

## Handouts for “Where to Find the Politics in the American Revolution” Mark Peterson, UC Berkeley, March 18, 2010

### The Molasses Act of 1733

... there shall be raised, levied, collected and paid, unto and for the use of his Majesty ..., upon all rum or spirits of the **produce or manufacture of any of the colonies or plantations in America, not in the possession or under the dominion of his Majesty ...**, which at any time or times within or during the continuance of this act, shall be imported or brought into any of the colonies or plantations in America, which now are or hereafter may be in the possession or under the dominion of his Majesty ..., the sum of nine pence, money of Great Britain, ... for every gallon thereof, and after that rate for any greater or lesser quantity: **and upon all molasses or syrups of such foreign produce or manufacture as aforesaid, which shall be imported or brought into any of the said colonies or plantations ..., the sum of six pence of like money for every gallon thereof ...**; and upon all sugars and paneles of such foreign growth, produce or manufacture as aforesaid, which shall be imported into any of the said colonies or plantations ... a duty after the rate of five shillings of like money, for every hundred weight Avoirdupoize....

### The Sugar Act : 1764

An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America, for continuing, amending, and making perpetual, an act passed in the sixth year of the reign of his late majesty King George the Second, (intituled, An act for the better securing and encouraging the trade of his Majesty’s sugar colonies in America;) for applying the produce of such duties, and of the duties to arise by virtue of the said act, towards defraying the expences of defending, protecting, and securing the said colonies and plantations; for explaining an act made in the twenty fifth year of the reign of King Charles the Second, (intituled, An act for the encouragement of the Greenland and Eastland trades, and for the better securing the plantation trade;) and for altering and disallowing several drawbacks on exports from this kingdom, and more effectually preventing the clandestine conveyance of goods to and from the said colonies and plantation, and improving and securing the trade between the same and Great Britain.

That from and after the twenty ninth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and sixty four, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid, unto his Majesty, his heirs and successors, for and upon all white or clayed sugars of the **produce or manufacture of any colony or plantation in America, not under the dominion of his Majesty**, his heirs and successors; for and upon indigo, and coffee of foreign produce or manufacture; for and upon wines (except French wine;) for and upon all wrought silks, bengals, and stuffs, mixed with silk or herbs of the manufacture of Persia, China, or East India, and all callico painted, dyed, printed, or stained there; and for and upon all foreign linen cloth called Cambrick and French Lawns, which shall be imported or brought into any colony or plantation in America, which now is, or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, the several rates and duties following; that is to say,

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of such foreign white or clayed sugars, one pound two shillings, over and above all other duties imposed by any former act of parliament.

For every pound weight avoirdupois of such foreign indigo, six pence.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of such foreign coffee, which shall be imported from any place, except Great Britain, two pounds, nineteen shillings, and nine pence.

For every ton of wine of the growth of the Madeiras, or of any other island or place from whence such wine may be lawfully imported, and which shall be so imported from such islands or place, the sum of seven pounds

For every ton of Portugal, Spanish, or any other wine (except French wine) imported from Great Britain, the sum of ten shillings.

For every pound weight avoirdupois of wrought silks, bengals, and stuffs, mixed silk or herbs, of the manufacture of Persia, China, or East India, imported from Great Britain, two shillings.

For every piece of callico painted, dyed, printed, or stained, in Persia, China, or East India, imported from Great Britain, two shillings and six pence.

For every piece of foreign linen cloth, called Cambrick, imported from Great Britain, three shillings.

For every piece of French lawn imported from Great Britain, three shillings.

And after those rates for any greater or lesser quantity of such goods respectively.

**VI. And it be further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in lieu and instead of the rate and duty imposed by the said act upon molasses and syrups, there shall, from and after the said twenty ninth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and sixty four, be raised, levied, collected, and paid, unto his Majesty, his heirs and successors, for and upon every gallon of molasses or syrups, being the growth, product, or manufacture, of any colony or plantation in America, not under the dominion of his Majesty, his heir or successors, which shall be imported or brought into any colony or plantation in America, which now is, or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs or successors, the sum of three pence.**

## **The Stamp Act, March 22, 1765**

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 your Majesty's dominions in America, towards defraying the said expences: we, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the commons of Great Britain in parliament assembled, have therefore resolved to give and grant unto your Majesty the several rates and duties herein after mentioned; and do most humbly beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of November, one thousand seven hundred and sixty five, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid unto his Majesty, his heirs, and successors, throughout the colonies and plantations in America which now are, or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors,

For every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written or printed, any declaration, plea, replication, rejoinder, demurrer, or other pleading, or any copy thereof, in any court of law within the British colonies and plantations in America, a stamp duty of three pence.

