

# Road to Revolution: the Boston Tea Party

Although the word “iconic” is widely overused, some historical events truly fit the description. The Boston Tea Party is one. It has captured the imagination of generations of school children and inspired theatrical protests in societies around the world.

The famous “tax on tea” came after a series of attempts to tax the American colonies.

During the eighteenth century Britain and France fought several wars for control of North America. In 1756, British victory in the “French and Indian War” settled the issue but left the British government deeply in debt. Requiring the colonies to pay more for their own defense seemed logical to many in London.

In Boston the view was very different. Increased taxes at any level were a burden. A three day fire in 1760 had devastated the town. Lacking fire insurance many families were wiped out financially. A small pox epidemic followed in 1764 further weakening the town and its prospects. Some merchants experienced severe losses when spending for military supplies ended after the French and Indian War.

First came the Stamp Act in 1765 requiring that revenue stamps be affixed to various documents including wills,



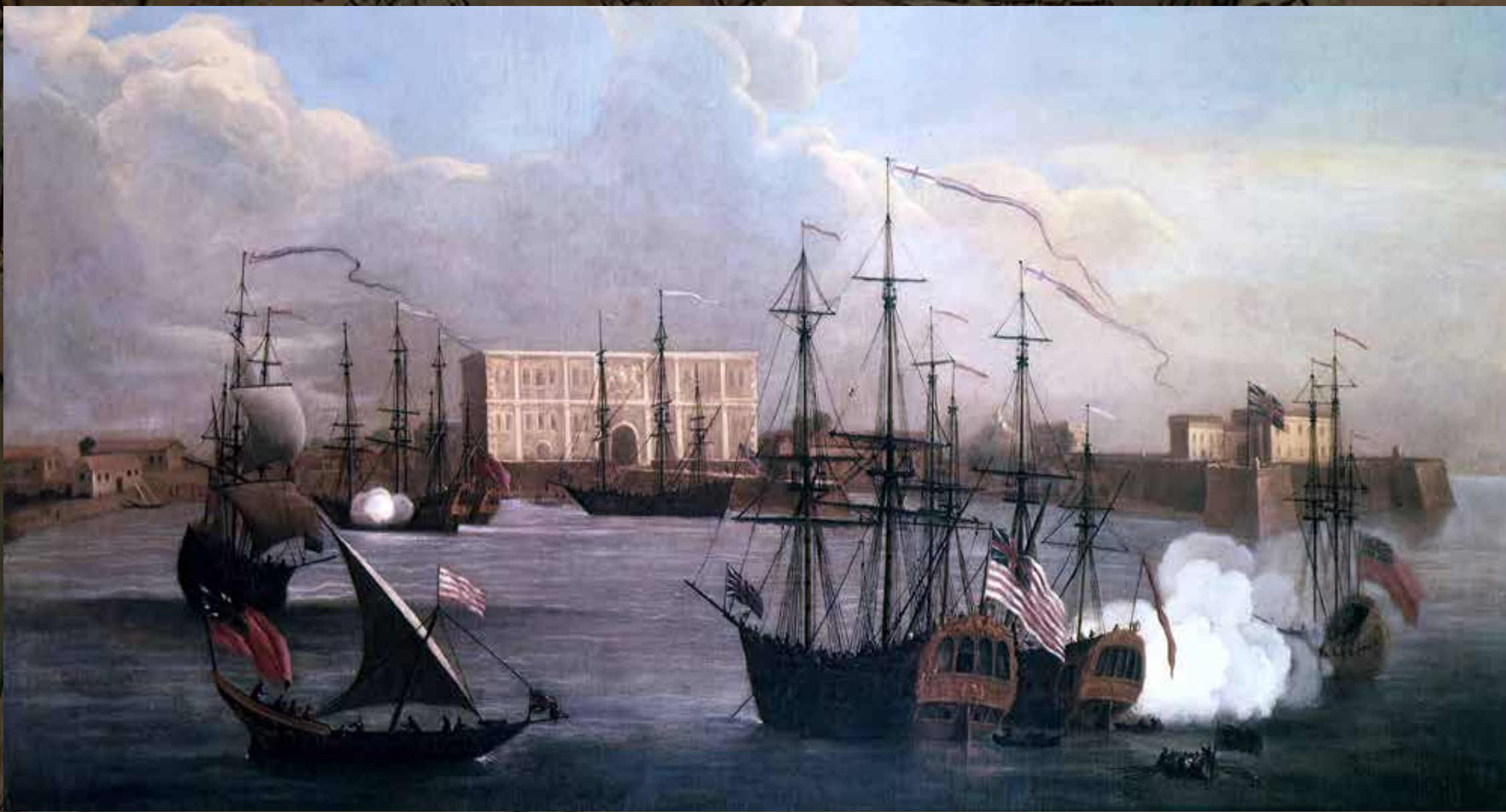
This 1789 engraving depicts the destruction of the tea in Boston Harbor. Library of Congress

newspapers, and legal agreements. Violent protests led to its repeal. In 1768 the British government made another attempt with the Townsend Acts, taxes on lead, paper, glass and tea. Colonists protested “taxation without representation” by an out of touch London government.

After the 1770 Boston Massacre all Townsend duties were repealed except one – the tax on tea. It was reinforced by the Tea Act of 1773.

# Too Big to Fail: The British East India Company

Efforts to save a powerful British company from collapse set in motion a chain of events that led to the Boston Tea Party.



The East India Company settlement in Bombay. The flags on company ships resemble but predate the American flag. Samuel Scott circa 1732.

## Globalization

In 1600, Queen Elizabeth I granted a charter for the "Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies." By the 1760s, the "East India Company" had become enormously profitable,



Moghul Emperor Shah Alam transfers tax collection rights to Robert Clive of the East India Company. Benjamin West, British Library

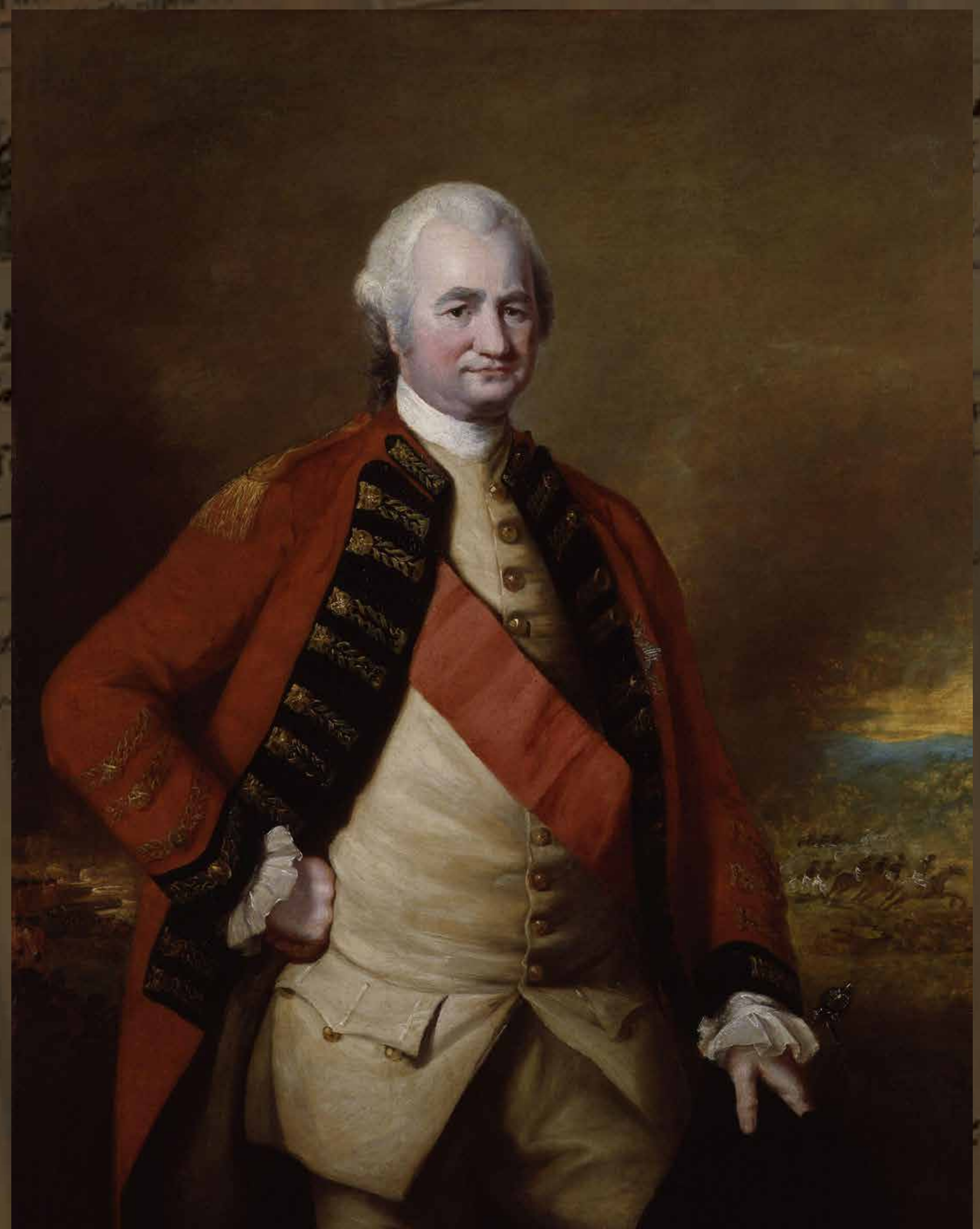
## Troubled and Troublesome

A disastrous famine struck India in 1769. It was made worse by the corruption and indifference of East India Company managers. Over a million died while they stockpiled grain, withheld relief, and insisted on the continued payment of taxes by their Indian subjects. In order to survive Indian men sold family members - girls first, then boys, then wives. The East India Company was threatened with collapse, creating enormous losses for English banks and investors.

"The ruin, which we have brought on an unfortunate country, will recoil upon ourselves."

Alexander Dow, East India Company military officer

trading not only in tea but also silk, cotton, spices, saltpeter (for gunpowder), gold and silver. With military capabilities greater than the armies of many countries, it ruled over 20 million people in Bengal, India.



