

THE PHILADELPHIA CAMPAIGN



Independence Hall, in Philadelphia. Here the Continental Congress met and signed the Declaration of Independence and adopted the Constitution.

The Philadelphia Campaign began in 1777 as a British plan to take Philadelphia. The city was important as the home of the Continental Congress. The campaign would last a year.

British General William Howe was in charge of the planning of the Philadelphia campaign. He started in New Jersey, trying to get the American troops commanded by General George Washington to leave their strong position. When General Washington would not leave, General Howe changed his plan. He and about 15,000 soldiers went to the Chesapeake Bay, about 55 miles southwest of Philadelphia. General Washington placed about 11,000 troops at Brandywine Creek ready to stop the British. On September 11, 1777, the British defeated the Americans at the Battle of Brandywine. After a few more short battles, the British took the city of Philadelphia on September 26, 1777.

General Washington and General Howe continued to attack each other in a series of battles, including the Battle of Germantown on October 4, 1777 and the Battle of Red Bank on December 19, 1777. Each general won some of the battles, but Philadelphia remained in British control.

General Washington moved his troops to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 20 miles from Philadelphia, to spend the winter. Many soldiers died from sickness and the hard conditions.

France had joined the war on the American side. The British were worried that French ships might come to New York, which the British had taken earlier in the war. General Howe was removed as the commander of the Philadelphia Campaign and was replaced by General Henry Clinton. The British troops left Philadelphia on June 18, 1778 to defend New York. Philadelphia was again in American control.

General Washington followed General Clinton. They fought at the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778. It was the last large battle in the north. Neither side won the battle, although the Americans proved once again that they could fight the strong British army.



Painting of General Washington and General Lafayette at Valley Forge

QUICK QUIZ

What city was home of the Continental Congress at the beginning of the campaign?

Where did General Washington send his troops for the winter of 1777-78?

When did the British leave Philadelphia?

Why did the British leave Philadelphia?