

Primary Regulatory Acts imposed upon America

1. Navigation Acts (1660s, Enforced Rigorously in the 1760s)

- Purpose: These acts mandated that colonial trade was to be conducted only on British or colonial ships and that certain goods, like sugar and tobacco, could only be exported to England.
- Consequences: While initially loosely enforced, Britain began strict enforcement in the 1760s to increase revenue.
- Colonial Response: Colonists often resorted to smuggling to circumvent these restrictions, viewing them as restrictive and detrimental to their economic prosperity.

2. Molasses Act (1733)

- Purpose: Imposed a tax on molasses imported from non-British colonies to encourage purchasing British molasses.
- Consequences: Had limited impact due to weak enforcement and widespread smuggling.
- Colonial Response: Colonial merchants largely ignored the tax by smuggling molasses from French and Dutch sources, establishing an early precedent for colonial resistance.

3. Sugar Act (1764)

- Purpose: Reduced the tax on molasses but enforced strict customs regulations and penalties on smuggling.
- Consequences: Aimed to raise revenue to offset the costs of the French and Indian War and to assert British control.
- Colonial Response: Many colonists saw it as an infringement on economic freedom. Merchants in New England, who relied heavily on molasses, were particularly affected and petitioned against the act.

4. Currency Act (1764)

- Purpose: Prohibited the colonies from issuing paper money, destabilizing local economies that depended on currency flexibility.
- Consequences: Hurt colonial economies by creating currency shortages, which limited trade.
- Colonial Response: Colonists, especially in the Southern colonies, viewed this as a direct attack on their economic autonomy and petitioned for repeal.

5. Stamp Act (1765)

- Purpose: Imposed direct taxes on all printed materials, including legal documents, newspapers, and playing cards.
- Consequences: First direct tax on the colonies, sparking widespread discontent and resistance as colonists argued it was “taxation without representation.”
- Colonial Response: Massive protests erupted, including the formation of the Sons of Liberty and the Stamp Act Congress. Boycotts and violent protests led to the Act’s repeal in 1766, marking a victory for colonial resistance.

6. Quartering Act (1765)

- Purpose: Required colonies to house and supply British troops stationed in America.
- Consequences: Colonists saw it as an invasion of privacy and an indirect tax to support a standing army they felt was unnecessary.
- Colonial Response: Resistance was particularly strong in New York, where the colonial assembly refused to comply, leading to tensions and eventual enforcement.

7. Declaratory Act (1766)

- Purpose: Stated that Parliament held authority over the colonies “in all cases whatsoever” after the repeal of the Stamp Act.
- Consequences: Although it didn’t impose new taxes, it reasserted British control, which alarmed colonists who felt it signaled future overreach.
- Colonial Response: Colonists were wary but initially celebrated the Stamp Act’s repeal. However, they grew increasingly skeptical of Britain’s intentions.

8. Townshend Acts (1767)

- Purpose: Levied taxes on imported goods like glass, paint, paper, and tea to raise revenue for British officials in the colonies.
- Consequences: Revived colonial anger toward taxation without representation and increased customs enforcement.
- Colonial Response: Boycotts and protests resumed, with groups like the Daughters of Liberty organizing non-importation agreements. Tensions culminated in events like the Boston Massacre in 1770, where British troops fired on protesting colonists, heightening anti-British sentiment.

9. Tea Act (1773)

- Purpose: Gave the British East India Company a monopoly on tea sales in the colonies, aiming to save it from bankruptcy while still collecting tax revenue.
- Consequences: Reinforced the principle of taxation without representation and threatened colonial merchants.
- Colonial Response: Protesters staged the Boston Tea Party in December 1773, dumping 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor. This act of defiance became a symbol of resistance.

10. Intolerable Acts (1774)

- Purpose: Also known as the Coercive Acts, these laws were passed in response to the Boston Tea Party. They included the Boston Port Act (closing Boston Harbor), the Massachusetts Government Act (reducing colonial self-governance), and the Administration of Justice Act (allowing royal officials to be tried in Britain).
- Consequences: These acts were intended to isolate Massachusetts but instead unified the colonies against perceived British tyranny.
- Colonial Response: Colonial unity strengthened as they convened the First Continental Congress in 1774 to address grievances, mark the beginning of organized colonial cooperation, and establish a boycott of British goods.

