

Document Section 2

Non-importation and the Boston Merchant Crisis

GOAL: Students will understand the economic boycotts and apply their understanding to the Non-Importation agreement.

FOCUS: Put on the board:

1. Give an example of an economic boycott with which you are familiar (Cuba, South Africa in the 1980s, etc).
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of economic boycotts? (T chart)
Do you think they work – why or why not?
3. Show what happens to the market of a highly demanded good (Cuban cigars?) when it is no longer allowed in the country.

SEGUE: Remind students of the background of the Non-Importation agreement of the summer of 1768 (see Power Point – it was formally agreed upon in August.) There are a few documents in the packet – John Greenough’s letters - that deal with the Tea Crisis in 1773. Make certain students understand the conflict between the smugglers and the smaller importers of London goods. Also, review the concept of “Consignee.”

You may want to show part of the power point that deals with Non-Importation at this juncture if you have not already.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS:

1. Distribute documents to students and place students in document groups.
2. For time-management, it may make sense to allow students within one group to divide the documents (or, alternatively, assign reading at home).
3. Students are to read documents and use a document analysis sheet (see appendix) to help them peruse the documents.
4. Students will discuss the “consider” questions that appear before several of the documents. One student or more should record possible answers.
5. After discussion, students will complete preparation for debate (see below.)

DEBATE QUESTION:

Students will divide into two groups. Each side will prepare one debate question and present it to the class.

1. It is 1773 and you are John Greenough. Using what you have learned about the non-importation crisis of 1768-1770 and what you have read in the transcripts, argue that your actions were justifiable.
2. It is 1773 and you are the leading patriot Samuel Adams. Argue why John Greenough should not have collected the tea for the Clarke family. Argue in favor of economic boycotts and the importance of compliance.

Non-Importation/Game Theory Documents

Document #1

John Rowe, Diary, 1768 [excerpt]

CONSIDER --John Rowe was a prominent Boston merchant. He participated early on in the patriotic effort of non-importation. How does his recounting of the Non-Importation Agreement of 1768 in March compare with John Mein's recounting of it in August? Are there any differences?

Mar. 4. [...] The Committee of Merchants appointed at their meeting March 1st 1768, having duly considered what they had in charge, do Report the following Resolutions viz

In consideration of the Great Scarcity of money which for several years has been so Sensibly felt among us & now must be Rendered much Greater not only by the immense Sums absorbed in the Collection of the Duties lately Imposed but by the great checks given thereby to Branches of Trades which yeilded us the most of our money & means of Remittance, _____ In consideration also of the great Debt now standing against us, which if we go on Increasing by the excessive Import we have been accustomed to while our Scources [sic] of Remittance are daily drying up, must terminate not only in Our Own & Our Country's Ruin but that of many of our Creditors on the other side of the Water--

In consideration farther of the Danger from some Late Measures of our losing many Inestimable Blessings & advantages of the British Constitution which Constitution we have ever Rever'd as the Basis & Security of all we enjoy in this Life, therefore Voted

1st That we will not for one Year send for any European Commodities excepting Salt, Coals, Fishing Lines, Fish Hooks, Hemp, Duck, Bar Lead, Shot, Wool Cards & Card Wire &c & that the trading towns in the province & other provinces in New England together with those in New York, New Jersey & Pennsylvania be Invited to accede hereto --

2nd That we will encourage the Produce & manufactures of these colonies by the use of them in Preference to all other manufactures --

3rd That in the Purchase of Such Articles as we shall stand in need of, we will give a Constant Preference to such Persons as shall subscribe to these Resolutions --

4th That we will in our Separate Capacities inform our several Correspondents of the Reasons & point out to them the necessity of withholding our usual Orders for their Manufactures -- the said Impediment may be removed & Trade & Commerce may again flourish --

5th That these Votes or Resolutions be Obligatory or binding on us from & after the time that these or other Singular or tending to the same Salutary Purpose be adopted by most of the Trading Towns in this & the neighboring Colonies--

6th That a Committee be appointed to Correspond with merchants in the before mentioned Towns & Provinces & forward to them the foregoing Votes, & that s'd Committee be Impowered to call a meeting of the merchants when they think necessary --
(153-155)

Oct. 16. This morning I waited on Colo. Robertson who came with Gen. Gage. He received me very Politely. I had a full hour's discourse with him abo the troops. I find him to be a Gentleman of Great Abilities & very cool & dispassionate. I took a walk & met Gen. Gage & Colo. Dalrymple. Gen. Gage engaged me to wait on him tomorrow morning.

Oct. 22. Waited on Colo. Maitland Adj't General to provide a Division for the King's Gunpowder in the Magazine. This forenoon was held a Gen. Court Martial on a soldier of the 14th who deserted. Colo. Dalrymple sat a President. I also attended Gen. Gage & Colo. Roberston. (177-178.)

