

Connecting History

Expanding Liberty

Settlers in all the early colonies had quickly established representative government. See *Chapter 3*, pp. 65–73.

Parliament and Colonial Government **Parliament**, England’s lawmaking body, was the colonists’ model for representative government. Parliament had two houses. Members of the House of Commons were elected. Members of the House of Lords were nonelected nobles, judges, and clergy.

English colonists in America did not want to give up the right to representative government. Because the king and Parliament were too far away to manage every detail of the colonies, some self-government was allowed. In all the colonies, the colonists formed their own elected assemblies—smaller-scale versions of the House of Commons. Virginia’s House of Burgesses was the first of these. The assemblies imposed taxes and managed the colonies.

The relationship between the assemblies and Parliament was awkward. Although Parliament granted the colonists some self-government, it retained ultimate authority. The colonists disliked many of the laws that Parliament passed without their consent. Conflicts also arose when the king appointed royal governors to rule some colonies on his behalf. These conflicts became more intense in the late 1600s.

SEQUENCE EVENTS Describe how English rights were strengthened.

English Rights Threatened

KEY QUESTION How were colonial rights affected by political changes?

The political relationship between the assemblies and the English government caused tension on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition, the policies of some kings of England threatened the rights of Englishmen everywhere.

Kings Limit Self-Government In the mid-1600s, Massachusetts and other colonies were smuggling goods and ignoring the Navigation Acts. (See Chapter 4.) When challenged, the people of Massachusetts claimed that England had no right to make laws for them. In response, King Charles II canceled their charter. The charter had given the colony the right of self-government.

When Charles’s brother James became king in 1685, he wanted to strengthen royal power. He also changed the way the northern colonies were governed. James combined Massachusetts and the other Northern colonies into one Dominion of New England, ruled by governor **Edmund Andros**. Andros angered the colonists by ending representative assemblies and limiting town meetings.

With their assemblies outlawed, some colonists refused to pay taxes. Andros jailed the loudest protestors. At their trial, they were told, “You have no more privileges left you than not to be Sould [sold] for Slaves.”

The colonists sent Increase Mather to England to plead with King James. (See *One American’s Story* on page 137.) However, a revolution in England was underway that changed the situation completely.

Why do you think the colonists resented Governor Andros (shown below)?

