



A PERSPECTIVES
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The Split History of the

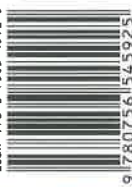
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BY MICHAEL BURGAN



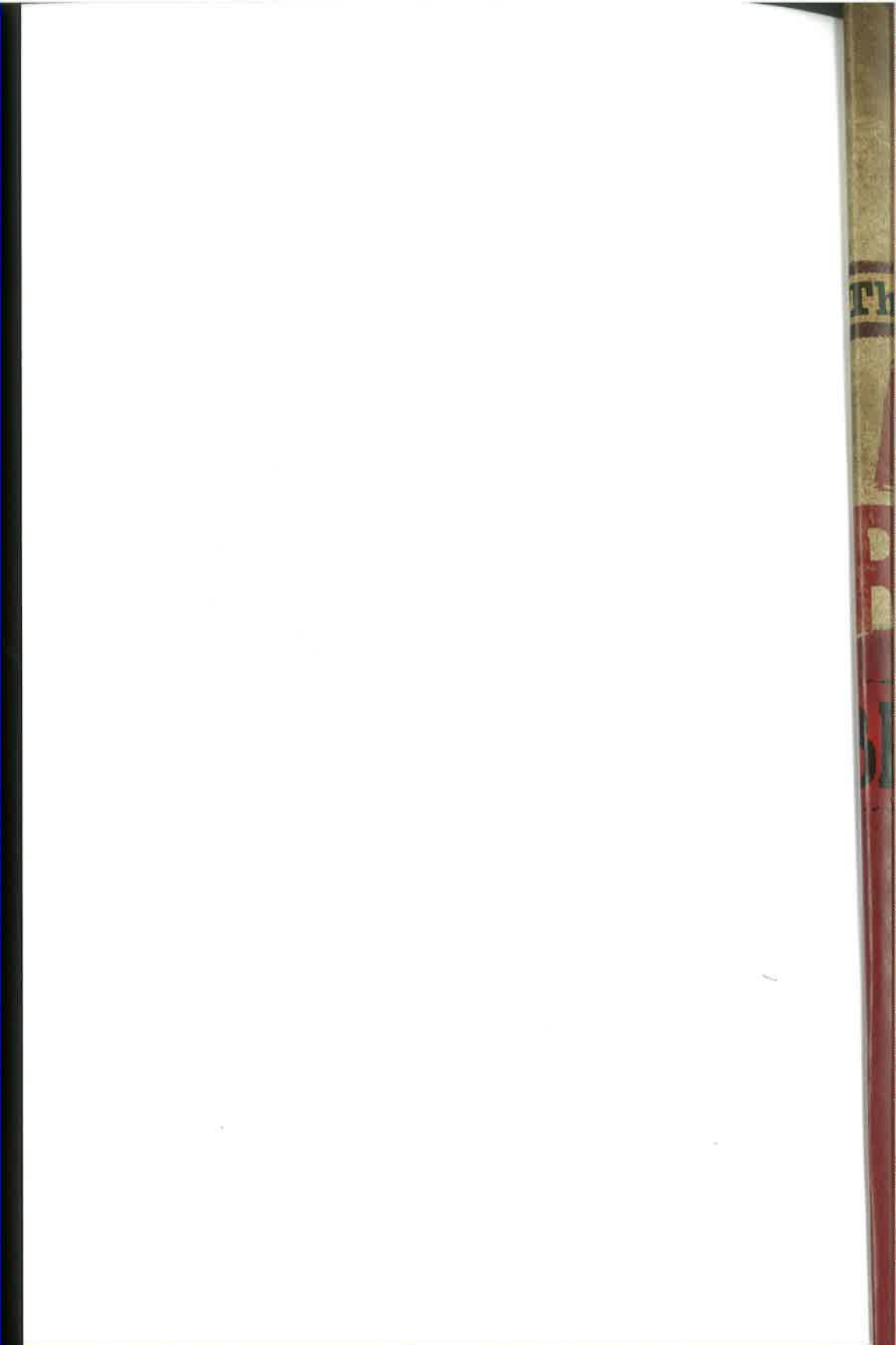
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AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BRITISH PERSPECTIVE

