira wine.

rewarded for his dishonesty. The customs official who boarded the *Liberty* on this occasion, however, was a stickler for rules. He demanded a full inspection of the cargo and the payment of duty on every relevant item.

Incensed, the skipper of the *Liberty* seized the customs officer, locked him in the ship's brig and set about unloading the whole cargo. Next morning the city was abuzz with the news, prompting a customs official to order the seizure of the *Liberty*. A British gunship was sent to transport the *Liberty* from Boston Harbor to a holding yard, prompting an angry mob to appear on the docks. Two customs officials were beaten senseless, windows were broken and property damaged. The violence failed to prevent the *Liberty* from being confiscated, while Hancock later received several writs for costs and unpaid customs duties. Though he had been outwardly loyal to Britain, the incident hardened Hancock's views about British rule and helped raise his profile as a figurehead of revolutionary sentiment.

DID YOU KNOW?

Hancock's *Liberty* was later forfeited to royal authorities, who ironically used the ship as a customs vessel. In 1769 it was boarded, set alight and burned to the waterline by an angry mob in Rhode Island.

ADAMS' CIRCULAR LETTER

Around the same time as the *Liberty* incident, a furore over a letter was causing consternation in the halls of government. The letter in question was written in February 1768 by Boston radical Samuel Adams and contained strongly-worded criticisms of the British government and its policies. Among Adams' claims were that the Townshend duties were unconstitutional and that the actions of royal officials were both inappropriate and illegal. Adams called for a unified colonial response to force a return to the previous condition, with only the local assemblies responsible for taxes in America. His letter was endorsed by the assembly in Boston and forwarded to the speaker of every other colonial assembly; it became known as the 'Massachusetts circular letter.' (See Who's Who for more on Samuel Adams.)

20 Harry Alonzo Cushing, ed. *The Writings of Samuel Adams* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904) 8.

Quill pen.

In England, Lord Hillsborough, the secretary for colonial affairs, was outraged by Adams' words. He declared the letter to be traitorous and dangerous, and ordered that colonial assemblies refuse to support it. Governors in America were directed to dissolve any assembly that refused to comply. When the Massachusetts assembly voted 92–17 against withdrawing the letter from circulation, the body was closed by the governor, Francis Bernard. As a result Massachusetts was without a government for much of 1768–69, leading to occasions of lawlessness and mob violence. This prompted Hillsborough to send four regiments of soldiers into Massachusetts to restore order. They began arriving in October 1768, sheltering not in the town's fort but in tents strewn across Boston Common.

DOCUMENT

SAMUEL ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS CIRCULAR LETTER, 1768

The House have [sic.] humbly represented to the ministry their own sentiments: that His Majesty's high court of Parliament is the supreme legislative power over the whole empire [and that because] the supreme legislative derives its power and authority from the constitution, it cannot overleap the bounds of it without destroying its own foundation … His Majesty's American subjects, who acknowledge themselves bound by the ties of allegiance, have an equitable claim to the full enjoyment of the fundamental rules of the British constitution. It is an essential [and] unalterable right, in nature, engrafted into the British constitution as a fundamental law.

It is [the colonists'] humble opinion, which they express with the greatest deference to the wisdom of the parliament, that the acts made there imposing duties on the people of this province, with the sole and express purpose of raising a revenue, are infringements of their natural and constitutional rights … as they are not represented in the British Parliament … [Members of the] House are further of opinion that their constituents, considering their local circumstances, cannot by any possibility be represented in the Parliament … being separated by an ocean of a thousand leagues.[20]

ACTIVITY

KEY IDEAS – NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

Read Samuel Adams' Circular Letter and complete the tasks below.

1. How does Adams view the authority of the British parliament? Which document does he say must be accorded with?
2. What does Adams claim to be the right of American colonists?
3. What is his argument against the imposition of taxes and duties on America by parliament?
4. What is significant about Adams' suggestion that there should be no 'infringements of natural and constitutional rights' without political representation?

KEY PEOPLE: SAMUEL ADAMS (1722-1803)

BACKGROUND

Born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts; strong family and political links there.

Adams' father bankrupted after investments in paper currency failed due to British policy changes in 1744.

Graduate of Harvard and cousin of John Adams.

VIEWS ON SLAVERY

Some evidence that he opposed slavery in private but he did not make public comment on it.

KEY IDEAS

Member of the Massachusetts assembly during 1765.

Present at the 'Boston Tea Party' (1773); a delegate to the first Continental Congress; and a vocal supporter for independence from 1774 onwards.

Formed Committees of Correspondence in order to circulate political ideas and grievances among the 13 colonies.

Formation of Non-Importation Associations is often attributed to him; and it is claimed by some that he organised the mobs who fought with British soldiers.

Response to Stamp Act (1765): linked to Loyal Nine; instrumental in organising protests and riots.

CONTROVERSIES

Led vitriolic campaign against the Massachusetts governor, Thomas Hutchinson, including the publication of Hutchinson's private letters.

EMPLOYMENT

Both a brewer and tax collector for the British; not successful at either; became a writer and recorder for the Massachusetts assembly.

TROOPS AND TENSIONS

DID YOU KNOW?

'Lobster' or 'lobsterback' was a common term of abuse for British soldiers. It referred not to their red tunics but their scarred and bleeding backs, caused by the floggings that were frequently used to uphold military discipline.

Arguably, Lord Hillsborough's decision to post almost 2000 soldiers in a city of just over 15 000 civilians was ill-considered. Boston was a city with a history of difficult relations with the military. As a port city it had long been a target for impressment, the Royal Navy's callous practice of kidnapping civilian sailors and forcing them into service. Bostonians had rioted against impressment in 1741, 1747 and 1764. Now they had to share their city with a flood of 'lobsterbacks' (British soldiers). The soldiers – who were poorly paid and therefore took up part-time work wherever they were garrisoned – competed for jobs with Boston's labourers in the midst of a trade slump. Their platoons paraded, drilled and shouted on Sunday mornings when respectable Bostonians were at worship. British soldiers were stationed on major thoroughfares, along the harbourside and outside government buildings. Off-duty soldiers filled the taverns, staggered through the streets drunk, cat-called and pawed the local women. The soldiers became both an annoyance and an ever-present reminder of British imposition in colonial life.

ACTIVITY

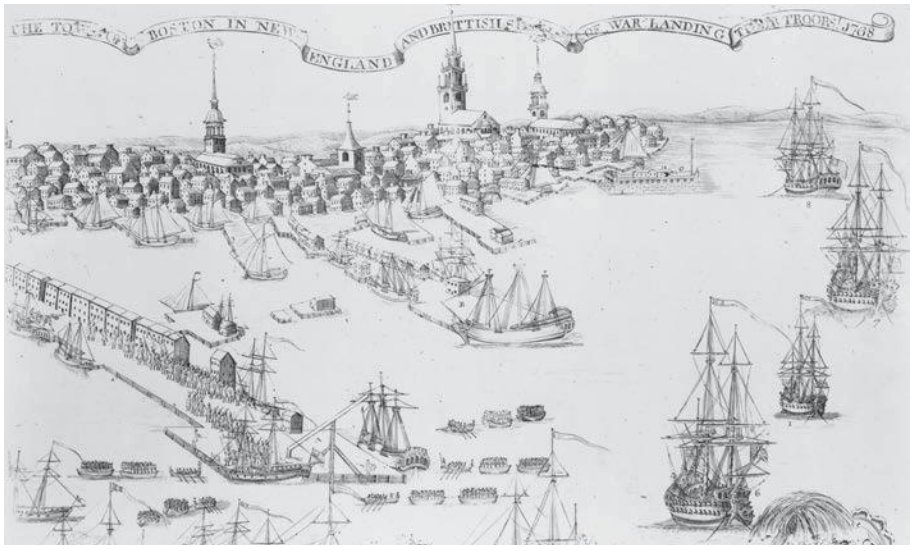
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Explain to a partner how you might have felt about the presence of British soldiers if you had been a shoe-maker or other tradesperson living in Boston in 1768.

DID YOU KNOW?

Richardson was later convicted of Seider's murder; the following year he received a royal pardon and obtained a job at the customs service. Richardson remained a loathed figure in Boston and left the city some time later.

In February 1770 Boston was rattled by the death of Christopher Seider, the eleven-year-old son of German immigrants. Seider had been one of a crowd of young boys harassing and threatening Ebenezer Richardson, a loyalist employed as a customs official. The boys gathered outside Richardson's house and began throwing stones, smashing windows and landing several rocks inside. When one struck Richardson's wife, he furiously grabbed a musket and waved it at the mob from a window. This had no effect, so Richardson loaded it with birdshot and fired into the street below. Most of the pellets hit Seider in the chest and injured him severely; he later succumbed to his wounds. Seider's funeral a week later was a bitter and turbulent affair, attended by a large mob and some of Boston's noted radicals.



'Town of Boston in New England and British ships of war landing their troops', 1768.

ACTIVITY

BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

As you read about the 'Boston Massacre' below, note down different beliefs and attitudes about the British soldiers in Boston in 1770.

THE 'BOSTON MASSACRE'

Four coffins of men killed in the 'Boston massacre'.

DIVERSE EXPERIENCES: CRISPUS ATTUCKS

The incident ignited a new wave of anti-British tension around Boston. Richardson was arrested and charged with murder but this did little to calm the coarser elements in the city. Mobs prowled the streets, openly abusing soldiers in taverns or at their sentry posts. When a British soldier passed the business of rope-maker Samuel Gray, Gray asked him if he was looking for work and the soldier said that he was. Gray's response was 'Wee [well] then, go and clean my s--thouse.'[21] On the evening of 5 March 1770 a British sentry, tired of young boys abusing and throwing snowballs at him, clipped one of them on the head with his musket. The sentry, Hugh White, returned to his post outside the customs house on King Street, thinking little of what he had just done – however it would not be the last of the matter.

Word of White's assault on the boy spread and a hostile mob began to form in King Street. In attendance were some of Boston's more notorious brawlers, including the aforementioned Samuel Gray and a part-African American dockworker named Crispus Attucks. Both men were allegedly carrying clubs. The ringing of the town bell – ordinarily a warning of fire – drew more people to King Street and before long the crowd was in excess of 300. Fearing for White's safety, Captain Thomas Preston of the 29th Regiment deployed a small platoon of men with fixed bayonets, though he gave orders not to fire. The soldiers surrounded White and all were pelted with snowballs, rocks, oyster shells and other debris.

What happened next is not entirely clear, although the outcome is certain. Some of the soldiers opened fire and several of the mob were hit, five of them fatally. It is not clear if an order was given; or if one of the soldiers fired intentionally; or if members of the crowd shouted 'Fire'; or if a weapon was discharged by accident. But four men lay dead, among them Gray and Attucks. Another, seventeen-year-old Patrick Carr, was mortally wounded and died from his injuries nine days later. On his deathbed Carr testified to a doctor that 'he was a native of Ireland, that he had frequently seen mobs and soldiers called upon to quell them … He had seen soldiers often fire on the people in Ireland but had never seen them bear half so much before they fired in his life.'[22] Despite the apparent actions of the mob in provoking the soldiers, Boston was soon thick with emotive propaganda as the rowdy elements bayed for British blood.

21 Cited in Doug Linder, 'Boston Massacre Trials: an Account', 2001: <www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/bostonmassacre/bostonaccount.html>. Accessed 6 November 2009.

22 Summary of the Boston Massacre trial, 1770: <www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Boston_Massacre>. Accessed 6 November 2009.

Crispus Attucks.

DOCUMENT

BOSTON BROADSIDE (PAMPHLET), MAY 1770

KEY EVENTS: BOSTON MASSACRE

A Poem in Memory of the never to be forgotten Fifth of March, 1770

Look into King-street, there with weeping eyes
Regard O Boston's sons, there hear the cries
There see the men lie in their wallow'd gore
There see their bodies, which fierce bullets tore

There hear their dying shrieks, their dying cries
Though but a few, before they clos'd their eyes
Before the living took the dead away
Those barb'rous monsters pierc'd them as they lay.

Where, like a current, Christian blood did flow
No one can tell what they did undergo
Step to the burying ground, and there behold
The bones of FIVE, which now in dust are roll'd

Young Seider's face we ought now to bemoan
And drop a tear on his unhappy tomb
He was the first that fell in a just cause
His murd'rer must now dye by Heaven's laws.

If bloody men intrude upon our land
Where shall we go? Or wither shall we stand?
Then may I wander to some distant shore
Where man nor beast had never trod before.[23]

CAPTAIN THOMAS PRESTON, ACCOUNT OF 5 MARCH 1770

On Monday night about eight o'clock two soldiers were attacked and beat. [At] about nine, some of the guard came to and informed me the town inhabitants were assembling to attack the troops and that the bells were ringing as the signal for that purpose. I saw the people in great commotion, and heard them use the most cruel and horrid threats against the troops. In a few minutes after I reached the guard, about a hundred people passed it and went towards the custom house where the king's money is lodged. They immediately surrounded the sentry posted there and with clubs and other weapons threatened to execute their vengeance on him. I was soon informed by a townsman their intention was to carry off the soldier from his post and probably murder him. This I feared might be a prelude to their plundering the king's chest.

I immediately sent a non-commissioned officer and twelve men to protect both the sentry and the king's money, and very soon I followed … so far was I from intending the death of any person that I suffered the troops to go to the spot where the unhappy affair took place without any loading in their pieces [guns] nor did I ever give orders for loading them. The mob still increased and were more outrageous, striking their clubs or bludgeons one against another, and calling out, 'Come on you rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels, fire if you dare, God damn you, fire and be damned, we know you dare not'. At this time I was between the soldiers and the mob, endeavouring all in my power to retire peaceably, but to no purpose. They advanced to the points of the bayonets, struck some of them and even the muzzles of the pieces, and seemed to be endeavouring to close with the soldiers. They then asked me if I intended to order the men to fire. I answered no …

While I was thus speaking, one of the soldiers having received a severe blow with a stick, stepped a little on one side and instantly fired, on which turning to and asking him why he fired without orders, I was struck with a club on my arm, which for some time deprived me of the use of it. Had it been placed on my head [it] most probably would have destroyed me. On this a general attack was made on the men by a great number of heavy clubs and snowballs being thrown at them … Instantly three or four of the soldiers fired, one after another, and directly after three more in the same confusion and hurry. The mob then ran away, except three unhappy men who instantly expired.[24]

23 'A Poem in Memory of the never to be forgotten Fifth of March, 1770,' Massachusetts Historical Society, http://www.masshist.org/database/2725?ft=Boston%20Massacre&from=/features/massacre&noalt=1&pid=34.

24 *An Impartial History of the War in America, Between Great Britain, Volume 1* (Michigan: Gale Ecco, 2010) 190

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Read the Boston broadside about 5 March 1770 and the account of the same evening by Captain Thomas Preston. Then complete the tasks below.

1. Summarise the two perspectives on the events of 5 March.
2. Is one perspective more convincing than the other? Give evidence to support your answer.
3. Referring to both accounts, describe the social and political atmosphere of Boston in March 1770.

'THE BLOODY MASSACRE' – A STUDY IN PROPAGANDA

Paul Revere, a life-long resident of Boston, was best known as a skilled silversmith, though he also dabbled in drawing and engraving. From the late 1760s Revere produced several political drawings and satires, generally mimicking others produced in London. In the wake of the shootings of 5 March 1770 Revere produced a pen-and-ink sketch, now held by the Boston Library, showing the position of the dead and injured in King Street. It is detailed enough to suggest that he was probably there. Several days later Revere constructed another representation altogether, an engraving entitled 'The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street'. Esther Forbes says of the engraving:

> Revere was primarily interested in the political aspects of his print, not in its art or accuracy ... In the engraving the soldiers are standing in a straight line, firing at an almost equally straight line of extremely non-belligerent inhabitants. An awkward space is filled in by exploding gunpowder and a bored mongrel dog. Captain Preston, with an evil grin and a sword, urges on his men ... That night every man fought for himself, but in the engraving the shooting is in a regular volley. Attucks is not black. There is no snow. The sky is blue – only a faint moon suggests that all this happened at night. The sign over the custom house, 'Butcher's Hall', is sheer propaganda. Yet Revere did what he wanted to do – produce, as fast as possible, a hair-raising Whiggish version of the 'bloody work in King Street.' He was so successful Josiah Quincy warned the jury which tried the British soldiers against 'the prints exhibited in our houses' which had added 'wings to fancy'.[25]

Revere's engraving appeared three weeks after the events of 5 March and he put considerable effort into selling it around Massachusetts at eight pence a sheet. Evidence soon came to light, however, that while Revere had engraved the piece he was not the original artist. The idea was instead plagiarised from a drawing by Henry Pelham. By the time Pelham got around to distributing his own image, Revere's version had already flooded the market.

Captain Preston and eight of his men were arrested, detained and committed to trial; they found it difficult to find legal representation. John Adams, a lawyer from Braintree (also in Massachusetts) who had been a vocal opponent of the Stamp Act, agreed to defend the soldiers. Though such a decision might have been expected to ruin Adams' career, he was elected to the Massachusetts assembly a few months later, suggesting that anger over the 5 March shootings was not as strong among the upper classes as it was among commoners. Indeed, there was a feeling amongst the elites that the shootings were provoked by the mob, and by the victims themselves.

This sentiment formed the basis of Adams' defence. He fervently contended that the dead men were members of 'a motley rabble of saucy boys, negroes and mulattos, Irish teagues and outlandish Jack Tars,'[26] in other words, a gang of drunks, African Americans, people of mixed race, rough farmers and sailors. The five deceased were known brawlers and rioters whose preferred evening hobby was beating up 'redcoats' for sport. Adams' witnesses affirmed the poor behaviour of the mob, while Patrick Carr's deathbed testimony – that the soldiers endured much before firing – was accepted by the court. The accusation that Captain Preston gave an order to fire was, crucially, not upheld. The jury members, all of whom had been recruited from outside Boston, found Preston and six of his soldiers not guilty of murder. Two soldiers who fired into the crowd were convicted of manslaughter but received the relatively light sentence of thumb-branding.

25 Esther Forbes, *Paul Revere and the World he Lived In* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 160.
26 Cited in John C. Miller, *Sam Adams: Pioneer in Propaganda* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1936), 179.

DID YOU KNOW?

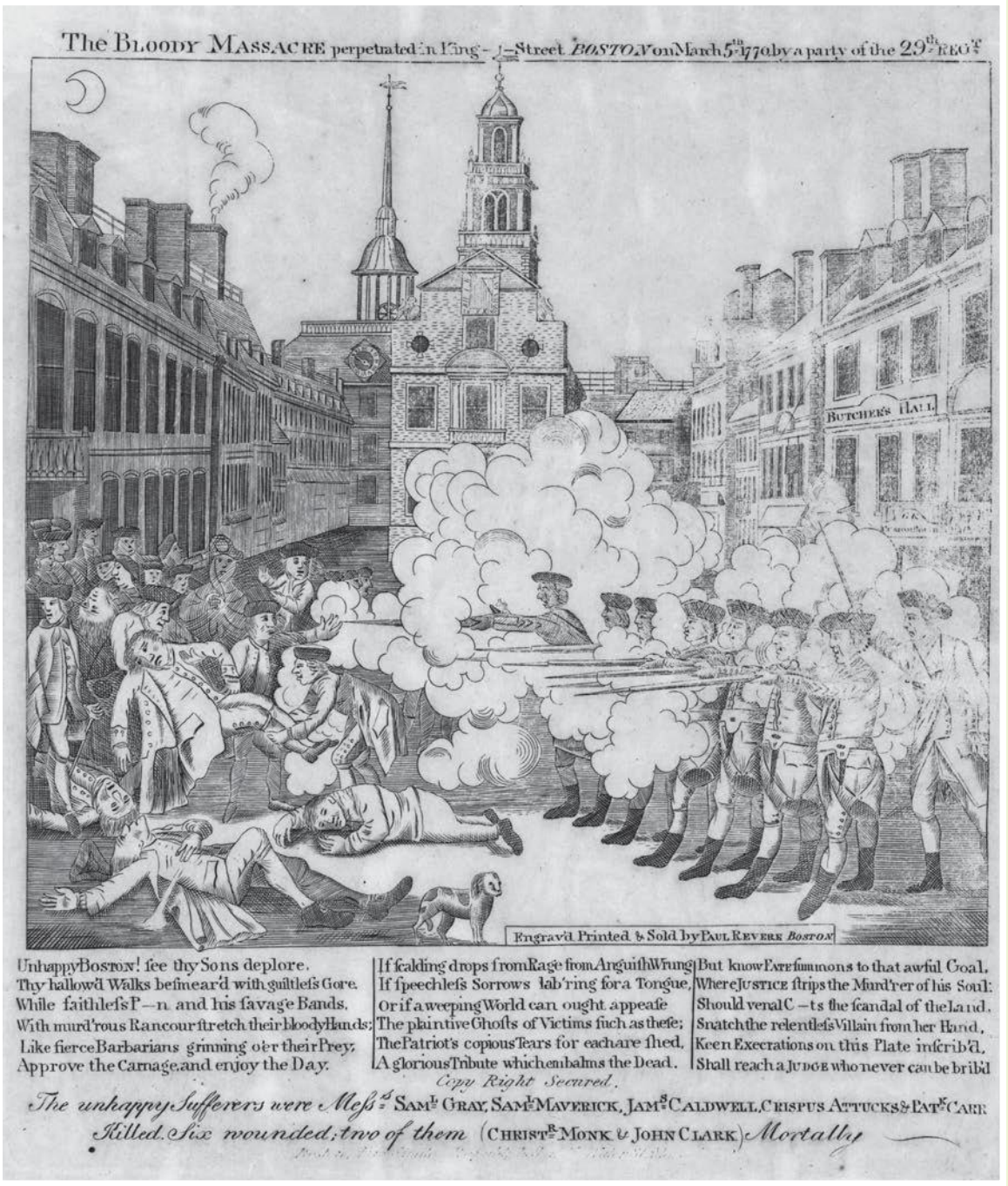
For a time Paul Revere advertised himself as a dentist, taking several patients. He had no training or experience in dentistry but believed his skills as a silversmith were sufficient.

Revere later received a letter from the infuriated Pelham, reading in part: 'When I heard you were cutting a plate of the late murder, I knew you were not capable of doing it unless you had copied it from mine.'

ACTIVITY

COMPARATIVE SOURCE ANALYSIS

Examine the representation of the 'Boston Massacre' below and find another primary source on the same event. Which source do you find the most accurate, based on your knowledge of the event?



'The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt.' Engraved, printed and sold by Paul Revere, Boston.

DISORDER AND DESTRUCTION

DID YOU KNOW?

The city of Sydney was named in honour of Charles Townshend's cousin, the 1st Viscount Sydney, who was a key minister when the First Fleet landed in 1788.

Despite some expressions of disgruntlement at the verdict on the 'Boston Massacre,' British soldiers remained garrisoned in Boston and the city soon settled down, enjoying comparative calm through 1771. This was largely due to the repeal of the Townshend duties, which were struck out by parliament on the same day as the 'massacre.' The repeal was due, in part, to the non-importation pacts which, though never widespread, still managed to trim £700 000 from British profits. The new British prime minister, Lord North, was keen to approach colonial policy in his own way rather than imitate his forebears. It was not, however, an entirely clean break: North insisted on retaining the tea duty as a symbolic gesture of parliamentary sovereignty over the American colonies. This would ultimately prove costly.

Despite the lull in Boston, troublesome events continued elsewhere in the colonies. In North Carolina the bitter feud between the Regulators and the colonial government reached its peak in mid-1771. The Regulators were a provincial militia comprised of common farmers and craftsmen. Their anger was fuelled by gross inequality, high taxes, corrupt government officials and the lavish spending of the governor on his own mansion. Tax collectors were the main target of the Regulators, receiving regular harassment and beatings from them from the mid-1760s onwards. The Regulators were eventually crushed after a telling defeat in May 1771; some members were arrested and executed while others fled to other colonies or avoided recriminations by renouncing the group and signing oaths of allegiance.

The burning of the British ship HMS *Gaspee* also served to perpetuate revolutionary sentiment in the colonies. The *Gaspee* was a twin-masted customs vessel deployed to Rhode Island, a colony notorious for smuggling, at the beginning of 1772. In June, while chasing a small merchant craft, the *Gaspee* ran aground in shallow water. The local Sons of Liberty boarded the ship, wounded the captain and burned the *Gaspee* to the waterline. This was not the first attack on a British customs ship but it was by far the most destructive. Officials made a concerted effort to identify the culprits and bring them to justice, even conducting a royal commission into the affair, but they were unable to make any arrests. News of the *Gaspee's* destruction – as well as rumours that colonial suspects might be tried in England – caused a sensation throughout the American colonies.

'Burning of the *Gaspee*.'

FEATURE

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: MERCANTILISM

Because the events of the 1760s mark the beginnings of the American Revolution, historians have studied them closely. Different theories have emerged about how and why the revolution occurred. Some historians argue that the events in America must be viewed in the fuller context of the British Empire: its composition, complexities and administrative challenges. Both the colonies and the empire were changing throughout the eighteenth century; the revolution was as much a product of changing perceptions as it was of tensions between Britons and Americans.

These historians tend to view mercantilism – the principle that colonies exist to enrich the mother country – as having been mutually beneficial, allowing both Britain and her colonies to flourish. Problems only arose when British ministers attempted to re-interpret and strengthen mercantilist legislation when logic suggested that it should have been wound back. For these theorists the origins of the revolution lay in a clash of interests, not an ideological concern with rights and liberties. Charles Andrews (1863–1943) asserts that prior to the late 1760s ideas about colonial rights were barely relevant to most Americans. Natural rights were a 'subject of more or less legal and metaphysical speculation' that had little 'marked influence on the popular mind'. By 1770, however, what began as a set of grievances transformed into 'a political and constitutional movement and only secondarily one that was financial, commercial or social.'[27]

While Andrews undermined the view that mercantilism was a flawed policy, Lewis Namier (1888–1960) attacked the belief that George III was an interfering tyrant whose actions provoked revolution. Namier's ground-breaking studies of British politics in the 1700s examined individuals and factions within the parliament, concluding that most acted in their own self-interest. The role

Cartoon showing George III and Lord Mansfield, seated on an open chaise drawn by two horses labelled 'Obstinacy' and 'Pride,' about to lead Britain into an abyss representing the war with the American colonies.

played by the king in forming policy was more benign (harmless) than previously suggested: George III appointed ministers, as was his responsibility, but he almost always listened to their advice and rarely interfered in matters of policy. The monarch's refusal to act upon American petitions was not pig-headed arrogance, according to Namier, but appropriate behaviour for a constitutional monarch, leaving matters of government and empire to his ministry.

Lawrence H. Gipson (1880–1971) focused on broader changes within the empire, particularly the effects of the English triumph in the French and Indian War. Gipson argued that this victory created a geo-political void in North America, radically altering the perspective of colonists. No longer hemmed in and threatened by France and Spain, British-Americans redefined their conceptions of 'empire'; they began to conceive of a North America that they would own and run themselves. Suddenly, British rule in America no longer seemed either necessary or relevant.

According to Gipson, victory in the French and Indian War:

> not only freed colonials for the first time in the history of the English-speaking people in the New World from the dread of the French, their Indian allies, and the Spaniards, but ... opened up to them the prospect, if given freedom of action, of a vast growth of power and wealth with an amazing westward expansion ... If many Americans thought they had a perfect right to profit personally by trading with the enemy in time of war, how much more deeply must they have resented – in time of peace – the serious efforts made by the home government to enforce the elaborate restrictions on commercial trade?[28]

Authur M. Schlesinger Jr argues that the origins of the American Revolution can be found in seemingly ordinary items such as rum and molasses. (See document below).

27 Charles Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 135.
28 Lawrence Gipson, 'The American Revolution as an Aftermath of the Great War for Empire' in *Political Science Quarterly* 65 (March 1950): 102.
29 Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (Washington DC: Beard Books, 1939), 59–61.

DOCUMENT

ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER JR, *THE COLONIAL MERCHANTS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*

> A keen observer declared in retrospect ... that the union among the colonies had derived 'its original source [from] a confederacy of Smugglers in Boston, Rhode Island and other seaport towns ....' These gentry were aided and abetted by the rum-distillers, who were particularly powerful in New England. John Adams was franker than most historians when he reflected in his old age: 'I know not why we should blush to confess that molasses was an essential ingredient in American independence'.
>
> The first move was made by the merchants of Boston in April 1763, when they organised the 'Society for encouraging Trade and Commerce within the province of Massachusetts Bay ... The merchants of New York were next to take action. Of these merchants Lieutenant-Governor Colden said: "Many of them have rose suddenly from the lowest rank of the people, to considerable fortunates, and chiefly by illicit trade in the last war. They abhor every limitation of trade and duty on it ...."' At the suggestion of the New York committee of merchants, the merchants of Philadelphia became active and appointed a committee to urge the Pennsylvania assembly to solicit Parliament to discontinue the molasses duties.[29]

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Read about different historical interpretations above and complete the tasks below.

1. According to Schlesinger, what was the source of union between the colonies? What role did colonial merchants play in the development of revolution?
2. How does Schlesinger's emphasis differ from that of Lawrence Gipson? Are there any similarities?
3. What do the interpretations of Schlesinger, Gipson, Andrews and Namier add to your understanding of how Britain's mercantilism affected the American colonies?

CONCLUSION

Victory in the French and Indian War in 1763 filled British America with relief and optimism. The great shadow of France had been removed from the west, opening up new territories and dispersing the Catholic 'menace'. The ministry in London, now dominated by conservatives, began to wonder how it could govern and defend its American possessions in a more cost-effective way. Managing settlement of the newly-acquired western lands and preventing conflict with native tribes required a continued military presence. It was therefore decided that the colonies must contribute something to revenue in order to ease the burden on England's war-weary treasury.

This policy shift resulted in a raft of legislation and taxes that invoked a storm of protest in America. Colonists of all kinds – assemblymen, merchants, townfolk, farmers and housewives – were swept up in a tide of anti-British dissent. Each tax dispute, trade duty, skirmish with soldiers or attack on a customs official heightened passions and made reconciliation all the more difficult. The decade beginning 1763 was, therefore, awash with community action, determined individuals, new-found ideologies, propaganda and even violence. In 1773 colonial gesture politics – as well as another hated British law – would set the colonies on the road to revolution.

TEST YOUR LEARNING

CHAPTER REVIEW

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – ESSAY

Write an essay of 600–800 words on one of the topics below. Your essay should include an introduction, paragraphs supported by primary source evidence and historical interpretations, a conclusion and a bibliography.

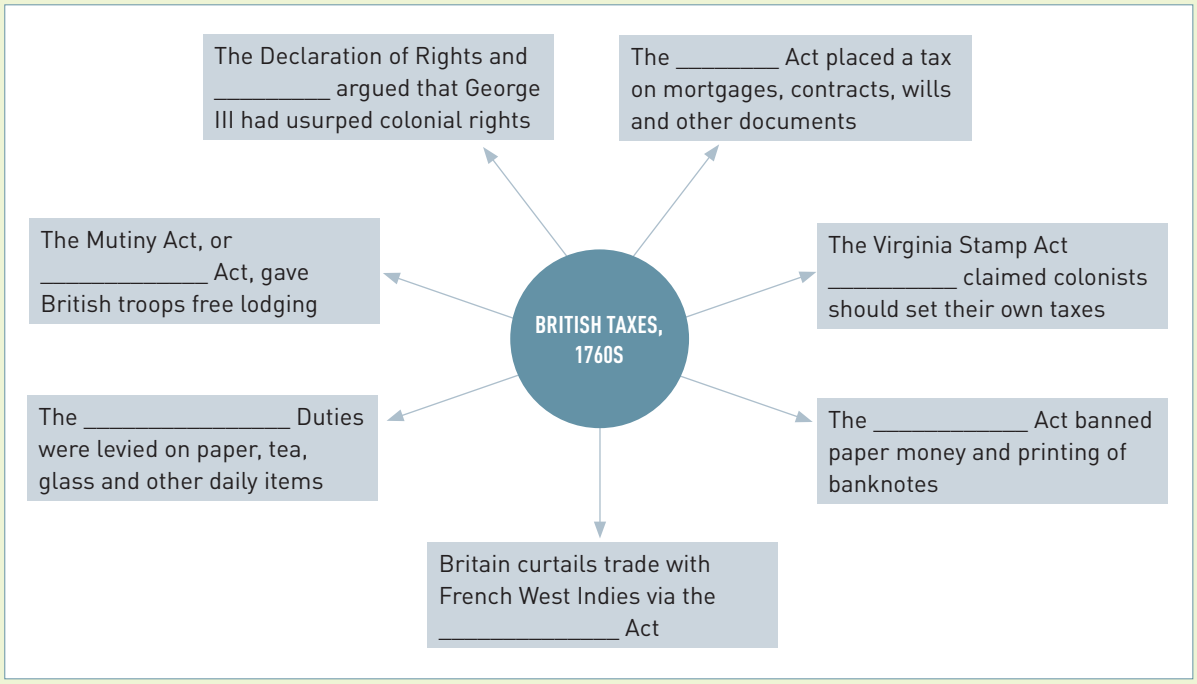
Alternatively, hold a class debate on one of the topics.

Topics:

- 'The American colonists overreacted to a series of unpleasant but necessary measures, such as the Stamp Act.'
- 'British mercantilism was to blame for much of the tension in pre-revolution America.'
- 'The so-called Boston Massacre was just one example of the American revolutionaries winning the propaganda war against Britain.'
- 'The Sugar Act of 1764 marked a turning point in the American Revolution.'

CAUSES OF REVOLUTION – FILL IN THE BLANKS

Fill in the blanks in the diagram with the missing words listed below.



Missing words:

- Sugar
- Currency
- Quartering
- Stamp
- Resolves
- Grievances
- Townshend

POPULAR MOVEMENTS – SUMMARIES

Read summaries of the following popular movements in the Glossary: Patriots, the Sons of Liberty, the Daughters of Liberty, the Committees of Correspondence and the Provincial Congresses. Find an example of the activities of each group in Section A of the book.

TEST YOUR LEARNING

EXTENSION

Find out how much support there was for the American colonists in Britain after 1765. For example, look at the criticisms made by William Pitt, Edmund Burke and John Wilkes of British actions in relation to the thirteen colonies.

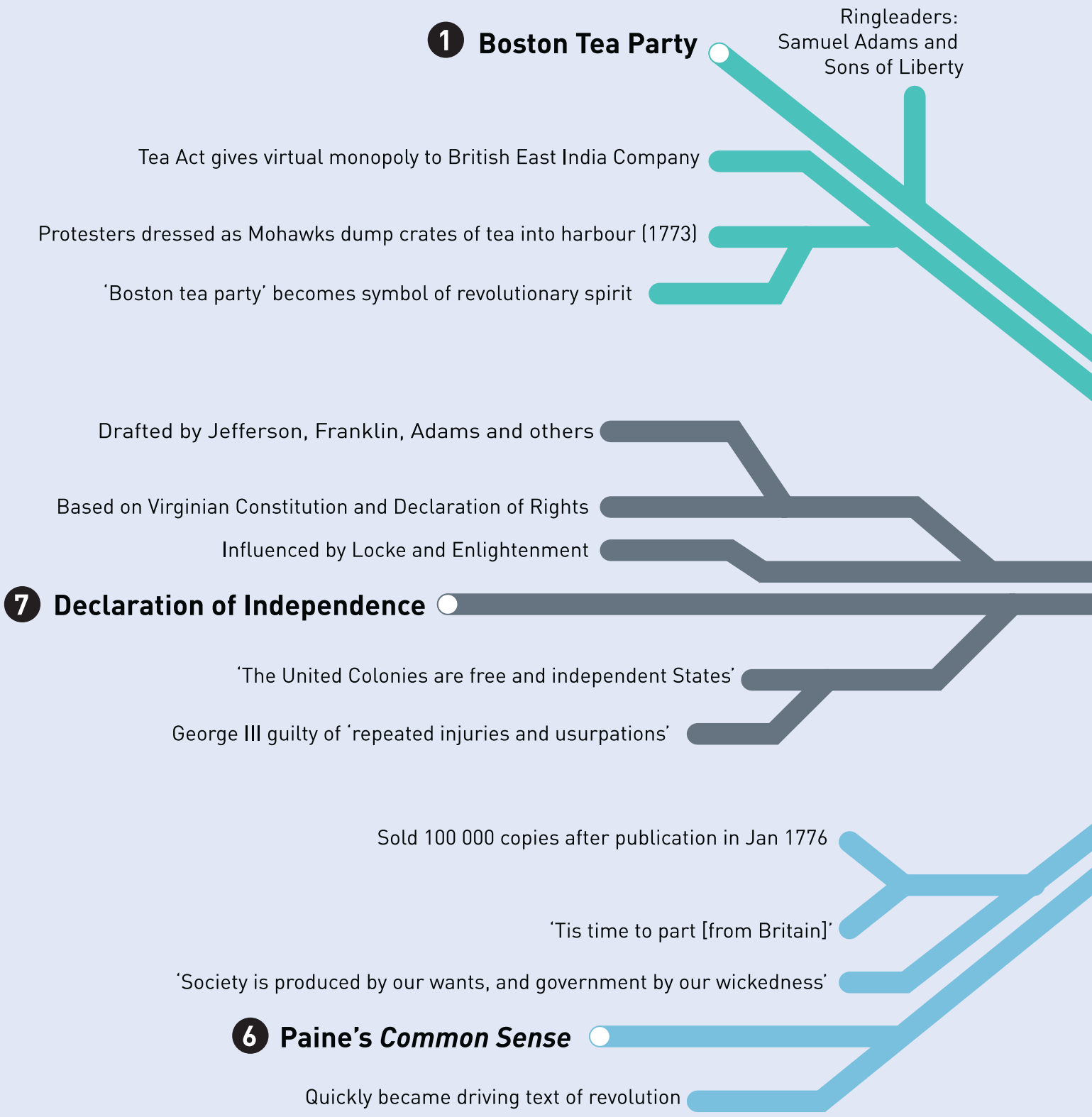
CHAPTER

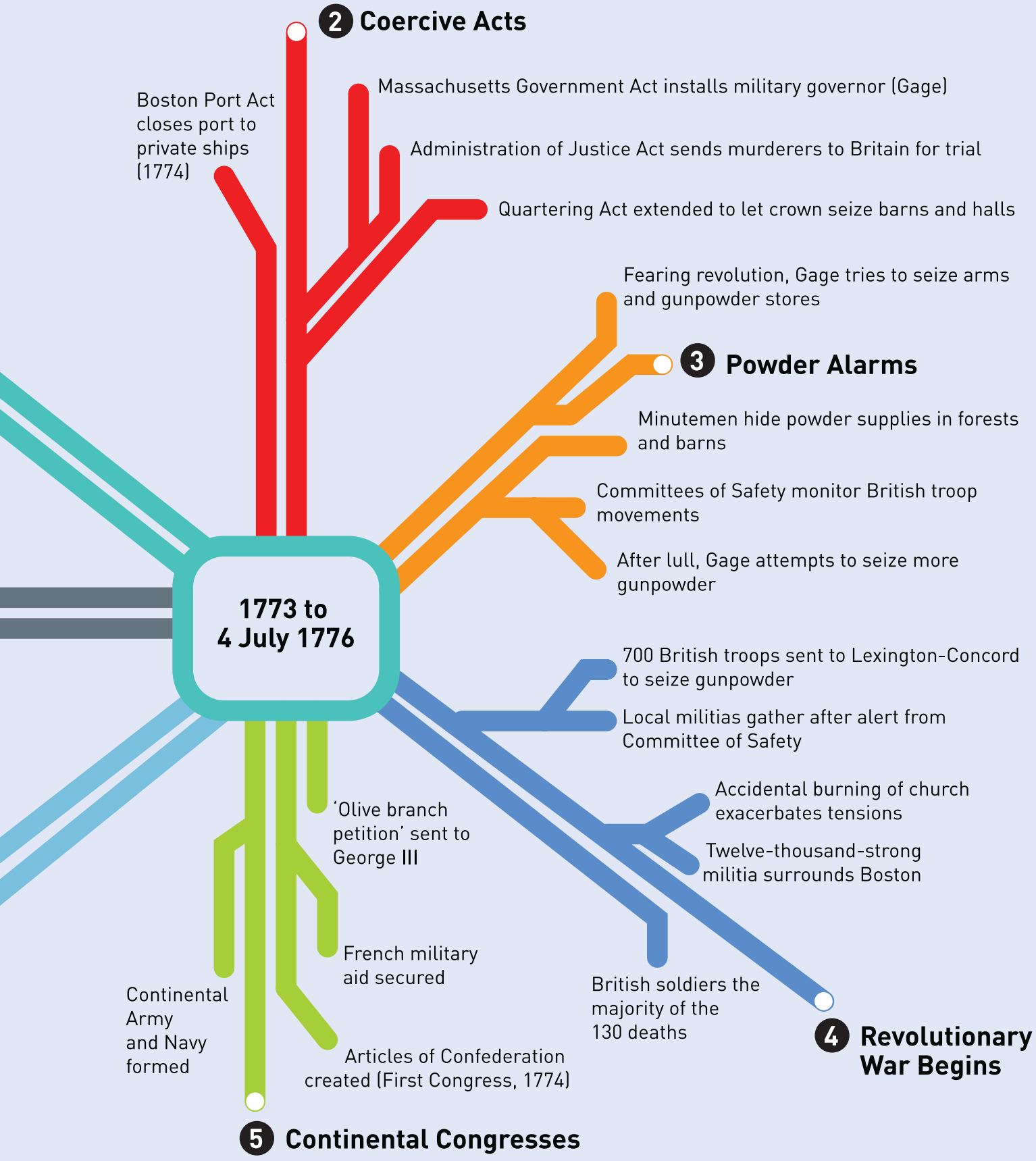
4

BREAKING WITH THE MOTHER COUNTRY

(1773–4 JULY 1776)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW




1773 to
4 July 1776
2 Coercive Acts
Boston Port Act closes port to private ships (1774)
Massachusetts Government Act installs military governor (Gage)
Administration of Justice Act sends murderers to Britain for trial
Quartering Act extended to let crown seize barns and halls
3 Powder Alarms
Fearing revolution, Gage tries to seize arms and gunpowder stores
Minutemen hide powder supplies in forests and barns
Committees of Safety monitor British troop movements
After lull, Gage attempts to seize more gunpowder
4 Revolutionary War Begins
700 British troops sent to Lexington-Concord to seize gunpowder
Local militias gather after alert from Committee of Safety
Accidental burning of church exacerbates tensions
Twelve-thousand-strong militia surrounds Boston
British soldiers the majority of the 130 deaths
5 Continental Congresses
'Olive branch petition' sent to George III
French military aid secured
Continental Army and Navy formed
Articles of Confederation created (First Congress, 1774)

INTRODUCTION

Following the 'Boston Massacre' and other events, Massachusetts remained tense during the 1770s; however, the situation took a turn for the worse in 1774. Following the wilful destruction of British East India Company property at the 'Boston tea party' in December the previous year, parliament passed four acts intended to restore order in the colony. Dissolution of the local assembly, installation of a military governor, an increase in troops and the closure of the harbour all followed. Knowing that Massachusetts could never stand against England alone, radicals like Samuel Adams sought inter-colonial support by painting the plight of Boston as a continental crisis. Doing so was difficult, given the historical disunity and distrust between the thirteen colonies; some people believed that the Bostonians had brought the problem on themselves.

Ideas and proposals travelled between the colonies, driven by Adams' own propaganda vehicle, the Committees of Correspondence. A meeting of colonial delegates was scheduled to discuss the events in Massachusetts. This rare attempt at an American consensus took root; the Continental Congress that emerged became, later, the first national government. Back in Boston tensions had increased and preparations were made for war, the colonists stockpiling weapons and organising militias. When the newly-appointed military governor attempted to short-circuit their plans by seizing stores of gunpowder, he provoked a skirmish with local farmers at Lexington. This was the first battle in what became the American War of Independence.

Despite bitter fighting in the remainder of 1775, when the new year dawned many Americans remained reticent about independence; some feared that rejecting the mother country and spurning a monarchical system of government might imperil the social fabric of their world. In his seminal work *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine argued that England was corrupt, that monarchy was flawed and that the American colonies could and should be independent. Paine's ideas, expressed in an accessible and logical way, convinced many people of the need to separate from Britain. In July 1776, the Continental Congress passed a Declaration of Independence.

East India House in London, painted by Thomas Malton the Younger, c. 1800.

A TUMULT OVER TEA

At the beginning of 1773, the British East India Company – the world's largest corporation at the time – faced a significant problem. Oversupply and a slump in European demand had left the company with a massive surplus of Asian tea. With its future at risk, the company sought assistance from the British government, which accordingly passed the Tea Act in May 1773. This legislation gave the East India Company

easy access to colonial markets. Its agents were authorised to avoid colonial merchants and ship tea directly to American cities. There it could be sold legally and, more importantly, at lower prices than the tea Americans had been smuggling in from the French and Dutch. The act seemed like it would benefit both Britain and colonial consumers.

Contrary to popular belief, the Tea Act did not impose a new tax on tea. The Townshend duty of 1767 remained in place on tea alone. But even with this duty added, the wholesale price of British East India tea would be a remarkable nine pence per pound cheaper than the other tea being sold in the colonies. British parliamentarians expected that the proposition would be too attractive for the colonists; Prime Minister North, in particular, believed that their high principles about taxation and representation would wither away in the face of discounted tea.

But Lord North did not reckon on the radicals whipping up anti-taxation sentiment in American cities. The Tea Act was portrayed as a sly attempt to import and sell a taxed commodity. The tea traders whose profits were threatened by the East India Company's entry into the American market were of course at the forefront of the protest. Non-importation agreements were strengthened; women pledged not to drink the 'king's brew' while men talked of tougher retribution against royal officers and Loyalists. A meeting in New York in October 1773 declared that 'the resolution lately entered into by the East India Company, to send out their tea to America subject to the payment of duties on its being landed here, is an open attempt to enforce the ministerial plan and a violent attack upon the liberties of America.' They decided that the cargo of Company tea ships would not be unloaded and, hence, the duty would not be paid.

DID YOU KNOW?

By the mid-1700s the British East India Company was, in effect, the ruling authority and military power in India. There, policy decisions were made at shareholders' meetings, not by the British government.

DOCUMENT

SONG ATTRIBUTED TO BOSTON SONS OF LIBERTY, 1773

Rally Mohawks! Bring out your axes!
And tell King George we'll pay no taxes
On his foreign tea!
His threats are vain – and vain to think
To force our girls and wives to drink
His vile Bohea [tea]!

Then rally boys and hasten on
To meet our Chiefs at the Green Dragon.
Our Warren's there, and bold Revere
With hands to do and words to cheer
For Liberty and Laws!
Our country's braves and firm defenders
Shall never be left by true North-Enders
Fighting Freedom's cause!

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the lyrics to the song by the Boston Sons of Liberty and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify how the song uses language to persuade, e.g. the use of the terms 'mohawks' and 'braves.'
2. Explain the reference to 'girls and wives' in the song. Why were females presented as victims of the Tea Act?
3. 'Warren' refers to Joseph Warren, Bostonian doctor, soldier and revolutionary. Explain the reference to 'bold Revere.' (See Chapter 3.)
4. What is suggested by the phrase 'true North-Enders'?
5. According to the song, which two main things were the Sons of Liberty fighting for? Why would the Tea Act have been in conflict with these aims?

1 Eldridge Henry Goss, ed. *The Life of Colonel Paul Revere* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., Gregg Press, 1972), pp. 123-24

A TEA PARTY

DID YOU KNOW?

The stock destroyed in the Boston Tea Party weighed forty-five tons and was enough to make 24 million cups of tea.

DID YOU KNOW?

Griffin's Wharf was dismantled soon after the revolution and its exact whereabouts is now a mystery.

The arrival of three tea-bearing ships in Boston Harbor in late November 1773 prompted a stand-off between local gangs, the shipping companies and the royal governor, by the then much-maligned Thomas Hutchinson. When the *Dartmouth*, the first ship, dropped anchor, Samuel Adams and Boston's Sons of Liberty convened several well-attended public meetings. They summoned royal officials, merchants, dockyard workers, even the owners of tea ships, giving them strict orders that the tea should not be unloaded. Gangs kept watch on the docks to ensure compliance. Meanwhile Hutchinson, determined to implement London's policies, was working equally as hard to get the tea ashore.

Under the terms of Tea Act, the *Dartmouth* was required to unload its cargo within twenty days of arrival, a deadline set to expire on 16 December. By this time it had been joined by two more tea ships, the *Eleanor* and the *Beaver*. Adams called yet another town meeting, this one by far the largest with more than 6000 people attending. After dark a band of men – perhaps as many as fifty, all crudely dressed as Native Americans – skulked quietly towards Griffin's Wharf. The three vessels were boarded and their holds burgled; 342 chests of tea were raised to the deck and toppled into the shallow water. It was all done quietly, under cover of darkness, to avoid attention from soldiers or officials. There was little violence, save for some jostling of the crew and one broken padlock:

A similar incident occurred at Hubbard's Wharf, Boston in March 1774, where sixteen chests of tea belonging to Davidson, Newman and Company were tipped into the saltwater. Hutchinson's determination to force the unloading of East India tea was a significant factor in both these events. Elsewhere in the colonies there had been stand-offs of a similar kind, yet other governors and high officials

2 Cited in James Hawk, 'Eyewitness acount of the Boston Tea Party,' in *A Retrospect of the Boston Tea Party with a memoir of George R. T. Hewes* (New York: S. S. Bliss, 1834)

DOCUMENT

GEORGE HEWES, EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF 16 DECEMBER 1773

> During the time we were throwing the tea overboard there were several attempts made by some of the citizens of Boston and its vicinity to carry off small quantities of it for their family use. To effect that object they would watch their opportunity to snatch up a handful from the deck, where it became plentifully scattered, and put it into their pockets.
>
> One Captain O'Connor, whom I well knew, came on board for that purpose, and when he supposed he was not noticed, filled his pockets and also the lining of his coat. But I had detected him and gave information to the captain of what he was doing. We were ordered to take him into custody and just as he was stepping from the vessel, I seized him by the skirt of his coat … By a rapid effort he made his escape. He had, however, to run a gauntlet through the crowd upon the wharf nine, each one, as he passed, giving him a kick or a stroke [hit].
>
> Another attempt was made to save a little tea from the ruins of the cargo by a tall, aged man who wore a large cocked hat and white wig … He had slyly slipped a little into his pocket, but being detected, they seized him and, taking his hat and wig from his head, threw them, together with the tea, of which they had emptied his pockets, into the water. In consideration of his advanced age, he was permitted to escape, with now and then a slight kick.[2]

ACTIVITY

SKETCH

Spend 5–10 minutes creating a sketch or cartoon of the incident described in the last paragraph of George Hewes' account of the Boston Tea Party (above). Share with the rest of your class.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at the image of the Boston Tea Party and complete the tasks below.

1. Describe the actions and demeanour of the Americans in the representation.
2. Speculate on the dress of the perpetrators of the Boston Tea Party. Why do you think they chose this type of costume?
3. To what extent is this an accurate record of events in Boston on 16 December 1773?
4. Using your broader knowledge, explain why the Boston Tea Party has been celebrated as a revolutionary turning point.

Destruction of tea at Boston Harbor.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fifty-nine men and boys are known to have participated in the Boston Tea Party. The last survivor, David Kinnison, lived to the age of 115; the year before he died he was interviewed about his role in the event.

KEY EVENTS: BOSTON TEA PARTY

kept their distance and refused to intervene. Public demonstrations forced ships in New York to return to England with their tea unloaded. In Philadelphia the tea was brought ashore but left to rot in locked warehouses. In Charleston it was unloaded, then seized, secured and later auctioned off to help fund the war effort.

No other colony had responded as strongly and as destructively as Massachusetts, whose daring drew a mixed reception. Within Massachusetts itself the actions of the 'tea party' were praised heartily. John Adams, writing the following day, commented that 'there is a dignity, a majesty … in this last effort of the Patriots that I greatly admire.'[3] Others thought it nothing more than an act of vandalism. One Boston newspaper suggested that whenever 'people rise to such a pitch of insolence as to prevent the execution of the laws, or destroy the property of individuals … there is an end of all order and government.'[4] Benjamin Franklin called it 'an act of violent injustice,' pointing out that the Bostonians had attacked a private corporation to protest against a government policy.[5] Franklin, John Dickinson and others urged payment for the lost tea.

3 Letter to Abigail Adams, 17 December 1773.
4 Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (Washington: Beard Books, 1939), 299
5 Ralph Ketcham, ed., *The Political Thought of Benjamin Franklin* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2003), 278–9.

DID YOU KNOW?

Thomas Hutchinson fled to England and served briefly as colonial adviser to the ministry. He advised Lord North that the Coercive Acts should be replaced with more moderate measures – his advice was ignored.

ACTIVITIES

DEBATE

As a class, debate the topic below. Appoint affirmative and negative speakers (three of each) and a time-keeper. Each speaker has three minutes to make their case. The rest of the class should vote on which team was the most convincing.

Topic: 'The Boston Tea Party was more about vandalism than heroism.'

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

With your class, discuss why the Boston Tea Party provoked such different responses at the time. How does the event appear today, with the benefit of hindsight?

KEY EVENTS: THE COERCIVE ACTS

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

The colonial 'tea-dunking' prompted disgust in the commercial and political circles of London. Parliament resolved to haul the Massachusetts radicals into line, recover the cost of the lost tea and restore some semblance of order to New England. Lord North told MPs in the House of Commons that 'the Americans have tarred and feathered your subjects, plundered your merchants, burnt your ships, denied all obedience to your laws and authority; yet so [tolerant] has our conduct been that it is incumbent on us now to take a different course. Whatever may be the consequences, we must risk something; if we do not, all is over.'[6]

Engraving of Lord North.

A series of 'coercive acts' followed. On 30 March 1774, North's government passed the Boston Port Act, closing the docks to all private shipping. Four warships were deployed to lend muscle to the act, blockading the entrance to Boston Harbor. All unapproved maritime commerce ceased, as did deep-sea fishing in the Atlantic, an important commodity for Boston's markets. The ministry went even further on 20 May, passing the Massachusetts Government Act which revoked the colony's charter, suspended its assembly and replaced Thomas Hutchinson with a military commander, General Thomas Gage. Boston would remain under military rule until order was reclaimed and the East India Company was compensated for the destroyed goods.

Anticipating further violence between mobs and soldiers, parliament also pushed through the Administration of Justice Act on 20 May 1774. This legislation gave the governor, at his discretion, the authority to send persons charged with murder to trial in England, away from the potentially hostile juries and judges of New England. The radicals called this the 'murder act,' perceiving it to be a licence to kill for loyalists and British soldiers. The fourth and final installment of coercive legislation was an update of the quartering provisions on 2 June: the measures contained in the 1765 Mutiny Act remained, however governors were now authorised to forcibly take possession of halls, barns and vacant buildings (though still not occupied homes).

6 Cited in Henry Commanger, *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six: the Story of the American Revolution as Told by its Participants* (New York: HarperCollins, 1975), 13.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at 'Bostonians in Distress' and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify three symbols or features connecting this representation to the Coercive Acts.
2. Who do the men in the boat represent? Why are there fish in the boat?
3. The words on the paper held by the man in the cage (standing) read: 'They tried with the Lord in their Troubl [trouble] and he saved them out of their Distress.' What is the significance of these words?
4. How useful is this source for understanding the situation in Boston at the end of 1774? Refer to other sources of evidence and to historical interpretations.

'Bostonians in Distress.'

THE QUEBEC QUANDARY

News of the Quebec Act arrived in America in 1774, around the same time the four Coercive Acts were implemented. The legislation radically expanded Quebec, extending its territory across the Great Lakes and south to the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Quebec became almost three times as large, spanning the area now occupied by Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana. As New France had previously done, Quebec dwarfed the thirteen colonies and boxed them in against the Appalachians and the east coast.

The legislation also changed the way Quebec was organised and governed. Since acquiring the territory in 1763, British administrators had encountered numerous problems. Quebec was still populated by 70 000 French settlers; most were Catholic and the majority spoke little or no English. Since all elected and appointed officials in British colonies were required to swear loyalty to the Protestant faith, this effectively excluded Quebec's French Catholic population. British legal codes and systems of land management were also introduced.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Quebec Act allowed for the reintroduction of the tithe (a compulsory donation to the Catholic Church) and the corvee (a stint of unpaid labour for a landowner), both unpopular with ordinary Americans.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANNOTATION

Look carefully at 'The Able Doctor' by Paul Revere and complete the tasks below.

1. Photocopy the representation or download it from the internet.
2. Attach notes to relevant parts of the representation, explaining the people, symbols, events and ideas depicted, as well as the tone of the representation.
3. Compare your annotated source with those of other students. Discuss what the representation communicates about perceptions of power relations between Britian and the colonies.

'The Able Doctor, or, America swallowing the bitter draught.' Paul Revere, 1774.

DID YOU KNOW?

The St Bartholomew's Day Massacre was a killing spree in Paris in 1572. Catholics rampaged through the city, murdering between 5000 and 30 000 Huguenots (French Protestants).

Parliament sought to strike a balance between British rule and French values. Amongst the compromises made was the continuation of French civil law for solving disputes, while British common law was retained for criminal matters. The oath of office was replaced by one making no reference to Protestantism, meaning that Catholics were now able to hold political positions. Freedom of religion was affirmed in Quebec; Jesuit missionaries were permitted back into the region for the first time since 1764.

The act riled Americans for two reasons. For Protestant New Englanders it raised the spectre of French Catholicism: 'We may live to see our churches converted [into] mass houses, and lands plundered of tithes for the support of a Popish clergy; the Inquisition may erect her standard in Pennsylvania and the city of Philadelphia may yet experience the carnage of a St. Bartholomew's Day.'[7]

7 *Pennsylvania Packet*, 31 October 1774.

DID YOU KNOW?

Today, Quebec is Canada's largest province by area, the second-largest by population and the only one with French as its official language. Quebec nationalism – the belief that the province should break away to form its own nation – is a powerful and sometimes destabilising force in Canadian politics.

The views of many were summed up by Philip Reading's sermon to the Christ Church in Philadelphia: 'What shall we pursue in defence of our native rights and privilege, when these dogs of hell ... dare to erect their heads ... Shall we not rise up as one man and with united hearts and hands vindicate our [Protestant] religion and [British] liberties?'[8]

The Quebec Act also revived the anger of a decade earlier when George III's proclamation closed off the western territories to settlers and speculators. This time, however, the opportunity seemed permanently lost. This generated anger not only on the frontier but in the halls of power, as Gary B. Nash explains:

> The roll call of Virginia revolutionary leaders was also the roll call of Virginia speculators in western lands whose rights, they believed, had been obliterated by a series of policy decisions, legal judgements and parliamentary acts ... George Mason

8 Philip Reading, 'The Protestant's Danger and the Protestant's Duty' (published sermon, 1755), 6.

Four Anglican bishops dancing around the 'Quebec Bill.'

> had watched the Proclamation of 1763 destroy first his beloved Ohio Company and then his hopes of obtaining 50,000 acres of Kentucky Land … Richard Henry Lee [saw the Quebec Act thwart] his Mississippi Land Company's hopes to lay hands on 2.5 million acres … George Washington had thousands of acres of bounty lands that he purchased cheaply slip from his hands … Thomas Jefferson had invested in three land companies that would have given him 17,000 acres … Patrick Henry saw five of his land ventures disappear like smoke.[9]

Historians since Charles Metzger in the 1930s have recognised that the Quebec Act was an important factor in the spread of revolutionary sentiment beyond Massachusetts. The Coercive Acts, though more severe, were intended for one colony only. John C. Miller suggests that the Quebec Act 'gave colonial propagandists their juiciest plum since the Stamp Act.'[10] The colonial press and propagandists railed against it, forecasting all manner of calamity from the 'Papists' on their western doorstep. Some developed wild conspiracies, suggesting it was a deliberate British attempt to further suppress their rights. One engraving attributed to Paul Revere, 'The Mitred Minuet,' shows an unholy alliance between English politicians, Anglican bishops and Catholics, hovering around the Quebec Act with the Devil providing advice. This rabid propaganda from the autumn and winter of 1774–75 prompted a new wave of anti-Catholic bigotry through most of the colonies.

DOCUMENT

FRANCIS JENNINGS, *THE CREATION OF AMERICA*

> By two main provisions [the effect of the Quebec Act] was to set off Quebec distinctly from the tumultuous colonies farther south. Internally it legalised the Roman Catholic religion and permitted its professors to hold office, thus authorising the governor to appoint Catholics to his governing council – to the frustration of the tiny Protestant minority scheming to take rule into its own hands. Externally the act affected the frontiers by fixing the boundary line of the 1763 Royal Proclamation as Quebec's boundary south to the Ohio River.
>
> Both provisions worked well for Quebec. The majority [French] population achieved its desired freedom of religion and was grateful … Trade with the Indians, Quebec's only [constant] trade, was brought under control … However so far as the rebellious colonies were concerned, the Quebec Act was one more outrageous 'Coercive Act' emanating from London. Liberties for Catholics aroused special rage in New England … For the rebels, the Act was an evil device to win Canadian Catholics against the disaffected Protestant colonies.[11]

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Read the Francis Jennings extract and complete the tasks below.

1. According to Jennings, who was pleased and who was displeased by the Quebec Act, and why? Cite three statements from the document to support your view.
2. Why was the Quebec Act's removal of the ban on Catholics holding office an annoyance for some people in the region and why did the act create particular animosity in New England?
3. Locate an extract about the Quebec Act written by another historian. Note down similarities and differences between it and the Jennings extract. Which interpretation do you find most convincing?

9 Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution* (New York: Viking, 2005), 171–2.
10 John C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1943), 373.
11 Francis Jennings, *The Creation of America* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 146–8.

ACTIVITIES

TABLE

After reading about the four 'Coercive Acts' and the Quebec Act, construct a table like the one below and fill it in.

ACT	DATE/ YEAR	PROVISIONS	BRITISH AIMS	AMERICAN OBJECTIONS	SIGNIFICANCE IN REVOLUTION
Coercive Acts i) Boston Port Act ii) Massachusetts Government Act iii) Administration of Justice Act iv) Quartering Act					
Quebec Act					

DISCUSSION

With your class, discuss why many Americans objected to the Quebec Act. Was it a reasonable objection?

DUNMORE'S PRIVATE WAR

As the British parliament was conceiving the Quebec Act, trouble was brewing on the Virginian frontier. War had broken out between colonists and the area's native tribes, sparked by settlers moving into newly-claimed lands in the west, a region now known as Kentucky. In October 1773 a war party of Delaware, Cherokee and Shawnee natives, fed up with incursions into their lands, ambushed, tortured and murdered a group of young men and boys. The killings sparked reprisal raids, ambushes and murders along the frontier. Terrified settlers abandoned their farmlands and flocked to the cities for protection, while 'Indian hunters' arrived and began forming vigilante groups to exact revenge.

