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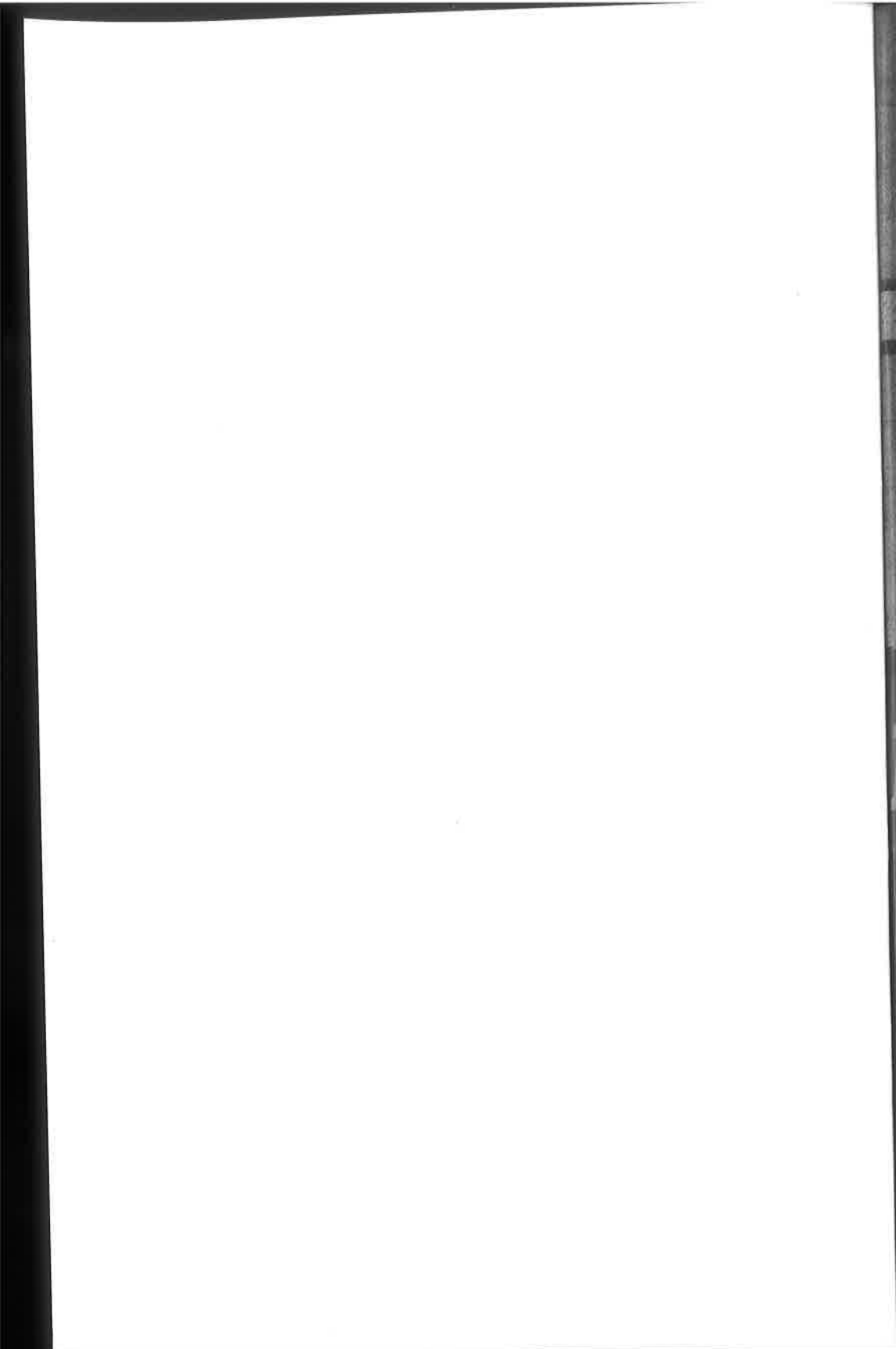
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BY MICHAEL BURGAN



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The Split History of the

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

PATRIOT PERSPECTIVE

BY MICHAEL BURGAN

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COMPASS POINT BOOKS

a capstone imprint

Compass Point Books
1710 Roe Crest Drive
North Mankato, Minnesota 56003
www.capstonepub.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Burgan, Michael.

