

For Crown or Colony? Full Historical Background

I. The Roots of Rebellion: The French and Indian War

When, in 1776, the people of the thirteen colonies declared independence from Britain and formed the United States, they transformed both the history and the geography of North America. To most people in the middle of the eighteenth century, the union of Britain's North American colonies into a single nation would have seemed almost inconceivable. The thirteen colonies that would later form the United States—Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia—were all separate. There was little unity between them, and few institutions to foster it. In 1754 Benjamin Franklin and others put forward the Albany Plan, for a union of colonies to conduct defense and Indian affairs, but this came to nothing. Most colonies had closer, more regular ties with Britain than they had with each other, and to leading colonists the British connection seemed largely beneficial. The sparks of colonial rebellion were generated by British policies and colonists' responses to them after the French and Indian War.

Over the first half of the eighteenth century, the British government had rarely intervened in colonial business. It usually left governors and provincial assemblies to manage the colonies for themselves. For decades colonial elites had controlled the taxation and administration of their colonies. Still, the continent's increasingly important role in overseas trade and in Britain's rivalries with other European powers caused Britain's interest in the colonies to grow. The war of 1754 to 1763—its achievements and its consequences—would reshape British views of its colonial empire and its colonists' views of the mother country.



American colonists were repeatedly embroiled in wars, not usually of their own making, for which they had to raise armies and pay taxes. Often arising out of European concerns, these wars nevertheless involved North American territory. Colonists took pride in their “English liberties” —voting for representatives, protection from arbitrary power, common law rights such as that to trial by jury—and were content enough to support wars against France or Spain, which they saw as “tyrannies” unblest by such privileges. Their support for war was greatest when colonial and British ambitions coincided. The 1754 peace pact reached six years earlier by Britain and France was broken by American events. France saw Virginia settlers and Pennsylvania traders, who were pushing west across the Appalachian mountains, as a threat to its territorial interests. When the French tried to build forts in the Ohio Valley, British and colonial governments warned them off. In western Pennsylvania in 1754, a Virginia militia unit under a young colonel named George Washington blundered into a skirmish with French troops, and touched off a war that would spread to Europe, India, and the Caribbean, as well as North America.

The French and Indian War, as it was known in America, was successful for Britain and its American colonies, but also exposed disagreements between them. Colonists disliked having British troops “quartered” (compulsorily billeted) in their homes. The British did not view colonists as their equals; they looked down on colonial militias as less effective than their own

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regular soldiers, because the militias did not embody what they believed to be proper social subordination. Most British officers were aristocrats and gentlemen who commanded soldiers drawn from among the poor and disadvantaged. Many colonial militia units reflected the greater democracy of New World settlements, with much less social distance between officers and men.

The war also spurred British political interest in the colonies, and a shift toward greater intervention in colonial affairs. It had been costly, and Britain looked to the colonies to foot part of the bill. The end of the war also led to an economic downturn in the colonies. The slump was worst in Boston, which had sunk into an economic stagnation that the war had only temporarily alleviated. Its population ceased to grow around 1750, and some of its trade was drawn away by other ports, especially the rapidly growing towns of Philadelphia and New York. Boston was thrown into a severe postwar depression as work disappeared and many people found themselves without employment.

“For Crown or Colony?” Connections:

- Nat's older brother Christopher fought in the French and Indian War
- Mr. Edes describes the debt facing both Great Britain and colonists

II. Conflict Grows Between Crown and Colony

The French and Indian War also laid a heavy financial burden on Britain. The government of prime minister William Pitt had spent lavishly and raised taxes to conduct the fighting in the late 1750s. The new prime minister, George Grenville, faced enormous debts, as well as expenditures for the navy, army, and officials essential to keeping Britain's newly expanded empire intact. Reluctant to raise taxes further at home, Grenville's unstable administration looked to the American colonies to provide some of the necessary revenues. Parliamentary efforts to levy taxes in the colonies met with repeated resistance. Between 1765 and 1775, successive crises, each more serious than the last, drew increasing numbers of people from all levels of American society into a struggle that would eventually lead to independence. Animating this struggle was a growing belief that the British intended to remove their “liberties” and subject them to the tyranny of arbitrary government—to “enslave” them, as many colonists started to say.

