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Continental Congress — NYC

The governing body of the Revolution, and New York's chapter

SERIES: FOUNDING-ERA REFERENCES

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The Continental Congress was a pivotal governing body during the British-American Revolutionary War, uniting the Thirteen Colonies in their struggle for independence from British rule.

Formation and Structure

The Continental Congress was established in response to growing tensions between the British North American colonies and the British government, particularly following the passage of the Intolerable Acts in 1774. It consisted of delegates from the Thirteen Colonies, with the First Continental Congress convening on September 5, 1774, in Philadelphia. The Congress aimed to address colonial grievances and organize resistance against British policies.

First Continental Congress (1774): This Congress focused on addressing colonial rights and grievances. It adopted the Declaration of Rights and Grievances, asserting the colonies' rights and calling for a boycott of British goods if the Intolerable Acts were not repealed.

Second Continental Congress (1775-1781): Convening shortly after the outbreak of hostilities in April 1775, this Congress took on a more active role in governance. It established the Continental Army, appointed George Washington as its commander, and ultimately declared independence from Britain on July 4, 1776, with the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

Articles of Confederation: In 1781, the Congress ratified the Articles of Confederation, which served as the first constitution of the United States. This document established a framework for governance until it was replaced by the U.S. Constitution in 1789.

Significance

The Continental Congress played a crucial role in uniting the colonies against British rule and laying the groundwork for the establishment of the United States' government. The Congress served as the de facto national government during the Revolutionary War, coordinating military efforts and diplomatic relations. The decisions made by the Congress were instrumental in shaping the future of the nation and establishing principles of democracy and representation. In summary, the Continental Congress was a foundational institution in United States history, representing the collective will of the colonies and leading them toward independence and self-governance. Its legacy continues to influence the structure and function of the U.S. government today.

New York, often called New York City (NYC), is the most populous city in the United States. It is located at the southern tip of New York State on New York Harbor, one of the world's largest natural harbors. The city comprises five boroughs, each coextensive with its respective county. It is the geographical and demographic center of both the Northeast megalopolis and the New York metropolitan area, the largest metropolitan area in the United States by both population and urban area. New York is a global center of finance[13] and commerce, culture, technology,[14] entertainment and media, academics and scientific output,[15] the arts and fashion, and, as home to the headquarters of the United Nations, international diplomacy.[c]

In 1664, New York was named in honor of the Duke of York (later King James II of England).[42] James's elder brother, King Charles II, appointed him proprietor of the former territory of New Netherland, including the city of New Amsterdam, when the Kingdom of England seized it from Dutch control.[43] New Netherland was renamed the Province of New York (now New York State).[44]

New York City traces its origins to Fort Amsterdam and a trading post founded on Manhattan Island by Dutch colonists around 1624. The settlement was named New Amsterdam in 1626 and was chartered as a city in 1653. The city came under English control in 1664 and was temporarily renamed New York after King Charles II granted

the lands to his brother, the Duke of York,[29] before being permanently renamed New York in 1674. Following independence from Great Britain, the city was the national capital of the United States from 1785 until 1790.[30] The modern city was formed by the 1898 consolidation of its five boroughs: Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island.

Anchored by Wall Street in the Financial District, Manhattan, New York City has been called both the world's premier financial and fintech center[31][32] and the most economically powerful city in the world.[33] As of 2022, the New York metropolitan area is the largest metropolitan economy in the world, with a gross metropolitan product of over US$2.16 trillion.[12] The New York metropolitan area's economy is larger than all but nine countries. Despite having a 24/7 rapid transit system, New York also leads the world in urban automobile traffic congestion.[34] The city is home to the world's two largest stock exchanges by market capitalization of their listed companies: the New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq. New York City is an established haven for global investors.[35] As of 2025, New York City is the most expensive city in the world for expatriates[36] and has by a wide margin the highest residential rents of any American city.[37] Fifth Avenue is the most expensive shopping street in the world.[38] New York City is home to the highest number of billionaires,[39] individuals of ultra-high net worth (greater than US$30 million),[40] and millionaires of any city in the world by a significant margin.[41]

Before the arrival of Columbus, the area of present-day New York City was inhabited by Algonquians, including the Lenape. Their homeland, known as Lenapehoking, included the present-day areas of Staten Island, Manhattan, the Bronx, the western portion of Long Island (including Brooklyn and Queens), and the Lower Hudson Valley.[45]