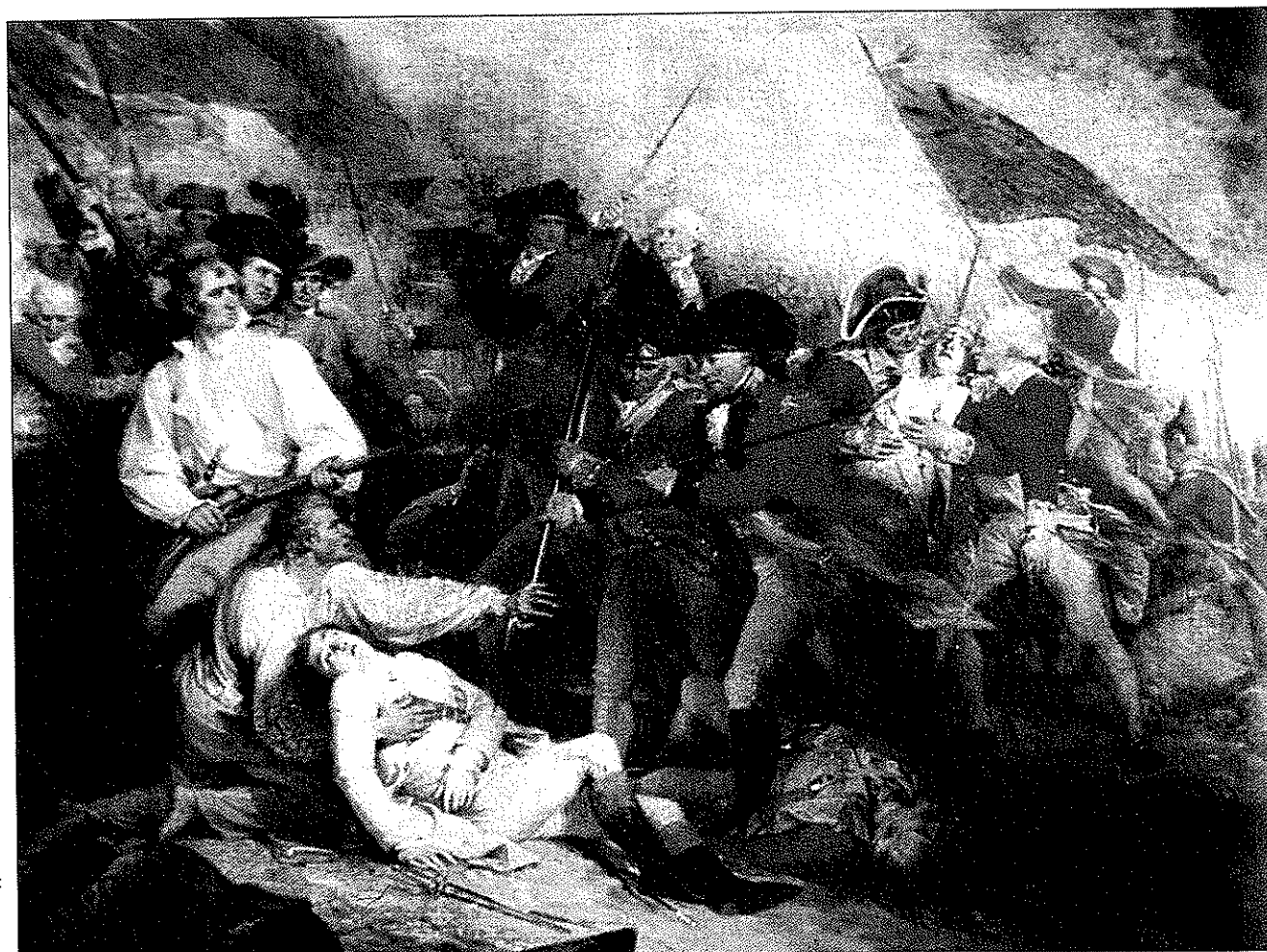


# The American Revolution, 1776–1783

In the last chapter, you read about the events leading up to the Declaration of Independence. Americans had to fight for freedom from Great Britain. In this chapter you will read how the American Revolution was fought. You will also read about the important people who made **victory** possible. Victory is the defeat of an enemy.

Why were many Americans willing to fight the British in the American Revolution?

The Battle of Bunker Hill was one of the first battles of the American Revolution.



## The Long Fight

Not all Americans wanted the Revolution. Some people remained **loyal**, or faithful, to Great Britain. They were called **Loyalists**. The people who were for independence called themselves **Patriots**. The Patriots fought the battles that won the American Revolution.

