



展望(Prospect)全国高等院校英语专业系列精品教材

美国历史文化概况

(英文版)(第二版)

董晓波 主编

*An Introduction to American
History and Cultures*



对外经济贸易大学出版社

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Colonization and Independence



Text A British Colonization (1607-1776)

导读

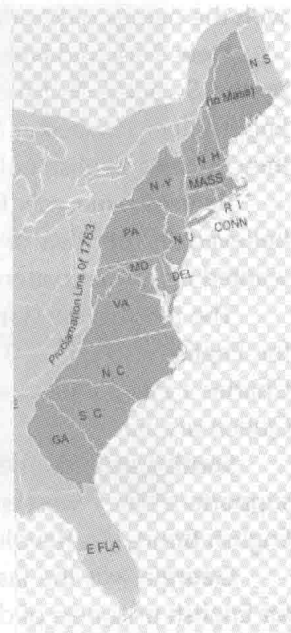
17世纪初，移民大潮开始从欧洲流到北美。在三个多世纪里，从最初仅几百名的英格兰移民迁徙，逐渐变为千百万人势如潮水的大迁移。他们在各种强大的动机的推动下，终于在这片一度荒芜的大陆上，建立了新的文明。

The Thirteen English-American Colonies

The Founding of the Thirteen Colonies

Christopher Columbus is believed to be the discoverer of America. He was an Italian. In 1492, financed by the Spanish queen, he sailed west from Spain in search of a sea route to India. He failed to reach India but found America instead. He believed he had reached India and called the natives on the island he had discovered the Indians. Following his steps, America Vespucci, another sailor flying the Spanish flag, proved that the land discovered by Columbus was not India, but a new continent. As a result, the new continent was named after him and became known as America. It was also called the New World while Europe became known as the Old World.

The first successful English colony **Virginia** in North America was planted in 1607. The area was named Virginia in honor of Elizabeth, known as Virginia Queen because she had never married. When Elizabeth I died in 1603, James I succeeded her. Like the queen, the new king encouraged foreign expansion as a way of easing religious disputes and economic distress in England. In 1606, he granted a



group of merchants the charter to form the Virginia Company. In 1607, the Virginia Company sent 105 men (no women) to America. The tiny band finally landed on the banks of the James River in present-day Virginia, which later became known as the mother state. The colonists established the Jamestown Settlement on the James River, both named after King James I.

Thirteen years after the founding of the settlement at Jamestown in Virginia, the second English colony **Massachusetts** was established. Unlike the first colonists at Jamestown, these newcomers came to America to seek freedom of religion. They had been known as Puritans because of their strong desire to “purify” the Church of England—to simplify its ritual and reform its structure by stopping appointing bishops. Their belief brought them much trouble in England, so they decided to immigrate into the territory of the Virginia Company in America. In September, 1620, a group of 102 puritans known as Pilgrim Fathers left Plymouth, England, and sailed for America in the ship named Mayflower.

They never got to Virginia. They landed at Plymouth on Cape Code on November 21, 1620. It was in present-day Massachusetts. The Pilgrim Fathers suffered terrible hardships during the first winter and half of them died. With the help of the native Indians, they started to cultivate crops and the next summer they reaped a good harvest. On the last Thursday in November of 1621, they celebrated their first Thanksgiving Day with a feast to thank God for His protection.

Beginning in 1630, large numbers of Puritans left England to settle in the Massachusetts. By 1643, about 20,000 immigrants had settled in this region, chiefly around the town of Boston. Gradually, religious disputes and struggles in Massachusetts intensified. Those who refused to obey the Puritanical rules or demanded freedom of beliefs were persecuted or driven out of the colony. Those who were banished from Massachusetts or could no longer endure the life there moved to other places to found new colonies. Before long, three other colonies were founded with the names of **Rhode Island**, **Connecticut**, and **New Hampshire**.

New York and **New Jersey** were first colonized by the Dutch while **Delaware** was founded by the Swedish. But the English would never tolerate any intruder at their door. In 1664, an English fleet stopped at Manhattan and commanded the three colonies to surrender. As a result, they became English colonies.

