

Violence, Nonviolence, and the American Revolution

by Spencer Graves

Abstract

The American Revolutionary war, according to the dominant narrative, brought freedom and democracy to the brand new US. This claim conflicts with much of what is known about that history, including the fact that the 13 British colonies that declared independence in 1776 had the most advanced democratic governance in the British Empire and perhaps the world at the time with democratic traditions dating from the founding of the colonies over a century earlier. In 1764 the King and Parliament started trying to exercise power over the colonies for which there was no practical precedent and which many colonists believed threatened their economic futures. This produced largely nonviolent resistance that escalated to war. The war was accompanied by relatively minor democratic gains that seem to have been accomplished through nonviolent negotiations among colonists as they organized themselves to resist the British military. If this is accurate, it makes the American Revolution more like the “Velvet Revolution” in Eastern Europe in 1989 than the French, Russian, and other violent revolutions whose accomplishments are more controversial today.

The Founding Myth¹ of Democracy

In the US, the dominant narrative about the origins of democracy seems to assign a central role to the American Revolutionary war 1776-1783. However, the general thrust of historical research available today suggests that the 13 British colonies that

declared independence in 1776 had the most open, democratic systems in the British Empire and perhaps the world long before the Revolution,² and the advances attributable to the Revolutionary war were modest compared to the claims of the dominant narrative. From this perspective, the rebellion was a natural response to attempts by the King and Parliament to roll back a tradition of colonial self-governance that had developed over the previous 150 years. Moreover, most of the democratic advances of that period might more appropriately be attributed to nonviolent actions³ that were roughly concurrent with the revolutionary war. This interpretation makes the American Revolution more consistent with (a) the record of other revolutions and independence struggles⁴ and (b) recent research results regarding the importance of civil society in developing democracy.⁵

This article reviews the evidence I have found regarding the level of freedom available during 1584-1800 in the 13 colonies that declared independence in 1776. It includes four main points: (1) *Most of the advances for freedom and democracy* popularly attributed to the American Revolution appear to have *developed earlier* as British⁶ colonists in America experimented successfully with concepts of governance that could not get similarly tested in England. (2) *The advances for democracy during the Revolution were largely achieved nonviolently* as colonists worked out details of how they would replace services previously provided by Royal appointees. (3) *Violence* such as the destruction of property during the Boston Tea Party *pushed the King and Parliament to convert a primarily nonviolent political struggle into a war* and stiffened opposition to the rebellion throughout the rest of the British Empire. (4) *If the colonists had maintained a nonviolent discipline, they might have created bigger problems for*

leading politicians in Britain and elsewhere with an overall greater advance for freedom and democracy.

This is not a criticism of Washington and the others who achieved US independence; on balance, their accomplishments were exceptional when compared with similar struggles prior to the twentieth century experience with nonviolence. However, past and current US foreign policy rests on the implicit assumption that most past uses of force by the US government have been appropriate under the circumstances AND effective in protecting freedom and democracy. The best available research in history, human behavior and political science suggests that this standard wisdom may be (a) inconsistent with the available evidence and (b) even dangerous if it encourages people to support violence in situations where nonviolent alternatives might on average produce better results at lower risk.

1. The Democratization of British Colonial America Prior to 1765

John Adams, a key leader of the American Revolution and the second President of the US, said,⁷ “The revolution was in the minds of the people, and in the union of the colonies, both of which were accomplished before hostilities commenced.” This is supported by Keyssar, whose landmark study of *The Right to Vote* reported that by the time of the American revolutionary war the percent of adult white males who could vote ranged from perhaps 40% in some locations to 80% in others, averaging probably less than 60%.⁸ By comparison, in 1765, the British Prime Minister, Grenville, said that less than 5% of the population of Great Britain itself was directly represented in Parliament, and the colonies with no representatives were⁹ “virtually represented”.

The extent of democratization in the 13 colonies that declared independence in 1776 contrasts sharply with the autocratic nature of the initial English colonizing efforts in North America. The first English colonization effort in America was in 1587 on Roanoke Island off the coast of present NC. That settlement disappeared without a trace.¹⁰ In 1607, the Virginia Company in London tried to found another colony at Jamestown, VA. These colonial efforts were led by a Governor and a council appointed in England.¹¹ In 1619, with business failing, the Virginia Company management was changed to add an assembly with apparently universal adult white male suffrage.¹² This model of governor, council and elected assembly was subsequently followed in all the 13 British colonies that declared independence in 1776.

The advanced democratic culture that rebelled against the excessively autocratic parliament developed only gradually from 1619 to 1765. At some point in their early history many if not all of these 13 colonies had 100% (or nearly 100%) adult white male suffrage. Later, voting was restricted following the English model to members of certain religions who owned substantial property. However, it was much easier to acquire property in the British colonies in America than in England. Requirements for membership in certain churches were often avoided by founding a separate congregation a few miles away. This practice was taken to an extreme when Rhode Island and Connecticut became separate colonies with locally elected governors, unlike the other British colonies whose governors were appointed in England.¹³

The power to approve or disapprove taxes resided in Parliament and the colonial assemblies. However, the power of the purse was greater in the colonies than in England, because British monarchs could survive in peacetime on their substantial private estates if

Nonviolence & the American Revolution

Parliament refused to approve requested taxes. On the other hand, governors in British North America generally found it harder to survive and support their legal mandates without taxes voted by the assembly. When discussion in Parliament displeased the English head of state, the Parliament was often dismissed. When colonial governors tried that, their financial needs usually forced them to reconvene the assembly fairly quickly, sometimes after a new election that returned even less compliant representatives. By denying revenue requests, colonial assemblies were able to force governors to accept both limits on their use of power and audits to ensure that agreements were kept.

Newspapers: A significant democratizing influence was the growing availability of local newspapers. The first domestic newspaper (in 1690) was officially suppressed after the first issue. The first regular newspaper, the *Boston News-Letter*, began in 1704. An important step in limiting the power of government was the acquittal in 1735 of John Peter Zenger, charged with publishing “seditious libels” in his *New York Weekly Journal*.¹⁴ Freedom of the press was considered so important for limiting abuses of governmental power that it became enshrined in the First Amendment to the US Constitution.

The Contribution of Native American Culture to British Colonial Governance: This greater assertiveness of the colonial assemblies seems to have developed in part from first hand knowledge of Native American culture and governance.¹⁵ This was supported by political theory expounded by John Locke, Jean Jacque Rousseau, and others, who themselves had¹⁶ “derived much of their ideas about democracy ... from travelers’ accounts of American Indian governmental structures.”

An important part of these “travelers’ accounts” was the *Jesuit Relations*, thick volumes published annually in Paris describing the culture, social and political life of Native Americans in and near Quebec. The more the Jesuits knew of Native American customs, the more effective they thought they would be in obtaining converts. These books were republished in the 1890s with allied documents with the original French, Latin or Italian on one page and an English translation on a facing page, totaling 73 volumes.¹⁷ They provide extensive documentation of seventeenth and eighteenth century Native American customs by people who would not likely be inclined to romanticize the practices of “heathens” they hoped to convert. Locke would have had access to a substantial portion of the first third of this material, and much more of it would have been available to Rousseau.

From these sources, it seems that Native American tribes in Northeastern North America had a level of egalitarianism and democratic governance virtually unknown in Europe at that time. In particular, the Five Nations of the Iroquois had a form of democratic federalism that had developed as an alternative to the blood feuds that had taken many lives and sapped the strength of all. Under the leadership of an Iroquois prophet called The Peacemaker and his disciple, Hiawatha, the five tribes agreed on procedures to resolve inter-tribal disputes peacefully while maintaining their own distinctive cultures. They also generally cooperated militarily when challenged by outsiders. This made them quite strong. Some¹⁸ “fifteen thousand Iroquois people held sway over a territory from Canada to Virginia and as far west as the Ohio River Valley.”

Native American ideas influenced colonial leaders including John Adams and Ben Franklin from first hand contact. John Adams and many other colonists had grown up

with regular contact with Native American and had worked with Native Americans as adults, sometimes in official capacities as negotiators.¹⁹ In particular, the Albany Plan of Union drafted by Ben Franklin in 1754 had been inspired in part by knowledge of Iroquois governance.²⁰ While the Albany Plan was not adopted at the time, it later served as a model for the Articles of Confederation and the current US Constitution. In 1775, the Continental Congress and its president John Hancock, sent treaty commissioners to the Iroquois, reminding them that over 30 years earlier in 1744, the Iroquois had advised the colonists to unite. The commissioners thanked the Iroquois for their earlier counsel and asked them to remain neutral in the struggle between Great Britain and the colonists. Almost a year later, on²¹ “11 June 1776, while independence was debated, ... visiting Iroquois were formally invited into the hall of the Continental Congress, and a speech was delivered calling them ‘brothers’ [and declaring] the Americans and the Iroquois to be ‘as one people, and have but one heart’”

Popular US history tends to overlook the frequent constructive interactions between colonists and indigenous peoples from the time the colonists reached the “New World” throughout the colonial period. Contact with freer Native American societies was not by itself sufficient to overcome traditions of autocratic governance; Dutch²² colonists in New Netherlands (New York) and French²³ in New France (Canada) with similar contact with the Iroquois retained their autocratic governance. The culture gap with Native Americans seems to have been less for English raised under a tradition of limited monarchy dating back at least²⁴ to the Magna Carta of 1215 and the English Bill of Rights²⁵ of 1689. The willingness and skill of Queen Elizabeth I in working with

Parliament helped nurture this tradition of limited government in the late sixteenth century.

