

*America -
Home of the Brave*
By Maureen Paterson



To my husband who inspires me and helps me see the real value of knowledge.

C O N T E N T S

This is Your Birthright	4
Turbulent Times	5
Resisting Domination	7
Independent Spirit	8
America Rising	10
Tremendous Spirit	12
Incredible Odds	13
A Free Land	14
Preserving Freedom	16
The Torch Burns Brightly	19

THIS IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT!



Figure 1: Coat of Arms of the United States of America

It is difficult to comprehend how much blood, sweat and tears a nation would need to gain independence. Well, let me tell you about a small new country, fighting for its freedom against the world's most powerful nation. This marvelous story is the history of our country and our Founding Fathers. It is full of intrigue, daring and incredible odds and was all done for your benefit. Let's look a little closer at your very own **inheritance!**

Turbulent Times



Figure 2

In 1763, Victory for the British in the French and Indian War was costly. But, in order to help pay for this war, King George III and his government, decided to tax their American colonists. They also wanted to gain more control of them because they had become increasingly independent. Here are some demands they made:

- 1764 - the Sugar Act to help pay for running the American colonies and for the recent French and Indian War.
- 1765 – the Stamp Act to pay for the British military that was in America.
- 1765 – the Quartering Act to house British troops and supply them with food.¹

¹ http://faculty.washington.edu/qtaylor/a_us_history/am_rev_timeline.htm

Then the king and Great Britain decided to tax the colonists' tea. This was too much for the Americans, so they had a Tea Party and dumped the king's tea into Boston Harbor (1773).

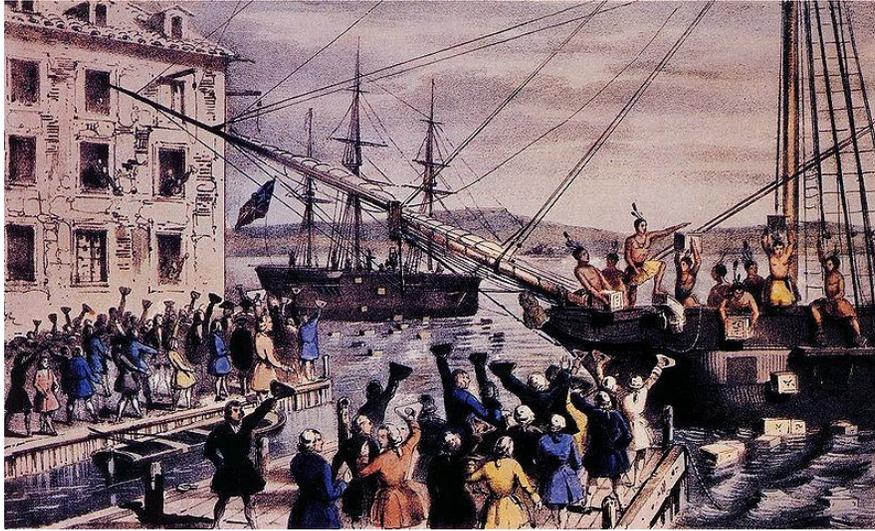


Figure 3

The king became furious and closed down the harbor. He also imposed even more regulations called the Intolerable Acts. In response, the colonists decided to meet in secret in the colony of Philadelphia at the First Continental Congress (1774), to protest these demands.

They did not mind paying taxes, but felt it was only right to have representation in the king's Parliament. They asked if they could send someone from one of their colonies to speak for them in Parliament. They appealed to the king to right the wrong imposed on them. "*We've resolved that Parliament has no power to tax us ... because we aren't represented in Parliament.*"² They felt their basic liberties as humans were being denied and asserted their rights to life, liberty and property.

² http://constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw01_11876.html

They felt this was reasonable “...We hold these truths to be self-evident”.³ But, the king refused to understand. He refused to allow their voices to be heard and felt they were being disloyal. The colonists planned for a second Continental Congress to consider further steps.

