Question Number 1. Factors that lead to the varied social, economic and political characteristics of Britain’s North American Colonies?

New England:

* Rocky, thin soil… glaciation….. lead to small independent farms… (no plantations… and little room for slavery). Farms concentrate on food production… home and then sale (left over). Tough, independent people.
* More manufacturing than in the south or middle colonies..(in part because of poor soil… needed an alternative source of income. Rivers were faster… and provided water power.
* Bigger in trade and ship building… northern forests… timber, masts, pitch…
* Fishing is huge…
* Founded by the puritans… initially very religious/pious.. Governments were heavily influenced by the religious institutions… (had to be a member of church to vote)….. also very democratic.
* Fewer indentured servants and slaves (eventually slavery would be outlawed)…. Economic conditions did not demand slavery, or support slaver.
* Wage labor was the predominant labor pattern.
* Educations was highly valued…. So children could read the bible…. And stay away from the devil. Massachusetts law that towns of 20 families (???) had to have a school.
* Families tended to be larger. Colonists came as families… more women… Healthier… life expectancy was as high as the 70s… “invented Grandparents”
* Political center was the town meeting.

Southern Colonies:

* Hot, humid, diseased… high rates of malaria… and death. Life expectancy was very low.
* Economies based on cash crops… rice, tobacco.. (later cotton).
* Tobacco made Virginia a profitable colony… Tobacco grew well in the heat and humidity.
* Tobacco economy demanded lots of workers… indentured servants… eventually slaves…
* Tobacco exhaust the land.. aggressively push inland to get more land.
* Tobacco and the headright system leads to a landed aristocracy… large plantation owners who own lots of land (Washingtons, Lees, Fitzhughs…. Fewer small farmers.
* Significant shortage of women… families grew slowly. Colonists tended to arrive as individuals (not as families). 6-1 men to women. Families were small and fragile (broken often by death)
* Towns were slow to develop…. Large farms spread people out more. Education and churches were fewer and farther between than in the northern colonies. Fewer urban professionals like lawyers, and financiers.
* Anglican Church was the predominant religious institution… South tended to be less pious and more worldly than the north.
* Poor road systems… rivers were main means of transportation.
* **Slave supported agriculture became a dominant economic institution** largely because of tobacco and climate.
* Political center was the County government.

Middle Colonies:

* New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania.
* Soil was fertile, reasonably flat… became the bread colonies… grain exporter.
* Broad slow rivers provided for transportation.
* Significant manufacturing developed… especially lumbering and shipbuilding.
* Important seaports developed: New York and Philadelphia.
* Landholdings were intermediate in size (smaller than the south, but larger than New England)
* More ethnically mixed.
* More religiously tolerant (in part thanks to William Penn’s example).
* Land was easier to access than in New England or the south.
* Middle Colonies tended to be both socially democratic and economically democratic.

Read Pages

Middle Colonies: pg. 62-64

South: pg. 68, 76, 77

New England: 80-84

Questions #2

How were the seeds of democracy developing in North America prior to 1774?

* Formation of colonies was haphazard at best… virtually no influence or control by the Royal Government (except a charter). These were independent ventures from the beginning.
* Jamestown Colony… Joint Stock company… the charter said colonists retains the “rights of Englishmen.” Large landowners in England had voting rights….
* Governing of the colonists was largely done initially by the colonists. 1000 miles from London… create a need for local government.
* House of Burgesses (Virginia)… essentially a legislature.
* Mayflower Compact
* Fundamental Orders: Connecticut
* Puritan Tradition (protestant tradition) of religious democracy… These guys started churches challenging traditional authority (Catholic Church)… built their own churches and ran them democratically. Laboratories of democracy.
* As the colonies develop… New England Town Hall… Jefferson called… “best school of political liberty that the world ever saw.”
* Puritan tradition of valuing education… educated all children… education is one of the world’s greatest agents of democracy.
* Royal Government neglect… salutary neglect… England largely left the colonies alone, didn’t enforce their own laws… when they do begin trying to… its going to cause problems.
* Frontier living creates a tough, independent, stubborn person… one not likely to take easily to the yoke of government.

