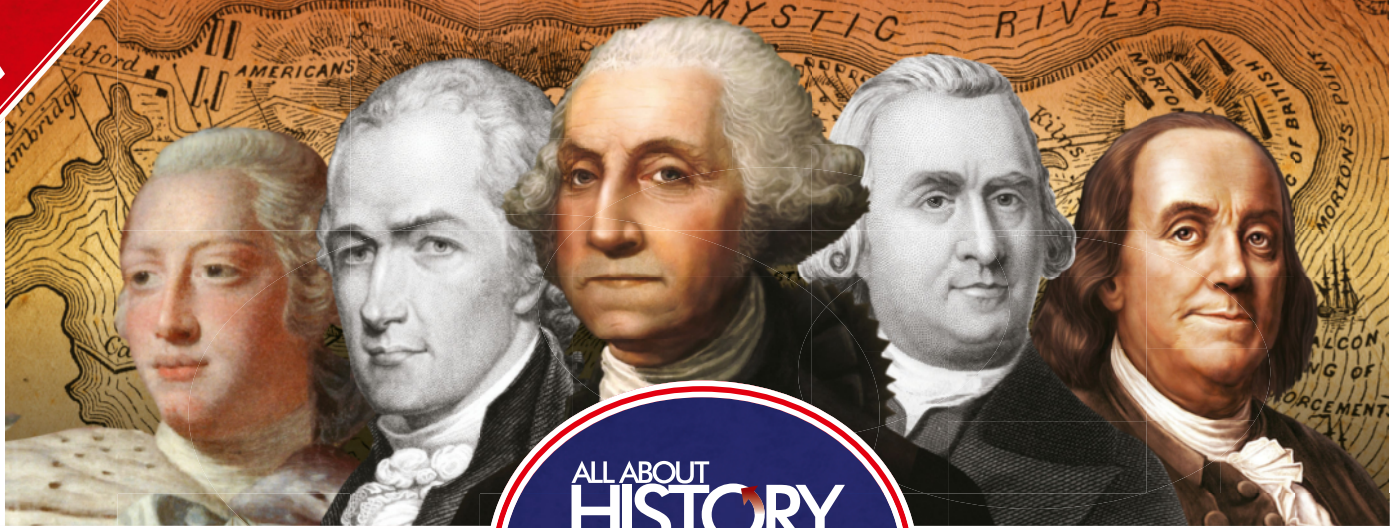


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AMERICAN REVOLUTION

DISCOVER THE COLONIAL REVOLT THAT LED TO THE BIRTH OF THE USA



KING GEORGE III & WASHINGTON: LIBERTY VS TYRANNY

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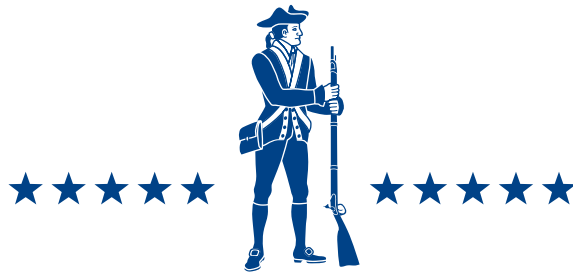


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The king who lost America

The story of how one monarch influenced the American Revolution

Remembered mostly for his madness and his role as the antagonist of the American Revolution, George III has gone down in history as one of the worst British monarchs ever. But did he actually deserve his dastardly reputation - and what was really his role in the loss of America?

Born in the comfort of a Westminster mansion on 4 June 1738, George III would become Britain's longest-reigning king. Throughout his long life, he would see revolution spread like wildfire across many different parts of the globe. Vilified as an incompetent brute by the American Revolutionaries and scorned by historians decades after his death, he has been a much-maligned figure. But George III's reign was in reality far more complex, filled with political and personal crises that would both complicate his legacy and take a severe toll on his mental health.

