The Stirrings of Revolt
Chapter 5
Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number!
Shake your chains to earth, like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you --
Ye are many, they are few!

-- Percy Bysshe Shelley
Early Battles (Pt. 1)

Battle of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, May 1775

- Ethan Allen, Benedict Arnold & the Green Mountain Boys
- Capture British garrisons at both locations in northern New York/great lake region.
- Allen collects 180 cannon - of which 1/3 are usable
- Henry Knox with a group of several hundred militia move the 60+ tons of weaponry more than 300 miles in two months.
Early Battles (Pt. 1)

Reinforcements Arrive -

May 1775 - Gen. Howe, Burgoyne and Clinton arrive with 6000 men

Gage now desired to take Charlestown and Dorchester Heights by June 18th

Bunker Hill (and Breed’s Hill) - June 17, 1775

1,500-2,000 colonial militia took the high ground on Breed’s Hill

British frontal assault with 2,500-3000 troops led to casualties over 1,000 total.

“White of their eyes” - low gunpowder forces colonial retreat
Early Battles (Pt. 1)

Siege of Boston, April 1775- March, 1776

• The high losses forced Gage to postpone movement towards Dorchester Hts and instead he chose to fortify Boston.

• With trenches dug in along the Boston and Charlestown necks, Washington waited until winter to proceed with an attack.

• Arriving in Jan., Colonel Knox began to bombard Boston from Cambridge with little success. On the night of March 5th, Washington ordered the movement of cannon and troops to Dorchester.

• Britain’s royal navy was now fully in range and at risk, forcing Gen. Howe to order a retreat.
‘Loyalties begin to change’

Bunker Hill/Siege of Boston - fallout
- Aug 23, 1775 King declares colonies in a state of rebellion
- Hessian mercenaries brought over to bolster army (18,000)
- Hessian brutality led to further unhappiness among colonies who see the war as a “family dispute”

Trouble in Virginia
- Royal Gov. of VA John Murray (Earl of Dunmore) abolished the VA House of Burgesses after the group voted to observe a day of solidarity with Boston.
- The House would reconvene at the “Raleigh Tavern” five separate times.
- March. 1775 - at St. John’s Church, Patrick Henry delivers his “Give me liberty or give me death!” speech. It would swing VA support for the cause of war.
- By June 29, 1776 VA had approved a functioning state Constitution - the first in the colonies.

“Gentlemen may cry, Peace! Peace! - but there is no peace. The war is begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!” - Patrick Henry, March 20, 1775
Second Continental Congress
May 1775
The Second Continental Congress - May 10, 1775

- Colonies are still divided over going to war.
  - Simply wish to redress grievances
- Acted as a temporary/de facto govt.
- Southern colonies are dependent on trade with Great Britain.
- Conflict so far had only been in New England (Massachusetts)

July 6, 1775 - Declaration of Causes

- Raise money for army; Washington elected head of Continental Army; redrafted appeal to the King
July 8, 1775 - Olive Branch Petition

- John Dickinson asked George III to remove Intolerable Acts
- The King again refused to recognize a congressional body in colonies

Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation Nov. 7, 1775

- Offered freedom to slaves who fought for the King
- Southerners feared slave rebellions
- Undecided Southerners joined with the North against the British
Colonies acquire some **“Common Sense”**

- Published early 1776

**Main Points**

- British policies were inconsistent

- Nowhere in the *universe* did a smaller heavenly body control a larger one; why then should Britain control N. Amer

- King was a brute and unaccommodating

- *Moral* obligation to the world to establish an independent, democratic republic. **Virtuous undertaking**
Declaration of Independence
July 4, 1776
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July 4, 1776

• Motion for Independence adopted on July 2nd; formally approved July 4th
• Laid out colonists complaints (27 grievances)
• Appealed directly to the King
• Described “unalienable rights”
• No direct mention of slavery was included to gain support from Southern slave states
Loyalists and Patriots

- Loyalists (Tories) were 20-25% of population
  - Feared mob rule; often wealthy, older pop.
  - More common in Middle and Southern Colonies
  - Estates often confiscated during the war
  - Well funded, trained and armed

- Patriots
  - More common in NE
  - Minority population of 30-35%
  - Large numbers of neutral colonists

*Disease, poor equipment and lack of discipline are major issues
1776-1777 (Pt. 2)

Failure in Boston forces the British to refocus on New York

- **Battle of Long Island** - Summer/Fall 1776
  - Howe and a massive British fleet of 400 ships including 75+ war ships and 32,000 soldiers arrive in New York
  - Washington forced to retreat from island in middle of the night.

- **Battle of Trenton** (Dec. 1776)
  - Washington crosses Delaware River
  - Surprises British and Hessian troops (1,000+ captured)
  - IMPT: Failure forces Washington to move battle away from the coastline and more inland. Needs French Naval support
1776-1777

- **Battle of Princeton (Jan. 1777)**
  - Another colonial victory led to British retreat back to New York.
  - Victories at Trenton and Princeton revived a weakened Continental Army and ruined British thoughts of a quick war.

