THE BEGINNING OF THE REPUBLIC 1775–1825

by
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Cover painting *Washington at Yorktown* courtesy of Library of Congress.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Independence is the main theme of this 50-year period of American history. It begins with the year in which an increasing number of Americans were seriously considering the desirability of independence, and ends shortly after the proclaiming of the Monroe Doctrine. In between lie the declaring of independence, the War for Independence, the recognition of the independence of the states by the British, the acknowledgement of American independence by foreign nations, the continuing struggle during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars of the United States to steer clear of European disputes, the acquiring of vast new territories by which the United States increased the surrounding area free from foreign control, and the War of 1812, which has been called by some historians the Second War for Independence. While there were many other momentous events and developments during these years, independence provides a unitary theme for the period.

The independence theme, however, involved more than national independence from European powers. There was the question also of the independence of the states. First, there was the struggle of the states to establish their independence from Britain. During and after that came the effort of the states to retain a portion or all of their independence from the government of the United States. This led to two major efforts at constitution making. The first was the Articles of Confederation, in which the states retained their independence by joining in a league or, as they styled it, a confederation. The government of the confederation was almost entirely dependent on the states. The second effort produced the Constitution of 1787—our Constitution—, in which the states yielded up a portion of their governmental jurisdiction to the government of the union. That is not to say that the question of the relationship between the states and the United States was finally settled in 1787 or 1789—when the Constitution went into effect. On the contrary, it remained a vital issue throughout this 50-year period and continues to enliven American politics down to the present. At any rate, the independence of the states was a part of the theme of independence over the years under consideration.

There is a sense, too, in which individual and family independence

constitutes a part of the theme of independence during these formative years. Certainly, the disestablishment of the churches was a measure favoring individual and family independence. The removal of government controls over the disposal of land also enhanced individual independence. Where slaves were freed, as in northeastern states, or where slavery was prohibited, as in the Northwest Territory, individual and family independence was expanded. More broadly, the limiting and restraining of governments, a characteristic activity of this period, worked to provide breadth for individual independence.

But individual independence should not be stretched to make it appear identical with individual liberty, and it is much more important that national independence not be confused with individual liberty. It sometimes happens that a colonial revolt will result in both national independence and increased protections of individual liberty. It happened in America in the 1770s and 1780s. But it hardly follows that one will lead to the other. In the 20th century there have been colonial revolutions in many lands. Often, they have been promoted and defended under the banner of freedom. In fact, 20th century revolutions have usually resulted in one party rule, dictatorship, and tyranny, even those that did achieve national independence. However desirable national independence may be, it is something quite different and separable from freedom.

However, the founding of the American republic is closely tied to individual liberty. That was so not only because the leaders proclaimed that British oppressive acts endangered liberty and it was made the cause of the revolt, but also when they gained the opportunity they restrained their governments in order to establish liberty. Thus, the quest for and establishment of liberty is one of the themes of this period. Indeed, the story of the revolt by the American colonists from England and the establishment of their own governments is one of the major epochs in the advance of human liberty. Although Americans were not the first to conceive of the idea of limiting government, they went further in erecting safeguards against government oppression than had been done before. They had both the opportunity to establish their own governments and a much clearer than usual understanding of the dangers of government to liberty.

It is not going too far to assert that there is an epic quality to the years of the founding and the early beginnings of the American republic. They are the centerpiece of American history. What went before is prologue; what came after is more than epilogue, but it has been conditioned and may well be judged by what the Founders wrought. The political foundations of these United States were laid during these years and the future course of America charted. Strip the years 1775-1825

from American history and what went before and came after loses much of its meaning. It is well, then, to think of these years as the American epic.

Strictly speaking, of course, these years do not quite comprise a classic epic. An epic, essentially, is a "poetic composition in which a series of heroic achievements or events, usually of a hero, is dealt with at length as a continuous narrative in elevated style." The models for the epic in Western Civilization are the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the great narrative poems attributed to Homer. Epics frequently have as their subject the founding of a city, a nation, or the coming together under a single rule of a people. Most often, they have to do with legends and myths, with early accounts of a people that go back before any precise historical record, accounts that were often passed along from one generation to another by word of mouth.

But this serves mainly to point up the differences between the founding of the United States and most countries which had preceded it in history. The origins of most of the European nations are available to us mainly in myths and legends, leavened by a few chronicles and other references. Little enough is known, for example, of the coming of the Anglo-Saxon peoples to what then became England, much less about their forebears on the continent. The establishment of English monarchy is, for us, a tangled web of chronicle, legend, lore, and historical glimpses of such shadowy figures as Ethelred the Redeless. Even more so was this the case with Rome and Greece, and it is only somewhat less so with France and Spain.

