

Chapter 4

The Empire in Transition

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Key Concepts

What are this chapter's key concepts?

- British government increasingly attempted to incorporate North American colonies into coherent, imperial structure with mercantilist aims; failed due to conflict w/ colonists and natives
- Colonists drew on local self-government to resist imperial control: liberty began to grow as a major concept
- Colonial rivalry between Britain and France intensified, threatening French-native trade networks and native autonomy
- Britain defeated the French, expanding territorial holdings
- Imperial officials attempted to prevent westward expansion - natives hoped to continue trading with Europeans while resisting colonial expansion
- Colonial leaders based calls for resistance on arguments about rights of British subjects
- American independence effort pushed by powerful leaders like Franklin

Loosening Ties

What changes marked the weakening of ties between the British mainland and overseas colonies?

British Parliamentary control saw limited rule over the colonies; the London Privy Council, too, as well as royal governors, were often bribed and controlled by colonial officials. In part because of this, the colonies remained divided, viewing each other as foreigners.

What was the overall context behind England's reduced attention to the colonies?

The British government made no serious effort to govern the colonies due to great divisions within Parliament concerning the extent of interference. Although many colonies soon became royal colonies and some new laws were implemented (mainly economic), colonies were generally left to diverge from British rule.

What, specifically, gave the colonies freedom to diverge from British rule?

- Reigns of German-born George I, George II saw monarchical alienation; prime minister/cabinet ministers became true executives
 - Parliamentary leaders depended on landholders and merchants, leading them to keep loose control over colonies to reduce expenditure
 - Navigation Act often ignored to stimulate commerce
- Day-to-day administration decentralized: some power in Board of Trade and Plantations, an advisory body; real power in Privy Council
 - Focus on mainland affairs led to reduced concentration on colonial affairs
 - Most London officials had little experience with America: only knowledge came from overseas agents (who rarely encouraged interference)
 - Royal officials (mostly governors) in America generally succumbed to bribery, favoritism
 - * Often hired substitutes to take places in America with low wages, encouraging bribery(ex: customs collectors often waived duties if paid directly)
- Main, deliberate resistance to authority seen in colonial legislatures
 - Gave themselves right to levy taxes, pass laws with potential veto by Privy Council
 - Often found loopholes such as slight changes to laws; leverage over Privy Council due to control of budget gave little power to Council itself

Decentralized control was rooted both in mainland England and the colonies. The Parliament's control over English politics and their ties with merchants meant that rarely would laws be enforced for economic reasons; furthermore, the London Privy Council had little overall control due to frequent bribery of royal officials and the legislatures' leverage over them.

Did the colonies begin to converge into one cohesive unit?

- Many colonists felt greater ties to England than to each other; nearby colonies viewed each other as foreigners tied only by geography
- Economic connections often emerged especially with roads along coast allowing for intercolonial trade, postal service promoting communication
- Cooperation was often challenging even amidst threat of adversaries
 - Threat from French/native allies led to Albany Plan
 - * Treaty with the Iroquois and a potential colonial federation with one general, elected government for native relations
 - * Allowed present constitutions to remain intact
 - Albany Plan approved by no colonial assemblies

No - despite some economic ties, the colonists generally remained split by regional differences. Even in the threat of their French adversaries, all legislatures refused to cooperate under the proposed Albany Plan.

The Struggle for the Continent

What were the major struggles for control over the American continent?

The most significant struggle was the French and Indian War, preceded by smaller conflicts between the British, French, and Iroquois over the large territories held by each group. It began with Washington's invasion of Fort Duquesne and was split into three phases: one of British disorganization and little assistance, one of colonial assistance and a connection to Europe but aggravated tensions between the British and the colonists, and the third with the tide turned toward the British and a victory which provided large swathes of land to the English and Spanish but sparked more conflicts between the British and the colonists.

What was the background to the French and Indian War?

A global war, the French and Indian War saw a rearrangement of global power with England at the head. However, the conflict was long-coming, with an uneasy balance of power between natives (particularly the Iroquois), the French, and the English colonists finally settled.

