

The following five resolves were passed by the House of Burgesses on May 30, 1765:

① Resolved, that the first adventurers and settlers of His Majesty's colony and dominion of Virginia brought with them and transmitted to their posterity, and other His Majesty's subjects since inhabiting in this His Majesty's said colony, the liberties, privileges, franchises, and immunities that have at any time been held, enjoyed, and possessed by the people of Great Britain.

② Resolved, that by two royal charters, granted by King James I, the colonists aforesaid are declared entitled to all liberties, privileges, and immunities of denizens and natural subjects to all intents and purposes as if they had been abiding and born within the Realm of England.

③ Resolved, that the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chose by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, or the easiest method of raising them, and must themselves be affected by every tax laid on the people, is the only security against a burdensome taxation, and the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, without which the ancient constitution cannot exist.

④ Resolved, that His Majesty's liege people of this his most ancient and loyal colony have without interruption enjoyed the inestimable right of being governed by such laws, respecting their internal policy and taxation, as are derived from their own consent, with the approbation of their sovereign, or his substitute; and that the same has never been forfeited or yielded up, but has been constantly recognized by the kings and people of Great Britain.

The fifth item, following, was rescinded the next day. Henry, perhaps believing that the matter would stand, had departed. The conservative members re-formed on May 31st for the purpose of removing all five resolutions, but succeeded only in removing this one. The text of it was found with Daniel Hanckie's will.

Stamp Act, Virginia Resolves from Newport RI newspaper

"Reprinting" Virginia's Resolves

Throughout the spring months of 1765, while Parliament carries on the business of the empire, colonial legislatures meet to regulate their own affairs. As Virginia's May legislative session draws to a close, news arrives that the stamp tax has been enacted. On the 30th of the month, goaded by the recently elected member Patrick Henry, the Virginia House of Burgesses passes a series of resolutions that recasts its earlier objections, objections embodied in the petitions Parliament had refused to consider. Four Virginia Resolves are entered into the assembly's official record, but others have apparently been debated. When the conservative *Virginia Gazette* declines to print the approved resolves, radicals gain control of their publication. On 24 June, the *Newport Mercury* prints the resolves, now grown from four to six. By 7 July, when the *Maryland Gazette* carries them, they are seven in number. Portrayed as more sweeping than they in fact are, the resolutions adopted by the Virginia House embolden other colonial legislatures.

To examine all four pages of this newspaper, please see the [online display of the *The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal*, 1 July 1765](#).



See

Lessons

Questions to Consider

1. Compare the four official Virginia Resolves, as listed in the glossary, to the resolves "reprinted" in the *Newport Mercury*. What is similar? What different? Which set of resolutions is more radical? Give evidence for your conclusion.

Further Exploration

2. The other colonies that prepared resolutions were: Rhode Island, South Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Maryland. Adopt one colony and research its resolutions. How do they compare to Virginia's official resolves?

3. Consider the power of the press. How might the protest against the Stamp Act have been different if the "radicals" had not had the opportunity to deliver their version of the Virginia Resolves? Taking the position of a conservative, or loyalist, who knows that the Virginia House of Burgesses adopted a set of resolves different from those represented in the *Newport Mercury*, write a letter to the editor of that newspaper protesting its misrepresentation of them.

4. How does the news affect modern citizens' understanding of current events? Choose a contemporary event and compare how it is reported by at least three sources. Be sure to identify and characterize your sources (AP wire, news report, editorial, blog, etc.)