

## Document A: B.W.'s Public Letter (Modified)

Many Patriot events took place in Boston

This public letter appeared on the front page of **The Boston-Gazette and Country Journal**, a colonial newspaper, on **October 7, 1765**. The author's name was printed as "**B.W.**"

This was printed one month before the Stamp Act went into effect

I don't know who B.W. is but if his letter was printed in a colonial newspaper, it is safe to guess he is against the Stamp Act

To the Inhabitants of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay

calling someone your Countrymen is respectful

My Dear **Countrymen**,

statement of truth

It is a standing **maxim** of English Liberty "That no man shall be taxed but with his own consent," and you very well know **we were not, in any sober** sense, represented in parliament, when this tax was imposed.

colonists had no representation to vote for or against this tax

The King is enslaving colonists by starting a tax

BW is encouraging colonists to rebel/riot

serious

**AWAKE!** Awake, my Countrymen and **defeat those who want to enslave us**. Do not be cowards. **You were born in Britain, the Land of Light, and you were raised in America, the Land of Liberty. It is your duty to fight this tax.** Future generations will bless your efforts and honor the memory of the saviors of their country.

Land of Light sounds like a good thing, BW just still be proud of being a part of Britain.

?? i thought BW said the colonists were not represented

**I urge you to tell your representatives** that you do not support this terrible and burdensome law. Let them know what you think. They should act as guardians of the liberty of their country.

I look forward to congratulating you on delivering us from the enemies of truth and liberty.

**Source:** B.W. "To the Inhabitants of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay," The Boston-Gazette and Country Journal, October 7, 1765.

### Vocabulary

**maxim:** a statement expressing a general truth

**sober:** serious

## Document B: From a London Newspaper (Modified)

Will Alfred wrote this public letter to Secretary Henry Seymour Conway. Conway was one of two of Britain's Secretaries of State and was responsible for relations with the American colonies. The letter was first published in a London newspaper and then was published in the Boston Gazette Supplement on January 27, 1766, nearly three months after the Stamp Act went into effect.

From a late London paper.

To Mr. Secretary Conway:

The riotous behavior of the people in Boston is remarkable. I would have been less surprised by their behavior if we had taxed their beer, because everyone drinks beer. But the Stamp Act is a tax on none of the necessities of life. It does not affect the poor. And even a poor person can afford this little amount of money. The tax on newspapers only affects the rich—common people do not purchase newspapers. Isn't it surprising, then, that the mob in Boston has begun to riot against this tax even before it has officially gone into effect? I was expressing my wonder at this, when I was informed, that it was not the burden of the tax to be raised, but the manner in which it was imposed, that created the discontent: If this is so, the matter is more serious than it may first appear. . . .

The colonists are our brethren and fellow-subjects. . . . We should ask therefore whether we have behaved to them as brethren. . . . The first birth right privilege of a Briton is, that he cannot be legally tried but by his peers. One of the next is, that he cannot be taxed but by a parliament in which he is represented. . . . Do these who impose taxes on the colonists pay also themselves a share of these taxes? If this is not the case, what have the colonists done that they are to be stripped of one of the most valuable privileges of Britons? Have the parliament of Great Britain a right to take from any, the lowest of the subjects, the smallest privilege, which he inherits by birth-right, unless forfeited by law?

**Source:** Will Alfred, "To Mr. Secretary Conway," Boston Gazette Supplement, January 27, 1766.

Alfred thinks the British should have taxed something that everyone buys - not just the rich.

Colonists did NOT care at they had to pay the tax, they were mad about HOW the tax was being enforced.

It is a British right to be represented when they are taxed... Alfred is asking if the colonists are being taxed fairly since all British people did not have to pay.

Common people do not buy newspapers but Alfred is surprised that even common people are rioting even before the Stamp Act is being enforced

Alfred is asking if the British have treated the colonists fairly

## Document C: A Stamp Act Collector's Letter (Modified)

**John Hughes, a stamp tax collector in Philadelphia, wrote this letter to his bosses in London.** he works for Parliament and probably does not agree with the actions of the colonists

My **Lords,** a very formal address this confirms that Hughes does not agree with the colonists

The colonists have been **insulting His Majesty, saying that the Stamp Act was unconstitutional, and oppressive.** Presbyterian is one religion that came from the Great Awakening

It is apparent to many people here that the **Presbyterians are at the head of these riots.** They are opposed to Kings and some cry out—'No King but King Jesus.' The leaders **fill every newspaper with inflammatory pieces, so that the minds of the common people are kept in a continual ferment. . . . No one dares write anything that would calm the people down. Doing so would put the writer's life and fortune in danger.** People are not going to write things that go against the popular belief

I am convinced the Presbyterians intend nothing less than the throwing off their **allegiance** and obedience to his Majesty, and forming a Republican Empire, in America, and being Lords and Masters themselves. (that Britain is being unfair) for fear of being in danger

**I am daily threatened by verbal messages and anonymous letters, with a mob of several thousand people, from the Jerseys, New York, and New England.** Hughes wants the King (Almighty) to force the colonists to be loyal to Britain and punish those who are starting the riots.

I conclude with praying, that the **Almighty may secure the allegiance of America to the Crown of Britain, by destroying the seeds of rebellion, and by punishing the ringleaders of these riots.**

**Source:** John Hughes, written in Philadelphia, January 13, 1766.

### Vocabulary:

**Presbyterians:** a religion that gained popularity during the Great Awakening

**inflammatory:** causing angry or violent feelings

**ferment:** agitation or excitement, typically leading to violence

**allegiance:** loyalty

The Sons of Liberty organized and encouraged this activity

**Guiding Questions:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. (Sourcing) Who wrote this, and what is his job? Does he side with England or with the colonists? How do you know?

John Hughes wrote this letter to his bosses. He is a tax collector in Philadelphia shortly after the Stamp Act went into effect.

It is most likely that he sides with England for multiple reasons.

- 1) He works for the English government collecting taxes
- 2) He is reporting Patriot activity to his bosses
- 3) He asks his King to secure the loyalty of the Patriot and to punish the leaders of the riots.

2. (Contextualization) Based on his account, what's going on in America in 1766? How has the Stamp Act affected him personally? Provide evidence from the document to support your answer.

At this time, the Stamp Act was in effect and many Patriots were voicing their disagreement with this tax. They were verbalizing and writing their opinions.

John Hughes was personally affected by these events because there were individuals who were threatening him verbally and in writing.

3. Do you believe his account? Give one reason why you would trust his account and one reason why you might not trust his account.

\*\*\*Your belief of this account is going to be opinion based

1) one reason to trust this account is because he is reporting to his bosses the events that are making his job more difficult. He is providing examples but not being specific enough to name any individuals involved.

2) one reason not to trust his account is because he is in fear for his life and wants change to happen quickly. He may exaggerate these points in order to convince the King to take action.

4. (Corroboration) How does the account in this document compare to the accounts in Documents A and B? Do you think most colonists were upset about the Stamp Act, or do you think a few leaders riled up everyone?