

STUDENT TEXTBOOK - ELEMENTARY

AMERICA'S STRUGGLE TO BECOME A NATION



Understanding the
Foundations of Freedom

— ★ ★ ★ —
RICK & MARILYN BOYER

First printing: November 2015

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Scripture quotations taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

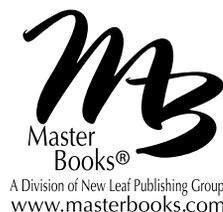
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Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people (Proverbs 14: 34).



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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

This book is designed to be used in coordination with *America's Struggle to Become a Nation Teacher Guide* also available from Master Books.

This curriculum is divided into 34 chapters in all, one for each week of the school year. Each chapter is divided into 3 reading sections.

There are at least two ways you can use it, depending on what fits your schedule best.

SUGGESTED PLAN: FIVE DAYS PER WEEK

Students will read a chapter per week. Each chapter is divided into three sections. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday they will read one section. Projects supplied in *America's Struggle to Become a Nation Teacher Guide* will be done on Thursday. On Friday, student will complete the test questions provided in Teacher Guide.

ALTERNATIVE PLAN: FOUR DAYS PER WEEK

Students will read selections on any three days of the week you choose. They will then answer 1/3 of the questions supplied in *America's Struggle to Become a Nation Teacher Guide* each day when they finish reading. (Chapters are divided into 3 sections to make it easy to see where to read.) On the fourth day they can do the projects that are located in the Teacher Guide.

Additional recommended resources are provided in *America's Struggle to Become a Nation Teacher Guide*. Our aim is for your kids to learn to love American history! We suggest audio recordings that kids can listen to while they play or travel or at nighttime as well as books for reading fun. Publisher's Note: Since the audio selections do concern a time of war, we recommend that all audios be previewed by an adult to determine the age-appropriateness of the material.



The Grand Union flag (left) is considered the first American flag, prior to the Stars and Stripes (right).

WHO IS UNCLE RICK?



Hi! I'm Uncle Rick, the family storyteller. I love to tell boys and girls exciting true stories about America's history. I also like to record wonderful old books about America. God's hand is so plain in the history of our country!

In the Founders of Freedom history series, you'll often see me dressed in my Founding era outfit. That's because, whatever period of American history I'm teaching about, I always want to call our attention back to the godly principles of America's founding.

I hope you love America as much as I do. God has blessed our nation with freedom, prosperity, and peace. He has made America the leading nation of the world. Millions of people have come here from other countries seeking a better life. Many millions more hope to come someday.

The people who built America gave us a nation founded on the principles of Scripture. It is that wonderful heritage that gave us liberty in the beginning and has kept us free for over two hundred years. I hope that you will enjoy learning about our country's history with me. The freedom and justice that we enjoy today are God's gift to us. Let us treasure and protect that gift so that we can pass it on to future generations.

(You can listen to my audiobooks at UncleRickAudios.com.)



Yankee Doodle, 1776,
three patriots, two playing drums
and one playing a fife
leading troops into battle

YANKEE DOODLE
1776 Pubby
J. J. Ryder
NEW ENGLAND

WHY A WAR OF INDEPENDENCE?

A HERITAGE OF FREEDOM

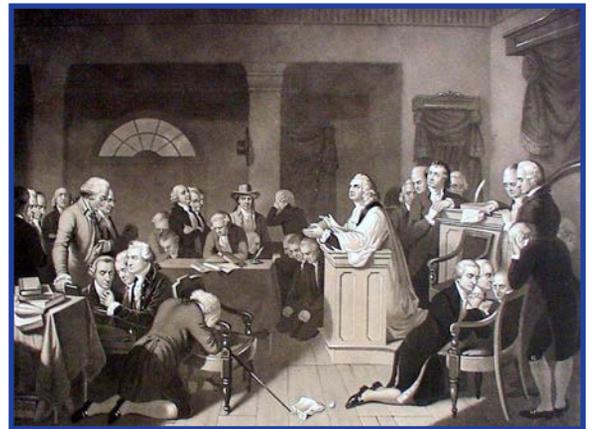
If we want to understand a big event in history, one of the most important questions to ask is, “Why did it happen?” If we know that something happened but don’t know why it happened, it shows that we do not understand the event very well.

