

Document Group 3A

Directions for Jury #3:

- Read your grievance. Decide as a group what it is accusing the King of and record that information on your Evidence Worksheet.
- Read each of your primary and secondary sources. Complete the Primary Source Analyzing Sheet that goes with it and then record which side it seems to support on your Evidence Worksheet. This will go quicker if your jury divides the sources and then shares the information gathered as a group.
- Share all collected information and discuss which side is MORE supported by the evidence given.
- On your evidence Worksheet, come up with your final verdict. Did the Colonists have a valid reason for including this grievance in the Declaration of Independence, or did the King have valid reasons for committing this “crime?” Is the grievance GUILTY or NOT GUILTY of falsely accusing the King? Be sure to use evidence from your sources to support your answer.

Excerpt from the Declaration of Independence

Grievance #3:

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world

Primary Sources:

- Prohibitory Act (Document 2K)
- Boston Port Act (Document 2L)
- Boston Tea Party accounts (Document 2M)
- Political Cartoon (Document 2N)

Secondary Sources:

- History of US “A Taxing King”
- Boston Tea Party Facts

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An Act to prohibit all Trade and Intercourse with the Colonies of *New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania*, the Three Lower Counties on *Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina*, and *Georgia*, during the Continuance of the present Rebellion within the said Colonies respectively; for repealing an Act, made in the Fourteenth Year of the Reign of His present Majesty, *to discontinue the Landing and Discharging, Lading or Shipping, of Goods, Wares, and Merchandize, at the Town and within the Harbour of Boston, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay*; and also Two Acts, made in the last Session of Parliament, for restraining the Trade and Commerce of the Colonies in the said Acts respectively mentioned; and to enable any Person or Persons, appointed and authorized by His Majesty to grant Pardons, to issue Proclamations, in the Cases, and for the Purposes therein mentioned.

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IN PARLIAMENT

http://www.manhattanrarebooks-history.com/prohibitory_act.htm

Document Group 3B

Reaction to the American Prohibitory Act of 1775

“It throws thirteen colonies out of the royal protection, levels all distinctions, and makes us independent in spite of our supplications and entreaties...It may be fortunate that the act of independency should come from the British Parliament rather than the American Congress.”

—John Adams on the Prohibitory Act.

“That as to the king, we had been bound to him by allegiance, but that this bond was now dissolved by his assent to the late Act of Parliament by which he declares us out of his protection.”

—Proceedings from the Second Continental Congress

The American Prohibitory Act of 1775 declared “all manner of (the American colonies’) trade and commerce is and shall be prohibited;” that any ships found trading “shall be forfeited to his Majesty, as if the same were the ships and effects of open enemies;” and that “for the encouragement of the officers and seamen of his Majesty’s ships of war” that “seamen, marines, and soldiers on board shall have the sole interest and property of all ships, vessels, goods and merchandise, which they shall seize and take.”

Boston Port Act March 31, 1774

AN ACT to discontinue, in such manner, and for or such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging...shipping, of goods...at the town, and within the harbour, of Boston, in the province of Massachusetts's Bay, in North America.

WHEREAS dangerous commotions and [rebellions] have been...raised in the town of Boston, *in the province of Massachuset's Bay, in New England, by divers ill affected persons...and to the utter destruction of the publick peace, and good order of the said town; in which commotions and [rebellion] certain valuable cargoes of teas, being the property of the East India Company, and on board certain' vessels lying within the bay or harbour of Boston, were seized and destroyed: And whereas, in the present condition of the said town and harbour, the commerce of his Majesty's subjects cannot be safely carried on there, nor the customs payable to his Majesty duly collected; and it is therefore expedient that the officers of his Majesty's customs should be forthwith removed from the said town:...*

... until it shall sufficiently appear to his Majesty that full satisfaction [has] been made by...the inhabitants ...of *Boston* to [the East India Company], for the damage sustained ...by the destruction of their goods sent to... *Boston*...and until it shall be certified to his Majesty,...by the governor...of the said province, that reasonable satisfaction [has] been made to the officers of his Majesty's revenue, and others, who suffered by the riots and [rebellions]...in the month December, in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy three...

