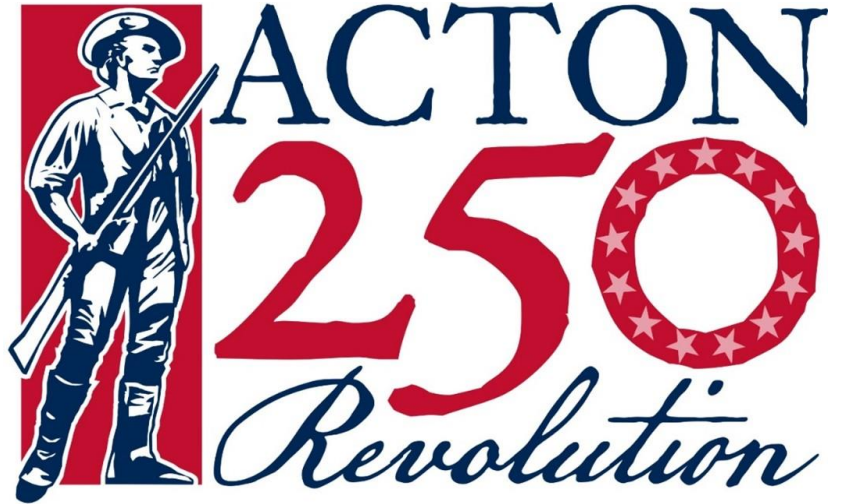


A Revolution in the News

With Professor Joseph Adelman

Author of *Revolutionary Networks: The Business and Politics of Printing the News, 1763-1789*

- Presented by the Acton 250 Committee
- More events of all kinds to follow well into 2025
- Acton has a lot of history to celebrate!



A Revolution in the News

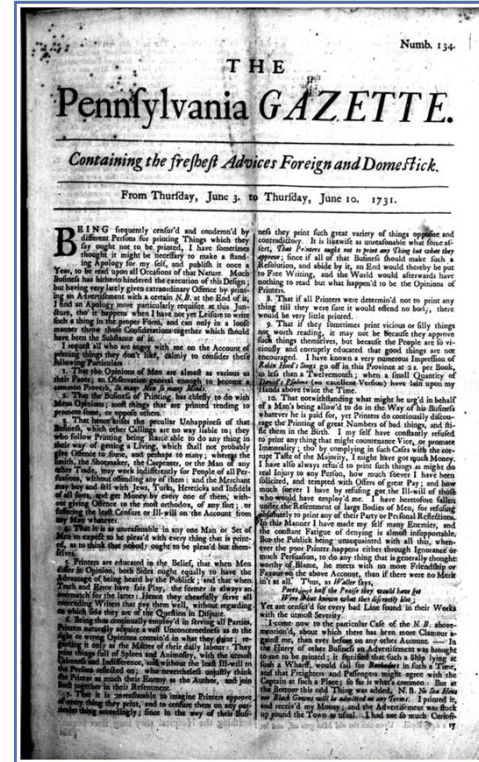
Joseph M. Adelman, Ph.D.

Department of History

Framingham State University

January 30, 2024

Franklin and the “Apology for Printers”



Source: "Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) (Robert Feke), H47," Harvard Art Museums collections online, Jun 02, 2022, <https://hvrd.art/o/299815>; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 10, 1731, America's Historical Newspapers.

Sources of Information



Oral Reports

- Visitors or travelers (Sailors, merchants, others)
- Public discussion (Tavern, coffee house, post office)
- Official proclamations/public meetings



Handwritten Reports

- Letters
- Diaries/journals
- Posted notices



Printed Reports

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Books
- Pamphlets
- Almanacs
- Prints/Graphics

