



Cornwallis surrenders to Washington

Yorktown, Virginia founded in 1691, was a busy 18th-century tobacco port but the town is best remembered as the site of the Battle of Yorktown, which effectively ended the Revolutionary War. Nine 18th-century buildings survived the 1781 Battle of Yorktown and can still be seen.

In the late summer of 1781 when George Washington and Rochambeau heard of Lord Cornwallis' encampment in Yorktown they raced southward from New York to link up with the French fleet under Admiral Comte de Grasse in Chesapeake Bay. Washington arrived just in time to bottle-up the British, who were anticipating reinforcements that never came from either General Henry Clinton or the British fleet.

Off shore, the French fleet effectively blocked aid from Cornwallis while Washington made life unbearable for the British troops with three weeks of shelling. Thomas Nelson a signer of the Declaration of Independence was also engaged in the final siege of Yorktown. Nelson being a true patriot, urged General Washington to fire on his own home, the Nelson House, where Cornwallis had his headquarters.

Lord Cornwallis' finally surrendered on *October 19, 1781* and this ended the disastrous British southern campaign. The loyalist and Patriot forces in the south had fought a series of savage fights that left both sides bloodied. These engagements sent Cornwallis limping into Yorktown in late summer trailed by a force led by the

Marquis de Lafayette a French Ally. Cornwallis attempted to surrender over 8,000 men to the French through his second-in-command, Charles O'Hara. French General Comte de Rochambeau, however, directed O'Hara to George Washington, who steered the British officer to his own second in command, Major General Benjamin Lincoln. The surrender occurred while the British band played The World Turned Upside Down, a tune that underscored the strange turn of events. This battle effectively ended the Revolutionary War with Great Britain.