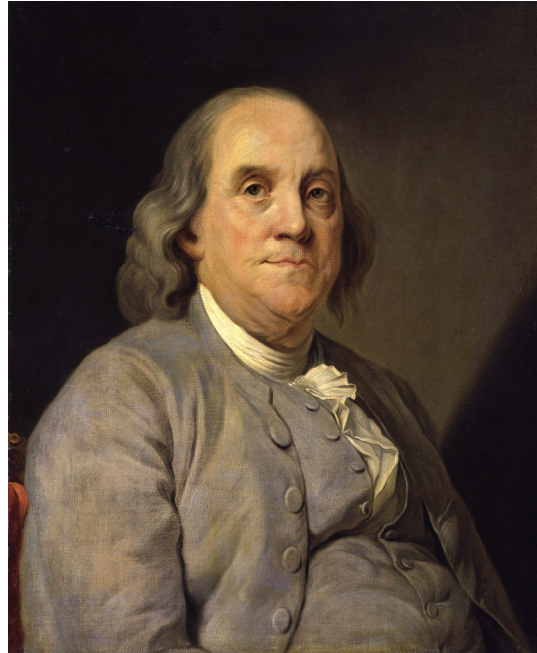


Franklin and France: The Treaty of Alliance, 1777-78



A Presentation to the Daughters of the American Revolution Washoe Zephyr Chapter

January 28, 2023

**JONATHAN "JAY" DICKEY
PRESIDENT
NEVADA SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

THE MAIN CHARACTERS

The American Commissioners

Benjamin Franklin

Arthur Lee (recalled in 1779)

Silas Deane (recalled in March 1778)

John Adams (replaced Deane in 1778)

Aides to the Commissioners

William Carmichael, Secretary to Commission

Edward Bancroft, unofficial secretary to Franklin

Ralph Izard, Commissioner to Tuscany

William Temple Franklin, private secretary to Franklin

The French

Louis XVI, King of France

Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes,
French minister of foreign affairs

Conrad-Alexandre Gerard, undersecretary to Vergennes;
First foreign minister to U.S. (1778-79)

Pierre-Augustin Caron de Meumarchais, playwright and spy

Jacques-Donatien le Ray de Chaumont, supplier of aid to Americans

Charles-Henri, Comte d'Estaing, Commander of French fleet (1778)

The English

David Murray, Viscount Stormont, English Ambassador

Paul Wentworth, Nathaniel Forth, and James Hutton

British negotiators in January 1778

The Women

Ann-Louise Boivin D'Hardancourt Brillon de Jouy

Ann-Catherine de Ligniville D'Auticourt Helvetius

BACKGROUND

February 10, 1763 The Treaty of Paris is signed, ending the Seven Year's War and the French & Indian War; France and England are at peace

April 1775 Lexington & Concord: America goes to war with England

March 1776. Deane is appointed to be a secret envoy to France to obtain financial aid; he begins negotiations with the Compte de Vergennes.

July 1776. Declaration of Independence

Fall 1776 America is losing the War; defeats in New York and New Jersey; 3,000 American troops captured by the British; the British capture Newport RI, and it becomes an enemy port

October 1776 Committee of Secret Correspondence appoints Deane, Lee and Franklin as Commissioners

November 1776 Franklin arrives in France; takes up residence in the Hotel de Valentinois in Passy, near Paris

Dec. 23, 1776 American Commissioners write Vergennes; Committee of Secret Correspondence writes to Commissioners authorizing negotiations, including a loan of two million pounds sterling

Dec. 1776/Jan. 1777 Washington's victories at Trenton and Princeton

March 1777 News of Washington's victories arrives in France

April 1777 The Marquis de Lafayette sails for America

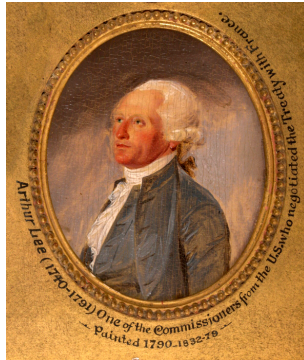
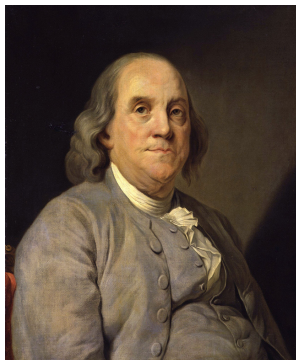
August 1777 News of the British capture of Fort Ticonderoga arrives

September 11, 1777 British General Howe captures Philadelphia

September/October 1777 The Continental Army defeats Burgoyne's army at Saratoga

December 4, 1777 News of the Victory at Saratoga arrives in France

NEGOTIATION AND EXECUTION OF THE TREATIES



December 12, 1777 Commissioners meet with Vergennes; Franklin provides draft terms of alliance; Paul Wentworth arrives from England to propose peace terms between England and America

