

56 ⇒ THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR: AN OVERVIEW, 1776-1783 ⇒





revolution: the complete overthrow of a political system

1492

1776-83

2000



THE 13 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	POPULATION	GREAT BRITAIN
 <p>About 2.5 million</p>		<p>About 8 million</p> 
<p><u>PATRIOTS</u>—colonists for independence (also called WHIGS, REBELS)</p> <p>About 1/3 of the Americans supported the Revolution.</p> 	<p>AMERICANS CHOOSE SIDES</p> <p>About 1/3 were neutral.</p>	<p><u>LOYALISTS</u>—colonists loyal to Britain (also called TORIES, REDCOATS)</p> <p>About 1/3 of the colonists remained loyal British subjects.</p> 
<p><u>CONTINENTAL ARMY</u></p> <p>Never more than about 18,500, often less</p> <p><u>STATE MILITIAS</u></p> <p>About 230,000 militiamen served—but never at one place (owing to regional loyalties) or at one time (owing to short enlistments of 3-12 months, desertions, and times out to harvest crops).</p> <p><u>FRENCH TROOPS</u>: after 1778, about 8,000</p> <p><u>AFRICAN-AMERICANS</u>: about 5,000</p> <p><u>NATIVE AMERICANS</u>: 2 Iroquois tribes; few other tribes</p> <p><u>WOMEN</u>: a few disguised as men and some who helped in combat by loading weapons or by carrying water.</p>	<p>ARMIES</p>	<p><u>BRITISH ARMY</u></p> <p>About 50,000 regulars—never at one place or time</p> <p><u>GERMAN MERCENARIES</u> (hired soldiers)</p> <p>King George III hired 30,000 soldiers from six German principalities. (Because more than half came from Hesse-Cassel, they were all called <u>Hessians</u>.) Most were forced to serve by their local ruler, who pocketed the British payments. Many remained in America after the war.</p> <p><u>LOYALISTS</u>: about 50,000</p> <p><u>AFRICAN-AMERICANS</u>: some slaves, in return for their freedom</p> <p><u>NATIVE AMERICANS</u>: 3 Iroquois tribes and most other tribes</p>
<p><u>AMERICAN</u>: 13 frigates; 40 merchantmen; more than 2,000 privateers</p> <p><u>FRENCH AND SPANISH</u>: by 1781, about 350 ships</p>	<p>NAVIES</p>	<p><u>BRITISH</u>: by 1781, about 460 ships</p>

THE 13 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

GREAT BRITAIN

MILITARY LEADERS



GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON, 1732-99
Commander in chief, 1775-83

- General Benedict Arnold, 1741-1801
 (turned traitor in 1779)
- General Horatio Gates, 1728-1806
- General Nathanael Greene, 1742-86
- General Henry Knox, 1750-1806
- General Charles Lee, 1731-82
- General Benjamin Lincoln, 1733-1810
- Commodore Esek Hopkins

FRENCH ALLIES

- Lieutenant General Comte de Rochambeau, 1750-1813
- Vice-Admiral Comte d'Estaing
- Admiral Comte de Grasse

FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS

- General Marie Joseph Marquis de Lafayette (French), 1757-1834
- General Baron Johan de Kalb (German), 1721-80
- Colonel Thaddeus Kosciusko (Polish), 1746-1817
- General Count Casimir Pulaski (Polish), 1749-79
- General Baron Friedrich von Steuben (Prussian), 1730-94



GENERAL WILLIAM HOWE, 1729-1814
Commander in chief, 1775-78

GENERAL HENRY CLINTON, 1738-95
Commander in chief, 1778-83

- General Charles Cornwallis, 1738-1805
- General John Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne, 1722-92
- Admiral Richard Howe, 1726-99
 (brother of General William Howe)
- Admiral George Rodney, 1719-92

