Chapter 4
Convergence and Conflict, 1660—1763

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 explores the transformation of the colonies’ relationship with Britain between 1660 and the end of the French and Indian War. The closeness between mother country and colonies during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries is examined with a look at such issues as the British imperial trade system, cultural and social connections between Britain and the colonies, and the nature of political thought in the colonies and Britain. By the mid-eighteenth century, tensions mount with a renewed competition in North America among Britain, France, and Spain. The chapter ends by examining imperial warfare in the eighteenth century with a special emphasis on the French and Indian War and its impact on relations between the colonies and Britain.

I. Economic Development and Imperial Trade in the British Colonies
   A. The Regulation of Trade
   B. The Colonial Export Trade and the Spirit of Enterprise
   C. The Import Trade and Ties of Credit
   D. Becoming More Like England: The Growth of Cities and Inequality
      1. Artisans in colonial cities
      2. The growing gap between rich and poor

II. The Transformation of Culture
   A. Goods and Houses
   B. Shaping Minds and Manners
   C. Colonial Religion and the Great Awakening

III. The Colonial Political World
   A. The Dominion of New England and the Limits of British Control
   B. The Legacy of the Glorious Revolution
   C. Diverging Politics in the Colonies and Great Britain

IV. Expanding Empires
   A. British Colonists in the Backcountry
   B. The Spanish in Texas and California
   C. The French along the Mississippi and in Louisiana

V. A Century of Warfare
   A. Imperial Conflict and the Establishment of an American Balance of Power, 1689–1738
   B. King George’s War Shifts the Balance, 1739–1754
   C. The French and Indian War, 1754–1760: A Decisive Victory
   D. The Triumph of the British Empire, 1763

VI. Conclusion
Learning Objectives

After a careful examination of Chapter 4, the student should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the concept of mercantilism and offer examples of British trade legislation that was designed to promote this economic policy.

2. Explain the colonial system of credit and how it impacted colonial consumption of British goods.

3. Discuss the characteristics of eighteenth-century colonial urban centers.

4. Describe the intellectual development of the colonists, including literacy rates, the nature of popular literature, and the intellectual development of women.

5. Explain the Age of the Enlightenment and its impact on colonial intellectual development.

6. Explain the Great Awakening and its impact on theology and religious style in the American colonies.

7. Discuss the major trends in British colonial administration from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century.

8. Explain the impact of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 on the administration of the colonies.

9. Explain the terms *actual representation* and *virtual representation* and how they reflected the diverging political ideologies of the colonies and Britain.

10. Describe the settlement of the backcountry and explain the social tensions that emerged between the older, established eastern communities and the western backcountry.

11. Explain Spanish expansion into North America, particularly Texas and California, and speculate about what that expansion will mean to the colonies as well as the future United States.

12. Describe the French movement into the Mississippi Valley and connect that development to the future French and Indian War.


14. Define the Albany Congress and the reasons for its successes and failures.

15. Explain the terms of the Treaty of Paris of 1763 and explain the treaty's potential for changing the relationship between the colonies and Britain after the French and Indian War.
Topics for Classroom Lectures

1. Discuss the methods of cultivating the major staple crops produced in the British colonies. Explain the labor intensity of raising sugar cane and tobacco, make a distinction between the long staple cotton grown in coastal Carolina and Georgia and short staple cotton that will be the King Cotton of the antebellum South, and point out the intricacies of rice cultivation in the coastal South.

2. Create a slide presentation of American colonial dwellings from New England, the Middle colonies, and the South. Trace the various architectural features to origins in England. Also, point out how the architectural distinctions reflect the cultural, social, and climate differences among the major colonial regions.

3. Discuss the settlement of the American backcountry during the early eighteenth century. How did the settlers of this area differ from the settlers of the seventeenth century? Consider the religious, regional, cultural, and moral backgrounds of the settlers. How would these issues define the relationship between the settlers of the backcountry and the established eastern population?

Topics for Class Discussion and Essays

1. Have students discuss the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening as intellectual preludes to the American Revolution. Connect enlightened political thought to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the writings of John Locke. Use these issues to predict Thomas Jefferson’s writing of the Declaration of Independence. Connect the Great Awakening to the cultural unification of the colonies and the emphasis on individual religious choice and autonomy. How do these developments help prepare colonists for revolutionary thinking? Why have historians linked the tradition among colonists of American religious revolution to their experience with political revolution?

2. Will the American Revolution be revolutionary? Have students look at the nature of British colonial administration and explain how it contributed to the American love of liberty. In fighting for independence and freedom, will Americans be fighting for something with which they are unfamiliar? Will they be fighting for political change or for a status of independence they had come to expect by the mid-eighteenth century?

Topics for Term Papers and Class Projects

1. Explore the development of rice cultivation in South Carolina. Trace the African origins of this agriculture, how it was brought to Carolina settlers, and its impact on the economic and social development of South Carolina.

2. Explore the importance of the Great Awakening to the American South. How did the movement impact the emergence of Southern religious style? What was the particular impact of the Great Awakening on the Southern backcountry?

3. Research the causes of the Salem witch trials. A variety of historical and scientific studies offer many dimensions to the possible origins of this unusual phenomenon in American history.
Resources for Lectures and Research Projects


Audio-Visual Resources

This video from the A&E Biography series examines the eclectic life of Benjamin Franklin and presents a nice accompaniment to the study of the Enlightenment in the colonies.

*In Search of History: The Salem Witch Trials*, A&E Video, 50 minutes.
This video explores the witch trials of Salem, Massachusetts, with a look at various social, psychological, and cultural explanations for the trials.