

Chapter 6: The American Revolution

General:

- Odds in favor of Britain
- Most battles lost

I. 1776: Washington's Narrow Escape

- a. British soldiers land at Staten Island (6/2/1776)
 - i. Gen. **William Howe**, Admiral Richard (Lord Howe)
 1. William Howe slow to move, cautious
 - ii. 32,000 men
- b. **Washington**
 - i. 19,000 men
 - ii. Still learning
- c. **New York** was key to holding the colonies
- d. Washington escapes from Howe (**Manhattan**) in rain storm at night
- e. American forces retreat to **Boston**
 - i. **Thomas Paine's** *The American Crisis*
 1. Increases American's Morale
- f. British forces settle in NY, NJ, Newport to wait out winter
 - i. Washington (2400 men) attacks Hessians at **Trenton** on **Christmas** night 1776
 1. Drunk Hessians lost 1000 (death/capture)
 2. Washington had 6 wounded (incl. James Monroe)

II. American Society at War

- a. All adult males (15-60) enroll in local militia
- b. Local militias chose sides (British/American)
 - i. **Patriots/Whigs** – revolutionaries
 1. **British dislike** for war required King to **hire Germans** (Hessians)
 2. Patriot militia springs to life when Redcoats appear
 3. Influenced by enlightenment
 4. Merchants, Planter class
 - ii. **Tories/Loyalists** – defenders of England
 1. Numerous, 30% population left colonies during/after war
 2. Americans generally concentrated in seaport cities
 3. "We are British subjects", treason unthinkable
 4. Backcountry farmers
 - a. If they win they will get land
 5. If paid by British then loyal
 - iii. **Neutral**
- c. American Militia
 - i. Preferred ambushes or hand to hand combat
 - ii. Kill/torture prisoners (unnecessarily)
 - iii. Appear, battle, use supplies, disappear (go home to do chores)
 1. High desertion rate
- d. Continental Army
 - i. Well trained
 - ii. Poor native born Americans

- iii. Not used to battle
 - iv. 5000-20,000 members (fluctuating)
 - e. Finance/Supply Problems
 - i. Congress couldn't supply army
 - ii. Allowed army to take supplies from farmers in return for promises of repayment
 - iii. Used money from abandoned loyalist estates
 - iv. Harsh winter (Morristown 1776-77)
 - 1. Washington lost all but 1000 men (fled, left army)
 - 2. Spring promised new recruits (\$20 & 100 acres of land for 3 years)
- III. 1777: Setbacks for the British
- a. Issues: divided counsels, overconfidence, poor communication, indecision
 - i. **Gen. Gage**
 - 1. Moved against **Philadelphia** (Patriot capital)
 - 2. Pushed Washington out by Sept 11
 - ii. **Burgoyne** moved South from Canada
 - iii. American army in north shrunk during winter
 - iv. **Burgoyne** attacked **Fort Ticonderoga**
 - 1. Continentals left gunpowder behind as they deserted
 - 2. Congress fires American commander; replaces with **Horatio Gates**
 - v. Oriskany
 - 1. Militiamen repulsed an ambush by Tories & Indians
 - vi. Bennington, Vermont
 - 1. New England militiamen led by Colonel John Stark won against British
 - vii. Oct 17 1777, Burgoyne surrendered at **Saratoga**
 - 1. Soldiers imprisoned, Burgoyne allowed to leave
 - b. Alliance with France
 - i. **French** celebrated British defeat at **Saratoga**
 - 1. Proves to French that the Americans can win
 - ii. **Special agent** sent to hint at **French aid**
 - iii. 1776 14 ships w/ military supplies sent to colonists
 - iv. **Spanish** helped as well
 - v. **Treaty of Amity and Commerce** (1778) – France recognized the United States and offered trade incl. privileges to American shipping; trading partners for a long time
 - 1. Britain declares war on France
 - vi. **Treaty of Alliance** (1778) – if France entered war, both sides would fight without truce or peace until both sides agreed to American independence was won
 - 1. All holdings were guaranteed for both sides, France wouldn't seek British land
- IV. 1778: Both Sides Regroup
- a. Defeat at **Saratoga** made war unwinnable (Lord North); king refused peace
 - b. Parliament granted all requests prior to independence
 - i. American Congress refused to begin **negotiations** until Britain recognized its independence or withdrew troops
 - ii. King already approved **withdraw** of troops
 - c. Washington's army at **Valley Forge**
 - i. Hard winter 1777-1778

- ii. Many soldiers left, required supplies
- iii. March, soldiers health restored by exchange of supplies with receipts
- iv. Training: **Frederick Williams Augustus Henry Ferdinand**, baron von Steuben
- v. **Battle of Monmouth** revealed Washington's **temper**
 - 1. All northern battles now at stalemate
- d. Actions on the Frontier
 - i. British Colonel **William Hamilton** offered bounty for American scalps
 - ii. **George Rogers Clark** ended attacks
 - 1. July 4 1778 took Kaskaskia by surprise
 - 2. Took Cahokia, Vincennes & others w/o bloodshed
 - 3. Killed Indians on sight to show that the British didn't protect them
 - 4. General John Sullivan & 4000 men defeated serious Indian (Iroquois)/Tories in Western NY (Aug 29 1779)
 - a. Burned Indian villages & food; many homeless & couldn't survive
 - 5. Daniel Boone & 30 men (+wives/children) held off 400 Indians at Boonesborough, Kentucky
 - a. Many other attacks
 - iii. Major Indian tribes along frontier destroyed, settlement of Appalachian West after war

