



# BESTMUN'22

**JCC: AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

**STUDY GUIDE**



## Letter from SG

Esteemed Delegates,

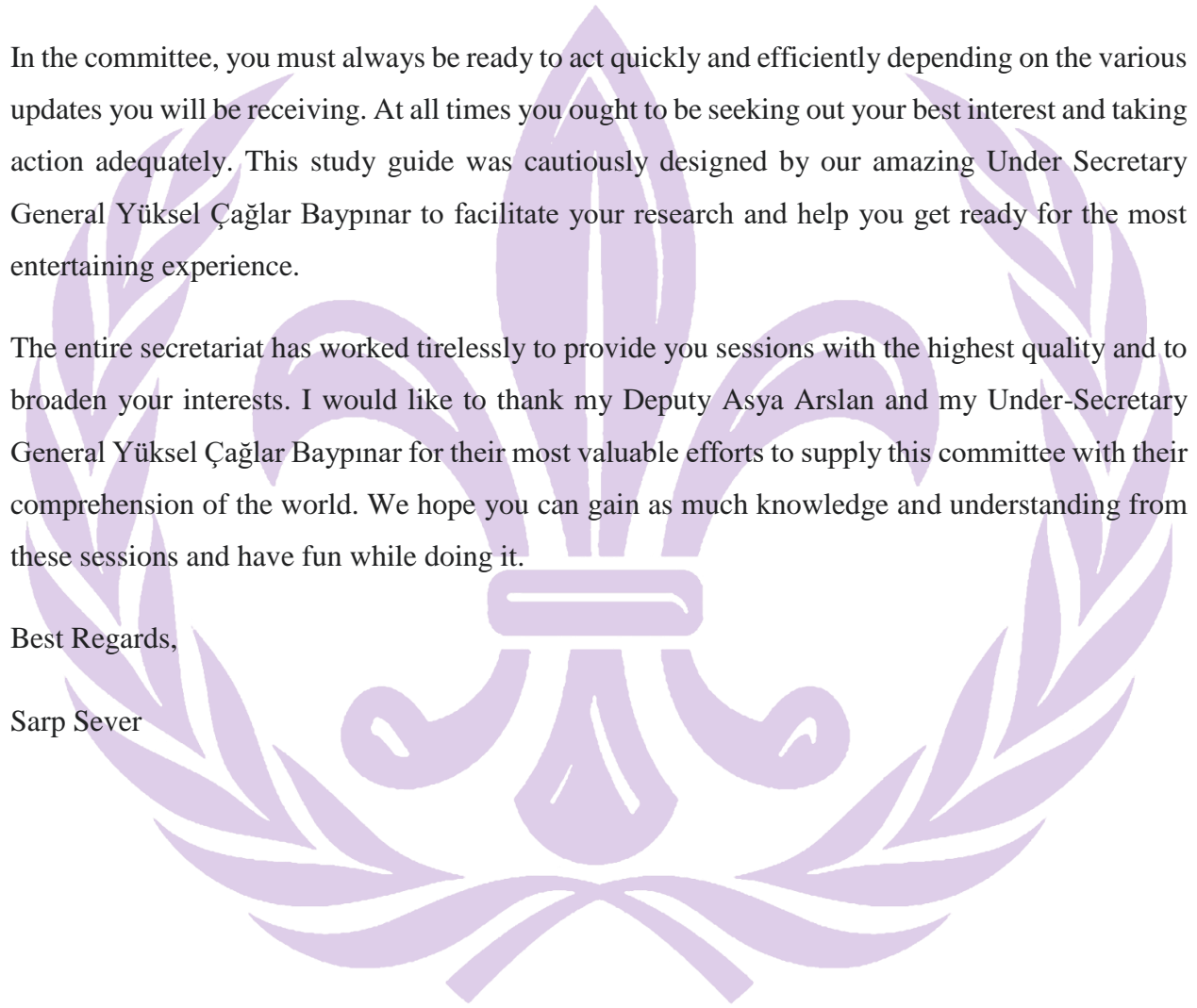
My name is Sarp Sever and I am the Secretary General of BESTMUN'22. In this second edition of our conference, we have two Joint Crisis Cabinet committees and American Revolution is one of them.

In the committee, you must always be ready to act quickly and efficiently depending on the various updates you will be receiving. At all times you ought to be seeking out your best interest and taking action adequately. This study guide was cautiously designed by our amazing Under Secretary General Yüksel Çağlar Baypınar to facilitate your research and help you get ready for the most entertaining experience.

The entire secretariat has worked tirelessly to provide you sessions with the highest quality and to broaden your interests. I would like to thank my Deputy Asya Arslan and my Under-Secretary General Yüksel Çağlar Baypınar for their most valuable efforts to supply this committee with their comprehension of the world. We hope you can gain as much knowledge and understanding from these sessions and have fun while doing it.

Best Regards,

Sarp Sever



## Letter from USG

Most esteemed participants,

Before introducing myself, I would like to welcome you all to BESTMUN '22. I am Yüksel Çağlar Baypınar and I'm a freshman at TED University Engineering Faculty and I will be serving you as the Under-Secretary-General responsible for JCC - American Revolution.

With the ever growing tension within the British colonies in America, it was only a matter of time before relations broke down, catastrophically at that too. Whether it would be the unreasonable, borderline abusive taxes of Great Britain, or the lack of the colonies' ability to represent themselves in a legislative body that ruled over them, 1775 was as good of a year as any, to start their rebellion, in their attempt to carve their own path.

Please bear in mind that this study guide is not a comprehensive total review of history, and it merely serves as a path through which every delegate can start researching. The course of the committee will require agile reactions to many events, so it is in the best interest of every member of the committee to complement this study guide with other resources and develop a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General of BESTMUN '22, Sarp Sever for putting together such an impressive academic team and Asya Arslan for her unending enthusiasm, patience and incredibly fun ideas. I also must thank Umay Alçın Göllü for her thorough support with this guide. I am pleased to welcome you all once again and looking forward to the copious debate sessions that will take place in the JCC committee of BESTMUN '22 Should you have any further inquiries about the subject, the guide, the committee, or anything else, please do not hesitate to contact me via the email provided below. I wish you all the best of luck and look forward to meeting you. You can contact me via [yuksel.baypinar@tedu.edu.tr](mailto:yuksel.baypinar@tedu.edu.tr)