Pennsylvania was founded by another group of English Protestants called Quakers. They believed in the idea of peace through brotherly love. They refused to fight in any wars and wanted no formal pattern of worship.

The territory of **Maryland** was granted by Charles I to his friend Lord Baltimore as a refuge for English Catholics. The Catholics in England were persecuted after the Reformation and Charles I sympathized with them. The new colony was named in honor of **Henrietta Maria**, Queen of Charles I.

South Carolina and **North Carolina** were originally given by Charles II to his eight close supporters. They were so faithful to him that they followed him to France in exile during the English Bourgeois Revolution.

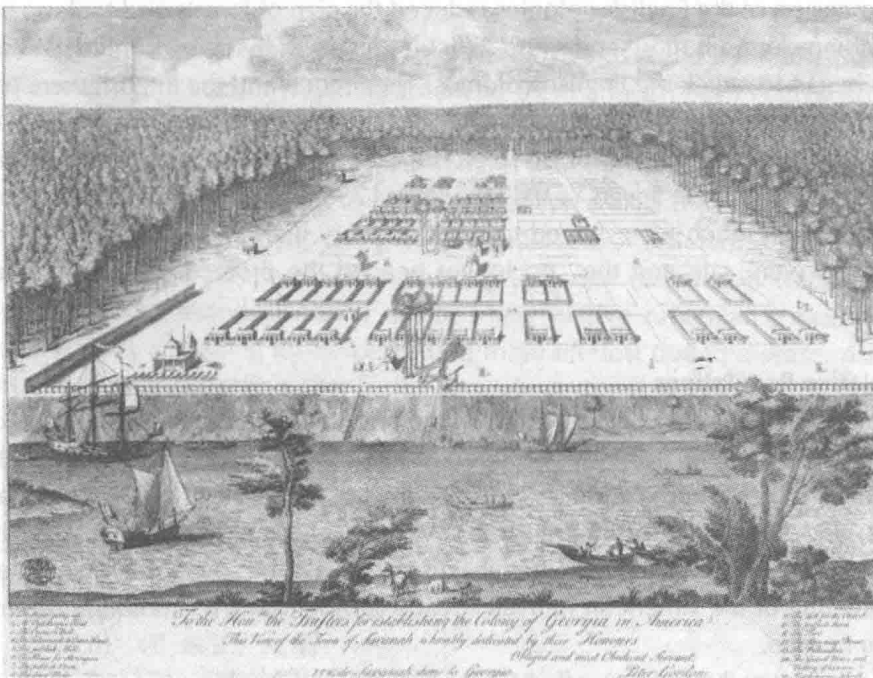
Georgia was the last of the thirteen English-American colonies. It was founded as a haven for English prisoners of debt who could not discharge their debts.

Life in the Colonies

The thirteen colonies were divided into the three regional groupings—New England, the Middle Colonies and the Southern Colonies.

New England, composed of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, has generally thin, stony soil, relatively little level land, and long winters, making it difficult to make a living from farming. The early settlers made use of the deep-water harbors to develop fishing, trade and the ship-building industry. They usually lived near the shore around harbors and this promoted the development of cities. Some New England merchants engaged in the notorious slave trade. Wealth was rapidly accumulated in New England and the successful merchants and ship-builders became the forefathers of the American upper-middle class.

The Middle Colonies, consisting of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, were characterized by a large degree of diversity. The Middle Colonies had rich soil, allowing the area to become a major exporter of wheat and other grains. The lumber and shipbuilding industries enjoyed success in the Middle Colonies, and Pennsylvania saw moderate success in the textile and pig iron industry. The Middle Colonies were the most ethnically diverse British colonies in North America, with settlers coming from all parts of Europe. Civil unrest in Europe and other colonies saw an influx of immigrants to the Middle Colonies in the Eighteenth Century. With the new arrivals came various religions which were protected in the Middle Colonies by written freedom of religion laws. This tolerance was unusual and distinct from other British colonies.



