

# 3

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# Revolution and Republican Culture

## 1763–1820

“The American war is over,” Philadelphia Patriot Benjamin Rush declared in 1787, “but this is far from being the case with the American Revolution. On the contrary, nothing but the first act of the great drama is closed. It remains yet to establish and perfect our new forms of government.” The changes that had already unfolded since 1763 were revolutionary in themselves: Britain had triumphed in the Great War for Empire, only to see its American empire unravel and descend into war. Against all odds, the thirteen rebelling colonies had pulled together and won their independence; now they were forming a federal republic that would take its place among the nations of the world.

The republican revolution extended far beyond politics. It challenged many of the values and institutions that had prevailed for centuries in Europe and the Atlantic World. After 1776, Americans reconsidered basic assumptions that structured their societies, cultures, families, and communities. Here, in summary, are the three principal developments discussed in Part 3:



## From British North America to the United States of America

After violently rejecting attempts to reform the British Empire, the Patriots won independence and began constructing republican governments. Their experiments extended across an entire generation, and it took still longer to decide how much power the federal republic should wield over the states. The political culture spawned by the Revolution was similarly unformed and slow to develop. Political parties, for example, were unanticipated by the founders and, at first, widely regarded as illegitimate. However, by 1820, they had become central to the adjudication of political conflict, heightening some forms of competition while blunting others. The United States also fought wars with Native Americans in the trans-Appalachian west to gain new territory, and with Great Britain to ensure its independence. Across three generations, American political culture was transformed, national borders were secured, and republican national and state governments commanded the allegiance of their citizens.



## Challenges to the Social Order

As Patriots articulated values they associated with independence, they aligned their movement with currents of reform eddying through the Atlantic World: antislavery; women's rights; religious liberty; social equality. Each of these ideas was controversial, and the American Revolution endorsed none of them in an unqualified way. But its idealism—the sense that the Revolution marked “a memorable epoch in the annals of the human race,” as John Adams put it—made the era malleable and full of possibility.

Legislatures abolished slavery in the North, broadened religious liberty by allowing freedom of conscience, and, except in New England, ended the system of legally established churches. Postwar evangelicalism gave enormous energy to a new wave of innovative religious developments. However, Americans continued to argue over social equality, in part because their republican creed placed family authority in the hands of men and political power in the hands of propertied individuals: this arrangement denied power and status not only to slaves but also to free blacks, women, and middling and poor white men. Though the Revolution's legacy was mixed, its meaning would be debated for decades in American public life.



## Conquest, Competition, and Consolidation

One uncontested value of the Revolutionary era was a commitment to economic opportunity. To achieve this, people migrated in large numbers, and the United States dramatically expanded its boundaries: first, by conquest, pushing west to the Mississippi River; then, by purchase, all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Northern merchants created a banking system and organized rural manufacturing. State governments used charters and other privileges to assist businesses and to improve infrastructure. Southern planters used slaves to grow a new staple crop—cotton. Many yeomen farm families moved west to farm; and Eastern laborers worked in burgeoning manufacturing enterprises. By 1820, the young American republic was on the verge of achieving economic as well as political independence.

Even as the borders of the United States expanded, its diversity inhibited the effort to define an American culture and identity. Native Americans still lived in their own clans and nations; black Americans were developing a distinct African American culture; and White Americans were enmeshed in vigorous regional ethnic communities. Over time, political institutions began to unite Americans of diverse backgrounds, as did increasing participation in the market economy and in evangelical Protestant churches. By 1820, to be an American meant, for many members of the dominant white population, to be a republican, a Protestant, and an enterprising individual.

# Revolution and Republican Culture 1763–1820

## Thematic Understanding

This timeline arranges some of the important events of this period into themes. Consider the items listed under the theme “Ideas, Beliefs, and Culture.” How did the American Revolution challenge existing social arrangements? Consider the role of religion in American life, the status of women, and the institution of slavery. What tensions developed as a result of those challenges? >

	WORK, EXCHANGE, & TECHNOLOGY	PEOPLING	POLITICS & POWER	IDEAS, BELIEFS, & CULTURE	IDENTITY
1763	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merchants defy Sugar and Stamp Acts</li> <li>• Patriots mount three boycotts of British goods, in 1765, 1767, and 1774</li> <li>• Boycotts spur Patriot women to make textiles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migration into the Ohio Valley after Pontiac's Rebellion</li> <li>• Quebec Act (1774) allows Catholicism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stamp Act Congress (1765)</li> <li>• First Continental Congress (1774)</li> <li>• Second Continental Congress (1775)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriots call for American unity</li> <li>• The idea of natural rights poses a challenge to the institution of chattel slavery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept of popular sovereignty gains force in the colonies</li> <li>• Colonists lay claim to rights of Englishmen</li> </ul>
1776	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing expands during the war</li> <li>• Cutoff of trade and severe inflation threaten economy</li> <li>• War debt grows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining immigration from Europe (1775–1820) enhances American identity</li> <li>• African American slaves seek freedom through military service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Declaration of Independence (1776)</li> <li>• States adopt republican constitutions (1776 on)</li> <li>• Articles of Confederation ratified (1781)</li> <li>• Treaty of Paris (1783)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judith Sargent Murray publishes "On the Equality of the Sexes" (1779)</li> <li>• Emancipation of slaves begins in the North</li> <li>• Virginia enacts religious freedom (1786)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas Paine's <i>Common Sense</i> (1776) causes colonists to rethink political loyalties</li> <li>• States rely on property qualifications to define citizenship rights in their new constitutions</li> </ul>
1787	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bank of North America founded (1781)</li> <li>• Land speculation increases in the West</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State cessions, land ordinances, and Indian wars create national domain in the West</li> <li>• The Alien Act makes it harder for immigrants to become citizens and allow for deporting aliens (1798)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. Constitution drafted (1787)</li> <li>• Conflict over Alexander Hamilton's economic policies</li> <li>• First national parties: Federalists and Republicans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Politicians and ministers deny vote to women; praise republican motherhood</li> <li>• Bill of Rights ratified (1791)</li> <li>• Sedition Act limits freedom of the press (1798)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indians form Western Confederacy (1790)</li> <li>• Second Great Awakening (1790–1860)</li> <li>• Emerging political divide between South and North</li> </ul>
1800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cotton output and demand for African labor expands</li> <li>• Farm productivity improves</li> <li>• Embargo encourages U.S. manufacturing</li> <li>• Second Bank of the United States chartered (1816–1836)</li> <li>• Supreme Court guards property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suffrage for white men expands; New Jersey retracts suffrage for propertied women (1807)</li> <li>• Atlantic slave trade ends (1808)</li> <li>• American Colonization Society founded (1817)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jefferson reduces activism of national government</li> <li>• Chief Justice Marshall asserts federal judicial powers</li> <li>• Triumph of Republican Party and end of Federalist Party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free blacks enhance sense of African American identity</li> <li>• Religious benevolence engenders social reform movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh revive Western Indian Confederacy</li> <li>• War of 1812 tests national unity</li> <li>• State constitutions democratized</li> </ul>

# 5

## CHAPTER

# The Problem of Empire

## 1763–1776

### AN EMPIRE TRANSFORMED

- The Costs of Empire
- George Grenville and the Reform Impulse
- An Open Challenge: The Stamp Act

### THE DYNAMICS OF REBELLION, 1765–1770

- Formal Protests and the Politics of the Crowd
- The Ideological Roots of Resistance
- Another Kind of Freedom
- Parliament and Patriots Square Off Again
- The Problem of the West
- Parliament Wavers

### THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE, 1771–1776

- A Compromise Repudiated
- The Continental Congress Responds
- The Rising of the Countryside
- Loyalists and Neutrals

### VIOLENCE EAST AND WEST

- Lord Dunmore's War
- Armed Resistance in Massachusetts
- The Second Continental Congress Organizes for War
- Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*
- Independence Declared

In June 1775, the city of New York faced a perplexing dilemma. Word arrived that George Washington, who had just been named commander in chief of the newly formed Continental army, was coming to town. But on the same day, William Tryon, the colony's crown-appointed governor, was scheduled to return from Britain. Local leaders orchestrated a delicate dance. Though the Provincial Congress was operating illegally in the eyes of the crown, it did not wish to offend Governor Tryon. It instructed the city's newly raised volunteer battalion to divide in two. One company awaited Washington's arrival, while another prepared to greet the governor. The "residue of the Battalion" was to be "ready to receive either the General or Governour *Tryon*, which ever shall first arrive." Washington arrived first. He was met by nine companies of the volunteer battalion and a throng of well-wishers, who escorted him to his rooms in a local tavern. Many of this same crowd then crossed town to join the large group assembled to greet the governor, whose ship was just landing. The crowd met him with "universal shouts of applause" and accompanied him home.

This awkward moment in the history of one American city reflects a larger crisis of loyalty that plagued colonists throughout British North America in the years between 1763 and 1776. The outcome of the Great War for Empire left Great Britain the undisputed master of eastern North America. But that success pointed the way to catastrophe. Convinced of the need to reform the empire and tighten its administration, British policymakers imposed a series of new administrative measures on the colonies. Accustomed as they were to governing their own affairs, colonists could not accept these changes. Yet the bonds of loyalty were strong, and the unraveling of British authority was tortuous and complex. Only gradually—as militancy slowly mounted on both sides—were the ties of empire broken and independence declared.

### IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

Consider whether the collapse of British authority in the thirteen rebellious colonies might have been avoided through compromise measures and more astute leadership. Was colonial independence inevitable, and was war the only way to achieve it?



**The Great New York Fire of 1776** In the wake of the Declaration of Independence, General William Howe's first objective was to capture New York, with its strategic location and excellent harbor. Patriot forces under George Washington's command attempted to defend the city but were forced into retreat and abandoned it to the British in September 1776. Early in the morning of September 21, a fire broke out near the southern tip of Manhattan and burned northwestward, driven by a strong wind. As many as a quarter of the town's buildings were destroyed; residents, already distressed by the fighting, fled into the streets with whatever possessions they could carry. Each side accused the other of arson, but that charge was never proven. Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

## An Empire Transformed

The Great War for Empire of 1756–1763 (Chapter 4) transformed the British Empire in North America. The British ministry could no longer let the colonies manage their own affairs while it contented itself with minimal oversight of the Atlantic trade. Its interests and responsibilities now extended far into the continental interior—a much more costly and complicated proposition than it had ever faced before. And neither its American colonies nor their Native American neighbors were inclined to cooperate in the transformation.

British administrators worried about their American colonists, who, according to former Georgia governor Henry Ellis, felt themselves “entitled to a greater measure of Liberty than is enjoyed by the people of England.” Ireland had been closely ruled for decades,

and recently the East India Company set up dominion over millions of non-British peoples (Map 5.1 and America Compared, p. 153). Britain’s American possessions were likewise filled with aliens and “undesirables”: “French, Dutch, Germans innumerable,

Indians, Africans, and a multitude of felons from this country,” as one member of Parliament put it. Consequently, declared Lord Halifax, “The people of England” considered Americans “as foreigners.”

Contesting that status, wealthy Philadelphia lawyer John Dickinson argued that his fellow colonists were “not [East Indian] Sea Poys, nor Marattas, but *British subjects* who are born to liberty, who know its worth, and who prize it high.” Thus was the stage set for a struggle between the conceptions of identity—and empire—held by British ministers, on the one hand, and many American colonists on the other.

### The Costs of Empire

The Great War for Empire imposed enormous costs on Great Britain. The national debt soared from £75 million to £133 million and was, an observer noted, “becoming the alarming object of every British subject.” By war’s end, interest on the debt alone consumed 60 percent of the nation’s budget, and the ministry had to raise taxes. During the eighteenth century, taxes were shifting from land—owned by the gentry and aristocracy—to consumables, and successive ministries became ever more ingenious in devising new ways to raise money. Excise (or sales) taxes were levied on all

kinds of ordinary goods—salt and beer, bricks and candles, paper (in the form of a stamp tax)—that were consumed by middling and poor Britons. In the 1760s, the per capita tax burden was 20 percent of income.

To collect the taxes, the government doubled the size of the tax bureaucracy (Figure 5.1). Customs agents patrolled the coasts of southern Britain, seizing tons of contraband French wines, Dutch tea, and Flemish textiles. Convicted smugglers faced heavy penalties, including death or forced “transportation” to America as indentured servants. (Despite colonial protests, nearly fifty thousand English criminals had already been shipped to America to be sold as indentured servants.)

The price of empire abroad was thus larger government and higher taxes at home. Members of two British opposition parties, the Radical Whigs and the Country Party, complained that the huge war debt placed the nation at the mercy of the “monied interests,” the banks and financiers who reaped millions of pounds’ interest from government bonds. To reverse the growth of government and the threat to personal liberty and property rights, British reformers demanded that Parliament represent a broader spectrum of the property-owning classes. The Radical Whig John Wilkes condemned rotten boroughs—sparsely populated, aristocratic-controlled electoral districts—and demanded greater representation for rapidly growing commercial and manufacturing cities. The war thus transformed British politics.

The war also revealed how little power Britain wielded in its American colonies. In theory, royal governors had extensive political powers, including command of the provincial militia; in reality, they shared power with the colonial assemblies, which outraged British officials. The Board of Trade complained that in Massachusetts “almost every act of executive and legislative power is ordered and directed by votes and resolves of the General Court.” To enforce the collection of trade duties, which colonial merchants had evaded for decades by bribing customs officials, Parliament passed the Revenue Act of 1762. The ministry also instructed the Royal Navy to seize American vessels carrying food crops from the mainland colonies to the French West Indies. It was absurd, declared a British politician, that French armies attempting “to Destroy one English province . . . are actually supported by Bread raised in another.”

Britain’s military victory brought another fundamental shift in policy: a new peacetime deployment of 15 royal battalions—some 7,500 troops—in North

#### EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

What was the impact of the Great War for Empire on British policymakers and the colonies?



