



Lesson

T W O

LESSON TWO: WORDS AND ACTION

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To explore how the influence of single individuals affected the larger populace during the American Revolution.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND THEIR OBJECTIVES

ACTIVITY ONE: The Leadership of George Washington

- Summary: Students look at two letters written by George Washington and a portrait of him.
- Objective: To draw conclusions about Washington's leadership abilities by reading his words and examining how he was depicted in portraiture.

ACTIVITY TWO: The Writings of John and Abigail Adams

- Summary: Students look at samples of the famous writings of John and Abigail Adams.
- Objective: To learn about John and Abigail Adams through their writings, think critically about their writings, and consider how they affected the larger populace.

ACTIVITY THREE: Phillis Wheatley, Patriot Poet

- Summary: Students examine two poems by Phillis Wheatley and an exchange of letters between Wheatley and George Washington.
- Objective: To interpret Phillis Wheatley's work as a patriot in light of the times in which she was writing.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

Social Studies: II d; IV h; X e.

History: Era 3, Standard 1



Longfellow's House
LONGFELLOW NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

BACKGROUND

History is full of examples of how the work and philosophies of individual people have profoundly affected the societies in which they lived. Whether it is through heroic actions or famous words, the world remembers certain personalities as having been instrumental in influencing the thoughts of the day. The Revolutionary period produced many strong figures who resonate in the history of the fight for independence as well as others whose influence was more subtle yet nonetheless pronounced.

[Longfellow National Historic Site, Massachusetts](http://www.nps.gov/long)
www.nps.gov/long

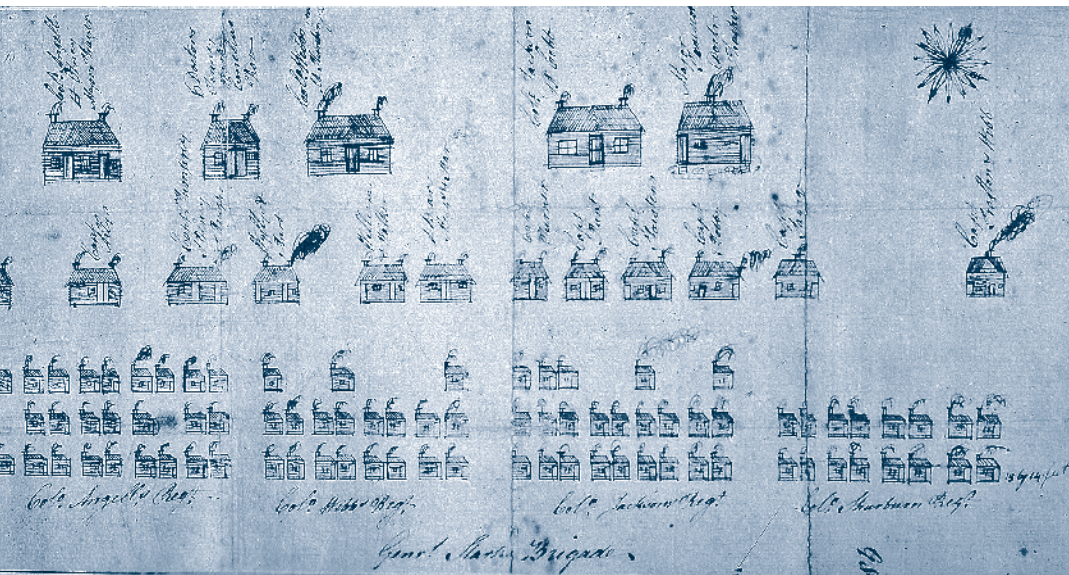
George Washington is arguably the most renowned figure of the American Revolution, beloved for his integrity and respected for his leadership abilities. On June 15, 1775, Congress chose Washington to be commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. He arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to assume his duties in July 1775. His first major military triumph was a clever maneuver that drove the British from Boston in a bloodless victory at Dorchester Heights. This event took place months after the Battle of Lexington and Concord, as the British remained encircled by patriot soldiers.

