



Rev250 Timeline of Events

2024 – Setting the Stage for Revolution

Rev250 Discover Danvers celebrates the nation's upcoming Semi-quincentennial (250th Anniversary) on July 4, 2026.

The Danvers Historical Society invites you to follow along with us as we explore the people and events leading up to the War of Independence. Here in Massachusetts, and especially Essex County, we begin the commemoration sooner than 2026, due to the many events that happened here prior to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Each week, and sometimes more often, we will post an account of an event or story important to the struggle for independence. Where possible, these stories will relate specifically to Danvers and the surrounding area of Essex County. Follow along and Discover Danvers!

April 1764 – Sugar Act; The French and Indian War has ended with the British driving the French from North America. As a result, the British national debt soars. To continue offering protection to the colonies, they must raise revenue. Settling west of the Appalachian Mountains has been barred. The Sugar Act imposes stricter trade regulations and duties on sugar and molasses.

March 1765 – Stamp Act is announced; This act placed taxes on printed matter, paper goods and legal documents. British stamps were affixed to documents or packages to show that the tax had been paid. Colonists increased their nonimportation efforts.

May 1765 – Two months later, the Quartering Act was instituted. This required the colonies to provide housing and supplies for British troops.

October 1765 – Riots erupt all over New England protesting the Stamp Act. The Massachusetts Assembly suggests a meeting of all the colonies to work for the repeal of the Stamp Act. The Stamp Act Congress, with representatives from nine of the thirteen colonies meets in New York City to discuss the crisis. They pass a declaration which claims that American colonists are equal to all other British citizens, protests taxation without representation, and states that, without colonial representation in Parliament, Parliament could not tax colonists.

March 1766 – Parliament repeals the Stamp Act but passes the Declaratory Act which establishes its complete authority to make its laws binding "in all cases whatsoever."

June 1767 – After a year of celebrations over the repeal of the Stamp Act, Parliament passes the Townshend Revenue Acts which impose new import duties on things like glass, lead, paint, paper and tea.

February 1768 – The Massachusetts General Court issues Massachusetts Circular Letter, denouncing the Townshend Acts and calling for unified resistance by all the colonies.

August 1768 – Boston merchants again discourage the purchase of British imports and trade with Britain.

October 1768 -- General Thomas Gage and British troops arrive in Boston to enforce compliance.

1769 – Amid the growing unrest, the women, and even children, of eastern Massachusetts hold day-long spinning bees mostly at the homes of local clergymen. The number of spun skeins of wool, flax, cotton, linen and tow were tallied in competitions across New England. By August, Royal Governor Bernard departed for England and Lt. Governor Thomas Hutchinson becomes governor *pro tem*. He is eventually confirmed as Royal Governor. Massachusetts receives responses to its Circular Letter from Assemblies in South Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina. The Virginia House of Burgesses passes resolutions condemning Britain's actions against Massachusetts, and states that only Virginia's governor and legislature could tax its citizens.

January 1770 – Riots break out in New York between citizens and soldiers over the New York Assembly's compliance with the Quartering Act.

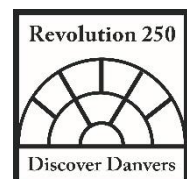
February 1770 – More than 100 women of Boston and other towns sign an agreement not to drink any tea until the Revenue Acts are repealed.

March 5, 1770 – **Boston Massacre** takes place. Five civilians are killed by British troops. A violent uprising was avoided when troops withdrew to islands in the harbor. Several Massachusetts towns vote to support the non-importation agreement. Boston petitions the Royal Governor to remove all troops from the city. The Townshend Acts are repealed in April, except for the tax on tea.

June 1772 – **Attack on the "Gaspee."** Several boatloads of local patriots attack a grounded British customs schooner, the *Gaspee*, near Providence, Rhode Island, and burn it. The Royal Governor offers a reward for the discovery of the men, planning to send them to England for trial. The removal of the "*Gaspee*" trial to England outrages American colonists

May 1773 – **Tea Act;** By reducing the tax on imported British tea, this act gave British merchants an unfair advantage in selling their tea in America. American colonists condemned the act, and many planned to boycott tea.