Grenville began his effort to increase revenues from the colonies with the Sugar Act of 1764, designed to end the notoriously inefficient enforcement of the navigation laws. Since 1733 there had been a high duty imposed on molasses imported to North America from foreign colonies, but none on molasses from British colonies. Smuggling was easy and revenues suffered. The Sugar Act imposed a new, low duty on imported molasses, making smuggling less lucrative, and



Source: National Museum of American History
Smithsonian Institution, Behring Center

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provided for more customs officers to be sent to America to enforce the law.

Grenville's next step ignited a serious crisis. In the Stamp Act of 1765 he extended to the colonies a measure already used in Britain: the requirement that a stamp be purchased for many documents and printed items (land titles, contracts, court documents, playing cards, books and newspapers). The tax had to be paid in hard currency, difficult to come by in the economic slump. The money raised would remain in the colonies to pay for troops and administration, but it would be controlled by colonial governors, not the elected assemblies. The Stamp Act provoked widespread anger because it affected almost everyone. Apprentices signing indentures, young couples getting married, merchants making contracts, people making wills, buying or selling land or the enslaved, newspaper readers—all would have to pay the new tax. The act also hit at the power of colonial political elites. Political instability in Britain led to the ousting of Grenville, and to the repeal of the Stamp Act early in 1766. Parliament, however, emphasized in a Declaratory Act that it retained the right to “make laws and statutes . . . to bind the colonies and people of America . . . in all cases whatsoever.” Although this act contained no specific measures, its spirit paved the way for further conflicts with the colonies.

In 1767 Parliament and a new chancellor of the exchequer, Charles Townshend, tried to tax the colonies again, both to raise money and to exercise parliamentary supremacy. Believing that colonists had rejected the Stamp Act because it was an “internal” tax, collected within the colonies themselves, Townshend sought to levy “external” taxes on goods brought into the colonies. The Revenue Act of 1767 (the “Townshend Duties” or “Townshend Acts”) taxed paint, paper, lead, glass, and tea as they reached America. Colonists regarded the distinction between internal and external taxes as invalid, so these duties again provoked fierce opposition.

Colonists objected to British taxes because without representation in Parliament they had no say in levying them, and because they saw taxation as part of a broader British plan to curb their liberties. Further resentment arose when Britain suspended the New York assembly after it refused to vote for supplies for British troops in the province, and then passed a Quartering Act obliging New Yorkers to board soldiers in their houses when required. The British also established a board of commissioners in Boston to run the colonial customs service, and in 1768 posted two regiments of troops to Boston to protect the commission.

Prominent in the arguments over British policy were colonial political leaders, who gathered in the provincial assemblies to debate what action to take. In 1765 the Stamp Act provoked prompt opposition. In June, the Virginia House of Burgesses passed strongly worded resolutions against the act, and eight other colonial assemblies followed suit. In October, official delegations from nine colonies gathered in New York City for a Stamp Act Congress, which adopted resolutions condemning the measure, called for a boycott of British goods, and sent petitions to Parliament and an address to the king.

Colonists initially claimed that Parliament could not tax them for revenue because they were not represented in the House of Commons. Some pamphleteers came to suggest that Parliament might have no authority in the colonies, and that the colonial assemblies governed in its place,

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under the direct authority of the king. But this theory contradicted the British constitutional principle that the king ruled in and through Parliament and held no authority separate from it. Gradually, pamphleteers undermined virtually everything colonists had once believed about their relationship with Britain, reaching increasingly radical conclusions, so that by 1774 Thomas Jefferson could suggest that by migrating to the colonies settlers had placed themselves beyond the sovereignty of Parliament. Jefferson and like-minded colonial leaders were but a few steps short of regarding the American colonies as independent from Britain.

Yet Jefferson and his fellow pamphleteers did not conduct political arguments in a vacuum. Attitudes toward Britain became radicalized in light of events acted out on the colonies' streets, farmlands, and households, as well as in the colonial assemblies. British taxes and British troops intruded on the lives of ordinary men and women. Crowd action had long been an integral part of colonial life. Now women and men deployed these traditions against the symbols of British rule. In New York alone, fifty-seven crowd risings took place between 1764 and 1775, and there were numerous similar episodes elsewhere. As popular crowds joined political elites in protesting British policy, they asserted their own sense of rights and justice, and helped turn protest into resistance.

