

## **Why were the American colonies unhappy with the British government?**

By the 1770's, Great Britain had established a number of colonies in North America. The American colonists thought of themselves as citizens of Great Britain and subjects of King George III. They were tied to Britain through trade and by the way they were governed. Trade was restricted so the colonies had to rely on Britain for imported goods and supplies. There were no banks and very little money, so colonists used barter and credit to get the things they needed.

Following the French and Indian War, Britain wanted to control expansion into the western territories. The King issued the Proclamation of 1763 prohibiting settlements beyond the Appalachian Mountains. Colonists who had already settled on these lands were ordered to return east of the mountains.

In 1765 Parliament passed the Quartering Act that said the colonists needed to find or pay for lodging for British soldiers stationed in America. With the French and Indian War over, many colonists saw no need for soldiers to be stationed in the colonies.

Britain also needed money to pay for its war debts. The King and Parliament believed they had the right to tax the colonies. They decided to require several kinds of taxes from the colonists to help pay for the French and Indian War. These taxes included the Stamp Act, passed in 1765, which required the use of special paper bearing an embossed tax stamp for all legal documents. Other laws, such as the Townsend Acts, passed in

1767, required the colonists to pay taxes on imported goods like tea.

Many colonists felt that they should not pay these taxes, because they were passed in England by Parliament, not by their own colonial governments. They protested, saying that these taxes violated their rights as British citizens.

The colonists started to resist by boycotting, or not buying, British goods. In 1773 some colonists in Boston, Massachusetts demonstrated their frustration by dressing up like Indians, sneaking onto ships in the harbor, and dumping imported tea into the water. This was called the Boston Tea Party. The British took action by closing the Boston port. A similar but smaller tea party took place in Yorktown, Virginia in 1774.

The First Continental Congress met in 1774 to make a list of complaints about the way Britain was treating the colonies. Many people in America felt their concerns were not being heard, and this caused more unhappiness in the colonies.

In April of 1775, a group of colonists fought against the British army in the Battles of Lexington and Concord. In 1775, the Second Continental Congress decided to form a Continental Army, which consisted of citizens from 13 colonies. George Washington was selected to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. The colonies were ready to fight for their rights.



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