

TIMELINE

American War of Independence on the American Mainland

1763

- 1763, February 10: First Treaty of Paris ends the French and Indian War. France cedes Canada and territories east of the Mississippi, much of India, Senegal, some Caribbean islands to Great Britain. Spain cedes to Britain Florida and Menorca in exchange for Cuba and the Philippines lost to Great Britain during the war
- 1763, October 7: Proclamation Line of 1763 bars settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains
- 1763, December: Arrival of British frigate *Squirrel* off Newport, RI to enforce new anti-smuggling laws

1764

- 1764, April 5: British Parliament passes the Sugar Act
- 1764, April 19: British Parliament passes Currency Act

1765

- 1765, March 22: British Parliament passes the Stamp Act
- 1765, March 24: British Parliament passes the Quartering Act
- 1765, May 31: Virginia Resolves in response to acts passed by Parliament
- 1765, October 19: Stamp Act Congress meets in New York City

1766

- 1766, March 18: Parliament passes Declaratory Act and repeals Stamp Act

1767

- 1767, June 29: British Parliament passes the Townshend Act imposing duties on tea, paper, and other items imported into the colonies

1768

- 1768, February 11: Samuel Adams writes letter opposing taxation without representation. The letter becomes known as the *Circular Letter*. Crown dissolves Massachusetts legislature for refusing to collect taxes while Bostonians refuse to quarter troops
- 1768, February 27: Earl of Hillsborough becomes first British Secretary of State for the Colonies
- 1768, June 10: John Hancock's sloop *Liberty* confiscated for smuggling
- 1768, October 1: British troops occupy Boston to curb perceived lawlessness

1769

- 1769, May 16: Virginia Resolves II, House of Burgesses is dissolved

1770

- 1770, March 5: British troops in Boston fire on rioters. The event becomes known as the "Boston Massacre"
- 1770, April 12: Repeal of the Townshend Acts except for the tax on tea

1772

- 1772, June 10: Royal Navy schooner *Gaspee* burned off Pawtuxet, RI

1773

- 1773, May 10: British Parliament passes Tea Act
- 1773, December 16: Colonist dump tea from the East India Co. ships *Dartmouth*, *Eleanor* and *Beaver* into Boston harbor: Boston Tea Party

1774

- 1774, March 30: British Parliament passes Boston Port Act, shutting down Boston Harbor. This is the first of five laws passed over the next eight weeks dealing with Britain's colonies on the American mainland. They are known collectively as the *Intolerable* or *Coercive Acts*

- 1774, May 10: Louis XVI (23 August 1754 – 21 January 1793) King of France
- 1774, June 2: British Parliament passes a new Quartering Act
- 1774, June 22: British Parliament passes the Quebec Act, the last of the *Intolerable Acts*
- 1774, September 5: First Session of First Continental Congress in Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia. It adjourns on 26 October

1775

- 1775, February 9: British Parliament declares Massachusetts to be in rebellion
- 1775, March 23: Patrick Henry gives speech, "Give me liberty or give me death" at St. John's Church in Richmond during 2nd Virginia Convention
- 1775, April 14: First American abolition society founded in Philadelphia with Benjamin Franklin and Dr. Benjamin Rush as presidents
- 1775, April 19: Battles of Lexington and Concord
- 1775, April 20: General Artemas Ward commences siege of British in Boston
- 1775, April 21: Royal Marines under Governor Lord Dunmore's orders take 15 half barrels of gunpowder from the magazine in Williamsburg
- 1775, May 10: First Session of the Second Continental Congress in Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia. Following Maryland's signing of the Articles of Confederation on 1 March 1781 it adjourns and reconvenes as the Congress of the Confederation (until 2 March 1789)
- 1775, May 10: Patriots capture Fort Ticonderoga, NY on Lake Champlain
- 1775, May 24: John Hancock becomes president of Congress replacing, Peyton Randolph of Virginia, who dies on 22 October 1775
- 1775, June 14: Congress establishes the Continental Army
- 1775, June 15: Congress appoints George Washington Commander-in-Chief
- 1775, June 17: Battle of Bunker Hill
- 1775, July 3: George Washington takes command of the Continental Army