Often protesters confined themselves to denouncing the British ministry, the Stamp Act, and its local agent. But protestors also touched on social divisions. A second Stamp Act riot on August 26 targeted symbols of wealth, culminating in a furious attack on the home of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson. The crowd ransacked the house, and with considerable effort demolished the cupola that had made it one of the town's grandest residences. The destruction marked popular resentment, not just about British policy, but also at the power and privilege colonial rule gave to a few men. Popular leaders were alarmed at the crowd's excesses on August 26, and tried to avoid further attacks on symbols of wealth. But they could not prevent social differences and tensions from finding expression in cities including New York and Charleston.

Opposition to the Stamp Act produced an unprecedented degree of political organization among colonists. Groups with names such as "Sons of Liberty" emerged in several towns and cities, and in later crises the name became a generic term for similar groups that provided the nucleus of a Revolutionary movement. Their members came from a variety of backgrounds and included many artisans. Wealthy merchants also protested, and made up an important segment of the Revolutionary leadership. Most famous was the Boston merchant and smuggler John Hancock. Finally, there were men who were not wealthy, but who did not (as the artisans did) work with their hands for a living, such as physicians, ship captains, and tavern keepers. As such men devoted themselves to building popular resistance to British authority, they started to transform American political life.

Colonists took Parliament's repeal of the Stamp Act early in 1766 as a sign that their protests had been successful, so when the Townshend Duties were enacted in 1767, protest resumed, lasting this time for over two years. Campaigners in the main ports organized non-importation agreements binding merchants not to purchase goods from Britain. Violators were publicly

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denounced as “Enemies to their Country,” tarred and feathered, or had their houses daubed with the contents of cesspits. Symbols of wealth were again targets. Abstaining from imported products or fashions became a mark of Patriotic willingness to give up luxuries for the public good. Women as well as men supported the boycotts, and their support became important Patriotic symbols. They organized spinning bees to produce yarn for cloth that would substitute for British textiles, and announced their refusal to purchase or drink the tea imported by traders. For women usually barred from a formal public role, the Patriotic cause offered an opening into political events, and some claimed that their support for it should earn them political rights.

Artisans were the strongest supporters of non-importation, because it increased the demand for locally-made goods, a boon for them at a time of depression. In 1770, after the boycott collapsed and this demand diminished, many small artisans ended up in debtor’s prison. But artisans were not just protecting their material self-interest. They were also asserting a right to participate in political decisions. Nothing could be “more flagrantly wrong,” said one New Yorker, “than the assertion of some of our mercantile dons, that the Mechanics have no right to give their Sentiments.”

In Boston, resentments came to a head as demonstrations against the Townshend Duties continued. On February 22, 1770, a customs official killed an eleven-year old boy when he fired his gun at some rioters. The boy’s funeral was observed throughout the town. Feelings ran high. Local traders and British soldiers swapped insults and brawled as some of the latter looked for casual work, and then on March 5, 1770, a crowd confronted a detachment of troops guarding the customs house on King Street, throwing snowballs and brickbats at them. Frightened by what seemed to be a bloodthirsty mob, the soldiers retaliated. The troops opened fire, killing four Bostonians and fatally wounding a fifth. All five were laboring men: Crispus Attucks, a half-Indian, half-African sailor; Patrick Carr, an Irish journeyman leathermaker; Samuel Gray, a ropemaker; Samuel Maverick, an ivory turner’s apprentice; and James Caldwell, a ship’s mate.



Source: Library of Congress Online, Prints and Photographs Division, <http://www.loc.gov>

Bostonians were incensed at what they soon came to call the “Boston Massacre,” and radical propaganda ensured that the Massacre would remain firmly lodged in public memory. Paul Revere’s engraving of the scene, widely copied and distributed, became the most familiar depiction of the event. Showing an orderly rank of Redcoats discharging their muskets into the crowd, Revere presented the massacre not as the result of panic, but as a deliberate act of murder by the British army.

In the short run the incident marked the end of a phase in the resistance to British policies. Within months Britain removed its troops from the town of Boston to Castle Island in Boston Harbor and also repealed most of the Townshend Duties. With the radicals already

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divided, the non-importation movement collapsed. In time, though, the Boston Massacre came to seem a turning point in the conflict with Britain. For the next thirteen years, Boston observed March 5 as a day of public mourning. Radicals used the event to rebuild popular opposition to British rule. The Massacre's victims came to be viewed as the first martyrs of a Revolutionary cause, and the fact that they were laborers built support for that cause among the poor. An event that had grown out of the non-importation movement and reflected divisions in Boston society, instead became a basis for building a united coalition.