Ann Rowe Cunningham, ed., *Letters and Diary of John Rowe: Boston Merchant, 1759-1762, 1764-1779*, (Boston, 1903), 153-155, 177-178.

Document #2

John Mein, *Boston Chronicle*, August 1769

John Mein, a bookstore owner whose shop Adams frequented, defends himself against the merchants' accusations that he has imported banned items. John Mein was also the publisher of the Boston Chronicle. Mein is often considered a Loyalist or Tory; however, the political content of his newspaper was very similar to other newspapers of the time. He printed letters and opinions from Whigs such as John Dickinson. John Mein, however, did have an increasingly hostile relationship with the Boston Gazette's patriotic publishers Benjamin Edes and John Gill. The Gazette's publishers refused to reveal the author of an article criticizing the Chronicle. In August 1768, merchants and traders entered into an agreement to ban imports of certain English goods that would last from 1 January 1769 to 1 January 1770. On 11 August 1769, John Mein was added to the list of importers who had broken the agreement. Here is Mein's defense of his own actions and accusations of the Patriots.

CONSIDER – What is Mein trying to prove? What evidence does he give to show that the patriots are hypocritical? Do you see any problems or shortcomings of his evidence?

***Boston Chronicle*, 17-21 August 1769**

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Copy of the Articles of Agreement concerning Non Importation, entered into and signed August 1768.

First. That we will not send for or import from Great Britain, either upon our own account, or upon commission, this fall, any other goods than what are already ordered for the fall supply. **Secondly,** That we will not send for or import any kind of goods or merchandize from Great Britain, either on our own account, or on commissions, or any otherwise, from the 1st of January 1769 to the first of January 1770. EXCEPT

Salt,
Coals,
Fish-Hooks,
Lines,
Hemp,
Duck,
Bar-Lead,
Shot,
Wool Cards,
and Card-Wire.¹

4. According to John Tyler “The patriots, on the other hand, who were eager to bring as many participants into the agreement as possible, were prepared to overlook small quantities of contraband goods. Likewise, they intended the burden of the boycott to fall on British-made textiles and the particular goods chosen for the new Townshend duties. They were ready, then, to tolerate importations of some types of hardware, without which they found it hard to live. The patriots also condoned a third category of items, such as medicines and gunpowder, that were clear necessities and that had been omitted from the hurried framing of the original agreement. Mein, however, recognized none of these distinctions, portraying all violations of the agreement as equally serious” (John W. Tyler, *Smugglers and Patriots: Boston Merchants and the Advent of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1986), 123)

Thirdly, That we will not purchase of any factor, or others, any kinds of goods imported from Great Britain, from Jan. 1769, to Jan. 1770.

Fourthly, That we will not import, on our own account, or on commission, or purchase of any who shall import from any other Colony in America, from January 1769, to Jan. 1770, any Tea, Glass, Paper, or other goods commonly imported from Gr. Britain.

Fifthly, That we will not, from and after the 1st of January 1769, import into this province any Tea, Paper, Glass, or Painters colours until the act imposing duties on those articles shall be repealed.

To the PUBLIC. August 21th , 1769

HAVING learnt, the day after my last Publication, for the first time, that the Chairman of the Merchants, really imported goods from England, preceding the year 1761, I, with the utmost readiness, admit, during the period of his Importations, he ought to be considered as a Merchant; but being now occupied in a business so very different and having ceased Importation entirely for many years - however honourable he may be by station, or however respectable in his business, -- as a Distiller, he can, at present, have no title, even to the name of Merchant.

THE PUBLIC, will no doubt perceive, that the cargoes of the vessels, are given without regard to what was excluded from or included in the Non-Importation agreement; a regard to justice inducing me to lay the whole before them --- and as the penetration of the candid readers must, often naturally, lead them to recur to the articles, agreed upon August 1768, they are, for that purpose, inserted anew in this paper.

That the "*Well Disposed Merchants*" who took the Lead at the different Meetings, have displayed ill grounded and pointed antipathy, in my case, must appear evident, as well as great partialities to others, when they allowed so many respectable and so many large Importers, as were mentioned in our last and in this Paper, to pass unnoticed. - A charge, which tho' sufficiently obvious already, shall be more fully demonstrated in the course of this laborious, yet necessary Undertaking.

Indeed these *Few "Well Disposed" Leaders*, not only, acted unjustly, with regard to me, who never was nor considered myself in the light of a Merchant; but they have also imposed upon the *really* well disposed part of the Gentlemen present at these Meetings (who implicitly trusted to their information and report), by exhibiting a partial list of the Importers, and have since, by their Advertisement, attempted to impose on the Public in general.

