



HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY 1102

DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

CONTENTS

I. RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND	2
Trade Regulations	3
French and Indian War	6
Colonial Resistance.....	12
II. THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.....	19
Second Continental Congress	21
Opposition and Aid	25
War in the South and West	30
III. BIRTH OF A NATION	38
Colonial Peace	39
Articles of Confederation	42
Constitution of the United States	48

Author:

Alpha Omega Staff

Editor:

Alan Christopherson, M.S.

Illustrations:

Alpha Omega Staff



Alpha Omega Publications®

804 N. 2nd Ave. E., Rock Rapids, IA 51246-1759

© MM by Alpha Omega Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

LIFEPAC is a registered trademark of Alpha Omega Publications, Inc.

All trademarks and/or service marks referenced in this material are the property of their respective owners. Alpha Omega Publications, Inc. makes no claim of ownership to any trademarks and/or service marks other than their own and their affiliates', and makes no claim of affiliation to any companies whose trademarks may be listed in this material, other than their own.

HISTORY 1102

DEVELOPMENT OF

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

Although the colonists began the 1760s celebrating the accession of George III, they soon became disillusioned. Within a dozen years following the introduction of imperial reforms, the British colonists were in open rebellion against Great Britain. The sudden vehemence with which Americans moved into rebellion astonished their contemporaries as it has astonished historians ever since. A series of trade acts and tax levies did not seem to justify revolution. Yet by 1776 many Americans agreed with John Adams that the colonists were “in the very midst of a revolution, the most complete, unexpected and remarkable, of any in the history of nations.” What could account for it? How was it to be justified?

The colonists admitted that it was not the particular acts of the British government that explained the Revolution; it was the meaning of those acts. Americans strove to understand the intentions of the British government and to determine their rights and liberties.

A military victory over Great Britain may have been a prerequisite for the success of the Revolution, but for Americans the Revolution meant more than simply eliminating a king and instituting an elective system of government. The Revolution was a moral upheaval that promised a fundamental shift in values and a change in the very character of American society. Originally designed to counter and reverse the modernizing tendencies of American life, republicanism ultimately quickened and magnified these trends.

In this unit you will look at the events that finally led to the Revolutionary War and at the kind of government that evolved in America. You will see the lives and events that molded the tenets of American government.

After establishing the English colonies in the New World, England left them alone for a time to do as they pleased. With the passage of the Navigation Acts in 1660, however, England’s attitude toward the colonies changed, and she began to exploit the colonies by levying a variety of taxes to help fill her coffers. Another motive behind these taxes was the desire to bring the colonies under subjection.

The trade regulations England placed on the colonies led to colonial resistance in the New World. The greatest single reason for the tax increase was to finance the French and Indian War. The English thought that the colonies should pay for the war since the fighting had taken place in America, a sentiment that increased hard feelings among the colonies and led to still stronger resistance.

OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you should be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAAC®.

When you have finished this LIFEPAAC, you should be able to:

1. Name the various British actions regulating American trade.
2. Describe the events of the French and Indian War and its effect on colonial attitudes toward Britain.
3. Describe Britain’s new policy restricting colonial freedoms and how it led to colonial resistance.
4. Describe the response of the colonists to Britain’s actions.
5. Explain the Declaration of Independence.
6. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the Continental army.
7. Describe the important events of the Revolutionary War.
8. Name people who contributed to the war.
9. Name the provisions of the Treaty of Paris of 1783.

10. State the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.
11. Describe the conflicting proposals of the Constitutional Convention.
12. Name the three branches of government and describe the system of checks and balances.
13. Explain the land ordinances of 1785 and 1787.
14. Describe the objections to and provisions of the Constitution.

Survey the LIFEPAAC. Ask yourself some questions about this study. Write your questions here.

I. RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Name the various British actions regulating American trade.
2. Describe the events of the French and Indian War and its effect on colonial attitudes toward Britain.
3. Describe Britain's new policy restricting colonial freedoms and how it led to colonial resistance.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

boycott	To join together against and have nothing to do with (a person, business, nation, employer, or any other person or thing) in order to coerce or punish. If people are boycotting someone, they do not associate with him, or buy from or sell to him, and they try to keep others from doing so
mercantile theory	The economic system prevailing in Europe in the 1500s and 1600s which favored a balance of exports over imports, national wealth being measured by the amount of gold and silver possessed
treaty	An agreement, especially one between nations, signed and approved by each nation

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

TRADE REGULATIONS

Trade is an important aspect of any country's economy. For England, the sea was a natural avenue of trade with other countries and with the colonies. Like other European nations, England at this time subscribed to the **mercantile theory**, which said that a country's power was measured by the amount of gold and silver it owned.

