

Massachusetts Government Act



The Massachusetts Government Act was passed in Parliament

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

- What was the Massachusetts Government Act?
- The Meaning and Definition of the Massachusetts Government Act
- The purpose of the Massachusetts Government Act
- The effect of the Massachusetts Government Act
- The Massachusetts Government Act, suitable as an educational Social Studies resource for schools and kids

[Intolerable Acts of 1774](#)

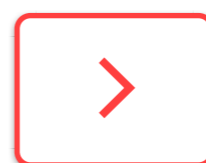
[Boston Tea Party](#)

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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 Massachusetts Government Act, one of the Intolerable Acts

Definition Massachusetts Government Act

The Meaning and Definition of the Massachusetts Government Act: The Massachusetts Government Act was passed by the Parliament of Great Britain on May 20, 1774. The Massachusetts Government Act revoked the colony's 1691 charter effectively ended the constitution of Massachusetts and restricted the number of town meetings that a community might hold and prohibited the election of town officials.

Purpose of Massachusetts Government Act

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



Colonial Town Meeting

Events leading up to the Massachusetts Government Act 1774

The events that led to the passing of the Intolerable Acts, including the Massachusetts Government 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 Massachusetts Government Act was one of the series of reprisals for the actions taken by the patriots. Read the [1774 Massachusetts Government Act text and words](#).

The Massachusetts Government Act 1774

The Massachusetts Government Act was:

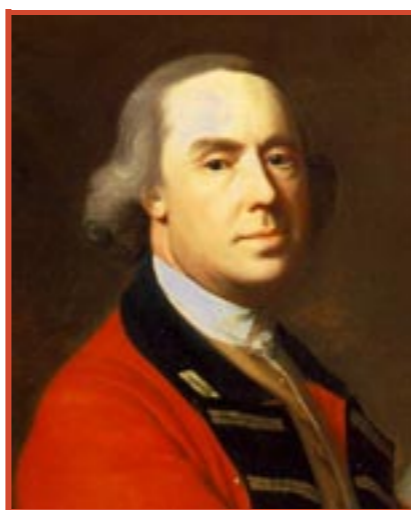
"An Act for the better regulating the government of the province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England. "

The Massachusetts Government Act:

- Put an end to the constitution of Massachusetts
- Only one town meeting was permitted a year in Massachusetts, unless approved by the governor
- Town officials would no longer be elected, they were to be appointed by the royal governor
- The executive council would no longer be elected, but appointed by the King
- The Massachusetts Government Act revoked the colony's 1691 charter

The Massachusetts Government 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 Boston colonists that the crown intended to impose martial law, in which a military government suspends civil law.



General Thomas Gage

Effects of the Massachusetts Government Act 1774

The Massachusetts Government Act was 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 Massachusetts Government 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.

Reaction of the other Colonies to the Massachusetts Government Act 1774

The other colonies sympathized with the people of Massachusetts and many deplored all of the Intolerable Acts including the Massachusetts Government 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 Massachusetts Government Act, as:

- A violation of their constitutional rights, natural rights 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.

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The Massachusetts Government Act of 1774 became one of the Intolerable Acts

The Massachusetts Government 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 Massachusetts Government Act of 1774 the American Revolution erupted.



Port of Boston in 1774

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