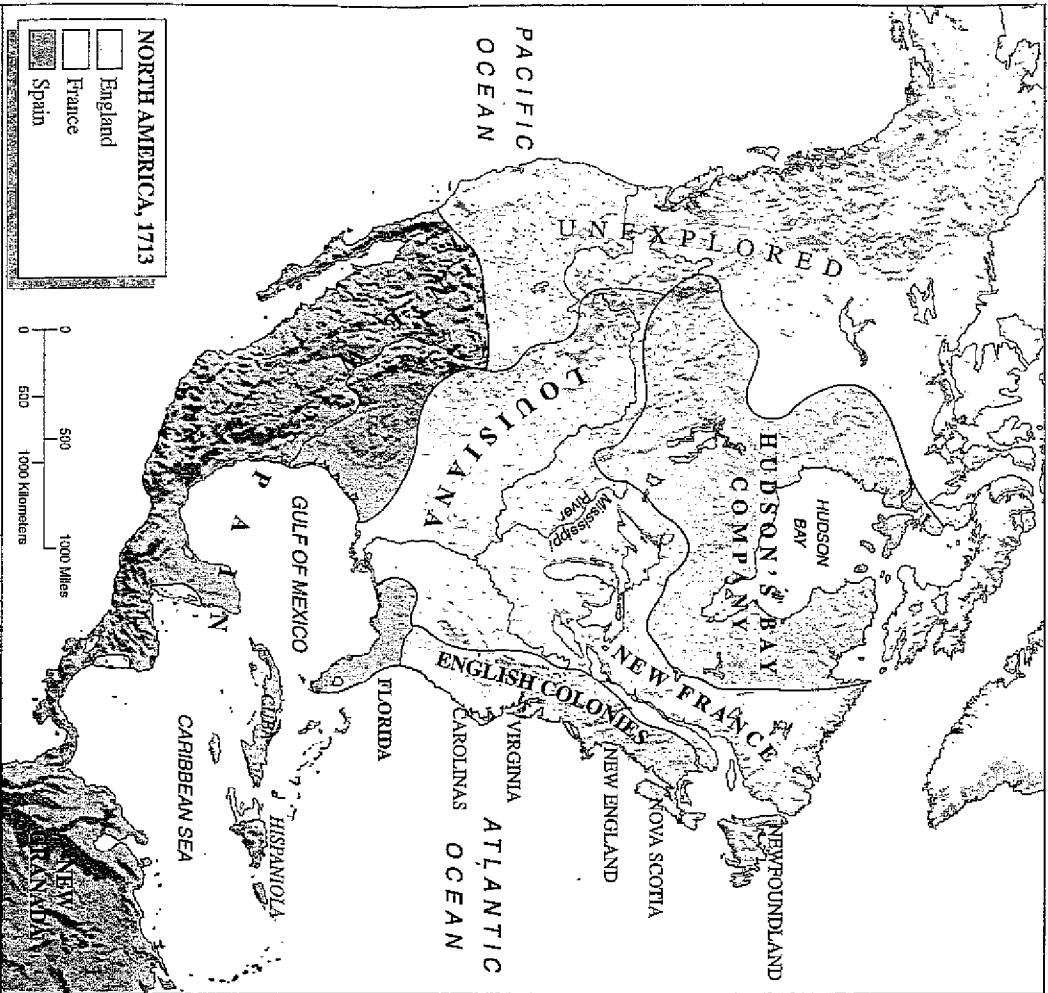
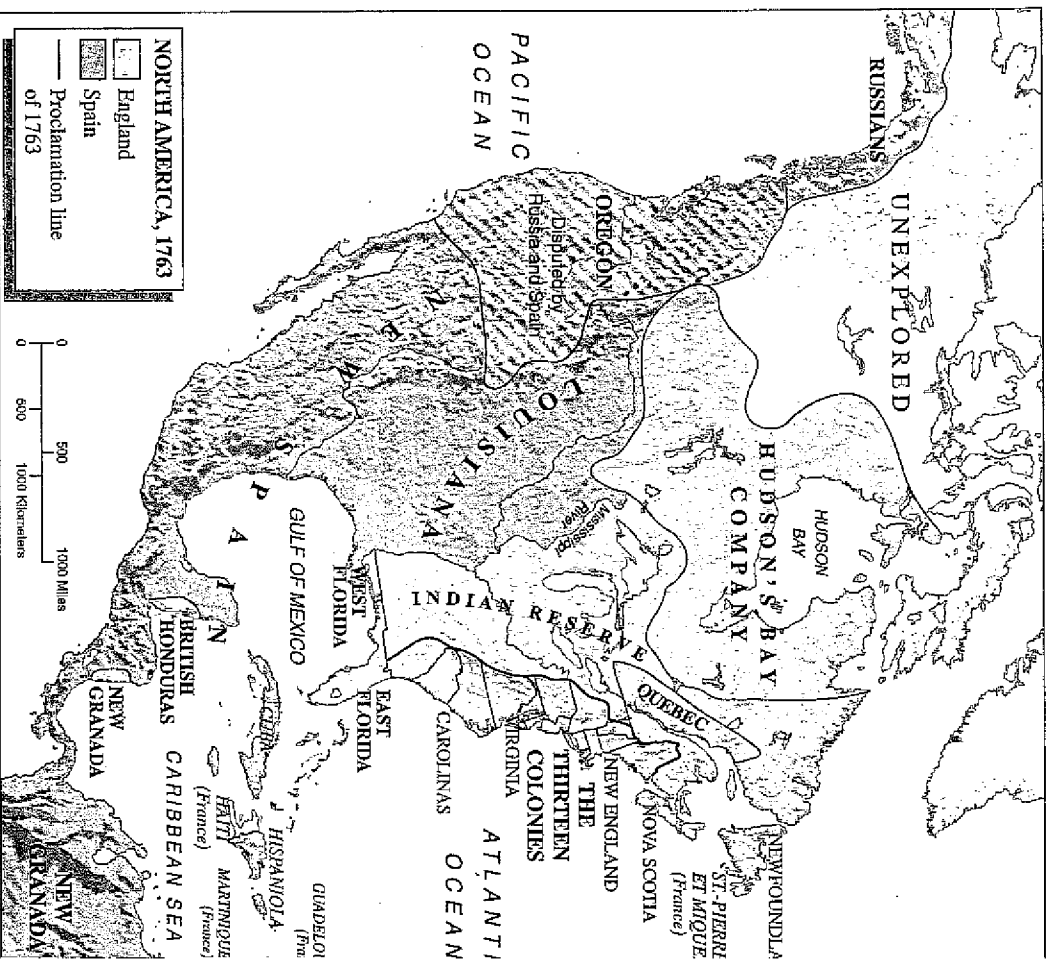


