**Document A**

Letter to the Customs at Boston

# Original Transcription

Thomas Rowe worked for the British Customs Service in Salem. He was accused of reporting Salem merchants for attempting to smuggle molasses by secretly removing it from a ship without paying the required duties (taxes). The following day he was attacked by a mob of Salem residents, including. Richard Derby, his son Elias Hasket, and Salem merchant, George Crowninshield.

***Page 1***

Copy of a Letter from the Collector & Comptroller of Salem and Marblehead to the Commissioners of the Customs at Boston.

Gentlemen,

The Collector was informed this Morning that Cap. Phillip Sanders of the Schooner Neptune lately arrived from Guadeloupe & St. Eustatia who had partly discharged her Cargo, did last Evening about ten o-Clock after the ???? were locked and the Waiter was stepped home to see his Wife, who was very ill, find Means to open the Hatches and land sundry Casks of Molasses but was prevented proceeding any further, by the Waiters return together with the landwaiter. Upon which information the Collector Comptroller Surveyor thought proper this Morning about nine O’Clock to visit the Wharf where the Vessel lay, and inspect into the Matter; when they came there they found themselves surrounded

***Page 2***

Surrounded by a large Mob with a flag flying, who gave out that they were in pursuit of the person who had given the Information respecting the Landing said Molasses and notwithstanding all the Endeavors of the Officers to quit them, continued to be very riotous for some time; but upon Declaration being made by Mr. Savage the Landwaiter, whom they supposed knew who the Informer was, that he was totally ignorant of the Matter, they went off. Upon which the Principal Officers not thinking it prudent, or consistent with the Good of the Service or their own Safety, to examine any further at that time as to the landing of the Molasses, came up to the Custom house it being then Office Hours; and whilst they were attending their duty, were alarmed by the Appearance of the aforesaid Mob, who had got in the Midst of them mounted in a hand-Cart drawn by some of their party, Thomas Rowe the Tide Waiter, who it seems they were told gave the first Information to Mr. Savage – they had tarred his Clothes all over, and then covered him with feathers, & pinned him into the Cart, and were carrying him thro’ the Town as a Spectacle of Infamy; - Stopping at all the Publick Offices, When they came to the Custom house they were desired

***Page 3***

Desired to release him, as being an Officer of the Customs and in the Exercise of his Duty, but said they would not till they had done with him, the most they could be prevailed on to do was, to promise they would not hurt him, and after carrying him to the extreme part of the town they released him, at the same time telling him he must not show his face again in this part; - They also stopped in their way at the House of Mr. James Grant late an Officer in the Army, and now employed as a trader in Town, a Gentleman of a respectable Character who they suspected had been an Informer in the Affair of the ???? Cargo from ??? ??? Neddham Master, which was ??? in February last but released by the Honorable Board, but said Gentleman having had Notice of their design against him had withdrawn himself.

Since this Riot and Tumult has subsided the Surveyor and Searcher with the Landwaiter have been down on the Wharf, where the said Master and Owners of the Neptune having before acknowledged that they had landed Nineteen Casks of Molasses in the Night, provided the said Nineteen Casks to those Officers, and have deposited the same in a Warehouse to be forthcoming on Demand. They

***Page 4***

They are not seized, or under our ????? conceiving it our Duty in this extraordinary Affair to take no further Steps without the Direction of the Honorable Board.

We are with Respect Gentlemen

Your most obedient and faithful Servants.