The worst incident came in April 1774 when a hunting party of twenty Mingo natives was ambushed, scalped and murdered by Virginian farmers. One of the dead was the pregnant daughter of the Mingo chief, Logan; her unborn child was reportedly cut from her body and scalped next to its mother. Logan, who had encouraged peaceful relations with the settlers, responded to this outrage by leading a war party that slaughtered men, women and children along the Virginia–Kentucky frontier. In May the Virginian governor, Lord Dunmore, gave orders for an all-out war on hostile tribes in the west. By October most native tribes had been driven off by the combined force of more than 2000 militiamen. In the wake of this brief but bitter campaign, the Shawnee and other nations were forced into a treaty which made them give up all land claims south and east of the Ohio River.

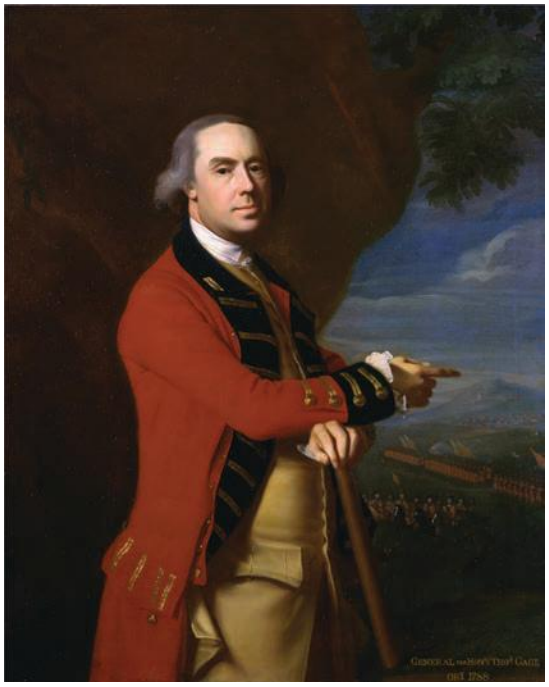
DID YOU KNOW?

After the murder of his relatives, Logan allegedly delivered a speech, now known as Logan's Lament. In it he spoke of his great affection for the white man but despaired that 'there [now] runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This has called on me for revenge.'

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the settlers killed by the raiding party was James Boone, the sixteen-year-old son of famous frontiersman Daniel Boone.

What were Dunmore's motives? He was no friend of frontier settlers, nor was he on good terms with the Virginia assembly, with which he had clashed repeatedly since 1772. It is likely that he, like most royal governors a 'speculator with a voracious appetite for land,' was trying to secure Virginia's hold over its western territories – a move that advanced his own business interests.[12] It has also been suggested that Dunmore, as a loyalist governor, was hoping to distract Virginians from the events unfolding in Boston and Philadelphia, perhaps even to exhaust the provincial militia and its stock of munitions.



General Thomas Gage.

BRITISH RULE IN BOSTON

At the start of 1775 Boston was under the control of the British military governor, General Thomas Gage, and his regiment. Gage was a veteran of the French and Indian War and a former military governor of Montreal, Canada. The Bostonians, glad to see the back of Thomas Hutchinson, at first greeted Gage warmly. This affection soon waned once the general began issuing arrest warrants for leading radicals and enforcing the closure of the port. Gage soon ordered troops to remove or destroy rebels' weapons and munitions.

The events unfolding in Boston convinced many colonials that the British were hell-bent on using military force to bring Massachusetts – and, by extension, the other colonies – into line. The disbanding of the colonial assembly, the appointment of a military governor and the imposition of martial law were the acts of an aggressive invader, not a kind mother country. Word spread to rural and remote areas about troops landing at Boston Port in their hundreds. It was only a matter of time, many believed, before this British iron fist would seize the countryside.

DID YOU KNOW?

Though dissolved by the Massachusetts Government Act, the colonial assembly continued meeting illegally, calling itself the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. Its first president was John Hancock, who became a 'wanted man' for accepting this role.

There was already some preparation underway for a colonial military response. Since the mid-1600s almost all towns and villages had trained and supported small militias, mainly to protect residents from Native American tribes or, in border regions, from the French. Made up of teenage boys and young men, married and single, these militias lacked the qualities of a professional army. They were poorly armed, wore no uniforms and did little or no marching. Their 'officers' were elected democratically and decisions were made through consultation rather than command. They had no combat experience other than brief skirmishes with Native Americans. They had, however, done regular training – some as often as twice a week – and had good shooting skills, local knowledge and camaraderie.

In 1774, following the passage of the Coercive Acts, the Massachusetts assembly – by now meeting illegally outside Boston - ordered a count of militia units around the colony. The October census found only 17 000 militiamen, some of these sick or unfit for fighting. It was grossly inadequate for defending Massachusetts against serious attacks by British redcoats. The assembly ordered an increase in recruits of 'minutemen' – ready to fight at a minute's notice – as well as improvements to militia organisation and command.

12 John Greiner, *The First Way of War: American War-making on the Frontier 1607–1814* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 148.

THE POWDER ALARMS

Minutemen were mobilised during the Powder Alarms, a series of war scares in late 1774. General Gage, on arrival in Boston, realised that war might easily erupt, given the tensions in the colony. To defuse the situation Gage decided his first priority was to remove or destroy gunpowder stores scattered around Massachusetts. It was important that this operation be conducted in secret to prevent revolutionary activists from seizing the powder first and moving it to secret locations. One of the first significant powder seizures, in Middlesex County, was successful and met little opposition; however, Gage's written instructions were later leaked to local patriots, who spread the word that Gage planned to disarm American colonists.

This incident sparked rumour, paranoia and false alerts. There were reports of massive British troop mobilisations and the capture and imprisonment of Americans. Bands of minutemen and patriots rallied to remove powder supplies, concealing them in forests, private barns or other buildings. Minutemen brigades were strengthened and Committees of Safety were formed to monitor British troop movements. 'Express riders' were nominated to spread the word to others should the British march on an area. Paul Revere's ride is a famous, though factually dubious, account of anti-British co-ordination in the colonies.

Faced with this volatile situation, Gage called a temporarily halt to the powder seizures and troop patrols outside Boston. Recognising the great difficulty of controlling Massachusetts, he wrote to London to request troop reinforcements, informing the government with his usual flourish, 'if you think ten thousand men sufficient, send twenty ... if one million is thought enough, give two million. You will save both blood and treasure in the end.' By December 1774 the atmosphere had calmed enough for Gage to send British regulars into rural Massachusetts once again to confiscate gunpowder. It would be during one of these outings, to the town of Concord, that the first shots of the Revolutionary War were fired.

A Minuteman preparing for battle.

DID YOU KNOW?

Today, the Minuteman is an American long-range missile (above), capable of attacking a target 13 000 kilometres away with a conventional or nuclear warhead.

DID YOU KNOW?

Though often portrayed as heroic and capable soldiers, the Minutemen were notoriously unreliable. Several leaders are said to have ignored or derided their contribution to the revolution.

TEXT OF 'PAUL REVERE'S RIDE'

ACTIVITY

PAIR WORK

With a partner, find a copy of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem *Paul Revere's Ride* and investigate whether it presents an accurate account of Revere's actions in April 1775. Then join with another pair and discuss your findings.

EXPORTING DISSENT

DID YOU KNOW?

Catharine Macaulay (1731–1791) was one of few prominent female writers in the British Empire – and one of very few advocates of republicanism. She supported both the American and French revolutions and communicated regularly with leaders such as Paine, Jefferson and Washington.

While some American colonists were making military and logistical preparations, others were considering how they could find enough support to stand against the British. Many looked to a well-established form of communication: the Committees of Correspondence. These groups had been active since the mid-1760s; they were re-activated in 1772 at the instigation of Samuel Adams and probably reached their peak in 1774.

The committees consisted of groups of like-minded people circulating political grievances and ideas through letter-writing campaigns. Some were organised on the instruction of colonial assemblies, county governments or town meetings, while others were informal groups of friends. Committees had, in the past, formed in response to a specific issue and disbanded when that issue was resolved. But by 1774 there were many ongoing committees, dedicated to resisting the Coercive Acts and other aspects of British rule. Their activity was not confined to the continent either: many committees maintained close contact with correspondents in England, such as the controversial historian Catharine Macaulay.

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES: MORE ON CATHERINE MACCAULEY

Not all American colonists had access to this network, which was generally confined to the urban middle and upper classes. People in rural and remote areas looked to their civic leaders, taverns and town meetings for news and guidance. Churches also played a role, though there was wide variation in the views they espoused; some preachers spoke of the evils of unrepresented taxation and the need for revolution. A 1774 sermon from Massachusetts minister Gad Hitchcock, for example, declared that when people are abused by political power 'they have the … right to transfer it to others.'[13]

REVOLUTION BY COMMITTEE

DID YOU KNOW?

In New England, town meetings were often held in the local church, with the priest playing a lead role. In some areas only church members could attend meetings.

The events of 1774 spurred action not only in the cities but in towns, villages, rural outposts and on the frontier. Research indicates that revolutionary action was less centralised than first suggested. Radical ideas and sentiment tended to be strongest in the cities but they did not always begin there; there were many grievances and anti-authoritarian structures in the countryside as well. New England, for example, had a tradition of town meetings, at which revolutionary ideas could now be expressed; following the Coercive Acts, such meetings began to be held every two or three months. Attendees discussed correspondence from the cities, the colonial assembly or the Continental Congress, and drafted documents such as non-importation agreements. Meetings issued orders for the local militia, requests for supplies and 'alarm lists' of able-bodied men who might be called upon in an emergency. Members stockpiled weapons, tools and food.

13 Jeffrey Schultz et al, *The Encyclopedia of Religion in American Politics* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1999), 87.

In Connecticut, the local convention decided to 'publickly avow our allegiance to him [George III] & his Lawfull successors.'[14] For the most part, however, meetings and committees expressed the need to defend their rights and made preparations for war. Edward Countryman compares these community organisations to the local governments that emerged later in revolutionary France and Russia:

> Between the end of 1774 and the summer of 1776 the committees did in New York what similar bodies would do in Paris between 1789 and 1792, and in Russia in 1917. They created a counter-government on radically different lines from the old one, took power to themselves until the old institutions were hollow shells, and then destroyed in name what they had drained of power in fact.[15]

The unfolding revolution of 1774–75 was not confined to town meetings. There was a marked disintegration of authority wherever few or no British troops were stationed, as locals openly defied the instructions of governors and officials. Ray Raphael's *The First American Revolution: Before Lexington and Concord* describes how mobs forced the closure of several county courts after they were placed under royal control by the Massachusetts Government Act. In the colony's west, representatives of Gage's appointed 'mandamus' council were bullied, threatened and chased back to Boston. In August 1774 Gage sent eighty British soldiers to arrest members of the Salem Committee of Correspondence, only to order their release when he learned that 3000 armed colonists were marching to their rescue.[16]

14 Minutes of Ridgefield town meeting 30 January 1775, cited in Daniel Teller, *The History of Ridgefield* (Ridgefield, 1878).

15 Edward Countryman, *A People in Revolution: the American Revolution and Political Society in New York, 1760–1790* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 102.

16 Ray Raphael, *The First American Revolution: Before Lexington and Concord* (New York: The New Press, 2002), 66.

17 Cited in Marc Egnal, *Divergent Paths: how Culture and Institutions have Shaped North American Growth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 58.

18 Rhys Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom* (New York: Oxford, 2004), 7–10.

FEATURE

PERSPECTIVES: CARTER'S UNEASY KINGDOM

The diaries of Virginian planter Landon Carter give some insight into revolutionary developments in the southern colonies. In print since the mid-1900s, the diaries were re-interpreted in 2004 by Australian historian Rhys Isaac. A prolific writer and member of the Virginia House of Burgesses, Carter was vocal and active but not politically powerful (Thomas Jefferson considered him 'dull, vapid, verbose [and] egotistical').[17] He was also a figure of some contradiction: in public, Carter stood in support of the revolution and its core ideas, yet he clung to slavery and existing power structures in his own home and plantation.

Isaac's choice of title for his study, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom*, hints at Carter's dilemmas. He was troubled by aspects of the revolutionary era that threatened his personal domain; for example, he found the disobedience of his children frustrating and expressed near-hatred for his argumentative wife. His diaries frequently attempt, somewhat weakly, to reconcile his use of slaves with the grand ideals of the revolution. On the eve of the Declaration of Independence, eight of Carter's slaves (one named Moses) took the opportunity to escape from the plantation. Isaac writes:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal ….' These words from the pen of Virginia's great liberationist, Thomas Jefferson, had not yet been published when Moses and his seven companions made their bold bid for freedom; but those beliefs were already in the air, and Landon Carter knew that as well as did the Eight [slaves] … Impelled by the climate of thought in which he lived, he used universal terms that – whether he knew it or not – entirely de-legitimised chattel slavery. The American patriots were in arms, he wrote, for 'so Just a cause as the preservation of the rights of nature impressed on all mankind at their creation.[18]

Carter's diaries hint at the opposing pressures placed on individuals at a time of great social change; they give a glimpse into the internal debates between self-interest and principle that many ordinary people face in a time of revolution.

KEY EVENTS: THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

A CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

Samuel Adams' wish for an inter-colonial summit became a reality with the gathering of the first Continental Congress in Philadelphia in September 1774. The Congress initially consisted of fifty-five men from twelve colonies (Georgia, needing British support to combat a native uprising on its frontier regions, chose not to attend). Many of the revolutionary notables attended: the Adams cousins of Massachusetts; George Washington, Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia; John Jay of New York. Not all were elected by their legislatures – some attended because they had the desire and resources to do so. Nevertheless the delegates were thought to be acting on behalf of their colonies.

19 Continental Congress, cited in J. R. Pole, ed., *Revolution in America 1754–1788* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), 24–5.

The Congress debated the Coercive Acts and the ongoing conditions in Massachusetts. Many argued that Boston was the architect of its own fate, thanks to its hot-headed mobs and radicals. Southern delegates, in particular, thought the actions of some Bostonians excessive. There was a broad consensus, however,

DOCUMENT

CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, 'ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION,' 1774

Several late, cruel, and oppressive acts have been passed respecting the town of Boston and the Massachusetts-Bay, and also an act for extending the province of Quebec so as to border on the western frontiers of these colonies, establishing an arbitrary government therein, and discouraging the settlement of British subjects in that wide extended country … to dispose the inhabitants to act with hostility against the free Protestant colonies …

To obtain redress of these grievances which threaten destruction to the lives, liberty and property of his majesty's subjects in North-America, we are of opinion that a non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement, faithfully adhered to, will prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable measure …

That from and after the first day of December next, we will not import into British America, from Great-Britain or Ireland, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever … nor will we, after that day, import any East-India tea from any part of the world; nor any molasses, syrups, panels, coffee or pimento from the British plantations or from Dominica; nor wines from Madeira or the Western Islands …

We will neither import nor purchase any slave imported after the first day of December next, after which time we will wholly discontinue the slave trade … nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it …

That a committee be chosen in every county, city, and town by those who are qualified to vote for representatives in the legislature, whose business it shall be attentively to observe the conduct of all persons [affected by] this association … any person [who] has violated this association … may be publicly known and universally condemned as the enemies of American liberty; and thenceforth we respectively will break off all dealings with him or her.[19]

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the 1774 Articles of Association and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify the criticisms of the Quebec Act made in the document and three measures to be taken by the colonies under the Articles.
2. Discuss the tone and message of the document. What threats are made to those colonists who act in breach of these resolves?
3. From your broader knowledge, discuss the likelihood of the success of the non-importation provisions. In your answer refer to the boycotts of 1768–69 (see Chapter 3).

on a number of key principles: the Congress drafted and passed the Articles of Association, which contained an outline of grievances, as well as fourteen measures to be adopted by each of the colonies in attendance.

CONFRONTATION IN LEXINGTON

Both history and folklore agree that the first shots of the Revolutionary War were fired on a village field in Lexington, Massachusetts in April 1775. Though small in scale – more a skirmish than a pitched battle – the fighting at Lexington was the result of a year of deep Anglo-American tensions. Colonial propaganda, the Powder Alarms of 1774 and Gage's seizing of munitions stores nudged the civilian population onto a war footing. The tinderbox was lit when Gage ordered more than 700 British regular troops to march on Concord in western Massachusetts, where a large gunpowder store was situated.

Travelling in separate units and moving west into rural Massachusetts, the British arrived in Lexington at dawn on 19 April 1775. They were confronted on the village green by a dishevelled and somewhat frightened group of colonial militia: seventy-seven men and boys, some armed only with sticks and scythes (crop blades). Their commander was Captain John Parker, a sickly veteran of the French and Indian War, who reportedly told his men 'Don't fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here.' Beyond the green were several dozen spectators.

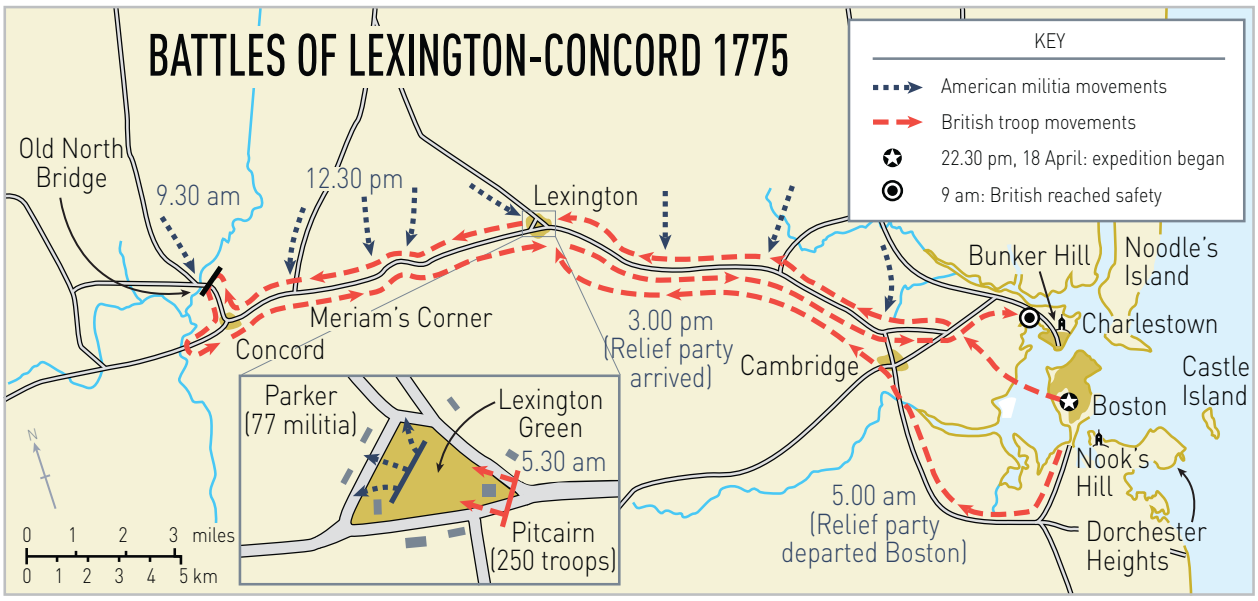
With the colonials blocking their path the British captain ordered his men to adopt an attack formation, then called on the rebels to disperse. Parker, noting how heavily out-numbered and out-gunned his men were, ordered his militia to retreat; some apparently began to do so. Then a shot was fired – it is not known why or by whom – which prompted an exchange of gunfire from both sides. The British soldiers advanced and killed eight colonial militiamen with bullet or bayonet, while the rest of the Americans quickly fled. Only one British soldier was wounded.

DID YOU KNOW?

The first shot at Lexington has become known in folklore as 'the shot heard 'round the world,' because of the tremendous impact it had on the development of North America.

DID YOU KNOW?

Captain John Parker, who led the Lexington militia against the 'redcoats' in April 1775, was at the time severely ill with tuberculosis. He survived the battle but would not participate in any others, dying just five months later.



DID YOU KNOW?

According to some officers, a British soldier at Lexington was fatally struck about the head with a tomahawk by a militiaman. It appeared to some that he had been scalped.

'First blow for liberty.'

The warning systems of the local Committee of Safety sent news of the fighting along the narrow road to Boston. In Concord the militia was soon fully aware of the British advance. The first English platoons arrived there at 7.30am and immediately began searching the area for weapons and gunpowder; with little success. During the search they accidentally set fire to a church, leading some Americans to believe they were torching the whole town. Hundreds of militia gathered and started shooting at the soldiers, who returned fire before being ordered to retreat to Boston.

On the nineteen-mile march, the soldiers encountered sporadic but deadly ambushes from militia, as well as occasional sniping from armed civilians. At the end of this fateful forty-eight hours more than 130 men were dead, the majority of them British soldiers. When General Gage awoke on the morning of 20 April he found the outskirts of Boston surrounded by a 12 000-strong militia. They had arrived overnight, intent on revenge after hearing of the bloodshed at Lexington and Concord. The colony of Massachusetts now appeared to be in a state of war.

DID YOU KNOW?

Washington's nomination for commander-in-chief was put forward by John Adams, partly because Adams disliked John Hancock and wanted to thwart his personal ambitions as a military leader.

A SECOND CONGRESS

The first Continental Congress had concluded in 1774 by committing to review the situation the following year. It gathered again in Philadelphia in May 1775, with most of the previous delegates attending. There were also two notable newcomers: Benjamin Franklin, not long returned from London, and John Hancock. Massachusetts had been in a state of war with Great Britain for three weeks. Even as Congress was preparing to sit, militia groups were escalating the conflict in western New York. There the so-called Green Mountain Boys, led by Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold, had successfully attacked the British fort at Ticonderoga, stealing several cannons and raiding munitions stores.

The second Continental Congress resolved to take control of the war effort, declaring the formation of a Continental Army, adopting the various New England militias surrounding Boston as its first regiment, and nominating George Washington as its commander-in-chief. This appointment was made partly because Washington had experience fighting in a militia, unlike most delegates. It also had a political tinge, since Washington was a Virginian and his involvement might bring the powerful southern colony further into the revolution. In July 1775 the delegates to Congress drafted and released a justification for its military action, the Declaration of the Causes and Necessities for Taking up Arms:

'Washington, appointed Commander in Chief.'

> Our forefathers, inhabitants of the island of Great-Britain, left their native land, to seek on these shores a residence for civil and religious freedom. At the expense of their blood, at the hazard of their fortunes, without the least charge to the country from which they [departed], by unceasing labour, and an unconquerable spirit, they effected settlements in the distant and unhospitable wilds of America, then filled with numerous and warlike barbarians.
>
> Societies or governments, vested with perfect legislatures, were formed under charters from the crown, and harmonious commerce was established between the colonies and the kingdom [of] their origin. The mutual benefits of this union became, in a short time, so extraordinary, as to excite astonishment. It is universally confessed that the amazing increase of the wealth, strength and navigation of the realm arose from this source.[20]

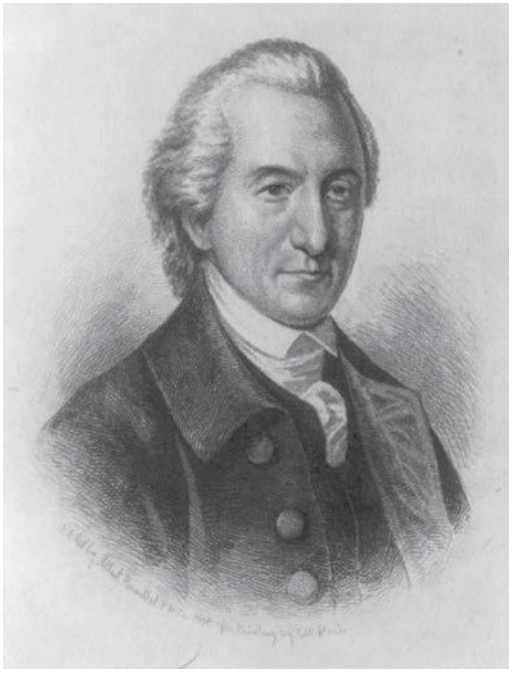
The second Continental Congress would remain in session continually throughout the Revolutionary War. King George III considered it an illegal body and refused to read many of its petitions and declarations. The delegates to Congress, particularly the more vocal ones, were considered enemies of the Empire and subject to charges of treason. Loyalist cartoons in London often portrayed delegates as sly traitors or as sheep, blindly following a treacherous bunch of radicals. The Congress would twice be forced to flee Philadelphia because of the close proximity of British soldiers, reconvening elsewhere briefly until the danger had passed. It would also come under verbal attack from some of its own countrymen, unhappy with Congress' ineffective supply to the army and its inability to control the various colonies.

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

ACTIVITY

Discuss to what extent King George III helped to cause the revolution by refusing to receive colonial petitions.

20 'Declaration of the Causes and Necessities for Taking up Arms,' The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/arms.asp#1.



John Dickinson.

A LAST CHANCE AT PEACE

Even after war had started in 1775, many in the second Continental Congress preached retreat and reconciliation rather than revolution and independence. To these moderates a military confrontation between the thinly-populated and under-resourced American colonies and the British military juggernaut was doomed to fail; it would result in unspeakable suffering and devastation of property. The best-known exponent of this view was Pennsylvania's John Dickinson, who by June 1775 had raised enough support in the Congress for a petition for reconciliation – a final letter to George III pledging loyalty and seeking peace:

> The union between our mother country and her colonies, and the energy of mild and just Government, produce benefits so remarkably important that the wonder and envy of other nations were excited … they beheld Great Britain rising to a power the most extraordinary the world had ever known … That your Majesty may enjoy long and prosperous reign, and that your descendants may govern your Dominions with honour to themselves and happiness to their subjects, is our sincere prayer.[21]

Even in its call for peace, however, the Olive Branch Petition (as it came to be known) affirmed colonial rights and criticised the king's ministry for its mishandling of the colonies:

> We shall decline the ungrateful task of describing the irksome variety of [tricks] practised by many of your Majesty's Ministers, the delusive pretences, fruitless terrors and unavailing severities that have … been dealt out by them, in their attempts to execute this plan, or of tracing … the progress of the unhappy differences between Great Britain and these Colonies, that have flowed from this fatal source. Your Majesty's Ministers … have compelled us to arm in our own defence, and have engaged us in a controversy so peculiarly abhorrent to the affections of your still faithful Colonists … [that we wonder] what may be the consequences.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Olive Branch Petition was sent to London with Richard Penn, a loyalist descendant of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania. King George III refused to grant Penn an audience or to receive the petition.

Among those to sign this petition were noted firebrands like John Hancock, Samuel and John Adams, John Jay and Patrick Henry; yet privately many held no hope that the petition would succeed in bringing about peace and reconciliation. John Adams said as much in a personal letter, noting his belief that continuation of the war was inevitable and admitting that America was already forming a navy and a military strategy. This letter was intercepted by loyalists and sent to England for analysis, arriving there at about the same time as Dickinson's petition. Little wonder that these mixed messages convinced George III that the petition was the work of deceivers and hypocrites, prompting him to disregard it. The petition also said:

> We beg leave further to assure your Majesty that notwithstanding the sufferings of your loyal colonists during the course of the present controversy, our breasts retain too tender a regard for the kingdom from which we derive our origin to request such a reconciliation as might in any manner be inconsistent with her dignity or her welfare. These, related as we are to her, honour and duty, as well as inclination induce us to support and advance; and the apprehensions that now oppress our hearts with unspeakable grief, being once removed, your Majesty will find your faithful subjects on this continent ready and willing at all times, as they ever have been with their lives and fortunes to assert and maintain the rights and interests of your Majesty and of our Mother Country.

21 'Olive Branch Petition,' second Continental Congress, July 1775.

ACTIVITY

ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

Discuss the extent to which George III behaved ethically in his response (or lack of response) to colonial grievances such as those expressed in the Olive Branch Petition.

DID YOU KNOW?

Samuel Adams was one of few Americans to welcome the war with England. On hearing news of the fighting at Lexington, he is reported to have said 'What a glorious morning this is for America!'

TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

Pauline Maier's 1998 book *American Scripture* explores the path to American independence, seeing it not simply as a child of the Congress, Jefferson and Paine but a crystallisation of broad public opinion. Until late 1775 most Americans were reluctant to abandon their hopes of reconciliation, despite the brutal fighting in Boston and New York. Their conversion to independence came gradually and somewhat painfully in the first half of 1776. Maier's research tracks this change by examining ninety different sets of resolves for independence, drafted and passed by towns, counties and colonial assemblies around America. Unlike previous historians of the era, Maier does not focus entirely on the political ideology in these documents; she considers them a product of 'the grubby world of eighteenth-century American politics.'[22] Maier places these declarations in the context of a 'complex political war,' in which the independence movement struggled to win enough support to pressure the Continental Congress towards independence.

DID YOU KNOW?

Governor John Wentworth fled to New York in 1775, where he began organising loyalist regiments to join with the British forces. The New Hampshire assembly confiscated his property and sentenced him to imprisonment *in absentia*.

One of the sources Maier consults is the New Hampshire motion for independence, passed on 5 January 1776, several days before the first editions of Paine's *Common Sense* had even appeared. The assembly there not only declared its independence but also produced the first written constitution in the new nation. Yet their actions were prompted by necessity as much as ideology; the New Hampshire governor, John Wentworth, had fled the previous year, leaving the colony without executive authority and with considerable uncertainty. Their bold move towards independence did not please everyone: New Hampshire's western settlers denied the legitimacy of their new government, 'a little horn, growing up in the place where the other was broken off.'[23]

Nevertheless New Hampshire had provided an important precedent. Inspired by its example and recognising that reconciliation with Britain was unlikely, politicians in other colonies began to follow suit. In Halifax, North Carolina, all eighty-three members of the provincial assembly voted unanimously to authorise its Congressional delegates to vote for independence:

In May 1776 the Continental Congress moved that all colonies should establish state governments along whatever lines they saw fit. Delaware, New Jersey, North and South Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland all did so by the end of the year; Georgia, New York and Vermont followed in 1777. Their draft constitutions contained many liberal innovations but also included property qualifications on voting and the exclusion of women, slaves, natives and indentured servants from elections altogether. All states except New York and Virginia decreed that Protestants alone could hold public office. In Maryland, where conservatives held sway, there was no secret ballot, so voting was conducted verbally and in public.

22 Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), xvii.

23 Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1969), 287.

DID YOU KNOW?

Hundreds of resolves were drafted by colonial assemblies, counties and town meetings between 1774 and 1776. Some urged peace and reconciliation but the majority expressed the need for Americans to defend their rights militarily.

DOCUMENT

THE HALIFAX RESOLVES, NORTH CAROLINA, APRIL 1776

> It appears … that pursuant to the plan concerted by the British ministry for [controlling] America, the king and parliament of Great Britain have [claimed] a power over the persons and properties of the people, unlimited and uncontrolled; and disregarding their humble petitions for peace, liberty and safety have made legislative Acts … That British fleets and armies have been and still are daily employed in destroying the people and committing the most horrid devastations on the country. That governors in different colonies have declared protection to slaves who [would like to soak] their hands in the blood of their masters. That the ships belonging to America are declared prizes of war and many of them have been violently seized and confiscated …
>
> Resolved: that the delegates for this colony in the Continental Congress be empowered to concur with the delegates of the other Colonies in declaring independency … reserving to this colony the sole and exclusive right of forming a constitution and laws for this colony ….[24]

ACTIVITY SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the extract from the Halifax Resolves and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify three grievances of the North Carolina assembly expressed in the Resolves.
2. What instruction do the Resolves give to North Carolina's delegates to the Continental Congress?
3. What justification is offered in the Resolves for this final course of action?
4. Consider the statement about governors and slaves. What does this suggest about the beliefs and attitudes of North Carolinians with regard to slavery?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Pennsylvania constitution of 1776 was greatly admired by some French revolutionaries, who incorporated many of its structures and principles into the 1789 National Constituent Assembly.

Pennsylvania enacted the most democratic constitution of the time. There was no governor, just a one-house legislature with a thirteen-man executive council. The legislature was elected every year and individuals were prohibited from serving more than four years out of every seven. Elections were held by secret ballot and all free men over the age of twenty-one could vote, provided they paid some form of tax. Bills passed by the legislature could not be enacted until one year after they had been made available for public reading, preventing the 'rushing through' of unpopular policies.

THE POWER OF A PAMPHLET

If the town meetings and colonial assemblies were the engines of the independence movement, then Thomas Paine's radical pamphlet *Common Sense* was its manual. Released onto the streets of Philadelphia in January 1776, *Common Sense* at first seemed unremarkable, just another political essay. The fifty-page booklet sold for two shillings (24 cents) a copy and made no mention of its author, Thomas Paine. He was a newcomer to America, having arrived in

24 'Historical Miscellanea: An Early History of North Carolina,' *North Carolina Manual*, (North Carolina: NC Department of the Secretary of State, 1991–1992)

late 1774, half-dead from the typhus he contracted on the ship. Paine was armed with a written reference from Benjamin Franklin – in Philadelphia a powerful document – and managed to gain a position as editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. Yet his service there gave no inkling of what Paine might achieve with *Common Sense*.

The first print run of Paine's pamphlet – 1000 copies – sold within a fortnight. Copies of the second edition soon appeared in Boston, New York and elsewhere. As many as 100 000 copies were sold in the first year, one for every twenty or so adult colonists. The sales of *Common Sense* have been exaggerated by folklore and textbooks, some of which claim the figure was as high as 500 000. Nevertheless *Common Sense* was a hugely popular text, its distribution approaching that of the Bible. And much like the Bible it would be read as a kind of scripture in churches, schools, town meetings, military camps and private gatherings.

Common Sense addressed three broad themes: the flawed basis of monarchy, the situation in the colonies and the future potential of America. While radical, it was not greatly original; most of Paine's ideas could be found elsewhere. The key achievement of *Common Sense* was the way it gathered existing ideas and conveyed them clearly and forcefully, using language, rhetoric and analogies understood by ordinary Americans. Paine shunned abstract political theory, deep philosophy and references to the ancient Greeks, opting instead for rational logic couched in clear statements, compelling phrases, memorable witticisms and the odd insult. The final product would prove more accessible to the colonial population than any text before it.

The success of *Common Sense* made Paine a household name. He was adored by patriots, mentioned in high places, even celebrated in the salons of France. Not everyone in America admired his work, however, and many were outspoken in their loathing. John Adams, an opponent of British monarchical 'tyranny' but never a radical democrat, declared *Common Sense* 'a poor, ignorant, malicious, short-sighted crapulous mass' and described Paine as 'a mongrel between pig and puppy, begotten by a wild boar on a bitch wolf.'[25] Loyalists treated the pamphlet with scorn. One of their number, James Chalmers, wrote a spirited response entitled *Plain Truth* in which he called Paine a 'political quack' and described the English constitution as 'the pride and envy of mankind.'

DID YOU KNOW?

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* earned its publisher, Robert Bell, a healthy £60 profit. When the author insisted that half this sum be donated to the Continental Army for the purchase of mittens, Bell refused.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ray Raphael's *Founding Myths* queries the circulation and impact of *Common Sense* in the American colonies. Raphael argues that the figure of 500 000 printed copies, often quoted in textbooks, is grossly exaggerated.

KEY PEOPLE: THOMAS PAINE

25 Paul Zall, *Adams on Adams* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky: 2004), xiv.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANNOTATION

Read the extract from *Common Sense* (over page) and complete the tasks below.

1. Photocopy or download the extract.
2. Using a colour code, highlight parts of the extract that discuss:
   - The nature of government
   - The nature of society
   - The monarchy (in general)
   - William the Conqueror
   - America's relationship with Britain
   - God
   - American commerce.
3. Create a text box for each of the seven themes above (in the appropriate colour). In each text box write a few lines summarising Paine's view on that subject.

DID YOU KNOW?

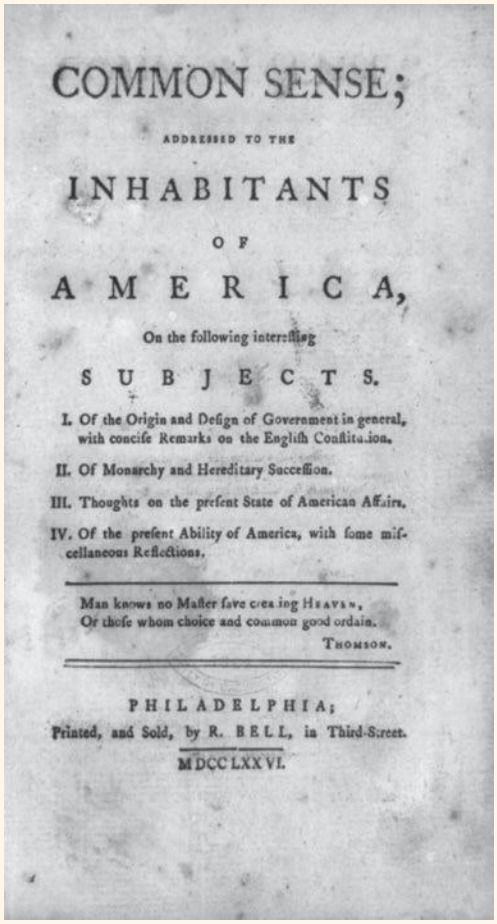
Paine died in 1809, lonely and relatively poor. Only six people attended his funeral. Years later Paine's bones were exhumed and returned to his native England; they were subsequently lost.

THOMAS PAINE'S 'COMMON SENSE'

DOCUMENT

THOMAS PAINE, *COMMON SENSE*, JANUARY 1776

Some writers have so [confused] society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them … they are not only different but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness. The former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices … The first is a patron [supporter], the last a punisher … Society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one … There is something exceedingly ridiculous in the composition of Monarchy. It first excludes a man from the means of information, yet empowers him to act in cases where the highest judgment is required. The state of a king shuts him from the World, yet the business of a king requires him to know it thoroughly … England since the conquest has known some good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones. No man in his senses can say that their claim under William the Conqueror is a very honourable one. A French bastard landing with armed bandits and establishing himself king of England against the consent of the natives is, in plain terms, a very paltry, rascally original. It certainly has no divinity in it … Monarchy and succession have laid … the world in blood and ashes. 'Tis a form of government which the word of God bears testimony against …



COMMON SENSE;

ADDRESSED TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

AMERICA,

On the following interesting

SUBJECTS.

I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.

II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.

III. Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.

IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

Man knows no Master save creating HEAVEN,
Or those whom choice and common good ordain.
THOMSON.

PHILADELPHIA;
Printed, and Sold, by R. BELL, in Third-Street.
MDCCLXXVI.

I have heard it asserted by some that [since] America has flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, the same connection is necessary [for] her future happiness … Nothing can be more [false] than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk that it is never to have meat; or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But … America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her. The commerce by which she has enriched herself are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.[26]

26 Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (Philadelphia: R. Bell, 1776).

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: THOMAS PAINE

Cartoon of Thomas Paine.

Paine's treatment in the annals of history provides an interesting contrast to the adulation enjoyed by Washington, Franklin and Jefferson. Historical interpretations of Thomas Paine paint, in essence, two portraits of the same man. For some historicans he is a hero, 'professional revolutionary,' democrat and egalitarian. He is the adroit wordsmith of *Common Sense* who convinced thousands of doubting Americans of the need for independence. This admiration for Paine and his work is expressed in a well-known folk song:

> He said 'I only talked about freedom
> And justice for everyone
> But since the very first words I spoke
> I've been looking down the barrel of a gun
> They say I preached revolution
> Let me say in my defence
> That all I did wherever I went
> Was to talk a lot of common sense.'
>
> Old Tom Paine he ran so fast
> He left me standing still
> And there I was, a piece of paper in my hand
> Standing at the top of the hill.
> It said, 'This is the Age Of Reason
> These are The Rights Of Man.
> Kick off religion and monarchy
> It was written in Tom Paine's plan.'[27]

A contrasting view of Thomas Paine, however, was dominant through the 1800s and into the early twentieth century. In such accounts Paine is a loathsome figure, shunned by mainstream historians and considered an ideological outcast. For historians of this persuasion, Paine was an iconoclast (destroyer of sacred things), an atheist and a dangerous troublemaker who ultimately did more harm than good. His disregard for social status and his malicious criticisms of organised religion were dangerously unsettling. He is held responsible for much of the violence and terror that later surfaced during the French Revolution (which he supported). Paine even dared to criticise George Washington (then president) in a letter in 1796: 'If there is sense enough left in the heart to call a blush into the cheek, the Washington administration must be ashamed to appear. And as to you, Sir, treacherous in private friendship … and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you … have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any.'

For decades after Paine's death he was effectively written out of the revolution. Thomas Ayres suggests that 'no figure in American history has been more undeservedly ignored in our textbooks, a terrible oversight [for] one of our nation's most colourful icons.'[28] On his death the *New York Times* wrote in its obituary that 'he had lived long, did some good but much harm.' Information about Paine and his influence are noticeably absent from most histories written before the twentieth century. Gilbert Vale, who wrote one of the very few 1800s accounts of Paine's life, said that *Common Sense* and other works were overlooked in many of the notable accounts of the American Revolution:

Thomas Paine.

> We have now in our house a compact history of the revolution … in which the same injustice is done to Mr Paine, for he scarcely occupies *one line* in the history … a larger work does him the same injustice. In a biography of distinguished American characters … a short notice was inserted of Mr Paine … [The author] was obliged to alter [the text] … not because the facts and sentiments were incorrect, but because the *praise* of Mr Paine would spoil the sale of the book.[29]

Today Paine is recognised as a significant revolutionary, though many American school

textbooks still ignore him or mention *Common Sense* only in passing. Some historians still paint him as a dangerous radical with ambitious but impractical ideas about equality, egalitarianism and democracy. Character attacks on Paine also abound. Travel writer Bill Bryson called him 'a tumbledown drunk, coarse of manner, blotchy-faced and almost wholly lacking in acquaintance with the virtues of soap and water ... he had been a failure at every trade he had attempted, and he had attempted many.'[30] Edward Babinski begs to differ:

> Paine may not have been a fop [one given to fashion and appearance] but contemporary testimony shows that he was a man of clean and temperate habits ... He was anything but a souse [drunk] and probably tasted less liquor during his entire life than Washington drank in one month. It may reasonably be assumed that he brushed his coat quite as often as Franklin did his, and, in his year-and-a-half stay at the home of James Monroe, our ambassador to France, followed the practice of washing his face.[31]

27 Graham Moore, 'Tom Paine's Bones.'
28 Thomas Ayres, *That's Not In My American History Book* (Lanham: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2000), 187.
29 Gilbert Vale, *The Life of Thomas Paine* (New York, 1841), 137.
30 Bill Bryson, *Made in America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 4w0.
31 Edward Babinski, 'Fictional Biography and Thomas Paine' (unpublished essay).

KEY PEOPLE: THOMAS PAINE (1737-1809)

BACKGROUND

Paine was English: he did not arrive in America until November 1774.

Born into poverty, the son of a corset maker; Paine left school at age 12 to work for his father.

VIEWS ON SLAVERY

Published anti-slavery essay in 1775 – 'African Slavery in America'.

KEY IDEAS

Liberal, anti-monarchy, anti-slavery and radical.

'These are the times that try men's souls.'

'The cause of America is in great measure the cause of all mankind.'

'Society is produced by our wants and government is produced by our wickedness.'

'Without the pen of Paine, the sword of Washington would have been wielded in vain.' (John Adams)

His pamphlet *Common Sense* was a critical contribution to circulating the idea of independence in early 1776.

His ideas contributed to the Declaration of Independence; he also coined the name United States of America.

POLITICAL ROLE

Paine held no official political office or seat in his lifetime.

CONTROVERSIES

Accused of atheism and radical views, Paine's contribution to the revolution was undervalued until the late 1800s.

EMPLOYMENT

Paine's attempts at being a corset maker, priest, teacher and tax collector were unsuccessful.

THE FINAL STEPS TO SEPARATION

As the ideas in *Common Sense* were popularised and the voices for independence grew louder through the early months of 1776, a faction within the Continental Congress began to push actively for separation from Britain. With Samuel and John Adams and Richard Henry Lee at its head, this group believed that reconciliation was a hopeless dream. Its members began lobbying the moderate delegates, seeking their support for independence if such a motion should be put before the Congress. New advice flowed in from the colonial legislatures in May and June; among these were instructions to Lee, passed by the convention in his native Virginia on 15 May:

> Resolved unanimously: That the Delegates appointed to … Congress be instructed to propose to that respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and independent States, absolved from all allegiance to, or dependence upon, the Crown or Parliament of Great Britain … That a Committee be appointed to prepare a Declaration of Rights and such a plan of Government as will be most likely to maintain peace and order in this Colony, and secure substantial and equal liberty to the people.[32]

Lee introduced this motion on 7 June 1776. There was some debate but no vote could proceed, since many delegates had not been authorised by their assemblies to vote for or against independence. It was decided to consider the matter again in just under a month, after the delegates had consulted with their own assemblies. Anticipating the probable success of Lee's motion, Congress decided to have a suitable declaration of independence prepared. It appointed a sub-committee – Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Robert Livingston and Roger Sherman – to complete this task.

The sub-committee decided that the first draft should be left entirely to Jefferson. The tall, reserved and softly-spoken Virginian was recognised both as a brilliant intellect and an eloquent writer. His first published work, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774) was probably the best written indictment of English policy and articulation of colonial rights. Equally important was Jefferson's combined knowledge of political philosophy and the unfolding events in America. He had read the 1689 Bill of Rights and Enlightenment philosophers like Locke and Rousseau and was familiar with the dozens of resolves and declarations that had flowed in since 1775. Decades later, in a letter to Richard Henry Lee, Jefferson explained his approach to drafting the Declaration of Independence:

> Neither aiming at originality of principle … nor yet copied from any particular previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind, and to give that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion. All its authority rests on the [popular] sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in … books of public right.[33]

Jefferson's declaration was written by candlelight, almost entirely overnight, and would prove both an astute summary of American ideology and a superb piece of theatre. His four colleagues on the drafting committee were suitably impressed: they tinkered with some wording but left much of it unchanged. On 28 June the committee presented the draft to Congress, which was more heavy-handed with its editing. At the behest of the southern delegates Congress deleted Jefferson's condemnation of British support for the slave trade. Lee's motion for independence was carried on 2 July, twelve votes to none with one abstention (the delegates from New York had not yet received their instructions, so cast no vote). The Declaration of Independence was itself passed by Congress on 4 July.

Benjamin Franklin reading a draft of the Declaration of Independence, John Adams seated, and Thomas Jefferson standing and holding a feather pen and paper, around a table.

DID YOU KNOW?

Franklin did not attend most meetings of the drafting committee because he was suffering from gout, a painful form of arthritis.

DID YOU KNOW?

John Adams predicted that 2 July, the day Lee's motion was passed, would become America's national holiday. He was mistaken, although American independence certainly was decided on 2 July rather than 4 July.

32 Resolution of the Virginia Convention, Williamsburg, 15 May 1776.

33 Cited in Alan Axelrod, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the American Revolution* (Indianapolis: Alpha Books, 2000), 166.

DOCUMENT

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, 1776

… 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; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government …

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes … But when a long train of abuses … evinces a design to reduce them … it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security …

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good …

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people …

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies, without the consent of our legislatures …

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us;

For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states;

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world;

For imposing taxes on us without our consent;

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury;

For transporting us beyond seas, to be tried for pretended offences;

For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighbouring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries …

For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever …

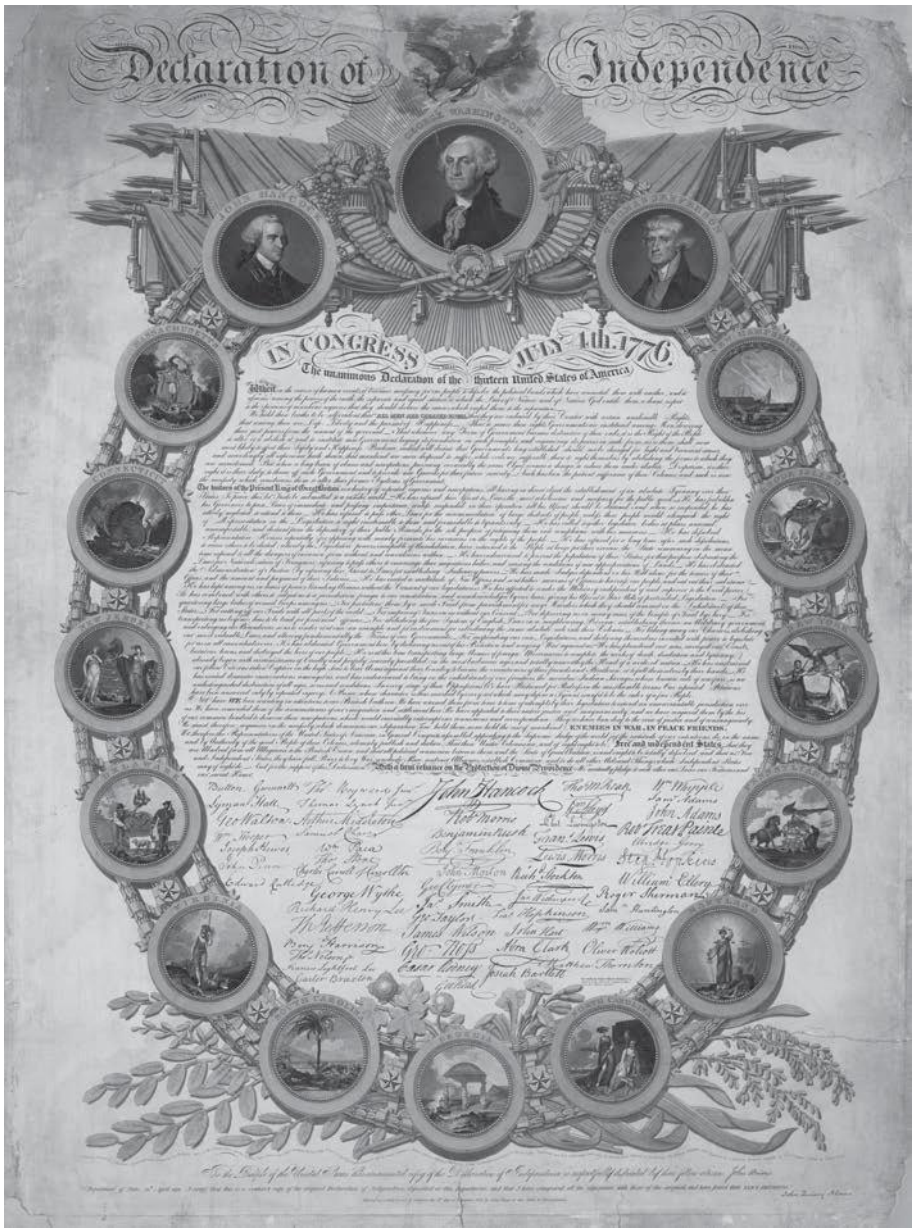
He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny already begun …

He has excited domestic insurrection among us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms; our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury …[34]

34 'Declaration of Independence,' National Archives and Records, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html



The Declaration of Independence.

KEY IDEAS: DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the extract from the Declaration of Independence (opposite) and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify three revolutionary ideas found in the opening three paragraphs of the Declaration.
2. In your own words, summarise the Declaration's beliefs and attitudes about government, its purposes and the source of its power.
3. For three of the grievances against the king listed in the document, identify an event or British policy from the period 1763–75 that it might be referring to.

ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

How does the Declaration's comments on Native Americans ('Indian savages') sound to a current-day audience? How have values and attitudes changed in this regard since 1776?

FEATURE

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: HOW RADICAL WAS THE REVOLUTION?

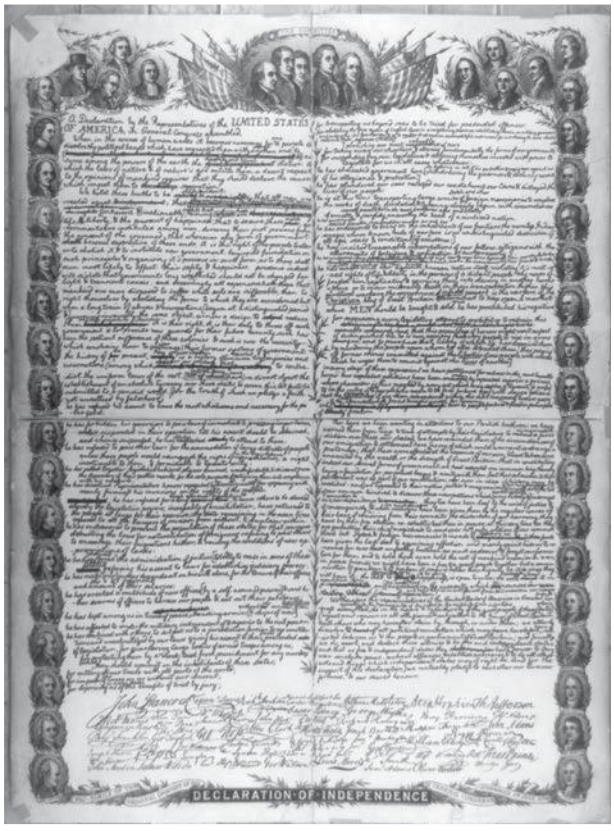
According to American folklore, the revolution was a pivotal moment in the Western tradition. The 'shot heard 'round the world,' the emergence of 'the spirit of '76' and the Declaration of Independence were watershed events; they revealed not just the determined heroism of a people prepared to battle tyranny but the origin of a bold new republican ideal. According to this view the birth of the independent United States was also the birth of modern democratic society, a political system founded upon the belief that people could govern themselves.

Some historians have asked, however, whether the ideas and motives of the revolution were truly radical and ground-breaking. Louis Hartz, Robert E. Brown and Daniel Boorstin have argued that the revolutionaries embarked on a campaign to protect, bolster and re-energise British rights and traditions; in other words, they sought to protect and cleanse the existing system, not replace it. Boorstin has further contended that the Declaration of Independence was a legal document, full of technicalities rather than radical ideology, while the revolution itself was almost wholly political in nature and thus achieved quite easily:

> The Revolution itself had been a kind of affirmation of faith in ancient British institutions. In the institutional life of the American community the Revolution thus required no basic change. This helps to account for the value which we still attach to our inheritance from the British constitution: trial by jury, due process of law, representation before taxation, habeas corpus, independence of the judiciary, and the rights of free speech, petition and free assembly, as well as our antipathy to standing armies in peacetime. There had been no considerable tradition in America of revolt against British traditions. The political objective of the Revolution, independence from British rule, was achieved after one relatively short effort. 1776 had no sequel and needed none: the issue was separation, and separation was accomplished.[35]

British historian Hugh Brogan has adopted a similar view, arguing that the revolutionaries came to independence slowly and painfully. Much of their dissenting prose and rhetoric up to 1774 had been a defence of their rights as free British subjects, not expressions of radical ideas. Yet Brogan has also embraced the idea that the colonial experience – living in isolation, in the wilderness and on the frontier, at the very edge of civilisation – instilled in Americans a naturally independent spirit. When in 1775–76 they came to a realisation that the old system and its traditions could not meet their needs, they overcame the problem by constructing a new order, just as their forefathers had overcome problems constructing a new world:

> They expressed attitudes which everything in their experience as settlers had tended to stimulate and reinforce. Side by side their



Part of the original draft of the Declaration of Independence.

> grandfathers had set up new polities; their fathers and then they themselves had enjoyed the consequent responsibilities and rewards of self-government … Their democratic habits were so ingrained that one of the reasons for the failure of the rebel invasion of Canada in 1775–76 was that whenever the New England volunteers were given orders to attack, they held an *ad hoc* town meeting to decide in the manner they were used to, that is by voting, whether to obey or not. And even revolution was to them a practical matter, almost an institution, since they had been trained … by the endless feuds with noble proprietors and royal governors and between the diverse interests within the colonies themselves … They were the progeny of the Old World: an Old World whose social order was based ultimately on force, hierarchy and religion which condemned the pursuit of happiness as delusory … The thirteen colonies no longer accepted these principles.[36]

Historians such as Charles Beard, Carl Becker and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr have had a different interpretation, namely that the revolution was primarily driven by socio-economic conflict, both internal and imperial. The main sources of tension between Britain and America were the Navigation Acts and the mercantilist ideal that underpinned them. The merchant and commercial classes, along with their political representatives and propagandists, were the main engine of revolutionary sentiment. These elites were not drawn to revolution by breaches of legal or constitutional principles, but because their economic interests were put at risk by a shift in British policy.

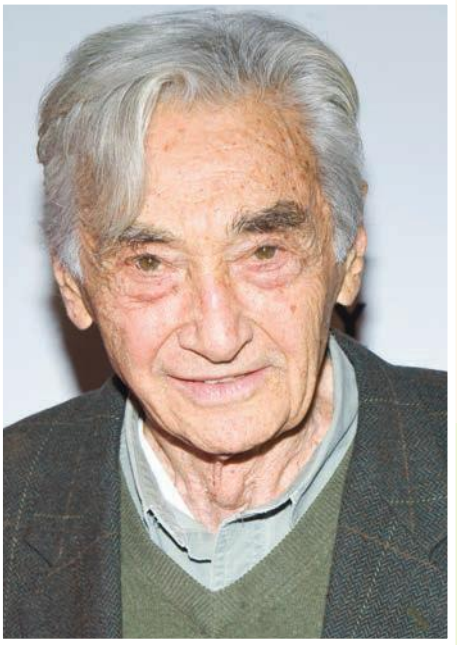
Howard Zinn has argued that the revolution should be seen as a successful bid by colonial elites to take power and profit away from Britain while avoiding rebellion at home. (See document below.)

35 Daniel Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 74.
36 Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 176.
37 Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: HarperCollins, 1980), 56.

DOCUMENT

HOWARD ZINN, *A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES*

> Around 1776, certain important people in the colonies made a discovery that would prove enormously useful for the next 200 years. They found that by creating a nation, a symbol, a legal unity called the United States, they could take over land, profits and political power from the British Empire. In the process they could hold back a number of potential rebellions and create a consensus of popular support for the rule of a new, privileged leadership.
>
> When we look at the American Revolution this way, it was a work of genius … the Founding Fathers created the most effective system of national control devised and showed generations of future leaders the advantages of combining paternalism with command.[37]



Howard Zinn (1922–2010).

ACTIVITY HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Examine the extract from Howard Zinn. What does Zinn argue were the true motivating factors for the American revolutionaries? What kinds of evidence would you need to be convinced by Zinn's argument? Compare Zinn's views with those of other historians mentioned above.

CONCLUSION

The period immediately following the Boston Tea Party of December 1773 was pivotal in American history. Although in mid-1773 the colonies had been in a state of tension due to British taxation and revenue measures, aside from a few radicals there had been little interest in war, revolution or independence. The Boston Tea Party, the Coercive Acts, Lexington-Concord and Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* changed all that, much faster than anyone could have predicted. London's understandable fury over the destruction of East India Company tea would sever the last bonds of affection between England and Massachusetts. Within a year the Boston radicals had succeeded in making their local cause a national one, pushing successfully for a continental summit and promoting the impression that Britain and its agents were acting tyrannically.

Citizens of Massachusetts had been preparing for war since mid-1774. It came the following April, after a skirmish with a British patrol at Lexington. The chief question now was how the other twelve colonies would respond to a war between England and Massachusetts. The question was answered at the second Continental Congress in May 1775, at which the other colonies gave overwhelming support to Massachusetts and adopted the Declaration of Independence. It was also answered in the stirring words of Thomas Paine and the flurry of resolutions and declarations passed by towns, counties and assemblies around the colonies. In the words of John Adams, 'thirteen clocks were made to strike together, a perfection of mechanism which no artist had ever before effected.'[38]

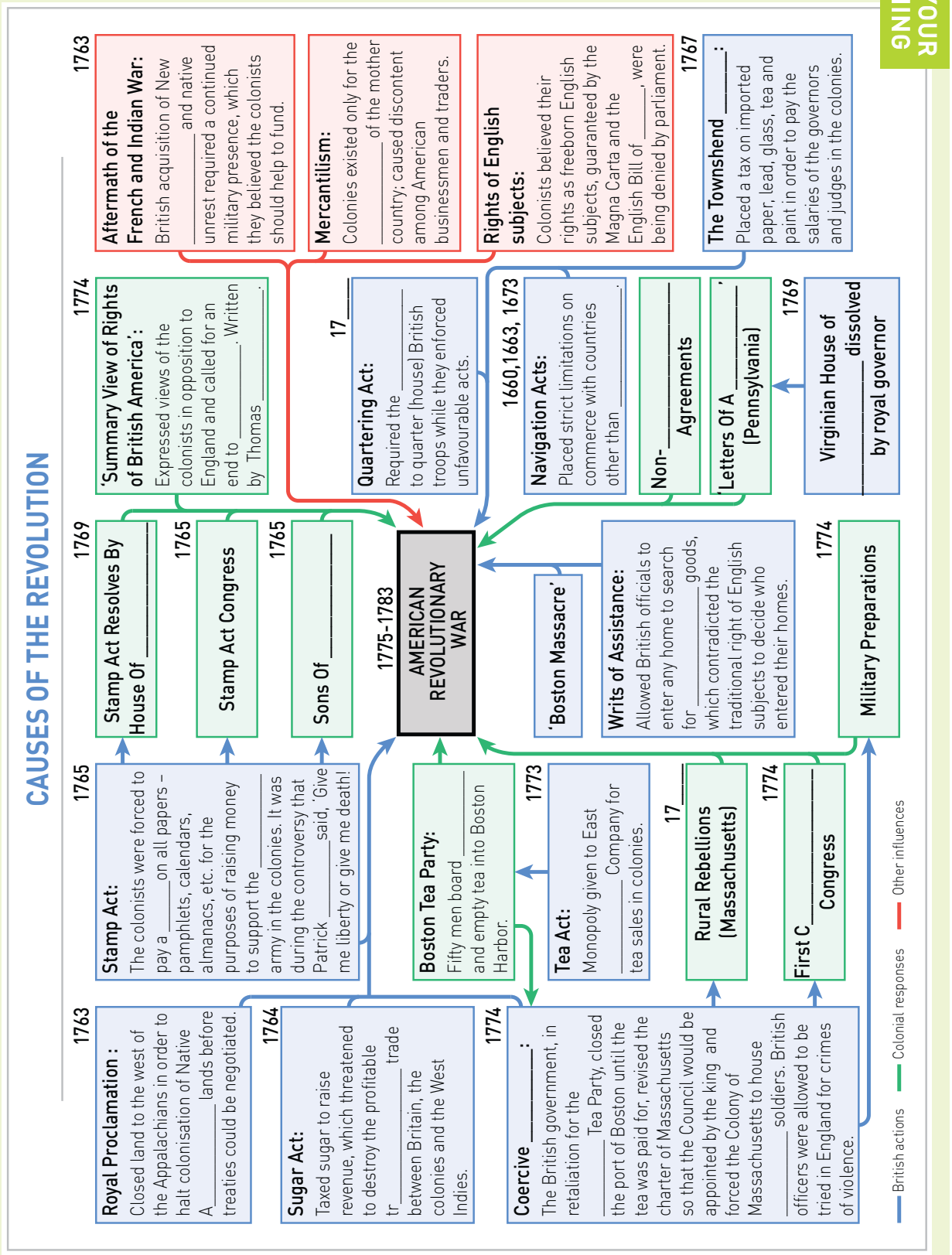
The Americans had embarked on a course for independence that just a decade before had seemed unthinkable.