## Britain's Atlantic and Asian Empires

The following table enumerates the economic benefits derived by Great Britain from its various colonies, which sent a wide variety of goods to Britain and also served as markets for British exports.

**TABLE 5.1**

**English/British Imports and Exports (annual averages in pounds sterling)**

	England*		Britain*	
	1700–01	1750–51	1772–73	1789–90
<b>Imports from Asia, Africa, and America</b>				
North America	372,000	877,000	1,997,000	1,351,000
The Fisheries**	0	7,000	27,000	188,000
West Indies	785,000	1,484,000	3,222,000	4,045,000
Africa	24,000	43,000	80,000	87,000
East Indies	775,000	1,101,000	2,203,000	3,256,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,956,000</b>	<b>3,512,000</b>	<b>7,529,000</b>	<b>8,927,000</b>
<b>Exports to America, Asia, and Africa</b>				
North America	362,000	1,355,000	3,254,000	3,763,000
West Indies	336,000	589,000	1,402,000	1,892,000
Africa	145,000	188,000	777,000	799,000
East India	125,000	653,000	893,000	2,173,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>968,000</b>	<b>2,785,000</b>	<b>6,326,000</b>	<b>8,627,000</b>

\*The “England” column shows data for England and Wales; “Britain” includes Scotland as well.

\*\*Includes Massachusetts Bay, Maine, and Newfoundland; by the 1760s more than £500,000 worth of fish was being sent annually to the West Indies and southern Europe.

Source: Adapted from *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2, ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 101.

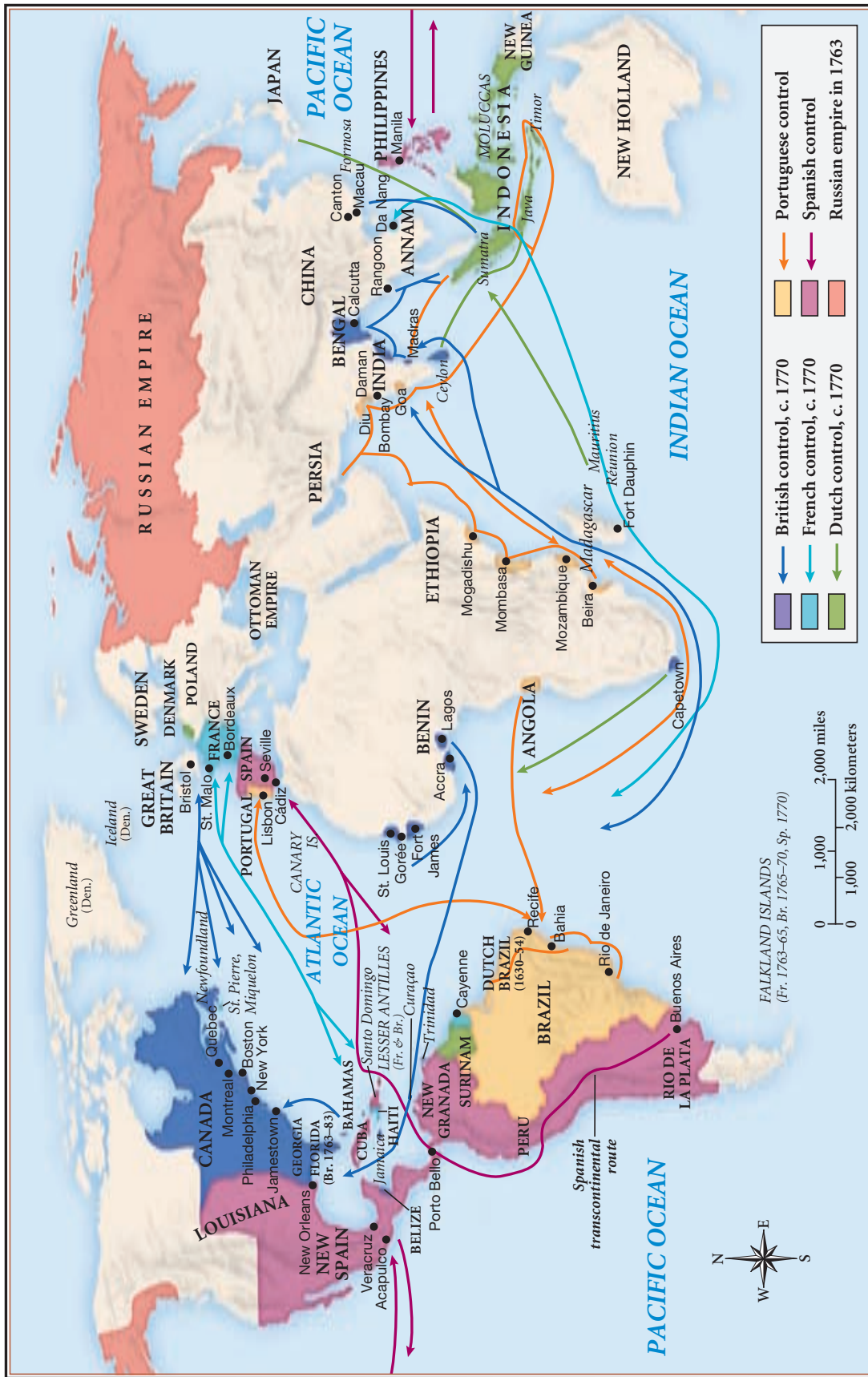
### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Compare Britain's colonies in their roles as producers of British imports to their roles as consumers of British exports. Why are the mainland colonies of North America a distant third as producers of imports, but ranked first as consumers of exports?
2. How did the American Revolution (1776–1783) impact the economic relationship between Great Britain and its mainland colonies? Is it reasonable to conclude that political independence did not bring economic independence?

America. The ministers who served under George III (r. 1760–1820) feared a possible rebellion by the 60,000 French residents of Canada, Britain's newly conquered colony (Map 5.2). Native Americans were also a concern: Pontiac's Rebellion had nearly overwhelmed

Britain's frontier forts. Moreover, only a substantial military force would deter land-hungry whites from defying the Proclamation of 1763 and settling west of the Appalachian Mountains (see Chapter 4). Finally, British politicians worried about the colonists' loyalty



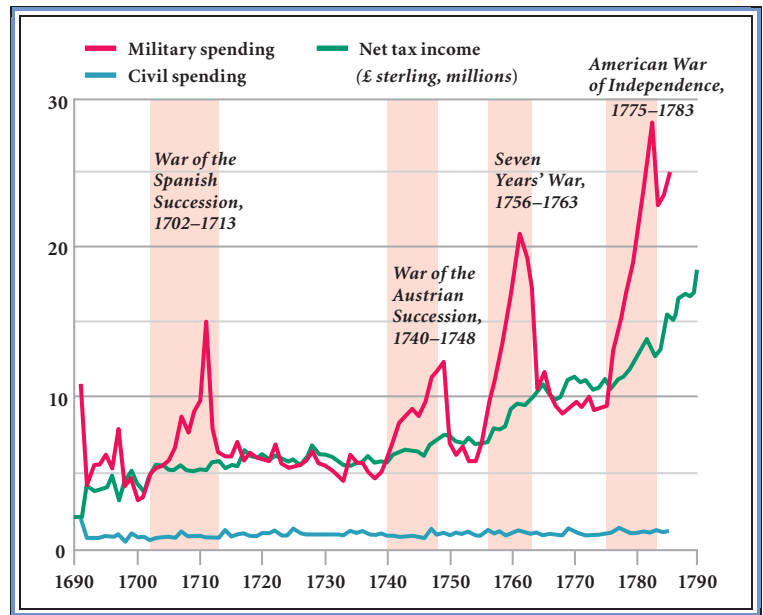


**MAP 5.1** Eurasian Trade and European Colonies, c. 1770

By 1770, the Western European nations that had long dominated maritime trade had created vast colonial empires and spheres of influence. Spain controlled the western halves of North and South America, Portugal owned Brazil, and Holland ruled Indonesia. Britain, a newer imperial power, boasted settler societies in North America, rich sugar islands in the West Indies, slave ports in West Africa, and a growing presence on the Indian subcontinent. Only France had failed to acquire and hold on to a significant colonial empire. (To trace changes in empire and trade routes, see Map 1.4 on p. 24 and Map 2.2 on p. 46.)

**FIGURE 5.1**  
The Cost of Empire, 1690–1790

It cost money to build and maintain an empire. As Britain built a great navy, subsidized the armies of European allies, and fought four wars against France and Spain between 1702 and 1783, military expenditures soared. Tax revenues did not keep pace, so the government created a large national debt by issuing bonds for millions of pounds. This policy created a class of wealthy financiers, led to political protests, and eventually prompted attempts to tax the American colonists.



now that they no longer faced a threat from French Canada.

The cost of stationing these troops, estimated at £225,000 per year, compounded Britain's fiscal crisis, and it seemed clear that the burden had to be shared by the colonies. They had always managed their own finances, but the king's ministers agreed that Parliament could no longer let them off the hook for the costs of empire. The greatest gains from the war had come in North America, where the specter of French encirclement had finally been lifted, and the greatest new post-war expenses were being incurred in North America as well.

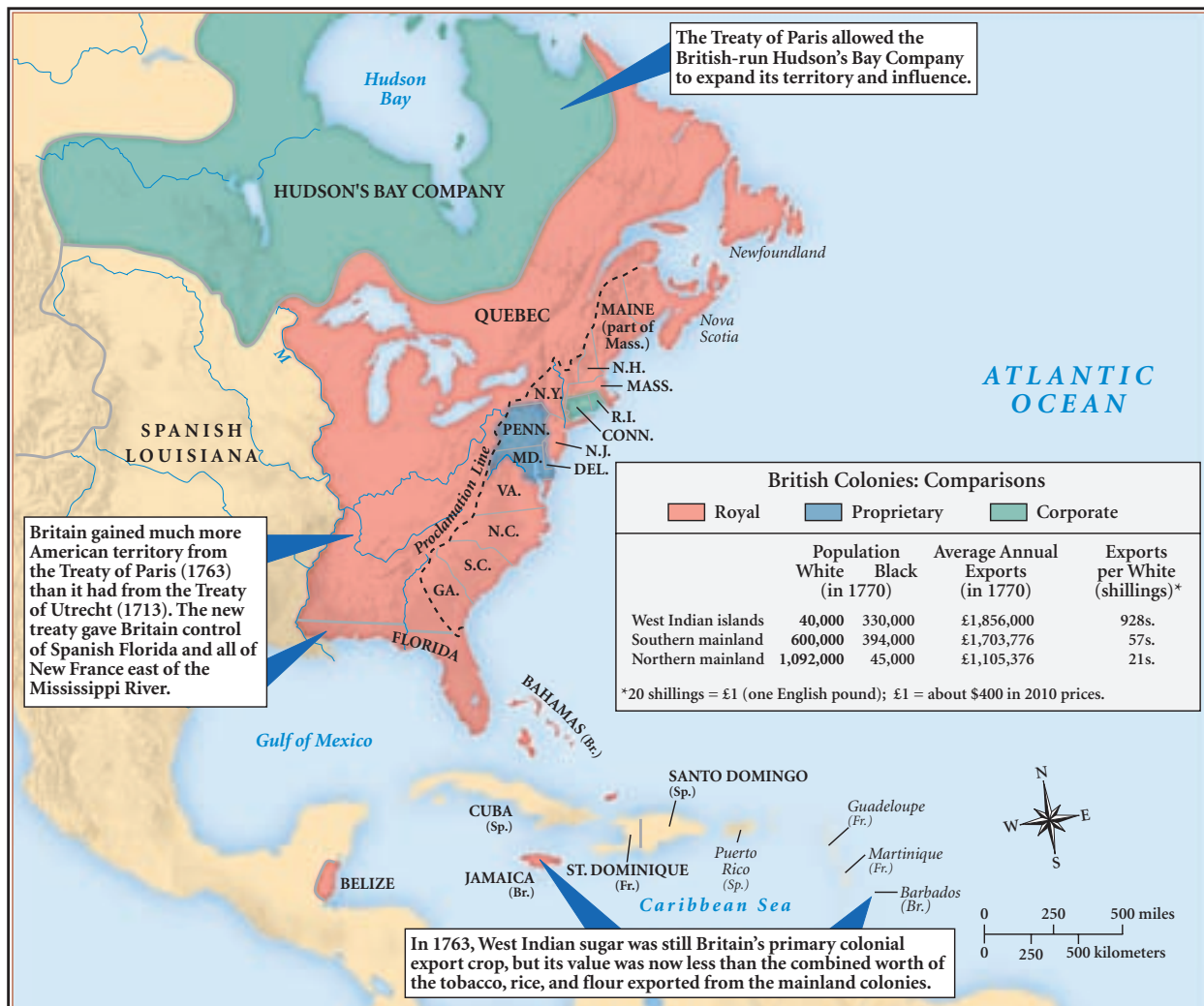
## George Grenville and the Reform Impulse

The challenge of raising revenue from the colonies fell first to George Grenville. Widely regarded as “one of the ablest men in Great Britain,” Grenville understood the need for far-reaching imperial reform. He first passed the Currency Act of 1764, which banned the American colonies from using paper money as legal tender. Colonial shopkeepers, planters, and farmers had used local currency, which was worth less than British pounds sterling, to pay their debts to British merchants. The Currency Act ensured that merchants would no longer be paid in money printed in the colonies, boosting their profits and British wealth.

**The Sugar Act** Grenville also won parliamentary approval of the **Sugar Act of 1764** to replace the widely ignored Molasses Act of 1733 (see Chapter 3). The earlier act had set a tax rate of 6 pence per gallon on French molasses — a rate so high that it made the trade unprofitable. Rather than pay it, colonial merchants bribed customs officials at the going rate of 1.5 pence per gallon. Grenville settled on a duty of 3 pence per gallon, which merchants could pay and still turn a profit, and then tightened customs enforcement so that it could actually be collected.

