Ch 7 The Road to Revolution

1. The Deep Roots of Revolution
   1. It could be said that the American Revolution started long before 1775—back to when colonists first came to America. They essentially revolted from England and moved to America.
   2. And, those American colonists were growing independent.
      1. Crossing the ocean took 6 to 8 weeks, one way.
      2. The Americans *felt* separated from England; they felt as though they were the cutting edge of the British Empire.
      3. The Americans were developing their own brand of politics.
         1. The Americans were embracing **republicanism**, which is a society where citizens elect representatives to govern for them.
         2. The "radical Whigs" of England influenced American thinking. They criticized how the king would appoint relatives to positions, accept bribes, or such corruption. These were a threat to liberty.
2. Mercantilism and Colonial Grievances
   1. The British colonies began haphazardly by various groups. Only Georgia was started by the British government.
   2. Still, Britain had an overall economic ideology in the form of mercantilism.
      1. In **mercantilism**, a nation's wealth and power is measured by its treasury of gold or silver.
      2. Thus, gold was sought after either by (a) finding or digging it, (b) stealing or winning it, or (c) earning it by exporting more than importing (by obtaining a "favorable balance of trade").
         1. A favorable balance of trade was easier if a country had colonies. The colonies supplied raw materials to the mother country and also buy the finished products.
         2. This setup meant America was being used for England's benefit in the form of ships, naval stores, lumber, tobacco, sugar, etc.
      3. Mercantilism placed restrictions on economic activity.
         1. The **Navigation Laws**, first passed in 1650, set rules to carry out mercantilist ideas.
            1. These laws said American goods could *only* be shipped on British ships (the Americans would rather go with the *cheapest* shipper, like the Dutch).
            2. These laws said goods heading from Europe to America had to stop in England first to pay duties. This jacked up the price for the Americans.
            3. **Enumerated goods** could only be shipped to England (Americans wanted to ship to the highest bidder).
         2. To ensure British monopoly in certain areas, Americans were restricted in what they could produce (wool and beaver hats were off limits).
         3. The Americans' hard money was constantly being funneled to England. Many turned to barter instead. Eventually the colonies printed paper money which quickly became worthless.
         4. The **Privy Council** in Britain could void American laws. Although it was ruled rather sparingly (only 469 times out of 8,563 laws), the principle bothered the Americans.
3. The Merits and Menace of Mercantilism
   1. The merits of mercantilism…
      1. The Navigation Laws were despised by Americans but weren't enforced (until 1763). This non-enforcement was called "**salutary neglect**" and effectively let the Americans do their own thing for a century.
         1. Salutary neglect was the result of wide geography, British apathy, and American smuggling. John Hancock made a fortune and was called the "King of Smugglers."
      2. Tobacco merchants were restricted to selling within the British Empire, but they did have a monopoly there.
      3. The Americans enjoyed the free protection of the powerful British Army and Navy.
   2. The menace of mercantilism…
      1. Mercantilism hindered America's economic growth. Worse, it was to keep America in a state perpetually subordinate to England.
      2. The Americans felt exploited and humiliated by the system, unable to come of age as a people.
      3. Teddy Roosevelt later commented that revolution broke out because Britain failed to recognize an emerging nation when it saw one.
4. The Stamp Tax Uproar
   1. In 1763, with the Seven Years' War over (French and Indian War), Britain had the largest debt in the world. 1/2 of the debt came via the wars in America.
   2. By 1763, the stage was set for a change in British—American relations. For America, the good ol' days were over and a laundry-list of acts and events were to follow…
      1. Prime Minister **George Grenville** suggested enforcement of the much-ignored Navigation Acts.
      2. Parliament passed the **Sugar Act** (1764), a tax on sugar. This was the first tax on Americans for raising revenue. Americans protested, the tax was lowered, and things calmed.
      3. The **Quartering Act** (1765) required colonists to provide food and quarter for British troops. This law was detested.
      4. Also in 1765, the **Stamp Act** was passed. This caused something of a firestorm of protest.
         1. The act's stated purpose was to raise money to support a new military force to protect the colonies. Grenville considered the tax fair—Americans would be paying for their own protection. Brits were paying twice as much for a similar tax, the Americans could also ante up.
         2. This act required using either stamped paper or affixing a stamp that showed payment of the tax.
            1. The stamp was required on nearly everything on paper, from legal documents down to newspapers and playing cards.
            2. Many questioned why a large military was *even needed* since the enemy (French) had just been ousted. Unless, of course, the purpose of the military was to lord over the colonists.
            3. To a large degree, it was the *principle* of these acts that irked the colonists, more so than the acts themselves.

Local government/rule seemed under attack.

The Sugar and Stamp Acts would be tried in **admiralty courts** (courts set up and run by England). In these courts, defendants were *guilty* until proven *innocent* and there were no trials by a jury of peers.

The notion of "**taxation without representation**" arose.

Grenville dismissed "taxation without representation" and said the colonists actually *were* represented via "**virtual representation**," figuring Parliament represents the British Empire, to which America is a member, and therefore America *is* represented in Parliament.

The Americans weren't convinced by this "U-turn logic."