Turmoil in Britain Protects the Colonial Experiments: Also important to the political evolution of the colonies was the political turmoil in England during the 86 years following the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603. This instability was driven by conflict between heads of state more autocratic than Elizabeth and a populace who expected better treatment. This period includes two major political events: a violent civil war and the largely nonviolent “Glorious Revolution”.

The English civil war 1642-1649 saw the autocratic King Charles I beheaded and replaced by the autocratic “Lord Protector” Cromwell,²⁶ with effectively no change in the level of freedom after much bloodshed. After Cromwell, the monarchy was restored under the autocratic Charles II and then James II, both sons of Charles I.²⁷

The unpopular policies of James II prompted several British leaders to write to William and Mary of Orange, son-in-law and daughter of James II, begging William to invade: If he did, the English would flock to him. They only asked that he agree to a limited monarchy consistent with English tradition. On Guy Fawkes Day (Nov. 5) 1688 William landed in Southwestern England²⁸ and started advancing towards London with an army that was initially smaller than that of James II. However, James’ army melted through desertions and defections. James fled to France. On 14 February 1689, William was crowned King of England and Scotland. These events have since become known as the “Glorious Revolution”. Later that year, William signed the English Bill of Rights.²⁹ (The new US Constitution of 1787 did not contain a Bill of Rights. This was provided only after citizens demanded that their rights be documented following the English

model.) These two events are largely consistent with the observation of Sharp that violence tends to concentrate power, while nonviolent action tends to diffuse it.³⁰

This political turbulence in England made it easier for British colonists in America to pursue their own interests with little interference from London. At first, almost anything they did could largely be overlooked, as they were such an insignificant part of the realm, and British political leaders had bigger problems closer to home.³¹

The government in London only began to devote substantial attention to their North American colonies after the colonial economies became a substantial portion of total British economic activity. By that time, the colonists had developed a self-governing tradition sufficient to encourage colonial leaders to consider independence. Earlier, in 1686 when James II dismissed colonial assemblies, the King's authority was grudgingly accepted. After the Glorious Revolution (three years later), the previous colonial democracy was quickly restored.³² Three quarters of a century later, after 1765, less dramatic efforts to reduce the powers of the colonial assemblies became unacceptable.³³

Part of the story of the American Revolution that is rarely told in the US is the fact that Britain had 26 colonies in North America and the West Indies in 1765 (see Figure 1),³⁴ only half of which rebelled to become the US. Nine of the other thirteen had long been British, and some had even contributed to the evolution of the British traditions of "no taxation without representation" and the powers of the colonial assemblies.³⁵ Substantial portions of the population in the other 13 (in addition to the 95% disfranchised majority in England proper) had substantive grievances against the existing order.

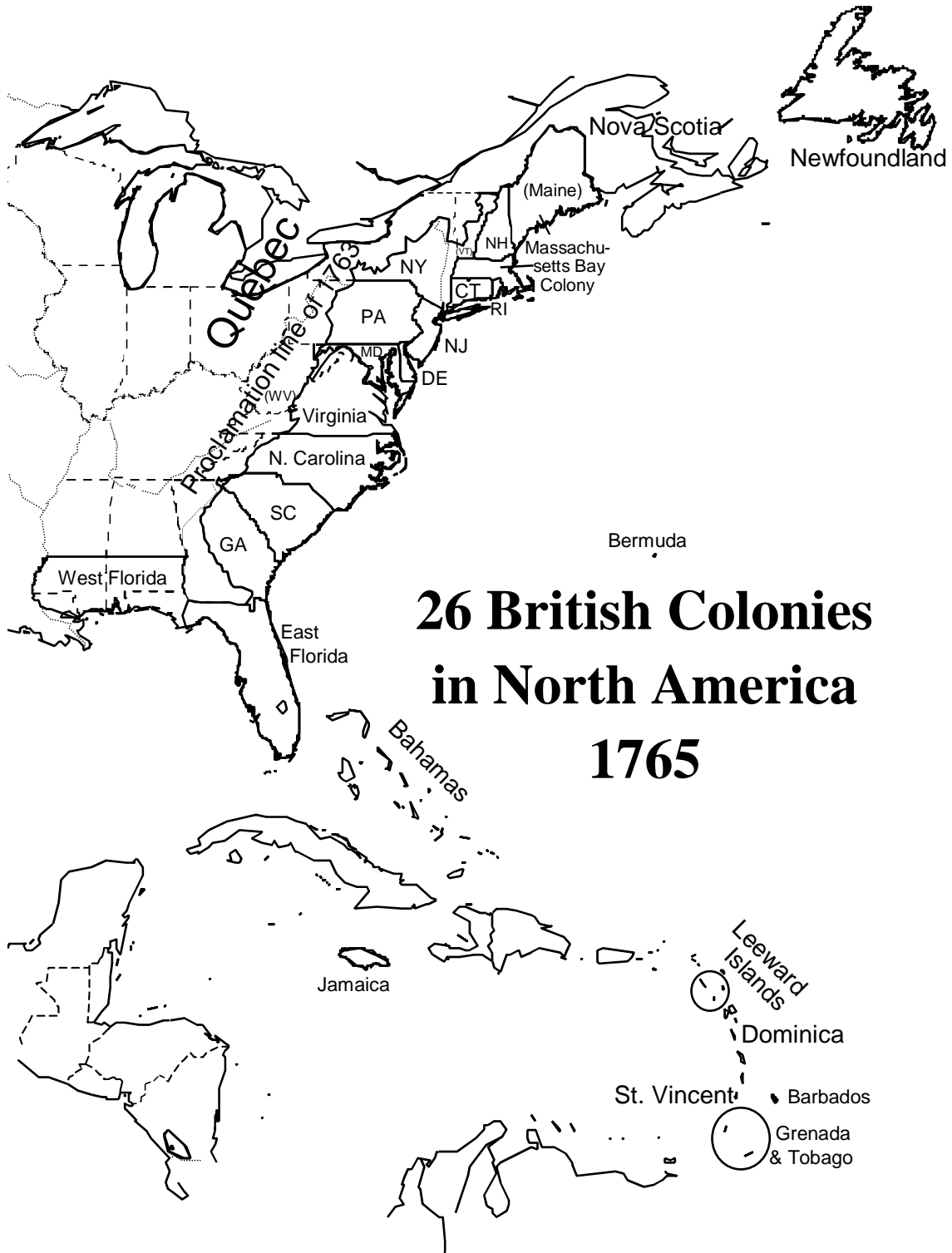


Figure 1. British Colonies in North America³⁶ in 1765

Any careful analysis of the American Revolution should try to explain not only why 13 colonies rebelled but also why the other 13 did not. While this question cannot be definitively answered, several probable contributors can be mentioned. A few comments regarding Bermuda and Quebec will be offered here; the remaining 11 are reviewed briefly in an Appendix.

In Bermuda, many were quite sympathetic to the rebellion, and on 31 July 1775, Bermudian Governor Bruere wrote to Lord Dartmouth, British Secretary of State for America,³⁷ “there may be but few friends to government here.” This was after the “shots heard ‘round the world” had been fired at Lexington and Concord but before the Declaration of Independence. The British military occupied Boston, and a colonial army lead by Washington was camped outside. On August 14-15, 1775, Bermudians organized the theft of a large cache of gunpowder from British military stores on Bermuda to supply Washington’s army.³⁸ However, as the war expanded, the precarious security position of Bermuda with threats from US³⁹ privateers and allies, France and Spain, combined to keep Bermuda British.⁴⁰

Alienating Potential Allies: Quebec had long been a French colony. Its conquest by Britain in 1763 ended⁴¹ “the American Hundred Years’ War”. The new British masters of Quebec officially supported the continuation of French language and customs including the exercise of the Catholic faith. These cultural considerations were, however, contradicted by British anti-Catholic policies. These included a period of six years between the death of one Bishop of Quebec and the nomination of another, during which time new priests could not be consecrated in Quebec and none were allowed to enter from France.⁴²

After the Boston Tea Party, Parliament passed the Quebec Act of 1774 hoping to thereby separate Quebec from the recalcitrant British subjects further south. The Quebec Act, called the⁴³ “Magna Carta of the French Canadians”, helped secure the loyalty of the local French aristocracy and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

Many of the common Quebecers, however, liked the protest rhetoric from the 13 colonies to their South. When a US “Continental Army”, 3,000 strong, marched into Quebec, many French Canadians resisted the governor’s call for military assistance, and some even joined the Continental Army. Much of this support disappeared after the invading army destroyed property and took food and supplies while “paying” in worthless continental script. After manufacturing more enemies than friends, the invaders were forced to leave.⁴⁴

In 1789, years after the American Revolution was over, leading British officials still worried that Canada might separate from Britain and join the new United States.⁴⁵ This possibility was largely eliminated by the US invasion of Canada during the War of 1812, which historians claim was instrumental in creating a Canadian national identity that was previously mostly nonexistent;⁴⁶ this change in group identification is consistent with the claim that group identification is often formed in conflict.⁴⁷

In sum, almost from the beginning of English colonial efforts in North America, governance in the 13 colonies that rebelled in 1776 was substantially more democratic than in England or in the 13 colonies that did not rebel (with the possible exception of Bermuda).⁴⁸ This seems to have been inspired in part by a marriage of English and Native American traditions. These “democratical” traditions⁴⁹ had developed when

English leaders had been too preoccupied with issues closer to home. When the colonies were big enough to be noticed, they were also too strong to be controlled.

