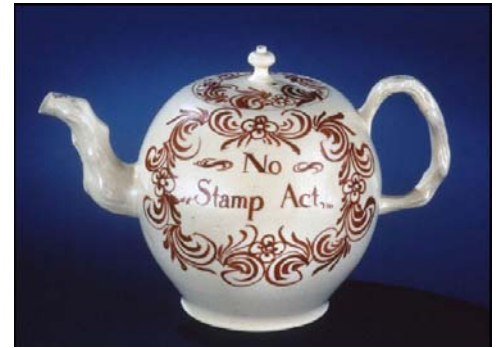


A Summary of the 1765 Stamp Act

The Stamp Act was passed by the British Parliament on March 22, 1765. The new tax was imposed on all American colonists and required them to pay a tax on every piece of printed paper they used. Ship's papers, legal documents, licenses, newspapers, other publications, and even playing cards were taxed. The money collected by the Stamp Act was to be used to help pay the costs of defending and protecting the American frontier near the Appalachian Mountains (10,000 troops were to be stationed on the American frontier for this purpose).

The actual cost of the Stamp Act was relatively small. What made the law so offensive to the colonists was not so much its immediate cost but the standard it seemed to set. In the past, taxes and duties on colonial trade had always been viewed as measures to regulate commerce, not to raise money. The Stamp Act, however, was viewed as a direct attempt by England to raise money in the colonies without the approval of the colonial legislatures. If this new tax were allowed to pass without resistance, the colonists reasoned, the door would be open for far more troublesome taxation in the future.



No Stamp Act Teapot: Manufactured in Derby, England for export to the American colonies.



TAX STAMP, British revenue 1765-1766 Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston MA.

Few colonists believed that they could do anything more than grumble and buy the stamps until the Virginia House of Burgesses adopted Patrick Henry's Stamp Act Resolves. These resolves declared that Americans possessed the same rights as the English, especially the right to be taxed only by their own representatives; that Virginians should pay no taxes except those voted by the Virginia House of Burgesses; and that anyone supporting the right of Parliament to tax Virginians should be considered an enemy of the colony. The House of Burgesses defeated the most extreme of Henry's resolutions, but four of the resolutions were adopted. Virginia Governor Fauquier did not approve of the resolutions, and he dissolved the House of Burgesses in response to their passage.

Georgii III. Regis.

C A P. XII.

An Act for granting and applying certain Stamp Duties, and other Duties, in the *British Colonies and Plantations in America*, towards further defraying the Expences of defending, protecting, and securing the same; and for amending such Parts of the several Acts of Parliament relating to the Trade and Revenues of the said Colonies and Plantations, as direct the Manner of determining and recovering the Penalties and Forfeitures therein mentioned.



WHEREAS by an Act made in the last Session of Parliament, several Duties were granted, continued, and appropriated, towards defraying the Expences of defending, protecting, and securing, the *British Colonies and Plantations in America*: And whereas it is just and necessary, that Provision be made for raising a further Revenue within *Our Majesty's Dominions in America*, towards defraying the said Expences: **W**e, *Our Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled,*

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