Document Group 3D

Boston Tea Party

Colonists were unhappy with the passage of the Tea Act in 1773. It gave the East India Company a monopoly on importing tea in the colonies, and it allowed for a duty (tax) to be paid for the tea. Bostonians did not want to pay the tax, despite the fact that the Tea Act actually called for colonists to pay less tax than they had previously. They believed that since they were not represented in Parliament, Britain had no right to tax them. Taxation without representation was still a major issue for the colonists.

Patriots were determined that the Dartmouth, a ship carrying tea would not be allowed to unload its cargo. Several meetings were held in the Old South Meetinghouse. The last meeting was held on December 16, 1773. At that meeting, there was a call for Mr. Rotch, the owner of the Dartmouth. Mr. Rotch reported that the governor refused him permission to send his vessel to sea before the tea should be landed. The governor was demanding the tea be unloaded and the duty paid. A murmur ran through the vast assemblage, but the rising excitement was hushed into silence when Samuel Adams arose, and in a clear voice said: "This meeting can do no more to save the country."

The Destruction of Tea

At that moment a person with painted face and dressed like an Indian gave a war-whoop in the gallery, which was responded to in kind from the door of the meeting-house. Another voice in the gallery shouted: "Boston harbor a teapot to-night! Hurrah for Griffin's Wharf!" The meeting instantly adjourned and the people rushed for the street, and pushed toward Griffin's Wharf, following a number of men disguised as Indians. The populace cheered. Guards were posted to keep order. Among them was John Hancock.

The disguised men, including Paul Revere and Samuel Adams, then went on board the tea-ships moored at Griffin's Wharf, and in the course of three hours they emptied three hundred and forty-two chests of tea into the water of the harbor. The operation was performed in the presence of a multitude who were silent spectators of the scene. It was done at an early hour in the evening--a bright, cold, moonlit evening--and of the sixty men who went on board the tea-ships, only a part of them were disguised as "Mohawks."

When the work was done--when Boston harbor had been made a vast "teapot"--the streets of the town became as quiet. "All things," wrote John Adams to James Warren, "were conducted with great order, decency, and perfect submission to government."

The aftermath of the Boston Tea Party

Early the next morning the Committee of Correspondence appointed Samuel Adams chairman of a sub-committee to draw up a statement of what had been done with the tea, and then they sent Paul Revere as express to carry the document to the Sons of Liberty in New York and Philadelphia.

The work of the Bostonians was applauded throughout the colonies. But among the crown-officers in America and the ministers in Great Britain there was fierce wrath. The friends of the Americans in the British Parliament were silent for a moment, because they could not justify the destruction of private property. The East India Company was assured that the town of Boston would pay for every pound of tea destroyed.

The debates in the Parliament and the British response

The king asked Parliament that body devise means for the immediate suppression of rebellion in the colonies.

The House of Commons proposed an address of thanks to the king, and assurance that he should be sustained in efforts to maintain order in America. This address excited angry debates. "There is open rebellion in America, and it must be punished," cried the king's supporters. "Repeal your unjust laws and deal righteously with the Americans, and there will be peace and loyalty there," retorted the Opposition. After a long and stormy debate, the address was adopted by an overwhelming majority.

This vote strengthened Lord North, and stimulated the passions of the monarch. Urged by his sovereign, North submitted a bill, at the middle of March, for the severe punishment of Boston. It provided for the removal of the Custom-house, courts of justice and government offices of all kinds from Boston to Salem, and forbade every kind of shipping business in the harbor of Boston. It also provided that when the rebellious town should fully and humbly submit to royal authority, the king should have the power to open the port and restore the government business.