These United States, by contrast, came into being in what are for us modern times, with the abundant paraphernalia of literary records, events substantiated from many independent sources, minutes of meetings, court records, and printed books. There is not the slightest doubt that the familiar names associated with the founding of the United States belonged to actual persons, and even the legends about some of them have been subjected to minute inquiries in later times. All this makes for rough going for epic poets, of course. Prosaic factual materials are not the readiest grist for the mills of poets. Heroes have great difficulty surviving the probing of their lives by modern biographical techniques. Elegant language requires an informing vision which has not fared well since the onset of the naturalistic outlook in the 19th century. The prose of professional historians has replaced epic poetry; irreducible facts which will stand careful scrutiny have tended to supplant elegantly worded narrative. We have, however, gained from that exact knowledge often at the expense of impoverishment of the spirit.

Even so, there are the makings of an epic in the men, events, documents, and developments of these years. The rudiments of the stuff of

epics can be found in the bold statements, heroic pronouncements, and measured declarations of this period: "Give me liberty or give me death"; the midnight ride of Paul Revere, warning that "The Redcoats are coming"; "Taxation without representation is tyranny"; Nathan Hale's "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country"; the Declaration of Independence's resounding "We hold these Truths to be self evident...."; "We have not yet begun to fight"; George Washington's farewell, "Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment." Thomas Jefferson's ringing description of the sum of good government in his First Inaugural Address: "Still one thing more fellow-citizens—a wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned." The language was often measured prose, but the breadth of the vision provided the poetic gloss.

An unusual crop of men peopled this era, among them both major and minor characters who would fit well amidst the elegant language of an epic: James Otis, Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams, John Dickinson, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, John Hancock, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Gouverneur Morris, Horatio Gates, Baron von Steuben, Marquis de Lafayette, James Madison, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, John Marshall, and many, many others who have well been called Founding Fathers.

Many of the events and documents of this period have a symbolic ring to them, too, symbolic of the coming into being and growth of the United States. Among the events are Lexington and Concord, the meeting of the Second Continental Congress, the declaring of independence, the Battle of Saratoga, the Franco-American Alliance, the Battle of Yorktown, the Treaty of Paris, the Constitutional Convention, the XYZ Affair, the Purchase of Louisiana, the Battle of New Orleans, the Acquisition of Florida, and the Monroe Doctrine. The period is studded with momentous documents: the *Novanglus Letters*, the Olive Branch Petition, *Summary View of the Rights of British America, Common Sense,* the Declaration of Independence, *The Crisis,* the Articles of Confederation, the Virginia Bill of Religious Liberty, the Constitution, the *Federalist,* the Bill of Rights, Hamilton's Report on Manufactures, Washington's Farewell Address, the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions, and others.

What gives dramatic character to any series of episodes which make up an epic is conflict. Of conflicts, there were more than enough during these years: Parliament versus colonial assemblies, King against Amer-

ican congresses, the opposition of loyalists to patriots, Redcoats against Continentals, Federalists versus anti-Federalists, the partisan conflict between Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans, the republican principle versus monarchy, nationalists versus state's-righters, and European domination versus self-determination in the New World.

What takes these men, events, documents, developments, and conflicts out of the ordinary and raises them to epic proportions are the great ideas which informed and enlivened them. Professor Clinton Rossiter has noted the habit the people of this time had "of 'recurring to first principles,' of appealing to basic doctrines....Few men were willing to argue about a specific issue...without first calling upon rules of justice that were considered to apply to all men everywhere." The following are some of these ideas: natural law, natural rights, balance of power, separation of powers, limited government, freedom of conscience, free trade, federalism, and republican forms of government. As Rossiter says, "The great political philosophy of the Western world enjoyed one of its proudest seasons in this time of resistance and revolution."[1] To which should be added, it had its finest season in the laying of the political foundations during the constitution-making years.

Perhaps the greatest wonder of all during these years is what these Americans wrought out of revolution. The modern era has had revolutions aplenty, and then some. All too often they have followed what is by now a familiar pattern, that is, great proclamations of liberty and fraternity, the casting off of the old rules and restrictions, the subsequent loosening of authority, the disintegration of society, and the turning to a dictator to impose a more confining order. Though some have tried to tell the story of early America along such lines, the interpretations are not only strained, but also do not explain the American achievements. Many things help to explain this, but one thing is essential to any explanation. Americans did not cut themselves off from their past experience, from ideas and practices of long standing, or from older traditions and institutions as so many revolutionists have done. In their reconstruction they relied extensively upon ancient and modern history and that which had come down to them through the ages. What separates their accomplishment from so many abortive revolutions is that these men brought to a fertile junction their heritage—which contained several great streams, especially the Classical, Christian, and English—, their experience, and contemporary ideas. The Founders stood on the shoulders of giants, and their own determination and ingenuity raised them to even greater heights.