GERMANS HIRED BY THE BRITISH

- General Frederick von Riedesel
- Colonel Johann Rall

ADVANTAGES

1. Outstanding leadership of General George Washington, a man of high character and inspiring courage
2. Strong motivation—Americans were fighting to become free: free to think for themselves, choose their own laws, and govern themselves.
3. Fighting on home ground—knew the territory
4. Experienced officers—including Washington—who had fought in the French and Indian War
5. Superiority of the American rifle (German-made)—in range and accuracy—over the British smoothbore musket
6. Sharpshooters—because of frontier experiences

1. Military power—strongest army and navy in the world; well equipped, trained, and disciplined
2. Superior numbers—outnumbering the American patriots in most battles
3. Indian support—from many Native Americans fearful of losing even more land to white settlers
4. Loyalist cooperation—from about 1/3 of the Americans, who wanted to remain British
5. Hefty war chest, with enough money to hire 30,000 German soldiers (Hessians)
6. Bright red uniforms—took pride in appearance

DISADVANTAGES

1. Inexperienced army and militia (most militiamen were farmers)—untrained and undisciplined
2. Short enlistments—often only 3 to 12 months
3. Brand new navy—few ships to defend coastline
4. Constant shortages: money, arms, food, clothing, medicine
5. Near-bankrupt treasury—Congress printed continental paper money that lost its value because of no hard money (gold/silver), called specie, backing it.
6. Loyalist warfare—often neighbor against neighbor

1. Weak motivation—not fighting for a cause
2. Unaggressive officers—failed to press advantages
3. 3,000 miles from British home base—resulting in poor communications and a long supply line
4. 1,500-mile enemy coastline—hard to blockade
5. Vast land—could conquer but not hold territory
6. Easy targets—because of red uniforms & classic military tactic of fighting in closed ranks
7. European aid to Americans; fighting European enemies

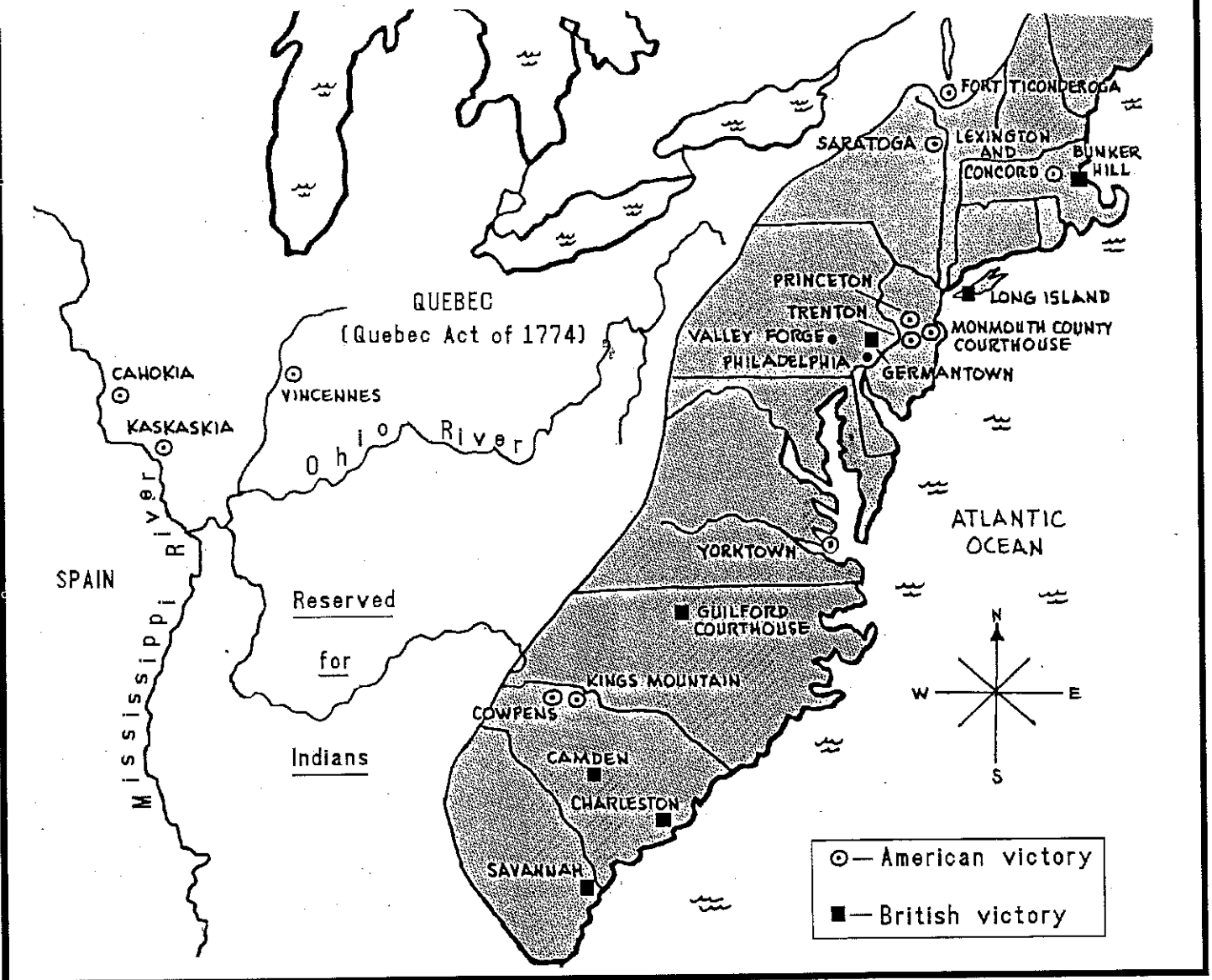
THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR: AN OVERVIEW, 1776-1783