**Question:. How did Britain’s victory over France in the 7 Year’s War alter the relationship between England and the American colonists? (Jana)**

* The Albany contract was established at the start at the war to keep the Native tribes loyal to Britain (short term) and to promote and establish unity within the colonies against the French (long term).
* A result of the war was a doubling of Britain’s national debt, which the crown attempted to pay off by heavy taxation on the colonies. They justified this by saying that they were protecting the colonies and therefor needed to be paid their dues in return. The colonists heavily protested these new taxes and their nonexistent representation in England along with their questionable “Englishmen rights”. The crown then sent troops into the colonies to enforce the new taxation laws and the protection of the officers of the crown. All of these events are the beginning fractures that lead to the American Revolutionary War.
* Another result of the 7 Year’s War was the proclamation line that made American expansion west of the Appalachian mountain range prohibited. This infuriated colonists who were needing more room and also the colonists past that line that now were being forced to relocate. The British established this to keep peace with the Natives, however it was also a fracture that pushed the colonists to independence.

Themes:

* Politics and Power- the British have the upper hand in all of America’s decisions, which pushes the colonists to gain their own power and independence.
* America in the World- the 7 Year’s War was just on event that led to many consequences that pushed the independence of not only American but also other countries to attempt the same.
* Identity- America’s identity as the step-child of Britain slowly and powerfully changes into its own unique culture and identity.

**Question : How did perceived and real constraints on the colonist’s economic activities and political rights spark a colonial independence movement and war with Great Britain?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Constraints** | **Effect** |
| Mercantilism (p.128) | * Stifled economic initiative
* Didn’t allow growth in the economy
 |
| Stamp Tax (p.129) | * Pinched pockets
* Strike at local liberties
 |
| Admiralty courts (p. 129) | * Didn’t allow juries
* Suspects were “guilty until proven innocent”
 |
| Stamp Act (p. 130) | * Creation of stamp act congress
* Creation of non-importation agreements
* Sons/Daughters of Liberty
 |
| Townshend Tea Tax (p. 132-135) | * Taxing without representation
* Boston massacre
* Boston tea party
 |
| Intolerable Acts (p.136-138) | * “massacre of American liberties”
* Boston port act closed harbor
* Maryland charter swept away rights in Massachusetts
* Quebec act gave land to French and allowed Catholics to worship
* Caused creation of first continental congress
* Congress passed “The Association”- called for non-importation, exportation or consumption of British goods
 |

**Themes:**

**Politics and Power-** British wanted power over America and some Americans wanted self-government. Americans advocated for political power that they did not have. The fight for political power between Britain and the colonies created drastic separation and led to the change in identity.

**Identity-** created an American identity, some no longer saw themselves as British men with British right but Americans with American rights, different identity within colonies as well; loyalists, federalists, revolutionaries. Enlightenment ideas created beliefs within the colonists to want equal treatment… “No taxation without representation”

**Work, Exchange, Technology**- constraints on economic activity put tight constraints on trade and limited the amount of money in colonies, which disrupted their way of life. The economic disturbance by Britain caused Americans to seek representation.

**Question What were the political, economic, and social results of the American Revolution?**

Social Changes of Revolution:

-beginning of organized abolitionist movement in many places -some slaves who fought in the war were liberated -land inheritance laws no longer in effect -Anglican church struggled to survive -women wanted to advance their role in society (led by Abigail Adams) -inspired democracy in other countries such as France (which led to a bloody and costly revolution) -Native Americans were forced out of their land by land-thirsty Americans -exodus of thousands of loyalists -lowered requirements to hold property (more people could vote) -begin progressive thinking of separation of church and state

Economic:

