

THE INTOLERABLE ACTS & THE 1ST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

Key concepts you will learn about at this station:

Republicanism - People have a voice in government.

In 1774, Parliament passed a series of harsh laws. Designed to punish the colonists of Massachusetts for destroying tea by dumping it into Boston Harbor, these laws became known as the **Intolerable Acts**. Because of England's hands-off treatment in the past, many traditions dealing with rights and self-government had been established. These new laws inhibited the free practice of their political traditions.



Boston Harbor 1768

One of the Intolerable Acts increased the governor's powers over the colonists. Another allowed for British troops to be housed in the homes of colonists. This was a direct hit to the pocketbooks of the Massachusetts' colonists. Parliament demanded that the harbor in Boston be closed until the destroyed tea had been paid for completely. Finally, the Intolerable Acts put an appointed council in charge of the city of Boston instead of the usual elected council. Those that were appointed would be loyal to the British government as opposed to the colony friendly elected council.

Other colonies, in response to these harsh acts against Massachusetts, sent aid to their fellow colony. The aid, in the form of food and money, kept the city from starving because their port, the very heart of the city's economy, was closed. In addition, the colonies called the **First Continental Congress**. The purpose of this meeting of delegates was to explain to the king why they believed they were being mistreated by their government and to ban all trade with Great Britain until Parliament repealed the Intolerable Acts. Fifty-six delegates from twelve colonies met in Philadelphia during September 1774. Georgia did not participate. The delegates agreed to meet again in May of the following year if their demands were not met.

Still, at this time a great many colonists wanted to stay British subjects. However, they did want to maintain their unique, independent way of living.

CONSIDER!

1. List three (3) elements of the Intolerable Acts.
2. Write an excerpt from the text that proves the statement that the Intolerable Acts were "A direct hit on the pocketbooks of Massachusetts' colonists...". Be sure to put your answer in quotation marks.
3. Give a reason for why you believe Georgia did not participate in the First Continental Congress.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

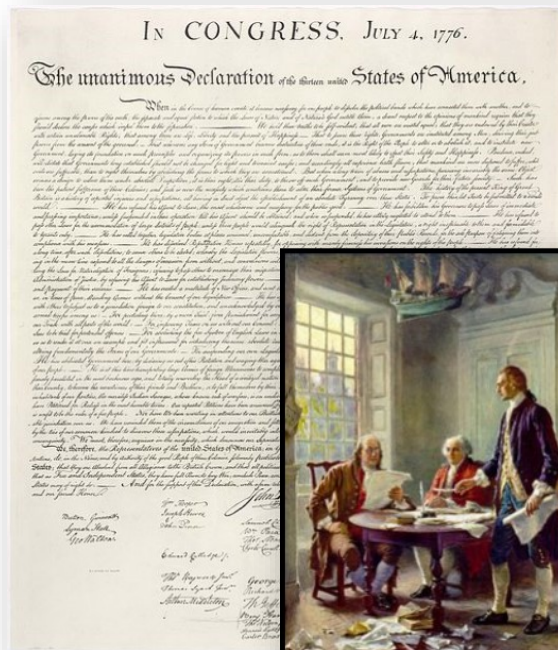
Key concepts you will learn about at this station:

Republicanism - People have a voice in government.

A committee of five men appointed by the **Second Continental Congress** wrote the **Declaration of Independence**. The committee consisted of Thomas Jefferson, the writer, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams. Not everyone at the Second Continental Congress agreed about separating from England and the king at this time. Nevertheless, those in favor of independence believed that a document should be ready for presentation for when the time was right.

Relying heavily on the ideas of **John Locke**, the Declaration of Independence sites, *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are **endowed** [provided] by their Creator with certain **unalienable** [unable to be taken away] Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness;...”*. The declaration contains 27 different offenses against the colonists by the King of England and other British officials. It also explains that the colonists had done their best to reconcile their differences with their government. In addition, it concludes that because no solution is obtainable, war is inevitable.

