

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Many Americans supported the war effort.
2. The Patriots both won and lost battles during the years 1775–1777.
3. France and Spain helped the Patriots fight the British.
4. The winter at Valley Forge tested the strength of Patriot troops.
5. The war continued at sea and in the West.

The Big Idea

Patriot forces faced many obstacles in the war against Britain.

Key Terms and People

mercenaries, *p. 128*

Battle of Trenton, *p. 129*

Battle of Saratoga, *p. 130*

Marquis de Lafayette, *p. 131*

Baron Friedrich von Steuben, *p. 131*

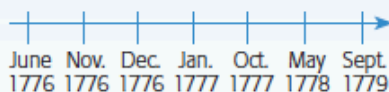
Bernardo de Gálvez, *p. 131*

John Paul Jones, *p. 133*

George Rogers Clark, *p. 133*

TAKING NOTES

Create a time line like the one below. As you read, identify and describe the events occurring on each of the dates listed on your time line.



The Struggle for Liberty

If YOU were there...

You are a serving maid at an inn in New York City. British soldiers often stop at the inn for a meal. You sometimes overhear their conversations, though they don't notice you. Now a Patriot leader has asked you to bring him any information you hear. You want to help the Patriot cause but wonder what will happen if you are caught spying.

Would you agree to spy for the Patriots?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Many colonists struggled for the Patriot cause. Men, women, and children all made important contributions. They fought, kept farms and shops running, and provided food and supplies. In spite of their efforts, winning the war was a great challenge.

Supporting the War Effort

George Washington's chief task as the Continental Army's commander in chief was to raise troops. During the war, more than 230,000 soldiers served in the Continental Army, and another 145,000 enlisted in local militias. The typical soldier was young, often under the legal age of 16, and had little money or property. The army offered low pay, harsh conditions, and a big chance of becoming a casualty. Yet the Patriots knew they were fighting for their homes and their freedom.

Finding and keeping dedicated soldiers would be a constant challenge throughout the war. In time, the Continental Congress required states to supply soldiers. Men who could afford it often paid others, such as slaves or apprentices, to fight in their places.

One question facing General Washington was whether to recruit African Americans. Many white southerners opposed the idea, and at first Washington banned African Americans from serving. When the British promised freedom to any slave who fought on their side, however, thousands of African Americans joined the Redcoats.

Battles in the Middle Colonies, 1776-77

Major Battles

-  New York, August 1776
-  Trenton, December 1776
-  Princeton, January 1777
-  Brandywine, September 1777

Colonial Forces

Strengths

- Fought for a cause they believed in
- Got help from European nations

Weaknesses

- Untrained, poorly equipped soldiers
- Small navy

British Forces

Strengths

- Well-trained, well-equipped soldiers
- Large, powerful navy

Weaknesses

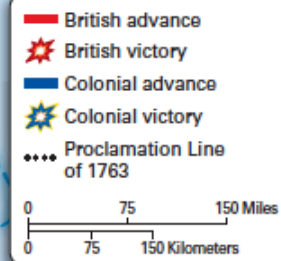
- Had to cross Atlantic Ocean
- Used mercenaries as soldiers

© Collection of The New-York Historical Society

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

1. **Movement** About how far was Washington's march from Boston to New York?
2. **Human-Environment Interaction** How did geography affect the British advance on Philadelphia?



In response, the Continental Army began allowing free African Americans to serve.

While men served as soldiers, many women ran farms and businesses. Others helped the army by raising money for supplies or making clothing. Women served as messengers, nurses, and spies. A Massachusetts man noted:

“At every house Women and children [are] making Cartridges, running Bullets ... and at the same time animating [encouraging] their Husbands and Sons to fight.”

—Anonymous, quoted in *Born for Liberty*, by Sara M. Evans

Perhaps the best known woman to fight in the war was Mary Ludwig Hays. She was

called Molly Pitcher because she brought water to the troops. When her husband was wounded in a 1778 battle, she took his place loading cannons. Another woman, Deborah Sampson, dressed as a man and fought in several battles.

