

the sea level has risen. We measure it. It is simple. It is the same thing at the Naval War College. We measure it. It is simple. We don't need complex computer models to go to Narragansett Bay and see it is nearly four degrees warmer mean water temperature and all the changes that happen as a result. We use a thermometer. It is not complicated. And the acidification of the oceans that is affecting the coral reefs and so many other creatures—it wiped out the northwest oyster spat. People grow oysters in the Pacific Northwest, and the sea water that came in was so acidic, it dissolved the shells of the baby oysters and wiped out a huge percentage of their crop. That we measure with the same kind of litmus tests kids do with their aquariums. It is not complicated. But they always want to talk about where it can be confusing. They never want to confront the problem.

We are going to find ways to continue to insist on confronting this problem. They may not be here tonight, but as the old saying goes, you can run, but you can't hide. There are too many of my colleagues who have been helpful and good on this issue before—as I said, before Citizens United. If we look at the Republican Senate activity on climate change before Citizens United and after, it is like looking at a heart attack. We see steady activity until Citizens United, and then it is a flat line. Citizens United, dark money, polluter money has done as much damage polluting our democracy as they have done polluting our planet. But we are going to continue to do something about it, and the American public not only is with us, they are going to insist on it.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GASPEE DAYS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am so glad to have you here because a recurring tradition on the Senate floor is about to take place, and it is always particularly good for a Senator from Rhode Island to have a Senator from Massachusetts presiding while I talk about this.

Today I am here to recognize and celebrate one of the earliest acts of defiance against the British Crown in our great American struggle for independence. Most Americans remember the Boston Tea Party as one of the major events building up to the American Revolution. We learned the story of spirited Bostonians—and when I say “spirited,” I mean that in several senses; I gather that spirits had been served to those Bostonians before they embarked on this adventure—clamoring onto the decks of the East India

Company's ships and dumping bales of tea into Boston Harbor as a protest of British “taxation without representation,” which was a fine and worthy stunt, and I am certainly not here to defend taxation without representation.

However, there is a milestone on the path to revolution that is frequently overlooked, and it is the story of 60 brave Rhode Islanders who challenged British rule more than a year before that Tea Party in Boston, and they did a little bit more than throw tea bags overboard. So every year I honor those little known Rhode Island heroes who risked their lives in defiance of oppression 1 dark night more than 240 years ago.

In the years before the Revolutionary War, as tensions with the American Colonies grew, King George III stationed revenue cutters, armed customs patrol vessels, along the American coast. They were there to prevent smuggling, to enforce the payment of taxes, and to impose the authority of the Crown.

One of the most notorious of these ships was the HMS Gaspee. Its captain, Lieutenant William Duddingston, was known for destroying fishing vessels, seizing cargo, and flagging down ships only to harass, humiliate, and interrogate the colonials.

Outraged by this egregious abuse of power, the merchants and shipmasters of Rhode Island flooded civil and military officials with complaints about the Gaspee, exhausting every diplomatic and legal means to stir the British Crown to regulate Duddingston's conduct.

Not only did British officials ignore the Rhode Islanders' concerns; they responded with open hostility. The commander of the local British fleet, ADM John Montagu, warned that anyone who dared attempt acts of resistance or retaliation against the Gaspee would be taken into custody and hanged as a pirate, which brings us to June 9, 1772, 242 years ago.

Rhode Island ship captain Benjamin Lindsey was en route to Providence from Newport, in his ship the Hannah, when he was accosted and ordered to yield for inspection by the Gaspee. Captain Lindsey ignored the Gaspee's command and raced away up Narragansett Bay—despite warning shots fired by the Gaspee. As the Gaspee gave chase, Captain Lindsey knew a little something about Narragansett Bay and he knew a little something about the Hannah. He knew that she was lighter and drew less water than the Gaspee. So he sped north toward Pawtuxet Cove, toward the shallow waters off Namquid Point. His Hannah shot over the shallows there, but the heavier Gaspee grounded and stuck firm. The British ship and her crew were caught stranded in a falling tide, and it would be many hours before a rising tide could free the hulking Gaspee.