Also, there seem to be three primary reasons why the other 13 British colonies in North America did not join the rebellion. First, the level of democratization seems not to have been as high even in those with long-established colonial assemblies. Second, the rebellious colonists failed to secure the support of the other 13 before they started shooting at them. (It's hard to win people's hearts and minds while killing them.) Third, eight of the 13 were island colonies whose precarious security positions essentially translated into "defense" plans involving immediate capitulation to external threats, relying on the British army and navy to keep slaves and commoners in their places.

2. Advances for Freedom and Democracy Associated with the American Revolution, 1765-1800

"The American Revolution", according to Keyssar,⁵⁰ "produced modest, but only modest, gains in the formal democratization of politics. ... Overall, the proportion of adult men who could vote in 1787 was surely higher than it had been in 1767, yet the shift was hardly dramatic. ... By 1790, ..., roughly 60 to 70 percent of adult white men ... could vote", compared to "probably less than 60 percent" before.

Important advances achieved by the American Revolution included (a) the widespread adoption of written constitutions with locally elected governors and councils replacing those appointed in England and (b) bills of rights explicitly guarantying certain rights to individuals and limiting the powers of governments. This trend was partly a response to the Coercive Acts of Parliament of 1774, which closed Boston harbor and

changed the Massachusetts colonial charter without consulting the colonists, giving the crown-appointed governor the power to appoint and remove many public officials including judges, justices of the peace, and marshals.⁵¹

Introduction of State Constitutions: Farmers in Massachusetts, who were already concerned about the possible confiscation of their property for inability to pay taxes or to repay loans, feared that the new rules would make these public officials less responsive to local concerns and more susceptible to bribery. Beginning in August 1774, when circuit court judges arrived in rural towns all across Massachusetts, they were met by thousands of angry farmers who filled the streets and refused to permit the judges to hold court under the new laws. Judges were asked to resign or at least to ignore the new act and hold court only under the Massachusetts charter of 1691. Each declaration of judges was put to a vote of the locals to determine whether it was acceptable. Under this onslaught of citizen resistance, most of the courts were closed although a few were allowed to operate under the 1691 charter.⁵²

This resulted in a power vacuum in Massachusetts, which was filled⁵³ “[o]n June 19, 1775, [when] the Massachusetts Congress elected a 28-member council that replaced the governor as executive. With this one alteration, ..., the Massachusetts Charter of 1691 became the first state constitution.” The Coercive Acts did not officially affect the other 12 rebellious colonies. However, believing the acts threatened them as well, by 1777 all 13 had adopted new constitutions consistent with their declared independence.⁵⁴ Facing a King and parliament attempting by fiat to eliminate 150 years of democratic tradition, the colonists agreed to instead to eliminate Britain from their colonial charters. After the war, painfully aware of their vulnerability as 14 independent states (including Vermont,

which had previously been disputed between New York and New Hampshire) and of the inadequacies of the Articles of Confederation, revolutionary leaders crafted the current US federal constitution and subjected it to vigorous debate in all the states.

While these were not the first written constitutions in history, they started a trend that has provided written constitutions for nearly all of the world's advanced industrial democracies and many totalitarian and authoritarian nations. One of the few exceptions is Great Britain, which is a constitutional monarchy without "a written constitution. There is no agreed mechanism [in Britain] for changing the (unwritten) de-facto constitution and not even agreement about what it actually contains."⁵⁵

Bills of Rights: Ten of the early state constitutions included bills of rights,⁵⁶ as had colonial charters since 1639 and the English Bill of Rights⁵⁷ of 1689, updating the Magna Carta⁵⁸ of 1215. Major US constitutional documents were translated into many languages and disseminated widely. These included the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and state constitutions. After the war, the Federalist Papers and the US Constitution of 1787 were also translated and distributed widely. They had a profound effect on constitutional thought around the world, especially in Europe in part via their impact on the French Revolution,⁵⁹ including the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen" of 1789. Rutland says, "Three months before the French acted, James Madison had already fulfilled a pledge he made during the ratification struggle over the Constitution drafted in 1787" by introducing in the first US House of Representatives 16 proposed amendments, 10 of which had been officially approved by 1791. These became the US Bill of Rights.⁶⁰

Keyssar reports that the post-war period saw several liberalizations of the right to vote in different states as disfranchised revolutionary war veterans successfully pushed for suffrage in spite of their inability to meet property requirements.⁶¹ A study of these changes may help explain the apparent contradiction between Sharp's comment that violence tends to concentrate power and Keyssar's observation that the American Revolution contributed to a modest growth in the percent of the population eligible to vote.⁶²

In sum, the American Revolution produced modest but important gains for freedom and democracy. Furthermore, the evidence summarized in this essay suggests that most of these gains were obtained through nonviolent discussions, motivated in part by the political exigencies of the war and facilitated by the accompanying turmoil. However, without the previous 150 years of democratic experience, the colonists might not have found it so easy to agree to disagree agreeably. In particular, the claim that the revolutionary war itself directly advanced freedom and democracy seems inconsistent with the weight of the available evidence.

3. The Impact of Violence and Nonviolence on Group Identification

“As early as 1748, the metropolitan government began to abandon its long-standing posture of accommodation and conciliation towards the colonies for a policy of strict supervision and control, a policy ... usually associated with the post-1763 era,” according to Greene.⁶³ However, the Seven Years' War intervened,⁶⁴ forcing both politicians in England and people in the colonies to suppress their differences and work together to defeat the common enemy. Initial defeat was turned into victory with

substantial assistance from colonists. Britain carried most of the financial burden, while colonists provided many of the required troops.

Neither side seemed to appreciate the contributions of the other. The British aristocracy complained that they had borne most of the tax burden. Meanwhile Ben Franklin, for example, complained, “They say that last Year, at Nova Scotia, 2000 New England Men and not more than 200 Regulars were join’d in the taking [of Fort] Beau Sejour; yet it could not be discover’d by the Account sent by Govr. Lawrence, and publish’d in the London Gazette, that there was a single New England-Man concern’d in the affair.”⁶⁵

After that war ended in 1763, the British government moved quickly to⁶⁶ “enforce sovereignty that had never hitherto been exercised in this positive manner” by enacting several measures that seemed to colonists to violate “their rights as Englishmen” and “loyal subjects of His Majesty, George III.” In particular, the Stamp Act pushed⁶⁷ “the young lawyer Patrick Henry, a nine-day member” of the Virginia House of Burgesses to propose seven resolutions that became known as the Virginia Resolves.⁶⁸ Other colonial assemblies passed similar measures and sent representatives to the “Stamp Act Congress” in New York in Oct. 1765. The Stamp Act Congress petitioned “King, Lords and Commons for repeal of the taxes”.⁶⁹

Before the congress met, the “Sons of Liberty” in Boston and other cities destroyed the homes of a few reputed tax collectors and Massachusetts Lt. Gov. Hutchinson. The word quickly spread, and most tax collectors resigned before local mobs could gather. The violence not only prevented implementation of the Stamp Act, it also became an obstacle to colonial objectives, because⁷⁰ “simple repeal would be

unacceptable to British political opinion, *as too obvious a surrender to mob violence* [emphasis added].” The hesitancy of colonial assemblies to vote adequate compensation for the victims of rioting and their willingness to pardon rioters angered the political leadership in London.⁷¹

The Stamp Act was repealed in 1766 after petitions and testimony in Commons by “merchants and manufacturers concerned with British trade to America [and] a procession of witnesses succeeded in alarming independent MPs [who] were already aware of hunger riots in Britain, and feared more general disorders.” At essentially the same time, Parliament passed the Declaratory Act,⁷² which asserted its right to legislate for the American colonies “in all cases whatsoever.” Late in the subsequent Revolutionary war, Parliament considered retreating from this position, but it was too late.

Members of Parliament were not alone in being scandalized by the violent destruction of property in Boston and other major colonial cities. Many colonials were also alarmed. For example, during the first mob action in Boston, Aug. 14, 1765, Governor Bernard was told that it was impossible to call out the militia, because “if a drummer could be found [to assemble the militia] who was not in the mob, he would be knocked down as soon as he made a sound, and his drum would be broken.” However, after a mob had destroyed the home of Lt. Gov. Hutchinson 13 days later, “Governor Barnard found much to his surprise that he would not have any difficulty raising the militia”.⁷³ Evidently, the violence of those 13 days had driven many militia members away from the mob to support the call for order.