1. Forced Repeal the Stamp Act This content copyright © 2010 by WikiNotes.wikidot.com
   1. Protest against the Stamp Act got organized. A **Stamp Act Congress** was called and convened in New York City to plan objection to the act.
      1. 9 of the 13 colonies met. Americans were slowly uniting (only 7 of 13 colonies had met at the Albany Congress during the French and Indian War).
      2. Protest could be divided into 2 types, informal and formal…
         1. Informal protest took place in the streets.
            1. Colonists boycotted British goods, either going without or making their own.
            2. The **Sons** and **Daughters of Liberty** showed their disapproval of tax collectors by tarring-and-feathering them, riding them out of town on a rail, stoning and burning effigies (dummies) of the tax collectors, and sometimes ransacked officials' homes.
         2. Formal protest was less dramatic and used pen-and-paper.
            1. **Non-importation agreements** were signed by many Americans as pledges to boycott British goods.
            2. The Stamp Act Congress also wrote Parliament, listed a "Declaration of Rights and Grievances" (foreshadowing the Declaration of Independence), and called for repeal of the Stamp Act.
      3. When the act was set to go into effect, there were no tax collectors to carry it out. Americans never paid one cent under the Stamp Act.
   2. The opposition led Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act (1766).
      1. American colonists cheered; they even erected a leaden statue of George III in New York City.
      2. But, Parliament also issued the **Declatory Act** (1766) declaring that London *still* ruled over the American colonies and could "bind" the colonies "in all cases whatsoever." This was foreshadowing more acts, and conflict, to come.
2. The Townshend Tea Tax and the Boston “Massacre”
   1. "Champagne Charley" Townshend initiated and got the passage of the **Townshend Acts** (1767) which taxed paper, lead, paint, and tea.
   2. These were "indirect taxes", unlike the "direct" Stamp Act (meaning the tax was hidden in the price of the good, not paid directly to the government).
   3. Despite being a hidden tax, it was the principle that bothered the colonists. They protested again, but with less passion since (a) the tax was small, (b) it was indeed hidden, and (c) smugglers found ways around it.
   4. A bit jumpy, the British took action against protest.
      1. In 1767, the New York legislature was suspended for failing to comply with the Quartering Act.
      2. British troops were sent to Boston to keep order and enforce British laws.
         1. On March 5, 1770, the **Boston Massacre** occurred. A colonial crowd of about 60 were milling about and taunting/threatening about 10 British redcoats. Things escalated until the British soldiers opened fire, killing or wounding 11 Americans.
            1. **Crispus Attucks** was one of the first to die. He was a black man and former slave. He became a symbol and rallying cry for freedom (he'd risen from slave, to free man, to martyr who stood up to Britain in the name of liberty).
            2. In the later trial, **John Adams** (future president) was the defense attorney and 2 redcoats were found guilty (manslaughter, released after a brand on the hand).
3. The Seditious Committees of Correspondence
   1. The status in the early 1770s was that the Townshend Acts had *not* produced revenue; they *had* produced a near-rebellion.
   2. King George III was nonplussed over events. He was 32 years old, of good morals, but power hungry and a poor ruler.
      1. Worse, he surrounded himself with "yes-men" and the manipulative prime minister **Lord North**.
      2. Lord North eventually gave in to repeal of the Townshend duties, *except* for tea, just to retain the point that Parliament had the right to tax.
   3. To **Samuel Adams**, this was not enough. The tea tax was the most disliked one, and again, the principle (taxation without representation) was the problem.
      1. Sam Adams was a red-blooded patriot…passionate and hot-blooded.
      2. He used his "trained mob" as his muscle.
      3. His main contribution was the establishment of the "**committees of correspondence**". These committees were really nothing but a letter-writing network with the goal of exchanging news/info and organizing and keeping resistance.
         1. These committees started in Boston, but soon grew to all the colonies.
         2. They eventually would grow into the first American congresses (the leaders were the men in the network).
4. Tea Brewing in Boston
   1. The British East India Company was in financial trouble by 1773. It had 17 million pounds of unsold tea.
   2. London decided to help the company by giving it monopoly rights to sell tea in America. This would have actually lowered the price of tea.
   3. Still, the American colonists were not happy about the tea situation. They thought the British were trying to sneak a tax in under a low price. It was the principle of taxation without representation that was bothersome.
      1. The **Boston Tea Party** took place on December 16, 1773.
         1. Samuel Adams was the ringleader. After a "meeting" at the Green Dragon Tavern, protesters dressed up like Indians, then went to the harbor and threw 342 chests of tea overboard.
         2. Reactions to the tea party were mixed. Patriotic types cheered it as standing up to the British in the name of freedom. Conservatives criticized the actions as one step above lawlessness and anarchy.
5. Parliament Passes the “Intolerable Acts”
   1. The British reaction was clear. In 1774, Parliament passed the **Repressive Acts** which came to be called the **Intolerable Acts** in America. They were to punish America, Boston especially.
      1. The **Boston Port Act** shut down Boston harbor. This was a huge financial blow to the colonies.
      2. The Massachusetts charter was revoked.
      3. Other acts limited Americans right to assemble and rule themselves.
