

Timeline of Resistance, 1763–1774 ^[1]

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1763

[Proclamation](#) ^[2] of 1763

Royal Proclamation sets aside lands west of the Appalachians for American Indians, angering colonists who wanted the land for themselves.

1764

Sugar Act

Parliament, desiring [revenue](#) ^[3] from its North American colonies, passed the first law specifically aimed at raising colonial money for the Crown. The act increased duties on non-British goods shipped to the colonies.

Currency Act

This act prohibited American colonies from issuing their own currency, angering many American colonists.

Beginnings of colonial opposition

American colonists responded to the Sugar Act and the Currency Act with protest. In Massachusetts, participants in a town meeting cried out against taxation without proper representation in Parliament, and suggested some form of united protest throughout the colonies. By the end of the year, many colonies were practicing nonimportation, a refusal to use imported English goods.

1765

Quartering Act

The British further angered American colonists with the Quartering Act, which required the colonies to provide barracks and supplies to British troops.

Stamp Act

Parliament's first direct tax on the American colonies, this act, like those passed in 1764, was enacted to raise money for Britain. It taxed newspapers, almanacs, pamphlets, broadsides, legal documents, dice, and playing cards. Issued by Britain, the stamps were affixed to documents or packages to show that the tax had been paid.

Organized colonial protest

American colonists responded to Parliament's acts with organized protest. Throughout the colonies, a network of secret organizations known as the Sons of Liberty was created, aimed at intimidating the stamp agents who collected Parliament's taxes. Before the Stamp Act could even take effect, all the appointed stamp agents in the colonies had resigned. The Massachusetts Assembly suggested a meeting of all the colonies to work for the repeal of the Stamp Act. All but four colonies were represented. The Stamp Act Congress passed a "Declaration of Rights and [Grievances](#) ^[4]," which claimed that American colonists were equal to all other British citizens, protested taxation without representation, and stated that, without colonial representation in Parliament, Parliament could not tax colonists. In addition, the colonists increased their nonimportation efforts.

1766

Repeal of the Stamp Act

Although some in Parliament thought the army should be used to enforce the Stamp Act (1765), others commended the colonists for resisting a tax passed by a legislative body in which they were not represented. The act was repealed, and the colonies abandoned their ban on imported British goods.

Declaratory Act

The repeal of the Stamp Act did not mean that Great Britain was surrendering any control over its colonies. The Declaratory Act, passed by Parliament on the same day the Stamp Act was repealed, stated that Parliament could make laws binding the American colonies "in all cases whatsoever."

Resistance to the Quartering Act in New York

New York served as headquarters for British troops in America, so the Quartering Act (1765) had a great impact on New York City. When the New York Assembly refused to assist in quartering troops, a [skirmish](#) ^[5] occurred in which one colonist was wounded. Parliament suspended the Assembly's powers but never carried out the suspension,

since the Assembly soon agreed to contribute money toward the quartering of troops.

1767

Townshend Acts

To help pay the expenses involved in governing the American colonies, Parliament passed the Townshend Acts, which initiated taxes on glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea.

Nonimportation

In response to new taxes, the colonies again decided to discourage the purchase of British imports.

"Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies"

Originally published in a newspaper, this widely reproduced pamphlet by John Dickinson declared that Parliament could not tax the colonies, called the Townshend Acts unconstitutional, and denounced the suspension of the New York Assembly as a threat to colonial liberties.

1768

Massachusetts Circular Letter

Samuel Adams wrote a statement, approved by the Massachusetts House of Representatives, which attacked Parliament's persistence in taxing the colonies without proper representation, and which called for unified resistance by all the colonies. Many colonies issued similar statements. In response, the British governor of Massachusetts dissolved the state's legislature. British Troops Arrive in Boston. Although the Sons of Liberty threatened armed resistance to arriving British troops, none was offered when the troops stationed themselves in Boston.

1769

Virginia's resolutions

The Virginia House of Burgesses passed resolutions condemning Britain's actions against Massachusetts, and stating that only Virginia's governor and legislature could tax its citizens. The members also drafted a formal letter to the King, completing it just before the legislature was dissolved by Virginia's royal governor.

1770

Townshend Acts cut back

Because of the reduced profits resulting from the colonial boycott of imported British goods, Parliament withdrew all of the Townshend Act (1767) taxes except for the tax on tea.

An end to nonimportation

In response to Parliament's relaxation of its taxation laws, the colonies relaxed their boycott of British imported goods (1767).

Conflict between citizens and British troops in New York

After a leading New York Son of Liberty issued a broadside attacking the New York Assembly for complying with the Quartering Act (1765), a riot erupted between citizens and soldiers, resulting in serious wounds but no fatalities.

Boston Massacre

The arrival of troops in Boston provoked conflict between citizens and soldiers. On March 5, a group of soldiers surrounded by an unfriendly crowd opened fire, killing three Americans and fatally wounding two more. A violent uprising was avoided only with the withdrawal of the troops to islands in the harbor. The soldiers were tried for murder, but convicted only of lesser crimes; noted patriot John Adams was their principal lawyer.

1772

Attack on the Gaspee

After several boatloads of men attacked a grounded British customs schooner near Providence, Rhode Island, the royal governor offered a reward for the discovery of the men, planning to send them to England for trial. The removal of the Gaspee trial to England outraged American colonists.

Committees of Correspondence

Samuel Adams called for a Boston town meeting to create committees of correspondence to communicate Boston's position to the other colonies. Similar committees were soon created throughout the colonies.

1773

Tea Act

By reducing the tax on imported British tea, this act gave British merchants an unfair advantage in selling their tea in America. American colonists condemned the act, and many planned to boycott tea.

Boston Tea Party

When British tea ships arrived in Boston harbor, many citizens wanted the tea sent back to England without the payment of any taxes. The royal governor insisted on payment of all taxes. On December 16, a group of men disguised as Indians boarded the ships and dumped all the tea in the harbor.

1774

Coercive ^[6] Acts

In response to the Boston Tea Party, Parliament passed several acts to punish Massachusetts. The Boston Port Bill banned the loading or unloading of any ships in Boston harbor. The Administration of Justice Act offered protection to royal officials in Massachusetts, allowing them to transfer to England all court cases against them involving riot suppression or revenue collection. The Massachusetts Government Act put the election of most government officials under the control of the Crown, essentially eliminating the Massachusetts charter of government.

Quartering Act

Parliament broadened its previous Quartering Act (1765). British troops could now be quartered in any occupied dwelling.

The colonies organize protest

To protest Britain's actions, Massachusetts suggested a return to nonimportation, but several states preferred a congress of all the colonies to discuss united resistance. The colonies soon named delegates to a congress -- the First Continental Congress -- to meet in Philadelphia on September 5.

The First Continental Congress

Twelve of the thirteen colonies sent a total of fifty-six delegates to the First Continental Congress. Only Georgia was not represented. One accomplishment of the Congress was the Association of 1774, which urged all colonists to avoid using British goods, and to form committees to enforce this ban.

New England prepares for war

British troops began to fortify Boston, and seized ammunition ^[7] belonging to the colony of Massachusetts. Thousands of American militiamen were ready to resist, but no fighting occurred. Massachusetts created a Provincial Congress, and a special Committee of Safety to decide when the militia ^[8] should be called into action. Special groups of militia, known as Minute Men, were organized to be ready for instant action.

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Debt far outweighs savings for Americans in 1765, especially where there is taxation without representation.

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