BERMUDA,BRITAIN & AMERICA

VISIT & LEARN MORE

The American Revolution was more than a struggle between Britain and its colonies. It was an Atlantic story involving merchants, sailors, soldiers, families and communities throughout the region.

Bermuda's strategic location, maritime networks, and influential families placed the island at the centre of events that helped shape the modern world.

As the United States marks the 250th anniversary of its independence, Bermuda's role offers a fascinating reminder that history is rarely confined by national borders.

To learn more, visit Globe Museum in St George's and Verdmont Museum in Smith's Parish. Built around 1700, both historic houses stood during the Revolutionary era and offer a glimpse into eighteenth-century Bermuda life and history.

REVOLUTIONARY TIMELINE

KEY DATES

1609
Sea Venture is wrecked on Bermuda while sailing to Jamestown, Virginia.

1775
George Washington appeals to Bermudians for support.

14 August 1775
More than 100 barrels of gunpowder are removed from the Powder Magazine in St George's in what became known as the Gunpowder Plot.

1776
The Declaration of Independence is adopted.

1783
The Treaty of Paris ends the Revolutionary War.

2026
America 250 commemorates the 250th anniversary of American Independence.

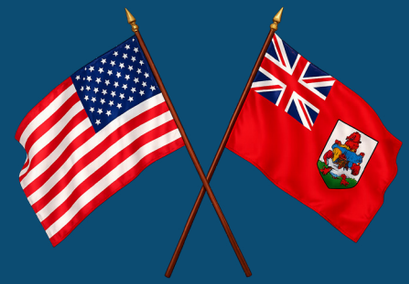
THE BERMUDA NATIONAL TRUST

Bermuda National Trust

Protecting and promoting Bermuda's unique natural and cultural heritage.

For everyone, forever.

Tel: (441) 236-6483
Email: palmetto@bnt.bm
Website: www.bnt.bm
@bermudanationaltrust
@BdaNatlTrust
@BermudaNationalTrust



BERMUDA & THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

How a small Atlantic island helped shape the birth of a nation

1775–1783

Discover the island's connections to the American Revolution during the 250th Anniversary of American Independence

A REVOLUTION ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

From Jamestown to Independence

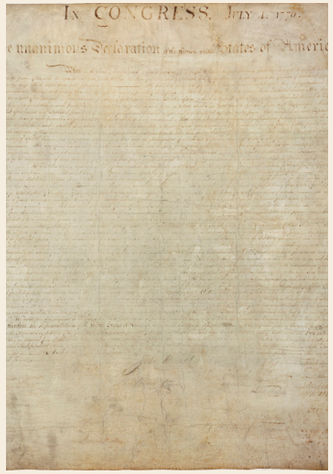
In 1776, thirteen British colonies declared their independence from Great Britain. The American Revolution transformed the Atlantic world and led to the creation of the United States.

The roots of these colonies stretched back to the early 1600s, when England established permanent settlements in North America on lands long inhabited by Indigenous Peoples.

Bermuda was closely linked to this process from the beginning. In 1609, the ship *Sea Venture*, bound for the struggling English colony of Jamestown in Virginia, was wrecked on Bermuda's reefs. The survivors spent ten months on the island before continuing to Virginia, helping ensure the survival of England's first permanent colony in the homelands of the Powhatan peoples.

Bermuda's Atlantic Connections

Although Bermuda remained British, the island maintained strong trade, family, and political connections with North America. Many Bermudians had relatives in the American colonies and depended on North America for food and supplies.


IN CONGRESS. JULY 4, 1776.

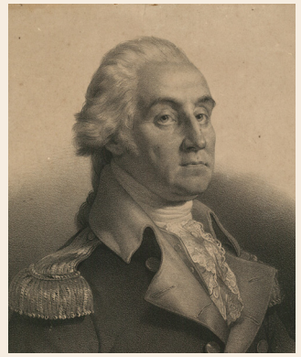
Declaration of Independence, 1776. National Archives.

As tensions grew Bermudians followed events with great interest. Some island residents even played direct roles in supporting the American cause.

Bermuda's role reminds us that world-changing events are often shaped far beyond the battlefield.

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

Washington's Appeal



One of Bermuda's most famous Revolutionary stories took place on the night of 14 August 1775.