BY MICHAEL BURGAN

CONTENT CONSULTANT:

Lawrence Babits, PhD

Professor Emeritus, Department of History

East Carolina University

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Michael Burgan has written numerous books for children and young adults during his nearly 20 years as a freelance writer. Many of his books have focused on U.S. history, geography, and the lives of world leaders. Michael has won several awards for his writing. He lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with his cat, Callie.

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DEALING WITH REBELS



nly 22 years old, George III was about to be crowned king of one of the world's great empires. It was September 22, 1761, and the military that George inherited with the lands of Great Britain had helped build that empire. Just a year before, British troops defeated French forces in Canada. And in the year to come, George's military would win victories against Spain in Cuba and the Philippines. British influence in India was on the rise. George said with pride, "I glory in the name of Britain."

Britain's long war against Spain, France, and other European nations, called the French and Indian War in North America, finally ended in 1763. The British greatly expanded their holdings in North America, adding to their 13 colonies along the Atlantic coast.



George III became king after the death of his grandfather George II.

TAXING THE COLONIES

One of George's concerns was keeping peace with the American Indian tribes along the frontier. American colonists had been moving onto Indian lands, and Indian relations with British officials had recently soured. War broke out in 1763 as the Indians attacked British forts in the west.

George issued a proclamation that said American colonists could not settle west of the Appalachian Mountains. The Proclamation of 1763 limited who could trade with the Indians in that region. The king and his aides also planned to send as many as 10,000 additional troops to the American frontier. To help pay the costs, Parliament passed the Sugar Act in 1764. The law raised some taxes on the colonies. It also called for collecting taxes, known as duties, that were already in place. The colonists had avoided paying the earlier duties by smuggling goods into the colonies.



The Proclamation of 1763 prohibited settlement west of the Appalachians.

In the Proclamation of 1763, George called the Americans his "loving subjects." The Americans, though, did not love the Sugar Act, and some spoke out against it.

George's need for money outweighed any concern about American liberty. Parliament passed the Stamp Act of 1765, which called for a tax on printed documents. This time the colonists did more than grumble. Colonists in several cities protested. Many also boycotted British goods. The boycott angered British merchants, who lost money because of it.

Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766. But the need for more money from the colonies had not gone away.

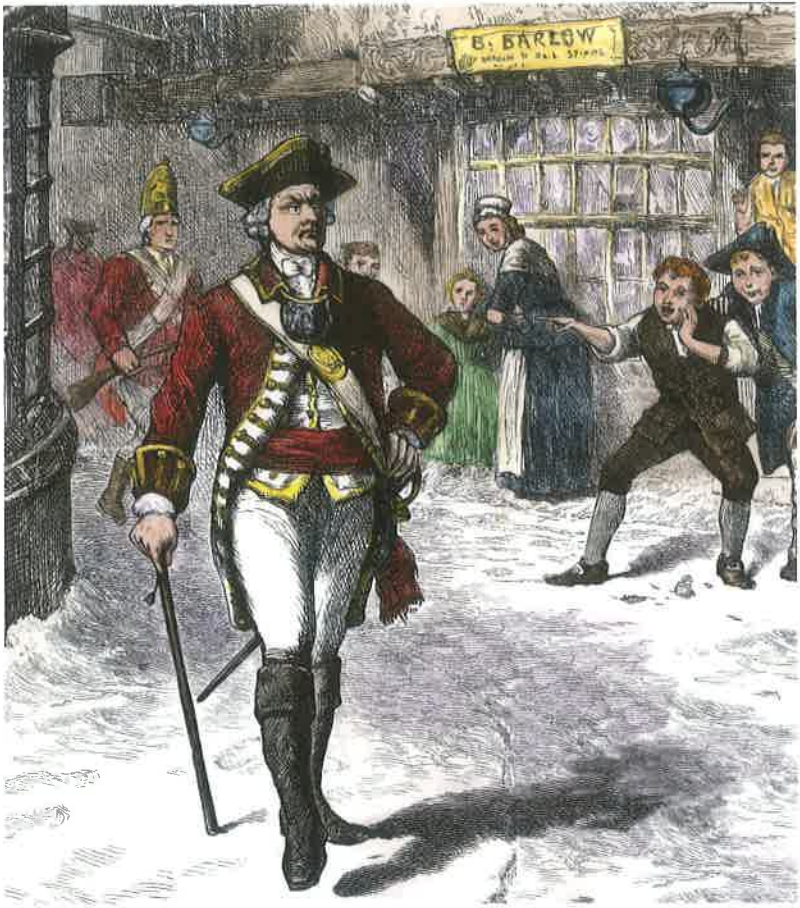
Leading the fight against the tax policies were American colonists known as Patriots. The Patriots claimed the only fair taxes were ones passed by elected colonial officials. Since the colonists had no voting representatives in Parliament, Patriots believed Parliament had no right to tax them. British leaders argued back that the Americans had “virtual representation.” They said that members of Parliament did what was best for the empire as a whole, and the Americans had to accept their actions.