The split history of the American Revolution : a perspectives flip book / by Michael Burgan.

pages cm. — (Perspectives flip book)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Summary: "Describes the opposing viewpoints of the British and Patriots during the American Revolution" — Provided by publisher.

ISBN 978-0-7565-4570-3 (library binding)

ISBN 978-0-7565-4592-5 (paperback)

ISBN 978-0-7565-4629-8 (ebook PDF)

1. United States—History—Revolution, 1775-1783—Juvenile literature. I. Title.

E208.B94 2013

973.3—dc23

2012004681

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IMAGE CREDITS

Patriot Perspective: Alamy: North Wind Picture Archives, 5, 19, 29; Corbis, cover (top), 11; Courtesy of Army Art Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 13, 20, 25; Getty Images Inc.: Stock Montage, 8; Library of Congress: Prints and Photographs Division, cover (bottom), 22; National Archives and Records Administration, 16; Newscom: akg images, 15

British Perspective: Alamy: North Wind Picture Archives, 5, 8, 10, 14, 16, 25; Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library, 19; Bridgeman Art Library International/Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, USA/Howard Pyle, 20; Corbis, cover (bottom); "Hoskins House" by Dale Gallon, image courtesy of Gallon Historical Art, Gettysburg, Pa., 27; Library of Congress: Prints and Photographs Division, cover (top); National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center/Lloyd Kenneth Townsend, artist, 12; SuperStock Inc.: SuperStock, 22

Art elements: Shutterstock: Color Symphony, paper texture, Ebtikar, flag, Sandra Cunningham, grunge photo, SvetlanaR, grunge lines

Printed in the United States of America in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.
032015 008807R

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THE ROAD TO WAR

*I*t was August 14, 1765. Across Boston several thousand angry people poured out into the streets. Shouts of "Liberty, property, and no stamps!" filled the air. The marchers were furious about the Stamp Act, a new law that taxed paper goods and documents of all kinds. That night enraged protesters burned a straw effigy of Andrew Oliver, the unlucky local official picked to collect the taxes. The mob also tore down a building Oliver owned and then headed to his home and wrecked furniture there. More destruction followed in the days to come.



Patriots protested the Stamp Act by demonstrating and hanging effigies.

The Stamp Act of 1765 was part of a new policy for the 13 American colonies—one that drove many colonists to protest British rule. Leading the fight against the policy were American colonists known as Patriots. They challenged British efforts to raise taxes and squash the colonists' freedoms. The Patriots' ideas and actions put the colonies and Great Britain on the road to war.

A CHANGING RELATIONSHIP

Until the 1760s Parliament and the British crown paid little attention to the distant American colonies—and most Americans liked it that way. When Parliament did pass laws that affected the colonies, the colonists sometimes ignored them. For example, they often smuggled goods they wanted from other nations instead of buying them from Britain. Colonists also elected local officials with a large degree of independence from London.

SONS OF LIBERTY

The Boston protests were led by a group of Massachusetts merchants and craftsmen called the Sons of Liberty. The group formed in Boston during the summer of 1765 and met in secret at first. Soon they numbered 2,000 men, and their protests drew much attention to the Patriot cause. By the end of 1765, Sons of Liberty groups existed in every colony.

But the relationship between the colonies and Great Britain grew tense after 1763. That year the British won the French and Indian War, in which Great Britain battled France for control of North America. Britain's victory gave it control of Canada and the eastern half of what became the United States. The war had been costly, and British officials demanded that colonists help pay for the future defense of the colonies.

In 1764 Parliament passed the American Revenue Act, known as the Sugar Act, which taxed goods including sugar, wine, coffee, and some types of cloth. The Sugar Act was the first law to raise new money in the colonies. Many merchants believed the new taxes would hurt their businesses.

The Americans cherished the British tradition that gave people the right to approve the taxes they paid. They did this through the representatives they elected to Parliament or colonial legislatures. The colonies, however, had no voting representatives in Parliament. More Americans began to protest against "taxation without representation."

In 1766 Parliament repealed the Stamp Act. But new taxes soon followed. The first of what came to be known as the Townshend Acts taxed glass, paint, paper, and tea imported from Britain. Some colonial merchants protested with a boycott of British goods. Boston was the center of the anger against the new laws. British officials there clamped down on smuggling. On June 10, 1768, the crew of a British warship seized a ship owned by Patriot merchant John Hancock, who was known for smuggling tea and molasses into the city. A crowd gathered to protest. Fists flew as the Americans beat up the British officials, leaving one of them bloody.

