

# Causes of the American Revolution



# Prewar Boundaries 1754

# Postwar Boundaries 1763



-  British territory
-  French territory
-  Spanish territory
-  Disputed between Great Britain and France

# Post-War Problems

**Proclamation of 1763:** British prohibited colonists from crossing over the Appalachian Mountains; NAs end of the deal →

Colonists ignored the law, bribed British troops along the border, & continued to provoke NAs by taking lands →

Need for a standing British army in the colonies to settle issues; England heavily in debt (140mil. Pounds) b/c of war; resentment between colonists and England brews →



Solution: Parliament places taxes (called “duties”) on certain goods to help pay for their expenses in the colonies as well as strictly enforcing Navigation Acts →

Smugglers tried to *avoid* paying taxes →

**1765: Writs of Assistance** allowed British authorities search and seize smuggled goods

**Why do the colonists have such a problem with this?**

A portrait of James Otis, a colonial American lawyer and orator. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat. He has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the right of the viewer.

“One of the most essential branches of English liberty is the freedom of one’s house. A man’s house is his castle.”

– JAMES OTIS

# British Taxation

**Sugar Act (1764):** tax on *foreign* sugar, textiles, wine, coffee, indigo (cut the tax on British molasses in half) brought into the colonies →

-England now had monopolized the selling of sugar and molasses

**Why is this a big deal?**

Protests begin; James Otis “No taxation without representation”

**What do you think England’s response from the govt will be?**

Taxation without  
representation is  
tyranny.

James Otis



England's response was that Parliament represented all British subjects, even those who did not vote. Parliament called this “**Virtual Representation**”

**Stamp Act (1765):** tax placed on imports such as tea, glass, paper and certain documents, paint, playing cards and other fine goods; PM Grenville was trying to raise money for defense

Colonists again reacted with protests & British reacted by sending more troops (seen as violating “innocent until proven guilty” right)

\*Tug of war continued,  
action then a reaction\*



## Resistance Begins

-**Sons of Liberty**: revolutionaries in Boston, MA

Samuel Adams - leader

John Adams - cousin

-Stamp collectors/agents were harassed (e.g. “tarred & feathered,” stormed officials houses, etc.)

-Women organized boycotts of taxed goods, handcrafted products (Daughters of Liberty)



Stamp Act eventually repealed in 1766 →

**Declaratory Act (1766):** Parliament has the right to *declare* laws for British colonies



# Townshend Act (1767)

Tax placed on imports such as tea, glass, oil, lead, paper, paint

-Revenue would be used to pay colonial governors so they wouldn't be bound to listen to the colonists

**Hmm...**

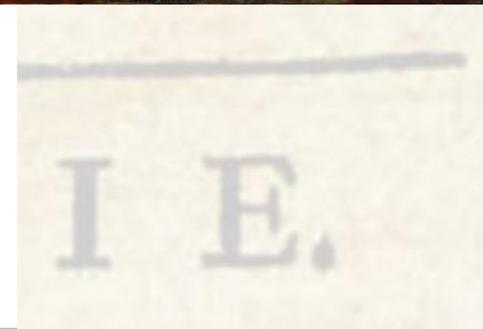
-Actually a lighter tax and taken indirectly, but nonetheless seen as another oppression →

