

As early as the late 1600s, England began taxing its colonies without representation by the colonies in Parliament. As a result, anger brewed among the colonies. Tarring and feathering became a popular method for the Sons and Daughters of Liberty to exact their revenge upon tax collectors and British officials. Mobs protested in the streets of New England towns. Taxes on paper goods and tea would prove to incite two very infamous events in American History. The War of Independence birthed of the frustration of “taxation without representation”. In the years leading up to the war from 1763 to 1776, the British enacted several laws, including the Stamp Act of 1765 and Townshend Acts, which increased the colonist’s anger and finally encouraged all-out rebellion.

British Imperial policies were composed primarily of taxes upon the colonists. The revenue from these taxes was to be used to pay military debt run up from the French and Indian War. The English government reasoned that the colonists should help reimburse the Crown for the protection Britain had provided them during the Seven Years’ War. In 1765, Parliament passed the Stamp Act. The Stamp Act addressed over fifty different items of trade, such as playing cards and newspapers, and required a stamp that certified the payment of the tax. The Stamp Act tax was created in order to raise funds for England’s new and growing military force. British officials who enforced the Stamp Act were persecuted by mobs of angry Americans. Many Englishmen were tarred and feathered—a cruel practice in which one is first painted in molten tar and then is covered in feathers. The Stamp Act was eventually appealed about a year after it was passed. Several years after the Stamp Act of 1765, Charles Townshend took control of the British ministry.

Townshend convinced Parliament to pass an import duty on goods like glass, paper, and most notably, tea. Because revenue from the Townshend Acts was used to pay the salaries of royal governors and judges, the American colonists regarded the Townshend Acts as another attempt to restrain their rights. Eventually, the uproar from the Townshend Acts would force Britain to send regiments of their “Lobsterbacks” to Boston in 1768.

However extreme the colonist’s viewed the British imposition of taxes, the same could be said for their response to said taxes. Two notable events in history were birthed by the colonies’ pent-up anger towards Britain’s tyrannical taxing: the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party. The Boston Massacre occurred on March 5, 1770, right below the balcony of Boston’s Old State House. A total of about 60 colonists harassed a small troop of redcoats. Their taunting was rooted in deep-seeded frustration stemming from Britain’s so-called radical taxation. The British troops’ fired without orders into the angry crowd, and the ensuing brawl killed 11 people. This event marked a change in the relationship between the British and the colonists; it was the first time that English troops had opened fire on the American public. The Boston Massacre was a predecessor to the Revolutionary War, much like the Boston Tea Party. On December 16, 1773, roughly three years after the Boston Massacre, members of the Sons of Liberty led a riot that brewed in Boston Harbor. 342 chest of tea were dumped into the bay, substantially setting back the British East India Company’s profits. The riot occurred because of the colonist’s resentment of the tax on tea that was retained even after the Townshend Acts had been repealed. The taxation on tea was especially bothersome because the colonists

drank so much of the beverage. The English never bagged the leading perpetrators of the Tea Party.

In the years from 1763-1776, Parliament imposed many taxes upon the American colonies. These taxes would later fuel the emotions that would boil into the War of Independence.