Signed: J. Fisher Collector

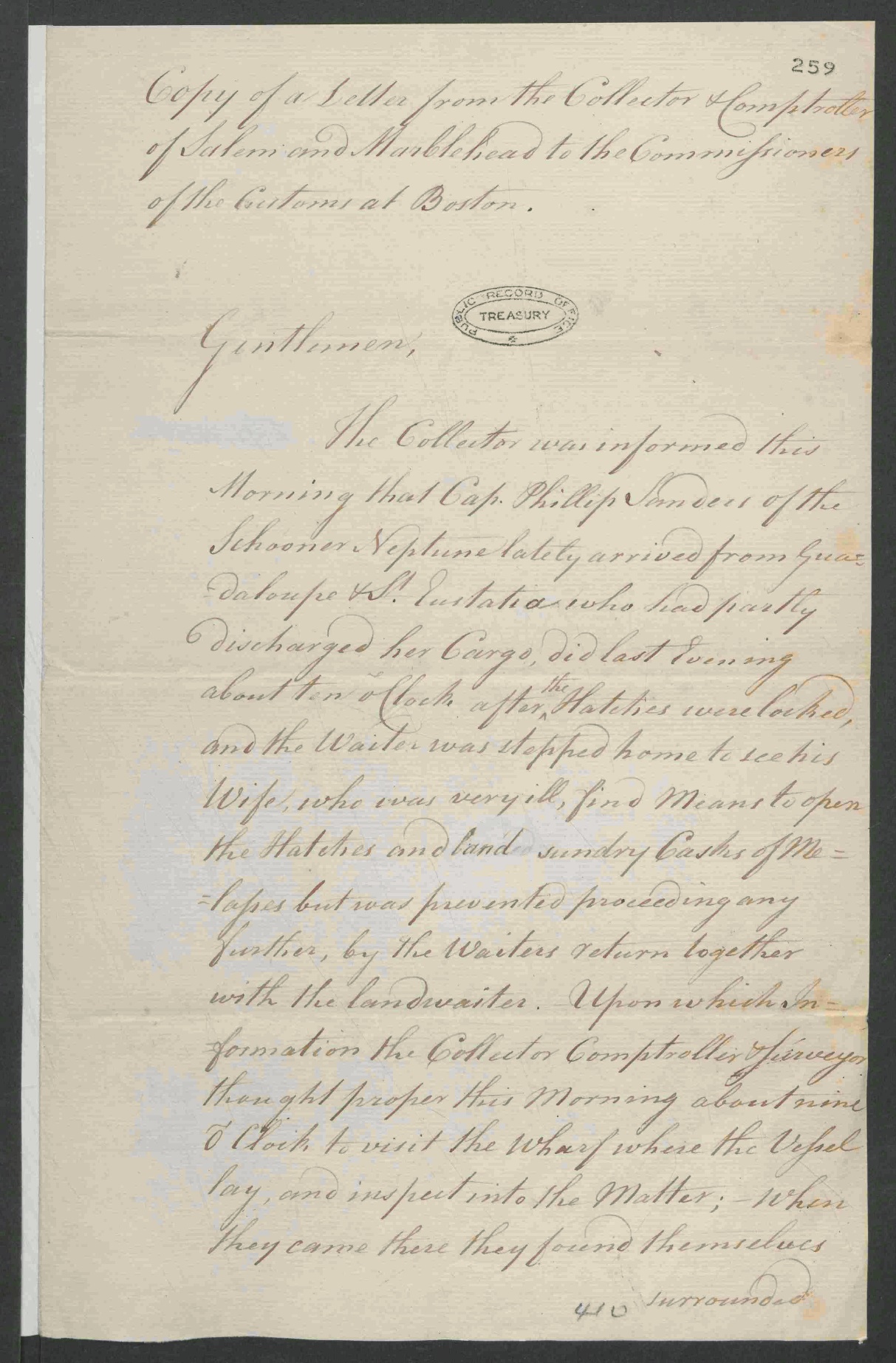
John Mascarene Comptroller

Custom of Salem & Marblehead

7th September 1768

**Document A**

***Page 1***

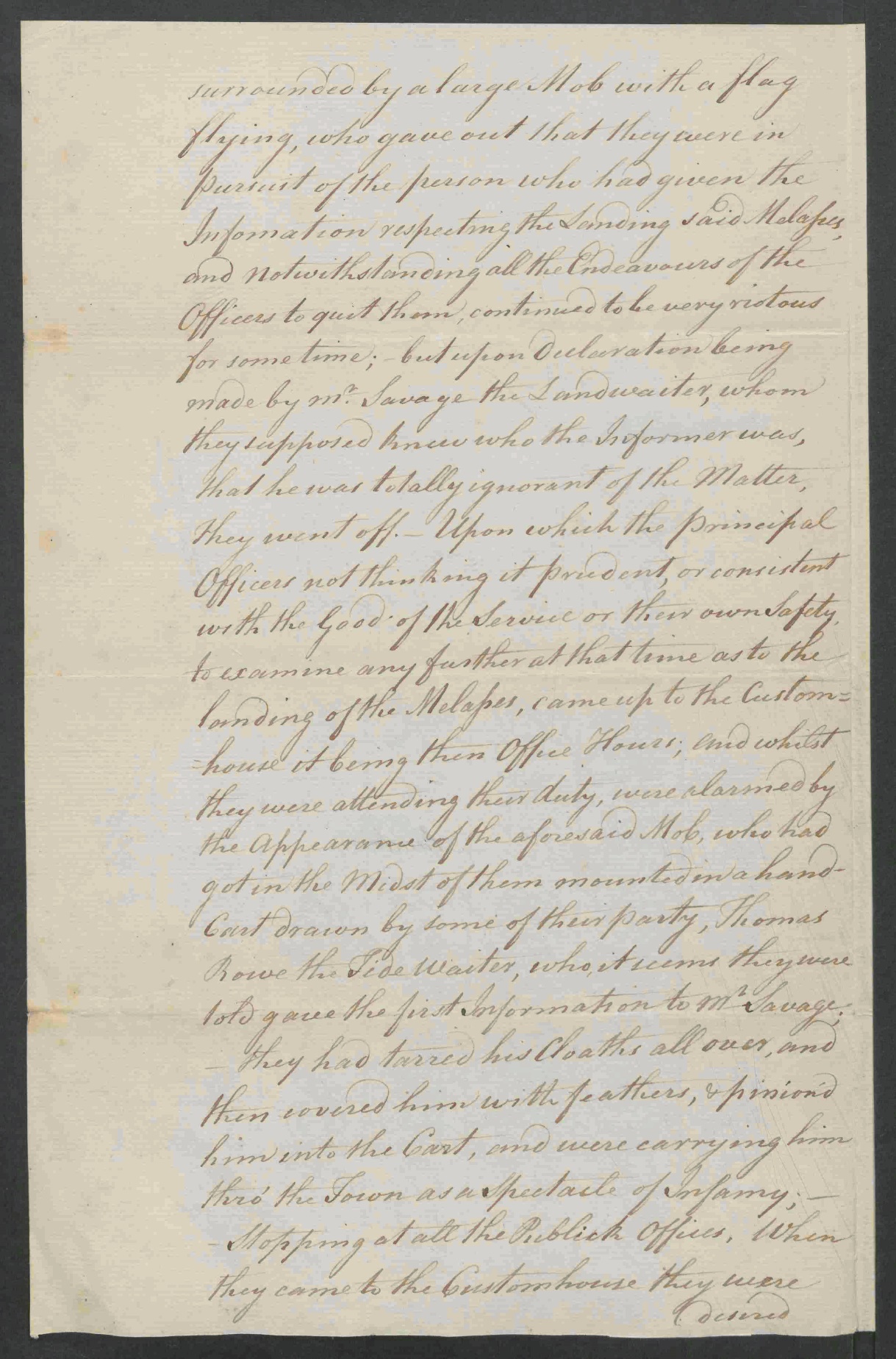
***18 cent***

## **Image Source**

The National Archives, United Kingdom. Copy of a Letter from the Collector & Comptroller of Salem and Marblehead to the Commissioners of the Customs at Boston. 1768 Sept. 7. T 1/465/259-260

