

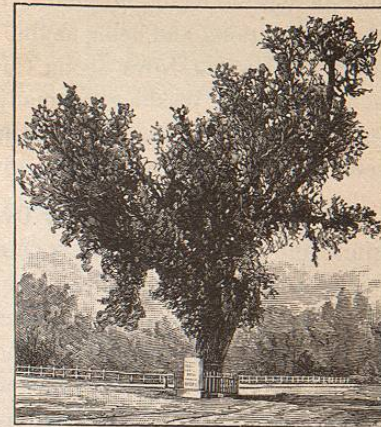
works had a like disastrous result; a third assault was successful. The ammunition of the Americans had given out, and they slowly retreated from Charlestown peninsula with a loss of about four hundred and fifty. The British lost over one thousand killed and wounded.

263. Second Continental Congress. — Three weeks after the battle of Lexington the second Continental Congress met at Philadelphia. John Hancock, of Massachusetts, was chosen president of the Congress, to succeed Peyton Randolph, of Virginia, who had been called home. While not yet ready for independence, Congress determined to make united resistance to British oppression. They voted to raise a "continental army" of twenty thousand, whose expenses were to be apportioned to the several colonies. The New England troops around Boston were to be adopted as the nucleus of the army. One of the most important acts of Congress was the selection of a commander-in-chief. George Washington, of Virginia, by his skillful management of the colonial troops in Braddock's disastrous expedition in the French and Indian war, and by the ability he displayed in the subsequent capture of Fort Duquesne, had become the most prominent American soldier. At the suggestion of John Adams, he was unanimously chosen to command the American forces (June 19, two days after the battle of Bunker Hill).

264. Washington Takes Command. — It was just two weeks after the battle of Bunker Hill that Washington reached the vicinity of Boston, and took command of the patriot army. The men were undisciplined, poorly supplied with guns and ammunition, enlisted for short periods of time, and dependent for support upon their various local authorities. Besides all these difficulties, the commander-in-chief had no organized central government to rely on. Undaunted, he began at once the task

of organizing, drilling, and equipping the troops. Eight months were spent by Washington in this work and in strengthening the fortifications around Boston, while thoughtless critics were censuring him for his apparent inactivity.

265. Expedition against Canada. — An expedition against Canada was decided upon for the double purpose of preventing an attack from that quarter and of inducing the Canadians to join their southern neighbors against the British. A thousand men under



Washington Elm (under which Washington took Command).

Colonel Benedict Arnold left Washington's army, and advanced by way of the Kennebec River and the Maine woods. After a journey of frightful struggle with starvation, cold, and fatigue, they were joined by a force under General Montgomery, who had traveled due north from Ticonderoga by the Lake Champlain route. Montreal was captured by Montgomery, and the combined forces, now numbering hardly twelve hundred men, attacked Quebec. Montgomery was killed in the assault, and Arnold was desperately wounded. Part of the attacking force was captured; the rest withdrew. Soon afterward Montreal was re-taken by the British, and the remnant of the colonial army was driven from Canada. Thus ended in disastrous failure the Canada expedition.

266. Evacuation of Boston. — Dorchester Heights overlook Boston from the south, and command the city even more effectually than does Bunker Hill. Having at last, in the spring of

1776, received some cannon heavy enough for his purpose, Washington secretly fortified these heights. The British, remembering the lesson of Bunker Hill, refrained from attacking the fortifications, and being unable to hold the city longer, sailed away to Halifax, Nova Scotia (March 17). By this brilliant achievement of Washington, many valuable military stores fell into the hands of the American army, and New England was freed from British troops for the first time in six years.

267. The King's Authority Overthrown; Fighting in Virginia and North Carolina.—One by one the royal governors fled from the country, and the people proceeded to choose their successors and organize governments similar to the state governments of to-day. The governors of Georgia and New Jersey, having failed to resign their offices, were arrested and kept under guard. Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia, seized a quantity of powder at Williamsburg and tried to arm the slaves, promising freedom to those who would join him. His force was beaten by the Virginians near Norfolk, and he sought refuge in an English ship. He afterward avenged himself by setting fire to Norfolk. In North Carolina a battle occurred at Moore's Creek (February 1776), in which one thousand militiamen completely routed a force of sixteen hundred Tories, who were on their way to the coast to cooperate with an expected British fleet. This battle aroused the Carolinians as Lexington did the New Englanders. Ten thousand men quickly assembled to resist the landing of the British.

