

The early colonists who came to America to find freedom had to face many dangers. They became very independent and self-sufficient. At first, England paid little attention to the colonists in America, and the colonists were not strictly controlled by English law and government.

However, after the colonies grew and became important centers of trade, the British imposed restrictions and trade regulations on them. Some of these restrictions were made to put England in a favorable position concerning trade with the colonies. The colonies objected vigorously to this.

The colonists also objected to other things like quartering of soldiers, taxation without representation in Parliament and lack of true self-government.

People soon banded together and, at the urging of such patriotic groups as the Sons of Liberty, refused to buy English goods.

Incidents like the *Boston Tea Party* in 1773 added fuel to the fire of revolution. The Boston Tea Party occurred when patriots, disguised as Indians, threw tons of tea into Boston Harbor, because the colonists did not like the tax policies of the British. When the British punished the Bostonians, all the colonists were aroused. Conditions grew worse and a year after the Boston Tea Party, Patrick Henry shouted:

"The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"

Henry's speech became one of the best-known pre-revolutionary speeches.

First Continental Congress

Colonial leaders decided to call a meeting to discuss how to win their rights. They were more interested in fair treatment than in independence. The First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1774, with delegates from 12 of the 13 colonies. Georgia did not send representatives, but agreed to support any plans made at the meeting. The delegates sent their complaints to the king, but British colonial policy did not change. Although they wanted their rights, delegates did not dream they

would soon have the responsibility of conducting a war. The colonial leaders also imposed an *embargo* (agreement prohibiting trade) on British trade and goods.

The First Continental Congress adjourned in 1774. The Second Continental Congress met later that year in Philadelphia. Here, it assumed the powers of a central government. An army and a navy were organized and money was issued. George Washington was chosen to lead the army. The Second Continental Congress would run our new country for the next seven years.

In 1775, British soldiers were sent to Lexington, Massachusetts, to seize the guns and ammunition of the colonists and arrest colonial leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock. It was Paul Revere who warned the *Minutemen* to meet British soldiers at Lexington. There, an unidentified shot started the war. Six years after the fighting began in Lexington, the British surrendered to General George Washington at Yorktown, Virginia. The Americans had won their fight for independence.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a *T* or *F* in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The only objection the colonists had toward British rule concerned trade regulations.
- ___ 2. When the First Continental Congress met, the members wanted to declare war against England.
- ___ 3. Patrick Henry did not want to see the war begin.
- ___ 4. The Sons of Liberty supported the colonists' cause.
- ___ 5. The English colonists were closely governed from the time of the earliest settlements.
- ___ 6. The Boston Tea Party occurred because of a tax dispute.
- ___ 7. Samuel Adams and John Hancock were colonial leaders.
- ___ 8. The colonists were angry about what the Indians had done at the Boston Tea Party.
- ___ 9. Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"
- ___ 10. The First Continental Congress met in 1774.
- ___ 11. The Second Continental Congress ran the U.S. government for most of the American Revolution.
- ___ 12. George Washington led the American Army in the Revolution.
- ___ 13. The British won the American Revolution.