11. Quebec Act (1774)

- Purpose: Extended Quebec's territory southward and guaranteed religious freedom for Catholics, viewed as an attempt to impose a pro-Catholic government close to Protestant colonies.
- Consequences: Alarmed colonists, especially in New England, who saw it as an expansion of British influence and control.
- Colonial Response: Colonists grouped this act with the Intolerable Acts as another example of British overreach. This fueled suspicion of British intentions and deepened resentment.

Summary and Lead-up to the Revolution

The cumulative effect of these acts created an atmosphere of distrust and resentment among the American colonists, who increasingly viewed British policies as exploitative and authoritarian. By 1775, tensions erupted into open conflict, marked by the battles at Lexington and Concord. The colonial responses to these acts laid the groundwork for the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the formal start of the Revolutionary War.

Sources:

- Middlekauff, Robert. *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Maier, Pauline. *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776*. Knopf, 1972.
- Countryman, Edward. *The American Revolution*. Hill and Wang, 1985.

Narrative

In the 1700s, a series of British laws imposed on the American colonies ignited a growing resentment that ultimately led to revolution. These acts, intended to assert Britain's economic and political control over its American territories, were met with resistance, defiance, and ultimately war. What began as discontent over taxation and trade restrictions transformed into a profound questioning of British authority and the colonists' rights.

Early Tensions: The Navigation Acts and the Molasses Act

British efforts to regulate colonial trade began as early as the mid-1600s with the Navigation Acts, designed to ensure that the economic benefits of the colonies were directed toward Britain. These acts required that all colonial goods be shipped on British or colonial vessels and that certain valuable commodities, like sugar and tobacco, be exported exclusively to England. While enforcement was initially lax, the British began to enforce these restrictions more rigorously in the 1760s, following costly European wars that had strained the British treasury.

- While specific quotes from the Navigation Acts era are rare, a British Parliamentary report at the time underscored the intention behind the acts: "to ensure that the riches and wealth of the colonies... might be turned to the advantage of the Kingdom" (Great Britain, Parliament, Navigation Act, 1660).

- John Adams later described the general colonial sentiment about British trade restrictions, noting that many in the colonies felt "a good smuggler is as much a patriot as any" (Adams Papers, Vol. 3, 1763).

The Molasses Act of 1733 further restricted colonial trade by imposing a heavy tax on molasses imported from non-British colonies, a key ingredient in the New England rum industry. Rather than comply, many colonists evaded the tax through smuggling, setting an early pattern of defiance. This widespread disregard for British trade restrictions underscored the colonists' growing sense of economic independence—and the British government's inability to enforce its policies.

- John Adams later reflected on the colonial opposition to early British trade restrictions: "They grew tired of the British yoke as restrictions began to affect their livelihoods" (Adams Papers, Vol. 3, 1763).

- Colonial merchants and officials documented their discontent with the act, saying it "laid an onerous burden on commerce" and disrupted economic freedom (Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Vol. 33, 1933).

The Sugar and Currency Acts: A New Era of Revenue Generation

In 1764, seeking to alleviate Britain's war debt, Parliament passed the Sugar Act. Unlike previous laws, which regulated trade indirectly, this act aimed to generate revenue by reducing the molasses tax but intensifying customs enforcement. British officials stationed in the colonies received broader powers to stop and inspect ships suspected of smuggling, and violators faced heavy penalties. The Sugar Act sparked resentment, especially among New England merchants, who viewed it as an economic threat and a violation of their rights as English subjects.

- James Otis wrote: "The taxes imposed upon us are more grievous than those which our fathers under the government of England were subjected to" (Otis, *Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved*, 1764).

- Boston merchants petitioned, stating, "The burden of our present distress is very grievous to us... it threatens the very existence of all North America" (Records of the Town of Boston, 1764).

