**Chapter 6: From Empire to Independence, 1750–1776**

Chapter Review

1. AMERICAN COMMUNITIES The First Continental Congress Shapes a National Political Community

In 1774, delegates from 12 colonies met in Philadelphia for the first meeting of the Continental Congress. The Congress nearly broke down over the issue of whether prayers would open the session. Over seven weeks of meetings and social gatherings, a community of national leaders emerged. In this fashion, Congress began the process of forging a national community. The vignette describes the difficulty—and the importance—of building such a community from America’s diverse local communities.

1. THE SEVEN YEARS’ WAR IN AMERICA

The Seven Years’ War was the final conflict between British and French forces in North America before the French Revolution. It decided the fate of territory between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River, and set in motion the conflict between colonists and Britain that would lead to the American Revolution.

a. The Albany Conference of 1754

In 1754, delegates from the various colonies met in Albany in an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate an Iroquois alliance. The delegates at the Albany Conference adopted Benjamin Franklin’s Plan of Union, but the colonial assemblies they represented rejected it.

b. France vs. Britain in America

The issue of expansion eventually led to war between Great Britain and France. The lack of unity seriously hindered the British colonies in their conflicts with the French and their Indian allies. Some Indians allied with the French, but many other tribes remained neutral, playing one European power off the other.

c. Frontier Warfare

In 1756, fighting broke out in the upper Ohio backcountry when the French defeated two armies, first under George Washington and second under Edward Braddock. The British suffered major defeats during the first two years of what became known as the French and Indian War in North America, or the Seven Years’ War in Europe. The British expulsion of French-speaking Acadians led to the creation of the “Cajun” community in Louisiana.

d. The Conquest of Canada

In an effort to take Canada, the British poured in money and men and settled old disputes with the Iroquois. By 1760 the fall of Montreal ended the French North American empire. Under the Treaty of Paris, France lost all its American mainland possessions. Its claims east of the Mississippi went to the British, except for New Orleans which was ceded to Spain; its claims west of the Mississippi went to Spain.

e. The Struggle for the West

Indians in the Ohio Valley felt betrayed. Many became followers of Neolin (“The Delaware Prophet”), who urged purification and holy war. In 1763, a series of attacks throughout the backcountry ended in stalemate with the British. In an effort to maintain the peace, the English issued the Proclamation of 1763, which set aside the area west of the Appalachian Mountains for Indians. White settlers ignored the line and moved into the Ohio Valley. A series of conflicts and treaties with Indian tribes expanded British lands.

1. THE EMERGENCE OF AMERICAN NATIONALISM

Britain’s success in the Seven Years’ War blinded the empire to the sense of separate identity American colonists had started to develop.

a. An American Identity

Conflicts between English and Americans grew during the Seven Years’ War. The war promoted nationalism and the idea of a wider American community, strengthening American identity. The conduct of the British army, and the cruelty employed by its officers, shocked colonists. Commercial links and improved roads brought colonies into closer contact with each other.

b. The Press, Politics, and Republicanism

Newspapers provided a means of widely communicating news of intercolonial affairs and expressing controversial opinions. Americans read the writings of radical Whigs who warned of a government conspiracy to quash liberty and institute tyranny. Only the constant vigilance of free people could protect liberty. Ideas collectively known as “republicanism” emerged that insisted that an independent people should control its own affairs. These ideas meshed well with the American colonial experience of property ownership, representative assemblies, and the struggle with royal authority.

c. The Sugar and Stamp Acts

The British need for additional revenue tested American unity. The high cost of maintaining troops along the Proclamation Line and the expense of servicing the large debt accumulated in the Seven Years’ War led the British to pass new colonial taxes. The Sugar Act tightened enforcement of customs regulations. Opponents called for a boycott of British goods, an idea which spread throughout the port cities. In early 1765 the British passed the Stamp Act, requiring tax stamps to be purchased for many items.

d. The Stamp Act Crisis

Americans protested not only the expense but the constitutional implications. The British claimed that Parliament represented all citizens of the empire through “virtual representation.” Americans asserted that only their own legislatures could levy taxes. Nine colonies issued denunciations of the act, declaring “no taxation without representation.” In Massachusetts, opposition was led by upper- and middle-class men who successfully mobilized working-class Bostonians. What was intended as a peaceful protest rally turned into a violent attack on those associated with the tax. Mobs successfully intimidated officials from selling the stamps. Nine colonies met at the Stamp Act Congress, passing resolutions against Parliament’s right to tax the colonies.