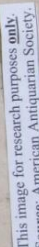


Stamp Act Duties – A Sampling

6	<i>Anno Regni quinto Georgii III. Regis.</i>	7
	tions, for or relating to the Removal of any Proceedings from before a single Justice of the Peace, a Stamp Duty of Ten Shillings.	shall be signed for any Kind of Goods, Wares, or Merchandize, to be exported from, or any Cocket or Clearance granted within the said Colonies or Plantations, a Stamp Duty of Four Pence.
Writ of Covenant, or Entry £s. 5 s. per Sheet.	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any Writ of Covenant for levying of Fines, Writ of Entry for suffering a Common Recovery, or Attachment issuing out of, or returnable into, any Court within the said Colonies and Plantations, a Stamp Duty of Five Shillings.	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, Letters of Mart, or Commission for private Ships of War, within the said Colonies and Plantations, a Stamp Duty of Twenty Shillings.
Judgments, Decrees, &c. 4 s. per Sheet.	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any Judgment, Decree, Sentence, or Dismission, or any Record of <i>Nisi Prius</i> or <i>Postea</i> , in any Court within the said Colonies and Plantations, a Stamp Duty of Four Shillings.	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any Grant, Appointment, or Admission of or to any publick beneficial Office or Employment, for the Space of One Year, or any lesser Time, of or above the Value of Twenty Pounds <i>per Annum</i> , Sterling Money, in Salary, Fees, and Perquisites, within the said Colonies and Plantations (except Commissions and Appointments of Officers of the Army, Navy, Ordnance, or Militia, of Judges, and of Justices of the Peace) a Stamp Duty of Ten Shillings.
Affidavits, Common-Bail, &c. (except Warrants relating to criminal matters, &c.) 1 s. per Sheet.	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any Affidavit, Common Bail or Appearance, Interrogatory Deposition, Rule, Order, or Warrant of any Court, or any <i>Dedimus Potestatem</i> , <i>Capias</i> , <i>Subpoena</i> , Summons, Compulsory Citation, Commission, Recognizance, or any other Writ, Process, or Mandate, issuing out of, or returnable into, any Court, or any Office belonging thereto, or any other Proceeding therein whatsoever, or any Copy thereof, or of any Record not herein before charged, within the said Colonies and Plantations (except Warrants relating to Criminal Matters, and Proceedings thereon or relating thereto) a Stamp Duty of One Shilling.	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which any Grant of any Liberty, Privilege, or Franchise, under the Seal of any of the said Colonies or Plantations, or under the Seal or Sign Manual of any Governor, Proprietor, or publick Officer alone, or in Conjunction with any other Person or Persons, or with any Council, or any Council and Assembly, or any Exemplification of the same, shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, within the said Colonies and Plantations, a Stamp Duty of Six Pounds.
Licences, Appointments, &c. to practise in any Court, 10 s. per Sheet.	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any Licence, Appointment, or Admission to any Counsellor, Solicitor, Attorney, Advocate or Proctor, to practise in any Court, or of any Notary within the said Colonies and Plantations, a Stamp Duty of Ten Pounds.	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any Licence for retailing of Spirituous Liquors, to be granted to any Person who shall take out the same, within the said Colonies and Plantations, a Stamp Duty of Twenty Shillings.
Bills of lading &c. 4 s. per Sheet.	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any Note or Bill of Lading, which shall	For every Skin or Piece of Vellum or Parchment, or Sheet or Piece of Paper, on which shall be ingrossed, written, or printed, any Licence for Retailing of Wine, to be granted to any Person who shall not take out a