Chapter 2

Independence

...In this state of extreme danger, we have no alternative left but an abject submission to the will of those overbearing tyrants, or a total separation from the Crown and Government of Great Britain, *uniting and exerting the strength of all* America *for defence, and forming alliances with foreign Powers for commerce and aid in war:—Wherefore, appealing to the Searcher of hearts for the sincerity of former declarations expressing our desire to preserve the connection with that nation, and that we are driven from that inclination by their wicked councils, and the eternal law of self-preservation.*

—Preamble of the Virginia Convention, May 15, 1776.

Resolved, *That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.*

—Resolution by Richard Henry Lee, introduced in the Continental Congress, June 7, 1776.

Chronology

September 1774—Suffolk Resolves of First Continental Congress.

October 1774—Formation of Continental Association.

March 1775—New England Restraining Act.

April 1775—Battles of Lexington and Concord.

May 1775—Second Continental Congress Convenes.

June 1775—Battle of Bunker Hill.

July 1775—Olive Branch Petition to George III.

January 1776—Publication of *Common Sense.*

July 1776—Declaration of Independence.

September 1776—Congress appoints Ministers to France.

December 1776—Washington's Victory at Trenton.

November 1777—Congress approves Articles of Confederation.

The colonies did not move quickly to declare their independence from Britain. They did not take that step until more than a dozen years after the first provocation. It was more than a year after the first battles of the war before they acted decisively. Many months elapsed between the time of George Washington's appointment as commander-in-chief, after armies were encamped against one another, and even after the colonists launched expeditions against British forces that the fateful move was made. In fact, Washington and his officers still toasted George III and professed their allegiance to him during the winter of 1775-1776 when they were in camp against his army. There is much evidence that many colonists clung to the British connection as long as they could honorably do so.

On its face, this was strange behavior. It is easy enough to understand why the colonists did not assert their independence until 1774. After all, until the passage of the Coercive Acts by Parliament in 1774 the British had made concessions in the face of colonial resistance. In practice, they had backed down from the hard line they had taken in theory about their power to tax the colonies. Moreover, there were well-placed Englishmen, especially in the House of Commons, who took the colonial side each time, up to the very time when independence had been declared. Thus, there was reason to hope that the British might move once again to compose the differences.

There was more to the delay than that, however. There were a few people who would have favored independence before 1774. Certainly by 1775 the number was increasing, but only events and a shift in opinion would provide the backing for a revolt. That is not to question the sincerity of colonial professions of attachment for Britain. Both interest and sentiment were engaged in the connection. All real property in America traced its ownership origins to grants made by the monarch. Break the attachment, and the security of property would be open to question. The British roots of most colonists was a telling argument against a precipitate break. Moreover, if the revolt failed, those involved in it would be rebels, and the leaders might well be put to death. In any case, prudence required that they move with care, and personal safety necessitated avowing allegiance to the end.

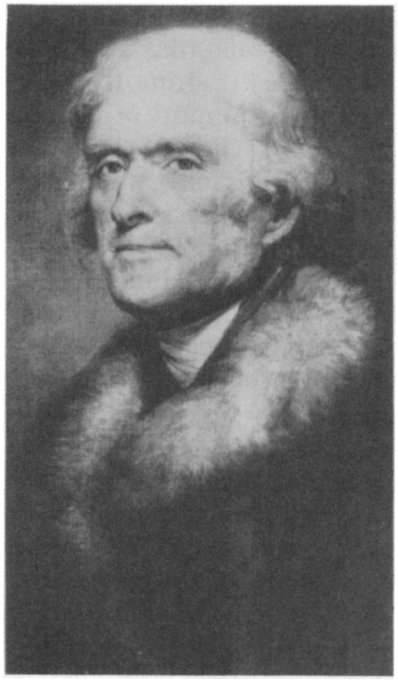
The Move toward Independence

Even so, the colonists moved inexorably toward independence from 1774 to 1776. The British did not make concessions or back down; they determined to use the measure of intimidation and force necessary to make the colonies comply with their decrees and laws. The colonies, on the other hand, began to prepare to take united action and were less

and less open to the idea that Parliament could lay down rules for governing them.

The Coercive Acts were aimed mainly at Boston and Massachusetts. They might have succeeded in isolating Massachusetts from the other colonies. But there were groups and organizations in most of the colonies determined to prevent that from happening. Thus, shortly after the passage of the acts, first Providence (Rhode Island), then Philadelphia, then New York City called for a general congress. In Massachusetts, where the initial intention had been to resist on their own, the House of Representatives welcomed the idea of united action by sending out a call for a congress itself. The First Continental Congress met in September, 1774, in Philadelphia. Twelve colonies sent 56 delegates. Only Georgia was not represented and, in view of its remote location, small population, and history of dependence on Britain, that is not surprising.

