

“To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving the peace.”

—GEORGE WASHINGTON

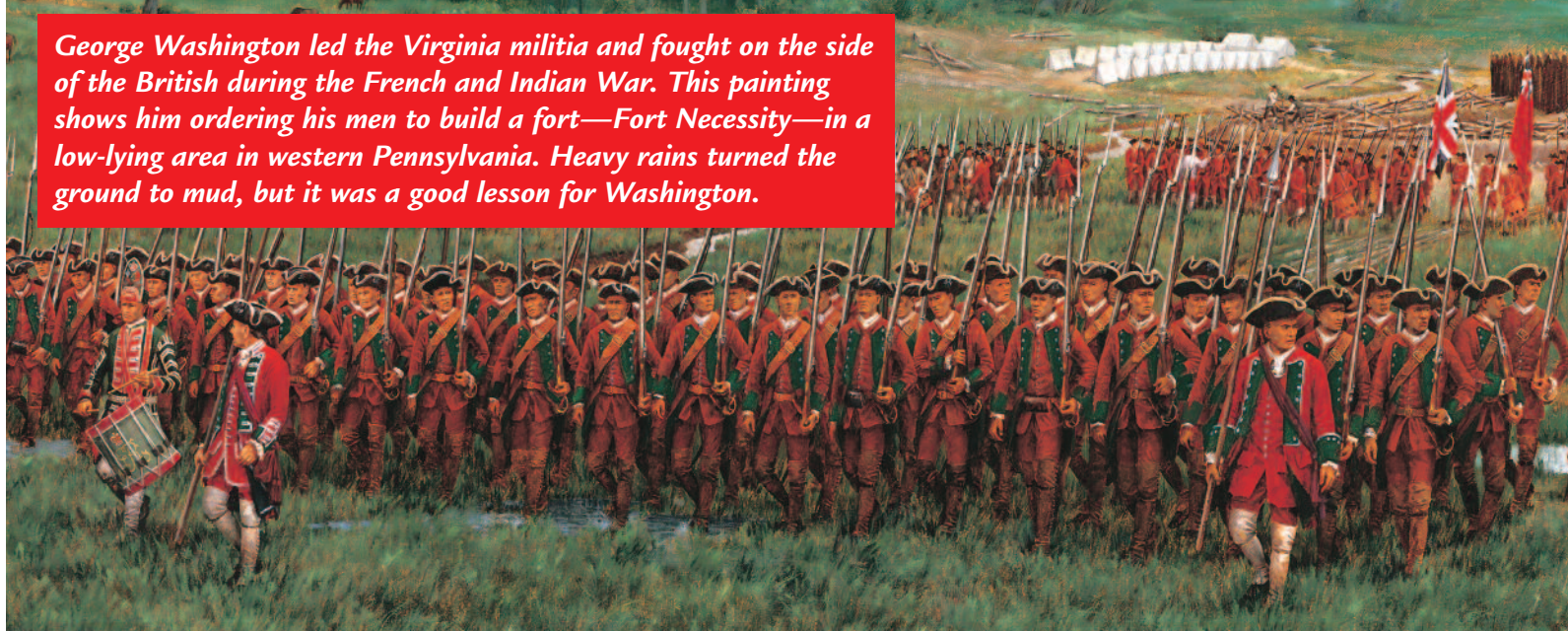


CHAPTER FIVE

VIRGINIA AND THE REVOLUTION

FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM 1754–1783

George Washington led the Virginia militia and fought on the side of the British during the French and Indian War. This painting shows him ordering his men to build a fort—Fort Necessity—in a low-lying area in western Pennsylvania. Heavy rains turned the ground to mud, but it was a good lesson for Washington.



ROOTS OF REVOLUTION

By the mid-1700s there were British, French, and Spanish colonies in North America. Virginia was growing, and new settlements were being built farther and farther west. Fights over land ownership were brewing, and big trouble lay ahead.

Old Enemies, New Battles

Great Britain and France had been rivals for a long time, and in the mid-1700s their struggle spilled onto American soil. British settlers began grabbing land in the fertile Ohio River Valley. The French also wanted this land. British authorities claimed Native American land, often through fraud or violence. Of course, the Indians living on the land had no say in any of this. A skirmish broke out between British and French troops. Who was leading the British soldiers? An inexperienced 21-year-old **militia** leader named George Washington! That battle led to a very long war.

American Indians were soon drawn into the fighting. They knew the Europeans were here to stay. In order to survive they had to choose sides. To many Indians, the French seemed the better choice. France seemed less interested in starting permanent colonies and more interested in trading furs and making business deals. Other tribes chose to fight for the British. Old tribal hatreds surfaced, and each tribe joined whatever European nation was fighting against its rivals.