THE TREATY OF PARIS The Treaty of Paris, signed in February 1763, brought an end to the world war and to the French Empire in North America. In winning the long war against France and Spain, Great Britain had gained a vast global empire. Victorious Britain took all of France's North American possessions east of the Mississippi River: all of Canada and all of what was then called Spanish Florida (including much of present-day Alabama and Mississippi).



What events led to the first clashes between the French and the British in the late seventeenth century? Why did New England suffer more than other regions of North America during the wars of the eighteenth century? What were the long-term financial, military, and political consequences of the wars between France and Britain?

In compensation for its loss of Florida in the Treaty of Paris, Spain received the vast Louisiana Territory (including New Orleans and all French land west of the Mississippi River) from France. Unlike the Spanish in Florida, however, few of the French settlers left Louisiana after 1763. The French government encouraged the settlers to work with their new Spanish governors to create a Catholic bulwark against further English expansion. Spain would hold title to Louisiana for nearly four decades but would never succeed in erasing the territory's French roots. The French-born settlers



How did the map of North America change between 1713 and 1763? How did Spain win Louisiana? What were the consequences of the British winning all the land east of the Mississippi?

always outnumbered the Spanish. The loss of Louisiana left France with no territory on the continent. British power reigned supreme over North America east of the Mississippi River.

The triumph in what England called the Great War saw Americans celebrating as joyously as Londoners in 1763. Colonists were proud members of the vast new British Empire. Most Americans, as Benjamin Franklin explained, "submitted willingly to the government of the Crown." He himself proudly proclaimed, "I am a Briton."

But Britain's spectacular military success also created future problems. Humiliated France thirsted for revenge against an "arrogant" Britain. Victory was also costly. Britain's national debt doubled during the war. The cost of maintaining the North American empire, including the permanent stationing of British soldiers in the colonies, was staggering. Simply taking over the string of French forts along the Great Lakes and in the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys would require 10,000 additional British soldiers. Even more soldiers would be needed to manage the rising tensions generated by continuing white encroachment into Indian lands in the trans-Appalachian West. And the victory required that Britain devise ways to administer (and finance the supervision of) half a *billion* acres of new colonial territory. How were the vast, fertile lands (taken from Indians) in the Ohio Country to be "pacified" of Indian conflict, exploited, settled, and governed? The British may have won a global empire as a result of the Seven Years' War, but their grip on the American colonies would grow ever weaker as the years passed.

MANAGING A NEW EMPIRE No sooner was the Treaty of Paris signed than King George III set about reducing the huge national debt caused by the prolonged world war. In 1763 the average Briton paid 26 shillings a year in taxes; the average American colonist paid only one shilling. The British government's efforts to force colonists to pay their share of the financial burden set in motion a chain of events that would lead to revolution and independence. That Americans bristled at efforts to get them to pay their "fair share" of the military expenses led British officials to view them as selfish and self-centered. At the same time, the colonists who fought in the French and Indian War and celebrated the British victory soon grew perplexed at why the empire they served, loved, and helped to secure seemed determined to treat them as "slaves" rather than citizens. "It is truly a miserable thing," said a Connecticut minister in December 1763, "that we no sooner leave fighting our neighbors, the French, but we must fall to quarreling among ourselves."

