AMERICA IN 1763, NOT YET A NATION.

ARE WE DEALING WITH A NATION THAT'S BECOMING MORE ALIKE OR IS IT BECOMING MORE DIFFERENT AT THE SAME TIME?

I THINK WE STARTED OUT AS DIFFERENT AS WE COULD BE.

THE BEGINNING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION 13 COLONIES UNDER THE BRITISH FLAG.

THEY SEE THEIR FUTURE AS BRITISH.

BUT THE BOND IS SEVERED AND AMERICANS DECLARE THEIR INDEPENDENCE IN ACTION AND IN THEIR WRITTEN DOCUMENTS.

THESE ARE NOT DEAD DOCUMENTS.

AND THESE DOCUMENTS CHANGED IN MEANING AND IN THEIR SIGNIFICANCE AS A RESULT OF THIS CONFLICT.

TODAY ON A BIOGRAPHY OF AMERICA "THE COMING OF INDEPENDENCE."

THE BRITISH COLONISTS SAW THE YEAR 1763 AS A GREAT WATERSHED IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

IN THE PAST, A GREAT SEMICIRCLE OF CATHOLIC ENEMIES HAD HEMMED THEM IN, FROM FRENCH CANADA AND LOUISIANA.

BUT IN 1763, THE PEACE OF PARIS GAVE ALL THE LANDS BETWEEN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AND THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER TO BRITAIN'S YOUNG KING GEORGE III.

THAT CHANGE, THE COLONISTS ASSUMED WOULD BRING PEACE AND SECURITY BEYOND ANYTHING THEY OR THEIR PARENTS, OR THEIR PARENTS' PARENTS HAD KNOWN.

AND NOW NOTHING WOULD KEEP
THEM FROM SPILLING BEYOND

31 01:02:05:21 01:02:08:15 THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS.

32 01:02:08:17 01:02:10:09 IN THE WAVE OF PATRIOTISM

33 01:02:10:11 01:02:13:03 THAT SWEPT THE COLONIES AFTER

34 01:02:13:05 01:02:17:23 NO ONE DOUBTED THAT THE AMERICA

35 01:02:17:25 01:02:19:08 OF THE FUTURE WOULD BE BRITISH.

36 01:02:19:10 01:02:22:26 THE VARIOUS COLONIES HAD

37 01:02:22:28 01:02:27:01 NO TIES WITH EACH OTHER

38 01:02:27:03 01:02:29:05 EXCEPT THROUGH LONDON AND

39 01:02:29:07 01:02:32:22 THEIR SHARED BRITISH IDENTITY.

40 01:02:32:24 01:02:34:29 THE AMERICANS WERE

41 01:02:35:01 01:02:38:29 PARTICULARLY PROUD

42 01:02:39:01 01:02:42:10 OF BEING GOVERNED UNDER

43 01:02:42:12 01:02:45:22 THE "BRITISH CONSTITUTION"

44 01:02:42:24 01:02:48:17 THAT IS, BRITAIN'S

45 01:02:45:24 01:02:51:23 FORM OF GOVERNMENT

46 01:02:48:19 01:02:53:28 WHICH DIVIDED POWER AMONG

47 01:02:51:25 01:02:56:01 THE KING, LORDS AND COMMONS

48 01:02:54:00 01:02:56:01 ONE SET OF COLONISTS

49 01:03:01:09 01:03:06:09 AFTER ANOTHER

50 01:03:06:11 01:03:09:04 TESTIFIED THAT

51 01:03:09:06 01:03:15:05 THEIR HEARTS WERE:

52 01:03:15:07 01:03:16:20 THE MYSTERY IS WHY,

53 01:03:16:22 01:03:18:10 ONLY 13 YEARS LATER

54 01:03:01:09 01:03:06:11 THEY DECLARED

55 01:03:06:11 01:03:09:04 THEIR INDEPENDENCE.

56 01:03:09:06 01:03:15:05 THAT MYSTERY IS NOT OURS ALONE;

57 01:03:15:07 01:03:18:10 IT WAS THE COLONISTS', TOO.

58 01:03:16:22 01:03:21:02 AS EVENTS UNFOLDED

59 01:03:18:10 01:03:21:02 THEY WONDERED AT THE UNEXPECTED

60 01:03:21:04 01:03:21:10 COURSE THEIR HISTORY WAS TAKING

61 01:03:21:10 01:03:22:10 AND SOUGHT EXPLANATIONS.

