

Lesson 4.2

THE REVOLUTION IN FALMOUTH: POINTS OF VIEW

Objective: Students will analyze Reverend Thomas Smith's account of the burning of Falmouth for information about Smith's economic class and political beliefs.

Materials:

- **Doc 4.2:** Excerpt from the Journal of the Rev. Thomas Smith

Timing: Two class periods.

Background Reading: Chapter Four, Section One

Procedure:

1. Make sure students are familiar with the events in Chapter Four, Section One of textbook, especially the causes of the Revolution and the burning of Falmouth.
2. Discuss the community of Falmouth at the outset of the Revolution: a commercial town with a fair amount of wealth, dependent on trade with Boston for its livelihood, one of the largest towns in Maine, a politically moderate atmosphere. Discuss the role of a pastor in a Revolution-era town: a leader of the people, someone all kinds of people turn to for counsel, moral uplift, and direction. Smith was a congregational minister, educated at Harvard, part of the upper class establishment in Falmouth. What would students anticipate his point of view about the Revolution might be? Loyalist? Patriot? Somewhere in between?
3. Read the excerpt together, having students look up any unknown words. Stop as frequently as you need to in order to clarify sentences or information. Ask students questions like the following:
 - What kinds of words does Smith use to describe the war? Why?
 - Why might he consider Captain Coulson "troublesome"? (Refer to the textbook for more information)
 - Why does he call the outbreak of the Revolution a "civil war"?
 - Why do you imagine the Bostonians might have "delivered up their arms" to the Selectmen? Who might the Selectmen be?
 - Who do you think the Gorhamites are? Why would they have "rifled" Coulson's house?
 - Why do you think people might be sending their principal goods into the country?
 - Why are the Falmouth residents and Smith worried about a famine? What might be making food scarce?
 - How would you describe Rev. Smith's feelings about the war? Is he excited? Scared? Confident? Why?
 - What clues does Smith give you about his political point of view? Is he a loyalist or a patriot? Or is he somewhere in between? Why?

- Would you call him a moderate or a radical? (Define these terms for students.) Why?
- How might these journal entries differ if they were written by Samuel Thompson? By Thomas Coulson? By a dock-worker or a fisherman?

4. Have students pick one of the characters mentioned above: Samuel Thompson--patriot, or Thomas Coulson--loyalist, or a character of either political persuasion that they imagine living in Falmouth, such as a dock-worker, fisherman, homemaker, etc. Students will write a journal entry from that character's point of view, making sure their opinions about the war, their economic status, and their place in the town of Falmouth are clearly described. Allow them to finish and polish their entries at home.

5. Next day: Have several students read their entries out loud to the class. Discuss accuracy and language choice. What is the writer's point of view?

Evaluation:

Grade students based on effort, clarity, and accuracy in the journal entry they complete.

Follow-up Activities:

- Have students write and stage skits dramatizing different political points of view during the Revolutionary War: loyalist, patriot, and the varying shades in between.
- Have students research the life and philosophy of a famous Revolutionary War figure (i.e. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin). Have them present their research in character--dressed in Revolutionary costume, using appropriate language.

Alignment with Learning Results:

Grade Level: **MIDDLE GRADES**

Content Area: **HISTORY**

Standard: **HISTORICAL INQUIRY, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION.**

Students will learn to evaluate resource material such as documents, artifacts, maps, artworks, and literature, and to make judgments about the perspectives of the authors and their credibility when interpreting current historical events.

Performance Indicator: Explain why historical accounts of the same event sometimes differ and relate this explanation to the evidence presented by the author or the point of view of the author, and identify ethnic or cultural [or political] perspectives missing from an historical account and describe these points of view.

EXCERPT FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE REV. THOMAS SMITH

1775

January 2. There is a great scarcity of corn in this part of the country.

February 3. We have the King's speech to the new Parliament, and the answer of both Houses. --7. People are much joyed by the debates of Parliament, which they think begin to look in our favor. . . .

