

INTRODUCTION

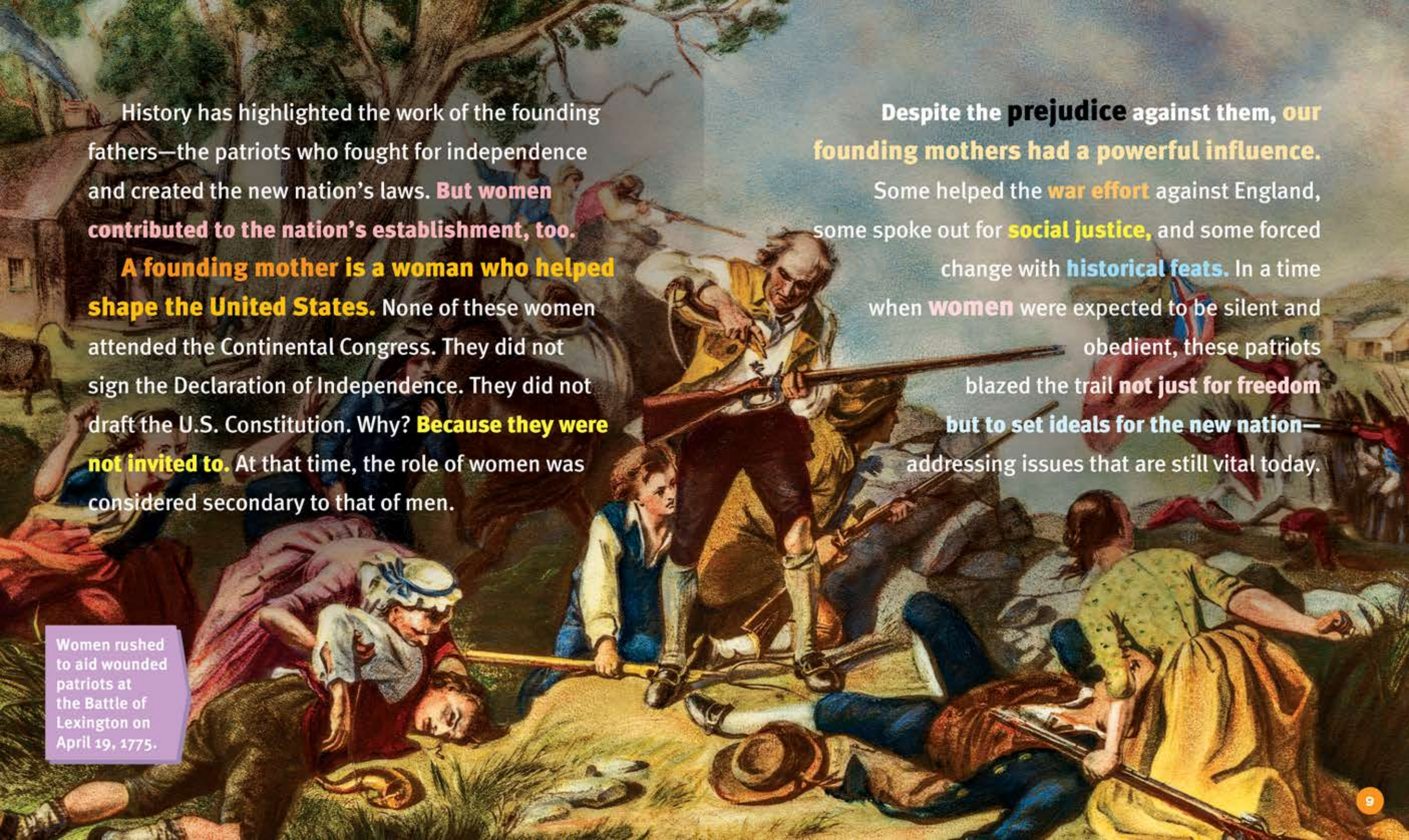
Women in a Turbulent Time

Before the United States was a country, it consisted of **13 colonies** ruled by **Great Britain**, a nation that included England and Scotland, across the Atlantic Ocean. **Many colonists grew unhappy with taxes** the British king imposed without allowing them to participate in the government. Calling themselves **patriots**, these colonists began protesting **taxation without representation**.

One of the most significant **tax protests** became known as the **Boston Tea Party**. When the king put a tax on tea, it became very expensive.

On the night of December 16, 1773, about **70 patriot men** who tried to disguise themselves as Indigenous people **dumped 342 chests of British tea** into Boston Harbor. This act helped energize the patriots' cause. **The colonists decided to organize** and debate what actions to take against Great Britain. **Representatives** from each colony **gathered in Philadelphia** for meetings called the Continental Congress, which declared the colonies' **independence** on **July 4, 1776**. **The American Revolution had begun!**

Although women did not participate in the Boston Tea Party, they helped plan it.



History has highlighted the work of the founding fathers—the patriots who fought for independence and created the new nation’s laws. **But women contributed to the nation’s establishment, too.**

A founding mother is a woman who helped shape the United States. None of these women attended the Continental Congress. They did not sign the Declaration of Independence. They did not draft the U.S. Constitution. Why? **Because they were not invited to.** At that time, the role of women was considered secondary to that of men.

Women rushed to aid wounded patriots at the Battle of Lexington on April 19, 1775.

Despite the **prejudice** against them, **our founding mothers had a powerful influence.**

Some helped the **war effort** against England, some spoke out for **social justice**, and some forced change with **historical feats**. In a time when **women** were expected to be silent and obedient, these patriots blazed the trail **not just for freedom but to set ideals for the new nation—**addressing issues that are still vital today.

CHAPTER



Mercy Otis Warren

Revolutionary Writer

Mercy Otis Warren was a woman whose words urged the colonists to support independence. She was born in Barnstable, Massachusetts, on September 14, 1728.



Though the American Revolution wouldn't happen for almost 50 years, some citizens were against British rule even then. Mercy's father, Colonel James Otis Sr., was one of them. Mercy listened carefully to her father's revolutionary ideas. She agreed with his desire to live in a nation that was not bound by the laws of a government an ocean away.

When Mercy Otis was 26 years old, she married James Warren. They moved to Plymouth, Massachusetts, and had five sons. As revolutionary thoughts rooted in the colonies, Warren wanted to help them grow. Her husband was a **politician**, but she wasn't sure how she could help. Women did not hold positions of power and influence in the government at that time.

Mercy Warren was later known as the "Conscience of the American Revolution."