62 01:03:22:10 01:03:24:24 THE CONFLICT BETWEEN BRITAIN

63 01:03:24:24 01:03:27:03 AND HER AMERICAN COLONISTS

64 01:03:27:03 01:03:28:24 BEGAN OVER TAXES.

65 01:03:28:24 01:03:30:26 THE WAR LEFT BRITAIN

66 01:03:30:26 01:03:32:26 WITH A LARGE DEBT

67 01:03:32:26 01:03:33:11 AND NEW FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS.

68 01:03:33:13 01:03:36:10 A MASSIVE INDIAN UPRISING

69 01:03:36:12 01:03:38:11 SHOWED THAT THE CROWN

70 01:03:38:11 01:03:40:06 HAD TO KEEP AN ARMY IN AMERICA.

71 01:03:40:06 01:03:43:06 THE BRITISH RESTORED PEACE, AND

72 01:03:43:06 01:03:46:01 THEN, TO PREVENT FURTHER TROUBLE

73 01:03:46:01 01:03:49:15 EXCLUDED SETTLERS FROM

74 01:03:49:15 01:03:50:15 LANDS BEYOND A LINE

75 01:03:50:15 01:03:52:01 THAT RAN NORTH AND SOUTH THROUGH

76 01:03:52:01 01:03:54:15 THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS.
NOT ONLY WAS BRITAIN BLOCKING THE COLONISTS' WESTWARD EXPANSION IT WANTED THEM TO HELP PAY FOR ITS ARMY IN AMERICA. FIRST THEY HAD PARLIAMENT PUT NEW DUTIES ON MOLASSES IMPORTED INTO THE COLONIES FROM THE NON-BRITISH WEST INDIAN ISLANDS. THAT AWOKE LITTLE OPPOSITION. BUT WHEN THE KING'S MINISTER ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR A STAMP TAX ON AMERICAN LEGAL DOCUMENTS NEWSPAPERS, PAMPHLETS AND ITEMS SUCH AS DICE AND PLAYING CARDS ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE. NEVER BEFORE HAD THE PARLIAMENT LAID A DIRECT TAX ON THE COLONISTS. IN BRITAIN, TAXES WERE CONSIDERED "FREE GIFTS OF THE PEOPLE" THAT COULD BE RAISED ONLY WITH THE PEOPLE'S CONSENT OR THAT OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVES. SINCE THE COLONISTS ELECTED NO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS THEY ARGUED, PARLIAMENT HAD NO RIGHT TO TAX THEM. EVEN A SMALL TAX WAS DANGEROUS. ONCE PARLIAMENT ESTABLISHED ITS RIGHT TO TAX THE COLONISTS IT WOULD TAX THEM TO DEATH, SINCE BY TAXING THE AMERICANS MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT REDUCED THEIR OWN TAX BURDEN AND THAT OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS. THE AMERICANS MADE THEIR CASE IN PETITIONS EVEN TO RECEIVE. THEN, AFTER ALL ELSE FAILED THEY FOUND A WAY TO PREVENT THE STAMP ACT FROM GOING INTO EFFECT. ON THE MORNING OF AUGUST 14, 1765 AN EFFIGY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STAMP DISTRIBUTOR, ANDREW OLIVER APPEARED HANGING FROM A TREE IN THE CENTER OF BOSTON. ALL DAY, GOODS BROUGHT INTO
TOWN FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE

