

## Colonial America and the Navigation Acts

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the British parliament enacted a number of laws, called Navigation Acts, governing commerce between Britain and its overseas colonies. For example, the Navigation Acts of 1660 and 1663 barred the empire's colonial merchants from exporting such commodities as sugar and tobacco anywhere except to England and from importing goods in non-English ships. Similarly, the Molasses Act of 1733 taxed all foreign molasses (a thick liquid drained from sugarcane and used to make rum) entering the mainland American colonies at sixpence per gallon. This act was intended less to raise revenue than to serve as a protective tariff (tax) that would benefit British West Indian sugar producers at the expense of their French rivals. By 1750 a long series of Navigation Acts were in force, with several effects on the North American colonial economy.

For one thing, the laws limited all imperial trade to British ships, defined as those with British ownership and crews that were three-quarters British. For purposes of the legislation, Parliament classified all colonists as British. This restriction not only contributed to Great Britain's rise as Europe's foremost shipping nation but also laid the foundations for an American shipbuilding industry and merchant marine. By the 1750s one-third of all imperial vessels were American-owned, mostly by merchants in the northeast and in mid-Atlantic colonies. The swift growth of this merchant marine diversified the northern colonial economy and made it more self-sufficient. The expansion of colonial shipping in turn accelerated urbanization by creating a need for centralized docks, warehouses, and repair shops in the colonies. By 1770 Philadelphia and New York City had emerged as two of the British Empire's busiest ports.

1. According to paragraph 1, the Navigation Acts of 1660 and 1663 did not allow
  - ☐ importing goods without paying taxes on them
  - ☐ importing goods made outside the British Empire
  - ☐ using English ships to transport goods to non-British colonies
  - ☐ using non-English ships to bring in goods from outside the colonies
2. What was the purpose of "the Molasses Act of 1733"?
  - ☐ To produce the funds needed to protect British West Indian sugar producers from attack by the French
  - ☐ To give British sugar producers in the West Indies an advantage over their French rivals
  - ☐ To prevent rum from being made outside of the British West Indies
  - ☐ To discourage the mainland American colonies from importing molasses
3. The word "swift" in the passage is closest in meaning to
  - ☐ gradual
  - ☐ fast
  - ☐ protective
  - ☐ long-term

**ANS :** BBBB(AC), DBBAC, DCD, 246