“For Crown or Colony?” Connections:

- Nat arrives in Boston during the occupation by British troops
- Nat encounters non-importation and non-consumption protests organized by the Sons and Daughters of Liberty
- Nat learns about the Townshend Acts that provoked the protests
- Royce witnesses the Seider murder and both Nat and Royce attend the Seider funeral which begins at the Liberty Tree
- Theophilus Lillie violates the non-importation agreement and is branded an “Enemy of His Country” in the Gazette
- Mrs. Edes organizes a spinning bee, promotes homespun, and refuses to drink imported tea
- Nat learns about the brawl at Gray’s ropewalk which took place a few days before the Boston Massacre
- Nat is an eyewitness to the confrontation between an angry Boston crowd and detachment of troops in front of the Custom-House that is known as the Boston Massacre

III. Resistance Becomes Revolution

Although concerted opposition to Britain receded, attacks on customs officers and other officials continued sporadically. These protests chiefly involved urban residents, not people in the countryside. This pattern changed during a further, still more serious imperial crisis, which began in 1773 with Parliament’s passage of the Tea Act. Protest again began in the towns, but this time it spread to rural regions, where the vast majority of colonists lived. When rural people became engaged in the struggle, resistance turned to Revolution.

The Tea Act was not intended as a colonial taxation measure. Parliament was trying to solve the financial troubles of the British East India Company, permitting it to raise money by selling tea directly to America through chosen agents in each colonial port. Its prices would be low enough that, even after paying the Townshend Duty on tea (which the act cut in half), the company could undercut other merchants who had, as John Adams put it, “honestly smuggled” their tea from Holland.

The Act should have made everyone happy: Britain would get taxes, the East India Company would get revenue, and colonists would get cheap tea. Instead, it reignited American outrage at British policy. Colonists spurned the attempt to bribe them into accepting the tax on tea.

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Charleston landed its first cargo of tea, but Philadelphia and New York refused to let tea ships even enter their harbors. In Boston in November 1773, the first vessels carrying tea docked because Thomas Hutchinson, now governor (and whose sons were Boston agents for the East India Company), insisted that the cargo should land and the tea duty be paid. Daylong protest meetings of “the whole Body of the People” convened, choosing leaders to persuade Hutchinson to desist. Talks broke down. On the night of December 16, parties of Patriot leaders and workingmen boarded the ships and dumped the tea overboard into the harbor. This “Boston Tea Party” became a powerful emblem of American resistance. They were shifting from being “freeborn Englishmen” to becoming “American freemen.”

Britain’s response to the Bostonians’ destruction of a valuable tea cargo was severe. Parliament passed four measures, which colonists called the Coercive or Intolerable Acts. These closed Boston harbor until the town paid for the tea, cutting off Boston’s main source of livelihood; altered Massachusetts’ government, revoking the 1691 charter that had given the colony the unique privilege of electing its own council, and limiting town meetings to one each year for the election of local officers; allowed British officials accused of wrongdoing to face trial in another province, or in Britain itself, away from Boston’s charged atmosphere; and made it easy for the British to billet troops in colonial homes. Soon after the Coercive Acts were announced, in May 1774, Thomas Gage, the general in charge of Britain’s army in America, replaced Hutchinson as governor and Gage’s troops reoccupied Boston.

Britain meant to show that it would retreat no further in the face of American protests, and would restore its authority in the colonies. But the Coercive Acts had exactly the opposite effect, redoubling the radical movement in Boston. Many Bostonians once sympathetic to the Crown began to change their views. More important, the British measures spread colonial resistance from town to countryside far more effectively than the Boston Committee of Correspondence had managed. By interfering with town meetings and county courts, the Coercive Acts carried Britain’s quarrel with Boston to every corner of Massachusetts. Rural people, many of whom had been reluctant to oppose British policies, now acted to prevent the new measures from taking effect. In doing so, they turned their province away from the path of submission to royal authority and onto the road to Revolution.

Most significant of all, the Coercive Acts prompted popular action in other colonies too. By late 1774 much of New England was united behind Massachusetts. So was white Virginia where, despite the evangelical challenge to its leadership since the Great Awakening, the planter class remained firmly in control. Having suffered from weak tobacco prices in the 1760s and indebtedness to British merchants, many Virginia planters were reconsidering the benefits of being part of the British empire and coming to see colonial status as a disadvantage. Meanwhile, the colony’s popular leaders, such as Patrick Henry, forged links between the gentry and others in the population, denouncing “luxury” and proclaiming the “virtue” of the Patriot cause. From 1774 to mid-1776 the combination of New Englanders and Virginia gentlemen led a drive for strong measures against Britain that would forge a path to independence.

