

## 4.13 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, you read about life in the American colonies during the early 1700s. You used a journal to organize information about various aspects of colonial life.

The colonists developed an economy based on farming, commerce, and crafts. Farm families produced most of what they needed for themselves. In the villages and cities, many trades and crafts developed.

American colonists expected to enjoy all the rights of English citizens, especially the right to have a voice in their own government. Crimes and punishments were defined by colonial assemblies. Often, punishments were harsh.

Class differences in the colonies were based mostly on wealth. Most people in lower classes could hope to move up through hard work. Enslaved African Americans had almost no such hope. After being brought to America in chains, they faced a life of forced obedience and toil.

Religion was very important to the colonists. The First Great Awakening revived religious feeling and helped spread the idea that all people are equal.

Except in New England, most colonial children received little education. Instead, they were expected to contribute to the work of the farm or home. Most colonial families were large. Often they included many relatives besides the parents and their children.

Much of colonial life was hard work, even preparing food. But colonists found ways to mix work with play. They also enjoyed sports and games.

For most of the 1700s, the colonists were content to be ruled by English laws. In the next chapter, however, you'll learn how tensions grew between the colonists and the government in far-off England.



This panorama of Philadelphia in 1702 reveals a number of aspects of colonial life. Church steeples, government buildings, colonial homes, ships, and citizens on unpaved colonial roads are all evident in the painting.



# Toward Independence

## 5.1 Introduction

An almost full moon cast a pale light over Boston on April 18, 1775. But the night was anything but quiet. Mounted on Brown Beauty, one of the fastest horses in Massachusetts, Paul Revere woke up the countryside with alarming news. British troops stationed in Boston were on the move! They had orders to march to the nearby town of Concord and seize weapons that the colonists had stored there.

This was news that local Patriots had been waiting for. **Patriots** (also called Whigs) were Americans who believed that the colonies had the right to govern themselves. On hearing Revere's warning, Patriots around Concord grabbed their muskets and prepared to meet the British troops.

The same news filled Loyalists (also called Tories) with dread. **Loyalists** were Americans who felt a deep loyalty to Great Britain. They saw themselves as faithful subjects of the king. They were horrified by the idea of taking up arms against British troops. How did colonists become so divided in their feelings about the British? As you read in the last chapter, most Americans were content with British rule in the early 1700s. In this chapter, you will learn what happened to change the relationship between Britain and the colonies.

The story begins in the 1750s, when Britain and the colonies fought a war against the French and their Indian **allies**. The French and Indian War left Britain with huge debts and a vast new empire to protect. To solve its problems, the British government passed new laws that tightened its control of the colonies. Some of these laws also placed new taxes on the colonists.

Americans were stunned. They had always had the right to make their own laws and taxes. Suddenly, Britain was changing the rules. It wasn't right, the colonists protested. It wasn't fair!

You probably know just how they felt. In this chapter, you will see how these feelings led the colonists to the brink of war.



### Graphic Organizer: Metaphor

You will use a metaphor to compare the tensions between Britain and the colonies to the strained relationship between a principal and students.



**The French and Indian War** Washington's whistling bullets were the first shots in a conflict known as the French and Indian War. This war was part of a long struggle between France and Britain for territory and power. Because many Native Americans fought with France in this latest conflict, the colonists called it the French and Indian War.

In 1755, Britain sent 1,400 British soldiers to Virginia to finish the job that Washington had begun. They were led by a bumbling general named Edward Braddock. The soldiers' job was to clear the French out of the Ohio Valley. Washington joined the army as a volunteer, hoping to make a good impression on General Braddock.

The British army's march into the Ohio Valley was a disaster. The troops' bright red uniforms made them perfect targets for French sharpshooters and their Indian allies. Two-thirds of the soldiers were killed.

Washington himself narrowly escaped death. "I had four Bullets through my Coat and two horses shot under me," he wrote in his journal. Showing great courage, Washington led the survivors back to Virginia. There, he was greeted as a hero.

The French and Indian War raged for seven long years. The turning point came in 1759, when British troops captured Canada. In 1763, Britain and France signed a peace treaty ending the war. In this treaty, France ceded, or gave, Canada to Great Britain.

Americans were thrilled with this victory. Great Britain now controlled a vastly expanded American empire. Never before had the colonists felt so proud of being British. And never before had the future of the colonies looked so bright.