-Relations with England were severed, but new laws allowing international trade expanded ties with other European countries -civilians tended to be worse off economically and the nation was in debt because the war was costly -France (who was allied with america) was in debt so they taxed their citizens- eventually leading to a war of their own) -Britain experienced debt as well -promotion of self sufficient agriculture

● france was broke, so they raised taxes which led to french revolution

● some states/colonies reduced property owning requirement to vote (equality)

● several states got rid of medieval inheritance laws

● 1775 Philadelphia Quakers found antislavery society

● Capitals of New Hampshire, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and

Georgia moved westward

● States seized control of former crown lands, large loyalists holding were confiscated and

cut into small farms

Social

● Men and woman demanded to be addressed Mr. Mrs Dr.

● Patriot elites emerged

Economic

● American traded freely with foreign nations

● Fisheries were disrupted and bounties for ships stores anded

● American ships were barred from British and British West Indies harbor

● British Navigation laws were more disagreeable than before

● state governments had borrowed more during the war than they could ever hope to

repay

● runaway inflation had been ruinous to many citizens and congress had failed in its feeble

attempts to curb economic laws

● weak central government (articles of confederation) couldn't get money, because they

didnt tax

**Question: What were the major compromises of the Constitutional Convention and the major arguments for and against the ratification of the Constitution?**

**Great Compromise**

* Larger states were given representation by population in the House of Representatives; smaller states were appeased by equal representation in the Senate (p.188)
* Each state had 2 senators regardless of size. To appease larger states delegates agreed that every tax bill or revenue measure must originate in the House, where population counted more heavily. (p.188) \* this was a critical compromise that broke the logjam and from there success seemed within reach.

**Other Compromises**

* Method of electing the president indirectly by the electoral college (p.189)
* As the commander and chief the President could wage war, but congress retained the right to declare war (p.189)
* In the first round of voting large states had the advantage, because state’s share of electors was based on the total of its senators and representatives in congress. Small states would gain a larger voice if no candidate got a majority of electoral votes then the election was thrown to the House of Representatives where each state would only get one vote. (p.189)
* Slaves would have a 3/5 vote (p.189)
* Federal judges would be appointed for life (p.190)
* Senators were chosen indirectly by state legislatures (p.190)
* Only in the case of one-half of the one of three branches – the house of representatives – were qualified (propertied) citizens permitted to choose their officials by direct vote (p. 190)
* Only legitimate government was one based on the consent of the governed, and that the power of the government should be limited (p.190)
* The virtue of the people, not the authority of the state, was to be the ultimate guarantor of liberty, justice, and order. (p. 190)

**Delegates agreed on (p.190). . .**

* Demand for a sound money supply and the protection of private property
* Favored a stronger government, with 3 branches and balances and checks among them
* Believed that manhood-suffrage democracy was something to be feared and fought

**Ratification arguments. . .**

**Against (antifederalists; p. 192):**

* Opposed stronger federal government
* Constitution had been drawn up by the aristocratic elements making it antidemocratic
* Believed that the sovereignty of the states was being submerged and the freedoms of the individual were jeopardized by the absence of a bill of rights.
* Decried the dropping of annual elections for congressional representatives, erecting of a federal stronghold 10 miles square, creation of a standing army, omission of any reference to god, highly questionable procedure of ratifying with only 2/3 of the states

**For (Federalists; p.192):**

* Favored a strong central government

**How Federalists convinced resistant states to ratify the constitution (p. 192-195):**

* Pennsylvania: not until high-handed irregularities had been employed by the federalist legislature in calling a convention
* Massachusetts: federalists gave solemn assurances that the first congress would add such a safeguard (bill of rights) by amendment
* New Hampshire: federalists cleverly arranged a prompt adjournment and then won over enough waverers to secure ratification
* Virginia: The new union was going to be formed with or without them and Virginia could not afford to be an independent state
* New York: realized that it could not prosper apart from the union
* North Carolina and Rhode Island: ratified after the government had been operating for some months

\*the last 4 states ratified not because they wanted to but because they had to, they could not safely exist outside the fold.

