Setting the Stage - Revolution in the Colonies

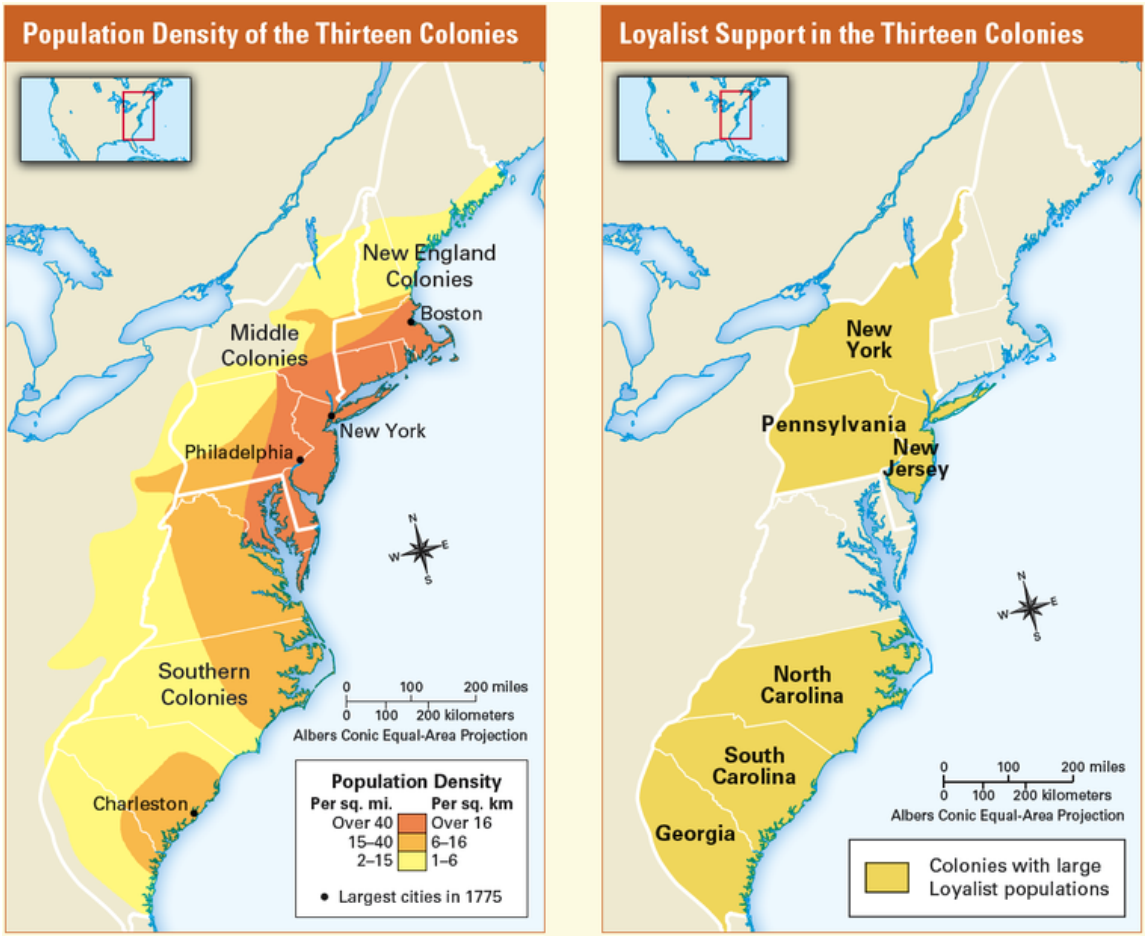
In this unit, you will learn why some colonists wanted to replace British rule with an independent government. You will also learn about the long, difficult struggle to gain that independence.

In the 1760s, Great Britain began passing new trade and tax laws for the colonies and enforcing old laws passed years before. Picture a southern rice farmer who is required by law to sell his crop only to England, even if he might get a higher price elsewhere. Or think of a northern merchant having to pay a new tax on paper—a tax imposed by a distant government in which he had no representation. How do you think they felt about such laws and taxes?

Colonists who supported Great Britain's policies and British rule were known as Loyalists. Those who resisted called themselves Patriots. When the colonies declared independence, Patriots were opposed by many Loyalists as well as British troops.

The map on the opposite page shows the physical geography of the 13 colonies. Knowing the land was one advantage Patriot forces had over British troops in the American Revolution.

The maps below show (left) where colonists lived in 1775 and (right) where Loyalist support was strong. These settlement patterns, along with the colonies' physical geography and regions of Loyalist strength, helped to shape the military strategies of the revolution.