Parliament quickly carried out its plan to keep taxing the colonists. The Townshend Acts of 1767 taxed such items as lead, paint, glass, and tea. In the colonies the new taxes led to more boycotts but no real violence—except in Boston. British officials sparked the protests after they seized a local merchant’s ship. After the protest ended, British Governor Francis Bernard of Massachusetts asked the British to send troops to Boston. The first of these Regulars, as the soldiers were called, arrived in September 1768.

BOSTON RIOT

From the beginning the British soldiers were met with hostility by many Boston residents. Soldiers were insulted or beaten on the streets. These actions angered the soldiers, who only wanted to be let alone to do their jobs. Some retaliated by harassing the colonists.

On the night of March 5, 1770, things came to a head. In front of the Customs House, a crowd of people were yelling and throwing rocks, sticks, and icy snowballs at several soldiers. Someone yelled,



British soldiers soon grew weary of abuse from Bostonians.

"Fire!" which the soldiers took as an order, firing on the crowd. Five Boston residents died, and six others were wounded.

Eight soldiers and their captain, Thomas Preston, were arrested and tried for murder. Ironically, Patriot lawyers John Adams and Josiah Quincy Jr. represented the soldiers. Preston and six soldiers were acquitted. The two soldiers found guilty of manslaughter were branded on their thumbs and sent back to England. The verdict did little to ease the tension between the Regulars and the colonists.

THE TEA ACT

As the American boycott went on, British merchants again demanded a repeal of taxes on the colonies. In 1770 King George's advisers met to discuss the issue. Some said Parliament should repeal all the taxes except one on tea. The king agreed.

The repeal of the other taxes seemed to satisfy many Americans, and the colonies were mostly calm until 1773. That year Parliament decided to help the East India Company, which imported tea from India to Great Britain. The Tea Act lowered the tax on tea and gave the company the sole right to sell tea in the colonies. British leaders thought the colonists would be happy with the act, because it allowed them to pay much less for tea than they had previously. But many colonists saw it as interference. Boston Patriots responded by throwing several hundred crates of East India tea into the harbor.

The "Boston Tea Party" infuriated King George and Lord Frederick North, the prime minister. The two men agreed that Massachusetts had to be punished. George shut down Boston harbor and limited local government power there. The king also

AMERICA'S FRIENDS

Not all members of Parliament opposed the Americans and their refusal to pay new taxes. One of America's greatest friends in Parliament was Isaac Barré. In 1765 he praised the Americans as "sons of liberty" filled with a "spirit of freedom." Another supporter was Edmund Burke, a member of Parliament who opposed the Coercive Acts. Burke could not see the point of passing new laws that would anger the colonies even more.

sent more troops to Boston. The British called these and other measures the Coercive Acts. They were meant to coerce the colonists to obey the king and Parliament.

