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JAY TREATY RATIFIED

JOHN ADAMS ELECTED PRESIDENT

DEATH OF WASHINGTON

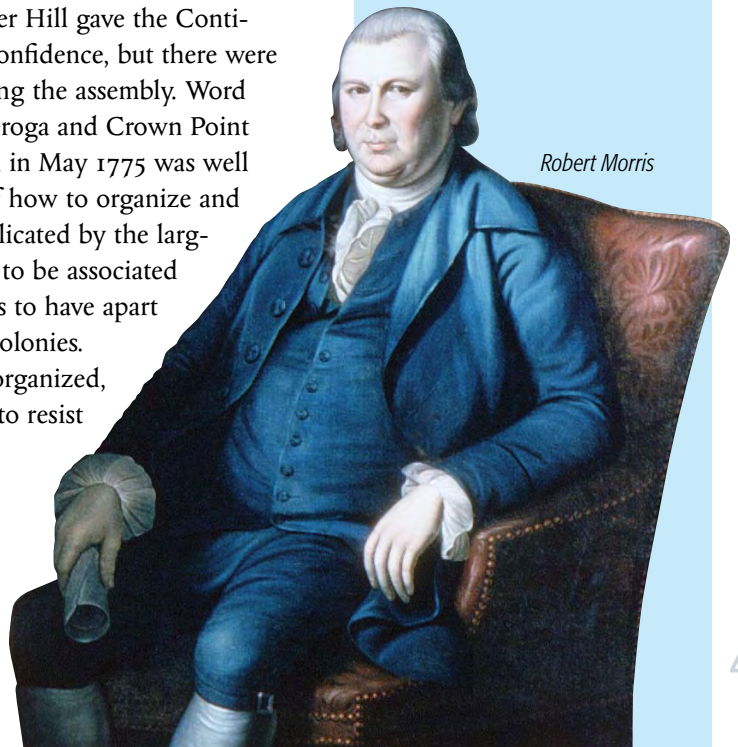
C H A P T E R

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the Push For Independence

A Cut Above the Rest

The victory at Breed's Hill and Bunker Hill gave the Continental Congress a small measure of confidence, but there were still many undecided issues confronting the assembly. Word of American victories at Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point just days after the convention opened in May 1775 was well received. But the pressing problem of how to organize and supply a Continental army was complicated by the larger problem of how the colonies were to be associated and what actual powers Congress was to have apart from the direction of the individual colonies. How would this new association be organized, and on what basis would it continue to resist the British Empire?



Robert Morris

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BOSTON MASSACRE

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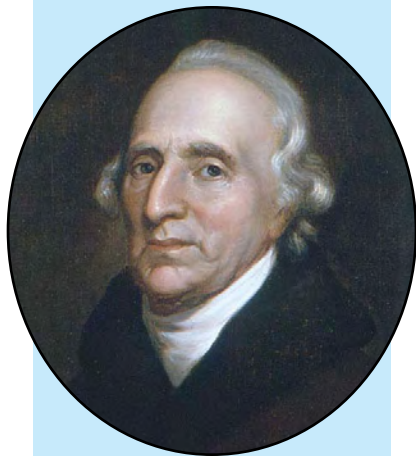
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TREATY OF PARIS

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Carroll of Carrollton

At the early age of eight, Charles Carroll was sent off to France to attend a Jesuit college. After graduating college at seventeen, Carroll continued his studies in Europe until he returned home at the age of twenty-eight. Despite his extensive European education, Carroll identified with the American Patriot cause at once. He was an early advocate for armed resistance and eventual separation from England and wrote anonymous newspaper articles protesting England's taxation of the colonies without representation. Carroll was a member of the Continental Congress and was the only signer of the Declaration of Independence who was Roman Catholic. He served in the Maryland Senate and in the U.S. Senate.