To strengthen her position as a world power, England passed the Navigation Acts in 1660, although the acts were not strictly enforced until the reign of George III. Later government regulations designed to take American merchants out of competition with the English included the Wool Act, the Hat Act, the Molasses Act, and the Sugar Act. Restrictions were placed on manufacture and the issuance of currency. Shortly before the French and Indian War, the writs of assistance were passed which allowed British officials to search colonists' homes.

Mercantilism. During the sixteenth century, England, France, Spain, Portugal, and Holland were engaged in a struggle for riches and power. Because the theory of mercantilism declared that the amount of gold and silver a country owned was more important than its military strength, each country wanted as large a supply of these metals as possible.

One method of securing gold was to have a colony trade only with the mother country. A colony would ship raw materials not available in the mother country, such as tobacco, naval stores, furs, and timber to the mother country. Manufacturers would then sell the goods they made from the raw materials back to the colonies. The colonies were prohibited from buying these goods from any other country. In this way the mother country was enriched, since the cost of the exported manufactured articles was higher than that of the imported raw materials. The difference in costs was paid in the important precious metals.

Mercantilism benefited the mother country, but not its colonies. As England passed more and stricter regulations to increase her own profit, the American colonists grew more and more disturbed.

Trade restrictions. English merchants did not want the Americans to compete with them in any way. When the colonists began to increase their production of wool to the point where the English wool raisers feared competition, the English Parliament passed the Wool Act of 1699. By this act all exports of wool products from any American colony to any other colony or to Europe were banned.

Bans were placed on other commodities as well. The growth in popularity of beaver hats and the existence of large numbers of these hats in America led to the Hat Act of 1732, which halted the export of beaver hats to Europe or to other colonies.

The Molasses Acts of 1733 and the Sugar Act of 1764 were passed to protect British West Indies planters from competition with the foreign West Indies islands. American shippers were forced to accept these measures because they had built up a profitable trade with the French and the Dutch, paying lower prices to them than those charged by the English.

Manufacturing restrictions. Trade was not the only aspect of the American economy restricted by the English. Industry and manufacturing in the colonies were also limited. The Hat Act of 1732 affected the American hat industry. To prevent further growth of the iron industry in the colonies, the Iron Act of 1759 prohibited the building of iron mills and steel furnaces, at the same time encouraged the production of raw iron by allowing it to enter England duty-free.

Currency control. Another method the English used to hold back economic growth was to control currency. The amount of money in the colonies was never enough to meet the needs of the colonies. The shortage of actual currency led many colonists to adopt a system of barter. Under this system a raw material such as wool could be exchanged for shoes, rice, or wheat.



Navigation Acts. Beginning in 1660, England passed a series of laws called the Navigation Acts. These acts controlled all colonial trade. The first Navigation Act required that all ships carrying goods between England and America be English-built or owned. Certain articles which included tobacco, sugar, indigo, and naval stores, could be sold only to England.

The Navigation Acts were later extended to include molasses, beaver skins, and other furs. The English government intended that these laws reduce the growing strength of the colonies. However, they did not cause friction with the colonists because they were loosely enforced.

The reason for lax enforcement was that the English were busy with affairs of the empire between 1685 and 1763, when they were fighting a series of wars with France. The English hoped to keep the colonies loyal to her by not enforcing these laws too strictly, in case the French in the New World declared war.

Another reason was the conflict between the king and the Parliament. The Puritan Revolution of 1689 forced the English government to neglect the colonies. Officials, too, were not eager to carry out the laws because growing trade and commerce between England and the colonies provided more profits to British merchants.

Also, because of geographical considerations, strict enforcement would have required many more ships than England had available. There was a great distance between England and the colonies, and the American coastline was long and irregular. The many harbors encouraged smuggling by the colonists to evade the laws and import or export goods illegally.

England decided to enforce the Navigation Acts after 1763. England's troubles at home were settled when a new king, George III, came to the throne. Since France had been pushed from the North American continent as a result of the French and Indian War, England could now pay more attention to the colonies. The English government had spent large sums of money in this war and, since the colonies had benefited from it, the English felt that the colonists should pay part of the cost.

Writs of assistance. Before the French and Indian War ended, the government had decided on a new policy toward the colonies. In 1761 the British officials were ordered to enforce the Navigation Acts more strictly and to seize all goods smuggled into the colonies. The officials were given the power to use legal papers called *writs of assistance* to enter the warehouses, shops, and homes of the colonists to look for smuggled goods.

These *writs of assistance* created a great deal of concern in the colonies since they gave British officials the right to enter at will and confiscate anything that the owner was unable to prove was not smuggled. A Boston lawyer, James Otis, protested that the *writs of assistance* violated one of the basic liberties of Englishmen, freedom from unreasonable search. Otis charged that the writs did not specify any particular place to search but were so general in nature that no colonial home was safe. However, Otis lost the case and the writs continued to be used.