As Americans, we need to understand why the United States came into existence. Why did 13 small colonies of Englishmen decide that they did not want to be Englishmen anymore? Why were they willing to have a war that they knew would kill many people, cause homes to be destroyed, and make some people enemies of their own neighbors? War is always a terrible thing. Surely the colonists knew that.

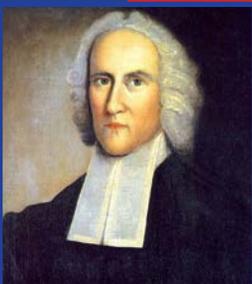
Did the Founders consider themselves to be in rebellion?

The Founders clearly believed that they were not in rebellion to God’s ordained institution of civil government; they were only resisting tyranny and not the institution itself. In fact, Rev. Jacob Duché (a supporter of the British) argued from the Bible in favor of the American position, explaining:

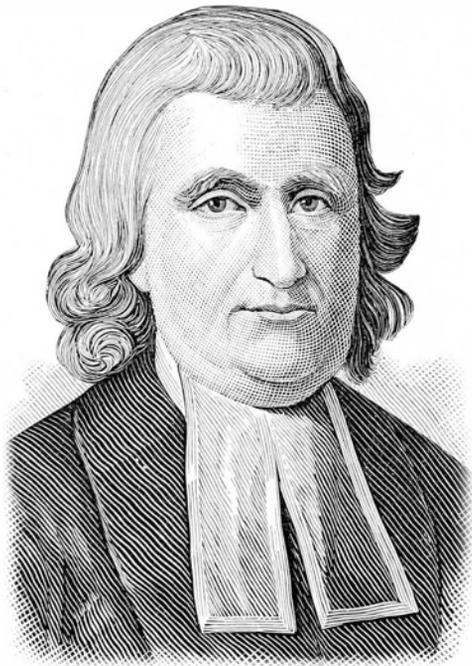
Inasmuch as all rulers are in fact the servants of the public and appointed for no other purpose than to be “a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well” (cf. Romans 13:3), whenever this Divine order is inverted — whenever these rulers abuse their sacred trust by unrighteous



The First Prayer in Congress September 7, 1774 by Jacob Duché in Carpenters Hall, Philadelphia, by T.H. Matheson 1848 (PD-US).



Jonathan Edwards, a Puritan preacher from Massachusetts, preached in Enfield, Connecticut, on July 8, 1741. His sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” is probably the most famous sermon ever preached in America. Edwards was no great orator. He read his sermon from a script and was so nearsighted that he had to hold a candle next to his page in order to read it. Yet the Spirit of God moved so powerfully on this occasion that people were clinging to the pews and columns of the church as if in danger of sliding suddenly into hell. Many cried to the preacher, “What must I do to be saved?”



Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon

attempts to injure, oppress, and enslave those very persons from whom alone, under God, their power is derived — does not humanity, does not reason, does not Scripture, call upon the man, the citizen, the Christian of such a community to “stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ . . . hath made them free!” (Galatians 5:1). The Apostle enjoins us to “submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake,” but surely a submission to the unrighteous ordinances of unrighteous men, cannot be “for the Lord’s sake,” for “He loveth righteousness and His countenance beholds the things that are just.”

Since the Englishmen in England and the Englishmen in America had so much in common, it might seem surprising that there was ever a war between the two groups. After all, they shared the same language. They shared the same rulers. They shared the Christian faith. They shared the same history, at least up until the time the colonies had been established.

But in fact, the main reason the American colonists gained their independence was *because* they were Englishmen. The English people had a long history of struggling to be free. It was a part of their traditions. Englishmen knew about Magna Carta (Latin for “The Great Charter”) in 1215. The Magna Carta had greatly weakened the power of the king. Much of English law was based on it.

The Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon (also a signer of the Declaration) also affirmed:

On the part of America, there was not the most distant thought of subverting the government or of hurting the interest of the people of Great Britain, but of defending their own privileges from unjust encroachment; there was not the least desire of withdrawing their allegiance from the common sovereign [King George III] till it became absolutely necessary — and indeed, it was his own choice.²

Significantly, as Dr. Witherspoon had correctly noted, it was Great Britain who had terminated the entreaties; in fact, during the last two years of America’s appeals, her peaceful pleas were directly met by armed military force. King George III dispatched 25,000 British troops to invade his own colonies, enter the homes of his own citizens to take their private possessions and



A 1733 engraving of the Magna Carta of 1215 by John Pine (PD-US).

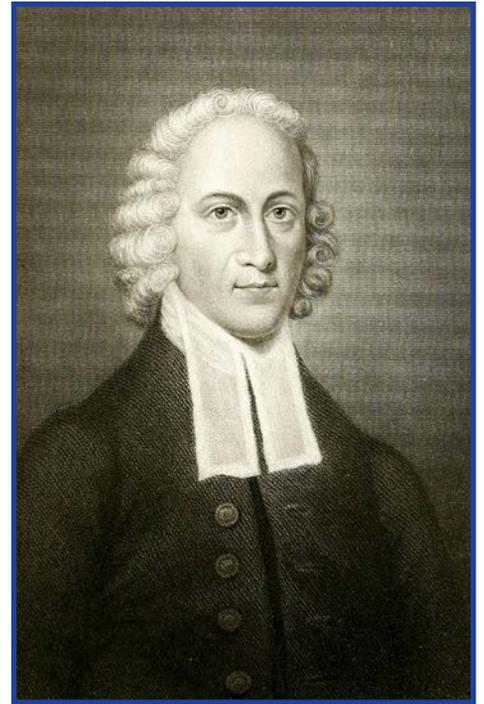
goods, and imprison them without trials — all in violation of his own British Common Law, English Bill of Rights, and Magna Carta (centuries-old documents that formed the basis of the covenant between British rulers and citizens). Only when those governmental covenants had been broken by their rulers and America had been directly attacked did the Americans respond in self-defense.³

So it was that in the 1700s when King George III and Parliament insisted on doing things that violated the rights of Englishmen, there was strong reaction. In fact, there were many people in England who agreed that the colonists were not being treated fairly.

By the time battles were finally fought between the British army and the colonists at Lexington and Concord, a strong spirit of independence and self-reliance had grown up in America. These people were descended from those who had left Europe and risked the dangers and hardships of travel in those days to make a new life for themselves and their families in North America. Their parents or grandparents or great-grandparents had faced the hazards of a wilderness far from home and all the comforts of civilization.

The people in the young American colonies had grown sturdy and confident in overcoming great obstacles. They had cleared land for farms, built homes, grown their own food, made their own clothes, and protected their own settlements from hostile Indians. They had received very little help from the king in doing all this, so they felt far more independent of him than did their brethren in England.

This did not mean that the colonists did not love England and their king. The people of New World still loved their mother country. They considered themselves Englishmen first. The earliest settlers told their children stories of their homeland with all its rich history and heroes. But their experience of living without much help from the government back home had a lasting impact on their way of thinking.



Theologian Jonathan Edwards

British Parliament meets in the Palace of Westminster. Photo by DAVID ILIFF, 2007 (CC-BY-SA 3.0).



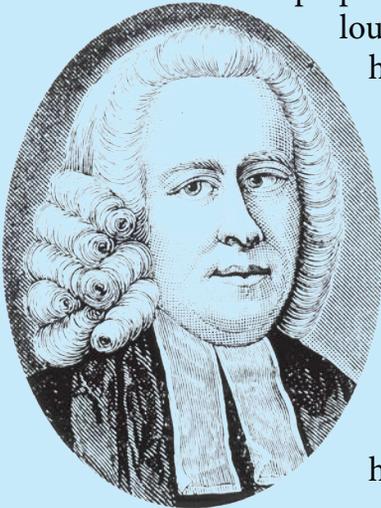
GEORGE WHITEFIELD

English-born George Whitefield was the foremost voice of the Great Awakening in America. He made several trips to America in the years before the Revolutionary War, preaching from Georgia all the way up to Maine. Many of the pulpits in the towns were closed to him because of his unusual way of ministering. Establishment ministers complained that he preached outside God's house and was harsh to sinners. Indeed, he did preach outdoors, especially after the churches refused to allow him in their

