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Colonial Reaction to the
Boston Port Bill

presented by

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COLONIAL REACTION TO THE BOSTON PORT BILL

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Preface

One of the generally accepted interpretations of the American Revolution is the view that Americans were far from unanimous in their opposition to Great Britain. Estimates as to the seriousness of the split vary somewhat, but the idea prevails that a large number of Americans supported the British cause. Sometimes the statement is made that the Revolution was engineered by a small group of "radicals," under the leadership of Samuel Adams, who used various propaganda techniques to put over their program. Often the statement of John Adams--that a third of the people were patriots, a third were loyalists, and a third were indifferent--is used as evidence of popular feeling at the time. Whatever the estimate, the impression remains that those who were opposed to revolution or were at least indifferent constituted a large segment of the American population.

The problem in this paper is to examine this interpretation as it applies to the Boston Port Bill of 1774 and the background of events leading up to and following directly from the Bill itself. What do these incidents reveal in the way of popular support for the American cause? Was there a sizable portion of the population actively opposed to patriot policies or at best apathetic? Or do reactions to the Port Bill indicate a great degree of unanimity among the people in their opposition to Great Britain?

The direct quotations used within these pages have been

modernized in spelling and capitalization. There are several reasons for this. One reason is purely mechanical--the abbreviations used so liberally during the eighteenth century are particularly difficult to reproduce with a typewriter. Many writers abbreviated by cutting a word down and placing the last few letters in the form of an exponent. Capitalization was markedly different from the modern form. Spelling also varied considerably: not only was there a difference in the use of abbreviations, capitalization, and spelling from today's accepted manner, but there was absolutely no degree of agreement among the contemporaries in that period. This also makes for difficult reading. Modernizing these factors does not detract from the meaning or historical significance of the quote. The only exception to the modernizations of the quotes has been made in the Appendixes.

Acknowledgment

I wish to express my thanks to Professor Robert E. Brown for his helpful suggestions and constructive criticism in both the research and writing done in this study. Any display of knowledge of the fundamentals of literary composition contained in these pages is a result of his kind efforts. I also wish to thank my wife, Marjorie, for the typing and proofreading of the manuscript, and for her many useful suggestions during the preparation of this thesis.

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Chapter I

Background of the Boston Port Bill

In March, 1774, Parliament passed the Boston Port Bill closing the port of Boston to all trade until Boston complied with some specific requirements laid down by Parliament. The Act stated that certain persons had fomented dangerous commotions and insurrections in Boston, that these commotions had subverted the king's government and destroyed public peace and good order in the town, and that during the trouble valuable cargoes of East India Company tea had been destroyed. Since commerce could no longer be carried on safely and since the customs could not be collected, Parliament declared that all commerce in Boston should cease after June 1, 1774. The ban was to continue until Boston had given full satisfaction to the East India Company for the tea which had been destroyed.¹

The Boston Port Bill had direct roots extending back to the Townshend Acts of 1767, and particularly to relations between the British government and the East India Company. Until 1767, the East India Company had exercised wide political and economic powers over the vast territory and wealth of India. Because of its control, it was able to draw immense wealth from India, but through corruption, mismanagement, and oppression, the Company found itself in difficulties with Parliament.

1. See Appendix A for full text of the Bill. An abbreviated version may be found in Henry Steel Commager, ed., Documents of American History, fourth ed., (New York, 1948), pp. 71-72.

There was a move in Parliament to divest the Company of its territorial revenues, which would strengthen the financial position of the British government, and a desire on the part of London merchants to break the Company monopoly in India, for which they were willing to pay a substantial sum. With the aid of friends in Parliament, however, the Company was able for awhile to thwart both the British government and the London merchants. In exchange for possession of its territorial revenues and trade profits, the East India Company agreed to pay the government £400,000 a year and to submit to restrictions on its dividends.² It was at this point that East India Company affairs became closely interwoven with colonial affairs.

The particular event was the passage in 1767 of the Townshend Revenue Acts, designed by Parliament to raise a revenue in the American colonies. The purposes of the revenue, as expressed by the act itself, were "for more effectively preventing the clandestine running of goods in the said colonies and plantations,...for making a more certain and adequate provision for defraying the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government, in such provinces as it shall be found necessary,...and towards the further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting and securing the said dominions...." The act placed duties on glass, red

2. John C. Miller, Origins of the American Revolution, (Boston, 1943), pp. 244-245.

and white lead, paper, painters colors and tea, the duties to be collected in America after November 30, 1767. Any money collected was to be kept in a separate fund to be used for the administration of the colonies and writs of assistance were legalized as an aid for enforcing the act.³

Of particular interest was the tax on tea. Four of the dutied articles were products of British manufacturing, but tea was an East India Company commodity. This article was to be taxed three pence a pound instead of the former tax of a shilling which had been collected in England. This meant a loss of nine pence a pound in revenue for the government, but the expectation was that a greatly increased sale of Company tea in America would still produce as much or more in total revenue. If this failed to materialize, the Company bound itself to compensate the government for any loss of revenue incurred, in addition, of course, to its fixed payment of £400,000 a year. At the same time, the lower duty on tea was expected to expand the tea market in America for the benefit of the Company, since Company tea would now be cheap enough, it was hoped, to compete with smuggled Dutch tea.⁴ In other words, the financial future of the East India Company was to be tied to the collection of a tea tax in America.

Like the Stamp Act of 1765, however, the Townshend Tax

3. Commager, Documents, pp. 63-64.

4. Miller, Origins of the American Revolution, p. 264.

failed to accomplish its purpose--in fact, it too resulted in strenuous opposition from the colonists. In Massachusetts the protests took the form of letters to British ministers and a circular letter to the other colonies soliciting support. In these letters, the Massachusetts legislature maintained that there were fundamental rules of the constitution which neither the supreme legislature nor the supreme executive could alter. Colonists, being British subjects, were by the rules of equity entitled to all the rights of the constitution. This particularly applied to a man's own possessions, which could not be taken from him without his consent.⁵

The circular letter of February 11, 1768, elaborated on these arguments and made an even stronger case for the colonies. The letter stated that the Townshend Tax was passed for the sole and express purpose of raising a revenue which infringed colonial constitutional rights. For not only were the colonists not represented in Parliament, which had levied the tax, but because of circumstances and distance, the colonies could never be represented in Parliament. Since the colonies were not, and could not be, represented in Parliament, Parliament could never pass acts taking colonial property. Only a colonial legislature could do this. The Massachusetts assembly particularly protested the avowed purpose of the Townshend Tax which was to provide a British-controlled fund for paying the salaries of British colonial officials. Said the assembly:

5. Commager, Documents, p. 65.

They have also submitted to consideration whether any people can be said to enjoy any degree of freedom if the Crown in addition to its undoubted authority of constituting a governor, should appoint him such a stipend as it may judge proper, without the Consent of the people & at their expense; & whether, while the judges of the land & other civil officers hold not their Commissions during good behavior, their having salaries appointed for them by the Crown independent of the people hath not a tendency to subvert the principles of equity & endanger the happiness and security of the subject....⁶

The protests were not confined to Massachusetts, however, for from Pennsylvania came support from John Dickinson in the form of the Farmer's Letters. Dickinson annihilated any distinction between internal and external taxes. He admitted that Britain could regulate trade in the interest of the empire, but the preamble of the Townshend Tax, he declared, showed that Britain's purpose was to raise revenue for the administration of justice and the support of civil government in America. A tax in whatever form was a tax, and he denied that Parliament had any power whatever to lay taxes in America.⁷

Protests proving unavailing, the colonists began to resort to a more concrete form of opposition. Boston led the way on March, 1768, with a non-importation agreement, followed by New York in April. In August, Boston re-stated its position with another agreement not to order additional goods from Great Britain during the coming fall, and to stop all trade from January, 1769, to January, 1770, with the exception of a few necessities. Philadelphia merchants fell in line with

6. Samuel Adams, The Writings of Samuel Adams, 4 vols., Harry Alonzo Cushing, ed., (New York, 1904-1907), I, 184.

7. John Dickinson, The Writings of John Dickinson, 1764-1774, Paul Leicester Ford, ed., (Philadelphia, 1895), pp. 312-322; 328-335.

these measures in March, 1769, but only after being subjected to much pressure from the populace and from the other towns. Further south, the Virginia burgesses met privately, after the governor had dissolved the assembly, and agreed not to import dutied articles, British luxuries, or slaves. Because of popular pressure, Charleston followed the other ports.⁸ This colonial opposition was something of a forecast of events which followed the passage of the Boston Port Bill.

For two years Britain and her colonies faced each other in a stubborn deadlock over the Townshend Tax. The colonists feared a situation in which British colonial officials would no longer be restrained by an assembly's control over salaries. Dissolution of the New York legislature for failure to provide for British troops in no way diminished this fear. In Massachusetts, the assembly came under attack for its circular letter of February, 1768, and when a newly-elected assembly refused to rescind the action of its predecessor, it, too, was dissolved on orders from the colonial secretary Hillsborough. Fearing violence in Boston because of non-importation, the British sent troops to preserve order, only to provide the occasion for clashes between the civil and the military ending in the Boston Massacre of 1770. The stationing of a board of customs commissioners in Boston to collect the Townshend and other duties simply increased the difficulties.⁹

8. Commager, Documents, 67-68; Annual Register 1768, p. 235; Curtis P. Nettels, Roots of American Civilization, (New York, 1945), p. 635.

9. Miller, Origins of the American Revolution, 255-267.

Again it was Britain rather than the colonies that finally backed down. The situation eased when Parliament repealed the Townshend Tax in 1770, just about the time of the Boston Massacre. In the repeal, however, there was one significant omission--the tax on tea--which Parliament kept as an emblem of British authority over the colonies, and perhaps also because of the commitment with the East India Company. It was this tax which contributed to later events leading directly to the Boston Port Bill.

The most important of these events was the passage in 1773 of the Tea Act which thrust the East India Company into the limelight of American affairs. By this time the Company was in dire financial straits, its debts had increased, its stock had fallen, and its warehouses contained some 17,000,000 pounds of unsold tea. Part of its trouble came from the refusal of Americans to consume taxed East India tea. Instead of expanding the tea market in America for the Company, the Townshend Tax had practically stopped all consumption of anything but smuggled Dutch tea. At the same time the Company had been faced with its annual payment of £400,000 to the government, without receiving the financial benefit of an enlarged American market.¹⁰ This market was no mean consideration, for Governor Thomas Hutchinson estimated the annual consumption in the colonies at about 6,528,000 pounds.¹¹

10. Ibid., 337-338.

11. For an interesting analysis of the Tea Act, its background and its consequences for America, see Arthur Meier Schlesinger, "The Uprising Against the East India Company," Political Science Quarterly, XXXII, (March, 1917), 60-79.

The Tea Act was designed to free the East India Company from its dilemma. In the first place, the government loaned the Company £1,400,000 renounced the £400,000 annual payment, and cancelled the requirement that the Company should reimburse the government for any loss in total revenue as stipulated by the agreement in 1767. At the same time, the Company could ship tea directly to America without putting it up for sale in England, thus cutting out middlemen and enabling the Company to undersell tea smugglers. The tea, however, still carried the three pence tax imposed in 1767 and kept when Parliament repealed the Townshend Act in 1770.¹²

Trouble came when the Company attempted to market its tea under the provisions of the Tea Act. Apparently with some misgivings about the venture, the Company dispatched cargoes of tea to Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Charleston, there to be sold by consignees appointed by the Company. But even before the tea arrived, there was evidence of mounting colonial opposition. Some of this was doubtless due to the tea monopoly conferred by the Tea Act, a fact which aroused fears of other monopolies. Perhaps also tea smugglers, who stood to lose a lucrative business, helped to foment opposition. But undoubtedly the foremost reason for colonial reaction was the threat to political freedom if the tea tax were collected.¹³ Having fought the idea of Parliamentary taxation successfully on

12. Miller, Origins of the American Revolution, p. 339.

13. Ibid., 340-344.

previous occasions, the Americans could not afford to admit the principle even though it was obscured by the camouflage of cheap tea.

Boston proved to be the focal point of opposition. New York and Philadelphia forced the captains of the tea ships to return their cargoes to England; Charleston permitted the tea to be landed and stored; but in Boston, circumstances dictated different action. There Governor Hutchinson, whose sons were consignees, took a determined stand to enforce the Tea Act. When the tea ships arrived, the people of Boston refused to permit the landing of the tea, and the consignees, backed by the governor, refused to send the ships back to England. The culmination of this deadlock was the Boston Tea Party. On December 16, 1773, just a day before the cargoes were liable to seizure by customs authorities for nonpayment of duties, a group of men disguised as Indians, dumped 342 chests of tea into Boston harbor.¹⁴ An indication that principle rather than mob violence was the motive for this act is evident from the care taken not to harm anything but tea.

An excellent example of colonial reaction to the Tea Party is contained in John Adams' Diary:

December 17. Last night, three cargoes of Bohea tea 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

14. Ibid., 346-347.

consequences, and so lasting, that I cannot 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 harbor, 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.

Adams went on to justify this violent action.

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 has struggled for ten years. It was losing all our labor for ten years, and subjecting ourselves and our posterity forever to Egyptian task-masters; to burthens, indignities; to ignominy, reprech and contempt; to desolation and oppression; to poverty and servitude.¹⁵

Parliament could not afford to allow this Act of open defiance to go unheeded. Punitive measures had to be taken for a royal law had been openly flaunted. Since Boston had produced the incident then it would be natural for the ministry to turn upon Boston with a special vengeance. The Port Bill was the punishment meted out to Boston.

Steps were quickly taken in Massachusetts to carry out the Act. The Boston Evening-Post, for May 23, 1774, ran the following announcement:

15. John Adams, The Works of John Adams, Charles Francis Adams, ed., 10 vols., (Boston, 1850), II, 323-324.

The commissioners of His Majesty's customs hereby give notice, that from and after the first day of June, 1774, the officers of the customs for this port and harbor will be removed from the town of Boston; to the town of Plymouth, within the limits of the port of Boston; then and there to proceed to carry on in the usual manner the business of their respective departments...and no officer of the custom will be permitted to remain in the town or harbor of Boston from and after the first day of June next, during the continuance of said Act.¹⁶

The commissioners remained out of Boston until the last of September, 1774; they returned at that time even though the port was officially closed. The last royal collector in Boston was Edward Winslow who was appointed just before the evacuation by the British.¹⁷

Governor Hutchinson became, in the eyes of the people of Boston, the symbol of all that was against the rights of America. Hutchinson had been instrumental in holding the ships in the port and thus aided in provoking the act of violence. General Gage was appointed Governor to Massachusetts Bay and Hutchinson was relieved of his duties. The ex-governor retired to a house outside Boston to wait for transportation to Britain. Some sympathizers went to see him and forever afterward were scorned by their neighbors as "Hutchinson's Addressers."¹⁸

The ramifications of the Port Bill were vitally important to all America. Parliament had asserted unlimited power, not only to regulate, but to destroy commerce according to its pleasure. Innocent and guilty were to suffer alike in Boston.¹⁹

16. Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 3 series of 20 vols. (Boston, 1791-1883, 1884-1907, 1907-1944), 1st series, XIII, 182-183. Hereafter cited as M.H.S., Proceedings.

17. Ibid., 475.

18. Mercy Warren, History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution, 3 vols., (Boston, 1805), I, 124.

19. C. P. Nettles, Roots of American Civilization, p. 644.

Colonial local governments and legislatures were at one stroke made completely contingent upon the will of Parliament; not only their laws but their very existance. Whatever a colonial had invested in his community, his job, his time, or his money could be made worthless without notice.

Chapter II

Reactions in New England

Reactions in New England were those of the people most immediately concerned with the Boston Port Bill. Commerce was an important factor throughout New England, and of course Boston itself was a port city built up through commercial activity. Since most of the population of Boston had some connection with commerce, the closing of the port had serious economic and social effects. The center of much of the cultural and intellectual life in Massachusetts was in Boston. The town dominated the surrounding area, just as any large economic center does. It is not surprising, therefore, that the New England colonies reacted promptly to the passage of the Port Bill.

With Boston the town most immediately concerned with the effects of the Port Bill, it was only natural that Boston should take the lead in any contemplated action. Before the Bill took effect, in fact, it became obvious that Boston did not intend to accept coercion passively. As soon as news arrived that Parliament had taken action, Boston appointed a committee to go to Salem and Marblehead in order to acquaint the people of those towns with the state of affairs in Boston and to see what assistance might be forthcoming. On May 18, 1774, the committee made its report. It found that there was "a disposition" to support Boston and that "...the selectmen of each town gave their assurance that their respective towns would have a meeting

forthwith; the results of which they would immediately forward to the selectmen of Boston."¹ On the same day the town appointed another committee for the purpose of securing suggestions which would aid and ease the lot of the people during the coming siege.² Boston indicated the pattern it was going to follow: to seek all possible aid outside and to carry on an internal program of retrenchment.

After the Port Bill took effect, June 1, 1774, Boston maintained this pattern with increased vigor. On June 17, 1774, the town took steps to advise the rest of the colonies of its position. The town "voted, (with only one dissent) that the Committee of Correspondence be enjoined forthwith to write to all the other colonies, acquainting them that we are not idle, that we are deliberating upon steps to be taken on the present exigencies of our public affairs."³ One method used by Boston for relief of the poor was to allow the Committee on Ways and Means to employ the poor in building projects on the town's land at the south end, thus providing a source of income for those thrown out of work, so the unemployed would not be forced by necessity to submit to British coercion.⁴

The pattern established by Boston was mirrored in the course of action taken in the Legislature of Massachusetts.

1. Boston Record Commission, A Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston Containing the Town Records, 39 vols., (Boston, 1876-1909), XVIII, 174. Hereafter cited as Boston Town Records.