After the death of his father in 1751, the teenage George became heir to the Hanoverian throne of Great Britain. Despite his destiny, the young boy remained an unlikely king. Shy and lacking confidence in himself, he preferred to immerse himself in his hobbies. His mother was also a strong-willed woman who had a remarkable influence on him. She was devoted to her family, and passed her religiosity and sense of moral duty onto her son. "George, be king," she said, setting him firmly on the path to the crown.

King George III ignored the pleas of the Americans and chose to label the rebel leaders traitors

To help in her efforts, she employed the 3rd earl of Bute, John Stuart, as a tutor to George. Despite rumours in the press of a torrid affair between the two, the young George looked up to Bute greatly. Perhaps the charismatic earl seemed like the father George had long been missing. Under Bute's influence, George was taught the art of politics and diplomacy, albeit as Bute saw it - which did not turn out to be particularly perceptive. In fact, Bute actively encouraged George to isolate himself from key political figures. This was a grave error, considering that George was ill-experienced in politics and could well have utilised the politicians' extensive knowledge to his advantage.

George became so reliant on Bute that he was unable to see how the earl's tactics were doing him more harm than good. At the age of 20, he wrote to Bute: "In what a pretty pickle I should be in a future day, if I had not your sagacious counsels." The growing mistrust of the future king from his parliamentary colleagues did not bode well for the future.

At the time of his ascension to the British throne in 1760, George III was just 22. It had become the norm for kings to take a passive role in ruling since the turmoil of the Glorious Revolution had threatened to destroy the monarchy altogether. But George III wanted to get actively involved in the politics of the day, much to the annoyance of the government. Steered by Bute, George III did away with many wise politicians he simply





George III, seen here in this 1763 royal portrait, ascended to the British throne when he was just 22

Key figures



The statue of George III in Bowling Green, New York City, is violently torn down after the reading of the Declaration of Independence

happened to dislike, including William Pitt the Elder, who resigned from his post in 1761 after a series of disagreements.

One of the most pressing matters of state was the Seven Years' War, which had been raging since 1756. George III had inherited this conflict when it was at its height. As Anglo- and French-Americans had continued skirmishes over the boundaries of their territories, their mother countries - Britain and France - stepped in, seeking to protect their prized possessions. War raged on for years, costing the European powers a considerable amount of money and manpower.

Eventually, Britain won out in 1763. It gained much of France's former possessions in North America, including a significant part of Canada, and all French territories east of the Mississippi. Britain also made some gains from Spain, which had allied with France during the war and therefore, in the minds of British policymakers, forfeited their right to territory in North America. So, Britain added Florida to its colonial possessions across the Atlantic. Britain was now the dominant power on the North American continent.

However, George III and the British Government were faced with quite the predicament. While

they had won the war, their finances were almost completely in ruin. The national debt meant that Britain needed to be paying off £4 million annually in order to stay afloat. They were now responsible for a vast tract of land and all its people, which the war-impoorished nation had not bargained for - but equally, did not wish to lose, for fear of losing face internationally.

Later that year, Bute deserted King George III and resigned from his post as prime minister. George Grenville was his replacement, and he had an appealing solution to the British government's debt problem. Grenville reasoned that as America

Georgian Papers Programme

Incredibly, a vast tract of original papers written by George was discovered in the basement of Apsley House, the duke of Wellington's London home, in World War I. They remained in storage for a century, but the new millennium heralded an unmissable opportunity for Georgian historians to see George III in a totally new light.

350,000 papers on the American Revolution - mostly written by the monarch himself, as he did not have a secretary - have been preserved, and in April 2015 Queen Elizabeth II opened

these archives to historians. Only 15 per cent of these have currently been viewed in print but they reveal a hidden side of the king.

As well as providing a groundbreaking, new perspective on the American Revolution (which has primarily been viewed through the eyes of the Americans), they show that George was above all else a committed family man, who cared for the future of his children more than anything. Some of the papers were published online in 2017, making them accessible to all.