Georgia Colony, early 1700's

In the Southern Colonies, made up of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, the climate was warm and there was enough level land for the early settlers to reclaim. As a result, people in the South were mainly devoted to agriculture and they lived apart along rivers and streams. Abundance of arable land also caused the appearance of large farms known as plantations. The plantation owners not only produced grain but also grew cotton and tobacco. The plantations were so large that the plantation owners had to buy Negro slaves from slave traders and employ indentured servants. The indentured servants could become free men after the term was over, but the black slaves had to stay on the plantation generation after generation.

Relations between England and Colonies

England's main concern with the colonies was economic during most of the colonial time. The guiding principle was based on the mercantilist view. It demanded the colonies to supply the mother country with raw materials while importing goods manufactured in England. So long as England could obtain raw materials from and sell manufactured goods in her American colonies, she would tolerate some inconvenience. Besides, English merchants and adventurers reaped a lot of money by transporting black slaves to America. Meanwhile, other European countries, especially France, were trying to enlarge their control in North America and this certainly endangered the existence of the English colonies and limited their territorial expansion. The colonies had to depend on England for security. Besides, there were the Indians to deal with. Since the expansion of the English colonies reduced the size of forests and took up much fertile soil, many Indians found it more and more difficult to make a living by hunting. Whole tribes of Indians thus began to attack the English colonies. The French and the English were each tried to make use of the angry Indians to attack the other. This further strained the tense relationship between the French and English colonists in North America. The French and the English became rivals. Finally they fought the Seven Years' War from 1756 to 1763. The war ended in victory for the English and the French were forced to give up every inch of land in North America. The English colonies were safe and they no longer needed the protection given by their mother country.

Impact on Native Populations

From the 16th through the 19th centuries, the population of Native Americans declined in the following ways: epidemic diseases brought from Europe; genocide and warfare at the hands of European explorers and colonists; displacement from their lands; internal warfare, enslavement; and a high rate of intermarriage. Most mainstream scholars believe that, among the various contributing factors, epidemic disease was the overwhelming cause of the population decline of the American natives because of their lack of immunity to new diseases brought from Europe.

Native Americans have been affected by disease and health concerns throughout their history, but a major turning point in Native American disease presence was the arrival of



Some indigenous peoples of the Americas were historically hunter-gatherers.

Europeans. This ushered in what is termed the Columbian Exchange. During this period European settlers brought many different technologies and lifestyles with them, but one of the most harmful effects of this exchange was the arrival and spread of disease. Native Americans, due to the lack of prior contact with Europeans, had not previously been exposed to the diseases that were prevalent on the distant continent. Therefore they had not built up internal immunities to the diseases or formed any medicines to combat them. Europeans came into the New World bearing various diseases. Those infected with diseases either possessed them in a dormant state or were not quarantined in such a way that distanced them enough from Native Americans to not spread the diseases, allowing diseases to spread into epidemics.

The most notable disease brought by Europeans was the destructive smallpox disease. Numerous other diseases were brought to Native American tribes, including “measles, scarlet fever, typhoid, typhus, influenza, whooping cough, tuberculosis, cholera, diphtheria, chicken pox, and venereal diseases.” Each of these diseases brought destruction through sweeping epidemics, involving illness and extensive death. Many Native American tribes experienced extensive depopulation, averaging 25-50 percent of tribal life lost due to disease. Additionally, singular tribes also neared extinction after facing severely destructive spread of disease.

Words & Expressions

1. colonization [kələnai'zeɪʃən] *n.* 殖民地化
2. colony ['kɒləni] *n.* 殖民地
3. finance [faɪ'næns] *vt.* 供资金给; 筹措资金
4. succeed [sək'si:d] *vi.* 继任; 继承
5. religious [ri'lɪdʒəs] *a.* 宗教性的, 宗教上的, 虔诚的
6. dispute [dis'pjut] *n.* 争论, 争执