To carry out the new laws and restore order, George named General Thomas Gage the governor of Massachusetts. Gage had served in America for many years and had an American wife. George trusted his view of the colonists. Gage believed the

Americans would not respect the British if the king allowed the colonists to do what they wanted.

The Coercive Acts, though, did not end the protests in America. The other colonies united behind Massachusetts, and all but Georgia sent delegates to the First Continental Congress in September 1774. The Congress stated that the colonists were still loyal to King George, but they opposed policies that denied them their freedom and rights.

Back in Britain merchants suffered as the Americans once again stopped buying their goods. But this time King George refused to give in and repeal the laws. To him, the New England colonists were now rebels. Before long all the Americans who challenged him would be.



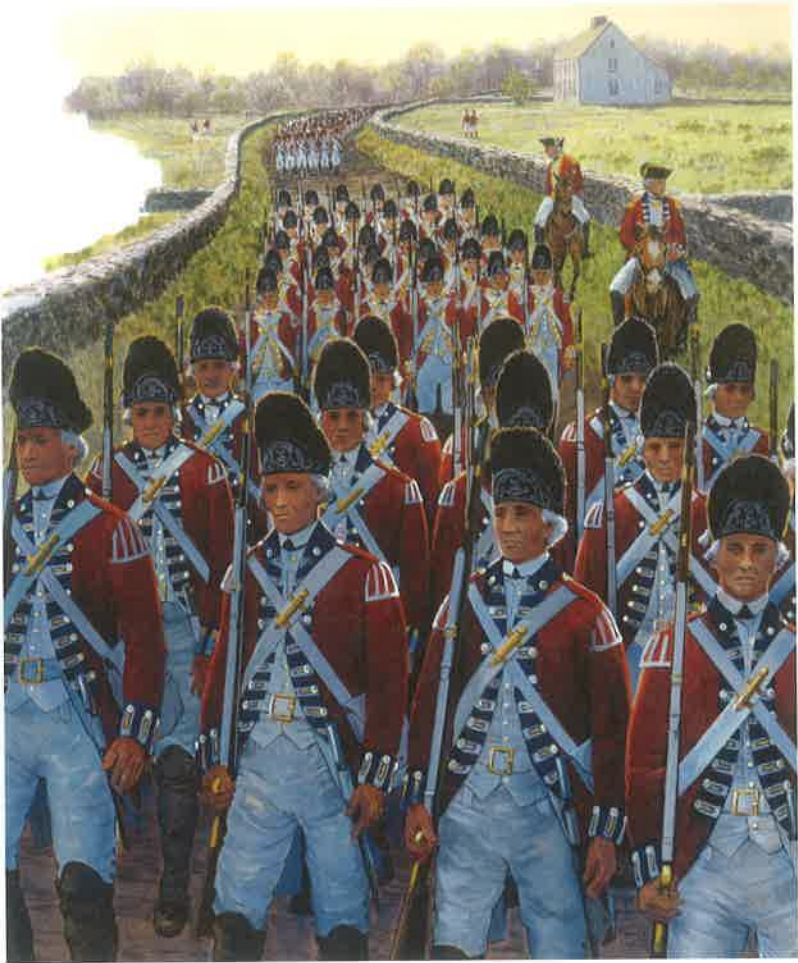
Lord North advised King George to deal firmly with the Americans.

A DISTANT WAR



By fall 1774 many Massachusetts militia members were already preparing to fight. In spring 1775 General Gage decided to stop the rebels. On the night of April 18, about 700 of his men left Boston for Concord, Massachusetts, to destroy the gunpowder and weapons stored there. But American spies knew about the march, and word quickly spread to neighboring towns.