READING CHECK Summarizing How did various groups contribute to the war effort?

Defeats and Victories

As the Revolution gathered steam, it became more deadly. At first the Continental Army suffered a number of defeats. In time, though, the Patriots' patience began to pay off.

THE IMPACT TODAY

Women are still banned from ground combat. But in Operation Iraqi Freedom, women operated warships and flew combat jets and helicopters for the first time in a major air-ground conflict.

Canada

In part because the army was short on supplies, many Patriot leaders favored fighting a defensive war. Others wanted to invade British-controlled Canada and make it the “14th colony.”

Patriot troops led by General Richard Montgomery captured Montreal in November 1775. The next major target was the city of Quebec. Benedict Arnold, now a general, led his troops north on a remarkable trek through the rough backcountry of Maine. He reached Quebec around the same time that Montreal fell to Montgomery. Since his first attempt to take the city failed, Arnold waited for Montgomery’s troops to join his.

Taking an immense chance, the combined armies attacked during a fierce blizzard on New Year’s Eve. They were quickly defeated. The Americans had suffered a crushing loss, and the Patriots’ hopes of taking Canada faded.

New York

New York City became the next battleground. General Washington had moved his troops to New York, expecting the British arrival. Sure enough, in June 1776, a fleet of British ships approached New York Bay. Led by General William Howe, the British forced the Continental Army off Long Island.

Howe’s 32,000 soldiers were much better equipped than Washington’s 23,000 men, most of whom were militia. The Patriot general had to use all of his skills just to save his army.

In a series of battles, Howe pounded the Continental Army, forcing it to retreat farther and farther. The Redcoats captured Patriots as well as supplies. Eventually, the British pushed Washington across the Hudson River into New Jersey. Howe’s revenge for his defeat at Boston was complete.

During the New York campaigns, a young Connecticut officer named Nathan Hale went behind British lines to get secret information. Seized by the British with documents hidden in the soles of his shoes, Hale was ordered to be hanged. Before his execution, he is said to

Crossing the Delaware

George Washington and his troops crossed the partially frozen Delaware River on the night of December 25, 1776. This daring act led to a key Patriot victory at the Battle of Trenton. German American artist Emanuel Leutze created this famous painting in 1851. A version of Leutze’s *Washington Crossing the Delaware* hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

What feelings do you think Leutze wanted to inspire with this painting?

have declared, “I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.”

New Jersey

In November 1776 the tattered Continental Army was on the run. Washington’s remaining 6,000 men were tired and discouraged. The one-year contract for many of them would end on December 31. Who would re-enlist in this losing army, and who would replace the soldiers who left? Washington’s army was in danger of vanishing.

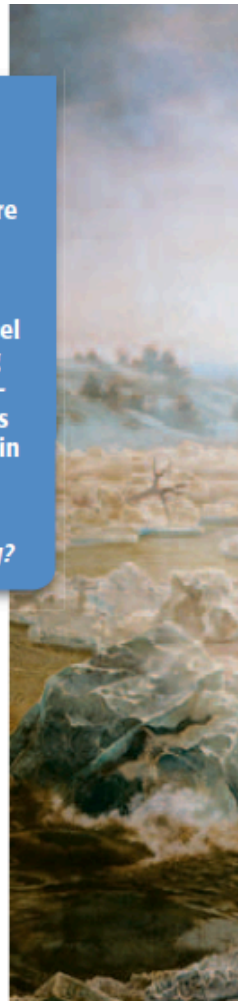
Thinking the rebellion would end soon, Howe left New Jersey in the hands of soldiers from the German state of Hesse. The Hessians were **mercenaries**—foreign soldiers who fought not out of loyalty, but for pay.