 A boycott of British goods led to the Act’s repeal amid assertions of Parliamentary supremacy.

1. “SAVE YOUR MONEY AND SAVE YOUR COUNTRY”

Opposition to the Stamp Act was more urban than rural, and varied with profession. But the next round of British duties on imports sparked wider opposition among the colonists.

a. The Townshend Revenue Acts

In 1767, Parliament passed the Townshend duties, a new set of external taxes collected on goods before they entered colonial markets, and inaugurated stricter enforcement policies. Americans reasserted their opposition to all taxation without representation. But Americans remained loyal.

b. An Early Political Boycott

Led by Bostonians, Americans in port cities revived their nonimportation agreements. Artisans took to the streets to enforce them. Nonimportation appealed to values of self-sufficiency and independence and brought rural people into the community of resistance. Colonial imports from Britain declined by 41 percent.

c. The Massachusetts Circular Letter

In 1768, the Massachusetts House of Representatives sent out a circular letter denouncing the Townshend Acts. British officials demanded its repeal, and the governor of Massachusetts shut down the Assembly. Threats of violence against royal officials led the British to station troops in Boston.

d. The Boston Massacre

Periodic incidents between soldiers and citizens escalated until 1770 when soldiers fired into a crowd, killing seven. News of the “Boston Massacre” helped galvanize public opinion against the British. The news of the repeal of the Townshend Acts lessened American resistance.

1. FROM RESISTANCE TO REBELLION

In 1773, the British Parliament’s Tea Act pushed American colonists over the edge, from resistance to rebellion.

a. Committees of Correspondence

In response to British encroachments on American rights and customs, Americans created committees of correspondence to communicate with other communities. Actions in Massachusetts confirmed colonial fears of British plans for stricter control of the colonies.

b. The Boston Tea Party

The 1773 Tea Act prompted mobs in Philadelphia and New York to intimidate tea importers. On Dec. 17, 1773, Bostonians dumped a shipload of tea into the harbor; soon, tea was destroyed in other cities, as well.

c. The Intolerable Acts

Britain punished Bostonians by passing the Intolerable Acts (the Coercive Acts) that ended the community’s self-rule. Troops could be quartered in private homes. At the same time, the Quebec Act established a highly centralized government for Quebec and toleration for Catholics. This seemed a preview of what was in store for Americans.

d. The First Continental Congress

In September 1774, delegates arrived in Philadelphia for the first meeting of the Continental Congress. Rather than overt attacks on British authority, Congress endorsed a policy of boycotts against British goods. It called for democratically elected local committees to enforce these policies.

e. Lexington and Concord

In Massachusetts, local communities had organized minutemen to defend communities. When on the evening of April 18, 1775, the British left Boston to capture American ammunition in Concord, they triggered a firefight with local minutemen. The battles of Lexington and Concord ignited the American Revolution.

1. DECIDING FOR INDEPENDENCE

On the heels of events Massachusetts, militias mobilized throughout the colonies, and delegates from twelve colonies met in Philadelphia.

a. The Second Continental Congress

In May 1775, the Continental Congress met again. Within months, Georgia joined the Congress. Congress organized an army, commanded by George Washington. It issued $2 million in bills of credit. John Adams and Benjamin Franklin also played important roles.

b. Canada and the Spanish Borderlands

The Congress reached out to other British colonies, including Canada and the Caribbean islands, and to Spain, for support. Results varied.

c. Fighting in the North and South

An unsuccessful effort to take Canada ended in the spring of 1776. By March the British had been forced out of Boston. British efforts in the South had also failed.

d. No Turning Back

Hopes for reconciliation waned. In a brilliant pamphlet, Thomas Paine helped cut Americans’ emotional ties to Britain and the King.

e. The Declaration of Independence

By July 1776, Congress was ready to take the final step. It approved Thomas Jefferson’s revised draft of the Declaration of Independence with no dissenting votes (New York abstained). Men of wealth and position committed treason against the government of England by signing a document that pledged them to the principle of equality.

1. CONCLUSION

Americans forged a distinctively “American” identity that enabled them to strike out for independence.

