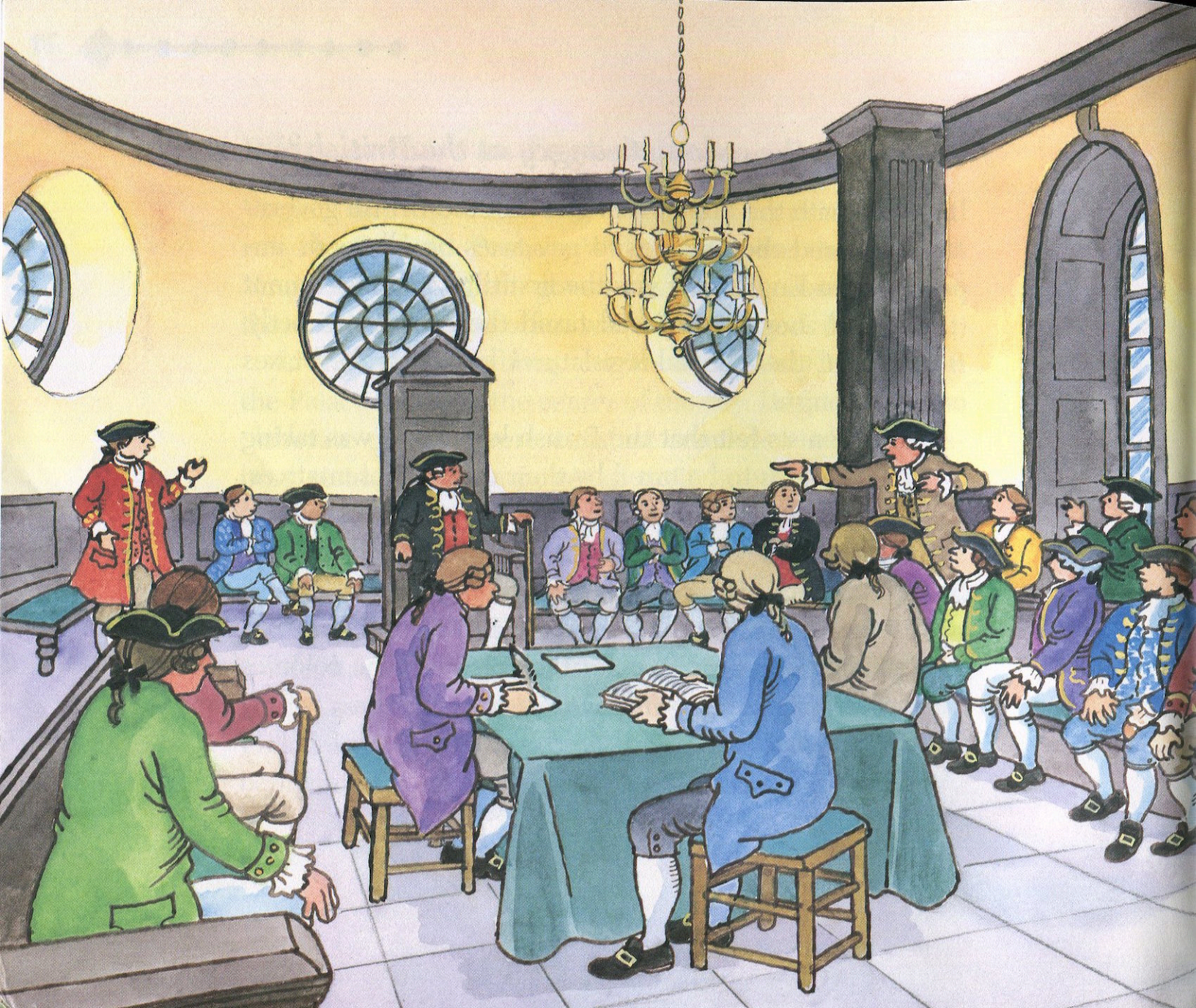


Why were the colonists angry at the British?

It started with the Stamp Act. In 1765, the British government ordered the colonies to pay taxes on all goods imported from England. It was the first time that Parliament (the British Legislature) had taxed the colonies directly. Before that, the colonial legislatures had controlled taxes on the colonists.

The colonists felt that the British legislature was taking away their rights to be taxed by their own representatives. Like people in the other colonies, Virginians protested strongly. Patrick Henry made a fiery speech against the Stamp Act in the House of Burgesses.

Britain repealed the Stamp Act in 1766, but Parliament kept passing other tax laws for the colonies. The colonies kept protesting. Many Virginians began to refuse to buy certain British goods.



The British dropped some of the taxes, but they kept others. People in the colonies continued to protest. In 1770, news reached Williamsburg that British soldiers had fired on rioters in the colony of Massachusetts. Three years later, they heard that colonists in Boston had staged a protest against a new tax on tea, dumping chests of British tea into the harbor.

Virginians had their own “Tea Party,” in the fall of 1774. By this time a movement to break away from British rule was gaining support throughout all thirteen colonies. In 1775, the American Revolution began.

If you had lived in Williamsburg then, you would have been part of it.