97 01:05:29:25 01:05:32:12 HAD TO BE STAMPED BY THE EFFigy.
98 01:05:32:14 01:05:37:10 AT NIGHT, A CROWD TOOK IT DOWN,
PARADED THE EFFIGY THROUGH TOWN
99 01:05:37:12 01:05:40:00 THEN BURNED IT
IN A GREAT BONFIRE
100 01:05:40:02 01:05:43:29 WITH MATERIALS TORN FROM
A SUPPOSED "STAMP OFFICE"
101 01:05:44:01 01:05:46:01 THAT OLIVER WAS BUILDING.
102 01:05:46:03 01:05:49:05 LATER, PART OF THE CROWD
ATTACKED OLIVER'S HOME.
103 01:05:49:07 01:05:50:23 FEARING MORE OF THE SAME
104 01:05:50:25 01:05:53:02 HE RESIGNED HIS OFFICE
THE NEXT DAY
105 01:05:53:04 01:05:55:23 AND NO ONE WAS WILLING
TO TAKE HIS PLACE.
106 01:05:55:25 01:05:58:29 THAT MEANT THE STAMP ACT
COULD NOT GO INTO EFFECT
107 01:05:59:01 01:06:00:23 IN MASSACHUSETTS
108 01:06:00:25 01:06:04:07 SINCE THERE WAS NO ONE
TO DISTRIBUTE THE STAMPS.
109 01:06:04:09 01:06:07:09 SOON STAMP MEN
IN ONE COLONY AFTER ANOTHER
110 01:06:07:11 01:06:09:20 RESIGNED TO AVOID OLIVER'S FATE.
111 01:06:09:22 01:06:13:03 THEN GROUPS CALLED
THE SONS OF LIBERTY APPEARED
112 01:06:13:05 01:06:17:20 TO COORDINATE OPPOSITION TO THE
STAMP ACT ACROSS COLONY LINES.
113 01:06:17:22 01:06:21:17 THE COLONISTS ALSO BOYCOTTED
CERTAIN BRITISH IMPORTS.
114 01:06:21:19 01:06:24:26 PARLIAMENT GAVE IN,
IT REPEALED THE STAMP ACT
115 01:06:24:28 01:06:28:03 BUT ONLY AFTER DECLARING
That IT HAD A RIGHT
116 01:06:28:05 01:06:31:01 TO BIND THE COLONIES
IN ALL CASES WHATSOEVER.
117 01:06:31:03 01:06:33:17 A YEAR LATER, IT TRIED
TO RAISE A REVENUE
118 01:06:33:19 01:06:36:10 THROUGH NEW DUTIES
ON PAPER, GLASS AND TEA.
119 01:06:36:12 01:06:38:20 IF THAT'S HOW THE
COLONISTS PREFERRED
120 01:06:38:22 01:06:40:09 TO GIVE MONEY TO THE CROWN
121 01:06:40:11 01:06:43:14 THE KING'S NEW MINISTER,
CHARLES TOWNSEND, ARGUED
122 01:06:43:16 01:06:47:03 LET THEM HAVE THEIR WAY.
123 01:06:48:14 01:06:51:25 BUT NOW A SERIES OF NEWSPAPER
ESSAYS ENTITLED
124 01:06:51:27 01:06:54:24 "LETTERS FROM A FARMER
IN PENNSYLVANIA"
125 01:06:54:26 01:06:57:04 URGED THE COLONISTS TO RESIST.
126 01:06:57:06 01:06:59:05 THEY WERE, IN FACT WRITTEN
127 01:06:59:07 01:07:02:23 BY A MILD-MANNERED LAWYER
NAMED JOHN DICKINSON
128 01:07:02:25 01:07:05:22 A MAN OF PROPERTY
WITH QUAKER CONNECTIONS
WHO WAS DEAD-SET AGAINST VIOLENCE.
DUTIES MEANT TO RAISE A REVENUE WERE TAXES, HE SAID AND SO EVERY BIT AS DANGEROUS AS THE STAMP ACT.

BUT "WE CANNOT ACT WITH TOO MUCH CAUTION," HE WROTE BECAUSE ANGER HAD A WAY OF PRODUCING ANGER AND COULD CAUSE A SEPARATION OF THE COLONIES FROM BRITAIN.

DICKINSON RECOMMENDED PEACEFUL FORMS OF OPPOSITION.

SUCH AS NON-IMPORTATION ASSOCIATIONS IF THE COLONISTS’ PETITIONS WENT UNANSWERED.

DICKINSON’S "FARMERS' LETTERS" WERE COPIED FROM ONE NEWSPAPER TO ANOTHER.

AND EVERYWHERE THE COLONISTS SAID HE HAD EXPRESSED THEIR POSITION PERFECTLY.

THEY FOLLOWED HIS ADVICE AND CUT BACK IMPORTS UNTIL, AGAIN, PARLIAMENT GAVE IN.

IN 1770, IT REPEALED ALL THE NEW DUTIES EXCEPT THE ONE ON TEA.

BY THEN, HOWEVER MANY COLONISTS' OLD CONFIDENCE IN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS PRETTY MUCH GONE.

TAXES WERE NOT THE ONLY REASON.

IN 1768, THE CROWN HAD SENT TWO REGIMENTS OF TROOPS TO BOSTON TO SUPPORT ROYAL OFFICIALS THERE.