The violence in Boston led King George III to send British troops there. Soon they were camped in the heart of Boston. The residents shouted insults at the soldiers, known as "Redcoats" and "lobster backs" because of their bright red uniforms.

A MASSACRE IN BOSTON

At times citizens and soldiers fought. The worst violence came March 5, 1770. In front of the Custom House, British guard Private Hugh White was arguing with colonist Edward Garrick. Soon a crowd of angry colonists gathered in support of Garrick, hurling taunts of, "bloody lobster back" and "lousy rascal."

The Americans didn't just toss insults at the guard on duty that cold March night. The growing crowd pelted the soldier with chunks of ice. More soldiers rushed to the scene, and the crowd threw snowballs and sticks at them. Someone shouted, "Fire!" and

the soldiers fired their guns into the shouting mob. Three men fell dead to the ground. Two of the eight others who were wounded died later in what the Patriots called the Boston Massacre. Eight British soldiers and a captain were arrested and later tried on murder charges. All but two were acquitted.

The killings enraged some Boston Patriots, but the violence did not continue. Still, the residents' hatred of the troops simmered. It wouldn't be long before it reached a boiling point.

A RIOT OVER TEA

Most colonists drank tea every day. By 1770 Parliament had abolished all of the Townshend Acts but one—the tax on tea. In May 1773, though, Parliament passed the Tea Act. The law lowered



Eleven men were shot during the Boston Massacre.

the tax on tea, but allowed only the British East India Company to sell tea in the colonies. Even though colonists would pay less for the East India tea than for smuggled tea, they viewed the Tea Act as just one more example of British attempts to control their lives.

Several thousand people jammed into Boston's Old South Meeting House December 16, 1773, to discuss the fate of three loads of tea sitting in the harbor. The Patriots did not want the tea to come ashore. When it became clear the governor wouldn't let the ships leave until the tea was unloaded, Patriot leader Samuel Adams stood. "This meeting can do nothing more to save this country!" he shouted.

Adams' words were a signal to other Patriots in the crowd. That night dozens of men, some disguised as American Indians, boarded the ships and threw all the tea into the harbor.

In London an angry King George quickly responded to this "Boston Tea Party." He had Parliament pass several laws that punished Boston and the Massachusetts colony as a whole. They included shutting down the port of Boston and limiting local control of the government. Americans called these laws the Intolerable Acts.

Lawmakers called for a meeting to discuss how the colonies could act together to protest the new laws. Every colony except Georgia sent delegates to a meeting held in Philadelphia. This First Continental Congress called for another boycott of British goods if the laws punishing Massachusetts were not repealed.

FIRST SHOTS OF THE REVOLUTION

King George III and his advisers ignored the colonists' demands. In the colonies some members of Congress feared war might break out. But few colonists talked about independence from Great Britain. Most just wanted to protect the rights and freedoms they had always enjoyed as British citizens.

In Massachusetts, though, militia troops prepared for war. Their actions made royal governor Thomas Gage nervous. In September 1774 Gage ordered his troops to seize a large amount of gunpowder used by the militia. The incident sparked the militia to train men to serve as Minutemen—soldiers who were capable of fighting at a minute's notice.

Early in 1775 Gage received orders to arrest the Patriot leaders in Massachusetts. He also made plans to capture more of the local militias' weapons and supplies.

Gage put his plan into action the night of April 18. He sent troops to Concord, a town northwest of Boston. On horseback, Paul Revere and two other Patriots dashed ahead of the Redcoats to warn colonists along the way.

The next morning Minutemen in Lexington led by Captain John Parker waited for the advancing Redcoats. Parker had already decided that his men would not fire on the British unless the British fired first. When Redcoats came within sight, Parker told his men to back down. Some obeyed him. Others, like his cousin Jonas Parker, did not budge.



The April 19 battle raged on Concord Bridge and other sites.

Three British officers approached the Minutemen. One officer demanded, “Ye villains, ye rebels, disperse! Damn you, disperse!”