Word to Know

► **militia**
mil-ISH-uh

A group of civilians trained as soldiers who serve in emergencies. They come from local areas rather than the entire country.

Two Mohawk Indians help a fallen friend.



The French and Indian War: 1754–1763

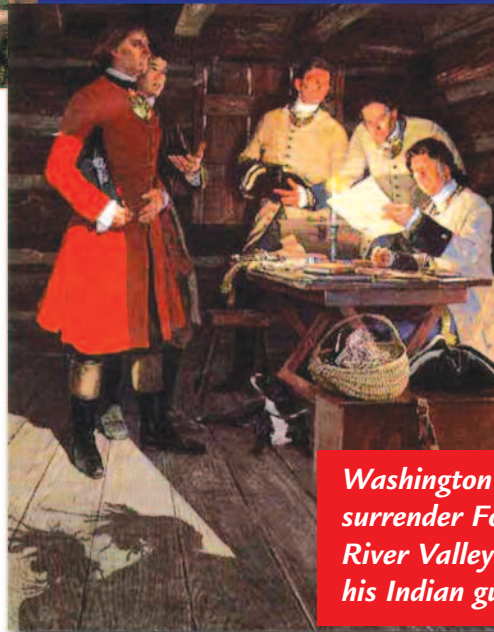
Such a confusing name! Who really fought this war? On one side stood the British, the American colonists, and the Iroquois Confederacy (a group of major Indian nations). On the other side were the French and all the Iroquois' enemies.

For a young Virginia militia commander, this war was an important training ground. George Washington's experiences during the war taught

him firsthand how the British army worked. That knowledge came in handy when he fought *against* them several years later, in the American Revolution.

This is MY Land!

Year after year the French and British, along with their American Indian allies, battled from the Carolinas all the way to Canada and as far west as the Great Lakes. At first the French won most of the battles. The British could not let *that* happen, so they began spending huge amounts of money, pouring more troops and weapons into winning the war. In September 1759, it all came down to one brief battle near Québec, Canada, that ended with a British victory and a crushed French army. Still, the war did not officially end until 1763.

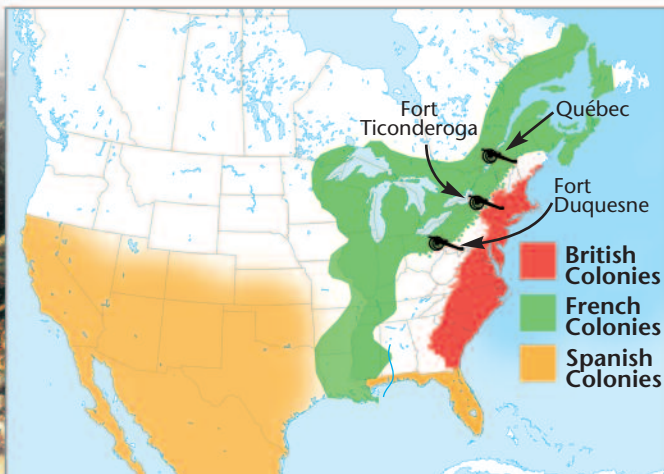


Washington demands that the French surrender Fort Duquesne in the Ohio River Valley. Notice the shadows of his Indian guides in the doorway.

Who Will Pay?

At the war's end, France officially surrendered to Great Britain, and America's maps changed. Britain had won the French and Indian War, but they had paid a big price. Britain gained new territories, but now had a new problem—paying to maintain them.

To raise money, Britain began heaping taxes on both the people of Britain and the Americans. After all, a lot of the fighting had been on American soil. The colonists had greatly benefited. Why shouldn't they contribute? These taxes were placed on many of the things the colonists used the most. Tempers began to rise.



America at the time of the French and Indian War

Conflicts developed between the colonies and Great Britain over how the colonies should be governed.

LIFE AND LIBERTY

Over 3,000 miles separated England and America. Can you imagine what would happen if you had questions about Britain's new taxes but had to wait three months for an answer? What if you disagreed with the answer? The British **Parliament** thought it had legal authority over the colonies. The colonists thought otherwise and believed their local assemblies should have legal authority.

Parliament believed it had the power to tax the colonists. Since it was not practical for the colonists to send **representatives** to Britain, the colonists argued that all taxes should be passed by local legislatures. In Virginia, this would mean the House of Burgesses. The British refused to listen.