AND LIKE ALL ENGLISHMEN DISTRUSTED GOVERNMENTS THAT USED STANDING ARMIES AGAINST THEIR OWN PEOPLE.

FREEMEN, THEY SAID, ARE NOT GOVERNED AT THE POINT OF A GUN.

IT SEEMED AS IF THE SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS WERE ALWAYS SCUFFLING WITH EACH OTHER.

FINALLY, ON MARCH 5, 1770 A CONTINGENT OF TROOPS FIRED INTO A CROWD KILLING FIVE PEOPLE.

PAUL REVERE, A LOCAL
SILVERSMITH AND PATRIOT

162 01:08:55:25 01:08:58:11 MEMORIALIZED THE BOSTON MASSACRE
WITH ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS PRINTS OF THE ERA.

164 01:09:02:00 01:09:06:10 IT SHOWS REDCOATS WILLFULLY SHOOTING UNARMED CIVILIANS.

165 01:09:09:24 01:09:11:08 BEHIND THE SOLDIERS
IN A BUILDING LABELED "BUTCHER'S HALL."

168 01:09:14:12 01:09:18:21 WAS ITS TRIGGER PERHAPS PULLED BY A HATED CUSTOMS MAN?

170 01:09:21:16 01:09:23:11 SOME WITH ROCKS INSIDE THREW AT THE SOLDIERS.

172 01:09:26:10 01:09:28:11 NOR IS THERE ANY INDICATION PROVOKED THE SOLDIERS
THAT BOSTONIANS

174 01:09:32:29 01:09:36:00 WHICH THEY THOUGHT THE TROOPS COULD NOT DO

176 01:09:39:01 01:09:42:29 THE PRINT, IN SHORT, GAVE ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE STORY.

178 01:09:46:11 01:09:49:19 THE EAST INDIA COMPANY SELL TEA IN THE COLONIES
AT A PRICE LOWER THAN THAT OF SMUGGLED TEA.

181 01:09:55:19 01:09:58:04 WHICH, FROM THE COLONISTS' PERSPECTIVE

183 01:10:01:10 01:10:05:12 AGAIN THEY RESISTED, BUT IN AS PEACEFUL A MANNER AS THEY COULD.

185 01:10:08:21 01:10:10:26 CONVINCED THE CAPTAINS OF TEA SHIPS

187 01:10:14:08 01:10:17:21 SHIPS ENTERED THE HARBOR

188 01:10:16:03 01:10:19:21 IN BOSTON, HOWEVER, THE TEA SHIPS ENTERED THE HARBOR

190 01:10:22:03 01:10:25:26 TOWNSMEN SPENT THE NEXT 20 DAYS TRYING, WITHOUT SUCCESS

192 01:10:29:17 01:10:32:09 THE SHIPS COULD GO BACK TO SEA.
THEN, ON THE NIGHT BEFORE
THE TEA COULD BE SEIZED
BY THE CUSTOMS SERVICE
A GROUP OF MEN DISGUISED
AS INDIANS BOARDED THE SHIPS
AND EMPTIED 342 CHESTS
OF TEA INTO THE WATER.
THE PROCEEDINGS WERE
AMAZINGLY QUIET
EXCEPT FOR THE
"PLOOP, PLOOP, PLOOP"
OF TEA DROPPING INTO THE SEA.
A YOUNG LAWYER FROM THE TOWN
OF BRAINTREE NAMED JOHN ADAMS
AN OBSCURE COUSIN
BOSTON LEADER, SAMUEL ADAMS
AND BY NO MEANS A LOVER OF MOBS,
FOUND THE EVENT "MAGNIFICENT."
THE "BOSTON TEA PARTY",
AS IT WAS LATER CALLED, WAS:
AND WOULD HAVE SUCH IMPORTANT
AND LASTING CONSEQUENCES
HE SAID:
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT
PROVED HIM RIGHT.
IT PUNISHED BOSTON WITH
A SERIES OF "COERCIVE ACTS"
THAT THE COLONISTS PROMPTLY
RENAIMED THE "INTOLERABLE ACTS."
AMONG OTHER THINGS, THEY
CLOSED THE PORT OF BOSTON
THROWING HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE
OUT OF WORK
AND CHANGED THE GOVERNMENT
OF MASSACHUSETTS
SO THE CROWN HAD MORE POWER,
THE PEOPLE LESS.
THEN BRITAIN PUT MASSACHUSETTS
UNDER MILITARY RULE
APPOINTING GENERAL THOMAS GAGE
AS ROYAL GOVERNOR
AND SENDING TROOPS
TO ENFORCE HIS AUTHORITY.
FROM THERE ON, THE CRISIS
GOT WORSE AND WORSE
WITHOUT RESpite.
IF BOSTON AND MASSACHUSETTS
COULD BE PUNISHED SO SEVERELY
WITHOUT A TRIAL OR ANY CHANCE
TO DEFEND THEMSELVES
HOW COULD NEW YORK
OR PENNSYLVANIA
OR SOUTH CAROLINA FEEL SAFE?
EVERY ONE BUT GEORGIA
SENT DELEGATES TO A CONTINENTAL CONGRESS IN PHILADELPHIA TO COORDINATE THEIR RESPONSE.

