

# **Naval Documents of The American Revolution**

**Volume I**

**AMERICAN THEATRE: Dec. 1, 1774–Sept. 2, 1775**

**EUROPEAN THEATRE: Dec. 6, 1774–Aug. 9, 1775**

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# A CHART OF THE WORLD

Describing the Tracks of Capt. COOK in the Years 1769, 70, 71, and in 1772, 73, 74, 75 with the

New Discoveries

# MERCATOR'S PROJECTION.

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NAVAL DOCUMENTS  
OF  
The American Revolution



*Colonel George Washington (of the Virginia Militia). By Charles Willson Peale, 1772.*

NAVAL DOCUMENTS OF  
The American Revolution

VOLUME I

AMERICAN THEATRE: Dec. 1, 1774–Sept. 2, 1775

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WILLIAM BELL CLARK, Editor

*For and in Collaboration with  
The U.S. Navy Department*

With a Foreword by

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

And an Introduction by

REAR ADMIRAL ERNEST McNEILL ELLER, U.S.N. (Ret.)

Director of Naval History

WASHINGTON: 1964

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*In this character of the Americans, a love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole; and as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your colonies become suspicious, restive, and untractable whenever they see the least attempt to wrest from them by force, or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for.*

EDMUND BURKE,  
1775

*If the American Revolution was the spearhead of a new political and economic order, the shaft of that spear was powered by hands that ennobled all human history.*

ADMIRAL ARLEIGH BURKE, USN (Ret.),  
1962

## In Memoriam

Having reviewed galley proofs, President Kennedy sent us this powerful Foreword in anticipation of publication in 1964. Appropriately he signed it on the 4th of July, a day that to all men stands for freedom, a day that could have had no meaning in 1776, or since, without the strength of the unchained sea. Mourned by the world, he left this life on 22 November 1963 for the vast seas of infinity, but his words still resound across the great waters that join and are the hope of free men as long as the United States stays strong on them:

“The same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

“We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution . . .

“Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

“This much we pledge—and more . . .

“In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.”

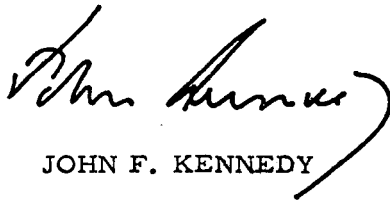
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

FOREWORD

Primary sources constitute the backbone of written history; and history is the means by which a nation repossesses its past. As the bicentennial of our own Declaration of Independence draws near, it is all the more important to publish as completely as possible the original papers essential to a full understanding of our nation's birth. Students of the American past will therefore welcome this series of volumes designed to illustrate through contemporary documents the role of the sea in the American Revolution.

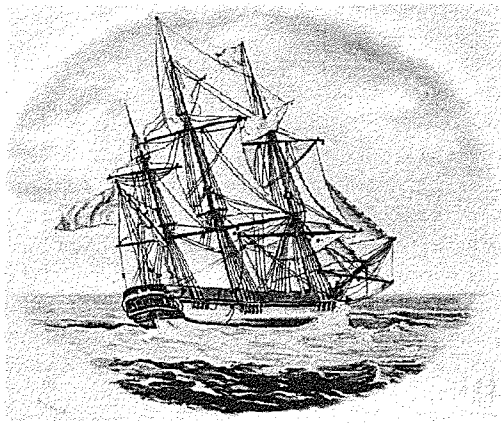
These volumes make amply clear the critical role played by sea power in the achievement of American independence. Although the documents emphasize naval and combined operations, American, allied and British, they properly include a selection of items showing the activities of privateers and of the merchant marine. It is evident that the thirteen colonies would have been hard put to win independence without this trident of maritime support -- the small but spirited American Navy, epitomized in the audacity of John Paul Jones; the powerful fleets of our allies, French, Spanish and Dutch, converting a local revolt into a two-continent war; and the ceaseless flow of supplies to the rebels made possible by Yankee ingenuity and daring in merchant ship and privateer.

These documents characteristically speak in the casual and laconic tones of the sailor who regards the hazards of storms, shoals and enemy fire as the expected impediments of life. Between the lines, they tell the story of courage and valor which established the high traditions of the American Navy -- and which, ever since, has inspired and fortified the American people in times of crisis.



JOHN F. KENNEDY

July 4, 1963



## INTRODUCTION

America rose dramatically from the sea and from it has increasingly drawn strength in the incredible events since Columbus' first thrilling landfall. The New World was discovered on the eve of and accelerated, if it did not in part cause, the series of revolutions that have swept through the past centuries like a typhoon. These revolutions have accompanied a rising gale of freedom—from antiquity the sea and nations wielding its trident have promoted democracy and liberated man from chains of every sort. In the American Revolution, which our documentary publication encompasses, the "cause of freedom" itself depended upon the sea. Independence could not have been won without wise exercise of force upon it. As Washington wrote in 1781, and none could know better:

" . . . Your Excellency [Admiral Comte de Grasse] will have observed that whatever efforts are made by the Land Armies, the Navy must have the casting vote in the present contest. . . . the triumphant manner in which Your Excellency has maintained the mastery of the American Seas, and the glory of the french Flag—leads both nations to look to you as the Arbiter of the War."

The meaning of the sea to the United States in the War for Independence has been comprehended by few Americans—had it been, each generation would have more wisely employed its growing influence upon our destiny and therefore upon that of liberty itself.

One reason the sea's early importance has not been understood may be the restricted availability of naval source material of the American Revolution. More than for any other key period of United States history the "seagoing" documents of this period have been widely scattered. Many have been lost. Many that remained were relatively inaccessible in private collections as well as public ones spread throughout much of Europe as well as the United States. Some valuable publication of documents has occurred, as by the old Naval History Society, but the vast body of this source material has lain little touched and little known for nearly two centuries.

It has long been apparent that the Naval History Division should seek to correct this deficiency. One of the primary responsibilities of it and predecessor offices has been collecting, editing and publishing records and documents of naval operations in wars of the United States.

This enduring mission got underway with the publication of the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 31 volumes (1894–1927). Then followed *Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-*

*War Between the United States and France: Naval Operations from February 1797 to December 1801*, 7 volumes (1935–1938), and *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars With the Barbary Powers: Naval Operations Including Diplomatic Background from 1785 Through 1807*, 7 volumes (1939–1944).

Periodically over the years publication of the naval records of the Revolution was considered. For various reasons these hopes did not reach fruition. The Directors of Naval History, however, did steadily collect records. The core of these, known as Record Group 45 (to which William Bell Clark made large contributions), now rests in the Naval Section of the National Archives where it was sent by that able historian and thinker, Commodore Dudley W. Knox.

