

Document A (Modified)

Boston-Gazette, October 7, 1765

My Dear Countrymen,

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.

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: This letter appeared in the Boston-Gazette newspaper on October 7, 1765.

Document B (Modified)

Boston-Gazette Supplement, 27 January 1766
From a late London Paper.

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?

Source: This letter was written in a London newspaper and then published in the Boston Gazette Supplement two months after the Stamp Act went into effect.

Document C (Modified)

Philadelphia January 13th 1766.

My Lords,

The colonists have been insulting His Majesty, saying that the Stamp Act was unconstitutional, and oppressive.

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.

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.

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.

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.

I am, My Lords, Your most Obedient & Most Humble Servant,

John Hughes

Vocabulary:

Presbyterians: A religion that gained popularity during the Great Awakening

Inflammatory: Arousing angry or violent feelings

Ferment: Agitation or excitement, typically leading to violence

Allegiance: loyalty

Source: The letter above was written by John Hughes, Stamp Distributor in Philadelphia, to his bosses in London. His job was to collect the tax on stamps.