The scene quickly became chaotic. A gun fired, though no one knows who pulled the trigger. More gunfire quickly followed. Jonas Parker fell to the ground, hit by a British lead ball. He struggled to load his gun and fire back, but a British soldier stabbed him with a bayonet. Seven other Americans also died that morning.

The British then continued to Concord. The worst fighting of the day broke out in Concord and along the road back to Boston during the British retreat. Hiding in houses and behind fences, the Americans took deadly aim. They paid back the Redcoats for the deaths in Lexington, killing or wounding about 250 British troops. With the fighting that day, the Revolutionary War had begun.

A WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

CH. 2

M

ilitia members soon flocked to Massachusetts from other colonies. Boston remained the center of the growing war. The British sent more troops to the city, while American forces surrounded it. In June Patriot leaders learned that the British planned to take the hills outside Boston. The militia rushed to nearby Breed's Hill and quickly put up a redoubt, a small fort made of dirt and wood.

The British attacked the American redoubt June 17. The fighting was bloody. Two waves of British troops charged the fort and other



British soldiers charged three times in their quest to take Breed's Hill.

American defenses. The well-protected Americans cut down many Redcoats, driving them back. On their third charge, the British forced the Americans to flee.

The battle was named for nearby Bunker Hill, and in one sense, it was a British victory. But the British suffered more than 1,000 casualties. A Patriot writing in a Boston newspaper claimed, "Two more such actions will destroy your [the British] army."

WASHINGTON TAKES COMMAND

In Philadelphia the Second Continental Congress met to plan the war effort. Just before the Battle of Bunker Hill, Congress named George

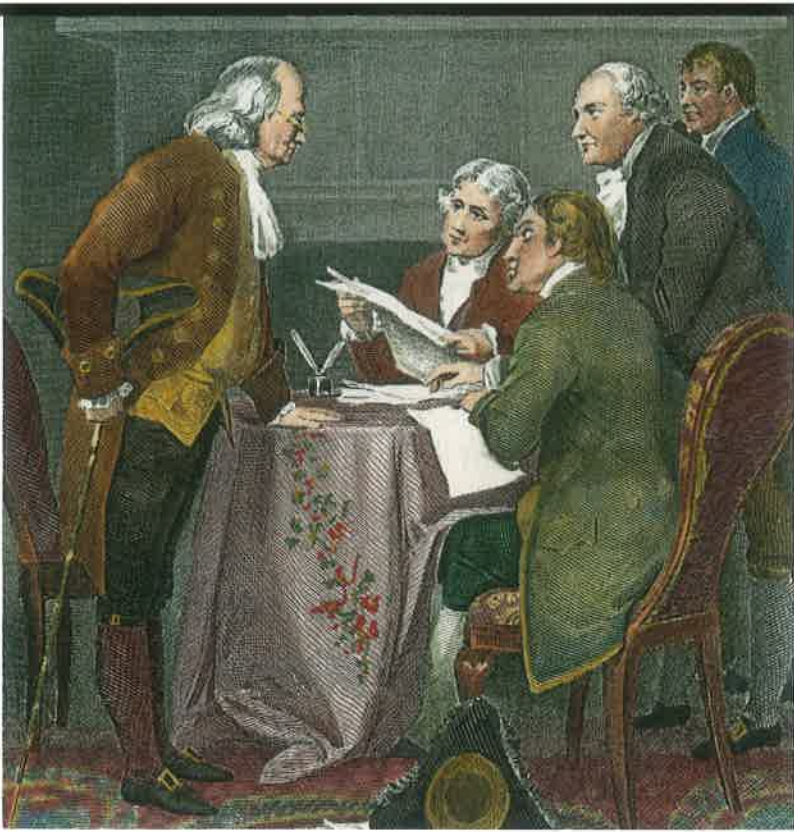
Washington to lead the American soldiers. These troops included militias and a new national force called the Continental Army.

Washington arrived in Boston in July 1775. A militia officer for 20 years, Washington did not like what he saw. Despite the training of the Minutemen, most of the American forces weren't ready for serious battle. The camps were filthy and food sometimes rotted. Washington quickly made changes to clean the camps and improve discipline. Washington knew the Americans were fighting against a trained army. He wanted his forces to be at their best.

