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AM304

Dr. Collins

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Brief 4 Active Listening

Questions discussed in this podcast:

How the ideas of the American Revolution were put into motion?

What did the process look like?

How did the ideas of the Revolution spread?

Elisa Zuchar Rycart teaches Early American History at University of Missouri

How did people and colonists find out what was going on in other places?

Newspapers with news from other colonies and countries with front news being more global than local. Less about journalists and more news coming from letters from military. Most things being published were actually being re-published with wide ranging news.

How long did it take from news to travel from Europe to the colonies?

Newspapers on merchant ships or people traveling for business. Starting in 1755, the packet boats were mail boats going between New York and England. Works with postal service to send letters and newspapers. About a month and a half to get from England to New York and then depends on the postal service to get across the other countries, 3-4 months from Philadelphia to England. By 1760-1765 the speed increased to about 2 months or faster with the improvement of the postal service and improvement of roads.

Can you describe the role that the post office place in British North America?

1750s newspapers were carried free of charge. Stood an imperial institution for British Empire, in the 1750s improvement on the roads and postal service occurred mostly due

to war time on the Seven Years War. This was to improve military information, paperwork, and news.

American Revolution was the last of a series of wars during the 18th century that Britain and France fought to expand empires in North America, Elissa how did those conflicts effect information for and in the colonies?

Until the Seven Years War, large numbers of British troops were in America so these British military is stationed in places like New York and then they needed the postal service to double in size to move to and from New York. The paperwork, postal service, and information pathways for all improve communication that were vital to the war efforts.

During the 1760s and 1770s most people were interested in reading about politics.

How did they get information for their newspapers and how did they choose which news to print?

Consisted of many points in Europe and along the Colonies that would connect and share information. Most newspapers were given out weekly to publish a 4-page issue with lots of local advertisements (2 pages worth). Most stories were about news in other places because local news was easy to learn from local coffee shops and taverns. Colonists were interested in what was happening in London. As things heated up, the news started to lean more towards colonial news which helped shape events. The newspapers included political questions of the time and chronological events. Pamphlets of the time included more information on political questions and help spread the ideas of the revolution.

Eric Slaughter English Professor at University of Chicago

What did pamphlets look like and how were they sold in this period?

Pamphlet is a small book delivered in sheets. Octavo in size, about 6 by 9 inches made from a sheet of paper that allows for 16 pages front and back. Payne's pamphlet was around 8 pages at 5 sheets. Cost depended on length and took about 1-2 shilling compared to a book at that time that took 5-10 shillings. Either getting it at a book seller, coffee house, or a company library, or directly from the author.

Thomas Payne or Johns Dickenson, what was the process the author went through to decide where and how to publish their pamphlets/ Why did people choose to write in pamphlets rather than newspapers?

Different rationales. Payne worked closely with Benjamin rush to connect them through different. Quickly suppressed and destroyed, but the answer to common sense had an easier time getting printed. Author would work with different publishers changing their name if it was known or trimming what people had objections with. Other write to newspaper editors to get their opinion out.

What do we know about how people read the printed materials of these times?

People were seeing a lot of arguments very quickly. Sometimes the printing of events had been far passed when the events actually happened. Shelf Life of newspapers became very short as information and arguments were happening so quickly. Some advertisements and push for reading certain documents were very lengthy and often pushed.

How publishers decided which pamphlets to reprint?

Sometimes a printer may decide it was worthy because of its success in other areas or a response to a popular pamphlet is worth publishing. People are paying for them or publishers are targeting certain audiences. One man ran 3 ads in 1773 and recorded only 3 sales.

Is the scale of re-printing a good way of measuring pamphlets against each other? Is there a better way?

It's a good way but does not necessarily encompass all print spectrum of the American Revolution. Bibliographies cohere along literary style prose or drama, but these are more segregated with pamphlets and where they were printed. They are segregated from newspapers. We're looking at availability as a metric for influence or reception.

“Books make Revolutions”, what does that mean? Is that how people should approach the American Revolution?

Pamphlets, newspapers, broadsides, and other printed works were dialogues of the time with street and church activities that gave print a special meaning under the revolution, but it is hard to imagine the American Revolution without the radicalization of readers which shares a pre-revolutionary idea. Printed works pointed to what colonists were reading as a cause for the present discontent.