This mahogany desk was used by George III for 40 years, where he worked tirelessly



John Adams, the USA's first ambassador to Great Britain, bows to King George III in 1785

had benefitted from the Seven Years' War, and the colonists had been saved from French encroachers (now requiring British troops stationed there to protect them), they ought to pay for their own defence. He wished to levy taxes on the colonists as a way to fill the British coffers - without increasing their representation in parliament. King George, a frugal man by nature, was swayed by this idea.

So, over the next few years, Parliament imposed a series of deeply unpopular taxes on America known as the Townshend Duties. The brainchild of Chancellor of the Exchequer Charles Townshend, they were openly supported by George III. One such duty was the Stamp Act of 1765, which raised money from all printed materials in the colonies. This had a fairly wide-reaching impact, but it especially irritated the pamphleteers (famous for criticising Britain and its king), for whom their activities were made all the more expensive.

Leading politicians at the time - even in Britain - objected to this draconian policy. Edmund Burke and Pitt the Elder were among the most vocal critics, saying that it was logistically very difficult to properly collect revenue from the other side of the world. The Stamp Act was repealed a year later, after George III and the British parliament relented. Colonists rejoiced, erecting a gilded statue of their benevolent king striking a power pose on his horse in Bowling Green, New York City.

Another of Townshend's policies was a duty on tea imported by the East India Company. This quickly riled up the colonist rebels, such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. They were angry at the fact the British government could tax Americans however they wished,

without Americans being able to have their say in parliament. "No taxation without representation!" became their rallying cry, and the so-called Sons of Liberty encouraged Americans to join the rebellion, culminating in the Boston Tea Party of 1773.

Of course, not all Americans immediately wanted to throw off their British-made shackles and get rid of George. A substantial sect of the American population - as many as 20 per cent - called themselves 'Loyalists', and believed the Thirteen Colonies should ultimately stay by the side of king and country. They were in frequent communication with the monarch and his government, sending many letters of support and pledges that if it came to war, hundreds of thousands of people would soon be ready to put down the insurgents.

Prominent loyalists included the Hooper shipping family of Massachusetts. Worried about how the actions of the revolutionaries would affect their business prospects, they asked their state's governor to meet with King George, and to ask him to "moderate the resentment of the [British] government against us". Knowing that this resentment was probably caused by them, the American Patriots were outraged at this betrayal.

Nonetheless, even as tensions between Loyalists and Patriots escalated, George III was not yet the main antagonist in the Revolution. It was mostly

"Colonists rejoiced, erecting a gilded statue of their benevolent king striking a power pose on his horse"



Nigel Hawthorne stars as King George in the award-winning 1994 film adaptation of Bennett's play

The madness of King George

George is perhaps best known for his mental state

As well as 'losing' the colonies, George is famous for a more sinister reason - his mental derangement, which set in in the later part of his reign. His health had often been fragile as a child and as the pressure of ruling a rebellious empire mounted, George's mental state deteriorated.

George first had a mental breakdown in 1778, but he recovered and ruled for 12 more years, with only hints that his sanity was at risk. In 1804, as Napoleon waged war in Europe, the king was struck down with another bout of mental instability, but again recovered. Finally, in 1810, George's mental health was damaged beyond repair and he succumbed to a bout of insanity from which he never returned. His son, the future George IV, acted as regent while his father was incapacitated.

By examining his symptoms and evidence from the time, scholars have diagnosed George with porphyria, a disease that impacts the central nervous system. By testing samples of his hair, scientists found he had over 300 times the normal concentration of arsenic in his system, which may have worsened the problem - despite the fact it might have been used as medication to treat it.

Indeed, the damning 1991 play *The Madness of King George III* by Alan Bennett shows the king as a mere political pawn, struggling to maintain his sanity in a world of plots against him.



King George III and his wife Queen Charlotte are depicted in this satirical Georgian cartoon, attempting to befriend a British peasant

The hobbyist king

How the monarch spent his free time

Even while he was on the throne, King George was being parodied in popular culture, just as he is today. Throughout his life he had a great interest in farming and agriculture, even preferring to live in Windsor Castle so he could keep an eye on his estate. For this, he was mockingly nicknamed 'farmer George', but it later became a term of endearment.