THE CONGRESS PETITIONED GEORGE III TO INTERCEDE ON THE COLONISTS' BEHALF EMPHASIZING THE AMERICANS' LOYALTY.

BUT THE KING DECIDED THAT THE COLONIES WERE: THE BLOWS BEGAN ON APRIL 19, 1775 AFTER GENERAL GAGE SENT TROOPS TO SEIZE COLONIAL ARMS STORED AT THE TOWN OF CONCORD, SOME 20 MILES OUTSIDE BOSTON. ON THE WAY, THEY WENT THROUGH LEXINGTON WHERE LOCAL MILITIAMEN ON THE TOWN GREEN BEGAN TO DISPERSE ONCE THEY SAW HOW OUTNUMBERED THEY WERE. SOMEWHERE, SOMEONE FIRED A GUN. THEN THE REGULARS EMPTIED THEIR MUSKETS INTO THE FLEEING MILITIAMEN, KILLING EIGHT AND WOUNDING TEN. AMOS DOOLITTLE RECALLED THE SCENE IN AN ENGRAVING HE MADE SEVEN MONTHS LATER.

IT IS MUCH LIKE REVERE'S BOSTON MASSACRE.
AGAIN DOOLITTLE SHOWED BRITISH SOLDIERS WITH THEIR COMMANDER URGING THEM ON SHOOTING INNOCENT COLONISTS. DOOLITTLE ALSO RECORDED THE REGULARS' MARCH TO CONCORD-- AN ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE PROVINCIALS AND REGULARS AT CONCORD'S NORTH BRIDGE AND PERHAPS MOST INTERESTING OF ALL THE REDCOATS' RETREAT BACK TO BOSTON BURNING HOUSES ALONG THE WAY WHILE MILITIAMEN FROM NEARBY TOWNS SHOT AT THEM.

THE RETREAT FROM CONCORD ALMOST FINISHED OFF GAGE'S ARMY. ONCE THE REMAINING TROOPS GOT BACK TO CAMP IN BOSTON THEY PRETTY MUCH HAD TO STAY THERE.

