

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Stamp Act of 1765

George III was the king of England in 1765. He made preparations for carrying out his harsh laws on the American colonists. He put agents in all the colonial ports. He sent cruisers out upon the seas. He put agents in his own ports in England. And these agents were to watch and see that no smuggling went on.

1. Who was the king of England in 1765?

\_\_\_\_\_  
.....  
\_\_\_\_\_

smuggling

\_\_\_\_\_  
.....  
\_\_\_\_\_

By and by, it was discovered that these agents and the cruisers were costing a great deal of money.

Moreover, the money was not coming in from the colonies as the king had supposed it would.

colonies

\_\_\_\_\_  
.....  
\_\_\_\_\_

“Something is wrong,” said the king’s council. Then they sat down and reckoned up the year's work.

This was what they learned: they had paid out seven thousand pounds to keep watch on the American ports and to patrol the seas, but the colonies had paid in only about two thousand pounds.

council

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.....  
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“These laws are failures,” said the statesmen.

“They deserve to be,” said some of the English people.

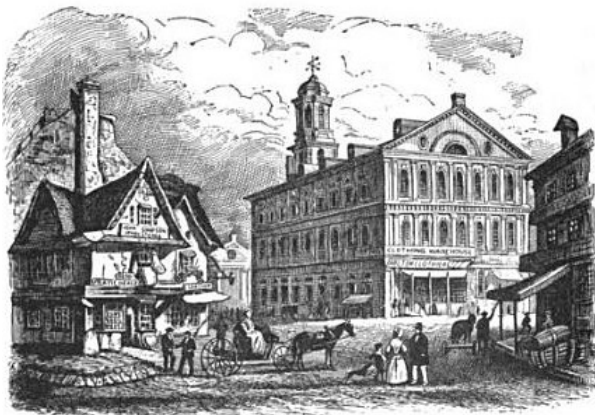
“We told you that they would be,” said others.

“But why are we receiving so little revenue from the colonies?” asked George III. “The American ports have a great commerce. There should be ten times two thousand pounds in revenue coming from them.”

## 2. English money:

- a. dollars
- b. francs
- c. pesos
- d. pounds

“The colonists are smuggling, sir,” answered the council.



FANEUIL HALL, BOSTON.  
“The Cradle of Liberty.”

“Smuggling?” cried George III. “How dare these colonists disobey the laws of England! Enforce the writs of assistance. Put an officer into every port. Bid him carry out these laws, or pay the penalty!”

commerce

writs of assistance

penalty

The writs of assistance were warrants, or laws, giving authority to officers to search houses for smuggled goods. They were put into action. Moreover, the officers themselves were threatened with fines, prison, and even death if they dared to neglect their duty.

Now, these writs of assistance were hard upon the colonists. They

were hard upon the officers, too; for many of the officers knew that the king was wrong. Therefore, they had often pretended not to see the smuggling that went on right under their eyes.

3. The \_\_\_\_\_ were warrants, or laws, giving authority to officers to search houses for smuggled goods.
- a. colonists
  - b. habeas corpus
  - c. penalties
  - d. writs of assistance

Among the colonists, there was great excitement when they learned what the king had done. "This is another act of tyranny!" they said. So meetings were called, and fiery speeches were made.