**Document A**

***Page 2***

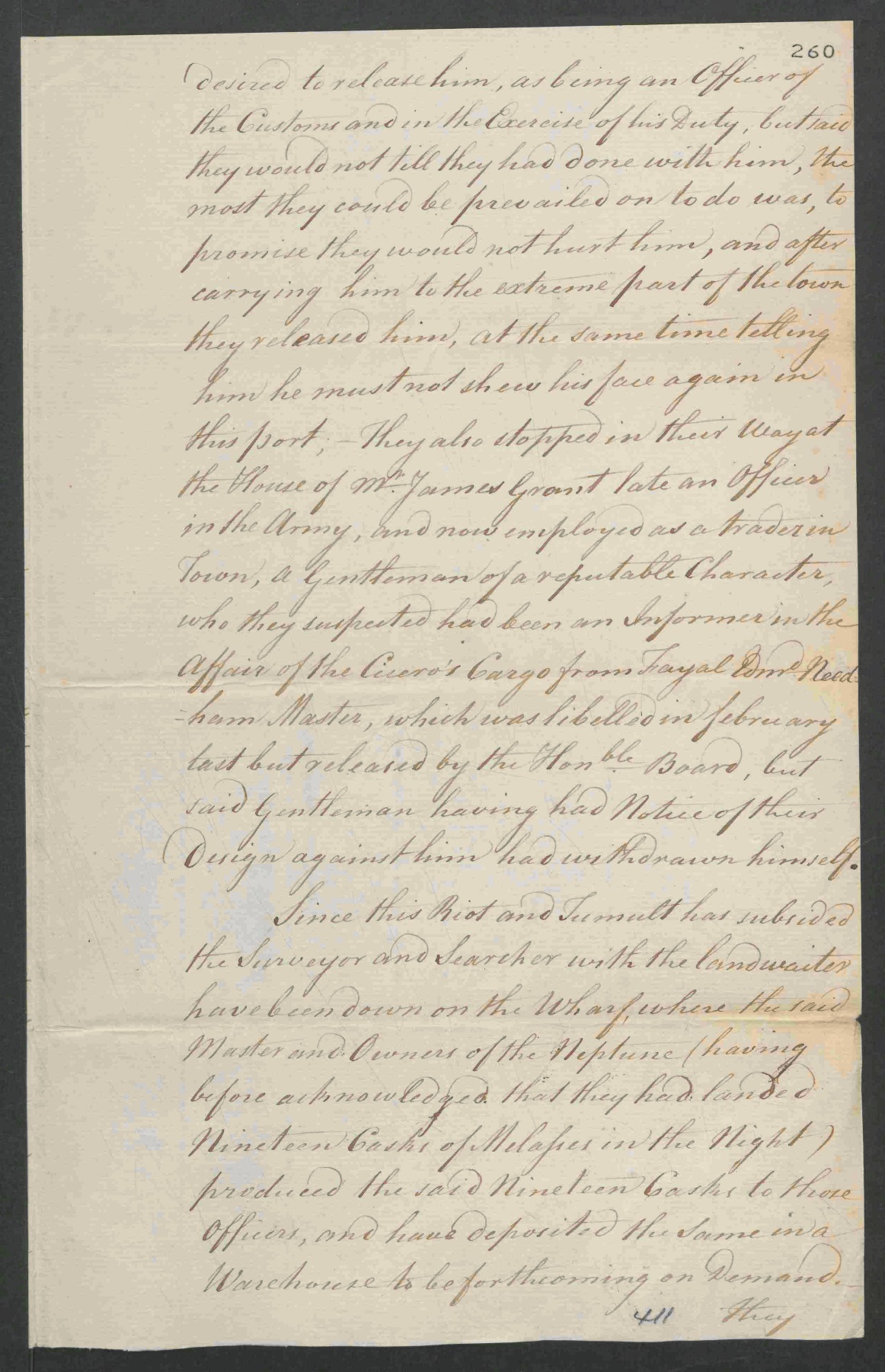
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The National Archives, United Kingdom. Copy of a Letter from the Collector & Comptroller of Salem and Marblehead to the Commissioners of the Customs at Boston. 1768 Sept. 7. T 1/465/259-260