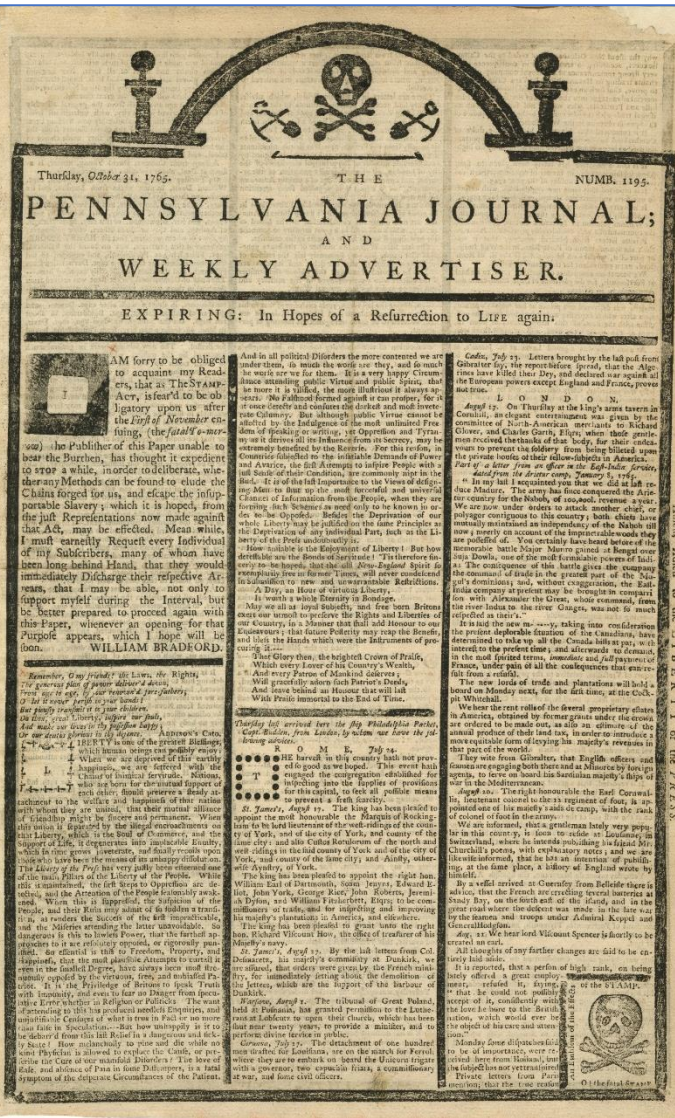
Source: American Antiquarian Society

Source: American Antiquarian Society



Mourning the Newspaper

Source: *Pennsylvania Journal*, October 31, 1765, American Antiquarian Society.