Early the next morning, Lieutenant John Barker and the Regulars with him saw armed militiamen waiting for them in Lexington. Someone fired a shot—Barker was sure it was a



British soldiers marched to Concord to destroy gunpowder and weapons.

colonist. The Regulars fired in return. Barker and the other officers ordered their men to stop, but “the men were so wild they could hear no orders.” Finally the British marched on, leaving eight dead Americans behind them.

At 8 a.m. the British force reached Concord. The soldiers found just a small amount of rebel supplies before more firing erupted. Several British soldiers were killed, and the rest retreated toward Boston. More rebels poured through the trees and over the hills to

join in the attack. British reinforcements from Boston helped Barker and the Regulars get back to camp, but not before dozens were killed.

Word of Lexington and Concord reached London almost six weeks later. Some British citizens feared that battling the colonists could leave Britain open to attacks by France or Spain. But George was determined to press hard on the rebels, believing that once they "have felt a smart blow, they will submit."

BUNKER HILL

General Gage hoped that smart blow would come just outside Boston. By mid-June the British there were surrounded by thousands of rebel militia. But several hills outside the city were not defended. Gage hoped to seize the hills and use them to attack the Americans. He had recently received more troops, as well as three new generals—William Howe, Henry Clinton, and John Burgoyne. Each would play key roles in the battles to come.

The attack was scheduled for June 18. Late the night of June 16, General Clinton heard noises on a distant hill. Sunrise the next morning would reveal the source of that sound—Americans digging feverishly to build a redoubt before the British could attack. The small fort went up on Breed's Hill, but the fighting that soon began was called the Battle of Bunker Hill.

General Howe led the first wave of British soldiers. Weighed down by their heavy backpacks and supplies, the troops were shot by the Americans stationed at the redoubt and behind stone walls.



British soldiers fought in organized formation during the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Clinton soon arrived with more men. Also fighting was Lieutenant John Waller, a British Marine. He prepared his men for a charge as the rebel guns fired all around them. The British attacked the redoubt from all sides with their bayonets. Waller saw the redoubt “streaming with blood and strewed with dead and dying men.”

The bravery of Waller and others forced the Americans to flee. But the British victory at Bunker Hill came at a high price—more than 1,000 casualties, almost half of the men who fought that day. The news of the deaths and injuries stirred action in London. George and his advisers knew they needed a much bigger army. They hired Hessian troops from small kingdoms in Germany.

George also removed General Gage from his command, hoping Howe would take bolder action. Finally George officially declared that the colonies were in a state of rebellion, and the rebels were traitors to the crown.

VICTORY IN NEW YORK

The king and his generals decided New York, with its larger harbor, offered a better position for carrying out attacks to either the north or south. And it had more Loyalists than the rebel stronghold of Boston. Making the move, however, required more ships. The British did not leave Boston until March 1776. Howe went to Nova Scotia, Canada, before heading to New York. The Americans under George Washington left for New York as well.

The British were preparing for the largest overseas invasion in their history. Bunker Hill had convinced them that the Americans were more than unskilled farmers causing trouble. The Americans' declaration of independence in July 1776 confirmed it.

That summer about 35,000 British troops began massing on Staten Island. British Admiral Lord Richard Howe joined his brother, General William Howe, in New York. The Howes were preparing for war, but at the same time, London had given them the power to discuss surrender terms and possible pardons for the rebels. The brothers sent a message to George Washington to set up a meeting. Washington said he had no power to discuss political issues. The fighting would go on.



The British defeated the Americans at the Battle of Long Island.

British and Hessian troops began crossing over to Long Island August 22. William Howe hoped to go from there to Manhattan, the heart of New York City. But General Clinton came up with the plan for the Battle of Long Island. Scouting on horseback, Clinton saw a pass that would let the British sneak up on the Americans waiting for them in Brooklyn. British troops attacked the Americans from the front August 27, while Clinton led his men through the pass. The British had almost 400 casualties. But the Americans had at least 1,000, with 1,000 more taken prisoner.

