**Chapter 5: *Toward Independence , 1763-1775* Expanded Timeline**

**1754-1763**  British national debt doubles

The cost of the British victory in the Great War for Empire was extremely high. To finance the

war, the British doubled the national debt. The British administrative response to this financial

crisis was to raise taxes at home and in the colonies.

**1760**  George III becomes king

In 1760 George III ascended to the throne. Young and energetic, George III would support

those who favored a more activist and expansionist colonial policy.

**1762**  Revenue Act reforms customs service

Determined to gain more control over the trading system in the American colonies, British

officials towards the end of the Great War for Empire began to press for legislative reforms that

would plug loop holes and enforce the payment of duties. The first effort in this strategy was

the Revenue Act. This legislation required customs officials to serve in the office to which they

were appointed rather than leasing it to a deputy in return for cash payments, thereby placing

more aggressive agents in the colonies.

Royal Navy arrests smugglers

In order to curb corruption and increase revenues in colonial trade, the British government

instructed the Royal Navy to stop American merchants who were illegally trading grain with the

French West Indies.

**1763** Treaty of Paris ends Great War for Empire

Proclamation Line restricts settlement west of Appalachians

British troops stationed in colonies

The Treaty of Paris confirmed the triumph of the British over the French in the Great War for

Empire. The British acquired French Canada and all the French territory east of the Mississippi

River, as well as Spanish Florida. Concerns over Indian occupation of the lands west of the

Appalachian in the wake of Pontiac’s uprising, prompted British officials to issue the

Proclamation of 1763, which prohibited British colonial settlement west of the Appalachians. To

enforce the Proclamation, as well as to control the French population of Canada and safeguard

Florida, the British placed a peacetime army of 10,000 men in the colonies.

George Grenville becomes Prime Minister

John Wilkes demands reforms in England

The new prime minister George Grenville strongly supported a more aggressive administrative policy over the colonies. He believed revenues from the Americans could be increased by closer regulation of colonial trade and that Americans needed to submit to Parliamentary authority.Meanwhile in England, the increased taxes, government power, and fears of corruption generated political demands for a greater representation of the people in Parliament. The Radical Whig John Wilkes was the most outspoken critic of the government.

**1764**  Currency Act protects British merchants

Sugar Act places duty on French molasses

Colonists oppose vice-admiralty courts

To increase revenue from America and assert Parliamentary authority over the colonies, George Grenville won Parliamentary approval of both the Currency Act and the Sugar Act in 1764. The Currency Act prohibited the issuing of paper currency in all the colonies. The Sugar Act shrewdly lowered the duty on French molasses to enhance the competitiveness of British molasses, while increasing regulation of illegal trade through vice admiralty courts. American colonists protested the act because they feared it would eliminate necessary trade with the French Islands. They also questioned theconstitutionality of the vice admiralty courts. Mostly, they opposed this increased exertion of British authority.

**1765**  The Stamp Act imposes direct tax on colonies

The Quartering Act provides for British troops

Riots by Sons of Liberty

Stamp Act Congress

First nonimportation movement

To acquire even more revenue from the American colonies, Grenville gained passage of the Stamp Act, which imposed a tax on all legal documents, newspapers, and correspondence. To force colonists to pay for their own defense, he also gained passage of the Quartering Act, which required colonists to house and feed British troops in America. While urban street mobs, motivated by economic self interest, and spurred on by religion enthusiasm and class animosity, rejected this assertion of authority with violence, political leaders called the Stamp Act Congress. Arguing that only elected representative of the colonists could impose taxes, the delegates opposed the tax on constitutional grounds. Meanwhile, patriots and their supporters organized a nonimportation movement against British goods. This combining of direct action and

constitutional debates, transformed the colonial response into a resistance movement.

**1766**  First compromise: Stamp Act repealed and Declaratory Act passed

A new prime minister, Lord Rockingham, opposed the Stamp Act. Caught between London

merchants who suffered at the hands of the colonial boycott and thus favored its repeal and

conservatives who insisted that England must respond to colonial resistance with force,

Rockingham forged a compromise. The Stamp Act was repealed and duties against colonial

trade were reduced. At the same time, Parliament issued the Declaratory Act that asserted

Parliament’s authority over the colonies. This ambiguous response allowed plenty of room for

negotiation.

1767 Townshend Duties on certain colonial imports

Restraining Act in New York temporarily suspends colonial assembly there

Daughters of Liberty make "homespun" cloth

Influenced by George Grenville’s persistent demand to find revenue in America, Charles

Townshend recommitted the British government to this agenda. The Townshend Act levied a series of duties on trade goods imported into the colonies to raise revenue to pay for royal officials and support the military. Townshend also responded to New York’s resistance to the Quartering Act by suspending their assembly until it submitted. In response, the colonists again refused to pay the duties, formed new political groups to organize resistance, and rejected the right of Parliament to tax them. Meanwhile, American women responded to the second nonimportation movement by trying to replace imports with the home production of cloth, called "homespun."

