

Taxes and Boycotts

SETTING THE SCENE

Read to Learn . . .

- ★ how the British government hoped to end its money problems after the French and Indian War.
- ★ why the colonists objected to the Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts.
- ★ how the British government reacted to the Boston Tea Party.

Terms to Know

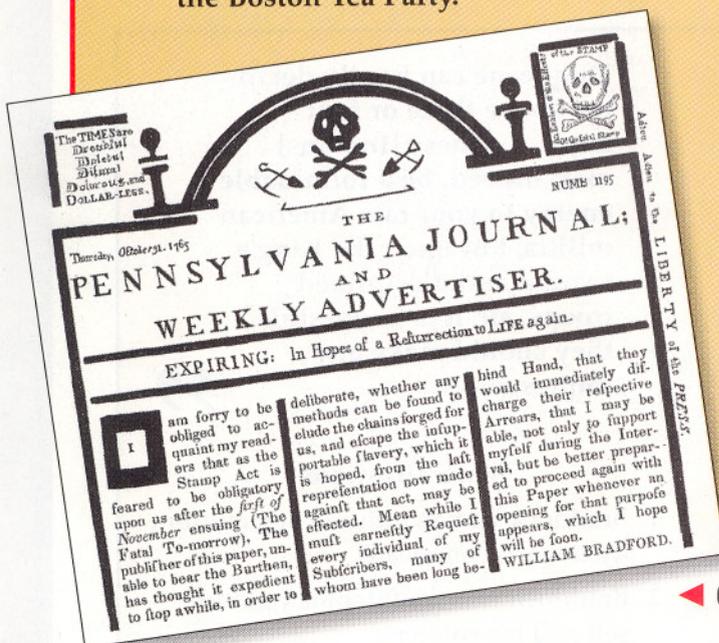
- ★ Proclamation of 1763
- ★ quartering
- ★ Stamp Act
- ★ boycott
- ★ Townshend Acts
- ★ writs of assistance
- ★ Committees of Correspondence

People to Meet

- ★ Pontiac
- ★ George Grenville
- ★ Patrick Henry
- ★ Samuel Adams
- ★ Lord North

Places to Locate

- ★ Fort Detroit
- ★ Boston



◀ COLONIAL NEWSPAPER ATTACKING STAMP ACT

The Treaty of Paris that ended the French and Indian War doubled the size of Great Britain's North American empire. The huge new territory, however, brought problems, as well as promise, to the British. The territory was expensive to support and to defend. When Great Britain tried to make the colonies pay for the services they received, the colonists grew furious. Angry protests made the situation worse.

★ Trouble on the Frontier

During the war, most Native Americans in the Ohio Valley supported the French. By 1760, though, the British had driven the French from that area. British traders took over where the French had been and more and more colonists settled in the region.

An Ottawa leader, **Pontiac**, sent out messengers to the Miami, Chippewa, and others encouraging them to join against the British takeover. Soon Pontiac's

alliance included almost every group from Lake Superior to the lower Mississippi River valley.

In May 1763 the united Native American nations began a long attack of **Fort Detroit**, a British military outpost in the Great Lakes region. This uprising, called **Pontiac's Rebellion**, took the British forces by surprise. The Native Americans captured several forts and frontier settlements. When Pontiac learned that the French had signed the Treaty of Paris, and he could no longer depend on French aid, his forces stopped fighting.



▲ KING GEORGE III

The Proclamation of 1763

Pontiac's Rebellion led the British to close western lands to settlement. King George III issued an order, known as the **Proclamation of 1763**, that forbade colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains.

The American colonists disliked the proclamation. Some of their colonial charters promised them all the lands west of the Appalachians. They wanted a chance to settle the rich Ohio Valley. Some colonists simply ignored the proclamation and moved west.

To enforce the proclamation, the British government stationed troops in frontier forts. This further angered Americans who disliked the idea of supporting military troops during times of peace.

★ Money Problems

Of the many postwar problems facing Great Britain, the most pressing was the problem of money. Parliament looked



toward the colonies for a solution. The war had made the colonists safe from attack by the French and had cost them very little. Now, British citizens thought, the colonists ought to help pay the costs of the war.

Most colonists saw it differently. From their point of view, the war had not been fought to protect them, but rather to protect British trade. In addition, the colonists thought it seemed only right that the parent country should take responsibility for defending its empire.