tyranny

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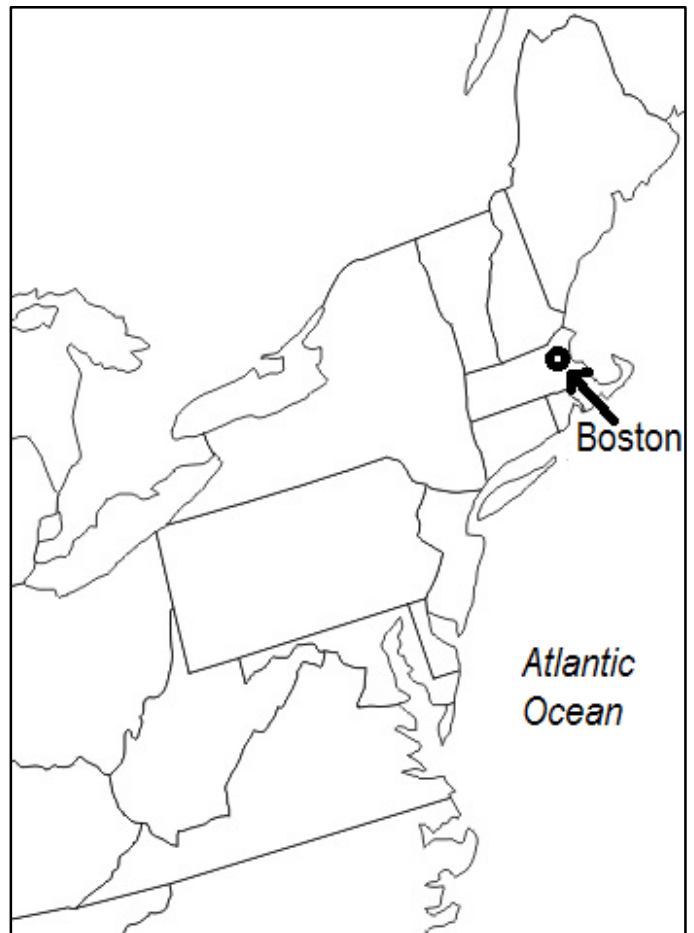
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"These writs are the laws a tyrant has made," said James Otis of Boston. "A man's home ought to be his castle. So long as he is a good

citizen, he ought to be protected in his home. These writs destroy all this. A man's home is no longer his castle. At any time, officers may break in and search it."

4. Today, Boston is the capital city of Massachusetts. Shade the state of Massachusetts on the map below.



Although these writs were now better enforced, revenue did not pour into the treasury of King George. The smuggling went on, but not so freely.

enforced

\_\_\_\_\_
.....
\_\_\_\_\_

“Some new way must be thought of,” said George Grenville, England's prime minister. Grenville was an honest man—a man who meant to deal wisely and fairly with the colonies.

5. Who was the prime minister of England at this time?

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.....
\_\_\_\_\_

One day, Grenville called the colonial agents together, and said, “I think I see a way to raise money from the colonies—a way which will succeed, and which will not make the colonists angry.”

Then, Grenville set forth this plan: “England shall stamp paper. This shall be sent to the colonies and the colonists shall buy it. They shall use it in all business. For example, if one man sells a piece of land to another, the deed shall be written on the stamped paper. The money thus

paid by the colonists for this stamped paper shall be the colonial tax, and all other taxes shall be removed from the American colonies.”

stamped paper

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.....
\_\_\_\_\_

The American colonial agents thought this over for a long time. Something must be done—that was sure. Moreover, the colonists had said that they were willing to pay their part of the tax if it could be done in any just way.

Now, one of the colonial agents in London at this time was Benjamin Franklin. There was also Arthur Lee, another good friend of the colonists, who at this very time was writing a



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. After the portrait by Duplessis, 1783.

book telling how unjust the king had been to his colonial subjects. Still, both these men thought the Grenville stamp plan was a good one.

Benjamin Franklin

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So one day in the English Parliament, Grenville explained his plan of a stamp tax. It was agreed that at the end of a year, unless in the meantime someone could think of a better plan, there should be a stamp act passed.

Parliament

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Then, colonial agents wrote letters to their colonies, and each agent asked the governor of his colony to write him what he thought about a stamp act. Only four governors, however, in all the colonies took the trouble to answer.

**6. How many governors wrote back?**

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Then, the colonial agents and Grenville talked together again. "Have you thought of any better plan?" Grenville asked.

The colonial agents said, "No."

Now, it happened that at the time that Grenville explained his Stamp Act to the Parliament, certain other laws for the colonies were threatened. Unfortunately, the news of these other laws and the news of the Stamp Act reached the colonies at the same time.

explained

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threatened

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These other laws were hard laws. They were unfair. When the colonists heard of them, they were furious.

