

America's Revolution (29) – Sugar Act (1764) – I

Lead: In the 1700s the United States broke from England. No colony in history had done that before. This series examines America's Revolution.

Intro: *A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts*

Content: At the end of the Seven Years' War or French and Indian War in 1763, one of the last decisions of the British ministry of Lord Bute which had negotiated the peace, was to establish a standing army in America. Considering that the third rail of English politics in that era had been intense opposition to standing armies, Parliament inflicted one on the colonies with relative ease and no significant opposition. King George III was enthusiastic because many leaders of the British Army sat in Parliament and formed a powerful block of support for royal policies in that body. He also saw it as a make-work policy for thousands of soldiers who would soon be mustered out and unemployed at the end of the war if they didn't have something to do.

Until needed for suppression of colonial agitation in the 1770s, the primary purpose of the American regiments was frontier duty protecting the colonials from Native American raids, but also preventing Americans from pushing west into the areas claimed by the Indians. Obviously, the troops were much more successful in the former than the latter. Colonists were simply not going to stop their westward march, and it caused enormous tension between colonials and Indians resulting in Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763. For Britain, the big problem was how to pay for the British Army in America. The new first minister, George Grenville, was determined to force the colonists, not to pay for the huge national debt, but to pay for the troops stationed in America. Next time: the Sugar Act, 1764.

At the University of Richmond's School of Professional and Continuing Studies, I'm Dan Roberts.

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