Smuggling →

-King George III sent two more regiments of "Redcoats" to Boston



Charles Townshend



# Boston Massacre

March 1770: protests by colonists due to Townshend Acts

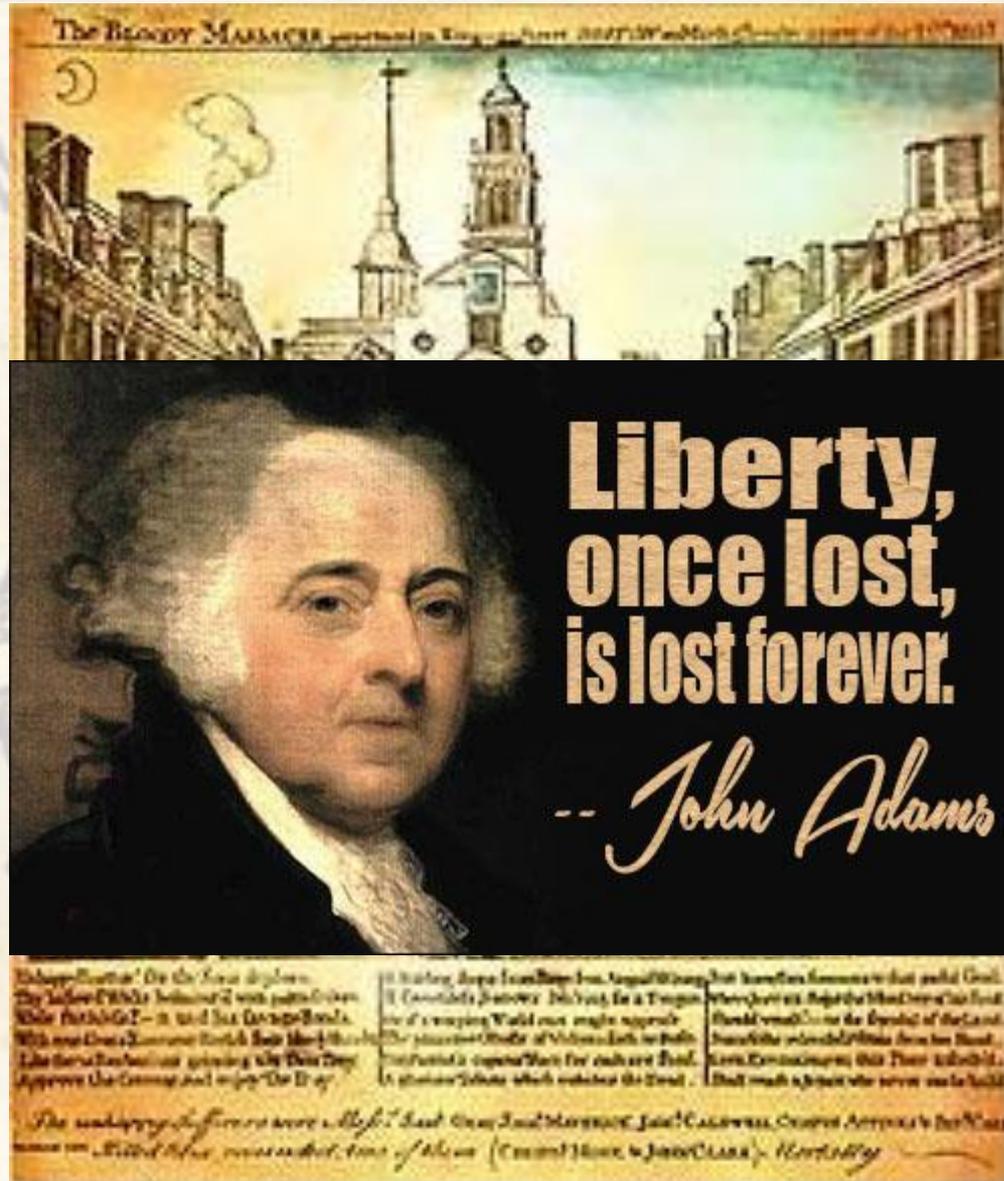
British troops fire on crowd; 5 colonists killed, 11 wounded including Crispus Attucks (escaped slave)

British officer in charge, Capt. Thomas Preston, was arrested and charged with manslaughter, along with eight of his men

John Adams served as attorney for the soldiers

**Why????**

*Most* soldiers acquitted at their trial for murder; ruled they acted in self-defense



# Boston Tea Party

**Tea Act (1773):** placed a 3 cent tax on each pound of tea – actually made British East India Tea Company's product more inexpensive