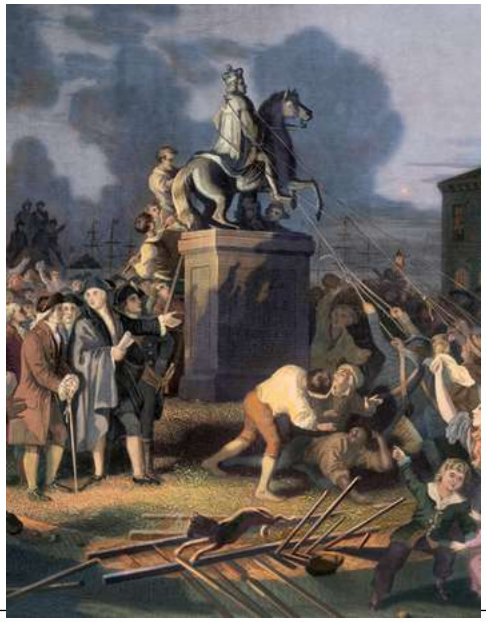


Section 1 - Introduction

An almost full moon cast a pale light over Boston on April 18, 1775. But the night was anything but quiet. Mounted on Brown Beauty, one of the fastest horses in Massachusetts, Paul Revere woke up the countryside with alarming news. British troops stationed in Boston were on the move! They had orders to march to the nearby town of Concord and seize weapons the colonists had stored there.

This was news Patriots had been waiting for. Patriots (also called Whigs) were Americans who believed the colonies had the right to govern themselves. On hearing Revere's warning, Patriots around Concord grabbed their muskets and prepared to meet the British troops.

The same news filled Loyalists (also called Tories) with dread. Loyalists were colonists who felt a deep loyalty to Great Britain. They saw themselves as faithful subjects of the king. They were horrified by the idea of taking up arms against British troops. How did colonists come to be so divided in their feelings about the British? As you read in the last lesson, most Americans were content with British rule in the early 1700s. In this chapter, you will learn what happened to change the relationship between Great Britain and the colonies.



The story begins in the 1750s, when Great Britain and the colonies fought a war against the French and their Indian allies. The French and Indian War left Great Britain with huge debts and a vast new empire to protect. To solve its problems, the British government passed new laws that tightened its control of the colonies. Some of these laws also placed new taxes on the colonists.

Colonists were stunned. For the most part, they had been able to make their own laws and determine their own taxes. Suddenly, Great Britain was changing the rules. It wasn't right, the colonists protested. In this chapter, you will see how these feelings led many colonists to consider rebelling against their government.

Section 2 - Before 1763

By 1750, the American colonies were bursting with growth. In just a century, the population of the colonies had grown from 50,000 to more than a million people. What brought about this rapid growth? Cheap land? Religious tolerance? Economic opportunity? All of these were important in attracting people to the colonies. But there was another reason.

For more than a century, the British government had, for the most part, left the colonies alone to solve their own problems. During this time, Americans had learned to govern themselves. Each colony elected its own assembly. Like the British Parliament, the assemblies had the power to pass laws and to create and collect taxes. Each assembly also decided how the colony's tax money should be spent. Americans had more freedom to run their own affairs than ordinary people in any country in Europe. Self-government also made the colonies attractive to settlers.

Conflict in the Ohio Valley As the colonies grew, settlers began to dream of moving across the Appalachian Mountains and into the Ohio Valley—the region between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Both Great Britain and France claimed this area. In 1754, the French made good on their claim by building a fort where the city of Pittsburgh stands today. They called it Fort Duquesne (du-KANE).

News of the fort alarmed the governor of Virginia. He ordered a small force of Virginia **militia [militia: a small army made up of ordinary citizens who are trained to fight in an emergency]** to drive the French out of the Ohio Valley. Militias are small armies of citizens who are trained to fight in an emergency. To head the militia, the governor chose a 22-year-old volunteer named George Washington.

Today, Americans remember George Washington as a great Patriot, a military hero, and the first president of the United States. In 1754, however, he was just an ambitious young man with no land or money. Washington believed that his best chance of getting ahead was to become an officer in the British army. There was only one problem with his plan. Most British officers believed that colonists made terrible soldiers.

The expedition into the Ohio Valley gave Washington a chance to prove them wrong. Near Fort Duquesne, he came across a French scouting party that was camped in the woods. Washington ordered his men to open fire. It was an easy victory. "I heard the bullets whistle," he wrote afterward. "And, believe me, there is something charming in the sound."

The French and Indian War Washington's whistling bullets were the first shots in a conflict known as the French and Indian War. This war was part of a long struggle between France and Great Britain for territory and power. Because many American Indians fought with France in this latest conflict, the colonists called it the French and Indian War.

In 1755, Great Britain sent 1,400 British soldiers to Virginia to finish the job that Washington had begun. They were led by a general named Edward Braddock. The soldiers' job was to clear the French out of the Ohio Valley. Washington joined the army as a volunteer, hoping to make a good impression on General Braddock.

Braddock's march into the Ohio Valley was a disaster. The troops' bright red uniforms made them perfect targets for French sharp-shooters and their Indian allies. Two-thirds of the soldiers were killed.

Washington himself narrowly escaped death. "I had four bullets through my Coat and two horses shot under me," he wrote in a letter. Showing great courage, Washington led the survivors back to Virginia. There, he was greeted as a hero.

