

Navigation Acts led by John Culpeper. There were no effective enforcement agencies and it was expensive to send British troops to the American colonies which were far away, so the policy of Salutary Neglect meant that such costs could be kept to a minimum. The British policy of Salutary Neglect was, most importantly, about the profits that could be made from the raw materials and products used for trade by the colonists in the 13 Colonies in exchange for goods from England. This led to the system of Triangular Trade across the Atlantic. Great Britain adhered to the philosophy of Mercantilism which came to mean that colonies existed for the good of the mother country. The famous British Prime Minister Robert Walpole stated that "If no restrictions were placed on the colonies, they would flourish". A great supporter of the Salutary Neglect policy.



Reasons for the Policy of Salutary Neglect - Inability to Enforce the laws

The reasons for the policy of Salutary Neglect were it was too difficult, too expensive and politically too risky to enforce the laws:

- Enforcement: During the early period of colonization there were no effective enforcement agencies in place
- Distance & Transport: 3000 miles from England to the colonies
- Complex Logistics: Required difficult coordination of people, facilities and supplies
- Expense: Too expensive to implement
- Political Dangers: Dissatisfied and discontented Colonists would find a willing ally in the French

However, the British government was far more vigilant when overseeing matters concerning merchants who were based in Great Britain the policy of Salutary Neglect did not apply to some matters. The policy of Salutary Neglect did not apply to issues involving contracts, debts, and the rates of currency exchange - also refer to Colonial, Continental and Revolutionary Currency. Concerns regarding these matters led to the Debt Recovery Act of 1732.

Salutary Neglect - The Navigation Acts

The Navigation Acts stated that Colonial exports had to be transported in English ships and that all Colonial imports had to first pass through English ports - whether the goods were for England or another country in Europe, meaning that the colonies were prohibited from trading directly with France, Spain and the Netherlands. The trade goods were to pay heavy duties (taxes) when shipped to England. The money from the taxes went to England, not the colonies from where they originated. The policy of Salutary Neglect allowed the colonial merchants to flout, or violate, the Navigation Acts. There were no effective agencies in place to enforce them - the policy of Salutary Neglect applied.

Salutary Neglect - Triangular Trade

The premise of Triangular Trade was that the different regions would trade goods that they had in abundance in exchange for those goods which were needed but lacking in their own region. Triangular trade provided the colonists with the ability to obtain English manufactured goods without spending hard currency that was in limited supply refer to Colonial Times. Many of the American colonists ignored the Navigation Acts and traded directly with France, Spain and the Netherlands - very profitable. They were able to get away with violating the law due to the long-standing, undocumented, English policy of 'Salutary Neglect'.

The Period and Era of Salutary Neglect

The policy of 'Salutary Neglect' lasted from the early 1600's to the 1760's and avoided strict enforcement of parliamentary laws - British officials in the colonies were basically allowed to turn a 'blind eye' to trade violations - they neglected to enforce the law. England's policy of salutary neglect on the colonies occurred in three time periods.

- Salutary Neglect 1607-1696: Navigation Acts were passed in the English parliament - but not enforced
- Salutary Neglect 1696-1763: Deliberate policy of Salutary Neglect to boost trade profits and ensure loyalty of the colonists
- Salutary Neglect 1763-1775: Great Britain attempts to reverse the policy of Salutary Neglect to pay for war debts, tightening their control, enforcing the Navigation Acts and other laws and imposing new taxes on goods

The Reversal of the Policy of Salutary Neglect

The benevolent period of Salutary Neglect all changed after the French and Indian War (aka Seven Years War 1755-1763) Although the French and Indian War was a victory for the British they were left with a massive war debt. To pay the war debt the British ended their policy of Salutary Neglect in the colonies. The defeat of the French had removed the political danger and the British were sufficiently confident to tighten their control over their now large and lucrative colonies. The long earlier period of "salutary neglect" came to an end and new initiatives with more and tighter controls were introduced. The British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Grenville, adopted the policy of bringing the colonies in line with regard to the payment of taxes - reversing the policy of Salutary Neglect.

- The measures implemented to reverse the policy of Salutary Neglect were to reduce the British national debt and stimulate the British economy.
- Lord Grenville significantly increased the presence of the Navy in Colonial America and instructed them to become more active in customs enforcement. British warships were ordered to patrol the ports to catch smugglers and seize contraband
- Writs of Assistance: Customs officials were ordered to go to their posts in Colonial America rather than work 3000 miles away. They were provided with Writs of Assistance (blanket search warrants) to stop smuggling. The Writs of Assistance gave Customs officials the authority to search any premises at any time
- The additional duties (taxes) raised due to the reversal of the policy of Salutary neglect were to pay the costs of having 10,000 troops stationed in the American colonies
- Admiralty courts for tax violators and smugglers were established in the colonies where a judge decided the outcome rather than a colonial court



The British therefore had the means, and the motivation, to enforce the laws of the Navigation Acts and looked for ways of imposing new taxes in the colonies and to make them bear a larger share of the costs of their administration and defence. The policy of Salutary Neglect was ended.

