

Jefferson and the end of the American Revolution

Reading Level: Elementary School

Thomas Jefferson Returns to Virginia

In September 1776, Thomas Jefferson left Congress. In 1779, he was elected governor of Virginia. This was during the Revolutionary War. As governor Jefferson had to raise troops, weapons and supplies for the war. However, early in the war, the British had not fought in Virginia.

That changed in early 1781, British soldier Benedict Arnold set fire to a foundry near Richmond where guns were stored. Then the British army marched to Virginia from the south. British General Cornwallis sent soldiers to surprise Thomas Jefferson. He was eager to capture the Governor of Virginia.

Captain Jack Jouett, a Patriot, spotted the British soldiers. He realized they were headed to Monticello. Jefferson and several Virginia delegates were staying at the plantation. Jouett rode his horse forty miles through brush and woods. He arrived in time to warn Jefferson. Jefferson sent his family to another farm. He waited at Monticello until he could see Redcoats through his telescope. Then he escaped, too.



A Jefferson family story relates that Jefferson used this telescope to see British soldiers swarming in the streets of Charlottesville in 1781.



Surrender of Lord Cornwallis
by John Trumbull.

Peace!

In 1781 the British surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia. In September 1783 the Treaty of Paris was signed. The war was over.

Thomas Jefferson never fought as a soldier in the American Revolution. But his writing skills and his beliefs in the rights of mankind helped shape our country's fight for independence. In June 1783, Jefferson was chosen to be a delegate at the "Confederation" Congress. His writing skills would now be important for shaping the new American government.

Th. Jefferson
MONTICELLO