

Thinking through the past



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The American Revolutionary war began in-part because of economic struggles England faced after securing safety for it's colonies during the Seven Years War. England needed to increase their taxation on the colonists after the war to pay off its war debts. Prior to these taxes, the colonies were wholly content while under the wing of the British Empire. Not only because the protection the British provided, but also because of their deep reverence for the Motherland. Colonists were angered by with Parliament due to their lack of acknowledgement towards colonists rights and opinions.

Colonists stood together in a defiant motion towards liberation from England's tyrannous acts of lawless duplicity. Before British government was able to fully dominate the colonies by use of loyalists and tax collectors, citizens of the colonies struck back, and with violent force. Lower class white colonists, female colonists, African slaves, and Native Americans all played an influential part and were influenced heavily by the course of the American Revolutionary War.

Historian Gary Nash argues that mainstream views of the Revolutionary era only touch the surface of what had occurred during the period and to whom it involved. He goes beyond the American colonies'; political leaders and noblemen into a much more acute ideological standpoint. Nash's reasoning stands on the protests from various minority groups to suggest that colonists wished to democratize society and challenge the authority of the greatest empire of its time, Great Britain. Furthermore, colonists developed a deep desire to derail its shackles of servitude to England in due process.

The New England colonies did not evaluate themselves, therefore, the removal of the minority colonists rights took colonists to a point at which

their position manifested itself into acts of revolt; their initiative grew into what is known as the Revolutionary War and finally, the United States of America. The Seven Years War holds the key to destabilization within England and it's North American Colonies. According to Gary Nash, the colonial response to the Stamp Act of 1765 drew more solemnly from common people than from their "presumed leaders" (61).

The Stamp Act Crisis in Boston, Massachusetts quickly became a centralized location for further detest to the British law. Colonists fought against the stamp act with fury and anger. Nash adds to the compelling reality that dregs had little or nothing to lose compared to the Elite colonists in the fight with Governor Thomas Hutchinson and brother-in-law Andrew Oliver, both were sent by Britain to restore order and invoke the laws. The common worker had their hands in on the destruction of Hutchinson and Oliver's property during one of their mob riots as mentioned in source three..

Ebenezer MacIntosh was viewed as "The principal leader of the mob,"(63) but by no means were these acts set in play by anyone other than British Parliament's forges for rapid wealth. The common people brought Parliament's ability to tax to a screeching halt. Gary Nash also brought forth the objections of two groups that were under the subjection of colonial mistreatment. Native Americans and Slaves acted in attempts to liberate themselves throughout the American Revolution. Though their enemy was not the British, but rather the colonists that exploited them.

Native Americans and African slaves were also directly involved in the Revolutionary War by aiding the British in attempts to dominate colonists. Nash concludes that these two forces alone were not only capable of making

a definitive difference in completing the war but also paving their own futures. African slaves were given an opportunity to be freed by the British, and as one-fifth of the population of the colonies, their role in the war would be exponential. Black slaves fought along side colonial rebels and the British Empire.

Only five thousand African slaves fought in the Continental army compared to the twenty-thousand who fought along side the British army. Nash focuses on the fact that all of them were fighting for the same cause, cessation from slavery while addressing how the British manipulated slaves for their personal gain. The primary sources in Thinking Through the Past reflects the desires of colonists and others to be free. To the colonists, policies such as the navigation and stamp acts, and the forthcoming of merchants that collected taxes were viewed as the announcement of England's tyrannical reign coming to the northern hemisphere.

The Laws and the governance that put these acts into play were seen as an enemy to the colonies and to freed people. It was then clear that American Colonies' loyalties to the British Empire meant surrendering their rights as free men. The riots and mobs from sources three, four, and five personify the intense emotional development in major cities such as New York. There demonstrators attempted to scare the merchants and tax collectors that enforced England's new laws. Colonists had begun a campaign against taxation without representation.

Source three acknowledges two gentlemen that were apart of the Sons of Liberty. These men were told to go down and have a governor merchant of New York burn the stamps, and by doing so dismissing the tax on paper-

goods. As a crowd gathered with them, rioting began and the mob of people destroyed some of Mr. Charles William's, a naval officer's property. The two Sons of Liberty were lucky to not be hung for carrying out such intolerable acts against a representative of Great Britain.

The crowd had more to do with the destruction of personal property than the "two mortified gentlemen"(71). The mobs overpowering mentality reflected the attitude and position of all North American Colonists. A breakdown of societal contentment and an anarchist uproar foreshadowed what was to come. The mob's use of destruction to punish merchants adds a clear mark on colonists brash sentiment towards British rule. Source four adds to the belief that the peoples mentality is one to fear for political officials.

Angry mobs of people often promote unscrupulous acts of violence, and their direction reached out toward British officials. As Gouverneur Morris of New York states, "We shall be under the worst of all possible dominions; we shall be under the domination of a riotous mob"(72). His letter illustrates the dark period before the storm. Colonists are determined to be a group of free citizens that cannot be ruled. Tensions grow, finally the memory of England provides little or no influence to the hearts of the colonists.

The Revolutionary movement of the non-elite people of English colonies filtered through a thought process that was as much radical as it was mandatory in the sense that all men were destined for freedom in the new land. Although their thoughts were ideological in nature, in the end their dreams were swept under by elitists and law makers. At one point the elitists and non-elites were fighting for a similar cause. Freedom from immoral or

unlawful regulations to which England had cast down to colonists, and colonists cast onto their spouses, slaves and their neighbors, the natives.

In this conjunction of groups came an alliance against tyranny by which only one would prevail. The radicalism of the colonists were brought forward through protests, mob hostilities, and bloodshed. Natives would side with British in order to benefit by gaining the rights to their land. Slaves would benefit in rising against colonists for the advancement of freedom for the one-fifth population of the colonies. These acts were not only pertinent to the expansion of North American colonies, but also to the radicalism and ideology written about in certain documents of United States history.

Their defiances against England, slavery, and snatching of land were fought for without desperations of acknowledgement, but for realities in the world and days that they lived. These groups fought bravely for the purpose of owning their freedom and what was rightfully theirs. Only years later would African Americans be freed. British Parliament unified New England colonies by viewing colonists as mere tenants of their land. Laws such as the Navigation and Stamp Acts were passed to add some of the economic pressures felt in England onto the shoulders of the American colonies.

With the hardships already faced in the American colonies, tax increases and outside governance manifested groups such as the Sons of Liberty and the Whig party that celebrated the idea of separation from England. As these men fought for the advocacy of rights, liberties, and the pursuits of happiness, they neglected to accept appeals from African slaves, Native Americans, and colonial woman, who all found themselves segregated and below white colonists. The majority of the war was fought adamantly by

these groups for the pursuance of freedom and justice, but few were allotted what they had fought so vigorously for.