Robert Clive, 1st Baron Clive, gained personal wealth while establishing control of Bengal for the East India Company. His neglect during the Indian famine is widely condemned today. National Portrait Gallery, London

## CRUEL AND UNUSUAL

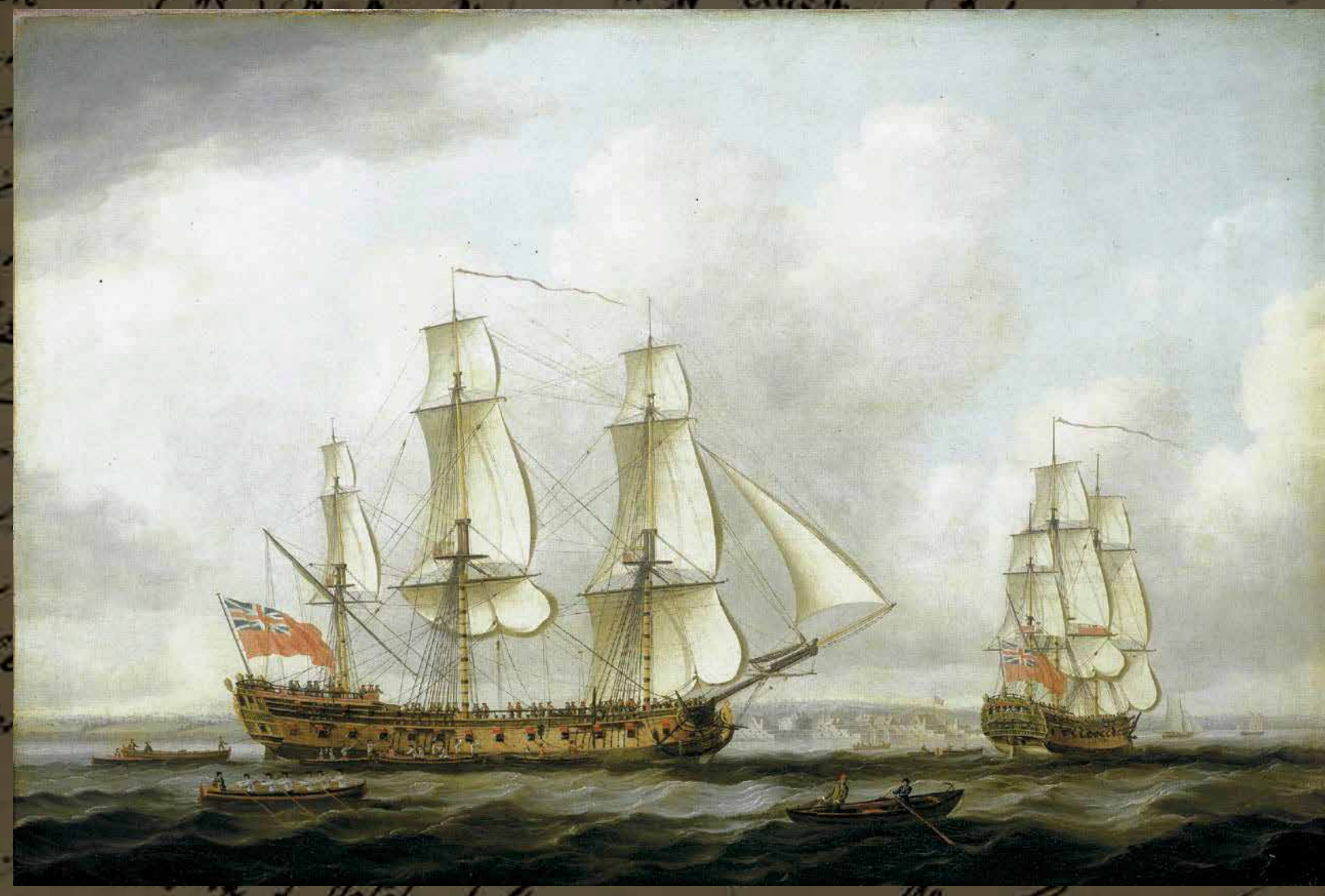
At this time the East India Company was importing tea from China. Large Indian plantations came later. To help reduce financial losses, the company pursued a strategy of selling opium to China.

# The Tea Act of 1773

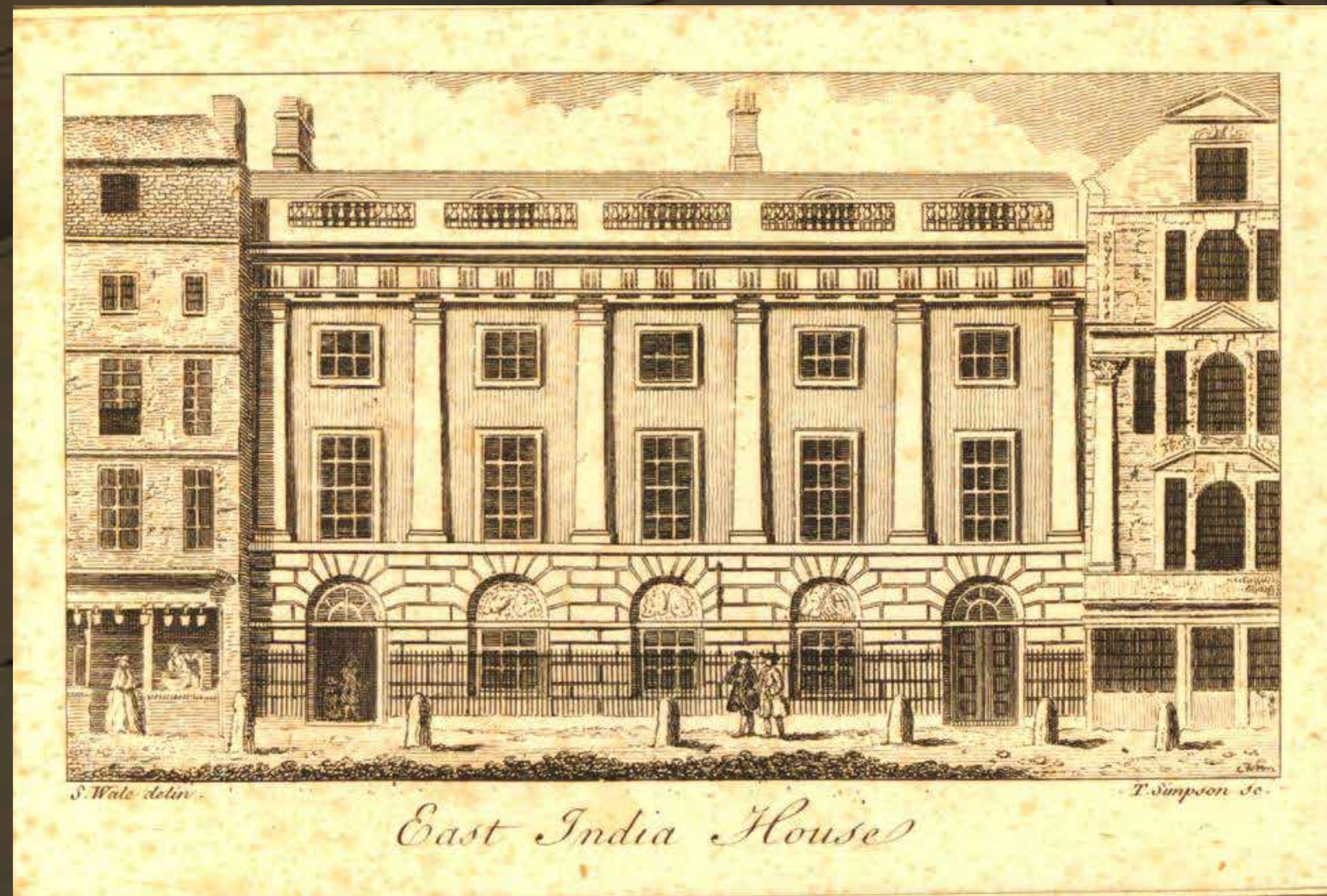
The British government scrambled for a plan to rescue the East India Company. Their solution counted on the popularity of tea in America.

## All the Tea in Warehouses

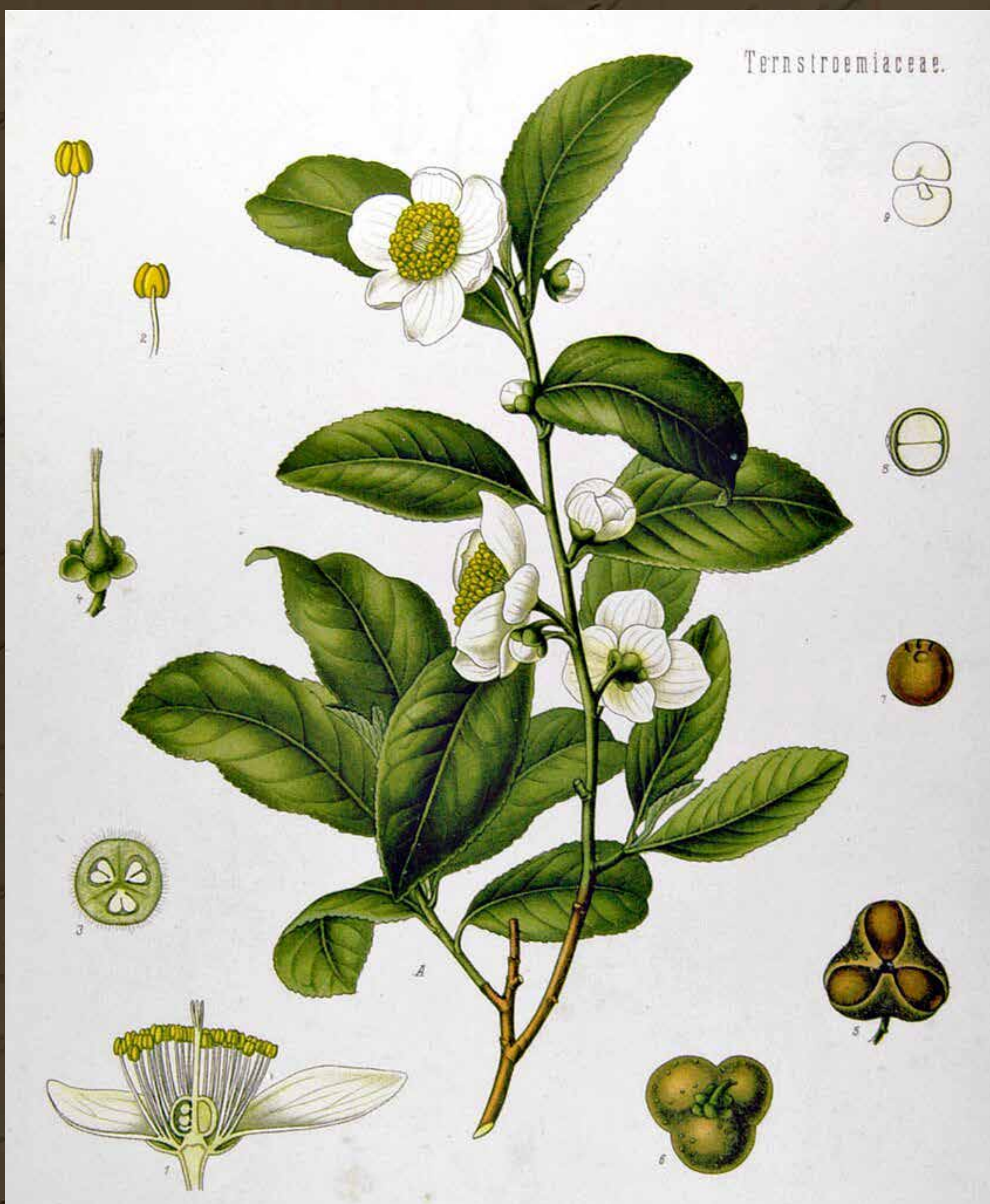
The East India Company faced stiff competition from illegal smugglers of lower priced tea. Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson wrote, "We have been so long habituated to illicit Trade that people in general see no evil in it." He estimated that three quarters of the tea consumed in America was smuggled, most of it by Dutch merchants. Meanwhile more expensive East India Company tea was rotting in English warehouses - unsold.



