Lesson: Deflation and Antagonism: Colonial Frustrations Magnified

Allocation: One 45 minute class period, during study of colonial resistance to Britain.

Objective: Expand the general issues of taxation and representation by having students consider (as part of the greater discussion of colonial-British government relations post 1763) the overlooked role of the lack of specie/deflation as a compounding factor of colonial frustration regarding taxation. Secondary benefits: develops concepts of currency/monies to set up future discussions in United States History.

Materials: Resolutions of the Stamp Act Congress, October 19, 1765

Lesson: Have students review/brainstorm traditional sources of grievance between Britain and colonies; have students examine, focusing on Article IX of Resolutions of the Stamp Act Congress. Discuss meaning of “specie” and notions of inflation and deflation, scarcity and surplus in general. Have students form small groups and analyze and discuss how a scarcity of currency might have affected many colonists as they absorbed duties placed on them by Parliament. The class may consider the interests of the Crown and Parliament in collecting taxes in specie. (This brief supplemental lesson can be used to introduce concepts which may be employed for additional episodes of currency tensions as well: the Carolina Regulator Movement, 1769; Jackson and the Bank of the United States; the post-War Revolution and Hamilton’s financial plans; Populism, the Silverites and Goldbugs (Wizard of Oz monetary allegory).
Lesson: The Albany Plan, 1754, and Franklin’s “Recollection” of the Plan, 1789: Clues to British Policy Failure and Colonial Disunity

Allocation: One 45 minute class period, during study of colonial resistance to Britain.

Objective: Have students gain heightened understanding of the efforts to achieve colonial unity and the challenges to this unity.


Lesson: Have students examine the *Albany Plan* and chart the functions of this proposed inter-colonial government. Discuss with students the factors in the colonial rejection of the proposal, noting how this rejection underscored localism, etc. (factors overcome by many in the coming years). Second, have students examine Franklin’s “Memorandum,” noting clues afforded by Franklin as the possible impact its acceptance by the colonies and the Crown would have afforded (note his suggestion of Crown’s failure; the class might discuss the concerns of the Crown for the Plan’s adoption and its rejection).