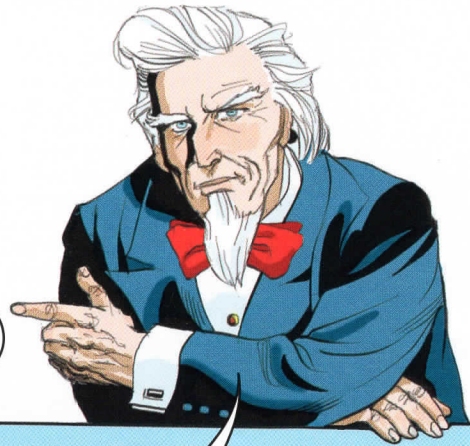


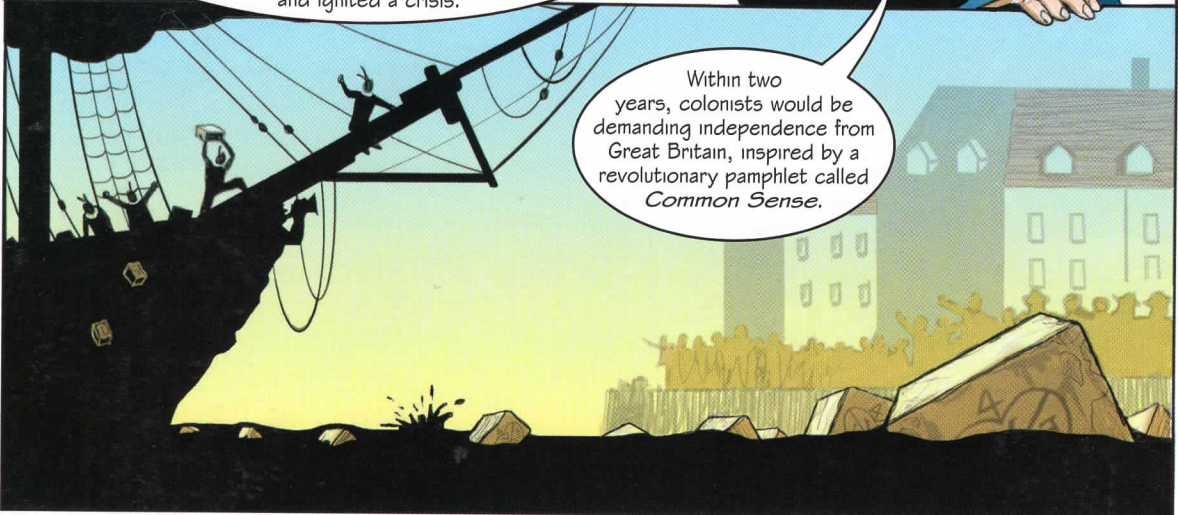
Common Sense

After the repeal of the Stamp Act, colonists expected relations with Great Britain to improve. But they didn't. Instead, in 1767, Britain imposed another series of taxes, called the Townshend Acts. Colonists retaliated with boycotts, protests, and speeches. Again, the British were forced to back down.

Eventually, only one tax remained--a tax on the importation of tea, the colonists' favorite drink. In November 1773, three ships loaded with British tea entered Boston Harbor. On December 16, radical "Sons of Liberty" disguised as Mohawk Indians dumped 342 chests of tea into the harbor and ignited a crisis.



Within two years, colonists would be demanding independence from Great Britain, inspired by a revolutionary pamphlet called *Common Sense*.



House of Commons, London, April 1774. British reaction to the Boston Tea Party was swift.

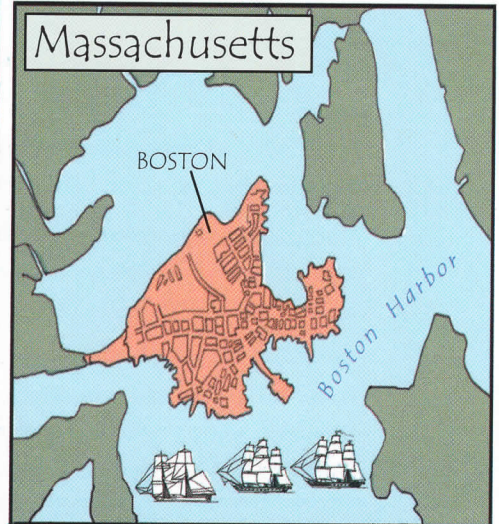
THESE CRIMINALS HAVE DESTROYED VALUABLE PROPERTY!

