

AMERICA'S FOUNDING FATHERS

Who are they?

Thumbnail sketches of 164 patriots

JACK STANFIELD

Universal Publishers
USA • 2001

America's Founding Fathers -- Who are they?
Thumbnail sketches of 164 patriots

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To my wife Barbara who inspired this book, and without whose patience and encouragement, it would not have been completed.

Content

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 SETTING THE STAGE	10
SKETCHES OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS	23
CHAPTER 2 FOUNDING FATHERS FROM CONNECTICUT	24
Andrew Adams, Oliver Ellsworth, Titus Hosmer, Samuel Huntington, William Samuel Johnson, Roger Sherman, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott	
CHAPTER 3 FOUNDING FATHERS FROM DELAWARE	32
Richard Bassett, Gunning Bedford, Jacob Broom, John Dickinson, Thomas McKean, George Read, Caesar Rodney, Nicolas Van Dyke	
CHAPTER 4 FOUNDING FATHERS FROM GEORGIA	39
Abraham Baldwin, William Few, Button Gwinnett, Layman Hall, William Houstoun, Edward Langworthy, William Leigh Pierce, Edward Telfair, John Walton, George Walton	
CHAPTER 5 FOUNDING FATHERS FROM MARYLAND	47
Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Daniel Carroll, Samuel Chase, John Hanson, Daniel of St Thomas Jenifer, Luther Martin, James McHenry, John Francis Mercer, William Paca, Thomas Stone	
CHAPTER 6 FOUNDING FATHERS FROM MASSACHUSETTS	55
John Adams, Samuel Adams, Francis Dana, Elbridge Gerry, Nathaniel Gorham, John Hancock, Samuel Holton, Rufus King, James Lovell, Robert Treat Paine, Caleb Strong	

CHAPTER 7	FOUNDING FATHERS FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE	65
	Josiah Bartlett, Nicholas Gilman, John Langdon, Mathew Thornton, John Wentworth, Jr., William Whipple	
CHAPTER 8	FOUNDING FATHERS FROM NEW JERSEY	70
	David Brearly, Abraham Clark, Jonathan Dayton, John Hart, Francis Hopkinson, William Churchill Houston, William Livingston, William Paterson, Nathaniel Scudder, Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon	
CHAPTER 9	FOUNDING FATHERS FROM NEW YORK	78
	James Duane, William Duer, William Floyd, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, John Lansing, Francis Lewis, Phillip Livingston, Robert R. Livingston, Gouverneur Morris, Lewis Morris, Robert Yates	
CHAPTER 10	FOUNDING FATHERS FROM NORTH CAROLINA	89
	William Blount, William Richardson Davis, Cornelius Harnett, Joseph Hewes, William Hooper, Alexander Martin, John Penn, Richard Dobbs Spaight, John William, Hugh Williamson	
CHAPTER 11	FOUNDING FATHERS FROM PENNSYLVANIA	98
	William Clingan, George Clymer, Thomas Firzsimons, Benjamin Franklin, Jared Ingersoll, Jr., Thomas Mifflin, Robert Morris, John Morton, Joseph Reed, Daniel Roberdeau, George Ross, Benjamin Russ, James Smith, John Bayard Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson	
CHAPTER 12	FOUNDING FATHERS FROM RHODE ISLAND	113
	John Collin, William Ellery, Stephen Hopkin, Henry Marchant	
CHAPTER 13	FOUNDING FATHERS FROM SOUTH CAROLINA	117
	Pierce Butler, William Henry Drayton, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Richard Hutson, Henry Laurens, Thomas Lynch, Jr., John Mathews, Arthur Middleton, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Charles Pinckney III, John Rutledge, Edward Rutledge	

Thomas Adams, John Banister, John Blair, Jr., Carter Braxton, Benjamin Harrison, John Harvie, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Francis (Lightfoot) Lee, Richard Henry Lee, James Madison, John Marshall, George Mason, James McClurg, James Monroe, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Edmund Randolph, George Washington, George Wythe