Around the same time, Parliament also enacted the Currency Act of 1764, which prohibited the colonies from printing their own paper money. Colonial economies were heavily reliant on locally issued currency, and without it, they faced significant financial hardship. In the Southern colonies, particularly, this act was seen as an attack on their economic autonomy and resulted in petitions to Parliament. Both acts marked a shift in Britain's approach to its American colonies—from indirect control over trade to direct intervention in colonial economies.

- Benjamin Franklin criticized the Currency Act, writing, "This act, prohibiting paper bills, must prove very detrimental to the trade, welfare, and prosperity of the colonies" (Franklin, *Letters to the Assembly of Pennsylvania*, 1764).

- Franklin further warned British officials that it would "render us a colony of beggars," underscoring the potential economic damage (Franklin, *Correspondence*, 1764).

The Stamp Act and Quartering Act: "No Taxation Without Representation"

The Stamp Act of 1765 became a pivotal moment in the colonial struggle against British authority. For the first time, Parliament imposed a direct tax on a wide range of printed materials, from legal documents to newspapers, affecting virtually every colonist. The outcry was immediate: prominent colonial voices argued that taxation without representation violated their rights as British subjects. In response, colonists organized boycotts, formed protest groups like the Sons of Liberty, and convened the Stamp Act Congress, where representatives from nine colonies asserted their opposition to British-imposed taxation. The intensity of the colonial response, which included violent protests and attacks on British officials, compelled Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act in 1766.

However, the British quickly replaced it with the Declaratory Act, asserting Parliament's right to legislate for the colonies "in all cases whatsoever."

- Patrick Henry famously declared, "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third... may profit by their example" (Henry, Speech to the Virginia House of Burgesses, 1765).

- The Stamp Act Congress stated in its resolutions, "That it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people... that no taxes be imposed on them, but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives" (Declaration of Rights and Grievances, 1765).

- John Adams wrote about the Declaratory Act with concern: "It was an alarming declaration of a design to tax us hereafter... we cannot be too cautious, jealous, and ready" (Adams Papers, Vol. 3, 1766).

- The Declaratory Act itself claimed, "Parliament had, hath, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws... to bind the colonies... in all cases whatsoever" (Declaratory Act, 1766, Statutes at Large).

The Quartering Act of 1765 further strained relations by requiring colonies to provide housing and supplies for British troops stationed in America. Many colonists saw this as an affront to their personal freedom and privacy, particularly as they felt the presence of British troops was unnecessary and oppressive. New York, where resistance to the act was especially strong, saw heightened tensions as colonial assemblies refused to comply, signaling an escalation in the standoff between Britain and its American subjects.

- The New York assembly formally complained, "We cannot and ought not be obliged to provide quarters for soldiers... in times of peace" (New York Colonial Assembly Proceedings, 1766).

- They argued that the act was "inconsistent with the principles of liberty, and the British constitution" (New York Assembly, Petition Against Quartering, 1765).

The Townshend Acts and the Boston Massacre: Rising Hostility

In 1767, the British government again sought revenue through the Townshend Acts, which taxed common imported items like glass, paint, paper, and tea. Revenue from these taxes was intended to pay British officials in the colonies, thereby reducing colonial influence over them. The acts rekindled colonial opposition to British taxation policies, with prominent figures such as John Dickinson arguing against the laws in widely read pamphlets. Women also played a vital role in the protests through the Daughters of Liberty, who promoted non-importation agreements and encouraged the use of homemade goods to avoid taxed imports.

The presence of British soldiers in colonial cities like Boston created a volatile environment, and in 1770, tensions erupted in violence. During what became known as the Boston Massacre, British soldiers fired into a crowd of angry colonists, killing five. Though British authorities argued the soldiers acted in self-defense, the event became a rallying cry for colonial resistance, fueling anti-British sentiment across the colonies.

- John Dickinson, in his Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, argued, "If Parliament may legally take money out of our pockets, without our consent, we have no property" (Dickinson, Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, 1767).

- Samuel Adams wrote in the Massachusetts Circular Letter that the acts endangered "the essential rights of the colonists as men, as Christians, and as subjects" (Massachusetts Circular Letter, 1768).