Here, we see George Washington tipping his hat to the British flag at Fort Duquesne. The British captured the badly damaged fort in 1758. It was rebuilt and called Fort Pitt. The city of Pittsburg was later built here.



The Granger Collection, New York





The Stamp Act angered the colonists, who felt that taxation without representation was unfair. Protests, such as the one shown here, forced Parliament to repeal the act.

**The Stamp Act** The British government had other problems besides keeping colonists and Native Americans from killing each other. One was how to pay off the large debt left over from the French and Indian War.

The solution seemed obvious to Prime Minister George Grenville, the leader of the British government. People in Britain were already paying taxes on everything from windows to salt. In contrast, Americans were probably the most lightly taxed people in the British Empire. It was time, said Grenville, for the colonists to pay their fair share of the cost of protecting them.

In 1765, Grenville proposed a new act, or law, called the Stamp Act. This law required colonists to buy a stamp for every piece of paper they used. Newspapers had to be printed on stamped paper. Wills, licenses, and even playing cards had to have stamps.

Once again, the colonists sensed tyranny. One newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Journal*, said that as soon as “this shocking Act was known, it filled all British America from one End to the other, with Astonishment and Grief.”

It wasn’t just the idea of higher taxes that upset the colonists. They were willing to pay taxes passed by their own assemblies, where their representatives could vote on them. But the colonists had no representatives in Parliament. For this reason, they argued, Parliament had no right to tax them. They saw the Stamp Act as a violation of their rights as British subjects. “No taxation without representation!” they cried.

Some colonists protested the Stamp Act by sending messages to Parliament. Loyalists simply refused to buy stamps. Patriots, however, took more violent action. Mobs calling themselves “Sons of Liberty” attacked tax collectors’ homes. Protesters in Connecticut even started to bury one tax collector alive. Only when he heard dirt being shoveled onto his coffin did the terrified tax collector agree to resign from his post.

After months of protest, Parliament **repealed**, or canceled, the Stamp Act. Americans greeted the news with great celebration. Church bells rang, bands played, and everyone hoped the troubles with Britain were over.



According to the Stamp Act, colonists had to buy stamps like this and place them on all paper products, such as newspapers, wills, and playing cards.

**repeal** to take back, or to cancel, a law



Adams wrote a letter protesting the Townshend Acts that was sent to every colony. The letter argued that the new duties violated the colonists' rights as British citizens. To protect those rights, the colonies decided to **boycott** British goods. This was a peaceful form of protest that even Loyalists could support. One by one, all of the colonies agreed to support the boycott.

Women were very important in making the boycott work, since they did most of the shopping. The *Virginia Gazette* wrote that one woman could “do more for the good of her country than five hundred noisy sons of liberty, with all their mobs and riots.” Women found many ways to avoid buying British imports. They sewed dresses out of homespun cloth, brewed tea from pine needles, and bought only American-made goods.

**Repeal of the Townshend Acts** Meanwhile, a new leader named Lord North became head of the British government. Described as a “great, heavy, booby-looking man,” Lord North embarrassed his supporters by taking naps in Parliament. But he was good with numbers, and he could see that the Townshend duties were a big money-loser. The duties didn't begin to make up for all the money British merchants were losing because of the boycott.

Early in 1770, North persuaded Parliament to repeal all of the Townshend duties, except for one—the tax on tea. Some members of Parliament argued that keeping the duty on tea was asking for more trouble. But stubborn King George wasn't ready to give up on the idea of taxing Americans.

“I am clear that there must always be one tax to keep up the right,” the king said. “And, as such, I approve the tea duty.”

## 5.5 The Boston Massacre

**O**n the same day that Parliament repealed most of the Townshend duties, a brawl broke out between soldiers and colonists in Boston. When the dust cleared, five Bostonians were dead and ten were injured.

Patriots called this incident the “Boston Massacre.” A massacre is the killing of defenseless people. What really happened was a small riot.

Trouble had been brewing in Boston for months before the riot. To the British, Boston Patriots were the worst troublemakers in the colonies. In 1768, the government had sent four regiments of troops to keep order in Boston.

Bostonians resented the British soldiers. They made fun of their red uniforms by calling them “lobsterbacks.” Sam Adams even taught his dog to nip at soldiers' heels.

Despite such insults, the troops were forbidden to fire on citizens. Knowing this only made Bostonians bolder in their attacks. General Thomas Gage, the commander of the British army in America, wrote that “the people were as Lawless...after the Troops arrived, as they were before.”