**Dec. 1773:** Sons of Liberty raid Boston harbor dressed as Mohawk NAs & dumped 90,000 lbs. of tea overboard

**Some praised action, some condemned, why?**



Ain't No Party  
Like a Boston Party

JOIN,

## Intolerable Acts (1773)

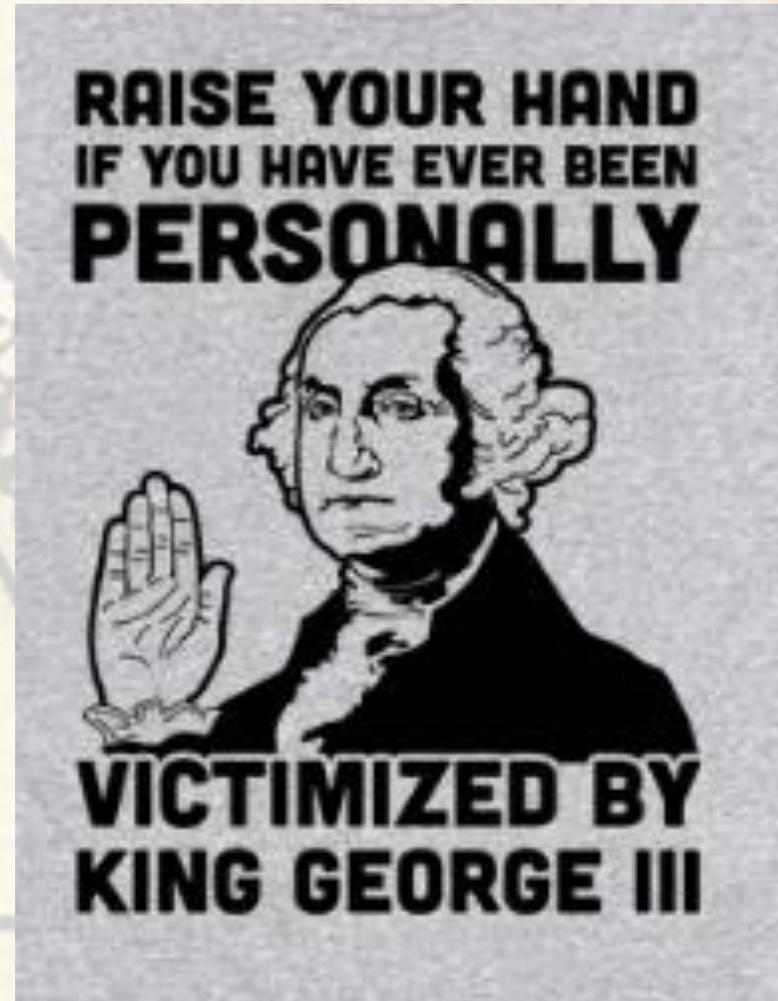
Parliament passes Coercive Acts to punish Boston

Colonists called it the Intolerable Acts:

**Why was it named differently by the British/Colonists?**

1. Closed Boston harbor until payback was made for the destroyed tea
2. Royal Governor could ban town meetings and the elected assembly was shut down
3. Suspended basic civil rights – took away right to a trial by jury for colonists
  - British officials would be tried in England
4. Housed troops in peoples homes aka “quartering of troops” required; Quartering Act 1765