Pg.176 Massachusetts drafted its constitution and then submitte the final draft directly to the people for ratification adopted in 1780.

Massachusetts constitution remains the longest lived constitution in the world.

* Not ratified until 1781

Major compromises

* Pg. 189 Most states wanted to shut off African slave trade but s. Carolina and Georgia required slave trade for rice fields.
* The method of electing the president indirectly by the electoral college rather than direct means.
* The debate if slaves should vote is one of the biggest compromises.
* The south said that the slaves should vote but the north argued they weren’t citizens. They decided that each slave was considered 3/5 of a person when voting which doesn’t make sense to me making a math catastrophe but that’s none of my business.

Major arguments

* Republicans wanted constitution
* Delegates stipulated that if 9 states said yes to the constitution it would be ratified

Anti federalists

* Anti federalists opposed strong federal government
* They were back country dewellers and poorer classes with debt since they thought a strong central government would make them pay their debts at full cost
* Had people like Samuel adams, Patrick henry and Richard henry supporting anti federalist camps
* Saw constitution as a plot to steal power back from the common folk.
* Thought that sovereignty of states was being submergerged and the freedom of the individuals were jeopardized by the absence of a bill of rights

Federalists

* Wanted strong centralized government
* Have power
* More wealthy than the anti federalists
* Had support from big names like George Washington, or Ben Franklin
* More educated
* Could control press and what goes in and out of the press approximately one hundred papers or magazines were made about the constitution but only a dozen were made by antifederalists

**8. Why did political parties develop and what positons did their members take on various economic, social, and foreign policy issues by 1800?**

* Political party development
* Initially meant as different forms of representation
* First two political parties were Federalists and Antifederalists
* **Federalists:**  1st American political party, committed to fiscally sound and nationalistic government. Wanted a national debt to “unite” state to central gov. hoped that those with the most to lose (wealthy) would work the hardest to support the nation. Wanted to put power in the hands of the wealthy, the “good men”. Desired an alliance with Britain, wanted strong central government. Founded around Hamiltons ideals
* **Anti-federalists:** Known as Democratic-Republicans, organized by Thomas Jefferson. Created to challenge federalists. Were for the small farmers and backwater dwellers. Valued the independent farmer as the ideal citizen. Wanted alliance with France. Wanted most power to remain in the states.

**11. Was the new constitution revolutionary or Conservative? Was it conservative or liberal?**

Government Previous to constitution

Monarchy, absolute government, Rich landowners had power, poor class no power

Enlightenment ideas began to spark ideas of individual rights, and began to question traditional sources of power

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Revolutionary | Conservative |
| Was not passed or ratified by states until the bill of rights was added. (the bill of rights was more revolutionary than the Constitution. Agreed monarchy wasn’t most effective way of governing.**Led** to more democracy and individual libertiesMade to protect rights of citizens from powerful government. Specifically designed to limit government.  •It enumerated specific powers of the Federal and state governments (federalism) to keep power close to the people. •Gives significant powers to the States (any power not given directly to Federal gov.. remains a state power.  •Property law will be established by the states. The constitution provided for the people to elect law makers in the House of Rep. Limited power of each branch of government (separation of powers)… Gave citizens the strongest/loudest voice in electing the President… (despite the whole elector thing). Beats birth order from the King. Provided a means of amending the constitution… to improve it… History has proven this document to have been revolutionary… as it has been applied to various identity groups. *It wasn’t as revolutionary as some later governments/constitutions (socialist/communist)… but it was still a big change in government*.  | Blacks, Native Americans, all women, and landless white men didn’t get rightsMade by rich educated eliteWas made to protect property for richDesigned in order to protect commerce (trade)… needed to have a functioning navy. Only one half of one branch of the government was elected directly by the people (House of Representatives)… Senate was selected by state governments, and president by “electors.”It did nothing to liberate slaves, or women. The writers were genuinely fearful of giving too much power to the uneducated masses.  |

Both revolutionary and counterrevolutionary, although made by rich to protect property (conservative) it was very liberal for its time and led to more liberal and democratic institutions although most did not occur right after.