PONTIAC'S REBELLION American colonists were rabid expansionists. With the French out of the way and vast new western lands to exploit, they looked to the future with confidence. Already the population of America in 1763 was a third the size of Great Britain's—and was growing more rapidly. No sooner had the Seven Years' War ended than land speculators began squabbling over disputed claims to sprawling tracts of Indian-owned land west of the Appalachian Mountains.

The Peace of Paris did not in fact bring peace to North America. News of the treaty settlement devastated those Indians who had been allied with the French. Their lands were being given over to the British without consultation. The Shawnees, for instance, demanded to know "by what right the French could pretend" to transfer their ancestral lands to the British. In a desperate effort to recover their lands, Indians struck back in the spring of 1763, capturing most of the British forts around the Great Lakes and in the Ohio River valley—and killing hundreds of British soldiers in the process. They also raided colonial settlements in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, destroying hundreds of homesteads and killing several thousand people.

The widespread Indian attacks in the spring and summer of 1763 came to be called **Pontiac's Rebellion** because of the prominent role played by the charismatic Ottawa chief. The attacks convinced most colonists that all Indians must be killed or removed. The British government took a different stance, negotiating an agreement with the Indians that allowed redcoats to reoccupy the frontier forts in exchange for a renewal of the generous trading and gift giving long practiced by the French. Still, as Chief Pontiac stressed, the Indians denied the legitimacy of the British claim to their territory under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. He told a British official that the "French never conquered us, neither did they purchase a foot of our Country, nor have they a right to give it to you."

To keep peace with the Indians, King George III issued the Proclamation of 1763, which drew an imaginary line along the crest of the Appalachian Mountains from Canada in the north to Georgia in the south, beyond which white settlers ("our loving subjects") were forbidden to go. For the first time, American territorial expansion was to be controlled by royal officials—and 10,000 British soldiers were dispatched to the frontier to enforce the new rule. Yet the proclamation line was ineffective. Land-hungry settlers defied the prohibitions and pushed across the Appalachian ridges into Indian country. The Proclamation of 1763 was the first of a series of efforts by the British government to more effectively regulate the American colonies. Little did the king and his ministers know that their efforts at efficiency would spawn a revolution.

REGULATING THE COLONIES

GRENVILLE'S COLONIAL POLICY Just as the Proclamation of 1763 was being drafted, a new British ministry had begun to grapple with the complex problems of imperial finances. The new chief minister, George Grenville, was a strong-willed accountant whose humorless self-assurance verged on pomposity. King George III came to despise him, but the king needed the dogged Grenville because they agreed on the need to cut government expenses, reduce the national debt, and generate more revenue from the colonies.

In developing new policies regulating the American colonies, Grenville took for granted the need for British soldiers to defend the western frontier. Because the average Briton paid twenty-six times the average annual taxes paid by Americans (the "least taxed people in the world"), Grenville—and most other Britons—reasoned that the "spoiled" Americans should share more of the cost of the troops providing their defense. He also resented the large number of American merchants who defied British trade regulations by engaging in rampant smuggling. So Grenville ordered to colonial officials to tighten the enforcement of the Navigation Acts, and he dispatched warships to capture American smugglers. He also set up a new maritime, or vice-admiralty, court in the Canadian port of Halifax, granting its single judge jurisdiction over all the American colonies and ensuring that there would be no juries of colonists sympathetic to smugglers. Under Grenville, the period of "salutary neglect" in the enforcement of the Navigation Acts was abruptly coming to an end, causing American merchants (and smugglers) great annoyance.

Strict enforcement of the Molasses Act of 1733 posed a serious threat to New England's prosperity. Making rum from molasses, a syrup derived from sugarcane, was quite profitable. Grenville recognized that the long-neglected molasses tax, if enforced, would devastate a major colonial industry. So he put through the American Revenue Act of 1764, commonly known as the Sugar Act, which cut the duty on molasses in half. Reducing the duty, he believed, would reduce the temptation to smuggle or to bribe customs officers. But the Sugar Act also levied new duties on imports into America of textiles, wine, coffee, indigo, and sugar. The new revenues generated by the Sugar Act, Grenville estimated, would help defray "the necessary expenses of defending, protecting, and securing, the said colonies and plantations."

The Sugar Act was momentous. For the first time, Parliament had adopted so-called external duties designed to raise *revenues* in the colonies and not merely intended to *regulate* trade. As such, it was an example of Par-

liament trying to "tax" the colonists without their consent. Critics of the Sugar Act pointed out that British subjects could only be taxed by their elected representatives in Parliament. Because the colonists had no elected representatives in Parliament, the argument went, Parliament had no right to impose taxes on them.

