

THE

NATIONAL

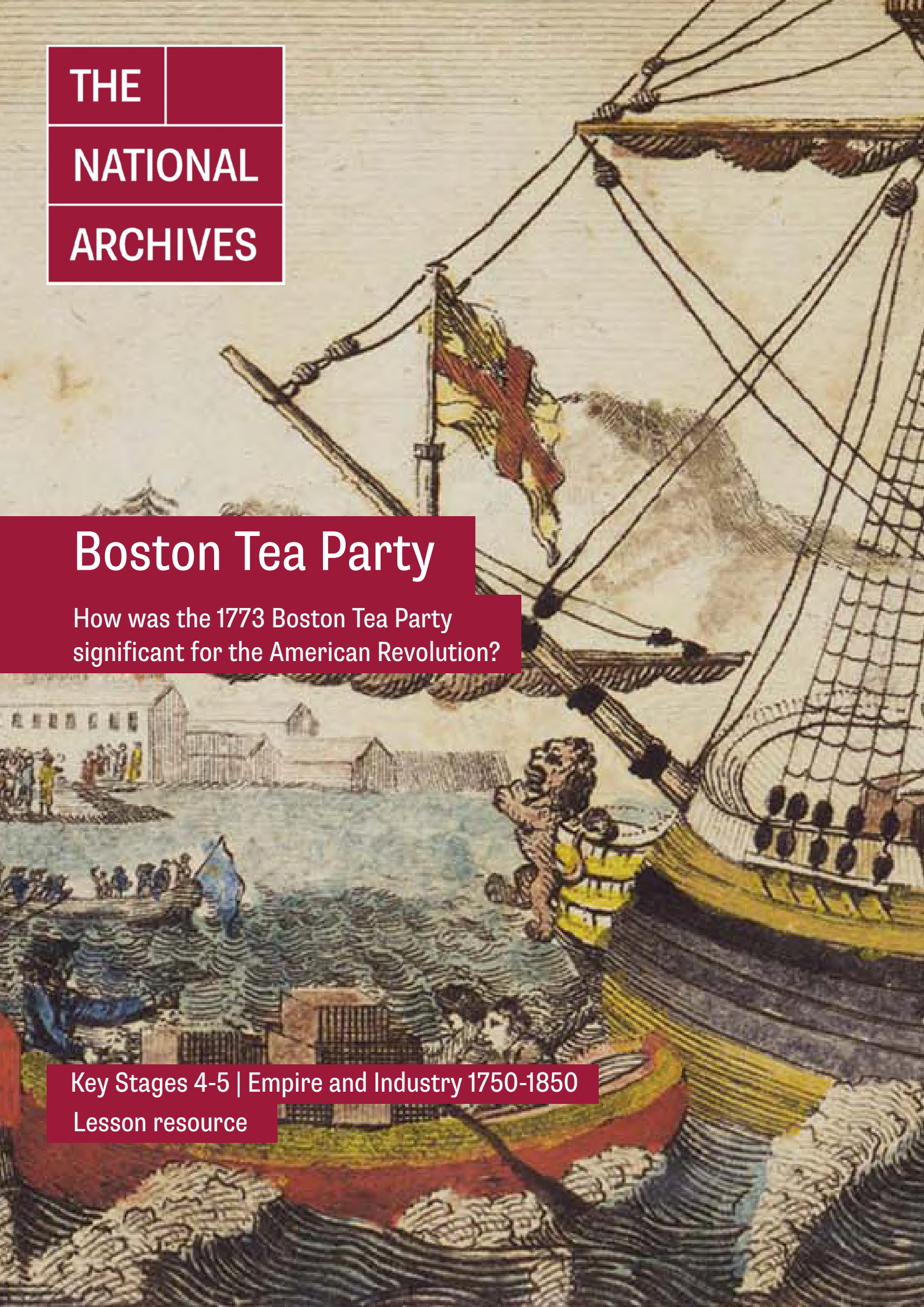
ARCHIVES

Boston Tea Party

How was the 1773 Boston Tea Party significant for the American Revolution?

Key Stages 4-5 | Empire and Industry 1750-1850

Lesson resource



Introduction

The Boston Tea party marked a critical moment in the history of the American Revolution as an act of colonial defiance against British rule. In Boston harbour, on 16 December 1773, American colonists, disguised as Mohawk Indians, boarded British ships and threw 340 chests of tea owned by the East India Company into the water. It was a protest about the tax on tea, levied without representation in the British Parliament and against the monopoly of the East India Company.

The earlier Townshend Acts placed duties on a range of imports to the colonies. These had been repealed; however, the tax on tea remained. A Tea Act was passed in the spring of 1773 to help the East India Company, which faced financial difficulties, and enabled its control of the trade in tea. To further assert its authority over the colonies, and in response to the Boston Tea Party, the British Parliament passed several acts known as the Coercive Acts. To the colonists, these became known as the Intolerable Acts and paved the way for further resistance and the American Revolution.

Use the documents in this lesson to explore context for the Boston Tea Party and see what some of the documents from the British side reveal about this event and beyond.

Suitable for:

KS 4 - 5

Time period:

Empire and Industry
1750-1850

Connections to the Curriculum:

Key Stage 4:

Edexcel GCSE History:

- British America: Empire & Revolution 1713-83.

Key Stage 5:

AQA GCE History:

- The origins of the American Revolution, 1760–1776
- Enforcing the Colonial Relationship, 1763–1774
- Ending the Colonial Relationship, 1774–1776

Edexcel GCE History:

- Britain: losing and gaining an empire, 1763–1914: The loss of the American colonies, 1770–83
- OCR GCE History:
- The American Revolution 1740–1796: Causes of the American Revolution.

Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Contents	Page 3
Teachers' notes	Page 4
Background	Page 7
External links	Page 9
Tasks	Page 10
Source 1	Page 16
Source 2a	Page 18
Source 2b	Page 19
Source 3	Page 21
Source 4	Page 23
Source 5a	Page 25
Source 5b	Page 27
Source 5c	Page 29
Source 5d	Page 31
Source 6	Page 33
Source 7	Page 35
Source 8	Page 37
Source 9	Page 39
Source 10	Page 42

Teachers' notes

This lesson examines documents held at The National Archives that relate to the Boston Tea Party. The aim is to assess their importance for the American Revolution. What do they reveal about Britain's relationship with the American colonists? These sources, by nature of the collection, largely present the British perspective on the American colonies, which is important for students to keep in mind.

Starter activity

Teachers discuss, using the questions below, the lesson illustration image of the Boston Tea Party.

Explain that the engraving comes from a 'The History of North America' by Reverend W. D. Cooper, published in London: E. Newberry in 1789. The book contained 'a review of the customs and manners of the original inhabitants: the First Settlement of the British Colonies, and their Rise and progress, from the Earliest Period to the time of their becoming United, Free and Independent States'. This image comes from the book held in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division of Library of Congress, U.S.A.

- What can you see in the image?
- What does the caption say? How does it contribute to our understanding of the image?
- How does the image depict the Boston Tea Party?
- Who do think was the audience for Cooper's book?
- How useful is this image for understanding the significance of the Boston Tea Party?
- After examining all the sources in this lesson, how would you re-evaluate this source as evidence for the Boston Tea Party?

In this lesson, students explore the relationship between Britain and her American colonies through several items from The National Archives' collections, including Parliamentary rolls from Chancery, the Colonial Office, and the War Office. The first source, however, is not from The National Archives. It is an original map showing the British colonies and provinces in America by Thomas Kitchin, 'Hydrographer to his Majesty' c.1770. Students are prompted to locate the 13 colonies and places mentioned in the sources that follow. It is important to discuss the meaning of the term 'British Dominions' used on the map and to consider the geographical difficulties of government from Britain.

Source 2 provides an image of the Tea Act itself and a short extract from it. The act was passed in the British parliament in May 1773 to help the East India Company, which faced financial difficulties due to unsold tea. It gave the company a monopoly on the tea trade with the American colonies. Students can see that the act is a long parchment roll stitched together. We see that it has been carefully weighted down to make sure it is not damaged when examined and is stored in a document box. The prompt questions help students consider why it was the catalyst for the Boston Tea Party and assess its impact.