7. distress [dis'tres] *n.* 悲痛, 悲伤, 痛苦; 不幸, 危难
8. merchant ['mɜ:tʃənt] *n.* 商人, 店主
9. charter [tʃɑ:tə] *n.* 特许状, 执照, 宪章
10. establish [is'tæbliʃ] *vt.* 建立, 设立
11. settlement ['setlmənt] *n.* 殖民, 定居, 殖民地
12. immigrate ['imigreit] *vt.* 使移居入境
13. intensify [in'tensifai] *vt.* 加强
14. persecute ['pɜ:sikju:t] *vt.* 迫害, 虐待, 困扰
15. surrender [sə'rendə] *vi.* 投降, 自首
16. refuge [refju:dʒ] *n.* 避难所, 安全地带, 避难, 庇护
17. exile ['eksail] *n.* 放逐, 流放, 被放逐者
18. notorious [nəu'tɔ:riəs] *a.* 声名狼藉的, 恶名昭著的, 众人皆知的
19. characterize ['kærɪktəraɪz] *vt.* 表示……的特性, 使具有……特点
20. lumber ['lʌmbə] *n.* 木材, 木料
21. unrest [ʌn'rest] *n.* 不安的状态, 动荡的局面
22. distinct [dis'tɪŋkt] *a.* 清楚的, 明显的; 截然不同的, 独特的
23. reclaim [ri'kleim] *vt.* 开垦, 改造, 感化, 纠正, 回收
24. arable ['ærəbl] *a.* 适于耕种的, 可耕的
25. plantation [plæn'teɪʃən] *n.* 种植园, 种植场
26. indentured [in'dentʃəd] *a.* 受契约束缚 (必须为人干活) 的
27. fertile ['fɜ:taɪl] *a.* 肥沃的, 富饶的; 丰富的; 能繁殖的, 可生育的
28. strain [streɪn] *vt.* 拉紧, 绷紧; 损伤, 扭伤; 紧张, 勉强
29. epidemic [epi'demɪk] *n.* 传染病, 流行病 *a.* 流行的, 传染性的
30. genocide ['dʒenəsaɪd] *n.* 种族灭绝; 集体屠杀
31. displacement [dis'pleɪsmənt] *n.* 移位; 置换; 取代
32. warfare ['wɔ:fəə] *n.* 战斗, 交战, 战争, 斗争, 竞争
33. overwhelming ['əʊvə'hwelmɪŋ] *a.* 势不可挡的, 占压倒优势的
34. immunity ['ɪmjʊnɪti] *n.* 免疫, 免疫性, 免除
35. prevalent ['prevələnt] *a.* 普遍的, 流行的
36. combat ['kɒmbət] *vt.* 与……战斗, 反对
37. destructive [di'strʌktɪv] *a.* 毁灭性的, 破坏的, 有害的

Notes

1. **Puritans:** The Puritans were a group of people who grew discontent in the Church of England and worked towards religious, moral and societal reforms. They contended that the Church of England had become a product of political struggles and man-made doctrines. The Puritans believed that the *Bible* was God's true law, and that it provided a plan for living. The established church of the day described access to God as monastic and possible only within the confines of "church authority". Puritans stripped away the traditional trappings and formalities of Christianity which had been slowly building throughout the previous 1,500 years. Theirs was an attempt to "purify" the church and their own lives.
2. **Pilgrim Fathers:** Pilgrim Fathers is a name commonly applied to early settlers of the Plymouth Colony in present-day Plymouth, Massachusetts, United States. Their leadership came from a

religious congregation of Puritans who had fled a volatile political environment in the England for the relative calm and tolerance of Holland in the Netherlands. Concerned with losing their cultural identity, the group later arranged with English investors to establish a new colony in North America.