***Answer the following questions from chapter 6:***

1. Seven Years’ War

2. Albany Conference

3. Halifax

4. Treaty of Paris

5. Fort Duquesne

6. Proclamation of 1763

7. Paxton Boys

8. Sugar Act

9. James Otis

10. Stamp Act

11. Patrick Henry

12. Samuel Adams

13. Sons of Liberty

14. Stamp Act Congress

15. Charles Townshend

16. Daughters of Liberty

17. Boston Massacre

18. Tea Act

19. Thomas Gage

20. Virginia Committee

21. Boston Tea Party

22. Intolerable Acts

23. First Continental Congress

24. Lexington

25. Paul Revere

26. William Dawes

27. Second Continental Congress

28. Olive Branch Petition

29. Declaration of Causes and Necessities of Taking Up Arms

30. Breed’s Hill

31. Benedict Arnold

32. Thomas Paine

33. Declaration of Independence

**1. The Albany Conference of 1754:** Who met at the Albany Conference and what was its

purpose? Who convened it? What did it accomplish? What did it illustrate about possible

intercolonial cooperation? What was Franklin’s Plan of Union? How did the Albany

Conference react to his plan? The colonies?

**2. The Conquest of Canada:** Why did the British concentrate on Canada rather than the war

in Europe? Who was William Pitt and what policies did he follow? What was the result?

What happened to French positions at Louisburg, Ft. Duquesne, Quebec and Montreal?

What was the settlement for Britain in the Treaty of Paris of 1763?

**3. The Emergence of American Nationalism:** How did colonial experiences in the Seven

Years War lead to a sense of American identity? How did the war help build a sense of

intercolonial identity? What systems of communication helped link the colonists?

**4. The Sugar and Stamp Acts:** What were the provisions of each act and what were the

British trying to do? How and why did the Americans react to each? What impact did the

Great Awakening ideas have here?

**5. The Stamp Act Crisis:** Why did the Stamp Act create a greater crisis than the Sugar Act

did? How did various colonial areas react? What were the various forms of protest in

different cities? What views were expressed at the Stamp Act Congress?

**6. Repeal of the Stamp Act:** Why did the British repeal the Stamp Act? What did they assert

in the Declaratory Act?

**7. The Townshend Revenue Acts:** Who was Townshend and why did he propose these new

acts? What did they cover? How did the colonies respond? What measures did Townshend

take to reinforce his Revenue Acts?

**8. The Politics of Revolt and The Boston Massacre:** What was the Boston Massacre and

what led up to the incident? What happened afterwards?

**9. Intercolonial Cooperation:** What activities and policies of the British and the colonial

governors led to the foundation of committees of correspondence? What was the function

of these committees? What were the general elements of the conspiracy theory and how

did the British seem to reinforce it?

**10. The Boston Tea Party:** What was the Tea Act and what was its purpose? How did the

Committees of Correspondence react? What was the “Tea Party” and how did the British

react to it?

**11. The Intolerable Acts:** What series of measures did the British pass and why did the

colonies call them intolerable? Since most measures were aimed at Boston, what prompted

other colonists to sympathize with them? What was Virginia’s response?

**12. The First Continental Congress:** What was the general tone of the First Continental

Congress? Who were the important leaders? What resolutions did Congress pass? What

were the Committees of Observation and Safety and how significant were they? What was

the general impact of committee activity?

**13. Lexington and Concord:** What led up to the violence at Lexington and Concord? What

warning did General Gage give to his superiors? What was the attitude of King George III?

William Pitt? Edmund Burke? What was the response of Patrick Henry? What losses were

incurred by both sides and what problem was forecast for the British?

**14. The Second Continental Congress:** How was the second Congress selected compared to

the first one and what effect did this have? Why did Georgia join the second Congress?

Were other British possessions in the New World interested and if so, why did they not

join? What level of sentiment was there for independence in the spring of 1775? What

actions did the Congress take?

**15. Fighting in the North and South:** What other military incidents took place before

Congress could respond with a Continental Army? How did King George react? What

military actions took place and how successful were they?

**16. No Turning Back:** What events moved things quickly to independence? What was the

essence of Thomas Paine’s pamphlet, Common Sense? What effect did it have? What

action did North Carolina take? The Declaration of Independence: From June 7 to July 2,

what actions led to the Declaration of Independence? What was the vote on supporting it?

What were the various ideas expressed in the Declaration?