Charles Carroll

The men who gathered in Philadelphia were up to the task of answering these questions. They represented the new type of man that only America could build: religious and tolerant; loyal, yet independent; cautious, but determined; deeply principled and also practical. The names of these men today are a roster of the heroes of liberty: Sam Adams, John Adams and John Hancock from Massachusetts; Ben Franklin and Robert Morris (1734–1806) of Pennsylvania; Roger Sherman (1721–1793) and Oliver Wolcott (1726–1797) of Connecticut; George Washington and **Richard Henry Lee** (1732–1794) of Virginia; **Charles Carroll** (1735–1815) from Maryland, and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, who later arrived to replace Peyton Randolph.

These were men already known for their leadership in the colonies; most had been involved in the struggle for liberty since the Stamp Act crisis a decade earlier. America needed men such as these to navigate the colonies through the turbulent waters of the struggling resistance to tyranny and to chart a course towards a future of freedom.

Busy Lee

Richard Henry Lee (right) protested the Stamp Act, supported the measures of Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson, and helped form the Committees of Correspondence. As a member of the Continental Congress (1774–1780, 1784–1787), he was active in promoting an agreement to halt the importation of slaves. He was on the committee that placed Washington in charge of the Continental Army and introduced the motion that led to the Declaration of Independence. Later, he was instrumental in the passage of the Bill of Rights and authored the Tenth Amendment.



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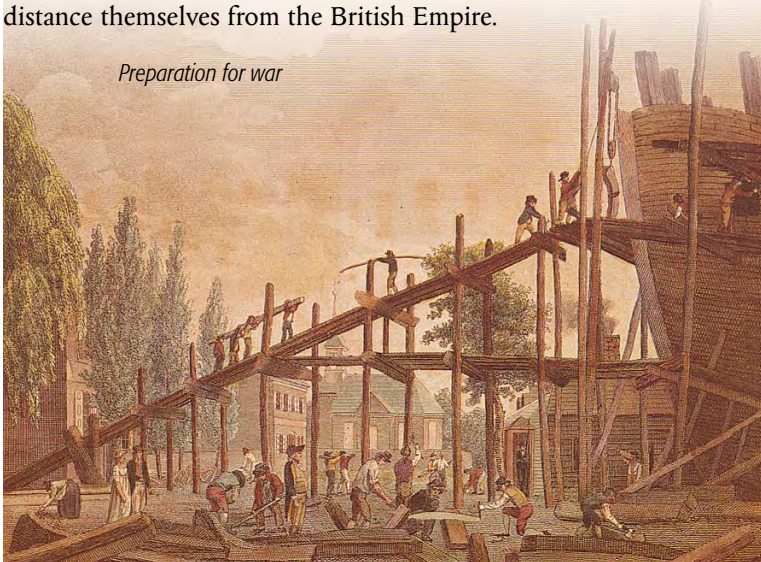
DEATH OF WASHINGTON

British Counterparts

While the leaders of the Continental Congress were far from moral perfection, they carried out their offices in a dignified manner and conducted themselves accordingly. Their character and ethics stood in marked contrast to the government officials who devised the British colonial policies for America. The two men who administered the land and sea wars for King George, **George Sackville** (1716–1785), the Secretary of State for the American colonies, and **John Montagu** (1719–1795), Earl of Sandwich and First Lord of the Admiralty, were not known for being morally straight when it came to the London social scene. One contemporary described Sandwich as “mischievous as a monkey and as lecherous as a goat.”

While the British conducted the war against America, the depravity and lack of ethics of its government ministers and officers in the military high command harmed the morale among the British troops and regularly compromised the military mission they were conducting. As the Americans increased their resolve to fight rather than submit to British oppression, the reputation of the British officials would only inflame colonial resentment all the more and give them additional reasons to distance themselves from the British Empire.

Preparation for war



Earl of Sandwich



The Culinary Earl

According to legend, John Montagu created the first sandwich. Montagu devoted much of his life to playing cards, and it was said that he was so addicted to the pleasures of gambling that he refused to leave the gaming table for meals. It was this habit that led the Earl to teach his servants to put meat, cheese, and other ingredients between two slices of bread, thus creating “the sandwich.” Whether or not this story is accurate, the sandwich was named for the Earl.

