Chapter #5: Colonial Society on the Eve of Revolution – Big Picture Themes

1. The Americans were very diverse for that time period. New England was largely from English background, New York was Dutch, Pennsylvania was German, the Appalachian frontier was Scots-Irish, the southern coast African-American and English, and there were spots of French, Swiss, and Scots-Highlanders.

2. Although they came from different origins, the ethnicities were knowingly or what mingling and melting together into something called “Americans.”

3. Most people were farmers, an estimated 90%. The northern colonies held what little industry America had at the time: shipbuilding, iron works, rum running, trade, whaling, fishing. The south dealt with crops, slaves, and naval stores.

4. There were two main Protestant denominations: the Congregational Church up north, and the Anglican Church down south. Both were “established” meaning tax money went to the church. Poised for growth were the “backwoods” faiths of the Baptists and Methodists that grew by leaps thanks to the Great Awakening.

IDENTIFICATIONS:

**Great Awakening**
The Great Awakening was a religious revival held in the 1730’s and 1740’s to motivate the colonial America. Motivational speakers such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield helped to bring Americans together.

**George Whitfield**
Whitefield came into the picture in 1738 during the Great Awakening, which was a religious revival that spread through all of the colonies. He was a great preacher who had recently been an alehouse attendant. Everyone in the colonies loved to hear him preach of love and forgiveness because he had a different style of preaching. This led to new missionary work in the Americas in converting Indians and Africans to Christianity, as well as lessening the importance of the old clergy.

**Jonathan Edwards**
An American theologian and Congregational clergyman, whose sermons stirred the religious revival, called the Great Awakening. He is known for his " Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God " sermon.

**Old and New Lights**
In the early 1700’s, old lights were simply orthodox members of the clergy who believed that the new ways of revivals and emotional preaching were unnecessary. New lights were the more modern-thinking members of the clergy who strongly believed in the Great Awakening. These conflicting opinions changed certain denominations, helped popularize missionary work and assisted in the founding educational centers now known as Ivy League schools.

**Phyllis Wheatley** (this id was added to the answer key – worth including)
Born around 1753, Wheatley was a slave girl who became a poet. At age eight, she was brought to
Boston. Although she had no formal education, Wheatley was taken to England at age twenty and published a book of poetry. Wheatley died in 1784.

**Age of Reason/Enlightenment**
A philosophical movement which started in Europe in the 1700’s and spread to the colonies. It emphasized reason and the scientific method. Writers of the enlightenment tended to focus on government, ethics, and science, rather than on imagination, emotions, or religion. Many members of the Enlightenment rejected traditional religious beliefs in favor of Deism, which holds that the world is run by natural laws without the direct intervention of God.

**John Peter Zenger**
A New York newspaper printer, was taken to court and charged with seditious libel (writing in a malicious manner against someone). The judge urged the jury to consider that the mere fact of publishing was a crime, no matter whether the content was derogatory or not. Zenger won after his lawyer, Andrew Hamilton, excellently defended his case. The importance—freedom of the press scored a huge early victory in this case.

**GUIDED READING QUESTIONS:**
Conquest by the Cradle
Know: Thirteen Original Colonies
1. What was the significance of the tremendous growth of population in Britain's North American colonies?

A Mingling of Races
Know: Pennsylvania Dutch, Scots-Irish, Paxton Boys, Regulator Movement
2. What was the significance of large numbers of immigrants from places other than England?

The Structure of Colonial Society
Know: Social Mobility
3. Assess the degree of social mobility in the colonies.

Makers of America: The Scots-Irish
Know: The Session
4. How had the history of the Scots-Irish affected their characteristics?

Workaday America
Know: Triangular Trade, Naval Stores, Molasses Act
5. Describe some of the more important occupations in the colonies.
Horsepower and Sailpower
Know: Taverns
6. What was it like to travel in early America?

Dominant Denominations
Know: Established Church, Anglicans, Congregationalists, Presbyterians
7. How did the denominations in America affect relations with Great Britain?

The Great Awakening
Know: Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Old Lights, New Lights, Baptists
8. How was the religion encompassed in the Great Awakening different from traditional religion? What was important about the difference?

Schools and Colleges
Know: Latin and Greek
9. What kind of education could a young person expect in colonial times?

A Provincial Culture
10. Did Americans distinguish themselves in the arts during the colonial period? Explain.

11. Why was the jury verdict in the Zenger case important?

12. How democratic was colonial America?