LIST OF REFERENCES

147

DEFINITIONS

148

INDEX

162

Tables

TABLE I	The Signers of the Declaration of Independence	3
TABLE II	The Signers of the Articles of Confederation	4
TABLE III	The Delegates to the Constitutional Convention	5
TABLE IV	Summary of Participants in All Three Documents	6

Preface

I was working on a book about the Federalist papers and talking to my wife about the founding fathers (in this case, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison) when my wife asked me, “Who were the other founding fathers?” I did not know how to answer her, so I promised to find out and write her a book on the subject. Thus, this book came into being and is dedicated to her.

The first order of business was to define “founding fathers.” I discovered the founding fathers were generally considered those who signed or participated in the creation of the three major political documents of our republic: the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the United States Constitution. The three documents were produced in a twelve-year period of dramatic change, commencing in 1776 with the break with Great Britain and ending in 1788, when the “people” ratified our current form of government. Because of the foresight, courage, and virtue displayed by these men, we have been blessed with liberty and prosperity for over two hundred years. These men deserve to be known and appreciated for they truly made a difference in our lives.

The founding fathers came from all classes and occupations and had a broad view of history and political reality. Leading citizens from each state took part, but those from Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, and New England made particularly significant contributions.

The Virginians were actively involved throughout this formative period, taking a leadership role after 1760 in all major confrontations with England, from the Stamp Act Congress in 1765 to Richard Henry Lee’s resolution for independence in the Continental Congress of 1776. Virginia furnished four of our first five presidents, the commander in chief of the Continental Army, and one of the strongest of the chief justices of the United States Supreme Court in our country’s history, John Marshall. The Virginians made key contributions to the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights. Some historians have speculated that Virginia’s leaders understood the meaning of liberty better than other leaders because Virginia was a slave state. Thus, Patrick Henry knew of what he spoke when he said, “Give me liberty or give me death,” for he had seen the effects of slavery.

Massachusetts gave us John and Samuel Adams; Connecticut, Roger Sherman, who signed all three documents; Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin and Robert Morris, who ensured the Revolutionary War was financed; and New York, Alexander Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris, and John Jay. Some of these names are familiar to all of us, but many are virtually unknown to most Americans. These men, along with

the rest of the founding fathers, are presented in this book in a summary form in order to highlight their contributions to the political and public life of their day.

I hope you find this book both interesting and informative. The format should allow you to easily and quickly gain insight into each of these patriots.

Jack Stanfield

AMERICA'S FOUNDING FATHERS

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INTRODUCTION

WHO WERE THE FOUNDING FATHERS?

This book provides thumbnail sketches of the founding fathers of the United States. These men produced the three great documents that led to the creation of our nation. The first of the documents was the Declaration of Independence, which boldly declared our right to be free from the government of Great Britain. The second was the Articles of Confederation, which created the first confederacy of the thirteen individual states and vested in a national government certain enumerated powers to conduct the war of independence and manage national affairs. The third was the United States Constitution, which was the foundation of the second confederation and has proven flexible enough to have successfully guided the government of our great country for more than two hundred years. These documents were written and approved in a twelve-year period (1776-1788) that changed the destiny of the North American continent. The country was fortunate to have such exceptional citizens in this truly amazing time.

The signers of the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation comprise a partial list of the founding fathers. Robert R. Livingston has been included in the list as a contributor to the Declaration of Independence, since he was on the committee that framed it. Unfortunately, he did not get instructions from his state in time to sign it. The fifty-five delegates who actually attended the Great Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 make up the contributors to the U.S. Constitution. All have been included, although some of those delegates left early and did not sign the document, and three of those present on the last day of the convention refused to sign for various reasons. Still, all participated in shaping the Constitution that emerged from the convention. Some also helped create the set of amendments known as the Bill of Rights. Thus, all should be considered founding fathers. In addition, others are included who were not directly involved in producing these three documents. They nevertheless played a major role in the declaring of independence and the shaping of the early government. These include Patrick Henry, John Jay, George Marshall, and James Monroe. George Marshall more than any other established the principle that the Constitution was the fundamental law of the land, and as such, should be

used to interpret the constitutionality of the nation's federal and state laws.

