

## NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

the Inhabitants of this Place, has rendered any Efforts of my Part, to preserve a Friendship and Harmony between them and the Troops, entirely unnecessary, and will always claim my Gratitude and best Wishes for their Prosperity.”

Afterwards the Major, together with other Officers quartered in this Place, at the Request of the Gentlemen who presented the Address, dined with them at the White-hall Tavern, where a genteel Entertainment was provided.

It is very remarkable (says our Correspondent) that since the Arrival of the Troops in this Place, now within two Months of three Years, only two Men out of one Hundred and Sixty of which they consisted have died, one a natural Death, and another by Accident; and that during that Time upwards of fifty Children have been born in the Barracks.

### 9 The Essex County Nonimportation Resolves

[*New-York Journal; or, the General Advertiser, June 7, 1770.*]

Ironically, widespread protest against the Townshend duties and zeal for the boycott of British goods occurred in New Jersey only after the repeal in March 1770 of all the import duties except the tax on tea. With the near total revocation of the exactions, merchants in the leading commercial communities in the colonies rapidly abandoned the nonimportation agreements. But not Jerseymen. Agrarian Jersey was not so adversely affected by the suspension of mercantile activities as were other colonies, and thus the province could better afford to adhere to the boycott and insist upon complete revocation of the duties. As the resolutions adopted by the mass meeting held in Elizabethtown indicate, the residents of New Jersey preferred to hew a hard line and thus joined in the denunciation of Rhode Islanders who had resumed business as usual in May.

*At a Meeting of the Freeholders, Merchants, and Traders of the County of Essex, at Elizabeth-Town, on Tuesday the 5th of June, 1770.*

Whereas the present critical State of public Affairs, loudly calls on every Member of the Community, to use his utmost Influence in order to support the invaluable Liberties, handed down to him by his Ancestors: The Merchants, Traders and Freeholders, of the County of Essex, having seriously considered the disinterested Efforts of the Merchants and Traders of the neighbouring Colonies, to save their sinking Country, by entering into an Agreement, not to import Goods from Great Britain, until the Acts of Parliament, passed for the express Purpose of raising a Revenue in the Colonies, should be totally repealed, which if continued, appears the most probable Means of accomplishing the valuable End so nobly designed. And it

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being represented to us, that some few Individuals in several of the neighbouring Colonies, from Motives inconsistent with, and injurious to the Common Cause of Liberty, in order to raise their own private Fortune, are using their Influence to break thro' this laudable and patriotic Agreement; and which if violated or broken thro', would forever hereafter discourage their Friends in Great Britain and elsewhere, from exerting themselves in our Behalf, or putting any Confidence in our most solemn Assurances: By which Means we shall be always considered as a wavering, disunited People, and fit Subjects for every Imposition. And as by this important Agreement of the Merchants only, they have themselves, plighted their Faith to the Public, that they would invariably adhere to the same, which has hitherto prevented other Branches of the Community from adopting Measures for the like salutary Purposes. Therefore as we now think it incumbent on every Individual to exert himself in supporting the Common Cause, have unanimously entered into the following Resolutions:

1st. That the said Non-Importation Agreement, appears to be founded on the truest Policy, and is a legal and constitutional Method of discovering our Sense of the several Acts of the British Parliament, passed for the express Purpose of raising a Revenue in the Colonies as aforesaid; and that those adhering thereto, are entitled to the Approbation and Thanks of every Freeholder in the Colonies.

2dly. *Res.* That as it appears that the Enemies of our happy Constitution in Great Britain, have prevented the full Effect of the said patriotic Agreement, by industriously propagating a mistaken Opinion of a Disunion in the Colonies, with Respect to the said Agreement; and an Incapacity, as well as want of Firmness in supporting so self-denying a Scheme, and having prevailed on the Manufacturing Towns to withhold their Interest, and suspend their Clamours, assuring them, that in Case those Impositions could be continued another Year, that we should be obliged to discontinue this necessary Measure, and thereby be ever afterwards exposed to their unreasonable Restrictions and Impositions. We do therefore unanimously agree to make known our Sentiments, that the said Agreement should be firmly adhered to, until the said Acts of Parliament be totally repealed.

3dly. *Res.* That we will do every Thing in our Power to carry into farther Execution so generous a Plan.

4th. *Res.* That we will not ourselves or by others, receive, purchase, sell or otherwise use, any of the Manufactures or Merchandize imported from Great Britain, contrary to said Agreement; and that we will not trade or have any commercial Intercourse with such Persons, who shall import Goods, or Cause them to be imported, or with any Person who shall purchase Goods or other Merchandize so imported, but that we will use every lawful Means in our Power, to hinder the Sale of such Goods, in any Way whatsoever.

5th. *Res.* That we are determined, that we will at all Times, be ready to join in any Measures that shall be entered into by the Colonies in general, to carry the Design of said Agreement into the fullest Execution; or if necessary to render the Inconveniencies occasioned thereby to Individuals, more equal and tolerable.

6th. *Res.* That we do highly approve and applaud the spirited Behaviour of our Boston, New-York and Philadelphia Brethren, in renouncing all Commerce and Intercourse with the Traders and Inhabitants of Newport in Rhode-Island, who have so perfidiously deserted them in this glorious Struggle: And we do agree to observe the same Rules of Conduct, they have so properly adopted, with respect to the said

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Traders and Inhabitants of Newport.

7th. *Res.* That we are well convinced that these are the general Sentiments of all the Freeholders and Inhabitants of this Province; and we will readily concur with them in any farther Measures they may propose, for the Support of an Agreement, upon which the Preservation of the Liberties of America so essentially depend.

8th. *Res.* And lastly, that we will at all Times, do every Thing in our Power to preserve good Order and Decorum in this Province, and to strengthen the Hands of Government, agreeable to our invaluable Constitution.

### 10 Protest Activities at the College of New Jersey

[Extracts of letters from Princeton and New Brunswick published in the *New-York Gazette; or, the Weekly Post-Boy*, July 16 and 30, 1770.]

The defection of New York City merchants from the nonimportation movement in early July 1770 further aroused the anger of Jerseymen at the prospect of the demise of the boycott and steeled their resolve to persevere. The small village of Princeton, home of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), was again the scene of public demonstrations. The collegians, as well as the faculty and administration, had consistently supported protest activities directed against post-1763 imperial measures; predictably the annual September commencement exercises combined academic and partisan orations. Although neither authors nor recipients of the extracts that follow have been identified, James Madison, Jr., future president of the United States and a member of the College of New Jersey class of 1771, corroborated the reports in a letter to his father: "We have no publick news but the base conduct of the Merchants in N. York in breaking through their spirited resolutions not to import, a distinct account of which I suppose will be in the Virginia Gazette before this arrives. Their letter to the Merchants in Philadelphia requesting their concurrence was lately burnt by the Students of this place in the college Yard, all of them appearing in their black Gowns & the bell Tolling." He added that all twenty-two members of the class of '70 had agreed to attend commencement exercises in September dressed "in American Cloth." (James Madison, Jr., to James Madison, Sr., July 23, 1770, William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal, eds., *The Papers of James Madison* (8 vols. to date, Chicago, 1962-), 1:50).

[Princeton, July 13, 1770]

This Afternoon the Students at Nassau Hall, fired with a just Indignation on reading the infamous Letter of the Merchants in New-York,<sup>1</sup> to the Committee of