BOSTON MUST BE PUNISHED.

WE MUST CONTROL THE COLONISTS.

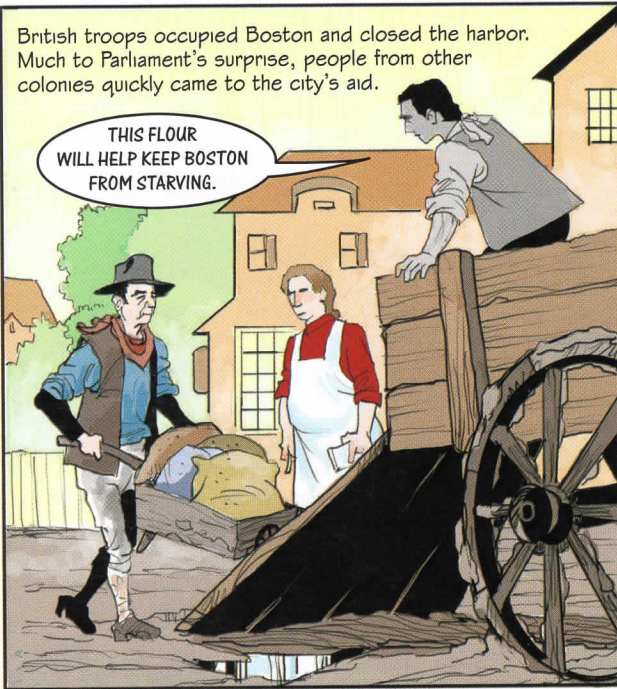


Parliament passed a series of harsh laws called the Coercive Acts. Among other repressive measures, they closed the port of Boston and denied the people of Massachusetts the right to elect their own officials.



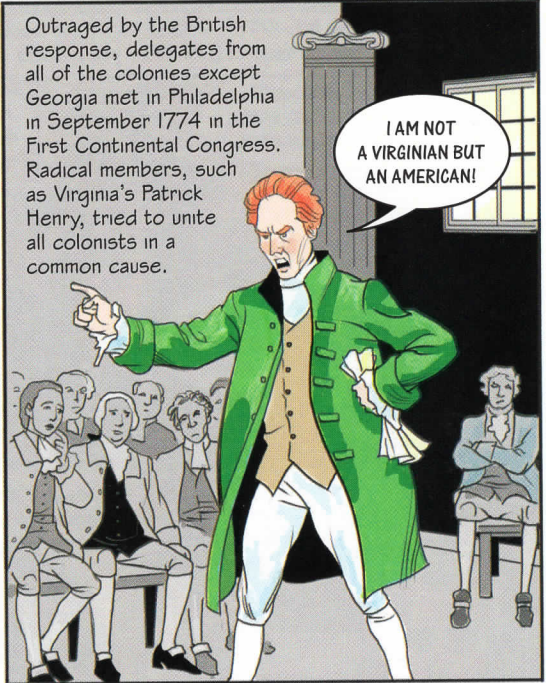
British troops occupied Boston and closed the harbor. Much to Parliament's surprise, people from other colonies quickly came to the city's aid.

THIS FLOUR WILL HELP KEEP BOSTON FROM STARVING.



Outraged by the British response, delegates from all of the colonies except Georgia met in Philadelphia in September 1774 in the First Continental Congress. Radical members, such as Virginia's Patrick Henry, tried to unite all colonists in a common cause.

I AM NOT A VIRGINIAN BUT AN AMERICAN!



More conservative and moderate delegates like New York's John Jay stressed the long-standing ties between Britain and America.

WE ARE BRITISH CITIZENS AND CAN RELY ON THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION TO ASSERT OUR RIGHTS.



