Name_____ Date_____

The American Revolution

Reading and Discussion

The American Revolution refers to the historical period when the thirteen colonies in North America rejected being ruled by outside governments, particularly the rule of Great Britain. The thirteen colonies were colonies under British rule that were located along the eastern seaboard of North America. In 1765, the population of these colonies was estimated to be over 2 million. Generally, the colonists believed that they were part of the British Empire and, as such, were subjects of British law.

Britain provided military and other forms of support for the colonies. In order to continue to do so, the colonies were expected to provide some of the funding necessary to maintain the defenses for the colonies. Britain decided to tax the American colonies for most of the amount of money needed, but the colonies felt that this tax was too much to pay. The colonies also believed that they ought not to be taxed unless they had some participation in the British Parliament. Americans did not think that they could be fairly represented in the Parliament by people who did not understand the situation in the colonies firsthand. This is when the phrase, “No taxation without representation” was coined. It was a slogan that supported a proper representation of the colonies in the British government as the only way for taxes to be levied legally.

In 1765, the British Parliament officially declared a tax called the **Stamp Act**. This act required goods such as newspapers and documents to have a “stamp” on them, which meant they were to be taxed. In October of 1765, a secret meeting of representatives from nine of the colonies met in New York City to discuss the legality of the Stamp Act. These men, called the **Stamp Act Congress**, met in secret and discussed taxation and voting rights in the colonies. During this time, the colonies began boycotting British goods and imports.

The **Sons of Liberty** formed during this time. They were an underground organization which had several chapters in each of the colonies. They considered themselves loyal to the British Crown, but refused taxation without representation. They held rallies in public squares in order to encourage support for boycotts. They did this in the hopes that it would force Britain to repeal unfair taxes.

In 1773, Britain created the **Tea Act** which was a resolution that eased the financial burden of the prominent **East India Trading Company**. This company would now be allowed to sell tea to the colonies without paying taxes to Britain. This outraged the colonists because it showed blatant favoritism to the company. Americans began boycotting tea and other products of the East India Trading Company. In December of 1773, the Sons of Liberty raided three East India ships that were carrying tea. In the night, the raiders tossed crates of tea into the Boston Harbor as an outward protest against the East India Trading Company. This event is known as the **Boston Tea Party**.

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After the Boston Tea Party, many Boston ports were closed, and British soldiers were gathered in these locations. Members of the Sons of Liberty kept close watch on the troop movements. In April of 1775, an army of at least 700 men began marching toward Lexington, Massachusetts. The colonial militia reacted and met them in the morning of April 19th. In the town of Lexington, a battle ensued and the British militia was caught off guard by the resistance of the colonists. This was the start of the war called the **American Revolutionary War**. The British declared the colonies to be traitors to the crown and the colonies were forced to create a standing army called the Continental Army. In 1783, the **Treaty of Paris** was signed, in which Great Britain surrendered the lands of the colonies to the newly formed United States of America.

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Activities

Activity A:

1. The Tea Act was a resolution that eased the financial burden of:

a. the colonists

b. The East India Trading Company

c. the militia

d. The American Revolution

2. There was a group of men that met in secret and discussed taxation and voting rights in the colonies. This group was called:

a. The Stamp Act Congress

b. The Taxation Committee

c. The Trading Company

d. The Free Trade Congress

Activity B:

1. _____ was an underground organization that was loyal to Britain but did not want taxation without representation.
2. The _____ required goods such as newspapers to be taxed.
3. In 1775, the colonies were forces to create a standing army called _____.
4. In 1783, _____ was signed, in which Great Britain surrendered the lands of the colonies to the newly formed USA.
5. _____ refers to the historical period when the thirteen colonies in North America rejected being ruled by outside governments, particularly the rule of Great Britain.
6. The event where tea was thrown into the harbor as a sign of protest was called _____.

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Answer Sheet

Activity A

1. The Tea Act was a resolution that eased the financial burden of:

    a. the colonists

    b. The East India Trading Company

    c. the militia

    d. The American Revolution

2. There was a group of men that met in secret and discussed taxation and voting rights in the colonies in the colonies. This group was called:

    a. **The Stamp Act Congress**

    b. The Taxation Committee

    c. The Trading Company

    d. The Free Trade Congress

Activity B

1. The Sons of Liberty was an underground organization that was loyal to Britain but did not want taxation without representation.
2. The Stamp Act required goods such as newspapers to be taxed.
3. In 1775, the colonies were forces to create a standing army called The Continental Army.
4. In 1783, The Treaty of Paris was signed, in which Great Britain surrendered the lands of the colonies to the newly formed United States of America.
5. The American Revolution refers to the historical period when the thirteen colonies in North America rejected being ruled by outside governments, particularly the rule of Great Britain.
6. The event where tea was thrown into the harbor as a sign of protest was called The Boston Tea Party.

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