

IMPERIAL WARS AND COLONIAL PROTEST, 1754–1774

The people, even to the lowest ranks, have become more attentive to their liberties, more inquisitive about them, and more determined to defend them than they were ever before known or had occasion to be.

John Adams, 1765

What caused American colonists in the 1760s to become, as John Adams expressed it, “more attentive to their liberties”? The chief reason for their discontent in these years was a dramatic change in Britain’s colonial policy. Britain began to assert its power in the colonies and to collect taxes and enforce trade laws much more aggressively than in the past. To explain why Britain took this fateful step, we must study the effects of its various wars for empire.

Empires at War

Late in the 17th century, war broke out involving Great Britain, France, and Spain. This was the first of a series of four wars that were worldwide in scope, with battles in Europe, India, and North America. These wars occurred intermittently over a 74-year period from 1689 to 1763. The stakes were high, since the winner of the struggle stood to gain supremacy in the West Indies and Canada and to dominate the lucrative colonial trade.

The First Three Wars

The first three wars were named after the British king or queen under whose reign they occurred. In both King William’s War (1689–1697) and Queen Anne’s War (1702–1713), the British launched expeditions to capture Quebec, but their efforts failed. American Indians supported by the French burned British frontier settlements. Ultimately, the British forces prevailed in Queen Anne’s War and gained both Nova Scotia from France and trading rights in Spanish America.

A third war was fought during the reign of George II: King George’s War (1744–1748). Once again, the British colonies were under attack from their perennial rivals, the French and the Spanish. In Georgia, James Oglethorpe led a colonial army that managed to repulse Spanish attacks. To the north,

a force of New Englanders captured Louisbourg, a major French fortress, on Cape Breton Island, controlling access to the St. Lawrence River. In the peace treaty ending the war, however, Britain agreed to give Louisbourg back to the French in exchange for political and economic gains in India. New Englanders were furious about the loss of a fort that they had fought so hard to win.

The Seven Years' War (French and Indian War)

The first three wars between Britain and France focused primarily on battles in Europe and only secondarily on conflict in the colonies. The European powers saw little value in committing regular troops to America. However, in the fourth and final war in the series, the fighting began in the colonies and then spread to Europe. Moreover, Britain and France now recognized the full importance of their colonies and shipped large numbers of troops overseas to North America rather than rely on “amateur” colonial forces. This fourth and most decisive war was known in Europe as the Seven Years' War. The North American phase of this war is often called the French and Indian War.

Beginning of the War From the British point of view, the French provoked the war by building a chain of forts in the Ohio River Valley. One of the reasons the French did so was to halt the westward growth of the British colonies. Hoping to stop the French from completing work on Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh) and thereby win control of the Ohio River Valley, the governor of Virginia sent a small militia (armed force) under the command of a young colonel named George Washington. After gaining a small initial victory, Washington's troops surrendered to a superior force of Frenchmen and their American Indian allies on July 3, 1754. With this military encounter in the wilderness, the final war for empire began.

At first the war went badly for the British. In 1755, another expedition from Virginia, led by General Edward Braddock, ended in a disastrous defeat, as more than 2,000 British regulars and colonial troops were routed by a smaller force of French and American Indians near Ft. Duquesne. The Algonquin allies of the French ravaged the frontier from western Pennsylvania to North Carolina. The French repulsed a British invasion of French Canada that began in 1756.

The Albany Plan of Union Recognizing the need for coordinating colonial defense, the British government called for representatives from several colonies to meet in a congress at Albany, New York, in 1754. The delegates from seven colonies adopted a plan—the Albany Plan of Union—developed by Benjamin Franklin that provided for an intercolonial government and a system for recruiting troops and collecting taxes from the various colonies for their common defense. Each colony was too jealous of its own taxation powers to accept the plan, however, and it never took effect. The Albany congress was significant, however, because it set a precedent for later, more revolutionary congresses in the 1770s.

British Victory The British prime minister, William Pitt, concentrated the government's military strategy on conquering Canada. This objective was accomplished with the retaking of Louisbourg in 1758, the surrender of Quebec to General James Wolfe in 1759, and the taking of Montreal in 1760. After these British victories, the European powers negotiated a peace treaty (the Peace of Paris) in 1763. Great Britain acquired both French Canada and Spanish Florida. France ceded (gave up) to Spain its huge western territory, Louisiana, and claims west of the Mississippi River in compensation for Spain's loss of Florida. With this treaty, the British extended their control of North America, and French power on the continent virtually ended.

Immediate Effects of the War Britain's victory in the Seven Years' War gave them unchallenged supremacy in North America and also established them as the dominant naval power in the world. No longer did the American colonies face the threat of concerted attacks from the French, the Spanish, and their American Indian allies. More important to the colonies, though, was a change in how the British and the colonists viewed each other.

The British View The British came away from the war with a low opinion of the colonial military abilities. They held the American militia in contempt as a poorly trained, disorderly rabble. Furthermore, they noted that some of the colonies had refused to contribute either troops or money to the war effort. Most British were convinced that the colonists were both unable and unwilling to defend the new frontiers of the vastly expanded British empire.

The Colonial View The colonists took an opposite view of their military performance. They were proud of their record in all four wars and developed confidence that they could successfully provide for their own defense. They were not impressed with British troops or their leadership, whose methods of warfare seemed badly suited to the densely wooded terrain of eastern America.

Reorganization of the British Empire

More serious than the resentful feelings stirred by the war experience was the British government's shift in its colonial policies. Previously, Britain had exercised little direct control over the colonies and had generally allowed its navigation laws regulating colonial trade to go unenforced. This earlier policy of salutary neglect was abandoned as the British adopted more forceful policies for taking control of their expanded North American dominions.

All four wars—and the last one in particular—had been extremely costly. In addition, Britain now felt the need to maintain a large British military force to guard its American frontiers. Among British landowners, pressure was building to reduce the heavy taxes that the colonial wars had laid upon them. To pay for troops to guard the frontier without increasing taxes at home, King George III and the dominant political party in Parliament (the Whigs) wanted the American colonies to bear more of the cost of maintaining the British empire.

Pontiac's Rebellion The first major test of the new British imperial policy came in 1763 when Chief Pontiac led a major attack against colonial settlements on the western frontier. The American Indians were angered by the growing westward movement of European settlers onto their land and by the British refusal to offer gifts as the French had done. Pontiac's alliance of American Indians in the Ohio Valley destroyed forts and settlements from New York to Virginia. Rather than relying on colonial forces to retaliate, the British sent regular British troops to put down the uprising.

Proclamation of 1763 In an effort to stabilize the western frontier, the British government issued a proclamation that prohibited colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains. The British hoped that limiting settlements would prevent future hostilities between colonists and American Indians. But the colonists reacted to the proclamation with anger and defiance. After their victory in the Seven Years' War, colonists hoped to reap benefits in the form of access to western lands. For the British to deny such benefits was infuriating. Defying the prohibition, thousands streamed westward beyond the imaginary boundary line drawn by the British. (See map, page 76.)

British Actions and Colonial Reactions

The Proclamation of 1763 was the first of a series of acts by the British government that angered colonists. From the British point of view, each act was justified as a proper method for protecting its colonial empire and making the colonies pay their share of costs for such protection. From the colonists' point of view, each act represented an alarming threat to their cherished liberties and long-established practice of representative government.

New Revenues and Regulations

In the first two years of peace, King George III's chancellor of the exchequer (treasury) and prime minister, Lord George Grenville, successfully pushed through Parliament three measures that aroused colonial suspicions of a British plot to subvert their liberties.

Sugar Act (1764) This act (also known as the Revenue Act of 1764) placed duties on foreign sugar and certain luxuries. Its chief purpose was to raise money for the crown, and a companion law also provided for stricter enforcement of the Navigation Acts to stop smuggling. Those accused of smuggling were to be tried in admiralty courts by crown-appointed judges without juries.

Quartering Act (1765) This act required the colonists to provide food and living quarters for British soldiers stationed in the colonies.

Stamp Act In an effort to raise funds to support British military forces in the colonies, Lord Grenville turned to a tax long in use in Britain. The Stamp Act, enacted by Parliament in 1765, required that revenue stamps be placed on most printed paper in the colonies, including all legal documents, newspapers,

pamphlets, and advertisements. This was the first direct tax—collected from those who used the goods—paid by the people in the colonies, as opposed to the taxes on imported goods, which were paid by merchants.

People in every colony reacted with indignation to news of the Stamp Act. A young Virginia lawyer named Patrick Henry spoke for many when he stood up in the House of Burgesses to demand that the king's government recognize the rights of all citizens—including the right not to be taxed without representation. In Massachusetts, James Otis initiated a call for cooperative action among the colonies to protest the Stamp Act. Representatives from nine colonies met in New York in 1765 to form the so-called Stamp Act Congress. They resolved that only their own elected representatives had the legal authority to approve taxes.