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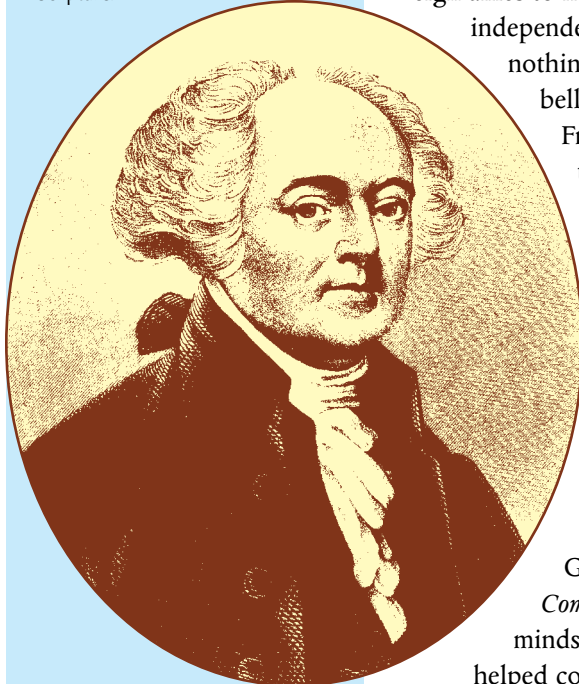
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Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos

Before Thomas Paine published *Common Sense*, men like John Adams had read *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, or *A Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants*, first published in Latin in 1579. The *Vindiciae* asked and answered a series of related questions from a Protestant perspective: Are subjects bound to obey princes? Is lawful to resist a ruler who violates the law of God? Is it lawful to resist a ruler who is oppressing or ruining the country. The author of the *Vindiciae* had “a profound acquaintance with Scripture.”



John Adams

Best Seller Moves Fence Sitters

In January of 1776, **Thomas Paine** (1737–1809), an Englishman who had been in America only two years, published a pamphlet entitled *Common Sense*. In three months, 120,000 copies of this electrifying little pamphlet of 46 pages had been sold and widely circulated. Its message was simple: America was destined to become a great independent power, but it needed to declare independence immediately to win foreign allies to her cause. Without independence, the conflict was

nothing more than a colonial re-

bellion, and America would never gain support from France and Spain. But even more powerful than the argument was the fiery rhetoric that flowed from Paine’s pen.

While in favor of independence, John Adams wrote a response criticizing *Common Sense* for its revolutionary tone, which he thought bordered on anarchy. For Adams, Paine’s work was “so democratical, without any restraint or even an attempt at any equilibrium or counterpoise [counterbalance], that it must produce confusion and every evil work.”

But the pamphlet’s popularity encouraged George Washington to write to a friend, “I find *Common Sense* is working a powerful change in the minds of men.” The timely appearance of this pamphlet helped convince many undecided colonists to favor cutting all ties with Britain.



