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Chapter 1 : Record Citations

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Biography Thomas Hutchinson Facts Thomas Hutchinson , American governor of colonial Massachusetts and a staunch defender of English colonial policy, was also a jurist and historian. Thomas Hutchinson was born in Boston on Sept. He entered Harvard at the age of 12, graduating 3 years later. Politics in Massachusetts In Hutchinson was elected selectman for Boston. That same year he gained a seat in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, where he served every year, except , and was speaker for 3 years until his defeat in the election of In he was sent to England to represent Massachusetts in the boundary dispute with New Hampshire. He gained favor with the Massachusetts merchants when, in the fight against the Land Bank, he advocated sound money. In he was appointed judge of probate and justice of common pleas for Suffolk County. He was appointed lieutenant governor of Massachusetts in and became chief justice for the colony 2 years later. Because of his continuing interest in commerce, he opposed general search warrants by the governor, insisting that they be issued by the courts. By Hutchinson was one of the most influential men in Massachusetts politics, but he had earned the enmity of fiery prerevolutionary patriots Samuel Adams and James Otis by his opposition to the Land Bank and his support of the issuance of general writs by proper authority. Although he opposed the Sugar Act and the Stamp Act on the grounds that they would injure trade, he never denied the right of Parliament to tax the Colonies. It was this attitude and the fact that his brother-in-law Andrew Oliver was stamp master that led a Boston mob to sack his home in This violence led Hutchinson to believe that more stringent policies should be adopted by Parliament. Uneasy Governorship Although expressing opposition to the Townshend duties, Hutchinson felt that they should be enforced as the law. He was acting governor of Massachusetts from to Appointed royal governor of Massachusetts in , he faithfully followed instructions from the Crown. His popularity waned when he twice called out troops to quell disturbances and constantly disputed with the House over such trivialities as its place of meeting. These documents, published in Massachusetts in , were interpreted so as to make it seem that Hutchinson had secretly urged the British government to exert more stringent authority over the Colonies. The Boston Tea Party was the result. Thomas Gage replaced Hutchinson as governor. Unaware of the gravity of the colonial crisis, he urged a policy of conciliation toward the Colonies. Although he had many friends in England and Oxford University conferred upon him an honorary degree, he remained homesick for New England. His writings include a reply to the Declaration of Independence and the three-volume History of Massachusetts Bay. On June 3, , he died and was buried at Croydon, England. Freiberg, Malcolm, Prelude to purgatory: Thomas Hutchinson in provincial Massachusetts politics, , New York: Encyclopedia of World Biography. Copyright The Gale Group, Inc.

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