The French and Indian War raged for seven long years. The turning point came in 1759, when British troops captured Canada. In 1763, Great Britain and France signed a peace treaty, or agreement, ending the war. In this treaty, France ceded, or gave, Canada to Great Britain.

Americans were thrilled with this victory. Great Britain now controlled a vastly expanded American empire. Never before had the colonists felt so proud of being British. And never before had the future of the colonies looked so bright.

Section 3 - Early British Actions in the Colonies

Changes that were taking place in Great Britain soon clouded the colonists' bright future. A new king, George III, had been crowned in 1760. He was not regarded as a bright man. One historian wrote that "he was very stupid, really stupid." He was also known for being proud and stubborn. He was determined to be a take-charge kind of ruler, especially in the colonies. The people George III chose to help him knew very little about conditions in North America. Before long, they were taking actions that enraged the colonists.

The Proclamation of 1763 The British government faced a number of problems after the French and Indian War. One was how to keep colonists and American Indians from killing each other as settlers pushed westward. Simply draw a line down the crest of the Appalachian Mountains, said George III. Tell settlers to stay east of that line and Indians to stay west of it.

This was what the king ordered in his Proclamation of 1763. To Americans, the king's order suggested **tyranny [tyranny: the unjust use of government power. A ruler who uses power in this way is called a tyrant.]** , or the unjust use of government power. They argued that the lands east of the Appalachians were already mostly settled. The only place that farmers could find available land was west of the mountains. Besides, the proclamation was too late. Settlers were already crossing the mountains.

The British government ignored these arguments. To keep peace on the frontier, it decided to expand the British army in America to 7,500 men.

The Stamp Act The British government had other problems besides keeping colonists and American Indians from fighting each other. One was how to pay off the large debt from the French and Indian War.

The solution seemed obvious to Prime Minister George Grenville, the leader of the British government. People in Great Britain were already paying taxes on everything from windows to salt. In contrast, Americans were probably the most lightly taxed people in the British Empire. It was time, said Grenville, for the colonists to pay their fair share of the cost of protecting them from Indians.

In 1765, Grenville proposed a new act, or law, called the Stamp Act. This law required colonists to buy a stamp for every piece of paper they used. Newspapers had to be printed on stamped paper. Wills, licenses, and even playing cards had to have stamps.

Once again, the colonists sensed tyranny. One newspaper, *The Pennsylvania Journal*, said that as soon as "this shocking Act was known, it filled all British America from one End to the other, with Astonishment and Grief."

It wasn't just the idea of higher taxes that upset the colonists. They were willing to pay taxes passed by their own assemblies, where their representatives could vote on them. But the colonists had no representatives in Parliament. For this reason, they argued, Parliament had no right to tax them. They saw the Stamp Act as a **violation [violation: breaking an established rule or law]** of their rights as British subjects. "No taxation without representation!" they declared.

Some colonists protested the Stamp Act by sending messages to Parliament. Loyalists simply refused to buy stamps. Patriots, however, took more violent action. Mobs calling themselves Sons of Liberty attacked tax collectors' homes. Protesters in Connecticut even started to bury one tax collector alive. Only when he heard dirt being shoveled onto his coffin did the terrified tax collector agree to resign from his post.

After months of protest, Parliament **repealed [repealed: to take back, or to cancel, a law]** , or canceled, the Stamp Act. Americans greeted the news with great celebration. Church bells rang, bands played, and everyone hoped the troubles with Great Britain were over.

The Quartering Act As anger over the Stamp Act began to fade, Americans noticed another law passed by Parliament in 1765. Called the Quartering Act, this law ordered colonial assemblies to provide British troops with quarters, or housing. The colonists were also told to furnish the soldiers with "candles, firing, bedding, cooking utensils, salt, vinegar, and . . . beer or cider."

Of course, providing for the soldiers cost money. New Jersey protested that the new law was "as much an Act for laying taxes" on the colonists as the Stamp Act. New Yorkers asked why they should pay to keep troops in their colony. After all, they said, the soldiers just took up space and did nothing.

In 1767, the New York assembly decided not to approve any funds for "salt, vinegar and liquor" for the troops. The British government reacted by refusing to let the assembly meet until it agreed to obey the Quartering Act. Once again, tempers began to rise on both sides of the Atlantic.

1. From 1763 to 1765, British Parliament and King George passed three laws that affected the colonists. Complete the table to explain these events.

Law	What did this law require colonists to do?	How did some colonists protest this law?	How did the British government react to those protests?
Proclamation of 1763		Colonists argued in letters and articles that it was tyranny, an unjust use of government power.	
Stamp Act (1765)	Colonists had to buy a stamp for any paper they used including newspaper and cards.		
Quartering Act (1765)			

- What do you think is the best argument for and against each of these laws? Format your answer for each of the three laws like the example below.