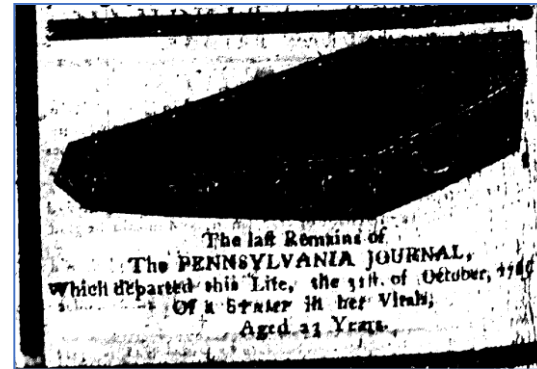


Pennsylvania Journal

October 31, 1765



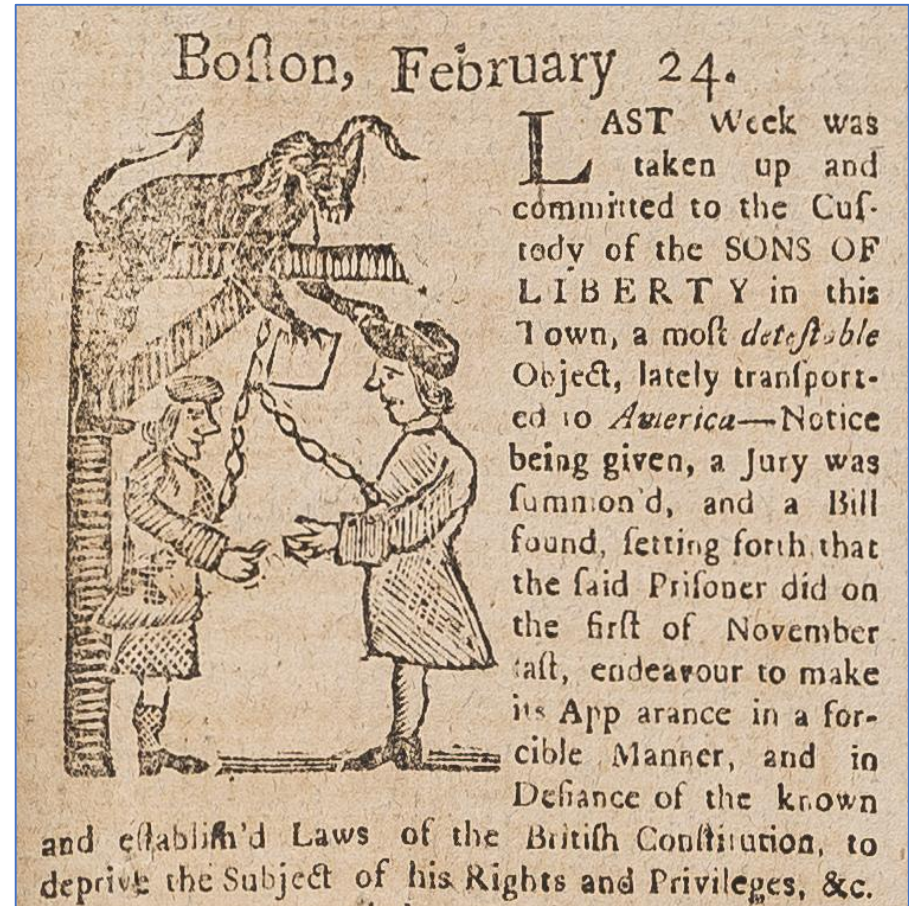
An Emblem of the Effects
of the STAMP.



The last Remains of
The PENNSYLVANIA JOURNAL,
Which departed this Life, the 31st. of
October, 1765
Of a STAMP in her Vitals,
Aged 23 Years.

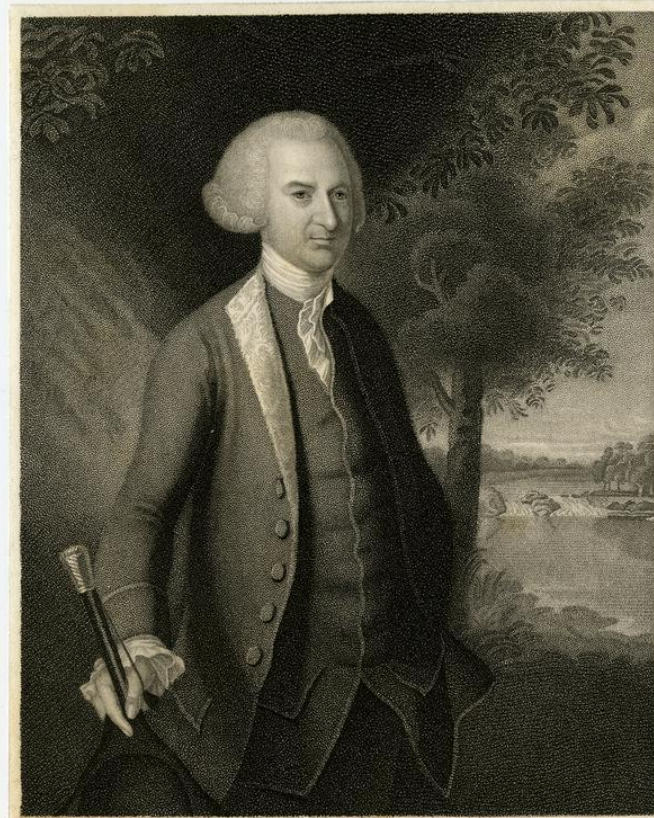
The Power of the Stamp

Source: *Boston Gazette*, February 24, 1766,
American Antiquarian Society.