**Document A**

***Page 3***

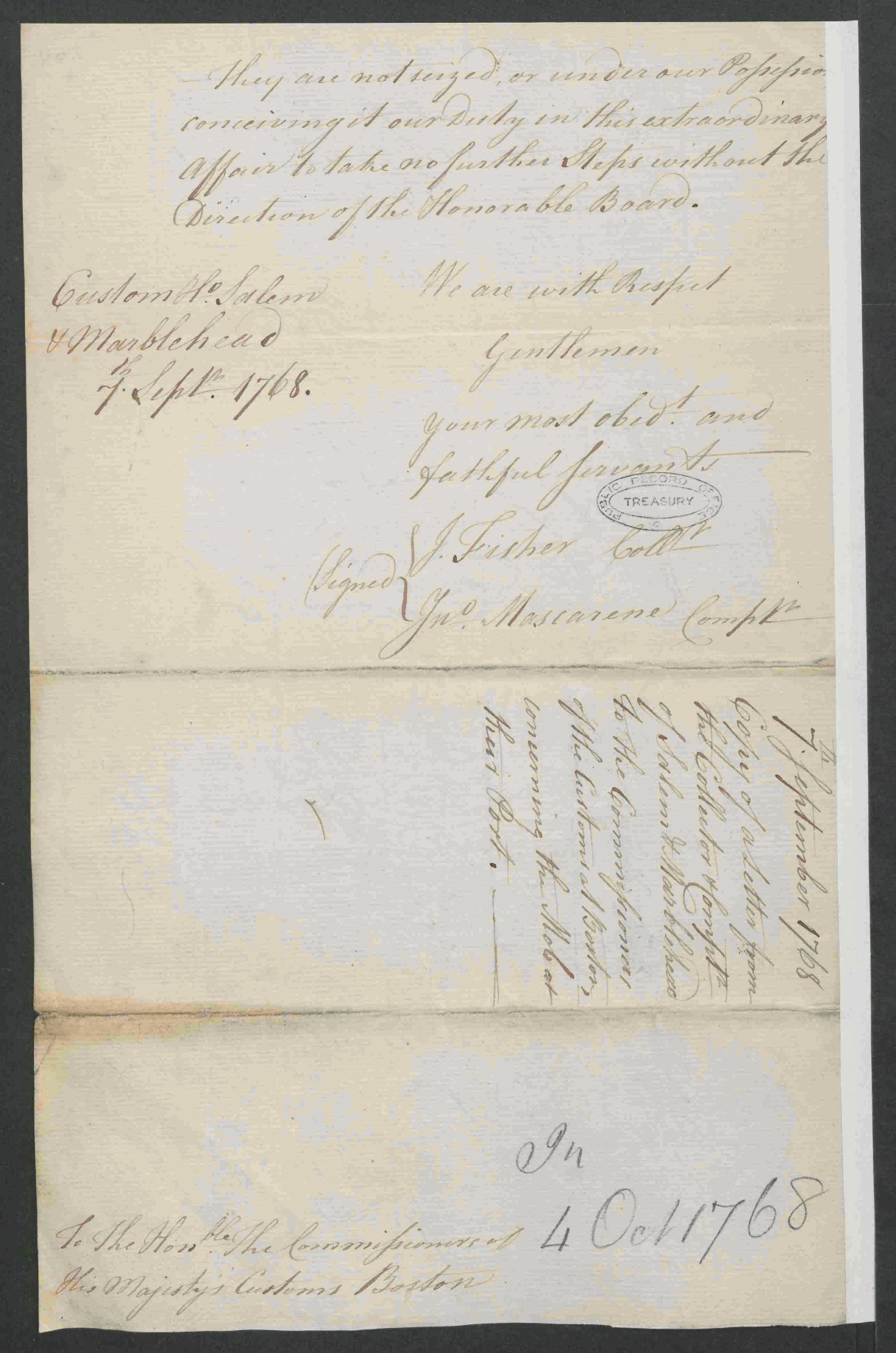
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**Document A**

***Page 4***

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## **Image Source**

The National Archives, United Kingdom. Copy of a Letter from the Collector & Comptroller of Salem and Marblehead to the Commissioners of the Customs at Boston. 1768 Sept. 7. T 1/465/259-260

**Document B**

Crowninshield Distilling Account with Richard Derby

# Original Transcription

Richard Derby was a wealthy ship owner and merchant who traded and sold sugar and molasses from the West Indies. He also owned a Salem distillery where he used molasses to produce rum. This is an account of molasses (right side) used to produce rum (left side) for George Crowninshield, a Salem merchant and ship captain. Crowninshield may have exported this rum across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe or Africa, where it would be traded for enslaved people. It’s also possible he sold this rum locally or in other North American colonies. Note the bottom-left line, accounting for rum delivered by Crowninshield’s enslaved person.