My competent predecessor, Rear Admiral John B. Heffernan, passed on to me the publication of the naval documents of the American Revolution, as a project highly recommended by the Secretary of the Navy's distinguished Advisory Committee on Naval History. A fortunate conjunction of wisdom, men and money soon made it possible to start the vast undertaking.

Few citizens have as clear realization of the importance of the past in shaping the future as have Thomas S. Gates, in 1957 Secretary of the Navy, and Admiral Arleigh Burke, then Chief of Naval Operations. Both understand that true progress (and not just "rat race" change) in material things, including even the most advanced ones reaching into space, depends upon the building of a sound foundation—the new is but the breaking crest of a tidal wave of advancing knowledge. Both also profoundly understand an equal if not greater value: *From the past comes inspiration*. It stirs us and those after us to emulate the courage, the selfless service, the patriotic sacrifice of our ancestors. Without these qualities America could not have been born free, could not have grown to greatness, and cannot endure great.

With their support, albeit not without frequent knocking on the door in competition with mighty projects like Polaris and space activities, initial funds became available.

At the same time the specially qualified individual to edit this massive undertaking had retired from business to North Carolina. William Bell Clark wrought a successful career in business, becoming Vice President of N. W. Ayer & Son, Inc. His heart, however, went to sea. Soon after World War I he first wrote about naval matters. Not long thereafter he began to concentrate on the American Revolution. Today he is the leading authority on the naval aspects of that world changing struggle.

As the project took shape in this office (and before agreement to allocate funds for it), we discussed the choice of editor with the Secretary of the Navy's Advisory Committee on Naval History. Some members were especially versed in the American Revolution. These included Samuel Flagg Bemis, Julian P. Boyd, Waldo Leland, Chairman, the late William E. Lingelbach, Allan Nevins and Walter Muir Whitehill. To a man they recommended Mr. Clark.

When I visited him, in his library I found other reasons than most of us realized why he was *the* man for the job. All knew him to be a tireless researcher, competent writer, and walking encyclopedia of the American Revolution. Few,

if any, realized, certainly I didn't, that in his library reposed transcripts of much of the material we would publish. Around the bulkheads, from deck to overhead, stood neatly tabbed portfolios with thousands of transcripts from repositories in Europe and the United States. Here was the distilled essence of a lifetime avocation—now to become a new and inspiring vocation.

This collection, added to Record Group 45, then appeared to be most of what we needed except for records overseas. Yet in the seven years we have worked on this project we have added much. Mr. Clark himself has since found large bodies of new manuscripts in Canada and in the United States from Massachusetts to California. In my own duties, which call for considerable travel in connection with other activities of the office, and those of others of my staff, research has been fruitful in scores of repositories. We have been helped by many scholars in this country and overseas.

My personal research concentrated in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Florida, several repositories in New York and New England, and a few elsewhere. State archives and those of historical societies yielded large cargoes; and it has been like finding "seas yet untried" to come upon private collections with extensive naval documents. Notable among the latter have been the Smith Collection, now in the National Park Service, Morristown, N.J., the Hayes Collection still in the original plantation house near Edenton, N.C. (microfilm in the University of North Carolina) and Captain John G. M. Stone's priceless Langdon Papers—a particular jewel transplanted out of New England into my home port of Annapolis.

A key man in the project has been Dr. William J. Morgan, author, student of the American Revolution, and head of the Historical Research Section of this office. He has researched for materials, developed leads to new sources of documents and has worked closely with Mr. Clark, Admiral Loomis and myself on formulating and implementing our editorial policy.

Dr. Morgan's Section, amidst a heavy workload of other assignments, has handled the cataloguing and processing of new materials. His group has done the comparison reading and re-reading of documents, essential in this vast compilation, and the many editorial details to transfer the manuscript, as delivered by Mr. Clark, into this book. The following have served with him as naval duty rotated them in and out of the Section of usually seven people who worked on the American Revolution as other duties permitted: Lieutenant John R. Ganey; Lieutenants (junior grade) Paul Withington, Christopher Smith, Llewellyn Heigham, John Sturgeon, Rex Vail, Stephen Schuker, Margaret Helfrich, Richard Basoco, and David Patterson; Chief Yeomen Harold Eagan, Bartley Sisson, and Frederick S. Coward; Yeoman First Class Samuel Lopiccolo; Yeomen Third Class Pauline Shipker and Marion Shafer. The duties of Robert I. Campbell, civilian assistant in the Section, have included microfilming thousands of documents at the Library of Congress and elsewhere. The excellent work of Lieutenant Patterson in many areas as this volume was readied for the press is worthy of particular notice. During the final stages of preparation of Volume I, we were also most fortunate in obtaining the services of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Scheffenacker whose devoted interest and competence have been a real boon.

Several from other sections of the Naval History Division have contributed markedly to this volume. These include: W. Bart Greenwood, Librarian and Coordinator of Naval Libraries, with F. S. Meigs, Miss Barbara Lynch and Miss Mary Pickens of his staff; Commander D. V. Hickey, Head of the Curator Branch, Lieutenant Commander Mary Linderman, Lieutenant (junior grade) Richard Webber and Charles Weaver; H. A. Vadnais, Jr., Assistant (civilian) Curator; Jesse Thomas, Donald Martin and Miss Florence Sharswood.

Commander Hickey and Mr. Greenwood have pulled strong oars in a major area of the project—the collection of illustrative material. Initially searching our own library for leads, we have enlarged our search, as for manuscripts, to include many ports. Catholic in exploration, we have sought photographs of contemporary and near contemporary paintings, engravings, charts, cartoons, broadsides, relics, and other iconographic material. These have been added as a special collection in our comprehensive historic photographic file in Commander Hickey's section. This collection on the American Revolution approaches 5,000 items. It is noteworthy that in all our searching we have found no picture of Vice Admiral Samuel Graves, early Commander of British Naval Forces in America.

In addition, Mr. Greenwood obtained rich treasures from many repositories (principally the Map Division of the Library of Congress) in charts, maps and engravings of port scenes. Under the leadership of such men as Dr. Arch C. Gerlach and Dr. Walter Ristow, the Map Division has become a world leader with its superb collection. The knowledge and cooperation of Richard W. Stephenson, research librarian, has been most valuable.

Naval Reservists, teachers by profession, on periods of summer active duty have measurably contributed: Commander John Tierney, Lieutenant Commander W. L. Hemeyer, Chief Builder Robert Payden. We have likewise profited by having experienced historians perform brief Naval Reserve duty with us: Captain Neville Kirk of the Naval Academy and Commander William Franklin, State Department.