Another of Grenville's regulatory measures, the Currency Act of 1764, originated in the complaints of London merchants about doing business with Americans, especially Virginians. The colonies had long faced a chronic shortage of "hard" money (gold and silver coins, called *specie*), which kept flowing overseas to pay debts in England. To meet the shortage of specie, they issued their own paper money or, as in the case of Virginia planters, used tobacco as a form of currency. British creditors feared payment in a currency of such fluctuating value, however. To alleviate their fears, Grenville prohibited the colonies from printing more paper money. This caused the value of existing paper money to plummet. As a Philadelphia newspaper lamented, "The Times are Dreadful, Dismal, Doleful, Dolorous, and DOLLAR-LESS." The deflationary impact of the Currency Act, combined with new duties on commodities and stricter enforcement, jolted a colonial economy already suffering a postwar decline and a surge in population, many of them new immigrants—mostly poor, young, male, and hungry for opportunity. This surge of enterprising people could not be contained within the boundaries of the existing colonies—or by royal decrees.

THE STAMP ACT As prime minister, George Grenville excelled at doing the wrong thing—repeatedly. The Sugar Act, for example, did not produce additional net revenue for Great Britain. Its administrative costs were four times greater than the additional revenue it generated. Yet Grenville compounded the problem by pushing through an even more provocative measure to raise money in America: a stamp tax. On February 13, 1765, Parliament passed the Stamp Act, which created revenue stamps to be purchased and affixed to every form of printed matter used in the colonies: newspapers, pamphlets, bonds, leases, deeds, licenses, insurance policies, college diplomas, even playing cards. The requirement was to go into effect November 1, nine months later. The Stamp Act affected all the colonists, not just New England merchants, and it was the first outright effort by Parliament to place a direct—or "internal"—tax specifically on American goods and services rather than an "external" tax on imports and exports—all for the purpose of generating revenue for the British treasury rather than regulating trade.

That same year, Grenville completed his new system of colonial regulations when he persuaded Parliament to pass the Quartering Act. In effect it

was yet another tax. The Quartering Act required the colonies to feed and house British troops. It applied to all colonies but affected mainly New York City, the headquarters of the British forces. The new act raised troubling questions in the colonies. Why was it necessary for British soldiers to be stationed in colonial cities in peacetime? Was not the Quartering Act another example of taxation without representation, as the colonies had neither requested the troops nor been asked their opinion on the matter? Some colonists decided that the Quartering Act was an effort to use British soldiers to tyrannize the Americans.

THE IDEOLOGICAL RESPONSE Grenville's revenue measures outraged Americans. Unwittingly, he had stirred up a storm of protest and set in motion a profound exploration of colonial rights and imperial relations. From the start of English settlement in America, free colonists had come to take for granted certain essential principles and practices: self-government, religious freedom, economic opportunity, and territorial expansion. All of those deeply embedded values seemed threatened by Britain's efforts to tighten its control over the colonies after 1763. The tensions between the colonies and mother country began to take on moral and spiritual overtones associated with the old Whig principle that no Englishman could be taxed without his consent through representative government. Americans opposed to English policies began to call themselves true Whigs and label the king and his "corrupt" ministers as "Tories."

In 1764 and 1765, American Whigs decided that Grenville was imposing upon them the very chains of tyranny from which Parliament had rescued England in the seventeenth century. A standing army—rather than a militia—was the historic ally of despots, yet now with the French defeated and Canada under English control, thousands of British soldiers remained in the colonies. For what purpose—to protect the colonists or to subdue them? Other factors heightened colonial anxiety. Among the fundamental rights of English people were trial by jury and the presumption of innocence, but the new admiralty court in Halifax excluded juries and put the burden of proof on the defendant. Most important, English citizens had the right to be taxed only by their elected representatives. Now, however, Parliament was usurping the colonial assemblies' power of the purse strings. This could lead only to tyranny and enslavement, critics argued. Sir Francis Bernard, the royal governor of Massachusetts, correctly predicted that the new stamp tax "would cause a great Alarm & meet much Opposition" in the colonies. Indeed, the seed of American independence was planted by the fiery debates over the stamp tax.

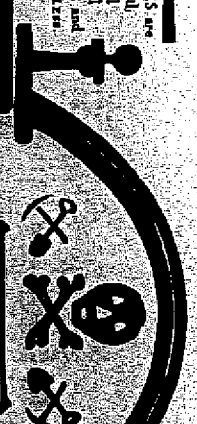
PROTEST IN THE COLONIES The Stamp Act aroused a ferocious response among the colonists. In a flood of pamphlets, speeches, and resolutions, critics repeated a slogan familiar to all Americans: "no taxation without representation." A Connecticut minister attributed the Stamp Act to a "selfish and venal spirit of corruption" that required more revenue solely "to add fuel to ungodly lusts . . . all manner of unrighteousness and oppression, debauchery and wickedness." Through the spring and summer of 1765, resentment boiled over at meetings, parades, bonfires, and other demonstrations. The protesters, calling themselves **Sons of Liberty**, met underneath "liberty trees"—in Boston a great elm; in Charleston, South Carolina, a live oak.