The British thought it would be easy to win the war. They had an army of trained soldiers. They also paid professional German soldiers to fight on their side. The British did not think the Americans were very good soldiers. For two years, the British Army chased General Washington and his soldiers. But even though the Continental Army lost many battles, they always escaped from the enemy.

## Washington and the American Army

General Washington had a hard time taking care of his men. A lot of them did not have **uniforms**, or special army clothes. So they wore their regular clothes. Some soldiers had to fight and march without shoes. Many of them had no blankets or tents. During the cold weather, some men got sick and died. There wasn't always enough food. Many soldiers went hungry.

Unlike the British Army, the American Army was not trained to be soldiers. Most of the men were farmers, fishermen, and store owners who were not used to taking orders from an army commander. Some would only fight in battles near their homes. Others left the army when it was time to plant or harvest crops. So Washington had a hard job keeping the army together.

But Washington was a good leader. His men trusted and respected him. Because of this, Washington was able to keep the army going.

List two problems the American Army had.

## UNIT PROJECT



George Washington became the first President of the United States. With your group talk and take notes about the qualities that make a good leader of a country.



This is an example of the uniforms worn by the British Army during the American Revolution.

## The Victory at Trenton

It was December 1776. General Washington had only about 2,500 men left in his army. Many soldiers were sick and didn't have warm clothes. Americans were beginning to lose hope.

Finally something good happened. On Christmas Eve, Washington had a plan.

It was a very cold night. Washington led his army across the Delaware River in boats. Then the cold and tired men marched to Trenton, New Jersey. There was a camp of German soldiers in Trenton. They were celebrating Christmas. They had no idea Washington was coming!

Washington's soldiers surprised the Germans and captured their camp. They took more than 900 German prisoners.

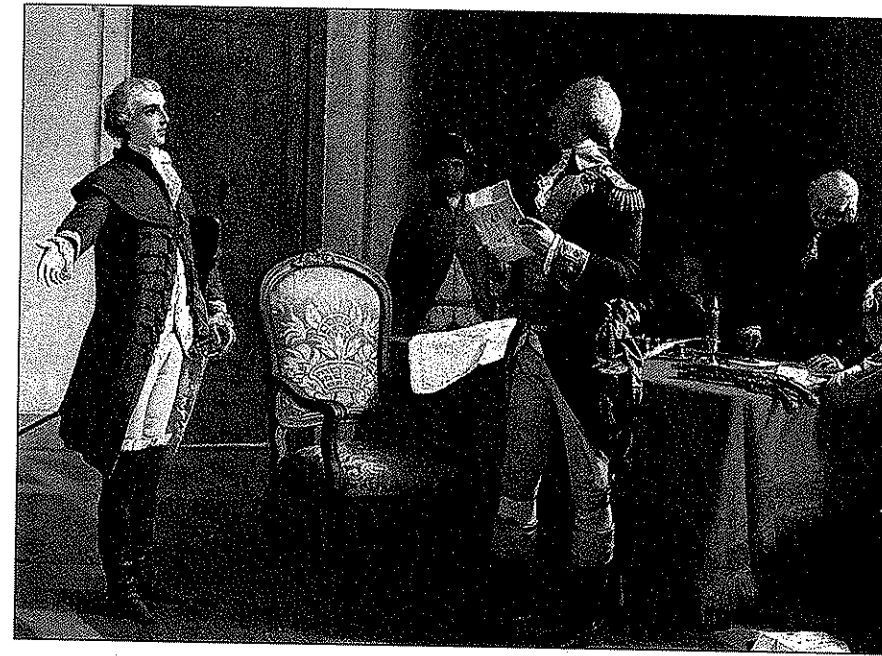
The victory at Trenton made Americans feel more hopeful about winning the war. So more men signed up to fight. The British Army, however, was still stronger than the American Army.

**Why did the battle at Trenton give Americans hope?**

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George Washington leads his men into battle.



The Marquis de Lafayette (on the left) meets George Washington.

## Help Arrives from Europe

While Washington worked to keep his army together, other colonial leaders were trying to get help. Benjamin Franklin tried to get France to enter the war on the side of the Americans. Great Britain and France were old enemies. So the Americans thought France might fight with them.

The French entered the war after the American victory at Saratoga, New York, in 1777. This victory let the French know that the Americans were strong.

