

Yankee Doodle Dandy

Colonial Philadelphia

By the time of the American Revolution, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was the largest city in the American colonies and an important center of trade. Its most prominent building was the State House, known today as Independence Hall. The famous Liberty Bell, originally cast in 1752, rang from Independence Hall for more than two decades before it sounded during the public reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8, 1776.

Explore Colonial Philadelphia

Franklin Square * One of Philadelphia's five original public squares, Franklin Square offers one of America's best playgrounds, family fun, and historic storytelling. * Visit www.historicphiladelphia.org for more information.

The Liberty Bell Center * The new home of Philadelphia's iconic bell. * Visit www.nps.gov/inde/liberty-bell-center.htm for more information.

Boycott on Tea

In 1767, the British Parliament passed the Townshend Acts, which included a new tax on tea in the American colonies. Colonists, asserting that the British had no right to tax the colonies since they had no representation in Parliament, organized a boycott of English goods, including tea. British troops were stationed in Boston to enforce the Townshend Acts and keep order, leading to heightened tensions between the colonists and the imperial authorities. These tensions boiled over three years later in the Boston Massacre, when several of the troops fired on a crowd of civilians.

Explore Colonial Boston

Faneuil Hall Marketplace * America's first open air marketplace features food, shopping, street theatre, and special events. It is located in the heart of historic Boston. * Visit www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com for more information.

Boston Tea Party

In 1773, the British Parliament passed the Tea Act in response to the colonials' boycott of tea, effectively reducing the price but keeping the tax in place. When ships carrying a cargo of English tea arrived in Boston Harbor later the same year, colonists protested, demanding the ships not be allowed to unload. An activist group called the Sons of Liberty took matters into its own hands, boarding the ships on December 16, 1773, and dumping the cargo into the bay.

Explore the Boston Tea Party

Old South Meetinghouse * The meeting house where the colonists gathered prior to the Boston Tea Party. * Visit www.oldsouthmeetinghouse.org for more information.

Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum * The site where the fateful protest took place. Visit an informative museum and climb aboard one of two authentically restored tea ships. * Visit www.bostonteatartyship.com for more information.

Patrick Henry

Parliament responded to the Boston Tea Party with the so-called "Intolerable Acts," meant to punish the protest by restricting the Massachusetts colonial government. Among other measures, the Intolerable Acts closed Boston's port, brought the colony under the direct rule of a royal governor, and allowed the governor to quarter British troops in privately owned buildings. The acts provoked enormous backlash, not only in Massachusetts, but in the other colonies as well. In a speech to the Second Virginia Convention on March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry responded to the Intolerable Acts and other British abuses by calling on the colonists to raise arms, saying, "I know not what course others may take; but as for me give me liberty or give me death!"

Explore St. John's Church

St. John's Church * See the historic site of Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech, and possibly catch a reenactment of this famous moment. * Visit www.historicstjohnschurch.org for more information.

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Paul Revere

In April of 1775 the Patriots got word that the British forces in Boston might attempt to confiscate the local militia's supply of weapons stored in nearby Concord, Massachusetts. Late on the night of April 18, 1775, the Patriots learned British troops were preparing to march out of the city. According to a prearranged signal, the colonists hung two lanterns in the steeple of the North Church, indicating the British would cross the Charles River by boat rather than march around Boston Neck by land. Paul Revere, a member of the Sons of Liberty, set out from the city on horseback, alerting every home on the way to Lexington that "the British were coming!"

Explore Paul Revere's Midnight Ride

Old North Church * Located in Boston's North End neighborhood, Old North Church is where Paul Revere received word of the British advance via lanterns displayed in the steeple. * Visit www.oldnorth.com for more information.

Paul Revere House * Not far from Old North Church is the preserved home of early America's most famous horseman, Paul Revere. * Visit www.paulreverehouse.org for more information.

Battle of Lexington and Concord

The British troops marched from Boston toward Concord, where they suspected Patriot militias had stashed weapons. When they reached the town of Lexington, a skirmish broke out between the British troops and assembled local militia members, killing eight of the Patriots. The British continued to Concord, where they encountered more than four hundred Minutemen near the North Bridge. At some point during the standoff that ensued, historians believe a British regular fired a shot. The American Patriots responded with "the shot heard 'round the world" and sparked a battle that began the American Revolution.

Explore the Battles of Lexington and Concord

Minute Man Visitor Center * Experience the multimedia presentation "The Road to Revolution" to learn about the events which led to the outbreak of America's War for Independence. * Visit <https://www.nps.gov/mima/planyourvisit/minute-man-visitor-center.htm> for more information.

North Bridge Visitor Center * After following the "Battle Road" from Lexington, see the site of the "shot heard 'round the world." * Visit <https://www.nps.gov/mima/planyourvisit/north-bridge-visitor-center.htm> for more information.