The ship Princess Royal, an "East Indiaman," that carried goods from Asian ports to England. The same ship was portrayed from two angles, a common format in marine paintings of the period. John Cleveley the Elder, c. 1770. National Maritime Museum Greenwich



East India House in London, the company headquarters at the time of the Boston Tea Party. After recovering financially the company built a larger facility. Engraving by T. Simpson, 1766



The tea plant (*Camellia Sinensis*). Green most of the year, it flowers in late fall or early winter. Kohler's Medicinal Plants, 1897

## Too Clever by Half - The Tea Act

It was decided to grant a monopoly on colonial tea sales to the British East India Company. By relieving the company of duties to the British government it could sell a large volume of tea at low prices, even undercutting smugglers of low cost Dutch tea. As a bonus the British government would impose small customs duties at American ports (the equivalent of three pence per pound). Enticing the colonists with cheap tea, they would establish the principle of taxation - or so they thought.



## READING (ABOUT) TEA LEAVES

Tea originated in China and Southeast Asia. Nearly all varieties come from a single plant (*Camellia Sinensis*). Different flavors result from the time of harvest, altitude of planting, size of leaves when picked, and variations in processing. Most of the tea dumped in Boston Harbor was called "Bohea," a type of black tea. Green tea was also destroyed including the delicate and costly "Hyson" variety.

# Lightening Rod: Royal Governor Thomas Hutchinson

Thomas Hutchinson came to personify unpopular British policies. He would become the last civilian governor of colonial Massachusetts.

“My temper does not incline to enthusiasm.”

— Thomas Hutchinson

## Temperamental Journey

Thomas Hutchinson’s mind ran toward “firmness not subtlety,” wrote historian Bernard Bailyn. “He didn’t understand people who were sensitive to what power was because they had never been able to share in it.” His acquisitiveness - for money and public office - alienated many. (At one point Hutchinson was Chief Justice, Lieutenant Governor, and a member of the legislature at the same time.) His inflexible personality was a major factor in the events of 1773.



Governor Thomas Hutchinson. Massachusetts State House Art Collection

## Burn out

By 1773 Governor Thomas Hutchinson was weary and anxious to leave America for a visit to England. As Lieutenant Governor, during the Stamp Tax crisis of 1765, a mob had attacked and destroyed his elegant Boston home. After the 1770 Boston Massacre the British government repealed some taxes and withdrew soldiers from downtown Boston to Castle Island. The result was a lull in anti-government activities. The Tea Act returned colonial firebrands like Samuel Adams to center stage.

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If doing any business, Mr. L. had the advantage in a most obliging manner...  
I know not what reason may make it necessary to continue the Duty on Tea, but I think the repeal of it or making the same Duty payable in England is necessary to prevent discord in the Colonies for in spite of all the votes of the Senate some will insist on it and that will bring on those unlawful riotous meetings in order to restrain or punish them, which have almost destroyed all sense of subordination in the people of Boston and other Commercial Towns. I should have but little trouble with all this business except one source...  
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Ironically Thomas Hutchinson had privately advised removal of the Townsend duty on tea in 1770. “I think that the repeal of it ... is necessary to prevent disorders in the colonies [and] those unlawful, riotous meetings... which have almost destroyed all sense of subordination in the peoples of Boston and other commercial towns.” Massachusetts Archives



The Old State House, seat of Massachusetts government during the Tea Act crisis. In defiance of British government officials, Patriots held the most consequential meetings in other Boston locations. National Park Service



Legacy: John Winthrop’s descendant John Kerry ran against Ann Hutchinson descendent George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential election

## THE HUTCHINSON FAMILY IN AMERICA

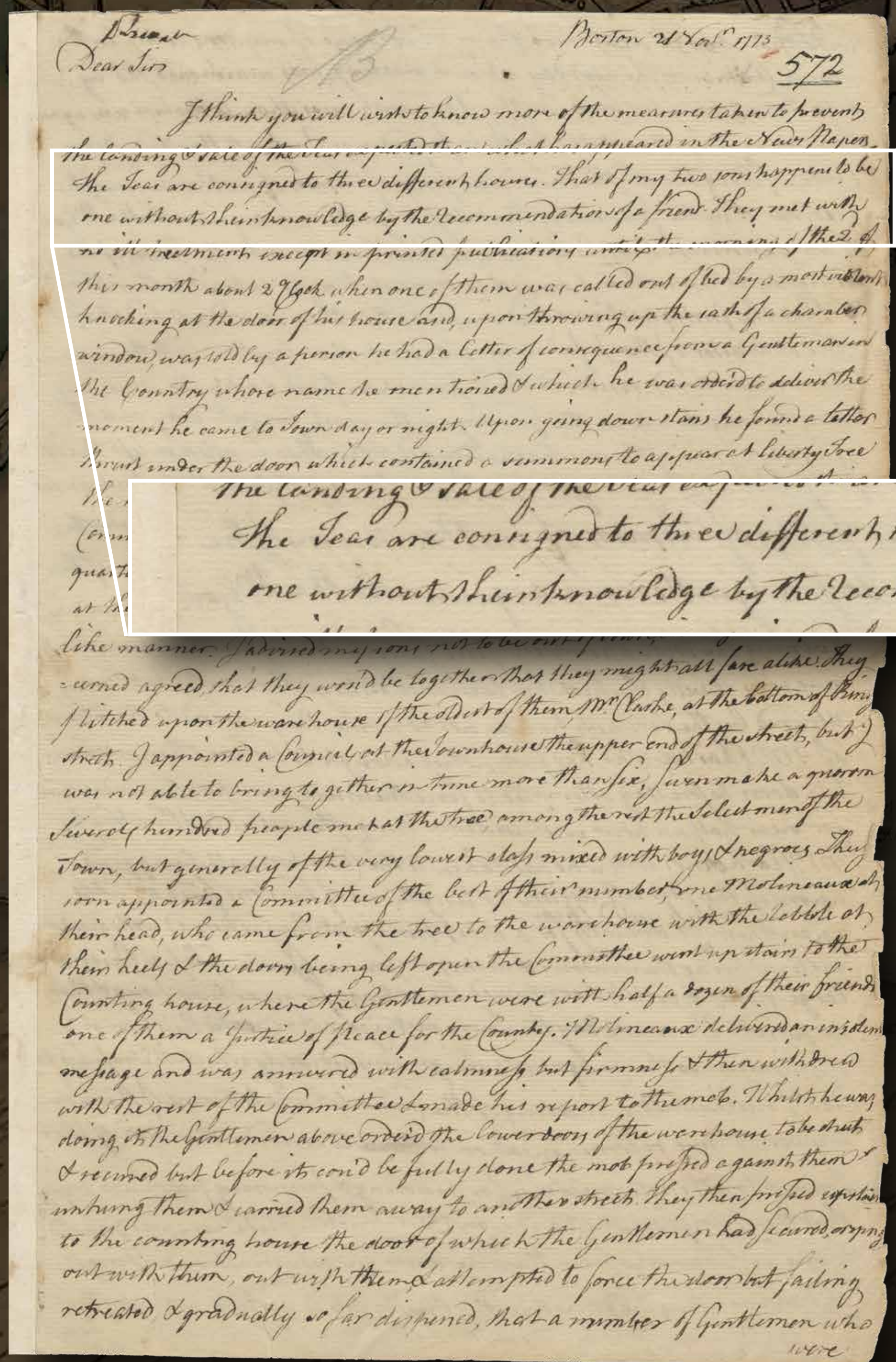
Thomas Hutchinson was a descendant of Anne Hutchinson. In 1634, she was banished from colonial Massachusetts by Governor John Winthrop in a dispute about religious doctrine. Her descendants include Franklin Roosevelt, Oliver Wendell Holmes, the Bush family, and Mitt Romney.

# The Consignees

In October, 1773 colonists learned that the East India Company was shipping 600,000 pounds of tea to four American ports including Boston. Local “consignees” would receive the tea and a share of the profits.

“The current Talk of the Town that Richard Clarke, Benjamin Faneuil, Esqrs; and the two young Mess-rs Hutchinsons, are appointed to receive the Teas.”

Boston Gazette, October 18, 1773



Thomas Hutchinson is defensive about the appointment of his sons to profit from the sale of tea. “The Teas are consigned to three different houses. That of my two sons happens to be one without their knowledge by the recommendation of a friend.” Massachusetts Archives

## Friends and Family

Governor Thomas Hutchinson had mixed feelings about the tax on tea, although he dutifully followed instructions from the government in London. If tea was to be shipped, his family would profit from it. As tea merchants he appointed two of his sons, two relatives by marriage, and two close friends. He later complained that the Sons of Liberty “have persecuted my Sons with peculiar pleasure.”

## Watson and the Tea Party

In this famous painting John Singleton Copley depicts London merchant Brook Watson being attacked by a shark in Havana Harbor. Watson survived the loss of a leg and continued his career. He would later recommend merchants Joshua Winslow and his business partner Benjamin Faneuil, Jr. as consignees in Boston to receive tea from the East India Company.



Thomas Hutchinson’s sons Elisha (shown in this image) and Thomas Jr. were selected to receive the tea and a commission of 6% on sales. Yale University Art Gallery



Watson and the Shark by John Singleton Copley. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

# Early Resistance

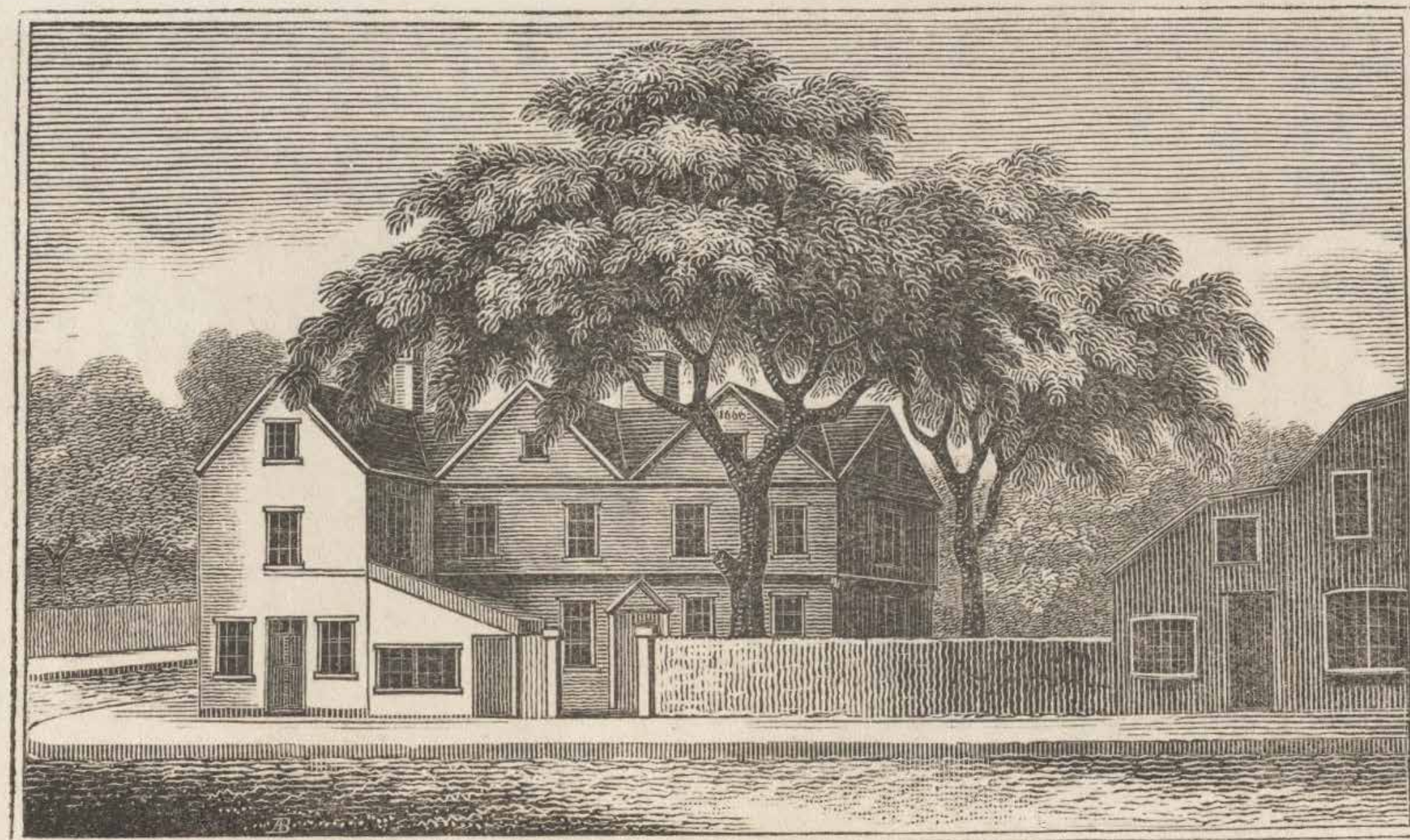
Colonists who had protested earlier attempts at taxation began harassing the “consignees” even before the arrival of tea shipments in Boston Harbor.