The Manifests of the three following Vessels will contribute to place this in a proper point of view.

(View an image of the manifest at <http://www.masshist.org/database/onview.cfm?queryID=396>)

"Copy of the Articles of Agreement. . .," *Boston Chronicle*, Number 120, 17-21 August 1769.

Boston Chronicle, 21-24 August 1769

*[Although other papers are quoted within this article, all were reprinted in the Boston Chronicle.]
John Mein reprints the non-importation agreement (as in August 17th) and then he adds:*

The following Advertisement was omitted in the *Boston Chronicle*, August 17, 1769, and is now Published, to shew that I am heartily willing to lay before the Public, all the transactions of the “Well Disposed Leaders.”

Boston, May 1st, 1769

THE Merchants of this town met according to adjournment on Thursday last, when the committee appointed to make enquiry relative to the importation of goods by the vessels lately arrived from Great-Britain, reported, that five or six persons, who were signers to the late agreement, had received a few articles (the remains of former orders) and were ready to deliver them up to the care of the committee; and that some who were not signers had imported some goods prohibited by the late agreement, which as to quality and quantity were very small.--- The Merchants then appointed a committee to confer with the persons last mentioned, and to consider what measures might be proper to take to prevent any further importation, and then adjourned their meeting to Tuesday next, (to morrow) at four o’clock, P.M. to be held at Faneuil-hall, at which time and place a general attendance of the Merchants is desired, and those who have imported in the late vessels are particularly requested to be present.

Anonymous Advertisements published in the Boston Evening Post, and Boston Gazette of Monday August 21, 1769

Mr. John Mein, Printer and Book seller from Scotland, having in his *Chronicle* of the 17th instant undertaken to vindicate his importing Goods contrary to the Agreement of the Merchants, and also furnished a partial Schedule of the Importations which have taken place from February to June last, declaring his intention to render the same compleat from the Custom-House Entries, in the course of his Papers, the Public are desired to suspend their judgment upon this Affair, as we learn the Committee of Merchants have it in their power to satisfy the most prejudiced that the account Mr. Mein has given cannot in the least invalidate the declarations that have been made from time to time on that subject, but choose to wait till Mr. Mein has finished his work, when they will doubtless undertake to undeceive them and prevent the mischief designed by his very impertinent and unjust representations of the affair. In the mean time, it may not be improper to remark, that his attempt to make the Public believe that the declarations of the Merchants in April last are untrue, because some Importations were made six weeks after that time, is very extraordinary, and discovers that he has a peculiar knack at reasoning.

From Draper's *Massa. Gazette*, April 17, 1769²

The Committee of Inspection are not ready to make Report who are Importers in Capt. *Scott* from *London*, but are in expectation of having it ready by Monday, when the Public will have a true account of them and their Goods; as also of the Importers by Capt. *Smith*, as soon as possible.

BOSTON, August 21, 1769

According to a few lines inserted in Mr. Draper's paper of the 17th inst. that the Committee were in hopes they should be ready against Monday to give the Public an account of Capt. *Scott*'s cargo, (which being the more immediately under their inspection) which is agreeable to their own determination, and not from any thing Mr. *Mein* was pleased to publish, as to goods imported conformable to the agreement of the Merchants, and those goods that are delivered up to the Committee, we shall save the Public the trouble of going over, as well as the Printers of their labour, and hope the Public will receive it with candor and truth, notwithstanding it may be Mr. *Mein* will give it another gloss: But we defy him to detect any material error, which, if any, when thoroughly examined by that critic, may be magnified a Mole-Hill to a Mountain; but, if when this comes in course with him, and there appears any thing worthy of notice, or that may not be satisfactory to the Public we shall endeavour to explain it to their satisfaction, confining ourselves to this Town, as to detecting any Importers contrary to agreement and giving account of those persons who persist in importing, and will not join with the Merchants in the agreement they have entered into for the good of their country. – They now give the Public an account of the goods imported in said Ship, for persons of this and other Towns, expecting their Committees take care of their own transgressors. -- They also insert the goods for other governments.

S. Johnson; 2 Cases, 1 Trunk, for S. Johnson of Connecticut.

T. Crowfoot R 4 Casks for Marblehead, for T. Roble.

NS 2 Cases and 1 Trunk for N. Sparhawk, Esq., Kittery, directed to the Care of John Leverett, Esq., who says they are only sundry Articles from Mr. Sparhawk's Son in London, as presents to sundry of the Family, and not for Sale.

IP 5 Bales, 1 Box, 4 Cases, 5 Trunks, 35 Chests, 43 Casks, 3 Bundles, 2 Bags, 10 Barrels Gun Powder, for Mr. Pollock of Newport.

