



Volume 20

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America's Revolution (40) – The Spreading Flame - II

Lead: In the 1700s the United States broke from England. No colony in history had done that before. This series examines America's Revolution.

Intro: *A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts*

Content: After the passage of the Stamp Act by Parliament in 1765, reaction was slow in coming but built all during the summer, fall and winter of 1765. In the end, Parliament was forced to repeal the Stamp Tax because of vigorous resistance within the

colonies and not insignificant opposition within Parliament itself. With Virginia and Massachusetts leading the way, the flame of resistance began to spread to the other colonies.

As this was an anti-tax movement, hostility was directed toward the destruction of the stamped paper itself, but more importantly at the agents of collection, the individuals and their allies who were commissioned to distribute the document paper. So profound and hostile was the atmosphere surrounding the dispute that by October 1765 all but two of the commissioners had resigned, most often to preserve life, limb and property. The remaining two, in North Carolina and Georgia, had disappeared from the lists by January 1766.

New Hampshire distributor, George Meserve, was typical of those caught between a determined London government and equally determined local opposition to the tax. He had been in England when the Stamp Tax was passed and secured appointment as agent before he sailed for the colonies. In Boston harbor his ship was beset by a mob who thought the stamped paper was on board and he received a stout warning from Portsmouth that he should resign. He was forced to return to New Hampshire and faced the humiliation of a public resignation. Next time: Stamp Act Congress.

At the University of Richmond's School of Professional and Continuing Studies, I'm Dan Roberts.

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