



The American Revolution



The American Revolution ended two hundred years of British rule for most of the North American colonies and created the United States of America. For over two centuries, the occupants of the American colonies lived peacefully under the rule of the English government. But, by 1775 the colonist had grown tired of being unfairly controlled by King George III and his parliament. As the "mother country," Britain expected obedience from its "children," the colonies. The colonists, on the other hand, believed that they had certain rights which Britain should respect. They wished to be treated like adults, not children. Each side refused to give in, which led to an all out war and eventual independence for the colonies American patriots, those who wanted freedom from England, On April 19, 1775 the American patriots who wanted freedom rebelled violently against British authority.

The Stamp Act

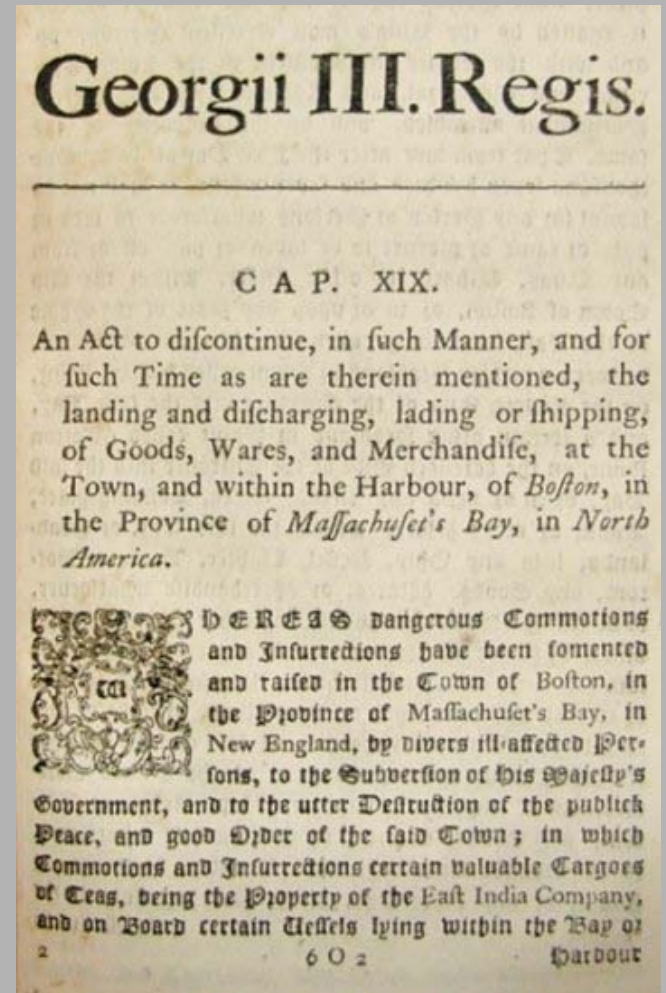
The Stamp Act was sponsored by George Grenville and it took effect on November 1, 1765. It was the first Direct tax imposed by Britain on its American colonies. The Act was created to help cover the cost of maintaining troops in the colonies. Under the Stamp Act, all printed materials and Commercial documents as well as printed material including, newspapers, pamphlets, bills, legal documents, licenses, almanacs, dice and playing cards, were taxed and had to carry a special stamp. Therefore for the first time in the 150 year old history of the British colonies in America, Americans had to pay tax not to their own local legislatures in America, but directly to England. The American colonists opposed The Act because they could not pay the tax, and because It violated the new principle of "No taxation without representation." The Stamp Act paved the way for the American Revolution. The colonists strongly protested and resisted, the Stamp Act and it was repealed on March 18, 1766.



THE QUARTERING ACT

The British further angered American colonists with the Quartering Act, which required the colonies to provide barracks and supplies to British troops. The Quartering Act was passed in June 2, 1765, against the wishes of the colonist.

The Quartering Act was an indirect tax on the colonists. Under the law, the colonist had to give quarters, food, and transportation to the British soldiers. The British forced the colonist to accept it because they were protecting the colonists from the French. The colonists did not consider the French a threat and did not like the idea of paying for the British protection.



THE BOSTON MASSACRE

The Boston Massacre (the killing of five men by British soldiers on March 5, 1770) was the result of tensions that had been growing between the colonists and the English troops since the troops first appeared in Massachusetts in October 1768. The soldiers were in Boston to keep order, but townspeople viewed them as a threat. Fights between the two sides were common.

The Boston Massacre began when a young apprentice shouted an insult at a British officer. A soldier on duty in front of the customs house gave the apprentice a knock on the ear with the butt of his rifle. The boy cried for help, and a crowd gathered. Someone rang the bells in a nearby church. This action drew more people into the street. The English guard found himself confronting an angry mob. He stood his ground and called for the main guard. Six men, led by a corporal, responded. They were joined by the officer on duty, Captain John Preston.

The crowd soon swelled to almost 400 men. They began pelting the soldiers with snowballs and chunks of ice. Crispus Attucks, a freed slave, surged to within inches of the fixed bayonets and dared the soldiers to fire. Finally, the squad fired into the unruly crowd, killing five men. As the gun smoke cleared, Crispus Attucks and four others lay dead or dying. Six more men were wounded. The massacre served as anti-British propaganda for Boston radicals and elsewhere heightened American fears of English armies.