**Dr: .. .. .. Capt. Geoe: Crowninshield his Distilling Acctt: with Richd: Derby .. .. Cr:**

**Left side**

1765

Decr: 13 To.. Balla: of former Acctt: in Molasss: . . . . . 280 ¼

1766

**July 19 To.. 10 Gallo Rum, 1767 Octor 6 33 ½ Gallo: Rum ??? 43 1/2**

**1770**

**Augt 17 To.. 17 ½ Gallo Rum dd** **W. Collins . . . . . . . . 17 ½**

**To.. 32/34 Gallo: Rum ddd: John Whitton . . . . . 32 ¾**

**22 To.. 14 hd: Rum 111 Gallo: . . . . . . . . . . . . 111**

**Decr 7 To.. 31/34 Gallo: Rum dd: his Servant . . . . 31 ¾**

**22 To.. 30 Hd: Rum ?? 3300 Gallo: . . . . . . 3300 3536 ½**

**3816 ¾**

**1771 Jany To.. 31 ¾ Gallo: Rum dd his Negro . . . . . . 31 ¾**

**3848 ½**

**Right side**

1766

July 19 By.. Sugar that made 10 **Gallo** Rum . . . . . . 10

1768

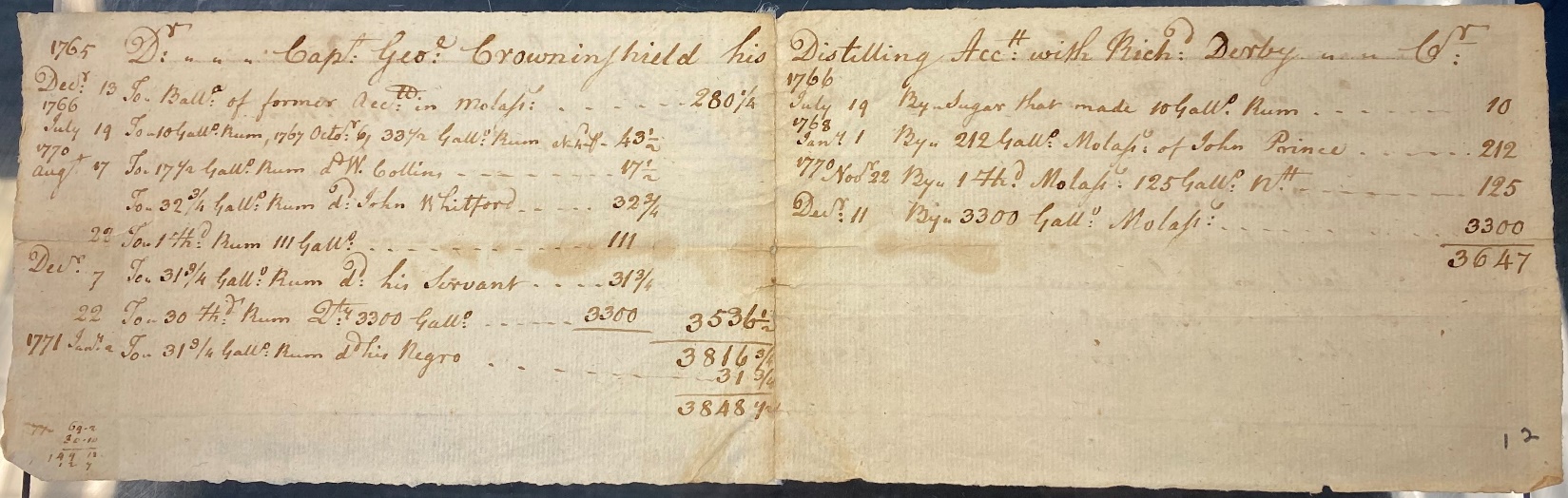
**Jany** 1 By.. 212 **Gallo**: Molass: of John Prince . . . . . . 212

1770 Nov 22 By.. 1 **Hd** Molass: 125 **Gallo**: Ntt . . . . . . . 125

**Decr**: 11 By.. 3300 **Gallo**: Molass: . . . . . . . . . . 3300

3647

**Document B**



## **Image Source**

MSS 37 Derby Family Papers, Box 16, Folder 1. Philips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass. NPS Photo.