The Continental Army was carrying out a siege of Boston, trying to keep the British from receiving supplies. The siege continued into 1776. In early March Washington placed troops and cannons on the hills of Dorchester Heights, south of Boston. The British planned an attack on the hills, but it was stopped for several days by a storm. By the time the storm cleared, the British decided that the American position on the hills was too strong. The entire British force left the city March 17. To the Americans, it was a great victory. But the British would soon sail to New York City with an even larger army. Washington moved south to fight them there.

INDEPENDENCE

As the two armies headed for New York, the delegates of the Second Continental Congress were at work in Philadelphia. On June 7, 1776, the Congress began to discuss a resolution declaring independence from Great Britain. Five delegates were picked to write a declaration of independence.



Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston, John Adams, and Roger Sherman worked together on the Declaration of Independence.

Virginia lawyer Thomas Jefferson was the main author of the declaration. Jefferson and John Adams of Massachusetts briefly debated who should write the first draft. Adams insisted Jefferson do it, saying, "You can write ten times better than I can." "Well," Jefferson replied, "if you are decided, I will do as well as I can."

During the following days, Jefferson worked at a small wooden desk, searching for the right words for what would become a historic document. Jefferson asserted that all men are equal and have certain rights, and "among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The delegates approved the final version of Jefferson's declaration July 4. The 13 colonies were now the United States of America.

A BAD START

In August Washington's army and the British began a series of battles in New York. The campaign started badly for the Americans, with a major loss on Long Island. By November the British had taken New York City and several American forts just north of it. They had also captured more than 4,000 prisoners.

George Washington faced another problem as 1776 came to an end. Some of his soldiers had agreed to fight for just one year, and it was almost time for them to go home.

Despite his worries about his army, Washington saw a chance to finally score a major victory. The evening of December 25, he prepared his troops for a surprise attack on the Hessians, the German troops fighting for the British. As an icy storm raged



Washington led about 2,400 soldiers across the icy Delaware River on the way to Trenton, New Jersey.

around them, the Americans crossed the Delaware River. Around 8:00 a.m. the Americans arrived at the Hessian camp at Trenton, New Jersey. They killed about 20 Hessians, wounded about 100, and captured about 900, while losing only two of their own men.

After this victory, Washington was eager for another. But many of the soldiers were still preparing to go home. The commander asked if they would stay with him just one more month. More than 1,000 agreed to fight on.

Washington fought the British at Princeton, New Jersey, January 3. About 280 of the outnumbered British soldiers were killed, wounded, or missing, and the Americans captured British supplies. With the success in New Jersey, Americans' hopes rose. That spring thousands of men enlisted in the American army for terms of three years or more. But the Patriots still faced a long war.

THE OTHER AMERICANS

As the colonies came together to support Boston, some Americans rejected the Patriot cause. The Loyalists favored keeping their ties to Great Britain. Some Loyalists respected the wealth and power of Great Britain. Others thought the Americans had no right to rebel. Some simply disliked the dangers of war and how it affected their lives. The strongest Loyalists formed their own military companies and fought for the British against other Americans. Not surprisingly, Patriots hated the Loyalists who actively worked against independence. Loyalists in many states risked losing their property—or even their lives—if they spoke up too loudly for the British.

CH. 3 DIFFICULT YEARS

*I*n spring 1777 British commander William Howe pulled his men out of New Jersey and headed back to New York. His next target was Philadelphia, the U.S. capital. Howe put his men on ships and landed in Maryland. In September 1777 they marched north.

By now General Washington's army had grown to about 11,000 men, but the British Army still outnumbered it by about 7,000 troops. Washington's goal was to attack the British before they reached Philadelphia.



American soldiers were routed at the Battle of Brandywine.

BRANDYWINE AND GERMANTOWN

On September 11 the Americans spread out along Brandywine Creek in Pennsylvania. In a battle that lasted most of the day, the British fooled the Americans by attacking with a small force in the center, then sending a larger force to encircle the Americans from the rear. The Americans suffered about twice as many casualties as the British, who soon took Philadelphia.

In October the two armies clashed at nearby Germantown, Pennsylvania. A heavy fog clung low over the battlefield, and American troops struggled to carry out their generals' detailed battle plan. The Americans once again lost, but Washington believed his men had fought well against the better-trained British.