George III's preoccupation with his hobbies, while scorned by some, actually helped to bring about advances in these fields - especially science. His Majesty accumulated a vast collection of stargazing instruments, built observatories, and even helped fund the great scientific minds of the day such as William Herschel. Herschel was so grateful to the king that he named one of his discoveries 'Georgium Sidus', or George's Star, after his patron. This discovery is now known as the planet Uranus.

George III also loved the arts, especially German opera. He even wrote a full concert programme consisting mainly of George Frideric Handel's music. Although the famed composer had died before George ascended the throne, he remained the king's favourite composer for a long time.



George III was still disliked in America until the end of his reign, as suggested by this 1812 engraving of a fight with James Madison

parliament that was giving Americans grief - the king was simply a background figure. However, George's unwavering support of parliament was starting to breed discontent and suspicion among Americans. Their hostility to him soon passed the point of no return and revolt was heavy in the air. The monarch was sensitive to this mood. In a letter to the prime minister, George wrote: "The die is now cast. The colonies must either submit or triumph. I do not wish to come to severed measures, but we must not retreat". Additionally, the clampdown on the rebellious state of Massachusetts added insult to injury, as the British government took away the state's right to self-governance and punished its leaders. These events became known as the Intolerable Acts to Americans, who began to organise themselves into what became the First Continental Congress.

One year later, the Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia. In a last-ditch attempt to stop a full-blown uprising, a congressman from Pennsylvania, John Dickinson, suggested reaching out to George III - after all, most Americans did not actually desire to overthrow him, and some even hoped that he might be a friend to the colonists, as he was seen to be less malicious than parliament. Revolutionaries such as John Adams opted to remain quiet and observe how this attempt panned out, so the Continental Congress agreed to Dickinson's idea, which became known as the Olive Branch Petition.

Their hopes for reconciliation were dashed when the petition made landfall in Britain. As the Battles of Lexington and Concord had recently broke out, King George refused even to receive the petition from the Americans, and worse still, he declared the colonies to be in "open and avowed rebellion". Thankfully for the Patriots, this worked in their favour, as they could now easily turn the American people against the British king.

Though the Declaration Act was passed in 1776, reminding America that it was entirely subordinate to British rule and was subject to whatever taxes Britain wished to levy, this meagre attempt at re-establishing dominance fell on deaf ears. The Declaration of Independence was drafted, and in no uncertain terms decried George as a "tyrant" who was "unfit to rule a free people". The golden statue of him in Bowling Green was violently torn down and the monarch now became the focal point of America's grievances with Britain.

Watching the War of Independence unfold from across the ocean, George found his power marginalised, but it's said he kept a close eye on the conflict's progress by studying war maps. While Britain had some success in the early stages of the conflict, by 1781 it became clear that Britain was on the losing side. Charles Cornwallis, one of the generals leading the British forces, had already surrendered to American and French forces. To all intents and purposes, the war was lost.

Besides, by this point, parliament was tiring of the expensive fighting. British public opinion had also shifted, beginning to favour shedding the burden of the rebellious colonies altogether. George had even considered abdicating the throne because the war had taken such a toll on his fragile mental and physical health.

"For the king, ending the conflict and making concessions to the Americans was never really an option"

The king's domestic bliss?

Behind the closed doors of his palace, George was a deeply devout monarch, living by a strict moral code. He took his position as king very seriously and lamented the excesses of his younger brother and sons, who spent most of their time partying and making unsuitable matches. He felt so ashamed of his brother's marriage to a widowed commoner that he passed the Royal Marriages Act 1772, which meant descendants of George II had to ask the monarch's permission before marrying.

