

**RESEARCHING OUR PAST:  
EDUCATIONAL HANDOUTS FOR STUDENTS &  
TEACHERS**

*Town of Huntington - The Declaration of Rights*



*Presented By the  
Huntington Town Clerk's Archives  
at Town Hall  
Jo-Ann Raia, Town Clerk/RMO*

## **Introduction**

This educational packet was developed in an effort to give school curricula a more personal level. The benefits in using teaching tools, such as this one, can be great for teachers and students.

Being emotionally and physically involved, students become curious about the past and get stimulated to do more research on a subject. Places and people that existed a long time ago come alive, colorful and warm, carrying the characteristics of time past. As a result, students remember what they have learned much longer.

Through exposure to archival collections, educators become aware of the wealth of historical information that exists in local government records and the many ways a single historical document can be used with students of different grades and ability levels.

This packet may be reproduced as needed. Original manuscripts described, can be viewed in our Archives solely. All activities are only suggestions and can be expanded or changed as needed.

### **For subject areas:**

Social Studies, American History, Geography, English Language Arts

### **Objectives:**

Use original records.

Identify and copy valuable information from original records.

Review historical events.

Identify and compare information from text books.

Development of thinking and oral (speech) skills.

**This leaflet was prepared by Antonia S. Mattheou, Town Archivist**

**1999**

**Imagine**

The place is Huntington, Long Island. The time is early Summer 1774. Delighted by the “Boston Tea Party” and shocked by the “Intolerable Acts” passed by Parliament, people gather in street corners holding loud discussions. What are they to do?

The colonists had become strong in numbers, wealth and resources. They felt it was time to resist the demands made upon them by Great Britain. They appointed a committee to represent the town and make decisions along with committees from other towns regarding resistance to British tyranny.

## **Huntington's Declaration of Rights**

This is the first record, in the Huntington Town Clerk’s Archives, signaling the approach of the Revolution.

*"1774 June 21*

*1st That every freemans property is absolutely his own, and no man has a right to take it from him without his consent expressed either by himself or his representatives.*

*2nd That therefore all taxes and duties imposed on His Majestys subjects in the American colonies by the authority of Parliament are wholly unconstitutional and a plain violation of the most essential rights of British subjects.*

*3rd That the act of Parliament lately passed for shutting up the port of Boston or any other means or device under color of law to compel them or any other of His Majestys American subjects to submit to Parliamentary taxation are subversive to their just and constitutional liberty.*

*4th That we are of opinion that our brethren of Boston are now suffering in the common cause of British America.*

*5th That therefore it is the indispensable duty of all colonies to unite in some effectual measures for the repeal of said act, and every other act of Parliament whereby they are taxed for raising a revenue.*

*6th That it is the opinion of this meeting that the most effectual means for obtaining a speedy repeal of said acts will be to break off all commercial intercourse with Great Britain Ireland and the English West India colonies.*

*7th And we hereby declare ourselves ready to enter into these or such other measures as shall be agreed upon by a general congress of all the colonies; and we recommend to the general congress to take such measures as shall be more effectual to prevent such goods as are at present in America from being raised to an extravagant price And lastly, we appoint Colonel Platt Conklin, John Sloss Hobart, Esq. and Thomas Wickes a committee for this town, to act in conjunction with the committees of the other towns in the county, as a general committee for the county, to correspond with the committee of New York.*

*Israel Wood President"*

**Questions to ask:**

1. Do you know of any other declaration? Who wrote it and when was it signed?
2. The term, “His Majesty” appears in the above text several times. Who was “His Majesty?”
3. What do you know about the Boston Tea Party?
4. What were the Intolerable Acts passed by Parliament?

**Activities:**

1. Plan a class trip or ask your students to visit the Huntington Archives to view documents relating to the Revolutionary War.
2. Make copies of the Declaration of Rights in its original form. Distribute it to your students and ask them to read it.

**ACT THIS OUT:** Ask students to act as members of the Committee appointed to represent the Town in drafting the Declaration of Rights.

Ask students to draft their own “Declaration of Student Rights”.

**For history’s sake:**

What if: (ask students to finish the sentence. Then ask others to respond.)

Some examples

- a) There was no revolution (there wouldn’t have been 4<sup>th</sup> of July)
- b) The “Boston Tea Party” had never taken place.

**Answers to the Questions**

1. The Declaration of Independence of the United States of America was drafted by Thomas Jefferson. John Adams and Benjamin Franklin offered some suggestions. It was signed by John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, on July 4, 1776.
2. His Majesty, King George III of Great Britain.
3. New taxes on tea, to the British East India Company by Parliament, caused trouble. On the night of December 16, 1773, a band of the Sons of Liberty, dressed as Indians, streamed down to the Boston Harbor, boarded the ships, ripped open the boxes of tea, and dumped the tea into the water. This event was called the Boston Tea Party.
4. Five laws passed by Parliament in 1774, were called the Intolerable Acts. The first closed the port of Boston to the passage of all goods except food and fuel. The second Act took away the charter of Massachusetts and placed the colony under the control of the British army. According to the third Act, British soldiers charged with murder were sent back to England for trial. The fourth Act required that people of Massachusetts were to provide living quarters for the British soldiers who were being rushed to Boston to enforce the new laws. The fifth Act, called the Quebec Act, extended the boundaries of Quebec to include territories claimed by Massachusetts, Connecticut and Virginia.

The Archives is open Monday-Friday, except holidays, from 10:00 am - 4:00 PM.

**For additional information regarding educational material and services the Archives offers, contact:**

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