

Document Section 5

Tea Party Perspectives

GOAL: Students will read primary accounts of the days right before the Boston Tea Party and about the Boston Tea Party itself in order to appreciate and comprehend the array of interpretation that surrounds this event.

FOCUS:

1. Stage a five minute “event” in the classroom. Catch the students off guard (maybe have a teacher or other students interrupt your beginning of lesson) with a harmless (don’t want to scare anyone) happening at school. For example—some extra students could come in and take some items from the room as they cause a scene.
2. Let the students bear witness to the event. Then have the students write a five minute response to what they saw. Share the responses. Discuss tone of the responses, point of view, etc.
3. Quick notes/mini lecture/discussion about the days before the Boston Tea Party. For example, students need to know why the Tea Party occurred on December 16th (the ships had run out of time—colonists would have to pay the tax.) Review some of the key players that are mentioned in the documents.

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 to help them peruse the documents.
4. Students will discuss the “Consider” questions that appear before several of the documents (some documents share one “Consider” question.) One student or more should record possible answers.
5. After discussion, students will complete preparation for debate (see below).

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

1. You represent the Loyalist point of view. The Boston Tea Party could have been prevented – the Patriots were unreasonable in their demands and ultimately should be held responsible for the destruction of property.
2. You represent the Patriots. The Boston Tea Party could have been prevented if Governor Hutchinson and the consignees met the minimal demands of the Patriots.

Tea Party Perspectives: Documents

CONSIDER -- Thomas Newell and Jonathan Rowe were successful 18th century Boston merchants. How would you characterize their similarities and their differences? Both were supporters of the Patriots, but which diary do you think reveals a hesitation? Why? Also, read these diaries not just for their telling of the destruction of the tea, but for a glimpse into the time period. What daily events did the diarists note? Is this type of diary similar to modern diaries? Why or why not?

Document #1:

Thomas Newell, Diary, 1 November - 30 December 1773 [excerpt]

[Day] Wind

November begins on Monday, hath 30 days.

- 1 S.S.E. Monday, cloudy.
- 2 N.E. Tuesday, cloudy. A number of printed hand [bills] were pasted up at the corner of most of the streets in town, desiring all the sons of freedom to meet at the Tree of Liberty, on Wednesday, -- signed "O.C."
- 3 N.W. Wednesday, pleasant. Town's sons of freedom mustered at Liberty Tree. waited on the consignees of Tea to resign; they would not.
- 4 S. Thursday, cloudy.
- 5 S.E. Friday. Town meeting concerning what to do with consignees of tea. At said meeting, a committee was chosen to wait on consignees Their answer was such that the town voted that it was daringly affrontive to the town. [. . .]

- 17 S.E. Wednesday, pleasant; very warm. This evening a number of persons assembled before Richard Clarke's, Esq., one of the consignees of tea; they broke the windows, and did other damage (I was at fire meeting this evening.)
- 18 N.E. Thursday, cold. Town meeting. A committee was appointed to acquaint the tea commissioners it was the desire of the town that they would now give a final answer to their request; viz., whether they would resign their appointment. Upon which, they sent into the town the following letter, viz.:

Sir, -- In answer to the message we have this day received from the town, we beg leave to say that we have not yet received any orders from the East India Company respecting the expected teas; but we are now further acquainted that our friends in England have entered into penal engagements in our behalf, merely of a commercial nature, which puts it out of our power to comply with the request of the town. We are, Sir,

Your most humble servants,
Richard Clarke and Sons
Benjn. Faneuil, Jr., for self and Joshua Winslow, Esq.
Elisha Hutchinson, for my brother and self.
Hon. John Hancock, Esq., Moderator of town meeting, assembled at Faneuil Hall.

- Thee answer was voted not satisfactory, and the meeting was immediately dissolved. At noon was launched, at Tyler's yard, a vessel across the street. Very fine launching; a great number of people to see it. [. . .]
- 27 N.E. Saturday, cloudy; P.M. rained. Selectmen set this evening with consignees of tea.
- 28 N.E. Sunday, pleasant. Captain Hall, from London in eight weeks; brought 114 chests of the so-much-detested East India Company's tea. The selectmen set this day. P.M. went to Cooper's meeting; he preached.
- 29 W. Monday, fine clear weather. This morning the following notification was posted up in all parts of the town, viz.:

"Friends, Brethren, Countrymen, -- That worst of plagues, the detested tea, shipped for this port by the East India Company, is now arrived in this Harbor. The hour of destruction or manly opposition to the machinations of tyranny stares you in the face. Every friend to his country, to himself, and posterity, is now called upon to meet at Faneuil Hall, at nine o' clock this day (at which time the bells will ring), to make a united and successful resistance to this last, worst, and destructive measure of administration."

People accordingly meet at Faneuil Hall, and voted that the tea now arrived in Captain Hall shall be returned to the place from whence it came, at all events. The hall could not contain all the people. (They immediately adjourned to the Old South meeting-house.) They voted to adjourn to the O. South. It was voted that a watch be appointed to consist of twenty-five men. Captain Proctor was appointed to be captain of the watch for this night (of the twenty-five men appointed), then the meeting was adjourned to the next morning, at nine o'clock.

- 30 S.W. Tuesday, pleasant. This morning the people met according to adjournment. The governor sent a proclamation, commanding all people there assembled forthwith to disperse, and to surcease all further unlawful proceedings at their utmost peril. After it was read by the sheriff there was immediately a loud and very general hiss. A motion was then made, and the question put whether the assembly would disperse according to the governor's requirement. It passed in the negative. At night, the meeting was dissolved.

December begins on Wednesday, hath 31 Days.

- 1 S. Wednesday, pleasant; at night rain.
- 2 E. Thursday, cloudy; P.M. rain. Captain Bruce, eight weeks from London, with 116 chests of that detestable tea. This evening was at St. Andrew's Lodge. I was chosen Junior Deacon of said Lodge.
- 3 N.E. Friday, rain. This evening I was one of the watch on board of Captain Bruce (with twenty-four more), that has tea for Clarkes & Co.
- 4 N.W. Saturday, fine, clear; windy. -- Captain Coulson, from Bristol. [. . .]

14 SE Tuesday. Cloudy. This morning the following hand-bills were posted up, viz.:

“Friends, Brethren, Countrymen, -- The perfidious act of your restless enemies to render ineffectual the late resolutions of the body of the people demand your assembling at the Old South meeting-house, precisely at two o’clock at which time the bells will ring.”

(My uncle at council at Dorchester turned out their minister, Bowman.)

The sons of freedom accordingly meet at Old South. Adjourned till Thursday.
15 S.E. Wednesday, cloudy.

15 E. Thursday, rain. Town and country sons mustered according to adjournment. The people ordered Mr. Rotch, owner of Captain Hall’s ship, to make a demand for a clearance of Mr. Harrison, the collector of the custom-house (and he was refused a clearance for his ship). The body desired Mr. Rotch to protest against the custom-house, and apply to the governor for his pass for the castle. He applied accordingly, and the governor refused to give him one. The people, finding all their efforts to preserve the East India Company’s tea, at night dissolved the meeting. But behold what followed the same evening: a number of brave men (some say Indians), in less than three hours emptied every chest of tea on board the three ships, commanded by Captains Hall, Bruce, and Coffin (amounting to 342 chests), into the sea [. . .]

28 N. Tuesday, snowed very hard all day. My dear Hannah very unwell; out of her head most of this evening.

Last evening Mr. Paul Revere returned here from New York. (The news of the destruction of the tea here gave great satisfaction to all the friends to Liberty.) At York, Governor Tryon has engaged to send the tea back to the place from whence it came. (Upon this news, all the bells in town were rung this morning).

29 S. Friday, cloudy. At noon I went over to Charlestown to see the tea burnt there. The Charlestown sons treated the Boston people very gently. (Punch and wine at their own expense – of Charlestown)

End of this year, 1773

DOCUMENT #2

John Rowe, Diary, 18 October – 31 December 1773

CONSIDER - John Rowe was a prominent Boston merchant who was engaged early on in the Patriot effort of non-importation. Yet, he had business dealings (he was a supplier) with the British troops. His ardent patriotism mellowed over time.¹ At the time of the Tea Party, Rowe was said to have made a reference to tea and salt the night before the tea party took place. There are some clues in this diary as to whether Rowe took part in the Tea Party. What do you think they are?

Oct 18. Mr. Finlay from Quebeck paid me a visit.

Oct 21. Levi Ames was hanged this afternoon--many Thousand Spectators attended the Execution—I dind at home with Mr. Finlay of Quebeck.

Oct. 25. Kings Accession to the Throne—The Cadets Under Arms—General Muster at Cambridge.