Source 3 is probably the earliest British account of the Boston Tea Party, from 17 December 1773. This letter was written by Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Leslie of the 64th Regiment of Foot to Lord

Teachers' notes

Viscount Barrington the Secretary at War. Leslie was writing from his barracks at Castle William on an island in Boston Harbour on the day after the Boston Tea Party. It is interesting that a soldier like himself wrote directly to address the Secretary of State. This provides the opportunity to discuss the intimate and personal qualities of the letter form. It may lead onto a discussion of the value of letters as historical sources that provide insights into the daily lived experience of individuals.

Source 4 provides an extract from the 'Massachusetts and Boston Weekly' newspaper, 23 December 1773. Students can compare this to the earlier British account. It is also an opportunity to discuss why this appears in in The National Archives' Colonial Office collections.

Source 5 is divided into two parts. The first part consists of extracts from a document requesting legal advice sent to the Attorney General from the Earl of Dartmouth, the Secretary of State for the Colonies in February 1774. The document includes a narrative of events and provides questions concerning the punishment of those involved in the Boston Tea Party. In the second part, students examine extracts from the Attorney General's responses that say that those involved in the Boston Tea Party had committed treason. Source 6 is the invoice, dated February 1774, from the East India Company for the destroyed tea from the Boston Tea Party. Students can see the different types of tea that were exported and use The National Archives currency converter to work out its value today.

In Source 7, students look at the Boston Port Act, the first of the Coercive Acts. It authorised the Royal Navy blockade of Boston Harbor and closed Boston's port to commercial traffic. Exports to foreign ports or provinces were also forbidden. Students consider, amongst other questions, the tone and attitude inferred in this extract from the Act and what its impact was on the colonies.

Source 8 provides long extracts from a letter from Lord Dartmouth, British Secretary of State, to New Jersey Governor William Franklin in July 1775. It mentions Thomas Gage, commander-in-chief of all British forces in North America since 1763. The inference of the letter is that had it not been for General Gage's failed attempt at Concord, colonies separately or together possibly might have come to some plan of accommodation. Instead, almost all North America rose against British control.

Source 9 is a proclamation from George III for suppressing rebellion in 1775. In this document, King George III referred to the American colonists as traitors. The proclamation was printed and distributed by William Franklin, the Colonial Governor of New Jersey (1763–1776), a Loyalist during the American Revolutionary War. His father Benjamin Franklin, however, became one of the most important leaders of the American Revolution and a Founding Father of the United States. Again, the document is important because it allows students to explore the relationship between Britain and her colonies in the context of revolution.

The final document is the iconic Declaration of Independence, which allows students a huge opportunity for discussion and debate.

All documents are provided with transcripts with difficult terms defined in square brackets. Students can work through the questions individually or in pairs and report back to the class.

Teachers' notes

Alternatively, teachers may want to use this lesson in two parts owing to the large number of sources. We would encourage teachers to ask students to explore other original records available online from the links in this lesson.

Finally, although this lesson is aimed at Key Stages 4/5, teachers could use these documents and provide their own questions and/or create simplified transcripts to use with younger students.

Further Activities

- Discuss and debate your choice for the most useful/interesting source in this lesson for understanding Britain's relationship with the North American colonies.
- Curate your own exhibition on the causes of the American Revolution using the sources in this lesson and the external links to further documents.

Sources

[Illustration image: Wikimedia Commons. Engraving from 'The History of North America', by W. D. Cooper, London: E. Newberry, 1789, p.58, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress.]

Source 1: A map showing the British colonies and provinces in America, by Thomas Kitchin, 'Hydrographer to his Majesty' c.1770. Copyright Bridgeman Images.

Source 2: 1773 Tea Act (13 Geo III, c 44). Catalogue ref: C 65/942.

Source 3: Earliest British account of the Boston Tea Party, 17 Dec 1773. Catalogue ref: WO 40/1:.

Source 4: Copy of the 'Massachusetts and Boston Weekly', giving an American account of the Boston Tea Party, Dec 1773. Catalogue ref: CO 5/91.

Source 5: Questions and Answers put to the Attorney and Solicitor General about how to punish rebels in Boston, Feb 1774. Catalogue ref: CO 5/160.

Source 6: The invoice from the East India Company about the destroyed tea from the Boston Tea Party, Feb 1774. Catalogue ref: CO 5/247, pp 185-187.

Source 7: 1774 Boston Port Act (14 Geo III, c 19). One of the Coercive Acts. Catalogue ref: C 65/956:

Source 8: Lord Dartmouth Secretary of State to Governor William Franklin. Catalogue ref: CO 5/992, folios 127-129d.

Source 9: Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion 1775. Catalogue ref: CO 5/993, folio 7.

Source 10: Declaration of Independence 1776. Catalogue ref: EXT 9/1.

Background

On the night of 16 December 1773, 340 chests of tea were destroyed in Boston Harbour, an event that has gone down in history as the Boston Tea Party. This political and mercantile protest was one of the key events in the lead up to the American Revolutionary War and, ultimately, American independence.

Those involved in the protest were against the British tax on tea in the Americas and the monopoly of the East India Company on tea there, both expressed by the 1773 Tea Act.

Tensions regarding taxation in America had been rising since 1763, when Great Britain signed the Treaty of Paris, ending the Seven Years' War and making Britain the dominant imperial power in North America. After this date, the British Parliament sought to tax their subjects in America to recover from a costly war with France and to better defend these colonies from future invasion.

However, doing so uncovered deeply opposing views regarding the way in which the North American colonies should be taxed. Parliament believed that they had the right to levy taxes upon all subjects within King George III's dominions. British subjects living in America thought differently. They were not represented in the British Parliament, making decisions thousands of miles away about their livelihoods. They were not against paying taxes to the British Crown and believed that they should set those taxes.

Protests in America over the 1765 Stamp Act, which imposed a direct tax on almost every form of paper used in the colonies, showed that Americans would not back down over this issue. Parliament was forced to repeal the intolerable Stamp Act in March 1766. However, to ensure that they would be able to enforce laws and taxes on the colonies in future they enacted the 1766 Declaratory Act, which asserted the government's right to pass laws in the colonies 'in all cases whatsoever'.

In 1767 and 1768, Parliament enacted the Townshend Duties – named after the Chancellor of the Exchequer Charles Townshend – which proposed new taxes on all lead, glass, paint, and tea imported into the colonies. Again, Americans protested; in Boston, hundreds refused to purchase any of the taxed British imports. Following protests in Boston, George III authorised the dispatch of troops to the area to deal with this rising lawlessness. This ultimately resulted in bloodshed, when on 5 March 1770 nine British soldiers fired at a crowd of hundreds of Bostonians, resulting in the deaths of five American colonists. To ease tensions in America, all the Townshend Duties were repealed, except the one on tea. This meant that tea suddenly became a focus of protest in America. The Sons of Liberty and similar groups, initially established to protest the Stamp Act, encouraged Americans to avoid legally importing tea. This resistance led to a drop in demand for East India Company Tea. The fortunes of this British joint-stock company were closely tied to those of the British State, as they had taken out a significant loan from the Bank of England.

To save the Company, and to encourage the payment of tea duties in America, Parliament passed the 1773 Tea Act. This act allowed the East India Company to export tea directly to North America, without first going through London. As with the Stamp Act, many in America opposed this for validating Parliament's right to directly tax American subjects.

Background

Most American colonies simply protested this act by returning the tea to Britain. However, in Boston, Governor Thomas Hutchinson refused to let the ships leave the harbour, and those that opposed the Tea Act in the town refused to let the ships unload.

On 28 November 1773, a ship carrying East India Tea, the Dartmouth, arrived at Griffin's Wharf in Boston. According to the Townshend Duty, if the tax was not paid within twenty days of the ship's arrival, then the ship and its cargo was to be seized by the authorities. That meant that the people of Boston had until December 17 to decide what to do. Over the next few weeks, thousands of concerned citizens attended meetings organised by the Boston Committee of Correspondence and the Sons of Liberty, where they decided that the tea should be sent back. Meanwhile, two more ships of tea, the Eleanor, and the Beaver, arrived in Boston. However, Governor Hutchinson still refused to release the ships. On the night of December 16th, following another meeting where Governor Hutchinson had refused to budge, a group of people, some disguised as Mohawks, flocked to Griffin's Wharf, boarded the three ships, and destroyed the entire shipment of tea.

News of the Boston Tea Party reached London in January 1774. In response, the British Government firstly tried to identify and prosecute the individuals involved. Once that failed, they instead passed a set of repressive acts, colloquially referred to in America as the Intolerable Acts, designed to punish the people of Boston and compel them to compensate the East India Company for the loss of their tea, and to send a message to other North American colonies of the consequences for protests such as the Boston Tea Party. These acts halted trade to Boston, brought Massachusetts under British governmental control, granted immunity to British soldiers and officials to criminal prosecution in the state, and required colonists to house British soldiers.