Yüksel Çağlar Baypınar

Under-Secretary-General Responsible for JCC American Revolution

## Table of Contents

- A. Historical Background of the American Colonies
  - a. The Foundation of the Colonies
  - b. Seven Years' War and The Great Britain during 18th Century
- B. Major Events Leading Up to the Revolution
  - a. Taxes and Import Regulations of the Great Britain
  - b. Boston Massacre
  - c. Boston Tea Party
- C. The First Continental Congress
  - a. The Intolerable Acts
  - b. Continental Association
- D. The Second Continental Congress
  - a. The Shot Heard Around the World
    - i. Minutemen & Disarmament
    - ii. Battle of Lexington & Concord
  - b. Battle of Bunker Hill
  - c. Olive Branch Petition
  - d. Siege of Boston
  - e. The Declaration of Independence
  - f. Battle of Long Island
    - i. Delayed Action on Brooklyn Heights
    - ii. The Siege & The Retreat
  - g. Battle of Trenton
  - h. Saratoga Campaign
    - i. The British Advancements
    - ii. General Howe's Detour
    - iii. Victory & International Interventions
  - i. Battle of Monmouth
    - i. George Washington's Ambitions
    - ii. The Failed Initiative
    - iii. Lee's Court Martial
- E. United States in Congress Assembled
  - a. Battle of Yorktown
    - i. Preceding Events
    - ii. The Siege
- F. Bibliography

# Historical Background of the American Colonies

## The Foundation of the Colonies

In 1492, Christopher Columbus, an Italian explorer set foot on what is now known as America, which would be a turning point in world history. After setting foot on the land and returning various times, it was clear that this land would be the new playground for bigger powers in the world. The colonization of the land that came after Columbus' discovery varies with themes of immigration, slavery and disease. Spain was one of the first to act fast and try to spread through the New World, followed by Portugal. (Childs, 1995)

On 5 March 1496, John Cabot, who gave England a claim on Canada, asked for and was later on granted the right to go on and explore the Atlantic by Henry VII because it had occurred to him that England, being at the end of the spice line and paying the highest prices, would be interested in finding a route to the Indies. With the support he managed to secure, he discovered Newfoundland(now in Canada) after several voyages in 1497. (Morison, 1971) The interest in the landfalls and expeditions in England was sporadic and unsystematic. Serious attempts to settle in the newly discovered areas did not begin until the late sixteenth century. The New World was scarcely addressed in England for the first fifty years after Cabot's discovery of Newfoundland, and no English attempts to conquer the territories in the West Atlantic were made. However, as the sixteenth century progressed, England's rivalry with Spain for European control morphed into a battle for worldwide supremacy. The perceived need in England for extending the island's sphere of influence into the Americas was fueled by Spain's expansion into the New World, which was exacerbated by competition with Portugal. (Sobecki, 2015)

Once history is analyzed, the reasons and events that paved the way to the revolution can be easily seen. After the colonization of British America, the settlers became increasingly independent as more time passed. Full of individuality and free from social elasticity, the settlers were latently republican. Settler societies of colonial British America never developed the social foundations necessary for either an aristocracy or a social system of legally established ranks due to the fact that they were the most radical compared to the rest of the western world. They saw

their colonizers as protectors from the outside world although they didn't seem to recognize them as actual authorities. (Greene, 2000)

In 1750, the thirteen British colonies (Virginia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia) had a population of around 1.2 million people, including about a quarter of a million slaves. All of the men, women, and children who resided in any of the provinces that declared the Revolution in 1776 made up less than one-tenth of one percent of all the individuals whose history we now refer to as "American." (Ciment, 2006)

## **Seven Years' War and The Great Britain during 18th Century**

The French and Indian War in North America, which lasted from 1756 to 1763, pitted all of the colonies against France and Native American armies headed by the French, as well as common imperialistic goals. The British government's subsequent efforts, beginning with the Stamp Act of 1765, to have the colonies pay a bigger portion of the costs of empire drew the colonies together in a spirit of opposition. According to historians writing from a post-Revolutionary perspective, the colonies' cultural and intellectual life became more eclipsed by political battles over who would govern them. (Ciment, 2006)

In 1754, fighting broke out in the Ohio Valley, which was then claimed by both the French and the British. To reinforce their claim, the French erected fortifications in the region in 1753. The governor of the Colony of Virginia responded by dispatching militia colonel George Washington to the Ohio border. After ambushing a small French company, Washington was beaten by a bigger French force. (Eccles, 2006) The French monarchy did not declare war on Britain in 1754, despite having a very good justification. Diplomacy was at a crossroads, with Austria covertly hinting that if France supported it in reclaiming Silesia, it would leave its half-century-old friendship with Britain. (Anderson & Stephenson, 2006)

With such a delicate situation, despite the fact that war had not yet been declared, the British began plotting an attack against the French in America. The French dispatched six

battalions under Baron Armand Dieskau to reinforce Louisbourg and Canada after learning of these moves. The army moving on Lake Champlain engaged the French near Lake George, seizing Dieskau, but opted not to pursue Fort Saint-Frédéric. More French troops landed in Canada in April 1756, along with a new commander, the marquis de Montcalm, and as a result, Britain finally declared war a month later. Although the French seemed to be winning at first, the British turned the situation to themselves in 1758 when the British launched three significant attacks against French fortifications. (Eccles, 2006) The capture of Fort Duquesne, Britain's third success of 1758, was made possible in part by Major General John Bradstreet's seizure of Fort Frontenac, which reduced France's hold on the west. Fort Duquesne, and the Franco-Indian battle against the British boundaries, grew untenable in larger proportion because the leader of the Anglo-American expedition, Brigadier General John Forbes, paid more attention to Indian diplomacy than any other military officer serving in North America. When the first groups of Delaware, Shawnee, and Mingo warriors departed their Ohio villages in the company of troupes de la marine and French-allied Indians from the Great Lakes who had congregated at Fort Duquesne, the bounds of the central colonies crumbled. Despite the valiant attempts, Fort Duquesne was defeated, culminating in the British triumph. (Anderson & Stephenson, 2006) The British took the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe in 1759 and launched three assaults against French fortifications on the mainland. On September 8, 1760, the French army was forced to surrender in Montreal. Despite military and naval wins, by 1760, the British were drowning in massive national debt. However, the conflict would not conclude until 1763. In January 1762, Britain declared war on Spain and resumed its efforts abroad. Martinique, St. Lucia, Grenada, and St. Vincent were all taken by the British in February and March 1762. In August 1762, they took Havana from the Spanish, followed by Manila in October 1762. (Eccles, 2006)