Even before the congress assembled, however, two important new publications appeared which attempted to shift colonial opinion even further from the British view than it already was. In July 1774 Thomas Jefferson published *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* and James Wilson *Considerations on...the Legislative Authority of... Parliament*. Both writers leaned toward the position that the colonies had their own legislatures and that, therefore, Parliament had no authority over the colonies. Jefferson did not state it that bluntly, but that was the tendency of his argument. For example, his comment on the action of Parliament in suspending the New York legislature was, "One free and independent legislature takes upon itself to suspend the powers of another, free and independent as itself...."[2] In conclusion, Jefferson said, "Let no act be passed by any one legislature which may infringe on the rights and liberties of another."[3] Up to this point, the colonists had generally accepted British regulation of their trade, as they had accepted the desirability of government regulation of trade. Rather, they had objected to taxing regulations for the purpose of raising revenue. Jefferson now went well beyond this position. Not only did he question the authority of Parliament over the colonies, but also the desirability of the regulation of trade in general. He made these observations about it, "That the exercise of a free trade with all parts of the world as of natural right..., was next the object of unjust encroachment...." Their "rights of free commerce fell once more the victim of arbitrary power....A view of these acts of Parliament for regulation...of the American trade...would...[evidence] the truth of this observation."[4] In short, the colonies did not need parliamentary regulation of their trade, but should rather see it as a violation of their rights and an instrument of tyranny.



Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)—

In an age of talented and versatile men, Jefferson stood head and shoulders above most of his contemporaries in the range of his accomplishments. He was a Virginia planter, lawyer, writer, phrasemaker, political thinker, diplomat, statesman, architect, inventor, scholar, and farmer. He was born in Virginia, graduated from William and Mary College, studied and practiced law, authored the Declaration of Independence in the Continental Congress, served as governor of Virginia during a portion of the War for Independence, minister to France, first United States Secretary of State, second Vice President, and third President. He also founded the Republican party, supported the Louisiana Purchase, and both founded and designed the early buildings of the University of Virginia. He died on July 4, the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

James Wilson of Pennsylvania argued in his pamphlet that Parliament had no authority over the colonies. Instead, their connection with England was with the king from first to last.[5] After all, the colonies were not represented in Parliament, and they could hardly be expected to submit to its authority. Wilson was moving toward what has since been called the dominion theory of empire. Later in the year, John Adams stated the case for this view more directly and in greater detail in the *Novanglus Letters*.[6] But before these appeared, the First Continental Congress had already met and adjourned.

The Congress, which met only for a short time in September and October of 1774, dealt with four main problems: (1) instructions to Massachusetts on resistance to the Coercive Acts, (2) the statement of a policy position toward recent British acts, (3) consideration of a plan of union, and (4) what concerted action to take.

Instructions to Massachusetts were contained in the Suffolk Resolves. The Suffolk Resolves declared that the Coercive Acts were unconstitutional, advised Massachusetts to form its own government until such time as the acts were repealed, recommended that the people of the colony arm themselves and form a militia, and called upon them to

adopt economic sanctions against Britain. In effect, they advised Massachusetts to defy the British.

A plan of union was proposed by Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania. It called for a general government for the colonies in America within the British empire. The plan was defeated, but there is little reason to suppose that the British would have accepted it had it been approved.

Congress stated its position toward Britain in a set of Declaration and Resolves. This declared the rights of the colonies, described the colonial understanding of the limits of parliamentary authority, and listed the British abuses of recent years. A debate occurred as to whether the colonists should trace their rights from natural law or from British grants. If they traced their rights from natural law, they would be establishing a basis for the break from England. Actually, they traced them from both, as can be seen in this quotation from the preamble of the document:

> That the inhabitants of the English colonies in North America, by the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English Constitution, and the several charters or compacts, have the following rights:
>
> That they are entitled to life, liberty, and property, and they have never ceded to any sovereign power whatever, a right to dispose of either without their consent.
>
> That our ancestors, who first settled these colonies, were at the time of their emigration from the mother country, entitled to all the rights, liberties, and immunities of free and natural born subjects within the realm of England.
>
> That by such emigration they by no means forfeited, surrendered, or lost any of those rights....[7]

The Congress established a Continental Association to impose economic restrictions on trade with Britain in an effort to get that country to alter its policies. The restrictions consisted of agreements of the colonists neither to import, consume, nor export goods from, of, and to Britain. Since the colonists reckoned they would be harmed most by stopping exports to Britain, they scheduled non-exportation to go into effect last. Local committees were charged with enforcement, and a major effort was made to get people to agree not to consume British goods.