The Tea Act and the Boston Tea Party: Symbolic Defiance

In 1773, Parliament passed the Tea Act, which granted the British East India Company a monopoly on tea sales in the American colonies. Although it lowered the price of tea, it reinforced the principle of British-imposed taxation. Many colonists viewed this act as another attempt to control colonial trade and undercut colonial merchants. In a dramatic show of resistance, a group of colonists, disguised as Native Americans, boarded British ships in Boston Harbor and dumped 342 chests of tea overboard. This act of defiance, known as the Boston Tea Party, not only represented a physical rejection of British goods but also a symbolic rejection of British authority.

- Samuel Adams denounced the Tea Act, writing, "The duty imposed upon tea... is intended to establish a precedent that the Parliament has a right to tax us" (Adams, Letter to John Scollay, 1773).

- During the Boston Tea Party, participants famously declared, "Boston harbor a teapot tonight!" reflecting their symbolic rejection of British-imposed taxes (Fischer, Liberty and Freedom, 2005).

The Intolerable Acts and the First Continental Congress: Toward Revolution

Furious at the destruction of British property, Parliament enacted the Intolerable Acts (also called the Coercive Acts) in 1774. These laws included the Boston Port Act, which closed Boston Harbor until the East India Company was compensated for its losses, and the Massachusetts Government Act, which severely limited colonial self-governance. Additionally, the Administration of Justice Act allowed British officials accused of crimes to be tried in Britain rather than in the colonies, further angering the colonists.

These harsh measures were intended to isolate Massachusetts and deter further rebellion, but they had the opposite effect. Colonies rallied in support of Massachusetts, convening the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia in September 1774. This gathering marked a

significant step toward colonial unity and cooperation, as representatives from twelve colonies discussed collective action against British policies. The Congress endorsed a boycott of British goods and established committees to enforce compliance across the colonies, setting the stage for organized resistance.

- George Washington described the Intolerable Acts as “an Invasion of our Rights and Privileges” (Washington, Letter to Bryan Fairfax, 1774).
- The First Continental Congress declared, “The inhabitants of the English colonies in North America... are entitled to life, liberty, and property” (Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress, 1774).

The Quebec Act: Final Straws

The Quebec Act of 1774, which expanded Quebec’s territory southward and granted religious freedom to Catholics in the region, further inflamed colonial fears. Many Protestants in New England saw this act as a threat, interpreting it as part of a broader British scheme to undermine Protestantism and impose authoritarian rule on the colonies.

- The First Continental Congress condemned the Quebec Act as an attempt to establish “arbitrary power” over the colonies, threatening “the liberties and religion of our Protestant colonies” (Address to the People of Great Britain, 1774).
- The Massachusetts Provincial Congress objected, stating the act “establishes a religion which we, our ancestors, and the British nation, have ever held in abhorrence” (Massachusetts Provincial Congress Records, 1774).

The Road to War

By the spring of 1775, after years of escalating tension, taxation, and increasingly punitive laws, conflict between Britain and its colonies seemed inevitable. The first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord, sparking open hostilities and marking the beginning of the American Revolutionary War. The colonists, once loyal British subjects, were now united in their quest for independence, setting forth on a path that would transform them from British subjects to American citizens.

Conclusion

The series of British acts imposed upon colonial America in the 1700s reveals a steady escalation of tension and conflict, as each law deepened colonial resentment and eroded loyalty to the British crown. The pattern of taxation without representation, economic restriction, and punitive legislation forged a uniquely American identity rooted in ideals of liberty and self-governance. From the Stamp Act to the Intolerable Acts, these British policies served not only as catalysts for rebellion but as formative experiences that would guide the creation of a new, independent nation.

Selected Excerpts

Sugar Act, 1764

An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America, for continuing, amending, and making perpetual, an act passed in the sixth year of the reign of his late majesty King George the Second, ([entitled], An act for the better securing and encouraging the trade of his Majesty's sugar colonies in America;) for applying the produce of such duties, and of the duties to arise by virtue of the said act, towards defraying the expences of defending, protecting, and securing the said colonies and plantations. . . .