Great Britain had essentially driven France out of North America in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War and with the Treaty of Paris in 1763, but it was saddled with debilitating debt, a postwar slump, and the burden of protecting a vast empire on a faraway continent. As a result, Britain tried to reorganize its empire in a large way. The reorganization endeavor, like earlier attempts to rule the colonies, such as the Dominion of New England, drew vehement opposition from provincial legislatures. Responses to new British tactics, such as planned boycotts and letters disseminated among colonial legislatures, demonstrated that the stakes of the game had increased

significantly in the years after 1763. The colonial assembly would be the major political power in the colonies by the time of the American War for Independence. (Ciment, 2006)

## **Major Events Leading Up to the Revolution**

European colonists had been in North America for over a century and a half by the middle of the eighteenth century. They had dealt with native peoples in a variety of ways throughout that time as had their forefathers for the century before permanent settlements when European mariners fished in American seas and coasted along the eastern seaboard in search of wealth and trade in ways that were both peaceful and violent. Although nearly all empires expand by forcibly extending dominion over others, the most successful empires have maintained long-term control by encouraging subordinated groups to participate voluntarily in the larger imperial community—something the colonizers of the Americas failed to do, helping to create the tension for a long-running conflict. (Anderson & Stephenson, 2006)

## **Taxes and Import Regulations of the Great Britain**

The relationship between Parliament and Britain's North American colonies changed dramatically between the enactment of the Stamp Act on March 22, 1765, and the commencement of the War of Independence on April 19, 1775. With growing debts and a desire to compel Americans to contribute to their own defense, successive British administrations looked for a practical and acceptable way to tax Americans. (Cogliano & Phimister, 2010) The colonists had disobeyed the Molasses Act for decades, and the British government had made no attempt to enforce it. Grenville attempted to correct the situation by replacing several customs officers, issuing strict directives to colonial authorities, and dispatching the British naval to police the ports. The Sugar Act of 1764, also known as the Plantation Act or the American Money Act, superseded the Molasses Act of 1733, which had proven ineffectual in generating revenue for the British Empire. The Sugar Act had strong enforcement requirements, unlike its predecessor. The Sugar Act also, for the first time, taxed the colonies directly, unlike earlier taxing measures. As a result, in Colonial America, the introduction of the Sugar Act (and later the Stamp Act) sparked huge protests. The British government faced a growing debt from the Seven Years' War and political



pressure to prove Parliament's power to tax the American colonies in the aftermath of the Stamp Act Crisis. Townshend, Britain's then-Minister of Finance, proposed a new set of colonial taxes on a variety of luxury items in March 1767, arguing that the Stamp Act was an internal tax, whereas the new proposal was external, covered by the Declaratory Act, and charged only on items willingly purchased as imports by colonists. (Ciment, 2006)

The Quebec Act of 1774 also contributed to the agitation of rebellious colonists. The British government introduced an Act in an attempt to decide the future of the French settlements in Quebec, which has had long-term consequences. Without intervention from London, the colony of Quebec was free to maintain its French language, laws, traditions, and Roman Catholic faith. The Quebec Act elicited a strong reaction from the Thirteen Colonies. Long-held prejudice made them wary of French Catholics, and many of the colonies hated the invasion of land west of the Appalachian Mountains, which they claimed was rightfully theirs. They were enraged at being walled in by a Catholic colony and denied access to the west's rich fields. (Marston, 2002)

## **Boston Massacre**

The 14th West Yorkshire Fusiliers and the 29th Worcestershire Regiment were dispatched to Boston in September 1768 by Lord Hillsborough, secretary of state for the American colonies, to defend the customs collectors from the populace. The soldiers landed on September 28, 1768, and their tenure in Boston would be marked by chaotic street clashes with local lads and rowdies. The advent of the military was seen as a compulsion by the colonists, who had been battling Parliament for the right to tax themselves. The locals were enraged by the British troops' apparent arrogance, as well as their rivalry for jobs, as the soldiers frequently worked in town during their off-duty hours to supplement their income. (Ciment, 2006) After two years of harassment during their occupation of Boston, British soldiers eventually lost control on March 5, 1770, shooting into a throng of rioting Americans, killing many of them, including Crispus Attucks, an escaped slave and sailor who was the first African American patriot slain. The fallout from this massacre eventually led to the American Revolution. The significance of the incident expanded as it was utilized for political purposes, stoking the flames of revolt among the colonies and portraying the British in the most unfavorable position possible. Although violence occasionally erupted over

minor issues, the primary question on many Bostonians' minds was whether colonists in British America would be subjugated to the downtrodden position of the Irish or would preserve their status as free English subjects. The massacre highlighted basic issues about the Revolution. There were four provisions in the Declaration of Independence dealing with the risks of "standing armies." The Bill of Rights and the Constitution provide civilian sovereignty over the military, as well as the right to a fair trial and freedom of assembly. The deadly fight of March 5, 1770, had a tremendous impact on America's foundational papers. (York, 2010)

## **Boston Tea Party**

Most colonies, who felt that only representatives they had chosen could levy taxes, saw parliamentary levies, such as the Stamp Act of 1765 and the Townshend Duties of 1767, as proof of a growing scheme to strip them of their privileges. Most of the levies were repealed as a result of colonists' protests and boycotts. The last tax that remained was a three-pence-per-pound fee on tea, an extensively consumed item in North America. When Parliament approved the Tea Act on May 10, 1773, it triggered a sequence of events that led to a crisis in the British Empire. Many colonists, on the other hand, bought illegal tea from Dutch sources, contributing significantly to the East India Company's developing financial difficulties. To protest the Tea Act, a group of patriots dressed as Mohawk Indians stormed three ships in Boston Harbor on December 16, 1773, broke open 342 chests of tea, and poured the contents overboard. The "Boston Tea Party" did not occur until the nineteenth century. The Boston Port Bill, which blocked Boston Harbor, was enacted as a result of the colonists' defiance of parliamentary authority. Other Americans rallied to Boston's cause, bringing the colonies closer together in their fight against British domination than they had been before. (Ciment, 2006)

