Lesson 4
British Imperialism in India

The Big Idea

As the Mughal Empire declined, Britain seized Indian territory and soon controlled almost the entire subcontinent.
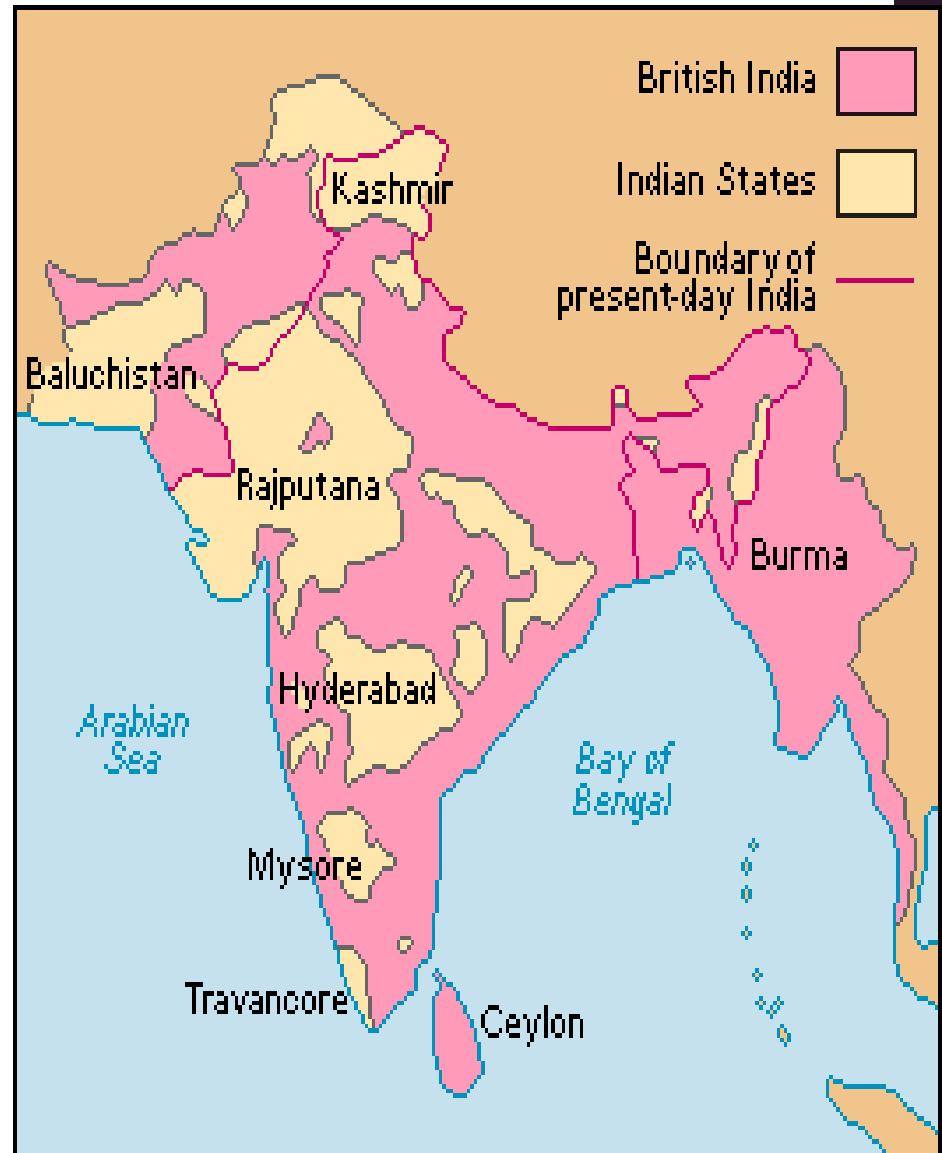
Why It Matters Today

India, the second most populated nation in the world, has its political roots in this colony.

Setting the Stage

British economic interest in India began in the 1600s, when the **British East India Company** set up trading posts at Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. At first, India's ruling **Mughal Dynasty** kept European traders under control. By 1707, however, the Mughal Empire was collapsing. Dozens of small states, each headed by a ruler, or **maharajah**, broke away from Mughal control. In 1757, **Robert Clive** led East India Company troops in a decisive victory Indian forces allied with the French at the **Battle of Plassey**. From that time until 1858, the East India Company was the leading power in India.

British Expand Control over India

- The area controlled by the East India Company grew over time.

- Eventually, it governed directly or indirectly an area that included modern Bangladesh, most of southern India, and nearly all the territory along the Ganges River in the north.

British India
Indian States
Boundary of present-day India

Kashmir

Baluchistan

Rajputana

Burma

Hyderabad

Arabian Sea

Bay of Bengal

Mysore

Travancore

Ceylon

East India Company Dominates

- Until the beginning of the 19th century, the **British East India Company** ruled India with little interference from British Parliament.

- The British considered India the brightest "**jewel in the crown**," the most valuable of all of Britain's colonies.

- The East India Company even had its own army, led by British officers and staffed by **sepoys**, or Indian soldiers.

- The governor of Bombay, **Mountstuart Elphinstone**, referred to the sepoy army as a…

    "delicate and dangerous machine, which a little mismanagement may easily turn against us."

1857 Sepoy Mutiny

The Sepoy Mutiny

- The British issued new Enfield rifles in which cartridges were **greased with animal fat** – either from **cows**, which Hindus consider sacred, or from **pigs**, which were forbidden to Muslims.