Many believe that the King of England was the audience of the Declaration of Independence. However, the colonists understood that if they were going to break away from English rule and start their own country they must have additional outside support. Thus, this important American document expresses to foreign governments why the British colonists were willing to rise up against English governmental authorities and go to war for their independence. The supporters of the Declaration of Independence knew that if they were going to have any success as an independent nation they would need the support and backing of other foreign authorities. The leaders of what would become America understood that “no man is an island”.



The Declaration of Independence

CONSIDER!

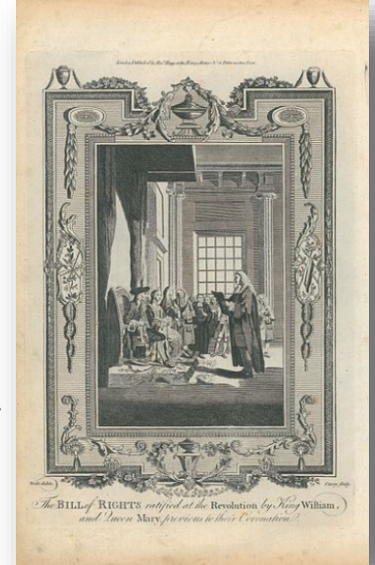
1. **Why was it important to have the Declaration of Independence ready even though not every one at the Second Continental Congress was in favor of independence at this time?**
2. **Which phrase from the Declaration of Independence identifies John Locke’s idea that man is given rights by God?**
3. **What can one infer the phrase, “no man is an island” mean?**

ENGLISH BILL OF RIGHTS

Key concepts you will learn about at this station:

Rights and Liberties - People have certain "God-given" rights that the government protects.

Since the **Age of Enlightenment** (a philosophical movement of the 17th century that stressed human knowledge and reasoning) Englishmen had been questioning the authority of the king and strengthening their own voice in government. Forced in 1215 to sign the **Magna Carta**, King John acknowledged that the king was not above the law and that everyone, including himself, had to obey the laws that were in place. Thus, when King James II attempted to renege, or break the agreement, the English people replaced him with Mary, James' daughter, and her husband, William of Orange. This event, known as the **Glorious Revolution**, led to the **English Bill of Rights** signed in 1689.



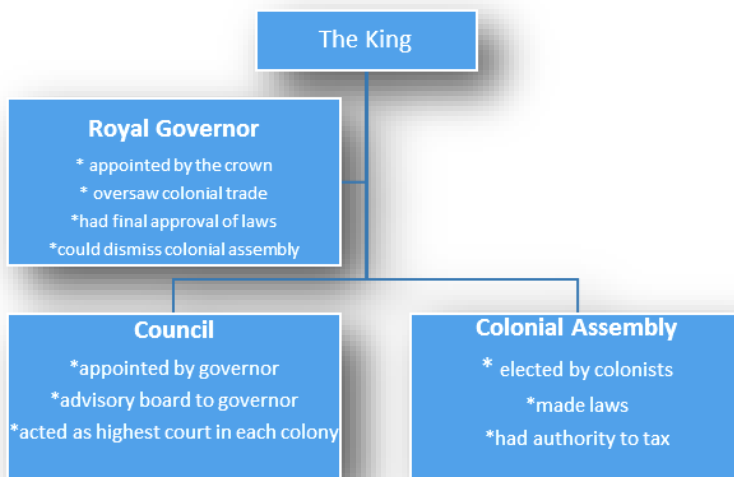
English Bill of Rights signed in 1689

The English Bill of Rights established several important principles including:

- The people would elect the members of Parliament
- Parliament would make laws; not the king
- No taxes would be passed without the consent of Parliament

The American colonists, claiming their rights as British subjects, also believed that they too should receive these same rights. However, they also had to accept having a royal governor. The royal governor would serve as the king's spokesperson but the colonists would pay his salary. Thus, while loyal to the king for his position the governor had to maintain respect from the colonists in order to be paid.

Study the chart (left) to learn more about who shared the power of colonial government and how this power was divided.



CONSIDER!

1. How did the Age of Enlightenment lead to more rights for Englishmen?
2. How did the American Colonial Assembly resemble the English Parliament?
3. What leverage or hold did the colonists have over the king's appointed governor?