What were the basic traits of New France and how were the natives involved?

- French/English had coexisted peacefully, but religious/commercial tensions produced new conflicts
 - Expansion of French presence under Louis XIV with growing fur trade, presence of French Jesuits, farmers travelling south from Canada
- New France comprised vast territory, with explorers claiming Louisiana (named for King Louis); subsequent explorers reached as far south as Rio Grande
 - Territory held together only by widely separated communities, fortresses, trading posts
 - In north, fortified city of Quebec with Montreal to south; Mississippi plantations further south worked by black slaves; Louisiana contained large cities like New Orleans, Mobile
 - Large territory shared with natives, English settlers
 - * French/English both understood importance of forging relations with native tribes for power
 - * Natives concerned with protecting independence; often marrying for convenience
 - English attracted natives with advanced goods, but forced to conform to standards
 - French adjusted behavior to native patterns, marrying women and adopting tribal ways; Jesuits allowed Catholicism
 - * Iroquois confederacy (Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida) had unique relationship with both groups
 - Economic relations with English/Dutch and some with French
 - Avoided allying to closely with either side, often playing both groups against each other
 - * Ohio Valley location of principal conflict; claimed by French but natives hoped to control, too (especially Iroquois)

New France expanded rapidly after the intervention of Louis XIV, but remained fragmented and held together by distant (yet often large communities). The territory was shared with the natives: unlike the English, the French often adopted native ways through marriage without infringing on their rights and desires. One key group allied with neither the English nor the French: the Iroquois, who, for economic reasons, remained neutral.

- Greatly dependent on relations between English/French throne
 - Aggravated after Glorious Revolution brought Louis XIV's enemies into power (opposed expansionism)
 - Continued as successor of William III (Anne), continued struggle against Spain, French ally
 - King William's War saw a few small clashes in NE
 - Queen Anne's War saw conflicts between southern Spaniards and northern French
 - * Resolution to Queen Anne's War (Treaty of Ulrecht) gave substantial French territory to English (including Newfoundland, Acadia)
- More conflicts followed, most notably King George's War
 - Based around conflicting trading rights of English settlers in Spanish territories
 - Merged with larger war: on opposite sides of conflicts between Austrians and Prussians
 - War ended after New Englanders captured French bastion at Louisbourg on Cape Breton w/ peace treaty forcing abandonment
- Aftermath led to deterioration between French-English-Iroquois relations
 - Iroquois granted trading concessions to English merchants, leading the French to fear English goal for expansion
 - French created more fortresses in Ohio Valley, leading the English to interpret activity as threat to western settlements, building their own fortresses
 - Iroquois power balance had collapsed, forcing them to ally with the English
 - Tensions increased in following five years, starting with 1754 Virginia militia into Ohio Valley under command of George Washington
 - * Attack unsuccessful: Fort Necessity (crude stockade constructed by Washington) raided with more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of men killed
 - * Washington forced to surrender

The initial conflicts were dependent on French-English relations in Europe, most notably Queen Anne's War, which involved the Spanish, an ally of the French. King George's War, too, was significant, representative of a greater war in Europe between the Prussians and the Austrians. After King George's War, Iroquois relations deteriorated due to a series of misinterpretations. The French and Indian War began with Washington's attack on Fort Duquesne in modern Pittsburgh.

What were the major initial conflicts between the English and the French?