We have obtained most new manuscript material on microfilm, have had it processed into paper copies and have catalogued them employing a multiple card system similar to that used in the notable Jefferson, Franklin and Adams publications by Julian P. Boyd, Leonard W. Labaree and Lyman Butterfield. Since we got underway these able editors have been among our valued advisors and have given many sound sailing directions.

Our large microfilm library, added to Mr. Clark's extensive lifetime collection, runs to over half a million pages and still grows. All material cannot appear in the published volumes, but the combined group will have unique research value, including as it does gleanings from a fleet of collections in America and from overseas.

A repository that seems never to exhaust itself is the Library of Congress. In its superb Manuscript Division under Dr. David C. Mearns, we have micro-filmed documents with our portable equipment, whenever opportunity allowed, for some four years and still have not reached home port.



This project has benefited by the wise advice and assistance of Rear Admiral F. Kent Loomis, USN (Ret.), Assistant Director of Naval History, who has furthered the accomplishments of this office in numerous ways. It also could not have gone forward without the ever resourceful assistance of several of my immediate office associates: Miss T. I. Mertz, Mrs. Gertrude M. Johnson, Yeoman First Class John Murphy and his successors over the years, Chief Yeomen D. W. Tamblyn and R. C. Rhoades. Mrs. Johnson has made the project incomparably easier in her skilled handling of the complex ordering and financial arrangements and the numerous archival correspondence files.

In the Chief of Naval Operations' administrative section, Mr. J. B. James' flexibility and cheerful willingness in funding hundreds of orders for microfilm and other reproduction, and Mr. John B. Gallagher's broad knowledge of printing procedures, have been indispensable to the success of our operation. The same must indeed be said of the excellent service we have received from Mr. Kenneth A. Hancock and Mr. Charles H. James, Defense Department Printing Service.

Elsewhere we list the principal repositories in which we have found materials for this volume. All of us on the staff extend appreciation to the many helpful souls who have eased our work in them. I would like to note with my personal gratitude the names of the following who have been particularly kind and accommodating to me in correspondence and in my research visits to some three score repositories, public and private, large and small:

The Duke of Argyll, John D. Bakeless; Marquis de Bausset, Samuel Bemiss; Francis Berkeley, Julian P. Boyd, Marion Brewington, Mrs. John Nicholas Brown; Lyman Butterfield; Herbert Cahoon; Arthur B. Carlson; Frank Carr; Miss Margaret Chapman; Clarkson Collins, III; Medecin en Chef Herve Cras, FN; Christopher Crittenden; Captain V. A. Dahlstrom; Charles W. David; Leon de Valinger; Captain J. C. De'Engelbronner, RNN; Captain Wade de Weese; Rear Admiral Oscar Dodson; Rear Admiral George Dufek; J. H. Easterby; Chief Yeoman Clifford Foley; the Earl of Gainsborough; Howard B. Gotlieb, Capitaine de Vaisseau Grincourt, FN; J. Welles Henderson; Right Reverend K. G. Hamilton; H. Hardenberg; James Heslin; Norman Higson; Robert W. Hill; Richard Hough; John Melville Jennings; Herman Kahn; Commander Peter Kemp, RN; John D. Kilbourne; Leonard W. Labaree; the late beloved William E. Lingelbach; Miss Frances Lordwood; Dwight C. Lyman; Commander W. E. May, RN; David Mearns; Commander E. G. Middleton, RN; Rear Admiral S. E. Morison; Rear Admiral A. M. Patterson; James W. Patton; Howard Peckham; Rear Admiral Hugh Pullen, RCN; Mrs. Granville T. Prior; Morris L. Radoff; Mrs. Marion B. Reed; John B. Riggs; Stephen T. Riley; F. S. Ronalds; Paul R. Rugen; Miss Mattie Russell; Miss Frances Settee; Miss Grace Siewers; Gust Skordas; Edouard Stackpole; Captain John Gilbert M. Stone; Rear Admiral Wallace Sylvester (deceased); Miss Muriel Taylor; William J. Van Schreeven; Guy Weatherly; Walter Muir Whitehill; Mrs. John Wood.

Mr. F. C. Drake conducted research for illustrative material in many English repositories, effectively furthering this area of our work. Through the in-

terest and support of Dr. Daniel J. Reed, Library of Congress, Madame Paul Henri Bonnel in 1963 began similar work for us searching for manuscripts and illustrations in French archives with outstanding results. Most of the French translations are the skillful rendering of Professor Bernard P. LeBeau, U.S. Naval Academy.

Frederick S. Hicks; Irving Halpern; Milton Kaplan; R. F. Metzdorf; Harry Shaw Newman; the late Irving S. Olds; Commander Mendel Peterson, USNR, a number of those in the foregoing paragraphs, and many others have been especially helpful in our illustrations search. Mr. Hicks, noted in his own right as collector and authority, has generously worked long hours on the illustrations and captions for this volume, and in many other ways.

I would like in this section to express the gratitude of all of us for the unfailing wise counsel and support of the able members of the Advisory Committee and the Special Consultants. Their names appear ahead of the Foreword.

Many others merit our appreciation. All these, though unnamed, we thank. I must mention, however, among those in the Navy Department who smoothed our course, the following in particular (positions are at the time): The Honorable Fred A. Bantz, Under Secretary of the Navy; The Honorable Cecil P. Milne, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Material); and Rear Admiral G. R. Donaho, USN, Assistant Vice Chief of Naval Operations (Administration) and his successor, Rear Admiral Roy C. Benson, USN. Without their signatures there would have been no money, no contract—and no publication.

We must also thank the present incumbents of the top offices in the Navy Department: Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze; and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral David L. McDonald, USN. Their perception of the importance of sound understanding of the past in all of the Navy's activities has facilitated the launching of this volume.

John Paul Jones, the indomitable, truly wrote early in the American Revolution, "Without a respectable Navy—alas America!" A Navy comprises more than warships, though around them all else pivots. Thus, as readers of this first volume will note, the term "Naval" in our title bears a broad definition. The sea's influence in U.S. history has been as far reaching as the winds that sweep its horizons; and every aspect has affected naval power and its exercise.

The sea's influence is no less now than in the brave years of the American Revolution but its meaning was clearer then. This is so because few Americans in 1775 lived beyond the reach of the sea. They felt its need constantly for travel, for transport, for imports that ruled their daily lives such as clothing, tools, arms including powder, staples like tea and salt. The sea winds they could feel and smell also brought home the need of ships for export and for protection from foreign attack. Hence it seemed desirable to introduce in this work *selected* maritime material dealing with trade and other matters that have indirect as well as direct naval association. As Mahan said, "a nation's sea-borne trade is the life blood of its power, the assurer of its greatness, the preserver of its comfort."