**boycott** To refuse to buy one or more goods from a certain source. An organized refusal by many people is also called a boycott.

Paul Revere's famous engraving of the Boston Massacre stirred up deep colonial resentment.





**The Tea Act** The Tea Act was Lord North's attempt to rescue the British East India Company. This large trading company controlled all the trade between Britain and Asia. For years it had been a moneymaker for Britain. But the American boycott of British tea hurt the company badly. By 1773, it was in danger of going broke unless it could sell off the 17 million pounds of tea that was sitting in its London warehouses.

The Tea Act lowered the cost of tea that was sold by the British East Indian Company in the colonies. As a result, even taxed British tea became cheaper than smuggled Dutch tea. The Tea Act also gave the British East India Company a monopoly, or complete control, over tea sales in the colonies. From now on, the only merchants who could sell the bargain-priced tea were those chosen by the company.

Lord North may have thought he could trick Americans into buying taxed tea by making it so cheap, but colonists weren't fooled. They saw the Tea Act as still another attempt to tax them without their consent.

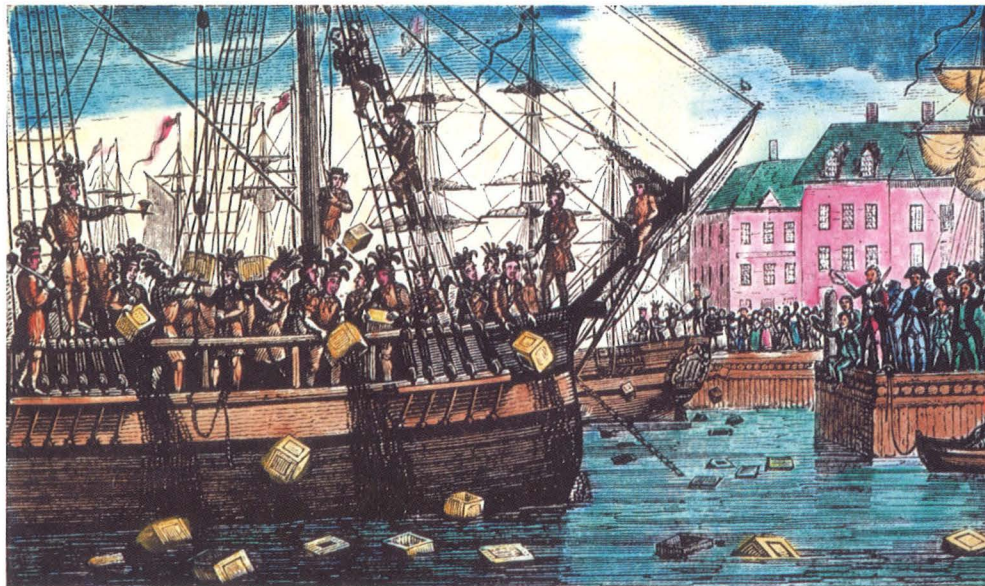
In addition, many merchants were alarmed by the East India Company's monopoly over the tea trade. They wondered what the British government might try to control next. Would there be a monopoly on cloth? On sugar? Nervous merchants wondered what would happen to their businesses if other goods were also restricted. The thought of more monopolies made them shudder.

The Granger Collection, New York

**Tea Ships Arrive** When the British East India Company's tea ships sailed into American ports, angry protesters kept them from unloading their cargoes. More than one ship turned back for England, still filled with tea. In Boston, however, the governor ordered the British navy to block the exit from Boston Harbor. He insisted that the three tea ships would not leave until all their tea was unloaded.

On December 16, 1773, the Sons of Liberty decided to unload the tea, but not in the way the governor had in mind. That night, about 50 men dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded the three ships. One of them, George Hewes, described what happened:

*We then were ordered by our commander to open the hatches and take out all the chests of tea and throw them overboard...and we immediately proceeded to execute his orders, first cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks.... In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found on the ship.... We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us.*



To protest the tax on tea, Patriots disguised as Native Americans threw 342 chests of tea overboard from three British ships. Colonists later called this the Boston Tea Party.



**The Colonies Begin to Unite** In fact, the Intolerable Acts did not force the colonists to give in. Boston Patriots declared they would “abandon their city to flames” before paying a penny for the lost tea. Merchants in other cities showed their support by closing their shops. Many colonies sent food and money to Boston so that its citizens would not starve.