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These leaders found their forum in two Continental Congresses, formed of representatives from the different colonies gathered to resist British policies. Although inter-colonial cooperation had been attempted in response to the Stamp Act, it was less far-reaching than this. The first Continental Congress met in Philadelphia for six weeks in the autumn of 1774, and the second in May 1775. Convened to rally to the aid of Massachusetts, delegates came to the first congress from twelve, then thirteen colonies. They included participants in popular protests, such as artisan members of the Charleston Sons of Liberty who were among South Carolina's delegation. Led by radicals keen to make the rest of America see that they shared Massachusetts' problems, this congress passed the Continental Association, a measure that decreed a complete boycott of European products and called for the creation of committees throughout the colonies to enforce it.

Before the Second Continental Congress could meet, fighting with Britain broke out in Massachusetts. During the fall and winter of 1774–1775, New Englanders had collected weapons and organized their town militias to defend their extralegal committees and conventions. In September 1774, a mere rumor that British troops had left Boston to capture a provincial powder store set thousands of rural Massachusetts men marching eastward until they could be recalled. An observer reported women in their houses along the way “making Cartridges, [and] running Bullets . . . animating their Husbands and Sons to fight for their Liberties.” It was a sign of what would come.

In occupied Boston a committee of artisans watched troop movements closely. The extralegal provincial congress began planning to raise an army of fifteen thousand men. But this army still did not exist when, on the night of April 18-19, 1775, General Gage dispatched troops to capture militia supplies hidden at Concord, some eighteen miles inland. The artisans' committee sent Paul Revere and other riders to warn the interior. When the British detachment reached Lexington, the town's militia was drawn up on the green to face it. They probably intended only a symbolic confrontation, but someone's gun went off, fire was exchanged, and soon eight militiamen were dead. The British troops marched on, completed their task at Concord, and set out back to Boston. Their outward march had been easy, but the return was not. Farmers and workmen rallied from the surrounding towns and attacked the British from the fields and woods along their route, scoring heavy casualties. Once the British had reached Boston, militia units—citizen-soldiers, poorly trained, and mostly without uniforms or good weapons—threw up siege lines around the city and kept the army penned up there.

In June the colonial militia again showed that they could fight. Gage decided to dislodge them from Breed's (Bunker) Hill overlooking Charlestown. He did so, but only at great cost. Determined to demonstrate the superiority of regular soldiers over the provincial forces he regarded as ill-disciplined, Gage launched a nearly suicidal uphill frontal assault on the defenses at the top. Before retreating to new positions, the militia killed or wounded nearly half of Gage's men. The British made no more such attacks, and when in the winter of 1775–1776 the provincials were reinforced by cannons captured from Ticonderoga, New York, Gage was obliged to withdraw from Boston altogether.

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During the summer of 1775 the Continental Congress took steps to support the New England armies and ready the colonies for war. It appointed George Washington to head a new Continental Army that would fight alongside the provincial militias. The choice of Washington was based partly on his reputation from the French and Indian War, but it was also political. Appointment of a southerner like Washington was essential if the war was to become more than a New England affair. Moreover, Washington was a wealthy member of Virginia's ruling class, and he would bring prestige to this new position.

Between 1774 and 1776, as the dispute with Britain grew, many people in the colonies were forced to take sides. Among those who formed the Revolutionary coalition, there was a powerful feeling of belonging to a grand cause. But what some found exhilarating many others feared. Some of them decided to go along with Revolution, "swimming with a stream," as one New Yorker put it, "it is impossible to stem." Others decided that life would be unimaginable without a king and the social order he stood for.

Loyalism to Britain was strong in some places. In the prosperous farming country around New York City, Loyalists formed a majority. In the Hudson and Mohawk valleys, parts of New Jersey, Maryland's eastern shore, and much of the Carolina backcountry, Loyalists were numerous enough to turn the struggle between Britain and the colonies into a civil war.