This carefully crafted policy garnered little support in America. New England merchants, among them John Hancock of Boston, had made their fortunes smuggling French molasses. In 1754, Boston merchants paid customs duties on a mere 400 hogsheads of molasses, yet they imported 40,000 hogsheads for use by 63 Massachusetts rum distilleries. Publicly, the merchants claimed that the Sugar Act would ruin the distilling industry; privately, they vowed to evade the duty by smuggling or by bribing officials.

**The End of Salutary Neglect** More important, colonists raised constitutional objections to the Sugar Act. In Massachusetts, the leader of the assembly argued that the new legislation was “contrary to a fundamental Principall of our Constitution: That all Taxes ought to originate with the people.” In Rhode Island, Governor Stephen Hopkins warned: “They who are taxed at



**MAP 5.2**  
Britain's American Empire in 1763

The Treaty of Paris gave Britain control of the eastern half of North America and returned a few captured sugar islands in the West Indies to France. To protect the empire's new mainland territories, British ministers dispatched troops to Florida and Quebec. They also sent troops to uphold the terms of the Proclamation of 1763, which prohibited Anglo-American settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains.

pleasure by others cannot possibly have any property, and they who have no property, can have no freedom.” The Sugar Act raised other constitutional issues as well. Merchants prosecuted under the act would be tried in **vice-admiralty courts**, tribunals governing the high seas and run by British-appointed judges. Previously, merchants accused of Navigation Acts violations were tried by local common-law courts, where friendly juries often acquitted them. The Sugar Act closed this legal loophole by extending the jurisdiction of the vice-admiralty courts to all customs offenses.

The Sugar Act revived old American fears. The influential Virginia planter Richard Bland emphasized that the American colonists “were not sent out to be the Slaves but to be the Equals of those that remained behind.” John Adams, the young Massachusetts lawyer defending John Hancock on a charge of smuggling,

To see a longer excerpt of the Richard Bland document, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America's History*.

argued that the vice-admiralty courts diminished this equality by “degrad[ing] every American . . . below the rank of an Englishman.”

In fact, accused smugglers in Britain were also tried in vice-admiralty courts, so there was no discrimination against Americans. The real issue was the growing power of the British state. Americans had lived for decades under an administrative policy of salutary neglect. Now they saw that the new imperial regime would deprive them “of some of their most essential Rights as British subjects,” as a committee of the Massachusetts assembly put it. In response, Royal Governor Francis Bernard replied: “The rule that a British subject shall not be bound by laws or liable to taxes, but what he has consented to by his representatives must be confined to the inhabitants of Great Britain only.” To Bernard, Grenville, and other imperial reformers, Americans were second-class subjects of the king, with rights limited by the Navigation Acts, parliamentary laws, and British interests.

### An Open Challenge: The Stamp Act

Another new tax, the **Stamp Act of 1765**, sparked the first great imperial crisis. The new levy was to cover part of the cost of keeping British troops in America—which turned out to be £385,000 a year (about \$150 million today), 70 percent more than the initial estimate. Grenville hoped the Stamp Act would raise £60,000 per year. The act would require a tax stamp on all printed items, from college diplomas, court documents, land titles, and contracts to newspapers, almanacs, and playing cards. It was ingeniously designed. Like its counterpart in England, it bore more heavily on the rich, since it charged only a penny a sheet for newspapers and other common items but up to £10 for a lawyer’s license. It also required no new bureaucracy; stamped paper would be delivered to colonial ports and sold to printers in lieu of unstamped stock.

Benjamin Franklin, agent of the Pennsylvania assembly, proposed a different solution: American representation in Parliament. “If you chuse to tax us,” he wrote, “give us Members in your Legislature, and let us be one People.” With the exception of William Pitt, British politicians rejected Franklin’s idea as too radical. They argued that the colonists already had **virtual representation** in Parliament because some of its members were transatlantic merchants and West Indian sugar planters. Colonial leaders were equally skeptical of Franklin’s plan. Americans were “situate at a great Distance from their Mother Country,” the Connecticut

assembly declared, and therefore “cannot participate in the general Legislature of the Nation.”

Asserting “the Right of Parliament to lay an inter-nal Tax upon the Colonies,” the House of Commons ignored American opposition and passed the act by an overwhelming majority of 205 to 49. At the request of General Thomas Gage, the British military commander in America, Parliament also passed the **Quartering Act of 1765**, which required colonial governments to provide barracks and food for British troops. Finally, Parliament approved Grenville’s proposal that violations of the Stamp Act be tried in vice-admiralty courts.

Using the doctrine of parliamentary supremacy, Grenville had begun to fashion a centralized imperial system in America much like that already in place in Ireland: British officials would govern the colonies with little regard for the local assemblies. Consequently, the prime minister’s plan provoked a constitutional confrontation on the specific issues of taxation, jury trials, and military quartering as well as on the general question of representative self-government.

#### UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

Why did most British and colonial leaders reject the idea that the colonies should be represented in Parliament?

## The Dynamics of Rebellion, 1765–1770

In the name of reform, Grenville had thrown down the gauntlet to the Americans. The colonists had often resisted unpopular laws and aggressive governors, but they had faced an all-out attack on their institutions only once before—in 1686, when James II had unilaterally imposed the Dominion of New England. Now the danger to colonial autonomy was even greater because both the king and Parliament backed reform. But the Patriots, as the defenders of American rights came to be called, met the challenge posed by Grenville and his successor, Charles Townshend. They organized protests—formal and informal, violent as well as peaceful—and fashioned a compelling ideology of resistance.

### Formal Protests and the Politics of the Crowd

Virginia’s House of Burgesses was the first formal body to complain. In May 1765, hotheaded young Patrick Henry denounced Grenville’s legislation and attacked



### Protesting the Stamp Act in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Throughout the colonies, disciplined mobs protesting the Stamp Act forced stamp distributors to resign their offices. In this engraving, protesters in the small city of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, stone an effigy of the distributor as other members of the mob carry off a coffin representing the death of American “Liberty.” Illustration from “Interesting Events in the History of the U.S.” by J. W. Barber, 1829/Picture Research Consultants & Archives.

George III for supporting it. He compared the king to Charles I, whose tyranny had led to his overthrow and execution in the 1640s. These remarks, which bordered on treason, frightened the Burgesses; nonetheless, they condemned the Stamp Act’s “manifest Tendency to Destroy American freedom.” In Massachusetts, James Otis, another republican-minded firebrand, persuaded the House of Representatives to call a meeting of all the mainland colonies “to implore Relief” from the act.

**The Stamp Act Congress** Nine assemblies sent delegates to the **Stamp Act Congress**, which met in New York City in October 1765. The congress protested the loss of American “rights and liberties,” especially the right to trial by jury. And it challenged the constitutionality of both the Stamp and Sugar Acts by declaring that only the colonists’ elected representatives could tax them. Still, moderate-minded delegates wanted compromise, not confrontation. They assured Parliament that Americans “glory in being subjects of the best of Kings” and humbly petitioned for repeal of the Stamp Act. Other influential Americans favored active (but peaceful) resistance; they organized a boycott of British goods.

**Crowd Actions** Popular opposition also took a violent form, however. When the Stamp Act went into effect on November 1, 1765, disciplined mobs demanded the resignation of stamp-tax collectors. In Boston, a group calling itself the **Sons of Liberty** burned an effigy of collector Andrew

Oliver and then destroyed Oliver’s new brick warehouse. Two weeks later, Bostonians attacked the house of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson, Oliver’s brother-in-law and a prominent defender of imperial authority, breaking his furniture, looting his wine cellar, and setting fire to his library.

Wealthy merchants and Patriot lawyers, such as John Hancock and John Adams, encouraged the mobs, which were usually led by middling artisans and minor merchants. In New York City, nearly three thousand shopkeepers, artisans, laborers, and seamen marched through the streets breaking windows and crying “Liberty!” Resistance to the Stamp Act spread far beyond the port cities: in nearly every colony, angry crowds—the “rabble,” their detractors called them—intimidated royal officials. Near Wethersfield, Connecticut, five hundred farmers seized tax collector Jared Ingersoll and forced him to resign his office in “the Cause of the People.”

**The Motives of the Crowd** Such crowd actions were common in both Britain and America, and protesters had many motives. Roused by the Great Awakening, evangelical Protestants resented arrogant British military officers and corrupt royal bureaucrats. In New England, where rioters invoked the anti-monarchy sentiments of their great-grandparents, an anonymous letter sent to a Boston newspaper promising to save “all the Freeborn Sons of America” was signed “Oliver Cromwell,” the English republican revolutionary of the 1650s. In New York City, Sons of Liberty leaders Isaac Sears and Alexander McDougall were minor merchants and Radical Whigs who feared

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Why did the Stamp Act arouse so much more resistance than the Sugar Act?

that imperial reform would undermine political liberty. The mobs also included apprentices, day laborers, and unemployed sailors: young men with their own notions of liberty who—especially if they had been drinking—were quick to resort to violence.

Nearly everywhere popular resistance nullified the Stamp Act. Fearing an assault on Fort George, New York lieutenant governor Cadwallader Colden called on General Gage to use his small military force to protect the stamps. Gage refused. “Fire from the Fort might disperse the Mob, but it would not quell them,” he told Colden, and the result would be “an Insurrection, the Commencement of Civil War.” The tax was collected in Barbados and Jamaica, but frightened collectors resigned their offices in all thirteen colonies that would eventually join in the Declaration of Independence. This popular insurrection gave a democratic cast to the emerging Patriot movement. “Nothing is wanting but your own Resolution,” declared a New York rioter, “for great is the Authority and Power of the People.”

## The Ideological Roots of Resistance

Some Americans couched their resistance in constitutional terms. Many were lawyers or well-educated merchants and planters. Composing pamphlets of remarkable political sophistication, they gave the resistance movement its rationale, its political agenda, and its leaders.

Patriot writers drew on three intellectual traditions. The first was **English common law**, the centuries-old body of legal rules and procedures that protected the lives and property of the monarch’s subjects. In the famous *Writs of Assistance* case of 1761, Boston lawyer James Otis invoked English legal precedents to challenge open-ended search warrants. In demanding a jury trial for John Hancock in the late 1760s, John Adams appealed to the Magna Carta (1215), the ancient document that, said Adams, “has for many Centuries been esteemed by Englishmen, as one of the . . . firmest Bulwarks of their Liberties.” Other lawyers protested that new strictures violated specific “liberties and privileges” granted in colonial charters or embodied in Britain’s “ancient constitution.”

Enlightenment rationalism provided Patriots with a second important intellectual resource. Virginia planter Thomas Jefferson and other Patriots drew on the writings of John Locke, who had argued that all individuals possessed certain “**natural rights**”—life, liberty, and property—that governments must protect (see Chapter 4). And they turned to the works of

French philosopher Montesquieu, who had maintained that a “separation of powers” among government departments prevented arbitrary rule.

The republican and Whig strands of the English political tradition provided a third ideological source for American Patriots. Puritan New England had long venerated the Commonwealth era (1649–1660), when England had been a republic (see Chapter 2). After the Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689, many colonists praised the English Whigs for creating a constitutional monarchy that prevented the king from imposing taxes and other measures. Joseph Warren, a physician and a Radical Whig Patriot, suggested that the Stamp Act was part of a ministerial plot “to force the colonies into rebellion” and justify the use of “military power to reduce them to servitude.” John Dickinson’s *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* (1768) urged colonists to “remember your ancestors and your posterity” and oppose parliamentary taxes. The letters circulated widely and served as an early call to resistance. If Parliament could tax the colonies without their consent, he wrote, “our boasted liberty is but A sound and nothing else.”

Such arguments, widely publicized in newspapers and pamphlets, gave intellectual substance to the Patriot movement and turned a series of impromptu riots, tax protests, and boycotts of British manufactures into a formidable political force.

## Another Kind of Freedom

“We are taxed without our own consent,” Dickinson wrote in one of his *Letters*. “We are therefore—SLAVES.” As Patriot writers argued that taxation without representation made colonists the slaves of Parliament, many, including Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia and James Otis in Massachusetts, also began to condemn the institution of chattel slavery itself as a violation of slaves’ natural rights. African Americans made the connection as well. In Massachusetts, slaves submitted at least four petitions to the legislature asking that slavery be abolished. As one petition noted, slaves “have in common with other men, a natural right to be free, and without molestation, to enjoy such property, as they may acquire by their industry.”

In the southern colonies, where slaves constituted half or more of the population and the economy depended on their servitude, the quest for freedom

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Why were southerners more threatened by challenges to the institution of slavery than northerners?



### Phillis Wheatley

Born in West Africa and enslaved as a child, Phillis Wheatley was purchased by Boston merchant and tailor John Wheatley when she was eight. Tutored by Wheatley's children, Phillis learned to read English, Greek, and Latin by the age of twelve. This engraving, which pictures her at a writing desk, was the frontispiece for her *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773), which was praised by George Washington and gained attention in both Britain and the colonies. Freed upon the death of her master, Wheatley married John Peters, a free black man. He was later imprisoned for debt, forcing Wheatley to take employment as a maid. She died in 1784 at age thirty-one; none of her three children survived infancy. Library of Congress.

alarmed slaveholders. In November 1773, a group of Virginia slaves hoped to win their freedom by supporting British troops that, they heard, would soon arrive in the colony. Their plan was uncovered, and, as James Madison wrote, “proper precautions” were taken “to prevent the Infection” from spreading. He fully understood how important it was to defend the colonists’ liberties without allowing the idea of natural rights to undermine the institution of slavery. “It is prudent,” he wrote, “such things should be concealed as well as suppressed.” Throughout the Revolution, the quest for African American rights and liberties would play out alongside that of the colonies, but unlike national independence, the liberation of African Americans would not be fulfilled for many generations.