The protest against the stamp tax took a violent turn with the formation of the Sons and Daughters of Liberty, a secret society organized for the purpose of intimidating tax agents. Members of this society sometimes destroyed revenue stamps and tarred and feathered revenue officials.

Boycotts against British imports were the most effective form of protest. It became fashionable in the colonies in 1765 and 1766 for people not to purchase any article of British origin. Faced with a sharp drop in trade, London merchants put pressure on Parliament to repeal the controversial Stamp Act.

Declaratory Act In 1766, Grenville was replaced by another prime minister, and Parliament voted to repeal the Stamp Act. When news of the repeal reached the colonies, people rejoiced. Few colonists at the time noted that Parliament had also enacted a face-saving measure known as the Declaratory Act (1766). This act asserted that Parliament had the right to tax and make laws for the colonies “in all cases whatsoever.” This declaration of policy would soon lead to renewed conflict between the colonists and the British government.

Second Phase of the Crisis, 1767–1773

Because the British government still needed new revenues, the newly appointed chancellor of the exchequer, Charles Townshend, proposed another tax measure.

The Townshend Acts Adopting Townshend's program in 1767, Parliament enacted new duties to be collected on colonial imports of tea, glass, and paper. The law required that the revenues raised be used to pay crown officials in the colonies, thus making them independent of the colonial assemblies that had previously paid their salaries. The Townshend Acts also provided for the search of private homes for smuggled goods. All that an official needed to conduct such a search would be a *writ of assistance* (a general license to search anywhere) rather than a judge's warrant permitting a search only of a specifically named property. Another of the Townshend Acts suspended New York's assembly for that colony's defiance of the Quartering Act.

At first, most colonists accepted the taxes under the Townshend Acts because they were indirect taxes paid by merchants (not direct taxes on consumer goods). However, soon leaders began protesting the new duties. In 1767 and 1768, John Dickinson of Pennsylvania in his *Letters From a Farmer in Pennsylvania* wrote that Parliament could regulate commerce but argued that because duties were a form of taxation, they could not be levied on the colonies without the consent of their representative assemblies. Dickinson argued that the idea of no taxation without representation was an essential principle of English law.

In 1768, James Otis and Samuel Adams jointly wrote the Massachusetts Circular Letter and sent copies to every colonial legislature. It urged the various colonies to petition Parliament to repeal the Townshend Acts. British officials in Boston ordered the letter retracted, threatened to dissolve the legislature, and increased the number of British troops in Boston. Responding to the circular letter, the colonists again conducted boycotts of British goods. Merchants increased their smuggling activities to avoid the offensive Townshend duties.

Repeal of the Townshend Acts Meanwhile, in London, there was another change in the king's ministers. Lord Frederick North became the new prime minister. He urged Parliament to repeal the Townshend Acts because they damaged trade and generated a disappointingly small amount of revenue. The repeal of the Townshend Acts in 1770 ended the colonial boycott and, except for an incident in Boston (the "massacre" described below), there was a three-year respite from political troubles as the colonies entered into a period of economic prosperity. However, Parliament retained a small tax on tea as a symbol of its right to tax the colonies.

Boston Massacre Most Bostonians resented the British troops who had been quartered in their city to protect customs officials from being attacked by the Sons of Liberty. On a snowy day in March 1770, a crowd of colonists harassed the guards near the customs house. The guards fired into the crowd, killing five people including an African American, Crispus Attucks. At their trial for murder, the soldiers were defended by colonial lawyer John Adams and acquitted. Adams' more radical cousin, Samuel Adams, angrily denounced the shooting incident as a "massacre" and used it to inflame anti-British feeling.

Renewal of the Conflict

Even during the relatively quiet years of 1770–1772, Samuel Adams and a few other Americans kept alive the view that British officials were undermining colonial liberties. A principal device for spreading this idea was by means of the Committees of Correspondence initiated by Samuel Adams in 1772. In Boston and other Massachusetts towns, Adams began the practice of organizing committees that would regularly exchange letters about suspicious or potentially threatening British activities. The Virginia House of Burgesses took the concept a step further when it organized intercolonial committees in 1773.

The *Gaspee* One incident frequently discussed in the committees' letters was that of the *Gaspee*, a British customs ship that had caught several smugglers. In 1772, it ran aground off the shore of Rhode Island. Seizing their opportunity to destroy the hated vessel, a group of colonists disguised as American Indians ordered the British crew ashore and then set fire to the ship. The British ordered a commission to investigate and bring guilty individuals to Britain for trial.

Boston Tea Party The colonists continued their refusal to buy British tea because the British insisted on their right to collect the tax. Hoping to help the British East India Company out of its financial problems, Parliament passed the Tea Act in 1773, which made the price of the company's tea—even with the tax included—cheaper than that of smuggled Dutch tea.

Many Americans refused to buy the cheaper tea because to do so would, in effect, recognize Parliament's right to tax the colonies. A shipment of the East India Company's tea arrived in Boston harbor, but there were no buyers. Before the royal governor could arrange to bring the tea ashore, a group of Bostonians disguised themselves as American Indians, boarded the British ships, and dumped 342 chests of tea into the harbor. Colonial reaction to this incident (December 1773) was mixed. While many applauded the Boston Tea Party as a justifiable defense of liberty, others thought the destruction of private property was far too radical.

Intolerable Acts

In Great Britain, news of the Boston Tea Party angered the king, Lord North, and members of Parliament. In retaliation, the British government enacted a series of punitive acts (the Coercive Acts), together with a separate act dealing with French Canada (the Quebec Act). The colonists were outraged by these various laws, which were given the epithet "Intolerable Acts."

The Coercive Acts (1774) There were four Coercive Acts, directed mainly at punishing the people of Boston and Massachusetts and bringing the dissidents under control.

1. The Port Act closed the port of Boston, prohibiting trade in and out of the harbor until the destroyed tea was paid for.
2. The Massachusetts Government Act reduced the power of the Massachusetts legislature while increasing the power of the royal governor.
3. The Administration of Justice Act allowed royal officials accused of crimes to be tried in Great Britain instead of in the colonies.
4. A fourth law expanded the Quartering Act to enable British troops to be quartered in private homes. It applied to all colonies.

Quebec Act (1774) When it passed the Coercive Acts, the British government also passed a law organizing the Canadian lands gained from France. This plan was accepted by most French Canadians, but it was resented by many in the 13 colonies. The Quebec Act established Roman Catholicism as the official

religion of Quebec, set up a government without a representative assembly, and extended Quebec's boundary to the Ohio River.

The colonists viewed the Quebec Act as a direct attack on the American colonies because it took away lands that they claimed along the Ohio River. They also feared that the British would attempt to enact similar laws in America to take away their representative government. The predominantly Protestant Americans also resented the recognition given to Catholicism.

BRITISH COLONIES: PROCLAMATION LINE OF 1763 AND QUEBEC ACT OF 1774



Philosophical Foundations of the American Revolution

For Americans, especially those who were in positions of leadership, there was a long tradition of loyalty to the king and Great Britain. As the differences between them grew, many Americans tried to justify this changing relationship. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Enlightenment, particularly the writings of John Locke, had a profound influence on the colonies.

Enlightenment Ideas The era of the Enlightenment (see Chapter 3) was at its peak in the mid-18th century—the very years that future leaders of the American Revolution (Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and Adams) were coming to maturity. Many Enlightenment thinkers in Europe and America were Deists, who believed that God had established natural laws in creating the universe, but that the role of divine intervention in human affairs was minimal. They believed in rationalism and trusted human reason to solve the many problems of life and society, and emphasized reason, science, and respect for humanity. Their political philosophy, derived from Locke and developed further by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, had a profound influence on educated Americans in the 1760s and 1770s—the decades of revolutionary thought and action that finally culminated in the American Revolution.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHY DID THE COLONIES REBEL?

Did America's break with Great Britain in the 18th century signify a true revolution with radical change, or was it simply the culmination of evolutionary changes in American life? For many years, the traditional view of the founding of America was that a revolution based on the ideas of the Enlightenment had fundamentally altered society.

During the 20th century, historians continued to debate whether American independence from Great Britain was revolutionary or evolutionary. At the start of the century, Progressive historians believed that the movement to end British dominance had provided an opportunity to radically change American society. A new nation was formed with a republican government based on federalism and stressing equality and the rights of the individual. The revolution was social as well as political.

