
Chapter 5: Colonial Society on the Eve of Revolution: 1700-1775

I. Who's Who

A. The Melting Pot

1. Germans: 6% the population

- a. Settled in Pennsylvania (known as Pennsylvania Dutch)
- b. Maintained their German language, customs, and religion (primarily Lutheran; not loyal to British crown)

2. Scots-Irish: 7% of population

- a. Emigrated from Northern Ireland
- b. Persecuted by English government and had little respect for the British government
- c. Primarily settled in Pennsylvania as well as Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas

3. Other groups: 5% of population

- a. Other European groups: French Huguenots, Welsh, Dutch, etc.

4. Slaves: 20-25% of population; 90% of South's population

II. Structure of Colonial Society

A. Colonial Government

1. 8 colonies had royal governors who were appointed by the king
 - a. Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania were controlled by proprietors
 - b. Connecticut and Rhode Island elected their governors
2. Nearly all of the colonies had a representative assembly elected by eligible voters (white, property owning males)

B. Established Churches

1. Congregational: Massachusetts (including Maine), Connecticut, and New Hampshire
 - a. Existed in all of New England **except** Rhode Island
 - b. Presbyterians were also common in New England
2. Anglican: Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and New York
 - a. Supportive of the crown
3. No established church: Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania
4. Religion in colonial America became much less fervid than when the colonies were established
5. Jews, Catholics, and Quakers suffered much religious persecution
6. Arminianism threatened the Calvinist idea of predestination by stating people determined their own fate and not just the elect could be saved

C. Aristocracy and the Existence of Social Classes

1. A hereditary aristocracy did NOT exist
2. Wealthy landowners were the top social class followed by craft workers and small farmers
3. Lowest classes: tenant farmers, indentured servants, and black slaves
4. Social mobility was possible with hard work

III. Roots of Revivalism

A. Great Awakening

1. Began in the 1730s
2. Affected New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and parts of Massachusetts
3. It was a **revival of religion**: a response to the weakening ties that colonists had to religion

- a. Partially due to the strictness of the Puritan churches
- b. Focused on individual conversion experiences rather than specific church doctrine
- c. Wanted to emphasize personal faith rather than doctrine

B. Jonathan Edwards

- 1. Minister who ignited the Great Awakening in MA**
- 2. Had his conversion experience at age 17**
- 3. Famous sermon: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (July 1741)
 - a. Stressed to people that they needed religion because hell was a real place
 - b. God was angry with human sinfulness
 - c. Those who expressed penitence could be saved by God's grace; those who ignored God's commandments would face eternal damnation

C. High Tide of the Great Awakening: George Whitefield

- 1. Whitefield**
 - a. Middle class
 - b. Attended Oxford
 - c. Famous **itinerant preacher**: he traveled from place to place giving sermons (some as large as 30,000 people)
 - d. Sought to address the question of "*What must I do to be saved*"
 - i. His answer was predestination
 - e. Preached to repent and beg for forgiveness
 - i. This led to a huge public response as thousands came to hear him speak
 - f. Focused on the "new" idea that people could have a sudden conversion experience and it did not have to be gradual ("Old Lights" hated this)
 - g. Taught those ordinary people with faith could understand the gospel and did not need ministers to lead them

D. Results of the Great Awakening

- 1. Undermined the old clergy; made room for "new lights," those who supported the revival
- 2. Increased competitiveness of churches: Baptists and Methodists attracted more followers
- 3. Broke down sectional boundaries; people thought of themselves as a single people
- 4. Common people realized they could make their own decisions without relying on ministers
- 5. Led to colleges being established (Princeton, Brown, and Rutgers)

IV. Zenger Trial (New York, 1734-1735)

A. Zenger Trial

- 1. John Peter Zenger printed "the truth" about a corrupt governor and was charged with seditious libel
- 2. A jury found him not guilty
- 3. This case paved the way for the establishment of freedom of the press

I. France Finds a Foothold in Canada

A. Background

1. **France** was **late** to the race for colonies in North America
2. The French were stuck fighting wars, mainly involving the **Roman Catholics** and the **Protestant Huguenots**
 - a. **The Edict of Nantes** granted limited religious toleration to the Protestants and ended the religious wars

B. French Exploration in the New World

1. France had three main areas in the New World: Canada, Acadia, and Louisiana (Mississippi River Valley area)
2. **1524: first official French expedition to North America**
 - a. Italian navigator **Giovanni da Verrazzano** explored the Atlantic Coast for King Francis I
 - b. French explorer **Jacques Cartier** sailed to Canada in **1534, 1535, and 1541**
 - i. **First European to reach the Gulf of St. Lawrence and claimed it for France**
3. **1608: Samuel de Champlain** (and others) established Acadia in Canada (New France)
 - a. He founded Quebec along the St. Lawrence River in 1608
 - b. **Later, French fur traders established other settlements in this area**
 - c. **Montreal was founded in 1642 by Roman Catholic missionaries**

C. New France

1. **The population of New France grew slowly**
 - a. **Landowning peasants had little motive to move from France**
 - b. **Only had a few thousand people by 1660**
2. **Economic Activities**
 - a. **Beaver** trapping and **fur trading** became the major economic activity in this area
 - b. Farming also became important— they raised livestock and grew wheat
 - c. Fishing and lumbering also became important industries
3. **Religion**
 - a. By law, all were Roman Catholic
 - b. French Catholic **missionaries** zealously tried to **convert Indians**
4. **Expanding the Empire**
 - a. **Antoine Cadillac**
 - i. Founded **Detroit** (city of straits) to block the British from pushing into the Ohio Valley in 1701
 - b. **Robert de La Salle**
 - i. Founded **Louisiana** in 1682 in an effort to thwart Spanish expansion into the area near the Gulf of Mexico