## Parliament and Patriots Square Off Again

When news of the Stamp Act riots and the boycott reached Britain, Parliament was already in turmoil. Disputes over domestic policy had led George III to dismiss Grenville as prime minister (Table 5.2). However, Grenville’s allies demanded that imperial reform continue, if necessary at gunpoint. “The British legislature,” declared Chief Justice Sir James Mansfield, “has authority to bind every part and every subject, whether such subjects have a right to vote or not.”

Yet a majority in Parliament was persuaded that the Stamp Act was cutting deeply into British exports and thus doing more harm than good. “The Avenues of Trade are all shut up,” a Bristol merchant told Parliament: “We have no Remittances and are at our Witts End for want of Money to fulfill our Engagements with our Tradesmen.” Grenville’s successor, the Earl of Rockingham, forged a compromise. To mollify the colonists and help British merchants, he repealed the Stamp Act and reduced the duty on molasses imposed by the Sugar Act to a penny a gallon. Then he pacified imperial reformers and hard-liners with the **Declaratory Act of 1766**, which explicitly reaffirmed Parliament’s “full power and authority to make laws and statutes . . . to bind the colonies and people of America . . . in all cases whatsoever.” By swiftly ending the Stamp Act crisis, Rockingham hoped it would be forgotten just as quickly.

**Charles Townshend Steps In** Often the course of history is changed by a small event — an illness, a personal grudge, a chance remark. That was the case in 1767, when George III named William Pitt to head a new government. Pitt, chronically ill and often absent

TABLE 5.2

### Ministerial Instability in Britain, 1760–1782

Leading Minister	Dates of Ministry	American Policy
Lord Bute	1760–1763	Mildly reformist
George Grenville	1763–1765	Ardently reformist
Lord Rockingham	1765–1766	Accommodationist
William Pitt / Charles Townshend	1766–1770	Ardently reformist
Lord North	1770–1782	Coercive

### Celebrating Repeal

This British cartoon mocking supporters of the Stamp Act—“The Repeal, or the Funeral Procession of Miss Americ-Stamp”—was probably commissioned by merchants trading with America. Preceded by two flag bearers, George Grenville, the author of the legislation, carries a miniature coffin (representing the act) to a tomb, as a dog urinates on the leader of the procession. Two bales on the wharf, labeled “Stamps from America” and “Black cloth return’d from America,” testify to the failure of the act. The Granger Collection, New York.



from parliamentary debates, left chancellor of the exchequer Charles Townshend in command. Pitt was sympathetic toward America; Townshend was not. As a member of the Board of Trade, Townshend had sought restrictions on the colonial assemblies and strongly supported the Stamp Act. In 1767, he promised to find a new source of revenue in America.

The new tax legislation, the **Townshend Act of 1767**, had both fiscal and political goals. It imposed duties on colonial imports of paper, paint, glass, and tea that were expected to raise about £40,000 a year. Though Townshend did allocate some of this revenue for American military expenses, he earmarked most of it to pay the salaries of royal governors, judges, and other imperial officials, who had always previously been paid by colonial assemblies. Now, he hoped, royal appointees could better enforce parliamentary laws and carry out the king's instructions. Townshend next devised the Revenue Act of 1767, which created a board of customs commissioners in Boston and vice-admiralty courts in Halifax, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston. By using parliamentary taxes to finance imperial administration, Townshend intended to undermine American political institutions.

The Townshend duties revived the constitutional debate over taxation. During the Stamp Act crisis, some Americans, including Benjamin Franklin, distinguished between external and internal taxes. They suggested that external duties on trade (such as those long mandated by the Navigation Acts) were acceptable to Americans, but that direct, or internal, taxes were not.

Townshend thought this distinction was “perfect nonsense,” but he indulged the Americans and laid duties only on trade.

### A Second Boycott and the Daughters of Liberty

Even so, most colonial leaders rejected the legitimacy of Townshend's measures. In February 1768, the Massachusetts assembly condemned the Townshend Act, and Boston and New York merchants began a new boycott of British goods. Throughout Puritan New England, ministers and public officials discouraged the purchase of “foreign superfluities” and promoted the domestic manufacture of cloth and other necessities.

American women, ordinarily excluded from public affairs, became crucial to the **nonimportation movement**. They reduced their households' consumption of imported goods and produced large quantities of homespun cloth. Pious farmwives spun yarn at their ministers' homes. In Berwick, Maine, “true Daughters of Liberty” celebrated American products by “drinking rye coffee and dining on bear venison.” Other women's groups supported the boycott with charitable work, spinning flax and wool for the needy. Just as Patriot men followed tradition by joining crowd actions, so women's protests reflected their customary concern for the well-being of the community.

Newspapers celebrated these exploits of the Daughters of Liberty. One Massachusetts town proudly claimed an annual output of 30,000 yards of cloth; East Hartford, Connecticut, reported 17,000 yards. This



**EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES**

How did the nonimportation movement bring women into the political sphere?

surge in domestic production did not offset the loss of British imports, which had averaged about 10 million yards of cloth annually, but it brought thousands of women into the public arena.

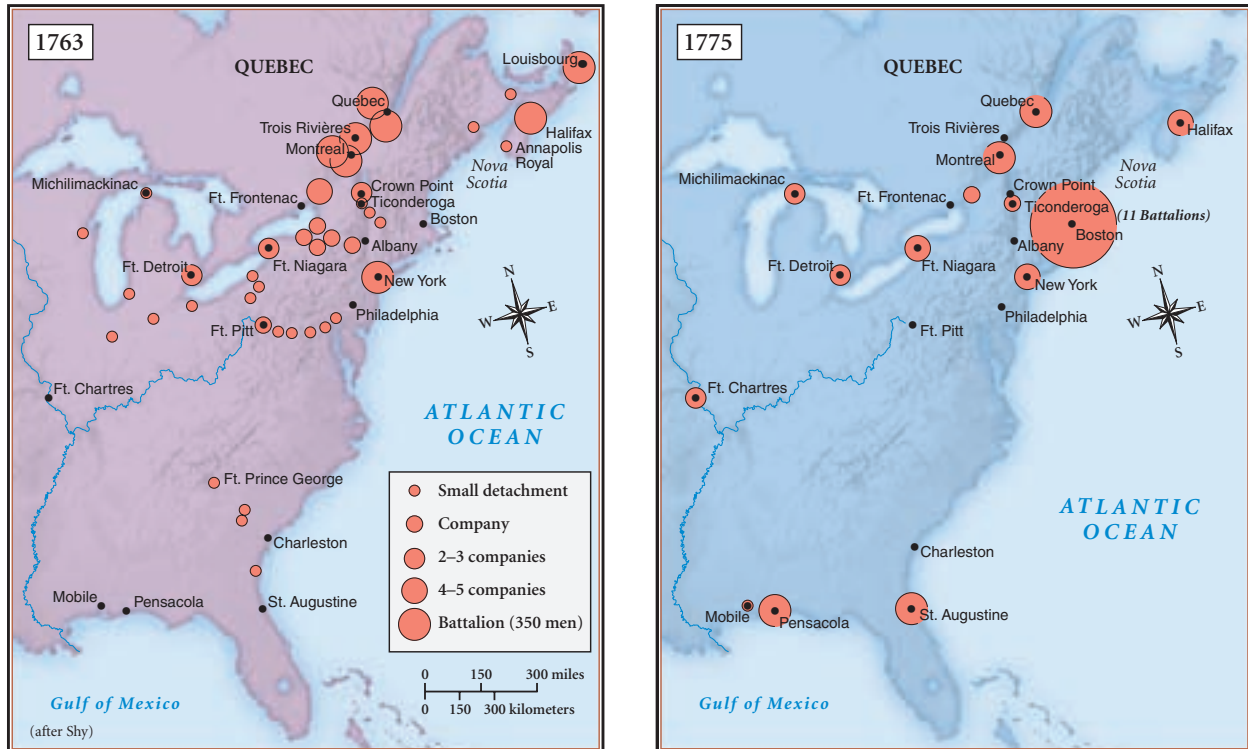
The boycott mobilized many American men as well. In the seaport cities, the Sons of Liberty published the names of merchants who imported British goods and harassed their employees and customers. By March 1769, the nonimportation movement had spread to Philadelphia; two months later, the members of the Virginia House of Burgesses vowed not to buy dutied articles, luxury goods, or imported slaves. Reflecting colonial self-confidence, Benjamin Franklin called for a return to the pre-1763 mercantilist system: “Repeal the laws, renounce the right, recall the troops, refund the money, and return to the old method of requisition.”

Despite the enthusiasm of Patriots, nonimportation—accompanied by pressure on merchants and consumers who resisted it—opened fissures in colonial society. Not only royal officials, but also merchants, farmers, and ordinary folk, were subject to new forms of surveillance and coercion—a pattern that would only become more pronounced as the imperial crisis unfolded.

**Troops to Boston** American resistance only increased British determination. When the Massachusetts assembly’s letter opposing the Townshend duties reached London, Lord Hillsborough, the secretary of state for American affairs, branded it “unjustifiable opposition to the constitutional authority of Parliament.” To strengthen the “Hand of Government” in Massachusetts, Hillsborough dispatched General Thomas Gage and 2,000 British troops to Boston (Map 5.3). Once in Massachusetts, Gage accused its leaders of “Treasonable and desperate Resolves” and

**Edenton Ladies' Tea Party**

In October 1774, a group of fifty-one women from Edenton, North Carolina, led by Penelope Barker created a local association to support a boycott of British goods. Patriots in the colonies praised the Edenton Tea Party, which was one of the first formal female political associations in North America, but it was ridiculed in Britain, where this cartoon appeared in March 1775. The women are given a mannish appearance, and the themes of promiscuity and neglect to their female duties are suggested by the presence of a slave and an amorous man, the neglected child, and the urinating dog. Library of Congress.



**MAP 5.3**  
British Troop Deployments, 1763 and 1775

As the imperial crisis deepened, British military priorities changed. In 1763, most British battalions were stationed in Canada to deter Indian uprisings and French Canadian revolts. After the Stamp Act riots of 1765, the British placed large garrisons in New York and Philadelphia. By 1775, eleven battalions of British regulars occupied Boston, the center of the Patriot movement.

advised the ministry to “Quash this Spirit at a Blow.” In 1765, American resistance to the Stamp Act had sparked a parliamentary debate; in 1768, it provoked a plan for military coercion.

## The Problem of the West

At the same time that successive ministries addressed the problem of raising a colonial revenue, they quarreled over how to manage the vast new inland territory—about half a billion acres—acquired in the Treaty of Paris in 1763 (see Chapter 4). The Proclamation Line had drawn a boundary between the colonies and Indian country. The line was originally intended as a temporary barrier. It prohibited settlement “for the present, and until our further Pleasure be known.” The Proclamation also created three new mainland colonies—Quebec, East Florida, and West Florida—and thus opened new opportunities at the northern and southern extremities of British North America.

But many colonists looked west rather than north or south. Four groups in the colonies were especially

interested in westward expansion. First, gentlemen who had invested in numerous land speculation companies were petitioning the crown for large land grants in the Ohio country. Second, officers who served in the Seven Years’ War were paid in land warrants—up to 5,000 acres for field officers—and some, led by George Washington, were exploring possible sites beyond the Appalachians. Third, Indian traders who had received large grants from the Ohio Indians hoped to sell land titles. And fourth, thousands of squatters were following the roads cut to the Ohio by the Braddock and Forbes campaigns during the Seven Years’ War to take up lands in the hope that they could later receive a title to them. “The roads are . . . alive with Men, Women, Children, and Cattle from Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland,” wrote one astonished observer (*Thinking Like a Historian*, p. 164).

All of this activity antagonized the Ohio Indians. In 1770, Shawnees invited hundreds of Indian leaders to

### IDENTIFY CAUSES

What groups were most interested in western lands, and why did Hillsborough oppose them?



## Beyond the Proclamation Line

Though the Royal Proclamation of 1763 called the territory between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River “Indian country,” the reality was more complex than this phrase indicates. The following documents illustrate some of the patterns that shaped life beyond the Proclamation Line between 1763 and 1776.

1. **Colonel John Bradstreet’s Thoughts on Indian Affairs, 1764.** *Colonel John Bradstreet led a force of British redcoats to Fort Niagara in response to Pontiac’s Rebellion. He drafted these remarks shortly afterward.*

Of all the Savages upon the continent, the most knowing, the most intriguing, the less useful, and the greatest Villains, are those most conversant with the Europeans, and deserve most the attention of Govern[men]t by way of correction, and these are the Six Nations, Shawanese and Delawares; they are well acquainted with the defenceless state of the Inhabitants, who live on the Frontiers, and think they will ever have it in their power to distress and plunder them, and never cease raising the jealousy of the Upper Nations against us, by propagating amongst them such stories, as make them believe the English have nothing so much at heart as the extirpation of all Savages. The apparent design of the Six Nations, is to keep us at war with all Savages, but themselves, that they may be employed as mediators between us and them.

2. **William Johnson to the British Lords of Trade, 1763.** *William Johnson, a New Yorker with extensive experience in Indian relations, was the crown’s superintendent for Indian affairs in the northern colonies.*

[T]he Colonies, had all along neglected to cultivate a proper understanding with the Indians, and from a mistaken notion, have greatly dispised them, without considering, that it is in their power at pleasure to lay waste and destroy the Frontiers. . . . Without any exaggeration, I look upon the Northern Indians to be the most formidable of any uncivilized body of people in the World. Hunting and War are their sole occupations, and the one qualifies them for the other, they have few wants, and those are easily supplied, their properties of little value, consequently, expeditions against them however successful, cannot distress them, and they have courage sufficient for their manner of fighting, the nature and situation of their Countrys, require not more.

