

## The Stamp Act

As the western border of the colonies temporarily cooled due to the ending of Pontiac's Rebellion, colonial passions were aroused by new outrages, real or imagined, emanating from the mother country. This time in the form of the Stamp Act.

George Grenville had conceived of a new method to increase revenues from the colonies to pay for defense and defray the significant costs of the French and Indian War. He had previously pushed the passage of the American Duties Act with minimal notice or opposition. He then worked closely with experts in Treasury and in the colonies to develop a new taxing scheme that would not arouse the anger of the American colonists, who, everyone knew, cared not to pay more taxes. It was hoped that by making a tax that was subtle and not one overtly enforced, the Americans may submit to its payment.

The act essentially placed a tax on every piece of paper used in the colonies, and to show that the paper had been taxed, it would be so stamped. This meant everything from legal documents to broadsides would be subject to taxation. While previous revenue generating schemes could arguably be considered the lawful regulation of commerce, this was an indirect tax, and this aroused significant colonial opposition.

No taxation without representation. This catchy phrase summarized colonial opinion. No representative of the colonies voiced opposition to its passage in Parliament and protestations of virtual representation to the otherwise, the colonists saw great dangers in the passage of the act. The opposition in the colonies to the act, would form the basis of resistance for other acts of parliament in the decade before the outbreak of war.