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## Chapter 8

### America Secedes from the Empire

1775-1783

The Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in 1775. All 13 colonies were represented. The objective of the meeting was to draft a set of appeals to which the king would respond; independence was

still not a widely accepted goal.

### **Congress Drafts George Washington**

The Second Continental Congress selected George Washington to lead the Continental army.

### **Bunker Hill and Hessian Hirelings**

From April 1775 to July 1776, the colonists were mixed in their feelings for independence: some voiced a desire to mend differences, while others raised armies to fight the British.

In May 1775, a small American force lead by Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold captured the British garrisons at **Ticonderoga and Crown Point**.

In June 1775, the colonists captured **Bunker Hill**. The British took it back, but they had heavily casualties. In **July 1775**, the Second Continental Congress released the "**Olive Branch Petition**", which professed American loyalty to the king and begged to the king to stop future hostilities. The petition was rejected by the king. With the rejection, the Americans were forced to choose to fight to become independent or to submit to British rule and power.

In August 1775, King George III proclaimed that the colonies were in rebellion. He then hired German **Hessians** to bring order to the colonies.

### **The Abortive Conquest of Canada**

In October 1775, the **British burned Falmouth** (Portland), Maine. In the same month, colonists attacked Canada, hoping that they could add it as a 14th colony and remove it as a possible source for a British base. The attack failed when General Richard Montgomery was killed.

In January 1776, the **British burned the town of Norfolk, Virginia**

### **Thomas Paine Preaches Common Sense**

The Americans continued to **deny any intention of independence** because loyalty to the empire was deeply ingrained; many Americans continued to consider themselves apart of a transatlantic community in which the mother country of Britain played a leading role; colonial unity was poor; and open rebellion was dangerous.

Thomas Paine released a pamphlet called **Common Sense** in **1776**. It argued that the colonies had outgrown any need for English domination and that they should be given independence.

### **Paine and the Idea of "Republicanism"**

Thomas Paine called for the creation of a new kind of political society, specifically a **republic**, where power flowed from the people themselves. This was outlined in a pamphlet called the **Common Sense**.

### **Jefferson's Explanation of Independence**

At the Second Continental Congress, Richard Henry Lee proposed that the colonies declare their independence. Thomas Jefferson was appointed to draft up the **Declaration of Independence**. The Declaration of Independence was formally **approved** by Congress on **July 4, 1776**. The "declaration" was more of an "explanation" of why the colonists sought their independence.

### **Patriots and Loyalists**

During the War of Independence, the Loyalists were called "**Tories**" and the Patriots were called "**Whigs**." The American Revolution was a minority movement. Most colonists were apathetic or neutral. Patriot militias did a good job of winning the "hearts and minds" of the colonists.

The Loyalists made up just 16% of the American population. Many educated and wealthy people remained loyal to England. Loyalists were most numerous where the **Anglican church** was strongest. The **Loyalists** were well entrenched in **New York City, Charleston, Quaker Pennsylvania, and New Jersey**. They were least numerous in New England.

The **Patriots** were numerous where **Presbyterianism and Congregationalism** flourished - mostly in New England.

### **The Loyalist Exodus**

Before the Declaration of Independence, the Loyalists were not extensively persecuted. After the declaration, though, they were subjected to more ridicule, hangings, and imprisonment.

Many Loyalists fled to the British lines.

### General Washington at Bay

The **British** concentrated their forces in **New York City** instead of Boston because Boston was evacuated in March 1776.

In **1776**, General Washington and his men were overpowered by the British at the **Battle of Long Island**. Washington and his men escaped to Manhattan Island.

General William Howe was General Washington's adversary.

On **December 26, 1776**, Washington crossed the Delaware River to surprise and capture **1,000 Hessians** in **Trenton**.

### Burgoyne's Blundering Invasion

London officials developed a plan for capturing the vital **Hudson River valley in 1777**. It would sever New England from the rest of the states and paralyze the American cause. The main invading force, lead by General Burgoyne, would push down towards Lake Champlain from Canada. General Howe's troops in New York, if needed, could advance up the Hudson River to meet Burgoyne near Albany. The third force was commanded by colonel Barry St. Leger, who would come in from the west by way of Lake Ontario and the Mohawk Valley.

General Burgoyne was forced to surrender his entire command at **Saratoga on October 17, 1777** to American general Horatio Gates (**Burgoyne's Blunder**). This win made it possible for the Americans to receive much-needed **aid from France**. (Turning point in war.)

### Revolution in Diplomacy?

The French wanted to support the American quest for independence in the hopes that they could destabilize the British empire. The Continental Congress drafted a **Model Treaty** which dictated that the Americans would only have a **commercial** trading connection with the French (i.e. no political or military connections).

The British offered the Americans **home rule** after the British lost at the Battle of Saratoga. The French feared American-British reconciliation, so in **1778**, the **French made an open alliance** with the Americans. The French would join the fight against the British for American independence.

### The Colonial War Becomes a World War

Spain and Holland became allied against Britain in **1779**. Catherine the Great of Russia lead the creation of the **Armed Neutrality**, which passively allied the remaining neutral European countries against Britain. The British decided to evacuate Philadelphia and concentrate their strength in New York City.

### Blow and Counterblow

General Benedict Arnold turned a traitor against the Americans in 1780.

General Nathaniel Greene succeeded in clearing most British troops out of Georgia and South Carolina.

### The Land Frontier and the Sea Frontier

In **1784**, the Iroquois were forced to sign the **Treaty of Fort Stanwix**, which was the first treaty between the United States and an Indian nation. They ceded most of their land to the Americans.

George Rogers Clark: conceived the idea of capturing the British forts located in the Illinois country in 1778-1779.

John Paul Jones is known as the father of the navy. He employed the tactic of privateering.

**Privateering**: when privately owned and crewed vessels were authorized by a government during a wartime to attack and capture enemy vessels, men, cargo, etc; it diverted the enemy's manpower from the main war effort; it brought in needed gold, harassed the enemy, and raised American morale by providing victories in a time when victories were few.

### Yorktown and the Final Curtain

From 1780-1781, the U.S. government was nearly bankrupt.

British General Cornwallis retreated to the Chesapeake Bay at **Yorktown** to await seaborne supplies and reinforcements. Admiral de Grasse joined the Americans in an assault of Cornwallis via the sea. George Washington, along with Rochambeau's French army and Admiral de Grasse, cornered Cornwallis. He was forced to **surrender on October 19, 1781**.

**Peace at Paris**

In 1782, a Whig ministry (favorable to the Americans) replaced the Tory regime of Lord North.

**Conditions of the Treaty of Paris of 1783:**

- British formally recognized the independence of the United States.
  - Florida is given to Spain.
  - The independent American now consisted of territory stretching to the Mississippi on the west, to the Great Lakes on the north, and to Spanish Florida on the south.
  - Yankees were to retain a share in the fisheries of Newfoundland.
  - The Loyalists were to no longer be prosecuted.
  - Congress was to recommend to the state legislatures that confiscated Loyalist property be restored.
- The states vowed to put no lawful obstacles in the way of Loyalist property collection.

Ben Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay negotiated the peace terms with Britain.

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