2. Ibid., 175.

3. Ibid., 176.

4. Ibid., 181.

The House of Representatives on May 26, 1774, voted (115-8) to have the Committee of Correspondence transmit copies of the Port Bill to the other colonies. To accompany the copy of the Bill, the Committee wrote a note which read in part: "...we enclose you an act, passed in the late session of the British Parliament....We think the archives of Constantinople might be in vain searched for a parallel. To reason upon such an act would be idleness. You will doubtless judge every British American colony deeply concerned in it."⁵ This tended to carry further the program of appeal contemplated by Boston, and after the Port Bill took effect, the House of Representatives made a formal plea for aid to Boston. The House pointed out that the action against Boston was an attack upon all colonial America which threatened the destruction of all liberty.⁶

The appeal from the House of Representatives fell on susceptible ears in the towns of Massachusetts. Many of these had already taken action indicating their sympathy for Boston and their feelings about the Port Bill. On June 6, 1774, Marblehead instructed its representative to the General Court to do his best to assist Boston. The instructions went on to say: "Our hearts bleed for the distressed but truly respectable Bostonians."⁷ It is interesting to note that this port town, as well as Salem, which theoretically stood to gain economically by Boston's plight, heartily supported the Bostonians.

5. M.H.S., Proceedings, 1st series, XIII, 182-183.

6. Adams, Writings, III, 129.

7. Quoted in Samuel Roads, Jr., The History and Traditions of Marblehead, (Marblehead, 1897), p. 113.

On the same day, in town meeting, Bellerica resolved "That the Act for blocking up Boston harbor is hostile, arbitrary, and cruel, and a solemn alarm, sounded to all America."⁸ Charleston, Concord, and Lynn passed resolves similar to those of Bellerica and Marblehead. The Committee of Correspondence of Chelmsford in a letter to Boston summed up the attitude of many towns by saying: "We are happy to have it in our power, by any means to show our affection for a town, who are so eminently suffering in the common cause. As we entertain the highest esteem of your conduct, we are willing not only to sympathize but share with you in your troubles."⁹

Having expressed their sympathy, the towns then prepared to show Boston that they were willing to share in the town's troubles in a more concrete form than mere moral support. From Cape Cod through the Connecticut valley to the Berkshires, the Massachusetts towns passed resolutions to provide economic assistance to a town which was being deprived of its economic foundation. A few examples show typical contributions which began to pour in to the blockaded port: Barnstable, \$12 10 8; Wellfleet, \$7 10 8; Eastham, \$10 and 50 bushels of corn; and Falmouth, \$30 18 and 51½ cords of wood at one time--30½ cords of wood at another time.¹⁰

8. Quoted in Henry A. Hazen, History of Bellerica, Massachusetts, (Boston, 1883), pp. 229-230.

9. Quoted in Wilson Waters, History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, (Lowell, 1917), p. 205.

10. See Appendix B.

Not all the towns in Massachusetts, however, expressed sympathy for Boston in her predicament. Freetown, for example, indicated that she looked with misgivings on the whole situation. On January 17, 1774, soon after the tea party, Freetown passed resolves stating "the people of Boston had not acted in their duty to prevent the dumping of the tea and the act was liable to bring the vengeance of the king upon America."¹¹ As time wore on and the issue of the plight of Boston became more apparent, neighboring towns were able to keep Freetown in line.¹² Freetown, however, was the exception which proves the rule, for during the research for this study this was the only specific example of a recalcitrant town that was encountered.

In addition to the official responses of the legislature and the various towns, the correspondence of individuals also reveals the widespread support which Boston received not only from New England but from other colonies as well. The views expressed came from both patriots and tories, which should answer the criticism of bias or prejudice which naturally presents itself.

The first person to be considered is Samuel Adams who ranks first because no one person did more writing on the subject of the Port Bill. He was so active in this period that some writers attribute the American Revolution to his work. An evaluation of the specific part played by Samuel Adams is

11. Quoted in A History of Freetown, Massachusetts with an Account of the Old Home Festival, (Fal River, 1902), p. 17.

12. Ibid., p. 18.

not within the scope of this study. Adam's comments are presented here as merely another source of both official and individual reaction to the Port Bill. Adams was a member of the Boston Committee of Correspondence. In this capacity he was a most prolific writer. He kept in touch with committees of correspondence outside Boston and with many important people in colonial America. Adam's letters told of conditions in Boston and invoked sympathy and aid from Massachusetts to Georgia. On May 13, 1774, Samuel Adams wrote a letter which was addressed to the colonies in general. Said Adams: "... the town of Boston is now suffering the stroke of vengeance in the common cause of America... [it] cannot be entertained as that this town will now be left to struggle alone."¹³ This letter was distributed to the committees of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia. At Philadelphia a copy of the vote of that town was enclosed with the letter and it was forwarded to the South. The committees of Rhode Island, Providence, and Portsmouth also received copies of the general letter written by Adams. Silas Deane received a letter from Samuel Adams dated May 18, 1774. Adam's assured him that his sentiment "...that Boston is suffering in the common cause is just and humane."¹⁴ The replies to these letters indicate that there was a swelling tide of resentment toward Great Britain and a growing feeling of unanimity in the colonies with

13. Adams, Writings, III, 108.

14. Ibid., 115.

respect to Boston. Boston was looked upon as suffering in the common cause of American liberty. Most of these letters from Adams' correspondence show that America felt that should the ministry succeed in squelching resistance in Boston, a new system of complete regulation was in order for all of British America.¹⁵

The committees of correspondence had their share of troubles, for of course Tory sympathizers attempted to discredit patriot efforts. On one occasion Adams had to explain to the Committee of Colrain that the non-importation agreements made in reply to the Port Bill were not a plot by Boston merchants to make huge profits through the creation of scarcity.¹⁶ At another time Adams related that the Donations Committee of Boston came under suspicion. Rumor said that the members of the Committee were benefiting from their post by diverting some of the money to their own pockets. They were also charged with using the poor, supported by the donations, to work on their own lands without payment. The Committee requested all colonial newspapers to print their denunciation of the charges. A challenge was made by the Committee to any person to furnish proof of the scandalous insinuations.¹⁷

British officials in Massachusetts supply a good picture of conditions in that colony as observed by British government agents. Thomas Hutchinson the Governor of Massachusetts Bay

15. Ibid., 104-225.

16. Ibid., 145..

17. Ibid., 167-168.

was in a good position to observe American attitudes. On one occasion he said, "I hear nothing of giving way, nor is there any proposal from any quarter of making compensation to the East India Company."¹⁸ Hutchinson was relieved as Governor by General Thomas Gage. He returned to England where he was warmly greeted by British officials. Upon his arrival in England, Hutchinson was taken almost immediately to an audience with the King and Lord Dartmouth, the colonial secretary to discuss affairs in America. From the evidence presented in his diary, Hutchinson did not report that the Port Bill was the success that the King seemed to infer.¹⁹ General Gage, Hutchinson's successor, reported on May 19, 1774, that the Port Bill had produced such a marked reaction that he felt he would have to bide his time because "minds so inflamed cannot cool at once."²⁰

Examples of other colonial reactions are abundant in Massachusetts. A letter of May 21, 1774, from John Scollay of Boston to Arthur Lee, recorded a typical Bostonian reaction. Scollay pointed out the importance of Boston to the economic and financial life of Massachusetts Bay. He said the closing of the port was a cause of distress to thousands of workers, and that Boston was faced with the problem of relief of the needy. The letter went on to say:

18. Thomas Hutchinson, The Diary and Letters of His Excellency, Thomas Hutchinson, Esq., Peter Orlando Hutchinson, ed., (Boston, 1884), p. 151.

19. Ibid., p. 158.

20. Peter Force, ed., American Archives, Fourth Series, 6 vols., (Washington, 1837), I, 333. Hereafter cited as Force, Archives.

For that purpose [relief] we have it in contemplation, if the blockade continues any length of time, to employ the poor in building a horse bridge over the Charles River about as wide as the Thames. By this bridge, Charleston, a large and opulent town, will be joined to Boston. This bridge will greatly facilitate the intercourse between Boston, Marblehead, and Salem, and other trading towns.

When the news first arrived of Lord North's proposing this bill in Parliament, it was looked upon as a mere hum.... I believe...the colonies are too precious a jewel for the Crown to part with....²¹

Charles Chauncy, a well-known Boston minister, in a letter to Richard Price dated July 18, 1774, summed the attitude of all of colonial America on the Port Bill.

...there never was such an [sic] union in the colonies as at this day. The cause for which we in this town are suffering, they look upon as the common cause of all North-America....

The indignation universally excited in all sorts of persons throughout America, by means of the Boston Port Bill, almost exceeds belief....

And it may be worthy of particular notice, the union of the colonies and their intention of liberality in donations for our relief were the result of their own thoughts, previous to any applications to them from this town or province.²²

Dr. Chauncy's letter grasps the magnitude of the feeling of unanimity in an American cause by people believing themselves to be threatened by an alien force.

The comments of John Andrews, a prominent Boston merchant, are also worth noting. In a letter written on August 2, 1774, he revealed something of the conditions in Boston during the siege. He told of seeing eleven carts loaded with fish and one loaded with sweet oil arriving in Boston on that morning. It was a donation from Marblehead. The Committee of

21. Ibid., 369-370.

22. M.H.S., Proceedings, XVII, 268-269.

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Ways and Means, according to Andrews, had difficulty in getting the donations into town. The commissioners enforcing the Port Bill refused to let it come in by water. Two cargoes of rice from North Carolina, and a thousand bushels of grain from Weathersfield were held up also. The acts of the commissioners caused much consternation on the part of the townspeople. Andrews related that the Committee of Ways and Means met and decided "to ship some rice at Marblehead on board a vessel for ... [Boston] and demand clearance: in case of refusal, to enter a protest and proceed with it to Boston and take a chance of it, and see whether they [the customs commissioners] will put their threats in execution or not." The writer felt that the whole plan was to starve Boston into submission or at least to cause the poor to become a serious problem. The poor, according to Andrews, were employed in mending the streets and docks for which they were paid enough to allow them to subsist.²³

Another observer, whose views are particularly relevant, was Benjamin Franklin. As colonial agent in England for the Massachusetts Assembly, Franklin was in an excellent position to receive information on America both from his colonial correspondents and from reports reaching Britain by way of official channels. In September he wrote the following to Thomas Cushing, speaker of the House of Representatives:

23. John Andrews, Letters of John Andrews, Esq., of Boston, 1772-1776, Winthrop Sargent, ed., (Cambridge, 1866), pp. 23-24.

The coolness, temper, firmness of the American proceedings; the unanimity of all the colonies, in the same sentiments of their rights, & of the injustice offered to Boston; and the patience with which those injuries are at present born, without the least appearance of submission; have a good deal surprised and disappointed our enemies, and the tone of public conversation, which has been violently against us, begins evidently to turn; so that I make no doubt that before the meeting of Parliament it will be as general in our favor.²⁴

Franklin is also significant in showing the change which took place in individuals themselves--something that doubtless happened to many besides Franklin. Soon after the Tea Party, Franklin wrote to Cushing decrying the fact that the Bostonians had gone too far. He felt that in a dispute about public rights it was entirely amiss to destroy private property. "A speedy reparation," he advised, "will immediately set us right in the opinion of all Europe."²⁵ But by September Franklin had obviously shifted his position.

The sympathetic reactions cited above are those of Boston's neighbors in Massachusetts, but the rest of New England was not left behind by the Massachusetts towns in voicing its opinion on the Port Bill. New Hampshire expressed heartfelt sympathy for the Bostonians. Subscriptions were raised for the relief of the besieged inhabitants of Boston who were regarded as suffering in the common cause of American liberty.²⁶

The towns of Portsmouth and Frankestown also voiced strong opinions on the Port Bill. In a letter of May 19, 1774, Portsmouth wrote to the people of Boston:

24. Benjamin Franklin, The Writings of Benjamin Franklin, Albert Henry Smyth, ed., 10 vols., (New York, 1907), VI, 238-239.

25. Ibid., 179.

26. Jeremy Balknap, The History of New Hampshire, 3 vols., (Dover, 1812), II, 284.

We think the late act of Parliament to shut up the port of Boston of the most extraordinary nature, and fatal tendency. We heartily sympathize with you under your present difficult and alarming situation; and we will exert ourselves to carry any plan into effect which may be concerted by the colonies general relief. We sincerely wish your resolution and prosperity in the common cause, and shall ever view your interest as our own.²⁷

Francestown reacted in a similar way. June 1, 1774, the day the Port Bill was to take effect was proclaimed a day of mourning and public prayer. The men of Francestown agreed that they would resist "this foreign tyranny to the bitter end and whatever peril."²⁸

The town of Exeter was typical of the New Hampshire towns in its reactions to the Port Bill. In a town meeting it was decided to raise £100 by taxation for the aid of Boston. An exemption to this tax was made for anyone who was against the proposition. A subtle form of coercion was used to make sure that a large fund was collected. All that was necessary was that the person enter his name with the clerk within ten days of the passage of the resolution. It is significant that there were few who took advantage of the exemption and the money was quickly raised.²⁹ A letter written by Exeter to the Committee of Correspondence of Boston also reveals the attitude of the town:

Gentlemen, It gives us peculiar satisfaction that we are the

27. Nathaniel Bouton, Provincial Papers Documents and Records Relating to the Province of New Hampshire from 1764 to 1776, (Nashua, 1843), p. 367.

28. Quoted in W. R. Cochrane and George K. Wood, History of Francestown, N. H., (Nashua, 1895) p. 68.

29. Charles Henry Bell, History of the Town of Exeter, New Hampshire, (Boston, 1888), p. 85.

happy instruments of conveying relief to the distressed. We send you by the bearer hereof Mr. Carlton, one hundred pounds, which sum was unanimously and cheerfully voted by this town for our suffering brethern in Boston. The cause for which you suffer we esteem the common cause of all America, your prudence and fortitude we admire. That you may be assisted by all the colonies in the present glorious struggle for liberty, and imbued with wisdom and patience to persevere to the end is the desire and hearty prayer of your sincere friends.³⁰

The above are representative manifestations of opinions in New Hampshire and indicate that the people of that colony were aware of the plight of the Bostonians and its relationship to the rest of colonial America. New Hampshire was not going to stand by and calmly watch their "Boston brethern" suffer for what they believed should be the interest of all British America.

Rhode Island was another neighboring New England colony; reactions there were similar to those of New Hampshire. Providence, Bristol, Richmond, New Shoreham, Cumberland, Barrington, and Newport all passed resolutions in support of the Bostonians.³¹

The statements of the people of Newport, Barrington, and Providence are typical of the sentiment expressed by the Rhode Island towns. In May, before the bill was to take effect, Newport told the world just where it stood by saying:

Voted, that we have the deepest sense of the injuries done to the town of Boston by the Act of Parliament lately passed for putting an end to their trade, and destroying the port. And that we consider this attack upon them as utterly subversive of American liberty; for the same power may at

30. Quoted in Ibid..

31. John Russell Bartlett, ed., Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations in New England, 10 vols., (Providence, 1862) VII, 272-281.

pleasure destroy the trade, and shut up the ports in every colony in its turn....³²

The town of Barrington expressed its thoughts on the matter in its instructions to its deputies. These instructions also reveal that the fiscal conditions of Rhode Island would be most unique among modern governments.

Whereas, the deputies represent to the town that there is in the general treasury, a considerable sum of money which is not at this time especially needed for the use of the colony, and as it appears to the town that the inhabitants of Boston are much distressed by the late port bill....it is voted that the representatives of this town at the next session of the assembly in this colony do to the utmost of their power endeavor that part of said money...be appropriated to and for the use of the said town....³³

A week later, August 12, 1774, the town of Providence passed a similar resolution in the instructions to its deputies. Providence called the Boston Port Bill "that unrighteous inhibition."³⁴

Rhode Island was not outdone by the larger New England colonies. The zeal which is shown by the above resolves equals that of any in New England. It might also be pointed out that Rhode Island held a more important political position, relatively speaking, than it holds today with forty-eight states with which to compete.

Just as New Hampshire and Rhode Island were outspoken in their support for Boston, indicating that they looked upon the cause of the Bostonians as a common cause, so Connecticut, the

32. Force, Archives, I, 343.

33. Quoted in Thomas W. Bicknell, A History of Barrington Rhode Island, (Providence, 1898), pp. 328-329.

34. Records of Rhode Island, VII, 282.

third colony, reacted in a similar way. Examples of feeling against the Port Bill in the latter colony, in fact, are much more numerous than those found in New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

The legislature led the way in consideration of the importance of the Bill. The House of Representatives urged the various Connecticut towns to support Boston with the following resolution:

This house...do resolve, that it be and is hereby earnestly recommended to the several towns in this colony, to continue cheerfully and liberally to contribute to the relief of their suffering brethern in said town [Boston], according to the several abilities which Divine Providence has given them; esteeming it an incumbent duty and an acceptable service in the right of God and their country.³⁵

The above resolution is also an illustration of the growing American nationalism. Some of the towns which responded to this resolution were Wethersfield, Enfield, Waterbury, Woodstock, Woodbury, Norwalk, Glastenbury, Litchfield, New Milford, Hartford, Fairfield, Groton, Windsor, Windham, Stratford, New London, Norwich, Plainfield, Killingly, Pomfret, Stanford, and Derby. All these towns passed resolved indicating sympathy with the Bostonians and remarked that they felt Boston was suffering in the common cause of all colonial America. Some of the more individualistic comments illustrate how Connecticut felt in the matter.

The town of Wethersfield is a good example. The inhabi-

35. Charles J. Hoadly, The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, 15 vols., (Hartford, 1887) XIV, 409.

tants of this town decided on June 17, 1774, that they would make donations from time to time to Boston as their own conditions would permit.³⁶ After much discussion the General Assembly of Connecticut deferred action on their resolution on the matter of aid to Boston for about five months. Wethersfield did not condone its delay and in a resolution passed in June, 1774, the town expressed itself on the subject of relief and laid down a pattern that was quite typical of the plans made by many of the towns.

Whereas, the honorable General Assembly of this colony taking into consideration the distressed situation of the town of Boston, did come into a resolution to contribute to their relief but deferred putting the same into execution, until after their session October next--We, the subscribers apprehensive that to put forward a contribution at this time may greatly tend to relieve and encourage the inhabitants of that town, under their present unparalleled suffering in the general cause of American liberty, do engage to pay the sums by us subscribed, in the manner following: (viz.) One penny on the pound of our list for the present year, as set down against our names; and such other sums as we shall set down. Each person subscribing to be holden for one penny on the pound; and for as much more as he shall see fit to subscribe; to be paid in cash, in wheat, rye, & Indian Corn; to be transported to said town of Boston, and delivered to the select men, or overseers of the poor for said town, to be disposed of as they shall judge best for the benefit of said town.³⁷

By July 25, 1774, the donations of Wethersfield had reached the following quantities: 34-3/4 bushels of wheat, 243-1/2 of rye, and 390 of Indian Corn.³⁸

The spirit of giving was also represented in the action of nine men from the town of Windham. The men collected 257

36. Silas Deane, "Correspondence of Silas Deane," Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, (Hartford, 1870), p. 136.

