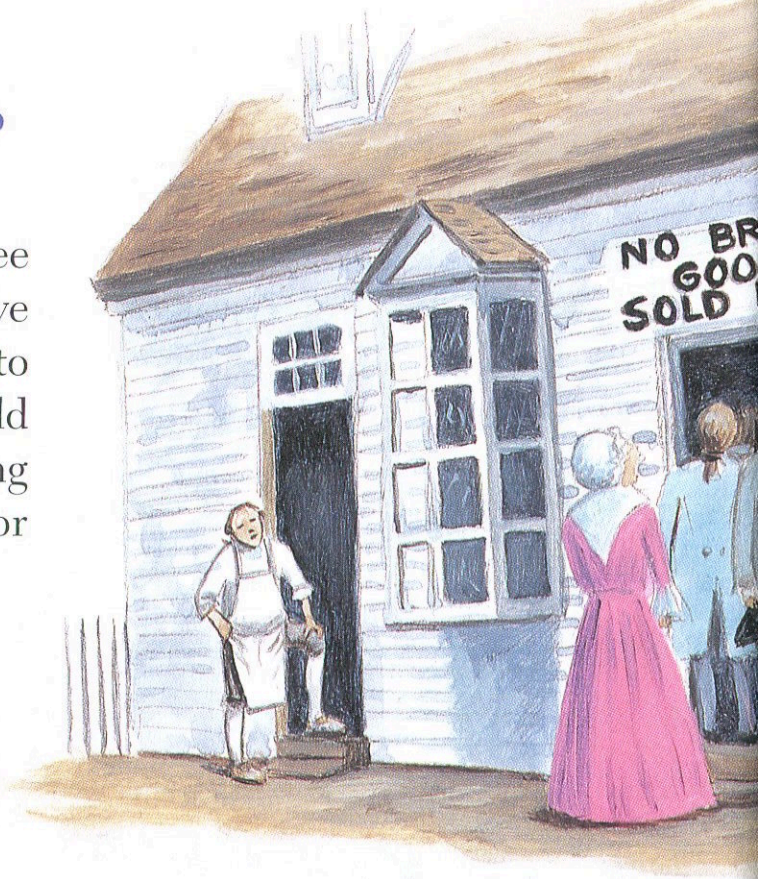



## *How could you tell who was a Patriot?*

Most towns had a “committee of safety” made up of twelve men. Patriots would swear to the committee that they would no longer support or obey King George, or any soldiers or citizens of England.



An illustration of a white wooden building with a brown roof and a bay window. A wooden barrel is in the foreground. The style is a soft, painterly illustration.

But just their word wasn't enough. Each man had to bring in two or three other men (called "friends of freedom") to back him up. If the committee believed the promise, the Patriot was given a pass. Men needed passes to travel safely through areas where the Patriots were strong. Women and children needed passes if they were traveling alone.

Patriots who owned businesses advertised that they would not stock British goods. Others refused to shop at stores that sold British items. They stopped drinking tea as a sign of loyalty. They drank coffee or "liberty tea" (brewed from strawberry, raspberry, mint, or other kinds of leaves) instead.

Patriots called themselves “Americans” as well as “Virginians” or “New Englanders.” If you saw a man wearing a medal with a picture of a tree on it, you knew he was a member of the Sons of Liberty, a group of Patriots well known throughout the colonies. Many towns had a “Liberty Tree” (it might be a real tree, or just a pole) where Patriots met to talk and plan.

The number 13 was important to the Patriots because there were thirteen colonies. It was often used as a signal. Some women wore their hair in thirteen curls as a sign of support for the Patriots.



After the Declaration of Independence was adopted in 1776, Patriot families celebrated the Fourth of July as a holiday. Towns planned a day of festivities including gun salutes, patriotic speeches, dances, sporting events, bell ringing, bonfires, and illuminations (lighted candles in the windows of the houses).

People sang songs about the leaders of the American and British armies. Two popular songs were “War and Washington,” and “General Burgoyne’s Surrender,” about a British officer who lost a major battle at Saratoga, New York, in 1777.

Sometimes a fireworks display would end with a burst of thirteen rockets.

