CHAPTER FOUR:
RISING EXPECTATIONS: AFRICAN AMERICANS
AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE, 1763-1783

CHAPTER SUMMARY

After their success in the French and Indian War, England began taxing the colonies more stringently, and passing other measures, to help pay for the expensive war and administration of the new territories. This initiated a series of events which led to the American Revolution. Enlightenment principles fed the Declaration of Independence and dramatically influenced African American’s perceptions of themselves and the condition of slavery. As the ideas of natural rights and freedom spread through the African-American community, slaves reacted strongly. In the South, huge numbers escaped, while in the North, slaves in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut used the legal system to petition for freedom, sometimes successfully. African Americans served on both sides, Loyalist and Patriot, in the American Revolution, generally choosing the side that seemed to offer the greatest opportunities for freedom. In the South, this usually meant the British, especially once the British leader Lord Dunmore began offering freedom to slaves for military service. As the personnel situation began getting more desperate, Patriot troops also allowed black enlistment. No matter the side they chose, blacks fought in many battles in various capacities, including as privateers, spies and soldiers.

The American Revolution also fostered a second revolution, that of emancipation for slaves in the North. Fueled partially by Christian ideals, Quakers initiated an anti-slavery movement which gradually abolished slavery across the North. African Americans made qualified gains during the aftermath of the American Revolution. Certainly, the free population swelled, but African Americans even in the North continued to face significant economic difficulties in a nation espousing the belief that “all men are created equal.”

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Understand the origins of the American Revolution.

Understand the origins of Enlightenment thought, its influence on the Declaration of Independence, as well as the meaning of both to whites and African-Americans.

Understand the influence of the American Revolution on blacks.

Understand the roles and motivations of blacks serving on the Patriot and the Loyalist side of the American Revolution.

Understand the early anti-slavery efforts, including secular and religious origins, the regional variations, as well as the effects of a growing free black population.
CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Introduction

II. Crisis of the British Empire
   A. French and Indian War
   B. Consequences of the French and Indian War
      1. For Indians
      2. For Colonists
   C. British Attempts to Assert Control over Colonies
      1. Initial Acts, 1763-1765
      2. Colonial Reaction
      3. British Response, 1768-1773
      4. Tea Act Controversy
      5. Lexington and Concord
      6. Revolution Begins

III. The Declaration of Independence and African Americans
   A. Meaning to Elite Whites
   B. Meaning to African Americans
   C. The Impact of the Enlightenment
      1. Newton
      2. Locke
      3. Conspiracy Theories
   D. African Americans in the Revolutionary Debate
      1. Source of Optimism
      2. Effects in South
      3. Effects in New England

IV. Black Enlightenment
   A. Intellectual Opportunities
   B. Phillis Wheatley
   C. Benjamin Banneker

V. African Americans in the War for Independence
   A. Fighting on the Side of Freedom
   B. Outline of the War
   C. Black Loyalists
      1. Reasons for Blacks to Choose British Side
      2. Loyalist Support in the South
      3. Dunmore’s Appeal
   D. Black Patriots
      1. Black Military Service (to Dec, 1775)
      2. Enlistment Allowed
      3. Recruitment Policies
      4. Demands for Liberty
      5. Black War Experiences
      6. Black Women and War

VI. The Revolution and Emancipation
   A. Anti-Slavery Forces
Chapter 4 | Rising Expectations: African Americans and the Struggle for Independence, 1763-1783

1. Enlightenment Rationalism
2. Economics
3. Christianity

B. The Revolutionary Impact
   1. Arguments For Emancipation
   2. Reduction in Number of Slaves
   3. Changes in Working Conditions

C. The Revolutionary Promise
   1. Increase in Free Black Population
   2. Urban Growth
   3. Economic Difficulty

VII. Conclusion

TEST MATERIALS

MAP QUESTIONS
(Locate the following regions, geographical features or political entities on a map)
Ohio River Valley
Britain
France
Spain
Canada
French province of Louisiana
New Orleans
Appalachian Mountains
New York City
Boston
Philadelphia
Bunker Hill
Saratoga
Yorktown
Sierra Leone
British West Indies

IDENTIFICATIONS
(For each of the following, identify by answering the questions – who? what? when? where? and describe the significance by answering the question – why is this important? Why do we study this?)
French and Indian War/Seven Years War
Proclamation Line of 1763
Sugar Act of 1764
Stamp Act of 1765
Stamp Act Congress
Townshend Acts
Boston Massacre
Crispus Attucks
Tea Act
British East India Tea Company
Sons of Liberty

44