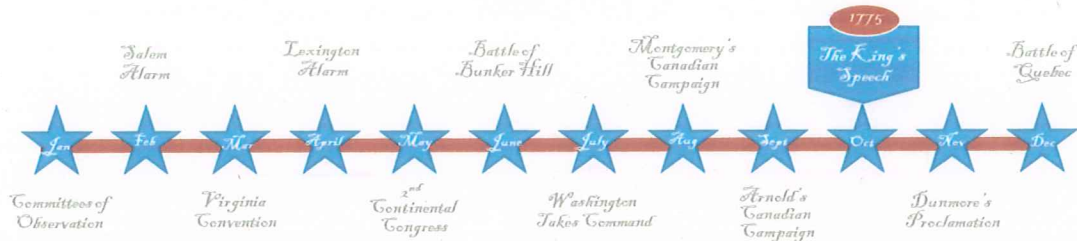


Passport Through Time

250 Years Ago

October 1775



King George's Speech

News of the conflicts at Lexington and Concord, the Battle of Bunker Hill, and the besieged British Army in Boston reached London throughout the summer of 1775. King George III was outraged by these humiliations in his North American colonies. When the Continental Congress's "Olive Branch Petition" pledging loyalty to the crown and requesting reconciliation arrived in London, the king refused to read it. Instead, he issued a proclamation on August 23 declaring the North American colonies to be in "open and avowed rebellion."

On October 26, King George made a blistering speech to Parliament. "[T]o be a subject of Great Britain," stated the king to the members of Parliament, "is to be the freest member of any civil society in the known world." Because Great Britain had established its North American colonies "with great industry, nursed [them] with great tenderness, ... and protected and defended [them] at much expense of blood and treasure," he predicted their rebellion would have "fatal effects." He stated his firm intention to commit British land and naval forces, as well as foreign mercenaries, to force the colonies into submission.

Vigorous debate followed the king's contentious speech. Despite grave concerns expressed by the Marquis of Rockingham, the Earl of Sherburne, and the Duke of Grafton, opposition to the king's proposal was defeated in the House of Lords by a vote of 69 to 29. Debate in the House of Commons was even more extensive. However, several hours of opposing arguments made by John Wilkes, George Johnstone, Edmund Burke, and Charles James Fox failed to persuade their colleagues. Opposition was defeated in the House of Commons by a vote of 278 to 108. The British government had declared war on its own colonies in North America.



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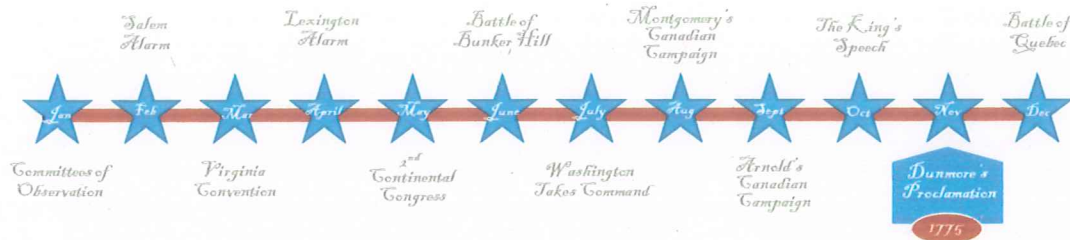
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Passport Through Time

250 Years Ago

November 1775



Lord Dunmore's Proclamation

Royal governors across Great Britain's North American colonies watched with horror as Patriots form their own "extra-legal" provincial governments and raise local militias. Virginia's royal governor John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, was so fearful of Patriot attacks that he fled his palace in Williamsburg and took refuge on the British warship ship HMS *Fowey* anchored in the York River. Patriots broke into Dunmore's abandoned palace and confiscated guns and swords displayed in the foyer.

On November 7, 1775, Dunmore issued an inflammatory proclamation. He declared the Colony of Virginia to be under martial law and required everyone "capable of bearing arms" to join the British Army. Failure to do so would be punishable by "forfeiture of life" and "confiscation of lands."

The proclamation also offered freedom to enslaved people owned by Patriots in Virginia in exchange for military service. "I do hereby farther declare," read the proclamation, "all indented servants, Negroes, or others (appertaining to rebels) free, that are able and willing to bear arms, they joining his Majesty's troops." By December, 300 enslaved people escaped and joined the British Army.

Despite the fact that African American Patriots had fought valiantly at the Battles of Lexington & Concord and Bunker Hill, Washington and the Continental Congress had forbidden the enlistment of new African American soldiers in the Continental Army. Dunmore's proclamation changed their position.



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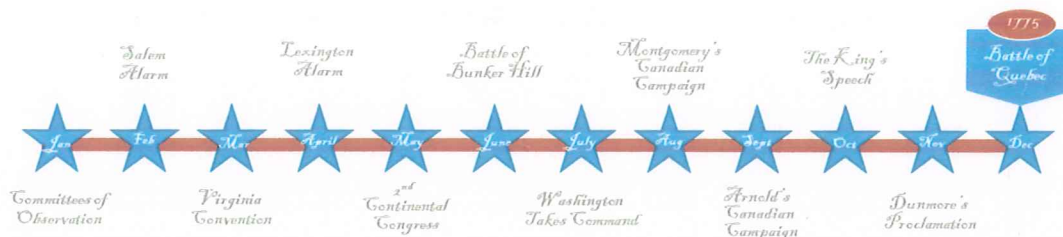
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Passport Through Time

250 Years Ago

December 1775



The Battle of Quebec

Thirteen British colonies in North America had united in protest of Britain's rule and had trapped the British Army in a siege of Boston. However, five colonies had remained loyal to the British crown and refused to send delegates to the Continental Congress: Quebec, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, East Florida, and West Florida.

As the siege wore on during the summer of 1775, the Continental Congress and General Washington considered options to encourage the Canadian colonies to join the Patriot cause. They developed what would be known as the Canadian Campaign, designed to enlist the help of these colonies and eliminate a critical route through which British reinforcements could invade New England.

Washington sent two forces, one led by Colonel Benedict Arnold and the other by Brigadier General Richard Montgomery, to Canada via different routes. On December 2, 1775, these forces convened on the St. Laurence River at Quebec City. With combined troops now numbering 1,100, the two leaders surrounded the city and developed a plan of attack.

The American forces launched their attack on December 31, just as an intense snowstorm began. The blizzard conditions blinded the Patriot soldiers and jammed their guns. Montgomery was killed and Arnold was wounded in the first assault. General Daniel Morgan assumed command but was forced to surrender. He and 400 Patriots were captured and taken prisoner. The ill-fated Canadian Campaign would continue through spring 1776 but would ultimately end in failure for the Americans.



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