The Stamp Act crisis established a pattern: Both Parliament and the colonists expressed concerns that their traditional rights and prerogatives were being violated by the other. At the same time each side misinterpreted or displayed ignorance or disinterest in positive actions by the other.⁷⁴ For example, Parliament felt compelled to maintain a standing army in America, because Native Americans still posed a threat on the western frontier. However, colonial assemblies refused to provide needed supplies. This particular problem was solved in part by removing troops from areas that refused to support them. After the removal of the troops many colonists suddenly discovered they wanted the protection and the money spent locally by the military. The required appropriations were then approved.⁷⁵

The so-called Boston Massacre provides other illustrations of the impact of violence on group identification. Boston led the colonies in much of the early resistance. British troops began arriving in Boston on Oct. 1, 1768, to try to force consent to Parliamentary authority. Local residents resented both the military mission and the competition for jobs from soldiers seeking part-time jobs to supplement their meager military income. This friction was not limited to Boston. Leach said, “Elsewhere in the colonies, wherever redcoats and patriots were in proximity there was likely to be tension if not open violence”. The tensions escalated until March 5, 1770, when⁷⁶ “an ugly-spirited mob so harassed and frightened a small party of troops on guard duty that first one and then others of the soldiers discharged their muskets into the crowd, killing five.”

In considering the policy implications of this experience, it seems appropriate to compare it with confrontations between demonstrators and security forces associated with more recent nonviolent events such as the spectacular collapse of the Soviet Bloc almost

without firing a shot. Security forces not personally threatened often disobey orders to shoot; when they do shoot, they rarely generate more than a tiny fraction of the destruction produced by troops who feel threatened.⁷⁷ Many successful nonviolent noncooperators take this one step further, working hard to treat security forces with respect though not always compliance. Most of the common British soldiers in America were “freeborn Englishmen,” like the colonists, raised to believe in “their rights as Englishmen” under the Magna Carta of 1215 and the English Bill of Rights of 1689.⁷⁸ Most had families in England who were at least as oppressed (and much less likely to have the franchise) as British subjects in America. If they had not been threatened, they might have disobeyed orders.

Instead, the cycle of new repressive measures from London and increased resistance by colonists continued to escalate.⁷⁹ “On December 16, 1773, a group of Bostonians disguised as Amerindians, boarded three vessels and threw the cargo of tea into the harbor.” The destruction of property was⁸⁰ “almost universally condemned in England. ... Even many colonists believed that the Bostonians had taken events to the extreme. George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were among those prominent Americans who expressed reservations about the events of December 16. Moreover, Massachusetts Bay seemed to stand alone. Although New York, Philadelphia, and Charles Town had refused the tea, none of these cities had gone to the extreme of destroying it.”

The isolation of Massachusetts Bay for their violent excesses was quickly repaired by an even more excessive reaction in London. British merchants who eight years earlier had urged repeal of the Stamp Act now supported punishing Boston with the

Coercive Acts.⁸¹ Merchants seemed to identify more with the losses of other merchants in 1773 than with the losses of tax collectors in 1765.

As late as 3 March 1775, Ben Franklin was still hoping for a resolution of the conflict short of war. On that date Josiah Quincy recorded in his diary,⁸² “I dined with Dr. Franklin [He warned against taking] any step of great consequence, unless on a sudden emergency, without the advice of the Continental Congress. [If it came to war,] only New England could hold out ... and if they were firm and united, in *seven years*” might gain their independence. Just over six weeks later on April 19, the “shots heard ‘round the world” were fired at Lexington and Concord.

Franklin’s estimate of seven years turned out to be remarkably accurate: The surrender of British General Cornwallis at Yorktown, VA, 6.5 years later on Oct. 17, 1781 was later acclaimed as the decisive engagement of the war, though that was far from obvious at the time. Raphael says,⁸³ “George Washington insisted that the war was not yet over, and George III was not ready to capitulate.” The British still held New York City and parts of the South. Gen. Nathaniel Greene, head of the US Army in the South, continued engaging British and Loyalist troops and partisans, winning hearts and minds of Southerners in the process.⁸⁴ Britain continued offensive actions into 1782 with new attacks on French and Spanish forces. The war officially ended 8.5 years after Lexington and Concord with the Treaty of Paris, Sept. 3, 1783, although fighting had largely ground to a halt a year earlier.

Returning to April 1775, the cycle of violence and counterviolence continued to drive the two sides further apart. After the war began each side manufactured recruits for the other, pushing people out of the middle and creating even more barriers to

communication and reconciliation. Some initially staunch supporters of each side moved to a more neutral position or even to the other side for many reasons: some to oppose earlier enemies, others because they felt they were carrying an unfair share of the burden or because they saw the revolutionary leadership oppressing them more than the British or vice versa.

The general tendency is summarized in Figure 2. A careful study of the individuals involved would appear more random than the composite image in the diagram. Leaders on both sides created problems for themselves by acting under mistaken assumptions about what motivated their “opposition”.⁸⁵

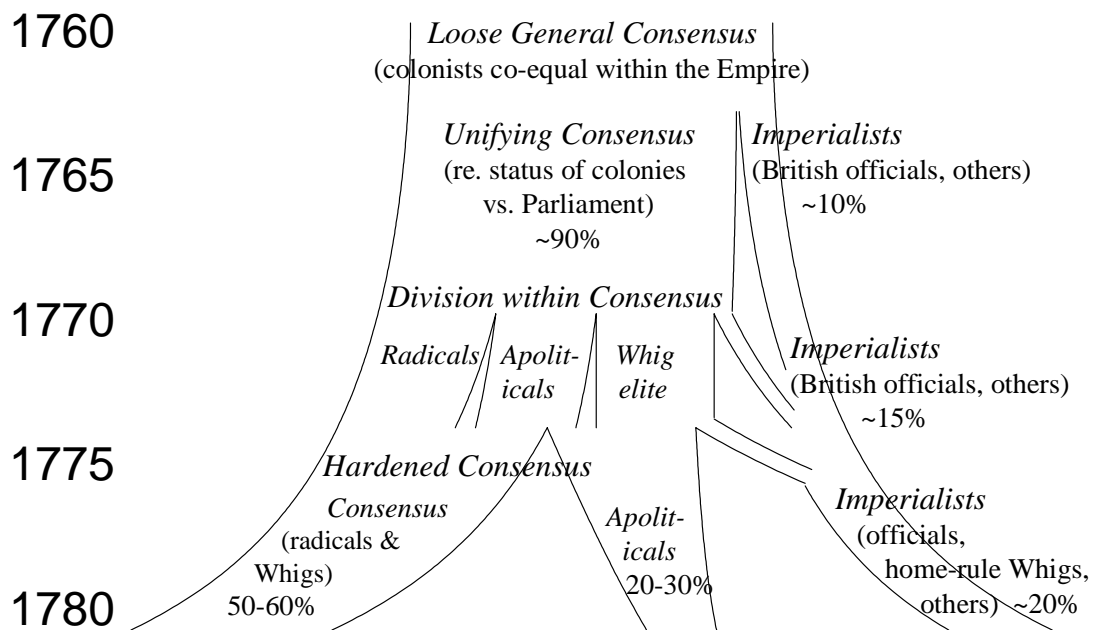


Figure 2. Evolution of Group Identity in the 13 Rebellious Colonies during the American Revolution⁸⁶

4. The Impact of the American Revolution outside the New United States

The American Revolution was the focus of great interest throughout Europe and in the other 13 British colonies in North America. Its ultimate success contributed to the expansion of “The Age of the Democratic Revolution”, described by Palmer and Godechot.⁸⁷ People everywhere had grievances against their governments, including the 95% disfranchised majority in Britain and the substantially disfranchised majorities in the 13 British colonies in North America that did not join the 1776 revolution. For example, Ireland, inspired by events in America, wrested concessions from the British Parliament.⁸⁸

The violence of the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the slave rebellion in St. Domingue (Haiti) limited the spread of this “Democratic Revolution” and contributed to many reversals. Maxwell observed,⁸⁹ “Whereas in the 1780s would-be Latin American revolutionaries had found inspiration in George Washington, by the 1790s, they recoiled in fear before the example of” the bloody slave revolt that secured Haitian independence from France.⁹⁰

Potential allies were turned into adversaries, e.g., by military excursions into Quebec. Canadian historians have suggested that Quebec might have joined the protests, possibly becoming another state in the US, if the revolutionaries had used less violence and anti-Catholic rhetoric.⁹¹

The violence of the revolution also helped marginalize many in Britain proper who were sympathetic to the cause of the revolutionaries. These included the famous eighteenth century British radicals John Wilkes and John Horne Tooke, both of whom

were imprisoned for unpopular speech during some portions of the 1763-1783 revolutionary period.⁹²

How can we compare the American Revolution with other violent and nonviolent revolutions and independence struggles? More definitive analyses would require more careful development of theory with concepts more carefully defined and tested in a variety of situations. However, a simple comparison with the violent and nonviolent revolutions and independence struggles of the twentieth century suggests that a campaign more carefully committed to nonviolent noncooperation might have contributed more to freedom and democracy at substantially lower risks than the revolutionary war. This claim is far from certain. Only one thing seems clear: When people are killed and property destroyed, the apparent perpetrators often make enemies. Violence often alienates potential allies and manufactures recruits for the opposition. A better understanding of these phenomena might help all parties to conflict more effectively pursue their objectives, transforming many lose-lose situations into win-win outcomes.