Presented with that irresistible opportunity, Captain Lindsey continued

on his course to Providence and there enlisted the help of John Brown, a respected merchant from one of the most prominent Providence families. The two men rallied a group of Rhode Island patriots at Sabin's Tavern, in what is now the east side of Providence. So perhaps something the Bostonians at the Tea Party and the Rhode Islanders at the Gaspee had in common was spirits. Together, the group resolved to put an end to the Gaspee's threat to Rhode Island waters.

That night, the men, led by Captain Lindsey and Abraham Whipple—later to become a commander in the Revolutionary navy—embarked in eight longboats quietly down Narragansett Bay. They encircled the Gaspee, and they called on Lieutenant Duddingston to surrender his ship. Duddingston refused and ordered his men to fire upon anyone who tried to board.

Undeterred, the Rhode Islanders forced their way onto the Gaspee's deck—in a hail of oaths and sword clashes and musketfire—and Lieutenant Duddingston fell with a musket ball in the midst of the struggle. Right there in the waters of Warwick, RI, the very first blood in the conflict that was to become the American Revolution was drawn.

As the patriots commandeered the ship, Brown ordered one of his Rhode Islanders, a physician named John Mawney, to head to the ship's captain's cabin and tend to Duddingston's wound—a humane gesture in their moment of victory to help a man who had threatened to open fire on them only moments before.

Brown and Whipple took the captive English crew back to shore and then returned to the Gaspee to rid Narragansett Bay of her despised presence once and for all. They set her afire. The blaze spread through the ship, and ultimately to the ship's powder magazine, which went off with an explosion like fireworks, the blast echoing through the night across the bay, the flash lighting the sea up like daylight, and fragments of the ship splashing down into the water all around.

The site of this audacious act is now named Gaspee Point in honor of these brave Rhode Islanders. So I come again here to share this story and to commemorate this night so many years ago—June 9, 1772—and the names of Benjamin Lindsey, John Brown, and Abraham Whipple, and those men not known to history who fought beside them that night.

The Gaspee Affair, as it was called, generated furor in the British Government, which appointed a royal commission of inquiry based in Newport to gather evidence for indictment. The indicted men were then to be sent to England for trial.

Well, not so fast. Rhode Island's colonial charter guaranteed its citizens the right to a trial in the vicinity in which the crime was alleged to have occurred. And beyond that, these Rhode Islanders presumed they were entitled to the

same rights as Englishmen in their mother country. Some went so far to say that this proposal to try them overseas violated ancient rights outlined in the Magna Carta.

This breach of the rights that colonists believed were enshrined in the British Constitution created continent-wide uproar. Young members of Virginia's House of Burgesses, such as Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry, yearning to protest, pushed the body to create a committee of correspondence to gather information from around the Colonies concerning the British Parliament's actions, while also urging other Colonies to do the same. By December 1773, 11 Colonies had set up committees of correspondence. These committees played a vital role in enflaming discontent. They were the first permanent modes of communication among the Thirteen Colonies and allowed abuses by Parliament to be quickly known throughout the Colonies.

John Allen, a little-known visiting minister in the Second Baptist Church in Boston, gave a sermon on the Gaspee Affair. It went the revolutionary equivalent of viral—widely published. In this sermon, Allen rejected the proposition that Parliament had a right to tax and enforce laws like the ones implicated in the Gaspee Affair on Americans without the consent of their colonial representatives—a position that would come to define colonial discontent and reverberates to this day through the slogan “no taxation without representation.”

Allen concluded his sermon with the provoking and revolutionary question whether the British King had a right to rule over America in the first place. Reverend Allen asserted there was no parliamentary right to reign as in Britain, nor a right by conquest, as the American colonists had only signed compacts with the Crown for protection of their religious and civil rights. Allen espoused Enlightenment ideals of social compacts and political rights, stating that if the British Government enacted laws that were oppressive to the rights of American colonists, as it had with the creation of a commission of inquiry intending to send the Gaspee raiders to England for trial, then it lost its right to rule over them.

The sermon was published eight separate times in three different colonial cities and spread widely through the Colonies. Through that, the Gaspee Affair sparked in the minds of Americans ideas about parliamentary abuses and the King's right to rule that would seed a spirit of discontent and eventually boil over into revolution. The sermon, along with fiery editorials published in the wake of the affair, inspired colonial leaders to speak openly about the British Government's abuses, instigating conflict that would culminate in the battles of Lexington and Concord.