The overwhelming job of solving Great Britain's financial problems went to a new

prime minister, **George Grenville**. He began by enforcing existing laws and then went on to introduce some new policies.

Grenville persuaded Parliament to pass the **Sugar Act of 1764**, putting a tax on foreign molasses and sugar. Several New England industries depended on the less expensive molasses from French sugar colonies rather than the higher-priced British molasses. This new tax was lower than an older 1733 sugar tax, but the colonists still refused to pay it.

Another new law annoyed Americans who objected to having British soldiers in the colonies. The **Quartering Act**, passed in 1765, required colonists to pay for **quartering**—housing and feeding—British soldiers in their area.

★ Stamp Act Controversy

In 1765 Parliament passed the **Stamp Act**. This law forced people to pay a special tax on certain items that were then stamped to show the tax had been paid. Things people used every day, such as newspapers, playing cards, and legal documents like diplomas or licenses, were taxed under the Stamp Act.

The colonists believed that Grenville had gone too far. Up to this time, colonial assemblies had made the important decisions about taxes and expenses. Now, for the first time, Parliament was trying to tax the colonists directly.

The colonists knew that one basic right of British citizens was to be taxed only by the representatives they had elected. Yet no American voted in elections to Parliament. The Stamp Act, then, clearly violated the cherished idea of *no taxation without representation*.

Angry colonial lawyers, merchants, and newspaper printers organized their friends, neighbors, and workers to oppose the Stamp Act. Soon, protests against the hated Stamp Act erupted throughout the colonies. In some cities, crowds rioted in

the streets and threatened agents of the British government. A small band of angry colonists formed a protest group called the **Sons of Liberty**. They seized and burned piles of the stamps.

Colonial merchants also acted together to fight the Stamp Act. By the end of 1765 more than 1,000 merchants had signed agreements to not buy or sell any British goods. This type of agreement later became known as a **boycott**.

Virginians took the lead in protests against the Stamp Act. In the House of Burgesses, a hot-tempered young lawyer named **Patrick Henry** called the Stamp Act illegal and proposed several resolutions against it. One resolution declared that the power to tax lay with the House of Burgesses alone. Other resolutions such as this were reprinted by newspapers throughout the colonies.

The Stamp Act Congress

The Massachusetts assembly suggested a meeting of representatives from all the colonies, to draw up a written protest. In October 1765, delegates from nine colonies met in New York City at the **Stamp Act Congress**.

In spite of the regional differences that separated them, the delegates were able to compose a petition and resolutions to send to King George III. These were carefully and respectfully worded. After all, the congressional delegates were still loyal British subjects—they simply wanted the government to recognize their rights under the British law.

Repeal of the Stamp Act

Grenville and others in England were astonished when they read about the colonists' reaction to the Stamp Act. In their opinion, Parliament had every right to tax Americans, as well as British subjects everywhere. Many members of Parliament were strongly against repealing the Stamp



Picturing History

▲ **REPEAL OF THE STAMP ACT** The colonists celebrated the British repeal of the Stamp Act as shown in this political cartoon. **What act did Parliament pass in place of the Stamp Act?**

Act, believing that such an action would weaken their ability to govern the empire.

On the other hand, British merchants who wanted to sell goods in America were pressuring Grenville to repeal the Stamp Act. The law was by now useless anyway, they reasoned, because no one obeyed it.

In March 1766 Parliament finally repealed the Stamp Act. At the same time, however, it passed another act meant to warn the colonists against any future protests. The **Declaratory Act** stated that Parliament had the right to rule and tax the colonies.

★ More Conflicts With Parliament

Parliament still intended to raise money from the colonies. In 1767 it passed another set of laws designed to do just that. Called the **Townshend Acts** after the finance official who wrote them, these laws placed import taxes on paint, glass, lead, paper, and tea coming into America.

The money would be used to pay British colonial officials. The acts even allowed officials to obtain **writs of assistance**, or blank search warrants. With these laws, officials could search anywhere for suspected smuggled goods.

Boycott of British Imports

The colonists once again protested. They sent petitions to Parliament. Merchants and planters throughout the colonies signed **nonimportation agreements** in which they agreed to not import the items that were taxable.

The Sons of Liberty saw to it that the intended boycott was carried out. At the same time, concerned colonial women organized as the **Daughters of Liberty**. They signed pledges against drinking tea and published notices in the local newspapers promising they would not buy British-made cloth.