The Intolerable Acts only served to bring the American colonies together against Great Britain. In September 1774, representatives from twelve of the thirteen colonies assembled in Philadelphia for the First Continental Congress aimed to settle the concerns and frustrations of the Americans with the British King and Government before relations broke down even further.

The Suffolk Resolves, accepted by the congress on September 17th, encouraged the continued protest of the Intolerable Acts by stockpiling military supplies and boycotting British goods. The Declaration of Rights also developed at this congress, outlining the need for a rebellion if the Intolerable Acts were not repealed.

These attempts at a peaceful reconciliation failed, however, and in April 1775, less than eighteen months after the Boston Tea Party, American Patriot forces went to war with Great Britain.

On 4 July 1776, when the Thirteen United States of America declared independence from Great Britain, they referenced the Intolerable Acts – passed in response to the Boston Tea Party – when justifying their actions. They no longer wished to be subject to a king who obstructed the Administration of Justice, cut off their trade, and who imposed taxes on them without their consent.

External links

[Boston Tea Party](#)¹

Episode on The Boston Tea Party from The National Archives' podcast 'On the Record'.

[John Bull and Uncle Sam: Four Centuries of British-American Relations – The American Revolution](#)²

An online document exhibition from the Library of Congress.

[Treason against the state: America declares independence](#)³

Find out more about the Declaration of Independence from this National Archives blog.

Explore a [timeline from Library of Congress from the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention, 1774 to 1789](#).⁴

[Milestone Documents: Revolution and the New Nation](#)⁵

Milestone documents of the American Revolution from US The National Archives in Washington D.C.

[The Boston Tea Party](#)⁶

More on the Boston Tea Party 1773 and its impact from the Bill of Rights Institute.

¹ <https://media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php/boston-tea-party/>

² <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/british/brit-2.html>

³ <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/treason-against-the-state-america-declares-independence/>

⁴ <https://www.loc.gov/collections/continental-congress-and-constitutional-convention-from-1774-to-1789/articles-and-essays/timeline/1773-to-1774/>

⁵ <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/list>

⁶ <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/the-boston-tea-party>

Tasks

Task 1

Source 1

A map showing the British colonies and provinces in America, by Thomas Kitchin, 'Hydrographer to his Majesty' c.1770. Copyright Bridgeman Images.

A hydrographer was a person who measured water depth and searched for rocks and wrecks that could be hazards to navigation and collected information on tides and currents.

- Using the map, find the 13 British colonies in North America: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut; New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware; Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Locate: Boston Harbour, Lexington & Concord, Philadelphia, Burlington.
- What does the map reveal about British attitudes to empire?
- Can you suggest any reasons that made it difficult for Britain to govern these colonies?

Task 2

The Tea Act followed earlier sources of grievance in the British American colonies, including the 1765 Stamp Act and the 1767 Townshend Acts passed by the British Crown. These laws increased taxation in the colonies and were considered unfair without their representation in the British parliament. After the Tea Act, colonists in Philadelphia and New York made the tea ships return to Britain. In Charleston, the cargo was left unopened on the docks to spoil. In Boston, colonists refused to let the ships be unloaded – the catalyst for the Boston Tea Party.

Source 2a

The photograph shows the Tea Act passed by the British parliament in May 1773. It supported the East India Company in financial difficulties due to unsold merchandise. The Act gave the company a monopoly on the tea trade with the American colonies. Catalogue ref: C65/942 (Geo III, c 44).

- Look at this document. What do you notice about it?
- Can you tell how this document is conserved at The National Archives?

Source 2b

Extract from the Tea Act was passed by the British parliament in May 1773 to help the East India Company which faced financial difficulties due to unsold tea. It gave the company a monopoly on tea trade with the American colonies. Catalogue ref: C65/942, (Geo III, c 44)

The Act meant that the East India Company could sell their tea directly to the colonies. It also gave the company the monopoly and so was able control all aspects of the tea trade and could undercut local traders in the colonies and elsewhere. The Tea Act freed the East India Company from paying export tax and was given a 'drawback' or refund on duties owed on surplus tea supplies. It followed

Tasks

the earlier sources of colonial grievance: 1765 Stamp Act and the 1767 Townshend Acts which increased taxation in colonies without representation in parliament. In Philadelphia and New York colonists made the tea ships return to Britain. In Charleston the cargo was left to rot on the docks. In Boston colonists refused to let them to unload and instigated what is now known as the Boston Tea Party.

- How was the Tea Act an attempt to assert British control and generate revenue from the colonies?
- Can you suggest the impact of this Act on the colonists and the business of local traders?

Task 3

Source 3

Earliest British account of the Boston Tea Party, 17 December 1773. Catalogue ref: WO 40/1

This letter was written by Lieutenant Colonel, Alexander Leslie of the 64th Regiment of Foot to Lord Viscount Barrington, the Secretary at War. Leslie was writing from his barracks at Castle William on an island in Boston Harbour on the day after the Boston Tea Party.

- Why do you think that Lt. Col. Leslie has been stationed to an island in Boston Harbour rather than in the town of Boston?
- What does the letter infer about his attitude to these events?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this account for understanding these events?
- Do you think there is anything surprising/unusual about this letter?
- Find out and explain how the British military position changed in Boston after the Boston Tea Party.

Task 4

Source 4

Extract from 'Massachusetts and Boston Weekly' newspaper, 23 December 1773, Catalogue ref: CO 5/91

This provides an American account of the Boston Tea Party.

- What does this newspaper extract infer about the impact of the Boston Tea Party on the people of Boston?
- Can you explain why 'there [was] the greatest care taken to prevent the Tea from being purloined by the Populace'?
- Why does the article point out that no damage was done to the ships carrying the tea?
- Who would have been the audience for this newspaper article?
- Why do you think this document exists in The National Archives Colonial Office records series?

Tasks

- How does this newspaper account differ from the account given in Source 3?
- How do both Source 3 and Source 4 compare to the image for this lesson, an illustration of the “Boston Tea Party” event created by British engraver Reverend W.D. Cooper in 1789? The engraving was printed in *The History of North America* published in London, England.

Task 5

Extracts from a document requesting legal advice sent to the Attorney and Solicitor General from William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, February 1774, Catalogue Ref: CO 5/160

The document included a narrative of events and questions concerning the punishment of those involved in the Boston Tea Party. The document recorded that ‘advice [was] received from Boston in letters from Governor Hutchinson, Admiral Montague and the Commandant of the King’s troops at Castle William and the information taken here of Captain Scott, lately arrived from thence, contain the following facts...’

Source 5a

- Why has George III requested information from the Attorney and Solicitor General?
- Why has Lord Dartmouth made this request on behalf of the King?
- How would you describe the tone and attitude in this document?
- What does it suggest about the British reaction to the Boston Tea Party?

Source 5b

- This extract describes some of the events relating to the Boston Tea Party. How does this version differ from the newspaper account in Source 4?
- What was the role of John Hancock and Samuel Adams in the American Revolution?

Source 5c

- What is the role of the Attorney General in the British state?
- Why did George III want the Attorney General to answer these two questions following the events of the Boston tea Party?
- How would you define the term ‘high treason’?
- How was justice administered in the colony of Massachusetts?
- Could the colony have heard a case of High treason? Explain your answer.

Source 5d

- What is the opinion of the Attorney General on the case for ‘high treason’?
- What grounds are offered for the case for ‘high treason’?
- What are the THREE ways of carrying out a prosecution for ‘high treason’ according to the Attorney General?
- What does this document reveal about how was justice administered in the colony of Massachusetts?

Tasks

Task 6

Source 6

Invoice, dated February 1774 from the East India Company for the destroyed tea from the Boston Tea Party, Catalogue ref: CO 5/247 pp.185-187.

- Why has this document been created by the East India Company?
- What are the five types of tea exported to Boston?
- What is the total value of the tea exported according to this invoice? Use [The National Archives currency converter](#)¹ to work out its value today.
- What does this invoice reveal about the business of the East India Company?
- How does this source link to the Boston Port Act (Source 7)?
- Why is this document useful when examining events relating to the Boston Tea Party?