On December 7 Washington retreated across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. Even with 2,000 fresh troops, the Patriots were near the end. “These are the times that try men’s souls,” wrote Thomas Paine in *The American Crisis*, a series of pamphlets he began publishing in late 1776.

Without a convincing victory, Washington knew he would lose his army. He decided to take a big chance and go on the offensive. The Americans would attack the Hessians at Trenton, New Jersey.

FOCUS ON READING

What is the main idea of the third paragraph under “New York”?





On Christmas night, 1776, with a winter storm lashing about them, Washington and 2,400 soldiers silently rowed across the ice-clogged Delaware River. As morning broke, the men, short on supplies and many with no shoes, marched through the snow to reach the enemy camp.

The Hessians, having celebrated the holiday the night before, were fast asleep when the Patriots sprang upon them. **The Battle of Trenton** was an important Patriot victory. American soldiers took more than 900 prisoners.

British general Charles Cornwallis rushed to stop Washington as he marched northeast to Princeton. On the night of January 2, 1777, the Patriots left their campfires burning, then slipped into the darkness and circled behind the British troops. In the morning, Washington attacked. A local resident witnessed it:

“The battle was plainly seen from our door ... and the guns went off so quick and many together that they could not be numbered ... Almost as soon as the firing was over, our house was filled and surrounded with General Washington’s men.”

—Anonymous, quoted in *Voices of 1776*
by Richard Wheeler

As Washington watched the Redcoats flee Princeton, he cheered, “It is a fine fox chase, my boys!” Now, new soldiers joined the chase. Others re-enlisted. The army—and the Revolution—was saved.

Saratoga

The two quick defeats stung the British. In the spring of 1777, they wanted a victory.

British general John Burgoyne decided to push through New York State and cut off New England from the other colonies. The strategy required perfect timing. According

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

strategy a plan for fighting a battle or war

to the plan, Burgoyne's army would invade from Canada, recapture Fort Ticonderoga, and sweep south to Albany. General Howe, in New York City, would sail up the Hudson River to meet him, strangling New England.

Indeed, Burgoyne took Ticonderoga in early July and headed toward Albany. Here, the timing went wrong for the British. Unknown to Burgoyne, Howe had left New York, sailed up the Chesapeake Bay, and captured Philadelphia. Delegates to the Continental Congress were forced to flee.

Meanwhile, Burgoyne's army bogged down in thick forests. The Patriots had chopped down large trees and dammed rivers to create obstacles. All along the route, the militia swarmed out of nowhere to attack the Redcoats. As Burgoyne neared Saratoga, New York, he found himself surrounded. On October 17, 1777, he was forced to surrender his entire army to General Horatio Gates.

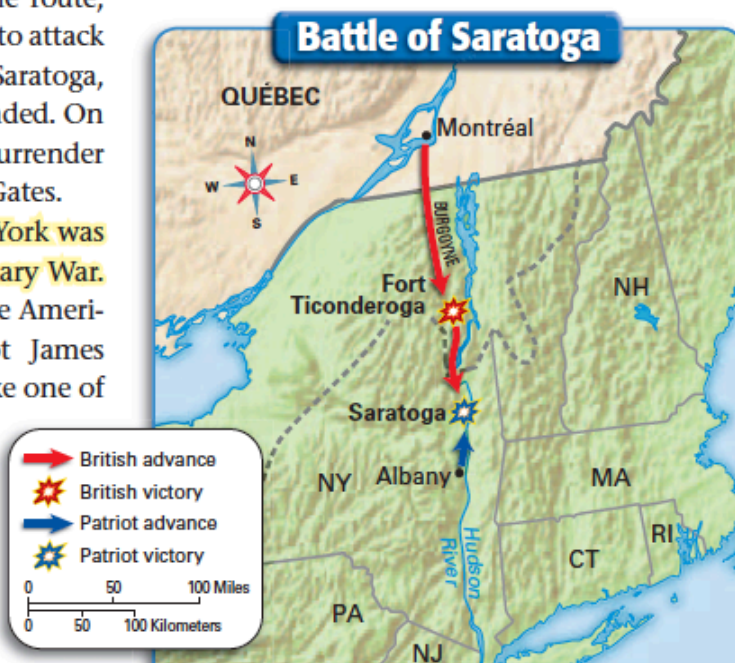
The **Battle of Saratoga** in New York was the turning point of the Revolutionary War. It was the greatest victory yet for the American forces. Morale soared. Patriot James Thacher wrote, "This event will make one of the most brilliant pages of American history."

