

First Continental Congress

September 5 to October 26, 1774

The meeting of delegates of 12 of the Thirteen Colonies was held at Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia at the beginning of the American Revolution.

The First Continental Congress was the governing body by which the American colonial governments coordinated their resistance to British rule during the first two years of the American Revolution. The Congress balanced the interests of the different colonies and also established itself as the official colonial liaison to Great Britain. As the war progressed, the Congress became the effective national government of the country, and, as such, conducted diplomacy on behalf of the new United States.

The Congress first met September 5, 1774, with delegates from each of the 13 colonies except Georgia. On October 20, the Congress adopted the Articles of Association, which stated that if the Intolerable Acts (taxes on tea, etc.) were not repealed by December 1, 1774, a boycott of British goods would begin in the colonies.

On October 26, the delegates drafted a formal petition outlining the colonists' grievances for British King George III. Many delegates were skeptical about changing the king's attitude towards the colonies, but believed that every opportunity should be exhausted to de-escalate the conflict before taking more radical action. They did not draft such a letter to the British Parliament as the colonists viewed the Parliament as the aggressor.

Lastly, not fully expecting the standoff in Massachusetts to explode into full-scale war, the Congress agreed to reconvene in Philadelphia on May 10, 1775.

Source: Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute
United States Department of State history@state.gov



Provided by the
Iowa Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Commemorative Events 2024-2026