GREAT AUTHORS - JOHN LOCKE & THOMAS PAINE

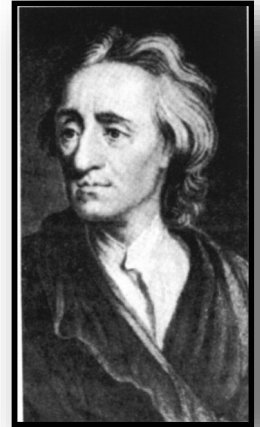
Key concepts you will learn about at this station:

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JOHN LOCKE

The **Enlightenment** of the 17th century led Englishmen to think differently about themselves and the world around them. This age of reason was a time when men were willing to look beyond traditions and normal ideas. They became more curious about who they were in the world and how they could make a difference. Men began to question whether religion held all the answers, while science and natural laws were being given more credibility.

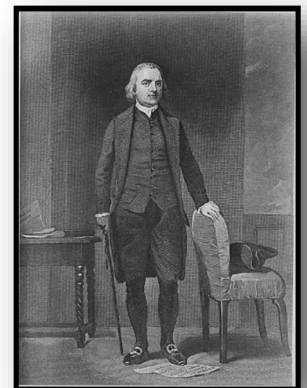
John Locke (1632-1704), an English philosopher, challenged the idea that the king had been given **inalienable** or absolute rights by God himself. He further believed that all men are created equal and had the right to govern themselves. And, with this right came the right to change the laws. Locke would write that rights of men included those of life, liberty, and property. He believed that the role of government was to protect these rights, not limited these rights. John Locke wrote, *"The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom, For in all the states of created beings capable of law where there is no law, there is no freedom."* The American colonists would use the words of Locke when answering the charges of treason as they challenged English laws and rule.



John Locke

THOMAS PAINE

As colonists began to debate among themselves whether they should separate from England, an English immigrant, new to the colonies, began to speak out. **Thomas Paine** (1737-1809), believed that the king had overstepped his authority on several occasions and had become corrupt. He would write that not only should the colonies separate from England but that all men, landowners and non-landowners, should have a voice in a new government. A government designed to protect the rich and the poor. Paine wrote that, *"Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one."* As the talk of war increased, Thomas Paine would write a pamphlet, **Common Sense**. This pamphlet would convince many colonists that war was the only way to bring the ideas of the John Locke, life, liberty, and property, to the colonies of America.



Thomas Paine

CONSIDER!

1. *What are the three rights John Locke believed all men had?*
2. *What do these rights mean to you?*
3. *Would Thomas Paine's Common Sense have convinced you to go to war with England? Why?*
4. *Write an excerpt from the text that proves that John Locke believed in inalienable rights. Be sure to put your answer in quotation marks.*

TOWNSEND ACT, SUGAR ACT, & STAMP ACT

Key concepts you will learn about at this station:

Free Enterprise/Free Trade - The development of business and trade supported by the idea that government should not restrict business and trade activities.

Going to war costs a lot of money and Parliament believed that the colonists should pay part of the costs of this conflict. Therefore, in 1765, Parliament passed the **Sugar Act** as a way to raise needed funds. This act placed a tax on all sugar products shipped to the colonies. Sugar and molasses now became more expensive. When this directive by Parliament did not raise enough funds a new tax, the **Stamp Act** in 1766 was enacted. This tax put an additional cost on all legal, governmental, and commercial documents. This included such items as wills, contracts, newspapers, licenses and playing cards. While Parliament was of the opinion that the tax was a small price to pay for British protection, the colonists saw the taxes as offense against their rights. The colonists believed only their own colonial assembly could tax them. They also did not like the idea that Parliament had taxed them without their consent (agreement).



Stamp of the Stamp Act of 1766

As a message to Parliament the colonists began to **boycott** (refuse to buy products). Through the boycott, England would not earn tax money and the merchants and ship owners would not receive their income from products sold in the colonies. This led merchants and ship owners to voice their complaints about the taxes. Colonists hoped this would add pressure for Parliament to repeal the acts. Their strategy worked! Parliament repealed the acts but, this was not the end of taxation.