268. Attack on the Carolina Coast.—The British were led to believe that with the aid of Tory sympathizers in the colony, North Carolina could be easily conquered, and thus the Southern colonies could be cut in two. Several vessels under Sir Henry Clinton were sent from Boston to the North Carolina coast, where they were to cooperate with the fleet under Admiral Parker, which had sailed from Ireland. Storms delayed

Parker's fleet, and the bold spirit of the North Carolina patriots deterred Clinton from attempting a landing (§ 267). The combined British fleet then sailed south with the intention of taking Charleston, the largest city in the South. The Continental Congress sent General Charles Lee with a force of Virginians and North Carolinians to relieve the town.

269. Battle of Fort Moultrie.—On an island just outside Charleston harbor, Colonel Moultrie had thrown up a fortification of palmetto logs (afterward called Fort Moultrie). The British fleet opened a heavy fire upon this fort (June 28). Meanwhile Clinton landed some troops on the east end of the island, so as to attack the fort on land and sea at the same time. The fire from the British guns was incessant, but their balls either flew above the low fortifications or sank harmlessly into its spongy palmetto walls. The Americans fired less frequently, but their well-aimed shots proved so destructive to the British forces that they withdrew from the attack with a loss of life six times as great as that of their opponents.¹ After

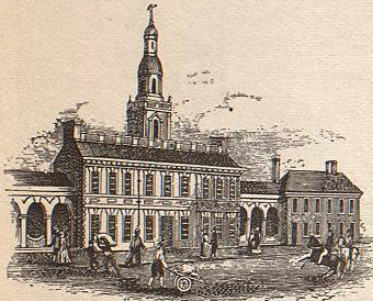


Jasper replacing the Flag at Fort Moultrie.

¹ In the midst of the battle, the flag which floated over the smoking guns of the fort suddenly disappeared from view. A British shot had broken the flagstaff, and it fell outside the walls. While the balls were flying thickest a brave young officer,

spending three weeks repairing his damaged ships, Parker sailed away to New York.

270. Independence Declared. — In the early spring of 1776, soon after the battle of Moore's Creek, North Carolina authorized her delegates in Congress to concur with delegates from other colonies in declaring independence. In May, Massachusetts and Virginia separately renounced their dependence on Great Britain. At the same time Virginia went a step further and instructed her delegates to propose to Congress "to declare the United Colonies free and independent States." In



The Old State House, Philadelphia, in which the Declaration of Independence was adopted and the Constitution of the United States framed.

obedience to these instructions, on the 8th of June Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, moved "that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States." This motion was seconded by John Adams, of Massachusetts. After warm discussion the question was postponed until July 1, in order that express instructions might be obtained from all the colonies. By that time every colony except New York had approved the step proposed, and on July 4 Congress unanimously adopted a formal Declaration of Independence. The delegates from New York refrained from voting; but five days later New York formally ratified the Declaration, and her delegates then signed it. The news of the adoption of the Declaration, which was received at the same time as that of the brilliant success at Fort Moultrie, created the wildest joy

Sergeant Jasper, sprang over the defenses, in plain view of the enemy, seized the flag, and planted it again on the walls of the fort.

throughout the country. Everywhere there were torch-light processions, ringing of bells, firing of guns, and other signs of delight and approval.

271. The Declaration. — The Declaration was written by Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia, chairman of a committee of Congress, of which John Adams and Benjamin Franklin were members. It contains among other statements the following:

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident:—That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government. . . . The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations. . . . To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. . . .

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people. . . .

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction [Parliament] foreign to our constitutions, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; . . .

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world;

For imposing taxes on us without our consent;

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury; . . .

For taking away our charters; . . .

For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. . . .

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. . . .

