

## ABSTRACT

### THE QUEBEC ACT: POLITICS, RELIGION, TERRITORY, AND THE REJECTION OF THE BRITISH MONARCHY IN THE AMERICAN COLONIES

The historiography of the American Revolution gives scant attention to the Quebec Act, which it often characterizes as only a motivational force for religious bigots in New England and land hungry speculators in Virginia. However, a close examination of the response to the act in the Thirteen American colonies gives a different interpretation. The act was not only widely resisted throughout the colonies, but that resistance differed in tone and substance between elite and popular print culture. For political elites in the American colonies, the Quebec Act was a threat from Parliament to the political supremacy of colonial assemblies while simultaneously posing a military threat in the form of the revitalization of a Catholic foe in French Canadians. Popular political opinion took a different tack, characterizing the act as not only a break with the British constitution in its establishment of Catholicism in a part of the British Empire, but also as an act of treason by the British monarch whose coronation oath required him to protect the supremacy of the Protestant faith. For radical Whigs in the American colonies this act served as further evidence of the despotic nature of the king. Given these reactions to the act, the widespread nature of the resistance, and the inclusion of the legislation into every official response to British policies by American colonists, it becomes apparent that the act had an influence on the course of the Revolution often omitted by historians.

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