December 16, 1777 Gerard meets with Franklin, assures that a treaty will be achieved

December 18, 1777 Ships sail for America with news of the treaty negotiations

January 3-5, 1778 James Hutton arrives from London to negotiate terms of settlement between England and America and is rebuffed; Franklin meets with Paul Wentworth, whose proposals are rejected

January 8, 1778 Gerard meets with the Commissioners; terms are reviewed; Franklin provides Gerard with draft treaties, contemplating that Spain would participate in the treaties as well; Gerard discloses that Spain would not be a party but that the King will sign a treaty with the Americans

January 18 1778 Gerard presents draft treaties to the Commissioners, and negotiations kick into high gear; the Commissioners engage in infighting

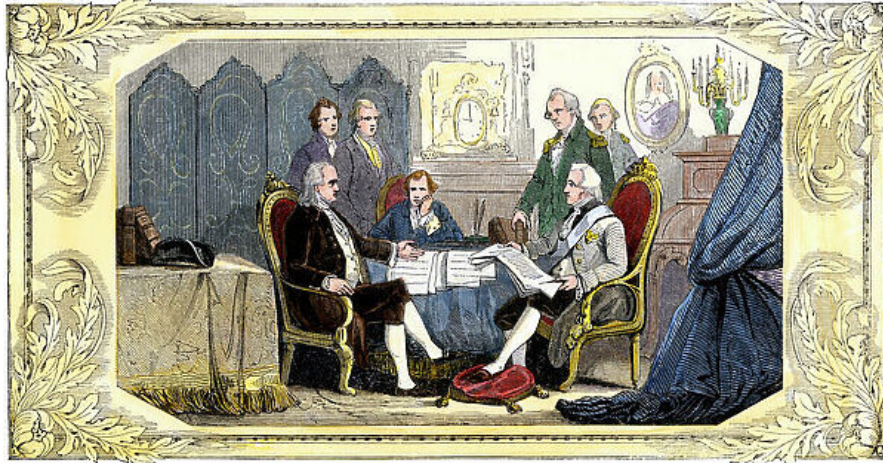
January 23 1778 Copies of the final terms of the Treaty of Alliance are made by Temple Franklin

January 28, 1778 France grants 6 million livres to America (ultimately over 6 *billion* livres)

*1 livre = @ 8.4 pounds sterling in 1778. 100 British pounds in 1778 is worth 20,376 pounds in 2023. 6 million livres translated to @ 50 million pounds in 1778, with a value of over **1 billion pounds** in 2023.*

February 4, 1778 Spain declines to participate in the Treaties

February 6, 1778 Treaty of Alliance and Treaty of Commerce and Trade are signed



KEY TERMS OF THE TREATY OF ALLIANCE

- If war was declared between England and France, a military alliance would be formed between France and America
- The combined military forces would seek to maintain the “*liberty, sovereignty and independence absolute and unlimited of the said United States*”
- The alliance would continue *indefinitely*
- North American lands held by the United States at the end of the war would be honored by France; America would relinquish any rights to islands in or near the Gulf of Mexico
- Neither country would cease fighting, or sign a peace treaty with England, without the consent of the other country
- Any subsequent treaty with England must recognize the independence of the United States
- Neither country would seek compensation from the other for services rendered during the Revolutionary War
- Other nations “who may have received injuries from England” may join the alliance
- All land claims would be honored
- The treaties would take effect only upon a declaration of war between England and France

AFTERMATH OF THE EXECUTION OF THE TREATIES

February 23, 1778 Boston newspapers report that Franklin was assassinated at the instance of Lord Stormont

March 10-17, 1778 A copy of the Treaty of Alliance is sent to London; England declares war

March 20, 1778 Franklin is given an audience with King Louis XVI, and introduced as the Deputy of the United Provinces of North America

March 31, 1778 Deane leaves France for America, with endorsement from Franklin as to his worthiness

April 1778 Adams arrives in Paris; Lee and Izard attack Franklin and Deane

May 4, 1778 U.S. Congress ratifies the treaties; Washington and his troops at Valley Forge celebrate

July 6, 1778 Franklin informs Vergennes of Congress's ratification

July 17, 1778 Ratified copies of the treaties signed

AFTERMATH OF THE AFTERMATH

1779 Franklin named sole "minister plenipotentiary"

1785 Jefferson replaces Franklin, who returns to Philadelphia

1790 Franklin dies on April 17 in Philadelphia

- **Transcript**

- **Treaty of Alliance**

- The most Christian King and the United States of North America, to wit, New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhodes island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, having this Day concluded a Treaty of amity and Commerce, for the reciprocal advantage of their Subjects and Citizens have thought it necessary to take into consideration the means of strengthening those engagements and of roudring them useful to the safety and tranquility of the two parties, particularly in case Great Britain in Resentment of that connection and of the good correspondence which is the object of the said Treaty, should break the Peace with france, either by direct hostilities, or by hindring her commerce and navigation, in a manner contrary to the Rights of Nations, and the Peace subsisting between the two Crowns; and his Majesty and the said united States having resolved in that Case to join their Councils and efforts against the Enterprises of their common Enemy, the respective Plenipotentiaries, impower'd to concert the Clauses & conditions proper to fulfil the said Intentions, have, after the most mature Deliberation, concluded and determined on the following Articles.

