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**America's Revolution (53) – John Dickinson's
Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania – I**

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: In many ways the Stamp Act crisis of 1765-1766 was exhausting for Americans. The riots, petitions, newspaper arguments, endless debate, and economic

dislocation caused by the drop-off in trade was bad enough. Even worse were the peculiar and uncomfortable emotions generated by this new and disquieting estrangement from Britain. This negative political energy produced a sense of confusion and weariness. And when Parliament proved its determination to force its will on the issue of taxation by passing a new round of import duties, the Townshend Acts, Americans were slow in reacting. There seemed to be a genuine doubt in some circles as to whether these taxes were in technical violation of the principle that had aroused such resentment and opposition during the previous year. Clearly many Americans were tired of the conflict and wished it to go away. Into this uncertainty stepped a heretofore unknown voice, Philadelphia lawyer, John Dickinson.

Dickinson had studied law in London and returned to establish a brisk and prosperous legal practice in Philadelphia and, following his father, a large estate in Delaware. He followed the siren call of politics into both Delaware and Pennsylvania assemblies. Dickinson represented Pennsylvania in the Second Continental Congress and there he was one of the most vigorous opponents of independence, arguing against John Adams' agitation. He resigned from Congress because he refused to sign the Declaration of Independence. Yet, despite this opposition, Dickinson fought in the Army for the American cause and saw his estates destroyed, but in 1767 he began to speak strongly against the Townshend taxation scheme. Next time: letters from a farmer.

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

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