**CHAPTER 5: ROADS TO REVOLUTION, 1750-1776**

* B OSTON MASSACRE – 1770, an angry crowd of Bostonians gathered outside the Boston customs house. They were protesting a British soldier’s abusive treatment a few hours earlier of a Boston apprentice who was trying to collect a debt from a British officer. Shots were fired and 4 Bostonians lay dead and seven more were wounded.
* After 1763, Parliament tightened control over economic and political affairs of the colonies.
* Colonists were shocked that they were trying to centralize decision making from London.
* As a whole, colonial resistance involved many kinds of people with many outlooks. It arose most immediately from a constitutional crisis within the British Empire, but it also reflected deep democratic stirrings in America and in the Atlantic world generally.
* Before 1775, most colonists objected peacefully, such as legislative resolutions and commercial boycotts.

**The Triumph of the British Empire, 1750-1763**

* The Seven Years’ War was a major turning point in American as well as European History.

***A Fragile Peace, 1750-1754***

* The cinder box was in the Ohio Valley. The British and French would dispute for control of this area. Many natives also lived here and they almost always supported the French.

***The Seven Years’ War in America 1754-1760***

* Washington’s 1754 clash with the French created a virtual state of war in North America. The British dispatched a thousand regular troops to North America to seize Fort Duquesne at the headwaters of the Ohio.
* Braddock had a loss of 900 men, including himself in one of the first battles.
* The French and their Native American allies captured Fort Oswego and Fort William Henry. They now threatened central New York and western New England.
* The war started bad for Britain in Europe as well.
* Two things turned the tide for the British.
	+ One, the Iroquois and most Ohio Indians, sensing the French were gaining too much of an advantage, agreed at a treaty at Easton to abandon their support of the French. Their withdrawal from Fort Duquesne and other French forts allowed the British to take them over.
	+ Two, William Pitt took control of military affairs in the British cabinet and reversed the downward course. He reinvigorated British patriotism and became a hero. He said that Britain would pay for most of the war if the colonists fought in Britain’s defense. This worked. The British gained Fort Duquesne and Louisbourg, reclaimed parts of New York, and Quebec fell in 1759. French resistance ended in 1760 when Montreal surrendered.

***The End of French North America, 1760-1763***

* The Seven Years’ War officially ended in both America and Europe with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763.
* France gave up all its land and claims east of the Mississippi (except New Orleans) to Britain.
* In return for Cuba, Spain ceded Florida to Britain.
* In the Treaty of San Ildefonso, France ceded the Louisiana territory to Spain.
* So, the French American Empire was reduced to a few tiny fishing islands off of New Foundland and some sugar islands in the West Indies.
* Old French colonists were now British or Spanish subjects.
* This caused the Anglo-Americans and the British to fight side by side with one another.
* The conclusion of each war planted the seeds first of misunderstanding, then of suspicion, and finally of hostility between the two former compatriots.

**Imperial Revenues and Reorganization, 1760-1766**

* Britain needed to support its newly grown empire and they began putting revenue measures in place.
* Following passage of the stamp act, opposition rose in the colonies because of the cost and what they saw as an overstepping of Parliament’s powers.
* George III was now in power.
* The king made frequent abrupt changes in government leadership that made the relationship with the colonies worse.
* The colonists’ protests reflected class and other divisions within Anglo-American society. Rich people tried to follow protocol when protesting. Poorer people tended to speak their minds more openly.