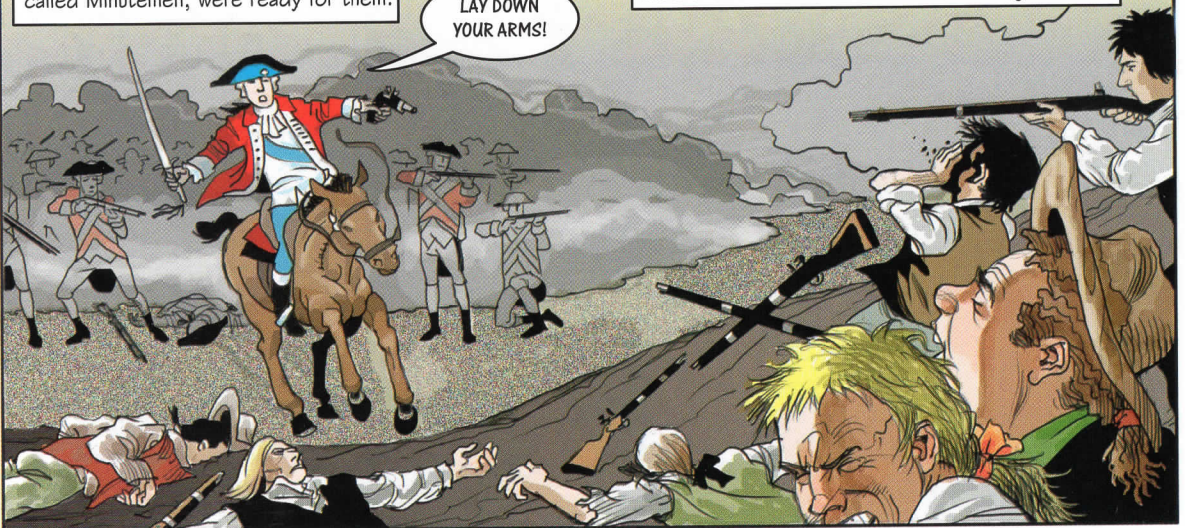
The Congress reached a historic agreement, deciding not to import or buy British goods. Also, each colony was urged to raise a militia for self-defense.



Lexington Common, April 19, 1775. When the British marched out of Boston to capture a colonial store of gunpowder, the Massachusetts militia, called Minutemen, were ready for them.

LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS!

No one knows who fired the first shot. But after a short volley, eight colonists were dead and ten others wounded. The Revolution had begun.



Philadelphia, May 10, 1775. Delegates to the Second Continental Congress were outraged about the carnage in Lexington, yet divided and uncertain of what to do.



THIS BLOODSHED SHOULD BE LAID AT THE FEET OF PARLIAMENT.

YES, HE IS!

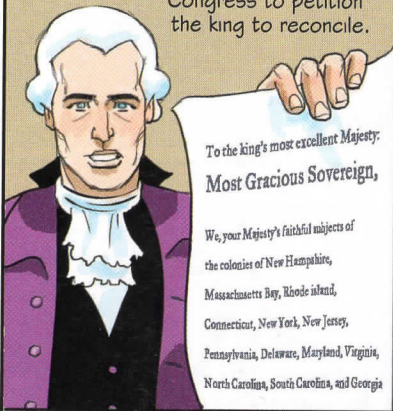
LET US PETITION KING GEORGE HIMSELF TO RESTORE PEACE.

OUR KING IS NOT TO BLAME!

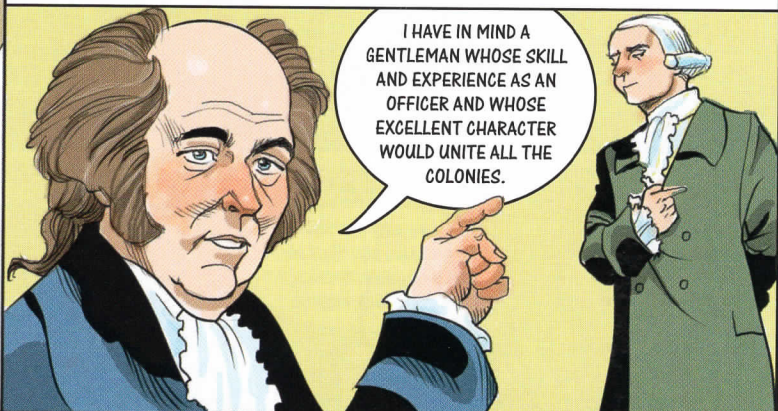
THE TIME FOR PEACE IS PAST! WE MUST DEFEND OURSELVES!