THE PROVINCIAL ARMY THAT FORMED
ACROSS THE RIVER IN CAMBRIDGE

256 01:14:09:14 01:14:10:12 SAW TO THAT.
257 01:14:11:23 01:14:15:08 AN ORDINARY SOLDIER, WHOSE NAME IS UNKNOWN
258 01:14:15:10 01:14:18:11 KEPT A JOURNAL OF HIS LIFE IN THE AMERICAN ARMY
260 01:14:22:08 01:14:24:08 HE HAD SOME TROUBLE DECIDING
261 01:14:24:10 01:14:26:09 JUST WHAT TO CALL THE KING'S TROOPS.
262 01:14:26:11 01:14:29:02 HE COULDN'T CALL THEM, AS LEGEND HAS IT
265 01:14:38:08 01:14:41:24 BUT AFTER A WHILE, HE FOUND A BETTER NAME--
266 01:14:41:26 01:14:42:24 "THE ENEMY."
267 01:14:44:19 01:14:46:16 WITHIN WEEKS OF LEXINGTON AND CONCORD
268 01:14:46:18 01:14:49:11 A SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS MET IN PHILADELPHIA.
269 01:14:49:13 01:14:53:06 IT APPOINTED ONE OF ITS MEMBERS AN UNCOMMONLY TALL, DIGNIFIED VIRGINIAN
270 01:14:53:08 01:14:55:22 NAMED GEORGE WASHINGTON TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE ARMY AT CAMBRIDGE.
272 01:14:57:19 01:15:00:19 A SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS MET IN PHILADELPHIA.
273 01:15:00:21 01:15:04:02 WASHINGTON HAD SOME MILITARY EXPERIENCE--
274 01:15:04:04 01:15:08:21 NONE OF IT ESPECIALLY GLORIOUS, AND SOME OF IT DISASTROUS.
275 01:15:08:23 01:15:12:17 EVEN SO, HE HAD SPENT MORE TIME AS A MILITARY OFFICER THAN MOST ANY OF HIS COUNTRYMEN
276 01:15:12:19 01:15:14:23 AND SO, WAS APPALLED AT THE DIRTY, DISORDERLY MEN
277 01:15:14:25 01:15:18:24 IN THE AMERICAN CAMP.
278 01:15:18:26 01:15:21:16 WASHINGTON QUICKLY BEGAN IMPOSING DISCIPLINE
279 01:15:21:18 01:15:24:14 TRYING DESPERATELY TO TRANSFORM THAT COLLECTION OF PATRIOTS AND ADVENTURE-SEEKERS
280 01:15:24:16 01:15:26:17 INTO A RESPECTABLE ARMY.
282 01:15:30:00 01:15:31:29 IT TOOK CHARGE OF THE POST OFFICE AND INDIAN AFFAIRS.
283 01:15:34:08 01:15:37:06 INTO A RESPECTABLE ARMY.
286 01:15:42:27 01:15:45:01 IT ALSO BORROWED MONEY ITS OWN CURRENCY.
287 01:15:45:03 01:15:48:14 IN FACT, THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS BECAME THE FIRST GOVERNMENT
OF THE UNITED STATES.

It had to assume those powers, it seemed, to prevent the British from crushing the Americans and ending their dream of finding a way to live as free men under the British flag.

But reconciliation was becoming increasingly unlikely. The king refused to answer another petition from Congress even though it was written in a scrupulously respectful way by our old friend, John Dickinson.

The colonists' statements of loyalty were meant "only to amuse" while they schemed to found an independent country.

Wasn't the congress seizing one power after another? Then, in the opening weeks of 1776, Common Sense appeared.

That pamphlet was the work of Thomas Paine--an Englishman of no particular distinction and little formal education, a man who had been trained as a corsetmaker and dismissed from the English customs service before arriving in America.

Less than two years before he wrote Common Sense.

With language that spoke to ordinary people, it said what so many native-born colonists were afraid to say--the time had come for America to go her separate way.

The problem wasn't the ministers or the parliament, or even George III as a person, although Paine did call him "the royal brute of Britain."

It was the "so much boasted constitution of England."

The British system of government, Paine argued, had two deadly flaws--monarchy and hereditary rule.
ONLY BY GOVERNING THEMSELVES
COULD AMERICANS
SECURE THEIR FREEDOM
AND REALIZE THE PEACE
THAT THEY SO DEEPLY DESIRED.
COMMON SENSE SPREAD THROUGH
THE COLONIES LIKE WILDFIRE
OPENING AMONG THE PEOPLE
A DEBATE OVER INDEPENDENCE
THAT WAS ALREADY WELL UNDERWAY
AMONG CONGRESSMEN.
AND YET, WHEN THEY LOOKED BACK
OVER THE PREVIOUS DECADE
THE COLONISTS WONDERED AT
THE ROAD THEY HAD TRAVELED.
HOW, THE FREEMEN
OF VIRGINIA'S BUCKINGHAM COUNTY
ASKED IN THE SPRING OF 1776
HAD BRITAIN AND AMERICA BECOME
SO INCENSED WITH EACH OTHER?
THE BRITISH SAW EVERYTHING
TO PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS
STEP BY STEP, MUTUAL CONFIDENCE
AND AFFECTION HAD SLIPPED AWAY
UNTIL THEY WERE BEYOND ALL HOPE
OF RECOVERY.
AS A RESULT, BUCKINGHAM COUNTY
CALLED FOR A TOTAL AND FINAL
SEPARATION FROM GREAT BRITAIN.
THEN, PERHAPS,
"SOME FOREIGN POWER MAY
LEND AN ASSISTING HAND."
FOR THEIR OWN INTEREST,
ONCE THE COLONISTS LEARNED
THAT GEORGE III HAD HIRED
GERMAN SOLDIERS
TO HELP PUT DOWN
THEIR "REBELLION."
UNLESS THE COLONISTS
ALSO GOT OUTSIDE SUPPORT
THEM WOULD SURELY BE DESTROYED.
IT WAS DO OR DIE.
NOT EVERYONE AGREED.
IN THE END, ABOUT
A FIFTH OF ALL COLONISTS
REMAINED LOYAL TO BRITAIN.
NONETHELESS, ON JULY 2, 1776
12 COLONIES APPROVED
A RESOLUTION:
A WEEK LATER, NEW YORK MADE
THE DECISION UNANIMOUS.
AFTER APPROVING INDEPENDENCE
CONGRESS SPENT TWO DAYS
EDITING A DRAFT DECLARATION