North justified the harsh measure by asserting that Boston was "the ringleader in every riot, and set always the example which others followed." He believed severe punishment of this rebellious town would strike terror throughout the colonies, and so bring the Americans into subjection to the crown. Many of his supporters in the House used very violent language, calling the Bostonians "mobocrats," and "vile incendiaries;" men who were "never actuated by reason, but chose tarring and feathering as an argument."

Boston Gazette Account

Photostat from the Dec. 20, 1773 issue of the Boston Gazette.

BOSTON, December 20.

On Tuesday last the body of the people of this and all the adjacent towns, and others from the distance of twenty miles, assembled at the old south meeting-house, to inquire the reason of the delay in sending the ship Dartmouth, with the East-India Tea back to London; and having found that the owner had not taken the necessary steps for that purpose, they enjoin'd him at his peril to demand of the collector of the customs a clearance for the ship, and appointed a committee of ten to see it perform'd; after which they adjourn'd to the Thursday following ten o'clock. They then met and being inform'd by Mr. Rotch, that a clearance was refus'd him, they enjoye'd him immediately to enter a protest and apply to the governor for a pass port by the castle, and adjourn'd again till three o'clock for the same day. At which time they again met and after waiting till near sunset Mr. Rotch came in and inform'd them that he had accordingly enter'd his protest and waited on the governor for a pass, but his excellency told him he could not consistent with his duty grant it until his vessel was qualified. The people finding all their efforts to preserve the property of the East India company and return it safely to London, frustrated by the sea consignees, the collector of the customs and the governor of the province, DISSOLVED their meeting.--But, BEHOLD what followed! A number of brave & resolute men, determined to do all in their power to save their country from the ruin which their enemies had plotted, in less than four hours, emptied every chest of tea on board the three ships commanded by the captains Hall, Bruce, and Coffin, amounting to 342 chests, into the sea!! without the least damage done to the ships or any other property. The matters and owners are well pleas'd that their ships are thus clear'd; and the people are almost universally congratulating each other on this happy event.

Account by Joshua Wyeth

The first published account of the Boston Tea Party by a participant was recorded from the words of Joshua Wyeth. He was just sixteen when he joined other patriots in boarding the tea ships in Boston Harbor. Mr. Wyeth told his story to a journalist in Cincinnati where he lived during his later years. The account was published in 1826, 53 years after the event has occurred.

I had but a few hours warning of what was intended to be done... To prevent discovery we agreed to wear ragged clothes and disfigure ourselves, dressing to resemble Indians... Our most intimate friends among the spectators had not the least knowledge of us... At the appointed hour, we met in an old building at... the wharf, and fell in one after another, as if by accident, as not to excite suspicion. We placed a sentry at the end of the wharf, another in the middle, and one on the bow of each ship as we took possession. We boarded the ship moored by the wharf, and ordered the captain and crew to open the hatchways, and hand us the hoisting tackle and rope, assuring them that no harm was intended them. Some of our numbers then jumped into the hold, and passed the chests to the tackle. As they were hauled on deck others knocked them open with axes, and others raised them to the railings and discharged their contents overboard. All who were not needed on this ship went on board the others where the same ceremonies were repeated. We were merry, in an undertone, at the idea of making so large a cup of tea for the fishes but we used not more words than absolutely necessary. I never worked harder in my life. While we were unloading, the people collected in great numbers about the wharf to see what was going on. They crowded around us. Our sentries were not armed, and could not stop any who insisted on passing.

Eyewitness Account by George Hewes

George Robert Twelve Hewes, a Boston shoemaker, participated in many of the key events of the Revolutionary crisis. Over half a century later, Hewes described his experiences to James Hawkes. When Parliament passed the Tea Act in 1773, colonists refused to allow cargoes of tea to be unloaded. In the evening of December 16, with Hewes leading one group, the colonists dressed in "the costume of a Indian." They boarded the ships in Boston harbor and dropped the tea overboard. Hewes' account shed light on how resistance became revolution. The "Boston Tea Party," as it became known in the 19th century, became a powerful symbol of the Revolution. And Hewes, artisan and ordinary citizen, was celebrated as a venerable veteran of the struggle for Independence.