During the second half of the 20th century, a different interpretation argued that American society had been more democratic and changed long before the war with Great Britain. Historian Bernard Bailyn has suggested that the changes that are viewed as revolutionary—representative government, expansion of the right to vote, and written constitutions—had all developed earlier, during the colonial period. According to this perspective, what was revolutionary or significant about the break from Great Britain was the recognition of an American philosophy based on liberty and democracy that would guide the nation.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

Colonial Unrest (ID, POL)

Patrick Henry
Stamp Act Congress
Sons and Daughters of Liberty
John Dickinson;
“Letters From . . .”
Samuel Adams
James Otis
Massachusetts Circular Letter
Committees of Correspondence
Intolerable Acts

Rulers & Policies (WXT)

George III
Whigs
Parliament
salutary neglect
Lord Frederick North

American Indians (PEO)

Pontiac’s Rebellion
Proclamation of 1763

Empire (POL, ENV)

Seven Years’ War
(French and Indian War)
Albany Plan of Union (1754)
Edward Braddock
George Washington
Peace of Paris (1763)

Economic Policies (WOR)

Sugar Act (1764)
Quartering Act (1765)
Stamp Act (1765)
Declaratory Act (1766)
Townshend Acts (1767)
Writs of Assistance
Tea Act (1773)
Coercive Acts (1774)
—Port Act
—Massachusetts Government Act
—Administration of Justice Act
Quebec Act (1774)

Philosophy (CUL)

Enlightenment
Deism
Rationalism
John Locke
Jean-Jacques Rousseau

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND CONFEDERATION, 1774–1787

O! ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the Old World is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. . . . O! receive the fugitive and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

Parliament's passage of the Intolerable Acts in 1774 intensified the conflict between the colonies and Great Britain. In the next two years, many Americans reached the conclusion—unthinkable only a few years earlier—that the only solution to their quarrel with the British government was to sever all ties with it. How did events from 1774 to 1776 lead ultimately to this revolutionary outcome?

The First Continental Congress

The punitive Intolerable Acts drove all the colonies except Georgia to send delegates to a convention in Philadelphia in September 1774. The purpose of the convention—later known as the First Continental Congress—was to respond to what the delegates viewed as Britain's alarming threats to their liberties. However, most Americans had no desire for independence. They simply wanted to protest parliamentary infringements of their rights and restore the relationship with the crown that had existed before the Seven Years' War.

The Delegates

The delegates were a diverse group, whose views about the crisis ranged from radical to conservative. Leading the radical faction—those demanding the greatest concessions from Britain—were Patrick Henry of Virginia and Samuel Adams and John Adams of Massachusetts. The moderates included George Washington of Virginia and John Dickinson of Pennsylvania. The conservative delegates—those who favored a mild statement of protest—included John Jay of New York and Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania. Unrepresented were the loyal colonists, who would not challenge the king's government in any way.

Actions of the Congress

The delegates voted on a series of proposed measures, each of which was intended to change British policy without offending moderate and conservative colonists. Joseph Galloway proposed a plan, similar to the Albany Plan of 1754, that would have reordered relations with Parliament and formed a union of the colonies within the British empire. By only one vote, Galloway's plan failed to pass. Instead, the convention adopted these measures:

1. It endorsed the Suffolk Resolves, a statement originally issued by Massachusetts. The Resolves called for the immediate repeal of the Intolerable Acts and for colonies to resist them by making military preparations and boycotting British goods.
2. It passed the Declaration of Rights and Grievances. Backed by moderate delegates, this petition urged the king to redress (make right) colonial grievances and restore colonial rights. In a conciliatory gesture, it recognized Parliament's authority to regulate commerce.
3. It created the Continental Association (or just Association), a network of committees to enforce the economic sanctions of the Suffolk Resolves.
4. It declared that if colonial rights were not recognized, delegates would meet again in May 1775.

Fighting Begins

Angrily dismissing the petition of the First Continental Congress, the king's government declared Massachusetts to be in a state of rebellion and sent additional troops to put down any further disorders there. The combination of colonial defiance and British determination to suppress it led to violent clashes in Massachusetts—what would prove to be the first battles of the American Revolution.

Lexington and Concord

On April 18, 1775, General Thomas Gage, the commander of British troops in Boston, sent a large force to seize colonial military supplies in the town of Concord. Warned of the British march by two riders, Paul Revere and William Dawes, the militia (or Minutemen) of Lexington assembled on the village green to face the British. The Americans were forced to retreat under heavy British fire; eight of their number were killed in the brief encounter. Who fired the first shot of this first skirmish of the American Revolution? The evidence is ambiguous, and the answer will probably never be known.

Continuing their march, the British entered Concord, where they destroyed some military supplies. On the return march to Boston, the long column of British soldiers was attacked by hundreds of militiamen firing at them from behind stone walls. The British suffered 250 casualties—and also considerable humiliation at being so badly mauled by “amateur” fighters.

Bunker Hill

Two months later, on June 17, 1775, a true battle was fought between opposing armies on the outskirts of Boston. A colonial militia of Massachusetts farmers fortified Breed's Hill, next to Bunker Hill, for which the ensuing battle was wrongly named. A British force attacked the colonists' position and managed to take the hill, suffering over a thousand casualties. Americans claimed a victory of sorts, having succeeded in inflicting heavy losses on the attacking British army.

The Second Continental Congress

Soon after the fighting broke out in Massachusetts, delegates to the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in May 1775. The congress was divided. One group of delegates, mainly from New England, thought the colonies should declare their independence. Another group, mainly from the middle colonies, hoped the conflict could be resolved by negotiating a new relationship with Great Britain.

Military Actions

The congress adopted a Declaration of the Causes and Necessities for Taking Up Arms and called on the colonies to provide troops. George Washington was appointed the commander-in-chief of a new colonial army and sent to Boston to lead the Massachusetts militia and volunteer units from other colonies. Congress also authorized a force under Benedict Arnold to raid Quebec in order to draw Canada away from the British empire. An American navy and marine corps was organized in the fall of 1775 for the purpose of attacking British shipping.

Peace Efforts

At first the congress adopted a contradictory policy of waging war while at the same time seeking a peaceful settlement. Many in the colonies did not want independence, for they valued their heritage and Britain's protection, but they did want a change in their relationship with Britain. In July 1775, the delegates voted to send an "Olive Branch Petition" to King George III, in which they pledged their loyalty and asked the king to intercede with Parliament to secure peace and the protection of colonial rights.

King George angrily dismissed the congress' plea and agreed instead to Parliament's Prohibitory Act (August 1775), which declared the colonies in rebellion. A few months later, Parliament forbade all trade and shipping between Britain and the colonies.

Thomas Paine's Argument for Independence

In January 1776, a pamphlet was published that quickly had a profound impact on public opinion and the future course of events. The pamphlet, written by

Thomas Paine, a recent English immigrant to the colonies, argued strongly for what until then had been considered a radical idea. Entitled *Common Sense*, Paine's essay argued in clear and forceful language for the colonies becoming independent states and breaking all political ties with the British monarchy. Paine argued that it was contrary to common sense for a large continent to be ruled by a small and distant island and for people to pledge allegiance to a king whose government was corrupt and whose laws were unreasonable.

The Declaration of Independence

After meeting for more than a year, the congress gradually and somewhat reluctantly began to favor independence rather than reconciliation. On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced a resolution declaring the colonies to be independent. Five delegates including Thomas Jefferson formed a committee to write a statement in support of Lee's resolution. The declaration drafted by Jefferson listed specific grievances against George III's government and also expressed the basic principles that justified revolution: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

The congress adopted Lee's resolution calling for independence on July 2; Jefferson's work, the Declaration of Independence, was adopted on July 4, 1776.

The Revolutionary War

From the first shots fired on Lexington green in 1775 to the final signing of a peace treaty in 1783, the American War for Independence, or Revolutionary War, was a long and bitter struggle. As Americans fought they also forged a new national identity, as the former colonies became the United States of America.

About 2.6 million people lived in the 13 colonies at the time of the war. Maybe 40 percent of the population actively participated in the struggle against Britain. They called themselves American Patriots. Around 20 to 30 percent sided with the British as Loyalists. Everyone else tried to remain neutral and uninvolved.

Patriots

The largest number of Patriots were from the New England states and Virginia. Most of the soldiers were reluctant to travel outside their own region. They would serve in local militia units for short periods, leave to work their farms, and then return to duty. Thus, even though several hundred thousand people fought on the Patriot side in the war, General Washington never had more than 20,000 regular troops under his command at one time. His army was chronically short of supplies, poorly equipped, and rarely paid.