For economy we have been forced to stow a large cargo between these covers. We have endeavored, however, from the splendid manuscript produced by William Bell Clark, to launch a volume worthy of its contents.

Our editorial policy reveals itself in the text, although a few points might be noted. Because every effort is made to retain the spelling, punctuation, and abbreviations of the original writer, the editorial apparatus is in the main uncomplicated. The standard ([ ]) indicates editorial insertions. On occasion (ordinarily in long entries), for clarity a paragraph break has been added where none existed in the manuscript.

Superior letters, a favorite eighteenth century device, have been eliminated except in signatures; likewise "ye" (except in some quoted headings) has become "the" and "yt" has become "that".

Document headings are our insertions unless quotation marks set off the heading indicating that it has been taken "as is" from the original manuscript.

To save space, superscriptions which repeat information in the heading are omitted or shortened, except in rare instances when the full one adds color or essential data to the document.

Where only part of a letter has been selected for inclusion in this volume, "[Extract]" appears at the top left of the entry. For continuing items such as legislative journals, ship logs, newspapers, or personal diaries which yield a number of individual items, it is clear that an entry on any given date is an extract from the source, and it has not been deemed necessary to note it. Unpublished Crown copyright material in The Public Record Office, London, is reproduced by permission of the Controller of H. M. Stationery Office.

As an aid to the user, the date appears in bold face above and to the left of the initial entry on that date, and to keep a good holystoning day in mind, Sundays are indicated.

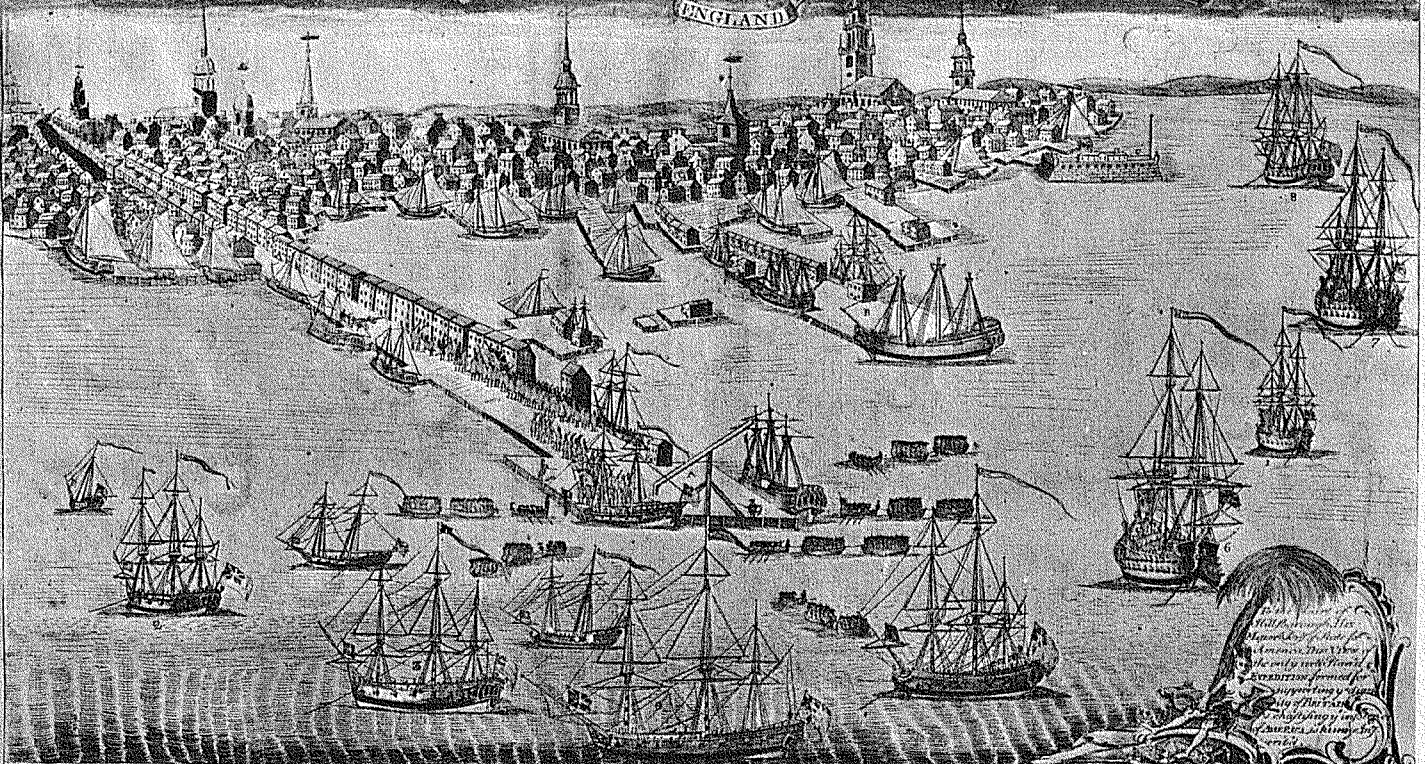
We anticipate at least fifteen volumes in the series. Volume II steams in close formation behind this one. Mr. Clark has manuscripts for Volumes III through VI well in hand.

We hope this volume and each of its successors will be of enduring value not only to scholars, who delve into the detailed rigging of history, but also to all Americans who would understand the powerful forces that made and keep us a free nation. Among these forces few have been as potent as the sea.

As Volume I shows, General Washington frequently referred to the importance of strength at sea. Subsequent volumes will carry many others of his letters, among them one to Lafayette late in 1781. It was written after the surrender at Yorktown that inevitably followed the French fleet's victory over the British off the Chesapeake Capes which denied Cornwallis the life-giving sea and sealed his fate. In this letter from our far off beginnings appear words that could have been written of World War II, of Korea, of Lebanon, of Cuba—words that are particularly appropriate to the global Confederation of the Sea by which we who love freedom oppose communist chains:

"It follows then as certain as that Night succeeds the day, that without a decisive Naval force we can do nothing definitive—and with it everything honourable and glorious."

VIEW OF PART OF THE TOWN OF BOSTON IN NEW ENGLAND AND BRITISH SHIPS OF WAR LANDING THEIR TROOPS 1768



- 11 Ranger
- 5 Alarm
- 20 Somerset
- 60 Romney
- 7 Lancaster
- 100 Devon
- 8 Bonnet

On Friday Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 1768, the Ships of War, armed Schooners, Transports, &c. came up the Harbour and Anchored round the Town within Cannon Lighted a Long Wharf & firing on their Cables, as for a regular Siege. At noon on Saturday October the 2<sup>nd</sup> the fourteenth & twenty-fourth Regiments a detachment from the 20<sup>th</sup> Reg<sup>t</sup> in Hancock's Wharf and Train of Artillery with two pieces of Cannon, landed on the Long Wharf, were formed and marched with a band of Drums beating & Colours flying up King's Church. Each Soldier having received 16 rounds of Powder and Ball.