37. Quoted in Sherman W. Admas and Henry R. Stiles, The History of Ancient Wethersfield Connecticut, 2 vols., (New York, 1904), II, 421.

38. Ibid., 429.

sheep, drove them to Roxbury and waited there for an opportunity to get them into Boston. In a letter which accompanied the gift to Boston, the generous donors asked the Bostonians to accept their offering and to "apply it to the relief of those honest, industrious poor, who are most oppressed by the late oppressing act."³⁹

Reactions in Woodstock, Gastenbury, and Farmington carried on the feeling of good will and aid for the Bostonians. Woodstock emulated the helpful action of the men of Windham and sent sixty-five sheep to Boston.⁴⁰ Gastenbury risked a generalization in its letter to Boston dated June 23, 1774. The signers said, "we believe all Connecticut almost to a man to stand by you and assist you...."⁴¹ Reactions in Farmington show that the people of that Connecticut town had a flair for the dramatic. May 19, 1774, found the town's indignation over the passage of the Port Bill at a boiling point. According to one account, "a very numerous and respectable body were assembled, of near one thousand people, when a huge pole, just forty-five feet high was erected, and consecrated to the shrine of liberty; after which the Act of Parliament for blocking up the Boston harbor was read aloud; sentenced to the flames, and executed by the hands of the common hangman...."⁴² After this violent

39. Joseph Anderson, ed., The Town and City of Waterbury, Connecticut, from the Aboriginal Period to the Year Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-five, 3 vols., (New Haven, 1896), I, 413.

40. Clarence Winthrop Bowen, The History of Woodstock, Connecticut, 8 vols., (Norwood, 1926), I, 143.

41. Quoted in G. H. Hollister, The History of Connecticut, 2 vols., (New Haven, 1855), II, 154.

42. Force, Archives, I, 336.

demonstration of Farmington's attitude concerning the Port Bill a meeting was called for discussion. Many resolves were passed; one of which stated "that the late act...for blocking up the port of Boston is unjust, illegal, and oppressive; and that we, and every American, are sharers in the insults offered to the town of Boston."⁴³

An interesting illustration that the state of affairs in New England in September, 1774, were decidedly in favor of Boston is supplied in one Delaware letter. The writer, Caesar Rodney, related that a false report came to Philadelphia which said that the King's ships had fired upon Boston. Reaction in the colonies became organized at this juncture. The colonial governments acted swiftly to deny this report. Rodney writes:

When the expresses went to contradict this false report, they found in those 2 gov'ts [Massachusetts and Connecticut] in different parties upward of 50,000 men well armed, actually on their march to Boston for relief of the inhabitants and that every farmer who had a cart or wagon (& not able to bear arms) were with them loaded with provisions, ammunition, baggage, etc.,--all headed by experienced officers....⁴⁴

The culmination of the spirit evidenced by the above resolves and personal comments of New England was found in the First Continental Congress. Through the spring and summer of 1774 the colonies passed resolutions and discussed the Port Bill and its relation to America. All that was needed

43. Ibid., 336.

44. Delaware Archives, 5 vols., (Wilmington, 1919) III, 1429.

now was to have the colonies meet together and decide upon a united American stand on the question. The Virginia Burgesses supplied the instrument for this meeting by issuing a call for a general Congress of the colonies to meet at Philadelphia. The New England colonies readily responded to the call. June found Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut with delegates appointed and ready to attend.

The delegates from New England went to the Continental Congress with the hope that the rest of colonial America would support Boston. Their hope was realized by the feeling that the New Englanders found present in the Congress. A few comments of the delegates from New England will illustrate this point. Silas Deane reported his findings to his wife. He said, "You may tell our friends that I never met, nor scarcely had an idea of meeting, with men of such firmness, sensibility, spirit, and thorough knowledge of the interests of America, as the gentlemen from the Southern provinces appear to be."⁴⁵ September 17, 1774, was a memorable day in the Congress. John Adams wrote that this was one of the happiest days in his life. Many statements were made in the session which led him to say, "This day convinced me that America will support the Massachusetts or perish with her."⁴⁶ James Bowdoin, a prominent Boston merchant, recorded his impressions in a letter to William Bollen, the Massachusetts agent in Great Britain, on

45. Letters of Members of the Continental Congress, 8 vols., Edmund Cody Burnett, ed., (Washington, 1921), I, 35-36.

46. Ibid., 34.

September 6, 1774. Bowdoin stated that Boston's hope had been answered and said, "we have the satisfaction to know that the other colonies look on our cause as their own."⁴⁷

The effects of the Continental Congress upon Boston was primarily to give encouragement to the feeling already present. Statements made in the debates of the Congress bore out what had been said months before. Boston was given heart by the resolutions made by the Congress. Ellis Gray of Boston commented to his friend Thomas Dolbeare, a merchant in Kingston, Jamaica: "...what keeps us most peaceable at present is the prospect of the Congress now assembled at Philadelphia; [they are] ...doing something for our relief."⁴⁸ A professor in Harvard, John Winthrop said that, "They [the colonies] all consider Boston as suffering in a common cause, and themselves as deeply interested in the event."⁴⁹ Benjamin Franklin wrote from London on September 15, 1774, to his friend in Boston, Thomas Cushing: "I rejoice to find that the whole continent have so justly, wisely, and unanimously taken up our cause as their own. This is an unexpected blow to the ministry, who relied on our being neglected by every other colony."⁵⁰ He was speaking as agent to Parliament for Massachusetts Bay. If any one comment had to be chosen among the many available that best expressed how Boston reacted to the Congress and the generous expressions of sympathy, the letter of Samuel Stillman, pastor of the first Baptist Church of Boston, would undoubtedly

47. M.H.S., Collections, IX, 372.

48. M.H.S., Proceedings, XIV, 315.

49. Ibid., XVII, 272.

50. Franklin, Writings, VI, 244.

receive prime consideration. Stillman wrote a long exposition on the Bill and its importance to all colonial America.

Such a spirit of union, firmness, intrepidity, and readiness to sacrifice every less consideration for the cause of liberty, I never conceived possible among a set of beings, whose primum mobile, in common, is self interest. The people [throughout] the continent are actuated by one soul, they have laid aside every distinction of name and party, but that of friends of freedom. The fire was kindled, and like a shock of electricity ran [throughout] this western world. No signs of fear on one hand, nor rashness on the other: but a moderate and firm opposition to any attempt to enslave America. I have the pleasure to find, that some who for years had been on the side of government have changed sides, and now unite with the majority of the people against oppression.

We are yet in prison in this town, but we seem to forget our circumstances through the friendship and generosity of the other colonies. They seem as if they would pluck out their very eyes [for] us, were such an act necessary to comfort and support us.⁵¹

The reactions cited above indicate that New England offered a united front of indignation to Great Britain's censure of the Bostonians. The people of New England told the world through their democratic town meetings and elected committees they they viewed the plight of Boston as something that vitally concerned them all. The personal reactions quoted in this chapter serve to reenforce this conclusion. Boston stood as the bulwark of American liberties. Over and over again the people of the New England colonies spoke of the "common cause of America;" they looked upon the Bostonians as the front rank fighters. The Port Bill became a matter of principle--should it be allowed to succeed in strangling the Bostonians into submission, then all of New England might be next.

⁵¹. M.H.S., Proceedings, L, 475.

New England was determined to see that the Port Bill did not succeed; all were to share in this project. Resolves were passed for all to see just where New England stood, but resolves were mere words and words could not defeat the purpose of the Bill. Action was in order and the New England colonies acted. Donations of all sorts: food, clothing, fuel, and money, were scraped together and sent to Boston.⁵² Many people may sympathize with a principle but the real test comes when a person digs down into his larder and pocketbook and freely gives. Towns throughout New England did just that. When it is also considered how scarce money was in colonial America the few pounds sent to Boston by her neighbors loom much larger. New England was not a big food raiser and engaged for the most part in subsistence farming. The food that was sent to Boston represented a sacrifice by many people in the small towns. Perhaps economic and political interdependence were factors in setting the program into action. Family ties might also be a factor, the feeling that they would be next might have been a consideration. Such a universal and heartfelt manifestation of concern for the "Boston brethern" cannot be explained entirely in economic or social terms. After reading many of the statements of the people of New England one would also be inclined to feel that the most important reason behind the actions of the New Englanders in response to the passage of the Boston Port Bill was that they felt that

52. See Appendix B for a summary of donations from Massachusetts towns.

they were aiding an American cause; that they all had a very important interest in maintaining the rights of American colonies against any infringement by the British in any manner whatsoever. Thus American nationalism had begun to assert itself.

Chapter III

Reactions in the Middle Colonies

Proceeding southward from New England one might expect that reactions to the Port Bill would be less enthusiastic in the middle colonies, but this was not true. These "bread basket" colonies were not as tied to commercial activity at Boston as their fellow Americans to the north. The closing of the port of Boston, therefore, might not effect them as markedly as the New England colonies. Besides this point, the existence of the great ports of New York and Philadelphia, for example, provided ample outlets to the sea. Family ties would not play an important role such as they might in New England. At first thought it might be concluded that Boston's loss would be a gain for many people in the middle colonies; if the port of Boston were closed, trade would be increased in the other Eastern seaports. The people of the middle colonies, however, did not ignore the state of affairs in Boston: the Port Bill brought definite reactions from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The absence of the town system in its well-developed New England form makes the task of collecting official reactions somewhat more difficult than in New England.

New York City violently demonstrated in sympathy for Boston. The Bill was cried through the streets as a "barbarous murder" and effigies of the authors of the measure were burned in public places.¹ A meeting was called by the more "substantial"

1. The American Revolution in New York, University of the State of New York, (Albany, 1926), p. 34.

members of the community in an effort to guide the protests into more peaceful channels. It was held at Faunces' Tavern but the attendance soon grew so large that it was necessary to adjourn to the Exchange where many statements and resolutions were made showing that the people of New York were behind the Bostonians in their troubles.² New York publicly advertised a meeting on the Port Bill to be held in the Fields on July 6, 1774. The meeting was very well attended and a number of resolves were adopted. Each resolve was voted on separately and all carried without one dissenting vote. The first resolve is indicative of the character of the rest:

1st resolved, nem. con., That the statute commonly called the Boston Port Act, is oppressive to the inhabitants of that town, unconstitutional in its principles, and dangerous to the liberties of British America; and that, therefore, we consider our brethren at Boston as now suffering in the common cause of these colonies.³

The New York Committees of Correspondence kept the people of New York informed of affairs in Boston. A brisk correspondence was carried on regularly with the Boston Committee of Correspondence.⁴ This exchange of letters was well under way before the Port Bill took effect. On May 23, 1774, the New York Committee of Correspondence wrote to Boston: "As a sister colony, suffering in defense of the rights of America, we consider your injuries as a common cause, to the redress of which it is equally our duty, and our interest to contribute."⁵

2. Martha J. Lamb, History of the City of New York: Its Origin, Rise and Progress, 2 vols., (New York, 1877), I, 765.

3. Force, Archives, I, 312.

4. History of Montgomery and Fulton Counties, N.Y., F.W. Beers & Co., (New York, 1878), p. 18.

5. Force, Archives, I, 297.

Albany voted a subscription for Boston and when subscriptions lagged the Albany Committee had two hundred copies of an advertisement printed which urged that those who had subscribed but had not yet sent their donations do so. The Committee also stated that any other donations would be "gratefully received."⁶

Other examples in New York of sympathy and aid for Boston may be found in Schenectady, Jamaica, and Newtown. Schenectady made its viewpoint clear to all by making a donation of wheat.⁷ Newtown passed resolves which denounced the Port Bill and kept its Committee of Correspondence in close touch with events throughout the colonies.⁸ The resolutions of Jamaica stated their sympathy for suffering Boston. They believed that the intentions of Parliament were not leveled at Boston in particular but all the liberties of all the other colonies.⁹

Several personal reactions in New York will illustrate some opposition or at least a luke warm reception to the position of the Bostonians. The motives for these opinions vary from religious prejudice to the perspective caused by the fact that the person was a Crown official. It is interesting to note that changes were often made in the definiteness of the

6. Alexander Flick, Minutes of the Albany Committee of Correspondence 1775-1778, Minutes of the Schenectady Committee 1775-1779, 2 vols., (Albany, 1925), I, 10.

7. Willis T. Hanson, A History of Schenectady During the Revolution, (New York, 1916), p. 20.

8. James Riker, The Annals of Newtown, in Queens County New York, (New York, 1852), pp. 176-177.

9. Henry Onderdonk, Documents and Letters Intended to Illustrate the Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County, (New York, 1846), p. 15.

stand taken before grass-root reactions were recognized. The evidence indicated above and a consideration of the perspective of station or position shows that these comments were not typical of reaction in New York as a whole.

One New Yorker, in a letter written May 21, 1774, rationalized the causes of New York's violent reaction in an interesting way. After he related how General Gage was hissed at a public dinner in Boston, he concluded that a Presbyterian junto was behind the resistance to Parliament and the aid given to Boston. He looked upon the Presbyterians as the cause of all violent American action. Only the adherents to the Church of England, he declared, were reliable and respectful to the British Parliament. The letter suggested that the ringleaders should be punished as an example to the rest and then most assuredly America would quiet down.¹⁰ Another New York letter written in June said that the violent opposition to the Port Bill was the action of a group of smugglers and mob leaders---men of property would put things in order soon.¹¹

Thomas Gamble was apprehensive about chances for reparations from Boston or settlement of affairs in general in America. In a letter written in New York on July 1, 1774, he stated his opinion of American affairs at that point of development. He insisted that the haughty attitude of the Bostonians was based on the assumption that the other colonies would unite behind

10. Force, Archives, I, 299-302.

11. Ibid., 302.

them. According to Gamble, the only way that Boston would pay for the tea would be if the coming Continental Congress instructed them to pay. He summed up his remarks with a prediction: "...as matters stand at present I foresee that the troubles in America will not cease for some time...."¹²

Cadwallader Colden's correspondence is also useful to illustrate how British officials were forced to recognize the seriousness of American reaction to the Port Bill. Colden was best known as the Tory Lieutenant-Governor of New York at the outbreak of the Revolution. He gained much of his reputation among Americans by his conduct during the Stamp Act controversy, 1765-1766. Colden was in regular contact with the Earl of Dartmouth. On the day the Port Bill took effect Colden reported to the Earl that the Bill was the subject of all conversation but that he was assured that the hot-headed people would be easily kept in check.¹³ Colden assured the Earl on June 6, 1774, that the zeal that he was then forced to admit existed in New York by that time, was only confined to the city of New York. The people outside that area were in no way disposed to become active in the manner of the city dwellers.¹⁴

New Jersey, another middle colony, supported the Bostonians with zeal that equaled its neighbors in New York. Many of the counties of New Jersey passed resolves displaying sym-

12. Lee Papers, 4 vols., in Collections of the New York Historical Society, 82 vols., (New York, 1866-1942), I, 126.

13. The Colden Letter Books, 2 vols., in N.Y. Historical Society, Collections, II, 339.

14. Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, E.B.O'Callaghan, ed., 14 vols., (Albany, 1857), VIII, 470.

pathy for Boston and stating that Boston was suffering in the common cause. Some of these counties were Sussex, Monmouth, Union, Morris, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Bergen, and Essex.

A few of the resolves of these New Jersey counties will serve as illustrations of New Jersey sentiment on the Port Bill. On July 16, 1774, Sussex county passed resolves which stated that the Act of Parliament was "oppressive, unconstitutional, and injurious."¹⁵ The people of Monmouth received a letter of thanks from the Boston Committee of Correspondence for their aid to Boston in the troublesome times. Wrote the committee: "Such charities not only serve to show the union and tender sympathy of the colonies with and for each other but will fix an everlasting brand of infamey upon the Ministry."¹⁶ After making a statement similar to the above, Hunterdon set up a subscription for relief from every town.¹⁷ Morris County passed resolves on the Port Bill on June 27, 1774. One of the Resolutions passed on that date summarizes the attitude described in the other resolves:

4th--that it is the opinion of this meeting that the Act of Parliament for shutting up the port of Boston is unconstitutional, injurious in its principles to the general cause of American freedom, particularly oppressive to the inhabitants of that town, and that therefore the people of Boston are considered by us as suffering in the general cause of America.¹⁸

15. Quoted in George Wyckoff Cummings, History of Warren County, New Jersey, (New York, 1911), p. 35.

16. Frederick W. Ricord & William Nelson, eds., "Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey," Archives of the State of New Jersey, 41 vols., (Newark, 1886), X, 498.

17. Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey, pub. by the State of New Jersey, (Trenton, 1879), p. 14.

18. History of Morris County, New Jersey, pub. by W. W. Munsell & Co., (New York, 1882), p. 23.

On June 25, 1774, the people of Bergen County passed resolves which agree with the resolves of Morris county because they felt "deeply affected with the calamitous condition of the inhabitants of Boston."¹⁹ The New York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury reported on October 21, 1774, that the people of Monmouth county had expressed their sympathy for Boston in a very tangible way. "Boston, October 24. Capt. Brown arrived at Salem, with a generous donation from our worthy sympathizing brethern of the county of Monmouth, in New Jersey, consisting of twelve hundred bushels of rye, and fifty barrels of rye flour."²⁰

The Committee of Correspondence of New Jersey was active in establishing itself as a liaison for information about Boston and expressing the sentiments of the people of New Jersey. A letter of July 28, 1774, to the Committee of Correspondence in Boston stated: "The arbitrary and cruel oppression under which your metropolis now labors from the suspension of commerce, must inevitably reduce multitudes to inexpressible difficulty and distress....Sympathy and resentment, with peculiar energy fill the breasts of your anxious countrymen."²¹ On another occasion the Committee of Correspondence of New Jersey told the

19. Quoted in Woodford W. Clayton and William Nelson, History of Bergen and Passaic Counties, New Jersey, (Philadelphia, 1882), p. 49.