In mid-August 1765, nearly three months before the Stamp Act was to take effect, a Boston mob sacked the homes of the lieutenant governor and the local customs officer in charge of enforcing the stamp tax. Thoroughly shaken, the Boston stamp agent resigned, and stamp agents throughout the colonies were hounded out of office. By November 1, its effective date, the Stamp Act was a dead letter. Colonists by the thousands signed nonimportation agreements, promising not to buy imported British goods as a means of exerting leverage in London.

Opposition to the Stamp Act

In protest of the Stamp Act, which was to take effect the next day, *The Pennsylvania Journal* printed a skull and crossbones on its masthead.

The "TRINES" are
Aptly
Dignified
Delineated, and
Delineated, 1765



Printed
at the
Office of
WILLIAM BRADFORD

THURSDAY, October 11, 1765.

PENNSYLVANIA JOURNAL.

A. D. B.

WEEKLY ADVERTISER.

EXPIRING, in Hopes of a Reformation to live again.

AM Fort to be obliged
to request my Name
as that of the Printer
Act, I bind to be no
lighter upon an other
Printer's Name, than
I will, and I will
not.

any Subscriber, any of whom have
been long and I shall be obliged to
immediately Discontinue their Name, and
I may be able, not only to
repose myself during the Interval, but
be better prepared to proceed again, with
the Paper, whenever an opening for that
purpose offers, which I hope will be
soon.

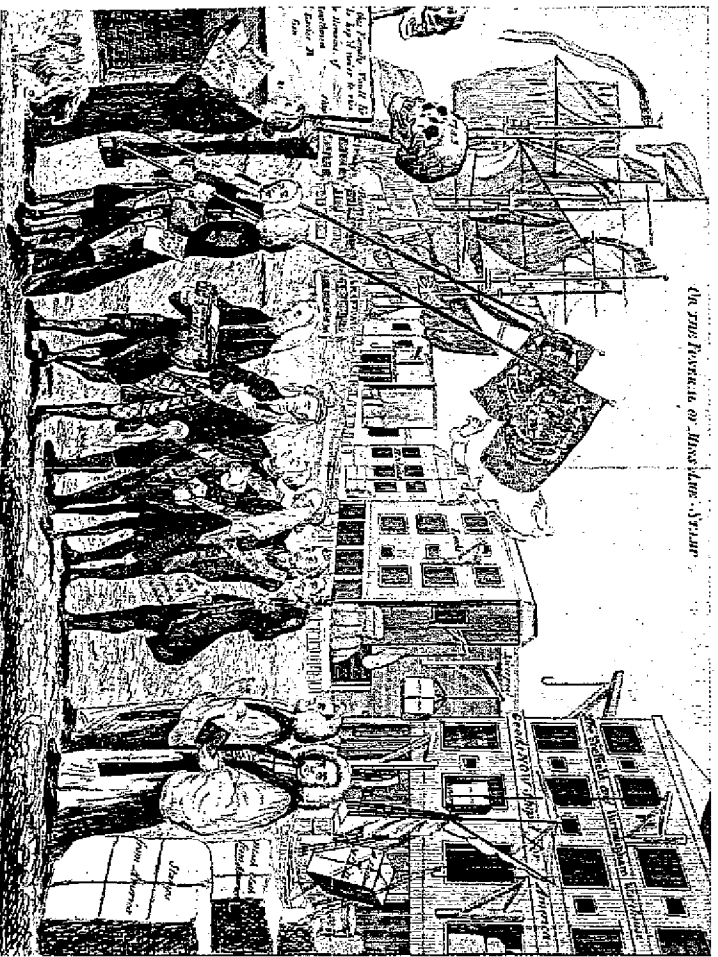
WILLIAM BRADFORD

The widespread protests involved courageous women as well as men, and the boycotts of British goods encouraged colonial unity as Americans discovered that they had more in common with each other than with London. The Virginia House of Burgesses struck the first blow against the Stamp Act with the Virginia Resolves, a series of resolutions inspired by the ardent young Patrick Henry. Virginians, the burgesses declared, were entitled to all the rights of Englishmen, and Englishmen could be taxed only by their own elected representatives. Virginians, moreover, had always been governed by laws passed with their own consent. Newspapers spread the Virginia Resolves throughout the colonies, and other assemblies hastened to copy Virginia's example.

In 1765 the Massachusetts House of Representatives invited the other colonial assemblies to send delegates to confer in New York about their opposition to the Stamp Act. Nine responded, and from October 7 to 25, 1765, the Stamp Act Congress formulated a Declaration of the Rights and Grievances of the Colonies. The delegates acknowledged that the colonies

The Repeal, or the Funeral Procession of Miss America-Stamp

This 1766 cartoon shows Grenville carrying the dead Stamp Act in its coffin. In the background, trade with America starts up again.



owed a "due subordination" to Parliament and recognized its right to regulate colonial trade, but they insisted "that no taxes should be imposed on them, but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives." Parliament, in other words, had no right to levy taxes on people who were unrepresented in that body. The bonds connecting colonies and Mother Country were splaying. "The boldness of the minister [Grenville] amazes our people," wrote a New Yorker. "This single stroke has lost Great Britain the affection of all of her Colonies." Grenville responded by denouncing colonial critics as "ungrateful!"