"Have we not suffered enough from unfair laws?" they cried. "What right has the English king to treat us like slaves?"

unfair laws

The newspapers of the colonies were filled with protests. Four leading men wrote fiery pamphlets against English tyranny. Public meetings were held. The people declared that they would never allow such laws to be made.

protests

pamphlets

public meetings

declared

But all this time, nothing was said about the Stamp Act. Perhaps the other laws were so unjust that no one could think of anything else at that time. At any rate, the year passed by, and again Grenville called the colonial agents together. "Do you still think the Stamp Act will be a good plan?" he asked.

"We hear no objection to it from the colonies," said the colonial agents.

So the Stamp Act was passed and became a law. England began to stamp the paper, and stamp agents were chosen to sell it to the colonists.



A STAMP USED IN  
1765.

"It will be well to choose the agents from the colonists themselves," said Grenville. "They will like their own people better than strangers." For Grenville tried to be fair and honest.

But all this time, the spirit of liberty was growing very rapidly—not only in the colonies, but also in England. These liberty-loving people were called Whigs. The people who, like George III, still believed in the old-time ideas were called Tories.



A PENNY STAMP  
OF 1765.

7. Describe the Whigs.

Handwriting lines for describing the Whigs.

8. Describe the Tories.

Handwriting lines for describing the Tories.

Now, some of the Whigs in the colonies were beginning to say, "Why should we be taxed at all?"

"Because England is paying for our wars," said others. "We ought to be willing to pay our part of the tax if England is fair to us."

"Because it has always been the right of the mother country to tax its colonies," said others. "And because the English flag would still protect us, if any European country should try to make war upon us."

mother country

Handwriting lines for the word 'mother country'.

These were honest answers. But the more the Whigs in America thought about it, the more they questioned, "Why should we be taxed at all?"

"It is against the very laws of England itself," they said.

"And why is it against the laws of England?" asked the Tories.

"Is there not a law in England that no English people shall be taxed

unless they have representatives in Parliament?" said some of the Whigs. "Way back in the days of King John, did not people rise up against taxation without representation?"

Did they not say then that taxation without representation is tyranny?"

"To be sure, they did! Why have we not thought of this before?" other Whigs said.

representation

Handwriting lines for the word 'representation'.



A HALF-PENNY STAMP OF 1765.

“How these colonial Whigs talk!” said the Tories in England. “They should be put in prison. They are traitors to the king.”

“The colonial Whigs are right,” said the Whigs in England. “They are not traitors.”

traitors

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9. Do you think that the colonial Whigs were traitors? Why or why not?

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Then, colonial newspapers began to take up the cry: “No taxation without representation! No taxation without representation!” And they

printed headlines in big black letters just as newspapers do today.

Whenever there was a public meeting, the people shouted, “No taxation without representation! No taxation without representation!” By and by, all the Whigs in the land made it their war cry.

headlines

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taxation

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war cry

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Then, clubs began to be formed in the colonies. The men who belonged to these clubs named themselves “Sons of Liberty.” These Sons of Liberty held public meetings and they held secret meetings. They made speeches. They marched in torchlight processions. And in all



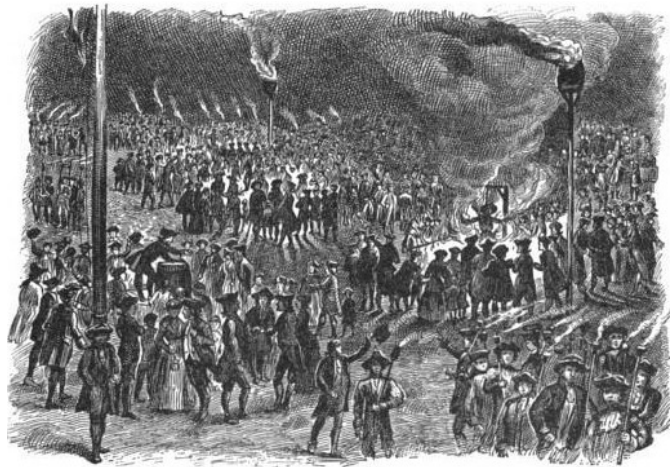
these they shouted: "Taxation without representation is tyranny! Taxation without representation is tyranny!"

Sons of Liberty

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PUBLIC MEETINGS AND TORCHLIGHT PROCESSIONS.