With a view to the  
Harbour of Boston  
in the year 1768  
the only view from  
the water of the  
Town of Boston  
at that time  
of the British  
troops landing  
at the Long Wharf  
in the year 1768

Engraven by J. G. S. Sciz. by P. R. K. Boston.

Landing of British troops at Boston, 1768.

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

Original letters and documents relating to the naval and maritime history of the American Revolution are scattered across the continent from coast to coast and overseas among the nations of Europe. Some may be found in the fireproof vaults of state, university and college libraries and historical societies; some in possession of autograph collectors; others held by families descendent from early seafaring men. By far the largest number that have survived repose in the public archives of this country and in Europe. Many priceless records have been irretrievably lost in the course of well nigh two centuries, succumbing to decomposition, flames, flood and bonfires of spring housecleaning.

As described in Rear Admiral Eller's Introduction, an exhaustive search has been made of archives and collections (public and private) in this country and abroad to supplement and augment my own half century of seeking out and securing accurate transcripts, photostats or microfilm of surviving letters or documents pertinent to the war at sea between 1775 and 1785.

As the project took shape, it became evident that the scope of the conflict transcended any previous concept of its extent. It encompassed not just the Continental Navy, but the fleets of George Washington in New England waters and off New York, those on Lake Champlain, and on the lower Mississippi, navies in eight of the revolting colonies, letters of marque and reprisal, the British Navy, the French Navy, ejection of a half-dozen Royal Governors, the problems and plight of naval prisoners, and weaving throughout, the constant and perilous efforts to secure munitions of war from the foreign West Indies and abroad.

It was the genesis of American seapower of today: A beginning with nothing; neither ships, nor cannon, nor gunpowder, nor trained naval officers, nor any tradition. It arose out of desperation under the coercive acts of a British King and subservient Ministry and Parliament, enforced by His Majesty's ships on the American station; an harassment experienced long before "the shot heard round the world" on April 19, 1775, heralded the beginning of our military history of the war.

This war at sea developed through dire necessity in each rebellious province and colony; to defend the seacoast towns and protect their ocean-borne trade, to seek among neutral nations the arms and ammunition without which there could be no resistance made on land or sea, and, finally, to retaliate with such meager means as were at hand. The spark which ignited these maritime activities was not the gunfire at Lexington, but the order in George III's Privy Council six months earlier prohibiting the exportation of gunpowder or other warlike stores to the American colonies. That order reached Boston in the beginning of December, 1774.

This volume begins at that point, or rather, three days earlier, on December 1, 1774, when the first step in the Continental Association (the non-acceptance of British imports) became effective. It presents chronologically the occurrences through September 2, 1775, at home, and through August 9, 1775, abroad. Because of slow and uncertain means of communication—a vessel's passage being subject to the whims of the wind—there was always an exasperating lapse of time between any event in America and knowledge of it in Europe, and vice versa. News from west to east generally took four or five weeks in transit; from east to west, against prevailing winds, five to six weeks or even longer. The chronology, therefore, has been divided into the American Theatre and the European Theatre, allowing for the time lapse, and thus placing the sequences in proper perspective.

The rebels in Massachusetts, for example, chased the Redcoats back into Boston on April 19, 1775, and one day later three British major generals—Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne—sailed for America from Portsmouth, England. To place that date in the chronology one day after the Battles of Lexington and Concord might lead a reader—thinking in terms of present day communication—to a hasty conclusion that the event of the 19th of April influenced the dispatch of these warriors on the 20th, whereas the news of Lexington did not reach London until May 29.

Thus, the chronological arrangement for the volume is:

American Theatre: December 1, 1774–May 20, 1775

European Theatre: December 6, 1774–June 26, 1775

American Theatre: May 21, 1775–September 2, 1775

European Theatre: June 29, 1775–August 9, 1775

For the American Theatre, the sequence is daily, from north to south: Canada, Nova Scotia, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, etc. After East and West Florida and Louisiana, come Bermuda and the West Indies. For the European Theatre, the sequence is, for example, Ireland, Scotland, England, Scandinavia, United Provinces (Holland), France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy.

Letters and documents appear in full when the subject matter relates entirely to maritime affairs. Extracts are used when a letter deals with other topics which are not pertinent. For example, a letter from George Washington to the Continental Congress may discuss recruiting, insubordination, commissary problems, and devote a single paragraph to naval activities. That paragraph alone has been selected.

Contemporary and letterbook copies have been used and so indicated. No attempt has been made to establish whether a letter was in the handwriting of the author, or dictated and signed by him. This procedure, essential to a collection of writings of an individual (*i.e.*, Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and Adams), could be of no practical value in this project; nor could it have been accomplished, as many letters of the period have no other source than printed versions, such as the journals and letters of the New York Provincial Congress,

almost all of which were lost when the capitol building at Albany was destroyed by fire.

Because of the magnitude of the project it was considered the better part of wisdom to accept a number of previously printed letters or documents, provided they were in a volume edited by a qualified and conscientious scholar, or that the originals could not be located.

The first major documentary series of a predecessor office of the Naval History Division was *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*. The next two series—*Quasi-War with France* and *Barbary Wars*—contain only American correspondence and documents, those of the respective enemies being unavailable or non-existent. For this present series, fortunately, there is extant “the other side of the story.” The voluminous records of both the British Admiralty and Colonial Office are preserved in the Public Record Office in London. Liberal use has been made of admirals’ dispatches, captains’ letters and journals of ships on the American station, as well as letters from such Royal governors as maintained, for a time, a semblance of authority under the guns of His Majesty’s men of war. Where ships’ logs or journals are used, the text has been arranged by standard, rather than nautical time, a necessary step if letters and logs are to be in agreement as to dates.

English accounts placed in juxtaposition with American provide contrasting viewpoints and conclusions upon many maritime events, both major and minor. Likewise there is disclosed not only British aims and strategy, but incidents upon which American writers were vague, or uninformed; accounts of prize-taking existing nowhere else, and a vivid impression of the alarms, mostly false, with which the enemy viewed the infantile naval efforts of the rebellious colonies.

The British and Colonial newspapers, with a style of journalism peculiar to the period, proved another profitable source. Frequently they printed incidents and events not recorded in letters of the times, and, contrary to a common impression, were generally accurate, if inadequate. Editorializing in their news columns frequently provides amusing reading.