- Lasted nearly nine years, divided into three key phases
- First phase began with Fort Necessity and ended with eventual involvement of Europeans
 - British initially provided modest assistance but was poorly organized, failing to prevent more French fleets from arriving and a British army failing in their attempt to take over the Fort Necessity area
 - Local forces preoccupied with defense on western front, defending against *all* native tribes but Iroquois (viewed English loss as weakness)
 - Iroquois themselves feared French - despite having declared war, made few advances on Canada
- Second phase opened in 1756 when governments of England and France directly began hostilities
 - Marked beginning of British Seven Years' War, where France allied with Austria, former enemy, and England allied with Prussia, former French ally
 - Fighting had reached West Indies, India, Europe; primary struggle remained in North America
 - English had been continually defeated until intervention of William Pitt, secretary of state
 - * Planned advanced military strategy with forced enlistment ("impressment"), seizure of supplies from farmers, tradesmen; demanded complementary shelter for troops
 - * Greater independence of Americans led to stark resistance to Pitt's advancements
 - 1757: major riot in New York City threatened to bring English war effort to conclusion
- Third phase initiated by William Pitt in relaxing many oppressive policies, with compensation for colonist supplies, new troops
 - Tide began to favor England, partly due to many troops and partly due to poor French harvests
 - Key generals Jeffrey Amherst, James Wolfe captured fortress at Louisbourg; defeated Montcalm in Quebec in 1759 where both commanders died, fell dramatically
 - Many other aspects of the war far more brutal
 - * Uprooted Nova Scotians (Acadians), forcing migration throughout English colonies due to suspected disloyalty
 - * Offered "scalp bounties" for natives
 - French/native allies retaliated with massacre of hundreds of English families

The conflicts of the French and Indian War can be divided into three phases: the first without colonial intervention and great British disorganization and numerous losses, the second tied with the Seven Years' War in England (known for British harshness against colonists under William Pitt), and the third initiated by greater cooperation between the colonists and the English, with many successful English battles (includ-

What was the aftermath of the Seven Years' War?

- Peace came after George III reached throne, Pitt resigned (he had hoped to continue hostilities)
 - French ceded West Indies islands, most of Indian colonies, Canada to GB; all territory east of Mississippi but New Orleans to Spain in Peace of Paris
- War had profound effects on various involved groups
 - War gave Britain many new territories while enlarging debt
 - * Led British leaders to house resentment for Americans due to few financial contributions (even some merchants continued selling goods to French)
 - * Many leaders felt reorganization was essential
 - For American colonists, began to feel sense of unity against common foe
 - * Established British illegitimacy: viewed war as voluntary, communal while British regulars viewed as hierarchical and coercive
 - Natives of Ohio Valley saw British victory as disastrous: allegiance to French led to English enmity
 - * Iroquois's passivity angered colonists, leading to unraveling of alliance, loss of control over territories

Peace was found after Pitt resigned; it entailed the cession of the majority of French land to the English and Spanish. The war caused the British and the colonists to feel greater mutual hostility and the natives to completely unravel due to the enmity of the British.

The New Imperialism

What marked Britain's decision to take a greater role in governing the colonies?

The British suffered from many major burdens after the war, including a redesigned imperial structure, challenges with larger area, a large war debt, and struggles with George III, an ill-fitted monarch. Grenville, a new prime minister, hoped to seize control over the colonies with many major changes, which included greater support of the natives to control colonial westward expansion and also many major economic changes. Although the colonists were initially unable to resist due to local divisions, they were eventually unified by an economic boon and the ideals of self-government.

- Britain initially hesitant due to great conflicts during war between Pitt and colonists
- Major 1763 shift in imperial design led to further challenges
 - British initially viewed colonies as key to trade; many leaders argued the land was the true value for taxes, imperial splendor
 - * Mercantilists, at conclusion of Seven Years' War, hoped to return Canada to France for Guadeloupe, productive sugar island
 - * Franklin felt larger territories were critical for limitless growth
- Area had grown twice as large by 1763, posing major challenges
 - Some British sought restrained settlement due to potential conflict with natives if settlement was rapid
 - Many colonists wanted to expand existing colonies westward into new lands; others felt new colonies should emerge
- War debt of England could not be improved
 - Landlords/merchants objected to tax increases
 - Necessity to station troops on American-Indian borders led to further costs
 - Little response of colonial assemblies in war efforts gave Britain little reason to rely on cooperation
 - Believed that only solution would be new system of taxation
- Accession of George III led to further issues
 - Strongly determined to increase power of monarch (pressured by mother)
 - * Removed stable Whig coalition from Parliamentary power, creating new bribed coalition with uneasy control over Parliament; very unstable
 - Intellectual/psychological limitations led to major political difficulties
 - * Disease produced intermittent bouts of insanity
 - * Often behaved irrationally: ill-fitted for role but immaturely constantly attempted to show fitness
- George Grenville, new prime minister, disagreed with Pitt: felt colonists had been long overindulged, required to pay part of cost
 - Hoped to implement major control over America

