



# The Radicals Behind the American Revolution: Six Who Spoke for Freedom

*Richard Horton*

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The settling of British America was a unique event in modern history. For the first time, an entire continent was available to those from many cultures and religions who wished for new opportunities free from the feudal remnants and rigid class distinctions of Europe that still existed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Enlightenment ideas and new challenges combined to create documents of government that allowed a degree of freedom and social mobility that led to a proto-democratic society, despite the differences between the thirteen colonies. A group of radical politicians and writers, Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine, Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, and young Thomas Jefferson by the mid 1700's increasingly spoke out against the actions of the London Government and the king. The British attempted to reassert control of the semi-independent and proud colonial governments and then send troops to enforce a series of arbitrary taxes decided by Parliament without input from the colonists. This book weaves into the story the events of the pre-revolutionary period, the lives of six radicals-and after the war- the conflicts in writing new state and federal constitutions. Our radicals persuaded most ordinary citizens that despite their long held loyalty and pride of being part of the British Empire, independence-whether peacefully or requiring force-was necessary to maintain their prosperity and freedom. However, after the Revolution, a new generation of leaders was required. Our radicals remained supporters of their states and the Articles of Confederation and were hostile to giving many powers including taxation to a strong central government under the 1787 Constitution. Only Jefferson born a generation later would contribute to the new nation despite early reservations while in France. The reputations of the others have been diminished by their resistance to forming the government we live under. Nevertheless, our radicals deserve thei

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