Task 7

Source 7

Extract from Boston Port Act, 1774 (14 George III, c19) Catalogue ref: C65/56

The Coercive Acts, which became known as the Intolerable Acts to the colonists, were passed in 1774. According to the Boston Port Act, the British Parliament closed the port of Boston until the colonists compensated the East India Company for the tea destroyed at the Boston Tea Party. These also included the Massachusetts Government Act which replaced elected local government in the colony of Massachusetts with direct rule by British Crown. The powers of the military governor, Thomas Gage were also increased. British troops could now be quartered in any occupied dwelling.

- Why did the British pass the Boston Port Act?
- What is the tone and attitude inferred in this extract from the Act?
- How was trade and commerce in Boston affected by this law?
- How would this Act have affected the people of Boston and other colonists?
- Find out more about the terms of other Coercive Acts and their impact.

The Coercive Acts became known as the Intolerable Acts to the colonists.

- Explain the difference between the words 'Coercive' and 'Intolerable'.
- What does the different labelling for the same laws infer about the colonial relationship?
- Explain how the Thirteen Colonies responded to the Coercive Acts.

¹ <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>

Tasks

Task 8

Source 8

Lord Dartmouth, British Secretary of State to New Jersey Governor William Franklin, 5 July, 1775, Catalogue ref: CO 5/992, folios 127-129d.

Thomas Gage was appointed commander in chief of all British forces in North America in 1763. Had it not been for General Gage's failed attempt at Concord, colonies separately or together possibly might have come to some plan of accommodation. Instead, almost all North America rose against British control.

On April 19, 1775, General Gage sent out regiments of British soldiers from Boston to Lexington to arrest colonial leaders Sam Adams and John Hancock and then move to Concord to suppress any resistance. The plan failed as the colonists became aware of the plan and Paul Revere and other 'Minutemen' warned the local population that the British were coming.

- What criticism of General Gage is inferred by this letter to the Governor of New Jersey?
- What is the attitude of the British Crown towards the North American colonies?
- What steps are the British going to take to meet resistance to its authority?
- What does the letter infer about how the British governed its colonies?
- Find out more context about events at Concord, Lexington, and the role of the 'Minutemen'.

Task 9

Source 9

Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion 1775, Catalogue ref: CO 5/993 f.7.

In this document, King George III referred to the American colonists as traitors. The proclamation was printed and distributed by William Franklin, the Colonial Governor of New Jersey (1763–1776), a Loyalist during American Revolutionary War. Benjamin Franklin, his father, however, became one of the most important Patriot leaders of the American Revolution and a Founding Father of the United States.

- What does the description of William Franklin at the top of the proclamation infer about his role and duties in New Jersey?
- Why did George III make this proclamation to his colonial subjects in North America?
- How does George III explain the reasons for rebellion in the colonies?
- What does he mean by the 'obstruction of lawful commerce'?
- What does the document infer about the colonial relationship with the British Crown?
- How does the British Crown intend to treat any resistance to its rule in the colonies?
- What is the difference between 'rebellion' and 'sedition'?

Tasks

Task 10

Source 10

Declaration of Independence, 1776, Catalogue ref: EXT 9/1.

A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America in General Congress Assembled. One of the Dulap Broadside printed on the night of 4 July 1776. In this document George III is referred to as a traitor and the American colonies declare their independence from Britain.

- What, according to the Declaration, is the purpose of government?
- What is the meaning of the terms: 'unalienable right' and 'civic duty'?
- Who was the audience for this document?
- How did the Declaration criticise and characterise British rule at the time?
- How had the colonists previously expressed grievances against George III and Parliament?
- Explain the tone and attitude expressed in the document.
- Find out about the influence of Thomas Paine's 'Common Sense' on the Declaration of Independence.
- How did the British Government respond to the Declaration of Independence?
- What was the significance of the Declaration of Independence for (a) the American Revolution (b) Slavery?

Source 1: A map showing the British colonies and provinces in America by Thomas Kitchin c.1770. Copyright Bridgeman Images



Source 1: Visual description

Map showing the eastern coast of North America. The title of the map in the bottom right corner is 'British Dominions in America, drawn from the latest and best Authorities, by Tho's [Thomas] Kitchin, Hydrographer to His Majesty'. The title is surrounded by a small illustration of Native Americans sitting and standing in a verdant landscape of grass, shrubs, and a waterfall.

In the north of the map, Canada is marked out as well as 'Province Quebec', Nova Scotia, 'Labrador or New Britain', and Newfoundland.

Further down, the following states are marked out in capital letters from east to west to south: Louisiana, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, New England, New Jersey, Delaware Counties, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Province of West Florida, and Province of East Florida.

Source 2b: Transcript

Glossary

A duty drawback* is a refund in payments that were initially collected upon importation of goods; these payments could have been for customs duties, sales taxes, or other fees.

Bohea tea* was the largest tea import in colonial times. This blend of tea originated from China in the trade with the British and Dutch East India Companies. It was a smoky tasting tea, rather like lapsang souchong and very popular. In the Boston Tea Party, 342 chests of Bohea tea were destroyed.

Transcript

An act to allow a drawback* of the duties of customs on the exportation of tea to any of his Majesty's colonies or plantations in America; to increase the deposit on bohea* tea to be sold at the India Company's sales; and to empower the commissioners of the treasury to grant licences to the East India Company to export tea duty-free.

Source 3: Earliest British account of the Boston Tea Party, 17 December 1773. Catalogue ref: WO 40/1

60000 Bottom of Dec 1773

My Lord

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

This morning the honor to visit your Lordship that Saturday, I sent them the Sons of Liberty having amongst 340 chests of Tea on board three Ships, that lay now together at one of the Wharfs.

The fourth of these that brought the Tea is bound to Cape Cod, but the Sea was so rough on shore, and its expected by this time it had found the same fate as the rest.

I had the Regiment ready to take their being had they been called upon.

I am informed the Council would not agree to the Troops going to Sea, however it must be in that at least Liberty would do now with the Troops being

Took

The Gentlemen that refused have still continued, and being to remain for the most threatens them much if they go to Sea, in short they will do every thing at present.

The Governor who is now on the Island has wrote to My Lord Dartmouth on this late Affair.

I have the honor to be My Lord
 Your most Obedient
 and most humble Servant
 Maj. T. Lee

Lord Privy Sealer

Source 3: Transcript

Notes:

* 'The Gentlemen' were probably customs officials and tea agents who sheltered at Castle William to avoid the people of Boston.

* 'Sons of Liberty' was an organization formed in the American Colonies in 1765 to oppose the Stamp Act. They supported colonial resistance against the British Crown with petitions and assemblies before the American Revolution.

Transcript

Castle William 17th December 1773

My Lord

I did myself the honor to write your Lordship last Saturday, since then the Sons of Liberty* have destroy'd [destroyed] 340 Chests of Tea on board three ships, that lay all together at one of the Wharfs.

The fourth vessel that brought the Tea is strand'd [stranded] near to Cape Cod, but the Tea was got safe on Shore, and it's expected by this time it has fared the same fate as the rest.

I had the regiment ready to take their Arms, had they been called upon.

I am informed the Council would not agree to the Troops going to town, however it must end in that at last. Lenity [gentleness] won't do now with the People here. The Gentlemen* that took refuge here still continue and likely to remain, for the mob threatens them much if they go to town, in short, they rule everything at present.

The Governor who is now on the Island, has wrote to My Lord Dartmouth on this late Affair.

I have the honor to be My Lord
Your most Obedient
and most humble Servant
Alexr. [Alexander] Leslie

Source 4: Extract from 'Massachusetts and Boston Weekly' newspaper, 23 December 1773. Catalogue ref: CO 5/91

the Tea from being purloined by the Populace: One or two being detected in endeavouring to pocket a small Quantity were stripped of their Acquisitions and very roughly handled:—It is worthy of Remark, that although a considerable Quantity of Goods were still remaining on board the Vessels, no Injury was sustained: Such Attention to private Property was observed that a small Padlock belonging to the Captain of one of the Ships being broke, another was procured and sent to him.—The Town was very quiet during the whole Evening and the Night following: Those Persons who were from the Country, returned with a merry Heart; and the next Day Joy appeared in almost every Countenance, some on Occasion of the Destruction of the Tea, others on Account of the Quietness with which it was effected.—One of the Monday's Papers says, That the Masters and Owners are well pleased that their Ships are thus cleared.

