

Summary: The American Revolution

A New Nation Is Born

The French and Indian War cost Britain a lot of money. Britain wanted the American colonies to help pay for it. In the 1760s, the British passed new laws that made colonists pay taxes on sugar, tea, and other things. The colonists complained. They made speeches and wrote letters to newspapers. One group protested by throwing crates of British tea into Boston Harbor.

In 1774, colonists held the First Continental Congress. They talked about ways to make Britain treat the colonies more fairly. Britain ignored these ideas and sent troops to control the colonists. The colonists organized their own army. The American Revolution began.

Colonists wanted independence from Britain. They thought the British were treating them unfairly. In 1776, the colonists wrote the Declaration of Independence. It declared the American colonies were free from Britain.

Loyalists and Patriots

As the war began, many people took sides. People who wanted independence were called Patriots. People who wanted to stay loyal to Britain were called Loyalists. In Florida, most people were Loyalists.

The Florida colonists stayed loyal to Britain for many reasons. One reason was that the settlers wanted British soldiers to protect them from attacks from the French, the Spanish, and American Indians. White settlers also feared that free and enslaved Africans might attack them.

Britain also spent money helping Florida. The settlers feared that Florida might fail without British money. Florida helped Britain in many ways during the American Revolution. St. Augustine was a center for British military supplies. Florida ranchers sold the British Army cattle for food. Florida Loyalists attacked Patriot settlements.

In 1779, Spain joined the Patriots in the war. Later, Spain took West Florida from the British. In 1783, the new Treaty of Paris gave the colonies their liberty. It also gave Florida back to Spain.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

tax *noun*, money that people or businesses pay to support the government

declaration *noun*, a written or spoken statement to tell what you believe

independence *noun*, freedom from the rule of someone else

liberty *noun*, freedom from the control of another country

After You Read

REVIEW Why did the American colonies want independence from Britain? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.

REVIEW Why did many Florida colonists remain loyal to Britain? What did settlers want the British soldiers to do for them? What did Britain do to help Florida grow? Underline two sentences that tell the answers.