In Virginia, lawmakers drafted a resolution in support of Massachusetts. The Virginians said that everyone’s rights were at stake. “An attack made on one of our sister colonies,” they declared, “is an attack made on all British America.”

The Virginians also called for a congress, or meeting, of delegates from all the colonies. The purpose of the congress would be to find a peaceful solution to the conflicts with Great Britain.

Not all Americans agreed with this plan. In every colony, there were Loyalists who thought that Bostonians had gone too far and should pay for the tea. If they were forced to choose, they would side with the king against Sam Adams and his Sons of Liberty. To them, it was the misguided Patriots who were causing all the trouble.

**The First Continental Congress** In September 1774, some 50 leaders from 12 colonies met in Philadelphia. The meeting brought together delegates from most of the British colonies on the North American continent. For this reason, it was called the First Continental Congress.

The delegates were used to thinking of themselves as citizens of their own colonies. Patrick Henry, a leader from Virginia, urged them to come together as one people. “I am not a Virginian,” he declared, “but an American.” But only strong Patriots like Sam and John Adams were ready to think of themselves this way. Many delegates were strong Loyalists who still thought of themselves as British. Still others, like George Washington, were somewhere in between. Only one thing united the delegates—their love of liberty and hatred of tyranny.

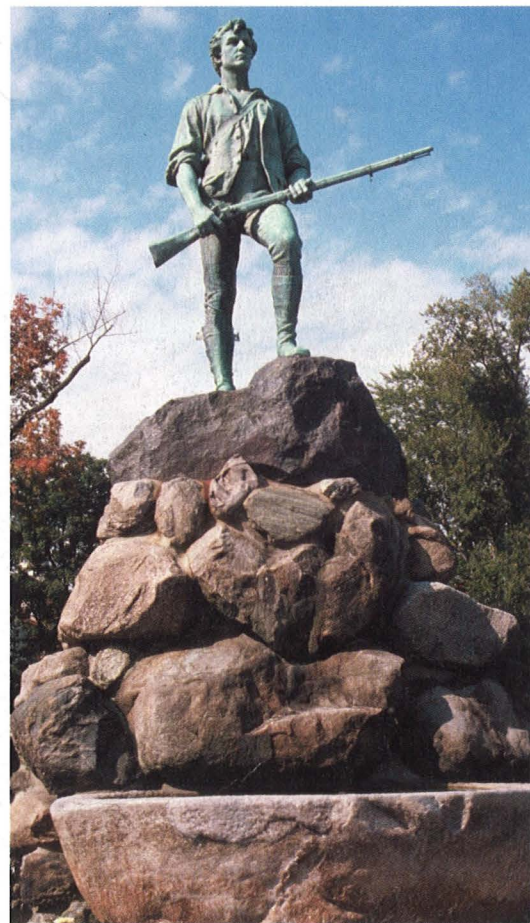
In spite of their differences, the delegates agreed to send a respectful message to King George. The message urged the king to consider their complaints and to recognize their rights.

The delegates also called for a new boycott of British goods until Parliament repealed the Intolerable Acts. Finally, they agreed to meet again the following May if the boycott didn’t work.

**The Colonies Form Militias** In towns and cities throughout the colonies, Patriots appointed committees to enforce the boycott. In case the boycott didn’t work, they also began organizing local militias. In New England, the volunteers called themselves Minutemen because they could be ready to fight in just 60 seconds.

Across the colonies, militias marched and drilled. In New Hampshire, unknown persons stole 100 barrels of gunpowder and 16 cannons from a British fort. Similar thefts occurred in other colonies. Rather than forcing the colonies to give in, the Intolerable Acts had brought the two sides to the brink of war.

Colonies began forming militias after the Intolerable Acts to enforce a boycott of British goods. Shown here is a statue of a member of the New England militia known as the Minutemen.





**The First Blow at Lexington** In April 1775, a spy told General Gage that the colonists were hiding a large supply of gunpowder and weapons in the nearby village of Concord. Gage decided to strike at once.

The general ordered 700 of his best troops to march to Concord and seize the weapons. To keep the colonists from moving the weapons, the attack had to be a surprise. And so Gage had his troops march the 20 miles to Concord at night.

