

CHAPTER FOUR: REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA: CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION, 1764–1783

READING AND STUDY GUIDE

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Britain's decisive victory in the French and Indian War in 1763 removed the French threat to its American empire. But the war had been expensive to wage, and the ongoing costs of administering and protecting North America nearly drained the British economy. To pay these costs, Britain adopted a new set of policies for America, including new taxes, more aggressive ways of collecting them, and more severe methods of enforcing these measures. The colonists viewed these policies as an ominous first step in a plot to deprive them of their liberty.

When King George III assumed the British throne in 1760, monarchism was deeply rooted in American culture, and Americans were proud of their British heritage. Opposition to British policy began with respectful pleas to the king for relief from unjust policies. Gradually, over the course of the next decade, Americans became convinced that it was no longer possible to remain within the British Empire and protect their rights. Resistance to British policies stiffened, and the colonists eventually decided to declare independence from Britain.

The notions of liberty and equality that Americans invoked in their struggle against British tyranny changed American society. The idea that "all men are created equal" and that every person enjoyed certain "inalienable rights," as America's Declaration of Independence

asserted, were radical ideas for those who had grown up in a society that was ruled by a king and that enthusiastically embraced the idea of aristocracy.

The Revolution did bring about some radical changes in American society. New England effectively eliminated slavery after the Revolution. The new states of the mid-Atlantic adopted a more gradual approach to abolishing slavery. In the South, however, where slavery was deeply entrenched and men made huge fortunes from crops produced with slave labor, only modest gains were made in promoting the abolition of slavery. Although not yet full political participants, revolutionary notions of equality led women to demand that husbands treat them as partners in their marriage. A new idea of companionate marriage blossomed.

Learning Objectives

After a careful examination of Chapter 4, students should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the problems facing Britain after the French and Indian War and list the parliamentary laws enacted during the Grenville administration in an effort to address these problems.
2. Identify the major colonial conflicts with Native Americans after the war and how these conflicts illustrated problems with the acquisition of western lands.
3. Describe the power exercised by colonial assemblies by 1764 and how Parliament attempted to challenge that power after the French and Indian War.
4. Define the provisions of the Stamp Act and why this law was distinctive from the other laws passed during the Grenville administration.
5. Discuss the Stamp Act Crisis. What were the legal, financial, and social factors connected to the American resistance to this law?
6. Define the term *writs of assistance* and explain how this issue contributed to the constitutional conflict over the Stamp Act in Massachusetts.
7. Identify the Sons of Liberty and understand their historical significance as an example of popular resistance to British policy.
8. Compare the effectiveness of the Stamp Act Congress and the Albany Congress in terms of effecting colonial unity and advancing American political interests.
9. Define the Regulator Movement and explain the impact of British imperial policy on social tensions in the colonies.
10. Explain the Townshend Duty Act and why Americans resisted this trade tax even though it was an external tax.

11. Explain the causes of the Boston Tea Party in terms of the provisions of the Tea Act of 1773 and its economic impact in the Boston area.
12. List the Intolerable Acts and explain their purpose as well as their impact on Britain's relationship with the American colonies.
13. Discuss the First Continental Congress and list its major accomplishments.
14. Comment on the political division within the American colonies regarding resistance to British policy and define the Whig and Tory factions.
15. Describe how Trumbull's composition reflected the realities of this battle, a struggle in which neither side won a clear victory.
16. Identify the Loyalist populations in the American colonies and describe their responses to the deteriorating relations between the colonies and Britain by the mid-1770s.
17. Explain the circumstances and impact of the Battles of Lexington and Concord and explain why these opening shots are referred to as "the shots heard round the world."
18. List the major accomplishments of the Second Continental Congress.
19. Identify George Washington and explain the reasons he was selected to serve as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.
20. Explain the nature of early American military forays into Quebec and comment on the degree of success attained by Americans there.
21. Identify Thomas Paine and explain the impact of his pamphlet *Common Sense* on the American movement toward independence.
22. Understand the connection between John Locke's contract theory of government and Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence.
23. Analyze the major elements of the Declaration of Independence and what Jefferson accomplished in each.
24. Understand the term *republicanism* and what it meant to Americans in 1776. Explain the roots of American republicanism in country ideology and the experience of the Puritan commonwealth.
25. Explain the challenges faced by George Washington in transforming the Continental Army into professional military troops.
26. Describe the role of women in the American military during the Revolution.