In their processions, they carried banners on which were all kinds of liberty sayings. "No taxation without representation!" was of course one of them. Another was: "Liberty is dead! Liberty is not dead! Liberty is dead! Liberty is not dead!"

Sometimes, as the Sons of Liberty marched along the streets, one would wail, "Liberty is dead! Liberty is dead!"

Then others would shout, "Liberty is not dead! Liberty is not dead!"

And the crowds that followed along beside the processions would cry, "Liberty lives! Liberty lives!"

processions

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marched

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In one town, the Sons of Liberty marched up and down the streets with a doleful, black-draped coffin. On the coffin was a card saying: "Liberty is dead! Liberty is dead!"

On through the streets, up to the burial ground, this dismal procession marched. And all the way the coffin bearers moaned and wailed, "Liberty is dead! Liberty is dead!"

In the burial ground, they dug a grave and let the coffin down into it. They even raised their spades to throw in the earth. But just then, the

leaders of the procession pulled the coffin up and shouted, "Who said liberty is dead? Liberty is not dead! Liberty lives!"

Then, the coffin was lifted upon the shoulders of the very tallest Sons of Liberty, and away they marched back into the town, shouting, "Liberty lives! Liberty lives! Liberty lives!"

All this was great sport. But when the time came, the Sons of Liberty did something more than play.

"Liberty lives!"

"The Stamp Act must be attacked first of all. We have no representatives in the English Parliament. Therefore, we will not be taxed," they said. "For taxation without representation is tyranny."

"Why not let the colonies have representatives in our Parliament?" asked the Whigs in England.

"Whoever heard of colonies having representatives in the English Parliament?" cried the Tories.

"Colonies never had representatives," said George III.

representatives

"But times are changing," said the Whigs.

"The laws of England shall not change," said the king. "We will have none of this nonsense in England."

But meantime, what were the Sons of Liberty doing about the Stamp Act? "That act must be made to fail," they said. "For when it fails, it will be repealed."

repealed

"But how do you propose to make it fail?" sneered the Tories in the colonies.

"First," answered the Sons of Liberty. "When we find out who the

stamp agents are, they shall resign. Second, we shall seize upon the stamped papers and burn them. In the third place, the people shall not be allowed to use the stamps even if they get them.”

By and by, a vessel came from England bringing a list of the colonists who had been appointed stamp agents.

“Now is our time to begin!” said the Sons of Liberty. And they began. Every agent was waited upon by the Sons of Liberty of his town, and asked to resign at once. If he did resign, that was well. If he did not resign, he was commanded to resign. If even then he would not resign, he was threatened. Often, one would find his doors and sidewalks chalked with such words of warning as: “We give you twenty-four hours to resign! Resign, or we burn your house! Resign, or tar and feathers!”

In all the public places, great cards were nailed to the walls and the cards said:

PRO PATRIA!  
THE FIRST PERSON WHO  
BUYS OR SELLS A STAMP  
LET HIM BEWARE!  
WE DARE!  
VOX POPULI!

By and by, Stamp Act riots began. In the first riot, an effigy of the Boston stamp agent was found one morning hanging from a tree.

effigy

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“Who has done this?” asked the people.

“The Sons of Liberty, of course.”

Then, some of the people laughed. “It is only boys’ fun,” they said. “Let us take it down before the stamp agent sees it.”

But when they began to take it down, the Sons of Liberty marched in and said, “Let that effigy alone!”

“Take that effigy down!” said the Justice of the Peace, sternly.

“Touch it if you dare!” said the Sons of Liberty. They lifted their muskets, and the Justice thought it safest to go away. Then, the Sons of Liberty themselves took the effigy from the tree. Hoisting it on a pole, they marched down the street.

Straight to the townhouse they marched shouting. There, in front of the townhouse the Sons of Liberty beheaded the effigy. They kicked it. They threw it up in the air, and then burned it in a bonfire.

“So will we serve the stamp agent!” they cried.

“Burn the stamp agent's shop! Burn the stamp agent's shop!” shouted one of the Sons of Liberty. Away the mob ran, pell-mell, to the stamp agent's shop.