In November 1775, from his Cambridge headquarters, now Longfellow National Historic

Site, Washington sent Henry Knox, formerly a Boston book dealer, to Fort Ticonderoga, New York, to retrieve cannon for use in Boston. Knox supervised the transport of 50 cannon dragged overland for 300 miles across Massachusetts to Boston. The patriots then faced the challenge of moving the cannon into place without alerting the British. Colonial militia and local volunteers fortified Dorchester Heights, south of the city, and mounted the Ticonderoga cannon. When he saw the patriots strongly entrenched atop Dorchester Heights, British General William Howe withdrew his troops from Boston, and Washington and the Americans regained control of the city.

[Morristown National Historical Park, New Jersey](http://www.nps.gov/morr)
www.nps.gov/morr

Washington's leadership skills also kept the Continental Army together during times of hardship. During the winter encampments at Morristown, New Jersey, Washington's influence on the American army was severely tested. In 1777, during the first encampment there, he faced dwindling troops as enlistments expired and soldiers deserted. Replacements from local militia resisted military discipline. To compound his problems, an epidemic of smallpox struck the area. To prevent a health



This map of Stark's Brigade shows the layout of the camp at Jockey Hollow.
MORRISTOWN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

disaster, Washington instituted an inoculation program for both soldiers and civilians. At the time this procedure was almost as dangerous as contracting the disease. Conditions were further worsened by shortages of food and clothing. Nonetheless, the Continental Army continued to function, and by summer was greatly reinforced.

The army returned to Morristown to encamp in the winter of 1779. Washington set up headquarters at the home of Theodosia Ford and her four children, while other senior officers found quarters in private homes. The remainder of the army camped in Jockey Hollow. December of that year proved to be the worst winter of the century, with more than 20 recorded snowstorms. Six-foot snowdrifts blocked supply roads. Delays in receiving food caused starvation among the troops, and clothing was in short supply. Washington petitioned Congress for help, but Congress was unable to provide for the army. Desperate to alleviate the troops' miserable condition, Washington turned to the governors of neighboring states and the magistrates of the New Jersey counties. New Jersey generously offered help and the army was saved from starvation, although the soldiers continued to suffer with limited supplies.

In May 1780, quick response by officers ended a mutiny among some suffering soldiers. Problems continued through the spring of 1780 as British troops approached New Jersey. Having sent three brigades to protect other areas, Washington ordered his last six brigades towards Springfield where they forced the British to turn back. The soldiers at Morristown left the encampment within days. Yet the role of Morristown in the Revolutionary War was not over. In the winter of 1780–81 the Pennsylvania brigades camped and mutinied in Jockey Hollow, in the winter of 1781–82 the New Jersey regiment camped there, and Morristown continued to be an important supply depot for the army through the end of the war.

Adams National Historical Park (John Adams and John Quincy Adams Birthplaces, and Old House), Massachusetts
www.nps.gov/adam

While Washington's prowess as a military leader greatly affected the Revolution, so too did the political and intellectual contributions of the Adams family. The hundreds of letters exchanged between John and Abigail Adams during the war attest to their dedication to the revolutionary cause.



Adams House in Braintree.
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



Old House.
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

After Abigail Smith married John Adams in 1764, the couple moved into the home next to the house in which John Adams was born. There, in 1767, Abigail gave birth to John Quincy. From this simple farmhouse in Braintree (now Quincy), Massachusetts, Abigail raised and educated her five children, oversaw the workings of the family farm, and wrote most of the now-famous correspondence that supported her husband's efforts while he served as a delegate to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. From her farmhouse in Braintree, Abigail saw the smoke rising from the battlefield at Bunker Hill in June 1775 (see Lesson 4). During a respite from national service, John Adams sat at his Braintree desk and wrote the Massachusetts Constitution, a plan for government that influenced the U. S. Constitution and that remains in use today.