For the Patriots, the best news of 1777 came from New York. In two separate battles near Saratoga that fall, the Americans defeated a British force that was moving south from Canada. Several heroes emerged during the battles, though least among them might have been the U.S. commander, Horatio Gates. At times Gates was slow to move his larger force against the British troops under General John Burgoyne. Another American general, Benedict Arnold, argued with the commander about what to do. At one point he defied Gates' order to stay in camp.

At both Saratoga battles, Arnold bravely led charges against the British. While attacking a British redoubt, Arnold had his horse



Daniel Morgan and his riflemen played an important role in the victories at Saratoga.

HERO AND TRAITOR

Benedict Arnold is remembered today as a terrible traitor. He turned against the Patriot cause in 1779 to help the British. But Arnold also had been one of the bravest generals on the American side. Throughout the war Arnold believed he didn't receive the rewards he deserved for his heroic service, which led to his leaving the Patriot side. After the war Arnold lived for a time in Canada and then settled in England, where he died a poor man in 1801.

shot from underneath him. "Rush on, my brave boys!" he called to his men, and they did, dodging bullets to take the redoubt. Also crucial at both battles were Colonel Daniel Morgan and his expert riflemen. With their second victory, the Americans took almost 6,000 prisoners. The success at Saratoga led France to join the war against Great Britain. The French had already been sending the Americans money and supplies. Now they would fight the British at sea and begin to send men to help the Americans.

A DIFFICULT WINTER

Washington and his troops next moved to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, to spend the winter. Tired from a tough campaign, the men began building small wooden huts there in December 1777.

As the winter went on, the troops battled the cold and disease while their bellies often ached for food. The soldiers were living on little more than "fire cakes" made of flour and water. The cry of

"No meat! No meat!" rang through the camp. In his headquarters Washington worried his army might not make it through the winter.

Keeping warm was another problem. The huts weren't sturdy enough to keep out the cold wind. Many soldiers were wearing rags. As many as 3,000 soldiers were dead by spring.

BETTER DAYS

Things began to look up for Washington's army in March. Army engineers began repairing the roads and bridges between the town of Lancaster and the camp, which allowed wagons of food to reach Valley Forge.

But the soldiers were still undisciplined and poorly trained. That changed with the arrival of Friedrich von Steuben. The professional soldier from the German kingdom of Prussia was skilled in the best European methods of keeping men organized during battle. Steuben



Friedrich von Steuben (right) trained the Americans to be skilled fighters.

personally trained a small number of Americans, and they then taught the other soldiers at Valley Forge.

They had their first chance to use their new skills in June 1778. The British left Philadelphia to return to New York. Some of Washington's troops waited for them at Monmouth Courthouse, New Jersey. On the sweltering hot morning of June 28, the battle there started badly for the Americans. They outnumbered the British, but American General Charles Lee seemed confused about what to do.

Washington arrived at the battle and was shocked to see his men retreating. Washington then rallied the troops to form a defensive line. Throughout the day the British attacked and the Americans held them off, helped by the accurate pounding of their artillery. The fighting ended as evening approached, with the Americans suffering about 500 casualties and the British about 1,100. During the night the British pulled out and continued on to New York.

The Battle of Monmouth Courthouse showed the increasing skill of the American troops. But the war for independence was now more than three years old. Many Americans had not expected it to go on so long. Still they were willing to fight on, as the main fighting shifted to the South.

FINAL VICTORY



In December 1778 British warships sailed up the Savannah River and seized the city of Savannah, Georgia. By early 1779 the rest of Georgia was under British control. The next year the British began a siege of Charleston, South Carolina. The city fell in May 1780, and about 5,000 Americans were taken prisoner.

The war in the South soon turned into a bloody civil war of sorts. Large numbers of Loyalists turned their weapons against American Patriots. American General Nathanael Greene saw that the Loyalists and Patriots "pursue one another with the most relentless fury, killing and destroying each other wherever they meet."



Nathanael Greene (center; on horseback) became a strong Patriot leader.

A DIFFICULT START

Support for the Patriots in the Carolinas rose or fell depending on how well they did on the battlefield. The fighting often did not go well for the Americans. For a time Horatio Gates commanded the Americans in South Carolina. But unlike the victories at Saratoga, Gates' forces lost badly at the Battle of Camden. Many of the survivors went home rather than fight again.