- 1775, July 10: Adjutant General Horatio Gates issues order that henceforth no "deserter from the Ministerial army, nor any stroller, negro, or vagabond" would be recruited into the Continental Army
- 1775, August 7: Louis XVI agrees to send Julien Achard de Bonvouloir to America on a fact-finding mission
- 1775, August 22: George III issues a proclamation declaring the Americans to be in a state of open rebellion
- 1775, September 15: The British *charge d'affairs* in Paris is ordered to protest the shipment of 30 tons of gun-powder to Philadelphia from St. Domingue, modern-day Haiti
- 1775, September 18: Continental Congress resolves to appoint a Secret Committee to import up to 500 tons of gunpowder, 20,000 musket locks, 10,000 stand of arms, and 40 brass six-pounders
- 1775, October 10: Sir William Howe named Commander-in-Chief of British army
- 1775, October 13: Congress founds Continental Navy
- 1775, November 7: Virginia Governor Lord Dunmore issues proclamation offering freedom to slaves "appertaining to rebels" who join his colors
- 1775, November 10: Congress founds Continental Marine Corps
- 1775, November 10: Lord George Germain replaces Dartmouth as Secretary of State for the Colonies
- 1775, November 13: Patriots under Richard Montgomery take Montreal
- 1775, November 17: Patriots destroy Governor Dunmore's arms at Kemp's Landing
- 1775, December 5: Benedict Arnold begins unsuccessful siege of Quebec City
- 1775, December 9: Patriots defeat Governor Dunmore at Battle of Great Bridge, VA
- 1775, December 28: Julien-Alexandre Achard de Bonvouloir sends glowing report detailing his conversations with the Secret Committee of Correspondence in Philadelphia to Paris.
- 1775, December 30: Washington allows recruitment of free Blacks veterans

1776

- 1776, January 16: Congress approves Washington's order of 30 December re: the re-enlistment of Black veterans
- 1776, February 21: Washington reconfirms the prohibition of enlistment of slaves with or without the consent of their owners
- 1776, February 24: A British agent informs London that American vessels entered Bilbao and Santander. "Their business can only be to load gunpowder and other warlike stores, perhaps not in the ports of Spain, but very probably at sea, where it is believed they are supplied by the Dutch."
- 1776, February 27: Bonvouloir's report reaches Foreign Minister Vergennes
- 1776, January 10: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* published in London
- 1776, February 29: House of Commons approves treaties with German principalities to supply troops for the American War
- 1776, March 3: Date of Silas Deane's instructions and list of supplies needed For the American war effort. He hands the list to French Foreign Minister the *comte de Vergennes* on 11 July 1776
- 1776, March 17: Crown forces evacuate Boston
- 1776, April 22: Louis XVI decides to provide funding to the Americans via the trading company of Roderigue Hortalez & Co. set up by Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais
- 1776, May 2: France makes 1 million *livres* in cash available to Roderigue Hortalez & Co.
- 1776, May 4: Rhode Island becomes first colony to declare independence
- 1776, May 11: Washington recommends raising companies of Germans to send among the Hessians fighting for Britain "for exciting a spirit of disaffection and desertion. If a few trusty, sensible fellows could get with them, . . . they would have great weight and influence with the common Soldiery, who certainly have no enmity towards us, having received no Injury, nor cause of Quarrell from us."
- 1776, May 15: Virginia legislature declares independence; second colony to do so

- 1776, May 29: A sloop from St. Eustatius arrives in Charleston, SC with 10,000 pounds of powder
- 1776, June 7: Independence resolution first introduced in Congress
- 1776, June 12: Virginia Convention adopts George Mason's Declaration of Rights
- 1776, June 15: Delaware declares independence from both Great Britain and Pennsylvania
- 1776, June 19: Continental Army forced to abandon Montreal
- 1776, June 20: Spain matches France's one million livres to American rebels
- 1776, 1/2 July: Caesar Rodney rides to Philadelphia to cast the decisive vote for independence
- 1776, July 4: Congress ratifies the Declaration of Independence
- 1776, July 7: General Schuyler withdraws from Crown Point to Ticonderoga
- 1776, August 14: Hessian troops begin to disembark on Staten Island
- 1776, September 7: Patriot submarine *Turtle* attacks British flagship HMS *Eagle* in New York Harbor
- 1776, September 9: The *Journal of the Continental Congress* reads: "Resolved, That in all continental commissions, and other instruments, where, heretofore, the words 'United Colonies' have been used, the stile be altered for the future to the "United States."
- 1776, September 22: Nathan Hale is hanged in New York for spying
- 1776, October 26: Benjamin Franklin sets sail for France from Philadelphia
- 1776, October 28: Battle of White Plains, NY
- 1776, November 16: Continental brig *Andrew Doria* (Capt. Isaiah Robinson) flying Stars and Stripes saluted on the Dutch island of St. Eustatius
- 1776, November 29: Benjamin Franklin lands in Quiberon, France
- 1776, December 8: Crown forces occupy Newport, RI
- 1776, December 20: Benjamin Franklin arrives in Versailles