After the war, and before John's term as president, John and Abigail traveled to England where John served as diplomat. Upon their return, the couple settled at Peace Field (later called Old House), purchased by John Adams in 1787. This house remained the home of four generations, continually occupied by members of the Adams family from 1788 to 1927.

Boston National Historical Park (Old South Meeting House), Massachusetts
www.nps.gov/bost

Like Abigail Adams, other women during the Revolutionary War period gained recognition through their inspirational words. One such person was Phillis Wheatley, a slave and member of the congregation of Old South Meeting House. In 1761, at seven years old, Wheatley was kidnapped from her native West Africa, enslaved, and shipped to America. She was given the name Phillis because that was the name of the slave ship that carried her to the colonies. Purchased by Susannah Wheatley, Phillis joined many others enslaved not on agricultural plantations, but in northern towns and cities. She learned English and the Wheatley children, Mary and Nathaniel, taught her to read and write. She learned quickly, and soon showed a remarkable ability for writing poetry.

Phillis Wheatley's poems often spoke of the issues of the day. She wrote as a patriot, and addressed the problem of slavery in the newly emerging American identity of a free nation. She admired George Washington and, in 1776, wrote a poem praising the "fame of [his] virtues" and sent it to him. When Washington wrote back to her to thank her for the poem, he invited her to visit him at his headquarters in Cambridge (see Lesson 2). Susannah Wheatley



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

felt that Phillis's poems should be published, but there were many in Boston who insisted that it was not possible for a slave to possess such literary ability. Subsequently, a committee of 18 prominent Bostonian men tested Phillis to see if she was, indeed, the author. They agreed that she was and her book of poetry was eventually printed, making her the first published African American woman.

A year before her death, Susannah Wheatley freed Phillis from slavery. Yet Phillis continued to live with the Wheatley family even after she was free. In 1778, Phillis married John Peters, another free African, and they had two children. It was difficult for the couple to make a living. Phillis wrote a second book but no Boston printers would publish it, and her husband could find little work. Phillis's first two children died young, and her third child died in infancy. On December 5, 1784, at about the age of 30, Phillis herself died, uncelebrated, her poems forgotten. Abolitionists rediscovered her poetry in the 1800s and, in their eyes, she became a symbol of what African Americans could achieve if given the chance.

ACTIVITY ONE

The Leadership of George Washington

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Source #12**, George Washington letter to General Parsons, February 10, 1777
Source #13, George Washington letter to State Governors, December 16, 1779
Source #14, Portrait of Washington by James Peale
Student Worksheet: Leadership of George Washington

ABOUT SOURCE #12

James Peale, brother of artist Charles Willson Peale, painted a portrait of Washington around 1790, just at the time the nation first elected Washington as president. Both Peale brothers appear directly behind Washington in the portrait. This painting was possibly purchased by John Dunlap (see Lesson 1), who sold it to John Binns around 1810. It is one of an extensive collection of portraits of Revolution-era images now in the Independence National Historical Park collection.

PROCEDURE

- ① Discuss with students the conditions at the winter encampments at Morristown and what George Washington did to alleviate the problems that the soldiers faced.
- ② Distribute photocopies of Source #12 (George Washington letter to General Parsons, February 10, 1777), Source #13 (George Washington letter to State Governors, December 16, 1779), and the student worksheet “George Washington as Military Leader.” Have students read the two letters and then complete Part A of the worksheet.
- ③ Distribute photocopies of Source #14 (Portrait of Washington by James Peale) and have students complete Part B of the worksheet. When they finish, go over the answers in class.
- ④ Based on the impressions they have from Washington’s letters and portrait, have students write a diary entry from the point of view of General Washington as he looks back on his experience in Morristown after the Revolutionary War is over.

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Leadership of
George Washington

PART A

You have been given two letters written by George Washington while he and his soldiers were wintering at Morristown. The Continental Army spent two winters at Morristown (1777–1778 and 1779–1780). The first letter, Source #12, was written during the first encampment. Read it to answer the questions below.