Abigail Adams

Abigail Adams was one of the most influential women involved with the American founding. She and her husband, John Adams (a leading Patriot from Massachusetts), exchanged hundreds of letters during the American Revolution. When John was a delegate to the Continental Congresses, Abigail wrote frequently to advise him. As the delegates drafted the Declaration of Independence, she counseled him to make sure the new government would be "more generous and favorable" to the ladies than the last.

Explore the Home of John and Abigail Adams

Adams National Historical Park * Tour the Quincy, Massachusetts, home of John and Abigail Adams. * Visit www.nps.gov/adam/index.htm for more information.

Declaration of Independence

On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress met in Independence Hall in Philadelphia to sign the Declaration of Independence, formally separating the colonies from Great Britain. The Declaration listed the colonies' reasons for breaking with the King, and more importantly, expressed the principles on which the United States of America would be founded: "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."

Explore the Signing of the Declaration of Independence

Independence Visitor Center * The best starting point for touring Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, and the other sites of Independence Mall. * Visit www.phlvisitorcenter.com for more information.

National Archives * See the real Declaration of Independence. * Visit www.archives.gov for more information.

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Betsy Ross

Legend has it that in 1776, General George Washington visited Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross in her upholstery shop. There, he asked her to sew the first American flag, showing her his sketch of thirteen stars arranged in a circle alongside thirteen red and white stripes. Although no one knows for sure if the story is true, records show that Betsy was paid for making flags just a few weeks before the Congress made this now famous design the official banner of the United States of America.

Explore the Home of Betsy Ross

Betsy Ross House * Learn about life in colonial times at the home of seamstress Betsy Ross, near the heart of historic Philadelphia. * Visit www.historicphiladelphia.org for more information.

Valley Forge

In December 1777, General Washington took his army to Valley Forge for the winter encampment. The soldiers were hungry and exhausted when they arrived. Most did not have shoes. They had few supplies to build shelters. Disease was rampant. For the Continental Army, it was one of the bleakest moments of the war. Despite these enormous challenges, however, the soldiers spent hours during the winter at Valley Forge practicing drills under the command of Baron von Steuben, a Prussian military officer introduced by Benjamin Franklin to aid Washington in training the Army.

Explore Valley Forge

Valley Forge National Historical Park * See the place where the Continental Army camped in 1777 for the bleakest winter of the war. * Visit www.nps.gov/vafo/index.htm for more information.

Molly Pitcher

The lore of the American Revolution includes the story of "Molly Pitcher," whose function with the Army included carrying water to the troops. When Molly's husband was wounded in battle, she is said to have taken his place, helping to fire the artillery. The real "Molly Pitcher" is thought to have been Mary Hays of Pennsylvania, whose husband, William Hays, was injured in the Battle of Monmouth. Molly Hays had joined her husband during the winter at Valley Forge and later followed him into combat, assisting the troops.

Explore the Battle of Monmouth

Monmouth Battlefield State Park * See where the legendary Molly Pitcher is said to have made her heroic stand during one of the Revolutionary War's largest battles. * Visit www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/monbat.html for more information.

Yorktown

In the autumn of 1781, the war at last reached its decisive moment in Yorktown, Virginia. There, General Washington and Rochambeau, the commander of the French forces, converged on the British Army. Around the same time, the French naval fleet arrived to prevent the British from retreating by sea. After one final battle, General Cornwallis conceded defeat. He surrendered on October 19, 1781.

Explore the Battle of Yorktown

Yorktown Victory Center * Located in Virginia's Historic Triangle, Yorktown is where the United States finally won its independence. * Visit www.historyisfun.org for more information.

Treaty of Paris

On September 3, 1783, the United States and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Paris, officially ending the American Revolution. In Paris, France, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay represented the United States at the negotiations with representatives of the King. By signing the Treaty, Britain formally recognized the United States as a free and independent country and ceded enormous territory in the west to the new nation.

Explore the Maryland State House

Maryland State House * Visit the place where the Treaty of Paris was ratified in the United States, officially ending the Revolutionary War. The Maryland State House is also where General Washington resigned his commission as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. * Visit www.visitannapolis.org for more information.

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Mount Vernon

After the war, many wanted to appoint George Washington King, but instead, he appeared before the Congress and resigned his commission as Commander in Chief. He then returned home to his Virginia estate, Mount Vernon. Upon hearing this news, Washington's former adversary King George III remarked that if true it would make Washington "the greatest character of the age." In fact, the General longed to return home. During the eight-year war, he had made only one brief visit to Mount Vernon. He remained there as a private citizen until 1789, when he was elected unanimously as the first president of the United States.

Explore Mount Vernon

*Mount Vernon * George Washington's home and plantation is one of America's greatest and most educational historic sites. * Visit www.mountvernon.org for more information.*

Soldiers' Homecoming

Like their General, the soldiers laid down their arms following the war and disbanded. Tens of thousands of these soldiers had fought to win independence, many for years at a time. They faced many new challenges as they returned to life as private citizens. In the years ahead, they would work together to form a new Republican experiment in liberty unlike anything the world had ever seen.