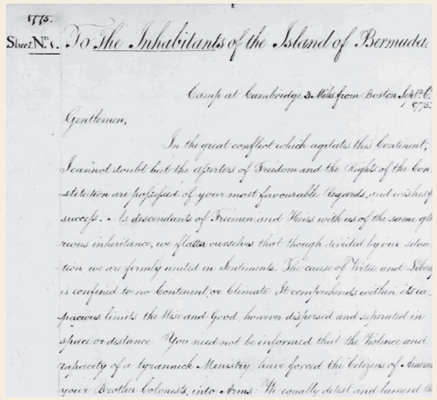
At the time, American forces faced a critical shortage of gunpowder. Earlier that year, George Washington had written to the people of Bermuda seeking assistance and offering friendship and trade in return.

A Midnight Mission

Soon afterwards, a group of sympathetic Bermudians secretly removed more than 100 barrels of gunpowder from the King's Powder Magazine in St George's and arranged for it to be delivered to the Americans.

The daring operation was carried out under cover of darkness and without bloodshed. The Continental Congress later praised Bermuda's assistance, and American leaders hinted that Bermuda might enjoy special trading privileges if it supported their cause.

Today, the Gunpowder Plot remains one of Bermuda's most remarkable Revolutionary stories.


1775.
Sheet N°. 1. To the Inhabitants of the Island of Bermuda.

Camp at Cambridge 3 Miles from Boston, July 6th 1775.

Gentlemen,

In the great conflict which agitates this Continent, I cannot doubt but the liberties of Freedom and the Rights of the Con-stitution are hospitable of your most favourable Regards, and wishes success. . . As descendants of Freemen and Heirs with us of the same glorious inheritance, we flatter ourselves that, though divided by our Situation we are firmly united in Sentiments. The cause of Virtue and Liberty is confined to no Continent or Climate. It comprehends within it's spacious limits the Wise and Good, however dispersed and separated in place or distance. You need not be informed that the Violence and Tyranny of a Tyrannick Ministry have forced the Colonies of America your Brother Colonists, into Arms. We cordially detest and lament the

Letter to the Inhabitants of Bermuda from George Washington, 1775. Library of Congress.

THE TUCKER FAMILY CONNECTION

Among Bermuda's most influential families were the Tuckers, whose members maintained close ties with the American colonies.

Merchants, politicians, military officers, landowners, and enslavers, the Tuckers were closely connected to events shaping the Atlantic world. Their wealth and influence were linked to networks of trade and systems of enslavement that connected Bermuda to Britain, Africa, the Caribbean and North America.

A Family Divided

Colonel Henry Tucker (1742–1818), a prominent merchant and later President of Bermuda, played a significant role in the island's complex relationship with the American colonies during the Revolution, including the 1775 Gunpowder Plot.

Those divided loyalties extended even to his own family. Henry Tucker was married to **Frances Bruere**, daughter of **Governor George Bruere,** Bermuda's wartime governor and a steadfast Loyalist. While Tucker is closely associated with support for the American cause, his father-in-law remained fiercely loyal to the British Crown. Their family reflects the competing allegiances that shaped Bermuda's place between Britain and the American colonies during the Revolutionary War.

Bermudians in the New Nation

The Tucker family's influence extended far beyond Bermuda. **St. George Tucker** became a Continental Army officer, distinguished Virginia jurist, and legal scholar, while **Thomas Tudor Tucker** served in the Continental Congress and later as Treasurer of the United States. Their careers demonstrate Bermuda's lasting contribution to the new nation.

THE LEGACY OF TUCKER HOUSE

Located within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Historic Town of St George and its Related Fortifications, Tucker House is also a recognised site on Bermuda's African Diaspora Heritage Trail. Together, these designations reflect the property's significance in telling the interconnected stories of Bermuda's colonial past, enslavement and emancipation, and its enduring connections to the wider Atlantic world.

Reimagining Tucker House

Today, Tucker House is temporarily closed while BNT undertakes a major conservation project on the Grade 1 listed building and reimagines the historic house museum.
The renewed museum will explore Bermuda's connections to the American Revolution, the American Civil War, Reconstruction, and the wider Atlantic world through the lives of the Tucker family, Joseph and Susan Rainey, and the many other people who lived and worked at Tucker House.

Joseph and Susan Rainey

A major focus of the reimagined museum will be **Joseph Hayne Rainey** (**1832–1887**), the first African American elected to the United States House of Representatives, and his wife, **Susan Rainey**. During the American Civil War, they fled South Carolina for Bermuda, where Joseph operated a barber shop from the detached kitchen building at Tucker House before returning to the United States and becoming a leading figure of Reconstruction.

Through the stories of the Tucker family, the Raineys, and many others, the reimagined museum will explore Bermuda's connections to the American Revolution, the United States Civil War and Reconstruction, and the wider Atlantic world.