Named after the finance minister of Great Britain, Parliament passed the **Townsend Acts** in 1767. This series of taxes was placed upon items imported into the colonies. Items such as glass, paper, paint, lead, and tea would now be taxed which meant they now costed more. In addition, the Townsend Acts made it legal for British soldiers to enter homes and places of businesses to look for items that had not been taxed. These **writs of assistance** or search warrants were used to seize smuggled goods prosecute smugglers. These acts infuriated the colonists who saw this not only as an unjust tax but also as an **affront** or insult against natural rights. The Townsend Acts, like the other acts before it, would be appealed by Parliament except for one item, tea.

CONSIDER!

1. *Why did Parliament believe the colonists owed the taxes they levied?*
2. *How did the Stamp Act lead to a boycott?*
3. *John Locke wrote, "no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions." How does this quote relate to the feelings of the colonists in regard to the Townsend Acts?*

PROCLAMATION OF 1763

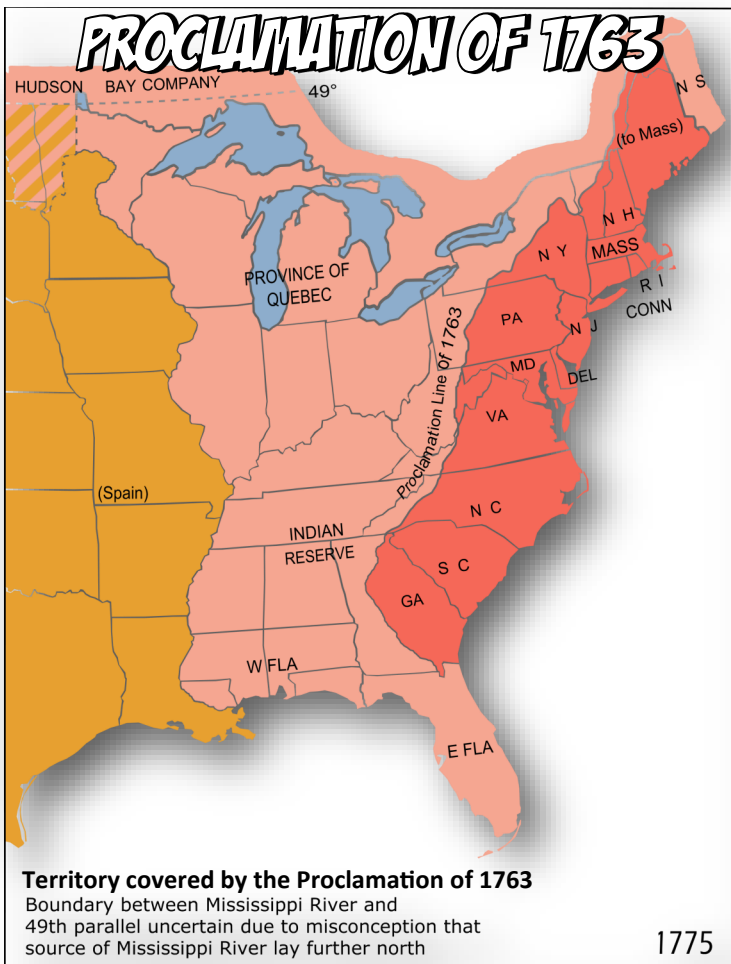
Key concepts you will learn about at this station:

Economic Opportunity - The strong belief that in America opportunities are available to better a person's economic situation.

After the French and Indian war, England found itself in debt. As the disruption between the Native Americans and the British soldiers and colonists grew, the British government had to seek ways to minimize the costly conflict. The British government did not have any soft feelings for the Native

Americans but wanted to lessen the great expense it took to arm troops in the western territories. In addition, the British government did not like the idea of the colonies expanding west of the Appalachian Mountains. This growth and movement west took settlers away from the sea and the **mercantile system** of the British. This mercantile system created a great deal of wealth for the British as it forced all colonial trade to be with the mother country.