Coercive Acts lead to →



# 1<sup>st</sup> Continental Congress

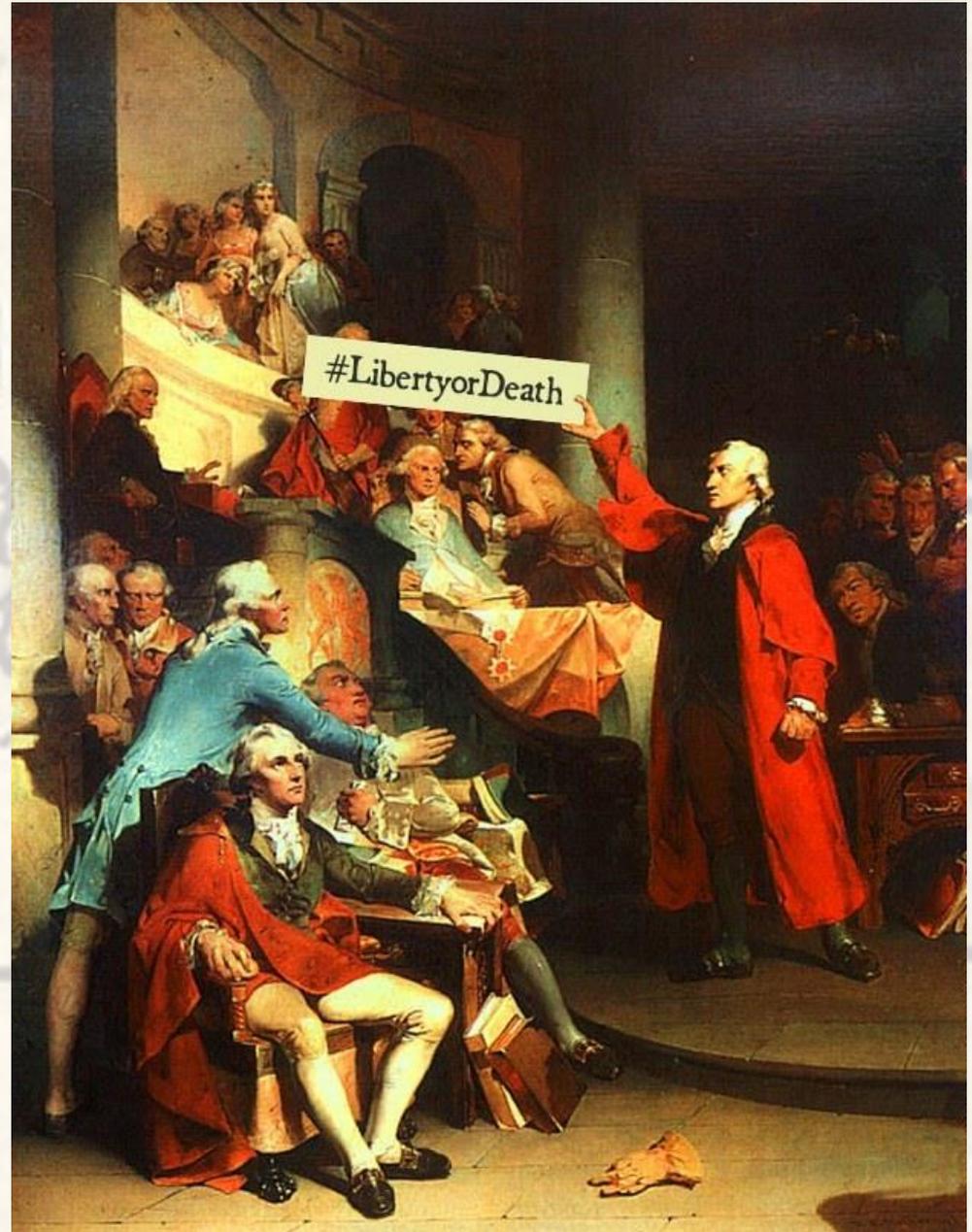
4 Sept. 1774 – 26 Oct. 1774

## **Committees of Correspondence:**

“shadow govts” that increased communication between colonies & united opposition to Britain's recent actions – (Sam Adams was a huge engineer)

- Discussed rights of colonies
- Demanded King George III restore those rights
- Agreed to meet again in 1 year

Militias (local men volunteering to give service) begin to form; “minutemen”



# Lexington and Concord



19 April 1775: British try to seize militia stockade

“Minutemen” (Paul Revere, William Dawes, Samuel Prescott and others) warn colonists

Militia gather and wait at Lexington for the British in the early morning →

Shots fired: “The Shot Heard ‘Round the World”

Colonists conduct guerilla-style warfare along road at Concord killing redcoats that were retreating back to Boston

- Total losses: British 273  
American 95



Lexington and Concord

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress

May 1775 in Philadelphia

Some talk of compromise & some of independence

Matters discussed:

-Agreed to form the Continental Army & appointed George Washington as leader due to experience in F&I War