None of these statements or actions had much discernible effect on British policy. Parliament refused to allow colonial agents to present petitions, and declarations and resolutions from the colonies were rejected out of hand. When William Pitt, now in the House of Lords as

the Earl of Chatham, introduced a resolution for the withdrawal of British troops from America, it was defeated by the lords temporal and spiritual, 68-18. On February 2, 1775, Lord North, the king's chief minister, declared that some of the colonies were in a state of rebellion and that more troops should be sent to America. A few days later, Parliament made it official that Massachusetts was in a state of rebellion.

Lord Frederick North, Earl of Guilford (1732-1792)—

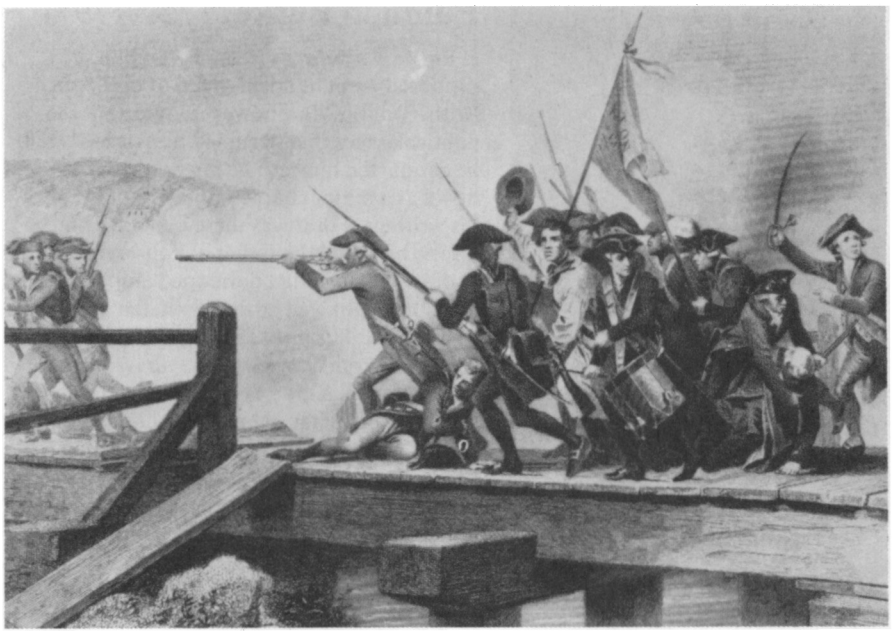
North was born in England, entered politics at the age of 22, and made a career of it. He was a Tory, and began to rise at a time when the king was bent on displacing the Whigs from power. Lord North (a courtesy title) became Prime Minister in 1770, and occupied that position until 1782, following the British defeat at Yorktown. His years of leadership were much taken up with events in America, first the attempt to quell the mounting resistance to British acts, then to conduct a war to end the revolt. In both efforts, he failed. First and last, or at least until 1782, North was the king's man, doing the bidding of his monarch, and accepting the blame for the failure of the policies.

The British were no longer in a mood to make significant concessions. Parliament did approve a plan whereby the colonies could levy the taxes and turn the revenue over to the British, but Americans were hardly in a mood to be swayed by such an empty gesture. A last ditch effort to persuade Parliament to alter its course was made by Edmund Burke, who saw merit in the colonial position, on March 22, 1775. Parliament was unmoved.

The mood in America was shifting away from conciliation as well. As Britain prepared to put down the rebellion, some, at least, were ready to have done with the efforts at peace. At the forefront of these was Patrick Henry, who addressed his fellow Virginians in March in words to this effect:

> Gentlemen may cry peace, peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the North

> will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God—I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!



The Struggle on Concord Bridge

No more were Lord North and the king determined upon peace. On March 30, Parliament passed the New England Restraining Act, which barred the North Atlantic fisheries to New Englanders and prohibited any trade between these colonies and anyone else except Britain and the British West Indies. The next month these provisions were extended to several of the colonies south of New England. On April 14, General Thomas Gage, British military commander in America, got orders to use force to break up the rebellion in New England. He acted with dispatch by sending troops to Concord on April 19, 1775, under orders to seize a munitions depot there. These troops were met by militia at Lexington; someone fired ("the shot heard round the world," Thomas Paine said), and a battle took place. It was enlarged during the course of the day, as riflemen gathered from all sides and threatened to destroy

