

## *Who were the Patriots?*

In the beginning, the Patriots were the people in the colonies who wanted England to remove taxes. But soon the word “liberty” was being heard. The Patriots no longer wanted to be “British Americans” — they just wanted to be “Americans.” They supported the Continental Congress as a way to rule themselves. They started thinking of themselves as the “United Colonies.”

Patriots were known by many names including “Rebels,” “Liberty Boys,” “Sons (or Daughters) of Liberty,” “Colonials,” and “Whigs.” About one-third of the people living in the thirteen colonies were Patriots.

When war broke out, the “Continental Army” was formed with men from the colonies and a few men from Canada. Most Native Americans were on the British side, but some tribes helped the Patriots.

The Patriots enlisted slaves to fight for them after England had already taken on thousands of African-American soldiers. Although more blacks joined the

British army, it is thought that about five thousand fought for the Patriots. Since slaves did not have last names, many gave themselves names such as “Liberty” or “Freedom.” One unit from Connecticut included men named Sharp Liberty and Cuff Freedom.



In 1778, France joined the Patriots' side. They sent money, troops, and a navy.

Spain and Holland entered the war in 1779, supplying money to the Patriots.