Thomas Paine

FRENCH REVOLUTION

WASHINGTON ELECTED SECOND TERM

WHISKEY REBELLION

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

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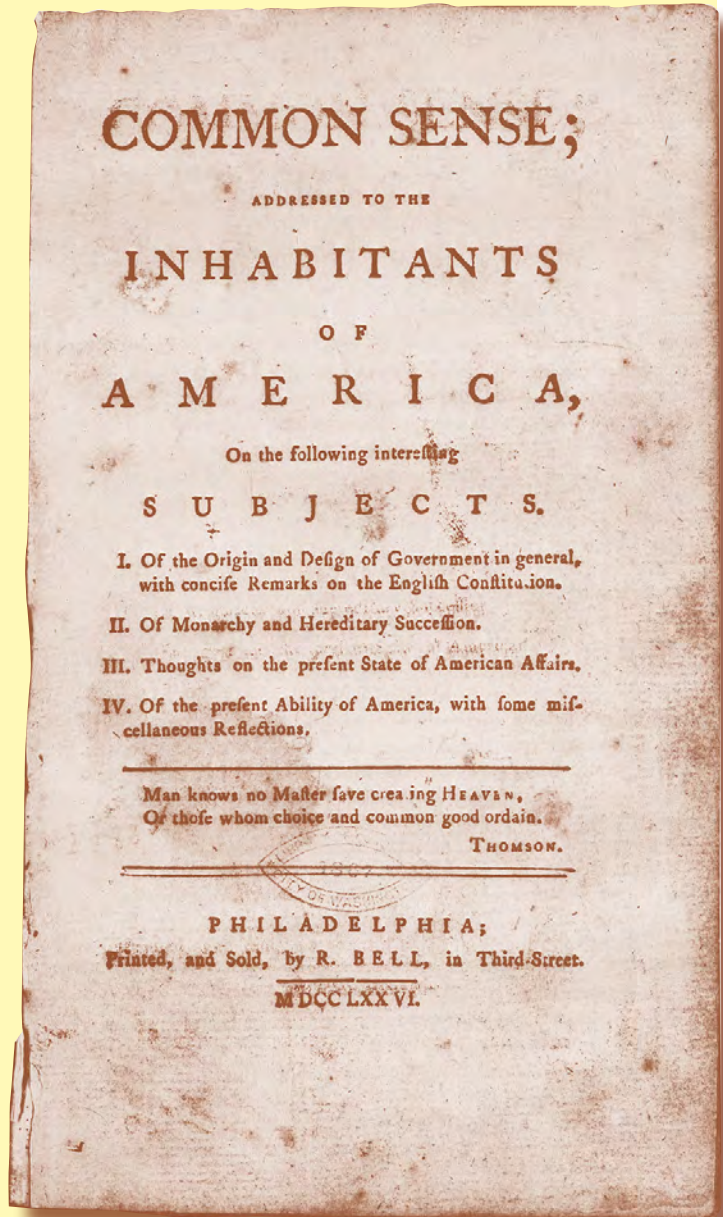
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Scripture Sense

Paine argued in *Common Sense* that “government by kings was first introduced into the world by the Heathens, from which the children of Israel copied the custom. . . . As the exalting of one man so greatly above the rest cannot be justified on the equal rights of nature, so neither can it be defended on the authority of scripture; for the will of the Almighty, as declared by Gideon [Judges 8:22–23] and the prophet Samuel [1 Sam. 8], expressly disapproves of government by kings. All anti-monarchical parts of scripture have been smoothly glossed over in monarchical governments, but they undoubtedly merit the attention of countries which have their governments yet to form. ‘Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s’ is the scriptural doctrine of courts, yet it is no support of monarchical government, for the Jews at that time were without a king, and in a state of vassalage to the Romans.” Paine includes an extended discussion of Judges 8:22–23 where he describes “the King of heaven” to be Israel’s “proper sovereign.” He then spends several pages quoting, discussing, and making application of the importance of 1 Samuel 8 to the issue of government in his day. It was Paine’s *biblical* arguments that helped the colonists decide for independence.



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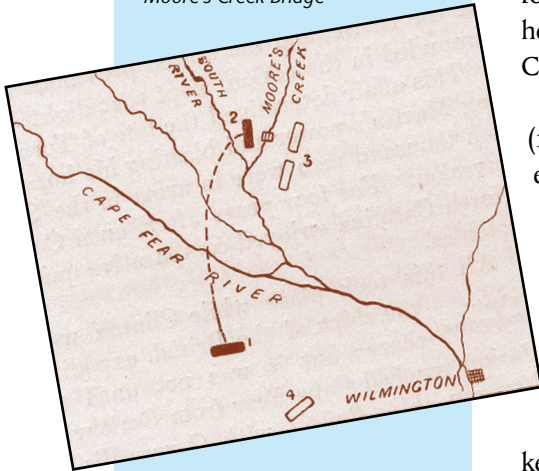
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Moore's Creek Bridge



Governor's Palace,
Williamsburg, Virginia



American Defense in the South

General Charles Lee (1731–1782) left Boston with troops to prevent British general Henry Clinton from landing an assault force somewhere in Virginia or the Carolinas. He established headquarters in Williamsburg awaiting word about where Clinton's force was going to land.