African Americans Initially, George Washington rejected the idea of African Americans serving in the Patriot army. However, when the British promised freedom to enslaved people who joined their side, Washington and the congress quickly made the same offer. Approximately 5,000 African Americans fought as Patriots. Most of them were free citizens from the North, who fought in mixed racial forces, although there were some all-African-American units. African Americans took part in most of the military actions of the war, and a number, including Peter Salem, were recognized for their bravery.

Loyalists

Tories The Revolutionary War was in some respects a civil war in which anti-British Patriots fought pro-British Loyalists. Those who maintained their allegiance to the king were also called Tories (after the majority party in Parliament). Almost 60,000 American Tories fought next to British soldiers, supplied them with arms and food, and joined in raiding parties that pillaged Patriot homes and farms. Members of the same family sometimes joined opposite sides. For example, while Benjamin Franklin was a leading patriot, his son William joined the Tories and served as the last royal governor of New Jersey.

How many American Tories were there? Estimates range from 520,000 to 780,000 people—roughly 20 to 30 percent of the population. In New York, New Jersey, and Georgia, they were probably in the majority. Toward the end of the war, about 80,000 Loyalists emigrated from the states to settle in Canada or Britain rather than face persecution at the hands of the victorious Patriots.

Although Loyalists came from all groups and classes, they tended to be wealthier and more conservative than the Patriots. Most government officials and Anglican clergy in America remained loyal to the crown.

American Indians At first, American Indians tried to stay out of the war. Eventually, however, attacks by colonists prompted many American Indians to support the British, who promised to limit colonial settlements in the West.

Initial American Losses and Hardships

The first three years of the war, 1775 to 1777, went badly for Washington's poorly trained and equipped revolutionary army. It barely escaped complete disaster in a battle for New York City in 1776, in which Washington's forces were routed by the British. By the end of 1777, the British occupied both New York and Philadelphia. After losing Philadelphia, Washington's demoralized troops suffered through the severe winter of 1777–1778 camped at Valley Forge in Pennsylvania.

Economic troubles added to the Patriots' bleak prospects. British occupation of American ports resulted in a 95 percent decline in trade between 1775 and 1777. Goods were scarce and inflation was rampant. The paper money issued by Congress, known as continentals, became almost worthless.

Alliance With France

The turning point for the American revolutionaries came with a victory at Saratoga in upstate New York in October 1777. British forces under General John Burgoyne had marched from Canada in an ambitious effort to link up with other forces marching from the west and south. Their objective was to cut off New England from the rest of the colonies (or states). But Burgoyne's troops were attacked at Saratoga by troops commanded by American generals Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold. The British army was forced to surrender.

The diplomatic outcome of the Battle of Saratoga was even more important than the military result. News of the surprising American victory persuaded France to join in the war against Britain. France's king, Louis XVI, was an absolute monarch who had no interest in aiding a revolutionary movement. Nevertheless, he saw a chance to weaken his country's traditional foe, Great Britain, by helping to undermine its colonial empire. France had secretly extended aid to the American revolutionaries as early as 1775, giving both money and supplies. After Saratoga, in 1778, France openly allied itself with the Americans. (A year later, Spain and Holland also entered the war against Britain.) The French alliance proved a decisive factor in the American struggle for independence because it widened the war and forced the British to divert military resources away from America.

Victory

Faced with a larger war, Britain decided to consolidate its forces in America. British troops were pulled out of Philadelphia, and New York became the chief base of British operations. In a campaign through 1778–1779, the Patriots, led by George Rogers Clark, captured a series of British forts in the Illinois country to gain control of parts of the vast Ohio territory. In 1780, the British army adopted a southern strategy, concentrating its military campaigns in Virginia and the Carolinas where Loyalists were especially numerous and active.

Yorktown In 1781, the last major battle of the Revolutionary War was fought near Yorktown, Virginia, on the shores of Chesapeake Bay. Strongly supported by French naval and military forces, Washington's army forced the surrender of a large British army commanded by General Charles Cornwallis.

Treaty of Paris News of Cornwallis's defeat at Yorktown was a heavy blow to the Tory party in Parliament that was conducting the war. The war had become unpopular in Britain, partly because it placed a heavy strain on the economy and the government's finances. Lord North and other Tory ministers resigned and were replaced by Whig leaders who wanted to end the war.

In Paris, in 1783, a treaty of peace was finally signed by the various belligerents. The Treaty of Paris provided for the following: (1) Britain would recognize the existence of the United States as an independent nation. (2) The Mississippi River would be the western boundary of that nation. (3) Americans would have fishing rights off the coast of Canada. (4) Americans would pay debts owed to British merchants and honor Loyalist claims for property confiscated during the war.

Organization of New Governments

While the Revolutionary War was being fought, leaders of the 13 colonies worked to change them into independently governed states, each with its own constitution (written plan of government). At the same time, the revolutionary Congress that originally met in Philadelphia tried to define the powers of a new central government for the nation that was coming into being.

State Governments

By 1777, ten of the former colonies had written new constitutions. Most of these documents were both written and adopted by the states' legislatures. In a few of the states (Maryland, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina), a proposed constitution was submitted to a vote of the people for ratification (approval).

Each state constitution was the subject of heated debate between conservatives, who stressed the need for law and order, and liberals, who were most concerned about protecting individual rights and preventing future tyrannies. Although the various constitutions differed on specific points, they had the following features in common:

List of Rights Each state constitution began with a "bill" or "declaration" listing the basic rights and freedoms, such as a jury trial and freedom of religion, that belonged to all citizens by right and that state officials could not infringe (encroach on).

Separation of Powers With a few exceptions, the powers of state government were given to three separate branches: (1) legislative powers to an elected two-house legislature, (2) executive powers to an elected governor, and (3) judicial powers to a system of courts. The principle of separation of powers was intended to be a safeguard against tyranny—especially against the tyranny of a too-powerful executive.

Voting The right to vote was extended to all white males who owned some property. The property requirement, usually for a minimal amount of land or money, was based on the assumption that propertyowners had a larger stake in government than did the poor and propertyless.

Office-Holding Those seeking elected office were usually held to a higher property qualification than the voters.

The Articles of Confederation

At Philadelphia in 1776, as Jefferson was writing the Declaration of Independence, John Dickinson drafted the first constitution for the United States as a

nation. Congress modified Dickinson's plan to protect the powers of the individual states. The Articles of Confederation, as the document was called, was adopted by Congress in 1777 and submitted to the states for ratification.

Ratification Ratification of the Articles was delayed by a dispute over the vast American Indian lands west of the Alleghenies. Seaboard states such as Rhode Island and Maryland insisted that these lands be under the jurisdiction of the new central government. When Virginia and New York finally agreed to cede their claims to western lands, the Articles were ratified in March 1781.

Structure of Government The Articles established a central government that consisted of just one body, a congress. In this unicameral (one-house) legislature, each state was given one vote, with at least 9 votes out of 13 required to pass important laws. Amending the Articles required a unanimous vote. A Committee of States, with one representative from each state, could make minor decisions when the full congress was not in session.

THE UNITED STATES IN 1783



Powers The Articles gave the congress the power to wage war, make treaties, send diplomatic representatives, and borrow money. However, Congress did not have the power to regulate commerce or to collect taxes. To finance any of its decisions, the congress had to rely upon taxes voted by each state. Neither did the government have executive power to enforce its laws.

Accomplishments Despite its weaknesses, the congress under the Articles did succeed in accomplishing the following:

1. Winning the war. The U.S. government could claim some credit for the ultimate victory of Washington's army and for negotiating favorable terms in the treaty of peace with Britain.
2. Land Ordinance of 1785. Congress established a policy for surveying and selling the western lands. The policy provided for setting aside one section of land in each township for public education.
3. Northwest Ordinance of 1787. For the large territory lying between the Great Lakes and the Ohio River, the congress passed an ordinance (law) that set the rules for creating new states. The Northwest Ordinance granted limited self-government to the developing territory and prohibited slavery in the region.

Problems with the Articles The 13 states intended the central government to be weak—and it was. The government faced three kinds of problems:

1. Financial. Most war debts were unpaid. Individual states as well as the congress issued worthless paper money. The underlying problem was that the congress had no taxing power and could only request that the states donate money for national needs.
2. Foreign. European nations had little respect for a new nation that could neither pay its debts nor take effective and united action in a crisis. Britain and Spain threatened to take advantage of U.S. weakness by expanding their interests in the western lands soon after the war ended.
3. Domestic. In the summer of 1786, Captain Daniel Shays, a Massachusetts farmer and Revolutionary War veteran, led other farmers in an uprising against high state taxes, imprisonment for debt, and lack of paper money. The rebel farmers stopped the collection of taxes and forced the closing of debtors' courts. In January 1787, when Shays and his followers attempted to seize weapons from the Springfield armory, the state militia of Massachusetts broke Shays's Rebellion.