The colonists had their own spies. When Gage's troops slipped out of Boston on April 18, 1775, Patriots were watching their every move. Soon Paul Revere and William Dawes were galloping through the countryside, warning colonists that the British were coming.

At Lexington, a village on the road to Concord, a small band of Minutemen gathered nervously in the chilly night air. "Stand your ground," ordered Captain John Parker. "Don't fire unless fired upon! But if they mean to have a war, let it begin here."

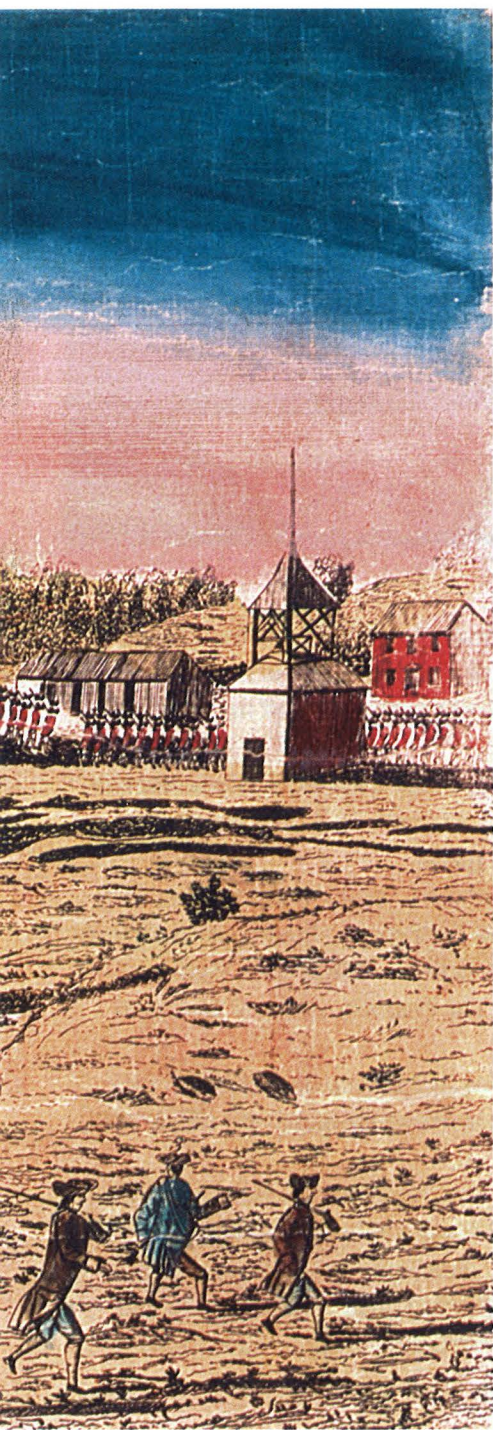
Suddenly, British troops appeared in the early morning mist. A shot rang out—from where, no one knew for certain. Without orders, the soldiers rushed forward, shooting wildly.

When the firing stopped, eight colonists lay dead or dying. Another ten were limping to safety with painful wounds. The British gave three cheers for victory and marched on to Concord.

### **The Second Blow at Concord**

By breakfast time, the British were in Concord, looking for gunpowder and weapons. But colonists had moved the gunpowder and hidden the weapons. In frustration, the soldiers piled up a few wooden tools, tents, and gun carriages and set them on fire.

On a ridge outside the city, militiamen from the surrounding countryside watched the smoke rise. "Are you going to let them burn the town down?" shouted one man.





## 5.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, you read about tensions between the colonies and Britain between 1763 and 1775. You used the metaphor of a principal and students to describe that relationship. American colonists had grown used to governing themselves, and they felt strongly about their right to do so.

The French and Indian War left Britain with huge debts and a much larger empire to govern. Parliament tried to deal with these challenges by imposing new taxes and passing new laws. These actions divided many of the colonists into opposing camps. Loyalists urged obedience to Britain, but Patriots resisted “taxation without representation” through protests, boycotts, and riots.

In 1774, delegates at the First Continental Congress sent a formal complaint to the king. Meanwhile, Patriots began forming militias to defend themselves against British troops.

King George III was determined to teach the colonists a lesson. But at Lexington and Concord, Patriots showed they would rather fight than give up their rights. In the next chapter, you will see how these clashes triggered an all-out war and the birth of a new nation.

Sons of Liberty raise a Liberty Pole in 1776. Liberty Poles were used to promote patriotism.