Each of the founding fathers is described in a thumbnail manner rather than in a long biographical form, making for ease of use. A standard format allows a quick review of the pertinent information about each individual and his public accomplishments. Activities were dated when the information was readily available, and the sources of data are listed in the reference section. The intent of the work is to provide a format that readily informs.

The three tables below list the names of those who were a party to a particular document. The summary table shows all of the individuals and indicates the documents with which they were involved. The tables are organized by states in alphabetical order, and individual names are also alphabetized. The book follows this same order. There are two exceptions. Gouverneur Morris is listed with the state of New York although he represented Massachusetts at the Constitutional Convention. Elbridge Gerry is listed in the state of Massachusetts even though he represented Rhode Island when signing the Declaration of Independence.

The summary table shows that only two individuals signed all three documents: Robert Morris of Pennsylvania and Roger Sherman of Connecticut. Eighteen individuals signed two of the documents, and 160 people directly participated in the preparation of the documents. They were both poor and wealthy, self-made, lawyers, planters, merchants, physicians, scholars, farmers, soldiers, and ministers. In other words, they came from the broad spectrum of colonial life. They gave much, in some cases all they had, to obtain the freedom we enjoy today.

As with any subject of great importance, these men had some significant disagreements on what was best and right for America, but when decisions were made, they upheld the law and participated in the process of governing. They worked within the political system to try to change the features they disagreed with. They understood that the Union and its preservation were paramount to the future greatness of the American Empire that was envisioned. They held the Union dear!

Like the founding fathers, many of the items and events referenced in the sketches may be unfamiliar. Therefore, a fairly extensive set of definitions has been included. Additionally, in Chapter 1, the stage is set for understanding the public accomplishments listed in the sketches by presenting a brief synopsis of the events influencing their lives and actions.

TABLE I
The Signers of the Declaration of Independence

<u>CONNECTICUT</u>	[Robert Livingston]*
Samuel Huntington	Lewis Morris
Roger Sherman	
William Williams	<u>NORTH CAROLINA</u>
Oliver Wolcott	Joseph Hewes
	William Hooper
<u>DELAWARE</u>	John Penn
Thomas McKean	
George Read	<u>PENNSYLVANIA</u>
Caesar Rodney	George Clymer
	Benjamin Franklin
<u>GEORGIA</u>	Robert Morris
Button Gwinnett	John Morton
Layman Hall	George Ross
George Walton	Benjamin Rush
	James Smith
<u>MARYLAND</u>	George Taylor
Charles Carroll of	James Wilson
Carrollton	
Samuel Chase	<u>RHODE ISLAND</u>
William Paca	William Ellery
Thomas Stone	Elbridge Gerry
	Stephen Hopkins
<u>MASSACHUSETTS</u>	<u>SOUTH CAROLINA</u>
John Adams	Thomas Heyward, Jr.
Samuel Adams	Thomas Lynch, Jr.
John Hancock	Arthur Middleton
Robert Treat Paine	Edward Rutledge
<u>NEW HAMPSHIRE</u>	<u>VIRGINIA</u>
Josiah Bartlett	Carter Braxton
Mathew Thornton	Benjamin Harrison
William Whipple	Thomas Jefferson
<u>NEW JERSEY</u>	Francis Lightfoot Lee
Abraham Clark	Richard Henry Lee
John Hart	Thomas Nelson, Jr.
Francis Hopkinson	George Wythe
Richard Stockton	
John Witherspoon	
<u>NEW YORK</u>	
William Floyd	
Francis Lewis	
Phillip Livingston	

* On committee that prepared document, but did not sign it.