REPEAL OF THE STAMP ACT The storm had scarcely broken before Grenville's ministry was out of office and the Stamp Act was repealed. For reasons unrelated to his colonial policies, Grenville had lost the confidence of the king, who replaced Grenville with Lord Rockingham, a leader of a Whig faction critical of Grenville's colonial policies. Pressure from British merchants who feared the economic consequences of the colonial non-importation movement convinced the Rockingham-led government that the Stamp Act was a mistake. The prime minister asked Parliament to rescind the Stamp Act. In 1766, Parliament repealed the Stamp Tax but at the same time passed the Declaratory Act, which asserted the power of Parliament to make laws binding the colonies "in all cases whatsoever." It was a cunning evasion that made no concession with regard to taxes but made no mention of them either. For the moment, however, the Declaratory Act was a face-saving gesture. News of the repeal of the Stamp Act set off excited demonstrations throughout the colonies. Amid the rejoicing and relief on both sides of the Atlantic, few expected that the quarrel between Britain and its American colonies would be reopened within a year.

FANNING THE FLAMES

Meanwhile, King George III continued to play musical chairs with his prime ministers. In July 1766 the king replaced Rockingham with William Pitt, the former prime minister who had exercised heroic leadership during the French and Indian War. Alas, by the time he returned as prime minister, Pitt was so mentally unstable that he deferred policy decisions to the other cabinet members. For a time in 1767, the guiding force in the ministry was the witty but reckless Charles Townshend, chancellor of the exchequer (treasury), whose "abilities were superior to those of all men," said a colleague, "and his judgment below that of any man." Like George Grenville before

him, Townshend held the "factious and turbulent" Americans in contempt, was surprised by their resistance, and resolved to force their obedience. The erratic Townshend reopened the question of colonial taxation and the more fundamental issue of Parliament's absolute sovereignty over the colonies. He took advantage of Pitt's debilitating mental confusion to enact a new series of money-generating policies aimed at the American colonies.

THE TOWNSHEND ACTS In 1767, Townshend put his ill-fated revenue plan through the House of Commons, and a few months later he died at age forty-two, leaving behind a bitter legacy: the Townshend Acts. With this legislation, Townshend had sought first to bring New York's colonial assembly to its senses. That body had defied the Quartering Act and refused to provide beds or supplies for British troops. Parliament, at Townshend's behest, had suspended all acts of New York's assembly until it would yield. New Yorkers protested but finally caved in, inadvertently confirming the British suspicion that too much indulgence had encouraged colonial bad manners. Townshend had followed up with the Revenue Act of 1767, which levied duties on colonial imports of glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea. The Townshend duties increased government revenues, but the intangible costs were greater. The duties taxed goods exported from England, indirectly hurting British manufacturers, and had to be collected in colonial ports, increasing collection costs. But the highest cost came in the form of added conflict with the colonists. The Revenue Act of 1767 posed a more severe threat to colonial assemblies than Grenville's taxes had, for Townshend proposed to use these revenues to pay colonial governors and other officers and thereby release them from financial dependence upon the assemblies.

The Townshend Acts surprised and angered the colonists, but this time the storm gathered more slowly than it had two years before. Once again, colonial activists, including a growing number of women calling themselves Daughters of Liberty, resolved to resist. They boycotted the purchase of imported British goods, made their own clothes ("homespun"), and developed their own manufactures. While boycotting direct commerce with Great Britain, the colonists expanded their trade with the islands in the French West Indies. The British sought to intercept such trade by increasing their naval presence off the coast of New England. Their efforts to curtail smuggling also included the use of search warrants that allowed British troops to enter any building during daylight hours.

SAMUEL ADAMS AND THE SONS OF LIBERTY As American anger bubbled over, loyalty to the mother country waned. British officials

could neither conciliate moderates like Dickinson nor cope with firebrands like Samuel Adams of Boston, who was emerging as the supreme genius of revolutionary agitation. Adams became a tireless agitator, whipping up the Sons of Liberty and organizing protests at the Boston town meeting and in the provincial assembly. Early in 1768 he and the Boston attorney James Otis formulated a letter that the Massachusetts assembly dispatched to the other colonies. The letter's tone was polite and logical: it restated the illegality of taxation without colonial representation in Parliament and invited the support of other colonies. British officials ordered the Massachusetts assembly to withdraw the Adams-Otis letter. The assembly refused and was dissolved by royal decree. In response to an appeal by the royal governor, 4,000 British troops were dispatched to Boston in October 1768 to maintain order. Loyalists, as the Americans who supported the king and Parliament were called, welcomed the soldiers; Patriots, those rebelling against British authority, viewed the troops as an occupation force intended to quash dissent.

