

## Early Events That Shaped the War



► **LOSS OF PROPERTY** Colonists watch as British soldiers burn their home.

### Personal Hardships

The Declaration of Independence showed that colonial leaders had united against Britain. But the colonists themselves were deeply divided. Many had to decide whether to support independence or to stay loyal to the British king.

#### Taking Sides

Colonists who supported independence called themselves **Patriots**. Those who remained loyal to the king were called **Loyalists**. About one-third of the colonists stayed **neutral**, or did not choose sides.

1 As people took sides, friendships and families were sometimes broken apart. Church groups were also divided. Taking

sides was especially hard for members of the Anglican Church, also called the Church of England. The king was the head of their church.

Colonists faced other hardships, too. Often their towns were robbed and destroyed by the British army. In 1776, for example, British soldiers burned many areas of New Jersey. They even stole beds from colonists' houses! In turn, Patriots often took goods from the Loyalists.

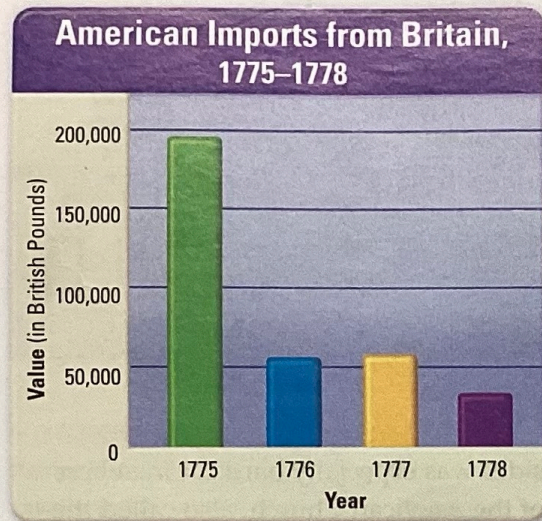
In some cases, Patriots destroyed their own belongings to keep them from the British. Others burned their crops so that the British could not get them for food.

#### READING CHECK CAUSE AND EFFECT

How did the war affect some colonial families?

Disagreements about the war broke some families apart.





**2** **GRAPH** Imports from Britain decreased during the early years of the war. By about how much did the amount of colonial imports decrease from 1775 to 1776?



## Economic Hardships

Along with personal problems, Americans also faced many economic hardships during the Revolutionary War. British blockades stopped ships from reaching American ports. These trade barriers, known as embargoes, caused shortages of imported goods.

### Prices Rise

**3** As the shortage of goods grew worse, Americans also faced inflation. **Inflation** is a rise in the price of all goods. Because of inflation, people needed more money to buy the same amounts of goods and services. In just two months, the prices of wheat and beef doubled!

Another cause of inflation was the falling value of colonial paper money, called Continentals. To pay for the war, Congress

printed more of the paper money. By printing too many Continentals, however, the government made them less valuable.

**4** Congress also had a difficult time trying to pay for the war. Congress could not force the states to contribute money. It could only ask them. The states could say no if they chose.

Because there was a shortage of goods, some farmers and shopkeepers began **profiteering**, or charging extra-high prices for their crops or goods. Some states passed laws that limited how much farmers could charge for food. These laws also made it illegal for people to hoard, or collect and hide, large amounts of goods. However, these laws were often broken.

### READING CHECK CAUSE AND EFFECT

**How did inflation affect people during the Revolutionary War?** People needed more money to buy the same amount of goods. Some people began profiteering.



## Women and the War

**5** As men left their homes to fight in the war, women took on new roles. Some women ran family farms or businesses. Others raised money for the war and collected clothing for the soldiers.

### In Battle and at Home

Some wives followed their husbands from battle to battle. Every winter when the armies were in their winter quarters, **Martha Washington** traveled to be with her husband, George. In army camps, women cooked food and washed clothes. Some brought water to soldiers during battles.

Some girls and women joined the men in battle. One night in 1777, 16-year-old **Sybil Ludington** rode more than 40 miles to tell Americans of a British attack.

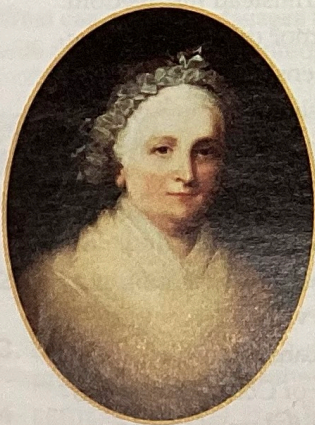
**Deborah Sampson** pretended to be a man and dressed in men's clothes so that she could fight during the war. **Margaret Corbin** was wounded after taking her husband's place in battle. She became the first woman veteran to be recognized by Congress. A **veteran** is a person who has served in the military.

Other women used their talents to support the Patriot cause. **Mercy Otis Warren** wrote poems and stories about people fighting for freedom. Later, she wrote a history of the American Revolution, the first by a woman. **Abigail Adams** argued for freedom in letters she wrote to her husband, John. She also cared for children who had been made homeless by the war.

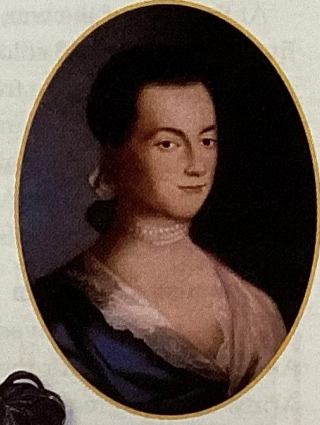
### READING CHECK CAUSE AND EFFECT

**What caused some women to fight in the American Revolution?** Some took the places of their wounded husbands. They wanted to join the fight for independence.

► SYBIL LUDINGTON



► MARTHA WASHINGTON



► ABIGAIL ADAMS





► **AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE WAR** The First Rhode Island Regiment fought for the Patriots. James Armistead (right) spied on the British army.

## African Americans, Free and Enslaved

At the start of the war, one of every five people in the 13 colonies was of African descent. Some free African Americans had set up communities in northern cities such as Philadelphia. However, the majority of African Americans lived enslaved, mostly in the South.

### The Promise of Freedom

Close to 5,000 enslaved African Americans fought for the Continental Army. Many were promised their freedom as a reward for their service. This promise was made to the soldiers of the First Rhode Island Regiment.

**7** **James Armistead**, an enslaved person from Virginia, was a spy for George Washington. The information that

Armistead collected helped the Americans win an important battle at Yorktown, Virginia. After the war was over, the Virginia government gave Armistead his freedom.

The British governor of Virginia promised freedom to all enslaved people who fought for the British. His group of more than 300 African American soldiers wore patches that said *Liberty to Slaves*.

### Free African Americans in Battle

Free African Americans also took sides. **Peter Salem** was among at least five African Americans who fought the British at the Battle of Concord. He also fought at Bunker Hill. James Forten, from Philadelphia, was just 14 years old when he joined the Continental Navy.

### READING CHECK CAUSE AND EFFECT

**Why did some enslaved African Americans fight in the Revolutionary War?** They fought in exchange for their freedom.