The End of the British Policy of Salutary Neglect

The British attempt to reverse their policy of Salutary Neglect in the 1760's and end illegal trading was to tighten their control, enforce the Navigation Acts and impose new taxes including the Sugar Act, Stamp Act, Townshend Acts and the Tea Act. These measures infuriated the American colonists. They had been allowed to flout the Navigation Acts for years - it had become their custom and practise and a direct result of Salutary Neglect. And then, to add insult to injury, the British were slashing their profits still further through the new taxes.

Effects of reversing of the Policy of Salutary Neglect

The colonists vehemently protested against the new measures resulting from the reversal of Salutary Neglect and the Sons of Liberty was formed. The Boston Tea Party affair followed which was as a result and in opposition to the Tea Act. The American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence was the inevitable conclusion to the laws and taxes imposed by the British on the American colonies - which had been fuelled by their attempt to end their policy of Salutary Neglect.

Salutary Neglect History Timeline

The seeds of revolution were sewn when the British attempted to reverse their policy of Salutary Neglect. The fastest way to gain an overview of the history of Salutary Neglect, and the attempts at the reversal of the Salutary Neglect Policy, is via a History Timeline of Salutary Neglect, for additional facts and information refer to Taxes in the Colonies.

History Timeline of Salutary Neglect

Salutary Neglect Timeline - Salutary Neglect Timeline - Salutary Neglect Timeline

- 1651 1651,1660 & 1663 The Navigation Acts were designed to regulate colonial trade but laws were violated due to the policy of Salutary Neglect
- 1663 The Navigation Act of 1663, also called the Act for the Encouragement of Trade or the Staple Act, was passed in the English Parliament.
- 1673 The Plantation Duty Act was enacted to the Plantations to trade exclusively with England and led to the Culpeper Rebellion of 1677.
- 1675 The Lords of Trade were appointed in England to enforce the new mercantile system and maximize potential profits for England within the confines of Salutary Neglect
- 1675 1675-1676 Bacon's Rebellion Nathaniel Bacon rebelled against a corrupt Governor
- 1677 Culpeper's Rebellion: Rebellion against the Colonial Government in Carolina and the Navigation Acts led by John Culpeper.
- 1688 1688 - 1763 The start of the French and Indian Wars between France and Great Britain
- 1689 The English Bill of Rights enables Parliament to control laws and taxes in the Colonies in America but still adhering to the policy of Salutary Neglect

Salutary Neglect Timeline and effects - Policy of Salutary Neglect adopted

- 1696 Salutary Neglect. Salutary Neglect was adopted as the English policy in Colonial America

- ⇒ **1696** The English government established the Board of Trade to oversee colonial policies working with the policy of Salutary Neglect.
- ⇒ **1696** Robert Walpole becomes Britain's first prime minister. Walpole approved the Policy of Salutary Neglect.
- ⇒ **1733** Navigation Act of 1733, also known as the Molasses Act

Salutary Neglect Timeline - Effects of Reversal of the Salutary Neglect Policy

- ⇒ **1763** The end of the French and Indian War (Seven years War) left the British with a massive war debt leading to the reversal of the Salutary Neglect policy
- ⇒ **1763** To pay the war debt the British end their policy of Salutary Neglect in the colonies. They started to enforce the laws of the Navigations Acts and looked for ways of imposing new duties (taxes)
- ⇒ **1764** Sugar Act
- ⇒ **1765** The Stamp Act
- ⇒ **1766** Vehement opposition by the Colonies resulted in the repeal of the Stamp act
- ⇒ **1765** The Sons of Liberty organization was formed
- ⇒ **1767** Townshend Acts - Series of Laws passed by the British Parliament placing duties on items imported by the colonists
- ⇒ **1773** Tea Act

- ⇒ **1774** December 16: The Boston Tea Party

- ⇒ **1775** March 22, 1775: In a conciliatory address to Parliament, Edmund Burke cites the British officials "wise and salutary neglect" as the prime factor in the booming commercial success of Britain's North American holdings.

- ⇒ **1775** The American Revolution (1775- 1783)



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History Timeline of Salutary Neglect

The Policy of Salutary Neglect

The Policy of Salutary Neglect and the British attempts to reverse the policy of Salutary Neglect was of vital importance important to the cause of the American Revolution and U.S. history.

Salutary Neglect

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