-Wrote the Olive Branch Petition



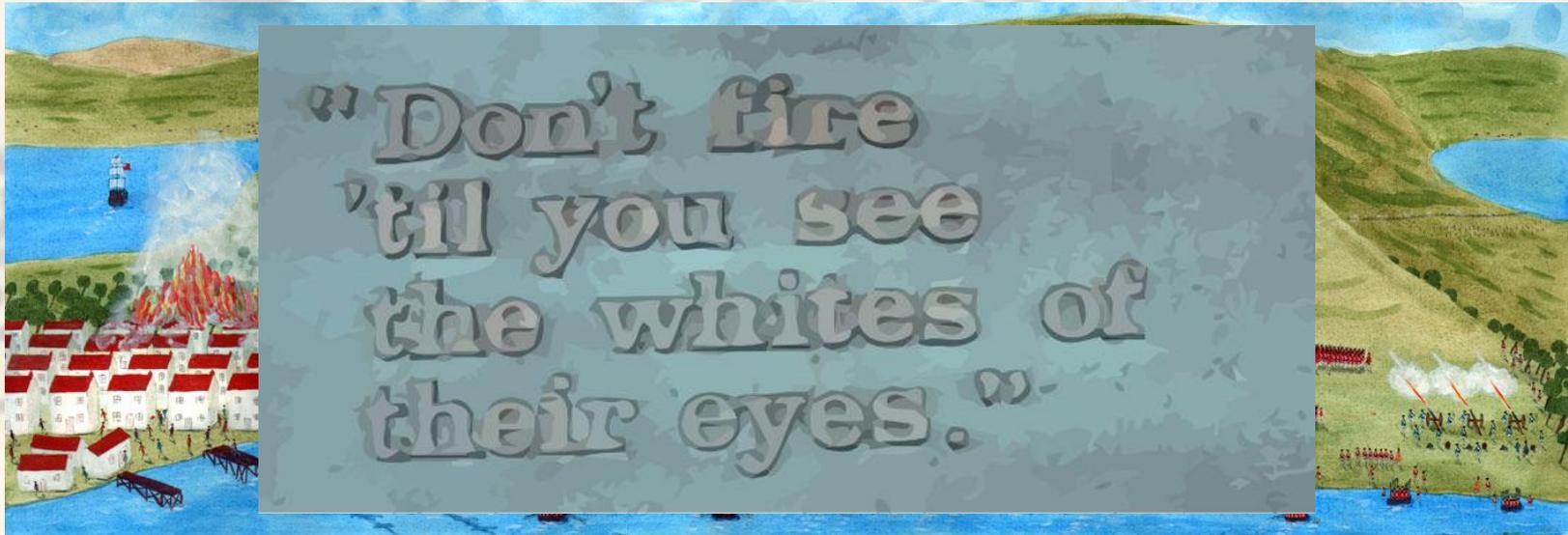
## Battle of Bunker Hill, MA

17 June 1775: Continentals (led by Samuel Prescott) take hill overlooking Boston (Breed's Hill)

-British charge the hill three times

-Technically the British won **but** the battle proved colonists could compete with the British army; proved that a knowledge of the diverse geography would be an advantage of the Continentals

-Deadliest battle of the Revolutionary War



British: 200 killed, over 800 wounded  
Continental: 100 killed, over 300 wounded

[Battle of Bunker Hill](#)

# Olive Branch Petition

2<sup>nd</sup> Continental  
Congress sends King  
George III a petition  
to return to the  
peace of the past