Trouble in Boston

Tempers flared on both sides of the Atlantic. On a cold March night in 1770, an icy snowball was thrown at a British soldier, so the soldiers fired their muskets into the crowd, killing five Americans. The **Boston Massacre** was the first violent encounter between American colonists and British troops. It would not be the last.



Words to Know

► **Parliament**
PAR-luh-ment

An assembly of people who participate in the ruling of the country

► **representatives**
rep-ree-ZEN-ta-tivs

People or groups who have the power to speak on behalf of a larger group of citizens

Not Another Tax!

Britain's first tax was a **sugar tax**. Many colonists had a sweet tooth, so this tax was very annoying.



Next came the **Stamp Act**, a tax on anything made of paper, such as books, newspapers, and playing cards. All paper items had to have this "stamp" on them.



A few years later, the **Townshend Acts** placed taxes on glass, paint, and tea. In 1770 that tax was repealed, except for the tea tax.

A new **tea tax** was placed on all but one brand of British tea. By then, the colonists were so angry they held the **Boston Tea Party**, sneaking onto a British ship.



As they tossed 342 cases of British tea into Boston Harbor, they yelled, "No more taxes!"

Words to Know

► Patriots

PAY-tree-uts

Colonists who went against the king during the American Revolution

► Loyalists

LOY-ul-ists

People who remained loyal to the king of England and the laws of that country

Too Many Acts!

England reacted to the Tea Party by passing new laws in 1774 to punish the troublemakers in Boston and also to show the other colonies who was “boss.” The colonists called the laws **Coercive Acts**. Coerce (*coh-ers*) means “to force.”

Boston’s port was closed until the tossed tea was paid for. Limits were placed on the Massachusetts legislature, and some colonists had to house and feed British soldiers.

Another act, the **Québec Act**, set rules for the lands in the Ohio Valley that had been taken from the French.

Colonists’ freedom of religion, political democracy, and ability to get land there would all be in doubt. This affected many colonists. They nicknamed all the hated new laws the “**Intolerable Acts.**”

Virginians realized that if Britain treated the people of Massachusetts this way, it could happen to them, too.



The Colonists React

Although Britain’s punishments were aimed mostly at the people of Massachusetts, many Virginians did not like what they saw. In the summer of 1774, America’s leading citizens met in Philadelphia for the first **Continental Congress**. Delegates from every colony except faraway Georgia gathered. They wrote to King George trying to make him see their side, but the answer they wanted did not come. What DID come were more and more British soldiers—arriving to keep the colonists quiet.

A Midnight Ride

Some people in Massachusetts began stockpiling weapons, so in April 1775, British soldiers made plans to set off from Boston to seize those supplies. Paul Revere and two other men mounted their horses and galloped off in the dark of night to warn citizens that the British were coming. In the town of Lexington the next morning, **Patriots**, their guns at the ready, made their stand. The first shots of the American Revolution rang out.

At just about the same time, Virginia’s Governor Dunmore threatened to take away munitions stored in Williamsburg. Patrick Henry—who, just weeks earlier, had shouted out in his powerful voice, “Give me liberty or give me death!”—and other Virginia Patriots were growing angry! But many Virginians remained **Loyalists** and pledged their allegiance to Britain and King George.

The Second Continental Congress met for the first time in May of 1775. This time the delegates formed a Continental Army and named George Washington as its commander. Talk of independence filled the air and many colonists began to believe that liberty was worth dying for. Which would you have chosen—Patriot or Loyalist? Or perhaps you would have waited to see what happened?

Virginians made significant contributions during the Revolutionary War era.

PATRICK HENRY: LIBERTY OR DEATH



May 29, 1736:
Born in Hanover
County, Virginia



1765: Joins the
House of
Burgesses



1774: Attends
the First
Continental
Congress

1775: "Give me
liberty or give me
death" speech at
St. John's Church



1775: Leads
militia against
Lord Dunmore in
Williamsburg



1776-1779,
1784-1786:
Governor
of Virginia



June 6, 1799:
Died at Red Hill,
in Brookneal,
Virginia



Young Patrick Henry first gained fame as a lawyer by fighting for colonists' rights.



Try, Try Again

Patrick Henry inspired patriots all across the colonies to fight against taxation without representation. What made him such an inspiration?

"If at first you don't succeed..." were words that meant a lot to Patrick Henry. He had tried owning a general store, farming, then storekeeping a second time. All were failures. Finally Henry went to work for his father-in-law at Hanover Tavern, which was across the street from the county courthouse. "Why not try law?" he thought, so Henry began studying to be a lawyer, and at the age of 24 took on his first case. At last he had found something he was good at.