John Dickinson The Farmer

Source: Engraving by J.B. Forrest after portrait by Charles Willson Peale, Historical Society of Pennsylvania,
<https://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/objects/5118>.



Engraved by J. B. Forrest from a Portrait by C. W. Peale painted in 1770.

JOHN DICKINSON.

John Dickinson

Boston Committee of Correspondence and the Towns

Source: *Massachusetts Spy* (Boston), Jan. 28,
1773.

Besides the towns mentioned in our last, the committee of correspondence here, have received the proceedings of the following, viz. Abington, Stoneham, Scarborough, Acton, Templeton, Lenox, &c. All which, notwithstanding, "they are to be printed in a VOLUME," we shall publish as we are able.

The following paragraph is from a late London paper. "THE celebrated Choiseul, late Prime Minister of France, being a few weeks ago asked why he ceded so amazing a tract of country as all Canada to Great-Britain by the last peace, replied, "I ceded it on purpose to destroy the English nation: They were fond of American dominions, and I was resolved they should have enough; for I have given them not only a constant drain for their most valuable inhabitants, but a formidable rival, which in less than a century will find employment for the councils of that turbulent people." Choiseul's words are already prophetick: Our ministers begin to discover that America is a very problematick benefit to England, and Lord Hillsborough actually resigned because we were opening on the Ohio fresh graves for the inhabitants of this kingdom."

News of Dumping the Tea Reaches Philadelphia

Source: Rare Books & Manuscript Department, Boston Public Library.

Christmas-Box

FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA JOURNAL.

FRIDAY Afternoon 5 o'Clock, Dec. 24, 1773.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 24.
A Two o'Clock this Afternoon arrived in this City a Gentleman, who came Express from New-York, with the following interesting Advice from BOSTON, which were sent there by Express also.

B O S T O N, DEC. 16.

IT being understood that Mr. Rutch, owner of the ship Dartmouth, rather lingered in his preparations to return her to London, with the East-India Company's Tea on board, there was on Monday last, P. M. a meeting of the Committee of several of the neighbouring towns, in Boston, and Mr. Rutch was first for, and enquired of whether he continued his resolution to comply with the injunctions of the body assembled, at the Old-South Meeting-House, on Monday and Tuesday preceding. Mr. Rutch answered, that in the interim he had taken the advice of the body counsel, and found that in case he went on of his own motion, to find that ship to sea in the condition, he was then in, it must inevitably ruin him, and therefore he must beg them to consider what he had said at the said meeting, to be the effect of compulsion and unadvised, and in consequence that he was not bound to abide by it, when he was now assured that he must be suitably ruined in case he did.

Mr. Rutch was then asked whether he would demand a clearance for his ship in the Custom-House, and in case of a refusal enter a protest, and then apply in like manner for a pass, and order her to sea. To all which he answered in the negative, the committee, doubting, informing their respective constituents of what had passed, a very full meeting of the body was again assembled at the Old-South Meeting-House on Tuesday afternoon, and Mr. Rutch being again present, was enquired of as before, and a motion was made and seconded, that Mr. Rutch be enjoined forthwith to repair to the Collector of the Customs and demand a clearance for his ship, and ten gentlemen were appointed to accompany him as witnesses of the demand. Mr. Rutch then proceeded with the committee to Mr. Harrison's lodgings, and made the demand. Mr. Harrison offered, he could not give answer till he consulted the Comptroller, but would at office hours, next morning, give a decisive answer. On the return of Mr. Rutch and the Committee to the body with this report, the meeting was adjourned to Thursday morning at ten o'clock.

T H U R S D A Y.

