

For Crown or Colony? Timeline

Educator's Timeline of Historical Events Before, During, and After "For Crown or Colony?"

February 10, 1763—The French and Indian War, which is known as the Seven Years War in the American colonies, ends with the Treaty of Paris, leaving Britain victorious over France but saddled with a huge war debt.

April 5, 1764—The British Parliament enacts the Sugar Act—the first of several unpopular attempts to raise revenues from the colonies through taxes on imported goods.

June 29, 1767—Parliament enacts the Townshend Acts (or Townshend Duties), which impose taxes on paper, paints, glass, and tea. Colonists angry at “taxation without representation” boycott these British goods and harass the customs officials charged with enforcement of the duties.

October 1, 1768—A troop of British soldiers arrive in Boston to maintain public peace and order, as well as enforce British tax laws. Many colonists in Boston treat the soldiers as though they are an invading army, and regularly harass them.

February 22, 1770—When a group of colonists protests at the home of Loyalist Ebenezer Richardson, a small riot breaks out and Richardson fires into the crowd, wounding an eleven year-old boy named Christopher Seider. Seider dies later that evening.

February 26, 1770—Christopher Seider's funeral is held. Seider is proclaimed a martyr for liberty and a victim of tyranny. Seider's long funeral procession increased tensions with the British soldiers stationed in Boston.

March 2, 1770—Colonists and British soldiers get into a brawl at John Gray's ropewalk (a ropemaking facility) in Boston.

March 5, 1770—A wigmaker's apprentice insults a British officer, and in retaliation, a soldier named Hugh White smacks the apprentice on the side of the head with his musket butt. Several hours later, a crowd of colonists gather around White near the Boston Customs House, throwing snowballs, ice, and oyster shells. More soldiers are sent to help White, the crowd continues to throw snowball and wave sticks, someone yells “Fire!” and the soldiers shoot into the crowd. Five colonists are killed. Although the

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soldiers plead self-defense, the incident becomes known as “The Boston Massacre” and becomes a major rallying point for Patriotic colonists.

March 6, 1770—Captain Thomas Preston, commander of the British soldiers at the Boston Massacre, is arrested and sent to jail. Citizens of Boston gather in Faneuil Hall to call for the immediate removal of all British troops from the city. John Adams and Josiah Quincy agree to defend Captain Preston and the soldiers.

March 8, 1770—Four victims of the massacre are buried. All shops in Boston are closed. Over 10,000 mourners participated in the funeral procession.

March 12, 1770—Captain Preston gives a deposition to a Boston court on the events of March 5.

March 14, 1770—Captain Preston and eight British soldiers are indicted for murder for their roles in the Massacre.

September 7, 1770—Captain Preston and the soldiers are formally arraigned on charges of murder. Both Preston and the soldiers plead “not guilty.”

October 24-30, 1770—Captain Preston’s trial takes place. Preston is acquitted from all charges after the evidence fails to establish he ordered the soldiers to fire.

November 27-December 5, 1770—Six of the soldiers are acquitted on all charges. Two of the soldiers are convicted of manslaughter.

December 14, 1770—The two convicted soldiers have their thumbs branded as punishment for their roles in the Massacre.

December 16, 1773—Protesting Parliament’s recently enacted Tea Act, which gives the British East India Company a virtual monopoly on tea in the colonies, Boston Patriot merchants disguised as Indians throw crates of tea into Boston Harbor in what comes to be known as “The Boston Tea Party.”

June 2, 1774 – The British declare martial law in Massachusetts.

October 26, 1774—In preparation for possible confrontation with the British, colonists form local militias known as Minutemen. They are called this for their ability to be ready for battle “at a minute’s notice.”

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April 19, 1775—The Revolutionary War officially begins when Massachusetts Minutemen confront British troops at the Battles of Lexington and Concord.

May 10, 1775—American troops surprise the British at Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain, capturing the fort without firing a shot.

June 14, 1775—The Continental Congress establishes the Continental Army, appointing George Washington as its Commander-in-Chief the next day.

June 17, 1775—Despite suffering heavy casualties, British troops defeat the Americans at the Battle of Bunker (actually Breed's) Hill in Boston.

August 22, 1775—King George III officially declares the American Colonies to be in a state of open rebellion.

November 14, 1775—Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, offers freedom to enslaved people or indentured servants who agree to fight against the Patriots.

March 17, 1776—British forces evacuate Boston after cannons captured by the Americans at Fort Ticonderoga are hauled overland 300 miles and installed in positions overlooking Boston harbor.

July 4, 1776—The Continental Congress approves the Declaration of Independence and separates the colonies from the British Empire.

August 27, 1776—Washington's army is forced to retreat after being defeated by British and Hessian mercenary troops in the Battle of Long Island—the largest single engagement of the war. The British subsequently capture New York City, which will remain in their hands until the end of the war.

December 25, 1776—After retreating through New Jersey, Washington's army crosses the Delaware River on Christmas Eve, taking Hessian forces at Trenton by surprise. This and the subsequent American victory at Princeton on January 3, 1777, do much to restore American hope after earlier defeats.

September 19, 1777—American forces win the First Battle of Saratoga. The French take notice of the growing possibility of American victory over the British—their own traditional enemy.

May 4, 1778—The Continental Congress ratifies the Treaty of Alliance with France.

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December 1778—The British occupy Savannah, Georgia. Frustrated by their inability to destroy Washington's Continental Army in the North, the British concentrate their efforts in the southern colonies, fighting against a successful guerilla campaign led by American generals Daniel Morgan and Nathaniel Green.

July 9, 1778—The Continental Congress approves the Articles of Confederation.

October 19, 1781—Cornered by American and French forces on land and blockaded by French warships at sea, British General Lord Cornwallis surrenders his army to Washington. Although peace is not officially ratified, this marks the end of the American Revolution.

January 14, 1784—The definitive articles of the Peace of Paris are ratified, formally establishing peace between the British Empire and the United States of America.