



The War for Independence: A Revolution and a Civil War

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British vs British

At the dawn of the American Revolution most of the people living in the thirteen colonies considered themselves to be British under the power of King George III. Before the first shot was fired, colonists debated and argued with each other as to whether the colonies should break from their mother country, Great Britain. This conflict pitted neighbor against neighbor and brother against brother. The war for independence was in fact a civil war.



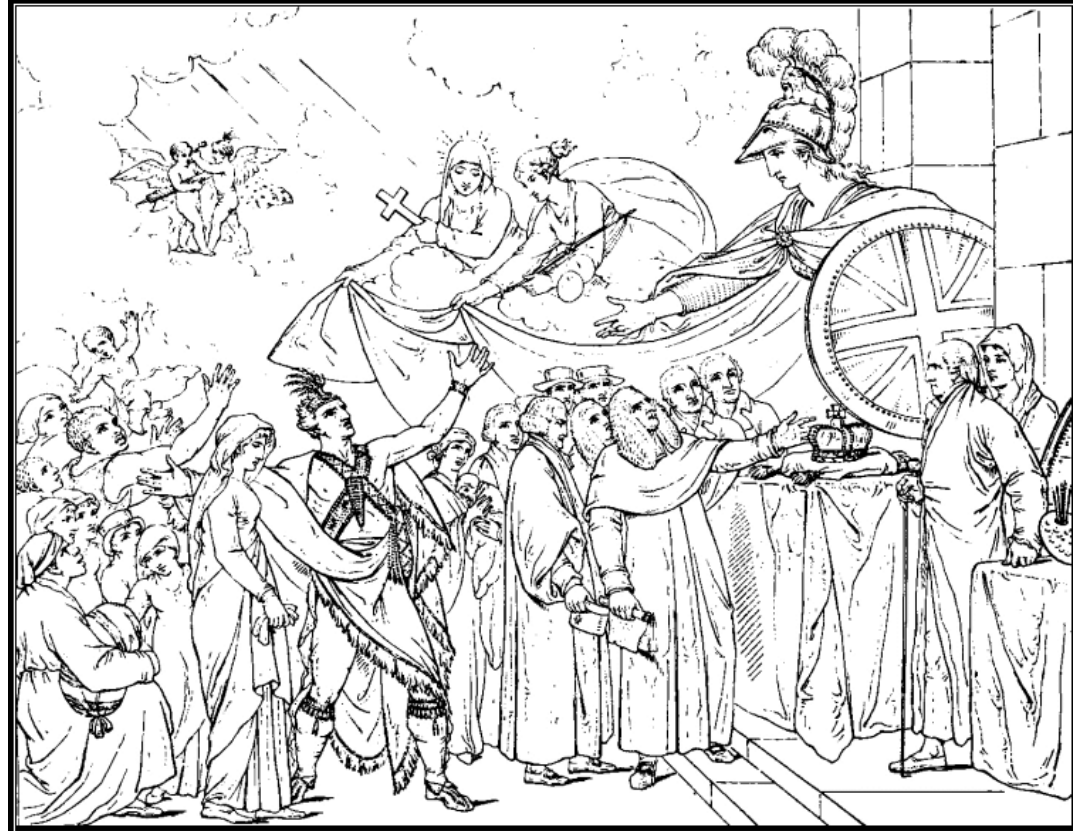
Key Terms

Tory/Loyalist – Term used for a colonist who supported Great Britain and wanted the colonies to remain part of Britain. At the end of the war many became refugees and were forced to leave America.

Tories



Careful. If you were a Tory, you might suffer at the hands of a Patriot mob.



After the war, Loyalists were welcomed back into Britain and her land.