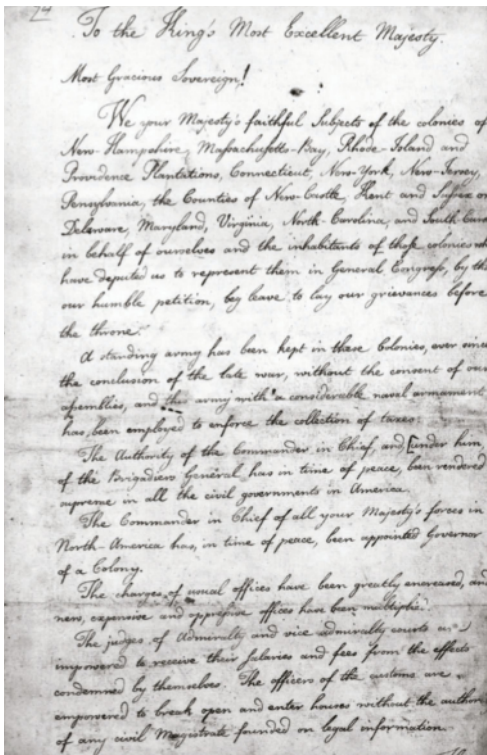
George's own marriage, although arranged purely to keep the dynasty going, turned out to be a very happy one. He and Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz

had 15 children together and unlike most other monarchs, he remained faithful to her in their 50-year marriage. She shared his love of music, and together they were patrons to some of the greatest artists of the age - such as an eight-year-old Mozart, who they received in 1764.

When the king suffered from bouts of mental instability, his relationship with the queen suffered. She was initially kept in the dark about his problems but when they became impossible to hide, she worried. "What is to become of me?" it is rumoured she said, and she was afraid of seeing the king by herself. However, she continued to support her husband until she died in 1818.



This 1770 portrait by Johan Zoffany shows King George, Queen Charlotte and their many children, painted in the joyful first decade of their marriage



The first page of the Olive Branch Petition, which addressed George III as the "Most Gracious Sovereign"

However, for the king, ending the conflict and making concessions to the Americans was never really an option. He pushed the war even further, refusing to allow parliament to make peace because he feared that if American rebels were seen to succeed, other British colonies would take heed and rebel against their occupiers.

In particular, he was referring to Ireland. As a devout Anglican, George was hugely resistant to allowing Roman Catholics equal rights under the law and implored his ministers to continue the war for fear of Irish rebellion. He also reasoned - incorrectly - that as France had been aiding the

Americans more than their financial situation allowed, the French would soon crumble along with the American resistance.

George was proved wrong and could no longer fight his ministers on the issue. In 1783, the American rebels, British forces and international parties to the war convened in Paris for a symbolic peace conference. America's independence was confirmed, so Britain had lost one of its most valued colonies. The borders that were drawn up were far more generous than even the revolutionaries had expected, which was a source of extra humiliation for Britain. Plus, Florida was given back to Spain, and Britain had to forfeit all its military possessions in the US.

With such a poor settlement, the British public felt a large degree of animosity towards their king, who felt his insistence on prolonging the war had led Britain to disaster. Once again, George III drafted an abdication speech, but he ultimately felt too tied into his duty to resign. He fell into a spell of melancholy and the government was on the verge of collapse yet again.

Luckily for the isolated king, hope was on the horizon. It came in the form of William Pitt the Younger, the elder Pitt's son. Becoming prime minister at the tender age of 24 in 1783, he was Britain's youngest elected leader, and his uneasy alliance with the monarch helped Britain get back on its feet. Pitt was seen as being uncorrupt owing to his youth and inexperience - unlike most of the British establishment at the time, which was rife with financial and political dodgy dealings.

As the young man was so popular, George III was able to ride the coattails of his success. In a wise move, the king now opted to leave decision-making powers to the prime minister, inadvertently laying the foundations for the constitutional monarchy that the UK has today.

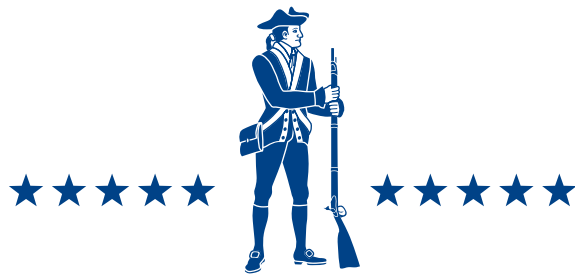
The loss of the Thirteen Colonies haunted George, but he now began to re-evaluate the situation. In a letter dating from the 1780s, he

displays his immense frustration; "America is lost!" he exclaims. However, it later becomes apparent that he sees American independence as a business opportunity for the mother country. "It is to be hoped that we shall reap more from their trade as friends than ever we could derive from them as colonies", the king believed. He even disclosed his quiet optimism to the United States' first ambassador to Britain, John Adams, telling him that Britain "desired to meet the friendship of the US as an independent power".