Summary and Conclusions

History is not benign. Differences in people's understanding of history drive conflict including war. For example, Uri Avnery, a leading Israeli peace activist said,⁹³ "The Zionist historical version and the Palestinian historical version contradict each other entirely, both in the general picture and almost every detail." Similarly, the Canadian understanding of the American Revolution and of many other aspects of US history differs substantially from the popular understanding in the US.⁹⁴

We learn from history not only specific details of past events but also general attitudes of appropriate reactions to certain situations. For example, the US body politic “learned” from World War II (a) to be proactive in defense of freedom and democracy, and (b) it is unwise to wait until an Adolph Hitler has invaded neighbors and begun a systematic campaign of genocide. Similarly, people around the world who feel oppressed have “learned” from the American Revolution that violence is sometimes a justifiable and effective response to tyranny.

Historians report events they think are important, and they rarely record occurrences that seem irrelevant. For example, the nonviolent “First American Revolution” in rural Massachusetts in the late summer and early fall of 1774 (discussed above with the introduction of state constitutions) disappeared from the historical narrative in part because it was so democratic it was incomprehensible and somewhat frightening to the aristocracy that led the violent revolution.⁹⁵

Recent research on democracy suggests that civil society may be more important to democracy than elections.⁹⁶ If people can agree to disagree agreeably and work together for common objectives, they can replace repressive governments with something more democratic, as happened between 1977 and 1994 in Argentina, the Philippines, Korea, Chile, South Africa, and the entire Soviet Bloc.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, the American Revolution is arguably the only major violent revolution or independence struggle in recorded history that was accompanied by unequivocal advances for freedom and democracy.⁹⁸ The impact of the method of struggle on democracy can be summarized in Sharp’s two observations:

1. Violence tends to drive away potential supporters, while nonviolent action tends to attract support.⁹⁹
2. Violence tends to concentrate power, while nonviolent action tends to diffuse it.¹⁰⁰

The evidence I have found from the American Revolutionary period seems consistent with these two claims.¹⁰¹ In this essay, I have attempted a fair and balanced review of the available information. However, even if even we conclude that the violence of the American Revolution did advance freedom and democracy, it is still an exceptional event. Past uses of violence have rarely produced positive result, leading usually to lose-lose outcomes where even the official “winners” lost more than they gained, and where less violent responses could have been found if the participants on at least one side had had a better appreciation for the rate at which violence often alienates supporters and manufactures recruits for the opposition. By contrast, recent history provides several cases where nonviolent noncooperation produced clear advances for freedom and democracy and few cases with losses comparable to those experienced in violent conflict.

Even if the present analysis of the American Revolution is wrong, if this reading of other revolutions and independence struggles is accurate, then attempts to glorify the American Revolutionary war promote an approach to conflict that has been largely disastrous for virtually every group that has attempted to emulate it, overlooking strategies of nonviolent noncooperation that have had substantially more successes and fewer risks.

Finally, modern research in political science suggests that advances for freedom and democracy have generally coincided with advances in civil society. To the extent

that this is accurate, it has two primary implications. First, even if the present review of American revolutionary history is substantively deficient, attempts to glorify the American Revolutionary war *threaten democracy itself*, because war weakens civil society and freedom. Second, concerned individuals and many nongovernmental organizations can make major contributions to world peace and economic development by promoting the growth of civil society around the world. They can do this by protesting human rights abuses, which tend to disrupt and weaken civil society, and by promoting the production and distribution of articles, pamphlets, books, audio and video materials to effectively disseminate this information.

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I wish to thank especially my wife, Betsy Wolf-Graves, for tolerating tedious repetitions of the ideas of this essay in various forms and for help in refining the presentation. I also wish to thank Becky Baybrook for suggesting the relevance of the Iroquois to US history.

Appendix. The American Revolution and the Other 13 British Colonies in North America

Figure 1 identifies the 26 British colonies in North America in 1765, only 13 of which rebelled to form the US. In the other 13, substantial portions of the population (in addition to the 95% disfranchised majority in England proper) had substantive grievances against the existing order. The situations in Bermuda and Quebec during this period were briefly mentioned with Figure 1 above.

The seven British colonies in the Caribbean had long and substantive British traditions including representative assemblies, more similar to the 13 colonies that rebelled than to Florida, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. However,¹⁰² the “British West Indian Assemblies were more oligarchical than those of North America. Only the Assembly of Barbados survived without interruption into the twentieth century. The assemblies of the other islands voluntarily disbanded themselves during the mid-nineteenth century rather than admit black representatives. The opposition of the planters to a broader franchise among both whites and blacks, for much of the eighteenth century, meant that the legislatures were but mere tools of the plantocracy and shadows of representative government.” During the American Revolution, these colonies were generally sympathetic to the rebel cause, experiencing similar protests but repulsed by the violence and having security concerns similar to Bermuda.

Of the remaining four colonies (East and West Florida, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland), only Newfoundland had long been British. However, it was managed more as a commercial enterprise to support the summer fisheries than as a colony and did not obtain a colonial assembly until 1832.¹⁰³ During the American Revolution, privateering¹⁰⁴ “produced near famine-level food shortages”, which doubtless limited any revolutionary spirit among the small Newfoundland population.

Nova Scotia had been taken from the French¹⁰⁵ in 1711. Over the next 20 years, English colonists from Britain and New England moved into the area. These new colonists, led by the New Englanders with democratic experience, pressed for a representative assembly,¹⁰⁶ which was granted in 1758. However, it did not have control of revenues, as did other British colonies, until after the war.¹⁰⁷ In 1754, on the eve of the

Seven Years' War (known in the US as the French and Indian War), the British expelled many of the resident French, slaughtering some brutally. Acadians (or Cajuns) say that this event defined the Acadian identity,¹⁰⁸ consistent with the assertion with Figure 2 above that group identity is often forged in conflict.

In August 1776, two Nova Scotians organized a unit of some 180 men, mostly also from Nova Scotia, and attacked Fort Cumberland.¹⁰⁹ They were quickly repulsed.¹¹⁰ “Such was the extent of the contest for the hearts and minds of Nova Scotians.” Nova Scotians with strong rebel sympathies left for places like Boston. Privateers “burned houses, barns, and fishing shacks, killed livestock and plundered moveable property”, doubtless reinforcing native loyalist tendencies.

East and West Florida had only become British in 1763 as a result of the Seven Years' War and had no colonial assembly. The political issues that drove the American Revolution had relatively little impact in Florida, though Spain supported the rebels and reclaimed Florida during the hostilities.¹¹¹

Notes

¹. Lipset wrote that George Washington “is the most important single figure in American history” for his role in keeping an army in the field throughout this period, in providing a respected voice urging unity while others worked out the details of the current US federal system (or “republic” as they called it) with its checks and balances, and in establishing precedents as the first President that have served the republic well since. I differ with Lipset only in his use of the word “democracy” in the title to his article: Seymour M. Lipset (1998), “George Washington and the Founding of Democracy”, *Journal of Democracy*, 9(4): 24-38. Regarding the word “myth”, Edmund S. Morgan (1988) *Inventing the People* (Norton) used the word “fiction” to describe the aspects of mainstream culture by which “the many are governed by the few”. (See esp. pp. 14-15.) Similarly, Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, ed. (1984) *Arms and Independence: The Military Character of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA: U. Press of VA) and their contributors discuss aspects “of the mythologizing of the Revolution”. For example, Charles Royster “Founding a Nation in Blood: Military conflict and the American Nationality”, pp. 25-49, describes how “the shared violence of the conflict [was exploited] to create an important bond” or group identity and traces the utilization of this image through the War of 1812. I mostly use the word “narrative” here to describe how people understand history, what happened and why, and