- **Battle of Saratoga (Oct. 1777)**
  - British sought to cut NE off from remaining colonies by taking command of the Hudson River
  - Full invasion of NY by British was slowed by Benedict Arnold
  - Gen. Burgoyne was successfully defeated by Daniel Morgan and Gen. Horatio Gates who used unconventional tactics inc. killing officers (Bg Gen Fraser killed) British lines break
1776-1777

• Battle of Saratoga (Oct. 1777)
  • Victory at Saratoga made French foreign aid possible.
  • French, Spanish and Dutch enter the war. England now faces possibility of world wide conflict.
  • French Navy is a boost for colonial troops

• Valley Forge (winter of 1777-78)
  • Despite recent victories, colonial army was poorly equipped, supplied and heavily run over by disease.
  • Heavy casualties and desertion rates at Valley Forge
  • Prussian Military Instructor Baron von Steuben - over winter drills American troops into proper shape. Saves colonial army
Franco-American Alliance, 1778

• Prior to victory at Saratoga, French had established a secret trade alliance with America to supply munitions and equip.

• Marquis de Lafayette - with Benjamin Franklin were key in gaining French financial support of the war.

• In 1778 French offer formal military alliance and recognized American independence

• By 1779, Spain and Holland entered and Russia along with most of the remaining European continent remained neutral but hostile towards the British; war was global

• 1780 A larger French fleet (5,500) along with naval help arrive in Rhode Island
Southern Campaign pt. 3

- In 1780, Charleston is captured by the British
  - Major loss to the colonies
  - Largest port in the south (4th largest overall)
- Continental Army led by Marquis de Lafayette and Gen. Nathanael Greene pushed Cornwallis from SC north towards Yorktown on the Chesapeake.
- Washington’s army was already heading south from NY towards Chesapeake Bay region
Battle of Yorktown, 1781

- Last major battle of the war
- Washington and French Gen. Rochambeau surround Cornwallis by land; French Admiral de Grasse blocked off a British escape through the Chesapeake.
- Cornwallis’ fatal error forced the surrender of his entire army (7,000 men) on Oct. 19, 1781
- British losses in India, West Indies, Mediterranean and American Colonies forced them to look for peace.
Surrender of Lord Cornwallis by John Trumbull
Peace of Paris

XIII. Peace at Paris: British ready to come to terms after global losses

**French attempted to create a weak U.S.**

1. U.S. diplomats Ben Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay sent by Congress to make no separate peace without consulting the French.
   
   a. They ignored these orders as they were highly suspicious of France & Spain.

   b. John Jay believed France wanted to keep US border east of the Allegheny mountains and give western territories to its ally, Spain, for its help in the war.

2. U.S. turned to Great Britain who were happy to break up Franco-American Alliance
Peace of Paris, 1783

Treaty of Paris of 1783: Britain formally recognized US independence

1. Granted US huge boundaries stretching to the Mississippi River in the west, the Great Lakes in the north, and to Spanish Florida in the south. No slaves were emancipated by British troops.

2. American concessions:
   a. Loyalists could not be further persecuted and Loyalist property was to be returned
   b. American states were bound to pay back debts to British creditors (exactly what the conflict started over)

   **U.S. did not comply with many of these concessions and it later became a partial cause of the War of 1812 against Britain.**

3. The French were upset to not be included - leads to future hostility

4. America alone gained from the war (France bankrupted; Britain loses colonies)
American society during the war

A. Over 250,000 American soldiers fought -- 10% who fought died; largest % of any American war in history

B. British occupied most major cities, e.g. Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

C. War Economy: all of society became involved in the war.

1. State and national governments created (Articles of Confederation)

2. Merchants loaned money to the army and to Congress. Others made fortunes from wartime contracts that were often given out by congress to its own congressional members. Loans, contracts and salaries paid for by soon to be established national bank (Hamilton)

3. Most of the fighting was done by the poorest Americans -- Young city laborers, farm boys, indentured servants, and sometimes slaves.

4. African Americans fought on both sides. -- 5,000 in the Continental army and nearly 30,000 in the British army.
Importance of Virtue

- Virtue was extremely important in justifying the war.
- Virtue however, carried various meanings often depending on social class and gender/sex.
- Women: “Republican Motherhood” and the sphere of influence. A virtuous woman was involved through economic boycotts, educating and raising democratic sons, supporting troops “camp followers”
- Men: Virtuous through public actions, speaking against tyranny, joining the army, fighting the wrongs
- Wealthy: civic leadership or duty was expected, voting or providing an opinion, financially supporting the cause, working to create a new and better society in America.
- Poor: they were virtuous citizens by supporting the local governments, helping the cause by enlisting or reenlisting in the Continental Army. Adhere to democratic principles, in addition to supporting American commerce.