Thus, the British passed the **Proclamation of 1763**. This piece of legislation made it illegal for settlers to move past the Appalachian Mountains. Therefore, movement into the Ohio Valley or the area of Tennessee would not be tolerated and protection in this area would not be guaranteed. This action by Parliament angered the colonists who would come to ignore it. They believed that it was their right to settle in any area in which they could find prosperity and success.



CONSIDER!

1. Was the Proclamation of 1763 successful? Why?
2. How would you have settled the conflict between the Native Americans and the westward seeking colonists?

SOCIAL CLASSES

Key concepts you will learn about at this station:

Labor System - the establishment of various systems of labor used in American business.

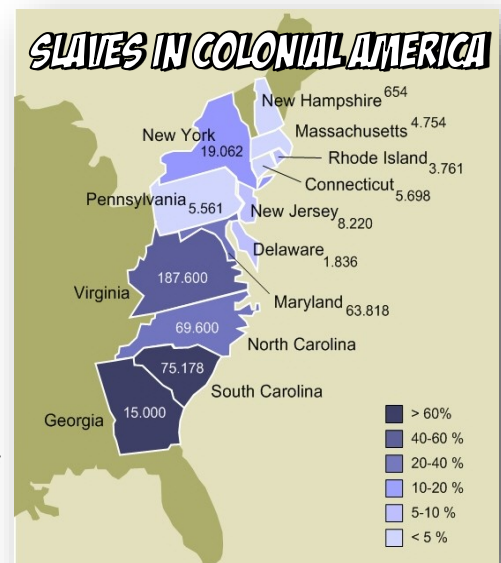
As British settlers soon discovered America was full of differences. The new settlers had to adapt to different climates, different soils, and different living conditions. However, with these differences came new opportunities. Land, a commodity not readily available in Europe, was found in abundance in the colonies. This one item would be the promise for success in America.

Why was land so important? England, at the time of the American colonies, had a growing population but a stagnant amount of land. Only five percent of the population owned land and this asset was passed from father to first-born son. Remaining children had to find opportunities elsewhere, thus the growth of cities. However, as cities grew, opportunities diminished. Land provided not only a place to live but also a place to make a living. In America, land was abundant and often claimed by the mere sweat of one's labor. With what seem as an unlimited supply, opportunities became boundless.

The British system of land ownership also brought with it the right to vote. With more people being landowners in America more people had a voice in their government. This meant that large landowners as well as small had an equal say. Unlike England, America's middle class grew and there was no need for **aristocrats**, a titled or elite citizen. As landowners prospered so did city dwellers as craftsmen and tradesmen were needed to supply the needs of the farmers and sell their commodities.

Another aspect that land provided was **social mobility**, the ability to move in and out of a social class. With land a man was able to grow his own food and provide his own shelter. He could provide for his family without the assistance of others. If he wanted to work harder he could obtain more. If disaster overtook him, he himself, was responsible for regaining what he had lost. These opportunities were not available in England.

Nevertheless, this land also brought a rise of a class almost removed from British society, slavery. With large plantations in the southern regions a need for great amounts of cheap labor rose. The answer, at the time, was the installation of an African slave system. The economy of this region was obtained on the backs and lives of a race with no voice; not in their work, their families, or their very being.



CONSIDER!

- 1. In your own words, explain why a British citizen would be willing to move to the colonies.**
- 2. How did an abundance of land in the Americas lead to the development of a labor system?**

UNITING OF A NATION

Key concepts you will learn about at this station:
Diversity - There is a variety of people in America.

The American colonies emerged as a compilation of different aspects to form a unique identity. This melding of different characteristics and elements would suffer, at times, from inner conflict, however, eventually it would settle into a very diversified and distinctive identity.

POLITICS AND LAW: While the British were the main settlers, many other ethnic groups soon found their way to the colonies. A unifying factor at this time was the new ideas of the Enlightenment. These ideas included those of natural law as it referred to human societies and government. Kings and the nobility no longer were seen as infallible or God-ordained. The philosophies that man created his own fate through his own voice were becoming accepted. Thus, government became a protector of rights not a giver of rights.

