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Vignette I

Characters: Narrator, Members of Parliament (5), Members of Sons of Liberty (8), Paul Revere

Narrator: The year is 1766 and the British colonies of North America are unhappy with what they consider to be unfair taxes levied on them by Great Britain. Listen as members of the British Parliament discuss what to do about these angry colonists.

Great Britain 1766

Member of Parliament 1: The colonists are not calming down. They continue to protest the Stamp Act and boycott British goods. I am told they may rebel if we don't do something soon.

Member of Parliament 2: Can the Stamp Act be repealed to quiet them down?

Member of Parliament 3: It can. However, we still need to collect taxes to cover the debts from the French and Indian War and pay to maintain our newly acquired land.

Member of Parliament 4: Perhaps we could repeal the Stamp Act and impose a new tax, such as a tax on tea. The colonists might be so pleased to have the Stamp Act gone that they won't worry about new taxes.

Member of Parliament 5: A brilliant solution! We need to keep the peace with the British colonists, but we also have to pay off Great Britain's debts. Let us repeal the Stamp Act and pass another act as quickly as possible to tax the colonists on other goods. If they do not have to buy stamps, they may not even be aware of being taxed.

Narrator: The British Parliament voted to repeal the Stamp Act in March of 1766, only one year after the Stamp Act was passed. But, four years later, the colonists are still unhappy. Listen to find out why.

Four Years Later: Colonies 1770

Member of Sons of Liberty 1: King George and his Parliament must think we are fools! Nothing has changed! They merely replace one tax with another! These taxes are imposed on us by a far-away government.

Member of Sons of Liberty 2: We have been able to raise our own taxes in the past. Have they lost faith in our ability to govern ourselves?”

Member of Sons of Liberty 3: Whatever their reason, it is not fair. We deserve a voice in how to raise the money.

Member of Sons of Liberty 4: The British Parliament thinks we are weak. We cannot tolerate unfair taxes that are set by a ruler who is across the ocean.

Member of Sons of Liberty 5: Yes, and look where it has led—a massacre in the streets of Boston! We must stand up for those who died.

Three Years Later: Colonies 1773

Narrator: The year is 1773, three years after the Boston Massacre, and the colonists still feel unheard by Great Britain. Listen as Paul Revere discusses what action to take next with his fellow members of the Sons of Liberty.

Paul Revere: We are no better off than we were three years ago! It is true that Parliament repealed some taxes after the Boston Massacre, but the tax on tea remains.

Member of Sons of Liberty 6: It’s not too late. We need to send Parliament a message and show them we are strong.

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Member of Sons of Liberty 7: Remember the ships in the harbor that we blocked from unloading tea? If the ships won't go back, let's dump the tea into the Boston Harbor!

Paul Revere: Yes! That will show Parliament what we think about paying a tax for the right to drink tea. Think how much money Great Britain will lose if the contents of more than 300 chests of tea sink to the bottom of the bay.

Member of Sons of Liberty 8: Agreed. It's time to do something! No more taxation without representation!

Continued chanting by all members of Sons of Liberty: No taxation without representation!