In a few minutes, the shop was in flames. The people across the bay looked out and said, “See the blaze! What are the Sons of Liberty doing now?”

Even this was not enough. “On! Onward to the stamp agent's house!” they cried. “Kill the stamp agent! Burn his house!” But the stamp agent's friends had given him warning. Before the Sons of Liberty reached his house, he had fled to a safer place.

warning

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When the Sons of Liberty could not find the stamp agent, they shouted, “On to the home of the Justice!” Then the house of the Justice was broken into. Desks and closets were plundered.

Morning came at last. The mob broke up. There was quiet once more in the town of Boston. But in other towns, in other colonies, there were mobs like this. More than once, a stamp agent was cruelly treated.



PAPERS WERE DESTROYED, AND BAGS OF MONEY WERE THROWN INTO THE STREET.

“Something must be done,” said the governor of Boston. In a letter to England, he wrote: “We are in danger

of our lives. The hatred of the Stamp Act has gone beyond the control of our government. We cannot protect ourselves. Moreover, very few stamps are being used, for no one cares to risk his life.”

“Who would have thought that the colonists would take the Stamp Act like this?” said Grenville.

“We did not expect it,” said Benjamin Franklin. Still, Benjamin Franklin was a good Whig, and he believed with his countrymen that taxation without representation was tyranny.

countrymen

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“They are right to fight taxation without representation,” Franklin said. “I am glad they are fighting it. But I did not think they would oppose the Stamp Act like this.”

“What is to be done about it?” the English council wondered.

“There is but one thing to do. That is to repeal the Act,” said Grenville.

“Never!” thundered the king. “Are we going to give way to those colonies? On what ground, pray, do they rebel at any law England sees fit to make for them?”

“On the ground that taxation without representation is tyranny,” said Benjamin Franklin.

“But the colonies have always been taxed,” was all King George could say. And to him, that was reason enough.

10. Benjamin Franklin was a Tory.
- a. True
  - b. False

But the spirit of liberty was not to be crushed.

spirit of liberty

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A Whig barber found that a Tory was in his chair. “I will play a trick on this Tory,” he thought. So he shaved one side of the man's face and drove him from the shop.

“A Tory! A Tory!” he shouted as the man went up the street. In a few minutes, a crowd had gathered, and the barber explained. Then the people shouted in great glee and ran after the poor Tory.

“The Tory! The Tory!” they cried; for this was great fun for them.

Glad enough was the Tory when at last he reached his home. “What is the matter?” cried his wife. But he was too angry to answer. It is said that it was never safe, as long as that Tory lived, to mention the Sons of Liberty in his presence.

gathered

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mention

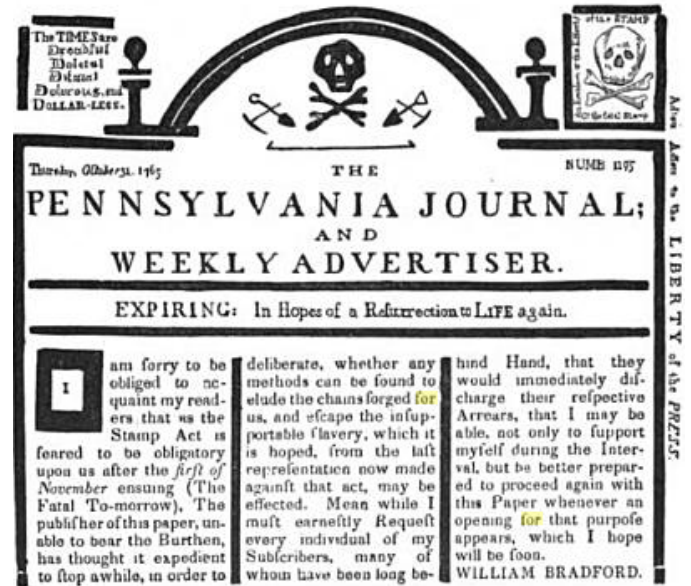
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The Pennsylvania newspaper came out one day with a big black heading with skull and crossbones. In one corner was a stamp, and on the stamp another skull and crossbones.

This meant: “Goodbye to the liberty of the press!”



A COLONIAL NEWSPAPER.