**1768** Second nonimportation movement

British armies occupy Boston

In response to the Townshend duties, American patriots organized a second nonimportation movement. Deepening colonial resistance prompted the British to choose military coercion rather than debate and send troops to Boston. Meanwhile, the boycott organized by the colonists against the British began to cut seriously into trade.

**1770** Second compromise: Townshend duties repealed

Boston Massacre

Lord North sought another compromise with the colonists. He decided to repeal all but the tax on tea, which he retained purely for symbolic reasons. In response the Americans called off the boycott. A spirit of compromise prevailed even as violence resulted in both New York and Boston from the presence of British troops. In Boston, when street mobs harassed British troops, the troops fired into the crowd, killing five men. Though Boston rebels exploited the incident to broaden the movement against British rule, a spirit of harmony tended to suppress the deep passions and mutual distrust between the colonists and the British.

**1772**  Committees of Correspondence formed

Fearful of British efforts to increase power over them, the colonists formed numerous

Committees of Correspondence. Committee members exchanged information and ideas regularly by letter from colony to colony and from the cities and towns to the country. These committees broadened the resistance movement even while compromise prevailed.

**1773** Tea Act assists British East India Company

Boston Tea Party

Lord North revived American resistance by passing the Tea Act in 1773. Meant to help the East India Company by giving it a monopoly on tea sales in the colonies, the colonists viewed it asan effort to put American merchants out of business and enforce Parliament’s authority to tax the colonies. Committees of Correspondence organized widespread boycotts and resistance to the shipment of tea to the colonial ports. When the Governor of Massachusetts maneuvered to force a shipment of tea into Boston, Boston Patriots stormed the ship and threw its cargo of tea into the harbor.

**1774** Coercive Acts punish Massachusetts

Quebec Act offends patriots

First Continental Congress

Third nonimportation movement

Loyalists organize

The British sought to punish the Bostonians by compelling them to submit to a series of

parliamentary acts. The Port Bill closed the harbor. The Government Act ended Massachusetts’ political autonomy by annulling its charter and prohibiting public meetings. A new Quartering Act required colonists to accommodate more troops. The Justice Act took trials out of Massachusetts to other colonies. These acts, combined with the Quebec Act, which legalized Catholicism in Quebec, led to a broad based call for a Continental Congress. Though many delegates sought compromise at the Congress, the majority stated its repudiation of Parliamentary authority and launched commercial warfare against Britain through a massive nonimportation movement. While the countryside prepared for armed resistance, the Massachusetts House defied British authority by continuing to meet outside of Boston.

**1775**  General Thomas Gage marches to Lexington and Concord

When General Thomas Gage went into the countryside outside of Boston to arrest colonial leaders and capture supplies, he encountered a countryside in rebellion. British troops did battle against colonial forces at Lexington and Concord. Debate and resist