**Supplemental Primary Source Documents**

**Document C**

To Inform All Masters of Vessels

Original Transcription

This notice was placed in The Boston Evening Post newspaper, January 2, 1764. It is “signed” by two officers of the British Customs Service in Salem. The notice directs captains who trade at non-British colonies in the West Indies to pay the required duties on rum, sugar, and molasses. It references the Molasses Act (“Act of the Sixth of his late Majesty King George the Second”), which merchants largely ignored. The Sugar Act was passed three months after this notice was published, on April 5, 1764.

Custom-House

December 26, 1763.

Port of Salem,

Whereas it has been represented

to the Right Honorable the Lords Com-

missioners of his Majesty’s Treasury, that

many Vessels trading to the Plantations not

belonging to the King of Great-Britain, and

returning with Cargoes of Rum, Sugar, and

Molasses, have found Means to smuggle the

same into his Manjesty’s Colonies, without pay-

ing the King’s Duty. This is to inform all

Masters of Vessels using the said Trade, that

they are herby strictly required on their

Arrival here, to enter or report their Ships

and Cargoes at the Custom-House, when pro-

per Officers will be put on board such Vessels,

to see that the Act of the Sixth of his late

Majesty King George the Second (imposing

a Duty on all foreign Rum, Sugar, and Mo-

lasses) be in all it’s Parts fully carried into

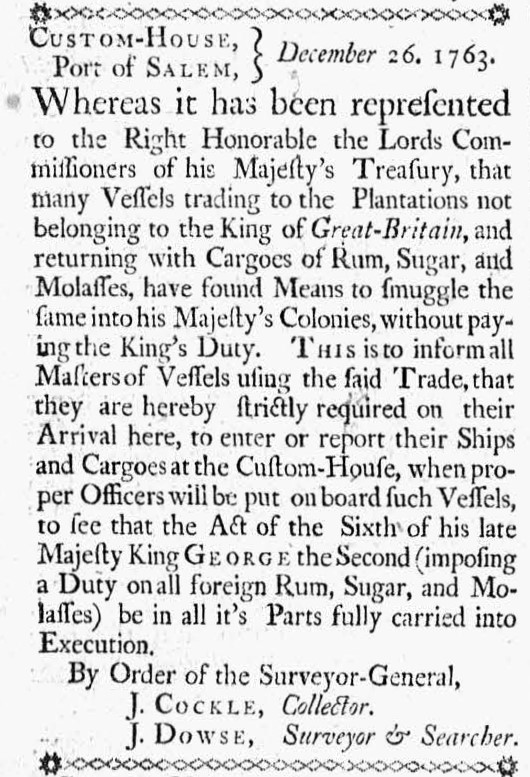
Execution.

By Order of the Surveyor-General,

J. Cockle, Collector.

J. Dowse, Surveyor & Searcher

**Document C**



## **Image Source**

“The Boston Evening Post.” January 2, 1774. Courtesy of Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers. Early American Newspapers, Series 1: From Colonies to Nation.

**Document C**



## **Image Source**

“The Boston Evening Post.” January 2, 1774. Courtesy of Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers. Early American Newspapers, Series 1: From Colonies to Nation.

**Document C**

112 Gallons of Rum to Hannah Pratt

Original Transcription

Richard Derby was a Salem merchant, ship owner, and owner of a rum distillery in Salem. This is a receipt of rum purchased and received by Hannah Pratt. Pratt owned and operated a well-known tavern in Salem, the Blue Anchor in Town House Square. Pratt inherited the tavern from her mother, widow Margaret Pratt.

Following the death of a husband, 18th century women gained a new level of economic freedom and responsibility. They had the power to hold and manage their own property and earnings. But some widows became working women out of necessity to support themselves and their families. Many were licensed to sell alcohol and did so from their homes, shops, or even outside as a form of “poor relief.” Some gained significant success, owning and operating popular public taverns.

Salem Novr. 27th 1762

Hanh Recd. of Richd: Derby 112 Gallo Rum the Excise of

Pratt which I am to be Accountable for being a Licensed

Person in Salem in the County of Essex. **Hannah Pratt.**



## **Image Source**

MSS 37 Derby Family Papers, Box 14, Folder 9. Philips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass. NPS Photo.