Nov 2. This morning the Revd. Mr. Walter & Mr. Parker paid me a visit on affairs of our Church—When I got abroad I found an advertisement stuck up at almost every Corner as Follows

“To the Freemen of this & the neighboring Towns Gentlm., you are desired to meet at Liberty Tree this day at Twelve of Clock at noon, then & there to hear the Persons to whom the Tea is shipped by the East India Company, make a publick Resignation of their Office as Consignees upon Oath & also swear that they will re-ship any Tea that may be Consigned to them by said Company by the first Vessell sailing for London.”

Boston Nov 3rd 1773-- O.C. Secretary.

Nov 3. This day the Inhabitants of the Town are alarmed Occasioned by the advertisement of yesterday--The Gentlemen to whom the tea was Supposed to be Consigned did not obey the Summons & make their Appearance at Liberty Tree, upon which the Sons of Liberty appointed a Committee to go & wait on them to know their Determination, upon which the Committee with a large Concourse of people went from Liberty Tree to the store of Mr. Richd. Clark & Sons at the Bottom of King Street where they found Mr. Richd. Clark, Mr. Benjn. Faneuil the Governour, two Sons, Mr. Jos. Winslow of Marshfield who are the Gentlemen These Teas are supposed to be Consigned to. There were several of their Friends there with them, Colo. Hatch of Dorchester, Judge Lee of Cambridge, Mr. Nat Cary, Mr. Thos. Laughton, & many others—Mr. Mollineux as Chairman of this Committee Read to them a Paper & produced another which they Required them to sign &c—Mr. Richd. Clark & the other Gentlemen gave them for answer--they would not Comply with their Request or words to that purpose—this was an Unexpected answer to them & has given them much Displeasure The principal People that accompanied Mr. Mollineux were as Follows—Mr. Saml. Adams, Mr. Wm. Dennie, Mr. John Pitts, Colo. Heath of Roxbury, Dr. Church, Dr.

¹ John W. Tyler, *Smugglers and Patriots: Boston Merchants and the Advent of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1986), 121.

Warren, Dr. Young, Capt. Jno. Matchet, Capt. Hopkins, Nat Barker, Gabriel Johnnot, Ezekl. Cheever & about five hundred more as near I could guess—The same pieces was posted up this day as yesterday with this addition—Shew me the Man that dare take this down—I spent the evening at the Bunch of Grapes, Colo. Ingersoll with Treas. Gray, Thos. Gray, James Warden, Nat Cary, Geo. Erving. Melabiah Bourne. Jos. Scot, Jos. Blanchard Thos. Brattle, Tuth. Hubbard, Jos. Winslow, Jos. Golthwait John Cotton, Solo Davis, Edwd. Davis, Wm. Davis & Saml. Quincy.

Nov 4. The Town very Quiet this day—I dined at Bracketts on Boston Neck on Turtle & Spent the evening at the Possee. Thos. Palmer Esq has his Ball to Night at Concert Hall.

Nov 5. This day there is to be a Town Meeting--Mr. Palmer's Ball was very Brilliant, there were Upwards of Two hundred Gentlemen & Ladies—Very quiet for a Pope Night.

Nov 6. Town Meeting again this forenoon.

Nov 11. The Geese flew to the So[outh]ward yesterday.

Nov 12. The Govr. sent Colo. Hancock an order for him to hold his Company in Readiness.

Nov. 17. This morning Capt. Scot arrived from London he Brings advice that Hall, Loring, Coffin & Bruce are to Bring the Tea from the East India Company—this a measure that is Generally disapproved & will Remain a Great Occasion of Disagreement between England & America.

Nov. 18. Last night a Considerable Body of People paraded thro' the Streets & attacked the House of Mr. Richd. Clark. One of his Family fired a Gun from the House but luckily did not Hurt—they Broke all his Windows & Window Frames—but very little other Damage—This morning a Town Meeting was called on this & the Tea Affair--Another Committee Chose—the Gentlemen to whom the Tea is Consigned are still Resolved to Pursue such orders as they may receive.

Nov. 19. This day the Gentlemen to whom the Tea is Consigned Petitioned the overnour & Council Relative their affairs.

Nov 21. Letters from Dear Sucky Inman.

Nov 23. The Governour & Council met this morning on the Tea Matters.

Nov 25. Thanksgiving—Mr. Walter read prayers & preached a most charming Sermon Suitable to this Order of Government from the 92nd Psalm 21st 22nd Verses.

No 27. This day is my Birthday—I am fifty eight years old—I am at present very hearty & strong—but in my knees—Rather Feeble. I bless God for all his Mercies to me.

Nov 28. Sunday—This morning was Brot. me a threatening letter Signed Determined which is on File—This agitated my mind & I did not go to Church—Captain hall arriv'd fr. London—Great Noise abo. the Tea on board Capt. Hall.

Nov 29. This morning there were Papers stuck up to the following Purpose “Friends, Brethren, Countrymen! “That worst of Plagues The Detestable Tea, ship'd for this Port by the East India Company is now arriv'd in this harbour , the Hour of Destruction or manly Opposition to the Machinations of Tyranny Stares you in the Face: every Friend to his Country to himself & to Prosperity is now called upon to meet at Fanewill Hall at nine of Clock this Day (at which time the Bells will begin to Ring) to make a United & Successful Resistance to this last worst & most Destructive Measure of Administration.

Boston Novr. 29, 1773.

In consequence of the above notification about one thousand People met at Faneuill Hall where they past a Vote that they would at all events Return this Tea—from Faneuill Hall they adjourn'd to the Old South Meeting. Afternoon they met again & adjourn'd until the morning—there were in the meeting this afternoon abo. Twenty five hundred People as near as I could guess.

Nov 30. The Body met again this morning. The Govr. sent them a message advising them to depart on their Perill—they took but little notice of the message—they met again this afternoon. I told them that I had purchased a Cargo for Capt. Bruce' Ship, that it was on the wharf & that Captain Bruce when he arrived would apply to the Body & that I would endeavour to prevail on him to act with Reason in this Affair & that I was very sorry he had any Tea on Board--& which is very True for it hath given me great Uneasiness. I staid some time at the Meeting & was Chose a Committee Man much against my will but I dare not say a word. After Dinner I was sent for by the Body by Two Messengers John Ingersoll and Jos. Eyres. This was at the motion of Mr. Hancock. I wish he had Omitted it.

Dec 1. Met the Committee, present Sam Adams, Jno. Hancock, Jonathan Williams & myself.

Dec 2. Capt. Bruce arriv'd this morning from London.

Dec 3. This morning Capt. Bruce & I were sent for by the Committee Relative the Tea on board him they ordered him to Griffins Wharff & gave him the same Directions as to Capt. Hall.

Dec 6. Spent the evening at Col. Ingersoll's with “The Five Club” Present, Dr. Wm. Loyd, Mr. Geo Bethune, Mr. Timo Finch, Mr. Secretary Flucker, Mr. Treas. Gray, Mr. Thos. Boylston, Colo. Solomon Davis, Mr Melabiah Bourn, myself & Mr. Inman. Mr. John Brown Voted a member. The Revd. Mr. Morehead was buried this afternoon his Bearers were, Dr. Pemberton, Dr. Eliot, Mr. Bacon, Dr. Mather, Mr. Stillman, Mr. Lathrop. A Great Concourse of people attended this Funeral.

Dec 7. Afternoon I attended the Funeral of Mr. Robt. Jenkins he being a Brother was Buried in Form, the Masons of the Several Lodges walking in Procession with their Jewels & White Aprons. I was Pallholder with Bro. Price, Bro. Warren, Bro. Box, Bro. Cutler & Bro. McNeal.

Dec 8. Capt. Coffin arrived in Nantasket Road with the Small Pox & part of the Tea.

Dec 11. This forenoon a Committee was sent to me abo. Bruce's Ship, Dr. Warren, Wm. Mollineux, John Potts, to know when she would be unloaded & many other Questions.

Dec 14. The Body of the people met at Dr. Sewall's meeting.

Dec 15. An acct. came this evening that Young Capt. Loring was cast away on the Back of Cape Cod last Friday.

Dec 16. I being a little Unwell staid at home all Day & all the evening. The Body meeting in the Forenoon adjourn'd until afternoon. Broke up at Dark. Several Things passed between Mr. Rotch & them. A number of People appearing in Indian Dresses went on board the three Ships Hall, Bruce & Coffin, they opened the Hatches, hoisted out the Tea & flung it overboard—this might I believe have been prevented. I am sincerely sorry for the Event. Tis said near two thousand People were present at this affair.

Dec 17. I am still unwell & staid at home all day. My New Ship, the Montague, was launched this day at Walker's Yard.

Dec 18. Miss Betty Inches was buried this afternoon. The affair of Destroying the Tea makes Great Noise in the Town. Tis a Disastrous Affair & some People are much Alarmed. I can truly say, I know nothing of the Matter nor who were concerned in it. I would rather have lost five hundred Guineas than Bruce should have taken any of this Tea on board his Ship.