Proclamation of 1763
For:
Against:

Stamp Act
For:
Against:

Quartering Act
For: *The soldiers are here to protect the colonies from foreign attack, so colonists should help pay for them!*
Against:

Section 4 - The Townshend Acts

The next British leader to face the challenge of taxing the colonies was Charles Townshend. He was known as "Champagne Charlie" because of his habit of making speeches in Parliament after drinking champagne. Townshend believed that the colonists' bad behavior made it even more important to **retain [retain: to continue to keep]** an army in the British colonies. Once he was asked in Parliament whether he would dare to make the colonists pay for that army. Stamping his foot, Townshend shouted, "I will, I will!"

Townshend kept his promise. In 1767, he persuaded Parliament to pass the Townshend Acts. The new laws placed a duty, or tax, on certain goods the colonies imported from Great Britain. These goods included such popular items as glass, paint, paper, and tea.

A Boycott of British Goods To many colonists, the Townshend duties were unacceptable. Once again, colonists were determined not to pay taxes that their assemblies had not voted on.

A Boston Patriot named Samuel Adams led the opposition to the Townshend Acts. Adams was not an attractive man, and he was a failure at business. But he was gifted at stirring up protests through his speeches and writing. The governor of Massachusetts once complained, "Every dip of his pen stung like a horned snake."

Adams wrote a letter protesting the Townshend Acts that was sent to every colony. The letter argued that the new duties violated the colonists' rights as British citizens. To protect those rights, the colonies decided to **boycott [boycott: to refuse to buy one or more goods from a certain source. An organized refusal by many people is also called a boycott.]** British goods. This was a peaceful form of protest that even Loyalists could support. One by one, all of the colonies agreed to support the boycott.

Women were very important in making the boycott work, since they did most of the shopping. The *Virginia Gazette* wrote that one woman could "do more for the good of her country than five hundred noisy sons of liberty, with all their mobs and riots." Women found many ways to avoid buying British imports. They sewed dresses out of homespun cloth, brewed tea from pine needles, and bought only American-made goods.

Repeal of the Townshend Acts Meanwhile, a new leader named Lord North became head of the British government. Described by Townshend as a "great, heavy, booby-looking man," Lord North embarrassed his supporters by taking naps in Parliament. But he was good with numbers, and he could see that the Townshend duties were a big money-loser. The duties didn't begin to make up for all the money British merchants were losing because of the boycott.

Early in 1770, North persuaded Parliament to repeal all of the Townshend duties, except for one—the tax on tea. Some members of Parliament argued that keeping the duty on tea was asking for more trouble. But King George wasn't ready to give up on the idea of taxing Americans. "I am clear that there must always be one tax to keep up the right," the king said. "And, as such, I approve the Tea Duty."

Section 5 - The Boston Massacre

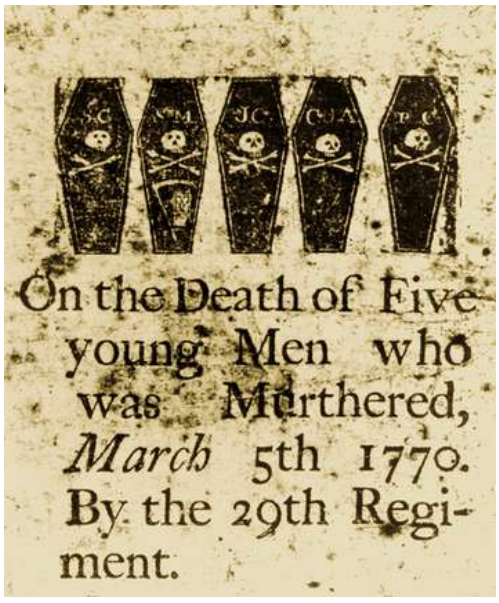
On the same day that Parliament repealed most of the Townshend duties, a fight broke out between soldiers and colonists in Boston. When the dust cleared, five Bostonians were dead and ten were injured.

Patriots called this incident the Boston Massacre. A massacre is the killing of defenseless people. What really happened was a small riot.

Trouble had been brewing in Boston for months before the riot. To the British, Boston Patriots were the worst troublemakers in the colonies. In 1768, the British government had sent four regiments of troops to keep order in Boston.

Bostonians resented the British soldiers. They made fun of their red uniforms by calling them "lobsterbacks." Samuel Adams even taught his dog to nip at soldiers' heels.

Despite such insults, the troops were forbidden to fire on citizens. Knowing this only made Bostonians bolder in their attacks. General Thomas Gage, the commander of the British army in America, wrote that "the people were as Lawless . . . after the Troops arrived, as they were before."



Mob Violence Breaks Out On March 5, 1770, a noisy mob began throwing rocks and ice balls at troops guarding the Boston Customs House. "Come on you Rascals, you bloody-backs," they shouted. "Fire if you dare." Some Patriot leaders tried to persuade the crowd to go home. So did Captain Thomas Preston, the commander of the soldiers. But their pleas had no effect.