TABLE II
The Signers of the Articles of Confederation

CONNECTICUT

Andrew Adams
Titus Hosmer
Samuel Huntington
Roger Sherman
Oliver Wolcott

DELAWARE

John Dickinson
Thomas McKean
Nickolas Van Dyke

GEORGIA

Edward Langworthy
Edward Telfair
John Walton

MARYLAND

Daniel Carroll
John Hanson

MASSACHUSETTS

Samuel Adams
Francis Dana
Elbridge Gerry
John Hancock
Samuel Holten
James Lovell

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Josiah Bartlett
John Wentworth, Jr.

NEW JERSEY

Nathaniel Scudder
John Witherspoon

NEW YORK

James Duane
William Duer
Francis Lewis
Gouverneur Morris

NORTH CAROLINA

Cornellius Harnett, Jr.
John Penn
John William

PENNSYLVANIA

William Clingan
Robert Morris
Joseph Reed
Daniel Roberdeau
Jonathan Bayard Smith

RHODE ISLAND

John Collins
William Ellery
Henry Marchant

SOUTH CAROLINA

William Henry Drayton
Thomas Heyward, Jr.
Richard Hutson
Henry Laurens
John Mathews

VIRGINIA

Thomas Adams
John Banister
John Harvie
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Richard Henry Lee

TABLE III
The Delegates to the Constitutional Convention

<p><u>CONNECTICUT</u> [Oliver Ellsworth]* William Samuel Johnson Roger Sherman</p> <p><u>DELAWARE</u> Richard Bassett Gunning Bedford Jacob Broom John Dickinson George Read</p> <p><u>GEORGIA</u> Abraham Baldwin William Few [William Houstoun] [William Leigh Pierce]</p> <p><u>MARYLAND</u> Daniel Carroll Daniel of St Thomas Jenifer [Luther Martin] James McHenry [John Francis Mercer]</p> <p><u>MASSACHUSETTS</u> [Elbridge Gerry] Nathaniel Gorham Rufus King [Caleb Strong]</p> <p><u>NEW HAMPSHIRE</u> Nicholas Gilman John Langdon</p> <p><u>NEW JERSEY</u> David Brearly Jonathan Dayton [William Churchill Houston] William Livingston</p>	<p>William Paterson</p> <p><u>NEW YORK</u> Alexander Hamilton John Lansing Gouverneur Morris⁺ [Robert Yates]</p> <p><u>NORTH CAROLINA</u> William Blount [William Richardson Davie] [Alexander Martin] Richard Dobb Spaight Hugh Williamson</p> <p><u>PENNSYLVANIA</u> George Clymer Thomas Fitzsimons Benjamin Franklin Jared Ingersoll, Jr. Thomas Mifflin Robert Morris James Wilson</p> <p><u>SOUTH CAROLINA</u> Pierce Butler Charles Cotesworth Pinckney Charles Pinckney III John Rutledge</p> <p><u>VIRGINIA</u> John Blair, Jr. James Madison [George Mason] [James McClurg] [Edmond Randolph] George Washington [George Wythe]</p>
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* Individuals in brackets [] are delegates that did not sign the proposed Constitution

⁺ Represented Massachusetts at the Convention even though he lived in New York

TABLE IV
Summary of Participants

State Delegates	Declaration Of Independence	Articles Of Confederation	Constitution
Connecticut			
Roger Sherman	X	X	X
William Samuel Johnston [Oliver Ellsworth]			X X
Samuel Huntington	X	X	
Oliver Wolcott	X	X	
Titus Hosmer		X	
Andrew Adams		X	
William Williams	X		
Delaware			
George Read	X		X
Gunning Bedford			X
John Dickinson		X	X
Richard Bassett			X
Jacob Broom			X
Thomas McKean	X	X	
Nicholas Van Dyke		X	
Caesar Rodney	X		
Georgia			
William Few			X
Abraham Baldwin			X
[William Leigh Pierce]			X
[William Houstoun]			X
John Walton		X	
Edward Telfair		X	
Edward Langworthy		X	
Button Gwinnett	X		
Layman Hall	X		
George Walton	X		
Maryland			
James McHenry			X
Daniel Carroll		X	X
Daniel of St Thomas Jenifer			X
[Luther Martin]			X
[John Francis Mercer]			X
John Hanson		X	
Samuel Chase	X		
Thomas Stone	X		
William Paca	X		
Charles Carroll of Carrollton	X		

