

I REFORM AND RESISTANCE

sterling); the former circulated on the authority of the provincial government, while the latter was backed by a specified amount of gold or silver coinage prescribed by law. The exchange rate between the two currencies fluctuated throughout the eighteenth century, but sterling always had a higher valuation. In 1704 the differential (the proclamation rate) was £100 sterling to £133 proclamation.

2. The customary complimentary close was "I am, Dear Sir, Your Most Humble and Obedient Servant" or some variation thereof.

2 The New Jersey Committee of Correspondents to Joseph Sherwood

[Jacob Spicer Letter Book, Spicer Papers, New Jersey Historical Society.]

A Quaker lawyer of Austin-Freyers, London, Sherwood held the post of colonial agent for New Jersey from 1760 to 1766. (The colonial agency was an unofficial albeit important element in imperial administration. Since the colonies were not directly represented in Parliament, the legislature of each colony hired a lobbyist, usually a prominent English merchant or lawyer, to promote the interests of the province within the British government.) Sherwood owed his appointment in part to the experience gained as the assistant to his predecessor, Richard Partridge, and in part to his influence with Samuel Smith and the "Quaker faction" in New Jersey (a loose coalition of West Jersey Friends led by Quaker assemblymen). As members of the legislature, the "Committee of Correspondents" was understandably disturbed about what appeared to be parliamentary encroachments upon the wide latitude enjoyed by the assembly in matters pertaining to local government—especially the crucial power of taxation.

September 10th 1764

If any thing comes on the Stage next Session of Parliament either for repealing the Duties laid on the Trade of the Northern Colonies and prohibiting a paper Currency at last Session, or for adding any thing new by way of Tax on this Colony, the Committee of Correspondents direct that you will humbly & Dutifully Set forth In the name and on Behalf of this Colony¹ that we look upon all Taxes laid upon us without our Consent as a fundamental infringement of the Rights and priveleges Secured to us as English Subjects and by Charter;² and that our paper Currency hath always kept its [value]³ and being prohibited from having any more but upon Terms of not being a Legal tender let the Necessity be ever so pressing we esteem a very great provincial hardship, for these among other Important Reasons that it will not

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only Cramp us in our Business with one another & the English Merchants, but Impede the Growth of the Settlement of this province, and very probably greatly obstruct his Majesty's Service upon any future emergency. You are Desired to enlarge and make the necessary proofs as Occasion may require.

The more Active and Expensive part of the Opposition we expect will be upon the other Colonies who are abundantly more Concerned in Trade, yet it is Necessary so far to Cooperate with them as to Show the Colonies are unanimously of One Mind.

CHARLES READ⁴
SAMUEL SMITH⁵
JACOB SPICER⁶

1. I have found no official legislative authorization for the action of the committee; apparently Read, Smith, and Spicer were acting on their own initiative.

2. The "Charter" refers to the "Concessions and Agreements" issued by the New Jersey proprietors in 1665 which stipulated that the governor and council were "not to impose, nor suffer to be imposed, any tax, custom, subsidy, tallage, assessment, or any other duty whatsoever upon any colour or pretence, upon the said Province and inhabitants thereof, other than what shall be imposed by the authority and consent of the General Assembly." Aaron Learning and Jacob Spicer, comps., *The Grants, Concessions, and Original Constitutions of the Province of New Jersey* (Philadelphia, 1752), p. 20. Although subsequent changes in the nature of the propriety and the transfer of governance to the crown in 1702 nullified the provisions of the "Concessions," the old charter remained a powerful symbol of governmental authority and political prerogatives.

3. The manuscript is torn here; "value" is probably the missing word since Jersey money had a deserved reputation for stability.

4. In 1739 Charles Read, Jr., (1715-1773) moved from Philadelphia to Burlington, where he continued his extensive involvement in mercantile, legal, and political activities. He was an ironmaster, lawyer, merchant and shipper, slaveowner, and landowner. His writings on agriculture earned him membership in the American Philosophical Society (1758). During a lengthy public career he served as customs collector for the port of Burlington (1732-1773), assemblyman from Burlington City (1751-1758), councillor (1758-1773), surrogate for both East and West Jersey, deputy secretary of the province, and associate justice (1753-1754 and 1763-1773) and chief justice (1754 and 1764) of the supreme court. An Anglican, he was politically allied with the Quaker faction.

5. Samuel Smith (1721-1776), Quaker merchant and large landowner from Burlington, was a veteran of Jersey politics. The leader of the Quaker faction, he held the posts of West Jersey treasurer (ca. 1751-1775), assemblyman for Burlington City (1754-1763), and councillor (1763-1775). An historian by avocation, Smith wrote the classic *History of the Colony of Nova Caesaria or New Jersey* (Burlington, 1765). He was the brother of Richard Smith (see Doc. 14, headnote).

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6. Jacob Spicer (1716-1765), Cape May merchant and landowner, represented his county in the legislature from 1743 until his death. He was often associated with the Quaker faction in the assembly.

3 Robert Ogden to Samuel White

[Printed in William A. Whitehead, et al., eds., *Archives of the State of New Jersey*, First and Second Series (48 vols., Newark and elsewhere, 1880-1949), 1st ser., 9:496. Hereafter the *Archives* will appear *NJA*; reference will be to the First Series unless otherwise indicated.]

Robert Ogden II, an Elizabethtown attorney who served as both a justice of the peace and an East Jersey surrogate, represented Essex County in the assembly from 1761 to 1765. He held the post of Speaker of the House from 1763 to 1765, during which time he attended the Stamp Act Congress. He resigned his seat in November 1765 to avoid certain censure from his colleagues for refusing to sign the protest resolves of the Congress. Samuel White, Harvard graduate, Taunton lawyer, and legislator since 1749, was Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. It was White who formally signed the circular letter of June 8 inviting the legislatures of the various colonies to appoint three representatives to meet with delegates from the other provinces in New York on the first Tuesday in October to discuss the hardships placed upon America by the recent revenue acts and to join in "a General and united Dutiful, Loyal and Humble Representation of their Condition to his Majesty, and the Parliament, and to implore Relief."

Burlington, June 20, 1765¹

Sir,

Yours of the 8th Instant came opportunely to my Hands on the last Day of the Sitting of our Assembly.² Having communicated it to them, they took it into deliberate Consideration, and desired me to inform, through you, the General Court of the Massachusetts, That though they are not without a just Sensibility respecting the late Acts of Parliament affecting the Northern Colonies, yet apprehending, whatever Reasons may be thought proper to be urged against them may be better received after some Time elapse; our Assembly, on that Account, & because the Trade of this Province is insignificant in comparison of others, are unanimously against uniting on the present Occasion.³ They, however, cannot but wish such other Colonies as think proper to be active, every Success that they can loyally and reasonably desire.⁴

I am, Sir, Your most Hum. Servt.
ROBT. OGDEN, Speaker