British challenges included a new shift in imperial design emphasizing land over trade, the large growth in area leading to internal and external administrative conflicts, and a great war debt which many felt required inevitable taxation. Furthermore, George III, an unstable monarch, hoped to be active as a ruler but was generally ill-fitted for the role. Finally, George

What were the major burdens of Britain's large em-

What were the relations between the natives and the British?

- After French departed Ohio Valley, British immediately streamed in, angering natives
 - Ottawa chieftain Pontiac struck back against British; war ended immediately by government to prevent major conflicts
 - Proclamation of 1764 prevented expansion beyond Appalachians
 - * Allowed London to control westward movement in hopefully orderly manner
 - * Allowed coastal colonies to remain strong, promoting English interests
- Tribes generally discontent with Proclamation due to required cession of more land
 - Many accepted as only option, especially Cherokee
 - Relations improved with natives in large part due to British-appointed superintendents Stuart (south) and Johnson (north)
 - * Sympathetic to natives, living among tribes
 - Proclamation ultimately failed to meet most needs of natives
 - * Line of settlement never enforced, with settlers continually expanding beyond despite restrictions by British authorities

The British government issued Proclamation of 1764, restricting expansion beyond the Appalachians, in an attempt to appease the natives and take direct control over westward expansion. However, most tribes were discontent as it required cession of more land and it was poorly enforced.

- Grenville tightened hold over colonies
 - Required permanent troops in colonies, mandatory colonial assistance in maintaining armies, sent ships to patrol for smugglers
 - Manufacturing restricted as to not compete with expanding industries of Britain
 - * Sugar Act of 1764 strengthened duty enforcement on sugar (limiting illegal sugar trade), establishing new courts for smugglers
 - * Currency Act of 1764 banned paper money
 - * Stamp Act of 1765 issued new taxes on printed documents
 - * Ultimate goal to strengthen mercantilism in colonies
- Colonists initially struggled to resist Grenville's changes as frequent local grievances between colonies limited cohesiveness
 - Primary tensions between "backcountry" and coastal societies w/ isolation and underrepresentation
 - * Western societies far closer to native tribes, often left unable to defend by government
 - Civil war in North Carolina emerged
 - * Caused by Regulator movement: farmer movement to oppose high taxes collected by local sheriffs
 - * Failed with local assembly, so began resisting by force; suppressed by governor William Tryon with army of militiamen
 - Hanged seven dissidents for treason; nine killed on each side
- Tensions with British began to overshadow divisions between colonies
 - Everyone felt antagonized by Grenville program
 - * Commercial restraints, increased taxes angered northern merchants
 - * Northern backcountry angered by reduced western expansion
 - * Southern planters feared additional taxes
 - * Professionals depended on merchants/planters for livelihood
 - * Small farmers feared abolition of paper money
 - New restrictions arrived in British attempt to restrict postwar debt
 - * After having poured money into colonies for wartime success, bust followed with declined standard of living
 - Most Americans circumvented policies; economy not destroyed
 - Political consequences viewed as most damaging with Enlightenment ideals of self-government threatened

Stirrings of Revolt

What were the major fundamental causes of revolt in the colonies?

Colonial revolt was sparked for multiple reasons, including the Stamp Act, which represented an infringement on American liberty, the Townshend Program, which raised taxes greatly and saw an increase in customs enforcement, and the Boston Tea Party, which saw Bostonians revolt against reduced taxes on British tea. Philosophically, revolt emerged from fundamental differences in American and British perspectives on sovereignty.