In this letter, Washington is writing about a serious problem that affected the army. What problem was he writing about?

.....
As commander of the troops, what did Washington do about this problem?

.....
Washington insisted that this problem be kept secret. Why?

.....
Do you think Washington handled this serious situation wisely? Why or why not?

.....
.....
.....

Washington's second letter, Source #13, was written during the second winter at Morristown. Read it to answer the questions below.

Washington is again writing about a problem for the Continental Army. What is it?

.....
What two things does he say the soldiers are lacking?

- ①
- ②

What is Washington afraid will happen if the problem is not fixed?

.....
.....

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Who is this letter written to?

Why do you think Washington was writing to them?

PART B

This portrait of Washington, Source #14, was painted by James Peale around 1790. It shows Washington as he looked at the end of the Revolutionary War.

Describe how Washington looks in this painting.

There are two men standing directly behind Washington. Describe the expressions on their faces.

Why do you think they are looking at him in this way?

What is going on in the background of this scene?

Judging by the look on Washington's face and the way he is standing, what words would you use to describe how the artist wished to portray him?

ACTIVITY TWO

The Writings of John and Abigail Adams

RESOURCES NEEDED

Source #15, John Adams Diary Entry, December 17, 1773

Source #16, Abigail Adams letter to John Adams, August 14, 1776

ABOUT THE SOURCES

The Massachusetts Historical Society writes:

During much of his life, John Adams kept a diary in which he described both daily activities and events in which he participated. John Adams spent much of his adult life in service to his country. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress, an officially appointed diplomat (who served as a commissioner in France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, and as minister to the Court of St. James's), vice president, and president of the United States.

John and Abigail Adams exchanged over 1,100 letters, beginning during their courtship in 1762 and continuing throughout John's political career. These warm and informative letters include John's descriptions of the Continental Congress and his impressions of Europe while he served in various diplomatic roles, as well as Abigail's updates about their family, farm, and news of the Revolution's impact on the Boston area.

The Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive presents selections from the most important manuscript collection held by the Massachusetts Historical Society. Digital images of the letters exchanged between John and Abigail Adams, John Adams's diary, and John Adams's autobiography are presented alongside transcriptions.

The Archives can be found at www.masshist.org

PROCEDURE

Part A

- ① Introduce students to the importance of John and Abigail Adams in the Revolutionary War. Discuss how intellectual discussions of ideas were an essential part of the Revolution's history.
- ② Distribute photocopies of Source #15 (John Adams Diary Entry, December 17, 1773). Explain to students that this excerpt is from the Adams diary and refers to the Boston Tea Party. Read the diary entry aloud and discuss:
 - What is John Adams concerned about regarding the events of the Boston Tea Party? What questions does he raise about it?
 - What question does he raise regarding the patriots' decision to carry out the Tea Party?
 - What is his opinion about this?
 - Why does he feel the way he does?

ACTIVITY TWO

- ③ After discussing the diary entry, hold a debate in class about whether or not the Boston Tea Party was justified. Have one side represent the patriots and the other, Parliament. To prepare for the debate, have students do independent research about the Boston Tea Party.

Part B

- ① Distribute photocopies of Source #16 (Abigail Adams letter to John Adams, August 14, 1776). Explain that John and Abigail wrote to each other regularly while John was away as a delegate to the Continental Congress. Read the letter aloud in class and discuss:
 - What is the letter about?
 - Why do you think it was necessary for her to bring up this topic to her husband?
 - What is her concern about her ability to educate her own children?
 - How would you describe her feelings about the issue she is writing about?
- ② Use Abigail's letter to explain the concept of how ideas were shared and spread in the 18th century. Explain to students that letters were powerful means of communication, as were newspapers and broadsides. Did her letters to John affect the larger populace? If so, how? If not, why not? How do the letters help us better understand the past?