In 1769 the Virginia assembly reasserted its exclusive right to tax Virginians, rather than Parliament, and called upon the colonies to unite in the cause. Virginia's royal governor promptly dissolved the assembly, but the members met independently and adopted a new set of nonimportation agreements that sparked a remarkably effective boycott of British goods.

Meanwhile, in London the king's long effort to reorder British politics to his liking was coming to fulfillment. In 1769 new elections for Parliament finally produced a majority of the "king's friends." And George III found a new chief minister to his taste in Frederick, Lord North. In 1770 the king installed a cabinet of the "king's friends," with the stout Lord North as first minister.

THE BOSTON MASSACRE By 1770 the American nonimportation agreements were strangling British trade and causing unemployment in England. The impact of colonial boycotts had persuaded Lord North to



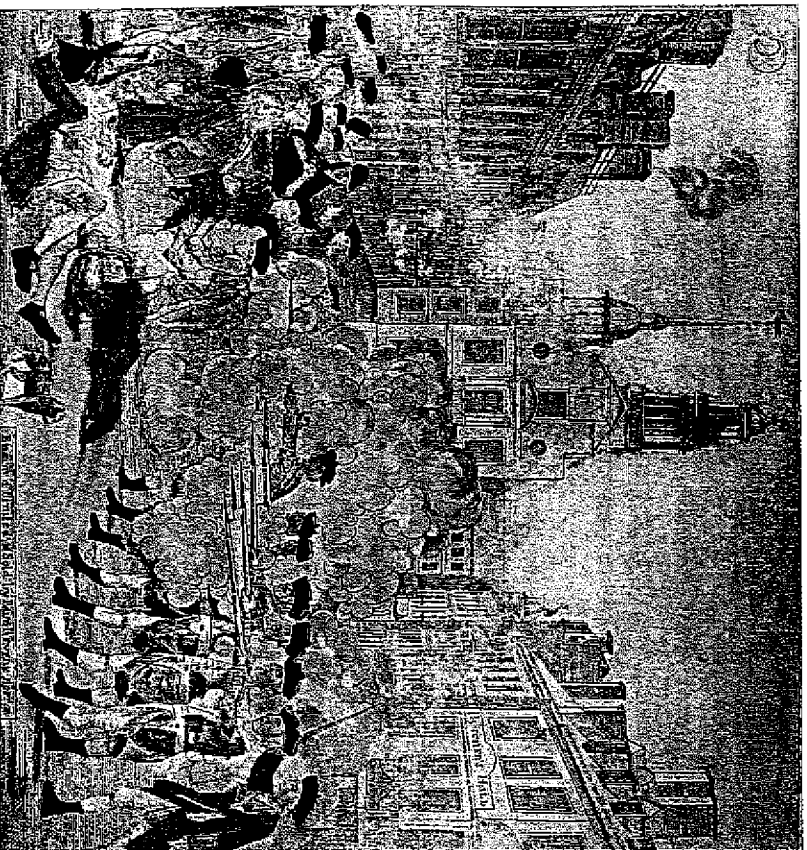
Samuel Adams
Adams was the fiery organizer of the Sons of Liberty.

modify the Townshend Acts—just in time to halt a perilous escalation of tensions. The presence of 4,000 British soldiers (“Jobster backs”) in Boston had become a constant provocation. Crowds heckled and ridiculed the red-coated soldiers, many of whom earned the abuse by harassing and intimidating colonists.

On March 5, 1770, in the square outside the Boston customhouse, a group of rowdies began taunting and hurling icicles at the British sentry. His call for help brought reinforcements. Then someone rang the town fire bell, drawing a larger crowd to the scene. At their head, or so the story goes, was Crispus Attucks, a runaway Indian–African American slave. Attucks and others continued to bait the British troops. Finally, a soldier was knocked down; he rose to his feet and fired into the crowd, as did others. When the smoke cleared, five people lay dead or dying, and eight more were wounded. The cause of colonial resistance now had its first martyrs, and the first to die

The Bloody Massacre

Paul Revere's partisan engraving of the Boston Massacre.



was Crispus Attucks. The British soldiers were indicted for murder. John Adams, Sam's cousin, was one of the defense attorneys. He insisted that the accused soldiers were the victims of circumstance, provoked, he said, by a “mottley rabble of saucy boys, negroes and mulattoes.” All of the British soldiers were acquitted except two, who were convicted of manslaughter and branded on their thumbs.

The so-called Boston Massacre sent shock waves throughout the colonies—and to London. Late in April 1770, Parliament repealed all the Townshend duties except for the tea tax. Angry colonists insisted that pressure be kept on British merchants until Parliament gave in altogether, but the nonimportation movement soon faded. Parliament, after all, had given up the substance of the taxes, with one exception, and much of the colonists' tea was smuggled in from the Netherlands (Holland) anyway.