Ultimately, George saw his hopes fulfilled, although the relationship between the two nations was somewhat tense at first. The king, meanwhile, drifted off into private retirement. His long reign and the controversies that accompanied it had nearly destroyed his mental health, and he was only too happy to play a minor role in his later years. He died in 1820 having ruled Britain for nearly 60 years. He remains Britain's longest-reigning king, although Queens Victoria and Elizabeth II were both on the throne longer.

Traditionally, owing to his lack of affinity for governance and mental health troubles, George III has been portrayed as a childish despot unwilling to surrender what was already lost. But historians in the 20th century started to take an alternative view of the monarch - that he actually delegated much of his power to parliament, and moreover, that placing George III at the heart of the revolution is an overly personal view of history. After all, one man could not possibly have been responsible for all of the colonists' grievances.

While George remains the butt of the joke in popular culture surrounding the Revolution - for instance in the 2016 musical *Hamilton*, he is a bumbling character that sings desperately to the colonies, "You'll be back!" - he was evidently a far more complex character than has largely been assumed. Deliberately or not, George III's actions while on the throne helped the USA and Britain to become the democracies they are today.



Spies, lies and Patriots

How a group of cunning Americans brought the downfall of
the British - by any means necessary

Words Alice Barnes-Brown



On the eve of independence, America was a dangerously divided place to be. Even if you cared little for politics, you had to choose your side. Were you loyal to your king, or did you dream of a better nation, free from the yoke of the Old World? Neighbours viewed each other with suspicion, and as relations with the mother country worsened, so too did relations between communities.

Soon, society could be divided into two groups - the Loyalists and the Patriots. If an independent America was your goal, you were firmly in the Patriot camp. If you remained true to the sovereign, then you were a loyalist.

Even though tensions ran high, without any formal organisation, the Patriots didn't stand a chance of ultimately defeating the mighty British.

When the Revolutionary War finally broke out, the Patriots were, to say the least, the underdogs. However, a growing national consciousness helped to transform this ad hoc group into a formidable force.

The Patriots, like Americans themselves, were a diverse bunch. Men, women and children could all be Patriots, even if their most radical act was simply to quarrel with their loyalist neighbours, boycott British goods, or champion homemade products. But they had one advantage - numbers. Patriotic citizens were spread across every corner of America, ready to fight for their liberty.

Slowly but surely, the Patriots began to organise themselves. While people out in the countryside were resisting in any way they could, a political elite was forming in Boston. Men like George

Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and John Hancock were beginning to make their mark on society, trying to inspire Americans into rebellion. Indeed, it was Franklin who coined the term 'Patriots' in the lead-up to the Revolutionary War. This served as a banner that proud Americans could gather under, and a nationalistic mood swept across the nation.

The British are coming

Paul Revere, who brought news of the imminent British invasion, is one of New England's most legendary Patriots. The silversmith rode into Lexington, Massachusetts, in April 1775, famously shouting, "The British are coming!" at the top of his voice in order to mount a heroic civilian defence against the strength of the Crown.



Key figures

Unlike the wealthy Bostonian rebels, Revere was an ordinary working man, whose patriotic spirit would later inspire countless tales.

Thanks to the rallying cries of men like Revere, civilian militias sprang up all over the Thirteen Colonies. Within a week of Revere's legendary outing, up to 16,000 New Englanders had mustered up a siege army to surround the occupied city of Boston. Threatening and harassing the British there, the militia proved that thousands of Americans were willing to make sacrifices for their freedom.