- what that means for how they should approach current problems. “Myth” is a synonym that is used less often here because of its provocative connotations.
2. Alan Tully (2000) “Political Development of the Colonies after the Glorious Revolution”, ch. 5 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell) discussed the substantial political development that made independence possible but concluded that this political culture “would not go through an era of revolution without some profound alterations.” While “profound”, the changes brought by the revolution are still modest compared with the dominant, naive claim that revolution replaced the tyranny of George III with democracy. See also John M. Murrin (1984) “Political Development”, ch. 14, pp. 408-456 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *Colonial British America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins U. Pr.), Edmund S. Morgan (1988) *Inventing the People* (NY: Norton), and Marchette Chute (1969) *The First Liberty* (NY: Dutton).
 3. Walter H. Conser, Jr., Ronald M. McCarthy, David J. Toscano, and Gene Sharp (1986) *Resistance, Politics, and the American Struggle for Independence, 1765-1775* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner), and Ray Raphael (2002) *The First American Revolution: Before Lexington and Concord* (NY: The New Press), and Elisha P. Douglass (1955) *Rebels and Democrats: The Struggle for Equal Political Rights and Majority Rule During the American Revolution* (Chicago: Elephant)
 4. Spencer Graves (2005) “The Impact of Violent and Nonviolent Action on Constructed Realities and Conflict”, www.prodsyse.com, 2/27/2005.
 5. Larry Diamond (1999) *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins U. Pr., p. 221). For an eloquent and highly influential but unscientific discussion of the power of civil society, see Václav Havel (1979) “The Power of the Powerless”, pp. 11-96 in John Keane (1986) *The Power of the Powerless* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe).
 6. It seems appropriate to distinguish between “England”, “Great Britain,” and the “United Kingdom”. Queen Elizabeth I was Queen of England, not including Scotland. When she died in 1603, she was succeeded by King James VI of Scotland, who became also King James I of England [Christopher Hill (1961) *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714* (NY: Norton). He called his combined domain, “Great Britain.” However, that name was not adopted officially until the Act of Union of 1707 (<http://www.britannia.com/celtic/scotland/scot8.html>, accessed 12/25/2003), over a century later. A second “Act of Union” in 1801 established the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1922, most of Ireland separated to become the Irish Free State, and the remainder was renamed the “United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1967, v. 10. p. 734) For simplicity, the term “British” will be used in this article to include the related colonies in America.
 7. Jonathan Schell (2003) *The Unconquerable World* (NY: Metropolitan, ch. 5, p. 160). *The works of John Adams, second President of the United States: with a life of the author, notes and illustrations, by his grandson Charles Francis Adams*, v. 5 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., p. 492); cited from Claude H. Van Tyne (1922) *The Causes of the War of Independence* (NY: Houghton Mifflin, p. 1)
 8. Alexander Keyssar (2000) *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (NY: Basic Books, p. 7)
 9. Peter D. G. Thomas (2000) “The Grenville Program, 1763-1765, ch. 15 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell) See also Eric Foner (1998) *The Story of American Freedom* (NY: Norton, esp. pp. 5-7).
 10. “First English Settlement in the New World”, <http://statelibrary.dcr.state.nc.us/nc/ncsites/english1.htm> accessed 1/26/2004. Newfoundland was claimed for England in 1497 but was not colonized until much later; www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/default.html accessed 9/17/2004.
 11. Marchette Chute (1969) *The First Liberty* (NY: E. P. Dutton, p. 6)
 12. Marchette Chute (1969) *The First Liberty* (NY: E. P. Dutton, pp. 13, 17). Initially, it seems that all taxpayers were eligible to vote, and since the “tax was imposed on all males over sixteen it seems probable that all of them were voters”, including “not only free men without property but also servants”. See also www.apva.org/history, accessed 9/17/2004

- ¹³ . Edmund S. Morgan (1988) *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (NY: Norton, p. 134); *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1967, vol. 6, pp. 349-350 and vol. 19, pp. 267-268)
- ¹⁴ . Michal R. Brozicki (2000) "The Cultural Development of the Colonies", ch. 9 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell), esp. pp. 75-76. Also Robert A. Rutland (2000) "Bills of Rights and the First Ten Amendments to the Constitutions", ch. 33 in Greene and Pole, p. 266, and Doug Linder (2001) "The Trial of John Peter Zenger: An Account", www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/zenger/zengeraccount.html, accessed 2/14/2004
- ¹⁵ . John M. Murrin (1984) "Political Development", ch. 14 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *Colonial British America* (Johns Hopkins U. Pr., esp. p. 413). Murrin said, "When Enlightenment ideas reached mid-eighteenth-century America, they were embraced and studied seriously, not because they inspired a radical reshaping of the social landscape, but because they legitimated (often for the first time) a broad set of social and political changes that had already occurred."
- ¹⁶ . Donald A. Grinde, Jr. (1992) "Iroquois Political Theory and the Roots of American Democracy", ch. 6 in Oren Lyons and John Mohawk, *Exiled in the Land of the Free* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, esp. pp. 231-233)
- ¹⁷ . Reuben Gold Thwaites (1959) *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 1610-1791* (NY: Pageant). This 73 volume work first appeared in the 1890s. The original French, Latin and Italian appear on one page and an English translation on a facing page. For a small sample of this monumental work, see Allan Greer, ed. (2000) *The Jesuit Relations* (Boston: Bedford / St. Martins)
- ¹⁸ . Donald A. Grinde, Jr. (1992) "Iroquois Political Theory and the Roots of American Democracy", ch. 6 in Oren Lyons and John Mohawk, *Exiled in the Land of the Free* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers; quote from p. 247)
- ¹⁹ . Robert W. Venables (1992) "American Indian Influences on the America of the Founding Fathers", ch. 3 in Oren Lyons and John Mohawk, *Exiled in the Land of the Free* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers; esp. pp. 107-109)
- ²⁰ . Donald A. Grinde, Jr. (1992) "Iroquois Political Theory and the Roots of American Democracy", ch. 6 in Oren Lyons and John Mohawk, *Exiled in the Land of the Free* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers; esp. pp. 244-245)
- ²¹ . Donald A. Grinde, Jr. (1992) "Iroquois Political Theory and the Roots of American Democracy", ch. 6 in Oren Lyons and John Mohawk, *Exiled in the Land of the Free* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers; esp. pp. 250-255
- ²² . www.usahistory.info/colonies/New-Amsterdam.html and www.usahistory.info/colonies/New-York.html accessed 9/17/2004
- ²³ . Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, vol. 1* (NY: McMillan, ch. 1 & 2)
- ²⁴ . An important current of thought in seventeenth and eighteenth century England and her colonies held that the Magna Carta of 1215 merely "reaffirmed" the "Ancient Constitution" of the legendary Saxon Kings Hengist and Horsa, who supposedly came to England in the sixth century. One proponent of this theory was Blackstone "whose *Commentaries on the Common Law of England* was regarded as the definitive statement on the British Constitution." (Isaac Kramnick 2004 "Ideological Background", ch. 11, esp. p. 90, in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution*, NY: Blackwell) In the Continental Congress in 1776, in addition to drafting the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson served on a committee with Adams and Franklin to propose a seal for the new United States. Jefferson felt the seal should include Hengist and Horsa (Marchette Chute 1969 *The First Liberty: A History of the Right to Vote in America, 1619-1850*, NY: Dutton, p. 237; <http://www.runestone.org/jef.html>).
- ²⁵ . Signed by William of Orange as part of the agreement with the British aristocracy that made him King of England and Scotland via the "Glorious Revolution" (www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/england.htm).
- ²⁶ . Christopher Hill (1980) *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714* (NY: Norton, pp. 95-97); Edmund S. Morgan (1988) *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (NY: Norton, ch. 7, pp. 55-77)
- ²⁷ . Christopher Hill (1980) *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714* (NY: Norton, pp. 99-100)

28 . Christopher Hill (1980) *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714* (NY: Norton, pp. 166-171)
29 . Edmund S. Morgan (1988) *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (NY: Norton, ch. 7, p. 116-117)
30 . Gene Sharp (1973) *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 3 volumes (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent),
esp. pp. 799-806 in vol. 3. The events of seventeenth century England describe here are consistent
with the revolutions and independence struggles summarized in Figure 2 of Spencer Graves
(2005) "The Impact of Violent and Nonviolent Action on Constructed Realities and Conflict"
available from "www.prodsyse.com", accessed 2/27/2005. An attempt to evaluate seventeenth
century England using the Freedom House scales as he did suggests a possible increase of 2 steps
in the level of freedom attributable to the nonviolent Glorious Revolution contrasted with no
change in freedom as a result of the English Civil War, consistent with his analyses of other
violent and nonviolent revolutions and independence struggles.
31 . This seems similar to business innovations described by Drucker: Initially, innovators tend to be
ignored by major potential competitors. When they begin to attract greater attention, they are
often growing and changing so fast that the major players cannot compete successfully. See Peter
Drucker (1985) *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (NY: Harper and Row)
32 . Allan Tully (2000) "The Political Development of the Colonies after the Glorious Revolution", ch.
5 in Greene and Pole (2000). Tully further describes how the seventeenth century electoral
tradition in the colonies was further expanded in the eighteenth century to the point that the
colonists were prepared to resist the attempts of Parliament after 1763 to exercise power in the
colonies that it had never exercised there before.
33 . Jack P. Greene (2000) "The Origins of the New Colonial Policy, 1748-1763", ch. 13 in Jack P.
Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell) and
Alan Tully (2000) "The Political Development of the Colonies after the Glorious Revolution", ch.
5 in Greene and Pole, op cit.
34 . Peter D. G. Thomas (2000) "The Grenville Program, 1763-1765", ch. 15 in Jack P. Greene and J.
R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 120 in
the 2004 paperback edition).
35 . Selwyn H. H. Carrington (2000) "The American Revolution and the Sugar Colonies, 1775-1783",
ch., 63 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution*
(Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 519 in the 2004 paperback edition)
36 . The present author has not found anything identifying directly Grenville's list of 26 colonies.
However, the entities identified on the present map were British colonies at the time, each having
an official colonial government. Britain also had commercial interests in Belize. However, Spain
retained official sovereignty there throughout the eighteenth century, and Britain only claimed it as
an official colony in 1862; see http://workmall.com/wfb2001/belize/belize_history_index.html
accessed 9/18/2004. The western boundary of the 13 colonies that rebelled in the 18th century
was defined by the "Proclamation of 1763", wherein the King declared "it to be Our Royal Will
and Pleasure, ... to reserve under our Sovereignty, Protection, and Dominion, for the use of the
said Indians, all the Lands and Territories ... lying to the Westward of the Sources of the Rivers
which fall into the Sea from the West and North West ([www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/
English/PreConfederation/rp_1763.html](http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/PreConfederation/rp_1763.html), accessed 3/28/2004). The "Proclamation Line" on
Figure 1 follows 152 points extracted from maps of "water" -> "Hydrologic Units" and "streams
and waterbodies" downloaded from "<http://nationalatlas.gov/natlas/NatlasStart.asp>", accessed
4/18/2004. For alternate depictions, see "U.S. Territorial Map 1775", [http://xroads.virginia.edu/
~MAP/TERRITORY/1775map.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MAP/TERRITORY/1775map.html), or "British North America in 1775",
www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/misc/amerrevol/AMREMap4.pdf, accessed 4/17/2004.
37 . <http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~alan/family/N-Dartmouth.html> accessed 9/21/2004; Wilfred
Brenton Kerr (1936) *Bermuda and the American Revolution 1760-1783* (Princeton U. Pr., p. 44)
38 . Wilfred Brenton Kerr (1936) *Bermuda and the American Revolution 1760-1783* (Princeton U. Pr.,
pp. 46-52)
39 . I don't know the first official use of the term "United States of America", but it appears in the
official title for what is now known as the "US Declaration of Independence": "In Congress, July
4, 1776. The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America". Thus, it may not