3. **“Indians Giving a Talk to Colonel Bouquet,” 1766.** *Based on a painting by Benjamin West, this engraving from a book about Bouquet’s campaign to the Ohio following Pontiac’s Rebellion depicts a meeting with Delaware, Seneca, and Shawnee representatives in October 1764.*



Source: The Granger Collection, New York.

4. **David Jones’s journal, 1773.** *David Jones was a Baptist minister who traveled down the Ohio River in 1772 and 1773. His journal offers a compelling glimpse of life in the valley’s trading communities.*

FRIDAY [January] 22, in company with Mr. Irwine, set out for Chillicathee. . . . Here Mr. Irwine kept an assortment of goods, and for that purpose rented an house from an Indian whose name is *Waappee Monneeto*, often called the White Devil. . . . Went to see Mr. Moses Henry a gunsmith and trader from Lancaster. This gentleman has lived for some years in this town, and is lawfully married to a white woman, who was captivated so young that she speaks the language as well as any Indian. . . . Mr. Henry lives in a comfortable manner, having plenty of good beef, pork, milk, &c. . . . Chillicathee is the chief town of the Shawannee Indians — it is situated north of a large plain

adjacent to a branch of Paint Creek. This plain is their corn-field, which supplies great part of their town. Their houses are made of logs. . . .

WEDNESDAY [February] 10. . . . This is a small town consisting of Delawares and Shawanees. The chief is a Shawanee woman, who is esteemed very rich — she entertains travelers — there were four of us in company, and for our use, her negro quarter was evacuated this night, which had a fire in the middle without any chimney. This woman has a large stock, and supplied us with milk. Here we also got corn for our horses at a very expensive price. . . .

FRIDAY [February] 12 . . . We passed [the Delaware chief] Captain White Eye's Town. . . . He told me that he intended to be religious, and have his children educated. He saw that their way of living would not answer much longer — game grew scarce — they could not much longer pretend to live by hunting, but must farm, &c. — But said, he could not attend to matters of religion now, for he intended to make a great *hunt* down Ohio, and take the skins himself to Philadelphia.

**5. Killbuck to the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, December 1771.** *John Killbuck Jr., or Gelelemend, a Delaware headman, aired grievances on behalf of Ohio Delaware, Munsie, and Mahican Indians.*

Great numbers more of your people have come over the Great Mountains and settled throughout this country, and we are sorry to tell you, that several quarrels have happened between your people and ours, in which people have been killed on both sides, and that we now see the nations round us and your people ready to embroil in a quarrel, which gives our nations great concerns, as we, on our parts, want to live in friendship with you. As you have always told us, you have laws to govern your people by, -- but we do not see that you have; therefore, brethren, unless you can fall upon some method of governing your people who live between the Great Mountains and the Ohio River and who are now very numerous, it will be out of the Indians' power to govern their young men, for we assure you the black clouds begin to gather fast in this country. . . . We find your people are very fond of our rich land. We see them quarrelling every day about land and burning one another's houses, so that we do not know how soon they may come over the river Ohio and drive us from our villages, nor do we see you, brothers, take any care to stop them.

**6. Aeneas MacKay to Pennsylvania governor John Penn, April 4, 1774.** *MacKay, a magistrate of Pennsylvania's Westmoreland County, reported on Virginia's effort to create a competing jurisdiction in the vicinity of Pittsburgh. Dr. John Connolly, appointed by Governor Dunmore as commander*

*of the militia in Pittsburgh, was at the center of the controversy.*

Since the return of the Celebrated Doctor Connelly from Virginia last to this place, which he did on the 28th of March, our village is become the scene of anarchy and Confusion. . . .

The Doctor now is in actual possession of the Fort, with a Body Guard of Militia about him, Invested, as we are told, with both Civil & military power, to put the Virginia Law in Force in these parts, and a considerable Number of the Inhabitants of these back Parts of this Country, Ready to join him on any emergency, every artifice are used to seduce the people, some by being promoted to Civil or military employments, and others with the promises of grants of Lands, on easy Terms, & the giddy headed mobs are so Infatuated as to suffer themselves to be carried away by these Insinuating Delusions. . . .

The Indians are greatly alarmed at seeing parties of armed men patrolling through our streets Daily, not knowing but there is hostility intended against them and their country.

Sources: (1, 2) E. B. O'Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany, 1856–1887), 7: 690–694, 574; (4) David Jones, *A Journal of Two Visits Made to Some Nations of Indians on the West Side of the River Ohio, in the Years 1772 and 1773* (Burlington, 1774 [rep. NY, 1971]); (5) K. G. Davies, ed., *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770–1783*, 19 vols. (Shannon and Dublin, 1972–1981), 3: 254–255; (6) Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, series 1, 12 vols. (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns & Co., 1856), 4: 484–486.

### ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. John Bradstreet, a career British army officer, based his observations (source 1) on his wartime experiences in the West. William Johnson (source 2) had lived in close proximity to Iroquois Indians for many years. Compare their views: what do they agree upon, and where do they differ?
2. Charles Grignon's engraving (source 3) appeared in print a short time after Pontiac's Rebellion. How does it portray the Ohio Indians? Compare Grignon's image with the descriptions in sources 1 and 2 and John Killbuck's speech (source 5). What parallels or differences do you see?
3. What do you find most surprising about source 4? What evidence of European influence do you see in the Indian towns Jones describes?
4. Sources 5 and 6 describe the state of affairs on the upper Ohio shortly before the outbreak of Dunmore's War. What concerns does Killbuck express? Why was Virginia's willingness to organize a militia so important to the residents of the region?

### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using these documents and what you have learned in Chapter 5, write a short essay that surveys British and Anglo-American attitudes toward the Ohio Indians and explores the contradictions between these attitudes and the reality of life in the Ohio country.

gather at the town of Chillicothe on the Scioto River. There they formed the Scioto Confederacy, which pledged to oppose any further expansion into the Ohio country.

Meanwhile, in London, the idea that the Proclamation Line was only temporary gave way to the view that it should be permanent. Hillsborough, who became colonial secretary in 1768, adamantly opposed westward expansion, believing it would antagonize the Indians without benefitting the empire. Moreover, he owned vast Irish estates, and he was alarmed by the number of tenants who were leaving Ireland for America. To preserve Britain's laboring class, as well as control costs, Hillsborough wanted to make the Proclamation Line permanent.

For colonists who were already moving west to settle in large numbers, this shift in policy caused confusion and frustration. Eventually, like the Patriots along the seaboard, they would take matters into their own hands.

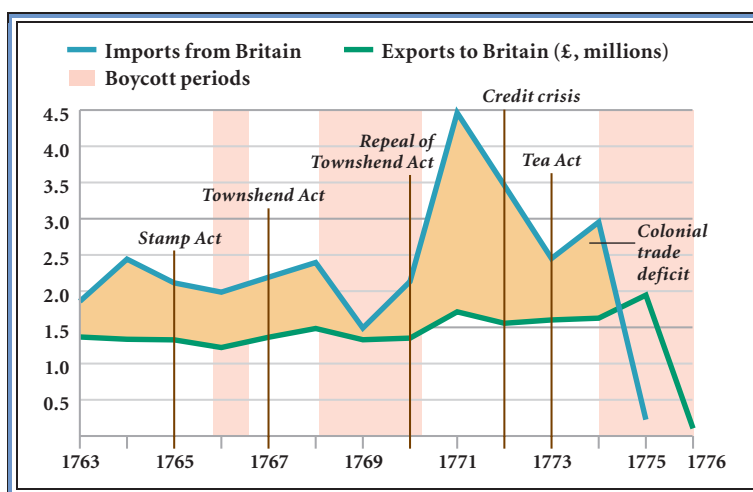
## Parliament Wavers

In Britain, the colonies' nonimportation agreement was taking its toll. In 1768, the colonies had cut imports of British manufactures in half; by 1769, the mainland colonies had a trade surplus with Britain of £816,000. Hard-hit by these developments, British merchants and manufacturers petitioned Parliament to repeal the Townshend duties. Early in 1770, Lord North became prime minister. A witty man and a skillful politician, North designed a new compromise. Arguing that it was foolish to tax British exports to America (thereby raising their price and decreasing consumption), he persuaded Parliament to repeal most of the Townshend

duties. However, North retained the tax on tea as a symbol of Parliament's supremacy (Figure 5.2).

**The Boston Massacre** Even as Parliament was debating North's repeal, events in Boston guaranteed that reconciliation between Patriots and Parliament would be hard to achieve. Between 1,200 and 2,000 troops had been stationed in Boston for a year and a half. Soldiers were also stationed in New York, Philadelphia, several towns in New Jersey, and various frontier outposts in these years, with a minimum of conflict or violence. But in Boston — a small port town on a tiny peninsula — the troops numbered 10 percent of the local population, and their presence wore on the locals. On the night of March 5, 1770, a group of nine British redcoats fired into a crowd and killed five townspeople. A subsequent trial exonerated the soldiers, but Boston's Radical Whigs, convinced of a ministerial conspiracy against liberty, labeled the incident a "massacre" and used it to rally sentiment against imperial power.

**Sovereignty Debated** When news of North's compromise arrived in the colonies in the wake of the Boston Massacre, the reaction was mixed. Most of Britain's colonists remained loyal to the empire, but five years of conflict had taken their toll. In 1765, American leaders had accepted Parliament's authority; the Stamp Act Resolves had opposed only certain "unconstitutional" legislation. By 1770, the most outspoken Patriots — Benjamin Franklin in Pennsylvania, Patrick Henry in Virginia, and Samuel Adams in Massachusetts — repudiated parliamentary supremacy and claimed equality for the American assemblies within the empire. Franklin suggested that the colonies



**FIGURE 5.2**  
**Trade as a Political Weapon, 1763–1776**

Political upheaval did not affect the mainland colonies' exports to Britain, which rose slightly over the period, but imports fluctuated greatly. The American boycott of 1765–1766 prompted a dip in imports, but the second boycott of 1768–1770 led to a sharp drop in imports of British textiles, metal goods, and ceramics. Imports of manufactures soared after the repeal of the Townshend duties, only to plummet when the First Continental Congress proclaimed a third boycott in 1774.



### Patriot Propaganda

Silversmith Paul Revere issued this engraving of the confrontation between British redcoats and snowball-throwing Bostonians in the days after it occurred. To whip up opposition to the military occupation of their town, Revere and other Patriots labeled the incident “The Boston Massacre.” The shooting confirmed their Radical Whig belief that “standing armies” were instruments of tyranny. Library of Congress.

were now “distinct and separate states” with “the same Head, or Sovereign, the King.”

Franklin’s suggestion outraged Thomas Hutchinson, the American-born royal governor of Massachusetts. Hutchinson emphatically rejected the idea of “two independent legislatures in one and the same state.” He told the Massachusetts assembly, “I know of no line that can be drawn between the supreme authority of Parliament and the total independence of the colonies.”

There the matter rested. The British had twice imposed revenue acts on the colonies, and American Patriots had twice forced a retreat. If Parliament

insisted on a policy of constitutional absolutism by imposing taxes a third time, some Americans were prepared to pursue violent resistance. Nor did they flinch when reminded that George III condemned their agitation. As the Massachusetts House replied to Hutchinson, “There is more reason to dread the consequences of absolute uncontrolled supreme power, whether of a nation or a monarch, than those of total independence.” Fearful of civil war, Lord North’s ministry hesitated to force the issue.

### TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME

What was Benjamin Franklin’s position on colonial representation in 1765, and why had his view changed by 1770?

## The Road to Independence, 1771–1776

Repeal of the Townshend duties in 1770 restored harmony to the British Empire, but strong feelings and mutual distrust lay just below the surface. In 1773, those emotions erupted, destroying any hope of compromise. Within two years, the Americans and the British clashed in armed conflict. Despite widespread resistance among loyal colonists, Patriot legislators created provisional governments and military forces, the two essentials for independence.

### A Compromise Repudiated

Once aroused, political passions are not easily quieted. In Boston, Samuel Adams and other radical Patriots continued to warn Americans of imperial domination and, late in 1772, persuaded the town meeting to set up a committee of correspondence “to state the Rights of the Colonists of this Province.” Soon, eighty Massachusetts towns had similar committees. When British officials threatened to seize the Americans responsible for the burning of the customs vessel *Gaspée* and prosecute them in Britain, the Virginia House of Burgesses and several other assemblies set up their own **committees of correspondence**. These standing committees allowed Patriots to communicate with leaders in other colonies when new threats to liberty occurred. By 1774, among the colonies that would later declare independence, only Pennsylvania was without one.

**The East India Company and the Tea Act** These committees sprang into action when Parliament passed the **Tea Act of May 1773**. The act provided financial relief for the East India Company, a royally chartered private corporation that served as the instrument of British imperialism. The company was deeply in debt; it also had a huge surplus of tea as a result of high import

duties, which led Britons and colonists alike to drink smuggled Dutch tea instead. The Tea Act gave the company a government loan and, to boost its revenue, canceled the import duties on tea the company exported to Ireland and the American colonies. Now even with the Townshend duty of

3 pence a pound on tea, high-quality East India Company tea would cost less than the Dutch tea smuggled into the colonies by American merchants.

Radical Patriots accused the British ministry of bribing Americans with the cheaper East India Company’s tea so they would give up their principled opposition to the tea tax. As an anonymous woman wrote to the *Massachusetts Spy*, “The use of [British] tea is considered not as a private but as a public evil . . . a handle to introduce a variety of . . . oppressions amongst us.” Merchants joined the protest because the East India Company planned to distribute its tea directly to shopkeepers, excluding American wholesalers from the trade’s profits. “The fear of an Introduction of a Monopoly in this Country,” British general Frederick Haldimand reported from New York, “has induced the mercantile part of the Inhabitants to be very industrious in opposing this Step and added Strength to a Spirit of Independence already too prevalent.”