## **The First Continental Congress**

The colonies' response to Parliament's enactment of the Coercive Acts in 1774 was the First Continental Congress. The Coercive Acts, often known as the Intolerable Acts by American colonists, were the culmination of nearly a decade of political instability. The main concerns of Congress were deciding the nature and scope of colonial rights, as well as determining the best manner to defend these rights. Two committees were formed among the delegates. The trade

committee looked at the British business system to see whether there were any trade restrictions that were onerous. The grand committee, which was the more important of the two, determined the colonies' rights, identified when those rights were being violated by Britain and presented an action to protect those rights. (Ciment, 2006) Congress passed the Declaration of Rights and Concerns on October 14, with the goal of enumerating colonial grievances, proposing a strategy for redressing those grievances, and defining the constitutional relationship between Parliament and the colonies. In 1774, this proclamation was a compromise, but it demonstrates how extreme the colonial attitude had become since 1765. (Cogliano & Phimister, 2010)

## **The Intolerable Acts**

Alarmed by the situation, the British government enacted the Coercive Acts in 1774 to restore order, particularly in Boston. Lord North believed that this would be enough to keep the tiny band of rebels in check, despite the fact that some of the acts he was doing were backed by a large number of people. The port of Boston was closed, and provincial government officials accused of corruption were given notice that they may face charges in the United Kingdom. Lieutenant-General Thomas Gage returned to Boston with 3,500 regular troops and the authority to administer Massachusetts. (Marston, 2002) The announcement of the Coercive Acts sparked widespread indignation. The penalty meted out to the Tea Party was disproportionate to the supposed transgression, colonists believed. The law amounted to nothing less than a revenge act. In the eyes of the people, Britain's choice to use the military to enforce the despised program deserved a rebuke. (Kennedy, 2014)

## **Continental Association**

The Continental Association was recommended by Congress as a means of seeking redress for its concerns and bringing the Coercive Acts to an end. After December 1, 1774, Americans should refuse to import products from the United Kingdom and Ireland, and they should stop exporting their own commodities and output after September 10, 1775, according to the conditions of the Continental Association. Since the days of the Stamp Act, boycotts and non-importation agreements had become important tools of protest, and they had been especially effective in

response to the Townshend Acts. This document is a copy of a New Hampshire Non-Importation Agreement. Colonists publicly declared their support for the opposition movement and put pressure on Parliament by signing such accords. (Cogliano & Phimister, 2010)

## **The Second Continental Congress**

### **The Shot Heard Around the World**

#### **Minutemen & Disarmament Efforts**

Seeing as the British refused to roll back the Intolerable Acts, in accordance with the Continental Association, which stated to summon a second meeting if circumstances warranted, the Second Continental Congress convened on May 10th 1775. The congress, fully aware of King George III's declaration of Massachusetts being in open rebellion, decided best to be prepared against a possible military action by the British government. Thus, the minutemen were formed. The minutemen were small batches of local militia from the Massachusetts Bay Colony that were armed and ready to take action at a minute's notice, hence the name.(Greene, 2000)

General Thomas Gage, the military governor of Massachusetts and commander-in-chief of the local British military, ordered his men to run small, secret strikes to rebel resource camps, hoping to disarm them, thus avoiding any possible conflict entirely. This plan resulted in public backlash, and the relatively benign conflicts called Powder Alarms. (Dull, 1985)

Taking into consideration the state of rebellion declared, General Gage received instructions from the Earl of Dartmouth to disarm the rebellion, and imprison their leaders. The British general was granted a high degree of freedom as to how he would go on to carry out these orders, as neither a time period, nor a method was specified in the orders. However, hearing from his spies of a possible military unity between the colonies being discussed, he chose to act swiftly. In only 4 days, he ordered one of his colonels to take Their regiments from Boston to Concord,

where the rebels were suspected of stockpiling military equipment, and seize or destroy all of said equipment.(Greene, 2000)

The rebellion leaders were informed about Dartmouth's instructions far before General Gage, and had time to strategize. The night before the march to Concord, Paul Revere, a member of the Sons of Liberty, rode out to Concord, in order to warn the locals and some members of the Congress, those being Samuel Adams and John Hancock, about the imminent danger of the British. He also alerted the colonial militia nearby that night.(Greene, 2000)

Colonial militia, having been quickly notified thanks to Paul Revere's efforts the previous night, assembled in Lexington, as approximately 700 British infantry, under the command of Major Pitcairn and several lieutenants, started their march for Concord. The colonial militia, in total, had outnumbered the British, clocking in at around 4000 men. However, these men were not organized, or centralized in any way, which meant that they wouldn't show up in a uniform fashion.(Kennedy, 2014)

## Battle of Lexington & Concord

The militia, placed in Lexington, soon received news of the approaching Regulars, and their leaders, knowing that they were both outnumbered and outclassed by the British forces, ordered their men to not fire unless fired upon. As the two parties met, a British officer ordered the rebel militia to lay down their arms and disperse. The captain, trusting the fact that their equipment in Concord was well hidden at this point, wouldn't risk his men for no cause, and ordered them to disperse and go home. However, among the shouting and due to many other complications, it took quite some time for his order to be carried out. And despite both the captain's and Pitcairn's orders to hold fire, a shot was fired. (Kennedy, 2014)

The shot heard around the world, marked the beginning of the American Revolutionary War.

The rebels in Lexington quickly realized that a frontal assault would cause their certain demise, and with orders from their captain, retreated to Concord, suffering minor losses. As the rebels regrouped and waited for reinforcements deep within Concord, the British forces split up, looking for guns and ammunition. However, after a relatively short duration of time, the rebels

were starting to outnumber the British forces that were split in groups. This realization encouraged the rebel captains to advance, taking the offensive against the British who were both tired and caught off guard. After many rounds of volleys across the North Bridge, the British had to retreat back to Boston, as the battle's tides quickly turned against them, but their way back to Boston had already been set up with many ambushes by the rebels already. The rebels who were chasing after the British then laid a siege around Boston, marking the end of active conflict, spare for some naval skirmishes. The defeat the British army suffered from the hands of untrained militia was an embarrassing one for one of the most elite armies on the planet. (Kennedy, 2014)

## **Battle Of Bunker Hill**

In June, 1775, the Continental Congress, expecting heavy retaliation from the British for what happened in the Battle of Lexington, decided that they should form a united and centralized army, and appointed George Washington as the Commander in-Chief. (Marston, 2002)

Only a day after his appointment, as he was on his way to Boston in order to take charge of the now Continental Army besieging the city, the British were planning to break the siege. They had planned to quickly take high ground on the Bunker Hill, gaining an advantageous position to launch an attack on the siege forces. However, the spies in Boston once again warned the Continental Army, letting them know the plan ahead of time, which resulted in the army fortifying and assuming defensive positions on Bunker Hill, and nearby Breed's Hill. (Marston, 2002)

The march of the British left many factors unaccounted for, and was ill-prepared at best. As they slowly marched up the unharvested Breed's Hill, full of waist high grass, uneven ground and in general, a territory that worked very much against the integrity of their formation, the soldiers that were overequipped soon grew tired from their load and the heat. As they had also failed to supply the correct type of ammunition for their cannons, this first wave of assault was quickly pushed back by the Continental Army with minor difficulty, a fate that would repeat itself once more within the same hours. However, after many hours of successfully holding their lines, the Continental Army was running out of ammunition, and had to retreat, giving up their positions on the hill. The siege however, was yet to be broken.