TABLE IV
(Continued)
Summary of Participants

State Delegates	Declaration Of Independence	Articles Of Confederation	Constitution
Massachusetts			
Rufus King			X
Nathaniel Gorham			X
[Elbridge Gerry]		X	X
[Caleb Strong]			X
John Hancock	X	X	
Samuel Adams	X	X	
Francis Dana		X	
James Lovell		X	
Samuel Holten		X	
John Adams	X		
Robert Treat Paine	X		
New Jersey			
William Livingston			X
David Brearly			X
William Paterson			X
Jonathan Dayton			X
[William Churchill Houston]			X
John Witherspoon	X	X	
Nathaniel Scudder		X	
Francis Hopkinson	X		
John Hart	X		
Abraham Clark	X		
Richard Stockton	X		
New York			
Alexander Hamilton			X
[Robert Yates]			X
[John Lansing]			X
James Duane		X	
Francis Lewis	X	X	
William Duer		X	
Gouverneur Morris		X	
William Floyd	X		
Phillip Livingston	X		
Lewis Morris	X		
Robert R. Livingston	X		

TABLE IV
(Continued)
Summary of Participants

State Delegates	Declaration Of Independence	Articles Of Confederation	Constitution
North Carolina			
William Blount			X
Richard Dobbs Spaight			X
Hugh Williamson			X
[Alexander Martin]			X
[William Richardson Davis]			X
John Penn	X	X	
Cornellius Harnett, Jr.		X	
John Williams		X	
William Hooper	X		
Joseph Hewes	X		
New Hampshire			
John Langdon			X
Nicholas Gilman			X
Josiah Bartlett	X	X	
John Wentworth, Jr.		X	
William Whipple	X		
Mathew Thornton	X		
Pennsylvania			
Benjamin Franklin	X		X
Thomas Mifflin			X
Robert Morris	X	X	X
George Clymer	X		X
Thomas Fitzsimons			X
Jared Ingersoll, Jr.			X
[James Wilson]			X
Daniel Roberdeau		X	
Jonathan Bayard Smith		X	
William Clingan		X	
Joseph Reed		X	
Benjamin Rush	X		
John Morton	X		
James Smith	X		
George Taylor	X		
George Ross	X		

TABLE IV
(Continued)
Summary of Participants

State Delegates	Declaration Of Independence	Articles Of Confederation	Constitution
Rhode Island			
William Ellery	X	X	
Henry Marchant		X	
John Collins		X	
Elbridge Gerry	X		
Stephen Hopkins	X		
South Carolina			
John Rutledge			X
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney			X
Charles Pinckney III			X
Pierce Butler			X
Henry Laurens		X	
William Henry Drayton		X	
John Mathews		X	
Richard Hutson		X	
Thomas Heyward, Jr.	X	X	
Edward Rutledge	X		
Thomas Lynch, Jr.	X		
Arthur Middleton	X		
Virginia			
John Blair, Jr.			X
James Madison, Jr.			X
George Washington			X
[George Wythe]	X		X
[George Mason]			X
[Edmund Randolph]			X
[James McClurg]			X
Richard Henry Lee	X	X	
John Banister		X	
Thomas Adams		X	
John Harvie		X	
Francis Lightfoot Lee	X	X	
Thomas Jefferson	X		
Benjamin Harrison	X		
Thomas Nelson, Jr.	X		
Carter Braxton	X		

[] Participant did not signed the Constitution

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE STAGE

Major changes occurred in the population of the British colonies in North America in the 1700s. These changes helped set the stage for continuing conflicts with Great Britain over colonial rights. The colonies were prospering, and their representative assemblies were growing stronger, which helped make possible a certain amount of cooperation among the thirteen independent colonies. These facts, plus miscalculations by both the British Parliament and the colonial leaders, led to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War.