pulpits. He had a tremendously clear and

loud voice with which he could make himself

heard by the huge crowds who turned out to hear him. He preached with a unique power, often leaving many people on their faces on the ground under deep conviction. He was a personal friend of Benjamin Franklin, who was pleasantly amazed at the positive effect Whitefield had on religious life in his town of Philadelphia. Franklin estimated that Whitefield could be heard by a crowd of thirty thousand. The evangelist often attracted crowds that large and even larger. When word went out that Whitefield was coming to a town to preach, the roads for miles around would sometimes be covered with clouds of dust rising high into the air as thousands of people left their fields and hurried down the roads to the meeting place.



Another reason for the independent spirit of the generation of 1776 was the Great Awakening. This was a mighty revival God sent to both England and America in the 1700s. John

Wesley and George Whitefield were among the early leaders of this revival, from which the Methodist Church was born. Wesley's ministry took place mostly in England and his effect on the country was very strong. Whitefield made several voyages to America during the middle of the century and preached, often drawing crowds of many thousands. He and other prominent preachers such as Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Davies, and Jonathan Mayhew were

often opposed by leaders of the Church of England, but they continued to preach and thousands were converted to Christ.

The preachers of the Great Awakening did not all agree on every point of doctrine or teaching, but they all understood that salvation is by faith alone and through grace alone. It is not by good works, but by believing in Christ that our sins are forgiven and we are made new creatures.

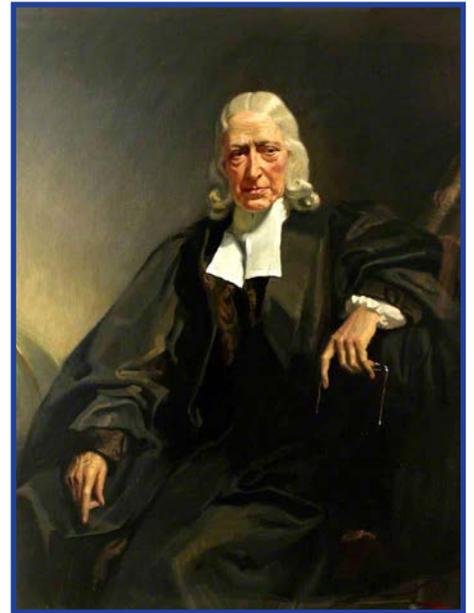
"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

—John 3:16.

Many of them joined or formed churches not connected to the Church of England (also called the Anglican Church in England and the Episcopal Church in America). These independent churches did not take orders from a denomination. They ran their own affairs without interference from a national church.

It is important to understand also that many of the early colonists had come to America because of religious persecution by the Church of England. The Pilgrims, though they were loyal to their king, had suffered much at the hands of the king's church. Men who preached without a license from the church were jailed. People who worshiped in independent churches were sometimes jailed also, and others had their property seized or paid heavy fines. Boston was founded by Puritans, Christians who had not left the national church but wanted reforms in the church to make it conform to what the Bible teaches. Puritans were often persecuted as well, and they and the Pilgrims (who were among those called Separatists) got used to running their own local churches, as they believe the Bible directed. Religious freedom was the most important freedom of all to them.

Part of the message of the gospel is that all men are born sinners. This meant that, by nature, a king is no better than a



John Wesley, artist and date unknown (PD-US).



Embarkation of the Pilgrims, by Robert Walter Weir, 1857 (PD-Art).



Samuel Adams

peasant. All men stand in need of salvation through Christ. This truth also served to reduce the awe in which Americans held the throne of England. They certainly believed that the king and Parliament were to be obeyed, as long as they acted in obedience to God. But when the English government began to do things that English law did not give them authority to do, the colonists were not afraid to protest.