Dec 20. My nephew Jack came to Town from Salem this afternoon.

Dec 25. Christmas Day. I went to Church this morning. Mr. Walter read prayers & preached a most excellent sermon. We collected in old tenor 400-8/ for the Benefit of the Poor.

Dec 26. Exceedingly windy & stormy—its Blown down many Turrets & done Damage among the Shipping at Long Wharff & Tillstons & Blown off the Tiles from my house.

Dec 27. St John's Day. I dined at Colo. Ingersoll's with the Brethren Free Masons under my Jurisdiction (Present 34)

Dec 31. The People of Charlestown collected what Tea they could find in The Town & burnt it in the View of a thousand Spectators. There was found in the House of One Withington of Dorchester about half a Chest of Tea—the people gathered together &

took the Tea, Brought it into the Common of Boston & Burnt it this night about Eleven of Clock This is supposed to be part of the Tea that was taken out of the Ships and floated over to Dorchester.

Ann Rowe Cunningham, ed., *Letters and Diary of John Rowe* (Boston, 1903).

Document #3
John Adams, Diary, 17-18 December 1773

CONSIDER – John Adams was a lawyer, not a merchant. Does his recounting of December 16th play out differently from the other Patriots? Where does he find fault in the destruction of the tea?

1773. DECR. 17TH.

Last Night 3 Cargoes of Bohea Tea² were emptied into the Sea. This Morning a Man of War sails.

This is the most magnificent Movement of all. There is a Dignity, a Majesty, a Sublimity, in this last Effort of the Patriots, that I greatly admire. The People should never rise, without doing something to be remembered -- something notable And striking. This Destruction of the Tea is so bold, so daring, so firm, intrepid and inflexible, and it must have so important Consequences, and so lasting, that I cant but consider it as an Epocha in History.

This however is but an Attack upon Property. Another similar Exertion of popular Power, may produce the destruction of Lives. Many Persons wish, that as many dead Carcasses were floating in the Harbour, as there are Chests of Tea: -- a much less Number of Lives however would remove the Causes of all our Calamities.

The malicious Pleasure with which Hutchinson the Governor, the Consignees of the Tea, and the officers of the Customs, have stood and looked upon the distresses of the People, and their Struggles to get the Tea back to London, and at last the destruction of it, is amazing. Tis hard to believe Persons so hardened and abandoned.

What Measures will the Ministry take, in Consequence of this? Will they resent it? will they dare to resent it? will they punish Us? How? By quartering Troops upon Us? -- by annulling our Charter? -- by laying on more duties? By restraining our Trade? By Sacrifice of Individuals, or how.

The Question is whether the Destruction of this Tea was necessary? I apprehend it was absolutely and indispensably so. -- They could not send it back, the Governor, Admiral and Collector and Comptroller would not suffer it. It was in their Power to have saved it- but in no other. It could not get by the Castle, the Men of War &c. Then there was no other Alternative but to destroy it or let it be landed. To let it be landed, would be giving up the Principle of Taxation by Parliamentary Authority, against which the Continent have struggled for 10 years, it was loosing all our labour for 10 years and subjecting ourselves and our Posterity forever to Egyptian Taskmasters -- to Burthens, Indignities, to Ignominy, Reproach and Contempt, to Desolation and Oppression, to Poverty and Servitude.

² Bohea Tea was the most popular tea from India that the Bostonians drank.

But it will be said it might have been left in the Care of a Committee of the Town, or in Castle William. To this many Objections may be made.

Deacon Palmer and Mr. Is. Smith dined with me, and Mr. Trumble came in. They say, the Tories blame the Consignees, as much as the Whiggs do -- and say that the Governor will loose his Place, ~~by~~ for not taking the Tea into his Protection before, by Means of the Ships of War, I suppose, and the Troops at the Castle. I saw him this Morning pass my Window in a Chariot with the Secretary. And by the Marching and Countermarching of Councillors, I suppose they have been framing a Proclamation, offering a Reward to discover the Persons, their Aiders, Abettors, Counsellors and Consorters, who were concerned in the Riot last Night.

Spent the Evening with Cushing, Pemberton and Swift at Wheelwrights. Cushing gave us an Account of Bollans Letters -- of the Quantity of Tea the East India Company had on Hand -- 40,00000 weight, that is Seven Years Consumption -- two Millions Weight in America.

1773. DECR. 18. SATURDAY.

J. Quincy met me this Morning and after him Kent, and told me that the Governor said Yesterday in Council, that the People had been guilty of High Treason, and that he would bring the Attorney General on Monday to convince them that it was so -- and that Hancock said, he was for having a Body Meeting to take off that Brother in Law of his.

John Adams diary 19, 16 December 1772 - 18 December 1773 [electronic edition]. *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*. Massachusetts Historical Society. <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

Document #4

Letter from John Adams to James Warren, 17 December 1773

Boston Decr 17 1773

Dear Sir

The Dye is cast: The People have passed the River and cutt away the Bridge: last Night Three Cargoes of Tea, were emptied into the Harbour. This is the grandest, Event, which has ever yet happened Since, the Controversy, with Britain, opened!

The Sublimity of it, charms me!

For my own Part, I cannot express my own Sentiments of it, better than in the Words of Coll Doane to me, last Evening –Balch Should repeat them – The worst that can happen, I think, Says he in Consequence of it, will be that the Province must pay for it. Now, I think the Province, may pay for it, if it is burn'd as easily as if it is drank –and I think it is a matter of indifference whether it is drank or drowned. The Province must pay for it, in Either Case. But there is this Difference. I believe, it will take them 10 Years to get the Province to pay for it. If so, we shall Save 10 Years Interest of the Money. Whereas if it is drank it must be paid for immediatly. Thus He-However, He agreed with me that the Province, would never pay for it. And also in this that the final Ruin, of our Constitution of Government, and of all American Liberties, would be the certain Consequence of Suffering it to be landed.

Governor Hutchinson and his Family and Friends will never have done, with their good services to Great Britain and the Colonies! But for him, this Tea might have been Saved to the East India Company. Whereas this Loss if the rest of the Colonies Should follow our Example will in the opinion of many Persons bankrupt the Company. However, I dare Say, that the Governors, and Consignees, and Custom House Officers, in the other Colonies will have more Wisdom than ours have had, and take effectual Care that their Tea shall be sent back to England untouched. If not it will as surely be destroyed there as it has been here.

Threats, Phantoms, Bugbears, by the million, will be invented and propagated among the People upon this occasion. Individuals will be threatened with Suits and Prosecutions. Armies and Navies will be talked of – military Execution—Charters annull'd—Treason—Tryals in England and all that – But-these Terrors, are all but Imaginations. Yet if they should become Realities they had better be Suffered, than the great Principle, of Parliamentary Taxation given up.

The Town of Boston, was never more Still and calm of a Saturday night than it was last Night. All Things were conducted with great order, Decency and *perfect Submission to Government*. No Doubt, we all thought the Administration in better Hands, than it had been.

Please to make Mrs. Adams's most respectfull Compliments to Mrs. Warren and mine.

I am your Friend,

John Adams

CONSIDER – In Documents #5 and 6, the story of the fate of the consignees unfolds. As you read think about whether the Council (comprised mostly of Patriots), should grant authority to protect the consignees. What were the dangers to the consignees?

Document #5

“The Petition of Richard Clarke & Sons of Benjamin Faneuil, and Thomas and Elisha Hutchinson,” 13 December 1773

To His Excellency the GOVERNOR, And the Honorable his Majesty’s Council,
The Petition of Richard Clarke & Sons, of Benjamin Faneuil, and Thomas and Elisha Hutchinson.

That the Honorable East India Company in London have shipt a considerable quantity of Tea for the Port of Boston, and as your Petitioners are made to understand will be consigned to their address for sale.

That some of your Petitioners have in consequence of this been cruelly insulted in their persons and property – That they have had insulting and incendiary Letters left and thrown into their Houses in the night, That they have been repeatedly attack’d by a large body of Men, That one of the Houses of your Petitioners was assaulted in the night by a tumultuous and riotous Assembly of people & violent attempts made to force the House for the space of two hours that have greatly damaged the same.

That they are threatned in their persons and property, and further with the destruction of the said Tea on its arrival into Port. And that the Resolves and proceedings of the Town at their meetings on the 5th and 18th inst. are intended to be expressive of the general sense of the Town, to which we beg leave to refer your Excellency and the Honorable Board.

Your Petitioners therefore beg leave to resign themselves and their property committed to their care to your Excellency and Honors as the Guardians and protectors of the people, humbly praying that measures may be directed to for the landing and securing the Teas until your Petitioners can be at liberty openly and safely to dispose of the same or until they can receive directions from their Constituents.