Our story really begins in the 1760s with the close of the French and Indian War and the emergence of greater colonial prosperity. The colonial economy was growing along with the population, which had grown from a quarter of a million in 1700 to approximately two and a half million by 1775. The population would double again in a quarter of a century. The increase was fed by the influx of immigrants looking for a better life in a new land and the norm of having large families. The population went from mostly English to mixed ancestry, including those whose ancestors came from Germany, Scotland, or Ireland. This shift in national background made ruling the colonies more difficult, since the sense of the English ancestry in the colonies and the loyalty it instilled were being diluted. In addition, by 1775, over a half million slaves were employed in the southern colonies. Unlike the slaves in the south, the few slaves and free blacks in the north were not essential to its economy, so the attitude towards slavery in the two regions was quite different. This difference would affect the relationships between these two regions from the end of the Revolutionary War.

The colonies were also quite urban. Many of the colonists lived in cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Newport, and Charleston as well as in towns of 1000 or more inhabitants. There were wealthy merchants as well as wealthy plantation owners.

The Emerging Political Awareness and Collaboration Among the Colonies

The colonies began to perceive the strength of union and that they were independent entities deserving special treatment from Great

Britain. They referred to themselves as Americans as opposed to British. These colonies were separately established and separately governed. They had their own governors, councils, and assemblies with a great deal of independent authority. The adult, white male property owners in the various colonies elected the representatives to their assemblies. By contrast, the upper houses or councils and the governors were chosen in various ways, depending upon the type of colony. For instance, the directors of corporately chartered colonies like Rhode Island elected the council and governor. The charters of proprietary colonies were granted to individuals, and royal colonies belonged to the crown outright.

Though independent, the colonies learned to cooperate when they were threatened by external events. This cooperate was made possible because of their history of representative assemblies with the authority to make laws and levy taxes within specified areas. They had active representative assemblies for a long time and looked upon them as an “innate right” to govern themselves. They also had strong leaders, illustrated by the various independent actions and risks that these individuals were willing to take, starting with the Stamp Act Congress.

The event that forever changed the political climate in the colonies and between the colonies and Great Britain was the French and Indian War, which erupted in 1754 and ended in 1763. Even before the war, the colonial assemblies had a history of a significant level of independence of action that would not be easily given up after the war, and this attitude helped shape their future revolutionary responses. This war, which threatened the very existence of the colonies, was a powerful force for uniting them and helped to expand the authority of their assemblies. During this crisis, the colonies learned to communicate with each other and to understand their common rights.

But the British government became uneasy when these independent colonial assemblies and their leaders refused to provide militia to support British expeditions and the fact that the assemblies also took advantage of the situation to increase their power. The British government also had to contend with the fact that some of the colonists traded with the French (the enemy), as there was large profits to be made. Thus, after the war, the British Parliament quickly moved to reestablish its control over the colonies. Parliament’s actions, which were taken without consulting the colonies, served to increase tensions between the colonies and England. Moreover, these actions raised the fear in the colonies of the loss of the authority for independent action that they had for so long enjoyed.

The political situation in Great Britain was further compounded by the realization that the American colonies had benefited substantially from a war that had caused mounting debt for England. Economic difficulties made the British government reluctant to pay for the colonies’

peacetime defense. They saw no alternative but to tax the colonies. Believing that they had the right to legislate for the British Empire as a whole, Parliament passed the Stamp Act of 1765 without consulting the colonies. This tax had high emotional impact because Great Britain had not tried to directly tax the colonies before.