38 Cited in Merrill Jensen, *The Founding of a Nation* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1968), 33.

TEST YOUR LEARNING

CHAPTER REVIEW – FILL IN THE BLANKS

Fill in the blanks in the diagram below. (You may wish to photocopy it first.)



TEST YOUR LEARNING

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – ESSAY

Write a 600–800 word essay on one of the topics below. Your essay should include an introduction, paragraphs supported by evidence, a conclusion and a bibliography.

Topics:

- 'The Coercive Acts were the primary long-term cause of the American Revolution.' To what extent is this accurate?
- To what extent did the 'Boston massacre' and Boston Tea Party trigger the revolution?
- 'Britain brought the American Revolution upon itself.' Do you agree?

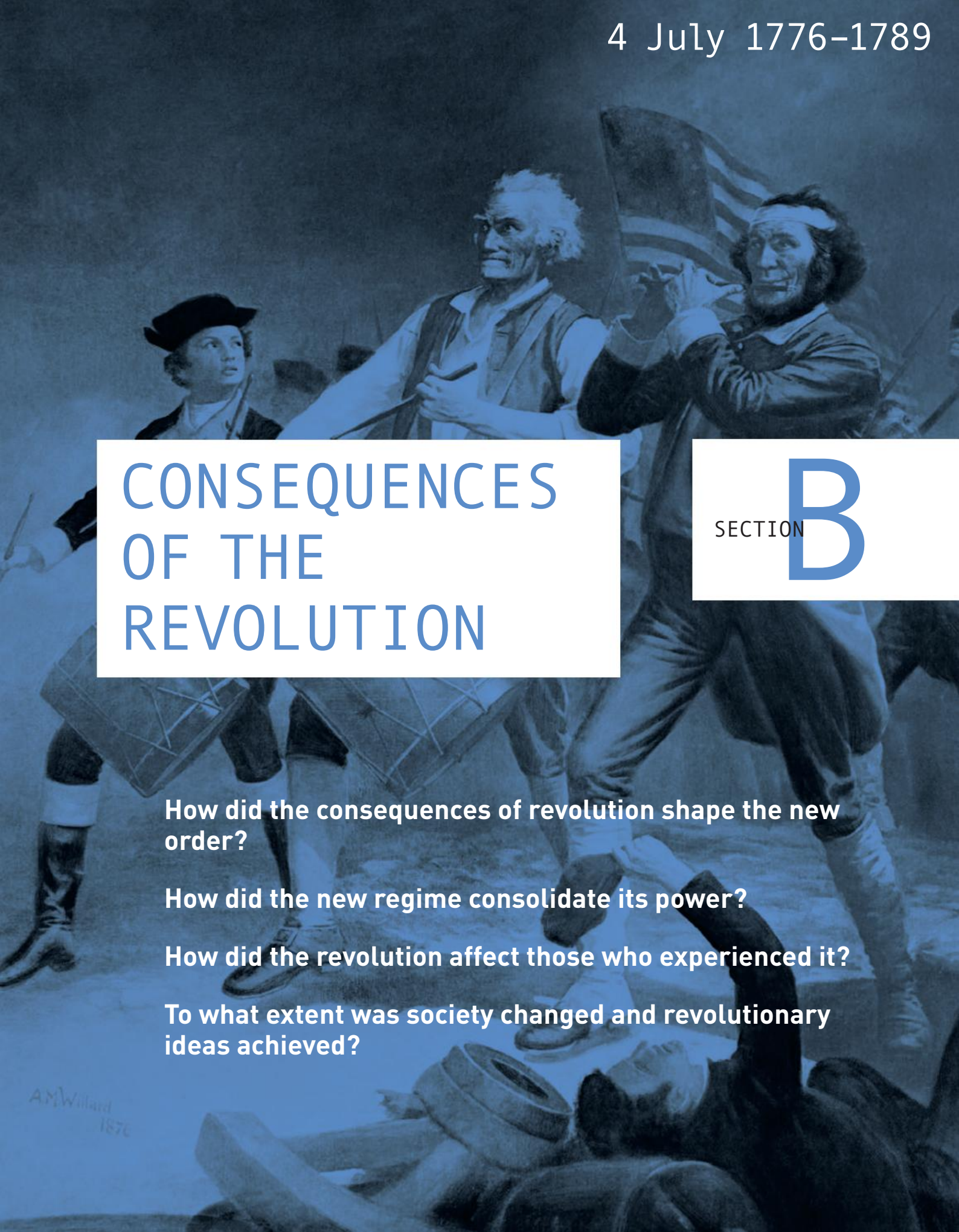
REVOLUTIONARY TRIGGERS – RANKING

Rank these events and conditions in order of significance in triggering the revolution by 4 July 1776:

- Agitation by Sons and Daughters of Liberty
- The Articles of Confederation
- Revolutionary work by the Committees of Correspondence
- The passing of state constitutions
- Anger at the Stamp Act and other British policies
- The concept of 'no taxation without representation'
- The Boston Tea Party
- The Powder Alarms
- Poor decisions by King George III
- Paine's *Common Sense*
- 'Letters from a Farmer.'

Compare your ranking with those of other students.

CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION: MORE ESSAY TOPICS



CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLUTION

SECTION B

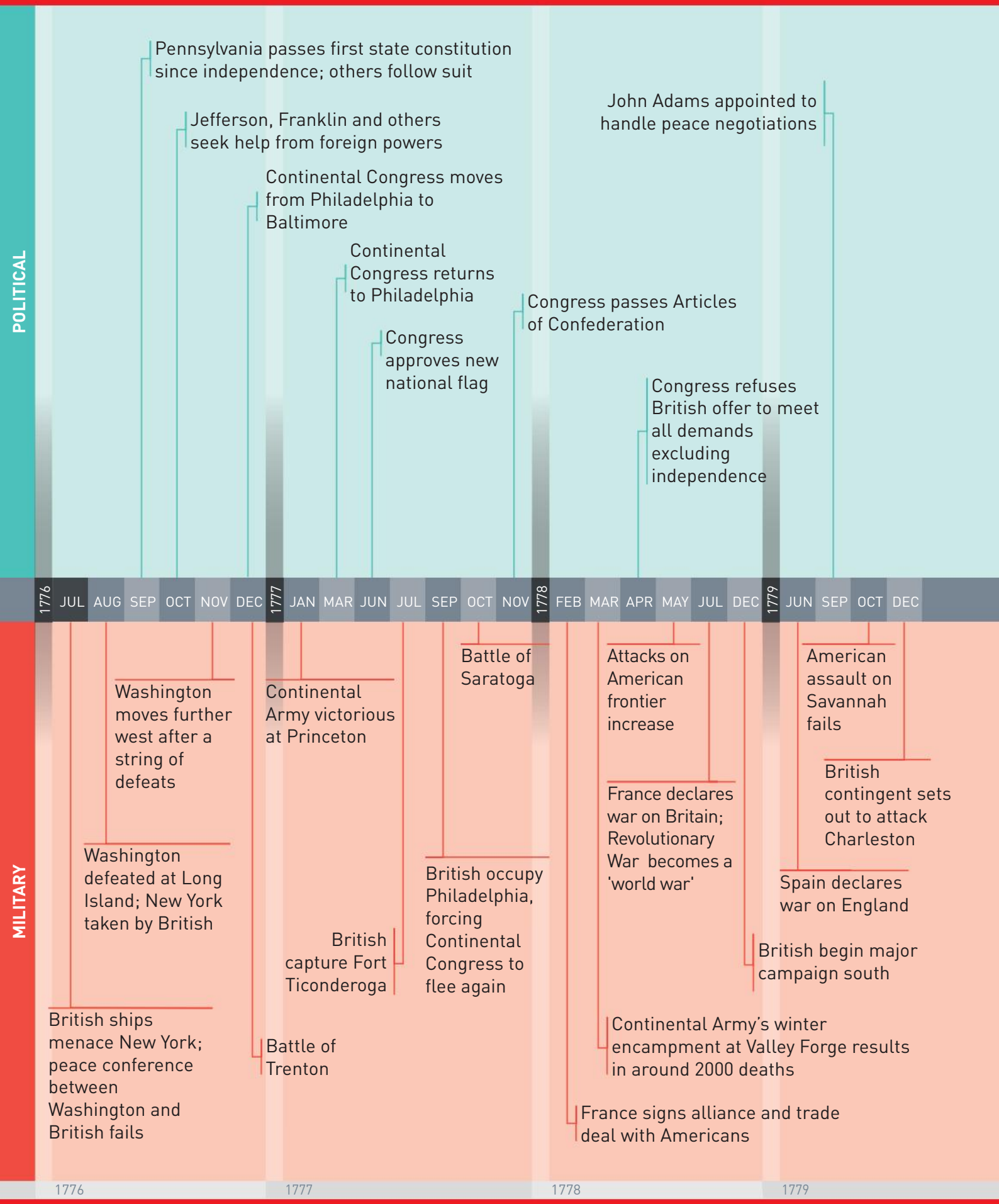
How did the consequences of revolution shape the new order?

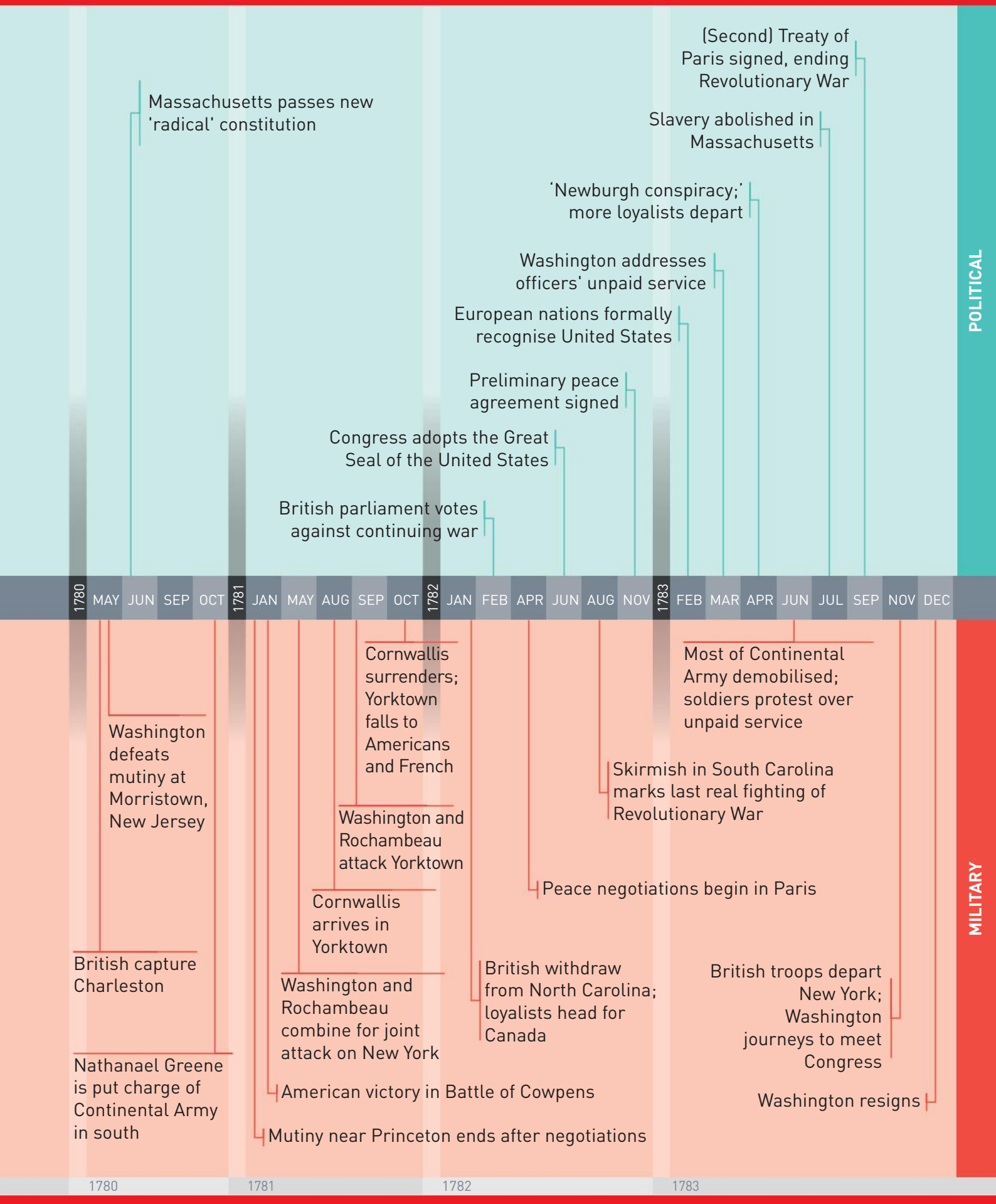
How did the new regime consolidate its power?

How did the revolution affect those who experienced it?

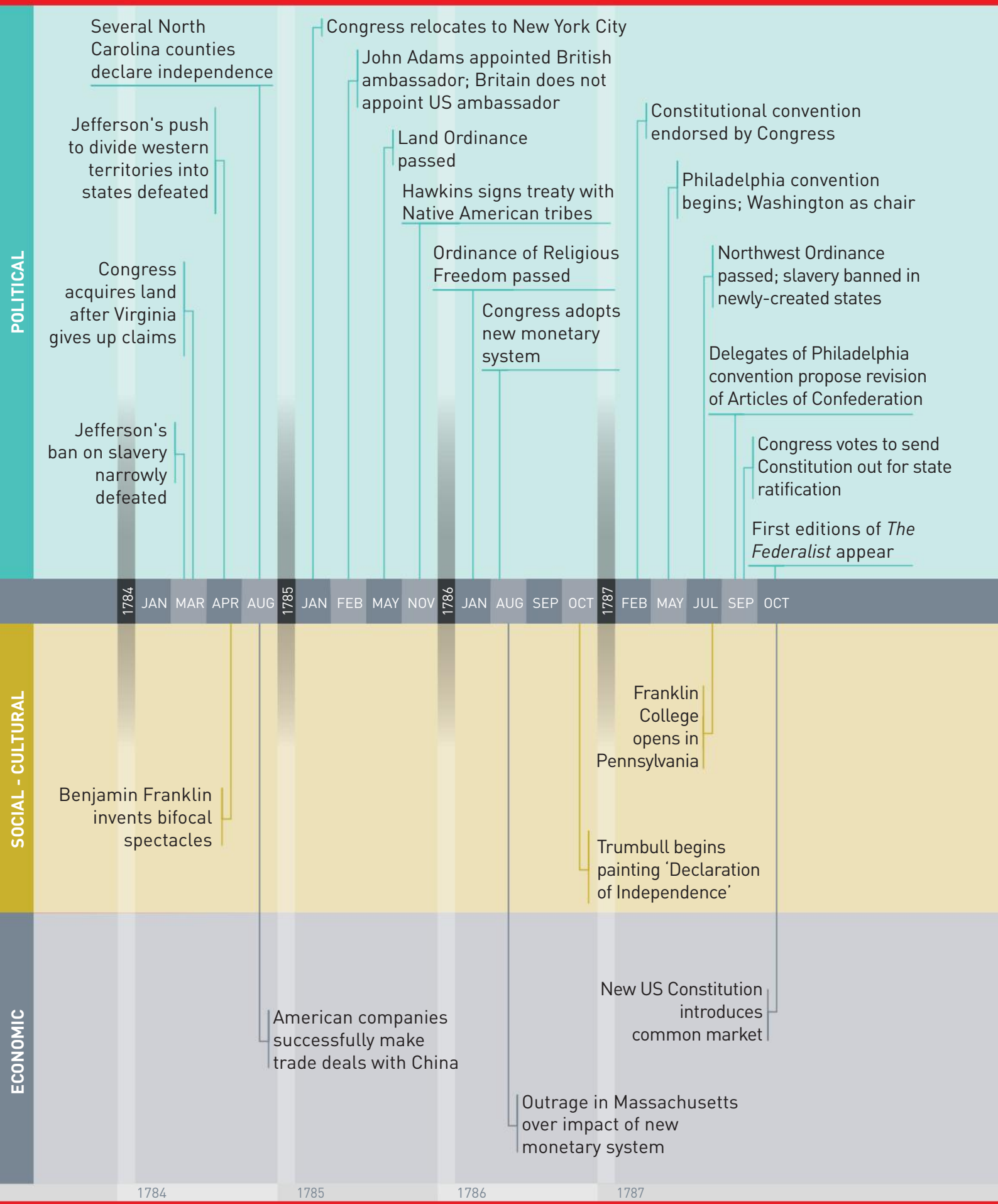
To what extent was society changed and revolutionary ideas achieved?

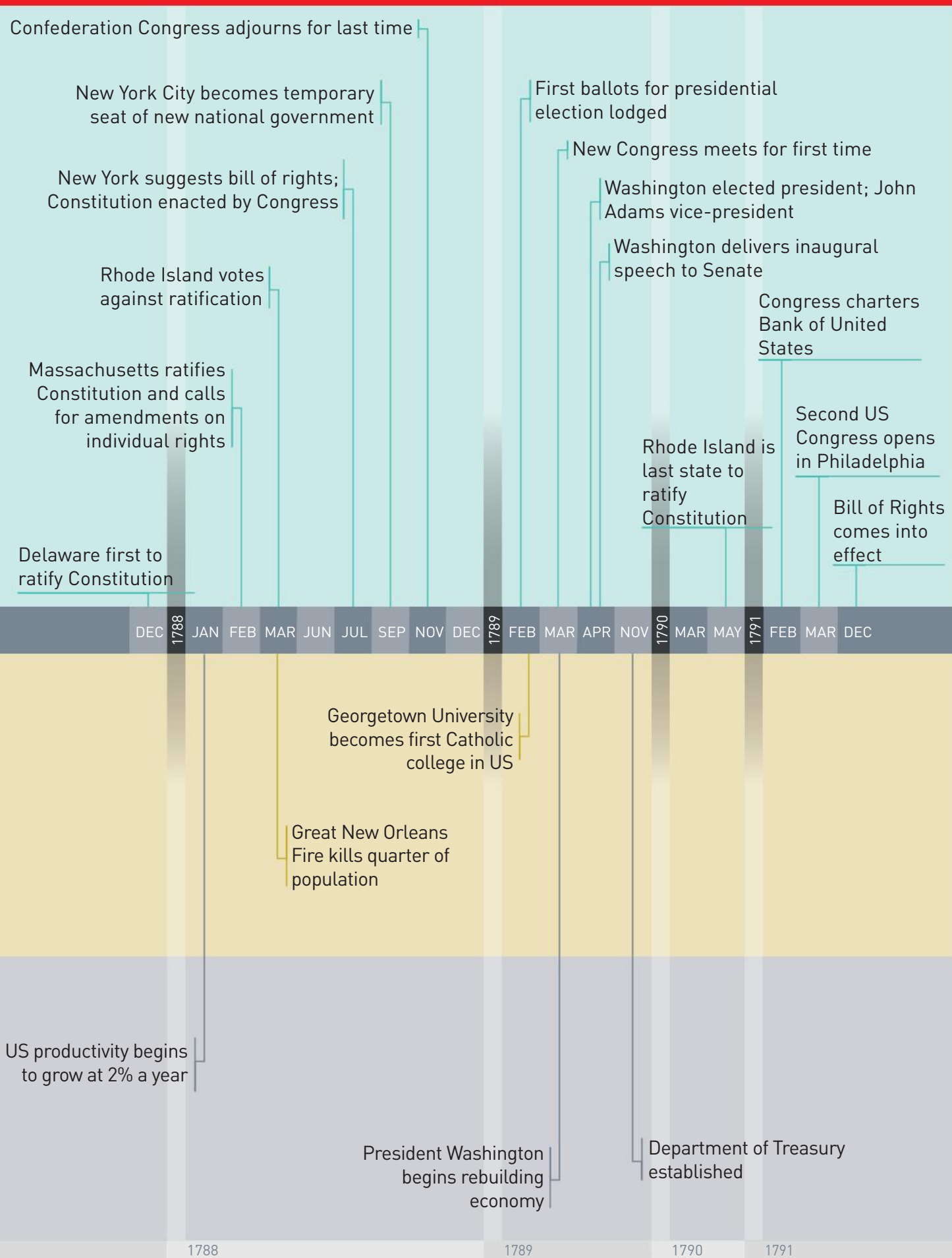
SECTION B TIMELINE




POLITICAL
MILITARY
1780
MAY
JUN
SEP
OCT
1781
JAN
MAY
AUG
SEP
OCT
1782
JAN
FEB
APR
JUN
AUG
NOV
1783
FEB
MAR
APR
JUN
JUL
SEP
NOV
DEC
Massachusetts passes new 'radical' constitution
(Second) Treaty of Paris signed, ending Revolutionary War
Slavery abolished in Massachusetts
'Newburgh conspiracy;' more loyalists depart
Washington addresses officers' unpaid service
European nations formally recognise United States
Preliminary peace agreement signed
Congress adopts the Great Seal of the United States
British parliament votes against continuing war
Washington defeats mutiny at Morristown, New Jersey
British capture Charleston
Nathanael Greene is put charge of Continental Army in south
Cornwallis surrenders; Yorktown falls to Americans and French
Washington and Rochambeau attack Yorktown
Cornwallis arrives in Yorktown
Washington and Rochambeau combine for joint attack on New York
American victory in Battle of Cowpens
Mutiny near Princeton ends after negotiations
British withdraw from North Carolina; loyalists head for Canada
Peace negotiations begin in Paris
Skirmish in South Carolina marks last real fighting of Revolutionary War
Most of Continental Army demobilised; soldiers protest over unpaid service
British troops depart New York; Washington journeys to meet Congress
Washington resigns
1780
1781
1782
1783

SECTION B TIMELINE cont.




Confederation Congress adjourns for last time
New York City becomes temporary seat of new national government
New York suggests bill of rights; Constitution enacted by Congress
Rhode Island votes against ratification
Massachusetts ratifies Constitution and calls for amendments on individual rights
Delaware first to ratify Constitution
First ballots for presidential election lodged
New Congress meets for first time
Washington elected president; John Adams vice-president
Washington delivers inaugural speech to Senate
Congress charters Bank of United States
Second US Congress opens in Philadelphia
Rhode Island is last state to ratify Constitution
Bill of Rights comes into effect
POLITICAL
DEC 1788 JAN FEB MAR JUN JUL SEP NOV DEC 1789 FEB MAR APR NOV 1790 MAR MAY 1791 FEB MAR DEC
Georgetown University becomes first Catholic college in US
Great New Orleans Fire kills quarter of population
SOCIAL - CULTURAL
US productivity begins to grow at 2% a year
President Washington begins rebuilding economy
Department of Treasury established
ECONOMIC
1788
1789
1790
1791

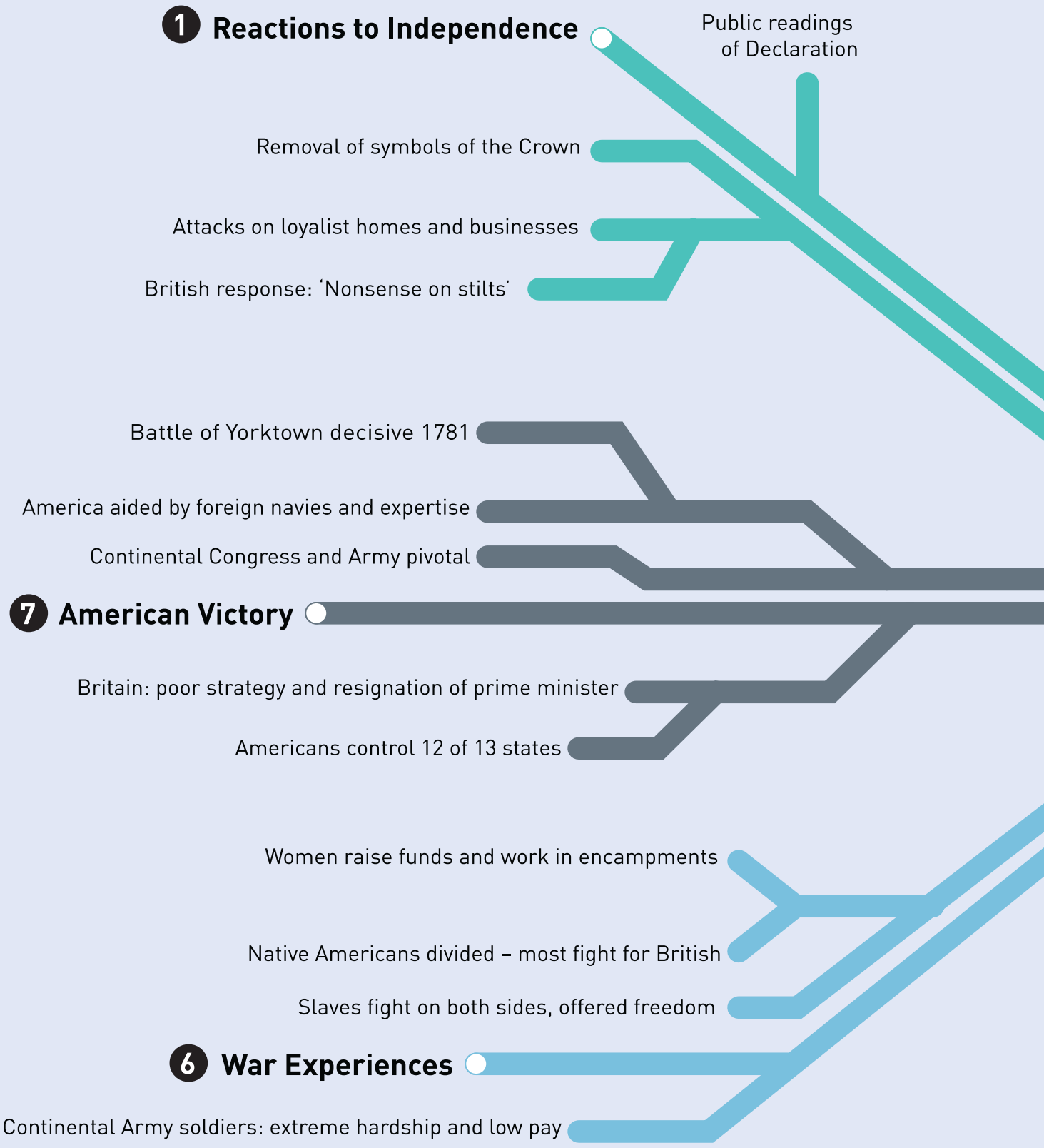
CHAPTER

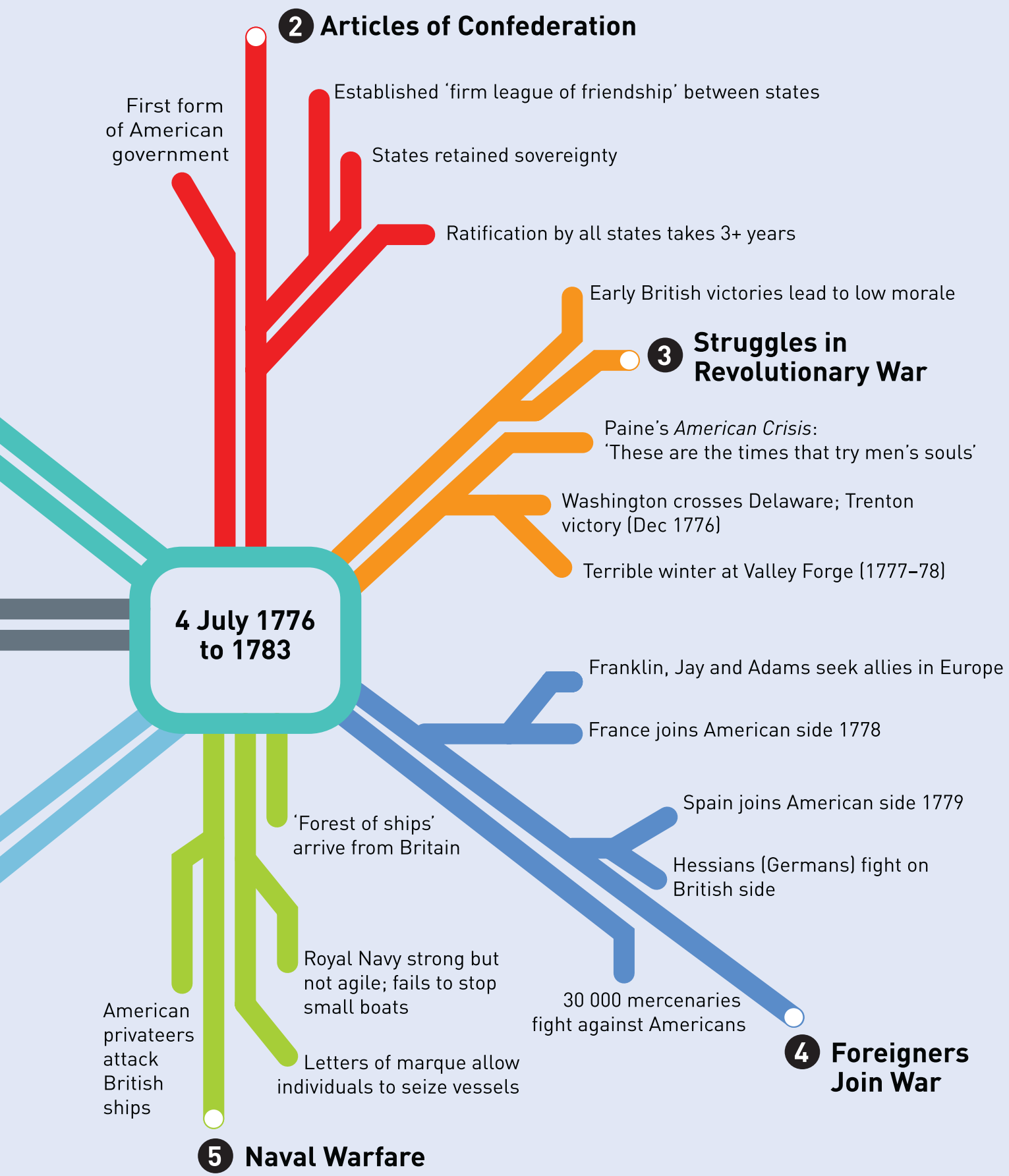
5

SECURING INDEPENDENCE

(4 JULY 1776–1783)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW




2 Articles of Confederation
First form of American government
Established 'firm league of friendship' between states
States retained sovereignty
Ratification by all states takes 3+ years
Early British victories lead to low morale
3 Struggles in Revolutionary War
Paine's American Crisis: 'These are the times that try men's souls'
Washington crosses Delaware; Trenton victory (Dec 1776)
Terrible winter at Valley Forge (1777–78)
4 July 1776 to 1783
Franklin, Jay and Adams seek allies in Europe
France joins American side 1778
Spain joins American side 1779
Hessians (Germans) fight on British side
30 000 mercenaries fight against Americans
4 Foreigners Join War
'Forest of ships' arrive from Britain
Royal Navy strong but not agile; fails to stop small boats
Letters of marque allow individuals to seize vessels
American privateers attack British ships
5 Naval Warfare

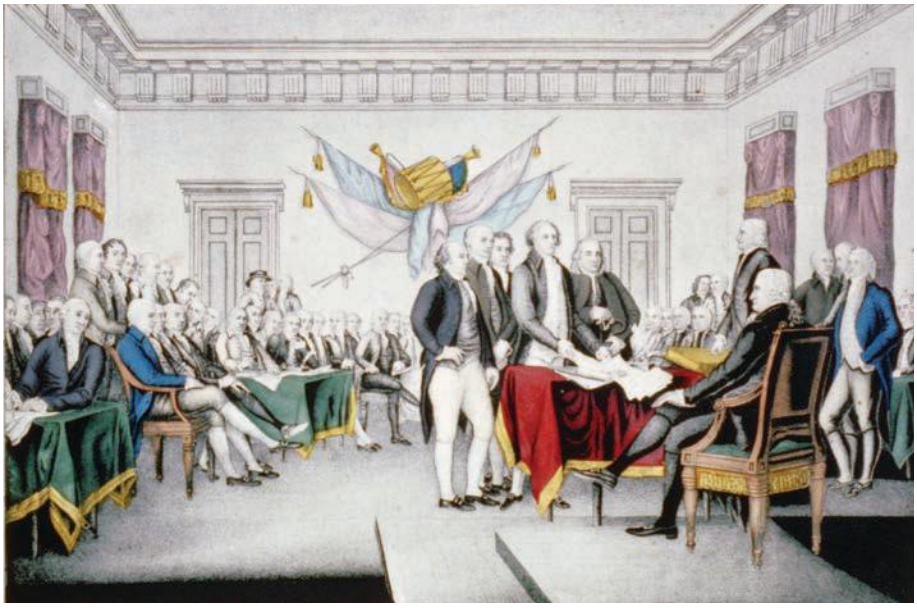
INTRODUCTION

The Declaration of Independence formally created a new nation – the United States of America – but it was far from clear whether this nation would last. Independence had to be consolidated by a military victory over the British, and in mid-1776 the chances of this appeared remote. America now had a military force and a form of national government, yet neither appeared sufficient to withstand the world's superpower. The new regime faced dire problems: disunity among states, a weak national political system and an under-developed economy.

John Hancock, first president of the United States Congress under the Articles of Confederation.

Under the old order, defence and military matters had mostly been left to the British. Colonial militias had fought in the French and Indian War but did so under the command of British officers, providing few Americans with leadership experience. Most North American weapons, artillery and munitions came from Britain. America had no substantial industrial base to convert to military production; no navy or warships to protect harbours; and a relatively small population for recruitment and labour. A successful war against England hinged upon foreign supplies and military assistance.

As George Washington and his officers tried to wage a war with a drastically inexperienced and ill-equipped army, the Congress considered how the United States would be governed. The delegates had in mind a loose association of thirteen states, bound together by a constitutional document: the Articles of Confederation. Believing that locally-based government and the decentralisation of power would best serve the people, the Articles left most political authority in the hands of the states. National government, or a confederation congress, would rely on the thirteen states to act co-operatively and in the nation's interests. Whether this optimistic coalition would work remained to be seen.



'Declaration of Independence, July 4th 1776.'

INDEPENDENCE DECLARED

After passing the Declaration of Independence on 4 July 1776 the Continental Congress sent the document by courier to John Dunlap, its contracted printer in Philadelphia. Dunlap worked through the night, setting type and running off broadsides[1] so that Congress would have 200 copies by morning. It was a daunting task for the twenty-nine-year-old Dunlap, with Benjamin Franklin, America's greatest printer, standing by and overseeing his work. Dunlap's copies of the Declaration were distributed to legislative assemblies, military commanders, committees of safety and – as a courtesy – to British governors and generals. A single copy was sent to King George III in London.

The Dunlap broadside contained no signatures, only the printed name of John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress. A common but incorrect assumption is that the Declaration was signed by all fifty-six delegates on 4 July. It was certainly passed, printed and distributed on that day; however the more official version, endorsed with the signatures of the fifty-six delegates, was not completed until early August.

Public readings of the Declaration began four days after its passage through Congress. Washington, stationed with the army near New York City, ordered it to be read aloud to his troops. Within a week it had been proclaimed to crowds in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In some places these readings provoked attacks on loyalist homes and businesses, or symbols of the crown. Gangs sought out the king's portrait and either defaced it or turned it around; royal arms were stripped from buildings and carriages; some towns met to rename streets or buildings that bore the king's name. In New York City a crowd attacked a gilded statue of George III on horseback, pulling it to the ground and sending it away to be smelted and used for bullets.

There were some hostile reactions to the Declaration, both in America and abroad. Loyalists dismissed it as fantasy and some, like Thomas Hutchinson,

A French representation of New Yorkers tearing down a Broadway statue of George III on horseback on 9 July 1776. After readings of the Declaration of Independence across America, the king's image was destroyed, defaced or removed from public view.

DID YOU KNOW?

A famous symbol of the revolution is the Liberty Bell (below), a 900-kilogram copper bell featuring a large crack, originally housed in Independence Hall, Philadelphia. It was rung on 8 July 1776 to summon Philadelphians to a reading of the Declaration of Independence, as well as on other notable occasions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Only twenty-five of Dunlap's original copies of the Declaration of Independence have survived. In 1989 a man bought a second-hand painting for four dollars and found an original Dunlap broadside folded inside the frame. It later sold for $US 8.14 million.

1 Broadside: poster or broadsheet.

wrote stinging criticisms of it. By mid-August copies had reached England and appeared in the press, causing a significant stir. Neither king nor parliament issued official comment, though the ministry secretly commissioned a speech writer, John Lind, to formulate a response; his 110-page *Answer to the Declaration of the American Congress* was bland and ineffective. A young philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, was more direct with his criticism, proclaiming the idea of natural rights to be 'nonsense on stilts' and saying that 'The opinions of the modern Americans on government, like those of their good ancestors on witchcraft, would be too ridiculous to deserve any notice if ... they had not led to the most serious evils ....'[2]

DID YOU KNOW?

Jeremy Bentham went on to become famous for his concept of utilitarianism: that the moral value of an action is judged by the extent to which it creates 'the greatest good' for 'the greatest number' of people. In his will Bentham ordered that his body be dissected in a public autopsy, to assist in the study of anatomy.

DID YOU KNOW?

In revolutionary America a 'tory' was someone thought to support the British cause. Today it refers to a member of the British Conservative Party.

THE TORMENTED 'KING'S MEN'

Independence was not only of political significance. It had implications for American society, especially for those whose allegiance remained with Great Britain. Even as war loomed, American society had begun to divide into two distinct groups: those who supported the revolution ('patriots,' 'Whigs' or 'rebels') and those who did not ('loyalists,' 'royalists' or 'tories'). These cracks first emerged during the Stamp Act crisis of 1765, when those who spoke in defence of the policy were harangued and persecuted by those who denounced it. A decade later these social divisions had widened considerably, to the point where the Revolutionary War was, in some areas, also a civil war.

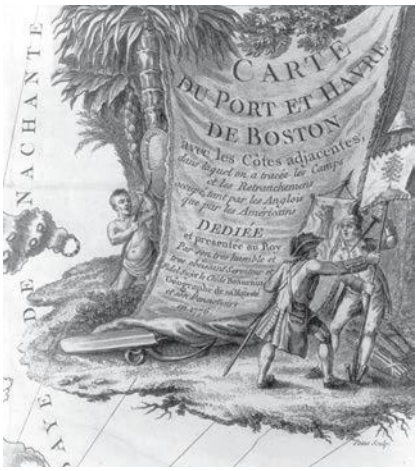
It is difficult to gauge how many loyalists there were in America prior to July 1776. John Adams famously observed that one-third of the people supported independence, one-third remained loyal to England and the other third were indifferent (uncommitted). Recent historians suggest the number of loyalists has been exaggerated, both by propaganda at the time and subsequent research. Robert Middlekauff's *The Glorious Cause* suggests Loyalists made up nineteen per cent of the American population, their numbers being higher in the Middle Colonies:[3]

> [M]any tenant farmers of New York supported the king, for example, as did many of the Dutch in the colony and in New Jersey. The Germans in Pennsylvania tried to stay out of the Revolution, just as many Quakers did, and when that failed, clung to the familiar connection rather than embrace the new. Highland Scots in the Carolinas, a fair number of Anglican clergy and their parishioners in Connecticut and New York, a few Presbyterians in the southern colonies, and a large number of the Iroquois Indians stayed loyal to the king ... In no colony did loyalists outnumber revolutionaries.[4]

Understanding why some Americans remained loyal to the crown is complex. Loyalists tended, on average, to be wealthier than patriots. Their families were often recent arrivals in America, they maintained closer ancestral links with Britain and were active within the Anglican Church. Many loyalists held royal appointments or government posts, or owned businesses dependent on English contracts. The southern states – producers of raw materials like cotton and tobacco – relied almost exclusively on Britain for the sale of their goods, so the loyalism there may have been driven by economic necessity. Some divisions were simply personal. The DeLanceys of New York, for example, are said to have supported the king on account of their bitter feud with the Livingstons, who were patriots.

2 Cited in David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2007), 173.
3 Middle Colonies: now the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.
4 Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 564.

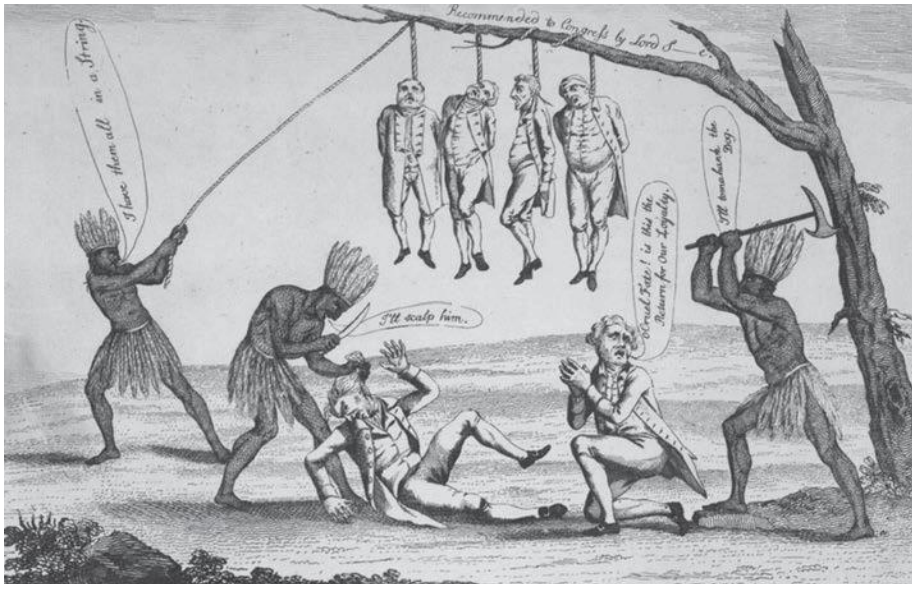
To the patriot movement, the loyalists were enemies of the revolution. As tensions increased in 1775, so too did harassment and attacks against Loyalists. Incidents of tarring-and-feathering peaked in New England during that year, usually perpetrated against the so-called 'king's men.' Pressure was also brought to bear on neutral parties. According to James Volo, 'many persons who wished to remain neutral were driven from their homes in the countryside by the more radical elements ... Timothy Ruggles, chosen as a [lawyer] to General Thomas Gage, was attacked in the night, his horse had its tail cropped and was painted over its entire body ... Daniel Leonard ... avoided the mobs but had several musket balls shot through the windows of his sleeping chamber in the night.'[5]



A French representation showing a loyalist and a patriot struggling for control of the thirteen colonies, while a Native American looks on.

By the time of the 1776 Declaration, many radical groups concluded that Loyalists must be expunged from American life, their positions filled with patriotic individuals and their property seized for the public good. A civil war against Loyalists ran parallel to the war against Britain. Claude H. Van Tyne, one of the few historians to focus specifically on Loyalists, suggested that the revolutionaries had a job on their hands convincing many people *not* to support the king: 'The great majority of men could be regarded as ... ready to stampede and rush along with the successful party; yet even among the masses, this traditional love of kingship had to be reckoned with and combated. Loyalty was the normal condition, the state that *had* existed and *did* exist; and it was the [patriots] who must do the converting.'[6]

Loyalists tended to be conservative, both politically and behaviourally. In cities occupied by British troops, where they were safer, Loyalists were more visible and vocal. They formed associations and condemned the revolution as dangerous and anarchistic. They spied on those sympathetic to the rebels and occasionally acted as unofficial local governors. Loyalists also joined in the fighting: as many as 20 000 served with the British regular army in fifty Loyalist regiments, while as many again fought in civilian militia units across all thirteen colonies.



A British drawing, 'The Savages Let Loose, or the Cruel Fate of the Loyalists,' showing Native Americans (representing American revolutionaries) engaged in the murder of six unfortunate 'tories.'

DID YOU KNOW?

Daniel Leonard had been one of the more vocal loyalists in Boston, writing pro-British essays under the name 'Massachusettensis.' Like many other loyalists he was forced to flee in 1776, eventually resettling in Bermuda.

5 James Volo, *Daily Life during the American Revolution* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 59.

6 Claude H. Van Tyne, *The Loyalists in the American Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 2–3.

FEATURE

WILLIAM FRANKLIN, THE PRODIGAL SON

Political differences not only separated states, cities and towns – they sometimes divided families. Such a case was the bitter split between Benjamin Franklin and one of his favourite sons. William Franklin (1731–1813) was illegitimate – one of several children Franklin fathered out of wedlock – but he was nevertheless raised by Franklin's wife, Deborah, as if he was a legitimate son. William was educated in England and in 1763 was appointed royal governor of New Jersey, largely because of his father's influence.

William Franklin remained faithful to Britain throughout the revolution, putting him at odds with his father, who, by 1775, was a fervent patriot. The Continental Congress declared William, as a loyalist governor, to be an 'enemy to the liberties of this country;' this led to his arrest and detention as a prisoner of war in 1776. Franklin Jr was released on parole two years later and fled east, taking refuge in a loyalist enclave in New York City. He lived there for a time, becoming president of the Board of Associated Loyalists and allegedly ordering the lynching of Joshua Huddy, a patriot privateer. In 1782, with the war all but lost, William Franklin fled for England, where he lived out the rest of his days.

A representation of Benjamin Franklin and his son William during Benjamin's famous experiment with lightning.

William Franklin's allegiance to England was an embarrassment to his father, who tried many times to persuade his son of the justness of the revolution. Their political differences opened a rift between the two that was never fully mended. Benjamin Franklin exchanged a few brief, courteous letters with his son and they met briefly in Europe in 1785; however, he mentioned William in neither his memoirs nor his will.

ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION ACTIVITY

DEVISING A POLITICAL SYSTEM

On 12 June 1776, the day after Congress appointed Jefferson and four others to draft a statement of independence, the body had nominated another sub-committee to formulate a draft constitution. This committee contained one man from each of the thirteen states and included well-known figures such as Samuel Adams, John Dickinson and Edward Rutledge. The committee left much of the writing to Dickinson; by 12 July his draft 'articles of confederation' had been tabled before a full meeting of Congress.

The Articles were hotly debated for more than six weeks. Congress was so divided over their content – and indeed whether such a confederation was workable at all – that the matter was put on hold in August. Command and organisation of the war effort became a higher priority, as did the safety of Congress itself (the delegates were soon after forced to abandon Philadelphia on account of encroaching British troops). The Articles were not raised for discussion again until April 1777 and a final draft was not approved by the Congress until 17 November that year. Before passing into law, they had to be distributed, discussed and ratified (formally approved) by the thirteen states.

DOCUMENT

EXTRACT FROM ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION, NOVEMBER 1777

ARTICLE ONE

The Style of this Confederacy shall be 'The United States of America.'

ARTICLE TWO

Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled.

ARTICLE THREE

The said States … enter into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare, binding themselves to assist each other, against all force offered to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of religion, sovereignty, trade, or any other pretense whatever.

ARTICLE FOUR

i) [T]he free inhabitants of each of these States … shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of free citizens in the several States, and the people of each State shall have free [entry to and exit from] any other State, and shall enjoy therein all the privileges of trade and commerce …

ii) If any person guilty of, or charged with, treason, felony, or other high misdemeanor in any State, shall flee from justice and be found in any of the United States, he shall, upon demand of the Governor or executive power of the State from which he fled, be delivered up and removed to the State having jurisdiction of his offense.[7]

ACTIVITY

DISCUSSION

Read the Articles of Confederation and discuss their meaning with other students. In what ways are they similar to the Australian federal system?

The Articles of Confederation established the United States of America as a 'firm league of friendship.' As with most confederations the thirteen states retained sovereign power and the right to govern themselves, other than in matters of national importance outlined in the Articles. The document contained thirteen separate articles outlining the form and structure of government, responsibilities of the states, voting procedures, sources of revenue and matters of law, foreign affairs and defence. It created a Congress of the Confederation to represent the states on a one-vote-per-state basis. A three-quarters majority (nine out of thirteen states) was required for the passing of new laws; a unanimous vote was needed for amendment of the Articles themselves.

From the very beginning there were concerns about this new mode of government. John Adams, writing to his wife Abigail in late July 1776, voiced the most common doubt when he asked, 'If a confederation should take place, one great question is how we shall vote. Whether each colony shall count [as] one, or whether each shall have a weight in proportion to its wealth or number of exports and imports, or a compound ratio of all.'[8] The larger and more powerful states like Massachusetts, Virginia and New York felt entitled to more of a say than smaller states like Delaware and Rhode Island. The small states, in contrast, feared domination by their larger neighbours.

These concerns were reflected in the time it took the states to ratify the Articles of Confederation. By July 1778, eight of the thirteen states had signed up, including

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1776 Abigail Adams urged her husband John to 'remember the ladies' in the new political system.

DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES: ABIGAIL ADAMS

7 'The Articles of Confederation,' University of Groningen, http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1776-1785/the-articles-of-confederation-1781.php.

8 Merrill Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1940), 250.

Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Yet it would take almost three years for the remaining five states to follow suit. These final endorsements were held up mainly by negotiations over western land claims: the smaller states of Delaware and Maryland, for example, refused to ratify while their powerful neighbour Virginia was manoeuvring to double its size. Maryland became the last state to ratify, on 1 March 1781. Dickinson's draft of July 1776 had taken almost five years to gain formal acceptance – a sign of the complexity of a federal system of government based on co-operation and consensus between the states.

Charles Inglis, an Anglican loyalist in New York, rejected calls for a republic, favouring what he called a 'limited monarchy':

DOCUMENT

CHARLES INGLIS, 'THE TRUE INTEREST OF AMERICA IMPARTIALLY STATED,' 1776

> Devastation and ruin must mark the progress of this war along the sea coast of America. [Until now] Britain has not exerted her power. Her number of troops and ships of war here at present is very little more than she judged [necessary] in time of peace – the former does not amount to 12,000 men – nor the latter to 40 ships, including frigates. Both she and the colonies hoped for and expected an [agreement]; neither of them has lost sight of that desirable object. The seas have been open to our ships; and although some skirmishes have unfortunately happened, yet a ray of hope still cheered both sides that, peace was not distant. But as soon as we declare for independence, every prospect of this kind must vanish. Ruthless war, with all its aggravated horrors, will ravage our once happy land – our seacoasts and ports will be ruined, and our ships taken. Torrents of blood will be spilt, and thousands reduced to beggary and wretchedness …
>
> Limited monarchy is the form of government which is most favourable to liberty … although here and there among us a crack-brained zealot for absolute democracy or absolute monarchy may be sometimes found. Besides the unsuitableness of the republican form to the genius of the people, America is too extensive for it. That form may do well enough for a single city, or small territory; but would be utterly improper for such a continent as this …[9]

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the extract from Charles Inglis and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify the tone and perspective of the author. What does he mean when he says that 'Britain has not exerted her power' until now?
2. What, according to the extract, will be the result of America declaring independence?
3. How might the conflict best be resolved, according to Inglis?
4. Using your broader knowledge, explain whether or not you agree with Inglis that a 'limited monarchy' would have been more 'favourable to liberty' in America than a republic.

THE DISASTROUS YEAR

So poorly did the Continental Army fare throughout 1776 that many delegates to the Congress were preparing for a British victory. By early December the Continentals had endured a string of defeats, such as those at Bunker Hill, Long Island, Harlem Heights and White Plains. An invasion of Canada failed; the Royal Navy controlled coastal waters and burned the port cities of Falmouth and Norfolk. Washington's army was pushed out of New York into New Jersey, then driven even further west into Pennsylvania.

9 Gordon S. Wood, ed. *The American Revolution: Writings from the Pamphlet Debate 1773–1776, Vol 2* (New York: Library of America, 2015).

By mid-December the Continental Army was encamped on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River. Winter had set in, the days were bitterly cold and nights were freezing; snow fell frequently and sheet ice covered the river. Across in New Jersey a Hessian (German) regiment set up in Trenton for Christmas while a small British force was located further east at Princeton. Each army was preparing for its winter encampment, where combatants paused fighting to shelter from the harsh weather (a common practice in eighteenth century warfare). Neither the English nor their Hessian allies were expecting trouble from the Americans until March or April.

The death of American general Joseph Warren at Bunker Hill, June 1775.

George Washington was at a crossroads as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. Morale was low from a number of miserable defeats during 1776, declining food stores and other shortages. The majority of enlisted men had signed up for a twelve-month term; most would probably opt for a return to their farms in the spring. New recruits would come but they would probably prove insufficient, in light of the army's poor record and the states' inability to meet recruitment quotas. Washington faced the prospect of being a general without an army by the middle of the next year; furthermore, Major-General Charles Lee, his most vocal rival, was sending letters to Congress hinting at Washington's removal.

ACTIVITY

COMPARATIVE TABLE

Create a table like the one below and fill it in as you read about the Revolutionary War.

RELATIVE STRENGTH OF ARMIES IN DECEMBER 1776

	BRITISH ARMY	CONTINENTAL ARMY
Sources of funding		
Personnel		
Technology and equipment		
Allies		
Leadership		
Supplies		
Local knowledge		
Naval support		
Popular support		
Prospects of success in Revolutionary War		

Travelling with the Continentals was Thomas Paine, whose pamphlet *Common Sense* was a source of inspiration for revolutionaries. He despaired that, eleven months on, the independence he craved might be thwarted by military defeat. Recognising that the American cause needed a revival of literary energy, Paine began work on a new series of patriotic essays, later known as *The American Crisis*. The first began with the stirring words:

DID YOU KNOW?

Thomas Paine allegedly wrote some early instalments of *The American Crisis* on the head of a drum, while on location with the Continental Army.

> These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods ... it would be strange indeed if so [heavenly] an article as freedom should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right (not only to tax) but 'to bind us in all cases whatsoever' – and if being bound in that manner is not slavery, then there is not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is [sacrilegious]; for so unlimited a power can belong only to God.[10]

Paine circulated his first essay among the high-ranking officers in the army. So impressed was Washington that he instructed his junior officers to gather together the enlisted men and read excerpts. Its tone inspired one final aggressive strike against the Hessian regiment at Trenton. The first instalment was later circulated in the cities to much acclaim. It was followed by another twelve essays, published under the same title, within the next eighteen months. At the darkest point of the Revolutionary War, Paine's words convinced doubting Americans of the justness of their cause and the great rewards that awaited them if victory could be obtained.

CROSSING THE DELAWARE

Aware that his opportunities were rapidly dwindling, Washington took a risk. Together with his closest advisors he concocted a plan to lead the army across the half-frozen Delaware River and attack the Hessian position at Trenton. Christmas night was chosen, since most of the Germans were likely to be either off guard, asleep or drunk. Spiriting thousands of men, horses, equipment and light artillery across an icy river in the black of night was no easy feat, yet Washington's men managed to do it virtually undetected.

10 Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*, 1776.

ACTIVITIES

SOURCE ANALYSIS

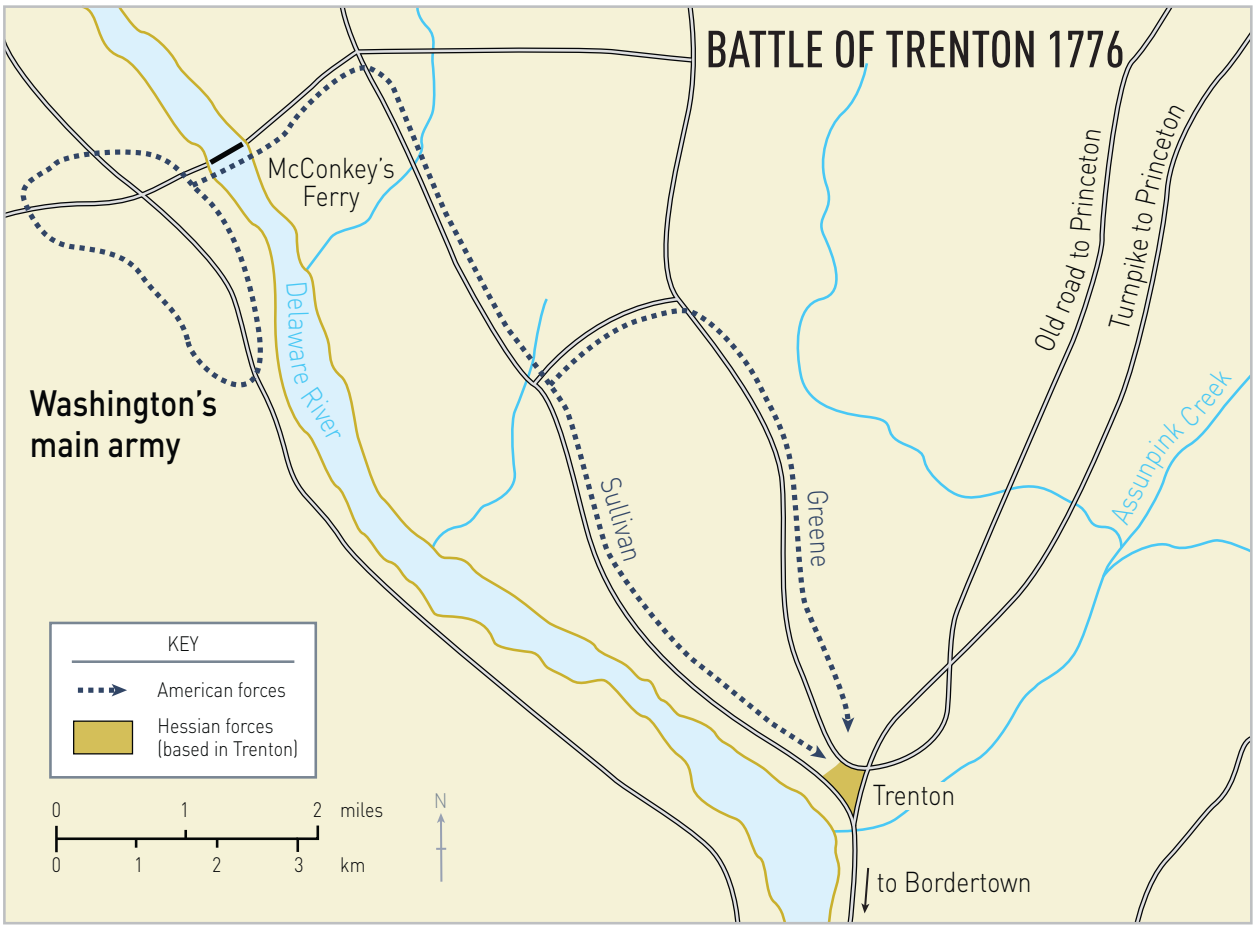
Look carefully at 'Washington Crossing the Delaware River' and complete the tasks below.

1. Describe Washington's appearance and demeanour in the representation. What impressions or attributes are implied?
2. What obstacles must the American soldiers overcome to achieve their objective at Trenton, according to the representation?
3. The 'stars and stripes' (the United States' national flag) did not exist at the time of the Battle of Trenton. Give a possible explanation for their appearance in the representation.
4. To what extent is this representation a complete and accurate depiction of the Continental Army's crossing of the Delaware River in December 1776?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Find a reproduction of Emanuel Leutze's 1851 painting of the same event. List the similarities and differences between Leutze's representation and the one appearing to the right, commenting on any instances of 'artistic licence.'

'Washington Crossing the Delaware River.'



At 4.00am they began the long march to Trenton, some without boots or shoes, rags wrapped around their bleeding feet. So bitter was the weather that two American soldiers died along the way.

The Americans attacked Trenton at 8.00am and by noon they were victorious. Almost a thousand Hessians were killed, wounded or captured, compared to only four Americans lost (including the two men who died *en route*). The Hessian colonel, Rall, was warned of the attack but either ignored or underestimated it (he was later killed in the battle). Washington's army went on to defeat the British regiment stationed at Princeton, New Jersey. Despite being of limited strategic significance in themselves, the two victories consolidated Washington's position, helped restore morale in the army and, in concert with Paine's rhetoric, boosted American hopes.

American Revolutionary War. Battle of Trenton, New Jersey. Washington's surprise attack on the Hessian soldiers at Trenton proved successful.

THE SEARCH FOR ALLIES

Trenton and Princeton were minor victories; the war was far from won. The United States – with a ramshackle army of barely 3000 men, inadequate supplies, inexperienced officers and a small, rural population – was incapable of defeating Britain single-handed. Finding support from overseas was critical. Congress recognised this from the outset and sent diplomats to Europe in search of moral, material and military support.

Some of America's most talented figures were despatched to Europe. Benjamin Franklin journeyed to France, John Jay to Spain and John Adams to Holland. Congress even sought help from unlikely sources such as Russia's empress, Catherine the Great (the American emissary to St Petersburg, Francis Dana, was unable to speak Russian and lingered there for two years, achieving almost nothing). These delegates spent many months abroad, lobbying for international recognition of the new United States, pushing for trade agreements and seeking loans, equipment contracts and military alliances. The Americans' best hope was a military alliance with France.

The French were paying close attention to the colonial difficulties of their British arch-rivals – they found it amusing and were aware of the opportunities that might come their way. However, France's own financial situation was perilous. Committing to an alliance with America, and possibly another war with England, would further drain the near-bankrupt French treasury. Their ministers therefore trod carefully in early dealings with the Americans. In early 1776 an agent named Pierre Beaumarchais, acting with funds supplied by the kings of France and Spain, established a bogus company that secretly exported military equipment to America. The French foreign minister, Vergennes, favoured a more formal alliance, though by late 1776 his attitude cooled after a string of American defeats.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some of the leaders America approached for help with their revolution against the British monarchy were themselves absolutist monarchs. France's Louis XVI (below), for instance, could sentence a person to imprisonment without trial.

KEY PEOPLE: FRANKLIN IN FRANCE

ACTIVITY

RESEARCH

Find out more about Benjamin Franklin's time in France. What difficulties did he and other envoys face in seeking international assistance in the early part of the Revolutionary War?

Not until late 1777, after America's fortunes in the war had improved, did foreign leaders begin to consider any public involvement. The critical alliance with France was signed the following year, largely because of Benjamin Franklin. The doctor had risen to enormous popularity at the royal court. Franklin was treated as a scientific genius dressed in the garb of a commoner; his image appeared on coins, watches, brooches and canvases. Franklin's time in France was a diplomatic success but he also enjoyed himself, living extravagantly, attending balls and galas, and conducting several affairs (despite being a married man in his seventies). When the more staid John Adams called upon the doctor in Paris during 1777, he professed some shock at Franklin's decadent lifestyle.

DID YOU KNOW?

While in France, Benjamin Franklin wore a fur-skin hat, reportedly to cover large boils on his forehead. The style of the hat was adopted by many in the Parisian court.

