

The Colonial Period (1607–1776): Timeline of Key Events Leading to
Break with England

I. Colonial Experience

1607 - First Permanent Settlement at Jamestown
1620 - Mayflower Compact, Plymouth Bay Colony
1629 - Massachusetts Bay Charter
1630's - "Great Migration"
1607-1776: First American “Constitutional” Documents = Colonial Charters

II. Events in England during this Period

1642-1660: The “Great Rebellion” (Cromwell and the “Interregnum”)
1660-1685: Charles II
1685-1688: James II
1689: Accession of William & Mary to the English Throne
English “Bill of Rights” – Statute

III. “Seven Years War” [French & Indian War] 1756-63

IV. 1760-1776: Escalation of Conflict between Colonies and
England

1761 – Writs of Assistance Case (James Otis, February 24) (opposing use of
general search warrants)
1764 - Sugar Act (September 29) (anti-smuggling; limited exports; provided for
trial in admiralty courts - no jury)
1765 - Stamp Act (March 22) (tax on newspapers, documents) (“taxation without
representation”)
1765 - Stamp Act Congress (October)
1766 - Stamp Act Repealed (March 18)
1766 - Declaratory Act (parliament has right to make laws for colonies "in all cases
whatsoever")
1767 - Townshend Act (November 20) (tax on paper, glass, tea, etc.)
1770 - Townshend Act Repealed (except for tea)
1770 - "Boston Massacre" (March 5)
1773 - Boston Tea Party (December 16)
1774 - Boston Port Act (March 31)
1774 - Amended Quartering Act (June 2) (quartering of British troops in homes)

V. Moving Toward Independence

1774 - First Continental Congress

1774 – Articles of Association

1775 - Battles of Lexington & Concord (April 19)

1775 - Battle of Bunker Hill (June 17)

1775 - Second Continental Congress

1776 - Thomas Paine's Common Sense (January 9, 1776)

1776 – Colonies urged to prepare for break with England (replace colonial charters with state “constitutions”) (May, 1776)

1776 – Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776)