To keep the pledge and still get fabric for clothes, the Daughters of Liberty met at spinning clubs to spin, weave, or knit



Picturing History

▲ **BOSTON TEA PARTY** Patriot Samuel Adams led the Boston protestors who destroyed a ship's cargo of East Indian tea. **What group was responsible for dumping the tea in the harbor?**

their own cloth. Wearing homespun fabric became an important symbol of American resistance against tyranny.

★ Talk of Independence

Tensions grew in the colonies, especially in the cities. New Yorkers were outraged when Parliament closed their colonial assembly. In **Boston**, riots against customs officials broke out on the waterfront. Boston citizens were angry at the sight of red-coated soldiers on the streets. **Samuel Adams**, an outspoken leader of the Sons of Liberty, kept the public anger simmering with his speeches and newsletters warning that Parliament was a threat to American rights and liberties.

The Boston Massacre

Finally the tensions exploded. On the night of March 5, 1770, a group of Boston youths and dockworkers began insulting and throwing snowballs at a British guard

on duty. When more soldiers arrived, an angry mob surrounded them. The British captain, Thomas Preston, tried to calm his men and the crowd. In the confusion the soldiers began to fire their guns into the crowd. When the shooting stopped, five people lay dead in the street. One was **Crispus Attucks**, an African American sailor.

Captain Preston denied that he gave the order to fire, and he was later cleared of that charge. Samuel Adams, however, spoke for many colonists when he called the incident the **Boston Massacre**.

In April 1770 a new prime minister, **Lord North**, tried to improve relations with the colonies. The Townshend Acts were repealed, with the exception of the tax on tea. This tax remained to remind the colonists of Parliament's authority, for tea was a very popular drink.

★ The Conflicts Increase

During the next few years, tensions between the colonists and the British

seemed to ease and colonial businesses recovered. Still, some colonial leaders were suspicious of Parliament and kept the idea of opposition alive.

One of these leaders was Samuel Adams. Along with a few others, he encouraged the colonists to remain watchful and aware of what the British were doing.

In 1772 Adams organized **Committees of Correspondence** in the towns of Massachusetts. In a time when there was no radio or telephone, these committees were a network for passing along news. Soon Committees of Correspondence formed in other colonies as well.

Trouble Over Tea

The next crisis in the colonies brewed over taxes on tea. In early 1773, the directors of the British East India Company asked Lord North for help with their financial troubles. To rescue the company, the government agreed to the **Tea Act**. It gave the East India Company exclusive rights to sell tea directly to the Americans without paying the British import tax. The company carried tea in its own ships and used its own sellers. This cut out business for colonial sea captains and merchants.

Lord North expected colonists to be pleased by the low prices under the Tea

Act. Once again, however, the government had not understood the colonists. Merchants and shippers joined radicals like Samuel Adams to protest the act. Drinking tea became a symbol for giving in to Parliament's laws.

The Boston Tea Party

In the fall of 1773, ships carrying 500,000 pounds (227,000 kg) of East India Company tea were on their way to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charles Town. Merchants protested and the Sons of Liberty made plans. In **Boston** more than 300 chests of valuable tea were waiting on board ship. Colonists were determined to send the ships and cargoes away. The governor of Massachusetts was equally determined to see the tea unloaded.

As the ship lay in the harbor, a band of people disguised as Mohawks ran silently down the docks. The group boarded the ships and dumped the tea into the harbor. Easily recognizable under the disguises were the faces of Boston's Sons of Liberty.

The news of the **Boston Tea Party**, as the incident became known, enraged Parliament. The response would push the colonists still further away, until tensions exploded into war.

★ SECTION 3 REVIEW ★

Checking for Understanding

1. **Identify** Pontiac, George Grenville, Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams, Lord North, Fort Detroit, Boston.
2. **Define** Proclamation of 1763, quartering, Stamp Act, boycott, Townshend Acts, writs of assistance, Committees of Correspondence.
3. **How** did the British government hope to solve Great Britain's financial problems after the French and Indian War?

4. **What** caused the meeting of the Stamp Act Congress? What did it accomplish?

Critical Thinking

5. **Identifying Alternatives** If Parliament and the king had followed different policies, could they have prevented the moves toward independence? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY

6. Design a poster that encourages colonists to stop buying British goods.