## Back to the Liberty Tree

During the Stamp Tax crisis of 1765 radicals demanded that the stamp agents appear and resign their commissions beneath the Liberty Tree, the scene of many demonstrations organized by the Sons of Liberty. In the early morning hours of November 2, the tea consignees were rudely awakened when messengers knocked on their doors and delivered letters demanding that they also resign under the Liberty Tree. Their refusal led to increasing harassment.

The merchants have been “cruelly insulted in their persons and property.”

Tea consignees to Governor Hutchinson and the Governor’s Council, 1773



LIBERTY TREE, 1774. CORNER OF ESSEX AND ORANGE STREETS. The world should never forget the spot where once stood Liberty Tree, so famous in your annals.—La Fayette in Boston.

The Liberty Tree was cut down before British soldiers evacuated Boston. It was re-imagined in this 1825 image. Houghton Library, Harvard University

...change with them I took one of my sons to me in the evening... the next day a town meeting was convened... the town was full of rumors of just indignation... the information was such that together with the common sense mentioned... the information past month... the door before they attempted to force their way in... for near half an hour with violence being often called to threaten by... upon if they did not desist... large stones & bullets & continued the outrage for near two hours & then

Thomas Hutchinson describes the attack on the Clarke home: “At length one of his sons fired a pistol upon them which caused them to withdraw for a short time but they returned with greater violence broke the windows... and threw large stones.” Massachusetts Archives

## Escalation

After merchant Jonathan Clarke refused demands for resignation at the Liberty Tree, the Clarke warehouse was attacked by a mob. The merchant family barricaded themselves in an upstairs counting room. On November 17th a crowd surrounded the Clarke home smashing windows and shattering door frames as the family took shelter on a second floor. One family member fired a pistol. Fortunately, no one was struck. Two Clarke sons would later retreat to the protection of the British garrison on Castle Island.

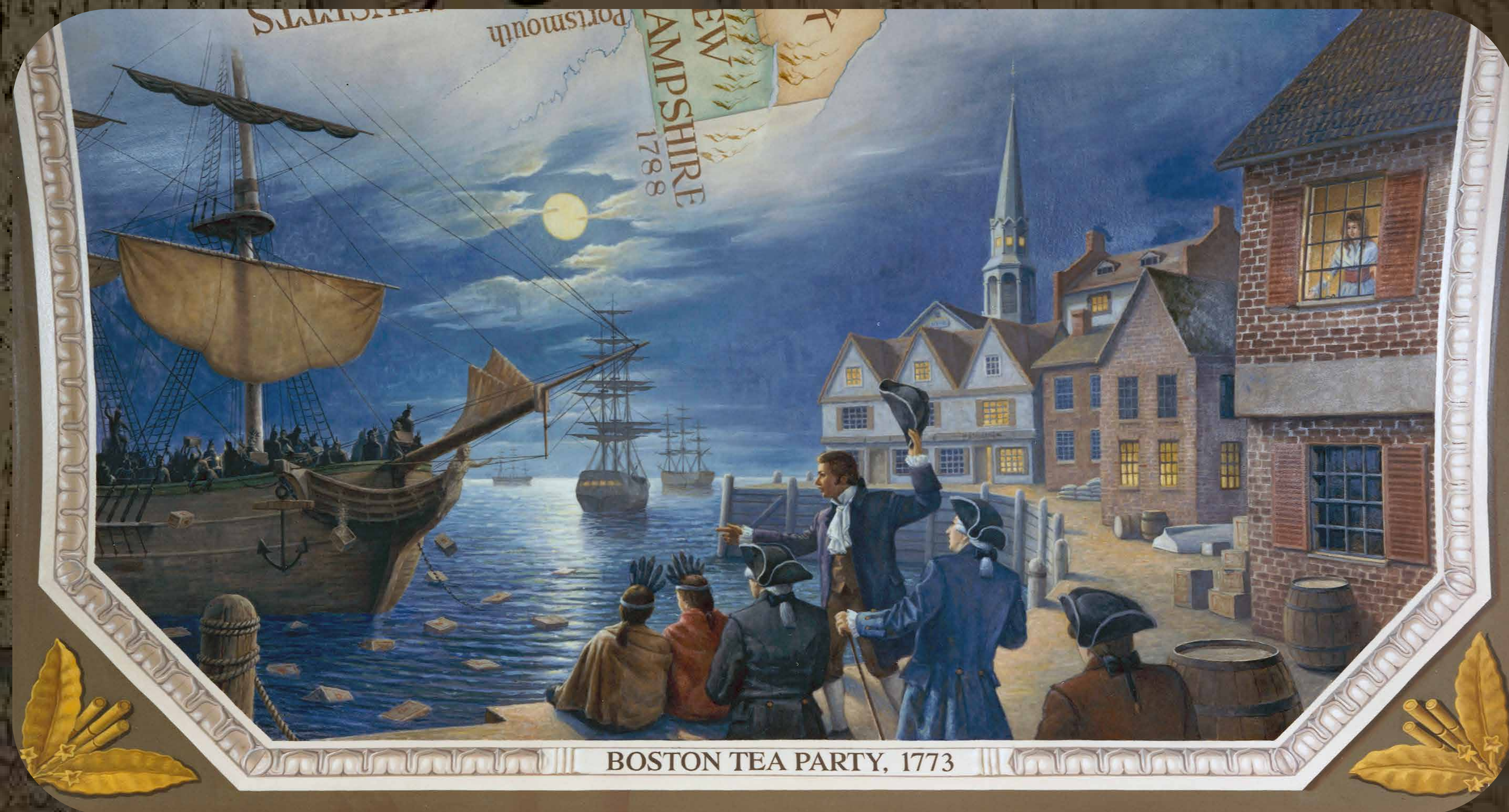
## The Copley Connection

Artist John Singleton Copley preferred art to politics, painting the portraits of “Patriots” like Samuel Adams, and “Tories” including British General Gage. His father-in-law Richard Clarke was a merchant who preferred money making to politics. Clarke’s son Jonathan was selected to receive the tea. As the crisis deepened Copley attempted to mediate but his efforts were unsuccessful.



In this painting John Singleton Copley (upper left) portrays his wife and family, including father-in-law Richard Clarke. The Clarke’s went into exile in London. Copley also left America to pursue his career beyond the provincial art world of colonial Boston. John Singleton Copley. National Gallery of Art

# Not Just Taxation Without Representation



*The Boston Tea Party. Architect of the Capitol*

The phrase “Taxation without representation” is known by every school child. That was the central but not the only concern. Granting a monopoly on tea sales to the East India Company might be a first step toward establishing other monopolies that would destroy business opportunities for local merchants. Proceeds from the tax would pay the salaries of British colonial officials. Samuel Adams and other radicals saw payment by colonial legislatures as critical for retaining a measure self-government.

# Tea Time

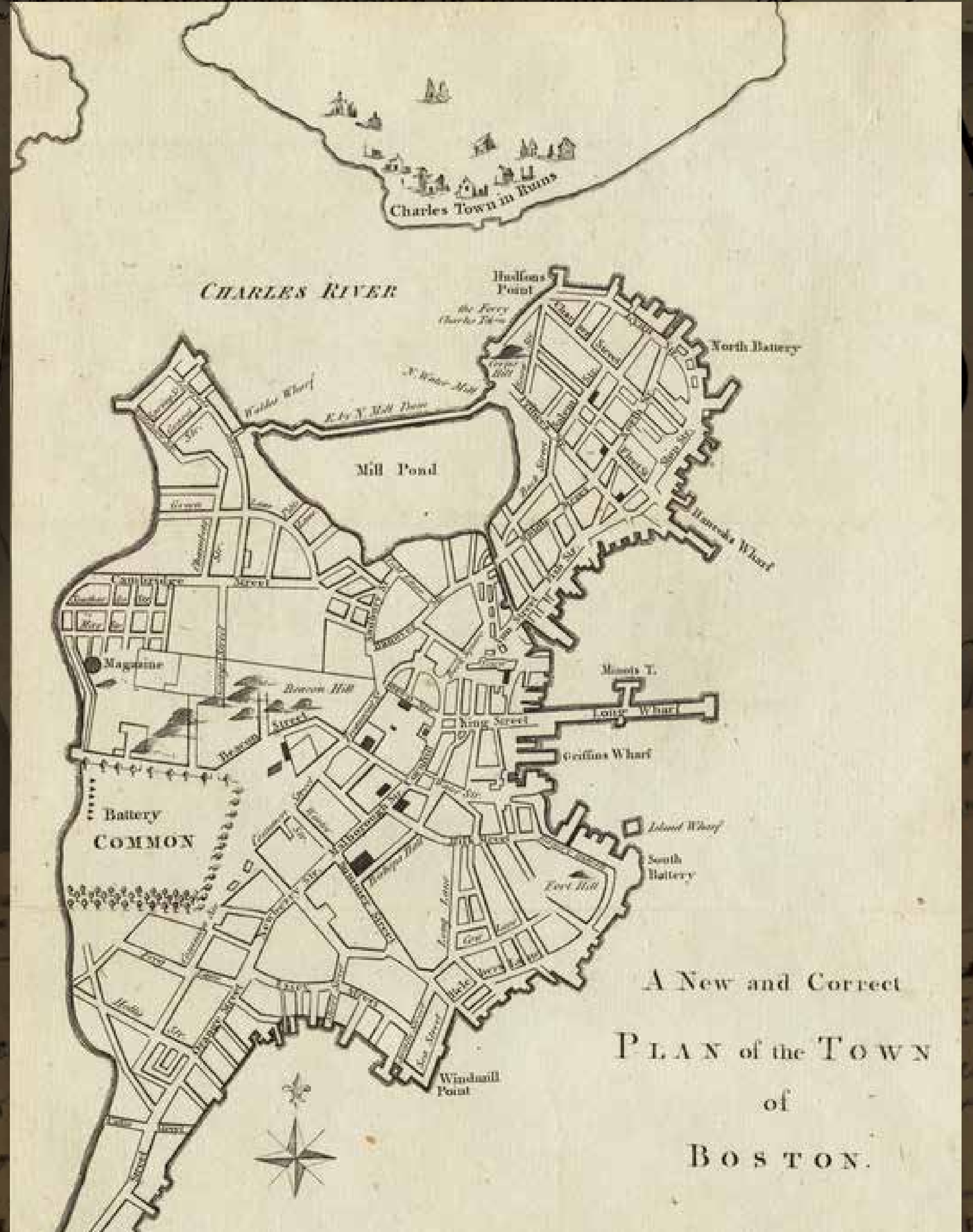
On November 28, 1773 the ship *Dartmouth* arrived in Boston Harbor with the first tea shipment. Its captain was required to pay customs duties within twenty days or face seizure of the ship and cargo.