As the mob pressed forward, someone knocked a soldier to the ground. The troops panicked and opened fire. Two bullets struck Crispus Attucks, a black man at the front of the crowd. He was the first to die, but not the last. The enraged crowd went home only after receiving a promise that the troops would be tried for murder.

Massacre or Self-Defense? Samuel Adams saw this event as a perfect opportunity to whip up anti-British feeling. He called the riot a "horrid massacre" and had Paul Revere, a local silversmith, engrave a picture of it. Revere's engraving shows soldiers firing at peaceful, unarmed citizens.

Prints of Revere's engraving were distributed throughout the colonies. Patriots saw the Boston Massacre as proof that the British should remove all of their troops from the colonies. Loyalists saw the tragedy as proof that troops were needed more than ever, if only to control Patriot hotheads.

One hero came out of this sad event. He was a Boston lawyer named John Adams. Like his cousin Samuel, John Adams was a Patriot. But he also believed that every person, even the British soldiers, had the right to a fair trial. Adams agreed to defend the soldiers, even though he knew that his action would cost him friends and clients.

At the murder trial, Adams argued that the troops had acted in self-defense. The jury found six of the soldiers not guilty. Two of them were found guilty only of manslaughter, or causing death without meaning to.

Throughout his long life, John Adams remained proud of his defense of the British soldiers. He said that upholding the law in this case was "one of the best pieces of service I ever rendered to my country."

Section 6 - The Boston Tea Party

Despite the hopes of Patriots like Sam Adams, the Boston Massacre did not spark new protests against British rule. Instead, the repeal of the Townshend duties led to a period of calm. True, there was still a small duty on tea. But the tax didn't seem to bother Loyalists very much. Patriots knew they could always drink Dutch tea that had been smuggled into the colonies without paying duties.

Things did not stay peaceful, however. In 1773, a new law called the Tea Act prompted more protests. One of them was the incident that became known as the Boston Tea Party.

The Tea Act The Tea Act was Lord North's attempt to rescue the British East India Company. This large trading company controlled all the trade between Great Britain and Asia. For years, it had been a moneymaker for Great Britain. But the American boycott of British tea hurt the company badly. By 1773, the tea company was in danger of going broke unless it could sell off the 17 million pounds of tea that were sitting in its London warehouses.

The Tea Act lowered the cost of tea that was sold by the British East India Company in the colonies. As a result, even taxed British tea became cheaper than smuggled Dutch tea. The Tea Act also gave the British East India Company a monopoly, or complete control, over tea sales in the colonies. From now on, the only merchants who could sell the bargain-priced tea were those chosen by the company.

Lord North may have thought he could persuade Americans to buy taxed tea by making it so cheap, but colonists weren't fooled. They saw the Tea Act as still another attempt to tax them without their consent.

In addition, many merchants were alarmed by the East India Company's monopoly over the tea trade. They wondered what the British government might try to control next. Would there be a monopoly on cloth? On sugar? Nervous merchants wondered what would happen to their businesses if other goods were also **restricted [restricted: to place limits or controls on something]** .

Tea Ships Arrive When the British East India Company's tea ships sailed into American ports, angry protesters kept them from unloading their cargoes. More than one ship turned back for England, still filled with tea. In Boston, however, the royal governor ordered the British navy to block the exit from Boston Harbor. He insisted that three tea ships would not leave until all their tea was unloaded.

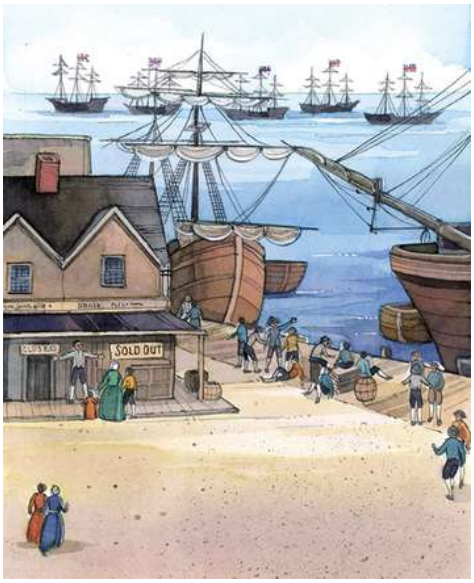
On December 16, 1773, the Sons of Liberty decided to unload the tea, but not in the way the governor had in mind. That night, about 50 men dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded the three ships. One of them, George Hewes, described what happened:

We then were ordered by our commander to open the hatches and take out all the chests of tea and throw them overboard . . . and we immediately proceeded to execute his orders, first cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks . . . In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found on the ship . . . We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us.

About 90,000 pounds of tea were dumped into the sea that night. Nothing else on the ships was touched.

News of the Boston Tea Party excited Patriots throughout the colonies. "This is the most magnificent moment of all," wrote John Adams in his journal the next day. "This destruction of the tea is so bold, so daring, so firm . . . it must have . . . important consequences." He was right.

