Allison French

Charles Townshend

Charles Townshend is know for the Townshend Act, an imported tax on the American colonies for things like lead, glass, paint, tea and paper.

Charles was born on August 27, 1725 in Norfolk, England. He is the 2nd son to Charles Townshend, 3rd Viscount Townshend and Audrey Harrison. In September 1775, Charles married Lady Caroline Campbell, who already had a son. Together they had a daughter, Anne, and two sons that died as young children.

As a young boy and into adulthood, Charles suffered from epilepsy. Despite his health problems he went on to study the law at Leyden University in Holland. In 1748, Charles won a lower seat in Parliament. Because of his health, he eventually had to give up his seat in Parliament and became a member of the Board of Trade. This is how he got involved in the trade problems between Great Britain and the American colonies.

The British decided to tax the American colonies to help cover the debt that the French and Indian war caused. Parliament passed the Stamp Acts, which caused protests and boycotts from the colonies. Townshend proposed to King George that they charge a tax on imported goods such as lead, glass, paper, tea and paint. He knew this would not raise a lot of money but it would prove that the King was still in charge over the colonies. The American colonists were not happy about being taxed and this eventually led them to separate from the British.

Not long after the Townshend Act passed, Charles suddenly passed away from a fever on September 4, 1767. He did not get to see the effects his acts caused with the colonies.