## Events of the American Revolution

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| **Battle / Event** | **Date** | **Significance** |
| Lexington & Concord | April 1775 | Forewarned by Paul Revere, American militiamen fought 800 British troops on April 19th, 1775. The battle first broke out at Concord. Seventy-three British soldiers were killed and over 200 were wounded. The Americans lost 49 soldiers and suffered 39 wounded. This marked the beginning of the Revolutionary War. |
| Battle of Bunker Hill (Breed’s Hill) | June 1775 | The Americans occupied Bunker Hill, overlooking Boston. The British, commanded by General Gage, had no choice but to attack the Americans. In a hard fought battle, the American were forced to withdraw. While the British were victorious, they suffered heavy losses. |
| Attack on Canada | September – December 1775 | In September 1775, Benedict Arnold set off with an American force to capture Quebec. It was not until December 31 that Arnold's troops were ready to attack. The attack failed and the Americans were repulsed after suffering heavy losses. |
| *Common Sense* Published | January 1776 | *Common Sense* argued that the time had come to sever colonial ties with England. This pamphlet sold 120,000 copies in the first three months and was instrumental in convincing many colonists to join the revolutionary cause. |
| Declaration of Independence Signed | July 4, 1776 | Twelve colonies voted in favor of the Declaration of Independence. New York abstained. This Declaration stated that the colonies were free and independent states, absolved of all allegiance to England. |
| Battle for New York | July – October 1776 | The British set forth to subdue the colonies. They began the effort by recapturing New York. First, they drove Washington off Long Island and then from lower Harlem. Washington retreated to White Plains, where for the first time, he was able to hold off the British forces. |
| Washington’s New Jersey Retreat | November 1776 | After a brief pause at White Plains, Washington is pursued by Howe through New Jersey. Washington reached safety by crossing the Delaware River. |
| Battle of Trenton | December 1776 | Washington's Army went back across the Delaware and surprised the British at Trenton. The main attack was made by 2,400 American troops on the Hessian Garrison. Washington's troops defeated the British forces. The American victory was the first of the war, and helped to restore American morale. |
| Battle of Princeton | January 1777 | Howe sent troops south to take on Washington in Trenton. The American troops sidestepped the British forces in Trenton, instead battling them in Princeton. The battle was won by the Americans at the last moment, forcing the British to withdraw to New Brunswick and clearing the way for the Continental Congress to return to Philadelphia – for a little while. |
| Battle of Saratoga | October 1777 | Burgoyne pressed towards Albany. The American army, however, was blocking his way at Bemis Heights. The British made two attempts to break through American defenses, but failed. After the second attempt, they withdrew to Saratoga, where they were surrounded by American troops. The British had no choice but to surrender. One quarter of the British forces in North America were now out of the picture, and, while many battles were yet to be fought, American Independence was assured. |
| Winter Quarters at Valley Forge | 1777-1778 | With the British Army secure in Philadelphia, the American army settled into winter quarters at Valley Forge. It was a winter of hardship and suffering for the troops. It was also a winter of training, in which the American troops were taught how to be professional soldiers. |
| Treaties Signed with France | January – February 1778 | After the American victory at Saratoga, the French were ready to enter into an agreement with the Americans. On January 7, 1778, the French royal council declared unanimously in favor of a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States. It was followed on February 6 with a treaty of alliance. |
| *Bonne Homme Richard* vs. *HMS Serapis* | September 1779 | The most remarkable ship duel of the American Revolution was between the *Bonne Homme Richard*, commanded by John Paul Jones, and the *HMS Serapis.* The *Serapis* was a 50-gun ship, while the *Bonne Homme Richard* was barely sea-worthy. When the captain of the *Serapis* demanded surrender, John Paul Jones answered: "Surrender be dammed, I have not begun to fight." The *Bon Homme Richard* went on to vanquish the *Serapis*. |
| Siege of Charleston | 1779-1780 | The British began a southern strategy by laying siege at Charleston. The siege lasted until British artillery fire got close enough to set the town on fire and force surrender. |
| Battle of Camden | July 1780 | Horatio Gates was at Camden, commanding a force of 1,400 Continentals. He was soon joined by patriot troops from Virginia and North Carolina. General Cornwallis was also in Camden, with a British army of 3,000. Gates and Cornwallis soon found themselves facing each other across a field. The two sides advanced on each other. After a few minutes, the Carolina line gave way. This led to a general crumbling of the American lines, and the American army was soon in complete retreat. |
| Benedict Arnold Scandal | September 1780 | In an act that has made his name synonymous with treason in American history, General Benedict Arnold conspired to turn his command of West Point over to the British. In return, he was to receive money and become a general in the British army. His treason was discovered when Major Andre, his British contact, was captured. Andre was reluctantly hung as a spy. |
| Battle of King’s Mountain | October 1780 | In North Carolina, Major Ferguson was patrolling with a force of over 1,000 Tory supporters. When Ferguson became aware of the large contingent of militia gathering to stop him, he decided it would be prudent to move back toward Cornwallis' forces. The militia followed rapidly and, when Ferguson realized that they were overtaking him, he organized his defenses atop King's Mountain. The militia surrounded the base of the mountain and began scaling it on all sides. The patriots had the advantage in that the slopes of the mountain were wooded, while the summit was not, thus exposing the Tory troops to attack by concealed Americans. The defenders' losses quickly mounted and, when Ferguson was killed, the remaining Tories surrendered. Of the Tory troops, 157 were killed, 163 were severely wounded, and 698 were captured. The patriot militia had 28 killed and 62 wounded. |
| Battle of Cowpens | January 1781 | American General Morgan defeated a British force of regulars under the command of Colonel Tarleton. Morgan's troops enveloped the British in a classic military action that captured all of the British forces. |
| Articles of Confederation Ratified | March 1781 | Though agreed to by Congress on November 15, 1777, the Articles did not go into effect until Maryland approved them in March of 1781. The Articles stated that there was a perpetual union between the states, though individual states remained sovereign. The states retained every right not given to the central government. |
| Battle of Guilford Court House | March 1781 | American forces under the command of General Greene attacked British forces commanded by General Cornwallis at Guilford Court House. The British forces won a tactical victory, but the British loss of life was too heavy for Cornwallis' forces to bear. |
| Battle of Yorktown | May 1781 | After receiving conflicting instructions, Cornwallis went to Yorktown. General Washington, together with French ground and naval forces, surrounded the British army, forcing its surrender and effectively ending the war. |
| Treaty of Paris | September 1783 | On September 3, 1783, a peace treaty was formally signed between Great Britain and the United States. This treaty officially ended the Revolutionary War. |