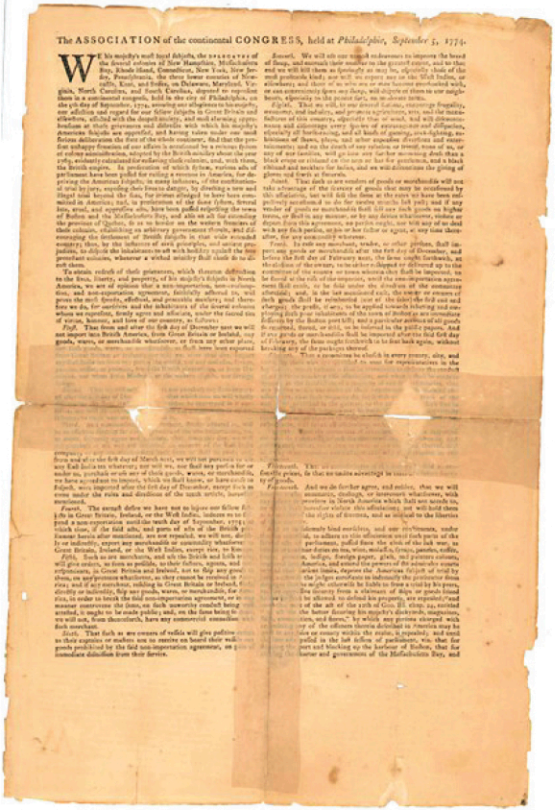
Highly Important

EARLIEST OF THE UNITED STATES FOUNDING DOCUMENTS



The ASSOCIATION of the continental CONGRESS, held at *Philadelphia*, *September* 5, 1774.

WE his majesty's most loyal subjects, the deputies of the several colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the three lower counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex, on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, deputed to represent them in a continental congress, held in the city of Philadelphia, on the 5th day of September, 1774, avowing our allegiance to his majesty, our affection and regard for our fellow subjects in Great Britain and elsewhere, affected with the deepest concern, and much alarming apprehensions at their grievances and dangers to which his majesty's American subjects are exposed, and having taken under our most serious deliberation the state of the whole continent, find that the present unhappy situation of our affairs is chiefly owing to a long series of colony oppressions, adopted by the British ministry, whose views, we have reasonably conjectured from repeated declarations, to which we find the British empire is indebted for its rise and greatness, that all parliament have been pushed to the ruling a revenue in America, for defraying the American civil list, in many instances, of the members of the British legislature, enabling their fellow-subjects, by disclaiming a free and illegal taxation, to enjoy the fruits thereof, to have been accumulated in America; and, in prosecution of the same system, several acts, general and opprobrious, have been passed respecting the town of Boston and the Massachusetts Bay, and also an act for extending the province of Quebec, so as to border on the western frontiers of those colonies, establishing an arbitrary government therein, and discouraging the settlement of British subjects in that wide extended country; thus, by the influence of evil principles, and sinister purposes, to deprive the inhabitants of such benefits original the best protectant colonies, wherever a settled security shall cease to enjoy them.

To attain redresses of their grievances, which therefore deprivation to the free, liberty, and property, of his majesty's subjects in North America, we are of opinion that a non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement, faithfully adhered to, will prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable measure; and therefore we do, for ourselves and the inhabitants of the several colonies whom we represent, firmly agree and associate, under the sacred ties of virtue, honour, and love of our country, as follows:

First. That from and after the first day of December next we will not import into British America, from Great Britain or Ireland, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever, or from any other place, [illegible]

[illegible] from and after the first day of March next, we will not purchase any East India tea whatever; nor will we, nor shall any partake for or under us, purchase or use any of the goods, wares, or merchandise, we have agreed not to import, which we shall know, or have cause to suspect, were imported after the first day of December, except such as come under the rules and directions of the tenth article hereof mentioned.