Social Change

In addition to revolutionizing the politics of the 13 states, the War for Independence also profoundly changed American society. Some changes occurred immediately before the war ended, while others evolved gradually as the ideas of the Revolution began to filter into the attitudes of the common people.

Abolition of Aristocratic Titles

State constitutions and laws abolished old institutions that had originated in medieval Europe. No legislature could grant titles of nobility, nor could any court recognize the feudal practice of primogeniture (the first born son's right to inherit his family's property). Whatever aristocracy existed in colonial America was further weakened by the confiscation of large estates owned by Loyalists. Many such estates were subdivided and sold to raise money for the war.

Separation of Church and State

Most states adopted the principle of separation of church and state; in other words, they refused to give financial support to any religious group. The Anglican Church, which formerly had been closely tied to the king's government, was disestablished (lost state support) in the South. Only in three New England states—New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Massachusetts—did the Congregational Church continue to receive state support in the form of a religious tax. This practice was finally discontinued in New England early in the 1830s.

Women

During the war, both the Patriots and Loyalists depended on the active support of women. Some women followed their men into the armed camps and worked as cooks and nurses. In a few instances, women actually fought in battle, either taking their husband's place, as Mary McCauley (Molly Pitcher) did at the Battle of Monmouth, or passing as a man and serving as a soldier, as Deborah Sampson did for a year.

The most important contribution of women during the war was in maintaining the colonial economy. While fathers, husbands, and sons were away fighting, women ran the family farms and businesses. They provided much of the food and clothing necessary for the war effort.

Despite their contributions, women remained in a second-class status. Unanswered went pleas such of those of Abigail Adams to her husband, John Adams: "I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors."

Slavery

The institution of slavery contradicted the spirit of the Revolution and the idea that "all men are created equal." For a time, the leaders of the Revolution recognized this and took some corrective steps. The Continental Congress abolished the importation of enslaved people, and most states went along with the prohibition. Most northern states ended slavery, while in the South, some owners voluntarily freed their slaves.

However, in the decades following the Revolutionary War, more and more slaveowners came to believe that enslaved labor was essential to their economy. As explained in later chapters, they developed a rationale for slavery that found religious and political justification for continuing to hold human beings in lifelong bondage.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: HOW RADICAL WAS THE REVOLUTION?

Was the American Revolution (1) a radical break with the past or (2) a conservative attempt simply to safeguard traditional British liberties? One approach to this question is to compare the American Revolution with other revolutions in world history.

In his *Anatomy of a Revolution* (1965), historian Crane Brinton found striking similarities between the American Revolution and two later revolutions—the French Revolution (1789–1794) and the Russian Revolution (1917–1922). He observed that each revolution passed through similar stages and became increasingly radical from one year to the next.

Other historians have been more impressed with the differences between the American experience and the revolutions in Europe. They argue that the French and Russian revolutionaries reacted to conditions of feudalism and aristocratic privilege that did not exist in the American colonies. In their view, Americans did not revolt against outmoded institutions but, in their quest for independence, merely carried to maturity a liberal, democratic movement that had been gaining force for years.

In comparing the three revolutions, a few historians have concentrated on the actions of revolutionary groups of citizens, such as the American Sons of Liberty. Again there are two divergent interpretations: (1) the groups in all three countries engaged in the same radical activities, and (2) the Americans had a much easier time of it than the French and Russians, who encountered ruthless repression by military authorities.

Another interpretation of the American Revolution likens it to the colonial rebellions that erupted in Africa and Asia after World War II. According to this view, the colonial experience in America caused a gradual movement away from Britain that culminated in demands for independence. Other studies of the military aspects of the Revolution have pointed out similarities between American guerrilla forces in the 1770s and the guerrilla bands that fought in such countries as Cuba in the 1950s and Vietnam in the 1960s. Recall that the British controlled the cities while the American revolutionaries controlled the countryside—a pattern that in the 20th century was often repeated in revolutionary struggles throughout the world. Typically, as in the case of the American Revolution, insurgent forces were weak in the cities, but strong in the surrounding territory.

Since the American Revolution pre-dated the other modern revolutions it is compared to, its influence on them is a topic of study. Seeing the American Revolution in the context of other uprisings provides insights to help understand it better.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

Separation (ID) Intolerable Acts Patrick Henry Samuel Adams John Adams John Dickinson John Jay First Continental Congress (1774) Joseph Galloway Suffolk Resolves economic sanctions Declaration of Rights and Grievances Second Continental Congress (1775) Olive Branch Petition Declaration of the Causes and Necessities for Taking Up Arms Thomas Jefferson Declaration of Independence George Washington	Expansion (PEO, POL) Land Ordinance of 1785 Northwest Ordinance of 1787 War (POL) Paul Revere William Dawes Lexington Concord Battle of Bunker Hill Battle of Saratoga George Rogers Clark Battle of Yorktown Articles of Confederation unicameral legislature	Final Break (WOR) absolute monarch Prohibitory Act (1775) Treaty of Paris (1783) A New Nation (CUL) Thomas Paine; <i>Common Sense</i> Patriots Loyalists (Tories) Minutemen Continental Valley Forge Abigail Adams Deborah Sampson Mary McCauley (Molly Pitcher) Shays's Rebellion
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THE CONSTITUTION AND THE NEW REPUBLIC, 1787–1800

Thus I consent, sir, to this Constitution, because I expect no better, and because I am not sure that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its errors I sacrifice to the public good. . . .

Benjamin Franklin, 1787

With these words, Benjamin Franklin, the oldest delegate at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, attempted to overcome the skepticism of other delegates about the document that they had created. Would the new document, the Constitution, establish a central government strong enough to hold 13 states together in a union that could prosper and endure?

In September 1787, when Franklin, Washington, and other delegates signed the Constitution that they had drafted, their young country was in a troubled condition. This chapter will summarize the problems leading to the Constitutional Convention, the debates in the various states on whether to ratify the new plan of government, and the struggles of two presidents, Washington and Adams, to meet the domestic and international challenges of the 1790s.

The United States Under the Articles, 1781–1787

Four years separated the signing of the Treaty of Paris of 1783 and the meeting of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. During that time, the government operated under the Articles of Confederation, which consisted of a one-house congress, no separate executive, and no separate judiciary (court system). The country faced several major problems.

Foreign Problems

Relations between the United States and the major powers of Europe were troubled from the start. States failed to adhere to the Treaty of Paris, which required that they restore property to Loyalists and repay debts to foreigners. In addition, the U.S. government under the Articles was too weak to stop Britain from maintaining military outposts on the western frontier and restricting trade.

Economic Weakness and Interstate Quarrels

Reduced foreign trade and limited credit because states had not fully repaid war debts contributed to widespread economic depression. The inability to levy national taxes and the printing of worthless paper money by many states added to the problems. In addition, the 13 states treated one another with suspicion and competed for economic advantage. They placed tariffs and other restrictions on the movement of goods across state lines. A number of states faced boundary disputes with neighbors that increased interstate rivalry and tension.

The Annapolis Convention

To review what could be done about the country's inability to overcome critical problems, George Washington hosted a conference at his home in Mt. Vernon, Virginia (1785). Representatives from Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania agreed that the problems were serious enough to hold further discussions at a later meeting at Annapolis, Maryland, at which all the states might be represented. However, only five states sent delegates to the Annapolis Convention in 1786. After discussing ways to improve commercial relations among the states, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton persuaded the others that another convention should be held in Philadelphia for the purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation.

Drafting the Constitution at Philadelphia

After a number of states elected delegates to the proposed Philadelphia convention, congress consented to give its approval to the meeting. It called upon all 13 states to send delegates to Philadelphia "for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation." Only Rhode Island, not trusting the other states, refused to send delegates.

The Delegates

Of the 55 delegates who went to Philadelphia for the convention in the summer of 1787, all were white, all were male, and most were college-educated. As a group, they were relatively young (averaging in their early forties). With few exceptions, they were far wealthier than the average American of their day. They were well acquainted with issues of law and politics. A number of them were practicing lawyers, and many had helped to write their state constitutions.

The first order of business was to elect a presiding officer and decide whether or not to communicate with the public at large. The delegates voted to conduct their meetings in secret and say nothing to the public about their discussions until their work was completed. George Washington was unanimously elected chairperson. Benjamin Franklin, the elder statesman at age 81, provided a calming and unifying influence. The work in fashioning specific articles of the Constitution was directed by James Madison (who came to be known as the Father of the Constitution), Alexander Hamilton, Gouverneur

Morris, and John Dickinson. While they represented different states, these convention leaders shared the common goal of wanting to strengthen the young nation.