April 6. We have been flushed for some days with news from home¹, that the merchants and manufacturers and others were rising in our favor, and that Parliament was likely to repeal all the acts; but have now news that sinks us entirely, that Parliament and administration are violently resolute with 14 frigates, and 4 more new regiments, [all coming] by force to oblige us to a compliance with the laws.

12. Capt. Coulson² is very troublesome.

18. Gen. Gage sent 900 men by night to Concord, to destroy our magazine there, which were driven back, though reinforced with 1100 more.--19. To day our people in many hundreds are collecting from all the near towns. The people are every where in the utmost consternation and distress.--20. The country is all in alarm every where, sending soldiers to Boston. A civil war is now commenced.

21. Our company of soldiers set out for Boston.

25. We sent away to Windham our principal things. Our people are many of them doing the same.--28. We had about 40 men killed in the action of Wednesday the 19th. . . .

29. A small man of war, the *Canso*³, Capt. Mowat, has been here some time, Capt. Coulson and his ship, which makes the people all in a toss.--30. We are continually disquieted, apprehensive that we and the whole country are inevitably and entirely ruined. We hear that Gen. Carlton, of Canada, is coming upon us with an army, and that 40 or 50 Indians are certainly discovered upon the back of Royalstown, now Durham. This was soon quieted.

May 1. We hear the Bostonians have delivered up their arms to the Selectmen.--2. We have a great army of twenty thousand or more of our Provincials at Cambridge and Roxbury, preparing to attack General Gage, with the King's troops in Boston, while the people there are in the utmost perplexity and confusion.--6. Boston is closely shut up, so that there is no going out or coming in. On Saturday and Monday last, about 800 or 900 were permitted to go out. . . .

10. Yesterday one Col. Thompson⁴ came here with a company of men from Brunswick, to take the man of war here and Coulson's ship, and Capt. Mowat his.

11. Doctor ----- and Parson Wiswell walking on the Neck, were taken by them and made prisoners, which made a vast tumult. The Gorhamites, with some from Windham,

¹Reverend Smith's family was from Boston

²Capt. Coulson is Thomas Coulson, a loyalist merchant who traded lumber with Britain.

³Canso: the *Canceaux*, a British ship commanded by Capt. Mowatt

⁴Colonel Thompson: Samuel Thompson, a Brunswick militia leader

and Capt. Phinney, called Colonel, Hart, Williams and Steward, joined them in the night, and having rifled Coulson's house of all in it, they went off Friday.

13. The town has been in great distress, many women and children have moved out, and the most have sent their principal goods into the country. A dreadful day! . . .

June 26. People are apprehensive of a famine, there being a scarcity of corn and flour.
. . .

July 10. Four vessels came in, three from the West Indies and one from Maryland, with 1500 bushels of corn, and one before with as much more.--13. Crosby came here in a brig with 3500 bushels of corn and ----- barrels of flour, so that we are plentifully relieved from all fears of a famine. Blessed be God. . . .

October 15. Sunday. Mr. Deane [Rev. Samuel Deane, Smith's co-pastor] being unwell, I preached all day, and administered both sacraments.

16. A fleet of five or six vessels of war anchored at the Island with Mowat, a cat bomb ship, two cutter schooners and a small bomb sloop.

17. They came up before the town, P.M.; sent word that in two hours they should fire upon the town, which was respited.

18. At nine A.M. they began and continued until dark, with their mortars and cannon, when with marines landing, they burnt all the lower part of the town and up as far as Mr. Bradbury's, excepting Mrs. Ross' two houses, and son Thomas' shop and stores, my house being included. I rode to Windham just before the firing began, as did Mrs. Smith yesterday. A solemn time!

From the *Journals of the Rev. Thomas Smith, and the Rev. Samuel Deane, Pastors of the First Church in Portland.* by William Willis. Portland: Joseph S. Bailey. 1849.