***Friction Among Allies, 1760-1763***

* There were frictions between the troops and colonial soldiers during the Seven Years’ War. Colonists said the troops were mean and ruthless, and the soldiers said the colonists were lazy and not dedicated.
* Colonists did not like to quarter the soldiers.
* Britons were angry that the colonists did not have to pay for the war. Britain doubled its national debt and British landowners had to assume the payment through land tax and excise duties on a wide variety of items.
* Colonists felt the same way; they believed that since they were buying British goods it was fueling Britain’s economy.
* Fights with Natives also put England further into debt.
* Pontiac, an Ottawa Indian, helped to form an anti-British movement, which was mistakenly called “Pontiac’s Rebellion”. During the spring and summer of 1763, they sacked 8 British forts near the Great Lakes and besieged those at Pittsburgh and Detroit. But for the next 3 years, shortages of food and ammunition, a smallpox epidemic at Fort Pitt (triggered when British officers deliberately distributed affected blankets at a peace parley), and the fact that the French would not return led the Natives to make peace with Britain.
* PROCLAMATION OF 1763 – asserting direct control of land transactions, settlement, trade, and other activities of non-Indians west of the Appalachian crest. Although calming Indian fears, the proclamation angered the colonists by subordinating their western claims to imperial authority and by slowing expansion.
* They also decided to keep 10,000 soldiers here to intimidate the Indian, French, and Spanish inhabitants. The Britons didn’t like this because they thought the colonist should have to pay for some of it. The colonists didn’t like this because they saw it as a “standing army” that in peacetime could only threaten their liberty. They saw the proclamation of 1763 as hindering their expansion to the west.

***The Writs of Assistance, 1760-1761***

* The British constitution was not a written document but instead a collection of customs and accepted principles that guaranteed certain rights to all citizens.
* James Otis contended that Parliament possessed no authority to violate any of the traditional “rights of Englishmen”, and he asserted that three were limits.
* A writ of assistance could allow officers to seize illegally imported goods. The document required no probable cause for suspicion, many critics considered it unconstitutional.

***The Sugar Act, 1764***

* 1764 – The Sugar Act was passed.
* It was designed to raise revenues to offset Britain’s military expenses in North America.
* The act also said that colonists could export lumber, iron, skins, and many other commodities to foreign countries only if the shipments first landed in Britain. They hoped that the colonists would buy more from Britain and in turn create jobs there.
* It also complicated the requirements for shipping goods. A captain had to list every item on the ship, if he missed one his vessel was open to seizure
* It also disregarded many traditional English protections to a fair trial.
* It allowed custom officials to transfer smuggling cases to vice-admiralty courts where judges instead of juries decided the outcomes.
* The Sugar Act awarded vice-admiralty judges 5% of any confiscated cargo, so they had an incentive to find defendants guilty. The cases were usually heard in Nova Scotia and the law reversed normal courtroom procedures – they were guilty until proven innocent.
* The navy enforced this act vigorously.
* Americans continued to smuggle it until 1766 when Britain lowered the duty to a penny.
* The Sugar Act’s immediate effect was minor, but it gave the colonists an idea where imperial power was heading.

***The Stamp Act, 1765***

* Britons were still paying a greater amount of taxes than the colonists.
* The Stamp Act required colonists to purchase special stamped paper for important documents. The prime minister projected yearly revenue to be between 60,000 and 100,000 pounds.
* The stamp act was an internal tax, levied directly on property, goods, and government services in the colonies.
* They saw the colonists as being represented virtually in Parliament. Meaning that Parliament would do what was right for the colonists.
* Many colonists felt that the Stamp Act forced them to confront the issue of parliamentary taxation head-on or to surrender any claim to meaningful rights of self-government.

***Resisting the Stamp Act, 1765-1766***

* Colonists responded to this act in 1765. They saw it as Parliament’s indifference to their interests and the shallowness of the theory of virtual representation.
* Patrick Henry was very outspoken about what Parliament was doing. He was a planter from Virginia. His words became more popular in Boston.
* The Loyal Nine formed and they wanted stamp collectors to resign before tax collections were due on Nov. 1 – then the Stamp Act would become inoperable.
* Boston became the hotbed for resistance. They suffered the most from the Sugar Act.
* However, their problems started before this. Before the Seven Years’ War their shipbuilding industry lost ground to New York and Philadelphia, British impressments had undermined their fishing industry, and the unemployment raised taxes for poor relief, many people were driven out of business, it was also trying to recover from a fire in 1760 that had burned 176 warehouses.
* In the aftermath of the Stamp Act, Bostonians aimed their traditional forms of protest more directly and forcefully against imperial officials.
* Groups similar to the Loyal Nine were forming and they called themselves the Sons of Liberty.
* The Sons of Liberty recognized that the violence and raiding of wealthy homes was going to far so they required that their followers not carry weapons, because they realized the value of martyrs.
* In October 1765 representatives of 9 colonial assemblies met in New York City in the so-called Stamp Act Congress. They agreed on and articulated that Parliament could not levy taxes on the colonies or hold trials without a jury being present.
* Most stamp distributors resigned and by December things were running smoothly again.
* To force the Stamp Act’s repeal, New York’ merchants agreed on October 31, 1765, to boycott all British goods, and businessmen in other cities soon followed their example. People in Britain began to panic and urged Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act.