Several major leaders of the American Revolution were not at the convention. John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Thomas Paine were on diplomatic business abroad. Samuel Adams and John Hancock were not chosen as delegates. Patrick Henry, who opposed any growth in federal power, refused to take part in the convention.

Key Issues

The convention opened with the delegates disagreeing sharply on its fundamental purpose. Some wanted to simply revise the Articles. Strong nationalists, such as Madison and Hamilton, wanted to draft an entirely new document. The nationalists quickly took control of the convention.

Americans in the 1780s generally distrusted government and feared that officials would seize every opportunity to abuse their powers, even if they were popularly elected. Therefore, Madison and other delegates wanted the new constitution to be based on a system of checks and balances so that the power of each branch would be limited by the powers of the others.

Representation Especially divisive was the issue of whether the larger states such as Virginia and Pennsylvania should have proportionally more representatives in Congress than the smaller states such as New Jersey and Delaware. Madison's proposal—the Virginia Plan—favored the large states; it was countered by the New Jersey Plan, which favored the small states. The issue was finally resolved by a compromise solution. Roger Sherman of Connecticut proposed what was called the Connecticut Plan or the Great Compromise. It provided for a two-house Congress. In the Senate, states would have equal representation, but in the House of Representatives, each state would be represented according to the size of its population.

Slavery Two of the most contentious issues grew out of slavery. Should enslaved people be counted in the state populations? The delegates agreed to the Three-Fifths Compromise, which counted each enslaved individual as three-fifths of a person for the purposes of determining a state's level of taxation and representation. Should the slave trade be allowed? The delegates decided to guarantee that slaves could be imported for at least 20 years longer, until 1808. Congress could vote to abolish the practice after that date if it wished.

Trade The northern states wanted the central government to regulate interstate commerce and foreign trade. The South was afraid that export taxes would be placed on its agricultural products such as tobacco and rice. The Commercial Compromise allowed Congress to regulate interstate and foreign commerce, including placing tariffs (taxes) on foreign imports, but it prohibited placing taxes on any exports.

The Presidency The delegates debated over the president's term of office—some argued that the chief executive should hold office for life. The delegates limited the president's term to four years but with no limit on the number of terms. They also debated the method for electing a president. Rather than having voters elect a president directly, the delegates decided to assign to each state a number of electors equal to the total of that state's representatives and senators. This electoral college system was instituted because the delegates feared that too much democracy might lead to mob rule. Finally, the delegates debated what powers to give the president. They finally decided to grant the president considerable power, including the power to veto acts of Congress.

Ratification On September 17, 1787, after 17 weeks of debate, the Philadelphia convention approved a draft of the Constitution to submit to the states for ratification. Anticipating opposition to the document, the Framers (delegates) specified that a favorable vote of only nine states out of 13 would be required for ratification. Each state would hold popularly elected conventions to debate and vote on the proposed Constitution.

Federalists and Anti-Federalists

Ratification was fiercely debated for almost a year, from September 1787 until June 1788. Supporters of the Constitution and its strong federal government were known as Federalists. Opponents were known as Anti-Federalists. Federalists were most common along the Atlantic Coast and in the large cities while Anti-Federalists tended to be small farmers and settlers on the western frontier. (See table on the next page for more on the two groups.)

The Federalist Papers

A key element in the Federalist campaign for the Constitution was a series of highly persuasive essays written for a New York newspaper by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay. The 85 essays, later published in book form as *The Federalist Papers*, presented cogent reasons for believing in the practicality of each major provision of the Constitution.

Outcome

The Federalists won early victories in the state conventions in Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania—the first three states to ratify. By promising to add a bill of rights to the Constitution, they successfully addressed the Anti-Federalists' most telling objection. With New Hampshire voting yes in June 1788, the Federalists won the necessary nine states to achieve ratification of the Constitution. Even so, the larger states of Virginia and New York had not yet acted. If they failed to ratify, any chance for national unity and strength would be in dire jeopardy.

Debating the Constitution		
	Federalists	Anti-Federalists
Leaders	George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton	From Virginia: George Mason and Patrick Henry; From Massachusetts: James Winthrop and John Hancock; From New York: George Clinton
Arguments	Stronger central government was needed to maintain order and preserve the Union	Stronger central government would destroy the work of the Revolution, limit democracy, and restrict states' rights
Strategy	Emphasized the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation; showed their opponents as merely negative opponents with no solutions	Argued that the proposed Constitution contained no protection of individual rights, that it gave the central government more power than the British ever had
Advantages	Strong leaders; well organized	Appealed to popular distrust of government based on colonial experiences
Disadvantages	Constitution was new and untried; as originally written, it lacked a bill of rights	Poorly organized; slow to respond to Federalist challenge

Virginia In 1788, Virginia was by far the most populous of the original 13 states. There, the Anti-Federalists rallied behind two strong leaders, George Mason and Patrick Henry, who viewed the Constitution and a strong central government as threats to Americans' hard-won liberty. Virginia's Federalists, led by Washington, Madison, and John Marshall, managed to prevail by a close vote only after promising a bill of rights.

Final States News of Virginia's vote had enough influence on New York's ratifying convention (combined with Alexander Hamilton's efforts) to win the day for the Constitution in that state. North Carolina in November 1789 and Rhode Island in May 1790 reversed their earlier rejections and thus became the last two states to ratify the Constitution as the new "supreme law of the land."

Adding the Bill of Rights

Did the Constitution need to list the rights of individuals? Anti-Federalists argued vehemently that it did, while Federalists argued that it was unnecessary.

Arguments for a Bill of Rights

Anti-Federalists argued that Americans had fought the Revolutionary War to escape a tyrannical government in Britain. What was to stop a strong central government under the Constitution from acting similarly? Only by adding a bill of rights could Americans be protected against such a possibility.

Arguments Against a Bill of Rights

Federalists argued that since members of Congress would be elected by the people, they did not need to be protected against themselves. Furthermore, people should assume that all rights were protected rather than create a limited list of rights that might allow unscrupulous officials to assert that unlisted rights could be violated at will.

In order to win adoption of the Constitution in the ratifying conventions, the Federalists finally backed off their position and promised to add a bill of rights to the Constitution as the first order of business for a newly elected Congress.

The First Ten Amendments

In 1789, the first Congress elected under the Constitution acted quickly to adopt a number of amendments listing people's rights. Drafted largely by James Madison, the amendments were submitted to the states for ratification. The ten that were adopted in 1791 have been known ever since as the U.S. Bill of Rights. Originally, they provided protection against abuses of power by the central (or federal) government. Since the ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1868, most of the protections have been extended to apply to abuses by state governments as well. Below is the text of the Bill of Rights.

First Amendment "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Second Amendment "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Third Amendment "No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner prescribed by law."

Fourth Amendment "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

Fifth Amendment “No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.”

Sixth Amendment “In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed; which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.”

Seventh Amendment “In suits of common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.”

Eighth Amendment “Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.”

Ninth Amendment “The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.”

Tenth Amendment “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

Washington's Presidency

Members of the first Congress under the Constitution were elected in 1788 and began their first session in March 1789 in New York City (then the nation's temporary capital). People assumed that George Washington would be the electoral college's unanimous choice for president, and indeed he was.

Organizing the Federal Government

Washington took the oath of office as the first U.S. president on April 30, 1789. From then on, what the Constitution and its system of checks and balances actually meant in practice would be determined from day to day by the decisions of Congress as the legislative branch, the president as the head of the executive branch, and the Supreme Court as the top federal court in the judicial branch.

Executive Departments As chief executive, Washington's first task was to organize new departments of the executive (law-enforcing) branch. The Constitution authorizes the president to appoint chiefs of departments, although they must be confirmed, or approved, by the Senate. Washington appointed four heads of departments: Thomas Jefferson as secretary of state, Alexander Hamilton as secretary of the treasury, Henry Knox as secretary of war, and Edmund Randolph as attorney general. These four men formed a cabinet of advisers with whom President Washington met regularly to discuss major policy issues. Today, presidents still meet with their cabinets to obtain advice and information.

Federal Court System The only federal court mentioned in the Constitution is the Supreme Court. Congress, however, was given the power to create other federal courts with lesser powers and to determine the number of justices making up the Supreme Court. One of Congress' first laws was the Judiciary Act of 1789, which established a Supreme Court with one chief justice and five associate justices. This highest court was empowered to rule on the constitutionality of decisions made by state courts. The act also provided for a system of 13 district courts and three circuit courts of appeals.