A view of British ships in Boston Harbor in 1768, as an earlier crisis over taxation was escalating. Massachusetts Historical Society

## Tug of War

“Patriots” were determined to prevent the landing of tea and payment of duties. Governor Hutchinson was adamant that the ship could not leave the harbor without payment. British Admiral John Montagu delayed preparing his war ships for winter. Three, including the flagship *Captain*, would prevent the *Dartmouth* from turning back to sea if the captain wished to avoid a confrontation. British guns on Castle Island would pound the ship if it attempted to leave the harbor.



This 1775 map by a British officer clearly shows Griffin's Warf, location of the Tea Party. The land has since been filled in. Today, Boston's Intercontinental Hotel occupies the site. Norman B. Leventhal Map Center, Boston Public Library

## Griffin's Warf

Boston's Committee of Correspondence ordered Captain James Hall to avoid customs and bring the ship *Dartmouth* to Griffin's Warf. Two additional ships, the *Eleanor* and *Beaver*, were later directed there. The *Beaver* had been delayed at anchor off Rainsford Island for a week for “cleansing and smoking,” because the crew was infected with smallpox.



## Caught in the Middle

Merchant John Rowe owned the ship *Eleanor*. Conscious of risks, he advocated landing the ships at Griffin's Warf instead of his own “Rowe's Warf,” as originally ordered by the Patriots. Privately, he would have agreed to pay a duty. In a public meeting he questioned, “Whether a little Salt Water would not do it good, or whether Salt Water would not make as good Tea as fresh.”

Merchant John Rowe has been accused of “playing both sides” during the crisis. “Rowe's Warf” remains a landmark on Boston's waterfront. Robert Feke, Massachusetts Historical Society

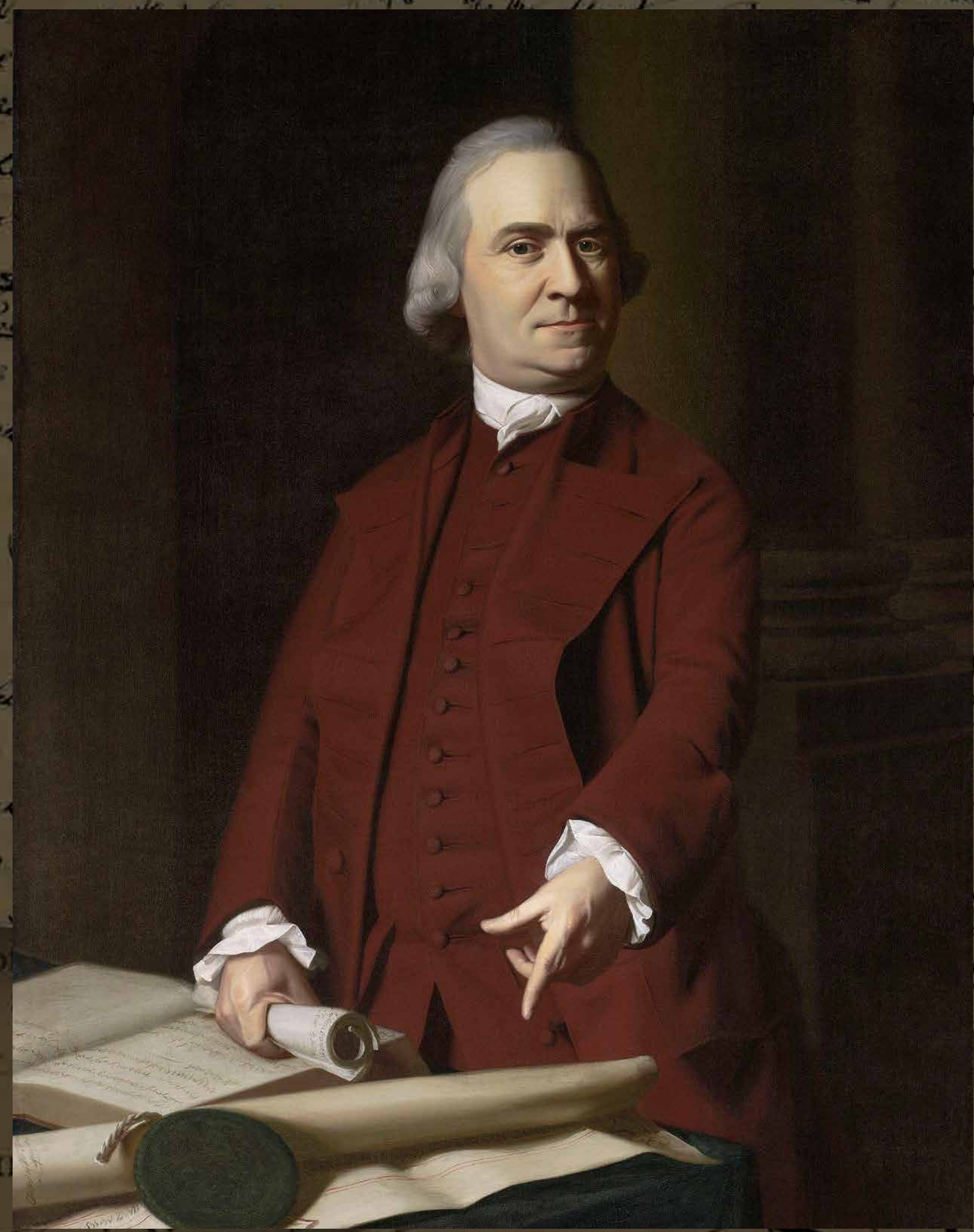


# The Grand Incendiary

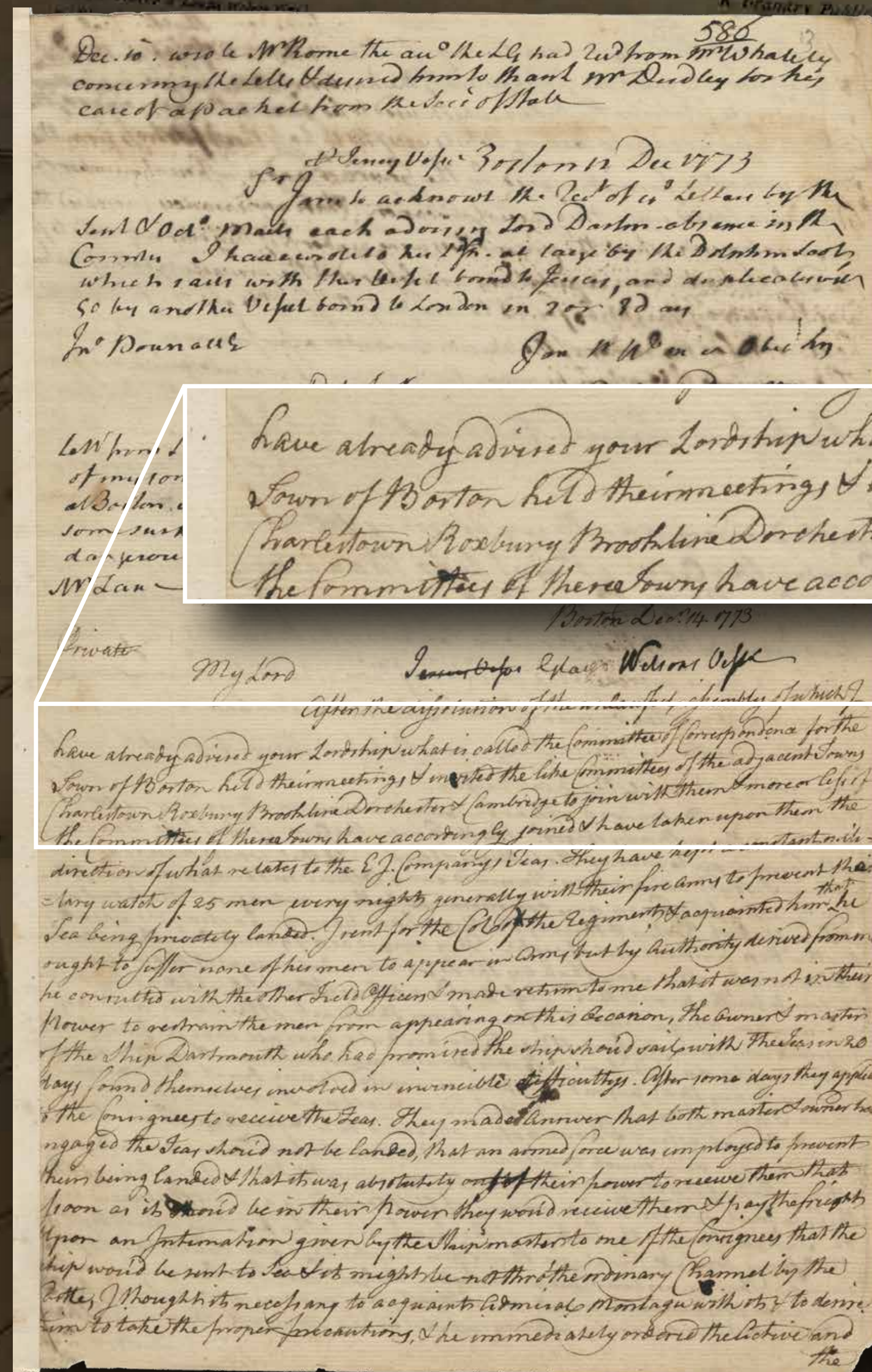
As in earlier protests Samuel Adams emerged as the leading opponent of the tax on tea.

## Samuel Adams

He preferred to be called Samuel Adams, not the more diminutive "Sam." Thomas Hutchinson called him the "Grand Incendiary." After inheriting his father's malt business, Adams failed as a brewer but displayed a genius for organization and propaganda. He frequented taverns to gauge public opinion and established "Committees of Correspondence" that would play a central role in the tea crisis. In 1773 he relied on a new extra-legal group, called the "Body of the People," to give orders.



