

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

US Culture and Society

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OCTOBER 1492: COLUMBUS SAILED TO THE AMERICAS

- Columbus sailed with 3 ships on his first trip, the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria. (He made 4 voyages in total, his second trip had 17 ships.)
- **Goal:** To find gold and resources
- He persuaded the king and queen of Spain to finance an expedition to the lands, the wealth, he expected would be on the other side of the Atlantic-the Indies and Asia, gold and spices.
- Spain sought gold, which was becoming the new mark of wealth, more useful than land because it could buy anything.
- In return for bringing back gold and spices, they promised Columbus 10% of the profits, governorship over new-found lands

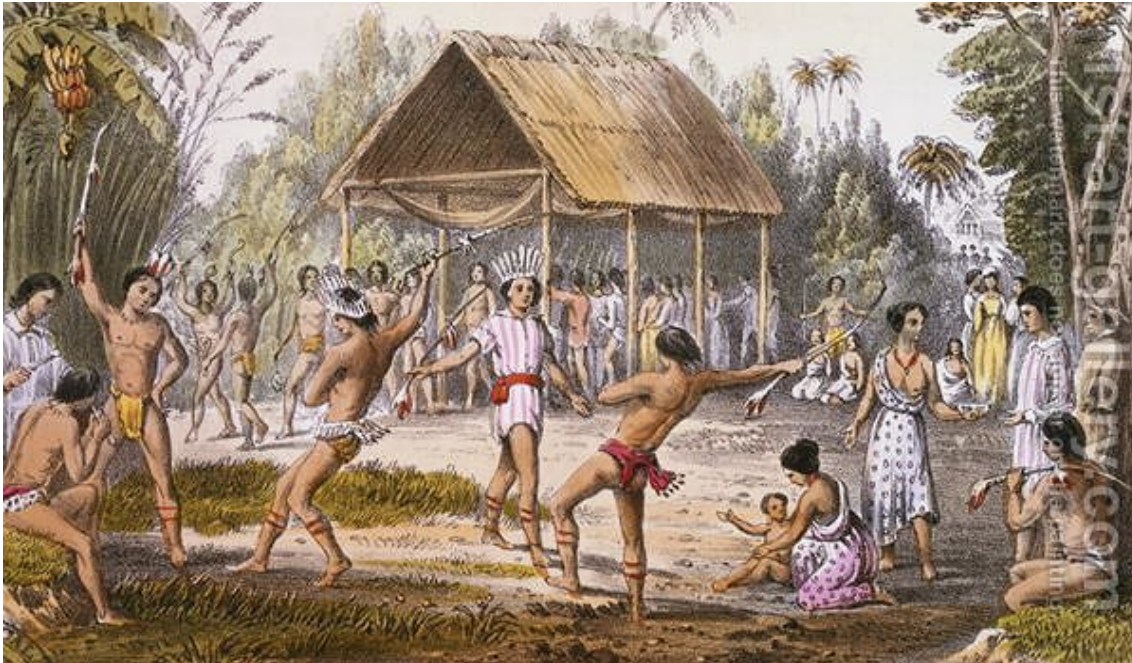
BUT

- Columbus would never have made it to Asia, which was thousands of miles farther away than he had calculated.
- One-fourth of the way there he came upon an unknown, uncharted land that lay between Europe and Asia-the Americas.



THE ARAWAKS

- When Columbus approached the land, he was met by the Arawak Indians, who swam out to greet them.
- The Arawaks lived in village communes, had a developed agriculture of corn, yams, cassava. They could spin and weave, but they had no horses or work animals. They had no iron, but they wore tiny gold ornaments in their ears.
- Columbus to take some of them aboard ship as prisoners because he insisted that they guide him to the source of the gold.
- He then sailed to what is now Cuba, then to Hispaniola (the island which today consists of Haiti and the Dominican Republic). There, bits of visible gold in the rivers, and a gold mask presented to Columbus by a local Indian chief, led to wild visions of gold fields.



COLUMBUS' OBSERVATION OF THE ARAWAKS

- The Arawaks were remarkable for their hospitality and their belief in sharing.

Columbus wrote: “As soon as I arrived in the Indies, on the first Island which I found, I took some of the natives by force in order that they might learn and might give me information of whatever there is in these parts.”

When Columbus and his sailors came ashore, carrying swords, speaking oddly, the Arawaks ran to greet them, brought them food, water, gifts.

He later wrote of this in his log: “They ... brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and many other things, which they exchanged for the glass beads and hawks' bells. They willingly traded everything they owned... . They were well-built, with good bodies and handsome features.... They do not bear arms, and do not know them, for I showed them a sword, they took it by the edge and cut themselves out of ignorance. They have no iron. Their spears are made of cane... . They would make fine servants.... With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want.”



WHY DID CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS SAIL?

- He was determined to find a direct water route west from Europe to Asia, but he never did. Instead he found the Americas also known as the “New World”
- It was called the “New World” because the people of the European Middle Ages thought the world was only Europe, Asia, and Africa. These continents are called the “Old World.” The Americas were also referred to as the “fourth part of the world” (North and South America).
- Christopher Columbus lived in the **Age of Exploration** → he was an explorer The purpose of Christopher Columbus's first voyage was to find a shorter route to Asia.
- Each of Christopher Columbus' voyages were made in order to gather more resources/goods/slaves for Spain.