Hamilton's Financial Program

One of the most pressing problems faced by Congress under the Articles had been the government's financial difficulties. Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury, presented to Congress a plan for putting U.S. finances on a stable foundation. Hamilton's plan included three main actions. (1) Pay off the national debt at face value and have the federal government assume the war debts of the states. (2) Protect the young nation's "infant" (new and developing) industries and collect adequate revenues at the same time by imposing high tariffs on imported goods. (3) Create a national bank for depositing government funds and printing banknotes that would provide the basis for a stable U.S. currency. Support for this program came chiefly from northern merchants, who would gain directly from high tariffs and a stabilized currency.

Opponents of Hamilton's financial plan included the Anti-Federalists, who feared that the states would lose power to the extent that the central government gained it. Thomas Jefferson led a faction of southern Anti-Federalists who viewed Hamilton's program as benefiting only the rich at the expense of indebted farmers. After much political wrangling and bargaining, Congress finally adopted Hamilton's plan in slightly modified form. For example, the tariffs were not as high as Hamilton wanted.

Debt Jefferson and his supporters agreed to Hamilton's urgent insistence that the U.S. government pay off the national debt at face value and also assume payment of the war debts of the states. In return for Jefferson's support on this vital aspect of his plan, Hamilton agreed to Jefferson's idea to establish the nation's capital in the South along the Potomac River (an area that, after Washington's death, would be named Washington, D.C.).

National Bank Jefferson argued that the Constitution did not give Congress the power to create a bank. But Hamilton took a broader view of the Constitution, arguing that the document's "necessary and proper" clause authorized Congress to do whatever was necessary to carry out its enumerated powers. Washington supported Hamilton on the issue, and the proposed bank was voted into law. Although chartered by the federal government, the Bank of the United States was privately owned. As a major shareholder of the bank, the federal government could print paper currency and use federal deposits to stimulate business.

Foreign Affairs

Washington's first term as president (1789–1793) coincided with the outbreak of revolution in France, a cataclysmic event that was to touch off a series of wars between the new French Republic and the monarchies of Europe. Washington's entire eight years as president, as well as the four years of his successor, John Adams, were taken up with the question of whether to give U.S. support to France, France's enemies, or neither side.

The French Revolution Americans generally supported the French people's aspiration to establish a republic, but many were also horrified by reports of mob hysteria and mass executions. To complicate matters, the U.S.–French alliance remained in effect, although it was an alliance with the French monarchy, not with the revolutionary republic. Jefferson and his supporters sympathized with the revolutionary cause. They also argued that, because Britain was seizing American merchant ships bound for French ports, the United States should join France in its defensive war against Britain.

Proclamation of Neutrality (1793) Washington, however, believed that the young nation was not strong enough to engage in a European war. Resisting popular clamor, in 1793 he issued a proclamation of U.S. neutrality in the conflict. Jefferson resigned from the cabinet in disagreement with Washington's policy.

"Citizen" Genêt Objecting to Washington's policy, "Citizen" Edmond Genêt, the French minister to the United States, broke all the normal rules of diplomacy by appealing directly to the American people to support the French cause. So outrageous was his conduct that even Jefferson approved of Washington's request to the French government that they remove the offending diplomat. Recalled by his government, Genêt chose to remain in the United States, where he married and became a U.S. citizen.

The Jay Treaty (1794) Washington sent Chief Justice John Jay on a special mission to Britain to talk that country out of its offensive practice of searching and seizing American ships and impressing seamen into the British navy. After a year of negotiations, Jay brought back a treaty in which Britain agreed to evacuate its posts on the U.S. western frontier. But the treaty said nothing about British seizures of American merchant ships. Narrowly ratified

by the Senate, the unpopular Jay Treaty angered American supporters of France, but it did maintain Washington's policy of neutrality, which kept the United States at peace.

The Pinckney Treaty (1795) Totally unexpected was the effect that the Jay Treaty had on Spain's policy toward its territories in the Americas. Seeing the treaty as a sign that the United States might be drawing closer to Spain's longtime foe Britain, Spain decided to consolidate its holdings in North America. The Spanish influence in the Far West had been strengthened by a series of Catholic missions along the California coast but they were concerned about their colonies in the Southeast. Thomas Pinckney, the U.S. minister to Spain, negotiated a treaty in which Spain agreed to open the lower Mississippi River and New Orleans to American trade. The right of deposit was granted to Americans so that they could transfer cargoes in New Orleans without paying duties to the Spanish government. Spain further agreed to accept the U.S. claim that Florida's northern boundary should be at the 31st parallel (not north of that line, as Spain had formerly insisted).

Domestic Concerns

In addition to coping with foreign challenges, stabilizing the nation's credit, and organizing the new government, Washington faced a number of domestic problems and crises.

PINCKNEY'S TREATY, 1795



American Indians Through the final decades of the 18th century, settlers crossed the Alleghenies and moved the frontier steadily westward into the Ohio Valley and beyond. In an effort to resist the settlers' encroachment on their lands, a number of the tribes formed the Northwest (or Western) Confederacy. Initially the tribes, including the Shawnee, Delaware, Iroquois, and others under the Miami war chief Little Turtle, won a series of bloody victories over the local militia. Americans on the frontier were incensed by evidence that the British were supplying the American Indians with arms and encouraging them to attack the "intruding" Americans. In 1794 the U.S. army led by General Anthony Wayne defeated the Confederacy tribes at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in northwestern Ohio. The next year, the chiefs of the defeated peoples agreed to the Treaty of Greenville, in which they surrendered claims to the Ohio Territory and promised to open it up to settlement.

The Whiskey Rebellion (1794) Hamilton, to make up the revenue lost because the tariffs were lower than he wanted, persuaded Congress to pass excise taxes, particularly on the sale of whiskey. In western Pennsylvania, the refusal of a group of farmers to pay the federal excise tax on whiskey seemed to pose a major challenge to the viability of the U.S. government under the Constitution. The rebelling farmers could ill afford to pay a tax on the whiskey that they distilled from surplus corn. Rather than pay the tax, they defended their "liberties" by attacking the revenue collectors.

Washington responded to this crisis by federalizing 15,000 state militiamen and placing them under the command of Alexander Hamilton. The show of force had its intended effect, causing the Whiskey Rebellion to collapse with almost no bloodshed. Some Americans applauded Washington's action, contrasting it with the previous government's helplessness to do anything about Shays's Rebellion. Among westerners, however, the military action was widely resented and condemned as an unwarranted use of force against the common people. The government's chief critic, Thomas Jefferson, gained in popularity as a champion of the western farmer.

Western Lands In the 1790s, the Jay Treaty and the victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers gave the federal government control of vast tracts of land. Congress encouraged the rapid settlement of these lands by passing the Public Land Act in 1796, which established orderly procedures for dividing and selling federal lands at reasonable prices. The process for adding new states to the Union, as set forth in the Constitution, went smoothly. In 1791 Vermont became the first new state, followed by Kentucky in 1792 and Tennessee in 1796.

Political Parties

Washington's election by unanimous vote of the Electoral College in 1789 underscored the popular belief that political parties were not needed. The Constitution itself did not mention political parties, and the Framers assumed none would arise. They were soon proven wrong. The debates between Federalists and Anti-Federalists in 1787 and 1788 were the first indication that a two-party system would emerge as a core feature of American politics.

Origins

In colonial times, groups of legislators commonly formed temporary factions and voted together either for or against a specific policy. When an issue was settled, the factions would dissolve. The dispute between Federalists and Anti-Federalists over the ratification of the Constitution closely resembled the factional disputes of an earlier period. What was unusual about this conflict was that it was organized—at least by the Federalists—across state lines and in that sense prefigured the national parties that emerged soon afterward.

In the 1790s, sometimes called the Federalist era because it was dominated largely by Federalist policies, political parties began to form around two leading figures, Hamilton and Jefferson. The Federalist party supported Hamilton and his financial program. An opposition party known as the Democratic-Republican party supported Jefferson and tried to elect candidates in different states who opposed Hamilton's program. The French Revolution further solidified the formation of national political parties. Americans divided sharply over whether to support France. A large number of them followed Jefferson's lead in openly challenging President Washington's neutrality policy.

NEW STATES IN THE UNION, 1791–1796



Differences Between the Parties

The Federalists were strongest in the northeastern states and advocated the growth of federal power. The Democratic-Republicans were strongest in the southern states and on the western frontier and argued for states' rights. (See the table on the next page for additional differences between the parties.) By 1796, the two major political parties were already taking shape and becoming better organized. In that year, President Washington announced that he intended to retire to private life at the end of his second term.

