

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Section 1: The Revolution Begins

FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

Delegates to the **First Continental Congress** were worried about the relationship between Great Britain and its American colonies. The delegates debated whether violence was avoidable. They encouraged the peaceful boycott of British goods but also began preparing for war. They drafted a Declaration of Rights, but King George refused to consider it. Colonists who chose to fight for independence were known as **Patriots**.

“SHOT HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD”

On April 19, 1775, 700 **Redcoats** set out for Concord. A British general sent the soldiers to destroy a weapons storehouse they thought was there. Three colonists rode out on horseback to warn that the British were coming. Seventy armed **minutemen** waited for the British at Lexington. To this day nobody knows who fired the first shot. The British killed eight minutemen, then went on to Concord where they destroyed a few buildings. In **reaction** the minutemen fired on the Redcoats. The British suffered many casualties and were forced to retreat.

SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

At the **Second Continental Congress** some delegates called for war while others wanted peace. The Congress named the Massachusetts militia the **Continental Army**. The army's commander was **George Washington**. Delegates signed the Olive Branch Petition asking King George to make peace. He would not consider it.

EARLY BATTLES

On June 17, 1775, the British in Boston found colonial forces dug in on Breed's Hill. When the British crossed the harbor in boats to take the hill, the colonists opened fire. The British took the hill on their third try. But the **Battle of Bunker Hill** proved the colonists could hold their own. Soon after, General Washington took command of the Continental Army in Boston. He set up cannons from Fort Ticonderoga to fire on the British. On March 7 the British retreated from Boston.

Section 2: Declaring Independence

PAINE'S COMMON SENSE

Common Sense was published anonymously, or without the name of its author, who was **Thomas Paine**. At this time the idea that citizens should pass laws made news. As word of the pamphlet spread throughout the colonies, it eventually sold about 500,000 copies. The pamphlet made a strong case for political and economic freedom. It supported the right to military self-defense. *Common Sense* changed the way many colonists viewed their king.

INDEPENDENCE IS DECLARED

The first point argued by **Thomas Jefferson** in the **Declaration of Independence** was that all men possess unalienable rights, or rights that cannot be denied. These rights include “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Jefferson also maintained that King George III had trampled on the colonists' rights by supporting unfair laws and wrongly meddling in colonial governments. In addition Jefferson argued that the colonies had the right to independence from Britain. He believed in the Enlightenment idea of the social contract. This idea says that citizens should agree to be governed only when rulers and governments support their rights. Jefferson said that King George III had violated the social contract, so the colonies should not obey his laws.

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress voted in favor of the Declaration of Independence. In approving the Declaration, the Congress finally broke away from Great Britain. Today we

celebrate the Fourth of July as the birthday of our nation.

Not everyone rejoiced over the approval of the Declaration. Patriots and **Loyalists** became divided. Sometimes family members were on opposite sides during the war. More than 50,000 Loyalists left the colonies during the Revolution.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Looking back, we realize that the Declaration paid no attention to many colonists. Abigail Adams, wife of delegate John Adams, tried to influence him to include women in the Declaration. It did not happen. Enslaved African Americans also had no rights under the Declaration. Slavery was legal in all colonies in July 1776. The Revolutionary War would not end the battle over slavery, even though New England states moved to end it by the 1780s.

Section 3: Struggle for Liberty

SUPPORTING THE WAR EFFORT

Life in the army was hard, but the Patriots knew they were fighting for an important cause. More than 230,000 mostly young men served in the Continental Army. After the British promised to free any slaves that fought for them, the Continental Army allowed free African Americans to serve. Women played an important role in the war by helping to supply the army and serving as messengers, nurses, and spies.

DEFEATS AND VICTORIES

At first the Continental Army lost several battles. Then the Patriots won an important victory. British General Howe, who thought the rebellion would soon be over, left New Jersey in the hands of Hessian **mercenaries**. The Patriots surprised the Hessians and won the **Battle of Trenton**.

British General John Burgoyne planned to cut off New England from the other colonies. His **strategy** required perfect timing. The Patriots surrounded Burgoyne and won the **Battle of Saratoga**, which was the turning point of the war.

HELP FROM EUROPE

Britain's enemies, France and Spain, began to help the Patriots. Holland also helped the Patriots. The **Marquis de Lafayette**, **Baron Friedrich von Steuben**, and **Bernardo de Gálvez** joined the war on the Patriots' side.

WINTER AT VALLEY FORGE

The winter of 1777 turned brutally cold and snowy. General Washington settled his troops at Valley Forge, where they bore hardships with courage and drilled to become better soldiers.

WAR AT SEA AND IN THE WEST

The small Continental Navy sunk hundreds of British ships. **John Paul Jones** fought a battle with the British in which his ship took heavy damage. He fought on, and the British ship surrendered. In the West, **George Rogers Clark** led Patriots against British trading villages and Fort Sackville. Clark's campaigns hurt British support in the West.

Section 4: Independence!

WAR IN THE SOUTH

The war in the northern colonies did not go as the British government had hoped. The northern Patriots were tough to beat. The British moved the war into the South, where they believed large groups of Loyalists would help them win. General Henry Clinton led the British troops. The British plan worked at first.

The war in the South proved especially nasty. Patriots and Loyalists engaged in direct fighting. The British wiped out crops, farm animals, and property. Georgia fell to the British. Next, the British conquered the port of Charleston, South Carolina. The Patriots failed to retake Camden, South Carolina.

Patriot General Nathanael Greene arrived to shape up the army. Meanwhile, under the leadership of **Francis Marion**, the Southern patriots used surprise attacks to cut off British communication and supply lines. The British could not capture Marion and his men.

BATTLE OF YORKTOWN

The Patriots were in trouble in early 1781. They had little money for paying soldiers and buying supplies. The British held most of the South as well as Philadelphia and New York.

The Continental Army began to pressure the British in the Carolinas. General Charles Cornwallis moved his 7,200 men to Yorktown, Virginia. In New York, General Washington combined his troops with French troops commanded by **Comte de Rochambeau**. Washington marched his force to Virginia in hopes of trapping Cornwallis in Yorktown.

With 16,000 soldiers, Washington's force surrounded Cornwallis. For weeks the French-American force wore down the British troops. Finally, the British surrendered. The Patriots captured 8,000 British prisoners at the **Battle of Yorktown**.

THE TREATY OF PARIS

Britain lost most of its army at Yorktown and could not afford a new one. So Great Britain and America began peace talks. Delegates took more than two years to reach a peace agreement.

The Treaty of Paris of 1783 gave the United States independence from Great Britain. It also created America's borders. In a separate treaty, Britain returned Florida to the Spanish. The Patriots' courage had won the Revolutionary War.