Amalgam of conservative and liberal ideas, although we look at it and it appears conservative to us it was very liberal for its time compared to other governments of that time period.

**Number 9**

Significance of the Great Awakening: Roots of Revolution

The major effect of the Awakening was a rebellion against authoritarian religious rule which spilled over into other areas of colonial life. Amidst the growing population of the colonies within the 18th Century and mass public gatherings, charismatic personalities such as Whitefield and Tennent rolled through to deliver their messages. Though a religious movement, the Awakening had repercussions in cultural and political spheres as well. Customs of civility and courtesy, the governing norms of life in the colonies, were set aside in favor of a more quarrelsome age. Practices and mind-sets were changed by the Awakening like never before.

Towards an American Identity

Revivalism in the colonies did not form around a complex theology of religious freedom, but nevertheless the ideas it produced opposed the notion of a single truth or a single church. As preachers visited town after town, sects began to break off larger churches and a multitude of Protestant denominations sprouted. The older groups that dominated the early colonies – the Puritans and the Anglicans – eventually began a drastic downward trend in popularity. Although they accounted for about 40% of American congregations as late as 1760, that number eventually dropped to under 2.5% by 1790.

The social effect of multitudes of new denominations was not, however, a fracturing of communities, but a unifying drive which helped to create a “national consciousness”.

The effect of Great Awakening unity was an attitude that went against the deferential thinking that consumed English politics and religion. Rather than believing that God’s will was necessarily interpreted by the monarch or his bishops, the colonists viewed themselves as more capable of performing the task. The chain of authority no longer ran from God to ruler to people, but from God to people to ruler. The children of revivalism later echoed this radicalism and popular self-righteousness in the American Revolution, when self-assertion turned against the tyrannical ways of George III. It was not to any church that the signers of the Declaration of Independence appealed to, but directly to the “Supreme Judge of the World”. It was through the revivalism of the first half of the Eighteenth Century that the colonists were finally able to step out from under the protectorate of the established Christian churches and assert religious control over their own nation’s destiny.

Government as Contract

Another effect of the Great Awakening on colonial culture was the growth of the notion of state rule as a contract with the people.

Parishioners during the revival gained an understanding of covenants with their churches as contractual schemes; they argued that each believer owed the church their obedience, and the churches in turn owed their congregants the duty to be faithful to the Gospel. Parishioners therefore reserved the right to dissolve the covenant and to sever ties with the church without prior permission. This notion of covenant was a popular one in Puritan society and reflected a common biblical understanding of association. Present in the Mayflower Compact and later forming an ideological basis for breaking from Great Britain, the notion of covenant grew to link religion and politics in the colonies.

The ideals of Puritanical covenant theology were manifested in the “social compact” of the Declaration of Independence.

Under this theory, implicit in the Declaration, disassociated individuals in the “state of nature” agree to live and be bound together under consensual government. With the frequency by which believers broke away from larger churches to form splinter groups, the colonists must have been accustomed to separating themselves from larger institutions.

Religious Uniformity

Perhaps the greatest fuel added to the revolutionary fire that began burning in the latter half of the 18th Century was religious pluralism within the colonies. Unlike England, which after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 had become spiritually stagnant under the Church of England, the colonists adhered to no single denomination. The splits in churches that revivalism had caused prevented uniformity in religion from becoming a reality. While groups such as the Quakers and Anglicans still existed in areas, none could rise to dominate the religious scene and become the primary American religion. So long as the colonists did not become complacent, their religious zeal would continue to burn strong.

Eventually, this religious zeal turned to revolution and sentiments of self-governance. That the religious spirit of the colonists was a necessary component to the drive for independence is confirmed in the sentiments of those who lived during the period of fighting. As British statesman William Knox noted about the American drive for independence, “Every man being thus allowed to be his own Pope, he becomes disposed to wish to become his own King”.