The Americans did better in South Carolina fighting in small units. These groups ranged in size from 50 to 500 men. Francis Marion was one of the bold and daring men who led the guerrillas against the enemy. Marion was known as the Swamp Fox for his skill in avoiding British troops.

In response, the British sometimes robbed or destroyed the homes of Patriots. Patriot Eliza Wilkinson feared for her life when Redcoats on horseback thundered up to her sister's South Carolina home. Pistols and swords drawn, the British tore through the house, stealing jewelry and clothing. Wilkinson called the Redcoats "inhuman monsters."

SOUTHERN SUCCESS

After Gates' defeat at Camden, Nathanael Greene took over as the American commander in the South. Greene had helped improve the supply system during the hard winter at Valley Forge.

Greene split his army in two. Daniel Morgan led a group of cavalry and other skilled soldiers, while Greene took the rest of the men. In January 1781 Morgan's forces met part of the British army at a spot in South Carolina where cows once grazed. At the Battle of the Cowpens, Morgan formed the Americans into several lines. The

AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THE REVOLUTION

During battles in the South and across the country, African-Americans fought next to whites. Some of the black American soldiers were slaves, and their masters received money for their services. Others were free blacks such as Lemuel Haynes. The Massachusetts Minuteman fought in several battles of the Revolution. In 1776 Haynes wrote against slavery: "Even an African, has equally as good a right to his liberty in common with Englishmen."

sharpshooters were in front, followed by Continental troops, while the cavalry soldiers were at the rear.

When the British soldiers charged, the Americans retreated. The Redcoats scattered as they chased the Americans, which allowed the American cavalry to ride in and swiftly attack. As the fighting went on, Morgan rode up to his troops. Flashing his sword, he said, "Give them one more fire and the day is ours." The Americans kept firing, and the British quickly surrendered.

Greene then joined Morgan, and the combined force fought the British at Guilford Courthouse in North Carolina. The Americans finally retreated, but the British paid a high price for the victory, with more than 500 casualties to the Americans' 250.

Lord Charles Cornwallis, the British commander, decided to head north to Virginia. Fighting was already under way there during the first part of 1781. French officer Marquis de Lafayette led both American and French troops. The British had several thousand troops in the state, which were joined by Cornwallis' soldiers in May. After several small battles, Cornwallis set up camp in Yorktown on the York River.

The French had sent thousands of soldiers to help the Americans, and powerful warships were also on the way. In August Washington decided the French and American forces would attack the British in Virginia. Together the two allies had about twice as many men as the British. Meanwhile, French ships kept British aid from reaching Cornwallis by sea.

Washington began a siege of Yorktown. The largest cannons began firing on the British October 9 and kept firing for a week. The British shot back as well, and one officer was concerned for Washington's safety as he watched the fighting.

"Sir, you are too much exposed here, had you not better step a little back?" the officer asked.

Washington replied to the aide, "If you are afraid, you have liberty to step back." The commander, though, did not move.

Meanwhile, American soldiers dug trenches closer and closer to the British lines. French and American troops captured two British redoubts October 14. From there they would be able to do even more damage with their big guns. Three days later a single British officer waved a white cloth at the Americans. Cornwallis was ready to surrender. The final agreement between Washington and Cornwallis was reached October 19.

WOMEN AT WAR

Patriot women did important work during the war. They ran farms and businesses and collected money for clothing. Some traveled with the troops to feed the men and nurse the wounded. A few even fought the British. One of these female soldiers was Massachusetts schoolteacher Deborah Samson.

In May 1782 21-year-old Samson disguised herself as a man named Robert Shurtliff and enlisted in the American army. She fought for the next 18 months alongside the male soldiers and was wounded in at least one battle. When her gender was discovered, the Army gave her an honorable discharge in October 1783. She later received a small pension from the state of Massachusetts for her service.

News of the American victory at Yorktown reached Great Britain in November. The fighting still went on, but British leaders were no longer certain they could win. Early in 1782 Parliament agreed to end the war. Several Patriot leaders were already in Europe to discuss a peace treaty, which was signed September 3, 1783. The Treaty of Paris granted the Americans their independence.

Across the country Americans celebrated peace and independence. They had won a war that Washington had called "a defense of all that is dear and valuable in life."



A British soldier waving a white flag signified the British surrender at Yorktown.

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