

**Volume 20**

**Number 003**

**America's Revolution (31) – Stamp Act Crisis – 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: George Grenville, Chief Minister to King George III, was trying to manage a looming British financial crisis, but primarily was looking for money to pay for British troops based in America. Having levied a tax on the molasses used to make colonial rum, he wanted more money. Therefore, in 1764 he began hinting that Americans should pay for the paper used to transact legal business in the colonies. No such official dealings could be conducted on paper not bearing a governmental stamp.**

**The government would sell the paper to the colonists and by this raise money for the troops. Colonial representatives were beyond emphatic that this stamp tax would be met with resentment and resistance. Grenville even toyed with the colonies by seeming to seek their input on the method of collection, but in the end it became clear that he was just being disingenuous and was determined to levy the stamp tax no matter what.**

**It was not as if the Stamp Act had no naysayers. There was rich and resonant opposition to the levy, even to the right of Parliament to tax the colonials. This opposition was accompanied by a powerful defense of the colonists' singular right to tax themselves. Such opposition in Parliament seemed to go nowhere. Colonel Isaac Barre thundered that the colonists had fled to America to escape Tyranny, had carved a magnificent civilization from the wilderness, overcame all challenges of the hostile native**

**inhabitants, and deserved the fundamental right of Englishmen to be taxed solely by representatives they had elected. It was if he was speaking into the winds of a hurricane, so resentful of colonial presumption and so determined was the Parliamentary majority to exercise its will. Most members were convinced that Parliament could do anything it wanted to do. The Stamp Act passed overwhelmingly and received the King's consent on March 22, 1765. And then all hell broke loose. Next time: Colonial resistance.**

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

### **Resources**

**Knollenberg, Bernhard. *Origin of the American Revolution*. Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2002.**

**Copyright 2016 Dan Roberts Enterprises,  
LLC.**