

The French & Indian War

Name: _____ C: _____

Date: _____

Because the Proclamation of 1763 sought to halt expansion, it convinced the colonists that the British government did not care about their needs. A second result of the French and Indian War—Britain's financial crisis—brought about new laws that reinforced the colonists' opinion even more.

By 1763, tensions between Britain and one colony, Massachusetts, had already been increasing. During

the French and Indian War, the British had cracked down on colonial smuggling. In 1761, the royal governor of Massachusetts authorized the use of the writs of assistance, which allowed British customs officials to search any ship or building. Because many merchants worked out of their residences, the writs enabled officials to search colonial homes. The merchants of Boston were outraged.

After the war, the British government stationed 10,000 troops in its territories to control the Native Americans and former French subjects. Although this army was meant to protect the colonies, the colonists viewed it as a standing army that might turn against them. Maintaining troops in North America was an added expense on an already strained British budget. Britain had borrowed so much money during the war that it nearly doubled its national debt.

Hoping to lower the debt, King George III chose a financial expert, George Grenville, to serve as prime minister in 1763. Grenville soon angered merchants throughout the colonies. He began to suspect that the colonists were smuggling goods into the country. In

1764 he prompted Parliament to enact a law known as the Sugar Act. The Sugar Act did three things. It halved the duty on foreign-made molasses (in the hopes that colonists would pay a lower tax rather than risk arrest by smuggling). It placed duties on certain imports. Most important, it strengthened the enforcement of the law allowing prosecutors to try smuggling cases in a vice-admiralty court rather than in a more sympathetic colonial court.

By the end of 1764, the colonies and Great Britain were disagreeing more and more about how the colonies should be taxed and governed. These feelings of dissatisfaction soon would swell into outright rebellion.

On the cold, clear night of March 5, 1770, a mob gathered outside the Customs House in Boston. They heckled the British sentry on guard, calling him a "lobster-back" to mock his red uniform. More soldiers arrived, and the mob began hurling stones and snowballs at them. At that moment, Crispus Attucks, a sailor of African and Native American ancestry, arrived with a group of angry laborers.

"This Attucks . . . appears to have undertaken to be the hero of the night; and to lead this army with

banners . . . up to King street with their clubs . . . [T]his man with his party cried, 'Do not be afraid of them. . . .' He had hardiness enough to fall in upon them, and with one hand took hold of a bayonet, and with the other knocked the man down" – John Adams

Attucks's action ignited the troops. Ignoring orders not to shoot, one soldier and then others fired on the crowd. Five people were killed; several were wounded. Crispus Attucks was, according to a newspaper account, the first to die

<p>The uprising at the Customs House illustrated the rising tensions between Britain and its American colonies. In order to finance debts from the French and Indian War, as well as from European wars, Parliament had turned hungry eyes on the colonies' resources.</p> <p>The seeds of increased tension were sown in March 1765 when Parliament, persuaded by Prime Minister</p>	<p>George Grenville, passed the Stamp Act. The Stamp Act required colonists to purchase special stamped paper for every legal document, license, newspaper, pamphlet, and almanac, and imposed special "stamp duties" on packages of playing cards and dice. The tax reached into every colonial pocket. Colonists who disobeyed the law were to be tried in the vice-admiralty courts, where convictions were probable</p>
<p>When word of the Stamp Act reached the colonies in May of 1765, the colonists united in their defiance. Boston shopkeepers, artisans, and laborers organized a secret resistance group called the Sons of Liberty. One of its founders was Harvard-educated Samuel Adams, who, although unsuccessful in business and deeply in debt, proved himself to be a powerful and influential political activist.</p> <p>By the end of the summer, the Sons of Liberty were harassing customs workers, stamp agents, and sometimes royal governors. Facing mob threats and demonstrations, stamp agents all over the colonies resigned. The Stamp Act was to become effective on November 1, 1765, but colonial protest prevented any stamps from being sold.</p> <p>During 1765 and early 1766, the individual colonial assemblies confronted the Stamp Act measure. Virginia's lower house adopted several resolutions put forth by a 29-year-old lawyer named Patrick Henry. These resolutions stated that Virginians could be taxed only by the Virginia assembly—that is, only by their own representatives. Other assemblies passed similar resolutions.</p>	<p>The colonial assemblies also made a strong collective protest. In October 1765, delegates from nine colonies met in New York City. This Stamp Act Congress issued a Declaration of Rights and Grievances, which stated that Parliament lacked the power to impose taxes on the colonies because the colonists were not represented in Parliament. More than 10 years earlier, the colonies had rejected Benjamin Franklin's Albany Plan of Union, which called for a joint colonial council to address defense issues. Now, for the first time, the separate colonies began to act as one.</p> <p>Merchants in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia agreed not to import goods manufactured in Britain until the Stamp Act was repealed. They expected that British merchants would force Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act. The widespread boycott worked. In March 1766, Parliament repealed the Stamp Act; but on the same day, to make its power clear, Parliament issued the Declaratory Act. This act asserted Parliament's full right to make laws "to bind the colonies and people of America . . . in all cases whatsoever."</p>