A Diamond with a cypher in it, 3 Bales, 3 Cases, 5 Trunk, 3 Chests, 6 Casks, 1 Bag, 16 Barrells Gun Powder, for -----Newport.

NA 1 Bale, 2 Casks, N. Allen, at Shrewsbury.

LA 3 Cases shipt by a Gentleman not in Trade, to his Friend in the Country, likewise not in Trade, and supposed to be for his Family Use.

H Crowfoot W. 16 Chests Tea, for T. and E. Hutchinson.

² This excerpt is part of *Mein's* article in the *Boston Chronicle*.

To the PUBLIC [*John Mein again*]

I present my compliments to the Authors of the above Advertisements: I am really sorry they neglected to sign their names to their publications; charity herself must only impute it to forgetfulness, and far be it from me to hint that it was either owing to shame or timidity. ---- On the contrary, with real good will, I beg of the Authors to remedy this omission in their next pieces; for such naked Advertisements cannot gain any degree of credit with impartial readers.

I shall make but few strictures on these two Publications, it being beneath any man to contend with opponents sheltered under a mask: I shall however, condescend for once, and I intreat the Public carefully to read the last sentence of the first Anonymous Advertisement, and then to consult the Boston Chronicle of last Monday, in which, the manifests of two vessels, belonging to Mr. Hancock, are given; one of which vessels arrived April 10th, the other on the 18th of the said month: and also to compare the following cargo, (brought in the London Packet, Capt. Cales, which vessel was entered at the Custom House here April 19th 1769,) with the reports of the few "*Well Disposed Leaders*" which were printed May 1st and 4th, 1769. But this, as I have already declared, shall be more fully demonstrated in the course of this undertaking.

On reading the "*True Account*" given of Capt. Scott's cargo by the "*Well Disposed*" committee, I felt sentiments arise in my mind which would be painful to me to rehearse – I therefore, merely out of pity and compassion, most earnestly beg of them, for their own sake, to take their "*True Account*" again into their serious consideration, and not again present it to the public, till they have made the necessary amendments – Wishing they may adopt this advice, I shall for the present draw a veil over that Publication.

As Carriages generally take precedence in every procession, I have followed the common practice, in placing foremost the Chaise consigned to a worthy Gentleman of this Town; begging of him at the same time to account to the Public, how such a Vehicle happened to be imported amidst our resolutions of economy: I do not say it was for his own use, but why did he become a channel of conveyance for such an article of Luxury? – This really ought to be explained. – If age or infirmity render a carriage necessary, it is both just and reasonable, that our own Artists have the preference: and I can point out to the Importer, a Gentleman, in that branch of business in this Town, equal to any Artist in Great-Britain.

JOHN MEIN

"The following advertisement. . . ," *Boston Chronicle*, Number 121, 21-24 August 1769.

Document #3

Article from the *Boston Post Boy*, 6-13 December 1773

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CONSIDER—How does this article show the Patriots' (in Philadelphia) willingness to place their pecuniary interests second to their patriotic ones?

Philadelphia—Nov. 22

A correspondent observes, that at a time when almost every American pen seems to be drawn in defense of our violated rights, he is amazed that the judicious advocates for liberty should omit to give us their sage advice and opinion on the fatal consequences that must result from our large importations from Great-Britain, and our almost total neglect of our own manufactures, the most durable source of wealth and independence. He further observes, that the immense importation of London porter and English beer at this perilous crisis, is a glaring instance of the impolicy of his countrymen, who prodigally lavish their money for the emolument of a Country, at 3000 miles distance, a country that is now abridging us of our liberties, when they might have a variety of excellent beer, even porter itself, made in this city, that would not disgrace the celebrated Ben Kenten's cellar. This he thinks an ungenerous return to the public spirit of our brewers, who have not only risked large sums for rendering their business of utility to their country as well as themselves, but have on a trying occasion, sacrificed their pecuniary interest to promote public welfare.*

--He concludes by advising his countrymen not only to oppose the ministry of Great-Britain and their auxiliaries, the East-India slave-makers, with regard to the article of tea—but also to forbear all unnecessary importations – for by saving our money we may preserve the remains of our Liberty – If not regain those that are last.

*At the time of the non-importation agreement, a vessel arrived here from England loaded with malt, and although the article was at that time very much wanted, the brewers met, and in a most spirited manner resolved not to purchase any part of the cargo.

"A correspondent observes. . .," *Boston Post Boy*, Number 851, 6-13 December 1773

Documents #4a-d

Letters of John Greenough relating to the Boston Tea Party, 1774

CONSIDER –John Greenough was a merchant and Justice of the Peace in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. When the Clarkes' ship of tea, the William, was "shipwrecked" off Provincetown on 10 December 1773, Jonathan Clarke enlisted Greenough's aid to save the tea. Samuel Adams and the other patriots were furious with John Greenough. The following is a transcription of letters between John Greenough and his family about the fateful tea occurrence. What would you have done if you were John Greenough? Would you have saved the tea or dumped it? Why?