*"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet,
as to be purchased at the price
of chains and slavery? Forbid it,
Almighty God! I know not what
course others may take; but as
for me, give me liberty or give
me death!"*

—PATRICK HENRY, MARCH 23, 1775

"I Am Not a Virginian, but an American."

Time after time, Henry raised his voice to protest British taxes. He spoke against the Stamp Act so angrily and loudly that his fellow burgesses were afraid he'd be tossed in jail. In 1774 Henry headed off to the first session of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia as one of Virginia's seven delegates, and his voice soon shook the halls as he called for America to unite.

Henry's Later Years

Henry's work did not end with a cry for revolution. He served his country in many ways. Although Henry had no military experience, he became a colonel of the First Virginia Regiment and commander-in-chief of the Virginia militia. He spent 25 years, on and off, as a Virginia lawmaker. He was Virginia's governor and turned down a chance to serve as chief justice of the United States, secretary of state, and minister to Spain.

In poor health in 1795, Patrick Henry went home to Red Hill. Age had weakened his body, but his ideas remain clear and strong to this day. Henry's words, "Give me liberty or give me death," became fighting words that inspired our nation in the days of revolution.

As Patrick Henry spoke at a meeting in St. John's Church in Richmond, his words caused a great stir. Would America go to war?



Lord Dunmore: Patrick Henry's Enemy

One man really made Henry's blood boil—the king's governor in Virginia, the Earl of Dunmore, John Murray. In April of 1775, Dunmore moved all the gunpowder from the storehouse in Williamsburg so that the Patriots could not use it. Henry marched 150 men from Hanover County and demanded the public's gunpowder be put back, so Dunmore issued a proclamation against "a certain Patrick Henry."

Dunmore got a final taste of Virginia's growing anti-British feelings. By December of 1775, he was forced to flee Virginia forever.



By his Excellency the Right Hon. JOHN Earl of
DUNMORE, his Majesty's Lieutenant and
Governor General of the Colony and Dominion of
VIRGINIA, and Vice Admiral of the same:
A Proclamation.

VIRGINIA: 1775.
WHEREAS there have been informed, from sundry An-
thony, that a certain Patrick Henry, of the County of
Stafford, with a Number of Adventurous Followers, have
gathered up Arms, Gunpowder, and other Stores, and
raised up a certain Company, who have taken out of
several Independent Companies, some of the County, to
serve as Volunteers in a Part of the Country, to
oppose the Forces of Great Britain, and in open De-
fiance of the Laws of Great Britain, and in open De-
fiance of the Acts of Par-

The Declaration of Independence gave reasons for independence and ideas for self-government.

Virginians made significant contributions during the Revolutionary War era.

THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

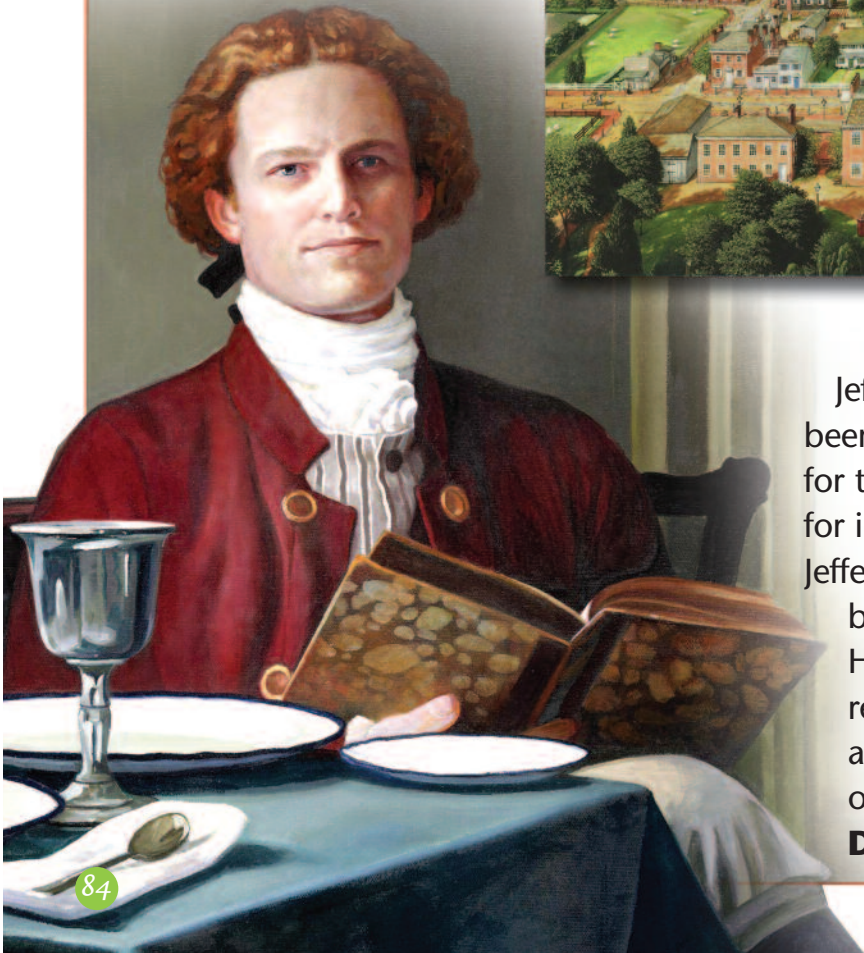
Philadelphia in the summer of 1776 was hot. Flies swarmed everywhere as the Second Continental Congress tried to figure out what to do about the troubles with Britain. The delegates were leaders from each of the thirteen colonies. They knew the time had come to break away from Britain and form a new government. John Adams, a lawyer from Massachusetts and one of the most outspoken delegates, proposed that Thomas Jefferson—a tall, redheaded 33-year-old Virginian—write the document that would cut the colonies' ties with Great Britain. That document would change the world.