Fourth. The strength duties we have not to import our fellow subjects in Great Britain, Ireland, or the West Indies, induces us to expend a non-exportation until the tenth day of September, 1775; which time, if the said acts, and parts of acts of the British parliament herein after mentioned, are not repealed, we will not, directly or indirectly, export any merchandise or commodity whatsoever to Great Britain, Ireland, or the West Indies, except rice, to Europe.

Fifth. To enable us to carry this association into execution, we will give orders, as from us publicly, to their factors, agents, and representatives, in Great Britain and Ireland, not to ship any goods to them, on any pretence whatsoever, as they cannot be received in America; and if any merchant, residing in Great Britain or Ireland, directly or indirectly, ship any goods, wares, or merchandise, for sale, or on consignment, to America, in order to break the said non-importation agreement, or in manner contravene the same, on such unworthy conduct being notified, it ought to be made public; and, on the same being so [illegible] we will not, from thenceforth, have any commercial connexion with such merchant.

Sixth. That both as we owners of vessels will give positive orders to their captains or masters not to receive on board their vessels any goods prohibited by the said non-importation agreement, on pain of immediate detention from their factors.

Seventh. We will also use our utmost endeavours to improve the breed of sheep, and encourage their increase to the greatest extent, and to that end we will kill them as sparingly as may be, especially those of the most profitable kind; nor will we export any to our sister Indies, or elsewhere; and those of us who are or may become manufacturers will, on our commercial terms our sheep, and dispose of them to our neighbours, especially in the present year, as we choose to do.

Eighth. That we will, to our utmost ability, encourage frugality, economy, and industry, and promote agriculture, arts, and the manufactures of this country, especially that of wool; and will discourage extravagance and excessive every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially of horse-racing, and all kinds of gaming, cock-fighting, exhibitions of shows, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments; and on the death of any relation or friend, we, or any of us, or our families, will go into any fashion or mourning dress than a black crape or ribbon for any man or his family, and a black ribbon and no other for a woman, and we will discourage the giving of gloves and mourning rings.

Ninth. That such as are retailers of goods or merchandise will not take advantage of the scarcity of goods that may be occasioned by this association, but will for them at the price we have been accustomed to do for twelve months last past; and if any vendor of goods or merchandise shall raise the price upon his customers, or shall in any manner, or by any device whatsoever, evade or depart from the spirit of this association, or shall by any other means, will or way act or do, for himself, or by or for father or agent, or any man therein after, the said association shall be void.

Tenth. In order any merchant, trader, or other person, shall import any goods or merchandise after the first day of December, and before the first day of February next, the time might forthwith, at the direction of the owner, to either be shipped or delivered up to the committee of the county or town wherein they shall be imported, to be found at the call of the committee, and the non-importation agreement shall cease, to be duly under the direction of the committee aforesaid; and, in the last mentioned case, the value of owners of such goods shall be reimbursed out of the inland the first and charges; the profit, if any, to be applied towards relieving and employing such poor inhabitants of the town of Boston as are remaining destitute by the Boston port bill; and a particular account of all goods so received, stored, or sold, to be delivered to the public papers. And if any goods or merchandise shall be imported after the first day of February, the time might forthwith to be then back again, without breaking any of the packages thereof.

[illegible] This association be closely in every county, city, and town, [illegible] to use for representatives in the [illegible]

[illegible] Fifth. [illegible] to enable advantage in [illegible] of goods.

Twelfth. And we do further agree, and resolve, that we will encourage, cherish, and promote frugality, economy, and industry, and promote agriculture, arts, and the manufactures of this country, especially that of wool; and will discourage and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially of horse-racing, and all kinds of gaming, cock-fighting, exhibitions of shows, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments; and on the death of any relation or friend, none of us, or our families, will go into any fashion or mourning dress than a black crape or ribbon for any man or his family, and a black ribbon and no other for a woman, and we will discourage the giving of gloves and mourning rings.

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on the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the articles' signing

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