There are several paintings about the Boston Massacre – which do you think is the correct version?

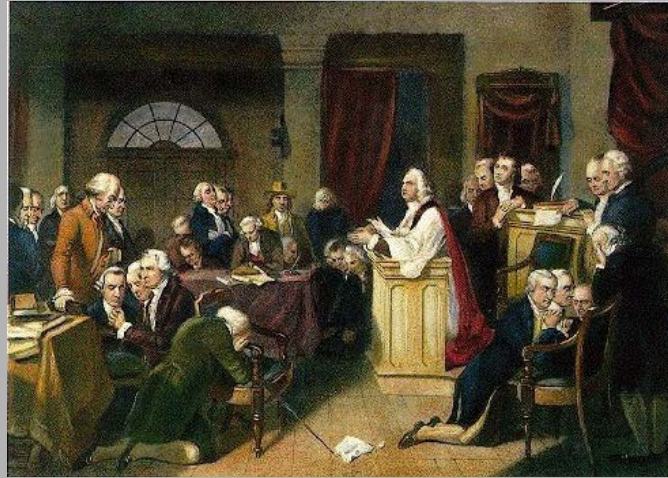


THE BOSTON TEA PARTY



In 1773, Parliament enacted yet another tax, the Tea Act. It was designed to allow the English Tea company to bypass middlemen and sell directly to American retailers. When the first ship, the Dartmouth, reached Boston with a cargo of tea on November 27, 1773, The Committee of Correspondence and the Sons of Liberty prevented owner Francis Rotch from unloading the Tea. Rotch and the captains of two newly arrived ships, the Eleanor and the Beaver, agreed to leave without unloading the tea, but they were denied clearance by Governor Hutchinson. According to the law, if the tea was not unloaded within 20 days (by December 17), it was to be seized and sold to pay custom duties. Convinced that this procedure would still be payment of unconstitutional taxes, the radical patriots resolved to break the deadlock. On December 16th, a crowd of several thousand persons assembled in Faneuil Hall and shouted encouragement to about 60 men disguised as Mohawk Indians, who boarded the three ships. With the aid of the ships' crew, the Indians tossed 342 chests of tea, valued at £18,000 into Boston Bay. The furious royal government responded to this "Boston Tea Party" by the so called Intolerable Acts of 1774, practically eliminating self-government in Massachusetts and closing Boston's port.

THE INTOLERABLE ACTS



Britain responded to the Boston Tea Party in 1774 by passing several laws that became known in America as the Intolerable Acts. One law closed Boston Harbor until Bostonians paid for the destroyed tea. Another law restricted the activities of the Massachusetts legislature and gave added powers to the post of governor of Massachusetts. Those powers in effect made him a dictator. The American colonists were very angered by these Forceful acts. In response to these actions and laws, the colonist banded together to fight back. Several committees of colonists called for a convention of delegates from the colonies to organize resistance to the Intolerable Acts. The convention was later to be called the Continental Congress.

THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

The First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia from Sept. 5 to Oct. 26, 1774, to protest the Intolerable Acts. Representatives attended from all the colonies except Georgia. The leaders included Samuel Adams, John Adams of Massachusetts, George Washington and Patrick Henry of Virginia. The Congress voted to cut off colonial trade with Great Britain unless Parliament abolished the Intolerable Acts.

It approved resolutions advising the Colonies to begin training their citizens for war. They also attempted to Define America's rights, place limits on Parliament's power, and agree on tactics for resisting the aggressive acts of The English Government.

It also set up the Continental Association to enforce an embargo against England. By the time the first meeting of The Continental Congress ended, Hostilities had begun between Britain and the colonies.



Conflict and Revolution

- **April 14, 1775** - Massachusetts Governor Gage is secretly ordered by the British to enforce the Coercive Acts and suppress "open rebellion" among colonists by using all necessary force.
- **April 18, 1775** - General Gage orders 700 British soldiers to Concord to destroy the colonists' weapons depot. That night, Paul Revere and William Dawes are sent from Boston to warn colonists. Revere reaches Lexington about midnight and warns Sam Adams and John Hancock who are hiding out there



The War Begins



At dawn on April 19 about 70 armed Massachusetts militiamen stand face to face on Lexington Green with the British advance guard. An unordered 'shot heard around the world' begins the American Revolution. A volley of British muskets followed by a charge with bayonets leaves eight Americans dead and ten wounded. The British regroup and head for the depot in Concord, destroying the colonists' weapons and supplies. At the North Bridge in Concord, a British platoon is attacked by militiamen, with 14 casualties British forces then begin a long retreat from Lexington back to Boston and are harassed and shot at all Along the way by farmers and rebels and suffer over 250 casualties. News of the events at Lexington and Concord spreads like wildfire throughout the Colonies.

April 23, 1775 - The Provincial Congress in Massachusetts orders 13,600 American soldiers to be mobilized. Colonial volunteers from all over New England assemble and head for Boston, then establish camps around the city and begin a year long siege of British-held Boston.

The war has officially begun!