READING CHECK Summarizing
Why was the Battle of Saratoga a turning point in the war?

Help from Europe

The French and Indian War had drastically changed the balance of power in North America. The French and Spanish had lost a large expanse of valuable land to the British. Both countries were delighted to see their powerful rival experiencing trouble in its American colonies.

The victory at Saratoga gave the Patriots something they had been desperately seeking: foreign help. Not surprisingly, it came from Britain's enemies, France and Spain. Even Britain's old ally, Holland, joined the fight on the side of the Patriots.



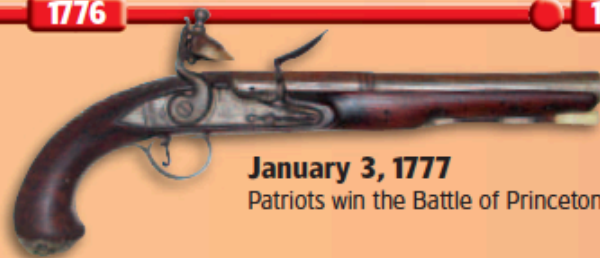
October 17, 1777 British forces under General John Burgoyne marched south, heading for Albany. They were crushed by Patriot forces under General Horatio Gates at Saratoga.

Time Line

The Patriots Gain Ground

December 26, 1776
Patriots win the Battle of Trenton.

1776



January 3, 1777
Patriots win the Battle of Princeton.

1777

July 27, 1777 Marquis de Lafayette arrives in Philadelphia to offer his assistance to the Patriot cause.



Two Remarkable Europeans

"The welfare of America is closely bound up with the welfare of mankind," declared a wealthy young Frenchman, the **Marquis de Lafayette**. Inspired by the ideas of the Revolution, Lafayette bought his own ship and arrived in America in 1777. He brought with him a group of well-trained soldiers and volunteered to serve in the Continental Army himself without pay.

Lafayette spoke little English and had never seen battle. However, he quickly became a skillful commander, earning the title of major general. Lafayette led 2,000 Patriots to successfully pursue 6,000 Redcoats throughout Virginia during 1780–81. He gave \$200,000 of his own money to support the Revolution and wrote many letters home to powerful friends and family asking their aid for the Patriot cause.

In February 1778 another European came to serve heroically under Washington. **Baron Friedrich von Steuben**, an experienced military officer from Prussia, led with a combination of respect and fear. He started training the American troops, focusing on basic military drills. Soon he turned the Continental Army into a finely tuned fighting force. A historian called von Steuben's feat "perhaps the most remarkable achievement in rapid military training in the history of the world."

Help from France

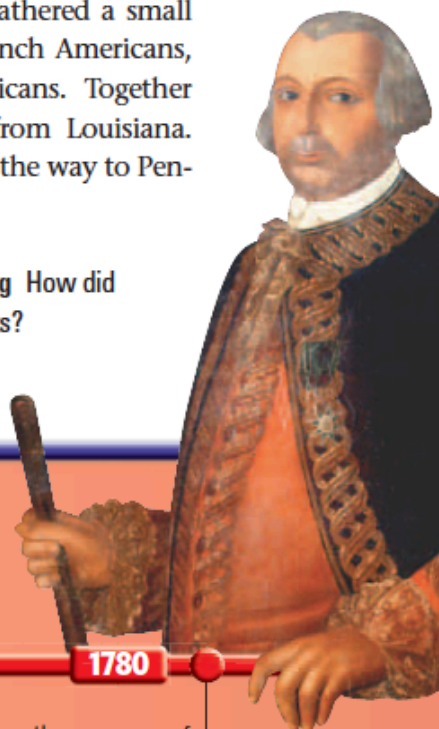
Benjamin Franklin, a skilled and experienced diplomat, had gone to France in 1776 to ask for support from King Louis XVI. Finally, the Battle of Saratoga in 1777 persuaded the French king that the colonists could win the war. Not until then did the king agree to an alliance with the Patriots.