- Sugar Act from a year earlier had little effect on non-merchant colonists, but Stamp Act tax increased taxes for all Americans
 - Opposition from most powerful members of population, especially tavern owners and printers (who were thereafter required to purchase stamps for business operation)
- Economic burden relatively light; true issue was precedent
 - Most Americans had seen previous taxes as intended to regulate commerce; many believed that Sugar Act (despite true purpose) was simply part of imperial duties
 - Stamp Act could only be interpreted as direct grab for wealth; many believed it would open the door to more burdensome taxes
- Initial resistance was light (what could they do?) until House of Burgesses inspired great sedition among colonists
 - Collective voice of younger aristocrats hoped to challenge power of planters
 - Foremost was Patrick Henry, having already achieved fame for oratory, defiance against British authority
 - * In 1765, made vague threat to decapitate George III
 - * Introduced set of resolutions that Americans and British possessed equal rights, including taxation only by representatives
 - * Virginians, like other Brits, should pay no taxes apart from those induced by their own representatives
 - Burgesses rejected most extreme of resolutions, but kept most as "Virginia Resolves"
- In Massachusetts, James Otis persuaded for intercolonial congress to take action against new tax
 - Met in NY with delegates from 9 colonies, petitioned king/Parliament with emphasis on rightful subordination but insisted that all taxes come from provincial assemblies
- Many cities began to resist, like a 1765 riot in Boston where men in "Sons of Liberty" terrorized stamp agents and burned stamps
 - Riots caused agents to hastily resign, ceasing sale of stamps in continental colonies
 - Pillagers attacked pro-British "aristocrats" like lieutenant governor Hutchinson, pillaging and destroying his house
- Crisis subsided after England backed down, w/ London authorities changing attitude due to economic pressure (from colonial boycotts by most citizens, where those loyal to Britain were pressured by Sons of Liberty)
 - 12 English merchants begged parliament to repeal; English ports began to experience great poverty

What were examples of internal rebellions in the colonies?

Other significant *internal* conflicts emerged in the 1760s, based on the class system in NY and NE. The small farmers who had long been tenants of rented land owned by larger farmers began to demand ownership, ceasing rent payments. It was mostly a failure, but in the NY-governed Vermont, an entirely new state broke off.

- Rockingham appeasement program far less well-received in England
 - Landlords feared that reduced colonial taxation would inevitably cause greater taxes on them
 - King finally dismissed Rockingham, replacing with aging yet powerful Pitt (critic of Stamp Act)
- Pitt's poor health (gout/mental illness) gave majority of power to chancellor, Charles Townshend
 - First major challenges: Parliamentary grievances of Americans Mutiny Act of 1765, forcing colonists to provide quarters/supplies for troops
 - * Troops stationed for defense of colonists -> British felt price was fair
 - * Colonists not angry about quartering but instead *mandatory nature*
 - * NY/MA refused mandated supplies (despite army HQ in NYC)
 - Townshend made two key changes to enforce law, raise revenues
 - * Singled out NY, disbanded assembly to ensure not all colonies were aroused at once
 - * Levied higher taxes on goods imported from England (lead, paint, paper, tea)
 - Colonists could not reject in his eyes due to their seeming acceptance of "external" taxes
 - Taxes equally unacceptable to Stamp Act
- Townshend's major changes viewed as assault on government, annihilation of rights
 - Massachusetts Assembly started with letter to all colonial governments to stand up against every Parliamentary tax
 - Letter had little effect w/ some opposition but also large fear with threat of dissolution from England, but MA stood by
- Townshend implemented new customs commissioners board to reduce corruption
 - In some sense, goals were met: smuggling ended entirely in Boston
 - Boston merchants very angry about strict enforcement of Navigation Acts, led another boycott
 - * Later joined by merchants of Philadelphia, NYC
 - * English luxuries quickly fell out of favor
- Townshend suddenly died in 1767; solution fell onto Lord North, new PM
 - Repealed all acts but tea taxes in 1770

The Townshend Program began after Rockingham was dismissed and Pitt replaced him, whose health made him a puppet for Charles Townshend. Townshend faced major challenges from the colonists, but generally further aggravated matters by disbanding New York's as-

What was the Boston Massacre?