The city of Philadelphia as it looked at the time the Declaration was written.



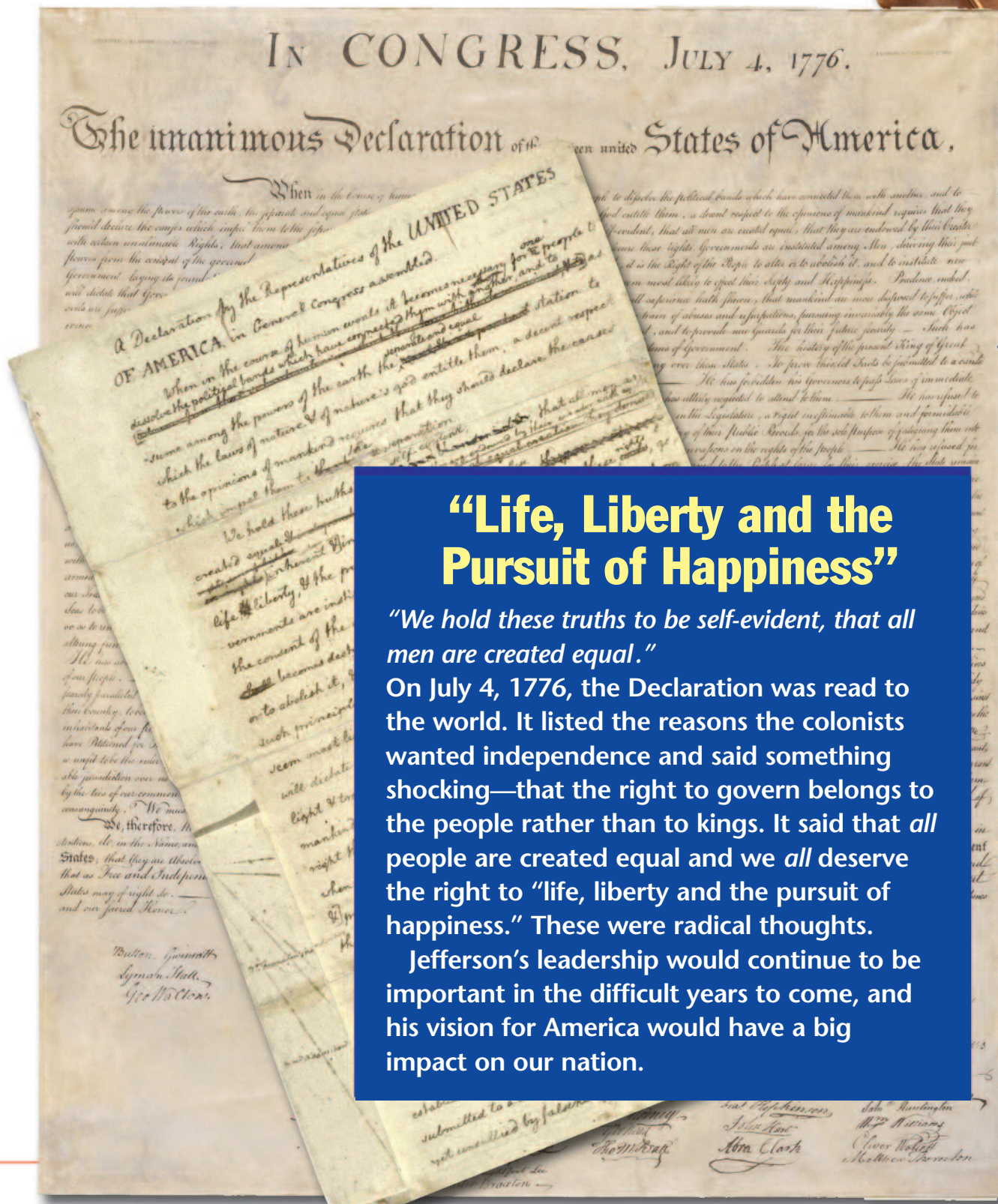
Jefferson's Huge Task

Jefferson had a difficult job. He had been chosen to provide political leadership for the colonists by expressing the reasons for independence from Great Britain. Jefferson loved reading. He had read many books by the world's greatest thinkers. He thought about all the books he had read and got to work. It took him about two weeks to finish his first draft of a brilliant document—the **Declaration of Independence.**



“When in the Course of Human Events”

That was how Jefferson began his Declaration. Benjamin Franklin and John Adams offered advice from time to time. Finally, on July 3rd, it was time to share the Declaration with the members of the Congress. An unhappy Jefferson watched as the delegates changed some of his heartfelt words. But the document was done. The delegates agreed. The ties with Great Britain were now broken.



IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

“Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness”

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration was read to the world. It listed the reasons the colonists wanted independence and said something shocking—that the right to govern belongs to the people rather than to kings. It said that *all* people are created equal and we *all* deserve the right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” These were radical thoughts.

Jefferson’s leadership would continue to be important in the difficult years to come, and his vision for America would have a big impact on our nation.

William Smith
Lynch Hall
York

John Hancock
John Adams
Thomas Jefferson
Benjamin Franklin
John Jay
Roger Sherman
George Washington
James Oglethorpe
James Oglethorpe

Virginians made significant contributions during the Revolutionary War era.

American Indians, whites, enslaved African Americans, and free African Americans had various roles during the American Revolution.

Words to Know

► **neutral**

NEW-trul

Not taking any side or having a particular opinion