The Battle of Bunker Hill was, by default, a British victory seeing as the Continental Army retreated, however, compared to approximately 400 casualties in the Continental Army, they had lost a significantly bigger portion of their forces, closing in at over 1000 infantrymen.

## **Olive Branch Petition**

With the exception of Quebec and the Floridas, British control throughout mainland British North America fell apart over the course of around eighteen months in 1775 and 1776. The British-American conflict reached a new chapter with the commencement of the war. The dispute was no longer about revenue, but about more fundamental concerns of power and government. (Cogliano & Phimister, 2010) Despite the fact that it lacked legal power, the Second Continental Congress saw no other option and as such, began to govern. (Ciment, 2006) On July 8, 1775, Congress sent King George III the Olive Branch Petition (document 7) pleading with him to assist in the conflict and redress colonial complaints. Faced with violent resistance to his authority, the monarch was not in the mood to negotiate with the assassins of his men and declared the colonists to be in revolt. The Olive Branch Petition was rejected by King George III. He issued this declaration on August 23, 1775, declaring the colonies to be in revolt and requesting the assistance of all civil and military officers of the British state, as well as his loyal subjects in America, in defeating the insurgency. (Cogliano & Phimister, 2010)

## **Siege of Boston**

May 1775, as the British were still disoriented by their defeat in the battle of Concord, Continental Army officer, Benedict Arnold set out from his company, on their way to assist the siege of Boston, and instead made his way over to Fort Ticonderoga, believing it to have poor defenses. However he failed to bring over any significant amount of manpower with him to take the fort, but luckily, met up with the Green Mountain Boys, led by Ethan Allen. In a surprise night raid, they managed to take over the Fort with barely any resistance at all. Even though their alliance led to success, from the very beginning, Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen had disputes on authority and credit. (Dull, 1985)

Winter was harsh, and the siege of Boston was not making much progress, as the soldiers grew weary, disease spread and resources ran low. Continental Army Colonel Henry Knox however, had a bright idea that could, in theory, affect the result of the siege conclusively. In the recently taken Fort Ticonderoga, there was heavy artillery in large amounts, which is the perfect siege weaponry that the siege actually lacked at that moment. In a journey that took him over six weeks, by using boats, horses and most notably, ox-drawn sledges, he managed to bring over 60 tons of artillery. With this stupendous feat of logistics, one could easily argue that he directly affected the result of the siege, as their clever use was the key to Washington's success. At first, Commander Washington suggested a frontal assault, but was advised against it, with his subordinates arguing the defensive power of the British, and their possibility to fend this attack off. Instead the heavy artillery pieces were carried overnight to Dorchester Heights, a part of the siege territory that directly saw and flanked the British forces inside the city. When dawn came and the redcoats noticed the heavy artillery that was aimed directly at them, and seeing how they lacked any means of meaningful retaliation, fled the city with their remaining ships, taking a significant amount of loyalists with them. With that, the city of Boston was now under the rule of the Continental Congress. George Washington placed the significant half of his army to New York, predicting that if the British were to come back, that would be their first port. (Marston, 2002)

## **The Declaration of Independence**

After the bloodshed of 1775 and early 1776, and the effects of Thomas Paine's "Pamphlet of Common Sense", the idea of independence was getting ever so widespread, and the Second Continental Congress agreed to declare independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776. The Thirteen Colonies began to refer to themselves as "the United States of America" following this, though this term would not be formally recognized until after the Treaty of Paris in 1783. (Marston, 2002) The draft of the Declaration was written by Thomas Jefferson. After voting on sovereignty, Congress accepted Jefferson's proposal after making significant changes to the text—the United States was born as a result of its adoption. (Cogliano & Phimister, 2010) The text, which was heavily influenced by British philosopher John Locke, sought out to legitimize the colonies' cause of independence to Britain and the rest of the globe. Interestingly, Jefferson makes King George III the scapegoat of all previous disputes between the colonies and the mother nation in the draft



Declaration, which was ultimately altered because Jefferson's draft was a more radical document than that adopted by the Congress. (Ciment, 2006) In order to declare independence, Americans had to abandon their loyalty to King George III. Americans have been attacking Parliament's power for most of the preceding decade. Independence also meant breaking connections with the British monarchy, which is why the Declaration of Independence included a long attack on the monarch. This has been proven to be effective. On July 9, 1776, following a public reading of the Declaration of Independence in New York City, New Yorkers symbolically overthrew the King by demolishing an equestrian monument of him, melting it into musket pellets. (Marston, 2002)

## **The Battle of Long Island**

As America was in the process of declaring its independence, In accordance with Commander George Washington's predictions, the British arrived at New York, stationing in Staten Island since the Continental forces stationed there couldn't possibly take any sort of retaliative action.(Allison, 2011)

George Washington stationed his troops around the edge of Brooklyn Heights, and chose to take the defensive side, ordering his men to dig trenches. The area had seen a lot of improvement from a military perspective with several forts built, and several more on the way. However, it was apparent that the untrained militia under the name of an army, was far from a proper one.