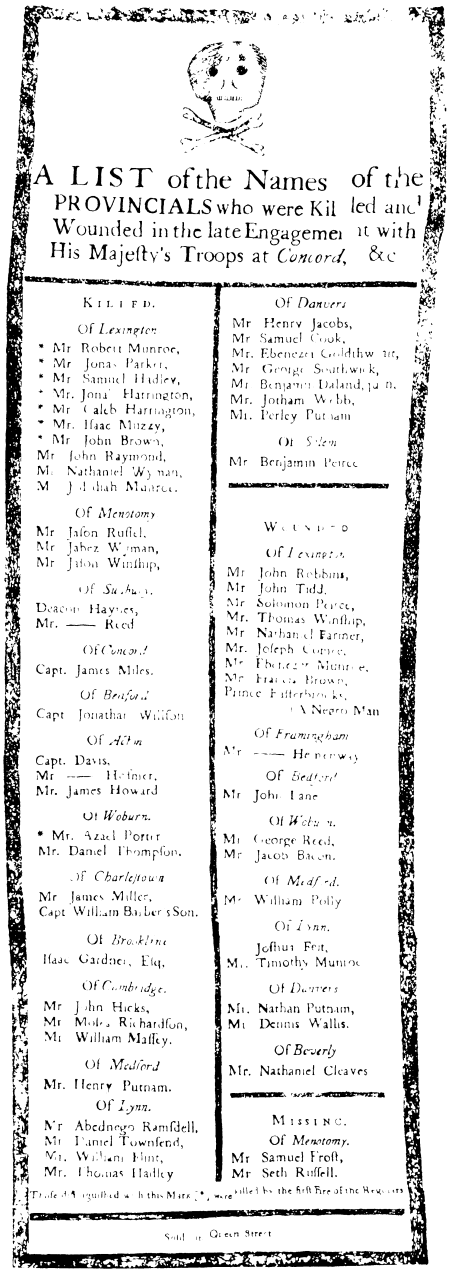
the British forces at one point. Reinforcements arrived, however, and the British managed to return to their haven in Boston. Seventy-three British troops were killed during the day; fighting on a war-like scale had taken place. The resolution of the British and Americans would now be tried by arms.

Edmund Burke (1729-1797)

Burke was born in Ireland—Dublin, it is supposed—but he spent much of his life in British politics. But however important the political issues that occupied him or how well he conducted himself, he might have gone down as a minor character had it not been for his writings. For it was these that gave him title to be called the father of conservatism, and, if sociology had developed along different lines, he might well be denominated as founder of it as well. His most famous and influential work was *Reflections on the French Revolution*. In it, he made a lasting case against revolutionary change and for building upon the inherited order of things. He is remembered, too, as a friend of America for his opposition to British policies of provoking colonial resistance and trying to suppress the revolt by an untimely application of force.

Less than a month after Lexington and Concord, a Second Continental Congress assembled at Philadelphia (May 10). The first congress had voted its own dissolution but provided that a new one should meet if the disputes had not been resolved. In the meanwhile, of course, the situation had become much more explosive. So it was that a second congress met. This was the congress which would direct the continental forces for the next half-dozen years. It had no constitution and no authority except such as the states gave it. Among the members of the Second Continental Congress were some of the most talented men ever to grace the American scene, men whose names will live as long as the founding of the Republic is remembered. From Massachusetts came John and Samuel Adams along with John Hancock, who was chosen to preside over the congress; from Pennsylvania came Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris and James Wilson, among others; from Connecticut came Roger Sherman and Oliver Wolcott; from Virginia came George Washington, Richard Henry Lee, and Thomas Jefferson, and

so on through the roll call of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, as well as some who had left the Congress by that time. Of necessity, some, such as Washington, Franklin, and John Adams, were called to more exacting work during the war, but at its inception the Congress contained a goodly portion of the leading men in America.



A LIST of the Names of the PROVINCIALS who were Killed and Wounded in the late Engagement with His Majesty's Troops at *Concord*, &c

KILLED.

Of *Lexington*

* Mr Robert Munroe,
* Mr Jonas Parker,
* Mr Samuel Hadley,
* Mr Jona. Harrington,
* Mr Caleb Harrington,
* Mr. Isaac Muzzy,
* Mr John Brown,
Mr John Raymond,
Mr. Nathaniel Wyman,
Mr Jedidiah Munroe.

Of *Menotomy*

Mr Jason Russell,
Mr Jabez Wyman,
Mr Jason Winship,

Of *Sudbury*

Deacon Haynes,
Mr. —— Reed

Of *Concord*

Capt. James Miles.

Of *Brittain*

Capt Jonathan Willson

Of *Acton*

Capt. Davis.
Mr —— Hosmer,
Mr. James Howard

Of *Woburn*.

* Mr. Azael Porter
Mr. Daniel Thompson.

Of *Charlestown*

Mr James Miller,
Capt William Barber's Son.

Of *Brooklyne*

Isaac Gardner, Esq.

Of *Cambridge*.

Mr John Hicks,
Mr Moses Richardson,
Mr William Maffey.

Of *Medford*

Mr. Henry Putnam.

Of *Lynn*.