In fact, Samuel Adams (the “Father of the American Revolution” and a signer of the Declaration of Independence) specifically recommended a study of the Scriptures in order to understand the basis of America’s struggle against a tyrannical king, explaining that:

The Rights of the Colonists as Christians. . . . may be best

understood by reading and carefully studying the institutes of the great Law Giver and Head of the Christian Church, which are to be found clearly written and promulgated in the New Testament.⁴

In 1638, the Rev. Glover brought a printing press across the sea from England. He died on the voyage, but his widow wasted no time in setting up a printing business with the help of Harvard College. Harvard’s first president, Henry Dunster, took an interest in the press, which issued a publication called a “broadside,” titled *The Freeman’s Oath*, an Almanac (only eight pages long) and the famous *Bay Psalms Book*, a hymnbook with only lyrics and no musical notes.

The confidence of the Americans was also supported by the fact that they were a productive people. By the time of independence, the colonies were producing timber, tobacco, and other crops that England wanted. In 1760 alone, they had sent over five million dollars’ worth of products to England. That was a very large

amount of money in those days. So the colonists had another reasons to feel that their voice should be heard in the British government.

AN ARGUMENT WITH A PROUD KING

In fact, the colonies had developed greatly in the years since the first English colony, Jamestown, was established a century and a half before. In 1639 the first printing press in America had gone to work. Books and newspapers began to spread. Six colleges had been started and town schools had sprung up to educate children. The first six colleges in America were Harvard (1638), William and Mary (1692), Yale (1700), Princeton (originally called the College of New Jersey, in 1746), and King’s in 1754.

The church pulpits were occupied by men who preached with wisdom and power. So the communities of young America were advancing by their success in trade, the strength of their churches, the harmony of their communities, and the spread of information through their newspapers and books. They were developing an established culture of their own that was not dependent on how everybody thought in England.

One important issue in the war was “taxation without representation.” The people in England voted for men to represent their home districts in making laws for the nation. This was similar to what we Americans have in Congress. Just as the president of the United States has to share power with Congress, so the king had to share power with Parliament. He could not do whatever he wanted to do just because he was king. Together, the king and Parliament made laws, including laws about taxes.

But the colonists in America did not have representatives in Parliament. They had colonial governments made up of men elected by the people. The colonies required the people to pay taxes, but there was no great objection to that, because the colonists had the chance to vote on their representatives. They believed that the laws of England gave them the right to vote for those who taxed them, just as Englishmen in England did.

But most people were not willing to go to war just over taxes. That was one reason for the disagreements that led to war, but there was much more to the problem.

The French and Indian War (1754–1763) had much to do with the founding of America for two important reasons. First, it had shown the American settlers that they could organize, prepare, and deploy forces to defend their colonies. In addition, it had driven the British government far in debt. That meant that the government needed money, and when governments need money they get it through taxes.

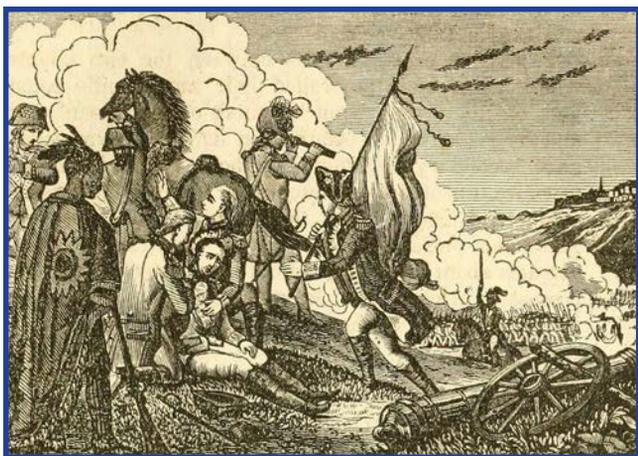
Harvard University, like most of the early American colleges, was started in order to train preachers.