1776, December 26: Battle of Trenton, NJ

1777

1777, January 2: Second Battle of Trenton/Assunpink Creek

1777, January 3: Battle of Princeton, NJ

1777, January 12: Washington instructs recruiting officers to "enlist none but Freemen," the implication being that the recruits could be black as long as they were free

1777, January 15: Vermont declares independence; it becomes the 14th state in 1791

1777, January 25: The *Amphitrite* leaves France for Portsmouth, NH with artillery pieces and military supplies. She arrives on 20 April 1777. By 1 December 1777, eight of the nine vessels sent out by Beaumarchais arrive safely in Portsmouth, NH

1777, April 27: British raid on Danbury, CT; Sybil Ludington's 40-mile ride at night to Carmel, NY

1777, June 13: Lafayette and de Kalb arrive at Georgetown, SC on *La Victoire*

1777, June 14: Congress passes resolution describing new flag: "the flag of the United States be thirteen alternate stripes red and white" and that "the Union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation."

1777, July 7: Battle of Hubbardton, the only battle fought in Vermont during the War for Independence. The so-called Battle of Bennington of 16 August 1777 was actually fought at Wallumsac, NY

1777, July 31: Congress appoints *marquis* de Lafayette a major-general in the Continental Army. More than 100 volunteers from all across Europe will join the Continental Army over the next few years

1777, August 6: Battle of Oriskany, NY

1777, September 3: Battle of Cooch's Bridge, DE

1777, September 11: Battle of Brandywine

1777, September 20: Paoli Massacre

- 1777, September 26: British occupy Philadelphia
- 1777, October 4: Battle of Germantown
- 1777, October 12: British forces under General "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne are surrounded at Saratoga. They surrender on 17 October 1777
- 1777, October 22: Battle of Red Bank
- 1777, November 15: Congress authorizes Articles of Confederation setting a deadline of 10 March 1778 for ratification by the states. It is not ratified by all states until 30 January 1781 (Maryland)
- 1777, November 28: John Adams appointed to replace Silas Deane in Paris. He will arrive there on 8 April 1778
- 1777, December 4: News of Burgoyne's surrender reaches Paris
- 1777, December 19: Continental Army enters winter quarters at Valley Forge
- 1777, December 17: France recognizes the United States as an independent nation

1778

- 1778, February 6: American representatives in Paris sign a "Treaty of Amity and Friendship" and a secret "Treaty of Alliance" with France
- 1778, 14 February: Rhode Island Assembly votes to allow the enlistment of "every able-bodied negro, mulatto, or Indian man slave" that chose to do so, and that "every slave so enlisting shall, upon his passing muster before Colonel Christopher Greene, be immediately discharged from the service of his master or mistress, and be absolutely free". Active recruitment ended in June 1778.
- 1778, 13 February: Stars and Stripes flying on *Ranger* (Capt. John Paul Jones) and *Independence* saluted for first time by French Navy
- 1778, February 23: Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben arrives at Valley Forge
- 1778, February 25: Americans forces under George Rodgers Clark capture Fort Sackville in Vincennes (Indiana)
- 1778, February 26: Congress instructed the states to fill up their units "by drafts, from their militia, or in any other way" without mention of race

- 1778, March 16: Great Britain declares war on France
- 1778, March 20: King Louis XVI receives U.S. representatives Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane and Arthur Lee
- 1778, April 8: John Adams arrives in Paris to replace Deane
- 1778, May 4: Congress ratifies Treaty of Alliance with France
- 1778, May 6: Continental Army at Valley Forge celebrates French alliance
- 1778, 18 June: British evacuate Philadelphia
- 1778, 19 June: Continental Army leaves winter quarters at Valley Forge
- 1778, 26 June: George Rogers Clark captures Kaskaskia, IL
- 1778, 28 June: Battle of Monmouth
- 1778, June 17: First naval engagement of the war between *Belle Poule* and HMS *Arethusa* off the coast of England. An *Acte Royal* by Louis XVI sets 17 June 1778 as the official starting date of hostilities
- 1778, July 2: Continental Congress returns to Philadelphia
- 1778, July 10: France declares war against Britain
- 1778, July 27: Naval battle off Ile d'Ouessant/Ushant; indecisive engagement between France and Great Britain (English Channel)
- 1778, July 29: French Admiral d'Estaing arrives with a fleet outside Newport, RI to support the (failed) American attack on the city
- 1778, August 31: D'Estaing's defeated force departs for Boston
- 1778, November 30: Continental Army enters winter quarters in Middlebrook
- 1778, December 29: British capture Savannah