Mr Abednego Ramsdell,
Mr Daniel Townsend,
Mr. William Flint,
Mr. Thomas Hadley

Of *Danvers*

Mr Henry Jacobs,
Mr Samuel Cook,
Mr. Ebenezer Goldthwaite,
Mr George Southwick,
Mr Benjamin Daland, jun.
Mr. Jotham Webb,
Mr. Perley Putnam

Of *Salem*

Mr Benjamin Peirce

WOUNDED

Of *Lexington*

Mr John Robbins,
Mr John Tidd,
Mr Solomon Pierce,
Mr. Thomas Winship,
Mr Nathaniel Farmer,
Mr. Joseph Comee,
Mr Ebenezer Munroe,
Mr Francis Brown,
Prince Fullerbricks, A Negro Man

Of *Framingham*

Mr —— Hemenway

Of *Bedford*

Mr John Lane

Of *Woburn*.

Mr George Reed,
Mr Jacob Bacon.

Of *Medford*.

Mr William Polly

Of *Lynn*.

Joshua Frot,
Mr. Timothy Munroe

Of *Danvers*

Mr. Nathan Putnam,
Mr Dennis Wallis.

Of *Beverly*

Mr. Nathaniel Cleaves

MISSING.

Of *Menotomy*.

Mr Samuel Frost,
Mr Seth Russell.

Those distinguished with this Mark *, were killed by the first Fire of the Regulars

Sold at Queen Street

John Hancock (1737-1793)

Hancock was a prominent Boston merchant and shipper, and one of the leaders in Massachusetts opposed to the taxing policies of the British. He served as president of the Second Continental Congress, was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence, and is famed for penning the largest signature on the document. He served as the first elected governor of Massachusetts, and was reelected several times to that post. In the 1780s, well after the ratification of the Articles of Confederation, once again he became president of the Congress. His last great public service was to preside over the Massachusetts convention which ratified the Constitution.

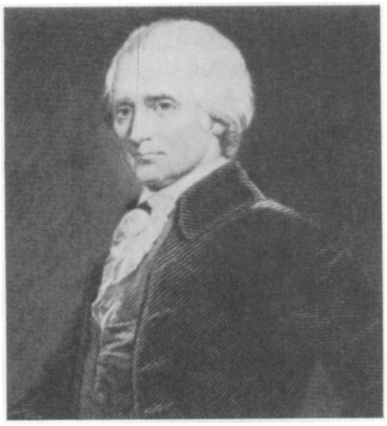
Congress was confronted with the task of what to do about the budding war from the moment it met. New England had already taken matters in hand to the extent that Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold led a force of colonials in taking Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain on the same day that Congress met in Philadelphia. And on June 17 the Battle of Bunker Hill took place as a result of a British decision to drive the Americans from a redoubt on Breed's Hill. This battle pitted a British army against a colonial army, and though the British drove the Americans from their positions they did so at the expense of heavy casualties.

Before the Battle of Bunker Hill, however, Congress had made the first steps toward taking over the conduct of the war. George Washington was appointed commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He left straight-away to take charge in Massachusetts, which he accomplished on July 3. George Washington had gained considerable military experience in the French and Indian War, and was already emerging as a leader to whom others were drawn for advice and counsel. Washington was a man of great feeling and strong sentiment, but it was above all his firmness and steadfastness that made him invaluable to the American cause. A very important consideration at the time of his selection, of course, was that he was from Virginia, the most populous of the colonies; and the New Englanders especially could see that it was essential to bring the other colonies to their support. The choice of Washington was unanimous and, through all the difficult years and much wrangling between Washington and Congress, that body never really faltered in its support of him. No more did Washington falter in his

determination to serve the Congress by winning the war. Washington took no salary for his military contribution; rather, he required only that his expenses be paid.

Though feeling was running high in America against Britain, there were those in Congress who believed that they would be remiss in their duty if they did not make yet another appeal for reconciliation. John Dickinson took the leadership in drawing up and getting through Congress the Olive Branch Petition on July 5, 1775. The members assembled declared themselves "Attached to your Majesty's [King George III] person, family, and government, with all devotion that principle and affection can inspire...." This being the case, "We, therefore, beseech your Majesty, that your royal authority and influence may be graciously interposed to procure us relief from our afflicting fears and jealousies...."[8] Congress did not blink the fact, however, that armed conflict was going on already, and the next day they declared their reasons for taking that course.