3. **Manhattan:** Manhattan is one of the five boroughs of New York City. The word “Manhattan” has been translated as “island of many hills” from the Lenape language. Manhattan consists of Manhattan Island and several small adjacent islands. It is the smallest, yet most urbanized of the five boroughs. Manhattan is a major commercial, financial, and cultural center of both the United States and the world. Many major radio, television, and telecommunications companies in the United States are based here, as well as many newspapers, magazines, books, and other media publishers. Manhattan has many famous landmarks, tourist attractions, museums, and universities. It is also home to the headquarters of the United Nations. Manhattan has the largest central business district in the United States, is the site of both the New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ, and is the home to the largest number of corporate headquarters in the country. It is the center of New York City and the New York metropolitan region, hosting the seat of city government and a large portion of the area’s employment, business, and entertainment activities. As a result, residents of New York City’s other boroughs such as Brooklyn and Queens often refer to a trip to Manhattan as “going to the city”.
4. **Catholics:** The three primary divisions of Christianity are Roman Catholicism, the Orthodox church, and Protestantism. The Catholic Church, also known as the Roman Catholic Church, is the world’s largest Christian church, with more than a billion members. The Church’s leader is the Pope who holds supreme authority in concert with the College of Bishops of which he is the head. The Church defines its mission as spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, administering the sacraments and exercising charity. It operates social programs and institutions throughout the world including schools, universities, hospitals, missions, shelters and charities.
5. **Reformation:** The English Reformation was the series of events in 16th century England by which the Church of England first broke away from the authority of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church. Based on Henry VIII’s desire for an annulment of his marriage, the English Reformation was at the outset more of a political than a theological dispute. The reality of political differences between Rome and England allowed growing theological disputes to come to the fore. Before the break with Rome, it was the Pope and general councils of the church that decided doctrine. Church taxes were paid straight to Rome and it was the Pope who had the final say over the appointment of bishops. The split from Rome made the English monarch the Supreme Governor of the English church by “Royal Supremacy”, thereby making the Church of England the established church of the nation.
6. **The English Bourgeois Revolution:** The death of Queen Elizabeth ends the collaboration between the monarchy and the bourgeoisie. With the accession of Charles I to the throne in 1625, the conflict became more acute between the monarchy and the Parliament composed of solid middle-class country gentry and merchants, nearly all puritans. The clash led to a civil war in 1642 between the Royalists troops and the Parliamentary forces under the command of Oliver Cromwell. The parliamentary forces, though suffered some setbacks at first, decisively defeated the Royalists in 1645. The civil war ended up with the capture and execution of Charles I in 1645 and a republic under the name of the Commonwealth of England was founded with Cromwell as Lord Protector.
7. **Columbian Exchange:** The Columbian Exchange was a dramatically widespread exchange of

animals, plants, culture (including slaves), communicable diseases, and ideas between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. It was one of the most significant events concerning ecology, agriculture, and culture in all of human history. Christopher Columbus' first voyage to the Americas in 1492 launched the era of large-scale contact between the Old and the New Worlds that resulted in this ecological revolution, hence the name "Columbian Exchange".

Exercises

I. Fill in the blanks with the most suitable words. Change the form when necessary.

persecute	intensify	overwhelming	destructive	establish
dispute	finance	immigrate	combat	refuge

1. It was the most _____ storm in 30 years.
2. Throughout history, people _____ for their religious beliefs.
3. She _____ her fame as an actress.
4. His rudeness _____ her dislike for him.
5. About 6.6 million people _____ to the United States in the 1970s.
6. The _____ majority of those present were in favor of the plan.
7. The suffering of the _____ makes her heart sore.
8. The _____ between good and evil will continue forever.
9. Find a way to settle, not to _____.
10. New York is a great _____ center.

II. Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F) according to the passage.

1. Christopher Columbus, an Italian explorer, discovered America, which is called the New World while England became known as the Old World.
2. The first successful English colony Virginia was planted in 1607 by the Virginia Company.
3. In September, 1620, a group of 102 puritans known as Pilgrim Fathers left England, sailed for America in the ship named Mayflower and landed on the banks of the James River in present-day Virginia.
4. The early settlers of New England made use of the deep-water harbors to develop farming, fishing, trade and the ship-building industry.
5. There is abundant arable land in the Southern Colonies which caused the appearance of plantations.
6. During most of the colonial time, England's main concern with the colonies was economic while the colonies had to depend on England for security.
7. Genocide and warfare at the hands of European explorers and colonists were the overwhelming causes of the population decline of the American natives.