"...the possession of our Towns, while we have an army in the field, will avail them little...It is our arms they have to subdue."—George Washington

	THE 13 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	GREAT BRITAIN
GOALS	Preserve the Continental army; and wear down British troops until they give up and go home	Force the Continental army to surrender; restore British control of the 13 colonies
STRATEGIES	Hit and run! Avoid battles; avoid capture. The only victory necessary: the last one	Capture seaports. Then, divide and conquer. How? By isolating and seizing: 1) New England, 2) the middle states, and 3) the South.
TACTICS	Guerrilla tactics learned from the Indians (surprise raids, fighting from behind trees), as well as conventional 18th century war tactics	Conventional 18th century war tactics: frontal attacks in close ranks

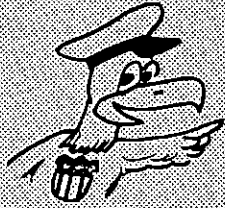
MAJOR BATTLES

"I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration, and defend these states."—John Adams

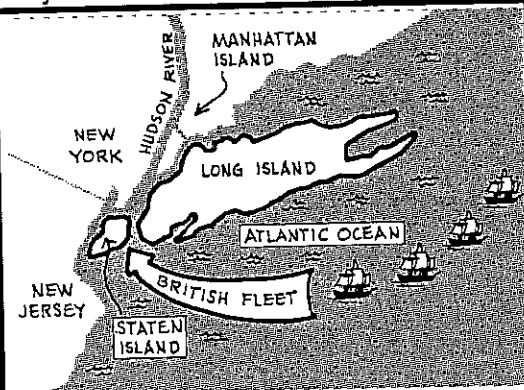


And now back to our story of General Washington and the Continental Army, who in April had forced the British troops to evacuate Boston.

July 2, 1776—Washington had guessed correctly: the British were headed for New York.



Gen. William Howe, hoping to divide the colonies by taking New York, landed 10,000 British soldiers on Staten Island on July 2, the same day Congress voted for independence.



Soon a fleet of 200 ships, led by General Howe's brother Admiral Richard Howe, brought more British redcoats to New York, for a total of 34,000.