Number two in its rules for students was this:

“Let every Student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal! John 17:3 and therefore to lay Christ in the bottome, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and Learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth Wisdom, Let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seeke it of him” — Proverbs 2,3



George Washington on horse, soldiers fighting during the battle of the Monongahela, 1754 (PD-US).



Death of General Wolfe (French and Indian War)

In the argument over this, the English government had some truth on their side. They reminded the colonies that they had provided a navy to protect American shipping from the French. The colonies replied that this was true, but England required them to trade only with England. So it was partly for England's benefit that the shipping was defended.

The king had sent thousands of his soldiers to help the colonists fight the French and their Indian allies. That had been very expensive.

The colonies freely admitted this. But they responded that they, too, had paid a high financial price by providing their own militiamen. As Benjamin Franklin said, they had "raised, paid, and clothed nearly twenty-five thousand men — a number equal to those sent from Great Britain, and far beyond their proportion. They went deeply into debt in doing this; and all their estates and taxes are mortgaged for many years to come in discharging that debt."⁵ Parliament had admitted that this was true as well.

Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." King George had much power and struggled with pride. Pride can get in the way of our making wise decisions.

But their own financial burdens were heavy on the minds of the British leaders now. They were not as open as they should have been to the claims of the colonies. King George and his advisers made up their minds that the colonies would be taxed and they would pay those taxes. They probably never thought that there would be active resistance. They lived in England. People in England depended on their king and had great respect for the throne. It was commonly accepted that the noblemen were better and wiser than the common people.

John Hancock was a great patriot. He was a wealthy merchant and owned much property in the city of Boston. When the British were in control of Boston, it was thought that the only way to get rid of them might be to burn the entire city. When the possibility was mentioned to Hancock, he said, "Burn Boston and make John Hancock a beggar, if the public good requires it!"⁶

The colonists were not unwilling to pay taxes. But they believed that English law gave them the right to tax themselves through the elected leaders of their colonies. If the king had asked the colonial legislatures to collect some taxes to help pay the debt from the war,

it is possible that peace would have continued.

But George III was young and headstrong. When he first became the king, his mother had said to him, "George, be king!"

and he intended to follow her advice. Young George was very impressed with his new authority, and he used it to fill high places in his government with men who would go along with whatever he said. He did not have a high respect for frontier colonists far away on another continent. He would bend those “commoners” to his royal will.

Probably, there were few men at the time who thought that a long struggle was just around the corner. Some of those who protested most loudly about the “right to tax” were just as loud in their claims of love and loyalty to the mother country. But as events went on and the British government got more and more aggressive in its effort to establish more control over the colonies, violence seemed more and more likely.

Taxation without representation was an important issue in the War of Independence, but far from the only one. The Declaration of Independence lists 27 causes for separation. Taxation without representation is only the 17th on the list.

Once the fighting started, then many of the colonists began to see that they must defend their freedom or lose it. War was on its way.

UNJUST LAWS

The bitter feelings toward the English government had started over a hundred years before the first battle. In 1651, just 31 years after the Pilgrims landed, Parliament had passed the first of the Navigation Acts. This act said that the American colonies could not trade with any nation besides England. They could not receive ships of any foreign nations in their harbors.

This meant that colonial businessmen had to accept whatever price the English merchants wanted to pay. They could not offer their goods to merchants in France or Spain for instance, to see if they could get a better price.

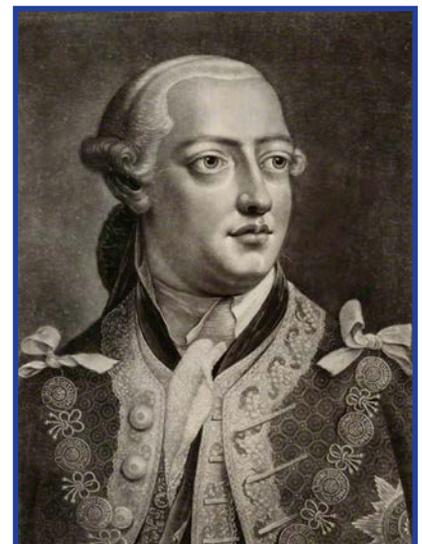
This law struck the colonies of New England especially hard. New Englanders were seafaring folk. Sometimes whole communities would work together through the winter to cut timber, saw boards, and build a schooner. Then in the spring, the ship would be loaded with more timber, along with animal skins and whatever other goods could be produced. A crew would be made up from the men and boys of the town and the ship would sail off, perhaps to the West Indies or some other port. There the cargo would be sold or traded for other goods and the ship would sail for home. The return cargo, whether of rum or molasses or some other product, would then be sold and