### **Delayed Action on Brooklyn Heights**

Even though the British were ready for frontal assault almost immediately from the moment of their arrival, they kept waiting for weeks, sustaining the status quo and creating tension among the Americans. Unlike their previous encounters, the British were prepared, organized and definitely held the upper hand both in force, and in terms of options for their actions. (Dull, 1985)

A British colonel, James Grant, not to be confused with the British general, James Grant, led the attack as the first show was heard around Red Lion Inn. Or so the Americans thought. The British, fully aware of their advantage in numbers, chose to instruct Colonel James Grant to lead a diversionary attack. Learning from their mistakes, the full battle plan was a well kept secret, with

only General Howe having full access to it. Due to the number of British troops in the engagement, and the chaotic atmosphere that a frontal assault brought with it, the Americans failed to notice that the entire attack was a ruse, and American General Lord Stirling was flanked soon after. General Howe and his men initiated the main thrust of the attack up the Battle Pass, as they charged at Stirling's army from behind. And just as the forces of General Howe commenced their assault, Colonel Grant saw his reinforcements arrive, multiplying the number of his troops. The British however, had one last move to make, which would be the Hessians that once again flanked the American forces, this time from the east. Almost completely surrounded and cut off, the Americans retreated in panic and chaos, which led them to be stuck between the East River, and the British army, with no obvious way out as crossing the river under normal circumstances, would be the equivalent of swimming across a no man's land. (Marston, 2002)

## The Siege & The Retreat

After successfully trapping the Americans, General Howe, much to his officers' dismay, refused to launch a direct assault on them, fearing the fate that could await him as they rushed through the open fields of Brooklyn Heights. Instead, the British dug trenches and started a pseudo siege, slowly moving towards the Americans. But unfortunately for General Howe, as they were slowly moving forward, the Americans were slowly crossing the river, only at night time and with utmost secrecy. During the last night of their evacuation, things were going slow, the sun would soon rise, and the British, who noticed the lack of American pickets, would start to advance at full speed. Luckily for George Washington however, the fog that settled as daybreak arrived, made sure he and the last of his forces could cross the river as well. (Kennedy, 2014)

Crossing the river however, would not end the battle by any means. During their retreat, the British forces constantly engaged with the American forces, who have suffered defeat after defeat, losing hundreds in casualties, and thousands, as prisoners of war, left by the British to rot.

After these engagements, even though the American army was still alive, somehow, Commander George Washington's rule came to question, as the faith of the soldiers came to waver. The British occupied New Jersey, as the now torn apart army made their retreat to Pennsylvania. (Dull, 1985)

# The Battle of Trenton

As the year slowly came to an end, Commander George Washington wanted to restore the rapidly declining morale in his army. His target was the Hessian forces, the now reinforced German forces that once assisted in their defeat in Long Island.

George Washington prepared well in advance for this attack, and managed to gather a lot of intel, as well as launching several successful raids. A spy he stationed in Trenton who traded with the British and the Hessians, had a big role in convincing them that the American army was in complete denial, and their morale was so low that an attack on Trenton would not be feasible. This information, and the seemingly secure positioning of their garrisons, gave the Hessians a false sense of security, which in turn caused them to lower their guards substantially. (Dull, 1985)

The attack on Christmas night, was to be carried out from three directions. General Cadwalader would assault the British garrison in New Jersey as a diversion, with only several hundred men. The secondary purpose of this attack was to avoid any complications that a British reinforcement could cause during their main attack. The second direction would also be somewhat of a flank, as General James Ewing would take a couple hundred militia with him to cut off the Hessians' escape path through the Assunpink Creek bridge. The main thrust however, would come not by land, but by water. George Washington would cross the icy Delaware River at night, silently, and start a full scale battle before the Hessians could realize where the enemy was coming from. (Marston, 2002)

The plan was followed, but many logistic difficulties like George Washington losing a very significant portion of the main forces to the icy river. However, the short and fierce battle that took place, quickly saw the defeat and subsequent surrender of the Hessians, bringing much needed victory for the Americans. As he had lost thousands to Delaware River, Washington could not deliver a quick follow up to his initial success, but over the next weeks, Battles of Assunpink Creek and Princeton would be fought and won, which helped solidify the patriots' position and faith again. The war was far from finished. (Allison, 2011)

# Saratoga Campaign

After the Battle of Trenton and the subsequent skirmishes, the revolutionary war was in a status-quo, favoring the patriots ever so slightly. The British knew that decisive action was needed, and their soaring economy forced their hands into action, as they couldn't afford to fight this war for much longer. Thus, the Saratoga Campaign was planned.

## The British Advancements

The campaign would see General Howe in New York, and general Burgoyne in Montreal, advance north and south respectively, meeting in the middle and practically dividing the United States in two. Or so was the plan.(Allison, 2011)

General Burgoyne started his march down south in spring 1777, occupying Fort Crown Point, which was undefended, and thanks to his Indian support, covering his tracks and being on the lookout for patriots, both his movement and power were mostly kept a secret. With the element of surprise at his disposal, General Burgoyne made his move towards Fort Ticonderoga, occupying it with minimal trouble as the American garrison retreated swiftly. With respect to their plan, Burgoyne kept moving south, securing the land he passed through. However, his movement would come to a standstill as he would meet his first major obstacle around Bemis Heights. A combined force of the soldiers from Fort Ticonderoga and further reinforcements from the Continental Army presented major resistance, making any further free movement impossible for him without taking care of the American threat first. He knew that with the assistance from General Howe flanking the American forces from south would be adequate for a swift victory.(Allison, 2011)

## General Howe's Detour

Unfortunately for General Burgoyne, General Howe, for reasons still speculated upon, chose to abandon, or as some believe, delay the plan. Howe figured that as the Continental Army kept reinforcing their defense in Bemis Heights, their capital, Philadelphia would be left relatively undefended. As he made his move, he faced and defeated George Washington in Brandywine Creek, taking the capital as the Congress was forced to move to York.

The newly moved congress took swift action to stop Burgoyne's movement south, and sent Horratia Gates and Benedict Arnold among some other officers to stop him. Even though there were many disagreements between the American generals upon the context of the engagement, mainly between Gates and Arnold, they stood strong against the British forces. Benedict Arnold, defying his superior Gates' orders, left to take on the offensive, successfully dealing heavy blows to the British army with the little power he had. Constant skirmishes and several more Patriot victories saw Borgoyne's Army completely surrounded in their retreat. As their reinforcements arrival was far too late, On October 17th, under the terms agreed upon the previous day, Burgoyne's army surrendered, ending the Saratoga Campaign in bitter defeat for the British.