20. New Jersey Archives, XXIX, 512.

21. New Jersey Minutes, p. 28.

people of Boston that they looked upon themselves as eventually being in the same predicament.²² Benjamin Franklin's son William was Governor of New Jersey during the period of this study and his comments indicate that he was uncertain as to the feeling of his colony on the Port Bill. Governor Franklin wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the colonies, about conditions in America the day before the Port bill took effect. The letter stated:

It is difficult as yet to foresee what will be the consequence of the Boston Port Act. It seems as if the merchants of Philadelphia and New York, at their late meeting, were inclined to assist or cooperate with those of Boston, in some degree....

A Congress of members of the several Houses of Assembly has been proposed in order to agree upon some measures on the present occasion; but whether this expedient will take place is as yet uncertain.²³

The Governor went on to say that he feared that New Jersey might go along with the other colonies simply because they would not want to appear singular in the eyes of the other Americans.

The fears of the Governor were bound to be increased by sentiments expressed by individuals in New Jersey. Opinion there was generally in support of Boston. The Pennsylvania Gazette carried an extract of a New Jersey letter of June 8, 1774. The letter was written by a member of the House who was also a member of the Committee of Correspondence. The writer stated that the people of New Jersey were interested in the

22. History of Union County New Jersey 1664-1923, A. Van Doren Honeyman, ed., 3 vols., (New York, 1923), I, 135.

23. Force, Archives, I, 368.

affairs of Boston because they felt that they might be next. The tenor of the letter is summed up in the words, "Our committee is well disposed in the cause of American freedom."²⁴

Delaware was not left behind by its larger neighbors, as the people of Delaware reacted to the Port Bill in much the same manner as the colonies already cited. On August 1, 1774, representatives of the counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex met together to discuss the Port Bill. The meeting was called by a circular letter from the Speaker of the House. The resolves passed at this meeting echo those of the rest of colonial America.

Resolved, 1. That the Act of Parliament for shutting up the Port of Boston is unconstitutional, oppressive to the inhabitants of that town, dangerous to the liberties of the British colonies, and that, therefore, we consider our brethern at Boston as suffering in the common cause of America.²⁵

As far as the available evidence indicates, the representatives brought to the meeting the ideas of the people of their respective counties--ideas which indicate that the people of Delaware were squarely behind the Bostonians. The counties of Sussex, Kent, and New Castle passed resolves independent of those passed at the general meeting of August 1. They expressed the same feelings as shown in the above resolve and in much the same language.²⁶

24. New Jersey Archives, XXIX, 395.

25. Force, Archives, I, 664.

26. Ibid., 664-666.

Reactions in Pennsylvania tend to carry on the pattern that has been described in the other colonies. Examples of the tenor of the Pennsylvanian's feelings about the Port Bill are numerous in that politically active colony. The available reactions in Pennsylvania are mostly those of Philadelphia, the counties and legislature rather than the small towns or cities.

The governor of Pennsylvania attempted to head off organized sympathy for Boston by the people under his administration. When the storm of the Port Bill broke, the legislature of Pennsylvania was not in session. Numerous petitions were sent to the Governor asking him to call a special session for the consideration of the Port Bill.²⁷ The Governor brought the petitions before the Board, which was a council appointed by the Crown to assist the Governor, and asked their advice as to what answer he could make. The Board after due consideration drew up and approved the following answer: "Upon all occasions when peace, order and tranquility of the Province requires it, I shall be ready to convene the assembly, but as that does not appear to me to be the case at present, I cannot think such a step would be expedient or consistent with my duty."²⁸

27. Pennsylvania Gazette, June 15, 1774. The Gazette had aided the consideration of the Port Bill by printing the full text of the Bill on May 18, 1774. See Appendix A.

28. Minutes of Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government, pub. by the State of Pennsylvania, 16 vols., (Harrisburg, 1852), X, 179-180.

The people persisted in their desire to let the Bostonians know that they stood behind them so that the failure of the Governor to cooperate caused the people to meet in State House Yard to air their opinions. Much talk and debate ensued and the meeting passed resolves on the Port Bill. One of these resolves stated that the Port Bill was "unconstitutional, oppressive to the inhabitants of that town...and therefore they considered their brethern at Boston as suffering in the common cause of America."²⁹

Philadelphia disclosed its feeling on the Port Bill early and in very definite terms. On May 20, 1774, at the City Tavern a meeting was held to consider the Port Bill. The meeting decided to make the cause of Boston their own.³⁰ A Committee of Correspondence was chosen and instructed to write to Boston informing the Bostonians of the sympathetic feelings of the people of Philadelphia.³¹ Four days later the Committee of Correspondence wrote a similar letter to Boston and added that they felt "Great Britain must be out of her senses."³²

After the Port Bill went into operation, Philadelphia continued in this vein in an even stronger sense. On the first of June, the day the Port Bill took effect, the shops were closed throughout the city as a sign of mourning for the suffering

29. Charles Thomson, "The Papers of Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress," N. Y. Historical Society Collections, XIV, 223.

30. Frank M. Etting, An Historical Account of the Old State House of Pennsylvania Now Known as the Hall of Independence, (Boston, 1876), p. 74.

31. Samuel Hazard, ed., The Register of Pennsylvania, 16 vols., (Philadelphia, 1829), III, 34-38.

32. Force, Archives, I, 347.

Americans in the town of Boston.³³ Nearly eight thousand people assembled on June 18, 1774, in a mass meeting. John Dickinson, the author of the Farmer's Letters, and Thomas Willing were the leaders. This meeting recommended a continental congress and appointed a committee to raise a subscription for the relief of the Bostonians.³⁴

The Society of Friends in Philadelphia was also active in support of Boston. They collected a large sum of money which aided Boston significantly. The committee of the Society reported that "The sum contributed by the Philadelphia meeting for sufferings was \$2540, mostly in gold....Three thousand and thirty families, consisting of six thousand nine hundred and twenty-three persons, received aid from this fund.³⁵

In addition to Philadelphia and the Society of Friends, the counties of Pennsylvania also responded to the plight of Boston. Some of the counties of Pennsylvania which passed resolutions of sympathy for Boston and declared that Boston was fighting a common cause were Bucks, Augusta, Allegheny, Delaware, Berks, Philadelphia, Perry, Chester, and Fayette. The wording of these resolves was very much like those of the other colonies already discussed.

33. Etting, History of Old State House, p. 74.

34. Sherman Day, Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania, (Philadelphia, 1843), p. 34.

35. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 72 vols., (Philadelphia, 1877-1948), I, 168.

The dangerous implications of the Port Bill to American liberty were emphasized in most of the resolves passed by the Pennsylvania counties. Augusta and Allegheny counties passed similar resolves on the same day. A committee was appointed by Augusta County to collect subscriptions.³⁶ Allegheny County did not have its subscription going as early as Augusta County but was more eloquent in the wording of its resolves.

Resolved, unanimously, That there is no reason to doubt but the same system of tyranny and oppression will--should it meet with success in Massachusetts Bay--be extended to other parts of America. It is, therefore, become the indispensable duty of every American...by every means which God has put in his power, to resist and oppose the execution of it; that for us we will be ready to oppose it with our lives and our fortunes.³⁷

The above resolve illustrates the fear that was present in Pennsylvania that should the Port Bill succeed in its operation in Boston the people of the rest of America may be next in line for similar treatment. Sympathy was not the only motive therefore, for the support given to Boston--self preservation was an important reason also. The people of Allegheny County were talking in terms of backing the cause with all they had--their lives, money and property.

Berks County, after mentioning the threat to American liberties posed by the Port Bill stated on July 2, 1774, "that it is the duty of all the inhabitants to contribute to the support of said sufferers."³⁸ Assembled at the County Court House

36. Franklin Ellis, History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania, (Philadelphia, 1882), p. 71.

37. Quoted in History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, A. Warner & Co., pub., (Chicago, 1889), p. 75.

38. Morton L. Montgomery, History of Berks County in Pennsylvania, (Philadelphia, 1886), p. 137.

The people of Chester County passed resolves on the Port Bill on July 13, 1774.³⁹

Feeling for Boston was carried down to the grass roots: Newtown and Fermanagh townships looked upon the need of giving aid to the poor of Boston one of their main concerns. In its resolves Newtown injected Christianity and American nationalism as motivations for its action:

We hold it as our bounden duty, both as Christians and as countrymen, to contribute towards the relief and support of the poor inhabitants of the town of Boston, now suffering in the general cause of all the colonies; and we do hereby recommend the raising a sum of money for that purpose to every inhabitant...in this county as soon as possible.⁴⁰

Sometimes smaller units than the counties acted independently. Fermanagh township scraped together as much money as it possibly could afford. The town proudly announced that the two largest subscriptions were for ten shillings each.⁴¹ A group of German farmers in Philadelphia county, believing that they ought to do their bit, assembled a donation which was sent to Boston. This indicated that the new immigrants of Pennsylvania took an active interest in American affairs.⁴²

X An indication of the social pressure brought about by the majority upon recalcitrants is illustrated by an incident in Bucks County. Charges were brought by the Committee of Safety of Bucks County against Thomas Meredith. The accused

39. J. Smith Futhy and Gilbert Cope, History of Chester County, Pennsylvania, (Philadelphia, 1881), p. 60.

40. Quoted in Pennsylvania Magazine, XV, 260.

41. Ibid., XVII, 180.

42. Ibid., XXVIII, 242-243.

issued the following statement:

Whereas, I have spoken injuriously of the distressed people of the town of Boston, and disrespectfully of the measures prosecuting for the redress of American grievances; I do hereby declare, [that] I am heartily sorry for what I have done, voluntarily renouncing my former principles, and promise for the future to render my conduct inexceptionable to my countrymen, by strictly adhering to the measures of the Congress.⁴³

While remonstances and resolves were being passed on the various political levels the individual inhabitants of Pennsylvania were recording their personal views in letters or signed newspaper articles. These personal comments will be cited to show that the general essence of the official comments thus far discussed were indicative of the mind of Pennsylvania on the matter of the Port Bill.

One of the best summaries of the situation, both in Pennsylvania and in the other colonies, came from Deputy-Governor Penn. In a letter to the Secretary of State for the colonies he stated: "The temper of the people, as well here as in other parts of America is very warm. They look upon the chastisement of the people of Boston to be purposely rigorous, and held up by way of intimidation to all America; and in short, that Boston is suffering in the common cause."⁴⁴ This statement agrees with others presented here, and certainly Penn could not be accused of distorting colonial opposition for propaganda purposes.

43. Ibid., XV, 265.

44. Force, Archives, I, 514.

Events in Pennsylvania bear up the Deputy Governor's words. The city of Philadelphia reacted to the Port Bill in away that left no doubt as to where its inhabitants stood on the measure. A letter written in Philadelphia on the day the Bill took effect throws some light on the motives of the people of that city. "We must stand or fall together," stated this writer, "for the Boston Port Act carries in its principle and effects the certain, if not the immediate destruction of all the liberties of America."⁴⁵ As a result of this type of feeling about the Port Bill, Philadelphians decided to make an outward manifestation of their sympathy for Boston. On June 1, 1774, when the Port Bill took effect the city went into mourning. All business was stopped; the church bells rang a muffled tribute and flags were at half mast. One resident of the city said that "such a pause is intended, not only to show the real concern we feel for the distresses of our brethren...but to give an opportunity of seriously reflecting on our own dangers."⁴⁶ On the next day a citizen reported that he believed that excepting the Friends, nine-tenths of the citizens shut up their houses.⁴⁷ The Friends or Quakers would not enter into these proceedings because their doctrine forbade active opposition of this type. The day of mourning dictated that church bells be rung, and though the Church of England did not join in the events officially, the Anglican bells rang

45. Ibid., 378-379.

46. Ibid., 365.

47. Ibid..

out with the others. An official notification was made at the insistence of the rector of Christ's Church to the effect that the bells of that church were rung without his consent. The notice pointed out that the established church was restrained from any religious observance except on days appointed by the church or the public authority of the government.⁴⁸

The greatest obstacle to popular measures in Pennsylvania seems to have been the Quakers, but even Quaker pacifism was not sufficient to restrain the Pennsylvanians. Charles Thomson, secretary of the Continental Congress, reported that at the great mass meeting held in Philadelphia immediately after news of the Port Bill many principled leaders such as John Dickinson attended with the purpose of offsetting the Quakers' who gathered in considerable numbers to assert their ideas.⁴⁹ The resolves which were passed at this meeting were as spirited as those passed elsewhere in the colonies, indicating that the Quakers had exerted little influence.⁵⁰

The Farmer, John Dickinson, continued to use his pen in the popular cause just as he had done in the time of the Townshend Act. In a series of letters addressed to the inhabitants of the British colonies in America he wrote:

...administration and Parliament do us Americans the honor to think, we are such idiots, that we shall not believe ourselves interested in the fate of Boston, but that one colony may be

48. Ibid.,

49. Quoted in Pennsylvania Magazine, II, 413.

50. See page 47.

attacked and humbled after another without showing the sense or spirit of beasts themselves, many of which unite against a common danger.⁵¹

By June 20, 1774, his early faith seemed to have been vindicated, Dickinson said that as far as he had been able to determine the colonies were unanimous in their desire for a Congress. A note of caution was offered by Dickinson lest one colony get too far ahead of the others and thereby lessen the effectiveness of the resistance.⁵²

Thomas Wharton, a prominent Philadelphia merchant was a good example of a Pennsylvania who changed with the changing times. A letter of his dated May 17, 1774, reported that the majority of the people to whom he spoke were of the opinion that while the Act was severe the Bostonians would probably pay for the tea. The reason given for this opinion was that the removal of Governor Hutchinson would sufficiently break the violent attitude of many people.⁵³ Wharton, and several of his friends, attempted to tone down the tempers of the people attending the great mass meeting on the Port Bill which was held in Philadelphia. He claimed that his efforts met with some success,⁵⁴ but the resolves quoted elsewhere in this study will demonstrate that the success was very small. By June 10, 1774, Wharton admitted his error by declaring that "all this extensive continent considers the Port Bill of Bos-

51. John Dickinson, The Writings of John Dickinson, 1764-1774, Paul Leicester Ford, ed., (Philadelphia, 1895), p. 492.

52. Force, Archives, I, 434.

53. Pennsylvania Magazine, XXXIII, 334.

54. Ibid., 337.

as striking essentially at the liberties of all North America."⁵⁵ By July he was sure that "the whole continent will hereby be united in a stronger and more firm union than anything which has heretofore happened could possibly effect."⁵⁶ And when the first Continental Congress met in September, Wharton appeared to be as rabid as anyone: "I am very jealous that the Congress will be compelled to adopt this measure... [non-importation agreements] and I do believe it will be attended with the most positive and strict observance... [so that] perhaps our great ones may find they had better never compelled the Americans to adopt this measure."⁵⁷

The Continental Congress gave other delegates from the middle colonies an opportunity to see that America was in essential agreement in support of Boston. An early reaction from a delegate is that of Joseph Galloway. In a letter to William Franklin, Governor of New Jersey, Galloway recorded his opinions of the meeting.

I am just returned from Philadelphia, where I have been to wait on and endeavor to find out the temper of the delegates. Near two thirds of them are arrived, [September 3] and I conclude all be ready to proceed on business on Monday. I have not had any great opportunity of sounding them. But so far as I have, I think they will behave with temper and moderation. The Boston commissioners are warm, and I believe wish for a non-importation agreement, and hope that the colonies will advise and justify them in a refusal to pay for the tea until

55. Quoted in ibid., 433.

56. Quoted in ibid., 435.

57. Quoted in ibid., 441.

their aggrivances are redressed.⁵⁸

The temper of the Congress was tested by George Ross, one of the Pennsylvania delegates. He proposed that Massachusetts should be left to her own discretion. Galloway seconded his motion. The feeling of sympathy for Boston was so strong that the proposition was defeated when put to a vote.⁵⁹

Throughout the colonies the fervor for the cause was encouraged and extended. The New York delegates made this point in their report to the freeholders of Dutchess County. The delegates said "permit us only to add that the recommendation of the committee of correspondence of this city in favor of the distressed inhabitants of the town of Boston has received additional weight by one of the resolutions of the Congress."⁶⁰ On September 17, the Congress passed resolutions which indicated support of Boston. George Read of Delaware was unable to be present on this important day and regretted that he was absent. He wrote to his wife on the day following:

If I had been able to have travelled through yesterday, I should have blamed myself for being absent, as two matters were debated which I would have chosen to appear in,--to wit, a resolve of approbation of the conduct of the people of Boston and the county of Suffolk,...since the operation of the Port Bill; and another resolve for a further contribution from all the colonies for the support of the poor of Boston, both of which will be published tomorrow.⁶¹

58. E. C. Burnett, Letters, I, 5.

59. J. C. Stille, The Life and Times of John Dickinson, 1732-1808, 2 vols., Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 14 vols., (Philadelphia, 1864-1895), I, 139.

60. E. C. Burnett, Letters, I, 84.

61. Ibid., 35-36.

The reactions of the middle colonies did not differ from those of Boston's next door neighbors in New England. As one proceeds southward through New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania the reactions of the people are everywhere the same. The homogeneity of colonial feeling thus far analyzed in this study is pointed out again and again in the similar wording of the resolves and the spontaneous spirit of giving aid to the poor of Boston. The resolves cited above point out repeatedly the use of the term "common cause." Subscriptions were set up in many towns, large and small.⁶² The surging desire to do something constructive in aid of Boston was found in the personal comments of the people and made itself felt in the official organs of government up through the legislature of the colonies.

The question of motivation is not a different one in the middle colonies. The people were further removed geographically but their sentiments were not different from the New Englanders. On the contrary they were remarkable the same. Stopping the effectiveness of the Port Bill meant placing a shot in defense of American liberty against arbitrary parliamentary actions. If the British policy succeeded in Boston, the inhabitants of the middle colonies could see themselves next in line. Self-preservation was undoubtedly a factor, but the character of the re-

62. See Appendix B for a list of donations sent to Boston from the middle colonies.

solves and the charitable actions of the people of the middle colonies suggests other reasons. One of them was an emerging native Americanism--a feeling that Americans were not simply British subjects but a people set apart. Whatever the antagonisms between colonies, and there had been many, there was still this unifying factor. The Bostonians were their brother Americans, To aid them in their time of need was to further bolster the newly-maturing idea of the American as having distinct rights inalienable by any power outside the American scene.

