

Primary Sources on the Whiskey Rebellion

Source: *George Washington's letter to Alexander Hamilton, July 29, 1792*

The amount of money the national government owes is greater than it can possibly pay. We have other government expenses that will add to the debt. The amount of debt owed is so large that the national government does not have the ability to raise the money. The Whiskey Tax is more than the government would usually ask for, but we must raise the Whiskey Tax.

Source: *From George Washington's Proclamation of the Whiskey Rebellion, August 9, 1794*

Due to the fact that the citizens are in open rebellion against the government, I regret to say that I consider it necessary to put down this rebellion. The interest of the nation and the need for social order is at risk if I do not stop this uprising. Therefore I order all people who are involved in this act of treason to stop and return to their homes by September 1st. I further order all others who are helping the rebels to stop. All military officers and other citizens should follow the law and do their best to put down any acts of rebellion

Source: *Alexander Hamilton – Open Letter printed in a Philadelphia Newspaper 28 August 1794*

A government gets its power through either strong laws or by using force against its citizens. If the laws are weak and power cannot be held through the law, then the government must use force. When force is used on a regular basis, liberty is ended.

Source: *Pamphlet written by Herman Husband, a Revolutionary War Veteran and farmer from North Carolina*

Hasn't the government raised taxes without regard for paying it back? Hasn't the government used the money carelessly? Hasn't this forced citizens to pay even more taxes? If this continues, the country will become poor and may even cease to exist. This increase in taxes is evil and most of you are probably angry and upset about this. Most of you will want to find some way to stop this problem.

Source: *Editorial from the Pennsylvania Gazette written by Hugh H. Brackenridge (Aug 22, 1792)*

Taxes on food and drink are dangerous to people's civil rights. Such taxes will end up destroying the liberties of the people in any country that tries them

Source: *A letter from Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington January 16, 1787*

Pay attention to the common people and their needs. Do not judge them too harshly if they make mistakes but gently remind them of their duties as citizens. If we, the powerful people in our country, forget the common people then we will be like wolves.