With the battle won, the Howes once again tried to talk peace. In September Lord Richard Howe met with three members of the Continental Congress, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and

Edward Rutledge. Howe said King George was willing to grant pardons to the Americans if they would give up their quest for independence. But the Americans refused.

A NEW YEAR

By November General William Howe had pushed some of Washington's force into New Jersey after taking several thousand more prisoners. Meanwhile, Howe sent a small force under Lord Charles Cornwallis to pursue the rebels. But Howe was content to hold off a major battle until the next year. He knew General Washington's forces had shrunk greatly, and the remaining soldiers were losing hope.

To provide food for his troops for the winter, General Howe set up posts near the rich farmland of northern New Jersey. He then left for New York City. Several days after Christmas, Howe received bad news. On the morning of December 26, Washington had launched a daring raid on Trenton, which was held by a Hessian force. Hundreds of the German soldiers were killed or taken prisoner. Cornwallis, who had left New Jersey, was ordered back to confront the rebels. But early in January the rebels scored another victory at Princeton.

Howe did not seem overly troubled by the losses. But Colonel William Harcourt wrote home his own thoughts. He placed some blame on Howe for stationing the troops where he did. And the Americans, he said, "are now become a formidable enemy."

SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES



ack in London some members of Parliament still opposed the war. But most lawmakers supported King George and the war effort. Confidence remained high even as rumors reached the city that the French were preparing for war. France, the British knew, was already sending supplies to the rebels.

In New York General William Howe made plans for his next campaign—an attack on the rebel capital of Philadelphia. In July 1777 Howe put about 15,000 men on ships and left New York to sail into Chesapeake Bay. The forces landed in northern Maryland

and then began their march toward Philadelphia. The first action of the campaign came September 11 at Brandywine Creek in Pennsylvania. Howe split his forces, attacking with a smaller force from the front while sending a larger force to circle around the Americans and attack from the rear. The Americans suffered heavy losses. By the end of September, Howe's men triumphantly entered Philadelphia.



General William Howe led the British forces in the colonies.

Many of the British troops were based in nearby Germantown. In early October Howe heard the noise of battle and rode to investigate. He saw some of his men retreating. "For shame, light infantry," the general called. "I never saw you retreat before." Howe thought his men faced only an American scouting party. Instead, Washington had launched a major attack from several directions.

Some British forces took cover in a stone house close to the main British camp. They held off the Americans long enough for reinforcements to arrive. The battle was fought in a thick fog, adding to the smoke from the cannons. In the confusion some



British soldiers took cover in the Chew house during the Battle of Germantown.

Americans fired at their own troops. Despite suffering more than 500 casualties, the British troops beat back the American attack.

SARATOGA

At almost the same time, several hundred miles away, John Burgoyne was trying to avoid a disaster. Burgoyne had started his campaign from Canada with high spirits, boosted by a quick victory at Fort Ticonderoga in July. But that success was quickly followed by a defeat outside Bennington, Vermont. Adding to his problems, Burgoyne found it harder to get supplies the farther he went from Canada. The large number of Loyalist forces he expected to join his army never appeared. And Burgoyne was still counting on help from General Howe—not realizing it would never come.

Meanwhile, an American army under Horatio Gates was gathered outside Saratoga, waiting for Burgoyne. The British troops were confident of victory. The Americans, though, did not run when the two armies met September 19. Burgoyne's army gained control of the area, but suffered twice as many casualties as the Americans.

In the following weeks, Burgoyne saw American sharpshooters pick off his troops and watched his food supplies shrink. He learned that some of Clinton's troops were heading north from New York. Burgoyne hoped he could meet up with Clinton, but his men would have to fight their way out of Saratoga. He made a desperate attack October 7 on the larger American forces.

The Americans swarmed ahead and captured British artillery. Over the next several days, more rebel reinforcements reached Saratoga. Burgoyne knew he was defeated. He surrendered to Gates with almost 6,000 of his men.

