

II TAXES AND TROOPS

Merchants in Philadelphia, informing them of their Resolutions, to send Home² Orders for Goods contrary to their Non-Importation Agreement, at the tolling of the College Bell, went in Procession to a Place fronting the College, and burnt the Letter by the Hands of a Hangman, hired for the Purpose, with hearty Wishes, that the Names of all Promoters of such a daring Breach of Faith, may be blasted in the Eyes of every Lover of Liberty, and their Names handed down to Posterity, as Betrayers of their Country.

[New Brunswick, July 24, 1770]

We are credibly informed from Princeton, "That the senior Class at Nassau-Hall, have unanimously agreed to appear at their ensuing Commencement, dressed in American Manufactures." How happy ought we to esteem ourselves, when we see some of our Youth, who will probably fill some of the highest Stations in their Country, when their Fathers have fallen asleep, so early declaring their Love to their Country; and we hope this will meet with that Esteem which is their Due, and that many at this critical Juncture, will follow their laudable Example, in encouraging our own Manufactures.

1. On July 7 New York merchants decided to abandon the nonimportation agreement and promptly apprised merchants in the other major commercial centers of their decision. How the collegians came to possess the letter directed to the Philadelphia merchants has not been determined; presumably it was being delivered by express rider.
2. That is, to Britain.

11 Public Coercion of Importers in Middlesex County

[The following reports appeared, respectively, in the *New-York Gazette; or, the Weekly Post-Boy*, August 6, 1770, and the *New-York Journal; or, the General Advertiser*, August 9, 1770.]

During the Stamp Act disorders and the early stages of the protest against the Townshend duties, New Jersey was spared the acts of violence that racked other colonies. But the perfidy of merchants in general and the apostasy of New York City traders in particular in abandoning nonimportation in 1770 roused the passions of Jerseymen to new heights. This was especially true in Middlesex County, hotbed of radical activities in the province. Public demonstrations, formal resolutions and petitions, and economic sanctions were

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deemed sufficient to make a point with the mother country; something more immediate and telling, however, was necessary in dealing with those Americans who violated the program of the popular front.

ADVERTISEMENT

We hear from ours and the Country's Friends in Woodbridge, that they Keep in Readiness in some convenient Place near the Centre of the Town (to wit, near Execution Dock, and not far from Liberty Oak,) a sufficient Quantity of Tar and Feathers, in order to ply those atrocious V—s, those vile Miscreants, who have violated their so often plighted Faith; and through the avaricious Humour of raising a private fortune on the Ruins of the Public, have perfidiously broke through the general and salutary Non-Importation Agreement. It is said ducking in Execution Dock will be added, as Occasion may require.¹

New York, August 9

Last week Mr. Applegate and Mr. Abrahams, of this City, went to the City of Brunswick,² in New-Jersey, having with them for Sale, a Quantity of Pine Apples, Limes, &c. The people of Brunswick finding them to be Subscribers for Importation, treated them so roughly, that they judged it not Safe to appear publicly, and being unable to sell their Fruit, a great Part of it spoil'd upon their Hands;³ they were glad to get off privately to avoid the Effects of the People's Resentment, which Mr. Abrahams was not so luckily to escape at Woodbridge, on his Return, where he was much insulted, and duck'd in a Creek, and was likely to have been much worse used if he had not made his Escape.⁴ We hear that two Merchants of this City, Subscribers for Importation, who a few Days ago set out on a Journey to Philadelphia, at Woodbridge were both heartily duck'd, but the Particulars we have not heard.⁵

1. Dr. Moses Bloomfield of Woodbridge later contended that the advertisement was "the Production of a very few, if more than one Man only," avowing that the "respectable" residents of the community "never did, nor ever will do, or cause to be done, any Thing inconsistent with Law or Liberty" and that they "do highly disapprove" of the notice. Letter of September 18, *New-York Gazette; or, the Weekly Post-Boy*, September 24, 1770.

2. New Brunswick.

3. The August 16, 1770, issue of the *New-York Journal; or, the General Advertiser* carried the following notice: "Mr. Applegate denies that he was insulted or obliged to conceal himself in Brunswick, and by that Means hinder'd from doing his Business, as mentioned in our last."

4. The following report appeared in the *Pennsylvania Journal; and the Weekly Advertiser* on August 9, 1770: "We hear that one of the New-Yorkers, who had signed for Importation, passing through New-Jersey, was stopped in his career at Woodbridge, and was there genteelly ducked to cool his courage: On his return to New-York he made a most piteous story, which, we hear, so sensibly touched the humane and generous hearted Importers, who would sell their country for gold, that on this *lamentable occasion* they had some thoughts of raising a subscription for to enable their brother to prosecute—perhaps the

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whole country." Was this Abrahams?

5. On August 13, 1770, the *New-York Gazette; or, the Weekly Post-Boy* published the following report: "Last Week two New-York Importers, in crossing a Brook in New-Jersey, on their Way to Philadelphia, the Bridge sunk under them, and they both were handsomely ducked. How enormous must be the Guilt of those who would betray the Liberties of the Public, to advance their private Fortunes, when even a public Bridge is not able to support the Weight of their Eniquities? May this be the Fate of every Wretch who would sell his Country for a Mess of Pottage."

12 The Mansfield Township Resistance Resolutions

[Mansfield Township Minute Book, 101-2, New Jersey Historical Society.]

The determination to maintain the boycott of British goods until all the Townshend duties were repealed played an important role in some communities in further refining the extralegal political organizations formed at the local level during the Stamp Act troubles. The action of the residents of Mansfield Township, a predominantly Quaker community in Burlington County, is especially important. First, the residents took action as a town meeting, rather than an extralegal assemblage, in an attempt to cloak the protest movement with the mantle of legitimacy. Second, in establishing a special committee to enforce the nonimportation agreement, the citizens of Mansfield moved perceptibly toward the assumption of governmental powers and anticipated the committees of observation created by the Continental Congress in 1774.

At a meeting of the most respectable Freeholders and Inhabitants¹ of the Township of Mansfield, County of Burlington and Province of New Jersey, Conven'd by Advertisement at the usual place of Doing Publick business, August the 13th 1770.

Whereas the Merchants and Freeholders of the City of New York have most basely and in direct violation of their Publick faith Plighted to the other Colonies broke through their Non-Importation Agreement to the great encouragement of the Enemies to American Freedom, and manifest injury of their Fellow-Subjects, We the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Township afores[ai]d, well knowing the very fatal Consequences that must inevitably result from a general Importation of Merchandize from Great Brittain at this Critical Juncture do Resolve.

1st That we owe and will maintain all due Allegiance to our rightfull Sovereign George the third King of Great Brittain France & Ireland &ca.

2d That we are as much the natural Subjects of the Dominion of Great Brittain