**The Tea Party and the Coercive Acts** The Sons of Liberty prevented East India Company ships from delivering their cargoes in New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. In Massachusetts, Royal Governor Hutchinson was determined to land the tea and collect the tax. To foil the governor’s plan, artisans and laborers disguised as Indians boarded three ships—the *Dartmouth*, the *Eleanor*, and the *Beaver*—on December 16, 1773, broke open 342 chests of tea (valued at about £10,000, or about \$900,000 today), and threw them into the harbor. “This destruction of the Tea . . . must have so important Consequences,” John Adams wrote in his diary, “that I cannot but consider it as an Epoch in History.”

The king was outraged. “Concessions have made matters worse,” George III declared. “The time has come for compulsion.” Early in 1774, Parliament passed four **Coercive Acts** to force Massachusetts to pay for the tea and to submit to imperial authority. The Boston Port Bill closed Boston Harbor to shipping; the Massachusetts Government Act annulled the colony’s charter and prohibited most town meetings; a new Quartering Act mandated new barracks for British troops; and the Justice Act allowed trials for capital crimes to be transferred to other colonies or to Britain.

Patriot leaders throughout the colonies branded the measures “Intolerable” and rallied support for Massachusetts. In Georgia, a Patriot warned the “Freemen of the Province” that “every privilege you at present claim as a birthright, may be wrested from you by the same authority that blockades the town of Boston.” “The cause of Boston,” George Washington declared in Virginia, “now is and ever will be considered as the cause of America.” The committees of correspondence had created a firm sense of Patriot unity.

#### UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

Why did colonists react so strongly against the Tea Act, which imposed a small tax and actually lowered the price of tea?



### The Boston Tea Party

Led by radical Patriots disguised as Mohawk Indians, Bostonians dumped the East India Company's taxed tea into the harbor. The rioters made clear their "pure" political motives by punishing those who sought personal gain: one Son of Liberty who stole some of the tea was "stripped of his booty and his clothes together, and sent home naked." Library of Congress.

In 1774, Parliament also passed the Quebec Act, which allowed the practice of Roman Catholicism in Quebec. This concession to Quebec's predominantly Catholic population reignited religious passions in New England, where Protestants associated Catholicism with arbitrary royal government. Because the act extended Quebec's boundaries into the Ohio River Valley, it likewise angered influential land speculators in Virginia and Pennsylvania and ordinary settlers by the thousands (Map 5.4). Although the ministry did not intend the Quebec Act as a coercive measure, many colonists saw it as further proof of Parliament's intention to control American affairs.

### The Continental Congress Responds

In response to the Coercive Acts, Patriot leaders convened a new continent-wide body, the **Continental Congress**. Twelve mainland colonies sent representatives. Four recently acquired colonies — Florida, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland — refused to send delegates, as did Georgia, where the royal governor controlled the legislature. The assemblies of Barbados, Jamaica, and the other sugar islands, although wary of

British domination, were even more fearful of revolts by their predominantly African populations and therefore declined to attend.

The delegates who met in Philadelphia in September 1774 had different agendas. Southern representatives, fearing a British plot "to overturn the constitution and introduce a system of arbitrary government," advocated a new economic boycott. Independence-minded representatives from New England demanded political union and defensive military preparations. Many delegates from the Middle Atlantic colonies favored compromise.

Led by Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania, these men of "loyal principles" proposed a new political system similar to Benjamin Franklin's proposal at the Albany Congress of 1754: each colony would retain its assembly to legislate on local matters, and a new continent-wide body would handle general American affairs. The king would appoint a president-general to preside over a legislative council selected by the colonial assemblies. Galloway's plan failed by a single vote; a bare majority thought it was too conciliatory (*American Voices*, p. 172).

Instead, the delegates demanded the repeal of the Coercive Acts and stipulated that British control



**MAP 5.4****British Western Policy, 1763–1774**

The Proclamation of 1763 prohibited white settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains. Nonetheless, Anglo-American settlers and land speculators proposed the new colonies of Vandalia and Transylvania to the west of Virginia and North Carolina. The Quebec Act of 1774 designated most western lands as Indian reserves and vastly enlarged the boundaries of Quebec, dashing speculators' hopes and eliminating the old sea-to-sea land claims of many seaboard colonies. The act especially angered New England Protestants, who condemned it for allowing French residents to practice Catholicism, and colonial political leaders, who protested its failure to provide Quebec with a representative assembly.

be limited to matters of trade. It also approved a program of economic retaliation: Americans would stop importing British goods in December 1774. If Parliament did not repeal the Coercive Acts by September 1775, the Congress vowed to cut off virtually all colonial exports to Britain, Ireland, and the British West Indies. Ten years of constitutional conflict had culminated in a threat of all-out commercial warfare.

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Why did Parliament prefer North's solution to the Boston Tea Party to William Pitt's?

A few British leaders still hoped for compromise. In January 1775, William Pitt, now sitting in the House of Lords as the Earl of Chatham, asked Parliament to renounce its power to tax the colonies and to recognize the Continental Congress as a lawful body. In return, he suggested, the Congress should acknowledge parliamentary supremacy and provide a permanent source of revenue to help defray the national debt.

The British ministry rejected Pitt's plan. Twice it had backed down in the face of colonial resistance; a third retreat was impossible. Branding the Continental Congress an illegal assembly, the ministry rejected

Lord Dartmouth's proposal to send commissioners to negotiate a settlement. Instead, Lord North set stringent terms: Americans must pay for their own defense and administration and acknowledge Parliament's authority to tax them. To put teeth in these demands, North imposed a naval blockade on American trade with foreign nations and ordered General Gage to suppress dissent in Massachusetts. "Now the case seemed desperate," the prime minister told Thomas Hutchinson, whom the Patriots had forced into exile in London. "Parliament would not—could not—concede. For aught he could see it must come to violence."

### The Rising of the Countryside

The fate of the urban-led Patriot movement would depend on the colonies' large rural population. Most farmers had little interest in imperial affairs. Their lives were deeply rooted in the soil, and their prime allegiance was to family and community. But imperial policies had increasingly intruded into the lives of farm families by sending their sons to war and raising their taxes. In 1754, farmers on Long Island, New York, had paid an average tax of 10 shillings; by 1756, thanks to

the Great War for Empire, their taxes had jumped to 30 shillings.

**The Continental Association** The boycotts of 1765 and 1768 raised the political consciousness of rural Americans. When the First Continental Congress established the **Continental Association** in 1774 to enforce a third boycott of British goods, it quickly set up a rural network of committees to do its work. In Concord, Massachusetts, 80 percent of the male heads of families and a number of single women signed a “Solemn League and Covenant” supporting nonimportation. In other farm towns, men blacked their faces, disguised themselves in blankets “like Indians,” and threatened violence against shopkeepers who traded “in rum, molasses, & Sugar, &c.” in violation of the boycott.

Patriots likewise warned that British measures threatened the yeoman tradition of landownership. In Petersham, Massachusetts, the town meeting worried that new British taxes would drain “this People of the Fruits of their Toil.” Arable land was now scarce and expensive in older communities, and in new settlements merchants were seizing farmsteads for delinquent

debts. By the 1770s, many northern yeomen felt personally threatened by British policies, which, a Patriot pamphlet warned, were “paving the way for reducing the country to lordships” (Table 5.3).

**Southern Planters Fear Dependency** Despite their higher standard of living, southern slave owners had similar fears. Many Chesapeake planters were deeply in debt to British merchants. Accustomed to being absolute masters on their slave-labor plantations and seeing themselves as guardians of English liberties, planters resented their financial dependence on British creditors and dreaded the prospect of political subservience to British officials.

That danger now seemed real. If Parliament used the Coercive Acts to subdue Massachusetts, then it might turn next to Virginia, dissolving its representative assembly and assisting British merchants to seize debt-burdened properties. Consequently, the Virginia gentry supported demands by indebted yeomen farmers to close the law courts so that they could bargain with merchants over debts without the threat of legal action. “The spark of liberty is not yet extinct among our people,” declared one planter, “and if properly

TABLE 5.3

**Patriot Resistance, 1762–1776**

Date	British Action	Patriot Response
1762	Revenue Act	Merchants complain privately
1763	Proclamation Line	Land speculators voice discontent
1764	Sugar Act	Merchants and Massachusetts legislature protest
1765	Stamp Act	Sons of Liberty riot; Stamp Act Congress; first boycott of British goods
1765	Quartering Act	New York assembly refuses to fund until 1767
1767–1768	Townshend Act; military occupation of Boston	Second boycott of British goods; harassment of pro-British merchants
1772	Royal commission to investigate <i>Gaspée</i> affair	Committees of correspondence form
1773	Tea Act	Widespread resistance; Boston Tea Party
1774	Coercive Acts; Quebec Act	First Continental Congress; third boycott of British goods
1775	British raids near Boston; king’s Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition	Armed resistance; Second Continental Congress; invasion of Canada; cutoff of colonial exports
1776	Military attacks led by royal governors in South	Paine’s <i>Common Sense</i> ; Declaration of Independence



## The Debate over Representation and Sovereignty

Speaking before the House of Commons, Benjamin Franklin declared that before 1763 Americans had paid little attention to the question of Parliament's "right to lay taxes and duties" in the colonies. The reason was simple, Franklin said: "A right to lay internal taxes was never supposed to be in Parliament, as we are not represented there." Franklin recognized that representation was central to the imperial debate. As the following selections show, the failure to solve the problem of representation, and the closely related issue of parliamentary sovereignty, led to the American rebellion.

**Jared Ingersoll**

### Report on the Debates in Parliament (1765)

Connecticut lawyer Jared Ingersoll (1722–1781) served as his colony's agent, or lobbyist, in Britain. In this 1765 letter to the governor of Connecticut, Ingersoll summarizes the debate then under way in Parliament over the Stamp Act. When the act passed, he returned home to become the stamp distributor in Connecticut. A mob forced him to resign that post. Ingersoll later served as a vice-admiralty judge in Philadelphia and, during the Revolution, remained loyal to Britain.

The principal Attention has been to the Stamp bill that has been preparing to Lay before Parliament for taxing America. The Point of the Authority of Parliament to impose such Tax I found on my Arrival here was so fully and Universally yielded [accepted], that there was not the least hopes of making any impressions that way. . . .

I beg leave to give you a Summary of the Arguments which are made use of in favour of such Authority. The House of Commons, say they, is a branch of the supreme legislature of the Nation, and which in its Nature is supposed to represent, or rather to stand in the place of, the Commons, that is, of the great body of the people. . . .

That this house of Commons, therefore, is now . . . a part of the Supreme unlimited power of the Nation, as in every State there must be some unlimited Power and Authority. . . .

They say a Power to tax is a necessary part of every Supreme Legislative Authority, and that if they have not that Power over America, they have none, and then America is at once a Kingdom of itself.

On the other hand those who oppose the bill say, it is true the Parliament have a supreme unlimited Authority over every Part and Branch of the Kings dominions and as well over Ireland as any other place.

Yet [they say] we believe a British parliament will never think it prudent to tax Ireland [or America]. This true they say, that the Commons of England and of the

British Empire are all represented in and by the house of Commons, but this representation is confessedly on all hands by Construction and Virtual [because most British subjects] . . . have no hand in choosing the representatives. . . .

[They say further] that the Effects of this implied Representation here and in America must be infinitely different in the Article of Taxation. . . . By any Mistake an act of Parliament is made that prove injurious and hard the Member of Parliament here [in Britain] sees with his own Eyes and is moreover very accessible to the people. . . . [Also,] the taxes are laid equally by one Rule and fall as well on the Member himself as on the people. But as to America, from the great distance in point of Situation [they are not represented in the same way]. . . .

[Finally, the opponents of the Act say] we already by the Regulations upon their trade draw from the Americans all that they can spare. . . . This Step [of taxation] should not take place until or unless the Americans are allowed to send Members to Parliament.

Thus I have given you, I think, the Substance of the Arguments on both sides of that great and important Question of the right and also of the Expediency of taxing America by Authority of Parliament. . . . [But] upon a Division of the house upon the Question, there was about 250 to about 50 in favour of the Bill.

Source: New Haven Colony Historical Society, *Papers* (1918), 9: 306–315.

**Joseph Galloway**

### Plan of Union (1775)

Speaker of the Pennsylvania assembly Joseph Galloway was a delegate to the First Continental Congress, where he proposed a plan that addressed the issue of representation. The colonies would remain British but operate under a continental government with the power to veto parliamentary laws that affected America. Radical Patriots in the Congress, who favored independence, prevented a vote

on Galloway's plan and suppressed mention of it in the records. Galloway remained loyal to the crown, fought on the British side in the War for Independence, and moved to England in 1778.

If we sincerely mean to accommodate the difference between the two countries, . . . we must take into consideration a number of facts which led the Parliament to pass the acts complained of. . . . [You will recall] the dangerous situation of the Colonies from the intrigues of France, and the incursions of the Canadians and their Indian allies, at the commencement of the last war. . . . Great-Britain sent over her fleets and armies for their protection. . . .

In this state of the Colonies, it was not unreasonable to expect that Parliament would have levied a tax on them proportionate to their wealth, . . . Parliament was naturally led to exercise the power which had been, by its predecessors, so often exercised over the Colonies, and to pass the Stamp Act. Against this act, the Colonies petitioned Parliament, and denied its authority . . . [declaring] that the Colonies could not be represented in that body. This justly alarmed the British Senate. It was thought and called by the ablest men [in] Britain, a clear and explicit declaration of the American Independence, and compelled the Parliament to pass the Declaratory Act, in order to save its ancient and incontrovertible right of supremacy over all the parts of the empire. . . .

