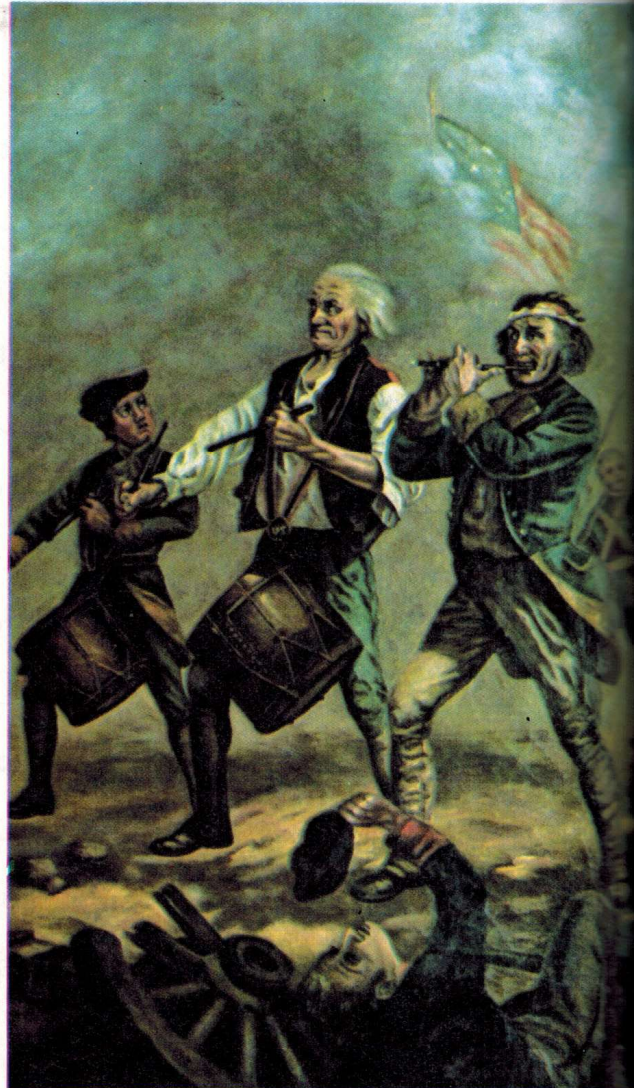


The American Revolution

With the close of the French and Indian War in 1763, England became the most powerful kingdom in the world. Many American colonists were proud to be a part of their mother country. England allowed her colonists in the New World much more freedom than France had allowed hers. The colonists of New France could not own homes or land. They could not have any part in making their laws. English colonists could own their homes and lands, and they had a part in making their own laws.

Though 3,000 miles of ocean separated England from her American colonies, the colonists were promised the same rights that the people in England had. This promise had made the colonists happy. Would the king of England ever dare to break it?



The American Colonies Demand Their Rights as Englishmen

Money Problems

England may have become the greatest power in the world, but she had also become very poor. She had fought four wars with France. Wars are expensive.

France and Spain still wished for a larger part of the New World. If they fought England, England wanted to be powerful enough to win. England must find a way to make money.

Stamp Act

At that time, **King George III** was king of England. He decided that the colonists themselves must pay for the protection that the English army had given them during the French and Indian War. This sounds fair, but remember, the colonists believed that they were to have a part in making their own laws. This was part of the rights which Englishmen were supposed to have. King George put aside this promise when he told the British government to pass laws for the Americans to obey.

The colonists had no part in making these laws.

One law was known as the **Stamp Act**. Special stamps were to be sold by the British government to the American colonists. These stamps were really seals. The law said that all newspapers, marriage certificates, almanacs, and other documents bought by the colonists had to have a seal or stamp placed on them. The colonists were to buy the stamps when they bought the paper. So each stamp was really a tax that the colonists had to pay. *A tax is money that people pay to their government to help run the government.*

In England, people could choose men to represent them and make their decisions for them about the tax. But the colonists in America had no such



The Stamp Act aroused the anger of the colonists. A group of colonists is shown here burning a pile of the hated British stamps.

representatives. The colonists had no say in the taxes they had to pay. They believed that the laws of England said that the colonists were supposed to have a say in their taxes, for they believed they were supposed to have the rights of Englishmen. In their minds, King George was breaking the law of England as well as breaking his word.

More Problems

The English government tried to force the colonists to do other things, too. Most colonists were hardworking. They grew crops such as tobacco, cotton, sugar, and indigo with hopes of selling their products to other countries. But England began telling them, “No, you may not sell your products to any other country, except England.” The colonists were forced to accept the low prices that England offered them, because they could not sell their products anywhere else.

Some colonists made cloth. From this cloth, some colonists began to make beautiful clothes. England told the colonists that they could make only

clothes for their own families. Clothes made in one colony could not be sold in another colony. Where could a wealthy colonist buy fine clothes? He had to order them from England.

Iron was important to the colonists, for many utensils, pots, and pans of that time were made from iron. England said the colonists could make their own iron, but they were not allowed to make anything with the iron. The colonists must sell their iron to England where it would be made into the things that the colonists needed. Then, the English ships would take the iron products back to the colonies, where they would be sold for high prices.

Who would get wealthy under such laws? Who would become poor? Since the colonists had no voice as to the price of their products, they were the ones to become poor.

Such things would not happen to the people who lived in England. Where had the colonists’ rights as Englishmen gone? The king had little concern for the colonists in America except for the money he made from them.

You can imagine how upset the colonists became when the Stamp Act was passed. The colonists decided not to buy the stamps. "If we buy the stamps, the king will soon tax other things, too," they told each other.