- apply to the colonial army outside Boston in 1775, but it certainly applies to the threats from US privateers after July 4, 1776.
- 40 . Wilfred Brenton Kerr (1936) *Bermuda and the American Revolution 1760-1783* (Princeton U. Pr.); Esmond Wright (1977) "Bermuda in 1776: Loyalist -- or neutral?", *History Today*, 26(7) 427-443
- 41 . Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, vol. 1* (NY: McMillan, sec. 1.9, p. 58 in the French edition published by Le Cercle du Livre de France)
- 42 . Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, vol. 1* (NY: McMillan, sec. 2.1, p. 68 in the French edition published by Le Cercle du Livre de France)
- 43 . Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, vol. 1* (NY: McMillan, sec. 2.1, p. 80 in the French edition published by Le Cercle du Livre de France)
- 44 . Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, vol. 1* (NY: McMillan, ch. 2). Even with this disaster, the rebels still had substantial support in Quebec for many years. This support finally dissipated when the US invaded Canada during the War of 1812. Historians report that the Canadian national identity was defined by this later invasion, consistent with the previous discussion about group identity being forged in the crucible of conflict. (Wade, sec. 3.5, p. 143 in the French edition published by Le Cercle du Livre de France)
- 45 . Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, I* (sec. 2.5, p. 105 in the French edition, Le Cercle du Livre de France)
- 46 . Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, I* (sec. 3.5, p. 143 in the French edition, Le Cercle du Livre de France); see also Pierre Berton (1980) *The Invasion of Canada* (French edition: Montreal: Les Éditions de l'Homme)
- 47 . Spencer Graves (2005) "The Impact of Violent and Nonviolent Action on Constructed Realities and Conflict", available from "www.prodsyse.com" accessed 2/27/2005.
- 48 . Donald S. Lutz (2000) "State Constitution-Making, through 1781", ch. 34 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 277) said, "Parliament had not, after all, been created by an act of popular sovereignty. Americans, on the other hand, had for a century and a half been erecting their own legislatures on the basis of documents which they approved themselves."
- 49 . "Democracy" was a pejorative at the time of the American Revolution, synonymous for some with "mobocracy". Many leaders of that period argued that only (white) men with substantial property had the independence and demonstrated wisdom to be entrusted with the franchise. See, e.g., Alain de Benoist, "Democracy Revisited: The Ancients and the Moderns", <http://foster.20megsfree.com/456.htm> accessed 2004 sep 23.
- 50 . Alexander Keyssar (2000) *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*(NY: Basic Books, pp. 7, 24)
- 51 . David L. Ammerman (2000) "The Tea Crisis and Its Consequences, through 1775", ch. 24 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell); "Massachusetts Government Act, www.founding.com/library/lbody.cfm?id=94&parent=17 accessed 10/5/2004.
- 52 . Ray Raphael (2003) *The First American Revolution: Before Lexington and Concord* (New Press)
- 53 . Donald S. Lutz (2004) "State Constitution Making, through 1781", ch. 34 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (2004) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Blackwell)
- 54 . Donald S. Lutz (2004) "State Constitution Making, through 1781", ch. 34 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (2004) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Blackwell)
- 55 . "International Constitutional Law", Institut für öffentliches Recht, Bern, Switzerland, www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/uk__indx.html accessed 25 January 2004
- 56 . Donald S. Lutz (2004) "State Constitution Making, through 1781", ch. 34 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole (2004) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Blackwell, p. 279 in the paperback edition)
- 57 . English bill of rights <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/england.htm>
- 58 . Robert A. Rutland (2000) "Bills of Rights and the First Ten Amendments to the Constitution," ch. 33 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell).

- 59 . George A. Billias, ed. (1990) *American Constitutionalism Abroad: Selected Essays on Comparative Constitutional History* (NY: Greenwood Pr.)
- 60 . Robert A. Rutland (2000) "Bills of Rights and the First Ten Amendments to the Constitution," ch. 33 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 267 in the 2003 paperback edition). Michael Zuckert (2000) "Rights", ch. 88 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 119-123 in the 2003 paperback edition).
- 61 . Alexander Keyssar (2000) *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*(NY: Basic Books, p. 7)
- 62 . See also Charles Tilly (2003) *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge U. Pr., esp. p. 44)
- 63 . Jack P. Greene (2000) "The Origins of the New Colonial Policy", ch. 13 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, esp. p. 101)
- 64 . "Seven Years' War", The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. 2001, <http://www.bartleby.com/65/se/SevenYea.html>, Feb. 3, 2004. This was an international war fought simultaneously in Europe, American and India. It is known as the "French and Indian War" in the US.
- 65 . Thomas L. Purvis (2000) "The Seven Years' War and Its Political Legacy", ch. 14 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 115 paperback edition 2004). Fort Beau Sejour later played a role in the American Revolution, then called Fort Cumberland; see, e.g., www.ccg.ednet.ns.ca/cumb/cumbtwp.htm and www.canadianheritage.org/reproductions/10184.htm; accessed 11/5/2004.
- 66 . Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Stamp Act Crisis and Its Repercussions, Including the Quartering Act Controversy", ch. 16 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 123 paperback edition 2004)
- 67 . Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Stamp Act Crisis and Its Repercussions, Including the Quartering Act Controversy", ch. 16 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 124 paperback edition 2004)
- 68 . For a perspective on the issues that pushed a majority of the Burgesses to support most of Henry's resolutions, see Woody Holton (1999) *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (U. of N. Carolina Pr.)
- 69 . Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Stamp Act Crisis and Its Repercussions, Including the Quartering Act Controversy", ch. 16 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 124 paperback edition 2004)
- 70 . Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Stamp Act Crisis and Its Repercussions, Including the Quartering Act Controversy", ch. 16 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 128 paperback edition 2004)
- 71 . Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Stamp Act Crisis and Its Repercussions, Including the Quartering Act Controversy", ch. 16 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 123 paperback edition 2004).; Robert Middlekauff (1982) *The Glorious Cause* (Oxford U. Pr., pp. 110-117)
- 72 . Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Stamp Act Crisis and Its Repercussions, Including the Quartering Act Controversy", ch. 16 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 130 paperback edition 2004)
- 73 . Robert Middlekauff (1982) *The Glorious Cause* (Oxford U. Pr., pp. 91-93)
- 74 . See especially the discussion around Figure 1 in Spencer Graves (2005) "The Impact of Violent and Nonviolent Action on Constructed Realities and Conflict", "www.prodsyse.com", 2/27/2005.
- 75 . Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Stamp Act Crisis and Its Repercussions, Including the Quartering Act Controversy", ch. 16, in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 133 paperback edition 2004)
- 76 . Douglas Edward Leach (2000) "The British Army in America, before 1775", ch. 18 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 155 in the 2004 paperback edition)
- 77 . Spencer Graves (2005) "The Impact of Violent and Nonviolent Action on Constructed Realities and Conflict", www.prodsyse.com, 2/27/2005.