      4. Certain crimes by Brits in America were to be tried in England by English jurors, *not* in America by American jurors.
   2. The **Quebec Act** was also passed in 1774. It was forward-thinking, but ill-timed.
      1. The act's goal was to benefit French-Canadians who now lived in British America. Each part of the act had a reason the Americans disliked it.
      2. The French were guaranteed Catholicism as okay. (Americans saw this as a threat to Protestantism and an extension of the pope's power).
      3. The French could have trials without juries as they were accustomed. (Americans saw this as foreshadowing the removal of trials-by-jury altogether).
      4. The French were allowed to stay in the Ohio Valley. (Americans, despite beating the French in the war, were *not* allowed to move there per the Proclamation Line of 1763).
6. Bloodshed
   1. The **First Continental Congress** met in Philadelphia from September to October of 1774.
      1. 12 of the 13 colonies were present (Georgia absent).
      2. The congress did *not* desire independence, but did (a) draw up a list of grievances (which were ignored by London) and (b) wrote a Declaration of Rights.
      3. Plans were made to convene again in 1775 if the situation didn't change.
   2. The "Shot Heard 'Round the World" in **Lexington** (April 1775) started the American Revolution.
      1. British soldiers left Boston headed to **Concord** to capture weapons and troublemakers John Hancock and Sam Adams.
      2. Massachusetts "Minutemen" met the troops on the Lexington green where the first shots were fired.
      3. After stopping the British at the North Bridge in Concord, the British turned back. The minutemen struck at the British from behind rocks and trees (Indian-style) the whole way back, killing 1/2 of the redcoats.
      4. With Lexington, the American Revolution had begun.
7. Imperial Strength and Weaknesses
   1. Britain had great advantages.
      1. They had (a) 7.5 million people to America's 2 million, (b) a powerful navy, and (c) wealth in hard money.
      2. With their money, they also hired **Hessians** (German mercenary soldiers). These troops were added to about 50,000 British regulars who were well-trained, well-equipped. Also, there were an estimated 50,000 **Loyalist** Americans.
   2. Britain had a few disadvantages.
      1. There were international troubles: (a) problems in Ireland required the attention of British troops and (b) France was just waiting for a chance to get back at England.
      2. Many British didn't wish to fight and kill the Americans. William Pitt even removed his son from the army on this point.
      3. British officers were not the best, the men were mistreated, the war was to be fought an ocean away, and supplies would often run low.
8. American Pluses and Minuses
   1. The Americans had only a few advantages, but they proved to be worthy ones.
      1. Leadership for America was terrific with George Washington as general and Ben Franklin as diplomat.
      2. France lent aid, secretly at first and then openly. Support came in the form of money, guns, supplies, and then troops and a navy.
         1. **Marquis de Lafayette**, 19 years old, was the most famous of the French officers.
      3. The Americans fought only on the defensive meaning they just had to *hold* the land. The British had to actually *conquer* land.
      4. The typical American soldier was more accustomed to the country and straight-shooting.
      5. They felt they were fighting for a cause—freedom. The British fought because they were ordered to do so.
      6. Geography proved to be perhaps the largest advantage for the Americans. The British were 3,000 miles away, had to conquer a vast country, and there was no central capital in American on which to focus their attacks. The Americans employed a "drawn game"—fight, backup, live to fight another day, and therefore *not lose*!
   2. America had real disadvantages.
      1. The people were split into three groups: **Patriots**, moderates, and Loyalists (AKA **Tories**).
      2. There were sectional rivalries evidenced by the appointment of military officers.
      3. The lack of money was a real problem. America printed "Continental" paper money, which quickly became worthless.
      4. America's financial help would come from France, but they'd have to deal with the powerful British naval blockade.
      5. America had essentially no navy at all.
      6. On paper, America should *not* win the war.
9. A Thin Line of Heroes
   1. The American army struggled throughout the war in many respects…
      1. Supplies were scarce: clothing, wool, wagons, etc. And worse, money was scarce meaning these things couldn't just be purchased.
      2. Training was quick, spotty, and often poor. Desertion was common.
         1. Training was greatly improved by **Baron von Steuben** a Prussian drillmaster who whipped the American soldiers into shape.
   2. African-Americans also served and fought in the war.
      1. At the war's outset, blacks were sometimes barred from service. By the end of the war, over 5,000 African-Americans served.
      2. Blacks also fought for the British. This was especially appealing because Lord Dunmore (royal governor of Virginia) announced freedom for any slave that agreed to fight for the British.
         1. 1,400 blacks were relocated to either Jamaica, Nova Scotia, or England after the war.
   3. Apathy and division within America hurt the fight for the cause.
      1. Many people lived so remotely that they had no interest in a war with a nation an ocean away. This seemed to have no bearing on a frontier farmer grubbing stumps out of the forest and raising crops to feed himself.
      2. Merchants liked to sell to the British because the Brits paid in gold, not worthless paper money.
      3. The American Revolution was a "minority war" in the sense that it was only because a select few threw themselves into the cause with passion that the Americans won.