*Richard Clarke & Sons,
Benjamin Faneuil jun.
Tho. And Elisha Hutchinson.*

“The Petition of Richard Clarke & Sons of Benjamin Faneuil, and Thomas and Elisha Hutchinson,” *Boston Gazette*, 13 December 1773.

Document #6
The Governor's Council notes, Nov. 19, 1773

CONSIDER – The Council and Governor Hutchinson did not agree on how to deal with the impending Tea Crisis.

At a Council held at the Council Chamber in Boston
Upon Friday the 19th Day of November, 1773

PRESENT

His Excellency Thomas Hutchinson, Esq.; Governor
Isaac Royall James Bowdoin James Pitts
John Erving, Esq. James Russell, Esq. Samuel Dexter
William Brattle James Otis

His Excellency represented to the Council the tumults and disorders prevailing in the Town of Boston and required their advice upon measures proper for preserving the peace and for supporting the authority of Government – whilst the Council were debating on the subject a Petition from Richard Clarke, Benjamin Faneuil and Messrs. Thomas and Elisha Hutchinson to the Governor and Council was presented setting forth, that the honorable East India Company in London have shipp'd a considerable quantity of Tea for the Port of Boston which they are made to understand will be consigned to their address for sale, and that some of them have in consequence of this been cruelly insulted in their persons and property; they therefore beg leave to resign themselves and the property committed to their care to the Governor and Council as the Guardians and protectors of the people, and pray that measures may be directed to for the landing and securing the Teas untill they can be at liberty openly and safely to dispose of the same, or until they can receive directions from their Constituents – After long debate it was proposed and agreed that his Excellency be desired to appoint a future day for the Council to sit, and he appointed Tuesday the 23d instant, and the Council adjourned the further consideration to that time accordingly [. . .]

Monday November 29, 1773	Present in Council
His Excellency Thomas Hutchinson, Esq.; Governor	
Samuel Danforth James Bowdoin George Leonard	
Isaac Royall, Esq. James Russell, Esq. Artemas Ward, Esq.	
John Erving James Pitts John Winthrop	
	Same Dexter

His Excellency directed that the Council proceed upon the business for which it stands adjourned – After debate upon the report of the Committee, the Question, whether it be accepted, was put, and it passed unanimously in the affirmative, as the advice of Council to his Excellency, in the words following, viz.

“Previous to the consideration of the Petition before the Board they would make a few observations occasioned by the subject of it. The situation of things between Great

Britain and the Colonies has been for some years past very unhappy. Parliament on the one hand has been taxing the Colonies, and they, on the other, have been petitioning and remonstrating against it, apprehending they have constitutionally an exclusive right of taxing themselves, and that without such a right their condition would be but little better than slavery.

Possessed of these sentiments, every new measure of Parliament tending to establish and confirm a Tax on them renews and increases their distress; and it is particularly increased by the Act lately made empowering the East-India Company to ship their Tea to America. This Act in a commercial view they think introductive of monopolies and tending to bring on them the extensive evils thence arising: but their great objection to it, is from its being manifestly intended (tho' that intention is not expressed therein) more effectually to secure the payment of the duty on Tea laid by an Act passed in the 7th year of his present Majesty intituled "An Act for granting certain duties in the British Colonies and plantations in America"; which Act in its operation deprives the Colonists of the right above-mentioned (the exclusive right of taxing themselves) which they hold to be so essential an one, that it cannot be taken away or given up without their being degraded or degrading themselves below the character of Men. It not only deprives them of that right, but enacts that the monies arising from the duties granted by it may be applied "as his Majesty or his successors shall think proper or necessary for defraying the charges of the administration of Justice and the support of the Civil Government within all or any of the said Colonies or Plantations."

This clause of the Act has already operated in some of the Colonies and in this Colony in particular, with regard to the support of Civil Government, and thereby has operated in diminution of its Charter Rights to the great grief of the good people of it, who have been and still are greatly alarmed by repeated reports that it is to have a further operation with respect to the defraying the charge of the administration of Justice, which would not only be further diminution of those Rights, but tend in all constitutional Questions, and in many other cases of importance to bias the Judges against the Subject – They humbly rely on the justice and goodness of his Majesty for the restitution and preservation of those rights.

This short state of facts the Board thought necessary to be given to shew the cause of the present great uneasiness which is not confined to this neighbourhood but is general and extensive. The people think their exclusive right of taxing themselves by their Representatives infringed and violated by the act above-mentioned. That the new Act empowering the East India Company to import their Tea into America confirms that violation, and is a new effort not only more effectually to secure the payment of the Tea duty, but lay a foundation for the enhancing it, and in a like way, if this should succeed, to lay other Taxes on America; that it is in its attendents and consequences ruinous to the liberties and properties of themselves and their posterity; that as their numerous Petitions for relief have been rejected, the said new Act demonstrates an indisposition in Ministry that Parliament should grant them relief; that this is the source of their distress – a distress that borders on despair, and that they know not where to apply for relief.

These being the sentiments of the people, it is become the indispensable duty of this Board to mention them, that the occasion of the late demands on Mr. Clarke and others, the Agents for the East India Company, and of the consequent disturbances might

appear. And we mention them not to justify those disturbances, the authors of which we have advised should be prosecuted but to give a just idea of the rise of them.

On this occasion justice impels us to declare that the people of this Town and Province, tho' they have a high sense of Liberty derived from the manners, the example and constitution of the Mother Country, have till the late parliamentary taxations of the Colonies been as free from disturbances as any people whatever.

This representation the Board thought necessary to be made prior to their taking notice of the Petition of the Agents abovementioned, to the consideration of which they now proceed.

“The Petitioners beg leave to resign themselves and the property committed to their care to his Excellency and the Board as Guardians and Protectors of the People, praying that measures may be directed to for the landing and securing the Tea,” &c.

With regard to the personal protection of the Petitioners, the Board have not been informed that they have applied for it to any of the Justices of the peace, within whose department it is to take cognizance of the case of the Petitioners and all other breaches of the peace, they being vested by Law with all the authority necessary for the protection of his Majesty's Subjects – In the principal instance of abuse, of which they complain, the Board have already advised that the authors of it should be prosecuted according to Law; and they do advise the same in the other instances mentioned in their Petition.

With regard to the Tea committed to the care of the Petitioners, the Board have no authority to take either that or any other merchandize out of their care, and should they do it or give any order or advice concerning it, and a loss ensue, they apprehend they should make themselves responsible for it.---- With respect to the prayer of the Petition “that measures may be directed to for the landing and securing the Tea,” the Board would observe on it, that the duty on the Tea becomes payable and must be paid or secured to be paid on its being landed. And should they direct or advise to any measure for landing it, they would of course advise to a measure for procuring the payment of the duty and therefore be advising to a measure inconsistent with the declared sentiment of both Houses, in the last Winter Session of the General Court; which they apprehend to be altogether inexpedient and improper.

The Board, however, on this occasion assure your Excellency that as they have seen with regret some late disturbances and have advised to the prosecuting the authors of them, so they will in all legal methods endeavour, to the utmost of their power, to prevent them in future.

Whereupon advised that his Excellency renew his Orders to his Majesty's Justices of the peace, Sheriffs and other peace officers to exert themselves to the utmost for the security of his Majesty's subjects the preservation of peace and good order and for preventing all offences against the Laws.

“At a Council held in the Council Chamber. . . ,” *Boston Gazette*, 13 December 1773.

CONSIDER –Thomas Hutchinson served as acting governor from 1769 (after Francis Bernard left) to 1774 when General Gage replaced him with military rule. During his tumultuous time in Boston, Hutchinson incurred the wrath of the Patriots in his dealing with the tea incident. Read Documents #7-9 and try to imagine the position he faced. What were the Governor's interests? Did he have a conflict of interest? How so? How accurate do you think this portrayal is? How does it compare with the earlier accounts? Who does the governor blame for the events, and why?