1779

- 1779, January 11: Lafayette sails to France to solicit more assistance
- 1779, February 23-25: Col. George Rogers Clark captures British General Henry Hamilton "Hair-buyer" at Vincennes, Indiana

- 1779, March 11: Congress establishes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers out of mostly of French personnel serving in the Continental Army
- 1779, May-November: General Sullivan's expedition against the Iroquois
- 1779, April 12: Convention of Aranjuez between France and Spain. Spain will enter the war as an ally of France but not of the US
- 1779, June 3: Continental Army leaves winter quarters in Middlebrook for New York Highlands
- 1779, June 21: Spain declares war against Great Britain following French promises to assist Spain in recovering Gibraltar and Florida
- 1779, July 16: Battle of Stony Point
- 1779, September 16 - October 18: French and American siege of Savannah
- 1779, September 23: Naval battle of Flambourgh Head (English Channel) pitting *Bonhomme Richard* under Capt. John Paul Jones vs *HMS Serapis*
- 1779, September 27: John Jay is appointed minister to Spain and tasked with winning Spanish support for American independence
- 1779, September 21: Spanish forces under Don Bernardo de Galvez, Governor of Louisiana, capture Baton Rouge
- 1779, October 25: British evacuate Newport, RI
- 1779, December 1: Continental Army enters winter quarters at Morristown

1780

- 1780, January 1: Mutiny of the Massachusetts Line at West Point, NY
- 1780, February 2: King Louis XVI approves the *expédition particulière*, the transportation of forces to be stationed in the USA
- 1780, March 1: Louis XVI promotes Rochambeau to lieutenant general and puts him in command of the expedition
- 1780, April 27/28: Lafayette arrives in Boston aboard frigate *L'Hermione*. He is accompanied by Commissary Ethis de Corny, who had orders to make arrangements for the arrival of Rochambeau's forces

- 1780, May 2: Rochambeau's convoy sails out of Brest
- 1780, May 26: Joint British and Indian attack on Spanish at St. Louis fails
- 1780, May 12: Charleston, SC falls to Crown forces following a siege that had begun on 21 February. French forces, incl. the Black *chasseurs volontaires de St. Domingue* had participated in the defense
- 1780, May 29: Battle of the Waxhaws, SC
- 1780, June 22: Battle of Springfield, NJ
- 1780, July 11: Commanded by Admiral de Ternay, a fleet carrying some 450 officers and 5,300 French troops under *comte* de Rochambeau sails into Narragansett Bay in Newport, RI
- 1780, August 16: Battle of Camden, SC
- 1780, September 25: Benedict Arnold's attempt to hand over West Point to British fails
- 1780, October 2: Major John André is hanged in Tappan
- 1780, October 7: Battle of King's Mountain, SC
- 1780, December 20: Great Britain declares war on the Netherlands

1781

- 1781, January 1: Mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line near Princeton, NJ
- 1781, January 5: Unsuccessful French raid on Jersey Island (English Channel)
- 1781, January 17: Battle of Cowpens, SC
- 1781, January 20-27: Mutiny of the New Jersey Line at Pompton, NJ
- 1781, January 30: Maryland is the last state to ratify the Articles of Confederation almost three years after the deadline of March 10, 1778 set by Congress. The Second Continental Congress dissolves and reconvenes as the Congress of the Confederation
- 1781, February 3: British capture island of Saint Eustatius/Statia from Dutch
- 1781, March 15: Battle of Guilford Courthouse, NC