ACTIVITY THREE

Phillis Wheatley,
Patriot Poet

RESOURCES NEEDED

Student Worksheet: Phillis Wheatley, Patriot Poet
Poem to King George & Letter and Poem to George Washington

PROCEDURE

Part A

- ① Tell students about the life of Phillis Wheatley and her remarkable aptitude for learning and writing. Ask students to consider why some people in Boston did not believe she had written her poems.
- ② Distribute photocopies of the student worksheet “Phillis Wheatley’s Poem for King George.” Read aloud the poem “To the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1768” and go over any difficult words and phrases. Ask students to then complete the worksheet. When students have finished, go over the answers in class.

Part B

- ① Distribute copies of the student worksheet “Phillis Wheatley Writes to George Washington.” Explain to students that when Washington had his headquarters in Cambridge (now Longfellow National Historic Site), he received a letter from Phillis Wheatley that included a poem she wrote for him. Washington, after receiving the letter and poem, invited Wheatley to pay him a visit at his headquarters.
- ② Have students read aloud Phillis Wheatley’s letter to George Washington. Discuss what Wheatley wrote to Washington and her purpose for writing.
- ③ Read aloud Phillis Wheatley’s poem to George Washington.
 - Ask students what feelings the poem evokes.
 - What images does the poem invoke?
 - What words in the poem let the reader know that Phillis is honoring Washington as a war commander?
 - How is this poem similar to Phillis’s poem to King George, written eight years earlier? How is it different?
- ④ Have students read aloud Washington’s reply to Phillis.
 - Why did Washington apologize to Phillis?
 - What did Washington think of the poem Phillis wrote for him?
 - Why didn’t Washington publish the poem?
 - What invitation did Washington extend to Phillis?

ACTIVITY THREE

- ⑤ Have students consider that Washington was a slaveholder from the South.
 - Would this fact have affected their exchange?
 - Do you think Washington knew that Phillis was a formerly enslaved African, or was he responding to her as he would any female?
 - If he did not know she was African, do you think this knowledge would have affected his reply?

Part C

- ① Ask students to write a brief description of the poem Phillis Wheatley wrote to Washington. Ask them to describe why Wheatley wrote the poem and what she wanted to convey to her reader.
- ② Ask students to choose a political figure, either historical or present-day, who they would like to write a poem about, as Phillis Wheatley did. It could be someone they would implore to act a certain way, as Phillis did in her poem to King George, addressing this person and offering their hopes and expectations about the situation. Or it could be a poem of praise honoring that person's abilities, as Phillis did in her poem to Washington.
- ③ Have students share their poems in class, explaining to their classmates why they chose their particular person to write about.

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Phillis Wheatley,
Patriot Poet

Poem to King George

The following is a poem by Phillis Wheatley addressing King George III of England. Wheatley wrote this poem before the start of the Revolutionary War, in the early stages of unrest towards British rule.

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1768

*Your subjects hope, dread, Sire—
The crown upon your brows may flourish long,
And that your arm may in your God be strong!
O may your septre num'rous nations sway,
And all with love and readiness obey!
But how shall we the British king reward!
Rule thou in peace, our father, and our lord!
Midst the remembrance of thy favours past,
The meanest peasants most admire the last*
May George, beloved by all the nations round,
Live with heav'ns choicest constant blessings crown'd!
Great God, direct, and guard him from on high,
And from his head let ev'ry evil fly!
And may each clime with equal gladness see
A monarch's smile can set his subjects free!*

* *The repeal of the Stamp Act*

Describe in your own words what Phillis Wheatley is saying in this poem.

How do you think Wheatley felt about King George when she wrote this poem?

What advice does she give the King in this poem?