► **volunteer**

vol-un-TEER

Offer to do something for free for a community or to benefit a cause

CHOOSING SIDES

When the War of Independence began, it divided Virginia and tore families apart. Virginia's Patriots signed up to serve in the Continental Army. Other Virginians remained loyal to Great Britain. Some Virginians stayed **neutral** and refused to take sides. The war also created a new problem.

African Americans and the War

The Declaration of Independence said that "all men are created equal." But what about the enslaved African Americans? By the time America went to war with Britain, roughly 40 percent of Virginia's population was enslaved, with many living in miserable conditions. When Britain promised enslaved men freedom in exchange for fighting for the king, it sounded like a good deal. Thousands of African Americans enlisted.

Black soldiers had fought bravely for independence in the early days of the war, but when George Washington became commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, he sent every black soldier home. Why? Washington, a slave owner, feared that an African American soldier with a gun could easily turn on his "master." But with Lord Dunmore recruiting black soldiers for Britain's army, Washington had to take action. At first he allowed only free blacks to enlist, but soon he also allowed slaves to fight in place of their masters. Washington did not regret his decision. The new African American recruits fought with honor.

African American Loyalists



Some enslaved African Americans supported the British who promised them freedom. After the war, although free, they had to leave America. Many went to Canada, England, and Africa.

African American Patriots



Some free African Americans fought for independence from Great Britain. Some were slaves sent by their masters. Others were slaves promised freedom after the war.

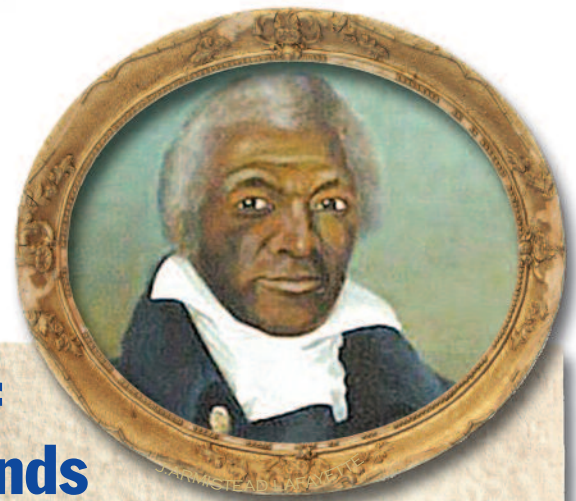
American Indians



The war divided the American Indians, too. Many Indians went off to fight. Some fought alongside the Patriots, while others allied themselves with the British.