October 1773 – Danvers Board of Selectmen's meeting held at Turk's Head Tavern, Danvers, owned by John Piemont. This Paul Revere engraved bill was found in the Danvers Town Hall



basement in 1969 by Richard B. Trask. The printed services listed were “Lodging, eating, wine, punch, porter, horse-keeping, oats, tea and cakes.” It was common for town business to be conducted at taverns. The Turk’s Head was located near what is now Pine Street near Sylvan Street. The Selectmen were apparently entertained before, during or after their meeting resulting in a bill of 11 shillings, 8 pence to the Town of Danvers for eating, punch, horse-keeping, cakes and brandy. What could the Selectmen have been meeting about? Were they conducting routine business? Did they discuss the Tea Act? Note that no tea was purchased at this meeting. Read Richard Trask’s entire account and the significance of this small piece of paper in Danvers Historical Collections, Vol. XLIV, p. 17-20, “Unique Revere Engraving Discovered in Danvers Town Papers.”

Also see Richard Trask’s video of Danvers Revolutionary War artifacts at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkkC-5J9UVw>

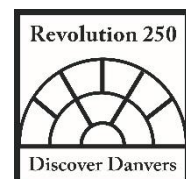
December 1773 – Boston Tea Party; When British tea ships arrived in Boston harbor, many citizens wanted the tea sent back to England without the payment of any taxes. The Royal Governor insisted on payment of all taxes. On December 16, a group of men boarded the ships and dumped all 342 chests of tea in the harbor. The commemoration of this event in December 2023 attracted an estimated 20, 000 visitors.

March 1774 – Boston Port Act – King George III sends a message to Parliament informing them of the destruction of the tea in Boston harbor. A bill to close the port of Boston until the tea is paid for is debated in March, passes Parliament. The Boston Port Bill is read a third time and sent into the House of Lords for concurrence.

April 16, 1774 -- General Gage embarks for Boston to take his role as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty’s forces in America

May 16, 1774 -- “Arrived his Majesty’s Ship Lively Capt. Bishop, in 26 days from London, in whom came his Excy: General Gage, who is appointed Govr. and Commander in Chief of this Province. Genl. Gage has brought over with him an Act of Parliament for blocking up the Port of Boston, which Act is to take place the first Day of June next – By this cruel edict of the British Parliament Thousands of our inhabitants, will be involved in one common undistinguished Ruin!”

May 20, 1774 – Coercive Acts anger colonists. In response to the Boston Tea Party, Parliament passed several acts to punish Massachusetts. The Boston Port Bill banned the loading or unloading of any ships in Boston harbor. The Administration of Justice Act offered protection to royal officials in Massachusetts, allowing them to transfer to England all court cases against them



involving riot suppression or revenue collection. The Massachusetts Government Act put the election of most government officials under the control of the Crown, essentially eliminating the 1691 Massachusetts charter of government. Civil courts were abolished, and a Mandamus court system was imposed with Trial by jury terminated.

Altogether these acts were later called the **Intolerable Acts**.

June 1, 1774 -- Transports arrive bringing the 4th Regiment of Foot and the 43rd Regiment of Foot to Boston in support of Governor Thomas Gage. The Boston Port Act goes into effect. The Port is closed.

June 2, 1774 – Quartering Act amended. Parliament broadened its previous Quartering Act (1765). British troops could now be quartered in any occupied dwelling.

June – September 10, 1774 – The General Court is ordered to assemble at Salem, moving the capital from Boston to Salem. General Thomas Gage, newly appointed Royal Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony takes up residence at “King” Robert Hooper’s summer home, later known as *The Lindens*, about 4 miles from Salem; He establishes an office in the south front room of Jeremiah Page’s House; excerpt from DHC Vol. 40, p. 84; British troops of the 4th and 43rd Regiment of Foot bivouacked near what is now Danvers Ford and Liberty Tree Mall. The family that still owns the land under the mall used to find Native American and military artifacts like musket paper cartridges and musket balls while farming.

June 17, 1774 -- To protest Britain's actions, Massachusetts suggested a return to nonimportation, but several states preferred a congress of all the colonies to discuss united resistance. The colonies soon named delegates to a congress -- the First Continental Congress -- to meet in Philadelphia on September 5th. Massachusetts General Court, in a locked-door meeting, appoints James Bowdoin, John Adams, Sam Adams, Thomas Cushing & Robert Treat Paine as delegates to the Continental Congress. Gov. Hutchinson tries to dissolve the General Court

June 21, 1774 – Royal Governor General Gage dissolves the local provincial legislature and brings the British 64th Regiment of Foot to Danvers.

Enjoy more REV250 history facts here soon!