Washington's Farewell Address

Assisted by Alexander Hamilton, the retiring president wrote a farewell address for publication in the newspapers in late 1796. In this message, which had enormous influence because of Washington's prestige, the president spoke about policies and practices that he considered unwise. He warned Americans

- not to get involved in European affairs
- not to make "permanent alliances" in foreign affairs
- not to form political parties
- not to fall into sectionalism

For the next century, future presidents would heed as gospel Washington's warning against "permanent alliances." However, in the case of political parties, Washington was already behind the times, since political parties were well on their way to becoming a vital part of the American political system.

One long-range consequence of Washington's decision to leave office after two terms was that later presidents followed his example. Presidents elected to two terms (including Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson) would voluntarily retire even though the Constitution placed no limit on a president's tenure in office. The two-term tradition continued unbroken until 1940 when Franklin Roosevelt won election to a third term. Then, the 22nd Amendment, ratified in 1951, made the two-term limit a part of the Constitution.

John Adams' Presidency

Even as Washington was writing his Farewell Address, political parties were working to gain majorities in the two houses of Congress and to line up enough electors from the various states to elect the next president. The vice president, John Adams, was the Federalists' candidate, while former secretary of state Thomas Jefferson was the choice of the Democratic-Republicans.

Adams won by three electoral votes. Jefferson became vice-president, since the original Constitution gave that office to the candidate receiving the second highest number of electoral votes. (Since the ratification of the 12th Amendment in 1804, the president and vice-president have run as a team.)

Comparison of Federalist and Democratic-Republican Parties		
	Federalists	Democratic-Republicans
Leaders	John Adams Alexander Hamilton	Thomas Jefferson James Madison
View of the Constitution	Interpret loosely Create strong central government	Interpret strictly Create weak central government
Foreign Policy	Pro-British	Pro-French
Military Policy	Develop large peacetime army and navy	Develop small peacetime army and navy
Economic Policy	Aid business Create a national bank Support high tariffs	Favor agriculture Oppose a national bank Oppose tariffs
Chief Supporters	Northern business owners Large landowners	Skilled workers Small farmers Plantation owners

The XYZ Affair

Troubles abroad related to the French Revolution presented Adams with the first major challenge of his presidency. Americans were angered by reports that U.S. merchant ships were being seized by French warships and privateers. Seeking a peaceful settlement, Adams sent a delegation to Paris to negotiate with the French government. Certain French ministers, known only as X, Y, and Z because their names were never revealed, requested bribes as the basis for entering into negotiations. The American delegates indignantly refused. Newspaper reports of the demands made by X, Y, and Z infuriated many Americans, who now clamored for war against France. “Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute” became the slogan of the hour. One faction of the Federalist party, led by Alexander Hamilton, hoped that by going to war the United States could gain French and Spanish lands in North America.

President Adams, on the other hand, resisted the popular sentiment for war. Recognizing that the U.S. Army and Navy were not yet strong enough to fight a major power, the president avoided war and sent new ministers to Paris.

The Alien and Sedition Acts

Anger against France strengthened the Federalists in the congressional elections of 1798 enough to win a majority in both houses. The Federalists took advantage of their victory by enacting laws to restrict their political opponents, the Democratic-Republicans. For example, since most immigrants voted Democratic-Republican, the Federalists passed the Naturalization Act, which increased from 5 to 14 the years required for immigrants to qualify for U.S. citizenship. They also passed the Alien Acts, which authorized the president to deport aliens considered dangerous and to detain enemy aliens in time of war. Most seriously, they passed the Sedition Act, which made it illegal for newspaper editors to criticize either the president or Congress and imposed fines or imprisonment for editors who violated the law.

The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions

Democratic-Republicans argued that the Alien and Sedition Acts violated rights guaranteed by the 1st Amendment of the Constitution. In 1799, however, the Supreme Court had not yet established the principle of judicial review (see Chapter 7). Democratic-Republican leaders challenged the legislation of the Federalist Congress by enacting nullifying laws of their own in the state legislatures. The Kentucky legislature adopted a resolution that had been written by Thomas Jefferson, and the Virginia legislature adopted a resolution introduced by James Madison. Both resolutions declared that the states had entered into a “compact” in forming the national government, and, therefore, if any act of the federal government broke the compact, a state could nullify the federal law. Although only Kentucky and Virginia adopted nullifying resolutions in 1799, they set forth an argument and rationale that would be widely used in the nullification controversy of the 1830s (see Chapter 10).

The immediate crisis over the Alien and Sedition Acts faded when the Federalists lost their majority in Congress after the election of 1800, and the new Democratic-Republican majority allowed the acts to expire or repealed them. In addition, the Supreme Court under John Marshall asserted its power in deciding whether a certain federal law was constitutional.

The Election of 1800

During Adams’ presidency, the Federalists rapidly lost popularity. People disliked the Alien and Sedition Acts and complained about the new taxes imposed by the Federalists to pay the costs of preparing for a war against France. Though Adams avoided war, he had persuaded Congress that building up the U.S. Navy was necessary for the nation’s defense.

Election Results

The election of 1800 swept the Federalists from power in both the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government. A majority of the presidential electors cast their ballots for two Democratic-Republicans: Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. Because both these candidates received the same number of electoral ballots, it was necessary (according to the rules in the original Constitution) to hold a special election in the House of Representatives to break the tie. In December 1800 the Federalists still controlled the House. They debated and voted for days before they finally gave a majority to Jefferson. (Alexander Hamilton had urged his followers to vote for Jefferson, whom he considered less dangerous and of higher character than Burr.)

Democratic-Republican lawmakers elected in 1800 took control of both the House and the Senate when a new Congress met in March 1801.

A Peaceful Revolution

The passing of power in 1801 from one political party to another was accomplished without violence. This was a rare event for the times and a major indication that the U.S. constitutional system would endure the various strains that were placed upon it. The Federalists quietly accepted their defeat in the election of 1800 and peacefully relinquished control of the federal government to Jefferson's party, the Democratic-Republicans. The change from Federalist to Democratic-Republican control is known as the Revolution of 1800.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHAT DOES THE CONSTITUTION MEAN?

From the moment it was drafted in 1787, the U.S. Constitution has been a continuing subject of controversy. As political issues changed from one era to the next, Americans changed their views of how the Constitution should be interpreted. The dispute between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists over the proper powers of the central government has never been completely resolved and, to a certain extent, continues to be debated by modern-day Republicans and Democrats.

In the decades preceding the Civil War (1790–1860), the chief constitutional issue concerned the nature of the federal union and whether the states could nullify acts of the federal government. The North's triumph in the Civil War settled the issue in favor of centralized power and against southern champions of states' rights. In the post-Civil War era, northerners regarded Hamilton and other Federalist Framers of the Constitution as heroes. At the same time, states'-rights advocates were portrayed as demagogues and traitors.

In the early 20th century, a change in politics again brought a change in scholars' views toward the Framers of the Constitution. Reacting to the excesses of big business, certain historians identified economic factors and class conflict as the primary force behind the Constitutional

Convention of 1787. Published in 1913, at the height of the Progressive era, Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* argued that, in writing the Constitution, the Framers were chiefly motivated by their own economic interests in preserving their wealth and property. Beard's controversial thesis dominated historical scholarship on the Constitution for almost 50 years. Expanding on Beard's thesis, some historians have argued that even the sectional differences between northern Framers and southern Framers were chiefly economic in nature.

In recent years, many historians have concluded that the economic interpretation of the Framers' motives, while valid up to a point, oversimplifies the issues of the 1780s. Historians place greater stress on the philosophical and intellectual backgrounds of the delegates at Philadelphia and explain how they shared similar 18th-century views of liberty, government, and society.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

Founders (ID, CUL) James Madison Alexander Hamilton Framers of the Constitution Gouverneur Morris John Dickinson Federalists Anti-Federalists The Federalist Papers Bill of Rights; amendments Washington's Farewell Address "permanent alliances" Alien and Sedition Acts Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions Disputes (WXT) slave trade infant industries national bank tariffs; excise taxes	Expansion (PEO, POL) Battle of Fallen Timbers Treaty of Greenville Public Land Act (1796) A Constitution (POL) Mt. Vernon Conference Annapolis Convention Constitutional Convention checks and balances Virginia Plan New Jersey Plan Connecticut Plan; Great Compromise House of Representatives Senate Three-Fifths Compromise Commercial Compromise electoral college system legislative branch Congress	A New Republic (POL) executive departments; cabinet Henry Knox Edmund Randolph Judiciary Act (1789) federal courts Supreme Court national debt Whiskey Rebellion Federalist era Democratic-Republican party political parties two-term tradition John Adams Revolution of 1800 Foreign Affairs (WOR) French Revolution Proclamation of Neutrality (1793) "Citizen" Genêt Jay Treaty (1794) Pinckney Treaty (1795) right of deposit XYZ Affair
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