

Unit 6

American Revolution

Section 1: Background to the Revolution

The War of Austrian Succession

- In 1740 a wide-scale war in Europe broke out, caused by the succession to the throne of Austria
 - War was fought in three areas of the world:
 1. Europe
 2. Asia
 3. North America
- 1748- peace treaty returned all territory to its original owner (with the exception of Silesia)

The Seven Years War

- Diplomatic allies of the Seven Years War:
 - France (who abandoned Prussia) + Austria
 - Great Britain + Prussia
- These new alliances led to the Seven Years War

The Seven Years War (cont.)

- Three major scenes of battle: Europe, India, North America
 1. Europe: British/Prussians vs. Austrians/Russians/French
 2. India: British vs. French
 3. North America:
 - Seven Years War called the French and Indian War in N.A.
 - 1763 Treaty of Paris=French ceded the lands east of the Mississippi to England

The American Revolution

- Results of the French and Indian War
 - Weakened Loyalty to Britain
 - Americans were left with a loss of respect for the British military power
 - Americans also felt that they did not share the same values as the British or that the British paid them the proper respect

Section 2: the Revolution

Changing British Policy

- In 1760 King George III took the throne of England (will be the monarch during the American Revolution)
- The Proclamation of 1763 was issued- it closed off the region west of the Appalachian Mountains to all settlements by colonists

British Raise Money

- By 1763 Great Britain was in financial trouble- costly to win the French and Indian War (Seven Years War)
- British were the most taxed people in the world while the American colonists were prospering- taxes were raised in the colonies for defense
- Sugar Act (1764)- Cut the sugar tax in half- stop smuggling of sugar; pay something in taxes
 - To enforce the Act, British ships patrol American waters
- Quartering Act (1765) Law required the colonies to provide housing and supplies for British soldiers

Stamp Act Crisis

- Stamp Act (1765)- placed a tax on newspapers, pamphlets, legal documents, and most other printed materials
 - First time the American colonists had been taxed for the clear purpose of raising money
 - Citizens in England had been paying this kind of tax since 1694

Colonial Response

- Stamp Act Congress
 - October 1765- Delegates from seven colonies met in New York- Known as the Stamp Act Congress
 - James Otis argued that Britain had no right to force laws/taxes on the colonies because the colonists had no representatives in British parliament= “no taxation without representation”

Colonial Response (cont.)

- Sons of Liberty
 - In response to the Stamp Act the colonists organized a boycott (refusal to buy certain goods or use certain services) of British goods
 - Sons of Liberty and the Daughters of Liberty were two groups who enforced the boycott
 - Stamp Act was repealed in March 1766

Boston Massacre

- March 5, 1770- British soldiers open fired on a protesting crowd- five colonist were killed
- After the incident, the British canceled all of the Townshend taxes except the tax on tea (thus only the tea boycott continued)

Boston Tea Party

- Tea Act (1773)- gave the British East India Company the right to sell its tea in America without paying the normal taxes
- December 16, 1773- a group of colonists dressed as Native Americans boarded a British tea ship and dumped every crate into Boston Harbor

Rising Tensions

- Intolerable Acts (1774)
 - As punishment for the Boston Tea Party, Parliament passed the Coercive Acts (aka Intolerable Acts)- targeted Massachusetts
 - Closed Boston Harbor until the ruined tea was paid for + self-gov't removed
- First Continental Congress- September 5, 1774
 - Measures adopted
 - Boycott of British goods
 - Call to the people of the colonies to arm themselves and form militias
 - Direct appeal was made to George III asking for compromise

Crisis Point

- Fighting at Lexington and Concord –first battles of the American Revolution
 - Colonial militias armed themselves and stockpiled weapons
 - April 19, 1775- 700 British troops secretly marched from Boston toward Concord where a stockpile of weapons were
 - 4,000 Patriots attacked the British troops causing heavy casualties
 - The Battles of Lexington and Concord began the American Revolution

Declaration of Independence

- Independence
 - In June 1776 members of the Congress decided that cutting ties with Great Britain and declaring independence was necessary
 - A committee was appointed to write the Declaration of Independence; it included
 - Thomas Jefferson- the main author
 - John Adams
 - Roger Sherman
 - Benjamin Franklin

Turning Point of the War

- Victory at Saratoga- After the battle, the French officially allied with the U.S.
 - The British attempted to cut New England off from the rest of the colonies- led by General John Burgoyne the British forces moved downward from Canada
 - On October 17, 1777 Burgoyne was forced to surrender- the biggest American victory up to that point in the war; marked a turning point in the war

Yorktown

- Victory at Yorktown
 - After his campaign through the south British General Cornwallis set up camp in Yorktown, on a peninsula between the York and James rivers
 - Washington marched south to Yorktown and formed a semicircle around the city trapping the British
 - On October 18, 1781 Cornwallis was forced to surrender
 - Yorktown was the last major battle of the Revolutionary War

Treaty of Paris (1783)

- Major points of the Treaty of Paris
 - Great Britain recognized the independence of the United States
 - Great Britain agreed to remove its troops from the United States
 - Congress agreed that no actions would be taken against Loyalists, however, persecution of the Loyalists continued after the war

Section 3: New Government

Articles of Confederation

- In 1777 the Continental Congress adopted a set of laws to govern the U.S.- these were called the Articles of Confederation
- Established a limited national government- most of the political power lay with the states – fear of a strong central government

Articles of Confederation

- Problems with the Articles of Confederation
 - Congress had no power to force the states to do what it wanted
 - Congress had no power to tax
 - Articles were only a “firm league of friendship”- meant the states were not bound to be one nation
- Constitutional Convention- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania- 1787
 - Constitutional Convention was called to fix the national government (weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation)

Components of the Constitution

- Separation of Federal Powers
 - Separation of powers (Montesquieu’s conception)- the three branches of gov’t all have different areas of authority/ different powers
 - Designed to prevent any one branch of government becoming too powerful
 - Legislative branch- law-making body
 - Judicial branch- court system
 - Executive branch- president
- Checks and balances- each branch of government has the power to check, or stop, the others in certain ways; another device to limit the power of each branch of government

Bill of Rights

- Defined the rights of citizens
 - In an effort to convince states to accept the Constitution, the Federalists offered to support ten amendments which came to be known as the Bill of Rights (ratified in 1791)
 - First ten amendments to the Constitution are the Bill of Rights
 - The purpose of the Bill of Rights was to specifically protect the inalienable rights Thomas Jefferson wrote about in the Declaration of Independence

- ***Amendment I (#1)***
 - Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.
- ***Amendment II (#2)***
 - A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.
- ***Amendment III (#3)***
 - No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.
- ***Amendment IV (#4)***
 - The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.
- ***Amendment V (#5)***
 - No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.
- ***Amendment VI (#6)***
 - In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

- ***Amendment VII (#7)***
 - In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.
- ***Amendment VIII (#8)***
 - Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.
- ***Amendment IX (#9)***
 - The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.
- ***Amendment X (#10)***
 - The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.