Resisting Domination

Meanwhile, Virginia’s representatives pledged supplies and support for Boston when their harbor was closed. They purposed a day of prayer in support of Boston and at their second Virginia Convention of 1775, one member Patrick Henry, said, “If we wish to be free.....we must fight! God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”⁴

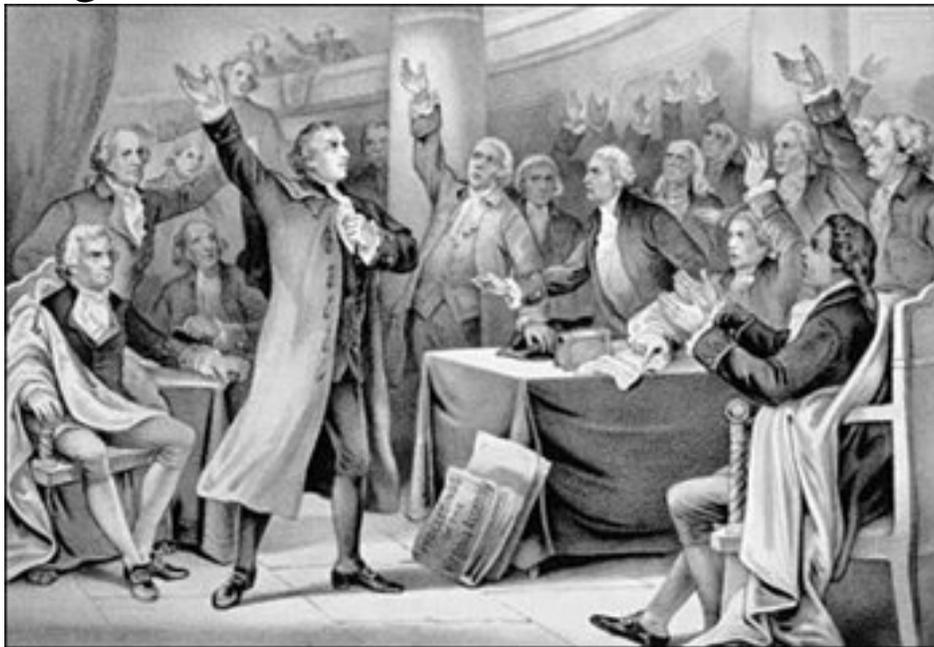


Figure 4

³ *Quotes from the Declaration of Independence:*
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html

⁴ <http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/henry-liberty.html>

They then knew what they must do. They needed to write a document that would declare their Independence from their King. It was daring and was a path from which they could not turn back. Even if it meant tremendous danger, they felt a strong **responsibility** to their colonies.

Independent Spirit



Figure 5

This sense of **responsibility** grew from a seed that had been planted in their hearts. Our forefathers had immigrated to a new world where their success in life was not determined by the class they were born into. Instead it was a result of working hard for their dreams and owning their own property.

There were no lords or masters on the frontier. For the first time, they tasted real freedom, and believed “**that all men are created equal.**” They had established their own local

government in which they were represented and realized “**that Governments are instituted among Men**”.⁵ They had tasted the sweetness of independence.



Figure 6

Now, the king wanted to take this Freedom away. He did not want them to be represented in his government. He wanted them to pay taxes without listening to their opinions. This was what we call **taxation without representation**.



Figure 7

⁵ *Quotes from the Declaration of Independence:*
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html

America Rising



Figure 8

At the second Continental Congress of 1775 in Philadelphia, each one of our Founders represented their own colony. They realized that if they accepted **taxation without representation**, it would affect everyone that they represented. They felt very responsible to their colony and did not want this **tyranny** for them and their descendants.



Figure 9

But was it worth war, perhaps death, and loss of their home? After much trepidation and debate back and forth, our forefathers voted Yes! They chose to fight for freedom, whatever the cost!