Chapter IV

Reactions in the Southern Colonies

The southern colonies were even more removed than the middle colonies from the affairs of Boston. At first glance, one might expect that the distance could be measured economically and socially as well as geographically. Slavery, tobacco, and the Church of England seemingly would preclude the possibility of any sympathy among southern planters and small farmers for the Congregational merchants and mechanics of Boston. In fact, one might suspect that the southerners secretly felt elation that Boston "mobs" were to suffer for their wanton destruction of private property.

Any supposition that the southerners were not sympathetic with Boston, however, would be highly erroneous. Speeches, resolves, and legislative action quickly demonstrated that the South was as fully aware of the implications of the Boston Port Bill as were its sister colonies further north. From Maryland to Georgia came physical as well as moral support for the besieged Bostonians.

Turning first to Maryland, one may find that the people there were not outdone anywhere in the colonies in their strong stand in support of Boston. In the southern colonies the principal organ of government outside the legislature was the county; therefore, it is on that level that a good consensus of opinion may be obtained. The counties passed resolves on the Port Bill which were sympathetic with Boston's position,

and at the same time demonstrated, perhaps, that the similarities between North and South were greater than the differences.

Many Maryland counties, in fact, passed resolutions and moved to aid Boston before the Bill took effect in June. In Talbot County, for example, the people assembled at the County Court House on May 24, 1774, specifically to discuss the Port Bill. Those present decided that they must unite with all Americans who were gathering to offer aid to Boston.¹ The people of this Maryland county determined to pursue every legal means "to avert the evils threatened by the last act of Parliament for shutting up the port and harbor of Boston."² Queen Anne County passed resolves on the Port Bill on May 13, 1774. The people of Queen Anne County said "...that they look upon the cause of Boston, in its consequences, to be the common cause of America."³ Another meeting was held to discuss the Port Bill on May 30, in which the bill was declared a violation of natural rights, constitutional rights and the rights of English subjects, thus basing resistance on legal grounds. The Port Bill was called "a foundation for the utter destruction of American freedom," at this meeting.⁴

After the Port Bill took effect, June 1, 1774, the counties of Maryland continued to denounce the bill and indicate sympathy

1. Force, Archives, I, 348.

2. Quoted in Maryland Historical Society, Maryland Historical Magazine, 20 vols., (Baltimore, 1906-1925), VI, 153-154.

3. Force, Archives, I, 336.

4. Quoted in Thomas J. Scharf, History of Maryland, 3 vols., (Baltimore, 1879), II, 148.

for Boston. Kent County resolves, passed on June 2, said the people of Kent County were "moved with the most tender sympathy for the distresses of their suffering brethern of Boston" and started a subscription for relief of the poor.⁵ Anne Arundel County on June 4 and Lower Frederick and Harford Counties on June 11 passed resolves saying that the people of those counties looked upon Boston as suffering in the common cause of all America.⁶ Charles County stressed self-preservation more than Christian sympathy in its meeting on the Port Bill on June 14, 1774.⁷ On June 18 Caroline County fell in step with the rest of Maryland.⁸ Frederick County felt some overt action to demonstrate its sympathy was necessary and collected \$100 for the relief of Boston. The resolves of this county were more dramatic and stated, "the people of Boston as standing in the gap where tyranny and oppression [were] ready to enter, to the destruction of the liberties of all America."⁹

In addition to their individual actions, the Maryland counties apparently considered the situation serious enough to call for concerted efforts. A convention of deputies of all the counties was held at Annapolis, June 22, 1774, to take action in support of Boston. This meeting declared the stand of the deputies in several resolves, of which the two most

-
5. Quoted in ibid., 149.
 6. Quoted in ibid., 150-151.
 7. Quoted in ibid., 152.
 8. Quoted in ibid., 153.
 9. Quoted in ibid., 155.

pertinent follow:

I. Resolved...the said bills, if passed into acts will lay a foundation for the utter destruction of British America; and therefore that the town of Boston and the province of Massachusetts, are now suffering in the common cause of America. VIII. Resolved Unanimously, that a subscription be opened in the several counties of this province...for the relief of the distressed inhabitants of Boston....¹⁰

John Hancock, in a letter dated September 6, 1775, indicated that contributions from Maryland counties in response to this call were considerable.

Rec'd of John Dickinson Esq. One hundred & fifty seven pounds thirteen shillings & nine pence Philadelphia Currency, being a donation from the county of Carolina in Maryland to the poor of Boston, which I engage to transmit to the Committee of donations to be appropriated to the sufferers of Boston agreeable to the design of the donors.¹¹

Events in the capital of Maryland indicate that the city was vitally aware of the significance of the Port Bill to colonial America. Annapolis passed resolves to that effect on May 25, 1774, at a city meeting.

Resolved, that it is the unanimous opinion of this meeting, that the town of Boston is now suffering in the common cause of America, and that it is incumbent on every colony in America, to unite in effectual means to obtain a repeal of the late act of Parliament for blocking up the harbor of Boston.¹²

On May 27, 1774, the people of Annapolis declared that the officers of the law should not bring a suit for the recovery of any debt due anyone in Britain until the Port Bill was repealed.¹³ Daniel Dulany, Jr., in a letter to Arthur Lee

10. Quoted in ibid., 157-158.

11. Quoted in The Pennsylvania Magazine, XXXIV, 253.

12. Force, Archives, I, 352.

13. Maryland Historical Magazine, XV, 189.

reported that all resolves passed unanimously except the one concerning legal measures. He felt inclined to vote against this resolve because some injustice might be done.¹⁴

The Committees of Correspondence of Maryland were very active during this period. Before the Bill took effect the Annapolis Committee of Correspondence wrote to the Baltimore Committee that nothing could be plainer than that the suffering of Boston was in the general cause of America. The Committee went on to say that only through a union of mutual confidence could the basis be laid for the support of American liberties.¹⁵ The Baltimore Committee wrote a sympathetic note to Boston three days after the odious bill took effect, expressing, as many others had previously done, the idea of an emerging American nationalism. The letter said in part:

Permit us,..as brethern, fellow citizens and Americans embarked in one common interest most affectionately to sympathize with you, now suffering and persecuted in the common cause of our country, and assure you of our readiness to concur in every reasonable measure that can be devised for obtaining the most effectual and speedy relief to our distressed friends.¹⁶

While these events were taking place in Maryland similar things were happening in Virginia. The Virginia House of Burgesses became a focal point for sentiment in that colony. Jefferson reported in his memoirs that when the members of the

14. Force, Archives, I, 334-335.

15. Scharf, History of Maryland, II, 145.

16. Quoted in Clayton Colman Hall, Baltimore Its History and Its People, 3 vols., (New York, 1912), I, 25.

House heard of the passage of the Port Bill, the lead was seized by Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, Francis Lightfoot Lee, and a few others along with Jefferson and a stand was made for an unequivocal position in line with Massachusetts. In order to announce their position Jefferson related that he with the help of Rushworth "rummaged...for the revolutionary precedents... [and] cooked up a resolution, somewhat modernizing their phrases, for appointing the first day of June, on which the Port Bill was to commence, for a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer."¹⁷ This "cooked up" resolution is worth reading because it captures the American spirit in this affair as perhaps no other single utterance does.

This House, being deeply impressed with apprehension of the great dangers to be derived to British America from the hostile invasion of the city of Boston, in our sister colony of Massachusetts Bay, whose commerce and harbor are, on the first of June next, to be stopped by armed force, deem it highly necessary that the said first day of June be set apart by the members of this House as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, devoutly to implore the divine interposition for averting the heavy calamity which threatens destruction to our civil rights, and the evils of civil war; to give us one heart and one mind firmly to oppose, by all just and proper means, every injury to American rights, and that the minds of his majesty and his Parliament, may be inspired from above with wisdom, moderation, and justice, to remove from the loyal people of America all cause of danger from a continued pursuit of measures pregnant with their ruin.

Ordered, therefore, that the members of this House do attend their places at the hour of ten in the forenoon on said first day of June next, in order to proceed with the Speaker and the Mace, to the church of this city for the purposes aforesaid, and that the Reverend Mr. Price be appointed to read prayers, and the Reverend Mr. Gwatkin, to preach a sermon suitable to the occasion.¹⁸

17. William Wirt Henry, Patrick Henry Life, Correspondence and Speeches, 3 vols., (New York, 1891), I, 176-177.

18. John Pendelton Kennedy, ed., Journals of the House of Burgesses, (1773-1776), (Richmond, 1905), p. 124.

These resolves brought down on the House of Burgesses the wrath of the royal Governor, Lord Dunmore, but even this was not sufficient to halt activities in Virginia. When Dunmore dissolved the House, May 24, 1774, the Burgesses simply adjourned to the Appollo room of the Raleigh Tavern to carry on their deliberation in spite of the Governor. Non-importation agreements were adopted, but the most important thing to come out of this meeting was the momentous decision of proposing a general congress of all the colonies to consider the plight of America.¹⁹ The Raleigh Tavern resolutions were signed by eighty-nine Virginians and were very much like those of the colonies already quoted. They denounced the Port Bill and concluded with the observation that they were "clearly of the opinion that an attack made on one of their sister colonies... was an attack made on all British America."²⁰

In addition to the activities of the House of Burgesses, the counties of Virginia were also very emphatic in their denunciation of the Port Bill. Some of the Virginia counties which passed resolves indicating sympathy for Boston and stating that they felt that the town of Boston was suffering in the common cause were Fredericksburg, Prince William, Westmoreland, Spottsylvania, Richmond, Prince George, Culpepper, Essex, Fauquier, Nansemond, New Kent, Chesterfield, Caroline,

19. Landon C. Bell, The Old Free State, 2 vols., (Richmond, 1927), I, 203.

20. W. W. Henry, Patrick Henry, I, 180.

Middlesex, Dinwiddie, York, Fairfax, Hanover, Albermarle, Accomack, and Rockingham.²¹ Although the records are not available for other counties, this list gives some indication of the extent of popular support for Boston in Virginia.

During the first month of the Port Bill's effective life there was a virtual outcropping of resolves from the Virginia counties. On the day the Bill took effect, the people of Fredericksburg County met to consider the Port Bill and unanimously agreed to do everything that might be thought expedient by the other colonies to aid Boston in recovery of her liberty.²² Prince William County passed resolves generally agreeing with Fredericksburg just five days later but their motive was opposition to Great Britain's right to tax America with a duty on tea.²³ Westmoreland County passed resolves on June 22, which placed their emphasis on the destruction of commerce as the cause of their indignation and added that Boston should be understood as suffering in the common cause of America.²⁴ The people of Richmond County stressed the economic sanctions also and said that:

They do respect the Bostonians, in their sister colony of Massachusetts Bay, as suffering in the common cause of British America; and that the hostile attack now made on them by the Parliament of Great Britain, in blocking up their harbor, and violently taking away the property of many individuals, by

21. Lewis Preston Summers, History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County 1777-1870, (Richmond, 1903), p.189.

22. Force, Archives, I, 373.

23. Ibid., 388.

24. Ibid., 437.

preventing them the use of their wharfs, quays, etc., is an avowed intention to reduce all America to a state of slavery.²⁵

Whatever British intentions, it is important to note from these various expressions the implication that the Boston Port Bill was an indication of British intentions regarding all the colonies.

By July, 1774, the Virginia counties hit their stride in passing resolves indicating sympathy for Boston and telling the rest of colonial America to follow their lead. James City County passed resolutions on July 1 and ordered that a subscription be started to raise money, corn, wheat, or any other commodity that people could spare for the relief of the people of Boston.²⁶ Culpepper County agreed with James City in declaring their state of mind on July 7.²⁷ Essex County told the world that it stood beside the other Virginia Counties on the question of the Port Bill and asked that all the colonies unite in defense of their common rights.²⁸ The resolves of Fauquier County passed on July 9 asked all colonial America to supply Boston with all that would enable her to hold out.²⁹ The Chesterfield County resolves typify the feeling expressed by the Virginia counties during July: "Resolved, that the town of Boston is now suffering in the cause of American liberty; that her safety and protection is, and ought to be, the common cause of the other colonies; and their relief

25. Ibid., 492.

26. Ibid., 499.

27. Ibid., 523.

28. Ibid., 527.

29. Ibid., 529.

ought to be attempted by all proper and constitutional ways and means in our power.³⁰

Perhaps the most advanced position taken by any of the Virginia counties was that of Albemarle County in its resolution of July 26, 1774. The freeholders first declared that the inhabitants of the "Several States of British America" were subject to the laws which they had adopted at their first settlement, and others since made by their respective legislatures, duly constituted and appointed with their own consent. No other legislature whatever could rightfully exercise any authority over them--a flat denial of the provisions of the Declaratory Act passed when Parliament repealed the Stamp Act. They went on to say that British action against Boston made the cause a common one, and that they were ready to join with their fellow subjects in re-establishing and guaranteeing their constitutional rights, "when, where, and by whomsoever invaded." The most effectual remedy, they declared, was economic pressure through non-importation of most British goods. But even more significant was the following:

It is the opinion of this meeting, that these measures should be pursued until a repeal be obtained of the Act for blocking up the harbor of Boston; of the Acts prohibiting or restraining internal manufacturers in America; of the Acts imposing on any commodities duties to be paid in America; and of the Act laying restrictions on the American trade; and that on such repeal it will be reasonable to grant to our brethren of Great Britain such privileges in commerce as may amply compensate their fraternal assistance, past and future.

30. Ibid., 538.

In short, Albemarle County was demanding that Britain abolish her whole mercantile system, the very thing that members of Parliament had feared when they repealed the Stamp Act and Townshend Act. The fact that Jefferson drafted these resolutions doubtless had something to do with these demands.³¹

As in Maryland, the Virginians decided that concerted action of the counties would be more effective than individual action. The rump Raleigh Tavern meeting in May had recommended such action, with the result that a convention of the counties met in Williamsbury on August 1, 1774. This convention elected delegates to a general congress of all the colonies and then proceeded to instruct these delegates on the views of the convention. They declared allegiance to George III, determination to support him in the "legal exercise" of his just rights and prerogatives, approval of a constitutional convention with Great Britain, and a desire to return to the old connection between the two countries. They also said that they had "acquired" in the acts of navigation restricting colonial commerce, because they wanted British protection, and they considered this adequate compensation for such protection. They ended their instructions with the declaration that any attempt by General Gage to carry out his threats against Massachusetts would justify "RESISTANCE and REPRISAL." Then without waiting for the Continental Congress to act, the Virginia Convention

31. Commager, Documents, pp. 77-78.

drew up its own non-importation agreement to put pressure on Britain.³²

Virginia committees of correspondence were actively doing their part in telling the Bostonians and the rest of colonial America the attitude of the people of Virginia on the Boston Port Bill. The Committee of Norfolk and Portsmouth was in close contact with committees throughout Virginia and particularly with the Baltimore Committee. The Norfolk and Portsmouth Committee wrote a most eloquent letter to Boston assuring the people of that town that Virginia stood by their side by saying: "...our bosoms glow with tender regard for you; we sympathize with you in your sufferings....Be assured, we consider you as suffering in the common cause, and look upon ourselves as bound by the most sacred and solemn ties to support you in every measure that shall be found necessary to regain your just rights and privileges."³³

During the passage of the resolves on the various levels of government and the action of the committees of Correspondence, the individual Virginian was developing his own particular view of the affairs in America at this time. An accounting of some of the personal comments and actions during this period reveal that the views of most Virginians were represented by the reactions thus far discussed.

32. Ibid., 78-80

33. Force, Archives, I, 371-72.

The grave import of the Port Bill as far as all America was concerned was appreciated in Virginia before the Bill took effect. Arthur Lee writing from London to his brother Richard Henry Lee on March 18, 1774, aired his opinions. He told his brother that the affairs of America had now reached a very serious stage. If the Port Bill was allowed to succeed in humbling Boston, Arthur Lee foresaw the establishment of a dangerous precedent. Parliament would undertake to subjugate America by degrees.³⁴

George Mason wrote from Williamsburg May 26, 1774: "I arrived here on Sunday morning last, [and] found everybody's attention...entirely engrossed by the Boston affair."³⁵ A letter from a member of the Virginia assembly to a friend in London sums up the tenor of the reactions of Virginia before the Port Bill actually took effect:

Infinite astonishment, and equal resentment, has seized every one here on account of the war sent to Boston. It is the universal determination to stop all exportation of tobacco, pitch, tar, lumber, etc., and to stop all importation from Britain while this act of hostility continues. We every day expect ~~an~~ express from Boston, and it appears to me incontestably certain, that the above measures will be universally adopted. We see with concern, that this plan will be most extensively hurtful to our fellow-subjects in Britain; nor would we have adopted it, if Heaven had left us any other way to secure our liberty, and prevent the total ruin of ourselves and our posterity to endless ages. A wicked ministry must answer for all the consequences. I hope the wise and good on your side will pity and forgive us. The House is now pushing on the public business for which we were called here at this time; but before we depart our measures will be settled and agreed on. The plan proposed is extensive; it is wise, and I hope, under God, it will not fail of success. America possesses virtue

34. Ibid., 228-229.

35. W. W. Henry, Patrick Henry, p. 183.

unknown and unfelt by the abominable sons of corruption who planned this weak and wicked enterprise.³⁶

After the Port Bill took effect personal reactions in Virginia showed an increase in tempo and depth. Richard Henry Lee wrote to Samuel Adams and asked the Bostonians to take heart that the rest of the colonies would unite in the common cause.³⁷ Jefferson reported that "no example of such a solemnity had existed since the days of our distresses in the war of '55 since which a new generation had grown up."³⁸

The Virginian destined to reap more fame than any of his contemporaries, George Washington, was in agreement with the stand taken in Virginia. Washington was sitting in the House during these great days. Silas Deane, an important political leader during this period, reported in a letter to his wife of Washington's conduct during the debates in the House of Burgesses. Deane wrote that he heard through good authority that Washington, upon hearing of the Port Bill jumped to his feet and offered to raise, arm, and lead one thousand men at his own expense to aid Boston. The writer said that he had it on good authority that "his [Colonel Washington's] fortune is said to be equal to such an undertaking."³⁹ Washington summed up much of the motivation behind these actions in a letter that he wrote on June 10, 1774 to George William Fairfax.