Document #7

Letter from Thomas Hutchinson to Lord Dartmouth, 15 November 1773

Boston 15 November 1773

My Lord

Your Lordship's letter No. 11 of the 17th August came to my hands the last Evening. His Majesty's most gracious condescension in the grant of his royal Order of leave for my absence from the Province increases my Obligations to fidelity in his service. When I shall be informed by your Lordship of his Majesty's determination in consequence of the Address and other proceedings of the Assembly which had not come to your knowledge at the date of your letter and shall see the effect it may have in the Province, I shall be better able to judge than I am at present how far his Majesty's service, by which I shall govern myself, will require me to avail myself of the liberty given me to go to England. At present the spirits of the people in the Town of Boston are in a great ferment. Everything that has been in my power without the Council I have done and continue to do for the preservation of the peace and good Order of the Town. If I had the Aid which I think the Council might give my endeavours would be more effectual. They profess to disapprove of the tumultuous violent proceedings of the people but they wish to see the professed end of the people in such proceedings attained in a regular way and instead of joining with me in proper measures to discourage an opposition to the landing of the Teas expected one and another of the Gentlemen of greatest influence intimate that the best thing that can be done to quiet the people wou'd be the refusal of the Gentlemen to whom the Teas are consigned to execute the trust and they declare they wou'd do if it was their care and wou'd advise all their connections to do it nor will they ever countenance a measure which shall tend to carry into execution an Act of Parliament which lays Taxes upon the Colonies for the purpose of a revenue. The same principle prevails with by far the greater part of the Merchants, who though in general they declare against mobs and violence, yet they as generally wish the Teas may not be imported. The Persons to whom the Teas are intended declare that whilst they can be protected from violence to their persons, they will not give way to the unreasonable demands which have been made of them. I wish the Vessels bound to New York may arrive before those designed to this Province. Governor Tryon I know to be well disposed to do his duty and the people there are less disposed to any violent proceedings, as I have reason to think than they are here and an example of peace and good order there may have its influence here.

I am with great respect
My Lord &c.

Thomas Hutchinson to Lord Dartmouth, 15 November 1773, Thomas Hutchinson Letterbooks, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Document #8

Letter from Thomas Hutchinson to the East India Company, 19 December 1773

To the Directors of the East India Company, Boston 19 December 1773
Gentlemen:

As the interest of so respectable a Corporation as that of the East India Company is affected by illegal and violent proceedings in my Government it may be expected from me that I should give information concerning them especially as the Consignees are under confinement and not so well able to do it as otherwise they would be.

As double the quantity of Teas proposed to be shipped by the Company had been imported in a year and the duty paid without any disturbance I flattered myself for several months after I first heard of the intention to ship on account of that Company that I should find no more difficulty then when Teas have been shipped by private merchants.

Mr. William Palmer who has been the principal exporter of Teas to New England and who has sometimes shipped to my sons more than 200 Chests in a year and has taken pains to encourage the sale of it here and who the present year had purchased a large quantity to have been shipped as usual wrote to my sons that the East India Company would ship on their own account that a large quantity I think 200 Chests or upwards which remained in his hands not shipped must be sold in London at loss that as some compensation for the loss and disappointment he hoped to obtain a part of what the Company might ship to their consignment and private letters from London had also mentioned the names of the persons to whom it was probable the Teas would be consigned.

When they had received no other information a letter was delivered at midnight at the house of one of my sons requiring him to appear at the Tree of Liberty at a time named and to resign or refuse to accept his trust with menaces if he did not. The like letters were left about the same time at the houses of Mr. Clarke and Mr. Faneull. The next morning printed papers were posted up in the several parts of the Town notifying the Inhabitants to attend to hear the resignations and 4 or 500 (sic) did attend and among them the Selectmen Town Clerk town Treasurer and other Officers. After the time was past when the Consignees were required to appear a Committee was appointed among whom were some persons of considerable property to repair to the Consignees and to require a Resignation. This Committee was followed by a large body of people and many of them not of the lowest rank who came to the Warehouse of Mr. Clarke where the Consignees were with several Gentlemen of character their friends who were in the Counting house above stairs with the door secured the doors below being left open. The Committee came up the people remained below and spoke to the Gentlemen a small window being open but upon their refusal to treat with them the Committee made their report to the people in the street.

What [] it was doing Mr. Clarke ordered the lower doors of his warehouse to be [closed] but before they could be secured they were burst open and taken off the hinges and the people pressed upstairs attempted to force the door of the Counting house. One of the Gentlemen being a Justice of peace had commanded the peace in the Kings name but was hooted at and received a slight blow. The transaction being at noon day in a publick street some of the Leaders thought proper to go off the mob thereupon began to disperse and a number of Gentlemen who were upon Change went thro what remained and together with the Gentlemen

in the Counting house took the Consignees into their protection and brought my eldest son to me in the Council Chamber. A few days after a Town meeting was called when after a number of Resolves Committees were appointed consisting of some of the Selectmen Representatives and other desiring the Gentlemen to resign. They acquainted the Committee in substance that they did not know enough of their appointments to give my answer.

On Friday the 12th of November information was given to the Lieutenant Governor of an intention to surprise the Consignees in their houses in the evening and to compel them to resign. He gave notice immediately and they all left their houses. My sons came to me in the Country with their families which have remained with me ever since. Wednesday the 17. Mr. Clarke the son arrived from London. His father imagining the information given the Lieutenant Governor not to be well founded had returned to his house and had several other children round him to rejoice with him upon the arrival of his eldest son after long absence. In the evening a large number of people first beset the house of my eldest son but being convinced that he had not returned to it they left it and went to the house of Mr. Clarke at a distant part of the Town and in passing increased their numbers. He had just notice eno to secure his doors and for the female part of the family to remove to the upper part of the house and the rest to the Chambers before the Mob attempted to open the door of the house but finding it secured endeavoured with great violence to force it. After warnings repeatedly given by the Gentlemen from the Chamber windows that if they did not desist they would be fired upon one of the Gentlemen fired aiming at a man who was then forcing the door but missed him. This caused them to withdraw but they soon returned broke the windows to pieces, did other damage to the house out house, etc. and it has not been habitable since. After they had besieged the house about two hours many of them by that time being known they thought fit to disperse. The next day a meeting of the Town was again held and other Committees appointed to demand definitive answers which they then gave that they could not comply with the desire of the Town and their answers were voted daringly affrontive. Soon after, the Gentlemen finding it would be impossible for them to sell or even to land the Teas against the general voice of the people applied to the Governor and Council for protection in order to the safe landing and keeping the Teas until they should be able to sell them or until they could hear from their principals. The Council unanimously declined giving any advice to my protecting the Teas in landing and among other reasons gave this that their protecting the Teas would be countenancing an unconstitutional Tax seeing they could not be landed until the duties were paid. I urged the Council with great earnestness to a contrary advice without any effect. By the Constitution the Governor is not authorized to do any act of Government without his Council. As soon as I found what would be the advice of Council I advised my sons to quit the Town to be out of the way of any further improper applications and they followed my advice. Mr. Clarke and Mr. Fanueil remained. Not knowing it would be a joint concern they made offers to the Select men to land the Teas and to engage not to sell them until they could have further advice from the East India Company but they would hear of nothing short of their sending the Teas back to England which was requiring what was out of their powers. Upon the arrival of the Dartmouth a meeting of Town and Country was immediately called by printed notification. The extravagant proceedings there will appear from the enclosed paper in part. As soon as the Gentlemen heard of the first resolution they thought their persons no longer safe and privately withdrew to the Castle. I was then holding a Council in the Town and urging them without any success to some

declaration against the illegal meeting. As soon as I knew of their withdraw I gave orders for their protection and for such accomodation as the place would afford.

Upon the Owner and master of the Dartmouth their refusal or neglect to comply with the promise made to carry back the Teas another meeting was called when the Owner was required first to demand a Clearance at the Custom house which was refused and then a permit to pass the Castle first if the Naval Officer which was refused also. He was there upon required to apply to me for such a permit also which I refused and took that opportunity to let him know I had heard he had been advised to trawl his ship from the wharffe into the stream and offered him a letter to the Admiral recommending his vessel to his protection. He answered that he had been advised to it that day but he found no people willing to assist him and besides he should have made himself liable to the resentment and rage of the people. He intimated to me that some of the leaders of the people wished the Ship to go down and to be stopped at the Castle for then they would be rid of the affair and might say they had done all in their power. I had before been informed that it was intended to force the Ship out of the harbour and not by the usual Channel. Of this I gave notice to Admiral Montagu who disposed of his Ships so as to guard all the other Channels except that by the Castle and I gave notice to Colonel Leslie who comands at the Castle who would have stopd her if she had attempted to pass there.

Mr. Rotch the Owner of the Dartmouth left my house in the Country 7 or 8 miles from the Town about or after sunset so that he was brought into the evening before he returned to the people who were waiting for him in a vast body and who as soon as he had acquainted them with my refusal gave a loud huzza and many of them cried out a mob a mob and broke up and in great numbers ran to the wharffe where three of the Vessels having on board 340 Chests of Tea lay and in about two hours the whole of it was hoisted out and thrown into the dock the chestes being first opened.

It appears to have been a concerted plan for a sufficient number of men to do the work were prepared and disguised before the people came down from the meeting and guards were placed to prevent any spies and the whole conducted with very little tumult nor was there any suspicion of an intention in the conductors of the affair that the Tea should be destroyed.