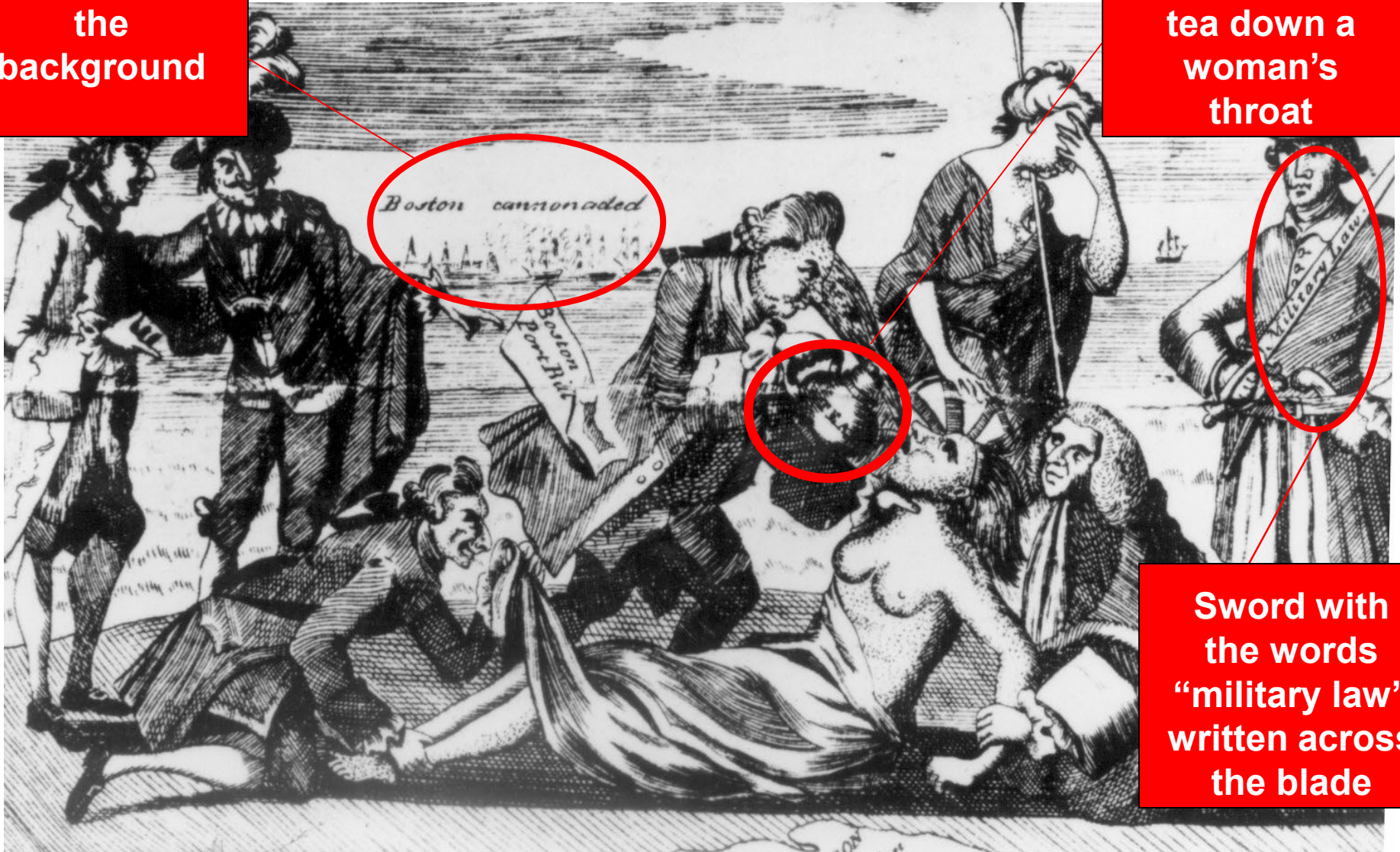


Rebels / Patriots – Term for the colonists who supported colonial independence from Great Britain. Among the well-known Patriots are such names as Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine, and George Washington.

