

I REFORM AND RESISTANCE

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

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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

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1. The date is misprinted as 1764 in *NJA*.
2. The journals of the New Jersey assembly make no mention of either the presentation or consideration of the Bay Colony's proposal.
3. It would appear that the assemblymen regarded the Sugar Act of 1764, rather than the Stamp Act, as the primary concern of the Massachusetts legislature; clearly the former statute would have a greater impact on mercantile New England than on agrarian New Jersey.
4. A year later, on June 27, 1766, the assembly took exception to Ogden's account, arguing that because the circular letter was presented after some members had gone home it was not considered by a "full house." Moreover, the legislators charged that Ogden had at first "agreed to send, nay urged, that Members should be sent to the intended Congress, but changed his Opinion upon some Advice that was given to him" and declared that "this sudden Change of Opinion, displeased many of the House." Hinting at collusion between Governor William Franklin and the Speaker, the assemblymen denied that the Massachusetts message had been given "deliberate Consideration" or that they had "unanimously" declined participation in the Congress. *Votes and Proceedings, June 11-28, 1766* (Woodbridge, 1766), p. 49. However, Jacob Spicer, veteran assemblyman from Cape May, explained the refusal of the house to send delegates to New York by the "expectation" that Great Britain would "find her Trade Cramped" as a result of the "restraint and duties" laid on the colonies and that "her own Interest might incline her to mediate a reformation." Spicer is saying what was said in document two—that the commercial colonies would be most affected and that their response would induce Britain to rescind or modify the measure. (Spicer to William Bayard, July 2, 1765, Letter Book, Spicer Papers, New Jersey Historical Society.)

4 "Caesariensis" on Stamp Collectors and the Stamp Act Congress

[*New-York Gazette; or, the Weekly Post-Boy*, September 12, 1765.]

Throughout August and September the men assigned to the crucial office of stamp distributor for the various colonies succumbed to public pressure and resigned. On September 2, Philadelphian William Coxe, who owed his appointment as stamp distributor for New Jersey to the influence of Governor William Franklin and his famous father Benjamin Franklin, quit his post. It is unlikely that "Caesariensis" knew of the resignation when he penned his letter; most likely his commentary was intended, directly or indirectly, to effect Coxe's removal. While most Jerseymen shared his opposition to the Stamp Act, few people would have seconded the writer's radical assertions that Parliament