01:19:50:13 01:19:53:03 SUBMITTED BY A COMMITTEE AND ITS DRAFTSMAN
01:19:53:05 01:19:57:26 A 33-YEAR-OLD VIRGINIAN NAMED THOMAS JEFFERSON.
01:19:57:28 01:20:01:17 JEFFERSON'S REPUTATION AS AN ELOQUENT WRITER
PRECEDED HIS APPEARANCE IN CONGRESS A YEAR EARLIER.

A 33-YEAR-OLD VIRGINIAN NAMED THOMAS JEFFERSON.
JEFFERSON'S REPUTATION AS AN ELOQUENT WRITER
PRECEDED HIS APPEARANCE IN CONGRESS A YEAR EARLIER.

01:19:53:05 01:19:57:26 A 33-YEAR-OLD VIRGINIAN NAMED THOMAS JEFFERSON.
JEFFERSON'S REPUTATION AS AN ELOQUENT WRITER
PRECEDED HIS APPEARANCE IN CONGRESS A YEAR EARLIER.

01:20:01:19 01:20:06:00 PRECEDED HIS APPEARANCE IN CONGRESS A YEAR EARLIER.

01:20:01:19 01:20:06:00 PRECEDED HIS APPEARANCE IN CONGRESS A YEAR EARLIER.

01:20:06:02 01:20:09:04 NOW, AS THE DELEGATES HACKED AWAY AT HIS PROSE

01:20:09:06 01:20:11:23 CHANGING WORDS, CUTTING LARGE PASSAGES

01:20:11:25 01:20:14:07 REWRITING MUCH OF THE LAST PARAGRAPH

01:20:20:09 01:20:22:21 HAD MUTILATED HIS TEXT.

01:20:24:09 01:20:27:05 ON JULY 4, THE DELEGATES FINISHED THEIR EDITORIAL WORK


01:20:32:13 01:20:35:01 AND "PROCLAIMED" THROUGHOUT THE LAND.

01:20:38:27 01:20:40:12 THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HAD ASSUMED A "SEPARATE AND EQUAL STATION"

01:20:40:14 01:20:44:16 HAD ASSUMED A "SEPARATE AND EQUAL STATION"

01:20:47:03 01:20:50:20 THEY CELEBRATED INDEPENDENCE BY SHOUTING "HUZZAH"

01:20:52:03 01:20:55:00 AND WATCHING MILITIA COMPANIES PARADE.

01:20:55:02 01:20:57:29 CROWDS TORE DOWN OR DESTROYED SYMBOLS OF ROYALTY

01:20:58:01 01:21:01:04 ON TAVERNS AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