Further heartened by the American victory at Saragota in October 1777, Louis XVI signed treaties of alliance and commerce early the following year. French supplies and money began openly making their way across the Atlantic. A twenty-nine-ship French fleet and thousands of French troops arrived in America in 1780, at a time when British military tactics were faltering and London's appetite

DOCUMENT

COMTE DE VERGENNES (FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER), JANUARY 1778

> The advantages which will result [from American independence] are [endless]. We shall humiliate our natural enemy [England] … who never knows how to respect either treaties or the right of nations. We shall divert to our profit one of the principal sources of her [wealth]. We shall shake her power, and reduce her to her real value. We shall extend our commerce, our shipping, our fisheries. We shall ensure the possession of our islands, and finally, we shall re-establish our reputation and shall resume amongst the powers of Europe the place which belongs to us …
>
> I mean that France must undertake the war for the maintenance of American independence, even if that war should be in other respects disadvantageous. In order to be convinced of this truth, it is only necessary to picture to ourselves what England will be when she no longer has America.[11]

11 Cited in Edward Corwin, *French Policy and the American Alliance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1916), Appendix III.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the extract from the Comte de (Count of) Vergennes and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify three statements from the extract that convey an anti-British perspective.
2. In your own words, identify the advantages Vergennes saw for France in American independence.
3. Putting the benefits aside, why might participation in the Revolutionary War be 'in other respects disadvantageous' for the French, according to Vergennes?
4. What does this extract add to your understanding of the international context of the American Revolution?

KEY PEOPLE: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790)

CONTROVERSIES

Opposed the Stamp Act on behalf of his colony but accepted it after its eventual passing; even nominated a friend as a registered stamp seller.

Became embroiled in a scandal when he leaked private letters of Thomas Hutchinson to the press, alienating him in England.

KEY IDEAS

Franklin proposed reconciliation with England in 1765-1774 but later became a key revolutionary.

POLITICAL ROLE

Became a member of the Pennsylvania assembly in 1751; was a delegate to the Albany Conference (1754).

Became Pennsylvania's delegate to the 2nd Continental Congress; drafting committee for Declaration of Independence.

BACKGROUND

Born and raised in Boston. At age 17 ran away to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Born into poverty, the 15th son of a candle and soap maker; became a printer's apprentice.

EMPLOYMENT

Made his name and fortune as a journalist, philosopher, inventor and scientist; retired from printing in his 40s.

Spent the years 1757-62 and 1764-75 in Europe, mainly in England, where he hoped to gain a role in the British government.

VIEWS ON SLAVERY

In youth, he bought and sold slaves in his shop. Later was a prominent anti-slavery campaigner.

for war was in decline. Spain and Holland also joined the alliance against Britain, though their material contribution to the war was significantly smaller. Now at war with three European powers, Britain's attention shifted from its errant American colonies to its other imperial possessions, and the British Isles themselves.

DID YOU KNOW?

The French and Spanish attempted to invade Britain in July 1779, taking advantage of the Royal Navy's absence in America. The attack failed due to poor co-ordination, bad weather and an outbreak of smallpox.

Lafayette returned to France as a hero in late 1781. He would later play a key role in the French Revolution, sitting in the Estates-General, leading the National Guard and drafting the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.

FROM FOREIGN SHORES

Foreign involvement in the Revolutionary War was not limited to treaties and alliances. The conflict drew in thousands of soldiers from Europe, both as volunteers and paid mercenaries. The contribution of foreign officers to the Continental Army has been widely documented. The historian George Washington Greene (grandson of Continental Army general Nathanael Greene) found that non-Americans were overrepresented in the higher ranks of the army (eleven of the twenty-nine major-generals were European, as were sixteen of the brigadier-generals).[12] There were fewer foreigners in the lower ranks, perhaps since 'few could care to serve as captains or lieutenants in the half-clad, half-starved army of America, who could be captains and lieutenants in the well-clothed and well-fed armies of France or Prussia.'[13]

The most famous foreign officer to serve with the Americans was Gilbert du Motier – or, as he is better known, the Marquis de Lafayette. Part of an esteemed military family, the young Lafayette was given a captain's commission in the French army as a wedding gift. In 1774 he learned of the revolution in America through his membership of the Freemasons. Despite being just nineteen and with only a few months' military service, Lafayette began lobbying American diplomats for a general's commission – and so keen were the Americans to involve Frenchmen that they agreed. Lafayette sailed for the United States in 1777, defying orders from King Louis XVI, and leaving behind his pregnant wife. He would play a comparatively minor command role, though he was present at several significant battles and became a close friend of George Washington.

A representation of Lafayette leading American troops into battle against the British. In reality Lafayette played a minimal command role, as an advisor to Washington.

Men from the German-speaking provinces of Europe also played a role in the Revolutionary War. Britain approached the princes and aristocrats in these provinces to rent the services of their standing armies; these hired soldiers would become known in America as 'Hessians,' since the largest number came from the province of Hesse. Like British soldiers, who received about three pounds per year, they were poorly paid. As in the British army, many Hessians had been forced into service through conscription or indenture; despite this they tended to be disciplined and experienced in combat. About 30 000 mercenaries fought against the Americans in the Revolutionary War, making up about one-quarter of the British forces.

12 George Washington Greene, *Historical View of the American Revolution* (Boston: Ticknor, 1865).
13 G. W. Greene, *Historical View of the American Revolution*, 283.

ACTIVITY

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

What would the consequences have been for the Americans if they had not received foreign support in the Revolutionary War?

LIFE IN THE ARMY

Though vulnerable in its early years, the Continental Army was able to adapt, improvise and, ultimately, to survive and succeed. Formed by an order of the second Continental Congress in June 1775, the army's first soldiers were gathered from the New England militia units that swarmed around Boston after the battles at Lexington and Concord. Most Continental Army recruits continued to be drawn from the north-eastern states until the late 1770s. They initially enlisted for a one-year term, meaning that experienced soldiers were continuously being replaced with 'green' recruits; for this reason Washington frequently lobbied Congress for longer periods of service.

Infantry, Continental Army.

In many respects, the early Continental Army hardly resembled an army at all. Washington said his soldiers 'would fight very well if properly officered, although they are an exceedingly dirty and nasty people.'[14] Military discipline and command structures were negligible: most militiamen were accustomed to *electing* their officers and obeying only those orders they thought valid. In late 1775 Washington introduced floggings and other measures as a means of improving discipline. He set an example by assisting with lower-level tasks not usually performed by officers, such as organising drills and issuing daily orders.

14 Letter to Lund Washington, 20 August 1775.

FEATURE

JOSEPH MARTIN'S WAR DIARIES

Much of what is known about life in the Continental Army has been extracted from the diaries of Joseph Plumb Martin (1760–1850). At the age of fifteen, Martin was inspired by the news from Lexington–Concord and rushed to enlist. After a brief stint in the Connecticut militia he joined the Continental Army in 1776 and remained in service until the end of the war. He was present at several key events, including the Battle of Brooklyn, the winter camp at Valley Forge and the final surrender at Yorktown.

Martin's diaries are an important primary source. He wrote simply and candidly, recounting his hopes, frustrations and pains. He was a private for most of the war and never rose any higher than sergeant. While Martin rarely referred to military strategies, leaders or ideologies, he noted the dramatic differences between the men who came together to form the Continental Army in 1775: 'They put me in this regiment, half New Englanders [like myself] and half Pennsylvanians, folks about as different as night and day. Myself, I'd rather be fighting with a tribe of Indians than with these Southerners. I mean they're foreigners; [they] can't hardly speak English. They don't like me either. They call me that 'damn Yankee.' And that's about the nicest thing they say.'[15]

A recurring theme in Martin's account is his anger at shortages of food and supplies, a regular problem for the army. He frequently describes being hungry, being given stale bread and salted horsemeat, and being refused food by farmers. On one occasion Martin finds a discarded oxtail after going without food for three days. He cooks and consumes the meat, only to violently regurgitate it. Martin is sharply critical of the officers who rarely go without food or shelter while their men starve and freeze.

15 Joseph Plumb Martin, *Diaries of Joseph Plumb Martin*.

DID YOU KNOW?

Washington's officers at Valley Forge amused themselves by playing cricket, a popular sport in New England in the 1700s. Cricket was played widely in the United States until the 1850s, when it was overtaken by baseball.

DEATHLY WINTER AT VALLEY FORGE

No single event better demonstrates the suffering of the Continental Army than its stint at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777–78. This six-month winter encampment saw around 11 000 soldiers and an unknown number of civilians, including many women, living in a Pennsylvania field. The first bitterly cold twelve weeks involved gross deprivation: there were shortages of food, clothing, blankets, tents, bandages and medicine. Washington ordered foraging parties into the local countryside to request and requisition supplies; however, with the army requiring 5000 pounds of meat and twenty-five barrels of flour per day, such efforts were insufficient.

By December the shortages were acute and men began to die from hypothermia, pneumonia, malnutrition and diseases like typhus, smallpox and dysentery. Hundreds of horses and a number of civilians succumbed to disease or cold.

A representation of Washington at prayer at Valley Forge. Washington's religious views have been widely debated: he was baptised an Anglican but rarely spoke or wrote on matters of religion. Washington was also a high-ranking member of the Freemasons.

MARTHA WASHINGTON AT VALLEY FORGE

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Look carefully at the representation to the right. What problems does it suggest were experienced by the Continental Army at Valley Forge? Compare the representation with Albigence Waldo's diary entry (next page).

Print showing George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette visiting soldiers at their winter encampment at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

Accounts of the suffering reached some American cities and prompted efforts to raise food, livestock and other necessities for those serving at Valley Forge. Albigence Waldo, a civilian serving in the encampment as George Washington's doctor, recorded the following observations in his diary:

> The Army, which has been surprisingly healthy [to date], now begins to grow sickly from the continued fatigues they have suffered ... yet they still show a spirit of ... contentment not to be expected from troops so young. I am sick, discontented and out of humour. Poor food, hard lodging, cold weather, fatigue, nasty clothes, nasty cookery, vomit half my time, smoked out of my senses ... I can't endure it. Why are we sent here to starve and freeze? ... There comes a bowl of beef soup, full of burnt leaves and dirt, sickish enough to make [one] spew ... I am sick, my feet lame, my legs are sore, my body covered with this tormenting itch, my clothes are worn out, my constitution is broken ....[16]

Conditions improved by February and most of those still present, including Waldo, marched out alive. But as many as 2500 souls did not leave Valley Forge; they lie buried there today in what is now a national park.

The Continental Army received one major benefit from the encampment, thanks to the training regimes of Baron von Steuben. Another European volunteer, von Steuben had been a captain in the powerful Prussian army but fled Europe, possibly to avoid a scandal involving his alleged homosexuality. Barely able to speak English, he arrived in America and turned up at Valley Forge, offering his services to Washington. Assigned an organisational role, von Steuben was able to pass on his strict Prussian training, teaching American soldiers the military skills they had previously been denied. Of particular value was the method of using bayonets as a weapon (until this point, most American soldiers had been using them as cooking utensils).

DID YOU KNOW?

About 500 women spent the winter at Valley Forge, many of them wives or relatives of soldiers or volunteers from nearby Philadelphia. Women received half-rations and, if they did enough work around camp, were allocated a half-pension after the war.

ACTIVITY

DIVERSE EXPERIENCES

Find out why the winter encampment at Valley Forge has become a celebrated event in the history of the Continental Army, even though it involved such misery for individuals. In your research, find out about the women present at the encampment, e.g. Catherine Littlefield Green, Lucy Knox and Lady Stirling.

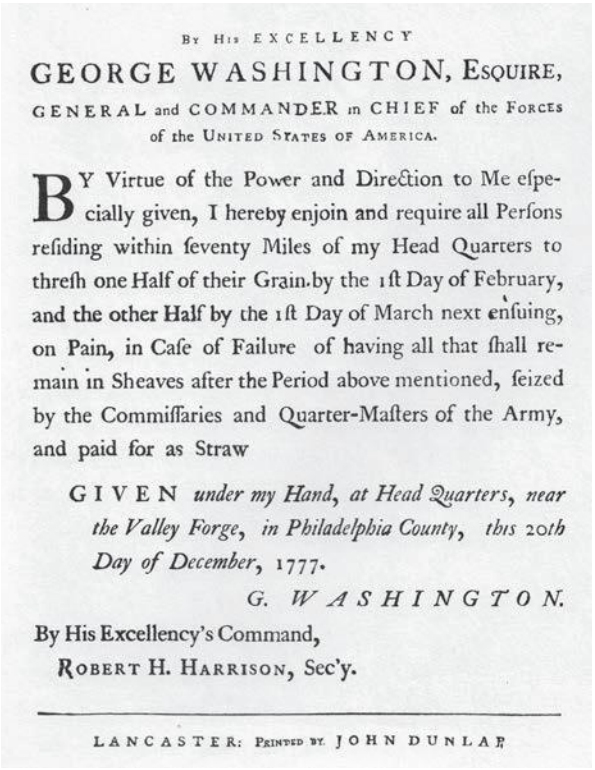
Soldiers frequently deserted from the Continental Army. Desertions tended to increase after lost battles, during winter encampments and when food, clothing and wages were short. Some soldiers joined under false names to collect enlistment bounties before deserting and rejoining elsewhere. Mutinies, too, were common, particularly in the second half of the war when Congress was effectively bankrupt and the soldiers were unpaid, often for months at a time. On New Year's Day 1781 more than 1500 Pennsylvania soldiers, many of them drunk, killed three officers and invaded the Continental Army's winter camp at Morristown, demanding that their terms of service be ended. They decamped and marched on Philadelphia, determined to convey their grievances directly to Congress. Washington, ever alert to the dangers of mutiny, drafted a blunt letter to the heads of four state governments, as well as Congress:

> It is with extreme anxiety and pain of mind [that] I find myself constrained to inform Your Excellency that the event I have long apprehended would be the consequence of the complicated distresses of the Army, has ... taken place. On the night of [1 January

16 Diary of Albigence Waldo, Valley Forge, 14 December 1777.

Washington requisitioned supplies from the neighbourhood with proclamations such as this.

PODCAST ON GEORGE WASHINGTON



By His EXCELLENCY

GEORGE WASHINGTON, Esquire,

GENERAL and COMMANDER in CHIEF of the Forces of the United States of America.

BY Virtue of the Power and Direction to Me eſpecially given, I hereby enjoin and require all Perſons reſiding within ſeventy Miles of my Head Quarters to threſh one Half of their Grain by the 1ſt Day of February, and the other Half by the 1ſt Day of March next enſuing, on Pain, in Caſe of Failure of having all that ſhall remain in Sheaves after the Period above mentioned, ſeized by the Commiſſaries and Quarter-Maſters of the Army, and paid for as Straw

GIVEN *under my Hand, at Head Quarters, near the Valley Forge, in Philadelphia County, this 20th Day of December*, 1777.

G. WASHINGTON.

By His Excellency's Command,
Robert H. Harrison, Sec'y.

LANCASTER: Printed by JOHN DUNLAP

1781] a mutiny was excited by the non-commissioned officers and privates of the Pennsylvania Line, which soon became so universal as to defy all opposition … [S]ome officers were killed, others wounded and the lives of several common soldiers lost … At what point this defection will stop or how extensive it may prove, God only knows.

[These] aggravated calamities and distresses have resulted from the total want [lack] of pay for nearly twelve months, for want of clothing at a severe season, and not infrequently the want of provisions … [I]t is in vain to think an Army can be kept together much longer, under such a variety of sufferings as ours has experienced … [U]nless some immediate and spirited measures are adopted to furnish at least three months pay to the troops … and means are devised to clothe and feed them better … the worst that can befall us may be expected.[17]

The long spear-like bayonet carried by most Continental Army soldiers.

ACTIVITY

KEY PEOPLE – GEORGE WASHINGTON

After reading the extract from George Washington's letter above, discuss the problems he raises concerning the Continental Army. What does the extract suggest about Washington's style as a military leader?

The mutineers marched towards Philadelphia but were met in Trenton by Joseph Reed, president of the Pennsylvanian assembly. Reed agreed to meet a 'committee of sergeants' and hear their grievances. Congress, realising the mutinous soldiers would enjoy broad public support and fearing the worst outcome, empowered Reed to negotiate; he managed to calm the rebels by granting discharges, extended periods of leave and re-enlistment bonuses. While they were in Trenton the mutineers were approached by a British agent who promised that the king would pay all their outstanding salaries if they agreed not to fight again on the rebel side. The soldiers refused the offer and promptly arrested the agent.

REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN

Women contributed to the war for independence in many ways. In the absence of their husbands, women took over the management of farms and stores. Daughters of Liberty groups, once concerned with non-importation campaigns, reconvened to assist the war effort by fundraising or sourcing equipment for the Continental

17 George Washington, circular letter, 5 January 1781.

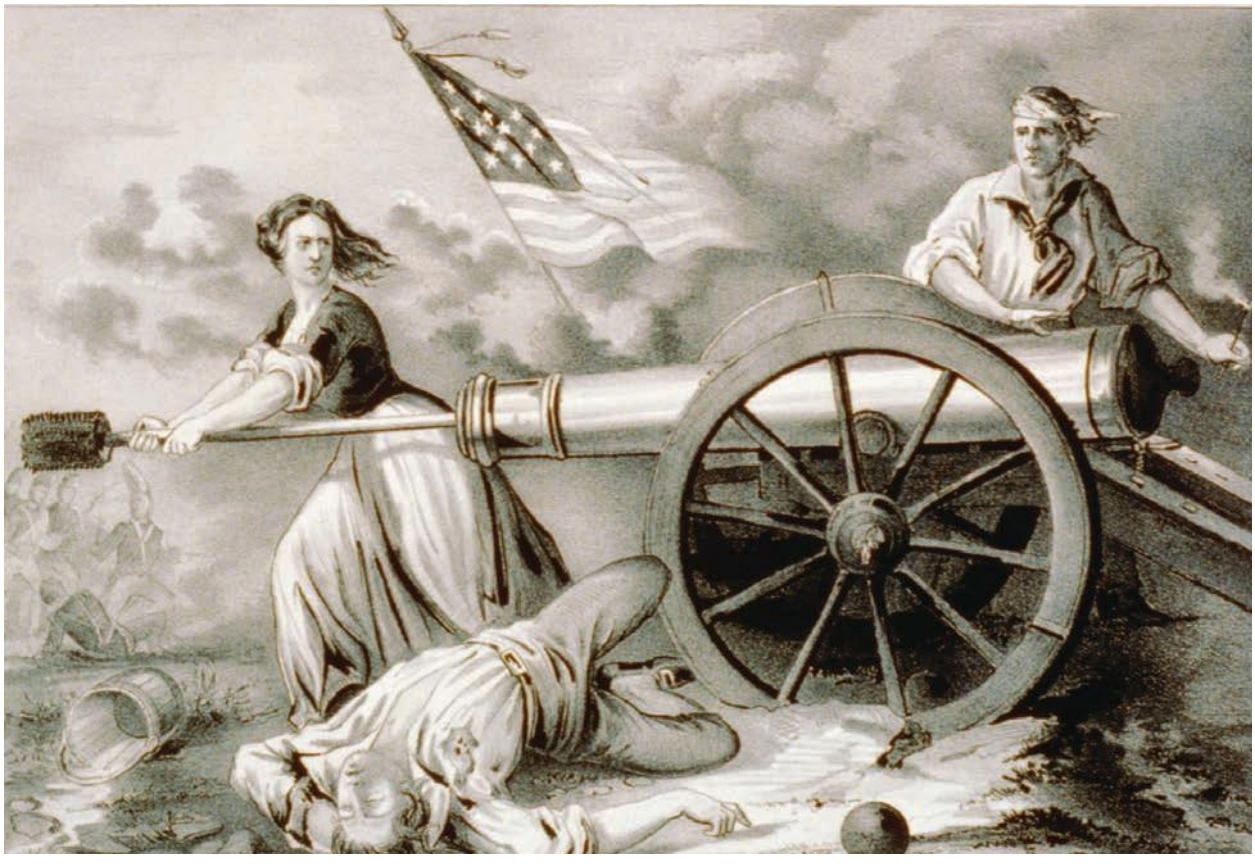
Army and state militias. Some women, mainly from the middle and upper classes, opened their homes and barns as military hospitals and barracks. Thousands of women followed their soldier husbands into encampments, where they worked as nurses, cooks and cleaners. Women mended uniforms, tended animals, cleaned rifles, searched the battlefield for weapons and ammunition, treated the sick and buried the dead.

Although women generally did not participate in combat, there were a few exceptions. Deborah Sampson (1760–1827) was a young Massachusetts schoolteacher, alert to the politics of the revolution. At five feet and seven inches (170 centimetres) she was tall and strongly built for a woman of the period. Sampson cut her hair short, wrapped binding around her torso to flatten her chest, dressed in farmers' clothes and enlisted under the name of Robert Shurtliff. She proved so adept with a rifle that her fellow soldiers seemed not to doubt her 'manhood,' though they teased her for not having to shave.

Deborah Sampson participated in several minor battles in 1782 and acquitted herself well. She suffered gunshot wounds to the thigh after a skirmish in New York and dug out the bullet herself with a pen-knife, fearing that army doctors would detect her secret. A severe fever saw Sampson hospitalised, however, and when medics discovered her true sex she was quietly discharged from the army. Though she was initially denied payment for her combat duties, lobbying from Paul Revere led to Congress granting Sampson a monthly pension in 1804. She later married, raised four children and earned a modest living by dressing in military uniform and recounting her wartime experiences in front of an audience.

DID YOU KNOW?

Deborah Sampson's first biographer, Herman Mann, praised her as a symbol of republican womanhood. After her death, however, Mann tarnished Sampson's reputation by suggesting she had engaged in a romantic affair with a 'Miss P.'



A representation of 'Molly Pitcher,' a Pennsylvanian woman said to have taken up arms after her husband was killed in battle. Most historians consider her to be a mythical figure or a composite of several patriot women.

FEATURE

THE SPECTRE OF SMALLPOX

The Revolutionary War was waged during a decade-long smallpox epidemic. The disease ravaged North America, killing up to five times as many people as the war did. Smallpox had been ever-present in Europe thoughout the 1700s, killing around half a million people in almost every year of that century. It is not known how smallpox found its way to North America; the Spanish conquistadors introduced it to South America, where it wiped out large numbers of both Inca and Aztec people. The first recorded outbreak in the British colonies was in Plymouth, Massachusetts in the 1630s.

DID YOU KNOW?

Smallpox is believed to have killed 300–500 million people during the twentieth century.

DID YOU KNOW?

M.T. Anderson's novel *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing*, set in revolutionary Boston, has a chapter entitled 'The Pox Party,' referring to the practice of transmitting smallpox at social gatherings.

By the time of the revolution both the Americans and the British had developed a crude form of vaccination, called 'variolation,' to minimise the impact of smallpox. Healthy people were deliberately infected through a scratch or small cut on the skin; pus would be harvested from the blisters of a smallpox victim (dead or alive) and introduced into the wound. The patient would then contract a relatively mild form of smallpox, requiring several weeks in quarantine to avoid passing the disease to others.

Although this method of inoculation caused suffering and, on occasion, death, it was generally considered a success. Americans were thirty times more likely to die from the naturally-acquired airborne form of the virus than from variolation. Home-spun inoculations became something of a social ritual: members of the elite would invite others to 'take the pox' at a dinner party or gathering. To have someone of high status refuse this invitation – as Martha Washington pointedly did to the wife of John Hancock – was a significant snub.

Smallpox posed a grave threat to the Continental Army, whose members lived in close contact and were already vulnerable to malnutrition, exposure, typhoid, dysentery and other conditions. In mid-1775 George Washington heard a rumour that the British intended to decimate American ranks by deliberately infecting them with smallpox. Though he considered such an act unlikely he ordered a series of rolling inoculations. It was a bold move with significant results. Records suggest that the death rate for the inoculated smallpox was one in 300, far less than the sixteen per cent death toll from naturally contracted smallpox.[18] Despite the success of variolation, Elizabeth Fenn's *Pox Americana* suggests that the disease still killed around 130 000 North Americans between 1775 and 1782.[19]

A British cartoon expressing doubts about the safety of smallpox inoculations. A doctor administers the infection while those already inoculated begin to turn into farm animals.

18 Eric Croddy et al, *Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 311.
19 Elizabeth Fenn, *Pox Americana: the Great Smallpox Epidemic 1775–82* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 22.

SLAVES IN UNIFORM

African Americans participated in the fighting from the outset, including the first skirmish (at Lexington) and the first significant battle (at Bunker Hill). Yet when Washington arrived to take command of the newly formed Continental Army in mid-1775 he was shocked to see African Americans armed and housed alongside white soldiers. Washington immediately recommended to Congress that the enlistment of further 'Negroes' be prohibited, regardless of their status as slaves or free men. Shortly afterwards Lord Dunmore, governor of Washington's native Virginia, issued a proclamation promising freedom to any slave who volunteered to take up arms against the revolution:

> I do, in Virtue of the Power and Authority given to me by His Majesty, determine to execute martial law ... [to achieve this] I do require every person capable of bearing arms to report to His Majesty's standard, or be looked upon as Traitors to His Majesty's crown and government ... And I do hereby further declare all indentured servants, Negroes or others free that are able and willing to bear arms [for] His Majesty's troops.[20]

Through his proclamation Dunmore aimed to bolster his own weak militia, but he may also have wanted to instil panic in revolutionary Virginians, whose fears of slave uprisings were intense. This became a common tactic of the Revolutionary War, used by both sides with varying degrees of success. Most American states followed Washington's lead and banned the recruitment of African American soldiers; commitment to this policy decreased after it was discovered that the British were enlisting black men in their thousands. When Massachusetts and Rhode Island failed to fill their quotas of recruits for the Continental Army, state authorities issued promises of freedom and land grants to black recruits. Rhode Island extended a similar offer to Native Americans.

Aside from the 'blacks only' regiments created in some states, most African Americans fought, lived, ate and slept alongside white soldiers. No other United States army would allow this degree of racial integration again until World War II.

African American soldier Peter Salem shoots Major Pitcairn at Bunker Hill. Painting by J.E. Taylor.

The grave of Nero Hawley in Trumbull, Connecticut. Hawley fought for most of the war in the place of his 'owner,' participating in several major battles and, in 1781, earning his freedom and a small monthly pension.

DID YOU KNOW?

The revolutions in America and France influenced a slave uprising in the French colony of Saint-Domingue (Haiti). In 1791 slaves overthrew their 'masters' and within a decade had established the first post-colonial independent nation run by former slaves.

20 Cited in Horace Greeley, *The American Conflict* (London: Hartford, 1867), 518.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1776 Lord Dunmore wrote to Lord Germain, minister for the American colonies, saying 'I have been endeavouring to raise two regiments here – one of white people, the other of black. The former goes on very slowly, but the latter very well.'

Not all accepted the situation quietly, of course; even some soldiers in the British army, which itself utilised as many as 20 000 non-Anglo-Saxon recruits over the course of the war, mocked the Continentals for having African Americans in their regiments:

> The rebel clowns, oh what a sight!
> Too awkward was their figure.
> 'Twas yonder stood a pious white
> And here and there a nigger.[21]

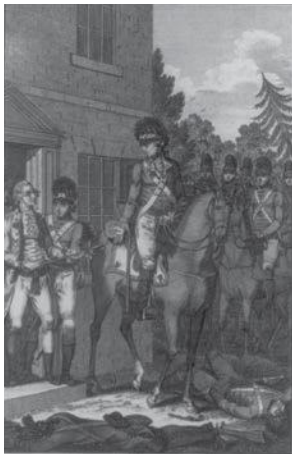
One Hessian officer even likened African Americans to animals:

> From here to Springfield there are few habitations which [do not have] a negro family dwelling in a small house nearby. The negroes here are as fruitful as other cattle. The young ones are well foddered [fed], especially while they are still calves. Slavery is, moreover, very productive. The negro is to be considered just as the bond-servant of a peasant. The negress does all the coarse work of the house, and the little black young ones wait on the little white young ones. The negro can take the [battle] field instead of his master, therefore no regiment is to be seen in which there are not negroes in abundance, and among them are able-bodied, strong and brave fellows. Here too there are many families of free negroes, who live in good houses, have property and live just like the rest of the inhabitants.[22]

ACTIVITY

DIVERSE EXPERIENCES

Investigate the life and war service of one of the following African American soldiers during the Revolutionary War: Salem Poor, Peter Salem, Seymour Burr, Wentworth Cheswell, Henry Washington, Nero Hawley. What challenges and successes did your chosen soldier experience? To what extent were his experiences different from those of other soldiers? Present your findings to your class.



The American general Lee taken prisoner by Lieutenant Colonel Harcourt of the British army.

21 Cited in William Alt, *Black Soldiers, White Wars* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 2002), 20.

22 Diary of Hessian officer, 1777, cited in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1862–63*.

PRISONERS OF WAR

Although captured soldiers and sailors were generally treated well during the Revolutionary War, they were expected to pay for their own food and supplies. Opposing armies often exchanged one prisoner for another or issued war parole, granting freedom if the prisoner agreed to quit the fighting. Many prisoners of war were released on condition that they defect and join the capturing army. A significant number took up this option, if only to facilitate their escape.

A sizeable number of captured American prisoners were detained on ships. These huge barges, called hulks, were kept permanently at anchor in American harbours. The most notorious of these was HMS *Jersey*, which held thousands of captured servicemen in appalling conditions off New York City. As many as eight men a day died from disease, starvation or beatings on board the *Jersey*; their bodies were either thrown overboard or buried in shallow graves along the shore-line. It is believed that five times as many Americans died in British captivity than in battle during the Revolutionary War.

THE WAR AT SEA

The war for American independence was fought primarily on land. However, in the 1700s armies were heavily dependent on naval support: reinforcements, food, munitions, equipment and orders were often conveyed by ship, so those

who controlled the seas and harbours often had a significant advantage on land. Naval vessels, with their huge cannons, could also blockade harbours or bombard a coastal city, leaving it in ruins. This was a dire problem for the Americans, who had no navy to speak of and therefore no capacity to withstand British blockades or naval attacks.

By the end of 1775 most colonies had requisitioned (taken control of) private ships and hastily armed them, assembling a basic navy. Congress acknowledged the need for a maritime force, establishing the Continental Navy and a small marine corps. The fledgling American navy eventually put about sixty ships to sea, with the navies of the separate colonies contributing about another forty. In contrast, the British Navy had 270 warships, many of these heavily-armed frigates or battleships, and by the war's end their total strength had increased to 468.

DID YOU KNOW?

Privateers generally divided up seized ships, cargo and cash between the sailors involved, the ship-owner or financier, and the state that issued them with a letter of marque.

Because of this imbalance American navies found it more effective to target British merchant ships and private boats instead of confronting the Royal Navy directly. Most of the damage inflicted on British shipping was carried out by privateers, or privately-owned warships. Congress encouraged this practice by issuing ship-owners and sea captains with documents called letters of marque, giving them the authority to attack British ships on behalf of the United States. The king reciprocated by granting letters of marque to loyalists and Quebec ship-owners, licensing them to attack American vessels. The practice is described in the folk song *Barrett's Privateers*:

> Oh the year was Seventeen Seventy-Eight
>
> How I wish I was in Sherbrooke now
>
> A letter of marque came from the king
>
> For the scummiest vessel I've ever seen.
>
> God damn them all!
>
> I was told we'd cruise the seas for American gold
>
> We'd fire no guns, shed no tears
>
> Now I'm a broken man on a Halifax pier,
>
> The last of Barrett's Privateers.[23]

23 Stan Rogers, 'Barrett's Privateers' (Canadian folk song).

A British 'press gang' at work, forcing civilians into service in the Royal Navy. This practice was used by both Britain and America.

The action between *the Serapis* and *Bon Homme Richard*, 1779. Painted by James Hamilton and engraved by R. Whitechurch.

It is estimated that around 10 000 Americans were engaged in privateering by the start of 1778. Later the same year, when the British were occupied with resisting the naval fleets of France and Spain, even greater numbers of American privateers emerged. In the final year of the war more than 400 American vessels operated as privateers in the waters of the eastern seaboard, around the British colonies in the Caribbean, and as far abroad as the British Isles themselves. The damage they inflicted on British ships and trade was severe, bringing about the loss or capture of 2000 ships, 12 000 men and cargo valued at £18 million.

FEATURE

REVOLUTION OR CIVIL WAR?

David Armitage argues that the American Revolution, like many revolutions, can more usefully be seen as a civil war. Indeed, some British commentators referred to the conflict as 'the American civil war' at the time, since it involved armed combat within a sovereign entity (Great Britain) between two parties who shared, at the start of the war, a common ruler (the king of England).[24] In July 1775 the Continental Congress stated that it sought reconciliation with Britain 'on reasonable terms ... thereby to relieve the Empire from the calamities of civil war.'[25] Nowadays when people speak of the 'American Civil War' they mean the attempt by southern slave-owning states to break from the Union in 1861–65; however, America had experienced many civil wars before then.

Armitage suggests that people tend to use the term 'revolution' to imply progress and innovation, while 'civil war' has a more destructive connotation.

24 David Armitage, 'Civil War and Revolution,' *Agora* Vol. 44, No. 2 (2009): 21.

25 Cited in James H. Hutson, *A Decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind: Congressional State Papers 1774–1776* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1975), 96–7.

THE WAR IN THE SOUTH

By late 1778 strategists in London were frustrated with their generals' inability to track down and eradicate Washington's army. They also realised that disorder in New England and some Middle Colonies was so strong that these provinces might never be regained. Consequently they developed a new strategy to recoup at least something from the war. This new tactical approach began with a major offensive against the southern colonies and their two main cities: Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina.

Representation of Francis Marion, providing food and courtesy to a captured British officer. There is evidence to suggest, however, that Marion often ignored the 'rules of war.'

There were many reasons why the British turned their attention to the southern states, including the fact that patriot forces were weaker there and could be overcome more easily, and because the British expected to find higher numbers of loyalists there than in the north. The south, with its rich plantations

of tobacco, rice, indigo and cotton, was of great economic importance to British manufacturers; by eradicating the rebels and setting up southern loyalist governments the English hoped to establish a new and more obedient cluster of American colonies.

Although Britain overestimated the number of loyalists living in the south, its early military interventions there were successful. The first assaults were centred on Georgia, which was almost entirely under British control by the end of 1778. Two years later General Clinton led a successful attack on Charleston, South Carolina – one of the largest and wealthiest cities in North America. In May 1780 more than 5000 American soldiers were overcome – by far the largest American surrender of the war – while the feared English cavalry officer Banastre Tarleton relentlessly pursued what remained of the southern regiments of the Continental Army. By late 1780 it appeared that the British, in league with local loyalists, were firmly in control. The turning point came at the Battle of Cowpens of January 1781 and the arrival of the French, who figured in the decisive victory at Yorktown.

The southern theatre became as much a civil war as a war of independence. With no organised American army in the south, resistance to the British came from shadowy groups of civilian militia, led by men like Francis Marion. Many battles in the south were fought not by British and American regulars, but by local patriots and loyalists, motivated more by petty grievances and vengeance than by politics or ideology. The British promise of freedom for any African slave who took up arms was a complicating factor, with countless Loyalist slave-owners fearful both of a slave revolt and of losing their property. Many chose supporting the revolution over British promises to free the south's 400 000 slaves.

REVIEW OF 'THE PATRIOT'

DOCUMENT (FILM)

THE PATRIOT

Roland Emmerich's 2000 film *The Patriot* (starring Mel Gibson) is a cinematic representation of the American Revolutionary War in the southern states. The film's producers had intended to use South Carolina militia colonel Francis Marion as their central character, however Marion's personal history was problematic (he was himself a slave-owner, an advocate of violence against troublesome slaves and the father of several children with female slaves). The producers instead opted for a fictional character, Benjamin Martin, whose military feats are modelled on Marion. The British dragoon officer, Colonel Tavington, is loosely based on Banastre Tarleton, while English commander Lord Cornwallis is the only real historical figure represented.

A veteran of the French and Indian War, a plantation owner and member of the South Carolina assembly, Benjamin Martin is initially opposed to fighting the British. He delivers a compelling speech in the legislature to that effect but is soon prompted to revolutionary action when Tavington shoots his young son in cold blood.

A few scenes in *The Patriot* are of interest, such as the debate over war in the South Carolina legislature and the tactics employed by Martin's militia platoon against the British. Much of the movie is historically unsound, however, and some scenes – such as a depiction of townsfolk being burnt to death in a church by British cavalry – have no basis in fact.

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

After watching Roland Emmerich's *The Patriot* (Columbia TriStar, 2000), discuss the extent to which the film accurately represents the Revolutionary War (particularly the tactics used by both sides). What alternative interpretations are possible, and what political message do you think the film is trying to convey?

FEATURE

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: GEORGE WASHINGTON

DID YOU KNOW?

American historian Ray Raphael's book *Founding Myths* contends that much of the accumulated 'knowledge' about the American Revolution is, in fact, drawn from the work of nineteenth-century novelists and biographers.

Most of written history has been concerned with the actions of powerful (usually male) public figures such as kings, presidents and generals. This focus on 'great men' in history originated with writers like Plutarch (46–120), whose *Parallel Lives* contained dozens of biographical studies of notable Greeks and Romans. In many historical accounts, leaders have been represented as sources of exceptional wisdom and virtue; no figure in the American Revolution has received more of this eulogising than George Washington.

To some extent this was merely a continuation of Washington's great popularity in life. In post-revolution America, Washington was the figurehead of the revolution, its military saviour, a character of the utmost grace and civility. Some even desired to see Washington elevated to the status of a demi-god: Noah Webster, creator of the first American-English dictionary, expressed a desire that in the future, as soon as a young American 'opens his lips' he should 'lisp the praise of liberty and of those illustrious heroes and statesmen who have wrought a revolution in his favour.'[26] There have often been political motives at work: as Ernst Breisach pointed out, 'Washington the national hero ... became the personification of those virtues which the young republic wished its citizens to have: thrift, patriotism, temperance, frugality, industry, honesty and obedience.'[27]

This representation of the apotheosis (elevation to sainthood) of Washington was created in 1865 and contains a representation of Abraham Lincoln, who was not born until a decade after Washington's death. At the foot of the scene are several symbols of liberty and Washington's service to the United States.

Parson Weems, one of Washington's first biographers, recounted – possibly concocted – a story about the young Washington chopping down his father's favourite cherry tree and being unable to lie about having done so. Weems' book, *A History of the Life and Death, Virtues and Exploits of General George Washington*, was a commercial and critical success, published at the height of Washington's immense popularity. Buoyed by this, Weems continued to supplement his meagre clergyman's income with life-and-times works about Benjamin Franklin, Francis Marion and the founder of Pennsylvania, William Penn. Weems' research was sporadic and relied upon anecdotes and rumour; nor was he objective, describing Washington as 'the greatest man that ever lived.' Yet since Weems was one of the first popular narrators of the revolution, his accounts have survived in folklore – and even, in some cases, in history books.

Realistic assessments of Washington are, of course, quite distinct from the myths surrounding him. His tactical nous was pivotal to the survival of the Continental Army, but in significant battles he was defeated twice as many times as he was victorious. Washington badgered Congress to better supply his army, but was never averse to lodging his own expense claims, including one $831 bill for new saddlery and stationery. He was civil and urbane in public but often moody and short-tempered in private. He was a keen seeker of wealth, always on the look-out for ways to extend his profit, and an avid speculator in the western lands. He kept large numbers of African slaves until his death; he once attempted a land purchase using slaves as payment.[28] The Iroquois called Washington 'Devourer of Towns' because of the scorched-earth strategies he ordered his officers to employ during the 1779 Sullivan expedition.

Like his fellow revolutionaries Washington had his flaws and contradictions. Yet his three-fold status as a revolutionary leader – commander of the army, chairman of the Philadelphia convention and the first president of the United States – has invited claims of near-sainthood. The challenge of the historian is to peel back the rhetoric and myth that more than two centuries have attached to the planter-turned-general from Mount Vernon.

DID YOU KNOW?

Washington had many problems with his teeth – by the age of forty he only had one left. He wore an uncomfortable set of dentures made of bone and ivory.

Washington's teeth.

26 Cited in K. Alan Snyder, *Defining Noah Webster* (Fairfax: Allegiance Press, 2002), 95.
27 Ernst Breisach, *Historiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 226.
28 Frank Grizzard, *George Washington* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2002), 285.

KEY PEOPLE: GEORGE WASHINGTON (1732-1799)

EMPLOYMENT

Limited military experience as lieutenant-colonel in Virginia militia.

Involved in land speculation.

Plantation owner.

VIEWS ON SLAVERY

Was a slave-owner all his life; inherited slaves, owned 27 by his marriage to Martha Custis; often wrote about African Americans as a secondary or inferior group; by 1786 was expressing anti-slavery views.

POLITICAL ROLE

Member of Virginia House of Burgesses (assembly) in his thirties.

Elected as a Virginia delegate to the first Continental Congress (1774).

Commander of Continental Army in Revolutionary War; chosen by second Continental Congress (1775) to increase southern support for the war. Later became first president of United States.

BACKGROUND

Born in Virginia; southern background influential in his appointment as commander-in-chief of Continental Army.

Wealthy, upper class.

Mainly hereditary wealth; connections with England.

CONTROVERSIES

Known to be elitist; prepared to use corporal punishment to enforce discipline.

Arguably sparked French and Indian War through his impetuosity.

KEY IDEAS

Response to Stamp Act (1765): 'parliament has no right to put its hands into our pockets without our consent.'

THE AMERICAN VICTORY

DID YOU KNOW?

A song reportedly played in the wake of the British defeat was *The World Turned Upside Down*. Its lyrics tell of a world where the natural order has been dramatically upset:

If buttercups buzzed after the bee

If boats were on land and churches on sea

If ponies rode men and if grass ate the cows,

And cats should be chased into holes by the mouse

If the mamas sold their babies

To the gypsies for half a crown

If summer were spring and the other way round

Then all the world would be upside down.

The British government endured severe criticism for its inability to bring the war to a conclusion, the failure of its southern campaign and the 1781 defeat at Yorktown. Neither the Continental Congress nor the Continental Army had been vanquished; American governments controlled twelve of the thirteen states. More than 30 000 British personnel and 7000 Hessians were dead, most from disease and deprivation rather than fighting. The war had cost Britain £80 million (in today's values, about $16 billion Australian). In February 1782 – seven years after the first battle at Lexington – parliament voted to end the war and pursue a peace treaty with the Americans. The following month, Lord North resigned as prime minister.

In assessing the reasons for Britain's defeat, it is clear that the very nature of the war was crucial. The strategy initially employed by British commanders was to land their forces in America, seize control of major cities, destroy the Continental Army, capture Congress, arrest dissidents and restore loyalists to colonial government. Yet when some of these objectives became impossible, British generals had to focus instead on occupation, suppression and pursuit. They were unable to accomplish these aims without alienating substantial numbers of previously loyalist or uncommitted Americans.

American leaders such as Washington soon recognised that their prospects would improve if they could extend the duration of the war. A long conflict would drain the treasury in London, erode support for the war in Britain and bring pressure to bear on the government in an already unstable political environment. Washington's evasive tactics – which were in stark contrast to his own aggressive instincts – were thus intended to prolong the war, exhaust British resources and frustrate their commanders. The survival of the Continental Army and the Congress was also crucial – as America's only national bodies, they were important symbols of American independence.

Washington and his generals.

ACTIVITIES

STATISTICS

Compile a graph on the Revolutionary War. Include the following figures for American, British and French forces: servicemen deployed, deaths, deserters, prisoners of war and financial costs. List all sources used.

SHORT RESPONSE

Using three or four points, evaluate the performance of the Continental Congress during the Revolutionary War. Did the Congress supply and instruct the Continental Army well? To what extent was the Congress hampered by the inaction of particular states?

Foreign support, particularly from France, was critical to America's success. The Royal Navy dominated the seas, quarantining cities and blocking American maritime supply lines. The Continental Navy and American privateers enjoyed some success, costing British companies dearly in terms of property and insurance; in military terms, however, they proved to be more of a nuisance than a threat. While French ground forces contributed, it was the arrival of the French navy that proved decisive at the American victory over Cornwallis at Yorktown (1781), the last major battle of the war. Injections of French money and munitions, which started in late 1775, were greatly significant. Finally, the Continental Army, poorly officered for the most part, benefited from the involvement and expertise of European personnel such as Lafayette and von Steuben.

DID YOU KNOW?

The French contributed approximately 1.3 billion livres to the Revolutionary War. Following this, France was in a dire economic state in the late 1780s, which in turn contributed to the French Revolution and the murder of King Louis XVI.

British officers and soldiers preparing to disembark and leave America.

CONCLUSION

The Declaration of Independence of 1776 was the cornerstone of America's political and ideological revolution – but this independence would only be secured by a military victory over Britain. Legend has it that America won the Revolutionary War through brilliant leadership, daring soldiery, heroic individuals and a resilient population. A more apt historical assessment is that the Americans, struggling to repel the might of the Empire, were able to survive, adapt and respond. The British underestimated the task and found themselves with impossible objectives: destroy an elusive army, conquer a continent and impose loyalty at gunpoint.

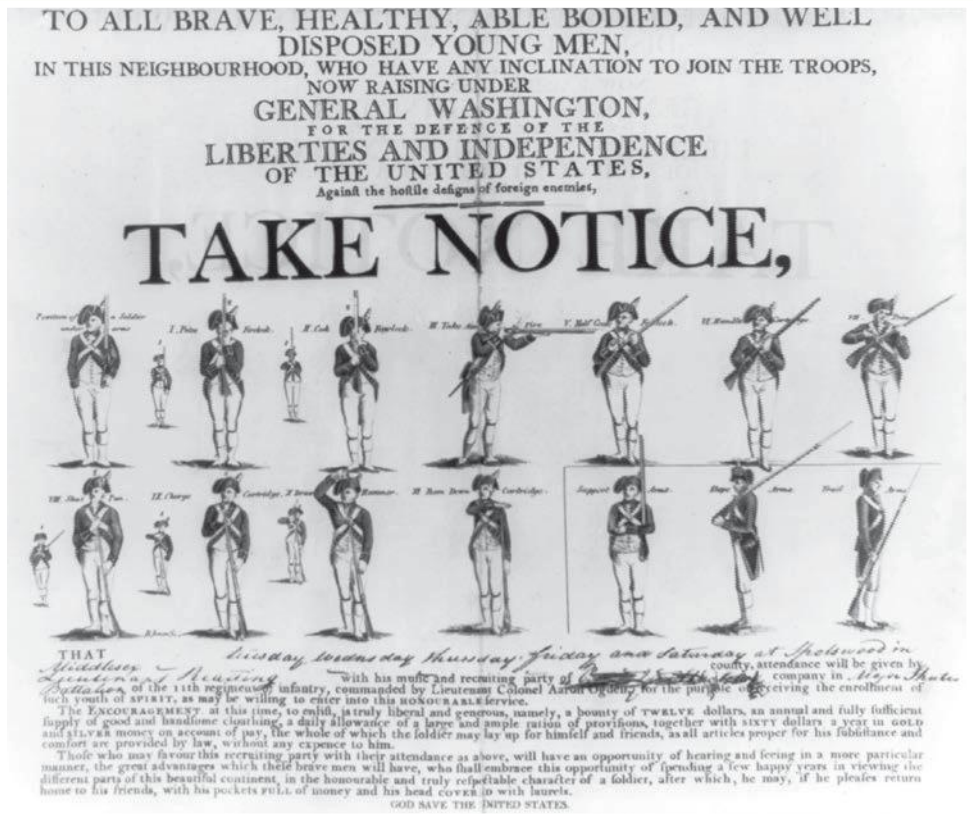
The involvement of foreign allies in this mix of confusion and circumstance proved decisive. The strength of the French army and, more importantly, the tactical contribution of Louis XVI's navy, were important contributors to the British defeat. The French declaration of war in July 1778 transformed the situation for London: North America was now only one theatre in a wider imperial conflict, and the stakes became far higher. Within three years the British appetite for recapturing its rebel colonies had declined to the point that parliament brought the campaign to an end. American independence had been won on the battlefield; it would now have to be secured on the home front.

TEST YOUR LEARNING

CHAPTER REVIEW

SOURCE ANALYSIS AND POSTER

After looking carefully at the poster below, identify techniques used to encourage men to enlist in the Continental Army. How effective do you think these might have been? Construct your own enlistment poster, this time for the British Army in 1780.


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,
THAT
with his music and recruiting party of
company in
county, attendance will be given by
of the 11th regiment of infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Aaron Ogden, for the purpose of receiving the enrollment of such youth of SPIRIT, as may be willing to enter into this HONOURABLE service.
The ENCOURAGEMENT at this time, to enlist, is truly liberal and generous, namely, a bounty of TWELVE dollars, an annual and fully sufficient supply of good and handsome cloathing, a daily allowance of a large and ample ration of provisions, together with SIXTY dollars a year in GOLD and SILVER money on account of pay, the whole of which the soldier may lay up for himself and friends, as all articles proper for his subsistance and comfort are provided by law, without any expence to him.
Those who may favour this recruiting party with their attendance as above, will have an opportunity of hearing and seeing in a more particular manner, the great advantages which these 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 SAVE THE UNITED STATES.

A broadside soliciting recruits for the Continental Army.

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – ESSAY

Write a 600–800 word essay on one of the topics below. Your essay should include an introduction, paragraphs supported by evidence, a conclusion and a bibliography.

Topics:

- Did the Americans win the Revolutionary War or did the British lose it?
- How did the involvement of foreign countries such as France change the course of the Revolutionary War?
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the American leadership (political, military and ideological) during the Revolutionary War. Was there any luck involved in the American victory?

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE – DIAGRAM

Create a diagram or infographic showing the significant factors and individuals involved in the American victory in the Revolutionary War. Include the contributions of a diverse range of people.

KEY EVENTS – MEMORY TASK

Photocopy the Chapter Overview diagrams and/or Timelines from this book and memorise the order of key events in the revolution.

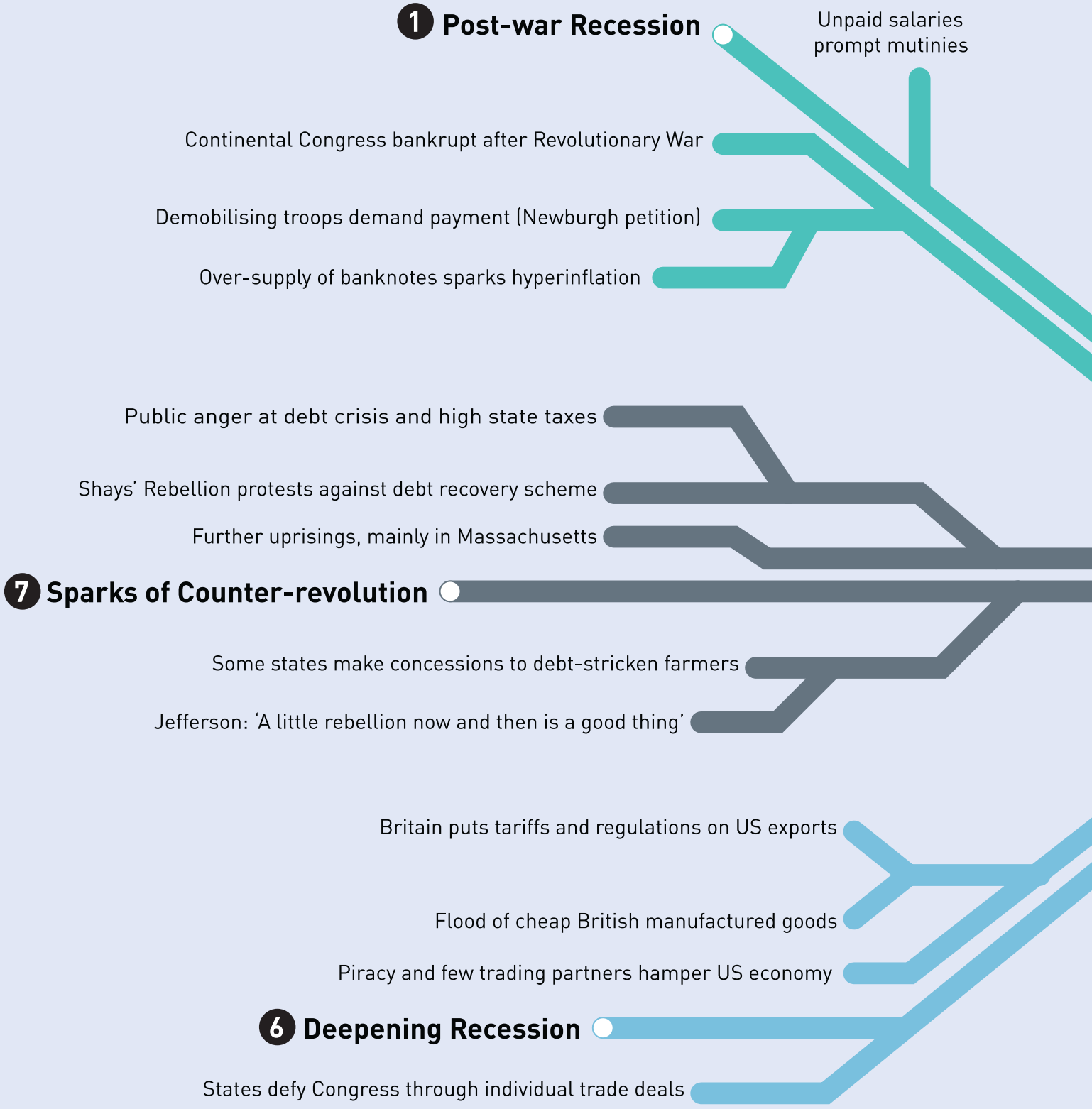
CHAPTER

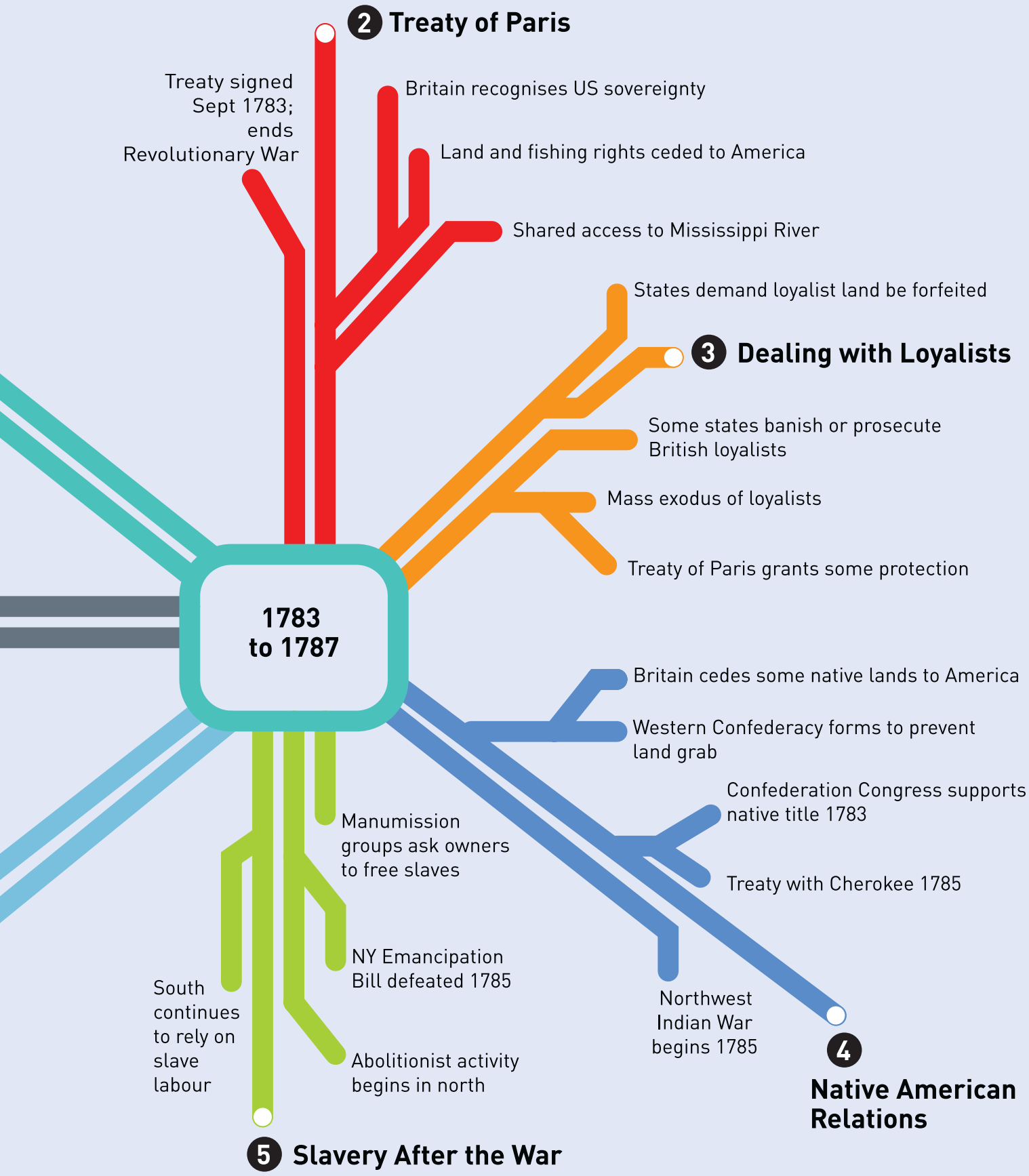
6

THE NEW NATION

(1783–1787)

CHAPTER OVERVIEW




1783 to 1787
2 Treaty of Paris
Treaty signed Sept 1783; ends Revolutionary War
Britain recognises US sovereignty
Land and fishing rights ceded to America
Shared access to Mississippi River
3 Dealing with Loyalists
States demand loyalist land be forfeited
Some states banish or prosecute British loyalists
Mass exodus of loyalists
Treaty of Paris grants some protection
4 Native American Relations
Britain cedes some native lands to America
Western Confederacy forms to prevent land grab
Confederation Congress supports native title 1783
Treaty with Cherokee 1785
Northwest Indian War begins 1785
5 Slavery After the War
Manumission groups ask owners to free slaves
NY Emancipation Bill defeated 1785
Abolitionist activity begins in north
South continues to rely on slave labour

The reverse of the great seal of the United States.

INTRODUCTION

For the new United States, victory in the Revolutionary War did not automatically mean a victory for the revolution. Despite the glowing terms of the Treaty of Paris, signed with the British in September 1783, the new society faced a range of political, economic and social problems. It was still not clear how a national government would be structured. The Declaration of Independence had expressed some vague political values and opposition to British policy but it did not provide a framework for governing the new nation. Having a treaty in place did not mean the British – nor indeed the French or Spanish – would necessarily abide by its terms. It remained to be seen how the United States would recover economically, given its loss of British trade and the massive debts incurred during the Revolutionary War.

This chapter is concerned with America's first years as a nation, without the protective cloak of the British Empire, and with difficulties faced by governments and leaders as they balanced their ideals with the need for stability, security and prosperity. The revolution had been against centralised authority and monarchy – but as with most revolutions, the new leaders found that shedding the mechanisms of central authority complicated the process of governing. The United States was left economically ravaged by the war, short of gold, without the security of British trade networks or the manufacturing base to produce what it needed. Its war veterans returned to the land and found taxes high, market prices low and economic prospects poor. It appeared the revolution had failed to deliver a better life for many Americans.

Representaion of Columbia, with two children being welcomed by Minerva.

The most pressing economic problem was debt. The nation and its member states were unable to repay foreign loans or honour internal promises, such as war salaries. In rural areas small but disruptive uprisings against state courts occurred in the mid-1780s, hampering government administration and the recovery of unpaid debts. The worst of these insurrections, Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts, required the summoning and mobilisation of a state militia. The American Revolution was now at a critical juncture. Would the so-called United States dissolve into thirteen bickering republics – or would the states bow to the power of a central government? How would this troubled new nation achieve unity, stability and prosperity?

THE SEEDS OF BANKRUPTCY

The United States was effectively bankrupt by the mid-1780s, due largely to the costs of the Revolutionary War. The shortage of specie before 1775 meant it did not take long for the war to drain American coffers of gold and silver. By the late 1770s the last desperate response of Congress and the states was to print money as it was needed; banknote production increased rapidly

as the economic situation deteriorated. Since banknotes were not underpinned by precious metals, commodities or land, their value plummeted as more passed into circulation.

The Continental Congress had been by far the worst offender. In June 1775 it issued $2 million worth of paper currency to fund the war, calling upon the thirteen colonies to honour these banknotes at their face value. Designed by Paul Revere and printed on thick paper, the banknotes contained complex symbols and a signature to discourage counterfeiting. By the end of 1775 Congress had authorised the release of a further $4 million. Currency issues grew exponentially until, by late 1779, there was a staggering $242 million in circulation. There were also tens of millions of dollars of counterfeit Continental notes, some created by profiteers, others by British agents attempting to sabotage the American economy. By the end of 1779, Congress' banknotes had become almost worthless.

Continental money.

Congress attempted to rein in the economic collapse by appointing Pennsylvanian merchant Robert Morris as its 'superintendent of finances' in February 1781. Given an almost free hand to implement reform, Morris suggested three major changes: first, he ceased the printing and further release of Continental currency; second, he organised sizeable loans of gold and silver coin from French and Dutch creditors and issued a new set of banknotes backed by these reserves; and third, he persuaded Congress to establish the Bank of North America, which he hoped would evolve into a central reserve bank like the Bank of England. These measures eased hyperinflation in 1780–81 but they failed to end it. Frustrated by a lack of state co-operation and Congress' incapacity to push through reforms, Morris resigned in January 1784.

DID YOU KNOW?

Robert Morris is often called the 'financier of the revolution'. In 1783 he spent $1.4 million of his own money to pay disgruntled soldiers – almost twice the cash contributions made by all thirteen states in the same year.

CONTINENTAL CURRENCY RELATIVE TO ONE SPANISH DOLLAR

	1777	1778	1779	1780	1781
January	1.25	4.00	8.00	42.50	100.00
April	2.00	6.00	16.00	60.00	167.50
July	3.00	4.00	19.00	62.50	–
October	3.00	5.00	30.00	77.50	–

Note: After the Currency Act of 1764, Spanish dollars (in gold and silver coins) were widely available in colonial America, so Congress adopted the dollar as its currency standard.

Source: Jack Greene, A Companion to the American Revolution *(Malden: Blackwell, 2000), 390.*

ACTIVITY

DATA ANALYSIS

Look carefully at the table of currency values (above) and complete the tasks below.

1. Describe the trend in the value of Continental currency relative to Spanish dollars in the period shown.
2. Identify possible reasons for the trend.
3. How did Robert Morris attempt to improve the government's financial system in 1781?
4. Using your broader knowledge, explain how the circulation of fake Continental banknotes in America might have assisted the British during the Revolutionary War.