Patriots

Boston
burning in
the
background

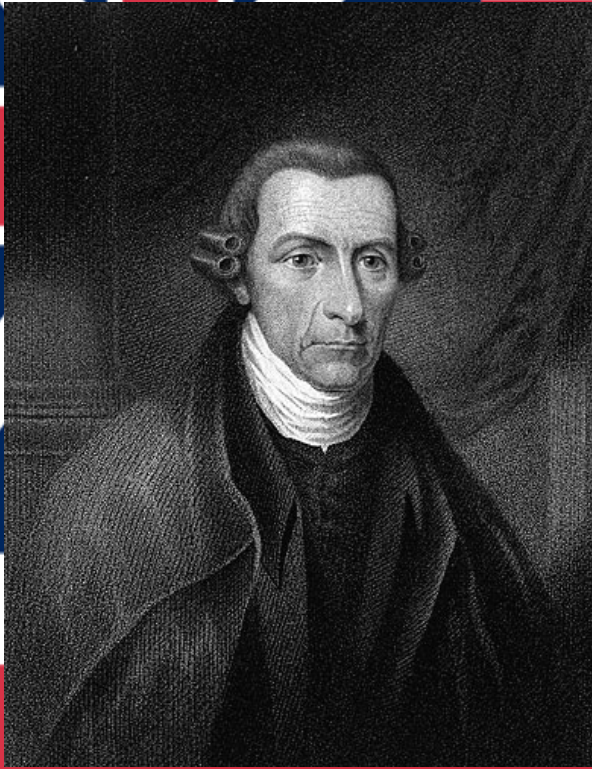
A British
subject forcing
tea down a
woman's
throat



Sword with
the words
“military law”
written across
the blade

This 1774 engraving by Paul Revere shows how many Patriots felt about the way colonists were treated by Great Britain.

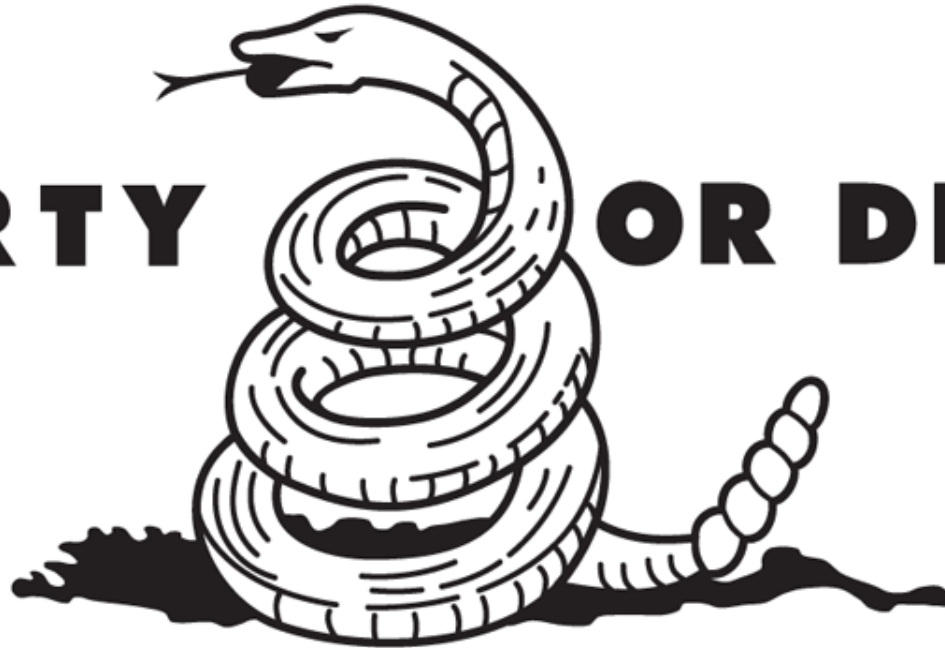
Key People



Patrick Henry of Virginia addressed the House of Burgesses in a moving speech imploring them to vote to separate from Britain and join the Continental Congress.

THE CULPEPER MINUTE MEN

LIBERTY OR DEATH



DONT TREAD ON ME

Henry's speech influenced this flag used by minutemen from Virginia. They were members of Henry's First Virginia Regiment in 1775.

Joseph Galloway



Galloway was a lawyer from Philadelphia and a member of the First Continental Congress. He was upset that so many members of the Congress wanted to sever ties with Great Britain. He made a speech to the Congress explaining why Britain acted as she did and why it was important to remain loyal to her.



Both Galloway and Henry fought passionately for their beliefs. The issue of independence drew such sharp lines that it seemed only a war could resolve this conflict.

Take a look at the excerpts from their speeches. Who would you follow?

LIBERTY AND UNION

In 1776, the Continental Congress ultimately wrote and signed the Declaration of Independence.



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