WHAT NEXT?

The news from Saratoga jolted the king and his aides. "You cannot conquer America," Parliament member Lord Chatham told his fellow lawmakers. "If I were an American ... while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms—never! Never! Never!"

The report from Saratoga also stirred the French. In February 1778 they signed a treaty of alliance with the Americans. Spain would later side with the Americans as well. King George prepared to fight France, his country's longtime enemy. General Clinton



Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga was a major blow to the British.

replaced William Howe as the commander in the colonies, and the British forces in Philadelphia were sent to New York.

The news from France also inspired thousands of British men to join the military. Meanwhile, three British officials traveled to Philadelphia to offer peace one last time. They were Frederick Howard, Earl of Carlisle; William Eden; and George Johnstone. The men promised if the Americans rejected independence, the British would pull out all of their troops, grant free trade, and allow American representatives in Parliament, among other things. But the rebels refused the offer. The war would go on, with the British now facing a much larger and more powerful enemy.

THE WAR IS LOST



With the failure of the peace talks, the British pursued a new plan.

The fighting would shift to the southern colonies, where the British counted on military aid from Loyalists.

Clinton sent a force of 3,500 soldiers to Georgia. The capital, Savannah, fell to the British at the end of 1778, and soon the whole colony came under royal control. The next British target was Charleston, South Carolina. Clinton led another force there at the end of 1779 and prepared for a siege that began the next February. The siege lasted several weeks, with both sides turning cannons on

each other. American commander Benjamin Lincoln surrendered May 12. About 5,000 Americans were taken prisoner.

WAR IN THE CAROLINAS

After taking Charleston, Clinton returned to New York, leaving Lord Cornwallis in charge of the Carolina forces. Reporting to Cornwallis was cavalry officer Banastre Tarleton. At Waxhaws, an area near the North Carolina border, Tarleton gave rebel commander Abraham Buford a chance to surrender before the British attacked. Buford refused.

The hard-charging British cavalry stunned the Americans. Some rebels tried to surrender, but Tarleton and his men fought on.

Riding with Tarleton were Loyalist troops. Loyalists guarded newly built forts, and at times the only British on the battlefield were officers guiding Loyalist forces. The knowledge of local Americans also helped in preparing for battle. In August 1780 Cornwallis faced a large rebel force at Camden, South Carolina. His Loyalist sources told him how to take advantage of swamps in the area. Cornwallis' infantry began the attack, and the cavalry finished off the Americans. The rebels quickly fled, but not before suffering almost 2,000 casualties.

South Carolina seemed to be firmly under British control, although rebel raiders did cause trouble. France and Spain had not yet been able to give the Americans effective help. They were more concerned with acquiring British lands in other parts of the world.



The British scored a victory at Camden, South Carolina, in 1780.

Cornwallis next moved into North Carolina, but he didn't stay long. Behind him a rebel force surrounded Loyalist troops at Kings Mountain, South Carolina. The Americans fired from behind trees and ran for cover whenever the British charged. The British had about 300 men dead or wounded and another 700 captured. The Americans had fewer than 100 casualties. The loss forced Cornwallis to retreat from North Carolina.

Back in South Carolina by the end of October, Cornwallis and his men suffered miserably. Food and medical supplies were hard to find. The men wore ragged clothes and slept in log huts. Meanwhile, across South Carolina, Loyalist support seemed to shrink as the rebels grew stronger. Cornwallis set up camp for several months, planning another assault on North Carolina.

CAROLINA LOSSES

The year 1781 began with bad news for Cornwallis. He had sent out Tarleton to hunt for a rebel force led by Daniel Morgan. The American set up a defense at a spot in South Carolina called the Cowpens. Tarleton, as usual, quickly thrust his men into battle, expecting the Americans to retreat. Instead, Morgan expertly moved his infantry and cavalry to hold off each British attack. Realizing they were defeated, most of the British surrendered, although Tarleton managed to escape.