Letter from David Stoddard Greenough to John Greenough, 4 January 1774

Dear Brother,

The Report that was brought here to day by some credible Men from Truro has very much surprised me as well as all other of your Friends. That is, that you was agoing to bring one or Two Chests of that Cursed Tea to Wellfleet to sell which is the cause of my hureing Gershorn Rider to Cary this Letter to the cape to be left there for you, Earnestly to beseech of you as a Friend & brother as you Value your own Interest, Credit & the Credit of our Family not to concern yourself any ways with the Tea. If you have bought any I'de advise you Rather to sink in the sea than to bring any of it here. for my part I cant hardly believe that so good a friend to your Country as you have always porfest to be would shift sides so quick at the prospect of a Little proffitt. I had Rather give you as much as you could Reasonable suppose the profits of one or Two Chest of Tea would bee (If I am worth it) than have it said that a Brother of mine a son of our Honourable Father wer[e] bought or Sold any of the detestable Stuff or ever consern'd with it. I'de scorn to buy any of it if I might have it for 6d. a pound. We have had a Training here to day when I had an opportunity of hearing people speak their minds about it people here are universally sett against it all our principal men seem to be in a Rage about it. I have been cautious of telling your wife the Threats I have heard many of them utter against you if you brought any of the Tea into this place, but this you may depend upon that If you should be so imprudent, that you will highly displease all your Friends here and the Tea will certainly be destroyed & it is the opinion of some of your best Friends Capt. Doane for me that not only the Tea but your House & other effects will be distroyd with it & no body to pity you. — Clark' (that Tea Devil) Lodg'd at your House sunday night on his Return to Boston he told your wife of it which caus'd here great uneasiness she Desires of you not to bring one ounce here. she desired me to write to you about it I told here I would. If I had an opportunity, but seeing it has got to such a pitch I thought it my duty to hire somebody to go to lett you know the danger you will bring your self into by bringing any Tea here Mr. N. Holbrook Advised me Repeatedly to go my self or send somebody some time ago to advise you not to meddle with any Tea upon no consideration at all but I had too good an Esteem of your Virtue to believe you would concern with it till since I heard their Storery., which I pray aint be true, there is scarcely one here but what blames you for ever concerning with any of the goods much more Tea. In haste I must Conclude

Your Loveing Brother (If you don't consern with any Tea) David. Stodd. Greenough.

P.S. Your Family is all well

David Stoddard Greenough to John Greenough, 4 January 1774, John Greenough Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society [transcribed by Peter Klarnet, Alexander Autographs.]

Letter from Col. Williard Knowles to John Greenough, 1 March 1774

Sir

I Desier[sic]. that you would be So good as to Come and advise with me about matters that we may Set our Characters[sic] in a true Light the town of Eastham has passed a number of Scandales[sic] Resolution upon me I shall be much oblige to you if you will come and goe to harwich with me next thursday — I shall git E[?] Doane to go with us and hold a Conference with our good friends — I will Settasye[sic] you for your good Service — from your good friend and humble Sevt...

Col. Williard Knowles to John Greenough, 1 March 1774, John Greenough Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society [transcribed by Peter Klarnet, Alexander Autographs.]

Letter from John Greenough to Thomas Greenough, 1 March 1774 [excerpt]

[I] am sorry you should think me so abandon'd as to sell the Libertys of my Country for any Gain whatever – were it in my Power to do it – indeed I never tho't that so weighty Matters were ever committed to the Disposal of Men of my Station in Life & I apprehend that they are secur'd by Power lodg'd in Persons of higher Rank sufficient to preserve them from Destruction. I mean the Legislative & executive Courts of the Nation or if you please of this Country- and if our Liberties are sold it must be thor' their Corruption, or if destroy'd it must be by an undue Opposition to and Suppression of the Power and Authority with which they ought to be invested in Order to their defending the same Rights of every subject – I am sorry Sir that instead of the Legislative Courts of the Province, private Persons and Societys[sic] have taken upon them to say and give out what is lawfull prudent just and right for a Man to say and do and what is not – and that instead of the Executive Courts of Justice that is a Court of Indians set up to execute what Penalty they Please on the Offenders against what such private Persons & Societies...give out to be Lawful And I think their Authority is not call'd much in Question at Boston. but you all submit to be guided Rul'd & directed by them weither[sic] thro' Fear or voluntarily have forsaken the ancient Laws of our Land which our father's established and were order'd and govern'd by in their Days; and which they left...us as the foundations for the Securing of our Liberties & Properties – Thus is our Liberties destroy'd , so far as such Men who have no lawfull Power and Right, do govern and controul[sic] our private lawful Actions or the Publick Acts of Government and our Properties are become precarious and uncertain being at the disposal of these Indian Liberty Sons—can we imagine a more absolute State of Tyranny and outrageous Cruelty than when every private gang of Plunderers & Assassins may wreak[sic] their Vengeance against any Person or their Property unpunish'd; nay what greater Curse can befall us! – and yet some Persons and not a few in Boston protect and encourage such Violations of the Laws of God and this Country blasphemously & say us to as said God's People of old hese be thy Gods 0 Israel – my Importance in Life is but of little weight to the Correcting the Madness of the Times or Supporting the decay'd State of Government in this County yet I thank God who