July 9—Headquartered in New York City on Manhattan Island, Washington responded to the British threat by having the Declaration of Independence read to his 19,000 troops.



8:30 a.m., Aug. 27—Washington expected a British attack on Long Island. He told his soldiers:

I HAVE 2 LOADED PISTOLS AND WILL SHOOT ANY MAN WHO TURNS HIS BACK IN BATTLE. EVERYTHING WORTH LIVING FOR IS AT STAKE HERE. I WILL NOT ASK ANY MAN TO GO FURTHER THAN I DO. I WILL FIGHT AS LONG AS I HAVE LEG OR AN ARM.

(GULP) I FEEL MOTIVATED. DON'T YOU, BOYS?
WE S-SURE D-DO!!



The **BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND** began thirty minutes later as the British, aided by fierce Hessians, attacked the patriot army. Outfoxing Washington, Howe's redcoats soundly defeated the Americans.



The patriots' crushing defeat might have signaled the last day of American independence—EXCEPT THAT...

During a heavy fog, Washington made a daring escape by ferrying 9,500 troops from Long Island to Manhattan. Manning the boats were John Glover's fishermen/soldiers from Marblehead, Massachusetts.



But General Howe's redcoats soon had Washington's army on the run.

Fancying a jolly fox hunt, the British chased the Americans out of New York, through New Jersey, and into Pennsylvania. Howe infuriated Washington with the bugle call "Gone to Earth," signifying the fox running for his hole.



Surprisingly, Howe did not move in for the kill (a persistent trait, perhaps a result of his Bunker Hill losses). He returned to New York City, which the British occupied until the end of the war, to set up winter headquarters.

THE HESSIANS ARE IN NEW JERSEY, GUARDING TRENTON AND PRINCETON, SO WE CAN PARTY ALL WINTER!



AND WILL YOU APPOINT A SOCIAL DIRECTOR, SIR?

December 1776: A GLOOMY CRISIS—Washington's demoralized troops, down to 3,000, were near desertion. From Pennsylvania, he wrote his brother John.

I THINK THE GAME IS PRETTY NEAR UP... NO MAN ... EVER HAD A GREATER CHOICE OF DIFFICULTIES AND LESS MEANS TO EXTRICATE HIMSELF FROM THEM.



COME ON GEDRGE, YOU CAN DO IT!

The American Crisis

THE TIDE TURNED WHEN WASHINGTON ASKED THOMAS PAINE, AUTHOR OF "COMMON SENSE" AND NOW A SOLDIER IN THE RETREATING ARMY, TO READ HIS SPIRITED NEW ESSAY, "THE AMERICAN CRISIS" TO THE DEJECTED TROOPS.

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 his country. But he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

The soldiers' spirits revived. It was a morale victory, but Washington needed a military victory as well. He had a brilliant idea.

Christmas night we'll surprise-attack the Hessian troops at Trenton, N.J. Get ready to recross the Delaware!

So on Christmas night, 1776, through a blinding sleet storm, John Glover's fishermen/sailors ferried Washington's 2,400 troops across the ice-clogged Delaware River toward Trenton.

WE MAY CATCH OUR DEATH OF COLD!

REMEMBER THE COUNTERSIGN—"VICTORY OR DEATH!"

The freezing troops then marched nine miles to Trenton. Their bare feet wrapped in rags left bloody footprints on the snow, but none complained.

PRESS ON, BOYS, PRESS ON! REMEMBER THE GLORIOUS CAUSE WE ARE FIGHTING FOR.

ALL I CAN REMEMBER IS A WARM STABLE...

9:00 a.m., December 26, 1776—TRENTON

In a smashing victory the patriots surprised the over-celebrated, sleepy Hessians and took Trenton in 45 minutes.

WHAT'S ALL THAT CLATTER?

COULD BE SAINT NICHOLAS, JA?