The other Vessel was cast ashoar at Cape Cod and I believe no accounts which can be depended on have been yet received concerning the Teas but, if landed, I fear they have undergone the fate of those at Boston. I have made two attempts to meet my Council the first and second day after this outrage but several of them being sick I could not make a Quorum. I have omitted nothing in my power to still the rage of the people, but found every attempt only increased it. I am sure the Consignees have suffered already much more than all their Commissions would have amounted to if they had gone on with the business and I see no prospect of an end to their distress.

I have the honour to be
Gentlemen

Document #9

“Destruction of the Tea in the Harbor of Boston, December 16, 1773”

CONSIDER: The following is a collection of letters from several of the Boston Patriots on the “destruction of the tea.” Consider how the story of the tea compares with Hutchinson’s views.

The three following letters have been transcribed from the originals. Dr. Franklin and Arthur Lee were Agents for the Massachusetts House of Representatives in London, at the time the Letters were written.

The account of Dr. Williamson’s Examination before the King’s Council, has likewise been copied from a paper in his own handwriting. He was a passenger on the first ship which arrived in England from Boston, after the destruction of the tea.

JARED SPARKS.

June 12, 1856.

Dr. Cooper to Dr. Franklin

Boston, December 17, 1773.

Dear Sir,

I missed the opportunity of sending you the above, and am now to give you an account of what has since happened among us.

Upon information that the tea, with the American duty upon it, was certainly shipped, and might soon be expected, we heard of an opposition forming in New York and Philadelphia, and measures concerted there to induce the resignation of the consignees. Our patriots determined to second their brethren in the other Colonies, and appointed a meeting of the people, at Liberty Tree, at noon-day, to receive the resignation of the consignees for this Province. But they chose not to appear, upon this intimation, at that place. A committee was then chosen to wait on them at the store, where all the consignees were met, to know if they would resign this commission. A great part of the body, without a vote for it, accompanied the committee. The answer was rough and peremptory, “No resignation.”

Soon after, the Governor called a council, and the consignees petitioned that the tea, upon its arrival, might be under their protection. The council declined having anything to do with it. A town meeting was legally called, and a respectable committee chosen, who repeatedly attempted to obtain the almost universally desired resignation, but without effect. The consignees insisted upon landing the tea, though they conceded to store it, till they could hear from their constituents. We soon were informed, that the consignees at New York and Philadelphia behaved in a soothing manner to the people, and, upon being assured that the tea was still dutied there, declared, without reserve, that they would not have the least share in executing a commission so disagreeable to their fellow-citizens.

About this time a number of people assembled in the evening, before Mr. Clark's house, from which a musket or pistol was fired upon them, without any damages, and they, in return, broke his windows and retired. Soon after, the consignees, who consulted with the Governor, &c., in every step, returned to the castle, in imitation of the commissioners, and, with similar views and hopes, no doubt, where they have remained ever since, except Mr. Joshua Winslow, who lately arrived from Nova Scotia, and lives at Marshfield.

Upon the arrival of the tea, an assembly of the people was called—it proved as large as any ever known here—of which Mr. Hancock was moderator. Great numbers from the neighboring towns united in it, and, indeed, the people in the country have all along been equally zealous with their brethren in Boston, in this common cause; and there is now established a correspondence and union between them, never known before. The moderator and people were strongly desirous of preserving the tea untouched, for the East-India Company. They labored this point with undissembled ardor, and great patience. They considered, however, that landing the tea would insure the duty, that it might be smuggled from the castle, and that the price of tea, higher among us than to the southward, would be almost an invincible temptation to this. They insisted, therefore, that it should go back in the same bottoms. They urged this upon the consignees with great earnestness, from an apprehension that the tea, in the present temper of the Province, would not be safe; but in vain; they could not be persuaded to further concessions than before. The master and owner were then called, who, seeing the irresistible torrent, engaged that the tea should return as it came. Two other vessels, freighted with it, arrived, and the same engagement was made for them.

There we thought the matter would have ended. But the Governor, consignees, revenue officers, &c., raised obstacles to this measure, and seemed to choose that the tea should be destroyed, and the exasperation of both countries heightened. Another assembly of the people was called, of which a country gentleman was moderator. The owner of the ship first arrived, appeared before them, and pleaded that if they held him to his engagement to carry the tea back, he should be ruined for want of clearances, &c. He was desired by the people to apply to the custom-house for a clearance, which he did, and was refused. He was then desired to wait on the Governor at Milton, for a pass at the castle, which was also refused.

The people waited for his return till dark, last evening. As soon as the Governor's refusal was known, the assembly was dissolved. Just before the dissolution, two or three hundred persons, in dress and appearance like Indians, passed by the Old South meeting-house, where the assembly was held, gave a war-whoop, and hastened to the wharf, where all the tea ships lay, and demanding the tea, which was given up to them without the least resistance, they soon emptied all the chests into the harbor, to the amount of about three hundred and forty. This was done without injury to any other property or to any man's person. An interloper, indeed, who had found means to fill his pockets with tea, upon being discovered, was stripped of his booty and his clothes together, and sent home naked. A remarkable instance of order and justice among savages. When they had

done their business, they silently departed, and the town has been remarkably quiet ever since.

This was done last evening, and had it been deferred a few hours longer, the tea, it was supposed, would have been taken under the protection of the admiral, at the castle. The Governor, collector, and consignees, most certainly had it in their power to have saved this destruction, and returned it undiminished to the owners in England; as the people were extremely desirous of this, did every thing in their power to accomplish it, and waited so long for this purpose, as to run no small risk of being frustrated in their grand design of preventing it being landed.

The fourth, and only remaining vessel, with tea, Captain Loring, is ashore near Cape Cod, the cargo likely to be saved; but what will become of the tea, brought in that bottom, time will discover. We have no account that any has yet arrived at New-York or Philadelphia. It is not doubted, however, that, from the latter place, it will be all sent back, and should it be landed in the former, that it will remain unvented in the fort. To the warm and violent opposition made here, the people have been partly, at least, excited by their brethren in those places, and by the merchants in London; but the principle upon which they acted, was a thorough detestation of the insidious design of Administration, to establish and increase the American revenue upon this article, after fair and repeated professions of an intention to relieve us. In what matter it will resent the treatment we have given to this exasperating measure is uncertain; but thus much is certain, that the country is united with the town, and the Colonies with one another, in the common cause, more firmly than ever. Should a greater military power be sent among us, it can never alter the fixed sentiments of the people, though it would increase the public confusion, and tend to plunge both countries into the most unhappy circumstances.

The tories, or tools of Hutchinson, seem struck with a panic; some of them own now the impossibility of supporting the measures of Administration, and a necessity of its being changed. The longer the Governor is continued, the more plainly this necessity will appear. In this view, there are some wise friends to this country, who do not regret his continuance in the chair. The last hope of him and his friends is, to govern wholly by a military power.

I am & c.
SAMUEL COOPER

To Arthur Lee

Boston, December 21st, 1773

Sir,

It has been the expectation of many of the Colonists, that the last session of Parliament would have put a final end to those grievances under which they had so long been oppressed, and against which they had so long in vain remonstrated. They expected

that the Revenue Acts would have been repealed, and that they should no more have had reason to complain of the unconstitutional exertions of Parliamentary power. They were naturally led to form these expectations from the conduct of Administration, who lately encouraged them with assurances, that if all things remained quiet in America, these unhappy dissensions would soon terminate in a lasting union. But how, Sir, were they surprised to find they had been deceived; to find that the Parliament, at the very time they expected relief, pursued new measures for effectually securing and enhancing these oppressive revenues; and with this majority, an Act, passed the last session, empowered the East India Company to ship their teas to America.

From this Act, they readily saw that they had nothing to hope from the favor of Administration, but that they rather discovered an indisposition that the Parliament should grant them any relief; they considered the Acts as introductive of monopolies which, besides the train of evils that attend them in a commercial view, are forever dangerous to public liberty, more especially under the direction and influence of government; they also looked upon it pregnant with new grievances, paving the way to further impositions, and in its consequences threatening the final destruction of liberties.

Thrown by this idea into a state of desperation, the united voice of the people, not only in this Province but in New York and Pennsylvania, and as far as we can learn, in all the Colonies, was, that they would never suffer tea to be landed, but would prefer any species of hazard and danger, to a tame submission to measures which, if pursued, must reduce them to a state of abject slavery. Administration could not have invented a method so effectual for raising the spirit of the Colonies, or promoting among them an entire union of sentiment. At the same time, people on your side the water have for several months been repeatedly informing our merchants of this maneuver, and advising them, as they regarded their sacred rights, to withstand the landing of the teas by the most vigorous opposition.