One rich Frenchman had already joined the Patriots. He was the Marquis de Lafayette. He arrived in America with other French soldiers in June 1777. He offered to serve in the American Army as a regular soldier. Instead, the Continental Congress made him a leader. Lafayette was only 20 years old when he joined the Americans.

Help came from other European nations, too. Germany and Poland sent men who were good army leaders. They helped train the American soldiers. Some countries also gave the Americans money.

**What European countries helped the Patriots?**

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General Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777–78.



### Winter at Valley Forge

The British Army was spending a comfortable winter in Philadelphia. But the winter of 1777 was very hard for Washington and his men. They camped on a frozen plain in Pennsylvania called Valley Forge. The soldiers were often hungry. Many men were sick that winter, too. Their shoes, if they had any, were worn out. Washington wrote, “You could tell where the army had been by the blood of their feet on the snow.”



Baron Friedrich von Steuben helped train American soldiers.

In these hard times, a soldier came to the Patriot camp to help. His name was Baron Friedrich von Steuben. He was from Prussia, a country in Europe known for its strong army. George Washington asked von Steuben to teach his soldiers how to fight better.

The Patriots were brave, but they did not know how to fight in an organized way. They were used to hiding in the forests and making surprise attacks. Now they had to fight the British on open fields. Von Steuben taught the American soldiers how to fight together as a group.


**What were conditions like for the soldiers at Valley Forge?**

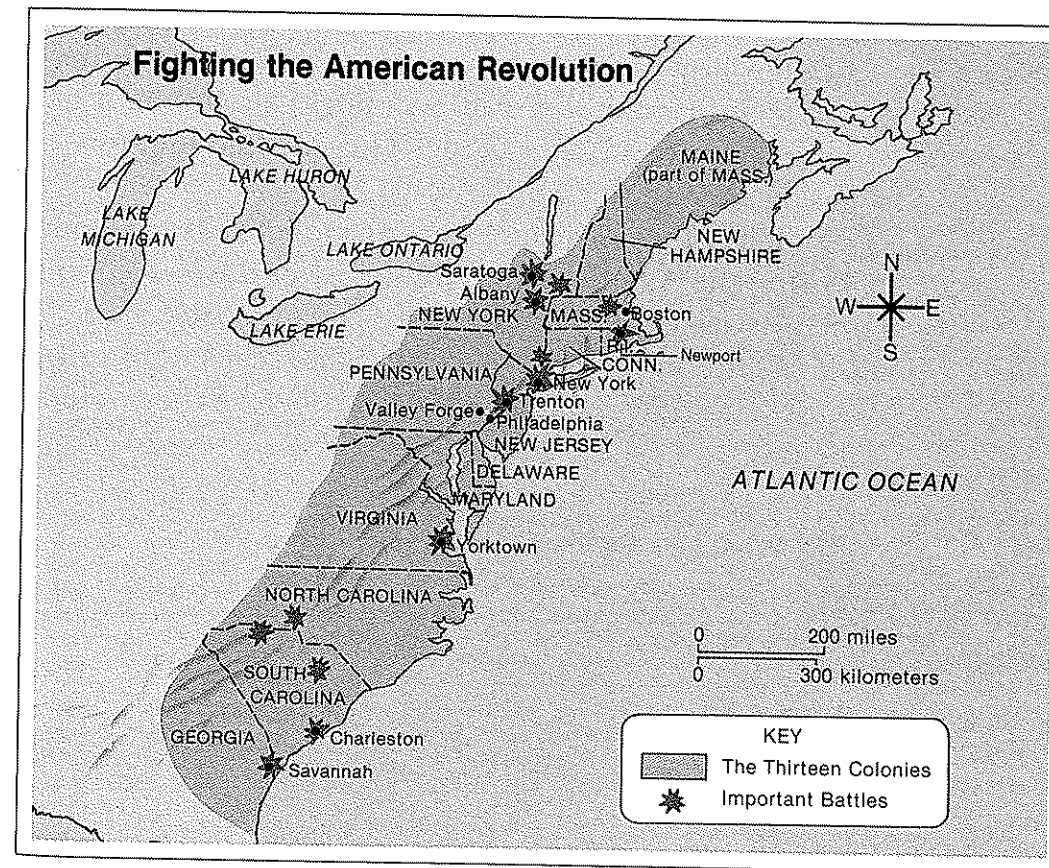
### Charleston Falls to the British

In the spring of 1780, the British captured the important port city of Charleston, South Carolina. There they captured many American soldiers. It was the biggest British victory of the war.