Our British brethren, . . . too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and consanguinity. We must, therefore, . . . hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, . . . do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved. . . . And, for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

272. The New Government. — At the same time that the committee was appointed to draw up the Declaration of Independence, another committee was named to prepare a plan of government. Twelve days after the adoption of the Declaration, this second committee submitted to Congress the first Constitution of the United States, entitled, "Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union between the States." It was adopted by Congress and then submitted to the several states for their ratification. In the year 1779 all the states had adopted the articles save Maryland, and Congress proceeded to exercise the powers thereby conferred. (See § 328.)

273. Summary of Beginnings of the War. — The war began in Massachusetts with the fight at Lexington (April 19, 1775), followed a month later by that of Bunker Hill, both of which had the effect of victories for the Americans. The second Continental Congress determined upon united resistance, and appointed Washington commander-in-chief of the Continental army. In the spring of 1776 Washington compelled the British to evacuate Boston. An expedition against Canada ended in failure. A party of militia gained a victory at Moore's Creek, North Carolina, over a large force of Tories. A British attack on Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, was defeated. On July 4, 1776, Congress declared the independence of the colonies, and steps were taken to form a new government.

274. Thought Questions. — How did it happen that the war began in Massachusetts rather than in some other colony? Why did not the battle of Alamance have such an immediate and widespread effect as the battle

of Lexington? Give instances of resistance to British tyranny in North Carolina; in Massachusetts; in Virginia; in Georgia; in New Jersey. Aside from Washington's preëminent fitness for the position of commander-in-chief, why was the selection of a Virginian or a Southerner desirable? What were the causes of the failure of the Canada expedition? How do you account for the refusal of the Canadians to join the colonies in resistance to Great Britain? If the British had succeeded at Fort Moultrie, what change in the theatre of war would probably have occurred? Which was the greater rebel, Washington or Bacon? What punishment were the American leaders liable to receive in case of the failure of their cause? What are "unalienable" rights? Name those mentioned in the Declaration of Independence. When, according to the Declaration, may a people alter or abolish their form of government? Which "injuries and usurpations" enumerated in the Declaration were most galling to the colonists? What was the full title of the first constitution of the United States? What does this title suggest to have been the leading idea of the framers of the Articles? What previous confederation had existed among the colonies?

III. STRUGGLE FOR THE MIDDLE STATES.

(July 1776–July 1778.)

275. The Plan of the British. — Great Britain now began active operations for the subjugation of her rebellious colonies. A powerful fleet under Admiral Howe was sent from England with an army of trained soldiers, including a strong force of hired German troops.¹ The plan of the British was to attack our coast-line in the center, and by forcibly occupying one or more of the Middle States to cut off New England from the South. Accordingly, for the next two years (July, 1776, to July, 1778) we shall find the war to consist mainly of a great struggle for the possession of the Hudson and Delaware rivers. The military events may be grouped under three heads: (1) Campaigns around New York City; (2) Campaigns in northern and central New York; (3) Campaigns around Philadelphia.

¹ These German troops were Hessians, from the district of Hesse-Cassel. The employment of foreign hirelings to subdue British-born subjects became a leading cause of American hatred for the mother-country.

1. CAMPAIGNS AROUND NEW YORK CITY.

276. Battle of Long Island. — In accordance with the plan just mentioned, New York was the first point of attack by the British. Washington suspecting their intention hastened from Boston to oppose them. In order to defend the city of New York and its approaches, he was compelled to scatter his forces over a line of twenty miles. About half of his army, under General Putnam, was stationed on Long Island at Brooklyn Heights, commanding the city. Howe's army soon arrived from Halifax, and was reinforced by the fleets of Admiral Howe (brother of the General) fresh from England, and of Admiral Parker, who had come from the defeat at Fort Moultrie. General Howe determined to capture Putnam's division,



General Howe.

and with that purpose landed twenty thousand soldiers on the southwest shore of Long Island. On the 27th of August a battle took place, in which the American advance-guard was defeated with the loss of more than one thousand prisoners, besides many killed and wounded. Before storming Putnam's main force on Brooklyn Heights, Howe waited for his fleet to come up. Meanwhile Washington crossed over to Long Island from New York, and having collected every available boat and fishing craft, safely conducted the remnant of Putnam's troops across to New York by night under cover of a heavy fog.