hath endow'd me with a Power of Discerning these things and could I think I should be of any Service I would readily lend my Assistance to reform them; I would seriously ask you Sir what right power or Authority according to the Laws of God or of this Land your Indians have to abuse my Person or destroy my Property for vending any Tea (especially if it hath never paid any Duty) and if they derive that such Power & Authority from the Laws of God now of the Land Whether their usurping the same is not a greater Infringement of our Rights and Liberties and more dangerous than nay Act of the British Parliament If so might not every honest man lend his Assent & lawful Aid if need be to punish these [?] of by the Laws of his Country... if so what Law of God or this Province forbids or any way militates with the selling drinking or using Tea which any Person is justly and lawfully posséd off[sic] doing what is lawfull and right might not every honest Man to support and Comfort such an one and his friends and hold the others in Contempt and endeavor to have them lawfully punish'd for their Contumelious Behaviour? Is Tea the Cause of the Dispute between this and the Mother State or the Duty on Tea? if not Tea consider'd in itself why ought we now to curse or call that detestable, that, on which we have so often ask'd the Divine Blessing – I doubt not Sir on Considering of these Question you will be with me in Opinion that I have acted in Conformity with Laws of God and my Country in the purchasing with my Labour two Chests of damag'd Tea which never paid any Duty and I have transgress'd no Law in endeavoring to sell them again – and whose Person were very weak or ill minded who would withdraw their Affections from me on this Account. neither ought I to humble myself before them to be reinstated in their favour or affection, for this would be supporting what I think is criminal & unjust – I am oblig'd to you Sir for your Cautioning me not to come to Boston as you look upon it unsafe for me to come nor do you desire to see me untill these Things blow over. I have no Disposition to purt it in the Power of any to treat me with Contempt when I can as well avoid it– a Friend of mine the other Day was saying he would go to Boston but as they had so many new Fashion'd Laws & Punishments in force there, he did not know[?] but he might offend against some of these Laws especially as it is now out of Fashion to print and publish them as formerly – which he thot[sic] a disadvantage to those of us how live at a Distance from Boston – and believed it would confine the Trade of that Town to itself where their Laws are only fully known – on the whole I think it a dark and melancholy Day with us in this Land and your Eyes ought to be lifted upwards with our Harts to him -- him who is able to keep us from eternal Misery and Destruction if Christ shall make us free then shall we be free indeed – and this Liberty is and can only be the portion of such as believe on him and walk in Obedience to his Rules & Precepts & imitate his Life & Character. I have this moment recd. your favour of Mr. Eldridge and perceive you are not fully inform'd of the Affairs that have been transacted in this Place I would refer you to Mr. Cooper the clerk of the important Committee at Boston who hath all the Papers in his Care excepting what I deliver'd at Our first Meeting on this Affair of Tea Copy of what I then delivered I now inclose for you for your purposes[?] this was taken by the Incendiaries here as something aim'd against them and therefore follow'd the Example of their Leaders in Boston to Stick to Nothing to reproach and wound vilify the Frame and Character all those who did not think and act just as they would have then[?] I am now fully determin'd not to remove from this Place. I had thots[sic] of it some time past – a short time I hope will bring about a more regular Government than we have at present – as to the present state of Affairs here the People have nary got over the first heat of their Passion and some of our principle Persons are arming themselves against the Force of lawfull Authority by revolve to stand by

one another with their Lives & fortunes and to let no civil Officer take them for their riotous proceedings & roberys[sic] on the high Way, which you have been made acquainted with by the News Papers. at Eastham they have Association Meetings warn 'd by private Persons - & Advertisements set up for persons to meet and declare whether they are Whig for Tories. and if a stranger should come into a Tavern there he would think by the Notif[?] that one Party would speedily declare War against the other – these are the Effects of Boston Peoples putting the Defence of their Liberties & Properties in to the Hand of Mobile vulgars – and many others I could mention but I forbare I would add this one Thing further. that if something to prevent further Tumults is not soon effected I fear there will be open Murders committed by some in this part of the Province..."