III. Translate the following sentences into Chinese.

1. Like the queen, the new king encouraged foreign expansion as a way of easing religious disputes and economic distress in England.

2. They had been known as Puritans because of their strong desire to “purify” the Church of England—to simplify its ritual and reform its structure by stopping appointing bishops.
3. The indentured servants could become free men after the term was over, but the black slaves had to stay on the plantation generation after generation.
4. From the 16th through the 19th centuries, the population of Native Americans declined in the following ways: epidemic diseases brought from Europe; genocide and warfare at the hands of European explorers and colonists; displacement from their lands; internal warfare, enslavement; and a high rate of intermarriage.
5. Those infected with diseases either possessed them in a dormant state or were not quarantined in such a way that distanced them enough from Native Americans to not spread the diseases, allowing diseases to spread into epidemics.



Text B The Road to Independence (1763-1783)

导读

英法为争夺海上霸权和掠夺殖民地而进行的七年战争，以英国胜利告终。英国在北美接管了加拿大和佛罗里达，控制了密西西比河以东的新法兰西，对北美殖民地全面加强控制，宣告阿巴拉契亚山脉以西为王室产业，禁止殖民地人民染指；并征收税款，严厉缉私，限制经济活动，严重损害了殖民地各阶层人民的经济利益。从1619年弗吉尼亚建立议会开始，各殖民地相继成立议会，与英国相抗衡。1765年九个殖民地举行抗议印花税大会，掀起反抗怒潮，走向独立的道路。

The Seven Years' War

By the middle of the 18th century, differences in life, thoughts and interests had developed in the mother country and the growing colonies. Local political institutions and practice diverged significantly from English ways, while social customs, religious beliefs, and economic interests added to the potential sources of conflict. The British government, like other imperial powers in the 18th century, favored a policy of mercantilism, which stipulates that in order to build economic strength, a nation must export more than it imports. To achieve this favorable balance of trade, the English passed regulatory laws exclusively benefiting the British economy. These laws created a trade system whereby Americans provided raw goods to Britain, and Britain used raw goods to produce manufactured goods that were sold in European markets and back to the colonies. As suppliers of raw goods only, the colonies could not compete with Britain in manufacturing. English ships and merchants were always favored, excluding other countries from sharing the British Empire's wealth. Between 1651 and 1673, the English Parliament passed four Navigation Acts intended to regulate commerce in the British interest. These were loosely enforced, however, and the colonies were by and large allowed to develop freely with little interference from England.

Conditions changed abruptly in 1763. In that year ended the Seven Years' War. In America



The Stamp Act ignited an angry response from the colonists. Above, a tax collector is tied to a pole by an unruly crowd. A British loyalist is secured at bottom of pole.

it is known as the French and Indian War (1756-1763) during which Britain and France fought over the control of North American colonies. In the end Great Britain defeated France and removed a long-standing threat to the colonies. During the peace negotiations, Britain acquired French holdings in Canada and Florida from France's ally, Spain. However, Britain also accumulated a large debt over the course of the war. To help pay off the debt, Britain sought to assert greater control over the far-flung parts of the empire and turn to the colonies to generate revenue and in so doing they came into conflict with the political traditions and assumptions of the colonists who resisted what they saw as unconstitutional parliamentary innovation.

In the years following the end of the Seven Years' War, a series of events occurred that changed many Americans from loyal subjects of the king in 1763 to revolutionaries intent on independence in 1776.

The Stamp Act

In 1765, the British Parliament passed the *Stamp Act*. It was the first direct tax to be levied on the American colonies. It required that all newspapers, pamphlets, legal documents, commercial bills, advertisements, and other papers issued in the colonies bear a stamp. The act was met with a great uproar in the colonies. It was vehemently denounced in the colonies by those it most affected: businessmen, merchants, journalists, lawyers and other powerful persons. Associations known as the Sons of Liberty were formed to organize opposition to the *Stamp Act*. Merchants boycotted English goods; stamp distributors were forced to resign and stamps were destroyed. The colonists argued that they shouldn't be taxed since they had no representation in the British government. They rallied behind the phrase, "no taxation without representation," which meant that without their representatives taking part in the debate in the English Parliament, they had no obligation to pay taxes.