TROUBLE IN THE RANKS

TIMELINE ON THE NEW REGIME

America's currency situation was particularly dire by 1783, as soldiers were being demobilised and discharged from the Continental Army. Most of these troops had joined up after Congress increased its enlistment bounties in 1778. Privates and non-commissioned officers had been promised an $80 payment and 100 acres of land if they enlisted and served for the duration of the war. In early 1779 the cash payment was increased to $200. State governments offered similar bounties for their own militia regiments; in Virginia the end-of-service bounty was as high as $750.[1]

As grand as these promises were, neither Congress nor the states possessed the resources to fulfil them. Printing additional banknotes to pay wages was a common response, though these notes were never worth their face value. Some merchants and retailers refused to accept them at all. Foreign coin became the only accepted form of currency, and where it was in short supply bartering was used instead. Worthless banknotes became a symbol of government incompetence and broken promises. Many treated Continental dollars with scorn. One soldier soaked his banknotes in water and used them to plaster his injured leg.[2] Returning soldiers sometimes wore their paper money as a cockade (hat decoration). In Philadelphia a crowd captured a stray dog, coated it in tar and rolled it in a pile of Congress' banknotes, before parading it past the State House.[3]

Unpaid salaries were at the heart of many mutinies during the Revolutionary War and the end of hostilities did not ease the problem. In 1782 thousands of soldiers were camped in Pennsylvania, awaiting their discharge orders and payments. Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, found itself without the funds to facilitate this,

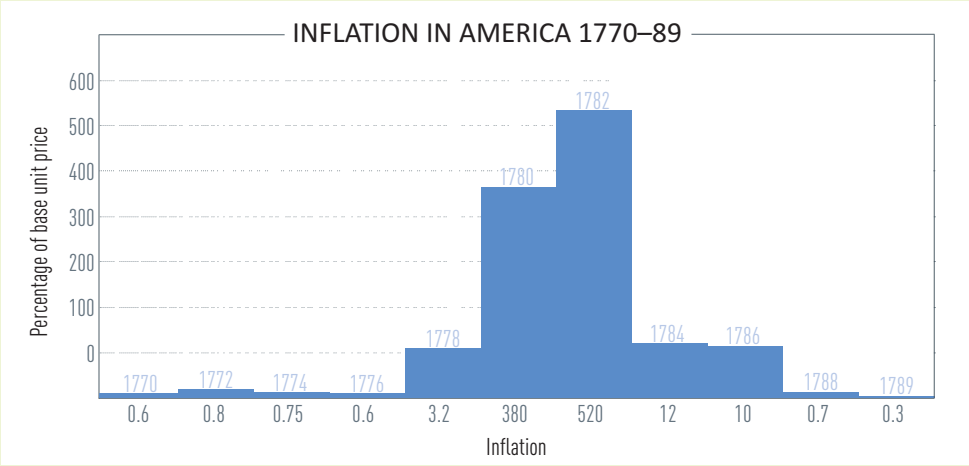
1 Gregory Urwin, *The United States Infantry* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 1991), 25.
2 *The American Magazine* (Vol. 6, 1878): 523.
3 George McHenry, *The Cotton Trade* (London: Saunders, Otley & Co., 1863), 164.

ACTIVITY

DATA ANALYSIS

Look at the graph on inflation in America (below) and complete the tasks below.

1. In one or two sentences describe how the cost of living changed in America between 1770 and 1789.
2. In 1782, by what percentage had the cost of living risen above normal levels?



3. Using your broader knowledge, give two reasons for the high rate of inflation in America between 1778 and 1784.
4. Suggest two political consequences of this rise in inflation.

instead issuing a furlough (temporary unpaid leave) to a large number of soldiers while it sought revenue from the states. It was a desperate stop-gap solution, but with no funds in the treasury there was nothing else the Congress could do.

The furlough orders sparked outrage among the soldiers and the radical press: 'To only furlough us and not to pay us is an odd unheard of piece of injustice and not to be put up with by brave men that have fought and suffered everything but the dissolution of soul and body', wrote one private.[4] A Philadelphia newspaper suggested that the national interest would be better served by withholding the salaries of public servants rather than of soldiers:

> Congress, having no further occasion for the services and sacrifices of the army … in their great wisdom … have thought proper to grant the troops of the respective states a furlough [indefinitely]. It would not be amiss … if the people, [Congress'] master, were to give them also leave of absence … [so] their services may then be dispensed with. The moneys drawn forth from the public treasury for salaries on the civil list, which are by no means [small], might be appropriated to a much better purpose: discharging the [back-pay] of the army.[5]

TALK OF A COUP

Congress' bankruptcy did not only affect enlisted soldiers. When desperately short of experienced commissioned officers back in 1777, Congress had attempted to retain its existing officers by promising lifetime pensions at half pay for those who served the duration of the war. The measure was strongly criticised by some state assemblies, wary of the cost and fearful that it might encourage the formation of a military class. The payment of officers' salaries was generally more consistent than that of enlisted soldiers; however, by 1781–82 some junior officers – lieutenants, captains and majors – had not been paid for months.

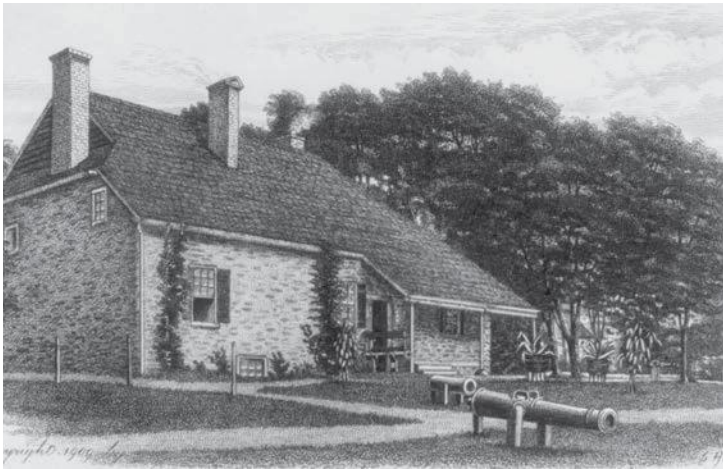
In late 1782 a section of the army was camped on a field near Newburgh, New York. The men built temporary buildings and prepared to sit out the winter of 1782–83. They were soon beset by shortages, as they had been in most winter encampments. Promised shipments of uniforms and blankets failed to materialise, groups of five or six soldiers took turns sharing one greatcoat to ward off the cold and there was insufficient straw and fodder for the horses. Ten starving Massachusetts soldiers stole eleven geese from a local farmer and feasted on them on Christmas Day 1782, a crime for which each was tried and punished with 100 lashes. Washington, sensing a sharp deterioration in the army's morale, called off his visit home to Mount Vernon.

An officer hears the complaints of a soldier of the Continental Army

In the ramshackle cabins at Newburgh several officers began discussing the shortages and lack of pay they had endured for much of the war. As the weeks passed and the shortages bit more deeply, their mood darkened and there was talk of action against the ineffective Congress. Some state delegates and other intermediaries visiting Newburgh commented on the atmosphere: General Arthur St. Clair reported to Congress that 'a convulsion of the most dreadful nature and fatal consequences' could be expected.[6]

As the tensions increased a meeting of interested officers was held in the church hall at Newburgh in March 1783. A surprise attendee at this meeting was George Washington – whose presence was, at first, not entirely welcomed by some of his fellow officers. Washington took the floor and spoke quietly but firmly about

4 John K. Robertson, *A Brief Profile of the Continental Army* at <www.revwar75.com>.
5 *Independent Gazetteer*, Philadelphia, 7 June 1783.
6 Peter Onuf, *Congress and the Confederation* (Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis, 1991), 82.



Washington's headquarters, Newburgh.

the poor economic state of the nation, the need to uphold civilian political authority and, above all, the great virtue of loyalty. Though many officers were somewhat calmed by Washington's speech the issue of back-pay and pensions continued to fester.

In April the Newburgh officers drafted a petition to the Confederation Congress in Philadelphia:

The Newburgh petition found support from some in Congress, particularly the nationalists who desired a stronger central government that could tax and regulate trade.

DID YOU KNOW?

Legend has it that Washington began his speech at Newburgh by slowly taking out his eye-glasses and telling those present: 'Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown grey but almost blind in the service of my country.'

DOCUMENT

PETITION FROM NEWBURGH OFFICERS, APRIL 1783

At this period of the war it is with peculiar pain we find ourselves constrained to address your august body on matters of a [financial] nature. We have struggled with our difficulties, year after year, under the hopes that each [year] would be the last; but we have been disappointed … We apply to Congress for relief as our head and sovereign …

Our distresses are now brought to a point. We have borne all that men can bear. Our property is expended, our private resources are at an end and our friends are wearied out and disgusted with our [constant appeals for help]. We, therefore, most seriously and earnestly beg that a supply of money may be forwarded to the army as soon as possible. The uneasiness of the soldiers, for want of pay, is great and dangerous. Any further experiments on their patience may have fatal effects …

We are grieved to find that our [colleagues] who retired from service on half-pay, under the resolution of Congress in 1780, are not only destitute … but [have] become the objects of [disgrace]. Their condition has a very discouraging aspect on us who must sooner or later retire … [and] demands attention and redress. We regard the act of Congress respecting half-pay as an honorable and just recompense for several years' hard service … We hope, for the honor of human nature, that there are none so hardened in the sin of ingratitude as to deny the justice of the reward.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the extract from the Newburgh petition and complete the tasks below.

1. Summarise the grievances of the officers as expressed in this petition. What is their perspective on the Revolutionary War?
2. Analyse the officers' use of language to persuade the Congress.
3. What does the petition suggest might happen if Congress cannot improve the situation?
4. Using your broader knowledge, evaluate this extract as a source of evidence on the economic crisis facing America at the end of the Revolutionary War. To what extent is it supported by other evidence?

In June 1783 almost 500 men marched on Philadelphia from their encampment just outside the city. For almost two weeks disaffected soldiers lingered in the capital, gathering regularly at Independence Hall to demand a hearing and harass the delegates as they came and went. There were mutterings that they might even enter the hall forcibly or prevent those inside from leaving. Members of Congress drafted a secret request to Pennsylvanian state leaders, asking them to call out the local militia to disperse the soldiers; this request was refused. Faced with a lack of support and the prospect of further intimidation, Congress packed up and relocated to Princeton, New Jersey.

Historians are divided on the significance of the Newburgh action. John Phillips Resch suggests that although it was more 'political bluff' than serious coup attempt it nevertheless 'reinforced popular perceptions that the Continental Army, like all regular armies, was … corrupt, that it threatened liberty and that it deserved to be treated as a necessary evil.'[7] Richard Kohn suggests the event was stirred by conspirators within the Congress itself: 'They would incite a mutiny in the Army – spark the explosion – then make certain it was immediately snuffed out. It was a treacherous double-game fraught with uncertainty. But to the nationalists, the whole future of the country was at stake.'[8]

DID YOU KNOW?

Between 1783 and 1787 the Confederation Congress was forced to meet in a number of locations: Philadelphia, Princeton, Trenton, Annapolis and New York City.

Alexander Hamilton, viewed by many historians as one of the 'busiest' of the Newburgh conspirators.

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES – DIALOGUE

Perform a short dialogue between a pair of Continental Army officers encamped at Newburgh in March 1783. The pair should discuss their reasons for threatening to mutiny and their thoughts on George Washington's speech.

A TREATY OF PROMISE

The 1783 Treaty of Paris[10] formally ended the Revolutionary War. Although fighting had wound down in late 1781 and there were no major battles after Yorktown, it would take another two years for both nations to ratify the treaty. Negotiations were left to American diplomats in France, particularly Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and John Jay. The British relied on a former slave trader and business agent based in Paris, Richard Oswald; having previously lived in the American colonies Oswald was considered experienced enough to negotiate on behalf of the Crown. By late 1782 these men had crafted a set of terms and sent them to their respective national governments. The terms were extremely favourable to the United States; in fact almost all requests of the American delegates had been accepted by Oswald.

TERMS OF THE TREATY OF PARIS 1783

- Formal British acknowledgement and recognition of the independence and sovereignty of the United States
- The surrender to the United States of all British territory between the Appalachian Mountains and the Ohio River
- The drawing of borders between the United States and British-occupied Canada to the north

7 John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2000), 72.
8 Richard Kohn, 'The Inside History of the Newburgh Conspiracy' in *William and Mary Quarterly* (Vol. 27, 1970): 93–4.
9 Markus Hünemörder, *The Society of the Cincinnati: Conspiracy and Distrust in Early America* (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 16.
10 Not to be confused with the 1763 treaty of the same name that ended the French and Indian War.

FEATURE

SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

In May 1783 a handful of influential war veterans formed a fraternity of military officers. To be a member one had to have served at least three years in the Revolutionary War at lieutenant rank or higher. This group appointed Washington as its president-general and within a year had recruited more than 2000 members. The most notable officers among them were: the Marquis de Lafayette, Baron von Steuben, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Alexander Hamilton, Nathanael Greene and John Paul Jones. They called themselves the Society of the Cincinnati, taking the name from a citizen of ancient Rome who responded to a war emergency, rose to the rank of general then returned voluntarily to his farm.

The Society's stated objective was to uphold the memory of the revolution and to engage in charitable works, in a similar vein to the Freemasons. Some outsiders claimed that the Cincinnati resembled a European knightly order, maintaining a military elite class that would express its views to, and perhaps pressure, future governments.[9] Amongst the Cincinnati's critics were John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, both of whom were excluded from membership because of their lack of military service. Both expressed concern about the disproportionate political influence that such a group might wield.

The Society of the Cincinnati continues today as a historical, cultural and charitable group. Applicants for membership must demonstrate an ancestral link to a former Continental Army officer. It is also possible to receive an honorary membership to the Society, particularly for those in high-profile political or public positions.

ACTIVITY

EXTENSION

Find out more about the history of the Society of the Cincinnati. Why was George Washington known as 'the Cincinnatus of the West'? Share your findings with the class.

Society of the Cincinnati membership certificate.

- American companies to enjoy fishing rights in the oceans to the east of British Canada and off the coast of Newfoundland
- The honouring of private and commercial debts in existence before the revolution
- American states to be 'encouraged' to compensate loyalists for land and property seized during the revolution
- Both nations to enjoy unrestricted access to the Mississippi River, an important waterway for trade and transport.

These generous terms sparked an angry response in London, both in parliament and the press. Oswald was savaged in the House of Commons for conceding too much and gaining too little. The treaty was voted down three times in February 1783. On the third occasion it resulted in a 'no confidence' motion that brought down the government, leaving Britain without a prime minister for more than a month. A revised set of terms was sent back to Paris but the Americans refused to shift from their demands. With the new British government politically weak and unwilling to recommence the war, parliament endorsed the treaty and returned it to their negotiators for signature. The final document was signed in September 1783.

John Jay.

The Treaty of Paris was a significant victory for America and its diplomats. Adams, Franklin and Jay proved, according to one commentator, to be 'masters of the game, outmanoeuvring their counterparts and clinging fiercely to the interests most vital to the future of the United States'.[11] But the treaty did not resolve all disputes; despite the apparent good faith that existed during negotiations, mistrust and deceit lingered. Though much had been agreed it seemed doubtful that both parties would honour their commitments in full. The Treaty of Paris brought the Revolutionary War to a close but it did not resolve Anglo-American tensions or bring prosperity to the United States through the 1780s.

Disbanding the Continental Army

DID YOU KNOW?

The American delegation in Paris commissioned Benjamin West to paint a commemorative portrait of the treaty signing. West began the portrait but the British delegates later refused to pose; it was never completed.

11 Michael Beschloss, *Our Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 20.

ACTIVITY

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE – DIAGRAM

Create a diagram or infographic entitled 'The 1783 Treaty of Paris – Before and After.' Include examples of continuity and change in regard to:

- Britain's rights and territories
- America's rights and territories
- Canada's status
- Compensation and debts.

Discuss any obstacles or difficulties that might be faced in meeting the terms of the treaty.

Relief sculpture of Franklin signing the Treaty of Paris.

Print showing John Bull [Britain] throwing up his arms in despair as the devil flies away with a map labelled 'America'; to the left are a portly Dutchman, a Spaniard, and a Frenchman, in the background is a battle scene at Gibraltar.

CITIZEN WASHINGTON

On the evening of 4 December 1783 George Washington attended his final mess dinner in a New York tavern. Only four of his fellow generals were in attendance, most others having returned to their native states, their homes and families. Washington bade a tearful farewell to each of the officers present; each man fully expected never to see the others again. The next day Washington left the city and made his way to Philadelphia, where he paused a while to visit old acquaintances. He then departed for Virginia via Annapolis, where Congress was in session.

Washington had two business matters to raise with Congress. The first was settlement of his personal expenses – a grand total of $64 355 – which the assembly settled by way of paper bonds. The second matter was the resignation of his commission. In an audience with Congress on 23 December, Washington produced from a coat pocket his original commission certificate, first presented to him in Philadelphia back in June 1775. He then delivered a brief speech, so choked with emotion that many in the Maryland State House struggled to hear his words:

> ... I have now the honor of offering my sincere congratulations to Congress and of presenting myself before them to surrender, into their hands, the trust committed to me; and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country. Happy in the confirmation of our Independence and Sovereignty, and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable Nation, I

> resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with [self-doubt] … Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action and [bid] an affectionate farewell to this august body under whose orders I have so long acted. I here offer my commission and take my leave of all the employments of public life.[12]

Washington's surrender of his military command was a remarkable event that sparked interest around the world. European observers had expected Washington to accept or even demand political power in the national government (as victorious generals in other countries had done, and as Napoleon would do a dozen years later). Indeed, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that power-brokers in the new nation privately offered Washington a crown, or any position in the new government that he wished to suggest. Instead Washington chose to return to civilian life; he spent his first Christmas home at Mount Vernon in nine years.

Washington taking leave of the officers of his army.

DID YOU KNOW?

Britain also had to negotiate separate peace treaties with France, Spain and the Dutch Republic. With valuable territory in India at stake, British diplomats were more concerned with securing favourable terms from the French than the United States.

DID YOU KNOW?

After delivering his speech to Congress, Washington moved into a side room where he is said to have wept. After composing himself he returned to the hall where he shook hands and said goodbye to those present.

THE LOYALISTS' DILEMMA

KEY MOVEMENTS: LOYALISTS AND PATRIOTS

Americans who were loyal to the British crown during and immediately after the Revolutionary War faced a dire predicament. Not only were they marginalised and persecuted, even assaulted, they were at risk of losing their land and possessions. A long-standing principle under English common law was that the property of traitors could be removed by the crown. In late November 1777 the Continental Congress, after a year of intense loyalist military opposition, encouraged the states to make full use of this legal precedent.

Most state assemblies jumped at the opportunity. Loyalist land was forfeited to the state and used to fund continental loan certificates. The belongings of loyalists were confiscated and auctioned. Several states targeted loyalists with acts of attainder, legislation declaring them guilty of crimes and subject to punishment without trial. These bills often ordered banishment of individuals and their families, even death sentences if they ever returned. A bill passed by the New York assembly in 1779 was typical of these laws:

12 Washington's farewell address to Congress, 23 December 1783.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1989 Parker Wickham's descendants filed a law suit against New York, claiming ownership of lands that had allegedly been seized illegally by the state in contravention of the Treaty of Paris. The suit was unsuccessful.

Illustration showing colonists jubilantly escorting a carriage in which sit two loyalists, one of whom appears to have been tarred and feathered.

> Whereas during the present unjust and cruel war waged by the King of Great Britain against the State and the other United States of America, diverse persons holding or claiming property within this State have voluntarily been [loyal] to the said King … with intent to subvert the government and liberties of this State and the other United States and to bring the same in subjection to the Crown of Great Britain … said persons having forfeited all right to the protection of this State and to the benefit of the laws under which such property is held or claimed … [T]he most notorious offenders … are hereby declared to be … convicted … and that all and singular the estate, both real and personal, held or claimed by them … on the date of the passage of the act, shall be, and hereby is declared to be forfeited to … the people of this State.[13]

A New York loyalist affected by these attainders was Parker Wickham (1727–1785). One of the wealthiest men in Suffolk County, Wickham had a family estate spanning thousands of acres. Wickham's election to a high government post angered many patriots, so much so that in early 1777 he had been kidnapped and dragged into Connecticut by a small militia. After he returned to New York the state legislature there seized his property without compensation and banished him under threat of death. Wickham's most strident political opponent, Jared Landon, ended up living in his former house.

Other states adopted similar anti-loyalist measures. Virginia invoked an English law from the fourteenth century and declared all loyalists to be enemy aliens. Tory merchants were given forty days to leave; all other adult males were required to swear allegiance to the state. Those that refused had their names publicised and were forbidden from owning firearms, holding public office, serving on juries and buying land. In Georgia each county appointed a twelve-man 'inquisition committee' that tested suspected Tories by requiring them to pledge an oath of loyalty to the revolution and hurl insults at George III. Massachusetts passed the Banishment Act in September 1778, casting more than 300 loyalists into exile.

The end of the war and the Treaty of Paris briefly raised hopes of an improvement in loyalist prospects. The British delegates who negotiated the treaty expressed concern about the fate of the loyalists, certainly more than they did about that of their former allies – natives and slaves – who were not mentioned in the final document. The treaty urged state governments to stop expelling loyalists and seizing their property, and to arrange compensation for property previously seized. But these were merely recommendations to state legislatures, which, under the Articles of Confederation, were not bound by any treaty signed by the Congress:

> Article V [Treaty of Paris]: It is agreed that Congress shall earnestly recommend to the legislatures of the respective states to provide for the restitution of all estates, rights, and properties which have been confiscated [from] real British subjects … And that Congress shall also earnestly recommend to the several states that the estates, rights, and properties of such mentioned persons shall be restored to them …
>
> Article VI: That there shall be no future confiscations made nor any prosecutions commenced against any person or persons for … the part which he or they may have taken in the present war, and that no person shall on that account suffer any future loss or damage … and that those who may be in confinement on such charges at the time of the ratification of the treaty in America shall be immediately set at liberty and the prosecutions so commenced be discontinued.

The Treaty of Paris eased pressure on loyalists but did not end it completely. The exodus of loyalists continued through 1783 and beyond, with between 80 000 and 100 000 loyalists leaving the United States. Some went to England

13 'Act of Attainder', New York legislature, 22 October 1779.

or the British West Indies but a large portion (46 000) relocated to Nova Scotia or Ontario, British-controlled provinces in what is now Canada. In most cases they took little more than they could carry, though most slave-owning loyalists were also able to take their slaves. On 4 May 1783 a small fleet left New York for Nova Scotia carrying 1686 white loyalists, 936 free blacks and 415 slaves. This marked the start of a mass relocation of loyalists throughout the spring of 1783, almost doubling the population of Nova Scotia and dramatically increasing the number of English-speaking citizens in Canada.

Reception of the American loyalists.

THE ABANDONED TRIBES

Most Native American nations supported the British during the Revolutionary War and, like the loyalists, were in a vulnerable position following the American victory. As many as 12 000 native warriors had participated in the fighting, most from the powerful Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. Because none of these nations was totally defeated during the Revolutionary War, tribal leaders were not altogether sure whether the British or Americans were victorious in 1783. When American settlers and negotiators later informed tribal leaders that they were a 'conquered people', they found this difficult to accept.

Native Americans were also concerned by Britain's disregard for their situation. The Treaty of Paris contained nothing about Britain's former 'Indian' allies, and British officers gave few instructions for native commanders and leaders. Celia Barnes believes that many tribes felt that their 'friend and protector, the British king, had not merely forgotten them in the negotiations; he had actually given away their land to his enemies, the Americans.'[14] It was now up to the *sachems* and other tribal chieftains to either submit to the Americans or to stand and fight.

For their part the Americans saw native tribes as traitors who had sided with Britain, as well as an obstacle to western expansion. There was hostility towards the 'Indians' in rural and frontier areas, with occasional calls for their settlements to be removed or relocated. The Confederation Congress developed a more sensible policy, initiating a series of negotiations with native tribes. Treaties were secured with the Iroquois at Fort Stanwix (October 1784), the Delaware and Ottawa at Fort McIntosh (January 1785) and the Shawnee at Fort Finney (January 1786) – all without violence. Congressional delegate Benjamin Hawkins signed three more treaties in Hopewell, South Carolina: with the Cherokee in late 1785, the Choctaw in 1786 and the Chickasaw in the same year. The first of these Hopewell agreements illustrates the content of treaties with the Native Americans. (See next page.)

Despite the humane and friendly language used in treaties with Native Americans, negotiations were often conducted in an atmosphere of intimidation. At Fort Finney, for example, General Butler made this thinly-veiled threat to the Shawnee chief: 'The destruction of your women and children or their future happiness depends on your present choice. Peace or war is in your power; make your choice

DID YOU KNOW?

Between the American Revolution and the Civil War the government would negotiate more than 100 treaties with Native American tribes. In all but a few cases native lands became the property of the United States.

Thayendanegea, Mohawk leader.

14 Celia Barnes, *Native American Power in the United States* (London: AUP, 2003), 45.

DOCUMENT

TREATY WITH THE CHEROKEE, SOUTH CAROLINA, NOVEMBER 1785.

The Commissioners Plenipotentiary of the United States in Congress assembled, give peace to all the Cherokees, and receive them into the favor and protection of the United States of America …

Article I: The chiefs and warriors of all the Cherokees shall restore all the prisoners, citizens of the United States, or subjects of their allies, to their entire liberty …

Article II: The commissioners of the United States in Congress assembled shall restore all the prisoners taken from the Indians, during the late war …

Article III: The said Indians, for themselves and their respective tribes and towns, do acknowledge all the Cherokees to be under the protection of the United States of America, and of no other sovereign whosoever …

Article V: If any citizen of the United States, or other person not being an Indian, shall attempt to settle on any of the lands westward or southward of the boundary … allotted to the Indians for their hunting ground … such person shall forfeit the protection of the United States and the Indians may punish him or not as they please …

Article XII: That the Indians may have full confidence in the justice of the United States, respecting their interests, they shall have the right to send a deputy of their choice, whenever they think fit, to Congress.

Article XIII: The hatchet shall be forever buried and the peace given by the United States, and friendship re-established between the said states … shall be universal; and the contracting parties shall use their utmost endeavors to maintain the peace ….[15]

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANNOTATION

Read the extract from the treaty made with the Cherokee in 1785 and complete the tasks below.

1. Photocopy or download the extract.
2. Using a colour code, highlight parts of the document that discuss:
   - Peace and protection
   - Prisoners of war
   - Land and hunting rights
   - Political control/sovereignty
   - Rights and representation.
3. Create a text box corresponding with each of the five themes above (in the appropriate colour). In each text box write a few lines explaining the relevant part of the treaty in your own words. Note any points that were open to different interpretations or likely to cause conflict down the track.

like men, and judge for yourselves.'[16] Treaties naturally tended to favour Congress, often formalising the surrender of large tracts of land to the United States. On some occasions the Native American negotiators were not authorised by, or representative of, all tribal groups in their area, prompting other native leaders to opt out of the treaties concerned. Furthermore, American settlers often ignored treaties altogether, moving into areas set aside for native use.

In late 1785 delegates from thirty native tribes met in Ohio to discuss their fears about future land losses. They formed a loose alliance known as the Western Confederacy, which included the Iroquois, Huron, Mohawk, Miama, Kickapoo, Shawnee, Cherokee, Ottawa and others. One of the instigators of this confederacy was Thayendanegea, a Mohawk who had fought as a captain in the British army under the name Joseph Brant. Infuriated by Britain's abandonment

15 Signed by the Commissioners Plenipotentiary of the United States and thirty-seven chiefs and warriors of the Cherokee, Hopewell, South Carolina, November 1785.

16 Cited in Francis Prucha, *American Indian Treaties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 52.

of his people, Thayendanegea travelled to London to plead his case. When this failed he became active in forming and strengthening the Western Confederacy.

Print showing Linn brothers in hand-to-hand combat in a Native American village, Kentucky, c. 1785.

The confederacy rejected the land transfers made at Forts Stanwix, McIntosh and Finney, declaring them to be illegal. Its members declared that they would only recognise the border agreed with the British back in 1768, pledging to defend their territory if any Americans went west of the line. The confederacy enjoyed secret support from the British, who sent arms, munitions and supplies south from Canada. The United States rejected this position and continued to affirm that the treaties of 1785–86 were legal and binding on Native American nations.

By the autumn of 1786 the first shots had been fired in what became known as the Northwest Indian War. For the next decade there was fighting along the Ohio River and south into Kentucky as Native Americans attempted to establish the 1768 line as a firm boundary. American settlers continued to push west, the lure of cheap land outweighing the dangers of 'Indian' attack. Militias raised by state governments and Congress pursued native forces; in October 1786 'Logan's Raid' destroyed Shawnee villages in Ohio. The campaign demonstrated the 'scorched earth' approach of frontier militias.

SLAVES OR FREE MEN?

The experiences of African Americans after the 1783 Treaty of Paris varied greatly, depending on local circumstances. In Pennsylvania, slavery had been decreasing prior to 1775 and continued to do so during the war; the development of the free market and an influx of skilled migrants to that state made slave-owning seem inefficient and troublesome. Abolitionist forces, too, were at work: the Society for the Release of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage was formed in 1775, five days before the shooting at Lexington. Most of its members were Quakers, a pacifist religious group with a long history of opposition to slavery. Benjamin Franklin became the Society's president shortly after returning from Europe in 1785, though he had himself owned and traded slaves in the past.

Between 1730 and 1779 the proportion of Pennsylvanians who were African slaves had dropped markedly from one in eleven to one in thirty. By 1780 slavery was being criticised on the floor of the Pennsylvania assembly, often with the aid of phrases from the Declaration of Independence. In that year the assembly passed a bill that aimed to phase out slavery.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1810, thirty years after the passage of Pennsylvania's act for the gradual abolition of slavery, there were still 795 African American slaves registered in the state. The last Pennsylvanian slave died in 1847.

SLAVERY TIMELINE

DOCUMENT

AN ACT FOR THE GRADUAL ABOLITION OF SLAVERY, PENNSYLVANIA, 1780

That every Negro and mulatto child born within this state after the passing of this act, who would … have been born a … slave, shall be deemed to be, by virtue of this act, the servant of [his or her owner] until such child shall attain the age of twenty eight years …

That every person who is the owner of any Negro or mulatto slave … shall on or before the said first day of November next, deliver … in writing … the name, surname, occupation or profession of the owner, the name of the county and township district where he or she resides, and also the names of any such slaves … together with their ages and sexes … No Negro or mulatto now within this State shall, after the first day of November, be deemed a slave … unless his or her name shall be [registered] as aforesaid …

And be it further enacted … that no man or woman of any nation or colour, except the Negroes or mulattoes who shall be registered [as slaves under the act] shall at any time hereafter be deemed … as slaves or servants for life, but as freemen and freewomen ….

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read the Pennsylvania act on the gradual abolition of slavery and complete the tasks below.

1. Which people are granted freedom in the first paragraph of the act?
2. What would have been the legal status of a person born to slave parents one week prior to this act being passed?
3. What are slave-owners required to do as outlined in the second paragraph? What happens to their slaves if they fail to comply with these requirements?
4. Discuss the consequences of this legislation. What effect did it have on slavery in Pennsylvania and other states? What compromises might have been made in favour of influential slave-owners in that state?

DID YOU KNOW?

Though tiny Rhode Island had a small slave population, many slave shipments arrived there. In the 1780s there were clashes between the state's Quaker abolitionists and its shipping magnates who profited from the trade.

Although the Pennsylvania act is hardly radical by today's standards, it was nevertheless the first American legislation that sought to end to slavery. Other northern states were encouraged to adopt similar 'gradual' measures that would not endanger local economic interests. Rhode Island, a major slave-trading centre despite its modest size, legislated to free existing slaves but to deem their children 'apprentices' who would be freed at the age of eighteen (females) and twenty-one (males). The act said nothing about the slave trade, however, which in fact accelerated in Rhode Island after it had passed. Between 1784 and 1807 the island's slave-traders launched 421 expeditions to Africa, kidnapping a further 47 477 people and selling them into bondage, mostly in the southern states.[17]

John Jay, a former president of the Continental Congress and a signatory to the Treaty of Paris, was at the forefront of the abolitionist movement in New York. Jay failed in his attempt to have an anti-slavery clause inserted in the state's 1777 constitution. In January 1785 he formed the New York Manumission Society to encourage the voluntary release of slaves by their owners. The Society began organising boycotts and publicity campaigns against merchants and businesses that profited heavily from slaves or the slave trade. It also lobbied the New York government and, in mid-1785, an emancipation (freedom) bill was raised in the assembly – it was ultimately defeated after weeks of debate. 'Emancipation was blocked', suggests Edgar J. McManus, 'by a majority that feared Negro power more than it desired Negro freedom.'[18] New York banned the slave trade in 1788 but there would be no emancipation law there until 1799.

17 James A. Rawley, *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 309.

18 Edgar J. McManus, *Black Bondage in the North* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973), 172.

These moves against slavery had a limited effect, however, since less than twenty per cent of America's slaves lived in the northern states. The vast majority of slaves lived in the south, more than half of them in Virginia and Maryland. For its part Virginia had banned the slave trade in 1774, and in 1776 its new constitution prohibited the importation of slaves from other states. An act in 1782 allowed for the voluntary freeing of slaves. Virginian leaders had been outspoken against slavery: Thomas Jefferson's first draft of the Declaration of Independence, for instance, had condemned the British for encouraging the slave trade (it was later edited out by southern delegates). When a French general, the Marquis de Chastellux, toured Virginia in mid-1782 he noted that most whites there 'grieved at having slaves' and constantly spoke of 'abolishing slavery and seeking other means of exploiting their lands'.[19]

DID YOU KNOW?

There is some evidence to suggest that the American Revolution disrupted the slave trade. In the 1780s and 1790s, for example, there was a steep increase in advertisements offering rewards for the capture of runaway slaves, particularly in Virginia and Maryland.

Virginia, however, was in the unique position of having a third of its population made up of slaves. In the early 1780s there were more than 280 000 Virginian slaves, and in some counties – Powhatan, King William and Amelia – slaves outnumbered non-slaves almost two to one. Virginia's plantation economy relied extensively on African labour to produce its staple crops, tobacco, rice and cotton. Furthermore, the majority of assembly members were slave-owners – most would tolerate no dramatic changes to slave laws, particularly when the economic situation worsened in the 1780s. The revolution had caused more upheaval and disruption in Virginia than in other states; thousands of Virginian slaves had joined the British but a much larger number took advantage of the chaos to flee their owners. Thomas Jefferson, for instance, lost thirty slaves from defection or escape during the Revolutionary War.

When the government seized the property of loyalists this property sometimes included slaves, who were then sold to new owners. One example was Belinda, the seventy-year-old house-servant of loyalist colonial Isaac Royall; she was acquired by the state of Massachusetts and subsequently released. In 1783 Belinda made a bold request to the Massachusetts general court for a reparation payment from Royall's large estate: she argued that it would compensate her for having been kidnapped from Africa and for the years of unpaid labour she had performed. Belinda said she had been 'denied the employment of one morsel of that immense wealth' despite it having been 'augmented [increased] by her servitude'. The court agreed, granting Belinda fifteen pounds per year; in the end she received the first year's installment only.[20]

19 Gary B. Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Oxford: Madison House, 1990), 12.

20 Jessie Carney Smith, ed., *Notable Black American Women* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1996), 29.

ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE, OR THE MAN THE MASTER.

Illustration showing the reversal of roles for slaves and slave masters, with former slaves now in the role of the slave master.

African Americans faced great uncertainty in the years following the Revolutionary War. State governments passed different laws and regulations pertaining both to slaves and free African Americans. The slave trade came under some challenge but continued in strength in the 1780s, with war service on either side providing no guarantee of freedom. Disruption caused by the war and the economic crisis of the mid-1780s prompted thousands of African Americans to migrate north and west, but even greater numbers were forced back into slavery in the south.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many 'black loyalists' were recaptured and returned to slavery. Others were taken to Canada, the West Indies or England by their loyalist 'masters'; Britain later returned many to Africa, particularly Sierra Leone, whose capital became known as Freetown.

Block house, Fort Mackinac, Mackinac Island.

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the few 'commodities' Britain was prepared to export to America in 1783–84 was convicts. At least three shiploads of British convicts arrived in American ports, to be sold for labour, before Congress outlawed the practice.

ECONOMIC STRAINS

Internal concerns about loyalists, natives and slaves were not the only problems confronting the new nation. The Treaty of Paris conceded American sovereignty (self-rule), rights and territorial gains – but a treaty can only succeed if all parties comply with its terms. It has already been noted that most American states ignored or avoided the fifth and sixth articles pertaining to loyalists and their property. Merchants and businessmen in most states also paid little attention to Article Four, which required them to honour their pre-revolution debts to British companies. Patrick Henry, ironically once a strident defender of property rights, said that if Americans were to repay private debts to British merchants, 'what have we been fighting for all this while?'[21]

Britain, displeased with the terms of the treaty and America's treatment of Loyalists, also ignored several of the provisions. The common view in London was that the 'United States' would soon disintegrate into smaller commonwealths or confederacies. It was therefore important for the British to keep a foothold in the western territories, ready to take advantage when such a situation occurred. On 8 April 1784 George III issued secret orders to the governor-general of Canada, instructing him not to withdraw troops from forts in the north-west. The last British fort, Mackinac, remained garrisoned until 1796 – thirteen years after the Treaty of Paris. The British officers in charge of these forts encouraged local tribes to attack American settlers. British fur-traders also remained in the region and continued shipping their product north into British Canada.

Of greater concern to American elites, however, was Britain's refusal to negotiate a new commercial treaty with the United States. Having lost the military conflict the British began what was, in effect, an economic war against the new republic. In July 1783 colonial governors in the British West Indies received orders from London to do no business with American ships. This denied Americans access to highly profitable ports, commodities and trade networks. The British government also banned companies from selling a number of critical goods to America, notably molasses. The American market was flooded with cheap manufactured British goods, while American exports to Britain were restricted by a series of regulations and high tariffs. America's trade deficit – the shortfall between exports and imports – rose from less than £1 million to £2.7 million in 1784.[22]

Free from British mercantilism, American merchants naturally sought new trading partners. The French seemed the most likely candidate, yet by 1783 the desperate economic situation in France was hardly amenable to a generous trade agreement with the United States. Confronted with enormous debt, French ministers and

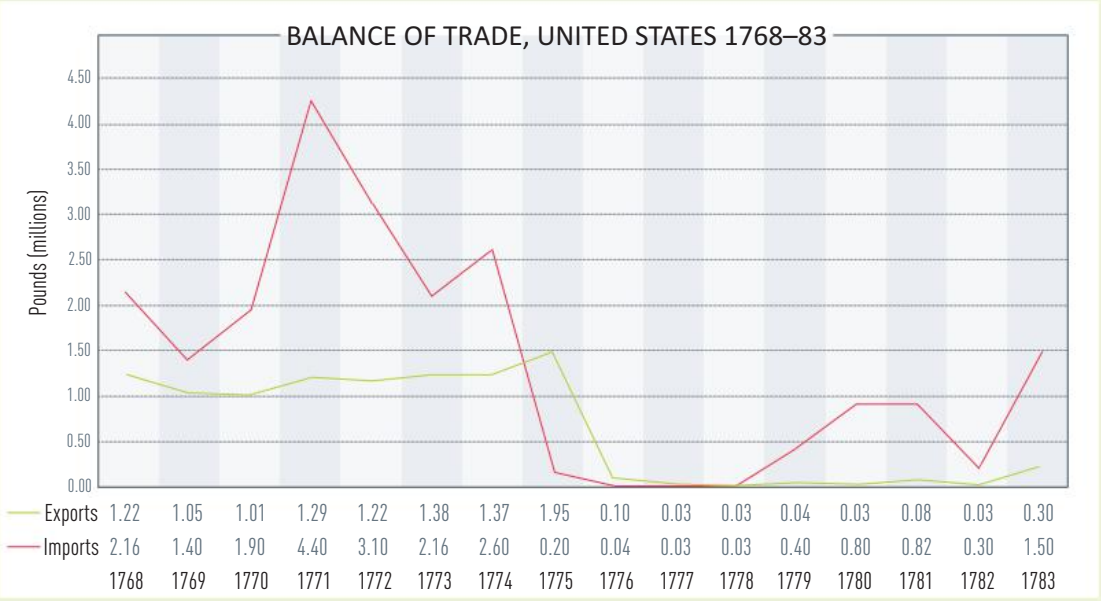
21 Cited in Calvin Johnson, *Righteous Anger at the Wicked States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 54.

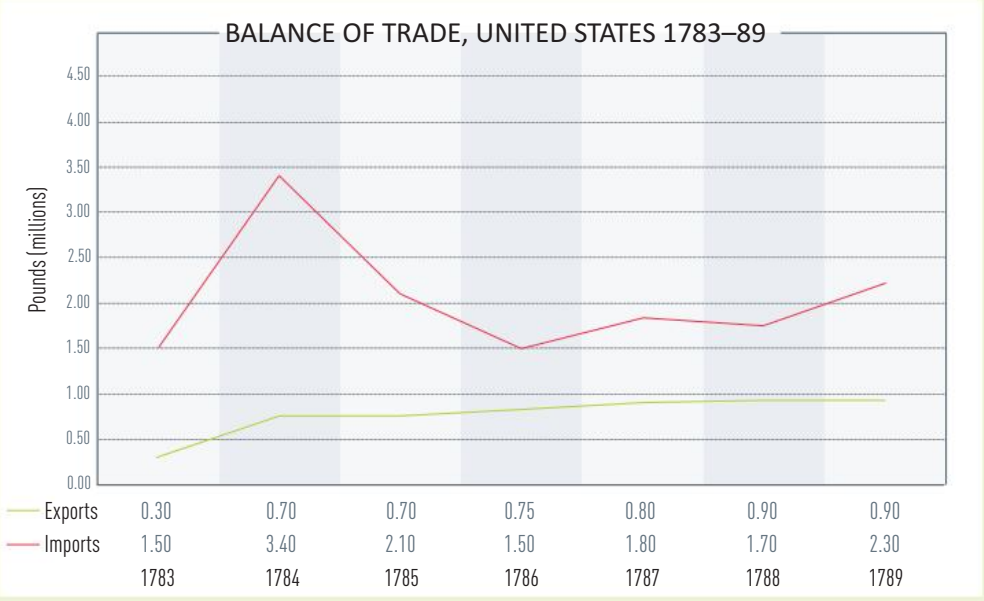
22 Warren Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 283.

companies were not keen to risk further losses by allowing newcomers into their markets. American negotiators, led by Jefferson in Paris, found it difficult to forge new trade deals, while French colonial administrators restricted American access to their ports in the Caribbean.

ACTIVITY

ECONOMIC CHANGE – DATA ANALYSIS





Look at the balance of trade graphs (above) and complete the tasks below.

1. Give two likely reasons why America's exports dropped to almost zero between 1776 and 1782.
2. Calculate the trade deficit (difference between exports and imports) in millions in 1784. What financial consequences did this have for America?
3. In what way did regulations and tariffs disadvantage America?

There were further economic difficulties in relation to Spanish-controlled lands in the south-west. Under the terms of a separate treaty Spain had gained control of New Orleans, the Mississippi River and the territory to its west. The treaty granted American ships free access to the Mississippi so they could transport goods to and from settlements in Tennessee and Kentucky. But in 1784 the Spanish reneged on this agreement, closing the river mouth to all non-Spanish traffic. Hoping to limit American expansion, Spanish agents encouraged native tribes to resist frontier settlements in South Carolina and Georgia, which had been reserved for the United States. The Spanish also encouraged frontier settlers in Kentucky to separate from the United States and form a Spanish protectorate. James Madison expressed concern over the actions of Spain in a letter to his mentor Thomas Jefferson:

> I am informed that sometime after New Orleans passed into the hands of Spain, her Governor forbid all British vessels navigating under the treaty of Paris to fasten to the shore … Nothing can delay [settlement in the Mississippi and Ohio valleys] but an impolitic and perverse attempt in Spain to shut the mouth of the Mississippi against the inhabitants above … The importance of this matter is in almost every mouth. I am frequently asked what progress has been made towards a treaty with Spain, and what may be expected from her ….[23]

DID YOU KNOW?

The Barbary raids led to the creation of the US Navy and US Marine Corps. America later engaged in two successful wars against the Barbary 'Musselmen' (Muslims) in 1801–05 and 1815.

Congress also faced financial problems emanating from the Mediterranean. From 1784 American trading ships venturing into Mediterranean waters began to endure attacks from Barbary pirates: these notorious 'corsairs' operated from several Muslim sultanates along the North African coast. They raided coastal settlements, plundered passing ships, stole cargo, kidnapped crews and sold whites into slavery. In the past pirates had left American ships alone because of their connections with Britain, and then France – but after 1783 there was no such protection. Congress followed the lead of other nations and offered a bribe of $80 000 to the pirates. Thomas Jefferson, by then based in France, argued against the payment, saying it would simply invite more attacks. He was proven right as the attacks continued throughout the 1780s.

To complicate matters, some states had negotiated their own trade deals in Europe to the exclusion of other states. This caused significant disquiet among the delegates to Congress, who recognised that having a number of separate deals would generate tension and rivalry between the states. In April 1784 Virginia and Maryland proposed an alteration to the Articles of Confederation that would give Congress the sole authority to regulate trade for the United States:

> … Unless the United States in Congress assembled [is] vested with powers competent [for] the protection of commerce, they can never command reciprocal advantages in trade – and without these our foreign commerce must decline and eventually be annihilated.
>
> RESOLVED, That it be … recommended to the legislatures of the several states to vest the United States in Congress assembled, for the term of fifteen years, with power to prohibit any goods, wares or merchandise from being imported into or exported from any of the states … That it be recommended to the legislatures of the several states to vest the United States in Congress assembled, for the term of fifteen years, with the power of prohibiting the subjects of any foreign states, kingdom or empire, unless authorised by treaty, from importing into the United States, any goods, wares or merchandise ….[24]

No other state ratified Virginia and Maryland's proposal. In July 1785 a further attempt to strengthen the commercial powers of Congress was thwarted. The United States found itself caught up in a trade war between the British,

23 Letter from James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 20 August 1784.
24 Resolutions of the Confederation Congress, 30 April 1784.

French and Spanish empires. Charged with steering a course through these turbulent waters, the national government was hampered by the self-interested manoeuvring of the states. It was becoming clear that the power of Congress was limited indeed.

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

With a partner, discuss the proposal put forward by Virginia and Maryland to amend the Articles of Confederation in 1784. What was the reason behind the proposal, and what would it entail? What advantages and disadvantages might there be from such an arrangement?

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the United States' first post-war trade deals was with China, which in 1784 received the first shipload of American ginseng, a native root widely used in Asian medicine. Daniel Boone and John Jacob Astor were amongst those to profit from the export of ginseng.

DEBTS AND DEFAULTS

By 1785 the impact of the economic slump was being felt in many parts of the United States. The revolution against the British had promised peace, prosperity and stability for all Americans, yet this prosperity was enjoyed by relatively few. The depression of the mid-1780s caused significant suffering among ordinary Americans, particularly veterans of the Revolutionary War. The latter had been lured into service by the Continental Congress' lavish enticements of land and cash; instead, most soldiers went home unpaid or in possession of devalued paper money. (One New York soldier was given a $70 note, which he traded a week later for $15 worth of goods.) Responsibility for fulfilling land grants to soldiers was passed to the states, which rarely met their obligations – land for speculators and investors was a greater priority than farmland for returned soldiers.

Many ex-soldiers sought relief by borrowing from banks and private creditors. In turn, money-lending became a profitable side-business for city-based merchants and exporters whose interests in overseas trade had slumped. Connecticut minister John Tyler remarked in 1786 that 'Most of the commercial interests have been very unsuccessful abroad since the war; and many [businessmen] seem now to be turning their attention to the estates of their debtors to make their fortunes at home.'[25] But while lending money was easy for those with sufficient assets, debt collection often proved difficult. The slumping market for agricultural produce, the shortage of gold and silver coin and the unreliable value of paper money saw loan defaults skyrocket.

Court house in Salem, Massachusetts.

In the face of this crisis city creditors urged state legislatures to deal with defaulting borrowers. The states had powerful debtors' courts that could insist on repayment of loans, authorise the seizure of property, foreclose on mortgages and even order long sentences of indentured labour or in debtors' prisons. Needless to say these courts were seen as a tool of money-hungry creditors and a sign of heartless state governments. As the economy slumped further in 1785–86, debtors' courts became busier and busier. In Worcester County, Massachusetts, there were 4789 legal actions against debtors

25 Cited in D. Szatmary, *Shays' Rebellion* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 29.

between 1784 and 1786, affecting almost one-third of all adult males; this was four times the 1770–72 figure.[26]

On top of the debt crisis were high state taxes. Most legislatures had sought to recover crippling war debts by increasing taxes and levies, prompting unrest among the population. Massachusetts, the crucible of anti-taxation protests in the 1760s, was the worst offender. The problem of state debt proved too much for John Hancock, who resigned as governor in 1785. His replacement, James Bowdoin, committed to a fifteen-year program of elevated taxes, a move popular with creditors and merchants but not farmers, artisans and small traders.[27] Furthermore, the property-owning requirements for voting were actually increased in Massachusetts after 1783, meaning its residents were taxed more and represented less than they had been before the revolution.

SHAYS' REBELLION

Portraits of Daniel Shays and Job Shattuck, leaders of the Massachusetts Regulators.

In August 1786 Daniel Shays' property was allegedly seized by a debtors' court. Shays, an ex-captain of the Continental Army, had fought at Lexington, Bunker Hill and Saratoga before resigning in 1780 to settle in western Massachusetts. He joined other townsfolk in protesting the state's debt recovery regime: in September 1786 he led several hundred men in a march on the Springfield court, forcing it to adjourn and close. Through the autumn and early winter of 1786 bands of men in western Massachusetts gathered wherever courts were scheduled to convene, lingering and presenting petitions:

> We request the Hon. Judges of this Court, not to open said Court at this term nor do any kind of business whatever, but all kinds of business remain as though no such Court had been appointed.
>
> LUKE DAY
> DANIEL SHAYS
> THOMAS GROVER.[28]

SHAYS' REBELLION

In January 1787 Shays led another assault, backed by 1200 men, on the federal arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts. This time the rebels, led by Shays, Eli Parsons and Luke Day, were confronted by a state militia, mobilised by the state assembly and largely paid for by the merchants of Boston. The militia was commanded by General Benjamin Lincoln, himself a veteran of the Revolutionary War, who ordered that artillery be prepared for firing against the rebels. Shays petitioned Lincoln, hoping to halt his attack and prevent bloodshed:

> Unwilling to be an accessory to the shedding of blood and greatly desirous of restoring peace and harmony to this convulsed Commonwealth, we propose that all the [government] troops ... be disbanded immediately, and that every person who has been acting, or any way aiding or assisting in any of the late risings of the people, may be indemnified [protected] in their person and property until the setting of the next General Court. No person [is to] be taken, molested, or injured ... until a fair opportunity can be had for a hearing in the next General Court respecting the matters of complaints of the people.[29]

26 D. Szatmary, *Shays' Rebellion*, 29.
27 Confession of Judah Marsh junior, *Hampshire Gazette*, 14 February 1787.
28 Richard D. Brown, *Massachusetts: a Concise History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 100.
29 Petition to the General Court at Springfield, 26 December 1786.

Lincoln rebuffed the petition and gave the order to attack. The rebels fled to the north-east and on 3 February 1787 were soundly defeated at Petersham. Shays escaped to New Hampshire; branded a traitor, he was sentenced to death *in absentia*, though Massachusetts did not actively pursue him and he was later granted a governor's pardon. More than a thousand of the rebels underwent trials involving humiliation and public retraction. Six men were sentenced to execution; two of these, Jason Parmenter and Henry McCulloch, received last-minute pardons as they stood at the gallows awaiting execution. The testimony of Judah Marsh was typical of 'confessions' made by captured rebels:

Monument to Shays' Rebellion.

> [B]eing in the midst of people, who were opposed to government ... I did at the desire of the band, go with ... Capt. Shays and his party to Springfield, Ludlow, Chicopee, and Amherst ... I am now fully sensible that I have acted a part contrary to the laws of God, as well as my country; and though I never had a design to shed blood ... yet I have been greatly to blame, in hearkening to bad advice; and in undertaking in so wicked a cause; and pursuing it so far as I have done. I have voluntarily resigned myself to legal authority, and throw myself on the mercy of the community. If my youth and unexperience [sic.] or former peaceable and inoffensive behaviour, (which I doubt not will be testified by those who are acquainted with me) will be any recommendation to the mercy of my country, I hope they will plead for me. Should my life be spared, which I humbly beg of my country particularly of the authority, I hereby declare, not only my penitence for past offences, but my sincere and hearty resolution to [be a] good subject to the government of this Commonwealth – and whether my life be spared or not, I beg the forgiveness of God and an injured community.[30]

DID YOU KNOW?

A further problem for many farmers was that some creditors would issue loans in paper money but demand repayments in gold or silver coin.

ACTIVITY

ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

Discuss whether Daniel Shays, Judah Marsh and others were right to challenge the new regime. What were their grievances and were they justified?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SHAYS' REBELLION

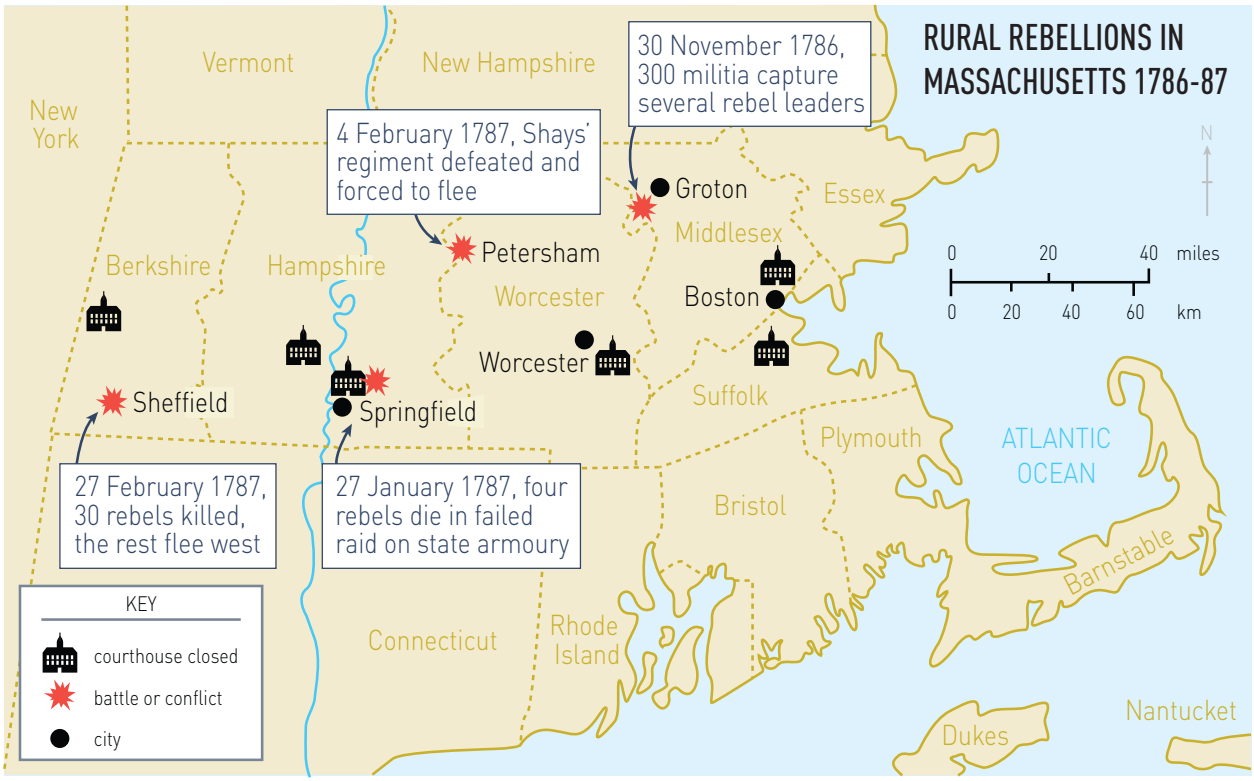
The Shays incident contributed to further uprisings in Massachusetts and nearby states, prompting fears that state assemblies would be affected. With public opinion on the side of the rebels, politicians found themselves under considerable pressure: many assemblies made concessions to the debt-stricken farmers, taxes were lowered and laws pertaining to repayments and defaulters were relaxed. In extreme cases outstanding debts were cancelled. To creditors it seemed the spectre of mob violence was threatening property rights and social order.

Historians have interpreted Shays' Rebellion in various ways: as a spirited last gasp of revolutionary sentiment; as evidence of the incompetence of national and state governments; and as one of a long string of small rural uprisings in the 1700s. Some believe it reflected class struggle – city against country, rich against poor – and as such differed from the revolution itself. Marion Starkey suggests that Shays' Rebellion 'did bear some resemblance to a class war', saying it is hard to gain a sense of the 'intimate histories' of the people involved, since 'like most

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1786 many rebels had not even heard of Daniel Shays; the term 'Shays' Rebellion' was only applied later. The people involved called themselves 'Regulators', after the rural uprisings of the 1760s and 1770s.

30 Petition from Daniel Shays to General Lincoln, 25 January 1787.



KEY PEOPLE: THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826)

BACKGROUND

Jefferson was born, raised and resident in Virginia.

Born into a wealthy plantation-owning family; college educated.

VIEWS ON SLAVERY

Jefferson kept slaves all his life and believed in white superiority to some extent, but he expressed anti-slavery views on several occasions.

POLITICAL ROLE

Elected to Virginia assembly (House of Burgesses) in 1769.

Best known for being the principal writer of the Declaration of Independence in June-July 1776.

Was a delegate to both Continental Congresses, governor of Virginia during the Revolutionary War, and ambassador to France 1785-89.

KEY IDEAS

Jefferson believed in people's ability to govern themselves; he favoured local government and states' rights.

His influential 1774 essay 'A Summary View of the Rights of British America' proclaimed that 'The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time'. He also said 'A little rebellion, now and again, is a good thing'.

EMPLOYMENT

As a young man, Jefferson became known as a political writer and philosopher, though he was also active in science.

CONTROVERSIES

Jefferson stood by the unpopular Thomas Paine when many shunned him.

Indians, their history is recorded by their enemies.'[31] David Szatmary places the affair in the context of broader socio-economic changes occurring in America before, during and after 1776:

> The uprising ... has a historic significance much deeper than that of a regional chronicle. The crisis atmosphere engendered by [rural] discontent strengthened the resolve of the nationalists and shocked some reluctant localists into accepting a stronger national government ... Shaysite anti-federalism [also] represented an attempt to save a [basic farming] way of life from the penetrating edge of a commercial society.[32]

Writing from France, Thomas Jefferson was keen to find out more about Shays' Rebellion:

DOCUMENT

LETTER FROM THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JAMES MADISON, JANUARY 1787

> ... I am impatient to learn your sentiments on the late troubles in the Eastern states. So far as I have seen, they do not appear to threaten serious consequences. Those states have suffered [from] the stoppage of ... their commerce ... This must render money scarce and make the people uneasy. This uneasiness has produced acts [from the people that are] absolutely unjustifiable, but I hope they will provoke no severities from their governments ...
>
> I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, as necessary in the political world as storms [are] in the physical. Unsuccessful rebellions ... generally [reveal] encroachments on the rights of the people ... An observation of this truth should render honest republican governors so mild in their punishment of rebellions, [so] as not to discourage them too much. [They are] a medicine necessary for the sound health of government ....[33]

ACTIVITY

POLITICAL CHALLENGES – SHAYS' REBELLION

Was Jefferson's view that 'a little rebellion now and then is a good thing' true in relation to Shays' Rebellion? To what extent do you agree with Marion Starkey's comment (above) that it is hard to get an accurate picture of the rebellion because its history has been written by Shays' enemies?

31 Marion Starkey, *A Little Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 5.
32 Szatmary, *Shays' Rebellion*, 119–20.
33 Thomas Jefferson, 'To James Madison, Paris, Jan. 30, 1787', *www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/thomas-jefferson/letters-of-thomas-jefferson/jefl53.php*.

DID YOU KNOW?

One poem, published in a city newspaper in 1787, ridicules the rural rebels and their involvement in political matters:

> Every leather-apron'd dunce, grown wise
>
> Presents his face forward to advise
>
> And tattered legislators meet
>
> From every workshop on the street.
>
> For in the ferment of the stream
>
> The dregs have worked up to the brim
>
> And by the rule of topsy-turvy
>
> The scum stands foaming on the surface.

FEATURE

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

Did the Articles of Confederation, which upheld the sovereignty and independence of the thirteen states, contribute in any way to America's political instability in the 1780s? Merrill Jensen (1905–1980) points out that, 'the fact that the Articles ... were supplanted by another constitution is no proof either of their success or of their failure. Any valid opinion as to [their] merits must be based on a detailed and unbiased study of the confederation period.'[34] One must also consider the economic recession that plagued America during and after the Revolutionary War. While the Articles have frequently shouldered the blame for this economic strife, it is feasible that other factors were equally responsible.

Most historians of the first decade of the United States have been critical of the Articles, arguing that they failed to build a sense of national unity or to provide central controls over trade, currency, credit or banking. It is argued that as long as these controls lay in the hands of thirteen different states, rivalry and self-interest would have prevailed. Albert Bushnell Hart, writing in the 1890s, contends that:

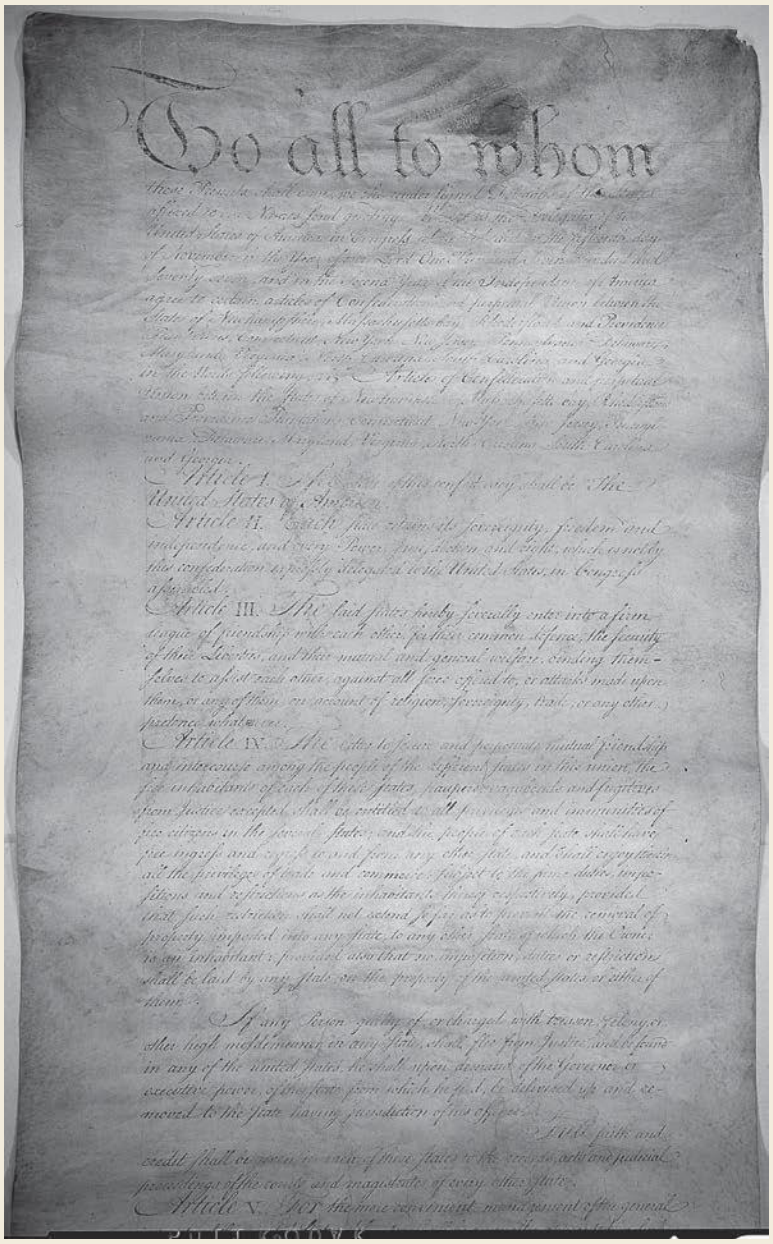
> The first and fundamental defect of the government was in the organisation of Congress. The Continental Congress had been a head without a body; under the Articles of Confederation, Congress was a body without a head. A single assembly continued to be the source of all national legislative, executive and judicial power. As though to prevent the country from getting the benefit of experience, no man could remain a member of Congress for more than three years in succession ... On important questions the approval of nine States was necessary, and often less than that number had voting representatives on the floor. Amendment was impossible, except by consent of all the State legislatures.[35]

The Forging of the Union by Richard Morris (1904–1989) is one of the best-known studies of the confederation period. Published in 1986, the book explores post-war economics more closely than other accounts. Morris maintains that the United States suffered economically between 1783 and 1787 because British trade policies sabotaged its post-war recovery, while the states behaved spontaneously and in their own self-interest, giving scant regard to national concerns. The Articles of Confederation failed to provide the national government with sufficient muscle to deal with these critical problems.

