

Chapter 08 - America Secedes from the Empire

Declaration of Independence

Formally approved by the Congress on July 4, 1776. This "shout heard round the world" has been a source of inspiration to countless revolutionary movements against arbitrary authority. The document sharply separated Loyalists from Patriots and helped to start the American Revolution by allowing England to hear of the colonists disagreements with British authority.

Loyalists / Tories

A colonist in the new world who remained loyal to the British during the American Revolution.

Whigs/Patriots

Name given to party of patriots of the new land resisting England prior to the Declaration of Independence.

Treaty of Paris of 1783

The British recognized the independence of the United States. It granted boundaries, which stretched from the Mississippi on the west, to the Great Lakes on the north, and to Spanish Florida on the south. The Yankees retained a share of Newfoundland. It greatly upset the Canadians.

Second Continental Congress

The Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia on May 10, 1775. Three delegates added to the Congress were Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Hancock. The Congress took on governmental duties. (United all the colonies for the war effort.) They selected George Washington as Commander in Chief. They encouraged the colonies to set themselves up as states. On July 4, 1776 they adopted the Declaration of Independence. The Congress ended March 1, 1781 when a Congress authorized by the Articles of Confederation took over.

Common Sense

Common Sense written in 1776 was one of the most potent pamphlets ever written. It called for the colonists to realize their mistreatment and push for independence from England. The author Thomas Paine introduced such ideas as nowhere in the universe is a smaller heavenly body control a larger. For this reason there is no reason for England to have control over the vast lands of America. The pamphlet with its high-class journalism as well as propaganda sold a total of 120,000 copies within a few months.

John Jay

John Jay was the First Chief Justice of the United States, and also an American statesman and jurist. Elected to the Continental Congress, he also helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris w/ Great Britain, ending the American Revolution. Serving as governor of New York State from 1795 to 1801, he was a advocate of a strong national government. Appointed by Washington, Jay negotiated a settlement when was w/ Britain threatened due to controversies over the Treaty of Paris: it became known as Jay's Treaty.

Mercenaries

A mercenary is a person hired for service in the army of a foreign country. For example, in the late 1760's George III hired soldiers to fight in the British army against Americans

Natural Rights Theory

The theory that people are born with certain "natural rights." Some say these rights are anything people do in the pursuit of liberty--as long as the rights of others are not impeded.

Privateering

Privately owned armed ships specifically authorized by congress to prey on enemy shipping. There were over a thousand American privateers who responded to the call of patriotism and profit. The privateers brought in urgently needed gold, harassed the enemy, and raised American morale. (American Revolution, 1775-1783)

Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson was a member of the House of Burgesses, wrote the Declaration of Independence, was ambassador to France, and was the President of the United States of America. He did all these things before, during, and after the Revolutionary war. With his Declaration of Independence he declared the colonies' freedom from England. While President, he bought the Louisiana Purchase and had Lewis and Clark to explore it.

Marquis de Lafayette

A wealthy French nobleman, nicknamed "French Gamecock", made major general of colonial army, got commission on part of his family.

Admiral de Grasse

Admiral de Grasse operated a powerful French fleet in the West Indies. He advised America he was free to join with them in an assault on Cornwallis at Yorktown. Rochambeau's French army defended British by land and Admiral de Grasse blockaded them by sea. This resulted in Cornwallis's surrender on October 19, 1781.

Patrick Henry

Patrick Henry was a fiery lawyer during revolutionary War times. Supporting a break from Great Britain, he is famous for the words, "give me liberty, or give me death!" which concluded a speech given to the Virginia Assembly in 1775. This quote is a symbol of American patriotism still today. After the American Revolution, Henry served two terms as governor of Virginia and was also instrumental in the development of the Bill of Rights.

Comte de Rochambeau

Commanded a powerful French army of six thousand troops in the summer of 1780 and arrived in Newport, Rhode Island. They were planning a Franco - American attack on New York.

Richard Henry Lee

Richard Henry Lee was a member of the Philadelphia Congress during the late 1770's. On June 7, 1776 he declared, "These United colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states." This resolution was the start of the Declaration of Independence and end to British relations.

Horatio Gates

Horatio Gates started in the English army and worked his way up through the ranks. Latter during the revolution he turned sides and was appointed to take charge of the Continental army of the North. One of Gates accomplishments was his victory at Saratoga. His career in the army ended when he lost to General Charles Cornwallis.

John Paul Jones

The commander of one of America's ships; daring, hard-fighting young Scotsman; helped to destroy British merchant ships in 1777; brought war into the water of the British seas.

Charles Cornwallis

Cornwallis was a British general who fought in the Seven Years War, was elected to the House of Commons in 1760, and lost battles to George Washington on December 26, 1776 and on January 3, 1777.

Cornwallis made his mark on history, even though he could never ensure an overall British win over the Americans. He had many individual victories and losses against the Americans in the American Revolution and will always be remembered as a great and powerful general.

Thomas Paine

Thomas Paine was a passionate and persuasive writer who published the bestseller, Common Sense in 1776. Paine had the radical idea that the colonies should set up America as an independent, democratic, republic away from England. Over 120,000 copies of his book were sold and this helped spark the colonists rebellion later that year.

Nathanael Greene

Nathanael Greene was a colonial general who fought the English in the late eighteenth century-- used fighting tactic of retreating and getting the English to pursue for miles. Historical Significance: Cleared Georgia and South Carolina of British troops.

Benedict Arnold

He was an American General during the Revolutionary War (1776). He prevented the British from reaching Ticonderoga. Later, in 1778, he tried to help the British take West Point and the Hudson River but he was found out and declared a traitor.

John Burgoyne

Burgoyne was a British general that submitted a plan for invading New York state from Canada. He was then given charge of the army. Though defeated, he advanced troops near Lake Champlain to near Albany. Burgoyne surrendered at Saratoga on Oct. 17, 1777. This battle helped to bring France into the war as an ally for the United States, this has been called one of the decisive battles of history

George Washington

Washington pulled his small force back into Fort Necessity where he was overwhelmed (1754) by the French. He was the commander of Virginia's frontier troops as a colonel. Left the army in 1758. Also the first President of the United States. Took office (Apr.30, 1789) in New York City.

William Howe

English General who commanded the English forces at Bunker Hill. Howe did not relish the rigors of winter campaigning, and he found more agreeable the bedtime company of his mistress. At a time when it seemed obvious that he should join the forces in New York, he joined the main British army for an attack on Philadelphia.