How did you get news about the war and what was happening in the other colonies?

Getting news was important to the Patriots even before the war began. Each colony had set up a "committee of correspondence," who hired its own riders to carry messages by horseback. (This was long before the telephone, radio, television, or even the telegraph had been invented.)

Messages were delivered from one town to the next until all colonies received the news.

Sometimes, information was sent by ship instead of overland.

After the war began, the committees of correspondence

formed "committees of safety." Their riders were constantly in danger of being captured by the British.

Children were sometimes used as messengers. One young messenger was nine-year-old John Quincy Adams, who later became the sixth president of the United States. He took messages from his mother, Abigail, in Braintree, Massachusetts, to his father, John, in Boston.

Another way to find out the news was from a newspaper. The *Boston Gazette* and the *South Carolina Gazette* were two papers that reported news with a Patriot view. The *Royal Gazette* (New York) was the best known of the Loyalist newspapers.

Most newspapers were printed only once a week and had four pages, with three columns on each page.

In small towns a "town crier," sometimes a schoolboy, might share news aloud. As more and more people learned to read, there was less need to have a town crier.

Pamphlets and books were also printed. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* had sent the idea of freedom throughout the colonies when it was published in January of 1776. It was often re-read and shared during the war. On the last page in bold letters were the words, **"THE FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES OF AMERICA."**

As thousands of people read the forty-seven pages, they saw themselves as the "United States."

More news could be found on posters, called broadsides, that were nailed to trees, poles, and buildings. Broadsides were used to get men to join the army and for various public announcements.