The Boston Tea Party

The Boston Tea Party was one of the major events that finally led to the outbreak of the American Independence War. The East India Company, a vital source of British wealth, was in financial trouble in those years. To help the company turn the corner, the British Government allowed it to export tea to the colonies without paying any import duty. Thus the company could easily undersell the independent tea merchants, who had to pay import duties. Colonial tea merchants organized strong opposition to this unequal treatment. Many people in the colonies joined in the struggle. On the night of December 16, 1773, a band of men, disguised as

Indians and led by Samuel Adams, boarded three British ships lying at anchor in Boston harbor and dumped the tea cargo, which was from China, into the sea. This incident later became known as the “Boston Tea Party.”

The British Government was thus forced to take actions. Otherwise it would lose face before the world for its failure to control its own colonies. The British parliament retaliated by closing the Port of Boston and by passing other laws known as Intolerable Acts in 1774.

The First Continental Congress

After the incident of the Boston Tea Party, relations between England and the colonies continued to deteriorate. In the face of such a grave situation, colonial delegates from 12 colonies (Georgia did not send its delegates) met in Philadelphia on September 5, 1774, “to consult upon the present unhappy state of the colonies”. This meeting has been known as the First Continental Congress. After heated debate and repeated compromise, the Continental Congress drew up a formal document known as *Declaration of Rights and Grievances* which requested George III, their king, to protect the rights of the colonies and to redress the unfair treatment. The *Declaration of Rights and Grievances* was sent to London only to be rejected by the English Parliament. The refusal meant that there was no hope for a satisfactory reconciliation and it was no longer possible to settle the dispute by peaceful means. Colonial militiamen were organized.



The Outbreak of the War

Before Congress met again, the situation had changed. Moving against the possibility of armed violence by the colonists, Britain sent about 1,000 soldiers from Boston on the night of April 18, 1775, to confiscate munitions that the colonists were storing at Concord—a small town not far away from Boston. During the night Paul Revere and fellow riders went from house to house, quietly giving warnings to people who belonged to a group of minutemen. On the morning of April 19, 1775, when the British troops, after a night of marching, reached the village of Lexington, they met about 50 minutemen. Shots soon broke out from both sides. It was here that these American farmers fired “the shot heard round the world.”

The Second Continental Congress

While the alarms of Lexington were still resounding, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia on May 10, 1775. Though there were still some disagreements, the Second Continental Congress finally agreed to take steps to organize and equip an American army, appointing George Washington, a Virginian, commander-in-chief of the American forces. The Second Continental Congress also provided for asking help from other countries, especially

France which was a rival of Britain.

The British Government was also preparing to fight a war. On August 23, 1775, King George III issued a proclamation declaring the colonies to be in a state of rebellion. This made it legal for the British Government to send troops to suppress the rebellion in the colonies.

Meanwhile, patriots of America worked hard to mobilize public support for the revolutionary war. At the beginning of 1776, Thomas Paine published his pamphlet entitled *Common Sense* in which he argued for complete independence from Britain. In the book he says, "I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments and common sense... A government of our own is our natural right... Europe regards her as a stranger, and England has given her warning to depart." Paine argued that the American colonies were the children of Europe rather than of England and that England had no right to control them and the colonies had the very right to seek their own economic and political interests.

The Declaration of Independence

One after another, the colonies cast off hesitation and, through their assemblies (law-making bodies of the colonies), declared that they favored independence. Finally a committee, composed of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and some other members, was appointed by the Second Continental Congress to draw up *the Declaration of Independence*.



Signing the Declaration of Independence, 1776

After three weeks of discussion, the committee prepared the famous document which was drafted by Thomas Jefferson. It was formally adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, a day which has been celebrated each year as Independence Day or the National Day of the United States.

The Declaration of Independence is remarkable in that it approached the problem of