The Gaspee Affair galvanized colonial discontent and led to greater unity among the Thirteen Colonies. After

Rhode Islanders defiantly set fire to the Gaspee, the American Colonies came together for a common cause for the first time in their history, a formative step in the birth of our new Nation.

I know these events, and the patriots whose efforts allowed for their success, are not forgotten in my home State. Over the years, I have enjoyed marching in the annual Gaspee Days Parade through Warwick, RI, as every year we recall the courage and zeal of these men who fired the first shots that drew the first blood in that great contest for the freedoms we enjoy today.

They set a precedent for future patriots to follow, including those in Boston who more than 1 year later would have their tea party. But do not forget, as my home State prepares once again to celebrate the anniversary of the Gaspee incident, Massachusetts colonists threw tea bags off the deck of their British ship. We blew ours up and shot its captain more than 1 year earlier. We are little in Rhode Island, but as Lieutenant Duddingston discovered, we pack a punch.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NEVADA'S MISS USA—NIA SANCHEZ

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have to be honest. Last night I was flipping around—the NBA, the game of the week, the Red Sox playing Detroit, and the Tony awards. But also, Miss USA was going on. I have to acknowledge, I watched a little bit but not a lot of each. But I watched them all. I am disappointed that I caved in and watched the final of the Miss USA contest, because Miss Nevada won, and I would have liked to have seen that. I placed a call to her, and I will talk to her as soon as she gets out of the clouds, where I am sure she is now. But I congratulate the newly crowned Miss USA, Nevada's own Nia Sanchez.

What a story she has. This woman was homeless and spent a good part of her young days in a shelter. She is an exceptional Nevanadan. She is gifted beyond her physical beauty. She holds a fourth-degree black belt in tae kwon do and is a certified instructor in the martial arts. When she is not practicing tae kwon do in her own studio, she is fighting on behalf of abused women. She volunteers at Shade Tree, a shelter for abused women. We are proud of Shade Tree.

So I, along with all Nevadans, congratulate Miss USA Nia Sanchez on her well-deserved victory. I wish her the

very best as she pursues the crown of Miss Universe and undertakes her duties as a global ambassador.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

BISHOP MCGUINNESS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIP

• Mr. BURR. Madam President, I wish to congratulate the Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School boys tennis team for securing the North Carolina High School Athletic Association's 1A dual tennis championship. The team proved that hard work pays off by finishing the season 15 to 1 in dual matches.

With the expertise and positive influence of head coach Bob Weckworth and associate head coach Benny Jones, these young men achieved a well-deserved victory.

Winning a State championship is a testament to hard work and dedication. They displayed pride and sportsmanship throughout the season.

I join the students, teachers, friends and family of Bishop McGuinness Catholic High in congratulating Ben Jandzinski, Andrew Balogh, Alek Bissell, Jonathan Ingram, Zack Jones, Max Kreber, Sam McLaughry, Jesse Russell, Will Shannon, John Valle, Lance Dittrich, Adam Chinnasami, Jared Russell, Justin Russell and Dickson Tam on their hard-earned championship.●

REMEMBERING DR. VINCENT HARDING

• Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Madam President, I wish to commemorate the life of Dr. Vincent Harding, a prominent civil rights leader, beloved professor and proud Coloradan, who passed away on May 19, 2014. Although Dr. Harding is no longer with us, his presence lives on through the lasting influence of his life's work. Thanks to Dr. Harding and the countless others who took part in the civil rights movement, we have made great strides in the pursuit of equality for all through landmark legislation and advocacy. His passing also reminds us of the ongoing struggle for equal rights in America and moves us to continue this fight in his honor.

A devout believer in the power of social activism, Dr. Harding moved from Harlem, NY to Georgia in the early 1960s to join the American civil rights movement. He traveled the South to assist with anti-segregation campaigns, and he and his wife, Rosemarie Freeney Harding, founded the Menonite House, an interracial service center and gathering place for individuals active in the movement. Through this work, Dr. Harding met friend and co-activist, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for whom he became an aide and speechwriter. Following Dr. King's death, Dr. Harding went on to serve as the first director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center.