Having thus briefly stated the arguments in favour of parliamentary authority, . . . I am free to confess that the exercise of that authority is not perfectly constitutional in respect to the Colonies. We know that the whole landed interest of Britain is represented in that body, while neither the land nor the people of America hold the least participation in the legislative authority of the State. . . . Representation, or a participation in the supreme councils of the State, is the great principle upon which the freedom of the British Government is established and secured.

I wish to see . . . the right to participate in the supreme councils of the State extended, in some form . . . to America . . . [and therefore] have prepared the draught of a plan for uniting America more intimately, in constitutional policy, with Great-Britain. . . . I am certain when dispassionately considered, it will be found to be the most perfect union in power and liberty with the Parent State, next to a representation in Parliament, and I trust it will be approved of by both countries.

### *The Plan*

That the several [colonial] assemblies shall [form an American union and] choose members for the grand council. . . .

That the Grand Council . . . shall hold and exercise all the like rights, liberties and privileges, as are held and exercised by and in the House of Commons of Great-Britain. . . .

That the President-General shall hold his office during the pleasure of the King, and his assent shall be requisite to all acts of the Grand Council, and it shall be his office and duty to cause them to be carried into execution. . . .

That the President-General, by and with the advice and consent of the Grand-Council, hold and exercise all the legislative rights, powers, and authorities, necessary for regulating and administering all the general police and affairs of the colonies. . . .

That the said President-General and the Grand Council, be an inferior and distinct branch of the British legislature, united and incorporated with it, . . . and that the assent of both [Parliament and the Grand Council] shall be requisite to the validity of all such general acts or statutes [that affect the colonies].

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Source: Joseph Galloway, *Historical and Political Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion* (London, 1780), 70.

### **QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS**

1. According to Ingersoll, what were the main arguments of those in Parliament who opposed the Stamp Act? Did those opposing the Stamp Act agree with the act's supporters that Parliament had the right to tax the colonies?
2. How did Galloway's plan solve the problem of colonial representation in Parliament? How would the British ministers who advocated parliamentary supremacy have reacted to the plan?
3. The framers of the U.S. Constitution addressed the problem of dividing authority between state governments and the national government by allowing the states to retain legal authority over most matters and delegating limited powers to the national government. Could such a solution have been implemented in the British Empire? Why or why not?

fanned by the Gentlemen of influence will, I make no doubt, burst out again into a flame.”

## Loyalists and Neutrals

Yet in many places, the Patriot movement was a hard sell. In Virginia, Patriot leaders were nearly all wealthy planters, and many of their poorer neighbors regarded the movement with suspicion. In regions where great landowners became Patriots — the Hudson River Valley of New York, for example — many tenant farmers supported the king because they hated their landlords. Similar social conflicts prompted some Regulators in the North Carolina backcountry and many farmers in eastern Maryland to oppose the Patriots there.

There were many reasons to resist the Patriot movement. Skeptics believed that Patriot leaders were subverting British rule only to advance their own selfish interests. Peter Oliver wrote of Samuel Adams, for example, “He was so thorough a Machiavilian, that he divested himself of every worthy Principle, & would stick at no Crime to accomplish his Ends.” Some “Gentlemen of influence” worried that resistance to Britain would undermine all political institutions and “introduce Anarchy and disorder and render life and property here precarious.” Their fears increased when the Sons of Liberty used intimidation and violence to uphold the boycotts. One well-to-do New Yorker complained, “No man can be in a more abject state of bondage than he whose Reputation, Property and Life are exposed to the discretionary violence . . . of the community.” As the crisis deepened, such men became Loyalists — so called because they remained loyal to the British crown.

Many other colonists simply hoped to stay out of the fray. Some did so on principle: in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, thousands of pacifist Quakers and Germans resisted conscription and violence out of religious conviction. Others were ambivalent or confused about the political crisis unfolding around them. The delegate elected to New York’s Provincial Congress from Queen’s County, on Long Island, chose not to attend since “the people [he represented] seemed to be much inclined to remain peaceable and quiet.” More than three-fourths of Queen’s County voters, in fact, opposed sending any delegate at all. Many loyal or neutral colonists hoped, above all, to preserve their families’ property and independence, whatever the outcome of the imperial crisis.

Historians estimate that some 15 to 20 percent of the white population — perhaps as many as 400,000

colonists — were loyal to the crown. Some managed to avoid persecution, but many were pressured by their neighbors to join the boycotts and subjected to violence and humiliation if they refused. As Patriots took over the reins of local government throughout the colonies, Loyalists were driven out of their homes or forced into silence. At this crucial juncture, Patriots commanded the allegiance, or at least the acquiescence, of the majority of white Americans.

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## Violence East and West

By 1774, British authority was wavering. At the headwaters of the Ohio, the abandonment of Fort Pitt left a power vacuum that was filled by opportunistic men, led by a royally appointed governor acting in defiance of his commission. In Massachusetts, the attempt to isolate and punish Boston and the surrounding countryside backfired as Patriots resisted military coercion. Violence resulted in both places, and with it the collapse of imperial control.

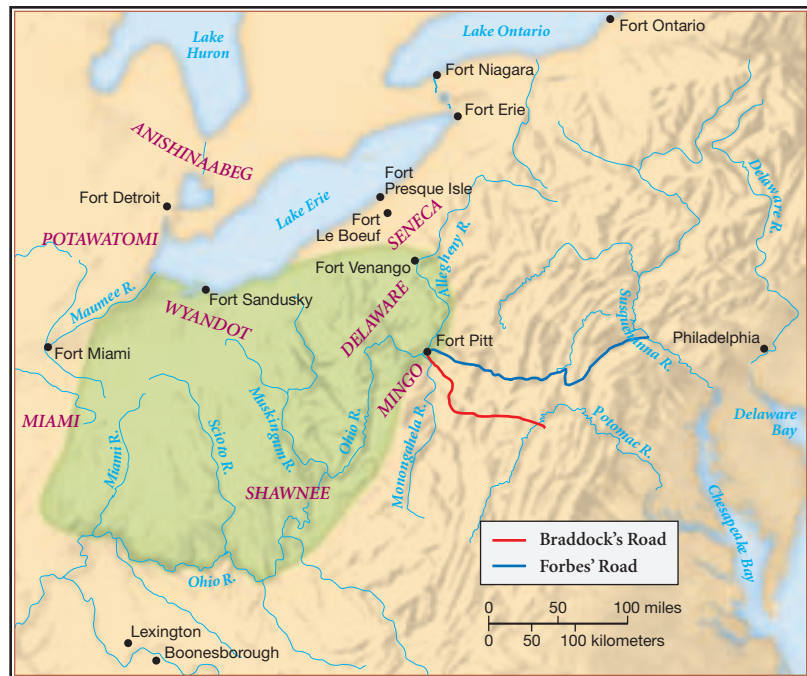
### Lord Dunmore’s War

In the years since the end of Pontiac’s Rebellion, at least 10,000 people had traveled along Braddock’s and Forbes’s Roads to the headwaters of the Ohio River, where Fort Pitt had replaced Fort Duquesne during the Great War for Empire, and staked claims to land around Pittsburgh (Map 5.5). They relied for protection on Fort Pitt, which remained one of Britain’s most important frontier outposts. But the revenue crisis forced General Gage to cut expenses, and in October 1772, the army pulled down the fort’s log walls and left the site to the local population. Settler relations with the neighboring Ohio Indians were tenuous and ill-defined, and the fort’s abandonment left them exposed and vulnerable.

In the ensuing power vacuum, Pennsylvania and Virginia both claimed the region. Pennsylvania had the better claim on paper. It had organized county governments, established courts, and collected taxes there. But — in keeping with its pacifist Quaker roots — it did not organize a militia. In this decision, Virginia’s royal governor, the Earl of Dunmore, recognized an opportunity. Appointed to his post in 1771, Dunmore was an irascible and unscrupulous man who clashed repeatedly with the House of Burgesses. But when it suited him, he was just as willing to defy the crown. In 1773, he traveled to Pittsburgh, where, he later wrote, “the people flocked about me and beseeched me . . . to

**MAP 5.5****The Ohio Country, 1774–1775**

The erosion of British imperial authority caused chaos in the Ohio country. Pennsylvania and Virginia each claimed Pittsburgh and the surrounding countryside, while the Indian communities on the upper Ohio increasingly feared colonist aggression. Their fears were realized in the summer of 1774, when Lord Dunmore led a force of Virginia militia into the valley. After defeating a Shawnee force in the Battle of Point Pleasant, many Virginians began surveying and staking claims to land in the Kentucky bluegrass. In the summer of 1775, perhaps a dozen new towns were settled there, in violation of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Quebec Act of 1774.



appoint magistrates and officers of militia.” He organized a local militia; soon, men armed by Virginia were drilling near the ruins of Fort Pitt.

In the summer of 1774, Dunmore took the next step. In defiance of both his royal instructions and the House of Burgesses, he called out Virginia’s militia and led a force of 2,400 men against the Ohio Shawnees, who had a long-standing claim to Kentucky as a hunting ground. They fought a single battle, at Point Pleasant; the Shawnees were defeated, and Dunmore and his militia forces claimed Kentucky as their own. A participant justified his actions shortly afterward: “When without a king,” he wrote, “[one] doeth according to the freedom of his own will.” Years of neglect left many colonists in the backcountry feeling abandoned by the crown. **Dunmore’s War** was their declaration of independence.

### Armed Resistance in Massachusetts

Meanwhile, as the Continental Congress gathered in Philadelphia in September 1774, Massachusetts was also defying British authority. In August, a Middlesex County Congress had urged Patriots to close the existing royal courts and to transfer their political allegiance to the popularly elected House of Representatives. Subsequently, armed crowds harassed Loyalists and ensured Patriot rule in most of New England.

In response, General Thomas Gage, now the military governor of Massachusetts, ordered British troops in Boston in September 1774 to seize Patriot armories

in nearby Charlestown and Cambridge. An army of 20,000 militiamen quickly mobilized to safeguard other Massachusetts military depots. The Concord town meeting raised a defensive force, the famous **Minutemen**, to “Stand at a minutes warning in Case of alarm.” Increasingly, Gage’s authority was limited to Boston, where it rested on the bayonets of his 3,500 troops. Meanwhile, the Patriot-controlled Massachusetts assembly met in nearby Salem in open defiance of Parliament, collecting taxes, bolstering the militia, and assuming the responsibilities of government.

In London, the colonial secretary, Lord Dartmouth, proclaimed Massachusetts to be in “open rebellion” and ordered Gage to march against the “rude rabble.” On the night of April 18, 1775, Gage dispatched 700 soldiers to capture colonial leaders and supplies at Concord. However, Paul Revere and a series of other riders warned

Patriots in many towns, and at dawn, militiamen confronted the British regulars first at Lexington and then at Concord. Those first skirmishes took a handful of lives, but as the British retreated to Boston, militia from neighboring towns repeatedly ambushed them. By the end of the day, 73 British soldiers were dead, 174 wounded, and 26 missing. British fire had killed 49 Massachusetts militiamen and wounded 39. Twelve years of economic and constitutional conflict had ended in violence.

### PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT

What led to Dunmore’s War, and why did western settlers support it?

## The Second Continental Congress Organizes for War

A month later, in May 1775, Patriot leaders gathered in Philadelphia for the **Second Continental Congress**. As the Congress opened, 3,000 British troops attacked American fortifications on Breed's Hill and Bunker Hill overlooking Boston. After three assaults and 1,000 casualties, they finally dislodged the Patriot militia. Inspired by his countrymen's valor, John Adams exhorted the Congress to rise to the "defense of American liberty" by creating a continental army. He nominated George Washington to lead it. After bitter debate, the Congress approved the proposals, but, Adams lamented, only "by bare majorities."

**Congress Versus King George** Despite the bloodshed in Massachusetts, a majority in the Congress still hoped for reconciliation. Led by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, these moderates won approval of a petition expressing loyalty to George III and asking for repeal of oppressive parliamentary legislation. But Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, and other zealous Patriots drummed up support for a Declaration of the Causes and Necessities of Taking Up Arms. Americans dreaded the "calamities of civil war;" the declaration asserted, but were "resolved to die Freemen rather than to live [as] slaves." George III failed to exploit the divisions among the Patriots; instead, in August 1775, he issued a Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition.

Before the king's proclamation reached America, the radicals in the Congress had won support for an invasion of Canada to prevent a British attack from the north. Patriot forces easily defeated the British at

Montreal; but in December 1775, they failed to capture Quebec City and withdrew. Meanwhile, American merchants waged the financial warfare promised at the First Continental Congress by cutting off exports to Britain and its West Indian sugar islands. Parliament retaliated with the Prohibitory Act, which outlawed all trade with the rebellious colonies.

Montreal; but in December 1775, they failed to capture Quebec City and withdrew. Meanwhile, American merchants waged the financial warfare promised at the First Continental Congress by cutting off exports to Britain and its West Indian sugar islands. Parliament retaliated with the Prohibitory Act, which outlawed all trade with the rebellious colonies.

**Fighting in the South** Skirmishes between Patriot and Loyalist forces now broke out in the southern colonies. In Virginia, Patriots ousted Governor Dunmore and forced him to take refuge on a British warship in Chesapeake Bay. Branding the rebels "traitors," the governor organized two military forces: one white, the



**George III, 1771**

King George III was a young man of twenty-seven when the American troubles began in 1765. Six years later, as this portrait by Johann Zoffany suggests, the king had aged. Initially, George had been headstrong and tried to impose his will on Parliament, but he succeeded only in generating political confusion and inept policy. He strongly supported Parliament's attempts to tax the colonies and continued the war in America long after most of his ministers agreed that it had been lost. The Royal Collection © 2011 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II/The Bridgeman Art Library.