Samuel Adams by John Singleton Copley. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



"What is called the Committee of Correspondence for the Town of Boston held their meeting and invited the like committees of the adjacent towns Charlestown, Roxbury, Brookline, Dorchester and Cambridge to join with them." Thomas Hutchinson. Massachusetts Archives

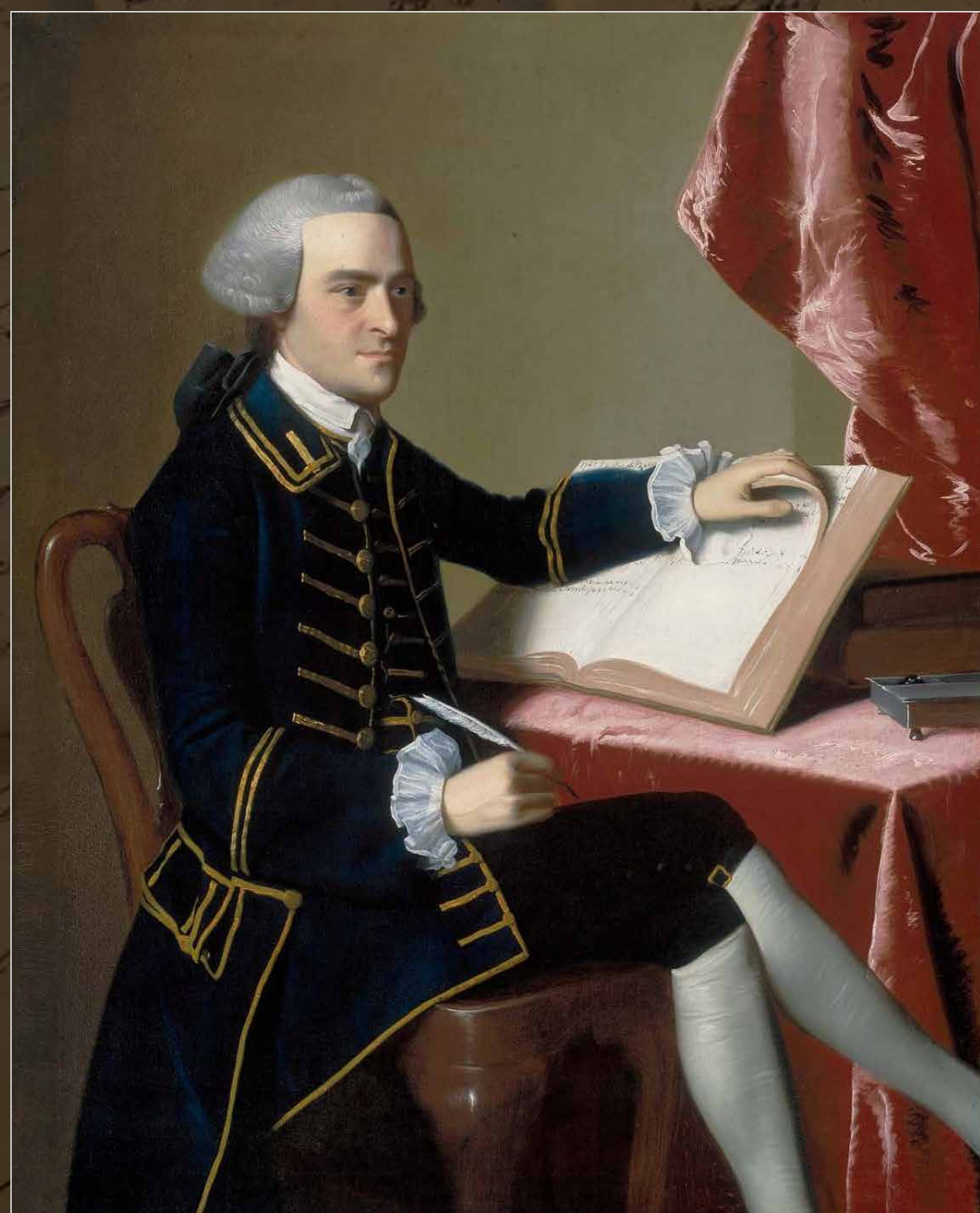
have already advised your Lordship what is called the Committee of Correspondence for the Town of Boston held their meetings, & invited the like committees of the adjacent towns Charlestown, Roxbury, Brookline, Dorchester & Cambridge to join with them. I have a list of the names of the Committees of these towns have accordingly joined, & have taken upon them the

## This is Personal

Deacon Samuel Adams, Sr., Samuel's father, had founded a land bank, allowing farmers to borrow paper money against the value of their land. Thomas Hutchinson favored "hard money" – gold and silver. He campaigned against the land bank and Deacon Adams was ruined financially. Samuel inherited debts and lawsuits.

## Merchant Prince - John Hancock

Reputedly, John Hancock was Boston's wealthiest merchant. Born into humble circumstances he was adopted by a merchant uncle and moved into the top level of colonial society. During the Stamp Tax crisis of 1765 he sided with Samuel Adams. Thomas Hutchinson appointed him Colonel of Cadets, perhaps hoping that the status and impressive uniform would appeal to Hancock's vanity. When Hutchinson called for the cadets to maintain order in 1773 Hancock ignored the request.



John Hancock by John Singleton Copley. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

## Sons and Daughters of Liberty

During the Stamp Tax crisis of 1765 the phrase "Sons of Liberty" came into popular usage.

Newspaper accounts also referred to "Daughters of Liberty." Boycotting English tea, some women served a concoction called "Labrador Tea" made from the redroot bush. Mercy Otis Warren published satires lampooning Governor Hutchinson.



Mercy Otis Warren by John Singleton Copley. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

# The Body of the People

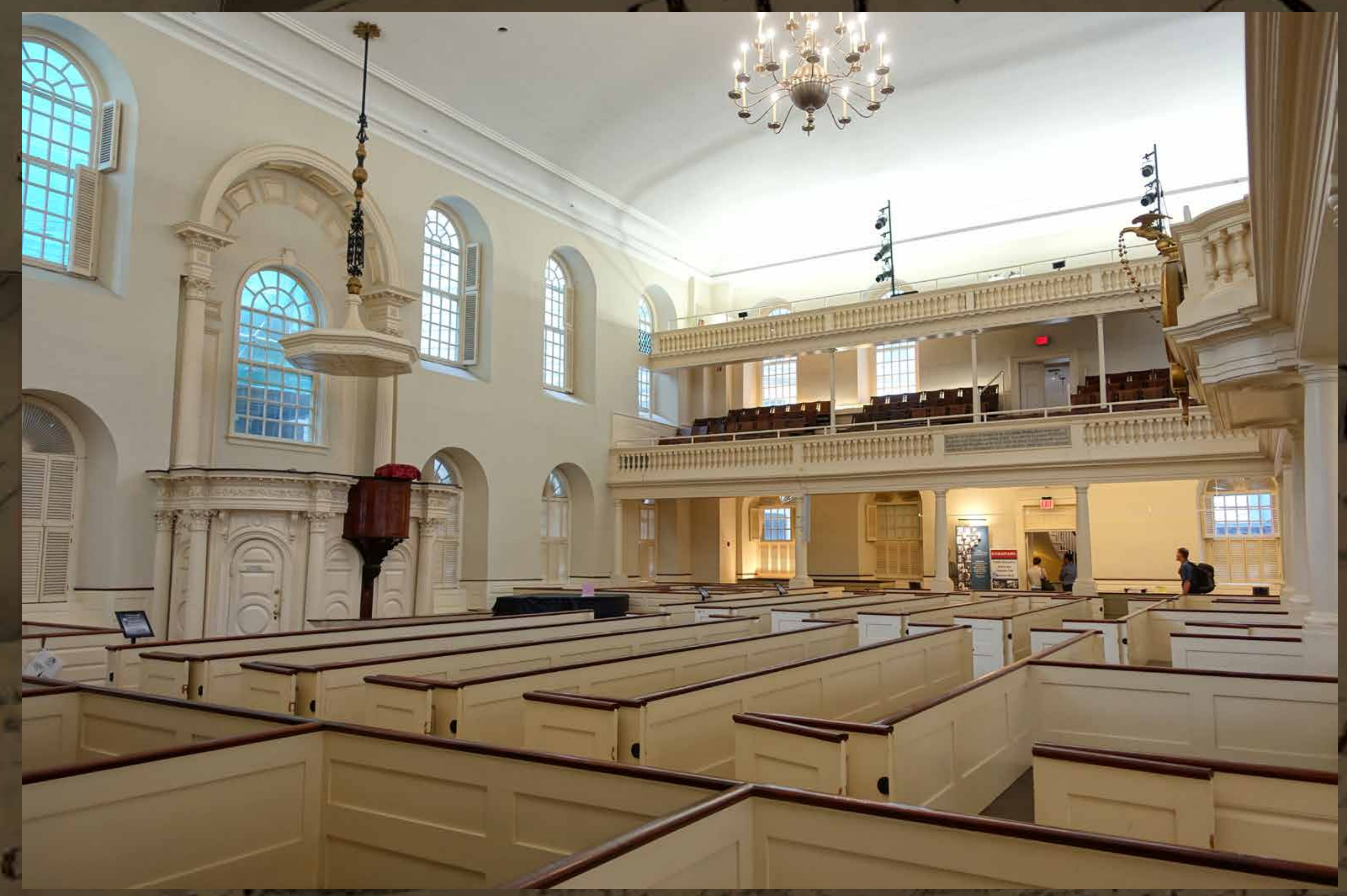
At a series of mass meetings, beginning on November 29th, radicals made demands that the consignees appear, resign, and agree to return the tea to England.

**The Old South Meeting House**  
After an overflow crowd strained Faneuil Hall, meetings were conducted at the Old South Meeting House with attendance reported at over 5,000 (perhaps exaggerated). Using the term "Body of the People" radicals created an extra legal assembly that would not have the potential financial liability of an official town meeting.

**"Friends! Brethren! Countrymen! The Hour of Destruction of Manly Opposition to the Machinations of Tyranny stares you in the Face,"**  
Notice of a protest meeting at Faneuil Hall, November, 1773



Old South Meeting House, gathering place of the "Body of the People." National Park Service



The "standing" capacity of the Old South Meeting House is estimated at 650 today. Overcrowded and surrounded by protesters, it attracted many more in 1773. Daderot

**Francis Rotch and the ship Dartmouth**  
The first tea ship to enter Boston Harbor was not owned by Boston merchants. The Rotch family, Nantucket Quakers, were involved in the whaling industry. Their ship *Dartmouth* had made a voyage to London carrying whale oil and returned with a shipment of East India Company tea for the consignees. Twenty-three year old Francis Rotch represented the family and courageously attended meetings of the Body of the People.



In 1767 the *Dartmouth* became the first ship to be built in New Bedford. Its ochre paint, common but not universal for merchant ships, reflected the subdued taste of its Quaker owners. Shortly after the Tea Party the ship was lost on a 1774 voyage to London. Courtesy of New Bedford Whaling Museum

**The Rotch Family and Phillis Wheatley**  
Like many Quakers the Rotch's opposed slavery. Phillis Wheatley wrote a poem eulogizing one family member. During the 19th century the wealthy Rotch family relocated most activities to New Bedford and was active in the abolitionist movement.



