In the spring of 1775, the organized protests in the colonies turned into organized war. Soon after, some revolutionary leaders began calling for a complete break with Britain — independence. Americans had come out of the French and Indian War in 1763 feeling pride in being a part of the greatest empire in the world. Now, barely a decade later, a majority of them wanted out.

North Carolinians were deeply divided in the War for Independence. In this chapter, you’ll explore their words and deeds as they fought each other, declared themselves an independent state, and set up a new government. Whether that government truly reflected the principles they claimed to fight for was debated at the time — and is still debated today.

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- Thomas Peters, Black Loyalist and African Nationalist
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- Primary Source: A Virginian Responds to Dunmore’s Proclamation
- The Battle of Moore’s Creek Bridge
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- Primary Source: Plans for Democracy
- Primary Source: “Creed of a Rodger"
- Primary Source: The North Carolina Constitution and Declaration of Rights
- Nancy Hart, Revolutionary Woman

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Moore’s Creek Bridge Campaign — 1776
British Southern Campaign (Cornwallis-Greene) — 1780-81

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENTS
Moore’s Creek Bridge — 27 Feb. 1776 (Whigs defeat Tories)
Ramsey’s Mill — 20 June 1780 (Whigs defeat Tories)
King’s Mountain — 7 Oct. 1780 (Mountain Patriots defeat British troops)
Guilford Courthouse — 15 Mar. 1781 (Climactic battle between Cornwallis and Greene cripples the British army, which then retreats to Wilmington)

NOTABLE BATTLES & SKIRMISHES
Aston’s — 10 Mar. 1771 (Governor William Tryon’s Royal militia defeats Regulators)
Cohens’ Mill — 21 July 1776 (Whigs defeat Tories)
Charlotte — 26 Sept. 1780 (British troops under Cornwallis capture Charlotte)
Shallow Ford — 14 Oct. 1779 (Whigs defeat Tories, Cornwallis crosses 8 Feb. 1781)
Cowan’s Ford — 1 Feb. 1781 (Cornwallis crosses the Catawba River)
Terrence’s Tavern — 2 Feb. 1781 (Tarleton’s British cavalry routs American militia)
Chapin’s Mill — 2 Mar. 1781 (American troops withdraw after ambushing Tarleton’s cavalry)
Weetz’s Mill — 6 Mar. 1781 (Skirmish between troops of Cornwallis and Greene)
Rockfish — 2 Aug. 1781 (Craig’s British troops defeat North Carolina militia)
Aston House (House in the Horseshoe) — 5 Aug. 1781 (Tories defeat Whigs)
Elizabethsboro — 27 Aug. 1781 (Whigs defeat Tories)
MoPala’s Mill — 1 Sept. 1781 (Whigs defeat Tories)
Lindley’s Mill — 22 Sept. 1781 (Whigs fail to rescue Governor Thomas Burke from Tories)
Raf Swan — 15 Oct. 1781 (Whigs defeat Tories)

Map of major campaigns, battles and skirmishes in N.C. during the American Revolution

Primary Sources:
John Trumbull's famous painting, Declaration of Independence, depicts the presentation of the first draft of the Declaration of Independence to the Second Continental Congress on June 28, 1776 in Philadelphia.

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