CHAPTER 4: THE STRUGGLE FOR THE CONTINENT
Objectives:

- We will examine the French relationship with the Indians in the colonies.
- We will examine the growing escalation that would lead to war between the British and the French in the Colonies.
“But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:” Luke 21:9-10.
Struggle for the Continent:

- In the 1750s and 60s, a great war raged through North America, changing forever the balance of power both on the continent and throughout much of the world.
- It was called the Seven Year War where the British and France dominated in world trade and naval power.
- It cemented Great Britain’s role as world’s great commercial and imperial nation.
• It also cemented its control of most of the settled regions of North America.

• In America, the conflict was the final stage in a long battle among the three principal powers in northeastern North America: the English, French, and the Iroquois.

• The War established a precarious dominance for the English societies throughout the region.
• The French and Indian War also brought Americans closer contact with British authority than ever before, it raised to the surface some underlying tensions in the colonial relationship.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

• The French and the English had coexisted relatively peacefully in North America for nearly a century.
• But by the 1750s religious and commercial tensions began to produce new conflicts.
• The crisis began in part because of the expansion of the French presence in America in the late seventeenth century as a result of Louis XIV’s search for national unity and increased world power.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

• Lucrative fur trade drew immigrant French Peasants deeper to the wilderness.

• Missionary zeal drew large numbers of French Jesuits into the interior in search for potential converts.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

- The bottomlands of Mississippi River valley attracted French farmers discouraged by the short growing season in Canada.
- By the mid seventeenth century, the French Empire in America comprised a vast territory.
- Sieur de La Salle began the explorations that in 1682 took him to the delta of the Mississippi, where he claimed the surrounding country for France and named it Louisiana in the King’s honor.
- The French would lay claim to the point in Lake Superior to a point within the Rocky Mountains.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

• To secure their hold on these enormous claims, they founded a string of separate communities, fortresses, missions, and trading posts.
• The city of Quebec was the center of the French Empire in America.
• France also modeled after the plantation economy worked by black slaves and owned by “Creoles” (White immigrants of French descent).
• New Orleans founded in 1718 serviced the French plantation economy.
• French were not alone in the continental interior.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

- The French shared territories with a large and powerful Indian population in regions now often labeled the middle grounds and their relations with the natives were crucial to the shaping of their empire.
- They also shared the interior with a growing number of English traders and settlers, who had been moving beyond the confines of the colonial boundaries in the East.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

- Both the French and English knew that the battle of control over North America would be determined by how they win over Indian support.
- Indians for their part were principally concerned with protecting their independence.
- Whatever alignment was a marriage of convenience determined by which group offered the most attractive terms.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

- The English with more advanced commercial economy could usually offer the Indians better and more plentiful goods.
- But the French offered something that was more important: tolerance.
- English settlers tried to impose their culture and social norms on the Native Americans.
- The French settlers adapted their own behaviors with Indian cultural patterns.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

• French fur traders frequently married Indian women and adopted tribal ways.

• Jesuit missionaries interacted comfortably with natives and converted them to Catholicism by the thousands without challenging most of their social customs.

• By the mid-nineteenth century French had better and closer relations with most of the tribes of the interior than did the English.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

• The most powerful native group, however had a different relationship with the French.

• The Iroquois Confederacy a coalition of five Indian nations that had formed a defensive alliance in the fifteenth century.

• They were the most powerful tribal presence in the Northeast since the 1640s when they had fought and won a bitter war against the Hurons.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

• The Iroquois forged an important commercial relationship with both the Dutch and English.

• They maintained their independence and avoided a too close a relationship with either group and astutely played the French and English against each other.

• They maintained a uneasy balance of power in the Great Lakes region and beyond.
New France and the Iroquois Nation:

• The principle area of conflict among these many groups was the Ohio Valley.
• The French claimed it.
• Several competing Indian tribes lived there, English settlement was expanding into it and the Iroquois were trying to establish a presence there as traders.
Anglo-French Conflicts:

- As long as England and France were in peace in Europe, and a fragile balance survived; tensions were mild between French, English, and Iroquois.
- After the glorious revolution in England, the English throne passed to one of Louis XIV’s principal enemies, William III who long opposed French expansion.
Anglo-French Conflicts:

- A series of Anglo-French wars continued intermittently in Europe for eighty years.
- The wars had important repercussions in America.
- King Williams’s War.
- Produced a few indecisive clashes between the English and French in Northern New England.
Anglo-French Conflicts:

• Queen Anne’s War that lasted twelve years generated substantial conflicts.
• Border fighting with the Spaniards in the South as well as with the French and their Indian allies in the North.
• The treaty of Utrecht which closed the conflict in 1713 transferred substantial areas of French territory in North America to the English including Arcadia (Nova Scotia) and Newfoundland.
Anglo-French Conflicts:

- Two decades later the England and Spain went to war.
- This led to the clash between the British in Georgia and the Spaniards in Florida.
- The aftermath was the last English colony in America, Georgia, founded in 1733.
Anglo-French Conflicts:

• English colonists were drawn into a struggle called the King George’s War and between 1744 to 48 engaged in a series of conflicts with the French.

• The aftermath of King George’s War relations among the English, French, Iroquois in North America quickly deteriorated. Iroquois granted English merchants trade concessions in the interior.
Anglo-French Conflicts:

- This set off a chain of events that became disastrous to the Iroquois Confederacy.
- The French feared that the English were using the concessions as a first step toward expansion into French lands.
- They began in 1749 to construct a new fortresses in the Ohio Valley.
Anglo-French Conflicts:

- The English interpreted the French activity as a threat to western settlements.
- They built a fort on their own.
- For the next five years tensions between the English and the French increased.
- In the summer of 1754, the governor of Virginia sent a militia force under the command of an inexperienced young George Washington into the Ohio Valley to challenge French expansion.
Anglo-French Conflicts:

- Washington built a crude stockade (Fort Necessity) not far from the larger French outpost, Fort Duquesne, on the site of what is now Pittsburgh.
- After the Virginians staged an unsuccessful attack on the French, the French attacked Fort Necessity, trapping Washington and his soldiers inside.
- After a third of them died in the fighting, Washington surrendered.
- That clash marked the beginning of what became the French and Indian War, the American part of the much larger Seven Year’s War that spread through Europe at the same time.