As Lee waited in Virginia, the royal governor Josiah Martin (1737–1786) of North Carolina, convinced that there were enough Loyalists in his colony to defeat the Patriots, raised several Loyalist regiments to be commanded by British officers. By the middle of February, about 1,500 clashed with a smaller band of Patriots at Moore's Creek Bridge on February 27, 1776. After three minutes, it was all over; the Patriots were victorious. The following day, the 800 remaining Loyalists surrendered, giving up their rifles, muskets, swords, wagons, and a substantial amount of gold. The Americans had broken the back of their British opposition in North Carolina, and this battle encouraged the North Carolina Provincial Congress to work for complete independence.

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Men in Skirts

Raised by England in 1739 and designated as the 42nd Foot in 1751, the regiment fought in the French and Indian War and was heavily engaged throughout the War of Independence. A true highland regiment was uniformed in the kilt and plaid, but the uniform proved unsuitable and was eventually exchanged for white linen trousers.



American Highlanders Support Team George

Many of the Loyalists of North Carolina were Scottish **Highlanders**, descendants of Scots who had come to America years earlier. To those Highlanders who had hoped that by coming to America they might escape civil wars, the outbreak of the War of Independence must have been a grim disappointment. Their allegiance over the years had once again shifted in support of the British king. They were known for their fearless battle tactics. The Highlanders liked to fight close up (hand-to-hand combat). It has been said that the Scots greased themselves, cut their hair, and shaved their beards so the enemy could not hold onto them in battle.



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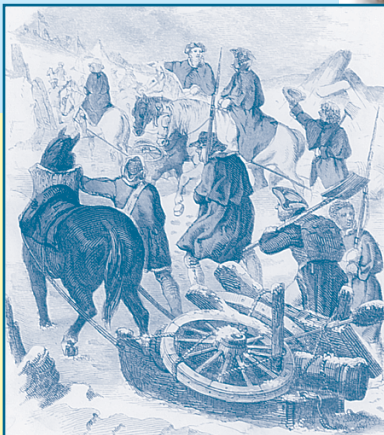
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Jesus Christ and the Founding of America

On March 16, 1776, Congress called for a “day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer” throughout the colonies. The people were called on to bewail their “ manifold sins and transgressions, and, by a sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease his righteous displeasure, and through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain his pardon and forgiveness; humbly imploring his assistance to frustrate the cruel purposes of our unnatural enemies.”

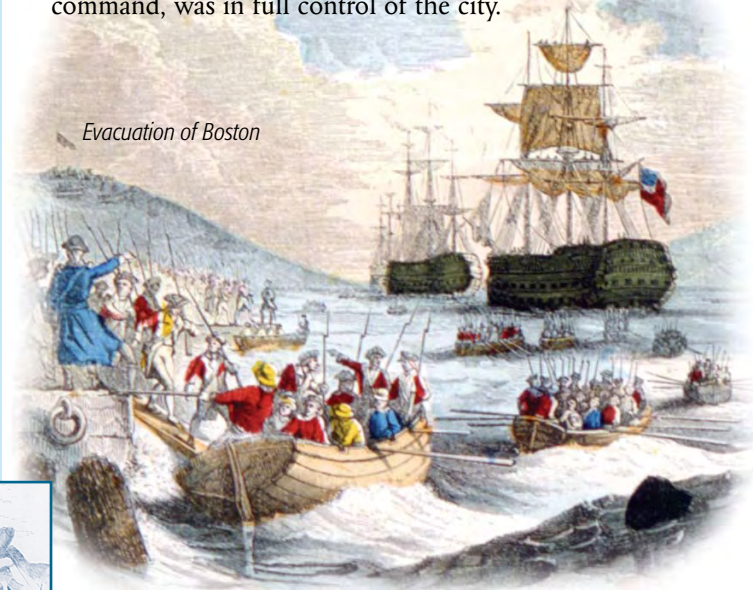
Cannons being hauled



Patriots Enter Boston

In March 1776, the Americans seriously threatened the British positions in Boston when they placed fifty cannons on **Dorchester Heights** overlooking Boston Harbor and the British troops. General Howe, who had replaced General Gage as commander, realized he was at a serious disadvantage. He negotiated the withdrawal of his British troops along with 1,000 Tory citizens in return for not burning down the city. Loading up more than 125 ships, General Howe and the British sailed away from Boston, and the Continental Army, under General Washington’s command, was in full control of the city.