John Adams gave credit to the Great Awakening as the source of motivation behind the war, and in certain parts of England the revolution was even called the “Presbyterian Rebellion”.

1. By the eighteenth century, the various colonial regions had distinct economic identities. The northern colonies grew grain and raised cattle, harvested timber and fish, and built ships. The Chesapeake colonies and Northern Carolina were still heavily dependent on tobacco whereas the southernmost colonies grew mostly rice and indigo. Cotton, so important to the southern economy in the nineteenth century, had not yet emerged as a major crop.

Agriculture was the leading industry, involving 90 percent of the people. The triangle trade was very profitable. A skipper from New England would leave New England with a cargo of rum and sail to the Gold Coast of Africa. There, he would barter the rum for African slaves. After receiving the slaves, he would go to the West Indies and trade the slaves for molasses, where the molasses would be taken back to New England and be distilled back to rum. Lumbering was the most important single manufacturing activity. One third of the British merchant marine ships were American-built.

Families in America procreated too slowly to provide farm labor, Indians died to quickly on contact with whites. African cost too much at the time. The only choice was indentured servants, many of them were young men who had fled disastrous slump in the cloth trades that hit England. As indentured servants, voluntary mortgaging the sweat of their bodies for several (usually 4 to 7) to Chesapeake masters. Both Virginia and Maryland employed the headright system to encourage the importation of servants working.

Indentured servants became a problem form the colonies. As the servants became free from their contracts, they expected to gain land, but most of the land was already taken; and the land that wasn’t taken was property of the natives. Most servants became homeless of had to go back to their old jobs as a servant.

Themes: Work Exchange and Technology. Environment and Geography. Peopling

#2

**Inequality**

Slaves:

Less fortunate of all, or course, were the black slaves. They enjoyed no equality with whites and dared not even the dream of ascending, or even approaching, the ladder of opportunity.

 Slaves were America’s closest approximation to Europe's volatile lower classes, and fears of black rebellion plagued the white colonists.

Women:

Abigail Adams kept her beliefs about equality for women between her and her husband. Despite her privileged position and persuasive power, and despite her threat to foment a rebellion, Abigail Adam’s plea went largely unheeded in the Revolutionary era- as did comparable pleadings to extend the revolutionary principle of equality to blacks.

Abigail was among the first to see the implications of revolutionary ideas for changing the status of women.

Indentured Servants:

In all the colonies, the ranks of the lower classes were further swelled by the continuing stream of indentured servants, many of whom ultimately achieved prosperity and prestige

Landless/Farming Poor:

 Most white American's, and even a handful of free blacks, were farmers

 In the south, the power of the great planters continued to be bolstered by their disproportionate ownership of slaves.

 The riches created by the growing slave population in the 18th century were not disputed evenly among the white's.

 Wealth was concentrating in the hands of the largest slave owners, widening the gap between the prosperous gentry and the " poor whites," who were more and more likely to become tenant farmers.

**Power**

British:

The main reason the colonies started rebelling against 'mother England' was the taxation issue. The colonies debated England's legal power to tax them and did not wish to be taxed without representation (one of the main causes of the Revolutionary War).

In 1774, as a response to the Boston Tea Party, the British Parliament passed a series of acts, called the Coercive Acts. These acts crushed many of the chartered rights of colonial Massachusetts and infringed on the rights of the other colonies. Americans reacted with trade boycotts and began to unite and take political power into their own hands.

Revolution broke out because Britain failed to recognize an emerging nation when it saw one. (Theodore Roosevelt)

Wealthy Farmers/Merchants:

The men who first joined the militia were hallmarks of respectability in their communities. Friendly Indians, free blacks, white servants, and free white men who had no stable home were excluded from joining but desperation led to the recruiting of the less respectable whites. The military became a place of promise for the poor, who might rise in rank, acquire some money, change their social status.