Just before the Dissolution of the Meeting, a Number of brave and resolute Men, dressed in the Indian Manner, approached near the Door of the Assembly, gave the War-Whoop, which rang through the House, and was answered by some in the Galleries, but Silence being commanded, and a peaceable Deportment was again enjoined, till the Dissolution: The Indians, as they were then called, repaired to the Wharf where the Ships lay that had the Tea on board, and were followed by Hundreds of People, to see the Event of the Transactions of those who made so grotesque an Appearance. On board Capt. Hall's Ship, where they hoisted out the Chests of Tea, and when upon Deck stove the Chests and emptied the Tea overboard; having cleared this Ship, they proceeded to Capt. Bruce's, and then to Capt. Coffin's Brig— they applied themselves so dexterously to the Destruction of this Commodity that in the Space of three Hours they broke up 342 Chests, which was the whole Number in those Vessels, and discharged their Contents into the Dock; when the Tide rose it floated the broken Chests and the Tea in so much that the Surface of the Water was filled therewith a considerable Way from the South Part of the Town to Dorchester-Neck, and lodged on the Shores.—There was the greatest Care taken to prevent

Source 4: Transcript

(a)

Just before the Dissolution of the Meeting, a number of brave and resolute Men, dressed in the Indian Manner, approached near the Door of the Assembly, gave the War-Whoop, which rang through the House, and was answered by some in the Galleries, but Silence being commanded, and a peaceable Deportment was again enjoined, till the Dissolution: The Indians as, they were then called, repaired to the Wharf where the ships lay that had the Tea on board, and were followed by Hundreds of People, to see the Event of the Transactions of those who made grotesque an Appearance.....[newspaper damaged].....on Board Capt. Hall's ship, where they hoisted out the chests of Tea, and when upon Deck stove [broke] the Chests and emptied the Tea overboard; having cleared this ship, they proceeded to Capt. Bruce's, and then to Capt. Coffin's Brig [two masted square-rigged ship]- they applied themselves so dexterously [skilfully] to the Destruction of this Commodity that in the Space of three Hours they broke up 342 Chests, which was the whole number in those Vessells and discharged their Contents into the Dock; when the Tide rose it floated the broken Chests and the Tea insomuch that the Surface of the Water was filled therewith a considerable Way from the South Part of the Town to Dorchester-Neck, and lodged on the Shores. There was the greatest care taken to prevent

(b)

the Tea from being purloined by the Populace: One or two being detected in endeavouring to pocket a small quantity were stripped of their Acquisitions, and very roughly handled- It is a worthy Remark, that although a considerable Quantity of Goods were still remaining on board the Vessels, no injury was sustained: Such Attention to private Property was observed that a small Padlock belonging to the Captain of one of the Ships being broke, another was procured and sent to him.- The town was very quiet during the whole Evening and the Night following: Those Persons who were from the Country, returned with a merry Heart, and the next Day, Joy appeared in almost every Countenance, some on Occasion of the Destruction of the Tea, others on Account of the Quietness with which it was effected.- One of the Monday's Papers says, that the Masters and Owners are well pleased that their Ships are thus cleared.

Source 5a: Extracts from a document requesting legal advice sent by William Legge, 1774. Catalogue ref: CO 5/160

Whitehall 5th Feby 1774. 1

Solicitor General.

Gentlemen,

I am commanded by His King
to transmit to you the inclosed
Narrative of Facts relating to
some late Transactions at Boston
in North America, accompanied
with two Questions thereupon

It is His King's Pleasure that
you do take this Case into your
immediate and mature
Consideration, and Report to me,
for His Majesty's Information,
your Answer to the Questions
proposed.

The State of His Majesty's
Colonies in America, under
the Insults that have been
offered to the Authority of His
Kingdom, requires the most
serious deliberation and
speedy decision: It is therefore
His Majesty's Pleasure that
you should transmit your
Answer to me with all possible

1

dispatch to the end that the
Measures ~~in~~ His Majesty may
think proper to pursue may
not fail of their Effect thro' any
Delay that can be avoided.

I am Sir,

Dartmouth.

Source 5a: Transcript

Whitehall 5th February 1774
Attorney and Solicitor General

Gentlemen

I am commanded by the King to transmit to you the enclosed narrative of facts relating to some of the late transactions of Boston in North America, accompanied with the two Questions thereupon.

This is the King's Pleasure that you do take this Case into your immediate and mature consideration and Report to me for His Majesty's Information your answer to the Questions proposed.

The state of His Majesty's Colonies in America, under the Insults that have been offered to the Authority of this Kingdom, requires the most serious deliberation and speedy decision. It is therefore His Majesty's Pleasure that you should transmit your answer to me with all possible dispatch, to the end that the measures His Majesty may think proper to pursue may not fail of their Effect through any Delay that can be avoided.

...

Dartmouth

Source 5b: Extracts from a document requesting legal advice sent by William Legge, 1774. Catalogue ref: CO 5/160

Twenty Second.

That this Committee repeatedly sent for the owner of the Ship Dartmouth, requiring him to comply with the request of the Town, and send his Ship with the Tea back to England. In excuse for his refusal, he said that he could not obtain a Clearance from the Customhouse, whereupon notifications were again posted up on the 11th Decem^r for another Meeting of the Inhabitants, which was accordingly held in the afternoon.

That, at this Meeting it was determined that the

owner

no

owner of the Ship Dartmouth should demand at the Customhouse a clearance of the Tea for England, which was accordingly done, in the presence of twelve Persons appointed to see it done. 11

That, upon the refusal of the Customhouse to grant such Clearance, the Meeting was adjourned to the next day, in order to consider what was to be done, when the said owner was required to demand a Permit from the Naval officer to pass the Castle, which being also refused, he was ordered to apply to the Governor in person for such Permit, which being also refused, he returned and made his report to the Meeting, whereupon numbers of People cried out a Mob a Mob, and left the House, and immediately a Body of Men, disguised like Indians, and encouraged by Mr. J^r. Hancock, Sam. Adams, and others, repaired to the Wharf, where three Kegels having Tea

11

on board, lay aground, took Possession of the said Kegels, and in two Hours the whole of the Tea was destroyed. —

Source 5b: Transcript

...

Twenty Second

That this committee repeatedly sent for the owner of the Ship Dartmouth requesting him to comply with the request of the Town and send his ship with the Tea back to England. In excuse for his refusal, he said that he could not obtain a clearance from the Custom house, whereupon notification were again posted up upon the 14th December for another meeting of the Inhabitants, which was accordingly held in the afternoon. That at this Meeting, it was determined that the owner should demand at the Custom house a clearance of the Teas for England, which was accordingly done in the presence of twelve Persons appointed to see it done.

That, upon the refusal of the Custom house to grant such clearance, the meeting was adjourned to the next day, in order to consider what was to be done, when the said owner was required to demand a Permit from the naval officer to pass the Castle, which was also refused, he was ordered to apply to the Governor in person for such a Permit, which being also refused, he returned and made his report to the meeting, whereupon numbers of People cried out a 'Mob' a 'Mob' and immediately a body of men disguised like Indians, and encouraged by Mr. John Hancock, Samuel Adams and others repaired to the wharf where three vessels having tea on board, lay aground, took possession of the said vessels, and in two hours, the whole of the tea was destroyed...

Source 5c: Extracts from a document requesting legal advice sent by William Legge, 1774. Catalogue ref: CO 5/160

Queries.

1. Do the acts & Proceedings stated in the foregoing Case, or any of them, amount to the Crime of High Treason?

2. If they do, who are the persons chargeable with such Crime, and what will be the proper and legal Method of proceeding against them?

Source 5c: Transcript

Queries

1. Do the Acts & Proceedings stated in the foregoing case, or any of them amount to the crime of High Treason?
2. If they do, who are the persons chargeable with such Crime and what will be the proper and legal method of proceeding against them?

Source 5d: Extracts from a document requesting legal advice sent by William Legge, 1774. Catalogue ref: CO 5/160

74.
40

To the Right Honourable
The Earl of Dartmouth, one of His
Majesty's Principal Secretaries of
State, and First Lord of Trade and
Plantations.

My Lord

Having received your Lordship's
commande to take into our consideration a case transmitted
to us, ~~of~~ ~~of~~ ~~of~~ and two questions put thereupon, We
have considered the same; and humbly submit to your
Lordship the following Answer to the said Questions.

1. We are of opinion that the Acts and
Proceedings, stated in the above mentioned Case, do
amount to the Crime of High Treason, namely, to the
levying of War against His Majesty.

These Proceedings are an attempt, concerted
with much deliberation, and made with open face in
pursuance of such concert, to obstruct the execution of an
Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, imposing a duty

40

00.

upon Tea imported into America; and to put a general
restraint upon the exercise of a lawful trade, as if it were
a publick grievance.