- Withdrawal of Townshend Duties unable to pacify colonial opinion; major event in MA before news of repeal reached America brought revolt to new intensity
- Bostonians had been harassing customs commissioners in Boston -> British government placed troops ("redcoats") within city to monitor
 - Low pay meant they often competed with Bostonians for jobs
- In March 1770, dockworkers pelted sentries at customs house w/ rocks/snowballs
 - Significant scuffling with shots fired by British soldiers, killing many
 - Events seen as "Boston Massacre" by colonists, perpetuated by Paul Revere's artistic depiction as organized attack on peaceful crowd
- In aftermath, two soldiers found guilty of manslaughter but six others acquitted; many felt that all deserved punishment
 - Older Samuel Adams with significant ties to NE's Puritan past; failure in business, spoke of corruption/sin of Britain, attracting large following and becoming first head of "committee of correspondence"
 - Other colonies followed Adams' footsteps with large network of dissent organizations forming

The Boston Massacre was the result of Bostonians' anger at British troops being directly stationed in the city, leading dockworkers to pelt the sentries with rocks and snowballs. After the British shot at the crowd in defense, many Americans felt their actions were unnecessary, further aggravating dissent (like w/ Samuel Adams' committee of correspondence).

What was the main philosophy behind the revolutions?

- Temporary calm emerged for about three years after massacre; colonial political structure soon began to shift to justify revolt
- Revolutionary ideals emerged from numerous sources, including religious (mostly Puritan) experiences, ideas from abroad like from the Scots about GB, and the country westerners who felt left out of political structure
- New concept of true meaning of government emerged based around ideal of inherent corruption of humans
 - English Constitution long considered best solution to provide safeguard for inherently corrupt officials with fair power distribution between three elements (monarchy, aristocracy, common) for checks and balances
 - * Americans felt single center of power (king/monarchy) had begun to grow too strong
 - * American arguments found little sympathy: general practice was to inscribe constitutions while English used vague system always subject to change
 - Idea of "taxation without representation" foreign to most English: believed that Parliament represented not individuals but the entire empire (even if not all counties had elected representatives)
 - * Americans felt, due to personal colonial assembly meetings, that direct representation was key (they had none)
- Contrasting ideals reflected fundamental differences between American/English view on sovereignty
 - Americans sought **division of sovereignty**, with some power to Parliament but majority of power given to local assemblies
 - British felt all government required single, ultimate authority

The key philosophical differences between the British and the Americans were based fundamentally around the difference between uniform sovereignty with a single, ultimate power and divided sovereignty, with most power given to state-based assemblies. Americans drew their revolutionary ideals both from their own experiences (need for representation) and from other radicals, like the Scots.

- Growing dissent despite calm start to 1770s; customs commissioners seen as inept and arrogant
 - Often levied unfair taxes, illegally seized merchandise
- Writing/talking quickly spread dissent, including discussions in towns, churches, and **taverns**
 - Ordinary people began to absorb new ideas
- Direct forms of rebellion emerged
 - Colonists seized British revenue ship on Delaware River
 - Angry Rhode Islanders boarded and set fire to British ship *Gaspée*; British sent commission to America to return perpetrators for British trial
- Most significant revival of revolutionary fervor sparked by business of selling tea
 - EIC was on the verge of bankruptcy with large stocks of tea
 - British authorized direct export of tea without any navigation taxes, allowing for monopoly
 - Enraged colonists for many reasons
 - * Merchants feared replacement due to monopoly; certain ones were excluded in exclusive EIC selection of merchants
 - * Revived anger for taxation without representation: EIC was not required to pay standard customs
 - Response: boycott of tea entirely which mobilized entire population in mass protest, particularly women, who led effort
 - * Women had always been key players in resistance activities (ex: Mercy Otis Warren, with satirical plays)
 - Formed "Daughters of Liberty" in 1760s, who often mocked men for insufficient fervor; challenged tea in 1773
 - * Plans emerged to prevent cargoes of EIC from arriving in ports
 - In Philadelphia/NYC, tea never left ships; in Charles Town, stored in public warehouses
 - Boston, failing to prevent ships, saw group of Patriots break into three ships and toss tea chests into harbor
- Aftermath of Tea Party, due to Boston's denial to pay for property damages, saw Coercive Acts in MA
 - Reduced self-government, closed port, tried officers in other colonies
 - Sparked new resistance along entire coast, with legislatures installing numerous resolves to support Massachusetts
 - Women's groups continued to boycott British goods, creating popular substitutes