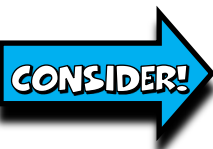
RELIGION: The early settlers to the colonies were Pilgrims and Puritans, groups who sought religious freedom and purity. Catholics, Jews and other religions soon joined them. The colonies became a haven for those who had suffered religious suppression or intolerance. By 1730, a new religious movement, known as the **Great Awakening**, brought with it a revival or rebirth of spiritual hope. A spiritual relationship with God became more important than ones' spiritual behavior.

ECONOMY: As more and more colonists became landowners, economic opportunities saw the growth of the middle class. No longer was there a great divide between the haves and the have-nots. There was now greater mobility between the social classes. A person's birth no longer determined his ability to achieve success. All became equal in an economy that offered much hope and advancement.

EDUCATION: The colonies also saw the advancement of education to all who sought it. No longer was education just for the elite or church leaders. The Bible was a primer for early settlers and the rise of religion led schools led to the spread of education throughout America. Literacy became a need for success and advancement; a common goal found throughout the colonies.

WAR: While there was much to divide the colonies such as climate, natural resources, and economic opportunities one great uniter was war. The French and Indian War was fought as these groups sought to deter the advancement of settlers as they crossed the Appalachian Mountains. This war united the colonies with a common cause against a common enemy that no government, religion, or language ever could.

PUBLISHING: Information is knowledge and it was through this sharing of knowledge that the American colonists were able to unite. Published in the form of newspapers, books, and billboards knowledge shared the poor injustices of Parliament and the king, the advancement of mankind and the economic opportunities available to all who sought them.



1. **Select two sentences from the text that best support the following topic sentence: "The American colonies emerged as a compilation of different aspects to form a unique identity."**
2. **List the bolded subheadings in order from LEAST likely to unify the colonies to MOST likely to unify the colonies.**

BOSTON TEA PARTY & SONS OF LIBERTY

Key concepts you will learn about at this station:

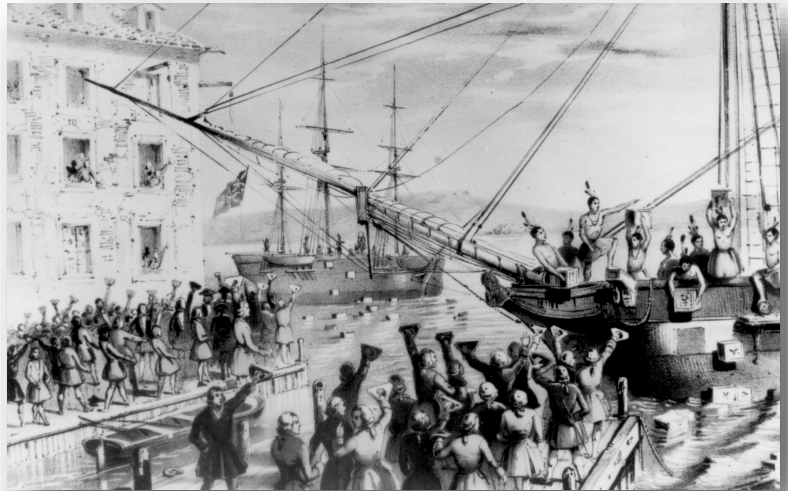
Free Enterprise/Free Trade - The development of business and trade supported by the idea that government should not restrict business and trade activities.

In the fall of 1767, many colonists had become upset with the British government. Tea, the common drink of the colonies, was now taxed, and the importing of this commodity from other sources was illegal. The **East India Company** was the sole supplier of tea to the colonies. This made the colonies believe that not only were they being taxed unfairly but also, their abilities to choose whom they would trade was in peril.

The city of Charlestown, South Carolina responded to this news by allowing the tea to be unloaded on to the docks. Then they would not allow the tea to be moved, thus allowing this precious drink to rot on the docks. Philadelphia and New York protested by not allowing ships with tea as its cargo to land at the docks. By keeping the tea in the bay, no profits could be made.

