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Patrick Henry

Patrick Henry, a key figure in the American revolution, was born on May 29, 1736, in Virginia. Known for his powerful and persuasive oratory skills, Henry played a significant role in the American colonies to seek independence from British rule (Davidson, et al 2021). Thomas Kidd argues in *Patrick Henry: First Among Patriots*, that Henry created his legacy for freedom declaring “ liberty or death” during his famous speech before colonists in 1775 (qtd. in Schlereth, 2012 P 893). Henry opposed the constitution because he feared government abuse of power over the citizens. He favored rights for the people and desired a smaller government (Ragosta, John 2018).

Patrick Henry’s father was a Scottish immigrant who worked as a farmer and planter, while his mother, Sarah Winston Syme Henry, came from a wealthy Virginia family. Patrick had 10 siblings, including his brothers John and William, and his sisters Elizabeth and Annie. In 1754, Henry married Sarah Shelton, and they had six children together. Sarah was a devoted wife and a supportive partner to Henry. Sarah Henry died by suicide after a lengthy illness in 1775. He married Dorothea Dandridge in 1777, and they had 11 children together. Dorothea was a cousin of Martha Washington. Martha was married to George Washington. Dorothea came from a very prominent family. Henry had 17 children in total (Schlereth, 2012).

Henry’s early career was marked by a commitment to defending the rights of the colonists against British oppression. He served in the Virginia house of burgesses and criticized the Stamp Act (Davidson, et al., 2021). His speeches and resolutions inspired many colonies to join the cause of independence, making him a pivotal figure in the early days of the American Revolution. He often used biblical and religious references in his speeches that had a powerful influence on the delegates and colonists. His words evoked great emotion and had a powerful persuasion upon the citizens (Schlereth, 2012).

Moreover, even though an anti-federalist initially, Henry continued to push against Tyranny and eventually served as the governor of Virginia and the first continental Congress. He would not support the constitution until a bill of rights was written for the citizens (Schlereth, 2012). He articulated that self-governance and individual liberty would protect the people. Through his tenations goals and perseverance, Henry eventually won over his enemies who called him a traitor (Ragosta, 2018). He established a name and reputation as a winning attorney and orator above all others (Davidson, et al., 2024). Ragosta noted that Henry’s stamp act speech inspired even the likes of quiet Thomas Jefferson and spurred civil disorder. That was the final straw that shattered the connection between Americans and the British (286). Finally, Americans were free (Schlereth, 2012).

Ultimately, Patrick Henry would be known by some as a blazing traitor, ripping through time and country unapologetically, bringing about change (Ragosta, 2018). He played a key role in shaping the newly independent United States. He was the central figure in writing Virginia’s new constitution. Its’ Declaration of Rights became the forerunner for the Federal Bill of Rights, leading Congress to bodley propose independence (Schlereth, 2012). He was the original patriot of his time leading the way to freedom. Through the art of powerful persuasion, Patrick Henry became the voice of liberty and a founding father of America (Ragosta, 2018).

Works Cited

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