2. The methods of proceeding against them
are, either by prosecuting them for High Treason, in the
country, in the ordinary course of Justice; or arresting
them there by the Justices of the peace, or some of them,
and transmitting them hither to be tried in some
County of England, to be assigned by The King's Com-
missioners; or by sending over a Warrant of a Secretary of State,
grounded on sufficient Information upon Oath, to arrest
and bring over the Offenders to be tried here.

We take each of these courses to be legal;
and that to be the most proper, which the circumstances
of the case absolutely require. In the consideration of
which we humbly submit, that a Preference is due

03.
42

to the more ordinary course, if it be thought, in other
respects, equally sufficient and effective.

Source 5d: Transcript

To the Right Honorable
The Earl of Dartmouth, one of his
Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, and First Lord of Trade and Plantations

My Lord,

Having received Your Lordship's commands to take into consideration a case transmitted to us etc... and two questions put thereinupon, we have considered the same; and humbly submit to your Lordship the following Answer to the said Questions.

We are of the opinion that the Acts and Proceedings, stated in the above-mentioned case do amount to the Crime of High Treason, namely to the levying of War against His Majesty.

These proceedings are an attempt, concerted with much deliberation, and made with open force in pursuance of such concert, to obstruct the execution of an Act of the Parliament of Great Britian, imposing a duty upon Tea imported into America; and to put a general restraint upon the exercise of lawful trade, as if it were a publick grievance.

...

Methods of proceeding against Them are either by prosecuting them for Their Treason, in the country, in the ordinary course of Justice, or arresting Them there by the Justices of the Peace, or some of Them and transmitting Them hither to tried in some County of England, to be assigned by the King's Commission, or by sending over a Warrant of a Secretary of State grounded on sufficient Information upon Oath, to arrest and bring over the Offenders to be tried here.

We take each of these courses to be legal, and that to be the most proper, which the circumstances of the case absolutely require. In the consideration of which we humbly submit, that a Preference is due to the most ordinary course, if it is to be thought , in other respects, equally sufficient and effective.

Source 6: Extracts from a document requesting legal advice sent by William Legge, 1774. Catalogue ref: CO 5/160

An Account of the Invoice Amount of Teas exported to Boston in New England by the United East India Company. Consigned to Messrs Thomas & Elisha Hutchinson, Benjamin Faneuil Junr, Joshua Winslow & Richard Clarke & Sons Merchants.

Sh. Beaver, Heyeckiah Coffin Master.

	chests					
Tea Bohea	80	cont ^d	28,625	at 2 ⁰⁰	2,862	10 ⁰⁰
Single (1 st sort)	20		1,637	2 ⁰⁸	218	5 ⁰⁴
Hyson	5		380	5 ⁰⁰	95	0 ⁰⁰
Congou	5		432	2 ⁰³	48	12 ⁰⁰
Souchong	2		138	3 ⁰⁰	20	14 ⁰⁰
					<u>3,243</u>	1 ⁰⁴

£ 3 243 1 4

Sh. Dartmouth, James Hall, Master.

	chests					
Tea Bohea	80	cont ^d	28,161	at 2 ⁰⁰	2,816	2 ⁰⁰
Single (1 st sort)	20		1,596	2 ⁰⁸	212	16 ⁰⁰
Hyson	5		370	5 ⁰⁰	92	10 ⁰⁰
Souchong	4		276	3 ⁰⁰	41	0 ⁰⁰
Congou	5		428	2 ⁰³	48	3 ⁰⁰
					<u>3,210</u>	19 ⁰⁰

£ 3 210 19 00

Sh. Eleanor, James Bruce, Master.

	chests					
Tea Bohea	80	cont ^d	28,094	at 2 ⁰⁰	2,809	8 ⁰⁰
Single (1 st skins)	20		1,389	3 ⁰⁰	208	7 ⁰⁰
Hyson	5		384	5 ⁰⁰	96	0 ⁰⁰
Souchong	4		270	3 ⁰⁰	40	10 ⁰⁰
Congou	5		436	2 ⁰³	49	1 ⁰⁰
					<u>3,203</u>	6 ⁰⁰

£ 3 203 6 00

£ 9 659 6 04

Admiralty Office 28th Feb. 1774

Source 6: Transcript

An Account of the Invoice Amount of Teas exported to Boston in New England by the United East India Company...

Beaver, Hezekiah Coffin, Master.

Tea	Chests	Lbs	Price/lb	£	s	d	
Bohea	80	28,625	2s	2,862	10	-	
Singlo (1st sort)	20	1,637	2s 8d	218	5	4	
Hyson	5	380	5s	95	-	-	
Congou	5	432	2s 3d	48	12	-	
Souchong	2	138	3s	20	14	-	£3,245 1s 4d

Dartmouth, James Hall, Master.

Tea	Chests	Lbs	Price/lb	£	s	d	
Bohea	80	28,161	2s	2,816	2	-	
Singlo (1st sort)	20	1,596	2s 8d	212	16	-	
Hyson	5	370	5s	92	10	-	
Congou	4	276	3s	41	8	-	
Souchong	5	428	2s 3d	48	3	-	£3,210 19s -d

Eleanor, James Bruce, Master.

Tea	Chests	Lbs	Price/lb	£	s	d	
Bohea	80	28,094	2s	2,809	8	-	
Singlo (1st sort)	20	1,389	2s 8d	208	7	-	
Hyson	5	384	5s	96	-	-	
Congou	4	270	3s	40	10	-	
Souchong	5	436	2s 3d	49	1	-	£3,203 6s -d

Source 7: Extract from Boston Port Act, 1774 (14 George III, c19).

Catalogue ref: C 65/56

An Act to discontinue in such Manner and
for such Time as the Queen mentioned the Landing
and Discharging Landing or Shipping of Goods Wares
and Merchandise at the Town and Within the
Harbour of Boston in the Province of Massachusetts
City in the said America.

2 Whereas dangerous Commotions and Insurrections have been
fomented and raised in the Town of Boston in the Province of Massachusetts
City in Great Britain by diverse ill affected Persons to the Subversion of his
Majesty's Government and to the utter Destruction of the Publick Peace and good
Order of the said Town in which Commotions and Insurrections certain Saltstaves
Cargoes of Tea being the Property of the East India Company and on board
certain Vessels lying within the City or Harbour of Boston were seized and
destroyed and whereas in the present Condition of the said Town and Harbour
the Commerce of his Majesty's Subjects cannot be safely carried on there nor
the Customs payable to his Majesty duly collected and it is therefore expedient
that the Officers of his Majesty's Customs should be forthwith removed from the
said Town and it please your Majesty that it may be enacted and be it enacted by
the King's most Excellent Majesty by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords
Spiritual and Temporal and Commons in this present Parliament assembled and by
the Authority of the same That from and after the full Day of June one thousand
seven hundred and seventy-four it shall not be lawful for any Person or Persons
whosoever to lade or put or cause to be laded or put off or from any Quay
Wharf or other Place within the said Town of Boston or in or upon any part of the
Shore of the City commonly called the Harbour of Boston between a certain Headland or
Point called North Point on the Eastern Side of the Entrance into the said City
and a certain other Headland or Point called Alderston Point on the Western Side of
the Entrance into the said City or in or upon any Island Creek Landing Place or

Source 7: Transcript

An Act to discontinue, in such manner, and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, lading [loading] or shipping, of goods, wares, and merchandise, at the town, and within the harbour, of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts's Bay, in North America.

WHEREAS dangerous commotions [disturbances] and insurrections have been fomented [cause trouble to develop] and raised in the town of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts's Bay, in New England, by divers ill-affected persons, to the subversion of his Majesty's government, and to the utter destruction of the publick [public] peace, and good order of the said town; in which commotions and insurrections certain valuable cargoes of teas, being the property of the East India Company, and on board certain vessels lying within the bay or harbour of Boston, were seized and destroyed: And whereas, in the present condition of the said town and harbour, the commerce of his Majesty's subjects cannot be safely carried on there, nor the customs payable to his Majesty duly collected; and it is therefore expedient [necessary] that the officers of his Majesty's customs should be forthwith removed from the said town: May it please your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of June, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, it shall not be lawful for any person or persons whatsoever to lade [load cargo] put, or cause or procure to be laden or put, off or from any quay, wharf, or other place, within the said town of Boston, or in or upon any part of the shore of the bay, commonly called The Harbour of Boston, between a certain headland or point called Nahant Point, on the eastern side of the entrance into the said bay, and a certain other headland or point called Alderton Point, on the western side of the entrance into the said bay...