## Victory & International Interventions

The victory was substantial for the American morale, and after a long period of indecisiveness, France was finally convinced to join the fray. They would go on to provide military and economic support for the patriots, as well as fighting against Britain in the seas. Benjamin Franklin also hired a Prussian military officer named Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin von Steuben, to reform the Continental Army into a professional force to be reckoned with. British Generals William Howe and John Burgoyne returned back to Britain, as Henry Clinton assumed charge. (Allison, 2011)

## Battle of Monmouth

February 1778, for some historians, marked the time that permanently shifted the tides of the American Revolutionary War in favor of Americans. With the ever growing pressure from the French locally, and their Treaty of Alliance with the United States, forced Britain into a defensive position in the war, a position they couldn't possibly leave under current circumstances. General Henry Clinton was ordered to fall back to New York, regroup and consolidate his army, where they would be ferried out to, by the Royal Navy to avoid further losses. (Allison, 2011)

## George Washington's Ambitions

George Washington, whose role as Commander-in-Chief was once again on unstable grounds, knew that in order to solidify his role once and for all, he couldn't allow the British to leave unscathed. As he kept track of Clinton's movements, he sent a couple thousand soldiers from his newly trained army, under the command of General Charles Lee, his second in command, in order to deliver a heavy blow to the retreating British forces while avoiding a full out confrontation between the two armies. (Marston, 2002)

### The Failed Initiative

The first confrontation with the British was far from what Washington was planning, as Charles Lee failed to carry out the attack swiftly enough, which created many complications that the detached army couldn't face. There were many factors, some still up to debate as to how and why this happened. Ranging from contradicting intelligence, to what could be considered straight up treason, actions of Charles Lee turned around their advantage much to Washington's dismay.

After this botched attack, General Clinton decided to take initiative and sent Cornwallis with his first division to flank and destroy the now exposed vanguard. He also believed that Washington, with the main body of the army, would be far enough for him to have enough time to use heavy artillery in this battle before Washington arrived to provide support. This gained him a significant advantage over Lee, who lacked such resources as he was commanding a mobile and light unit. (Allison, 2011)

Hearing of Clinton's intentions, Charles Lee ordered a general retreat, but faced much difficulty actually communicating his order in a proper fashion. The now trained army managed to somewhat hold themselves together during the retreat in spite of their inadequate command, or lack thereof. Crucially, Lee failed to inform Washington about any of the events that took place moments before which created a tense environment when the two men met shortly thereafter.

"You ought not to have undertaken it unless you intended to go through with it." told Washington to Lee, as he decided to take the matters into his own hands, delivering the battle he intended to Clinton. His decisive and immediate action, made Clinton lose the only advantage he had, the initiative. The British general saw no meaning in battling a strong, well positioned enemy who knew the territory far better. Adding onto that, the brutal heat on that specific day cause as

many death as the skirmishes that took place. All of these factors, combined with the clear order to retreat to New York, Clinton decided to break off the engagement and continue their march. (Allison, 2011)

While there were some engagements during the retreat, the heavy blow Washington planned was nowhere to be seen, and in general, the Battle of Monmouth was an inconclusive draw. However, in their situation, that would, arguably, be an American victory. And an American victory it was, on papers at least. George Washington knew the political importance of him presenting this battle of a victory possessed. With the help of his officers' reports, he presented the Battle of Monmouth, as a rare occasion on which the British had left the battlefield and more.

## Lee's Court Martial

Charles Lee, now having shade cast on him by the officers' reports in praise of the commander-in-chief, had a personal vendetta. Seemingly unable to let go of his failure, he wrote a letter to Washington, a disrespectful one that according to the Commander, was highly improper. Learning about Washington's intentions to conduct an official inquiry on his behavior, Lee demanded a court-martial. A court-martial has the authority to judge the guilt of members of the armed services who are subject to military law, as well as to decide on punishment if the defendant is found guilty. Washington had Lee arrested, and obliged in his demand. He was charged with Disobeying orders by refusing to attack on the morning of the fight, despite repeated instructions; conducting an unnecessary, chaotic, and disgraceful retreat; and showing disrespect to the commander-in-chief. After a month of trials, and Lee's hamartia of turning this into a personal contest between him and Washington, he was found guilty of all three charges with slight changes to the actual charges and as punishment, was suspended from the army for a year. Lee went on to argue his point and vent his wrath against Washington to anyone who would listen, provoking challenges to duels from both John Laurens and Steuben. Only the duel with Laurens occurred, and Lee was wounded during it.

# United States in Congress Assembled

## Battle of Yorktown

### Preceding Events

In the following year, Spain would officially join the war, assisting the United States officially, they would also join the ongoing naval attack on the British by the French. The French also further committed to helping the revolutionary cause, sending a significant amount of military support to the U.S..

Benedict Arnold married Peggy Shippen, an elite from a loyalist household, mixing with Loyalist sympathizers in Philadelphia. She was a personal friend of British major John André, and she stayed in touch with him after he became the chief of the British intelligence organization in New York. Many historians believe she was instrumental in Arnold's decision to cross sides; he secretly negotiated with her friend André, and she communicated their messages. He planned to hand over the fort West Point, which he commanded, to the British, but the conspiracy was discovered in September 1780 when Patriot militia apprehended André, who was carrying papers that disclosed the plot. André was hanged, while Arnold escaped to the British. He led British forces in the Raid of Richmond and surrounding districts, where they burned most of New London, Connecticut, to the ground and murdered surrendering men following the Battle of Groton Heights—just a few miles downriver from his hometown.

The following months would see the British adopting a change of plan. After learning from the many times they tried and failed to break the stalemate in the north, they decided to make their moves on the more favorable south, due to it having higher loyalist density relative to the northern states. They quickly occupied the city of Savannah, and after a joint French American siege on the city failed, they moved on to lay their own siege on Charleston. The city fell in a couple of months, and most notably, saw a considerable amount of POWs taken, costing dearly to the US army. (Allison, 2011)

The British chose to act swiftly and make use of their advantage, spreading over the southern states without too much difficulty. As they reached the borders of Trenton, the Confederation Congress(governing body of the US), decided to take action. They sent Horatio



Gates to battle the British, and following his defeat to General Cornwallis, Nathanael Greene replaced him as the Commander of the Southern Department.

