CHAPTER 5

Roads to Revolution, 1750-1776

1. How did Britain and its colonies view their joint victory over France in the Seven Years’ War?

2. How did colonial resistance to the Stamp Act differ from earlier opposition to British imperial measures?

3. In what ways did resistance to the Townshend duties differ from earlier colonial resistance efforts?

4. In what ways did colonists’ views of parliamentary authority change after 1770?

5. What led most colonists in 1776 to abandon their loyalty to Britain and choose national independence?
Triumph and Tensions: The British Empire, 1750-1763

A Fragile Peace, 1750-1754

The Ohio Valley was the key to controlling North America; therefore, it was sought after by the British, the French, the Iroquois Confederacy, and the local Indians.
Triumph and Tensions: The British Empire, 1750-1763

The Seven Years’ War in America, 1754-1760

The French (and Indians) were winning early

BUT… in 1758…

Many Indians, including the Ohio and Iroquois abandon the French

AND THEN… also in 1758…

William Pitt had an idea…

Pitt promised that if the colonists would raise the necessary men to fight the war that the British would pay for the vast majority of the cost of the war

The fighting ended in America in 1760 with the Surrender of Montreal
Triumph and Tensions: The British Empire, 1750-1763

The End of French North America, 1760-1763

Treaty of Paris (1763)
France loses land East of the Mississippi to Britain

France loses land West of the Mississippi (including New Orleans in the 1762 Treaty of San Idelfonso) to Spain

Spain trades Florida to the British for Cuba

Acadians forced to move – some go to New Orleans and become Cajuns
Triumph and Tensions: The British Empire, 1750-1763

Anglo-American Friction

During and after the war, the British soldiers complained about the lack of discipline of the colonial troops, while the colonial troops complained about the pompous British soldiers.

The British also were very upset that they had to pay for this war and the colonists didn’t.
Triumph and Tensions: The British Empire, 1750-1763

Frontier Tensions

Even though the French gave up in 1763 – the Indians didn’t.
The biggest resistance came from Pontiac’s Rebellion (1763)

This led to King George issuing the Proclamation of 1763.
He also kept 10,000 British soldiers in America that he expected the colonists to pay for.
The colonists weren’t overly happy about “winning” this war.
Writs of Assistance, 1760-1761

Basically a blanket search warrant that never expires

Created by Parliament to stop colonists from smuggling in non-British goods (mostly from the French)… it was fairly effective

The colonists took it to court, saying it was unconstitutional, but lost
The Sugar Act, 1764

Britain wanted to raise revenue to pay for the military expenses in America, so Parliament created the Sugar Act, an *external tax* which amended the 1733 Molasses Act

- Tax on sugar went from 6p/gallon *down* to 3p/gallon and later down to just 1p/gallon!

- Created a lot of confusing, tedious paperwork on all colonial shipping (made it tough to be 100% legal)

- Smuggling cases were heard in *vice-admiralty courts*
  - British appointed judge (vs. colonial juries)
  - Judge got 5% of the goods when the party was guilty
  - Cases heard in Halifax, Nova Scotia

- This mainly affected merchants in large port cities (NY, MA, PA)
The Stamp Act Crisis, 1765-1766

The English were paying 26 schillings of tax to the colonists average of 1 schilling, plus the colonists were making way more money than the English.

The Sugar Act wasn’t raising much money, so Parliament passed an internal tax…

The Stamp Act (1765)

- Had to buy stamps for almost all paper products
- Violators had their cases heard in vice-admiralty courts
- Affected almost everyone (unlike the Sugar Act)
- English have been paying a similar tax for 70 years
The Stamp Act Crisis, 1765-1766

- Colonists said, “No taxation without representation!”
- To which the English replied, “You’re virtually represented in Parliament… just like the majority of Englishmen”
- Some colonists (esp. in Boston) decided to target the tax collectors/distributors and other wealthy political officials (i.e. Andrew Oliver and Thomas Hutchinson)

Some large groups called themselves the Sons of Liberty

What’s wrong with this depiction of the Sons of Liberty?
The Stamp Act Crisis, 1765-1766

The most effective resistance was when the colonists, led by NY, decided to boycott British goods.

This caused the British merchants to persuade Parliament to revoke the Act in 1766.

Parliament replaced the Stamp Act with the Declaratory Act in 1766.
Colonists used the philosophy of those like John Locke to justify their resistance. An atmosphere of resistance was the sermons of Protestant (not Anglican or Quaker) ministers who preached that “solidarity against rejecting sin and obeying God”
1765: Parliament passed this act which required colonial legislatures to pay for goods needed by British soldiers (like mattress straw and candles).

The cost was minimal – it was the principle that ticked off the colonists (esp. New York in this case)… the idea that Britain’s leadership trumped colonial leadership.
Crisis Over the Townshend Duties, 1767-1770

Parliament had two main goals dealing with the colonies:

A) Have the colonies submit to Parliamentary authority
B) Raise revenue (money)

So... In 1767 they passed the Revenue Act (a.k.a. Townshend duties) solely to raise money

It taxed:

The British treasury actually lost revenue from these taxes... showing that goal A was perhaps more important than goal B
Resistance Resumes, 1766-1770

Crisis Over the Townshend Duties, 1767-1770

John Dickinson wrote *Letters From a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, which reiterated the colonial stance that import taxes were okay ONLY when it’s voted on by the people’s elected representatives and when it’s NOT used to solely raise revenue.

Sam Adams started a “circular letter” to the other colonies condemning England for continuing to tax without colonial representation.

