**Chapter 4**

The Empire in Transition

*Reviewing Objectives*

**A thorough study of Chapter Four should enable the student to understand:**

1. The primary reasons for the growth of the differences between colonial Americans and the British government that resulted in a clash of interests.
2. The colonial attitudes toward England and toward other colonies before the Great War for empire.
3. The causes of the Great War for empire, and the reason for the French defeat.
4. The effects of the war on the American colonists and on the status of the colonies within the British Empire.
5. The options available to the British for dealing with the colonies in 1763, and the reasons for adopting the policies that they chose to implement.
6. The importance of the series of crises from the Sugar Act through the Coercive Acts, and how each crisis changed colonial attitudes toward the mother country.
7. The change in American attitudes toward Parliament, the English constitution, and the king. What such slogans as “no taxation without representation” really meant.
8. The significance of the convening of the First Continental Congress, and what it accomplished.
9. Lexington and Concord—who fired the first shot, and does it really matter?

**Pertinent Questions**

**Chapter Four**

**A Loosening of Ties**

1. How did the relationship between king and Parliament change during the early eighteenth century? What role did the prime minister play in this change?
2. How were the American colonies administered by Britain, from Britain, during this period? What was the effect of this policy?
3. How did British officials in the colonies carry out (or fail to carry out) their duties, and what was the effect of their activities?
4. How was England’s hold on the colonies weakened between 1700 and 1775?
5. What factors helped promote colonial divisions during this period?
6. What was the Albany Plan, and what did it reveal about colonial unity.

**The Struggle for the Continent**

1. To what areas of North America had the French laid claim by 1750?
2. How did the French attempt to secure their hold on the vast areas they claimed?
3. What could the French and the English offer the Indians who lived in the continental interior?
4. What did the French offer that was “often more important” than what the British promised, and what made it so significant?
5. What were the causes and result of Anglo-French conflicts between 1686 and 1748? What role did the American colonies of each play in these?
6. How did the Great War for the empire become a “truly international conflict,” and how did Britain carry out its part in the struggle?
7. What role did the French and British colonies play in this war?
8. What were the terms of the Peace of Paris of 1763?

**The New Imperialism**

1. What dilemma faced London policymakers at the end of the Great War for the Empire?
2. What arguments were raised for and against the post-1763 “territorial imperialism,” and how did this new policy alter British attitudes toward the colonies?
3. What initial policy changes occurred when George III ascended the throne, and what were the king’s motives for these changes?
4. How were the policy changes cited in question 17 reflected in the acts passed under the Grenville administration? Deal with the specific acts as well as general policy objectives.
5. What was it about post-1763 British policy that would cause colonists in every section to see the disadvantages rather than the advantages of being part of the British Empire?

**Stirrings of Revolt**

1. Why did the Stamp Act so antagonize the American colonists?
2. Who sounded the “trumpet of sedition” in Virginia over the Stamp Act? What reasons, other than those stated in the resolutions proposed, contributed to this action? What was the effect of this, and what were the results?
3. How did actions by the Stamp Act crowd raise questions of whether protests in the colonies represented more than opposition to British policies?
4. What was England’s response to the American protests over the Stamp Act. Explain the policies of Charles Townsend and of Lord North and how they differ.
5. What role did Samuel Adams play in the American protests? How did his view of the need for American independence differ from those of most other colonial leaders at the time?
6. How did the colonial view of the nature of the British Empire differ from the view by George III and his supporters?
7. What was the “political outlook” that gained a following in America and ultimately served to justify revolt?
8. Why was the Tea Act seen by many Americans as a threat to themselves and their institutions?
9. What were the Coercive acts? How did the Quebec Act help to unite the colonies with Boston in opposition to these acts?

**Cooperation and War**

1. What role was played by committees of correspondence in the American protests?
2. What were the five major decisions made at the First Continental Congress, and what was their significance?
3. What British leaders spoke out in support of the American causes, and what were their reasons for doing so?
4. What were the circumstances that led to the fighting at Lexington and Concord?

**Patterns of Popular Culture**

1. How and why did taverns become a central institution in colonial American social life?
2. What circumstances and events helped make taverns central to political life as well?

# Summary

Despite a number of disagreements, by 1763, Anglo-American ties seemed stronger than ever. The colonies had prospered under British rule, had developed local institutions through which they seemed to govern themselves, and finally, with the defeat of France, appeared ready to expand into the heart of the continent. However, no sooner was the war ended than the British began to alter the pre-1763 system in an effort to make it more efficient and more responsive to control from London. The means chosen to do this (enforced regulations to end the illegal trade that had flourished under salutary neglect, plus taxation to pay for the colonial administration) were seen in the colonies as threats to the way of life they had come to accept as rightfully theirs. Rising in protest, the colonies faced a British government determined to assert its authority, and, with neither side willing to give in, the cycle of action and reaction continued. Finally, spurred on by a propaganda campaign that characterized the mother country as a tyrant determined to bring America to its knees, the colonies acted. The Intolerable Acts proved the final straw, and in

September 1774, twelve British provinces met in a Continental Congress in hopes that a united front would cause London to reconsider and that conflict would be avoided. But it did not work, and in the spring, fighting occurred at Lexington and Concord. Although independence was not yet declared, the American Revolution had begun.