The British had control of the Charleston port and of several other important cities. But they couldn't win the war. America was too big. Look at the map below. Battles took place all over. The British couldn't stop the Patriots in all the small towns and villages.

Small groups of Patriots captured British supplies. They made surprise attacks. One fighter known for surprise attacks was Francis Marion of South Carolina. His nickname was the “Swamp Fox.” He got his name because the British could never catch him.

 Look at the map. In which colonies were the battles of Saratoga, Trenton, and Charleston fought?



## Another Kind of Fight for Freedom

The Declaration of Independence is about the rights and freedoms that all people should have. But not everyone was equal. Women did not have the same rights as white men, and most African Americans were slaves.

During the American Revolution, some slaves were promised freedom if they would fight against the British. Rhode Island even passed a law that said every slave who would fight for the Patriots would be free. Rhode Island formed a Patriot **regiment**, or team of soldiers, made up mostly of African Americans.

In Newport, Rhode Island, the Rhode Island regiment fought against a regiment of well-trained Germans. The Germans yelled at the African American soldiers and ran at them pointing sharp **bayonets**. A bayonet is a piece of pointed metal placed on the end of a rifle. A soldier could stab and kill someone with a bayonet.

The African Americans in the Rhode Island regiment fought bravely. Even though the African Americans had no uniforms or bayonets, they killed many of the German soldiers. The Patriots won the Battle of Newport. The day after the battle, the leader of the German soldiers asked to be moved to another regiment. He said his own men might shoot him if he led them into another battle! They blamed him for losing so many men at Newport.

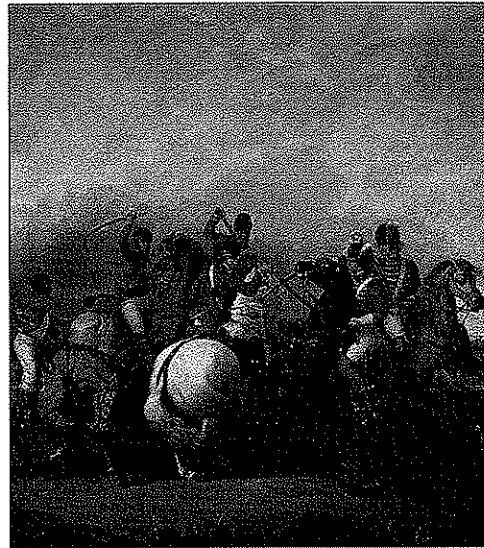
Many other African Americans fought for freedom during the American Revolution. After the Revolution, many slave owners in the North began to free their slaves. But in the South, African Americans were still slaves. It would be almost 100 years before they would be free.

What law did Rhode Island pass?

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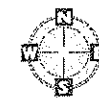


This is a painting of a battle during the American Revolution.