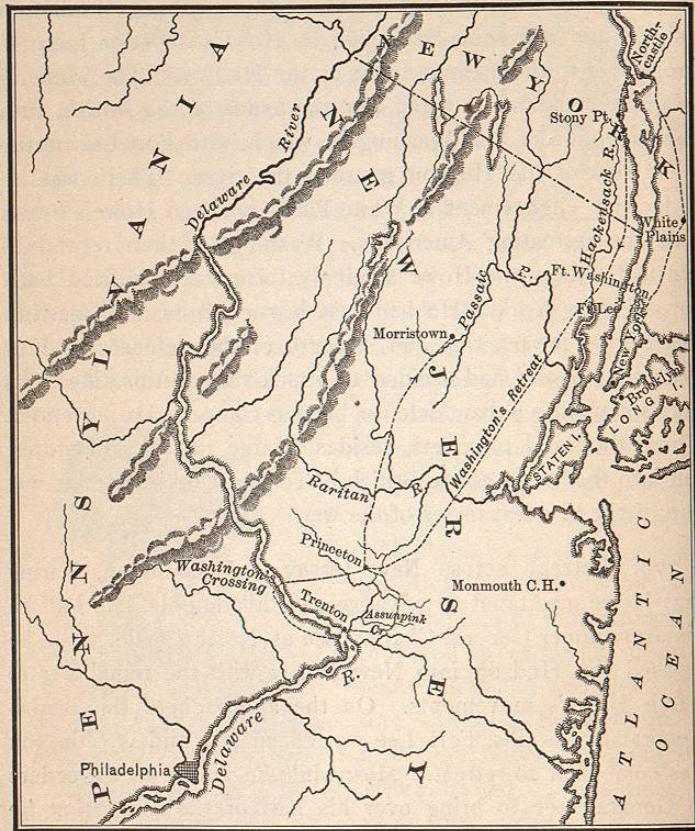


277. British occupy New York; Washington's Retreat Northward. — With the British fleet in possession of the harbor, and their troops occupying Brooklyn heights, it was impossible for the American army to hold New York. Washington withdrew from the city to the northern end of Manhattan Island, and was soon compelled by Howe's superior force to cross over to the mainland east of the Hudson. The whole of Manhattan Island thus fell into the hands of the British, with the exception of Fort Washington, which, with Fort Lee on the west bank of the Hudson, guarded the river. There was an indecisive engagement at White Plains between Howe's forces and the retreating Americans. Washington then retired to North Castle, while Howe suddenly turned and hurried back toward New York. He had just learned from an American deserter of the position and strength of the defenses at Fort Washington, and had decided to attack that fortification. Its garrison made a gallant defense, but was compelled to surrender. Three thousand prisoners, besides a large quantity of stores, fell into the hands of the British.¹ To the Americans, this was one of the heaviest losses of the war.

278. Retreat across New Jersey. — Washington, fearing that Howe meditated an advance on Philadelphia, left half of his army under General Charles Lee at North Castle, while he crossed the Hudson into New Jersey with the remainder to watch Howe's movements. On the approach of the British General Cornwallis, Fort Lee was evacuated, and Washington was compelled to retreat. Meanwhile he sent repeated orders to General Lee to bring over his half of the army, that he might be able to oppose the enemy. But Lee was jealous of

¹ Insomuch as the width of the Hudson at this point was so great that Forts Washington and Lee were unable to prevent British ships from passing up the river, Washington had directed the former fort to be evacuated. But in the absence of positive orders, and in deference to a message from Congress not to abandon the fort, the officers in command had failed to carry out Washington's plan.

Washington. He pretended to misunderstand, and sent various excuses.¹ Washington, with his little force of hardly three thousand men, unable to risk a battle, continued to retreat across New Jersey, his men discouraged, poorly clad, and suffer-



ing from the intense cold. Reaching the Delaware he crossed the river, taking with him every boat that could be found for

¹ When Lee at last started toward Washington he was surprised and captured by a small British force while spending the night at a country-house some distance from his army. (This Lee was not connected with the Lees of Virginia.)



WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE.

miles in either direction. When the British arrived they found it impossible to cross. They then went into winter quarters, separating their army into several divisions, the main body being stationed at Princeton, and a force of fifteen hundred Hessians at Trenton.

