

Road to Revolution Script

[Slide/Scene 1: Introduction]

[Narrator]

There was much discontent in the colonies during the mid 1700s. The British government enacted several laws to generate revenue to pay their war debts from the French and Indian War and to impose more control over the colonies. The colonists did not want taxation without representation nor did they want the British to have complete rule. These economic and political disagreements were contributing factors that led to the Revolutionary War.

[British Male Voice Arrogant]

"The colonies were acquired with no other view than to be a convenience to us, and therefore it can never be imagined that we are to consult their interest." – The London Chronicle 1764

[Slide/Scene 2: Stamp Act]

[Narrator]

The Sugar Act of 1764 increased the duties on imported sugar and other items such as textiles, coffee, wines and indigo. One year later in 1765, The Stamp Act imposed the first direct tax on the American colonists. Legal documents, pamphlets, playing cards, and newspapers required a one-penny stamp. There was widespread opposition to the Stamp Act.

[American Samuel Adams Male Voice Cynical]

"If our Trade be taxed, why not our Lands, or Produce... in short, everything we possess? They tax us without having legal representation." – Samuel Adams 1765

[Slide/Scene 3: Stamp Act Continued]

[Narrator]

A group of men made up of workers and tradesmen formed the Sons of Liberty. They used newspaper editorials and violence to attack the law and those who enforced it.

Fearing for their lives, the British stamp agents resigned. The Stamp Act was repealed in 1766.

[Slide/Scene 4: Townshend Revenue Acts]

[Narrator]

More acts were passed to generate revenue and increase control over the colonists. The Quartering Act required colonists to feed and house British Troops. Then, in June 1767, The English Parliament passed the Townshend Revenue Acts This was a series of taxes on imported paper, tea, glass, lead, and paints. In defiance of these acts, Bostonians decided to boycott all English luxury goods. In 1770, the Townshend Acts were repealed, but not until a bloody encounter took place in Boston.

[Slide/Scene 5: Boston Massacre]

[Narrator]

The colonists now viewed the British troops with suspicion and constantly taunted them. On March 5, 1770, a young colonial apprentice shouted an insult to a British soldier. The soldier hit him with his rifle and the boy cried for help. A crowd gathered in front of the Customs House. A contingent of British troops under the command of Captain Thomas Preston was detached to maintain order. As the eight soldiers pushed back the crowd with their bayonets, the citizens became more boisterous and began throwing sticks and snowballs. The soldiers were overwhelmed. At this point one of the soldiers fired his musket into the crowd. A volley of shots followed. When it was over, five colonists lay dead, including an African-American, Crispus Attucks. [Pause ...] The British troops were charged with murder.

[Slide/Scene 6: Boston Massacre Continued]

[Narrator]

The next day a tearful merchant of Boston, James Forest, went to see John Adams and pleaded with him to defend Preston and his men. John Adams knew that taking the case might affect his law career, but he also believed in justice and that everyone was entitled to a defense. He took the case without hesitation. In Captain Thomas Preston's trial, Adams cast doubt on whether or not Preston gave an order to fire. Preston was acquitted. In the trial of the soldiers, Adams told the jury,

[John Adams Male Voice Strong and Bold]

"Soldiers quartered in a populous town will always occasion two mobs where they prevent one."

[Narrator]

Six of the men were acquitted and two were convicted of manslaughter. The cases showed that law, not mob rule prevailed. Adams went on to become the second President of the United States.

[Slide/Scene 7: Boston Tea Party]

[Narrator]

With the Tea Act of 1773, the British East India Tea Company was given a monopoly. The colonists were outraged. In political protest a group of Boston women signed a petition not to drink any foreign tea.

[Female American Voice Strong and Defiant]

"We the daughters of those patriots who have, and do now appear for the public interest, and in that principally regard their posterity – as such, do with pleasure engage with them in denying ourselves the drinking of foreign tea, in hopes to frustrate a plan which tends to deprive a whole community of all that is valuable in life."

[Slide/Scene 8: Boston Tea Party Continued]

[Narrator]

On November 27, 1773, three British ships entered Boston Harbor carrying a cargo of tea. When the Governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, insisted that tea be unloaded in Boston, despite a boycott organized by the Sons of Liberty, something had to be done. On December 16, 1773 a group of patriots dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded the *Dartmouth*, *Eleanor* and the *Beaver* and deposited all of the tea chests into Boston Harbor. This act of defiance became known as the Boston Tea Party.

[George Hewes Male American Voice]

"In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found in the ship, while those in the other ships were disposing of the tea in the same way, at the same time. We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us." George Hewes 1773

[Narrator]

Admiral Montagu was watching the action from a short distance away. When the men passed his house, he shouted,

[Admiral Montagu Male British Voice Cynical and a Warning]

"Well, boys, you have had a fine, pleasant evening for your Indian caper, haven't you? But mind, you have got to pay the fiddler yet!"

[Narrator]

Montagu wrote his report to Great Britain the next day.

[Admiral Montagu Male British Voice Matter of Fact]

"I could easily have prevented the execution of this plan but must have endangered the Lives of many innocent People by firing upon the Town." - Admiral Montagu December 17, 1773

[Slide/Scene 9: Intolerable Acts]

[Narrator]

The British parliament responded to this treacherous deed with the Intolerable Acts, a series of actions meant to clamp down on the colonists. Boston Harbor was closed until the East India Company received payment for the tea that had been destroyed. Other acts gave royal officials the right to be tried in England, changed the Massachusetts charter and gave the royal governor direct control over the colony, allowed the quartering of British troops in civilian homes, and rearranged Canadian borders.

[King George III Male British Voice Resolute]

"They will be lions while we are lambs: but if we take the resolute part, they will undoubtedly prove very meek." King George III 1774

[Narrator]

The Intolerable Acts gave Samuel Adams the ammunition he needed to advocate for Independence. In September 1774, the thirteen colonies sent representatives to the First Continental Congress. There they denounced the Intolerable Acts and declared they should have

the same rights as Englishmen. Broad­sides were posted requesting that merchants not send any orders to Great Britain.

[Slide/Scene 10: British Occupation]

[Narrator]

The British reacted to these resolutions by sending Lt. General Thomas Gage to occupy Boston and suppress any rebellion. Gage was ordered to arrest Samuel Adams and John Hancock who were considered rabble-rousers. Tensions continued to grow between the colonists and the British until the morning of April 19, 1775 when a small group of militiamen or minutemen as they were called faced an army of British soldiers on Lexington Common.

[Thomas Gage British Male Voice Informative]

“Having received intelligence, that a quantity of Ammunition, Provisions, Artillery, Tents and small Arms, have been collected at Concord, for the Avowed Purpose of raising and supporting a Rebellion against His Majesty, you will March with a Corps of Grenadiers and Light Infantry, put under your Command, with the utmost expedition and Secrecy to Concord, where you will seize and destroy all Artillery, Ammunition, Provisions, Tents, Small Arms, and all Military Stores whatever. But you will take care that the Soldiers do not plunder the Inhabitants, or hurt private property.” - Thomas Gage April 18, 1775