Chapter 4: The Empire in Transition (Part 1)

LOOSENING TIES

A Tradition of Neglect

- During reigns of George I and George II (unaccustomed to English ways), prime minister and his cabinet members began to dominate the nation – controlled a majority of Parliament
  - Depended heavily on merchants and landlords
  - First of modern prime ministers was Robert Walpole – relaxed Navigation Acts, wanting commerce to be more free
- Decentralized Colonial Administration
  - London had no colonial office – closets was the Board of Trade but that didn’t make many decisions
  - Privy Council (central administration agency for gov’t as a whole) had real authority
  - Only responsible for laws at home and overseas, not colonial affairs
- Few London officials actually go to America – usually send people for them
- Officials appointed by the crown didn’t even come to the colonies sometimes – they just sent replacements, further slowly breaking the colonies away from England
  - Colonial legislatures became more powerful (pass laws, levy taxes, etc.) and thought of themselves has mini Parliaments

The Colonies Divided

- Colonists still thought of themselves as English subjects even of their resistance to the English government
- Felt stronger ties across the pond than to each other
- More growth = more settlements = more interaction, so a postal service helped people communicate – by 1732: spread to Virginia and South and even Georgia
- Albany Plan
  - Felt threat from rivals French and their Indian allies
  - Delegates from PA, MD, NY, and NE met in Albany to make treaty with Iroquois
  - The Ben Franklin proposed: Parliament set up one central gov’t, each colony would have its own constitution, and grant to central gov’t powers like governing relations with Indians
    - He was ahead of his time – already calling for separation
    - No one approved this

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE CONTINENT

- 3 main powers: English, French, and Iroquois
New France and the Iroquois Nation

- English and French got along alright for the most part, until crisis happened: expansion of French presence in America in late 17th century
- France began to make large land claims and establish their own French North American Empire
  - Claimed Louisiana, as far west as Rio Grande River, from Lake Superior to Rocky Mts
  - Established towns, trading posts, missions, etc. to hold their claims
  - They shared lots of territory with the natives but they weren’t like the English and challenged the natives – France practiced tolerance by adjusting themselves to their tribal ways – France was good allies with natives
  - Jesuit missionaries interacted with them and converted many to Catholicism w/o changing their social customs
- Iroquois Confederacy
  - Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, and Oneida
  - Most powerful tribe in Northeast since the 1640s
  - Allied with English and Dutch but still traded with French
  - Maintained their independence and played the two groups they interacted with against each other
- Ohio valley = future battleground – each group was moving there and conflict is inevitable

Anglo-French Conflicts

- After Glorious Revolution, throne passed on to Louis XIV’s enemy: William III
- Queen Anne (daughter of James II) went to the throne in 1702 and carried on conflict b/w France and its new ally, Spain – things got worse
- Numerous conflicts
  - King William’s War (1689-1697)
  - Queen Anne’s War (1701) 12 years long, ended with Treaty of Utrecht – gave some French territory to the English
  - Clashes in Georgia and Florida
  - King George’s War (1744-1748)
    - Anglo-French conflicts brought English Americans into conflict b/w Frederick the Great of Prussia and Maria Theresa of Austria
    - Effects: relations among the three main groups (see above) deteriorated
- France thought that English were wanting to expand into French lands with the concessions the Iroquois gave them, so they made new fortresses
- English protest and make their own fortresses
- Balance of power the Iroquois maintained for a while is disappearing
- 1754: Washington led group from Virginia to Ohio Valley to challenge French expansion
  - Assembled Fort Necessity in the area that French Fort Duquesne was in
  - Washington leads failed attack on French fort
  - They get trapped in their fort for 3 days and then surrenders
The Great War for the Empire

- French and Indian war in 3 phases
  - 1) From Fort Necessity conflict to expansion of war to Europe in 1756
    - General Edward Braddock, commander in Chief of British army in America, failed to retake the forks of the Ohio River where Washington lost his conflict
    - French and Indian ambush killed him
    - Local colonial forces trying to hold on from raids by the French and Indian forces – pretty much all Indians joined this except the Iroquois – they still feel antagonized by the French
    - 1755: English colonists withdrawn to Alleghany Mts to escape hostilities
  - 2) French and English governments formally declare war in 1756 (international conflict, The 7 Years’ War)
    - France joins Austria and England joins Prussia
    - Fighting now in West Indies, India, and Europe – main battle in North America
    - William Pitt takes charge
      - Planning military strategies for North American conflict, appointing leaders, issuing orders to colonists
      - British commanders forcibly enlist colonists b/c the army was running low on peeps
      - Took farmers’ equipment
      - Colonists didn’t like this British impressments, so they resisted like the 1757 New York Riot
  - 3) Pitt relaxes the obnoxious policies in America
    - Gave control of military recruitment to colonial assemblies – many people began to join after that
    - After 1756: France suffers bad harvests – unable to keep winning streak going
    - By mid-1758: British began taking French strongholds one after another
    - Jeffrey Amherst and James Wolfe take fortress of Louisbourg in July 1758
    - A few months later, Fort Duquesne falls w/o a fight
    - Siege of Quebec
      - Wolfe’s army surprises Marquis de Montcalm and defeated them in battle
      - Marked beginning of end for American phase of 7 Years’ War
    - Peace came when George III rose to the throne
    - Peace of Paris signed in 1763

- EFFECTS
  - Greatly expanded England’s territorial claims in New World
  - Enlarged Britain’s debt
  - Tension between Britain and America – Britain mad that Americans didn’t add much financial help and that merchants were still selling goods throughout the conflict
o On American colonists: for first time, it forced them to band together and fight for a common cause
  ▪ Also was a great socializing experience
  ▪ Previous impressments of British making the colonists think about how they were illegitimate in the local affairs
  ▪ Colonial troops saw themselves as “People’s army unlike British army – they seemed snobby and arrogant

o For Iroquois: British victory = very bad
  ▪ Indian tribes that allied with French and Iroquois fall to hate of English
  ▪ English looked down on how Iroquois kept trying to avoid antagonism of French and how they didn’t help much
  ▪ Iroquois Confederacy began to crumble