

Rolling Toward Revolution... October 1773



Coat of Arms of King George III of Great Britain

In London: Ben Franklin's essay was circulating in the press and there was still considerable gossip about who had obtained and published the illicit copies the Massachusetts Royal Governor's confidential and politically sensitive letters.

In the Colonies: John Adams of Boston celebrated his 38th birthday this month. His law practice had rebounded in the three years since he had obtained an acquittal of the British defendants in the Boston Massacre case. He and Abigail recently had welcomed a third son, Thomas Boylston, at their farm in Braintree. Although the family was now living back in Boston, he often travelled back and forth to Braintree.

The first public asylum in the colonies opened for "Persons of insane and disordered minds" in Williamsburg. The Quakers who had operated a private hospital in Philadelphia since the 1750s, included a section for such unfortunates.

In New Jersey: Late in the month, Governor William Franklin summoned the 30 members of the NJ Assembly to Burlington in November for the fall session. East and West Jersey had been cobbled together 13 years earlier under the Royal Governor and his appointed Councilors. Together, they represented the interests of the Crown, the greatest wealth, and the political and legal leadership in the now single Province. Some councilors were respected local leaders who held local offices, such as justice of the peace as well. The Assembly, a kind of "lower house", was directly elected following the Common Law and statutes of England. They represented local communities and Jersey's major cities (Burlington, Elizabeth Town, Perth Amboy). Their members were typically large landholders, large merchants, and lawyers. Somerset County had three representatives. Hendrick Fischer of Bound Brook and John Berrien of Rocky Hill were long serving assemblymen who would attend. Fischer was a farmer and Berrien, a merchant, lawyer, and surveyor. Both held local political offices as well. John Roy of Basking Ridge, a yeoman farmer prepared to attend his second session. All three would serve throughout the tumultuous years ahead.

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