The Colonists Speak Out

Although there were some colonists who agreed with England, many colonists felt that England was treating them wrongly. Men from nine colonies decided to hold a meeting in New York. In this meeting, it was decided that the colonists should complain to the king. At last the British government felt forced to drop the Stamp Act.

New Taxes

But the king of England was not happy at all. He was determined to make the colonists pay taxes without their consent. He now had the British government place a tax on glass, paint, paper, and tea sold in the American colonies. Again, the colonists refused to buy the goods that carried the new tax.

The Boston Massacre

The people of Boston, Massachusetts, grew very angry and restless at the new taxes. England sent soldiers to Boston to help keep the peace and force the

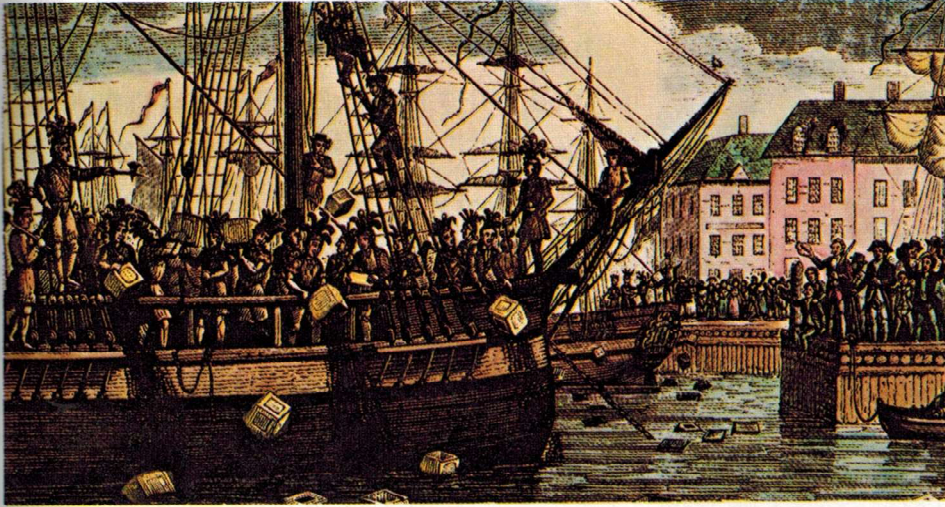
colonists to obey. Because the British soldiers wore red coats, some colonists teased them and called them "red coats" or "lobster-backs."

One cold, snowy evening, a small mob began throwing snowballs at a British soldier. Some of the mob began throwing stones as well. British soldiers came running to stop the fight. Suddenly, without orders, and perhaps by accident, a gun was shot. In the confusion, more soldiers fired their guns. Five colonists were killed.

Each side was partly to blame for this terrible mistake. The colonists were teasing, irritating, and threatening the British soldiers. And the British soldiers fired without orders.

Hot tempers on both sides erupted in the Boston Massacre in 1770. This picture of the Boston Massacre was engraved by Paul Revere.





Americans disguised themselves as Indians and threw British tea into Boston Harbor at the Boston Tea Party.

The people of Boston angrily called this incident the “**Boston Massacre.**” A *massacre is the cruel killing of many people at one time.* Preachers preached against what the British were doing, and many of their sermons were printed in pamphlet form so that many people could read them. As always, the ministers had a great influence on the people.

England saw that the tax on the glass, paint, paper, and tea was not worth all the trouble it was causing. All the taxes were dropped except one. England wanted to show the colonists that the British government still had the right to tax the colonists. So a small tax was still kept on tea. You can imagine what drink the colonists refused to buy from England—tea!

The Boston Tea Party

Three years had passed since the Boston Massacre. Most colonists still

refused to buy tea from England. King George III decided to force the colonists to accept the tea. Three ships loaded with tea sailed into Boston’s harbor.

On a chilly December night in 1773, about fifty colonists dressed up to look like Indians. Carrying tomahawks, they boarded the three ships where there were 342 chests of tea. Each chest was smashed open with a tomahawk and then thrown over the sides of the ships into the water. When they destroyed the last chest of tea, they quietly went back to their homes. This event became known as the **Boston Tea Party.**

News of the Boston Tea Party spread quickly to the other colonies. Many colonists cheered the people of Boston for their courage. Others wondered with fear, “What will England do now?”

The English government saw no ex-

cuse for the Boston Tea Party. The English government passed harsh laws to punish the thousands of people in Boston, even though only fifty men did the damage.

More English soldiers were sent to Boston. England closed Boston's harbor. Since no ships could sail in or out, the people of Boston had no way of buying supplies or food.

"The port of Boston shall stay closed until its people pay for the tea they destroyed," the British government said. If the harbor remained closed, the people of Boston could starve to death.

The other colonies soon heard of the unfair laws forced upon the people of Boston. South Carolina sent gifts of food. Connecticut and New York sent herds of sheep and cattle. Other colonies also sent gifts. The English were



The building where the Continental Congress met is now called Independence Hall.

able to keep ships from sailing into Boston, but they couldn't keep other colonists from traveling over the New England paths and hills to help the people of Boston.

"How can we protect ourselves from these regulations that the government of England has no right to impose upon us?" each colony asked itself.

One of the patriots suggested that representatives from each colony meet together in Philadelphia to decide what to do.

The War Begins

The

Fif
Sept
Engla
they c
Most
fair to
had d
becam

Fin
again
to hav
lishme
they h
asked
respec
people
obey t