While the minds of the people were impressed with these sentiments, the vessels arrived with the teas, consigned to Messrs. Richard Clarke & Sons, Thomas & Elisha Hutchinson, Benjamin Faneuil, and Joshua Winslow, Esqrs. Previous to this, the Town of Boston had several meetings, in order to induce the consignees to resign their trust, but to no purpose. And immediately upon the arrival of the vessels aforesaid, that every measure possible might be taken to prevent confusion and disorder, while the minds of all were in great agitation, the people in this and many of the neighboring Towns, assembled in the Old South meeting-house, (Faneuil Hall not being capacious enough to contain the people that attended,) to prevail with the consignees to send back the teas, and if possible to preserve it from that destruction, which the resentments of the people might justly lead them to expect. You will see by the enclosed papers the measures they took, and the resolves they passed, and will wonder, perhaps, that these resolves and measures were in vain. They not only treated with the consignees, but with the owners and masters of these vessels; but all without success.

Despairing to effectuate any method of accommodation, after having tried all that could be devised to no purpose, they dissolved the meeting, which, agreeable to their

constant and declared design, had protected the teas from destruction. Nigh twenty days were now passed since the arrival of one of the tea vessels, commanded by Capt.Hall, at which time, according to Act of Parliament, it was in the power of the custom house officers to take the teas into their own possession, in order to secure the duties. There were just grounds to think, that they intended to do it the minute the twenty days were expired, and that they would attempt to land them by force, and overbear any opposition that might occur by a second effusion of blood. Under these apprehensions, the teas, on the evening of the 16th instant, were destroyed by a number of persons unknown and in disguise.

Such was the obstinacy of the consignees, their advisers and coadjutors, such their aversion to all conciliatory measures, that they are almost universally condemned, and some even of our party among us, acknowledge that the destruction of the teas must be imputed to these obstinate enemies of our liberties, who never would consent to any method proposed for its preservation, and who perhaps wished to irritate and inflame the minds of an injured, oppressed people, to measures of violence, of which afterwards they hoped to make their own advantages.

The House of Representatives, at their last session, appointed us a Committee to write to their Agent. In pursuance of this appointment, we have given you this information of the present state of our affairs, and doubt not you will make such an improvement of this intelligence, as shall be most for the interest of this Province in particular, and of the Colonies in general.

We are, with respect,
Your most humble servants,

THOMAS CUSHING
SAMUEL ADAMS
JOHN HANCICK
WILLIAM PHILLIPS

John Scollay to Arthur Lee

Boston, December 23d, 1773

Sir,

At the instance of my worthy friend, Mr. Samuel Adams, I have presumed to take upon me to communicate to you what I know concerning the doings of the Town, and of the people, at their late meetings, respecting the teas exported by the India Company, in Captains Bruce, Hall, and Coffin. This I am the more capable of doing, as I have the honor of being one of the selectmen of this Town. I am therefore personally acquainted with some facts relating to this matter, more especially what passed between the selectmen and Mr. Jonathan Clarke, one of the consignees, at the interview they had with him and his brother, a few days before the people met on this occasion. From the first

report of the India Company's obtaining an Act of Parliament to export teas to the Colonies, it threw the inhabitants of this and the other towns into great agitation; they judging that it was altogether a plan of Administration to increase and secure the revenue, which for some years past has caused such distress and unhappiness in North America.

When it was known that Messrs. Hutchinsons, Clarke, and Faneuil, were to be the Agents for the India Company, it was thought advisable to call the Town together, to know the minds of the inhabitants on this matter. They met the 4th ult., debated on the subject, and adjourned to the 6th. At both these meetings they manifested, by their votes, their detestation of the measure; not as an act of the India Company, but as a scheme of Administration. They raised a reputable committee to wait on the consignees, who, as the Town judged, treated their application with contempt. This being the case, the meeting was dissolved. On the 18th, the Town was again called together to deliberate on this matter: a very great number of the inhabitants and of the most respectable characters appeared: the Town was solicitous to gain the consent of the consignees to the reshipping the tea to London: they were the more urgent, as they knew this measure would prevent the destruction of the Company's property, which they judged would be the case if it was not sent back.

They again raised a committee to wait on the consignees, they treated this application much in the same manner as they did the other. The answer they sent the Town was looked on by them as trifling. They voted it unsatisfactory, and the meeting was dissolved, and no further application was made to them by the Town. People's minds were daily more and more agitated. A number of persons, friendly to the consignees, fearful of disagreeable consequences, endeavored to persuade them to come to a composition with the Town. Of this number I was one. We set before them the evils that must ensue, if they were obstinate: but if a composition took place, the property of the Company would be preserved, the Town would be restored to its usual tranquillity, and they themselves would recover their former good standing with their fellow-citizens. Though we labored night and day in the affair, all our efforts could not produce an agreement between them and the Town. The town's people thought they had been ill-treated by them at the late town meetings, therefore they were now on their part determined that the teas should not be landed; so the consignees were on their part obstinate, and would be noways active in sending it back. Had the consignees, on the Town's first application to them, offered to have stored the tea, subject to the inspection of a committee of gentlemen, till they could write their principals; and that until that time no duty should be paid, which no doubt the commissioners of the customs would have consented to, under these circumstances: Had they made such an offer to the Town, at either of their two meetings, I am persuaded the Town would have closed with them, and every thing would have been preserved from destruction. The above doings took place before the arrival of the tea, and before the arrival of Mr. Jonathan Clarke, one of consignees, from London.

On Saturday the 27th ult., a few days after his arrival, he called on me to know if it would be agreeable to the selectmen for him to wait on them. I told him it would; that if he would name his time, the Board should be summoned. According to his desire, the

Board met at 4 o'clock, P.M. He with his brother attended. He informed the selectmen that he esteemed himself very unhappy in incurring the displeasure of his fellow-citizens, by his being appointed an agent for the India Company for the sale of the tea that was expected. He said the appointment was not of his seeking, that he was wholly passive in the affair, (this by some is said to be not true,) therefore it was unreasonable that he and the others should suffer. We told him, that let our private opinion be what it would, by what we could collect, the people would be satisfied with nothing less than the sending the tea back. He said that was impossible for him to do; that it was contrary to the acts of trade; the tea, with the vessel, would be liable to confiscation; that in this way they should be a means of procuring the loss of the Company's interest, and perhaps bring on ruin to themselves. We told him that, perhaps some method might be devised that would remove the difficulty; that as it could not be landed without the utmost hazard, if he should reshipe it, and protest against the obstructors of his regular proceedings, and return the tea to London with such a protest, he might save the Company's property, and perhaps obtain their thanks for his care of their interest; whereas were the consignees to take no step for the preservation of it, they would, and very justly, incur their resentment for not preserving the tea when in their power to do it. We had a long conversation with this gentleman and his brother, on the subject. On the whole, before he left us, he said, that nothing should be done as to the tea, in any clandestine manner; that the vessel should come up to town with it; that so soon as Capt. Hall, who was hourly expected, should arrive, and he knew the contents of his letters, he would immediately hand in proposals to the selectmen for them to communicate to the town.

The next day Capt. Hall arrived. The selectmen met at the Hall, (although Sabbath day,) at twelve o'clock, in expectation of an application from Mr. Clarke: we sent our messenger to his house, could hear nothing of him. We adjourned till five o'clock in the evening, when we again met, hoping to have an application, that we might have time to call the Town together in the way prescribed by law, before any other meeting might take place. We continued sitting till nine o'clock; sent again to the houses of consignees, but could get no intelligence where they were. One of the selectmen, finding the storm arising, sent privately to Mr. Clarke's brother-in-law, desired him, if he had any regard for him or his connections, that he would find him, and get him and the others forthwith to apply to the selectmen, (agreeable to his promise,) that a regular town meeting might be called. He returned for answer that it was impossible for him to see them that evening; but that early in the morning he would get them to send a billet to the selectmen with their proposals.

Very early the next morning hand bills were dispersed, by unknown persons, inviting the people to meet at Faneuil Hall, on occasion of Capt. Hall's arrival with the tea. This being the case, it was in vain to attempt to call the Town together in a legal way, which would have been done, had Mr. Clarke have complied with his promise to the selectmen, which was, that immediately on the arrival of Capt. Hall, he would hand in to them his proposals as a foundation for a town meeting. This might have prevented the event that has since taken place. The people of this and the neighboring Towns, met in conformity to the dispersed hand bills, on Monday, the 29th. A very great number met, so great that the town hall could not contain them. They were obliged to adjourn to a large

meeting-house, where, it is supposed, that five or six thousand of respectable inhabitants met; men of the best character and of the first fortunes.

The doings of this and the other meetings are made public, that it will be needless for me to recite them. I will only say that it is the observation of persons unprejudiced, and of character, who attended these meetings, which consisted of all sorts, *whig and tory*, that the utmost decorum was observed; that through the whole of their debates, although they were determined the tea should not be landed subject to a duty, yet it was apparent that their only view in sending it back, was not only to render the scheme of Administration abortive, but to preserve the tea from destruction. This ran through the whole of their reasoning on the subject. To accomplish this, every step that could be taken, (consistent with their intentions of its going back,) was taken, to preserve it. Sometime after the people were assembled, I received a letter directed to me, signed by all the consignees, the purport of which was that they could not comply with the expectations of the Town in sending the tea back, but that they would store it, till they could know the mind of the India Company concerning it.