These Indians sided with the Loyalists against the Patriots.



A Tale of Two Friends

James Lafayette: Daring Spy

One of the war's best spies was an enslaved African American from Virginia named James Armistead. He asked his master to let him **volunteer** in the Continental Army, and in 1781 he became the servant of a French general, Lafayette. Together the two men came up with a plan. Armistead went to the British, pretending to be a runaway slave willing to spy on the Patriots. He traveled between the two sides, giving false information to the British and correct information to the Patriots. His bravery helped the Patriots win the war. At the war's end he asked for his freedom. To honor General Lafayette, he took his last name and became James Armistead Lafayette.



The Marquis de Lafayette: A Friend from France

Why would the Marquis de Lafayette, a 19-year-old French nobleman, leave the comforts of home, travel across the Atlantic, and volunteer his service to the Continental Army during the American Revolution?

France and Britain were mortal enemies at the time, and Lafayette was inspired by tales of the upstart Americans. During the war, Lafayette persuaded the king of France to provide French troops, ships, and money to aid the Americans. Lafayette became a good friend and advisor to George Washington and helped lead the Americans to victory at Yorktown.

All Colors and Shapes

White women took on more responsibilities to support the war effort, from running farms and businesses to nursing the wounded. A few even dressed as men and joined the army. Virginia's Indians also found themselves having to choose sides. Some of Virginia's leading families had claimed land in the fertile Ohio Valley. Since the colonists were always grabbing land, many Indians sided with the British after promises were made to keep the Ohio Valley closed to white settlers.

Women in the Front Lines



Many women traveled with the soldiers from battle to battle. Some even fought. They cooked, sewed, and nursed the sick and wounded. Others ran farms, shops, and businesses while their husbands and fathers were away.

The last major battle of the Revolutionary War was fought at Yorktown, Virginia.

A variety of factors explain the reasons for moving Virginia's capital.

VICTORY AT YORKTOWN

For six awful years, the war continued. Washington's army was struggling. In the summer of 1781, the British had firm control of New York City, and British troops led by General Lord Cornwallis had swept through the South, winning battle after battle.

The War Comes to Virginia

In 1780, a decision was made to move Virginia's state capital from Williamsburg to Richmond. Many Virginia settlers had been moving westward, and Richmond was a more central location. But most importantly, it was further inland from the sea and safer from British attack.

Still, in spite of that, the British captured Richmond. Things looked bleak until France, America's enemy in the French and Indian War, became its friend and ally in the Revolution.



Washington studies the battlefield at Yorktown. What do you think Washington was thinking?

Guns blast on the high seas at the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay.



A Fight at Sea

America did not have much of a navy, but France—America's new friend—did. On September 5, 1781, the French navy surprised the British fleet at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. The Battle of the Virginia Capes cut off British troops at Yorktown from their supply ships. With supplies and ammunition running short, the British commanders knew they could not hold out for very long.

Try It My Way

Thousands of French soldiers began arriving to help the exhausted American troops. In May 1781 General Washington and a French commander, Comte de Rochambeau, met to hatch a new plan. Washington wanted to launch an attack on the British stronghold in New York City. Rochambeau had another idea. American victories in the Carolinas had recently forced British general Lord Cornwallis north into Virginia. Why not march south to fight him there? Washington agreed.

Surrounded!

In mid-August 1781 about 17,000 French and American soldiers began marching from New York to Virginia. They reached Yorktown in September. This was the plan: First, cut off the supply of ammunition, guns, and food from British ships. Second, completely surround Lord Cornwallis and his troops so they could not move. Finally, begin an endless barrage of shelling, day after day. Cornwallis's ammunition was just about gone. He knew things were hopeless. On October 19, Lord Cornwallis surrendered.

Almost Over

The Patriots had won! The American victory at Yorktown led to the surrender of the British army, which led to the end of the war in 1783. The Battle of Yorktown did not end the war, but it was the last major military battle on land between British forces and the Continental Army.

Surrender at Yorktown

As a military band played, stunned British soldiers lined up along Hampton Road to surrender to the Americans. At the command of "ground arms," the British soldiers angrily tossed their weapons onto the field. Lord Cornwallis was too humiliated to be there, so he pretended to be sick and sent a lower-ranked officer to surrender to George Washington. Washington angrily refused to accept the ceremonial sword of surrender from a lower officer, so he also sent someone in his place.

