

Gin act



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

After the Glorious Revolution in 1688, the beverage gin began to overtake beer. Soon the distilling of gin was available to anybody that was willing to pay taxes. However the government had an inconsistency for their taxation method. The Gin Act of 1736 was an example of the governments many actions toward the distillation of gin. At first the Gin Act imposed a high license fee for gin retailers with a very high gallon tax but within a few years these rules changed.

Although there were numerous shop owners and peasants that made their livings off gin, there were many that conflicting views from the community about the restriction of the sale of gin in the 18th century. There are various documents about the diverse views from the community on the restriction of selling of Gin. In document two Daniel Defoe, who is an author and social commentator speaks in favor of gin by telling the people that gin helps consume the over population of grain for the peoples interest and because of this reason the distilling of gin should be preserved.

Defoe is promoting the distilling of gin to people. William Pulteney, a landowner made a speech in parliament in 1736 in favor of the distilling of gin. Pulteney stated that gin was the chief provider for many families and with the help of gin many families could keep their families surviving. Lord Bathurst in 1737 claim gin was necessary because doctors stated that the drinking of gin was healthy and that it provides relief for people. Also because of the conditions of England the relief from Gin was a necessity.

Other documents presents the grimmer aspects about gin. An anonymous distilled liquor in 1736 argued that gin was a menace society because

families spend all their money on gin and people are always drunk. From a petition to parliament, County Magistrates from Middlesex expressed that gin destroyed thousands of lives. Gin turns people evil. People were unfit for work, and that they were corrupted in their morals. Although Lord Lonsdale is a wealthy man, Lonsdale spoke to parliament as the adversary of gin.

Lonsdale stated that gin caused birth defects but harms the human body. Gin fills the prisons with more criminals, and loads the hospital with cripples. Some people do not just limit their views to the consequences that gin has on society but brings it to a religious view. John Wesley, an accountant articulated in 1749 that drinking gin was a sin and by not drinking the beverage you will be saved from sin. Wesley expressed that if one continued drinking all they will achieve is drunkenness, fighting, quarreling, and brawling.

There are conflicting views about the issue of restricting gin. Some of the wealthy are against gin while some of the wealthy are for gin. As an example Lord Bathurst and Lord Lonsdale are both wealthy lords but their views on the restriction of gin is completely different. Lord Bathurst argues that gin is good for the people's health, whereas Lord Lonsdale argues that gin destroys the human body. Therefore Lord Bathurst is non supportive of the restriction of gin while Lonsdale is.

In documents 11 and 12 a painting about a street that produces beer is compared to a street that produces gin. In the street that produces beer, the society is developing, people are well fed, and they are not drunk or rioting but in the painting of the gin street, people are drunk, babies have birth

defects, buildings are crumbling and basically people are in chaos. Also there are distillers that have differing views about the restriction on the restriction of gin.

An anonymous person from *Distilled Liquors: The Bane of the nation* stated that because of gin people were never in a clear state of mind and even if they were they would go back drinking, hence supportive of the gin restriction, while in a letter to John Moore, an important distiller in 1736 stated that the Gin act strikes the very root of property rights because of the high license fees thus non supportive of the gin restrictions.

Although there were conflicting views on the restriction of gin, there was not a certain group that supported the restriction of gin or a group that was non supportive of the restriction of gin. From wealthy lords to distillers, they all had different views on the gin restriction. Some argues for the restriction but some argued against the restriction causing conflicts within their community.