Having met on Thursday morning, ten o'clock, they sent for Mr. Rutch, and asked him if he had been to the Collector, and demanded a clearance, he said he had; but the Collector said, that he could not, consistent with his duty, give him a clearance, till all the dutiable articles, were out of his ship; they then demanded of him whether he had protested against the Collector; he said he had not. They ordered him upon his peril, to give immediate orders to the Captain, to get his ship ready for sea, that day, enter a protest immediately against the Custom-House, and then proceed directly to the Governor, (who was at his seat at Milton, seven miles off) and demand a pass for his ship to go by the Gallie. They then adjourned to 1 o'clock P. M. to wait on Mr. Rutch's return, having met according to adjournment, there was the fullest meeting ever known, (it was reckoned, that there were two thousand men from the country) they waited very patiently till about 1 o'clock, when they found Mr. Rutch did not return, they began to be very uneasy, called for a disputation of the meeting, and finally obtained a vote for it, that the more moderate part of the meeting fearing what would be the consequences, begging that they would reconsider their vote, and wait till Mr. Rutch's return, for this reason, that they ought to do every thing in their power to find the Tea back, according to their resolution. They obtained a vote, to remain together one hour longer; in about three quarters of an hour Mr. Rutch returned, his answer from the Governor was, that he

could not give a pass till the ship was cleared by the Custom House, the people immediately, as with one voice, called for a disputation, which having obtained, they repaired to Griffin's wharf, where the tea vessels lay, proceeded to its cables, and hoisted the tea upon deck; cut the chests to pieces, and threw over the side; (there were two ships and a brig, Capt. Hall, Bruce, and Coffin, each vessel having 114 chests of tea on board,) they began upon the two ships first, as they had nothing on board but the tea, then proceeded to the brig, which had hauled to the wharf, but the day before and had but a small part of her cargo out. The Captain of the brig begged they would not begin with his vessel, as the tea was covered with goods, belonging to different merchants in town, they told him the tea they wanted, and the tea they would have; but if he would go into his cabin quietly, not one article of his goods should be hurt. They immediately proceeded to remove the goods, and then to dispose of the tea.

It was expected that the men of war would have interfered, as all the Captains and other Officers were ordered on board their ships before night; and the day before, there were six dozen of muskets sent on board the Admiral's ship. The King-Fisher, and several armed schooners were rigged and fired, and the Clakers armed brig, arrived that day from Rhode-Island, but the people were determined. It is to be observed, that they were extremely careful, that not any of the tea should be stolen, so kept a good look out, and detected one man filling his pockets, whom they treated very roughly, by tearing his coat off his back, and driving him up the wharf, through thousands of people, who could not kick him as he passed.

We are positively informed, that the patriotic inhabitants of Lexington, at a late meeting, unanimously resolved against the sale or consumption of all foreign, Dutch or English importations; and to manifest the sincerity of their resolution, they brought together every ounce contained in the town, and committed it to one common bonfire.

We are also informed, Charlestown is in motion to follow their illustrious example.

Sure, Would it not materially affect the bringing this detestable hero into disuse, if every town would reject their tea? Is it not in every license to all houses of entertainment, who were known to afford tea to their guests?

Our reason for forgetting this, is the difficulty these people are under to avoid dishing out this poison, without such a provision in their favour.

We have this moment received intelligence that Mr. Clarke's brigantine, commanded by Captain Loring, hired at the back of Cape-Code. The Captain has not landed his Tea there, of which he has 18 chests on board, belonging to the East-India Company.

N E W - Y O R K, Dec. 22.

Last night an express arrived here from Boston, who left it on Friday last, and brings lively letters among which is the following, viz.

Boston, 13th December, 1773.

GENTLEMEN,
YESTERDAY we had a greater Meeting of the Body than ever. The country coming in from twenty miles round, and every day was taken that was practicable for returning the Tea. The moment it was known out of doors, that Mr. Rutch, could not obtain a pass for his ship, by the Gallie, a number of people buzzed in the street, and in a very little time, every ounce of the Tea on board of Capt. Hall, Bruce, and Coffin, was immersed in the Bay, without the least injury to private property.

The spirit of the people on this occasion surpassed all parties, who viewed the scene.