July 1775: After  
Bunker Hill

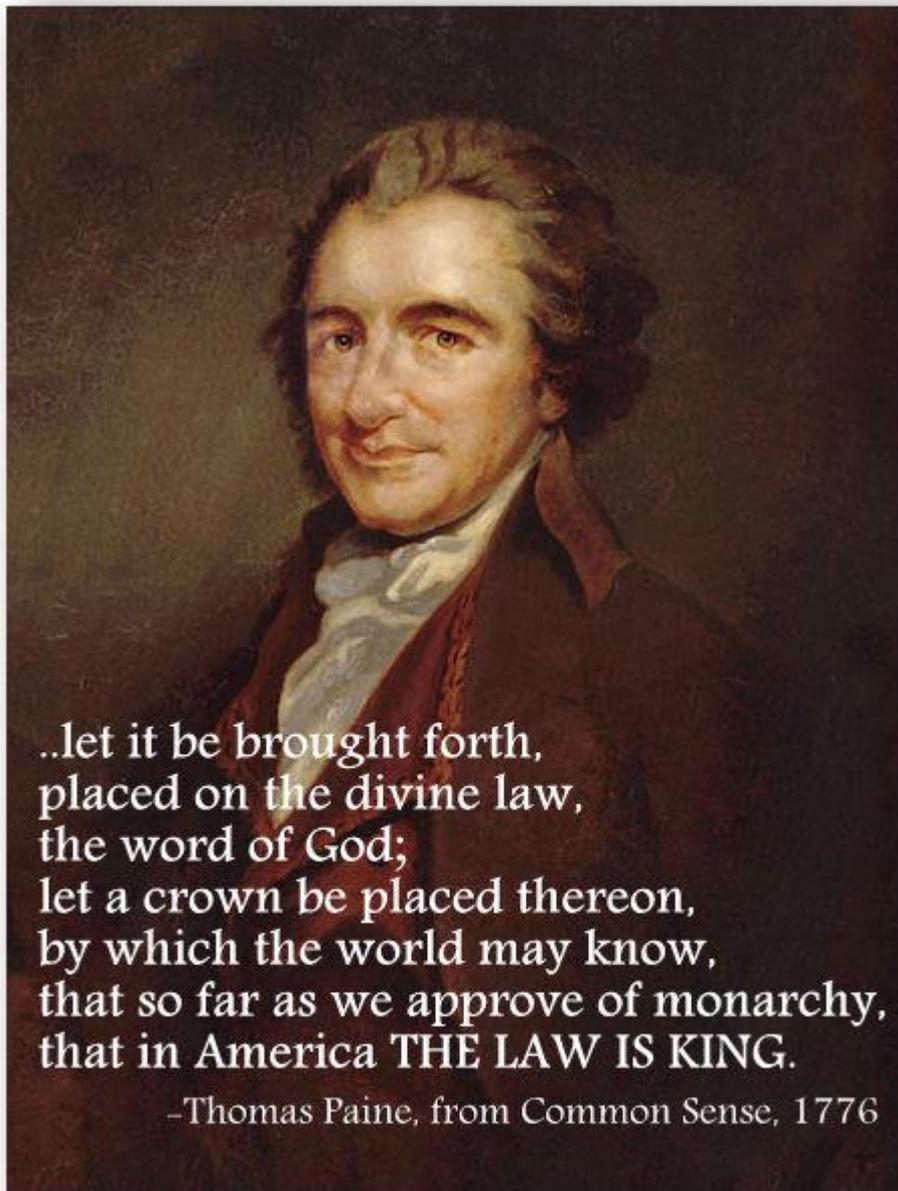
He refuses the  
petition & urges the  
rebellion put down  
with a formal  
proclamation  
(August 1775)

**Significance?**



D I E.

## *Common Sense*



..let it be brought forth,  
placed on the divine law,  
the word of God;  
let a crown be placed thereon,  
by which the world may know,  
that so far as we approve of monarchy,  
that in America **THE LAW IS KING.**

-Thomas Paine, from *Common Sense*, 1776

-Many colonists were loyal to England – **why would they be?**

-Many “**Loyalists**” were merchants & traders

-**Patriots**: colonists who wanted revolution

**Common Sense**: pamphlet that urges independence for the colonies

-Targeted farmers and others who were still “on the fence”

Authored by Thomas Paine, Jan. 1776

## Loyalists aka “Tories”

- Older
- Merchants and wealthy landowners
- Members of the Anglican Church
- Pennsylvania Dutch colonists (owned land granted to them by the king)
- Many decided to leave the colonies fearing persecution by patriots, many left after the Revolutionary War concluded

# The King's Men

*Loyalist Military Units  
in the American Revolution*

Hudson Valley and New York City Loyalists



## Patriots aka “Whigs”



- Younger generation
- Sons of Liberty members
- Also from areas where self-govt had been in place and mercantilism was not a heavy influence
- From Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist denominations (1<sup>st</sup> GA spinoffs)

or D I E.