279. Battle of Trenton. — Everything now looked gloomy for the Americans. Washington's men were so much discouraged that when their time expired many refused to reënlist, and his little army was rapidly decreasing in numbers. In response to Howe's proclamation offering pardon and protection to all who would swear allegiance to the British crown, hundreds of wealthy persons were abandoning the American cause. General Cornwallis, thinking the war was over, prepared to sail for England. Washington saw that unless some success was won to revive the drooping spirits of his countrymen, the cause of liberty would be lost. He formed the daring plan of crossing the Delaware, now dangerous with floating ice, and attacking the British force at Trenton. On Christmas night he safely conducted his men across the stream, and advancing through snow and sleet, took the enemy completely by surprise. With the loss of only four men (two killed and two frozen to death) Washington captured the entire force of over one thousand Hessian soldiers, and crossed back into Pennsylvania with his prisoners and booty.

280. Battle of Princeton. — Four days later Washington again crossed the Delaware and occupied Trenton. Meanwhile Cornwallis hastily abandoned his purpose of embarking for England, and led part of his troops from Princeton to attack the American forces at Trenton. After some skirmishing night came on, and Cornwallis decided to wait till next day for reënforcements. Washington's position was now most critical. Behind him was the river full of floating ice. If the British should force him from his entrenchments there was no way of

escape, and a surrender seemed inevitable. Cornwallis remarked that he had "run down the old fox at last." But again the genius of the American commander turned defeat into victory. Ordering a few of his soldiers to go within hearing distance of his enemy and to pretend to throw up entrenchments, others to keep his camp-fires burning, Washington secretly withdrew his army from its perilous position, stole around Cornwallis, and at sunrise attacked and defeated the British force at Princeton (January 3d), capturing nearly five hundred prisoners. The sound of cannon behind him was the first hint Cornwallis had that his enemy had escaped. He hastened to the rescue of his men, but the "old fox" had out-generaled him. Washington had withdrawn to Morristown Heights, where the British made no attempt to follow. A general retreat of the British to the vicinity of New York ensued.

2. CAMPAIGNS IN NORTHERN NEW YORK.

281. Plan of the British.—While Howe was taking possession of New York City, a British force from Canada had made an unsuccessful expedition against the northern part of the state. Arnold, in command of a small American fleet on Lake Champlain, made a heroic resistance, but was forced to abandon his ships and retire within the defenses of Ticonderoga. The British general feared to attack the fort, and withdrew his army to Canada. The next year (1777) a more carefully prepared plan was adopted. Three separate armies were to penetrate the state from different directions. One



army under General Burgoyne was to descend from the north, by way of Lake Champlain and the Hudson, as far as Albany. A second force, much smaller than the first, was to go up the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario, land at Oswego, and advancing from the west, capture Fort Stanwix in central New York, then join Burgoyne at Albany. At the same time General Howe's army at New York was to ascend the Hudson, and unite with the two other forces. Thus would the conquest of New York be complete.

282. Burgoyne's Advance.—Burgoyne, with eight thousand men splendidly armed and equipped, sailed up the Sorrel River and Lake Champlain, unopposed until he reached Ticonderoga. After a brief resistance, the garrison abandoned this stronghold, and Burgoyne advanced to the head of Lake George. General Schuyler, commanding the American forces, slowly retreated to Bemis Heights on the Hudson, about thirty miles above Albany. Burgoyne's advance was now attended with the greatest difficulty. His line of march lay through a swampy wilderness through which his enemies had completely obstructed every road by cutting down trees across his path and destroying bridges. He could procure no food from the surrounding country, and found great trouble in getting supplies from Canada.

283. Bennington and Fort Stanwix.—Learning that the Americans had stores of provisions at Bennington, Vermont, twenty miles distant, Burgoyne sent one thousand men to capture them. These troops were attacked by General Stark with an army of hastily collected New England militia, and almost the entire British force was killed or captured. Meanwhile the British general, St. Leger, with an army of British and Indians, had advanced from Lake Ontario to support Burgoyne, and was now besieging Fort Stanwix. Schuyler sent Arnold to relieve the fort. By a stratagem Arnold suc-