

The events surrounding the whiskey rebellion

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The Events Surrounding the Whiskey Rebellion For hundreds of years, there have been many reasons for citizens to feel like they were being taken advantage of by their government. The biggest source of these exploited feelings seems to be taxes. Now, when citizens feel like they are taken advantage of, there seems to be 2 ways that they deal with it: they accept it and pay their taxes, or they get angry until the whispers of rebellion are heard ' round the country. A great example of a rebellion caused by taxes was the Whiskey Rebellion. This rebellion led to the people's wary of the power of the federal government. Although not known my many people, the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 had intense effects on the history of the United States including the importance of the federal government. The Whiskey Rebellion had been simmering for several years before breaking out in 1794. After the Revolutionary War, the government agreed to take over the debt of the states only if the nation's capital could move from Philadelphia south to a swamp area on the Potomac which we today call Washington, D. C.

(anonymous). In order to help pay the debts, the Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton put an excise tax on all liquor sold in the United States of 25%. The famers in the southwestern states below New York relied on their whiskey production for their source of money. This was because transporting liquor was much easier to transport than as grain.(Rothbard) So, this tax was disputed greatly by farmers. This unpopular tax represented a big hassle of federal authority at the time. Thomas Jefferson, in fact, resigned from his post as Secretary Of State, due to one reason being his protest against the whiskey tax. After Jefferson's resignation, he helped form the Democratic-Republican Party. This party supported states' rights against the

power of the federal government, which led to the fall of the Federalist party of Washington and Hamilton (anonymous " Whiskey Rebellion"). By the time the year 1794 rolled around, the Whiskey Rebellion had broken out and was starting to spread. It was impossible for the tax collectors that had been sent to western Pennsylvania to collect the whiskey tax from that specific area, due to being constantly threatened. Police were told to arrest anybody that resisted the tax. This only provoked the farmers and caused so much more violence. In July of 1794, local anti-tax settlers became enraged when James McFarlane of the local militia was shot by federal troops while trying to defend a tax official. The settlers burned down the buildings belonging to the official, as he was hustled to safety by the federal troops.(Rothbard) There were negotiations that took place to try to settle the uprising without any violence needed, but when they all failed, President Washington put on his Revolutionary War uniform in order to lead the army of 12, 000 troops into Western Pennsylvania, the stronghold of the rebellion. This great army shut down the Whiskey Rebellion very easily, and the farmers, staring in the eyes of a large force and notable commander, retreated swiftly (Kohn). Only two of the rebels that Washington's army captured were imprisoned, but were later let go by Washington. The Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 isn't a very popular rebellion, but made a great impression on the future of the United States. Some of the largest were a new relationship that had formed between the federal government and the states, conflict in the administration of George Washington that led to the ending of the Federalist Party, and the start of a new party which is still in use to this day. The Whiskey Rebellion was the first and only time that a president of the United

States personally led troops into battle. Since, our leaders have been very careful about putting taxes on things in order to avoid rebellions. Works Cited Anonymous. " The Whiskey Rebellion." PBS. PBS, n. d. Web. 15 Dec. 2012. Anonymous. " Whiskey Rebellion." N. p., n. d. Web. Kohn, Richard H. " The Washington Administration's Desicion to Crush The Whiskey Rebellion." Journal of American History 59. 3 (n. d.): 567-84. JSTOR. Web. 15 Dec. 2012. Rothbard, Murray N. " The Whiskey Rebellion." By Murray N. Rothbard. N. p., n. d. Web. 16 Dec. 2012.