

Wealth pays

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On April 19th, 1775, a group of American Colonists marched towards the town of Lexington to intercept a group of British soldiers sent to enforce tax laws. There was not a clear intention of a violent conflict, but what occurred would set off the powder keg that was colonial America. Towns became battlefields and blood was shed on both sides of the fight. It began with lower-class colonists acting out in response to British taxation on imports and goods, and quickly inflated to a full-scale revolution attracting political and military leaders.

By the time the dust settled, the United States of America had formed independent of the British monarchy. It is clear that any British rule was dissolved by the end of the Revolution, but what is far more important though is how Americans reacted to the power vacuum created by the British absence. As the Continental Congress worked to create a government, they feared that if power was given fully to the people, the people would not make informed decisions. Thus, Founding Fathers created a government that shifted power from the Crown to the elite of America. A system that leaned so heavily towards the elite that even the right of every man to vote could not offset the injustices it would impose. The Founding Fathers claimed to base our country on the ideals of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness and the belief that all men are created equal.

They had the entire American society dreaming of a nation where men were not judged by their fathers, but by their own actions. A true Utopian image, until the Founding Fathers decided who would qualify for these rights.

America was made a better place for those in charge, but not much changed for the common man. An arguably smart decision by the Founding Fathers,

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but it does not reflect the values the Revolution was founded on. One aspect of American culture that indicated that power simply shifted to the American elite is the way blacks were treated after the Revolution.

Slaves were not treated as an entire people instead they only counted as three-fifths of a person for voting purposes. This meant that for southern states they would have significantly higher effect on the outcome of votes, but in reality the slaves were not being represented because they could not vote. This meant that power was unfairly shifted to a single group of Americans. Slavery was on the decline in the north and people like Benjamin Franklin were ashamed to have ever been part of it, but it grew in the south as the independent economies yielded more profits for those willing to take advantage of the free labor. No matter how hard a black person worked in the US they would never be able to achieve the same success as a white man. The social prejudices against them meant that the only work they would be able to find is that which no other man was willing.

This discrimination would lead much farther than post-revolution era even all the way into the 21st century. Voter qualifications also worked against blacks. Because many of them had only recently been granted freedom they had little opportunity to amass the property that would allow them to vote. The voting requirements were designed with the intention of allowing wealthy white men the right to vote and exclude most others. Another group that did not achieve the same sense of power as the American elite was the female population.

Although at times during the Revolution attempts were made to gain rights for women most of them did not bring about results. There are records of several letters from Abigail Adams to her husband John Adams threatening a rebellion amongst the women, which if carried out would prove fatal to the American struggle for independence. " We will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice or Representation" She writes. A statement very similar to the famous " no taxation without representation". Abigail is saying that if she has to abide by a set of rules she should have a say in what they are.

Another quote from her letters reads, " Remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember all men would be tyrants if they could." Abigail is saying that by ignoring the women the Founding Fathers are starting to seem like the tyrants that they fought to emancipate themselves from. She acknowledges that it is in their nature to try to obtain power, but threatens that they will suffer the same fate as the British. Women would not obtain full suffrage until 1920, and would face similar social oppression as that which the blacks faced.

The oppression against women and blacks after the Revolution was so strong that it has lasting effects to this day. The third, and largest group to be excluded from the privileges of the Constitution was the lower class. Because of the intelligent nature of most of the upper class they gravitated towards the positions of political power. This system seemed to be favorable, because it meant that politicians would be wealthy enough as it was so their

only incentive would be for the greater good of man. The problem was that the lower-class were rarely if ever represented.

Although they had the right to vote farmers and other blue-collar workers still only had the option to vote between two lawyers who couldn't fully understand the issues farmers and the working class were faced with. This exclusion of men to the rights the constitution seems unintentional and in some respects unavoidable, but nevertheless it is another group the Founding Fathers failed to consider when drafting the Constitution and establishing the government. After the poor and blacks risked their lives on the front lines they were left without much change in their day to day lives. The rich, white men still ruled the nation and the ideas of the Revolution only applied to the select few who knew how to manipulate the events in their favor. When placed against these insurmountable odds the only group left standing were the wealthy white men of the nation who were left to take full advantage of their power. There were many systems set in place to keep the government from reverting to a monarchy, but it did not fairly represent every man in the nation as it claimed to.