***The Declaratory Act, 1766***

* In March 1766, Parliament repealed the Stamp Act.
* The Declaratory Act was written in vague language so the colonies interpreted it to their own advantage.
* The House of Commons wanted the colonists to take the act literally to meant that they could not claim exemption from any parliamentary statute, including a tax law.
* The colonists saw it modeled after a law regarding Ireland, which was considered exempt from British taxation.
* Most colonists put the events of 1765 behind them, and they showed gratitude of the Stamp Act’s repeal.
* However, the crisis led many to ponder British policies and actions more deeply than ever before.

***Ideology, Religion, and Resistance***

* Many people turned to the words of John Locke – he wrote about individual rights and government’s duty to preserve those rights.
* “Republicans” - especially admired the sense of civic duty that motivated citizens of the Roman republic. They maintained that a free people had to avoid moral and political corruption and practice a disinterested “public virtue,” in which all citizens subordinated their personal interests to those of the polity.
* Many people thought Parliament was corrupt.
* SAMUEL ADAMS – he was a powerful speaker because he could mix the message of Christian piety with republican ideals.
* Clergymen exerted an enormous influence on public opinion.

**Resistance Resumes, 1766-1770**

* British leaders condemned the colonists for evading their financial responsibilities and for insubordination; most colonists believed that the Stamp Act had not been an isolated mistake but rather part of a deliberate design to undermine colonial self-governance.

***Opposing the Quartering Act, 1766-1767***

* Charles Townshend took over for Pitt in March 1767.
* As Townshend was taking office, a conflict arose; The New York Legislature did not want to pay for the quartering act (money for soldiers rations and living means).
* It aroused resentment because it was an indirect tax; it obligated assemblies to raise a stated amount of revenue. It also reinforced the idea of a standing army.
* New York found it burdensome and refused to grant any supplies. It did not affect a lot of colonies.
* This produced anti-American feelings in the House of Commons. Townshend drafted the New York Suspending Act, which threatened to nullify all laws passed by the colony if the assembly refused to vote the supplies. By the time George III signed it, New York and appropriated the necessary funds.
* KEY – THE QUARTERING ACT DEMONSTRATED THAT BRITISH LEADERS WOULD NOT HESITATE TO DEFEND PARLIAMENT’S AUTHORITY THROUGH THE MOST DRASTIC STEPS: BY INTERFERING WITH AMERICAN CLAIMS TO SELF-GOVERNANCE.

***The Townshend Duties, 1767***

* Parliament passed Townshend’s Revenue Act of 1767 (popularly called the Townshend duties) in June and July 1767. The new law taxed glass, paint, lead, paper, and tea imported to the colonies from England. It was an external tax.
* From the colonial standpoint, Townshend’s duties were taxes just like the Stamp Act duties.
* Townshend thought that through the Revenue Act, he hoped a fund would be established that would pay the salaries of governors and other royal officials in America, thus freeing them from the assemblies’ control. In effect, by stripping the assemblies of their most potent weapon, the power of the purse, the Revenue Act threatened to tip the balance of constitutional power away from elected colonial representatives and toward nonelected royal officials.
* The Revenue Act worsened the British Treasury’s deficit.
* For Parliament, the issues were becoming a test of national will over the principle of taxation.