Evacuation of Boston



Worth the Effort

The cannons captured at Fort Ticonderoga were transported to Boston under the supervision of **Colonel Henry Knox** (1750–1806) during the winter of 1775–1776. Knox started out as a Boston bookseller with no formal education but had reaped enough technical knowledge from manuals to become Washington’s artillery commander. Knox had wood sleds built to hold the cannons, which were dragged through the snow for over 300 miles. These captured cannons played a major role in forcing the British to evacuate Boston.

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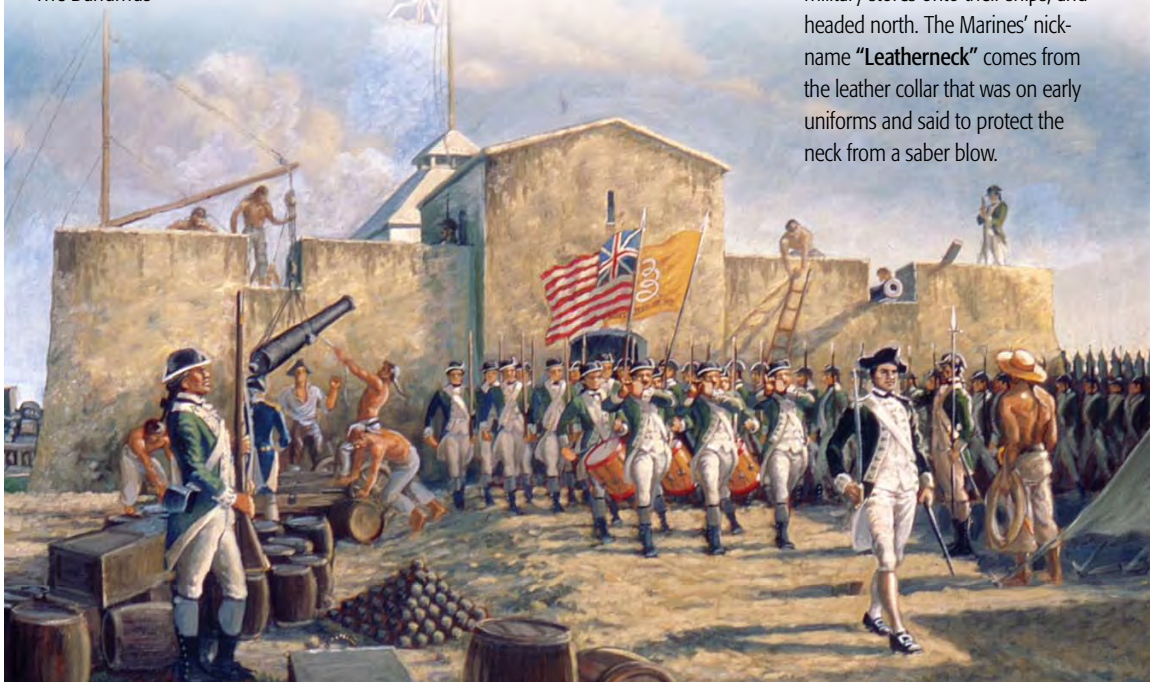
DEATH OF WASHINGTON

Moving Closer to Independence

General Washington's bloodless victory at Boston had freed New England from the British threat and strengthened the determination of the Continental Army. The army took heart in the valiant defense of the South under General Lee and the state militias. These substantive victories gave the Continental Congress the confidence that the battle against the most powerful nation in the world could be won.

By the end of March 1776, South Carolina had adopted a temporary constitution, effectively ending British control of the colony. The Fourth Provincial Congress of North Carolina approved the **Halifax Resolves** on April 12, which instructed its delegates in Philadelphia to "concur with the delegates of the other colonies in declaring independency."

