



The American Revolution

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Sons of the American Revolution

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Colonial American Discontent Article 1 of 3

In our last article, we examined colonial life in Virginia before 1774. This series will observe events that promoted colonial American discontent with King George III, Parliament and Mother England.

King George III was the son of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and grandson to King George II of England. George III was born 4 June 1738, and upon the death of his grandfather in 1760, George III, at age 23, was propelled to the Throne. He was ill prepared for this awesome responsibility. He was not a scholar, since he only read by age 11. All his life he suffered from Porphyria, which caused him temporary lapses of judgment and mental instability.

In 1763, King George III and England were victorious over France and the “French and Indian War” concluded. Britain emerged from war as an undisputed world power, but the war had left England politically unstable. Parliament had eroded regal authority and England was deep in debt. In the coming decade, King George III would contest Parliament for authority and devise several measures designed to relieve the debt. Coincidentally, colonial America had accustomed itself to a degree of self-rule, and it’s economy was prospering. Regal measures designed to tax America and curtail its political independence were naturally met with colonial disfavor.

Trouble began with Parliament's enactment of *The Stamp Act*, which required important documents, contracts and other legal scripts to bear a stamp. The tax paid for such stamps was known as a "Stamp Duty." These stamp duties were a tax directed at colonial America, and enacted without the latter's consent or comment. This tax was designed to pay for the maintenance of a British army in colonial America. America's position was that such an army in post-war America was unnecessary, and that there was no need for either the army or the tax. All thirteen American colonies loudly protested this measure and coined the phrase "Taxation without Representation." American protestations were disruptive and sometimes violent. Parliament reluctantly, relented and modified the measure, but insisted that Parliament had the authority and right to levy tax on America without colonial comment or consent.

On 29 June 1767, Parliament enacted *The Townsend Revenue Act*, requiring colonial America to pay tax on glass, paint, oil, lead, paper and tea. This act was designed to force America to raise 40,000 pounds annually for the administration of their governance. The act resurrected colonial bitterness and hostility.