



Volume 20

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America's Revolution (56) – Boston Rises – 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: John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* (1767) may have produced a sense of satisfaction among many in the colonies weary of conflict with Britain and anxious to do nothing, but in Boston, on

the front lines of said conflict, they produced no such lethargy. It seemed as though the London authorities had fixed their attention on Massachusetts as the center-point of all things seditious in the colonies and many Bostonians were happy to return the compliment. The arrival of the newly designated Customs Commissioners added fuel to the flames of resentment already aroused by the passage of the Townshend import taxes on lead, paper, glass and tea. The dispatch of British troops to occupy the city virtually guaranteed an explosion.

The Commissioners could not have picked a worse day to arrive. November 5th was Guy Fawkes Day. It was named for one of the infamous, if befuddled, leaders of the Gunpowder Plot to kill King James I and most of Parliament with him in 1605. It was always an excuse for drunken, riotous behavior. The arrival of the already

loathsome tax collectors whipped up the mob even more. They were not physically harmed, but had to endure the sight of an angry, welcoming mob bearing badges on their chests reading, “Liberty and Property and No Commissioners.” It was not a portent for smooth relations to come. Next time: Sam Adams and the Circular Letter.

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

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