Whereas it is expedient that new provisions and regulations should be established for improving the revenue of this kingdom, and for extending and securing the navigation and commerce between Great Britain and your Majesty's dominions in America, which, by the peace, have been so happily enlarged:

and whereas it is just and necessary, that a revenue be raised, in your Majesty's said dominions in America, for defraying the expences of defending, protecting, and securing the same; we, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the commons of Great Britain, in parliament assembled, being desirous to make some provision, in this present session of parliament, towards raising the said revenue in America, have resolved to give and grant unto your Majesty the several rates and duties herein aftermentioned; and do most humbly beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the twenty ninth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and sixty four, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid, unto his Majesty, his heirs and successors, for and upon all white or clayed sugars of the produce or manufacture of any colony or plantation in America, not under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors; for and upon indigo, and coffee of foreign produce or manufacture; for and upon wines (except French wine;) for and upon all wrought silks, bengals, and stuffs, mixed with silk or herbs of the manufacture of Persia, China, or East India, and all callico painted, dyed, printed, or stained there; and for and upon all foreign linen cloth called Cambrick and French Lawns, which shall be imported or brought into any colony or plantation in America, which now is, or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, the several rates and duties following. . . .

II. And it is hereby further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That from and after the said twenty ninth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and sixty four, there shall also be raised, levied, collected, and paid, unto his Majesty, his heirs and successors, for and upon all coffee and pimento of the growth and produce of any British colony or plantation in America, which shall be there laden on board any British ship or vessel, to be carried out from thence to any other place whatsoever, except Great Britain, the several rates and duties following; that is to say . . .

XX. And, for the better preventing frauds in the importation of foreign sugars and paneles, rum and spirits, molasses and syrups, into any of his Majesty's dominions, under pretence that the same are the growth, produce, or manufacture, of the British colonies or plantations, it is further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That from and after the twenty

ninth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and sixty four, every person or persons loading on board any ship or vessel, in any of the British colonies or plantations in America, any rum or spirits, sugars or paneles, molasses or syrups, as of the growth, product, or manufacture, of any British colony or plantation, shall, before the clearing out of the said ship or vessel, produce and deliver to the collector or other principal officer of the customs at the loading port, an affidavit signed and sword to before some justice of the peace in the said British colonies or plantation, either by the grower, maker, or shipper, of such goods, or his or their known agent or factor, expressing, in words at length and not in figure, the quality of the goods so shipped, with the number and denomination of the packages, and describing the name or names of the plantation or plantations, and the name of the colony where the same grew or were produced and manufactured. . . .

XXI. And it is further enacted, That upon the arrival of such ship or vessel into the port of her discharge, either in Great Britain or any other port of his Majesty's dominions, where such goods may be lawfully imported, the master or other person taking the charge of the ship or vessel shall, at the time he makes his report of his cargo, deliver the said certificate to the collector or other principal officer of the customs, and make oath before him, that the goods so reported are the same that are mentioned in the said certificate, on forfeiture of one hundred pounds. . . .

XXII. Provided always, That if any rum of spirits, sugar or paneles, molasses or syrups, shall be imported into Great Britain from any British colony or plantation in America, without being included in such certificate as is herein before directed, and it shall be made to appear, to the satisfaction of the commissioners of his Majesty's customs at London or Edinburgh respectively, that the goods are really and truly the produce of such British plantation or colony, and that no fraud was intended, it shall and may in such case be lawful for the said respective commissioners to permit the said goods to be entered, upon the payment of the like duties as such goods would be liable to if this law had not been made.

Stamp Act, 1765

An act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, and other duties, in the British colonies and plantations in America, towards further defraying the expences of defending, protecting, and securing the same; and for amending such parts of the several acts of parliament relating to the trade and revenues of the said colonies and plantations, as direct the manner of determining and recovering the penalties and forfeitures therein mentioned. WHEREAS by an act made in the last session of parliament, several duties were granted, continued, and appropriated, towards defraying the expences of defending, protecting, and securing, the British colonies and plantations in America: and whereas it is just and necessary, that provision be made for raising a further revenue within your Majesty's dominions in America, towards defraying the said expences: we, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the commons of Great Britain in parliament assembled, have therefore resolved to give and grant unto your Majesty the several rates and duties herein after mentioned; and do most humbly beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of November, one thousand seven hundred and sixty five, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid unto his Majesty, his heirs, and successors, throughout the colonies and plantations in America which now are, or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors.

