

Name: _____
Social Studies

Date: _____
Period: _____

The War Comes to an End

In fleeing the South and marching his troops into Virginia, British General Cornwallis made a serious tactical error. His army arrived in Yorktown, Virginia in August, 1781. This small town is situated on a narrow peninsula. He felt confident that the British ships could meet his army there and either bring supplies by sea or evacuate his troops if necessary.

Washington, along with his ally, the French army, saw an opportunity to trap Cornwallis on the peninsula. He marched his troops south from New Jersey to Yorktown. Meanwhile, a French fleet led by Admiral de Grasse was also heading for Virginia. Once in the Chesapeake Bay, the French fleet closed the trap. Cornwallis was cut off. He could not get supplies and he could not escape by land or sea.

By the end of September, more than 16,000 American and French troops battled Cornwallis' army of fewer than 8,000. Day after day, American and French artillery pounded the British.

For several weeks, Cornwallis held out. Finally, with casualties mounting and supplies running low, he realized the situation was hopeless.

On October 19, 1781, The British surrendered their weapons. The French and the Americans lined up in two facing columns. As the defeated redcoats marched between the victorious troops, the British army band played "The World Turned Upside Down." The American army band responded by playing "Yankee Doodle."

In London, the defeat shocked the British. "It's all over," cried the British Prime Minister and he agreed to a peace treaty.

Under the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the British recognized the United States as an independent nation. It extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. The Americans agreed to ask the state legislatures to pay the Loyalists for property they had lost in the war. In the end, however, most states ignored this claim.

1. Why was moving his army to Yorktown a tactical mistake for General Cornwallis?

Yorktown is located on a peninsula which meant he could be surrounded.

2. What role did the French play in the war's end? The French provided the Americans with the navy they needed to surround Britain @ Yorktown.

3. What was agreed to in the Treaty of Paris? British recognized the U.S. as an independent nation. The Americans also agreed to pay the Loyalist for property they had lost however, most states ignored this claim