In some instances there is repetition in accounts given by contemporary American writers of the same event. Each one, however, has incorporated some fact or fancy lacking in the others. Therefore, it seemed advisable to accept iteration where necessary so that future historians, biographers, novelists or students would not be deprived of the complete documentary story.

Where military and maritime history overlap, the problem of selection becomes difficult. Even Lexington and Concord, fought ten or twelve miles from navigable waters, had naval connotations. When it came to the campaigns on Lake Champlain and the Richelieu, Sorel and St. Lawrence rivers, the operations were largely amphibious. Hence some military documentation was called for. The taking of Ticonderoga is a case in point. It was the prelude to the disastrous attempt to conquer Canada. Without the account of its capture, as gathered from the various versions of participants, the subsequent events would lack background. Even the storming of that fortress was in itself an amphibious operation—a boat crossing from the New Hampshire Grants to the Province of

New York. And it led, shortly thereafter, to the acquisition of the first two armed vessels publicly owned—the schooner *Liberty* and sloop *Enterprise*.

To summarize: This volume, as previously stated, begins in December, 1774. The arrival at Boston on December 3, of His Majesty's Ship *Scarborough* with the Order in Privy Council prohibiting exportation of gunpowder to the American colonies, and an accompanying circular letter from the British Secretary of State to the Royal Governors, calling for their assistance in its enforcement, precipitated the first shots of the American Revolution—and not at Lexington. The letter for Rhode Island's Governor fell into the hands of that colony's General Assembly. Within twenty-four hours, by Assembly order, armed men removed inland forty-four cannon and most of the powder from Fort George in Newport harbor. Order and letter, again by Assembly direction, were printed in the *Providence Gazette* on December 10. A copy of the *Gazette* reached Boston and two days later Paul Revere, with newspaper and dispatches in his saddle bag, rode into Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Four hundred men set off, by boat, barge and scow, down the Piscataqua River for Fort William and Mary at its mouth. The fort commander, beset on all sides, warned them not to enter, but his warning was disregarded.

"I immediately ordered three four pounders to be fired at them, and then the small arms," he reported, "and before we could be ready to fire again, we were stormed on all quarters."

That was December 14, 1774. One hundred barrels of gunpowder were carried off, and Governor John Wentworth, crying for naval support, blamed the mischief on publication of the Privy Council order in the Rhode Island newspaper.

Between this date and the day of Lexington, British naval efforts to intercept gunpowder and arms shipments, to protect two Tory settlements in Massachusetts, to support the waning authority of Governor Wentworth in New Hampshire, to fill undermanned ships by impressments from vessels stopped and searched, and to continue enforcement of the oppressive acts of trade and navigation, provoked recrimination, bitterness and some violence. Efforts to evade the Continental Association by certain merchants produced more unpleasantness and drastic action by provincial committees in New York, New Jersey and Maryland. Further south, on April 20—a day after Lexington but nine days before Virginia knew of it—Lord Dunmore seized the powder in the Williamsburg magazine; a preface to his ultimate downfall.

While Lexington and Bunker Hill were primarily matters for the military, each had its naval prelude and aftermath. In between were fought two naval engagements—off Machias and in Narragansett Bay—and both were American victories. They marked the initial efforts at sea; in Massachusetts without Provincial authority; in Rhode Island with the sanction of Assembly. In May also, provincials destroyed a British armed schooner in Boston harbor and in full view of His Majesty's ships riding at anchor. The Continental Congress resolution urging the provinces and colonies to arm ships to defend themselves had thus been anticipated throughout much of New England.



As rebellion spread, the Carolinas sent their Royal Governors fleeing for refuge to British naval vessels, and Georgia preempted the powder which came by merchant ship to the port of Savannah. South Carolina's earliest feat was to send a tiny sloop to St. Augustine and take more than one hundred barrels of gunpowder from a vessel at anchor outside the bar.

In Boston, as the grip of the Continental Army tightened, the pangs of hunger and the fear of a frigid winter sent the British Navy cattle and sheep stealing from the islands and shores of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, and lumber buying or confiscating along the sparsely settled coast of Maine. Enemy cannon bombarded New York, because the rebels were removing the guns from the Battery, and Stonington, in Connecticut, because other rebels fought back when their vessels were seized.

The British so-called Restrictive Acts, arriving along with the three major generals, intensified enemy operations at sea, and expedited development of naval forces by the revolutionary bodies of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. George Washington launched his own little fleet to intercept supply ships entering Boston harbor, and the Colony of Rhode Island pledged its delegates to propose an American fleet to the Continental Congress.

Without the wholehearted assistance of a great many devoted men and women in public and private libraries and historical societies, this project never could have been accomplished. Listing them in alphabetical order by repository, so that all who personally helped me may share equally in the appreciation due:

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Walter Muir Whitehill, director, Boston Athenaeum, Boston.

Zoltan Harasati, keeper of rare books, Boston Public Library, Boston.

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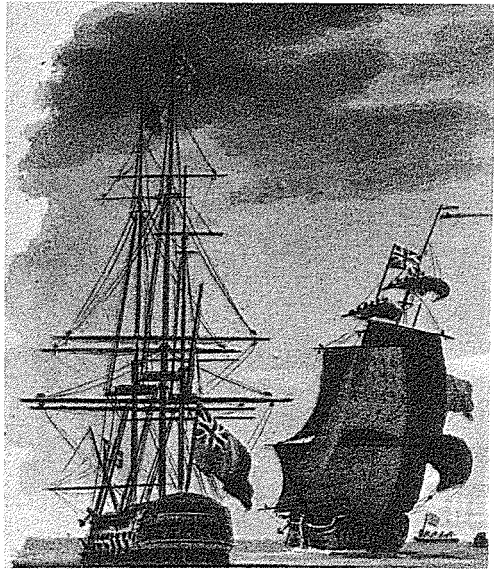
And to these individuals who kindly granted me the use of manuscripts in their private collections: Malcolm C. Drake, Middleboro, Massachusetts; Carrow Thibault, Ardmore, Pennsylvania; Nicholas Biddle, Morris Duane, Barry Hays Hepburn, and the late Frederick R. Kirkland, all of Philadelphia.