Source 8: Lord Dartmouth, British Secretary of State to New Jersey Governor William Franklin, 1775. Catalogue ref: CO 5/992, folios 127-129d

Resolutions to be adopted by General
 Gage must depend upon his own
 Judgment and the Opinions of the
 able Generals with him; therefore
 I have only to add that it is His
 Majesty's express Command that
 you do exert every Endeavour to
 employ every means in your power
 to aid & support him & Admiral
 Graves in all such Operations
 as they may think proper to
 undertake for restoring the King's
 Orders into full Execution, and
 restoring the Authority of His
 Majesty's Government, &c.
 (Dartmouth)

Under Your Letter, Georgia & the
 Florida's, is in Arms against Great
 Britain, & committed in Rebellion,
 that menace to our Terms (the)
 Constitution.
 In this Situation therefore
 it is His Majesty's Resolution that the
 most vigorous Efforts should be made
 both by Sea and Land, to reduce the
 rebellious Subjects to Obedience, &
 the proper measures are now pursuing
 not only for augmenting the Army
 under General Gage, but also for
 making such Addition to our Naval
 Strength in N. America, as may enable
 Admiral Graves to make such a
 Disposition of his Fleet as that he may
 the Squadron necessary for the two
 England Station, there may be several
 Squadrons at New York, within the
 Bay of Delaware, in the neighbourhood
 of the Coast of Carolina.
 After what has passed there
 1775

(N^o 10)
 Gov^r of New Jersey
 Sir,
 Whitehall, 5 July 1775.
 127
 B4
 Your Ideas of the Situation
 of the King's Affairs in N. America,
 and of the fatal Effects of General Gage's
 Attempt at Concord, are perfectly just,
 and I really believe that if that
 unfortunate Event had not happened
 just at the time that my Letter of the 3^d
 of March was received by the Governour
 of the several Colonies, each of those
 Colonies separately, or upon some
 plan of Communication less
 dangerous than a general Congress,
 would have been committed in such a
 Consideration of the Resolution of the
 House of Commons of the 20th of February
 as would have led to some plan of
 Accommodation
 That happy moment of
 Advantage is lost, and instead of
 Accommodation, all N. America, except
 Quebec.

Source 8: Transcript

Whitehall, 5th July 1775
Governor of New Jersey

Sir,

Your ideas of the situation of the King's Affairs in North America and the fatal effects of General Gage's attempt at Concord are perfectly just and I really believe that if that unfortunate event had not happened just at the time that my letter of the 3rd of March was received by the Governors of the several colonies separately, or upon some plan of communication less dangerous than a general Congress would have been committed such a consideration of the Resolution of the House of Commons of the 20th of February as would have led to some plan of accommodation.

That happy moment of advantage is lost and instead of Reconciliation all North Americans, except Quebec, Nova Scotia, Georgia & the Floridas, is in Arms against Great Britain & committed in Rebellion that menaces to overthrow the Constitution.

In this situation it is the King's firm resolution that the most vigorous efforts should be made both by Sea and Land to reduce these Rebellious subjects to Obedience & the proper measures are now pursuing not only for augmenting the Army under General Gage but also for making such addition to our Naval strength in North America as may enable Admiral Graves to make such a Disposition of his Fleet as that beside the Squadron necessary for the New England Station, there may be separate Squadrons at New York within the Bay of Delaware in Chesapeake Bay & upon the Coast of Carolina.

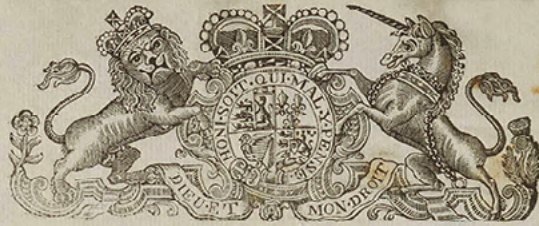
...

I have only to add that it is His Majesty's express Command that you do exert every Endeavour & employ every means in your power to aid & support him [Gage] & Admiral Graves in all such operations as they may think proper to undertake for carrying the King's Orders into full Execution and restoring the Authority of His Majesty's Government.

(Dartmouth)

Source 9: Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion 1775.

Catalogue ref: CO 5/993 f.7.



BY HIS EXCELLENCY

WILLIAM FRANKLIN, ESQ.

Captain-General, Governor and Commander in Chief in and over the Province of *New-Jersey*, and Territories thereon depending in AMERICA, Chancellor and Vice-Admiral in the same, &c.

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS I have received His Majesty's Royal Proclamation, bearing Date at *St. James's* the twenty-third Day of *August* last, together with His Majesty's Commands to cause the same to be made publick in such Manner as has been usual on the like Occasions, which Proclamation is in the Words following:

BY THE KING

A PROCLAMATION,

For suppressing Rebellion and Seditious.

GEORGE R.

WHEREAS many of our Subjects in divers Parts of our Colonies and Plantations in *North-America*, misled by dangerous and ill-designing Men, and forgetting the Allegiance which they owe to the Power that has protected and sustained them, after various disorderly Acts committed in Disturbance of the publick Peace, to the Obstruction of lawful Commerce, and to the Oppression of our loyal Subjects carrying on the same, have at length proceeded to an open and avowed Rebellion, by arraying themselves in hostile Manner to withstand the Execution of the Law, and traitorously preparing, ordering, and levying War against Us; AND WHEREAS there is Reason to apprehend that such Rebellion hath been much promoted and encouraged by the traitorous Correspondence, Counsels and Comfort of divers wicked and desperate Persons within this Realm: TO THE END THEREFORE that none of our Subjects may neglect or violate their Duty through Ignorance thereof, or through any Doubt of the Protection which the Law will afford to their Loyalty and Zeal; We have thought fit, by and with the Advice of our Privy Council, to issue this our Royal Proclamation, hereby declaring that not only all our Officers civil and military are obliged to exert their utmost Endeavours to suppress such Rebellion, and to bring the Traitors to Justice; but that all our Subjects of this Realm and the Dominions thereunto belonging are bound by Law to be aiding and assisting in the Suppression of such Rebellion, and to disclose and make known all traitorous Conspiracies and Attempts against Us, Our Crown and Dignity; And we do accordingly strictly charge and command all our Officers as well civil as military, and all other our obedient and loyal Subjects to use their utmost Endeavours to withstand and suppress such Rebellion, and to disclose and make known all Treasons and traitorous Conspiracies which they shall know to be against Us, Our Crown and Dignity; and for that Purpose, that they transmit to one of our principal Secretaries of State, or other proper Officer, due and full Information of all Persons who shall be found carrying on Correspondence with, or in any Manner or Degree aiding or abetting the Persons now in open Arms and Rebellion against our Government within any of our Colonies and Plantations in *North-America*, in order to bring to condign Punishment the Authors, Perpetrators, and Abettors of such traitorous Designs.

GIVEN at our Court at *St. James's*, the twenty-third Day of *August*, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-five, in the fifteenth Year of our Reign.

I DO THEREFORE, in Obedience to His Majesty's Commands, and with the Advice of His Majesty's Council for this Province, hereby publish the same, to the End that all His Majesty's liege Subjects in this Province may be fully acquainted therewith and govern themselves accordingly.

GIVEN under my Hand and Seal at Arms, in the City of *Burlington*, the twenty-fourth Day of *November*, in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-five; and in the sixteenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord *GEORGE* the Third, of Great-Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c.

W^M. FRANKLIN.

By His EXCELLENCY'S Command,
CHA. PETTIT, D. Secretary.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

Source 9: Transcript

* 'Whereas' is often used in legal documents and proclamations it means 'that being the case' or 'in view of the fact'.

** 'Given under my Hand and Seal at Arms' means according to powers delegated to William Franklin by the Crown.

*** Burlington: Find this town on the Source 1 map [on Delaware River in the state of New Jersey, now a suburb of Philadelphia.]

Transcript

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

WILLIAM FRANKLIN, Esq.

Captain-General, Governor and Commander in Chief and over the Province of New-Jersey, and Territories thereon depending in AMERICA, Chancellor and Vice-Admiral in the same, etc.

A PROCLAMATION .