A fac-simile about one-third the size of the original.

Down in Virginia was a bold Son of Liberty, Patrick Henry. One day, he arose in the legislature. Patrick Henry made a speech so full of fire that even his own people were alarmed.



PATRICK HENRY IN THE VIRGINIA ASSEMBLY.  
After the painting by Chappel.

“Be careful,” they said.

“Why should we be careful?” Patrick Henry said. And, as far as anyone knows, he never could be made to be careful. For in all the war that followed, there was no stronger, bolder patriot, than Patrick Henry of Virginia.

Patrick Henry

Virginia

patriot

The women and the girls were as patriotic as the men and the boys. They, too, formed societies; and they called themselves the Daughters of Liberty. At this time, females were not raised to take active parts in politics. Females could not fight the stamp agents. They could not hang effigies.

They could not make speeches. But they could do other things.

Daughters of Liberty

Females could weave cloth, blankets, and yarn for the soldiers, in case war should really come. They could meet together for “spinning bees,” as they called them. And the amount of yarn the Daughters of Liberty could spin in an afternoon made warm stockings and mittens for many a poor soldier when at last the war came. For long, long months, no patriotic family would eat mutton, because people wished to keep the sheep for the wool that grew upon their backs.

spinning bees

Report of all this excitement was carried to England. "How ungrateful these colonies are!" sighed the king.

ungrateful

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"To think," said one of the Tories. "That these children of ours—these colonies that have been planted by our care and have been protected by us—to think that now they grudge us money to pay this debt!"

protected

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grudge

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"Planted by our care!?" answered an English Whig. "When were they planted by our care? The people were driven to America to

escape our persecution in the first place. And when have we taken care of them? They have taken care of themselves. And as for the French and Indian War, was it not as much to protect ourselves as to protect them?"

persecution

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*The true Sons of Liberty*  
And Supporters of the Non-Importation Agreement,

**A**RE determined to resent any the least Inult or Menace offer'd to any one or more of the several Committees appointed by the Body at Faneuil-Hall, and chastise any one or more of them as they deserve; and will also support the Printers in any Thing the Committees shall desire them to print.

**AS** a Warning to any one that shall affront as aforesaid, upon sure Information given. one of these Advertisements will be posted up at the Door or Dwelling House of the Offender.

A NOTICE BY THE SONS OF LIBERTY.

Then the good, wise William Pitt spoke. "We are told that the Americans are obstinate. We are told



that they rebel against us. We are told that they resist us. I rejoice that they are obstinate. I rejoice that they rebel. I rejoice that they resist us. I rejoice that they are not dead to feelings of liberty, and that they will not submit to us like slaves.”

obstinate

rebel

resist

“The Stamp Act should be repealed,” Grenville said. “The Stamp Act must be repealed.”

“Does Parliament mean to say that it represents us?” asked the patriotic James Otis. “Does it call its taxation fair? The members of Parliament know little of us.”

Then Samuel Adams, another patriotic Boston man, offered a resolution to the Massachusetts legislature. “We, the English colonists in America,” said the resolution. “Believe that we have the same right to be represented that English people in England have. Therefore, since we are not represented in the English Parliament, that Parliament has no right to tax us.”

“All those in favor?” said the Speaker of the legislature.

“Ay, ay, ay!” shouted every member.

“Those opposed?”

Not a sound. And so this resolution was sent over to the king of England.

resolution

Patrick Henry, the fiery young patriot of Virginia, also brought resolutions before the legislature of his colony. “Resolved,” said he. “That British freedom does not permit taxation without representation.

Therefore, the only power that can tax this colony is the Virginia legislature itself.”

legislature

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Massachusetts then sent out a circular letter to the governors of all the colonies, asking them to send delegates to New York City. There, the delegates would hold a meeting and draw up more resolutions to send to the king.

delegates

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New York City

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The delegates came, but from only nine colonies. The other four had king's governors over them, and

these governors would not allow the people to send even one delegate.