“That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States,...that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights,”⁶



Figure 10

With strong hearts and clear minds, they composed a letter about their grievances to **“let Facts be submitted to a candid world.”**

In the letter they wrote of their numerous requests and pleas to be heard **“for the public good.”** They explained their **“unalienable Rights”**, and their basic needs for **“Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”**. Since their many requests had been ignored, they emphasized their decision, as colonists, to break the ties with their mother country – **“to dissolve the political bands.”**

⁶ *Ibid.*

Tremendous Spirit

“When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another....”⁷



Figure 11

Then each representative courageously and solemnly stepped forward and signed this manuscript – the Declaration of Independence. They would now be labeled traitors and it would result in a death sentence. Yet, believing steadfastly in their decision, they had a “**...firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence,**”⁸



Figure 12



Figure 13

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

More importantly, it was the one of the most courageously brilliant and cherished documents of all time. It declared their independence from their king and their resolve for their new country.

Now, they were committed down the road to Liberty despite alarming risk. Perhaps you are familiar with the American Revolution. Then, you know how difficult their struggle was.

Incredible Odds

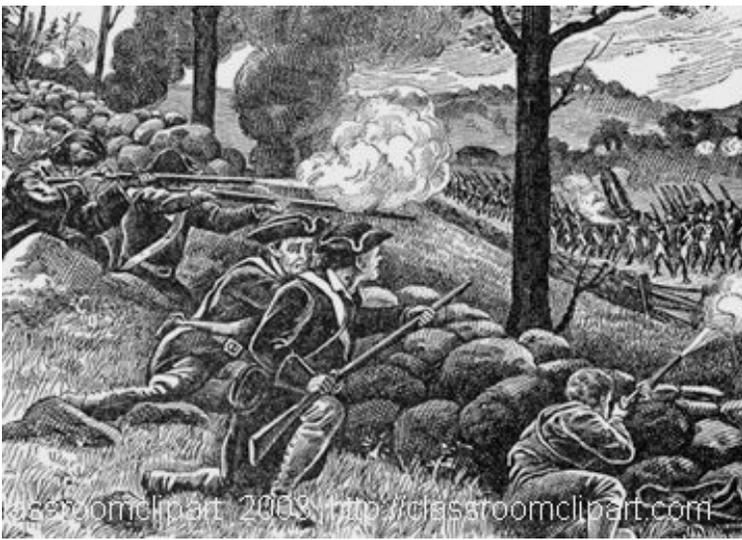


Figure 14

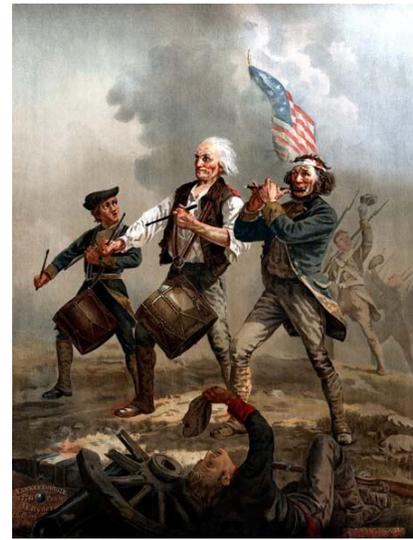


Figure 15

Almost immediately the repercussions were felt. British soldiers were dispatched to bring in the traitors. If they were captured, they would meet a slow and painful death. They were at war with Great Britain, the greatest army of that era. This rebellion of England's colonists were attacked with incredible force. Americans were colonists no more. They had a country of their own to defend for freedom!



Figure 16

Even though this path of freedom that they chose was dangerous, they were committed to it. They endured freezing winters often with no jackets or shoes, very little food, disease, and many hardships. And their Commander in Chief, George Washington, inspired them with his bravery and leadership. They fought on courageously because their cause came from their hearts.

A Free Land

Listen to these words of one of our Founding Fathers.

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

~Thomas Paine



Figure 17

Many did die during the Revolution and many lost their homes and fortunes. But, not one of our Founding Fathers ever regretted their commitment to this great cause. “...we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor”⁹

After six long tortuous years, in 1781, the British surrendered in Yorktown Virginia and victory for independence was secured! The world heard the news with disbelief. A rag tag army beat the greatest army in the world? Yes! The United States of America was proudly born.



Figure 18

⁹ Ibid.