Capturing 1,000 prisoners, the Americans shouted to the Hessians: "These are the times that try men's souls!" And they danced in the streets.

January 2, 1777—British General Cornwallis marched south to retake Trenton. Exhausted, he refused advice to attack Washington the night he arrived.

I HAVE THE OLD FOX TRAPPED NOW. I'LL BAG HIM IN THE MORNING

Meanwhile:

WE'RE OUTA HERE TONIGHT! BUT LEAVE CAMP FIRES BURNING TO FOOL CORNWALLIS.

January 3—PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Washington led a victorious attack on Cornwallis' rearguard at Princeton. Ignoring danger, he charged and cried out:

IT'S A FINE FOX CHASE, MY BOYS!

LOOK AT 'EM SCAMPER

Washington's brilliant victories reclaimed New Jersey for the patriots, and he now wintered his troops at Morristown. His reputation for courage restored, the nation cheered him as a hero—all except his mother.

When neighbors congratulated Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, she said the news reports of her son's genius were too flattering, but they wouldn't go to his head. "George will not forget the lessons I have taught him," she said.



ABIGAIL ADAMS,
1744-1818

While General Washington winters at Morristown, let me tell you about some other people involved in the Revolution, lest you think only white men fought for American liberty.

I am Abigail Adams. You've met me as the wife of John Adams.

I'm also the mother of John Quincy Adams. Both men are future United States presidents.

Patriots, those Americans who supported Independence, were of every nationality and faith, demonstrating the love of freedom that brought us all to this country.

Some groups—such as African-Americans, Native Americans, and all women—were excluded from some or all of the rights we were fighting for in the Revolution; nevertheless, many of us put our shoulders to the wheel, hoping our time would come.

As you remember, I wrote John asking him to remember the ladies in the new code of freedom he and the other Founding Fathers were writing. He laughed at my request, for like most men of his time, he believes women have restricted roles. Let's see for ourselves how some women and African-Americans participated in the War.

And for starters, you might like to read the very first history of the American Revolution. It was written by a woman, my friend Mercy Otis Warren of Plymouth, Massachusetts. (History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution) This was an unusual feat for a woman, for women in our day were excluded from college and intellectual activities. Mercy became educated through listening to the tutor of her patriot brother, James Otis.

Deborah Sampson yearned to be a soldier, unthinkable for a woman. Brave, imaginative Deborah became the first woman in the American army, serving two years disguised as a man.

COME ON, DEBORAH! WE HAVE TO MILK THOSE COWS.
NOT ME. I'M LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE.



Molly Pitcher was the name given to many women who, like Molly Corbin and Mary Hays McCauley, brought water and aid to the soldiers and even manned the cannon when needed.

MORE WATER, MOLLY!

SORRY, NO TIME FOR THAT. I'VE GOT TO FIRE THIS CANNON!



Phyllis Wheatley displayed such a brilliant mind as a young slave that her Boston owners encouraged her gifts as a poet. Her poem to General George Washington, published in the Pennsylvania Magazine in 1776, caught the General's attention, and he invited Phyllis for a visit at his Cambridge headquarters.



Peter Salem and other African-Americans fought at Lexington and Bunker Hill. Salem heard Major Pitcairn's "Disperse, ye rebels!" at Lexington and was credited with killing Pitcairn at Bunker Hill. Salem's bravery won the attention and admiration of General Washington, who asked to meet him.

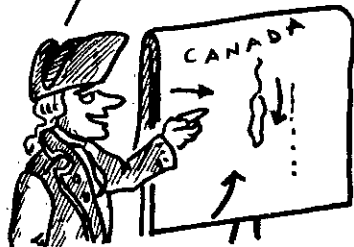


Of 5,000 African-Americans in the Continental Army, most were freedmen. About fifty served in each battalion. There were two all-black regiments—from Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The 400-strong R.I. regiment won fame in the battle of Sullivan, S.C., by withstanding three fierce assaults from 1,500 Hessians.