"Continental Marines Raid Fort Montague, The Bahamas"



Leathernecks Hit the Beach

The Committee of Safety of the Second Continental Congress created the Continental Marines on November 19, 1775, to be "enlisted and commissioned to serve for and during the present war between Great Britain and the colonies." The Marines were part of the Continental Army. "Don't tread on me" was their motto, and a rattlesnake was their symbol. The first Marine landing assault was made at Nassau, the Bahamas, March 3, 1776. The Marines captured Fort Montague in a bloodless battle and the next day captured Fort Nassau, arrested the British governor, loaded the island's military stores onto their ships, and headed north. The Marines' nickname "**Leatherneck**" comes from the leather collar that was on early uniforms and said to protect the neck from a saber blow.

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George Mason

On May 15, 1776, the Virginia Convention passed a motion to direct its delegates to propose a resolution to the Continental Congress that would declare the thirteen colonies free and independent states. The battle had been hard-fought in Virginia between those who favored independence and those who wanted to remain loyal to the crown. The change in loyalty was brought about by such men as Patrick Henry, George Mason (1725–1792), James Madison, and Edmund Pendleton (1721–1803) who, when elected to the Convention, persuaded it to vote in favor of complete independence and called for a union of the states to pursue that goal. Rhode Island and Massachusetts quickly followed suit. John Adams encouraged all of the states to take measures to form their own independent governments.

Two days after the vote in Virginia, John Witherspoon, who had assumed a seat in the Continental Congress for New Jersey, preached a fast-day sermon at Princeton that encouraged his listeners to take hope in the providence of God despite the circumstances and to acknowledge that God had been protecting the colonies in their struggle for freedom. Apologizing for the political nature of his discourse, he said, “You are all my witnesses, that this is the first time of my introducing any political subject into the pulpit. At this season however, it is not only lawful but necessary, and I willingly embrace the opportunity of declaring my opinion without any hesitation, that the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature.”



Edmund Pendleton

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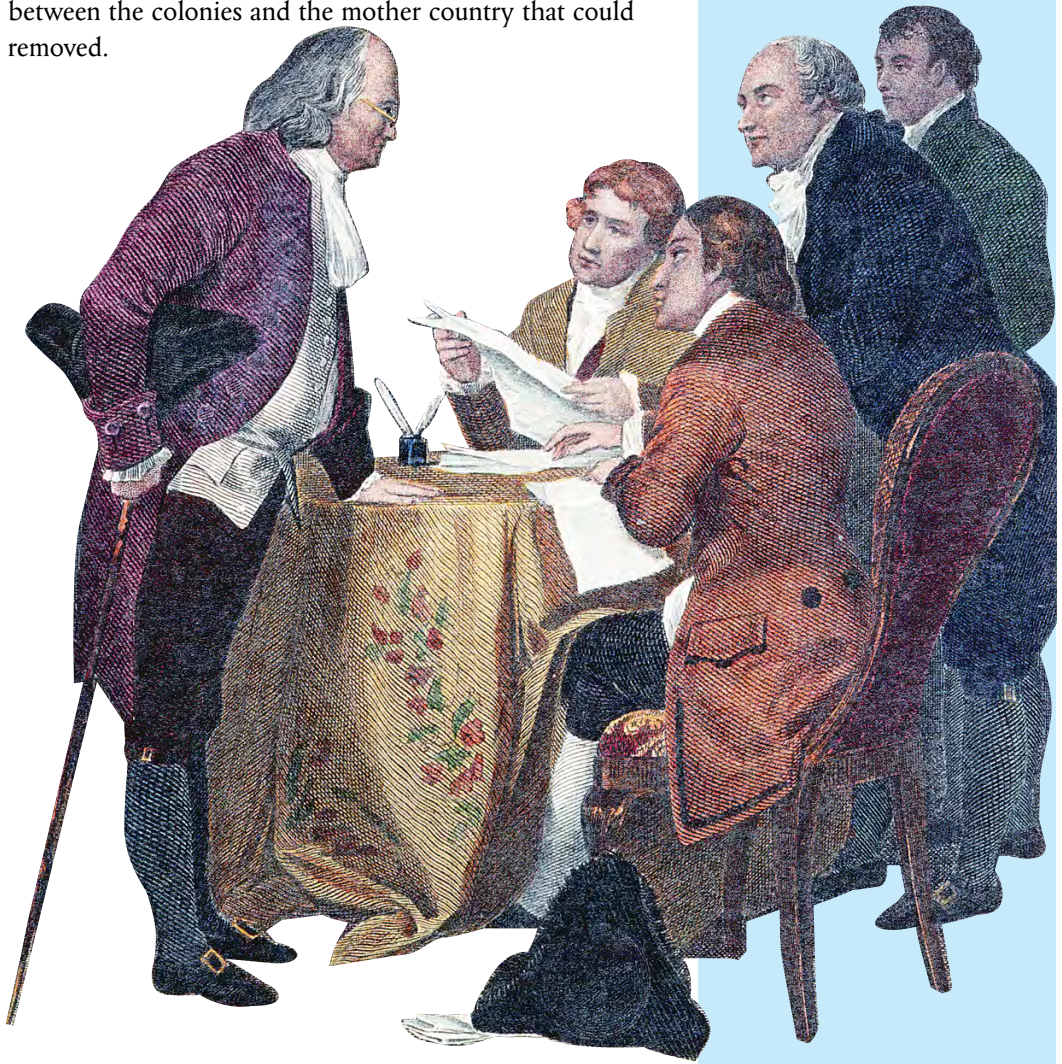
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Virginia Takes the Lead