The people ordered the letter to be read, but they were so irritated at the conduct of these gentlemen, that they acted no further on the letter than hearing it read. At the meeting the people required Mr. Rotch, the owner of Capt. Hall's ship, at his peril, to return the tea on board to London. He consented to it, but said he considered himself as under duress, and therefore, to save himself from blame, he should protest against the people. So far they were contented; hoping they should obtain the end they were in pursuit of, and at the same time preserve the Company's property; and that the tea would be on its return to London, before twenty days should expire; that being the time the officers of the customs could let it lay on board, under a report.

Some days after this meeting, it was evident that Mr. Rotch, by his conduct, had no intention of returning the tea in his ship to London. This being the apprehension of the people, it created a great uneasiness, not only in this but in the other Towns; however, they waited till the 14th instant, but three days before the expiration of the time when the officers of the customs would take possession of it for the duties, and perhaps call in the naval and military force to their aid, which, since the destruction of the tea, has been found to have been their intention; the Captains of the several ships of war being ordered on board and preparations were, it is said, actually made for some expedition, (there being then, and are now in the harbor, on sixty-gun ship of war, two frigates, besides several smaller vessels of force,) it was much feared that country would have destroyed the teas, even under these circumstances, which would have produced dreadful effects on all sides. At this meeting there was a much greater appearance than at any time. People attended it from Towns at the distance of twenty miles.

At this they ordered Mr. Rotch, at his peril, to carry back the tea to London. He told the people, that as the custom house officers would not clear out his ship, so long as the tea was on board, so neither would the Governor give him a pass by the castle; therefore it was in vain for him to attempt it. They ordered him immediately to wait on the collector, and demand a clearance for his ship. The collector refused to do it. They

then ordered him to wait on the Governor, to know if he would give his ship a pass by the castle; he refused also, by saying, that as the ship was not regularly cleared at the custom house, he could not do it. The people then required of Mr. Rotch his answer whether he would proceed with his ship, or order Capt. Hall, the master, to proceed to London with the ship, in the situation she was in. He gave for answer that he would not.

On this the meeting was dissolved; but before the dissolution of the meeting, a great number in disguise, who, it was said, came from the country, passed by when the people were assembled, and went on board the several vessels that had the tea on board, and in a very short time, without noise or tumult, destroyed all the tea, by throwing it into the sea. The people, from their first taking up this matter until the destruction of the tea, showed no disposition to have it destroyed, if it possibly could be prevented, consistent with their intentions of preventing its being landed and paying the duty. They took every method that a people engaged in such a cause could take. They waited till the last moment, hoping that a compliance with their requisition would take place that so not only the end they had in view might be answered, but that the India Company's property might be preserved. Let who will be the persons who were instruments of the destruction of so large a property, almost every one look on the consignees as the faulty cause. Upon the whole, I do lament the loss of the Honorable Company; I also lament the original cause of that loss, which I think is most unrighteous, and which has proved a source of unhappiness to the Americans.

Very soon, I fear, the Americans will be drove, if some kind interposition does not take place, to that desperation, which neither the severest threats, nor the mildest treatment of the British Parliament, will control. I have, in the above, given, so far as I am able, an honest detail of the facts relating to a matter very interesting, and which may perhaps draw on us the resentment of Administration; yet we do console ourselves that we have acted constitutionally, and that a good Providence will so order this matter, as that it may insure in great good to these Colonies. I should not have taken upon me to write on this subject, but that the relation I stand in to the Town; and in hopes that a plain, circumstantial narration of facts, might be of service, to a gentleman of your influence and disposition. I have therefore ventured on your candor, and have spoke the sentiments of a heart much agitated for the welfare of this and our mother country; and if my mite will serve the good old cause, I give it cheerfully. As I am no adept in letter writing, and for some other reasons, I choose to have my name concealed. In any other way, you may make what use of this letter you please.

I am, with great regard for you, sir, and for all the friends of our happy Constitution,

Your most humble servant,
John Scollay

Dr. Williamson's Examination Before the King's Council in London

Before his Majesty's most Honorable Privy Council, February 19th, 1774 – Dr. Williamson, of Philadelphia, being examined concerning the public transactions at Boston, in November and December last, respecting the tea that was sent there by the East India Company, and destroyed in the harbor, said:

That on the 17th or 18th of November, 1773, he arrived in Boston from Rhode Island, with the purpose of proceeding in the first vessel for London. Being told that the inhabitants were assembled in town meeting, he went to the public hall, for the purpose of gratifying his curiosity, by observing whether it was a rude collection of the lower class of people, or an orderly assembly of respectable citizens. He had been told, that the expected tea was the occasion of the meeting, and that there had already been one or two meetings on the same subject. In a few minutes after he entered the hall, some gentlemen, who were said to be selectmen, came in with a letter from the tea consignees. The letter was read by the clerk, and imported that the consignees could not then resign. It was voted *not satisfactory*. Mr. Hancock was moderator of the meeting. Two or three persons spoke a few minutes concerning the tea, or the contents of the letter, but he was too far off to hear them distinctly. The meeting was then dissolved. He apprehends no vote but the above was passed at this meeting, but believes the selectmen agreed to afford the tea consignees an interview, whenever the tea ship might arrive, though he does not recollect how he received this intelligence. This, they said, was intended to give the consignees an opportunity of resigning, so as to escape the public odium.

On the 29th of November, there was a meeting of the people – not a regular town meeting. He apprehends this meeting had its origin in a report that the selectmen had not prevailed, or were not likely to prevail, on the consignees, to resign. The people began to meet in the public hall, but soon adjourned to a large church, or meeting-house, at some distance. He was present while some of the votes were passed on that day. Mr. Jonathan Williams acted as moderator. He remembers, in particular, it was voted, *That the tea should be sent back, at all events, to the place from whence it came*, or words to this amount; also, *That it should pay no duty*; and *That it should return in the bottom in which it came*. It was also voted, *That the tea should not be entered*; and Mr. Rotch and Capt. Hall were enjoined, under severe penalties, not to enter it. The speakers were very numerous on the subject of the above votes, but he cannot possibly recollect who they all were, for he only learned the names of most of them while they were speaking. The discourse of some tended in a very different direction from that of others; for while some advised to moderation, and by all means to the abstaining from violence, a few talked in a style that was violent and inflammatory.

But the men who appeared to be the leaders, and to have the confidence and esteem of the people, were unanimous in determining, at the least they seemed to determine, that the tea should go back to London, and that they would prevent any measures by which it might be in danger. From observing the countenance, and attending to the discourse of this body of people, he was then fully persuaded, that the tea would not be destroyed; that it would be sent back, that no attempt would be made with any

prospect of success to detain it. A watch of twenty-five men was appointed to take care of the ship by night, lest the tea should be taken out of her, or rather (for this was given as the reason,) lest some enemy of the town should burn the ship, in order to lay the blame to the inhabitants. He does not remember who proposed the watch, nor who was the captain of it, but believes it was proposed that they should not be armed. He thinks there was also a meeting of the people of the 30th, at which he was informed, they entered into sundry resolutions. He was also informed, for he was not present to see it, that the sheriff on that day, by order of the governor, charged the people to disperse. He believes a watch was kept over the tea ships every night from the arrival, until that night on which the tea was destroyed.

There was another meeting of the body of the people of Boston, and the neighboring Towns, on Tuesday or Wednesday, the 14th or 15th of December, as he was informed. He heard the bells ringing, and saw people going to the meeting. By the report he then received, from sundry people who attended, he believes that the account of the proceedings, which was published in the newspaper of Edes & Gill, was just. He believes there was also an adjourned meeting of the body on the 16th or 17th of December. In the evening of that day, above an hour after dark, he was informed that a number of people were employed in destroying the tea. He immediately went that he might obtain full satisfaction as to this fact, and from a small eminence about fifty yards from the nearest ship, he could observe that there were people on board, who, he apprehends, were disguised. He could hear them cut open the tea chests, when they had brought them upon the deck. The rioters made very little noise. On the next day the ships were said to be quite clear.

Addenda

That Mr. Hancock was moderator of the said town meeting at Faneuil Hall, on the 17th or 18th of November, and as such, put the question. That the letter which was read at the meeting, said to have been written by the tea consignees, and which was voted *not satisfactory*, was the same, according to the best of his memory, with a letter which he now saw published in a paper, called the "Massachusetts, &c. No. --." Also that Jonathan Williams, as moderator of the said meeting, on the 29th of November, put the several questions, which were voted while he was present.

Hugh Williamson