27. Describe the role of African Americans and Native Americans in the military during the American Revolution.
28. Identify Sir William and Richard Howe and explain why their approach to fighting in the American Revolution has been characterized as “hesitant.”
29. Explain why the year 1777 in the American Revolution is referred to as the “Year of the Hangman.”
30. Understand the Battle of Saratoga as a turning point in the American Revolution.
31. Understand France’s motivation for entering into the Franco-American alliance and how the alliance transformed the Revolution into a world war.
32. Explain the nature of American naval warfare during the Revolution. Identify John Paul Jones and comment on his contribution to the naval war.
33. Explain the British southern strategy and the reasons why it backfired.
34. Identify the Peace of Paris of 1783. Explain the initial American demands during negotiation, the reasons why Americans negotiated a unilateral peace, and the final terms of the treaty.
35. Summarize why America won the War for Independence. Point out the strengths of the American side as well as the weaknesses of the British.
36. Explain the impact of the American Revolution on the status of women, African Americans, and Native Americans.

Key Terms & Definitions

Sugar Act British tax aimed at imported sugar, molasses, and other goods imported into the colonies; it also created a new mechanism for enforcing compliance with custom’s duties. (98)

Stamp Act Legislation that required colonists to purchase special stamps and place them on all legal documents. Newspapers and playing cards had to be printed on special stamped paper. (99)

nonimportation movement A boycott against the purchase of any imported British goods. (100)

Boston Massacre A confrontation between a group of Bostonians and British troops on March 5, 1770, during which the troops opened fire on the citizens, killing five of them. (101)

Intolerable Acts Legislation passed by Parliament to punish Bostonians for the Boston Tea Party. It closed the Port of Boston; annulled the Massachusetts colonial charter and dissolved or severely restricted that colony's political institutions; and allowed British officials charged with capital crimes to be tried outside the colonies. (102)

militia An organization of citizen soldiers regulated by the laws of the individual colonies that provided the primary means of public defense in the colonial period. (104)

Lord Dunmore's Proclamation Official announcement issued by Lord Dunmore, royal governor of Virginia. It offered freedom to any slave who joined the British forces in putting down the American rebellion. (105)

Common Sense Thomas Paine's influential pamphlet that forcefully argued for American independence, attacked the institution of monarchy, and defended a democratic theory of representative government. (107)

Declaration of Independence On July 4, 1776, Congress approved the final text of the Declaration of Independence, a public defense of America's decision to declare independence from Britain that was to be printed and sent to the individual states. (110)

Patriots Colonists who supported American independence. (110)

Loyalists Colonists who remained loyal to the king and Britain. (110)

Treaty of Paris (1783) Treaty between the newly created United States of America and Britain that officially ended the war between the two and formally recognized American independence. (116)

unicameralism A form of representative government with only one legislature. Pennsylvania's 1776 constitution created a unicameral system. (118)

companionate marriage A term used by scholars to describe a more egalitarian relationship between husband and wife in which the two act as companions to each other. (124)

Study Questions:

How did the Revolution's idea of liberty transform American society? (96)

Why is the scale in the cartoon, *The Great Financier*, out of balance? (98)

How did colonists react to the Stamp Act? (99)

How did nonimportation transform women's political role in the colonies? (100)

How does Revere stage the events of the Boston Massacre to evoke sympathy for the colonists' cause? (101)

Why did the Intolerable Acts seem to strike at the essence of colonists' liberty? (102)

What is the symbolic significance of Judge Mansfield's actions in this political cartoon? (103)

What was the impact of Lord Dunmore's Proclamation on southern colonists? (104)

Why did British regulars choose Concord as their military objective? (105)

What does The Political Cartoon for the Year 1775 reveal about the nature of relations between the colonies and Britain? (106)

What were the arguments of Paine's *Common Sense*? (107)

How did Trumbull craft his painting so it would appeal to both an American and British audience? (108)

What does Trumbull's portrayal of African Americans tell us about his views and those of his likely audiences? (109)

What audiences did the Declaration of Independence address? (110)

How did the metaphor of dismemberment influence Loyalist thought? (111)

What does *Martin v. Commonwealth* reveal about women's roles in Revolutionary era America? (112)

Why did Thomas Paine describe Valley Forge as one of the times that "try men's souls?" (113)

How does Peale's painting of Washington differ from Trumbull's *The Death of General Warren*? (114)

What role did the French navy play in the victory at Yorktown? (115)

Why was the song "The World Turned Upside Down" so appropriate for the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown? (116)

Who were the Regulators? (117)

What made Pennsylvania's Constitution so radical for its day? (118)

Why did the traditional Whig view of representation oppose democracy? (119)

What was the impact of the American Revolution on the institution of slavery? (120)

Why did so many Indians side with the British during the American Revolution? (121)

Was Hannah Corbin's argument for women's suffrage consistent with Whig theory? (122)

Was Abigail Adams's demand for women's rights consistent with the Revolution's ideals? (123)

How do these two paintings demonstrate the changing views of the family in the era of the American Revolution? (124)