

View of the Year 1765

REVERE'S engraving, "A View of the Year 1765," is known apparently by four copies, one owned by the American Antiquarian Society (acquired in 1913 from Goodspeed's and formerly the William E. Spalding copy), one owned by the Worcester Art Museum, one owned by the Bostonian Society (presented by Robert C. Mackay in 1883), and a fourth formerly owned by James Lovell Little and now by Dr. Clarence C. Little of Bar Harbor, Maine.

The size of the plate is $6\frac{1}{16}$ by $7\frac{5}{8}$ inches. At the lower right corner it is signed "Engrav'd Printed & Sold by P. Revere Boston." The three columns of verse underneath are not quoted here since they are shown in Plate no. 5. The allegorical scene shows a dragon, representing the Stamp Act, carrying a scroll labeled "Magna Charta" facing a group of ten figures, four of whom are lettered "U," meaning United Provinces. Then follows "V" for Virginia, "H" for Hampden, the seventeenth-century Englishman who was regarded as the symbol of resistance against taxes, "N Y" for New York, an unnamed figure in clerical costume, "R I" for Rhode Island, and "B" for Boston. On the ground, under the dragon's claws, are two bodies, one holding a scroll lettered Pym, who represented the imposition of the excise tax of 1643, and the other with a scroll lettered "Anti-Sejanus" recognizing Dr. William Scott's "Anti-Sejanus" letters in the *London Public Advertiser*. At the right is the Liberty Tree, with the date of August 14, 1765, commemorating the outbreak on that day, when a crowd opposed to the Stamp Act hanged an effigy of Andrew Oliver, the stamp-master, on the tree and demolished several houses. On the tree is shown the figure of John Huske, who was hanged in effigy on November 1, 1765, in retaliation for his reported efforts to have the Stamp Act passed. Huske was a native of New Hampshire who removed to England and was elected a member of the House of Commons, and whether the allegation was well founded or not, his name was synonymous with

opposition to the colonies. Above is the flying figure of Minerva opposing two flying harpies. The verse underneath is in three columns, and could have been written by some patriot poet or by Revere himself.

The copy of the engraving owned by J. Lovell Little in 1891 was accompanied by a card, in Revere's handwriting, describing the print. Goss, in his *Life of Revere*, 1891, Volume 1, page 35, quotes the card as follows: "The odious Stamp Act represented by the Dragon confronted by Boston with drawn sword. The colonies New York and Rhode Island support Hampden. New Hampshire and Virginia with the other United Colonies are also represented. While from the Liberty Tree hangs the officer of the Crown." I have been unable to locate this card.

Revere copied this plate largely from an English caricature entitled "View of the present Crisis," which was published in April, 1763, both as a large print $13\frac{5}{8}$ by $8\frac{3}{8}$ inches, and as a smaller engraving reproduced in the *Scots Scourge*, Volume 2, plate 24. Revere evidently used the smaller print. The English caricature was issued to signalize opposition to the Excise Bill of 1763. Excise is depicted as a huge dragon-like monster wearing on his head a Scotch bonnet and grasping a large scroll, or Magna Charta. He is opposed by Wilkes, with drawn sword, backed by Charles Churchill, with pointed gun. The Duke of Newcastle and Earl Temple are standing behind Churchill. The Duke of Cumberland, sword in hand, the Duke of York, who is urging the British lion to the rescue, Britannia, and William Pitt are hastening against the monster. In the air are two flying demons, one Lord Mansfield with Scotch bonnet and armed with a syringe with which he sprinkles the group, and the other the Duke of Bedford with one leg encased in a jack-boot, alluding to his supposed subservience to Lord Bute, and the other leg made of wood furnished with a spike. He has a bull's head and two fans serve him for wings. On the other side of the sky Minerva is flying to the rescue. Overthrown on the ground are Arthur Murphy, promoter of the *Auditor*, and Tobias Smollett, promoter of the *Briton*. At the right is a group composed of Lord Bute, Lord Holland portrayed as a fox, and two figures representing France and England (summarized from description of plate in *Catalogue of Prints in British Museum . . . Satires*, 1883, Volume 4, number 4037, page 262).

In adapting his plate for American consumption, Revere omitted Lord Bute's group at the right and substituted the Liberty Tree with the hanging of Huske. He copied the group opposing the dragon to include the figure of Britannia and then added four more figures to depict the United Provinces. The flying figures above are copied faithfully, as are also the two prostrate figures below, although the latter carry signs to denote their identity. Both the English and the American prints are reproduced, the former from the *Scots Scourge* owned by the Harvard College Library, and the latter from the copy owned by the American Antiquarian Society.

The *Boston Evening Post* of November 4, 1765, prints a long account of the popular outbreak of November 1, with the hanging of the effigy of John Huske. In the same issue is an advertisement of the publication of "A Caricatura, being a Representation of the Tree of Liberty, and the Distresses of the present Day. Sold by N. Hurd, near the Exchange." The *Boston Gazette* of January 27, 1766, advertises as "Just Published, (Price Half a Pisterene) And to be Sold by Paul Revere, near Dr. John Clark's, at the North End, by Adam Collson, under Liberty Tree, and by the Printer hereof: A Hieroglyphical View of the Year 1765, neatly engraved."

Revere's print of "A View of the Year 1765" is reproduced in the *Magazine of American History*, 1886, Volume 15, page 14, in E. H. Goss's *Life of Paul Revere*, 1891, Volume 1, page 33, and in William Murrell's *History of American Graphic Humor*, 1933, Volume 1, page 26, all much reduced, and almost full size in Harriet O'Brien's *Paul Revere's Own Story*, 1929, page 37.