What they lacked in experience, they made up for in morale. When the Continental Congress took charge of the New England militias in June 1775, enthusiasm for the cause was at an all-time high. With General George Washington now at the head of the so-called Continental Army, for the first time a feeling of national bonding and a faint whiff of victory teased American senses.

This was heightened in the early days of the war when the Patriot army inflicted some serious defeats on the British, despite their lack of resources. While the famous Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775 was technically a loss for the Continental Army, considering their

inexperience and poor resources, the fact that they inflicted approximately 1,000 casualties on the better-funded British was certainly a testament to their commitment.

On the home front, too, regular civilians were willing to fight for their rights. 200,000 people guarded their own communities as militiamen and supported the Continental Arm, despite Washington's disdain for them. Washington's conceit for the militias was rather judgmental and civilians could be enormously helpful. For example,

in the 1781 Battle of Cowpens, South Carolina local Catherine Moore Barry shared the benefit of her detailed knowledge of the land and warned her fellow Patriots of the oncoming British Army. This allowed the Americans to trap their enemies.

However, enthusiasm (and with it, the number of Patriot soldiers) dwindled as the war waged on. Washington realised this, describing the men who did volunteer as a "drop in the ocean", and setting quotas to maintain manpower.

Many states ended up drafting men in to meet these demands, and in 1778 Congress did the unthinkable - it enlisted African-American slaves in the Continental Army. 5,000 black soldiers served, hoping that they could win their emancipation once the war was over.

Agent 355
is the mystery
alias of one female
member, whose
legend inspired
books and artistic
reconstructions

Agent 711

But the Patriots knew they would not win the Revolution with just brute force alone, especially against the better-equipped, better-manned and overall better-prepared British. Washington's stroke of genius was to set up an intricate network of spies, pioneering the use of espionage tactics far ahead of his time.

Arguably the most famous of these undercover organisations was the Culper Spy Ring, founded in 1778 by Washington himself. Made up of farmers, tailors, merchants, officials and other committed civilians, they built up a vast array of connections within the British establishment, so they could gain as much information as possible. Membership in the ring went all the way to the top - Washington's code name in the group was 'Agent 711' - but it was difficult to know who to trust.

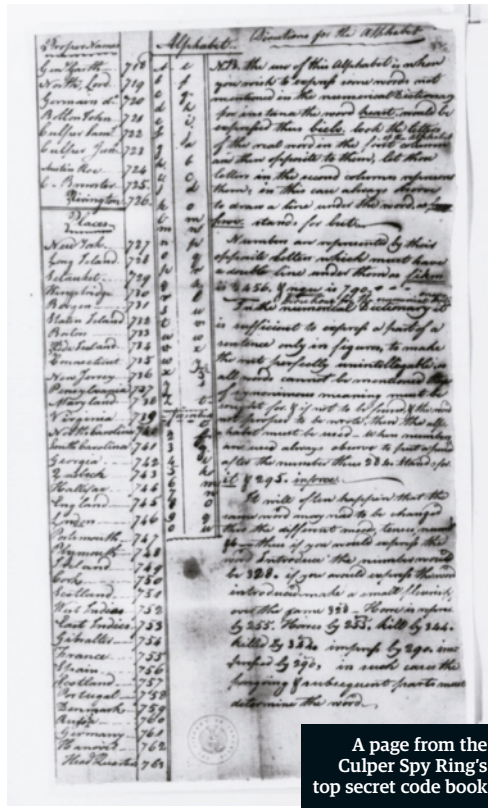
After all, Washington knew firsthand the dangers of compromising the secret identity of spies. His 21-year-old friend Nathan Hale had been caught spying by the British in 1776, and he was swiftly executed without trial. Wounded by Hale's premature death, Washington ensured that any future espionage was to be conducted with the utmost care.