African-American poet Phillis Wheatley. Library of Congress

# Decision Day

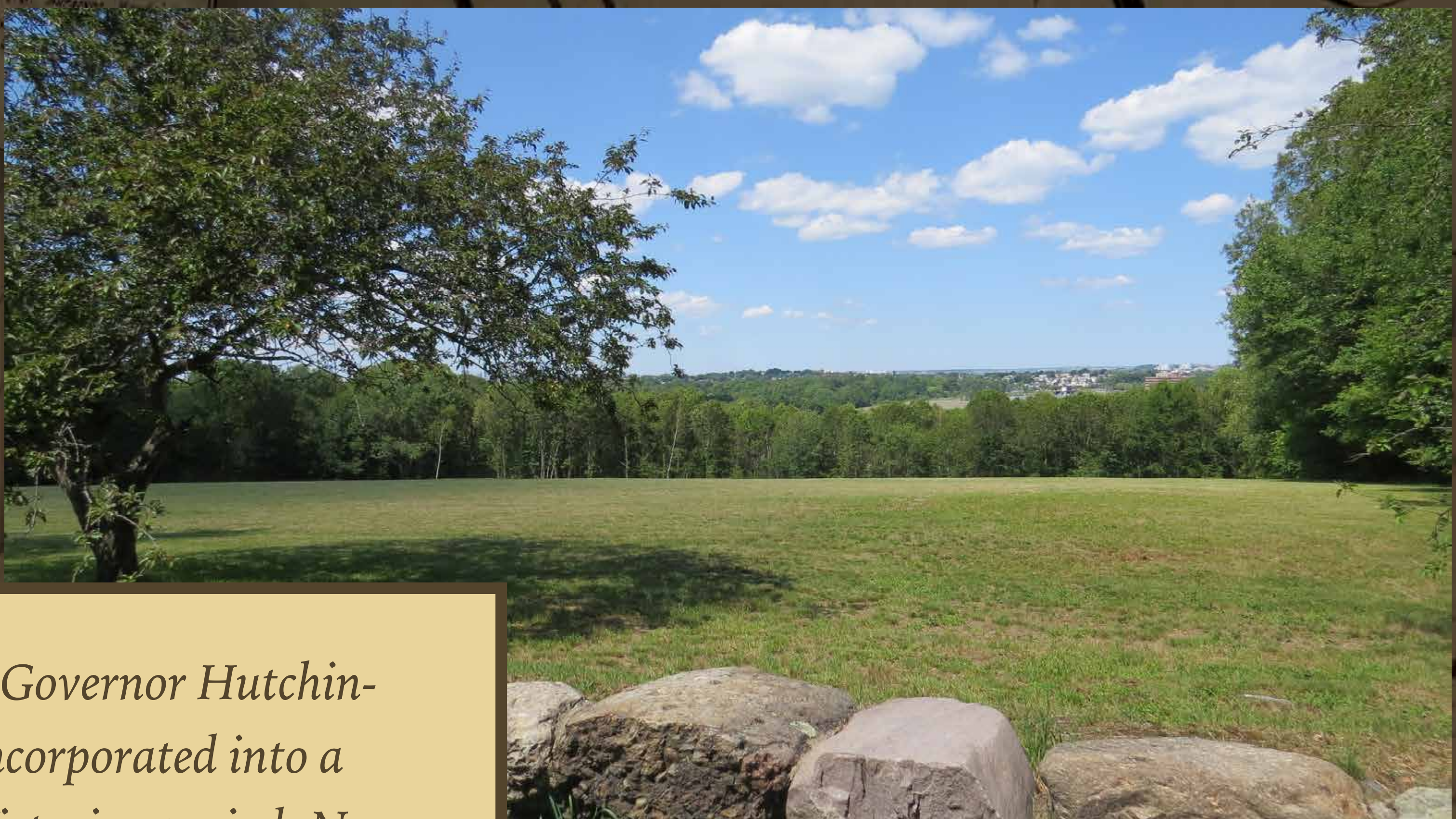
The deadline for the first tea ship to clear customs and avoid seizure was December 17th. On December 16, 1773 the Old South Meeting House was the site of a climactic gathering of the Body of the People.

“There is nothing else this meeting can do to save the country.”

Samuel Adams, December 16, 1773

## Mission to Milton

A decisive meeting opened at 10:00 a.m. Young Francis Rotch was instructed to travel to Governor Hutchinson’s Milton home to seek a pass allowing his ship *Dartmouth* to return the tea to England. Hutchinson refused. Returning at 5:45 p.m. the meeting house was nearly dark, dimly lit by a few candles. At the news of Hutchison’s refusal, a voice shouted “Boston Harbor, a tea kettle tonight.” Samuel Adams rose to proclaim. “There is nothing else this meeting can do to save the country.”



Governor Hutchinson's Field. Commonwealth Museum photo

It is believed that part of Governor Hutchinson’s Milton home was incorporated into a larger home during the Victorian period. Nearby, Governor Hutchinson’s Field overlooks the Neponset River Valley, diagonally across from the birthplace of President George Herbert Walker Bush, a Hutchinson relative. Commonwealth Museum photo



Old South Meeting House. National Park Service

## On to Griffin’s Warf

“Whoops” were heard in the gallery, answered by similar sounds near the exits. Leaders including Samuel Adams and John Hancock stayed behind as the building emptied. It would be difficult to prove their involvement in what was to follow. As many as sixty men, dressed as Mohawk Indians, were ready to march to Griffin’s Warf. Some wore more elaborate costumes and leaders spoke in an unintelligible dialect. Others had simple disguises with blankets and blackened cork or soot to cover their faces.

# The Boston Tea Party



## *Destruction of the Tea*

Dividing into three groups the men boarded the tea ships. While some townspeople looked on by torchlight, there was no commotion. Many participants had obvious experience in maritime trades. Some attached blocks and tackle to the tea chests. On deck, others hauled them up. Men with axes smashed the boxes as tea was shoveled overboard. Three hundred forty two chest were destroyed. At low tide it piled up around the ships.



This bottle holds tea leaves that washed up on the shore of Dorchester Neck the morning after the Tea Party. Massachusetts Historical Society



A masonic Lodge met at the Green Dragon and members joined in the destruction of the tea.



Thayendanegea by Gilbert Stuart. British Museum

## *Tea Party Facts*

- The term Boston Tea Party was not used at the time. It was introduced in the nineteenth century. The incident was referred to as the “destruction of the tea.”
- Much of the planning took place privately in settings like the “Green Dragon Tavern,” the “Bunch of Grapes Tavern,” and Faneuil Hall. Detailed plans were not discussed openly before large crowds at the Old South Meeting House.
- Dressing as “Mohawks” did not reflect the aspirations and rights of Native people. The obvious purpose was disguise although some colonists may

have thought that dressing as Indians was a statement of a new American identity separate from Britain and Europe.

- The Mohawk nation supported Britain in the American Revolution. Thayendanegea, also known as Joseph Brant, became an officer in the British army. Some European soldiers under his command dressed as Mohawks.
- One man was knocked unconscious when struck with a tea crate and thought to be dead. His body was pulled to the side and covered with leaves. When participants came to

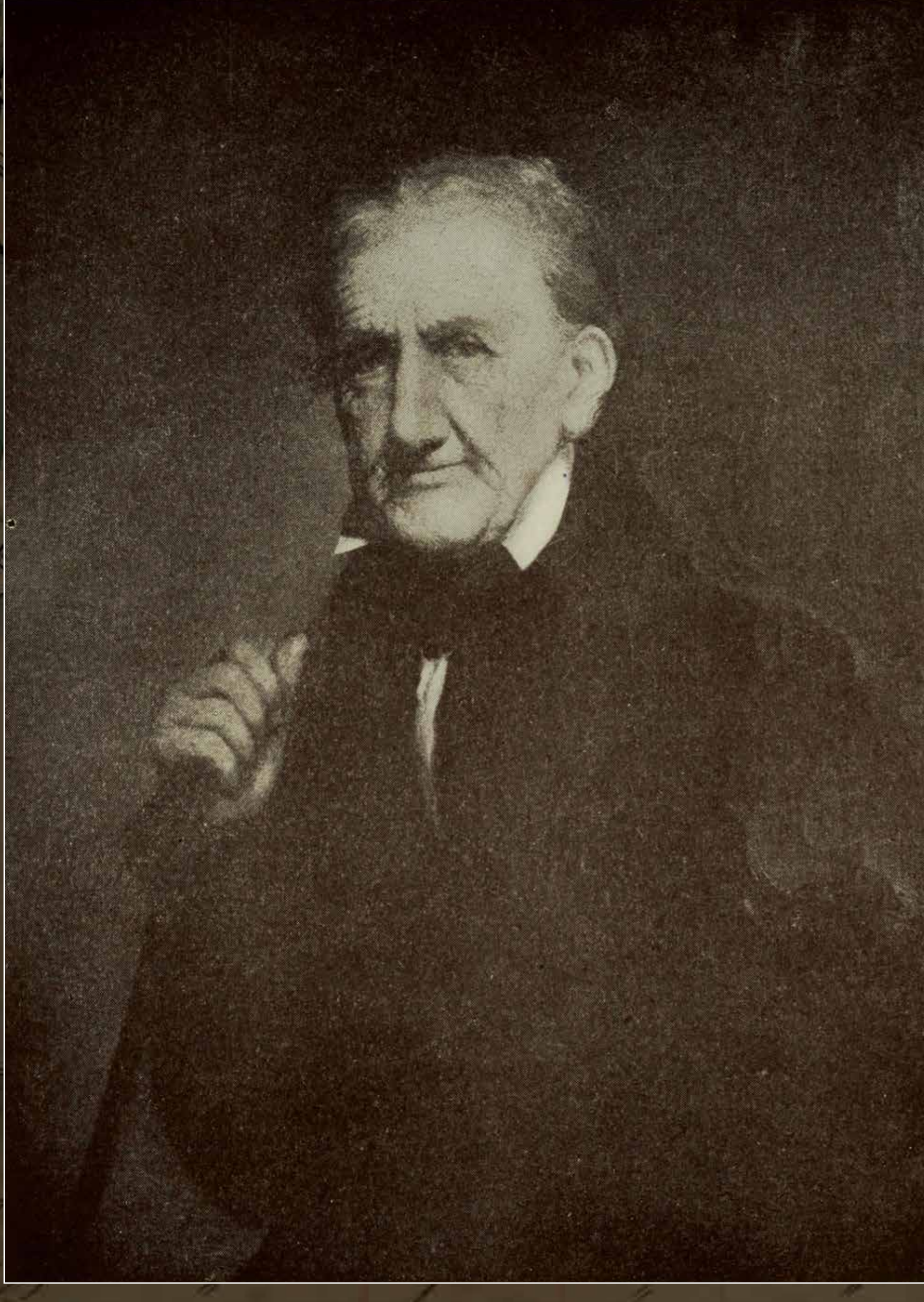
retrieve the body the man revived, to the relief of his team.

- One person tried to stuff tea into his clothing. He was stripped of his jacket and struck repeatedly as he fled the scene.
- The only damage to any ship was the destruction of a padlock. It was replaced by the Patriots.
- Paul Revere was involved in planning and destruction of the tea. He made what might have been the first of his famous rides to bring news of the destruction of the tea to New York.

# George Robert Twelves Hewes

Most Tea Party participants chose to remain anonymous. Decades later two books appeared based on interviews with George Robert Twelves Hewes, who was then in his nineties.

“In about three hours... we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found in the ship.”