The Sons of Liberty regrouped and in 1768 the colonists were bringing boycott back (yeah).

In 1770, Parliament repealed all the duties EXCEPT the one on tea.

So… the colonists began a nonconsumption (of tea) movement.
Resistance Resumes, 1766-1770

Customs “Racketeering,” 1767-1770

Parliament went über-strict on enforcing the Navigation Acts, mainly to raise revenue to pay their governors and strip away the power of the purse.

It was basically legalized piracy and became rather corrupt. For example, they tried to seize John Hancock’s ship, *Liberty*, and make him pay £9,000, but a Boston mob ended that threat.

However, not to lose face, the British sent 4,000 soldiers to Boston to “keep the peace.”
Some Britons opposed King George and Parliament’s policies.

John Wilkes, a journalist and member of Parliament, spoke against the policies. Therefore, he was jailed and denied his seat a few times – only gathering more and more support.

The real significance is that more and more people (esp. colonists) began to wonder about how truly representative Parliament was.
Women and Colonial Resistance

Women (white women) were able to support the cause through…

- Joining the boys
- Not serving tea
- Spinning Bees

Daughters of Liberty
The Deepening Crisis, 1770-1774

The Boston Massacre, 1770

Boston had 4,000 British soldiers occupying the town (remember Hancock?)
Colonists were upset…
• Saw the soldiers as a standing army
• Many soldiers were Irish-Catholics in a predominantly Protestant city
• Unemployment was high and soldiers worked for less pay than locals
The Deepening Crisis, 1770-1774

The Boston Massacre, 1770

Colonists were egging on the soldiers with insults, dares, and snowballs.

A soldier fired (who really knows why) and in a matter of seconds 6 were wounded and 5 were dead.

Afterwards, all British soldiers in Boston were isolated to an island (for their safety), John Adams represented them in court and only two soldiers were punished with thumb brands.

This only solidified, for many colonists, that the British were there to suppress the colonists by any and all means possible.
The Deepening Crisis, 1770-1774

The Boston Massacre, 1770

So... which tells the real story?

Is there any truth to either of them?
The Committees of Correspondence, 1772-1773

In response to Lord North’s plan to pay the royal governors in 1772 (taking away the power of the purse), Sam Adams created the idea of a vast communications network which came to be known as the committees of correspondence.

Within 2 years every colony (except Quaker-y Pennsylvania) was interconnected.
Conflicts in the Backcountry

Land-hungry colonists ignored the Proclamation of 1763 and migrated West. They showed that they had no problem using violence against:

- Indians (Paxton Boys)
- Other Colonists (Green Mountain Boys)
- British officials (North and South Carolina Regulators)
The Deepening Crisis, 1770-1774

The Tea Act

Parliament passed the Tea Act in 1773 which actually lowered the price of tea to well below the cost of smuggled tea, but…

it also gave the British East India Company a monopoly on tea sent to the colonies

Price wasn’t the issue… it was seen as just another tax by the British who planned on using the revenue to pay the royal governors

A number of colonists, led by Sam Adams, responded with the “Boston Tea Party”, throwing hundreds of thousands of dollars of tea into the harbor
Toward Independence, 1774-1776

Liberty for African-Americans

Slaves wondered with all these colonial cries for liberty… what about their liberty

1775 – Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia, offered freedom to any indentured servant or slave who “enlisted in the cause of restoring royal authority”

This was purely for military strategy… nothing else.
The “Intolerable Acts”

In response to the Boston Tea Party, Parliament responded with four Coercive Acts and a Quebec Act… what the colonists deemed the Intolerable Acts

1) **Boston Port Bill:** Closed Boston Harbor unless they paid for the ruined tea within one month

2) **Massachusetts Government Act:** Made Massachusetts a royal colony under governor General Thomas Gage
Toward Independence, 1774-1776

The “Intolerable Acts”

3) **Administration of Justice Act**: Those charged with murder while enforcing royal authority could be tried in England

4) **Quartering Act**: British could use *empty* private buildings to house troops

5) **Quebec Act**: Retained Catholicism as Quebec’s established religion and gave the conquered French-Canadians vast territorial claims west of the Appalachians
The First Continental Congress

In response to the Intolerable Acts, in 1774, the colonists hold a meeting in Philadelphia known as the First Continental Congress. They agree to arm themselves against an attack from the British and to cut off all trade with Britain and her other colonies.
From Resistance to Rebellion

The colonies all created provincial governments that mirrored the royal governments, including creating a colonial militia (minutemen).

Paul Revere and William Dawes warned the minutemen that the British were coming.

The first shots fired took place at Lexington and Concord.
Toward Independence, 1774-1776

From Resistance to Rebellion

The Second Continental Congress met in 1775 – John Dickenson wrote the *Olive Branch Petition* and the Continental army under the command of George Washington was born

- Cease fire at Boston
- Repeal the Coercive Acts
- Negotiations to guarantee American rights

Meanwhile… there was a battle at Bunker Hill (Breed’s Hill)

King George III and Parliament refused to accept the Olive Branch Petition and instead announced that the colonies were in a state of rebellion
Common Sense

T. Paine wrote *Common Sense* in January, 1776.

He spoke against monarchies and said America should ‘start over’ without all the corruptions from Europe.

America could be a great model nation founded on republican principles.

It convinced a lot of undecided people to lean towards rebellion as a just action.
Declaring Independence

As war seemed inevitable (there was already many military engagements since Lexington), delegates from the colonies met in Philadelphia and after much debate, adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 2, 1776. It was signed on July 4 (and in the weeks following).