

Views of americans towards britain in years before revolution essay sample

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



Between the years of 1763 and 1776, the worsening relations between the colonies and Great Britain were illustrated by the views colonists had towards the British Parliament and King George III. The first in a series of direct and immediate events within these years, which eventually destroyed the relationship, was the Proclamation of 1763. By prohibiting settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains, England expected to save on administrative costs by controlling expansion. Even though most colonists ignored this law, it angered them because it tried to restrict them. This act lead into a chain of acts including, in 1764, the Sugar Act and the Currency Act, in 1765, the Stamp Act and the Quartering Act, the Intolerable Acts of 1774, as well as many others that aggravated the colonists and caused resentment towards Parliament and the King. The actions of the King and Parliament towards the colonies soon caused a once loyal adherence to authority to degenerate into a hatred, and more so, a justification for the rebellion against the king. This attitude that the king and parliament were taking advantage of their power over the colonies, is summed up by the Declaration of Independence, ‘...it is the Right of the people to alter or to abolish [‘...any Form of Government (that) becomes destructive of (the natural rights of Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness)...’]...’

By 1763, Britain began to attempt to display more clearly the power King George III and the British Parliament thought they had. This flaunting of authority began with the Proclamation of 1763, which, by prohibiting the settlement of colonists west of the Appalachian Mountains, stirred the feelings of the people, and received a mild reaction. After the more vigorous reactions to the Revenue Act and Currency Acts of 1764, there was an

outright reaction of opposition to the Stamp Act when it was passed on March 22, 1765. Because it was an 'internal' tax, a tax which applies to commerce within the state, it was accepted by none. The colonists were used to the taxes Britain imposed on their trade and 'external' taxation, but when parliament passed the Stamp Act, representatives from 12 of the 13 colonies joined together to form the Stamp Act Congress to take action against the Act. The outcome was the Declaration of Rights which said, amidst 'warmest sentiments of affection and duty to his majesty...', that they would only be taxed by their consent, and supported the famous term, 'no taxation without representation.'

In addition, the 'principle' that the colonists believed was that England was allowed to tax them externally, and regulate trade as they pleased. However, as the farmer clearly says, (document B), according to the colonies, the government was not entitled to tax America internally. Also, the farmer states that the act is 'unconstitutional,' which displays the idea that the colonies had their own constitution, and that Britain was making laws against it. Parliament was seen by most colonists as an authority, but not as the ultimate authority, as seen with their constitution. The act was soon repealed, and although tension manifested its way between the colonists and Britain, the colonists still were loyal to the king. Even though most colonists didn't mind not being independent, they detested the Stamp Act, and Britain's idea that they could tax them as they wished.

Soon after the Stamp Act followed the Quartering Act in 1765, and the Townshend Act, each taxing the colonists even more. Still, however, in 1770,

the colonists were continuing to show loyalty to the king, (document C). By this time, one main question arose in the colonial mind: Which body of government, the colonial legislature, or the British Parliament, was the supreme source of authority? Although loyalty to King George III was taught in schools, colonists began to question his authority, especially after the Boston Massacre, on March 5, 1770. The incident aroused much questioning and hatred towards the British soldiers, known as 'lobster backs' who were quartered in Boston. By 1772, a Boston town meeting responded to the Quartering Act, (document D), stating their dissatisfaction with it, and that it was an unconstitutional law.

America saw itself as having its own constitution, and that it was their right to disobey any laws that went against it. This type of relationship became more and more clear as time went by, however loyalty to the king remained. Then, by July of 1774, the Intolerable Acts had taken effect, closing down Boston's port to trade, and affecting the trial process in America. As a result, the Bostonians became very angry at parliament, and friction became even more intense. Thomas Jefferson responded blatantly to it, saying that Parliament had finally gone too far when it disallowed Boston to trade. He then turned to the king, as the last hope, saying that it was the king's duty to protect them, (document E).

In September of 1774, the First Continental Congress was formed by 56 representatives from all 13 colonies, in order to discuss what to do. They stated that every colonist had the right of 'being tried by their peers,' and that 'keeping a standing army...is against law,' (document F). The doctrine

also says that the laws England was passing were unconstitutional, going against 'the several charters or compacts' they had written prior to the occasion. The idea that the colonists' constitutions were the supreme law, and that they dominated that of parliament, was supported by most by this time, and showed that the colonists did not feel like parliament was in total control of them. Although the colonists didn't like Parliament's actions of taxing them, with all of the acts they passed, they didn't mind very much if they regulated trade, but only wished to keep their 'old privileges' of being able to tax and govern themselves, (document G). Soon afterwards, on April 18, 1775, Lexington and Concord occurred, commencing in an American victory. This event was a major turning point in the colonial odious opinion towards Britain, and it showed that colonists would actually fight and die against their mother country to protect themselves from the domination of parliament and the king.

After Lexington and Concord, although most colonists were against Parliament, some were continuing to be loyal. In Westchester, (document H), the colonists' views of parliament were clear, stating that they 'acknowledge no Representatives but the General Assembly.' This specific example of complete deference to England barely a year before the Revolution, shows that some areas would still 'support the king and constitution,' even though many colonists were already fighting for liberty. Not three months later, the Second Continental Congress met, and declared that the fact that they're English won't even stand in the way of liberty, (document I). Colonists were very angry at Parliament for not allowing them to have liberty, but many still

supported the king, thinking that he would do something about it in the long-run. The colonists who still had this feeling that the king was the 'good guy,' soon were against the king as a result of reading Thomas Paine's Common Sense, (document J). Thomas Paine states sarcastically that the king is an 'enemy to liberty,' and is truly not the person to put trust in. The effect of this pamphlet was immense, and read by possibly one million people. It changed what was once a strict obedience to England turn into a fierce desire to fight for liberty against both the king and parliament.

The final outcome that the nation came to in 1776 was the Declaration of Independence, (document K). It blamed the king for most of the wrong that had happened, as well as parliament, and justified that a revolution against England would be necessary because the joint authority of parliament and the king had been too destructive to the basic rights of the people.

By 1776, war, which was nearly unthinkable in 1763, seemed necessary. Between these years, the basic outlook on King George III and the British Parliament drastically changed, illustrating the worsening relations that were taking place. Colonists went so far as to declare independence from the country that they once depended upon, and fought for. Instead, their views about their mother country turned to hatred, and became the backbone for Revolution.