In May 1778 the Continental Congress ratified the treaty of support with France. The French had been helping the Patriots all along with supplies and ammunition. After the treaty became official, the French increased the level of supplies and agreed to provide soldiers and ships. The French naval support would be a key ingredient in defeating the British.

Help from Spain

Spain, also a bitter enemy of Britain, joined the war in 1779. **Bernardo de Gálvez**, the governor of Spanish Louisiana, became a key ally to the Patriots. Gálvez gathered a small army of Spanish soldiers, French Americans, colonists, and Native Americans. Together they made their way east from Louisiana. Gálvez seized British posts all the way to Pensacola, Florida.

READING CHECK Summarizing How did France and Spain help the Patriots?



February 1778

Baron Friedrich von Steuben begins training Patriot soldiers.

June 21, 1779

Spain declares war against Britain.

1778

1779

1780

May 1778 France joins the Patriots in an alliance.

March 14, 1780 Bernardo de Gálvez, the governor of Spanish Louisiana, captures the British stronghold of Fort Charlotte at present-day Mobile, Alabama.

ANALYSIS SKILL

READING TIME LINES

Which nations joined the Patriot cause?

Primary Source

JOURNAL ENTRY

Valley Forge

A surgeon at Valley Forge, Albigence Waldo kept a journal of what he saw during the winter of 1777–78.

“The Army which has been surprisingly healthy hitherto, now begins to grow sickly from the continued fatigues they have suffered this Campaign. Yet they still show a spirit of Alacrity [cheerful readiness] and Contentment not to be expected from so young Troops. I am Sick—discontented—and out of humour. Poor food—hard lodging—Cold Weather—fatigue—Nasty Cloaths [clothes]—nasty Cookery . . . smoke and Cold—hunger and filthiness—A pox on my bad luck.”

—Albigence Waldo, from *Diary of Surgeon Albigence Waldo of the Connecticut Line*

ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

Why did Waldo seem surprised by the soldiers' attitude?



Winter at Valley Forge

The entry of France and Spain into the war came at a crucial moment. The Continental Army was running very low on food and clothing. In December 1777, Washington settled his 12,000 men at Valley Forge, north of Philadelphia.

To this day, the name of Valley Forge brings to mind suffering—and courage. Yet no battles took place here. The only enemy was the brutal winter of 1777–78.

Washington's men lacked even the most basic protections against shin-deep snows. In spite of the general's repeated requests for supplies, conflicts over funding between state authorities and Congress kept supplies from coming. Washington wrote in a letter:

“To see men without clothes . . . without blankets to lie upon, without shoes . . . without a house or hut to cover them until those could be built, and submitting without a murmur, is a proof of patience and obedience which, in my opinion, can scarcely be paralleled [matched].”

—George Washington, quoted in *George Washington: A Collection*

As winter roared in, soldiers quickly built crude shelters that offered little protection against the weather. Some soldiers had no shirts. Others had marched the shoes off their feet. At their guard posts, they stood on their hats to keep their feet from touching the freezing ground. One soldier wrote that getting food was the “business that usually employed us.”

During that terrible winter, some 2,000 soldiers died of disease and malnutrition. Amazingly, the survivors not only stayed—they drilled and marched to the orders of Baron von Steuben, becoming better soldiers.