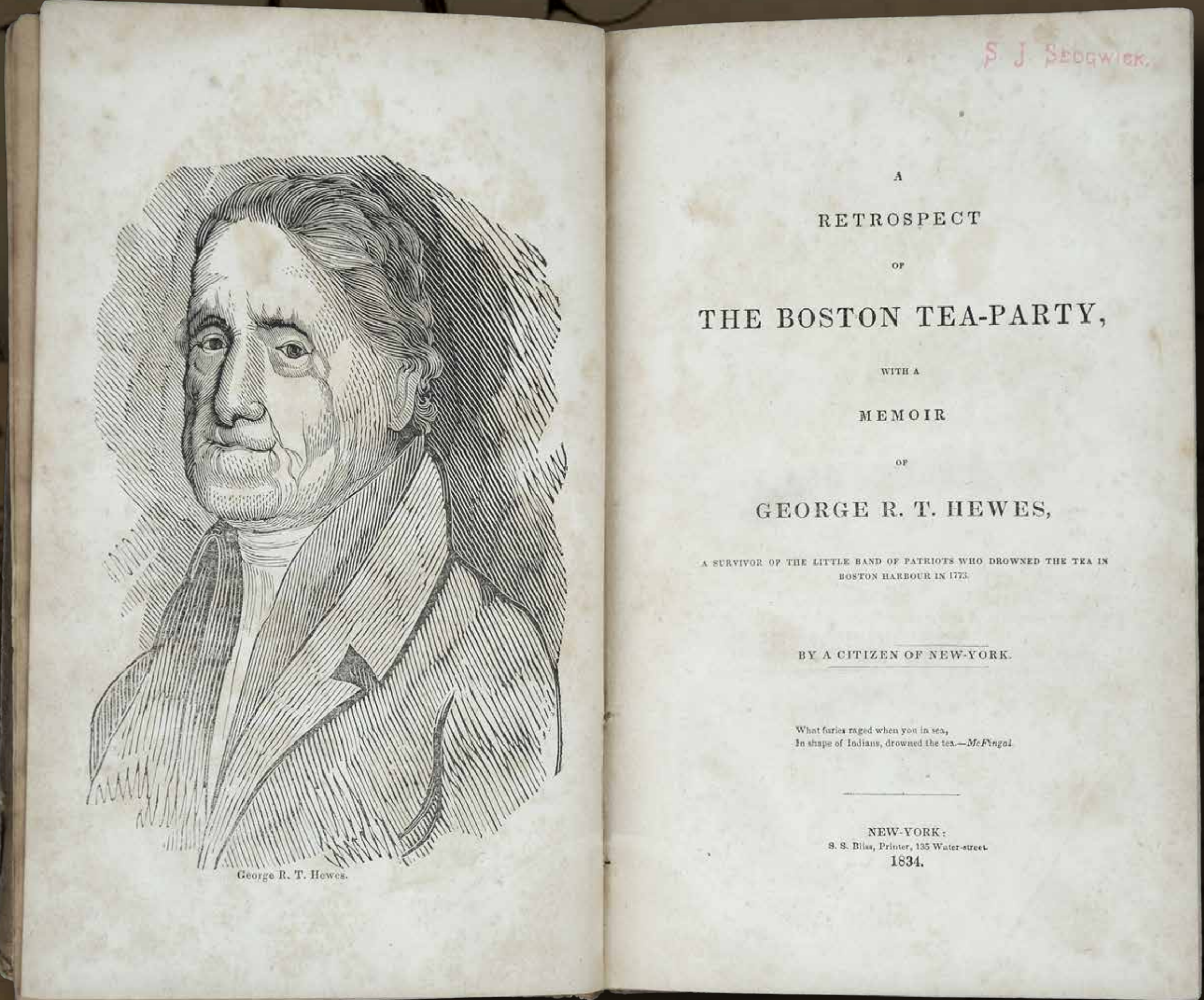
George Robert Twelves Hewes. Wikimedia Commons

## George Robert Twelves Hewes At The Boston Massacre

Hewes was a poor shoe maker who witnessed the Boston Massacre in 1770. As the crowd gathered he was struck on the shoulder with a gun by Private Kilroy, who was later convicted of manslaughter. When the soldiers fired, one of the victims was standing next to Hewes and the shoemaker caught him as he fell. Disinterested in politics before this, Hewes was radicalized.

## The Boston Tea Party

Hewes dressed in the imagined style of a Mohawk and “covered face and hands with coal dust in the shop of a blacksmith.” Because of his whistling talent he was made an “officer.” As “boatswain” his duty was to summon the men with a whistle. Hewes demanded keys to the hatches and candles for light from the ship’s captain. First “cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks, so as thoroughly to expose them to the effects of water,” they threw the tea overboard.



Hewes became a minor celebrity in New England when this 1833 memoir appeared. It used the phrase “Boston Tea Party.” The father of 15 children, Hewes lived until the age of 98. The Society of the Cincinnati, Library Purchase, 1990.

## In the Matter of John Malcolm

John Malcolm was an ardent “Tory” and customs informer who was famously hot tempered. Hewes confronted him when he thought Malcolm was about to strike a child. Malcolm struck Hewes instead, wounding him “deeply on the forehead, so that Mr. Hewes for some time lost his senses.” He was treated by Dr. Joseph Warren. In retaliation, a mob tarred and feathered John Malcolm. Hewes disapproved, preferring a legal warrant and trial for Malcolm.



This image portrays the “tar and feathering” of John Malcolm. The Liberty Tree appears in the background. Malcolm is forced to drink hot tea, before an image of the earlier “Tea Party.” Library of Congress

# Intolerable Acts and Colonial Resistance

The British Parliament responded to the Boston Tea Party with the Coercive Acts of 1774, called the “Intolerable Acts” by the colonists.

## Coercive Acts of 1774

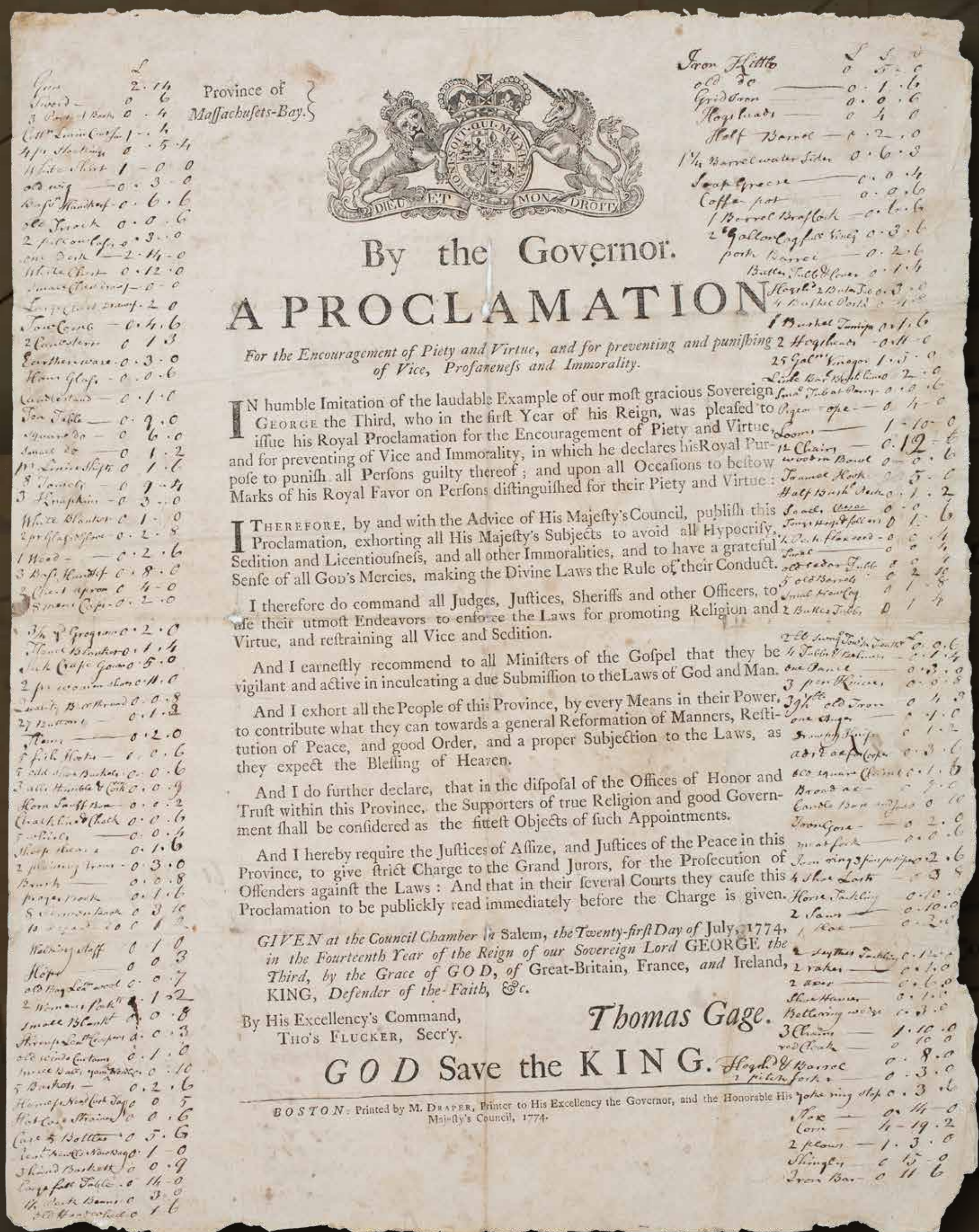
The port of Boston would be closed and blockaded until restitution was made for the tea. The Massachusetts Government Act restricted town meetings to one a year and mandated Royal appointment of the Council (the upper house of the legislature). The Act for the Impartial Administration of Justice allowed removal of trials to other colonies or Britain – ending the principle of trial by a jury of peers. The Quartering Act allowed high ranking officers to demand accommodations for troops.



General Thomas Gage replaced Thomas Hutchinson as Governor of Massachusetts. He would be in command in April of 1775 when fighting broke out at Lexington and Concord. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

## The Road to Revolution

At first George Washington had expressed disapproval of the destruction of the tea. After the Coercive Acts he felt that liberty was threatened in all the colonies. On September 5, 1774 representatives of twelve of the thirteen colonies met in Philadelphia to oppose the Coercive Acts. Meetings of the “First Continental Congress” became a major step toward revolution.



Proclamation by General Gage, 1774. After the “Intolerable Acts,” Gage warned colonists to “avoid all Hypocrisy, Seditiousness, and Licentiousness, and all other Immoralities.” In 1811 this copy was used as scrap paper by Attleboro’s May family to tally family holdings including “sheep shears” and “bundles of hops.” Courtesy of American Antiquarian Society



Carpenter’s Hall in Philadelphia was the scene of the First Continental Congress. Colonial representatives met in response to the Coercive Acts, introduced in Massachusetts after the Boston Tea Party. Pbjamesphoto

## John Adams on the Tea Party

Adams admired the theatricality of the tea party and the fact that it did not lead to loss of life. “This is the most magnificent Monument of all. There is a Dignity, a Majesty, a Sublimity, in this last Effort of the Patriots, that I greatly admire... This Destruction of the Tea is so bold, so daring, so firm, intrepid and inflexible, and it must have so important Consequences. And so lasting, that I can’t but consider it as Epocha in History.”

John Adams, 1773

