

## NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

depends (under the Divine Favour) intirely upon our own Virtue, Union & Steadiness in ye defence of our Inestimable Rights & Priviledges, & I am also of Opinion That if We lose a Tittle of them without the utmost Force of Opposition We shall well deserve the Chains prepared for Us.

I am Gentlemen  
Your most obt Servt  
RICHARD SMITH<sup>6</sup>

1. Rodman and Smith were judges of the court of common pleas for Burlington County, a tribunal that had jurisdiction in civil suits. Rodman later served in the assembly from 1767 to 1768.

2. The court of quarter sessions consisted of a quarterly meeting of certain justices of the peace in each county to handle a variety of civil matters.

3. Despite the determination to suspend all legal and judicial activities in the civil sphere until the Stamp Act was repealed, business was transacted as usual in some parts of the province; lawyers and judges simply ignored the statute. This was increasingly the case by the spring of 1766 after news of the likelihood of repeal reached the colonies.

4. Smith is referring to the fact that the Stamp Act was to have become operative on November 1, 1765.

5. The references are to the Grenville ministry, responsible for passage of the Stamp Act, and the Rockingham ministry, pledged to its repeal.

6. Smith's signature is crossed out in the manuscript, and a postscript apparently from the Burlington Sons of Liberty committee of correspondence is appended. Unfortunately, the postscript is also lined through and is not legible; the complimentary close lacks signatures but is plural in form.

## 15 Woodbridge Celebrates the Repeal of the Stamp Act

[*Supplement to the New-York Gazette; or, the Weekly Post-Boy,*  
June 19, 1766.]

When the long-awaited news that the Parliament had rescinded the Stamp Act finally reached Philadelphia on May 19, communities throughout the Mid-Atlantic colonies responded with a series of public celebrations. Giving vent to the pent-up frustrations and anxieties attendant to nearly a year of concerted protest, the celebrants also took advantage of the occasion to reiterate the reasons for their opposition to the Stamp Act and, as in Woodbridge, to praise those deemed responsible for securing repeal. Most Jersey Whigs sent news of their activities to John Holt, whose paper favored popular causes.

## I REFORM AND RESISTANCE

Woodbridge, (East-New-Jersey) June 5, 1766

Mr. Printer:

Yesterday being the Birth-Day of our most gracious Sovereign, George the third, the Sons of Liberty belonging to this Town, assembled at the Liberty Oak, on the Square, making a Company of many Hundreds, to celebrate the same, and publicly to testify their Joy at the Justice and Equity of the British Legislature, in repealing the American Stamp Act. The Morning was ushered in with the Beat of Drum, and Sound of Trumpet, by which the Sons of Liberty were soon assembled. A large Ox was roasted whole, and Liquor of different Kinds in great Plenty provided for the Company. His Majesty's Colours were displayed in different Parts of the Square, and Liberty Oak was handsomely decorated. The Ladies likewise, genteely dressed, graced the Entertainments of the Day, dined principally upon Plumb Puddings in Honour to the Queen, and afterwards regaled themselves with Plumb Cake, Tea, &c. In the Evening the Town was illuminated, and a large Bonfire made as near Liberty Oak as the Safety of that ancient Tree would admit of; when the following toasts were drank: 1. George the third. 2. The Queen. 3. The Royal Family. 4. To the Memory of the Duke of Cumberland.<sup>1</sup> 5. The present Honest Ministry.<sup>2</sup> 6. The House of Lords. 7. The Parliament. 8. Pitt and Freedom.<sup>3</sup> 9. Lord Camden.<sup>4</sup> 10. All those who distinguished themselves to obtain a Repeal of the Stamp Act. 11. America's Friends in Great Britain. 12. America's Friends in Ireland. 13. The Sons of Liberty in America. 14. The noble Assertors of Liberty in St. Christophers and Nevis.<sup>5</sup> 15. The Liberty of the Press. 16. May the Gentlemen of the Law prosecute their Business with Moderation.<sup>6</sup> 17. Peace and Happiness to those who treat their Debtors with Lenity. 18. Prosperity to the Jerseys. The whole Rejoicings were conducted with the unmost Regularity and Decorum, not the least Accident happening; and we flatter ourselves his Majesty has no loyaler Subjects, either in Europe or America, as the most firm Loyalty seemed to glow in every Breast, and each endeavored to excel in honouring the Day.

1. William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, uncle of George III who in the early summer of 1765 negotiated the formation of the Rockingham ministry, which eventually repealed the Stamp Act. Cumberland died on October 31, 1765. That a toast was offered to him reveals great perception of British politics.

2. The ministry of Charles Watson-Wentworth, Marquis of Rockingham, which replaced the Grenville administration in July 1765 and sponsored repeal of the Stamp Act.

3. William Pitt, chief critic of the Stamp Act and champion of American resistance to the tax in the House of Commons.

4. Charles Pratt, Baron Camden, outspoken opponent of both the Stamp Act and the Declaratory Act in the House of Lords.

5. St. Christopher (St. Kitts) and Nevis were the only West Indian colonies to resist implementation of the Stamp Act; that Jerseymen knew of the events transpiring on these distant islands in a day of primitive communications indicates a high level of political awareness.

6. There was growing resentment against lawyers because of allegedly excessive fees and litigations; the suspension of legal activities for nearly nine months because of the Stamp Act greatly compounded the problem.