Preserving Freedom

I wish I could say that it all ended happily ever after. But, after a few years of our freedom, troubles came again. Great Britain once again tried to invade, and our Founding Fathers realized that the United States was not strong enough. The states kept quarreling amongst themselves. We needed a stronger federal government to unite us, but not too powerful to oppress us like Great Britain had done. This balance was tricky. Our freedom would constantly need to be protected against **tyranny**. We needed to create a united shield.



Figure 19

Our Founding Fathers, at the Constitutional Convention (1787), once more came together to try to solve this problem. Some of our most intelligent and dedicated citizens in American History committed themselves to this cause. Each represented their own state and had their own ideas. There was often conflict between them. Yet, after much debate, research and diligent work, they were able to cooperate and meet each other half-way in creating the **United States Constitution**.



Figure 20

It was the first time ever, that a country had a federal government that so closely represented the people. The Constitution was like a guiding hand for this **Republic**. It laid out rules to follow in keeping the federal government from becoming authoritarian like King George III. The Constitution would provide a sense of direction and organization for the government.

“Among the chief points at issue were how much power to allow the central government, how many representatives in Congress to allow each state, and how these representatives should be elected--directly by the people or by the state legislators. The work of many minds, the Constitution stands as a model of cooperative statesmanship and the art of compromise.”¹⁰

¹⁰ <http://archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html>

By following the Constitution, the three branches of the federal government would be able to keep checks on each other and themselves. It defines both the individual and combined powers of its three branches: the President as head of the **Executive Branch**, the house of Representative and Senate that comprise the **Legislative Branch** and the Supreme Court as head of the **Judicial Branch**. The specific freedoms for individuals were spelled out more specifically in the Bill of Rights.

Here are some of the civil liberties that it defines:

- Freedom of Religion
- Freedom of Speech
- Freedom to Media Access
- Freedom of Assembly
- Freedom of Petition
- Right to possess firearms
- Right to question arrests and property seizures, without a warrant
- Right to a public trial for crimes
- Right to question excessive bail or unusual punishment

The **Constitution** laid out clear laws to follow in order to preserve these liberties. ¹¹This new form of government was called a **Republic** and would be the united shield. Our Founding Fathers warned that it needed to be constantly maintained with vigilance. Involved citizens would need to be the armor that protected our **Constitution** and our **Republic**.

“...I read it (the Constitution) with great satisfaction, as the result of good heads prompted by good hearts, as an experiment better adapted to the genius, character, situation, and relations of this nation and country than any which had ever been proposed..... What other form of government, indeed, can so well deserve our esteem and love?” ~ John Adams

¹¹ <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/what-is-the-purpose-of-the-constitution-of-united-states.html>