John Greenough to Thomas Greenough, 1 March 1774, John Greenough Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society [transcribed by Peter Klarnet, Alexander Autographs.]

Letter from John Greenough to Thomas Greenough, 22 March 1774 [excerpt]

I hope you did not take any thing I wrote in my last Letter you as [?] as I wrote with that Freedom which you have indulged me with in Conversation my Design was to shew[sic] you my real Sentiments of the Savage Behaviour of all Mankind when retrained neither by the Laws of the Community or Nation they live under nor by the Law of God, and to them our present unhappy State being over or controul'd from doing what is in Conformity to both, by private persons or Societies thus behaving among us in the close of my last Letter I said that if something to prevent further Tumults was not Speedily effected I fear'd there would be open Murders committed by some in this part of the Province. I have now to inform you that at Eastham they had a Body Meeting as it was call'd on the 28th Feby when among other resolves it was propos'd in that Meeting that it was not proper for the Town Stock of Ammunition to be lodge'd at Colo. Knowles's house how bring an Enemy to his Country by selling & buying part of Chest of damag'd Tea — the Selectmen tho't themselves not oblig'd to obey this Resolution so far as to remove the Ammunition from the Custody of the chief Officer of the Regiment and not do it forth with divers menaces were made to awe them into the violation of their lawfull trust & Duty and on the 4th of March a Number of Persons trim'd in the modish or most devilish hew & Dress of barbarians with black faces & blacker Hearts went to the House of Mr. Smith one of the Select men in the Night Time and demanded of his Wife where he was and being told he was at neighbours House they Way laid an took him on his return home. and he not complying with their Demand, to assist in removing the Stores from the Care of Colo. Knowles and to place them in the Hands of one of the highest Incendiaries there – they were about to strip him naked and to Tarr and Feather him but on his knowing some of them by their Voice he call'd them by Name and told them that their stripping him in that cold Night would probably be his Death he being a very weakly tender Constitution, they proceeded no further than tarring his Hands & Face and then compelled him to Swear not to discover who they were that had thus inhumanely treated him — this open 'd the Eyes of many who before saw not the ill Effects of your Indians (I call them your because you do in your Letter to me) being allow'd and countenanced in lawless & outrageous Behaviour at Boston and on the 7th. of March there being a Design by the Incin[diary] Sons of Liberty to execute by further Violence in the Night what they had before in vain attempted in the 4th. instant that is to compel the Select men to go with them and

wrest the Towns Ammunition out of the Hands of Col. Knowles — about 80 or so of the principle Persons for Sobriety Virtue & of Estate in the Town assembled being headed by the Principal Military Officers in the Town and Magistrate being present they desired a Deputy Sherriff to use his Endeavours to surpress[sic] the intended Riot and they would give him all the Aid the Law directs good Subjects to afford in such Cases as being loth to shed Blood which might be the case if the Rioters proceeded to Mob Col. Knowles & beset his House, the chose a three or four Persons to wait on the Ringleaders of the Faction and to disswade[sic] them from their Purpose. they return'd but received no Satisfactory Answer — the [?] of these persons who were under Arms being to prevent the intended Riot. they waited untill late in the Night and the Rioters finding they should be defeated in the Execution of the Wicked Designs dispersed & they were who assembled to oppose them dismissed by their Officers, and to appear at the same Place the next Afternoon, when there were about 200 Persons of the Militia belonging to that Town that appear'd under their Military Officers to assist the Peace Officers in preventing further Riots — several Persons Suppos'd to be concern 'd in the Mob on the 4th inst. and in the intended one the last Evening were persuwaded[sic] that Day and did come to the Deputy Sheriffs House where the Inhabitants were drawn up to assist him in his Duty — and they declaring they would surcease all further Mobbish & Riotous & tumultuous behaviour and promising to endeavour to prevent it in others — the Inhabitants then retired peaceably to their Several Houses, and thus hath ended the Authority of Indians in making & executing their Laws at Eastham, and there hath since been the most quiet Annual Meeting there that was were known, and things go on in the proper Course being guided by lawfull Authority how soon the Example of the virtuous Behaviour of the Inhabitants of Eastham may be followed by other Towns where the Indian Constitution hath been set up. I am not able to say but this I know that if your People at Boston could be made sensible of the amazing alteration there is from Rioting & Tumult to Peace and good Order in that Town they would at once snatch from the Hands of those Savage Barbarians in the Power they have taken from the Peace Officers and restore it to them again and destroy the Authority & Government they have treasonably usurped & now exercise over the Inhabitants of Boston & other Places — if any thing I have said Seems to you treating Some of the Inhabitants of Boston injuriously I would only say that their Conduct in these Affairs deserved to be in a proper Light to be viewed by the Glasses of the Law of God and the Laws of Our Community. and if they will not bare examination let those step forth whose Business it is and ought to be to amend such Things and let every good Subject aid them therein — then may I and thousands of others who are menaced and kept from carrying on our lawfull Business be in safety when we are transacting the same at Boston — and the Trade of the Town would proportionally increase with good Order & a peaceable Government as established by Law — and then would every Person see the banefull Effects of such Measures as do destroy the very Essence of all our Liberties and vainly striving there by to free ourselves from paying Duties impos'd by the British Parliament[. . .]

