once proceedings were taken to nullify the appointment. At that time Wilmington had less than 500 white inhabitants, but her citizens were very patriotic and very resolute.

Rocky Point, fifteen miles to the northward, had been the residence of Maurice Moore, Speaker Moseley, Speaker Swann, Speaker Ashe, Alexander Lillington, John Swann, George Moore, John Porter, Colonel Jones, Colonel Merrick, and other gentlemen of influence. It was the center from which had radiated the influences that directed popular movements. Nearer to Onslow, Duplin, and Bladen than Wilmington was, and the residence of the speaker and other active leaders, it was doubtless there that plans were considered, and proceedings agreed upon that involved the united action of all the neighboring counties. At Wilmington and in its vicinity were Harnett, DeRosset, Toomer, Walker, Clayton, Gregg, Purviance, Eustace, Maclaine, and DuBois, while near by were Howe, Smith, Davis, Grange, Ancrum, and a score of others of the loftiest patriotism. All were in full accord with the speaker of the Assembly; all were nerved by the same spirit; all resolved to carry resistance, if need be, to the point of blood and death.

We fortunately have a contemporaneous record of some of their proceedings. The *North Carolina Gazette,* published at Wilmington, in its issue of November 20, 1765, says:

> On Saturday, the 19th of last month, about 7 o'clock in the evening, near five hundred people assembled together in this town and exhibited the effigy of a certain honorable gentleman; and after letting it hang by the neck for some time, near the courthouse they made a large bonfire with a number of tar barrels, etc., and committed it to the flames. The reason assigned for the people's dislike to that gentleman was from being informed of his having several times expressed himself much in favor of the stamp duty. After the effigy was consumed, they went to every house in town and brought all the gentlemen to the bonfire, and insisted on their drinking "Liberty, Property, and No Stamp Duty," and "Confusion to Lord Bute and All His Adherents," giving three huzzahs at the conclusion of each toast. They continued together until 12 of the clock, and then dispersed without doing any mischief.

Doubtless it was a very orderly crowd, since the editor says so. A very orderly, harmless, inoffensive gathering; patriotic, and given to hurrahing; but we are assured that they dispersed without any mischief.

And continues the same paper:

> On Thursday, the 31st of the same month, in the evening, a great number of people assembled again, and produced an effigy of Liberty, which they put in a coffin and marched in solemn procession with it to the churchyard, a drum in mourning beating before them, and the town bell, muffled, ringing a doleful knell at the same time; but before they committed the body to the ground, they thought it advisable to feel its pulse, and, finding some remains of life, they returned back to a bonfire ready prepared, placed the effigy before it in a large two-armed chair, and concluded the evening with great rejoicings on finding that Liberty had still an existence in the colonies.
>
> Not the least injury was offered to any person.

The editor of that paper, Mr. Stewart, was apparently anxious to let his readers know that the people engaged in these proceedings were the very soul of order and the essence of moderation. So far they had done no mischief and offered no injury to any one. But still they had teeth, and they could show them. The next item reads:

> Saturday, the 16th of this instant, that is November: William Houston, Esq., distributor of stamps for this province, came to this town; upon which three or four hundred people immediately gathered together, with drums beating and colors flying, and repaired to the house the said stamp master put up at, and insisted upon knowing "Whether he intended to execute his said office or not." He told them, "He should be very sorry to execute any office disagreeable to the people of this province." [1]But they, not content with such declaration, carried him into the courthouse, where he signed a resignation satisfactory to the whole. They then placed the stamp master in an armchair, carried him around the courthouse, giving at every corner three loud huzzahs, and finally set him down at the door of his lodging, formed a circle around him, and gave three cheers. They then escorted him into the house, where were prepared the best liquors, and treated him very genteelly. In the evening a large bonfire was made and no person appeared on the streets without having "Liberty" in large letters on his hat. They had a table near the bonfire well furnished with several sorts of liquors, where they drank, in great form, all the favorite American toasts, giving three cheers at the conclusion of each.

"The whole was conducted," says the editor, "with great decorum, and not the least insult offered to any person."

This enforced resignation of the stamp master was done under

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[1]It is not to be inferred from Dr. Houston's action in this matter, in 1765, that he was in favor of taxation of the colonies by Great Britain. Benjamin Franklin, then the agent of several of the colonies in London, assumed, as a matter of course, that the Stamp Act would be operative, and he recommended some of his friends to accept the office of stamp master. Dr. Houston did not apply for the appointment, and when the people arrayed themselves against it, he did not oppose them. Also, when, ten years later, the Revolution began, he was in full sympathy with other patriots in North Carolina and was a friend of independence and separation.