Letter and Poem to General Washington

To His Excellency
George Washington
Sir,

I have taken the freedom to address your Excellency in the enclosed poem, and entreat your acceptance, though I am not insensible of its inaccuracies. Your being appointed by the Grand Continental Congress to be Generalissimo of the armies of North America, together with the fame of your virtues, excite sensations not easy to suppress. Your generosity, therefore, I presume, will pardon the attempt. Wishing your Excellency all possible success in the great cause you are so generously engaged in. I am,

Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant,
Phillis Wheatley
1776

*Celestial choir! enthron'd in realms of light,
Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write.
While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms,
She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.
See mother earth her offspring's fate bemoan,
And nations gaze at scenes before unknown!
See the bright beams of heaven's revolving light
Involved in sorrows and veil of night!
The goddess comes, she moves divinely fair,
Olive and laurel bind her golden hair:
Wherever shines this native of the skies,
Unnumber'd charms and recent graces rise.
Muse! bow propitious while my pen relates
How pour her armies through a thousand gates,
As when Eolus heaven's fair face deforms,
Enwrapp'd in tempest and a night of storms;
Astonish'd ocean feels the wild uproar,
The refluent surges beat the sounding shore;
Or thick as leaves in Autumn's golden reign,
Such, and so many, moves the warrior's train.
In bright array they seek the work of war,
Where high unfurl'd the ensign waves in air.
Shall I to Washington their praise recite?
Enough thou know'st them in the fields of fight.*

STUDENT WORKSHEET

*Thee, first in peace and honours,—we demand
The grace and glory of thy martial band.
Fam'd for thy valour, for thy virtues more,
Hear every tongue thy guardian aid implore!
One century scarce perform'd its destined round,
When Gallic powers Columbia's fury found;
And so may you, whoever dares disgrace
The land of freedom's heaven-defended race!
Fix'd are the eyes of nations on the scales,
For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails.
Anon Britannia droops the pensive head,
While round increase the rising hills of dead.
Ah! cruel blindness to Columbia's state!
Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late.
Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side,
Thy ev'ry action let the goddess guide.
A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine,
With gold unfading, WASHINGTON! be thine.*

George Washington's Reply

Cambridge, February 28, 1776.

Miss Phillis,

Your favour of the 26th of October did not reach my hands 'till the middle of December. Time enough, you will say, to have given an answer ere this. Granted. But a variety of important occurrences, continually interposing to distract the mind and withdraw the attention, I hope will apologize for the delay, and plead my excuse for the seeming, but not real neglect.

I thank you most sincerely for your polite notice of me, in the elegant Lines you enclosed; and however undeserving I may be of such encomium and panegyrick, the style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your great poetical Talents. In honour of which, and as a tribute justly due to you, I would have published the Poem, had I not been apprehensive, that, while I only meant to give the World this new instance of your genius, I might have incurred the imputation of Vanity. This and nothing else, determined me not to give it place in the public Prints.

If you should ever come to Cambridge, or near Head Quarters, I shall be happy to see a person so favoured by the Muses, and to whom Nature has been so liberal and beneficent in her dispensations. I am, with great Respect, etc

TYING IT TOGETHER

Have students choose a person they admire and who has had a strong influence in their lives. It could be a family member, friend, celebrity, or public figure. Have students write an essay on why this person is special to them and what influence the person's words or actions have on them.

VOCABULARY

correspondence: exchanging information by writing letters.

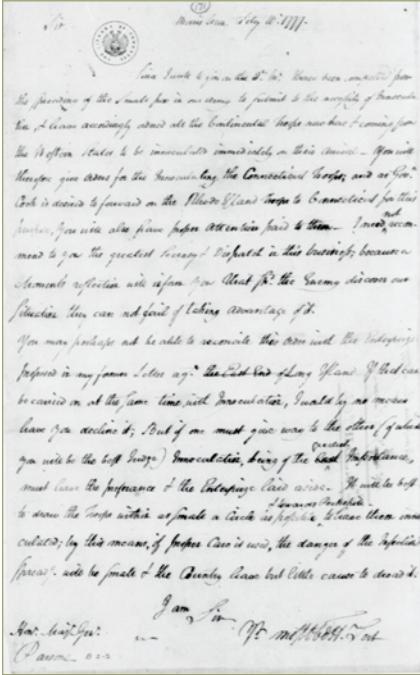
delegate: a person who officially represents a larger group of people.

encampment: a place where people set up camp sites.

mutiny: to rise up against those in command in the military.