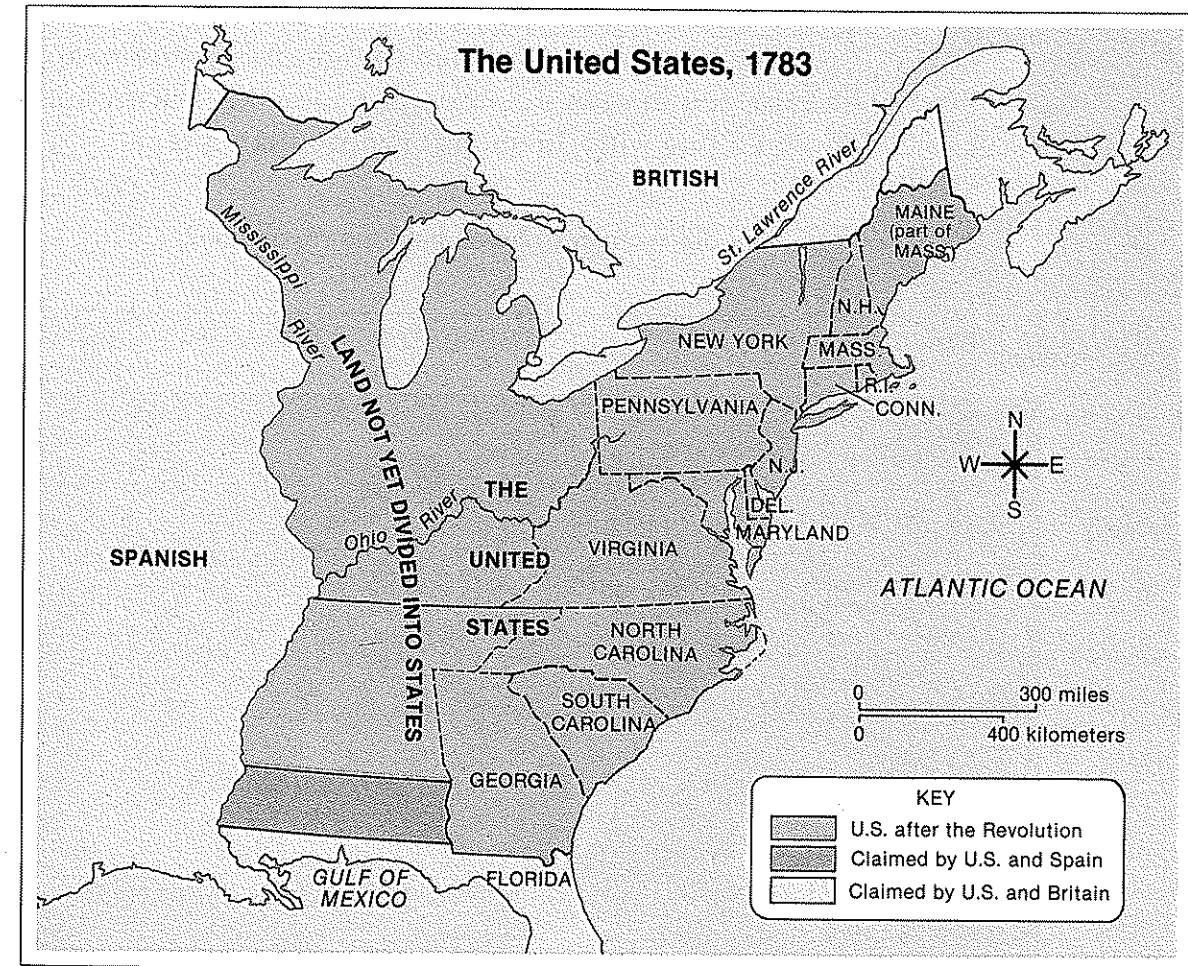
## The Last Battle: Yorktown

British General Cornwallis marched his armies toward Yorktown, on the coast of Virginia. French soldiers had joined Washington's army. The Americans and the French set out after the British. At Yorktown, the British were trapped. The French Navy blocked Cornwallis from the sea. American and French forces kept Cornwallis from escaping on land.

Cornwallis knew he had lost. He surrendered on October 19, 1781. The American Revolution was over. The 13 colonies had finally won their independence from Great Britain. In 1783, Great Britain and the new United States signed a peace treaty.



Look at the map. After 1783, what nation owned most of the land east of the Mississippi River?



## Women in the Revolution

The American Revolution was not won only by men. Women, too, helped make victory possible.

While men were away fighting, women did all the work the men had done. They farmed so that their families and the soldiers would have food. They had to cook, clean, sew, and take care of children. Women also made guns and supplies for the soldiers. A woman known as "Handy Betsy the Blacksmith" was famous for all the cannons and guns she made.

Although rules said that women weren't allowed to fight in the battles, women did go to the battlefield. Many women served as nurses and cooks. George Washington's wife often helped at the battlefield.

Mary Hays brought food and water to soldiers. They called her Molly Pitcher because she brought pitchers of water. When her husband was hit by a bullet, Molly Pitcher ran to take his place.

Deborah Sampson wanted to fight for freedom. So she dressed in men's clothes. She joined the army and fought along with the men for more than a year.

**How did women at home help the revolution?**

Molly Pitcher fought for freedom.



## CHAPTER CHECKUP

Complete each sentence. Circle the letter in front of the correct answer.

- Patriots were people who
  - were loyal to the king.
  - fought on the British side.
  - fought for American independence.
  - did not want independence.
- The leader of the Continental Army was
  - Benjamin Franklin.
  - Francis Marion.
  - George Washington.
  - General Cornwallis.
- French soldiers fought on the side of
  - the British.
  - the Germans.
  - the Loyalists.
  - the Patriots.
- Von Steuben helped train the American soldiers to
  - fight together as a group.
  - fight from behind trees.
  - use ships in battle.
  - make surprise attacks.
- The Battle of Newport was won
  - with the help of German soldiers.
  - with the help of French soldiers.
  - with the help of an African American regiment.
  - because General Cornwallis surrendered.
- After the war, the land that made up the United States included
  - all of Canada.
  - land east of the Mississippi River.
  - land west of the Mississippi River.
  - land south of the Mississippi River.



List and describe three problems that the American Army had during the American Revolution.

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