For every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written or printed, any declaration, plea, replication, rejoinder, demurrer, or other pleading, or any copy thereof, in any court of law within the British colonies and plantations in America, a stamp duty of three pence. . . .

For every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any affidavit, common bail or appearance, interrogatory deposition, rule, order, or warrant of any court, or any Dedimus Potestatem, Capias, Subpoena, summons, compulsory citation, commission, recognizance, or any other writ, process, or mandate, issuing out of, or returnable into, any court, or any office belonging thereto, or any other proceeding therein whatsoever, or any copy thereof, or of any record not herein before charged, within the said colonies and plantations (except warrants relating to criminal matters, and proceedings thereon or relating thereto) a stamp duty of one shilling.

For every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any licence, appointment, or admission of any counsellor, solicitor, attorney, advocate, or proctor, to practice in any court, or of any notary within the said colonies and plantations, a stamp duty of ten pounds. . . .

For every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any indenture, lease, conveyance, contract, stipulation, bill of sale, charter party, protest, articles of apprenticeship, or covenant (except for the hire of servants not apprentices, and also except such other matters as are herein before charged) within the British colonies and plantations in America, a stamp duty of two shillings and six pence. . . .

IV. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every deed, instrument, note, memorandum, letter, or other instrument or writing, between the captain or master or owner of any ship or vessel, and any merchant, trader, or other person, in respect to the freight or conveyance of any money, goods, wares, merchandizes, or effects, laden or to be laden on board of any such ship or vessel, shall be deemed and adjudged to be a charter party within the meaning of this act.

V. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all books and pamphlets serving chiefly for the purpose of an almanack, by whatsoever name or names [entitled] or described, are and shall be charged with the duty imposed by this act on almanacks, but not with any of the duties charged by this act on pamphlets, or other printed papers; anything herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

Townshend Acts, 1767

Whereas several of the houses of representatives in his Majesty's colonies and plantations in America, have of late against law, claimed to themselves, or to the general assemblies of the same, the sole and exclusive right of imposing duties and taxes upon his Majesty's subjects in the said colonies and plantations; and have in pursuance of such claim, passed certain votes, resolutions, and orders derogatory to the legislative authority of parliament, and inconsistent with the dependency Of the said colonies and plantations upon the crown of Great Britain : may it therefore please your most excellent Majesty, that it may be declared ; and be it declared by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That the said colonies and plantations in America have been, are, and of right ought to be, subordinate unto, and dependent upon the imperial crown and parliament of Great Britain; and that the King's majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons of Great Britain, in parliament assembled, had, bath, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the colonies and people of America, subjects of the crown of Great Britain, in all cases whatsoever.

II. And be it further declared and enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all resolutions, votes, orders, and proceedings, in any of the said colonies or plantations, whereby the power and authority of the parliament of Great Britain, to make laws and statutes as aforesaid, is denied, or drawn into question, arc, and are hereby declared to be, utterly null and void to all in purposes whatsoever.

Declaratory Act, 1766

An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America; for allowing a drawback of the duties of customs upon the exportation, from this kingdom, of coffee and cocoa nuts of the produce of the said colonies or plantations; for discontinuing the drawbacks payable on china earthen ware exported to America; and for more effectually preventing the clandestine running of goods in the colonies and plantations. WHEREAS it is expedient that a revenue should be raised in your Majesty's dominions in America, for making a more certain and adequate provision for defraying the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government, in such provinces where it shall be found necessary; and towards further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing, the said dominions; we, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the commons of Great Britain, in parliament assembled, have therefore resolved to give and grant unto your Majesty the several rates and duties herein after mentioned; and do most humbly beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the twentieth day of November, one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid, unto his Majesty, his heirs, and successors, for and upon the respective goods herein after mentioned, which shall be imported from Great Britain into any colony or plantation in America which now is, or

hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs, or successors, the several rates and duties following; that is to say,

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of crown, plate, flint, and white glass, four shillings and eight pence.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of green glass, one shilling and two pence.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of red lead, two shillings.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of white lead, two shillings.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of painters colours, two shillings.

