

## NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

suggests House Speaker Robert Ogden as the target of outrage. The object of popular resentment because of his refusal to sign the resolves of the Stamp Act Congress which had adjourned on October 24, Ogden was, according to Robert R. Livingston of New York, "burnt in Effigy in almost all the Towns of East Jersey" and elsewhere in the province (Livingston to ?, November 2, 1765, Livingston Papers, Bancroft Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations). Cognizant of the hostile climate of opinion, Ogden promptly resigned his seat in the assembly when the legislature met on November 26. Of course the demonstration went beyond condemning one man; it was also intended to serve as a warning to anyone who dared openly support the Stamp Act.

New-Brunswick, October 29, 1765

This morning, on an eminence in this city, was hung the effigy of a wretch, who on a late solemn occasion, subtilly procured himself an employment, and at once shewed the wickedness and dirtiness of his head, and the vileness and rancour of his heart, by basely betraying that important trust. . . .<sup>1</sup> Papers denoting his horrid crime were affixed to his breast, and from his mouth hung labels expressing such words and sentiments, as may well be supposed to come from the lips of such an abandoned miscreant in his last moments. The Figure is to hang all day, and in the evening will be attended by all true sons of freedom, to a funeral pile erected on the common, where it will be reduced to ashes, amidst the acclamations of the beholders.

May such be the fate of every vile traitor, in whatever sphere they move! may they live despised! die unpitied! and if they are remembered, let that remembrance only increase the detestation of posterity.

This signal act of justice, (tho' we own the object almost too low for resentment) will however, we think, evince to the neighbouring colonies, that neither the dirty insinuations of pimps and pandars, nor the frowns of power, have been as yet, able to extinguish the spirit of liberty in the province of New-Jersey.

1. Ellipsis in the original newspaper account.

### 10 Copy of a Letter from Trenton in New Jersey

[Dartmouth Papers, 100, Staffordshire County Record Office, Stafford,  
England.]

Neither author nor recipient of the letter has been identified. The writer

## I REFORM AND RESISTANCE

was probably Joseph Reed, who, after completing his legal studies at the Middle Temple in London, had returned to Trenton in May 1765. While in England, he had, through his future father-in-law, Dennys De Berdt, become acquainted with several ranking political figures including William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth. He may have been writing directly to Dartmouth, but it is more likely that the recipient was De Berdt who passed the letter on to the earl. The writer was not the only Jerseyman who felt that, should peaceful protest fail, Americans would resort to arms to oppose the Stamp Act.

Novr. 5th 1765

You will have so much Complaining I dare say in all your Letters from Hence that it must be by now an old Subject & Consequently very disagreeable. For my own part I am at a Loss what to think; at present we are in a State of suspence looking with an anxious earnestness for relief, & the most moderate among us dread the Consequences of High measures.

Our People of all Ranks & Orders seem ripe for Violence and Confusion unless some method is fallen upon to pacifie them, & you will see & Hear by the Publick Papers to what a Prodigious Height the Iregularities of the Populace have been Carried.

The Stamps have never been Landed in Philadelphia or this Province & it Has been very lucky they have not as the destruction of them which would certainly have been the Case would have look'd like and Insult upon our Mother Country.<sup>1</sup> The resolutions of the merchants will be too Publick to be long a Secret from you, all Law Business had ceased in these Provinces since the first of November so that except in Criminal Proceedings we are in a State of General Suspence [&] Outlawry: No debts can be recovered nor Contracts compli'd with, but as the party pleases. A general scarcity of money has been Complain'd of for some months but our present situation is a deplorable one for a Civilized Country.

It is reported that besides the resolutions of importing no more Goods unless the Act is repeal'd, that the Flax seed usually exported to Ireland will be stop'd, by which means the Linnen Manufactory must suffer greatly. In short the Spirit of the People is to [resist]<sup>2</sup> the Treatment they have meet<sup>3</sup> with by every possible means. The officers appointed to Carry the Act into execution have all been obliged to resign and one who was hardy enough to stand out the Polulace determined to bury Him alive, & actually carried their Violence so far as to shut Him up in a Coffin & put Him under Ground, when He found Himself obliged to Comply.

There is this difference between our Mobs & yours in England, & a material one it is, that every man above 16 & under 60 is obliged to keep a Gun & other Arms, so that instead of being an undisciplined Multitude, they are formidable not only for their Numbers but their knowledge of Fire Arms & Resolution to make use of them.

In the light I view it at present I do not think it possible to carry the Act into execution without the Loss of many Lives and a great deal of Bloodshed. We hope something will be done for us when the Parliament meets. Should our applications be rejected, our Situation will be Shocking & they who have money Here will not be much better off.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Stamps and stamped paper for New Jersey arrived on October 5 and were stored aboard a British warship in Delaware Bay. Subsequent shipments were also placed aboard naval vessels; no stamps ever reached the colony.
2. This word appears "resent" in the manuscript; it seems likely that the copyist made an error in transcription.
3. That is, "met"; probably a transcription error.
4. The transcriber copied only the portion of the letter printed here.

### 11 The Stamp Act Resolves of the New Jersey Assembly

[*Votes and Proceedings, November 26-30, 1765* (Woodbridge, 1765), pp. 7-8.]

Prior to the Stamp Act Congress, the legislatures of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Rhode Island adopted resolutions protesting the exaction. Upon conclusion of the intercolonial conclave, most of the other assemblies immediately did likewise; only Georgia, New Hampshire, and North Carolina failed to issue a declaration of rights and grievances. Sections 2-6 of the Jersey resolves are identical with their numerical counterparts in the declarations of the Stamp Act Congress; section 7 of the former corresponds verbatim with section 10 of the latter remonstrance. It should be noted that the New Jersey resolutions, unlike those adopted elsewhere, were exclusively constitutional in nature. That no economic arguments were advanced in opposition to the Stamp Act by the assembly reflects the agrarian complexion of the provincial economy.

November 30, 1765

Whereas the late Act of Parliament, called the Stamp-Act, is found to be utterly subversive of Privileges inherent in, and originally secured by Grants and Confirmations from the Crown of Great-Britain to the Settlers of this Colony:<sup>1</sup> In Duty therefore to ourselves, our Constituents and Posterity, this House thinks it absolutely necessary to leave the following Resolves on our Minutes.

1. *Resolved, Nemine Contradicente,*<sup>2</sup>

That his Majesty's Subjects inhabiting this Province, are, from the strongest Motives of Duty, Fidelity, and Gratitude, inviolably attached to his Royal Person and Government; and have ever shewn, and we doubt not ever will, their utmost Readiness and Alacrity for acceding to the constitutional Requisitions of the Crown, as they have been from Time to Time made to this Colony.