The Torch Burns Brightly

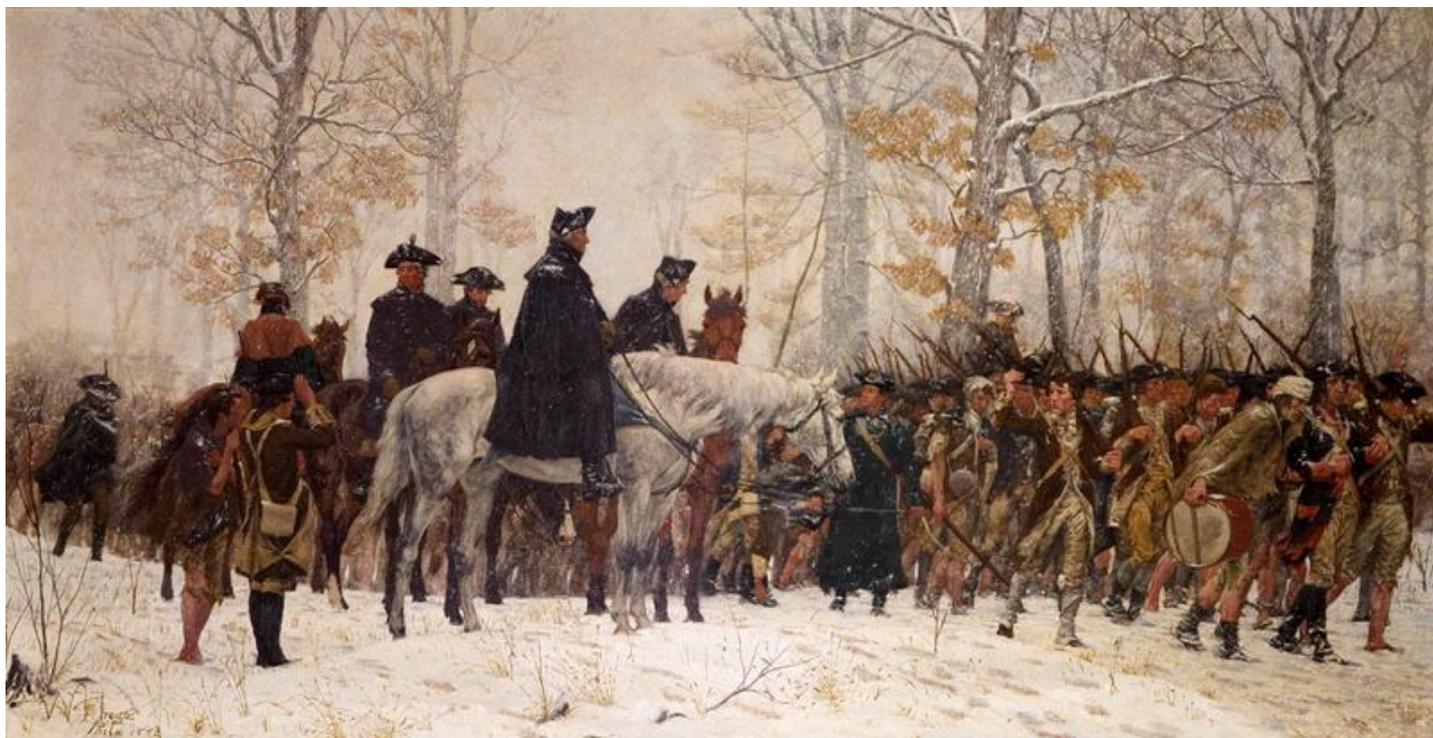


Figure 21

Wasn't this an amazing story of bravery and persistence? Now that you know more about your **birthright**, will you stand firm and vigilant and protect this shield? When you get distracted, just recall this amazing story and remember – preserving your freedom is now up to you! You are the armor that can preserve **your freedom**.

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.”

~ Ronald Reagan



Figure 22

Here are just a few suggestions for Preserving Your Constitutional Shield:

- 1. Attend and be involved in local Town Boards, City Councils and School Boards.*
- 2. Educate yourself and stay informed!*
- 3. Watch, listen, and think critically.*
- 4. Speak out when you see freedom threatened.*
- 5. Hold politicians accountable.*
- 6. Choose what YOU will do to preserve your freedom.*

“Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.”¹² ~ James Madison

¹²http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/james_madison.html?gclid=CPKQlsDG6a8CFSQCQAodV0354A



How Well Do You Remember?

- 1. What came first, the First Continental Congress or the Virginia Convention?*
- 2. Who said the famous words, “...give me liberty or give me death!”?*
- 3. What is it called when someone demands you to pay taxes but won't let you be represented in their government?*
- 4. Can you name some of the basic needs our Founding Fathers wrote about?*
- 5. What was the name of the document that declared our founders independence from the King?*
- 6. Who said these famous words, “These are the times that try men's soul.....”?*
- 7. Who was the Commander in Chief that inspired the colonists during the American Revolution?*
- 8. What did the signers of the Declaration pledge?*
- 9. What was the name of the convention where our Founding Fathers created the U.S. Constitution?*
- 10. What type of government was our government called?*
- 11. Who is so important in preserving our Freedom?*

Answers

1. *First Continental Congress*
2. *Patrick Henry*
3. *Taxation without Representation*
4. *Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.*
5. *Declaration of Independence*
6. *Thomas Paine*
7. *George Washington*
8. *Their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.*
9. *Constitutional Convention*
10. *A Republic*
10. *Ourselves*

Sources for Pictures

Cover and page 21: <http://publicdomainclip-art.blogspot.com/2007/08/statue-of-liberty.html>

Department of Interior Disclaimer: Information presented on this website is considered public information and may be distributed or copied. Use of appropriate byline, photo, image credit is requested. Ownership - Information presented on this website, unless otherwise indicated, is considered in the public domain. It may be distributed or copied as is permitted by the law.