Benjamin Tallmadge, a cavalry officer with some undercover experience, was charged with building a functional and highly secretive spy network. Tallmadge (alias John Bolton) recruited friends and acquaintances from his Long Island

This painting was nicknamed 'Yankee Doodle' as it embodies the patriotic spirit of 1776



Paul Revere dashes out on his horse to warn his fellow Patriots about the impending British arrival



A page from the Culper Spy Ring's top secret code book



Thayendanegea (Anglicised to Joseph Brant) was the leader of the Six Nations tribal organisation, and became an officer in the British Army

Britain's unexpected allies

The Native Americans who supported the British cause

In the war against the upstart colonists, Britain searched for help deep within the belly of the beast. Surprisingly, the Crown found it was able to call upon thousands of Native Americans, who believed that their future was more secure under British occupation than it would be if America was an independent nation.

Naturally, they had reason to be concerned. History had taught them that if left unchecked, the colonists were dangerous and could kill them in the blink of an eye. This was especially true when Americans were expanding their settlement, almost annihilating anyone in their way. Washington himself had even become known as "town-destroyer" to some Iroquois, having led attacks on a number of tribes on the frontier.

In an attempt to stop the bloodshed, the British government forbade colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains. For rural Americans, this proved to be one of their chief grievances with the British, as they believed that Native Americans were being treated better than most of the white, British subjects.

Many tribes, such as the Cherokee, threw their lot in with the British, serving on the front line as soldiers, forming political coalitions with other tribes, and helping to share information about the terrain. They became such an integral part of the Loyalist cause that in 1775, a worried Continental Congress told them "We desire you to remain at home, and not join on either side, but keep the hatchet buried deep."

© Getty-Wiki

hometown, whom he had total trust in - such as Robert Townsend (alias Samuel Culper Junior), Caleb Brewster, and Abraham Woodhull (also known as Samuel Culper Senior).

The younger 'Culper' set himself up as a loyalist coffee shop owner of an establishment that British officers and their American allies frequented. To add to the illusion, he also wrote pro-Tory articles in the *Royal Gazette*. This cover was convincing enough to fool a number of his enemies, creating a false sense of security in the coffee house. Officers might accidentally reveal too much about British troop movements, and the loose chatter of pro-British Americans allowed Tallmadge to gauge what morale on the other side was really like.

Once a key piece of intel had been gathered, another member of the ring - Anna Strong - would send a secret message to the higher-ups, using her clothes on the washing line to signal that she was privy to an important secret. Alternatively, precious information might be hidden at a farm owned by 'Culper Senior', and transported across the Long Island Sound to Connecticut by Caleb Brewster, who happened to own a whaling ship that regularly made the journey.

As well as collecting real intelligence for themselves, Washington and his spies were experts at disseminating fake information among the British. Propaganda was important, and the Culper network would create letters with incorrect intelligence, as well spread rumours that both discredited the British Army and exaggerated American prowess.

But spying was a dangerous job, and getting caught meant getting executed. To avoid detection,

the Culper ring used a variety of innovative tactics. As well as the washing line code, the group used advanced ciphers to ensure their messages would not be read by the wrong people. Many words and terms were encrypted as a three-digit number, based on their position in the *New Spelling Dictionary* by John Entick, and only a few spies were entrusted with the key to crack the code. It's possible they used invisible ink - a new invention at the time - but this has not been conclusively proven.

Transmission of evidence was certainly slow, but the Culper ring still managed to be a thorn in the side of the British. Perhaps their most rewarding work was discovering British plans to overwhelm a weary French force, who had come to the aid of the Revolutionaries. They had only just arrived on American shores and would certainly have lost any combat with the British, but thankfully the Culper ring warned the outnumbered French of the attack so they could get to safety.

Even after the Revolutionary War had ended, the identity of Culper's spies was not revealed until long afterwards for fear of reprisals by the local Loyalist communities. But not even the British could deny their success. Major George Beckwith, the man in charge of the British spy network in the Colonies, irritably remarked that "Washington did not really outfight the British; he simply out-spied us!" on his return to London.

The Patriots and their clandestine spies eventually won the day in 1783 when America's independence was confirmed. Without their efforts, America might be a very different place - it may have remained a British colony for much longer, or it might never have celebrated an Independence Day at all.