Section 7 - The Intolerable Acts



Lord North was stunned by news of the Boston Tea Party. As he saw it, he had tried to help the colonists by sending them cheap tea. And what did they do? They threw it in the sea! This time they had gone too far.

King George agreed. To him, the issue was no longer about taxes. It was about Great Britain's control over the colonies. "We must master them totally," he declared, "or leave them to themselves." The king wasn't about to leave the colonies to themselves, however.

Great Britain's anger led Parliament to pass a new series of laws in 1774. These laws were so harsh that many colonists called them intolerable, or unacceptable. Throughout the colonies, they became known as the Intolerable Acts.

Parliament Punishes Massachusetts The Intolerable Acts were designed to punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party. The first law closed Boston Harbor to all shipping until the ruined tea was paid for. The second law placed the government of Massachusetts firmly under British control. Colonists in Massachusetts could not even hold a town meeting without the colonial governor's permission. The third law said that British soldiers who were accused of murder would be tried in England, not in the colonies. Finally, more troops were sent to Boston to enforce the new laws.

A few British leaders worried that the Intolerable Acts might push the colonies into rebellion. But George III was sure they would force the colonists to give in to British **authority [authority: the government or controlling power]** .

The Colonies Begin to Unite In fact, the Intolerable Acts did not force the colonists to give in. Boston Patriots declared they would "abandon their city to flames" before paying a penny for the lost tea. Merchants in other cities showed their support by closing their shops. Many colonies sent food and money to Boston so that its citizens would not starve.

In Virginia, lawmakers drafted a resolution in support of Massachusetts. The Virginians said that everyone's rights were at stake. "An attack made on one of our sister colonies," they declared, "is an attack made on all British America."

The Virginians also called for a congress, or meeting, of delegates from all the colonies. The purpose of the congress would be to find a peaceful solution to the conflicts with Great Britain.

Not all Americans agreed with this plan. In every colony, there were Loyalists who thought that Bostonians had gone too far and should pay for the tea. If they were forced to choose, they would side with the king against Sam Adams and his Sons of Liberty. In their view, it was the misguided Patriots who were causing all the trouble.

The First Continental Congress In September 1774, some 50 leaders from 12 colonies met in Philadelphia. The meeting brought together delegates from most of the British colonies on the North American continent, so it was called the First Continental Congress.

The delegates were used to thinking of themselves as citizens of their own colonies. Patrick Henry, a leader from Virginia, urged them to come together as one people. "I am not a Virginian," he declared, "but an American." But only strong Patriots like Sam and John Adams were ready to think of themselves this way. Many delegates were strong Loyalists who still thought of themselves as British. Still others, like George Washington, were somewhere in between. Only one thing united the delegates—their love of liberty and hatred of tyranny.

In spite of their differences, the delegates agreed to send a respectful message to King George. The message urged the king to consider their complaints and to recognize their rights.

The delegates also called for a new boycott of British goods until Parliament repealed the Intolerable Acts. Finally, they agreed to meet again the following May if the boycott didn't work.

The Colonies Form Militias In towns and cities throughout the colonies, Patriots appointed committees to enforce the boycott. In case the boycott didn't work, they also organized local militias. In New England, the volunteers called themselves Minutemen because they could be ready to fight in 60 seconds.

Across the colonies, militias marched and drilled. In New Hampshire, unknown persons stole 100 barrels of gunpowder and 16 cannons from a British fort. Similar thefts occurred in other colonies. Rather than forcing the colonies to give in, the Intolerable Acts had brought the two sides to the brink of war.

Section 8 - Lexington and Concord

King George had made many mistakes in his decisions about the colonies. The First Continental Congress listed all these mistakes in its message to the king. Now he made another one.

Rather than consider the colonists' complaints, King George refused even to answer their message. "The New England governments are in a state of rebellion," he said. "Blows must decide whether they are to be subject to this country or independent." In Boston, General Gage, the king's commander of British troops in America, got ready to deliver those blows.

The First Blow at Lexington In April 1775, a spy told General Gage that the colonists were hiding a large supply of gunpowder and weapons in the nearby village of Concord. General Gage decided to strike at once.

The general ordered 700 of his best troops to march to Concord and seize the weapons. To keep the colonists from moving the weapons, the attack had to be a surprise. So Gage had his troops march the 20 miles to Concord at night.

The colonists had their own spies. When Gage's troops slipped out of Boston on April 18, 1775, Patriots were watching their every move. Soon Paul Revere and others were galloping through the countryside, warning colonists that the British soldiers were coming.

The news reached Lexington, a town on the road to Concord, in the early hours of April 19. Led by Captain John Parker, a small band of Minutemen gathered nervously in the chilly night air.

At dawn, the British troops reached the town green. "Stand your ground," ordered Parker. "Don't fire unless fired upon, but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here." As the Minuteman faced the British troops, a shot rang out—from where, no one knew for certain. Without orders, the soldiers rushed forward, shooting wildly. A few Minutemen managed to return fire.