John Greenough to Thomas Greenough, 22 March 1774, John Greenough Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society [transcribed by Peter Klarnet, Alexander Autographs.]

Document #5

Letter from Thomas Hutchinson to William Penn, 26 May 1770 [excerpt]

CONSIDER -- Thomas Hutchinson served as the royal governor of Massachusetts from 1769 until the Revolution. His sons were merchants who were very much involved in the tea trade. His letter books (copies of letters sent and received) are filled with his opinions on the merchants during the time. The following letter is addressed to Governor Penn of Pennsylvania about the merchant agreements in Philadelphia. How seriously did the governor take the colonial threats of non-importation?

Boston 26 May 1770

Sir,

The persons who under the name of Merchants have carried on a Correspondence with such as call themselves a Committee of Merchants in Philadelphia are now divided and the real Merchants who in the height of their zeal called in the populace to their aid are now restrained by the populace from acting according to their Sentiments. Near 50 Merchants on Tuesday last met in the morning and agreed to a free Importation of all goods except Teas but through timidity made some sort of condition that the Trade in general approved of it. In the afternoon there was a Meeting of the Inhabitants in general and they disagreed to it but it seems to be beyond doubt that by far the majority of the Merchants who were present at this meeting were in favour of it but were over ruled by persons not in Trade and many of them without Property. The Letter from the Merchants in Philadelphia is kept private. Letters which encourage opposition to Parliamentary Authority are immediately published.

I suspect the Merchants in Philadelphia will be deceived by the accounts/transmitted from hence and made to believe that the major part of the Merchants are still in favour of non Importation. There are 3 or 4 principal houses which I know to be for importation but have not courage to appear. If your Merchants will not suffer themselves to be imposed upon but will adhere to the Sentiments which they have expressed these principal houses will I think take courage and it may break up the Confederacy [. . .]

Thomas Hutchinson to William Penn, 26 May 1770, *Thomas Hutchinson Letterbooks*. Vol. 26: 494-495, [transcriptions only], Massachusetts Historical Society.

Document #6

Letter from Thomas Hutchinson to Cadwallader Colden, 2 June 1770

Boston 2 June 1770

Sir

The Combinations in the several Colonies against the Importation of Goods from Great Britain must appear to all unprejudiced persons to be unwarrantable and subversive of Government. In this Province they have been the source of most of our disorders. I can have no aid from any part of the authority established by the Constitution in suppressing them. I now despair of any thing from Parliament the present Session. So wild a Scheme has brought great distress up on the labouring people as well as the Traders in this town and I am well informed that the major part of the Merchants wish to see the Trade free from restraint but having in the heighth of their zeal called in the populace as their servants are forced now to submit to them as Masters. By a vote of the populace last week near 50 merchants who had agreed to a general importation in the Fall were compelled to desist from any steps to carry their agreement into execution and about 30 more who are of the same sentiments with the 50 are deterred from making them publick. Six or eight persons who have the command of the populace and who are not Merchants nor persons of property take upon themselves to publish to the World in print and to convey by Letters to their Correspondents in the other Colonies from time to time very false accounts of the state of Affairs in this Colony. I have no doubt that they receive and publish here as false accounts from the other Governments. They have sometimes from some of the Colonies and they had particularly last week from Philadelphia such accounts from Merchants there, as do not tend to promote their plan. These they suppress. I wrote to Governor Penn and gave him a just account of our Affairs in hopes some use might be made of it to undeceive the people there. It is with the same view with respect to New York that I give you this trouble.

The Merchants at Newport are much offended with the people of this Town and Governor Wanton writes favorably of the prospect of a total breach.

There is a greater appearance of jealousies of each other in the combind parties in the several Colonies than I have known since they began. If any thing occurs to you which can be done by the servants of the Crown to dissolve these Confederacies I shall be extremely obliged to you to communicate it. The continuance of them must be of most fatal consequence. In the present State of Affairs the less such a Correspondence is known the more success will probably attend it. I am very respectfully

Sir Your most obedient humble servant