- 1781, March 22: Admiral de Grasse leaves Brest for the West Indies
- 1781, April 4: The frigate *Sagittaire* together with a convoy of 30 vessels, some of them carrying the replacements for Rochambeau, separates from de Grasse' fleet and heads for Boston. It carries a letter by de Grasse of 29 March proposing joint military action. She arrives in Boston on 7 June 1781.
- 1781, May 10: Rochambeau's son returns from France
- 1781, June 29: Battle of Spencer's Ordinary, VA
- 1781, July 6: Battle of Green Spring, VA
- 1781, September 5: In the Battle off the Capes, French Admiral de Grasse prevents a British fleet from entering the Chesapeake Bay, sealing the fate of Lord Cornwallis in Yorktown
- 1781, September 6: Crown forces under Benedict Arnold burn New London, CT
- 1781, September 8: Battle of Eutaw Springs, SC
- 1781, September 28: Beginning of the siege of Yorktown
- 1781, October 3: Battle of the Hook near Gloucester, VA. Largest cavalry engagement of the War of Independence
- 1781, October 19: Cornwallis surrenders. The Continental Army marches north to its winter quarters in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York in early November. French forces will spend the winter of 1781/82 in Williamsburg, Hampton, Yorktown and Jamestown. Lauzun's Legion spends spring 1782 in Charlotte Court House.

1782

- 1782, March 20: Prime Minister Lord North's government resigns and is replaced by the ministry of Lord Rockingham
- 1782, July 4: Rochambeau's infantry begins its march from Virginia to Boston
- 1782, July 11: British evacuate Savannah, Georgia
- 1782, July 15: Celebration in Philadelphia for birth of Dauphin

- 1782, August 7: Washington creates the Purple Heart
- 1782, November 30: Preliminaries of Peace are signed in Paris between the United States and Great Britain
- 1782, December 25: Rochambeau's infantry sails out of Boston Harbor for the Caribbean. Lauzun's Legion winters in Wilmington, DE

1783

- 1783, February 4: George III issues Proclamation of Cessation of Hostilities ending the American War of Independence
- 1783, February 5: Sweden recognizes independence of the United States
- 1783, February 6: Spain ends its siege of Gibraltar
- 1783, February 10: Rochambeau arrives in Saint-Nazaire
- 1783, April 4/5: *De jure* end of hostilities in the territory of the United States Based upon the stipulations of the "Declaration Signed in Paris by the American Commissioners" of 20 January 1783
- 1783, April 11: Congress issues proclamation announcing cessation of Hostilities between the US and Great Britain on the territory of the United States
- 1783, April 15: Congress ratifies 30 November 1782 preliminaries of peace
- 1783, April 16: Peace is proclaimed in Philadelphia
- 1783, April 19: Washington informs his troops that hostilities have ended
- 1783, May 11: Lauzun's Legion sails out of Wilmington for France
- 1783, May 18: United Empire Loyalists reach Canada
- 1783, September 3: Second Treaty of Paris ends American War of Independence. Great Britain acknowledges the independence of the USA
- 1783, October 5: A final transport of 85 French soldiers leaves Baltimore for Europe
- 1783, November 25: Crown forces evacuate New York City

1783, December 23: George Washington resigns as commander in chief

1784

1784, January 14: Congress meeting in Annapolis ratifies the Treaty of Paris

1784, February 23: Rhode Island legislature passes Negro Emancipation Act giving freedom to all children born after March 1, 1784 to slave mothers. Enslaved African-Americans and Native Americans remain slaves

1784, April 9: Parliament in London ratifies the Treaty of Paris. The exchange of the ratified treaties takes place on 12 May 1784

1784, June 2: Congress dissolves the Continental Army

1784, June 3: Congress creates the United States Army

1785

1785, July 4: Bristol, RI holds first annual Independence Day Parade

1786

1786, May 17: Congress ratifies the "Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the King of Prussia, and the United States of America". The first treaty concluded between the US and a foreign power, it remained in effect until 6 April 1917

1787

1787, July 13: Congress enacts the Northwest Ordinance

1787, May: Former Virginia slaves freed by Lord Dunmore arrive in Sierra Leone

1787, May 13: Eleven ships carrying convicts leaves England for New South Wales, Australia where they arrive on 26 January 1788

1787, May 25: Constitutional Convention assembles in Philadelphia.

1787, December 7: Delaware is the first state to ratify the Constitution

1788

1787, 21 June: New Hampshire becomes the ninth state to ratify the Constitution.
With this ratification the constitution officially goes into force.

1788, September 13: The Continental Congress, which still functioned at irregular intervals
passes a resolution to put the new Constitution into operation

1789

1789, February 4: George Washington is elected President of the United States

1789, March 2: Last meeting of the Tenth Congress of the Confederation

1789, March 4: The US Constitution takes effect

1789, April 30: George Washington is sworn in as First President

1790

1790, 29 May: Rhode Island is the last of the 13 original states to ratify the
United States Constitution