WHEREAS I have received His Majesty's Royal proclamation, bearing Date at St. James, the twenty-third Day of August last, together with His Majesty's Commands to cause the same to be made public in such Manner as has been usual on the like Occasions, which Proclamation is in the Words following:

BY THE KING

A PROCLAMATION

For suppressing Rebellion and Sediton

George R [Rex]

Whereas many of our Subjects in diverse Parts of our Colonies and Plantations in North-America, misled by dangerous and ill designing Men, and forgetting the Allegiance which they owe to the Power that has protected and sustained them, after various disorderly Acts committed in Disturbance for the public Peace to the Obstruction of lawful Commerce, and to the Oppression of our loyal Subjects carrying on the same, have at length proceeded to an open and avowed Rebellion, by arraying themselves in hostile Manner to with Execution of the Law, and traitorously preparing, ordering, and levying War against Us; AND WHEREAS there is Reason to apprehend that such Rebellion hath been much promoted and encouraged by the traitorous Correspondence, Counsels and Comfort of divers wicked and desperate Persons within this Realm. TO THE END THEREFORE that none of our Subjects may neglect or violate their Duty through Ignorance thereof, or through any Doubt of the Protection which the Law will afford to their Loyalty and Zeal; We have

Source 9: Transcript (cont.)

thought fit, by and with the Advice of our Privy Council, to issue this our Royal Proclamation, hereby declaring that not only all our Officers civil and military are obliged to exert their utmost Endeavours to suppress such Rebellion, and to bring the Traitors to Justice; but that all our Subjects of this realm and the Dominions thereunto belong are bound by Law to be aiding and assisting in the Suppression of such Rebellion, and to disclose and make known all traitorous Conspiracies and Attempts against Us, Our Crown and Dignity; And we do accordingly strictly charge and command all our Officers as well civil as military, and all other our obedient and loyal Subjects to use their utmost Endeavours to withstand and suppress such Rebellion, and to disclose and make known all Treasons and traitorous Conspiracies which they shall know to be against Us, our Crown and Dignity; and for that Purpose, that they transmit to one of our Principal Secretaries of State, or other proper Officer, due and full Information of all Persons who shall be found carrying on Correspondence with, or in any Manner or Degree aiding or abetting the Persons now in open Arms and rebellion against our Government within any of our Colonies and Plantations in North-America, in order to bring to condign [deserved] Punishment the Authors, Perpetrators and Abettors [accomplices] of such traitorous Designs.

GIVEN at our Court at St James', the twenty-third Day of August, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Five, in the fifteenth year of our Reign.

I DO THEREFORE, in Obedience to His Majesty's Commands, and with the Advice of His Majesty's Council for this Province, hereby publish the same, to the end that all His Majesty's liege Subjects in this Province may be fully acquainted therewith and govern themselves accordingly.

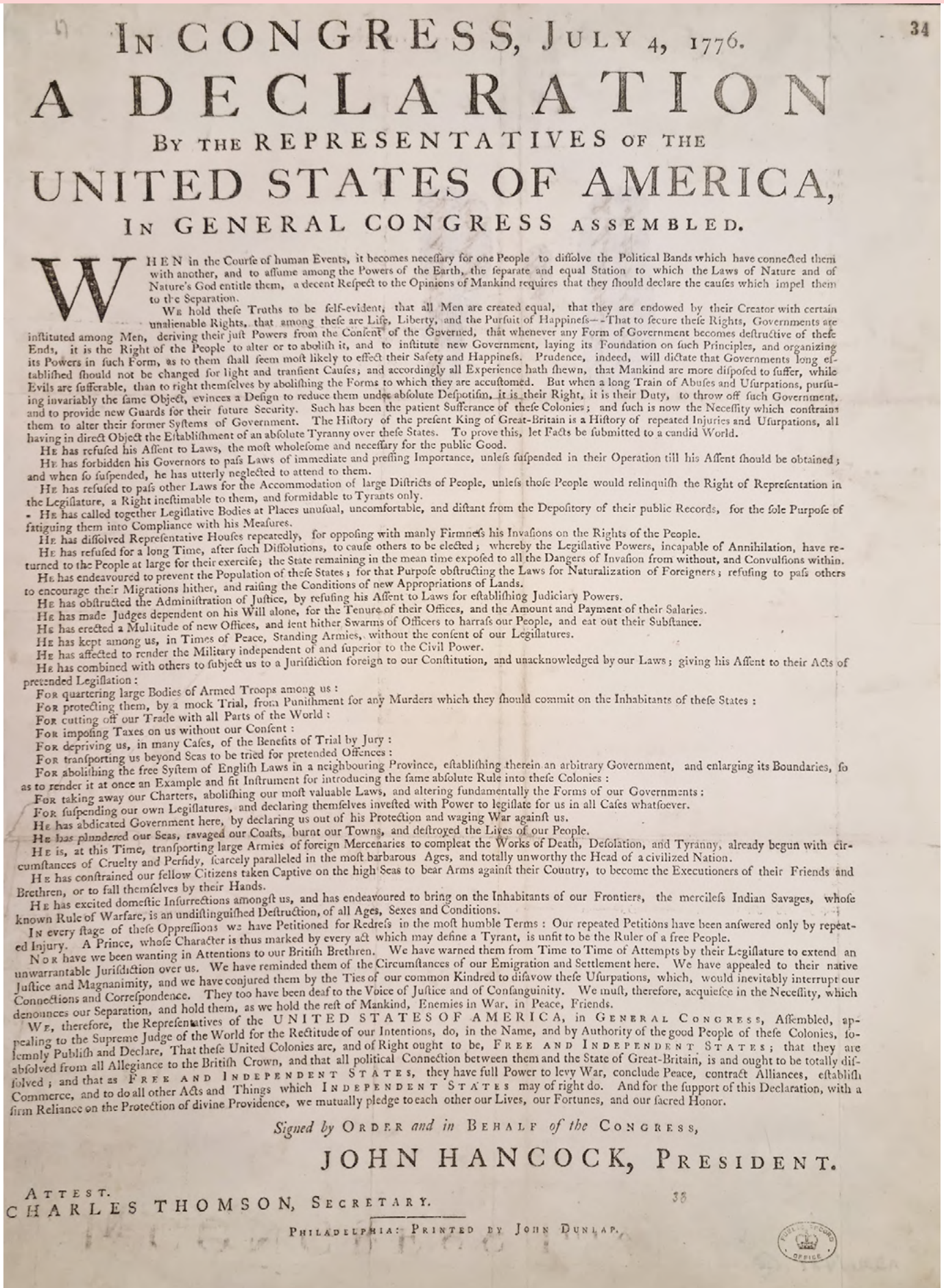
Given under my Hand and Seal at Arms**, in the City of Burlington***, the twenty-fourth Day of November, in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-five; and in the sixteenth Year of the reign of our sovereign Lord George the Third of Great-Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, Etc.

FRANKLIN

By His EXCELLENCY'S Command
CCHA. PETTIT, D. Secretary.
GOD SAVE THE KING

Source 10: Declaration of Independence, 1776.

Catalogue ref: EXT 9/1



Source 10: Transcript

In Congress, July 4, 1776

A DECLARATION
BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IN THE GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

Source 10: Transcript (cont.)

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

Source 10: Transcript (cont.)

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Signed by ORDER and in BEHALF of the CONGRESS

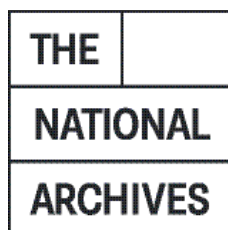
Source 10: Transcript (cont.)

JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT

ATTEST

CHARLES THOMSON, SECRETARY

PHILADELPHIA: PRINTED BY JOHN DUNLAP



Why do our hyperlinks come with footnotes?

Our resources are designed to be printed and used in classrooms, which means hyperlinks aren't always accessible digitally. We include the full link at the bottom of the page so that you can type in the address without distracting from the main text of the lesson materials.

Did you know?

The National Archives Education Service also offers free workshops onsite in Kew and online in your classroom.

Our [Onsite Workshops](#) are available for free here at The National Archives and allow students to experience genuine original documents reflecting over 1000 years of history. From Elizabeth I's signature to the telegrams of the sinking Titanic, students love the wow-factor of being able to see real history on the desk in front of them.

Our [Online Workshops](#) allow our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone. We'll arrange a test call before your session to check the tech is working.

Find out more:

[🌐 nationalarchives.gov.uk/education](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/education)

[✉️ education@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:education@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

facebook.com/TheNationalArchivesEducationService

twitter.com/UKNatArcEdu