Figure 1: Arms of the United States of America. Public Domain. Issued from Bufford's Print Publishing House, 313 Washington St., Boston, c1864

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arms_of_the_United_States_of_America.jpg

Figure 2: [Edward Savage](#) and/or [Robert Edge Pine](#), [Congress Voting Independence](#), Historical Society of Pennsylvania, via the [US Library of Congress](#), June 2011, Public Domain.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Congress_voting_independence.jpg

Figure 3: "The Destruction of Tea at Boston Harbor", lithograph depicting the 1773 [Boston Tea Party](#). Author: [Nathaniel Currier](#): Public Domain. <http://www.octc.kctcs.edu/mmaltby/his108/Boston%20Tea%20Party.jpg>

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/52/Boston_Tea_Party_Currier_colored.jpg

Figure 4: Patrick Henry: <http://www.freeclipartnow.com/history/american-history/revolution/historical-figures/Patrick-Henry-Give-Me-Liberty-or-Give-Me-Death.jpg.html>

Figure 5: Free Classroom Clipart: http://classroomclipart.com/clipart-view/History/United_States/Colonial_America/Colonial%20Life/PSA2_253b_jpg.htm

Figure 6: File: George III of the United Kingdom-e.jpg. Image Credit: Public Domain, Image Source Page:

ftp://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George_III_of_the_United_Kingdom-e.jpg

Figure 7: Markham, Richard. *Colonial Days: Being Stories and Ballads for Young Patriots*. New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1881. <http://ushistoryimages.com/stamp-act.shtm>

Figure 8: Declaration-of-Independence:

<http://www.freeclipartnow.com/history/american-history/revolution/Declaration-of-Independence.jpg.html>

Figure 9: Patriotic Art: <http://www.ace-clipart.com/patriotic-clipart-art-01.html>

Figure 10: Trumbull, John. Signing of the Declaration of Independence 1786-87. Painting ID: CL-2500-KA Style: [Victorian, Neoclassism](#) (Detail) John Trumbull (1756-1843 American) Oil on canvas Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, USA

<http://www.superstock.com/stock-photos-images/463-6352>

Figure 11: <http://samuelatgilgal.files.wordpress.com/2008/07/constitution-signing.jpg>

Figure 12: Praying Hands: Public Domain.

http://www.wpclipart.com/religion_mythology/praying/praying_hands.png.html

Figure 13: Scroll: <http://www.freeclipartnow.com/history/american-history/revolution/Declaration-of-Independence-scroll.jpg.html>

Figure 14: Free Classroom Clipart: http://classroomclipart.com/clipart-view/History/United_States/Colonial_America/AC5_072BW_jpg.htm

Figure 15: Public Domain. Spirit of '76: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sprit_of_%2776.2.jpeg

Figure 16: Prayer at Valley Forge: <http://www.ace-clipart.com/american-history-photos-01.html>

Figure 17: Public Domain:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Washington_Crossing_the_Delaware_by_Emanuel_Leutze,_MMA-NYC,_1851.jpg

Figure 18: Betsy Ross' flag first flew with the reading of the Declaration of Independence at Independence Hall on July 8, 1776. http://www.wpclipart.com/American_History/civil_war/Betsy_Ross.png.html

Figure 19: Betsy Ross Flag: http://www.wpclipart.com/flags/historic/usa_betsy_ross_historic.png.html

Figure 20: Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scene_at_the_Signing_of_the_Constitution_of_the_United_States.png

Figure 21: Public Domain: Painting depicting George Washington leading the Continental Army to Valley Forge in 1777. Author - William B. T. Trego (1858-1909)

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_March_to_Valley_Forge_William_Trego.png

Figure 22: <http://www.ace-clipart.com/american-flag-clipart-01.html>