Cornwallis set off after the Americans, chasing them into North Carolina. Hoping to move quickly, he left behind his tents and most of his supply wagons. American soldiers had been through the area already, picking it clean of supplies. The lack of available food weakened Cornwallis' army.

By March 1781 the American force in the Carolinas numbered around 4,500, about double the number of Cornwallis' troops. Led by General Nathanael Greene, the rebels made a stand at Guilford Courthouse. The Americans set up three lines of defense, as they had at the Cowpens. Cornwallis had his horse shot out from under him. He took another and rode dangerously close to the enemy lines. A sergeant took hold of the horse, warning the general that he was in danger of being captured or killed.

Cornwallis made it back safely to his troops, but the battle did not go well. At one point the general ordered his artillery to fire grapeshot—tiny metal balls packed into a shell. The shot was designed to cut down many soldiers at once, but with soldiers

packed so close together, Regulars as well as rebels took the hits. The British finally forced the Americans to flee, but suffered many casualties.

By April Cornwallis was thinking of taking his men to Virginia. He wanted to defeat the rebels there because from Virginia, the Americans could supply their forces to the south. And as long as the rebels fought effectively in the Carolinas, the British would never gain the full support of the residents there.

Clinton had been thinking about Virginia too. A British force under Benedict Arnold had arrived there in December 1780. They destroyed supplies and generally created terror. Another 4,200 British troops soon followed them, and when Cornwallis arrived in the spring, he brought about 1,500 more.



General Cornwallis scored a costly win at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

LAST GASP

Cornwallis had acted on his own in leaving the Carolinas for Virginia. Clinton feared that leaving the region would expose Charleston and Georgia to rebel attacks. As 1781 went on, the two generals exchanged letters, with Cornwallis growing upset with Clinton's requests. In June Clinton asked Cornwallis to send troops to New York because he feared an attack there. Another letter told Cornwallis to plan a raid on Philadelphia, but then Clinton told him to forget that plan. Finally Clinton told him to build a base in Virginia that could serve as a port for the British navy. Cornwallis did so at Yorktown.

Back in New York, Clinton worried about the Americans' plans. The attack on New York that he feared never came. Instead, a note from Cornwallis sent August 31 told the story: "There are between 30 and 40 sail within the capes, mostly ships of war, and some of them very large." A French naval fleet had reached Virginia. A small rebel land force was also nearby. Fearing heavy losses if he decided to fight his way out, Cornwallis decided to stay. He counted on reinforcements from Clinton to help him escape.

Clinton did send warships to confront the French. But the warships didn't repel the French fleet. And the only troops that reached Virginia were a combined American and French force of more than 10,000. Cornwallis was outnumbered, with no way to escape. In late September the rebels began a siege of Yorktown that lasted several weeks. By October 9 rebel cannons pounded the British positions, and the Americans seized two redoubts.

Cornwallis knew he had lost and made the decision to surrender. At the surrender ceremony October 19, Cornwallis said he didn't feel well enough to attend, sending General Charles O'Hara in his place. As O'Hara led the defeated soldiers away, their band played the song "The World Turned Upside Down." The song expressed what the soldiers must have felt—shock that their great army had lost to a group of rebels.

In late November news of the defeat reached London. Lord North threw out his arms and shouted, "O God! It is all over!" But King George was not ready to quit. Early in 1782 Clinton received word that the war would continue—but without any additional reinforcements.

George, however, was increasingly alone in wanting to fight on. Many members of Parliament were tired of spending money and losing men on what seemed a lost cause. The British and Americans began peace talks. When the Treaty of Paris was signed September 3, 1783, George had to accept the loss of this distant, rich part of his empire.

George remained king of Great Britain until 1820, although mental illness made him less active in government for most of those years. George had tried to assert his power, believing that his father and grandfather had given too much control to Parliament. But in the end his actions not only lost the American colonies, they also gave even more power to Parliament.

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