The Continental Congress, which governed the colonies through the war, was dominated by rich men, linked together in factions and compacts by business and family connections.

1. By the eighteenth century, the various colonial regions had distinct economic identities. The northern colonies grew grain and raised cattle, harvested timber and fish, and built ships. The Chesapeake colonies and Northern Carolina were still heavily dependent on tobacco whereas the southernmost colonies grew mostly rice and indigo. Cotton, so important to the southern economy in the nineteenth century, had not yet emerged as a major crop.

Agriculture was the leading industry, involving 90 percent of the people. The triangle trade was very profitable. A skipper from New England would leave New England with a cargo of rum and sail to the Gold Coast of Africa. There, he would barter the rum for African slaves. After receiving the slaves, he would go to the West Indies and trade the slaves for molasses, where the molasses would be taken back to New England and be distilled back to rum. Lumbering was the most important single manufacturing activity. One third of the British merchant marine ships were American-built.

Families in America procreated too slowly to provide farm labor, Indians died to quickly on contact with whites. African cost too much at the time. The only choice was indentured servants, many of them were young men who had fled disastrous slump in the cloth trades that hit England. As indentured servants, voluntary mortgaging the sweat of their bodies for several (usually 4 to 7) to Chesapeake masters. Both Virginia and Maryland employed the headright system to encourage the importation of servants working.

Indentured servants became a problem form the colonies. As the servants became free from their contracts, they expected to gain land, but most of the land was already taken; and the land that wasn’t taken was property of the natives. Most servants became homeless of had to go back to their old jobs as a servant.

Themes: Work Exchange and Technology. Environment and Geography. Peopling

#2

**Inequality**

Slaves:

Less fortunate of all, or course, were the black slaves. They enjoyed no equality with whites and dared not even the dream of ascending, or even approaching, the ladder of opportunity.

 Slaves were America’s closest approximation to Europe's volatile lower classes, and fears of black rebellion plagued the white colonists.

Women:

Abigail Adams kept her beliefs about equality for women between her and her husband. Despite her privileged position and persuasive power, and despite her threat to foment a rebellion, Abigail Adam’s plea went largely unheeded in the Revolutionary era- as did comparable pleadings to extend the revolutionary principle of equality to blacks.

Abigail was among the first to see the implications of revolutionary ideas for changing the status of women.

Indentured Servants:

In all the colonies, the ranks of the lower classes were further swelled by the continuing stream of indentured servants, many of whom ultimately achieved prosperity and prestige

Landless/Farming Poor:

 Most white American's, and even a handful of free blacks, were farmers

 In the south, the power of the great planters continued to be bolstered by their disproportionate ownership of slaves.

 The riches created by the growing slave population in the 18th century were not disputed evenly among the white's.

 Wealth was concentrating in the hands of the largest slave owners, widening the gap between the prosperous gentry and the " poor whites," who were more and more likely to become tenant farmers.

**Power**

British:

The main reason the colonies started rebelling against 'mother England' was the taxation issue. The colonies debated England's legal power to tax them and did not wish to be taxed without representation (one of the main causes of the Revolutionary War).

In 1774, as a response to the Boston Tea Party, the British Parliament passed a series of acts, called the Coercive Acts. These acts crushed many of the chartered rights of colonial Massachusetts and infringed on the rights of the other colonies. Americans reacted with trade boycotts and began to unite and take political power into their own hands.

Revolution broke out because Britain failed to recognize an emerging nation when it saw one. (Theodore Roosevelt)

Wealthy Farmers/Merchants:

The men who first joined the militia were hallmarks of respectability in their communities. Friendly Indians, free blacks, white servants, and free white men who had no stable home were excluded from joining but desperation led to the recruiting of the less respectable whites. The military became a place of promise for the poor, who might rise in rank, acquire some money, change their social status.

The Continental Congress, which governed the colonies through the war, was dominated by rich men, linked together in factions and compacts by business and family connections.