For every pound weight avoirdupois of tea, three pence. . . .

And for and upon all paper which shall be printed, painted, or stained, in Great Britain, to serve for hangings or other uses, three farthings for every yard square, over and above the duties payable for such paper by this act, if the same had not been printed, painted, or stained; and after those rates respectively for any greater or less quantity.

Tea Act, 1773

An act to allow a drawback of the duties of customs on the exportation of tea to any of his Majesty's colonies or plantations in America; to increase the deposit on bohea tea to be sold at the India Company's sales; and to [empower] the commissioners of the treasury to grant licenses to the East India Company to export tea duty-free.

WHEREAS by an act, made in the twelfth year of his present Majesty's reign . . . it is amongst other things, enacted, That for and during the space of five years, to be computed from and after the fifth day of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two, there shall be drawn back and allowed for all teas which shall be sold after the said fifth day of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two, at the publick sale of the united company of merchants of England trading to the East Indies, or which after that time shall be imported, by licence, in pursuance of the said therein and hereinafter mentioned act, made in the eighteenth year of the reign of his late majesty King George the Second, and which shall be exported from this kingdom, as merchandise, to Ireland, or any of the British colonies or plantations in America, three-fifth parts of the several duties of customs which were paid upon the importation of such teas. . . . and with respect to such teas as shall be exported to the British colonies and plantations in America, the said [drawback] or allowance shall be made in such manner, and under such rules, regulations, penalties, and forfeitures, as any drawback or allowance payable out of the duty of customs upon foreign goods exported to foreign parts, was could, or might be made, before the passing of the said act of the twelfth year of his present Majesty's reign, (except in such cases as are otherwise therein provided for: and whereas it may tend to the benefit and advantage of the trade of the said united company of merchants of England trading to the East Indies, if the allowance of the drawback of the duties of customs upon all teas sold at the publick sales of the said united company, after the tenth day of May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-three, and which shall be exported from this kingdom, as merchandise, to any of the British colonies or plantations in America, were to extend to the whole of the said duties of customs payable upon the importation of such teas; may it therefore please your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament

assembled, and by the authority of the same, That there shall be drawn back and allowed for all teas, which, from and after the tenth day of May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-three, shall be sold at the publick sales of the said united company, or which shall be imported by licence, in pursuance of the said act made in the eighteenth year of the reign of his late majesty King George the Second, and which shall, at any time hereafter, be exported from this kingdom, as merchandise, to any of the British colonies or plantations in America, the whole of the duties of customs payable upon the importation of such teas; which drawback or allowance shall be made to the exporter in such manner, and under such rules, regulations, and securities, and subject to the like penalties and forfeitures, as the former drawback or allowance granted by the said recited act of the twelfth year of his present Majesty's reign, upon tea exported to the said British colonies and plantations in America was, might, or could be made, and was subject to by the said recited act, or any other act of parliament now in force, in as full and ample manner, to all intents and purposes, as if the several clauses relative thereto were again repeated and re-enacted in this present act.

Boston Port Act, 1774

An act to discontinue, in such manner, and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading or shipping, of goods, wares, and merchandise, at the town, and within the harbour, of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in North America. WHEREAS dangerous commotions and insurrections have been fomented and raised in the town of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England, by divers ill-affected persons, to the subversion of his Majesty's government, and to the utter destruction of the publick peace, and good order of the said town; in which commotions and insurrections certain valuable cargoes of teas, being the property of the East India Company, and on board certain vessels lying within the bay or harbour of Boston, were seized and destroyed: And whereas, in the present condition of the said town and harbour, the commerce of his Majesty's subjects cannot be safely carried on there, nor the customs payable to his Majesty duly collected; and it is therefore expedient that the officers of his Majesty's customs should be forthwith removed from the said town: May it please your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of June, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, it shall not be lawful for any person or persons whatsoever to lade put, or cause or procure to be laden or put, off or from any quay, wharf, or other place, within the said town of Boston, or in or upon any part of the shore of the bay, commonly called The Harbour of Boston, between a certain headland or point called Nahant Point, on the eastern side of the entrance into the said bay, and a certain other headland or point called Alderton Point, on the western side of the entrance into the said bay, or in or upon any island, creek, landing place, bank, or other place, within the said bay or headlands, into any ship, vessel, lighter, boat, or bottom, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever, to be transported or carried into any other country, province or place whatsoever, or into any other part of the said province of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England; or to take up, discharge, or lay on land, or cause or procure to be taken up,