We conceived it our duty to afford you the most early advice of this interesting event, by express, which, departing immediately, obliges us to conclude.

By Order of the Committee.

P. S. The other vessel, viz. Captain Loring, belonging to Messrs. Clark, with fifty-eight chests, was, by the Act of God, call on Rhode, on the back of Cape-Code.

* By the act, any dutiable goods to board a vessel after being on days in a harbour, license liable to the payment of the duties. The people wanted till the last day, and in a few hours the ship, (to fear the duties they payable) was to have been delivered to the custody of the men of war.

The "Lexington Alarm"

Source: Van Gorden-Williams Library & Archives Digital Collections, *digitalVGW*,
<https://digitalvgw.omeka.net/items/show/497>

Watertown Wednesday Morning near 10 o'clock

To all the Friends of America Liberty, be it known that this Morning before break of Day a Brigade consisting of about 1000 or 1200 Men landed at Rhipps Farm at Cambridge & marched to Lexington where they found a Company of our beloved Militia on Arms, upon whom they fired without any Provocation and killed 6 Men and Wounded 4 others. By an Express from Boston this Morning we find another Brigade and now upon their March from Boston supposed to be about 1000. The bearer Mr. Spauldijul is charged to alarm the County quite to Connecticut and all Persons are desired to furnish him with fresh Horses as they may be needed. I have spoken with several Persons who have seen the Dead & Wounded. May let the Delegates from this Colony to Connecticut see this they know

J. Palmer one of the
Committee of S—y
Col. Foster of Brookfield one of the Delegates. A True Copy
taken from the Original per Order of Committee of Corres-
pondence for Worcester. Alleft. Notion. Dading J. Clark
Worcester April 9th 1775.

Brooklyne Thursday 12 o'clock. the above is a true
Copy as recd. Horse & Express forwarded from
Worcester To Jst. Daniel Syler Jr.

Circulating the “Lexington Alarm”

TABLE 2. *Transmission of the “Lexington Alarm” Letter, April 19–24, 1775*

Date	Time	Location	Approximate Miles from Previous Stop
Wednesday, April 19	10:00 am	Watertown, MA	
	Unknown	Worcester, MA	37
Thursday, April 20	11:00 am	Brooklyn, CT	40
	4:00 pm	Norwich, CT	21
	7:00 pm	New London, CT	13
Friday, April 21	1:00 am	Lyme, CT	15
	4:00 am	Saybrook, CT	5
	7:00 am	Killingworth, CT	16
	9:00 am	East Guilford, CT	9
	10:00 am	Guilford, CT	5
	12:00 pm	Branford, CT	8
	Unknown	New Haven, CT	8
Saturday, April 22	8:00 am	Fairfield, CT	24
Sunday, April 23	4:00 pm	New York, NY	60
Monday, April 24	2:00 am	New Brunswick, NJ	36
	Unknown (am)	Princeton, NJ	15
	9:00 am	Trenton, NJ	13
	Unknown	Philadelphia, PA	33

Note: Data compiled from Joseph Palmer, “To all friends of American liberty,” April 19, 1775 [Am.606], HSP. Distance calculations are intended only as rough approximations. East Guilford is now Madison, Connecticut.

Circulating the “Lexington Alarm”

