

# Boston Port Act



The Act was passed in Parliament IN 1774

This article on the Boston Port Act in Colonial America provides fast facts and information about the effects of these laws and taxes.

- What was the Boston Port Act?
- The Meaning and Definition of the Boston Port Act
- The purpose of the Boston Port Act
- The effect of the Boston Port Act
- Suitable as an educational Social Studies resource for schools and kids

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Headline

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## History of the 13 Colonies and the laws & taxes that sparked rebellion against the British

The definition and purpose of the 1774 Boston Port Act, one of the Intolerable Acts

### Definition of the Boston Port Act

The Meaning and Definition of the Boston Port Act: The Boston Port Act was passed by the Parliament of Great Britain March 31, 1774. The Boston Port Act was designed to punish the inhabitants of Boston, Massachusetts for the incident that would become known as the Boston Tea Party. The Port Act was one of a series of British Laws referred to as the [Intolerable Acts](#) passed by the Parliament of Great Britain 1774.

### Purpose of Boston Port Act of 1774

The Boston Port Act was to close the port until the tea that had been destroyed at the Boston Tea Party and that payments were made to the East India Company paid for the lost tea and that payments were made to the king for the lost taxes. Only food and firewood were permitted into the port.



Port of Boston in 1774

### Events leading up to the Boston Port Act 1774

The events that led to the passing of the Intolerable Acts, including the Boston Port Act, were primarily the:

- The [Boston Massacre](#) which occurred on March 5, 1770
- The [Tea Tax](#) of 1773
- The [Boston Tea Party](#) that occurred on December 16, 1773

The Sons of Liberty, a secret, underground organization formed following the 1765 Stamp Act, were Patriots who agitated and protested against British rule in the colonies. The Boston Port Act was one of the series of reprisals for the actions taken by the patriots. Read the [1774 Boston Port Act text and words](#).



## The Boston Port Act 1774

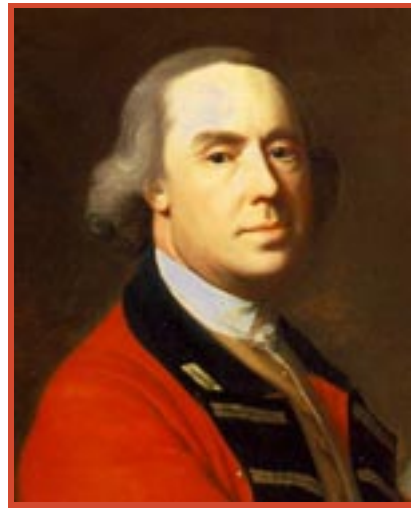
The Boston Port Act was:

*"An act to discontinue, in such manner, and for or such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading or shipping, of goods, wares, and merchandise, at the town, and within the harbour, of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts Bay, in North America."*

The Boston Port Act closed the port of Boston so tightly that the colonists could not bring hay from Charlestown to give to their starving horses.

## The Boston Port Act - The Appointment of General Thomas Gage

The Massachusetts Government Act gave the royal appointed governor of Massachusetts control of the colony, rather than the people. As part of the British attempt to intimidate the residents of Boston, King George III appointed General Thomas Gage, who commanded the British army in North America, as the new military governor of Massachusetts in May 1774. After the events of the Boston Massacre General Gage had said that "America is a mere bully, from one end to the other, and the Bostonians by far the greatest bullies." The appointment of General Thomas Gage made it clear to Bostonians that the crown intended to impose martial law, in which a military government suspends civil law.



**General Thomas Gage**

## Effects of the Boston Port Act 1774

The Boston Port Act intentionally passed to punish all the residents of Massachusetts rather than those responsible for the destruction and economic loss during the Tea Party Protest. Read the original text of Boston Port Act for full details of the tone and the provisions of the act. The British King George and parliament believed that the people of Massachusetts could be punished without the other colonies objecting. They believed that the harsh punishment of the whole Massachusetts colony would panic the other American colonies into conceding the authority of Parliament over their elected assemblies. The British were completely wrong.

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## Reaction of the other Colonies to the Boston Port Act 1774

The other colonies sympathized with the people of Massachusetts and many deplored all of the Intolerable Acts including

the Boston Port Act. The British had revoked the colony's 1691 charter, had appointed a Military Governor (General Thomas Gage) and had effectively imposed martial law, in which a military government suspended civil law. They saw the Intolerable Acts, including the Boston Port Act, as:

- A violation of their constitutional rights, natural rights and and their colonial charters
- Abolishing Colonial Laws
- Fundamentally altering the forms of Governments and suspending Legislatures
- Suspending trade

If the British could do this to Massachusetts then it could do this to the other colonies. In addition the Quebec Act had limited opportunities for the American colonies to expand on their western frontiers. The [Committees of Correspondence](#) sprang into action gaining support from the other colonies and this led to the [First Continental Congress](#) which was convened in Philadelphia on September 5, 1774, to coordinate a colonial response to the Intolerable Acts.

## The Boston Port Act of 1774 became one of the Intolerable Acts

The Boston Port Act of 1774 is one of the five Coercive, or Intolerable Acts, that lead to dissent in the American colonies and to the creation of the Declaration of Rights and Grievances in 1774. The British measures that were classed as the Intolerable Acts were:

- March 31, 1774: The Boston Port Act
- May 20, 1774: [The Massachusetts Government Act](#)
- May 20, 1774: [The Administration of Justice Act](#)
- June 2, 1774: [The Quartering Act of 1774](#)
- June 22, 1774: [The Quebec Act of 1774](#)

Less than a year following the "Intolerable Acts" including the Boston Port Act of 1774 the American Revolution erupted.



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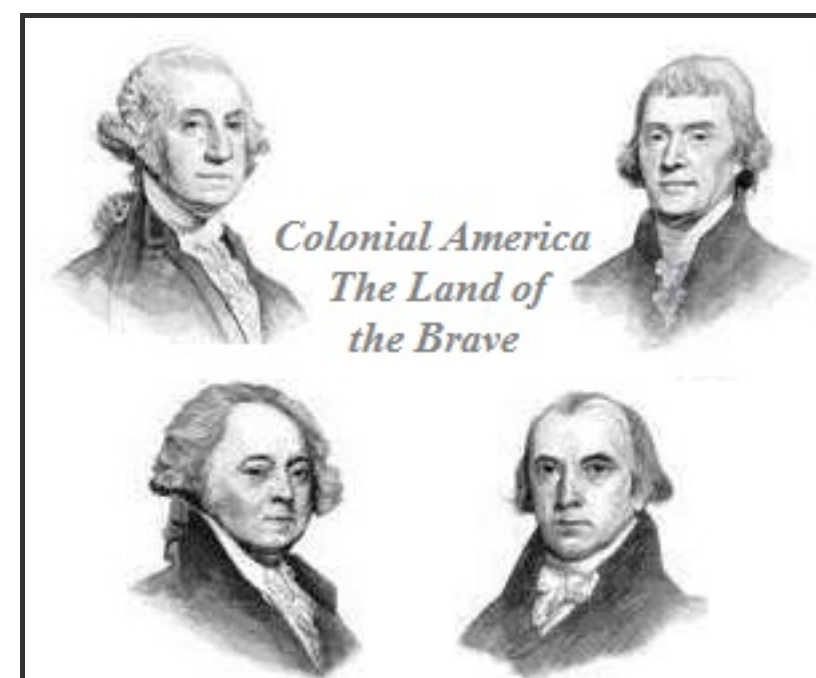
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