

Tanya Littlefield

Period Three

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TOPIC: “The American Revolution was the culmination of unavoidable mistakes and misunderstandings in England and America from 1763-1776.”
Why did the colonies grow disconnected from Great Britain?

The American Revolution was, arguably, one of the greatest movements in all of human history — a revolution after which many others were modeled. In the 1600s, people emigrated from England to the Americas to start new lives. For many years, the bond between Britain and their colonies seemed to be one that would remain long unbroken. However, the separation of the colonies from their mother country was ultimately inevitable. As an effect of certain contemptible acts, increasing self-reliance, and various conflicts from the years 1763 to 1776, the colonies grew gradually disconnected from Great Britain and, eventually, revolted.

For a long time, before the Revolution, people who emigrated from Britain to the Americas liked to call themselves Englishmen. They were, after all, being treated the same as those English that remained in their homeland. However, as years progressed and the colonies grew more and more away from the influence of Britain, they started to develop new political ideas and become “rebellious.” The mother country of Britain

began to “punish” its children, the colonies, with acts which were appalling in the eyes of the colonial people. More importantly, the colonies were told that they were still represented in Britain, and yet they were being taxed on things that those living in Britain were not — this is otherwise known as “taxation without representation.” At first, less severe acts were put into motion; examples of these acts include the Townshend Acts of 1767, the Declaratory Act of 1766, and the Tea Act of 1773. However, the colonies did not view these acts as anything to take lightly, and, with the aforementioned acts in place along with others, they led to the Boston Tea Party. Enraged, the British presented, without a doubt, the most harsh of the acts inflicted upon the colonies. They were called the Intolerable Acts. These acts were implemented in the year 1774 and included the Boston Port Act (the closing of the Boston Ports until the tea from the Boston Tea Party was paid for), the Massachusetts Government Act (revoking the right to self-government), Act for the Impartial Administration of Justice (British officials charged with capital are tried in England as opposed to the colonies), the Quartering Act (all colonies could be asked to house military), and the Quebec Act (new colony gets religious toleration, and land increase). These acts not only crippled the colonies financially, but also took away any sense of freedom they might have possessed. Thus, the acts inflicted upon the colonies were a major turnkey in the colonies’ disconnection from Great Britain and, finally, the Revolution.

As the colonies grew and matured, drawing away from England, their economy acquired a feeling of strong self-reliance. People progressed more and more: they built cities and churches and schools; prepared the soil to raise grain, tobacco and other crops

and cattle; and they had grown strong in surviving the forests. The colonists realized that they were producing what they needed to be self-sufficient, so as to not be dependant on the products of Britain — they were succeeding in growing enough crops to survive on, and had raised cattle in such a way that they had excesses of meat. In addition to the thriving food sources in the colonies, there were also many flourishing businesses in the colonies that stimulated their economy. The British soon saw that the booming economy of the Americas was cutting down on their country's profits, and took steps (namely, the aforementioned acts) to stint the economic growth of the colonies and bring revenue back to England. This self-reliance was basically just another catalyst in the complete disconnection of the colonies from Britain.

Finally, there were many conflicts between England and the Americas that caused a disconnection. One such conflict was that of the Boston Tea Party. After the Tea Act of 1773, outraged patriots dressed as Mohawk Indians and boarded the vessels of the East Indian Company docked in the Boston harbor. These masked patriots dumped all the tea that was on the three ships into the ocean. In total, they emptied 342 chests of tea which was valued at more than 10,000 pounds (Oleksy, 1998). In response, the outraged British implemented one of the Intolerable Acts, known as the Boston Port Act. This conflict basically threatened to devastate the colonies economically. Another conflict between the British and the colonists was that of the Boston Massacre. On March 5, 1770, soldiers led by Captain Thomas Preston were met by a large and taunting crowd of civilians — mostly dockworkers. Captain Preston was unable to disperse the crowd and he ordered

his troops not to fire into the crowd. However, the order was not heeded and eight civilians were killed initially, with an additional one dying later (Gherardini, 1998).

In conclusion, there were many factors that contributed to the disconnection of the American colonies from Great Britain. The most predominant factors, however, would undoubtedly be contemptible acts, increasing self-reliance, and various conflicts. These factors directly caused rebellion, disconnection of bonds, and, climactically, the actual American Revolution.