TABLE 3. *Publication of the “Lexington Alarm” Letter, April 1775*

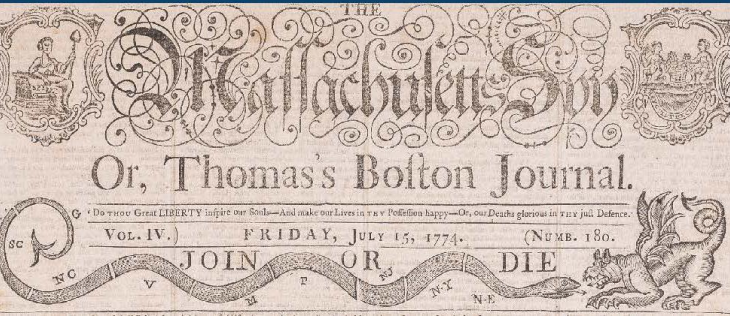
Date	Publication Type	Publication Title	Printer	City
April 20	Newspaper	<i>Norwich Packet</i>	Robertsons and Trumbull	Norwich
April 22	Broadside	“INTERESTING INTELLIGENCE” (second express)	Robertsons and Trumbull	Norwich
April 23	Broadside	“The following interesting Advices”	unknown	New York
April 24	Newspaper	<i>New-York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury</i>	Hugh Gaine	New York
April 24	Newspaper	<i>Pennsylvania Packet</i>	John Dunlap	Philadelphia
April 24	Broadside		W. & T. Bradford	Philadelphia
April 25	Newspaper	<i>Pennsylvania Evening Post</i>	Benjamin Towne	Philadelphia
April 25	Newspaper	<i>Wöchentliche Pennsylvaniaische Staatsbote</i>	John Henry Miller	Philadelphia
April 25	Broadside		Francis Bailey	Lancaster
April 26	Newspaper	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>	Hall & Sellers	Philadelphia
April 26	Broadside		[Mary Katherine Goddard]	Baltimore
April 27	Newspaper	<i>Rivington’s New-York Gazetteer</i>	James Rivington	New York
April 28	Newspaper	<i>Pennsylvania Mercury</i>	Enoch Story & Daniel Humphreys	Philadelphia
April 28	Newspaper	<i>Virginia Gazette</i>	John Pinckney	Williamsburg
April 29	Newspaper	<i>Virginia Gazette</i>	Dixon & Hunter	Williamsburg
April 29	Broadside		Alexander Purdie	Williamsburg

REVOLUTIONARY NETWORKS

JOSEPH M. ADELMAN

The Business and Politics of Printing the News

1763-1789

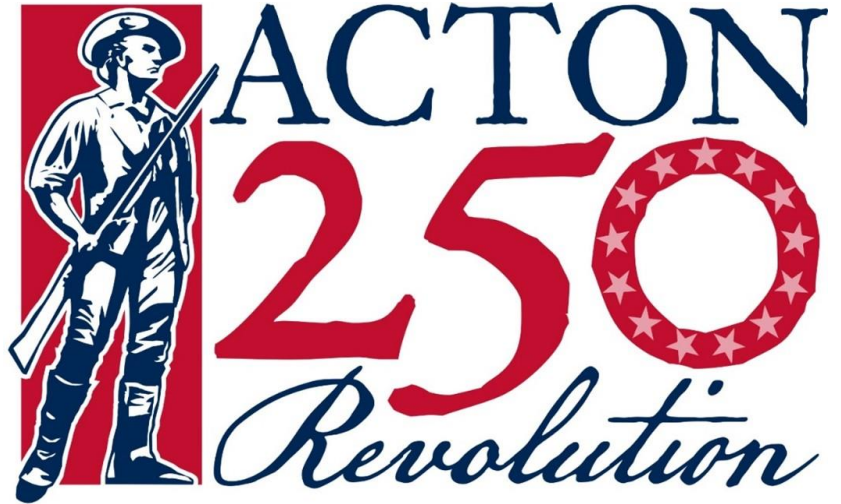


Contact Information

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- Instagram: @jmadelman_history
- Mastodon: @jmadelman@historians.social

Question and Answer Time!

- Please wait until called upon
- Please be respectful and save time for others



Thank You! ... and More to Come!

Next Up:

March 19, 6:30PM

Acton Memorial Library Book Group

“Odyssey of Phillis Wheatley”

April date TBD

Acton Center Tour – Amy Cole

Tuesday, April 2 7PM

Historian John L. Bell, Author of *“The Road to Concord: How Four Stolen Cannon Ignited the Revolutionary War”*