While the soldiers suffered through the winter at Valley Forge, the British lived a life of luxury in Philadelphia. Most of the Patriots had fled the city, leaving only Loyalists and British soldiers. Together they enjoyed the city's houses, taverns, and theaters, and held parties and balls.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas

What challenges did the Continental Army face at Valley Forge?

War at Sea and in the West

While some Americans struggled against the British on land in the former colonies, others fought at sea and on the western frontier. Each area posed tough challenges.

War at Sea

The entry of the French navy into the war greatly aided the colonists. Many people had thought that the mighty British navy would crush the much smaller American fleet. However, the British failed to use their powerful navy effectively during the war.

In the fall of 1775, the Continental Congress made plans to build four American warships. Soon afterward the Congress formally established the marines and the Continental Navy. By adapting merchant vessels, the navy had eight fighting ships ready for combat by February 1776.

That month the tiny American navy launched a major offensive to damage the operating ability of the British fleet located off the Carolina coast. Rather than attack the fleet directly, the Patriots went after the British supply base on Nassau, in the Bahamas.

The American troops seized the main supply fort on the island. They then raised the newly created flag of the American Revolution over Nassau. After that campaign, the American navy focused on seizing British supply ships and weakening Britain's naval forces in the West Indies.

John Paul Jones

The Patriots owed much of their success on the seas to naval hero **John Paul Jones**. Jones had once been considered an outlaw. He was born John Paul in Scotland and began working on ships at a young age. After accidentally killing the leader of a mutiny, he fled to America and added Jones to his name.

When the war broke out, Jones volunteered his services to the newly created navy. He quickly established himself as a brave and clever sailor. Considered a pirate by the

British, Jones captured many British supply ships. The French greatly admired Jones. When France entered the war in 1778, French leaders presented him with a small fleet of seven vessels to command. He named his flagship *Bonhomme Richard* ("Gentleman Richard") in honor of Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

One of Jones's most famous victories was the capture of the British warship *Serapis* on September 23, 1779. Early in the battle, the British knocked out the heaviest artillery on the *Bonhomme Richard*. Captain Richard Pearson of the *Serapis* then called out to Jones, "Has your ship struck [surrendered]?" Jones replied, "I have not yet begun to fight!" The battle continued for more than two hours. Finally the Americans wore down the British, who surrendered at 10:30 p.m.

The Continental Navy used fewer than 100 ships over the course of the war. Yet the British lost more than 200 ships to the small but effective American naval force.