- 78 . Edmund S. Morgan (1988) *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (NY: Norton, esp. pp. 283-284); Jack N. Rakove (1998) *Declaring Rights: A Brief History with Documents* (NY: Bedford Books)
- 79 . David L. Ammerman (2000) "The Tea Crisis and Its Consequences, through 1775", ch. 24 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 195 in the 2004 paperback edition).
- 80 . David L. Ammerman (2000) "The Tea Crisis and Its Consequences, through 1775", ch. 24 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, p. 197 in the 2004 paperback edition). On 2 Feb. 1774, Franklin, then a lobbyist in London, wrote, "The violent destruction of the tea seems to have united all parties here against us." Walter H. Conser, Jr., Ronald M. McCarthy, David J. Toscano, and Gene Sharp (1986) *Resistance, Politics, and the American Struggle for Independence, 1765-1775* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 222)
- 81 . Robert Middlekauff (1982) *The Glorious Cause* (NY: Oxford, pp. 229-231). Paul Langford (1986) "The British Business Community and the Later Nonimportation Movements, 1786-1776", ch. 7, pp. 278-324, in Walter H. Conser, Jr., et al., eds., *Resistance, Politics, and the American Struggle for Independence, 1765-1775* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner)
- 82 . Walter H. Conser, Jr., et al., eds., *Resistance, Politics, and the American Struggle for Independence, 1765-1775* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, p. 566)
- 83 . Ray Raphael (2004) *Founding Myths: Stories that Hide our Patriotic Past* (NY: The New Press, ch. 12)
- 84 . There seems to be some suggestion that Greene and Washington displayed greater concern with the suffering of civilians than their British and Loyalist opposition, being less inclined to take supplies without payment as the US had in Canada, and thereby winning people's hearts and minds, especially in the South. See, e.g., Ronald Blumer (1997) *Liberty! The American Revolution* (Twin Cities Television, pt. 3, segment 5, "The World Turned Upside Down"), including commentary on Nathanael Greene by Ronald Hoffman, Pauline Maier, George C. Newmann, John Keegan, and others. For more on the war in the South, see Rachel Klein (1985) "Frontier Planters and the American Revolution: The South Carolina Backcountry", pp. 37-69 in Ronald Hoffman, Tand. W. Tats, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA: U. Pr. of VA).
- 85 . Michael A. McDonnell (2000) "Resistance to the American Revolution", ch. 43 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell)
- 86 . Richard M. Fulton, ed. (1981) *The Revolution that Wasn't: A Contemporary Assessment of 1776* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, p. 15)
- 87 . R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution, I. The Challenge* (1959) and *II. The Struggle* (1964; Princeton U. Pr.) Jacques Godechot (1963) *Les Révolutions* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France).
- 88 . Maurice J. Bric (2000) "The American Revolution and Ireland", ch. 62 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell)
- 89 . Kenneth Maxwell (2000) "The Impact of the American Revolution on Spain and Portugal and their Empires", ch. 65 in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (2000) *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell)
- 90 . Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Haiti", pp. 904-909, *Africana* (Basic Civitas Books)
- 91 . Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, vol. 1* (NY: McMillan, sec. 2.2-3, pp. 75-92 in the French edition published by Le Cercle du Livre de France) The evidence is not all one sided. Wade said that the lack of discipline in the colonies further south helped to delay the calling of a colonial assembly.
- 92 . Jerome R. Reich (1998) *British Friends of the American Revolution* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe)
- 93 . Uri Avnery (2003) *Truth Against Truth* (Tel Aviv, Israel: Gush Shalom; www.gush-shalom.org, p. 1).
- 94 . Seymour Martin Lipset (1990) *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (NY: Routledge); Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, vol. 1* (NY: McMillan, sec. 1.4, p. 36 in the French edition published by Le Cercle du Livre de France); Pierre

- Berton (1980) *The Invasion of Canada* (French edition: Montreal: Les Éditions de l'Homme). An activity that may reduce conflict in certain situations is the preparation of a common history. For example, the *Illustrated History of Europe* claims it is the first truly European history. Previously, the French had their history of Europe, which was different from the German history of Europe, both of which were different from the English, Danish, Spanish, Italian, Greek, etc. In the 1980s, a European businessman identified this lack of a common history as an obstacle to the establishment of a strong European identity and to effective collaboration on many issues. To overcome this obstacle, he organized a team of leading historians from all across Europe who produced this book; Frédéric Delouche, ed. (1993) *Illustrated History of Europe: a Unique Portrait of Europe's Common History* (NY: Holt)
- 95 . Ray Raphael (2002) *The First American Revolution* (NY: The Free Press, esp. pp. 1 & 223). Also, as Shaffer noted, historians often “attempt to create a sense of national history that would justify the [horrible losses of war] and develop a sense of nationhood”; Arthur H. Shaffer (1975) *The Politics of History: Writing the History of the American Revolution 1783-1815* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing).
- 96 . Larry Diamond (1999) *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins U. Pr., p. 221).
- 97 . Roger S. Powers and William P. Vogeley (1997) *Protest, Power and Change: An Encyclopedia of Nonviolent Action from ACT-UP to Women's Suffrage* (NY: Garland)
- 98 . Some may argue that one violent struggle or other in Europe, Latin America, Asia or Africa advanced freedom and democracy. However, all such claims would likely be vigorously challenged by widely available historical accounts. Even the American Revolution is not viewed so positively in other parts of the former British Empire, especially in Canada, which provided new homes for many forced to leave the US because of their loyalty to their King.
- 99 . Gene Sharp (1973) *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 3 volumes (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent), esp. ch. 12 in vol. 3 for the principles and vol. 2 for numerous examples.
- 100 . Gene Sharp (1973) *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, 3 volumes (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent), esp. pp. 799-806 in vol. 3; Seymour Martin Lipset (1990) *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (NY: Routledge, p. 109) said, “The emphasis on due process, free speech, and other rights of individuals as superseding the needs of the state for the maintenance of order is severely challenged during wartime. Threats to the very existence of the nation lead governments everywhere to suspend or ignore legal rights. America and Canada have not been exceptions. In the United States, habeas corpus was suspended during the Civil War; free speech was denied opponents of the conflict in World War I, and many, particularly socialists and other radicals, were imprisoned; citizens of Japanese ancestry were placed in concentration camps on both sides of the 40th parallel for no other offense than their national origin; and a wave of intolerance against Communists and other leftists accused of complicity with them, which entered history under the generic name of McCarthyism, swept the United States during the Korean War, a conflict with two Communist states. The courts did little to restrain the authorities, thus revealing the fragility of legal guarantees in the face of wartime hysteria.
- 101 . The experience of the Masonic Lodge during the American Revolution seems to support Sharp's observations. Revauger described how the American Free Masons grew from 100 to 200 lodges (3,000 members) during their Revolution. A few years later in revolutionary France, they collapsed from 650 lodges (35,000 members) to 3. The rituals of Free Masonry provide certain training in democratic governance and civil discourse. In America, “the loyalists little by little left the lodges as they left revolutionary America”, but the lodges apparently retained their civility. In Revolutionary France, however, the fault lines ran much more clearly through each lodge, pitting bourgeois and aristocratic members against each other and shattering the lodges. Marie-Cécile Révauger (1990) “En Amérique et en France: le Franc-Maçon dans la cité”, pp. 17-30 in Élise Merienstras, ed., *l'Amérique et la France: Deux Révolutions* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne).
- 102 . Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy (2000) *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: U. of Penn. Pr., p. 132)
- 103 . www.heritage.nf.ca/law/reform.html accessed 9/18/2004

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- ¹⁰⁴ . Elizabeth Mancke (2004) “The American Revolution in Canada”, ch. 61, esp. p. 507, in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell).
- ¹⁰⁵ . Mason Wade (1955) *The French Canadians, vol. 1* (NY: McMillan, sec. 1.4, p. 36 in the French edition published by Le Cercle du Livre de France)
- ¹⁰⁶ . www.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution4_e.html accessed 9/22/2004.
- ¹⁰⁷ . Elizabeth Mancke (2004) “The American Revolution in Canada”, ch. 61, esp. p. 508, in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell).
- ¹⁰⁸ . Benoît Aubin (2004) “400 Ans Plus Tard Dans les Maritimes”, *L’Actualité*, Sep. 2004, pp. 28-30.
- ¹⁰⁹ . On the Chignecto Isthmus, Nova Scotia, 240 km (150 mi.) Northeast of Maine; formerly Fort Beausejour; www.ccg.ednet.ns.ca/cumb/cumbtwp.htm and www.canadianheritage.org/reproductions/10184.htm; accessed 11/5/2004.
- ¹¹⁰ . Elizabeth Mancke (2004) “The American Revolution in Canada”, ch. 61, esp. pp. 506-507, in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Malden, MA: Blackwell). See also www.blupete.com/Hist/NovaScotiaBk2/Part2/Ch12.htm accessed 9/22/2004.
- ¹¹¹ . Thomas E. Chávez (2002) *Spain and the Independence of the United States: An Intrinsic Gift* (Albuquerque, NM: U. of NM Pr.): Spain started supporting the rebellion late in 1776 with an explicit though secret understanding that they would reclaim Florida (e.g., pp. 30-32). Spanish authorities helped the French plan the attack at Yorktown and worked with the French to capture the Bahamas in 1782, though they were returned to Britain as part of the the peace treaty the following year (ch. 13, pp. 198-212). Chávez said, “without Spain’s involvement, the consequences of the war would have been vastly different.” (p. 213) See also Bob Blythe, “Colbert’s Raid on Arkansas Post: Westernmost Action of the Revolution”, www.nps.gov/revwar/about_the_revolution/colberts_raid.html accessed 9/22/2004