Nathanial Gorham of Massachusetts, president of the Confederation Congress, during the unrest of 1786.

Charles Beard (1874–1948) suggests that the idealism of the revolution ebbed away at the end of the war, replaced instead with commercial interests. The withdrawal of the British threat saw a power shift: the revolution's political philosophers like Jefferson, Paine and Sam Adams were replaced by men of property, trade and finance. Their main interests lay not in states' rights, decentralised power or individual liberties but in building commerce, stabilising the currency, re-establishing national credit and securing the rights of lenders. Many of these men were political conservatives who had disliked taxes and regulations in the 1760s–1770s, yet had no desire to dismantle the British political structures that existed in America.

Merrill Jensen, tracking the Articles of Confederation from their origins, observes that they encountered opposition from the start, even as they were being ushered through Congress and passed around the states. The federalists who desired trade and currency regulation pushed for the states to grant Congress stronger national controls. When that failed they began to poison public perceptions of the Articles, in the hope that they might later be



The first page of the Articles of Confederation.

discarded: '[They] undertook to convince their countrymen of the inadequacies of the Articles of Confederation. They pictured the Confederation period as one of chaos, born solely of the existing form of government.'[36]

In an essay entitled 'Rethinking the Articles of Confederation,' H. A. Scott Trask suggests that the economic depression of the 1780s had little to do with the nation's government – in fact it was unavoidable regardless of which political system was in place. America had just endured a costly war, incurred massive public debt, severe inflation and gross disruption to foreign trade – these were the compelling factors, not the Articles of Confederation. Trask also notes that the national economy was showing clear signs of improvement by late 1786. He suggests that criticism of the Articles was largely the work of fear-mongers and federalist propagandists:

[T]he period of the Articles of Confederation was not characterised by chaos and increasingly bad economic times, as historians tend to assume. Rather, the Articles proved themselves to be a perfectly viable structure for a free society, encouraging trade and prosperity and adherence to the highest ideals of 1776. [The problems of the 1780s] involved economic imbalances and debts left over from the war with Britain.[37]

34 Merrill Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), 239.
35 Albert Bushnell Hart, *Formation of the Union* (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1898), 105–6.
36 M. Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation*, 3–4.
37 H. A. Scott Trask, 'Rethinking the Articles of Confederation' at mises.org.

QUIZ ON ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

CONCLUSION

The first years of the United States were ones of disappointment and unfulfilled promise. Despite Thomas Paine's assertions that an American republic would flourish if freed from the chains of Britain, there was little sign of this by the mid-1780s.

Soldiers had returned from the Revolutionary War with their pockets empty or filled with near-worthless banknotes. Settlers and speculators sought to claim the new western lands only to find their ambitions blocked by Native Americans and foreign powers. The 1783 Treaty of Paris had been circumvented to America's disadvantage. Wealthy merchants found their enterprises blocked by France, Spain and their former business partners in Britain. Furthermore, the domestic economy had collapsed from debt, inflation and a slump in exports.

As they had done during the revolution, Americans looked to the national Congress to provide solutions. But the Confederation Congress was limited by the Articles of Confederation and the self-interest of the thirteen states, which still largely governed themselves. The men of Congress found it near-impossible to forge trade deals, conduct foreign affairs and rectify the national economy while the states competed for scant resources and opportunities.

For the nationalists, who had argued for stronger central government even as the Articles were being ratified in the late 1770s, the time was right for a new constitution.

TEST YOUR LEARNING

CHAPTER REVIEW

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at 'America Triumphant and Britannia in Distress' and complete the tasks below.

'America Triumphant and Britannia in Distress' (1782).

1. Identify four symbols of America or the American Revolution in the representation.
2. Compare the depictions of Britain (Britannia) and America (Liberty). How are their differing fortunes portrayed?
3. Explain the likely meaning of the ships in the centre of the representation.
4. Evaluate the representation in light of the context of its creation. To what extent was America 'triumphant' in the 1780s? In your answer refer to historical interpretations of the period.

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – DISCUSSION

Even though slavery is generally associated with the southern states of America, it has been argued that northern states also played a significant role in the trade. Find evidence to support such a view and discuss it with your class. To what extent did northern states contribute to, and profit from, slavery?

TYPES OF CHANGE – TIMELINES

Examine the Timelines for Section A and B of this book. Identify trends in the types of change evident before, during and after the revolution. For example, to what extent was America was still in the throes of military conflict by 1787?

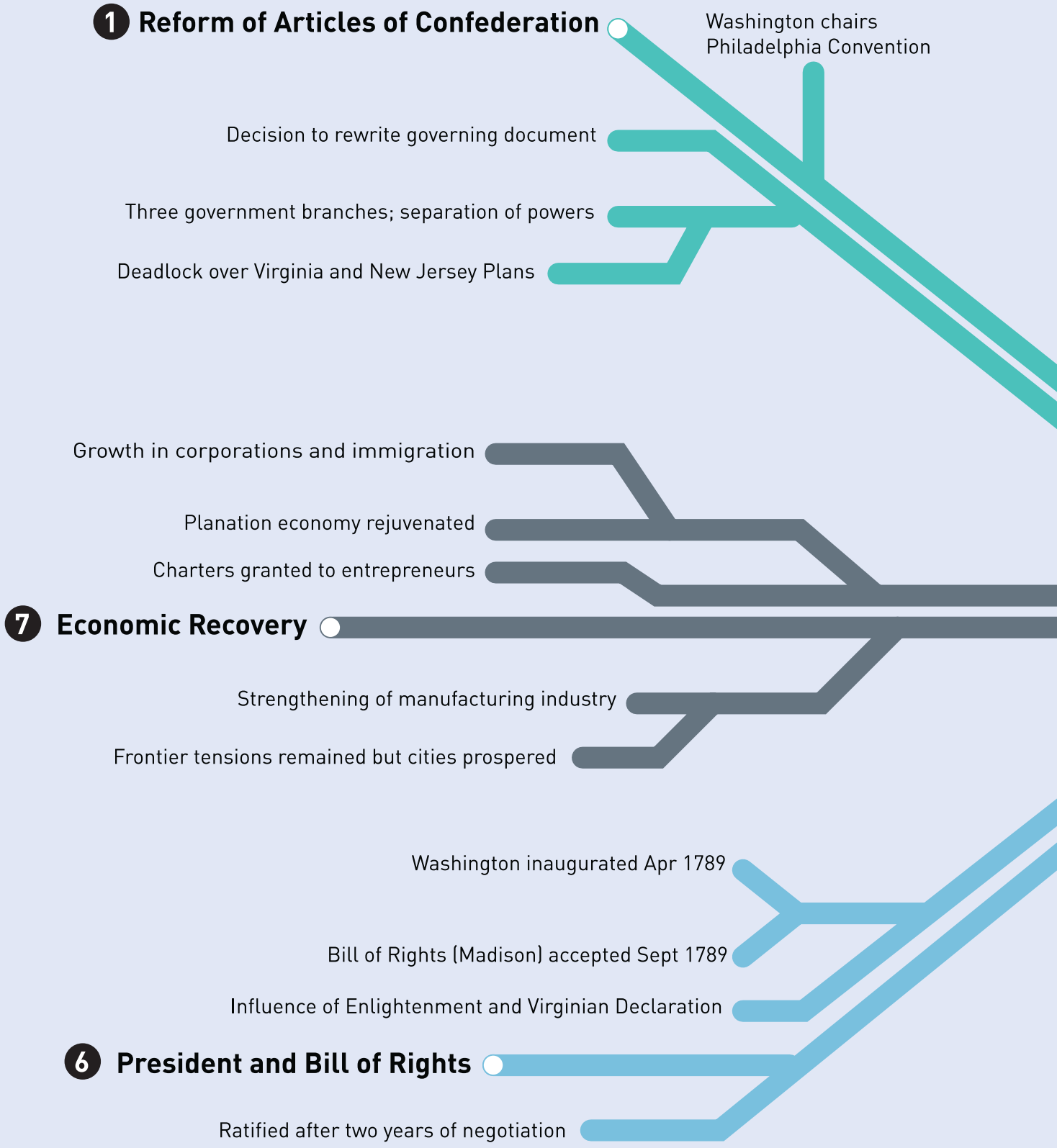
CHAPTER

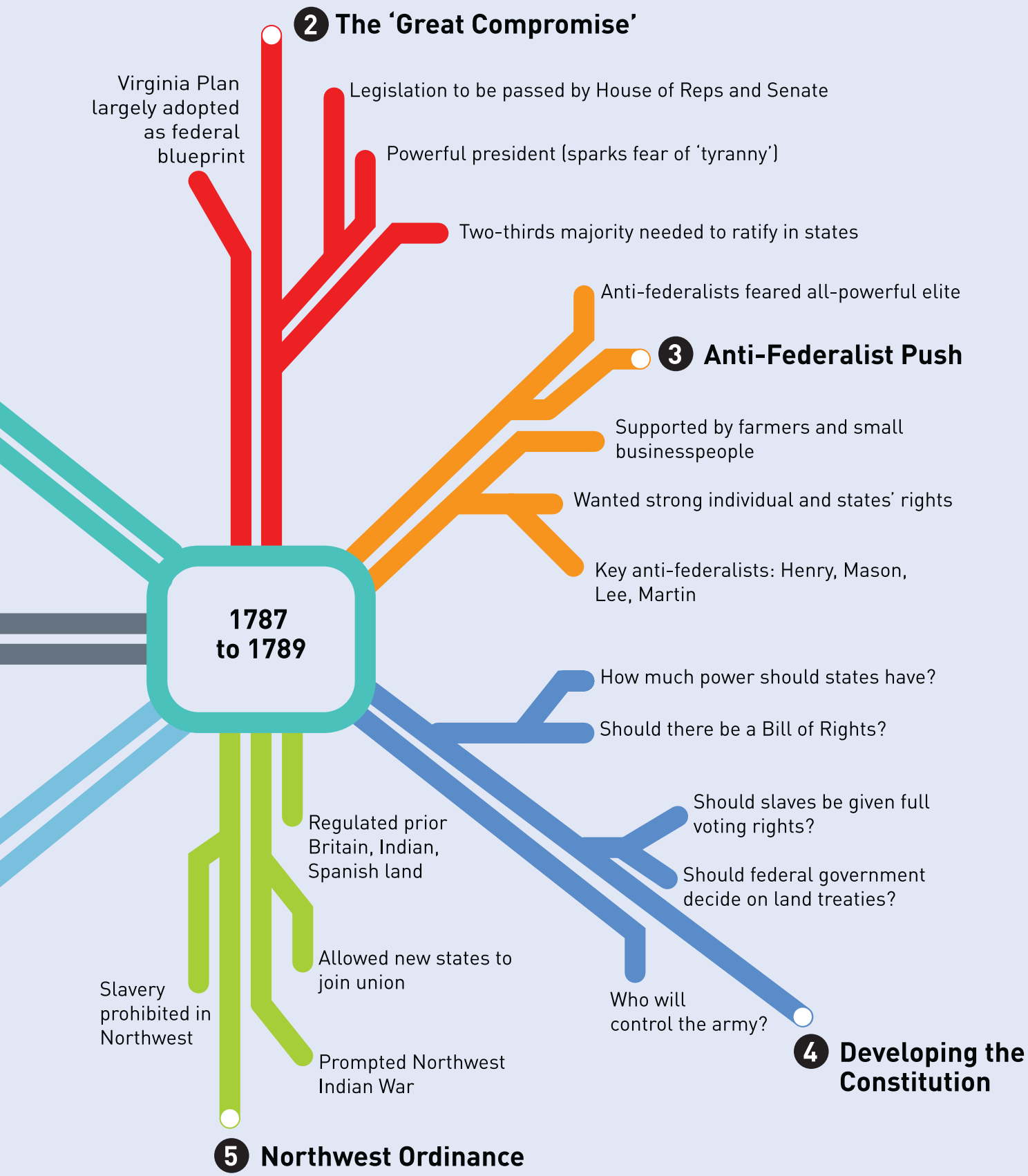
7

FORGING THE REPUBLIC

(1787–1789)

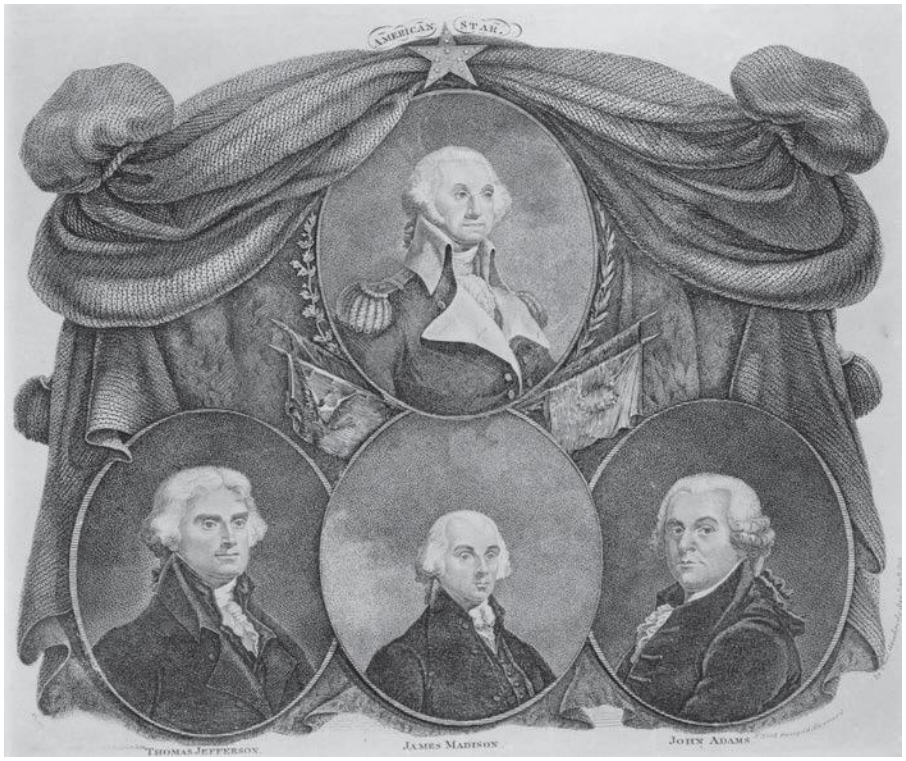
CHAPTER OVERVIEW




1787 to 1789
2 The 'Great Compromise'
Virginia Plan largely adopted as federal blueprint
Legislation to be passed by House of Reps and Senate
Powerful president (sparks fear of 'tyranny')
Two-thirds majority needed to ratify in states
3 Anti-Federalist Push
Anti-federalists feared all-powerful elite
Supported by farmers and small businesspeople
Wanted strong individual and states' rights
Key anti-federalists: Henry, Mason, Lee, Martin
4 Developing the Constitution
How much power should states have?
Should there be a Bill of Rights?
Should slaves be given full voting rights?
Should federal government decide on land treaties?
Who will control the army?
5 Northwest Ordinance
Regulated prior Britain, Indian, Spanish land
Allowed new states to join union
Prompted Northwest Indian War
Slavery prohibited in Northwest

INTRODUCTION

During the mid-1780s the political framework of the United States was attacked by a vocal minority. They argued that the Articles of Confederation provided a weak foundation for government and declared them to be responsible for the nation's economic crisis. Several attempts were made to strengthen the Articles but they withered on the vine because of lack of support from the states. By 1786 matters had become so desperate that several nationalist leaders talked of a continental convention to consider the matter. Representatives from five states met in Maryland in September, committing to a larger gathering of state delegates in Pennsylvania the following summer. The subsequent unrest in western Massachusetts and smaller uprisings elsewhere in New England lent added urgency to their meetings.



'American Star,' showing portraits of George Washington (top) and (below, left to right) Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and John Adams.

The fifty-five delegates who met in Philadelphia between May and September 1787 were the political architects of the modern United States of America. They chose to abandon the Articles of Confederation and instead set about drafting a whole new constitution. These 'founding fathers,' as they became known, laboured for four months behind closed doors and, often, in unpleasant heat. Their discussions incorporated philosophy, history and the successes and failures of other governments; they debated proposals, models, problems and solutions; they found compromise between competing views and interests. The result was a model for a federal system, involving three branches of government, shared powers, a powerful president and a strengthened Congress.

The real battle, however, was not creating the United States Constitution but persuading the people and states to accept it. The ratification process of 1787–88 saw an outpouring of public discussion and debate as the population divided into two loosely-formed groups: the federalists, who favoured the Constitution, and the anti-federalists, who opposed it. Some of the issues that sparked the revolution, such as rights and representation, resurfaced as the nation considered its political future. As these grand debates unfolded, other changes were taking place: women, African Americans, Native Americans, the poor and indentured servants all sought better economic and social conditions – with varying degrees of success.

CALLS FOR CHANGE

By mid-1786 criticism of the political structure of the new nation had reached a crescendo. Opposition to the Articles of Confederation was nothing new: some leaders were condemning the looseness and inadequate powers of the confederacy even as the Articles were being drafted. Congress proposed amendments to the Articles in 1784 and 1785 to strengthen its ability to negotiate trade abroad, but both failed to draw support from more than a couple of states. As agreement from all states was necessary, amending the Articles seemed impossible. George Washington, writing to fellow revolutionary John Jay, complained about the lack of national power and the behaviour of men in local and state governments:

> Your sentiments, that our affairs are drawing rapidly to a crisis, accord with my own … We have errors to correct. We have probably had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our confederation. Experience has taught us that men will not adopt and carry into execution measures calculated for their own good, without the intervention of a coercive power. I do not conceive [that] we can exist long as a nation without having lodged somewhere a power which will pervade the whole union … What astonishing changes a few years are capable of producing! I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror ….[1]

On the latter point, there is evidence to suggest that some leaders engaged in a half-hearted search for a potential 'king of the United States.' Both Nathaniel Gorham (then president of Congress) and Baron von Steuben approached Prince Heinrich, an ambitious member of the Prussian royal family, about the matter; the prince politely declined. Members of the French royal family were also considered, while George III's second son, Frederick, Bishop of Osnaburg, was nominated by a clique of loyalists and merchants. These overtures and rumours aroused public suspicion, however, and Congress was forced to publicly declare that it had no intentions of seeking a monarch.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Articles of Confederation prohibited treaties or alliances between any of the thirteen states, to avoid division and competition within the confederation. Yet in 1785 Virginia and Maryland negotiated a trade agreement, ignoring this provision.

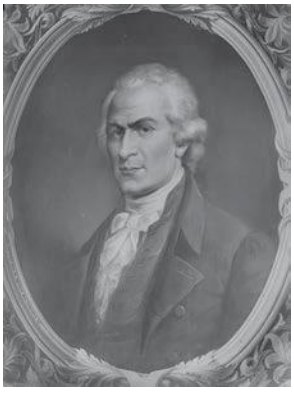
DID YOU KNOW?

Frederick, Duke of York, was ordained as Bishop of Osnaburg in 1764 when he was six months old, making him the youngest bishop in history.

REFORM BEGINS

The first formal moves towards changing the Articles of Confederation began in Annapolis, Maryland over four days in September 1786. Instigated by powerful Virginian interests, the Annapolis summit was only attended by eleven representatives from five states: Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware. Amongst these delegates, however, were some influential figures. Alexander Hamilton was a West Indies-born lawyer and an aide to Washington during the war; he had long dreamed of the great potential for America, if government power could only be strengthened. James Madison, a softly-spoken young Virginian with a detailed knowledge of political theory and philosophy, was another advocate of federal power. Hamilton, Madison and the other delegates in Annapolis agreed unanimously that the Articles of Confederation were in need of urgent reform:

> That there are important defects in the system of the Federal Government is acknowledged by … those States which have [come to agreement] in the present meeting. The defects, upon a closer examination, may be found greater and more numerous than even these [resolutions] imply … They are, however, of a nature so serious … as to render the situation of the United States delicate and critical, calling for an exertion of the united virtue and wisdom of all the members of the confederacy.[2]



Alexander Hamilton.

KEY PEOPLE: ALEXANDER HAMILTON

1 George Washington, letter to John Jay, 15 August 1786.
2 Resolution of the Annapolis Convention, Maryland, September 1786.

KEY CHALLENGES: PHILADELPHIA CONVENTION

The Annapolis delegates drafted a recommendation to Congress that a 'grand convention' of the states be held the following summer. Congress acted upon the suggestion by calling for state delegates to gather in Philadelphia in May 1787, 'for the sole purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation and reporting to Congress and the several legislatures such alterations and provisions therein as shall, when agreed to in Congress and confirmed by the States, render the federal Constitution adequate to the [pressing needs] of government and the preservation of the Union.'

A GATHERING IN PHILADELPHIA

DID YOU KNOW?

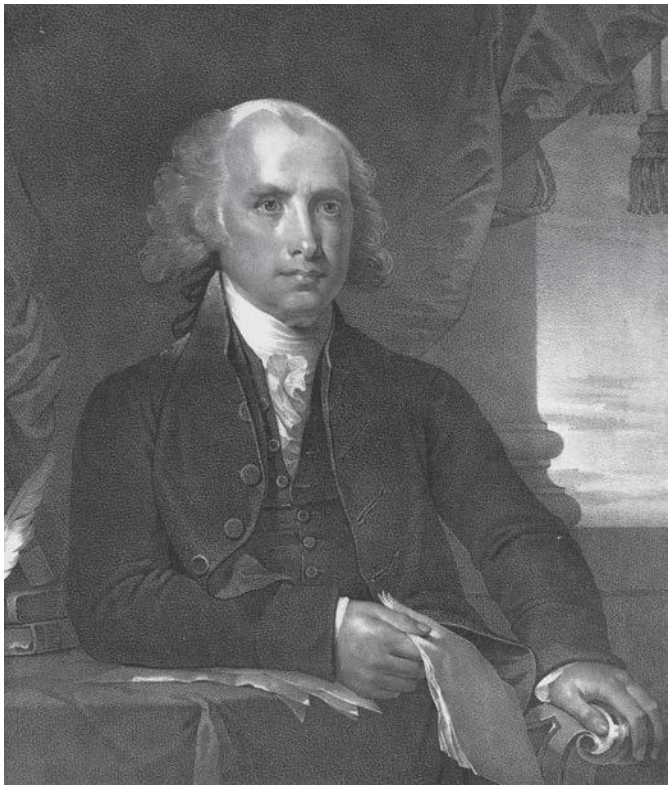
On hearing that the convention had decided to conduct its business in secret, Thomas Jefferson wrote from Paris, 'I am sorry they begin their deliberations by so abominable a precedent as that of tying up the tongues of their members.'

There was support for the convention from several states, particularly in the wake of Shays' Rebellion. Twelve states sent between two and eight delegates each, making a total of fifty-five delegates; Rhode Island refused to participate. Several key revolutionary leaders did not attend the gathering: Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry, both from Virginia, refused their invitations, the latter declaring that he 'smelt a rat in Philadelphia, tending toward monarchy'; Samuel Adams was in poor health (and was suspicious of the convention); and John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were abroad on diplomatic duties (though both had limited correspondence with delegates).

KEY PEOPLE: JAMES MADISON

The Philadelphia convention involved some of the finest political minds in America; Jefferson later described it as 'an assembly of demi-gods.' George Washington was the most prominent figure and the obvious candidate to chair proceedings. Most of those involved in the Annapolis Convention were present, including Alexander Hamilton and James Madison. Others included Robert Morris, the former superintendent of finances; John Dickinson, author of *Letters from a Farmer* and the failed Olive Branch Petition; and Roger Sherman, a member of the committee responsible for the Declaration of Independence. Benjamin Franklin also attended, though at eighty-one years of age his hearing was poor and he spoke only occasionally during debates.

James Madison.



The first of the fifty-five delegates arrived in Philadelphia at the start of May, taking rooms in the city's hotels, boarding houses and private rooms. It would be another three weeks before seven states were represented – enough to form a quorum so that discussions could begin. After unanimously electing Washington as chairman, the delegates moved that their meetings be entirely secret, with no public access and no release of minutes, records or information while the proceedings were underway. Members swore an oath of secrecy and guards were posted at the doors to prevent eavesdropping. Confident that they could speak honestly and openly the delegates began discussing the future of the nation.

ACTIVITY

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Would the 'secrecy' of the Philadelphia convention be allowed today? If so, under what circumstances? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of conducting such an important meeting without public scrutiny or official records.

TO REVISE OR START ANEW?

The first challenge confronting the Philadelphia convention of 1787 was what to do about the Articles of Confederation: should they be modified or scrapped altogether? A consensus emerged that it would be easier to write a framework document anew rather than attempt to improve the Articles, which were viewed as fundamentally flawed. There was nevertheless a verbal agreement that the spirit of the Articles and the nature of the confederacy be reflected in the new piece. John Dickinson crystallised the views of most present when he addressed the convention on 30 May:

> The Confederation is defective [and] all agree that it ought to be amended. We are a nation, although consisting of parts or states – we are also confederated, and [we] hope we shall always remain confederated. The enquiry should be: [1] What are the legislative powers which we should vest in Congress? [2] What judiciary powers? [3] What executive powers? We may resolve therefore, in order to let us into the business, that the confederation is defective; and then proceed to the definition of such powers as may be thought adequate to the objects for which it was instituted.'[3]

Most agreed that the national government must be strengthened and given powers over matters such as taxation, currency, trade and foreign affairs. But the Americans had just fought a revolution *against* a powerful central government they believed was taxing them heavily while denying their political rights – the key question was how to achieve powerful government that was unable to develop into tyrannical government.

Their answer was to revisit an existing idea – the separation of political powers – with modifications and improvements to make it more effective. National government as a whole would be strengthened but it would be divided into three distinct branches: executive (the presidency), legislative (Congress) and judicial (courts). Each branch would have considerable power in its own right but this power would be 'checked' (limited) by powers of the other two branches. The three branches of government would exist in a state of equilibrium; none on its own would be able to control the government.

Having separate branches of government was, in itself, nothing new. English government had been balanced between the monarchy, two houses of parliament and an independent judiciary. The Enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu had written extensively about separation of powers in his 1734 work *The Spirit of the Laws*. What was revolutionary about the American proposal was that separation of powers was incorporated into a republican model; it was explicitly defined by checks and balances; and the system was articulated and enshrined in a constitution. Regardless of how the document operates in practice, its theoretical basis was one of the key political innovations of the modern era.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 1787 convention was held during one of Philadelphia's hottest summers. With the windows shut and heavy curtains drawn, Independence Hall was unbearably hot – particularly for heavily-dressed men in wigs.

DID YOU KNOW?

In between the long sessions in Independence Hall, many delegates sat for a physiognotrace, a mechanical tracing device that produced an exact silhouette of one's profile.

3 Cited in Joseph Morton, *Shapers of the Great Debate at the Constitutional Convention* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2005), 77.

FEATURE

POLITICAL CHECKS AND BALANCES

The American political system includes:

Checks on the power of the president

- The president can be impeached by the Senate
- Presidential appointments must be approved by the Senate
- The Supreme Court can declare presidential orders unconstitutional and invalid
- The president cannot declare war without congressional approval
- The president cannot raise revenue without Congressional approval.

Checks on the power of Congress

- The president can veto (disallow) legislation passed by Congress
- The president, not Congress, is commander-in-chief of the military
- The president may summon emergency sessions of Congress
- The Supreme Court can deem legislation unconstitutional and invalid
- The bicameral (two-house) nature of Congress means it is 'self-checking.'

The US Supreme Court.

Checks on the power of the Supreme Court

- The president appoints Supreme Court justices
- The president can issue pardons
- The Senate must approve judicial appointments
- The Congress can impeach Supreme Court and lower court justices
- The Congress can alter the size of the Supreme Court.

DID YOU KNOW?

Only two United States presidents – Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton – have faced impeachment under Article II of the Constitution. Both were tried before the Senate and found 'not guilty,' Johnson by just one vote. Richard Nixon resigned from the presidency before impeachment proceedings over the Watergate scandal began.

ACTIVITY

CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE – DIAGRAM

Construct a diagram or concept map showing how the various 'checks and balances' of the American political system might come into play in one or more of the following situations:

- The president wants to declare war on another country
- The House of Representatives passes a bill the president disagrees with
- The Senate does not approve of a Supreme Court Justice nominated by the president.

What are some of the positive and negative consequences of a system based on checks and balances?

Painting by Howard Chandler Christie of George Washington presiding over the second Constitutional Convention in 1787.

DID YOU KNOW?

Washington was elected chairman not only because of his public profile, but also his concern with procedure, gentility and appropriate conduct. He did not participate in debates.

DECIDING ON A MODEL

Having concluded that the national government should be strengthened and comprised of three branches, the 1787 Philadelphia convention set to work on the detail, particularly the composition of the Congress. Individuals and state delegations began tabling their own schemes: there was the Virginia Plan, the New Jersey Plan, the Hamilton Plan, the Dickinson Plan and so on. Each proposal was read, explained, queried, discussed and hotly debated. Scenarios were created to test how each model might operate in practice. Legal implications were considered to ensure each proposal would stand up to challenges – fortunately most of the delegates were educated in the law and many were practising lawyers.

By mid-June the convention had seriously considered two proposals: the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan. The Virginian proposal, sometimes called the Large States Plan, created a political system with three branches of government – executive (government), legislative (parliament) and judicial (courts) – and a legislature that contained two houses. Under this plan the legislature would be dominant: it would appoint individuals to the executive and judicial branches, rule on the constitutional validity of laws and regulate overseas trade. Importantly, it would be elected on a proportional basis, so that the more populous states (those with high populations) would be better represented – and as a consequence enjoy greater power and influence – than the less populous states.

The New Jersey Plan was different. Unlike the Virginian model, which was prepared beforehand, the New Jersey proposal was hammered out in Philadelphia by small-state delegates desperate for an alternative. It was also known as the Small States Plan or the Paterson Plan after its chief architect, Irish-born lawyer William Paterson. In this proposal the legislature or parliament also had significant powers, including the appointment of an executive committee for a one-year term. However, the legislature contained only one elected house with all states represented equally, as per the Articles of Confederation. Not only would 'whales' and 'minnows' have equal voting rights but the national government would continue to rely on the states for its revenue.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Philadelphia convention of 1787 spent two weeks discussing the pros and cons of the Virginia Plan but only four days considering the New Jersey Plan. The consensus seemed to favour Virginia, but there were plenty of delegates who thought the model 'too democratic.'

DID YOU KNOW?

The delegates did not scrimp on entertainment while in Philadelphia. At one gathering they consumed 54 bottles of Madeira wine, 60 bottles of red wine, 34 bottles of beer, eight bottles of cider, seven large bowls of punch and a large number of canapés, olives and relishes.

With the convention in an apparent deadlock, some delegates began to search for 'middle ground' that would satisfy both parties. Benjamin Franklin, who did not speak often in debates but attracted the full attention of those present when he did, said:

> The diversity of opinion turns on two points. If a proportional representation takes place, the small States contend that their liberties will be in danger. If an equality of votes is to be put in its place, the large States say their money will be in danger. When a broad table is to be made and the edges of the planks do not fit, the artist takes a little from both, and makes a good joint. In this manner here both sides must part with some of their demands, in order that they may join in some accommodating proposition.[4]

Compromise was to become, in fact, an important feature of the United States Constitution. Its mechanisms and clauses sought to strike a balance between the interests of large and small states, between northern and southern states, and between state and federal powers.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Australian federal parliament is similar to the United States Congress. House of Representatives seats are allocated according to population, whereas each state is represented equally in the Senate regardless of population (currently, six senators per state and two per territory).

DID YOU KNOW?

Although Congress was set up to represent 'the people' and 'the states,' the nature of modern politics means that a legislator will generally vote with their party rather than consider how every piece of legislation affects their own state and electors.

THE 'GREAT COMPROMISE'

A solution to the July 1787 impasse in Philadelphia came from Connecticut delegates, who put forward a model later dubbed the Great Compromise. Based heavily on the Virginia Plan, its most obvious compromise was in the composition of the Congress. The legislature would have two houses, as per Virginia, but the representation in each house would be different. The House of Representatives would be the lower house or 'people's house,' popularly elected every two years and with seats allocated on the basis of population ('one member for every 40 000 inhabitants').[5] The states with larger populations would therefore have the majority of seats.

The Senate would exist as the upper house or 'states' house,' with two senators per state regardless of population; in other words, each state would be represented equally, unlike in the House of Representatives. As a legislative 'house of review' the Senate would operate in a more stable and deliberative manner than the House of Representatives, with Senators nominated by state legislatures and serving six-year rather than two-year terms. Edmund Randolph described the function of the Senate as one of 'keeping up the balance, and to restrain, if possible, the fury of democracy.'[6]

Under the provisions of the Great Compromise, legislation would need to pass through both houses of Congress, to ensure the approval of both the 'people' and the states. Each house was allocated specific powers and responsibilities within the legislature. All bills raising revenue, for example, can only originate in the House of Representatives, while the Senate was given the exclusive power to confirm treaties and presidential appointments. The delegates in Philadelphia tinkered with and debated this model for almost two weeks before voting to accept it (five votes to four) on 16 July 1787.

ACTIVITY

BRAINSTORM

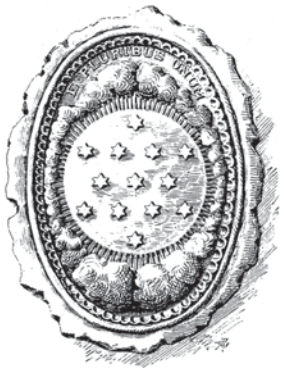
On the board, list the components of the Virginia Plan, the New Jersey Plan and Connecticut's Great Compromise. Note down the advantages and limitations of each proposal. For example, which one would be more likely to produce stable government?

4 Cited in Ellen Frankel Paul, *Liberty, Property and the Foundations of the American Constitution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 33.
5 Charles Kromkowski, *Recreating the American Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 285.
6 Records of the Federal Convention of 1787, page 58.

A PRESIDENT OR A KING?

A more controversial element of the constitution was the office of president. Recognising that the federal government would need day-to-day administration and decision-making powers in cases of war, threat or emergency, the Founding Fathers formulated a strong executive presidency. The president has considerable power to defend the nation, enforce laws and uphold the constitution; however, in many cases he or she cannot act without the approval of Congress. Article II of the constitution defines the president's powers thus:

> The executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his office during the term of four years … together with the Vice-President chosen for the same Term … The President shall be commander in chief of the Army and Navy of the United States …, he may require the opinion, in writing, of the principal officer in each of the executive Departments … [H]e shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment. He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties … and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for ….[7]



The first Seal of the President of the United States, originally used to seal official orders and correspondence with wax. The stars represent the thirteen states, while the Latin motto *E Pluribus Unum* means 'Out of many, one.'

ACTIVITY

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Compare and contrast the role and powers of the president of the United States with those of a constitutional monarch, such as the British king or queen. Which system is preferable?

The most controversial aspect of the constitution was the president's status as commander-in-chief of the military, a role not given specific constitutional limits or boundaries. Given their traditional antipathy towards standing armies and their fear of military oppression, many Americans were concerned about this power. Edmund Randolph, one of three Philadelphia delegates who would later refuse to sign the constitution, declared the executive presidency to be 'a foetus of monarchy.'

DID YOU KNOW?

Only thirty-nine of the fifty-five delegates actually signed the final draft of the US Constitution. Nine delegates had to leave Philadelphia early, while the delegates from Maryland and New York left the convention in protest. Three of the men who stayed till the end refused to sign.

A DRAFT CONSTITUTION

Whatever the innovations and benefits of the American Constitution, it could not be enacted without state and congressional approval. Given the failure of attempts to reform the Articles of Confederation, achieving this would be no mean feat. The Philadelphia convention, knowing the difficulties involved in national reform, gave the constitution its own ratification process, spelled out in two critical elements of Article VII. Ratification would be decided by state conventions and not by state legislatures; and secondly, the document could be enacted upon ratification by nine states (a two-thirds majority) rather than by all thirteen.[8]

On 17 September 1787 the Philadelphia convention was dissolved and three days later the draft constitution was read to the Confederation Congress. By the last days of September it had been distributed to the states and released for public examination. The next ten months brought heated debate, propaganda and ideological combat; according to John Vile the ratification process 'divided the

7 United States Constitution, Article II.

8 Constitution of the United States of America, Article VII.

country almost as strongly as had the earlier fight for independence.'[9] Two main camps emerged – the federalists and the anti-federalists.

KEY CHALLENGES: FEDERALISM

FEDERALISTS: IN FAVOUR OF THE CONSTITUTION

The federalists – those who supported the constitution and the federal system it would create – included some of America's brightest minds: James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, John Adams and others. Well educated and politically astute, they used pamphlets and public meetings to sell the advantages of federalism. Without doubt their most significant weapon was the *Federalist Papers*, a series of essays published under the pen-name 'Publius' (the authors were, in fact, Madison, Hamilton and Jay). The first *Federalist Papers* essay, written by Hamilton and published in New York in October 1787, gave readers the sense that the question was of great significance:

> … You are called upon to deliberate on a new Constitution for the United States of America. The subject speaks its own importance; comprehending in its consequences nothing less than the existence of the Union, the safety and welfare of the parts of which it is composed, the fate of an empire [which is] in many respects the most interesting in the world. It has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question: whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force … The crisis at which we are arrived may be regarded as the era in which that decision is to be made, and a wrong election … may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind.[10]

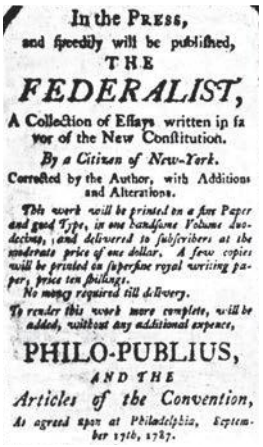
Another eighty-four *Federalist Papers* were published between October 1787 and August 1788, a rate of one every three or four days. Each addressed a particular element of concern, acting both as an 'instruction guide' for the constitution and a rebuttal of anti-federalist criticisms. The *Papers* defined the constitution as the supreme law of the land, transcending all governments and preventing the rise of potential tyrants. They highlighted the concept of popular sovereignty, explaining that the new government would be answerable to the people. They explained to readers the intricate system of checks and balances, pointing out that military oppression, restriction of liberties and excessive taxation would be unlikely, if not impossible, under the constitution.

Critical to the federalist cause was the support of George Washington. As chairman Washington had not often participated in debates at the Philadelphia convention, however he announced his strong support for ratification early in the piece. Given Washington's enormous popularity this was a considerable asset for the federalists. Though he was not a vigorous campaigner for the constitution like Madison and Hamilton, Washington nevertheless defended it in public and in private. In a letter to Virginia's United Baptist Churches, Washington wrote that if he believed the constitution 'might possibly endanger the religious rights of any ecclesiastical society, certainly I would never have placed my signature to it.'

Also in the federalist camp, though in the minority, were farmers and small businessmen who had endured the economic hardships of the 1780s and who – rightly or wrongly – blamed the Articles of Confederation and the 'weak'

DID YOU KNOW?

Although the *Federalist Papers* (below) were originally produced to inform the public debate about ratification, they have since become quasi-legal documents that are occasionally quoted in American court judgments.


In the Press,
and speedily will be published,
THE
FEDERALIST,
A Collection of Eſſays written in fa vor of the New Conſtitution.
By a Citizen of New-York.
Corrected by the Author, with Additions and Alterations.
This work will be printed on a fine Paper and good Type, in one handſome Volume Duodecimo, and delivered to ſubſcribers at the moderate price of one dollar. A few copies will be printed on ſuperfine royal writing paper, price ten ſhillings.
No money required till delivery.
To render this work more complete, will be added, without any additional expence,
PHILO-PUBLIUS,
AND THE
Articles of the Convention,
As agreed upon at Philadelphia, September 17th, 1787.

9 John Vile, *The Constitutional Convention of 1787* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 656.

10 Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist Papers*, No.1, 1787.

Confederation Congress for failing to restore prosperity after the revolution. Some of these yearned for strong leadership, tired of what they saw as the bickering and small-mindedness of state assemblies. One such person spoke in favour of the constitution:

DOCUMENT

JONATHAN SMITH, MASSACHUSETTS RATIFICATION CONVENTION, 1788

> I am a plain man and get my living by the plough ... I have lived in a part of the country where I have known the worth of good government by the [lack] of it. There was a black cloud that rose in the east last winter, and spread over the west. It brought on a state of anarchy and that led to tyranny. I say, it brought anarchy. People that used to live peaceably, and were before good neighbours, got distracted, and took up arms against government. Our distress was so great that we should have been glad to snatch at anything that looked like a government. Had any person that was able to protect us come and set up his [flag], we should all have flocked to it, even if it had been a monarch, and that monarch might have proved a tyrant ... When I saw this constitution, I found that it was a cure for these disorders.[11]

11 Cited in Harlow G. Unger, *America's Second Revolution* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 133.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Read Jonathan Smith's address to the Massachusetts convention and complete the tasks below.

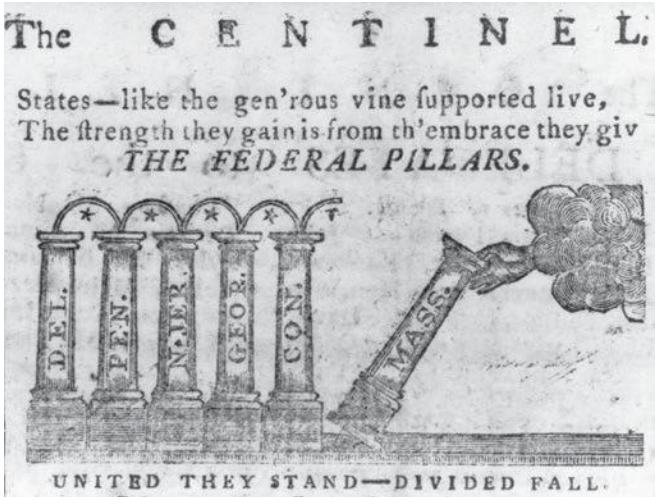
1. What is Smith's occupation and how would you describe his use of language?
2. Which event, or series of events, is Smith referring to when he speaks of a 'black cloud' that 'rose in the east last winter' and 'spread over the west'?
3. Describe an example of 'anarchy' from the period, and say why people might have been 'glad to snatch at anything that looked like a government' afterwards.
4. Using your broader knowledge, explain why federalists such as Smith believed the constitution would be a 'cure' for America's 'disorders.' To what extent were they accurate?

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Find a contrasting perspective from Smith's on the constitution. What fears did anti-federalists raise about the constitution?

ANTI-FEDERALISTS: AGAINST THE CONSTITUTION

The anti-federalists were a broader and more diverse group than the federalists. They boasted fewer well-known names and many of their leaders – Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee and George Mason – were Virginians. The majority of anti-federalists were plantation-owners and small businessmen, rather than city-based merchants or financiers. Like their pro-ratification counterparts many had been active in state government as governors or legislators; according to Gordon S. Wood, however, they 'tended to lack the influence



The federal pillars.

and education of the federalists, and often they had neither social nor intellectual confidence.'[12]

Anti-federalist objections to the constitution centred on four main points: it increased national power to unacceptable levels; it diminished state power and sovereignty; there was no explicit protection for individual rights; and there would be a standing federal army under the control of a powerful president. Their preference was for small, localised government which would be, by definition, closer to the people it represented. Tyranny would be impossible in a system where power was decentralised and shared by the states of the union.

Patrick Henry became the figurehead of the anti-federalist movement, not entirely willingly. He defined ratification as a simple choice between two ambitions: economic and military power, and true happiness and freedom. Harking back to the mother country he once criticised as dictatorial, Henry suggested that what had made Britain's empire great was not its power but its concern for liberty. He encouraged Americans to select wisely in this choice between 'liberty and empire':

> We are descended from a people whose government was founded on liberty; our glorious forefathers of Great Britain made liberty the foundation of everything. That country is a great, mighty and splendid nation, not because their government is strong and energetic, but because liberty is its direct end ... We drew the spirit of liberty from our British ancestors [and] by that spirit we have triumphed over every difficulty. But now the American spirit, assisted by the ropes and chains of consolidation, is about to convert this country into a powerful and mighty empire. If you make the citizens of this country agree to become the subjects of one great consolidated empire of America, your government will not have sufficient energy to keep them together. Such a government is incompatible with the genius of republicanism. There will be no checks, no real balances, in this government ....[13]

The anti-federalists were sharply criticised and, in some cases, personally attacked for opposing ratification. They were said to be: paranoid about government as an institution; lacking faith in the wisdom of the people; blind to the faults of the Articles of Confederation; prepared to sacrifice national progress in favour of states' rights and self-interest; fearful of change; and impeding the great potential of the United States.

DID YOU KNOW?

Elbridge Gerry, who opposed the constitution, once joked that the federalists should be known as 'rats' (ratifiers) and the anti-federalists as 'anti-rats.'

DID YOU KNOW?

The anti-federalists were quick to attack the draft constitution. Within five days of its publication in Philadelphia critical pieces began to appear in the press.

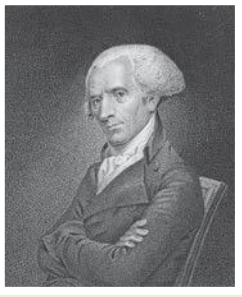
Patrick Henry's passionate and forceful oratory. Although it was only ever heard in his native Virginia, it was an asset to the anti-federalist movement.

12 Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution*, (New York: Random House, 2002), 159.

13 Patrick Henry, 'Shall Liberty or Empire be Sought?,' 1788.

PROMINENT ANTI-FEDERALISTS

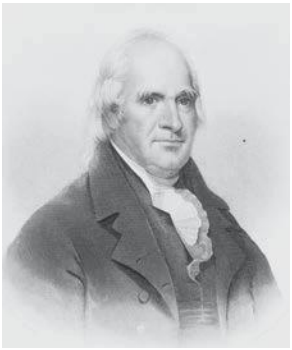
NAME	STATE	ARGUMENTS
'Brutus'	New York	An anonymous essayist who penned sixteen pieces criticising the delegates at the Philadelphia convention for making decisions they were not empowered to make. The pseudonym was a reference to the Roman general who stabbed the 'tyrannical' Julius Caesar in order to save the republic.
Samuel Bryan 1759–1821	Pennsylvania	Using the pen-name 'Centinel,' Bryan published a series of twenty-four essays in his native Philadelphia, most of which railed against the constitution as the work of privileged interests seeking to maintain or advance their own wealth or status.
'Federal Farmer'	Various	Probably originating in New York, the letters of 'Federal Farmer' appeared in most New England and middle states, and suggested that the strong powers of the federal government would eventually 'swallow' the states into one single national entity.
Elbridge Gerry 1744–1814	Massachusetts	One of the few men present at the Philadelphia convention to refuse to sign the draft constitution. Gerry was famous for stating that 'the people are dupes of pretended patriots.'
Patrick Henry 1736–1799	Virginia	The most notable anti-federalist, Henry did not attend the Philadelphia convention and became an outspoken critic of the constitution, voting against it in the Virginia ratifying convention. (See Who's Who.)
Richard Henry Lee 1732–1794	Virginia	Famous for first raising the motion of independence in July 1776, Lee said of the constitution that 'the greatness of the powers given [will] produce a coalition of monarchy men, military men and aristocrats ... whose noise, impudence and zeal exceeds all belief.' (See Who's Who.)
Luther Martin 1748–1826	Maryland	A lawyer, Martin attended the Philadelphia convention but disliked the secrecy of its proceedings. He participated in debates but eventually walked out in disgust when the matter of individual rights was not discussed.
George Mason 1725–1792	Virginia	Though a slave-owner, Mason objected to the constitution on the grounds that it did not guarantee individual rights; he also felt it threatened the power of the states. Mason attended the Philadelphia convention but did not sign the constitution.
Melancton Smith 1744–1798	New York	A war veteran, anti-slavery campaigner and prominent merchant who attended the New York ratifying convention. He was initially opposed to ratification then voted for the constitution with amendments.


Elbridge Gerry.


Patrick Henry.


Richard Henry Lee.


Luther Martin.



George Clinton of New York (above) is believed to have been responsible for anti-federalist essays published there under the pseudonym 'Cato.' Clinton later overcame his objections to the constitution, serving as vice-president under both Jefferson and Madison.

While these criticisms may have been true of some individuals in the anti-federalist movement, most were committed to maintaining a confederacy of thirteen unified states under a republican government; they just preferred national power in a decentralised form. Thinking of themselves as representatives of yeoman farmers, small businessmen and artisans, many anti-federalists were opposed to oligarchies (small, elite governing groups) and monopolies. They did not accept that America had to become an imperial power to flourish economically. Patrick Henry said:

> We are come hither to preserve the poor Commonwealth of Virginia, if it can possibly be done: Something must be done to preserve your liberty and mine. The Confederation, this same despised government, merits in my opinion, the highest [praise]: It carried us through a long and dangerous war: It rendered us victorious in that bloody conflict with a powerful nation: It has secured us a territory greater than any European monarch possesses: And shall a government which has been thus strong and vigorous, be accused of [stupidity] and abandoned for want of energy?

ACTIVITY

POSTER

Construct a poster persuading Americans not to ratify the new constitution. Use the arguments and propaganda of the anti-federalists and some of your own.

DEBATE

As a class, debate the topic below. Imagine it is September 1788 and the draft constitution has just been circulated. Appoint affirmative and negative speakers (three of each) and a time-keeper. Each speaker has three minutes to make their case. The rest of the class should vote on the most convincing team.

Topic: 'The American Constitution will safeguard the people's rights and liberties.'

KEY PEOPLE: PATRICK HENRY

DID YOU KNOW?

George Mason's passionate anti-federalist position cost him his lifelong friendship with George Washington. The two rarely spoke to each other after 1788.

CLAMOURING FOR RIGHTS

Of the distinctions between federalists and anti-federalists, the most divisive was the question of individual rights. The draft constitution contained no explicit protections or guarantees of personal rights, such as freedom of speech, movement, assembly and religion. Other buffers against oppressive government power were also overlooked, such as freedom of the press, the right to a fair trial and limitations on search warrants. Since a lack of these rights had been a major grievance during the revolution, many felt a constitution should protect these rights explicitly.

The push for a bill of rights was particularly strong in Virginia, where the anti-federalist leadership was strongest. Back in 1776, almost a month before Congress endorsed the Declaration of Independence, the Virginian assembly had passed its own sixteen-point Declaration of Rights. It was one of the American Revolution's clearest and strongest expressions of individual liberties. Much of it had been penned by George Mason, a neighbour and close friend of George Washington. Mason had been present at the Philadelphia convention of 1787 and was an active contributor to its debates; however, he and two other delegates had refused to sign the constitution because it failed to spell out individual rights.

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: FEDERALISTS AND ANTI-FEDERALISTS

On Federalists

David Harrell Jnr:

In the battle for public opinion, labels can be as important as logic, perhaps more so. And those who favoured ratification of the Constitution got the jump on their opponents by seizing the name 'Federalist' to represent their position. 'Nationalist' would have been a more accurate label, but a less winning one, for it suggested a degree of unity so high that it might fatally weaken the power of the states.[14]

Henry Steele Commager et al:

The Federalists ... had the assets of youth, intelligence, something positive to offer and, absolutely invaluable, the support of Washington and Franklin ... The warmest advocates of the Constitution were eager young men such as the thirty-two-year-old Rufus King. [They] believed that the slogans of 1776 were outmoded; that America needed integration, not state rights; that the immediate peril was not tyranny but disorder or dissolution; that the right to tax was essential to any government.[15]

James Ely:

Economic reform was a major Federalist priority. Supporters of the Constitution blamed inadequate government under the Articles of Confederation for loss of credit, lower land values and decay of commerce during the 1780s. Throughout the ratification debates, the Federalists stressed the economic advantages of a strong central government. They argued that ratification ... would facilitate the restoration of credit and would encourage commerce and manufacturing.[16]

Gary B. Nash et al:

The Federalists had persuaded themselves that America's situation had changed dramatically since [the Declaration of Independence had been adopted in] 1776. They eagerly embraced the idea of nationhood and looked forward with anticipation to the development of a rising 'republican empire' based on commercial development and led by men of wealth and talent ... Power, they argued, was not the enemy of liberty but its guarantor. Where government was not sufficiently 'energetic' and 'efficient' (these were favourite Federalist words) disorganisers and demagogues [politicians who exploit fears and prejudices] would do their nefarious work.[17]

Rufus King, a delegate to the Philadelphia convention, a leading federalist and an outspoken opponent of slavery.

On Anti-Federalists

Jack Greene:

[Anti-federalists were] a disparate group ... largely united only by their fear of the Constitution. They feared that the states would be swallowed up, that the interests of their respective localities would be sacrificed to those of others, and that the people would lose control over the distant national government which would eventually transmute itself into an irresponsible aristocracy ....[18]

Herbert Storing:

Was there [ever] a single Anti-Federal position? In the most obvious sense there surely was not. The Federalists claimed that the opposers of the Constitution could not agree among themselves, that they shared no common principles, that their arguments cancelled each other out. This is an exaggeration, for there was more agreement about many points of opposition to the Constitution than might appear at first glance.[19]

Joseph Murray:

The Anti-Federalists agreed that the Articles of Confederation had weaknesses and flaws but

thought that they could be solved with amendments to the existing articles ... [They] considered that republics were most likely to succeed as small political entities where the government could consist of delegates selected from the people, were well known by the people and intimately knowledgeable of the wants and needs of the people.[20]

John Dilulio:

The Anti-Federalists cannot be ignored or dismissed as cranks or crackpots. Nor can [they] be pigeon-holed as men united by narrow regional interests (they drew leaders from every state), by selfish economic interests (though some had land and financial capital, many had very little) or by [support] for slavery (abolition-leaning Anti-Federalists, both north and south, would bloody any nose that dared to suggest as much).[21]

14 David Harrell Junior, *Unto a Good Land* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 211.
15 Henry S. Commager, *A Concise History of the American Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 119.
16 James Ely, *The Guardian of Every Other Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 49.
17 Gary B. Nash et al, *The American People* (New York City: Longman, 2006), 187–8.
18 Jack Greene, *Colonies to Nation 1763–1789* (New York City: W. M. Norton, 1975), 557.
19 Herbert Storing, *What the Anti-Federalists were For* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), 5.
20 Joseph Murray, *Alexander Hamilton: America's Forgotten Founder* (New York: Algora, 2007), 107.
21 John Dilulio, *Godly Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 42.

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Referring to the interpretations above and this chapter, write a 300-word response to the following question: How did federalism and anti-federalism differ, and what were the main arguments made by each side? Which was more convincing?

DID YOU KNOW?

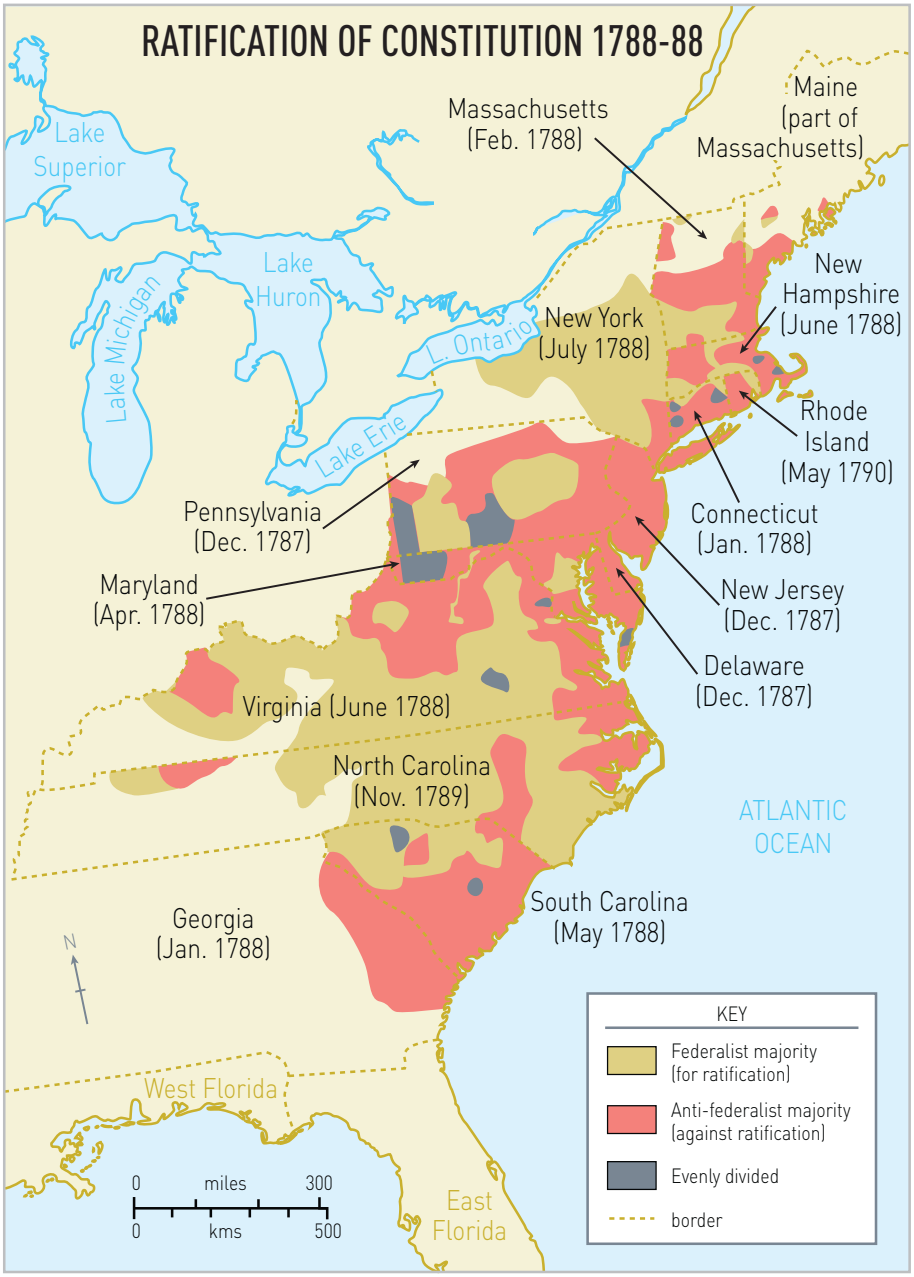
One writer, 'Brutus,' implied that some federalists were campaigning against a bill of rights because they had a hidden agenda: 'I cannot help suspecting that [these] persons ... are wilfully endeavoring to deceive and lead you into an absolute state of vassalage [i.e. slavery].'

As the call for a bill of rights grew louder some federalists readily accepted the idea, however others denied that such a measure was necessary. Among their claims was that rights are policed and protected by the lower courts, not constitutions; that the constitution, in its preamble, contained a number of implied rights; and that setting rights 'in stone' in the new constitution would actually limit them, because they would become the *only* rights that individuals would possess. Alexander Hamilton argued against the inclusion of a rights-based amendment, believing the constitution in its current form provided adequate protection:

> [Under the constitution] the people surrender nothing, and as they retain every thing, they have no need of particular reservations. 'We the people of the United States, to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America.' Here is a better recognition of popular rights than volumes of those sayings that make up several of our state bills of rights, and which would sound much better in a treatise of ethics than in a constitution of government.[22]

But Hamilton's view was dwarfed by a broad consensus that a charter of rights was needed. The revolutionaries had, in their struggle with England, made much of the principles established and protected in landmark legal and political documents like the Magna Carta (1215) and the English Bill of Rights (1689). Many of the great tracts of the revolution, such as Paine's *Common Sense* and the Declaration of Independence, had been directly concerned with natural rights. The thirteen states and their dozens of counties had drafted clauses on rights in their countless resolves, declarations and constitutions. It therefore seemed nonsensical that the constitution remained silent about the individual rights of American citizens.

22 Alexander Hamilton, *The Federalist Papers*, No. 84.
23 Cited in John Kaminski, *Federalists and Antifederalists* (Lanham: Madison House, 1989), 166.



Unlike in Philadelphia, delegates to the state ratifying conventions were, by and large, chosen by the people. Counties or large towns were invited to elect one or more delegates to consider and vote on the constitution on their behalf. In preparation for the convention:

- Delaware's three counties elected ten delegates each, a total of thirty;
- New Jersey's thirteen counties elected three delegates each, a total of thirty-nine;
- Georgia's eleven counties elected twenty-nine delegates;
- Connecticut voted for its delegates by town rather than by county, electing 168.

The results of these ratifying conventions give an indication of which regions in each state sided with the federalists or anti-federalists (see map, left).

THE STATES CONSIDER

Rights were vigorously debated at the state ratifying conventions. In Pennsylvania one anti-federalist urged the convention to put up 'a permanent landmark by which [our leaders] may learn the extent of their authority.'[23] The Pennsylvanians voted to ratify (46–23) on the condition that the new Congress be 'encouraged' to pass a rights-based amendment to the constitution. In Massachusetts, the sixth state to ratify, the vote was even closer (187–168) and came only after several noted anti-federalists, including revolutionary figureheads Samuel Adams and John Hancock, changed their position. Enough votes were mustered for ratification by engineering a compromise motion that called for a bill of rights.

Maryland and South Carolina voted to ratify (63–11 and 149–73 respectively), becoming the seventh and eighth states to do so. Things were not so comfortable at the New Hampshire ratifying convention, where delegates quibbled over a long list of individual rights they believed should be appended to the constitution. The New Hampshire vote was narrow (57–47) but succeeded on the back of a motion that the newly-formed Congress initiate a bill of rights. Virginia ratified (89–79) but only after fierce debates. Patrick Henry spoke against ratification on several grounds but reserved his strongest speech for the question of absent constitutional rights:

> I am happy to find that the gentleman on the other side declares [that my fears are] groundless. But suspicion is a virtue as long as its object is the preservation of the public good … There are many on the other side, who possibly may have been persuaded to the necessity of these measures, which I conceive to be dangerous to your liberty. Guard with jealous attention the public liberty. Suspect every one who approaches that jewel. Unfortunately, nothing will preserve it but downright force. Whenever you give up that force, you are inevitably ruined.[24]

Under the terms of Article VII, the constitution was officially enacted with the ratification of the ninth state (New Hampshire). It was scheduled to come into effect the following spring, with the election and investiture of the Congress and the president. By the end of July 1788 only North Carolina and Rhode Island had still not ratified. North Carolina held its convention the following month but deferred voting until there was evidence of movement towards a bill of rights. By November the North Carolinians, aware of progress on the issue, finally voted to ratify. Rhode Island, the smallest of the thirteen states and the only one not to send delegates to Philadelphia in 1787, remained deeply suspicious of the constitution and the federal system it created. Isolated and under pressure from their powerful neighbours, the islanders finally relented, becoming the last state to ratify in May 1790.