01:21:01:06 01:21:04:24 IN NEW YORK, PEOPLE PULLED A BRONZE STATUE OF GEORGE III

01:21:04:26 01:21:07:26 FROM ITS PEDESTAL AND SENT IT OFF TO CONNECTICUT

01:21:07:28 01:21:10:22 WHERE PATRIOTIC WOMEN MELTED THE STATUE DOWN


01:21:21:18 01:21:24:01 THE ONE IN WHICH CONGRESS DECLARED

01:21:24:03 01:21:27:13 THAT "THESE UNITED COLONIES ARE, AND OF RIGHT OUGHT TO BE
385 01:21:29:21 01:21:31:00 LITTLE ATTENTION--
386 01:21:31:02 01:21:33:22 INDEED, SO FAR AS I CAN TELL,
      NONE AT ALL--
387 01:21:33:24 01:21:37:20 WAS GIVEN TO THE DOCUMENT'S
      SECOND PARAGRAPH, WHICH BEGAN:
388 01:21:37:22 01:21:40:14 "WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS
      TO BE SELF-EVIDENT;
389 01:21:40:16 01:21:42:24 THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL."
390 01:21:44:00 01:21:45:20 THOSE IDEAS WERE EXPRESSED
391 01:21:45:22 01:21:47:27 IN MANY OTHER
      CONTEMPORARY WRITINGS
392 01:21:47:29 01:21:53:02 BUT ONLY THE DECLARATION
      ANNOUNCED AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE
394 01:21:59:07 01:22:01:00 TO DECLARE INDEPENDENCE
      WAS ONE THING--
395 01:22:01:02 01:22:03:01 TO WIN IT WAS ANOTHER.
396 01:22:03:03 01:22:05:16 WHILE CONGRESS WHITTLING AWAY
      AT JEFFERSON'S PROSE
397 01:22:05:18 01:22:07:23 A MASSIVE BRITISH FLEET
      ARRIVED AT NEW YORK.
      THE LARGEST SEA AND LAND FORCES
400 01:22:15:01 01:22:17:04 EVER SEEN IN NORTH AMERICA
401 01:22:17:06 01:22:21:29 TO END THIS PESKY COLONIAL
      REBELLION, ONCE AND FOR ALL.
404 01:22:26:22 01:22:30:01 SUFFERED ONE DEFEAT
      AFTER ANOTHER.
405 01:22:30:03 01:22:32:17 WASHINGTON BROKE
      THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL
406 01:22:32:19 01:22:35:05 WITH SMALL
      BUT SIGNIFICANT VICTORIES
407 01:22:35:07 01:22:37:21 AT TRENTON AND PRINCETON,
      NEW JERSEY
408 01:22:37:23 01:22:41:00 IN LATE DECEMBER
      AND EARLY JANUARY.
409 01:22:41:02 01:22:45:01 BY THEN, HE HAD CONVINCED
      CONGRESS THAT THE AMERICAN CAUSE
410 01:22:45:03 01:22:47:14 COULD NOT DEPEND
      ON LOCAL MILITIAMEN
      ONLY FOR SHORT PERIODS
      NEAR THEIR HOMES.
413 01:22:53:22 01:22:57:11 IT NEEDED AN ARMY OF
      TRAINED SOLDIERS AND OFFICERS
414 01:22:57:13 01:23:00:26 WILLING TO SIGN UP
      FOR LONG TERMS OF SERVICE
415 01:23:00:28 01:23:03:08 IN RETURN FOR CONCRETE REWARDS
416 01:23:03:10 01:23:06:05 INCLUDING BOUNTIES,
      RESPECTABLE PAY
AT THE WAR'S END.

Thereafter, the American cause was primarily defended not by men defending their homes and families as at Lexington and Concord but by young, single men--both white and black--with little if any property. Militia men sometimes supported the Continental Army as at Saratoga, New York where they gathered from all over New England to stop an invasion from Canada under the British general in October, 1777. The victory at Saratoga gave the signal for France which was hesitant to join the United States in a losing war to negotiate an alliance with the Americans. That tipped the odds against Britain. 

Thereafter, Britain concentrated its attention on the South where it set off a brutal, bloody civil war. Finally, the British commander, Lord Charles Cornwallis turned east and settled in at Yorktown, Virginia on the Chesapeake Bay waiting for supplies and reinforcements. 

Washington and a large body of French troops moved in and mounted a siege while the French fleet prevented the British. On October 18, some three years after Saratoga, Cornwallis surrendered. When the British minister learned the news he exclaimed, "Oh God, it's all over."

And so another group of negotiators gathered in Paris. The Americans, including the wily Benjamin Franklin and honest John Adams, won extraordinarily favorable terms.
THE TRANS-APPALACHIAN WEST BECAME PART OF THE UNITED STATES ALONG WITH ALL THE LAND BETWEEN CANADA AND THE NORTHERN BORDER OF FLORIDA AND BRITAIN RECOGNIZED THE UNITED STATES AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION. NOT 1763, BUT 1776 TURNED OUT TO MARK THE GREAT WATERSHED IN AMERICAN HISTORY. HOW WOULD LIFE BE DIFFERENT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT GREAT DIVIDE? NOW AT LEAST, THE AMERICANS COULD DECIDE THAT THEMSELVES.