36. Force, Archives, I, 340.

37. Richard Henry Lee, The Letters of Richard Henry Lee, James Curtis Ballagh, ed., 2 vols., (New York, 1911), I, III-113.

38. Thomas Jefferson, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Paul Leicester Ford, ed., 10 vols., (New York, 1892), I, 10.

39. The Deane Papers, N.Y. Historical Society, Collections, 5 vols., I, 27.

After he outlined the entire situation of the dispute, he ended his letter with these words:

...in short the ministry may rely on it that Americans will never be taxed without their own consent: [that] the cause of Boston; the despotic measures in respect to it, I mean now is and ever will be considered as the cause of America (not that we approve their conduct in destroying the tea) and that we shall not suffer ourselves to be sacrificed by piece meal....⁴⁰

If the observance of a fast is any indication of a peoples' devotion to a cause, the way in which the people of Virginia carried out the fast proclaimed by the legislature should have convinced Boston of the Southerners' support.

Wrote Edmund Randolph:

The fast was obeyed throughout Virginia with such vigor and scruples, as to interdict the tasting of food between the rising and setting sun. With remembrance of the king, horror was associated; and in the churches as well as in the circles of social conversation, he seemed to stalk like the arch enemy of mankind.⁴¹

In private homes, according to one account, women sealed up their stock of tea and declared that they would not use it until the duty was repealed.⁴²

To the southward of Virginia, North Carolina soon showed that colony stood beside its northern American friends. The official organs of government were called upon to pass resolves denouncing the Port Bill and to make definite efforts

40. George Washington, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., 39 vols., (Washington, 1931), III, 224.

41. The Virginia Historical Society, The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 56 vols., (Richmond, 1893-1948) XLVIII, 215.

42. Charles Campbell, History of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia, (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 574.

to show their sympathy for Boston in a material way.

The lower House of North Carolina created a committee to draw up a formal resolution on the stand to be taken on the Port Bill and in its instructions the House declared that the committee was to express North Carolina's warmest attachment to its sister colonies in general, and to Massachusetts in particular. The instructions stated that North Carolina was of the opinion that a union of the colonies was necessary in the support of Boston and the preservation of the rights and liberties of all America.⁴³

An investigation of the state of opinion in the counties of North Carolina brings to light the fact that they acted in much the same way as the counties in the colonies already discussed. Some of the counties which passed resolutions on the Port Bill were Anson, Craven, Rowan, and Pitt. Rowan County blamed the ministry for the troubles in America and called the attention of the other colonies to the Port Bill as proof of the intention of the ministry to deprive the colonies of their constitutional rights and liberties. The County denounced the Port Bill and declared that the cause of the town of Boston was the common cause of all of colonial America.⁴⁴ A committee was appointed by Craven County to consider the alarming state of affairs in British America.⁴⁵ The people of Anson

43. The Colonial Records of North Carolina, 30 vols., pub. by State of North Carolina, (Raleigh, 1890), IX, 1200.

44. Ibid., 1025.

45. Ibid., 1027.

County pointed out that the yoke of slavery was about to be placed upon British America and that the colonies must act to preserve their liberty.⁴⁶ A committee to receive donations for the relief of the poor of Boston was set up by Pitt County as their reaction to the detested Port Bill.⁴⁷ The resolves passed at Wilmington, North Carolina on July 21, 1774, serve as a good illustration of the type of resolves that were passed throughout North Carolina concerning the Port Bill. The Wilmington resolves stated:

Resolved, That we consider the cause of the town of Boston as the common cause of British America and as suffering in the defense of the rights of the colonies in general; and that therefore we have in proportion to our abilities sent a supply of provisions for the indigent inhabitants of that place....

Feeling ran so high in North Carolina that a general convention was demanded. The people felt that only in this way could the rest of colonial America be made to see clearly where the people of North Carolina stood on the question of the Port Bill. A provisional convention of North Carolina was held at Newbern on August 25, 1774, which passed resolutions similar to those of the lower House of the colony. The convention proclaimed that the Port Bill was "the most cruel infringement of the rights and privileges of the people of Boston, both as men, and members of the British government."⁴⁹

46. Ibid., 1032.

47. Ibid., 1081.

48. Ibid., 1017.

49. Ibid., 1045.

Committees of Correspondence in North Carolina kept the people of that colony informed as to the progress of the struggles of Boston and recommended measures for their aid. The Wilmington Committee sent a circular letter to all the counties of North Carolina explaining the nature of the cause of Boston and recommending action. A meeting was called of the delegates of all the counties for August 20, 1774, which was to meet at Johnston County Court House. A subscription was suggested by the Wilmington Committee for the relief of the poor of Boston thrown out of work by the Port Bill.⁵⁰

South Carolina was not outdone by its northern sister. A copy of the Boston resolves of May 13, 1774, which asked the other colonies to rally to the aid of that town came to Charleston and caused a town meeting to be called immediately. The town, in turn, decided to call a general meeting of the province to be held in Charleston on the sixth of July. Circular letters were sent out explaining the situation in Boston and urging opposition.⁵¹ This meeting was reported by the South Carolina Gazette to be the largest ever assembled.⁵² According to the resolves passed at this meeting South Carolina acted on the motive of self preservation. It was feared that a dangerous precedent might be established which would cause the rights,

50. Force, Archives, I, 619.

51. Edward McCrady, The History of South Carolina Under Royal Government 1719-1776, (New York, 1901), p. 733.

52. Ibid., p. 734.

property, and privileges of the rest of America to be in danger.⁵³

South Carolina was adequately served by its various committees of correspondence. The opinions of the above meeting were echoed throughout the colony as the committees promoted assistance for Boston. The pressure caused by many people desiring to send donations to Boston caused the Committee of Charleston, for example, to provide a solution. A public announcement was made which told those wishing to contribute goods for the relief of Boston that a special committee existed to aid and expedite matters. Subscriptions were to be given to any of the thirteen members of this committee. A footnote to the announcement disclosed that one generous resident of Charleston had offered the free use of his wharf for the storage and shipping of rice to Boston.⁵⁴

Some personal reactions from South Carolina will help enlarge upon the picture of that colony's sympathetic feeling for Boston. A South Carolina letter of June 4, 1774, reveals the character of the opinions in Charleston on the Port Bill. The King's birthday came almost simultaneously with the day the Port Bill took full effect. This letter relates that the birthday was officially celebrated in the usual way--bells were rung, colors were displayed, the guns of the fort were fired, and the militia was reviewed--but the people

53. David Ramsay, The History of South Carolina from Its First Settlement in 1670 to the Year 1808, 2 vols., (Charleston, 1809), I, 226-227.

54. Force, Archives, I, 448.

did not join in the celebration. The houses were not illuminated nor were there any demonstrations of joy. The writer says that the people lamented "that so good a prince should be beset by a minority who seem to have studied to alienate, rather than preserve, the affections of his most loyal subjects."⁵⁵ Another South Carolina letter dated June 13, 1774, indicated that the merchants in that colony were generally inclined to favor non-importation. As a method of making the non-importation agreements work the writer suggested that America take stock of her resources. Iron particularly interested the writer of this letter and he was anxious for an accounting. He also wanted to know what quantity of hoes, axes, tools, cutlery, and other articles usually imported from Great Britain that each colony could supply to the common need of America.⁵⁶ This would seem to indicate that the retrenchment necessary for the effectiveness of the non-intercourse agreements was accepted by South Carolina. The main purpose of these agreements was, of course, a demonstration of opposition to Parliament caused by its action against Boston.

On first consideration it might seem that sentiment in Georgia would not be as forceful as that found in South Carolina and the other colonies. One reason for this speculation would be that Georgia's history was different from the general pattern of the rest of British America. Georgia had been

55. Ibid., 382.

56. Ibid., 408.

founded later and the British government had incurred considerable expense in setting up this "buffer colony." Connection to Britain would therefore be stronger. This is true to a certain degree but it did not stop Georgia from indicating that a considerable portion of its people were of the same opinion as the rest of America.

One vehicle for expressing opinion in Georgia was the principle newspaper of that colony. The Georgia Gazette of July 14, 1774, described the position that sentiment in Georgia had reached, and took the lead in suggesting future action:

The critical situation to which the British Colonies in America are likely to be reduced from the alarming and arbitrary imposition of the late acts of the British Parliament respecting the town of Boston as well as the acts that at present extend to the raising of a perpetual revenue without the consent of the people or their representatives, is considered as an object extremely important at this critical juncture, and particularly calculated to deprive the American subjects of their constitutional rights and liberties as a part of the British Empire. It is therefore requested that all persons within this province do attend at the liberty pole at Tondee's Tavern, in Savannah, on Wednesday the 27th instant, in order that the said matter may be taken under consideration, and such other constitutional measures be framed as may then appear to be most eligible.⁵⁷

The meeting suggested by the Gazette was postponed until August 10 in order that more of the parishes could be represented.⁵⁸ The delegates met and thoroughly discussed the Port Bill and its ramifications throughout colonial America. The resolves that were reported in this meetings show that Georgia

57. The Revolutionary Records of the State of Georgia, 3 vols., Allen D. Chandler, ed., (Atlanta, 1908), I, 11.

58. Ibid., 13.

was not going to be left outside the pale of general colonial feeling on the Port Bill. The meeting resolved that:

...an act of Parliament, lately passed, for the blockading the port and harbor of Boston... [was] contrary to... [their] idea of the British constitution: First, for what it in effect... [deprived] good and lawful men of the use of their property without judgement of their peers, and secondly for that it... [was] in nature of an ex post facto law, and indiscriminately blends, as objects of punishment, the innocent with the guilty.

It was also resolved that Georgia would "concur with... [its] sister [American] colonies in every constitutional measure to obtain redress of American grievances...."59

Some resolutions were passed by various localities which denounced the above resolves, but the position of those in sympathy with Boston was vindicated in the election for the lower House of the Legislature in January, 1775. The issue in the election was the question of the resolves of the much-publicized meeting and the attitude to be taken toward Britain by Georgia. The patriots won a sufficient number of seats to hold a majority and thereby settled the issue as far as the legislature of the colony was concerned.⁶⁰

The result of this election was clear enough to prod the Governor into writing a long discussion against the attitude expressed in the resolves of the 10 of August cited above. This paper was officially read to the House. The opposition of the Governor only served to heighten the enthusiasm for the cause. The House, in spite of the Governor's message, officially recognized that the act of Parliament shutting the port of Bos-

59. Ibid., 16-17.

60. For a complete outline of the events of the election and actions in the House see ibid., 34-37; 52-53.

ton as an infringement and violation of the rights of the colonists.⁶¹

Reactions at the county or parish level mirrored the attitude of the House. The parishes of Georgia followed the pattern indicated by the counties in other colonies. Some of the parishes which passed patriotic resolves were St. Andrew, St. Matthew, St. George, St. Paul, and St. John. The people of St. Andrew Parish stated in their resolves that they would never become slaves and would support the actions of the rest of America toward Britain.⁶² The Parish of St. John backed up its feeling for Boston by subscribing a donation of two hundred barrels of rice for the relief of Boston.⁶³ St. Paul and St. George Parishes deviated from the general pattern at first by passing resolutions against the actions of the great meeting of the 10 of August, but later fell in line with the others.⁶⁴

Events in Georgia apparently misled the governor of that colony in his estimate of popular support for Boston, for in a letter to Dartmouth, Governor Wright at first claimed that the resolves of Georgia in support of Boston were the work of a junto of only a few people. In a later report, however, he had to admit that a change in his evaluation was necessary:

And now I am mentioning these matters permit me my Lord to say how things appear to me, and I conceive that the licentious spirit in America has received such contenance and

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid., 34-38.

63. Force, Archives, I, 767.

64. Chandler, Revolutionary Records of Georgia, I, 22-26, 30-31.

encouragement from many persons, speeches, and declarations at the time of the Stamp Act, and ever since in Great Britain ...in short things and circumstances in America have increased so fast...that however matters may be got over at present and whatever appearance there may be of amity and union the flame will only be smothered for a time and break out again at some future day with more violence.⁶⁵

The royal governor seems to have diagnosed the trouble as something more serious than just the Port Bill.

Feeling for the Bostonians was not as unanimous in Georgia as might be found in the other colonies. Reactions similar to St. Paul and St. George Parishes cited above may be found in the towns of Georgia. Wrightsborough and Augusta agreed with the parishes which did not go along with most of the residents of Georgia.⁶⁶ It has already been suggested that Georgia had a background different from most of the colonies---particularly the older ones.

A majority of the Georgians, however, backed Boston. Attempts to aid the people of the suffering town were supported; meetings which kept the cause before the people were held and adequately attended. Machinery continued to be set up for the transmission of aid to Boston. For example, a tax on violations of the non-importation agreements was provided by forty-five delegates who met at Savannah on January 18, 1775. The proceeds of this tax were "to be applied towards relieving such poor inhabitants of the town of Boston as...[were] immediate

65. Georgia Historical Society, Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, 9 vols., (Savannah, 1840-1906) III, 181.

66. Ibid., 27-30.

sufferers of the Port Bill."⁶⁷ Thus the policy of Georgia set down as early as July of 1774 was carried on successfully. This policy was, in some respects, dissimilar to that pursued in other southern colonies but in over-all nature it was not different to any marked degree.

The Continental Congress served as the culmination of reaction in the South just as it had been for the other sections of America. This is not as clearly defined as in the New England or middle colonies because some of the southern colonies were not represented by large delegations and one southern colony, Georgia, did not attend the Congress at all.

Virginia was very well represented and the statements of the delegates from that colony are very indicative that Virginia was going to stand firmly behind the position it had outlined through the summer of 1774. Virginia may claim the foremost position in the move for a Congress, since the House of Burgesses agreed upon calling one before they received the fiery resolutions of Boston. After the proclamation of a fast the Governor dissolved the Burgesses. On May 27 they assembled unofficially and recommended a general Congress of deputies from all the colonies to meet annually to deliberate on such measures as "the united interests of America may from time to time require."⁶⁸ Twenty-five Burgesses sent out a formal call for the first convention to meet on August 1, 1774. Thomas Jefferson said that the call was greeted

67. Ibid., 46.

68. Burnett, The Continental Congress, p. 20.

enthusiastically and was like a shock of electricity which caused the colonies to see the Congress as a means of expressing their sentiments.⁶⁹ He drew up a set of instructions for his fellow delegates from Virginia which was published and became a good presentation of the motives that prompted many people to action in all parts of America. Jefferson's pamphlet was entitled, "A Summary View of the Rights of British America." Many of the utterances in the Congress were based on natural and proscriptive rights which Jefferson outlined in this important pamphlet. The wording was much like another famous document edited by Jefferson, The Declaration of Independence.⁷⁰ Patrick Henry caught some of the great importance of the Congress when he eloquently proclaimed, "The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders, are no more. I am not a Virginian but an American."⁷¹

The comments on the Congress of Caesar Rodney, John Dickinson, and Joseph Hewes reenforce those of the Virginia delegates. On September 9, 1774, Caesar Rodney wrote, "it is the greatest assembly...that was ever collected in America--and the Bostonians who...have been condemned by many for their violence are moderate men, when compared to Virginia, South

69. Jefferson, Writings, I, 12.

70. A reprint of this paper has been made, in the original style in the Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints, (New York, 1943).

71. Burnett, Letters, I, 14.

Carolina, and Rhode Island; in short all the colonies seem to be hearty in the cause."⁷² John Dickinson wrote to Arthur Lee that "a determined and unanimous resolution animates this continent, firmly and faithfully to support the common cause to the utmost extremity."⁷³ This was written in a letter of October 27, 1774, just after the Congress adjourned. A letter of Joseph Hewes of North Carolina indicates that the Congress was well received. Hewes said in this letter: "I have the pleasure to inform you that they [the Congress delegates] are generally approved of here by all ranks of people; the Germans who compose a large part of the inhabitants...are all on our side."⁷⁴

With the qualified exception of Georgia, the people of the southern colonies seem to have reacted to the Boston Port Bill in much the same way as the people of the rest of colonial America. Activity reached all the way from colonial legislatures and conventions down through the counties, parishes and towns to the individual. One might even go so far as to say that in some instances, Virginia for example, the South was further advanced in its position than New England itself.⁷⁵

72. Letters to and from Caesar Rodney 1756-1784, George Herbert Ryden, ed., (Philadelphia, 1933), pp. 45-46.

73. Burnett, Letters, I, 83.

74. Ibid.

75. See Appendix B for a summary of donations made to Boston by the people of the southern colonies.

Chapter V

Conclusions

The first conclusion that seems valid upon the evidence presented is that the Port Bill brought reaction from all of colonial America. Parliament aimed the Bill squarely at Boston, imposing sanctions as a direct result of the Tea Party of December 16, 1773, held in Boston harbor. A particular colony had been singled out by Parliament for special coercive action. The Boston Port Bill, which would have caused great suffering in Boston had not the rest of the colonies aided her, was not considered merely a local affair by Americans. Almost immediately after the news of the consideration of the bill came to America, colonial sentiment was fired for Boston. Before the Bill took full effect resolutions of sympathy were passed by legislatures and official organs from New Hampshire to Georgia. Mrs. Mercy Warren, the sister of James Otis, stated in her history of the Revolution that, "such a remarkable coincidence of opinion, energy and zeal, existed between the provinces...that their measures and resolutions were often similar, previous to the opportunity for conference."² Examples have been given in previous chapters which illustrate the accuracy of this statement.

A concrete form of this sentiment can be found in the many donations made to Boston during her time of trouble. It

1. Warren, History of the American Revolution, I, 135.

is surprising that so much money was collected and sent to Boston in light of the critical shortage of pounds in America. Most of the money came from the more densely settled areas but the small towns made contributions of money also-- at perhaps a greater sacrifice. The donations were not limited to money. Livestock, equipment, personal goods, and food of all kinds were forwarded to Boston by the generous sympathizers.² Sometimes the people of a small community would make a careful check of their provisions and send on to Boston the small amount that they felt they could spare. On other occasions the more well-to-do Americans made gifts of considerable importance.

