

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: 1775-1783

- I. **Second Continental Congress** -- May 10, 1775
 - A. All 13 colonies present -- delegates still not interested in independence but rather redressing of grievances (conservative position).
 - B. Most significant act of Congress: Selected **George Washington** to head of the **Continental Army**.
 - C. **Declaration of the Causes & Necessity of Taking Up Arms** (Jefferson & Dickinson)
 1. Drafted 2nd set of appeals to the king and British people for redress of American grievances.
 2. Seen as intermediate step towards the Declaration of Independence
-- (*Declaration & Resolves* from 1st Continental Congress was earlier step.)
 3. Adopted measures to raise money and to create an army and a navy.
 - D. **Olive Branch Petition** (written largely by John Dickinson)
 1. Last ditch effort by moderates in the Continental Congress to prevent an all-out war.
 2. Once again, professed loyalty to the crown; sought to restore peace
 3. Appealed to the king to intercede with Parliament to reconsider the "Intolerable Acts"
 4. King refused to recognize Congress and the war raged on
- II. Following Bunker Hill, King formally proclaimed the colonies in rebellion (Aug. 23, 1775).
 - A. This was tantamount to a declaration of war against the colonies.
 - B. 18,000 **Hessians** (German mercenary soldiers) hired by King to support British forces
-- Colonials shocked that the king would hire forces known as butchers for the war between Anglo-Saxon cousins.
- III. Patriots & Loyalists
 - A. **"Tories" (loyalists)** = about 20% of the American people
 1. Colonists who fought for return to colonial rule; loyal to the king.
 2. Usually conservative: educated and wealthy; fearful of "mob rule."
 3. Older generation apt to be loyalists; younger generation more revolutionary
 4. King's officers and other beneficiaries of the crown
 5. Anglican clergy and a large portion of their followers; most numerous of the loyalists (except in Virginia)
 6. Well entrenched in aristocratic NY, Charleston, Quaker PA, and NJ.
 7. Least numerous in New England
 8. Ineffective at gaining allegiance of neutral colonists
 - B. **Patriots**
 1. Sometimes called "whigs" after British opposition party
 2. American rebels who fought both British soldiers and loyalists
 3. Most numerous in New England
 4. Constituted a minority movement
 5. More adept at gaining support from colonials
 6. Financing: **Robert Morris**, "the financier of the Revolution" helped Congress finance the war.
 - C. The Loyalist Exodus
 1. Loyalists regarded by Patriots as traitors.
 2. About 80,000 loyalists were driven out or fled the colonies
-- Estates confiscated and sold; helped finance the war
 3. 50,000 fought for the British

- IV. **Battle of Saratoga** (most important battle of the American Revolution.
 - 1. Made possible French aid which ultimately ensured American independence.
 - 2. Spanish and Dutch eventually entered and England was faced with world war.
 - 3. Revived the faltering colonial cause

- V. Washington retired to **Valley Forge** for winter of 1777-78
 - 1. Supplies were scarce: food, clothing
 - 2. Army whipped into shape by the Prussian drillmaster **Baron von Steuben**.
 - 3. Episode demonstrated American resolve despite horrible conditions.

- VI. **Benedict Arnold** becomes a traitor in 1780 -- tremendous blow to American morale
 - 1. Arnold frustrated with his treatment by his superiors despite his heroic service
 - 2. Persuaded Washington to make him head of West Point
 - 3. Plotted with the British to sell out the key stronghold of West Point commanding the Hudson River
 - 4. Plot accidentally discovered by Washington

- V. **France Becomes an Ally**
 - A. French eager to exact revenge on the British for the Seven Years War.
 - 1. Saw Revolutionary war as an opportunity to stab England in the back.
 - 2. New World colonies were England's most valuable overseas possessions
 - B. Secret supply to the Americans
 - C. Declaration of Independence a turning point for French aid
 - 1. Showed Americans meant business
 - 2. Victory at Saratoga displayed an excellent chance for defeating England
 - D. **Franco-American Alliance, 1778:** France offers U.S. a treaty of alliance.
 - 1. Promised Americans recognition of independence.
 - 2. Both sides bound themselves to wage war until the US won its freedom or until both agreed to terms with Britain.
 - 3. Many Americans reluctantly accepted the treaty.
 - a. France a strong Roman Catholic country
 - b. a traditional enemy of Britain for centuries.
 - E. American Revolution turned into **a world war** that put severe stress on Britain's resources.
 - 1. Spain and Holland entered in 1779.
 - 2. Catherine the Great of Russia organized the **League of Armed Neutrality**
 - Lined up almost all remaining European neutrals in an attitude of passive hostility toward England as a result of England disturbing Baltic shipping.
 - 3. War raged in Europe, N.A., South America, the Caribbean, and Asia.**

- VI. Peace at Paris
 - A. British ready to come to terms after losses in India, West Indies, and Mediterranean
 - B. French attempt to create a weak U.S.
 - C. **Treaty of Paris of 1783** - American concessions:
 - 1. Loyalists could not be further persecuted
 - 2. Congress was to recommend to state legislatures that confiscated Loyalist property be restored
 - 3. American states were bound to pay British creditors for debts long owed.
 - 4. U.S. did not comply with many of these concessions and it became partial cause of another war with Britain in 1812.
 - D. **America alone gained from the war**
 - 1. Britain lost colonies and other territories**
 - 2. France got revenge but became bankrupt which caused French Revolution.**
 - 3. Spain gained little**