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# DEPOSITORY LOCATION ABBREVIATIONS<sup>1</sup>

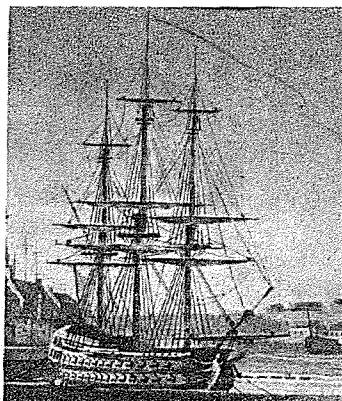
AAS	American Antiquarian Society, Worcester
AMAE	Archives Du Ministère Des Affaires Étrangères, Paris
APS	American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia
BM	British Museum, London
CL	William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
ConnHS	Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford
ConnSL	Connecticut State Library, Hartford
CUL	Columbia University Library, New York
CW	Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg
DAC	Dominion (Public) Archives of Canada, Ottawa
DLAR	David Library of the American Revolution, Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania
FDRL	Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York
HL	Hayes Library, Edenton, North Carolina
HSD	Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington
HSP	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
HU	Harvard University Library, Cambridge
HUL	Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California
JCBL	John Carter Brown Library, Providence
LC	Library of Congress, Washington
Mass. Arch.	Massachusetts Archives, Boston
MassHS	Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston
Md. Arch.	Maryland Archives (Hall of Records), Annapolis
MdHS	Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore
MeHS	Maine Historical Society, Portland
MHA	Marine Historical Association, Mystic, Connecticut
MNHP	Morristown National Historical Park, Morristown, New Jersey
NA	National Archives, Washington
NCDAH	North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh
NHA	Nantucket Historical Association, Nantucket, Massachusetts
NHCHS	New Haven Colony Historical Society, New Haven
NHS	Newport Historical Society, Newport
NLCHS	New London County Historical Society, New London
N.S. Arch.	Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax
NYHS	New-York Historical Society, New York
NYPL	New York Public Library, New York
NYSL	New York State Library, Albany
Pa. Arch.	Pennsylvania Archives, Harrisburg
PML	Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
PRO	Public Record Office, London
R.I. Arch.	Rhode Island Archives, Providence
RIHS	Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence
SCHS	South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston
UVL	University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville
VHS	Virginia Historical Society, Richmond
VSL	Virginia State Library, Richmond
WPL	Public Library, Whitehaven, England
WSL	William Salt Library, Stafford, England
YUL	Yale University Library, New Haven

1. The Descriptive List of Illustrations includes additional sources from which only graphic material has been used in this volume.



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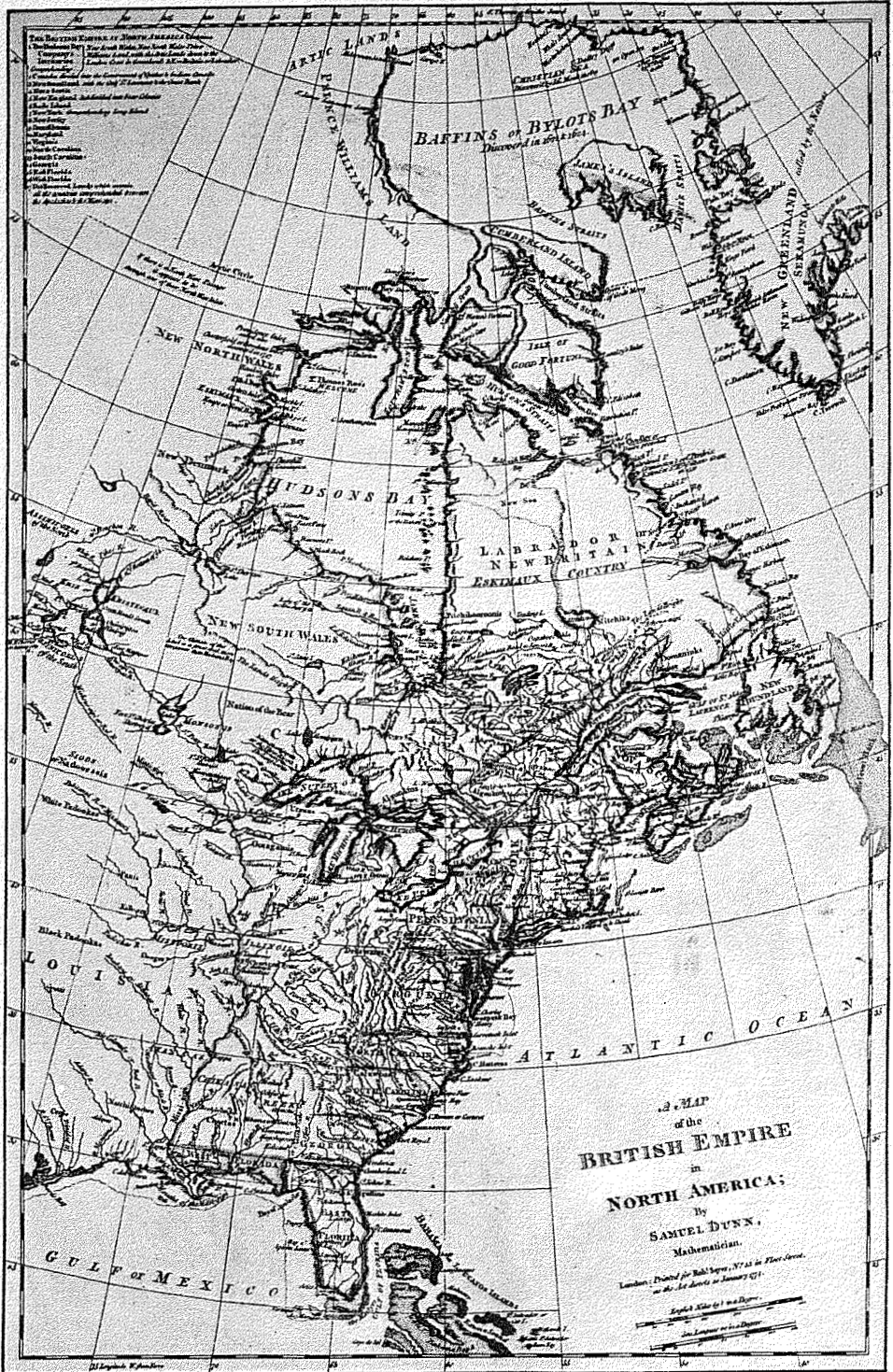
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Line engraving, probably published in London, April 1, 1775. The view is symbolic of the contrast in the Parliamentary attitude toward the English colonists of North America (against whom repressive measures were leveled in Massachusetts in consequence of the Boston Tea	

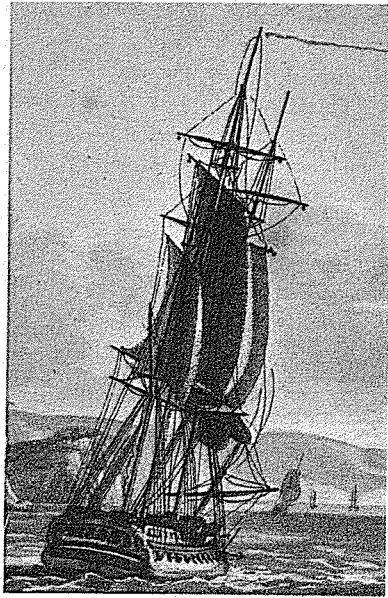
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Party), as opposed to that shown to the French-speaking settlers of Canada (whose Roman Catholicism had been tolerated by the Quebec Act), the publisher's sympathies obviously being with the former. It is interesting to note the date of publication, almost three weeks before the outbreak of open hostilities at Lexington on April 19, 1775. (Collections of The Library of Congress, Washington.)	
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Map of the British Empire in North America, 1774.