Source #12 George Washington Letter to General Parsons, February 10, 1777

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To Brigadier General
Samuel Holden Parsons
Morris Town, February 10, 1777.

Sir: Since I wrote to you on the 8th. Instt. I have been compelled, from the spreading of the small pox in our Army, to submit to the necessity of Inoculation, and have accordingly ordered all the Continental Troops now here and coming from the Eastern States to be inoculated immediately on their arrival. You will therefore give Orders, for the inoculating the Connecticut Troops; and as Govr. Cooke is desired to forward on the Rhode Island Troops to Connecticut for this purpose, you will also have proper attention paid to them. I need not recommend to you the greatest Secrecy and dispatch in this business; because a moment's reflection will inform you, that should the Enemy discover our Situation they can not fail taking advantage of it.

You may perhaps not be able to reconcile this order with the enterprise, proposed in my former Letter against Long Island. If that can be carried on, at the same time with inoculation, I would by no means have you decline it; but if one must give way to the other (of which you will be the best judge); Inoculation being of the greatest importance, must have the preference, and the enterprise laid aside. It will be best to draw the Troops within as small a Circle as possible, and towards Peek's-kill to have them inoculated, by this means, if proper care is used, the danger of the Infection's Spreading, will be small and the Country have but little cause to dread it. I am etc.

Source #13 George Washington Letter to State Governors, December 16, 1779

MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Circular to Governors of the Middle States

[Note: Gov. George Clinton, of New York; Gov. William Livingston, of New Jersey; President Joseph Reed, of Pennsylvania; President Caesar Rodney, of Delaware; and Gov. Thomas Sim Lee, of Maryland.]

Head Quarters, Morristown, December 16, 1779.

Sir: The situation of the army with respect to supplies is beyond description alarming. It has been five or six weeks past on half allowance, and we have not more than three days bread at a third allowance on hand, nor any where within reach. When this is exhausted, we must depend on the precarious gleanings of the neighbouring country. Our magazines are absolutely empty everywhere, and our commissaries entirely destitute of money or credit to replenish them. We have never experienced a like extremity at any period of the war. We have often felt temporary want from accidental delays in forwarding supplies, but we always had something in our magazines and the means of procuring more. Neither one nor the other is at present the case. This representation is the result of a minute examination of our resources. Unless some extraordinary and immediate exertions are made by the States, from which we draw our supplies, there is every appearance that the army will infallibly disband in a fortnight. I think it my duty to lay this candid view of our situation before your Excellency, and to entreat the vigorous interposition of the State to rescue us from the danger of an event, which if it did not prove the total ruin of our affairs, would at least give them a shock from which they would not easily recover, and plunge us into a train of new and still more perplexing embarrassments than any we have hitherto felt. I have the honor, etc.

[Note: The text is from the letter sent to Gov. Thomas Sire Lee and is in the writing of James McHenry.]

Source #14 Portrait of Washington by James Peale

George Washington by James Peale, 1790.

INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



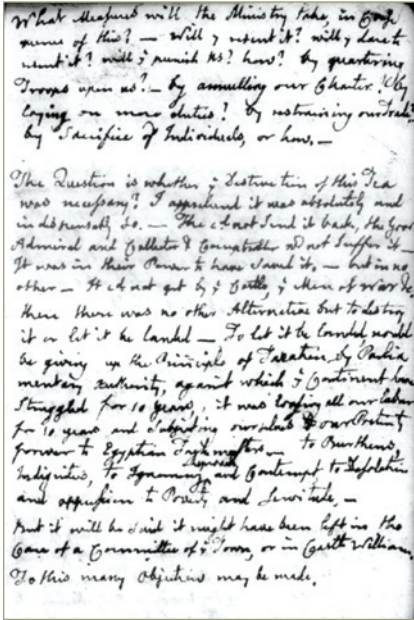
Source #15 John Adams Diary Entry, December 17, 1773

December 17, 1773 entry from the Diary of John Adams.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Portrait of John Adams.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



1773. Decr. 17th.

Last Night 3 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 Consequences, and so lasting, that I cant 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 Harbour, 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.