discharged, or laid on land, within the said town, or in or upon any of the places aforesaid, out of any boat, lighter, ship, vessel, or bottom, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever, to be brought from any other country, province, or place, or any other part of the said province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, upon pain of the forfeiture of the said goods, wares, and merchandise, and of the said boat, lighter, ship, or vessel or other bottom into which the same shall be taken, and of the guns, ammunition, tackle, furniture, and stores, in or belonging to the same: And if any such goods, wares, or merchandise, shall, within the said town, or in any the places aforesaid, be laden or taken in from the shore into any barge, hoy, lighter, wherry, or boat, to be carried on board any ship or vessel coming in and arriving from any other country or province, or other part of the said province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, such barge, hoy, lighter, wherry, or boat, shall be forfeited and lost. . . .

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any ship or vessel shall be moored or lie at anchor, or be seen hovering within the said bay . . . it shall and may be lawful for any admiral, chief commander, or commissioned officer, of his Majesty's fleet or ships of war, or for any officer of his Majesty's customs, to compel such ship or vessel to depart to some other port or harbour, or to such station as the said officer shall appoint, and to use such force for that purpose as shall be found necessary: And if such ship or vessel shall not depart accordingly, within six hours after notice for that purpose given by such person as aforesaid, such ship or vessel, together with all the goods laden on board thereon, and all the guns, ammunition, tackle, and furniture, shall be forfeited and lost, whether bulk shall have been broken or not. . . .

IV. Provided always, That nothing in this act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to any military or other stores for his Majesty's use, or to the ships or vessels whereon the same shall be laden, which shall be commissioned by, and in the immediate pay of, his Majesty, his heirs or successors; nor to any fuel or victual brought coastwise from any part of the continent of America, for the necessary use and sustenance of the inhabitants of the said town of Boston, provided the vessels wherein the same are to be carried shall be duly furnished with a cocket and let-pass, after having been duly searched by the proper officers of his Majesty's customs at Marblehead, in the port of Salem, in the said province of Massachusetts Bay; and that some officer of his Majesty's customs be also there put on board the said vessel, who is hereby authorized to go on board, and proceed with the said vessel, together with a sufficient number of persons, properly armed, for his defence, to the said town or harbour of Boston.

Quartering Act, 1774

An act for the better providing suitable quarters for officers and soldiers in his Majesty's service in North America.

WHEREAS doubts have been entertained, whether troops can be quartered otherwise than in barracks, in case barracks have been provided sufficient for the quartering of all officers and soldiers within any town, township, city, district, or place, within his Majesty's dominions in North America: And whereas it may frequently happen, from the situation of such barracks, that, if troops should be quartered therein, they would not be stationed where their presence may be necessary and required: be it therefore enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That, in such cases, it shall and may be lawful for the persons who now are, or may be hereafter, authorised by law, in any of the provinces within his Majesty's dominions in North America, and they are hereby respectively authorised, impowered, and directed, on the requisition of the officer who, for the time being, has the command of his Majesty's forces in North America, to cause any officers or soldiers in his Majesty's service to be quartered and billeted in such manner as is now directed by law, where no barracks are provided by the colonies.

II. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if it shall happen at any time that any officers or soldiers in his Majesty's service shall remain within any of the said colonies without quarters, for the space of twenty-four hours after such quarters shall have been demanded, it shall and may be lawful for the governor of the province to order and direct such and so many uninhabited houses, out-houses, barns, or other buildings, as he shall think necessary to be taken, (making a reasonable allowance for the same), and make fit for the reception of such officers and soldiers, and to put and quarter such officers and soldiers therein, for such time as he shall think proper.

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That this act, and every thing herein contained, shall continue and be in force, in all his Majesty's dominions in North America, until the twenty-fourth day of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.