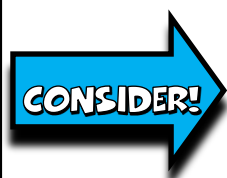
Boston had the harshest reaction to the rulings being made by Parliament. Men, known as the **Sons of Liberty**, a secret society whose goal was to disrupt British policies and laws, came together on the night of December 16, 1773. Their mission, known as the **Boston Tea Party**, was to unload all of the tea on ships in Boston Harbor. During the raid some of the Sons of Liberty dressed as Indians in order to hide their identity. After all, this action was that of treason and they did not want to be recognized by the British or its sympathizers. The raid took several hours as 342 chests of tea were thrown into the water; thus destroying the tea and its profits.

Upon hearing of this destruction to property and fiscal gains Parliament would seek retribution, revenge. Parliament demanded that the colonists repay for the lost tea. It also demanded the punishment of those responsible. A compromise could not be reached and America found itself ever closer to revolution. Thus the actions of a few would be felt by many as war, and its consequences, became ever closer.



Boston Tea Party, December 16, 1773

the



1. *Explain why would the acts of the Boston Tea Party be seen as treason?*
2. *In three words describe the feelings of the Sons of Liberty as they participated in the Boston Tea Party.*

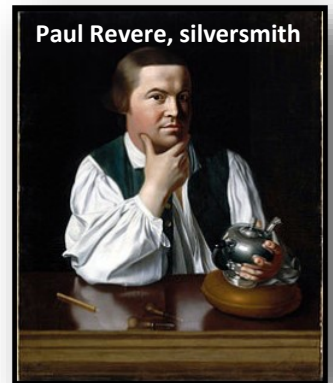
LEXINGTON & CONCORD

Key concepts you will learn about at this station:

War - In order for America to gain independence and maintain or expand its borders, war came inevitable.

As words continued to escalate in 1770 between Great Britain and the American colonies actions in the Massachusetts also escalated. **Minutemen**, a group of citizenry trained and readied to fight at a moment's notice, could be found throughout the region. Colonists had also stockpiled secret stashes of arms and supplies.

Spies on both sides fed information about the other side's movements. **Paul Revere**, a Boston silversmith, joined with William Dawes to let those in waiting know when British troops began to move within the area. The movement would signal that the British were on the hunt for the colonists' weapons and those who were instigating an uprising against the king. The code signal, hung in the tower of the **Old North Church**, would tell the Minutemen and colonists how the British troops would be coming; "one if by land, two if by sea". This code relayed the message that if the troops were coming across land from Boston then one lamp would be hung and if two lamps were hung then the troops would be moving along a water route out of the city. Paul Revere, William Dawes, and Dr. Samuel Prescott would sound the alarm during a "midnight ride" on the night of April 19, 1775.



Paul Revere, silversmith



The Battle at Lexington, April 19, 1775

At dawn, as British troops entered the town of **Lexington**, outside of Boston, the British came face to face with colonists led by **Captain John Parker**. Parker's forces included the local **militia**, a group armed citizens who had pledged to defend their community. While no one knows for sure who fired the first shot it is known that Parker was wounded, eight of his men were killed and the rest had scattered into the neighboring woods. While little more than a skirmish, Ralph Waldo Emerson would later

claim that Lexington was the sight of "the shot heard 'round the world."

British troops would leave Lexington and move on to Concord where they discovered and destroyed the hidden colonial supplies. Feeling good about their days work, they left Lexington by way of a bridge north of town. Between Concord and Lexington, nearly 4,000 Minutemen and militia forces met the British troops. This constant barrage of musket fire sent the **redcoats**, British troops, retreating.

The time had come for each colonists to make up their individual minds. Would they stand with the rebel Minutemen and militia and become **Patriots**, or remain true to the king of England and be known as **Loyalists**.

CONSIDER!

1. **Explain the incidents that happened at Lexington, then Concord.**
2. **Explain in your own words the meaning of Ralph Waldo Emerson's words, "the shot heard 'round the world."**