Loyalty to the king was still strong. John Dickinson of Pennsylvania persuaded the Congress to petition the king to reconcile.

However, John Adams of Massachusetts also convinced the delegates to appoint a general to lead the Continental army assembled to defend Boston.



To the king's most excellent Majesty:
Most Gracious Sovereign,
 We, your Majesty's faithful subjects of the colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia



I HAVE IN MIND A GENTLEMAN WHOSE SKILL AND EXPERIENCE AS AN OFFICER AND WHOSE EXCELLENT CHARACTER WOULD UNITE ALL THE COLONIES.

In the next months, the British and the Americans clashed often: in Boston, Maine, and Virginia. By the end of 1775, no one could deny that Britain and America were at war.

Yet the idea of independence remained unpopular. Many of those who had taken up arms still felt part of a loyal protest, not a revolution.



COMMON SENSE;
 ADDRESSED TO THE
INHABITANTS
 OF
A M E R I C A,
 On the following interesting
S U B J E C T S:

- I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.
- II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.
- III. Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs.
- IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

A NEW EDITION, with several Additions in the Body of the Work. To which is added an APPENDIX; together with an Address to the People called QUAKERS.
 N. B. The New Edition here given increases the Work upwards of One-Third.

By **THOMAS PAINE,**

Then a British immigrant named Thomas Paine wrote an electrifying pamphlet that changed the debate forever.

Only 46 pages long, *Common Sense* spoke directly to ordinary Americans.

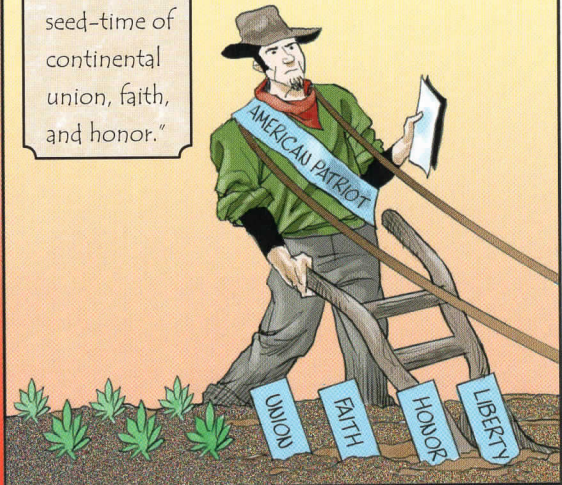
"I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense."

Paine's mission was to convince colonists to make a complete break with Great Britain.

