

Aim: How democratic was Colonial America?


"All the News that's News to the New World"

The Colonial Chronicle

Today's Weather: Clouds, highest of 52° tomorrow, 55° likely in the morning

***** Thursday, April 5, 1735 *****

Town Votes To Build Bridge



Bridge to the 19th Century?

Amherst, Mass. Mar. 20 - At a town meeting here today, the property holding men of Amherst voted on a proposal to build a bridge over the Connecticut River. The proposal passed by a vote of 60 to 15. Supporters of the

Mass. Assembly Debates Voting Rights Bill

Boston, Mar. 25 - Debate began in the Massachusetts assembly today over a bill that would end religious qualifications for voting.


As it stands now, only members of approved protestant congregations may vote in assembly elections. The proposed legislation would remove this requirement and allow all otherwise eligible Christians to vote in assembly elections.

Zenger Acquitted

Jury rules against New York Governor

New York, Apr. 4 - A jury of 12 men found John Peter Zenger, publisher of the New York Weekly Journal, not guilty of libel today.

Three weeks ago, Zenger published an article critical of John Cosby, the royal governor of New York. In the article, Zenger asserted that the governor was guilty of corruption. Because the jury found the accusations to be truthful, they ruled in favor of Zenger, asserting that the press should have the right to print information so long as it is true.



Publisher, John Peter Zenger

Legislature

Do Now: What words or ideas come to mind when you hear the word “democracy”?

**Popular Sovereignty–
Power to govern comes
from the people**

Individual Rights–

**Constitutionalism–
Limited government**

Growth of Democracy in Colonial America

- **Mayflower Compact** (1620) – Plymouth settlers agreed to create their own gov't (government under consent of governed)
- **Representative Government** - Elected Assemblies (Virginia House of Burgesses – first one)
- **Written Constitutions** – Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (first one)
- **Direct Democracy**-New England Town Meeting
- **Freedom of the Press** - Zenger Trial (Trial by Jury)
- **Growing Religious Toleration** by mid 1700s – Rhode Island, religious diversity

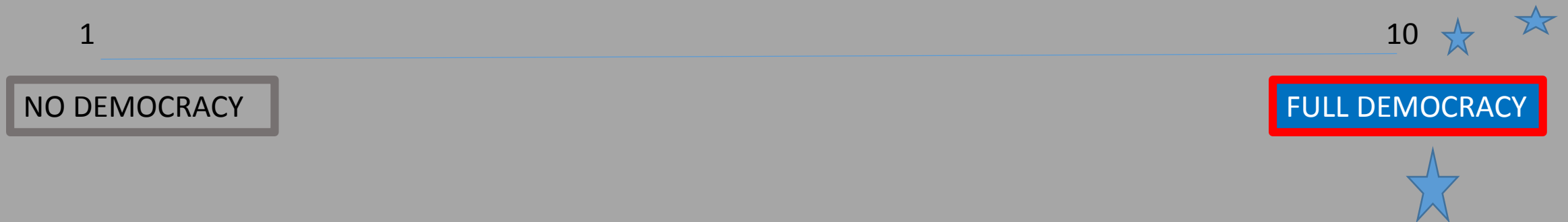
UNDEMOCRATIC FEATURES OF COLONIAL AMERICA

- Voting Restrictions
 - Women denied the vote (and rights)
 - Property qualifications to vote
 - Religious qualifications to vote (repealed 1776)
- Slavery

- Who had the rights?
- Who didn't have the rights?

Conclusion:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how democratic was colonial America.



- Should we judge the past based on today's values (today's standards vs. 18th century standards)