Many who sided with the Revolution did so only after long hesitation. Prior to independence, the greatest disunity existed in Pennsylvania and New York, where political leaders were sharply divided. Much of New York's upper class, along with men such as Pennsylvania's John Dickinson, foremost of the pamphleteers against the Townshend Duties, hesitated on the brink long after Virginians such as Washington and Jefferson, and New Englanders such as John Hancock or John and Abigail Adams, had made up their minds for independence. After independence, these hesitant leaders did their best to obtain a new political order that would be secure for their own class.

The notion of radicalism had two dimensions that often, but not necessarily, coincided. On one hand, it entailed firm opposition to British measures, and a willingness to take steps that would lead, by 1776, to a complete break with British rule. On the other, some radicals went further, advocating social and political change within America itself. Between 1774 and 1776, committees formed to take on governmental functions became a new forum for urban artisans. Rural committees were often controlled by obscure farmers. Women, too, became involved in popular action, helping committee searches, enforcing boycotts, raising funds, and making clothing and supplies. These developments unleashed a greater militancy and radicalism, bringing new figures into public life and altering the way it was conducted.

The Revolution's most powerful pamphleteer, Thomas Paine, an English radical, had arrived in Philadelphia only in 1774 but quickly immersed himself in political journalism. Early in 1776, as the Continental Congress was wavering over whether or not to pursue independence from Britain, Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* struck a powerful blow in favor. *Common Sense* embodied radicalism in both senses, arguing both for American independence and for a new

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form of politics and society in the former colonies. “We have it in our power,” Paine wrote, “to begin the world over again.” He used plain language, addressing the political concerns of Patriot elites whom he urged to sever ties to Britain, but he aimed particularly at artisans and farmers, whom he urged to join the political discussion. Independence would not only be just (“a government of our own is our natural right”), but also expedient: America’s prosperity would follow from having “the legislative powers in her own hands.”

Above all, Paine ridiculed the idea of a monarchy and the principle of government by hereditary succession. He laid out instead a plan for an independent America under republican government, in which annually elected provincial assemblies based on “more equal . . . representation” would be overseen by an elected congress governed by a Continental Charter. Paine’s book won wide acclaim. Up to 150,000 copies were printed. From Georgia to New Hampshire people read and applauded Paine’s argument for independence and his vision of a great popular democracy freed from the ties of European monarchy.

As the crisis deepened, the case for independence made increasing sense. The popularity of Tom Paine’s argument and of other calls for independence helped move the cause forward, and the existence of the Continental Army gave Congress the political strength to contemplate such a step. In the early summer of 1776 the Continental Congress appointed Thomas Jefferson and others to draft a declaration of independence that, after making amendments, it adopted in early July. By declaring independence, and forming a new entity—the United States of America—Americans markedly raised the political and military stakes in their struggle with Britain. With independence, American radicals took the final step in redefining themselves and their protest against Britain. They no longer saw themselves as “colonists,” as rebels against British authority, or as protecting their “rights and privileges [as] freeborn Englishmen.” They were now free Americans defending their independent states against an overseas power.

Independence did much more, however, than alter Americans’ relationship to Britain. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed universal rights, rooted not in British precedents, but in the laws of nature. It suggested a radical vision of a new American society. It affirmed that the ultimate source of authority should lie not with kings or rulers, but with “the good People of these Colonies.” Its bold statement “that all men are created equal” reflected the popular attempt to wrest self-government and self-determination from the hierarchical power of an imperial monarchy. Alongside liberty and political rights it placed the concept of equality. Paine had written that “Whenever I use the words freedom or rights, I . . . mean a perfect equality of them. . . . The floor of Freedom is as level as water.”

Yet Americans were not all agreed that equality or popular government should be the basis of their new nation. The citizen-militias of New England had brought them to war and Revolution, but Americans were divided as to whether these should provide a model for continuing the war or for forming new governments. George Washington’s goal from the start was to build “a respectable army,” and he gradually made conditions more and more like those of the British regulars his troops were fighting. The rough, often unruly democracy of the war’s beginning was superseded by harsher discipline, and Washington’s recipe for the Continental Army reflected

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the wishes of many members of Congress for an independent America. Once the British were finally removed, they hoped, they could build an ordered, disciplined society under the control of an American upper class. The tension between popular and elite conceptions of the new United States would be a recurrent theme throughout the Revolution and the events that were to follow.

“For Crown or Colony?” Connections:

- Many key events including the Boston Tea Party, First Continental Congress, Battles at Lexington and Concord, publication of Common Sense, and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, are covered in the animated Epilogue

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