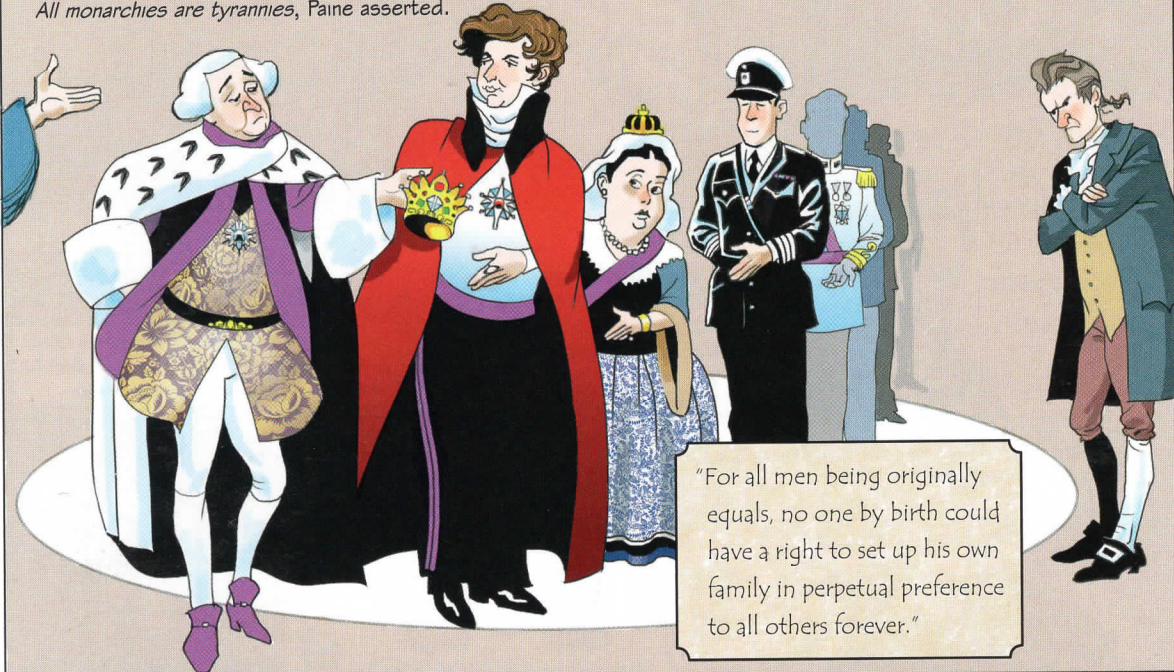


The time for independence had come.

"Now is the seed-time of continental union, faith, and honor."

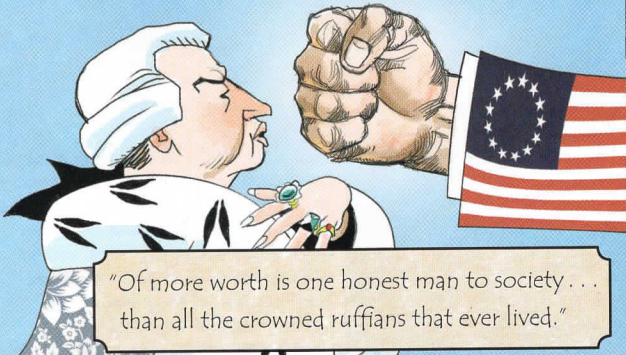


All monarchies are tyrannies, Paine asserted.



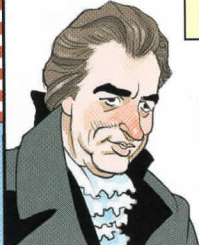
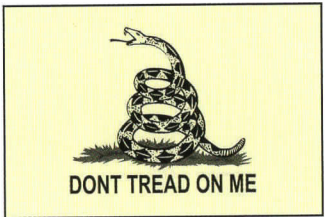
"For all men being originally equals, no one by birth could have a right to set up his own family in perpetual preference to all others forever."

And all monarchs are tyrants--even George III, whom Paine called the "royal brute."



"Of more worth is one honest man to society . . . than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived."

Americans do not owe the king or Great Britain their allegiance, he said.



"A government of our own is our natural right."

The cause of America is the cause of all mankind, Paine insisted.

Common Sense was published on January 10, 1776, and sold briskly. By the end of the year, Americans had bought 500,000 copies.

AS AM I. WOULD YOU CARE FOR MORE LIBERTY TEA?

I AM FOR COMMON SENSE AND INDEPENDENCE!

That same week, a newspaper published King George III's address to Parliament.

"This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe."

THE REBELS ARE NOW IN AN OPEN STATE OF REVOLT, HOSTILITY, AND REBELLION. BLOWS MUST DECIDE THE OUTCOME!

By refusing to accept Dickinson's Olive Branch Petition, the king proved that he was not interested in compromise.

In the spring of 1776, the idea of independence spread from city to town to village.

Americans everywhere understood and were moved by Paine's message: "We have it in our power to begin the world over again." The war for independence was soon at hand. The next fateful step was up to the Continental Congress.



Common Sense was perhaps the most influential publication in American history. It was read by men and women of all social ranks. It has been estimated that by the end of 1776, there was one copy for every five colonists.

Paine called for American independence when the idea was still controversial--and changed the minds of thousands.

He attacked the British monarchy directly, paving the way for Thomas Jefferson's condemnation of King George III in the Declaration of Independence.

Paine called for a republican government elected by the people. He said, "In America *the law is king.*"

EXCERPTS FROM *COMMON SENSE*

"The sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a city, a country, a province, or a kingdom, but of a continent . . . 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected, even to the end of time, by the proceedings now. Now is the seed-time of continental union, faith, and honor . . .

"O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose, not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia, and Africa, have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind."