



## The Townshend Acts of 1767

One year after the repeal of the Stamp Act, King George III and Parliament attempted to tax the colonists again when they passed the Townshend Acts of 1767. The Townshend Acts required the colonists to pay taxes on imported items such as lead, paint, paper, glass and tea. The money raised from these taxes helped England pay judges, governors, tax collectors, and soldiers living in the colonies.

The Townshend Acts were very unpopular and led to many protests, especially in major ports up and down the Atlantic Coast. In Boston, for example, British tax collectors were nearly killed by an angry mob when they seized a ship belonging to a popular merchant named John Hancock. The men were forced to retreat to an island fortress in the middle of the harbor until they were rescued by a fleet of Royal Navy warships several weeks later (*see image at right*).

Another way that people protested the Townshend Acts was by refusing to buy imported goods. Rather than relying on items that were shipped in from England, many colonists learned how to knit their own clothing and make their own paper. They found local spices to substitute for tea and left their houses unpainted. This caused businesses in England to lose money.



*When news of the Townshend Acts reached the port of Boston, riots broke out in the city. In response, England sent this fleet of warships to ferry 2,000 troops into the city to restore order. Sultana joined this fleet in September 1768.*

In order to ensure that revenue from the Townshend Acts was collected, King George III assigned the job of enforcing the new taxes to the Royal Navy. A small fleet of ships was created to patrol colonial waters to prevent smuggling, assist British tax collectors, and restore order in unruly ports when necessary. The ships that were most suited for this job were sloops and schooners. These vessels were perfect for patrolling in colonial waters because they could sail into the wind, chase down colonial ships at a moment's notice, and sail in shallow waters where large warships couldn't go. In 1768, a small schooner named Sultana was purchased by the Royal Navy and added to this fleet. She would soon set sail for North America and into the growing struggle between England and the thirteen colonies.



## The Townshend Acts of 1767

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

DIRECTIONS: Read the text on the previous page, then answer the following questions in complete sentences. Write your answers on the lines provided.

1. What were four items taxed by the Townshend Acts?

---

---

2. How did England use the money raised from the Townshend Acts?

---

---

3. What were some ways that the colonists protested the Townshend Acts?

---

---

4. What was the role of the small fleet of ships created by the Royal Navy?

---

---

5. Why were sloops and schooners perfect for patrolling coastal waters?

---

---