“

In circumstances dark as these, it becomes us, as Men and Christians, to reflect that, whilst every prudent Measure should be taken to ward off the impending Judgements. . . . All confidence must be withheld from the Means we use; and reposed only on that GOD who rules in the Armies of Heaven, and without whose Blessing the best human Counsels are but Foolishness — and all created Power Vanity.

John Hancock⁷

”



Portrait of George III of the United Kingdom by William Pether after Thomas Frye, c.1710 (PD-Art).



Capture of the *Cyane* and *Levant* by the *Constitution*.

divided among those who had taken part in the project. These voyages could be very profitable, and fortunes were made.

Virginia also, with its tobacco and other crops, suffered from this first navigation act. But the act had little effect because it was weakly enforced. The king appointed revenue officers, but they were lax about the law and many could be persuaded to look the other way for a handful of silver. So the trade went on.

England had also passed laws on manufacturing. The Iron Act of 1750 encouraged the colonies in the production of iron, but

forbade the manufacture of finished iron products. So it was legal to make iron in the colonies, but illegal to use it to make tools such as pickaxes or plows. The colonists had to sell their iron to England and buy their plows from England. There were also laws forbidding one colony to sell certain products to the other colonies. The strict control that England wanted to hold over the business of the colonies had a negative effect on colonial development and was very much resented. Because

they were so unpopular, the manufacturing laws as a whole were also only weakly enforced.

But when the king started trying to enforce them a hundred years after they had been passed, trouble was brewing. The colonies suddenly realized how much control the government

When people live together in communities and nations, government is necessary to protect the rights of each citizen. But when governments try to control more of community life than they should, people lose freedom. America's history is an account of a nation constantly struggling to maintain the right balance of freedom and responsibility.

intended to exercise. The mother country was claiming the right to tax the colonies in any way she pleased, and the people of the colonies had very little to say about it. This was not a wise way in which to govern people who had conquered a wilderness.

In 1764, the fuse was clearly lit. That was the year in which the Stamp Act was passed. Perhaps the king and Parliament wanted to see just how the act would be received before really enforcing it, because they waited a year before they tried. The act said that official government stamps must be placed on paper used for certain business transactions. The stamped paper was required for newspapers, almanacs, lawsuits, even marriage licenses. Of course the stamps could only be purchased from the British government.

The colonists were unhappy when the government decided to start enforcing the Navigation Acts. They were even more upset when the Stamp Act was passed. But the next event made smoldering sparks of resentment burst into flame: the king sent soldiers to enforce these unpopular laws. The insult was even greater because the colonists knew that the despised soldiers would be paid with money collected for the Stamp Act. The Americans were paying the soldiers sent to oppress them!

Significantly, as Dr. Witherspoon had correctly noted, it was Great Britain who had terminated the entreaties; in fact, during the last two years of America's appeals, her peaceful pleas were directly met by armed military force. King George III dispatched 25,000 British troops to invade his own colonies, enter the homes of his own citizens to take their private possessions and goods, and imprison them without trials — all in violation of his own British Common Law, English Bill of Rights, and Magna Carta (centuries-old documents that formed the basis of the covenant between British rulers and citizens). Only when those governmental covenants had been broken by their rulers and America had been directly attacked did the Americans respond in self-defense.⁸



Coalbrookdale by Night. Blast furnaces light the iron making town of Coalbrookdale, Philipp Jakob Loutherrbourg, 1801 (PD-US).



The Boston Tea Party