

## NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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

## II TAXES AND TROOPS

Merchants in Philadelphia, informing them of their Resolutions, to send Home<sup>2</sup> 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