For two years thereafter, colonial discontent remained at a simmer. The Stamp Act was gone, as were all the Townshend duties except that on tea. But most of the Grenville-Townshend innovations remained in effect: the Sugar Act, the Currency Act, the Quartering Act. The redcoats had left Boston, but they remained nearby, and the British navy still patrolled the coast. Each remained a source of irritation and the cause of occasional incidents.

Many colonists showed no interest in the disputes over British regulatory policies raging along the seaboard. Frontier folks' complaints centered on the lack of protection provided by the British. As early as 1763 near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a group of frontier ruffians took the law into their own hands. Outraged at the unwillingness of Quakers in the Pennsylvania Assembly to suppress marauding Indians, a group called the Paxton Boys took revenge by massacring peaceful Susquehannock Indians. Moving eastward, the angry Paxton boys chased another group of peaceful Indians from Bethlehem to Philadelphia. Benjamin Franklin talked the Paxton Boys into returning home by promising more protection along the frontier. Farther south, settlers in the South Carolina backcountry complained about the lack of protection from horse thieves, cattle rustlers, and Indians. They organized societies called Regulators to administer vigilante justice in the region and refused to pay taxes until they gained effective government. In 1769 the assembly finally set up six circuit courts in the region and revised the taxes, but it still did not respond to the backcountry's demand for representation in the colonial legislature.

Whether in the urban commercial centers or along the frontier, there was still tinder awaiting a spark, and the most incendiary colonists were eager to provide it. As Sam Adams stressed, “Where there is a spark of patriotick fire, we will enkindle it.”

A WORSENING CRISIS

In 1772 a maritime incident further eroded the colonies' fragile relationship with the mother country. Near Providence, Rhode Island, the *Gaspee*, a British warship, ran aground while chasing smugglers, and its hungry crew proceeded to commandeer local sheep, hogs, and poultry. An angry crowd from the town boarded the ship, shot the captain, removed the crew, and set fire to the vessel. The *Gaspee* incident reignited tensions between the colonies and the mother country. Ever the agitator, Sam Adams convinced the Boston town meeting to form the Committee of Correspondence, which issued a statement of rights and grievances and invited other towns to do the same. Similar committees sprang up across Massachusetts and in other colonies. A Massachusetts Loyalist called the committees "the foulest, subtlest, and most venomous serpent ever issued from the egg of sedition." The crisis was escalating. "The flame is kindled and like lightning it catches from soul to soul," reported Abigail Adams, the wife of future president John Adams.

THE BOSTON TEA PARTY Lord North soon provided the colonists with the occasion to bring resentment from a simmer to a boil. In 1773, he tried to help some friends bail out the East India Company, which had in its British warehouses some 17 million pounds of tea it desperately needed to sell. Under the Tea Act of 1773, the government would allow the grossly mismanaged company to send its south Asian tea directly to America without paying any duties. British tea merchants could thereby undercut the prices charged by their colonial competitors, most of whom were smugglers who bought tea from the Dutch. At the same time, King George III told Lord North that his job was to "compel obedience" in the colonies; North ordered British authorities in New England to clamp down on American smuggling.

The Committees of Correspondence, backed by colonial merchants, alerted colonists to the new danger. The British government, they said, was trying to purchase colonial acquiescence with cheap tea. They saw the reduction in the price of tea as a clever ruse to make them accept taxation without consent. Before the end of the year, large shipments of tea left Britain for the major colonial ports. In Boston irate colonists decided that their passion for liberty outweighed their love for tea. On December 16, 1773, scores of Patriots disguised as Mohawks boarded three British ships and threw the 342 chests of East India Company tea overboard—cheered on by a crowd along the shore. John Adams applauded the vigilante action. The destruction of



The Able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught
This 1774 engraving shows Lord North, the Boston Port Act in his pocket, pouring tea down America's throat and America spitting it back.

the disputed tea, he said, was "so bold, so daring, so firm, intrepid and inflexible" that it would have "important consequences." Indeed it did.

The Boston Tea Party pushed British officials to the breaking point. They had tolerated abuse, evasion, and occasional violence, but the destruction of so much valuable tea convinced the furious king and his advisers that a firm response was required. "The colonists must either submit or triumph," George III wrote to Lord North, who decided to make an example of Boston to the rest of the colonies. In the end, however, he helped make a revolution that would cost England far more than three shiploads of tea.

THE COERCIVE ACTS In 1774 Parliament enacted a cluster of harsh measures, called the Coercive Acts, intended to punish rebellious Boston. The Boston Port Act closed the harbor from June 1, 1774, until the city paid lodging in the city for British soldiers. Finally, the Massachusetts Government Act made all of the colony's civic officers appointive rather than elective, declared that sheriffs would select jurors, and stipulated that no town meeting could be held without the royal governor's consent. In May, Lieutenant-General Thomas Gage, commander in chief of British forces in North America, became governor of Massachusetts and assumed command of the 4,000 British soldiers in Boston.