The **Treaty of Paris**, signed on September 3, 1783, ended the war and recognized America's independence, with territory that stretched from New England to Georgia and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. The fighting was finally over, and there was room to grow. How would the brand-new nation fare?

On October 14, the Americans and French attacked the British troops at Yorktown, bravely leaping over barricades of trees with sharpened trunks pointed at them.



AMERICAN REVOLUTION: TIMELINE

War in Europe spills over into North America and leads to high taxes for the colonists. The fight to make their voices heard leads to the War of Independence, also known as the Revolutionary War.



1754
-1763

The French and Indian War pushes the French out of the West, but it also causes money problems for Great Britain.

1764
-1767

Parliament passes taxes on sugar, paper items, and other items used often by colonists.

1770

The Boston Massacre



1773

The Boston Tea Party



1774

England passes the "Intolerable Acts"—the Coercive Acts and the Québec Act. The First Continental Congress meets.

1775

March: Patrick Henry delivers his "Give me liberty or give me death" speech in Richmond, Virginia.

April: Paul Revere's Ride. The first shots of the war are fired at the Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. Patrick Henry challenges Governor Dunmore over Virginia's weapons at Williamsburg.

May: Second Continental Congress meets. George Washington is named commander-in-chief of the new Continental Army.



1776

The Declaration of Independence is written by Thomas Jefferson, and the United States officially breaks from Britain.

1777
-1778

Victory at Saratoga, New York, convinces France to become an American ally. George Washington and his troops spend a miserable freezing winter at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.



1780

Virginia's state capital is moved from Williamsburg to Richmond.

1781

March: The Articles of Confederation are ratified.

October 19: The British surrender at Yorktown, Virginia.

1783

Treaty of Paris is signed. Britain recognizes an independent U.S. with territory reaching west to the Mississippi River.



LET'S REVIEW

Review Questions

Use pages 80–81 to answer question 1.

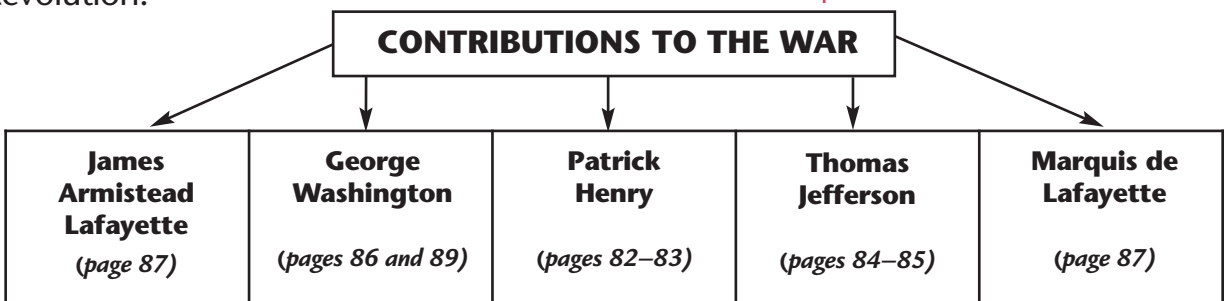
1. Create a T-chart to list ideas about government held by the British Parliament and the colonists.

Use pages 84–85 to answer question 2 in a paragraph.

2. What did the Declaration of Independence declare and why was it an important document?

Use the page numbers in the chart to complete question 3.

3. Copy and complete the chart by explaining the contribution of each individual during the American Revolution.



Use pages 86–87 to answer question 4.

4. Make a list of each of the following group's roles during the American Revolution:

- white women
- enslaved African Americans
- free African Americans
- American Indians

Use pages 88–89 to answer questions 5–7 in complete sentences.

5. Explain the significance of the American victory at Yorktown.

6. Name the document that ended the war and what it stated.

7. Of the three reasons the capital was moved from Williamsburg to Richmond, which do you think was the most significant? Why?

Key Words to Know

Use your own words to explain the meaning of each word.

Loyalists

Patriots

Parliament

neutral

Think and Do

- Use a variety of sources to create the front page of a newspaper with headlines and articles detailing one of these events:
—Patrick Henry speaks out against taxation without representation at St. John's Church in 1775 in Richmond.
—Thomas Jefferson writes the Declaration of Independence in 1776 stating reasons for America's independence and ideas for self-government.
—The Treaty of Paris is signed in 1783 officially ending the war.
- Write a short play about a spirited conversation between a Loyalist father and his Patriot son as they discuss whether the Virginia colony should go to war with England.