The tea destroyed was contained in three ships, lying near each other at what was called at that time Griffin's wharf, and were surrounded by armed ships of war, the commanders of which had publicly declared that if the rebels, as they were pleased to style the Bostonians, should not withdraw their opposition to the landing of the tea before a certain day, the 17th day of December, 1773, they should on that day force it on shore, under the cover of their cannon's mouth.

On the day preceding the seventeenth, there was a meeting of the citizens of the county of Suffolk, convened at one of the churches in Boston, for the purpose of consulting on what measures might be considered expedient to prevent the landing of the tea, or secure the people from the collection of the duty. At that meeting a committee was appointed to wait on Governor Hutchinson, and request him to inform them whether he would take any measures to satisfy the people on the object of the meeting.

To the first application of this committee, the Governor told them he would give them a definite answer by five o'clock in the afternoon. At the hour appointed, the committee again repaired to the Governor's house, and on inquiry found he had gone to his country seat at Milton, a distance of about six miles. When the committee returned and informed the meeting of the absence of the Governor, there was a confused murmur among the members, and the meeting was immediately dissolved, many of them crying out, "Let every man do his duty, and be true to his country"; and there was a general huzza for Griffin's wharf.

It was now evening, and I immediately dressed myself in the costume of an Indian, equipped with a small hatchet, which I and my associates denominated the tomahawk, with which, and a club, after having painted my face and hands with coal dust in the shop of a blacksmith, I repaired to Griffin's wharf, where the ships lay that contained the tea. When I first appeared in the street after being thus disguised, I fell in with many who were dressed, equipped and painted as I was, and who fell in with me and marched in order to the place of our destination.

When we arrived at the wharf, there were three of our number who assumed an authority to direct our operations, to which we readily submitted. They divided us into three parties, for the purpose of boarding the three ships which contained the tea at the same time. The name of him who commanded the division to which I was assigned was Leonard Pitt. The names of the other commanders I never knew.

We were immediately ordered by the respective commanders to board all the ships at the same time, which we promptly obeyed. The commander of the division to which I belonged, as soon as we were on board the ship appointed me boatswain, and ordered me to go to the captain and demand of him the keys to the hatches and a dozen candles. I made the demand accordingly, and the captain promptly replied, and delivered the articles; but requested me at the same time to do no damage to the ship or rigging.

We then were ordered by our commander to open the hatches and take out all the chests of tea and throw them overboard, and we immediately proceeded to execute his orders, first cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks, so as thoroughly to expose them to the effects of the water.

In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found in the ship, while those in the other ships were disposing of the tea in the same way, at the same time. We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us.

We then quietly retired to our several places of residence, without having any conversation with each other, or taking any measures to discover who were our associates; nor do I recollect of our having had the knowledge of the name of a single individual concerned in that affair, except that of Leonard Pitt, the commander of my division, whom I have mentioned. There appeared to be an understanding that each individual should volunteer his services, keep his own secret, and risk the consequence for himself. No disorder took place during that transaction, and it was observed at that time that the stillest night ensued that Boston had enjoyed for many months.

The next morning, after we had cleared the ships of the tea, it was discovered that very considerable quantities of it were floating upon the surface of the water; and to prevent the possibility of any of its being saved for use, a number of small boats were manned by sailors and citizens, who rowed them into those parts of the harbor wherever the tea was visible, and by beating it with oars and paddles so thoroughly drenched it as to render its entire destruction inevitable.

-- George Hewes



Document Group 3F

Detail of *The Bostonians Paying the Excise (tax) Man* (1774), a color engraving by an unknown artist; John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, Providence, RI. The sign on the Liberty Tree is upside down and reads "Stamp Act". The pot has the word "TEA" printed on it.