Statements have been made that only a handful of radicals were responsible for America's opposition to British policy, but the evidence does not support this view. The many resolves passed by communities and legislatures throughout America would have been difficult for a few men to engineer. The depth of the colonial feeling crept to the back country and to the small communities everywhere in America. Resistance was not limited to a mob of uncouth, uneducated, rabble as some interpretations have implied. The "mob" would include Franklin, Jefferson, Hancock, and Washington. It would be a difficult task indeed to make a case that would include Washington, for example, as a mobster.

2. See totals in Appendix B for an illustration of the diversity of the gifts made to Boston.

The motives behind the aid given Boston varied with individuals. Some of the comments presented in this study indicate that many acted on the principle of self-preservation. These people felt that should the ministry succeed in humbling Boston by the Port Bill a similar instrument might be used on them. Success of the measure would, of course, recommend its future use. The line of reasoning suggested here was used by individuals living in communities that stood to make an immediate economic gain should commerce be diverted through their respective areas. Apparently the immediacy of the gain did not lessen the fact that a weapon might be given to Parliament which would be difficult to take away at some propitious time in the future.

Another motive for the rallying around the Bostonians by the rest of America was that of pure Christian brotherhood. This was the force that moved many of the Friends of Pennsylvania. By doctrine, active or violent resistance was denied the Quaker. He could not, therefore, condone the Tea Party. The fact that many people were left in serious difficulty by the results of the Bill was another matter. The Quaker could not stand aside while a fellow creature suffered from starvation. The resolves of Philadelphia were not completely accepted by the Quakers but nevertheless they raised a considerable donation and sent it to Boston with a statement of their motives. ³

3. See Chapter III page 47.

The principle of American liberty was another motive. Americans had acted for themselves in much of their government and they were not going to see their rights compromised. Should Parliament be recognized to have the power to completely eliminate a community by a simple act, then American liberty and prerogative was certainly on very shaky ground. The other colonies, therefore, would have to prevent this dangerous principle from being established. If the action of a few men could provoke Parliament to bring poverty to a city of over 12,000 inhabitants, then nowhere in America was a man safe. The fundamental rights of life, liberty and property so dear to American hearts were only in existence at the pleasure of Parliament if the principle held forth by the Port Bill was kept unchallenged.

The most important motive has yet to be considered, that is, the growing spirit of American nationalism. By 1774 a feeling of uniqueness in being an American was in evidence in the colonies. People there began to think in terms of American issues and causes as distinct from British interests. In their resolves they mentioned their country, meaning America, not Britain. When they declared that violators of their resolves should be treated as enemies of their country, they were certainly not referring to the mother country. It was this idea which appears in Patrick Henry's statement that he was an American, not a Virginian. Just as in the rise of the nation states in Europe, local or provincial

loyalties had to bow before a bigger loyalty. Many factors contributed to this emerging nationalism--common language, similar experiences in government, travel and exchange of information, and particularly the cooperation forced on the colonies by British policies after 1763. By 1774 they had reached a stage in their development where their common interests loomed as more important than their individual differences. In many of the resolves and personal statements one can find evidence that the colonies had reached the point where they felt that not only the Port Bill but other restrictions on America should also be lifted. American nationalism was asserting itself.

The effects of the hearty support given to Boston, whatever the motive, were many fold. As far as Boston itself was concerned the aid sent to the town from all over America enabled her to ride out the storm. Samuel Adams summed up the attitude in Boston when he wrote, "The people of this town have at length gone through the winter [of 1774-1775] with tolerable comfort. Next to the gracious interposition of heaven, we acknowledge the unexampled liberality of our sister colonies."⁴ The most important effect was the drawing together of the colonies into a closer union of spirit and interests. The first Continental Congress was the high water mark as far as the influence of the Port Bill may be traced.

4. Samuel Admas, Writings, III, 199.

Two contemporary comments may be offered as summation of the important aspects of colonial reaction to the Port Bill. Edmund Randolph, in his Essay on the Revolutionary History of Virginia, 1774-1782 caught the spirit behind much of colonial reaction when he said,

Men, mad in the career of power seldom delay to consult the human heart. They overlook the sympathies which act upon nations, sincerely sisters for the general purposes, and which cannot be topical, although the distance of place and an exemption from instantaneous suffering may for a moment deceive with the expectations of at least an indifference on their part.⁵

Another good summary may be found in the Lee Papers.

What could put it into our blockhead's heads that these people could be tricked out of their liberties by cunning, or bullied by any force which they can send over?...I have lately my lord run through almost the whole colonies from the South to the North--I have conversed with all the orders of men...and cannot express my astonishment at the good sense and general knowledge which prevades the whole....I think I should not be guilty of exaggeration in asserting that there are two hundred thousand strong bodied active yeomanry ready to encounter all hazards and dangers...rather than surrender a little of the rights which they have derived from God and their ancestors: They were arming and drilling men in preparation for defense, Virginia, Rhode Island, Carolina, Massachusetts, and even that Quakering province [Pennsylvania] is following the example.⁶

The Boston Port Bill of 1774 was, in a significant way, a contributor to the awareness of the rising feeling of interdependence in the colonies. It was one drop of nourishment to the strongly maturing seeds of American nationalism.

5. Virginia Magazine, XLVIII, 214.

6. Lee Papers, 4 vols., N.Y. Historical Society, Collections, I, 141.

Appendix A¹
Boston Port Bill

An Act to discontinue, in such manner and for such time as are therein mentioned, the landing and discharging, loading or shipping Goods, Wares, or Merchandise, at the Town, and within the Harbor of Boston, in the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, in North-America.

Whereas dangerous commotions and insurrections have been fomented and raised in the town of Boston, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, in New-England, by divers ill-affected persons, to the subversion of his Majesty's government, and to the utter destruction of the public peace and good order of the said town; in which commotions and insurrections certain valuable cargoes of Teas, being the property of the East-India Company and on certain vessels lying within the bay or harbor of Boston, were seized and destroyed: And whereas in the present condition of the said town and harbor, the commerce of his Majesty's subjects cannot, nor the Customs payable to his Majesty duly collected; and is therefore expedient that the Officers of his Majesty's Customs should be forthwith removed from the said town: May it please your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the king's most excellent Majesty, by and with the consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parlia-

1. Pennsylvania Gazette, May 18, 1774.

ment assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of June, One thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, it shall not be lawful for any person or persons whatsoever to lade or put, or cause or procure to be laden and put, off or from any quay, wharf or other place, within the said town of Boston, or in or upon any part of the shore of the bay, commonly called the harbor of Boston, between a certain headland or point, called Nahant Point, on the eastern side of the Entrance to said bay, and a certain other headland or point, commonly called Alderton Point, on the Western side of the entrance into said bay, or in or upon any island, creek, landing place, bank or other place, within the said bay or headlands, into any ship, vessel, lighter, boat or bottom, any goods, wares or merchandise whatever, to be brought from any other country, province or place, or any other part of the said province of Massachusetts Bay in New England, upon pain of forfeiture of the said goods, wares and merchandise, and of the said boat, lighter, ship, vessel, or other bottom into which the same shall be put, or out of which the same shall be taken, and of guns, ammunition, tackle, furniture and stores, in or belonging to the same; and if such goods, wares or merchandise, shall, within the said town, or in any other places aforesaid, be laden or taken in from the shore into any barge, hoy, lighter, wherry or boat, shall be forfeited and lost.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,

That if any wharfinger or keeper of any wharf, crane, or quay, or their servants or any of them, shall take up or land, or knowingly suffer to be taken up or landed, or shall ship off, or suffer to be waterborne, at or from any of their said wharfs, cranes, or quays, any such goods, wares or merchandise; in any such case, all and every wharfinger or keeper of such wharf, crane or quay, and person whatever who shall be assisting, or otherwise concerned in the shipping or in the loading or putting on board such boat or other vessel, for that purpose, or in the unshipping of such goods, wares and merchandise, or to whose hands the same shall knowingly come, after loading shipping or unshipping thereof, shall forfeit and lose treble the value thereof, to be computed at the highest price which such goods, wares and merchandise shall bear, at the place where such offense shall be committed, at the time when the same shall be so committed; together with the vessels and boats, and all the horses, and carriages whatsoever, made use of in the shipping, unshipping, landing, removing, carriage or conveyance of any of the aforesaid goods, wares and merchandise.

And it be further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any ship or vessel shall moored or lie at anchor, or be seen hovering within said Bay, described and bounded as aforesaid, or within one league from said Bay so described, or the said Headlands, or any of the islands lying

between or within the same, it shall and may be lawful for any Admiral, Chief Commander, or Commissioned Officer of his Majesty's fleet or ships of war, or for any officer of his Majesty's Customs, to compel such ship or vessel to depart to some other port or harbor, or to such station as the said officers shall appoint, and to use such force for that purpose as that be found necessary: And if such ship or vessel shall not depart accordingly, within six hours after notice for that purpose given by such person as aforesaid, such ship or vessel, together with all the goods laden on board thereon, and all the guns, ammunition, tackle, and furniture, shall be forfeited and lost, whether bulk shall have been broken or not.

Provided always, That nothing in this Act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to any military or other stores for his Majesty's use, or to the ships or vessels wherein the same shall be laden, which shall be commissioned by, and in the immediate pay of his Majesty, his heirs or successors; or to any fuel or victuals brought coast-wise from any port of the continent of America, for the necessary use and sustenance of the inhabitants of the said town of Boston, provided the vessel wherein the same to be carried shall be duly furnished with a cöcket and let-pass, after having been duly searched by the proper Officer of his Majesty's Customs at Marblehead, in the port

of Salem, in the said province of Massachusetts Bay; and that same Officer of his Majesty's Customs be also there put on board the said vessel, who is hereby authorized to go on board, and proceed with the said vessel, who together with a sufficient number of persons, properly armed, for his defense, to the said town or harbor of Boston; nor to any ships or vessels, which may happen to be within the said harbor of Boston on or before the first day of June, One thousand seven hundred and seventy-four and may have either laden or taken on board, or be there with intent to load or take on board, or to land or discharge any goods, wares or merchandise, provided the said ships and vessels do depart the said harbor within fourteen days after the first day of June, One thousand seven hundred and seventy-four.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all seizures, penalties and forfeitures, inflicted by this Act shall be made and prosecuted by any Admiral, Chief Commander, or Commissioned Officer of his Majesty's fleet or ship of war, or by the Officers of his Majesty's Customs, or some of them, or by some other person deputed or authorized, by warrant from the Lord High Treasurer, or the Commissioners of his Majesty's treasury for the time being, and no other person whatsoever: And if such Officer, or other person, authorized

as aforesaid, shall, directly, or indirectly, take or receive any bribe or reward to connive at such landing or unloading or shall make commence any collusive seizure, information or agreement for that purpose, or shall do any other act whatsoever; whereby goods, wares or merchandise, prohibited as aforesaid shall be suffered to pass either inwards or outwards, or whereby the forfeitures and penalties inflicted by this Act may be evaded, for such offender shall forfeit the sum of five hundred pounds for every such offense and shall become incapable of any office or employment, civil or military; and every person who shall give, offer or promise, any such bribe or reward, or shall contact, agree or treat with any person, so authorized as aforesaid to commit any such offense, shall forfeit the sum of fifty pounds.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the forfeitures and penalties inflicted by this Act, shall and may be prosecuted, sued for and recovered, and be divided paid and applied, in like manner as other penalties and forfeitures inflicted by any Act or Acts of Parliament, relating to the trade or revenues of the British colonies or plantations in America, are directed to be prosecuted, sued for or recovered, divided, paid and applied, by two several Acts of Parliament, the one passed in the fourth year of his present Majesty, entitled, "An Act for granting certain duties in the British Colonies and plantations in America; for continuing, amending, and making perpetual, an Act passed in the sixth year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Second,

entitled, an Act for the better securing and encouraging the trade of his Majesty's sugar colonies in America, for applying the produce of such duties, and the duties to arise by virtue of the aforesaid Act, towards defraying the expenses of protecting and securing the said colonies and plantations; for applying explaining an Act make (sic in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of King Charles the Second, entitled, An Act for the encouragement of the Greenland and Eastland trades, and for the better securing the plantation trade, and for allowing and disallowing several drawbacks on export from this kingdom, and more effectually preventing the Clandestine conveyance of goods to and from the said colonies and plantation, and improving and securing the trade between the same and Great-Britain;" the other passed in the eighth year of his present Majesty's reign, entitled, "An Act for the more easy and effectual recovery of the penalties and forfeitures inflicted by the Acts of Parliament relating to the trade or revenues of the British colonies and plantations in America."

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That whenever it shall be made to appear to his Majesty, in his Privy Council, that peace and obedience to the laws shall be so far restored in the said town of Boston, that the trade of Great Britain may safely be carried on there and his Majesty's customs duly collected, and his Majesty in his Privy Council, shall judge the same to be true, it shall and may be lawful for his Majesty, by Proclamation, or order of Council to assign and appoint the extent, bounds or limits, of the

port of Harbor of Boston, and of every creek or haven within the same or in the islands within the precinct thereof, and also to assign and appoint such and so many open places, quays and wharfs, within the said harbor creeks, haven and islands, for landing, discharging, loading, and shipping of goods, as his Majesty, his heirs or successors, shall judge necessary and expedient; and also to appoint such and so many Officers of the Customs therein as his Majesty shall think fit; after which it shall be lawful for any person or persons to lade or put off from, or discharge or land upon, such wharfs, quays and places, so appointed within said harbor, and none other, any goods, wares or merchandise whatever.

Provided always, That if any goods, wares or merchandise shall be laden or put off from, or discharged, or loaded upon, any other place than the quays, wharfs or places, so to be appointed the same, together with the ships, boats, and other vessels employed therein, the horses, or other cattle and carriages used to convey the same, and the person or persons concerned or assisting therein or to those hands the same shall knowingly come, shall suffer all the forfeitures and penalties imposed by this or any other Acts on the illegal shipping or landing of goods.

Provided also that it is hereby declared and enacted That nothing herein contained shall exist, or be construed to enable his Majesty to appoint such Port, Harbor, Creeks, Quays, Wharfs, places or Officers, in the said Town of Boston, or in said Bay

or Islands, until it shall sufficiently appear to his Majesty, that full satisfaction hath been made by or in behalf of the Inhabitants of the said Town of Boston to the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East-Indies, for the damages sustained by the said company, by the destruction of their goods sent to the said Town of Boston, on board certain ships or vessels as aforesaid; and until it shall be certified to his Majesty, in Council, by the Governor, or Lieutenant-Governor of the said Province, that reasonable satisfaction hath been made to the Officers of his Majesty's Revenue and others who suffered by the Riots and Insurrections above mentioned; in the Months of November and December, in the year One thousand seven hundred and seventy-three, and in the Month of January in the year One thousand seven hundred and seventy-four.

And be it further enacted by this Authority aforesaid, That if any Action or Suit shall be commenced, wither in Great Britain or America, against any Person, or Persons, for any Thing done in Pursuance of this Act of Parliament, the Defendent or Defendents in such Action or Suit may plead the general issue and give the said Act and the special Matter in Evidence and any Trial to be had thereupon, and that the same be done in Pursuance and by the Authority of this Act: And it shall appear to have been done, the Jury shall find for the Defendent or Defendents, and if the Plaintiff shall be nonsuited, or discontinue his Action, after the Defendent or Defendents shall have appealed or if

Judgment shall be given upon any Verdict or Demurrer against the Plaintiff, the Defendent or Defendents shall recover treble costs, and have the like Remedy for the same, as Defendents have in other cases by Law.

Appendix B¹

The book from which the following abstracts were taken has the following introductory certificate:

Boston, July 18, 1778.

I certify that this Book contains a True Copy of the Account of all the Donations Received by the Committee appointed by the Town of Boston, to receive the Generous Benefactions of the Sister Colonies, for the Relief and Support of the Inhabitants of the Towns of Boston and Charlestown, suffering by the operation of that Cruel Act of the British Parliament, commonly called the Boston Port Bill.

By order of the Committee of Donations,
ALEX^r HODGDON, Clerk.

Donations Received from the Province of the Massachusetts Bay

1774.

July	5.	Wrentham	19 $\frac{1}{4}$ bush.	Rye,	11-3/4	Corn	
	"	Groton	21	"	"	20 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
	7.	Pepperrell	24	"	"	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	"
	20.	Charlemont	2	bbls.	flour		
	22.	Screwsbury	£6	:	2s	:	6
	"	Beverly	14	:	2	:	1
	30.	Lenox	3	:	17	:	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Aug.	2.	Marblehead	224	quintals	of fish,	53	gals. oil,
			£39	:	5	:	3.
	3.	Brookfield	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	rye,	10	corn.	
Sept.	8.	Old York, fr. Josh ^a & Sam ^l	Sewall,	£2	:	16	:
	"	Concord, fr. John Beaton,	£3	:	0	:	0
	27.	Chelmsford,	40	rye			
Oct.	10.	Berwick,	26	sheep,	6	oxen.	
	20.	Middleborough	51	Rye,	30	Corn	
	24.	Old York	106	potatoes,	57	sheep,	4
			23	qtls. fish,			
				23	cords	of wood,	£1
				:	4s.		
	26.	Newbury Falls fr. Samuel Moody,	schoolmaster,				
			£7	:	0	:	0
Nov.	26.	Petersham fr. Silvanus How,	11	quarters	mutton		
	"	Belchertown, fr. Josh ^a Boydell & W ^m Clark,	2				
			bshls.	wheat			
	"	Rehoboth,	88	sheep,	£14	:	8
			:			:	9

1. Copied from New England Historic, Genealogical Society, New-England Historical and Genealogical Register, 101 vols., (Boston, 1847-1948), XXX, 374-380.

Nov. 30. Pittsfield (Joseph Easton 12s.) £6 : 12 : 0
 " Medfield, 132 lbs pork, 402 lbs. cheese, 22 cart loads wood.