# AMERICAN THEATRE

*From December 1, 1774, to May 20, 1775*



1 Dec. 1774

"A LIST OF ALL SHIPS AND VESSELS WHICH HAVE CLEARED OUTWARDS  
IN THE PORT OF ANNAPOLIS IN MARYLAND"<sup>1</sup>

1774

Decemr 1 Brig *Geddis*, John Harrison, Master, 50 tons, 7 men, for Liverpool  
3500 Bushels of Wheat, 1400 Staves & Heading

1. Port of Entry Books, 1745-1775, MdHS. The Entry Books contain both outward and inward entries for the ports of Patuxent, Annapolis, North Potomac, Oxford, and Pocomoke, but only those for Annapolis contain entries for 1775. The Annapolis books, include entries for the port of Chester, on the Eastern Shore, across the Chesapeake from Annapolis, and which was handled by a deputy naval officer. The entries are detailed and include the above information as well as the place where the vessel was built, by whom owned, and where last registered. The first inward entry, covering the period involved, will be found under date of December 29, 1774. The complete list of clearances for Europe and the West Indies will be found in Appendix A.

THEODORICK BLAND TO FARREL & JONES, BRISTOL MERCHANTS<sup>1</sup>

Farmingdell [Va.] Decr. 1st, 1774

This acknowledges by us the Rect. of your favor of the 10th of Augt. by the Virginian Capt. J. Aselby, in which was enclosed my acct, Current, Nt. Proceeds 8-11-2 for two Hhds. Tobo. for which sum, with the Intt. thereon (at 60 days) amounting to 4s/4 I have drawn a Bill in favor of Mr. Chs. Duncan amounting to 8-15-6, which I doubt not will be duely Honour'd. I must confess the low price I have got for my Tobo. does not afford me great encouragement to try the Port of Bristol as a Market for that Commodity. especially when I consider that part of the same crop, & what was deem'd Rather inferior in Quality Netted me Seven Pounds twelve & Sixpence from Liverpool, my intention was to encrease my Commission to Yr. Port, But I think no man can be expected to run upon his ruin with his Eyes open. You will therefore excuse my not complying with yr. request to assist Capt. Aselby in his Loading. I shd. have vested the small Proceeds in Goods. But the present political disputes between these Colonies & the Mother Country which threaten us with a deprivation of our Liberties and every thing that is dear to us, forbids such a step and induces us to exert every nerve to immitate the spider and spin from our own Bowels, altho the Webb shd. be our Winding Sheet. This is the determined resolution of every American as far as I can hear from Nova Scotia to Georgia, nor wd. any consideration induce a Virginian at this time to ship one Hhd. of Tobo. were it not to pay there debts as nearly as possible before the Arrival of the 10th day of Septr. Next at which time the non importation takes place, & will be I believe Religiously adhered to, unless our grievances are fully redressed before that time. What will be the Consequence shd. the Corrupt Aristocracy which at present rules the British Councils persevere in their arbitrary Measures with respect to America God only knows this Part of the Continent tho Ardently desirous of a *constitutional* reconciliation are to a

man, determined that that day which deprives them of their liberties, shall also deprive them of their existence.

I shd. not have troubled you so long an Epistil had I not thought it a duty I owed my Country to apprise every person in England with whom I was in the slightest manner connected of the Sentiments of the People of this Country which perhaps may be well known before this reaches you, from many Publick Acts. you will therefore Sr. I hope excuse this intrusion. & believe me to be [&c.]

T Bland <sup>2</sup>

1. Theodorick Bland Papers, LC.

2. Theodorick Bland (1742–1790), retired physician and Virginia planter.

THEODORICK BLAND'S SATIRICAL ADDRESS TO FREDERICK LORD NORTH AND  
GENERAL THOMAS GAGE <sup>1</sup>

[Farmingdell, Va., December 1, 1774]

The Humble Address of the Merchants, inspectors, and [Pa]rtners, and other dependants on the Merchants and warehouses in the Town of Blandford and parts adjacent to the Right Honble Lord North, Genl Gage &c.&c.

We your Lordships most Humble admirers, and dutifull adherents having taken into our most [careful] consideration, Your Lordships & his excellency's [many] noble Virtues, and the bold and Laudable strid[es you have] lately made, to Arbitrary Government; and [industrious] and enterprising encroachments you have ma[de upon] the rights and prerogatives of the Crown; of grea[t Bri]tain; the Salutary and wholesome Corruption your lordship has, by your Wisdom, brought about in the British Parliament; and the noble attempts of your excellency (under the specious pretence of Personating the Best of Kings,) to fix on his Majesties Loyal & foolish Subjects of this Conduct [*sic!* continent] the Shackles of despotism; do think it prudent and Politic at this time when such general detestation and abhorrence is shewn by all *other ranks of People*; to shew our gratitude, and offer up our unfeigned thanks to you; for the prudent, Lenient, and steady measures you have undertaken, and are now pursuing to overturn the British Constitution, in England [and Ame]rica to its very foundation. We heartily a[gree] with you in your Laudable plan for th[is accomplishment] in hopes that your Lord[ship] & excellency [will] have effectuated your Laudable purpose, w[ill look upon] us with an eye of benignity and generosity, [and] graciously considering the eminent service [we] have endeavoured to do to you [in heartily concurring and testifying our approbation in] your Plan and at the risque of the Good opin[ion] of the People of the Country wherein we reside, disdaining every application to us, to embrace their Sentiments or abet their Cause, tho evident by our interes[t] to do. And when it shall please the Devil for we disdain it [pleas'd you] to have [foiled] every attempt of the People of America; to establish and maintain their liberties & the Glorious Standard of Despotism shall be effectually planted & the free constitution of great Britain & America shall be overturn'd [so] that then Yr Lordship, an[d] excellency, will amply [re]wa[rd] us and our posterity with