This act united the colonies sufficiently to fight what they considered unfair taxation by the British government. The colonies' collaborative efforts helped establish the approaches used later in their struggle for independence. These approaches included an inter-colonial congress (the Stamp Act Congress), non-importation agreements, Committees of Correspondence, and the societies of the Sons of Liberty that were used to enforce the non-importation agreements and to create favorable public opinion. They also used civil disobedience (mob actions) to threaten local officials. The effectiveness of these approaches was validated when the colonists gained their objectives through their use.

Americans, who felt they had already borne their share of the war effort, resented the taxes levied by Parliament, and argued that only their assemblies had the authority to impose taxes, not a Parliament in which they were not represented. By 1770, radical spokesmen (whom we now call patriots) argued that the colonies only owed their allegiance to the Crown and not to Parliament. The colonies were raising basic constitutional questions about the sharing of power that became their basis of noncompliance. Conversely, the British government under Prime Minister George Grenville argued that sovereignty could not be divided; Parliament and the Crown together composed the supreme governing power of the empire.

This whole situation was made worse because the people living in Great Britain thought of themselves as superior to their American "cousins" and considered the purpose of the colonies to be the enrichment of the mother country. Consequently, their perception of what was fair and just was quite different from the colonists.

Miscalculations on Both Sides Led to the Revolutionary War

The stage was set for confrontation, which came rapidly, considering that it probably took three months to sail between the two countries. The success achieved with the tactics of 1765 (that is, the repeal of the Stamp Act) emboldened the colonies to try the same types of actions in the 1770s. They made use of petitions, non-importation agreements, civil disobedience, Committees of Correspondence, and an inter-colonial congress. At the brink of the Revolutionary War, they also created Committees of Safety to run the colonial governments. The Sons of Liberty were again active in making preparations to defend the

colonies and to encourage public support of the colonial assemblies and the congress. By now the British government had had its fill of colonial disobedience. Parliament and the king's council were determined to bring the rebellious colonies back under their control and to assert the absolute right of Parliament to legislate for the colonies as well as for the citizens of Great Britain.

Parliament intended the so-called Intolerable Acts (May 1774) and the closing of the port of Boston (the Boston Port Act, June 1774) to coerce the colonies into obedience, but the opposite resulted. These actions fully united and energized the colonies and caused the formation of a provincial congress at Salem to serve as a government for Massachusetts with John Hancock as president. These actions also led to the calling of the first Continental Congress, whose purpose was to seek redress from the king and to coordinate the actions of the thirteen colonies - in effect, to form a general government. This congress met in Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia in September 1774 with 56 delegates present; it issued a petition to the king and established another boycott of trade with Britain. Before adjourning in October of that year, it called for a second congress in 1775 if the dispute was not resolved equably.

In December 1774, Americans attacked Fort William and Mary at Portsmouth, New Hampshire to seize its gunpowder. In the scrimmage, British Captain John Cochran was injured. After December, Americans successfully enforced the non-importation of British goods further impacting the British economy. The patriots were now in control of most of the colonies except Georgia.

In 1775, without an acceptable response to its petitions, the Continental Congress organized a general government, made provision for an army, and appointed George Washington as commander in chief. They argued that these actions were within their rights as British citizens. At this time neither the Continental Congress nor the public was ready to declare independence. What the public wanted most was reconciliation with Britain through the intervention of the Crown. Richard Penn and Dr. Arthur Lee brought a petition to London in August 1775 to negotiate a peace, but it was rejected.

Clearly, the two sides had become unwilling or unable to retreat from their entrenched positions as a way to peacefully resolve their differences. In 1776, after attempts at reconciliation had failed and Thomas Paine's pamphlet, Common Sense, had stirred up the people, the country was ready for independence. At this point, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia offered a resolution in the Continental Congress. "Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of a right to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connections between them and the State of Great Britain, is, and ought to be totally dissolved." John Adams seconded the