Cooperation and War

What factors led to the beginning of the Revolution?

The Revolution was impacted significantly by developing sources of authority, including those within the colonies beginning to simulate closely the British Parliament but also the Continental Congress, a meeting of all colonial leaders to make key decisions about Britain, including an economic boycott. The battles began at Lexington and Concord with General Gage's troops sent on a guerilla mission to confiscate gunpowder but being met with trained minutemen.

- On local level, authority transitioned on a local scale from royal government to colonists themselves
 - Local institutions began to seize authority independently, forming **extralegal bodies** to simulate government
 - In MA, Samuel Adams (1768) called convention of delegates to replace formerly dissolved General Court
 - * Sons of Liberty, also organized by Adams, became another significant source of power
 - * Prominent citizens began to meet frequently to perform major political functions
 - * Most effective: committees of correspondence
 - Virginia later established intercolonial committees of correspondence, encouraging mutual cooperation between colonies
 - * Took major step of united action in 1774 after declaring that Intolerable (Coercive) Acts put all colonies at risk, calling all colonies together (except for Georgia)
- First meeting of country-wide Continental Congress occurred in Philadelphia, making five key decisions
 1. Rejected colonial union under Britain (like Albany Plan)
 2. Endorsed official statement of grievances for England
 - Conceded Parliament's right to limit trade
 - Requested that all oppressive legislation be repealed
 3. Approved resolutions for military preparation against British troops in Boston
 4. Agreed to stop *all trade* with Great Britain
 - Continental Association formed to enforce agreements
 5. Agreed to meet again in following spring
 - Through meeting, had formed agreement to remain autonomy while declaring economic war on GB
- More optimistic Americans hoped economic war would be sufficient to earn independence; many felt direct war was necessary
- Great contemplations made within Britain as to how to handle colonists
 - Pitt urged withdrawal of troops; Burke called for repeal of Coercive Acts
 - Lord North won approval by early 1775 for Conciliatory Proposition, which required taxes but allowed colonists to tax themselves under demand of Parliament
 - * Aimed to divide moderates from extremists, but too late

What occurred in Lexington and Concord?

- MA "minutemen" had been training for months to fight on a moment's notice
 - General Thomas Gage, commanding troops, felt minutemen were too small, but remained cautious (ignored advice of peers that American colonists would immediately bow down to authority)
 - After Gage received orders to arrest Adams/Hancock, hesitated; finally acted after hearing of large supply of gunpowder
 - * Hoped to raid minutemen (w/ 1000 soldiers) at night to take goods without bloodshed
 - * Patriots watched closely, with farms and towns already warned of British invasion
 - Arrival in Lexington met with prepared minutemen who quickly fell; reached Concord, burning remaining gunpowder supply; on return to Boston, shot at for entire trip, losing three times as many men as Americans
- Source of first shots disputed (both blamed each other), but tales began to rapidly spread to rally thousands of colonists in north and south
- Battles in Lexington and Concord may have seemed simply more battles as part of greater tensions; retrospectively, clearly recognized as decisive step for both, with war having begun

The skirmishes in Lexington and Concord are seen today as having been the first battles of the Revolution. They emerged after General Gage, commanding British troops, sent soldiers at night to confiscate an illegal gunpowder supply. The prepared minutemen fought back, seeing many soldiers on both sides killed.