DID YOU KNOW?

The area covered by the Ordinance became known as the Northwest Territory and includes the modern-day states of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin.

DID YOU KNOW?

The first permanent American settlement in the Northwest Territory was initiated by forty-eight war veterans in April 1788, at the junction of the Ohio and Muskingum rivers. They named it Marietta, after the French queen Marie-Antoinette.

A GRAND PLAN FOR EXPANSION

As the new constitution was being conceived in mid-1787, the Confederation Congress was busy adopting an important measure. The Northwest Ordinance, passed in July, regulated the vast territory between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, outlining how this land would be settled, governed and admitted to the union. Some of the most vexing questions of the revolutionary era, such as expansion, state rivalry and territorial claims, were dealt with in this single law. It would shape how the new nation would unfold, from thirteen small coastal states into the fifty-one-state federation we know as the United States today.

At the beginning of the revolution most states had existing claims on land in the west. Most of these claims were still in place post-revolution and became a source of heated dispute – even, in some cases, minor border conflicts. An unresolved question was whether the expansive western territory should be governed by the existing states, most of which were on the coast and separated from the western lands by mountain ranges and expansive terrain. It would make sense, it was argued, to admit new states rather than enlarge existing ones.

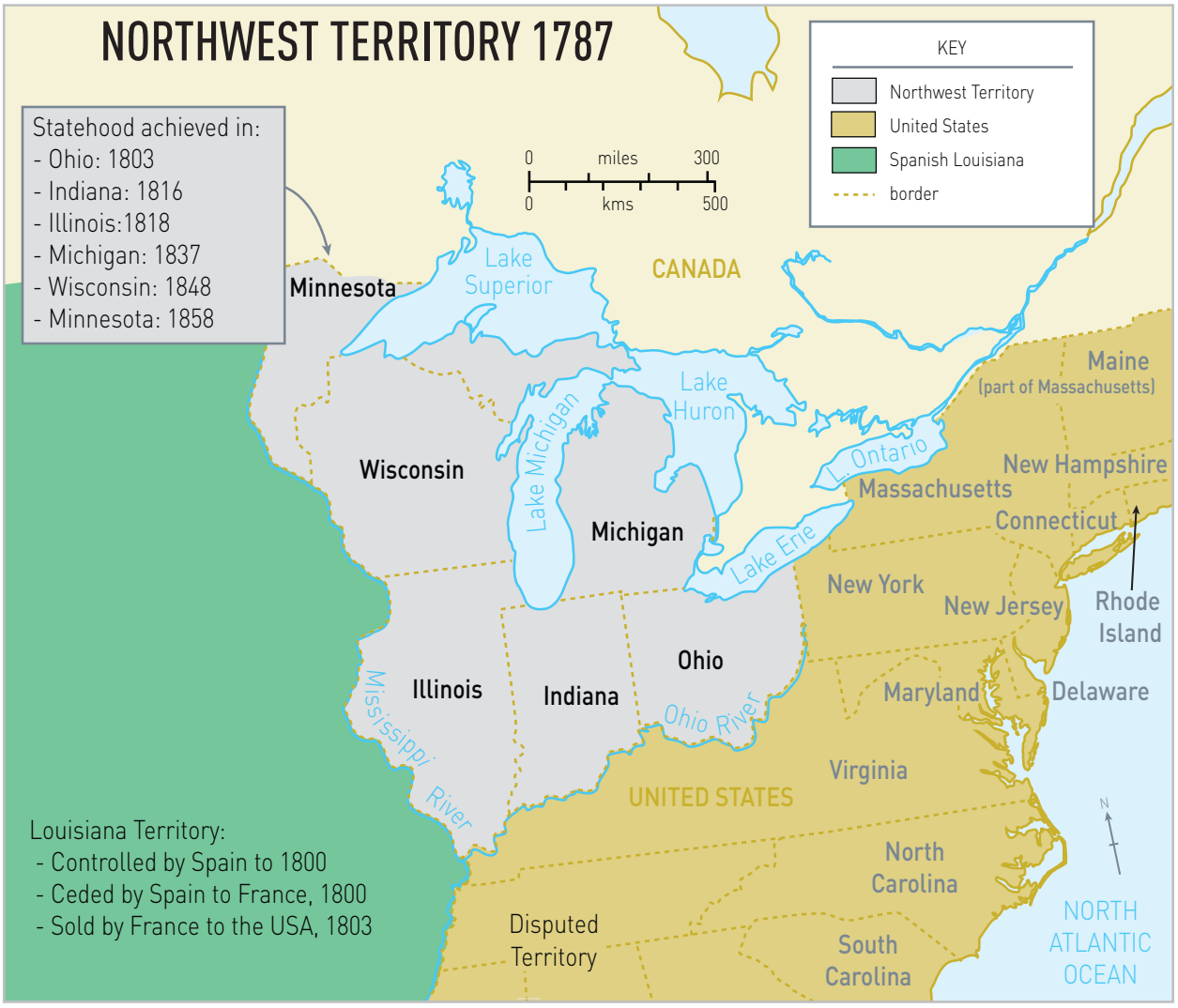
Back in 1784 Thomas Jefferson had suggested carving the western territory into seventeen equally-sized rectangular blocks, each to become a new state of

24 Patrick Henry, speech to the Virginian Ratifying Convention, 5 June 1788.

the union. This proposal provided a basis for the Northwest Ordinance three years later. The challenge faced by the Confederation Congress was convincing the states to surrender their pre-revolution claims on the western territory, in the interests of national expansion and future development. Some states did so willingly; others had to be cajoled by Congress, or bribed with offers to pay their war debts.

Promulgation of the first law in the Northwestern Territory.

With state claims removed, Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance in July 1787. New settlements in the west would be regulated by the Congress, which would be responsible for appointing territorial governors, administrators and judges. Once the population in any new settlement reached a total of 5000 free male adults, it was entitled to form a territorial assembly. Once there were 60 000



free men, the territorial assembly had the option of applying for statehood. The Ordinance also specified individual and civil rights that should be respected and upheld in the new territories, a foreshadowing of the Bill of Rights that would follow four years later:

> No person, demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner, shall ever be [harassed] on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiments, in the said territory … The inhabitants of the said territory shall always be entitled to the benefits of … trial by jury … Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.

The Ordinance also instructed that the 'utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their land and property shall never be taken without their consent,' a decree that would be rarely honoured. More controversially at the time, the Ordinance prohibited slavery in all new territories and states. This measure was supported by figures such as Washington, Jefferson and Madison, who wanted the institution of slavery to fade and disappear from American life. But the ban angered southerners who wished to relocate west, taking their slaves to provide labour. It also angered pro-slavery and states' rights politicians in the south, who argued that Congress had no authority to impose such restrictions on the rights or decisions of future states. The Ordinance proclaimed that 'There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted … Any [slave] escaping into the said territory, from whom labor is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, may be lawfully reclaimed [and returned].'

DID YOU KNOW?

Fourteen of the fifty-five delegates to the Philadelphia convention either owned domestic slaves or used slave labour for commercial purposes; these included George Washington, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and George Mason.

THE 'THREE-FIFTHS CLAUSE'

The 1787 delegates to Philadelphia included references to slavery in two sections of the Constitution: the notorious 'three-fifths clause' regarding representation in the Congress and a sunset clause (future end date) for slave importations. Both measures were compromises to the southern states, whose delegates refused to consider any move to prohibit slavery or end the slave trade outright. The extent to which the Founding Fathers genuinely tried to end the 'peculiar institution' of slavery is still a matter of debate among historians.

DID YOU KNOW?

The political impact of the three-fifths clause was considerable. In 1793 the 'slave states,' if slaves had not been counted, would have held thirty-three seats in the House of Representatives. With the three-fifths clause in place they instead held forty-seven. Four of the first five presidents were southerners, in part because of the clause.

The three-fifths clause was conceived during debates about representation and taxation. If the House of Representatives was based on population alone then southern states such as Georgia and the Carolinas, with their much smaller numbers of free white voters, would be significantly disadvantaged. The more populous northern states would enjoy more seats in the House and may come to dominate it. Similarly, if taxation was based on population and slaves were fully counted in this number, southerners argued they would be disproportionately taxed. Southern delegates therefore pushed for a compromise that acknowledged their situation. This resulted in the following clause:

> Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and, excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other persons.[25]

25 Constitution of the United States of America, Article I, Section II.

James Madison actively supported the three-fifths clause in Philadelphia, for which he has sometimes been criticised by historians. Drew McCoy suggests that Madison's backing of the three-fifths clause was more complicated than often painted, that he supported it in order to bring slaves into the legal and political mainstream: he said they should be 'considered, as much as possible, in the light of human beings and not as mere property,' so that they would be 'acted upon by our laws and have an interest in our laws.'[26]

ACTIVITY

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Read the three-fifths clause in the United States Constitution (opposite) and complete the tasks below.

1. What would be the rule for deciding:
   a) how many representatives each state could have in the national Congress?
   b) how much each state would be taxed?
2. Would indentured servants and 'Indians' be counted?
3. Who did 'all other persons' refer to, and how would they be counted?
4. Would those counted at 'three fifths' also receive three-fifths of a vote?
5. To what extent were Madison's views on the clause ethical or reasonable for the time?

DID YOU KNOW?

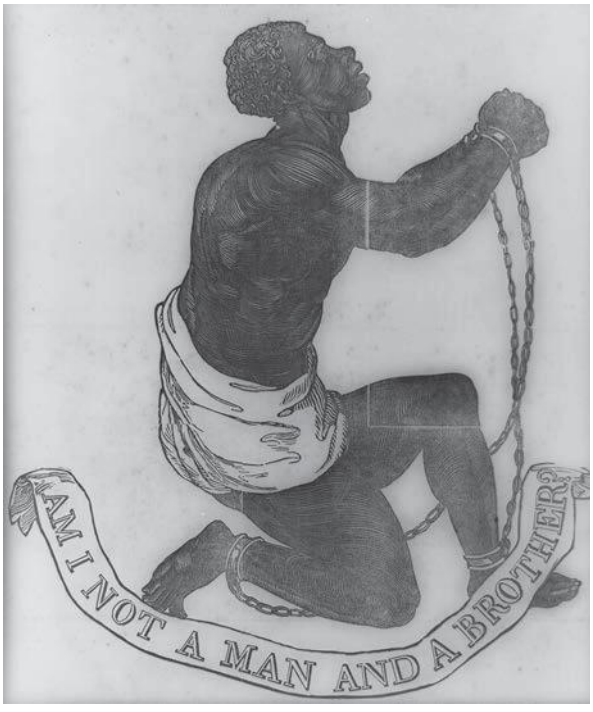
The 'fugitive clause' of the constitution (Article IV, Section III) stated that nobody 'held to service or labour' in one state could claim freedom if they escaped to another state. This enabled owners of runaway slaves to retrieve their 'property' from other states without legal impediments.

The Philadelphia delegates also considered whether the importation and selling of African slaves should continue or be regulated, limited or prohibited. In yet another compromise between abolitionist delegates and southern interests, the convention determined that future Congresses should have no authority to ban or limit the slave trade until twenty years after the expected ratification of the constitution: 'The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eight, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.'[27]

This measure can be viewed in two ways: positively, as a limitation on future slave-trading in the United States; or negatively, as a protective measure that allowed and perhaps encouraged the trade to continue. John Patrick points out that 'most delegates at the convention were sufficiently distressed by their bargains on human bondage that they contrived to keep the words "slave" and "slavery" out of the constitution … the clauses on slaves euphemistically included such terms as "other persons".'[28] Whatever their private misgivings, many of the Founding Fathers seemed content that a cap had been placed on the trading of human souls, even if it had been deferred by two decades. 'The slave business,' said George Washington, 'has at last been put to rest and will scarce awake.'[29]

26 Drew McCoy, *Last of the Fathers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 245.
27 Constitution of the United States of America, Article I, Section IX.
28 John Patrick, *Founding the Republic* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 152.
29 Julian Zelizer, *The American Congress* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 81.

Anti-slavery iconography.



SLAVERY UNRESOLVED

William Wilberforce, the brilliant young British politician whose energetic campaigning in the House of Commons led that body to abolish the slave trade (1807) and slavery in the empire (1833). Wilberforce frequently lobbied Congress and the American states to take similar action.

Yet the slave trade did not wither as many hoped it might – in fact it flourished in the generation following ratification. With the constitution preventing Congress from legislating to ban the slave trade until 1808, it was left to the states to develop their own policies on the matter. Some states allowed and even encouraged slave trading to continue; this is not so surprising, since it was one of the few successful commercial enterprises in America in the 1780s. Rhode Island and South Carolina were frequent importers of captive Africans after 1788; some New England ports were also slave-trading hubs. British companies played a role by exporting 'fresh' slaves to American ports.

Another factor in the growth of slave importation was increased demand for labour, sparked by the rise of the cotton industry in the southern states. Eli Whitney's 1793 invention of the cotton gin – a mechanical device for separating cotton fibres from their seeds – created a dramatic rise in the planting of cotton as a cash crop. Since the planting, tending and picking of cotton by hand was a labour intensive process, southern landowners again sought African slaves to fill the gap; in some cotton-growing areas the natural growth of slave populations was not sufficient to meet labour needs.

Despite the resurgence both of the demand for slaves and the slave trade, the revolution weakened the institution of slavery in America. Though it was never a cause or a direct concern of the Revolutionary War, the recruitment of free and bonded Africans by both armies undoubtedly brought slavery to the fore. African American veterans either earned their freedom or believed they should; others took advantage of the disruption of war to make their escape. The rhetoric of liberty and natural rights undermined slavery in most of the northern states, where it was already weakening prior to the revolution. Slavery was an agenda item at key gatherings of revolutionaries; it was discussed by the Continental Congress, the Confederation Congress, state assemblies and the Philadelphia convention. Some Founding Fathers went on the record with their preference that slavery should have a limited place in America's future; a few went so far as to say it should end.

Anti-slavery groups were also encouraged by the ideological discourse of the revolution, becoming larger and more vocal. There had been abolitionist groups in North America from 1688 onwards, chiefly among the Quakers of Pennsylvania, but their size and influence had been modest. The revolution was fertile ground for such campaigners; the mid-1770s saw the creation of several new groups, including the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, of which Benjamin Franklin became president in 1785. Other key revolutionaries were noted campaigners against slavery, such as Thomas Paine, who in 1775 called for the abolition of slavery in all states. While abolitionism did not reach its peak until just before the American Civil War (1861–65) its seeds were certainly sown during the revolutionary period.

DID YOU KNOW?

Simon Schama's *Rough Crossings* explores the complex problems created when Britain promised freedom to American slaves who volunteered to fight against the revolution – even when those slaves belonged to loyalists. Many such slaves were resettled in Sierra Leone, Africa.

POLITICAL COMPROMISES: SLAVERY

ACTIVITY

PRESENTATION

Investigate the abolitionist (anti-slavery) movement that emerged in Pennsylvania from 1688. Who were its leaders and what influence did they have on politics and law up to 1785? Present a summary of your findings.

The most notable impact of the revolution, however, was to make slavery less acceptable in social and political circles. Slave-owners and those who allowed slavery to continue found it more difficult to support the institution. As hereditary power gave way to republican democracy and state autonomy yielded to the federal power, the slave-owning classes found it increasingly difficult to justify their position. As Ira Berlin explains:

> The War for American Independence and the revolutionary conflicts it spawned throughout the Atlantic gave slaves new leverage in their struggle with their owners. Shattering the unity of the planter class and compromising its ability to mobilise the metropolitan state to the defence of slavery, the revolutionary era offered slaves new opportunities to challenge both the institution of chattel bondage and the allied structures of white supremacy. In many instances the state … turned against the master class. Yet slaveholders did not surrender their power easily. In most places, they recovered their balance … At the end of the revolutionary era there were many more black people enslaved than at the beginning. Even then, however, slaveowners could not recreate the *status quo* … The shock of revolution profoundly altered slavery.[30]

POLITICAL CHANGE: ABOLITIONISTS

ACTIVITY

CONSEQUENCES OF REVOLUTION

In a paragraph of 200–300 words, evaluate the consequences of the American Revolution for the slave trade in America. In your response refer to evidence and the views of two or more historians.

DIPLOMACY WITH NATIVE AMERICANS

The revolution and its aftermath might have energised the anti-slavery movement, but for Native Americans there were very few benefits. The tribes and their confederacies, allied either to France or Britain, enjoyed some confidence prior to the revolution, playing roles in trade, land claims and colonial wars. Though often exploited, they at least had recognition from European powers. The Revolutionary War removed British authority from much of the continent and Native Americans, overlooked in the Treaty of Paris, now had to hope for fair treatment at the hands of their former enemies.

Some members of the new United States government favoured diplomatic generosity to native nations in the west, evidenced by the many treaties signed in the mid- to late-1780s. Congressional delegates, however, in many cases used intimidation to convince native negotiators to sign away rights to land without fully understanding the implications. The United States considered the treaties as virtual bills of sale for 'Indian land,' which they now considered theirs. Many Native Americans, possibly still hoping for the return of their British allies, rejected the treaties they had signed and refused to acknowledge American sovereignty.

This spirit of negotiation, however strained, did not extend to settlers or land speculators on the frontier. They found it quicker to drive Native Americans from their land with guns than to engage in cumbersome treaty talks. Their heavy-handed approach and westward movement led to many skirmishes, which in turn inspired more native confederacies, a defensive position and a state of undeclared war along much of the frontier.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most treaties with the Native Americans contained reciprocal legal rights. Native tribes were permitted, for instance, to punish trespassers on their land; in return, they agreed to surrender any Native American accused of a crime by American authorities. Such measures, however, proved difficult to enforce.

TREATMENT OF NATIVE AMERICANS

30 Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 100.

Scenes from the Indian Wars – an American steamship, the *Warrior*, firing at Native Americans on a raft, and the opening of the fight at Wounded Knee.

Over the next century, as American settlers pushed further and further west, Native Americans were confronted with four options: fight, flee, negotiate or assimilate. Dozens of so-called 'Indian Wars' – from the Northwest Indian Wars of the 1790s to the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890 – were evidence that many nations, recognising the powerlessness of their position, preferred to fight for their own sovereignty. It was, in effect, their own war of independence:

> There were at least two wars of independence – one Indian and one White. And both traced their origins to [the Royal Proclamation of] 1763 … It would take more than fifty years for White Americans to win, and Indian Americans to lose, their respective wars for independence, for events on the battlefield, in the conference hall, and on the treaty ground to recast eastern North America conclusively as a White rather than an Indian country. But the increasingly powerful idea that the continent must become one or the other – and nevermore both – was the cultural legacy of 1763.[31]

A NEW PRESIDENT

DID YOU KNOW?

George Washington's journey from Mount Vernon to New York, the site of his inauguration, was marked by large crowds in most towns. Several thousand people lined the banks of New York Harbor to see the president-elect arrive by boat, and nearby ships issued cannon fire in tribute.

George Washington's election as the first president of the United States of America surprised nobody; indeed, the men who crafted the presidency did so with Washington in mind. He was elected almost unanimously, receiving votes from all members of the Electoral College (elected representatives empowered to vote for the president). The real question was which of his nine fellow nominees would be selected as vice-president. That honour went to John Adams who defeated, amongst others, John Jay and John Hancock.

Washington's inauguration took place in New York City on 30 April 1789. When leaving Mount Vernon a fortnight beforehand Washington recorded, as he often did, feelings of reluctance about the task ahead: 'with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express.' He took the oath of office before the newly elected Senate and House of Representatives of Congress, before delivering an inaugural speech that celebrated America's peaceful and orderly progress towards independence and a new system of government:

> No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some … providential agency, and in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of this united government, the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities from which the event has resulted, cannot be compared with the means by which most governments have been established.[32]

31 Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 190–1.

32 George Washington, Inauguration speech, 30 April 1789.

George Washington taking the oath of office at Federal Hall.

As the first president of the United States, Washington recognised that his actions would establish conventions (standard practices) and precedents for those who would later hold the office. He decided that his conduct and bearing should strike a balance between the dignity and reserve of a hereditary monarch, but with the approachability of an elected republican president. He preferred people to bow or curtsey rather than shake his hand, but asked to be called 'Mr. President' rather than 'His Highness' or 'His Excellency.' Washington hosted weekly levees – social gatherings open to anyone well-dressed and well-mannered – where he would meet all attendees. Determined that the federal government should be as visible and accessible as possible, Washington travelled to all thirteen states during his first term of office, quite a difficult feat in the late 1700s.

Washington established political as well as ceremonial conventions. He disliked and regularly criticised political parties and factions (ideological groupings), considering both to be bad for democracy. Though the constitution stated that Washington should seek the advice of the Senate to select his departmental secretaries (ministers) he found the Senate too political to be trustworthy. He instead decided to personally select the members of his cabinet, surrounding himself with advisors loyal to the president rather than to particular factions, steering clear of the politicised Congress and upholding the separation of the executive and legislative branches. Washington also chose not to interfere with legislation, nor did he veto bills simply because he disagreed with their content.

DID YOU KNOW?

Perhaps the most famous precedent established by Washington was his decision to retire from office in 1797 after serving two four-year terms. Only one president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, has served three terms. The 22nd Amendment to the constitution now explicitly prevents this.

AMERICAN SOCIETY REMADE?

A question asked of all revolutions is the extent to which they brought change to society. This is perhaps a more problematic question regarding America than it is for other revolutions, particularly those involving communist uprisings, since

Abigail Adams.

most of the goals of the American Revolution were legal and political rather than socio-economic and ideological. There was no class war; the revolution was largely waged against an external power, focusing on procedural matters like representation, taxation and individual rights rather than urging social upheaval, armed struggle and a redistribution of wealth. The changes were in many cases gradual rather than sudden, making it difficult to observe direct changes which 'remade' or 'recast' American society at the time. The revolution's social ideals and reforms would take years, even decades, to be fully realised.

WOMEN

A further question is the extent to which the revolution changed the lives of women. There is no doubt that women played a role in revolutionary action, supporting the struggle against British policy: they were active in non-importation societies and raised funds for the Continental Army; they followed their husbands to war and worked in military encampments as cooks, tailors and nurses; and they worked on the home front, running farms and businesses in the absence of men. Yet despite these contributions, women for the most part remained politically invisible. A few women dared to query how the grand rhetoric of liberty and freedom might apply to them as well as men, such as Abigail Adams who wrote to her husband John to request that:

JOHN AND ABIGAIL ADAMS

> ... In the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire that you would Remember the ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors [have been]. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves to any laws in which we have no voice or representation.[33]

DID YOU KNOW?

In the wake of the Revolutionary War hundreds of wealthy widows played an active role in the new economy, successfully running farms, plantations and businesses. The widow of American general Nathaneal Greene was an employer and supporter of inventor Eli Whitney, whose cotton gin would later transform the south.

John's response:

> As to your extraordinary code of laws, I cannot but laugh. We have been told that our struggle has loosened the bonds of government everywhere: that children and apprentices were disobedient; that schools and colleges had grown turbulent; that Indians slighted their guardians and Negroes grew insolent to their masters. But your letter was the first intimation that another tribe, more numerous and powerful than all the rest, were grown discontented. This is rather too coarse a compliment but you are so saucy [cheeky], I won't blot it out.[34]

As other leaders did not seem to take the issue any more seriously than John Adams did, the political status of women did not markedly improve in the generation following the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. No state specifically allowed women the right to vote after 1776; New Jersey used gender-neutral language in its electoral acts, theoretically allowing women the vote if they met the hefty requirement of £50 worth of independently owned property. (Only a few wealthy widows voted.) Elsewhere, women were subject to the same 'virtual representation' that had previously angered colonial men. No woman held office in state or national government, practised law or enrolled for a college education. Although many women were successful in commercial ventures, very few engaged in public debate about the revolution or the new nation, with the chronicler Mercy Otis Warren a notable exception.

HISTORIAN MERCY OTIS WARREN

The consensus in the new United States was that women remained the gentle sex, in need of protection and guidance from their husbands. Their role, as it had

33 Cited in Diane Ravitch, *Words that Moved a Nation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 31.
34 John Adams, 14 April 1776.

been in colonial America, was confined to marriage, motherhood and household management. Benjamin Rush, a signatory to the Declaration of Independence, talked about education for women, but only in relation to manners, gentility and the fine arts. Others could not imagine a situation where women might pursue academic interests. When it was put to Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale University, that women might be permitted to attend his college, he asked '[but] who will make our puddings?'

Some historians have described the post-revolutionary era as one of gradual improvements in status for American women. Gordon S. Wood argues that the commercial expansion of America allowed for women to attain greater financial freedom by selling handcrafts and foodstuffs from home; they would later build on this with jobs outside the home such as nursing, teaching and factory work. Wood and other historians also speak of a quaint state called 'republican motherhood,' where women fulfilled the critical functions of raising and educating families that would participate in the new democratic republicanism of the United States:

> Republicanism also enhanced the status of women. It was now said that women, as wives and mothers, had a special role in cultivating in their husbands and children the moral feelings – virtue and social affection – necessary to hold a sprawling and competitive republican society together. [Yet] at the same time that a distinct sphere of domestic usefulness was being urged on women, they were becoming more economically important and independent.[35]

DID YOU KNOW?

Judith Sargent Murray, a Massachusetts essayist, was an advocate of women's rights. Her 1790 pamphlet *On the Equality of the Sexes* caused a stir by suggesting that women should be educated; though even she saw this education as a means to improving domestic life rather than equipping women for professional service.

35 Wood, *The Great Republic* (Lexington: DC Heath, 1985), 240–1.

KEY PEOPLE: JOHN ADAMS (1735-1826)

POLITICAL ROLE

Agitated against the Stamp Act of 1765 and became a delegate to the first Continental Congress. Helped to draft the Declaration of Independence.

Adams travelled to Europe to secure help from Europe during the Revolutionary War; was credited with gaining French support.

Later became vice-president under Washington, then president himself (1797–1801). His son, John Quincy Adams, also served as president.

VIEWS ON SLAVERY

John and Abigail opposed slavery and did not own slaves. He did not always speak up against slavery, however, because of the political implications of alienating slave-owning southern states.

KEY IDEAS

Said provincial governments should have sovereign power over their own affairs.

Advocated the rule of law: America should be 'a nation of laws, not of men'.

There should be a balance between the different arms of the government, and the judiciary should be independent.

'All men, as they are sons of Adam ... have equal right unto liberty'.

Cautious of giving too much power to the majority; differed with Jefferson in this respect.

EMPLOYMENT

Adams was a Massachusetts lawyer and farmer; later a politician.

BACKGROUND

Born in Braintree, Massachusetts, John Adams was educated at Harvard University.

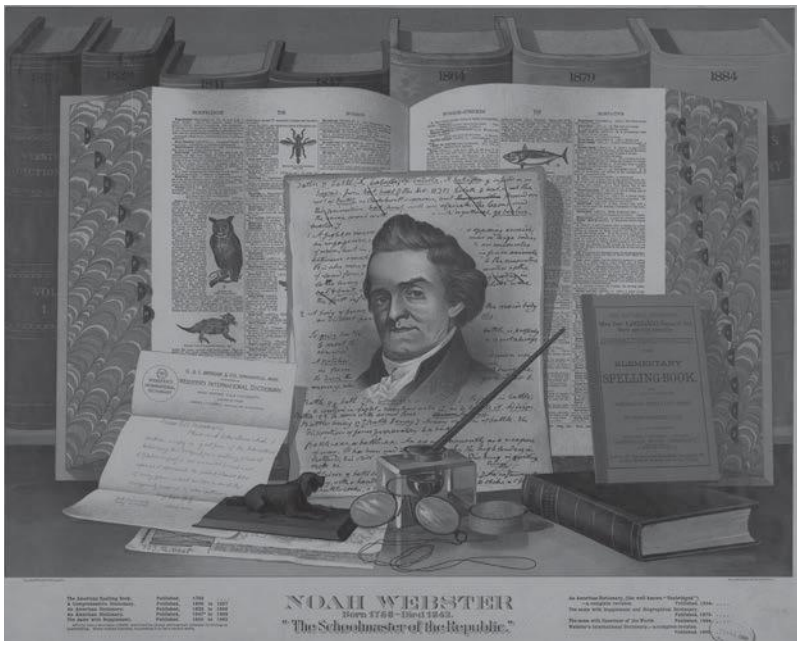
He married Abigail Smith in 1764: their close and intellectually nourishing relationship was documented in a series of letters.

CONTROVERSIES

Defended British soldiers accused of conducting the 'Boston Massacre' – an unpopular move with the public, though it did not injure his career in the long run.

As US president, passed controversial law restricting freedom of the press and allowing the deportation of 'dangerous' foreigners.

In later years developed bitter relationship with Jefferson and, to some extent, Franklin. Is said to have been harsh and abrasive.



Noah Webster, the 'schoolmaster of the Republic.'

SOCIAL CHANGE

There were more substantial changes afoot with regard to the structure of families. The old laws of primogeniture (the right of the eldest son to inherit the family estate) and entail (a restriction on the division of family estates) were overturned in most states. All male heirs now enjoyed equal inheritance rights and estates could be divided between them. This, along with a relaxation of parental controls, saw arranged marriages decline; relationships were increasingly based on romance and personal choice rather than profit and social advancement.

The structure of American society continued to transform in the wake of the revolution. The departure of loyalists, separation from Britain and abandonment of many European social customs prompted the rise of what many historians describe as 'meritocracy': a system based on talent and enterprise rather than birthright privilege. Aristocracy was part of the Old World; in the New World individuals would be judged not on their family name or landed assets, but their skill, knowledge, commercial success and contribution to the community. Self-made men from humble backgrounds, like Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, became models of this new republican meritocracy.

Such a society would of course be reliant on education, which expanded rapidly in the wake of the revolution. A republican democracy and an emerging meritocracy needed good schools and colleges, both to provide voters with civic instruction and to equip businessmen and workers to build prosperity. New schools sprang up in their dozens, especially in the northern states, as counties, towns and smaller communities raised funds and labour to construct their own facilities. In Pennsylvania the proportion of children receiving an education more than doubled, from one-third in the early 1770s to nearly seventy per cent after 1787. New colleges were granted charters, though they remained privately run and expensive to attend, beyond the reach of many Americans.

One of the pioneers of American educational reform was Noah Webster, the teacher who had set out to create an 'Americanised' form of English. In 1788 Webster criticised families who continued to send their offspring to the schools and colleges of Europe, arguing that they should be educated at home, in order to secure their loyalty and build a distinctly American culture:

> … Sending boys to Europe for an education, or sending to Europe for teachers – that this was right before the revolution will not be disputed … but the propriety of it ceased with our political relation to Great Britain. Our honour as an independent nation is concerned in the establishment of literary institutions, adequate to all our own purposes; without sending our youth abroad or depending on other nations for books and instructors.[36]

36 Noah Webster, *The American Magazine* (May 1788): 370.

ACTIVITY

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE – ESSAY

Write a 600–800 word essay on one of the topics below. Your essay should include an introduction, paragraphs supported by evidence, a conclusion and a bibliography.

- 'The more things change, the more they stay the same.' Was this true of the post-revolutionary period in America?
- 'The American Revolution brought little change or benefit to women, Native Americans or African Americans.' Do you agree? Discuss one or more groups in detail.
- What compromises were made to revolutionary ideals to accommodate vested interests?

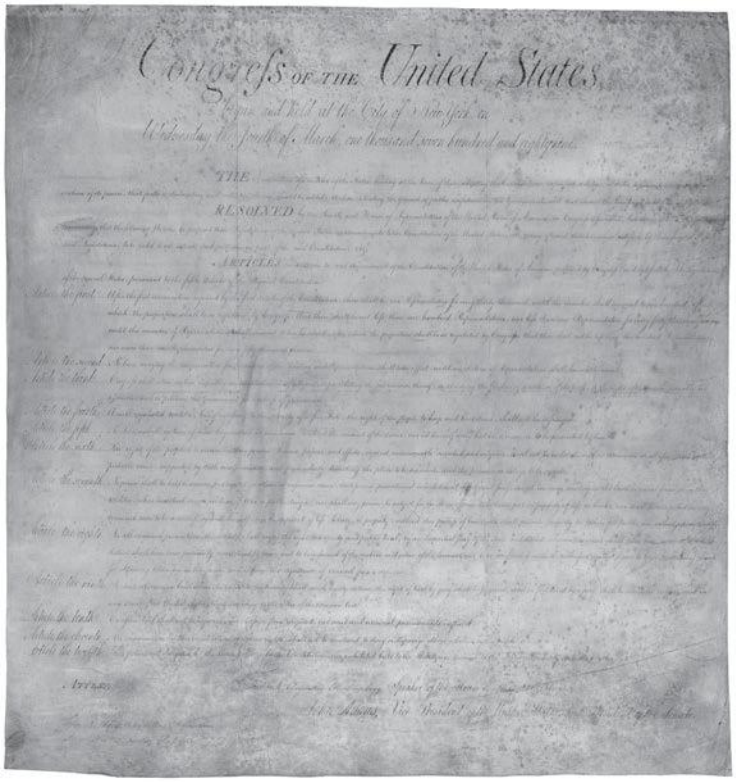
THE BILL OF RIGHTS ACHIEVED

Out of the ratification process came a consensus that the constitution should contain a bill of rights. One of the priorities of the first United States Congress, which sat for the first time in New York City in March 1789, was to develop amendments that would reflect the recommendations of state ratifying conventions. The task of drafting a charter of rights fell largely to James Madison, by then widely acclaimed for his role in developing the constitution. Madison was originally opposed to the inclusion of a bill of rights but considered it a better option than the summoning of a second constitutional convention, which might undo the delicate compromises achieved in Philadelphia. His aim was to protect individual rights while keeping the structure of the constitution intact.

Madison had plenty of material to draw upon when drafting his charter of rights. He was familiar with Enlightenment philosophers – Locke, Rousseau and others – as well as American revolutionary tracts by Dickinson, Paine, Jefferson and others. He had worked closely with George Mason on the Virginia Declaration of Rights in 1776 and had studied the recommendations of the state conventions. The Congress had also received hundreds of public submissions suggesting contents for a bill of rights. Drawing on all this material, but especially on the Virginian Declaration of Rights, Madison devised his proposed changes and tabled them before Congress on 8 June 1789. It would take more than two years of negotiation between the states before there was final agreement on form and content.

DID YOU KNOW?

Patrick Henry, angry at Madison for his role in creating the constitution, used his influence in the Virginia assembly to block Madison's appointment to the Senate (his preferred position). Madison instead ran for – and won – a seat in the House of Representatives.



The United States Bill of Rights.

FEATURE

CREATING A POLITICAL SYSTEM: THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The Bill of Rights is today considered, along with the Declaration of Independence and the constitution, one of the cornerstones of American democracy. It has protected the liberties of American citizens, articulating their freedoms and guaranteeing their legal rights. The Bill of Rights has, however, had its controversies, in particular the Second Amendment – the right to bear arms – which has contributed to America's high rate of gun ownership.

HISTORIANS ON THE BILL OF RIGHTS

DOCUMENT

UNITED STATES BILL OF RIGHTS, 1789

[After Preamble]:

AMENDMENT I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

AMENDMENT II

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

AMENDMENT III

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

AMENDMENT IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

AMENDMENT V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

AMENDMENT VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.

AMENDMENT VII

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

AMENDMENT VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

AMENDMENT IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

AMENDMENT X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANNOTATION

Copy or download the United States Bill of Rights (opposite) and complete the tasks below.

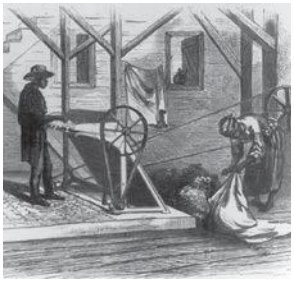
1. Using a colour code, highlight the following:
   - General rights and freedoms
   - Legal rights and processes
   - Protections
   - Powers.
2. Create a text box corresponding with each of the four headings above (in the appropriate colour). In each text box write examples of British actions and laws that infringed these rights prior to the American Revolution.
3. Find two or more historical interpretations of the United States Bill of Rights. What were historians' views on the document?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Supreme Court seeks to uphold the US Constitution. Like Australia's High Court, it often rules on whether individual rights have been infringed.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The post-ratification period in America was also one of economic rebuilding and recovery. Given that the negotiation of foreign trade links was slow and delicate, revitalisation of the American economy also had to come from within. Fortunately a number of factors made this possible. Immigration remained high through the 1780s, filling America with labour and entrepreneurial skill. People such as Samuel Slater – the 'father of the American factory' – arrived and established small but profitable industries, mainly in New England and the north-east. In the south, the invention of Whitney's cotton gin rejuvenated the plantation economy and gave birth to America's biggest export crop of the nineteenth century.



An example of Eli Whitney's cotton gin, a device for rapidly and effectively processing raw cotton. This invention led to dramatic economic growth in the southern states, and to an increase in demand for slaves to sow, tend and hand-pick crops.

An important feature of the new economy was the growth of corporations. The British government had always been unwilling to grant corporate charters, preferring to restrict the number of corporations and to confine them to British ownership. The American states, now freed from English control, set out to rectify this by increasing their release of corporate charters. In 1781–85 only eleven charters were granted; this increased to twenty-two in 1786–90 and 114 in 1791–95. In the seventeen years after 1800, the thirteen states granted more than 1800 corporate charters. This allowed state governments to organise or target specific needs: building projects, schools and colleges, infrastructure, banking and so on.

The First Bank of the United States in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Established largely by Alexander Hamilton, who modelled it on the Bank of England, it acted as a reserve bank, issuing and regulating currency.

Some fell by the wayside in this new republican economy. Robert Morris, Congress' former superintendent of finances, sought dramatic increases in wealth by buying up large tracts of land. He established the North American Land Company, which snapped up territory in the District of Columbia – site of the future national capitol – as well as 6 000 000 acres in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Kentucky and the Carolinas. But Morris borrowed beyond his means and when the land market slumped in the mid-1790s he found himself more than $4 million in debt. Arrested for bankruptcy and thrown into Philadelphia's Prune Street debtors' prison, Morris' mansions and belongings were confiscated by the state. It came to pass that one of the revolution's financiers and Founding Fathers spent three years behind bars before his release in 1800.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

For most Americans, however, the years following ratification were better than those preceding it. Life on the frontier and in remote settlements remained difficult and dangerous, but in the cities, towns and rural settlements there were considerable opportunities for intrepid businesspeople. The federal government, encouraged by Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury, fostered the development of manufacturing industries through subsidies and tax incentives. In 1791 the Bank of the United States was founded, helping to stabilise the economy. Markets recovered sufficiently for farmers to survive and, in time, turn a profit.

FEATURE

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS: WAS THE CONSTITUTION A COUNTER-REVOLUTION?

A charge sometimes levelled against the United States Constitution is that it was a counter-revolution by committee. There is some evidence to support such a claim. The men who met in Philadelphia in the hot summer of 1787 had been given no authority to dispense with the Articles of Confederation or to completely reconstruct national government. The convention was held in secret with no public involvement or press reporting, and few official records. The resulting constitution re-imposed central government, coercive national power and the authority to levy taxes; it ignored the spirit of the 1776 Declaration of Independence, paying little or no attention to rights.

DID YOU KNOW?

The constitution allowed the states to decide who voted in state and federal elections. Most states continued to restrict voting to those who owned a certain amount of property – in the 1789 Congress elections more than half of all free white men in at least seven states were excluded from voting.

Some historians paint the Founding Fathers and federalists, their attacks on the Articles of Confederation and their support for the constitution as the product of economic self-interest. Merchants, exporters, businessmen and nationalists recognised very quickly that without a strong national government exercising control and protection over trade, the United States could never compete with the imperial powerhouses of Britain, France and Spain. In other words, the constitution was mainly a way of making America more stable and attractive for domestic capital and foreign investors.

There was also the question of democracy in the new republic. Most state governments had been relatively democratic, elected every one or two years. People were close to and well represented by the government whose decisions affected them most. The constitution replaced this system, diluting state power and installing a national government with wide powers to tax and coerce, located in an arbitrarily-chosen capitol distant from most Americans. The constitution guaranteed voting rights for no-one, leaving this up to the states, most of whom continued to require voters to own substantial amounts of property. The president, the most powerful individual in the land, would be elected by a limited proportion of the population in a two-tiered system of direct and college voting. It was a system with many

undemocratic and anti-democratic features – but that was the idea, as Woody Holton notes:

> What these men were saying was that the American Revolution had gone too far. Their great hope was that the federal convention would find a way to put the democratic genie back in the bottle. Alexander Hamilton, the most ostentatiously conservative of the convention delegates, affirmed that many Americans – not just himself – were growing 'tired of an excess of democracy.' Others identified the problem as 'a headstrong democracy,' a 'prevailing rage of excessive democracy,' a 'republican frenzy' [and] 'democratical tyranny' ....[37]

Even James Madison, the slave-owning 'father of the constitution,' was no democrat. Knowledgeable about all the great republics since Athens, Madison believed that giving too much power to too many people was as dangerous as giving it to a few. His Virginia Plan was therefore constructed to pit competing interests against each other and to keep the people at arm's length from real political power: Madison privately said that '*Divide et impera* [divide and conquer] ... is under certain qualifications, the only policy, by which a republic can be administered on just principles.'[38]

Some historians also consider the motives of the Founding Fathers to have been informed by self-interest as much as political generosity. Charles Beard (1874–1948), whose landmark study *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* was published in 1913, focused on the socio-economic backgrounds of each of the Philadelphia delegates, considering their assets, investments, business interests and social connections.

Historian Charles A. Beard, who suggested in the early twentieth century that the constitution was influenced by the economic self-interest of its creators.

Beard concluded that the constitution aimed to keep the *status quo* while providing commercial opportunities and expansion.

Beard's view has long sustained criticism. When his work was published he was accused of attacking great men and of having socialist sympathies. Beard's arguments, however, are more complex than that: he does not 'accuse' the Philadelphia convention of a conspiracy or an intentional counter-revolution; what he does suggest is that their decisions were moulded by their own values and expectations. Nor does he criticise their self-interest, since it ultimately benefited the nation as a whole ('the bee sometimes fertilises the flower it robs' was his quaint turn of phrase). Beard said:

> Whoever leaves economic pressures out of history, or out of the discussion of public questions, is in mortal peril of substituting mythology for reality and confusing issues instead of clarifying them. It was largely by recognising the power of economic interests in the field of politics and making skilful use of them that the Fathers of the American Constitution placed themselves among the great practising statesmen of all ages and gave instructions to succeeding generations in the art of government.[39]

Some historians have gone further in their criticisms. Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* echoes Beard's view but also suggests that the constitutional drafters wanted to maintain aristocracy, limit democracy and impose coercive power through the rule of law. H. A. Scott Trask contends that many among the Philadelphia convention and the federalists wanted to go back to the old order, recreating the core elements of the British imperial rule they had spent the previous decade removing from American life; he says: they were 'ideologically attached to protectionist and nationalist theories,' that they 'exploited both real and false fears' and that 'the strong central authority they created would in time reproduce every statist feature of the British system – political corruption, perpetual debt, debilitating taxation, consolidated power, and a global empire. Such was not the promise of the revolution.'[40]

Despite this critical analysis, there is no doubt that the US Constitution has achieved one of its main aims: stability. Its fundamental principles have endured, providing order and durability for

the United States for more than two centuries. The innovations it contained – the development of a written constitution, separation of powers, federalism, balancing competing interests and forms of representation – have been admired and imitated elsewhere, not least in the constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia. As Hugh Brogan notes, the political framework set down in 1787–91 contained enough of the old order to provide continuity, with enough innovation to reflect the new world being created in North America:

> The Constitution as it emerged between 1787 and 1791 crowned the American Revolution and provided a safe compass for the future ... It strongly represented the old order to which Americans, as inheritors of English traditions and settlers in a wilderness, were accustomed; but it had eliminated from that order all those features which seemed obsolete or unjust in the New World. The political thought on which it was based was realistic, accepting that men were not angels, but that their aspirations were mostly legitimate, and it was the business of the political framework to give them scope. Liberty and law were its two inescapable guiding lights; as understood by the Founding Fathers they have served America pretty well.[41]

37 Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2007), 5.
38 Cited in Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2007), 10.
39 Charles Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: The Free Press, 1913), xvii.
40 H. A. Scott Trask, *Rethinking the Articles of Confederation* (Internet) at mises.org.
41 Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 214.

DID YOU KNOW?

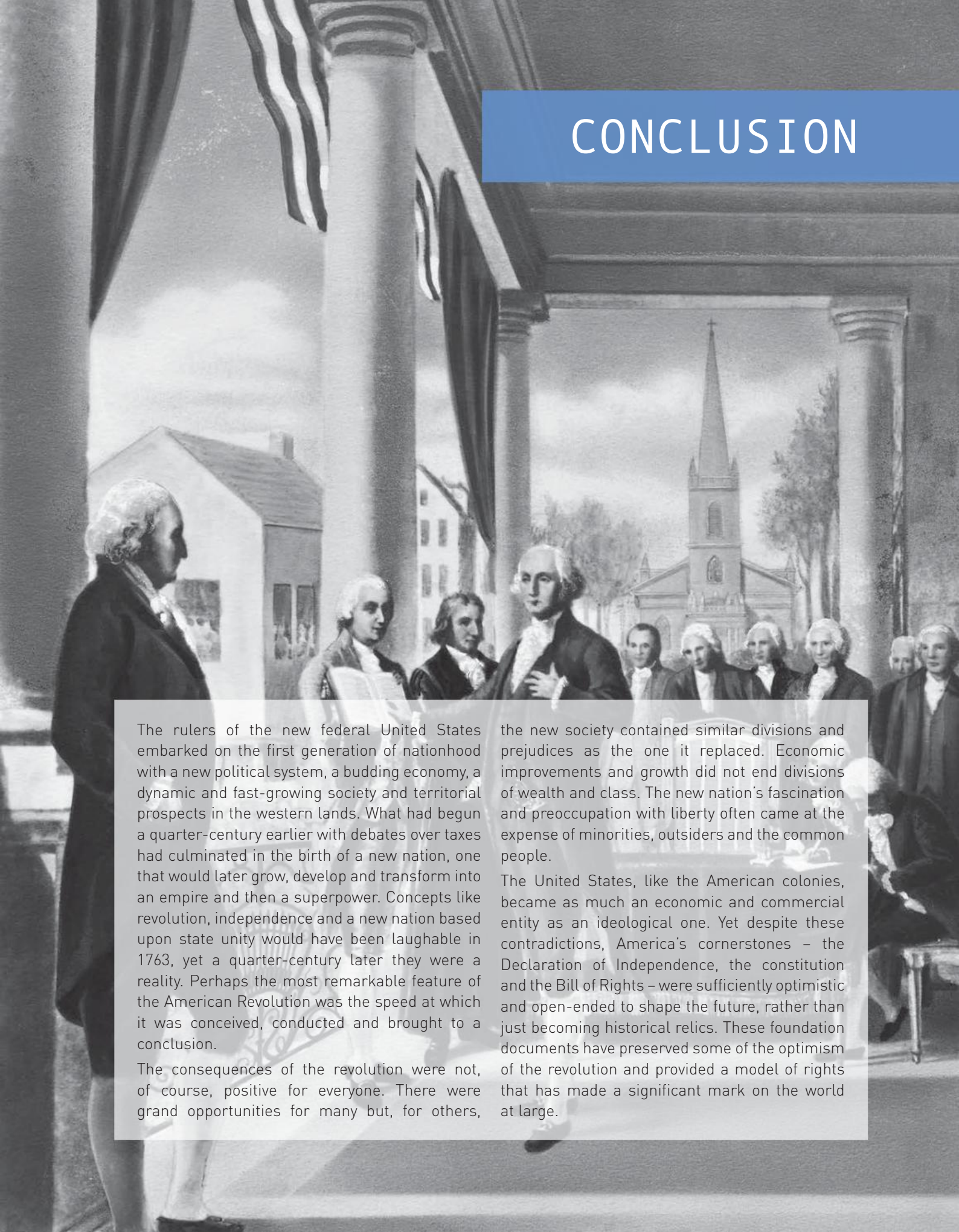
Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* has become one of America's most successful history books, with sales of over one-million copies. Zinn claimed the American Revolution was engineered by colonial elites, both to distract ordinary colonists from local grievances and to steal a portion of the British Empire for themselves.

George Washington is received by a crowd lining New York Harbor, on the day of his presidential inauguration in 1789.

ACTIVITY

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

In a paragraph of 200–300 words, explain why some historians suggest that the United States Constitution was a 'counter-revolution.' To what extent do you agree?



CONCLUSION

The rulers of the new federal United States embarked on the first generation of nationhood with a new political system, a budding economy, a dynamic and fast-growing society and territorial prospects in the western lands. What had begun a quarter-century earlier with debates over taxes had culminated in the birth of a new nation, one that would later grow, develop and transform into an empire and then a superpower. Concepts like revolution, independence and a new nation based upon state unity would have been laughable in 1763, yet a quarter-century later they were a reality. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the American Revolution was the speed at which it was conceived, conducted and brought to a conclusion.

The consequences of the revolution were not, of course, positive for everyone. There were grand opportunities for many but, for others, the new society contained similar divisions and prejudices as the one it replaced. Economic improvements and growth did not end divisions of wealth and class. The new nation's fascination and preoccupation with liberty often came at the expense of minorities, outsiders and the common people.

The United States, like the American colonies, became as much an economic and commercial entity as an ideological one. Yet despite these contradictions, America's cornerstones – the Declaration of Independence, the constitution and the Bill of Rights – were sufficiently optimistic and open-ended to shape the future, rather than just becoming historical relics. These foundation documents have preserved some of the optimism of the revolution and provided a model of rights that has made a significant mark on the world at large.

TEST YOUR LEARNING

CHAPTER REVIEW

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE – CREATIVE PIECE

Create a song, poem, drawing or painting that portrays the changes in society following the American Revolution. You may find it helpful to choose a particular event, person or conflict as your subject. Present your piece to the class.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES – PRESENTATION

Adopting the perspective of one of the individuals below in the period of 1787–89, research and deliver a short presentation addressing the question, 'What are the urgent priorities of the new United States?':

- A loyalist who has fled to Canada
- A Native American warrior of the western territories
- An educated slave in Virginia
- Abigail Adams
- James Madison.

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS – SOCIAL CHANGE

Joan Hoff Wilson concludes that:

> The American Revolution produced no significant benefits for American women. The same generalization can be made for other powerless groups in the colonies: native Americans, blacks, probably most propertyless white males and indentured servants. Although these people together with women made up the vast majority of the colonial population they could not take advantage of the overthrow of British rule to better their own positions as did the white, propertied males who controlled economics, politics and culture.
>
> Joan Hoff Wilson, 'The Illusion of Change,' in *The American Revolution* (ed) A.F. Young (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 387.

Find a contrasting interpretation and evaluate which one you find most convincing.

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT – ESSAY

Write an essay of 600–800 words on one of the topics below. Your essay should include an introduction, paragraphs supported by evidence, a conclusion and a bibliography.

Topics:

- To what extent was society changed and revolutionary ideas achieved in America (July 1776–1789)?
- How did the American Revolution (July 1776–1789) affect a range of people? To what extent did it deliver on its promise to promote 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'?

KEY EVENTS – MEMORY TASK

Photocopy the chapter overviews and timeline for Section B and memorise the key events in the period July 1776–1789.

KEY PEOPLE – WHO'S WHO

Read about George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison in the Who's Who and note down their key ideas and achievements in the period July 1776–1789.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrews, Allen. The King who Lost America: George III and Independence. London: Jupiter, 1976.

Though not directly concerned with the American Revolution this book examines the life and conservatism of King George III. It reveals the king's desire to hold America in check and keep the British Empire stable and well-ordered.

Axelrod, Alan. The Real History of the American Revolution: A New Look at the Past. New York: Sterling, 2008.

This book is more narrative in style than Axelrod's 2000 work, *Complete Idiot's Guide to the American Revolution* (see below). Here the author strives to find a middle ground between flag-waving nationalism and cynicism, employing a clear and simple style that makes the book ideal for new students of the American Revolution.

Axelrod, Alan. Complete Idiot's Guide to the American Revolution. Indiana: Alpha, 2000.

Don't be fooled by the title – this is a useful deconstruction of the factors that led to revolution in America, the leaders and movements involved and the war that followed. It lacks detail, however, on the period of constitutional and political reform that followed.

Bailyn, Bernard et al. The Great Republic: A History of the American People. Massachusetts: Heath & Co., 1985.

Though out of print and hard to find, this book provides a thorough analysis of colonial America and the transformations that followed the revolution. Noted historians Bernard Bailyn and Gordon S. Wood have contributed excellent chapters on the revolutionary period.

Bailyn, Bernard. The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard College, 1967.

A prominent study of the ideas of the revolution, this book is based largely on political literature of the period. Bailyn interprets the revolution as a constitutional crisis, giving rise to a movement seeking to correct flaws and corruption in the existing system.

Beard, Charles. An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States. New York: Macmillan, 1913.

Ground-breaking for its time, Beard's study investigates the interests of the men who drafted the US Constitution. Beard concludes that the new society was strongly shaped by – and indeed benefited from – the economic self-interest of the Founding Fathers.

Brogan, Hugh. The Penguin History of the United States of America. London: Penguin, 1985.

Brogan's eloquent account of American history, from European settlement to the resignation of Richard Nixon, includes an excellent chapter on the period of crisis, revolution and independence. Written with flair from a pro-federalist perspective.

Cantwell, John. The Spirit of Change: The American Revolution. Sydney: McGraw-Hill, 2004.

Written by an Australian teacher-author, this textbook features a strong narrative and a keen attention to detail. It thoroughly covers the history of colonial America and the early republic.

Churchill, Winston. A History of the English-speaking Peoples. London: Cassell, 1956.

The third volume of the former British prime minister's epic history focuses on Britain's development of colonies in America and its subsequent loss of these colonies; entitled 'The Age of Revolution,' the volume is worth reading.

Countryman, Edward. The American Revolution. New York: Hill & Wang, 1985.

An accessible and well written book that looks at the revolution from a range of perspectives – particularly from the 'bottom up.' Countryman's employs a personable, engaging tone.

Glatthaar, Joseph and Martin, James Kirby. Forgotten Allies. New York: Hill & Wang, 2006.

Offers insight into a rarely-covered aspect of the revolution: the participation of Native Americans. It recounts the fate of the Oneida of New York, one of the few tribes to support the revolutionaries (though it brought them little benefit in the long run).

Isaac, Rhys. The Transformation of Virginia 1740–1790. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

A Pulitzer Prize-winning book from an Australian historian, Isaac's interesting study of social upheaval and change in Virginia is valuable for understanding how revolutionary sentiment can both emanate from and impact on a particular region.

Jennings, Francis. The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Jennings presents the revolution as the manipulations of colonial elites, looking to extract a section of the empire and rule it as their own. Extremely critical in tone, the book focuses

particularly on minority groups such as slaves, Native Americans and the rural poor.

Jensen, Merrill. Articles of Confederation: An Interpretation of the Social-Constitutional History of the American Revolution. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940.

One of the few scholarly sources on the Confederation period. Jensen suggests that the Articles were not as flawed as is generally thought, and that economic interests led to a federalist-driven propaganda campaign against them.

Lemisch, Jesse. Jack Tar vs. John Bull. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

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McCullough, David. 1776. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2005.

Primarily a military history, 1776 paints an interesting picture of George Washington, always determined to act correctly but given to uncertainty and indecision.

McCullough, David. John Adams. New York: Simon & Shuster, 2001.

This excellent biography formed the basis of the 2008 mini-series of the same name by HBO Films. Well worth a read.

Middlekauff, Robert. The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution 1763–1789. London: Oxford University Press, 1982.

This detailed study suggests that the roots of the revolution were planted long before 1754. Colonial society was superficially British but beneath the surface it rejected Old World values such as aristocratic privilege and arbitrary royal power.

Morgan, Edmund. The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953.

The most comprehensive examination of the Stamp Act available, Morgan's text reveals it as a complex crisis with many players; however, the general perception is that the colonists were genuine in their opposition to the act along constitutional lines.

Morris, Richard. The Forging of the Union 1781–1789. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

An in-depth examination of a short but troubled period in American history. Morris paints the Articles of Confederation and its Congress as a fatal experiment that was doomed to collapse in the long run.

Nash, Gary B. The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America. New York: Viking, 2005.

A 'grass roots' study of the revolution that considers it not simply the invention of a disaffected aristocracy but a popular event more akin to a civil war, drawing in disparate grievances, local concerns, class interests and minorities struggling for improved lives.

Raphael, Ray. Founders: the People who Brought you a Nation. New York: The New Press, 2009.

An engaging study of the diversity and complexity of the revolution through biographical studies of seven 'founders,' some famous but others little-known. As in his other works, Raphael avoids myth-making and acknowledges difficult and awkward realities in American history.

Raphael, Ray. Founding Myths: Stories that Hide our Patriotic Past. New York: The New Press, 2004.

A lively book that deconstructs the myths of the American Revolution that are often accepted as facts. The excellent final chapter tells why the revolution has been romanticised at the expense of historical accuracy.

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A concise but scholarly study of the American experiment in revolution and independent government. Though generally positive, the book occasionally presents the 'founding fathers' as being engaged in a conservative counter-revolution.

Tuchman, Barbara. The March of Folly. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

A renowned historian, Tuchman writes in a way that is both stylish and engaging. In this book she discusses four critical

mistakes in history, one of which was the raft of flawed British policies that eventually cost London the American colonies.

Wood, Betty. Gender, Race, and Rank in a Revolutionary Age: The Georgia Lowcountry, 1750–1820. Georgia: Georgia Southern University Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Lecture Series, 2000.

This book explores the experiences of slaves, free women of colour and European women of different classes in Georgia during the revolution.

Wood, Gordon S. The American Revolution: A History. New York: Random House, 2002.

A compact, well-written account that is very useful for senior students. Wood's view that the revolution was a bold, radical and optimistic social and political transformation is evident throughout.

Wood, Gordon S. The Radicalism of the American Revolution. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

In this book, Wood echoes his former teacher, Bernard Bailyn, by suggesting that the American Revolution was a transformation based upon social ideas of equality, democracy, merit and improvement.

Young, Alfred F. and Nobles, Gregory F. Whose America Was It? Historians Debate the Founding. New York: New York University Press, 2011.

This book categorises and analyses historical interpretations of the American Revolution. A challenging read but useful for understanding the range of viewpoints on the revolution.

Zinn, Howard. A People's History of the United States. New York: HarperCollins, 1980.

Zinn's history of America focuses on the experiences of 'ordinary' people, so often ignored in historical accounts. An excellent read.

Zobel, Hiller B. The Boston Massacre. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970.

Though mostly concerned with the deaths resulting from the 'massacre' in March 1770, Zobel also touches on the events leading up to the conflict, the trial and its aftermath. An interesting study of an important revolutionary incident.

GLOSSARY

A

ABOLITIONIST

An individual or group that seeks the abolition (legal prohibition) of slavery and the emancipation of slaves.

ABSOLUTISM

A system of government in which a single monarch or entity wields absolute power, without obstacle, limitation or review.

ACTUAL REPRESENTATION

A form of democratic government in which every citizen is directly represented in the legislature by someone acting on their behalf. Sometimes called 'deputy representation' or 'direct representation.'

ARISTOCRACY

A system of government or social hierarchy marked by the existence of a wealthy and powerful elite. From the ancient Greek for 'rule of the best.'

ARTILLERY

Large calibre guns. In eighteenth century warfare this mainly referred to cannon.

ASSEMBLY

In the political context, a group of individuals, often elected, that gathers to make decisions and pass laws.

ATHEISM

A belief that God does not exist. An unpopular view in the eighteenth century, at which time allegations of atheism could lead to social isolation.

B

BILL OF RIGHTS

A collection or package of laws that outline the rights and freedoms guaranteed by individuals in a particular society.

BOYCOTT

The withholding of money from and/or refusal to trade with a particular nation or group, either as a form of protest or an attempt to exert pressure.

BRITANNIA

A female figure symbolising Great Britain, commonly associated with liberty, justice and strength.

BROADSIDE

Propaganda in the form of a large poster-sized sheet, usually containing scathing criticism of a particular person, group or policy.

C

CHARTER

A document granted to an individual, company or colonial assembly by an imperial power, allowing it to make decisions on behalf of the government.

CIVIL WAR

An armed conflict between organised groups or sections within a single nation. The aim is usually to determine which group controls the entirety of the nation.

COERCIVE ACTS:

Passed in response to the Boston Tea Party, the Coercive Acts were imposed on Massachusetts in 1774 to set an example to other colonies. They comprised the Boston Port Act, Massachusetts Government Act, Administration of Justice Act and Quartering Act.

COLONY

A foreign territory claimed or seized by an imperial power for the purposes of settlement and/or economic exploitation.

COMMITTEES OF CORRESPONDENCE:

Committees created by revolutionary leaders that became 'shadow governments.' Up to 8000 people served on these committees at the colonial and local levels. The committees became the focus of revolutionary and military efforts at the local level.

CONFEDERATION

A loose union of states or nations, which otherwise retain their independence and sovereign power. The central government of a confederation has little or no coercive power over the member states.

CONGRESS

In general terms, a meeting between representatives of different nations or constituent states, each of which is usually independent or self-governing. In modern-day America the Congress consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

CONQUISTADOR

Spanish term meaning 'conqueror,' used to describe the explorers, soldiers and sailors of Spain who invaded and occupied parts of South America between the 1400s and 1800s.

CONSTITUTION

The foundation for a political system, outlining institutions, processes and limits of power. The British constitution is 'unwritten' and based on centuries of convention and common law, however most modern constitutions are enacted documents.

CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

A system of government where a monarch (usually a king or queen) is the head of state but acts on the advice of the parliament and its ministers.

D

DAUGHTERS OF LIBERTY

Similar to the Sons of Liberty, Daughters of Liberty groups were established in 1765 and were particularly known for their 'spinning bees' and 'homespun' fabric which sought to undermine the Townshend Duties.

DEFERENCE

The act of recognising the superior position of a particular class, either through shows of respect such as saluting or 'doffing' headwear, or through manners and terms of address.

DEISM

A form of Christianity maintaining that God created the world but does not interfere in its natural processes.

of the parliament and its ministers.

COUNTY

An area of local government administration. Each of the American colonies contained several counties.

D

DAUGHTERS OF LIBERTY

DEFERENCE

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DEISM

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Many Enlightenment figures and revolutionaries were deists.