II. Global War and Colonial Disunity

A. Clash of Empires

1. **French and British settlers began fighting for control of the fur trade in the St. Lawrence River Valley in the early 1600s**

2. **France and Britain their Native American allies fought each other in a series of wars from 1689 to 1763**
 - a. Britain gained Newfoundland, the mainland Nova Scotia region of Acadia
 - b. The French gained territory around Hudson Bay under the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713
 - i. During the next 30 years, the French built forts in the Ohio Valley and across the southern parts of what are now the Canadian provinces of Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan
 - ii. Fighting began again in 1744

3. **The earliest wars between European powers for control of North America were:**
 - a. **King William's War (1689-1697) (or the War of the League of Augsburg)**
 - i. Involved conflict in Europe, New York, and New England

 - b. **Queen Anne's War (1702-1713) or (the War of Spanish Succession)**
 - i. Grew out of a conflict in Europe known as the War of the Spanish Succession.
 - ii. It was also a result of continuing Indian resistance to New England's expansion

 - iii. The peace treaty signed at Utrecht (Netherlands) in 1713 showed how badly the French and Spanish had been beaten
 - aa. Britain gained Acadia (renamed Nova Scotia), Newfoundland, and Hudson Bay
 - bb. British also won trading rights in Spanish America as result of the Treaty of Utrecht

3. **War of Jenkins's Ear (1740-1748): conflict between Britain and Spain, 1739-1748**
 - a. Fought over Spanish holdings in North America and the Caribbean
 - b. War was named for Captain Jenkins who had his ear severed by a Spaniard

4. **War of Austrian Succession (or King George's War): War of Jenkins's Ear merged with war in Europe—this war was over who would succeed the Habsburg throne**
 - a. France allied with Spain against Britain

III. The French and Indian War

A. Colonial Competition in North America

1. Britain had colonies on the eastern seaboard
2. Spain had Florida
3. France had settlements in the north and west—from what are now Maine and Nova Scotia to the St. Lawrence River Valley
 - a. France also had outposts in Newfoundland, the Great Lakes region, and the Mississippi River Valley
4. Both France and Britain claimed the inland territory between their settlements—this eventually caused problems
 - a. Native American groups controlled this land until about 1750
 - b. Remember that both the British and the French traded with the Indians for furs and had Indian allies
5. 1690s: Britain wants to conquer French lands in the New World; the French wanted to keep their land and ties with the Native Americans (they were too weak to try to take British lands)

6. **Why did Britain and France want the Ohio River Valley?**
 - a. Britain wanted to preserve its stake in North America
 - b. France wanted to connect its holdings in Canada with those in the Mississippi Valley

B. Who Would Rule The Ohio River Valley: Britain or France?

1. As both Britain and France expanded into the Ohio River Valley area territorial competition increased (France had built a chain of forts)
2. In 1749 **Lieutenant Colonel George Washington** was sent to the Ohio River Valley to demand that the French withdraw—the French refused
3. 1754: Washington led a small band of colonial troops to force the French to withdraw
 - a. French and Indian force defeated Washington at Fort Necessity (one of the first battles of the French and Indian War)
4. June 1754: representatives of seven of the British colonies met in Albany, New York, to plan further military action—this was called the **Albany Congress**
 - a. They met with representatives of the Iroquois tribes at the request of the British government
 - b. The immediate purpose:** to win the loyalty of the Iroquois
 - c. What they realized:** the problem was a lack of colonial unity due to:
 - i. Geographic barriers
 - ii. Conflicting religions
 - iii. Various nationalities: Germans to Irish
 - iv. Differing types of governments
 - v. Boundary disputes
 - d. The colonies needed to be able to levy taxes and raise troops for their common defense
 - e. In the end, nothing came of this plan and it did not go into effect

C. The War: Braddock and Pitt

1. **British stumbled badly early**
2. **Braddock killed during attack on Fort Duquesne**
3. **After British repelled, Indians mounted vicious assault on the colonies**
4. **British experience defeat after defeat in all-out assault on Canada**
5. **William Pitt—foremost leader in London government—decided to concentrate British efforts on Montreal and Quebec**
 - a. **The French are defeated at Quebec and Montreal by 1760**
6. **The result:** Britain now dominated North America and was the dominant world naval power

D. The Peace Treaty

1. In the **Treaty of Paris, 1763, Britain received all of Canada** and France was no longer a ruling power in North America
 - a. The French were allowed to retain several small, but valuable, sugar islands in the West Indies
 - b. France had given **New Orleans and the land west of it to Spain in 1762**
 - c. Britain also received Florida from Spain in exchange for Cuba

E. Britain's Post-War Concerns

1. **The colonies had not fully supported the war**
 - a. **Some colonies had refused to provide troops or money during war**
 - b. **Many still were trading with Britain's enemies during the war**

2. Following the war, Chief Pontiac of the Ottawa sought to drive the British out of the Ohio River Valley

a. Pontiac's uprising (near Detroit), as it became known, inflicted heavily casualties to the British

i. The British responded with smallpox infected blankets

aa. This rebellion made the British realize they needed to stabilize their relationship with the Indians in the western territories to protect their colonies

IV. Britain Reins in Its Colonies

A. The Proclamation of 1763

1. Issued by King George III to prohibit colonial settlement beyond the Appalachian Mountains

a. British view: wanted to prevent unnecessary conflict with the Native Americans

b. Colonists' view: saw this as oppression by Britain, as they wanted to move westward

2. It was clear that Britain was reasserting its control over the colonies after years of salutary neglect...but was it too late to regain control of them?