- When the troops **refused to bite off** the ends of the cartridges in order to "load rifles" they were imprisoned.

- Angry **sepoys** rose up against their British officers as several regiments marched off to **Delhi**, the old **Mughal** capital. There, they hailed the last Mughal ruler as their leader.

- In some places, the sepoys brutally massacred British men, women and children.

- The British rallied and soon crushed the rebellion taking terrible revenge for their earlier losses.

- Indian villages were torched and thousands of unarmed Indians were slaughtered.

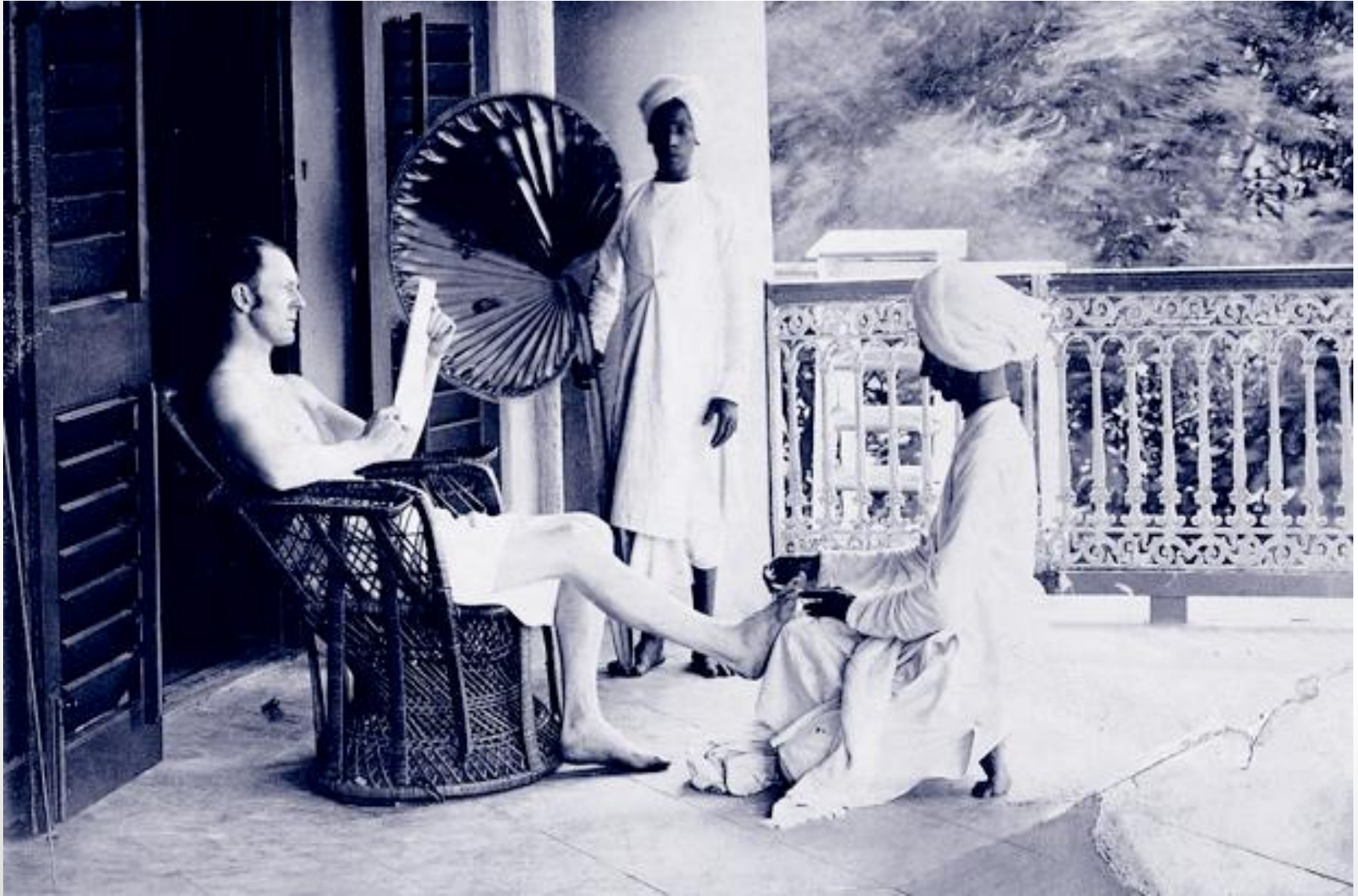- The Sepoy Rebellion left a bitter legacy of fear, hatred, and mistrust on both sides.

- Enfield P-53 Rifle

- Enfield Chassepot Paper Cartride

In this photograph, a British officer is waited on by Indian servants who are wearing cotton clothing. Handmade cotton textiles were an important industry in India until British colonization

#5

As you read about imperialism in India, note the cause or effect of each situation. Pg 362-366

Causes	Effects
1.	1. The East India Company gained control of India.
2. The British established a railroad network in India.	2.
3.	3. Villagers were no longer self-sufficient; food production declined and famine set in.
4. The Sepoy Mutiny occurred and the uprising spread over much of northern India.	4.
5.	5. Indians formed the Indian National Congress and then the Muslim League, which eventually called for self-government.
6. The British partitioned Bengal into Hindu and Muslim sections.	6.