When the firing stopped, eight colonists lay dead or dying. Another ten were limping to safety with painful wounds. The British troops gave three cheers for victory and marched on to Concord.

The Second Blow at Concord By breakfast time, the British were in Concord, searching for gunpowder and weapons. But the colonists had hidden them. In frustration, the soldiers piled up a few wooden tools, tents, and gun carriages and set them on fire.

On a ridge outside the city, militiamen from the surrounding countryside watched the smoke rise. "Will you let them burn the town down?" shouted one man. Captain Isaac Davis replied, "I haven't a man that's afraid to go." Davis marched his volunteers down the hill. As they approached Concord's North Bridge, the British troops opened fire. Davis fell dead, a bullet through his heart.

The British expected the Americans to break and run. To their surprise, the Minutemen stood their ground and fired back. Two minutes later, it was the redcoats who were running away in panic.

The retreat back to Boston was a nightmare for the British. More than 4,000 armed and angry Minutemen lined their route, shooting at every redcoat they saw. By the end of the day, 74 British soldiers were dead and another 200 were

wounded or missing. The colonists counted their own losses as 49 dead and 41 wounded. A British officer described what it was like to face the colonists' fury that day. "Whoever looks upon them as an irregular mob," the officer said, "will find himself much mistaken."

Indeed, since the French and Indian War, the British had been mistaken about the colonists again and again. Their biggest mistake was in thinking that ordinary people—farmers, merchants, workers, and housewives—would not fight for the rights that they held dear. At Lexington and Concord, Americans proved they were not only willing to fight for their rights. They were even willing to die for them.

Summary

In this chapter, you read about tensions between the colonies and Great Britain in the mid-1700s.

Before 1763 During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), Great Britain and France fought for territory and power. When the war ended, France gave up Canada to Great Britain. Great Britain now had a much larger American empire to control.

Early British Actions in the Colonies The war left Great Britain with huge debts. To raise money, Parliament passed the Stamp Act in 1765. Colonists protested the Stamp Act because it was passed without colonial representation. Colonists also protested the Quartering Act, which required them to house British troops at the colonies' expense.

The Townshend Acts and the Boston Massacre The Townshend Acts imposed more taxes on the colonies, which divided many colonists into opposing camps. Loyalists urged obedience to Britain, but Patriots resisted "taxation without representation" through protests, boycotts, and riots. Tensions in Boston erupted into violence in 1770 when British troops fired into a crowd of colonists in what become known as the Boston Massacre.

The Boston Tea Party and the Intolerable Acts When Patriots protested a new tax on tea by throwing tea into Boston Harbor in 1773, Great Britain responded by passing the Intolerable Acts to force the colonies to give in to British authority. Patriots responded by forming the First Continental Congress and organizing colonial militias.

Lexington and Concord Fighting between Patriots and British troops at Lexington and Concord in 1775 showed that colonists would not only fight for their rights, but were willing to die for them.

Create a pamphlet to persuade colonists to rebel against or remain loyal to the British government. You may choose to express your historical figure's opinion or your own. Your letter should have

1. an eye-catching title.
2. two paragraphs explaining your position for rebellion or loyalty, supported with reasons and examples.
3. two or three colorful illustrations

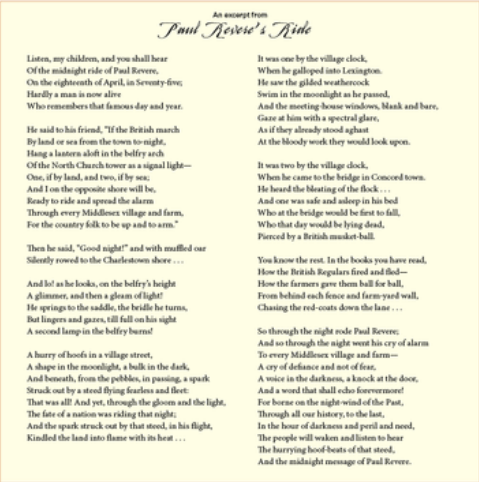
Reading Further - "I Love the Story of Paul Revere, Whether He Rode or Not"

So said President Warren G. Harding in 1923. Like most Americans at that time, Harding probably learned about Revere as a schoolboy when he read a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Later, when a skeptic claimed the story of Revere's ride never happened, Harding sprang to the poet's defense. But was Revere the hero Longfellow made him out to be?

In 1860, the young nation whose fight for freedom began at Lexington and Concord was in danger of falling apart. War clouds gathered as Americans

debated the issues of slavery and states' rights. The south, which had grown prosperous with slave labor, vigorously defended its way of life. The north, which had grown even more prosperous without slave labor, condemned slavery as morally wrong. Americans had never been so divided or so close to civil war.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was then the nation's most popular poet. He was also a northerner who opposed slavery. As he watched the nation move toward war, Longfellow began thinking about a new poem. He wanted it to be a call to arms for all who loved liberty in such a time of peril.