For every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written or printed, any special bail and appearance upon such bail in any such court, a stamp duty of two shillings . . . .

## **Text of the Virginia Resolves**

The original text of the Virginia Resolves as adopted by the House of Burgesses on May 29, 1765 was as follows:

- 1. Resolved, that the first adventurers and settlers of His Majesty's colony and dominion of Virginia brought with them and transmitted to their posterity, and all other His Majesty's subjects since inhabiting in this His Majesty's said colony, all the liberties, privileges, franchises, and immunities that have at any time been held, enjoyed, and possessed by the people of Great Britain.*
- 2. Resolved, that by two royal charters, granted by King James I, the colonists aforesaid are declared entitled to all liberties, privileges, and immunities of denizens and natural subjects to all intents and purposes as if they had been abiding and born within the Realm of England.*
- 3. Resolved, that the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, or the easiest method of raising them, and must themselves be affected by every tax laid on the people, is the only security against a burdensome taxation, and the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, without which the ancient constitution cannot exist.*

*4. Resolved, that His Majesty's liege people of this his most ancient and loyal colony have without interruption enjoyed the inestimable right of being governed by such laws, respecting their internal policy and taxation, as are derived from their own consent, with the approbation of their sovereign, or his substitute; and that the same has never been forfeited or yielded up, but has been constantly recognized by the kings and people of Great Britain.*

*5. Resolved, therefor that the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and exclusive Right and Power to lay Taxes and Impositions upon the inhabitants of this Colony and that every Attempt to vest such Power in any person or persons whatsoever other than the General Assembly aforesaid has a manifest Tendency to destroy British as well as American Freedom.*

**This 5th resolution was originally adopted along with the other 4 on May 29th, but struck the next day in a separate vote by the assembly.**

## **Additional resolutions**

When the Virginia Resolves were first published in colonial newspapers the articles cited not only the officially adopted 4 resolutions but included the, already revoked, 5th resolution along with two more resolution the origin of which is still disputed. Those additional resolutions were:

*6. Resolved, That his majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this colony, are not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance whatsoever designed to impose any taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws and ordinances of the general assembly aforesaid.*

*7. Resolved, That any person who shall by speaking or writing maintain that any person or persons other than the general assembly of this colony have any right or power to impose or lay any taxation whatsoever on the people here shall be deemed an enemy to this his majesty's colony.*

**These two resolutions were never passed by the House of Burgesses and it is not known who authored them although some sources claim that they were part of the original draft by Patrick Henry.**

## **What did Patrick Henry say that provoked cries of “treason”?**

Henry said "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles I his Cromwell, and George III... (Henry was interrupted by cries from the opposition)... may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it." (Some historians consider the last sentence to be a later fabrication).

## **The Quartering Act; June 2, 1774**

An act for the better providing suitable quarters for officers and soldiers in his Majesty's service in North America.

WHEREAS doubts have been entertained, whether troops can be quartered otherwise than in barracks, in case barracks have been provided sufficient for the quartering of all officers and soldiers within any town, township, city, district, or place, within his Majesty's dominions in North America: And whereas it may frequently happen, from the situation of such barracks, that, if troops should be quartered therein, they would not be stationed where their presence may be necessary and required: be it therefore enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That, in such cases, it shall and may be lawful for the persons who now are, or may be hereafter, authorised by law, in any of the provinces within his Majesty's dominions in North America, and they are hereby respectively authorised, empowered, and directed, on the requisition of the officer who, for the time being, has the command of his Majesty's forces in North America, to cause any officers or soldiers in his Majesty's service to be quartered and billeted in such manner as is now directed by law, where no barracks are provided by the colonies.

II. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if it shall happen at any time that any officers or soldiers in his Majesty's service shall remain within any of the said colonies without quarters, for the space of twenty-four hours after such quarters shall have been demanded, **it shall and may be lawful for the governor of the province to order and direct such and so many uninhabited houses, out-houses, barns, or other buildings, as he shall think necessary to be taken, (making a reasonable allowance for the same)**, and make fit for the reception of such officers and soldiers, and to put and quarter such officers and soldiers therein, for such time as he shall think proper.

## **English Bill of Rights 1689**

### **An Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Settling the Succession of the Crown**

Whereas the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons assembled at Westminster, lawfully, fully and freely representing all the estates of the people of this realm, did upon the thirteenth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred eighty-eight [old style date] present unto their Majesties, then called and known by the names and style of William and Mary, prince and princess of Orange, being present in their proper persons, a certain declaration in writing made by the said Lords and Commons in the words following, viz.:

Whereas the late King James the Second, by the assistance of divers evil counsellors, judges and ministers employed by him, did endeavour to subvert and extirpate the Protestant religion and the laws and liberties of this kingdom;

By assuming and exercising a power of dispensing with and suspending of laws and the execution of laws without consent of Parliament;

By committing and prosecuting divers worthy prelates for humbly petitioning to be excused from concurring to the said assumed power;

By issuing and causing to be executed a commission under the great seal for erecting a court called the Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes;

By levying money for and to the use of the Crown by pretence of prerogative for other time and in other manner than the same was granted by Parliament;

By raising and keeping a standing army within this kingdom in time of peace without consent of Parliament, **and quartering soldiers contrary to law;**

By causing several good subjects being Protestants to be disarmed at the same time when papists were both armed and employed contrary to law;

By violating the freedom of election of members to serve in Parliament;

By prosecutions in the Court of King's Bench for matters and causes cognizable only in Parliament, and by divers other arbitrary and illegal courses;

And whereas of late years partial corrupt and unqualified persons have been returned and served on juries in trials, and particularly divers jurors in trials for high treason which were not freeholders;

And excessive bail hath been required of persons committed in criminal cases to elude the benefit of the laws made for the liberty of the subjects;

And excessive fines have been imposed;

And illegal and cruel punishments inflicted;

And several grants and promises made of fines and forfeitures before any conviction or judgment against the persons upon whom the same were to be levied;

All which are utterly and directly contrary to the known laws and statutes and freedom of this realm;

And whereas the said late King James the Second having abdicated the government and the throne being thereby vacant, his Highness the prince of Orange (whom it hath pleased Almighty God to make the glorious instrument of delivering this kingdom from popery and arbitrary power) did (by the advice of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and divers principal persons of the Commons) cause letters to be written to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal being Protestants, and other letters to the several counties, cities, universities, boroughs and cinque ports, for the choosing of such persons to represent them as were of right to be sent to Parliament, to meet and sit at Westminster upon the two and twentieth day of January in this year one thousand six hundred eighty and eight [old style date], in order to such an establishment as that their religion, laws and liberties might not again be in danger of being subverted, upon which letters elections having been accordingly made;

And thereupon the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons, pursuant to their respective letters and elections, being now assembled in a full and free representative of this nation, taking into their most serious consideration the best means for attaining the ends aforesaid, do in the first place (as their ancestors in like case have usually done) for the vindicating and asserting their ancient rights and liberties declare

That the pretended power of suspending the laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal;

That the pretended power of dispensing with laws or the execution of laws by regal authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal;

That the commission for erecting the late Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes, and all other commissions and courts of like nature, are illegal and pernicious;

That levying money for or to the use of the Crown by pretence of prerogative, without grant of Parliament, for longer time, or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal;

That it is the right of the subjects to petition the king, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal;

That the raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with consent of Parliament, is against law;

That the subjects which are Protestants may have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions and as allowed by law;

That election of members of Parliament ought to be free;

That the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament;

That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted;

That jurors ought to be duly impanelled and returned, and jurors which pass upon men in trials for high treason ought to be freeholders;

That all grants and promises of fines and forfeitures of particular persons before conviction are illegal and void;

And that for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently.