

common goods was the first British tax on goods that were produced and used exclusively in the colonies.

Whereas, by an act made in the last session of Parliament, several duties were granted, continued and appropriated toward defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the British colonies and plantations in America; and whereas it is first necessary, that provision be made for raising a further revenue within your majesty's dominions in America, towards defraying the said expenses; we, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, *the Commons of Great Britain*, in parliament assembled, have therefore resolved to give and grant unto your majesty the rights and duties hereinafter mentioned. . . . That from and after the first day of November, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid unto his majesty. . . .

. . . For every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, on which shall be engrossed, written, or printed, any declaration, plea, replication, rejoinder, demurrer, or other pleading, or any copy thereof, in any court of law within the British colonies and plantations in America, a stamp duty of *three pence*. . . .

Charles Botta, *History of the United States of America: War of Independence*, vol. 2 (London: A. Fullarton & Co.), 29–33.

### PRACTICING Historical Thinking

**Identify:** Summarize the purpose of the Stamp Act as described in the first paragraph above.

**Analyze:** Why might a North American colonist see the Stamp Act as unfair? Why might a British policy maker see it as fair?

**Evaluate:** Compare the British treatment of the colonists as outlined in the Stamp Act with William Trent's treatment of the native peoples in Document 4.2.

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## DOCUMENT 4.4 | PATRICK HENRY, Virginia Resolves 1765

Patrick Henry (1736–1799), a Virginia attorney and planter, shocked his fellow members of the Virginia House of Burgesses with his heated speeches against the Stamp Act. Henry's arguments proved increasingly popular as relations between the British government and the colonies soured throughout the 1760s and 1770s.

*Whereas*, the honorable House of Commons in England have of late drawn into question how far the General Assembly of this colony hath power to enact laws for laying of taxes and imposing duties, payable by the people of this, his majesty's

most ancient colony: for settling and ascertaining the same to all future times, the House of Burgesses of this present General Assembly have come to the following resolves:—

... *Resolved*, That the first adventurers and settlers of this, his majesty's colony and dominion, brought with them and transmitted to their posterity, and all other his majesty's subjects, since inhabiting in this, his majesty's colony, all the privileges, franchises, and immunities that have at any time been held, enjoyed, and possessed, by the people of Great Britain. . . .

... *Resolved*, That his majesty's liege people of this most ancient colony have uninterruptedly enjoyed the right of being thus governed by their own Assembly in the article of their taxes and internal police, and that the same hath never been forfeited, or any other way given up, but hath been constantly recognized by the kings and people of Great Britain.

... *Resolved*, therefore, That the General Assembly of this colony have the only and sole exclusive right and power to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this colony; and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons whatsoever, other than the General Assembly aforesaid, has a manifest tendency to destroy British as well as American freedom.

Moses Coit Tyler, *Patrick Henry* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1898), 69–70.

### PRACTICING Historical Thinking

**Identify:** Describe the problem and proposed solution to the injustices that Henry describes.

**Analyze:** Determine two opposing audiences that Henry has in mind, and explain why you chose them.

**Evaluate:** In what ways does Henry's resolution echo documents like John Locke's "Second Treatise on Civil Government" (Doc. 3.9)?

## DOCUMENT 4.5

### JOHN DICKINSON, Letter from a Farmer in Pennsylvania

1767

John Dickinson (1732–1808) was a prominent Pennsylvania lawyer and essayist who published the series *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* to protest British imperial policies in the aftermath of the Stamp Act crisis of 1765. Here he is referring to the Townshend Duties, which were a series of taxes placed on imported goods in the aftermath of the Stamp Act crisis.

The assembly of that government [New York] complied with a former act of parliament, requiring certain provisions to be made for the troops in *America*, in every particular, I think, except the articles of salt, pepper and vinegar. . . .