An excerpt from

Paul Revere's Ride

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore . . .

And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat . . .

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock . . .
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane . . .

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

One day in April 1860, Longfellow took a walk with a friend in Boston. His companion told him a story that took place on another April day, some 85 years earlier. It was the tale of a midnight ride made by a silversmith named Paul Revere to alert the countryside to coming danger. Longfellow was inspired. Like Paul Revere's ride, the poem he planned would be a cry of alarm to awaken a sleeping nation.

Longfellow set to work at once. His finished work, titled "Paul Revere's Ride," was published in 1861. Over the next century, generations of schoolchildren would read and memorize its stirring lines. As you read the excerpt that follows, can you see why the poem captured Americans' imaginations?

Longfellow Creates a Legend: The Lone Hero

Longfellow had set out to create a dramatic tale that would make patriotic hearts beat faster. In the process, he transformed Paul Revere from a local folk hero into a national legend. Even today, millions of Americans know the opening lines of Longfellow's poem.

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,

When we think of the events that launched the American Revolution, we can picture them clearly. Revere asks a friend to send a signal from Boston's Old North Church when the British troops quartered there begin to move out.

One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,

The signal comes and Revere gallops into the night, waking the countryside with the news that the British are coming.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!

Alerted by our lone hero, the colonists rise up to defend their homes and liberties.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall . . .

The rest, as they say, is history. Or is it?

Skeptics Raise Doubts: Did Revere Really Ride?

Historians were quick to point out many inaccuracies in Longfellow's telling. For example, the poet omitted the fact that, during his ride, Revere was captured by British troops. Longfellow also left out the names of other messengers who rode that night, such as William Dawes and Samuel Prescott.

As doubts about the poem multiplied, skeptics began to question the entire story. Some said Revere's ride didn't happen at all. Or if it did, Revere was captured before he could warn many Patriots. Such talk annoyed President Harding. "Somebody made the ride and stirred the minutemen in the colonies to fight the battle of Lexington," he said. "I love the story of Paul Revere, whether he rode or not."

As time passed, some doubters threw cold water on the idea that Revere was a hero. One skeptic said that Revere "set out with two other guys for money." When the three were arrested, he "turned stool pigeon and betrayed his two companions." Is this true? Was Revere a traitor to his cause?

Historians Weigh In: The Real Meaning of Revere's Ride

Modern historians find no evidence that Revere was paid to ride or that he became an informer when he was captured. But they also remind us that Revere was not the only hero of that momentous night. Within hours of his ride, 122 colonists had lost their lives and many more lay wounded. As one historian writes,

Revere's ride was not the major event that day, nor was Revere's warning so critical in triggering the bloodbath. Patriotic farmers had been preparing to oppose the British for the better part of a year . . . His ride to Lexington . . . took on meaning only because numerous other political activists had, like Revere, dedicated themselves to the cause.

—Ray Raphael, *Founding Myths: Stories that Hide Our Patriotic Past*, 2004

The real meaning of Revere's ride is what it tells us about these unsung heroes. On hearing that the British soldiers were coming, those patriotic farmers had a choice. They could remain safe in their beds or rise up to defend their rights. Looking at their response, historian David Hackett Fischer writes, "The history of a free people is the history of hard choices. In that respect, when Paul Revere alarmed the Massachusetts countryside, he was carrying a message for us."

Preparing to Write: Describing a Hero

With his poem "Paul Revere's Ride," Henry Wadsworth Longfellow made Paul Revere an American hero. Longfellow used words to create his hero. Below is the last verse of the poem. Circle words that might make Paul Revere seem like a hero to readers.

- So through the night rode Paul Revere; And so through the night went his cry of alarm To every Middlesex village and farm,-- A cry of defiance, and not of fear, A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door, And a word that shall echo forevermore! For, borne on the night-wind of the Past, Through all our history, to the last, In the hour of darkness and peril and need, The people will waken and listen to hear The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed, And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

1. What is your definition of a hero?
2. By your definition, who is someone in your community that you consider to be a hero? List three reasons why this person is a hero in your eyes.
3. List three reasons why this person is a hero in your eyes.
4. Write five words or phrases that describe your hero and his or her actions.

Writing a Descriptive Paragraph

Write a clear, descriptive paragraph about your hero. Your paragraph should convince a reader that this person has the qualities of a hero.

Use this rubric to evaluate your paragraph. Make changes in your paragraph if you need to.

Score	Description
3	Paragraph presents convincing detail on heroism. It uses a variety of descriptive words and phrases. It is well constructed with a topic sentence, supporting details, and a conclusion. There are no spelling or grammar errors.
2	Paragraph presents convincing detail on heroism. It uses some descriptive words and phrases. It has a topic sentence, supporting details, and a conclusion. There are some spelling or grammar errors.
1	Paragraph does not present convincing detail on heroism. It has few descriptive words and phrases. It lacks a topic sentence, supporting details, or a conclusion. There are many spelling or grammar errors