- **ART. 1.**

If War should break out betwan france and Great Britain, during the continuance of the present War betwan the United States and England, his Majesty and the said united States, shall make it a common cause, and aid each other mutually with their good Offices, their Counsels, and their forces, according to the exigence of Conjunctures as becomes good & faithful Allies.

- **ART. 2.**

The essential and direct End of the present defensive alliance is to maintain effectually the liberty, Sovereignty, and independance absolute and unlimited of the said united States, as well in Matters of Gouvernement as of commerce.

- **ART. 3.**

The two contracting Parties shall each on its own Part, and in the manner it may judge most proper, make all the efforts in its Power, against their common Ennemy, in order to attain the end proposed.

- **ART. 4.**

The contracting Parties agree that in case either of them should form any particular Enterprise in which the concurrence of the other may be desired, the Party whose concurrence is desired shall readily, and with good faith, join to act in concert for that Purpose, as far as circumstances and its own particular Situation will permit; and in that case, they shall regulate by a particular Convention the quantity and kind of Succour to be furnished, and the Time and manner of its being brought into action, as well as the advantages which are to be its Compensation.

ART. 5.

If the united States should think fit to attempt the Reduction of the British Power remaining in the Northern Parts of America, or the Islands of Bermudas, those Countries or Islands in case of Success, shall be confederated with or dependent upon the said united States.

ART. 6.

The Most Christian King renounces for ever the possession of the Islands of Bermudas as well as of any part of the continent of North america which before the treaty of Paris in 1763. or in virtue of that Treaty, were acknowledged to belong to the Crown of Great Britain, or to the united States heretofore called British Colonies, or which are at this Time or have lately been under the Power of The King and Crown of Great Britain.

ART. 7.

If his Most Christian Majesty shall think proper to attack any of the Islands situated in the Gulph of Mexico, or near that Gulph, which are at present under the Power of Great Britain, all the said Isles, in case of success, shall appertain to the Crown of france.

ART. 8.

Neither of the two Parties shall conclude either Truce or Peace with Great Britain, without the formal consent of the other first obtain'd; and they mutually engage not to lay down their arms, until the Independence of the united states shall have been formally or tacitly assured by the Treaty or Treaties that shall terminate the War.

ART. 9.

The contracting Parties declare, that being resolved to fulfil each on its own Part the clauses and conditions of the present Treaty of alliance, according to its own power and circumstances, there shall be no after claim of compensation on one side or the other whatever may be the event of the War.

ART. 10.

The Most Christian King and the United states, agree to invite or admit other Powers who may have received injuries from England to make common cause with them, and to accede to the present alliance, under such conditions as shall be freely agreed to and settled between all the Parties.

ART. 11.

The two Parties guarantee mutually from the present time and forever, against all other powers, to wit, the united states to his most Christian Majesty the present Possessions of the Crown of france in America as well as those which it may acquire by the future Treaty of peace: and his most Christian Majesty guarantees on his part to the united states, their liberty, Sovereignty, and Independence absolute, and unlimited, as well in Matters of Government as commerce and also their Possessions, and the additions or conquests that their Confederation may obtain during the war, from any of the Dominions now or heretofore possessed by Great Britain in North America, conformable to the 5th & 6th articles above written, the whole as their Possessions shall be fixed and assured to the said States at the moment of the cessation of their present War with England.

ART. 12.

In order to fix more precisely the sense and application of the preceding article, the Contracting Parties declare, that in case of rupture between France and England, the reciprocal Guarantee declared in the said article shall have its full force and effect the moment such War shall break out and if such rupture shall not take place, the mutual obligations of the said guarantee shall not commence, until the moment of the cessation of the present War between the United States and England shall have ascertained the Possessions.

ART. 13.

The present Treaty shall be ratified on both sides and the Ratifications shall be exchanged in the space of six months, sooner if possible.

In faith whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries, to wit on the part of the most Christian King Conrad Alexander Gerard royal syndic of the City of Strasbourg & Secretary of his Majesty's Council of State and on the part of the United States Benjamin Franklin Deputy to the General Congress from the State of Pennsylvania and President of the Convention of the same state, Silas Deane heretofore Deputy from the State of Connecticut & Arthur Lee Councillor at Law have signed the above Articles both in the French and English Languages declaring Nevertheless that the present Treaty was originally composed and concluded in the French Language, and they have hereunto affixed their Seals

Done at Paris, this sixth Day of February, one thousand seven hundred and seventy eight.

C. A. GERARD
B FRANKLIN
SILAS DEANE
ARTHUR LEE