

A Warm Place — Hell, 1768

THE Rescinders print, entitled “A Warm Place — Hell,” is one of the rarest of Revere’s engravings and is known by only two copies. One, now reproduced, was owned for many years by the Misses Emily B. and Mary L. Eliot of Roxbury, and later of Cambridge, who were the daughters of Nathaniel G. Eliot, the son of Ephraim Eliot who married Elizabeth Fleet, the daughter of John Fleet, the son of Thomas Fleet, Senior. The print was acquired by Ephraim Eliot (*Publications*, Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Volume 25, pages 47–50). It was bequeathed to the American Antiquarian Society by Miss Mary L. Eliot upon her death on January 15, 1927. Another copy was acquired several years ago by a Providence book-dealer, James A. Tyson. The John Carter Brown Library obtained this copy in October 1960.

The story told in the print is well known. On February 11, 1768, the Massachusetts House of Representatives voted to approve a “Circulatory Letter” opposing the various Acts of Parliament levying taxes on the colonies, and ordered that copies should be sent to the legislatures of all the colonies (letter printed in *Massachusetts House Journal* for 1767–1768, appendix, pages 20–23). The letter greatly disturbed Parliament, and Governor Bernard was ordered to demand that the vote of the House should be rescinded, under penalty of his dissolving the General Court. On June 30, 1768, the House put the motion to vote whether the resolution of the House authorizing the circular letter should be rescinded. Upon a yea and nay vote, 92 members voted not to rescind, and 17 voted to rescind. The names are carefully recorded in the *House Journal* for June, 1768, pages 89–90.

The vote aroused great excitement in Massachusetts, especially as the General Court was promptly dissolved by Governor Bernard on July 1. Everywhere toasts were drunk to “the glorious ninety-two,” and the seventeen rescinders were held up to public obloquy.

It set the scene for one of Paul Revere’s best known caricatures. He issued a

print entitled "A Warm Place — Hell," showing the devil with a pitchfork pushing seventeen men into the yawning, fiery jaws of a monster representing the mouth of Hell. Above is a flying devil, crying "push on Tim," referring to Timothy Ruggles, an active Loyalist and one of the seventeen. Another member of the group is shown bearing a calf's head, an evident reference to Dr. John Calef. Ephraim Eliot preserves an interesting reminiscence of the print. He showed it to Paul Revere, then eighty years of age, who observed that he had not seen a copy for forty years. He said that "he was a young man, zealous in the cause of liberty when he sketched it & had forgotten the circumstances — but this he did remember, that while he was doing it, the famous Doct Church (then considered a leading whig, though he afterwards proved defective) came into his shop & seeing what he was about, took a pen & wrote the following lines as an accompaniment. The Colonel then delivered them with much pathos exactly as they are on the print. He was asked to call over their names, but could recall only the above named Timothy Ruggles, & Doctor Robert [error for John] Calef of Ipswich, whom he had particularized in the print with a Calfs head." (*Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, Volume 25, page 49, quoting from Ephraim Eliot's commonplace book, which manuscript is now owned by Samuel Eliot Morison of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The same incident is told in the sketch of Paul Revere written for the *New England Magazine* for October, 1832, page 309.)

It was Revere, too, who had a hand in honoring the ninety-two patriots who refused to rescind. Fifteen patriots, or "Sons of Liberty," commissioned Revere to make a large silver punch bowl, which bore this inscription, "To the memory of the glorious Ninety-two Members of the Honbl House of Representatives of the Massachusetts-Bay, who, undaunted by the insolvent Menaces of Villains in Power, from a strict Regard to Conscience, and the Liberties of their Constituents, on the 30th of June 1768, Voted, NOT TO RESCIND." The names of the fifteen patriots were engraved around the top of the bowl, and Revere's name is stamped underneath. The bowl descended to Robert C. Mackay of Boston and was displayed to the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1873 (see *Proceedings*, 1873-1875, page 199). It later was acquired by Marsden J. Perry of Providence, and

in 1949 was obtained from Mr. Perry's widow, through a public subscription chiefly raised by Mr. Mark Bortman of Boston, and presented to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, there to be permanently preserved.

The Rescinders engraving has been often reproduced. E. H. Goss, in his *Life of Paul Revere*, 1891, Volume 1, page 60, first showed it in reduced form. The Colonial Society of Massachusetts reproduced it in exact size in the program for its annual dinner on November 21, 1922, and again in its *Publications*, Volume 25, page 49, printed in 1924, where Samuel Eliot Morison exhibited the print and made comment upon it. William Murrell, in his *History of American Graphic Humor*, 1933, prints a reduced reproduction in Volume 1, page 26. Esther Forbes, in her *Paul Revere*, 1942, page 146, shows the print, and also its English original, both somewhat reduced.

A recent discovery has been made in Sheffield, England, of a different and interesting impression of the "Rescinders" print. In the Sheffield City Library, in the Wentworth Woodhouse Collection, there was found in 1949 a broadside poem, with the engraving of "A Warm Place — Hell" placed at the top. It was found in a bundle of Boston papers of July, 1768. The broadside is $13\frac{3}{4}$ inches high by 8 inches wide, to the edges of the printing. A twenty-line poem is followed by a list of the seventeen rescinders, each described in uncomplimentary terms (see Plate no. 11, slightly reduced). Evidently Edes & Gill printed this patriotic broadside and ornamented it with the original engraved cut of "A Warm Place — Hell." The Massachusetts Historical Society has a copy of the broadside, but with its most important element, the engraved cut, carefully torn off.

As was usual, Revere obtained the model for his print from an English original. A small volume of political caricatures, entitled *The Scots Scourge, being a Com-pleat Supplement to the British Antidote to Caledonian Poison*, was published in 1765. There was no date on the title-page, but in the American Antiquarian Society copy the date of "1765" has been inserted in the handwriting of Isaiah Thomas. The work was in two volumes and went through six editions. Plate 22 in the first volume is entitled "A Warm Place — Hell" and shows the devil with a pitchfork pushing six miscreants into the fiery jaws of a monster representing Hell. A verse in the text thus describes the print:

Hell open its jaws! lo! the train is arriv'd!
 They may bless their good fortune so long they surviv'd!
Reynard backs the *gude* L — as he us'd to do here,
 While the Devil pricks *Law*, and the rest in the rear.

Revere's print is almost an identical copy of the English caricature, except for increasing the number of figures to seventeen, inserting a flying devil above, and placing over the dragon's eye a representation of the cupola of the Province House, with Shem Drowne's familiar Indian with bow and arrow. The size of the English print is $3\frac{7}{16}$ high by $3\frac{15}{16}$ inches wide, to the edge of the border lines. Revere's print measures $3\frac{3}{8}$ by $4\frac{15}{16}$ inches to the border lines of the cut, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ by $4\frac{15}{16}$ inches to the edge of the printing. The same English print also appeared in *The North Briton. Extraordinary. No 1763. Or, A Peep into Futurity*. This was the caption title of an undated pamphlet, evidently issued in 1765. It had nothing to do with the long series known as *The North Briton* conducted by John Wilkes in 1763. Both of the English originals are in the American Antiquarian Society's Library. The cut in the *Scots Scourge*, as well as Revere's print, is reproduced, Plate no. 10.

In his print Revere inserted at the lower right corner "Pubd Accord'g to Act by M Darly." Matthew Darly was the most famous publisher of satirical prints in London in the 1750's and 1760's, and frequently his imprint carried the approval of the Act of Parliament. A vast amount of information regarding this period of English caricature is contained in Frederic G. Stephens's lengthy Introduction to Volume 4 of the *Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum — Political and Personal Satires*, 1883.