

## The Journey to a Better Future

The pure sense of nationalism that was needed in order for The American Revolution to be made possible is simply extraordinary. Millions of strangers had to unite as one to fight for their freedom and a better future for their children. Without the strengthening of unity and the overcoming of struggles, it is most likely the great country that is America would not be where it is today.

Unarguably, the heroes of The American Revolution had sacrificed and fought through many of their own personal struggles. David McCullough's *1776* describes these colonists as, "those who carried the fight for independence forward a year of all-too-few victories, of sustained suffering, disease, hunger, desertion, cowardice, disillusionment, defeat, terrible discouragement, and fear, as they would never forget." Through this excerpt, McCullough captures the very essence of the fight for independence. Men, women, and children alike had to work together to fight through these hardships while only being able to hope for the cause to be successful. Some even recognize the revolution as a major act of radicalism in history. Gordon S. Wood describes the viewpoints of the colonists in *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, "The idea of labor, of hard work, leading to increased productivity was so novel, so radical, in the overall span of Western history that most ordinary people, most of those who labored, could scarcely believe what was happening to them." As depicted in the quotation, numerous colonists did not fully absorb what was actually happening in the country. The decision to try to establish a separate country from Britain was essentially too strong and too great to even believe. In addition, in *The Glorious Cause* by Robert Middlekauff, he explains, "It was difficult not to be intimidated by a crowd, especially at a time when it had attained such skill in the gentle art of

tarring and feathering.” During this time, people who supported the revolution would often harass those who were against or even neutral towards the revolution thus creating an aura of radicalism.

Furthermore, the presence of great political and military leaders was a key factor in the colonists’ victory in the American Revolution. In a *Digital History* excerpt, “Washington’s strategy of avoiding large-scale confrontations with the royal army made it impossible for the British to deliver a knockout blow. Only once during the Revolution (at Charleston, S.C. in 1780) did an American army surrender to British forces.” George Washington was a popular military leader not because of his experience in battle, but because of his strong character. In an article by *Alpha History*, it expresses, “Washington did what needed to be done; as one historian puts it, he only needed to be better than the generals he opposed. Perhaps his shortcomings as a general can be partly explained by the quality of his officers, which was rarely good enough to maintain discipline and coordinate full-scale battles. Although of great aggressive instinct, after the early defeats of 1775-76 Washington realised that the survival of the revolution was closely linked to the survival of the Continental Army.” However, in this excerpt, Washington is depicted as the best general out of the candidates they had rather than a great military leader overall. “Once, during the Siege of Boston, when almost nothing was going right and General Schuyler had written from Albany to bemoan his troubles, Washington had replied that he understood but that “we must bear up against them, and make the best of mankind as they are, since we cannot have them as we wish.” It was such resolve and an acceptance of mankind and circumstances as they were, not as he wished them to be, that continued to carry Washington through. “I will not however despair,” he now wrote to Governor William Livingston.”

Hope and belief set the driving motivation in the colonists' fight for independence. In 1776, McCullough elucidates, "If the older churches often found themselves unable to cope with growth and mobility, the newer sects—especially the Separates and the Baptists—did not. Nor did churches swept by the revival and its message that the experience of the Spirit, the New Birth, constituted true religion. For the Awakening recalled a generation to the standards of reformed Protestantism, which had prevailed at the time of the founding of America. It revived values summed up best by its greater emphasis on individual experience and its lessened concern for traditional church organization. At the same time it produced a concentration on morality and right behavior, a social ethic supple enough to insist on the rights of the community while it supported the claims of individualism." Religion was a major part in the daily lives of the colonists and gave them something to believe in throughout their struggle for independence.

Overall, The American Revolution is one of the most prominent events in history. The birth of the great nation again would not have been possible without the driving motivations of the colonists as well as their resilience. They had a better future in mind than people now live in today.