***The Reasons We Went to War***

The British philosopher John Locke said that all men have the right to life, liberty, and property. {Copyright} In the period leading up to the revolution, the Colonists began to question whether the British believed what Locke had to say is true. This was the true beginning of the American Revolution. The foundation of the American Revolution was primarily political and economic; however social and intellectual reasons played a major role.

One significant political driver was taxation without representation. Specifically, the Colonists were not participants in the governing system of the British government, in stark contrast to British citizens on British soil. Yet the system of taxation of the Colonists was felt to be onerous or inconsistent with the benefits or services provided by the Government. The Colonists had a saying to express their position, “No taxation without representation.” There were three main acts declared by Britain that angered the Colonists. The first was the Stamp Act. This forced the Colonists to buy stamps for all legal documents. While the costs of the stamps were not a lot, that was not the point. It appeared to be nothing more than a means to raise revenue. The revenue generated from this Act exceeded by more than ten times the annual revenue generated from the Colonists before 1763.

* Who was John Locke?
* What did the Colonist do?
* When was the Stamp act?

These three instances of British oppression and their impact on the American economy were big reasons for ultimate revolt.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL

While economic and political reasons were the main factors behind the rebellion, intellectual reasons, while less significant, were also motivating. One reason that the intellectual reason had so much influence was the argument by John Locke that if a government should persist in exceeding its rightful powers, the people would be free not only from their obligation to obey any particular law, but their obligation to obey the government. The Colonists took this to heart. They believed that the government had abused its power, which it had, and that they had a right to rebel, which they did. They believed this so much that when the Colonists finally drafted a Declaration of Independence they included many of Locke’s ideas. Another reason that influenced the colonist’s was the idea of virtual representation verses actual representation. The British were using a form of virtual representation. The Colonists had no representative in the government and so they were not being represented as British citizens. The Colonists wanted actual representation. They believed that this would make it so that they had a say in the government actions impacting their day to day lives. With the England and the king so far away, there was no appreciation for local needs and issues such as the impact of new taxes or the changes in a right to be tried by a jury of your peers. The Colonists believed that these were basic rights deserved by all people. Clearly the British thought different. The primary British concern was revenue and seemed to do that by any means necessary, even at the expense of colonist’s rights. These are just a handfull of intellectual reasons that started the American Revolution.

A final major reason behind the revolt was social conditions. The British did not respect the Colonists. One example of this is when George Washington unsuccessfully attempted to join the British army. The reason that he did not switch was that they were not going to respect his rank. The British were going to demote Washington if he joined despite his greater experience than many of his British counterparts. To him this was unacceptable and thankfully he did not join the British. Another social reason for revolt was the King himself. King George III had social and intellectual problems. He suffered from a disease that produced bouts of insanity and appeared to become more insane with age. This made the government appear very unstable. The Colonists could not see why they should let a lunatic like the king impose his irrational power on their daily lives. They also started to believe that any government that can produce a king like George III must not be fit to appropriately rule anyone. Hence, they needed to make a better government through any means necessary including revolt.

*In conclusion, the American Revolution was a decision not taken lightly. There were many factors that went into the decisions leading to war. These factors were primarily political and economic; however social and intellectual reasons also played a major role*.

3 things we are grateful for:

Family

Military

Navy

Marines

Coast Guard

Service Personnel

Police

Fireman

Teachers