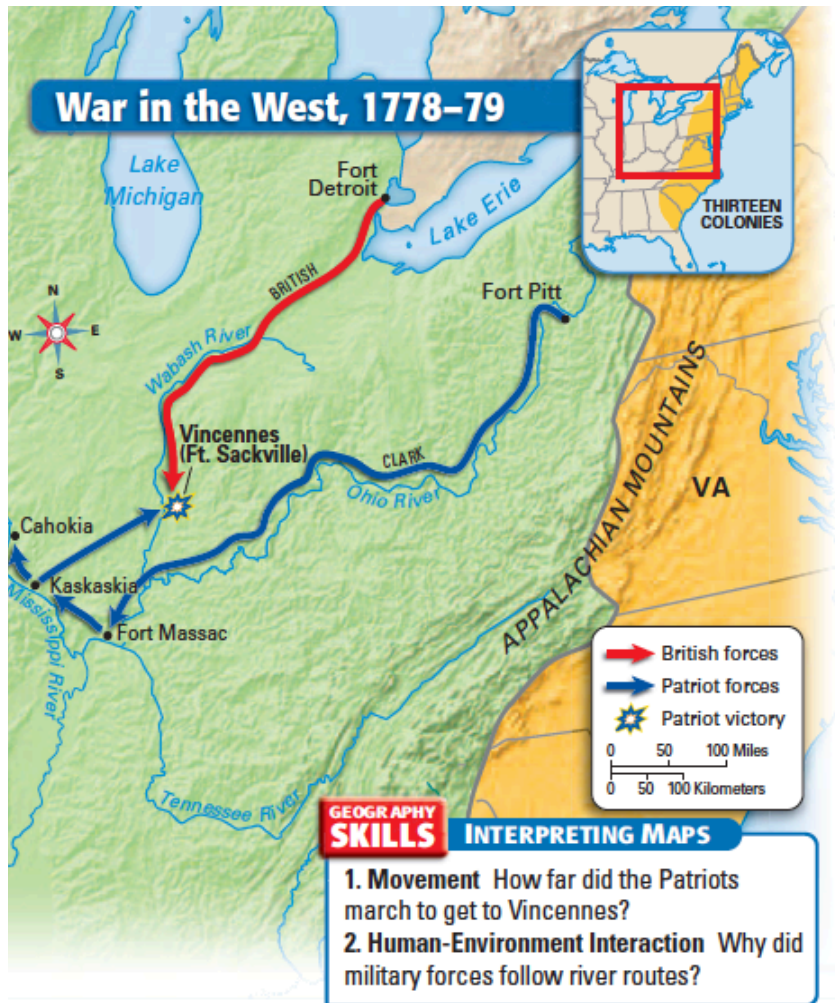
War in the West

The lands west of the Appalachian Mountains were controlled by Native American nations. Both the British and the Patriots tried to enlist these groups in their cause.

George Rogers Clark volunteered to lead the western campaign. Clark had been a surveyor along the Ohio and Kentucky rivers. By the time the war broke out, he knew the lands of the Midwest well. Clark created an army from the scattered settlements in the area. One of the best-known groups was the Over Mountain Men, a band of settlers from present-day Tennessee.

Determined to weaken British support systems, Clark targeted trading villages. Following the Ohio River to the Tennessee, Clark's force set out on a 120-mile overland trek to Kaskaskia, in present-day Illinois. The village's leaders learned of the attack and surrendered. Other Patriots took Cahokia without a fight.

In February 1779 Clark launched a surprise attack on Fort Sackville near the town



of Vincennes. The attack was unexpected because the nearby Wabash River was icy and flooded. Despite overflowing riverbanks, Clark's force of 150 men endured an 18-day march through freezing water. They also managed to bring enough Patriot flags for an army of hundreds. The flags were displayed near the fort, and the skilled pioneers sustained enough musket fire to indicate a much larger army. Falling for the ruse, the commander of Fort Sackville surrendered.

In general the British were more successful at winning over the Native Americans. But Clark's many campaigns undermined British support in the West.

READING CHECK **Finding Main Ideas** How did Jones and Clark help the Patriots' war effort?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW The Patriots faced hardships as the war continued. In the next section, you will see how they finally achieved their goal of independence.

Section 3 Assessment

go.hrw.com
Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SC7 HP4

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- Identify** What groups supported the Patriot war effort? How did each group contribute?
 - Analyze** Why was it difficult to find and keep soldiers in the Continental Army?
- Describe** What early defeats did the Patriots face?
 - Elaborate** Was it a mistake for the British to use mercenaries to help them fight the war? Why or why not?
- Elaborate** Why do you think European nations supported the colonists rather than Great Britain?
 - Evaluate** Do you think that the Patriots would have won the war without help from France and Spain? Why or why not?
- Describe** What difficulties did the Patriots face at Valley Forge?
 - Elaborate** How might weather conditions affect the outcome of a battle?
- Identify** Who was John Paul Jones?
 - Compare** In what ways was Jones's naval strategy like that of the Continental Army?

Critical Thinking

- 6. Drawing Conclusions** Review the events on your time line. Copy the chart below and use it to identify the region in which the events took place and how the events reflected the Patriots' successes and failures.

Region	Patriot Problems	Patriot Successes

FOCUS ON SPEAKING

- 7. Thinking about the Struggle for Liberty** Why was this period of the war so difficult for the Patriots? How did they struggle through? What are the one or two points that are the most important about this period of the war?