Queen's Own Loyal Virginians; and one black, the Ethiopian Regiment, which enlisted 1,000 slaves who had fled their Patriot owners. In November 1775, Dunmore issued a controversial proclamation promising freedom to black slaves and white indentured servants who joined the Loyalist cause. White planters denounced this "Diabolical scheme," claiming it "point[ed] a dagger to their Throats." A new rising of the black and white underclasses, as in Bacon's Rebellion in the 1670s, seemed a possibility. In Fincastle County in southwestern Virginia, Loyalist planter John Hiell urged workers to support the king, promising "a Servant man" that soon "he and all the negroes would get their freedom." Frightened by Dunmore's aggressive tactics, Patriot yeomen and tenants called for a final break with Britain.

In North Carolina, too, military clashes prompted demands for independence. Early in 1776, Josiah Martin, the colony's royal governor, raised a Loyalist force of 1,500 Scottish Highlanders in the backcountry. In response, Patriots mobilized the lowcountry militia

### EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

How did the violence around Boston in the spring of 1775 affect proceedings in the Second Continental Congress?

and, in February, defeated Martin's army at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, capturing more than 800 Highlanders. Following this victory, radical Patriots in the North Carolina assembly told its representatives to the Continental Congress to join with "other Colonies in declaring Independence, and forming foreign alliances." In May, the Virginia gentry followed suit: led by James Madison, Edmund Pendleton, and Patrick Henry, the Patriots met in convention and resolved unanimously to support independence.

**Occupying Kentucky** Beginning in the spring of 1775, in the wake of Dunmore's War, independent parties of adventurers began to occupy the newly won lands of Kentucky. Daniel Boone led one group to the banks of the Kentucky River, where they established the town of Boonesborough; nearby was Lexington, named in honor of the Massachusetts town that had resisted the redcoats a few months earlier. The Shawnees and other Ohio Indians opposed the settlers, and colonists built their tiny towns in the form of stations to protect themselves—groups of cabins connected by palisades to form small forts.

These western settlers had confused political loyalties. Many had marched under Dunmore and hoped to receive recognition for their claims from the crown. But as the rebellion unfolded, most recognized that the Patriots' emphasis on liberty and equality squared with their view of the world. They soon petitioned Virginia's rebel government, asking it to create a new county that

would include the Kentucky settlements. They had "Fought and bled" for the land in Dunmore's War and now wanted to fight against the crown and its Indian allies in the Ohio country. Virginia agreed: in 1776, it organized six new frontier counties and sent arms and ammunition to Kentucky. In July, the Continental Congress followed suit, dispatching troops and arms to the Ohio River as well.

### Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*

As military conflicts escalated, Americans were divided in their opinions of King George III. Many blamed him for supporting oppressive legislation and ordering armed retaliation, but other influential colonists held out the hope that he might mediate their conflict with Parliament. John Dickinson, whose *Letters* did so much to arouse Patriot resistance in 1768, nevertheless believed that war with Great Britain would be folly. In July 1775, he persuaded Congress to send George III the Olive Branch Petition, which pleaded with the king to negotiate. John Adams, a staunch supporter of independence, was infuriated by Dickinson's waffling. But Dickinson had many supporters, both inside and outside of Congress. For example, many of Philadelphia's Quaker and Anglican merchants were neutrals or Loyalists. In response to their passivity, Patriot artisans in the city organized a Mechanics' Association to protect America's "just Rights and Privileges."

#### Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap

In 1775 Daniel Boone led a group of prospective settlers into Kentucky on behalf of Richard Henderson, a North Carolina judge and self-appointed proprietor of a land speculation venture called the Transylvania Colony. Henderson's venture soon collapsed, but Boonesborough was one of perhaps a dozen towns founded in Kentucky in violation of crown policy that summer. Boone became a folk hero, and in the mid-nineteenth century George Caleb Bingham painted this memorable scene. Using biblical imagery (the woman on horseback recalls Mary riding into Bethlehem on a donkey) and dramatic lighting, Bingham portrays Boone as an agent of progress bringing civilization to a howling and dangerous wilderness. George Caleb Bingham, *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap*, 1851–52. Oil on Canvas, 36½ x 50¼". Washington University Art Gallery, St. Louis. Gift of Nathaniel Phillips, 1890.





With popular sentiment in flux, a single brief pamphlet helped tip the balance. In January 1776, Thomas Paine published *Common Sense*, a rousing call for independence and a republican form of government. Paine had served as a minor customs official in England until he was fired for joining a protest against low wages. In 1774, Paine migrated to Philadelphia, where he met Benjamin Rush and other Patriots who shared his republican sentiments.

In *Common Sense*, Paine assaulted the traditional monarchical order in stirring language. “Monarchy and hereditary succession have laid the world in blood and ashes,” Paine proclaimed, leveling a personal attack at George III, “the hard hearted sullen Pharaoh of England.” Mixing insults with biblical quotations, Paine blasted the British system of “mixed government” that balanced power among the three estates of king, lords, and commoners. Paine granted that the system “was noble for the dark and slavish times” of the past, but now it yielded only “monarchical tyranny in the person of the king” and “aristocratical tyranny in the persons of the peers.”

Paine argued for American independence by turning the traditional metaphor of patriarchal authority on its head: “Is it the interest of a man to be a boy all his life?” he asked. Within six months, *Common Sense* had gone through twenty-five editions and reached hundreds of thousands of people. “There is great talk of independence,” a worried New York Loyalist noted, “the unthinking multitude are mad for it. . . . A pamphlet called *Common Sense* has carried off . . .

thousands.” Paine urged Americans to create independent republican states: “A government of our own is our natural right, ’tis time to part.”

## Independence Declared

Inspired by Paine’s arguments and beset by armed Loyalists, Patriot conventions urged a break from Britain. In June 1776, Richard Henry Lee presented Virginia’s resolution to the Continental Congress: “That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states.” Faced with certain defeat, staunch Loyalists and anti-independence moderates withdrew from the Congress, leaving committed Patriots to take the fateful step. On July 4, 1776, the Congress approved the **Declaration of Independence** (see Documents, p. D-1).

The Declaration’s main author, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, had mobilized resistance to the Coercive Acts with the pamphlet *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774). Now, in the Declaration, he justified independence and republicanism to Americans and the world by vilifying George III: “He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.” Such a prince was a “tyrant,” Jefferson concluded, and “is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.”

Employing the ideas of the European Enlightenment, Jefferson proclaimed a series of “self-evident” truths: “that all men are created equal”; that they possess the “unalienable rights” of “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit



### Independence Declared

In this painting by John Trumbull, Thomas Jefferson and the other drafters of the Declaration (John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Robert Livingston of New York, and Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania) present the document to John Hancock, the president of the Second Continental Congress. One Patriot observer reported that when the Declaration was read at a public meeting in New York City on July 10, a massive statue of George III was “pulled down by the Populace” and its 4,000 pounds of lead melted down to make “Musquet balls” for use against the British troops massed on Staten Island. Yale University Art Gallery/Art Resource, NY.

of Happiness”; that government derives its “just powers from the consent of the governed” and can rightly be overthrown if it “becomes destructive of these ends.” By linking these doctrines of individual liberty, **popular sovereignty** (the principle that ultimate power lies in the hands of the electorate), and republican government with American independence, Jefferson established them as the defining political values of the new nation.

For Jefferson, as for Paine, the pen proved mightier than the sword. The Declaration won wide support in France and Germany; at home, it sparked celebrations in rural hamlets and seaport cities, as crowds burned effigies and toppled statues of the king. On July 8, 1776, in Easton, Pennsylvania, a “great number of spectators” heard a reading of the Declaration, “gave their hearty assent with three loud huzzahs, and cried out, ‘May God long preserve and unite the Free and Independent States of America.’”

## SUMMARY

Chapters 4 and 5 have focused on a short span of time—a mere two decades—and outlined the plot of a political drama. Act I of that drama, the Great War

for Empire discussed in Chapter 4, prompted British political leaders to implement a program of imperial reform and taxation. Act II, discussed in this chapter, is full of dramatic action, as colonial mobs riot, colonists chafe against restrictions on western lands, Patriot pamphleteers articulate ideologies of resistance, and British ministers search for compromise between claims of parliamentary sovereignty and assertions of colonial autonomy. Act III takes the form of tragedy: the once-proud British Empire dissolves into civil war, an imminent nightmare of death and destruction.

Why did this happen? More than two centuries later, the answers still are not clear. Certainly, the lack of astute leadership in Britain was a major factor. But British leaders faced circumstances that limited their actions: a huge national debt and deep commitments to both a powerful fiscal-military state and the absolute supremacy of Parliament. Moreover, in America, decades of salutary neglect strengthened Patriots’ demands for political autonomy and economic opportunity. Artisans, farmers, and aspiring western settlers all feared an oppressive new era in imperial relations. The trajectories of their conflicting intentions and ideas placed Britain and its American possessions on course for a disastrous and fatal collision.

# CHAPTER REVIEW

**MAKE IT STICK** Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you’ve read.



**TERMS TO KNOW** Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

### Key Concepts and Events

**Sugar Act of 1764** (p. 155)  
**vice-admiralty courts** (p. 156)  
**Stamp Act of 1765** (p. 157)  
**virtual representation** (p. 157)  
**Quartering Act of 1765** (p. 157)  
**Stamp Act Congress** (p. 158)  
**Sons of Liberty** (p. 158)  
**English common law** (p. 159)  
**natural rights** (p. 159)  
**Declaratory Act of 1766** (p. 160)  
**Townshend Act of 1767** (p. 161)  
**nonimportation movement**  
 (p. 161)

**committees of correspondence**  
 (p. 168)  
**Tea Act of May 1773** (p. 168)  
**Coercive Acts** (p. 168)  
**Continental Congress** (p. 169)  
**Continental Association** (p. 171)  
**Dunmore’s War** (p. 175)  
**Minutemen** (p. 175)  
**Second Continental Congress**  
 (p. 176)  
**Declaration of Independence**  
 (p. 178)  
**popular sovereignty** (p. 179)

### Key People

**George Grenville** (p. 155)  
**John Dickinson** (p. 159)  
**Charles Townshend** (p. 160)  
**Lord North** (p. 166)  
**Samuel Adams** (p. 166)  
**Lord Dunmore** (p. 174)  
**Thomas Paine** (p. 178)  
**Thomas Jefferson** (p. 178)

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter's main ideas.

1. As British administrators sought to increase colonial revenues and tighten administrative control, what might have led them to pursue a less confrontational course with the colonies? What factors do you think are most important in explaining the failure of compromise?
2. What kinds of provocation caused colonists to riot or otherwise act directly, even violently, in defense of their interests? How did common law, Enlightenment, and republican ideas shape their thinking as they took action?
3. What compromises were proposed in the colonies as alternatives to independence? Why did Patriots reject them?
4. **THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING** Consider the events listed under “Work, Exchange, and Technology” and “Politics and Power” for the period 1763–1776 on the thematic timeline on page 149. How important were the linkages between economic developments and political ones in these years?

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

1. **ACROSS TIME AND PLACE** Chapter 4 presented a turbulent era, marked by social and cultural conflict and imperial warfare, during which the regions of British North America were disparate and without unity. Yet by 1776—only thirteen years after the Treaty of Paris ending the Great War for Empire—thirteen of Britain's mainland colonies were prepared to unite in a Declaration of Independence. What happened in that intervening time to strengthen and deepen colonists' sense of common cause? As they drew together to resist imperial authority, what political and cultural resources did they have in common?
2. **VISUAL EVIDENCE** Return to the Paul Revere engraving of the Boston Massacre on page 167. This image was an instrument of political propaganda. What features of the image are most important to its political purpose? Consider his depiction of both the soldiers and the townspeople. Look, too, at the buildings surrounding the crowd, especially the Custom House on the right. List the ways in which Revere invokes the idea of tyranny in this image.

## MORE TO EXPLORE

Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (2007). Traces the international impact of the Declaration.

Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., *A Companion to the American Revolution* (2000). A useful compendium of short essays on topics related to the Revolution.

Woody Holton, *Forced Founders* (1999). Considers the coming of the Revolution in Virginia.

Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles* (2011). A compelling narrative of Loyalist experiences in the Revolution.

Andrew O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America* (2013). A British view of the crisis.

*Liberty! The American Revolution* (PBS video) and its companion Web site: [pbs.org/ktca/liberty/](http://pbs.org/ktca/liberty/). A useful overview of the Revolutionary movement.

**TIMELINE** Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

1763	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proclamation Line limits white settlement</li> </ul>
1764	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sugar Act and Currency Act</li> <li>• Colonists oppose vice-admiralty courts</li> </ul>
1765	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stamp Act imposes direct tax</li> <li>• Quartering Act requires barracks for British troops</li> <li>• Stamp Act Congress meets</li> <li>• Americans boycott British goods</li> </ul>
1766	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First compromise: Stamp Act repealed</li> <li>• Declaratory Act passed</li> </ul>
1767	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Townshend duties</li> </ul>
1768	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second American boycott</li> </ul>
1770	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second compromise: partial repeal of Townshend Act</li> <li>• Boston Massacre</li> </ul>
1772	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committees of correspondence form</li> </ul>
1773	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tea Act leads to Boston Tea Party</li> </ul>
1774	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coercive Acts punish Massachusetts</li> <li>• Dunmore's War against the Shawnees</li> <li>• Continental Congress meets</li> <li>• Third American boycott</li> </ul>
1775	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Gage marches to Lexington and Concord</li> <li>• Second Continental Congress creates Continental army</li> <li>• Lord Dunmore recruits Loyalist slaves</li> <li>• Patriots invade Canada and skirmish with Loyalists in South</li> <li>• Western settlers occupy Kentucky</li> </ul>
1776	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thomas Paine's <i>Common Sense</i></li> <li>• Declaration of Independence</li> </ul>

**KEY TURNING POINTS:** The Boston Tea Party (1773), the Coercive Acts (1774), and the first Continental Congress (1774). What did Parliament hope to achieve with the Coercive Acts? How did the decision to convene a continent-wide congress demonstrate the failure of Parliament's efforts?