Dec. 4. No. Yarmouth, 43 cords of wood
 14. Union Fire Club at Salem (consisting of 19 members) £40 : 0 : 0
 28. Cambridge, fr. David Hoar, ten lbs. Balm & ten lbs. Sage.
 " Unknown £1 : 16 : 0

1775
 Jan. 2. Salem, Deaⁿ Whitaker's parish, £24 : 16 : 8
 3. Rutland Dist. Co. of Worcester, fr. Coloⁿ Nathan Sparhaw, 593 lbs. beef.
 " Dorchester, fr. Capt. Lem^l Robertson, 160 lbs. beef
 " Braintree, 25 Carcasses.
 4. Welfleet, £40
 " Eastham, South, £3. 13. 6
 " Billerica, 48½ rye, 2½ corn, £5. 7. 0-3/4
 " Westford, 34½ rye, 6 corn
 9. Salem, Rev. Mr. Dimon's parish, £87. 1.
 10. Lexington, 61 cart loads of wood (with the Flagg), £3. 11. 6
 12. Reading, First and Third parishes, 1 bush. rye, 7 lbs. pork, 26 cart loads of wood, £1. 8.
 14. Salem, Rev. Mr. Dimon's parish, £3. 19
 " Dorchester, 25 cords wood, 3 pr. men's and 2 pr. boy's shoes.
 " Stoughton, 17 loads of wood.
 18. Temple, 40 bush. rye.
 20. West Springfield, 23 hogs.
 21. Barnstable, West, £7. 9. 4--including 16 shillings collected of the Marshpee Indians.
 23. Do. East, £12. 10. 8.
 " Salem, No. Society--Rev. Mr. Barnard, £45.
 " Manchester, £28. 0. 7½
 24. Rehoboth, 59 lbs. flax (James Allyne, 8; Joseph Allyne, 24; Josiah Cushing, 12; Abner Allyne, 12; Jacob Cushing, 3; Sam^l Allyne, 12.)
 " Salem, Rev^d Mr. Barnard & Dunbar's Society, £114: 9. 0½
 28. Attleborough, £33. 10. 7½
 30. Falmouth, Casco Bay, 51½ cords wood.
 " Cape Elizabeth, 44½ cords wood.
 31. Danvers, £13. 13. 6
 " Welfleet, £7. 10. 8

Feb. 2. Yarmouth, East precinct, £7. 4. 4.
 3. Newburyport, £202. 10. 2
 " Kettery, £41. 3. 5
 " Middleton, £22. 9. 1.
 " Rehoboth, Rev. Ephm. Hoit's, £6. 0. 2.
 do Rev. Robert Rogerson's, £2. 6. 3

4. Berwick, South, £11. 6. 8.
- " do North, £2. 2
- " Eastham, 52½ bush. corn, £0. 8.
6. Biddeford, Joseph Morrill, £0. 12.
- " Southborough, £5. 0. 9
- " Newbury, Rev. John Tucker's, £46. 4. 2
- " do Rev. Moses Parson's, £10. 16. 4.
- " do Rev. Oliver Noble's, £9. 0. 6
- " Truro, £11. 16. 2½
- " Scarborough, £11. 4. 3
7. George Town, First, £22. 14. 4
- " Sturbridge, Capt. Eben^r. Crafts, £0. 12.
- " " Joseph Peirce, £0. 5. 4
- " do Nath^l Walker, Jr. £0. 3.
- " Beverly, £31. 9. 10 and goods estimated at
£41. 10. 4. = £73. 0. 2
8. Brookfield, 9 bush. rye.
- " Greenwich, 10 bush. rye, 2½ corn.
9. Sandisfield, £7. 10.
- " Wells, £9. 1: 1.
- " Mendon, 268 lbs. cheese, 50 flax.
- " Marlborough, by Joseph Howe, who subscribed 40
shillings toward purch[']sg, 334 lbs. beef.
- " Paxton, 11 bush. rye, 9 corn, 2½ malt.
- " Wells, 26-¾ cords wood.
15. Brookfield, 19 bush. corn.
- " Northborough 6½ bush. wheat, 51½ rye, 15½ corn,
61 lbs. pork, 36 lbs. cheese, 6½ malt,
£10. 19. 4.
- " Milton, 24 cords wood.
- " Littleton, 26½ bush. rye, (collected by Mr. R.
Harris, who gave the carting of 6½, and
Messrs Bennett & Jn^o Wood who gave the cart-
ing of 20 bushels), 1 check Handkerchief,
½ lb pink flowers, £4. 3. 0½
16. Brookline, Joseph Winchester & others, 9 bush.
corn, 18½ potatoes, 2 fat sheep, 1 cord
wood, 48 cabbages, £25. 7. 6½
- " Shrewsbury, Second, 51 bush. rye, 2 corn.
17. Cambridge, 4 bush rye, 33½ corn, 2 bu. potatoes,
17 loads wood, 1 bush. turnips, £31. 4. 6½
- " Concord, 87½ bush. rye, 31 corn, £11. 4. 6½
- " Lunenburg, 2 bush. wheat, 82 rye, 2 corn.
- " Lincoln, 29½ corn, 19 cords wood, 2 pr. boy's
shoes, £1. 15. 5½
- " Dracut, 45½ bush. rye, £3. 17. 1
- " Acton, 38 " " 3½ corn, 32 lbs. pork
£3. 17. 4

20. A Gentⁿ unknown, £1. 14. 8
- " Chilmark, £6. 10.
- " Brookline, Rev. Joseph Jackson, £2.
21. Roxbury, Second, 2 bush. rye, 1 corn, 40 lbs. cheese, 13-3/4 cords wood, £15. 12.
- " Roxbury, Third, 18 bush. potatoes, 51 lbs. pork, 5½ cords wood, 72 cabbages, 1 bush. turnips, £20. 4. 7.
21. Brookline, Maj. W^m. Thompson, 1 load wood, 2 cwt. rice.
22. Bolton, 28 bush. rye, 5 corn.
- " Sandwich, £19. 0. 3
24. Malden, Rev. Mr. Willis' parish, 2 loads wood, 1 pr. women's shoes, 1 ton of hay, £3. 1.
- Malden, Rev. Mr. Thatcher's parish, £9. 13.
- Lancaster, Second parish, 40 bush. rye, 38 corn, 96 lbs. cheese, £0. 12. 0
25. Sturbridge, 9 bush. corn, 2 bbls. flour, 5 cwt. flour, 3 bush. malt, 1 bbl. salt beef, 4 bbls. rye flour, £4. 13
- " Dedham, 47½ cords wood.
27. Plympton, £4. 16.
28. Medway, East parish, 53½ lbs. cheese, £7. 2
- " Sturbridge, fr. Nath^l & Josiah Walker, 15 shillings
- " Danvers, North parish, 8 pr. men's shoes, 2 pr. boy's shoes, 8½ yds check, 1 pr. mooseskin breeches, 2 skeins thread, £26. 15. 4
- March 6. Nantucket, Rev. Bezal. Shaw's par. £26. 16. 9.
8. Marblehead, fr. Comttee of Inspection, one per cent. on Sales of sundry cargoes imported since Dec. 1, 1774, contrary to Resolve of Con. Congress, = £120.
10. Bradford, 17 prs. men's & 18 prs. women's shoes, £18. 14. 10.
- " Duxbury, 21 cords wood.
- " Roxbury, fr. Maj. Nath^l. Ruggles, 1 bbl. salt beef.
- " Boston, fr. Stephen Bruce, 1 bbl. salt beef.
- " Gloucester, £117. 0. 4
13. Eastham, North parish, £7. 16.
- " Brookfield, 30 bush. rye, 14 corn, 224 lbs. cheese, ½ bush. beans.
15. Plymouth, fr. Nath^l. Goodwin, 20 bush corn.
- " Marshpee, fr. Rev. Gideon Hawley, 18 shillings.
17. Yarmouth (Cape Cod) West par. £5. 6. 8
20. George Town, First par. £6. 0. 3
- " do fr. Capt. W^m Rogers, £2. 8.
- " Old Hadley, 8 cwt. rye flour, £2. 13. 4
- " Scituate, 1st par. £5. 6. 8
21. Hatfield, £12. 15. 3
22. Plymouth, fr. Comttee of Inspection, one percent. on sales of sundries imported since Dec. 1, 1774, contrary to resolve of Con. Congress. = £31. 5. 6½

22. Brookfield, 2^d precinct, 12 shillings.
 " Berkley, £8. 1. 7.
 " Bridgewater, East par. 344 lbs. flax, 3 lbs.
 sheeps' wool, 9 lbs. tobacco, 2 iron shovels,
 1 foot spinning wheel, £6. 15. 9½
 " Tisbury, £12.
 Falmouth (Casco Bay) 2^d par. 30-7/8 cords wood.
 Scituate, South par. £6. 15. 11½
 Gorhamtown, 8-7/8 cords wood.
 25. Falmouth (Co. Barnstable), £5. 16
 " Fr. a Gentⁿ unknown, £0. 19. 8
 27. Salem, fr. Comtee of Inspection as above,
 £109. 9. 5½
 " Duxbury, £4. 8.
 " Marlborough, 24 bush. rye, 5½ corn, 80 lbs.
 cheese, 1 pr. men's shoes, 1½ bush. malt,
 £32. 18. 2
 29. Dartmouth (Acushnet River), £50. 17. 3
 " Norton, £7. 2. 10
 April 9. Christian Town (Marthas Vineyard), fr. the
 Indians, £2: 1
 10. Fr. persons unknown (supposed to be the Friends
 Society at Nantucket) £90. 9.
 11. Hanover, fr. a lady unknown, £2. 8
 14. Monson, 5 bush. rye, 1 bbl. & 2 cwt. 9 lbs.
 flour, 17 lbs. tobacco, 12 lbs. butter,
 2 prs. stockings, 8 cwt. 1 qr. 14 lbs.
 rye flour
 " Sherburne, 2 bush. potatoes
 " Shrewsbury, 1 bush rye.
 1776
 March Weston, £13. 7. 11
 1777
 Jan. 28. Brimfield, £9. 0. 4
 Mar. 15. Newton, £22. 16. 6
 " Boston (Sarah Hutchinson 12s.; Ellis Gray, Esq.,
 13s. 4d.), £1. 5. 4.
 July Stockbridge, £9.
 Woodbury, 1st Soc. £8. 8. 4.
 Boston, (Nathaniel Peirce, 10 cords wood @ 36s. is
 18; Jonathan Amory, 1 hhd Sugar, 13 cwt.
 3 qurs. 23 lbs. Net, @ 8 per cwt is £111. 12.
 10; Saml Blodgett 35 bushels Indian mean @
 5s is 8. 15.) £138. 7. 10
 Dec. 17. Sandisfield, fr. Matthew Williams, £1. 4.
 Arundel, £21. 8. 8-3/4

A Summary of DONATIONS received by the Committee appointed by the Town of BOSTON, to receive the Generous Benefactions of the SISTER COLONIES, for the Relief and Support of the Inhabitants of the Towns of Boston and Charlestown Suffering by the Operation of that Cruel Act of the British PARLIAMENT commonly called the BOSTON PORT BILL.

MASSACHUSETTS BAY.--10 $\frac{1}{2}$ bush. wheat; 833 bush. rye; 399-3/4 corn; 5 bbls. 11 cwt. 9 lbs. com. flour; 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ bush. malt; 224 lbs. rice; $\frac{1}{2}$ bush beans; 173 sheep; 6 oxen; 23 hogs; 111 qurs. mutton; 8 bbls. 16 cwt. 1 qur. 14 lbs. rye flour; 283 lbs. pork; 3 bbls. 1087 lbs. beef; 228 quint. fish; 53 galls. oil; 12 lbs. butter; 1199 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. cheese; 366 $\frac{1}{2}$ cords & 165 cart loads of wood; 453 lbs. flax; 3 lbs sheeps wool; 1 ton hay; 26 lbs. tobacco; 29 pr. men's 19 women's, & 6 boy's shoes; 2 prs. stockings; 146 $\frac{1}{2}$ bush. potatoes; 120 cabbages; 2 bush. turnips; 10 lbs. balm; 10 lbs. sage; 1/2 lb. pink flowers; 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ yds check; 1 check handkerchief; 1 pr. moose-skin breeches; 1 foot spinning wheel; 2 iron shovels, and cash \$2213. 8. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$

CONNECTICUT.--448-3/4 bush. wheat; 5108-3/4 rye; 1051-3/4 corn; 85 bush. ship stuffs; 2 bbls. 4 cwt. com. flour; 16 bush. beans; 10 bush beans; 1841 sheep; "83 oxen, including a cow;" 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ bbls. 27 cwt. 14 lbs. rye flour; 5 bbls. pork; 1 bbl. beef; 540 lbs. cheese; 8 pr. men's, 1 women's, 2 prs. children's shoes; and cash \$251. 4. 5.

PENNSYLVANIA.--105 bbls. and 249 cwt. 2 qrs. 18 lbs. ship stuffs; 36 bbls. and 68 cwt. 3 qus. 15 lbs. superfine, and 1035 bbls. 2122 cwts. 15 lbs. com. flour; 2 bbls. 2 cwt. 21 lbs. ship bread; 107 bbls. 215 cwt. 3 qrs 27 lbs. rye flour; 3 tons nail rod iron; 3 tons bar iron; and cash, \$435. 17. 18.

SOUTH CAROLINA.--712 $\frac{1}{2}$ casks & 370, 463 lbs. rice and cash, 1403. 12. 3-3/4. Of the rice 580 casks & 259,814 lbs. were sold in New-York realizing \$1304. 19. 0-3/4.

MARYLAND.--235 bushs. rye; 9329 $\frac{1}{2}$ bush. corn; 57 bbls. & 114 cwt. com. flour; 21 bbls. 26 cwt. 1 qr. ship-bread; 20 bbls. 35 cwt. rye flour; 2 bbls. pork; and \$245.

NORTH CAROLINA.--2296 $\frac{1}{2}$ bush. corn; 34 bbls. 68 cwt. com. flour; 10 casks & 5,300 lbs. rice; 1 hogshhead & 10 bush. peas; 1 hogshhead, 61 bbls. 80 cwt. ship-bread; 147 bbls. pork and \$1. 13. 6.

NEW-HAMPSHIRE.--30 bush. peas; 174 sheep; 15 oxen; and cash \$370. 14. 10.

VIRGINIA.--4011 bush. wheat; 4595 $\frac{1}{2}$ bush. corn; 27 bbls. & 54 cwt. ship stuff; 197 bbls. & 394 cwt. com. flour; 119 $\frac{1}{2}$ bush. peas; 54 bbls. 67 cwt. & 2 qurs. ship bread; 30 bbls. pork; 6 firkins & 360 lbs butter; and cash \$447. 5. 10.

CANADA.--1056 $\frac{1}{2}$ bush. wheat; 2 bbls. 4 cwt. com. flour; and cash \$100. 4.

RHODE ISLAND.--825 sheep; 13 oxen; 1 pr. men's shoes; and cash \$363. 5. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$.

NEW JERSEY.--1140 bush. rye; 50 bbls. 87 cwt. 2 qrs. rye flour; and cash \$594. 6. 2.

NEW YORK.--44 bush. wheat, and 6 of rye; 394 bbls. & 714 cwt. 3 qrs. 2 lbs. com. flour; 5 hogshheads & 30 cwt. Indian meal; 24 tierces & 50 cwt. 2 qrs. 3 lbs. ship bread;

22 bbls. 34 cwt. 3 qrs. 9 lbs. rye flour; 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ bbls. pork;
28 firkins & 1669 lbs. butter; 1 pipe and 123 galls.
grandy; 3 tons nail rod iron; 1 ton bar iron.

GEORGIA.--Nett proceeds of sale in New York of 63 casks of
rice = cash, \$162. 0. 3-3/4.

ISLANDS IN WEST INDIES.-- 2 cwt. 2 qrs. cocoa, and cash, \$22. 16.

ISLAND OF GREAT BRITAIN.--\$154. 6. 8.

Totals:--Wheat, 5570-3/4 bushels.

Rye, 7322-3/4 "

Corn, 17,673 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Ship-stuffs, 85 " 132 bbls. 303 cwt. 2 qrs. 18 lbs.

Flour, 1762 bbls. 3499 cwt. 6 qrs. 41 lbs.

Indian Meal, 5 hhds. 30 cwt.

Malt, 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ bushels.

Rice, 722 $\frac{1}{2}$ casks, 375,987 lbs.

Beans, 16 bushels.

Peas, 1 hhd. 169 $\frac{1}{2}$ bushels.

Ship Bread, 1 hhd. 24 tierces, 138 bbls., 226 cwt.

1 qr. 24 lbs.

Sheep, 3013.

Oxen, 117.

Hogs, 23

Mutton, 11 qrs.

Rye Flour, 222 $\frac{1}{2}$ bbls. 416 cwt. 3 qrs. 8 lbs.

Pork, 194 $\frac{1}{2}$ bbls. & 283 lbs.

Beef, 4 bbls. & 1087 lbs.

Fish, 228 quintals.

Oil, 53 galls.

Butter, 34 firkins, & 2041 lbs.

Cheese, 1739 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

Wood, 366 $\frac{1}{4}$ cords.

" 165 cart loads.

Flax, 453 lbs.

Sheeps Wool, 3 lbs.

Hay, 1 ton.

Tobacco, 26 lbs.

Brandy, 1 pipe, & 123 galls.

Shoes, men's 38 prs.; women's 20; children's 8.

Stockings, 2 pairs.

Potatoes, 146 $\frac{1}{2}$ bush.

Cabbages, 120.

Turnips, 2 bush.

Balm, 10 lbs.

Sage, 10 lbs.

Pink Flowers, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

Check, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ yds.

Check Hdks. 1.

Mooseskin Breeches, 1 pr.

Foot Spinning Wheels, 1.

Iron Shovels, 2.

Nailrod Iron, 6 tons.

Bar Iron, 4 tons.

Cocoa, 2 cwt. 2 qrs.

Cash: From the Colonies, &c.,	£6765. 15. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$
A balance received from a committee of the General Court appointed to take care of the donations sent after the town of Boston was shut up and before the committee of donations could meet at Watertown.	218. 17. 5
From Hon. John Hancock, rec'd from sundry gentlemen while in Congress in 1777 2500 dollars.	750.
	<hr/> £ 7734. 12. 5 $\frac{1}{4}$

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One type of source material that was important to this study was the writings and works of some of the people who lived in America during the period under consideration. A variety of reactions were obtained and many different motives were revealed through the use of these sources.

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