

Module 03: A Revolution for Whom?

Conclusion

The American Revolution impacted the many non-white, non-Christian, non-propertyied Americans more subtly than it did white, male, Christian property owners. Long after 1776, most African Americans remained slaves or, at best, second-class citizens. Women enjoyed few legal or economic rights, and even fewer political rights, until shortly before the Civil War. Some states maintained property restrictions for holding office or provided support for religion well into the nineteenth century.

Does it follow, then, that the Revolution meant nothing to women, African Americans, Jews, or poor men? Decidedly not. The phrase "all men are created equal" ran throughout the American consciousness. Americans may not have realized the ideal for many years, but the standard had been set. Equality became a goal toward which many Americans aspired and against which they measured their progress. Slowly, women and minorities began to gain recognition from the white, Christian men of property who dominated the United States. In many ways, the Revolution is still not complete.