

HISTORICAL HEROES:

James Otis

JAMES OTIS was one of the unsung heroes of the American Revolution. A Harvard graduate, he became a lawyer in Boston, where he argued against the Writs of Assistance, a law that would allow the British to enter homes and take the colonists' property for any reason. Though he worked for the government at the time, he resigned from his position and represented the people in a 1761 trial that judged the law's fairness. He did not win, but Otis soon became known as a talented public speaker, and he gave many speeches that convinced citizens to unite and take action against the British and their unjust laws. He went on to publish many political writings that helped inspire the actions that lead to the American Revolution.



James Otis,
1725-1783



Faneuil Hall in Boston, where
Otis delivered speeches.

Questions

1. Unscramble the letters to complete the sentences.

a. James Otis shouted the famous phrase,
OTAANTXI _____ TAXATION _____ without
representation is tyranny!”

b. James Otis is buried alongside fellow patriots
like John Hancock and Paul EVERER
_____ REVERE _____ in Boston's Granary
Burying Ground.

2. If your government tried to pass a law that you
did not agree with, would you take action against it?
If so, what would you do?

Student responses will vary.
