

Creation of Our Nation: The Revolutionary War

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December 19th, 2018

Introduction

As many people already know, the United States was not always free. Gaining independence was not easy, but easy never changed anything. The Revolutionary War was the largest and most monumental conflict of the 18th century. It brought joy, grief, and freedom to millions of people worldwide. Without this detrimental yet essential war, the United States of America would not even exist. Through the use of critical explanations of historical information, I will analyze how the greatest country in the world was formed.

The War Begins

Before the war even started, there were signs that a large, more significant affair would arise from the strife in the American Colonies. The British Empire implemented a multitude of tariffs and taxes on the colonists in order to repay their debt from the French and Indian War. However, even though the British basically fought the war for them, the Colonists still believed that they shouldn't be taxed. Some notable taxes that angered the Colonists include: The Stamp Act of 1765, the Townshend Tariffs of 1767 and the Tea Act of 1773.¹ These taxes, along with a multitude of others, extremely frustrated the colonists. Eventually, the first armed conflict of the Revolution would take place. Colonial resistance led to violence in 1770, when British soldiers opened fire on a mob of colonists, killing five men in what was known as The Boston Massacre.² Conflict in the states would only escalate. By 1775, armed combat between Colonial militiamen and British soldiers erupted in what is known as the Battle of Lexington and Concord.³ This is

¹ History.com Editors, "Revolutionary War," HISTORY, last modified September 11, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/american-revolution-history>.

² History.com Editors, "Revolutionary War," HISTORY, last modified September 11, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/american-revolution-history>.

³ "Revolutionary War." American Battlefield Trust. Accessed December 20, 2018. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war>.

classified as the first official battle of the Revolutionary War. Fighting in North America would range from 1775-1781, although it did not formally end until 1783. The colonists were furiously irate that they didn't have a place in the British government, so they were determined to change that. Many claimed that King George III was a tyrant and that there should not be "taxation without representation". The Declaration of Independence, a document stating the Colonies' frustration and grievances with the British, was approved by the Continental Congress on July 4th, 1776.⁴ Not many who were involved in the war would have predicted the outcome of it.

Britain's Outcome

When the Revolutionary War finally ended, there were various results and impacts, some more significant than others. Despite losing the war, Britain suffered from very few detrimental results. However, they were victim to many trivial consequences. Some of these less important outcomes include political upheaval and a decrease in the credibility of the British Army. Not many British leaders stayed in power for long, and what was known as the most professional army was now sufficiently lacking moral. Although these fallouts still hold some significance, they paled in comparison to Britain's larger detriments. Not only did Britain lose control of all of its American Colonies, it became economically drained. This caused Britain's financial debt to skyrocket, turning its trade routes to America into shambles due to import and export imbalances.⁵ Nowadays, Britain currently trades with many countries around the world(including the United States), but one must think how much more the British would earn if they kept hold of the American Colonies.

⁴ "Declaration of Independence | History, Significance, & Text." Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed December 20, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Declaration-of-Independence>.

⁵ "Effects of the American Revolution: Summary & History - Video & Lesson Transcript." Study.com. Accessed December 20, 2018. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/effects-of-the-american-revolution.html>.

Global Outcome

Although much of the Revolutionary War's impacts involved Britain, there were still other countries who were affected from this global conflict. After successfully defeating the British, the American colonies were now known as "The United States of America." Despite this, they were still technically *Colonies* for several years after the war. It stayed like this until 1790 when the colonies were legally considered *States*, with Delaware being the first.⁶ Also in North America, many people who were loyalists throughout the war either moved to Britain or Canada.⁷ Elsewhere in the world, many nations began their own revolution, inspired by the courage and unity shown by the colonies. One such nation was France, with its own revolution lasting from 1789 to the late 1790's.⁸ This was caused due to the French Monarchy (which was on the brink of bankruptcy) increasing taxes to pay off the debt it made from supporting the colonies in the Revolutionary War. In Ireland, a failed rebellion in 1798 capped off a series of revolts attempting to release Great Britain's grasp on them. Overall, the American Revolution impacted many countries economically and inspired new forms of political ideas and government across the world.

Personal Reflection

In current society, not many people know much about the Revolutionary War, let alone have an opinion of it. Nonetheless, my opinion of the war is actually quite conflicted. I feel like the Colonies should have paid the taxes and just accepted the fact that Britain basically won the

⁶ "Colonies to States ***." Colonial America for Kids ***. Accessed December 20, 2018.
<https://www.landofthebrave.info/colonies-to-states.htm>.

⁷ "What Happened To British Loyalists After The Revolutionary War?" NPR.org. Last modified July 3, 2015.
<https://www.npr.org/2015/07/03/419824333/what-happened-to-british-loyalists-after-the-revolutionary-war>.

⁸ Editors, History.com. "French Revolution." HISTORY. Last modified August 28, 2018.
<https://www.history.com/topics/france/french-revolution>.

Seven Years War for them. However, I also think that Britain increasing taxes and quartering soldiers in America was quite a low-blow. Overall, I honestly think that the war was justified, but for some of the wrong reasons. I believe that the Colonies going to war for just taxation would not have been justified. This is because at that time, British citizens were paying more than ten times the amount of taxes compared to the Colonies.⁹ Nevertheless, I do accept the Colonies' war justification on Britain for everything else, including taxes. Even if I believe that some parts of the war were not justified, I really do admire the grit and determination of the American people throughout the whole conflict. Despite the French providing much of the equipment and fight the British in the sea, much of the land battles consisted of American soldiers. It really is astonishing to wonder exactly what the briefly-trained American Colonists were thinking going up against battle-hardened soldiers in a professional army. Yet I think the British strategy of trying to control major cities was a bad idea. Britain's American Colonies were much larger than its homeland (land wise), and controlling a small fraction of it just would not be enough to rout the Americans. I did feel bad about France going into debt, but they had to do everything in their power to stop the British Empire from growing. I believe that in many ways, Britain's loss in the Revolutionary War was the start of their slow decline as being the world's number one superpower.

Conclusion

Through the use of critical analyzations of historical events, one should now have a better overall perception and a stronger overall opinion of the Revolutionary War. Furthermore, it is extremely important to realize that once one's right are limited or taken away completely, a

⁹ "What We Get Wrong About Taxes and the American Revolution." PBS NewsHour. Last modified December 26, 2016. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/what-we-get-wrong-about-taxes-american-revolution>.

conflict will follow. This is what happened with the Colonists, and it's what would happen with a number of other countries afterward. With virtually all the cards stacked against them, the American Colonists did what they believed in and did not stop until they won. This determination is a defining feature of America throughout its history, and it can be first credited to those who fought for our nation's freedom. Not only was the Revolutionary War a worldwide trendsetter, it can also be credited for spawning the greatest nation in the world, the United States of America. In conclusion, learning about the Revolutionary War has given me a greater understanding of the political significance in any war throughout history.

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