Now, on to Saratoga, New York. Victory is at hand!

British strategy for 1777 focused on isolating New England with a three-pronged attack. General John Burgoyne was in charge.

General Howe, my troops will march south from Canada and meet yours marching north from New York. Colonel Barry St. Leger will move east.



Oct. 17, 1777—BATTLE OF SARATOGA (N.Y.)

But General Howe, deciding to capture Philadelphia instead, was a "no show," and Burgoyne suffered a disastrous defeat at Saratoga. He surrendered 5,000 men, including seven generals.

The American victory at Saratoga was a turning point. France and Spain realized the colonists could win the war and decided to aid them in defeating Britain, their old enemy. The motivation: revenge and hope of regaining land lost to Britain: Canada in the case of France and Gibraltar in the case of Spain.



1778—A FRENCH-AMERICAN ALLIANCE, negotiated by Benjamin Franklin, was crucial to America's victory in 1783. Britain responded by declaring war on France in 1778.

NOW THAT WE'VE SIGNED THE TREATY — LET'S SWAP A FEW JOKES, MES AMIS.



VERY WELL, DID YOU HEAR THE ONE ABOUT...

1789—SPAIN declared war on Britain and aided the patriots without a formal alliance. Bernardo de Galvez, Spanish governor of Louisiana, aided the patriots by capturing Pensacola, Florida, from Britain. This kept the British from attacking the U.S. from the southwest. Galveston, Texas is named for the heroic Galvez.

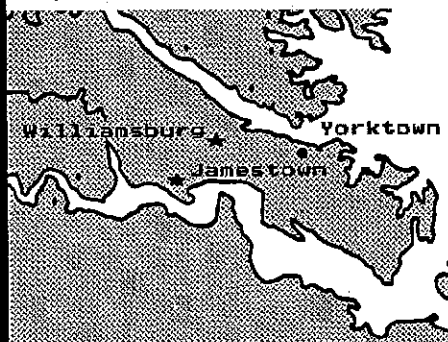
VALLEY FORGE—News of the French Alliance cheered Washington's troops as they wintered in bitter cold Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

Baron Friedrich von Steuben, a Prussian volunteer who spoke no English, drilled the soldiers all winter, frustrated that they couldn't understand his German swearing. He turned them into professionals, and his drill book became standard in the army.



Meanwhile, the British replaced Howe with Clinton as commander in chief and opened a campaign in the south. With loyalist support, they won major victories.

But then, in Yorktown, Virginia, British General Cornwallis fell into a trap laid by Washington.



October 19, 1781—BATTLE OF YORKTOWN

With brilliant strategy, Washington had the French fleet block Cornwallis by sea, while the American and French armies surrounded the British by land.

Cornwallis surrendered, effectively ending the war. Pleading illness, he sent General Charles O'Hara to offer his sword. The British troops,

ACTUALLY, THE SURRENDER WOULDN'T BE SO BAD IF THOSE YANKS WOULD STOP PLAYING THAT AWFUL MUSIC.



marching between lines of French and American troops to lay down their arms, refused to look at the Americans. General Lafayette told the American band to strike up Yankee Doodle, and British heads swung around sharply!

May 1782—Army officers, angered by Congress' inability to pay them, asked Washington to become king in a monarchy set up by the army. In one of his most important acts, Washington refused this military dictatorship.

AN ABHORRENT IDEA! BANISH THESE THOUGHTS FROM YOUR MIND.



1783—The TREATY OF PARIS gave the United States generous terms:

1. recognition of independence,
2. land stretching west to the Mississippi River (plus navigation rights on the river) and north to the 45th parallel and the Great Lakes (Britain did not want her rival France to have this land),
3. fishing rights off the Canadian coast.

The United States agreed to urge states to restore loyalist property and pay debts to British merchants.

Britain gave Florida to Spain.

1783: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