Congress adjourned on August 2 to await developments. These were not long in coming. George III declared the colonies to be in open rebellion on August 23. Benedict Arnold led an expedition to Canada in the fall, with the permission of General Washington. (There was hope at the time that if British forces in Canada could be overcome, Canada would join with the other colonies.) Congress authorized a



Richard Henry Lee (1732-1794)—

Lee was born in Virginia, a descendant of early settlers of the colony, and a brother to Arthur Lee, who was a diplomat to France for the Continental Congress. He was educated in England, but he emerged early as an opponent of British misrule and in favor of independence. He was a member of the Virginia Committee of Correspondence, a delegate to the First and Second Continental Congress, and introduced the resolution for independence which was adopted by Congress on July 2, 1776. Although he did not approve the extent to which the Constitution of 1787 threatened the powers of the states, he was one of the first Senators from Virginia, and in that position he proposed the 10th Amendment, which set limits to the jurisdiction of the Federal government.

navy, and a further move was made toward independence by opening up correspondence with foreign nations in November. In the same month, the colonies received word that the king had refused to receive the Olive Branch Petition. The House of Commons then defeated a motion to make the Petition the basis of reconciliation, defeated it by a vote of 83 to 33. Late in 1775 a royal proclamation was issued closing the colonies to all commerce after March 1, 1776.

That all these things had occurred and that the colonists still could not bring themselves to declare for independence indicates how reluctantly they took that step. But as 1775 gave way to 1776, the colonists were in their winter of decision. In that winter they were divided into three camps: those for independence, those undecided, and those who opposed it. However alluring the prospect of independence, it was difficult for many to resolve actually to take the step. To do so, they would have to forswear ancient allegiances, must commit the most heinous of crimes (or so they had been taught) by becoming traitors in the eyes of their British rulers, must hazard their lives and fortunes upon the uncertain outcome of a war, must almost certainly divide the country, and might well let loose domestic disorder on a large scale. Arguments were made in public for and against independence even as men wrestled inwardly with the difficult question. Those who took the public step for independence would be called Patriots; those who finally persisted in opposing it were Loyalists.

A little book, *Common Sense*, written by Thomas Paine in January of 1776 went far toward galvanizing American opinion in favor of independence. Within three months, 120,000 copies of it were in circulation. George Washington said that it "worked a powerful change in the minds of many men," and the testimony of other contemporaries as well as later historians confirms this judgment.

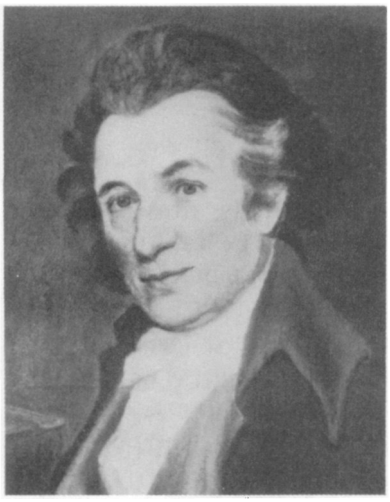
That this little pamphlet should have had such currency and impact must surely be attributed to the fact that it raised up an idea whose time had come rather than to the character of its author. Few would have predicted before 1776 that Thomas Paine would have the niche in history he gained. He had hardly distinguished himself in England before coming to America, and he was far too much a revolutionary to be welcome in any land for long. However, his striking way of writing caught Benjamin Franklin's eye, and he encouraged Paine to come to America, which he did in 1774. Somehow he grasped the tendency of the current in his new land and was able to fortify it in flashy language which moved his newly acquired fellow countrymen.

Paine took as his main task in *Common Sense* the convincing of Americans that the time had come for independence. The British, not they, had broken the ties of consanguinity. All that was left was for the

Americans to grasp the nettle. Indeed, as he pictured the matter, their only choice was tyranny or independence. The colonists had moved to the point where they were ready to dispense with Parliament. Thus, Paine focused his attention on the one tie that would remain, that to the king. Of the institution of monarchy, Paine said:

> Government by kings was first introduced into the world by the heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the custom. It was the most prosperous invention the devil ever set on foot for the promotion of idolatry. The heathens paid divine honors to their deceased kings, and the Christian world had improved on the plan by doing the same to their living ones. How impious is the title of sacred majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his splendor is crumbling into dust![9]

As for George III, Paine disposed of him as "the royal brute of Britain," a descendant of a long line of monarchs hardly worthy of mention. In sum, his view of monarchy was that "Of more worth is one honest man to society, and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived."[10] Many Americans, who had never seen or been in the vicinity of a monarch, in any case, undoubtedly nodded their assent.



Thomas Paine (1737-1809)

Paine was born in England, tried his hand at several occupations, but such success and fame as he ever achieved was as a supporter of revolutions and writer. He lived in America from 1774-1787, returned to Europe and became very much involved in the French Revolution, then returned to America to live out his days in relative obscurity. Paine's little book, *Common Sense*, propelled Americans toward independence, and another series, *The American Crisis*, fortified their patriotism during the dark days of the War for Independence. The French Revolution turned out to be not so fortunate an undertaking, and, though Paine wrote a book in defense of it, titled *The Rights of Man*, he was later imprisoned in France and had to have American help to secure his release.