***The Colonists’ Reaction, 1767-1769***

* In December 1767, JOHN DICKINSON published twelve essays entitled *Letters from a farmer in Pennsylvania*; in them he wrote how the Revenue Acts were unconstitutional because they couldn’t put taxes on the sole purpose of raising revenue if the people had not consented first. His contribution lay in persuading people that the arguments they made against the Stamp Act also applied to the Revenue Act.
* SAMUEL ADAMS was asked to circulate a letter to the other colonies. In it he condemned both taxation without representation and the threat to self-governance posed by Parliament’s making governors and other royal officials financially independent of the legislatures. Yet, it viewed Parliament as the supreme legislative power over the whole empire and it did not advocate illegal activities.
* Townshend died suddenly and Hillsborough took over. He told the Massachusetts assembly to disown its letter, forbade all colonial assemblies to endorse it, and commanded royal governors to dissolve any legislature that violated his instructions.
* He challenged them directly, which led to a unified, angry response.
* Many legislatures previously against the circular letters now endorsed it fully.
* The colonists wanted this act repealed so in August 1768 Boston’s merchants adopted a non-importation agreement, and the tactic slowly spread southward. The Sons of Liberty began reorganizing.
* Not all colonists supported this because this is how they made their money, but it probably kept out 40% of imports from Britain. It was more significant in the long run because it mobilized colonists into more actively resisting British policies.

***“Wilkes and Liberty,” 1768-1770***

* John Wilkes was a London editor and member of Parliament who wanted the Revenue Acts repealed because of how it was affecting people in Britain, since the colonists were not accepting their goods.
* He was imprisoned in England and many people supported him. He was elected twice to Parliament and denied his seat both times. He became popular in Boston and had regular communications with the Sons of Liberty.
* Wilkes and his following made clear that Parliament and the government represented a small if powerful minority whose authority could be legitimately questioned.

***Women and Colonial Resistance***

* Women went to church more and became involved in the protests.
* Women refused to drink tea, and they bought and consumed most of the tea in the colonies.
* Nonconsumption agreements became popular and were extended to include English manufacturers, especially clothing. They made most of the decisions about consumption and they would have to make their own clothes if they did not purchase the goods. They organized spinning bees – this should that colonists would forego luxury for liberty.
* Women’s participation showed that colonial protests extended into the heart of many American households and congregations, and were leading to broadened popular participation in politics.

***Customs “Racketeering.” 1767-1768***

* Besides taxing colonial imports, Townshend sought to increase revenues through stricter enforcement of the Navigation Acts.
* He also introduced legislation creating the American Board of Customs Commissioners. This law raised the number of port officials, funded the construction of a colonial coast guard, and provided money for secret informers. It also awarded an informer one-third of the value of all goods and ships appropriated through a conviction of smuggling.
* The law quickly drew protests because of the way it was enforced and because it assumed those accused were guilty unless they could prove otherwise.
* It used to be that sailors could trade their own goods – goods kept in private chests. Now, these goods were seen as the ship’s cargo. To merchants and seaman alike, the commissioners had embarked on a program of “customs racketeering” that constituted little more than a system of legalized piracy.

**The Deepening Crisis, 1770-1774**

* The colonists saw it that Parliament had no governing rights over them. And Britain thought that the colonists were becoming too violent and dispatched 4,000 troops to Boston in the summer and fall of 1768.

***The Boston Massacre, 1770***

* Soldiers would often take local jobs for less. This angered many Bostonians who were already living poorly.
* A customs informer shot into a crowd picketing the home of a customs-paying merchant, killing an eleven-year-old boy.
* Although the army had no part in the shooting, it became a natural target for frustration and rage.
* Civilians gathered at the customs office. A guard ordered them to disperse. People began throwing things at the guards and they fired on the crowd. Five people were killed.
* They were tried and defended by John Adams (he was not a supporter of crowd actions). All but two were acquitted, the two that weren’t only suffered a branding on their thumbs.
* The shooting coupled with the light sentence reinforced the idea in colonist’s minds that the British government was bent on coercing and suppressing them through naked force.

***Lord North’s Partial Retreat, 1770***

* Lord North was the new British prime minister and he persuaded Parliament to repeal most of the Townshend Acts and retain the tax on tea.
* The colonists refused to drink English tea, through nonconsumption they succeeded in limiting the revenue on tea to about 1/6 the level originally expected.