DEMOCRACY

A political system where the people participate in decision-making, either directly or through their elected representatives. From the Greek *demos*, meaning 'the people.'

DESERTION

The act of an enlisted soldier abandoning his post and fleeing during a time of war. Generally a serious crime punishable by death.

E

EFFIGY

A crude dummy, scarecrow or mannequin representing a specific individual, often set alight as a public show of intimidation or criticism.

EMANCIPATION

Freeing and/or granting civil rights to disenfranchised groups, particularly slaves.

ENLIGHTENMENT

Period of intellectual curiosity and development, from the mid-1600s to the late 1700s, which spawned new philosophical, political and scientific ideas and theories, particularly concerning the importance of reason and rationality.

F

FEDERALISM

A political system in which power and responsibility is shared between a central government and other constituent units such as states and local governments.

FEDERALIST

In the American context, a person or group supporting the United States Constitution and the newly strengthened federal government created by this constitution.

FRONTIER

A border area, usually contested by different parties. In colonial society the frontier represented the outermost fringe of settlement, the 'edge of civilisation.'

G

GOVERNOR

An individual appointed to manage and oversee colonial government on behalf of a monarch. A governor is, in theory, the highest authority in the colony.

H

HESSIANS

Colloquial American term for professional soldiers hired by the British from the royalty of provinces in modern-day Germany, especially the province of Hesse.

HIERARCHY

An order or structure with clear and relatively stable ranks. A social hierarchy, for example, may contain several classes that are differentiated by wealth, social status and behaviour.

I

IMPEACHMENT

A process, outlined in the United States Constitution, in which a public figure, such as a president, politician or judge, can be placed on trial for high crimes and misdemeanours.

IMPERIALISM

System based upon maintaining and expanding an empire, where a 'mother country' governs and draws economic benefit from a number of colonies.

IMPRESSMENT

Common eighteenth century practice used by the Royal Navy to meet its personnel requirements, involving kidnapping merchant sailors or dock workers, often when they were drunk.

INDENTURED LABOUR

A system of unpaid labour, specified in indenture contracts and imposed upon defaulting debtors and petty criminals.

INFANTRY

In the eighteenth century, the largest component of the army, mainly comprising foot soldiers.

INFLATION

Economic phenomenon caused either by rising prices or excess production of paper money, leading to depreciation of its real value.

L

LADY LIBERTY

Female personification of the Roman goddess Libertus, adopted by American propagandists as a symbol of American freedom.

LEGISLATURE

A body of individuals elected or appointed to pass laws (legislation). The British parliament, American colonial assemblies and the United States Congress are examples of legislatures.

LETTER OF MARQUE

A written statement from a monarch orgovernment allowing a ship's captain to carry out privateering attacks on foreign shipping, usually during times of war.

LIBERALISM

A political ideology based on the rights and freedoms of individuals, with government responsible for the security and protection of those rights.

LIBERTY

Broadly interpreted as meaning 'freedom,' in the eighteenth century it referred to freedom from government control or interference in one's life.

LIBERTY CAP

A red woollen bonnet denoting the concept of freedom, commonly used in revolutionary propaganda. Emanates from ancient Rome, where it was given to slaves who had been granted their freedom.

LIBERTY POLE

A long pole or flagstaff that served as symbol of the Sons of Liberty. Placing a flag or liberty cap atop the pole was a signal for local Sons of Liberty to gather.

LIBERTY TREE

A symbol of freedom, based on a large elm tree in Boston Common that was a meeting place for various Sons of Liberty activities. Other American towns followed suit by nominating their own 'liberty trees.'

LOBSTERBACK

Derogatory term for British soldiers, based on the red scars on their backs from floggings by military tribunals.

LOYALIST

An American who remained loyal to Great Britain before, during or after the revolution.

M

MANUMISSION

The voluntary release of chattel slaves by their owners (see slavery). A legal process that was restricted in many places to prevent freed slaves from becoming criminals or a burden on the state.

MERCANTILISM

Economic system based on the concept that colonies exist to enrich the 'mother country' through their supply of raw materials and their purchases of manufactured goods.

MERCHANT

Person who engages in buying, selling, importing and exporting goods for profit.

MERITOCRACY

Social system in which individuals are able to advance and achieve recognition on the basis of their efforts, talents and abilities rather than privilege or hereditary status.

MILITIA

A paramilitary force consisting of civilians, who drill and train in preparation for conflicts and emergencies.

MINUTEMAN

Term used to describe an American militia soldier who maintained a high state of readiness, to be called into service 'at a minute's notice.'

MONARCHY

A system of government in which a single figure, usually part of a hereditary dynasty, rules as head of government and state. The most common European political system in the 1700s.

MULATTO

Obsolete term for a person of mixed ethnicity, particularly someone combining Caucasian (white) and African American heritage.

MUTINY

An uprising, insurrection or refusal to obey orders in a military unit, often in response to poor conditions, inadequate supply or incompetent leadership.

N

NATIONALISM

Strong faith in the strength and potential of one's country. In the early United States this was reflected in attempts to build unity and forge a national identity through art and culture.

NATIONALIST

A person or group that supports or seeks the strengthening of his or her nation, through stronger government, improved trade and cultural expressions of nationhood and patriotism.

NATURAL RIGHTS

An Enlightenment concept suggesting that all individuals are born with certain rights, such as the right to life and freedom from oppression.

NEW ENGLAND

Colloquial term for the northernmost of the original thirteen colonies: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

NON-IMPORTATION

A pact or agreement in which individuals refuse to import, buy or accept goods from a foreign power.

O

ORDINANCE

A law or decree made by a government or body of authority, usually setting down regulations or procedures for the public good.

P

PAPISM

Derogatory term for Catholicism, common amongst anti-Catholics in America before and during the revolution.

PATRIOT

In this context a colloquial term for an individual or group supporting the American Revolution.

PETITION

A document sent to a leader or government, requesting or urging a particular course of action, such as the repeal of an existing policy or the implementation of a new policy.

POLICY

A course of action decided upon and implemented by a government, such as new taxation, legislation or regulation.

POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

The concept that a whole people could rule a nation. A foundation for independent government and law-making that draws its authority from the will and consent of the people.

PRESIDENT

In politics, the elected leader of a republic, often the head of government and/or head of state.

PRIVATEER

A sailor or ship's captain who, during wartime, is given royal or government authority to attack and plunder private and merchant shipping owned by the enemy. Seized cargo was usually shared between privateers and their government.

PROCLAMATION

A new law or regulation issued by a monarch and announced publicly. Proclamations do not pass through the parliament, though they carry the same weight as legislation.

PROPAGANDA

Political materials distributed publicly – such as pamphlets, posters or cartoons – conveying a political message. Often used to describe manipulative, exaggerated or distorted materials.

PROPERTY QUALIFICATION

In the eighteenth century, a measure to determine who was entitled to vote in general elections. Qualification was determined by property ownership or the amount of tax paid annually.

PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES:

Colonial assemblies and conventions that were replaced or renamed after the colonies became states. The New York Provincial Congress, among others, was set up to advance a pro-American agenda in contrast to its more conservative forebear.

PURITANISM

An austere form of Christianity practised in Britain and the north-east colonies of America before and during the revolution. Puritans advocated religious devotion, simple living, plain dress and moderation.

R

RADICAL

A group, individual or idea that is considered extreme, unsettling or dangerous for its time.

RATIFICATION

The process by which a proposal or suggested reform is passed into law. In this context it refers to the debates, voting and enactment of the United States Constitution in 1787–88.

REDCOAT

Colloquial term for a regular British soldier in eighteenth century America.

REPRESENTATION

Having one's interests considered by, or reflected in, a legislature or assembly, either actually (through an elected representative) or virtually (through the entire assembly).

REPUBLICANISM

System of government based upon popular sovereignty, a degree of democracy and an elected president rather than a hereditary monarch.

REQUISITION

A formal request for money, goods or other necessities, usually made by or on governments. They are not legally binding and may be ignored or refused.

RESOLVES

A set of resolutions or determinations to follow a particular course of action, usually made by a committee or assembly.

REVENUE

Money collected by governments in the form of taxes or duties. The official title of the 1767 Townshend duties was the Revenue Acts, as their explicit function was to generate income.

S

SATIRE

A form of writing/cartooning, common in eighteenth century England, conveying political and social criticism through ridicule or derision.

SEDITION

The act of speaking or writing material that supports treason or rebellion against the government. May constitute a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment or death.

SEPARATION OF POWERS

The division of powers amongst several branches of government – usually the executive, legislature and judiciary – in order to prevent any one branch from abusing its power.

SKIRMISH

A fight between smaller military units stationed ahead of, alongside or behind larger bodies of troops. Also a colloquial term for a small or insignificant battle.

SLAVERY

The practice of capturing human beings, relocating and forcing them to work without payment. In 'chattel slavery' slaves are considered the personal property of their 'masters.'

SONS OF LIBERTY

An influential group of patriots dedicated to securing America's independence from Britain. The Boston group was founded in 1765, primarily in response to the Stamp Act, and was known for its slogan 'no taxation without representation.' Sons of Liberty groups gradually grew into more formal organisations, such as the Committees of Safety.

SOVEREIGNTY

The right of a people, or a government acting on its behalf, to make decisions, form laws and exercise power within its own borders.

SPECIE

Metallic currency such as gold or silver coin, also called 'hard money.' Because of its bullion value specie is thought to be less likely to depreciate than paper currency.

SPECULATION

In this context, the practice of claiming or acquiring large tracts of land, in order to subdivide and sell it for profit at a later date.

STANDING ARMY

An army comprising career soldiers who 'stand over,' i.e. do not disband during times of peace. The first British standing army was formed by King James II in 1685.

T

TARRING AND FEATHERING

A type of 'mob justice' or vigilantism, emanating from medieval Europe, whereby the victim is stripped of clothing, doused with molten tar or pitch, then coated with feathers.

TORY

Colloquialism for a person of conservative political views; in this context an individual or group opposing the American Revolution.

TREASON

An idea or action that threatens or undermines the ruling monarch or government; in most cases it is a serious criminal offence, punishable by death.

TREATY

Document written and signed in negotiation between two or more warring parties, finalising the terms for peace, territorial ownership, agreed borders, access to waterways and so on.

TYRANNY

Excessive power or the abuse of power. Political leaders who seek to suppress the rights of citizens are often called tyrants.

U

USURP

To seize or assume power without legal right.

V

VIRTUAL REPRESENTATION

A system in which citizens of a nation or empire are represented by an entire legislature, even if those citizens have not participated in elections for the legislature.

W

WHIG

A member of the progressive faction in eighteenth century British politics and/or a supporter of the American Revolution.

WRIT OF ASSISTANCE

Permit granted to royal officials, allowing them to search private premises for contraband or taxable goods.

Y

YANKEE

A British term to describe American militia soldiers during colonial wars of the mid-1700s. Probably derived from the Dutch Janneke ('Little Johnny') or the native Yngese (English). Later used by Americans from southern states to describe northerners.

YEOMAN

Short for 'yeoman farmer,' someone who cultivated his/her own small plot of land (unlike 'tenant farmers' who worked rented land).

WHO'S WHO IN THE REVOLUTION

ADAMS, ABIGAIL (1744–1818)

The wife of Massachusetts lawyer and politician John Adams, Abigail Adams was one of the most influential women of the revolutionary era. She has been the subject of many studies by historians, largely because of the letters she penned, mainly to her husband, which reveal her to have been an astute and articulate woman. In 1776 Abigail Adams famously urged her husband, then sitting in the second Continental Congress, to 'remember the ladies' when framing laws for the new society; she was also passionately opposed to slavery and other forms of servitude. Abigail Adams became more outspoken in social and political matters when her husband became the second United States president. She is remembered as one of America's most intellectually acute 'first ladies.'

ADAMS, JOHN (1735–1826)

John Adams began life modestly as the son of a farmer in rural Massachusetts. Adams attended Harvard College, worked briefly as a teacher, then decided a career in law would offer him greater opportunities. He was admitted to the bar in 1758 and established his own small but successful law firm in Boston. Reportedly Adams was observant, articulate and ambitious – qualities that contributed to his success as a lawyer – but he could also be obnoxious, combative and prone to sarcasm, qualities that sometimes hindered his progress. As a lawyer he observed many small but controversial cases in the lead-up to revolution, such as James Otis' challenge against British search warrants, which instilled in him a strong desire to challenge abuses of government power. He was an outspoken critic of the Stamp Act on the basis that Massachusetts lacked political representation and therefore should not bear the tax. Adams rose to prominence with the 'Boston Massacre' in March 1770: despite the risk of public isolation and potential damage to his business, Adams agreed to represent the eight British soldiers who had been arrested, imprisoned and committed for trial. He did so impartially yet vigorously, convincing the Boston courtroom that the victims of the shootings were drunken brawlers who were spoiling for a fight. So successful was Adams' rhetoric that six of the eight soldiers were acquitted, while two were convicted of manslaughter and received only light punishments. Despite his earnest defence of the soldiers Adams made it clear that he remained firmly opposed to the policies of Great Britain. He expressed this opposition in the Massachusetts assembly, to which he was elected in 1770, and in published essays and pamphlets such as *Novanglus* (1772). Massachusetts nominated Adams as a delegate to both the Continental Congresses, where from the outset he pushed for separation and, if necessary, war with England. He nominated George Washington as commander-in-chief and sat on the sub-committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence. Adams was later sent to Europe as a diplomatic representative of the new United States, residing in France and the Netherlands; in 1785 he became the nation's first ambassador to Great Britain, where he had a polite but awkward audience

with King George III. Adams returned to America in 1788, pledged his support for the constitution and ran in vain against Washington for the presidency. Adams was beaten but under the electoral system of the day, he was appointed Washington's vice-president – the first person to hold the office. In 1797 he became president after Washington declined to stand for office a third time.

ADAMS, SAMUEL (1722–1803)

Once described by a British governor as 'the most dangerous man in Massachusetts, dedicated to the perpetration of mischief,' Adams arguably contributed more to the development of the American Revolution than any other individual. Adams was born in Boston to a deeply religious family of Puritan stock. Like his cousin John Adams, he entered Harvard College with the intention of entering the ministry; however, he found politics and the law more in tune with his intellect and interests. From a young age Samuel Adams voiced opposition and resentment to British interference in American matters – perhaps because his father was driven to near-bankruptcy after British legislation dissolved his sizeable mortgage business. The years following his graduation from Harvard were aimless and unprofitable for Samuel Adams: he tried his hand at several business ventures, including mercantile accounting, malt production and tax collecting; however, he had more interest in and aptitude for politics than generating profit. A prolific writer, by the late 1740s Adams had started predicting social and apocalyptic calamity in his letters and essays, blaming Massachusetts' imminent demise on English interference, mismanagement by royal officials and the decline of wholesome religious values. Though he was less confident as a public speaker, he became an important figure in Boston's town meetings and, in turn, the leader of one of the city's largest factions. The passing of the Sugar Act (1764) and then the Stamp Act (1765) provided strong platforms for Adams' constitutional theories and anti-British rhetoric, serving to increase his prominence, especially amongst the lower tiers of Boston society. He was friendly with members of the 'Loyal Nine,' the early caucus from which sprang the Sons of Liberty, and he tacitly approved of gang harassment and intimidation of customs and taxation officials. Adams strongly objected to the increase of British troops from 1768 and although there is no evidence that he organised the mob riot that led to the 'Boston Massacre' he certainly exploited the shootings to further his agenda. He wrote the famous 1772 'circular letter' that led to London's suspension of the Massachusetts assembly and instigated Committees of Correspondence to spread revolutionary sentiment. He was a leading figure during the 1773 customs crisis that culminated in the Boston Tea Party. Elected to both Continental Congresses, Adams appeared to take a back-seat to his more confident cousin John; however, he served on several congressional committees and lobbied other delegates for independence behind the scenes. The end of the Revolutionary War saw him return to Massachusetts, where he remained for the rest of his life, concerned mostly with state politics. Adams fumed against the Shays rebels in 1786, asserting that they should be put to death. He was initially opposed to the Philadelphia constitution but after careful consideration gave it his vote at the Massachusetts ratifying convention, provided that it was

amended with a bill of rights. Adams later ran unsuccessfully for the United States Congress (1788) and became governor of Massachusetts, his last significant political office.

ALLEN, ETHAN (1738–1789)

Born and raised on the remote frontier of western Connecticut, Ethan Allen served briefly in the French and Indian War before settling down to life as a farmer. In 1770 he was swept up in the movement that became known as the 'Green Mountain Boys,' an anti-government militia that for years drove officials, surveyors and settlers from land that had been claimed by speculators in distant cities. His involvement in this group and other exploits saw Allen's popularity rise; and when the Connecticut militia decided to march on the British fort at Ticonderoga in 1774, he was elected to lead the expedition. On arrival he clashed with the ambitious Benedict Arnold over who had ultimate command, but despite these tensions they managed to capture the fort and its arsenal. Allen became something of a folk hero in his native Connecticut; however he was captured by the British in mid-1775 and spent most of the war on prison ships. He moved his family to Vermont and lived a relatively quiet life, although in 1786 the Massachusetts rebel leader Daniel Shays attempted to recruit him, an offer Allen declined.

ARNOLD, BENEDICT (1741–1801)

Even today, the name of Benedict Arnold is considered by many to be synonymous with treachery and treason in the United States: at the height of the Revolutionary War he is said to have betrayed his nation for fleeting reasons. Yet earlier in the war Arnold had been one of the most skilled commanders in the Continental Army and a close friend of George Washington. Born to a wealthy family in Connecticut, the teenaged Arnold served in that colony's militia during the French and Indian War. He returned home to New Haven and established a small merchant company, trading in the West Indies, before British taxes and policies forced him out of business and took him to the edge of bankruptcy. Though he never held political office, Arnold spoke frequently against English intervention in the American colonies. In 1775 he rejoined the Connecticut militia, this time as a captain, and in May he combined with Ethan Allen to launch a surprise raid on the British fort at Ticonderoga, New York. The attack was a stunning success and netted the Americans both important strategic positions and many cannon. However, when Arnold was not promoted for his efforts he promptly resigned his commission and returned home. George Washington soon commissioned him as a colonel in the newly-formed Continental Army and authorised him to lead an attack on the loosely-defended British city of Quebec. This American attempt to invade Canada was largely unsuccessful, though Arnold demonstrated considerable initiative during the campaign and was later promoted to brigadier-general. He went on to play a leading role in the successful Battle of Saratoga (1777), where he was injured and, again, did not receive full credit for his contribution. While recuperating in Philadelphia he met Peggy Shippen, an eighteen-year-old loyalist; they were married several months later. This and other factors led to loyalists and English spies opening channels of communication with Arnold, in an

attempt to encourage his defection to the British regular army. By mid-1779 Arnold was effectively working as a British agent, supplying information about troop numbers and positions in return for monetary reward. He was given command of West Point and began to weaken its defences to facilitate a successful British siege. In September 1780, in danger of discovery, Arnold defected to the British, who commissioned him as a brigadier-general in their own army. He was later recalled to England where he soon lost favour, living out his days as a businessman of limited success.

ATTUCKS, CRISPUS (C. 1723–1770)

Very little is known about the background of Crispus Attucks, the best-remembered victim of the 'Boston Massacre' shootings of 1770. The only certainty is that he was, either in full or in part, of African heritage, while some historians believe that he also had Native American (Wampanoag) ancestry. It is most likely that Attucks was a former slave who had either escaped or received manumission (freedom as a gift from his owner) and made his way to Boston seeking work. He apparently found work tending and maintaining shipping in Boston Harbor and fell in with the rowdy and drunken mobs of sailors, rope-makers and ne'er-do-wells that prowled Boston's streets at night. When one of these gangs marched on the British barracks in King Street, Attucks was in attendance, reportedly carrying a large club. He was shot twice by musket, died almost instantly and was later given a hero's burial with the other men who died in the 'massacre' (this was particularly significant given that mixed-race burials were rare at the time). Paul Revere's famous engraving of the shootings fails to indicate Attucks' racial background, either by accident or intention.

BLAND, RICHARD (1710–1776)

Richard Bland was, like George Washington, a well-bred Virginian. His grandfather was one of the founders of the colony and Bland followed in his footsteps, inheriting the family plantation, taking up a commission in the Virginia militia and being elected to the House of Burgesses. Though he never practised, Bland was qualified in law; he was a proficient writer and an astute drafter of legislation. His most notable contribution to the American Revolution was a 1766 pamphlet entitled *An Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies*, a clear and logical exploration of colonial rights that was outshone by – but not inferior to – similar works by Jefferson and Dickinson. Bland later served in both Continental Congresses but died suddenly three months after the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

BOONE, DANIEL (1734–1820)

An American frontiersman and folk hero not generally associated with the revolution, Daniel Boone was nevertheless swept up in the fighting and for some time served as a militia officer. Born into a family of Quakers in remote western Pennsylvania, Boone received little formal schooling but plenty of practice in hunting, shooting and trapping. With his family living not far from a number of 'Indian' villages, Boone also developed an understanding of Native American culture. He served with the British in the French and Indian War, then in 1773 moved his family to the new western region of Kentucky. With few British soldiers this far west, the war in Kentucky was mainly fought

between American settlers and British-allied native tribes like the Shawnee. Boone fought several times against the Shawnee and British rangers; his brother Ned and son Israel were killed alongside him in separate battles. He was elected to the Virginia assembly during the last years of the war.

BURKE, EDMUND (1729–1797)

Edmund Burke was an Irish-born member of the Westminster parliament, famous as a speechmaker, political philosopher and vocal opponent of the French Revolution. Like his friend and mentor Lord Rockingham, Burke was critical of the parliament's policies with regard to the American colonies: he opposed attempts to raise taxation revenue in America and considered the colonists to have the rights of natural-born Englishmen. A tremendous orator, Burke voiced these sentiments repeatedly in the House of Commons, to the great annoyance of ministers like George Grenville and Lord North. These speeches earned Burke respect and affection amongst the revolutionaries in America; the tories and loyalists simply dismissed him as a troublesome Irishman. In 1792 Burke wrote *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, a foreboding criticism of the events there. He is today considered to be one of the founders of modern conservatism.

BUTE

see John Stuart

CORNWALLIS, CHARLES (LORD CORNWALLIS) (1738–1805)

A British general of noble birth, Lord Cornwallis was educated at Eton and decided to make a career in the military. He served as a mid-ranking officer during the Seven Years' War (the European arm of the French and Indian War) and saw action mainly on the continent. Cornwallis was elected to the House of Commons in 1760; two years later he took his father's seat in the House of Lords. Although in parliament he had opposed both the Stamp Act and the Declaratory Act, Cornwallis nevertheless volunteered for service upon the outbreak of fighting in America. Distrustful of colonials but able to inspire respect from his own soldiers, Cornwallis acquitted himself well as a general and, in 1779, was appointed commander of British operations in the southern colonies. His aggressive policies there targeted patriot families and businesses, sought to recruit local loyalists and promised freedom for slaves who volunteered to take up arms against the revolution. Cornwallis is best remembered as the British general who surrendered at the Battle of Yorktown (1781), the last significant battle of the Revolutionary War.

DICKINSON, JOHN (1732–1808)

Though sometimes portrayed as a soft moderate because of his support for the 'Olive Branch Petition' of 1775, much of John Dickinson's political life was spent defending colonial rights and supporting the revolution. A native Philadelphian and a lawyer by training, Dickinson's star rose in 1767–68 with the publication of twelve essays entitled 'Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania.' In these anonymously published letters Dickinson attacked the Townshend duties as unconstitutional because they aimed to raise revenue rather than regulate commerce. He was selected to represent Pennsylvania at both Continental Congresses; at the second one he joined forces with Thomas

Jefferson to pen the Declaration of the Causes and Necessities for Taking up Arms. Dickinson opposed independence in 1776, not because he objected to the principle but because he felt more time was needed to prepare for war, secure foreign allies and finalise systems of government. He served briefly in the war as a brigadier-general before retreating to Pennsylvanian state politics. Dickinson was a keen participant at the Philadelphia convention and a strong supporter of the constitution.

DU MOTIER, GILBERT (MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE) (1757–1834)

Gilbert du Motier, known as Lafayette, was born to a family of military nobility in south-central France, the descendant of a general in the Grande Armée. He joined the military at a young age and learned of the revolution in distant America through his involvement in the Freemasons. Ignoring the advice of his superiors and abandoning his pregnant wife, Lafayette arrived in America in mid-1777 and requested a commission from the Continental Congress. Although he was only a captain, the Congress – short of officers and wanting closer ties with France – appointed Lafayette major-general. He became an aide to George Washington and despite the great difference in their ages they became lifelong friends (the Frenchman's eldest son would be named George-Washington Lafayette in honour of the American commander-in-chief). Because he was a foreigner Lafayette was never given command of an American division; however he was involved in several significant campaigns including Brandywine, Valley Forge and Monmouth. He returned home for a year (1779–80) and was treated as a celebrity in France, where support for the revolution was strong; while there he lobbied the French king for a greater commitment to the American cause. Back in America by mid-1780, Lafayette joined forces with the Continental Army in the final thrust against Yorktown, the last great battle of the war. He became a national hero in America, returning several times before his death; many towns, streets and buildings were named after him. Lafayette also played a critical role in the French Revolution between the mid-1780s and 1792, before his disillusionment with the course of the revolution saw him flee France.

FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN (1706–1790)

The most famous American in the world at the time of the revolution was Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania. Though born into comparative poverty, the tenth son of a candle-maker, his work as both a printer and writer earned Franklin wealth and respect. A highly intelligent and curious figure, Franklin was an experimental scientist, a keen philosopher and a prolific inventor. Amongst his discoveries was a universally famous 1752 experiment that involved flying a kite during a powerful storm to ascertain the electrical qualities of lightning. Amongst his inventions were the lightning rod, bifocal spectacles, a new heat-dispersing stove and an improved type of urinary catheter. All this made Franklin well-known globally, particularly in France, the hub of the Enlightenment. In 1762–63 he had lined up with Washington and others to buy tracts of western land, hoping to sell them later for a sizeable profit. Two years later Franklin objected on principle to the proposed Stamp Act, however once it was passed by parliament Franklin eagerly chased the contract for the sale of stamp paper; he even recommended

a friend in Pennsylvania for the moderately lucrative job of distributing tax stamps. Franklin spent most of the years between 1765 and 1774 in England, counting amongst his friends the scientist Joseph Priestley and the philosopher David Hume. According to some biographers he desired a seat in parliament and perhaps cabinet; this did not eventuate, possibly because of his common – not to mention colonial – origins. Franklin came to support the American Revolution slowly and gradually; after witnessing the mistreatment and appalling conditions experienced by the poor in England and Ireland in 1771, he became frustrated by the indifferent attitude of British politicians. This was highlighted by their disregard of pleas and petitions from the colonies – and perhaps also by their snobbery towards Franklin himself. The final straw came when the British solicitor-general, Alexander Wedderburn, savaged Franklin for stealing a packet of private letters penned by Thomas Hutchinson and publishing them in America for both monetary and political gain. Humiliated, Franklin left London in March 1775, sure that the separation of England and America was inevitable. He arrived home in time to represent Pennsylvania in the second Continental Congress and sit on the committee responsible for drafting the Declaration of Independence. Franklin was nominated as a diplomatic representative to the French government and spent the next nine years abroad (1776–85), performing official duties and enjoying hero status and the social grandeur and excesses of France. Though aged eighty-one and hard of hearing, he sat in the Philadelphia convention as something of an elder statesman, attentive and available for consultation but not participating in debates. Franklin gave his support to the constitution and, in the final years of his life, devoted considerable energy to the abolition of slavery in America.

GAGE, THOMAS (1719–1787)

Born to a family of minor nobles in Sussex, England, Thomas Gage attended the Westminster School with future generals Howe and Burgoyne, before taking up a commission in the British army. He fought competently but without distinction during the French and Indian War; but his keen mind for administration and governance led to his 1760 appointment as military governor of Montreal. In 1763 Gage was promoted to major-general and commander-in-chief of the British army in North America – initially a difficult role given the unfolding of Pontiac's Rebellion and a number of rural uprisings. Gage returned to Britain in mid-1773; however, with the passing of the Coercive Acts the following year he was again summoned to serve in America, this time as military governor of Massachusetts. The general took to the job with his usual professionalism and attention to detail, yet privately considered that it would be near-impossible to subdue the rebels of Massachusetts and avoid war. He was involved in the 'powder alarms' and the imposition of martial law. In late 1775 Gage was recalled to England, where the press savaged him, in many ways unfairly, and he never returned to America.

GATES, HORATIO (1727–1806)

One of the more notable Continental Army generals, Horatio Gates was born in Essex and began his career as a lieutenant in the British army. He served in Germany during the 1740s before purchasing a commission (a common practice) in the New York militia. Gates fought alongside many of his future American commanders in the French and Indian War and, in 1769, decided

to emigrate permanently to the colonies; he settled on a small plantation in Virginia, not too far from Washington's estate at Mount Vernon. When war erupted in 1775 Gates volunteered his services and Washington eagerly accepted, since the commander-in-chief had at his disposal only a handful of men with officer experience in the British army. Gates participated in the victorious Battle of Saratoga, receiving more credit than he was due, before relocating to the southern colonies for the last phase of the war. Gates returned to Virginia where he sold his plantation, freed his slaves and enjoyed a quiet retirement in a stately home in New York City.

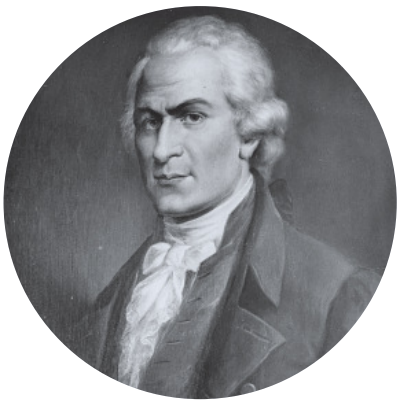
GRENVILLE, GEORGE (1712–1770)

George Grenville, England's prime minister during the passage of the Stamp Act, inherited Lord Bute's decision to station large numbers of troops in North America on a permanent basis – and, accordingly, the problem of how to pay for them. Raising taxes in Britain was out of the question: the levels of internal taxation were already high and attempts to raise a new cider tax in 1763 had been met with public protest. Grenville's cabinet therefore opted to raise taxes in America, pushing the Sugar Act (1764) and Stamp Act (1765) through parliament. The new tax stamps raised nothing from America except trouble and petitions, and Grenville soon lost the king's confidence. In July 1765 he was dismissed in favour of Lord Rockingham.

HALE, NATHAN (1755–1776)

Born and raised in Connecticut, Nathan Hale attended Yale College, graduating at eighteen and becoming a teacher. The outbreak of war in 1775 led him to join the local militia, in which he was commissioned lieutenant. During the Battle of Long Island in 1776, Hale volunteered to go in disguise behind British lines and report on enemy activity. He was recognised in a tavern, arrested and found to be carrying written information about troop numbers and movements; the British subsequently put him on trial for espionage and hanged him on the island of Manhattan. Famously (though not necessarily accurately), Hale's last words were said to have been, 'I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country.'

HAMILTON, ALEXANDER (1755–1804)



Alexander Hamilton was the illegitimate son of a Scottish father and French mother, born on a British island in the West Indies. He arrived in Boston as a boy of sixteen, moved to New York City for further study and quickly developed an interest in imperial and colonial politics. Hamilton began writing for local pamphlets, criticising the Quebec Act and other British policies; he was no friend of the mobs, however, condemning acts of violence and destruction against loyalists and stressing the importance of social order. The outbreak of war saw Hamilton join the colonial militia, where he was commissioned as a lieutenant and given command of a small unit. He participated in the early fighting around New York and then, in 1776, in Washington's famous victory at the Battle of Trenton. The following year Hamilton was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and appointed as Washington's chief of staff, working closely with the general to prepare, draft and review orders and correspondence. He remained in this important administrative role for most of the war, briefly obtaining a field command in the lead-up to the Battle

of Yorktown (1781). Hamilton was involved in the Newburgh conspiracy two years later, possibly as a ploy to strengthen Congress' financial authority. Hamilton recognised the great potential of the new United States but he soon became frustrated by the lack of a strong national government that could realise this vision. He was elected to the Confederation Congress but served barely eight months before resigning, frustrated at the self-interest of the states and Congress' incapacity to get anything done. It was little wonder that Hamilton was an eager participant in both the Annapolis and Philadelphia conventions that discussed revision of the Articles of Confederation; Although Hamilton strongly preferred a centralised model for government (including a president with a life term and an absolute veto) he nevertheless accepted the Philadelphia constitution – so much so that during the ratification period he would write fifty-one of the eighty-five *Federalist Papers*. Washington chose Hamilton as the first treasury secretary and over the next six years he played a pivotal role in the financial reconstruction of post-revolutionary America. Hamilton was famously killed in a duel.

HANCOCK, JOHN (1737–1793)

One of the richest men in America in the mid-1700s, Hancock was a Boston merchant who later acquired fame as the first person – with the largest writing – to sign the Declaration of Independence (leading to the colloquial term 'John Hancock' for signature). Born in Massachusetts and like many of his fellow revolutionaries educated at Harvard, Hancock went to work in his uncle's shipbuilding business. Part of his training included two years in England, building client and supplier networks, before he returned to America in 1762. Hancock inherited the business after his uncle died and soon became a Boston selectman (town councillor). Hancock and his company were known smugglers and evaders of customs duties, a practice he had learned from his uncle. On Hancock's instructions, his ships and agents smuggled more than a million gallons of molasses each year, buying them cheaply from French merchants in the Caribbean and bribing customs officials to turn a blind eye. Hancock's company avoided more than £30 000 of duty annually, paying corrupt customs officials one-tenth this amount in bribes. So unconcerned was Hancock about trade duties that new ones did not initially worry him – he just planned to avoid them like the rest. Between 1766 and 1768 customs officials began to target Hancock's ships with stop-and-search orders, the most notable of these incidents being the seizure of his wine-carrying sloop *Liberty*. Initially appearing as a moderate who pledged loyalty to Britain, over time Hancock evolved into a vehement opponent of the Navigation Acts, the Sugar Act and any other British policy that affected his business. He became supportive of people like Samuel Adams and, in 1766, entered the Massachusetts assembly. Hancock served in the second Continental Congress after opting not to attend the first. Fancying himself a military leader despite his lack of experience, Hancock frequently sought command of militia units but was usually persuaded by his colleagues to concern himself with political leadership. In May 1775 he was elected president of the Continental Congress, carrying out this difficult task with skill; he also contributed a sizeable share of his own fortune to the war effort. In his later years Hancock served in the Confederation Congress and sat for two terms as governor of the newly independent state of Massachusetts.

HENRY, PATRICK (1736–1799)

Born in Virginia to immigrant parents, Patrick Henry's resonant voice never lost the deep Scottish tones he inherited from his father. This and Henry's willingness to say the unsayable made him a powerful orator, although historians are divided about the true content of his speeches. The young Henry began as a businessman, then became a planter, but failed at both; in 1760 he resolved to make a career in the law. He achieved some celebrity three years later during the 'Parson's Cause' case, in which he argued passionately against the British government's decision to overturn an act of the Virginian assembly. His oratory included some radical attacks on Anglican priests and King George III himself, quite a rarity for the dour and restrained courtrooms of colonial Virginia. Henry was elected to fill a casual position in the Virginia legislature in the midst of the Stamp Act crisis. After barely a week in the assembly he introduced the Virginia Resolves and spoke strongly for the bill, allegedly delivering the well-known comment 'if this be treason, make the most of it.' The content of this speech was not transcribed but the Resolves are on record and contain some of the strongest anti-British sentiment of the time – stronger even than that of Massachusetts. The Resolves passed, largely because Henry had purposefully waited until the more conservative members of the assembly were absent; the Resolves caused a sensation and brought Henry to public prominence. Ten years later he delivered his signature 'give me liberty or give me death!' speech, made in support of military preparations against future British aggression. There is little evidence that Henry issued these exact words, though it is clear that he spoke strongly and with vitriol against the British government and military. Henry was a delegate to both Continental Congresses, serving briefly as a colonel in the local militia in 1775. For three years (1776–79) he was governor of the newly-independent Virginia. He raised an income mainly from tobacco planting, kept many slaves and was involved in land speculation. Following the Treaty of Paris Henry remained entrenched in Virginian state politics, serving another three-year term as governor (1784–86) and shunning invitations both to the Confederation Congress and the Philadelphia convention. He became the strongest and most prominent opponent of the constitution, criticising it as a return to monarchy, an attack on states' rights and a threat to individual liberty. As the figurehead of the anti-federalist movement, Henry withstood all manner of personal and political attacks and for a time became disillusioned with the course of the new nation. Nevertheless his federalist opponents, George Washington and John Adams, respected Henry enough to offer him important cabinet and diplomatic posts; he gave them due consideration but ultimately declined to enter national politics. He remained involved in Virginian government until his death from stomach cancer, just a few months before Washington's own demise.

HUTCHINSON, THOMAS (1711–1780)

Born in Boston, Thomas Hutchinson was the city's most notable loyalist during the 1770s. He held a number of high-ranking royal appointments including chief justice, lieutenant governor and, from 1771, governor of Massachusetts. His strict adherence to British policies – even those he disagreed with – made him highly unpopular. He was frequently the target of vitriolic pamphlets written by Samuel Adams and others. Even more

dramatically, Hutchinson's home was invaded and virtually destroyed by a mob during the Stamp Act crisis of 1765. As governor, Hutchinson was embroiled in two further crises in 1773: Benjamin Franklin's interception and publication of his personal correspondence to London; and the customs stand-off which led to the Boston Tea Party. He was replaced as governor by Thomas Gage in 1774 and fled to England the following year, never to return to his homeland.

JEFFERSON, THOMAS (1743–1826)

One of the more enigmatic of the American revolutionaries, Thomas Jefferson was a true figure of the Enlightenment, blessed with an active mind and an insatiable thirst for knowledge. His talents as a stylish and prolific writer are best reflected in the impassioned words of the Declaration of Independence, which Jefferson was mostly responsible for drafting. Born into a prominent Virginian family, Jefferson was privately tutored at first, then undertook studies at the prestigious William and Mary College, where his devotion to study saw him excel in mathematics, philosophy, French, Greek, classical studies and music. He later went on to study law and was accepted to the bar. Jefferson entered the Virginia assembly in 1769 and five years later achieved acclaim with his essay *A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, in which he opposed the Coercive Acts on the basis that they breached the natural rights of colonial Americans. These ideas were too radical for Jefferson to be nominated to attend the first Continental Congress, though he was selected for the second. A somewhat reserved individual, softly-spoken and lacking the confidence to make strong speeches, Jefferson played a limited role in congressional discussion. The other delegates, however, were aware of his natural flair with the quill – and this prompted Jefferson's appointment to the five-man committee charged with writing the Declaration of Independence. Following independence Jefferson returned to Virginia, where he concerned himself with state matters, including educational reforms, changes to inheritance laws and bills codifying the freedom of religion. He also served a three-year term as governor (1779–81). In 1785 the Congress invited Jefferson to act as its minister in France, a role he carried out skilfully for four years. Because of his foreign duty Jefferson was not present at the Philadelphia convention in 1787; nevertheless he maintained regular correspondence with many attendees and gave the constitution his cautious support. Jefferson returned to America to serve as Washington's first secretary of state, yet clashed constantly with fellow cabinet member Alexander Hamilton, usually over matters of finance or states' rights. Jefferson ran unsuccessfully against John Adams in the presidential election of 1796 but defeated him four years later, becoming the third American president.

JONES, JOHN PAUL (1747–1792)

John Paul Jones (originally named John Paul) was born in Scotland. He ran away to sea at the age of thirteen and was master of his own ship by twenty-one. In 1772 Jones killed a member of his own crew in a swordfight, forcing him to leave behind his small fortune and flee across the Atlantic to Virginia. He found life in America agreeable and with the outbreak of war he volunteered his services to the fledgling Continental Navy. By 1778 Jones had command of his

own small frigate, *Ranger*; he sailed it across the Atlantic and began harassing British ships and coastal towns. The following year he was given command of a larger forty-two-gun ship and accomplished his most notable victory, the capture of the fifty-gun British frigate HMS *Serapis*. Jones is remembered as the first great naval commander of the United States, who caused hindrance and damage to the British that was disproportionate to the resources at his disposal. Jones died suddenly in France in 1792 and his body was buried in a Paris graveyard; it was subsequently exhumed and repatriated to the United States, now lying at the US Naval College in Annapolis.

KING GEORGE III (1738–1820)

Despite being 'the king that lost America,' George III is still considered one of England's greatest monarchs. Born to the Hanover dynasty in London, eight weeks premature, the infant George was not expected to survive and was lucky to do so. He was the first Hanover king of British birth (both his predecessors having been born in Germany) and the first to receive a wholly British upbringing. He was shy and withdrawn but received a thorough education in the classics, politics, sciences and history; much of this was delivered by Lord Bute (see John Stuart), his tutor and mentor through most of the prince's adolescence. The death of his father, the Prince of Wales, saw George become heir apparent in 1751. Nine years later his grandfather, George II, also passed away; George III ascended the throne at the age of twenty-two. He ruled throughout six decades of substantial change and instability in world affairs. The Industrial Revolution was well underway when he took the crown, and the Napoleonic wars were only finally won near the end of his reign. George had an innovative mind in many respects: he encouraged scientific investigation and developments in industry, agriculture and astronomy. In politics, however, he was a noted conservative, believing that crown and parliament should have a firm grip over matters of empire. He favoured the selection of Tories over Whigs when selecting ministries, which served to destabilise an already divided parliament. He was not above favouritism either – the promotion of his former teacher Lord Bute to the prime ministership raised many eyebrows. Although charged in the Declaration of Independence with a multitude of crimes and painted as a tyrant by American revolutionaries, George was hardly callous or bloodthirsty. He generally played the part of a constitutional monarch, accepting and affirming the advice of his ministers even if he did not agree with it. He harboured no hatred of the Americans but viewed the dispute between Britain and her colonies as an issue of principle which, if left unchallenged, might well disrupt the rest of Britain's empire; matters of natural rights, representation and self-government were abstract principles and secondary to imperial integrity. George and his ministers grossly overestimated the strength of loyalist support in America, and underestimated Americans' capacity to wage war. He rejected independence and did not believe the United States and its republican experiment would last (not an uncommon view in Europe after the revolution). For the last decade of his reign the king was blind, immobile and mentally ill; he played no part in politics during this time, his son George IV ruling as regent in his place.

LAFAYETTE

see Gilbert du Motier

LEE, RICHARD HENRY (1732–1794)

Sometimes referred to as one of America's 'forgotten founders,' Richard Henry Lee was a merchant, planter and politician who made the motion to declare independence from Britain at the Second Continental Congress in 1776. After working as justice of the peace in Virginia, Lee became a member of the House of Burgesses (1758–75) and a US senator (1789–92). He represented Virginia at the two Continental Congresses and was president of Congress in 1784. Lee was a controversial figure who was the subject of a number of rumours, including one that he and others were trying to remove George Washington from the role of commander-in-chief of the Continental army, and another that he was trying to devalue Virginia's wartime currency by refusing to accept paper money from his tenants. In 1792 Lee is said to have retired from public life on account of exhaustion; he died two years later.

MADISON, JAMES (1751–1836)

James Madison's impact on the revolution, though it came late in the piece, was immense – he was eventually called 'the father of the constitution.' A Virginian, Madison received a broad education in the classics and sciences and worked briefly as a lawyer. He entered the Virginia assembly at the height of the push for independence in 1776 and was soon likened to his mentor, Thomas Jefferson, with whom Madison shared a brilliant mind as well as an aversion to speech-making. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress for the final three years of the Revolutionary War (1780–83); there his knowledge of political principles and attention to detail earned him the respect of his fellow delegates. Madison returned to Virginian politics after the Treaty of Paris and made significant contributions to the political development of his own state. Like others in the mid-1780s, Madison became frustrated with the inadequacies of the Confederation Congress and the unwillingness of the thirteen states to work together for the common good. He attended the 1787 convention in Philadelphia, where his 'Virginia Plan' for national government was tabled; after long debate and compromise, the core principles of this proposal were integrated into the draft constitution. Overcoming his natural shyness, Madison spoke strongly and frequently in favour of the new constitution and how it would function to prevent the misuse of power. He became a leading supporter of the constitution during the ratification arguments and a contributor to the *Federalist Papers*. Madison sparred often with his fellow Virginian Patrick Henry over the functions and powers of the constitution, particularly the question of a bill of rights, which Madison believed unnecessary. When it was agreed, however, that such a bill would be incorporated it was Madison who drafted the proposed amendments. He would later become the fourth United States president, succeeding Jefferson in 1809.

MARTIN, JOSEPH PLUMB (1760–1850)

Joseph Plumb Martin was born in Massachusetts to well-off parents who could afford to fund his education. When he joined the Continental Army as a fifteen-year-old in 1775 he kept a diary of his experiences. Martin's writings survived intact and have provided historians with a full and frank account of life and soldiering during some pivotal moments in the Revolutionary War.

The young soldier was present at several battles including Brooklyn, White Plains, Monmouth and Yorktown; he was also with the army through some of its most destitute periods, such as the winter encampment at Valley Forge. In his account of the war Martin speaks little about the politics or prominent figures of the revolution; he instead records observations and opinions about the army, his fellow soldiers, the conditions they endured and the battles they fought. Much of Martin's writing contains implicit criticisms of how he and his fellow soldiers were – or rather were not – supplied and supported during the Revolutionary War. Martin later became a schoolteacher and then a farmer, relocating to the new state of Maine where he lived until he was nearly ninety.

MOLINEUX, WILLIAM (1717–1774)

William Molineux wrote no pamphlets, held no elected offices and was dead before the outbreak of war with England, yet he was an important agitator in Boston during the build-up of revolutionary tension. Born in England, unlike most of his fellow rabble-rousers, Molineux was a hardware trader by profession and, like John Hancock, was willing to ignore British mercantile laws to profitable ends. Records from the 1760s suggest that Molineux traded illegally with Holland, so the Sugar Act (1764) would certainly have impeded his business practices. A street-level leader of protests and mobs rather than a political figure, Molineux was hot-tempered and stubborn: when a town meeting in January 1770 ignored his suggestion that it march on the governor's house and destroy it, Molineux threatened suicide if the group did not comply. He is best known for leading, along with Samuel Adams, the Boston Tea Party of December 1773, however within a year Molineux had perished.

NORTH, FREDERICK (LORD NORTH) (1732–1792)

Lord North was Britain's prime minister through most of the revolutionary period, from 1770 to 1782. A noted Tory and strong supporter of the king, he served as a backbencher in the House of Commons during the 1760s, then accepted a cabinet position in the government of William Pitt. The collapse of the ministry in 1770 saw North become prime minister. A forceful and witty speaker, he was able to stave off attacks and criticism to forge a lasting government (a rarity in eighteenth century British politics). He was a driving force behind the Tea Act (1773) and the Coercive Acts (1774), though he would later admit that the latter had pushed Massachusetts to the brink of war. North had no taste or aptitude for war: once conflict with the American colonies was underway he offered to resign, believing others to be better suited to such a crisis. The king refused his resignation, leading North to pass responsibility for the war effort to other members of his cabinet.

OTIS, JAMES (1725–1783)

The son of a prominent lawyer and attorney-general of Massachusetts, James Otis was himself a formidable lawyer and advocate for colonial rights. The brother of Mercy Otis Warren, he graduated from Harvard College in 1743 and carved an enviable reputation at the bar. His best-known case was a 1756 challenge to British writs of assistance (general search warrants allocated to customs officials), during which Otis delivered a four-hour exposition of

why such writs were unlawful and unconstitutional. Otis lost the case when it was dismissed by Thomas Hutchinson (at that time chief justice), but it ultimately won Otis acclaim and blackened Hutchinson's reputation. Otis was a strong opponent of the various revenue acts and reportedly coined the phrase 'taxation without representation is tyranny.' His contribution to revolution was cut short when he was punched senseless in a fight with a customs official, sustaining injuries that apparently led to his becoming mentally unwell. He was eventually killed when struck by lightning.

PAINE, THOMAS (1737–1809)

Thomas Paine did not arrive in America until the eve of the Revolutionary War. Back in his native England he had tried – and failed – at a number of different occupations, including tax-collecting, privateering, school-teaching, selling tobacco and making ladies' underwear. Both of Paine's marriages had ended unhappily: he lost his first wife, Mary, during childbirth and abandoned his second, Elizabeth, to move to London. It was there in 1774 that Paine had a chance meeting with Benjamin Franklin, who must have spotted some potential in the thirty-seven-year-old Paine – he gave him a written reference and suggested he move to America. A month later Paine was en route to Philadelphia; although he caught a near-fatal dose of typhoid fever on the voyage, he eventually arrived in late November. Once in America Paine quickly found his niche: writing and publishing. He spent most of 1775 as the editor of a Pennsylvania almanac, acquitting himself well and building up a small but loyal readership. Fascinated by the revolution and surprised at the strength of loyalist sentiment, in late 1775 Paine began working on a pro-independence pamphlet with the intended title *Plain Truth*. When he showed a draft to Benjamin Rush, Paine's friend and fellow advocate for independence, Rush suggested he change the title to *Common Sense*. Given the political climate, the American colonies were awash with essays, editorials and polemics, so nobody – least of all Paine, whose writings to that point had enjoyed only limited success – could have anticipated the impact the pamphlet would have. Paine drew little financial reward from *Common Sense* but continued to work and write for the revolutionary cause. While encamped with the struggling Continental Army in 1776, Paine began work on another series of inspirational essays called *The American Crisis*. He never sat in the Continental Congress but was recruited onto one of its committees; this ended, however, with his dismissal for revealing secret information as a journalist. Entranced by the unfolding revolution in France, Paine ventured there in 1790, where he penned another world-famous tract, *Rights of Man*. He was celebrated in France and granted citizenship there; once the French Revolution began to sour, however, he was imprisoned and sentenced to the guillotine – in a stroke of luck, he was not collected for execution at the nominated time and the following day the political situation changed, eventually leading to his release. Paine returned to America and died in both poverty and obscurity; only six people attended his funeral.

PITT, WILLIAM (PITT THE ELDER) (1708–1778)

Like Edmund Burke and, to a lesser extent, Lord Rockingham, William Pitt the Elder (not to be confused with his son, William Pitt the Younger) was a British politician considered to be a friend of the American colonists. As a

young man Pitt had had a brief military career before following his brother Thomas into politics; he entered parliament in 1735 via the notorious 'rotten borough' of Old Sarum, which contained just a couple of voters. In 1757 Pitt joined forces with the Duke of Newcastle, the newly appointed prime minister, and developed strategies to facilitate an English victory in the Seven Years' War with France. He spoke forcefully in parliament against new taxes, particularly those levied on the American colonies, arguing that they were both unconstitutional and dangerous. As the colonial crisis progressed, Pitt gave strong and portentous warnings about the dangers of pushing the Americans too far; a notable contribution was a January 1775 bill, subsequently rejected by the House of Lords, which laid out a program of reconciliation with the colonies. Pitt's last appearance in the parliament, a month before his death, was to call for peace with America whatever the cost. So fondly did Americans remember him that they named the Pennsylvanian city of Pittsburgh in his honour.

POWHATAN (1545–1618)

Chief Powhatan (also known as Wahunsenacawh) was the leader of Virginia's Powhatan people and of the Powhatan Confederacy, an alliance of Native American tribes that fought against English settlers in Jamestown. Powhatan's daughter, Pocahontas (Matoaka), is said to have saved Captain John Smith from being killed by her tribesmen in 1607, though Smith's is the only account of the episode. Two years later, as tensions increased between Smith and the Powhatan, the Chief said, 'Let [us] assure you of our love, and every year our friendly trade shall furnish you with corn; and now also, if you would come in friendly manner to see us, and not thus with your guns and swords as to invade your foes.' Powhatan died from disease in 1618; his burial mound is located on the Pamunkey Reservation.

REVERE, PAUL (1735–1818)

Though immortalised in legends that are both exaggerated and misleading, Paul Revere was nevertheless a significant revolutionary figure, an important propagandist and a grass-roots organiser. Born in Boston to a French father and American mother, Revere apprenticed as a silversmith before fighting briefly during the French and Indian War. He returned to Boston and took ownership of his father's silversmith business, earning a good reputation for his artisanship. Revere became interested in politics but never ran for office. His rise to prominence came in the aftermath of the 'Boston Massacre,' of which Revere constructed several engravings including the grossly inaccurate 'The Bloody Massacre Perpetrated in King Street.' This and other Revere engravings, such as 'The Able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught,' were little more than copies of other people's ideas, though this did not lessen their impact. Revere was active in the Sons of Liberty, possibly being present at the Boston Tea Party, as well as the local Committees of Safety that monitored British troop activity. It was in the latter role that Revere carried out his famous 'midnight ride' in April 1775, to warn locals on the road to Lexington that British soldiers were on their way. This event was commemorated in an 1861 poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow which exaggerates Revere's role in delivering this warning. Revere later served in the war as a militia officer, before returning to his business interests in Boston.

ROCKINGHAM

see Charles Watson-Wentworth

RUSH, BENJAMIN (1745–1813)

Born just outside Philadelphia and educated at Princeton, New Jersey, Benjamin Rush spent several years in Britain studying medicine. There he was entranced by both the grandeur of the royal court and the horror of slave ships at dock in Liverpool. Rush returned to America in 1769, started a medical practice and wrote several texts on medicine and chemistry. The doctor also embraced revolutionary ideas, becoming involved with the Sons of Liberty and being elected to attend the Continental Congress. Rush became friendly with Thomas Paine and gave him feedback on his draft of *Common Sense* (he apparently suggested the title). A signatory of the Declaration of Independence, Rush became a surgeon-general with the Continental Army and a strong critic of Washington's leadership, a stance he later regretted. Rush was arguably the most prominent medical expert in the new society, pioneering some treatments that were ahead of their time; he was, however, a passionate advocate of the now-discredited 'bleeding' treatment and believed that black skin was due to a form of skin disease.

SHAYS, DANIEL (1741–1825)

Not much is known of Daniel Shays' early life, although he was probably born in rural Massachusetts and worked as a farmer. He became a soldier soon after the outbreak of the Revolutionary War and saw action in several significant battles, including Bunker Hill and Saratoga. Shays excelled both as a soldier and a leader, ascending to the rank of captain and receiving commendation for his service. He left the Continental Army in 1780 and returned to Massachusetts, where he served as an official in the small town of Pelham. Six years later, in the midst of economic depression, a slumping market for farm products, high debt and litigious creditors, Shays and others decided to act. For several months bands of armed men bullied debtors' courts and other public buildings into closure, leading to the formation of a state militia. The rebels were defeated in February 1787 and Shays himself fled north to Vermont, a Massachusetts court sentencing him to death *in absentia*. He was later pardoned by Governor Hancock and granted a war service pension; he spent the rest of his days in the state of New York.

STUART, JOHN (LORD BUTE) (1713–1792)

The British prime minister for ten months in 1762–63, the Scottish-born Lord Bute had, in the 1750s, been tutor to the Prince of Wales (the future King George III). His influence with the young king saw him promoted prematurely to lead the government, despite significant opposition in the House of Commons. Bute was forced to resign from office in April 1763 following a furore over a new cider tax introduced by his cabinet; his role in government was minimal from then on. He remained, however, a figure of mockery for cartoonists and satirists, particularly those who wished to criticise the king without being seen to do so. Consequently many mezzotints and satires depict Bute (who is usually shown wearing a kilt) unflatteringly.

VON STEUBEN, FRIEDRICH (1730–1794)

Friedrich von Steuben played a critical role in the organisation, co-ordination and training of the Continental Army in the early phase of the Revolutionary War. Born in central Germany to a military family, von Steuben rose only to the rank of captain in the Prussian army but gained considerable experience as a staff officer. He volunteered his services to the American war effort and made his way across the Atlantic. Wrongly introduced as a lieutenant-general, von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge in early 1778 and was given significant responsibilities by Washington. He set to work drafting a training manual for non-commissioned officers and re-organising camp layouts, sanitation and procedures. Perhaps his most notable contribution was to train American soldiers in the use of the bayonet, a weapon they had hardly bothered with up to that point. Von Steuben served at Yorktown before leaving the army, becoming an American citizen and receiving a substantial annual pension from the Congress. He lived out his days in upstate New York.

WARREN, JOSEPH (1741–1775)

A Harvard-educated doctor and an active Freemason, Joseph Warren was a significant figure amid the Boston radicals of the early and mid-1770s. An associate of Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Paul Revere and others, Warren was a vocal agitator in the wake of the 'Boston Massacre,' an event that troubled him much more than disputes over taxes and duties. He wrote several inflammatory articles about the 'massacre,' advocated the death penalty for the soldiers involved and delivered several commemorative speeches around the city. Warren was involved in drafting the Suffolk Resolves and was a leading figure in Boston's Committee of Correspondence. Unwilling to wait for an officer's commission to arrive from Congress, he volunteered to fight as a private at the Battle of Bunker Hill. It was a fateful decision: Warren was shot through the head by a British captain and killed instantly.

WARREN, MERCY OTIS (1728–1814)

Mercy Otis Warren chronicled the events of the revolution as they unfolded around her. Some consider her the revolution's first historian; others describe her as 'the conscience of the revolution.' Born and raised in a family bursting with revolutionary sentiment, Warren's father was a noted Massachusetts lawyer and assemblyman, while her brother, lawyer James Otis, was allegedly responsible for the catchphrase 'taxation without representation is tyranny.' She married James Warren, a wealthy merchant who, in 1754, also entered colonial politics, further exciting her interest in the affairs of Massachusetts specifically and America generally. Mercy Otis Warren corresponded regularly with figureheads of the revolution: George and Martha Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Patrick Henry and John and Abigail Adams. The latter wrote to her husband that 'God Almighty ... has entrusted [Warren] with Powers for the good of the World, which he bestows on few of the human race ... it would be criminal to neglect them.' (Warren later fell out with John and Abigail.) Warren's writing ranged from the expository and analytical to the creative and satirical. She wrote several poems and dramatic pieces concerned with colonial politics and the revolution, while a final compilation of her historical writings, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution*, was released in 1805 when

Warren was seventy-five. She took an unashamedly anti-federalist position, as suggested by her description of the US Constitution as 'doubtful in its origin, dangerous in its aspect.'

WASHINGTON, GEORGE (1732–1799)

Although he became America's most famous revolutionary and its first republican president, prior to the 1770s George Washington seemed a most unlikely candidate for leading a rebellion. Born, raised and resident in Virginia, Washington was powerful in his own state as both a plantation owner and a politician. Most of his wealth came from two large inheritances: the first from his half-brother Lawrence, who died in 1752, and the second from his wife Martha Custis, who left him a third of her huge family estate in Virginia. In 1754 the twenty-two-year-old Washington was granted a commission in the Virginia militia and was ordered to drive French settlers from the upper Ohio River valley, near modern-day Pittsburgh. He and his 160-man militia were soon captured by a much larger French force; Washington was forced to sign a document of surrender in French – somewhat embarrassingly, since he didn't speak or read that language – before being allowed to return to Virginia. Several times between 1755 and 1757 he wrote to English generals seeking a commission in the regular British army; his overtures were repeatedly rejected. Washington returned home, where he was involved in local government and, from 1758, was a member of the House of Burgesses. Washington's revolutionary intent did not emerge until the mid-1770s: he had spoken against the Stamp Act in 1765 and voiced opposition to the Townshend revenue acts. Records suggest, however, that Washington remained loyal to Britain at that time, believing the disputes over taxation and representation to be a transient crisis; when the Townshend duties were repealed in 1770, he considered the matter resolved. Washington was consequently enraged by the Coercive Acts and was amongst those calling for an American inter-colonial summit to discuss the issue. He attended both Continental Congresses, attending the second in the full uniform of a Virginia colonel, as if to advertise his availability for military command. Upon the outbreak of war he was appointed commander-in-chief of the newly-created Continental Army. It was in this role that Washington contributed the most – perhaps more than any other individual – to ensuring the success of the revolution. Confronted with well equipped, well trained and battle-hardened British soldiers, Washington had little more than a few thousand ill-disciplined farmers at his disposal; yet with time, good fortune and assistance the general was able to shape them into a relatively competent force. Recognising that the survival of the army and the Congress were integral to the survival of the revolution, he employed tactics of retreat, evasion and ambush that ran against his own aggressive instincts. He begged, pestered and roared at Congress, the states and the people of America so that his army might have the food and resources to survive. He staved off criticism and plots to replace him, conducting himself with the reserved demeanour and good manners of a gentleman, even when circumstances might have dictated otherwise. Few who met Washington failed to respect and admire him. The onset of peace saw him resign his command and retire from public life – itself an astonishing event, since most victorious generals demand power in line

with their victories. The troubling situation of the 1780s and the apparent ineptitude of the Confederation Congress led many of Washington's friends to lure him into the political fray in an attempt to heal the new nation. Washington attended the Philadelphia convention of 1787 and was elected chairman, presiding over discussion rather than participating in it. He gave his support to the US Constitution and the federalists – given Washington's standing it was perhaps the movement's greatest asset. The executive office of president was virtually created with Washington in mind, so few were surprised when the Electoral College voted unanimously for him in 1789. He served two four-year terms and then, growing old and disillusioned with political life, refused to stand again; he was determined that eight years was long enough for any individual to hold the office, a precedent that endured for almost 150 years. Washington retreated to Mount Vernon and lived a further two years in retirement before a throat infection claimed him at the age of sixty-seven. His death prompted weeks of mourning around the new nation he had helped to forge.

WATSON-WENTWORTH, CHARLES (LORD ROCKINGHAM) (1730–1782)

Prime minister of Britain for two brief but significant periods (1765–66 and 1782), Lord Rockingham was first chosen by King George III to replace George Grenville, whose ministry had destabilised British–colonial relations with the Stamp Act. Rockingham, like his close friend Edmund Burke, was opposed to taxation of the American colonists. He invited Benjamin Franklin to address parliament on the matter, and the repeal of the Stamp Act occurred during his first term as prime minister. Rockingham's cabinet was unstable, however, and he was forced to resign in mid-1766. Like Burke, he spent the next sixteen years in parliament voicing opposition to colonial policy and supporting the rights of the Americans. He became prime minister again in 1782 and quickly recognised the independence of the United States, before dying suddenly after only fourteen weeks in office.

WEBSTER, NOAH (1758–1843)

Born to a farming family in Connecticut, Noah Webster studied at Yale and served briefly in the local militia. He graduated with a law degree but did not practise immediately, preferring to work as a teacher for a time. Finding most schools to be crowded and inefficient, bogged down by archaic English methods and stuffy textbooks, Webster resolved to develop new resources and approaches for American education; he also rejected the notion that American literature and arts must mimic those of England or hark back to Latin and Greek. In 1783 Webster published a textbook featuring Americanised spelling of common words; this was soon followed by a grammar book along similar lines. These texts would form the nucleus of *Webster's Dictionary*, the first American-English lexicon. Politically, Webster was a federalist, writing prolifically during the ratification debate and editing a federalist newspaper in New York.

INDEX

M

N

O

P

Q

R

S

T

U

V

W

Y

Z