To prevent the British from advancing into North Carolina and Virginia, Greene chose guerrilla warfare over pitched combat because he was outmanned and under-supplied. To outmaneuver and harry British forces, his strategy would mainly rely on riverboats and cavalry. Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, Greene's second-in-command and the Marquis de Lafayette, were among Greene's main subordinates during the Southern campaign. (Allison, 2011)

Greene defied conventional military tactics by splitting his forces: he would lead the main American force southeast, while Morgan would command a smaller group southwest. Cornwallis retaliated by separating his forces, sending the main detachment against Greene and a group against Morgan under the command of Tarleton. Morgan led Continental troops to a stunning victory at the Battle of Cowpens in January 1781, destroying Tarleton's force almost entirely. Cornwallis rushed off in pursuit of Morgan after the battle, burning some of his own provisions to speed up his army's march as there was no other way for him to catch up to the much more mobile Americans. Greene joined up with Morgan and retreated into North Carolina, purposely forcing Cornwallis away from British supply lines

He received reinforcements from North Carolina and Virginia in early March, effectively doubling his army size. On March 14, he marched his force to Guilford Courthouse and began preparing for an attack by Cornwallis, based on Morgan's strategy from the Battle of Cowpens. The North Carolina militia formed the first line, the Virginia militia formed the second line, and the Continental Army regulars formed the third line, which was positioned on a hill behind a little stream. The Battle of Guilford Court House began on March 15 when the main British force launched a major attack. The initial American line fired volleys before retreating to the next line or away from the battleground. While Cornwallis launched an unsuccessful assault against the third line, the second line held out longer and continued to fight the British advance. The British reformed and made an attack on the third line's left flank, but Henry Lee's cavalry crushed them. Cornwallis retaliated by ordering his artillery to fire grapeshot into the conflict, hitting both British and American troops. Greene ordered a retreat when his army's left flank crumbled, bringing the conflict to a close. Despite the fact that the Americans lost the Battle of Guilford Court House, the British suffered far more casualties.(Allison, 2011)

# The Siege

General Cornwallis, after suffering heavy losses while battling Nathanael Greene, believed that as long as the Americans had the chance to use Virginia as a supply base, no decisive victory could be achieved. He moved to Yorktown where he would consolidate his army, and strategize for further action. Notably, he freed many slaves to join him and raided small towns on his way, increasing his strength ever so slightly. (Dull, 1985)

As the French support finally arrived, George Washington offered to take the initiative, and take New York from Clinton, as the main bodies of both the French and American forces were stationed very close to the city. However, French General Rochambeau, advised against this move and suggested military action against Cornwallis, thus the two generals were in a disagreement. In the Summer of 1781 the armies joined north of New York City, and as French General Comte de Grasse notified them of his intention to sail to the Chesapeake Bay, both armies began marching south toward Virginia, deceiving the British into believing a siege of New York was intended.

At the Battle of the Chesapeake Bay in early September, de Grasse destroyed a British fleet led by Sir Thomas Graves that had arrived to reinforce Cornwallis. As a result of this victory, de Grasse prevented Cornwallis from receiving any external aid or fleeing by sea, as well as disembarking the heavy siege weaponry required by the allied ground forces.

The Americans and the French built their first parallel and began the bombardment shortly after their arrival after some preliminary arrangements in late September. With the British resistance reduced, Washington dispatched two columns on October 14, 1781, to attack the final important British outer defenses. Two redoubts were secured by a French column led by Wilhelm of the Palatinate-Zweibrücken and an American column led by Alexander Hamilton. The allies were able to complete their second parallel after capturing these defenses. (Allison, 2011)

The troops proceeded out in stormy weather after nightfall on October 6 to dig the first parallel: the thickly clouded sky obscured the moon and protected the extensive digging activity from British sentries' gaze. To begin the trench, Washington ceremoniously struck several strikes

with his pickaxe. The French were to command the left part of the trench, while the Americans were to command the right half. The British noticed the new allied trench just out of musket range on October 7. The allies completed the cannon installations and pulled the artillery into line during the next two days. When the British realized the large number of guns the allies had, their spirits began to wane. (Allison, 2011)

The Americans were ordered to dig a second parallel by George Washington on the night of October 11th. It was 370 meters closer to the British lines, but because the British number 9 and 10 redoubts were in the way, it couldn't be extended all the way to the riverbank. The British fire continued to land in the old line throughout the night, and Cornwallis had no idea that a new parallel was being dug. The allied soldiers were in position on the new line by the morning of the 12th.

On October 14, 1781, with the British defenses weakened by relentless bombardment, Washington dispatched two divisions to attack the remaining substantial British outer defenses. Redoubt No. 9 was taken by a French column led by Wilhelm of the Palatinate-Zweibrücken, while Redoubt No. 10 was taken by an American column led by Alexander Hamilton.

The allies' onslaught on Yorktown was greater than ever, as more artillery pieces joined the line from the riverfront. Cornwallis discussed his condition with his commanders, and they all felt that it was hopeless.

A drummer emerged on the morning of October 17th, followed by an officer waving a white handkerchief. The siege was over. The British requested customary war honors during the negotiations, which would allow the army to march out with flags flying, bayonets fixed, and the band playing an American or French tune as a tribute to the victorious. Washington, on the other hand, was adamant in refusing to provide the British the honors that they had denied the defeated American troops at the siege of Charleston the year before. (Allison, 2011)

While the British still held New York City, Savannah and Charleston, both sides knew that the war was as good as over, and peace negotiations began in Paris, resulting in the Treaty of Paris several years later, officially ending the American Revolutionary War.

## Bibliography

Anderson, F., & Stephenson, S. (2006). *The War That Made America: A short history of the French and Indian War*. Penguin Books.

Childs, W. R. (1995). 1492-1494: Columbus and the discovery of America. *The Economic History Review*, 48(4), 754. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2598134>

Ciment, J. (2006). *Colonial America: An encyclopedia of social, political, cultural, and economic history*. Sharpe Reference.

Cogliano, F. D., & Phimister, K. E. (Eds.). (2010). *Revolutionary America 1763–1815*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203852903>

Eccles, W. J. (2006, February 7). *Seven Years' War*. The Canadian Encyclopedia. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/seven-years-war>

Fogleman, A. (1992). Migrations to the thirteen British North American colonies, 1700-1775: New estimates. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 22(4), 691. <https://doi.org/10.2307/205241>

Greene, J. P. (2000). The American Revolution. *The American Historical Review*, 105(1), 93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2652437>

Kennedy, F. H. (2014). *The American Revolution: A Historical Guidebook*. Oxford University Press.

Marston, D. (2002). *Essential Histories: The American Revolution 1774-1783*. Osprey Publishing Limited.

Morison, S. E. (1971). *The European discovery of America: The Northern Voyages, A.D. 500-1600*. Oxford University Press.

Sobecki, S. (2015). New World Discovery. *Oxford Handbooks Online*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.141>

York, N. L. (2010). *The Boston Massacre: A history with documents* (1st ed.). Routledge.  
Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203849095>.

Dull, J. (1985) *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, Yale Univ Pr

Allison, R. (2011) *The American Revolution: A Concise History*, Amazon.com