***The Committees of Correspondence, 1772-1773***

* This was the first attempt of the colonists to maintain close and continuing political cooperation over a wide area.

***Backcountry Tensions***

* Land pressures and the lack of revenue from the colonies left the British government utterly helpless in enforcing the Proclamation of 1763.
* Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1768) – land was granted along the Ohio River that was occupied and claimed by the Shawnees, Delawares, and Cherokees to the governments of Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The Indians sensed that no policy of appeasement would work.

***The Tea Act, 1773***

* The Tea Act eliminated all remaining import duties on tea entering England and thus lowered the selling price to consumers (Ironically, the same saving could have been accomplished by repealing the Townshend tax, which would have ended colonial objections to the company’s tea and produced enormous goodwill toward the British government).
* The Tea Act also permitted the company to sell its tea directly to consumers rather than through wholesalers.
* The Tea Act alarmed many Americans, because they saw in it a menace to liberty and virtue as well as to colonial representative government. It would raise revenue, which Britain would use to pay royal governors.
* This led to a boycott on tea and Bostonians did not want it shipped to America. This led to the BOSTON TEA PARTY where approx. 50 young men went to an East Indian Tea Company ship and dumped 45 tons of tea into the Boston Harbor.

**Toward Independence, 1774-1776**

* There was a calm after the tea party – a calm before the storm.
* By spring 1775 they were on a collision course and blood was shed.
* Americans wanted liberty and Parliament wanted obedience.

***Liberty for Black Americans***

* As the colonists were speaking their voice, slaves also spoke their voice for their own freedom. There was a case in England where a court freed a slave saying there was no such law in England. Many slaves clung to this.
* Many slaves looked for war and the arrival of the British as a means for them to become free.
* Virginia’s governor, Lord Dunmore, promised freedom to any slave who enlisted in the cause of restoring royal authority. Dunmore’s proclamation associated British forces with slave liberation in the minds of both blacks and whites.

***The Coercive Acts***

* These became known as the Intolerable Acts – there were four of them.
	+ The Boston Port Bill – it ordered the navy to close Boston Harbor unless the Privy Council certified by June 1 that the town had arranged to pay for the ruined tea. It was deliberately made short to ensure the port closed.
	+ The Massachusetts Government Act – revoked the Massachusetts charter and restructured the government to make it less democratic.
	+ Administration Justice Act – permitted any person charged with murder while enforcing royal authority in Massachusetts (such as the British soldiers indicted for the Boston Massacre) to be tried in England or in other colonies.
	+ Quartering Act (a new one) – allowed the governor to requisition empty private buildings four housing troops.
* These along with a new governor, General Thomas Gage, Britain’s military commander in North America, struck New Englanders as proof of a plan to place them under military tyranny.
* The Quebec Act – established Roman Catholicism as Quebec’s official religion.
* These angered the colonists and led to them to the brink of rebellion.

***The First Continental Congress***

* Colonists met in Philadelphia
* Suffolk Resolves were endorsed, they said:
	+ Colonies owed no obedience to any Coercive Acts
	+ Provisional government should collect all taxes until the former Massachusetts charter was restored.
	+ They would defend themselves if attacked by royal troops.
* They also voted to boycott all British goods after December 1
* Not all endorsed these measures.
* They sent a petition to the king.

***From Resistance to Rebellion***

* By spring 1775 colonial patriots had established provincial “congresses” that paralleled and rivaled the existing colonial assemblies headed by royal governors.
* Second Continental Congress:
	+ OLIVE BRANCH PETITION – it had 3 demands:
		- 1 – Cease fire at Boston
		- 2 – Repeal of the coercive acts
		- 3 – Negotiations to establish guarantees of American rights
* Meanwhile – they voted in May 1775 to establish an “American Continental Army” with George Washington as a commander.
* Bunker Hill/ Breed’s Hill
* George III and Parliament declared all the colonies rebellious, outlawing trade and subjecting their ships to seizure

***Common Sense***

* Thomas Paine wrote “Common Sense” – he condemned monarchy and said they could start fresh.

***Declaring Independence***

* July 2, Congress created the U.S.A. – July 4, it was ratified.