What Measures will the Ministry take, in Consequence of this? Will they resent it? will they dare to resent it? will they punish Us? How? By quartering Troops upon Us? — by annulling our Charter? — by laying on more duties? By restraining our Trade? By Sacrifice of Individuals, or how.

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

Source #15 John Adams Diary Entry, December 17, 1773

December 17, 1773 entry from the Diary of John Adams.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

which the Continent have struggled for 10 years, it was loosing all our labour for 10 years and subjecting ourselves and our Posterity forever to Egyptian Taskmasters — to Burthens, Indignities, to Ignominy, Reproach and Contempt, to Desolation and Oppression, to Poverty and Servitude.

But it will be said it might have been left in the Care of a Committee of the Town, or in Castle William. To this many Objections may be made.

Deacon Palmer and Mr. Is. Smith dined with me, and Mr. Trumble came in. They say, the Tories blame the Consignees, as much as the Whiggs do — and say that the Governor will loose his Place, by for not taking the Tea into his Protection before, by Means of the Ships of War, I suppose, and the Troops at the Castle.

I saw him this Morning pass my Window in a Chariot with the Secretary. And by the Marching and Countermarching of Councillors, I suppose they have been framing a Proclamation, offering a Reward to discover the Persons, their Aiders, Abettors, Counsellors and Consorters, who were concerned in the Riot last Night.

Spent the Evening with Cushing, Pemberton and Swift at Wheelwrights. Cushing gave us an Account of Bollans Letters — of the Quantity of Tea the East India Company had on Hand — 40,00000 weight, that is Seven Years Consumption — two Millions Weight in America.

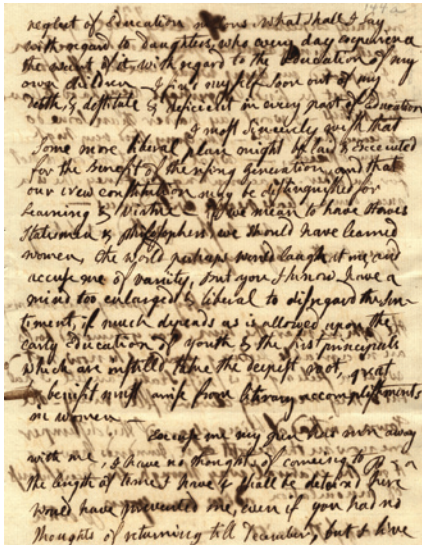
Source #16 Abigail Adams Letter to John Adams, August 14, 1776

Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, August 14, 1776.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Portrait of Abigail Adams.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, ADAMS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



...neglect of Education in sons, What shall I say with regard to daughters, who every day experience the want of it. With regard to the Education of my own children, I find myself soon out of my debth, and destitute and deficient in every part of Education.

I most sincerely wish that some more liberal plan might be laid and executed for the Benefit of the rising Generation, and that our new constitution may be distinguished for Learning and Virtue. If we mean to have Heroes, Statesmen and Philosophers, we should have learned women. The world perhaps would laugh at me, and accuse me of vanity, But you I know have a mind too enlarged and liberal to disregard the Sentiment. If much depends as is allowed upon the early Education of youth and the first principals which are instilled take the deepest root, great benefit must arise from litrary accomplishments in women.

Excuse me my pen has run away with me. I have no thoughts of coming to [Philadelphia]. The length of time I have [and] shall be detaind here would have prevented me, even if you had no thoughts of returning till December, but I live...