Richard Henry Lee of Virginia made a motion on June 7, 1776, declaring that the United Colonies were free and independent states and that the political connection between the colonies and Great Britain should be dissolved. Not all members were convinced and needed additional time to consider the matter.

The Continental Congress appointed a committee to draw up a declaration of independence outlining the reasons why the colonies were taking such a momentous step. The committee went to work on a draft detailing the grievances against the king. England's policies toward the Americans had driven a wedge between the colonies and the mother country that could not be removed.

The Declaration Committee



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FOR STUDY

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CHAPTER 38:

The Push For Independence

Terms

Common Sense
 Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos
 Moore's Creek Bridge
 Highlanders
 Dorchester Heights
 Halifax Resolves
 Leatherneck

People

Richard Henry Lee
 Charles Carroll
 George Sackville
 John Montagu
 Thomas Paine
 General Charles Lee
 Josiah Martin
 Colonel Henry Knox
 John Witherspoon

Buoyed by American armed success at Breed's Hill and Bunker Hill, the members of the Continental Congress began to grapple with the many hard tasks facing them. How would they organize and supply the Continental Army? What powers did the Congress actually have over the colonies as a whole? Certainly there was no dearth of talent since they had such men as George Washington, Roger Sherman, Thomas Jefferson, and Richard Henry Lee. Doubts about whether Tories might gain control of North Carolina were settled with a Patriot victory over Tory forces at Moore's Creek Bridge in February of 1776. The following month, The British abandoned Boston to Washington's forces. In May, Virginia instructed its delegates to push for independence and John Witherspoon preached a fast-day sermon at Princeton calling on his hearers to trust in God's continuing providence to the colonies in their struggle for freedom. In June, the Continental Congress appointed a committee to write a declaration of independence.

Discussion Questions

1. How important was Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*, in convincing Americans that independence was the right course of action?
2. Why did John Adams *not* like Paine's work?
3. What was the role of Edmund Pendleton at the Virginia Convention?
4. What was the character, generally speaking, of British officials discussed in this chapter?

Optional Enrichment Projects

1. Construct or draw a model of the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge in North Carolina.
2. The Continental Congress called for a "day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer" on March 16, 1776. Find a copy of this proclamation, memorize it, and recite it to your parents or teacher.
3. Write at least three pages on the life of Richard Henry Lee.