THE 13 COLONIES

- The United States was formed from thirteen British colonies in 1776.

Why were the 13 colonies established?

- Queen Elizabeth wanted to establish colonies in the Americas in order to grow the British Empire and to counter the Spanish. The English hoped to find wealth, create new jobs, and establish trade ports along the coast of the Americas.
- Each colony has its own unique history on how it was founded. Many of the colonies were founded by religious leaders or groups looking for religious freedom. These colonies included Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Maryland, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Other colonies were founded purely in hopes of creating new trade opportunities and profits for investors.



COLONIAL REGIONS

- The colonies are often divided up into 3 regions including the New England Colonies, the Middle Colonies, and the Southern Colonies.

•New England Colonies

- Connecticut
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Rhode Island

•Middle Colonies

- Delaware
- New Jersey
- New York
- Pennsylvania

•Southern Colonies

- Georgia
- Maryland
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Virginia



THE 1ST COLONY: JAMESTOWN, VIRGINIA (1607)



THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

- The American Revolution was a time when the British colonists in America rebelled against the rule of Great Britain. There were many battles fought and the colonies gained their freedom and became the independent country of the United States. The American Revolutionary War lasted from 1775 until 1783.

Reasons?

- **Representation** → The colonists felt they were not represented in the British government. The British government was making new laws and taxes on the colonies, but the colonies had no say. They wanted to have some say in the British government if they were going to pay high taxes and have to live by British law.
- **War** → War didn't happen right away. First there were protests and arguments. Then some small skirmishes between the colonists and the local British army. Things just got worse and worse over the course of years until the colonies and Great Britain were at war.



EXAMPLES OF UNFAIR TAXES

- Unpopular pieces of legislation placed upon the American colonies for the purpose of raising funds to pay the French and Indian War debt:
- **The Sugar Act (1764) (also known as the Revenue Act)**
- It was aimed at ending the smuggling trade of sugar and molasses from the French and Dutch and West Indies and at providing increased revenues to fund British Empire responsibilities following the French and Indian War (new version of the Molasses Act of 1733)

NOTE: The French and Indian War was a war fought between France and Britain over territory in North America. It last about 7 years; the British won.

- **Stamp Act (1765)**
- The new tax was imposed on all American colonists and required them to pay a tax on every piece of printed paper they used. (Ship's papers, legal documents, licenses, newspapers, other publications, and even playing cards were taxed)
- **Townshend Acts (1767)**
- Were a series of laws which set new import taxes on British goods including paint, paper, lead, glass and tea and used revenues to maintain British troops in America and to pay the salaries of some Royal officials who were appointed to work in the American colonies.



HOW MANY WARS WERE FOUGHT?

- In total, more than **1,500** Revolutionary War battles occurred during the American Revolution. These battles occurred in all thirteen colonies.

Major wars fought during the American Revolution:

- April 19, 1775: Lexington - the first battle of the American Revolutionary War and the Battle of Concord
- May 10, 1775: Battle of Fort Ticonderoga
- June 17, 1775: Battle of Bunker Hill
- January 17, 1781: Battle of Cowpens
- June 27-28, 1778: Battle of Monmouth
- October 7, 1777: Battle of Saratoga
- **October 19, 1781: The Siege of Yorktown - the British surrender ended the American Revolutionary War**





THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: JULY 4, 1776

Each colony had its own local government. In 1774 they each elected officials to represent them at the First Continental Congress. This was the first effort of the colonies to unite and make a single government.

***** In 1776, Congress declared the independence of the United States from Great Britain*****

They officially adopted the final version of the Declaration of Independence

A New Government

The new government of the United States was different than the government of the colonist's homeland, Great Britain. They decided that they didn't want to be ruled by a king anymore.

They wanted a government that was ruled by the people. The new government would be a democratic government with leaders elected by the people and balances of power to make sure that no one could become king.



IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature, and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, 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. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such Principles and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Tyranny, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World. He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and pernicious to tyrants only. He has called together legislative Bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. He has deprived Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the People. He has refused for a long time after such Depositions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, requisite for the Redress of the Grievances, have remained in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within. He has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Law for Naturalization of Strangers; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers. He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries. He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance. He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislature. He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power. He has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: For quartering large Bodies of armed Troops among us: For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world: For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: For depriving us in many Cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury: For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences: For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies: For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever. He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People. He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of Death, Desolation and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation. He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitations of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions. In every Stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free People. Nor have We been wanting in Attention to our British Brethren. We have warned them from time to time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends. We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of Right do. And for the Support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

John Hancock, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and other signatories.



“We hold these truths to be self-evident: 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; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”



INDEPENDENCE DAY IN THE US TODAY

- In the US, it is considered a federal holiday.
- Patriotic displays and family events are organized throughout the United States.



SOURCES

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HOMEWORK:

Listen and watch the music video “This is America” by Childish Gambino.

Analyze and discuss the imagery in the music video and how it relates to the history and current events of the United States.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYOjWnS4cMY>