11. Delegates came from how many colonies?

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How angry the Sons of Liberty who lived in these colonies were! In Georgia, for example, the Liberty boys pleaded, stormed, and threatened, but all in vain. The governor could not be moved. He dared not move. And so the Congress met with delegates from only nine of the thirteen colonies.

threatened

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But even while this Congress was holding its meeting, an English ship sailed up to the New York wharf. The ship was loaded with stamped paper.

Then the bells in the city tolled mournfully. The shops were closed. The flags in the harbor fell to half-

mast. "Liberty is dead! Liberty is dead!" moaned the people.

"But Liberty is not dead! Liberty is not dead!" shouted the Sons of Liberty. Down they rushed to the ship, seized the paper, and burned it.

In Rhode Island, when the first stamps came, the people went to the ship at the wharf and seized upon the papers even before the captain had a chance to land them. In Georgia, the king's governor smuggled them in before the Liberty boys knew of the coming of the ship. But though he succeeded in hiding his stamped papers, they did him little good, for he dared not bring them out for use.

Rhode Island

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"The Liberty boys of Georgia," he wrote to King George. "Have no reason in them; they are crazy in their patriotism."

In Maryland, a gibbet was raised in front of the courthouse, and the effigy of the stamp agent hung upon it. "So fares the man that dares use a

stamp!" said a big card fastened to the gibbet.

In South Carolina, too, the stamps were rejected, and the liberty flag was run up, crowned with a wreath of laurel. "It is only at the risk of my life that I use these stamps," wrote the stamp agent of South Carolina at this time.

rejected

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"It is useless to try to push this Stamp Act," said Grenville when he knew of these things. "It has been a great mistake from the first. Let the Stamp Act be repealed."

"Never!" insisted George III.

"But it is a failure," said Grenville. "We cannot carry it out; and a law that cannot be carried out ought to be repealed."

failure

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And though George III still grumbled, the Stamp Act was repealed. "We are fools to give way to these colonies," the king said.

grumbled

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"Another victory for freedom," said the Whigs in Parliament.

"Another piece of foolishness," muttered the Tories.

"Liberty lives! Liberty lives!" shouted the Whigs in the colonies, when the news of the repeal reached America.

"This is no time to rejoice," said the Tories in the colonies. "Rather, we should be ashamed, for we are guilty of another act of disloyalty to our king."

But the Sons of Liberty, both in England and in America, were not moved by what the Tories said.

Then, what rejoicing in America! Again there were public meetings and torchlight processions. Bells were rung and great feasts were

held. There were balls and parties everywhere in honor of this happy day. The Sons of Liberty came dressed in the richest velvets and laces that could be bought. The Daughters of Liberty were there, too. Their ruffs were stiffer than ever, and their powdered hair was piled high upon their heads. For this was a great time in the colonies, and another victory was won for liberty.

"Liberty lives! Liberty lives!" the people shouted. Even the boys in the street took up the cry. The Sons of Liberty made speeches. The statesmen argued, and the ministers preached about it. When the Sons marched, the people waved flags from their windows as the procession passed.

Wagonloads of fair young Daughters draped in liberty flags and banners rode at the head of the procession. The Sons followed, shouting: "Hurrah for liberty! Three cheers for freedom! Liberty lives! Down with the tyrant! Up with liberty! Property, and no stamps!"

In London, too, there was great rejoicing. Bells were rung. Speeches were made—by the Whigs, of course. And a day was set apart for celebration. We know this to be true,

for in the *London Gazette* of March 18, 1776, you will find these lines: "This day his Majesty came to the House of Parliament and was pleased to give his assent to the Repeal of the Stamp Act. Immediately, when the king had signed the Royal Assent, the merchants trading with America sent a vessel to put into the first American port with the account of the Repeal... There were...great rejoicings in London by all ranks of people... The ships in the rivers displayed all their colors, and there were bonfires in many parts of the city.

12. When was the Stamp Act repealed?

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"Now," said the merchants. "Trade with the colonists will go on again."

"A blow has this day been struck for liberty," said the Whigs.

So, for different reasons, many of the people in London shared in the colonists' rejoicing over the repeal of the Stamp Act.

rejoicing

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13. Why were many people happy about the repeal of the Stamp Act?

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No taxation without representation!

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Draw an illustration of the American colonists protesting the Stamp Act.