V. War in The South

- a. End of 1778 focus shifts to south (no major action since 1776)
- b. Gen Clinton takes **Savannah, GA**
 - i. Loyalist strength less than expected
 - ii. British forces so harsh Loyalists rebelled
- c. Nov 1778 British attack Savannah, invaders take the town
 - i. Drove to Charleston, plundered plantations along the way
 - ii. Gen Charles Cornwallis brings new forces
 - iii. May 12 1780 Benjamin Lincoln surrenders Charleston (& 5,500 men)
 - 1. Largest single American loss
 - iv. **Horatio Gates** sent south by Congress against Washington
 - 1. Gates' force surprised by Cornwallis & Gates retreated to Hillsborough, NC
- d. Carolinas
 - i. Cornwallis almost had S.C. under control & Banastre Tarleton & Patrick Ferguson (mobilized Tory militiamen) overreached themselves
 - 1. "Overmountain" men allied with other Whigs went after Ferguson, defeated him & other Tories (Oct 7 1780)
- e. Congress chooses new commander for south, Nathanael Greene (patient, good manager, salvages supplies, avoids needless risks)
 - i. Arrives Dec 1780
 - ii. Sent Cornwallis on "wild goose chase" to Hillsborough, then to Wilmington to resupply
 - iii. Cornwallis heads for Virginia
- f. **Benedict Arnold** becomes British general Sept 1780, grudge against Washington
- g. British realize they **cannot** win
 - i. Look for help from Nationals (Blacks) guarantee not slaves (not equal)
- h. **Yorktown**
 - i. Cornwallis picks Yorktown as defensible site

- ii. Little worry over siege, Washington focused on British Navy & NY
 - 1. Small U.S. Navy & American privateers wounded British fleet
 - 2. Capt. John Paul Jones captured, sank British frigate (sept 23 1779)
 - 3. French navy forces British out of Chesapeake waters
 - a. W/o French water forces, hard to end war
- iii. July 1780, French land 6000 men at Newport, RI (British blockade held for 1 year)
- iv. French fleet (Admiral de Grasse) + Washington = 16,00 men (double Cornwallis)
- v. Sept 28 siege begins at Yorktown
- vi. **Oct 17 1781 (4 years after Saratoga) Cornwallis surrenders**

VI. Negotiations

- a. Feb 27 1782, House of Commons **votes to end war**
 - i. British troops took some slaves back to England to hurt planter class
 - ii. Ship looting
- b. Continental Congress makes 5 man commission to make peace treaty
 - i. John Adams, John Jay, and Benjamin Franklin only active
- c. 1783 France & Spain make peace with Britain
- d. **Peace of Paris Sept 3 1783**
 - i. Political Independence of U.S.
 - ii. Mississippi River boundary to west
 - iii. Nov 24 last British troops left NYC
 - iv. Washington resigns on Dec 23
 - v. Fishing rights over Nova Scotia

VII. The Political Revolution

- a. Radical change in principles. Opinions, sentiments, & affections
- b. Government
 - i. Republic, contract theory, sovereignty of people, separation of powers, natural rights
- c. State constitutions
 - i. Political experimentation 1776-1787 at state level

VIII. The Social Revolution

- i. Political experimentation 1776-1787 at state level
 - 1. Most had check & balances (separate bodies of gov.)
 - 2. Bill of rights
 - 3. Limit power of governors & increase power of legislator
- ii. Articles of Confederation
 - 1. States accepted near Nov 1777, Maryland wanted other states to give up claims in their charters; they complied
 - 2. Congress was a pluralized monarchy
 - 3. No power to enforce resolutions
 - a. States could ignore the actions of congress
- b. New political opportunities b/c creation of state governments
 - i. Social base larger (more diverse)
 - ii. Newcomers has less property & education
- c. Past experiences with England led to fights for rights
 - i. Questioned denial of representation for the backcountry
 - ii. Wide suffrage (almost universal male suffrage)
- d. Unsettled land used for veterans of the war

- i. Lands closed by Proclamation of 1763 & Quebec Act of 1774 now usable
 - e. 1775 Washington allows blacks into armed forces
 - i. 5000 admitted
 - f. Slaves who served in war won independence & possible land
 - i. Most went to Canada or Caribbean
 - ii. If helped British, hanged
 - iii. Northern states had doctrines & led to emancipation during/after war
 - iv. Most northern states have freedom to children of slaves after 18 or 21
 - g. Status of women varied by state; not much freedom
 - h. **Judith Sargent** Murray of Gloucester, Mass. – “On the Equality of the Sexes” (1779 pub. 1790)
 - i. Stressed women capable outside home
 - i. Toleration of religion → complete freedom of religion & separation of church and state
- IX. The Emergence of an American Culture
 - a. Men found themselves working with others from different states during war
 - b. Revolution created national consciousness & tradition
 - c. John Adams – creation of Independence Day, help to unite republic
 - d. Public education proposed by Thomas Jefferson & Samuel Adams
 - i. Didn’t happen b/c wealthy didn’t want their kids equal with the poor
 - e. 1st nation that doesn’t have ancient past